



FADING INTO DEATH THROUGH PĀTAÑJALAYOGA: ON THE APPARENT DEAD-LIKE STATE OF THE YOGA PRACTITIONER ABSORBED INTO CONTENTLESS SAMĀDHI

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Abstract

This article was inspired by a reading of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's commentary, *Pātañjalayogasūtravṛtti* (PYV), on *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* 1.18. In explaining contentless absorption (*asamprajñātasamādhi*), Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa depicts the yoga practitioner as being “like a cadaver” (*mṛtavat*). The article investigates the use of metaphors of death in the *Pātañjalayoga* commentarial literature and aims to make sense of them in the context of *asamprajñātasamādhi*. This literature indicates that the yoga practitioner becomes deeply absorbed in contentless *samādhi* through the practice of cessation (*nirodha*), namely the progressive shutting down of psycho-physical drives, up to the point of their total annihilation. Thus, one might say that the practitioner attains a quasi-death-like condition. Once the practitioner has reached this advanced phase of absorption, metaphors of death are used to depict his condition. This raises the question of how these metaphors relate to the practice of yoga. I argue that these expressions were intended to convey the stillness of the yoga practitioner's mind and body, once he or she has reached *asamprajñātasamādhi*, which makes the yoga adept fit either for liberation-in-life (*jīvanmukti*) or at the time of death (*videhamukti*).

KEYWORDS

Pātañjalayoga, death, death-like state, yogic death, *mṛta*, *mṛtakavat*, *mṛtavat*, *nirodha*, *samādhi*, *samprajñātasamādhi*, *asamprajñātasamādhi*.



Preliminary Remarks

Nowadays, at least among modern, global urbanites, yoga is mainly associated with ideas and practices that enhance mindfulness and healthy bodies and lifestyles. However, early traditions of South Asian yoga were connected with an ascetic lifestyle and world-view that is very different from modern concerns. The historical goal of yoga was not particularly to have a mindful and healthy life, but rather to attain ultimate liberation (*mokṣa*) from the ongoing cycle of *saṃsāra*. Therefore, in several yoga texts (Gerety 2021; Jonker 2021; Sanderson 2004; Vasudeva 2004) one can find instructions on practices enabling an advanced yoga practitioner to voluntarily abandon his life and to never return. Seen from this perspective, in some early yoga traditions yoga was not primarily about the art of living but especially about the art of abandoning the mind and body, if not the art of dying.

Although there have been many detailed commentaries published on the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*,¹ many commentators do not provide specific textual references to the associations between death and *samādhi* found in this corpus and its commentaries. Grinshpon (2002), for example, associates Pātañjalayoga with a context of emptiness and the cessation of psycho-physical activities. While usefully exploring this and other important aspects of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*,² Grinshpon's work, in his *Silence Unheard: Deathly Otherness in Pātañjala-Yoga*, focuses mainly on the PYŚ and he fails to detail textual occurrences of terms in the commentarial literature such as *mṛta* and *mṛtakavat*, which refer specifically to death. These terms are explored in this article. From the

¹ Regarding terminological references in this article, YS/YB/PYŚ refers to specific textual portions of the so-called *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*: YS=*Yogasūtras*; YB=*Yogabhāṣya*; PYŚ=*Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. Therefore, when mentioning a *sūtra*, it will be referred to as YS; when the *bhāṣya*, as YB; and when both *sūtras* and *bhāṣya*, as PYŚ. According to Maas (2020a: 5) Patañjali's work can be dated to around 400 CE. In line with Maas (2013: 58; 2006: xv, xx) and Bronkhorst (1991: 212; 1985: 194, 203), in this article the text of PYŚ is taken as a single and unified whole work edited by a single person, probably named Patañjali, who arranged the *sūtras* (some of which could be older, while others are his own compositions) and provided them with an explanation (Maas 2013: 64). As for other assessments of PYŚ authorship, see Maas (2013: 64–5). Moreover, in this article, the terms Pātañjalayoga, *Pātañjalayogadarśana*, *yogadarśana*, *yogaśāstra* of Patañjali, or simply *yogaśāstra*, all refer to the yoga of Patañjali as a theoretical and prescriptive system of philosophy. The denominations are not to be confused with *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*, the title of the root text comprising both the *sūtras* and the *bhāṣya*.

² Grinshpon (2002: 6) summarises his understanding of the *Yogasūtra* in terms of three main motifs: a) “Yoga is essential otherness,” which implies “[T]he creation of a yogic universe based on difficult and prolonged observances and practices culminating in actual sensory renunciation”; b) “The otherness of Yoga is expressed in terms of paranormal experiences (*siddhi*)”; and c) “The scholarly tradition underestimates the significance of yogic otherness. Even the classical scholars (Vyāsa, Vācaspati-miśra, Vijñānabhikṣu, King

analysis of the expression *mṛtakavat* occurring in Vijñānabhikṣu's *Yogavārttika*, and *mṛtavat* in Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's *Pātañjalayogasūtravṛtti*, I aim to further contribute to the understanding of the imagery of death connected to yoga, making references not only to the cultural background of the *Pātañjalayogadarśana*, but also to Abhidharma Buddhism, the Pāśūpatas, and *Haṭhayoga* generally.³

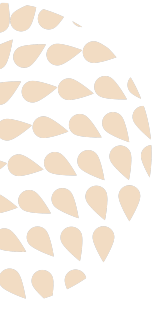
In this article, I suggest that there is an implicit awareness among Pātañjalayoga adherents that a death-like state constitutes the advanced practice of this tradition of yoga, which entails the stillness (*niścalatva*) of *asamprajñātasamādhi*, wherein, in the afterlife of yogic absorption, the Self (*puruṣa*) is freed from the empirical self (*prakṛti/citta*).⁴ In *asamprajñātasamādhi*, once psycho-physical functions are put to rest, the yoga practitioner's mind and body have no more tasks to accomplish. His body resembles that of a cadaver (*mṛtavat/mṛtakavat*). Finally, the Self can abide in its own nature (YS I. 3: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam*). This essentially entails a different, yogic conception of life and death. The aim is to free the true Self (*puruṣa*) from being wrongly entangled in its empirical and illusory counterpart (*prakṛti*), namely the phenomenal self. Thus,

Bhoja) exemplify this gap between the commentator and yogic silence." For reviews of Grinshpon (2002), see Carpenter (2003: 218–20) and Williamson (2004: 226–27).

³ This article deals mainly with the Sanskrit literature on the *yogadarśana* of Patañjali. However, it should be noted that metaphors of death occur abundantly in both early and later texts on *haṭhayoga*: see, for example, HP IV.107, and the use of *mṛtavat* in the *Amanaska* (11th–12th cent. CE), *Yogabīja* (14th cent. CE), and *Nādabindūpaniṣad* (first half of the 18th cent. CE); *śavavat* (like a dead body) in the *Dattātreya-yogaśāstra* (12th–13th cent. CE), *Gheraṇḍasamhitā* (18th cent. CE), and *Yogacintāmaṇi* (16th cent. CE) (text chronology is based on Birch 2018: 6–10). The use of other metaphors could be included, such as: *mṛtyu* (death), *maraṇa* (the act of dying), *mṛyate* (he dies), *kāṣṭhavat* (like a log of wood), and *stambhavat* (like a pillar). I am grateful to Jason Birch for pointing out references in these *haṭhayoga* sources. On the relation between yoga and death in the early Śaiva tradition of the Pāśūpatas, see Jonker (2021).

⁴ The polarity of *puruṣa/prakṛti*, a fundamental principle of Sāṅkya philosophy, in which Pātañjalayoga is entwined, represents an ontological dualism, which structures the world. For a philosophical and descriptive account of Pātañjalayoga dualism, see Larson and Bhattacharya (2008: 72–73; 85–91) and Larson (2013: 183–221). Larson defines this particular form of dualism as "eccentric dualism." On the dualism in yoga, see also Jakubczak (2008) and Schweizer (1993). Although different forms of dualism characterise the history of South Asian philosophy, these studies focus on how the PYŚ accepts a specific, non-Cartesian kind of dualism, according to which not only physical but also mental phenomena are regarded as having a material constitution. The term *citta* (mind) as well as the nominal compound *cittavṛtti* (mental states/events/functions), include a wide variety of events ranging from mental to material ones. In this sense, both mind and brain fall under the same category, providing an alternative to Cartesian dualism, which represents a well-known paradigm within the history of European philosophy. Physical and intellectual phenomena are described and inscribed in the paradigm of *prakṛti*, while *puruṣa* (the Self) is essentially distinct, having nothing in the way of content that is a feature of the world or of one's bodily or mental constitution.





the yogic path is a way to prepare oneself for the final release from the body. Considering this context, I argue that through the metaphor of death (*mṛtavat/mṛtakavat*), the Pātañjalayoga commentators, Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, are ultimately concerned with evoking a scenario of the psycho-physical stillness of *asamprajñātasamādhi*. On a different level of textual interpretation, these metaphors convey a reference to the “yogic death,” which refers to an advanced yogi deciding to abandon his own life by deliberately inducing death by means of yoga techniques at the end of his life.

In the following section of this article, two passages are examined: one is from an influential commentary on the PYŚ, namely Vijñānabhikṣu’s *Yogavārttika* (YV), and the other is from Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa’s *Pātañjalayogasūtravṛtti* (PYV). Vijñānabhikṣu dates from between around 1450 and 1550 CE, while Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa lived between around 1670 to 1750 CE. Commenting on YBh/YS I.18, both Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa describe the yoga practitioner as being deeply absorbed in *asamprajñātasamādhi* and “remaining like a cadaver.” The expressions used are *mṛtavat* in the PYV, and *mṛtakavat* in the YV. These passages comment on the textual portion of YBh/YS I.18 where *asamprajñātasamādhi* is defined. To my current knowledge, the specific terms *mṛtavat/mṛtakavat* do not occur in the PYŚ nor within its other commentaries besides the YV and the PYV. In order to make sense of these expressions, there will be consideration of other texts connected with the practice of yoga where the exact or similar expressions occur.

Discussing the effects and outcomes of the advanced phase of yogic practice is not at all easy. Rather, it is a highly complex matter due to the verbal idiosyncrasy involved in describing the ineffable experiences ensuing from the achievement of extraordinary mental states.⁵ The advanced phase of yogic practices, namely the contentless meditative absorption or *asamprajñātasamādhi*, is achieved by progressively regulating mental and bodily functions, involving a series of psycho-physical inhibitions. In the Pātañjalayoga textual corpus, the description of this process conveys the sense of the absence and cessation of mental and physical states. Such experiences, being of a

⁵ See Matilal (2002: 3–37) for a comprehensive treatment of mysticism and ineffability in South Asian culture, philosophy, and religion. On the theme of mysticism and its relation to language and logic, see also Russell (1970), in relation to ancient Greece thinkers and modern European philosophers, and Staal (1975; 1979) for Asian and South Asian cultures. Staal explains how so-called mystical experiences go beyond language, and that to recount them in ordinary language faces difficulties in adequately describing them. He presents a parallel with the artificial languages of physics, music, ritual, linguistics and logic. All these disciplines are in need of expressive vehicles capable of communicating their relative objects of study or scientific facts and relationships, which go beyond ordinary language. In all these cases, ordinary language

mystical sort, are achieved through a set of beliefs and practices which lead the practitioner beyond his body and mind, through absorption into the *puruṣa*; they are hard to communicate and to prove empirically. In this regard, the actual performance of the above-mentioned cessative activity, termed as *nirodha*, is fundamental to yoga practice, particularly in the context of the PYŚ. The practice of *nirodha* consists of the progressive achievement of increasingly refined and subtle states of consciousness, where the mind and body of practitioners are reduced to their minimal functions. Once these are completely absent, the practitioner, being deeply absorbed into *asamprajñātasamādhi*, appears, to someone observing him, as if he were dead; he resembles a cadaver.

The PYŚ explains that it is important to detach oneself from worldly affairs in order to achieve contentless absorption. YS II.15 states: *pariṇāmatāpasamskāraduḥkhair guṇavṛttivirodhāc ca duḥkham eva sarvaṃ vivekinaḥ*.⁶ Patañjali claims that for the yogin whose mind discriminates, everything is sorrow, due to the conflict of the *guṇas*, and the sorrow caused by the mental impressions, austerities and the transformations of the *prakṛti*. This “dark” scenario is also connected to the cessative practice (*nirodha*) of the progressive absorption of any mind-state, and the relative conceptualisation in terms of *vivekakhyaṭi*, namely, the “knowledge of the difference,” which refers to the ontological difference between the Self and *prakṛti* in meditative concentration.⁷

Vijñānabhikṣu uses an evocative image, namely *unmūlaka* (YV\PYŚ 1.18, cfr YV 1932: 56, 29), to describe the annihilation of mental impressions (*samskāra*). *Unmūlaka* denotes the “pulling up by the roots” of mental impressions, which comprise the apparent objectiveness of *prakṛti*. The act of renouncing the apparent world of *prakṛti* provokes internal resistance. This is because the means for uprooting *prakṛti* are contained within *prakṛti* itself: among the impressions of *prakṛti*, which need to be uprooted and eradicated, there is also, paradoxically, the sense of there being a “person” who is doing the uprooting and eradicating, the impressions of which also need to be eradicated.

can create only shorthand descriptions and approximations. Even though those engaged in mystic experiences may depict experiences in ordinary language, they refer to non-ordinary states of mind that are beyond language. According to Staal (1979: 20; 1996: 279–93, 433–41), mystical experiences precede the origin of language in the course of biological evolution, similarly to both music and ritual.

⁶ Cf. YS II.15 (YS 1919: 74, 4–5): “Because of the sorrows due to the [continuous] transformation of matter, as well as anguish and latent impressions [in the mind], and [also] because of the conflicting movements of the *guṇas*, everything is just sorrow for one who discriminates.”

⁷ Cf. YBh/YS II.26 (YBh 1919: 97, 1): *sattvapuruṣānyatāpratyayo vivekakhyaṭiḥ*.





Prakṛti can be broadly understood as referring to existence in the world. The practitioner immersed within *prakṛti* needs to completely detach himself from *prakṛti* by inhibiting his psycho-physical states, to let him abide in the *puruṣa*. In the PYŚ this process is also described as *pratīprasava*,⁸ a process in which the yoga practitioner, voiding the mind of its contents and functions, allows all phenomena to become reabsorbed (*pratīprasava*) in *prakṛti*. Only in this way does the aspirant yogin reach the ultimate destination of “isolated perception” (*dṛṣeḥ kaivalyam*), as stated in YS II.25.⁹

PYŚ II.3 defines one of the *kleśas* (sorrows/afflictions) affecting the yoga practitioner.¹⁰ It concerns the idea of “clinging to life” (*abhiniveśa*), or the desire to be alive.¹¹ *Abhiniveśa* also manifests as “anxiety at death” (*maraṇatrāsa*), and the “pain connected with death” (*maraṇaduḥkha*), which is caused by the experiences of death in past lives.¹² Considering that the yogin deeply absorbed in *asamprajñātasamādhi* has put to rest all of his mental and physical functions, he has also mastered the fear and anxiety connected with death.

⁸ The concept *pratīprasava* refers to the flowing back of the externalized and physical *guṇas* into unmanifest *prakṛti*, cf. YS IV.34 (YS 1919: 207, 2–3): *puruṣārthasūnyānāṃ guṇānāṃ pratīprasavaḥ kaivalyaṃ svarūpapratīṣṭhā vā citiśaktir iti*: “The process of returning to the original state [of *prakṛti*] and its constituents (*guṇas*), once void [of acting] for the Self’s purpose, is referred to as the contentless of seeing (*kaivalyam*), or else as the abiding of the consciousness in its own essence.” The standard English translation for the neuter term *kaivalya* is “isolation.” Here, I understand it as *taddṛṣeḥ kaivalyam* on the basis of YS II.25). Henceforth, the rationale behind *kaivalyam*’s semantic shift from “isolation” to “contentlessness of that seeing” detached from the *guṇas*, is that the Self is isolated, and rests in itself because it sees no object. On *pratīprasava*, see also YBh/YS II.2, 10, 27; III.50.

⁹ Cf. YS II.25 (YS 1919: 96, 5–6): *tadabhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ taddṛṣeḥ kaivalyam*: “Because of the absence of [wrongly directed knowledge], the correlation [between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*] is [also] absent. [This is] the removal [of what is] the contentlessness of that seeing of the seer (*puruṣa*).”

¹⁰ The *kleśas* are five in number (ignorance, ego/one’s self, excitement/passion, aversion, will to live), listed in YS II.3: *avidyāsmītārāgadveṣābhiniveśāḥ kleśāḥ*; see also YBh/YS I.8), and singularly defined in PYŚ II.5–9.

¹¹ Cf. PYŚ II.9 (YS 1919: 65, 6): *svarasavāhī viduṣo ’pi tathā rūḍho ’bhiniveśaḥ*: “The will to live is sustained by a natural instinct and is strong even in the wise.” Cf. also YBh/YS II.9 (YBh 1919: 65, 7): *sarvasya prāṇina iyam ātmāśīr nityā bhavati mā na bhūvaṃ bhūyāsam iti*: “Every living being has the desire for eternal life, stated as: ‘May I not cease to live! May I live.’”

¹² Cf. YBh/YS II.9 (YBh 1919: 65, 8): *sa cāyam abhiniveśaḥ kleśaḥ svarasavāhī kṛmer api jātamātrasya pratyakṣānumānāgamair asaṃbhāvito maraṇatrāsa ucchedadṛṣṭyātmakaḥ pūrvajanmānubhūtaṃ maraṇaduḥkham anumāpayati*: “Moreover, the affliction termed *abhiniveśa* is a natural instinct. It is even in a new-born worm. The anxiety about death, which is essentially regarded as extinction [of life], is not experienced through perception, inference or verbal testimony. It enables one to infer that the pain of death has been experienced in a previous life.”

The concepts of *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti* provide insight into the destiny of the advanced yoga practitioner, who has attained the final goal of *samādhi*. Although the PYŚ does not contain either of these two terms, later commentators nevertheless make use of them. Patañjali says virtually nothing about the condition of the yogin after the experience of *samādhi*, though the terms *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti* convey ideas later conceived within the context of South Asian asceticism to describe what the condition could be. *Jīvanmukti* refers to the practitioner who obtains liberation while still alive, notwithstanding the residue of *karma* yet to be burnt, which binds the subject to the world; *videhamukti* refers to the practitioner who, close to the time of death, finally and voluntarily abandons the body by means of the practice of yoga.

