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Haṭha Yoga Series - 4

ĀSANAS OF THE YOGACINTĀMAṆĪ

The Largest Premodern Compilation on Postural Practice



by
Jason BIRCH

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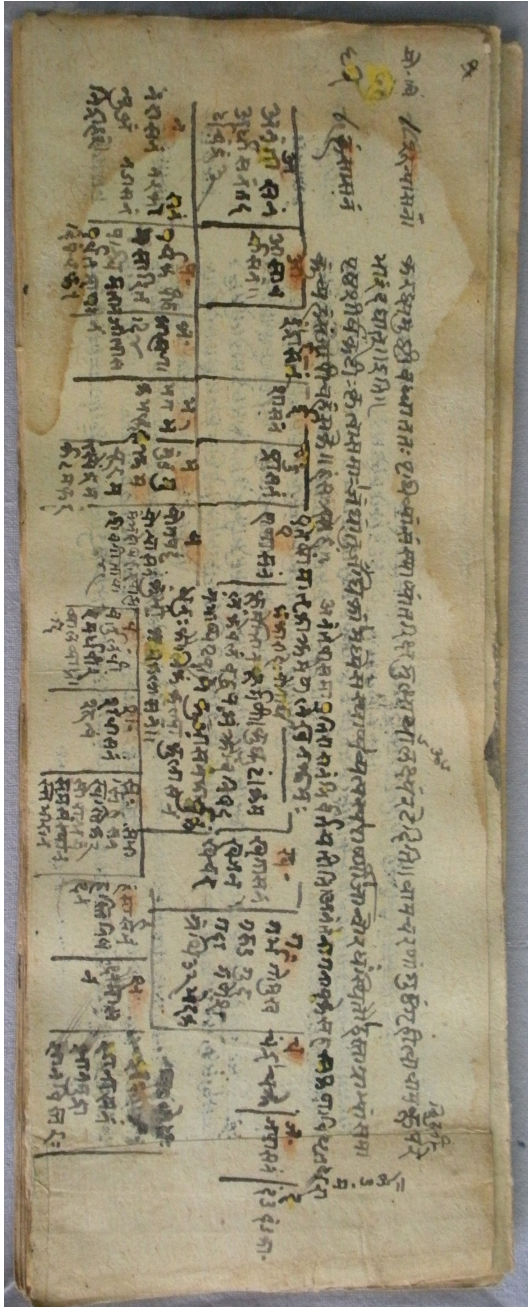


Figure 1: The *Yogacintamani*, folio 62v, ms. no. 3537.
 Scindia Oriental Research Institute Library, Ujjain.

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योगचिन्तामणिर्नित्यं चिन्तनीयो मुमुक्षुभिः ।
जीवन्मुक्तिमहाकामैरजरामृत्युकाङ्क्षिभिः ॥

Śivānandasarasvatī

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Acknowledgements

THE CHANCE DISCOVERY of a heavily annotated manuscript of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* at a library in Ujjain was as close as I will ever come to unearthing a wish-fulfilling gem. The discovery was a eureka moment in my efforts to reconstruct the history of yoga postures (*āsana*). The Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* contains a unique account of a large collection of *āsanas* that is unprecedented in extant literature written before the seventeenth century. When read with other yoga texts that give details of postural practice, the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* is a salient example of the extent to which *āsanas* proliferated in yoga traditions of the early modern era.

Prior to encountering the Ujjain manuscript, I had read much of Śivānanda's *Yogacintāmaṇi* in the course of my research on the *Amanaska*, a Sanskrit text that was the focus of my doctoral thesis at the University of Oxford (2013). The historical importance of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* was made apparent in two articles by Parashuram Krishna Gode (1953, 1954), the first curator of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute in Pune. He proved convincingly that Śivānanda's work was based on an earlier text of the same name composed by Godāvaramiśra, a minister of the Orissan king Gajapati Pratāparudradeva. Gode's scholarship was followed by Christian Bouy's book on the Yoga Upanishads (1994). Bouy was interested in the role of yoga in the history of Advaitavedānta, and his study of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* led him to believe that Advaitavedāntins created such compendiums in the centuries preceding the Yoga Upanishads because of the lack of authoritative vedantic works on contemporary forms of yoga.

After I presented my research on the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* at the University of Vienna's conference 'Yoga in Transformation' in 2013, James Mallinson proposed that we include the *Yogacintāmaṇi* as one of the ten texts to be studied by the ERC-funded Haṭha Yoga Project. At the second workshop of the Haṭha Yoga Project, James Mallinson, Somdev Vasudeva, Csaba Kiss and Jacqueline Hargreaves read and commented on a first draft of the section on *āsana* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, which I created with

the help of Mark Singleton. I owe Mark a great debt of gratitude for his assistance with the first draft of the edition and translation.

My research on the Ujjain manuscript left me with a strong appetite for further study of the *Yogacintāmaṇi*'s sophisticated discourse on yoga and its rich array of citations. In 2020, Shaman Hatley suggested we collaborate on a proposal to the National Endowment of Humanities to edit and translate the entire work. The success of this application has resulted in a project on the 'Wish-fulfilling Gem of Yoga' at the University of Massachusetts, directed by Shaman Hatley and co-directed by James Mallinson and myself.

The comments and advice of Shaman Hatley greatly improved this book in the final stages of its completion. Shaman kindly spent many hours reading with me relevant passages of the original version of the *Yogacintāmaṇi*. My sincere thanks also go to Dominic Goodall for his detailed remarks on the whole book, especially the edition and translations. Alexis Sanderson, Harunaga Isaacson and Jim Mallinson made astute comments on various sections. Matthew Clark and Lubomír Ondračka carefully proofread a final draft and made many helpful suggestions. Finally, I am indebted to Jacqueline Hargreaves for her invaluable support and collaboration.

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The Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*

ONE OF THE AVAILABLE PAPER MANUSCRIPTS of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* contains an enlarged version of Śivānanda's work, which I refer to as the 'Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*'. Its manuscript is held at the Sindhiyā Prācyavidyā Śodha Pratiṣṭhāna of the Vikrama Viśvavidyālaya in Ujjain.¹⁰⁷ Much of this manuscript's additional content consists of marginal and interlinear notes that have been added to the original version of the *Yogacintāmaṇi*. Such notes in varying amounts have been made on at least half of the folios, and I have been unable to trace most of their content to earlier works, the exception being several comments and a verse from Sundaradeva's *Haṭha-saṅketacandrikā* (see below). Also, the redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* has changed and rearranged some portions of the original *Yogacintāmaṇi* in the process of integrating new material. A good example of this is the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*'s section on *āsana*, which was rearranged into three lists. The haphazard nature of the notes and redacting suggests that the Ujjain manuscript is the autograph of a long version of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* that was known to at least one other author (see below).

The Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* and its unique compilation of *āsanas* have been described in Birch 2018: 110–120. The main points of that discussion are summarised in this subsection before more recent research is presented. The redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* added the names of eighty-four *āsanas* to the collection of thirty-three in the original version of the *Yogacintāmaṇi*,¹⁰⁸ as well as extra verses and comments on some of the *āsanas* of the original collection. Also, descriptions of twenty-three additional *āsanas* were added. Eight of these appear to be derived from Vācaspatimiśra's *Tattva-vaiśārādī*. However, as far as I know, seventy-six of the names and fifteen

scripts.

¹⁰⁷ This library is also known as the Scindia Oriental Research Library. The manuscript in question is catalogued as the *Yogacintāmaṇi* of Śivānandasarasvatī, no. 3537. See the subsection 'Manuscripts' for further details and the catalogue reference.

