

# YOGA

IN PRACTICE

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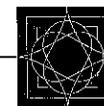
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# YOGA

I N P R A C T I C E

*Edited by*  
*David Gordon White*



PRINCETON READINGS IN RELIGIONS

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## CONTENTS

<i>Contents by Tradition</i>	vii
<i>Contents by Country</i>	ix
<i>Contributors</i>	xi
Introduction · <i>David Gordon White</i>	1
Note for Instructors · <i>David Gordon White</i>	24
<b>Foundational Yoga Texts</b>	29
1. The Path to Liberation through Yogic Mindfulness in Early Āyurveda · <i>Dominik Wujastyk</i>	31
2. A Prescription for Yoga and Power in the <i>Mahābhārata</i> · <i>James L. Fitzgerald</i>	43
3. Yoga Practices in the <i>Bhagavadgītā</i> · <i>Angelika Malinar</i>	58
4. Pātañjala Yoga in Practice · <i>Gerald James Larson</i>	73
5. Yoga in the <i>Yoga Upaniṣads</i> : Disciplines of the Mystical OM Sound · <i>Jeffrey Clark Ruff</i>	97
6. The Sevenfold Yoga of the <i>Yogavāsistha</i> · <i>Christopher Key Chapple</i>	117
7. A Fourteenth-Century Persian Account of Breath Control and Meditation · <i>Carl W. Ernst</i>	133
<b>Yoga in Jain, Buddhist, and Hindu Tantric Traditions</b>	141
8. A Digambara Jain Description of the Yogic Path to Deliverance · <i>Paul Dundas</i>	143
9. Sarah's <i>Queen Dohās</i> · <i>Roger R. Jackson</i>	162
10. The Questions and Answers of Vajrasattva · <i>Jacob P. Dalton</i>	185
11. The Six-Phased Yoga of the <i>Abbreviated Wheel of Time Tantra</i> ( <i>Laṅhukālacakratāntra</i> ) according to Vajrapāṇi · <i>Vesna A. Wallace</i>	204
12. Eroticism and Cosmic Transformation as Yoga: The <i>Āmatattva</i> of the Vaiṣṇava Sahajiyās of Bengal · <i>Glen Alexander Hayes</i>	223

The Original *Gorakṣasataka**James Mallinson*

The *Gorakṣasataka* or “Hundred Verses of Gorakṣa” contains some of the earliest teachings on *haṭha yoga* to be found in Sanskrit texts. It is the first text to describe complex methods of *prāṇāyāma*, breath control, and the first to teach the esoteric *sarasvatīcālana*, “the stimulation of Sarasvatī,” a technique for arousing Kuṇḍalinī, the coiled serpent goddess who lies dormant at the base of the spine in the unenlightened. Most of the varieties of yoga practiced around the world today derive from *haṭha yoga*. The first texts to teach its techniques appeared soon after the beginning of the second millennium.

What unites these early texts and sets them apart from other works on yoga are the physical techniques known as *bandhas* and *mudrās*, which are used to control the breath and raise Kuṇḍalinī. Much of *haṭha yoga*’s development can be seen as a reaction against the exclusivity and complexity of Tantric cults and practices. The esoteric physiology of Tantra is taken as the template for the human body, but the means of accessing and controlling the energies and substances within has become purely physical. The only external aid necessary is a guru qualified to teach *haṭha yoga*’s practices. There is no need for Tantra’s elaborate initiations, nor the secret mandalas and mantras passed down within occult Tantric lineages, nor elaborate ritual paraphernalia, including the infamous *pañcamakāra* or “five Ms”: *madya* (“wine”), *māmsa* (“meat”), *matsya* (“fish”), *mudrā* (“hand gestures”), and *maithuna* (“sex”). As is made clear in the last verse of the *Gorakṣasataka*, alternatives for these can be found within the body of the yogi. The techniques may differ, but the results of *haṭha yoga* are the same as those of Tantric rituals and yoga: supernatural powers (*siddhis*) and liberation (*mukti*). In contrast to the usual conceptions of Tantric liberation, however, the latter can be achieved while alive, in a body immortalized by means of *haṭha yoga*.

*Mukti*, liberation, is the goal of the yoga of the *Gorakṣasataka*. As is made clear in its first verse, its teachings are aimed at ascetics, men who have re-

nounced worldly existence and devoted their lives to becoming liberated. Some other texts on *haṭha yoga*, such as the *Śivasambhitā*, teach that householders can benefit from its practice, and there are occasional hints in such works that women also used its techniques, but the male renouncer is the usual intended audience of texts on *haṭha yoga*.

### The Yoga of the *Gorakṣasataka*

The theory and method of the *Gorakṣasataka*'s path to liberation are relatively clear, unlike those found in many other works on *haṭha yoga*. For the yogi to be liberated, his mind must be controlled. The mind and the breath are connected, so to control his mind the yogi should control his breath. Three methods should be used simultaneously to master the breath: eating a controlled diet, assuming a particular posture, and stimulating Kuṇḍalinī.

The ingredients of a controlled diet are not identified in the text; the yogi's food is simply required to be such that it "is unctuous and sweet, leaves a quarter [of the stomach] empty and is eaten in order to please Śiva."

"Posture" is *āsana*. Only two *āsanas* are recommended in the *Gorakṣasataka*: *padmāsana*, the lotus posture, and *vajrāsana*, the diamond posture. The *Gorakṣasataka*'s *vajrāsana* is known in other texts as *siddhāsana*. Both *padmāsana* and *vajrāsana* are relatively simple seated postures. *Haṭha yoga* later became associated with the practice of more complex *āsanas*, but they are absent from its early texts. They first appear in the thirteenth-century *Vasiṣṭhasambhitā*, whose yoga is not *haṭha yoga* but rather an attempt to accommodate Tantric Kuṇḍalinī yoga within an orthodox Vedic soteriology. The *Vasiṣṭhasambhitā*'s verses on *āsana* were used in the fifteenth-century *Haṭhapradīpikā* (or *Haṭha-yogapradīpikā*), the first work in which complex *āsanas* are included among the techniques of *haṭha yoga*.