Vijñānabhikṣu, Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa and their Reading of Death in PYŚ I.18

In his *Yogavārttika* (YV) on PYŚ I.18 (*virāmapratyayābhyāsapūrvāḥ saṃskāraśeṣo 'nyaḥ*), Vijñānabhikṣu employs a peculiar expression: *mṛtakavat*. This is used to describe the condition of the practitioner's mind (*citta*), which, when dissolved in *asamprajñātasamādhi*, only consists of left-over mental impressions (*saṃskāraśeṣa*),¹³ due to the steady practice of *nirodha*, *paravairāgya* “superior form of detachment,” and *virāmapratyaya* “cessation-experience.” Vijñānabhikṣu uses this metaphor to describe the condition in which the mind and the body of a yoga practitioner become merged. He says that this state of *asamprajñātasamādhi*, which in the YS is called the “other” (*anya*), can be equated with death, that it is death-like (YV/PYŚ I.18: *mṛtakavat*). Here, the practitioner's mind seems as if it were dead because there are no more tasks to accomplish, and no more psycho-physical functions (*cittavṛttis*) giving shape to it.¹⁴ Using the term *mṛtakavat*, Vijñānabhikṣu comments in the YV on PYŚ I.18:

¹³ As noted by Maas (2020b: 977, fn. 57), Patañjali conceives the term *saṃskāra* (mental impression) as a quasi-synonym with *vāsanā*, and vice versa, even if this translation neither conveys the etymology of the term, nor the distinctly Buddhist Yogācāra connotations. This is indicated in YBh/YS II.13 (*ye saṃskārāḥ smṛtīhetavas tā vāsanās tās cānādikālīnāḥ*) and similar passages. It is interesting to note that the PYŚ mentions two varieties of *saṃskāras*, as stated in YS III.9: a) *vyutthānasamskāra*, namely the mental impressions of the emergent-state of consciousness; and b) *nirodhasamskāra*, the mental impressions of the restricted state of consciousness. Moreover, YS I.50 makes reference to a further *saṃskāra* whose function consists of restricting the *nirodhasamskāra* itself. That the *saṃskāras* are related to past activities can be read in YS III.18. Here they are the causes—in the form of subliminal traces (*vāsanās*)—of memory and afflictions, and also the causes of the fruition (*vipāka*) of right or wrong actions (*dvaye khalv amī saṃskārāḥ smṛtikleśahetavo vāsanārūpā vipākahetavo dharmādharmarūpāḥ*).

¹⁴ Cf. YV/PYŚ I.18 (YV 1935: 55, 34): *cittaṃ...vṛttisārūpyakāryakaraṇād mṛtakavad bhavati iti*.





*kr̥tavairāgyābhyāsaṃ cittam nirāmbanaṃ nirviṣayam abhāvaprāptim iva vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇād mṛtakavad bhavati ity, eṣo 'vasthāviśeṣa ityāder ayam arthaḥ nirbīja iti. saṃskāradvārā janmabījaṃ jñānakarma tacchūnyāvasthety arthaḥ. saṃskārākhyasaṃsārabījonmūlaka iti vārthaḥ.*¹⁵

The mind resulting from the practice of [higher] detachment loses its meditative support, content, [and] appears as if non-existent, just as if cadaverous, because of the absence of action [giving rise] to effects in the form of mental activity. [In the passage of the *Yogabhāṣya*] beginning with *iti*, it is said that this is a peculiar condition. This is called the seedless *samādhi* (*nirbīja*). By means of the mental impressions (*samskāras*), knowledge and action, the seed of life, [arise]. The meaning of [seedless *samādhi*] is a state void of those. Alternatively, it can also mean the uprooting of the seed of *saṃsāra* known as subliminal drives.

The expression *mṛtakavat* used here is somewhat curious. It appears to imply both bodily stillness and austerity. In the entire textual corpus of the *Yogasāstra* of Patañjali there are no occurrences of qualifications implying the semiotic space of death used to refer to *asamprajātasamādhi*. Within such a semiotic space, what sort of information and imaginary is realised? I argue that the image of death in the YV and PYV conveys the stillness of *asamprajñātasamādhi* where the psycho-physical inhibition achieved through *nirodha* is implied. This stillness is expressed by Vijñānabhikṣu's formula *vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇād*, which refers to the absence of that which causes effects, such as psycho-physical activities (*cittavṛtti*). Neither the PYŚ, nor other commentaries on it, besides the YV, describe the practitioner absorbed in deep *samādhi* as if cadaverous or dead. There is only one other instance in the *Yogasāstra* that imitates Vijñānabhikṣu's use of the term, which is chronologically posterior to him. This use of the term is represented in a late commentary on the PYŚ entitled *Pātañjalayogasūtravṛtti* (PYV) by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa. He was a prolific author, active between the middle of the 17th and the 18th centuries CE, well known for his remarkable works on *vyākaraṇa*.

To Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa are attributed two commentaries on the PYŚ, namely the PYV and an abridged form of it (*Laghuvṛtti*). Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa followed the example of his yogic predecessor Vijñānabhikṣu, who wrote the YV and a condensed form of it, entitled *Yogasārasaṃgraha*.¹⁶ Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, about two centuries after the time of Vijñānabhikṣu,

¹⁵ Cf. YV/PYŚ I.18 (YV 1935: 56, 27–29).

¹⁶ See Jha (1894) and the reviewed edition by Kumar (1995).

closely follows the wording and the ideas contained in the YV.¹⁷ The PYV is an example of where the author reuses the wording of another text, in this case from the YV.¹⁸

PYŚ I.18	Vijñānabhikṣu YV/PYŚ I.18	Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa PYV/PYŚ I.18
<p><u>Yogasūtra</u></p> <p><i>virāmapratyayābhyāsa-pūrvah saṃskāraśeṣo 'nyah</i></p>	<p>- <i>kṛtavairāgyābhyāsa-cittaṃ nirālambanaṃ nirviṣayam abhāvaprāptim iva vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇād mrtakavad bhavati ity.</i></p>	<p>- <i>evaṃ hi kṛtavairāgyābhyāsa-cittaṃ nirviṣayaṃ vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇād abhāvaprāptam iva mrtavad bhavati.</i></p>
<p><u>Yogabhāṣya</u></p> <p><i>tadabhyāsapūrvakaṃ hi cittaṃ nirālambanam abhāvaprāptam iva bhavati ity eṣa nirbījah samādhir asamprajñātaḥ.</i></p>	<p>- <i>nirbīja iti saṃskāradvārā janmabījaṃ jñānakarma tacchūnyāvastha ity arthaḥ.</i></p> <p>- <i>saṃskārākhyasaṃsāra-bījonmūlaka iti vārthaḥ.</i></p>	<p>- <i>ata eṣo 'samprajñāto janmabījakarmaśūnyāvastha ity ucyate.</i></p>

Turning now to Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's PYV commentary on PYŚ I.18, the resemblance with Vijñānabhikṣu's wording is striking. Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, however, uses the form *mṛtavat* instead of Vijñānabhikṣu's *mṛtakavat* to depict the advanced yoga practitioner in *asamprajñātasamādhī*:

¹⁷ Currently, there are no specific or systematic studies comparing the works of both these authors, who comment on *Pātañjalayoga*. In my PhD thesis, I collected and reported on comparisons between the wording of both texts, but the study was limited to the first *pāda* of the PYŚ. Moreover, studies analysing Vijñānabhikṣu's relevant contribution to *Pātañjalayoga* and his theistic reading of it are lacking. In his YV, Vijñānabhikṣu established a new interpretation of the PYŚ in terms of *bhedābhedavāda*, *bimbapratibimbavāda*, or *anyonyapratibimba*. The new *bhedābhedā* reading of the PYŚ is hardly comprehensible if the most important works of Vijñānabhikṣu (*Vijñānāmṛtabhāṣya*, *Sāṅkhyapṛavacanabhāṣya*, and YV) are not taken as a whole. Nicholson (2010: 41–65; 108–118), Rukmani (2007: 13–17), and White (2014: 44–48, 52) have shed some preliminary, but not systematic, light on this Vedāntic trend in the *Pātañjalayogadarśana*.

¹⁸ The “reuse” and “adaptive reuse” of philosophical material is a widespread practice in South Asian literature. See Freschi and Maas (2017).

*evam hi kṛtavairāgyābhyāsaṃ cittam nirviṣayaṃ vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇād
abhāvaprāptam iva mṛtavad bhavati. ata eṣo'samprajñāto janmabījakarma-
śūnyāvastha ity ucyate.*¹⁹

Consequently, the mind resulting from the practice of [higher] detachment becomes void of content, it seems non-existent, as if it was in a *dead-like state* because of the absence of action [giving rise] to effects in the form of psycho-physical activities. Therefore, this is said to be the contentless [*samādhi*], which is a condition void of activity causing birth in the world.

In a comparative analysis, very few changes in word order and lexicon can be detected between Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's PYV and Vijñānabhikṣu's YV, though Nāgeśa is generally more concise than Vijñānabhikṣu.²⁰

The comparative chart sketched above outlines how there are no relevant differences in the main readings of PYŚ I.18 by Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa. The chart illustrates how formal similarities or differences, and textual material coming from the YV, have been reused by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa. Expressions in bold indicate similarity in form. The expressions *mṛtakavat/mṛtavat* are underlined to mark their relevant place within this analysis. Although a few, slight differences, which do not affect the overall construal of PYŚ I.18, come to light when comparing both YV and PYV, the hermeneutic effort of both authors nevertheless coincides with the explanation of the concept of *asamprajñātasamādhi*. Already in the commentarial portion of PYŚ I.18, *asamprajñātasamādhi* is explained through a metaphor referring to *citta*, namely *abhāvaprāptam iva*, pointing to a mind-state void of any object/support in absorption (*nirvastuka/nirālambana*), in which mental activities are absent. While explaining the expression *abhāvaprāptam iva*, Vijñānabhikṣu states that it amounts to a distinct condition (*avasthāviśeṣa*). This qualifying statement does not occur in Nāgeśa's text. This expression refers to the term *tadabhyāsa*. It is a reference to the practice of a superior form of detachment (*paravairāgya*), which is the cause that leads the practitioner to

¹⁹ Cf. PYV/PYŚ I.18 (PYV 1917: 235, 11–12).

²⁰ Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa's style of composition is specifically praised in the ambit of his works on *vyākaraṇa*, and the way he makes explicit and solves the intricacies of the grammarians Pāṇini and Patañjali. Nāgeśa's principal literary activity concerns *vyākaraṇa* and, in particular, explanations of Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* and Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*. As stated by Thieme (1971: 47), Nāgeśa can be considered as the great reformer of Pāṇini interpretation, liberating the explanation of the *Aṣṭādhyāyī* from a great many artificial, interpretative tricks and, at the same time, opening up a more thorough and precise understanding of Patañjali.

abandon even the support/object on which meditative absorption was previously rooted in, namely *samprajñātasamādhi*. The term *nirālamba* refers to the mind (*citta*) resting in *asamprajñātasamādhi*, which is characterized as being void of any object, or support for meditative absorption. Grouping together the various qualifiers referring to *asamprajñātasamādhi* witnessed in the PYŚ, YV and PYV, the use of negations is striking, as for instance in the use of the terms *nirvastuka*, *nirālambana*, *nirviṣaya* and *abhāvaprāptam*. The same type of semantics qualifying *asamprajñātasamādhi* applies to another term occurring in PYŚ I.18, namely *virāmapratyaya*.²¹

The series of negations qualifying *asamprajñātasamādhi* continues with the expression *nirbija*, that is “seedless absorption.” This term primarily refers to the concentration that contains no seed, which is a form of *samādhi* devoid of any generative seed of *kleśa* and the resulting *karma*.²² The condition qualified as “without seed” is what makes *asamprajñātasamādhi* a distinct state, as indicated by Vijñānabhikṣu, because the only *saṃskāras* left have no potential to create in the yoga practitioner any desire for action or knowledge capable of creating karmic bonds in the world, or *saṃsāra*. Knowledge and

²¹ As pointed out by Maas (2009: 275), the author reads the compound *virāmapratyaya*, as a descriptive (*karmadhāraya*) compound, underlying a relation of apposition between the two terms, cf. YVi/PYŚ I.18 (1999: 225, 11): *viramaṇaṃ virāmaḥ / virāmaś ca asau pratyayaś ca virāmapratyayaḥ*. In this sense, the compound does not denote an experience having inhibition as its content, as it would have been in the case of a *bahūvr̥hi* compound, but rather an experience being described as inhibition or cessation. Therefore, the compound should also not be translated as the “experience of inhibition” as in the case of a *atpuruṣa* compound, rather, as “inhibition-experience.” The same formula of analysis of the compound *virāmapratyaya* as a *karmadhāraya*, is also followed by Bhoja in his *Rājamārtaṇḍa* (RM), cf. RM/PYŚ I.18 (RM 1919: 6, 28): *virāmaś ca asau pratyayaś ca iti virāmapratyayaḥ*. Furthermore, Bhoja continues, the practice of cessation is an interrupted modality of exclusion, or negation of any sort of mental content. Interestingly, Bhoja also claims that this cessative practice expresses the form “not this, not this,” quoting a famous *mahāvākya* from the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, cf. RM/PYŚ I.18 (RM 1919: 7, 1–2): *tatra yā kācidvṛttir ullasati tasyā neti netīti nairantaryeṇa paryudāsanaṃ virāmapratyayābhyāsaḥ*. The expression *neti neti* also occurs in *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* II.3, 6; III.9, 26; IV.2, 4, IV.23 (see Olivelle 1998: 66): *athāta ādeśo neti neti*. Interestingly, Bhoja here refers to the *paryudāsapratīṣedha* type of negation, namely the implicative negation. According to Indian grammarians, the negative particle (*nañ*) can have two meanings, *prasajyapratīṣedha* and *paryudāsapratīṣedha*. The latter is generally found when the negative particle is compounded with a noun (*abrāhmaṇaṃ ānaya*), whereas the former is generally found when it is used independently with a verbal form (e.g., *anṛtaṃ na vaktavyam*). *Prasajyapratīṣedha* is described as a case where the negative sense predominates (“in any case, one should not say an untruth”), whereas in *paryudāsapratīṣedha* the negation is not absolute, but rather qualifies something else; see Abhyankar (1986: 212–13 [sub voce *na*, 6], 213 [sub voce *nañ*]).

²² Cf. PYŚ I.51 (Maas 2006: 158–62). *Nirbija* is the state in which all traces of the seed of future *kleśa* have been eradicated. On the usage and meaning of *nirbija* within the PYŚ, see also O’Brien-Kop (2020: 6; 2017: 142–4).





action amount to the seeds that sprout into life (*janmabija*) and continuous rebirth. Even in this case, both the YV and the PYV semantically agree. The only difference consists in a stylistic preference. In Vijñānabhikṣu's wording occur two compound expressions, *janmabijaṃ* and *jñānakarma*, which do not feature the PYV. Again, and still a matter of contrasting literary tastes, YV's choice of the term *tacchūnyāvastha* directs attention towards the occurrence in the PYV of a single compound expression, namely *janmabijakarmaśūnyāvastha*.

While not amounting to a semantic shift, a notable difference between the YV and the PYV emerges at the end of the YV commentarial section on PYŚ I.18. Here, Vijñānabhikṣu's text presents an alternative interpretation of the term *nirbija*, marked by *iti vārtha*, which does not occur in the PYV. The YV states that the fact of being seedless can alternatively signify, or be expressed as, "the uprooting of the seed of *saṃsāra* known as subliminal drives" (*saṃskārākhyasaṃsārabijonmūlaka*). Once mental impressions have been purified and put to rest by means of the steady practice of *paravairāgya*, they do not have any further function. For the advanced yoga practitioner, psychic drives which still do not yet exist or are not yet manifest do not constitute any potential impediment. Although the practitioner might appear as though dead, he is now finally released and free to move towards a different mind level up to the final stage of *kaivalya*.

According to the Monier-Williams and Apte dictionaries,²³ the term *mṛtaka* as an adjective can signify: "a dead man, a corpse," or as a neuter substantive: "death, decease, impurity contracted through the death of a relation." As for the case of *mṛta*, as a past participle, and as an adjective, it has the following entries: "dead, deceased, death-like, torpid, rigid, departed, vanished (as consciousness), vain, useless, calcined, reduced (said of metals)." *Mṛta* has the following meanings as a neuter substantive: "death, grave (*caitya*), begging, food or alms obtained by begging." Both terms might be used, to some extent, as synonyms. However, the term *mṛta* seems to possess a more ample variety of contextual meanings compared to *mṛtaka*, as witnessed by the following entries: "*caitya*, namely a grave; torpid, rigid; departed and vanished as consciousness, vain, useless; calcined, reduced."

The meaning of *mṛta* as *caitya* (grave) is interesting, especially when the meaning of *mṛta* is connected to the idea of *samādhi*. As discussed by McLaughlin (2021: 8), both

²³ As on the following websites: <http://sanskritdictionary.com/?q=mRtaka&lang=sans&iencoding=hk&action=Search> and <http://sanskritdictionary.com/?q=mRta&lang=sans&iencoding=hk&action=Search>.

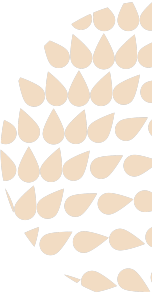
burial and cremation have a long history in South Asia, which can be traced back to Bronze Age practices from Central Asia (see Koryakova and Epimakhov 2007).

McLaughlin remarks (2021: 8) that in South Asia, when death comes to exceptional individuals— such as sages, monks, ascetics, saints or accomplished yoga practitioners—their bodies are generally buried rather than cremated; the burial site is indicated by a special marker.²⁴ Such a burial site is called a *samādhi*. The marking of such a burial site is not considered simply as a memorial. Rather, it marks a localised instantiation of sacred power radiating forth from the mortal body left behind by the realised individual (McLaughlin 2021: 16). Brahmanical textual sources, such as the *Taittirīyāranyaka* (8th–6th cent. BCE), *Baudhāyanapitṛmedhasūtra* (6th–3rd cent. BCE), *Yatidharmasamuccaya* (11th cent. CE), *Atridharmasūtras* (5th–10th cent. CE), *Śaunakadharmasūtras* (5th–10th cent. CE), and some Pāśupata's manuals, narrate the practice of taking care of realised sages' bodies (McLaughlin 2021: 13–14). This is a radical concept, considering the impurity generally associated with death in Brahmanical and Hindu traditions. Striking is the fact that behind these practices there are no purification rites performed in relation to the death and burial of an ascetic. It is believed that there is no transfer of impurity to those touching the corpse.