¹⁰⁸ In my earlier publication (2018: 111–112), I stated that there are thirty-four *āsanas* in the original version of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* if one counts different versions of the same posture separately. The actual number is thirty-three, as shown in Table 3.

of the descriptions are not found in any surviving yoga text that predates the sixteenth century. Since the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* was completed in 1659 CE,¹⁰⁹ it is currently the earliest dated record of more than eighty-four names of *āsanas*.¹¹⁰

The redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* compiled the *āsanas* in three lists, the first of which contains names and descriptions of *āsanas* numbered from one to fifty-four. According to the redactor's numbering, the *āsanas* of the original *Yogacintāmaṇi* are initially enumerated from one to twenty-nine. However, a second set of numbers of one to thirty-three was added sometime after the collection was augmented with marginal and interlinear notes. In actual fact, the redactor included five additional postures and three variations of existing postures in the notes to the original collection of the *Yogacintāmaṇi*.¹¹¹

The redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* marked the end of the original collection of *āsanas* with the colophon, 'thus, the collection of *āsanas* in the *Yogacintāmaṇi*.' After this colophon, there is a somewhat obscure comment that appears to acknowledge that seven *āsanas* have been added to the original collection.¹¹² Below the colophon, another twenty-one *āsanas* are

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of the scribal comment '1717 jyeṣṭhe śuddha 15 br̥haspatyām pūrṇaḥ,' see Birch 2018: 111–112.

¹¹⁰ The Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* is probably not the oldest text to contain a list of eighty-four names of *āsanas* because such a list occurs in the *Haṭṭharatnāvalī* (3.9–20), which was composed after the *Haṭṭhapradīpikā* (15th century) and before Sundaradeva's *Haṭṭhatattva-kaumudī*. Sundaradeva was active before 1659 CE (see below). Therefore, the *Haṭṭharatnāvalī* was probably composed in the early seventeenth century, a few decades before the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*. Neither Śivānanda nor the redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* appear to have been aware of the *Haṭṭharatnāvalī*.

¹¹¹ These additional *āsanas* are *kevalasvastika* (1), *ardha* (3), *garuḍa* (20), *markaṭa* (28) and *garbha* (29), and additional variations of *paryāṅka* (8), *vīrāsana* (15) and *śavāsana* (26) were also included. A description of *padmāsana* is repeated and many other comments are added. All of this additional material is in bold type in my edition.

¹¹² For a translation and discussion of this colophon and comment following it, see footnote 300. Even though five additional *āsanas* and three variations were added to this section (see footnote 111), it appears that the redactor counted only seven additional *āsanas*. In Birch 2018: 113 n. 42, seven additional *āsanas* are noted, but a variation of *śavāsana* was overlooked.

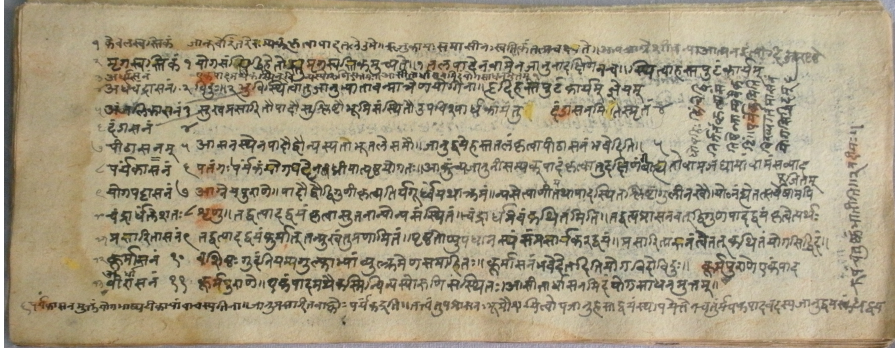


Figure 2: The *Yogacintāmaṇi*, folio 59r, ms. no. 3537.
Scindia Oriental Research Institute Library, Ujjain.

described. A significant number of these are attributed to two yogis, namely, Mohanadāsa (*āsanas* no. 44–49) and Lakṣmaṇadāsa varayogī (*āsanas* no. 50–54). Apart from attributions to legendary sages, such as Vasiṣṭha and Matsyendra, the reference to these two yogis may be unique in premodern works because it appears that the redactor has ascribed specific *āsanas* to yogis who may have been alive or recently deceased at the time.

The way the redactor has laid out the descriptions of the *āsanas* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* is rather unusual. The name of each *āsana* has been written separately on the left-hand side of each folio and the corresponding descriptions are on the right side (see Figure 2). The two sets of numbers and the marginal and interlinear notes make the text somewhat chaotic in appearance and difficult to read in places. It seems probable that the redactor revised this section of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* at least once by adding some of the supplementary material at a later time.

The second list is a table of eighty-two names of *āsanas* (see Figure 1). The postures are listed in alphabetical order and the cells of the table are divided according to the Sanskrit alphabet. If one considers that two variations of *svastika* and four variations of *brāhmaṇādi* are indicated by adjoining numbers (e.g., *svastika* 2), then eighty-four *āsanas* have been incorporated. Most of the names of the *āsanas* in the first list were included and thirty-nine others added.

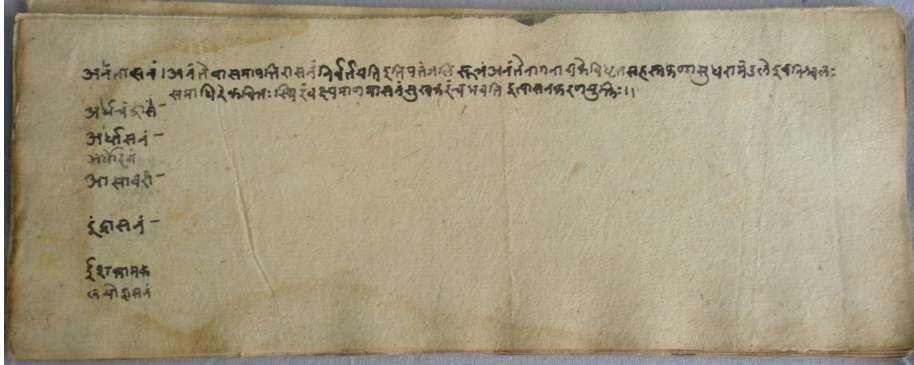


Figure 3: The *Yogacintāmaṇi*, folio 63r, ms. no. 3537.
Scindia Oriental Research Institute Library, Ujjain.

The third list contains one hundred and twelve names of *āsanas*. This list has been crudely written close to the outer edges of the folios, two of which may have been added by the redactor at a later time because the folio numbers 65 and 66 are repeated. On folios 63 and 64, the names are written on the left-hand side and the remaining space of both folios is blank. The one exception is the first *āsana* (i.e., *ananta*), which has a description to the right side of its name (see Figure 3). Therefore, the redactor may have intended to add descriptions next to each name but never did so. On the remaining folios, the names were written on the left- and right-hand sides, and those on the right-hand side are upside down. This list is probably a compilation of several older ones, because seventeen names are repeated. Excluding the repetition, the list contains ninety-five names, and includes seventeen that are not in the first two lists of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*. If all of the names of the *āsanas* added to the original collection of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* are tallied, there are eighty-four,¹¹³ which yields a total number of one hundred and eighteen postures in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*.

¹¹³The calculation of the additional *āsanas* is 28 (section 1) + 39 (section 2) + 17 (section 3) = 84. It can be verified by consulting Table 3 in Birch 2018: 115–118. The variation of *śavāsana* was not included in list 1b of this table. If it is added, then the total number of additional *āsanas* is eighty-five.

