

*Interplay of Sāṅkhya and Buddhist
Ideas in the Yoga of Patañjali
(with Special Reference to Yogasūtra
and Yogabhāṣya)¹*

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I

The question of the exact characterisation of philosophy in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* does not seem to be settled as yet. The tradition talks of the dual system namely, Sāṅkhya-Yoga. Patañjali's philosophy of Yoga has been sometimes called Patañjala-Sāṅkhya, but it is yet differentiated from Kapila's Sāṅkhya in that the former incorporates the concept of *īśvara* which the latter does not. On account of this difference Patañjali's Yoga has also been named *Seśvara Sāṅkhya*² or theistic Sāṅkhya.

But the description of Yoga as theistic Sāṅkhya does not seem to be correct because *īśvara* in Patañjali's Yoga is not God in the sense of the creator of the world or even the efficient or material cause of the world.³ The *īśvara* of Yoga carries all the characteristics of Sāṅkhya *puruṣa* in their ideal form. The *puruṣa* of Sāṅkhya system, though free by its very nature, is apparently in bondage due to its union with *prakṛti*. The *īśvara* of Yoga is *puruṣa-viśeṣa* (a special conscious being) (YS 1.24) in that it is not even touched by any possibility of bondage in the form of afflictions, actions or latent impressions of past actions. In contrast, the *īśvara* of Yoga is not even touched by any possibility of bondage in the form of afflictions, actions or latent impressions of past actions. As a result, the *īśvara* is an ideal

puruṣa to whom Patañjali ascribes omniscience (YS 1.25) but not omnipotence. This *īśvara* is also supposed to be the teacher of teachers (YS 1.26), because as the ideal *puruṣa* free from ignorance, he can be looked upon as a guiding star, as an exemplar by everyone. But he is not an object of devotion (*bhakti*) in the traditional sense of the term. If *īśvara-praṇidhāna* means devotion to *īśvara*, then it is devotion in the sense of meditative surrender. Utterance of the word 'Om' which becomes a part of this devotion is for paying attention to its referent viz. *īśvara* (YS 1.27-28). The interpretation of *īśvara-praṇidhāna*, as surrendering all actions to Him (*sarvakriyāṇām arpaṇam*)(VB on YS 2.1), as offered by Vyāsa⁴ and other commentators, is misplaced because it is contrary to Patañjali's concept of *īśvara* as a being completely untouched by actions. It is possible that these commentators being themselves under theistic influence have interpreted *īśvara-praṇidhāna* as theistic devotion. Some later commentators who were under the influence of Advaita-Vedānta have also projected their views on Pātañjali Yoga. The *īśvara* of Patañjali according to them achieves the status of omniscient, omnipotent and prime cause Brahman.

But the undesirable consequence of these influences was that the original conceptual setting of the *Yogasūtra* was disguised or even distorted by the commentaries written under these influences. It becomes necessary, therefore, to unearth the original setting of the *sūtras* and to analyse its complex structure anew.

II

Though the legacy of Sāṅkhya in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* is undeniable, it is visible mainly as forming the transcendental metaphysical framework of Patañjali's teaching. We find that the categories of Sāṅkhya system like *prakṛti*, *puruṣa*, *mahat*, and *ahamkāra* are mostly of transcendental (non-empirical) character. The Sāṅkhya way to the so-called emancipation (*kaivalya*: isolation of *puruṣa* from *prakṛti*) goes through the discriminative knowledge of these abstract categories. This emancipatory knowledge according to the Sāṅkhya is again not empirical or meditative but intellectual and speculative. The concept of meditative realisation is absent from the classical Sāṅkhya system. Patañjali's main teaching which is enveloped in this framework is, however, empirical and practical to a large extent.

Patañjali emphasises the goal called *samādhi* which one has to attain through practice and make it a matter of experience. The vision (*prajñā*) which one attains through the practice of *samādhi* is again a direct vision. It is not of an abstract or speculative kind.

In Sāṅkhyakārikā, Īśvarakṛṣṇa talks of eight forms (*bhāva*) of the intellect, four of which are *sāttvika* and four *tāmasa*. *Dharma*, *jñāna*, *vairāgya* and *aśvarya* are the *sāttvika* forms (SK 23). Regulation of conduct comes under *dharma*, whereas the emancipatory knowledge is *jñāna*. In this Sāṅkhya system, *dharma*, though a *sāttvika* form of the intellect, is a means to bondage and only *jñāna* is the way to emancipation. So, moral regulation of conduct does not have any direct role to play in Sāṅkhya theory of emancipation. On the other hand moral regulation of conduct through *yamas* and *niyamas* is essential for mastering *samādhi* according to Patañjali.

The empirical-practical orientation of Patañjali's Yoga therefore does not seem to be rooted in Sāṅkhya. Though it is difficult to trace the exact source of this orientation, it seems certain that this source does contain many elements which can be traced to Buddhism and a few which can be traced to Jainism.

