Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga
A Survey of Traditions
(with Illustrations)
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(with Illustrations)

Gudrun Bühnemann

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I wish to thank the authorities of the Keśar Library, Kathmandu, for permitting me to reproduce the drawings of āsanās from colour photocopies of manuscript 347.

I am indebted to Dr. Lokesh Chandra for sending photocopies of the drawings of the eighty-four Siddhas according to the Jodhpur tradition (referred to as N1), which are reproduced in this book, and to Dr. N.E. Sjoman for providing photocopies of an identical set of drawings from another publication (referred to as N2) for comparison’s sake.

I wish to thank A. Sanchez and S. Wong/Sanchez for permission to reproduce the photographs of the eighty-four āsanās in the Yoga Challenge® system from a poster published in 2003.

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Finally, I thank Dr. M. Palangat of the University of Wisconsin-Madison for providing a reading of the names of the eighty-four āsanās written in Malayalam script and listed in Appendix 8.4 and P. Pierce, M.A., for editing this book for English style.
Guide to Transliteration and Pronunciation

In this book Sanskrit and Hindi words are transliterated according to the standard system used by Indologists. Exceptions are some names of places and persons written in their most common anglicized forms without diacritical marks.

Long vowels are the diphthongs e, o, ai and au and vowels marked with a macron; all other vowels are short.

a is pronounced like the u in but
ā like the a in car
i like the i in hit
ī like the i in machine
u like the u in put
ū like the u in rule
r like the ri in riff
e like the ay in pay
ai like the ai in aisle
o like the o in low
au like the ow in hów.

The m nasalizes the preceding vowel; it may also be pronounced like the English m.

Consonants are divided into aspirated consonants written with a following h (for example, kh) and unaspirated ones (for example, k). The retroflex sounds t, th, etc. are pronounced with the tip of the tongue turned back and touching the upper palate. The letter g is always hard and pronounced like the g in goat. The letter c is pronounced as in chin. The ñ is pronounced like the ng in ring; ñ sounds like the Spanish ñ in señora. The palatal sibilant ś and the retroflex ṣ sound similar to English sh.
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1. The Coloured Drawings of the Āsanas according to the Jogapradipakā
This is a circa nineteenth-century set of drawings of eighty-four āsanas illustrating a section of Jayatarāma’s Jogapradipakā. The set is part of a document containing coloured drawings of eighty-four āsanas and twenty-four mudrās, each accompanied by text. The document was removed from the library of the Rāni of Jhansi in central India in 1858 and has been kept in the British Library since 1861, where it is catalogued as manuscript Add. 24099. The document is described in section 6.2.1, the drawings of the āsanas are reproduced in section 6.2.2 and the names of the āsanas are listed in Appendix 8.2.

2. The Line Drawings from Nepal
This is a set of line drawings showing practitioners performing āsanas, numbered from one to eighty-four. The drawings form part of manuscript 347 preserved in the Keśar Library, Kathmandu. The manuscript consists of forty-eight folios and is labelled “Hastamudrā, caurāshi āsana,” which means ‘hand gestures, eighty-four āsanas.' The section on āsanas consists of fifteen folios. The manuscript is described in section 6.3.1 and the line drawings are reproduced in section 6.3.2.

3. The Sources in the Jodhpur Tradition
3a. This is a set of line drawings of the eighty-four Siddhas performing eighty-four Yoga postures, reproduced from the Appendix (pp. 1–21) of the book “Nava nātha caurāsi siddha” compiled by Yogin Naraharinātha and published by the Gorakṣanātha Matha (Vārāṇasi) in 1968. The line drawings are copies of older drawings in the Jodhpur style. The copies were made by Prabhātnāth Yogi of the Division for the Propagation of Yoga (yogapracārini śākhā) of the (Śri) Siddha Ratnanāth Arts Institute (Kalā Kendra) at Caugharā in the Dān district of western Nepal in 1968. The line drawings are described in section 6.4.1 and reproduced in section 6.4.2.
3b. These are selected portraits of individual Siddhas performing different āsanas which decorate the walls of the sanctum of the large temple at the Mahāmandir temple complex outside Jodhpur, in central Rājasthān. The construction of this Nātha temple was completed under Mān Singh, the Mahārāja of Marwar, in 1805. The murals possibly date from 1810. The sixteen portraits correspond to line drawings 1, 4, 11, 21, 25, 32, 34, 46, 50, 53, 58, 60, 64, 65, 68 and 71. The portraits are described in section 6.4.3 and reproduced in section 6.4.4. The photographs were taken by R. Linrothe who kindly made them available for publication in this book.

4. The Line Drawings in Svāmī Svayamānanda 1992
These are contemporary line drawings of eighty-four āsanas reproduced from Svāmī Svayamānanda 1992. The line drawings are described in section 5.4.3 and reproduced in section 6.5. The āsana names are listed in Appendix 8.5.

5. Photographs of the Eighty-four Āsanas in the Yoga Challenge® System
These are photographs of the eighty-four āsanas taught by A. Sanchez as part of Yoga Challenge® IV. They are reproduced from a poster published in 2003. The āsanas are described in section 5.4.4, their names listed in Appendix 8.6 and the photographs reproduced in section 6.6.
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1. Comparative Overview of the āsanas Taught at Ghosh’s College; by A. Sanchez as Part of Yoga Challenge® IV; and in Bikram Yoga™ (pp. 34–35)

2. The Names of the Eighty-four Siddhas in the Jodhpur Tradition (following N1 and N2) (pp. 87–88)
Frequently Used Abbreviations

GS  Gheraṇḍa-Saṃhitā.

GŚ  Gorakṣaśataka.


JP  Jogapradipakā.


ŚS  Śiva-Samhitā.

YS  Yogasūtra(s).
1. Introduction

Physical postures (āsana) are the most important and often the only constituent of modern Yoga. Many practitioners believe that the postures derive from an ancient original set of eighty-four āsanas. In this book I trace, for the first time, traditions of eighty-four postures by examining original materials, including line drawings, descriptions in older Indic texts and modern publications which reflect contemporary traditions. I have also taken up a number of broader issues related to the topic of Yoga postures so as to provide the reader with a larger context. At the same time I see this as a welcome opportunity to summarize for a wider public the results of comparatively new academic research on Yoga.

How can one define Yoga? Yoga is often popularly considered to be a single unified system. However, under the term Yoga can be subsumed a diverse body of teachings and a variety of practices and approaches, which were traditionally passed on from teacher to student and then codified in texts. Definitions of Yoga necessarily vary with schools and systems, and no one comprehensive definition of Yoga can be given. Literal translations of the term Yoga include ‘union’ and ‘means,’ among others.

A common characteristic of many traditional Yoga systems is a structured approach, which consists of a set of prescribed practices, often arranged in graded components. The disciple progresses through a sequence of practices with the help of a teacher to a goal, which in most cases is defined as liberation from the cycle of existence (samsāra) and/or union with a deity or divine principle. In most systems a set of moral precepts and rules of conduct are ordained so as to provide a foundation for practice. The final state is often defined as meditative absorption (samādhi). Components of Yoga practice often include dietary restrictions; cultivating a balanced mind and an attitude of indifference to pairs of opposites, which are defined as heat/cold, pleasure/pain, and so forth; and solitary meditation. Measurable signs of progress, which signal the practitioner’s success, are described in the texts. These include physical changes and visions, among other things. Yoga differs from the varied ancient In-
dian practice of austerities which mortify the body, since it emphasizes a balanced and controlled approach that avoids extremes.

In recent years Yoga has become decontextualized, commercialized and transformed into a mass movement in Western culture, where it has been made into a practice to enhance physical fitness and beauty—often labelled as hathayoga.¹ This Western approach to Yoga has in turn influenced the way in which Yoga is now taught and practised in India, where one can witness the same traits that manifest themselves when traditional religious systems are adapted by people who practise them outside of their original contexts. It is evident that the Western and modern Indian concept of Yoga and the traditional Indian Yoga systems are not the same in nature and goal. One might in fact wonder whether the use of the term Yoga is appropriate for the former.

A common element of modern Yoga practice is the performance of postures. Some of the postures are shared by almost all modern schools, although the style of performance, such as the technique and speed, may again vary. The selection, number and sequence of postures practised vary greatly with traditions. A number frequently invoked as authentic by ancient and modern authorities is eighty-four. However, nothing is known about an original set of eighty-four āsanas. Despite the broad popular interest in Yoga and the growing number of publications on the subject, hardly any research has been done on the history of the practices which are often subsumed under the name hathayoga. With this book I hope to make a contribution to the subject by inquiring into traditions of eighty-four classical or basic postures. As a general introduction to the topic, a brief survey of relevant Yoga texts is provided below. Then the terms hathayoga and rājayoga are examined in some detail, since their meaning in the past differs greatly from author to author and is not as clear-cut as their modern usage. This is followed by a discussion of the place and function of āsanas in different Yoga systems. Then the number of āsanas in Yoga systems is examined, and several sets of eighty-four āsanas are presented from both older and modern sources. Most important among the pictorial representations are the coloured drawings according to

¹ A list of definitions of the term Yoga from Sanskrit texts can be found in Daniélou 1949: 6–8; definitions from other texts could easily be added to it.

² For a recent study of ‘Modern (Postural) Yoga,’ see Michelis 2004. The author also provides a detailed discussion of ‘Neo-Haṭhayoga.’ For Yoga in modern India, see also Alter 2004.
I. Introduction

the Jogapradipakā which are preserved in the British Library. They are of high artistic value and unique in that no other comparable illustrated manuscript has come to light so far. Among the sources illustrating sets of eighty-four postures, this manuscript therefore occupies a foremost position.
2. A Brief Survey of Relevant Texts

In this section I will introduce some important texts on Yoga referred to in this book, and their authors and dates as far as these are known. Dating material from South Asia is notoriously difficult. Large text passages were freely borrowed by compilers and inserted into new works. Passages from texts were also incorporated into works of anonymous Sanskrit literature such as the Puṭāṇas. The compilers’ practice of extracting material from diverse sources frequently contributes to inconsistencies of thought and expression within one text. It is often difficult to decide which author borrowed from which and to establish a reliable chronology of texts. The fact that texts were also subjected to repeated redactions accounts for the fact that one text is often extant in several recensions of different length from different time periods—a problem which further complicates the dating of texts.

Several scholars have tried to find indications of early Yoga practice in seals of the Indus Valley civilization, but the evidence from that period is far from conclusive. Others have looked for elements of Yoga practice and early references to Yogins in the hymns of the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda, but not much substantial material can be found. Teachings on Yoga appear first in passages of the earlier Upaniṣads. They are found in the Kaṭha-Upaniṣad (which dates from the last few centuries BCE), the Śvetāśvatara-Upaniṣad (the first two centuries CE?) and the Mokṣadharma section (roughly the early centuries CE) of the Mahābhārata, namely chapters 168–353 of the work’s 12th book, the Śāntiparvan. In these texts, different authorities promote diverse teachings and definitions of Yoga. This diversity reflects the situation in ancient India, where different systems of Yoga co-existed. In the course of time, however, the Yogāsūtra or Yogasūtras (YS), also known as Yogānuśāsanasūtra, has become the ‘classical’ text on Yoga and the basis for a system superseding other systems of Yoga. Although it has received an extraordinary amount of attention from modern scholars, as well as from contemporary Yoga practitioners, one should keep in mind that the system of the YS is but one Yoga system among others. The YS is strongly influenced by Sāmkhya views. It consists of 194/195 aphorisms (sūtra), most likely of different origin and time periods, divided into four sections (pāda). Its compiler is unknown, but
the text began to be ascribed to Patañjali probably around the tenth century CE. Because of its composite nature it is difficult to date the YS as a whole, and no scholarly consensus has been reached in this regard. Efforts to dissect the work into passages which could then be dated separately have not yielded conclusive results, the approaches differing considerably among scholars. The last redaction of the YS is likely to have been completed by the fourth century CE. The Yogasūtrabhāṣya from approximately the fifth/sixth century CE but attributed to the legendary (Veda-)Vyāsa or Bādarāyaṇa is the most influential commentary on the YS. The YS with the Yogasūtrabhāṣya is collectively called Pātañjalayogaśāstra. Modern authors often refer to the description of the Yoga with eight ancillary parts (āṣṭāṅgayoga)\(^1\) found in YS 2.29 as ‘the Yoga’ taught in the YS and as rājayoga. However, the YS incorporates diverse teachings on Yoga, which were propagated by different groups, and of which āṣṭāṅga-yoga is just one part. The word rājayoga, to be discussed in more detail in section 3, does not appear in the text at all.

Material on Yoga is scattered in different text genres, including passages in the Dharmaśāstra and Purānic literature, and in later Upaniṣads dealing specifically with Yoga and known as Yoga-Upaniṣads. The extant texts which are exclusively devoted to a tradition now often called hāthayoga are compilations dating from a later period. Earlier material is included in Śaiva Tantras and in Tantric compendiums, but most of it is not easily accessible and therefore not widely known. The seventh-century work Tirumantiram by the Tamil poet Tirumūlar is an important early treatise on Yoga and a source for Śaiva Siddhānta philosophy. Sections of the Mālinīvijayottaratantra, an important Tantra in the tradition of the Trika school, present Śaiva Yoga teachings. They have recently been studied by Vasudeva (2004). Chapter 25 of Laksmanadeśika’s tenth-/eleventh-century Śāradātīlaka\(^4\) should also be mentioned here. It gives a very concise summary of Yoga teachings in eighty-nine verses, and clearly presupposes a long development, drawing on different Yoga texts and traditions, from which it

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\(^1\) I translate Sanskrit aṅga as ‘ancillary part’ and not—as usual—‘limb,’ thereby modifying the translation of aṅga as ‘ancillary/auxiliary’ used by Vasudeva (see Vasudeva 2004: 367), who follows A. Sanderson.

presents teachings on the energy centres (cakra) in the human body and the kundalini energy, among others.

The Yogaśāstra ascribed to Dattātreya⁵ is written as a dialogue between Sāmkṛti and Dattātreya. It seems to go also by the name Yogatattvaprakāśa and shares many passages with the Yogatattva-Upaniṣad, a later text included in the corpus of the Yoga-Upaniṣads.

Of great importance is the thirteenth-/fourteenth-century⁶ Gorakṣaśataka (GŚ), one of several works ascribed to Gorakṣanātha/Gorakhnāth. This author, along with his teacher Matsyendranātha, is considered the founder of the movement of the Nātha-Yogins and of the system often called haṭhayoga. The GŚ, in spite of the component śataka, which refers to a collection of one hundred stanzas, is extant in several recensions with different verse numbers, ranging up to 200.

The Yogaśikhā-Upaniṣad⁷ belongs to those Yoga-Upaniṣads which are likely to have either been expanded or composed in whole by an Advaitin in South India who borrowed passages from the Nātha texts.⁸ The Upaniṣad shares many common passages with the Yogabija attributed to Gorakṣanātha.⁹

The Śiva-Samhitā (ŚŚ) has been assigned to about the fifteenth century and shows the influence of Vedāntic thought.

The fifteenth-/sixteenth-century Haṭhapradīpikā¹⁰ (‘Small Lamp on Haṭha’; HP), also called Siddhāntamuktāvali¹¹ in the colophons of some manuscripts, is ascribed to Svātmārāma alias Ātmārāma. According to some manuscripts, the author belonged to the tradition of Sahajāṇanda. The commentary Yogaprakāśikā by Bālakṛṣṇa names Rāmanātha as the work’s author. The text is extant in several recensions and preserved in many manuscripts, in which the number of verses varies, as does their

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⁵ In the introduction to his edition of the Haṭhartatnāvali, p. 34, Reddy speculates that the Yogaśāstra may have been written by an authority in the Dattātreya lineage. Bouy 1994: 118 dates the Yogaśāstra to as early as around 1300 CE.
⁶ For a detailed discussion of the problem of the date and for different legends connected with Gorakṣanātha’s life, see Nowotny 1976: 19ff. and Bouy 1994: 15–28.
⁷ Bouy 1994: 31 dates this Upaniṣad to between 800 and 1300 CE.
⁸ For more information, see Bouy 1994: 6.
⁹ For a table showing common passages in both texts, see Bouy 1994: 104.
¹⁰ In a note on their translation of HP2 1.1, Gharote/Devnath state that only the title Haṭhapradīpikā is attested in the manuscripts, not the widely-popularized name Haṭhayogapradīpikā. I therefore refer to the text as Haṭhapradīpikā.
distribution in the chapters of the work. A new edition of the text in ten chapters (HP2) was recently published, but appears to contain material which was interpolated into the text later. Of the extant commentaries on the text only three have so far been published, all of which belong to the nineteenth century CE and thus are several centuries later than the original text. The three published commentaries are the Haṭhapradīpikāvyākhyā Jyotsnā by Brahmananda, who died in 1842 CE and wrote the commentary before 1830 CE, the Haṭhapradīpikāvyākhyā Yogapraṅaśikā by Bālakṛṣṇa from the first half of the nineteenth century CE and the Haṭhapradīpikāvṛtti by Bhojjatmaja, written in 1852 CE in Marāṭhi.