Since the publication of Birch 2018, I have discovered that some of the scribal comments in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* were borrowed from Sundaradeva's *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*. The latter's chapter on *āsana* mentions various details on postural practice, in particular the salutary effects of certain *āsanas*, and describes several postures that are yet to be found in other works.¹¹⁴ The redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* does not explicitly mention Sundaradeva or the name of one of his works, yet the parallels are extensive enough to make the connection highly probable. The close parallels consist of a verse on *śavāsana*,¹¹⁵ and two of Sundaradeva's commentarial remarks.¹¹⁶ Also, three of the *āsanas* attributed to Mohanadāsa are mentioned in both works.¹¹⁷ The parallels between the additional text of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* and Sundaradeva's commentarial remarks are strong evidence that the redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* was the borrower because it is almost certain that Sundaradeva composed the verse on *śavāsana*. The verse's unusual mix-

¹¹⁴ For a discussion of Sundaradeva and his works on yoga, see Birch 2018a: 58–61. Examples of untraced *āsanas* in the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā* (ms. no. 2244, f. 28r–29r) include *valgulyāsana*, *vṛścikāsana* and *mūlabandhāsana*.

¹¹⁵ Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* (p. 123, ll. 170–174 of this edition) *uttānam urvyāṃ śayanam vidhāya prasārya pādau karasamputam bhṛdi | nāsāgram ādhāya dṛṣam smaran śivam pṛṣṭhe sthitir yatra śavāsanaṃ hi tat ||* Cf. *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā* (ms. no. 2244, f. 17r l. 8 – f. 17v l. 1), which has the variants *nāsāgra* and *pṛṣṭhotthitir*.

¹¹⁶ An additional comment in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* at the end of the description of *mayūrāsana* (p. 120, ll. 130–131 of this edition), *navarasāmājirṇajvarodaragulmaśūlavishādirogharam*, is close to an introductory comment on *mayūrāsana* in the southern manuscripts of the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*. For example, GOML transcript (no. R3239, p. 31, ll. 6–7): *atha navarasāmājirṇajvarodaragulmaśūlavishādirogeṣu mayūrāsanam*. Manuscripts of the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā* from north India have *sadyonavarasā°* (e.g., ms. no. 2244, f. 17r, l. 5). A note in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* (p. 121, l. 138 of this edition) on *kukkuṭāsana* (*kukkuṭam nāḍisuddhyupayogi 2*) appears to derive from Sundaradeva's introductory remark on *kukkuṭāsana* and *dbanurāsana* (*athāsaneṣu nāḍisuddhyupayogyāsanaadvayam*) in the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā* (ms. no. 2244, f. 16v, l. 9 and ms. no. R3239, p. 30, l. 12).

¹¹⁷ These *āsanas* are *naḍāsana*, *garbhāsana* and *hamsāsana*. Descriptions of the last two in the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā* have been translated in Birch 2018: 122, 126. The posture called *naḍāsana* in the Ujjain manuscript is very similar to *alaksyakarmāsana* in the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*, which is discussed in the subsection 'Commonalities with Persian and Hindi Works.'

ture of metres is an idiosyncratic feature of his work.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, as far as I know, Sundaradeva composed his own commentarial remarks. The likely fact that the redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* borrowed from the *Haṭṭhasaṅketacandrikā* provides new limits for Sundaradeva's floruit, which must have occurred after Śivānanda's *Yogacintāmaṇi* and before the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* (i.e., 1659 CE), thus making it sometime during the first half of the seventeenth century.

As noted in the section 'Influence on Subsequent Authors' and shown in Table 6, it is apparent that Nārāyaṇatīrtha borrowed from the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* because he included two postures unique to the Ujjain manuscript, namely *cakrāsana* and *garuḍāsana*, and the same seated positions of Pātañjalayoga, namely *krauñca*, *hasti* and *samasamsthāna*, in addition to the other *āsanas* of the original *Yogacintāmaṇi*. Without being aware of Nārāyaṇatīrtha's debt to the *Yogacintāmaṇi*, Endo Ko (1993: 55–56) proposed that Nārāyaṇatīrtha was active sometime between 1600 and 1690 CE. If the upper limit (i.e., 1690 CE) is correct, it is likely that the *Yogasiddhāntacandrikā* was composed between 1659 and 1690 CE because, as noted above, the Ujjain manuscript appears to be the autograph of the enlarged version of the *Yogacintāmaṇi*. The fact that Nārāyaṇatīrtha may have had access to this enlarged version raises the possibility that it was copied and disseminated more widely than the existence of a single autograph might suggest.

The *Āsanas* of the Original *Yogacintāmaṇi*

The original version of Śivānanda's *Yogacintāmaṇi* combines commentary on Patañjali's *sūtras* on *āsana* with descriptions of specific postures. Such a combination is first attested in Śaṅkara's *Pātañjalayogaśāstravivarāṇa* and subsequently in some other commentaries, such as those of Vācaspatimiśra and Vijñānabhikṣu. This format integrates general guidelines on postural

¹¹⁸The verse on *śavāsana* in footnote 115 combines the metres called *upajāti* and *indravaṃśā*. Such combinations are not unusual in Sundaradeva's work, and possibly unprecedented in other works on yoga.

practice, such as that an *āsana* should be comfortable and steady, with instructions on how to assume specific postures. In contrast to Śāṅkara and other commentators, Godāvaramiśra and Śivānanda extended their discussion of specific postures beyond those mentioned in the *bhāṣya* of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* and, to do this, they borrowed most of their material from the *Haṭhapradīpikā* and *Yogayājñavalkya*, as well as various Purāṇas and Śaiva works, to compile a collection of thirty-three descriptions. Both authors included five postures from the *Dharmaṣūtrikā* and cited this work by name. The *Dharmaṣūtrikā* is an early Śaiva text on yoga that was probably composed a thousand years or so before the *Yogacintāmaṇi* (Barois 2020: 15–19). Until the sixteenth century, authors of Haṭha texts and related works seemed unaware of the *Dharmaṣūtrikā* (Barois 2020: 30–31).

When expounding on Pātañjalayoga, Godāvaramiśra and Śivānanda largely relied on Bhojadeva's commentary called the *Rājamārtanḍa*. They begin the section on *āsana* with Bhojadeva's comments on *sūtras* 2.46–47, and point out that *sūtra* 2.47 in the *Rājamārtanḍa* is slightly different to *sūtra* 2.47 in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. This provides us with an interesting example of how commentators grappled with different readings in the transmission of a text. They were aware of a version of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* that had the word *ananta* in *sūtra* 2.47 whereas Bhojadeva read *ānantya*. Śivānanda incorporated Godāvaramiśra's comments on this, and both compilers believed that *ananta* was the original reading of the *sūtra* and interpret the word in light of Vācaspatimiśra's commentary as referring to the lord of serpents named Ananta.¹¹⁹ Neither Godāvaramiśra nor Śivānanda composed their own descriptions of specific *āsanas*. However, they may have been among the first to incorporate descriptions of inverted positions in a compilation on *āsana*.¹²⁰ Before the sixteenth century, inverting the

¹¹⁹ For a discussion of the readings *ānantya* and *ananta* in the transmission of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* and its commentaries, see Maas 2018: 83–85 and Wujastyk 2018: 32–35.