Some orthodox scholars of Yoga have a tendency to claim that Patañjali's Yoga being prior to Jainism and Buddhism the latter two might have borrowed many ideas from the former and not vice-versa. It is forgotten that the oldest commentary of Yoga, namely *Vyāsabhāṣya* interprets some aphorisms from the fourth chapter of *Yogasūtra* as Patañjali's criticism of Yogācāra Buddhism.⁵ The modern scholars, on the other hand, accept 2nd to 5th century A.D. as the possible time of the creation of *Yogasūtra*. If this view is acceptable then our study of *Yogasūtra* will have to take a different form. The more important question, however, seems to be of identifying the background literature of *Yogasūtra*. *Sūtra* literature of any school is generally understood as crystallization or abbreviation of the elaborate background literature which is already available. For example, the background literature of *Mīmāṃsā-sūtras* is Brāhmaṇa texts and that of *Brahmasūtra* is Upaniṣads. Though elaborate literature of Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika schools is not found before their *sūtras*, at least their earlier forms are seen in works like Carakasamhitā. Now coming to *Yogasūtra* of Patañjali, its metaphysical

framework can be traced to Sāṅkhya literature which was already available. But when we search for the background literature of the practical and experiential aspect of *Yogasūtra*, we find it rarely in the orthodox (Vedic) tradition.⁶ On the other hand, a large number of concepts constituting this aspect are found mentioned, explained and discussed elaborately in the literature of Śramaṇa tradition in general and Buddhism in particular. *Yogasūtra* therefore can be understood better in the light of Sāṅkhya, as well as, Buddhist (and Jaina) literature.

Both Patañjali in *Yogasūtra* and Vyāsa in his *Bhāṣya* use Buddhist terms, concepts and doctrines while explaining the empirical and practical aspect of Yoga. But they do not acknowledge the legacy of the Buddha or Buddhist literature anywhere.⁷ What could be the reason? One might claim here that the Yogic tradition which was available to Patañjali and Vyāsa already contained many elements of Buddhism, but they were so assimilated with the Yogic tradition that their separate identity was blurred or vanished. This explanation is not fully satisfactory because there are clear indications of the fact that these authors were aware of the separate identity of Buddhism. They were aware of the Buddhist doctrine of momentariness and also of the idealist school of Buddhism and they were also critical about them.⁸ It seems that they were ready to accept the Buddhist ideas concerning the theory and practice of meditation but did not want to accept the theories of 'mind only' and momentariness which were associated with them. There they wanted to stick to Sāṅkhya theory of Realism and two-fold eternality.⁹ They might have thought that it is possible to accommodate Buddhist practical theory of meditation and still maintain the Sāṅkhya identity of the system. This could be the reason why they borrowed many themes from the Buddhist tradition but did not acknowledge them.¹⁰

Another related question is: If Patañjali and Vyāsa borrowed many things from the Buddhist tradition, what could be the Buddhist text or texts which they might have followed? They must not have followed *Yogācāra* or *Mādhyamika* texts. Some scholars have compared concepts of Pātañjali-yoga with Pali Buddhism. For example, La Vallee Poussin (Bhave 1992) has compared aphorisms of Yoga with *Abhidharmakośa*, as well as, Pali Buddhism. S. N Tandon (1998), on the other hand, has focused only on Pali sources. However, though the content of Pātañjali-yoga is close to Pali Buddhist texts, it is most likely that they did not follow the texts in Pali/Magadhi language, but some texts in Sanskrit Buddhism. The texts like

Yogācārabhūmi and *Abhidharmasamuccaya* of Asaṅga and *Abhidharmakośa* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu seem to be very relevant in this context.

It is important to take the points of similarity between Pātañjali-yoga and Buddhism seriously not only in order to consider how Buddhist background literature on meditation might have influenced Patañjali and Vyāsa, but also in order to understand some of the concepts in Pātañjali-yoga in a right perspective. Take for instance the two technical terms, *nirodha* and *kleśa*, they are central to Pātañjali-yoga. I want to suggest that if these terms are interpreted independently of Buddhist background, they are likely to mislead us. In classical Sanskrit, *nirodha* is generally taken to mean suppression¹¹ and *kleśa* is taken to mean affliction or pain.¹² If we accept these meanings in the context of Patañjali's Yoga, then the definition of 'yoga' as '*citta-vṛtti-nirodha*' will be understood as 'suppression of the states of mind' and the five types of *kleśa* will be understood as five types of afflictions or pains. As against this, *nirodha* in the Buddhist context means cessation and *kleśa*¹³ means defilement or impurity. These meanings throw better light on the Pātañjali-yoga concepts. Yoga as the state of meditative trance makes better sense if it is understood as the cessation (which can be natural or spontaneous) of mental states, rather than their suppression (which is generally deliberate or forced).¹⁴ Similarly it makes better sense to call misconception and desire as impurities rather than as kinds of pains. In fact there is scope for interpreting the whole of Pātañjali-yoga in the Buddhist light, as a synthesis of Sāṅkhya and Buddhism. It will be a big task worth undertaking by the scholars of Buddhism and Pātañjali-yoga.

Here I would like to focus on the theme in a limited way. I want to show that due to the dual influence of Sāṅkhya and Buddhism, we many a times find Patañjali's thought oscillating between the two systems of thought. Put it differently, we sometimes find a kind of interplay of Sāṅkhya and Buddhist ideas in Patañjali's *Yogasūtra*. In what follows I will try to understand this interplay of Sāṅkhya and Buddhist elements with special reference to three notions (a) *cittavṛttinirodha*, (b) the cause of suffering, (c) *avidyā* and *prajñā*.

