



"The original essence of the Yoga Sūtra was passed on by oral tradition. First, you learn the rhythm of the Sūtra. This was in Saṃskṛta, first learning the words or Sūtra, then the meanings. By learning to recite the Sūtra perfectly it was clear that you were earnest in wanting to learn their meanings.

The scheme would be to repeat it twice, in exactly the same tone used by the teacher. This would take many years. Thus these days it's difficult to expect to understand the Sūtra from a book or a course.

A Sūtra Class began with a dedication. It had the effect of orienting the mind to the class and subject and could also be a dedication to a god, if accepted, to remove obstacles, or if none, not to put any i.e. Gaṇeśa.

It is also a dedication to all one's teachers or all the teachers and the author of the text himself. Patañjali as in - Pata that which falls and Añjali a position of offering as in Añjali Mudrā. Something fell from above and became Patañjali. The roots are in Indian mythology.

A god reclining on a bed of serpents was beseeched by the sages of old. They had problems with Saṃskṛta grammar, Knowledge of disease and Peace of mind.

Thus in order to find a balance of body mind and speech they prayed to God. Ānanta answered them and threw down something which was half-man up to the shoulders and above a head of many cobras. This became the man Patañjali.

From this myth, three works are often attributed to him. One of Grammar for speech, one of medicine for the body, one of Yoga for the mind. Patañjali was regarded as an incarnation of the great Ānanta and the prayer salutes him and his work."

- TKV Desikachar 1979