

HATHARATNAVALI OF SRINIVASABHATTA

A late medieval treatise on yoga and tantra

MEDAPATI VENKATA REDDY*

Revival of interest in yoga

The age old art of yoga, hitherto almost buried into the annals of Indian civilisation has now been excavated by the East as well as the West in the last few decades. Yoga is not a religious dogma. It is both a science and philosophy—science in the sense that it is a well defined technique based on modern physiological principles; and philosophy because it teaches a way of life.

The uniqueness of yoga and its phenomenal popularity have evoked the attention of scientists to this ancient system. While some scientific information is available at the present time, there is still no proper understanding of the physiological effects of yoga. The revival of interest in yogic research is increasing both in the East and the West.

Hathayoga and Srinivasabhattacha

Hathayoga literature flourished in Andhra and reached its zenith during Srinivasa's period. Svatmarama, whose work—Hathapradipika (HP) is a monumental work, also belongs to Andhra and he proved to be a source of inspiration to many a writer on yoga all over the country¹. Srinivasa belonged to a later date and also came under the spell of Svatmarama to whom he refers in the very introduction of his work *Hatharatnavali* (HR). A large number of scholars and writers in Andhra like Bhogeswara Yogi, author of *Yogaratnapradipika*, Raghava, author of *Satkarma Sangraha* and others followed Srinivasabhattacha².

Srinivasabhattacha was the son of Thimmaya Jyothishika and Somamba. He was well versed in Veda, *vedanta*, *vyakarana*, *yoga*, *tantra*, philosophy, logic, *sankhya*, literature and the theories of Gautama and Kanada. He was indeed, one of the greatest exponents of Hathayoga. He is of the same order as the great teachers like Matsyendra, Goraksha and Atmarama.

हठविद्यां हि मत्स्येन्द्रगोरक्षाद्या विजानते ।

आत्मारामोऽपि जानीते श्रीनिवासस्तथा स्वयम् ॥

* Chief Yoga Instructor, Vemana Yoga Research Institute, Secunderabad-3 (A. P).

1. Venkatarreddy. M: *Hatharatnavali* by Srinivasabhattacha (MS) critically edited and being published with the financial assistance of T. T. Devasthanam—Tirupati. See chapter on Atmarama

2. Ibid.

He claims himself to be on par with the great pioneers, and he found his master only in Patanjali, whose footsteps he followed and in the process added one more dimension to yoga, namely *hathayoga*, which does not find place in Patanjali's work.

Hathapradipika

Hathapradipika (HP) was an earlier composition than Hatharatnavali.

Srinivasa refers to the author of Hathapradipika with both the prevalent names, viz. Atmarama and Svatmarama. Unfortunately, the date of Hathapradipika is also not known directly.

In HP, Svatmarama mentions Nityanatha as one of the *Mahasiddhas*. Nityanatha is known as the author of Rasaratnakara and to have lived about 1300 A. D.³ Sivatatvaratnakara composed in 1709 A. D. made use of HP⁴. The earliest manuscript copy of HP is dated Samvat 1686 corresponding to 1629 A. D.⁵

Gode refers to manuscripts as much as 66 years earlier than the Calcutta manuscript and fixed on the basis of this material, the earlier limit of HP as 1360 A. D. and later limit as 1650 A.D. Gode also mentions that another important work "Yoga Chintamani" by Sivananda Saraswati, which quotes repeatedly from HP was a composition of a date somewhere between 1500 to 1860 A. D.⁶

The Kaivalyadhama Yoga school fixes the date between 1350–1550⁷. G. W. Briggs considers the work to belong to 15th century.⁸ J. N. Farquhar opines HP as an earlier work than Gherandasamhita or Sivasamhita.⁹ S. C. Vasu observes the obvious influence of Hathapradipika on Gheranda Samhita.¹⁰

Commentators of HP also do not give any clues regarding the date of composition of HP. Brahmananda, one of the commentators, was a disciple of Meru Sastry, who is said to belong to a period around 1859 A. D.¹¹

3. Digambarji Swamy: Hathapradipika, Kaivalyadhama-Lonavla, 1970–p. 8

4. Gode. P. K: Studies in Indian literary history, Vol-1, Bharateeya Vidyabhavan, p. 379.

5. Digambarji Swamy-Supra

6. Ibid

7, 8, 9, & 10. Venkatarreddy, M., Supra

11. Aufrecht's Catalogus Catalogorum, part-1, p. 388

Another author Paramanandayogi was a disciple of Dattatreya and wrote Vedanta Vartikam in Telugu and quotes from HP.¹² It is generally agreed by scholars that Paramananda yogi belonged to a period around 1600 A. D. and hence the composition of Hathapradipika might be in the last quarter of 16th century.