The Hatharatnāvali (HR) by Śrīnivāsa from Āndhra, South India, may tentatively be dated to between 1625 and 1695 CE. The text is strongly influenced by the Haṭhapradīpikā, which it frequently quotes. The HR was commented on by Ambaragira Yogin of unknown date and provenance.

The Gheraṇḍa-Samhitā (GS) was written by an author influenced by Vaiṣṇavism and Vedāntic thought. It is a compilation written in the form of a dialogue between Gheraṇḍa and his disciple Candaṃkāpāli. The text has been assigned to the seventeenth/eighteenth century CE, but this date is far from certain.

The Jogapradīpakā (JP) was written by Jayatarāma, also known as Jaiyatarāma, Jayyatarāma, Jaitrāma or Jayatirāma in 1737. The text was recently edited on the basis of two incomplete manuscripts (from Pune and Vērāṇasī). Its language can be characterized as a mixed Hindi, which contains Braj Bhāṣā, Khari Boli and semi-

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12 M.L. Gharote, however, considers this version to be the original text of the HP (Gharote 1991: 248). For a comparison of the versions extant in different manuscripts of the HP, see Gharote 1991. The first two chapters on āsanas and prāṇāyāma (with the Jyotsnā commentary) are currently being re-edited and translated by U. Bräutigam as part of a doctoral dissertation to be submitted to the University of Bonn, Germany.

13 For these dates, see Gharote 1991b.

14 According to the colophon of a manuscript (see HR1, introduction, p. 14 and p. 17, note 5, and HR2, p. 41, note 2), Śrīnivāsa belonged to the Tīrathhukta region, identified with Āndhra. See Reddy’s discussion of this point in the introduction to HR1, pp. 14–15.

15 See Reddy’s discussion on the author’s date in the introduction to his edition of the text (HR1, p. 10) and the introduction to the edition by Gharote/Devnath/Jha (HR2, p. xiv).

16 For this time period, see the introduction to the edition of the GS, p. xxi.

17 For more information on this text, see section 3.3.2. The text is also called Jogapradīpyakā, Jogapradīpakā and Jogapradīpikā in some manuscripts.
2. A Brief Survey of Relevant Texts

Sanskrit forms.\textsuperscript{19} Jayatarāma was a resident of Vṛndāvan and a disciple of Payahari-bābā, also called Kṛṣṇadāsa, who occupied the seat of Galtā (Jaipur). The JP is clearly influenced by Svātmārāma’s Ṣaṭhapradīpikā and acknowledges its debt to it.\textsuperscript{20}

This brief survey of selected texts referred to in this book is by no means exhaustive but merely intended to provide the reader with some background for the following discussions. There exists a large body of literature on Yoga, both published and unpublished, and new texts continue to be edited from manuscripts.

\textsuperscript{18} The correct date is \textit{samvat} 1794, that is, 1737 CE. The introduction to the edition of the text, p. 1, converts \textit{samvat} 1794 into 1718 CE, an error which Gharote corrected (email communication, May 8, 2002). Gode 1940: 312 assigns the text to the year 1729 CE.

\textsuperscript{19} I am indebted to Dr. Charles Pain for this linguistic analysis.

\textsuperscript{20} For such an acknowledgement, see, for example, the reference in verse 956 of the JP.
3. On the Terms hathayoga and rājayoga

It is now common in the secondary literature to refer to a tradition of Yoga which emphasizes physical practices such as postures and restraint of the breath as hathayoga. However, this term appears comparatively late in Sanskrit texts (although some of the practices subsumed under this term are of considerable age), and so does the distinction between hathayoga and rājayoga ('royal Yoga') in the way it is often made by modern authors. More research on the use of the terms hathayoga and rājayoga in texts of different time periods would be necessary to determine how they were understood by earlier authors. In a joint article, Kokaje/Gharote (1981) have made a beginning in this direction. In this section I will outline some of the shades of meaning of the terms in selected Sanskrit texts to demonstrate their different uses.

The word hatha can mean 'force' in Sanskrit, and when combined with the word Yoga, hathayoga can be rendered as 'the applying of force' in a very general sense. In a technical sense, the term can be translated as 'the Yoga applying force.' There are several interpretations of the term hathayoga that clearly differ from the understanding of many modern authors, who refer to the practice of postures as hathayoga and to practices described in the YS, especially the Yoga with eight ancillary parts (aṣṭāṅgayoga) in YS 2.29, as rājayoga.

It seems that at the time of Gorakṣanātha the word hatha was understood as referring mainly to prānāyāma practice. The terms hathayoga and rājayoga appear as parts of a fourfold Yoga in a number of later texts. According to texts such as Yogarāja-Upaniṣad 1cd-2ab, Yogatattva-Upaniṣad 19ff., Śīva-Saṃhitā 5.9, Yogaśikhā-Upaniṣad 1.129, Śāṅgadharapaddhati, section 156, verse 1 (no. 4347) and Āgama-rahasya, pūrvārda 27.4563, this fourfold Yoga consists of mantrayoga, layayoga, hathayoga and rājayoga. The Yogaśikhā-Upaniṣad and the Yogabija state that these

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21 This interpretation of the term is supported by practices which aim at raising the kundalini energy in the human body, making the prāna enter the suṣumnā channel and attempting to keep death away from the practitioner. The latter idea as a goal of Yoga is clearly expressed in HP 1.9cd, HP1 2.3cd (HP2 4.6cd) and HP1 2.40d (HP2 4.28d).
22 For details on this point, see Kokaje/Gharote 1981: 198, 201.
23 The passage is identical with Yogabija 143cd–144.
Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga: A Survey of Traditions (with Illustrations)

Four divisions form one comprehensive Yoga (mahāyoga). The four parts of this Yoga are interpreted differently in these texts. From Yogabija, verses 145–152 it appears that hathayoga is associated with prāṇāyāma, and rājyoga with samādhi. Yogabija, verses 148cd–149ab, Yogaśikha-Upaniṣad 1.133, Hatharatanāvali (HR2) 1.22 and several other texts divide the word haṭha into the components ha and tha, signifying the sun (ha) and moon (tha), and thereby support the link to prāṇāyāma practice. Yoga-mārgaprakāśikā 137 takes the syllable ha to designate Śaṅkara/Siva and tha to mean Śakti.

The fourfold mahāyoga is also described in Haṭharatanāvali 1.7cd–23. In that text rājyoga is understood as a mental state, and hathayoga as a practice leading to that state. The system of hathayoga is defined as including ten mudrās, eight kriyās, eight kumbhakas and eighty-four āsanas (HR2 1.17). Both hathayoga and rājyoga are said to be dependent on one another (HR2, 1.18).

Aparokṣānubhūti (verses 143–144), a work attributed to Śaṅkara, may be among the earlier texts to use the two terms rājyoga and hathayoga. Verses 102–103 describe a Yoga with fifteen ancillary parts (āṅga), which are enumerated in section 4.2 below. These ancillary parts are explained one after the other in subsequent sections of the text and include āsana, mūlabandha and prāṇasamāyamana among others, which are interpreted in specific ways in keeping with Vedāntic thought. Verses 143–144 of the text then call the Yoga with fifteen ancillary parts rājyoga and recommend it to a practitioner whose mind is purified. For the less advanced practitioner this system of rājyoga is recommended in combination with hathayoga, a term that remains

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24 See, for example, Yogatattva-Upaniṣad, 21ff. and the passage Yogaśikha-Upaniṣad 1.130–136ab; the latter passage is identical with Yogabija, 145–152.

25 This interpretation of the two syllables of the word haṭha echoes the established interpretation of the two syllables ham and saḥ, which constitute the ‘non-recitation’ (ajapa) gāyatri or haṃsaḥ mantra, in which ham (or sometimes ha) is said to be the sound of exhalation, and saḥ (or sa), the sound of inhalation. (For an attempt to explain how the syllables ha and tha [the latter syllable replacing sa] came to signify the sun and moon, see Dave/Bhole 1987.) The syllables ha and sa, too, are said to represent the sun and the moon or Śiva and Śakti respectively.

27 We do not have exact information on the date of composition or compilation of the Aparokṣānubhūti. Bouy 1994: 62 dates the text to between the eighth and thirteenth centuries. A large section of the Aparokṣānubhūti, including the description of the Yoga with fifteen ancillary parts (but not the verses distinguishing between rājyoga and hathayoga), also forms part of the Tejobindu-Upaniṣad.
3. The Terms ḫathayoga and rājayoga

unexplained in the text.

Verses 143–144 of the Aparokṣānubbhūti have been commented on by fourteenth-century Vidyārānya-Mādhava in his Dipikā. It is significant that this commentator explains the term ḫathayoga as ‘the well-known Yoga with eight ancillary parts described by Patañjali,’ and understands rājayoga as the Vedāntic Yoga with fifteen ancillary parts. In his Jīvanmuktiviveka Vidyārānya-Mādhava does not use the term rājayoga at all. The few occurrences of the word ḫathayoga support an interpretation in a more general sense of a ‘forceful method’ (employed by Yogins) as contrasted with a ‘gentle method’ (mṛduyoga).²⁸

Like Vidyārānya-Mādhava, the anonymous author of the preface to a nineteenth-century Gujarati work Āgamapракāśa²⁹ regards ḫathayoga as Patañjali’s Yoga system. However, he deviates from Vidyārānya-Mādhava when he explains rājayoga (spelt ‘rājyayoga’) as the Yoga of the Kaulas.

The sixteenth-century author Vījñānabhikṣu, finally, presents the more familiar distinction between rājayoga and ḫathayoga. For this author, rājayoga is concerned with mental processes, and ḫathayoga with posture (āśana), restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma) and the purification of the channels (nādi).³⁰

There is a reference to two traditions of ḫatha in the fourteenth-century compilation Śāṅgadharapaddhati by Śāṅgadhara, sections 157–158. They are specified as

1) the tradition of Gorakṣa and his followers and
2) the tradition of Mṛkanḍaputra/Mārkanḍeya and his followers.

A similar passage appears in the compilation Āgamarahasya, pūrvārdha 27.467ff., but in that text the first tradition of Yoga is associated with Gorakṣanātha’s teacher Matsyendranātha. According to tradition, Matsyendranātha was the first teacher of ḫathayoga after Ādinātha (Śiva). While Gorakṣanātha and/or Matsyendranātha are thus considered to be the founders of ḫathayoga and are included in the group of the Nine Nāthas and in Siddha lineages, the identity of Mārkanḍeya remains unclear.

²⁹ For this work and a translation of its preface into English, see Rinehard/Stewart 2000: 276.
³⁰ For this distinction, see Vījñānabhikṣu’s Yogasārasamgraha, p. 39, 5–6 (Sanskrit text) and p. 55 (translation) and Vījñānabhikṣu’s Sāṃkhyaśāra, uttarabhāga, 6.3.
Section 156, verse 18 (no. 4364) of the Śāṅgadharapaddhati\textsuperscript{31} speaks of the rājayoga as practised by Dattātreya and his followers. The name of Dattātreya as a teacher of Yoga is associated with a section in the Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa, which also speaks about posture and the restraint of the breath,\textsuperscript{32} and with a text titled Yogaśāstra (see section 2 of this book), among others.

The Gheraṇḍa-Samhitā does not use the term hathayoga at all. The text refers to its Yoga, which consists of āsanas, prāṇāyāma, etc., as ghata(stha)yoga, the ‘Yoga (pertaining to) the body (ghata).’ \textsuperscript{33} It is tempting to suggest a connection between the words hatha and ghata.\textsuperscript{34} However, the etymology of the term hatha has not been explained convincingly,\textsuperscript{35} and the word ghata cannot easily be derived from it.\textsuperscript{36}

Yogaśikhā-Upaniṣad 1.136cd=138 offers a different explanation of the word rājayoga by interpreting the term as the union of menstrual blood (rajas) and semen (retas). Similarly, Yogabija (verse 89) gives the union of rajas and retas as one of the meanings of the term Yoga. Although the eighteenth-century commentator on the Upaniṣad named Upaniṣadbrahmayogin glosses the union of rajas and retas in more general terms as the union of Śakti and Śiva, it is clear that the Upaniṣad’s explanation of the word rājayoga as well as the Yogabija’s explanation of Yoga take Tantric practices into account in which these two substances were mingled and used in ritual. The anonymous author of the preface to the above-mentioned Āgama-prakāśa must also have had such practices in mind when he explained rājayoga as the Yoga of the Kaulas. Based on the Yogaśikhā-Upaniṣad’s explanation, D.G. White suggests a new interpretation of the term rājayoga as the ‘consumption of male and female sexual emissions.’\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{31} This section of the text is also found in Āgamarahasya, pūrvaṁdhā 27.4669.
\textsuperscript{32} For this section of the text, see Pargiter’s translation of the Purāṇa, pp. 193–207.
\textsuperscript{33} For the term ghata(stha)yoga, see GS 1.2 and the colophons to several chapters of the text.
\textsuperscript{34} In his notes on GS 1.1, P. Thomi (Gheraṇḍasamhitā: Sanskrit-deutsch. Würzburg: Institut für Indologie, 1993) suggested just such a derivation of the word hatha from ghata (ghata > hata > hatha).
\textsuperscript{35} According to Mayrhofer, the etymology of neither hatha nor the word ghata has been explained convincingly (Mayrhofer 1986–2001, volume 3: 530–531, s.v. hatha; Mayrhofer 1986–2001, volume 3: 167, s.v. ghata).
\textsuperscript{36} H.H. Hock (email communication, December 5, 2002) explains that it would be difficult to combine the two forms hatha and ghata on linguistic grounds.
\textsuperscript{37} See White 2003: 81–82 and 295, note 86 for this interpretation. The reference from the Amanaskayoga, which he cites (White 2003: 81 and 295, note 86) to strengthen his argument,
3. The Terms hathayoga and rājyoga

In the West, the term rājyoga has been popularized by Swami Vivekananda (1863–1902) through his influential treatise “Rājyoga,” written in 1896. In that work he uses the term to refer to Patañjali’s Yoga with eight ancillary parts. However, the term rājyoga does not appear in the YS at all, and references to rājyoga as a system of Yoga are few in the literature. In many texts rājyoga does not refer to a system of Yoga but to a mental state and is used synonymously with the word samādhi. The fact that texts such as Haṭhapradīpikā 1.1 explain hathayoga as the stairway to rājyoga (that is, to samādhi) seems to have contributed to the confusion.

In the course of time many later authorities have attempted to combine the Yoga with eight ancillary parts (aṣṭāṅgayoga) taught in YS 2.29 with techniques of the so-called hathayoga. Thus Yogatattva-Upaniṣad 24–27 combines the eight ancillary parts of YS 2.29 with twelve other practices including ‘seals’ (mudrā) and ‘energy locks’ (bandha), and defines this Yoga as hathayoga. However, the approach to Yoga in the YS, which is influenced by Śaṅkhyā thought and emphasizes mental processes, and the approach to Yoga taken by the Nāthas as laid down in later hathayoga texts clearly differ. In the YS there is no mention of bandhas, mudrās, cakras or kuṇḍalini, practices and concepts which take on great importance in the Yoga of the Nāthas. The teachings collected in the YS originated in a different milieu and breathe a different spirit than those advocated by proponents of the Nātha tradition, which employ physical and physiological means. Although the goal of hathayoga is also defined as

does not support his interpretation. Amanaskayoga 2.33–37 criticizes different practices of ascetics, including vajroli, and makes it clear that only the practitioner of rājyoga attains success. Amanaskayoga 2.3–6ab describes this rājyoga, which is said to be a combination of external and internal mudrās (the śāmbhavi mudrā is extolled in 3.20 and passim) and superior to all Yogas. Two explanation of the meaning of rājyoga are given. The first (2.4) derives rājyoga from the word rājatva (‘sovereignty’), and the second from the verbal root rāj (‘to shine’). This rājyoga is held to be the Amanaskayoga advocated by the text.