III

(a) The notion of *citta-vṛtti-nirodha*

Patañjali defines yoga as *citta-vṛtti-nirodha*. The concept of *citta*, which is central to the philosophy of Yoga is not basically a Sāṅkhya concept. Were Patañjali under the full influence of Sāṅkhya, he would have used the term *buddhi* or *antaḥkaraṇa* in place of *citta*. The concept of *citta*, on the other hand, is of central importance in Buddhism. Patañjali's concept of *cittavṛtti* is closely similar to the Buddhist concept of *caitta* or *cetasika*. The difference is that Patañjali offers two different classifications of *cittavṛttis*. The five-fold classification¹⁵ is oriented to epistemology, whereas the twofold classification into *kliṣṭa* and *akliṣṭa* (defiled and non-defiled) is oriented to moral psychology and soteriology. The fivefold classification is partly rooted in Sāṅkhya epistemology which accepts three means to knowledge namely *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *āgama*. But it also seems to be influenced by the Buddhist epistemology in its acceptance of *vikalpa* (mental construction) as a cognitive state. However, unlike Patañjali's classification of *cittavṛttis*, the Buddhist classification of *caittas* is not primarily epistemic, but moral-psychological-cum-soteriological. Hence through the twofold classification of *cittavṛttis*, Patañjali seems to be synthesising Sāṅkhya epistemology with Buddhist moral psychology. Having identified *cittavṛtti* with *caitta* we can say that *cittavṛttinirodha* of Patañjali in Buddhist terminology will be *caittanirodha*. The highest state of meditative trance in the Buddhist theory of meditation is called *samjñā-vedayita-nirodha* (cessation of perception as well as sensation),¹⁶ which according to Vasubandhu is *citta-caitta-nirodha* (cessation of mind and mental states).¹⁷

Patañjali, however, does not set aside the Sāṅkhya framework completely even while defining yoga as *cittavṛttinirodha*. In the very next aphorism (YS, I.3) he brings in the concept of the seer (*draṣṭā*) and describes its role in this highest stage of meditative trance. He points out that the seer, *draṣṭā* (which the commentators identify with *puruṣa*), who otherwise would assimilate the self with modifications of mind, remains in the original state (that of witness – consciousness) at this stage.

The notion of *citta-vṛtti-nirodha* does not presuppose any eternal entity by itself. *Citta-vṛtti-nirodha* in Pātañjali yoga is often identified with *samādhi*. *Samādhi* in Buddhism is defined as single-pointedness of mind (“*ekāgratā cittasya*”), where neither the mind nor the single object on which it concentrates is regarded as eternal. *Nirvāṇa*, which is identified with *nirodha* in Buddhism, is described in *Abhidharmakośa* as an unconditioned phenomenon (*asamskṛta-dharma*),¹⁸ but it is described not as a positive entity, nor does it presuppose the existence of any eternal positive entity. As against this, Patañjali’s description of *samādhi* in terms of *draṣṭā* (identified with the Sāṅkhya *puruṣa*) is eternalistic. Patañjali in this way tries to synthesise the non-eternalistic Buddhist model with the eternalistic Sāṅkhya framework.

(b) Duḥkha and its cause

The Buddha said that all composite things are objects of suffering. One of the explanations was that every composite thing (*samskāra*) is impermanent, and impermanence makes it unsatisfactory. Sometimes a broader explanation was given. According to it everything is an object of suffering in any of the three ways (i) *duḥkhaduḥkhatā*: certain things are objects of suffering because they are painful in themselves, (ii) *samskāraduḥkhatā*: certain things are objects of suffering because they are composite (*samskāra*) in nature (and hence are subject to destruction), (iii) *vipariṇāmaduḥkhatā*: certain things are objects of suffering because they result into suffering. This threefold explanation of suffering is called the doctrine of *trividha-duḥkhatā*.¹⁹ Following this Buddhist understanding, Patañjali maintains in *Yogasūtra* 2.15 that everything is an object of suffering according to a wise (discriminating) person. Here he supports this thesis by giving an explanation in terms of *trividha-duḥkhatā* (“*pariṇāma-tāpa-samskāra-duḥkhaiḥ*”).

The above explanation of suffering appears to be largely empirical. Though Patañjali accepts it, he is not fully satisfied with it as he has also accepted at the same time the metaphysical framework of Sāṅkhya. Hence, in the same aphorism he supplements the empirical explanation with a typically Sāṅkhya metaphysical

explanation. He gives the latter in terms of mutual opposition amongst the strands of *prakṛti* (*guṇavṛttivirodhāt*).

