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**The Yoga Texts Attributed to Yājñavalkya  
and their Remarks on Posture**

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## The Yoga Texts Attributed to Yājñavalkya and their Remarks on Posture

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### Abstract

This essay disambiguates the yoga texts associated with the name of the ancient Indian sage Yājñavalkya. Two key works are identified and reflections are offered on their manuscript and print histories. A text and translation of the section on yoga postures (*āsana*) from one of these works is presented, with a discussion of the historical evolution of these posture descriptions.

### Yājñavalkya

The name of the ancient Upaniṣadic sage Yājñavalkya was associated with at least two quite different texts on yoga that circulated in medieval India. Perhaps the inspiration for the yoga works created in association with the name Yājñavalkya came from the remark in the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* (fourth to fifth century CE) that there was a “yoga teaching (*Yogaśāstra*) taught by me”.<sup>1</sup> There are passages elsewhere in the work suggesting that the author was aware of yoga traditions, including an important early description of how to assume the Lotus posture.<sup>2</sup> But

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- 1 *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 3.110 (Setlur [1912](#): 1227): योगशास्त्रं च मत्प्रोक्तं ज्ञेयं योगमभीप्सता, cited by Divanji ([1954](#): 113). The date of this work has been discussed by Kane ([1930–1962](#): 1.834) and most recently Olivelle ([2016](#): 82–3).
- 2 *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 3.198ab (Setlur [1912](#): 1240–41): ऊरुस्थोत्तानचरणः सव्ये न्यस्योत्तरं करम् ”having his feet turned upwards on his thighs, and having placed his right hand on his left, ...” (another translation: Vasu [1913](#): 162–3). I am grateful to Patrick Olivelle for drawing this passage to my attention.

there is no evidence for any historical relationship between the author of the *Yājñavalkyaśmṛti* and the various *Yogayājñavalkya*- works discussed below.<sup>3</sup>

But through history, the name *Yājñavalkya* continued to evoke yogic associations. It appears in the earliest work to call itself a treatise on *Haṭha Yoga*, namely the thirteenth-century *Yoga Teaching of Dattātreyā* (*Dattātreyayogaśāstra*). In this work, *Yājñavalkya* and his successors are presented as those who know the eightfold yoga normally associated with *Patañjali*, while *Kapila* and his successors and students are associated with a new dispensation, *Haṭha Yoga*, that teaches yogic seals (*mudrā*) and locks (*bandha*).<sup>4</sup>

## The Yoga Works Associated with *Yājñavalkya*'s Name

Confusion has existed concerning these works, going back centuries, partly because many variant and overlapping forms of the works' names have long been in indiscriminate circulation. References to a "*Yogayājñavalkya*" have been common in both Sanskrit literature and international scholarship up to the present, and the ambiguity underlying these references has rarely been acknowledged or addressed.

One of these works goes by titles such as *Yogayājñavalkya*, *Yājñavalkyagītā*, *Yogayājñavalkyagītā* or *-saṃhitā* or *-upaniṣad* or *Yogayājñavalkyagītāsūpaniṣatsu*.<sup>5</sup> This syncretic *Haṭhayoga* text consists of twelve chapters and is cast as a dialogue between the sage *Yājñavalkya* and his wife *Gārgī* (a.k.a. *Maitreyī*) on the subject of yoga.<sup>6</sup> The text begins:

याज्ञवल्क्यमुपिश्रेष्ठं सर्वज्ञं ज्ञाननिर्मलम्

[*Gārgī* said this] to *Yājñavalkya*, that best of sages, omniscient, pure through knowledge.

I shall refer to this work by the title *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*.<sup>7</sup>

The second "*Yogayājñavalkya*" text has become best known today under the title *Brhadhyogiyājñavalkyaśmṛti*,<sup>8</sup> although several manuscript colophons call it the

3 See Derrett 1973: 34. Lindquist 2011 discusses the identity of the Upanishadic *Yājñavalkya*.

4 See Mallinson and Singleton 2017: xx, 228, *et passim*. Lacking access to an edition or manuscript of the *Dattātreyayogaśāstra*, I refer to Sovarel 1998: verses 26cd–27: एवमष्टाङ्गयोगं च याज्ञवल्क्यादयो विदुः ॥ २६ ॥ कपिलाद्यास्तु शिष्याश्च हठं कुयुस्ततो यथा । तद्यथा च महामुद्रा महाबन्धस्तथैव च ॥ २७ ॥.

5 These titles are variously found in secondary literature, manuscript colophons, catalogues, in testimonia by other pre-modern authors, and in published books. In manuscript catalogues, the most common name is perhaps *Yājñavalkyagītā*, and the work is sometimes grouped with manuscripts on legend and epic (*itihāsa-purāṇa*).

6 On the history and denotation of *haṭhayoga* see Birch 2011.

7 As does the NCC: 22, 86a.

8 As in NCC: 14, 83a.

“*Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*”.<sup>9</sup> However, in other sources it is also sometimes just called the *Yogayājñavalkya* or the *Yogiyājñavalkyasmṛti*. It also has twelve chapters, but is not cast as a dialogue with Gārgī. Rather, a group of kings and sages headed by Janaka come to ask Yājñavalkya, who is in Mithilā, about the secret of eternal Brahma by which they may cross the ocean of *saṃsāra*.<sup>10</sup> The text begins:

मिथिलास्थं महात्मानं सर्वयोगेश्वरेश्वरम्

[Janaka and the other kings, and others, asked Yājñavalkya,] who was  
in Mithila, the noble lord of all the lords of Yoga, ...

Locating the encounter in Mithilā is an obvious gesture to the well-known law text, the *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, mentioned above, that also places the action in Mithilā.<sup>11</sup> I shall refer to this work as the ***Sarvayogasamuccaya in the Yogayājñavalkya***.

The relationship between these versions of the “*Yogayājñavalkya*” was discussed in a series of adversarial publications in the 1950s that were concerned to identify the “real” work.<sup>12</sup> While it is not necessary to approach the textual history of these works from an essentialist point of view, two issues are of real historical interest and deserve further investigation.