39 HP1 4.3–4 asserts that the following terms are synonyms: rājyoga, samādhi, unmani and manonmani; further, immortality (amaratva), merging (laya), truth (tattva), empty and not empty (śūnyaśāntya), the supreme state (paramapada), transcending the mind (amanska), non-duality (advaita), without support (nirālambā), unstained (nirājiñana), liberation while alive (jīvanmukti), the natural (sahajā) state and the fourth (turyā) (state). The corresponding stanzas HP2 8.50–51 offer a number of variant readings. GS 7.17 also asserts that rājyoga, samādhi, unmani and the natural state (sahajāvasthā) are synonyms.
liberation, the Nāthas’ understanding of what liberation means, namely escape from death and immortality, differs. The occurrences of the terms rājayoga and hathayoga to distinguish these two different approaches to Yoga are limited in texts and not based on a traditional use of the terms.
4. The Place and Function of Āsanas in Yoga Systems

4.1 The Term Āsana

The word āśana can be translated as 1) sitting, abiding, 2) a seat or throne, 3) a sitting position or posture, among other possible meanings. In Yoga, āśana is a technical term for posture, for which synonyms such as pītha or niśadana are also used.⁴⁰ Some texts offer specialized philosophic interpretations of the term, such as the aforementioned Vedānta text Aparokṣānubhūti (verse 112), which defines āśana as ‘that in which continuous reflection on brahman is easily possible.’ Another unidentified text defines āśana as ‘the establishment in the original state.’⁴¹ Āsana is also a term for positions in archery and wrestling.⁴²

4.2 Āsana as an Ancillary Part (aṅga) of Yoga Systems

Posture is counted as an ancillary part (aṅga) of many Yoga systems, and is defined and described as such in many texts. However, the place of āsanas within the systems varies, and so does the importance attached to them. In some Yoga systems, such as the Śaiva systems of Yoga with their six ancillary parts (Vasudeva 2004: 397–398), āśana is not listed separately as an ancillary part, but nevertheless some seated postures suitable for meditation are described. In this section I will briefly survey the place of āsanas in different Yoga systems, thereby taking note of divisions according to the number of the ancillary parts (aṅga). I will merely refer to selected texts and caution the reader that although the same or similar terms are used in them, the specific definitions of the ancillary parts often vary between systems, as do the practices subsumed under these terms. Such variations in the interpretation of the terms will not

⁴⁰ The word pītha is used in HP1 1.39 and HP2 2.25; for niśadana, see the commentary attributed to Vyāsa on YS 2.46. Another, but less common, synonym is prthvī, which literally means ‘the earth.’ In his commentary Jyotsnā on HP 3.126 (HP2 7.10) Brahmānanda glosses the word prthvī as āśana.

⁴¹ This definition is quoted by Gharote 1999: 16, 23 from an unidentified text.

⁴² For this use of the term āśana, see Sjoman 1999: 45.
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be apparent from a mere listing of the ancillary parts of different Yoga systems.

Yoga systems with eight or six ancillary parts are the ones most commonly found in texts. In many systems with eight ancillary parts (āstāṅga), āsana is the third ancillary part, following the great rules (yama) and minor rules (niyama). The standard list in YS 2.29 consists of the 1) great rules (yama), 2) minor rules (niyama), 3) posture (āsana), 4) restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma), 5) withdrawal of sense organs (from sense objects) (pratyāhāra), 6) fixation (of the mind on a certain object) (dhāraṇā), 7) meditation (dhyāna) and 8) absorption (samādhi).

Yoga systems with six ancillary parts usually do not include the great and minor rules. However, one should not conclude that these systems did not emphasize or value the rules. In Tantric texts, the rules are often articulated in other sections of the same work. The texts propagating a Yoga with six ancillary parts have broadly been divided into two groups.Only one of the two groups of texts includes āsana. Thus, for example, āsana is entirely lacking in a later and most likely interpolated passage, Maitrāyaṇiya-Upaniṣad 6.18, which lists the six ancillary parts as: 1) restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma), 2) withdrawal of sense organs (pratyāhāra), 3) meditation (dhyāna), 4) fixation (dhāraṇā), 5) discernment (tarka) between what should be cultivated and what should be rejected and 6) absorption (samādhi). But āsana is included, for example, in the second verse of the Yogacūḍāmaṇi-Upaniṣad, where we find: 1) posture (āsana), 2) restraint of the breath (prāṇasamrodha), 3) withdrawal of

43 A Yoga with six ancillary parts is found in a number of sources, including a few Dharmasūtra texts, Purāṇas and some of the Yoga-Upaniṣads. In texts of the Āgamic/Tantric tradition (Brunner 1994: 439–440 and Rastogi 1992: 247ff.) this Yoga is more common than the Yoga with eight ancillary parts. A considerable amount of research has been done on sadāṅgayoga in Buddhist and Hindu texts; see, for example, Grönbold 1969: 134–147 and 1996. Recently Vasudeva 2004 studied the sadāṅgayoga in the Mañjūśīlayottaratantra of the Trika. For a useful survey of sadāṅgayoga in different varieties of Śaiva Yoga, see Vasudeva 2004: 367–436. A survey of recent scholarship on the topic is found in Sferra 2000: 11–37.

44 Grönbold 1983 divides the texts describing sadāṅgayoga into two groups: 1) those which include āsana and 2) those which include tarka, that is, discernment between what should be cultivated and what should be rejected. The second group is again subdivided into two groups. In Grönbold’s opinion, the first group represents a spurious sadāṅgayoga, since it simply omits the first two ancillary parts (that is, the great and minor rules) of the āstāṅgayoga (Grönbold 1983: 184). However, as Vasudeva 2004: 370 observes, the differences between individual Yoga systems may be greater than they may appear to be at first sight despite the similarities of terms. One major difference is that unlike Patañjali’s Yoga, the Śaiva systems of Yoga are strictly theistic.
sense organs (pratyāhāra), 4) fixation (dharanā), 5) meditation (dhyāna) and 6) absorption (samādhi).  

A Yoga with four ancillary parts which includes posture appears in several texts. A verse from the unedited work Videhamukti-kathana, also found in Yogarāja-Upaniṣad, verse 2 and quoted in Śāṅgadharapaddhati, section 156, verse 2 (no. 4348), enumerates the four as 1) posture (āsana), 2) restraint of the breath (prāṇasamrrodha), 3) meditation (dhyāna) and absorption (samādhi). HP 1.56 (see HP 2 3.3) teaches a different Yoga with four ancillary parts, consisting of 1) posture (āsana), 2) retention of breath (kumbhaka = prāṇāyāma), 3) techniques called ‘seal’ (mudrā) and 4) concentration on the inner sound (nādānusandhāna) leading to samādhi. But another passage in one recension of this text (HP 2 1.35; see GS 4) also refers to a Yoga with six ancillary parts.

Āsana is lacking in the five-fold Yoga explained in Vāyu-Purāṇa 10.76 and ascribed to Maheśvara/Śiva. This Yoga consists of 1) restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma), 2) meditation (dhyāna), 3) withdrawal of sense organs (pratyāhāra), 4) fixation (dharanā) and 5) recollection (smarana).

Gheraṇḍa-Saṃhitā 1.10–11 teaches a Yoga with seven ancillary parts, in which āsana functions as the second ancillary part. The seven parts are 1) the six purification practices (satkarman), 2) posture (āsana), 3) techniques called ‘seal’ (mudrā), 4) withdrawal of sense organs (pratyāhāra), 5) restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma), 6) meditation (dhyāna) and 7) absorption (samādhi).

A section (verses 102ff.) in the aforementioned Aparokṣānubhūti, which is also found in the Tejobindu-Upaniṣad (1.15ff.), teaches a Yoga with fifteen ancillary parts (pañcadasāṅga), in which āsana occupies the seventh position. The fifteen ancillary parts are 1) great rules (yama), 2) minor rules (niyama), 3) renunciation (tyāga), 4) silence (mauna), 5) location (deśa), 6) time (kāla), 7) posture (āsana), 8) root lock

45 The Maitrīya-Upaniṣad, which J.A.B. van Buitenen studied in detail, has undergone several redactions. The passage 6.18 was certainly not part of the first redaction of the text.
46 The same verse appears in a number of other texts, including Dhyānabindu-Upaniṣad 41 and the fourteenth-century compilation Śāṅgadharapaddhati by Śāṅgadharā, section 157, verse 3 (no. 4374) (see Grönbold 1983: 184). It also appears with variants in GS 4 and other Yoga texts of the Gorakṣa school.
47 For this work, see Grönbold 1969: 144–145 and 1983: 182.
48 The text identifies this Yoga as Pāṣupatayoga.
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(mūlabandha), 9) equilibrium of the body (dehasāmya), 10) fixed vision (drksthitī), 11) restraint of the breath (prānasamyojana), 12) withdrawal of senses (pratyāhāra), 13) fixation (dhāranā), 14) meditation on the self (ātmadhīyāna) and 15) absorption (samādhi). At first sight the fifteen ancillary parts appear to be an expanded version of the Yoga system with eight ancillary parts as found in the YS, but a closer examination of the text shows that each term is interpreted according to non-dualist Vedāntic thought and is given an entirely new meaning, with emphasis on the practitioner’s mental condition. Posture (āsana) is defined as ‘that in which continuous reflection on brahman is easily possible’ (verse 112) and is distinguished from a posture which causes discomfort. The next verse then singles out Siddhāsana, the name of a traditional Yogic posture, and offers a Vedāntic reinterpretation of it.

4.3 The Function of Āsanas in Yoga Systems

YS 2.46 recommends any seated posture or form of sitting (āsana) which is firm and comfortable for the practice of the restraint of the breath (prānāyāma) and the other ancillary parts. The fifth-/sixth-century commentary on the YS attributed to Vyāsa specifies eleven āsanas and indicates by an ‘etc.’ that the author knew additional postures. These postures are meditative āsanas, which enable the practitioner to sit with his chest, neck and head held erect. Similarly, many other Yoga texts recommend a small number of meditative postures, which the practitioner can hold comfortably for a prolonged period of time. In his commentary (Bhāsyā) on Brahmāsūtras 4.1.7(-10), the philosopher Śaṅkara, who flourished between 650 and 800 CE, elaborates on the Śūtra’s statement that meditation should be done in a seated position. He makes a case for seated postures such as the lotus posture, explaining that meditation, which is defined as a flow of identical thoughts, cannot be practised while walking or running because movement distracts the mind. Even when standing the mind is occupied with holding the body and unable to examine subtle matters. When lying down one may suddenly fall asleep. Other texts expand the number of postures by adding āsanas for strength, health and suppleness of body. Thus HP1 1.17 states that āsanas bring about firmness, health and lightness of body. All traditional systems of Yoga, however,

49 For this observation, see also Grönbold 1983: 183.
assign a preparatory and subordinate place to āsanas in the pursuit of liberation from the cycle of rebirth. Neither the YS nor the Upaniṣads nor the epic texts on Yoga emphasize āsanas. Even most texts of the Nātha or ḫaṭha traditions teach a very limited number of āsanas, and these are often combined with ‘energy locks’ (bandha), that is, muscular contractions and other practices, such as prānāyāma. This view of the subordinate position of āsanas clearly differs from that of most modern Yoga schools.

HP1 1.18 (HP2 2.4) divides āsanas according to two traditions:

1) āsanas in the tradition of sages (muni) such as Vasiśṭha and
2) āsanas as taught by Yogins such as Matsyendra(nātha).

This division may be suggestive of a tradition of meditative postures and another tradition of postures taught by physical culturists, such as the Nāthas. The identity of Vasiśṭha remains unclear. Vasiśṭha is a name appearing in many lineages of teachers or sages. His name is associated with the Yogakāṇḍa of the Vasiśṭha-Samhitā, which is sometimes called Yogayājñavalkya[saṁhitā] and perhaps dates from about 1250 CE. Matsyendranātha is traditionally considered the founder of hathayoga and would naturally be associated with āsanas. He features prominently in the group of the Nine Nāthas and in some Siddha lineages.

We know little about the development of āsana traditions over time. While the texts of the Nātha/haṭha tradition teach relatively few postures, the number of postures gradually expanded within circles of practitioners who wanted to derive physical benefits from them. Thus the postures were isolated from the general framework of Yoga and combined with physical exercises. In modern India, āsanas have also been incorporated into athletic routines, including those of wrestlers (malla). The practice of performing āsanas on the wrestler’s post (mallakhāmba) and on a rope (raju) continues in Mahārāṣṭra. Here the function of āsanas is to make the body supple and strong. Health and physical development were also the goal of modern proponents of Yoga such as Swami Kuvalayananda (1883–1966) from Kaivalyadhama near Pune in Mahārāṣṭra, who was instrumental in introducing āsanas into the curricula of Indian

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50 Yogic āsanas only figure among other types of exercises and movements performed on the wrestler’s post. For a description of āsanas performed on the wrestler’s post, see Mujumdar 1950: 359–363. According to Ghadobe 1989: 42, āsanas on a rope are described in the text Kapālakaraṇṭaka, also known as Haṭhābhyaśa-paddhati. In the notes to his edition of the HR
schools. Health benefits are likewise the goal of most modern Yoga schools in India and abroad, which teach many postures and few or no breathing techniques, and exclude the practices considered most important in hathayoga, which aim at raising the kundalini. A relatively new development in India and abroad is the performance of āsanas in Yoga contests as part of competitive sport. This is referred to as Yoga Sports and includes such subdisciplines as Athletic Yoga, Olympic Yoga Sport and Artistic Yoga Sport.

The āsana practice of the many modern Yoga schools in India and the West is not directly based on or otherwise connected with any known textual tradition. Even so, modern Yoga schools regularly invoke the authority of the YS despite the fact that there is little in their curricula that bears resemblance to the teachings in that text. One reason for this is that the YS is the best-known text on Yoga in the West and believed to be of great antiquity. It is accessible in a number of translations. Claiming the authority of such a text adds to the prestige of one’s school and the authenticity of its teachings. Some exponents of modern Yoga have also attempted to draw a more specific connection between their āsana practice and the ancillary parts of Patañjali’s Yoga as taught in YS 2.29. To defend themselves against criticism from traditionalists, who accuse modern Yoga teachers of being unfaithful to traditional Yoga by promoting postures instead of cultivating spiritual practices, several contemporary teachers have begun to claim that all ancillary parts of Patañjali’s eightfold Yoga are inherent in their āsana practice. They assert that the ancillary parts either unfold naturally after or are even experienced during the practice of the postures. These teachers include proponents of the Aṣṭāṅgayoga of Pattabhi Jois,\(^1\) of Iyengar Yoga\(^2\)

\(^{1}\) See A. Grover Pace’s article “Ashtanga Yoga in the Tradition of Sri K. Pattabhi Jois” on the official website of the Aṣṭāṅgayoga Research Institute in Mysore (retrieved December 1, 2002 from http://www.ashtanga.com/html/AYarticle.html). Āsanas are advocated as the foundation for the restraint of the breath (prāṇāyāma) and as the key to the development of the great and minor rules (yama/niyama). When these four ancillary parts have been developed, the others “will spontaneously evolve over time.”

\(^{2}\) See K. Baier’s article “Iyengar and The Yoga Tradition” (retrieved December 1, 2002 from http://www.iyengar-yoga.com/articles/yogatradition/) on the official website of the Iyengar Yoga Institute in Puṇe. Baier suggests that B.K.S. Iyengar affirms the simultaneous presence of all the ancillary parts of Yoga in the āsana practice and not a gradual development of these
4. The Place and Function of Āsanas in Yoga Systems

and B.K.S. Iyengar himself, all of whom offer slightly different but similar views on the issue. In the following statement Yogi Amrit Desai (b. 1932), founder of Kripalu Yoga, claims experiences which indicate the presence of all ancillary parts of the eightfold Yoga in the performance of āsanas:

In my posture flow experiences I was spontaneously and naturally entering into all the stages of Ashtang yoga simultaneously: āsanas (postures), pranayama (specific breathing patterns), pratyahara (internalization of the outgoing attention), dharana (concentration), dhyana (deep meditation), and ultimately samadhi (complete union with universal consciousness ...). These stages are usually practiced in a linear, willful fashion, but in my case they unfolded one from the other in a natural, organic fashion, with each succeeding stage adding itself to the others, until all were experienced simultaneously in a peak yogic experience of self-transcendence. In this final stage of samadhi, movement sometimes continues, or the body may subside into complete stillness.