¹²⁰ As attested by Hemacandra's auto-commentary on his *Yogaśāstra*, the practice of inverting the body was also called an *āsana* as early as the twelfth century. After commenting on the nine postures of that text, Hemacandra describes a dozen or so other postures, one of which is an inverted pose named after Duryodhana, a warrior who features in the

body had been a salient practice of Haṭhayoga, in which it was designated a *mudrā* rather than an *āsana*. The haṭhayogic *mudrā* called *viparītakaraṇī* is described in the *Dattātreya-yogaśāstra* (146–149) and *Haṭhapradīpikā* (3.73–78). In contrast to these source works, Godāvaramiśra included an *āsana* called ‘*viparītakaraṇa*,’¹²¹ and explained it by citing the relevant passage in the *Dattātreya-yogaśāstra*.¹²² Śivānanda omitted *viparītakaraṇī* from his compilation of *āsanas* perhaps because, unlike Godāvaramiśra, he devoted a separate section of his *Yogacintāmaṇi* to the haṭhayogic *mudrās* (see Table 1). Nonetheless, both compilers included a verse on *narakāsana*, which they attribute to the *Haṭhapradīpikā*. This posture, which is named after one of the hell realms where malefactors are hung upside down,¹²³ appears to be similar to the version of headstand commonly practised in modern yoga (as seen, for example, in Iyengar 1979: 179–184). The attribution of this verse to the *Haṭhapradīpikā* is particularly interesting because early manuscripts of this text do not mention *narakāsana* and it is absent in the vulgate version, which was established by Brahmānanda’s commentary in the nineteenth century.¹²⁴

Mahābhārata (see Mallinson and Singleton 2017: 103–104). These postures are provided in the commentary as examples of further *āsanas*, and Hemacandra does not reveal the original context or source for *duryodhanāsana*.

¹²¹ Godāvaramiśra’s spelling of *viparītakaraṇa* was probably derived from the *Dattātreya-yogaśāstra*’s verse *pāda* (146a) that has *karaṇam viparītākhyam*. However, generally speaking, this technique is called *viparītakaraṇī*.

¹²² Godāvaramiśra’s *Yogacintāmaṇi*, ms. no. 220 of 1882–83, ff. 40v–41r. See Table 3 for the position of *viparītakaraṇa* within Godāvaramiśra’s compilation of *āsanas*.

¹²³ For example, a realm of *naraka* called *taptakumbha* is described as follows in the *Garuḍapurāṇa* (2.3.41–42):

After that, there is the most terrifying [realm called] ‘the red-hot pot.’ Listen to me. Everywhere there are red-hot pots full of flames of fire. Blazing sacrificial fires, they are filled with boiling oil and iron powder. The servants of Yama cast the malefactors face down in them.

ataḥ paraṃ bhīmataraṃ taptakumbhaṃ nibodha me |

samantatas taptakumbhā vahnijvālāsamanvitāḥ ||

jvaladagnicayās taptatailāyaścūrṇapūritāḥ |

eṣu duṣkṛtakarmāṇo yāmyaiḥ kṣiptā hy adbhomukhāḥ ||

¹²⁴ To date (November 2022), none of the one hundred and seventy five manuscripts

The diversity of Śivānanda's sources and the extra material he added to Godāvaramiśra's discussion (see Table 3) produced a compilation of *āsanas* that would probably have been the most extensive of its kind when he composed it, and it perhaps represents the most important account of postural yoga practice after the locus classicus of Haṭhayoga, the *Haṭhapradīpikā*. Unlike Godāvaramiśra, Śivānanda accentuated the contribution of Haṭhayoga to his compilation of *āsanas* by including more material from the *Haṭhapradīpikā* and citing the text by name three times.

The *Āsanas* of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*

As noted earlier, the compilation of *āsanas* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, which has been edited in this book, is significantly more extensive than the original version of Śivānanda's *Yogacintāmaṇi*. It contains one of the earliest lists of eighty-four names of postures and another list of over one hundred names. When combined, the number of names in these lists surpasses the eighty-four *āsanas* listed in the *Haṭharatnāvalī* and even the collection of one hundred and twelve *āsanas* of the eighteenth-century *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*. Many of its additional descriptions and names of *āsanas* do not occur in extant yoga texts composed before the seventeenth century.

Since the name of an *āsana* may refer to different postures across various traditions, it is difficult to speculate about the shape and execution of the postures mentioned only by name in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*. However, it is worth noting that many of the names of the additional *āsanas* are derived from animals (e.g., *kumbhīra*, *eṇa*, *khaga*, *bheka*, *bhallūka*, *pāśava*, *vyāghra*, etc.), and some are named after gods (e.g., *īśa*, *indra*, *gaṇeśa*, etc.). Also, some names hint at the purpose of the *āsana*, such as the posture for piercing the knots (*granthibhedāsana*),¹²⁵ the posture that makes one a sky

consulted by the Light on Haṭha Project at SOAS University of London and the University of Marburg contain a verse on *narakāsana*. However, it is possible that Godāvaramiśra knew a version of the *Haṭhapradīpikā* with *narakāsana* because a few manuscripts of this work have additional *āsanas* (e.g., ms. nos. 29869 and 30051 at the Sampūrṇānanda University Library and ms. no. IM3449/2 at the Royal Asiatic Society Bombay).

¹²⁵ In the general context of a list of *yogāsanas*, one would expect the term *granthi* to refer

dweller (*kbecarakārakāsana*), the posture for mantra repetition (*japāsana*), the posture for devotees (*bhaktāsana*), the posture for [cultivating] patience (*kṣamāsana*),¹²⁶ the posture for eliminating sleep (*nidrāharāsana*), the posture for the five bodily winds beginning with *prāṇa* (*prāṇādīpañcakāsana*),¹²⁷ and so on.

Other names give some indication of who might have practised the posture or the social context from which the posture may have derived, such as the posture for Brahmins (*brāhmaṇāsana*), the posture for the four castes, beginning with the Brahmins (*brāhmaṇādivarṇāsana*), child's pose (*bālāsana*), the pose of those with a shaven head (*muṇḍāsana*),¹²⁸ the posture for the assembly (*sabbāsana*) and the family posture (*kulāsana*).¹²⁹ There is also a group of four postures that are connected with gnosis: the posture for gnosis (*jñānāsana*), the posture for awakening gnosis (*jñānabodhāsana*), the posture with the seal of gnosis (*jñānamudrāsana*) and the posture for the expansion of gnosis (*jñānavistarāsana*).

The descriptions of the complex *āsanas* added to the Ujjain manuscript of the *Yogacintāmaṇi* reveal features of postural practice that are not preserved in literature, sculpture, illustrations or paintings created before the sixteenth century. These include the yogi's exclamation of *om* or *alākṣya*

to the three knots that block the central channel (see *Amarauḅha* 35–41), rather than lumps or tumours in the body (see footnote 278).

¹²⁶ Without a description, the meaning of *kṣamāsana* is a little ambiguous. It could also mean 'earth posture' or even 'seat on the earth.' However, in the context of yoga, the meaning of *kṣamā* as patience is likely because *kṣamā* usually has this meaning in yoga texts and is even included in some lists of *yamas* (e.g., *Śāradātīlakantra* 2.5.7, *Yogayājñavalkya* 1.5.1, *Jogapradīpyakā* 23).

¹²⁷ This posture occurs in the second and third lists of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* as *prāṇādīpañcakam* and *prāṇādīyāsanaṇi* 5. Both names suggest that a group of five postures is intended here, perhaps, one for each bodily wind.

¹²⁸ Without a description, it is difficult to know the exact meaning of the word *muṇḍa* in this context. It could just mean the head, as in *śiṛṣāsana*, or it might refer to ascetics with shaven heads or anyone with a shaven head.

¹²⁹ In this instance, my translation of *kulāsana* reflects its generic meaning. If this posture derived from tantric traditions, the term *kula* would have a different meaning (see TAK vol. 2, 2004: 120–122).

when an *āsana* has been assumed (e.g., *stambhāsana* and *śūnyāsana*), rubbing certain parts of the body (e.g., *naḍāsana*), the practice of *naulī* in an *āsana* (e.g., *naulyāsana*),¹³⁰ moving postures (e.g., *markaṭāsana* and *cakrāsana*) and the use of certain herbs and foods (e.g., *nidrābarāsana*).

