



yogena cittasya padena vācām

(yo-gay-nuh chih-tah-syuh pah-day-nuh vah-chum)

malaṁ śarīrasya ca vaidyakena

(mah-lahm shah-ree-rah-syuh chuh vy-dyuh-kay-nuh)

yo'pākarottam̐ pravaram̐ munīnām̐

(yo-pah kar-oh-tahm prah-vah-rahm moo-nee-nahm)

patañjalim̐ prāñjalirānato'smi

(pah-tahn-jah-lim prahn-jah-leer ah-nah-to-smee)

ābahu puruṣākāram̐

(ah-bah-hoo poo-roo-shah-kar-ahm)

śaṅkha cakrāsi dhāriṇam̐

(shahn-kah chah-krah-see dar-ee-nahm)

sahasra śīrasam̐ śvetam̐

(sah-hah-srah sheer-ah-sahm shvay-tahm)

pranamāmi patañjalim

(prah-nuh-mah-mee pah-tahn-jah-lim)

hari om

(hari-he om)

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This invocation to Patañjali is the introduction to the Bhoja Vr̥tti, the commentary on the Yoga Sūtras written by Raja Bhoj. It is frequently chanted at the beginning of a yoga class. The first part of the chant salutes Patañjali's achievements as a founding figure in yoga; in grammar; and in ayurvedic medicine. The second part salutes him for carrying: the conch, which sounds the vibrations of the Universe but also awakens us to the coming victory over the world of matter; the wheel, which symbolizes the dominion and universal power of wisdom; and the double-edged sword of discriminative understanding, which enables us to see duality and cut through it to reveal reality. The reference to '1,000 heads' is to his form as Ananta or Adisesa, the divine serpent that, in biting its own tail, symbolizes endlessness or the circle of eternity from which all possibilities and universes can spring.

-- Kofi Busia

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