



ISSN Print: 2394-7500
ISSN Online: 2394-5869
Impact Factor: 8.4
IJAR 2023; 9(9): 199-202
www.allresearchjournal.com
Received: 10-07-2023
Accepted: 12-08-2023

Prem Sukh
Research Scholar, Sri Sri
University, Faculty of Health
and wellness, Odisha, India

BR Sharma
Hon'ble VC, Sri Sri University,
Cuttack, Odisha, India

Meditative techniques in classical hatha yoga texts: A study

Prem Sukh and BR Sharma

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.22271/allresearch.2023.v9.i9c.11279>

Abstract

Meditative techniques are basically the process of focusing the mind or some practices which turn the normal human mind into a focused mind. Mainly these techniques help to develop the concentration of the individual psychic which is known as *Dhārnā*. In the Hatha Yoga tradition, we found many techniques, methods and processes of concentration. This paper attempts to outline the meditative techniques which are mentioned in these Classical Yogic texts, as *Haṭha yoga pradīpikā*, *Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā* and *Haṭharatnāvalī*. The purpose of the study is to light on the meditative techniques which are preserved in these Classical *Haṭha* yoga texts in comparative perspective, that transformation the mind in Transcendent mode and reader will be more familiar with method, practices and techniques of meditation. Here, all above mentioned yogic texts come under the *Haṭha* Yoga tradition which was developed in the 6th to 15th centuries AD. Meditative practices, we can also find out in our ancient Vedic culture in an early age it was the part of daily of a prayer in a different form. Recently, the archeologists have unearthed the sculptures in a meditative posture in the ancient Indus valley civilization, Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa site.

Keywords: *Haṭha* yoga, meditative techniques, classical texts, *Dhārnā*

Introduction

The word 'Haṭha' drive with the two *bija* mantras which has been explained in different *haṭha* yoga texts that, *ha* represents *prāṇa*, the vital force, and *tha* represents *mind*, the mental energy. It also means as *ha* is *idā* and *tha* is *pinglā* nādis it means right and left nostril. So *haṭha* yoga means the union of the *prāṇic* and mental forces or union of both nostrils then *prāṇa* will move in *Śuṣumna* nādi. When union between the *prāṇic* and mental forces takes place, then an exalted event occurs in human being. This will be the awakening of higher consciousness. The word *haṭha* yoga also denote as a 'forceful yoga'. Specifically, meditation techniques have been developed for vantage in the later period. Meditation has been decoded in Vedas, Upanishad, Śrimadbhāgavad Gita, Pātanjali Yoga Sutra, *Haṭhayogapradīpikā*, *Gheraṇḍ Saṃhitā*, *Haṭharatnāvalī* and also in other Tantra texts. Meditation was considered as Upasana and practiced by individual during the Vedic and Post-Vedic period. The Upanisads emphasis on self-analysis through intellect, and establishing the mind on Self.

Objective of the study: - The purpose of this theoretical study is to make a comparison of the different methods of meditation or *Dhāranā*, which have been mentioned in the above scriptures. At the same time, it is also to be known in which direction these techniques of meditation lead the human mind, which has been explained in these selected Classical *Haṭha* yoga texts. Whether the seeker is required to practice any asana or mudra before practicing these meditation techniques, or not.

Methods and Materials: - In order to study the philosophical problem, the theoretical data was collected from various yogic Texts. To analyze data, analytical and comparative methods were adopted.

Corresponding Author:
Prem Sukh
Research Scholar, Sri Sri
University, Faculty of Health
and wellness, Odisha, India

Meditative Techniques and Classical Hatha Yoga Texts:

- In today's time, many methods of meditation are in vogue, but in due course of time we have to consider and understand those methods of meditation which are mentioned in the yogic scriptures. Any type of technique/s can be considered as a meditative technique/s which is/are help to improve our concentration and thereby make the human mind more focused on any object or thought. These types of practices and methods are known as Dhāranā in yoga philosophy and in classical Haṭha Yoga texts. Haṭha Yoga is physical and mental practices that uses the different yogic techniques for achieve higher consciousness of human mind. Haṭha Yoga is first mentioned in Sanskrit texts from around the 11th century. But some of its techniques can also be traced back to epics and other texts from at least One thousand years ago. The main object of Haṭha Yoga is to create an absolute harmony of the interacting activities and processes of the physical body, mind and Spirit, finally which will be the stage of Rājyoga. Therefore, we can consider hatha yoga as the preliminary practice of Rāja yoga.