Kuṇḍalinī can be made to move either by *sarasvatīcālana*, stimulating Sarasvatī, or by *prāṇarodha*, restraining the breath. Sarasvatī is the goddess of speech; her home in the body is the tongue. The yogi is to move his tongue by wrapping it in a cloth and pulling it from side to side. The tongue is connected to the Suṣumnā *nāḍī*, the central and most important of the 72,000 *nāḍīs* or channels in the body. Pulling the tongue lifts the base of the Suṣumnā at the bottom of the spine, which is where Kuṇḍalinī sleeps, thereby stirring the dormant Kuṇḍalinī into action and allowing her, assisted by the associated rush of *prāṇa*, the vital breath, to enter the Suṣumnā.

This esoteric technique was misunderstood by most later commentators and anthologists because the text does not state explicitly where the cloth is to

be applied. Kuṇḍalinī resides at the base of the spine, and stimulating her is said in the text to free the yogi from various diseases that might afflict the abdominal region, so the practice has been misunderstood as being performed in the lower part of the upper body. A variant of the *Gorakṣasataka*'s verse describing the cloth is found, without any instructions as to what should be done with it, in the context of *sakticālana*, "stimulating the goddess," in two other early works on *haṭha yoga*—the *Yogabīja* and *Haṭhapradīpikā*. The Hindi translation of the Gorakhpur edition of the *Yogabīja* supplies *nābhi*, the navel, as the location at which the cloth is to be applied. Brahmānanda, who wrote a commentary on the *Haṭhapradīpikā* in 1843 CE, understands the verse to be describing the *kanda*, a bulb in the region of the navel from which all the body's *nāḍīs* are said to arise (to make sense of the verse he adds that the *kanda* appears as if wrapped in a cloth). The *Yogakuṇḍalyupaniṣad*, a late Yoga Upaniṣad, includes most of the *Gorakṣasataka* in its first chapter.

Upaniṣadbrahmayogin, who wrote commentaries on a corpus of 108 Upaniṣads, makes no attempt to explain *sarasvatīcālana* in his commentary on the *Yogakuṇḍalyupaniṣad*. In his translation of the *Yogakuṇḍalyupaniṣad*, T. R. Srinivasa Ayyangar, who translated all the Yoga Upaniṣads for the Adyar Library, ingeniously turns the practice into a variant of *śāmbhāvīmudrā*, a meditation technique in which the fingers are used to block the orifices of the head. The dimensions of the cloth are taken to refer to the distance that the breath is "elongated" to surround the Suṣumnā. In the description of *sakticālana* found in the *Gheraṇḍasambhitā*, which probably dates to the early part of the eighteenth century, the cloth is said to be wrapped around the *nābhi*, the navel. *Sakticālana* is not mentioned in most modern manuals of yoga, such as B.K.S. Iyengar's otherwise encyclopedic *Light on Yoga*. In his translation of the *Haṭhapradīpikā*, the present-day guru Satyananda Sarasvatī says that *nauli*, churning of the stomach, is to be used to stimulate the goddess. There are two later Sanskrit texts which incorporate the *Gorakṣasataka*'s verses on *sarasvatīcālana* and understand them correctly: the *Bṛhatkhecariṣa*, a commentary on the *Khecarividyā* probably written in the first half of the eighteenth century, and the *Haṭharatnāvalī*, which was compiled in the seventeenth century. The latter borrows from the *Gorakṣasataka* wholesale but substitutes *jīhvām*, "the tongue," for the original's *tannāḍīm*, "her channel," as the location of where to wrap the cloth. Here lies the crux of the passage's misinterpretation elsewhere: as mentioned above, the location of Sarasvatī's *nāḍī* or "channel" is not made clear in the text of the *Gorakṣasataka*. In some texts—the Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi*, *Brahmajñāna*, and *Haṭhatatvokaumudī*, and the Hindi *Gorakbāṇī*—Sarasvatī is said to be a synonym of either Kuṇḍalinī or Suṣumnā. Both identifications make sense because of the different possible referents of

Sarasvatī. Kuṇḍalinī and Sarasvatī are both manifestations of Śakti, the feminine principle of the universe; Sarasvatī is also the name of the now mythical river said to meet the Ganges and Yamuna in a triple confluence at Allahabad which is paralleled in the body by the confluence of the Iḍā, Pingalā, and Suṣumnā *nāḍīs*. Both analogues only serve to obscure, however, the location of Sarasvatī in the body. In other texts—the Sanskrit *Matsyendrasaṃhitā*, *Śārṅgadharapaddhati*, and *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati*; and the Hindi *Prāṇ Saṃkalī*—Sarasvatī is neither Kuṇḍalinī nor Suṣumnā but a separate *nāḍī*, all or one end of which is located in the tongue. In the *Khecarīvidyā*, the tongue is frequently called Vāgīśī, “Goddess of Speech,” a synonym of Sarasvatī. It is this identification of the Sarasvatī *nāḍī* that makes sense of the compound *sarasvatīcālana*.

