



YOGA POSTURES AND FORCEFUL YOGA: TIBETAN AMṚTASIDDHI TEXTS BY AMOGHAVAJRA

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Abstract

The *Amṛtasiddhi* is a text that has recently become better known to people who are interested in the study and practice of yoga, especially Haṭha Yoga. This 11th-century text, by Mādhvacandra, is now considered to be the earliest text that teaches some of the main practices of Haṭha Yoga. Scholars now include the *Amṛtasiddhi* in the category of early *haṭhayoga* texts. This paper is based on the Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus (*'Chi med grub pa'i yig sna*) composed by Amoghavajra but attributed to Virūpa. Although the *Amṛtasiddhi* and Haṭha Yoga might be thought to belong to separate traditions, namely Buddhist and Hindu, they nevertheless share some common practices. This paper was prompted by seeing descriptions of some yoga postures in the Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus, which contains physical yoga practices that bear some resemblance to the *āsanas* of the Haṭha Yoga tradition. These texts on the practice of physical yoga, or *trulchor* texts, are written in verse form. They are mainly instructions on how to form various simple and complex body postures, often followed by specific breathing techniques and movements. In these posture-oriented yoga practices, the body posture (*lus gnad*) and the breathing technique (*rlung gi gnad*) are the main elements. Amoghavajra uses the Tibetan term *lus gnad* for these physical forms of yoga and *drag po'i sbyor ba* (forceful yoga) for one of the breathing techniques involved in this practice. *Drag po'i sbyor ba* is one of the Tibetan equivalents for the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*. In this paper, I will discuss the usage of the term *lus gnad* in Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus and will present some of the selected Haṭha Yoga-like body postures. I will also discuss what this "forceful yoga" is.

KEYWORDS

Amṛtasiddhi, *'Chi med grub pa*, *trulchor* (*'khrul 'khor*), Amoghavajra, Virūpa, *lus gnad*, forceful yoga, Haṭha Yoga.

Introduction

Around the beginning of the second millennium, a set of practices found in a text called *Amṛtasiddhi*,¹ attributed to Virūpa (Bir wa pa), began to appear in medieval India, Nepal and Tibet. This text teaches a new system of yoga, which leads to the attainment of freedom from ageing, disease, death and rebirth, by making one's (*vajra*) body² a path to liberation in this life,³ not in the *bardo* and not in the next life.⁴ This method of yoga later spread within the Hindu Haṭha Yoga tradition.⁵ It also flourished in the Shangpa Kagyu (*Shangs pa bka' brgyud*) school of Tibetan Buddhism, with its own unique *Amṛtasiddhi* lineage of masters, which descended from Virūpa, who probably lived in the 8th or 9th century.⁶

There are several different *Amṛtasiddhi* texts within the Tibetan Buddhist canons and teaching cycles. Kurtis Schaeffer has identified various Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* texts in his article, "*The Attainment of Immortality: From Nāthas in India to Buddhists in Tibet.*" Around 500 years ago, Tāranātha (1575–1634 CE) also noticed the presence of the *Amṛtasiddhi* in the Tibetan canon; he writes:

Early translators translated the *Amṛtasiddhi* text and there are discrepancies in these translations. Even the titles of the text have different names, such as '*Chi med grub pa* (Attainment of the Deathless

¹ See Mallinson and Szántó (2021). Scholars now include the *Amṛtasiddhi* in the category of early *haṭhayoga* texts (Birch 2018: 116).

² "'Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba," In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 199 // *dpal ldan Bi ra'i (Virūpa) zhal dag nas 'chi med sgrub pa'i de nyid gsungs zhes bya ba ni sbye shi med cing rdo rje'i lus 'di nyid las rkyen gzhan las mi ltos shing dngos dang dngos min gyin gzung 'dzin nye bar zhi ba'i man ngag gsungs so //*.
"'Chi med 'khrul 'khor." In *Shangs pa chos skor rnam lnga'i rgya gzhung*, Vol. 10: 207 // *dpal ldan Birwa nag po yi, rang lus thabs ldan phyag rgya ni, 'chi med mkha' spyod bsgrod pa'i gnad //*.

³ *Amṛtasiddhi* 30.3: // *jivanmukti phalapradā* // (Mallinson and Szántó 2022).

"'Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba." In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 171 // *rnal 'byor pa ni pha rol 'gro zhes bya ba ni tshe gcig lus gcig la sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa mngon du gyur pa'o //*.

⁴ "'Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba." In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 184: // *dus 'di nyid las bar do dang dus gzhan la mi ltos shing slob dpon chen po Bir wa'i man ngag la brten nas sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa mngon du gyur pa'o //*.

⁵ Mallinson (2020a: 412) states that, "Several *haṭhayoga* texts (*Gorakṣasāṭaka*, *Amarauḥaprabhoda*, *Vivekamārtāṇḍa*) borrow directly from the *Amṛtasiddhi* without attribution. See also Birch (2020: 949).

⁶ The Shangpa Kagyu *Amṛtasiddhi* lineage masters are Virūpa, Bram ze nag po, Dhur khrod nag po, La stod mgon po, Sangs rgyas gnyen bston and Brtson 'grus seng ge. See Kalu Rinpoche (ed.), '*Chi med 'khrul 'khor*. In *dPal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor rnam lnga'i rgya gzhung*, Vol. 10: 212–13).

State), *bDud rtsi grub pa* (Attainment of Nectar), *'jigs med grub pa*⁷ (Attainment of Fearlessness/Indestructibility). In addition to Nyenton Chenpo's (*gNyen ston chen po*, 12th–13th century) *Amṛtasiddhi* lineage, there are other *Amṛtasiddhi* translations, commentaries and traditions established by *Paṇḍita* Vanaratna⁸ (14th–15th century) and *Paṇḍita* Śāriputta.⁹

I have seen three Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* root texts, two of them in the Tibetan Tengyur catalogue¹⁰ and one in the Shangpa (*Shangs pa*) teaching cycle.¹¹ All three of these *Amṛtasiddhi* texts are attributed to Virūpa or Bir wa pa. All three of these texts also have different Tibetan and Sanskrit titles.¹² There are three *Amṛtasiddhi* commentaries, two in Tibetan Tengyur¹³ and one in the Shangpa teaching cycle.¹⁴ One of the Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* texts, entitled 'Attainment of nectar' (*bDud rtsi grub pa'i rtsa ba/Amṛtasiddhimūla*), has recently been translated, along with the Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text (composed by Mādhavacandra), by Péter Dániel Szántó and James Mallinson (2021). The *Amṛtasiddhi* text from the *Shangs pa* teaching cycle '*Bras bu lus 'chi med kyi rtsa ba*, taught

⁷ *'jigs med* could be a misspelling of *'jig med*.

⁸ I have not seen any *Amṛtasiddhi* texts related to these *paṇḍitas*, Vanaratna and Śāriputta. The text of the *Chinnamunda Vajrayoginī Sādhana* is attributed to *Paṇḍita* Śāriputta, whose lineage comes down from Birwapa/Virūpa. The 4th Zhamar provides his *Amṛtasiddhi* trulkhor lineage, which has come through Śri Vanaratna. The *Amṛtasiddhi* trulkhor lineage masters, according to the 4th Zhamar, Choekyi Drakpa (*zhwa dmar chos kyi grags pa*, 1453–1524 CE) are: Virūpākṣa, Kṛṣṇa Vipra, Paḡala, Śri Vanaratnapāda, Mahā-lotsawa, descending to the 4th Zhamar. See the collected works of the 4th Zhamar, "*Thams cad mkhyen pa zhwa dmar bzhi pa spyan snga chos kyi grags pa'i gsung 'bum bzhugs so*." Vol. (ba): 798 (2009).

⁹ Tāranātha, "*Chi med grub pa'i 'khrīd yig*." Vol. 20: 420: *//'chi med grub pa 'di la sngon lo tsa ba gzhan dang gzhan gyis bsgyur ba /'gyur mi gcig pa 'ga' re snang zhing gdams ngag gi mtshan don rang yang 'chi med grub pa, bdud rtsi grub pa, 'jigs med grub pa sogs 'gyur mi gcig pa sogs mang po 'byung 'dug //*.

¹⁰ (1) *bDud rtsi grub pa'i brtsa ba (Amṛtasiddhimūla)*, written and translated by the Indian yogi, Enadeva. (2) '*Chi med bsgrub pa zhes bya ba (Amṛtasiddhinama)* written and translated by *Yogeśvara* Amoghavajra.

¹¹ (3) '*Bras bu lus 'chi med kyi brtsa ba (Amarasiddhimūla)* taught by E De ba and translated by Mar pa lo tsa ba. According to the colophon of the text, the translator is called Mar pa, who I think is probably sMar lo tsa ba.

¹² See footnotes 10 and 11.

¹³ (1) '*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba (Amṛtasiddhivṛtti)*, composed by *Yogeśvara* Amoghavajra. (2) *g.Yung drung grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba (Amṛtasiddhivṛtti)*, translated by E De ba.

¹⁴ '*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa (Amṛtasiddhivṛtti)* by E Tēpa, translated by rMa lotsawa. (Sometimes his name is spelt as E de ba, sometimes as E te pa.). In Kalu Rinpoche, ed. "*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa*." In *dPal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor rnam lnga'i rgya gzhung*, Vol. 7: 221–34.





by Dhur khrod pa,¹⁵ and the *Amṛtasiddhi* text *bDud rtsi grub pa'i rtsa ba*, taught by E de-ba, from the Derge Tengyur, are very similar. However, Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* text, '*Chi med bsgrub pa* (The attainment of Deathless State) is different.

This article is based on the Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus, composed and self-translated into Tibetan by the Indian yogi Amoghavajra, which has not yet been critically studied. It is not being proposed that yoga postures involved in the *Amṛtasiddhi* physical yoga practice are identical to *āsana*, even though the Tibetan term *lus gnad* is used for *Amṛtasiddhi*'s postural-oriented yoga. However, Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus predates influential Haṭha Yoga texts, such as the 15th-century *Haṭhapradīpikā*, and some of the postures involved in this yoga have some resemblance to *āsanas* of Haṭha Yoga.

Amoghavajra wrote the *Amṛtasiddhi*, its commentary, and a few miscellaneous *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga texts. According to the colophon of the texts, all these *Amṛtasiddhi* texts written by Amoghavajra are attributed to Bir wa pa. These texts are available in the Tibetan Tengyur catalogues of Peking (*pe cing*), in the Narthang (*snar thang*) and Serthima (*gser bris ma*) editions. These *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga texts contain instructions and steps for various physical yoga practices, which end in a particular posture. Some of these postures are familiar to us from Haṭha Yoga-related *āsanas*.

Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* works contains the *Amṛtasiddhi* root text and its commentary. They are '*Chi med bsgrub pa* [Q5051] and '*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa* [Q5058]. In addition to the *Amṛtasiddhi* root text and its commentary, there are about sixteen *Amṛtasiddhi* miscellaneous texts as catalogued in the Peking, Narthang and Serthima Tengyur editions, all of which are attributed to Virūpa. The Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text mentions ten *vivekas* or ten elements of the body. Whereas the Amoghavajra *Amṛtasiddhi* text mentions eight *vivekas* (Tib. *dben pa brgyad*) or eight elements of the body, which are body, channels, vital air, *bindu*, sun, moon, mind and particularity (*viśeṣa*). The detailed descriptions of these eight elements are given in his commentary; and there are separate texts on methods of remedying the defects of each of these elements attributed to Virūpa. Although the Tengyur collection catalogues the remedy for the defects of each of these eight elements as a separate, individual text, the colophon

¹⁵ This Dhur khrod pa could be the third lineage master of *Amṛtasiddhi* teachings. The third lineage master of *Amṛtasiddhi*, according to both Shangpa tradition and the 4th Zhamar, is Dhur khrod Nag po. Schaeffer (2002: 520, n. 32) suggests that this Dhur khrod po and Enadeva (an Indian *siddha* who translated the *Amṛtasiddhimūla* into Tibetan) is the same person.

indicates that these individual text sections are actually a single text entitled *dBen pa brgya kyi skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag*.¹⁶

The root text mentions the (hathayogic) techniques of *mahāmudrā*, *mahābandha* and *mahāvedha*, but the names and descriptions are not as clear as in the Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text, especially *mahāvedha*. However, there is a detailed explanation of each step of the *mahāmudrā* technique in one of his texts on physical yoga practice. Unique to the Amoghavajra *Amṛtasiddhi* works is that they contain several texts on physical yoga practice, which the texts call *lus gnad*. The root text lists the texts that teach *lus gnad* (physical yoga with breathing techniques), which appear in separate texts.¹⁷

As noted previously, the yoga postures that we see in these texts are not separately classified as *āsana*, as in Hindu texts, nor are any names given to these postures. Amoghavajra uses the Tibetan term *lus gnad* (ལུས་གནད་) for these physical forms of yoga, which are usually translated as “key body posture” (*āsana*). These *lus gnad* mainly consist of the formation of various complex yoga postures, followed by the application of a specific breathing technique: “forcefully uniting the upper and lower air at the navel.” The commentary uses the term *drag po'i sbyor ba* (forceful yoga), which is to be performed with one of the variations of a breathing or yogic technique called *bum pa can*. The term *drag po'i sbyor ba* is one of the Tibetan equivalents of the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*. This article therefore focuses on the postural and breathing techniques of the *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga practice, as presented by Amoghavajra.

¹⁶ The sections are:

'Chi med grub pa'i dben pa brgyad las lus bden pa'i skyon bcos thabs [Q5068].

'Chi med grub pa'i rtsa dben pa'i yig sna [Q5069].

'Chi med grub pa'i thig le dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5070].

'Chi med grub pa'i rlung dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5071].

'Chi med grub pa'i sems dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5072].

'Chi med grub pa'i zla ba dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5073].

'Chi med grub pa'i nyi ma dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5074].

'Chi med grub pa'i bye brag dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5075].

¹⁷ The names of these texts are:

'Chi med kyi 'phrang sel [Q5052].

'Chi med grub pa'i sdom bzhi'i 'khrul 'khor gyi yig sna [Q5053].

'Chi med grub pa'i dngos gzhi bcu bdun gyi rnam gzhang [Q5054].

'Chi med grub pa'i rtsa mdud brgyad 'grol ba'i 'khrul 'khor gyi yig sna [Q5055].

rDo rje bzlas pa'i rnam gzhang [Q5056] & [Q5057].

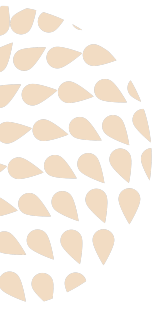
Three other *Amṛtasiddhi* miscellaneous works are also attributed to Virūpa:

'Chi med grub pa'i khams lnga'i man ngag [Q5076].

'Chi med grub pa'i sdom pa bzhi'i skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag [Q5077].

rLung skyon sel ba'i go rims [Q5078].





The subject of Haṭha Yoga and *āsana* is mainly in the Hindu domain. However, since *Amṛtasiddhi* and Haṭha Yoga traditions share some important practices¹⁸ and as some of the formations of the yoga postures mentioned in Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga texts have some resemblance to the *āsanas* that appear in the late medieval Haṭha Yoga texts, a comparison deserves some consideration. This will give us some idea of how the Haṭhayogic style of body posture practices are represented in Vajrayāna Buddhist texts, at a time when Haṭha Yoga texts were first emerging. At present, there is a gap in knowledge between the proliferation of *āsanas* in the post-*Haṭhapradīpikā* Haṭha Yoga texts and the very *āsanas* mentioned in the early *haṭha* text.¹⁹

Who is Virūpa /Bir wa pa: the source of *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching?

Amṛtasiddhi texts are silent on Virūpa, from whom the *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching originated. *Amṛtasiddhi* is generally associated with the well-known *Mahāsiddha* Virūpa, who is famed for reversing the river Gaṅgā and pawning the sun for a cup of wine; he contributes a unique perspective as a Tibetan scholar. However, according to some Tibetan masters/scholars, there are two main confusions regarding the name and identification of the source of the *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching. Firstly, there are two different Virūpas: Virūpa Senior and Virūpa Junior or Black Virūpa.²⁰ Some Sakya masters such as Ngor Khenchen Kunga Zangpo (14th–15th century)²¹ and Jamgon Amnye zhab (17th century) caution against confusing these two *siddhas*, who are both called Virūpa. According to a Sakya (*sa skya*) text and Jonang (*jo nang*) texts they are the teacher and

¹⁸ See Birch (2020: 453): “The praxis common to both the yoga of *Amṛtasiddhi* and the Haṭha Yoga of the *Amaraghaprabodha* is three techniques called *mahāmudrā*, *mahābandha* and *mahāvedha*.” These three practices are known, respectively, as *phyag rgya chen po*, *bsdam pa chen po* and *'bigs pa chen po*, in the text *bDud rtsi grub pa'i rtsa ba*; and as *am-grol*, *bhan-dha* and *be-ta* in Shangpa's *Amṛtasiddhi* trulkhor texts.

