

The Rich Heritage of Jain Yoga

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Yoga has a long history. It is an integral subjective science. The origins of yoga are a matter of debate.¹ There is no consensus on its chronology or specific origin other than that yoga developed in ancient India. Suggested origins are the Indus Valley Civilization (3300–1900 BCE)² and pre-Vedic Eastern states of India³ the Vedic period (1500–500 BCE), and the śramaṇa movement.⁴ According to Gavin Flood, continuities may exist between those various traditions. This dichotomization is too simplistic, for continuities can undoubtedly be found between renunciation and vedic Brahmanism, while elements from non-Brahmanical, Sramana traditions also played an important part in the formation of the renunciate ideal.⁵

¹ Flood, Gavin D. (1996), *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge University Press, Pp87-90

² Crangle, Edward Fitzpatrick (1994), *The Origin and Development of Early Indian Contemplative Practices*, Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, Pp-6-7

³ Zimmer, Heinrich (1951), *Philosophies of India*, New York, New York: Princeton University Press, ISBN 0-691-01758-1 Bollingen Series XXVI; Edited by Joseph Cambell. Pp 217,314

⁴ Samuel, Geoffrey (2008), *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra*, Cambridge University Press, ISBN 978-0-521-69534-3

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⁵ Gavin Flood: "These renouncer traditions offered a new vision of the human condition which became incorporated, to some degree, into the worldview of the Brahman householder. The ideology of asceticism and renunciation seems, at first, discontinuous with the brahmanical ideology of the affirmation of social obligations and the performance of public and domestic rituals. Indeed, there has been some debate as to whether asceticism and its ideas of retributive action, reincarnation and spiritual liberation, might not have originated outside the orthodox vedic sphere, or even outside Aryan culture: that a divergent historical origin might account for the apparent contradiction within 'Hinduism' between the world affirmation of the householder and the world negation of the renouncer. However, this dichotomization is too simplistic, for continuities can undoubtedly be found between renunciation and vedic Brahmanism, while elements from non-Brahmanical, Sramana traditions also played an important part in the formation of the renunciate ideal."

- Flood, Gavin D. (1996), *An Introduction to Hinduism*, Cambridge University Press, Pp77

The very earliest indication of the existence of some form of Yoga practices in India comes from the Harappan culture which can be dated at least as far back as 3000 B.C. A number of excavated seals show a figure seated in a Yoga position that has been used by the Indian Yogis for meditation till the present day. One of the depicted figures bears signs of divinity worshipped as the Lord of Yoga. The importance of these findings goes a long way towards certifying the pre-Aryan, pre-Vedic inroads of Jainism across Asia. Professor A Chakravarti has suggested that the Harappa and Mohenjodaro figures of the Yogi and the bull indicate a connection with the very first Tirthankara, Rishabh, and a “cult of ahimsa” which was the faith of those residents of the early Indus-Valley.”⁶ It has been theorised that the images from Mohenjodaro of the naked yogis reflect a pattern that would be repeated later on in Jain sculpture.⁷

Richard Lannoy writes⁸ - “Another familial motif is that of a nude man represented as a repeat motif in rigidly upright posture, his legs slightly apart, arms held parallel with the sides of his body, which recurs later as the Jain Tirthankara, repeated row upon row. The hieratic style favoured by that religious community... its rigid conformism, and its utilitarian outlook, so resemble the Harappan culture that it appears more than likely that the prehistoric traits were handed down over many centuries.”

At the time of excavations at Mohenjodaro, Stuart Piggot wrote: “There can be little doubt that we have the prototype of the great god Shiva as the Lord of the Beast (Pashupati) and prince of Yogis.”⁹ The origins of yoga have been speculated to date back to pre-Vedic Indian traditions, it is mentioned in the Rigveda¹⁰ but most likely developed around the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, in ancient India’s ascetic and śramaṇa (Jain and Buddha) movements.¹¹ The chronology of earliest texts describing yoga-practices is unclear, varyingly credited to Hindu Upanishads¹² and Buddhist Pāli Canon,¹³ probably of third century BCE or later.¹⁴

Jain History of Yoga

The practice of meditation in India dates back to the time of Lord Rishabh, who was the propounder and the first Tirthankara (first founder) of Jainism. Evidences in the Agamas (Jain Scripture) reveal that Bahubali, son of Lord Rishabh attained salvation after he practiced

⁶ Life Force, author: Michael Tobias, Publisher: Jain Publishing Company, Fremont, California, 1991, Pp21

⁷ Ibid

⁸ The Speaking Tree--- A Study Of Indian Culture And Society, London, Oxford University paperback, 1974, p. 10

⁹ http://www.hinduwisdom.info/Yoga_and_Hindu_Philosophy.htm/ retrieved on 5/11/2016 11am

¹⁰ Karel Werner states that the existence of accomplished Yogis in Vedic times cannot be doubted, citing the Kesin hymn of the Rigveda as evidence of a Yoga tradition in the Vedic era.