Haṭhapradīpikā: - In the early time of Hatha yoga has been in practice since before the composition of the Haṭhapradīpikā, which is known in secondary literature as Haṭhayogapradīpikā. The Sanskrit Yoga text is the only source for information and practice of Hatha Yoga.

Haṭhayogapradīpikā is a medieval text, written around 1350 AD., by the Nath Yogi Svātmārāma. The meaning of the title is appealing to consider if one wishes to begin to understand the text content as Pradīpikā means light or to illuminate, *ha* means 'sun', *tha* means 'moon' and yoga or *yug* means to 'join'. So the title suggests as light on how to join the sun and the moon, or another way we could say this would be done with Haṭha yoga practice, that Prāṇa will be balanced in both the Nādis *Idā* and *Pinlgā* and flow in Suṣumnā. Haṭhayogapradīpikā is the first classical yoga text that patently sets out to teach Haṭha Yoga above other methods of yoga.

Nādānusandhāna: - (Concentration on the internal body sound) In Haṭhapradīpikā, Yogi Svātmārāma describes Āsana, Śātkarma, Prāṇayāma, Mudrās, Bandh and Samādhi in four chapters and in additionally fifth chapter deal with yoga therapy. Very particularly in the fourth chapter, he described Nādānusandhāna as a Meditative Technique which improves the consciousness of individuals and helps to attain Samādhi.

In very first verse in Ch. IV- 1, Nātha Yogi Svātmārāma give a Salutations to the Lord Shiva in the form of Guru, who is consider as the Nature of nāda, bindu, and kalā. Those who are completely devoted to him, they attain the formless state.

Various path of Samādhi has been described in different yogic texts. Now, Yogi Svātmārāma describe the practice of Nādapāsana in the form of Nādānusandhāna which is the main method of Samadhi as propounded by Guru Gorakṣa Nātha, by the worship or concentration on the internal body sound. It is for the benefit of those who are unable to understand the knowledge of Supreme reality. This is a method, that can practice and perform by ordinary people also. *Śrī Ādināth* mentioned one crore and a quarter types of layas or methods of dissolution into the Supreme Śakti. The practice of Nādānusandhāna is the best one of all the layas.

Method: - There is a method which is explain with some yogic postures and mudras, it means before the practice of Nādānusandhāna Sādhak must be prepare and practice some Āsanas and also keep their Nādis clean.

The Sādhak shall be sitting in the Muktāsana/Siddhāsana posture and assuming the Sāmbhavi-mudrā, should listen with concentrated mind to the sound within body, heard in the right ear. The Sādhak should practice with close the both ears, both eyes and the nose with mouth with the fingers of hands through sanmukhi mudra then the sounds proceed from the Suṣumnā Nādi that has been purified by the practice of Prāṇayāma.

Different Stages of Nādānusandhāna: - As in all types of yogic practices this practices of Nādānusandhāna also has been categorize in four stages.

*arambhaśca ghaṭaścaiva tathā paricayo'pi ca |
niṣpattiḥ sarvayogeṣu syādavasthacatuṣṭayam ||4.69||*

Now, the four stages of Nāda are described as -

- (1) Ārambhāvasthā
- (2) Ghaṭāvasthā
- (3) Parichayāvasthā
- (4) Niṣpattyavasthā

(1) Ārambhāvasthā:- In first stage which is Ārambhāvasthā, due to the piercing the Brahmagranthi in heart a Yogi obtain lustrous body, blissful mind, a divine fragrance, free from illness, fullness of heart and a particular unstruck tinkling sound is heard within the body. The sound become an object of hearing.

(2) Ghaṭāvasthā: In the second stage namely Ghaṭāvasthā when the Prāṇavāyu pass through the middle path this is Suṣumna, the sādhak's attain comfort position in Asana and become like a Īśvara. By the piercing of the viśnugranthi Inner sounds are heard resembling tinkling bells but other sounds may also be heard.

(3) Parichayāvasthā: In this third stage Parichayāvasthā is explained as a nāda similar to the sound of a drum and mardala instrument can be heard in the space between the eyebrows (Ajñācakra). At this stage the prāṇa reaches in the Mahāśūnya (space between the eyebrows) which endow all kinds of siddhis. Then rising the highest order of the mind experienced by Citta, Sahajānanda (the state of Supreme Bliss) is attained by the Sādhaka and then there is freed from all imbalances of humours, pain, old age, disease, hunger and sleep.

