

SACRED TEXTS

The Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali, Sūtra by Sūtra

*All 195 sūtras in Devanāgarī and IAST, word by word, with an original translation
and practical commentary*



योगसूत्र

yogasūtra

YOGIDE

Free sample

For the personal use of the buyer; sharing or reselling is not allowed. This book informs and does not replace a qualified

Contents

Before you begin	4
Which Sanskrit text we use	4
How to pronounce what you read	4
How to use this book	5
Chapter I. Patañjali and his text	6
Who was Patañjali?	6
When was the text written?	6
What is a sūtra?	6
The great commentaries	6
The four chapters	7
Is this a book about postures?	7

teacher or medical advice. Questions: administration@lacangel.fr

Before you begin

You are holding the oldest systematic treatise on yoga of the Brahmanical tradition that has come down to us. In 195 short sentences, Patañjali sets out what yoga is, why we suffer, how the mind works, what practice changes and where it leads. Almost every school of yoga taught today, from the gentlest morning class to the strictest ashram in Rishikesh, refers to this text, often without having read it.

This book gives you the whole text, not a selection. Every sutra appears in four layers:

1. **Devanāgarī**, the script in which Sanskrit is usually printed in India today.
2. **IAST transliteration** (International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration), the scholarly standard that lets you pronounce each word correctly even if you do not read Devanāgarī.
3. **A word-by-word gloss**, so that you can see what each term means and how the sentence is built.
4. **A literal translation and a short, practical commentary**, which draws on the oldest commentary, the Yoga-bhāṣya attributed to Vyāsa, and suggests how the sutra can be lived.

About the translations.

Every translation and commentary in this book was written for Yogide. None of them is copied or adapted from a modern published translation. When we mention what Vyāsa, Vācaspati Miśra or Bhoja say, we summarise their Sanskrit commentaries, which are centuries old and in the public domain. Where we refer to an older English translation, it is one that is itself in the public domain (see Sources).

Which Sanskrit text we use

There is no single "official" text of the Yoga Sūtras. Manuscripts and editions differ in small points. This book follows the sutra text as edited by Kāśinātha Śāstrī Āgāṣe in the Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series, volume 47 (Pune, 1904), which prints the sūtras with the commentaries of Vyāsa, Vācaspati Miśra and Bhoja. We used the digital version prepared by Philipp A. Maas for GRETIL, the Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages (version of 31 July 2020). The Devanāgarī in this book was generated from that transliteration and checked sutra by sutra.

In this edition the four chapters (pāda) contain 51, 55, 55 and 34 sūtras: **195 in all**. You will often read that the Yoga Sūtras have 196 sūtras. The difference comes mainly from one sentence after III.21, etena śabdādy antardhānam uktam ("by this, the disappearance of sound and the rest is explained"), which some editions count as a sūtra and others print as part of Vyāsa's commentary. Where a numbering difference may confuse you when comparing with another edition, we point it out.

How to pronounce what you read

You do not need to master Sanskrit to use this book, but a few rules make a large difference:

Letter	Sounds roughly like	Example
a	the u in "but" (short)	yoga is "yo-guh", not "yo-gah"
ā, ī, ū	long a as in "father", ee as in "see", oo as in "moon"	āsana = "aa-suh-nuh"
e, o	always long, as in "they", "go"	yoga, deva
c	ch as in "church"	citta = "chit-tuh"
ś, ṣ	sh (two slightly different positions)	śauca, puruṣa
ṛ	a short vowel ri with a lightly rolled r	ṛtti = "vri-ttee"
ṭ, ḍ, ṇ	retroflex: tip of the tongue curled back	draṣṭṛ
ṁ	nasalises the preceding vowel	saṁskāra
ḥ	a light breath echoing the vowel before it	nirodhaḥ = "ni-ro-dhaha"
kh, gh, th, dh, ph, bh	aspirated: the consonant plus a puff of air (never English th)	dhyāna, bhakti
jñ	usually pronounced "gy" or "dny" in North India	jñāna = "gyaa-nuh"

The Sanskrit apostrophe (') in transliteration, and the sign ॥ (avagraha) in Devanāgarī, mark an initial a that has merged into the previous word. It is not pronounced.

How to use this book

- **As a study text.** Read one sutra a day, aloud, in Sanskrit and in translation. Read the word-by-word gloss slowly. Then read the commentary and close the book. Take the sutra with you into the day. At that pace, the whole text takes about seven months.
- **As a reference.** The glossary at the end lists the key terms with the sutras where they first appear. If you meet saṁskāra or īśvara in a class or another book, you can find its place in Patañjali's system in a minute.
- **As a practice companion.** Chapter 7 offers a progressive twelve-week plan that combines study, ethics, posture, breath and meditation, entirely based on the sutras.