¹⁹ “...within the broader history of Haṭha Yoga, it becomes apparent that there was a substantial increase in the number of *āsanas* after the 16th century...In contrast to this, very few *āsanas* were mentioned or described in the early *haṭha* texts, which can be dated from the 12th to the 15th century.”...“if it ever comes to light that eighty-four *āsanas* existed outside of Haṭha Yoga before the 15th century, then it would appear that *haṭhayogis* gradually adopted them over the course of several centuries” (Birch 2018: 104–5, 125).

²⁰ The physical description of Senior Virūpa is of him having flower headgear and holding wine in a horn cup. Black Virūpa has skull headgear and holds nectar in a horn cup. See 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse'i dbang po's text, “*Grub brgya'i byin rlabs*.” In 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po'i *gsung 'bum*, Vol. 14: 331 and 337. See Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1977–1980).

²¹ See footnote 27.

the disciple.²² Virūpa Senior (8th–9th century), the source of the Sakya Lamdre teachings, is known as Thutop Wangchuk (mThu stobs dbang phyug) in Tibetan. Junior Virūpa (c. 9th–11th century)²³ is known as Black Virūpa (Skt. Kṛṣṇa Virūpa²⁴ / Tib. Nag po Bi ru pa/ Bir wa pa), Virūpa of Oḍḍiyāna (Tib. O rgyan yul), the black or dark one (Tib. Nag po/ Skt. Kṛṣṇa).²⁵ Secondly, later Tibetan scholars such as Tāranātha, Ngor Khenchen Kunga Zangpo (14th–15th century), Ngagchang Drakpa Lodoe (Sakya Khricen Drakpa Lodoe, 1563–1617 CE) and the *Amṛtasiddhi* trulkhor text²⁶ from the Shangpa (*Shangs pa*)

²² “Nag po Bi ru pa (Kṛṣṇa Virūpa/Black Virūpa) from Oḍḍiyāna is the disciple of *Yogeśvara* Virūpa. He was born into a Brahmin family. When he was born, astrologers made a divination that he will commit four sins. Thus, he was named the Black Virūpa” // *de'i slob ma ni U rgyan gyi yul du byung ba'i Nag po Bi ru pa yin te... ming ni nag po ces bya'o /*. See Tāranātha: “bKa' babs bdun ldan gyi brgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba rin po che'i khungs lta bu'i gnam.” In *gSung 'bum tā ra nā tha* ('dzam thang par ma), Vol. 17: 29.

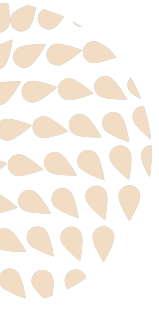
²³ This date is based on Tāranātha's text. The text says that Junior Virūpa (Bi ru pa chung ba) appeared between the reign of Kashmiri King Śrī Harśadeva (11th century) and the King Devapala (9th century). See Tāranātha: “*Dam pa'i chos rin po che 'phags pa'i yul du ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar bston pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung zhes bya ba bzhugs so.*” In *The collected works of Jo-nang rJe bTsun Tāranātha. (History of Buddhism in India, written in 1608)*, Vol. 16: 425. The teacher of Ḍākinī Sukhasiddhi (important to the Shangpa kagyū lineage) is the Black Virūpa (who may not be the Senior Virūpa). Ḍākinī Sukhasiddhi is the teacher of Khyungpo Naljor (the founder of Shangpa Kagyu lineage). So according to the date of Khyungpo Naljor (11th–12th century) and Sukhasiddhi (10th–11th century), this Black Virūpa also might be from 9th–11th century. Tāranātha says: // *khyad par Bi rū pa chung ba ni rgyal po 'di dang De va pā la'i bar du byung bar mngon* //. “It is evident that between this king and the Devapāla...Junior Virūpa appeared.” There is confusion in identifying “this king” from the above text of Taranatha. For example, the English translation of Taranatha's text, entitled *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*, by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopdhyaya (1990: 261) identifies “this king” as King Gopāla. However, the Tibetan text entitled “rGya bod mkhas grub rim byon gyi rnam mthar phyogs bsgrigs” (*Biographical Dictionary of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism*, 1973, Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan works and Archives, Vol. 1: 494) identifies “this king” as Harśadeva. The text says, // *Bi ru pa chung ba ni Ta ra na tha'i rgya gar chos 'byung las rgyal po Hri Harsha deva zhes pa kha che'i rgyal srid byed dus dang De va pā la'i bar du byung bar mngon* //. “In *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*, Junior Virupa appeared between the reigned of Kashmiri King Śrī Harśadeva (11th century) and the King Devapala.”

²⁴ Nag-po Bi-ru-pa (Black Virūpa) is called Kṛṣṇa Virūpa in 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse'i dbang-po's text (see 'Jam dbyangs mkhyen brtse dbang po, “*Grub brgya'i byin rlabs.*” Vol. 14: 337): // *nag po bi rU pa la 'dud / Kri sh+Na bi rU pa da zhes bsgyur /*. There are three Indian *Amṛtasiddhi* lineage masters with the name of Nag-po (black), the 4th Zhamar has named the third *Amṛtasiddhi* lineage master, Black brahmin (Bram-ze Nag-po), as Kṛṣṇa Vipra (see footnote 8). So, I have here used the Sanskrit name Kṛṣṇa Virūpa for Nag-po Bi-ru-pa (Black Virūpa).

²⁵ See Sakya Research Centre, P2293: Nag po bi rU pa, where Black Virūpa or Junior Virūpa of Oḍḍiyāna, the student of Mahāsiddha Virūpa, is identified with the teachings of the severed-head goddess (*dbu bcad ma*). Retrieved from: <https://sakyaresearch.org/persons/2293#main>. Accessed on: 8 May 2023.

²⁶ Kalu Rinpoche, ed. “*Chi med 'khrul 'khor.*” In *dPal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor rnam lnga'i rgya gzhung*, Vol. 10: 202. // *dPal ldan Birwa nag po yi / / rang lus thabs ldan phyag rgya ni / / 'chi med mkha'spyod bsgrod pa'i gnad /*.





teaching cycle, attribute the teaching of *Amṛtasiddhi* to the Black Virūpa (Kṛṣṇa Virūpa) of Oḍḍiyāna. Tāranātha had already written a couple of texts on *Amṛtasiddhi* practice.²⁷ In his praise of the lineage masters of *Amṛtasiddhi*, he used the name Black Virūpa of Oḍḍiyāna instead of Virūpa.²⁸ In his hagiography of the lineage masters of the Tummo (*gTum mo*) transmission, he specifically used the name Black Virūpa for Junior Virūpa, who is a direct disciple of Virūpa and who is also from Oḍḍiyāna. Ngor Khenchen Kunga Zangpo²⁹ and Ngagchang Drakpa Lodoe (the teacher of Jamgon Amnye) even say that the teachings of the severed-head goddess (Chinnamastā) and the *Amṛtasiddhi* teachings came down through the Junior Virūpa.

The one who illuminated the Sakya (Lamdre) teaching is the *Yogeśvara*, the senior Virūpa. He visited India three times. The junior Virūpa is the one described by Vajrāsana (rDo rje gdan pa) as “the Virūpa who wanders through the charnel ground and eats human flesh.” This is the one from whom the teachings of Vajrayoginī Vārāhī Chinnamastā (*phag mo dbu bcad ma*) and the teachings of *Amṛtasiddhi* (*'Chi med grub pa'i gdams ngag*) originated.³⁰

All the earlier Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* texts attribute their teachings only to Virūpa or Bir wa pa. They do not mention either Black Virūpa or Junior Virūpa. In the hagiography of Black Virūpa (or Junior Virūpa) by Tāranātha, there is no reference to his association with the *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching. It is only in the above quotation from Ngagchang Drakpa Lodoe's Sakya Lamdre text, which specifically states that the *Amṛtasiddhi* and

²⁷ 1. 'Chi med grub pa'i 'khrid yig. 2. 'Chi med grub pa'i gdmas ngag.

²⁸ “Supplication to the Kṛṣṇa Virūpa (*Nag po Bir wa*) of the land of Oḍḍiyāna” // *gnas O rgyan mkha' 'gro'i zhing khams su / slob dpon nag po Birwa la gsol ba 'debs // Tāranātha*. “*Chi med grub pa'i 'khrid yig.*” *gSung 'bum tā ra nā tha* (*'dzam thang par ma*), Vol. 20: 420.

²⁹ Ngorchen Kunga Zangpo (page 28). “*Kye rdo rje'i sgrub thabs kyi rgya cher bshad pa bskyed rim gnad kyi zla zer.*” In *The Complete Works of Ngor-chen Kun-dga'-bzang-po*, Vol. 2: 7–424. Dehra Dun: Sakya Centre, 1990–1999: // *des na grub chen brgyad cu'i bstod par chu bo chen po gyen la bzlog..zhes bshad pa ltar gyi rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug Birwapa de yin / phag mo dbu bcad ma dang 'chi med 'khrul 'khor sogs kyi gdams ngag mdzad mkhan gyi..Birwapa zhes bya ba...zhes pa gnyis 'khrul par mi bya'o //*

³⁰ See sNgags 'chang grags pa blo gros (2007: 353) // *rnal 'byor dbang phyug birwa pa che ba 'di yin zhing / 'di's rgya gar du theng gsum byon te / dang po la lam 'bras gsungs pa'i Birwapa che bar grags pa dang.... Birwa pa chung ba ni rdo rje gdan pas dur khrod rgyu zhing sha chen gsol Birwa pa zhes bya ba yi sogs gsungs pa ltar gyi slob dpon de nyid yin la 'di phag mo dbu bcad ma dang 'chi med grub pa'i gdams ngag 'di las brgyud pa yin gsungs //*. In “*gSung ngag rin po che lam 'bras bu dang bcas pa'i khrid yig dang po'i blo can gyis rtogs par sla ba gsung rgyun rim gsal.*” In *Mantra Collection Works of The Ancient Sa-skya-pa Scholars*, Vol. 1: 343–584. Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007.

Vajrayoginī Chinnamastā teachings came down through the Junior Virūpa and not the Senior Virūpa. I haven't been able to find any concrete textual evidence that the Black or Junior Virūpa is the source of the *Amṛtasiddhi* text. However, in the Tibetan tradition it is generally believed that the Virūpa associated with Chinnamastā Devī and Amṛtasiddhi teachings is the Black or Junior Virūpa, not the Senior Virūpa of the Sakya Lamdre teachings.³¹

Further research is therefore needed into the study of these two Virūpas and who is the actual source of the *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching. It may also be questioned whether the Virūpa of Oḍḍiyāna, the teacher of Yogini Sukhasiddhi (the root teacher of Khyungpo Neljor, the founder of Shangpa Kagyu, 11th–12th century) is the Black Virūpa (Nagpo Birupa) and not the well-known senior Virūpa. The Tibetan word *Nag po* is possibly a later addition by Tibetan scholars used to highlight this particular Virūpa. I have seen two hagiographies of Sukhasiddhi (*Su kha sid dh'i lo rgyus*) from two different sources, the Shangpa teaching cycle (edited by Kalu Rinpoche, 1905–1989 CE)³² and the *gDams ngag mdzod* (edited by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, 1813–1899 CE),³³ where Virūpa, the teacher of Sukhasiddhi, is referred to as *Bir wa pa* (Virūpa) and also as *Nag po bir wa pa* (Black Virūpa), respectively. It would also be worth investigating other *siddhas* with the name Black: *Kṛṣṇācārya* (*Nag po spyod pa*), *Kṛṣṇācāryāvra* (*brTul zhugs kyi spyod pa nag po pa*) and *Kaṇha* (*Nag po pa*), as *siddhas* with these names also sometimes seem to have some association with the *yoginī* Chinnamastā and *Amṛtasiddhi*. There are several Trulkhor texts written and translated by the same Amoghavajra of our *Amṛtasiddhi* text which are almost identical to the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s Trulkhor texts. These texts are attributed to the *siddha* called *Kṛṣṇācārya* (*Nag po spyod pa*)³⁴ and paid homage to

³¹ See *Rangjung Yeshe Wiki, Dharma Dictionary*: “This Virupa, the human originator of the Lamdre teachings of the Sakyapa school is however NOT the teacher of the awareness dakini Sukhasiddhi, whose teachings became important in the Shangpa Kagyu tradition.” Retrieved from: <https://rywiki.tsadra.org/index.php/Virupa>. Accessed on: 21 June, 2024.

³² See texts: Kalu Rinpoche (ed.), “*Su kha sid dhi bde ba'i dngos grub lo rgyus*.” In *Shangs pa chos skor nram lnga'i rgya gzhung*, Vol. 1: 53: // *de'i dus na o rgyan gyi nags khrod du slob dpon bir wa pa zhes kyang bya* //

³³ See Lodro Thaye (ed.), “*Su kha siddhi'i lo rgyus rgya gzhung gsang sgrub lte ba 'sprul 'khor dbang mchog rnam*.” In *gDams ngag mdzod*, Vol. 12: 282: // *de'i dus su o rgyan gyi nags khrod na slob dpon nag po bir wa pa zhes kyang bya* //

³⁴ See the colophon in Amoghavajra's “*Tsandha li'i 'khrul 'khor*.” In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 225–8.





Cakrasaṃvara.³⁵ Kṛṣṇācārya and Kaṇha are generally identified as one person.³⁶ According to Abhayadattaśrī's "Legend of the Eighty-four Mahāsiddhas," this *siddha* gave the teachings of Chinnamastā Devī when he was dying.³⁷ Among his disciples were two female Mahāsiddhas, famously known as the two sisters with severed heads (*dbu bcad ma spyun gnyis*).³⁸

Yogeśvara Amoghavajra

The exact date of the Virūpa's Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* text by the Indian yogi Amoghavajra has not yet been established. It is probably a text from before the 14th century. The Tibetan title of this Virūpa's *Amṛtasiddhi* text, 'Chi med grub pa, is mentioned in the catalogue of the Tibetan Buddhist canon compiled by Butön Rinchen Drup (Bu ston rin chen drub, 1290–1364 CE), which underwent its final compilation in the early of the 14th century.³⁹ Schaeffer (2002: 518) says, "This is the earliest datable mention of Virūpa's name in connection with the *Amṛtasiddhi*." Although it is clear that Virūpa's *Amṛtasiddhi* teachings reached Tibet and became established in the Shangpa Kagyu (*Shangs pa bka' brgyud*) tradition from the time of Sangye Nyenton (Sangs rgyas gnyen ston, 1175–1255 CE) onwards.⁴⁰

As for the author, Amoghavajra, neither the *Amṛtasiddhi* nor the Tibetan Buddhist records say anything that could help identify him. The only information we have about him is that he had the title "lord of yoga" (*rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug/Skt. Yogeśvara*), that he had been to Tibet, and that he had written these texts in Tibetan language himself in Tibet. Although there are two small clues in one of his miscellaneous *Amṛtasiddhi* texts and in his *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary, they are not sufficiently helpful for definitely determining an identification. At the beginning of "Amṛtasiddhi's Remedy for the

³⁵ See the first page in Amoghavajra's "Shing rta'i 'khor lo 'khrul 'khor bco lnga pa" In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 209–12.

³⁶ See Dowman (1985: 123).

³⁷ *Ibid.*: 127.

³⁸ *Ibid.*: 321.

³⁹ Nishioka (1983): No. 2714: *Bir wa pa'i mdzad pa'i 'Chi med grub pa*.

⁴⁰ Sangye Nyenton is the first lineage holder of the *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching in the Shangpa tradition. He received the *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching from a yogi called Latoe Gonpo (*La bstod mgon po*).