Most of the postures that exhibit these features are among those attributed to Mohanadāsa and Lakṣmaṇadāsaśvarayogī. The former yogi may be responsible for a larger collection of postures that has been described in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Pavanaviḡayasvarodayabhāṣānibandha* (as discussed in the next section). This collection contains other postures with features similar to those mentioned above, such as the yogi's exclamation of *alakṣya* upon adopting an *āsana*.¹³¹ However, the authors of these two works took greater pains than the redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* to explain the complex meditation and breathing techniques (*prāṇāyāma*) in these postures. One example is *garbhāsana*, which is described briefly in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* as a foetal position in which the yogi should perform the 'untainted action' (*nirañjanakriyā*). In descriptions of *garbhāsana* in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and Sundaradeva's *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*, *nirañjanakriyā* is a breath retention during which the yogi moves the breath internally between the head and abdomen (see Birch 2018: 123–124). Such details have been omitted from the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, the descriptions of which are often very rudimentary.

Among the *āsanas* attributed to Lakṣmaṇadāsaśvarayogī, two in particular are noteworthy, namely, 'the best of the crutches' (*āsāvarī*) and the 'posture for eliminating sleep' (*nidrābarāsana*). Both postures require a T-shaped wooden prop called an *āsā*, a term that I am yet to find attested in another yoga text.¹³² The practice of *nidrābarāsana* also requires a snuff

¹³⁰ The technique called *naulī* is one of the *ṣaṭkarma*, six therapeutic methods that were first taught in the *Haṭhāpradīpikā* (2.21–37) to remove excess phlegm and fat. The Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* describes two bodily positions in which *naulī* can be practised.

¹³¹ For example, this is also prescribed for *cakrāsana* in the *Pavanaviḡayasvarodayabhāṣānibandha* (ms. no. 33, f. 17v).

¹³² For the names of the T-shaped wooden prop and references to it in primary literature, see footnote 341.

made of liquorice and a nasal powder of dried ginger, black pepper and long pepper. Lakṣmaṇadāśasvarayogī's predilection for pepper is also seen in an earlier marginal note in which he is said to have advised that one should eat rock salt and pepper to master all postures.¹³³

Some of the unusual features of the *āsanas* attributed to Mohanadāśa and Lakṣmaṇadāśasvarayogī can also be found in the collection of eighty-four postures of Jayatarāma's *Jogaṇṇadīpyakā*. In light of the sophistication of the postural practices known by Mohanadāśa, Lakṣmaṇadāśasvarayogī and Jayatarāma, the art of practising complex *āsanas* appears to have reached its zenith in some sects of the Sant tradition, as well as the Nātha Sampradāya.

Commonalities with Persian and Hindi Works

The six *āsanas* attributed to Mohanadāśa in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* are also described in two works in Persian and Hindi, both of which belong to the same era as Godāvaramiśra and Śivānanda. The *āsanas* in question are called *naḍāsana*, *garbhāsana*, *naulyāsana*, *stambhāsana*, *śūnyāsana* and *haṃsāsana* in the Ujjain manuscript. Table 8 contains the names of these postures in a sixteenth-century Persian work called the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and an unpublished Hindi text called the *Pavanaviḃayasvarodayabbāśānibandha* (or *Pavanaviḃaya*^o for short). With the exception of *naḍāsana*, the names are similar. However, each *āsana*'s description corresponds so closely that it is beyond doubt that these postures derive from the same teacher or lineage.

The descriptions of *śūnyāsana*, *garbhāsana* and *haṃsāsana* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Haṭṭhasaṅketacandrikā* (also noted in Table 8) have been discussed in Birch 2018: 121–127. Since the publication of this research, corresponding *āsanas* have been discovered in the *Pavana-viḃaya*^o, as outlined in Tables 8 and 9.

¹³³I am assuming here that Lakṣmaṇadāśasvarayogī, to whom various *āsanas* are attributed in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, and Lakṣmaṇasvarayogī, who is mentioned in a marginal note on pepper and rock salt in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, are the same person in spite of the slight difference in the names (see footnote 230).

Table 8: Mohanadāsa's *Āsanas* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*, *Pavanavijaya*^o and *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*.

Ujjain <i>Yogacintāmaṇi</i>	<i>Baḥr al-Ḥayāt</i>	<i>Pavanavijaya</i> ^o	<i>Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā</i>
naḍāsana	alakh karma	alakh karma	alākṣyakarmāsana
garbhāsana	garbha āsana	garbhāsana karma	garbhāsana
naulyāsana	bunawli	nauli karma	–
stambhāsana	thambha āsana	thambhāsana	–
śūnyāsana	sun āsana	sunyāsana	–
haṃsāsana	hans karma	haṃsa karma	haṃsāsana

The fourth chapter of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and the section on *āsana* in the *Pavanavijaya*^o incorporate the same collection of postures. The shared content of these two works, as well as further references to Mohanadāsa, suggest that the six *āsanas* attributed to Mohanadāsa in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* were part of a larger collection of postures that has been preserved in Persian and Hindi.

The references to Mohanadāsa reveal something of the historical milieu in which this collection of *āsanas* arose. At the beginning of the *Pavanavijaya*^o, its author Alakhadāsa bows to his guru Mohana.

[The following] couplet [says:] Having first worshipped the feet of the guru, I think of that whose name is breath. Alakhadāsa gives happiness to people and bows to Mohana.¹³⁴

Alakhadāsa's combination of physical yoga techniques and *svarodaya*, a system of prognostication that relies on nasal dominance, makes it likely that his guru was Mohan of Mewar, who was a yogi and direct disciple of Dādū (1544–1603 CE), the founder of the Dādūpanth. Mohan was a contemporary of Dādū and, according to a hagiography of Rāghodās

¹³⁴ *Pavanavijaya*^o 1 (f. 1r, ll. 2–4):

dobarā || prathama carana guru vanda kai sumaro pavana ju nāma |
alakhadāsa sukha daina jana mohana karata pranāma ||

(also Rāghavdās, 1660 CE), he was known for combining Haṭhayoga and *svarodaya*:

Mohan Mevārau was a fine disciple of Dādū Dīndayāl. He applied the knowledge of *svarodaya* by determining the phases of the sun and moon, tracing the three body channels, the five elements, their colours and distances by measurement of finger-breadth; he calculated the right day for seeing a patient, insemination, a long-distance trip, or for war, and which foot to place first, and explained which constellations and undertakings were auspicious or inauspicious.

Rāgho says: He was an expert of haṭha-yoga who had entered the deepest absorption, a treasury of good qualities.¹³⁵

If Alakhadāsa was a disciple of Mohan of Mewar, as seems to be the case, then the *Pavanavijaya*^o was probably composed in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, which is shortly after the composition of *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* (c. 1550 CE) and prior to the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*.

A Mohanadāsa is also mentioned in the *Bṛhatkṛbecarīprakāśa*, a commentary by Ballāla on the *Kṛbecarīvidyā*.¹³⁶ This commentary, which may date to the eighteenth century, attributes a teaching to Mohanadāsa for applying salt to the tongue and milking it as a preparation for *kṛbecarīmudrā*.¹³⁷ This particular teaching corresponds to instructions on *kṛbecarīkarma* in both the *Pavanavijaya*^o and *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*,¹³⁸ and so the reference to Mohanadāsa in

¹³⁵ Trans. Horstmann 2021: 101. I am indebted to Monika Horstmann and Daniela Bevilacqua for the information on Mohanadāsa they provided in private correspondence.

¹³⁶ For more information on the *Bṛhatkṛbecarīprakāśa*, see Mallinson 2007: 3, 157–162.