First, several of the surviving datable manuscripts of the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya* are extremely old, and a new critical edition is a desideratum. Second, since various Sanskrit authors ambiguously cite a “*Yogayājñavalkya*,” it becomes important to be exact about which of these two texts contains the citations to which the references refer: confusion surrounds this issue.<sup>13</sup> Kuvalayananda and Kokaje (1957) argued convincingly that it is the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*<sup>14</sup> that can in most cases be identified as

9 It may be that the title “*Bṛhadyogiyājñavalkyasmṛti*” is an innovation by the work’s first editor, Kuvalayananda (on whom see Alter 2004, 2007).

10 After the introduction, the chapters are on (1) *mantrayoga*, (2) the syllable *om*, (3) the *vyāhṛtis*, (4) the *gāyatrī*, (5) *omkāragāyatrīnyāsa* (6) *sandhyopāsana*, (6) *snāna*, (7) *sandhyopāsana*, (8) *prāṇāyāma*, (9) *dhyāna*, (10) *sūryopasthāna*, (11) *yogadharma*, and (12) *vidyāvidyānirṇaya*. This analysis is based on Shastri 1953. MS London BL Colebrooke 818 (IOLR: 1.4, 785–6, #2435) has slight differences.

11 *Yājñavalkyasmṛti* 1.2 (Acharya 1949): मिथिलास्थः स योगीन्द्रः क्षणं ध्यात्वा ब्रवीन्मुनीन् || “That Yogi lord, residing in Mithilā, thought for a moment and then addressed the sages.”

12 Divanji 1953, 1954; Kuvalayananda and Kokaje 1951, 1957, with references to Kane (1930–1962: 1.188–90), and more recently the appendix “The Real One” in Bedekar and Gharote 1982: 134–67.

13 The list of citations given by Divanji (1954: 113), for example, cannot be accepted without case-by-case checking.

14 I.e., the edition of Kuvalayananda and Kokaje 1951.

the work to which later authors are referring. And Bouy pointed out that the *Yogacintāmaṇi* of Śivānanda Sarasvatī – a work from about 1600 CE known for citing many earlier works – quotes from the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*, calling it either *Yogayājñavalkya* or *Yogiyājñavalkya*.<sup>15</sup> Against this, Bouy helpfully tabulated many citations to the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*<sup>16</sup> that are found in Nārāyaṇa’s seventeenth-century commentaries on the Upaniṣads.<sup>17</sup> But, following Bouy’s lead, more literary research is required into the rich intertextuality of these and related works such as the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* (before 1250).<sup>18</sup>

Judging from the distribution of known manuscripts, it appears that the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* was more widely read in South India, while the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya* was better known in the north, including Nepal.

### The *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*

This more ancient Yājñavalkya text was first edited and published by Kuvalayananda and Kokaje (1951), who based their edition on MS Poona BORI 354 of 1875–76.<sup>19</sup> They titled the work *Brhadhyogiyājñavalkyasmṛtiḥ*. A later edition appeared in 1953 under the same title, edited by Shastri.<sup>20</sup> Kenghe identified a manuscript in the Sarasvati Bhavan library as an additional MS of the same text that Kuvalayananda and Kokaje had published. This MS has the (additional) title *Yogasārasamuccaya*.<sup>21</sup> I have already referred above to one manuscript of this work found in the British Library’s old India Office collection.<sup>22</sup> Another, MS London BL Or. 3568, is found in the British Library’s old British Museum collection.<sup>23</sup> Bendall noted that this manuscript was,

...probably the oldest Sanskrit MS in our collection. At a first glance it might seem to rank with the 9th century MS. of the Cambridge collection, or even with the Horiuzi documents.<sup>24</sup>

15 Bouy (1994: n. 335), citing the analysis of Gode (n.d.).

16 I.e., ed. Divanji 1954.

17 Bouy 1994: 74–5.

18 On the date of the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* see Bouy (*ibid.*: n. 343 *et passim*), Birch (2011: notes 8, 10). The section of the text on postures is translated by Mallinson and Singleton (2017: 104 f.).

19 NCC: 14.83 refers to this MS and to MS Poona Deccan College 363 of 1875–76 (≡ “D p. 93”), a birch-bark MS of 21 ff. in Śāradā script, bought in Ujjain. The reference to the IO is not a manuscript.

20 Shastri (1953). It is possible that Shastri merely reproduced the edition by Kuvalayananda and Kokaje.

21 MS Varanasi SBL 176 (SBL: entry no. 42493).

22 See note 10, referring to MS London BL Colebrooke 818, described in IOLR: 1.4, 785–6, #2435.

23 Described by Bendall (1902: 142, #349).

24 *Ibid.*: 143.

The ninth-century manuscript to which Bendall was referring is MS Cambridge UL Add. 1049, that contains the only surviving copy of the Śaiva Siddhānta work *Pārameśvaratantra* and a fragment of the *Jñānārṇavamahātantra*. The manuscript has been dated to 828 CE.<sup>25</sup> Bendall's palaeographical comparisons showed that MS London BL Or. 3568 is from a similar period.

Yet another manuscript of this work, also titled the “*Yogasārasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*,” was discovered by the Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project in 2010.<sup>26</sup> MS Kathmandu NAK 5-696 consists of 49 palm-leaf folios and is written in the Newari script.<sup>27</sup> This manuscript is of special interest because its colophon permits us to date it to 1024 CE. This MS and MS London BL Or. 3568 give physical evidence that the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya* was not composed later than the tenth century.

An English translation of the edition by Kuvalayananda and Kokaje was published in 1982.<sup>28</sup>

The existence of unexamined, thousand-year old manuscript testimony to the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*, and the intrinsic interest of the work, make it an attractive prospect for a research project.

### The *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*

Manuscripts of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* are known in Devanagari and various other scripts, including Malayalam, Kannada, Telugu and Grantha, suggesting a wide distribution of the text, including strong representation in south India.<sup>29</sup> This work was first printed in 1893 in Bengali script, followed by editions in 1897, 1901, 1902/03, and 1938 (twice).<sup>30</sup> The edition by Divanji (1954) superseded these earlier editions, being based on a critical examination of sixteen manuscripts in addition to the earlier editions.<sup>31</sup> Starting from the end of the nineteenth century, translations of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* have appeared in Bengali, Gujarati, and Hindi and, more recently, English.<sup>32</sup>

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25 Vergiani, Cuneo, and Formigatti 2016.

