



From Rāmācharaka's "Standard of the Normal Man" to Lutosławski's Strategy of National Revival

How Rāmācharaka's Interpretation of Yoga Fits with the Early Stage of
Yoga Adaptation in Poland

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Abstract. – The aim of the article is to present how Rāmācharaka's vision of yoga fits with the initial stage of yoga adaptation in Poland. The focus lays on the fact how elements of Rāmācharaka's yoga were used by Wincenty Lutosławski in his system of yoga, described as "the development of the power of will". It may be assumed that it was Lutosławski's activity, who not only wrote the first Polish yoga textbook but was also deeply involved in promoting his system, that contributed to the wider interest in Rāmācharaka and introduced his specific understanding of yoga to this part of Europe. [Poland, Lutosławski, Rāmācharaka, Chobot, yoga, prana, occultism]

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Yoga arrived in Poland in the first decade of the 20th century. The year 1905, when the first Polish yoga textbook was issued, may be considered as the beginning of the long process of adapting yoga to the cultural reality of this part of the world. The term "Polish" used here refers to the fact that the book was written in Polish by a Pole who himself practiced yoga and even considered himself to be a yogi.¹ What is more, and this is of particular importance, the textbook presented a version of yoga adapted to the specific needs of the Polish nation, which, due to the historical circumstances, was faced with an urgent necessity for revival – physical, moral, and spiritual. This Polish yoga was understood as a self-help and "national-help" strategy – a certain lifestyle as well as a system of practices and a way of coping with the problems

¹ I refer here to the idea expressed by E. de Michelis who links the beginnings of modern Yoga with "what seems to be the first recorded affirmation, by a Westerner, that he considered himself a yoga practitioner – after a fashion" (2005: 3). De Michelis recalls Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862) who, in one of his letters, called himself a yogi. De Michelis stresses: "Up to this point the West had known about (and had been interested in) yoga and *yogins*, but these were seen as altogether 'other'. Yoga, that is, was in no way perceived as an option to be taken up by Westerners; it was a phenomenon observed, studied and reported about in the third person, as it were ... In Thoreau's case yoga was taken up by a Westerner while remaining a Westerner" (2005: 3).

of everyday life, which may or even should be adopted by the Poles. In the longer perspective, adopting the practice of yoga was supposed to bring the complete revival of the Polish nation and eventually lead to the revival of all humanity. The very base of this Polish yoga, as it was called by its exponent – Wincenty Lutosławski – was the vision of yoga created and popularized by Yogi Rāmācharaka, mainly in his two widely read books “Hatha Yoga. Or the Yogi Philosophy of Physical Wellbeing” (1904) and “Science of Breath. A Complete Manual of the Oriental Breathing Philosophy of Physical, Mental, Psychic, and Spiritual Development” (1905b). In fact, those two publications gave the first impulse for this very early Polish interpretation of yoga.

The aim of this article is to present how Rāmācharaka’s vision of yoga fits with the initial stage of yoga adaptation in Poland. The main focus is to show how elements of Rāmācharaka’s yoga were used by Wincenty Lutosławski in his system of yoga described as “the development of the power of will.” It may be assumed that it was Lutosławski’s activity, who not only wrote the yoga textbook but was also deeply involved in promoting his system, that contributed to the wider interest in Rāmācharaka, which grew during the next 15 years and brought about the Polish translations of his most popular yoga books.

Yogi Rāmācharaka

Yogi Rāmācharaka (William Walker Atkinson 1862–1932) is a pivotal figure for the development of modern yoga and its popularization as a practical self-help method, which may be applied to improve the quality of life and solve common everyday problems. This American attorney, merchant, publisher, and, above all, occultist and prominent personage of the New Thought movement (see, e. g., Albanese 2007 or Mosley 2006), popular in 19th-century America, was a prolific author, who published his books under several different pen names such as: Theron Q. Dumont, Magnus Incognito, Swami Bhakta Vishita, Swami Panchadasi, or Yogi Rāmācharaka. The list of Atkinson’s books is impressive and covers more than 120 titles. To be precise, these are the books attributed to Atkinson. But we may never be sure that all the texts published under so many *noms de plume* really were of his authorship. All of them deal with the vast spectrum of subjects that interest New Thought sympathizers – telepathy, the power of the mind, mind-healing, self-healing, the

relation between body and mind, mind reading, psychomancy, crystallomancy, clairvoyance, telepathy, occultism, spiritism, mediumism, mesmerism, mysticism, alchemy, life after death, nature-cure, and many others. As Catherine Albanese stated, Atkinson’s books represent “New Thought in its brashest, least Christianized and God-dependent version” (2007: 358; quoted in Singleton 2010: 130). A considerable part of Atkinson’s works dealing with Indian traditions, mainly Hinduism and yoga, were published under the pen name Yogi Rāmācharaka. They brought the author international and long-lasting fame. Suffice to say that Rāmācharaka’s books, which are over a hundred years old today, are still published and attract quite a number of readers. They also still raise considerable interest in Poland. The evidence of this may be the fact that over the past few years most of Rāmācharaka’s Polish translations issued before World War II were re-edited and republished not only in the form of traditional books but also in electronic versions. “Rāmācharaka’s books” – enthusiastically writes one of the reviewers commenting upon the re-edition of Polish versions of “Hatha Yoga” and “Science of Breath” – “make splendid reading for everyone. Pleasant, easy to read and comprehend, full of inalienable truths about the nature of the world and the universe that keep lifting the veil of secrecy covering the most marvelous mysteries, more than one hundred years after publication they are still as up to date as they were in the moment of their first original issue in 1904” (Gadomski 2013).

It must be remembered, however, that Rāmācharaka’s yoga books represent, as Marc Singleton calls it, a “distinct ‘New Thought’ sub-genre of modern yoga” (2010: 130) – eclectic, blending New Thought ideas and practices (which are themselves very diverse) with Nature Cure and elements of yoga. As Singleton specifies: “... in practice, often little distinction was drawn between the two [i. e., yoga and New Thought]: both are overwhelmingly concerned with health and with the accumulation of personal spiritual power for material well-being” (2010: 130).

Rāmācharaka’s vision of yoga, especially as depicted in “Hatha Yoga” and “Science of Breath,” was so popular and so widely accepted that it started to function as a model way for understanding what yoga, its practices, and their results should be and, as one may assume, contributed to the world-wide popularity of yoga.

Rāmācharaka in Polish: Translations and Editions

In Poland, Rāmācharaka's name began to earn popularity at the outset of the second decade of the 20th century. During this time, Polish translations of his most popular yoga books appeared. In 1921, "Science of Breath"² and "Fourteen Lessons in Yogi Philosophy and Oriental Occultism" (originally published in 1904) were released in the Polish language. A year later, a Polish version of "Hatha Yoga" was issued and in 1923 "Advanced Course in Yogi Philosophy and Oriental Occultism" (originally published in 1905) appeared. The year 1925 brought a Polish edition of "Raja Yoga or Mental Development" (originally published in 1906). In the 1930s, excerpts of "The Inner Teachings of the Philosophies and Religions of India" (originally published in 1909) and "Gnani Yoga" (originally published in 1907) were released in Polish. Before the outbreak of World War II, most of the aforementioned books were reissued.

