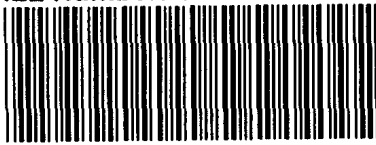


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Sucāruvādadeśika

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Todd Lewis
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Editors



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The Yoga Tradition's Arguments against Buddhism

EDWIN F. BRYANT

There are a small number of people in life outside one's immediate family members whom, when viewed in retrospect, one sees as having been one's benefactors, mentors, guardians, well-wishers – people, howsoever categorized, who have significantly aided one on life's journey and done so with genuine concern and affection. At least, in my case the number that comes to mind is small: a Catholic priest in school, a headmaster in college, a *sādhu* in an ashram, a few teachers here and there, an unexpectedly benevolent neighbor in New Jersey, and the occasional true friend along the way. Ted Riccardi is someone I place in this select group, and thus it is with sincere pleasure that I welcome this opportunity to honor him with some little contribution in this volume.

I was an unconventional student when I showed up in the MEALAC graduate program in 1989. Ted took me under his wing and taught me the ways of academia. Wise and shrewd about the limitations and agenda-laden underpinnings of the academic enterprise, he taught me the all important notion of “context,” and urged me to always probe the underpinnings of any “*discorso*,” but he did so without any pressure or overt intellectual ideology of his own. Most especially, Ted was always kind and accommodating, even as there was sometimes an amused but affectionate glint in his eye, or so I imagined, as he witnessed my sometimes painful and dissonant engagement with western academic research in its theoretical and methodological modes.

In thinking about what to offer my academic guru for this volume, a brief exchange I once had with Ted came to mind. I once asked him: “Which of the traditions that he had spent so much of his life studying interested him the most?” Ted paused for a minute and then, with what seemed to me some hesitation and tentativeness, tersely replied “Buddhism.” With this somewhat tenuous link to a small aspect of my most recent work on the *Yoga Sūtras*, I offer to my mentor with genuine respect and gratitude this compilation of perspectives from the Yoga commentarial tradition on certain notions of mind and consciousness from the Buddhist Idealist Schools.

Various forms of Buddhist Idealism, Vijñānavāda, in particular, must have been prevalent on Patañjali’s landscape, since he dedicates a number of *sūtras* to this subject in the fourth chapter of the *Yoga Sūtras* (the discussion extends from IV.14 up to IV.22.) Since this is the only section of the text which engages with another philosophical school so explicitly, these challenges must have been unavoidable. Indeed, some scholars see as Yoga an internal updating of the old Sāṃkhya tradition partly with a view of bringing it into conversation with the more technical philosophical traditions that had emerged by the second to fifth centuries CE, particularly the challenges represented by Buddhist thought.¹

The provocative nature of the Buddhist challenge is further underscored by the fact that this is the only section of the text that utilizes *anumāna pramāṇa*, “reason and argument” (loosely translated), which is otherwise not prioritized or utilized at all in the other 198 *sūtras*. And for good reason: from the possible sources of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) accepted by the Yoga school in I.7 (*pratyakṣa*, *anumāna* and *āgama*, perception, inference and verbal authority), verbal authority can hardly be used profitably in discussions with Buddhists; the sacred texts and human authorities accepted by the Hindus, are not the same as those accepted by the Buddhists. In other words, even though, in stark contrast to Vedānta, Patañjali does not quote or refer to a single Upaniṣadic statement in his *Sūtras*, there is anyway no use quoting the Upaniṣads to resolve a philosophical issue, such as whether there is an *ātman* or not, if a Buddhist opponent does not accept the Upaniṣads as authoritative sacred texts. So, in discussions

1 Gerald Larson and Ram Shankara Bhattacharya, *Yoga: India’s Philosophy of Meditation* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2008

with those outside the Vedic fold such as Buddhists, verbal authority cannot serve as a common framework for debate or even discussion (although skilled debaters did, as a point of fact, sometimes quote the opponents' scriptures in order to attempt to refute them on their home turf, so to speak). Nor can personal experiential perception – after all, where Hindu *yogīs* might claim that they or their teachers have “perceived” the existence of the *ātman* in the higher states of *samādhi*, Buddhist meditators might equally claim that they have “perceived” precisely the nonexistence of any such autonomous *ātman* in their higher meditate states. So where does the conversation go from there? Neither perception nor verbal authority, therefore, can serve as productive epistemological sources when debating with non-orthodox schools; only inference can, that is rational disputation based on long and meticulously honed criteria for what constitutes valid reasoning.