Date of Hatharatnavali

Since Srinivasabhakta mentions Atmarama as one of the authorities on Hathayoga, the earlier terminus of his work may be fixed as 1600 A. D. Srinivasa styles himself as below in the colophon.

‘सकल नयशास्त्रसम्प्रदायप्रवर्तक न्यायाचार्य’

He mentions some of the authorities on *navya nyaya* like Sasadhara (about 1300 A. D.) and Manikantha Misra (about 1300 A. D.) who wrote Nyaya Siddhantadipa and Nyayaratna. B. K. Matilal, editor of Sasadhara's "Nyayasiddhantadipa" accepts Sasadhara's influence in the South and thus Sasadhara had great influence both in the Western and Southern India by 1600 A. D.¹³

Srinivasa mentions himself as the conqueror of logicians like Mahadeva Misra.

‘महादेवमिश्रादि सकलतार्किक वादजयजन्य जयलक्ष्मीविराजमान’

But unfortunately we do not have any information of Mahadeva Misra. Satkarma Sangraha of Chidghanananda¹⁴ is a work which shows clear influence of HR though Chidghanananda himself does not make any specific mention of Srinivasa or HR. But the fact that he describes such practices as *chakri*, *antarnauli*, *bastri*, *vichitrakarani* and *gajakarni* shows the influence of Srinivasa without any doubt. There is very little information available regarding this author and his date.

Another author who quotes from HR is Sunderadeva. He wrote Hathasanketachandrika and describes *chakrikriya*, *antarnauli*, *sankhaprakshal* as well as shapes and measurements of *sutraneti* etc.¹⁵ Unfortunately there are more than one Sunderadeva whose identity is yet to be established. One is the author of Hathasanketachandrika and the other is one who composed an anthology called Suktisundara. Gode who established the

12. Subramanyam. N. etc: Vedanta, 1874, p-2. Source. Tamilnadu Archives, Madras

13. Matilal, B. K: Nyayasiddhantadipa, L. D. Institute of Indology—Ahmedabad, 1979, p. 19

14. Harshe. R. G: Satkarmasangraha, Kaivalyadhama, Lonavla, 1970.

15. Sunderadeva, author of Hathasanketachandrika, (MS) G. O. M. L. Madras. No 3239

date of Sukthisundara between 1664 and 1719 A. D. opines that if the author of Hathasanketachandrika is identical with the author of Suktisundara then the date is applicable to both. However this identity has not been proved.¹⁶

Sunderadeva also cites quotations from another work, Yoga Bhaskara in addition to quotations from several other works. Catalogus Catalogorum mentions Yoga Bhaskara as a book written by Kavindracharya Saraswati. The date of Kavindracharya Saraswati is fixed as 1600–1675 A. D.¹⁸ Hence the date of Hathasanketa Chandrika may be taken as the earlier terminus. The manuscript of the work is copied in Saka 1847 i. e. 1783 A. D.¹⁹ The date of the original work may be taken as between 1695–1750 A. D.

Srinivasa in his opening verse of HR referred to three names of *navya nyaya* authors mentioned above, viz. Sasadhara, Manikanthamisra and Gangesa. It is significant that he has not mentioned Gadadhara (17th century A. D.) a comparatively late *navya nyaya* writer. It is probable that Gadadhara may at least be his contemporary but not his predecessor. Considering the above facts date of HR can be fixed to a period between 1625 and 1695 A. D.

SIGNIFICANT FEATURES

Srinivasa is blessed with a complete authority over language and wrote in a style marked for its brevity and clarity. His definitions of various yogas like *mantra-yoga laya-yoga, hatha-yoga*, are unique. Srinivasa's definition of *raja-yoga* is, perhaps, the most outstanding.

न दृष्टिलक्ष्याणि न चित्तबन्धो न देशकालौ न च वायुरोधः ।

न धारणाध्यानपरिश्रमो वा समेधमाने सति राजयोगे ॥

There is no need of focussing the vision on a particular point, no need of mental control, no need of *pranayama*, no effort for *dhyana* and *dharana*. Although it involves the cessation of all objects of thought, it is in fact the realisation of the self-luminous consciousness.

Ashta Karmas

Srinivasa gives more importance to *Suddhikriyas* like *ashtakarmas*. He includes *gajakarni* and *chakri karma* in the list of *ashta karmas*.