As for cremation ground practices, Pāśupata textual sources (see Jonker 2021: 75–76), such as the *Pāśupatasūtras* (4th–5th cent. CE), along with its commentaries, the *Pañcārthabhāṣya* (4th–5th cent. CE) and *Ratnaṭikā* (10th cent. CE), tell that in the last two stages (*avasthā*) of life a Pāśupata ascetic is supposed to live on offerings and strive towards death in a cremation ground to attain the highest goal, namely union with Rudra (*rudrasāyujya*).²⁵ To this aim, the mind has to be stilled by fully fixating it on god. To do so: “The [Pāśupata] aspirant dies, and even must die, in order to become united with Rudra, for it says: *right* at the moment of his death will the lord give him the highest goal. Death does not overcome the aspirant, nor is he unprepared for

²⁴ On burial markers, see McLaughlin (2021: 15–18). It should be noted that the *samādhi* shrine has resonances with the Buddhist *stūpa*, the Sufi *dargāh* (tomb/shrine), and the Hindu temple (*mandir*).

²⁵ Jonker (2021: 76) quotes here from *Pāśupatasūtras* vv. 32–40: “Kaunḍinya comments that the aspirant is not supposed to leave the cremation ground to acquire food because staying alive is not the highest attainment for a Pāśupata. He infers this from *Pāśupatasūtra* 5.33: ‘obtaining union with Rudra’ (*labhate rudrasāyujyam*). The union with Rudra is the highest goal to be achieved. By keeping Rudra in his mind continuously (*Pāśupatasūtra* 5.34), the last bit of *karma* is consumed, thereby allowing the aspirant to escape the endless cycle of transmigration (Hara 1999: 431). From the commentary it becomes clear that the aspirant is not there to continue to live for a very long time.” The commentary referred to by Jonker is from the *Ratnaṭikā* (Jonker 2021: 77).





death” (Jonker 2021: 78). Jonker (2021: 79) adds that, “It is plausible to understand the death of the Pāśupata ascetic as a form of a self-induced yogic death.” He concludes that, “This death can be considered yogic because of the yogic practices of meditation, stilling of the mind, breath-restraint and concentration on Rudra. It is also yogic because right at the moment of death, the Pāśupata attains yoga, namely union with Rudra and thereby *mokṣa*.”

In the Buddhist context, there are also references to a dead-like state. Generally speaking, Pali *sūtras* are more informative regarding the practices of meditation, compared to other coeval texts, notably the Upaniṣads. The eight-fold path described in Pali texts contains two practices specifically related to meditation, namely right mindfulness and right concentration. Meditation practices are also categorised, particularly in the Theravāda tradition, as *jhānas* (Sanskrit: *dhyāna*) (attainments/contemplations), which are distinguished as being either *rūpajhānas* (with form) states or *arūpajhānas* (without form) states (Potter 1996: 52–53). There are four *rūpajhānas*: (1) detachment from the external world and a consciousness of joy and ease; (2) concentration, with suppression of reasoning and investigation; (3) the passing away of joy, with the sense of ease remaining; (4) the passing away of ease also, bringing about the state of pure self-possession and equanimity.

Beyond those states are added four higher states, called formless (*arūpa*) meditations (*arūpajhāna*), which are also known as *samāpattis* (attainments). To these, a ninth state is annexed, namely “cessation of perception and feeling” (*saññavedayitanirodha*), or the “attainment of cessation” (*nirodhasamāpatti*), which constitutes an integral process in the realization of liberation. Here, however, the aim of meditative teaching is clearly depicted: a monk in his advanced state of meditation practice is anything but dead. It is implied, exactly as in the case of *Pātañjalayoga*, that the mind of the practitioner dwells in a condition where all its functions and activities are put to rest. The description (below) of this meditational state, points to the suspension of all mental events, even the most rudimentary mental activity, and the realization of *nirvāṇa*:

The monk who has attained *saññavedayitanirodha*, his bodily activities, verbal activities, and mental activities have been stopped, have subsided, but his vitality is not destroyed, his (body) heat is not allayed, and his senses purified. This, sir, is the difference between a dead thing, passed away, and that man (*Majjhima Nikāya* I. 296: see Potter 1996: 52–53).

In a discussion of Buddhist practices of meditation, Griffiths (1993: 38–41) refers to the *Samyuttanikāya* (v. 307) and the *Dighanikāya* (II.71). The context is the description of a

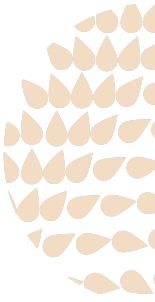
double series of meditational states called *dhyānas*, which is characterised by an increasing degree of enstasis (“standing within”), aimed at the withdrawal of the practitioner’s psycho-physical function from the external world, and at the reduction of the content of consciousness. As noted above, these are divided into a series of four *rūpa* (“with form”) states, and a series of five *arūpa* (“formless”) states, which consist of a series of four plus a fifth state. The author points to a state of meditative absorption referred to by other Buddhist texts as *nirodhasamāpatti* (“attainment of cessation”) (Griffiths 1993: 40). *Nirodhasamāpatti* denotes the progressive cessation of all mental events, and, among the various absorbed mental states, it is considered the more elevated one. It is also named “cessation of sensation and conceptualisation” and *acittaka* “mindless” (Griffiths 1993: 41). Griffiths continues:

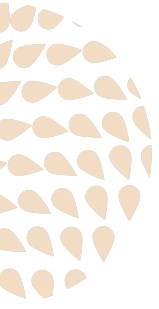
A practitioner who attains this state is perhaps most like a catatonic or a patient in deep coma: the only things that distinguish such a person from a dead person are the continuance of the autonomic functions of the nervous system, such things as minimal heartbeat, body heat, and (perhaps) respiration. Response to external stimuli is impossible, as is initiation of action. Attaining cessation in this way is the culmination, perhaps the *reduction ad absurdum* of enstatic meditational technique.²⁶

Still within the Buddhist milieu, there also exists the concept of *bhavaṅga*, which can be taken as referring to a condition of psycho-physical cessation, and thus similar to a death-like state. *Bhavaṅga* refers to the state in which the mind is said to rest, when no active consciousness process is occurring. In other words, it can be described as one’s state of mind when nothing appears to be going on, or when the mind rests in itself, such as when one is in a state of deep dreamless sleep,²⁷ and also momentarily between

²⁶ Cousins (1973: 127) explains the term *jhāna* as a practice involving the systematic induction of a specific type of “trance” state under controlled conditions, necessarily requiring a previous clarity of consciousness and a well-balanced, happy frame of mind. For Cousins, *jhāna* refers, in its higher phase—namely the fourth formless *samāpatti*—to a specific physiological phenomenon, neither in the sense of a dull stupor nor as catalepsy, in terms of suspension of consciousness. Cousins (1973: 125) claims that *jhāna* denotes a lucid trance, and although it possesses similarities with a trance state, the mind does not perceive through the five senses and the person is incapable of speech. During this higher phase of *jhāna*, all bodily activities have ceased, though the movement of breath is mentioned, and heartbeat is implied.

²⁷ In this regard, one might also include a parallel with the Vedānta discourse on deep, dreamless sleep. The Vedāntic theory of *ātman* is construed on the basis of the experience of dreamless sleep, which, being radically and qualitatively different from waking and dreaming states, is considered by the Vedāntins as a state of a temporarily purified individual *ātman*, a state of pure, substantial consciousness. They take the experience of dreamless sleep as a model experience of the *ātman*’s final liberation from the body and its internal as well as external faculties. See Fort (1985), Prasad (2000), and Sharma (2004).





each active consciousness process. In a reading of Buddhist texts such as the *Visuddhimagga* and *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*, Gethin (1994: 13–14) claims that *bhavaṅga* is: a) “understood in the texts as in most respects sharing the same properties as other types of consciousness (*citta*); *bhavaṅga* is not something different from consciousness, rather it is consciousness operating in a particular mode (*ākāra*) or consciousness performing a particular function (*kicca*)”; b) “a mental province that defines the essential character and capabilities of a given being, and that this mental province is seen as exerting some kind of influence on conscious mental states.” *Bhavaṅga* is essentially consciousness in its passive mode, and is as sophisticated and complex a kind of consciousness as any other.

Still Dead and Sleeping Bodies: *Pātañjalayogasūtra-Bhāṣyavivaraṇa* on PYŚ II.46 and IV.4

Besides the expression *mṛtavat/mṛtakavat*, used to refer to the body of the yoga practitioner who has fallen into a dead-like state, other terms are also used in *Pātañjalayoga* to refer to this state, namely *supta* (sleeping) and *śava* (corpse). In this section, two instances from the *Pātañjalayogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇa*²⁸ (YVi) will be analysed. As seen, in the context of the practice of *samādhi*, the metaphors of death can have the simple purpose of conveying the idea of the extraordinary immobility or stillness that occurs in advanced states of meditative absorption. In this regard, it might be asked how practitioners attain a deep state of contentless absorption. Concerning the practice of *āsana*, YS II.46 states that a posture (*āsana*) should be firm (*sthira*) and pleasant (*sukha*).²⁹ The description and conception of *āsana* imply the idea of stillness. In *Pātañjalayoga*, the idea of stillness is conveyed through terms such as *sthiratva*,

²⁸ Rukmani (1998) argues that it is highly improbable that (Ādi) Śaṅkarācārya wrote this text. Moreover, she places the TV chronologically prior to the YVi. However, see also the review by Harimoto (2004), who criticises the points Rukmani thinks are decisive evidence for placing the YVi after Vācaspatimiśra’s TV (10th cent. CE). Rukmani claims that terms in the YVi such as *anye/anyeṣām*, *nimitta*, *pūraka*, *recaka*, and the variant readings of YS II.7–8, refer to their use by Vācaspatimiśra. Harimoto claims that neither the *Vivaraṇa-kāra* nor Vācaspatimiśra knew the commentary on the YBh by the other, and that the YVi’s authorship seems to be still open to investigation. On the YVi’s authorship problem, see also Harimoto (1999: 36–136).

²⁹ Cf. YS II.46 (YS 1919: 110, 15): *sthirasukham āsanam*.

sthita,³⁰ *niścāla*,³¹ and *niškampa*.³² How *sūtras* II.46 and II.47 can be read has been discussed by Maas (2018).³³ It is in the context of an exposition of yoga postures that the YVi employs the expression *mṛtasuptavat*,³⁴ namely “remaining like a dead or sleeping body.” This compound glosses the term *padmāsana* occurring in YBh/YS II.46. *Mṛtasuptavat* is meant to describe the outward resemblance of the yoga practitioner performing the lotus posture. Although the practitioner’s depiction might appear similar—as the terms *mṛtasuptavat*, *mṛtavat* and *mṛtakavat* all indicate bodies like those of a cadaver—the difference is that in the former case the practitioner is simply practising *padmāsana*, while in the latter the yogin is deeply absorbed in *asamprajñātasamādhi*.

In PYŚ IV.4, the topic of the discussion focuses on how the yogin, whose successful practice has led him to the development of extraordinary powers (*siddhi*), may be able

³⁰ Cf. YVi/PYŚ II.46 (YVi 1952: 225, 15–16): *yasmin āsane sthitasya manogātrāṇām upajāyate sthīratvam, duḥkham ca yena na bhavati tad abhyasyet*: “[The practitioner] should practise a posture in which the condition of stability (*sthīratva*) in both mind and body is produced and by which no harm arises.”

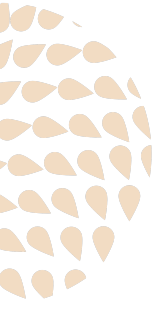
³¹ Cf. TV/PYŚ II.46 (TV 1919: 110, 26): *sthīraṃ niścālaṃ*. Also cf. YV/PYŚ II.46 (1935: 266, 29): *sthīraṃ niścālaṃ*.

³² Cf. RM/PYŚ (RM 1919: 28, 25): *tad yadā sthīraṃ niškampaṃ*.

³³ Maas proposes (2018: 57–60, Appendix I) reading II.46 and 47 as a single sentence: *sthīrasukham āsanam prayatnaśāithilyānantasamāpattibhyām*. “None of the above cited translators took into account that YS 2.46 actually is just the initial part of a sentence that extends—over a parenthesis in the *bhāṣya*-part of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*—into the following YS 2.47. This is quite surprising because the fact that the two *sūtra*-s 2.46 and 2.47 form a single sentence is clearly expressed at the beginning of the *bhāṣya*-part of PYŚ 2.47, in which Patañjali remarks that the verbal form ‘arises’ (*bhavati*) has to be supplied in this sentence.” As for the meaning of the expression *sthīrasukham*, Maas concludes: “However, it cannot be decided with certainty whether it is a determinative adjective compound in which the first member specifies the second one adverbially, as Vācaspati suggested, or whether the relationship of the two members of the compound is appositional, as it was understood by Śāṅkara in his *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* (i.e., in the most informative commentary of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*), and in Bhojarāja’s and Vijñānabhikṣu’s commentaries. Nevertheless, in view of the general superiority of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa* over the *Tattvavaiśāradī*, I would tend to accept the second-mentioned analysis of *sthīrasukha* at least provisionally. In this case, the two *sūtras* 2.46 and 2.47 can be translated in the following way: “A steady and comfortable posture (YS 2.46) [arises] from a slackening of effort or from merging meditatively into infinity (YS 2.47).”

³⁴ Cf. Maas’ edition of this passage, Maas (2018: 91, 10–12): *tatra padmāsanaṃ nāma – savyaṃ pādān upasaṃhṛtya dakṣiṇopari nidadhīta, tathāiva dakṣiṇaṃ savyasyopariṣṭāt. kaṭyurogrīvaṃ ca viṣṭabhya mṛtasuptavan nāsikāgranihitadrṣṭiḥ...* “In this context, the Lotus Posture (*padmāsana*) is like this: drawing the left foot in towards oneself, one should then place it over the right. Likewise, the right one on top of the left. Stiffening the hips, trunk, and neck, with the gaze fixed on the tip of the nose, like a dead or sleeping person...”





to create other bodies endowed with single, individuated personalities.³⁵ The yoga practitioner is capable of creating and projecting new mentally reproduced creatures endowed with consciousness, resembling those of living human beings. In the YVi commentary on PYŚ IV.4, there is another reference to death: YVi/PYŚ IV.4 (1952: 320, 23): *cittendriyābhāve ca mṛtadeśīyaḥ kāyo nirarthakaḥ syāt*. The author of the YVi states that a body deprived of a mind and its sensory-motor functions would be like a corpse not fit to accomplish any task, and practically useless (*nirarthaka*). Here, the author of YVi seems to be claiming that even though the yogin may be as if dead, through the power of a *siddhi* he can be conscious in other minds, which are manifested from "I-ness" (*asmitā*).

Asamprajñātasamādhi, Dharmameghasamādhi, Abhāva: Fading Into a State Like Death

As seen through textual references in the YV and the PYV on PYŚ I.18, the advanced yoga practitioner progresses in the attainment of *samādhi*, first through *samprajñātasamādhi*, and then *asamprajñātasamādhi*. In the PYŚ, both types of meditative absorption are described. *Samprajñātasamādhi* is cognitive concentration, which still has some objects, while *asamprajñātasamādhi* is non-cognitive and objectless. Mental and physical functions are different according to the kind of *samādhi* attained.³⁶ In *samprajñātasamādhi*, mental activity (*cittavṛtti*) becomes progressively less operative, but nevertheless persists in four aspects: *vitarka* (cogitation), *vicāra* (reflection), *ānanda* (bliss), and *asmitā* (I-ness) (PYŚ I.17).³⁷ However, in *asamprajñātasamādhi*, the mind's functions are fully arrested, and there is neither any object nor content of concentration. Both the expressions *mṛtakavat* and *mṛtavat* point to a death-like

³⁵ Cf. YS IV.4 (YS 1919: 178, 12): *nirmāṇacittāny asmitāmātrāt*; and relative commentarial section YBh/YS IV.4 (YBh 1919: 178, 13–14): *asmitāmātram cittakāraṇam upādāya nirmāṇacittāni karoti, tataḥ sacittāni bhavanti*: "Making use of nothing more than [the ego-sense form of meditation] as a cause for the mind, [the yoga practitioner] is able to create [other] minds [out of his extraordinary powers]. Therefore, [the newly created beings] are endowed with [single] minds."

³⁶ See Larson and Bhattacharya (2008: 27).

³⁷ *Samprajñātasamādhi* has four progressive levels of the mind's adherence to any sort of content or object (from sensorial to cognitive) characterising its activities. These different levels are referred to with the technical term *samāpatti*, literally "coming together/entering into relation with." Cf. YBh/YS I.41 (Maas 2006: 68, 17–19); see also PYŚ I.42–45. *Samāpatti* can be read as a reference to their individual denomination that is listed in PYŚ I.17 as: *vitarka*, *vicāra*, *ānanda* and *asmitā*. These levels stand for different layers of relation to the *guṇas* and the operations of *prakṛti*, which are controlled by the yoga practitioner applying *vairāgya* (detachment). The result is *viśayavitr̥ṣṇya* (having no thirst for objects). Cf. YS I.15: *dṛṣṭānuśravikaviśayavitr̥ṣṇasya vaśikārasamjñā vairāgyam*.

condition where mind and bodily functions are inactive. It is in contentless *samādhi*, namely *asamprajñātasamādhi*, that the death-like state is experienced.

The progressive arrest of psycho-physical functions witnessed during the levels of *samprajñātasamādhi* indicates the yoga practitioner's level of involvement with *prakṛti*; the *guṇas* become progressively less effective. In *asamprajñātasamādhi*, mental functions only consist of one's own mental impressions (*saṃskāraśeṣa*), as described in YS I.18. These mental impressions, according to Patañjali, can be represented as the remainder of mental impressions inherited from previous lives, which shape present life, triggering and prompting experiences that bind the subject to *saṃsāra*. When YS I.18 refers to *saṃskāraśeṣa*, it points to the state resulting from the *abhyāsa* (continuous practice) of *vairāgya* (dispassion) and *paravairāgya* (extreme dispassion), which are technical terms describing the overall attitude to the praxis of *nirodha*, or the cessation of mental and physical functions.³⁸ This inhibition of mental impressions required to attain *nirodha* is directed towards any *cittavṛtti* (mental event), and in particular towards any *pratyaya* (idea/concept). A *cittavṛtti* or a *pratyaya* can be caused by any sort of experience or stimulus, and results from mental content or sensori-motor input occurring in a subject. *Nirodha*, denoting both the cessative function and relative mind and body state (*niruddha*), thus marks the praxis, the aim of which is the attainment of *kaivalya* (alone-ness) through separation from phenomenal existence.