26 Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project. *Online Title List and Descriptive Catalogue* (NGMCP), accessed June 2014.

27 MS NAKK 5-696 has been filmed twice: as reel no. A 1161-3 and then as reel no. A 51-12.

28 Bedekar and Gharote 1982.

29 MS London BL Colebrooke 790b is clearly described in IOLR: 1.4, 785 (#2434).

30 Divanji (1953: 1–2), Divanji (1954: 99–100).

31 A listing of over 100 surviving manuscripts is now available in Raghavan et al. (NCC: 22, 86–7).

32 Desikachar 2000, which is a translation of Śāstrī (1938) to which unspecified textual changes were made by T. Krishnamacharya. English summaries of the chapters were given by Divanji (1954: 107–12) and Larson and Bhattacharya 2008: 476–89, the latter also unfortunately based on the superseded edition of Śāstrī (1938).

Taking earlier scholarship into account, Bouy made the following key assertions about the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*:<sup>33</sup>

- it is later than the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*,
- it owes a great deal to the earlier *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*,<sup>34</sup> and
- it is datable to the period between about 900 and 1350.<sup>35</sup>

The *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* inherits textual material from works in the literary canon that Colas (2012) has called “The Vaikhānasa Saṃhitā Corpus.” One of the earliest works in this canon, the *Vimānārcanākalpa*,<sup>36</sup> contains material that is similar to passages in the *Vāsiṣṭhasaṃhitā* as well as to texts from the the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* of the Pāñcarātra Corpus. If the *Vimānārcanākalpa* is datable to about 900 CE, as Colas (*ibid.*) suggests, then it is likely that all these works, including the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*, can trace parts of their content to this source.<sup>37</sup>

## Translations

The present study arose out of a continuing research project into the early history of yoga postures being conducted by Dr. Philipp Maas (Leipzig) and myself. The *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya* describes only a single yoga posture. But chapter three of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* contains a description of eight āsanās. In what follows, these passages about posture are edited, translated and discussed.

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33 Bouy 1994: n. 360.

34 See footnote 18 above.

35 Birch (2011: 528, no. 8) noted that Maheshananda et al. (2005) presented evidence for thinking that the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* is twelfth century or later. This would narrow the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*’s date to the range 1100–1350.

36 Prayāgadāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926. Nine postures are described: *Brāhmya*, *Svastika*, *Padma*, *Gomukha*, *Siṃha*, *Mukta*, *Vīra*, *Bhadra* and *Mayūra*. See the translation of Mallinson and Singleton (2017: 100 f.).

37 See Colas 1984, 1986 and especially Colas 1988 for discussion of the *Vimānārcanākalpa*, and Mallinson 2014: 227 *et passim* for further discussion of these parallels.

### Yoga Posture in the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*

The work mentions only a single yoga posture, the Lotus Posture. It is the position adopted by the goddess Devī, when she is symbolising the mantra *om*.<sup>38</sup> In another passage, the posture is described as follows. The Sanskrit text is based on Shastri 1953.

#### Sanskrit text

ऐशान्यभिमुखो भूत्वा उपविश्याऽसने शुभे ॥ १८६ ॥  
नात्युच्छ्रिते नातिनीचे बैलाजिनकुशोत्तरे<sup>a</sup> ।  
ततोपविश्य सुसुखं<sup>b</sup> गुरुं चादौ नमस्य च ॥ १८७ ॥  
पद्मासनं च बद्ध्वा वै दीर्घं प्रणवमुच्चरेत् ।  
ऊरुस्थोत्तानचरणः सव्ये न्यस्येतरं करम् ॥ १८८ ॥  
उत्तानं किञ्चिदुन्नाम्य मुखं विष्टभ्य चोरसा ।  
निमीलिताक्षः सत्त्वस्थो दन्तैर्दन्तान्न संस्पृशेत् ॥ १८९ ॥  
तालुस्थाऽचलजिह्वश्च संवृतास्यः सुनिश्चलः ।  
संनियम्येन्द्रियग्रामं पाषाण इव निश्चलः ॥ १९० ॥  
द्विगुणं त्रिगुणं वापि प्राणायाममुपक्रमेत् ।  
ततो ध्येयः स्थितो योऽस्सौ हृदये दीपवत् प्रभुः ॥ १९१ ॥

<sup>a</sup> बैल-] conjecture by DW ; बैल- *ibid.*: 2324.

<sup>b</sup> Accepting the emendation suggested by Shastri (*ibid.*: 2324): सुसु(सु)खं.

38 Shastri 1953: 4:28, p. 2272; Bedekar and Gharote 1982: 27, 81.



**Translation**

- 186cd–188 Facing in the north-easterly direction of Śiva, he should sit on a clean seat. It should be neither too high nor too low, it should be covered with snakeskin, antelope skin and kuśa grass. Then, sitting on it very comfortably, and starting by paying respects to the master, one should assume the **Lotus Posture**. Then one should pronounce the holy sound *om* in a prolonged way. One should have the feet facing upwards on the thighs, and place the opposite hand on the left.
- 189–190 Then, turning the face slightly upwards and steadying the chest, closing one's eyes and remaining steady in a pure state of mind, one should not let one's upper and lower teeth touch. With the mouth closed and the tongue touching the palate without moving, one is very still.
- 191 One should practice breath control two or three times. After that, the lord who stands in the heart like a lamp should be meditated upon.

### Yoga Posture in the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*

The Sanskrit text of chapter three of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* offered below includes a limited number of critical notes based on the readings of the three printed editions. The base text is the edition of Divanji (1954: 19–22) (“B[ombay]”), with variants recorded from edition of Śāstrī (1938) (“T[rivandrum]”) and Desikachar (2000) (“M[adras]”). Divanji (1954) is the best edition to date in the sense that it gives a critical account of the manuscript tradition and an apparently workmanlike collation of the variant readings from a representative sample of sixteen manuscripts from different parts of India and five earlier printed editions.