Just as Patañjali brings the Buddhist and Sāṅkhya elements together in his explanation of the unsatisfactory character of all things, he does in his analysis of the origin of suffering, as well. In *Yogasūtra* 2.3 to 2.15, he gives a casual explanation of suffering in terms of *kleśas* (defects or defilements of mind) which is largely empirical and influenced by the Buddhist explanation. Asaṅga in *Abhidharmasamuccaya* refers to six *kleśas* (ADS, p. 43). In *Abhidharmakośa* Chapter V, Vasubandhu discusses six *anuśayas* (latent tendencies) which he identifies with *kleśas* (defilements).²⁰ They are *rāga* (desire), *pratigha* (hatred), *māna* (ego, pride), *avidyā* (misconception), *dṛṣṭi* (dogmatic view) and *vicikitsā* (doubt).²¹ Except *vicikitsā*, the remaining five are comparable to the five *kleśas* namely *raga*,²² *dveṣa*, *asmitā*,²³ *avidyā* and *abhiniveśa*²⁴ respectively from Patañjali's list. In Patañjali's explanation in terms of *kleśas*, *avidyā* stands for the fundamental defilement, the root-cause of all sufferings. (We shall see that Patañjali defines *avidyā* in a typically Buddhist fashion). The last three *kleśas* in Patañjali's list correspond to the three kinds of *tṛṣṇā* accepted in Buddhism, namely, *kāmatṛṣṇā*, *vibhavatṛṣṇā* and *bhavatṛṣṇā* (desire of pleasure, aversion and desire to be born that is, fear of death) respectively. In *Yogasūtra* 2.16 to 2.18, Patañjali comes back to the Sāṅkhya explanation of the cause of suffering. Here the union of *prakṛti* (*dṛśya*) and *puruṣa* (*draṣṭā*) is itself regarded as the cause of suffering that needs to be avoided.

Thus, we find that Patañjali presents Buddhist-style explanation and the Sāṅkhya-style explanation of the cause of suffering almost separately. He presents them in juxtaposition but does not relate them or formulate any clear synthesis of them. It is possible that Patañjali wants to arrive at a synthesis between the two by distinguishing between subtle and gross defilements. In *Yogasūtra* 2.10 and 2.11, he suggests that the gross manifestations of *kleśas* could be overcome with the help of meditation, but the subtle *kleśas* can be overcome only by the reverse process by which the manifestations of *Prakṛti* merge into their origin. Thus, the Sāṅkhya metaphysics seems to operate at a subtle level and the Buddhist theory and practice of overcoming sufferings at gross level. This the distinction made by Patañjali has its background in Vasubandhu's distinction between *bhāvanā*-

heya-kleśa and *darśana-heya-kleśa*.²⁵ For Vasubandhu, gross defilements such as lust and hatred can be abandoned with the help of meditation. But subtler defilements such as misconception and dogmatic views can be abandoned with the help of right vision. This right vision for Vasubandhu is the vision regarding the four noble truths and impermanence of all things. Though Patañjali accepts the basic distinction between the two types of *kleśas* to be abandoned by meditation and right vision respectively, he replaces the Buddhist conception of right vision by the Sāṅkhya concept of right vision, which consists in discrimination between *prakṛti* and *puruṣa* (which is followed by the merger of all manifestations into *prakṛti*: 'pratiprasava'). Hence he replaces Vasubandhu's 'darśana-heya' by 'pratiprasava-heya'. The situation, however, seems to be more complex than this, because Patañjali's concepts of *avidyā* and *prajñā* are again dominated by Buddhist-style considerations.

(c) Avidyā and prajñā

The Yoga concept of *avidyā* has not always been understood very clearly. Vyāsa and other commentators have identified *avidyā* with *viparyaya*, one of the *citta-vṛttis*. But though *avidyā* could be construed as a special kind of *viparyaya*, it cannot be identified with *viparyaya* as such. Any false cognition or a misidentification is *viparyaya*. But *avidyā* which is at the root of all *kleśas* is a special kind of misidentification, which is quite different from the misidentification we come across in our daily life.

Though *avidyā* cannot be identified with *viparyaya*, which is a kind of *cittavṛtti*, it is not irrelevant to *cittavṛttis* in general. As we have seen, Patañjali advances two classifications of *citta-vṛttis*. One is a two-fold classification into *kliṣṭa* and *akliṣṭa*,²⁶ which has been made from a moral-spiritual point of view. The other is the five-fold classification into *pramāṇa*, *viparyaya*, *vikalpa*, *nidrā* and *smṛti* (YS 1.6), which has been made from epistemological point of view. That a particular state of mind is epistemologically veridical or non-veridical does not necessarily imply that it is morally-spiritually sound or unsound (respectively). *Pramāṇa-citta-vṛtti* (true cognition) is epistemologically sound. But a person may be inclined to

have a true cognition out of some desire or aversion or confusion about what is permanent and what is impermanent. In that case the same state of mind would be called defiled (*kliṣṭa*)— a morally–spiritually unsound state. On the other hand, certain illusions, though they are epistemologically non-veridical states of mind, may not be defiled states, as they may not involve desire or aversion. A stick half-immersed into water, for instance, looks bent even to an emancipated person.

Avidyā, according to Patañjali, is the ground of all other defilements. It is therefore more correct to include *avidyā* in the two-fold classification of *citta-vṛttis* into defiled and non-defiled (*kliṣṭa* and *akliṣṭa*) than in the five-fold classification into *pramāṇa*, *viparyaya* etc.