¹¹ Samuel 2008, p. 8.

¹² Mark Singleton (2010), Yoga Body: The Origins of Modern Posture Practice, Oxford University Press, ISBN 978-0-19-539534-1, pages 25–34

¹³ Werner, Karel (1998). *Yoga And Indian Philosophy* (1977, Reprinted in 1998). Motilal Banarsidass Publ. ISBN 81-208-1609-9. Pp119-20

¹⁴ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga.....> retrieved on 5/11/2016 , 11am

uninterrupted Kayotsarg , a form of meditation for twelve months. It is believed that he was so immobile that even creepers grew around his body. Chakravarti Bharat, brother of Bahubali also attained seamless knowledge through contemplation and meditation. His dedication and perfection in the art of contemplation and meditation led him to become the omniscient – all knowing’.

Similarly, we know that the entire penance (sadhana) of the twenty-fourth, the last tirthankar of Jainism, Lord Mahavir , revolved around meditation (dhyan) and relaxation (kayotsarg). Hundreds of his ascetics were clairvoyants, telepathists, and omniscients , who had achieved special powers through the practice of meditation. Successive Acharyas (head of the sect) and the current ascetics of Jain community still continue to live with the same tradition. The roots of the Jain tradition of meditation are found in the Jain Agamas. In the 28th chapter of Uttaradhyayan , we find a brief and systematic description of the path to salvation. References of this kind of penance can also be found in 32nd chapter of Uttaradhyayan. Findings in the ancient literature Ayaro , illustrates the process of Jain-sadhana in detail. Meditation and Asanas are also expounded in certain chapters of Sutrakritang , Bhagwati, and Sthananga. The description of penance is given in Aupapatika Sutra .

The later Jain Acharyas also contributed significantly towards the development of the practice of meditation. Acharya KundaKunda (1st Cent., A.D.), wrote Samayasara , Pravacanasara and introduced a new way to meditate. Acharya Umaswati (2nd and 3rd Cent., A.D.) edited Tattvartha Sutra in which he expounded the path to salvation through meditation. According to *Tattvarthasutra*, yoga is the sum of all the activities of mind, speech and body.¹⁵ Umasvati calls yoga the cause of “asrava” or karmic influx as well as one of the essentials—*samyak caritra*—in the path to liberation.¹⁶ In his *Niyamasara*, Acharya Kundakunda, describes *yoga bhakti*—devotion to the path to liberation—as the highest form of devotion.¹⁷ Acharya Bhadrabahu had practiced Mahaprana Meditation for twelve years. Acharya Haribhadrasuri added a new chapter to Jain-yoga in the 8th Cent., A.D. He introduced a new method and compared Jain-yoga with other methods. He wrote several books including Yoga Bindu, Yoga DrishtiSamuccaya, Yoga Shatak, and Yoga Vinshika. In the 12th Cent., A.D. Acharya Hemchandra wrote Yoga Shastra . Mainstream Hinduism’s influence on Jain yoga is noticed as Haribhadra founded his eightfold yoga and aligned it with Patanjali’s eightfold yoga.¹⁸

¹⁵ Tattvarthasutra [6.1], see Manu Doshi (2007) Translation of Tattvarthasutra, Ahmedabad: Shrut Ratnakar p. 102

¹⁶ Tattvarthasutra [6.2]

¹⁷ Niyamasara [134–40]

¹⁸ *The Integrity of the Yoga Darsana: A Reconsideration of the Classical Yoga* By Ian Whicher, Pp 313

Acarya Haribhadra and Acarya Hemacandra mention the five major vows of ascetics and 12 minor vows of laity under yoga. This has led certain Indologists like Prof. Robert J. Zydenbos to call Jainism, essentially, a system of yogic thinking that grew into a full-fledged religion.¹⁹ The five yamas or the constraints of the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali* bear a resemblance to the five major vows of Jainism, indicating a history of strong cross-fertilization between these traditions. Worthington writes, “Yoga fully acknowledges its debt to Jainism, and Jainism reciprocates by making the practice of yoga part and parcel of life.”²⁰

Jñānārava of Śubhacandra is another beautiful thought provoking text, which discusses the 16-fold contemplations and reveals that when one wakes up from the slumber of delusion and practices the virtues, supreme ecstasy sets in and truth then reveals itself²¹. He also distinguishes the three states of the soul as discussed earlier. He draws a very beautiful picture of a *yogi* engrossed in spirituality. A spiritual *yogi* dives deep into the ocean of compassion and loving kindness and is absolutely free from attachment and hatred. His body is steady and his mind is purified by the waves of enlightenment–²²He discusses four types of *dhyāna* viz. *Pindastha*, *Padastha*, *Rupastha* and *Rupātita*.²³

The following table gives a list of some important post-āgamika Yoga works²⁴

¹⁹ Zydenbos, Robert. "Jainism Today and Its Future." München: Manya Verlag, 2006. p.66

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Jñānārava – shlok-27, Acharya Shubhchandra ,Pub.Jeevraaj granthmala,Sholapur

²² Ibid-28

²³ Ibid -37-40

²⁴ Jaina Yoga and Sādhana, Jain Vishwa Bharati Institute .P.G.Lessons.