The Polish translations of Rāmācharaka's books were published by two publishing houses, which clearly indicates the target readers. Most of the books were issued by Księgarnia i Dom Wydawniczy Trzaska, Evert i Michalski (Trzaska, Evert, and Michalski Bookseller and Publishing House), one of the biggest and most renowned publishing houses operating in Poland during the interwar period.³ This publishing house was specialized in popular science publications, dictionaries, encyclopedias, reference books, and guidebooks. Its assortment had a good reputation – varied, up-to-date, reliable, and carefully edited. Trzaska, Evert, and Michalski's range of available books was aimed at the intellectual elite and the middle class. The books were widely distributed, hence easily accessible. We may suppose that Rāmācharaka's books released by this publishing house enjoyed considerable interests as almost all of them had two editions. Unfortunately, it is not possible to determine the number of copies released, which would be helpful in estimating the level of their popularity and accessibility. The publisher's documentation, as well as warehouse

stocks, were completely destroyed during the Warsaw Uprising in 1945.

The second publishing house releasing the books of Rāmācharaka was Księgarnia Filozoficzno-Okultystyczna (Philosophical-Occult Bookseller), operating during the interwar period in Cieszyn.⁴ This publishing house was specialized in occult and esoteric books. Although, according to the publisher's principles, all the books were addressed to a wide circle of readers, in practice they ended up in the hands of a sizeable group of people in Poland who were interested in *scientia occulta* at that time. However, the publishing house's activity was not merely limited to book publications. In fact, its most important goal was to promote a passion for the study of "the mysteries of the very existence" (Chobot 1921d: 1) as well as waking interest in the powers latent in every human being. The *spiritus movens* behind the activity of the Księgarnia Filozoficzno-Okultystyczna was the well-known social activist, teacher, and spiritist Józef Chobot (1875–1942). In Poland, he was one of the first people who started systematic work on developing a kind of esoteric milieu in which those ideas could be discussed, developed, and put into practice for the public good.⁵ Within the scope of this program, Chobot published (between 1921 and 1928) a magazine under the very meaningful title *Odrodzenie – Miesięcznik poświęcony sprawom odrodzenia człowieka i badaniom zjawisk duchowych* (*The Revival – A Monthly Dedicated to the Issue of the Human Revival and the Study of Spiritual Phenomena*). The magazine aimed at propagating all the information that could contribute to the moral and spiritual revival of the Polish nation and, in a more long-term perspective, the whole humanity. Among the many and varied ideas appearing on the pages of *Odrodzenie*, themes of oriental provenance were of special importance. Chobot stressed the exceptional significance of Eastern wisdom, particularly that which flowed from India. He wrote:

India, swathed with the eternal glory and light, is the cradle and the beginning of all nations and magnificent, divine ideas and revelations. From there, from the holy

2 See References Cited for the publications of Rāmācharaka, including those translated into Polish.

3 Trzaska, Evert, and Michalski Bookseller and Publishing House was set up in 1919 by the booksellers W. Trzaska and J. Michalski and the industrialist L. J. Evert. During WWII the publishing house limited its activity to selling the warehouse stock. After the war, it resumed its full activity in 1945. The publishing house operated until 1951.

4 Cieszyn is a town situated in Silesia (in the south of Poland) on the east bank of the Olza River. In the interwar period Silesia was known for its active and varied occult *milieu*.

5 Józef Chobot was also a founder (in 1925) of the Bractwo Odrodzenia Narodowego (Brotherhood of the National Revival) – an organization which, according to the principles developed by him, was supposed to work on reforming and improving the spiritual, ethical, and material dimension of human activity.

banks of the Ganges, from the sky-high peaks of the Himalayas which overlook endlessly the world, which rise stately towards the pure, sunny skies and unite with the Spirits of Creation, from there the first words of wisdom and revelation flew to the humanity (1921c: 3).

The publication of the Polish translation of Rāmācharaka's "The Inner Teachings of the Philosophies and Religions of India" (only excerpts of the 1909 English version) in *Odrodzenie* may be seen as a clear expression of such views as well as an attempt to contribute to humanity's *renovatio*, which was one of the main themes of 19th and 20th century occult thoughts.

The second book of Rāmācharaka published by Księgarnia Filozoficzno-Okultystyczna was "Science of Breath" released in 1921. It should be admitted, however, that the Polish edition of "Science of Breath" is not an exact translation but a compilation of fragments precisely translated or only briefly recounted, with many parts of the original book being completely excluded from the Polish version. At the very end of the Polish edition, the publisher even included an additional exercise – as he called it, "the massage of the solar plexus," whose efficacy, as he claimed, he had experienced personally (Chobot 1921e: i).

"Science of Breath" was issued within a popular series entitled "Książnica wiedzy duchowej"⁶ (The Bibliotheca of Spiritual Wisdom). The series, as the publisher declared, was supposed to be a practical response to the problems encountered by humanity, as it moved away from the old era dominated by the material concerns and stood at the threshold of a new spiritual time. Chobot stated:

Due to this need ... we take up [publishing] this Książnica Wiedzy Duchowej; with the light of the ancient sages', Masters of humanity, and modern geniuses' wisdom we want to enlighten the darkness lingering in the human mind, we want to move and awake the powers latent within us and show the path leading towards liberation from the enslavement of the corporality and earthly existence, leading towards the light of the Spirit, everlasting heavenly bliss; we want to contribute to the revival of humanity, so that the new human being ... could experience and learn from the beginning, work out within himself, summon up the divinity, purity, power and the peace of mind that he once lost and could shine in his royal vestment among the creatures of this world

⁶ The series was published between 1921–1938. It contains books dealing with various esoteric issues (such as spiritualism, clairvoyance, yoga, Egyptian secret knowledge, the esoteric interpretation of the Bible, alternative treatments for mental, physical illness, etc.) written by Polish authors as well as translations.

and could rise on the higher level of perfection (1921d: i).

According to Chobot, Rāmācharaka's "Science of Breath" meets these expectations in a perfect manner – it is a guidebook containing practical and easy exercises, which makes it particularly accessible and hence universal. As Chobot states in the introduction, the book contains:

... an exhaustive presentation of rules and conditions which allow to keep and enhance health, intensify the physical strength and the abilities of the human body and spirit, cure sicknesses and physical disabilities, disperse unwanted, harmful and impure thoughts, feelings and lust, influence our will, passions, desires and our character – in a word – [they allow for] a blessed and conscious influence on all the manifestations of our life, our body, soul, and Spirit and replenish them with the life-giving, creative, healing, and reinforcing currents of cosmic power called by the Sanskrit name – prana (Chobot 1921e: ii).