#### Sanskrit text

तृतीयोऽध्यायः ॥

याज्ञवल्क्य उवाच —

आसनान्यधुना वक्ष्ये शृणु गार्गि तपोधने ।  
स्वस्तिकं गोमुखं पद्मं वीरं सिंहासनं तथा ॥ १ ॥  
भद्रं मुक्तासनं चैव मयूरासनमेव च ।  
तथैतेषां वरारोहे पृथग्वक्ष्यामि लक्षणम् ॥ २ ॥  
जानूर्वोरन्तरे<sup>a</sup> सम्यक्कृत्वा पादतले उभे ।  
ऋजुकायः सुखासीनः स्वस्तिकं तत्प्रचक्षते ॥ ३ ॥  
सीवन्यास्त्वात्मनः पार्श्वे गुल्फौ निक्षिप्य पादयोः ।  
सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु दक्षिणे दक्षिणेतरम् ॥ ४ ॥  
एतच्च स्वस्तिकं प्रोक्तं सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ।  
सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु पृष्ठपार्श्वे निवेशयेत् ॥ ५ ॥  
दक्षिणेऽपि तथा सव्यं गोमुखं गोमुखं यथा ।  
अङ्गुष्ठौ च निबध्नीयाद्धस्ताभ्यां व्युत्क्रमेण तु ॥ ६ ॥  
ऊर्वोरुपरि<sup>b</sup> विप्रेन्द्रे कृत्वा पादतले उभे ।  
पद्मासनं भवेदेतत्सर्वेषामपि पूजितम् ॥ ७ ॥  
एकं पादमथैकस्मिन्विन्यस्योरुणि संस्थितम् ।  
इतरस्मिन्स्तथा चोरुं वीरासनमुदाहृतम् ॥ ८ ॥

<sup>a</sup> जानूर्वोर्- T; जानोर्वोर्- BM (not Sanskrit).

<sup>b</sup> ऊर्वोर्- T; उर्वोर्- BM (incorrect word).

## Translation

### Chapter three

Yājñavalkya said –

- 1–2 Listen, Gārgī, you great ascetic, I shall now explain the postures. I shall provide a description of each of the following, you of the lovely figure:
- the Lucky Mark (*svastika*),
  - the Cow’s Face (*gomukha*),
  - the Lotus (*padma*),
  - the Hero (*vīra*),
  - the Lion Posture (*siṃhāsana*),
  - the Good Fortune (*bhadra*),
  - the Liberated Posture (*muktāsana*), and
  - the Peacock Posture (*mayūrāsana*).
- 3 The **Lucky Mark** (*svastika*) is described as follows: the soles of both feet are put in between the knees and the thigh, and then one sits comfortably with an upright body.
- 4–5ab And it is also called the **Lucky Mark** (*svastika*) when, having placed the ankles of the two feet beside one’s own perineal seam (*sīvanī*), the right ankle is on the left and the left one on the right. It destroys all wrongs.
- 5cd–6 One should put the right ankle down on the left side of the back, and the left one similarly on the right. This is called **Cow’s Face** (*gomukha*) because it looks like a cow’s face. One should hold one’s big toes with the opposite hands.
- 7 Noble brahman lady, you should place the soles of the two feet on top of the thighs. That is the **Lotus Posture** (*padmāsana*) that everybody admires.
- 8 Now, putting a foot on one thigh and keeping it there, and then the thigh on the other one, is called **Hero Posture** (*Vīrāsana*).

गुल्फौ च वृषणस्याधः सीवन्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ।  
दक्षिणं सव्यगुल्फेन दक्षिणेन तथेतरम् ॥ ९ ॥  
हस्तौ च जान्वोः संस्थाप्य स्वांगुलीश्च<sup>a</sup> प्रसार्य च ।  
व्यात्तवक्रो निरीक्षते नासाग्रं सुसमाहितः ॥ १० ॥  
सिंहासनं भवेदेतत्पूजितं योगिभिः सदा ।  
गुल्फौ च वृषणस्याधः सीवन्याः पार्श्वयोः क्षिपेत् ॥ ११ ॥  
पार्श्वपादौ च पाणिभ्यां दृढं बद्धा सुनिश्चलम् ।  
भद्रासनं भवेदेतत्सर्वव्याधिविषापहम् ॥ १२ ॥  
संपीड्य सीवनीं सूक्ष्मां गुल्फेनैव तु सव्यतः ।  
सव्यं दक्षिणगुल्फेन मुक्तासनमितीरितम् ॥ १३ ॥  
मेढ्रादुपरि निक्षिप्य सव्यं गुल्फं तथोपरि ।  
गुल्फान्तरं च निक्षिप्य मुक्तासनमिदं तु वा ॥ १४ ॥  
अवष्टभ्य धरां सम्यक्तलाभ्यां तु करद्वयोः  
हस्तयोः कूर्परौ<sup>b</sup> चापि स्थापयन्नाभिपार्श्वयोः ॥ १५ ॥  
समुन्नतशिरःपादो<sup>c</sup> दण्डवद्व्योम्नि<sup>d</sup> संस्थितः ।  
मयूरासनमेतत्तु सर्वपापप्रणाशनम् ॥ १६ ॥  
सर्वे चाभ्यन्तरा रोगा विनश्यन्ति विषाणि च ।  
यमैश्च नियमैश्चैव आसनैश्च सुसंयता<sup>e</sup> ॥ १७ ॥  
नाडीशुद्धिं च कृत्वा तु प्राणायामं ततः कुरु ॥ १८ ॥  
इति श्रीयोगयाज्ञवल्क्ये तृतीयोऽध्यायः ।

<sup>a</sup> स्वांगुलीश्च BT; स्वांगुलीस्सं- M.

<sup>b</sup> कूर्परौ BM; कोर्परौ T.

<sup>c</sup> पादो MB; पादौ T.

<sup>d</sup> व्योम्नि MB; व्योमि- T.

<sup>e</sup> सुसंयुता MTB; the Divanji (1954) MSS in Grantha and Kannada script (ग २, ३, ४, ५, ६, क) read सुसंयतः.