Century	Author	Text
1 st	<u>Ācārya</u> Kumkakunda	<u>Samayasara</u> Pravacanasara, Niyamsaar etc
2 nd and 3 rd	<u>Ācārya</u> Umaswati	<u>Tattvartha Sutra</u>
4 th and 5 th	Bhadrabahu II	<u>Āvaśyaka Nirukti</u>
4 th and 5 th	<u>Pujyapada</u> Devanandi	<u>Samadhi Tantra</u> , Iṣtopadeśa, sarvarth siddhi
6 th	Jinabhadragani	<u>Dhyana Śataka</u>
8 th	<u>Ācārya</u> <u>Haribhadra</u>	Yoga Grantha Catuṣṭaya
9 th	<u>Ācārya</u> <u>Jinasena</u>	Mahapurana
11 th	<u>Ācārya</u> Ramasena	Tattvānuśasana
11 th	<u>Ācārya</u> Śubhachandra	Jñānaṇava
11 th	Somadeva Suri	Yogasara
12 th	<u>Ācārya</u> Hemachandra	Yogashastra
13 th	<u>Pandit</u> . Āshadharji	Athyātma Rahasya
15 th	Sundarasuri	Athyātma Kalpadruma
18 th	Vinayavijayji	Shantasudharasa
18 th	<u>Upadhyaya</u> Yashovijayaji	Athyatmopanishad, etc.
20 th and 21 st	<u>Acarya</u> <u>Tulsi</u> and Mahaprajna	Manonuśasanam, 60 books on <u>Preksā Dhyāna</u>
21 st	Muni Pramansagar	Bhavna Yoga
21 st	Muni Pranamaya Sagar	Arhama Yoga
21 st	Acharya Nanesh	Samikshan Dhyan
21 st	Aryika Gyanmati and Aryika Chandnamati	Trilok Dhyan Paddhati

In the spiritual tradition of India, Yoga occupies an important place and in the yogic tradition, *dhyāna* or meditation occupies an important place, and the Jaina *āgamas* are confined to the discussion of Yoga as *dhyāna*. But the above table speaks at great length of the various yogic traditions of Jainism, enumerated and discussed by the illustrious *ācāryas* from time to time. Based on the available *āgamika* and post *āgamika* literature, we can broadly classify the Jaina *dhyāna* yoga *sādhana* practices in four periods²⁵ viz:

Period	Ācārya	Century
1.	From Lord Mahāvīra to Ācārya <u>Kundakunda</u>	6th C B.C to 1st C.A.D
2.	From Ācārya Kundakunda to Ācārya Haribhadra	1st C.A.D to 8th C.A.D
3.	From Ācārya Haribhadra to Ācārya Yaśovijaya	8th C.A.D to 18th C.A.D
4.	From Ācārya Yaśovijaya to date	18th C.A.D to date

In the first period *Kāyotsarga*, *Bhāvanā*, *Vipāsanā* and *Vicaya* were important. People practised meditation, contemplation not for days but for months and years together to accomplish self-realization and emancipation. Lord Mahāvīra himself fasted and meditated for 12.5 years; so did his thousands of monks, nuns and other lay followers. After the 1st Century A.D, philosophical speculation paved way for scriptural study and so *Dhyāna sādhana* took back seat. In the 3rd period Ācārya Haribhadra and others made a comparative study of Jaina Yoga and Pātañjali Yoga and numerous texts on Yoga were written during this period²⁶.

During the 18th century works we can see the impact of devotion (*bhakti*) on Yoga and so many Yoga works were written based on *bhakti*. The most recent contributions of Acharya Tulsi and Acharya Mahapragya (21st Cent.A.D.) 9th and 10th Acharyas of the JainTerapanth sect, respectively include extensive review and revival of the ancient tradition of meditation known as Preksha Meditation.²⁷ The modern age is an age of scientific research and speculation, hence Yoga and meditation practices have been scientifically interpreted and thus we have *Prekṣā Dhyāna*, *Aṇuṣṭhāna Dhyāna*, deep rooted in spirituality for spiritual health and welfare. Disciple of Acharya Vidyasagar, Muni Pramana Sagar invented BhavnaYoga and Muni Pranamaya Sagar started Arham Yoga with the combination of spirituality and science. Many other Jain religious practices are automatically associated with Yoga tradition. Shravkachara (Ethical practice of Jain Householders) Moolachara (Ethical practice of Jain Monks) are the root of Jain Yoga. These are essential for both.

²⁵ Ibid-

²⁶ Yoga In Jain Tradition-Dr Pryadarshna, ISJS study material. Updated on: 04.07.2015

²⁷ <http://www.preksha.com/meditation/preksha225meditation.asp...5/11/2016 11:40am>