Defects of the Eight Bodily Constituents”⁴¹ he makes a statement: “The notes and texts of this practice are not available in Nepal (*lho bal*). However, in accordance with the beliefs of the country [Tibet], I will reveal the complete instruction, the meanings of the eight bodily constituents, so that blessed beings can understand it.”⁴² This tells us that he might have had some connection to Nepal, which leads us to wonder whether this Amoghavajra might be the Indian *paṇḍita* Amoghavajra (also known as the Junior Amoghavajra), who was one of the four main disciples⁴³ of the senior Amoghavajra. He travelled to Nepal and Tibet, taught, wrote⁴⁴ and translated several Sanskrit texts into Tibetan. He was a student and close friend of Devākaracandra (11th–12th century) and spent time in Nepal and Tibet.⁴⁵ He was also a close friend and teacher of Bari Lotsawa (Ba ri lo tsa ba rin chen grags, 1040–1112 CE) with whom he translated several texts.⁴⁶

The second clue we see is in a person called Pal Gyi Jungney (dPal gyi 'byung gnas), who requested the *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary attributed to Amoghavajra, which leads us to another problem in identifying this obscure person. I've also found a person with the same name called Gelong Pal Gyi Jungney (dge slong dpal gyi 'byung gnas), who may or may not be the same person, but who also requested Hevajra's self-empowerment rituals; it is said that Phagpa Lodro Gyaltzen (the 7th Sakya *trizin* “throne-holder,” 13th century) composed the text. It is difficult to find any records or information regarding these two individuals with the name Pal Gyi Jungney.

⁴¹ The Tibetan title, according to the colophon, is: ‘*Chi med grub pa'i dben pa brgyad kyi skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag*. In the BDRC digital library, each of the eight bodily constituents are catalogued into separate sections or texts, starting from “‘*Chi med grub pa'i dben pa brgyad las lus dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs*,” to “‘*Chi med grub pa'i dben pa brgyad kyi skyon thabs kyi man ngag*,” which is actually the section “‘*Chi med grub pa'i bye brag dben pa*.” According to the colophon, it appears that these eight sections of bodily constituents comprise a whole text.

⁴² Amoghavajra: “‘*Chi med grub pa'i dben pa brgyad las lus dben pa'i skyon bcos thabs*.” In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 228: / *chan dang yig sna la sogs pa / lho bal phyogs na yod ma yin /*.

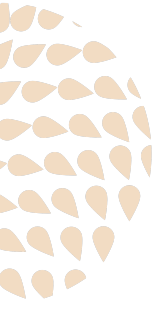
⁴³ The four main students of senior Amoghavajra were: Devākaracandra, Nagpo pa, Vīryacandra and Amoghavajra. See Tāranātha: “‘*rGyud rgyal gshin rje gshed skor gyi chos 'byung rgyas pa yid ches ngo mtshar*.” In *gSung 'bum tā ra nā tha ('dzam thang par ma)*, Dzam thang dgon, Vol. 6: 117 / *de la slob ma bzhi ste debakara tsandra dang Nagpopa dang Virya tsandra dang Amogha vajra chung ba'o /*.

⁴⁴ Texts such as “‘*rDo rje'i tshig rnam par dbye ba zhes bya ba*,” “‘*Tshogs kyi bdag po gsang ba'i sgrub thabs*” etc. See the colophon of these texts.

⁴⁵ Tāranātha: “‘*rGyud rgyal gshin rje gshed skor gyi chos 'byung rgyas pa yid ches ngo mtshar*.” In *gSung 'bum tā ra nā tha ('dzam thang par ma)*, Dzam thang dgon, Vol. 6: 87–8.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*: 117 / *Bari ba'i bla ma sku drin che shos gcig yin /*.





There is another Indian *siddha* named Amoghavajra, called Grub thob Amoghavajra, whose name appears in the hagiography of Khyungpo Neljor (*khyung po rnal 'byor*, 11th–12th century, founder of Shangpa Kagyu).⁴⁷ The hagiography only tells us that at the time of Khyungpo Neljor's birth, Siddha Amoghavajra travelled from India by his miraculous power and made a prophecy that Khyungpo Neljor would travel to Nepal and India in the future and receive teachings from many Indian *siddhas*. Apart from the name Amoghavajra and the fact that he received teachings from Amoghavajra, the text does not mention any *Amṛtasiddhi* teachings. This Amoghavajra is generally identified as the Senior Amoghavajra (Amo gha ba dzra che ba) or Senior Vajrāsana (rDo rje gdan pa che ba).

I see two possibilities: either *Yogeśvara* Amoghavajra is one of the two famous Indian *siddhas*, either Amoghavajra senior or Amoghavajra junior (Amo gha ba dzra chung ba); or it is another person who wrote only *Amṛtasiddhi*-related texts in Tibet. Between the senior Amoghavajra and the junior Amoghavajra, the junior Amoghavajra has more in common with the Amoghavajra who wrote the *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus because both had travelled to Tibet and translated texts into Tibetan. Virūpa's *Amṛtasiddhi* teaching took root in the Shangpa Kagyu tradition. From this tradition originated their own style of *Amṛtasiddhi* practice known as 'Chi med 'khrul 'khor (*Amṛtasiddhi*'s “thirty-two” trulkhor practices), which later passed down to other Kagyu, Jonang and Sakya masters. Excluding Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* texts, all the rest of Virūpa's *Amṛtasiddhi* texts, such as *bDud rtsi grub pa'i rtsa ba*, 'Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa g.yung drung grub pa, 'Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa, and 'Bras bu lus'chi med kyi rtsa ba, were written by the Indian *paṇḍita* E Deva (aka Enadeva, Dur khrod pa). E Deva's *Amṛtasiddhi* text is included in the Shangpa teaching cycle, but not Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* text.

***Amṛtasiddhi*'s unique method and approach to attain its liberation: Breathing techniques**

According to the commentary in the *Amṛtasiddhi*, the meaning of 'Chi med grub pa (*Amṛtasiddhi*) is: “'Chi med (*amṛta*/deathless) means deathlessness of (a person's) true identity, its nature, and the body; *bsGrub pa* (*siddhi*) means the manifestation of these

⁴⁷ “mKhas grub khyung po rnal 'byor gyi rnam thar.” In *rTsa chen shing par dpe rnying dpe dkon phyogs bsdu*s, Vol. 24: 35 / *de tshe rgya gar grub thob a mo ghas / 'di ni sprul pa'i sku ste rgya gar sgrid /*.

Tāranātha. “rGyal ba'i bstan pa rin po che spyi'i rnam bzhag las 'phros pa'i dpal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor gyi 'byung khung yid kyi mun sel.” In *gSung 'bum tā ra nā tha* ('dzam thang par ma), Vol. 17: 454, Dzam thang dgon: / *stag gi lo la sku bltams ma thag rgya gar grub chen a mo gha vajra rdzu 'phrul gyis byon nas/*.

three fruits.”⁴⁸ Both the *Amṛtasiddhi* and its commentary (hereafter referred to as AC), written by Amoghavajra, have the Sanskrit titles *Amṛtasiddhi* and *Amṛtasiddhivṛtti* respectively. Except for these two texts, almost all the other Amoghavajra’s *Amṛtasiddhi* related texts are the instructions for physical yoga practices like trulkhor. These instructions primarily consist of *lus gnad* (the formation of certain body posture and movement) and *rlung gi gnad* (breathing technique). The physical yoga practice in these yoga manuals is generally divided into three phases: initial, main and final. It is interesting to note that it is only in the main phase that breathing practices are mentioned. The breathing technique involved in almost all of the practices is to unite the upper and lower air at the navel region. This is done by drawing the lower air upwards and pressing the upper air downwards. One of the most important elements of Amoghavajra’s *Amṛtasiddhi* is this method of breathing. The AC says that this is a secret *mudrā* unique to *Amṛtasiddhi*.⁴⁹

The outsiders (non-Buddhist) believe that taking a bath in Gayā (*gha ya*) or the Gaṅgā (*ghang ga*) or at a *ghaṭṭa* by the Gaṅgā (*ghang ga’i gar*) will bring them liberation. The non-tantric *Mahāyāna* Buddhist accepts that liberation can be attained through (the *bodhisattva*’s) five paths and ten grounds. The Buddhist tantra, in general, has a view that liberation can be obtained through the generation and the completion stage. Now here (in *Amṛtasiddhi*) its goal is attained by uniting the upper air and lower air instantaneously at the navel emanation chakra (*nirmāṇacakra*).⁵⁰

This method of breathing appears quite often in the *Amṛtasiddhi*’s yoga instructions. The AC explains how this can be done by applying a force of air (forcefully drawing up the lower air), which draws up the wish-fulfilling channel-wheel’s (*cintāmaṇicakra*) four channel-petals, along with its seeds, upwards to the navel *cakra*.⁵¹ At the same time, pressing down the throat channel-wheel’s (*sambhogachakra*) sixteen channel-petals, along with its seed, is pressed down with a force of air to the navel, where they become

⁴⁸ “*Chi med bsrub pa zhes bya ba,*” In *bsTan ’gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 162. // *’chi med ces bya ba ni ngo bo dang rang bzhin dang rgyu lus ’chi rgyu med pa’o* //.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* // *de ni gsang ba’i phyag rgya’o* //.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*: 196 // *phyi pa’i lugs kyis gha ya dang ghang ga dang ghang ga’i gar la ’khrus byas pa la sogs pas thar pa thob par ’dod pa dang / / mtshan nyid kyis lugs kyis lam lnga sa bcu la rten nas thar pa thob par ’dod pa dang sngags spyi’i lugs kyis bskyed rdzogs kyis sgo nas thar pa thob par ’dod pa yod de da res sprul pa’i ’khor lo la steng ’og gnyis kyis rlung skad cig gis zung du ’jug pas de nyid kyis don mngon du ’gyur ba’o* //.

⁵¹ *Ibid.* / *gsang ba’i gnas ni gyen du drang zhes bya ba ni / / yid bzhin gyi ’khor lo la pad ma ’dab ma bzhi pa sa bon dang bcas rlung gi stobs kyis sprul pa’i ’khor lo ru drang bar bya’o* //.



one (non-dual) with the navel *nirmāṇacakra*.⁵² The AC's explanation of the following verse from *Amṛtasiddhi* root text makes some key points.

Yoni lock is a goddess.
/ 'dzo ni sdam pa lha mo ste /⁵³
Throat lock is a god.
/ mgrin pa sdom pa lha yin no /⁵⁴
Kumbhaka and Pūraka⁵⁵
/ dgang ba can dang bum pa can /
Engage fully in the *mudrā*.
/ Phyang ryga gzung ba rnam par bya /⁵⁶

The AC makes four important points here:

(1) Vajrayoginī resides in the secret region's (*yonī*) channel-wheel;⁵⁷ (2) Ekavīra (Cakrasaṃvara without a consort) abides in the throat channel-wheel;⁵⁸ (3) the meaning of *kumbhaka* and *pūraka* is to "straighten" the crooked channels, airs and the essential drops and engaging in the forceful yoga (*drag po'i sbyor ba*);⁵⁹ (4) with the union of the upper and lower airs, there occurs the union of the male deity (the throat *cakra*) and the female deity (secret *cakra*) at the navel, resulting in the manifestation of the union of

⁵² Ibid. // *sprul pa dag tu mnyam par bya zhes bya ba ni / / longs spyod rdzogs pa'i 'khor lo ni pad ma 'dab ma bcu drug sa bon dang bcas pa rlung gi stobs kyis mar mnan ste sprul pa'i 'khor lo dang gnyis med du bslab par bya'o //*.

⁵³ *Amṛtasiddhimūla*: / dzo ni bha dha lha mo yin /.

⁵⁴ *Amṛtasiddhimūla*: / mgrin pa bsdam pa lha yin no /.

⁵⁵ *Kumbhaka* and *pūraka* are usually known, respectively, as / *bum pa can* / and / *gang ba can* / in Tibetan. However, in Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus, they are used contrariwise.

⁵⁶ "Chi med bsgrub pa zhes bya ba." In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 103. This verse in *Amṛtasiddhimūla* (*bDud rtsi sgrub pa'i rtsa ba*): / dzo ni bha dha'i lha mo yin / mgrin pa bsdam pa lha yin no / dgang ba can dang bum pa can / phyang ryga gzung ba rnam par bya /. In *Amṛtasiddhi* (Sanskrit text): / *yonibandho hi devinām kaṅṭhabandho hi devatah / pūrakam khumbhakam kṛtvā dhṛtvā mudrām bhaya āpahām /*. See *Amṛtasiddhimūla*: 41–42; *Amṛtasiddhi*: 12.2–12.3 (Mallinson and Szánto 2020).

⁵⁷ "Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba." See Amoghavajra, "Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa," Vol. 87: 195: // 'jo ni (*yonī*) sdom pa lha mo ste / zhes bya ba ni gsang gnas kyi 'khor lo pad ma 'dab ma bzhi pa'i steng du rdo rje rnal 'byor ma bsgom par bya'o //.

⁵⁸ Ibid. // *mgrin pa sdom pa lha yin no zhes bya ba ni / longs spyod rdzogs pa'i 'khor lo rtsa 'dab bcu drug gi steng du 'khor lo sdom pa dpa' bo gcig pa bsgom par bya'o //*.

⁵⁹ Ibid. // *gang ba can dang bum pa can zhes bya ba ni rtsa dang rlung dang thig le yon po rnam bsrang zhing drag po'i sbyor ba la 'jug par bya'o //*.

bodhicitta and wisdom.⁶⁰ These explanations show that it is essential in *Amṛtasiddhi* practice to unite the upper and lower airs and also the upper throat *cakra* (along with its seed) and the lower, secret *yonī cakra* at the navel. This is done by *pūraka* and *kumbhaka* and other yoga techniques.

This yogic technique, or breathing application, of the union of the upper and lower airs has eleven different variations in the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s seventeen principal practice texts. The first of the eleven breathing applications listed below is used in four of the seventeen principal practices of *Amṛtasiddhi*. In this breathing technique, the practice called *drag po'i sbyor ba* (forceful yoga) is mentioned. *Drag po'i sbyor ba* is one of the Tibetan equivalent terms for the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*.

Below are listed eleven different breathing applications in the *Amṛtasiddhi*'s seventeen principal practice texts (*rlung gi gnad ni*):

1. Unite⁶¹ the upper and lower (airs)⁶² and forceful yoga (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing drag po'i sbyor ba'o*).
2. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and hold (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing bskyil pa*).
3. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and fill the whole body (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing lus spyi dgang pa*).
4. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and bind/lock (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing bsdam*).
5. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and expand (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing brkyang*).
6. Expand the lower air upwards and press the upper air forcefully ('og *rlung stod du brgyang zhing steng rlung drag por mnan*).
7. Unite the upper and lower airs and pierce (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing bsnun pa*).
8. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and generate strength in the upper (body) (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing stod du stobs bskyed*).
9. Draw the lower air forcefully and fill it upwards ('og *rlung drag por 'then te bstod du dgang*).

⁶⁰ Ibid. // *phyag rgya gzung ba nam par bca' zhes bya ba ni steng 'og gnyis kyi sbyor ba las yab yum zung du 'jug cing thabs dang shes rab gyi don mngon du 'gyur ba'o* //.

⁶¹ Unite here means *kha sbyor* in Tibetan and *samputa* in Sanskrit. Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text (Mallinson and Szántó (2021: 12.16): / *ayam ca samputo yogo mūlabandho 'pyayam matah* /. Tibetan *Amṛtasiddhi* text 'Bras bu lus 'chi med kyi rtsa ba, (In *dPal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor nam lnga'i rgya gzhung*, 6: 214): // 'di ni kha sbyor sbyor ba ste // rtsa ba'i bsdam pa (*bsdam pa*) 'dod pa'o //.

⁶² Upper air generally means the air above the navel, and lower air means air below the navel.



10. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and separate the refined from the impurities (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing dangs snyigs 'byed*).
11. Unite the upper and lower (airs) and fill the channels (*steng 'og kha sbyar zhing rtsa rnams dgang*).

Forceful yoga (*drag po'i sbyor ba*)

In his study of the origin of the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*, Mallinson (2020b: 9) concludes that, “Sheer weight of evidence thus indicates a Buddhist origin for the term *haṭhayoga*.” Mallinson (2020b: 3–4) lists seventeen Vajrayāna tantric Buddhist texts that use the term *haṭhayoga*, which date from the early 8th to the 12th century. I have seen mainly three different translations of the Sanskrit term *haṭha* (for *haṭhayoga*) in the Vajrayāna Buddhist texts that I have been able to obtain, which are based on the Sanskrit texts and their corresponding Tibetan texts. The first is *drag po* or *drag shul* (violent or forceful), the second is *stobs* (strength/power/force), and third *btsan thabs* (method of coercion or forcing). In the *Guhyasamājatantra* (*rGyud phyi ma*) and *Sekanirṇaya dBang nges par bstan pa zhes bya ba*, the term *haṭhayoga* is translated as *drag shul sbyor ba*⁶³ and *drag po'i sbyor ba*,⁶⁴ respectively. In Anupamarakṣita's *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga* texts⁶⁵ (*sByor ba yan lag drug pa*), the term *haṭhayoga* is translated as *stobs kyi rnal 'byor*.