- 9–11ab And one should place the ankles below the scrotum at the sides of the perineal seam (*sīvanī*), with the left ankle on the right and the with right one on the other side. Place the hands on the knees, with the fingers stretched out. Then, with the mouth wide open, one should look towards the tip of the nose, with full concentration. This is the **Lion Posture** (*siṃhāsana*), that yogis have always admired.
- 11cd–12 And one should place the ankles below the scrotum at the sides of the perineal seam (*sīvanī*), holding the feet at the side securely with both hands. This is the completely motionless **Good Fortune Posture** (*bhadrāsana*). It takes away all diseases and poisons.
- 13 After pressing the narrow perineal seam with the ankle from the left side, and the left one with the right ankle the posture is called **Liberated Posture** (*muktāsana*).
- 14 Alternatively, after placing the left ankle on top of the penis, and placing the other ankle on top as well, this is **Liberated Posture** (*muktāsana*).
- 15–17ab Planted on the ground firmly with the palms of the two hands, on one's forearms, placing the elbows beside the navel, with one's head and feet raised, one is like a rod, steady in space. This is indeed the **Peacock Posture** (*mayūrāsana*). It destroys all sin. And all internal diseases and poisons come to nothing.
- 17cd–18ab Being very self-controlled<sup>39</sup> by means of the commitments (*yama*), obligations (*niyama*) and postures, and having performed the purification of the conduits (*nāḍī*), you should then do breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*).<sup>40</sup>

**The end of the third chapter in the *Yogayājñavalkya*.**

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39 A feminine participle describing Gārgī. The South Indian readings सुसंयतः mentioned in note e would make the sentence refer to a male practitioner.

40 The purification of the conduits and breath control are described in chapters 4 and 5 respectively of the *Yogayājñavalkya*(gītā).

## Discussion

The following discussion draws on the more extensive research in preparation by Maas and Wujastyk that contains further discussion of all the points below. The sequence of discussion follows that of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*, and all translations are by the authors, unless otherwise stated.

### Lucky Mark

The first posture mentioned, Lucky Mark (*svastika*) is the fourth posture named in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (on 2.46). It is the first posture named in the early recension of the *Skandapurāṇa* (ca. 550–650 CE).<sup>41</sup> Two versions of the posture are presented in our text. The first historical description of how to assume this posture appears in the *Vivaraṇa* commentary on the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. The date and identity of the author of this commentary, Śaṅkara, have been much discussed, but it is clear from his writing that he was an ascetic with a close personal knowledge of the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* tradition and its practice. He may perhaps be dated to ca. 700–800 CE, although the topic is still open.<sup>42</sup> The *Vivaraṇa* describes the posture as follows:

The posture in which one is seated with the right big toe tucked in between the left thigh and calf so that it cannot be seen, and with the left big toe tucked invisibly in between the right thigh and calf, in such a way that the heels do not hurt the testicles, is the Lucky Mark Posture (*svastikāsana*).<sup>43</sup>

Another description of how to adopt this posture appears possibly a century later, in texts of the Vaikānasa Saṃhitā Corpus (see p. 164 above), in the *Vimānār-canākalpa*, ca. 900, that presents this posture in similar terms to Śaṅkara;<sup>44</sup> This is essentially the same as the first version of the posture described in the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*. Vācaspati's description in his tenth-century *Tattvavaiśārādī* is again very similar,<sup>45</sup> but the Śaiva *Dharmaputrikā* of the tenth century or earlier

41 Bhaṭṭarāi (1988: 960), translated and discussed by Maas and Wujastyk (n.d.).

42 The argument that this Śaṅkara is the same person as the famous Vedānta philosopher is made by Harimoto (1999: 136). This dating of the philosopher is argued for by Clark (2006: 111), citing Nakamura (1983: 7 *et passim*).

43 Rama Sastrī and Krishnamurthi Sastrī 1952: 226: दक्षिणं पादाङ्गुष्ठं सव्येनोरुजङ्घेन परिगृह्णादृश्यं कृत्वा, तथा सव्यं पादाङ्गुष्ठं दक्षिणेनोरुजङ्घेनादृश्यं परिगृह्ण, यथा च पार्थिव्यां वृषणयोरपीडनं तथा येनास्ते, तत् स्वस्तिकमासनम् ॥

44 Pāṭala 96 (Prayāgadāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 511), translated Mallinson and Singleton 2017: 101; cf. Colas 1988: 262. It is treated as a variant of Brahmā's Posture (*brāhmya*), which does not have the heels in the proximity of the testicles.

45 Bodas 1892: 112.

describes a posture that does not involve tucking in the toes and it appears to be similar to what today is called “sitting crosslegged”.<sup>46</sup>

### Cow’s Face

The second posture, The Cow’s Face (*gomukha*), is not mentioned as such in the early tradition of classical yoga. But it is one of the nine postures described in the *Vimānārcanākalpa*:

One should sit with the right knee pressed on the left knee. That is the Cow’s Face.<sup>47</sup>

It is described differently in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*, another work of the same religious tradition, composed in the period after 1000 CE, perhaps in South India, where the tradition is found today. The *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* contains a description of a form of theistic yoga that follows the outer shape of Patañjali’s eightfold path, but that is interpreted and elaborated in quite different ways from the tradition of Patañjali and his commentators.<sup>48</sup> The description of the posture in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* is the same as that in the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* namely crossing the legs and crossing one’s hands behind one’s back, grasping the big toe of the opposite foot with each hand.

### Lotus

The third posture mentioned in the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*, the Lotus (*padma*), is one of the most famous of all, and the first mentioned in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. Perhaps the earliest description of how to adopt the posture is again from Śaṅkara, who begins his description as follows in his *Vivaraṇa*.

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<sup>46</sup> Barois 2017.

<sup>47</sup> *Vimānārcanākalpa* paṭala 96 (Prayāgādāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926:511): दक्षिणजानुं वामजानुं संश्लिष्टं निविशयेत् तत् गोमुखम्। (दक्षिणेतरे दक्षिणपार्श्वे, अदक्षिणं दक्षिणोरो इति गुल्फौ निवेशयेत् - तत् गोमुखम्। The parenthetical text is difficult to understand and may say something like “The one that is not the right one is on the right side, the one that is not the right one is on the right thigh. That is how one should place the ankles. That is the Cow’s Face.” Cf. Mallinson and Singleton 2017: 483 n. 32.

<sup>48</sup> Rāmānujācārya and Krishnamacharya 1966: 286. Schrader 1916: 94 ff. is still a valuable survey of the contents of the work. For further discussion and references, see Maas and Wujastyk (n.d.).

In this context, the Lotus Posture is like this: drawing the left foot in towards oneself, one should then place it over the right. And likewise, the right one on top of the left.<sup>49</sup>

The wording of the *Vimānārcanākalpa*'s description, perhaps a hundred years later, is similar to the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*'s, and similarly brief, like that of the *Sarvayogasamuccaya* in the *Yogayājñavalkya*.