Be this as it may, a study of the classical texts shows that modern Yoga teachers’ interpretation of Yoga as the exclusive practice of different postures is not supported by the authority of the ancient texts on Yoga, nor is it in line with the view of āsanas as a preliminary foundation of practice in traditional Yoga texts.

We do not have access to source materials that would enable us to trace the history of modern developments in āsana practice. It is possible that some important texts on Yoga that may provide some clues about historical developments have not yet come to light or have been lost. In any case, one needs to recall that Yoga practices were traditionally carried out individually under the supervision and guidance of a teacher. These teachers were bearers of oral traditions which are difficult to trace. The

ancillary parts on the basis of the postures. This view apparently reflects a position which Iyengar has adopted more recently.

See the following statement in Iyengar 1989: 50: “All the eight limbs of yoga have their place within the practice of āsana.” Iyengar 1989: 50ff. proceeds to interpret the great and minor rules (yama/niyama) as principles to be observed in the practice of āsanas.

Some teachers of Kaivalyadhamma (Bhole/Jha-Sahay 1979) also argue for a greater appreciation of āsanas as a means of attaining meditative states. They cite YS 2.47 in support of their view, a śūtra which refers to āsanas as a preparation to meditating on the infinite (anantasamāpatti). However, they do not go to the extreme of asserting that all eight ancillary parts of Yoga can be experienced by just practising āsanas.

The quotation is taken from Desai 1985: 1-4. According to Desai 1985: 1-30, five ancillary parts of Patañjali’s Yoga (āsana, prāṇāyāma, pratyāhāra, dīrghāni and dhyāna) are practised in Kripalu Yoga. The great and minor rules (yama/niyama) are not considered part of formal practice but rather to be the foundation. The last ancillary part, absorption (samādhi), emerges naturally and can therefore not be included in formal practice either.
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personal accounts of the American Theos Bernard (1908–1947), who underwent a traditional course of Yoga near Ranchi in North India in the 1930s, show that at that time Yoga practices similar to those recorded in texts such as the Haṭhapradipikā were still observed and orally transmitted.

Sjoman’s research on the origins of modern āsana traditions identified a section describing a wide range of postures in one extant version of the Śrītatvanidhi as an important link between the ancient and modern traditions. In his study Sjoman is mainly concerned with the Yoga tradition of the Mysore Palace, from which T. Krishnamacharya (Krishnamacariar) (1888–1989) and his two students B.K.S. Iyengar (b. 1918) and K. Pattabhi Jois (b. 1915) emerged, both of whom developed their own distinct styles of practice. In identifying factors that contributed to the development of the Mysore Yoga tradition, Sjoman 1999: 44 stresses the influence of the exercise arenas (vyāyāmaśāla) run by ascetic orders and wrestlers. He concludes that the Yoga system of the Mysore Palace as known to Krishnamacharya was a syncretistic system drawing heavily on a gymnastic text, the Vyāyāmadipikā, and that it incorporated influences from the wrestlers’ tradition, indigenous exercises and even Western gymnastics. Other Yoga traditions have not been examined in such detail, leaving much scope for future research.

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56 For more information, see the discussion in Sjoman 1999: 55–60.
5. Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga

5.1 The Number of Āsanas in Yoga Systems

The number of āsanas mentioned in Yoga texts varies greatly. Tirmūlar's Tirumantiram, section 3, for example, lists the following eight postures from an alleged 180 postures: Bhadrāsana, Gomukhāsana, Padmāsana, Simhāsana, Sthirāsana, Virāsana, Sukhāsana and Svastikāsana. Some postures referred to in Śaiva Tantras are listed in Vasudeva 2004: 397–401. Gorakṣaśatakā 5ab states that there are as many āsanas as species of living beings. Several texts claim that eighty-four āsanas were taught by Śiva from a total of eighty-four laksas, that is, eighty-four times one hundred thousand (8,400,000) āsanas. The Gorakṣaśatakā may be the oldest of these sources. Similar statements are found in later hathayoga texts, such as HP1 1.33 (HP2 2.3), ŚS 3.84 and GS 2.1-2. However, the texts then proceed to describe a much smaller number of āsanas as important, which are said to have been selected from the eighty-four. The number and names of the āsanas chosen differ in the texts. From the legendary eighty-four āsanas, GS 7 selects only two āsanas as important: Siddhāsana and the lotus posture (Kamalāsana). HP1 1.34 and ŚS 3.84 name only four postures. In the case of the Haṭhapradipikā, these are Siddhāsana, the lotus posture (Padmāsana), Simhāsana and Bhadrāsana, among which Siddhāsana is considered the best. The Śiva-Saṃhitā specifies the four postures as Siddhāsana, Padmāsana, Ugrāsana (also called Paś-cimottāna) and Svastikāsana. Gheranda-Saṃhitā 2.2 teaches as many as thirty-two postures. The Yogaśāstra of Dattātreya, verses 66–67, also refers to 8,400,000 āsanas, of which the lotus posture is considered the most important. This posture is indeed of great importance since it is mentioned in ancient texts and also plays an important role in Indian iconography. The actual number of postures described in other later Yoga

57 In my opinion, HP2 represents an inflated version of the text, in that it contains interpolated material. The section HP2 2.5-18, which is obviously an interpolated passage, describes eleven āsanas, while 2.19 states that only four āsanas have been selected from a total of eighty-four. These four postures are described in 2.21–38. There are considerable differences among the versions found in manuscripts of the HP. Gharote 1991: 244–246 describes a manuscript of the HP from Jodhpur which lists as many as one hundred āsanas.
texts occasionally attains the sacred number 108. The Yoga section preserved in one of two versions of the Śrītattvānīdhi, which was studied by Sjoman 1999, teaches as many as 122 āsanas. The number of āsanas in contemporary traditions also varies. While most traditions teach a smaller number of postures that can be learnt by the average practitioner with some amount of practice, there is also a noticeable tendency to expand the number of āsanas by introducing new variants. Dhirendra Brahmachari 1970 describes 108 postures plus the Sun Salutation; Iyengar 1984: 507-512, about 200 āsanas; and Yogeshwaranand Parmahansa 1987, as many as 300. The recent publication Mittra 2003 is a collection of photographs of 608 postures, which were selected from a “Master Yoga Chart” featuring 908 postures, which Mittra published earlier. While some of the postures were developed by Mittra himself, most were collected from books and from information provided by students of different traditions.

5.2 The Number Eighty-four

The number eighty-four continues to hold special symbolic significance for authors of ancient and modern Yoga texts, who honour this number in their āsana systems. One encounters the number in other contexts as well. Thus, we find various lists of names of eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, a description of eighty-four phallic representations (liṅga) of Śiva, listings of names of eighty-four Tantras and so forth. Eighty-four postures

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34 For 108 āsanas in the Yogāsanamālā and the Jodhpur manuscript of the Ṣaṭkapradipikā, see Gharote 1999: 25.

35 Hirschi 1997 honours the number eighty-four in a set of posture cards. As Hirschi 1997: 5 explains: “I’ve adhered to the body postures of classic yoga in the selection of exercises. Even the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, one of the oldest yoga writings, speaks of eighty-four positions. However, very few of these are actually described, and by no means can all these exercises be done, unless you’ve been doing yoga since you were a small child. This set also consists of eighty-four cards....” Other modern compilers of lists of eighty-four āsanas include Venkateshananda (†)/Metcalf/Roy 1984, V. Bretz (Sukadev) of Yoga-Vidya, Germany (retrieved December 10, 2002 from http://www.yoga-vidya.de/Asana_Uebungsplaene/ Fortg-Flex.html) and L. Spaulding of Yoga East, Inc., Louisville, Kentucky, who compiled an (unpublished) list of eighty-four postures for her teachers’ training.

36 This description is found in the section titled caturāṣṭīṭīlamāhātmya of the Āvantya-khaṇḍa of the Skanda-Purāṇa.

37 For some information on eighty-four as a mystical number classifying different entities, see Dasgupta 1976: 204. An extensive list of texts whose titles reflect a classification of entities as eighty-four can be found in “New Catalogus Catalogorum,” volume 6: 307.
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are not only mentioned in Yoga texts but also in Kāmaśāstra. It is therefore apparent that the number eighty-four traditionally signifies completeness, and in some cases, sacredness. Multiples of the number eighty-four are also in use. The number 84,000, therefore, is frequent in Buddhist literature and stands for an extraordinary large and complete number: 84,000 stūpas are said to have been built by Aśoka, one each for the relics of the Buddha, and there are references to 84,000 kinds of enlightenment through Amitābha (Reck 1997: 548).

5.3 Eighty-four Āsanas in Older Texts

5.3.1 Haṭhairatnāvali

Underscoring the purely mystical nature of the number eighty-four, Shashībhusan Dasgupta (1976: 205) remarks: “We do not find ... these eighty-four Āsanas described anywhere, only a few of them being described in the Yogic and Tāntric literature.” However, this statement turns out to be inaccurate. Although none of the extant older Yoga texts enumerate or describe eighty-four āsanas, two texts have been published which list or describe eighty-four Yoga postures. The earliest text is the Haṭhairatnāvali (HR) by Śrīnivāsa from Andhra, South India, a Sanskrit text which can tentatively be dated to between 1625 and 1695 CE. The HR is strongly influenced by the Hathaprādīpika, which it frequently quotes. The names of the eighty-four postures, beginning with Siddhāsana and ending with Śavāsana, are enumerated in HR2 3.9–20 (see Appendix 8.1), but only thirty-six of the postures are described. In the list of postures, four varieties of the important lotus posture (6–9) are found. Their names differ from the five variations of the posture found in lists 8.3 and 8.4. There are as many as six different kinds of Mayūrāsana (10–15) and five kinds of Kukkuṭāsana (56–60). The peacock posture (Mayūrāsana), which figures prominently also in other lists of eighty-four postures, must have been considered especially important. Three varieties each of the Matsyendrāsana (25–27) and the Kūrmāsana (47–49) are listed. Many āsana names are uncommon and not found in other lists.

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61 See the list from the Kokaśāstra cited in Hanmanṭe 1980: 553.
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5.3.2 Jogapradipakā

The only older text known so far which actually describes eighty-four āsanas is the North Indian Jogapradipakā (JP) by Jayatārāma, a resident of Vṛndāvan, who wrote the work in 1737. Jayatārāma was a disciple of Payaharibābā, also called Kṛṣṇadāsa, who occupied the seat of Galta (Jaipur). The language of the JP is a mixed Hindi with Brāj Bhāṣā, Khari Boli and semi-Sanskritic forms. The JP is clearly influenced by Svātmārāma’s Hatha-pradipikā. The names of the āsanas in this text, which are listed in Appendix 8.2, differ considerably from those listed in the Hatha-pratipadāvalī. They appear to have been compiled from disparate sources and also include two mudrās, Mahāmudrā āsana and Jonimudrā/Yonimudrā āsana. In section 5 of the text twenty-four mudrās are described separately. A comparatively large number of postures are named after Siddhas (12, 52-58). Some āsana names are Sanskrit, while others are derived from local languages. A summary of the descriptions of most of the eighty-four āsanas in section 3 of the JP can be found in Gharote’s English introduction to his edition of the text (pp. 3-18). As Gharote notes, seventy of the eighty-four āsanas are also described in the Yogāsananamālā, a text possibly authored by Jayatārāma as well and written in 1768. Twenty-six of the āsanas are described in a manuscript of the Hatha-pradipikā from Jodhpur. The āsanas in the Jogapradipakā differ considerably from those in the other traditions listed in the Appendices. Standing postures are completely absent. The performance of most āsanas is accompanied by the fixation of the gaze (dṛṣṭi) either on the tip of the nose or in between the eyebrows. Some āsanas are combined with prāṇāyāma practices and are held for a long time. Thus Pachimataṇa/Paścimatanā āsana (7) is recommended for a period of three to six hours and that of the Kāpāli/Kapāli āsana (17), for three hours. Some of the descriptions in the text bear a similarity to postures depicted in the sources in the Jodhpur tradition reproduced.

In the appendix to his edition of the JP, Gharote has included line drawings of sixty āsanas. These drawings were not commissioned to accompany the descriptions in the JP but to illustrate the āsanas in the Yogāsananamālā. Gharote informed me that the line drawings are taken from manuscript 5450 of the Yogāsananamālā preserved in the Rajasthān Oriental Research Institute, Jodhpur; it is currently being edited by him. According to Gharote, the illustrations are fairly reliable but need corrections in the light of the descriptions. The illustrations of the āsanas in the Yogāsananamālā reproduced in the appendix to Gharote's edition of the JP, however, appear to be not the original drawings of the eighteenth-century manuscript but a redrawn version. It should also be noted that they seem to have been taken from more than one source.
5. Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga

in section 6.4 of this book. The eighty-four āsanas according to the JP are illustrated in a set of circa nineteenth-century coloured drawings by an unknown artist which is described in section 6.2.1 and reproduced in section 6.2.2 of this book.

5.4 Eighty-four Āsanas in Contemporary Sources

5.4.1 Hanūmān Śarmā

In this section I will discuss several contemporary sets of eighty-four āsanas which I could identify.64 Their names are listed in the Appendices. Selected sets of eighty-four āsanas are then reproduced in section 6 from extant drawings or photographs.

A mere list of the names of eighty-four postures along with remarks on their health benefits can be found in Daniéloú’s book “Yoga: The Method of Re-Integration” (1949: 146–149, Appendix C). As is often the case in his writings, Daniéloú neglects to acknowledge his sources. However, a similar list of āsana names appears in the reference work “Saṃkhyā-Śaṃketa Koś,” compiled by Hanṇmaṭe in Marathi (= Hanṇmaṭe 1980: 553–554). This work identifies the Yogāṅka of the Hindi magazine Kalyān published from Gorakhpur as the list’s source. This piece of information enabled me to identify Hanūmān Śarmā’s article “Yogavidyā: Āsan aur unkā upayog,” published in Kalyān no. 10 in September 1935, as the source of Daniéloú’s and Hanṇmaṭe’s lists of āsanas. The article includes a list of eighty-four āsanas with remarks on their health benefits but not a description of the postures. The origin of the list of names is not discussed. The āsana names are reproduced in Appendix 8.3 on the basis of Śarmā’s list, with occasional variants found in Daniéloú 1949 and Hanṇmaṭe 1980 indicated in the notes. An interesting feature of this list is that it includes five varieties of Padmāsana (3–7), four of which are identical with those in list 8.4. Several āsana names in the list are reminiscent of types of prāṇāyāma (15, 15, 28).

5.4.2 Gaṅgādharaṇ Nair

Two modern publications in Indian vernaculars that include sets of eighty-four āsanas

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64 Chidananda 1984: 96 refers to a publication titled “Yogasanas Illustrated” by Swami Shivananda, published “nearly fifty years ago in Madras.” In it eighty-four important āsanas are supposed to be outlined. I was unable to locate a copy of the book.
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have come to my attention. The first is a book by Gaṅgādharaṇ Nair (1962)\(^{66}\) of the Yogāsanakendram in Quilon, Kerala, which describes eighty-four āsanas based on a tradition from Kerala, about which no further information is provided. Their names are listed in Appendix 8.4. The set includes five kinds of Padmāsana (1, 2, 14, 15, 51), four of which are identical with types of Padmāsana in list 8.3. This is the only list that includes an ‘energy lock’ (bandha), namely Uḍḍiyānabandha (84), among the eighty-four āsanas. Seventy-one of the eighty-four āsanas are documented in photographs, āsanas 6, 7, 8, 10–12, 15, 17, 19, 24, 41 and 55 not being illustrated. The photographs of the postures could not be reproduced here because of their poor quality.