⁶³ Sanskrit text: // *yadā na sidhyate bodhir haṭhayogena sādhayet* //. In *Guhyasamājatantra or Tathāgataguhyaka* (1984), ed. Swami Dwarikadas Shastri (Bauddha Bharati series 17), 18.162: 134. Varanasi: Bauddha Bharati. Tibetan text: / *gang tshe byang chub ma grub na / / drag shul sbyor bas bsgrub par bya /*. “rGyud phyi ma.” In *Narthang Kangyur*, trans. Rinchen Zangpo, Yeshe De Dharma publication (2010–2012), Vol. 84: 328. Retrieved from: http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW2KG5014_0405 [BDRC bdr:MW2KG5014_0405] Accessed on: 10th July 2024.

⁶⁴ Sanskrit text: // *citram tato vipākaḥ syāt tṛtīye tu vilakṣaṇam / / vimarḍḍaśca tato jñeyo haṭhayoganirākṛteḥ* //. In *Advayavajra, Advayavajrasaṅgraha*, ed. M. H. Shastri (Oriental Institute, Baroda, 1927: 28). Baroda: Oriental Institute.

Tibetan text: / *drag po'i sbyor ba spangs pa yis / / sna tshogs de nas rnam par smin / / gsum pa mtshan nyid bral ba ste / / rnam par nyed pa de nas shes / Maitripada (Advayavajra). “dBang bskur ba nges par bstan pa zhes bya ba.”* In *Maitripāda (Advayavajra). 1982–1985. “dBang bskur ba nges par bstan pa zhes bya ba.”* In Zhuchen Tsultrim Rinchen (ed.), Nagtsho Lotsawa Tshülthrim Gyelwa (Trans.), *Derge Tengyur*, Vol. 51: 284–87 (page 284). Delhi: Karmapae Choedhey, Gyalwae Sungrab Partun Khang. Retrieved from: http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW23703_2252 [BDRC bdr:MW23703_2252] Accessed on: 8th July 2024.

⁶⁵ Sanskrit text: Sferra (2000: 107): “*Idānīm haṭhayoga ucyate / iha yadā pratyāhārādibhir bimbe dṛṣṭe... niḥspandaneti haṭhayogaḥ*”

Tibetan text: Sferra (2000: 162): / *da ni stobs kyi rnal 'byor gsungs te / 'dir gang gi tshe so sor bsdud pa la sogs pa rnams kyi gzugs mthong bar 'gyur ba na....zhes pa stobs kyi rnal 'byor ro /*.

However, in the *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga* section of the *Vimalaprabhā Śrī* text (*Dri med 'od shri*)⁶⁶ and in the *Caturmudrā*⁶⁷ (*Phyag rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa*), the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga* is translated as the *btsan thabs kyi rnal 'byor* or *btsan thabs sbyor ba*. Later, most Tibetan scholars such as Bu ston rin chen sgrub, Tsongkhapa and Tāranātha adopted the Tibetan term *tsan thabs kyi rnal 'byor* or *sbyor ba* for the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*, the practice associated with *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga*. Though Tsongkhapa also uses the term *drag sbyor* along with the *btsan thabs kyi sbyor ba*.⁶⁸

Ṣaḍaṅgayoga's method of *haṭhayoga* (*btsan thabs sbyor ba*) has more affinity with “Hindu” Haṭha Yoga than with the practices described in the *Guhyasamājantra* and *Sekaniṛṇaya*. In *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga*, yogis apply *haṭhayoga* as an alternative method to *pratyāhāra*, *dhyāna* and *prāṇāyāma* practice, to force the air and confine it into the central channel and to hold the *thigle/bindu* without letting it out, through the practice of *nāda*.⁶⁹ Je

⁶⁶ // *da ni btsan thabs kyi rnal 'byor gsungs te / 'dir gang gi tshe so sor sdud pa la sogs pas gzugs mthong bar 'gyur pa la...zhes pa ni btsan thabs kyi rnal 'byor ro // “Dri med 'od shri.”* In Rigs ldan pad ma dkar po (Pundarika). (n.d.). “bsDus pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po dus kyi 'khor lo'i 'grel bshad rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su 'jug pa stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dri ma med pa'i 'od bcas bya ba.” In Dro Lotsawa Sherab Drakpa (trans.), *sDe ge bKa' 'gyur*. Vol. 102: 4–943. sDe dge: sDe dge par khang chen mo. Available at: http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW30532_0845 [BDRC bdr:MW30532_0845] Accessed on: 13th August 2024. *Kanjur Dege Edition*, ed. by Tai Situ, 08 [sDe dge par khang chen mo]. Retrieved from: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW4CZ5369> [BDRC bdr:MW4CZ5369]. Accessed on: 25 June 25, 2024.

⁶⁷ Sanskrit text: *Advayavajrasaṅgraha* (5: 4) page 28: / *sekaḥaṭhayoge cedam nirdiṣṭam bhagavata /*. In *Shastri Mahamahopadhyaya Haraprasad* (ed.). *Gaekwad's Oriental Series No. XL* (1927). Calcutta: Oriental Institute, Baroda.

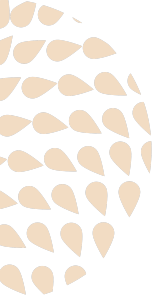
Tibetan text: / *bcom ldan 'das kyi dbang btsan thabs kyi sbyor bas bstan to /*. Nāgārjuna (Klu sgrub snying po), “*Phyag rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa*.” In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe cing)*, trans. Ma Lotsawa Ma Ben Chö Bar, Vol. 48: 167–172, page 168, [Pe cing pho brang] 1724. Retrieved from: http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/MW1KG13126_3069 [BDRC bdr:MW1KG13126_3069] Accessed on: 25 June 2024.

Note: The *Caturmudrā* Sanskrit text attributed to Advayavajra and the *Caturmudrā* Tibetan text in the Tengyur canon attributed to Maitripada (Advayavajra) are different texts. However, what I have found is that the *Caturmudrā* Tibetan text (*Phyag rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa*) attributed to Klu sgrub snying po and the *Caturmudrā* Sanskrit text attributed to Advayavajra in *Advayavajrasaṅgraha* text appears to be the same text.

⁶⁸ See footnote 68.

⁶⁹ Practice of *nāda* (forceful yoga) according to Tsongkhapa: *nāda* is a mere sound, the sound of the syllable *hum*. How to practice: the legs should be in *vajra*, cross-legged; cross the arms at the chest, holding the hands as a fist. Slightly lower the head and forcefully suck air into the central channel through the nose with the sound of *hum*. Simultaneously, from either of the two lower openings (genital or anus), draw up the *apānāvāyu* (*thur sel gyi rlung*), which is just above the navel, and then drag the air slowly higher and higher. It should be done forcefully and for a long time, but not for too long. Otherwise, with the lack of strength, it won't become forceful. See Tsongkhapa Lobzang Drakpa's “*Dus 'khor rdzogs rim sbyor ba yan lag drug gi khrid*.” In *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tsong Kha Pa Blo Bzang Grags Pa*, Vol. 12: 823.





Tsongkhapa (*rJe tsong kha pa*, 14th–15th century) calls *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga*'s method of *haṭhayoga* a *drag sbyor* (forceful yoga). Tsongkhapa writes: “Do not practise *haṭhayoga* (*drag sbyor*) from the beginning without first practising *pratyāhāra* and *prāṇāyāma*. Otherwise, the practitioner will not be able to guide the air into the central channels and will experience obstacles. Therefore, practice *pratyāhāra* and *prāṇāyāma* gently first. If there is no success even after long practice, then at that time the practitioner should perform *haṭhayoga* (*drag po btsan thabs kyi sbyor*).”⁷⁰ Tsongkhapa explains further that, “It should be done forcefully (*drag po*) and for a long duration, but not too long. Otherwise, with the lack of strength (by doing it for too long), it won't become forceful (*drag po*).” This shows that *Ṣaḍaṅgayoga*'s *haṭhayoga* requires strength and force.

Amoghavajra mentions the term *drag po'i sbyor ba* several times in his commentary. As there is no available *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary in Sanskrit, there is no way of knowing whether the term forceful yoga (*drag po'i sbyor ba*) mentioned in the AC is a translation of the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*. However, we know that sometimes *haṭhayoga* has been translated as *drag po'i sbyor ba* or *drag sbyor* in other Vajrayāna Buddhist texts. Amoghavajra does not clearly explain what *drag po'i sbyor ba* (forceful yoga) is. He simply says, “engage in forceful yoga.” What we can understand from the text is that forceful yoga (*drag po'i sbyor ba*) is associated with the practice of *bum pa can* (*bum pa can* is usually known as *kumbhaka* in Sanskrit but in Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus *bum pa can* is called *pūra* and *dgang ba can* is called *kumbhaka*). Amoghavajra explains that the term *bum pa can* mentioned in the *Amṛtasiddhi* root text means “straightening the crooked channels (Tib. *rtsa*; Skt. *nāḍī*), air (Tib. *rlung*; Skt. *vāyu*) and essential drops (Tib. *thig le*; Skt. *bindu*), and engaging in forceful yoga.”

// *bum pa can la bslab par bya zhes pa ni rtsa dang rlung dang thig le yon po rnam bsrang zhing drag po'i sbyor ba la 'jug par bya'o* //.⁷¹

Training in *bum pa can* (*pūra*)⁷² means straighten the crooked channels, airs and essential drops and engage in forceful yoga (*Amṛtasiddhi* commentary).

⁷⁰ // *dang po nas drag sbyor byas pas tshud mi nus kyi steng du gegs chen po bskyed do /... / des na dang por sor sdud dang srog rtsol gyis 'jam po'i sgo nas bsgom la / rgyun ring du bsgoms kyang ma grub na de'i tshes drag po btsan thabs kyi sbyor ba 'di bya'o* //. Tsongkhapa Lobzang Drakpa states: “Dus 'khor rdzogs rim sbyor ba yan lag drug gi khrid.” In *The Collected Works (gsung 'bum) of the Incomparable Lord Tsong Kha Pa Blo Bzang Grags Pa*, Vol. 12: 815.

⁷¹ “Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba,” Vol. 87: 191–2.

⁷² As transliterated in Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary.

// gang ba can dang bum pa can zhes bya ba ni rlung gnyis kyi stobs bskyed cing
rtsa mig dgang ba dang rtsa dang rlung dang thig le yon po rnams bsrang zhing
drag po'i sbyor la 'jug par bya'o //.73

Gang ba can (*kumbhaka*) and bum pa can (*pūraka*) mean generating force in both (upper and lower) air and filling the channels; straightening the crooked channels, air and essential drops, and engaging in forceful yoga (*Amṛtasiddhi* commentary).

The breathing technique of the bum pa can in *Amṛtasiddhi*'s seventeen principal practice:

// steng 'og kha sbyar zhing drag po'i sbyor ba'o //.74

Unite the upper and lower (air) and forceful yoga.

Amoghavajra does not explain what straightening the crooked *nāḍī*, *vāyu* and *bindu* is, what “engaging in forceful yoga” means, or how they are related. However, these explanations may be seen in another text⁷⁵ attributed to the *siddha* called *brTul zhugs kyi spyod pa Nag po pa*⁷⁶ (*Kṛṣṇacaryāvrata*). According to the text: “Secret instruction of straightening the crooked *nāḍī*, *vāyu* and *bindu* composed by immortal Nagpo U tsi ta” (*Nag po U tsi ta'chi ba med pas mdzad pa yon po bsrang ba'i gdams ngag*), *Kṛṣṇacaryāvrata* received this teaching from a *mahāsiddha*, the immortal Acinta (U ci ta), whose teacher was *Maheśvara* (*Śiva/dBang phyug chen po*). The text says, “the crooked channel is a duo of left and right channels; crooked air is a duo of air coming in and going out; the crooked essential drop is blood and semen. Straightening the crooked channels, air, and essential drops is the entry (of air) inside the central channel.”⁷⁷ According to one of the commentaries on this practice by Sakya master Jamgon Amnye ('Jam mgon a mnye, 17th century), he uses the term *btsan thabs* (another Tibetan equivalent word for *haṭha* in *haṭhayoga*) for forcing or coercing the air into the central channel by straightening the crooked channels, air and essential drops.⁷⁸

⁷³ Ibid.: 195.

⁷⁴ Ibid.: 189.

⁷⁵ “Nag po u tsi ta 'chi ba med pas mdzad pa yon po bsrang ba'i gdams pa.” In *The Sakya Lamdre Collections*, Vol. 10: 547–51.

⁷⁶ Attributed to sLob dpon brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa Nag po pa.

⁷⁷ Ibid.: 549 // Yon po bsrang ba zhe bya ba yin te rtsa yon po ni ro rkyang gnyis rlung yon po ni ldang 'jug gnyis thig le yon po ni khu khrag gnyis de rnams bsrangs pa ni dbu mar tshud pa ste //.

⁷⁸ // slob dpon Nag po U tsi ta 'chi ba med pa'i ma rgyud mtha' dag la brten nas rlung btsan thabs su dbu mar 'jug pa'i





The explanation from these texts gives us some idea of the relationship between straightening the crooked channels, airs and essential drops, and engaging in the “forceful yoga” mentioned in Amoghavajra’s *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary. According to Kṛṣṇacaryāvratā’s (Nag po pa) text and the explanation by Jamgon Amnye, “forceful yoga” (*drag po’i sbyor ba*) has the meaning of “forcing or coercing air into the central channel,” achieved by straightening the channel, air and essential drops. In one of the physical yoga practices in *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga manuals, which deals with the application of “forceful yoga,” Amoghavajra speaks of directing (the air into the central channel) by the application of uniting the upper and lower air at the navel channel-wheel.⁷⁹ This explanation of the meaning of “forceful yoga,” as forcing or coercing air into the central channel, agrees with one of the meanings of the practice of *haṭhayoga* (*bstsan thabs sbyor ba*) taught in *Kālacakratantra*’s *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*.

Trulkhor and *Lus gnad*

Trulkhor is like a king,
Samādhi is like a servant.⁸⁰

Trulkhor⁸¹ is now widely known as a *yantra* (yoga), after the publication of the famous book *Yantra Yoga* by the renowned Tibetan Dzogchen teacher Choegyal Namkhai Norbu. However, there are some Buddhist scholars who say that the Sanskrit word for trulkhor in the context of physical yoga practice is *adhisāra*.⁸² I found a Tibetan text in the Taklung Kagyu’s (*stag lung bka’ brgyud*) *Treasury of Texts* which says that the Sanskrit term for trulkhor is a *yantra*; it explains how the term *yantra* as a magical device and

gdams ngag yon po bsrang ba zhes bya ba ste de yang rtsa yon po ro rkyang gnyis sems yon po gzung ’dzin gnyis rlung yon po ldang ’jug gnyis te de rnams dbu mar stobs su bya ba’i thabs yin //. See Jamyang Amnye Zhab Ngawang Kunga Sonam. “Yongs rdzogs bstan pa rin po che’i nyams len gyi man ngag gsung ngag rin po che’i byon tshul khog phub dang bcas pa rgyas par bshad pa legs bshad ’dus pa’i rgya mtsho.” In *Ngag dbang Kung bsod nam Collected works*, Vol. 21: 503.

⁷⁹ “Chi med grub pa’i ’grel pa zhes bya ba.” *bsTan ’gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 193–4 // *sprul pa’i ’khor lo la steng ’og gnyis kyi sbyor yis rtsa rnams kyi stobs bskyed cing mdzug par bya’o //*.

⁸⁰ “Kham Gsum Chos Kyi Rgyal Po Thub dBang Rat na Shri Thung Mong Ma Yin Pa Zab Chos Nor Bu’i ’phreng ba” Vol. 4: 152 // *’khrul ’khor rgyal po dang ’dra / ting nge ’dzin bran dang ’dra //*.

⁸¹ Two different spellings occur in Tibetan texts: /’khrul ’khor / and /’phrul ’khor /.

⁸² Wallace (1998: 69): “*Adhisāra* is the Sanskrit term for the Tibetan trulkhor (’khrul ’khor) or a class of physical exercises practised in Buddhist tradition.”

yantra as a *rtsa lung thigle* yoga practice are related.⁸³ In both cases, the trulkhor seems to be a device or tool for removing or destroying internal or external disharmonious elements, such as external enemies and plagues, and internal physical and mental illnesses.⁸⁴ Trulkhor is an ambiguous word and quite difficult to translate into English. So, we see many different English words for trulkhor in the Buddhist dictionary, such as yogic exercise, *haṭhayoga*-like exercises, yogic posture, the yoga of movement, magical wheel, wheel of confusion, device, machine, black magic, and so on. To avoid confusion, I have tried to retain the Tibetan word trulkhor as it is. However, I have sometimes used physical yoga practice for the term trulkhor in this article.