*Cālana*, “stimulation” or “causing to move,” is part of the practice of *khecarīmudrā*, an important haṭhayogic technique in which the tongue is loosened and lengthened so that it can be turned backwards and inserted above the soft palate in order that the yogi might taste the *amṛta*, the nectar of immortality dripping from the moon in the head. *Khecarīmudrā* is not taught in the *Gorakṣasataka* but is described in some other early Sanskrit works on *haṭha yoga*, including the *Dattātreyaयोगसाstra*, the *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, and the *Khecarīvidyā*. In the latter, *cālana* is a means of loosening the tongue (by wrapping it in a cloth and pulling on it) in order that *khecarīmudrā* may be performed. Many of the traditional practitioners of *haṭha yoga* whom I have met in India have demonstrated this technique to me. Theos Bernard also reports, in his account of a traditional training in *haṭha yoga* (*Hatha Yoga*, London: Rider, 1950), that he was told to practice it. *Cālana* as a preliminary to the practice of *khecarīmudrā* is not in itself said to stimulate Kuṇḍalinī, but *khecarīmudrā* is. Ballāla says in the *Bṛhatkhecarīprakāśa* that Kuṇḍalinī is to be awakened “by means of *āsana*, breath-retention, moving the tongue, *mudrā* etc.” In this way, a quintessentially haṭhayogic technique consisting of the crude manipulation of the body, leads to the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī and thence to liberation. While *sarasvatīcālana* was an important component of *haṭha yoga* at its inception, it appears—if one takes Sanskrit texts on *haṭha yoga* as one’s yardstick—to have fairly quickly fallen into obscurity, understood by only a handful of later practitioners or scholars. Within vernacular texts and the oral tradition, however, the idea of a connection between the tongue and Kuṇḍalinī, or at least the region in which she is said to lie sleeping, has survived. Thus, various medieval and later Hindi works—for example, the *Gorakh Bāṇī*, *Pañc Mātrā*, and *Mahādev Jī Kī Sabdī*—mention a link between the tongue and the penis (the yogi must restrain both), as does the eighteenth-century *Jogpradīpakā*, in which a single channel, identified with the Suṣumnā, is said to join the tongue and the penis. The *Jogpradīpakā* passage associates the lengthening of the

tongue with *laghutā*, “lightness” (“flaccidness”?), of the penis, the overcoming of sexual urges, and the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī. In 1996, at the Yoga Centre of Benares Hindu University, I met Dr. K. M. Tripathi, who demonstrated a technique in which the tip of the tongue is pressed against the front teeth and held there while the mouth is repeatedly opened wide and closed again. It is to be done at least a thousand times a day, he said, and the technique tugs on the *merudaṇḍa*, the spinal column, causing Kuṇḍalinī to rise. Dr. Tripathi told me that he had to give up this technique when he was married: householder practices that pull on the lower end of the *merudaṇḍa* are incompatible with the yogi’s practice of tugging at the top.

The second method for stimulating Kuṇḍalinī taught in the *Gorakṣasataka* is restraining the breath. Some later texts, which do not teach *sarasvatīcālana*—such as the *Śivasamhitā* and *Yuktabhavadeva*—say that Kuṇḍalinī should be stimulated by manipulating *apāna*, the lower breath. Holding the breath is called *kumbhaka* in the *Gorakṣasataka*. *Kumbhaka*, which means “pot,” can be unassisted, i.e., spontaneous and unstructured, or it can be assisted and take one of four forms. The former is superior. The latter is described in the *Gorakṣasataka* in verses that are also found in the *Haṭhapradīpikā* and which are the earliest descriptions of complex breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) to be found in any Sanskrit text. The four varieties of *kumbhaka* are Sūryā, Ujjāyī, Śitalī, and Bhastrī. Each involves inhaling and exhaling in a different way. Sūryā is performed by inhaling through the right nostril and exhaling through the left. For Ujjāyī the yogi is to make a rasping noise in the lower part of the throat as he inhales. In Śitalī he is to inhale through his rolled tongue. For Bhastrī he is to pump the breath in and out as if working a pair of bellows. These *kumbhakas* have various physical effects, ranging from the elimination of diseases to the awakening of Kuṇḍalinī. To achieve mastery of the breath and assist the stimulation of Kuṇḍalinī, there are three further practices that the yogi should undertake: the three *bandhas* or locks. These archetypal haṭhayogic practices are *mūla bandha*, in which the perineum is contracted; *uddīyāna bandha*, in which the stomach is drawn up toward the abdomen; and *jālandhara bandha*, in which the chin is held down on the chest.

The *Gorakṣasataka*’s yoga is summarized in its description of the best way to *samādhi*, the ultimate stage of all yogas. The yogi is to sit in a correct posture, stimulate Sarasvatī, and control his breath with the four *kumbhakas* in conjunction with the three *bandhas*. *Samādhi* will ensue. In a subsequent passage which is likely to be a later addition to the core of the text, Kuṇḍalinī’s ascent up the Suṣumnā is described. Heated by the inner fire and stimulated by the breath, she enters the Suṣumnā and climbs in staccato steps as she pierces the knots of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra. Finally she reaches the *cakra* of the moon,

which she melts into an ambrosial fluid. As a result of her drinking this, the yogi's mind becomes inured to external pleasures and hence controlled. Kuṇḍalinī then unites with Śiva before disappearing.