Put the soles of the two feet on top of the thighs and then place the palms of the two hands as before. That is the Lotus Posture.<sup>50</sup>

A differently-worded and more elaborate description is given at approximately the same period in the Śaiva *Dharmaputrikā*.<sup>51</sup> In some early Buddhist sources, the Buddha is described as sitting on a “Lion seat (*siṃha-āsana*)” on top of lotuses (*padma*) that miraculously appear on top of the cushions.<sup>52</sup> Perhaps there is an ancient associative relationship between the notion of a “lotus posture” and “a sitting on a lotus.”

## Hero

The Hero (*vīra*) posture is very old, but the earliest literary sources do not agree about what it is.<sup>53</sup> The name of the posture is mentioned in the *Baudhāyanadharma-sūtra*, in the early first century BCE, where it is part of the ritual procedure for becoming an ascetic.<sup>54</sup> This work does not explain how to assume the posture.

This posture is also mentioned by name in very early Buddhist and Jaina sources, including the *Ṭhāṇāṅgasutta*,<sup>55</sup> of the third or fourth century CE.<sup>56</sup> For the Jains, this posture is like holding the position of being seated on a modern chair, but without the chair. Abhayadeva Sūri, the late eleventh-century commentator on the *Ṭhāṇāṅgasutta*,<sup>57</sup> described the posture as follows:

49 Rama Sastri and Krishnamurthi Sastri 1952: 225: तत्र पद्मासनं नाम — सव्यं पादमुपसंहृत्य दक्षिणोपरि निधीत। तथैव दक्षिणं सव्यस्योपरिधात। The text does not specify what the right and left are. The words “leg,” “thigh,” or “knee” are not present in the Sanskrit.

50 Pātala 96 (Prayāgadāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 511): ऊर्वोरुपरि पादतलौ विन्यस्य पूर्ववद्धस्ततलद्वयं न्यसेत् तत्पद्मासनम्।

51 Barois 2017.

52 E.g., in the *Suvarṇaprabhāsottamasūtra*, *Tathāgatāyuhṣpramāṇanirdeśaparivarta* chapter, (Bagchi 1967: 4).

53 Furthermore, there is variation and grammatical confusion in many yoga texts about this posture. More detailed discussion is given by Maas and Wujastyk (n.d.).

54 Kane 1930–1962: v. 2.2, p. 957, n. 2187a. On the date of this work, see Olivelle 2016: 61.

55 *Ṭhāṇāṅgasutta* 5.1.396.

56 Dundas 2006: 385.

57 Winternitz 1981–1985: 2.555.



The Hero Posture looks like the position of someone who has sat down on a lion throne, with their feet on the ground, and the throne has been taken away. And it is hard to do. That is why it is called the Hero Posture, because it is the posture of a powerful hero. Someone who has this Hero Posture is called “One Who is Hero-postured”.<sup>58</sup>

It is listed as the third of the postures in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* discussion of *sūtra* 2.46, but is not described.<sup>59</sup> It is described in the *Vimānārcanākalpa* in ca. 900 as follows:<sup>60</sup>

Placing the right foot on top of the left thigh, place the right thigh on top of the left foot. That is the Hero (*vīra*) posture.<sup>61</sup>

This simple description is amongst the clearest in the literature.

It was also known by name to Kālidāsa, but interestingly, his commentator Mallinātha (fl. 1400) cites a verse describing how to adopt the posture that is identical to our *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* verse.<sup>62</sup> But Mallinātha ascribes it to Vasiṣṭha.<sup>63</sup> The earliest description of a different form of the posture is found in the *Vivaraṇa*:

Thus, in the Hero Posture, one of the feet is curled in, and the lower knee is placed down on the ground.<sup>64</sup>

Vācaspati Miśra described the posture in the following terms:

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58 Commentary on *Thāṇāṅgasutta* 5.1.396 (Jambūvijaya 2002–2003: 2.509:22–23): वीरासनं भूयस्तपादस्य सिंहासने उपविष्टस्य तदपनयने या कायावस्था तद्रूपम्, दुष्करं च तदिति, अत एव वीरस्य साहसिकस्यासनमिति वीरासनमुक्तम्, तदस्यास्तीति वीरासनिकः। Buddhist mentions include the *Lalitavistara* (Dharmachakra Translation Committee 2013: 187).

59 It is omitted in the edition of Āgāśe and Āpaṭe (*Āgāśe*: 111), but is present in the important manuscript MS Ahmedabad LDI 34(1).

60 Colas 1988: 262.

61 *Vimānārcanākalpa* paṭala 96 (Prayāgadāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 511): दक्षिणं पादं वामोरुरपरि न्यस्य वामपादोपरि दक्षिणोरुं न्यसेत् एतत् वीरासनम्। Cf. *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* 31.39 (Rāmānujācārya and Krishnamacharya 1966: 285), which is less clear but seems similar in meaning.

62 *Raghuvamśa* 13.52 (Parab and Paṇṣīkar 1925: 198–99).

63 The reference is to the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*, that was also cited multiple times by the late-sixteenth-century yoga commentator Vijñānabhikṣu (Digambarajī, Jha, and Sahay 1984: 14), including on *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* 2.46. See note 18 above.

64 Rama Sastri and Krishnamurthi Sastri 1952: 226: तथाकुञ्चितान्यतरपादमवनिविन्यस्तापरजानुकं वीरासनम्।

One of the steady person's feet is placed on the ground, and the other foot, with bent knee, is placed above the ground. This is the Hero Posture.<sup>65</sup>

None of these descriptions is really transparent.