Later on in his introduction, Chobot stresses that each man for his own sake should acquaint himself with the rules explained in Rāmācharaka's book. These rules are supposed to be especially useful for medical doctors, teachers, and university professors who should, in turn, feel obliged to disseminate them in hospitals, health resorts, schools, and universities. Such beneficial indications should also form a part of the obligatory military drill. In conclusion, Chobot states that the rules of breathing explained by "the Hindu philosopher" are a natural and effective means to "minimize the infinity of suffering experienced by this miserable, fallen and degenerated humanity" (1921e: ii).

While discussing the Polish translations of Rāmācharaka's books, it is worth mentioning briefly two of their translators. Three of Rāmācharaka's books brought out by the Trzaska, Evert i Michalski Publishing House were translated by a remarkable person from the Polish literary and philosophical world at the turn of the 19th and 20th century – Antoni Lange (1862–1929). He is considered to be one of the most important artists belonging to the first generation of Young Poland (Młoda Polska) artistic and literary trend. He was a poet, dramatist, novelist, publicist, translator (of, among others, oriental languages such as Sanskrit, Persian, Arabic) as well as a philosopher and mystic. In his vast, extremely diverse and unique oeuvre, he often used oriental, particularly Indian, themes. Most of them – concepts, ideas, terms – appear, however, in the esoteric, or to be more pre-

cise, theosophical interpretation. As research on Lange's artistic creations points to, he was interested in the Orient, but in its esoteric version. This is the source of Lange's fascination with Rāmācharaka, whose books he regarded very highly mainly as a valuable source of information about "the depth of wisdom of the East" (Lange 1921: i), considered so important for the inhabitants of the West. In this regard, Antoni Smuszkiewicz points out, "Lange was a true child of his time, questioning all the previous values and searching for support as well as answers for the tormenting questions about the very existence of human beings in the culture of the East" (1982: 138).

Lange not only translated Rāmācharaka's books into Polish but also used them as a central source of information, which he incorporated into his own artistic creations. Many of his short stories, which are commonly recognized as representing the early phase of the development of the Polish fantasy genre, reveal the clear influences of Rāmācharaka's books. In fact, Lange introduced into Polish literature and popularized many concepts from the Indian tradition – not in their original version but in the esoteric, New Thought interpretation of the "Yogi from Baltimore."

Both translations of Rāmācharaka's books released by Księgarnia Filozoficzno-Okultystyczna were prepared by the chiromancer and astrologer Karol Chobot (1886–1937), brother of the previously mentioned Józef Chobot. Like his older brother, Karol Chobot was well known in the occult milieu of interwar Poland. He helped his brother to set up and later to run the Księgarnia Filozoficzno-Okultystyczna publishing house; he was also the editor of the *Odrodzenie* magazine. Karol Chobot was not only a translator but also authored many articles dealing with the occult. These publications were based on his personal experience with the *scientia occulta* as well as literary sources, i. e., Rāmācharaka's books. The clearest example of how Karol Chobot used the Yogi of Baltimore's ideas is the 1926 booklet entitled "Suchoty są uleczalne. Leczenie suchot metodą hinduską prof. przyrody Ludwika Pasińskiego" (Consumption is Curable. Curing Consumption with the Indian Method of Ludwik Pasiński, Professor of Natural Science). In this book, Karol Chobot presents a natural, cheap, and, as he claims, effective way of curing tuberculosis with, among others, breathing exercises, which he derived from Rāmācharaka's manuals.

It was undoubtedly thanks to Karol and Józef Chobot's efforts – translations, original works, and

publishing activities – that Rāmācharaka became known and accepted as a kind of authority in the Polish occult environment of the interwar period and was referred to as a source of reliable information.

This does not mean, however, that the Yogi from Baltimore unanimously was accepted in Poland. There were several representatives of the esoteric community who considered him to be a fraud and saw his works as nothing more than a compilation of useless information derived from various sources. One of the first Polish occultist who stepped forward with a forthright criticism of Rāmācharaka was a famous astrologer from the interwar period, Jan Starża-Dzierżbicki (1883–1939). He revealed the true identity of the Yogi from Baltimore by writing in one of his publications that "the author of those books so eagerly translated into Russian and Polish has never been a Hindu called Ramācharaka, he is not a yogi, he is even not of Aryan origin" (1923: 13). Starża-Dzierżbicki added that Rāmācharaka's books did not present the true yoga but were, in fact, a demonstration of "the American New Thought system of optimism in combination with the hypnotical training and a compilation of varied theosophical brochures" (1923: 13). He also stated that Atkinson's adopting of an Indian yogi pseudonym was pure marketing as his writings did not meet with much interest as long as they were published under Atkinson's real name, but "Yogi Ramācharaka did, of course, his job" (1923: 13f.). Starża-Dzierżbicki was also very critical about the directions given by Rāmācharaka, which were – as the Polish occultist stressed – inaccurate, incorrect, incoherent, missing various important details and as such may put a practitioner in serious danger. They also would make an adept too heavily focused on himself and his activity instead of helping him to gradually break the ties with the external world. "One cannot imagine anything bringing more undesirable consequences for the human spirit than the practices of this pseudo-yoga" summarized Starża-Dzierżbicki (1923: 14).

Mention should also made of Józef Świtkowski (1876–1942), one of the key figures of the Polish occult milieu in the interwar period, who himself was a yogi and who authored his own interpretation of Patañjali's yoga⁷ inspired by Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. Being aware of the true iden-

⁷ Świtkowski presented his vision of yoga in a textbook titled "Wstęp w światy nadzmysłowe. Radza-Joga nowoczesna" (How to Enter the Higher Worlds. Modern Raja-Yoga. 1923) and widely read during the interwar period. The book was

ity of Rāmācharaka and, apparently, his intellectual affiliations, Świtkowski asserted that the Yogi of Baltimore presented unverified and unreliable information in his books which he derived from various sources of doubtful origin and mixed with his own fantasies. This way he had created worthless or even harmful images of what the practice of yoga and its results should be (Świtkowski 1937: 4).

Wincenty Lutosławski's "The Development of the Power of Will"

It seems that the first person (and certainly the first publicly recognizable person), who in Rāmācharaka's books found the inspiration for his own practice and later for creating his own system of yoga was a philosopher, writer, university professor, publicist, tireless social activist, organizer of many educational circles, interests groups, societies, and fraternities: Wincenty Lutosławski (1863–1954). In the 1980s and 1990s, the English-speaking philosophical world considered him as the most outstanding representative of Polish philosophical thought. Lutosławski was most famous for his in-depth analysis of the chronology of Plato's "Dialogues." He determined it using a pioneering method called stylometry, which he developed himself (cf. Lutosławski 1898). He presented the results of his study in an impressive book "The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic. With an Account of Plato's Style and of Chronology of his Writings" (1897), which turned him into one of the most well-known Polish philosophers of that time. In Poland, however, his name was commonly associated with his diverse social activities aimed at the revival of the Polish nation. According to Lutosławski, such a revival was the main precondition for Poland to regain its independence⁸ and, in the longer perspective, bringing the moral and spiritual rebirth for the whole humanity. Stanisław Pigoń, one of Lutosławski's students and then colleague, emphasized that he was a man in whom "continuously burns an unsuppressed desire to embody the ideal, to transform the souls, to reshape the world, to create the utopian State of Perfection" (1957: 234). This desire to

published in the already mentioned "Książnica Wiedzy Duchowej."