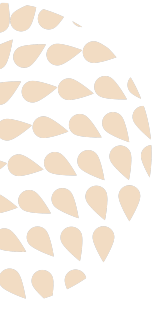
The term *nirodha*, as with many Sanskrit terms, designates both the *process* of cessation and the *state* of cessation of psycho-physical events. It is a masculine noun deriving from the verbal root *rudh-*, plus the adjunct of the preverb *ni-*. The *Dhātupāṭha* presents two basic meanings of the root *rudh-*: a) 4A. (with *anu-*) *kāme*:³⁹ “desiring/obeying,” and: b) 7U. *āvaraṇe*: “covering/opposing.”⁴⁰ It is quite apparent that the PYŚ retains the meaning b), although the idea of desire, wish or intention is also relevant, especially if the voluntary type of psycho-physical cessative practice performed by yoga practitioners is taken into account. Considering its fundamental place within the *Pātañjalayoga* system of philosophy and practice, it should be noted that the term *nirodha* is generally understood as meaning “cessation,” “restriction,” or “inhibition.” However, *nirodha* presents different levels of application. Broadly speaking, *nirodha* is

³⁸ YS I.2: *yogaś cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*. *Nirodha* can also stand for one of the stages of mind (*cittabhūmayas*) conceived in the PYŚ. This stage is referred to as *niruddha* “obstructed, shut down.” See YBh/YS I.1: *kṣiptaṃ mūḍhaṃ vikṣiptaṃ ekāgraṃ niruddhaṃ iti cittabhūmayāḥ*.

³⁹ Cf. *Dhātupāṭha* (1969: 33).

⁴⁰ Cf. *Dhātupāṭha* (1969: 40).





characterized as an ongoing process to be applied to all mental events, in which the mind's content and its objects are increasingly restricted.⁴¹ It takes place once the yoga practitioner begins to withdraw the sense-organs from the external world.⁴² Here, the yoga aspirant has to perform *pratyāhāra*, namely the withdrawal from the practitioner's body of sensorial stimuli.⁴³ On the other hand, as a state of mind rather than a process, *nirodha* occurs in the state of mind (*cittabhūmaya*) denoted as *niruddha* (restricted/shut down).⁴⁴ Along with the practice of *pratyāhāra*, the restriction of the mental occurrences is brought about by means of both *abhyāsa* and *vairāgya*.⁴⁵

The extent of the yogin's steadiness of practice and detachment determines his endurance in the advanced meditational state of *asamprajñātasamādhi*, which does not necessarily continue indefinitely; it can persist as well as fade. The scenario described in PYŚ I.18 refers to the liminal condition that takes place when the yoga practitioner attains the stage beyond *samprajñātasamādhi*, which is also referred to as

⁴¹ It should be noted that the distinction presented here between levels of *nirodha* is hypothetical; it is a tentative interpretation of the texts. This distinction does not occur in the literature of *yogadarśana*.

⁴² YBh/YS II.54 (YBh 1919: 115, 10; 116, 1–2) contains an interesting and naturalistic simile: *yathā madhukararājam makṣikā utpatantam anūtpatanti nivīśamānam anunivīśante tathendriyāṇi cittanirodhe niruddhāni ity eṣa pratyāhārah*. “Just as when the queen bee flies up, the bees fly up after her [and] when she settles down, they settle down after her; so, also when the mind is restricted, the organs are restricted. This is the withdrawal of the sense-organs.” Vācaspatimiśra reads the compound *svaviśayāsamprayoge* as a locative of motive (*nimittasaptamī*), cf. TV/PYŚ II.54 (TV 1919: 115, 23–24): *svaviśayāsamprayogasya sādharmaṇasya dharmasya cittānukāranimittatvaṃ saptamyā darśayati sveti*. According to Vācaspatimiśra, the mind imitates the sense-organs because both the mind (*citta*) and the sense-organs share the common characteristic of being detached from their objects.

⁴³ That *pratyāhāra* may mark the first practical step of *nirodha* is a matter of textual interpretation. *Pratyāhāra* is listed in YS II.29 as the fifth of the eight *aṅgas* and is explained by way of analogy in YS II.54 and in the commentary. It is defined as the sense-organs' imitation of the mind's form, when they have no contact with their own object, cf. YS II.29 (YS 1919: 101, 7–8): *yamaniyamāsanaprāṇāyāmapratyāhāradhāraṇādhyānasamādhayo 'ṣṭāv aṅgāni*; and YS II.54 (YS 1919: 115, 5–6): *svaviśayāsamprayoge cittasvarūpānukāra ivendriyāṇaṃ pratyāhārah*. Moreover, *pratyāhāra* can be intended as the first phase of the overall process of *nirodha* because, still following YBh/YS II.54, it begins with the mind's restriction (*citta-nirodhe*). Vācaspatimiśra reads the compound *svaviśayāsamprayoge* as a locative of motive (*nimittasaptamī*), cf. TV/PYŚ II.54 (TV 1919: 115, 23–24): *svaviśayāsamprayogasya sādharmaṇasya dharmasya cittānukāranimittatvaṃ saptamyā darśayati sveti*. Vācaspatimiśra (TV/PYŚ II.54) reads the compound *svaviśayāsamprayoge* as a locative of motive (*nimittasaptamī*); see preceding fn. above.

⁴⁴ Cf. YBh/YS I.1: *kṣiptam mūḍham vikṣiptam ekāgraṃ niruddham iti cittabhūmayah*: “The states of mental activity are: fixed, dull, distracted, one-pointed, and ceased.”

⁴⁵ Cf. YS I.12: *abhyāsavairāgyābhyāṃ tannirodhaḥ*. Here the demonstrative pronoun *tad* can be referred to the *cittavṛttis* previously discussed (cf. YS I.2).

asmitāsamāpatti. In this state, the yogin abandons his own identity, as well as the practice of object-based absorption (*sālabana/sabija*), and only *saṃskāras* (*nirbija*) that do not bear fruit persist. The state of *nirbijasamādhi* occurs when the practitioner restrains even those *saṃskāras* borne out of *ṛtaṃbharaprajñā*.⁴⁶ The term *nirbija* can be here read as an adjective referring to *asamprajñāta*.⁴⁷ In turn, *asamprajñāta* can be taken as a synonym for the interesting, poetic phrase *dharmameghasamādhi*.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Cf. YS I.51: *tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhān nirbijāḥ samādhiḥ*: “The seedless *samādhi* takes place when, due to the cessation of any mind-activity, this [*saṃskāra* born out of *prajñā/ṛtaṃbharā/nirvicāra*] is also restricted.” The main idea behind this *sūtra* concerns *ṛtaṃbharaprajñā* (YS I.48: *ṛtaṃbharā tatra prajñā*), which inhibits the production of *vyutthānasaṃskāras* (cf. YS I.50: *tajjaḥ saṃskāro ’nyasaṃskārapratibandhī*), though this does not yet properly amount to the *nirbija* state. It must be applied to the *saṃskāra* of *nirodha*, even with regard to those *saṃskāras* born from *ṛtaṃbharaprajñā*, as they can, in turn, generate a further attachment to *prajñā* itself. *Asamprajñāta* is achieved through the steady and thorough practice of *nirodha*. Here, however, an attitude of *paravairāgya* (cf. YS I.16: *tat paraṃ puruṣakhyāter guṇavairiṣṇyam*) is necessary in order to abandon the practice of *nirodha* itself and progress toward *kaivalya*, as suggested by YS III.50 (YS 1919: 138, 6–7): *tadvairāgyād api doṣabijakṣaye kaivalyam*.

⁴⁷ Cf. YBh/YS I.18: *eṣa nirbijāḥ samādhir asamprajñātaḥ*: “This *samādhi*, which is seedless, has no content to recognize.” YBh/YS I.2: *tadavasthaṃ saṃskāropagaṃ bhavati // sa nirbijāḥ samādhiḥ // na tatra kiṃcit samprajñāyata ity asamprajñātaḥ*: “This condition admits [only] *saṃskāras*. This is the seedless *samādhi*. The word *asamprajñāta* means that nothing whatsoever is cognised.” See also, YS III.8 (YS 1919: 122, 1): *tad api bahiraṅgaṃ nirbijasya*: “Even these [three, namely *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*] are considered as external supports to seedless meditation.” YBh/YS III.8 (YBh 1919: 122, 2–3): *tad apy antaraṅgaṃ sādhanatrayaṃ nirbijasya yogasya bahiraṅgaṃ bhavati, kasmāt, tadabhāve bhāvād iti*: “Even these, namely the three internal means of attainment, are indirect aids to seedless yoga. Why? Since this [seedless *samādhi*] occurs even when these do not take place.”

⁴⁸ Whether or not *dharmameghasamādhi* is synonymous with *asamprajñāta* is a matter of textual interpretation. Furthermore, the topic is complicated by whether or not *dharmamegha* might be also regarded as the highest peak of *samādhi*, as mentioned in YBh/YS I.2, as *prasaṅkhyāna*, which is the culmination of *vivekakhyaṭi*. *Dharmamegha*, *prasaṅkhyāna*, *nirbija* and *asamprajñāta* are semantically related terms, all describing consciousness as being void of any object. At the same time, each of these terms has a specific function and characterisation. Whereas *dharmamegha* seems more related to *prasaṅkhyāna*, considering that both the terms *nirbija* and *asamprajñāta* denote a state of meditative absorption, they may refer, by means of negative prefixes *nir-* and *a-*, to a psychic state lacking any object. The PYŚ discusses the theme of *dharmamegha* in reference to YS I.2 and YS IV.29: YBh/YS I.2 (see Maas 2006: 8–17): *tad eva rajoleśamalāpetam svarūpapratīṣṭham sattvapuruṣānyatākhyātimātram dharmameghadhyānopagaṃ bhavati // tat paraṃ prasaṅkhyānam ity ācakṣate dhyāyinaḥ... tadavasthaṃ saṃskāropagaṃ bhavati // sa nirbijāḥ samādhiḥ // na tatra kiṃcit samprajñāyata ity asamprajñātaḥ*: “This one [*sattva*] abides in itself, released from the last small particles of *rajas*, it is composed of discriminative knowledge (*vivekakhyaṭi*), [and] advances into the concentration known as *dharmamegha*, as recognized by those practising meditation... In this state, [in which no mental functions or even discriminative knowledge is left], mental impressions come forwards. This is the seedless *samādhi*. Here the consciousness has no object, [that is why it is called] non-cogitative *samādhi*.” O’Brien-Kop (2017: 133) discusses how the *kleśas* (mental afflictions) are eradicated through the practice of a particular form of meditation, or *dhyāna*, known as *prasaṅkhyāna*, which, in turn, is defined as



The condition of the non-fruitfulness of *saṃskāras* defines *dharmameghasamādhi* and thus connects it to *asamprajñātasamādhi* and *nirbījasamādhi*, which can be traced to PYŚ IV.29.⁴⁹ Here it is claimed that *dharmameghasamādhi* indicates a state where the seeds of *saṃskāras* are removed and not active anymore. This event leads the practitioner towards the non-arising of further *pratyayas*, which means the full eradication of psycho-physical stimuli.⁵⁰ The expression *dharmamegha* occurs in YBh/YS I.2, where the term is introduced to denote the highest form of meditation, or contemplation (*paraṃ prasaṅkhyānaṃ*). *Dharmameghasamādhi* is thought to take place when the *sattva* of mind (*cittasattva*) predominates over the other two *guṇas*. When the *tamas* and *rajas guṇas* are removed, then the yoga practitioner can approach the state of trance known as *dharmamegha* (YBh/YS 1.2). That *dharmamegha* is the highest form of meditation is reiterated also in the TV and the YV on YS I.2, while in the YVi/PYŚ I.2 (1999: 163, 1) it is referred to as *samādhi* (*dharmamegho nāma samādhi*). Two other references to

meditation on the cloud of *dharma* (*dharmameghadhyaṇa*). Referring to PYŚ IV.29, 30, 31, O'Brien-Kop (2017: 133–134, fn. 40) argues that *dharmamegha*, although considered as equal to *prasaṅkhyāna* by the author of the YVi (1952: 11) discussing PYŚ I.2, is nevertheless divided into two forms that are distinguished, namely *dharmameghadhyaṇa* and *dharmameghasamādhi*. In the form of *dhyāna*, it serves to eradicate the *kleśas* (cf. PYŚ II.2, 11) and its effect is *vivekakhyaṭi*, which is an epistemic and ontological distinction between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti*. On the other hand, the form of *dharmameghasamādhi* will arise only once the practice of *dharmameghadhyaṇa* stands “in every respect” (*sarvathā*, cf. PYŚ IV.29) in a completely fulfilled state. In the words of O'Brien-Kop (2017: 134, fn. 40): “In keeping with soteriological texts of the period, including Buddhist texts, Patañjali treats the terms *dhyāna* and *samādhi* as distinct technical signifiers in his text, so there is no reason to suppose that he collapses the two terms into one when it comes to *dharmamegha*. The progression of *dharmamegha* from a state of *dhyāna* to one of *samādhi* represents the typical sequence from absorption to concentration, such as we see in both Pātañjala and Buddhist schemes of meditation.”

⁴⁹ Cf. also YBh/YS IV.29 (YBh 1919: 202, 7–10): *yadāyaṃ brāhmaṇaḥ prasaṅkhyāne 'py akusīdas tato 'pi na kiñ cit prārthayate. tatrāpi viraktasya sarvathā vivekakhyaṭir eva bhavati saṃskārabijakṣayān nāsyā pratyayāntarāny utpadyante tadāsyā dharmamegho nāma samādhir bhavati*: “When this Brāhmaṇa [practitioner] has no interest in the highest meditation (*prasaṅkhyāna*), when he does not desire anything from that [*prasaṅkhyāna*], then, indifferent, he has ever-present discriminative knowledge. In this manner, once the seeds of mental impressions are annihilated, no other psycho-physical drives are generated, [then this person] abides in what is known as *dharmameghasamādhi*.”

⁵⁰ For the present study, the exposition of *dharmamegha* is limited to only the most important references. The compound *dharmamegha* poses several problems related to its interpretation and deserves a separate analysis; see Collins (2009), Klostermaier (1986), O'Brien Kop (2020), and the analyses by Feuerstein (1987), Rukmani (1997: 619–623), and Wujastyk (2018: 35–38). What must be here underscored is how the idea of *dharmamegha* stands as evidence of a strong relationship with Buddhist thought, as highlighted by Wujastyk (2018: 35–41) referring to the *Milindapañha* (Wujastyk 2018: 36–37), *Daśabhūmikasūtra* (Wujastyk 2018: 36), and Asaṅga's (c. 350–430 CE) *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* (Wujastyk 2018: 38). For the use of *dharmamegha* as a *bhūmi* in Vasubandhu's *Bhāṣya* on *Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra* and other Buddhist texts, see Squarcini (2015: 158, 189).

dharmameghasamādhi are at (1) YS IV.29 (cf. YS 1919: 202, 5–6: *prasaṅkhyāne 'py akusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyāter dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ*): “[The yoga practitioner] taking no interest in contemplation, possesses discriminative knowledge in every respect, [and] obtains *dharmameghasamādhi*,” and at (2) YBh/YS IV.30 (cf. YBh 1919: 202–203, 12–13: *kleśakarmanivṛttau jīvan eva vidvān vimukto bhavati*), where it is maintained that having utterly annihilated the afflictions and the deposit of *karma*, the yoga practitioner becomes liberated, whilst still being alive (*jīvanmukti*).

YBh/YS IV.29 and IV.32 also describe the effects of *dharmamegha*. In YBh/YS IV.29, *dharmamegha* is described as that state in which the *pratyayas* no longer arise, due to the perishing of the seeds of *saṃskāras*.⁵¹ YBh/YS IV.32 describes how *dharmamegha* corresponds to a state where the *guṇas* cease their activities, achieve the limit of their sequence, and no longer subsist.⁵² Perusing the commentarial literature, similar ideas are present in the YVi, the TV and the YV explaining PYŚ IV.29. In this passage, the YVi IV.29 states that, “It is named *dharmamegha* since it rains the highest form of *dharmā* known as *kaivalya*.”⁵³ Again, regarding *dharmamegha*, Vācaspati’s TV/PYŚ IV.29 states that it is the state following the inhibition of all *pratyayas*, and marks the emergence of *vivekakhyāti* and the detachment from and the cessation of *prasaṅkhyāna*.⁵⁴ Similar ideas also recur in TV/PYŚ IV.32 (1919: 204), YV/PYŚ IV.29 (YV 1935: 445–446), and YV/PYŚ IV 30 (YV 1935: 449).

Considering these textual sources, the ongoing practice of detachment in its two forms (*vairāgya/paravairāgya*) is essential to the achievement of *dharmameghasamādhi*. In this regard, YS IV.29 introduces a term related to *vairāgya*, namely *akusīda*, meaning, “taking

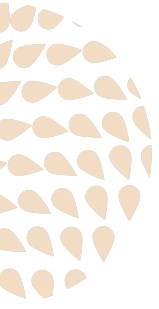
⁵¹ Cf. YVi/PYŚ IV.29 (YVi 1952: 363, 20–21): *kleśasaṃskārabhijakṣayān nāsya pratyayāntarāṅy utpadyante tadāsya dharmamegho nāma samādhir bhavati*.

⁵² Cf. YBh/YS IV.32 (YBh 1919: 204, 5–7): *tasya dharmameghasyodayāt kṛtārthānāṃ guṇānāṃ pariṇāmakramah parisamāpyate na hi kṛtabhogāpavargāḥ parisamāptakramāḥ kṣaṇam apy avasthātum utsahante*.

⁵³ Cf. YVi/PYŚ IV.29 (YVi 1952: 363, 22–23): *kaivalyāhkyam paraṃ dharmam varṣati iti dharmameghaḥ iti saṃjñā*.

⁵⁴ Cf. TV/PYŚ IV.29 (TV 1919: 202, 23–26): *yadā vyutthānapratyayā bhaveyus tadā nāyaṃ brāhmaṇaḥ sarvathā vivekakhyātir yatas tasya na pratyayāntarāṅi bhavanti tataḥ sarvathā vivekakhyātir iti / tadāsya dharmameghaḥ samādhir bhavati / etad uktaṃ bhavati prasaṅkhyāne viraktas tannirodham icchan dharmamegham samādhim upāsita*. “Whenever presented-ideas of emergence may arise, then this Brāhmaṇa has not attained to discriminative discernment at all times. After he has no other presented-ideas, he has at all times attained to discriminative discernment. Then the concentration called the Rain-cloud of [knowable] things becomes his. What he means to say is this: when he becomes disaffected towards Elevation and longs for its restriction, he should devote himself to the concentration [called] the Rain-cloud of [knowable] things” (trans. Woods 1914: 341).





no interest” or “without gain.”⁵⁵ This points to a fundamental yogic tenet: the yoga practitioner should, in the first place, perform the constant eradication (*nirodha*) of mental events (*cittavṛtti*) leading her/him into *asamprajñātasamādhi*, in which *saṃskāras* still persist (YS I.18). *Nirodha* is to be applied to any *pratyaya* that remains, or to sensorial stimuli that might lead to the formation of intellectual notions. In order to obtain the complete emptying of the mind and the state of *kaivalya* (aloneness of seeing), *nirodha* is thus applied to *cittavṛttis*, *pratyayas*, and *saṃskāras*, amounting to a cardinal praxis in *Pātañjalayoga*.