The posture described in our present text is the same as that described in the *Śāradātilakatantra*, a voluminous work on Tantra composed by an author named Lakṣmaṇadeśika, possibly in Orissa, and possibly in the twelfth century CE.<sup>66</sup>

Having put one foot below and having placed the other one on the thigh, the Yogin should sit with erect body; thus the heroic posture (*vīrāsana*) is described.<sup>67</sup>

### Lion Posture

While the Lion Posture (*siṃhāsana*) is listed in the *Skandapurāṇa*, it is not described there.<sup>68</sup> As with the previous posture, the Lion Posture is described in the *Vaikhāṇasa Saṃhitā* Corpus. The *Vimānārcaṇākālpa* describes it as:

Similarly, placing the ankles at the sides of the perineal seam below the scrotum, having settled with the hands stretched out on the knees, looking at the tip of the nose, one should have one's mouth closed. That is the Lion Posture.<sup>69</sup>

The closure of the mouth is a contrast with all later descriptions. The Pāñcarātra's *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* has:

After placing the crossed ankles at the sides of the perineal seam, one places the two hands on the knees, stretching out all the fingers. The gaze is fixed on the tip of the nose, the mouth wide open, the wise man is straight. This is called the Lion Posture. It is deeply respected by all the gods.<sup>70</sup>

65 Bodas 1892: 112: स्थितस्यैकतरः पादो भूयस्त एकतरश्चाकुञ्चितजानुर्भूयमित्येतद्विरासनम्। The text of the printed edition is emended in the light of MS Jaisalmere Jinabhadra 395 (Malvania and Punyavijayaji 1972: 167–8). My thanks to Dr. Philipp Maas (2016) for this reading.

66 Bühnemann 2011: 206.

67 *Śāradātilakatantra*, ch. 25, verses 15cd–16ab (*ibid.*: text 217, tr. 226): जानूर्वोरन्तरे सम्यक्कृत्वा पादतले उभे। ऋजुकायो विशेष्योगी स्वस्तिकं तत् प्रचक्षते ॥ १२ ॥ (see citation for critical notes).

68 Bhaṭṭarāi 1988: 960.

69 Pātala 96 (Prayāgādāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 511): पूर्ववत् वृषणस्याऽधः सीवन्याः पार्श्वयोः गुल्फौ न्यस्य हस्तौ प्रसार्य जान्वोः स्थाप्य नासाग्रं निरीक्ष्य संवृताऽऽस्यो भवेत् एतत् सिंहासनम्।

70 Ch. 31, vv. 42–43 (Rāmānujācārya 1916: 2:285): सीवन्याः पार्श्वयोर्गुल्फौ व्युत्क्रमेण निवेश्य च। करौ जान्वोर्निधायोभौ प्रसार्य निखिलाङ्गुलीः ॥ नासाग्रन्यस्तनयनो व्यात्तवक्त्र ऋजुः सुधीः। एतत्सिंहासनं प्रोक्तं सर्वदेवाभिपूजितम् ॥ ४३ ॥

This description is almost word-for-word identical with that of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*.

I already noted above that in early Buddhist sources, the *siṃhāsana* referred not to a posture, but to a kind of throne or seat. The same is true of the ancient *Treatise on Dance and Theatre* by Bharata:

O twice-born ones, one should offer a Lion-Seat (a throne) to gods or kings, and likewise there should be a seat made of reeds for chief priests and ministers.<sup>71</sup>

It seems, then, that in older literature, a *siṃhāsana* was understood to be a throne, and only later was the expression applied to a physical yoga posture.

### Good Fortune

The Good Fortune (*bhadra*) posture is another of the postures, like the Hero, that is named in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*. In the *Vivaraṇa* commentary, it is described as follows:

Thus, the posture in which one is seated, having placed the right foot on top of the left, and the right hand on top of the left, is the Good Fortune Posture (*bhadrāsana*). Everything else is the same.<sup>72</sup>

The crossing of the feet in this posture is not the same as the posture described in the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*, and generally there seems to be variation through history about what this posture looks like. For example, the *Vimānārcanākalpa* describes a posture similar to the Lucky Mark (*svastika*) with the eyes focussed between the eyebrows and the hands clasped.<sup>73</sup> The commentator Vācaspati Miśra (fl. 950–1000 CE), who was a householder, not a yogin, described the posture as follows:

Make a hollow of the soles of the feet, close to the scrotum, and cover it with the hand-tortoise.<sup>74</sup>

The hand-tortoise is a special hand gesture, or *mudrā*, also known from dance, ritual and meditation contexts, though there is uncertainty about its earliest interpretation. Vācaspati Miśra also cited the *Viṣṇupurāṇa* that placed the Good

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71 *Bhāratanaṭyaśāstra* 12.215 (Ramakrishna Kavi and Ramaswami Sastri 1934–1964:171): देवानां नृपतीनां च दद्यात्सिंहासनं द्विजाः । पुरोधसाममात्यानां भवेद्वेत्रासनं तथा ॥ २१५ ॥

72 Rama Sastri and Krishnamurthi Sastri 1952: 225: तथा दक्षिणं पादं सव्यस्योपरि कृत्वा, हस्तं च दक्षिणं सव्यहस्तस्योपरि निधाय, येनास्ते, तद्भद्रासनम् । अन्यत्समानम् ॥ Saying, “everything else is the same,” the author refers to his previous descriptions of how to adopt related postures.

73 Prayāgadāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 512.

74 Bodas 1892: 112: पादतले वृषणसमीपे संपुटीकृत्य तस्योपरि पाणिकच्छपिकां कुर्यात्तद्भद्रासनम् ॥

Fortune posture as the first of the postures, although it does not describe how to adopt it.<sup>75</sup> The *Dharmaputrikā* describes the posture, under the name “Good Fortune in All Directions,” as

The Good Fortune in All Directions posture, tied or untied, has the legs parallel on the ground with the hands on the knees.<sup>76</sup>

Abhayākara Gupta (fl. 1100), in his *Vajrāvalī*, described this posture again quite differently, as “when someone on a high seat keeps both their feet straight.” Some scholars wish to interpret the Good Fortune posture from the medieval period onwards as referring to the posture of someone, especially the Buddha, sitting on a chair with their legs bent at the knee and feet on the ground, in what one might call the European manner.<sup>77</sup> But this interpretation is not generally supported by the wider yoga literature.

## Liberated

The Liberated Posture (*muktāsana*) is, to my knowledge, never mentioned in the early yoga tradition. Like the The Cow’s Face (*gomukha*), it appears in texts of the *Vaikānasa Saṃhitā* Corpus (see p. 164 above), being one of the nine postures described in the *Vimānārcanākālpa*:

Placing the left ankle above the penis, one should place the right one on top of it. That is the Liberated Posture.<sup>78</sup>

It is described in similar terms, with slight elaboration in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā*:

In this case, after placing the left ankle above the penis, and placing the other ankle here, and having also settled the hands in the middle of the body, this is called the Liberated Posture, in which those who seek liberation are established.<sup>79</sup>

All these descriptions follow the second option described in the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*.