(4) Niṣpattyavasthā :- In the niṣpatti (fourth) stage when the prāṇavāyu pierces the rudragranthi which is located at the Ajñācakra and reaches the seat of Lord Śiva(Īśvara) at the point between the eyebrows, the musical notes of a well-tuned viṇa are heard. In this stage prāṇa enters into the brahmarandhra. Then the mind becomes totally concentrated on ongoing Nāda and there will be no longer differentiates between the object and Observer.

In this stage Yogi achieved the power of god or become equaling to god and capable to create and destroy the things. In this stage Mokṣa may or may not be attained, but it is

here that an unbroken happiness is attained. Which is attained by Rājyoga Samadhi as the main aim of Haṭhayoga. According to yogi Svātmārāma the meditation on point between the eyebrows is useful for attaining the state of ūnmani in a short period of time. The method of meditation on point between eyebrows is easy way for attaining the state of rājayoga that is Turyavastha which is the king of all the yoga Sādhna even for those with low intellect. Yogi Svātmārāma said here, the ordinary people can also perform this meditative technique those who have not done appropriate practice of yoga and the method is easy for all. The merging of the mind through nāda appear in a short period of practice of Nādānusandhāna.

Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā: - Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā is a one of the 18th-century systematically written classical hatha yoga text. In this text there is a discourse between the sage Gheraṇḍa and The King Caṇḍakāpālī, this text teaches us about Ghatasthayoga or Saptāṅga Yoga, which is achieved through seven different practices which are deal with the Haṭhayogic practices. In this text sage Gheraṇḍa explain (Panch-dhāraṇā) five meditative techniques or concentration practices with three types of Dhyāna practices.

Panch-dhāraṇā:- Sage Gheraṇḍa has described as –

- (1) Adhodhāraṇā – Parthivi dhāraṇā
- (2) Ambhasidhāraṇā – Jala dhāraṇā
- (3) Vaisvanaridhāraṇā – Agni dhāraṇā
- (4) Vayavidhāraṇā – Vāyu dhāraṇā
- (5) Nabdhodhāraṇā – Ākasha dhāraṇā

Sage Gheraṇḍa has described these five concentration practices/Pancha dhāraṇā, under the category of mudra. The five concentration practices or dhāraṇā he also includes focus and lock the prāṇa through different kumbhaka and concentrate on a specific point. Before practice of these dhāraṇā a Sādhaka must be prepare yourself with some specific mudras and Bandhas. Traditionally, these techniques can actually be used only after some success in the practice of Mudras and Bandhas.

(1) Adhodhāraṇā – Parthivi dhāraṇā :-

In the first dhāraṇā, sage Gheraṇḍa describes Adhodhāraṇā that is also known as Parthivi dhāraṇā. There is a Place in the heart that is with a four-sided Earth-Element with yellow colour which has Lam (L) the letter as its bija mantra and their god is Brhamā. Then hold the Prāṇa along with Citta for 2 hours. This is called Adhodhāraṇā by which the Yogi can conquer the Earth. One who practices prithvi dhāraṇā wins over death and wanders over the earth as a Siddha.

(2) Ambhasidhāraṇā – Jala dhāraṇā

In Ambhasidhāraṇā Water-Element which is white like a conch, and the letter Vam (V) as its Bija and is always presided over by Viṣṇu. focus on this element in the heart, become one-pointed and hold the prāṇa by kumbhaka up to five ghati (about two hours). This mudra is known by the name of Ambhasidhāraṇā. Leaving aside all worries, breathe in deeply, retain the breath up to five ghati and meditate on the water element. This is Ambhasidhāraṇā which destroys unbearable sufferings and sins. By this Ambhasidhāraṇā all the pains, unbearable sufferings and sins of a human being are destroyed. By doing this practice, no harm can come to a person.

(3) Vaisvanaridhāraṇā – Agni dhāraṇā

In Vaisvanaridhāraṇā the region of fire is the navel region. Its colour is red in a triangle form. Its mantra is Ram (R) and its deity element is full of streaming light, is Rudra. This fire lustre, radiance and is the provider of siddhi, perfection. Manifesting it by yogic power, retain the prāṇa with one-pointedness for five ghati (about two hours). By practising it, fear of death, vanishes and no harm is done by fire. It is called vaishvanaridhāraṇā.