8 Poland lost its independence as result of the three partitions in 1772, 1793, and 1895. The territory of Poland was divided between the Russian Empire, the Kingdom of Prussia, and The Habsburg Monarchy of Austria. Poland regained its sovereignty in 1918.

improve the society, the nation, and the whole of humankind should be regarded as the source of Lutosławski's activity, which brought about more or less formal social organizations, institutions of national revival, such as the most recognizable and influential Eleusis Society as well as the association of Eleuteria, Kuźnica (Forge), Wszechnica Mickiewiczowska (Mickiewicz's University), Koła Filareckie (Filaret Associations), Seminarium Wychowania Narodowego (Seminary of National Education), Zakon Kowali (The Order of the Smiths), whose members worked in accordance with Lutosławski's recommendations and programs on moral and spiritual formation, putting a strong emphasis on the development of nationalistic and patriotic attitudes.

The philosophical background for Lutosławski's reformist activity constituted a system, which he himself created and called eleutherism (from the Greek *eleutheros*, "free"). Its major pillar was the assumption of the existence of the "creative, constitutive character of an unrestricted free will of the *Self*, which is embodied in man" (Groblewski 1978: 50). Free will in cooperation with reason is, according to Lutosławski, the source of all independent human activity, through which men can create their own lives, influence others, and give a particular shape to the surrounding reality. This free will manifests itself in the fullest manner through human creativity, through the willingness and ability to act. As Lutosławski expressed it: "The *will* is what is felt as omnipotent and creative, what directly embodies the idea into action ..." (quoted in Kobierzycki 2000: 102, emphasis A.S.). According to the Polish philosopher, this will is in fact the very core of a person's *Self*.⁹ It may be understood as one of the dimensions of the *Self*. "The freedom of the will" – as Lutosławski stated – "is to be understood as a different description of the same reality which we call the very existence of the *Self*" (quoted in Jaworski 1989: 92). It is free will that allows each human being to make free choices; i. e., the choices which stem from his very nature, from his *Self*, are hence unconditioned by any external factors. Human freedom therefore is seen by the philosopher as the ability to use free will, to take each action in accordance with the totally unconditioned and unlimited will. The activities, which remain in harmony with the promptings of the *Self* and which

9 This is one of the distinctive and central categories, which build up Lutosławski's philosophical anthropology hence named voluntarism. For details on Lutosławski's concept of will see Jaworski (1989).

are the results of free choices, will always aim at the gradual improvement of the Self. Lutosławski explained:

Each and every *Self* has this intrinsic power of getting closer to its own ideal of perfection, resolving that the present day will bring it closer to this ideal, more than yesterday. Every *Self* may keep renewing this resolution until it awakens the will hidden within, the will which knows no obstacle nor resistance (quoted in Jaworski 1989: 92).

This conviction pushed the Polish philosopher to search for all possible ways to discover and expose will – this very essence of the Self. The “revealing of this very essence of the pure *Self*, independent from the body, controlling the body and the external world” (Lutosławski 1909: 151) would allow a man, as Lutosławski claimed, to “achieve power,” to use the full human potential.

The result of this search was a book, now commonly referred to as the first Polish textbook of yoga, whose full title is “Rozwój potęgi woli przez psychofizyczne ćwiczenia według dawnych aryjskich tradycji oraz własnych swoich doświadczeń podaje do użytku rodaków Wincenty Lutosławski” (The Development of the Power of Will through the Psychophysical Exercises According to the Ancient Aryan Traditions and His Own Experiences Given by Wincenty Lutosławski for the Use of His Compatriots).¹⁰

The program of self-discipline as well as self-development described in this book, although created as a remedy for Lutosławski's personal frailty, eventually turned into a full procedure for the revival of the Polish nation. It was to be achieved by the improvement of every individual who was a member of the Polish nation. The book

¹⁰ The first edition of this book was issued in 1909 in Warsaw, but copies of the texts, as the author mentioned in the foreword to the book, “were in use since then [i. e. since 1905] and were so effective that publishing them today gives an answer to the existing need” (Lutosławski 1909: v). The publication of “Rozwój potęgi woli” in the form of a book was preceded by a two-piece article entitled “Joga, czyli rozwój potęgi woli” (Yoga or the Development of the Power of Will), which was published in *Eleusis – Czasopismo Elsów* [Eleusis – The Elses' Periodical] in 1907 and 1908. This article concentrated mainly on practical hints. “Rozwój potęgi woli” was reissued twice in 1910 (Warsaw) and in 1923 (Vilnius). The second edition is almost identical with the first one, but the third one includes a number of changes made by Lutosławski under the influence of the “experience of grace” which he received in 1913 and later, and which entirely changed his attitude towards the practices he proposed in the original version of the book.

“Rozwój potęgi woli” includes a complete system of work which, when put into practice by all members of the society, would bring the physical, intellectual, moral, and spiritual development of the Polish people, who thus would gain the strength to fight for their lost freedom. Lutosławski explained:

There are no other possible exercises, which could be practiced so constantly as the easiest and the simplest exercises of will. They will give peace, give strength and inspiration that will show the way out of the worst snare. ... This is the way leading not only to the physical and moral regeneration but also to the independence most widely understood and permeating all the areas (1909: 179f.).

The program described in “Rozwój potęgi woli” is compiled from the recommendations, guidelines, and practices, which Lutosławski derived from various sources (cf. Świerzowska 2015). The most important, however, was yoga presented by Rāmācharaka and Swāmī Vivekānanda.

Lutosławski's interests in yoga (as well as other self-development strategies) stem from his own personal experiences. As he himself recalled, having published in 1897 his lifework “The Origin and Growth of Plato's Logic,” which took him over ten years to complete, he fell seriously ill. The sickness consisted of a feeling of permanent, overwhelming fatigue, and deep physical and mental exhaustion. The symptoms were so acute that, as Lutosławski wrote, “while being still alive I experienced death” (1909: vii).¹¹ Struggling ineffectively with the ailments for many years, he experimented with various therapeutic strategies. During his stay in London from 1903 to 1905, he conducted his research in the library of the British Museum. Lutosławski started to read “everything I could find there on health, the relation between spirit and body and various methods of chronic disease control” (1909: xi). This kind of literature was for the Polish philosopher the main source of information and practical instructions for overcoming his personal problems, and later became the means to solve most, if not all, troubles tormenting the whole humanity. During this time in London, Lutosławski came across Rāmācharaka's and Vivekānanda's books – two main pillars of his interpretation of yoga. The texts which impressed him most and which he considered most valuable were Rāmācharaka's “Hatha Yoga” and “Science of Breath” and Vivekānanda's “Yoga Philosophy”

¹¹ Lutosławski suffered from bipolar disorder. For more details cf. Gutowski (2009).