Therefore, the debates between the Hindus and Buddhists, both textual and actual,² adopted logic in critiquing the viewpoints of opponents (called *pūrvapakṣa* in textual sources). That Patañjali also dedicates a portion of this text to engaging *anumānā pramāṇā* against a *purvapakṣa*, and one *purvapakṣa* only, is thus significant.³ We present here, a selection of the arguments presented in *sūtraic* (seed) form in Patañjali's *Sūtras*, and unpacked in the primary and most seminal commentaries of the succeeding millennium and a half. We might note that the Vijñānavāda schools were opposed not only by the Vaidica orthodox traditions, but also by other Buddhist Realist schools.

Patañjali's engagement with Vijñānavāda Buddhism begins in IV.14. He begins by establishing the *siddhānta*, the Yoga position on external reality:

The things [of the world] are objectively real, due to the uniformity [of the *guṇas* that underpin] all change.

The commentators begin their exegesis to this verse with a technical

2 There were public debates sponsored in ancient India, the loser and his disciples often being expected to submit and become disciples of the winner.

3 Compared this to, for example, the second chapter of the *Vedānta Sūtras* which engages a number of *purvapakṣa* positions

analysis of the metaphysical constituents of material reality according to Sāṃkhya, which need not detain us here.⁴

Following this, in anticipation of the next verse, Vyāsa, the earliest and most foundational commentator (usually dated *circa* 3-4th century CE), introduces the *pūrvapakṣa* view of those who deny the reality of the external world, the “Idealists.” (The fifteenth century commentator Vijñānabhikṣu identifies the *pūrvapākṣa* referred to here by Vyāsa as the Vijñānavāda Buddhists).⁵ Some, says Vyāsa, argue that in actuality no objects are externally real, or independent of thought. In this view, since an object only demonstrably exists if it is cognized by thought and nothing can be proved to exist outside of or independent to the realm of thought, then one has grounds to argue that apparent external objects are themselves nothing other than the products of thought. This is a standard Idealistic position: perceivable material reality is entirely the product of the mind, rather than actually externally “really-out-there,” so to speak, external to the mind; the main proponents of this view in classical India were the Vijñānavādins. Idealism obviously counters the Yoga view that objects are real (II.22), at least in terms of their essential nature of the *guṇas* as Patañjali has specified in this verse (and numerous previous verses such as II.18), a position loosely categorized as “Realism.”

In support of their view, note the commentators, proponents of Vijñānavāda note that it can be demonstrated that there are objects that appear independent of thought, but which in reality are demonstrably not external to thought at all but rather internal to and created by it: namely the objects imagined in dreams. Mirages and hallucinations are also typically referred to in this regard. So, since some apparently external objects are in fact not external at all but clearly the product of the mind, as in the case of dream objects, and no demonstrable objects exist in waking reality that can be proved to be external to thought at all, then one might as well take a further step and

4 Individual items of reality emerge when the *guṇas* and their products interact with each other in various ways, that is, when the *sāttvic*, *tāmasic*, and *rājasic* proportions of *prakṛiti* are realigned. Individual objects perceivable in external reality are simply individual mutations of the *guṇas*. They are real, and therefore external to, and independent from, our perception of them.

5 Yamashita (1994), finds specific terms from Vijñānavāda literature represented by the Yoga commentators, such as *kalpita* and *parikalpita* (imagined), thus concurring with Vijñānabhikṣu’s identification here.

propose that all objects are actually just constructions of the mind.

But objective physical reality is self evident, says Vyāsa; there are no means to demonstrate that objective reality is a construction of the mind. Unlike the imagined reality of objects in a dream which is countered upon waking, there is nothing which counters the reality of objects experienced in the waking state. (Yoga would disallow that belief in external reality is countered when one becomes enlightened, since the liberated state, for the Sāṃkhya and Yoga schools, entails seeing reality for what it is, a temporary configuration of the *guṇas*, which are real and external). Indeed, Hariharānanda points out that, as a matter of fact, even the dream analogy supports the position of “realism” rather than “idealism” since the objects constructed and imagined by the mind in a dream are actually mental imprints or memories (*saṃskāras*) of “real” physical objects previously experienced in the waking state that then surface in the mind in a confused fashion when asleep.

The commentator Śaṅkara⁶ presents the argument here that to suppose the objects of perceptions to be not real, but merely consciousness, would entail consciousness being divided into subject and object. If the perception of, say, a worm is actually merely a construction of consciousness rather than an external physical thing wriggling around “out there,” independent of the perceiver, then this would entail supposing consciousness to be divided into two forms: consciousness of the thing perceived, the worm, and consciousness of one as perceiver, a duality of subject and object. But this is not defensible, he states: one might as well try to argue that one can divide a light into two lights – light as illuminator and light as illuminated.

Patañjali next presents his first actual philosophical argument against Idealism in the next verse, IV.15:

Because there is a multiplicity of minds [perceiving an object]
but yet the object remains consistent, there is a difference in
nature between the object and the mind [of the observer].