Trulkhor is a yogic device or practice that generally has three essential components. The first is *lus gnad* (body posture), and the next two are breathing techniques (*'byung ba rlung gi gnad*) and mental observation (*dmigs pa'i gnad*). Trulkhor is called “the King” not because of its superiority, but because when trulkhor is performed in the correct posture with the correct breathing technique, *samādhi* is said to arise or follow effortlessly.⁸⁵ There are many different types of trulkhors, each with its own purpose and benefits. Jigten Sumgön (*'jig rten gsum mgon*, 12–13th century) says, “Each Indian *mahāsiddha* possesses his or her own unique trulkhors and each of these different

⁸³ dPal ldan stag lung pa'i gsung rnam nor bzhi bang mdzod, 2007, Vol. 46: 296: “The Sanskrit term for trulkhor is *yantra*. *Yantra* is generally drawn on birch or banana leaves in the form of a mystical diagram (*cakra/maṇḍala*). When it is applied with *mantras* with intention, it pacifies the plagues. Here, in this case, one's *vajra* body is like a banana leaf on which the *yantra* is drawn. The body's channels and channel knots represent the mystical, circular diagram of the *cakra*. The *bindus* abide within all these channels. The movement of air within these channels represents the uttering of *mantras*. Thus, the yogi uses the inner *tsa* (channels), *rlung* (breath) and *thig le* (*bindu*) as the path of *yantra* to hold the sun and moon at their extremities (zenith and nadir) and reverse the flow of the river (*bindu*) upwards.” /'phrul 'khor zhes pa legs sbyar gyi skad na yantra zhes /.../ dper na ta la'i 'dab ma gang rung la zhi rgyas kyi 'khor lo zhi gbris / de la lha'i bsnyen pa dang bcas pa'i bzlas pa'i rnal 'byor dmigs pa'i kha bsgyur ba na grong khyer gyi rim nad zhi ba dang / 'dir yang rnal 'byor pa nyis kyi rdo rje'i lus bri zhi'i gzhi ta la lta bu mtsho la / rtsa mdud gzugs su gnas pa rnam bri bya'i 'khor lor mtshon zhiing / de nyid la khyab par gnas pa thig le dang / yongs su rgyu ba'i rlung gis ni bzlas pa'i rnal 'byor mtshon te / de lta na rnal 'byor pas rtsa rlung thigle gsum gyi 'phrul 'khor gyi lam du byas pas nyi zla rting par 'dzin pa dang / chu bo gyen la bzlog //.

⁸⁴ According to Amoghavajra, there are three types of illness: outer, inner and secret. The three outer diseases are the three humours: wind, bile and phlegm. Three inner illnesses are the three poisons: desire, aversion and ignorance. The three secret illnesses are the three misunderstandings: bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality. See *'Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa*, Vol. 87: 195.

⁸⁵ Jikten Gonpo Rinchen Pel: “sGyu lus kyi zhal gdams dri ma med pa bdud rtsi'i phreng ba.” *The Collected Works (bka' 'bum) Of Kham Gsum Chos Kyi Rgyal Po Thub Dbang Ratna Sri (skyob-pa 'jig-rten-gsum-mgon)*, Vol. 8: 438 // 'khrul 'khor rgyal po dang 'dra / ting nge 'dzin dran dang 'dra gsungs pa yang 'di lta bu la dgongs pa yin / lus kyi 'khrul 'khor re la gnad du song ba'i dus su rlung rang gnas su chud / sems las su rung nas ting nge 'dzin la 'bad rtsol mi dgos par gnad du 'gro //.





trulkhors has the power to bestow different *siddhis*,⁸⁶ such as the realisation of *mahāmudrā*, the sublime, yogic experience of bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality, etc.”⁸⁷

Lus gnad is one of the important components of trulkhor. Sometimes *lus gnad* (body posture) on its own is called trulkhor. For example, the cross-legged *vajra* pose is called trulkhor. The famous seven-fold meditation posture of Vairocana is called the “king of trulkhors.” In some later Tibetan Buddhist texts, the Tibetan terms trulkhor, *’dug stangs* and *lus gnad* are sometimes used interchangeably. There is a famous story in the *Vinaya Sūtra* about how a monkey copied the cross-legged sitting posture of the arhat (Tib. *skyil krung*, Skt. *paryāṅka*/) and showed it to the Jaina ascetics, and how the Jaina ascetics attained arhathood after sitting in this posture. In the *Vinaya Sūtra*, the Tibetan term *’dug pa* is used for the manner of sitting and standing of *ṛṣis* (Jaina ascetic postures), holding one arm up and standing on one leg.⁸⁸ However, when Jigten Sumgon (1143–1217 CE) tells this story, he uses the term trulkhor for the manner of sitting and standing of Jaina ascetics.⁸⁹ In the Amoghavajra *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus, the term trulkhor is used only in the title of some of the Amoghavajra’s *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga manuals, but its physical yoga practices are basically a trulkhor.

Lus gnad: Body postures

Vajrayāna Buddhism generally conforms to a six-limbed yoga system, *ṣaḍāṅgayoga*, rather than an eight-limbed, *aṣṭāṅgayoga*, system. In *ṣaḍāṅgayoga*, there is no separate limb for, or ancillary practice of, *āsana*. Unlike the Sanskrit term *āsana*, which has a range of meanings—as a seat, as a manner of sitting, and for non-seated, complex body postures—Tibetan texts use a few different words for these meanings. For example,

⁸⁶ “*Khams Gsum Chos Kyi Rgyal Po Thub dBang Rat na Shri Thung Mong Ma Yin Pa Zab Chos Nor Bu’i ’phreng ba*” Vol. 4: 152 // *de yang rgya gar na grub thob brgyad cu rtsa bzhi / bod na grub thob nam mkha’ la ’phur shes pa bzhi cu rtsa dgu yang ’khrul ’khor re re las ting nge ’dzin re re bskyes pa’i grub thob yin //*.

⁸⁷ Jikten Gonpo Rinchen Pel: “*sGyu lus kyi zhal gdams dri ma med pa bdud rtsi’i phreng ba.*” Vol. 8: 438 // *rgya gar gyi grub chen rnams la ’khrul ’khor rigs mi ’dra ba mang po yod / ’khrul ’khor re dang cha mthun pa’i dngos grub gyi thob tshul re re yod par lags par gda’ / des na ’khrul ’khor la las phyag rgya chen po’i rtogs pa bskyed pa yod / la las bde gsal mi rtog pa’i nyams bzang po bskyed pa yod //*.

⁸⁸ // *drang srong de dag kyang dka’ thub drag pos gdung bar byed de / kha cig ni lag pa bsgreng nas ’dug go / kha cig ni rkang pa ya gcig gi so //* Tai Situ 08 (8th Situ Chokyi Jungne), ed. Kanjur Derge Edition. [sDe dge]: [sDe dge par khang chen mo] Vol. 2: 247.

⁸⁹ “*Khams Gsum Chos Kyi Rgyal Po Thub dBang Rat na Shri Thung Mong Ma Yin Pa Zab Chos Nor Bu’i ’phreng ba*” Vol. 4: 153 // *drang srong thams cad bsgom pa’i ’khrul ’khor la la lag pa gnam la bsgreng pa’ m / la la langs pa’ m / lus shed thams cad rkang pa gcig gi the bong la bskur ba’ m / mig nyi ma la blta ba’i tshul ’dug pa’ o //*.

Tibetan words for the Sanskrit term *āsana* as a seat are *gdan*, *stan* and *khri*; such as *pad ma'i gdan* for *padmāsana* (lotus seat), *bde ba'i stan* for *sukhāsana* (comfortable seat), *chos kyi khri* for *dharmāsana* (preacher's seat), and *nyi ma'i gdan* for *sūryāsana*.

Regarding *āsana* as a manner of sitting, Tibetan texts may use the term *'dug stangs* (way of sitting or standing), *skyil krung* (cross-legged posture), and sometimes *stabs* (poses/gait). Here are some examples: *rdo rje'i 'dug stangs* (*vajrāsana*), *pad ma'i 'dug stangs* (*padmāsana*), *dpa' bo'i 'dug stangs* (*vīrāsana*), *tsog po'i 'dug stangs* (*utkuṭakāsana*), *rdo rje'i skyil krung* (*vajraparyāṅka/vajrāsana*), *sems dpa'i skyil krung* (*sattvaparyāṅka*), *skyil krung phye pa* (*ardhaparyāṅka*), *rol pa'i stabs* (*lalitāsana*) etc.

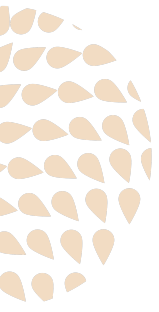
Lus gnad is another Tibetan term for body posture. The use of this term became more common in Tibetan Buddhist texts on Vajrayāna yoga from the 9th century onwards, coinciding with the rise of physically-oriented yoga on the Indian subcontinent and in Tibet. The term *lus gnad*, in the context of the physically-oriented Vajrayāna yoga, has a similar meaning to *āsana* in *haṭhayoga*. *Lus gnad* can either be a posture of a particular part of the body, or it can be a combination of the postures of different parts of the body, such as the legs, neck, hands, eyes or back. Here are some examples of the use of the Tibetan term *lus gnad* in Vajrayāna Tibetan Buddhist texts:

1. The body posture (*lus gnad*) is sitting with the seven-fold posture of Vairocana (*lus gnad ni rnam snang gi chos bdun la gnas pa'o*)⁹⁰: (1) *vajra* cross-legged posture (full lotus); (2) back straight; (3) neck bent; (4) hands in meditation posture below the navel; (5) shoulders open wide; (6) tongue touching the palate; (7) eyes at the tip of the nose.
2. There are three body postures (*lus gnad*): sitting like a lion, like an elephant or like a sage (*lus kyi gnad ni rnam gsum ste seng ge'i tshul dang glang chen tshul drang srong lta bur gnas par bya*).⁹¹
3. The body posture (*lus gnad*) during *bum pa can* (*bum can skabs kyi lus gnad*):⁹² (1) *vajra* cross-legged posture; (2) forming *vajra* fists and compressing four inches below the navel; (3) straightening the backbones

⁹⁰ Don brgyud dpal ldan 'brug pa'i chos mdzod chen po bsam 'phel nor bu'i bang mdzon. 2010. Vol. 17: 451A–2B.

⁹¹ Kunzang Namgyal and Longsal Nyingpo. (2004). *kLong gsal rdo rje snying po'i khrid chos nyid 'khor lo sangs rgyas mnyam sbyor chen po*. Vol. 13: 439–40.

⁹² *Bum can skabs kyi lus gnad*. (n.d.). In *Khams sde dge rdzong sar bla ma lha khang du bzhugs pa'i dpe rnying* (Vol. 18: 855–66).



like stacked coins; (4) neck bent; (5) tongue lifted towards the palate; (6) spread the shoulders like the wings of a bird; (7) settle the eyes on the tip of the nose; (8) clear away residual air three times; (9) inhale as if drawing a bow, fill the lower abdomen with air, as if it is a vase, and then exhale, as if releasing an arrow; (10) at the end, bring the *vajra* fist (hands) to the knees; (11) dismantle the cross-legged *vajra*.

In Tibetan physical yoga practices such as *trulkhor*, *lus gnad* (body postures) are not usually performed on their own. Most of the time, *lus gnad* (body posture) is accompanied by a breathing practice and an object of observation. So, we can see that the Tibetan Buddhist texts make a distinction between two types of *lus gnad* (body posture): the actual body posture (*lus gnad dngos*) and the breathing practice based on that body posture (*lus de la brten pa'i rlung gi sbyor ba*).⁹³ For example, in the text “The body posture (*lus gnad*) during the vase breathing” (*Bum can skabs kyi lus gnad*), not only is the posture discussed, but the breathing techniques are also mentioned.⁹⁴ Similarly, in his *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary, Amoghavajra gives the name of *kumbhaka* to the name of this *lus gnad*, saying, “There are seven *lus gnad* like *kumbhaka* in the *Amṛtasiddhi*’s third principal practice.”⁹⁵ Many of the *Amṛtasiddhi*’s physical yoga practices (*lus gnad*) are static yoga postures (sitting, standing, balancing, or “suspended” in a final posture) like Haṭha Yoga *āsanas*, with breathing practice only in the main phase of the yoga. And many others include movements like regular Tibetan *trulkhors*.

According to the Tibetan *rtsa rlung thigle* system, the body’s channels, air and essential drops (*thigle/bindu*) are present in every part of the human body. However, they are more prominent and vital in specific parts of the body. For example, the *Amṛtasiddhi* describes the fourteen key locations of the sixteen major types of *thigle/bindu* in the human body.⁹⁶ Thus, the proper position of a particular part of the body will have a positive effect on the corresponding channels, air and essential drops. As Longchenpa

⁹³ sGam po pa so nam rin chen. “rJe sgam po pas mdzas pas tE lo’i nA ro’i rnam thar sogs tshan khag cig.” (1974). Vol. 1: 516. // *lus gnad la gnyis te/ /lus gnad dngos dang/ / lus de la brten pa'i rlung gi sbyor ba'o //* Tsok Nyi Tulku (ed.). (2000 CE). “Chos rje dwags po lha rje’i gsung gnas lugs gnyis kyi man ngag dang go cha gnyis kyi man ngag.” // *lus kyi gnad la rnam gnyis te/ /lus gnad ngos dang der brten pa'i/ /rlung gi sbyor ba sgom pa'o //*.

⁹⁴ “Bum can skabs kyi lus gnad.” (n.d.). In *Khams sde dge rdzong sar bla ma lha khang du bzhugs pa'i dpe rnying* (Vol. 18: 855–66).

⁹⁵ “Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba,” In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 189 / *gsum pa'i lus gnad kum bha ka la sogs pa bdun no /*.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*: 174.

(Klong chen pa, 14th century) mentions, all the benefits of the wind, channels and essential drops arise from correct body posture (*lus gnad*).

Wrong body postures disturb the channels; unsettled channels agitate the air and the essential drops, and that causes all the problems. On the other hand, correct body postures bring beneficial results because a person has pleasant or unpleasant feelings, and good or bad experiences as a result of the wholesomeness of the gathering and the diffusion of the channels, air and the essential drops present in the person's *vajra* body.⁹⁷

So, this could be one of the explanations for how the term *lus gnad* (body posture) got its name from *lus kyi gnad* (vital points of the body) and *lus kyi gnad du bsun pa* (hitting the vital points of the body).

The usage of the term *lus gnad* in the Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi*

'Chi med bsgrub pa (*Amṛtasiddhi*):

// *lus kyi gnad rnams rab bstan pa* //
// 'phrang nyid bco brgyad phrag gnyis dang //
// *sdom pa dang ni dngos gzhi dang* //
// *rtsa mdud rdo rje'i bzlas pa'o* //⁹⁸

Lus gnad are shown in the following texts/practices:

1. *Amṛtasiddhi*'s removing the two sets of eighteen (thirty-six) hindrances.⁹⁹
2. *Amṛtasiddhi*'s sublimation of the gross elements *trulkhor*.¹⁰⁰
3. *Amṛtasiddhi*'s seventeen principal practices.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Longchenpa: *Dzogs pa chen po bsam gtan ngal so*. In *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa (kahthog)*, edited by Jamyang Gyeltsen, Vol. 101: 701: // 'di ltar skyon kun *lus gnad 'khrugs pa yis /rtsa 'khrugs rlung 'khrugs thig le 'khrugs pa las / 'byung bas ma dkrugs mnyam par gzhag pa gces / yon tan yang ni rtsa thig rlung gsum nyid / de la gags dang skyed med pa thams cad rtsa rlung gnad du gtong ba'i lus gnad ma shes pa las 'byung shing / yon tan yang lus gnad legs par bcas pa las 'byung ste / rdo rje'i lus las rtsa thig rlung gsum...//.*

⁹⁸ "Chi med bsgrub pa zhes bya ba." In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 102.

⁹⁹ 'Chi med kyi 'phrang sel.

¹⁰⁰ 'Chi med grub pa'i *sdom bzhi'i 'khrul 'khor gyi yig sna*.

¹⁰¹ 'Chi med grub pa'i *dngos gzhi bcu bdun gyi rnam gzhag*.