A word of care.

The Yoga Sutras mention breath retention, long sitting and intense concentration. This book suggests only gentle practices. If you have a heart condition, high or low blood pressure, glaucoma, epilepsy, a psychiatric condition, or if you are pregnant, consult your doctor before practising breath retention or long meditation, and learn any advanced technique from a qualified teacher.

Chapter 1. Patañjali and his text

Who was Patañjali?

We know very little about him. Indian tradition sometimes identifies the author of the Yoga Sutras with the grammarian Patañjali, who wrote the Mahābhāṣya, a great commentary on Pāṇini's grammar, around the second century BCE, and sometimes also with an author on medicine. A well-known invocation recited in many schools today (yogena cittasya padena vācāṃ...) honours a single Patañjali who purified the mind through yoga, speech through grammar and the body through medicine. Most historians consider these to be different people who shared a name, and that the identification grew later.

In devotional tradition, Patañjali is an incarnation of Ādiśeṣa (also called Ananta), the serpent of infinity on whom Viṣṇu rests. This is why statues show him with a human upper body and a serpent's coils below, under a hood of serpent heads. You may meet this image in ashrams in Rishikesh and elsewhere.

When was the text written?

Scholars do not agree on a single date. Estimates have ranged from the centuries before the common era to around 400 CE. An influential line of research, led by the Indologist Philipp A. Maas, argues that the sutras and the bhāṣya (the commentary attributed to Vyāsa) were composed together as one work, the Pātañjalayogaśāstra, probably between about 325 and 425 CE. In this view, "Vyāsa" may be a traditional name rather than a separate later author. Other scholars keep the traditional distinction between an older sutra text and a later commentary. This book does not need to settle the question: we present the sutras with reference to the commentary that has accompanied them for at least fifteen centuries.

What is a sūtra?

The word sūtra means "thread". A sutra text is a chain of very short statements, designed to be memorised and explained by a teacher. Many sutras have no verb; some are only two or three words long. They are deliberately compressed, like notes for a lecture, which is why commentaries have always been part of their study. Reading a sutra alone is like reading the chapter headings of a book: you see the shape, not yet the content. The word-by-word gloss and commentary are there to fill in what a teacher would say.

The great commentaries

Commentary	Author (as traditionally given)	Approximate date	What it adds
Yoga-bhāṣya	Vyāsa	c. 4th–5th century CE (see above)	The foundational explanation; almost all later readings depend on it
Tattva-vaiśārādī	Vācaspati Miśra	9th–10th century	A sub-commentary explaining Vyāsa line by line

Commentary	Author (as traditionally given)	Approximate date	What it adds
Rāja-mārtaṇḍa	King Bhoja of Dhārā	11th century	An independent, more concise commentary on the sutras
Yoga-vārttika	Vijñānabhikṣu	16th century	A detailed sub-commentary that reads Yoga closer to Vedānta

In this book, "Vyāsa says" means that we are summarising the Yoga-bhāṣya in our own words.

The four chapters

The text is divided into four pāda (literally "feet", quarters):

- **Samādhi-pāda** (51 sutras) defines yoga, maps the mind, gives the two great means (practice and non-attachment), introduces Īśvara and Om, lists the obstacles and their remedies, and describes the stages of absorption.
- **Sādhana-pāda** (55 sutras) is the most practical chapter: the yoga of action, the five afflictions, karma, the analysis of suffering and its cure, and the first five of the eight limbs (ethics, posture, breath, sense withdrawal).
- **Vibhūti-pāda** (55 sutras) describes the three inner limbs (concentration, meditation, absorption), the theory of transformation, and the extraordinary attainments, before warning that they are obstacles.
- **Kaivalya-pāda** (34 sutras) is the most philosophical: it discusses the sources of powers, karma and latent tendencies, the reality of objects, why the mind is not the self, and describes final freedom.

Is this a book about postures?

No, and this surprises many people. Only three sutras (II.46–48) speak about āsana, and they describe a stable, comfortable seat for meditation. The many postures taught in classes today come mostly from the later Haṭha yoga tradition (from about the eleventh century onwards: texts such as the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā) and from twentieth-century developments. This does not make modern posture practice less valuable. It means that when you read Patañjali, you meet a different and older question: how to free awareness from the agitation of the mind.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already help your practice, and that they show how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, texts quoted with their source, nothing invented.

The full book has 75 pages.

Get it here: <https://yogide.com/>

One-time payment, instant PDF.