If we take an object of the world, despite the fact that it remains a consistent and unitary object, *vastu sāmya*, it can be experienced

6 There is no agreement amongst scholars as to whether this commentary is written by the famous Vedāntin Śaṅkara of the 8-9th century, or is pseudonymous.

very differently by different minds. So, if the perceiver's mind is pervaded by *sattva*, for example, says Vyāsa, the object might engender *sāttvic* qualities in the mind, such as happiness; if pervaded by *rajas*, it might engender pain; if pervaded by *tamas*, forgetfulness; if perceived with the eye of wisdom, detachment, but these responses are all triggered by the same root object. As the ninth century commentator Vācaspati Miśra puts it, the same woman may be beloved, hated, ignored or approached with indifference by the individuals Chaitra, Viṣṇumitra, Devadatta, and Maitra, respectively, even though the woman remains the same object of perception throughout. If the same object triggers different feelings in different minds, then the actual object itself, being common to all, must be different from these minds.

But, irrespective of the different individual responses it might provoke, how is it that different people all perceive essentially the same basic source object in the first place, if the object is a construction of the mind rather than an object with external reality in its own right? If it is a mental construct, notes the 11th Century commentator Bhoja Rāja, then why wouldn't there be a complete difference in the original object constructed by one person's mind as compared to the object constructed by another person's mind – that is, not just a difference in the responses the same object invokes due to the differences of the observers' *guṇas* as in Vyasa's arguments, but a difference in the very physical nature of the object itself. Why would Chaitra *et al*, all perceive the same woman in the first place (irrespective of whether she provokes love, hate or indifference); why should an object erroneously construed as external in one's person mind be constructed simultaneously in another's mind?

And, even if this be allowed for argument's sake, continues Vācaspati Miśra, if external objects that appear common to all are actually internal mental constructs that happen to be shared by others, why are not *all* individual internal mental thought constructs shared by others? If one person randomly thinks of, say, the color blue, why is it that other people do not suddenly think of blue at the same time? In other words, in an Idealist ontology, how do we account for the shared nature of some perceived thoughts, and the private nature of other thoughts? Why is it just the apparently "external" objects that are simultaneously shared as perceptions by all, if they are also really

internal mental constructs whose metaphysical essence is no different from private thoughts?

And even if for argument's sake one supposes that such a common experience of an "external" object can be produced spontaneously and simultaneously in the internal mental constructs of numerous people, what is the original cause of the object's appearance? Can an object that has been constructed or imagined in one person's mind be transmitted to another's such that both individuals share the same supposed external perception of a common object? If so, whose mind, according to the philosophy of idealism, has originally imagined all the varied perceptions in (apparent) external reality common to all? Vijñānabhikṣu points out that one person does not share the perception of the dream of another person in the sleeping state, so how can it be that people all share the perception of the same supposed external object in the waking state? If this spontaneous commonality of perception is not due to transmission from one person's mind to another's, then how is it that the same shared object is being imagined by everyone simultaneously? And even if one allows that this can take place somehow or other, then why doesn't everyone always have identical impressions all the time, says Śaṅkara. For such reasons, says, Vyāsa, there must be a distinction between the object of perception, and the instrument of perception, the mind. The minds may be different in terms of the qualities of their perceptions, but the object remains the same. The object must be external to and independent of perception, or consciousness. This is Patañjali's thrust in this *sūtra*. Objects are not constructions of the mind, but *svapraṭiṣṭham*, grounded in their own right independent of perception, the Realist position.

IV.16 then continues the discussion:

An object is not dependent on a single mind [for its existence]; if it were, then what happens to it when it is not perceived [by that particular mind]?"

If an object, say a pot, were indeed merely a construction of the mind, what would happen to it, elaborates Vyāsa, if the mind were in a state of *samādhi*, or even if it were just plain distracted, i.e., intermittently not focused on that particular object? Since it is supposed to be the construction of a single individual's mind, would that object then

simply cease to exist when that person's mind is no longer aware of it? If so, then why can other people still see it? Moreover, according to the Idealist view, any parts of an object that are not perceived by the mind would not actually exist, says Vyāsa. So, if one only perceives a person from the front, does this mean the person's back does not exist because it is not within the sphere of perception; how can a stomach exist without a back! This state of *reductio ad absurdum* is termed *tarka* in Nyāya logic (and Śāṅkara adds a *tarka* scenario of his own⁷). The objects of the world can only therefore be independent entities, as minds, too, are independent entities. They unite together to fulfill their purpose, concludes Vyāsa (which, as per II.18, is to provide the *puruṣa* with opportunities for *bhoga*, experience, or *apavarga*, liberation).