(1896). The best evidence of the Polish philosopher's enthusiasm, who was absolutely convinced that he had finally managed to discover the cure for his illness, are the letters which Lutosławski kept writing to the American philosopher and psychologist William James¹² (1842–1910):

I want to send you good news – I have essentially improved my health and look forward to further improvements thanks to constant practice for the last 6 month of very valuable indications contained in a book called *Hatha Yoga* by Rāmāchāraka, Oak Park, Illinois, 1905 and also another by Swami Vivekānanda *Rāja Yoga*, London, Longmans, 1903. These two, combined with Edward Carpenter's^[13] *Art of Creation*, London 1904 have given a great impulse to my thought and will and have led me to exercises which transform slowly my body and regenerate it – if you try the same I feel confident that you might still become young again and transform your heart like I have transformed my brain. One important part in this training is limitation of food and regulation of pure water drinking, after having energized with magnetic passes. This opens great horizons for the future of the race, if *Hatha Yoga* is taught and practiced in schools. I am considering now whether it would not be worthwhile to go to India to make a closer study of those *Hatha Yoga* teachers (1905b: np).¹⁴

I have so much to tell you! Please read and practice Rāmāchāraka, *The Yogi Science of Breath*, Oak Park, Ill. 1905. This book is worth a thousand others. And it will give you health if you follow its advice (1905a: np).

The aforementioned books formed the basis for Lutosławski's system described later in "Rozwój potęgi woli" (1909). This program introduced into everyday discipline, was supposed to bring harmony and equilibrium within the body, psyche, and mind, and was aimed at providing perfect control over them. This, in turn, would be the source of free, undetermined actions, stimulated only by the impulses flowing from the spirit (the Self).

The framework and the structure of his program Lutosławski derived from the yoga system of Patañjali interpreted by Swāmi Vivekānanda. Hence, Lutosławski's method is divided into two parts. The first one – external (Patañjali's *bahiranga* corresponding to Vivekānanda's so-called "prana model" [cf. de Michelis 2005: 151]) – similarly to Vivekānanda's interpretation is designed to bring the body to a state of perfect balance and to learn how to manipulate the currents of *prana*. It forms the basis for the second part of Lutosławski's system, the internal one (Patañjali's *antaranga* corresponding to Vivekānanda's so-called "samadhi model" [cf. Michelis 2005: 151]), during which a practitioner undertakes practices which are supposed to "reveal the power" and "reveal the very essence of the pure *Self*, independent from the body and controlling the body and external world" (Lutosławski 1909: 151). This part of Lutosławski's system of yoga covers, as the philosopher writes, *raja yoga* as popularized by Swāmi Vivekānanda. All the instructions given here were taken from his "Yoga Philosophy" (1896), but the description of each *raja yoga anga* is so vague that, in fact, it does not allow for unassisted practice. Lutosławski stressed, however, that this part of the discipline was so advanced and difficult that it required a personal teacher. It might happen that someone particularly gifted succeeds without help, but these were rare cases.

Rāmāchāraka's Yoga in Wincenty Lutosławski's "The Development of the Power of Will"

The first, "external" part of his system of yoga Lutosławski filled with various ideas and exercises, which he took mainly from Rāmāchāraka's "Science of Breath" (1905) and "Hatha Yoga" (1904). The Polish philosopher considered them as the most valuable, mainly due to their practical orientation. He even thought of translating them into Polish, but eventually abandoned the idea. As he explained, the books were full of foreign terminology and, most importantly, were addressed "to those willing to replace Christianity with ancient Aryan religion" (1909: 5). Thus, Lutosławski de-

12 Lutosławski met James in September 1893 during his first trip to America. As it seems, both philosophers began to correspond almost immediately after the meeting and exchanged letters until the death of James in 1910. On the basis of Lutosławski's letters in which the Polish philosopher described his experiences with yoga, James prepared the Presidential Address, which he delivered at the forum of the American Philosophical Association the Columbia University on the 28th of December 1906. The text of the lecture, including extensive quotations from Lutosławski's letters, James published in an article entitled "The Energies of Men" (1907).

13 Edward Carpenter (1844–1929), English poet, writer, philosopher, social activist, sexual reformer, and mystic was enchanted with the Indian philosophical and religious tradition. The most famous book of Carpenter dealing with his Indian fascination is "A Visit to a Gñāni" (1892). The author describes his meeting with a yogi who had attained liberation and discourses on various paths leading to self-realization. In my article, I entirely omit the influence of Carpenter on Lutosławski's system of yoga.

14 The largest collection of Lutosławski's correspondence is preserved in the Archive of Science of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU) in Krakow under the reference number K III-155. All the letters to and from Lutosławski cited in this article come from this collection.

cided that presenting the content of Rāmācharaka's books already set within the frames of a Christian worldview would be much more beneficial for the Polish reader.

As it seems, Lutosławski's special recognition for Rāmācharaka results from the fact that the vision of human welfare, which the Polish philosopher developed, corresponded with the one that emerges from the writings of the Yogi from Baltimore:

... Ramācharaka adopts an essentially romantic Nature Cure approach to bodily well-being, recommending the standard prescriptions of sunbathing, fresh air, water bathing, and gentle calisthenic exercise (Singleton 2010: 131).

In Lutosławski's case, such a vision was a consequence of his life's difficulties and many years of experimenting with alternative therapeutic strategies, which he tried to implement while unable to find a cure for his ailment within the scope of academic medicine. An excellent testimony of these experiments are Lutosławski's letters to William James written between 1899–1904 in which the Polish philosopher kept describing his gloomy moods, frailty, lack of will to live, whereas, at the same time, willingly shared his experiences of various cures and even tried to encourage James to try those, which he thought to be effective. The list of experiments mentioned by Lutosławski is long and varied. It covers, among others, magnetic treatments, *vibrationstherapie*, heliotherapy, and several dietetic experiments. The latter led the Polish philosopher to a conviction in the extraordinary value of fasting. At one point, he even began to consider it not only as extremely beneficial for physical and mental health but also as a way to solve most of the problems faced by humanity. Lutosławski used the experience gained in this period to work out his interpretation of yoga as a system ensuring the comprehensive transformation of man, nation, and humanity.

Rāmācharaka's books confirmed and broadened the Polish yogi's experiences and convictions. Lutosławski used them as his main source of recommendations for the general hygiene of life and for breathing exercises. Both constituted the first basic but fundamental part of his yoga system. Its main objective was to introduce a perfect rhythm and discipline into the practitioner's life to put all the spheres of his life in order and to introduce harmony. This, as Lutosławski claimed, would bring someone gifted to a full physical and mental balance. Another very important goal of this part

of yoga was to teach a practitioner some ways of collecting large amounts of *prana* in the body and to make him sensitive to the currents of *prana* flowing within his body. With these abilities, an adept could consciously manipulate the currents of energy and use them for the benefit of others as well as for his own sake.