### The Text

The *Gorakṣasāta* has not been critically edited, published, or translated before. The translation below is of the text as found in a single manuscript, MS R 7874 in the collection of the Government Oriental Manuscripts Library (Madras), a xerox copy of which was kindly provided to me by Christian Bouy. There are catalogue references to four more manuscripts, which may also be of this *Gorakṣasāta*, but I have been unable to consult any of them. There are nearly one hundred catalogue references to manuscripts of another text called the *Gorakṣasāta*. This, however, is quite different from the work translated here, and much better known: several recensions of it have been published and translated. This latter *Gorakṣasāta* was originally known as the *Vivekamārtanḍa*, and for simplicity's sake that is what I shall call it here. It seems likely that the *Vivekamārtanḍa* became known as the *Gorakṣasāta* through confusion with the text translated here. The earliest recension of the *Vivekamārtanḍa*—which is found in a manuscript written in 1477 CE and predates that text's being called the *Gorakṣasāta* by nearly two hundred years—has 173 verses; the *Gorakṣasāta* has approximately 100, a more suitable number for a *sāta* or “century.” (There is one late manuscript of the *Vivekamārtanḍa*—*as-Gorakṣasāta* that consists of one hundred verses, but it is almost certainly a *précis* composed to make sense of the name.)

The oldest catalogued manuscript of the *Gorakṣasāta* was written in 1795 CE. Barring the mention of Gorakṣa in its opening verse, which is likely to be a later addition to the text's central core, there is no internal evidence in the *Gorakṣasāta* that can be used to date its composition. The only method of doing so at our disposal is to identify borrowings from it in works which can be dated. Unlike many other texts on *haṭha yoga*, the *Gorakṣasāta* presents a coherent unit (at least in its central core: vv. 7–64), and is unlikely to include verses borrowed from elsewhere. It is from this central core that all of the borrowings from it found in other texts are taken (apart from those in the relatively late *Yogakuṇḍalyupaniṣad*). The *Haṭhāpradīpikā*, the best known Sanskrit work on *haṭha yoga*, was compiled in the fifteenth century and includes twenty-eight verses from the *Gorakṣasāta*. The *Yogabīja*, another early work on *haṭha yoga* and the likely source of five verses in the *Haṭhāpradīpikā*, borrows nine verses from the *Gorakṣasāta*. The *Śārṅgadharapaddhati*, an ency-

clopedic compendium of verses on a wide range of subjects including an extensive final section on *haṭha yoga*, was compiled in 1363 CE, but does not contain any verses from the *Gorakṣasāta*. We may therefore tentatively conclude that the central core of the *Gorakṣasāta* was composed (or at least became well known) in about 1400 CE. As the *Vivekamārtanḍa* gained in popularity under the name *Gorakṣasāta*, the original *Gorakṣasāta* fell into obscurity, whence the relative paucity of its manuscripts. In the eighteenth century, verses from the *Gorakṣasāta* were used to compile the encyclopedic *Haṭhātattvakaumudī*. These verses are said to be *granthāntare*, “in another book”: the *Gorakṣasāta* is not named, perhaps to avoid confusion with the *Vivekamārtanḍa*, which by then was already widely known as the *Gorakṣasāta* and which is frequently cited in the *Haṭhātattvakaumudī*. It is likely that the text was not originally a complete *sāta*. In addition to the central core consisting of verses 7–64, the introductory material at verses 2–6 may also be original, as may verses 65–74, which teach the sequence in which the techniques presented earlier in the text are to be used in order to attain *samādhi*, and which describe the obstacles that may impede the practitioner. Verses 75–88 are somewhat tautological in the light of what precedes them, and the non-dual Vedantic philosophy espoused in verses 88–100 is similarly incongruous, suggesting that these passages were added to the text to make it a *sāta*.

It is also highly unlikely that the text was originally associated with or attributed to Gorakṣa, let alone composed by him. The earliest datable references to Gorakṣa are found in two texts written in the early part of the thirteenth century. They are from opposite ends of the subcontinent and refer to him as a master of yoga, suggesting that his reputation was already well established. As we have seen above, the *Gorakṣasāta* was probably composed around 1400 CE, long after Gorakṣa's time. During the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries, Gorakṣa was credited with having founded an order of yogis. (This order is nowadays widely referred to as that of the “Nāths” or “Nāth Siddhas,” but there is no evidence for the use of the name “Nāth” to denote an order of yogis until the eighteenth century. Prior to that time the word *nātha/nāth*, when used in Sanskrit and Hindi works in the context of *haṭha yoga* and yogis, always refers to the supreme deity.) It is in the fifteenth century, when the yogi order that was to become the Nāths was seeking to become established and to distinguish itself from the other orders of yogis also beginning to coalesce at that time, that Sanskrit and Hindi works were first attributed to Gorakṣa. Some verses in the *Haṭhāpradīpikā* are attributed to him, but these do not include any of the twenty-eight verses taken from the *Gorakṣasāta*. The only mention of Gorakṣa within the *Gorakṣasāta* is at the beginning of the text.

Whether or not this is a later addition to the central core of the text, Gorakṣa cannot have composed the *Gorakṣasataka* for reasons other than chronology: the text's author distinguishes himself and his guru from Gorakṣa. In the second verse he says that he is describing Gorakṣa's method of yoga, which he has experienced thanks to his guru's teaching. His guru's teaching may or may not have been a direct oral transmission from that of Gorakṣa, but the text itself is clearly not comprised of the words of Gorakṣa.

Verses from the *Gorakṣasataka* have been used to compile a variety of later works including, as mentioned above, the *Yogabīja*, *Haṭhapradīpikā*, *Haṭharatnāvalī*, *Haṭhatattvakaumudī*, and the *Yogakunḍalyupaniṣad*. The first eighty verses of the last text's first chapter are all taken from the *Gorakṣasataka*. Verses from the *Gorakṣasataka* are found in later recensions of the *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, having perhaps first been incorporated as glosses. Through careful examination of these shared verses, combined with textual criticism and observation of the interplay between text and practice, subtle developments in the practice and terminology of yoga become apparent. The confusion over the positioning of the cloth used to perform *sarasvatīcālana* outlined above has resulted in considerable innovation in the techniques employed for the raising of Kuṇḍalinī, exemplified by Swami Satyananda Saraswati's recommendation for that purpose of *naulī* (abdominal churning), among whose many benefits listed in Sanskrit works the raising of Kuṇḍalinī is never found.