In IV.17, Patañjali presents the Yoga position as to why, if objects are objectively real, they are sometimes known, *jñāta*, and sometimes not known, *ajñāta*, to an individual:

A thing is either known or not known by the mind depending on whether it is noticed by the mind.

As a parting comment against the Idealists, Śāṅkara notes in his commentary here that if physical objects are simply creations of the mind, the mind should theoretically be able to create and thus gain knowledge of everything and anything at all, and therefore be omniscient – or it would not create any objects of awareness, and thus nothing would be known. Rather, the process of cognition, according to Yoga, occurs when the *citta* comes in contact with real sense objects existing external to the perceiver. Thus, the objects of the senses are like magnets, says Vyāsa, and the mind is like iron – sense objects in the vicinity of the mind exert their pull on the mind. Patañjali uses the term *uparāga* here, “colored:” when an object “colors” the mind due

7 In a world where objective reality is simply the internal mental construction of the individual, conventional social interactions would completely break down since there is no reason people's mental constructions of social norms should overlap in any coherent manner, says Śāṅkara. If everything is a construction of consciousness, for example, then why would the student and teacher both construct the same understanding of their respective social roles such that they might cooperate? How could any sane and standardized social system evolve from independently created mental imaginings?

to proximity (i.e., is pervaded or noticed by the mind), that object becomes known. Things which are not so pervaded remain unknown. In this way the mind is always changing, noticing one thing and then another.

The *citta* assumes the form of a particular object, is “colored” by it, like a cloth is colored when it comes into contact with dye, says Vijñānabhikṣu. More specifically, *buddhi*, the intelligence aspect of the *citta* internally replicates the physical features of the external object channeled to it through the senses and the sorting aspect of the mind (*manas*). That is, it assumes the shape and contours of the object psychically, and then presents this image to *puruṣa*, pure consciousness. *Puruṣa* then becomes aware of this image by dint of its consciousness reflecting on or pervading the *citta*. The *citta* remains inert and unconscious throughout this process – it is, after all, nothing other than a product of *prakṛtic* matter, however subtle; the ultimate experience of being aware of the object is the prerogative of *puruṣa* only. Thus, the *citta* itself becomes the object in terms of *puruṣa*'s awareness, even as the *puruṣa* is only indirectly aware of external objects through the mediation of *citta*.

In IV.18, Patañjali presents an axiomatic truth in Hindu philosophy – the unchanging nature, *aparīṇāmātva*, of *puruṣa*:

The permutations of the mind are always known to its Lord, the *puruṣa* soul, because of the soul's unchanging nature.

The logic here is well known: anything that changes cannot be eternal (since, obviously, if a thing changes into something else, the original thing transforms and thus was not eternal). Therefore, since the soul is eternal, it cannot change. If the soul were constantly changing by nature, argues Vyāsa, as is the case of the mind, then it would sometimes be aware of its object of awareness, the mind's states, *vr̥ttis*, and sometimes not. Yet this is not the case: *puruṣa* is always aware of the mind's *vr̥ttis*, even in deep sleep (which Patañjali has proposed in I.10 is a *vr̥tti* in its own right). The mind itself, in contrast, is sometimes aware of its objects of awareness, the sense objects, and sometimes not. Since the mind is always changing and roaming about, its objects – the sense objects – are sometimes in its sphere of perception and sometimes not. But the *puruṣa*'s awareness, in contrast, is constant

and unchanging, and this is why it is always aware of its object, the mind, irrespective of any particular *vṛtti* the mind might be in, that is, it is always absorbed in one or other of the *vṛttis*. This position can perhaps be analogized to a projector bulb which, while unchanging in its illumination, can illuminate a movie reel ever moving before it. Therefore, says Vyāsa, since *puruṣa* only has one object, its core awareness can remain unchanging and must be, accordingly, distinct from the ever-changing mind.

Next, in IV.19, Patañjali questions the position, identified by the commentators as being that of the Vaināśika Buddhists, that the mind is itself self-aware or self-illuminating, *svābhāsa*, like fire, which does not need any outside agent to illuminate itself:

Nor is the mind self-illuminating, because of its nature as the object of perception.