Though the concept of *avidyā* cannot be identified with the Yoga concept of *viparyaya*, it can be identified with the Buddhist concept of *viparyāsa*. Both the concepts, *avidyā* of Yoga and *viparyāsa* of Buddhism stand for wrongly identifying impermanent things as permanent, impure things as pure, unpleasant things as pleasant and soul-less things as soul-possessing.²⁷ This concept of *avidyā/viparyāsa* is a typically Buddhist concept in that it presupposes that all phenomena are non-eternal and non-substantial (soul-less). On the other hand, we have typically eternalistic and substantialist versions of *avidyā* upheld by the systems like Sāṅkhya and Vedānta. These systems accept the existence of both: an eternal reality on the one hand and the non-eternal phenomenal world on the other. They talk of beings possessing the substance called self or soul as against the empirical phenomena not possessing it. So, wrongly identifying the non-eternal as the eternal as well as the eternal as the non-eternal would amount to *avidyā* in these systems. Similarly, wrongly identifying soul-less things as the soul-possessing ones and soul-possessing things as the soul-less ones would amount to it. That Patañjali does not present his concept of *avidyā* in such an eternalistic fashion but presents it in a typically Buddhist fashion clearly indicates that there he is under the influence of Buddhism.

The Buddhist-style conception of *avidyā* which does not presuppose any eternal entity would be thought to be inadequate or at least incomplete in an eternalistic framework. And since Patañjali had accepted the eternalistic framework of Sāṅkhya, he might have felt unsatisfied with the non-eternalistic conception of

avidyā which he himself presented. This might have led him to come back to Sāṅkhya framework in the very next aphorism²⁸ where he defines the second *kleśa* namely, *asmitā* (ego). Patañjali defines it as a false union of *drkśakti* and *darśanaśakti*. By *drkśakti* Patañjali means *draṣṭā*, the seer, that is, *puruṣa*. By *darśanaśakti* he refers to 'seeing', which is the active aspect of cognition. *Darśanaśakti* thus refers to *buddhi* of the Sāṅkhya system, which is responsible for all cognitive activities. Vyāsa, the commentator, substantiates this interpretation by referring to Pañcaśikha's statement that the one who does not see *puruṣa* as distinct from *buddhi* regards *buddhi* as *ātman* that is, as one's own self.²⁹ The concept of *asmitā* as that of the false union of *puruṣa* and *buddhi*, gives us a typically Sāṅkhya conception of metaphysical misconception.

Patañjali in this way seems to present a two-fold conception of ignorance/false conception which is at the root of suffering. The first aspect of it is the false conception of reality that consists in wrongly seeing something eternal, pure, pleasant and soul-possessing. Patañjali calls it *avidyā*. The second aspect consists in the metaphysical confusion between the pure, passive consciousness of *puruṣa* and the cognitive activity of the intellect (*buddhi*). Patañjali calls it *asmitā*. Patañjali presents the two aspects one after the other but does not bring out any clear relationship between them. In the bipolar structure of Patañjali's thought we have *avidyā* and *asmitā* as the basic forms of ignorance, on the one hand and *prajñā* and *vivekakhyāti* as the forms of wisdom, on the other. Patañjali's conception of *prajñā* as the emancipatory wisdom has its roots in Buddhism.

Three kinds of wisdom (*prajñā*) were recognised in Buddhism. In early stages of one's pilgrimage towards emancipation from suffering one is verbally/scripturally informed about the impermanent, impure, unpleasant and non-soul-possessing character of reality. The verbal/scriptural knowledge of this kind is called *śrutamayī prajñā*. This wisdom is later on strengthened with the help of reasoning. The form of wisdom which emerges through it is called *cintāmayī prajñā*. But even this form of wisdom is imperfect; it attains perfection through the practice of meditative concentration. Wisdom in its perfect form is called *bhāvanāmayī prajñā*. It is a direct vision of the reality.³⁰

Patañjali accepts the same classification of *prajñā* and calls them as *śrutaprajñā*, *anumānaprajñā* and *ṛtambharā prajñā* (truth-bearing wisdom).

It is interesting to note that the three kinds of *prajñā* correspond (in reverse order) to the three *pramāṇas*, namely *pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *āgama* accepted by Patañjali. Interestingly again, these are the same *pramāṇas* which are accepted in Sāṅkhya system. But the functions of these three *pramāṇas* vis à vis emancipatory knowledge in the two systems namely, Sāṅkhya and Yoga are fundamentally different. In *Sāṅkhyakārikā* (verse 5) we are told that the objects which are subtle or transcendent are not the objects of direct knowledge, but that they are the objects of speculative reasoning (*sāmānyatodṛṣṭa anumāna*) or scriptural knowledge (*āgama*). So the Sāṅkhya-style emancipatory knowledge which consists in the discrimination between the ultimate transcendent categories, namely *prakṛti* and *puruṣa*, is ultimately intellectual or scriptural. On the other hand, the emancipatory knowledge according to Patañjali's Yoga is of meditative and direct character. *Ṛtambharā prajñā* of Patañjali's Yoga shares this characteristic with *bhāvanāmayī prajñā* of early Buddhism.

But *bhāvanāmayī prajñā* of Buddhism consists in seeing things as non-eternal, impure, unpleasant and soul-less. It represents the radical negation of *viparyāsas* (which Patañjali identifies with *avidyā*). It is clearly non-eternalistic. It is quite possible that Patañjali was not fully satisfied with it as he had accepted the eternalistic framework of Sāṅkhya. So, he frequently refers to *vivekakhyāti* (discriminative knowledge) which is a typically Sāṅkhya concept of emancipatory knowledge.