The *Gorakṣasataka* is the first text to teach the *prāṇāyāma* technique now widely known as *sūryabhedana*, "the piercing of the sun." In the *Gorakṣasataka* it is called the *sūryā bheda*, i.e., the "solar variety" of *kumbhaka*. The passage teaching it ends with the quarter-verse *sūryābhedam udāhṛtam*, "[this] is known as the *sūryā* variety (*bheda*) [of *kumbhaka*]." The same quarter verse is found in the *Haṭhapradīpikā* as *sūryābhedanam uttamam*, "the excellent piercing of the sun." The subsequent popularity of the *Haṭhapradīpikā* made it such that its new name for the technique became definitive. A corollary technique—called *candrābhedana*, "the piercing of the moon," in which the left or lunar channel is used for inhalation—is taught by some modern schools of yoga.

A close reading of the corpus of Sanskrit texts on *haṭha yoga* may provide insights into some of the nuances of its practices. However, the confusion of the names of the *sūryā/sūryābhedana kumbhaka* and the misunderstanding of *sarasvatīcālana* are indications that the primary purpose of such texts, particularly of anthologies such as the *Haṭhapradīpikā*, was not always the elucidation of the techniques of yoga. Rather, Sanskrit works on *haṭha yoga* served to endorse and lend authority to its practices and schools, perhaps under the auspices of a patron devoted to a yogi preceptor. Their terse teachings are not comprehensive enough to serve as foundations for practice and could never

replace oral instruction from a qualified guru. Nor are they likely to have been used as mnemonics by the aspiring yogi: no traditional yogi that I have met in India has ever used them in this way. Svātmārāma, the compiler of the *Haṭhapradīpikā*, left other inaccuracies and contradictions in his work, for which he was castigated by later authors such as Śrīnivāsa in his *Haṭharatnāvalī*. These remind us that our view of the practice of *haṭha yoga* in its formative period is little better than that of the proverbial frog's view of the sky from the bottom of a well. There would have been a vast range of experimentation in the new field of *haṭha yoga* during the first four centuries of its development, involving yogis, both male and female, of every stripe, the majority of whom would not have known Sanskrit. There are no historical reports of details of the practice of *haṭha yoga* until Islamic interpretations begin to appear in the fifteenth century and modern-day oral traditions, while they provide some clues, are an unreliable window onto antiquity. All we have to go on is half a dozen short Sanskrit works (and the Marathi *Jñāneśvari*) written or compiled by scholars who in some cases may not have practiced the techniques they describe.

As stated by Svātmārāma at the beginning of the *Haṭhapradīpikā*, early *haṭha yoga* was a befuddling "darkness of many doctrines." Svātmārāma valiantly tried to create a lamp (*pradīpikā*) to lighten this darkness by synthesizing into one coherent whole the doctrines in the texts he had at his disposal, but their incompatibility made this an ultimately impossible task. By making the *Haṭhapradīpikā* a compilation, however, he has unwittingly left us with a means of identifying the texts that taught those early doctrines, a small number of which do present coherent methods of yoga. One such text is the *Gorakṣasataka*.

There are many difficulties with the text of the *Gorakṣasataka* as found in the single manuscript (Government Oriental Manuscripts Library, Madras, MS R 7874) used for the present translation. At several places I have made conjectural emendations; at several others I have emended it using readings found in works which borrow from it, the *Haṭhapradīpikā* and *Yogakunḍalyupaniṣad* in particular. Some parts of the text have remained unclear to me despite my best efforts at emendation. These passages are marked with cruxes († . . . †); sometimes I attempt a translation, but where I am completely stumped I leave an ellipsis (. . .). The verse division of the manuscript is also problematic. It is unnumbered but gives single *daṇḍas* (vertical lines) to mark the end of half-verses and double *daṇḍas* to mark the end of verses. There are 107 double *daṇḍas*, but if each pair of half-verses is numbered without regard to the manuscript's punctuation we get a total of 101 verses, the usual number for a *sataka*.

This does, however, result in several infelicitous verse divisions. I have thus decided to leave the translation unnumbered.

### Suggestions for Further Reading

Of early (pre-*Haṭhāpradīpikā*) texts on *haṭha yoga*, only the following have been edited and translated into English: the *Khecarividyā*, ed. James Mallinson (London: Routledge, 2007), and the *Śivoasambhitā* (various editions, including James Mallinson [New York: YogaVidya.com, 2007]). The best edition and translation of the *Haṭhāpradīpikā* is that of Svami Digambarji and Dr. Pitambar Jha (Lonavla: Kaivalyadham S.M.Y.M. Samiti, 1970). There is no English translation of any of the longer recensions of the *Vivekamārtaṇḍa*, but it has been edited and translated into German by Fausta Nowotny (*Das Gorakṣaśataka* [Köln: Richard Schwartzbold, 1976]). Its hundred-verse *précis* has been edited and translated into English by Svami Kuvalayananda and S. A. Shukla (*Gorakṣaśatakam* [Lonavla: Kaivalyadham S.M.Y.M. Samiti, 1958]).

English translations of later works on *haṭha yoga* include the *Yoga-Upaniṣads*, tr. T. R. Śrīnivāsa Ayyangar (Madras: Adyar Library, 1938); the *Haṭharatnāvalī*, ed. M. L. Gharote, P. Devnath, and V. K. Jha (Lonavla Yoga Institute, 2002), the *Haṭhatattvakaumudī*, ed. M. L. Gharote, P. Devnath, and V. K. Jha (Lonavla Yoga Institute, 2007); and the *Gheraṇḍasambhitā*, ed. and tr. James Mallinson (New York: YogaVidya.com, 2004).