It should be noted, however, that the vision of *prana* used by Lutosławski was popularized by Swāmi Vivekānanda. It was also a vision, which underpinned Rāmācharaka's interpretation of yoga. It was formed mainly under the influence of F. A. Mesmer's (1734–1815) concept of animal magnetism, which was adopted and exploited in many various ways by the American New Thought Movement as well as by Harmonial Religion.¹⁵ Elizabeth de Michelis states: "When, therefore, our author [Vivekananda] identifies *prāṇa* with 'the vital force in every being' we should be aware that he is employing one of the expressions by which the mesmeric fluid was commonly known in his day" (2005: 162). According to Vivekānanda, the ability to control *prana*, namely, sending it in a particular direction, absorbing it (from food, water, and air), concentrating in a given part or organ of the body, cumulating, transferring, etc. gives someone the power to speed up his spiritual development as well as to help others struggling on their path. Bringing the currents of *prana* under control also gives a practitioner more mundane benefits – it allows him to heal himself as well as others, those who remain in the direct contact with him, and those who are further removed.

As previously mentioned, the first part of Lutosławski's system, the external one, was inspired mainly by Rāmācharaka's "Hatha Yoga" and "Science of Breath" and consists of six subsequent groups of indications.

Group One: "Conditions for the Success of the Exercise" (Lutosławski 1909: 16)

It contains a set of preparatory guidelines concentrating on dietary and hygienic habits. They cover, among others, advice regarding the proper chewing,¹⁶ necessary for "pulling" *prana* from food and water or various hygienic recommendations de-

¹⁵ "Harmonial Religion" encompasses those forms of piety and belief in which spiritual composure, physical health, and even economic well-being are understood to flow from the person's rapport with the cosmos (cf. Fuller 2017: 580).

¹⁶ In this case, Lutosławski (1909: xxif.) referred also to Horace Fletcher (1849–1919) who stressed the importance of proper chewing as the key factor for good health. Lutosławski recommends reading one of Fletcher's books (1903).

rived almost *in extenso* from Rāmācharaka, such as regular bowel movements, oral hygiene, body wash, and a “bathing exercise,” also called the “Yogi bath” (Rāmācharaka 1904: 207ff.; Lutosławski 1909: 57). This “bath,” among others, consists of rubbing the body with a towel, then performing some warming-up exercises after the bath as well as cleaning the mucous membranes or nose rinsing. Introducing these initiatory practices was supposed, as Lutosławski claimed, to bring a practitioner “the development of higher powers” by the constraint of “lower functions,” avoiding everything that “can overburden the body without bringing it any benefits” (Lutosławski 1909: 16) and to prepare the body for the smooth flows of currents of *prana*. The Polish philosopher stressed that the first set of indications built the fundament for further yoga practice and without them, the successive groups of exercises would not bring any results.

Group Two: “Breathing Rhythm” (Lutosławski 1909: 29)

The indications collected here were supposed to bring order to the practitioner’s breathing rhythm and teach him how to change it consciously. This skill was required in order to perform more advanced breathing exercises with a proper technique. All the instructions given here by Lutosławski were compiled from Rāmācharaka’s “Science of Breath” and “Hatha Yoga.” The Polish philosopher, e. g., recommended practizing conscious breathing, i. e., equating the breathing rhythm with the rhythm of the heart or linking the breathing rhythm to the walking rhythm. Lutosławski advised using the ability of conscious rhythmic breathing at this very early stage of the yoga practice to acquire virtues and (or) remove any flaws. The Polish yogi described, for example, the practice of inhaling tenderness, a love for silence, truthfulness, diligence, while exhaling impulsiveness, a tendency to gossip or lie, laziness, etc. (1909: 38). He also strongly encouraged yoga practitioners to use the ability to breathe rhythmically as the basis for rhythmic prayer. Repeating two or three words of a prayer (such as “God help me” or “Jesus bring me light”¹⁷) in combination with rhythmic inhalations and exhalations was, according to Lutosławski, one of the most effective exercises for Catholic yoga practitioners.

Group Three: “Invigorating Exercises” (Lutosławski 1909: 42)

In Lutosławski’s yoga system, this group of exercises covers breathing practices exactly as described by Rāmācharaka (1904, 1905). These include yogi complete breathing, cleansing breath, yogi nerve vitalizing exercise, yogi vocal breath, retained breath, lung cell stimulation, rib stretching, and chest expansion. As Lutosławski assured, such practices facilitate the strengthening of both the physical and astral bodies. Among the invigorating exercises, the Polish philosopher furthermore inserted three sets of practices entirely derived from the books of Rāmācharaka: morning exercises, bathing exercises, and sleeping exercises. The first set includes gentle gymnastic and breathing exercises, which should be carried out immediately after getting out of bed. The second set – bathing exercises – consists of simple physical and breathing exercises as well as the guidelines for the proper bathing and the subsequent drying of the body in order to “push prana contained in the droplets of fresh water hanging on the body into the skin” (Lutosławski 1909: 58). The sleeping set covers a group of general guidelines for the hygiene of sleep (room ventilation, avoiding over-thick duvets, etc.). It is worth mentioning that among these “sleeping exercises” Lutosławski also added a rhythmic prayer. The Polish philosopher stressed that this practice was particularly important. As he wrote: “One who will try out the effectiveness of the rhythmic prayer before going to sleep, will be convinced that such a prayer can not only make the body rest during sleep but will also bring tremendous progress of the spirit” (1909: 63).

Group Four: “Ability to Rest” (Lutosławski 1909: 64)

The exercises described here were supposed to teach the practitioner how to achieve a state in which the perfect rest would be possible. The practices recommended by the Polish philosopher again were taken entirely from Rāmācharaka’s “Hatha Yoga.” Their main aim was to make the practitioner capable of controlling the spending of *prana* and preventing its waste, which would usually occur at moments when the body does not perform any conscious work. The exercises provided here by Lutosławski involve loosening the body, pulling the *prana* from different parts of the body, and making it inert. These exercises, as the philosopher claimed, also sensitized the practitioner to the flow of the currents of *prana* and enabled

¹⁷ In Polish, this prayer may be expressed in two words only.

him to direct them consciously. However, more importantly, the practices recommended here not only bring physical benefits, such as relaxed and regenerated body and mind, but they may also be used for spiritual purposes. Lutosławski advised that in the moment when the body reaches a state of complete inertia a practitioner should imagine "that human earthly life is only one short experience of the immortal Self, should realize that the Self is pure spiritual power, a necessary part of the whole universe" (1909: 70).