5.4.3 Svāmi Svayamānanda

Svāmi Svayamānanda 1992 describes eighty-four āsanas from a different tradition. Eighty-one of these are accompanied by contemporary line drawings, which are reproduced in section 6.5. Their names are listed in Appendix 8.5. The three āsanas which are not illustrated are 9, 15 and 22. The author does not provide information about the origins of the set. The āsanas are arranged in a very systematic order, in which a basic posture is followed by its variation (for example, Sarvāṅgāsana, Aḍḍhasarvāṅgāsana; Vajrāsana, Suptavajrāsana).

It is difficult to judge a tradition of postures merely on the basis of a posture sequence published in a book. Āsana practice is likely to show deviations from the written model, especially insofar as it includes or substitutes variations on the postures. We can see this clearly in the āsana sequence of the Yoga Challenge® System, which is addressed in the next section.

5.4.4 The Yoga Challenge® System

Antonio (‘Tony’) Sanchez, the founder and director of the United States Yoga Association (USYA) (1984–2005), now based in Cabo San Lucas, Baja, Mexico, teaches a system of Yoga called Yoga Challenge®. It consists of four segments (I–IV) of

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increasing difficulty. Yoga Challenge® IV includes a set of eighty-four āsanas, documented on a poster printed in 2003. The names of the āsanas are listed in Appendix 8.6 as printed on the poster, and photographs of the postures are reproduced in section 6.6. A video recording of Yoga Challenge® IV, released in 2001, documents a total of 144 postures, which include the eighty-four postures and a number of variations not seen on the poster. The sequence of the postures in the video recording differs somewhat from that seen on the poster in its second part, where at times it follows the sequence in a list of ninety-one postures from Ghosh’s College (see below).

Sanchez began his Yoga training in 1976 with Bikram Choudhury, a student of Bishnu Charan Ghosh (see below), in Beverly Hills, California. In 1979 he was certified by Ghosh’s College of Physical Education in Calcutta (Kolkata), India. Ghosh’s College was established in 1923 by Bishnu Charan Ghosh (1903–1970), who had been trained at the Yogoda Satsanga Brahmacharya Vidyalaya, a school for boys in Ranchi, Bihar. The school was started in 1917 by his older brother, Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952), who later founded the Self-Realization Fellowship in America. Ghosh also worked with Swami Shivananda Saraswati (1887–1963). The eighty-four postures in Yoga Challenge® IV are based on the curriculum taught at Ghosh’s College, which is now under the directorship of Bishnu Charan Ghosh’s son, Biswanath (‘Bisu’) Ghosh.

The only teaching material from Ghosh’s College that was accessible to him is an older list of ninety-one ‘advanced āsanas.’ Sanchez received the list from his teacher Bikram Choudhury in the 1970s. In addition to ninety-one postures, the list includes four mudrās, five bandhas, four kriyās and two prānāyāmas. Šavāsana, which forms posture 37 in Sanchez’s poster, is not counted separately in the list of ninety-one postures, although it appears several times in the list. Handwritten remarks in the list occasionally insert additional postures and renumber some of them. Sanchez explains that some of the ninety-one postures were treated as variants and not counted separately. We have no further information about the origins of the ninety-one āsanas...
in the list. It is quite possible that its compiler did not initially intend to make a list of eighty-four āsanas but that the postures were formed into such a system over time to honour the number eighty-four. Ghosh may have compiled the list himself by incorporating āsanas from traditions he was familiar with. Some of the original names clearly show traces of their North Indian derivation—for example, in the use of the letter b instead of v (Bibhaktahastatulādaṇḍāsana for Vibhaktahastatulādaṇḍāsana).

The eighty-four āsanas include four varieties of the lotus posture (Padmāsana, 27–30), which are similar to varieties of the postures in lists 8.3 and 8.4. There are also four kinds of peacock postures (Mayūrāsana, 73–76). This is the only list of eighty-four āsanas I found which includes the Sun Salutation (Sūryanamaskāra) (2).

Because of the considerable popularity of the Sun Salutation in modern Yoga practice, a few remarks about it may be appropriate here. The Sun Salutation is a separate set of postures, of which many different versions are known. It may have been an independent exercise sequence which became linked to sun worship at some point in time. The Sun Salutation as taught, for example, by the Bihar School of Yoga features twelve postures, each accompanied by the recitation of a specific mantra which invokes one aspect of the sun god with a specific name. Twelve, the number of the months of the solar cycle, is traditionally the symbolic number of the sun. The sequence of the Bihar School of Yoga begins with the practitioner standing with his palms joined together in front of this chest in salutation of the sun. After a sequence of postures, he performs the eight-limbed prostration (āstāṅganamaskāra) to the sun, which is the climax of this sequence. In the eight-limbed prostration, the eight body parts of the practitioner (the forehead or chin, chest, both hands, knees and feet) touch the ground. This type of prostration is traditionally performed in India only by males. According to tradition, the sun god likes to be worshipped by prostrations. Some postures appear twice in the set: once when the practitioner moves into the prostration and—in reverse order—when he moves out of it. The twelve positions of the Sun

67 Stenhouse 2001 describes twenty-three variations of the Sun Salutation, but there are more variants which are not included in her book.
68 For a description, see, for example, Satyananda Saraswati 1983: 12–22, 41–46, 118–120. Dhirendra Brahmachari 1970: 283 refers to a Sun Salutation consisting of sixteen postures, which correspond to the sixteen aspects (kalā) of the sun. Pratinidhi 1939 divides the Sun Salutation into ten stages. K. Pattabhi Jois teaches one version with nine movements and a second version with seventeen.
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Salutation are repeated twice, using alternate legs to complete a full round. Some of the postures in the series are also taught independently as āsanas in their own right. Although—contrary to popular claims—the Sun Salutation is not referred to in ancient Yoga texts and is unlikely to be a very ancient practice, it has enjoyed popularity as a physical exercise in India for several centuries. In India, Sun Salutation competitions—referred to as Sūryanamaskār Yajñas in Hindi or as Sūryanamaskār Marathons—are held; during them young people repeat the sequence for hundreds or even thousands of times. In the photographs of the Sun Salutation in the Yoga Challenge® system, the sequence is broken down into twenty postures (2.1–2.20). Like the two versions of the Sun Salutation of Jois’s Aṣṭāṅgayoga, the set does not include the eight-limbed prostration. One of the postures, 2.3 (= 2.18), is included separately as the half moon posture (Ardhacandrāsana) (4) in the set of eighty-four postures.

A selection from the postures taught at Ghosh’s College makes up the standard āsana sequence of Bikram Yoga™. This system, taught by Bikram Choudhury (b. 1946), founder of the worldwide Bikram’s Yoga College of India™, features twenty-six āsanas. Table 1 shows correspondences between

1) the ninety-one āsanas taught at Ghosh’s College, documented in an unpublished list from the 1970s, which I obtained from S. Wong/Sanchez (left-hand column),
2) the eighty-four postures as documented in a poster and taught by Sanchez as part of Yoga Challenge® IV (centre column) and
3) the postures taught in Bikram Yoga™ as published in Choudhury 1978 (right-hand column).

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69 Rāmdās, the seventeenth-century saint from Mahārāṣṭra, is credited with reviving and spreading the practice of the Sun Salutation. He is supposed to have practised 1,200 Sun Salutations daily (Mujumdar 1950: 18–19, 453). For the role of Bhavanrao Pant, the Raja of Aundh, in propagating the Sun Salutation, see Mujumdar 1950: 452–456, Alter 1992: 98–103 and Alter 2000: 83–112. For a description of the practice in Mahārāṣṭra, see Kuvalayananda 1926: 210.
70 Some of these movements are identical; see 2.2 = 2.17 = 2.19; 2.3 = 2.18 (see also 4); 2.5 = 2.16, 2.6 = 2.15; 2.9 = 2.11.
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**TABLE 1**
Comparative Overview of the āsanas Taught at Ghosh’s College; by A. Sanchez as Part of Yoga Challenge® IV; and in Bikram Yoga™

| Ghosh’s List | Sanchez’s Poster | Bikram Yoga™
|-------------|------------------|------------------|

| ‘Breathing’; added to the list by a later hand | Not in poster but included in video documentation | 1 Standing Deep Breathing (‘Pranayama Series’)

| 1–2 | 1–2 (see Appendix 8.6) | |

| 3 Pārśvārdhacandrāsana | 3 Pārśvārdhacandrāsana | 2 Ardhcandrāsana, Pādahastāsana (‘Ardha-Chandrasana with Pada-Hastasana’)

| 4 Ardhcandrāsana | 4 Ardhcandrāsana | |

| 5 Pādahastāsana | 5 Pādahastāsana | |

| 6 Trikoṇāsana | 6 Trikoṇāsana | 9 Trikoṇāsana (‘Trikanasana’)

| 7 Daṇḍāyamānānavibhaktapādajānusīrāsana | 7 Daṇḍāyamānānavibhaktapādajānusīrāsana | 10 Daṇḍāyamānānavibhaktapādajānusīrāsana (‘Dandayamana-Bibhaktapada-Janushirasana’)

| 8 Utkatāsana | 8 Utkatāsana | 3 Utkatāsana (‘Utkatasana’)

| 9 Garuḍāsana | 9 Garuḍāsana | 4 Garuḍāsana (‘Garurasana’)

| 10 Daṇḍāyamānajānūśirāsana | 10 Daṇḍāyamānajānūśirāsana | 5 Daṇḍāyamānajānūśirāsana (‘Dandayamana-Janushirasana’)

| 11 Daṇḍāyamānadhavanurāsana | 11 Daṇḍāyamānadhavanurāsana | 6 Daṇḍāyamānadhavanurāsana (‘Dandayamana-Dhanurasana’)

| 12 Tulādaṇḍāsana | 12 Tulādaṇḍāsana | 7 Tulādaṇḍāsana (‘Tuladandasana’)

| 13 Vibhaktahastatulādaṇḍāsana | 13 Vibhaktahastatulādaṇḍāsana | |

| 14 Daṇḍāyamānānavibhaktapādapaścimottānāsana | 14 Daṇḍāyamānānavibhaktapādapaścimottānāsana | 8 Daṇḍāyamānānavibhaktapādapaścimottānāsana (‘Dandayamana-Bibhaktapada-Paschimothanasana’)

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*I have standardized and partially corrected the orthography of the āsana names so as to enable the reader to compare the names of the postures with those in other lists. The orthography of the names as printed in Choudhury 1978 is added in parentheses.*

34
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>15 Tāḍāsana</th>
<th>15 Tāḍāsana</th>
<th>11 Tāḍāsana ('Tadasana')</th>
<th>16 Pāḍāṅguṣṭhāsana</th>
<th>16 Pāḍāṅguṣṭhāsana</th>
<th>12 Pāḍāṅguṣṭhāsana ('Padangusthasana')</th>
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<tr>
<td>17-36</td>
<td>17-36 (see Appendix 8.6)</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>Not counted separately</td>
<td>37 Savāsana</td>
<td>13 Savāsana ('Savasana')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not counted separately</td>
<td>Not counted separately</td>
<td>38 Pavanamuktāsana</td>
<td>14 Pavanamuktāsana ('Pavanamuktasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 Pavanamuktāsana</td>
<td>37 Pavanamuktāsana</td>
<td>15 Sit-Up</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Bhujāṅgāsana</td>
<td>39 Bhujāṅgāsana</td>
<td>16 Bhujāṅgāsana ('Bhujangasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>39 Salabhāsana</td>
<td>40 Salabhāsana</td>
<td>17 Salabhāsana ('Salabhasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 Pūrṇaśalabhāsana</td>
<td>41 Pūrṇaśalabhāsana</td>
<td>18 Pūrṇaśalabhāsana ('Poorna-Salabhasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41 Dhanurāsana</td>
<td>42 Dhanurāsana</td>
<td>19 Dhanurāsana ('Dhanurasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 Suptavajrāsana</td>
<td>43 Suptavajrāsana</td>
<td>20 Suptavajrāsana ('Suptavajrasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>43 Ardhaṅkurūmāsana</td>
<td>44 Ardhaṅkurūmāsana</td>
<td>21 Ardhaṅkurūmāsana ('Ardhakurmasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>44 Uṣṭrāsana</td>
<td>45 Uṣṭrāsana</td>
<td>22 Uṣṭrāsana ('Ustrasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45 Saṅkāsana</td>
<td>46 Saṅkāsana</td>
<td>23 Saṅkāsana ('Sasangasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 Jānuśirāsana</td>
<td>47 Jānuśirāsana</td>
<td>24 Jānuśirāsana, Paschimottanāsana ('Janushirasana with Paschimotthanasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47 Paschimottanāsana</td>
<td>48 Paschimottanāsana</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-55</td>
<td>49- 58 (see Appendix 8.6)</td>
<td></td>
<td>56 Ardhamatsyendrāsana</td>
<td>59 Ardhamatsyendrāsana</td>
<td>25 Ardhamatsyendrāsana ('Ardha-Matsyendrasana')</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kapālabhāti, included in a separate category of prāṇāyāma</td>
<td>Not in poster but included in video demonstration</td>
<td>26 Kapālabhāti ('Kapalbhati in Vajrasana')</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57-91</td>
<td>60-84 (see Appendix 8.6)</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Although the sequence of āsanas in Bikram Yoga™ differs occasionally and some minor modifications are seen, it is clear that it is based on the posture sequence taught at Ghosh’s College, from which it is a selection. The two breathing exercises included in Bikram Yoga™ as 1 (Standing Deep Breathing) and 26 (Kapālabhāti in Vajrāsana) are also part of Yoga Challenge® IV and documented at the beginning and end of the video demonstration (but not in the poster). Ghosh’s list of ninety-one postures adds Kapālabhāti in a separate category of prāṇāyāma. Bikram’s ‘sit-up’ (15) is also included in Yoga Challenge® IV, where it is usually performed when moving out of Savāsana. However, the sit-ups do not count as separate postures in the set of eighty-four postures. An innovation in Bikram Yoga™ is the mandatory hot temperature (around 100° F) in the Yoga studios.
6. Sets of Illustrations of Eighty-four Āsanas

6.1 Preliminary Remarks

While there is no shortage of publications featuring photographs of practitioners performing Yoga postures, few traditional illustrations of āsanas have been published. An important document is a set of drawings of 122 āsanas reproduced in Sjoman 1999. These drawings belong to the Mahārāṇī’s manuscript of a version of the nineteenth-century Śrītattvanidhi, a work compiled by Mummaṇī Kṛṣṇarāja Wodeyar (1794-1868). The manuscript is preserved in the Sarasvatī Bhāṇḍār Library, the private library of the Mysore Palace, and dates back to between 1811 and 1868. The descriptions of the āsanas are found in the ninth and last section of the manuscript, but do not form part of the recension of the text published by the Venkaṭesvar Press. Since the Śrītattvanidhi is a compendium covering a wide range of topics information on additional topics a compiler considered important, such as Yoga postures, could have easily been interpolated into the text of this recension at a later stage. Sjoman also reproduces illustrations from a compilation of different texts on Yoga titled Haṭhayogapradipikā (Sjoman 1999: 63), which is also preserved in manuscript form in the Sarasvatī Bhāṇḍār Library. This unpublished text is of unknown date and is different from Svātmārāma’s Haṭhapradipikā.

Also of interest is the set of seventy-four coloured drawings of (mostly) āsanas according to the Gheraṇḍa-Samhitā, purchased by R. Garbe in Vārāṇasi in 1886 and published in Schmidt 1908.

Line drawings of āsanas are included in a small book written in Marāṭhī language and published at the end of the nineteenth century. Its title can be translated as ‘Eighty-four āsanas included in the Yoga with eight ancillary parts, with illustrations’ (= Dharmasimha 1899). Although the title promises a description of eighty-four āsanas, the book includes descriptions and drawings of as many as ninety-seven āsanas with no sources indicated. Perhaps it was not the original author’s

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72 This information is based on Sjoman 1999: 40, 35.
intention to present a set of eighty-four postures. It is also possible that in practice some of the ninety-seven postures were considered variants and not counted among the eighty-four. It could also be that someone expanded the list of eighty-four postures by adding new postures. The situation can perhaps be compared to cases of collections of 108 names of deities. When counted, these names are often not exactly 108. But traditional commentators on these texts will usually interpret them so as to make 108.