How should we understand the terms *mṛtakavat* and *mṛtavat*, as used by Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, in light of the above discussion of *nirodha*? As descriptive expressions, *mṛtakavat/mṛtavat* can also function as explicative images for another metaphor occurring in the YBh on YS I.18, namely, *abhāvaprāptam iva*.⁵⁶ This clause may be translated as “...seemingly, [the mind] (*citta*) becomes non-existent.” Commenting on PYŚ I.18, Vācaspatimīśra underscores how the state of being “seemingly void of existence” (*abhāvaprāptam iva*) takes place during *asamprajñātasamādhi* and corresponds to a state in which the causes producing mental events do not subsist anymore (*vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇād*).⁵⁷ Interestingly, both Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa employ the same expression that occurs in the TV, namely *vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇāt* (see YV/PYV on PYŚ I.18). This compound expression can be translated as: “Because of the absence of action [giving rise] to effects in the form of mental activity.” What does *vṛttirūpa* mean here? An initial interpretation of *vṛttirūpa* would read *vṛtti* as an abridged form for *cittavṛtti*, “having the form of a mental activity.” As formulated in Sāṅkhya and the *yogaśāstra*, the materialism of *prakṛti* is grounded in *guṇapariṇāmavāda* (the transformation of the *guṇas*). It seems reasonable to conclude that, as the *cittavṛttis* are substances of material composition (*dravya*) undergoing material changes, as clearly stated in the YV and the PYV on PYŚ I.4, the death-like state applies to not only the

⁵⁵ The expressions employed in YBh/YS IV.29 (YBh 1919: 202, 7–8) to explain *akusīda* are: *na kiñcit prārthayate* (someone who wishes/desires nothing), and *virakta*. *Virakta*, which is a *sāmānyabhūta* form (or *luṅ*), of which *vairāgya* is a related adjective coming from the same verbal form (*vi-rañj*). On *vairāgya* and *paravairāgya*, see also PYŚ I.15–16.

⁵⁶ Cf. YV, PYV, YBh/YS I.18: *cittaṃ...abhāvaprāptam iva bhavati*. Although in a different context, see Freschi (2008) on the Mīmāṃsaka understanding of *abhāva*. Here both *abhāva* and *nirālambana* prominently figure. The Bhaṭṭa school of Pūrvamīmāṃsā, whose representative spokesman was Kumārila (7th cent. CE), is the only philosophical school in classical India which accepts absence (*abhāva*) as an instrument of knowledge (*abhāvapramāṇa*). As already seen, both terms *abhāva* and *nirālambana* occur in PYŚ I.18.

⁵⁷ Cf. TV/PYŚ I.18 (TV 1919: 22, 13–14): *ālambanikaraṇam āśrayaṇam abhāvaprāptam iva vṛttirūpakāryākaraṇān nirbījo nirālambanaḥ*. “It ‘seems as if it were itself non-existent’ because it does not perform its functions as a fluctuation. It is ‘seedless,’ that is, not directed to any supporting-object” (trans. Woods 1914: 43).

body but also to the mind (or *citta*), which is conceived of as having a material substrate.⁵⁸

But what sort of human being can survive the death of the body if not a yoga practitioner? It is probable that the reference to death is merely apparent, and the expression amounts to a metaphorical statement describing the condition of a yoga practitioner who has abandoned the ordinary life in the world in favour of a new life in a different realm where only the light of the true Self shines bright, abiding in its own state. What the yoga practitioner is about to fundamentally abandon is his own empirical self, or the illusory self that is immersed in the field of the objective content of *prakṛti*, which constrains him to the never-ending circle of birth and death. This *prakṛtic* self stands in full opposition to what is regarded as the real Self, which is nothing but the *puruṣa* or contentless consciousness. However, reading the full yoga narrative in this respect, it seems a clear description of the yogi in *samādhi*.

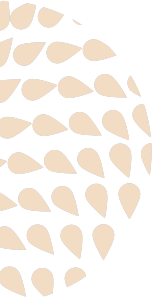
***Mṛta*: Parallels Between Haṭhayoga and Rasaśāstra**

The YV of Vijñānabhikṣu and the PYV of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa are not the only yoga-related texts where the expression *mṛtakavat/mṛtavat* occurs. There are instances where deeply absorbed yoga practitioners are depicted as cadavers in the literature of Haṭhayoga. The metaphor of death portraying the advanced yoga practitioner is also found in what is generally regarded as the paradigmatic text on Haṭhayoga, namely the *Haṭhapradīpikā* (HP) of Svātmārāma (c.15th century CE).⁵⁹ This text gained wide approval and after the

⁵⁸ That the *cittavṛttis* have a material structure is clearly stated by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa in his PYV and Vijñānabhikṣu in his YV/PYŚ I.4 (YV 1935: 20, 23–24): *itaratra vyuthāne yās cittasya vṛttayo dīpasya śikhā iva dravyarūpā*: “On the other hand, at the time of emerging in the world state, mental events have a substantial aspect, resembling the flame of a lamp. Both authors comment on PYŚ I.4, employing the same nominal compound in order to describe the material substance of a *cittavṛtti*, that is *dravyarūpā*.”

⁵⁹ On dating the HP, Bouy (1994) represents the most up-to-date scholarship; he is aware of the oldest dated manuscript (1496 CE). Digambaraji and Kokaje (1998: xx–xxi) and Gode (1953: 379–387) date the HP to between 1350 and 1550. There is, however, a shortcoming in the argument formulated by Digambaraji and Kokaje. The earlier terminus for the date of HP is considered to be an alchemical work named *Rasaratnasamuccaya* of Nityanātha, whose date is about the 14th century CE (Digambaraji and Kokaje 1998: xxi). Now, according to Wujastik’s study (1984: 70–71; see also White 1994: 160), Nityanātha is not the author of the *Rasaratnasamuccaya*, but rather of the *Rasaratnākara* (13th CE), which is, nevertheless, a text dealing with alchemy, medicine and magic. Nityanātha was a peculiar and ubiquitous character, a polymath to whom works on different subjects such as Haṭhayoga, alchemy, and tantric sorcery are attributed, and his name figures in both the list of yogic *siddhas* in the HP (I.7) and in the list of *rasasiddhas* in the *Rasaratnasamuccaya* (White 1994: 160). The *Rasaratnasamuccaya* is a treatise concerning iatrochemistry, namely alchemy and *āyurveda*, belonging to the 13th–14th centuries CE, and attributed to Vāgbhaṭṭa II, at





16th century was regarded as a standard and paradigmatic text of *haṭhayoga* practice, due to its formal structure based on four chapters,⁶⁰ and in view of the techniques described.⁶¹ HP IV.107 uses the expression *mṛtavat*, employed *ad hoc* to describe the state of *samādhi*, or, as most commonly referred to in the HP, the state of *unmanī*:

sarvāvasthāvinirmuktaḥ sarvacintāvivarjitaḥ /
mṛtavat tiṣṭhate yogī sa mukto nātra saṁśayaḥ // HP IV.107

Completely released from any single stage of yoga,⁶² void of thoughts

least according to White (1994: 167). As for the later terminus of the HP, Digambaraji and Kokaje (1998: xxi) date the HP to 1650 CE. This thesis is grounded on the discovery of a manuscript of the HP, preserved in the National Library in Kolkata, which is dated *saṁvat* 1868 (1629 CE). In view of the fact that the HP (I.7) presents a list of *mahāsiddhas* containing the name of Nityanātha, it is plausible to assume that the HP was composed slightly after the 13th or 14th century CE, or after Vāgbhaṭṭa's composition of the *Rasaratnasamuccaya*. For another discussion of the date of the HP, which is the main source of the analysis by Digambaraji and Kokaje (1998: xx-xxi), see Gode (1953: 379-87); for a synoptic list comparing the names occurring in the HP and *Rasaratnasamuccaya*, see Bouy (1994).

⁶⁰ Some versions of HP are subdivided into five chapters (HP 1998: xix-xx), while more extended versions containing ten chapters also exist (HP 1998: xx; Birch 2018: 8), as reported in the *Gorakṣasiddhāntasaṅgraha*. For the date of the ten chapters of the HP's texts, see Birch (2018: 8, fn.32).

⁶¹ As stated by Birch (2018: 7; 2011: 528) this is evinced in different yoga texts, such as the *Haṭharatnāvalī* (17th c.), which borrowed extensively from the *Haṭhapradīpikā*, as well as from compilations, such as the Godāvaramiśra's *Yogacintāmaṇi* (16th century), which quote the HP at length on matters of *haṭhayoga*, and following Digambaraji and Kokaje (HP 1998: xv), evinced by texts such as the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā* and the *Haṭhatattvakaumudī*. However, in the centuries following the HP, the literature concerning *haṭhayoga* and Pātañjalayoga changed significantly. More extensive texts on the four-fold system of yoga and *aṣṭāṅgayoga* were written. Furthermore, as above seen, two expanded versions of the HP, and a new interpretation of Pātañjalayoga, more related to Purāṇa and Vedānta teachings than the PYŚ, YVi, TV and RM, have emerged, as witnessed in the YV of Vijñānabhikṣu and the PYV of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa, who interpreted the yoga of Patañjali in terms of *bhedābhedavāda* (the doctrine of identity in difference). Moreover, as noted by Birch (2018: 7-8), learned Brahmins attempted to integrate teachings on *haṭhayoga* and *rājayoga* (that is, teaching concerning meditative absorption or *samādhi*) with those of the PYŚ and various Brahmanical texts such as the Upaniṣads, Epics, Purāṇas and Dharmaśāstra, and this resulted in large eclectic compilations on yoga (see Bouy 1994).

⁶² According to HP IV.69, four stages in all types of yoga exist, namely *ārambha*, *ghaṭa*, *paricaya*, and *niṣpatti*: *ārambhaś ca ghaṭaś caiva tathā paricayo 'pi ca / niṣpattiḥ sarvayogeṣu syād avasthācatuṣṭayam*. Taken singularly, these stages are described in HP IV.70-77. These stages are introduced under the topic of *nādānusanadhāna* or *nādotpāsana* (cf. HP IV.65), which is a type of meditative absorption on a sound (*nāda*), or a series of different sounds, arising within the body of a yoga practitioner (cf. HP IV.82-102). This sound, although "unstruck" or not externally produced (HP IV.70: *anāhata*), is audible from and within the right ear (HP IV.67: *śṛṅguyād daksīṇe karṇe*), reverberating in the *suṣumnānāḍi* (HP IV.68). It has different levels of loudness (HP IV.78) and timbre, described in HP IV. 84-86. For a detailed study on *nāda* and yoga, see Kienhle (1997).

The yogin, remaining as if he were dead, is certainly liberated.⁶³

In the HP this condition of a death-like state is obtained by means of the practice of *nāḍopāsana* or *nādānusandhāna*. This is the practice prompted at the beginning of HP IV. 65. Apart from Vijñānabhikṣu, Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa and the HP, there are other textual sources of Haṭhayoga where death-evoking imaginary is used to describe advanced yoga practitioners.⁶⁴

Besides *mṛtavat*, Svātmārāma employs another curious image describing the yogin in the advanced phase of *samādhi*. In HP IV.106, immediately preceding the verse containing the term *mṛtavat*, the yoga practitioner in the state of *samādhi* is depicted as a log of wood (*kāṣṭhavat*):

*śaṅkhadundhubhinādaṃ ca na śṛṇoti kadācana /
kāṣṭhavaj jāyate deha unmanyāvasthayā dhruvam //* HP I.106

And [the yoga practitioner] no longer hears the sound of a conch or kettledrum. His body surely becomes like a log of wood because of the *unmanī* state.⁶⁵

In *Amanaska* II.76, the so far unknown author uses this and other similes to express the idea of the stillness and lifelessness of yoga practitioner's body while absorbed in deep *samādhi* or in *amanaska*, "the no-mind state." The second chapter can be dated to the 11th or early 12th centuries CE and appears to be among the earliest yoga texts that teach a type of yoga called Rājayoga, which was generally understood in medieval yoga texts to be synonymous with *samādhi* (Birch 2013: 6). In *Amanaska* I.27, the simile comparing the yogin to an inanimate piece of wood (*nirjīvakāṣṭhopama*), which also resembles the *kāṣṭhavat* of HP I.106, is combined with another simile that likens him to a flame in a windless spot (*nirvātasthitadīpavat*). As claimed by Birch (2013: 7, 134–140), the second chapter of the *Amanaska* was one of the sources of the HP's fourth chapter, and its verses can be found in other yoga texts of the same period and in more recent texts.

⁶³ This stanza is also quoted in Bronkhorst (2000: 41): "Being free from all states and devoid of all thought, the Yogin is like a dead person; he is liberated, there is no doubt about it."

⁶⁴ Jason Birch kindly directed me to other textual sources for this concept.

⁶⁵ See also Bronkhorst (2000: 41) who translates HP (I.106) as: "By virtue of the mindless state (*unmanī avasthā*) the body becomes certainly like a piece of wood; it does not at any time hear the sounds of a conch-shell and of a large drum."



Instances of *kāṣṭhavat* are well attested in earlier literature, making it a shared literary image.⁶⁶

*niṣpannākhilabhāvaśūnyanibhṛtaḥ svātmasthitis tatkṣaṇān
niśceṣṭaślathapāṇipādakaraṇagrāmo vikārojhitāḥ /
nirmūlapravinaṣṭamārutatayā nirjīvakāṣṭhopamo
nirvāsthitadīpavat saḥajavān pārśvasthitair drśyate // (Amanaska II.76)⁶⁷*

[The yogin] who has [attained] the natural [no-mind state] is instantly motionless as a result of having realized the emptiness of all states, resides in his own self, his hands, feet and sense organs are all inactive and relaxed, and he is free of disturbances. Because he is one in whom breathing has radically ceased, he is seen by those standing close [to be] like an inanimate piece of wood and like the [steady flame of] a lamp situated in a windless [place].⁶⁸

Besides the occurrence of two metaphors within the same stanza, the only difference between the HP and *Amanaska* seems to be a stylistic one. If compared with Svātmārāma, the unknown *Amanaska*'s author uses metaphors richer in qualifications. For instance, the log of wood is “without life, inanimate.” This stylistic device creates vividness and tension, considering that the yogin is fully absorbed in *samādhi*. Moreover, this state is characterised by stillness which is the result of the inhibition of any psycho-physical activity, the function of breathing included. The complete eradication of breathing (*nirmūlapravinaṣṭamārutatayā*) is the reason for remaining in a motionless condition. Therefore, the aim of *Amanaska* II.76 is clear: when resting in his own self, the advanced yoga practitioner outwardly looks motionless and stays in a still condition.

Concerning the term *mṛta* (or *mṛtaka*), it is interesting to consider also the alchemical context. In *rasaśāstra* and *rasāyana* literature, the term *mṛta* often occurs and is understood as “calcined” or “reduced” (White 1994: *passim*), and the term *māraṇa* (killing) for the process of calcination of a substance. This understanding of the term *mṛta* could shed light on the correspondences between the terminology, culturally

⁶⁶ Birch (2013: 262, fn. 35) tracks several texts where *kāṣṭhavat* recurs: *Mahābhārata* XII.188.5d and XII.294.17a, *Kaulajñānanirṇaya* XIV.83, *Mokṣopāya* XVI.155.5-6a-b, *Kulārṇavatāntra* IX.14, *Haṭhapradīpikā* IV.106, *Nādabindūpaniṣat* 52c-d-53a-b, and *Amanaska* I.27.

⁶⁷ Cf. Birch (2013: 326) for a critical edition of *Amanaska* II.76.

⁶⁸ Translation Birch (2013: 326).

shared assumptions and images used by Vijñānabhikṣu and Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa and by some authors of *rasaśāstra* literature. As stated by White (1996: 57): “...the language of the Nāth Siddhas’ Haṭhayoga is often nothing other than a projection of alchemical discourse upon the human body. The human body is an alchemical body.” Some concepts utilised in *haṭhayoga* literature have echoes in Siddha alchemy, witnessed in early *haṭhayoga* texts, such as the *Amṛtasiddhi*, *Yogabīja*, *Dattātreyaśāstra*, *Goraḥṣāṭaka*, *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, *Khecarīvidyā*, *Amarauḥaprabodha*, and *Amarauḥaśāsana*. All these texts, except the *Amṛtasiddhi* and *Amarauḥaśāsana*, are considered (Mallinson 2012: 327) to be the sources for early Haṭhayoga’s syncretic systematization into the classical Haṭhayoga of Svātmārāma’s *Haṭhapradīpikā*. Although White’s (1996: 10) overall idea seems to imply a similarity between some of the terminologies of alchemists and *haṭhayoga* practitioners, their practices were nevertheless quite distinct, as noted in *Khecarīvidyā* II.72-79, *Śivasamhitā* III.61, V.112, and *Dattātreyaśāstra* 197.⁶⁹

Although alchemy exhibits more similarities with tantric *haṭhayoga* than with Pātāñjalayoga, it shares a number of assumptions on theoretical and hermeneutical phenomena with Pātāñjalayoga. Briefly, these common assumptions include the *puruṣa/prakṛti* dualism, the *tattvāntaraparīṇāma* (the unfolding of the *tattvas*), *prānāyāma*, *siddhis*, *samādhi*, and *kaivalya*. Since the discovery of the *Amṛtasiddhi*⁷⁰ (second half of 11th century CE) and an early recension of the *Amarauḥaprabodha* (c.end of 12th–first half of 15th century CE),⁷¹ it is now clearer that Haṭhayoga emerged from the interaction of Tantric Buddhist and Śaiva communities.⁷² They used some alchemical metaphors to describe the practices, but did not borrow practices from alchemy and were antagonistic to alchemists, as stated in *Dattātreyaśāstra* 197 (cf. fn. 69). For instance,

⁶⁹ See Mallinson (2012: 338). However, Mallinson notes how the *Dattātreyaśāstra* (v. 103) is sceptical about alchemy, and how alchemy is an obstacle to success in yoga.