Group Five: "The Psychophysical Exercises"
(Lutosławski 1909: 81)

These exercises correspond to Rāmācharaka's yogi psychic breathing. In Lutosławski's system they are of particular importance as he thought that while practicing them "the body remaining in this very special harmony with the Self, easily yields to the power of will. It is as if tuned and the soul can play on it" (1909: 81). In this state, the practitioner may also freely manage the flow of *prana* in order to achieve the intended results. Lutosławski advised practicing various exercises described by Rāmācharaka in his "Science of Breath," such as *prana* distributing, inhibiting pain, directing the circulation, self-healing, distant healing, healing others. Following Rāmācharaka, Lutosławski also showed the manipulation of *prana* as an extremely effective way to acquire various advantages and virtues, to control emotions, and to rebuild the entire body, as well as – and this the philosopher deemed particularly valuable – to control the reproductive organs, which would facilitate the accumulation of large amounts of *prana* and use it for much more noble and valuable purposes than mere sexual intercourse. Lutosławski was convinced that such a use of psychophysical exercises not only would bring the revival of the Polish people but would actually improve the entire Aryan race – i. e., strengthen it physically, mentally, and morally. At this stage of the yoga practice, Lutosławski also recommended taking up the exercise of the grand yogi's psychic breath (cf. Rāmācharaka 1905: 67; Lutosławski 1909: 104), which was, according to him, the most effective breathing exercise and "fills the whole body with *prana* and gives a great vitality. This is a cleansing exercise for the entire body, removing everything that hinders health. After this exercise one feels as if reborn" (1909: 105).

Lutosławski, just as Rāmācharaka, saw the possibility of using psychophysical exercises in the process of spiritual development. According to the

Polish philosopher, they were supposed to bring the practitioner a full awareness of the power of the Self over the body as well as the experience of the direct relationship (oneness) between the Self and God. It must be added, however, that although Lutosławski recognized the effectiveness of the exercise mentioned above in the spiritual development of man, he pointed out that the most effective means leading to this end was a silent prayer to God. Here, once again the Christian character of Lutosławski's yoga system is revealed.

Group Six: "Physical Exercises" (1909: 130)

At this point, the philosopher, however, did not include the *asanas*. Presumably, following Vivekānanda and Rāmācharaka, Lutosławski left this kind of practice almost completely out of his system.¹⁸ He only mentioned it briefly while describing the raja yoga, which, as already stated, constitutes the second, inner part of his system of yoga. Lutosławski mentioned *asanas* in just two short paragraphs stating merely that these were motionless postures, some extremely complicated, in which one had to learn to breathe rhythmically. Instead of the *asanas*, Lutosławski introduced into his yoga system aesthetic exercises derived from Genevieve Stebbins' work (1892).¹⁹ He considered this book as the best work on the theory of grace put into practice and showing the possibilities for the dramatic expression of feelings by certain movements, gestures, and postures. According to Lutosławski, the purpose of practicing the exercises taken from Stebbins was to develop graceful and beautiful movements that could express wonderful and sublime feelings. These exercises were also supposed to influence the Self, which would "bring again, at a higher level of spiritual development the Greek ideal of the beau-

¹⁸ Vivekānanda, in his interpretation of yoga and in order to avoid any links to hatha yoga, which he considered to be a practice only a little different from physical exercises, almost entirely ignored the *asanas* or presented them as physical exercises without any spiritual benefits. Following Vivekānanda, Rāmācharaka described *asanas* as "circus tricks of fakirs" and in his exposition of hatha yoga replaced them with calisthenics. "That these calisthenics are emphatically *not* identified as *āsanas* is important as it suggests both a recognition of the need for physical exercise in modern *hatha* yoga and the ongoing distrust of the core techniques of the Yogins" (Singleton 2010: 131).

¹⁹ It is worth noting that most probably Stebbins was one of the sources from which Rāmācharaka drew at least some of the gymnastic exercises described, as well as the idea of a rhythmic breathing. For details see Singleton (2010: 146).

tiful spirit in the beautiful and flawless body" (Lutosławski 1909: 130).²⁰

Besides the aforementioned practices and recommendations, Lutosławski took from Rāmācharaka's books one more important idea, which actually explained the mechanism of how most of the exercises described in "Rozwój potęgi woli" functioned (1909, 1910, 1923). It was a kind of ability, or skill²¹ of "putting" the practitioner's mind into his own body and later "sending" the mind to a specific part of the body in order to perform there a specific task. In other words, it was the ability to introduce thoughts into the physical body and send them to specified areas, so as to take full control over them, develop them, or free them from disease (see, e. g., Rāmācharaka 1904: 18). According to Lutosławski, this "sending the mind" would not only bring a therapeutic effect, but it could also make the whole human body function very harmoniously. With this skill, it was also possible to control the flow of *prana*, directing it towards any part of the body to assimilate it or "pull" it from the air, food, or water. This mechanism is described by Lutosławski as follows (this idea appears in "Rozwój potęgi woli" very often, and the quoted fragment is just one of many examples):

Since every organ of the body has its own guiding Self, which regulates the functions of this organ, a yogi may internally speak to these auxiliary selves commanding them to accept willingly the new material for the body. So he may recommend stomach to digest accurately, bowels to expel those monads which did not stand the trial, so that they do not create hindrance and spoil the proper order within the body. In this way, by eating with the full consciousness of what he is doing, a yogi needs a very small amount of food and digests perfectly all that he has eaten, never fearing gastric disturbances (Lutosławski 1909: 19).

The first part of yogic discipline described above was, according to Lutosławski, at this stage particularly important for the physical, intellectual, and moral transformation of the individual, and this process was to prepare the practitioner (and in the longer perspective the whole nation) for a complete revival. It was also the minimum program available to anyone. The second, internal part was

already so advanced, that as the philosopher admitted, it was available only to a few, very selected adepts.

In "Rozwój potęgi woli" Lutosławski showed specific examples of the implementation of yoga exercises and discussed in detail their results, which were different for different practitioners. In the case of children and young people, they were supposed to develop fitness, mental efficiency as well as the habit of self-discipline and the ability to use *prana* in an effective yet economical way. Taking up these yoga exercises, the labor workers would have a chance to "liberate themselves from the humiliating slavery [of physical work]" (1909: 163), "to improve the quality of their offspring" (1909: 164) and to speed up the spiritual progress. Women, in turn, may become "the batteries of *prana*" (1909: 171), and they may use the accumulated energy to "spread it on husbands, siblings, and parents" (1909: 171). In the case of artists and scholars, these exercises would take care of their often neglected physical fitness as well as strengthen the intuition so necessary for creative work.

The practices, which, according to Rāmācharaka, were supposed "to conform to the standard of the normal man" (1904: 13) then were used by Lutosławski to compose a strategy of social revival needed to win Poland's independence. Concluding his yoga guidebook Lutosławski wrote:

There are no other exercises that can be practiced regularly as these, the easiest and the simplest exercises of will. They will give peace, give strength and inspiration that will show the way out of the worst entanglement. ... Let us introduce the rhythm to our life – soon there will be harmony in it. ... This is the way leading not only to the physical and moral rebirth but also to the full, the most widely understood independence, which covers all the spheres (1909: 179f.).