Among the unpublished illustrated manuscripts of interest in this context is a nineteenth-century “Illustrated Book of Yoga Postures” from Rājasthān, preserved in the Ajit Mookerjee Collection in the Tantra Art Gallery of the National Museum, New Delhi. A few drawings with text are reproduced in Mookerjee 1971, no. 358 and in Rawson 1973, plates 138–139. Also of interest are sets of miniature paintings of twenty-one āsanas in four manuscripts of the Persian Bahr al-Hayat, a text which appears to be a translation of a lost work in Sanskrit or Hindi titled Amṛtakūṇḍa (‘Pool of Nectar’).73 The oldest of these manuscripts dates from 1600–1605 and is kept in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin (Leach 1995: 556–564). The other three manuscripts are based on it.

Traditional sets of drawings of eighty-four āsanas are rare. In this book I reproduce two complete sets from the nineteenth century. The most important one illustrates the eighty-four āsanas according to the Jogapradipākā.

6.2 The Coloured Drawings of the Āsanas according to the Jogapradipākā

6.2.1 A Description of the Drawings according to the Jogapradipākā
It has long been known that coloured drawings of āsanas and mudrās with accompanying text are kept in the British Library, London, and several of them have been published. However, the document has long remained unidentified and the complete set of drawings unpublished. The document is catalogued as manuscript Add. 24099 and labelled “Asanas and Mudras (Hata [sic] yoga).” According to a prefatory note by Sir Frederic Madden, who was the former keeper of the manuscript department of the British Library, Brigadier-Major H.E. Jerome of the 19th Regiment obtained the

73 For the different versions of this text, see Ernst 2003. The four manuscripts are listed in Ernst 2003: 221, note 47.
manuscript from the library of the Rāni of Jhansi in central India “at the sacking of that place in April 1858” (Blumhardt 1899: 63) and donated it to the British Library on April 17, 1861. A brief description of it is found in a catalogue volume. Losty describes it in an English article (1985), in which he reproduces twelve drawings in colour. The Italian version of the article (1985b) includes eighteen colour images. Nineteen coloured drawings can be viewed on the website of the British Library under “Images Online,” shelfmark Add. 24099.

The document consists of 118 folios measuring 8 1/2 by 4 1/2 inches and includes the following material:
1) a coloured drawing of Śiva as an ascetic instructing a group of devotees, with Pārvatī seated on his left thigh (fol. 1);
2) a colour image of a four-armed Gaṇeśa with his consort (fol. 2), which can be viewed at:
http://www.bl.uk/collections/northindia.html#muscat_highlighter_first_match ("Hindi Asanas and Mudras (Yoga); portrait of Ganesha;" retrieved April 21, 2004);
3) eighty-four coloured drawings, numbered from 1 to 84, with accompanying text illustrating and describing eighty-four āsanas (fols. 3–86);
4) twenty-four coloured drawings illustrating and describing twenty-four mudrās (fols. 87–117);
5) and a coloured drawing of a perfected Yogin (fol. 118) showing the kundalini , the cakras and deities populating his different body parts.

Losty 1985: 100 characterizes the drawings as executed in the Rajput style with elements of the Kangra idiom. He assigns the manuscript to the Panjab and dates it to about 1830.

After comparing the names of the āsanas in the document with those in lists of names of eighty-four āsanas which I had prepared for this book, I was able to identify the text portions of this document as extracts from Jayatarāma’s Jogapradipakā (JP). This work was written in 1737 and is discussed in section 5.3.2. The text on fols. 3–86 of the document, which describes the eighty-four āsanas, can be shown to have been extracted from JP 7.2–36.2. The text on fols. 87–117, which describes the twenty-four

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74 See Blumhardt 1899: 63 (no. 96).
75 Email communication dated April 21, 2004.
mudrās, was extracted from JP 53,9–71,14.

In this book the complete set of drawings of eighty-four āsanas is reproduced for the first time. It was obviously commissioned to illustrate the descriptions in the JP. If Losty’s assumption is correct, it was prepared about one hundred years after the composition of the JP and testifies to the importance of this text.

The scribe must have copied the text of the JP from a manuscript which was not used by Gharote for his edition of the text. This would explain the occurrence of mostly minor textual variants which are not recorded in the apparatus to Gharote’s edition of the JP. In the set of drawings Siddhi/Siddha āsana appears only once, as the last āsana in the series. In Gharote’s edition this āsana is described twice (see Appendix 8.2, 13a and 84). Among the usually minor orthographic variants in the names of the postures, the manuscript offers the variant Veda āsana (31) for the reading Deva āsana in Gharote’s edition.

The coloured drawings depict several Yogins, of bluish complexion and covered only with a loincloth, performing the āsanas. The practitioners of the two mudrās in this section (14, 15) and those of the twenty-four mudrās in the next section are yellowish. The Yogins have long hair, which is sometimes tied in a knot, and are frequently shown seated on a tiger or antelope skin, as traditionally recommended. They are often accompanied by an attendant of yellowish complexion, who is either standing by or performing chores. A lotus pond is frequently seen to the front, and a natural landscape with trees and occasionally buildings in the background.

In addition to the eighty-four coloured drawings, we find several line drawings below the textual descriptions, which show a Yogin performing the postures. They may be intended to correct errors in the way technical aspects of the postures are represented in the coloured drawings. The sketches have not been reproduced here, but they would need to be included in a study of the āsana section of the JP. Such a detailed comparison between the āsana descriptions of the JP and their representation in the drawings is not possible at this time and will have to wait until a critical edition of the JP becomes available.
6.2.2 A Reproduction of the Drawings according to the Jogapradīpakā (by permission of the British Library, Add. 24099)
6.3 The Line Drawings from Nepal

6.3.1 A Description of the Line Drawings from Nepal

A set of traditional line drawings of eighty-four āsanās forms part of manuscript 347 preserved in the Keśar Library, Kathmandu. It is a concertina-type manuscript (thā-saphū) made of paper, which was coated with yellow pigment to protect it from insects. The manuscript consists of forty-eight folios and is labelled “Hastamudrā, caurāshi āsana,” which means ‘hand gestures, eighty-four āsanās.’ The section on āsanās consists of fifteen folios, with an average of six line drawings per folio.

The circa nineteenth-century line drawings of the āsanās are reproduced in section 6.3.2 for the first time. They show different practitioners performing āsanās, numbered from one to eighty-four. Some sit on tiger skins and have moustaches. Some practitioners wear headgear, while others have long, unbound hair or hair tied into topknots. Some figures wear the sacred thread, and others a garland of rudrākṣa beads. A variety of postures are shown, some of which appear to be identical or almost identical with one another, such as 32 and 66, and 40 and 78. Many of the postures are known from works on Yoga, such as 14, which shows a practitioner performing the headstand with his legs in the lotus posture, or 65, which appears to show a practitioner in what is often termed the ‘bound lotus posture.’ It is, however, not possible to identify the āsanās, since no names are given in the manuscript, and different Yoga traditions label the postures differently. It would be meaningless to try to identify the postures with the help of descriptions in other texts, since we do not know anything about the tradition in which the drawings originated.

A similar but incomplete set of line drawings from Nepal is found on three and a half unnumbered folios in paper manuscript (thāsaphū) 82.234 in the collection of the Newark Museum. An anonymous donor gifted this still unpublished manuscript to the museum in 1982. The line drawings, which are neither numbered nor labelled, correspond to drawings 1–6 and 15–53 in the Keśar Library manuscript. The set is not reproduced in this book since it is incomplete and the drawings not very refined.

76 A microfilm of the manuscript can be accessed through the Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project under reel number C 37/6.
It is possible that the Nepalese artist intended to portray the eighty-four Siddhas performing the eighty-four āsanas, as in the sources relating to the Jodhpur tradition (section 6.4), but this cannot be determined with any certainty. The representations of the Yogins resemble to some extent those of the Siddhas in Yogic postures portrayed in a circa fifteenth-century painting from western Tibet of Vajradhara surrounded by the Siddhas (Linrothe 2006: 220). The painting is now in the Collection of S. and D. Rubin, New York. The resemblance is clearly seen in those practitioners depicted bent forward and those with one or both legs extended.
6.3.2 A Reproduction of the Line Drawings from Nepal
6.4 The Sources in the Jodhpur Tradition

6.4.1 A Description of the Line Drawings

A set of line drawings of the eighty-four Siddhas performing eighty-four Yoga postures appears in two contemporary publications:

1) in the Appendix (pp. 1–21) of the book “Nava nātha caurāśi siddha” compiled by Yogin Naraharinātha and published by the Gorakṣanātha Maṭha (Vārāṇasī) in 1968; in the following I refer to it as N1; and

2) in the book titled “Nava nātha caurāśi siddha bālāsundari yogamāyā” (pp. 3–23), published by Akhila Bhāratavarṣiya Yogapracārini Mahāsabhā Prakāśanam (Pune) in 1968; I refer to this book as N2.

It appears that both books reproduced the drawings from a common source but added the names of the Siddhas separately, most likely using a list of names found in the original unidentified document. This explains the occurrence of some variants in the names between N1 and N2, although the drawings are identical. It is possible that the original document also listed the names of the āsanas which the Siddhas perform, but that these names were not copied by N1 and N2 because the two publications were primarily concerned with the eighty-four Siddhas.

The names of the Siddhas in this tradition are listed in table 2 as found in N1, after comparing them with two versions of the names printed in N2. One version of the names appears below the drawings, and another one as a separate list labelled ‘The Eighty-four Siddhas Famous in Jodhpur, Rājasthān’ on p. 26 of N2. Similar names are inscribed in a circa nineteenth-century painting from Jodhpur preserved in the Bhārat Kalā Bhavan, Vārāṇasī (no. 5362), and there labelled ‘Maharaja Mansingh and Eighty-four Yogis.’ The ‘Yogis’ in the painting are in fact the eighty-four Siddhas. It is not surprising that the Siddhas should be associated with Yogic postures, given that Matsyendra and his disciple Gorakṣa are traditionally considered the founders of hathayoga.

77 Different Siddha traditions and lineages are described in Lokesh Chandra’s “Dictionary of Buddhist Iconography” (volume 1, introduction pp. xii–xxv; see also volume 4: 1093–1096).
Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga: A Survey of Traditions (with Illustrations)

The names of the Siddhas in these sources belong to a tradition specific to Jodhpur and mostly differ from the names transmitted in other more well-known lineages. They are a mixture of Sanskrit and local forms, as can be seen from 28, where the suffix pāva is added to a Sanskrit name. This suffix is an honorific and stands for Sanskrit pāda.

Lokesh Chandra reproduced the set of drawings from N1 in his "Dictionary of Buddhist Iconography," where he ascribes it to an "album published by Yogi Naraharinātha of Nepal for distribution to devotees." According to an inscription on the last page, the drawings are copies (pratilipi) of older drawings of the eighty-four Siddhas in the Jodhpur style. The copies were made by Prabhānāth Yogi of the Division for the Propagation of Yoga (yogaprācārīṇī śākhā) of the (Śri) Siddha Ratnanāth Arts Institute (Kalā Kendra) at Caugharā in the Dān district of western Nepal in 1968. The reputed Ratannāth Maṭha of the Gorakṣanāth sect is located at Caugharā. The drawings are reproduced in section 6.4.2 from N1. Drawings 35 and 36 were printed upside down, an error I have corrected.

No information is provided about the original document from which the drawings were copied. However, the portraits of the Yogins in the line drawings are very similar to those of the eighty-four Siddhas painted on the walls of the sanctum of the large temple in Mahāmandir, just outside Jodhpur (section 6.4.3). The early-nineteenth-century murals and much later line drawings are clearly in the same tradition and may eventually be traceable to a common source.

Some of the Yoga postures depicted are similar to the ones described in Jayatārāma’s Jogapradipakā, which is not surprising since both documents are connected with traditions from Rājasthān. As is the case with the Nepalese set of illustrations, it is not possible to identify the āsanas without having access to a corresponding text.

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For the eighty-four Siddhas/Mahāsiddhas, see Linrothe 2006. Dasgupta 1976: 202–210 also provides valuable information on Siddha traditions.


49 For these drawings, see volume 1, introduction, pp. xiv–xx.

50 For more information on this Maṭha, see Unbescheid 1980: 18–25.
6. Sets of Illustrations of Eighty-four Āsanas

**TABLE 2**
The Names of the Eighty-four Siddhas in the Jodhpur Tradition
(following N1 and N2)

<p>| | |</p>
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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
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<td>2)</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Gaurāṅga</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>Gorakṣa</td>
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<td>5)</td>
<td>Caurangi</td>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>Carpaṭi</td>
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<td>7)</td>
<td>Śrīgī</td>
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<td>8)</td>
<td>Acala</td>
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<td>9)</td>
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<td>Sajāī</td>
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<td>Kapila</td>
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<td>13)</td>
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<td>Bhūtāi</td>
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<td>Kuṇḍalī</td>
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<td>25)</td>
<td>Kambali</td>
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<td>26)</td>
<td>Maṇḍūkipāva(^9)</td>
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<td>27)</td>
<td>Jālandhara</td>
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<td>28)</td>
<td>Śrīgāripāva(^8)</td>
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<td>Kānipāva</td>
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<td>Hālipāva</td>
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<td>Tanukubja</td>
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<td>41)</td>
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<td>42)</td>
<td>Satātana(^9)</td>
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<td>43)</td>
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<td>48)</td>
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<tr>
<td>49)</td>
<td>Śivagovsāmi(^8)</td>
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<td>50)</td>
<td>Lohāṭṭa(^5)</td>
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<td>Aṅjāipāva</td>
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<td>52)</td>
<td>Avaghaṭa</td>
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</tbody>
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\(^8\) The list in N2 reads Śrīgāripāva.
\(^9\) The list in N2 reads Sanātana.
\(^8\) The list in N2 reads Śivagovsāmi.
\(^5\) The list in N2 reads Lohāṭṭaṇa.
53) Carmagosvāmi
54) Gāvasiddha
55) Saurī
56) Bhrāmara
57) Canderī
58) Acali
59) Viśaśamkha
60) Vilāpa
61) Milapā
62) Muktā
63) Pahūpanā
64) Cāla
65) Carmarāvala
66) Mālaki
67) Ghodačolī
68) Prakaṭipāva
69) Lohā
70) Guṇiharṣa
71) Vāripāva
72) Asṭhipāva
73) Sūtradaṇḍa
74) Lohapātra
75) Nāgeśa
76) Kulālipāva
77) Karpaṭi
78) Kanakāi
79) Himālaya
80) Tuṣakāi
81) Bālanātha
82) Mālakāra
83) Girivaranātha
84) Rāmanātha

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66 N2 reads Carmagosvāmi. The list in N2 has two names, Carma and Gosvāmi.
67 N2 reads Viśamkha.

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88 The list in N2 reads Muktā.
99 The list in N2 omits this name.
6.4.2 A Reproduction of the Line Drawings
6.4.3 The Murals in Mahāmandir

Portraits of the eighty-four Siddhas performing different āsanas decorate the walls of the sanctum of the large temple at the Mahāmandir temple complex just outside Jodhpur, in central Rājasthān. The construction of this Nātha temple was completed under Mān Singh, the Mahārāja of Marwar, in 1805. The murals possibly date from 1810. Unlike the line drawings discussed in section 6.4.1, which are very similar, these murals are not labelled. A particular sequence of practitioners is hard to determine since the portraits of the Siddhas are painted in a continuous register across the walls, without framed divisions between them. Most Siddhas wear the large earrings typical of the kānphaṭa Yogins. Each Siddha is seen in his own hut performing a different but unidentified āsana. We do not know anything about the sources the artist used for painting the postures. Perhaps he had a set of drawings or paintings at his disposal, which may still be stored in some Jodhpur collection. The basis for the line drawings must have been some source within the same tradition. That source must have also contained the Siddhas’ names, and perhaps, too, the names of the āsanas they are performing.

Murals similar to the ones in Mahāmandir that show the eighty-four Siddhas performing āsanas are also found on the walls of the sanctum of Udaimandir in Jodhpur. The temple was constructed under Mān Singh in 1821. The paintings are of inferior quality and the postures often mirror images of the ones in Mahāmandir.