4. *Amṛtasiddhi*'s releasing the eight channel knots *trulkhor*.¹⁰²

5. *Amṛtasiddhi*'s *vajra* recitation practice.¹⁰³

'*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa* (*Amṛtasiddhi* commentary)

// *lus kyi gnad rnam rab bstan pa zhes bya ba ni /*

*/ lus gnad brgya dang drug cu re brgyad du grangs nges par bstan pa'o //*¹⁰⁴

Amoghavajra says in his commentary on this verse that there are 168 definitive kinds of *lus gnad*, but he didn't explain what these 168 kinds of *lus gnad* are. It is difficult to find out about what these 168 specific kinds of *lus gnads* are. For example, in *Amṛtasiddhi*'s Seventeen Principal Practices text alone, there are 117 *lus gnads*, but many of the *lus gnads* are mentioned more than two or three times. However, there is a possibility that if we count all the *lus gnads* mentioned in the above list of texts, excluding those that have been repeated, we might reach that number.

The *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga manual texts mainly comprise instructions on how to form various simple and complex body postures, sometimes followed by certain breathing techniques and movements of certain parts of the body to remove certain obstacles or defects. The commentary divides this yoga practice into three components: *lus gnad* (body posture), *rlung gi gnad* (breathing technique) and *dmigs pa* (object of observation), as in *trulkhor* practice.¹⁰⁵ Many of these *lus gnads* end in a particular posture, like an *āsana* in Haṭha Yoga; and many others involve the movement of parts of the body. According to this explanation, *lus gnads* here refer to the formation of certain body postures as well as the movement of certain parts of the body.

There are various non-seated *lus gnad* or yoga postures in the *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga manual texts, such as balancing on the hands, feet or head, inversion, swinging on a rope, jumping, and supine and elevated positions. There are a couple of *lus gnads* that involve the use of a rope: hanging on a rope tied to a tree, with the feet held in a bend of the rope; and remaining suspended or hanging in the air by tying a rope around the ankles. I will go through some of the *Amṛtasiddhi* yoga manual texts and explain what the main components of this yoga are and what *lus gnad* is.

¹⁰² '*Chi med grub pa'i rtsa mdud brgyad 'grol ba'i 'khrul 'khor gyi yig sna.*

¹⁰³ *rDo rje bzlas pa'i rnam gzhag.*

¹⁰⁴ "'*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba.*" In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 187–8.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*: 189 // *dngos gzhi bcu bdun du grangs nges par bstan pa las / de yang lus gnad dang dmigs pa dang rlung gi gnad dang gsum mo //.*

Lus gnad in *Amṛtasiddhi's* seventeen principal practices¹⁰⁶

This text contains 117 physical yoga practices. Each section of the seventeen principal practices contains seven to ten sequences of yoga, grouped into initial, main and final phases. There are more than two sequences of yoga in the initial and final phases, and the number varies with each of the seventeen principal practices. However, there is only one sequence of yoga in the main phase of the seventeen principal practices. So, there are a total of seventeen main practices in this text. That is why the text is called “Seventeen Principal Practices.” The name of each of the seventeen sections of the Seventeen Principal Practices also corresponds to their main phase of the yoga.

Amoghavajra explains that each of these seventeen principal practices involves body postures (*lus gnad*), breathing techniques, and objects of observation. The instruction of the yoga is mainly about *lus gnad*, forming various simple and complex body postures and movements of certain parts of the body. Breathing practice is mentioned only in the instruction on the main phase of yoga. The object of observation is not mentioned in the instructions of this text, but they are explained in the AC. The objects of observation are mainly the five channels¹⁰⁷ and the six *cakras*.¹⁰⁸ The number of *cakras* as objects of observation varies with each practice.

To have a clearer idea of how these *lus gnads* look like when performed in sequences of yoga, I have presented the translation of the entire section of the “Ninth Principal Practice” from this text. The “Ninth Principal Practice” consists of sequences of seven *lus gnads*, which are grouped into initial, main and final phases. The initial phase has three *lus gnads*, the main phase has only one *lus gnad* with a breathing practice, and the final phase has four *lus gnads*. The *Amṛtasiddhi* text and the AC do not give any specific names for these 117 *lus gnads*, but they use the names of the six breathing

¹⁰⁶ “*Chi med grub pa'i dngos gzhi bcu bdun gyi rnam par bzhag pa.*” *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 133–58. “*Amṛtasiddhi's* systematic presentation of the seventeen principal practices,” attributed to Virūpa, written and translated by Amoghavajra.

¹⁰⁷ Amoghavajra's channel system is based on five channels and six *cakras*. The five channels comprise one central channel, two upper left (white element) and right (red element) channels and two lower left (faeces) and right (urine) channels. Amoghavajra's “*nGo sprod chen po'i 'grel pa.*” In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe Cing)*, Vol. 87: 201–9 // *(rtsa) de las bsdus pa lnga ni / byang chug sems dkar po rgyu ba'i (rtsa) / byang sems dmar po rgyu pa'i (rtsa) / dri chen rgyu ba'i rtsa / dri chu rgyu ba'i (rtsa) / a wa 'du ti'o //*.

¹⁰⁸ The six *cakras* are: crown, forehead, throat, chest, navel and perineum. “*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa.*” In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe cing)* Vol. 87: 192 // *'khor lo'i rnam grangs bstan pa bya ba ni / spyi bo dang smin mtshams dang mgrin pa dang snying ga dang lte ba dang gsang ba'i gnas dang drug go //*.





applications¹⁰⁹ or yogic practices. In addition, other names are used for *lus gnad*: *re dza ka* (Skt. *recaka*?); binding the nine channels (Tib. *rtsa dgu bcing pa*/Skt. *nava-nāḍī-prabandha*);¹¹⁰ hanging from a rope (*jala-dhara*); and “attaching the ocean to Meru” (*rgya mtsho ri rab la sbyar ba*).¹¹¹ So here, in the main phase of the Ninth Principal Practice, the *lus gnad* is called “head-downward stick yoga.”¹¹² The breathing technique involved in the main phase of the *trulkhor* is filling up the whole body by uniting the upper and lower air. The objects of observation are five channels and two channel-wheels (*cakras*).

Amṛtasiddhi’s Ninth Principal Practice¹¹³

Homage to Śrī Vajrayoginī. The yogi should train in “the head downward stick yoga.” It consists of initial, main and final phases.

// *dpal rdo rje rnal 'byor ma la phyag 'tshal lo / / dngos gzhi dgu pa'i rnam
gzhag ni / / mgo thur dbyug pa'i sbyor ba la / / rnal 'byor dag gi bslab bya
ste / / sngon 'gro dngos gzhi rjes gsum mo //*.

I. Firstly, the initial phase is:

// *dang po sngon 'gro'i rim pa ni //*

¹⁰⁹ The commentary provides a list of six breathing applications. They are: 1. *bum pa can* (Skt. *पुंराका* *pūraka*), 2. *gang ba can* (Skt. *कुम्भका* *kumbhaka*), 3. *shing rta 'khorlo* (Skt. *जराणा* *jarana* [this term may have been derived from the Skt. *jaranā*, meaning “decaying” but is translated by Amoghavajra, inexplicably, as “car-horse-wheel”]), 4. *rtsa stong 'khyil ba* (Skt. *सराणा* *saraṇa* [“running through,” interpreted by Amoghavajra as “emptying/washing/cleaning the channels”]), 5. *mGo thur dbyug pa'i sbyor ba* (Skt. *उजानि* *ujani*). This term has no known Sanskrit derivation but is interpreted by Amoghavajra as “practising upside-down inversion like a stick/staff”), and 6. *gTum mo* (Sanskrit *caṇḍālī*). Note: all the Sanskrit terms are transliterated in Tibetan in the text. Three of the Sanskrit terms (*jarana*, *saraṇa* and *ujani*) are difficult to identify. *Kumbhaka* and *pūraka* are usually known, respectively, as *bum pa can* and *gang ba can* in Tibetan. However, in this text, they are used contrariwise. See “*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba*,” in *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 191. See also the heading of each of the practices in “*Amṛtasiddhi’s Seventeen Principal practice*” text.

¹¹⁰ Binding the nine channels (*rtsa dgu bcing pa*); the Sanskrit term is transliterated in Tibetan as *རྩ་བ་ལྷེ་བླ་མ་* (*rNa ba na li pra b+ha d+ha*). I think the right transliteration of the Sanskrit words would be *nava-nāḍī-prabandha* (binding nine *nāḍīs* as the Tibetan name suggest). See: “*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba*,” in *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 190.

¹¹¹ Ibid.: 190 // *bcu pa'i lus gnad kum bha ka la sogs pa bdun no / brgyad pa'i lus gnad pu ra ka la sogs pa brgyad do //*.

¹¹² Ibid. / *dgu pa'i lus gnad U dza ni la sogs pa bdun no / U dza ni* in Tibetan is *mgo mthur dbyug pa'i sbyor ba*.

¹¹³ “*Chi med grub pa'i dngos gzhi bcu bdun gyi rnam par bzhag pa*.” *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 145–6.

1. Assume the *vajra*¹¹⁴ cross-legged posture [full lotus]. Having held a fist in both hands and having inserted [the hands] inside the crossed legs, place the hands on the ground with strength. [Then] placing the weight [of the body] on the hands, lift the crossed legs upwards.

// *zhabs gnyis rdo rje'i skyil krung bca' / / lag gnyis khu tshur bcang byas nas / / skyil krung nang du gzhug byas te / / stobs rnams bskyed cing sa la gzugs / / lag pa dag la ljig bskur nas / / skyil krung gyen la 'degs par bya //*.

2. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Straighten the spine and bend the throat¹¹⁵. Grasp the right shoulder with the palm of the left bent arm and rotate [the right shoulder] seven times. Repeat with the left shoulder.

// *zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' / / sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug / / lag g.yas bkug pa'i thal mo yis / / g.yas pa'i dpung pa bzung bya zhing / / stobs bskyed lan bdun bskor byar bya / / g.yon pa dag kyang de bzhin no //*.

3. Lie on your back and place the weight of the body on the upper third joint [of the back]. With both arms extended upwards and both legs bent upwards, hold [the legs] from the big toes and stretch [the legs] with strength.

// *gan rkyal dag tu nyal bya zhing / / yar gyi tshigs pa gsum pa la / / lus kyi ljid rnams bskur bya ste / / lag gnyis gyen la brkyang byas pas / / rkang gnyis gyen la bkug pa yi / / mthe bong gnyis nas bzung bya zhing / / stobs rnams bskyed cing brkyang bar bya //*.

II. Second, the main phase is:

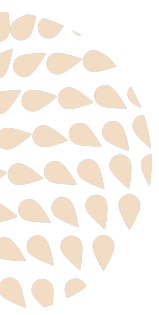
// *gnyis pa dngos gzhi'i rim pa ni //*

1. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Having tied a rope tightly around the ankles [where] the two feet are crossed and having hung it tightly in the sky [on a tree], remain suspended at a distance of one span [from the ground]. Having held with strength in both hands a suitable stick of a cubit and four inches in length, draw up the lower air with force

¹¹⁴ The *vajra* cross-legged posture in Buddhism is similar to the lotus posture in Hinduism.

¹¹⁵ *mgrin pa dgug* is sometimes translated as "bending the neck" in English.





and press down the upper air with force. [Then] bending the spine and throat, rise as if standing.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // skyil krung zhabs gnyis mgul pa ru /
/ dha'u ris rab tu sbrel byas nas // nam mkhar rab tu btags byas nas / mtho
gang mtshams su lding bya zhing // thabs dang mthun pa'i dbyug pa ni //
khru gang sor bzhi tshad ldan pa // lag gnyis stobs bskyed bzung byas nas //
'og rlung drap por then bya zhing // steng rlung drag por mnam byas pas //
sgal tshigs mgrin pa dgug byas la // 'g्रेng ba'i tshul gyis ldang bar bya //.

III. Third, the final phase is:

// gsum pa rjes kyi rim pa ni //

1. [Sitting] firmly on the lower end of the spine, cross the ankle of the bent right leg over the back of the neck. Stand up, gathering strength on the left leg and bring the palms of the hands together over the chest. Repeat with the left leg.

// tshigs pa'i mar mtshams brtan bya ste // rkang g.yas bkug pa'i mgul pa ni //
ljing pa dag la rgal bya ste // rkang g.yon stobs bskyed langs bya zhing //
thugs kar thal mo sbyar byas te // g.yon pa yang ni de bzhin no //.

2. Plant a staff of the right size firmly [on the ground] as if standing in the sky [mid-air]. Pass the belly over [the staff] and let both arms and legs float completely in the sky [mid-air] at a distance of one span [from the ground].

// tshad dang ldan pa'i dbyug pa ni // ldang zhing tshul gyis nam mkha' la //
brtan par rab tu gzugs bya ste // pho ba dag ni rgal (dgal) bya zhing // rkang
pa gnyis dang la pa gnyis // mtho gang sa mtshams nam mkha' la // stobs
skyed rab tu lding bar bya //.

3. Keep legs side by side and upright [standing up]. Gather strength in both hands, make a fist and strike on either side of the hips. Then swing both hands forward one after the other and run quickly upwards/uphill.

// rkang gnyis gshibs la bsgreng bya ste // lag gnyis stobs bskyed khu tshur
bcang // spyi dmigs gnyis la brdeg bya ste // de rjes lag gnyis khu tshur ni //
re mos mdun du g.yug bya zhing // gyen la rab tu brgyug pa bya'o //.

As we can see, many of these *lug gnads* are performed in a particular posture, and the body posture plays an important role. This could be the reason why the text refers to these yoga practices or *trulkhor* as *lus gnad* (body posture). Some of these yoga postures are similar to the *āsanas* of the Hindu tradition. The posture in the first sequence of the initial phase is popularly known as *kukkuṭāsana* (the rooster pose) in the Hindu tradition; the instruction for forming this posture is also similar to that found in the *Haṭhapradīpikā*.¹¹⁶ In the main sequence of yoga postures, there is a Sanskrit term transliterated in Tibetan as ལྷུ་རི (dha'u ri). The closest Sanskrit word I have found for the term ལྷུ་རི (dha'u ri) is *ḍorī*, which means rope. If I have translated it correctly, this yoga posture appears to be similar to one in the drawing of the penance posture (*tapakarāsana*) shown in the *Jogapradīpakā*, in which the yogi hangs upside down, suspended from the branch of a tree, held by a rope tied around his feet.¹¹⁷ There is another version of the same posture in Amoghavajra's *mGo 'thur dbyug pa'i 'khrul 'khor* text (attributed to Nag po spyod pa, Skt. Kṛṣṇacaryā). The text is almost identical to the Virūpa's *Amṛtasiddhi* *trulkhor* texts) where the text says that the yogi should clasp the arms with the palms of the hands instead of holding a stick.¹¹⁸ The posture in the first sequence of the final phase is similar to the description of the *trivikramāsana* in the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*.¹¹⁹

Amṛtasiddhi's Tenth Principal Practice

The Tenth Principal Practice¹²⁰ of *Amṛtasiddhi*'s seventeen principal practices also consists of seven sequences of yoga, grouped into initial, main and final phases. These

¹¹⁶ HP 1.23: “[The yogi] correctly assumes lotus pose, inserts the hands between the knees and thighs, places (the hands) on the ground, and remain in the air (*vyoma*). This is wild cock pose (*kukkuṭāsana*).” (Mallinson, Birch et al., 2025).

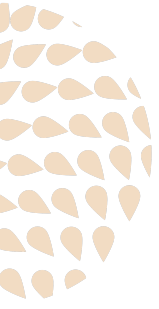
¹¹⁷ See the drawing of *tapakarāsana* posture according to *Jogapradīpakā* (Bühnemann 2011: 51, drawing no. 33).

¹¹⁸ Amoghavajra's “*mGo 'thur dbyugs pa'i sbyor ba*.” In *bsTan 'gyur (Pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 217 // *zhabs gnyis gshibs pa'i 'gul pa ru / / rda'u ris rab tu sbrel byas nas / / nam mkar rab tu brtags byas zhing / / mtho gang 'tshams su lding byas nas / / lag gnyis bsnol ba'i lag thil gyis / / rbe (sbe) sha gnyis ni bsdam bya ste / / yan lag dang po bcug byas nas / / 'geng [g'reng] ba'i tshul gyis ldang bar bya //* English translation: After tying a *ḍorī* (a rope) tightly around the ankles with your feet together, tie (the rope) tightly in the sky. Having remained suspended at a distance of one cubit (from the ground), clasp (opposite) arm muscles with the palms of your folded arms. After inserting your first limb (head) inside (the folded arms), rise gracefully.