It should be added that the practices described in "Rozwój potęgi woli" were also supposed to enable man to "gain God's strength" (1909: 180), necessary in the process of self-improvement and later in the struggle for independence. This is important, because one cannot forget that Lutosławski's interpretation of yoga is of a Christian nature. The Polish philosopher embedded the practices and ideas derived from Rāmācharaka and Vivekānanda into the Christian worldview or, more precisely, he presented them as consistent with Christianity and completed with the selected elements taken from the practice of the Christian life. Even more, Lutosławski stressed that, in fact, only the inclusion of the proposed methods within the

20 Analyzing the relationship between Lutosławski's system of yoga and Stebbins' harmonic gymnastic is beyond the scope of this article and, therefore, has been entirely omitted.

21 Rāmācharaka (1904: 199) describes this skill as "this 'knack' of sending the mind" – see also Singleton (2010: 131).

Christian, or more precisely, within the Catholic context would guarantee success. The philosopher wrote: "Only in Christianity, and within Christianity only in the Catholic Church can we reach the goal – overcome the weakness of the body by the power of will" (1909: xxiii). A key element of this Christianized yoga was grace. Lutosławski was convinced that the exercises *per se*, although effective, were not sufficient. An adept also needs God's grace, which gives man the power to overcome difficulties and pushes him to begin work on self-improvement. It is important to note that in Lutosławski's vision a practitioner enhanced with the power of God's grace is able to exercise his own free will to change himself and his situation. This combination allows the Polish philosopher to make the human being the master of his own fate, but, on the other hand, it leaves him in the position of creation, completely dependent on his creator.

Conclusion

While writing "Rozwój potęgi woli" around the turn of 1904 and 1905, Lutosławski was not aware of the real identity of Rāmācharaka and considered him to be a Hindu, an expert in Indian tradition and a reliable exponent thereof. However, by 1909, and thus while preparing the first edition of "Rozwój potęgi woli," he had already absorbed the information that would forge his beliefs. Although the Polish philosopher was convinced of the effectiveness of the yoga practices, he kept looking for additional sources of information, which in some way could confirm his personal experience. For this purpose, he engaged in extensive correspondence with people whom he thought to be competent in this field and which also included Rāmakrishna's disciple, Swami Abhedananda (1866–1939). The Polish philosopher shared with Swami Abhedananda his experience with the practice of yoga based on Rāmācharaka's and Vivekānanda's instructions. In response to Lutosławski's letter, Swami Abhedananda (1905: np) wrote:

I am glad to know that you have practiced some of the instructions given in *Raja Yoga* by Swami Vivekananda. ... I have lived with Swami V. for several years and I know that he was a great yogi with wonderful powers. I have never met Ramācharaka, but I know that he is an

Irish man Mr. Atkinson by nature. He is not a yogi. His books will not help you much.²²

Nevertheless, Lutosławski did not change his opinion about Rāmācharaka and his instructions until 1921, when the Polish philosopher experienced "the influence of God's grace" and entirely rejected all esoteric inspirations. He also radically changed his views on Rāmācharaka and his books, regarding the Yogi from Baltimore as a swindler and his works as harmful and unworthy of distribution. In 1921, and so at the time of launching the aforementioned Polish translation of Rāmācharaka's "Science of Breath," Lutosławski began a correspondence with the publisher of this work, Józef Chobot, sharply criticizing Rāmācharaka and showing deep astonishment that Chobot had decided to publish his book.²³ A clear evidence of the changes in Lutosławski's views on yoga and Rāmācharaka is also the third edition of "Rozwój potęgi woli."²⁴ The Polish philosopher not only removed the reference to Rāmācharaka from it but in its place inserted the following information:

In recent times, especially after the war, many misleading books proliferated, promising readers extraordinary gains for the mind and body but in fact insidiously undermining the trust to Christianity thus depriving the readers of their most abundant source of spiritual and bodily strength (Lutosławski 1923: 4 fn).

Lutosławski's yoga books, i. e., all three editions, were well received. The best evidence of its popularity is the fact that the first and second edition (1909 and 1910) sold out very quickly, and the third edition, published in 1923, was issued due to "the numerous demands for the book, which went out of print" (1923: iii), as the publisher of the book pointed out. This does not mean, however, that "Rozwój potęgi woli" and the ideas and views described therein were commonly and unquestioningly accepted. Particularly strong criticism com-

22 Swami Abhedananda to Wincenty Lutosławski, unpublished letter of October 16, 1905 in New York.

23 Chobot (1921a). Unfortunately, Lutosławski's letters to Chobot have not survived. Their content can only be reconstructed from Chobot's response.

24 Lutosławski supplemented this edition of "Rozwój potęgi woli" (1923) with three new chapters titled: "Fasting," "Prayer," and "Service to God." They emphasize the necessity of deepening the spiritual life by establishing an intimate relationship with God. In the preface to this edition the author clearly and repeatedly stresses that these three elements – fasting, prayer, and service to God – and not the practice of yoga, are the most important, most effective, and, in fact, the only relevant practices to every Pole.

ing out from the circles of the Roman Catholic Church was aimed at Lutosławski's yogic ideas, especially those derived from Rāmācharaka. The disapproval, however, was not expressed against the dietary or hygienic recommendations, whose usefulness was never questioned. The criticism focused entirely on the yoga techniques presented as a means to achieve moral perfection and a tool helping to develop Christian virtues. One of the Catholic critics of Lutosławski sarcastically comments upon the idea expressed by the Polish philosopher according to which one can obtain all the moral virtues and abilities using breathing exercises – exhaling unbelief and breathing in faith, etc. (Urban 1910b: 208; Lutosławski 1909: 39f.). Furthermore, Catholic authorities could not accept Lutosławski's conviction that practices of yoga allow for real spiritual development bringing a close and intense relationship with God.

Despite the criticism and the fact that Lutosławski himself gave up his ideas, the vision of yoga he created enjoyed a fairly widespread popularity. The reports coming out from the members of various groups and societies, which Lutosławski founded²⁵ and in which he disseminated his method, but also private letters he received from his students or people who took up yoga practice on their own, according to the instructions contained in "Rozwój potęgi woli," clearly showed that the practical recommendations and directions contained in the first part of Lutosławski's yoga system – i. e., those derived primarily from Rāmācharaka – most willingly were implemented into everyday life and considered to be particularly useful and effective.

Without a doubt, Lutosławski's "Rozwój potęgi woli" as well as his activities aimed at disseminating yoga and presenting it primarily as a simple and effective system to facilitate a physical, mental, and moral revival, followed by the spiritual development both of the individual and the entire nation, has played an important role in the transplantation of Rāmācharaka's vision of yoga on Polish soil and allowed his ideas to enter into the local cultural landscape.

²⁵ I refer primarily to the Patriotic and Religious Society of Eleusis, set up by Lutosławski in December 1902 in Lviv and directed by him until 1912. The Society published a newspaper titled *Eleusis – Czasopismo Elsów (Eleusis – The Elses' Periodical)*.

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This research was carried out within the framework of the Minister of Science and Higher Education's program entitled "National Programme for the Development of Humanities" in the years 2016–2019: Polish Culture in Relation to Western Esoteric Philosophy in the Years 1890–1939 (0186/NPRH4/H2b/83/2016).