On Sanskrit texts on *haṭha yoga* and in particular their relationship with the Yoga Upaniṣads, see Christian Bouy, *Les Nātha-Yogin et les Upaniṣads* (Paris: Diffusion de Boccard, 1994). On Tantric precedents of *haṭha yoga*, see Somadeva Vasudeva, *The Yoga of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra* (Pondicherry: Institut Français de Pondichéry, 2004).

On early texts on *haṭha yoga*, see the introduction to the *Khecarividyā* (Mallinson 2007). On yogic and alchemical traditions, see David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

### The Hundred Verses of Gorakṣa

So that renunciators whose essence is consciousness might attain perfection, I shall now duly proclaim the method of yoga which was made public by Gorakṣa, the king of the siddhas, and which gives signs of success in but a few days, for I have personally experienced it thanks to my guru's oral teaching.

The wise man does not fall into rebirth; through the science of sexual plea-

sure people are mutually ruined. By taking instruction, he who has been made to fall becomes perfect; he who does not take instruction does not. It is according to his actions that a man has a good or bad destiny: the builder of walls goes up, the builder of wells down. Therefore one must initially make an effort in order to be liberated from existence, and through devotion in body, speech and mind, obtain an excellent guru. One should always turn to a guru whose sight, mind and breath do not depend on form for support † . . . †

He is truly liberated whose mind is neither asleep nor awake, neither remembers nor forgets, and neither stops nor starts. He is without doubt liberated whose breath goes neither in nor out, neither in the left nostril nor the right, and neither up nor down. The mind has two impulses: past impressions and the breath. On one of them being destroyed, both are destroyed. Of these two, it is the breath which you must first conquer (on being allowed to do so [by your guru]), in order that you might become a liberated man † . . . †.

**[The Conquest of the Breath]** There is said to be a triad of methods best for bringing about the conquest of the breath: a controlled diet, posture and the third, stimulation of the goddess. Their characteristics shall now duly be described in turn.

**[Measured Diet]** Food that is unctuous and sweet, leaves a quarter [of the stomach] empty and is eaten in order to please Śiva is called a measured diet.

**[Posture]** Posture is said to have two varieties: *padmāsana* and *vajrāsana*.

**[Padmāsana]** If one puts the soles of both feet on the thighs, that is *padmāsana*, the lotus posture, which duly destroys all sins.

**[Vajrāsana]** If one puts the left heel under the bulb and the other one above it, and holds one's neck, head and body straight, it is called *vajrāsana*, the thunderbolt posture.

**[The Stimulation of the goddess]** Now I shall briefly teach the stimulation of the goddess. The goddess is coiled. Making her move in stages from her home to the place between the eyebrows is called the stimulation of the goddess. There are two chief ways of accomplishing this: the stimulation of Sarasvatī and the restraint of the breath. Through practice, Kuṇḍalinī becomes straight.

**[The Stimulation of Sarasvatī]** Of the two [methods], I shall first teach you the stimulation of Sarasvatī. Knowers of antiquity call Sarasvatī Arundhatī. By making her move Kuṇḍalinī moves automatically. With the vital breath moving in Iḍā [the left channel], the wise man should sit steadily in *padmāsana*, spread out a cloth twelve fingers long and four fingers broad, wrap it around

[Sarasvatī's] *nāḍī* and hold it firmly with the thumbs and index fingers of both hands. For two *mubūrtas* (one hour and thirty-six minutes) he should fearlessly move it left and right over and over again as much as he can. He should draw [the part of] the *Suṣumnā* which is at [the level of] *Kuṇḍalinī* slightly upwards so that *Kuṇḍalinī* can enter the *Suṣumnā*'s mouth. *Prāṇa* leaves that place and automatically enters the *Suṣumnā*. [The yogi] should stretch his stomach and, having contracted his throat, he should fill himself up with air through the solar [right] channel: the wind travels up from the chest. Therefore one should regularly stimulate *Sarasvatī*, she who contains sound. By stimulating her, the yogi is freed from diseases such as inflammation of the spleen, dropsy, splenitis and other [ills] that affect the stomach. All of those diseases are sure to be destroyed by the stimulation of the goddess.

**[The Restraint of the Breath]** Now I shall teach in brief the restraint of the breath. The vital breath (*prāṇa*) is wind produced in the body. [Its] restraint (*āyāma*) is known as *kumbhaka*. *Kumbhaka* is said to be of two kinds: assisted (*sabīta*) and unassisted (*kevala*). [The yogi] should practice assisted *kumbhaka* until unassisted *kumbhaka* is mastered. *Sūryā*, *Ujjāyī*, and *Śitalī* [are the first three] and *Bhastrī* [is] the fourth: when *kumbhaka* has these variations it is assisted *kumbhaka*. I shall now duly teach in brief [their] characteristics.

**[Sūryā kumbhaka]** In a clean place clear of people and mosquitoes and so forth, as long as a bow and free from cold, fire and water, [and] on a seat that is clean—neither too high nor too low, agreeable and comfortable—[the yogi] should assume *padmāsana*, stimulate *Sarasvatī*, gently draw in external air through the right channel, fill himself with as much air as is comfortable and then expel it through *Iḍā* [the left channel]. (Alternatively the wise man should expel the breath once the skull is purified.) This destroys the four diseases of the *vāta* humor and problems with worms. This [*kumbhaka*], which is called the *Sūryā* or solar variety, should be practiced repeatedly.