In the *purvapakṣa* view considered here, there is no need to posit the existence of an outside source of awareness in the form of *puruṣa* – the mind itself is held to be self-aware, the source of awareness. In Yoga epistemology, on the other hand, the states of the mind are clearly the object of awareness. When one says: “I am afraid, I am angry, etc,” the mind under the influence of anger or fear is the object of awareness, requiring a distinct subject of awareness, an “I.” Otherwise, it would be like saying the “cooking is cooked,” or the “cutting is cut,” says Vācaspati Miśra, or the “going is gone;” the act and the object of activity cannot be the same thing. Any object of awareness, says Bhoja Rāja, like a pot, cannot also be the subject of awareness; that which is perceivable requires a perceiver. If the pot perceived were identical with the perceiving subject, one should rather say “I am the pot,” not “I see the pot.” Moreover, points out Hariharānanda, if the mind itself were the subject of awareness or “I,” in the above examples of “I am afraid” or “I am hungry,” etc, there would in any case have to be one part of the mind which would be the “I,” or knower, and another part which would be the known or object of knowledge, the “angry” or “afraid.” This is tantamount to accepting that there is a part of the mind that is the “knower,” and a part of it that is the “known,” which admits a knower distinct from objects of knowledge and therefore approaches the position of the Yoga school.

And even if, in the example of fire noted above, one concedes that fire illuminates itself without the need of any other instigating agent, nonetheless, fire itself is an object which can only be known by something outside of itself, namely, the perceiver of the fire. So a distinct and separate outside entity is still required to experience and establish the luminosity of fire in the first place. Therefore, the counter argument of fire falls short. All in all, the mind, being an object of perception, cannot be subjectively aware, or self-aware for Yoga. Whatever illumination it seems to exude is the result of it being permeated by the illumination of the awareness of *puruṣa*, like the cloud appearing luminous due to the sun shining through it. In short, subject and object must be distinct entities, as is indicated in the next verse:

There cannot be discernment of both [the mind and the object it perceives] at the same time” (IV.20).

Vyāsa specifies that his comments here are directed towards the *kṣaṇikavādins* (those who believe in “momentariness”), another generic name for Buddhists. He reads Patañjali here as presenting another argument critiquing the notion that the mind is self-aware.

Buddhist philosophers hold that all aspects of reality, whether mental or physical, lack any essence, or durable nature. All ingredients of reality exist only for a *kṣaṇa*, moment, hence Buddhists are frequently referred to as *kṣaṇikavādins* when they surface as the *pūrvapakṣa*. During this moment of existence, an instance of reality acts as a cause which produces an effect before fading, and this does so continuously. All ingredients of reality thus produce and flavor the immediately succeeding moment of existence before expiring. Since all phenomena are momentary in this way, any object, such as a pot, although appearing to remain the same for an extended period of time, is actually undergoing change at every moment in all its parts. Continuity is merely apparent: the production of similar but successive effects each moment. One can analogize this to the sequence of stills of a movie reel, which portray a continuous object, but are actually completely distinct stills succeeding each other in rapid succession (but, *contra* Yoga, in this case without the independent and potentially autonomous “projector bulb” of *puruṣa*'s awareness underpinning

and animating the reel). This includes the mind; it, too, consists of a series or flow of momentary minds.

Obviously, this *kṣāṇikavāda* position threatens the *siddhānta* (philosophical premises) of the Yoga school which holds that the mind (and all objects of reality), while consisting of ingredients that are indeed constantly in motion, nonetheless have an essential substratum nature, *dharmin*, that endures, the eternal (albeit constantly permutating) *guṇas* of *prakṛti*. And, of course, Yoga most especially holds that the seat of awareness itself, *puruṣa*, also endures eternally (in this case, never permutating). Put differently, Yoga metaphysics holds that, while the outermost layer of reality is indeed a flow of “moments,” all such change is caused by the flux of the *guṇas*, which are eternal essences, where the Buddhists deny any eternal essences at all underpin reality. (But we might note that both schools agree that “surface level” reality is always in flux).

Now, says Vyāsa, take the cognition: “I know the pot.” In this act of awareness, there is an element of subject awareness experienced in the “I” part of the cognition, and an element of object awareness represented by the “pot.” The experience of knowing the pot thus involves two separate cognitions, one for the “I,” an experience of self-awareness, and another for the “pot,” an object of awareness. In a *kṣāṇikavāda* metaphysics, this would mean that the mind could only be aware of itself for one instant, and then aware of any other object such as a pot for another, separate instant. So if one were to posit that there is no *puruṣa* as subject of awareness (filtered through the ego, *aḥmkāra*), and if everything in objective reality arises and exists for only one instant, then during any one single instant the mind would not be capable of being self-aware – the “I” inherent in any act of cognition – as well as simultaneously being object aware of anything else such as a pot. One cannot – at the exact same time – have two cognitions such as being self-aware and object aware.

In other words, if the mind itself were self-illuminating, it would use up its one moment of existence in the act of being self-aware; the act of self-awareness uses up the existential life-span of the *kṣāṇa*, moment, so to speak. The mind would then find itself in the same situation in the next *kṣāṇa* – it would also be spent being self-aware, and so would the next, *ad infinitum*. Where, then would there ever be a moment free in which to be object-aware? There would never be

any room for object-awareness if the mind were self-illuminating in a *kṣāṇikavāda* ontology. This would mean one would never be aware of anything at all in external reality. The argument is another example of *tarka, reductio ad absurdum*. The Yoga position, of course, is that the functions of self-awareness on the one hand, *puruṣa*, and of object-awareness on the other, the *citta*, are divided between two separate and distinct entities.