⁷⁰ According to Mallinson and Szántó (2021: 3, fn. 1–3), the authorship of the *Amṛtasiddhi* is attributed to Mādhvacandra, its date no later than the second half of 11th century CE, and most likely composed in the Deccan region. It represents a relevant text because, as claimed by Mallinson and Szántó (2021: 3), “It is the first text to teach a system of yoga whose primary method is physical and it introduces many practices and principles fundamental to the yoga method often categorised in subsequent Sanskrit text as *haṭha*.”

⁷¹ According to Birch (2019: 5–6; 12–14) there exist two recensions of the *Amarauḥaprabodha*: a short and earlier recension dated between the end of the 12th and the first half of 15th century CE, and a long and more recent recension dated between the 15th and the 18th century CE. Although early modern publications attribute the *Amarauḥaprabodha* to Goraḥṣanātha, its authorship is still uncertain (Birch 2019: 3–4). Both recensions seem to have been redacted in south India (Birch 2019: 4–5).

⁷² With specific regard of the *Amṛtasiddhi* and the *Amarauḥaprabodha*, the former has a Buddhist Vajrayāna orientation, the latter a Śaiva one.





the *Amṛtasiddhi* mentions *māraṇa* as an alchemical technique where through calcination or oxidation a substance is made inert. *Māraṇa* as well as other derivatives from the root *mṛ* (die) are also used to denote the stilling of either the breath or semen.⁷³ Moreover, it is also plausible that some of *Amṛtasiddhi*'s terminology that derived from *Rasaśāstra*, such as *vedha*, *māraṇa* and *puṭa*, was incorporated by the redactor of the *Amaraughaprabodha*, perhaps because the meaning of these terms was a shared representation also outside of esoteric Buddhism.⁷⁴ To describe the effects of *mahāmudrā*, the redactor of the *Amaraughaprabodha* might have been alluding to the alchemical process of *māraṇa*, namely heating a substance in a burning pit to reduce it into ashes, when he refers to *marañāvasthā*.⁷⁵ In this regard, Birch (2019: 20) claims that:

In the *Amaraughaprabodha*'s description, the pressing of the perineum and the application of the throat lock (*bandha*) seem to create something akin to an alchemical vessel with two halves or lids (*dvipuṭa*). Presumably, this vessel is the central channel after it has been blocked above and below by the locks, which envelop and hold *kuṇḍalinī* in a death-like state (*marañāvasthā*).⁷⁶

From the perspective of yoga, references to Hathayoga appeared in commentaries on the PYŚ, such as Vijñānabhikṣu's YV,⁷⁷ and Nārāyaṇatīrtha's *Yogasiddhāntacandrikā*, shortly after the HP, when Haṭhayoga was absorbed by Brahmanical traditions.⁷⁸ On the alchemical side, White (1996: chapter 3, *passim*) suggests that the conflation of *haṭhayoga*, *rasaśāstra* and Buddhist Tantra, gave birth, around the 13th century CE, to what is termed by White as "Siddha alchemy," namely the blending of external alchemy with internal *haṭhayoga* practice. This type of alchemy is claimed in texts to have been

⁷³ Cf. Mallinson and Szántó (2021: 21).

⁷⁴ Cf. Birch (2019: 15).

⁷⁵ Cf. Birch (2019: 17, fn. 42). The term *marañāvasthā* occurs in the second hemistich of *Amaraughaprabodha* 21.

⁷⁶ In the context of raising *kuṇḍalinī*, as Birch claims (2019: 20), the meaning of *marañāvasthā* is not entirely clear.

⁷⁷ Cf. YV/PYS II.46 (YV 1932: 266, 26–34; 267: 21–23) primarily for references to Vasiṣṭha and the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* in regard to *āsana*. This text does not call its yoga "haṭha" but it is very close to the *Yogayājñavalkya*; and both teach the same form of *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, which is referred to as *haṭha* in the *Dattātreyayogaśāstra* (which attributes it to Yājñavalkya). Cf. YV/PYS II.49–50 in regard to *prāṇāyāma*. I owe a great deal of gratitude to Jason Birch who kindly shared with me, via email correspondence, the information above (30/10/2023).

⁷⁸ Cf. Birch (2019: 26).

taught by Matsyendra, in perhaps the 10th century CE. However, as noted already, in the Haṭhayoga literature there is no conflation, nor blending of theories and practices besides the borrowing of specific terminology, and the use of some alchemical similes. Moreover, there is not any known text so far blending Haṭhayoga with alchemy in any significant way. As mentioned, Brāhmaṇa tantric and alchemical systems are also deeply informed by Buddhist tantric practices. This is particularly so when considering the Tantra of the Western Transmission, the *yoginī kaula*, and the Nātha Siddha systems.⁷⁹ In light of the *Amṛtasiddhi* and the *Amarauḥaprabodha*, the yogic concept of *mṛta/mṛtaka*—referring to the dead-like body of the yoga practitioner—and the alchemical conception and technique of *māraṇa*, connected with the processing of mercurial preparations and procedures of calcination, indicate particular parallels between practices in *haṭhayoga* and techniques in *rasāyana*. While in yoga there is a transformation of the mind and body of the yoga practitioner, which results in psycho-physical stillness (*mṛtavat*) and ultimately in *kaivalya*, in *rasāyana* the term *mṛta* describes the end product of the long process of mercurial calcination and refining (*māraṇa*).

Life After Asamprajñātasamādhi

Although a considerable amount of *Pātañjalayoga* literature is at our disposal, it is still not entirely clear what the destiny of the yoga practitioner might be after attaining the *mṛtavat* state. As seen, this state is the advanced phase of contentless absorption culminating in *kaivalya*, namely the contentless of seeing the Self abiding in its own state.⁸⁰ This state coincides with liberation or *mokṣa*, which is the absence of bondage to the endless cycle of life and death.⁸¹ Alternatively, *kaivalya* is a non-commingled state (*puruṣasyāmiśrībhāvaḥ*) between the *puruṣa* and the *buddhi*⁸² (*buddhipuruṣa-*

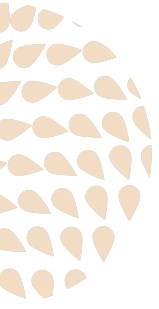
⁷⁹ For a detailed discussion of this topic, see White (1996: 55–57, chapter 3).

⁸⁰ Cf. YBh/YS II.6 (YBh 1919: 64, 4–5): *svarūpapratilambhe tu tayoh kaivalyam eva bhavati*: “When their (*dr̥kśakti* and *darśanaśakti*) real nature is known, there is indeed the contentlessness of that seeing [of the Self].”

⁸¹ Cf. YBh/YS II.23 (YBh 1919: 92, 2–3): *nātra darśanaṃ mokṣakāraṇam adarśanābhāvād eva bandhābhāvaḥ sa mokṣa iti...* (YBh 1919: 92, 4): *ato darśanaṃ jñānaṃ kaivalyakāraṇam uktam*: “In this context [of *Pātañjalayoga*], the vision is not the cause of liberation exactly because of the absence of the non-vision, [thus] *mokṣa* amounts to the absence of bondage [to *saṃsāra*]... Therefore, the vision which is knowledge is said to be the cause of contentlessness of that seeing.”

⁸² Cf. YBh/YS II.25 (YBh 1919: 96, 7–9): *tasyādarśanasya abhāvād buddhipuruṣasaṃyogābhāva ātyantiko bandhanoparama ity arthaḥ. etad dhānam. taddr̥śeḥ kaivalyaṃ puruṣasyāmiśrībhāvaḥ*: “The meaning is that because of the absence of this vision (i.e., correlation between *puruṣa/citta*), the ultimate release of bondage amounts to the non-existence of the relation between *puruṣa* and *buddhi*. This is the case namely the





saṃyogābhāva), and also the ultimate disjunction between the *puruṣa* and the *guṇas*.⁸³ *Kaivalya* is a neuter abstract noun, a *vṛddhi* formation from the noun/adjective *kevala* plus the *taddhita* suffix *ṣyañ*. It conveys the sense of “perfect isolation, abstraction, detachment from all other connections, detachment of the soul from matter or further transmigrations; becoming one with the Supreme; eternal happiness, emancipation, beatitude; exclusiveness, soleness, individuality, totality,” according to Monier-Williams (1994: 311). What sort of experience and meaning does Patañjali refer to through the term *kaivalya*? Does *kaivalya* mean final release from the body, namely death, and might it thus refer in general to yoga as a method to prepare for the departure from the body? Or rather, once *kaivalya* is attained, does the practitioner return from it? Arguments can be made for both interpretations.

It appears that the yoga practitioner who has attained *mokṣa* returns to the world as a *jīvanmukta*, waiting for the burning of the tiny seeds of *karma* that are left over. Once these seeds are fully burnt, he can finally abandon the body as a *videhamukta* at the time of death. The ideal of *mokṣa*, in its aspect of *jīvanmukti* as well as *videhamukti*, represents a central concept in Pātañjalayoga generally, although, as previously mentioned, Patañjali uses neither the term *jīvanmukti* nor *videhamukti*, nor does he explore or explain the life of the yogin after the attainment of *samādhi*.⁸⁴ Although the terms *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti* are absent from the PYŚ, YBh/YS II.4 nevertheless contains

contentlessness of that seeing is the absence of *puruṣa*’s commingling with the [*guṇas*].”

⁸³ Cf. YBh/YS III.50 (YBh 1919: 168, 14): *puruṣasyātyantiko guṇaviyogaḥ kaivalyam*: “The state of contentlessness of that seeing [of the Self] is the ultimate separation between the *puruṣa* and the *guṇa*.”

⁸⁴ Although the term *jīvanmukti* does not occur in the PYŚ, it recurs and is addressed in the commentarial literature, see: TV/PYŚ III.51 (TV 1919: 169, 26–27): *tasya hi bhagavato jīvanmuktasya caramadehasya cittapratīsarṅga eko ’rthaḥ*. “For this Exalted [yogin], released yet alive in the body, whose present body is his last, has as his sole aim the resolving of the mind-stuff [into its primary cause]” (trans. Woods 1914: 287). In the YV, since *jīvanmukti* is individuated within a body which has undergone experience, afflictions and so on, this state is different and distinguished from *īśvara* who is, by definition, eternally free from *karma*, *āśaya* and *vipāka*, see: YV/PYŚ I.24 (YV 1935: 66, 34–35): *ekaśārīrasthatvena tadboghasya eva prasaktatvād iti jīvanmuktasya api īśvarasadrśa eva bhogo duḥkhabhogamātram īśvarād vilakṣaṇam iti*. Still concerning *jīvanmukti*, see: PYV/PYŚ I.2 (PYV 1917: 222, 11): *anyathā jīvanmuktīpratīpādakaśrutyaśaṅgatiḥ syāt*, where Nāgeśa, aiming to justify the CU’s statement, distinguishes between liberation through knowledge and a different one obtained through the arrest of those still-latent stimuli related to acts that have already begun to produce results (*prārabdhakarma*); and: *tasya tāvad eva ciram iti jñāniviśayakaśruteḥ jīvanmuktīśruteś ca*. Here Nāgeśa quotes the above-mentioned passage from the CU. The same passage from the CU is also quoted in YV/PYŚ I.1 (YV 1935: 11, 23). The overall intent of YV and PYV is to distinguish between *samprajñāta*- and *asamprajñāta-samādhi*, where it is theorised that there is a difference concerning the role of knowledge in both kinds of *samādhi*. Besides the first *pāda* of YV, Vijñānabhikṣu discusses the topic of *jīvanmukti* also in: YV/PYŚ II.2, 4, 7, 11, 13, 14, 18, 24, 27, 32; III.18; and IV.21, 30, 31. For the idea of *jīvanmukti* as theorised by

an interesting phrase, namely *ataḥ kṣīṅakleśaḥ kuśalaś caramadeha ity ucyate*: “Therefore, the skilful yoga practitioner whose afflictions have waned is said to be in [his] last body.”⁸⁵ The topic under discussion here is *kriyāyoga* (cf. YS II.1: *tapahsvādhyāyeśvara-praṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ*) and its aims, namely, the coming into being of *samādhi* and the waning of afflictions (YS II.2: *samādhibhāvanārthaḥ kleśatanūkaraṇārthaś ca*).⁸⁶ Here, the afflicted (*kliṣṭa*) mental events (*cittavṛttis*) represent the afflictions, which play a fundamental role, because they shape one’s *karma* deposit (*karmāśaya*).⁸⁷ YBh/YS II.2 explains that the steady practice of *kriyāyoga* does not just enhance the state of *samādhi*, by making the *kleśas* wane, but also that once the *kleśas* have fully waned, they are ineffective (*aprasavadharminas*), just like seeds burnt through the fire of *prasaṅkhyāna* (*prasaṅkhyānāgninā dagdhabījakaḥ*).⁸⁸ As seen in PYŚ I.18, the yoga practitioner is left with just a remainder of ineffective *saṃskāras*. These *saṃskāras* are not capable of generating new *karma*. Moreover, and this is the relevant point, being in his last body (*caramadeha*), the yogin will not be reborn again. In this regard, the PYŚ does not directly refer to the condition of *jīvanmukti*, but if this reading is correct it is possible to draw a conceptual parallel between the state of *jīvanmukti* and the passages above quoted from PYŚ I.5; II.1, 2, and 4 (see also PYŚ II.10, 11). This parallel concerns the cultivation of *kriyāyoga*, and in turn *samādhi* and *prasaṅkhyāna*, so that the seeds of *karma* become ineffective or fully burnt (*dagdhabīja*).⁸⁹ This condition ensures that the yoga practitioner does not attain a new body, thus interrupting the cycle of *saṃsāra*.

Vijñānabhikṣu, see Nicholson (2010: 114–18). See also Chapple (2008: 83–100) for comment on the ideal of living liberation in Sāṅkhya and yoga. For references on *jīvanmukti* in Pātañjalayoga, see Birch (2020: 229, fn. 108).

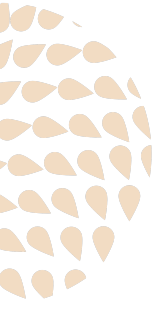
⁸⁵ Cf. YBh/YS I.4 (YBh 1919: 60, 3).

⁸⁶ Cf. YS II.1 (YS 1919: 57, 3–4), YS II.2 (YS 1919: 58, 4–5).

⁸⁷ Cf. YBh/YS I.5 (Maas 2006: 16, 4): *kleśahetukāḥ, karmāśayapracaye kṣetrībhūtāḥ, kliṣṭāḥ*: “[The *cittavṛttis* considered as] afflicted are those whose causes become the base of *karma*’s accumulation.”

⁸⁸ Cf. YBh/YS II.2 (YBh 1919: 58, 6–8): *sa hy āvevyamānaḥ samādhiṃ bhāvayati kleśāṃś ca pratanūkaroti. pratanūkṛtān kleśān prasāṅkhyānāgninā dagdhabījakaḥ aprasavadharmināḥ kariṣyatīti*: “When properly practised, this [*kriyāyoga*] brings about *samādhi* and weakens the afflictions. [Further], by the fire of meditation, it will render the weakened afflictions unproductive, like parched-up seeds.”

⁸⁹ It is interesting to note how in PYŚ II.26 the metaphor of the burnt seeds is used to refer to false knowledge (*mithyājñāna*). The knowledge reducing *mithyājñāna* to a burnt seed is termed *vivekakyāti*, the “discriminative knowledge” of *sattvapuruṣānyatāpratyaya*, namely the knowledge that discriminates between *sattvaguṇa* and *puruṣa*. Cf. YBh/YS II.26 (YBh 1919: 97, 1–7): *sattvapuruṣānyatāpratyayo vivekakyātiḥ. sā tv anivṛttamithyājñānā plavate. yadā mithyājñānaṃ dagdhabījabhāvaṃ vandhyaprasavaṃ sampadyate tadā vidhūtakleśarajasāḥ sattvasya pare vaiśāradye parasyāṃ vaśīkārasaṃjñāyāṃ vartamānasya vivekapratyayapravāho nirmalo bhavati. sā vivekakyātir aviṣṭā hānopāyaḥ. tato mithyājñānasya dagdhabījabhāvopagamaḥ punaś*



The progressive fading into a death-like state is a literary image that can be contextualized within the wider semantic register of South-Asian asceticism and the ideal of *jīvanmukti*, namely the theme of embodied liberation. Vijānabhikṣu, in his *Vijñānāmṛtabhāṣya*⁹⁰ (VAB) on Bādarāyana's *Brahmasūtras* (BS) IV.1,15,⁹¹ quotes directly from *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (CU) VI.14, 2: "There is a delay for me here only until I am freed, but then I will arrive!"⁹² Vijānabhikṣu understands this passage to mean that there is a delay for those who have already obtained *mokṣa* and aspire to full and final release from the world. The delay (*ciraṃ*) that is mentioned alternates between the final liberation or *videhamukti*, namely the "deliverance through release from the body," and *jīvanmukti*. That delay is due to the necessity to completely burn the karmic residue still persisting in the practitioner's body. However, after the residue is exhausted, the practitioner is permanently free of embodiment. The final act of emancipation is therefore final and irreversible.⁹³ Thus, when *mokṣa* involves the attainment of the

cāprasava ity eṣa mokṣasya mārgo hānasyopāya iti. "The discriminative knowledge refers to the notion of the difference between the *sattva* [*guṇa*] and *puruṣa*. However, when the false knowledge is functional, this [*vivekakhyaṭi*] vanishes. Once the false knowledge is reduced to the condition of a burnt seed, it is useless, then the flux of mental images of discrimination becomes pure. [Thus] the *sattva* is removed from the afflictions connected with the *rajaḡuṇa*, it endures in the highest form of the luminescence of the intellect, [and] in the mastery over the elements of *prakṛti*. Being steady, this discriminative knowledge represents the means of release. Henceforth, the false knowledge is reduced to the condition of a burnt seed, and it is said to be useless. This is the path towards liberation (*mokṣasya*), this is the means of release."

⁹⁰ Cf. VAB (1979: 311) on BS IV.1,15.

⁹¹ BS IV.1, 15 (BS 1863: 1080, 1): *anārabdhakārye eva tu pūrve tadavadheḥ*: "But [for the person aspiring to liberation] only those former acts whose effects have not yet begun [are removed by knowledge], because these deeds last [until the death of the body]" (trans. Thibaut 1890: 357, slightly modified). It should be made clear that the BS does not explicitly address the notion of *jīvanmukti*, and that this term never occurs in this text.

⁹² Cf. CU VI.14, 2 (CU 1998: 256, 4-5): *tasya tāvad eva ciraṃ yāvan na vimokṣaye'tha sampatsya*. (Trans. Olivelle 1998: 257).