¹³⁷ As noted in Mallinson 2007: 203 n. 236:

On *dohana*, another technique for lengthening the tongue in which the yogin rubs his tongue with *saindhava* and *pathyā* and milks it like a cow's teat, [Ballāla] quotes an author called Mohanadāsa (f. 20r, 2–3): *jīhvāṃ bahiḥ śvavan niskāśya tasyāṃ saindhavapathyācūrṇaṃ saindhavamaricacūrṇaṃ vā kṣiptvā dohayet gōstānavat | tatprakāśaś ca pūrvavat tarjanyamguṣṭhābhyāṃ tadūrdhvādbahḥ śhāpītābhyāṃ karābhyāṃ paryāyeṇa dohanam iti.*

¹³⁸ *Pavanavijaya*^o 216d–217:

the *Bṛhatkbecarīprakāśa* further connects this famous yogi of Mewar to the collection of *āsanas* recorded in Hindi and Persian.

As seen in Table 9, the *Pavanavijaya*^o and *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* describe almost the same collection of *āsanas*, including the six attributed to Mohanadāsa in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*.¹³⁹ It is noteworthy that most of these postures appear in the same order in the Hindi and Persian texts. Although a comparison of these three works reveals that each author was describing the same *āsanas*, there are enough small differences to suggest that one was not copying directly from the other. Therefore, it is likely that at least one intermediate source existed. A comparison of *stambhāsana*, *thambha āsana* and *thambhāsana* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Pavanavijaya*^o, respectively, is a good example of the extent of the similarities and differences in their descriptions:

Stambhāsana in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*:

Hunched over, [the yogi] should insert both hands
between the shanks and put them on the ground.
He [then] becomes airborne and exclaims *om*. Its
benefit is the disappearance of the earth and water
elements [in the body].¹⁴⁰

[...] *saindbava lavana nāma jo pāvai* ||216||
doharā || *tā saṅga miraci magāya kai malai duvārā nita* |
viva kara so dohana karai asthira rākhai citta ||217||
216d *saindbava*] emend. : *sindbava* codex. 217a *mirica milāya*] emend. :
miraci magāya codex.

Cf. *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* 4.15 (on *khecharī*): ‘In the first stage, having ground the tongue for six months with rock salt and whole pepper, one spends twice the time massaging it.’ Trans. Carl Ernst 2013.

¹³⁹ Unlike the scribe of ms. no. 33, I have numbered the *āsanas* of the *Pavanavijaya*^o from one to twenty-three to reflect the order in which the poses appear. The numbering of the poses in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* are those in Carl Ernst’s translation (2013).

¹⁴⁰ For the Sanskrit passage on *stambhāsana* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, see pp. 134, ll. 328–330 of the edition in this book.

Table 9: The *Āsanas* in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Pavanavijaya*°.

No.	<i>Pavanavijaya</i> °	No.	<i>Baḥr al-Ḥayāt</i>
1	haṃsa karma	1	hans karma
2	alakhā karma	2	alakh karma
3	trāṭaka karma	3	kahki
4	garbhāsana karma (with nirañ- jana)	4	niranjan (with gharba āsana)
5	cakri karma	5	chakri
6	navli karma	6	bunawli
7	gorkhi karma	7	gorakhi
8	aṅkocana karma	8	akūnchan
9	anahada śabda	9	anahad
10	mana śabda	10	nād
11	sitali karma	11	sitali
12	bhuvāṅgama karma	12	bhuvangam
13	trāṭaka	13	bhodak
14	pūraka kriyā	14	tarāwat
15	khecarī karma	15	khechari (with siddha āsana)
16	siddhāsana		
17	ṭāṭaka karma	16	tiktikā
18	kumbhaka karma	17	kumbhak
19	sabhāsana	18	sahasa āsana
20	thambhāsana	20	thambha āsana
21	cakrāsana	19	chakra āsana
22	vajrāsana	21	vajra āsana
23	sunyāsana	22	sun āsana

Thambha āsana in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*:

The recollection of the *thambha āsana* [no. 20]. One sits crosslegged holding both one's hands in between the shins, so that one is suspended by the strength of both hands. One does not forget the recollection. When one reaches this station, the matter of earth and water becomes reduced, and the matter of air and fire is increased.¹⁴¹

Thambhāsana in the *Pavanavijaya*°:

Pillar pose, whose greatness is unfathomable and profound, creates a pillar. When sitting down, adopt a cross-legged position and hold both hands between the shanks.¹⁴² Lift the body into the air with the hands and arms. From his mouth, the name alakha is uttered. First the water element becomes less and [then] the quality of heat increases.¹⁴³

The Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*'s description of *stambhāsana* is the most obscure of the three, as the cross-legged position of the legs is not mentioned. As seen in Figure 4, an illustration from the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*, the posture is similar

¹⁴¹ Trans. Carl Ernst 2013.

¹⁴² I have assumed that *piṇḍurina* is a variant spelling of *piṇḍali*, calf of the leg (McGregor 1994: 628)

¹⁴³ *Pavanavijaya*° 242–243, f. 17v, ll. 10–14:

atba thambhāsana ||
copai || thambhāsana thambhe jo sadhai tāki mahimā agama agādhai ||
baitba tabi pālathī karai piṇḍurina bica ubhai kara dharai ||242||
kara bhujā deba antarikṣa kījai nāma alakha ko mukha so lijai ||
prathama nīra aṃsa ghaṭi jāi tejasuni guna adbika labāi ||243||
iti thambhāsana ||

I thank James Mallinson and Daniela Bevilacqua for their suggestions on my translations of *thambhāsana*, *sūnyāsana* and *garbhāsana* in the *Pavanavijaya*°.

to *kukkuṭāsana* in the *Haṭhpradīpikā* (1.23),¹⁴⁴ the difference being that *padmāsana* is not specified for *stambhāsana*. Only the Sanskrit and Hindi works mention the exclamation of *om* and *alakṣya/alakha*, which appear to have been synonyms in this tradition.¹⁴⁵ The outstanding feature of the three descriptions is the benefits of the practice. All mention the changes to the elements in the body. The only difference is that the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* explains the effect on four elements whereas the others mention only two.

In many instances, the wording and details of the postures in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* and *Pavanavijaya*^o are more similar to one another than to those of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*. This is most apparent in their account of *śūnyāsana* because the Sanskrit and Hindi texts appear to describe two stages of the posture, whereas the Persian text describes only the first. In the first stage, the yogi balances on both fists and, in the second, the yogi balances on one fist while holding the bodyweight on one elbow.¹⁴⁶

Śūnyāsana in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*:

[The yogi] should make fists with both hands, then place them on the ground, lift up into the air and exclaim ‘*alakṣya*’ –*om*. [Then,] he should clasp the big toe of the left foot and hold the weight [of his body] on the left elbow.¹⁴⁷

Sūnyāsana in the *Pavanavijaya*^o:

The good [yogi], who would reach a high state, should sit immediately in the void pose. He should

¹⁴⁴ The *Haṭhpradīpikā*'s description of *kukkuṭāsana* is in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* and has been translated in this book (p. 160).

¹⁴⁵ As noted in footnote 325, the redactor of the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* wrote *om* above the word *alakṣyaṃ* in the description of *śūnyāsana*.

¹⁴⁶ A detail of the illustration of *śūnyāsana* in the manuscript of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* at the Chester Beatty library has been printed in Birch 2018: 122. A image of the folio (27v) is available in the Chester Beatty Digital Collections (https://viewer.cbl.ie/viewer/object/In_16_27/1/LOG_0000/ [accessed 15.9.2020]).