Patañjali introduces the concept of *prajñā* also in the second chapter of *Yogasūtra*, as sevenfold ultimate understanding (*saptadhā prāntabhūmiḥ prajñā*).³¹ Vyāsa's explanation of this sevenfold understanding exhibits a synthesis of Buddhism and Sāṅkhya. In fact, here basically Patañjali and then Vyāsa use the framework of four noble truths in the form of *heya*, *heyahetu*, *hāna* and *hānopāya* (prospective suffering which is to be abandoned; cause of the thing to be abandoned; abandonment of the thing to be abandoned; the means of abandoning the thing to be abandoned). In Buddhism the four noble truths (suffering, the cause of suffering, cessation of suffering and the path leading to the cessation of suffering)

are further elaborated in terms of their nature, the treatment to be given to them and the state of having given the due treatment to them. In this way the four noble truths assume twelve forms. The Buddhist tradition holds that the Buddha had twelve-fold knowledge of the four noble truths.³² The twelve-fold knowledge can be presented in the tabular form as follows:

Truth: The form of the truth to be known→	The nature of the truth (<i>satya</i>)	What is to be done with the truth (<i>krtya</i>)	What is to be done is done. (<i>krta</i>)
<i>duḥkha</i>	1. Suffering of various kinds	5. To be known fully (<i>parijñeyam</i>)	9. Is known fully (<i>parijñātam</i>)
<i>samudaya</i>	2. <i>Avidyā</i> or <i>tṛṣṇā</i> as the cause of suffering	6. To be abandoned (<i>prahātavyaḥ</i>)	10. Is abandoned (<i>prahīṇaḥ</i>)
<i>nirodha</i>	3. Cessation of suffering	7. To be realised (<i>sākṣātkartavyaḥ</i>)	11. Is realised (<i>sākṣātkṛtaḥ</i>)
<i>mārga</i>	4. Noble eight-fold path	8. To be practised (<i>bhāvayitavyaḥ</i>)	12. Is practised (<i>bhāvitaḥ</i>)

This is, thus, the background of Vyāsa's explanation of the seven-fold ultimate understanding.

Vyāsa here classifies the emancipatory understanding into two liberations, cognitive and mental liberation (*prajñāvimukti* and *cetovimukti*).³³ He includes four types of understanding under cognitive liberation and three types of understanding under mental liberation.³⁴ He explains the fourfold cognitive liberation as: *heya* is known fully so that nothing of it remains to be known; the causes of *heya* are destroyed so that none of them remains to be destroyed; the abandonment is realised by cessational absorption (*nirodha-samādhi*); the means to abandonment in the form of discriminatory knowledge is practised. The fourfold understanding clearly reflects the fourfold knowledge of the form, 'what is to be done is done', which is shown in the last column of the table above. Vyāsa then explains the threefold mental liberation (*cittavimukti*) as: the *buddhi* has fulfilled its function; the *guṇas* tend to merge in their causes not to emerge again; and *puruṣa* shines as a pure being without any relation to the *guṇas*. It can be clearly seen that he explains mental liberation vividly in the terminology of Sāṅkhya.³⁵

IV

In the foregoing discussion we have seen that Patañjali while presenting some of the fundamental ideas of his philosophy is under the dual influence of Sāṅkhya and Buddhism. The Sāṅkhya influence largely consists in Patañjali's acceptance of the transcendent metaphysical framework in which *prakṛti* (which Patañjali terms as *guṇas*, *drśya* etc.,) and *puruṣa* (which Patañjali terms as *draṣṭā*, *drkśakti* and also as *puruṣa*) are the basic categories. Wrongly identifying *puruṣa* with *prakṛti*, or, to be more specific, with *buddhi* (which Patañjali calls *darśana-śakti*), and not discriminating between them amount to the metaphysical misconception which manifests itself in the formation of ego (*asmitā*), whereas the emancipatory knowledge consists in discriminating between the two categories. In this state of discriminatory knowledge, *puruṣa*, the seer, is supposed to perform his basic role of a passive witness, which he does not perform at other times due to admixture with the operations of the intellect (*buddhi*).

On the other hand, there is the Buddhist influence as well, which largely consists in the empirical-practical message contained in the *Yogasūtra*. According to the latter, emancipation from suffering is not achieved through the speculative knowledge of some metaphysical categories. It is rather realised through the practical regulation of one's life with the help of *yama-niyamas* (moral-spiritual regulations and observances), *dhāraṇā-dhyāna-samādhi* (meditation leading to cessation of the operations of mind) and *prajñā* (the emancipatory vision which sees all phenomena as impermanent, impure, unpleasant and soul-less).

We have also seen that the Sāṅkhya approach was eternalistic whereas the Buddhist approach was non-eternalistic. Patañjali however, brings them together and tries to bring about a synthesis between the two. He seems to do this by accepting the former as the framework and fitting the latter into it.