16- Godc. P. K., Poona Orientalist, Vol-1, No. 2, p-52

17. Aufrecht.-Supra p-88

18. Dandekar. R. N: Sanskrit and Maharashtra, University of Poona-1972, p-46

19. Descriptive Catalogue of SKT. MS. Calcutta College, vol-III, 1900, p-103

Gajakarni

Gajakarni is of various types. Srinivasa mentions them as follows :

(1) Instead of drinking water, jaggery water, coconut water or milk is to be used as substitute. After drinking and performing a few *kumbhikas*, one has to vomit the whole fluid in quick succession. (2) One has to get control over the sphincter as a result of practice step by step and bring about anti-peristalsis voluntarily. This is more or less a type of *vamana dhauti*, described by Gheranda. In the beginning *vamana dhauti* should not be practised after taking meals. There is also another *kriya* known as *vyaghri kriya* (tiger action) which is similar to Gheranda's *vamana dhauti*.

One should practise *jagajakarni* first and then attempt the same with jaggery water, coconut water or milk. Though not a wash for the entire alimentary canal *guru-gajakarni* is an excellent stomach-wash. This is not to be practised every day. However, for mastering the method daily practice is necessary in the beginning. Once this technique is mastered *gajakarni* can be performed even after taking food.

As one who has practised all the varieties of this *kriya*, Srinivasa, in his work *Hatharatnavali*, gives a more comprehensive description of *Gajakarni* than what is given in *Hathapradipika* or in *Gheranda Samhita*.

Chakri Karma

Chakrikarma has been looked upon as one of the most important cleansing processes, having a bearing on other cleansing processes also. Some of the yogic texts like *Hathasanketachandrika* go to the extent of describing it as the basic process on which depends the success of *mula-bandha*, *basti*, *nauli* etc. Srinivasa criticises *Svatmarama* for not including this process in the *shatkarmas* described by him in *Hathapradipika*. The word *chakri* in Sanskrit means serpent. The process of cleansing the anal canal is known as *chakri karma*, a term first used by Srinivasa though he mentions that it is according to *gurusampradaya*. Srinivasa describes the technique of *chakri* as dilating anal aperture by rotating the finger in it till it is fully open. The therapeutic results attributed to this practice are very great: it is said to cure piles, chronic enlargement of spleen, corpulence, constipation etc.

Srinivasa claims the technique of *chakri* as his own and that *Svatmarama* does not accept *chakri karma*. He also states that the duty of the *sadhaka* is to attain proficiency in all *karmas* and what he mentioned here is to be learnt by all yogis.

One should remove the impurities as indicated above by inserting the index finger in the anus. *Chidghanananda* states the benefits of this *kriya* on the same lines as Srinivasa.

Antarnauli

Another important contribution of Srinivasa is *antarnauli*. Though his description is short and vague it shows different methods which were practised in Andhra in his time.

It is difficult to grasp the exact technique of *antarnauli*. Chidghanananda describes *antarnauli* in his *Satkarmasangraha* in a different way :

त्रिपदासनकं बद्ध्वा बस्तितुन्दविघर्षणात् ।

आन्त्रनीलिरियं प्रोक्ता मणिबन्धप्रसिद्धिदा ॥

having arranged the *tripadasana* (posture) rubbing the *bastitunda* (lower abdomen) is called *antarnauli* which helps in the proper practice of *manibandha*.

The technique of *manibandha* is not found in HR and *Satkarma Sangraha*. It is interesting to note here that Viswanatha yogi in his *Siddhanta Sekhara*²⁰ quotes from Chintamani the detailed technique of *manibandha*.

Bhujangikarana

According to Srinivasa the aim of *kumbhaka* is to increase the span of life. *Kumbhaka* means *pranayama*. To the existing varieties of *kumbhaka*, Srinivasa added another variety *bhujangikarana*. But the description is short and not clear. With *bhujangikarana*, the *kumbhakas* become nine in number.

कण्ठेन पूरयेद्वायुं रेचयेत्कण्ठनालतः ।

भुजङ्गीकरणं चेति कुम्भको नवमः स्मृतः ॥

Asanas

Every school of yoga prescribes some *asanas* for practice. HP claims *asanas* to be the first step of Hathayoga. Gherandasamhita has put *asanas* as a second step while Patanjali gives third place to *asanas*. Srinivasa accords the first place to *astakarmas* and the third to *asanas*. Patanjali neither specifically recommended any particular *asana* nor specified even one by name. The authors of Hathayoga have fully described the *asanas* in greater detail and variety. The *asana* concept seems to be based on postures adopted by birds, beasts, reptiles etc as well as the shape of certain objects.