**[Ujjāyī kumbhaka]** [The yogi] should close the mouth and gently draw in air through the two channels so that it comes into contact with [the region extending] from the throat to the heart, making a sound. In the same way as before he should hold his breath and then expel it through *Iḍā*. [This] *kumbhaka*, which is called *Ujjāyī*, ("the victorious"), should be performed when [the yogi is] walking or at rest. It destroys the fire that arises in the head; it completely removes phlegm from the throat; it increases the fire of the body and it rids the body of edema in the channels and imbalances in its constituent parts.

**[Śitalī kumbhaka]** The sage should draw in air through the tongue and then, after holding the breath as before, gently exhale it through his nostrils. Inflammation of the spleen and other diseases are destroyed, as is fever caused by an excess of *pitta*, the bilious humor. This *kumbhaka* called *Śitalī*, "she who is cool," destroys poisons.

**[Bhastrī kumbhaka]** Then the sage should assume *padmāsana* and, holding his neck and stomach straight, close his mouth and forcefully exhale through his nostrils in such a way that his breath makes contact with his throat, producing a sound in his skull. He should then quickly draw in a small amount of air as far as his heart lotus. Then he should exhale and inhale as before, repeating the process over and over again. The wise man should pump the air that is in his body in the same way that one might quickly pump a blacksmith's bellows. When the body becomes tired, he should gently inhale by way of the sun until the abdomen becomes full of air. Holding the middle of the nose firmly, without using the index fingers, he should perform *kumbhaka* as before and then exhale through *Iḍā*. This adamant [kumbhaka] purges the throat of bile; it increases the fire of the body; it awakens *Kuṇḍalinī*; it frees from sin, and is auspicious [and] pleasant. It destroys the bolt made of substances such as phlegm which is situated inside the opening of the *Brahmā nāḍī* [and] it pierces the three knots that are born from the three *guṇas*. This *kumbhaka*, called *Bhastrī* ("the bellows"), is to be practiced above all others.

**[The Three Bandhas]** Now I shall briefly teach the three *bandhas*. Once the four varieties of *kumbhaka* have been learnt and are being practiced regularly, [the yogi] should achieve mastery of the breath. He must perform the three *bandhas*, which I shall now describe. The first is *mūla bandha*, the second is *uḍḍiyāna bandha*, and the third is *jālandhara [bandha]*. Their characteristics are as follows:

**[Mūla bandha]** [The yogi] forces the downward-moving *apāna* breath to move upwards by means of contraction. Yogis call this *mūla bandha*, "the root lock." When *apāna* has turned upwards and reached the orb of fire, then the flame, fanned by the wind, rises high. As a result, fire and *apāna* reach *prāṇa*, which is hot by nature. The overheated *prāṇa* creates a blaze in the body, which heats the sleeping *Kuṇḍalinī* and wakes her up. Like a snake struck by a stick, she hisses and straightens herself. As if entering a snake-hole, she enters the *Brahmā nāḍī*. Therefore, yogis should maintain the regular practice of *mūla bandha*.

**[Uḍḍiyāna bandha]** *Uḍḍiyāna* is to be performed at the end of *kumbhaka* and the beginning of exhalation. It is the *bandha* by means of which the breath flies

up (*udḍiyate*) into the Suṣumnā, which is why yogis call it *udḍiyāna*. Sitting in *vajrāsana*, [the yogi] should hold his feet firmly with his hands and press the bulb there in the region of his ankles. He should very gently pull back his stomach, heart and throat, so that his breath does not reach his belly. Once gastric imbalances have been overcome, [*udḍiyāna*] is to be carefully performed at regular intervals.

**[Jālandhara bandha]** The *bandha* called *jālandhara* is to be performed after inhalation. It involves constricting the neck, and blocks the movement of the breath. Once the neck is constricted, by means of contraction and stretching the abdomen backwards [i.e., by the *mūla* and *udḍiyāna bandhas*], the breath quickly enters the Brahmā *nāḍī*.

**[Samādhi]** Now I shall teach the best way to *samādhi*, an enjoyable method which conquers death and always brings about the bliss of [absorption in] *brahman*. Correctly assuming a posture in exactly the same way as was taught earlier, [the yogi] should stimulate Sarasvatī and control his breath. On the first day he should perform the four *kumbhakas*, [holding] each of them ten times. On the second day [he should increase] that by five. Adding five each day, on the third day he should do twenty, which is enough. *Kumbhaka* should always be performed in conjunction with the three *bandhas*.

**[Obstacles to the Practice of Yoga]** Sleeping by day because of staying awake and having too much sex at night; over-agitation due to constant restraint of urine and feces; [and] problems with imbalanced posture on account of worrying about one's breath while exerting oneself: these cause disease to arise quickly. If the ascetic were to stop [his practice], saying "I have become ill from practicing yoga," and then abandon his practice altogether, that is said to be the first obstacle. The second is doubt and the third is negligence. The fourth is sloth and the fifth is sleep. The sixth is stopping one's practice and the seventh is said to be delusion. Irregularity is the eighth and the ninth is known as that with no name. Not attaining the essence of yoga is said by the wise to be the tenth. By reflecting [on them] the wise man should renounce these ten obstacles.