Patañjali's attempt towards the synthesis between the two elements raises some philosophical issues. Can eternalism and non-eternalism go together? Is it necessary to present the empirical/practical way of emancipating from suffering, (which is the central message of Patañjali's Yoga) in the eternalistic metaphysical framework of Sāṅkhya? Or can it be presented independently of it? Have Patañjali

and Vyāsa succeeded in synthesising the two systems together and creating a homogenous whole out of them? These issues lead us to a different kind of enquiry which has philosophical, as well as, practical implications.

Notes

1. This is an updated version of the paper published in *Journal of Buddhist Studies*, (Sri Lanka and Hong Kong), Vol. XII, 2014-15, pp. 107-122. The author is grateful to K. L. Dhammajoti, the editor of the journal for his permission to republish the paper.
2. *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* of Sāyaṇamādhava refers to Patañjali's philosophy as *seśvara-sāṅkhya*. However, Bronkhorst rightly has reservations in calling the Yoga of *Yogasūtra* and *Yogabhāṣya* as *seśvara-sāṅkhya*. See Bronkhorst (1981).
3. Bronkhorst (1981) supports this view. He also argues that the closest approximation to what we know about the 'Sāṅkhya with God' from the *Tattvasaṅgraha* and *Pañjikā* seems to be found among the Pañcarātras.
4. Here I am treating Patañjali and Vyāsa as the two personalities the former being the author of *Yogasūtra* and the latter that of *Yogabhāṣya* as per the tradition. Bronkhorst (1985) argues that the author of *Yogabhāṣya* who was either named Patañjali, or wrote *Yogabhāṣya* in the name of Patañjali, was himself the compiler of the *Yogasūtra*. Bronkhorst's well-argued claim, does not affect my main line of argument. It would imply, however, that while considering the Buddhist influence and the synthesis of Sāṅkhya and Buddhism in Yoga school, we have to take into account *Yogasūtra* and *Yogabhāṣya* together.
5. In VB IV.21 and IV.24, Vyāsa criticises Buddhists calling them *vaināśika*.
6. For example, the concept of *Īśvara* as an object of meditation, the syllable 'Om' as the symbol for *Īśvara*, and a few ideas of this kind are found not in Buddhism or Jainism but in orthodox tradition.
7. This attitude of Patañjali and Vyāsa can be contrasted with that of the Vedāntin Gauḍapāda who in *Āgamaśāstra* borrows many ideas from *Yogācāra* and *Mādhyamika* Buddhism and also explicitly refers to the Buddha approvingly. See for example ASG IV.83-84, 88, 99.
8. Aphorisms 15 to 21 of YS chapter 4 constitute Patañjali's criticism of Buddhist idealism and the doctrine of momentariness. Vyāsa in his commentary of aphorisms 14 to 22 makes the criticism explicit where he refers to Buddhists as *Kṣaṇikavādin* and *Vaināśika*.
9. '*kūṭasthanityatā*' and '*pariṇāmīnityatā*'. Vide VB 4.33.
10. The situation can be compared with a traditional Hindu marriage in which the wife loses the identity given by the earlier family and assumes the husband's identity. Similarly, here the Buddhist meditation theory loses its original Buddhist identity and assimilates itself with the Sāṅkhya identity. How successful this conversion becomes is a different question?
11. Monier Williams' dictionary gives the following meanings of the verb '*ni-rudh*': to hold back, stop, hinder, shut up, confine, restrain, check, suppress and destroy. Here the verb is transitive. The word *nirodha* in Buddhism is used generally in intransitive sense such as ceasing, being stopped/

destroyed, where the agent is generally absent. Nirodha in Buddhism as 'stoppage' is also not transitive (of the form 'X stops y'), but intransitive ('y stops').