¹⁴⁷ For the Sanskrit description of *śūnyāsana* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi*, see p. 134, ll. 331–334 of the edition in this book.

make the two hands into fists. After that he should put the hands on the ground, lift from the ground and remain in the sky. He cries out *alakha* and now holds there. He takes the big toe of the left foot and puts the weight on the left elbow. [†...†¹⁴⁸ Then], he says *alakha*. He can travel through heaven, hell and the earth. He who does this practice becomes beautiful.¹⁴⁹

Sun āsana in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*:

The recollection of the *sun āsana* [no. 22]. First, one clenches both fists and places them on the earth, placing the toes of the right foot on the right elbow and the toes of the left foot on the left elbow. One performs the recollection. Whoever reaches this station becomes capable of flight and becomes one of the spiritual entities – and God knows best.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ The lower edge of f. 18r has broken off, and at least one verse quarter is missing. It is possible that the missing part of the verse contains instructions for the yogi to do the other side of the posture. In other words, after taking the big toe of the left foot and holding his weight on the left elbow, the yogi then takes hold of the right big toe and holds his weight on the right elbow.

¹⁴⁹ *Pavanavijaya*° 250–252, f. 18r, l. 11 – f. 18v, l. 2:

atḥa sunyāsana ||
copai || *padavi ūca labai jo santa* || *beṭṭhe āsana sunya turanta* ||
vivi kara mūṭṭhi bandhana karai || *tā pācbai pabumī kara dbarai* ||250||
uṭṭhai bbūmi teṃ antara rabai || *raṭanā alakha tabā ava gabai* ||
vāma carana ko anguṭṭhā lei || *vāi kubanī para bhara deī* ||251||
 †+++++† *alakha jībha so gāve* ||
svarga patāla bhomya so gāmī || *jo ibi kriyā boyā abhirāmī* ||252||
iti sunyāsana ||
anguṭṭhā] emend. : *angu+ā* codex. *alakha*] conj. : *+lakha* codex.

¹⁵⁰ Trans. Carl Ernst 2013.



Figure 4: *Thambha āsana*, *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*, folio 26b, object no. In 16.26b.
 © The Trustees of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin.

Carl Ernst (2018: 427; 2016: 218–219) has argued that Muḥammad Ġawt, the author of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*, applied a strongly Islamic hermeneutic to the yogic practices by adding Islamic terms, names and even passages of text. In contrast to this, Kazuyo Sakaki (2005) has focused on the ‘yogico-tantric influence’ on the *Amṛtakunḍa* and its various translations, including the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*. However, the discovery of Hindi and Sanskrit descriptions of the *āsanas* in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* presents scholars with the first opportunity to assess the process of ‘Islamization’ and the ‘yogico-tantric influence’ by comparing parallel texts in three different languages.

Some of the most revealing points of comparison are the particular benefits of certain postures. In such instances, the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*’s account sometimes differs significantly from the known Sanskrit and Hindi works. For example, the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* statements on the rewards of *garbhāsana* are not based on the corresponding passages in Hindi and Sanskrit:

The *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*:

One takes [the breath] above from below, and below from above, in this exercise to such a degree that the inner eye, winged imagination, wandering reflection, and incomparable thought — all four — emerge from their restrictions. They enter witnessing of the spiritual state and become one.¹⁵¹

The *Pavanavijaya*^o:

By making a repeated attempt at this [foetal pose, the yogi] practises the pure meditation. He who sees the hidden universe revealed, his gaze merges [in it]. Desire, anger, sleep and fear disappear. Deluded knowledge and impurity vanish. The individual self becomes one with Śiva †[...]†.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ Trans. Carl Ernst 2013.

¹⁵² *Pavanavijaya*^o 166–167, f. 12v, ll. 13–16:

The *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*:

When this technique of meditation on the pure [light] is continually performed, the best of yogis sees the hidden Brahma revealed. Desire, fear and anger disappear because of the yogi's practice [of this technique]. So too delusion and impurity, and the individual self becomes one with Śiva.¹⁵³

Bearing in mind that the practice of *garbhāsana* and *nirañjanakriyā* are the same in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*, *Pavanavijaya*^o and *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*,¹⁵⁴ this comparison reveals that the compilers of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* transmitted the practice faithfully but reinterpreted its benefits to appeal to a sufi audience.

The *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Pavanavijaya*^o share much content beyond the collection of *āsanas* discussed here. In particular, they have parallel passages on *svarodaya*, and it seems the *āsanas* were taught within this system of astrology to purify the body and mind for meditation practices. Much of the content of the *Pavanavijaya*^o is about *svarodaya* and, within that broader context, this postural practice follows an explanation of the twelve zodiac signs in the body and the bodily heat (*tapas*) generated by visualising them.¹⁵⁵ Many of the postures themselves incorporate sophisticated breathing and

vāra vāra yaba jatana kara dhyāna nirañjana lāi ||
gopya pragata brahmāṇḍa je dekbai dṛṣṭi samāi ||166||
copai || kāma krodha nidra bhaya ghūṭai || bhūlati gyāna malinatā mīṭai ||
jīva siva dono ika hoī || †taba yā gati ko +++++ † ||167||
 167b *bhūlati*] conj. BIRCH/MALLINSON : *bhūpati* codex.

¹⁵³ *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*, ms. no. R3239, ff. 167–168 and ms. no. 2244, f. 84r:
śāśvad vidhim imaṃ kṛtvā nirañjanavicintanam |
labhate brahma yad guptaṃ prakāṣaṃ sādhabakottamaḥ ||129||
naśyanti kāmabhikopā abhyāsenāsyā yoginaḥ |
moho malinatā naśyec chivajīvaikyatā bhavet || 130||
 130a *bhi*] 2244 : *bhiḥ* 3239.

¹⁵⁴ For the parallel passages in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*, see Birch 2018: 122–124.

¹⁵⁵ *Pavanavijaya*^o, f. 9v, l. 10: ‘Now, the 12 signs of the zodiac and an explanation of the quality of heat in the body’ (*atha dvādasa rāsi deha me varṇana tapa guna*).

meditation techniques. In fact, over half of them are called an ‘action’ (*karma*) or a ‘posture in which an action is done’ (*karmāsana*), rather than simply an *āsana*. The introductory comments on *āsana* in the *Pavanavijaya*^o indicate that a collection of eighty-four of these postures existed and twenty-one of them were considered important, which one can assume are those described at length in the text. The introduction also provides some general guidelines on why and how the postures should be practised:

Now, the method of practising eighty-four postures and an explanation of the heat [arising] in the body.

[The following] quatrains [say:]

First, one should make the body and mind pure, practise *āsana* and meditation will follow. Without *āsana*, the body is not purified. One who knows eighty-four [postures] is wise. Among those, one should focus on twenty-one. Among all [of them], one should do those that are best. The practice of [performing the *āsanas*] one by one is different. [Practising] all [of them this way] brings about many good qualities. First, one should always eat light food and always sit alone, giving up company. Having made some vow, he should remain [in a pose. Then,] he should be able to sit [in it] day and night wherever [he is].

The [following] couplet [adds:]

First practise *baṃsāsana* and apply ash to the whole body. Having firmly bound a tight loincloth,¹⁵⁶ he should avoid the company of people.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ The term *vajra* appears to be describing the loincloth (*kachoṭā*) as tight. A similar expression occurs in *Madhumālātī* 172 (*bajra kachauṭā bāndhi kai*), which seems to be describing the loincloth being tied very tightly (Mallinson 2023).

I wish to thank Daniela Bevilacqua and James Mallinson for bringing these references to my attention.

¹⁵⁷ *Pavanavijaya*^o 144–147, f. 111r–111v:

In its introduction to the *āsanas*, the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* echoes the goal of purifying the body, the existence of eighty-four postures, the importance of twenty-one of them, and the need for fasting, seclusion and practising by day and night.