(4) Vayavidhāraṇā – Vāyu dhāraṇā

The colour of vāyu, air, is light black like that of collyrium or smoke. Its bija mantra is Yam(Y). This tattva has sāttvic properties. Having manifested it by yogic power, retain the prāṇa vāyu up to two hours with one-pointedness. With the practice of this mudra, by the name of vayviye dhāraṇā, a sādhaka achieves the power to travel in space and cannot die due to air. This major mudra destroys old age and death and enables one to fly in space. This dhāraṇā should never be disclosed to an undevoted and wicked person. By doing so, siddhi is destroyed.

(5) Nabdhodhāraṇā – Ākasha dhāraṇā

The colour of akasha tattva, the ether element, is like the pure water of the ocean. Its bija mantra is Ham(M) and its deity is Sadaśiva. This nabdhodhāraṇā mudra is perfected by retaining prāṇa vāyu for up to two hours, with a peaceful mind - it then opens the gate to liberation. A yogi who knows akashi dhāraṇā does not fall prey to death and does not perish even during Prlaya.

All types of dhāraṇā are different meditative techniques by which a yogi concentrate on a different elements or place inside the body with a particular bija mantra, their shape and colour. In this process a yogi focused their mind minimum five ghati mean two hours. But one important thing is that, every practitioner must be prepare their self for long seating posture which is unshakeable and also be work on their Nādis through the practice of Prāṇāyama.

Three fold of Dhyāna of Saptāṅgyoga:- Sage Gheraṇḍa in Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā described three kind of Dhyāna as it is the part of Ghatasthayoga or Saptasādhna.

Dhyāna is said to be of three kinds:

1. Sthūla - (gross)
2. Jyoti - (light)
3. Sūkṣma - (subtle)

Sthūla Dhyāna is said to be of a gross or physical meditation where the meditator focus on the concert form of object. In Jyoti dhyāna focus will be on Jyoti or light and in Sūkṣma Dhyāna concentration of Brahman as Bindu the ultimate reality beyond Kundali Śakti.

Haṭharatnāvalī: - Haṭharatnāvalī is a one of the important classical hatha yoga text this text was composed in the late 17th century by the Yogi Śrīnīvāsa Bhatt. This work also known as Haṭhayogaratnasarāni or Ratnāvalī. In this text he described mudras, eight types of cleansing practices known as Ashtakarma, nine Kumbhakas and Asanas with Nādānusandhāna. He also gives the definition of Mantrayoga, Layayoga, Rājyoga and Haṭhayoga.

Layayogah: In first chapter we found the little description about layayoga as.

Here, Yogi Śrīnivāsa Bhatt explains that the comprisal of the mind is Layayoga which is achieved through the saṣket (Secrete technique of laya). Ādinath has elaborated one and a half crore types of laya. Simple exercises to stabilize the vision between the eyebrows are the best practice. Concentration in the back of the head leads to victory over death.

In the fourth chapter he describes about Samadhi which is attain by the practice of Nādānusandhāna as one of the meditative techniques as Yogi Svātmārāma explained in Haṭhayogapradīpikā.

Atha Nādānusandhāna: - in Meditative prospective

A great yogi, who experiences a state of samādhi by meditating on the nada, experiences an inexplicable joy in his heart. Through constant practice, indifferent and with restraint, a yogi must resort to Nāda alone, who in a very short time attains the state of unmanī.

Method of Nādānusandhāna practices

A seeker should listen to the inner sound of the body by closing both his ears with cotton wool. Until his mind attains stability, one should concentrate on that inner sound i.e. Nāda. Various sounds are heard in the initial stage, as the practice goes on, even subtler sounds are heard^[5]. In the beginning of the practice, sounds like the sea, thunder, big drums and waterfalls are heard. In the middle stage, sounds like small drums, conch shells and bells are heard. While at the end sounds like small bells, harp and the hum of bees are heard. Thus, different sounds are heard within the body.

A sādhak becomes like a bee by constant practice of nādānusandhāna, like a bee that tastes nectar, not caring for the aroma. Similarly, the seeker does not run after the distractive thoughts by getting absorbed in the unstruck sound. Leaving all thoughts and subjects, always following the nāda, one merges into the nāda.