The complete set of the portraits of the individual Siddhas in Mahāmandir has not been published. One portrait photographed by D. White is reproduced on a book cover (White 1996) and three portraits are reproduced in Linrothe 2006: 413. In this book I reproduce photographs of sixteen individual portraits. They correspond to line drawings 1, 4, 11, 21, 25, 32, 34, 46, 50, 53, 58, 60, 64, 65, 68 and 71. The photographs were taken by R. Linrothe who kindly made them available for publication in this book.
6.4.4 A Reproduction of Selected Murals
(Photographs courtesy of Rob Linrothe)
6.5 The Line Drawings in Svāmī Svayamānanda 1992
6.6 Photographs of the Āsanas in the Yoga Challenge® System
7. Concluding Remarks

As I have shown in section 4.2, āsanas feature among the ancillary parts (aṅga) of many traditional Yoga systems but occupy a subordinate position. Authorities usually viewed them as a prerequisite for meditation (dhyāna). Postures gained more importance in the later Nātha tradition, where they became associated with practices usually subsumed under the term hathayoga. This is a somewhat fuzzy term which is interpreted differently by authors, as I have discussed in section 3. In texts of the Nātha tradition, we find a larger number of postures described, some of which are taught for strengthening the body and stabilizing it. But even in this tradition āsanas were not the main focus of practice. Moreover, their performance was usually combined with that of ‘energy locks’ (bandha) and control of the breath. The exclusive practice of āsanas for gaining physical strength and health and their inclusion within athletic routines is the result of a relatively modern development fostered by physical culturists, who have expanded the number of postures by adding new ones and variations on the old ones. Despite frequently made claims, those modern Yoga schools which exclusively focus on postures represent neither the teachings of the Yogasūtra nor those of the Nātha tradition.

Practitioners often assert that their postures are derived from an ancient tradition of eighty-four classical āsanas. The main goal of this book has been to trace and document such tradition(s) in Yoga. Although some texts refer to 84,000 postures said to have been condensed into eighty-four postures, this many postures are rarely described in older texts. However, contrary to a statement made by Shashibhusan Dasgupta (1976: 205) that eighty-four āsanas are not described anywhere, several lists of names of eighty-four āsanas could be located, although all of them are comparatively late.

The oldest list of names of eighty-four āsanas appears in the seventeenth-century Haṭharatnāvali, a Sanskrit text by Śrīnivāsa from Āndhra, South India. The oldest text which provides a list of names as well as descriptions of eighty-four postures is the eighteenth-century Jogapradīpaka by Jayatarāma from North India, written in a mixed Hindī. (A set of coloured drawings from the nineteenth century
illustrating the āsanas according to the descriptions in the Jogapradipākā is reproduced in this book.) The lists of eighty-four āsanas in the Hatharatnāvalī and the Jogapradipākā are entirely different. They also differ from descriptions of eighty-four āsanas which I found in four contemporary publications. Thus all of the six lists I examined are at variance, except list 8.3. This list is found in two modern books, Daniélou 1949 and Hanmade 1980, both of which are based on an article by Šarmā published in 1935. Many āsana names are only found in a single list. Only the lotus posture (Padmāsana), peacock posture (Mayūrāsana) and Siddhāsana (including the variant Siddhi/Siddha āsana in list 8.2) appear in all six lists. Two of these postures, Padmāsana and Siddhāsana, are ancient and important postures for meditation. In some of the lists we encounter uncommon names, which are not recorded elsewhere. However, since the names of āsanas often vary in different traditions not many conclusions can be drawn from mere lists of names of eighty-four postures without descriptions of them. Whatever their histories may be, the lists of names were certainly independently transmitted and cannot be traced to one single original list. None of the lists of names of eighty-four āsanas gathered in this book goes far back in time. Thus we do not have access to an ancient tradition of eighty-four āsanas, or to a tradition from which modern āsana systems can be derived. There is also no evidence that such a tradition ever existed.

Eighty-four and 84,000 are mystical numbers traditionally indicating completeness and sometimes sacredness. Most influential for the Yoga tradition of eighty-four postures must have been the tradition of eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, whose names are recorded in a number of lists, in which they vary considerably. The eighty-four Siddhas are frequently represented in art, occasionally as having assumed Yogic postures. The number eighty-four has continued to be influential up to modern times in circles of Yoga practitioners. Because of its symbolic significance and because ancient lists of eighty-four āsanas are not easily accessible, several modern Yoga teachers have taken to compiling their own lists of postures. Honouring the number eighty-four, they included postures they considered to be important, but every teacher has included different postures and combined them into different sequences in his/her list. In the course of my research I came across several such lists which identify themselves as modern compilations by Western authors from books written by contemporary Yoga
7. Concluding Remarks

teachers. They have been excluded from this study. In their motivations for compiling lists of eighty-four postures, however, the modern practitioners may not differ from the authors of the older texts Haṭharatnāvalī and the Jogapradīpakā, who themselves may have likewise compiled their lists. Otherwise one wonders why these two texts provide no information about the lineages through which the āsana lists were transmitted. In this way, ancient and modern teachers appear to have developed their own systems of āsanas acknowledging the number eighty-four.
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

8.1 Haṭharatnāvalī 3.9–20

1) Siddhāsana
2) Bhadrāsana
3) Vajrāsana
4) Siṃhāsana
5) Śilpāsana
6) Bandhapadmāsana
7) Karapadmāsana
8) Sampuṭitapadmāsana
9) Šuddhapadmāsana
10) Daṇḍamayurāsana
11) Pārśvamayurāsana
12) Sahajamayurāsana
13) Bandhamayurāsana
14) Piṇḍamayurāsana
15) Ekāpādamayurāsana
16) Bhairavāsana
17) Kāmadahanāsana
18) Pāṇipātrāsana
19) Kārmukāsana
20) Svastikāsana

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90 In the Appendices I have standardized the orthography of the names to a certain extent. I have, for example, removed hyphens in the names of āsanas except for cases where the Sanskrit vowel sandhi (that is, the coming together of two vowels) was not observed.

91 I mostly follow the text of the edition HR2 3.9–20, in which the names of the postures differ occasionally from those listed in the older edition HR1 3.8–19. In addition, I have taken versions of the names of the postures described in HR2 3.25–76 into consideration. I have added the word āsana to many names, unless the synonym piṭha was used or a name ended in mudrā. The text of the HR often omits the word āsana because of metrical constraints.

92 HR1 reads Šilpasimhāsana.

93 HR1, combining 6 and 7, reads Bandhakara.

94 HR2 3.45d gives the synonym Baddhakekī with the variant reading Bandhakeki.
21) Gomukhāsana
22) Virāsana
23) Maṇḍūkāsana
24) Markaṭāsana
25) Matsyendrāsana
26) Pārśvamatsyendrāsana
27) Bandhamatsyendrāsana
28) Nirālambanāsana
29) Cāndrāsana
30) Kāṇṭhavāsana
31) Ekapādāsana
32) Phaṇīndrāsana
33) Paścimatānāsana
34) Śayitapaścimatānāsana
35) <Vi>citrakaraṇī <mudrā>
36) Yoganidrā
37) Vidhūnanāsana
38) Pādapiṇḍānāsana
39) Hamsāsana
40) Nābhītalāsana
41) Ākāśāsana
42) Utpādatalāsana
43) Nābhīlasitapādakāsana
44) Vṛścikāsana
45) Cakrāsana
46) Utpālakāsana

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95 HR2 3.51 calls the posture by its synonym Dhanurāsana.
96 I follow here HR1 for the sake of consistency; compare similar names of postures, such as Bandhapadmāsana and Bandhamayūrāsana. HR2 reads Baddhamatsyendrāsana.
98 See HR2 3.69 for the full name of the mudrā.
99 HR1 reads Yogamudrā.
100 Also called Dhūnapīṭha in HR2 3.71.
101 HR1 reads Pādapiṇḍāna.
102 HR1 reads Hiṃsāsana (misprint).
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

47) Uttānakūrmāsana
48) Kūrmāsana
49) Baddhakūrmāsana¹⁰³
50) Nārjavāsana¹⁰⁴
51) Kabandhāsana
52) Gorakṣāsana
53) Aṅguśṭhāsana
54) Muśṭikāsana
55) Brahmaṇprśāditāsana
56) Paṇcacakulīkkuṭāsana
57) Ekapādakukkuṭāsana
58) Ākāritakukkuṭāsana
59) Bandhacakulīkkuṭāsana
60) Pārvakukkuṭāsana
61) Ardhanāṛśvarāsana
62) Bakāsana
63) Dharāvahāsana
64) Candrakāntāsana
65) Sudhāsārasana
66) Vyāghrāsana
67) Rājasana
68) Indrāṇi-āsana
69) Śarabhāsana
70) Ratnāsana
71) Citrapūta
72) Baddhapakṣi-āsana
73) Īśvarāsana
74) Vicitrānalīnīāsana¹⁰⁵
75) Kāntāsana

¹⁰³ The form Bandhakūrmāsana is not attested in the text, which otherwise uses the forms Bandhapadmāsana and Bandhamayūrāsana.
¹⁰⁴ Such a name is not attested in other texts. It is possible that nārjavā was intended as a descriptive term meaning ‘it is difficult.’ However, such descriptive terms are not found elsewhere in this context.
¹⁰⁵ HR1 separates 74 into two postures, Vicitra and Nalina.
Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga: A Survey of Traditions (with Illustrations)

76) Śuddhapakṣi-āsana
77) Sumandarakāsana
78) Caurāṅgi-āsana
79) Krauṇcāsana
80) Dr̥ḍhāsana
81) Khagāsana
82) Brahmāsana
83) Nāgapītha
84) Śavāsana

8.2 Jogapradipakā, Section 3

Different versions of the āsana names are recorded 1) in the text of the edition of the JP, which is a linguistically hybrid text, 2) in the English introduction to the JP by Gharote, 3) the captions of the line drawings appended to Gharote’s edition (which correspond to the descriptions of the āsanas in another work by the same author, the Yogāsanaamālā), 4) the inscriptions on the coloured drawings of manuscript Add. 24099 in the British Library, London, and 5) the accompanying text of that manuscript. In the left-hand column, I first list the names as they appear in section (khanda) 3 of Gharote’s edition and add—in square brackets—variants of the names recorded in other parts of the book, including Gharote’s English introduction. In the right-hand column I list the names of the āsanās as inscribed on the drawings of manuscript Add. 24099, followed by variants appearing in the text of the manuscript. In order not to burden the Appendix with too many minor orthographic variants, I have standardized the orthography somewhat by replacing the frequently used anusvāra with the class nasals.

1) Svastaka [Svastika] āsana
2) Padma āsana (for the second variety, see 44)
3) Neti āsana
4) Udara āsana
5) Saptarṣi [Saptarṣi/Saptarṣi] āsana
6) Pūrva āsana
7) Paścimatāṇa [Paścimatāṇa] āsana
8) Vajrasamghārā [Vajrasamghārā/Vajrasamghāḍa] āsana

106 ḤIR1 reads Sumandaka.
167 I have transliterated the names following the edited hybrid text of the JP without attempting any corrections and Sanskritizations, since sufficient manuscript material was not available to me for comparison’s sake. It is obvious that the edition also contains printing errors. In Hindi, unlike Sanskrit, the words āsana or mudrā following the names of postures are written as separate words.
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

9) Sūrya āsana
10) Gorakhājāli/Gorakhajāli [Gorakhānjali] āsana
11) Anasuyā [Anasūyā] āsana
12) Machandra [Machandar/Matsyendra] āsana (for the second variety, see 46)
13) Bhaire [Bhairava] āsana
13a = 84) Sidhi/Sidha [Siddhi/Siddha] āsana
14) Mahāmudrā āsana
15) Jonimudrā [Yonimudrā] āsana
16) Mayūra āsana
17) Kapāli [Kapāli] āsana
18) Siva [Śiva] āsana
19) Phodyā āsana
20) Mākaḍa [Markaṭa] āsana
21) Para āsana
22) Bhadragorakha āsana
23) Ṛṇḍa [Runda] āsana
24) Jogapada [Yogapada] āsana
25) Cakrī āsana
26) Ātamārāma [Ātamarāma] āsana
27) Mṛtyubhaṇji [Mṛtyubaṇji/ Mṛtyubhaṇji] āsana
28) Vṛścaka [Vṛścika] āsana
29) Viparītakaraṇa [Viparītakaraṇa] āsana
30) Deva āsana
31) Gohi āsana
32) Kocaka āsana
33) Tapakāra āsana
34) Bhidoka [Bhidoka] āsana
35) Brahmajurākusa [Brahmajurāṅkuśa] āsana\(^{108}\)
36) Andha āsana

\(^{108}\) See Brahmapurāṇkuśāsana in Appendix 8.3, no. 19.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Asana</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Bhiśrakā [Bhisarikā/Bhisarika/Bhisarakā]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Aghora āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Vijoga/Viyoga āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Joni [Yoni] āsana</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>Bodhasoka āsana</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>Bhaga [Bhāga] āsana</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>Rudra āsana</td>
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<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Padma āsana (second variety; for the first variety, see 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Sivaliṅga [Śivaliṅga] āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Machandra āsana (second variety; for the first variety, see 12)</td>
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<td>47</td>
<td>Vālamika āsana</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>Vyāsa āsana</td>
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<td>49</td>
<td>Dattadigambara āsana</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>Sidhasamādhi [Siddhasamādhi] āsana</td>
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<td>51</td>
<td>Carapāṭacoka [Carapāṭacauka/Carpaṭacoka] āsana</td>
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<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Gvālipāva āsana</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>Kaneripāva āsana</td>
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<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Hālipāva [Hālipāva] āsana</td>
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<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Midakipāva āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>Jalandhiripāva [Jālandharipāva] āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Gopicanda [Gopicandra] āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Bharathari [Bhartṛhari] āsana</td>
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<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Vasiṣṭha [Vasiṣṭha] āsana</td>
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<td>60</td>
<td>Citra āsana</td>
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<td>61</td>
<td>Aṇjanī āsana</td>
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<td>62</td>
<td>Sāvatri [Sāvitrī] āsana</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>Garuḍa āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Sukadeva [Śukadeva] āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65</td>
<td>Nārada āsana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Narasimgha [Narasimha] āsana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Miśrikā āsana
Aghora āsana
Vijoga āsana
Joni āsana
Bodhasoka āsana
Bhaga āsana
Rudra āsana
Baddhapadmā āsana
(S = Baddhapadmāsana)
Sivaliṅga āsana
Machindra āsana (second [dutiya] variety)
Vālamika āsana
Vyāsa āsana
Dattadigambara āsana
Siddhisamādhi āsana
Carapāṭacauka āsana
Gvālipāva [Gvālipāva] āsana
Kateripāva āsana
Hālipāva āsana
Midakipāva āsana
Jalandhiripāva āsana
Gopicanda āsana
Bharathari āsana
Vasiṣṭha āsana
Citra āsana
Aṇjanī āsana
Sāvitrī āsana
Garuḍa āsana
Sukadeva āsana
Nārada āsana
Narasimgha āsana
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

67) Varāha āsana

68) Kapila āsana

69) Jātī [Yati] āsana

70) Vṛṣapati [Vṛkṣa?] āsana

71) Pārvati āsana

72) Kurkaṭa [Kurakaṭa?] āsana

73) Kākabhūsanḍī [Kākabhṛṣandī/
Kākabhūṣandī] āsana

74) Siddhaharatālī [Siddhaharatāli/Siddhahartāli] āsana

75) Sumati āsana

76) Kalyāṇa āsana

77) Urdh apavāna [Urdhvaspavana,
Urdhávapayana] āsana

78) Masaka [Maśaka] āsana

79) Brahma [Brahmā] āsana

80) Anīla [Anila] āsana

81) Kūrmā āsana

82) Nagra [Nagara/Nagna] āsana

83) Parasaratāma [Parasarāma] āsana.\(^{109}\)

84) Sidhi/Sidha [Siddhi/Siddha] āsana

Varāha āsana

Kapila āsana

Yati āsana

Vṛhaspati (= Bṛhaspati) [Vrahhaspati] āsana

Pārvati āsana

Kukkuṭa āsana

Kākabhūṣandī āsana

Siddhaharatālī āsana

Sumati āsana

Kalyāṇa (= Kalyāṇa) āsana

Urdhbhava āsana

Masaka āsana

Brahma āsana

Anila āsana

Kūrmāsana

Nagna [Nagra] āsana

Parasarāma āsana

Siddha āsana

8.3 Hanūmān Śarmā 1935\(^{110}\)

1) Siddhāsana

2) Prasiddhasiddhāsana

3) Padmāsana

4) Baddhapadmāsana

5) Utthitapadmāsana

\(^{109}\) After the description of Parasaratāma āsana JP repeats that of Sidhi/Sidha/Siddhi/Sidhā āsana (see 13+).