Asana is one of the eight parts of Patanjali's yoga. According to Patanjali, *asana* is essentially a meditation posture and not an exercise performed for physical culture.

20. Viswanathayogi, author of *Siddhantasekhara* (MS) NO. c. 816. deposited at Oriental Institute, Mysore.

There are in fact 84 lacs of *asanas* taught by Lord Siva. Among them only 84 have come down to us in good shape. No authoritative Hāthayoga treatise gives a description of all 84 *asanas*.

Only eight *asanas* are enumerated and described in Sandilyopanishad. Nine *asanas* are described in Darsanopanishad. According to Goraksha Satakam only two are the typical *asanas*-Siddhasana and Kamalāsana. Practice of *asanas* is also said in this text to cure diseases.

Hathapradipika expounds only 17 postures including their variations. Gheranda has listed 32 postures in Gheranda Samhita, Paramanandayogi the author of Vivekachintamani listed only names of 37 *asanas*.²¹ According to Siva Samhita only 4 *asanas* are useful. Hatharatnavali gives a list of more than 76 *asanas* with names but only 38 *asanas* are described with full technique including variations.

Some *asanas* mentioned by Srinivasa are not found in Gherandasamhita or Hathapradipika. Another important feature of Srinivasa is that the *asanas* described involve more balancing poses, than HP and Gheranda Samhita. In most of the *asanas*, excluding the balancing postures one can relax and forget the activity going on in different parts of the body. Even balancing poses could be maintained for quite some time. This is opposite to the ordinary type of exercises where stress is given on repetition of movements.

Savasana

Srinivasa described Savasana (HR-III-CR-78) in a different form from that of HP and Gheranda Samhita. The position of hands and legs is given. Spreading of both the hands, legs and the thighs is to ward off fatigue. In addition he holds the practice of *savasana* as imperative after performing all *asanas*

S U M M A R Y

Yoga is not a religious dogma. It is both a science and philosophy. Hatha Yoga literature flourished in Andhra and reached its zenith during the period of Srinivasa who was the author of Hatharatnavali and was well versed in Veda, Vedanta, Vyakarana and Yoga etc. He was indeed one of the greatest exponents of Hathayoga. He found his master only in Patanjali, whose foot-steps he followed and in the process added one more

21. Venkatareddy. M., Collected but unpublished material on "Contribution of Andhra to Yoga literature"

dimension to yoga, namely *hathayoga*, which does not find place in Patanjali's work. Srinivasa is blessed with an authority over language and wrote in a style marked for its brevity and clarity. His definitions of various yogas like *mantrayoga*, *layayoga*, *hathayoga* are unique and that of *rajayoga* is perhaps the most outstanding. He gives more importance to *suddhikriyas* like *ashtakarmas*. He includes *gajakarni* and *chakrikarma* in the list of *ashta-karmas*. Srinivasa has described a series of *asanas*, which are in greater number than mentioned in Hathapradipika and Gheranda Sambhita.

सारांश

श्रीनिवासभट्ट की हठरत्नावली

योग और तन्त्र पर एक मध्य युगीन रचना

ले०. एम्. वेंकटरेड्डी

योग एक धार्मिक मत नहीं है। वह एक विज्ञानशास्त्र तथा दर्शन दोनों है। आन्ध्र में हठयोग सम्बन्धि साहित्य का खूब संवर्धन हुआ। श्रीनिवास, जिन्होंने हठरत्नावली की रचना की, के काल में हठयोग साहित्य अपने उत्कर्ष के शिखर पर था। श्रीनिवास वेद, वेदान्त, व्याकरण और योग में निपुण थे। हठयोग के तो वे महान् ज्ञाता थे। पतञ्जलि में ही उन्होंने अपना गुरु पाया जिनके पदचिन्हों का उन्होंने अनुसरण किया तथा कालान्तर में हठयोग नामक एक सर्वथा नवीन अंश को जिसका पतञ्जलि की रचना में उल्लेख नहीं है, योग के साथ जोड़ दिया। श्रीनिवास को भाषा पर दैवी अधिकार है तथा लेखन में उन्होने ऐसी शैली अपनाई जो स्पष्टता एवं सरलता के लिये विख्यात है। मन्त्र योग, लययोग, हठयोग इत्यादि विभिन्न योगों की उनके निर्वचन अनूठी हैं तथा राजयोग का सर्वथा विलक्षण है। अष्टकर्म जैसी शुद्धिक्रियाओं को वह अधिक महत्त्व देते हैं। गजकर्णी और चक्रिकर्म का समावेश उन्होंने अष्टकर्म की सूची में किया है।