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75 Bodas 1892: 113, citing *Viṣṇupurāṇa* 6.7.39 (Pathak 1997–1999: 2, 730a).

76 Barois 2017: समपादलब्धभूम्यधिजानुकरान्वितम्। सम्बद्धमसम्बद्धं वा सर्वतोभद्रमासनं ॥ १७ ॥ (conjecturing भूमि for the manuscript’s भूमिर to get a neuter agreeing with आसनम्).

77 Bhattacharyya (1981: 76–77), cited by Revire (2011: 44). See further discussion by Maas and Wujastyk (n.d.).

78 Pāṭala 96 (Prayāgādāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 511): गुल्फं सव्यं मेढ्रादुपरि विन्यस्य असव्यं तदुपरि न्यसेत् एतत् मुक्तासनम्।

79 Ch. 31, vv. 44–45ab (Rāmānujācārya 1916: 2:296): मेढ्रादुपरि विन्यस्य सव्यगुल्फमिहेतरम्। गुल्फं विन्यस्य पाणी चाप्यङ्गमध्ये निवेश्य च ॥ ४४ ॥ मुक्तासनमिदं प्रोक्तं स्थिता यत्र मुमुक्षवः।

## Peacock

The Peacock Posture (*mayūrāsana*) is not named or described in the earliest yoga texts, but once again the closeness of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* to the Pāñcarātra/Vaikhānasa tradition is shown by the appearance of this posture in the *Vimānār-canākalpa* in ca. 900, where it is described in terms almost identical to the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*.<sup>80</sup> The description in the *Ahīrbudhnyasaṃhitā* is also more or less identical, with the addition of its curative powers:

After properly settling the elbows on the sides of the circle of the navel, and resting firmly on the ground with one's two hands, like a rod in the air, one has one's head and feet elevated. This is regarded as the Posture from the Peacock. This destroys all poisons and turns away all diseases.<sup>81</sup>

This language of these sources is so close to that of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* that a direct connection between them is certain.

The specific assertion that this posture destroys poison may be based on the observation that Indian peacocks are not afraid to fight with snakes, including cobras.<sup>82</sup>

## Conclusions

The pedigree of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* connects it with a new, post-classical vocabulary for naming yoga postures and an emerging willingness to describe how to adopt them, albeit sometimes in opaque language. This language appears in Vaiṣṇava texts of both the Vaikhānasa and the Pāñcarātra corpora, that precede the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*, but perhaps not by many decades. As Bouy and Birch have pointed out, and as I have shown above, the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* has close similarities with the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*. At the same time, many of the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)*'s postures look back in name and sometimes detail to the classical tradition of Patañjali. It is a pivot between an older language and approach to yoga posture, and a newer engagement, owing much to Pāñcarātra and Vaikhānasa traditions, that would later strongly influence the Hāṭhayoga tradition. The *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* was widely read, as is shown by the many surviving manuscripts

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80 Paṭala 96 (Prayāgādāsajī, Bhaṭṭācārya, and Mādhavācārya 1926: 512).

81 Ch. 31, vv. 36–37 (Rāmānujācārya 1916: 2:294): निवेश्य कूर्परौ सम्यङ्गामिमण्डलपार्श्वयोः। अवष्टभ्य भुवं पाणितलाभ्यां व्योम्नि दण्डवत्॥ समोन्नतशिरःपादौ मायूरासनमिष्यते। एतत्सर्वविषघ्नं च सर्वव्याधिनिवारणम्॥ ३७॥

82 I am grateful to Prof. Dagmar Wujastyk for this suggestion.

in libraries all over India.<sup>83</sup> In many ways, the *Yogayājñavalkya(gītā)* and the *Va-siṣṭhasaṃhitā* seem to share a later historical destiny, taking postural descriptions from the Vaiṣṇava traditions and repackaging them for a wider audience.<sup>84</sup> In doing so, they became widely-circulated texts that were common sources of information about yoga posture for non-sectarian authors in the early second millennium CE.

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Kathmandu NAK 5-696, 163

London BL Colebrooke 790b, 163

London BL Colebrooke 818, 161, 162

London BL Or. 3568, 162, 163

Poona BORI 354 of 1875–76, 162

Poona Deccan College 363 of 1875–76, 162

Varanasi SBL 176, 162

## Abbreviations

Āgāṣe      Ve. Śā. Rā. Rā. Kāśīnātha Śāstrī Āgāṣe and Hari Nārāyaṇa Āpaṭe, eds. (1904). *VācaspatiMiśraviracitaṭīkāsaṃvalitaVyāsabhāṣyasametāni Pātañ-jalayogasūtrāṇi tathā BhojadevaviracitaRājamārtanḍābhīdhavṛttisametāni Pātañjalayogasūtrāṇi*. Vol. 47. Ānandāśramasaṃskṛtagranth-āvaliḥ. Puṇyākhyā-pattana: Ānandāśramamudraṇālaya. URL: <http://archive.org/details/patanjaliyoga>.

IOLR      Julius Eggeling et al. (1887–1935). *Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts in the Library of the India Office*. London: Secretary of State for India.

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<sup>83</sup> NCC: 22, 86a lists approximately 120 MSS.

<sup>84</sup> This supports the argument about Haṭha Yoga's universalism, discussed by Kiss (2011: 162) and Mallinson (2014: 229–31).

- NCC V. Raghavan et al. (1949–). *New Catalogus Catalogorum, an Alphabetical Register of Sanskrit and Allied Works and Authors*. Madras University Sanskrit Series. Madras: University of Madras. v.1: revised edition, 1968.
- NGMCP NGMCP (2014). *Nepal-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project. Online Title List and Descriptive Catalogue*. Universität Hamburg and Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. URL: <http://catalogue.ngmcp.uni-hamburg.de/>.
- SBL Sampurnanand Sanskrit University (1953–1995). *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Sanskrit Manuscripts Acquired for and Deposited in the [Sampurnanand] Sanskrit University Library (Sarasvati Bhavana), Varanasi During the Years 1791–*. Varanasi. 13v.

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