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6) Urdhva padmāsana
7) Suptapadmāsana
8) Bhadrāsana
9) Svastikāsana
10) Yogāsana
11) Prānāsana
12) Muktāsana
13) Pavanamuktāsana
14) Sūryāsana
15) Sūryabhedanāsana
16) Bhastrikāsana
17) Sāvitrismādhī-āsana
18) Acintanīyāsana
19) Brahmajvarāṅkuṣāsana
20) Uddhārakāsana
21) Mṛtyubhaṇjakāsana
22) Ātmārāmāsana
23) Bhairavāsana
24) Garuḍāsana
25) Gomukhāsana
26) Vātāyanāsana
27) Siddhamuktāvalī-āsana
28) Neti-āsana
29) Pūrvāsana
30) Paścimottānāsana
31) Mahāmudrā
32) Vajrāsana
33) Cakrāsana
34) Garbhāsana
35) Śirṣāsana

The list of āsanas in Šarmā’s article was adopted (with occasional small changes) in the publications by Daniélou 1949: 146–149 and Hañmanṣte 1980: 553–554. Variant readings are indicated in the notes.

Daniélou adds Siṃhāsana.
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

36) Hastādhāraśirṣāsana
37) Urdhvasarvāṅgāsana
38) Hastapādāṅguṣṭhāsana
39) Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana
40) Utānapādāsana
41) Jānulagnahastāsana
42) Ekapādaśirāsana
43) Dvipādaśirāsana
44) Ekaḥastāsana
45) Pādahastāsana
46) Kārnāpiḍamūlāsana
47) Koṅāsana
48) Trikoṅāsana
49) Catuṣkoṅāsana
50) Kandaḥpiḍāsana
51) Tulitāsana
52) Lolāsana, Tāḍāsana or Vṛksāsana
53) Dhanuḥāsana
54) Viyogāsana
55) Vilomāsana
56) Yonyāsana
57) Gupṭāṅgāsana
58) Utkatāsana
59) Śokāsana
60) Saṃkaṭāsana
61) Andhāsana
62) Ruṇḍāsana
63) Śavāsana
64) Vṛksāsana

\[112\] Daniëlou omits this āsana.
\[113\] Daniëlou reads Sarvāṅgottānāsana.
\[114\] Daniëlou reads Jānulagnāsana.
\[115\] Hanmarnte reads Karnāpiḍāsana.
\[116\] Hanmarnte reads only Vṛksāsana. Daniëlou lists Lolāsana, Todāsana and Vṛksāsana.
\[117\] Hanmarnte reads Khandāsana.
65) Gopuchāsana
66) Uṣṭrāsana
67) Markatāsana
68) Matsyāsana
69) Matsyendrāsana
70) Makarāsana
71) Kacchapāsana\(^{118}\)
72) Maṇḍūkāsana
73) Uttānamanaṇḍūkāsana
74) Haṃsāsana
75) Bakāsana
76) Mayūrāsana
77) Kukkuṭāsana
78) Phodyāsana\(^{119}\)
79) Śalabhāsana
80) Vṛścikāsana
81) Sarpāsana
82) Halāsana
83) Virāsana
84) Śāntipriyāsana

8.4 Gaṅgādhara Nair 1962\(^{120}\)

1) Padmāsana
2) Baddhapadmāsana
3) Kārmukāsana
4) Siddhāsana
5) Baddhayonyāsana
6) Kṣemāsana
7) Muktāsana

\(^{118}\) Daniélon reads Kacchāsana.
\(^{119}\) Hanmant reads Padmāsana.
\(^{120}\) The photographs of the postures in Nair’s book could not be reproduced here because of their poor quality.
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

8) Guptāsana
9) Svastikāsana
10) Samāsana
11) Sukhāsana
12) Sūryāsana
13) Yogamudrā
14) Utthitapadmāsana
15) Ěrđhvaspadmāsana
16) Kukkuṭāsana
17) Garbhāsana
18) Uttānakūrmāsana
19) Parvatāsana
20) Matsyāsana
21) Ānguṣṭhāsana
22) Pakṣyāsana
23) Kākāsana
24) Bakāsana
25) Virāsana
26) Gomukhāsana
27) Ākarṇadhanurāsana
28) Ekapādakandharāsana
29) Vajrāsana
30) Suptavajrāsana
31) Maricāsana
32) Dvipādakandharāsana
33) Dvipādabhujuśaśaṇa
34) Ěrđhvapaḍaśirṣāsana
35) Çakorāsana
36) Bāṇāsana
37) Upaviṣṭakoṇāsana
38) Paścimatanāsana
39) Jānuśirṣāsana
40) Maḥāmudram (!)
41) Gorakṣāsana
42) Bhadrāsana
43) Mayūrāsana
44) Ardhamatsyendrāsana
45) Pūrṇamatsyendrāsana
46) Kūrmāsana
47) Śaśakāsana
48) Vālivāmanāsana\textsuperscript{121}
49) Maṇḍūkāsana
50) Śiśāsana
51) Śiśāpadmāsana
52) Vṛkṣāsana
53) Sīṁhāsana
54) Uṣṭrāsana
55) Tolāṅgulāsana
56) Bhujāṅgāsana
57) Śalabhāsana
58) Naukāsana
59) Dhanurāsana
60) Merudanḍāsana
61) Pavanamuktāsana
62) Halāsana
63) Kaṇṭhapiḍānāsana
64) Viparītakarani mudrā
65) Sarvāṅgāsana
66) Ürdhva-pādahastāsana
67) Cakrāsana
68) Praśāritapādottānāsana
69) Pārśvottānāsana
70) Viryastambhanāsana
71) Vātāyanāsana
72) Pādahastāsana
73) Utānāsana

\textsuperscript{121} One would have expected the reading Balivāmanāsana here.
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74) Trikoṇāsana
75) Ardhačandrośasana
76) Ekapādāsana
77) Āṇjaneyāsana
78) Vṛścikāsana
79) Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana
80) Upadhānāsana
81) Garuḍāsana
82) Vīravogāsana
83) Yoganidrāsana
84) Uḍḍiyānābhandha

8.5 Svāmī Svayamānanda 1992

1) Śavāsana
2) Padmāsana
3) Baddhapadmāsana
4) Bhujāṅgāsana
5) Śalabhāsana
6) Ardhaśalabhāsana
7) Dhanurāsana
8) Paścimottānāsana
9) Ardhapāścimottānāsana
10) Uttānapādāsana
11) Ardha-Uttānapādāsana
12) Halāsana (first variety)
13) Halāsana (second variety)
14) Sarvāṅgāsana
15) Ardhasarvāṅgāsana
16) Matsyāsana
17) Saralamatsyāsana
18) Vajrāsana
19) Suptavajrāsana
20) Śaśakāsana
21) Ānandamadirāsana
22) Pādādirāsana
23) Siddhāsana
24) Baddhayoni-āsana
25) Matsyendrāsana
26) Ardhamatsyendrāsana
27) Pavanamuktāsana
28) Dvipādapavanamuktāsana
29) Gomukhāsana
30) Ākarnādhānurāsana
31) Hanumānāsana
32) Mahāvīrāsana
33) Simhāsana (first variety)
34) Simhāsana (second variety)
35) Uṣṭrāsana
36) Mayūrāsana
37) Yogamudrāsana
38) Tolāṅgulāsana/Tolāṅgalāsana
39) Tulāsana
40) Kukkuṭāsana
41) Haṁsāsana
42) Makarāsana
43) Bhrāgāsana
44) Śaśakāsana
45) Kūrmāsana
46) Ardhakūrmāsana
47) Vṛścikāsana
48) Garuḍāsana
49) Cakrāsana
50) Ardhacakrāsana
51) Gārbhāsana

122 This āsana differs from 44, which bears the same name.
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

52) Parvatāsana
53) Kandharāsana
54) Jānuśīrāsana
55) Vāṭāyanāsana
56) Pādahastāsana
57) Viparītāpādahastāsana
58) Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana
59) Pādacālanāsana
60) Dvihastabhujāsana
61) Nābhīdarśanāsana
62) Kāṇḍapiḍāsana
63) Trikoṇāsana
64) Prāṇāsana
65) Utkatāsana
66) Samkaṭāsana
67) Setubandhāsana
68) Śīrṣāsana
69) Tādāsana
70) Yogāṅdrāsana
71) Viparitakaraṇīmudrāsana
72) Hastapādāsana
73) Hastapādāṅguṣṭhāsana (first variety)
74) Hastapādāṅguṣṭhāsana (second variety)
75) Prārthanāsana
76) Sthitaprārthanāsana
77) Ekapādāsana
78) Carāṇa-Uddhṛtāsana
79) Atiṣṭhanamitāsana
80) Koṇāsāntulanāsana
81) Samtulanāsana
82) Samatvāsana

113 This āsana differs from 20, which bears the same name.
83) Upaviṣṭāsana
84) Stūpāsana

8.6 The Yoga Challenge© System

1) Vīrabrhadṛāsana (see photographs 1.1–1.3)
2) Sūryanamaskāra (see photographs 2.1–2.20)
3) Pārsvārdhacandrāsana (see photographs 3.1–3.2)
4) Ardhaśandrāsana
5) Pādhaṭāsana
6) Trikoṇāsana
7) Daṇḍāyamāṇa-vibhaktapāda-dājānuśirāsana
8) Utkaṭāsana (see photographs 8.1–8.3)
9) Garuḍāsana
10) Daṇḍāyamāṇajānuśirāsana
11) Daṇḍāyamāṇadhanurāsana
12) Tulādaṇḍāsana
13) Vibhaktahastatulādaṇḍāsana
14) Daṇḍāyamāṇa-vibhaktapāda-pāscimottānāsana
15) Tāḍāsana

24 The postures are listed as documented in a poster published in 2003. Initially the orthography was based on that found in an older typed list of ninety-one postures from Ghosh’s College. This list does not include diacritical marks, contains some obvious typing mistakes and shows the influence of North Indian orthography. Upon request, I standardized and partially corrected the orthography of the āsana names for the poster publication. My corrections included, among others, the addition of diacritical marks and the replacement of the letter b, characteristic of North Indian orthography, by the letter v.

25 The name of the āsana is transmitted without diacritical marks as ‘Tadasana,’ along with the translation ‘tree posture’ (see also Choudhury 2000: 91). Tāḍāsana is often translated as ‘mountain posture’ due to the influence of the translation of the name in B.K.S. Iyengar’s book “Light on Yoga” (1984: 610). Iyengar shows a somewhat different Tāḍāsana, also known as Samasthiti. He derives the name of the posture from the word tāḍa (“mountain”) attested only in Sanskrit lexicons. However, Sanchez’s series already includes a mountain posture (Parvatāsana) as 35. I have previously conjectured that ‘Tadasana’ is a corruption of Tarvāsana (from: taru [tree] + āsana = tarvāsana) meaning ‘tree posture.’ Considering the common exchange between da and la in Sanskrit and the fact that names of postures are often derived from local languages (tāḍa in Hindi means ‘palm tree’), I now suggest that Tāḍāsana be understood as Tālāsana, meaning ‘palm tree posture.’ A ‘palm tree posture’ (tāḍāsana) is depicted in Yogeshwaranand Parmahansa 1987: 77, Dhurendra Brahmachari 1970: 179 with
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16) Pādāṅguṣṭhāsana
17) Vāmanāsana
18) Khagāsana
19) Bakāsana
20) Ānguṣṭhāsana
21) Prānāsana
22) Sukhāsana
23) Samāsana
24) Siddhāsana
25) Bhadrāsana
26) Svastikāsana
27) Ardhapadmāsana
28) Padmāsana
29) Utthitapadmāsana
30) Baddhapadmāsana
31) Tulāṅgulāsana
32) Garbhāsana
33) Matsyāsana
34) Makarāsana
35) Parvatāsana
36) Kukkuṭāsana
37) Śavāsana
38) Pavanamuktāsana (see photographs 38.1–38.2)
39) Bhujāṅgāsana
40) Śalabhāsana (see photographs 40.1–40.2)
41) Pūṁasalabhāsana

plates 104-105 and on several websites (see, for example, http://www.chennaionline.com/health/yoga/tadasana.asp, retrieved April 15, 2003). However, this posture differs in that the practitioner stands on the tips of his toes, stretching both arms upwards perpendicularly (see also Dharmaśīmha 1899, no. 34). In Yogeshwaranand Parmahansi’s version, the practitioner’s fingers are spread apart in a fan-like manner, reminiscent of the leaves of a palm tree. In the picture on the website, however, the fingers are interlocked and the palms turned upward. A variation of Tādāsana is documented in the Yoga Challenge® IV video. It corresponds to the posture commonly known as Vṛksāsana, where the practitioner stands on one leg with both arms raised high up. The list of ninety-one postures from Ghosh’s College erroneously translates ‘Tadasana’ (15) as ‘tree posture’ and ‘Brikkhasana’ (91) as ‘palm tree posture,’ inasmuch as Tādāsana means ‘palm tree posture,’ and Vṛksāsana ‘tree posture.’
42) Dhanurāsana
43) Suptavajrāsana
44) Ardhabūrmāsana
45) Uṣṭrāsana
46) Saśakāsana
47) Jānuśirāsana
48) Paścimottānāsana
49) Vibhaktapādaścimottānāsana
50) Maṇḍūkāsana
51) Uttihapatāścimottānāsana
52) Pūrṇavibhaktapādaśānuśirāsana
53) Ekapādarājakopātasana
54) Daṇḍāyamānapūrṇajānuśirāsana
55) Naṭārājāsana
56) Ākarnaḥdhanurāsana
57) Catuskoṇāsana
58) Gomukhāsana
59) Ardhamatsyendrāsana
60) Ekapādagokilāsana
61) Ekapādaśirāsana
62) Dvipādaśirāsana
63) Uttihatakūrmāsana
64) Kūrmāsana
65) Yoganidrāsana
66) Oṃkārāsana
67) Samkāṭāsana
68) Pūrṇabhujaṅgāsana
69) Pūrṇadhanurāsana
70) Pūrṇa-Uṣṭrāsana
71) Īrdhvadhanurāsana
72) Ekapādadviparītadaṇḍāsana
73) Mayūrāsana
74) Baddhamayūrāsana
75) Ekapādamayūrāsana
8. Appendices: Lists of Names of Eighty-four Āsanas

76) Ekahastamayūrāsana
77) Halāsana
78) Sarvāṅgāsana
79) Úrdhvasarvāṅgāsana
80) Śirṣāsana
81) Úrdhvasirṣāsana
82) Vyāghrāsana\footnote{Corrected from ‘Bagghrasana.’}
83) Vyāghrāsanavṛścikāsana\footnote{Corrected from ‘Bagghrasana-Brischikasana.’}
84) Hastāsana
Selected Bibliography and Abbreviations

*Primary Texts*²


GS Gorakṣaśaṭatakā Gorakṣaśaṭatakam (With introduction, text, English translation, notes

²² The texts have been arranged in the order of the Roman (not the Sanskrit) alphabet to facilitate the use of the bibliography by non-specialists.
Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga: A Survey of Traditions (with Illustrations)


Eighty-four Āsanas in Yoga: A Survey of Traditions (with Illustrations)


YS Yogasūtra(s). The Sāṅga Yogadars’ana or Yoga Dars’ana of Patañjali with the Scholium of Vyāsa and the Commentaries—Tattva Vais’ārdi, Patañjala Rahasya, Yogavārtika and Bhāsvati of Vācaspati Mīśra, Rāghavānanda Sarasvatī, Vijñāna Bhikṣū & Hariharānanda Āranya. Edited with Introduction, Notes, Index, Appendices, etc. by Gosvāmī Dāmodara Śastri. Benares: Jai Krishnācās-Haridas Gupta, 1935.

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129 To help non-specialists, the entries are arranged in the order of the Roman (and not the Sanskrit) alphabet. Numbers refer to the Appendices (8.1–8.6).
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