⁹³ In Vijñānabhikṣu's YV commentary on PYŚ IV.29, 30, and 31, three levels of the condition of being liberated (*muktitva*) seem to be theorised, although these levels are not fully described in clear terms. The source of Vijñānabhikṣu's theory is probably *Tattvasamāsa* XXII, as Vijñānabhikṣu quotes this text when commenting on YV/PYŚ IV.32 (though without quoting the title of the text) for the threefold distinction of *mokṣa* (*trividho mokṣaḥ*). Vijñānabhikṣu seems to distinguish between:

a) *gauṇamuktitva* (YV/PYŚ IV.30), or the lower level of liberation, amounting to fully removing the causes of sorrow (*duḥkhanidānātyantocchedāya*). This state, following YV/PYŚ IV.28, coincides with the successful practice of *samprajñātasamādhi* and leads to the eradication of the *kleśas* and *vāsanās*. This level is reached once *vivekakhyaṭi*, *prasaṅkhyāna* and *dharmameghasamādhi* are realized and the practitioner can be regarded as a *jīvanmukta*;

b) *paramukti* (YV/PYŚ IV.31), or the higher level of liberation, which coincides with a state in

jīvanmukti state, this state is a preliminary condition to that of *videhamukti*. As already seen, the idea of *kaivalya* is linked with *jīvanmukti*. Patañjali claims (PYŚ II.25) that *kaivalya* takes place once *avidyā* is removed.⁹⁴ The YBh on YS II.25 explains that once the correlation between the Self (*puruṣa*) and the *guṇas* does not persist anymore, then the Self abides in its true nature.⁹⁵ But what does that mean? What happens in the practitioner's mind and body? It means that once *sattva* has reached its highest state of refinement, it is comparable to the purity of the *puruṣa*.⁹⁶ *Sattva* is the luminescent aspect of *prakṛti* or the most refined among the *guṇas*. At this point, the *sattva* aspect of *prakṛti*, along with *prakṛti*'s other constituents, must have undergone the "process of returning to the original state" (*pratiprasava*). Once the *pratiprasava* is achieved, *prakṛti* itself has no more function to accomplish for the *puruṣa*'s sake, and the *puruṣa*, here referred to as *citiśakti*, can finally abide in its natural form.⁹⁷ Therefore, *kaivalya* refers to the state that occurs when the Self or *puruṣa* is fully detached from the empirical self and the entire totality of its psycho-physical activities and states constituting the object of *puruṣa*'s perception. In this sense, *kaivalya* is contentlessness of that seeing, or the condition when *puruṣa* has no object in sight.

which there is little to know, because of "the full removal of the veiling impurities, due to the perfect level of knowledge reached" (cf. YS IV.31) [YS 1919: 203, 4–5]: *tadā sarvāvaraṇamālāpetasya jñānasya anantyāt jeyam alpam*);

c) *mukhyamokṣa* (YV/PYŚ IV.32) [YV 1935: 448, 37]: *paravairāgyodayena asamprajñāta-paramparyājanyam*, or the main liberation obtained as the result of the superior form of detachment (*paravairāgya*), produced in the gradual progress towards objectless-*samādhi*. This final stage of *mokṣa* is obtained once the *guṇas* have ceased their activity, cf. PYŚ II.22; III.55; and IV.34.

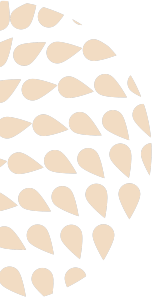
⁹⁴ Cf. YS II.25 (YS 1919: 96, 5–6): *tadabhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ taddrśeḥ kaivalyam*: "With the disappearance of this [*avidyā*], the correlation [between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* also] vanishes. [This is] release, the contentlessness of that seeing." This state characterising the *puruṣa* can be described as an "abstract" or "pure" perception, in which the perceiving is completely detached from any object. The *puruṣa*, being the contentless consciousness, witnesses objects without being connected or involved with them.

⁹⁵ Cf. YBh/YS II.25 (YBh 1919: 96, 8–9): *taddrśeḥ kaivalyam puruṣasya amiśribhāvaḥ punar asaṃyogo guṇair ity arthaḥ...* (YBh 1919: 96, 10): *tadā svarūpapraṭiṣṭhaḥ puruṣa ity uktam*. As for the idea of Self's *svaṛūpapraṭiṣṭha*, see YS I.3: *tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam*. Cf. also YBh/YS I.3: *svaṛūpapraṭiṣṭhā tadānīm citiśaktir yathā kaivalye*.

⁹⁶ Cf. YS III.55 (YS 1919: 174, 10): *sattvapuruṣayoḥ śuddhisāmye kaivalyam iti*: "Contentlessness [of that seeing] takes place when there is identity of purity of both the *sattva* and the *puruṣa*."

⁹⁷ Cf. YS IV.34 (YS 1919: 107, 2–3): *puruṣārthaśūnyānām guṇānām pratiprasavaḥ kaivalyam svarūpapraṭiṣṭhā vā citiśaktir iti*: "Contentlessness [of that seeing] is a process of returning to the original state of the *guṇas*, which are devoid of purpose for *puruṣa*, or it coincides with the potency of consciousness."





The state of *jīvanmukti* necessarily concerns *karma*, or its absence, and the related three-fold typology of acts, namely accumulated (*sañcita-*), future (*anāgata-*), and commenced *karma* (*prārabdha-karma*). Even if the seeds of *sañcitakarma* and *anāgatakarma* become ineffective, it is not the same for *prārabdha*, which, already begun, needs to be eradicated if the yogin is to attain *mokṣa*. *Jīvanmukti*, usually translated as “embodied liberation,” corresponds to the delay (*ciram*), mentioned above, during which the liberated person waits for the karmic residue to burn off.⁹⁸ The time when the body falls away is therefore tied to the end of the fruition of commenced *karma* (*prārabdhakarma*). The recognition of the *jīvanmukti* state is crucial, whether from a practical, didactical or pedagogical perspective, because teachers who impart instruction about yogic discipline and theory need to be fully liberated from the ties of *saṃsāra*. In a yogic context, the *guru* needs to recognise and point out paradigmatic yogins whose verbal testimonies, teachings, acts and experiences should be followed.

In trying to make sense of the implications of the terms *mṛtavat* and *mṛtakavat*, it could be asked whether or not they are ever linked to the state of *kaivalya* and *jīvanmukti*. The textual material so far analysed does not furnish an evident answer. However, what seems clear is that “being like a dead body” is the result of the psycho-physical immobility that characterises the advanced phase of *asamprajñātasamādhi*, attained through the constant application of the cessative practice of *nirodha*. As already discussed, this practice lies at the core of Pātañjalayoga. It seems that once advanced

⁹⁸ That the condition of *jīvanmukti* coincides with the extinction of the *kleśas* and *saṃskāras* and entering into the state of *prasaṅkhyāna* is also addressed by Vijñānabhikṣu, when commenting on YV/PYŚ II.2 (1935: 141, 37–39): *pratanūkr̥tāmś ca śuṣkendhanatulyān kṛtān kleśān kriyāyogaḥ svayam uddīpitena prasaṅkhyānāgninā vivekakhyaītivahninā dagdabījavat aprasavadharminō ‘prasavasvabhāvān saṃskārājanakān kariṣyati, jīvanmuktidaśāyām iti śeṣaḥ*: “Moreover, the yoga of action (*kriyāyoga*) will make, by means of the self-awakened flame of *prasaṅkhyāna* as brought forth through discriminative knowledge, the afflictions (*kleśas*) weak, similar to dried kindling, [and it will not cause] the rise of mental impressions which are [now] empty of their own nature [and], just like dried seeds, not capable of producing [anything else]. [To make the meaning clearer] the expression ‘in the state of *jīvanmukti*’ should be supplied in the *Bhāṣya* text.” The wording of the *Bhāṣya* on YS II.2, which Vijñānabhikṣu suggests implies *jīvanmukti*, is: *pratanūkr̥tān kleśān prasaṅkhyānāgninā dagdhabījakalpān aprasavadharmināḥ kariṣyati iti*. On Vijñānabhikṣu’s understanding of *jīvanmukti*, see also YV/PYŚ II.4 (1935: 144, 32–33): *prasaṅkhyānavato vivekasākṣātkāriṇō jīvanmuktasya dagdhakleśabījatayā sammukhībhūte sannikṛṣṭe ‘pi viṣaye ‘sau kleśānām sammukhībhāvāḥ punar na bhavati*. Here the YV states that for a *jīvanmukta* who has obtained *vivekakhyaīti*, the surviving *kleśas* bear no consequences. The same idea is also conveyed in YV/PYŚ II.4 (1935: 145, 30–31): *jīvanmuktānām viṣayasannikarṣe ‘pi kleśān abhivyakteḥ kleśasaṃskāra eva tadā na asti viveke kaivalya iva iti bhramaṃ nirasyati satām iti*. Later in the text, Vijñānabhikṣu relates that the experience, namely *bhoga*, amounts to a secondary factor (*gauṇa*) for a *jīvanmukta*, because experience exhibits an evident aspect of pleasure and so on: cf. YV/PYŚ II.6 (1935: 154, 28): *jīvanmuktasya ca gauṇa eva bhogaḥ sukhādisākṣātkārārūpa ity vākṣyam*. The text alluded to by Vijñānabhikṣu through the words *ity vākṣyam* has yet to be traced.

yoga practitioners have reached the peak of meditative absorption, they become *jīvanmuktas*. A *jīvanmukta* has acquired discriminative knowledge (*vivekakhyaṭi*) and has burnt off karmic residues (*karmāśāya*), mental impressions (*saṃskāras*) and latent-impressions (*vāsanās*), and attained detachment from mistaken knowledge (*avidyā*) and *prakṛti*. A *jīvanmukta* has attained the status of an advanced yogin who has gone through all the stages of meditative absorption up to *kaivalya*. On the yogic path, through the cessative practice of *nirodha*, the *jīvanmukta* eventually seems like a dead body because there is no more psycho-physical activity of any sort. In this sense, being *mṛtakavat* or *mṛtavat* represent the mark or proof of the attainment of the final stage of *Pātañjalayoga*, namely *kaivalya*. Although seemingly cadaverous, the *jīvanmukta* is nevertheless alive but in the *other* realm, namely, that of the Self or *puruṣa*.

Yoga can be understood as a “technology of the self,” namely a technique for abandoning the body at the time of death, in which this act is conceived of as a deliberate way of choosing one's death.⁹⁹ Is yoga a regulated method for the abandoning of the body in general, and a way of inducing one's own death? Is death a necessary condition to achieve liberation (*mokṣa*)? The literature of *Pātañjalayoga* does not seem to offer any specific answers to this question. It is not clear whether or not the *Pātañjalayoga* sources imply that liberation can only be achieved once the practitioner's body is released at the time of death. However, a tentative answer might be found in the last *pāda* of Kālidāsa's *Raghuvamśa* (1.8):¹⁰⁰ *yogena ante tanutyajām* “At death, [they] abandon their bodies through yoga.” Describing the four stages of human life (*varṇāśrama*), as represented in the behaviour of people depicted in the Raghu dynasty, Kālidāsa tells how through employing yoga practice the body is abandoned at the end of life; it is to be practised by life-renouncers and ascetics. This last group in particular, besides abandoning their social personalities and roles, accepted their own death not only in the sociological but also in the physical sense. However, although the ascetic is ideologically “free,” he is pragmatically limited by the rules of specific monastic communities and regulated interactions with the laity. What is salient here is the

⁹⁹ On yoga as a technique for dying, see Gerety (2021). The evidence presented in this study—from the *Mahābhārata* and *Bhagavad Gītā*, *Jaiminīya* and *Kaṭhuma Sāmaveda*, *Śvetāśvatara*, *Chāndogya*, *Muṇḍaka*, *Katha*, and *Maitrāyaṇīya* Upaniṣads, and PYŚ—show that this technique is grounded in a Brahmanical milieu, and on a contemplative praxis organized around the *om* meditation, and that this meditation takes place at a crucial threshold at the moment of death. However, discussing *om* reciting in the PYŚ, Gerety (2021: 238) notes that in it there is no mention of the moment of death; it departs significantly from the Brahmanical soteriologies he examines.

¹⁰⁰See Kale's edition of *Raghuvamśa* (1922: 5). I am grateful to Peter Pasedach, who kindly pointed me to Kālidāsa's stanza.





association between death and yoga practitioners, or more generally asceticism. Renunciates, whether of Brahmanical, Buddhist, or Jaina affiliation, are structurally outside the cycle of birth and death and are thus regarded as “technical operators of death.”¹⁰¹

But what about the case in which the transition from *jīvanmukti* to *videhamukti* is implied? Is there a way to relate *mṛtakavat/mṛtavat* and *jīvanmukti* with *videhamukti*? Kālidāsa’s *Raghuvamśa* (1.8) offers supportive evidence on how the practice of yoga can be connected to the final release from the body:

śaiśave 'bhyastavidyānāṃ yauvane viśayaiṣiṇām /
vārdhake munivṛttināṃ yogenānte tanutyajām //

[I will tell about the dynasty of the Raghus who] spent their adolescence in the study of letters, enjoyed pleasures in their youth, led an anchorite’s life in their old age, and who, at the end [of their lives], released their bodies through yoga [fixed their mind in meditation upon Brahman] (slightly modified translation from Kale [1922: 2]).

Mallinātha’s commentary, entitled *Saṅgīvanī*, on *Raghuvamśa* 1.8, provides support for the understanding of Kālidāsa’s stanza, which depicts through adjectives, declined in the locative case, the various stages of life (*śaiśave*, *yauvane*, *vārdhake*, and *ante*) of people in the Raghu dynasty.¹⁰² Commenting on the second half of the *pāda* (1.8), namely *yogena ante tanutyajām*,¹⁰³ referred to above, Mallinātha¹⁰⁴ states that the word *ante* occurring in the stanza refers to the time of abandoning the body (*śarīratyāgakāle*), which is a reference to the time of death. The term *yogena*, occurring in the instrumental case, points to yoga as a means, namely a meditative practice grounded on the contemplation on the higher Self (*paramātmadhyānena*). Immediately after, Mallinātha quotes verbatim from Amarasimha’s thesaurus, entitled *Amarakoṣa* or *Nāmaliṅgānuśāsana* (III.3.22). The

¹⁰¹ This expression and topic are also discussed by Samuel (2008: 128–31).

¹⁰² The specific reference to the Raghu dynasty could be read here as an example of a paradigmatic or universal pattern of existence and living in the world, which could be instantiated in the life of any person (Brāhmaṇa) who follows the example of the Raghus. In this sense, as suggested by Mallinātha’s commentary (Kale 1922: 5), a reference to the well-known four *varṇāśramadharmas* (*brahmācārīn*, *gṛhastha*, *vānaprastha*, *saṃnyāsīn/bhikṣu*) is implied in this context.

¹⁰³ This expression and topic are also discussed by Samuel (2008: 128–131).

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Kale (1922: 5).

Amarakośa presents five meanings for the lexeme “yoga”:¹⁰⁵ a) *sannahana*, “making one’s self ready,” “stripe,” “tying together,” “equipment, armour”; b) *upāya*, “means, instrument”; c) *dhyāna*, “concentration, meditation”; d) *saṅgati*, “relation, union”; and e) *yukti*, “reasoning.” What seems to be implied in Kālidāsa’s verse and Mallinātha’s analysis is a reference to the practice of yoga as a means to brace oneself for the departure from the body, namely death. Also suggested by the various meanings attributed to the term *yoga* occurring in the *Amarakośa*, hinted at by Mallinātha, is that yoga is thus a “method” to cope with the process of the abandonment of the body.

Although not ensuing from Pātañjalayoga literature, other textual sources in the Vedas and epics connect the practice of yoga with abandoning the body. This topic has been referred to elsewhere as “dying as a yogic event” (White 2009: 68), in the context of chariot warriors described in the *Mahābhārata*. In some passages, the hero performs a self-willed death and is referred to as a *yogayukta*. In this sense, the practice of yoga leads the practitioner to abandon the body as a *videhamukta* at the time of death, as other literature would term this event. Various passages from the Upaniṣads¹⁰⁶ and the epics indicate that the practice of yoga at the time of death will ensure definitive liberation. For instance, in the *Mahābhārata* (XVI.5.18–25), when Kṛṣṇa decided that the time had come to leave the body, he restrained together (*sannirudh-*) his senses, speech and mind and reached *mahāyoga*. Yet in the *Mahābhārata* there are several cases of individuals, such as Bhiṣma, Droṇa, Bhūrīśravas and Śuka, who are depicted as *yogayukta*, a term that most often appears in narratives in which dying warriors prepare themselves for the final journey to the world of the gods and enter the disk of the sun.¹⁰⁷ According to White (2009: 33, 60), there exist two types of beings who are

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Kale (1922: 5): *yogaḥ sannahanopāyadhyānasaṅgatiyuktiṣu ity amaraḥ*. For *Amarakośa*, cf. *Nāmalingānuśāsanam* (Sharma and Sardesai 1941: 274). See also Squarcini (2015: xlii–xliii), where the author provides other meanings also according to *Nānārthamañjarī* III, 264–265: *yogaḥ saṁnahanopāyadhyānasaṅgatiyuktiṣu // yogasūtre dravyalābhe viṣkambhādau ca bheṣaje*; and the *Śabdaratnapradīpa* 1.51: *yogo jātir viśeṣaś ca saṁyogo yoga ity api // yogaś cāgāmilābhaḥ syāt samādhir yoga ucyate*.

¹⁰⁶ See Gerety (2021: 225–233).