12. Monier Williams' dictionary gives the following meanings of the word *kleśa*: pain, affliction, distress, pain from disease, anguish. None of them are applicable to the term *kleśa* in the *Yogasūtra*.
13. Namely, Misconception (*avidyā*), Egoism (*asmitā*), Desire (*raga*), Aversion (*dveṣa*) and Attachment to existence (*abhiniveśa*); YS, 2.3.
14. Bronkhorst (1993, 71) too translates the definition of yoga as "the suppression of the activities of the mind" and associates it with mainstream meditation in Jaina and Hindu scriptures. I however treat this definition of Yoga as a mark of Buddhist influence.
15. "vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ/ pramāṇaviparyayaavikalpanidrāsmṛtayaḥ", YS, 1.5-6.
16. Or *samjñāveditanirodha*. See ADKB, II.44. Bronkhorst (1993:86-7) doubts the generally accepted view that cessation of ideations and feelings (*samjñāvedayitanirodha*) was the final stage of meditation according to the Buddha. Bronkhorst's main concern there is: what must have been the Buddha's own view about meditation? Whether Bronkhorst's argument is acceptable or not, my suggestion is that the view that *samjñāvedayitanirodha* (what Vasubandhu calls *cittacaittanirodha*) was the final stage of *samādhi* type of meditation according to Buddhism might have been present before the author of the *Yogasūtra*. It is possible to argue that the Buddha shared with the non-Buddhist tradition the technique of concentration meditation (*samādhi* or samatha meditation with formed as well as formless objects) after considerable modification, but the technique which he introduced anew was mindfulness (*satī*) meditation.
17. So, he asks, "kasmāt punarete cittacaittanirodhasvabhāve satyāv asaṃjñīsamāpattiḥ samjñāvedita-nirodhasamāpattiś cocyete?" ("If these stages are of the nature of nirodha of citta and caitta, why are they called *asaṃjñī-samāpatti* and *samjñāvedayitanirodha samāpatti*?"), Ibid.
18. "trividham cāpyasaṃskṛtam/ ākāśam dvau nirodhau ca...", ADK, I.4.
19. "tisro hi duḥkhatā, duḥkhaduḥkhatā, saṃskāraduḥkhatā, vipariṇāmaduḥkhatā ca", ADKB, VI.3.
20. Vasubandhu distinguishes between dormant (*prasupta*) *kleśa* and awakened (*prabuddha*) *kleśa* and identifies the former with *anuśaya*. See ADKB, V.2. *Prasupta* is a kind or stage of *kleśa* according to *Yogasūtra* (YS, 2.4).
21. Patañjali does not give the status of defilement to doubt (*vicikitsā* or *samśaya*), but includes it in the classification of *cittavṛttis*.
22. There is a striking similarity between Patañjali's definition of *rāga* as 'sukhānuśayī rāgaḥ' (YS, II.7) and a statement quoted by Vasubandhu, "so'sya bhavati sukhāyāṃ vedanāyām rāgānuśayaḥ." ADKB, V.2 (p. 279).
23. Vasubandhu also uses the words *asmitā* and *asmimāna* for *māna*. See ADK, V.II and ADKB on it. However, Patañjali assimilates *asmitā* with the *ahamkāra* of Sāṅkhya system. See the discussion of *asmitā* in the next section.
24. Vasubandhu explains dogmatic view as *abhiniveśa*. See ADK, V.8.
25. Vasubandhu discusses in detail the issue as to which defilements are to be abandoned by meditation (*bhāvanā*) and which by vision or insight (*darśana*) in ADK and ADKB, V.4-14.
26. "vṛttayaḥ pañcatayyaḥ, kliṣṭākliṣṭāḥ", YS, I.5.

27. “*catvāro viparyāsāḥ. anitye nityamiti, duḥkhe sukhamiti, aśucau śucīti, anātmny ātmeti.*” ADKB, V.8. Patañjali’s definition of *avidyā* goes parallel to it: “*anityāśuciduḥkhānātmasu nityaśucisukhātmakhyātir avidyā*”, YS, II.5.
28. “*dṛḡdarśanaśaktyorekātmatā iva asmitā*”, YS, 2.6.
29. “*buddhitaḥ parami puruṣamākāraśīlavidyādibhirvibhaktamapaśyan kuryāttatrātmabuddhim mohena.*”, VB, 2.6.
30. The three types of *prajñā* are explained in ADKB, VI.5.
31. “*tasya saptadhā prāntabhūmiḥ prajñā*”, YS, 2.27.
32. Vasubandhu calls it the twelve-fold path of knowledge (*dṛṣṭimārga*) and identifies it as twelve-fold wheel of *dharma* (*dvādaśākāram dharmacakram*). He explains: “*Katham dvādaśākāram? caturṅgām satyānām tridhākaraṇāt. duḥkham samudayo nirodho mārga iti. pariñheyam praheyam sākṣātkartavyam bhāvayitavyamiti. pariñātām prahīṇām sākṣātkṛtam bhāvitamiti.*” ADKB, VI.54.
33. This two-fold division of liberation is found in Buddhist *Sūtras*. “*dve vimuktīsūtra ukte. cetovimuktiḥ prajñāvimuktiśca*”, ADKB, VI.76.
34. “*eṣā catuṣṭayī kārya-vimuktiḥ prajñāyāḥ. cittavimuktistu trayī....*”, VB, II.27.
35. See VB, II.27. La Vallee Poussin claims that the last three *prajñās* resemble what the *Arhat* calls *kṣayajñāna* and *anutpādajñāna*. (See Bhave 1992, 9). However, although there is formal similarity between the two, the use of Sāṅkhya terminology in Vyāsa’s explanation cannot be overlooked.

References with Abbreviations

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ADK: *Abhidharmakośa* as in *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* of Vasubandhu. Edited by P. Pradhan. Patna: K. P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1967.

ADKB: *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. See above.

ADS: *Abhidharmasmuccaya*. Edited by P. Pradhan. Sa Visva Bharati, Santiniketan, 1950.

ASG: *The Āgamaśāstra of Gauḍapāda*. Edited and translated by Vidhushekhar Bhattacharya. Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1943.

SK: *Sāṅkhyakārikā of Īśvarakṛṣṇa (with Sāṅkhyatattvakaumudī of Vācaspatimiśra)*. Benares: Jaya Krishna das Haridas G, 1937.

YS: *Yogasūtra* as included in *Pātañjalayogadarśanam, Tattvavaiśārādī-samvalita-vyāsabhāṣya-sametam*. Varanasi: Bharatiya Vidyā Prakashan, 1963.

VB: *Vyāsabhāṣya* on *Yogasūtra* as included in *Pātañjalayogadarśanam, Tattvavaiśārādī-samvalita-vyāsabhāṣya-sametam*. See above.

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