Up to this point, Patañjali has considered this Buddhist notion of mind from the perspective of the subject of awareness. In IV.21, Patañjali, followed by the commentators, rearranges the same basic argument from the perspective of the objects of awareness:

If [the mind] were cognized by another mind, then there would be an infinite regress of one intelligence [being known] by another intelligence. Moreover, there would also be confusion of memory.

In a *kṣāṇikavāda* mind, the awareness of a pot exhausts the mind's existential moment of existence. So since Vyāsa has argued above that the subject of awareness and object of awareness cannot coexist in the same *citta* at the same moment, according to the same principle, if a pot were to be known, by whom would it be so? – the mind's moment of awareness would be on the pot as object of awareness, but without a subject.

The *pūrvapakṣa* is now introduced that there is another subsequent momentary flash of awareness, and it is this second awareness which is the knower of the first moment of awareness. First of all, as Hariharānanda notes, this entails postulating a future (i.e., subsequent) mind as knower of a present mind. The problem with this is that the two would not overlap if their nature were momentary as per a *kṣāṇikavāda* metaphysics: how can a “future” entity know a “present” entity when the latter would have become “past” and thus expired by the time the future entity became “present”? Even if this problem, as well as the other problems noted above are overlooked, if this second moment of awareness is the knower or subject of the first moment of awareness, then the latter thereby becomes the object of the former and one is now left without a subject for the second moment of awareness. And if one introduces another third moment of

awareness as knower of the second moment, then a fourth and so on, one again ends up with the “infinite regress,” *atiprasaṅga*, noted by Patañjali in this *sūtra*.

Patañjali’s second comment in this *sūtra* which pertains to the “confusion of memory,” *smṛtisamkara*, is understood by the commentators as pointing to the fact that all these moments of awareness noted above would produce *saṃskāras* of the same form. The pot, noted above, becomes the object of awareness for the mind during its moment of existence, and is placed as a momentary pot *saṃskāra* in the *citta*, as all objects of awareness are. But then this mind with its image of a pot itself becomes the object of awareness for a subsequent momentary mind, planting another momentary pot *saṃskāra* in the second momentary mind, and this, in turn, in a third momentary mind, and so forth (i.e., there would be knowledge of the pot, knowledge of the knowledge of the pot, knowledge of the knowledge of the knowledge of the pot, ad infinitum). But, in the absence of an unchanging, unifying agent and the same enduring *saṃskāra*, the knower experiencing the original pot in the first instance would not be the same knower recollecting it at a later moment. Thus, “memory would be thrown into confusion,” as there would be no enduring witness to know which mental imprint of the pot in this series pertained to the original pot or object of knowledge, or to connect the stream of duplicated *saṃskāras* in any sort of coherent manner, there would just be a confused multiplicity of duplicated *saṃskāras*.

Memory has always featured in the arguments of the orthodox Hindu schools against Buddhism. To say: “this is the pot that I saw yesterday” requires, in addition to the need of a constant witness to connect the *saṃskāras* – an enduring unchanging I – that the *saṃskāras* of the pot themselves be retained from one day to the next such that one can remember it. This suggests continuity of *saṃskāra*. If one argues that there is a stream of momentary pot *saṃskāras* in a cause and effect chain within which the *saṃskāra* of a previous moment prior to fading from existence subtly transmits its impression or stamp on the next, and this second on the third, and so forth, such that there appears to be one constant pot *saṃskāra*, but is in reality a stream of successive self-perpetuating moments, then other difficulties ensue. Such a chain of cause and effect would require that the pot *saṃskāra* exist for at least two or three distinct *kṣaṇas*, or

moments: there must be a moment when the *saṃskāra* receives the impression from its predecessor, perhaps a moment when it exists in its own right, then at the very least a moment when it overlaps with the subsequent *saṃskāra* such that it can transmit its impression upon it as it dissolves. According to other systems of Indian thought,⁸ most entities endure for at least three moments: origination, duration and cessation: without allowing this minimal overlap of any entity with its predecessor and successor, there could never be a stream of continuity – how could a consistent impression be transmitted from one moment to the next without such minimal overlap? But this entails the survival of a *saṃskāra* for more than one moment, which is not admitted by *kṣaṇikavāda*.⁹ (Such arguments are expressed in the Vedānta tradition and adopted by most Hindu philosophical schools.¹⁰) All in all, confusion arises, from the perspective of the Yoga and other *ātmavāda* school, by attempting to deny the existence of a *puruṣa* as the enduring witness of the mind.