¹⁰⁷ See White 2009: 67. The reference to the ascension to the immortal realm is a theme that permeates all major schools of Indian thought, stretching back to the early Vedic fire sacrifice. Malamoud (2002: 14–15) claims that in the Vedic tradition, witnessed, for example in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* X.5, 2, 8–13 (c.8th cent. BCE), there is the notion that each living being is connected to the sun by means of a *raśmi* (ray) attached to the centre of the heart. See also, *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* VII.6.5–6 (c.7th–6th cents. BCE; Olivelle 1998: 279), and *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* I.2.11 (3rd–1st cents. BCE; Olivelle 1998: 441). By the time of the early Upaniṣads, this concept is internalized in the body of the ascetic, where the process of ascension is understood to occur along a central channel running from the heart up through the crown of the head to the sun beyond. Along this channel are situated various points of concentration, such as the heart. The ascetic, by drawing his





capable of piercing the orb of the sun and entering the immortal realm for good: the *parivrājaka* (wandering ascetic) and the *yogayukta*, one who is “yoked to yoga” at the time of death. In the *Mahābhārata*, the notion of yoga is generally aligned with the PYŚ understanding of yoga as *samādhi*, and this can also be also recognised in the practices engaged in by the *Mahābhārata*’s *yogayuktas* at the time of death. Sitting down, holding together the breaths and the senses, the ascetic—and also the warrior in the case of the *Mahābhārata*—yokes himself to yoga, and with eyes focused on the goal (eyes turning upwards), hitched to his *prāṇa* (his subtle chariot), he ascends along the ray (*raśmi*) from the central channel to pierce the sun (crown of the head) and attain *brahmaloka*.¹⁰⁸

Within the *Mahābhārata*, the *Bhagavad Gītā* (c. 2nd cent. BCE–2nd cent. CE) offers a narrative of the hero’s dying as yogic event. Through yogic dying the hero can transcend his death. In this regard, Gerety (2021: 233) quotes Malinar: “Dying is not regarded as the end, but as a ‘threshold’ which brings about another state of being.” Death is thus a transition that must be carefully prepared for by a specific training in meditation. The *Gītā* (VIII.10–13)¹⁰⁹ also has relevant verses that concern the practice of yoga at the time of death:

prayāṅakāle manasācalena
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena caiva /
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak
sa taṃ paraṃ puruṣam upaiti divyam // VIII.10 //
yad akṣaraṃ vedavido vadanti
viśanti yad yatayo vītarāgāḥ /
yad icchanto brahmacaryaṃ caranti
tat te padaṃ saṃgrahaṇa pravakṣye // VIII.11 //
sarvadvārāṇi saṃyamya
mano hṛdi nirudhya ca /
mūrdhny ādhāyātmanaḥ prāṇam
āsthito yogadhāraṇām // VIII.12 //
om ity ekākṣaraṃ brahma
vyāharan mām anusmaran /

senses inwards and focusing his breath on this central channel, is equipped to ascend to the sun and enter the immortal realm. Over the next millennium, this ascension-body model is progressively developed into a number of systematised, internal, yogic maps of the body.

¹⁰⁸ This belief can be traced back to *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* VI.10–11 (Olivelle 1998: 401).

¹⁰⁹ As translated in McLaughlin (2021: 10). For the Sanskrit text, see GRETIL edition, accessed: http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/2_epic/mbh/ext/bhgce_u.htm.

yaḥ prayāti tyajan deham

sa yāti paramāṃ gatim // VIII.13 //

At the time of death, with unmoving mind, and yoked with devotion by the power of *yoga*, having caused the *prāṇa*, the vital breath, to enter the middle of the eyebrows, he, fully absorbed, goes up to the divine Supreme Being (VIII.10).

That which the knowers of the Vedas call the imperishable, which the ascetics, free from passion, enter, desiring which they undertake the celibate life, that step I will explain to you briefly (VIII.11).

Having closed all the gates to the body, and restrained the mind in the heart, having placed one's vital breath in the head, established in the concentration of *yoga* (VIII.12).

Uttering “*Om*,” the single-syllable that is Brahman and remembering me, he, who dies abandoning the body [in this way], goes to the supreme (VIII.13).

Concerning the topic of “dying as a yogic event,” it is interesting to note how in current Hindi parlance the term *samādhi* is used to refer to a burial site. In South Asia, since the time of the older Upaniṣads (McLaughlin, 2021: 9–13), it is common practice that when death comes to exemplary yoga practitioners or sages, their perfected body is generally buried rather than cremated, and the burial site indicated by a special marker.¹¹⁰ Such a burial site is called a *samādhi*. In its functional aspect, the *samādhi* shrine has resonances with Buddhist and Jaina *stūpas* and Sufi *dargāhs* (tomb/shrine). Jñāneśvar's *samādhi* shrine is believed to date from the late 13th century, after which time many of the datable Hindu *samādhi* sites were established.

Conclusion: Fading Into Death Through *Nirodha*

In conclusion, this study has aimed to provide evidence for the occurrence, use and meaning of the death simile *mṛtavat/mṛtakavat*, when connected with the cessative practice of *nirodha*. The similitive expression *mṛtavat/mṛtakavat* simply describes not only how the yoga practitioner outwardly appears like a cadaver, but it also conveys the

¹¹⁰ See Bühnenmann (2007); Bakker (2007). In some ascetic traditions, the deceased body of the *guru* is immersed in water, a practice known as *jalasamādhi* (water burial). See Kane (1974: 938–42); Pandey (1969: 256–57).



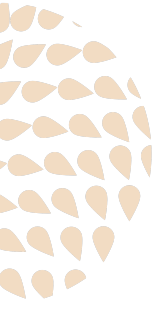


image of the extraordinary psycho-physical immobility or stillness of *asamprajñātasamādhi*, which is a condition that is necessary to attain the purpose of *Pātañjalayoga*, namely, the state of *kaivalya*. Moreover, remaining in a quasi-death-like state is proof of the orthopraxis of yoga. It signifies the mastery of the yoga praxis of cessation (*nirodha*), achieved mainly through breath control and seated meditation posture (*āsana*) practice (PYŚ II.46-47). This mastery leads to the full attainment of *asamprajñātasamādhi*, which conquers death and the five afflictions (*kleśa*), including the will to live (*abhiniveśa*, cf. PYŚ II.9). Having attained contentless *samādhi*, two paths are viable: to return to the world as a *jīvanmukta*, in the case where the practitioner still has seeds of karma to burn; or to abandon the body at the time of death as a *videhamukta*. In the former case, this state is apparently connected to the condition of death, temporarily entailing the cessation of any sort of psycho-physical stimuli. Although the yoga practitioner has voluntarily ceased his psycho-physical functions, he is nonetheless able to return to his body and the ordinary functions of the mind. In the latter case, by inducing one's own death, yoga can also be a method to abandon the body at the time of death.

As discussed above, the term *nirodha* describes the fundamental cessative attitude and all-encompassing practice that applies to all of the psycho-physical stages of *Pātañjalayoga*, which the practitioner has to observe. This reading and comprehensive definition of yoga as *nirodha* (cf. YS I.2: *yogaś cittavṛttinirodhaḥ*) is also suggested by Vācaspatimiśra.¹¹¹ It is only through the steady and persistent performance of *nirodha* that the practitioner fades into the dead-like state depicted as *mṛtavat* or *mṛtakavat*. What follows is a hypothetical reconstruction of the process of *nirodha*, as described in the *yogaśāstra* of Pātañjali. The texts present a precise technique of meditative absorption, in which the mind is progressively emptied of its content. This psycho-physical vacuum is realized through a process, sketched below, of the inhibition of the mind's states and functions, following four different registers of *nirodha*:¹¹²

¹¹¹ Cf. TV/PYŚ I.1 (TV 1919: 2, 23–24): *pravṛttinimittam tu yogaśabdasya cittavṛttinirodha eveti paramārthaḥ*. In his previous statement, Vācaspati stated that the use of the term *yoga* is to be derived from the verbal root *yuj-* in the sense of *samādhi*, namely absorption, and not in the sense of (ordinary) conjunction (*yuja samādhau ity asmād vyutpannaḥ samādhyaṛtho na tu yujir yogē ity asmāt saṃyogārtha ity arthaḥ*). In this reading of *yoga*, *samādhi* results exclusively from yogic practices (*vyutpattinimittamātrābhīdhānaṃ ca etad yogah samādhir iti*).

¹¹² This reconstruction is hypothetical and elaborated for heuristic reasons, as the PYŚ does not provide specific details of the dynamics of *nirodha*. However, scattered in the PYŚ a distinction can be discerned between different levels or aspects of *nirodha*. Among these, two generic forms can be detected, which, in turn, can be further analysed into four sub-forms. The two main typologies of *nirodha* can be here labelled as generic forms, namely *samprajñātasamādhi* and *asamprajñātasamādhi*. These two concern the distinct

1. *Cittavṛttinirodha*: the first negation is achieved by accomplishing cessation (*nirodha*) of any sort of *cittavṛttis*, that is to the five-fold classification of mental occurrences (cf. YS I.6: *pramāṇaviparyayavikalpanidrāsmṛtayah*). This level can be characterized as full awareness of *vivekakhyaṭi*.

2. *Pratyayanirodha*: the second negation comprises a further application of *nirodha* to any stimulus that stimulates *cittavṛttis*. This practice, known as *virāmapratyaya*, eradicates any concept (*pratyaya*) in the mind. In this state, the mind's content is marked only by the subliminal impressions that are left over (*saṃskāraśeṣa*) from the practice of *virāmapratyaya*. This form of practice is described in YS I.18, III.9. Once this threshold is surpassed, the door to *dharmameghasamādhi*, *ṛtambharaprajñā*,¹¹³ *nirbījasamādhi*,¹¹⁴ and *asamprajñātasamādhi* is opened.¹¹⁵

3. *Samskāranirodha*: this practice leads to the cessation of *saṃskāras* and their relative deposits (*āśaya*, cf. YS I.24; II.12), whose function consists, through the *vāsanās* (cf. YS/ YBh IV.8), in giving shape to individual psycho-physical stimuli (*pratyayas*) and mental

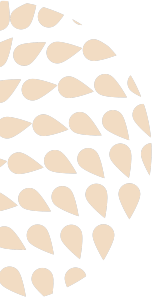
application of *nirodha* to *citta* in its emergent state (*vyutthāna*) and the different levels of *samāpatti* up to *asmitā*, and to *citta* in its *niruddha* state.

¹¹³ The expression *ṛtambhara* occurs in YS I.48 and YBh/YS III.51, but it does not receive a specific explanation, except for a tautological one in YBh/YS I.48: *tasmin samāhitacittasya yā prajñā jāyate tasyā ṛtambhareti saṃjñā bhavati. anvarthā ca sā satyam eva bibharti na tatra viparyagandho 'py astīti. Ṛtambhara*, according to YBh/YS III.51 (YBh 1919: 169, 3), is a peculiar state taking place in those yoga practitioners of the *madhubhūmika* class: *ṛtambharaprajñā dvitīyāḥ*. The complete taxonomy of the types of yoga practitioners also includes *prathamakalpika*, *prajñājyotis* and *atīkrāntabhāvanīya*, cf. YBh/YS III.51 (YBh 1919: 169, 1–2): *catvāraḥ khalv amī yoginaḥ prāthamakalpiko madhubhūmikaḥ prajñājyotir atīkrāntabhāvanīyaś ceti*.

¹¹⁴ *Nirbīja* is mentioned in YBh/YS I.2 (*atas tasyām viraktaṃ cittaṃ tām api khyātiṃ niruṇaddhi. tadavasthaṃ saṃskāropagaṃ bhavati. sa nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ*); as already seen, in YBh/YS I.18 (*eṣa nirbījaḥ samādhir asaṃprajñātaḥ*); in YS I.51 (*tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhān nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ*) and in YS III.8 (*tad api bahiraṅgaṃ nirbījasya*) where it is stated that the three *antaraṅgas*, namely *dhāraṇā/dhyāna/samādhi*, are regarded as “outer members,” that is aids (here *bahiraṅgas*, in the sense of auxiliary or secondary means), to attain contentless absorption.

¹¹⁵ *Asamprajñāta*, as well its opposite, is an interesting expression which has often puzzled translators such as Jha (1907) who renders it as “unconscious,” or Dvivedi's (1943) “Ultra-cognitive.” However, considering that the form *a/samprajñāta* is a past passive participle, and as such is rendered as “distinguished, discerned, accurately known.” If this term is not properly contextualized, it may lead one to ignore the function and role of the object of concentration/absorption, which amounts to what is known or not-known in *samādhi*. Cf. YBh/YS I.1, where *asamprajñāta* is related to *nirbījasamādhi*: *sa nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ / na tatra kiṃcit saṃprajñāyata ity asaṃprajñātaḥ*; in YBh/YS I.2: *sarvavṛttinirodhe tv asaṃprajñātaḥ samādhiḥ*; YBh/YS I.18.





events (*cittavṛttis*).¹¹⁶ The cessation of *saṃskāras* can also be described as *sarvanirodha*, mentioned in YS I.51, which is also characterised as *nirbījasamādhi*.¹¹⁷ This represents the final application of *nirodha* to the *saṃskāras*, whose annihilation leads to *kaivalya*, the ultimate goal of yoga.

4. *Nirodhasamādhi*: this state is one in which there is the complete cessation of any mental stimulus. It is equivalent to *nirbījasamādhi*, and corresponds to *kaivalya* (*dr̥śeh kaivalyam*).¹¹⁸

It is in reference to this last form of *nirodha* that the various similes of death become fully pertinent. Chronologically, these kinds of metaphors are evident in the *Haṭhapradīpikā* of Svātmārāma (who uses the terms *kāṣṭhavat* and *mṛtavat*), the YV of Vijñānabhikṣu (who refers to *mṛtakavat*), and the PYV of Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa (who also uses the term *mṛtavat*). As analysed above, the seemingly dead-like state attained by the yoga practitioner during *asamprajñātasamādhi* is the final goal of *Pātañjalayoga*. It is not an actual death, rather its opposite, which is the condition of being fully alive in the realm of *puruṣa*, even though psycho-physical bodily functions are put to rest. To realise the *puruṣa* and let it fully shine, effort and world-renouncing practices are therefore imperative.¹¹⁹ In this sense, by inhibiting and renouncing social bonds, and finding stillness of mind and body, the yoga practitioner seems as if *dead*.

¹¹⁶ It is interesting to note that the PYŚ talks of two varieties of *saṃskāras*, as stated in YS III.9: a) *vyutthānasamskāra*, namely the subliminal-activators of the emergent-state of consciousness; and b) *nirodhasamskāra*, the subliminal-activators of the restricted-state of consciousness. In YS I.50 another *saṃskāra* is mentioned. This *saṃskāra* is born from insight (*prajñā*) and obstructs the other *saṃskāras*. That the *saṃskāras* are related to past activities can be read in YS III.18, where is told that they are the causes, in the form of subliminal traces (*vāsanā*), of memory and afflictions, and also the causes of fruition (*vipāka*) of right or bad actions (*dvaye khalv amī saṃskārāḥ smṛtikleśahetavo vāsanārūpā vipākahetavo dharmādharmarūpāḥ*).

¹¹⁷ Cf. YS I.51: *tasyāpi nirodhe sarvanirodhān nirbījaḥ samādhiḥ*: “Since everything has ceased when even [*prajñāsaṃskāra*] has ceased, seedless *samādhi* arises.

¹¹⁸ Cf. YS II.25 (YS 1919: 96, 5–6): *tadabhāvāt saṃyogābhāvo hānaṃ tadr̥śeh kaivalyam*: “By means of the annihilation of this [*avidyā*, cf. YS II.24: *asya hetur avidyā*], the correlation disappears. This is cessation, the contentlessness of that seeing.” Also cf. YBh/YS II.25 (YBh 1919: 96, 8–9): *tadr̥śeh kaivalyaṃ puruṣasyāmiśrībhāvaḥ punar asaṃyogo guṇair ity arthaḥ*: “This is the cessation, the contentlessness of that seeing, the unmixed state of the Self; in other words, the state in which [the *puruṣa*] is not again correlated with world-constituents (*guṇa*).”

¹¹⁹ In the commentarial literature, there are nevertheless critics of *Pātañjalayoga*. Abhinavagupta’s first *āhnika* of *Tantrāloka* (see Torella 2019) lists the uselessness of *yogāṅgas* (*yogāṅgānupayogitva*); and in the ninth chapter of the *Haṃsavilāsa* of Haṃsamitṭṭhu, a *śaiva* Gujarati author born in 1738 CE (see Vasudeva 2011), there are similar objections. An anonymous opponent’s opinion is reported by the *naiyāyika*

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ABBREVIATIONS

BS	<i>Brahmasūtra</i> by Bādarāyana
CU	<i>Chāndogya Upaniṣad</i>
HP	<i>Hathapradīpikā</i> by Svātmarāma
PYŚ	<i>Pātañjalayogaśāstra</i> (YS and YBh)
PYV	<i>Pātañjalayogasūtravṛtti</i> by Nāgeśa Bhaṭṭa
RM	<i>Rājamārtaṇḍa</i> by Bojarāja
TV	<i>Tattvavaiśāradi</i> by Vācaspatimīśra
VAB	<i>Vijñānamṛtabhāṣyam</i> by Vijñānabhikṣu
YBh	<i>Yogabhāṣya</i>

Pakṣilasvāmin Vātsyāyana (4th–5th cents. CE) in regard to *apavarga*, or liberation. As quoted in Bronkhorst (2000: 37, fn. 114), although not here directly addressing the *yogadarśana*, Vātsyāyana in his *Nyāyabhāṣya* on *Nyāyasūtra* I.1.2 (1967: 150), citing an example of wrong ideas (*mithyājñāna*), states that, “Emancipation (i.e., liberation) is dreadful. It consists, as a matter of fact, in the cessation of all effects. Since emancipation is separation from everything, much that is good is lost in it. How could, therefore, a wise man find pleasure in this state of emancipation, in which all happiness has been cut off and which is without consciousness?” (*apavargo bhīṣmaḥ / sa khalv ayaṃ sarvakāryoparamaḥ sarvaviprayoge 'pavarge bahu ca bhadraḥ lopyata iti kathaṃ buddhimān sarvasukhocchedam acaitanyam amum apavargaṃ rocayed iti*). That final release, namely *apavarga*, is central to the Nyāya philosophical system is clear in Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* (cf. I.1.2: *duḥkhajanmapravṛttidoṣamithyājñānām uttarottarāpāye tadanantarāpāyād apavargaḥ*), where it is referred to as the result of the progressive cessation of sorrow, birth, activity, defect, and wrong ideas (*mithyājñāna*). That the *Pātañjalayoga* is not the type of yoga promoted by the *Nyāyasūtra* and *Bhāṣya* is discussed by Bronkhorst (1981: 310), and Bhattacharya (2004: 6 fn.1, 93). However, in the sense of liberation, the term *apavarga* occurs thirteen times in the PYŚ, and is witnessed in YS II.18 (cf. YS 1919: 81, 5–6: *prakāśakriyāsthitiśīlam bhūtendriyātmakam bhogāpavargārthaṃ dṛśyam*), where the term is used in combination with experience (*bhoga*) to qualify the fundamental objectives of *dṛśya*, “that which is to be seen, or the object,” namely *prakṛti*.



- YVi Pātañjalayogaśāstravivaraṇa/Pātañjalayogasūtrabhāṣyavivaraṇam by Śaṅkara (?)
YS Yogasūtra
YV Yogavārttika by Vijñānabhikṣu

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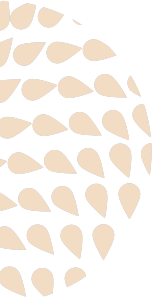
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