

THE HEART OF THE YOGI

THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORLD OF HATHA YOGA

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An Approximate Timeline of Yoga Texts and Philosophical Eras

<p>Vedic Era 4500 — 2500 BC</p> <p>Rishis — divinely inspired seers or sages — composed hymns that became the Vedas, the 4 central spiritual texts of India, covering ritual, sacrifice, mantra and devotion.</p> <p>Atharva Veda is the basis for Ayurveda and Tantra</p> <p>Pre-Vedic Shamanism Before 4500 BC</p> <p>Practices as purifying, healing, meditative and ascetic</p>	<p>Preclassical / Brahmanic Period and Upanishads 2500 — 100 BC; especially by 800 BC</p> <p>Priests and formalized rituals dominate orthodox religion.</p> <p>At the same time, forest-dwelling ascetics seek the direct experience of the Ultimate: their teachings become the 'Upanishads' — the wisdom learned at the feet of the Guru — some of which become sources for the yoga tradition</p>	<p>Classical Period 100 BC — 500 AD</p> <p>Samkhya and Yoga</p> <p>Samkhya Yoga — apparently influenced by Buddhism, making the supreme goal of life to 'put an end to the three kinds of suffering' — presents a 'realist' philosophy that appeals primarily to reason and logical analysis, rather than to scripture</p>	<p>Postclassical Period 500 AD — 1000 AD and beyond</p> <p>Return to mysticism from earliest roots, with influences from Hinduism and Buddhism. Embraces the body as a vehicle to enlightenment, rather than an obstacle. Provides the philosophical basis for hatha yoga</p> <p>Hatha Yoga 900 — 1000 AD founded</p> <p>Siddha Yogis — tantric practitioners seeking enlightenment, immortality and paranormal powers — are credited with creating hatha yoga. These are the 'Natha Yogis' — Matsyendra and his student Goraksha are considered hatha yoga's founders</p>
<p>Indus Valley Civilization 4500 — 2000 BC</p> <p>Symbols in art appear which are later associated with yoga, and show figures in seated, cross-legged poses.</p>	<p>Epic Age: The Bhagavad Gita 1000 — 100 BC; BG around 300 BC</p> <p>Part of the Mahabharata Epic: central teachings focusing on selfless action (karma yoga), devotion (bhakti yoga) and wisdom (jnana yoga)</p>	<p>Yoga Sutra of Patanjali 200</p> <p>Classical statement of ashtanga (eight-limbed) yoga. It has been adopted in contemporary times as the central text of hatha yoga. Patanjali has been traditionally read as a dualist system based on Samkhya, which was subsequently criticized and dropped by the traditions that followed — tantra and vedanta.</p>	<p>Advaita Vedanta 800 AD</p> <p>Shankara articulates nondualist philosophy and strong critique of Samkhya. His philosophy is rooted in the Vedas. Nondualism is adopted by most later forms of yoga and is shared by tantra. He establishes a number of orders of monks crucial to the transmission of yoga.</p> <p>Hatha Yoga Pradipika 1350 AD</p> <p>Important early hatha yoga text covering pranayama, bandhas, kriyas (purificatory practices) and 16 postures</p> <p>S h i v a Samhita 1750 AD</p> <p>Central hatha yoga text that joins Advaita Vedanta philosophy with the tantric/esoteric anatomy and practices of hatha yoga</p> <p>Gheranda Samhita 1750 AD</p> <p>Key text for the postures of hatha yoga, outlining over 100 practices, including 32 asanas</p>

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Dedication

To the many sages and Siddhas through the millenia who have selflessly endeavored to surrender every ounce of their being to the Truth; to share the experience with those who are ready to hear it; and to help along the way those who are not. This book is in honor of their teachings.

And to contemporary stylists of yoga, who teach by their example that we are made poorer by what we claim to trademark as our own.