Having said this, one can reiterate again that, at least in terms of *prakṛti*, Buddhism and Yoga both agree that “surface level” reality is “momentary,” and flows in a stream of ever-changing flux. Their essential difference is that in Yoga this all takes place in a constant, eternal and enduring substratum, *prakṛti* which is perceived by the autonomous *puruṣa*. In Buddhism, in addition to there being no *puruṣa* as the witness of *prakṛti*, there is no such enduring *prakṛti* entity to be witnessed as the substratum underlying the momentary flux of surface reality.

Having argued, then, that the mind is not self-illuminating but rather an object of knowledge, the question arises in IV.22 as to how the mind is known at all by *puruṣa*, given the Yoga axiom that *puruṣa* is changeless, *apratīsamkrama*, and does not act in any way:

8 For a comprehensive discussion on causality in Indic thought, see Shaw, J.L. “Causality: Sāṃkhya, Bauddha and Nyāya” *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 30 (2002) 213-70.

9 The same argument holds good, obviously, for the continuity of any ingredient of reality such as atoms, etc.

10 *Vide*, for example, from the Vedānta school, Vedānta Sūtra II.2.24; from the Mīmāṃsā school, Kumārila’s Ślokavārtika V.187 ff; from the Nyāya school, Udayana’s Ātmatattvaviveka IV (probably the most extensive critique of Buddhist views in orthodox Hindu polemics); from Sāṃkhya, Sāṃkhya Sūtra I.35.

Although it is unchanging, consciousness becomes aware its own intelligence by means of pervading the forms assumed by the intelligence.

If there were no medium such as the *citta* and if *puruṣa* were directly aware of external objects, it would as a consequence itself be an actor, by dint of engaging directly with the world. This would make it ever-changing, by dint of being aware of one object after another, as is entailed in everyday consciousness. If *puruṣa* were subject to change in this way, it would not be eternal – eternal means unchanging. Therefore, *puruṣa* is passive and unchanging; according to Yoga metaphysics, it is the *citta* which changes and modifies itself according to the objects of perception, molding itself into a replication of these objects, *āpatti*. However, while this paper concerns itself with Buddhism as the *pūrvapakṣa*, since Buddhist responses or refutations of the *ātma-vāda* position are beyond the scope of this paper, one might note that it is not entirely clear how introducing a medium such as the *citta* facilitates the commitment of the Yoga commentators to preserving the absolutely unchanging nature of the *puruṣa*. Since *citta* is ever-changing, *puruṣa* is still directly aware of an ever-changing entity. In other words, what difference does it make if *puruṣa*'s awareness is focused on a constantly changing entity comprised of gross *prakṛti* like the physical objects of the material world, or of subtle *prakṛti* like the *citta*?

The well-known simile of copper being poured into a mold and thereby taking the form of that mold surfaces frequently in the commentaries to explain the process of *puruṣa* becoming aware of the objects of knowledge. The *citta* is molded into the particular form of an external object such as the pot, and this transformed *citta* is then presented to the changeless *puruṣa*. The consciousness of *puruṣa*, which eternally radiates forth, thereby becomes aware of the *citta* in this particular mold of a pot. According to Yoga, *puruṣa* has not changed by dint of its awareness pervading *citta* and its machinations, nor has it “acted;” its awareness has merely passively encountered the *citta* in its molded forms of pots and so forth, just as light is unchanged when it contacts an object and illuminates it. Thus, the *citta* can act and continually change into the forms of the world, while the *puruṣa*, as witness, remains inactive and unchanging. Ad-

ditionally, when pervaded by *puruṣa*'s awareness in this way, the *citta* itself appears animated.

The *citta* is also conceptualized as acting as a mirror and reflecting the *puruṣa* – Vācaspati Miśra presents the classic illustration of the moon reflected in rippling water: the moon's reflection appears rippled and changing (and even appears luminous due to being pervaded by the moon's luminosity); but, it is only the reflection of the moon that moves with the ripples, the actual moon itself remains transcendent and unchanging. It would be foolishness or ignorance to take the rippled reflection to be the actual moon. But this is what the *citta* is doing. Reflecting the *puruṣa* and thereby appearing animated in its own right due to being pervaded by the *puruṣa*'s awareness, the mind considers its own states to be the real self. *Puruṣa* thus appears subject to change – transformed by the ever-changing states of the mind that in actuality it only passively animates. Misidentifying the true self with these states, the mind identifies with *samsāric* life despite the fact that, in reality, the *puruṣa* is transcendent, autonomous, and unchanging. IV.23 elaborates further:

The mind, colored by the seer as well as by that which is seen,
knows all objects.