**[The Ascent of Kuṇḍalinī]** Then the wise man who is established in the true reality should regularly practice [control of] the breath. The mind is absorbed into the Suṣumnā and the breath does not rush forth. As a result of his secretions being dried up, the yogi's journey is begun. He should force the downward moving *apāna* breath to move upwards by means of contraction. Yogis call this *mūla bandha*. When the *apāna* has become upward moving and goes together with fire to the place of *prāṇa*, then—with fire, *prāṇa* and *apāna* hav-

ing quickly come together—the coiled, sleeping Kuṇḍalinī, heated by that fire and stimulated by the breath, makes her body enter the mouth of the Suṣumnā. Then, having pierced the knot of Brahmā, which is born of the *rajas guṇa*, she quickly flashes like a streak of lightning in the mouth of the Suṣumnā. She hurries up to the knot of Viṣṇu and, after stopping at the heart, she swiftly moves on, having pierced the knot of Viṣṇu. [She then] goes to where the knot of Rudra is found, between the eyebrows, and, having pierced that, she goes to the orb of the moon, the *cakra* called *anāhata* which has sixteen petals. Once there she automatically dries up the fluid produced from the moon. When the sun has been moved from its abode to the place of blood and bile by the force of *prāṇa*, Kuṇḍalinī, having gone to where the *cakra* of the moon (which consists of the white fluid of phlegm) is found, consumes there the heated phlegm that has been discharged and is by nature cold. In the same way the white [fluid] in the shape of the moon is heated forcefully; agitated, Kuṇḍalinī moves upwards and thus [the fluid] flows even more. As a result of tasting this, the mind is beyond the objects of the senses. Having enjoyed the best of what is inside him, the young man [becomes] intent on the self. Kuṇḍalinī goes to †the place whose form is that of the eight constituents of nature.† Having embraced it she moves on to Śiva. After embracing him she disappears. In the same way, the red (*rajas*) from below and the white (*sukla*) from above dissolve in Śiva. Thereafter, the breath similarly joins with the twins *prāṇa* and *apāna*.

**[Realization of the Truth]** †With the gross element diminished and the speaker [becoming] greater†, the breath increases and makes all the [bodily] winds flow like gold [heated] in a crucible. With the physical body [absorbed] into the spiritual one, the body becomes extremely pure. I shall now describe this to you clearly. Free of the condition of being insentient, undefiled, with consciousness as its essence, that subtle body is the most important of all [bodies] and contains [the notion of] "I." Freedom from the condition of being insentient [and] the mistaken understanding of that which takes the appearance of time: notions such as these—which have their own form, like that of the rope and the snake—sow doubt about the form of reality. The condition arises of considering their cause to be time. This elemental [universe] is as real as water in a mirage. Beheld by the temporal body, the earth and its other parts are indeed produced from the elements. Like the hare's horn, it is real neither in the meaning of its name nor in its own form. †A bad dream arises in the meantime whose proof is produced. Is that man [i.e., the dreamer] deluded, like the [wild] gaze of a rutting elephant?† It is incorrect [to say] that everything comes into being and it is incorrect [to say] that it disappears, just as it is out of error that a man or a woman thinks mother-of-pearl to be silver.

Knowledge from a dream cannot be called the body even if it might appear real. Thus, after being mistaken, [the truth should be] established by means of careful investigation. In the same way, this body, through thorough introspection, clearly reveals itself to be insentient because it is formed from the elements. Thus, in the same way, just as through lack of thought, the process of the practice of [controlling] the breath comes to an end †. . . †, it is not a thing. Thus are the seven levels, from arising in that which is produced by knowledge. One should attain perpetual happiness in conditions such as that called "being without fire."

We drink the dripping liquid called *bindu*, the drop, not wine; we consume the rejection of the objects of the five senses, not meat; we do not embrace a beloved but rather the *Suṣumnā nāḍī*, her body curved like *kuśa* grass; if we must have intercourse, it takes place in a mind dissolved in the void, not in a vagina.

Thus ends *The Hundred Verses of Gorakṣa*.

## — 15 —

### Nāth Yogīs, Akbar, and the "Bālnāth Ṭillā"

*William R. Pinch*

In early March 1581, the Mughal emperor Akbar visited a major Nāth Yogī center, known as the "Bālnāth Ṭillā." He visited the site at least one other time in later years, and yogīs from the "Ṭillā" are said to have visited the Mughal capital on occasion. The "Ṭillā," or "crag," has been known by a variety of names over the centuries, including "Ṭillā Jogiān," "Gorakshanāth Ṭillā," and "Lakṣman Ṭillā." This chapter presents a selection of texts that describe this site and Akbar's visit to it, as well as different ways that Nāth Yogīs gravitated toward or interacted with the Mughal emperor and other sovereign powers in the region. Two of the texts were composed in Persian, one in Portuguese, one in Latin, and the rest in Hindi. The Persian, Latin, and Portuguese texts were committed to writing in the sixteenth century, fairly soon after the events described occurred; the remainder, in Hindi, come from oral tradition passed down over generations, only to be published in written form in the twentieth century.

The contemporary accounts of Akbar's visit to the Ṭillā were composed by two very different men: one was the emperor's close friend and prominent court intellectual, Abu'l Faḍl; the other was a European visitor to the Mughal court and a member of the relatively young Society of Jesus (or "Jesuit" order), Antonio Monserrate. Abu'l Faḍl, whose Persian account comes from his massive eulogistic biography of Akbar, assumed that the reader possessed a degree of familiarity with India and Mughal political and religious culture; he generally wrote sympathetically about Indian religious practices and tended to cast things in a quasi-Sufi devotionalist light. Thus, as he puts it in a later passage from volume three of the *Ā'in-i-Akbarī* (pp. 197–98), although yogic claims of superhuman power "may seem incredible in the eyes of those affected by the taint of narrow custom, those who acknowledge the wonderful power of God will find in it no cause of astonishment." By contrast, Monserrate, who wrote in Latin for Europeans (primarily his Jesuit superiors and brothers), assumed very little knowledge about India on the part of his readers; consequently his