

Yoga Sutra Translations

Even though yoga has been mentioned in various ancient texts, including the Vedas, Upanishads, the Bhagavad Gita etc, the credit for putting together a formal, cohesive philosophy of yoga goes to Sage Patanjali. In his Yoga Sutras, Patanjali has provided the very essence of the philosophy and teachings of yoga in a highly scientific and systematic exposition. The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali (YSP) form the basis for one of the six Hindu schools of philosophy (or 'shad-darshana,' literally six philosophies) and are a very important milestone in the history of Yoga. The book is a set of 195 aphorisms (sutras), which are short, terse phrases designed to be easy to memorize. Though brief, the Yoga Sutras are an enormously influential work that is just as relevant for yoga philosophy and practice today as it was when it was written.

The exact age of YSP is not known (some claim them to be about 5000 years old). However, they have been passed on through the ages orally, in the true teacher-student tradition, from generation to generation. They have been available in the print form only after the advent of the printing press. Because the sutras themselves are short, almost cryptic sentences, they are not easy to understand without the help of an expert commentator. One of the earliest, and considered to be the most authentic, commentaries was provided by Vyaasa. Most of the currently available commentaries, in various languages, owe much for their inspiration to the work by Vyaasa. In recent times, some authors have provided their commentaries based on a more modern and scientific approach.

In an effort to understand the underlying philosophy of the YSP, we started a Yoga Sutra Study Group in August, 2007. The SG meets on the second and fourth Saturday of each month. In the first go-round, we discussed the English translation of each sutra by various commentators (Taimni, Sw. Satchidananda, Sw. Vivekananda, Sw. Prabhavananda, Sw. Satyananda, Sw. Veda Bharati, Aranya, Karambelkar, Dvivedi, Rama Prasada, Jagannath Carrera, Vyaas Houston, Barbara Miller Stoler, and Georg Feurstein) and tried to understand the sutra by ourselves without referring to the detailed commentary by any of the authors.

At the completion of that round, which took a little over one year, we decided to continue with the discussion sessions and start from the beginning by studying the commentary by two authors in detail. We picked one author from the classical school, based on the commentary by Vyasa and one with a more modern, scientific, approach. For the former, we picked the commentary by Hariharananda Aranya and for the latter, Taimni. A summary of the discussions at these sessions is [available here](#).

While going through the translations by different authors we observed that no two translations were identical. In fact, each one presented a different interpretation, sometimes representing even opposing views. In order to capture the variance in each interpretation, we decided to present in a single place translations by many of the authors that we studied in the first round. This project is a brain-child of Lea's far-sightedness ([Lea Peace](#)). [Dean Verhoeven](#) and [Subhash Mittal](#) collaborated with Lea to come up with what is presented on these pages here. In this compilation, we have used the following commentaries as our source material:

- Patanjali, with commentaries by Vyaasa, trans. with commentaries from Sanskrit into Bengali by Hariharananda Aranya (1882), trans. into English by P.N. Mukerji (1963). "Yoga Sutras Of Patanjali". State University of New York Press, Albany. 1983.
- Patanjali, trans. I.K. Taimni, "The Science Of Yoga". Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, IL. 1961, 1981.
- Patanjali, trans. Vyaas Houston, "The Yoga Sutra Workbook; The Certainty of Freedom". American Sanskrit Institute, Warwick, NY. 1995.
- Patanjali, trans. Barbara Miller Stoler, The Yoga Sutras Attributed to Patanjali; "Yoga – Discipline of Freedom". University of California Press, Berkely, 1996.
- Patanjali, trans. Swami Satchidananda, "The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali". Integral Yoga Pub., Yogaville. 200
- Patanjali, trans. Swami Vivekananda, "Raja Yoga or Conquering the Internal Nature", Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta, India 1982
- Patanjali, trans. Swami Prabhavananda, "Patanjali Yoga Sutras", Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, India

Please click on the appropriate link on the left sidebar menu to visit a particular section of YSP.

In addition to the translation in English, we are also providing the original text in the Devanagari script (the script of the Sanskrit language), English transliteration as well as an audio rendition of each sutra. We look forward to your comments and feedback.

The complete set of audio recordings of all the sutras in a multi-track player is available [here](#)