Different states of Yogāvastha

In the practice of Nādānusandhāna

Arambha, ghata, paricaya and nispatti are the states of yoga described in all traditions of yoga. When a yogi attains the ārambha state, he develops a brilliant physique, deep insight, perfect well-being, sweet fragrance and contentment in the heart while enjoying emptiness. He has penetrated the brahmarandhra, nada emanates from sūrya and he hears a divine, unstruck, resounding sound.

In the second state of ghata, the vāyu (prāna) passes through the middle path (suṣumna), stability in asana is gained and the yogi becomes like a cupid. Moreover, the viṣṇu-granthi is pierced through, various sounds like that of kettle drum etc. are heard in the void (atīśūnya), bringing in Absolute Bliss.

In the third state, one hears the sound of the kettledrum, (prāna) reaches the mahāśūnya (centre of the eyebrows), which leads to the attainment of all siddhis (supernatural powers). The yogi attains spiritual happiness springing from Absolute Bliss and becomes free from all disturbances, sufferings, old age, premature death, hunger and thirst.

When the anila (prāna) flows to the sarvapītha after piercing the rudragranthi, one attains the state of nispatti in which one hears the sounds of the finely tuned vīṇā.

Comparison and Conclusion

In this study, it is viewed that in these all three classical yoga texts gives specific description about different meditative techniques. Very particularly in

Haṭhayogapradīpikā and Haṭharatnāvalī explained the concept of Nādānusandhāna that is also known as Nada or layoga. Both texts talk about four different stages of Nādānusandhāna which is one of the best practice of concentration. According to the given explanation in the texts there are more than one crore methods of laya but Nādānusandhāna is the best one because of this simple practice of concentration on Nada/internal body sound can be practiced by any layman and they can physically, mentally and spiritually have benefited.

And in another text, sage Gheraṇḍa gives the different detailed explanation in Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā about five different dhāraṇās (meditative techniques) which all are the techniques of concentration with their place, bija mantra and colours inside body. In Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā sage Gheraṇḍa gives brief description about three fold of meditation which are help to attain Samadhi and achieve the siddhis. One of the most important things mentioned in all the texts is that, before the practice of meditation, the practitioner should prepare himself with some meditative āsanās and cleanse his nādis with the practice of prāṇāyama.

References

1. Akers-The Hatha Yoga Pradipika. New Age Books; c2005. p.55.
2. Brahmananda-Hathayogapradīpikā of svātmārāma with the commentary jyotsnā, The Adyar Library and Research Centre The Theosophical Society, Adyar, Madras 20, India; c972. p.287.
3. Digambarji. Gharote-Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā. Kaivalyadham, S.M.Y.M. Samiti Lonavla, India; c2018. p. 203.
4. Gharoye, Devnath, Jha. Haṭharatnāvalī: A treatise on Haṭhayoga of ŚRĪNIVĀSAYOGĪ. The Lonavala Yoga Institute, Lonavala, India; c2017. p. 211.
5. Iyāṅgār. Hatha-yoga-pradipika of Svātmārāmasvamin, Part-I- The Theosophical publishing house adyar madras india; c1949. p. 304-3110.
6. Digambarji K. Haṭhapradīpikā of Svātmārāma. Kaivalyadham, S.M.Y.M. Samiti Lonavla, India; c2018. p. 130.
7. Maharaj-Gherand S. Sri Pitambara peeth Sanskrit Parishad. Ditiya MP; c2003, p. 274.
8. Mallinson James Haṭha Yoga - entry in Vol. 3 of the Brill Encyclopedia of Hinduism; c2011, p. 772.
9. Swami M. Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Publisher Bihar School of Yoga; c2012, p. 07.
10. Gheranda S. Samhita Commentary on the Yoga Teachings of Maharshi Gheranda. Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India; c2012, p. 356.
11. Maheshananda S. A Critical Edition of JYOTSNĀ: Brahmananda's Commentary on Hathapradipikā. Kaivalyadham, S.M.Y.M. Samiti Lonavla, India, 2011, p. 236-341.
12. Sinh. Hatha yoga pradipika. Panini office, Allahabad. 1914, p. 156-160.
13. Vasu. The Gherand Sanhita. Sri Satguru Publication. 1979, p. 154.