The *citta* is the pivot of *samsāric* existence. On the one hand it grasps the objects of the world, and, on the other, it itself is the object of *puruṣa*'s awareness. Thus, says Vyāsa, Patañjali states that it is “colored,” *uparakta*, by both object and subject, by the inanimate sense objects on one hand, and by *puruṣa*, the ultimate source of awareness, on the other – by both consciousness and unconsciousness.

In the commentaries here, we see the mind compared to the crystal: like a crystal, the mind can reflect disparate things in its various facets. Depending on the point to be made, sometimes the *puruṣa* is compared to a crystal,¹¹ and, other times, as we find here, the *citta* is compared to the crystal. In the former instance, the point is to illustrate that the *puruṣa*, even though its awareness appears to be colored by dint of pervading the adjacent *citta* with its *vṛttis*, remains pure and unchanged, just as the crystal remains clear and

11 See, for example, Vācaspati Miśra in I.3.

unchanged even though it might appear to be colored by an adjacent object. But here the same crystal simile is used to illustrate that it is the mind which is infused both with consciousness on one side, and with the objects of the senses, on the other, both completely distinct from itself, just as the crystal can be infused in its various facets with both red and other colors from objects completely distinct from itself.

This is why, says Vyāsa, it is easy to subscribe to the “Idealist” views discussed previously. Objects of consciousness are, after all, revealed by the mind, so it is understandable that some might think they are products of the mind.¹² Likewise, since the mind reflects the consciousness of *puruṣa*, it is understandable that some might suppose that the mind itself is the source of this consciousness. These views deserve attention, says Vyāsa, however, if one is to avoid some of the philosophical pitfalls outlined above and hopes to realize the true nature of consciousness, one must develop a clear understanding of the nature of and differences between the *puruṣa*, the *citta*, and the objects of perception. Hence the previous *sūtras* were directed by Patañjali at challenging certain views that might bear resemblances to the Yogic position. The view preferred by the Yoga school is that there are three entities in the process of knowledge: the knower, the instruments of knowledge, and the object of knowledge (*grahītr*, *grāhāṇa*, and *grāhya*, that is, *puruṣa*, *citta*, and *viśaya*, the sense objects). And discriminative knowledge, *viveka*, is the understanding of the difference between them.

Finally, in IV. Patañjali concludes his discussion concerning the nature of the mind and consciousness:

12 Vyāsa further argues in his commentary to this verse that if one takes this Idealist position, then one will have to argue that the insight into the nature of an object gained during *samādhi*, is also a mental construction. In *samādhi*, one gains insight into the nature of an object (i.e. that gross objects are in reality transformations of subtler energies as outlined throughout the *sūtras*). One then gets another insight, according to the idealist school of thought, that all external objects, whether gross or subtle, are in reality mental constructions. This is tantamount to saying that insight reveals the true nature of insight (i.e., that a second insight gains insight into the first insight). How can insight gain insight into insight, asks Vyāsa? This would be like saying burning can burn itself, or cutting cut itself. Insight can only be directed against an object different from itself.

That mind, with its countless variegated subliminal impressions, exists for another entity [other than itself], because it operates in conjunction [with other instruments].

The mind consists of unlimited *saṁskāras*. It is therefore a construction made of many parts. It also works in conjunction, *saṁhatya*, with other entities such as the senses, sense objects, and so forth. Things which are combinations of parts and work in conjunction with other entities, elaborate the commentators, are not eternal but have been conjoined for the purpose of something else, not for themselves. A house is a construction of different parts that relate with other entities; it does not exist for itself, but for another entity – the resident. The mind exists to provide either experience or liberation (II.18), but these are not for itself, but for some other entity. That other entity cannot itself be a construct consisting of parts, or regress would ensue; it must be something of a different nature: the changeless, partless *puruṣa*.

Having marshaled *anumāna* in an attempt to refute the Buddhist position, in IV.25, Patañjali returns to the epistemological base line of Yoga truth claims:

For one who sees the distinction [between the mind and the soul], reflecting on the nature of the self ceases.

Patañjali is indicating in this *sūtra*, says Vyāsa, that when one has actually realized the self, questions such as “Who am I,” etc, cease; hence, the prioritization of *pratyakṣa*, experience, in I.49, from the three sources of knowledge accepted by the Patañjali in I.6. The other two, *anumāna* and *āgama*, inference and verbal authority, can help remove doubt, says Hariharānanda, but only actual experience completely dissolves all questions. Existential questions are, after all, the products of *citta*. But, once one actually experiences the distinction between the real self and everything else, all existential questions evaporate, a Yoga truism that goes back to the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad: “all doubts are dispelled, for one who has seen [the truth]” (II.2.9).