[...] purity of the body is produced by the posture. In all, the postures are eighty-four, and upon reflection one recognizes that each one has a special quality and benefit. In this book twenty-one postures will be explained, and their goal will be successfully achieved, with the aid of the transcendent Creator. The condition of this practice is that in the beginning one chooses fasting and seclusion, while restraining one's gaze. When one encounters any kind of difficulty at the beginning of the effort (*mujābada*), one does not worry or deviate, but remains busy with the activity. The period of this exercise is like winter, but its result is like the rainy season and spring. For practice both by day and night, one picks a particular time.¹⁵⁸

Since Alakhadāsa was the disciple of Mohanadāsa, it is possible that the content of his *Pavanavijayasvarodayabhāṣānibandha* is related to a text reportedly composed by Mohanadāsa called the *Pavanavijaya*, the first verse of which is cited in a modern reference book on the Dādūpanth by Svāmi Nārāyaṇadāsa (1979: 654):

*atha caurāsī āsana kriyā vidhāna tapa guna debi me kathana ||
copāi || prathama pavitra deha manu kare || āsana sādha dhyāna anusare ||
bina āsana tana hoī na suddha || asī cāri jānata jai buddha ||144||
tā madhi vīsa eka āvadhārau || sabani maddhi uttama je karau ||
eka eka kī sādhanā aurai || guna aneka sādho sabha ṭhorai ||145||
bhojana prathama karai laghu sadā || baiṭhi ikānta saṃgu taja sadā ||
koi kasamau kare ṭhabirāi || divasa raina jaha baiṭhe jāi ||146||
dobarā || haṃsa karma sādhai prathama bhasma aṅga saba lāi ||
vajra kachoṭā bāndhi driḍha sangati loga tajāi ||147||
146b sadā] emend. : jadā codex.*

I thank James Mallinson and Daniela Bevilacqua for their assistance with this passage.

¹⁵⁸This is an unpublished translation by Carl Ernst, which he kindly shared with me (p.c. 11.10.2020). An earlier translation of the same passage can be found at: <https://asia.si.edu/essays/ocean-of-life/#03> [accessed 15.9.2020].

Favoured by Guru Dādū, Mohan tells the truth. As the breath flows in the left or right nostril, so knowledge of reality arises.¹⁵⁹

I am yet to consult a manuscript or edition of Mohana's *Pavanavijaya* to determine whether or not it contains the same content as Alakhadāsa's *Pavanavijaya*^o and the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*. The compound *bbāṣānibandha* ('commentary and digest on') in the title of Alakhadāsa's work indicates that it was based on a *svarodaya* text called the *Pavanavijaya* that, in this case, might have been composed by his guru.

The references to Mohanadāsa in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* and *Bṛhatkbecarīprakāśa* point to Mohanadāsa as the source of some of the *āsanas* in this collection. However, the relatively early date of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*'s composition raises some interesting questions about the direction of borrowing and the role of Mohanadāsa as the 'master of Haṭhayoga' who became known for teaching these postures. It is generally accepted that Dādū was born in *saṃvat* 1601 (1544–1545 CE) as stated in Jangopāl's hagiography called the *Dādūjanmalilā* (Thiel-Horstmann 1983: 5). Since the date of composition of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* (1550 CE) precedes that of Dādū's birth, it would appear that both Mohanadāsa and Alakhadāsa were active sometime after the Persian work was composed. Nonetheless, it is also reasonably clear that the author of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*, Muḥammad Ġawṭ, borrowed the material on yoga from an Indian tradition of yogis. There are two possible explanations for how this might have happened.

Firstly, Mohanadāsa might have learned this collection of *āsanas* from an older Indian tradition of yogis whose teachings have been lost in the sands of time. Mohanadāsa's fame, as a disciple of Dādū and a successful *svarayogin*, resulted in later attributions of these *āsanas* to him. In this case, we can assume that the author of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* borrowed material from the older tradition of Haṭhayoga which transmitted the *āsanas* to Mohanadāsa. A reference to a breathing technique called *bhuvāṅgam* in the

¹⁵⁹ *Pavanavijaya* 1:

guru dādū su kṛpā karī, bbāṣata mohan sāra |
yathā vāma dakṣiṇa svarana, tathā su tattva vicāra ||

work of ‘Abd al-Quddūs Gangohī (1456–1537 CE) somewhat supports the hypothesis that these postures existed before the time of Mohanadāsa (Digby 1975: 48).¹⁶⁰

The second possibility is that Dādū and his disciples, including Mohanadāsa, were active in the first half of the sixteenth century. Although Dādū’s date of birth of 1545 CE is attested by a primary source, namely Jaṅgopāl’s *Dādūjanmalilā*, a passage from the *Tasbrīh al-Aqvām* raises the possibility that Dādū was alive and active before 1550 CE, for it states that:

Dādū remained in Gujarat until the age of twenty and at the beginning of his twenty-first year, *saṃvat* 1591 equivalent to 1534 CE or 949 Hijri, he left Gujarat with his wife and Mohan Dās his disciple to travel.¹⁶¹

Whether the ‘Mohan Dās’ mentioned here was Mohanadāsa Mevāṛau, the yogi, or Mohanadāsa Daftari, Dādū’s amanuensis,¹⁶² this new date means that Dādū was thirty-seven years old in 1550 CE. If the yogi Mohanadāsa was close to the age of Dādū or older, it opens the small window of possibility that he created a collection of *āsanas* for achieving the aims of *svarodaya* and his fame had grown enough by 1550 CE to prompt Muḥammad Ġawṭ to feature his postural practice in a chapter of the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt*. This hypothesis ultimately depends on whether the testimony of the *Tasbrīh al-Aqvām* is more reliable than the *Dādūjanmalilā*, which is unlikely as the former was completed in 1825 CE and probably reflects more recent ideas within the Dādūpanth on the life of its founder.

¹⁶⁰ I wish to thank James Mallinson for this reference.

¹⁶¹ This statement is quoted from an unpublished translation of selections from the *Tasbrīh al-Aqvām*, British Library Board, Add.27255, trans. Bruce Wannell with help on the subject matter from James Mallinson.

¹⁶² Prior to the passage dating Dādū, the *Tasbrīh al-Aqvām* states, ‘From the kingdom of Mewar, from the city of Udaipur, Mohan Das from the caste of greengrocers, a Mewari who was a trader by profession [...]’ (trans. Bruce Wannell with help on the subject matter from James Mallinson). However, I’m not sure that this is sufficient information to identify whether it was Mohanadāsa Daftari or Mohanadāsa Mevāṛau, as both were from Mewar and the details of their lives before meeting Dādū are sketchy.

Comparing the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* with the *Pavanavijaya* and Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* reveals an extraordinary case of multilingual textual reuse and interreligious exchange. It is clear that sufis borrowed various yoga techniques that were practised by yogis of the Sant traditions. These primary sources are proof that the spread of yoga practices across India was not impeded by different languages and religions. In fact, just as the physical practices of Haṭhayoga moved seamlessly from a Buddhist to Śaiva milieu at the beginning of the second millennium (Birch 2024: 19–20, 37–46), so the postures of Mohanadāsa traversed the Sant and Mughal worlds. Such exchanges seemed to preserve the integrity of the physical practices but the theory underlying them and the interpretation of their benefits could change significantly. Also, techniques could move easily from one system of yoga to another: Mohanadāsa's *āsanas* were later extracted from *svarodaya* and integrated into systems of *aṣṭāṅgayoga* as *āsanas* in the Ujjain *Yogacintāmaṇi* and as methods of *prāṇāyāma* in the *Haṭhasaṅketacandrikā*. Moreover, the parallel material in the *Baḥr al-Ḥayāt* and *Pavanavijaya*^o suggests that *svarodaya* played a key role in facilitating the exchange of yoga practices between yogis and sufis. In fact, one might say that *svarodaya* was their shared language and a likely means to elevating the status of yogis and sufis as advisors to kings and nobles in worldly affairs.