¹¹⁹ See Birch (2018: 163) “Having placed one foot on the [back of the] neck, [the yogi] should sit [and then] stand up [with the leg on the neck]. This is Trivikrama's pose.”

¹²⁰ “*Chi med grub pa'i dngos gzhi bcu bdun gyi rnam par bzhag pa*.” *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. (ru): 71b-2a.





physical yoga practices are also made up of *lus gnad* (body posture), *rlung gi gnad* (breathing application) and *dmigs pa'i gnad* (the object of observation). The *lus gnad* are shown below. The breathing practice mentioned in its main phase of the practice is the same as that mentioned above in the Ninth Principal Practice. Its objects of observation are the five channels and the five channel-wheels (*cakras*). The following *lus gnad* are part of the initial practice of the Tenth Principal Practice. The first posture is similar to the body posture popularly known as the reverse prayer pose. The second posture is performed with both feet behind the neck while balancing on the hands, which is similar to the description of the wood-sparrow pose (*araṇyacaṭakāsana*) mentioned in *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati*.¹²¹

The Lus gnad from the Tenth Principal Practice's Initial Phase of Yoga

1. Assume the vajra cross-legged posture. Join the palms together behind the back [in the prayer posture] and press [the hands] against the seventh joint [of the back]. Straighten the spine and bend the throat. Gather all your strength and remain steadfast.

// *zhabs gnyis rdo rje skyil krung bca' / / lag gnyis rgyab tu thal mo sbyar / / tshigs pa bdun pa mnan byas shing / sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug / stobs rnam rab tu bskyed byas nas / bstan pa'i tshul gyis gnas par bya / /*

2. Sitting firmly on the lower end of the spine, cross the ankles of both bent legs over the back of the neck. After planting your hands on the ground, gather strength and [let the body] float in the sky.

// *tshigs pa'i mar mtshams brten byas te / / rkang gnyis bkug pa'i mgul pa ni / mjing pa dag la rgal byas shing / / lag gnyis sa la btsugs byas nas / / stobs bskyed nam mkhar lding bar bya / /*

Amṛtasiddhi's Eleventh Principal Practice

The *lus gnad* of the Seventeenth Principal Practice is called *dza la dha ra /'ja' la dha ra (jaladhara)*.¹²² This practice consists of nine sequences of yoga grouped into initial, main

¹²¹ Birch 2018: 155, v. 38. "Having placed one foot on [the back of] the neck, [the yogi] should fix the second foot above it, support [the body] with the palms of both hands [on the ground] and remain thus. [This] is the wood-sparrow pose."

¹²² "Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba." In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 191. // *bcu bdun pa'i lus gnad dza la*

and final practice. The following *lus gnad* is part of the initial phase. This yoga practice uses a rope and a tree as props, and it is called the yoga of *Ja-la-dha-ra* *(*dza la dha ra*).

Having tied the two ends of a rope to a tree in the mid-air, place the soles of [your] feet on the bend in the rope. By gathering strength in both hands, hold on to the rope and fly/swing fully into the sky.

// bar snang gnas pa'i shing dag la // thag pa'i sna gnyis btdags byas pas //
thag pa khug pa'i sbyor ba la // zhabs gnyis mthil ni bzhug byas te // lag gnyis
stobs bskyed thag pa la // bcang ba'i tshul gyis bzung bya te // nam mkhar rab
tu lding bar bya //.

***Lus gnad* in the “Remedy for the Defects of the Eight Bodily Constituents”¹²³**

The *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary '*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa* in the *Shangs pa* teaching cycle and in Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus gives a detailed account of the body, the body's channels, its airs, *bindu*, moon, sun, fire and the central channel, which is similar to the descriptions of the Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text edited by Mallinson and Szántó (2021). However, the *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary¹²⁴ in the *Shangs pa* teaching cycle's account of the body's elements is very similar to the Mādhvacandra's Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text rather than to that of Amoghavajra.

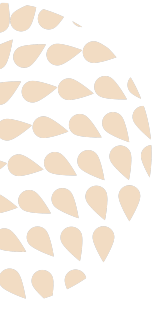
The text “*Amṛtasiddhi* Remedy for the Defects of the Eight Bodily Constituents” was written by Amoghavajra but is attributed to Virūpa; it pays homage to Śrī Vajrayoginī. The text explains the defects of the body, the channels, the airs, the essential drops, the sun, the moon, the fire, etc., and gives four methods for eliminating each of their defects. The four methods are *lus gnad*, the object of observation (*dmigs pa*), substances

dha ra'i phyag rgya la sogs pa dgu'o /. 'ja' la d+ha ra is a Sanskrit term transliterated in Tibetan; I couldn't identify the actual Sanskrit term.

¹²³ “*Chi med grub pa'i dben pa bryad kyi skyon bcos thabs kyi man ngag.*” In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. 87: 228–47. (Title of the text according to the colophon on page 247.) I have translated *dben pa bryad* as “eight bodily constituents.” A direct translation of *dben pa bryad* as “eight divisions” seems awkward here. The Sanskrit word *viveka* is usually translated as *dben pa* (division) in Tibetan texts. Amoghavajra uses the phrases *lus dben pa*, *nyi ma dben pa*, *zla ba dben pa*, *thig le dben pa*, and so on, in this text. I wonder whether these Tibetan terms are translations of Sanskrit phrases as we can see in the Sanskrit *Amṛtasiddhi* text by Madhvacandra (see Mallinson and Szántó, 2021: 41–118), such as *śārīra viveka*, *sūrya viveka*, *candra viveka*, *bindutattva viveka*, respectively.

¹²⁴ “*Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa.*” *dPal ldan shangs pa'i chos skor rnam lnga'i rgya gzhung*, Vol. 7: 227–40.





(*rdzas*), and blessings (*byin rlabs*). Here are some selected *lus gnads* to remove the flaws of the principal constituents of the body. The fourth *lus gnad* (yoga posture) is known as *kapālāsana*, which is the skull pose in Haṭha Yoga texts.¹²⁵ And the fifth *lus gnad* (posture) is the same as the rooster pose (*kukkuṭāsana*).

1. *Lus gnad* to remove the flaw of grasping a grasped object as a Self:

The body posture is, assume a vajra cross-legged posture with [the hands in] the equipoise *mudrā*.

// *lus gnad ni rdo rje skyil krung mnyam bzhag gi phyag rgya bca'o //*.

2. *Lus gnad* to cure the defects of entangled channels:

The body posture is, assume a lotus cross-legged posture. Stick the ocean [belly] to the Meru [spine], straighten the spine and bend the throat. [Then] massage the belly with both hands.

// *lus gnad ni zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' rgya mtsho ri rab la sbyar la sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug lag pa gnyis kyis lto ba mnye //*.

3. *Lus gnad* to cure the defect of rigid channels caused by the cold temperature of the body:

Body posture is, assuming a lotus cross-legged posture, pass the hands through the inside of the knees [knee pits] and bring the palms together at the spot between the eyebrows.

// *lus gnad ni zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' la sgyid khug gnyis su lag pa gnyis bcug la smin mtshams su thal mo sbyar ba'o //*.

4. *Lus gnad* to cure the flaw of essential drops (*bindu*) falling like a sweat:

Body posture is, plant the crown of your head and hands on the ground and raise both legs vertically to the sky.

// *lus gnad ni spyi bo dang lag pa sa la btsugs te rkang pa gnyis nam mkha' la bsgreng ba'o //*.

¹²⁵ Birch (2018: 163, v. 45): “Having placed the [top of the] skull on the ground, [the yogi] should lift up the feet. [This] is the skull pose.”

5. *Lus gnad* to clear away the defects of the air that causes the mental disorder.

The body posture is, assume a *vajra* cross-legged posture [full lotus], insert the hands into the crossed legs, and lift the crossed legs to the sky.

// *lus gnad ni rdo rje skyil krung bca' la khu tshur gnyis skyil krung nang du bcug skyil krung nam mkha' la 'degs par bya'o //*.

Lus gnad in Amṛtasiddhi's Releasing the Eight Channel Knots Trulkhor text ('Chi med grub pa'i rtsa mdud brgya 'grol ba'i 'khrul 'khor gyi yig sna)

In his commentary, Amoghavajra explains the system of body's *rtsa* (channels), *rlung* (air), *thig le* (essential drops/*bindu*), *me* (fire), *nyi ma* (sun) and *zla ba* (moon), etc. The central channel runs from the crown of the head through the six channel-wheels down to the genitals. Thirty-two secondary channels branch off from the crown, carrying the essential drops (*bodhicitta bindu*).¹²⁶ According to the AC, these thirty-two channels form eight channel-knots, each containing four channels tied to the main channel. These channel knots correspond to the bondage to *saṃsāra*. The eight channel knots are: (1) the knot tied to conceptuality, (2) the knot tied to attachment, (3) the knot tied to clinging, (4) the knot tied to the senses, (5) the knot tied to phenomena, (6) the knot tied to clarity, (7) the knot tied to bliss, and (8) the knot tied to nonconceptuality. The AC says:

When these eight channel knots are released, the practitioner attains eight powers of *samādhis*. By releasing the channel knots, the practitioner will attain the fruits of the (*bodhisattva*'s) five paths and the ten grounds (ten *bhūmis*) without having gradually progressed from one path and ground to another. The realisation of Buddha will manifest in this very life by following the quintessential instruction of Virūpa, without relying on (attaining enlightenment in) the *bardo* (an intermediate state, between death and rebirth) and the next life.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ “‘Chi med grub pa'i 'grel pa zhes bya ba.” In *bsTan 'gyur (pe cing)*, Vol. (ru): 89b // *byang chub kyi sems rab tu rgyu ba'i rtsa sum cu rtsa gnyis mdud pa brgyad du gnas / / rtsa sum cu rtsa gnyis bzhir bzhir 'dus pa las rtsa'i mdud pa re res gtso bo bcings pa'i tshul gyis gnas pa'o //*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*: 184 // *sa lam la sogs de las 'byung zhes bya ba ni / lam lnga dang sa bcu'm bcu bzhi' la sogs pa / rim bzhin du bgrod mi dgos shing rtsa mdud grol ba'i ngang las don mthar phyin pa'o /.../ dus 'di nyid las bar do dang dus gzhan la mi ltos shing / slob dpon chen po 'bir ba'i man ngag la brten nas sangs rgyas kyi dgongs pa mngon du 'gyur pa'o //*.





The methods for releasing the channel-knots are: *lus gnad* (body posture), *dmiga pa'i gnad* (an object of observation), *rdzas* (substances) and *byin rlabs* (blessings). According to the AC, it appears that the physical body postures and the movements involved in the trulkhor are the key body posture methods. The trulkhor for releasing each of the channel-knots consists of three phases: initial, main and final. Here are some of the *lus gnad* as a method for releasing the channel knots. The first yoga posture is similar to the peacock pose (*mayūrāsana*), performed with legs crossed (*baddhakeki*).¹²⁸

1. *Lus gnad* method for removing the flaws of the channel knot of attachment (this is the main phase of the trulkhor):

Assume the lotus cross-legged posture and plant your knees on the ground. At the distance of two spans from the position of the ankles where the legs are crossed, plant the palms of your hands side by side firmly on the ground. By placing the weight [of your body] on the elbows, let your body float in the sky.

// zhabs ni pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // pus mo sa la gzugs bya ste // zhabs gnyis bsnol ba'i mgul pa nas // mtho do gcal ba'i sa mtshams su // lag gnyis gshibs pa'i thal mo ni // sa la brtan por gzugs bya ste // gru mo gnyis la lji bskur nas // lus spyi mkha' la lding bar bya //.

2. *Lus gnad* method for removing the flaws of the channel-knot of bondage of phenomena (this is final phase of the trulkhor):

Sit in a squatting position with your feet next to each other. In the mid-air, at a distance of one span (from the ground), hold a stick of the right size horizontally with both hands. Jump seven times with your body flying in the sky.

// zhabs gnyis gshibs pa'i sbyor ba las // tsog gu'i tshul gyis 'dug byas te // sa la 'khyid gang gzhal ba yi // nam mkha' dag gi mtshams dag tu // tshad dang ldan pa'i dbyug pa ni // lag gnyis stobs kyis phrad du gzung // lus spyi mkha' la lding byas nas // lan bdun bar du mchong bar bya //.

¹²⁸ *Haṭharatnāvalī* III.45 // *mayūram padmakam kuryāt baddhakekīti kathyate* //.

Some selected Haṭha Yoga-like postures from Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi yoga* manual texts, attributed to Virūpa¹²⁹

Below are listed some supine (*gan rkyal nyal/uttānaśaya*) yoga postures (*lus gnad*):

1. Lie on your back and place the weight of the body on the upper third joint [of the back]. With both arms extended upwards and both legs bent upwards, hold [the legs] from the big toes and stretch [the legs] with strength.

// *gan rkyal dag tu nyal byas shing // yar gyi tshigs pa gsum pa la // lus kyi ljid rnams bskur byas shing // lag gnyis gyen la brkyang byas te // rkang gnyis gyen la bskum pa yis // mthe bong gnyis nas bzung byas shing // stobs rnams bskyed cing brkyang par bya //*.

2. After lying down in the supine position, keep your legs side by side, and raise them vertically upwards. Place the weight of the body on the upper first joint [of the back]. Gather strength in both arms, stretch them upwards. Bend the neck, pressing [the chin] against the chest.

// *gan rkyal dag tu nyal byas nas // rkang gnyis gshibs pa'i sbyor ba yis // gyen la rab tu bsgreng byas te // yar gyi tshigs pa dang po la // lus kyi ljid rnams bskur byas te // lag gnyis stobs bskyed stod du brkyang // mgrin pa dgug cing snying ga mnan //*.

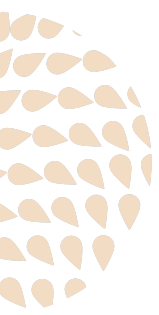
3. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. After lying on your back, raise the crossed legs upwards and place the weight of the body on the upper third joint [of the back]. Gather strength in both hands and support the waist.

// *zhabs ni pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // gan rkyal dag tu nyal byas shing // skyil krung gyen la bslang bya ste // yar gyi tshigs pa gsum pa la // lus kyi ljid rnams bskur byas te // lag gnyis stobs bskyed sbyor ba yis // rked pa dag ni brten par bya //*.

4. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Having interlocked the ten fingers, bind the back of the neck [with the hands]. After lying on the back, place the weight of the body on the upper third joint [of the back]

¹²⁹ The following trulkhor (or *lus gnad*) are selected from the texts '*Chi med grub pa'i dngos gzhi bcu bdun gyi rnam gzhas*' and '*Chi med 'phrang sel*'.





and let the crossed legs float in the sky. Forcefully draw up the lower air, forcefully press down the upper air, gather strength and practise.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis sor bcu bsnol byas nas // mjing pa dag ni bsdams byas shing // gan rkyal dag tu nyal byas nas // yar gyi tshigs pa gsum pa la // lus kyi ljid rnam bskur byas shing // skyil krung nam mkhar lding byas te // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas // steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

5. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Gathering strength in both arms, pass [the hands] through the knee-pits. After lying on your back, place the weight of the body on the upper seventh joint [of the back]. Forcefully draw up the lower and forcefully press down the upper air. After making a fist in both hands, touch [the hands] to the forehead. Gather strength and practise.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis stobs bskyed sbyor yi // sgyid khug gnyis su gzhugs byas nas // gan rkyal dag tu nyal byas te // yar gyi tshigs pa bdun pa la // lus kyi ljid rnam bskur byas nas // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas // steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // lag gnyis khu tshur bcang byas nas // dpral ba dag tu btugs byas nas // stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

6. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. After folding your arms behind your back and grasping your arm muscles [with opposite hands], lie on your back. Place the body weight on the upper third joint [of the back]. Straighten the abdomen and raise the crossed legs to the sky.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis rgyab tu bsnol byas nas // rbe sha gnyis ni bsdam byas pas // gan rkyal dag tu nyal bya ste // yar gyi tshigs pa gsum pa la // lus kyi ljid rnam bskur bya ste // skyil krung nam mkhar phyar bar bya //.

7. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. With the arms folded behind [your] back, bind the arm muscles tightly [with the opposite hands]. Lying in a supine position, raise the crossed legs upwards. At the upper seventh joint [of the back], having placed the weight [of the body] on the forearms planted firmly on the ground, gather strength in both the upper and lower [bodies] and bend the [lower body] upwards seven times.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis rgyab tu bsnol byas nas //
rbe sha¹³⁰ rab tu bsdam bya ste // gan rkyal dag tu nyal byas nas // pad ma
gyen la bslang bya ste // yar gyi tshigs pa bdun pa la // lag ngar gnyis la ljid
bskur nas // sa la brtan por bzuqs byas te // stod smad gnyis ni stobs bskyed nas
// gyen la lan bdun dgug par bya //.

8. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. After folding your arms behind your back and grasping your arm muscles [with opposite hands], lie on your back. Place the body weight on the upper third joint [of the back]. Straighten the abdomen and raise the crossed legs to the sky.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // rbe sha gnyis ni bsdam byas pas //
gan rkyal dag tu nyal bya ste // yar gyi tshigs pa gsum pa la // lus kyi ljid rnams
bskur byas te // khong pa dag ni bsrang byas nas // skyil krung nam mkhar
phyar ba bya //.

Some hovering (Lding ba), balancing and elevated yoga postures (Lus gnad)

9. Assume the vajra cross-legged posture. Having held a fist in both hands and having passed [the hands] through the crossed legs, plant the hands on the ground with strength. [Then] putting the weight [of the body] on the hands, lift the crossed legs to the sky.

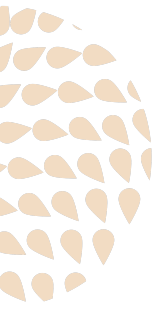
// zhabs gnyis rdo rje'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis khu tshur bcang byas nas //
skyil krung nang du gzhuqs byas te // stobs rnams bskyed cing sa la gzugs // lag
gnyis dag la ljid bskur nas // skyil krung nam mkhar gdeg par bya //.

10. Sitting firmly on the lower end of the spine, cross the ankle of the bent right leg over the back of the neck. Gathering strength, stand on the left leg and join the palms together over the chest. Repeat with the left leg.

// tshigs pa'i mar mtshams brten byas te // rkang g.yas bkug pa'i mgul pa ni //
mjing pa dag la rgal byas te // rkang g.yon stobs bskyed langs byas shing //
thugs kar thal mo sbyar byas te // g.yon pa dag kyang de bzhin no //.

¹³⁰ I translated *rbe sha* as *sbe sha*, arm muscle, according to the meaning conveyed by *lag pa'i sbe sha'i nad sel* (cures the ailment of the flesh/muscle of the arms). See *sNga 'gyur mying ma'i glegs bam rin po che*, Vol. 2: 360, *gSer rta: bLa rung*. Retrieved from: <http://purl.bdrc.io/resource/W3CN3026>. Accessed on: 16 April, 2023. [BDRC bdr:c:W3CN3026] // lag pa'i khu tshur gnyis mdun ri 'phul ba'i tshul du byas pas ro stod kyi sha rgyas pa dang lag pa'i sbe sha'i nad sel lo //.





11. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Straighten the spine and bend the throat. Gathering strength in both arms, plant the fists on the ground on the left and right sides. Having lifted the crossed legs upwards, let the [body] float in the sky.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug // lag gnyis stobs bskyed khu tshur ni // g.yas g.yon dag tu sa la gzugs // skyil krung gyen la btegs byas shing // nam mkhar rab tu lding bar bya //.

12. Making a fist with both hands, plant both forearms on the ground, [and] pull up both legs. Let the whole-body hover/float in the air. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air, forcefully pressed down the upper air, gather strength and practise.

// lag nyis khu tshur bcang ba yi // lag ngar gnyis ni sa la bstugs // rkang gnyis gyen la bkug byas nas // lus spyi nam mkhar lding byas shing // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas // steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

13. Gathering strength in both arms, plant the palms of the hands and the crown of the head on the ground. Keep the legs side by side and raise them vertically to the sky.

// lag gnyis stobs bskyed thal mo dang // spyi bo sa la bstugs byas te // rkang gnyis gshibs pa'i sbyor ba yi // nam mkha' dag la 'geng bar bya //.

14. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Having held a fist in each hand and planted both forearms and the crown of the head on the ground. Let the crossed legs float in the sky. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and forcefully pressed down the upper air, gather strength and practise.

// zhabs ni pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis khu tshur bcang ba yi // lag ngar gnyis dang spyi bo ni // sa la brtan por gzugs byas te // skyil krung nam mkhar lding byas shing // 'og rlung drag por then byas te // steng rlung drag por mnan byas nas // stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

15. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture and plant the knees on the ground. At the distance of two spans from the position of ankles where the legs are crossed, keeping the hands side by side, plant both palms firmly on the

ground. Having placed the weight [of the body] on the elbows, let the body float in the sky.

// zhabs ni pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // pus mo sa la gzugs bya ste // zhabs gnyis bsnol ba'i mgula pa nas // mtho do gcal ba'i sa mtshams su // lag gnyis gshibs pa'i thal mo ni // sa la brtan por gzugs bya ste // gru mo gnyis la ljib bskur nas // lus spyi nam mkhar lding bar bya //.

16. Sitting firmly on the lower end of the spine, cross the ankles of both bent legs over the back of the neck. After planting your hands on the ground, gather strength and [let the body] float in the sky.

// tshigs pa'i mar mtshams brten byas te // rkang gnyis bkug pa'i mgul pa ni / mjing pa dag la rgal byas shing // lag gnyis sa la btsugs byas nas // stobs bskyed nam mkhar lding bar bya //.

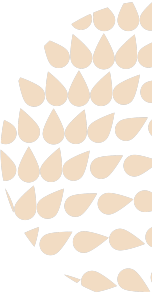
Some bending and twisting yoga postures

17. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Fold the arms behind the back and bind both arm muscles [with opposite hands]. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and forcefully pressed down the upper air, place the crown of the head on the ground, gather strength and practise.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis rgyab tu bsnol byas nas // rbe sha gnyis ni bsdam byas shing // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas // steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // spyi bo sa la gzugs byas nas // stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

18. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Raise [tilt] the lotus [crossed legs] upwards. Having [seated] firmly on the lower end of the spine, pass both hands through the knee-pits with strength. Straighten the spine and bend the throat, pressing [the chin on] the chest. Having joined the palms together, touch [the hands] to the forehead. Having united the upper and lower air, gather strength and practise.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // pad ma gyen la slang bya ste // tshigs pa'i mar mtshams brten byas nas // lag gnyis stobs bskyed sbyor ba yi // sgaid khug gnyis su gzhug byas la // sgal tshigs rab tu bsrang bya ste // mgrin pa dgug cing snying ga mnan // lag gnyis thal mo sbyar byas shing // dpral ba



rab tu gtug byas nas // steng 'og rlung gnyis sbyar byas ste // stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

19. Gathering strength in the left leg, bind the yoni [perineum] with the root of the [left] foot [left heel]. Press the ankle of the bent right leg onto the left thigh. With the inner elbow of the outwardly bent left arm, bind the right leg [from] above the tarsal bones. Bend the right arm behind your back, holding a fist in the [right] hand. Gathering strength in the left arm, grasp the right wrist with the palm of the left hand. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and forcefully pressed down the upper air, gather strength and practise.

// zhabs g.yon stobs bskyed dzo ni la // zhabs kyi rtsa ba'i drag tu bsdam // zhabs g.yas skum pa'i long bu yis // g.yon pa'i brla dag mnan byas te // lag g.yon phyr la bkug pa yi // gru mo rkang g.yas bol gong bsdams // lag g.yas rgyab tu bkug bya zhing // khu tshur dag ni bcang byas te // lag g.yon stobs bskyed thal mo yis // lag g.yas mgul pa bsdam byas pas // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas // steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // stobs rnams bskyed cing bsgom par bya //.

20. Gathering strength in the right leg, bind the yoni [perineum] with the root of the [right] foot [right heel]. Press the ankle of the bent left leg onto the right thigh. Having interlocked the ten fingers, insert both knees [inside the arms] and bind [the knees] with the forearms. Straighten the spine and bend the throat. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and slightly pressed down the upper air, generate all the strength and practise.

// zhabs g.yas stobs bskyed dzo ni la // zhabs kyi rtsa bas drag tu bsdam // zhabs g.yon skum pa'i long bu yis // g.yas pa'i brla dag mnan byas te // lag gnyis sor bcu bsnol byas nas // pus mo gnyis ni gzugs byas nas // lag ngar gnyis kyis bsdams byas zhing // sgäl tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas // steng rlung cung zad mnan byas shing // stobs rnams bskyed cing bsgom par bya //.

21. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Cross the arms behind your back and hold the big toes [with the opposite hands]. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and forcefully pressed down the upper air, straighten the spine and bend the throat. [Then] gradually bend the body down and touch the forehead to the seat three times.

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis rgyab tu snol byas pas //
rkang gnyis mtheb mo bzung byas te // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas //
steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug //
rim gyis lus bkug dpral pa ni // stan la lan gsum gtug par bya //.

22. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture. Having crossed the arms behind the back, hold the big toes [with the opposite hands]. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and forcefully pressed down the upper air, straighten the spine and bend the neck. Gradually bend the body down and touch the forehead thrice to the seat [ground].

// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // lag gnyis rgyab tu snol byas pas //
rkang gnyis mtheb mo bzung byas te // 'og rlung drag por then byas nas //
steng rlung drag por mnan byas shing // sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug //
rim gyis lus bkug dpral pa ni // stan la lan gsum gtug par bya //.

23. Assume the lotus cross-legged posture and raise (tilt) the crossed legs upwards. Having settled on the lower end of the spine, gathering strength in both hands, pass (the hands) through the knee-pits, straighten the spine and bend the neck. Having interlaced the ten fingers, tightly bind the neck [with the hands]. Forcefully draw the lower air upwards and forcefully press the upper air downwards.

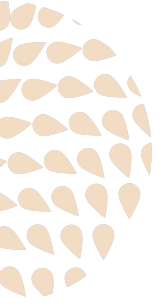
// zhabs gnyis pad ma'i skyil krung bca' // pad ma gyen la slang bya ste //
tshigs pa'i mar mtshams brten byas nas // lag gnyis stobs bskyed sbyor ba yis //
sgyid khug gnyis su gzhugs byas te // sgal tshigs bsrang la mgrin pa dgug // lag
gnyis sor bcu bsnol byas pas // mgrin pa rab tu bsdam byas pas // 'og rlung
drag por then byas nas // steng rlung drag por mnan par bya //.

Some unusual yoga postures

24. Having tied the two ends of a rope to a tree in the mid-air, place the soles of your feet on the bend in the rope. By gathering strength in both hands, hold on to the rope and fly/swing fully into the sky.

// bar snang gnas pa'i shing dag la // thag pa'i sna gnyis btags byas pas // thag
pa khug pa'i sbyor ba la // zhabs gnyis mthil ni gzhug byas te // lag gnyis stobs
bskyed thag pa la // bcang ba'i tshul gyis bzung bya ste // nam mkhar rab tu
lding bar bya //.





25. Plant a staff of the right size firmly [on the ground] as if standing in the air. Pass your belly over [the staff] and let both arms and legs float completely in the air at a distance of one span [from the ground].

// tshad dang ldan pa'i dbyug pa ni / ldang zhing tshul gyis nam mkha' la / /
brtan par rab tu gzugs bya ste / / pho ba dag ni rgal (dgal) bya zhing / / rkang pa
gnyis dang lag pa gnyis / / mtho gang sa mtshams nam mkha' la / / stobs bskyed
rab tu lding bar bya //.

26. Having climbed a tree with the head facing downward, wrap both arms and legs around the tree as if holding in your lap. Having forcefully drawn up the lower air and forcefully pressed down the upper air, gather strength and practise.

// ljon shing dag la 'dzeg byas nas / / mgo bo thur du brtan (bstan¹³¹) byas te / /
lag pa gnyis dang rkang pa gnyis / / ljon shing dag la 'khyud byas shing / / pang
par btab pa'i tshul dag gis / / 'og rlung drag por then byas te / / steng rlung drag
por mnan byas nas / / stobs bskyed rab tu bsgom par bya //.

27. After tightly joining the rope [dorī] around the ankles of the feet lying side by side, hang/tie it tightly in the sky and remain suspended/floating at a distance of one span [from the ground]. Gathering strength in both hands, hold a suitable stick measuring one cubit and four inches long. Forcefully draw up the lower and forcefully press down the upper air. Having filled the whole body [with air], bend the spine and throat, and rise as if standing.

// zhabs gnyis gshibs pa'i mgul pa ru / / dha'u ris rab tu dbrel (sbrel) byas nas / /
nam mkhar rab tu gdags byas shing / / mtho gang mtshams su lding byas pas / /
thabs dang mthun pa'i dbyug pa ni / khru gang sor bzhi tshad ldan pa / / lag
gnyis stobs bskyed bzung byas nas / 'og rlung drag por then bya ste / / steng
rlung drag por mnan bya zhing / / lus spyi rab tu dgang bya ste / / sgal tshigs
mgrin pa dgugs byas pas / / 'greng ba'i tshul gyis ldang bar bya //.

Conclusion

What is unique about Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* works, which we do not see in other *Amṛtasiddhi* texts by Virūpa, is a large number of physical yoga practices. This article

¹³¹ I have translated the word *brtan* as *bstan*.

has focused on the two important elements of these physical yoga practices: *lus gnad* (body posture) and the *rlung gi gnad* (breathing technique). Attention has been drawn in particular to the Haṭha-Yoga-like body postures that we rarely see in other Vajrayāna Buddhist texts. As mentioned above, the *Amṛtasiddhi* is not specifically a Haṭha Yoga text; its practice is called *Amṛtasiddhi*, not Haṭha Yoga. However, Vajrayāna's *Amṛtasiddhi* and the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava traditions of Haṭha Yoga share some important practices. So, when we notice *haṭhayoga*-like yoga postures and the mention of a term and practice called *drag po'i sbyor ba* (a Tibetan equivalent for the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*) in the *Amṛtasiddhi* texts and commentary, it leads us to inquire as to whether or not they have any specific relationship to the practices of the Haṭha Yoga tradition. So that we may find clues to the development of the somewhat enigmatic term *haṭhayoga*, and to the proliferation of many *āsanas* in late medieval Haṭha Yoga texts, it seems pertinent to consider whether or not the term *haṭhayoga* has any specific connection with the *haṭhayoga* practices referred to in the *Kālacakratantra*, as *ṣaḍaṅgayoga*, and Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary.

The physical yoga practices in Amoghavajra *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus are basically a trulkhor consisting of *lus gnad* (body posture), *rlung gi gnad* (breathing method) and the *dmigs pa'i gnad* (object of observation). The instructions and steps of these physical yoga practices in these yoga manuals are primarily made up of *lus gnad* (body posture). The Tibetan term *lus gnad* generally means body posture. *Lus gnad* here in these texts is the formation of postures, often followed by movement. Many of the practices and the final postures in the instructions bear some resemblance to the *āsanas* of the Haṭha Yoga tradition.¹³² However, unlike the *āsanas* of the Hindu tradition, they are not given any names, which may be because Vajrayāna Buddhism mainly follows the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* system, where there is no separate limb of yoga called *āsana*. The exact date of the Amoghavajra's *Amṛtasiddhi* corpus is not known, but it is a testimony to the fact that some of the yoga postures that were called *āsanas*, or bear some resemblance to the *āsanas* in later Haṭha Yoga texts, are used in the *Amṛtasiddhi* physical yoga practices.

The Tibetan term *drag po'i sbyor ba*, which is one of the Tibetan terms equivalent to *haṭhayoga*, is used in the *Amṛtasiddhi* commentary by Amoghavajra. It remains uncertain whether or not the Tibetan term *drag po'i sbyor ba*, as used by the author, is actually a direct translation of the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga*. But since the Sanskrit term *haṭhayoga* is sometimes translated as *drag po'i sbyor ba* in Tibetan Buddhist Vajrayāna texts, the

¹³² For example, some of the instructions for *lus gnad* here are similar to the descriptions of *āsanas* in the *Haṭhābhyāsapaddhati* (18th century). See the descriptions of *āsanas* number 19, 38, 45, 52, 53, 81 and 86 in Birch (2018: Appendix A).





study of this term and practice deserve further attention. The practice *drag po'i sbyor ba* mentioned in Amoghavajra *Amṛtasiddhi* texts is associated with *bum pa can*. The texts do not explain what *drag po'i sbyor ba* is; they simply say “straighten the crooked channels (Tib. *rtsa*, Skt. *nāḍī*), air (Tib. *rlung*, Skt. *vāyu*) and essential drops (Tib. *thig le*, Skt. *bindu*), and engage in forceful yoga.” According to my analysis and also a study based on the *Yon po bsrang ba*, a text attributed to Kṛṣṇacaryāvratā (with a commentary on this practice by Jamgon Amnye), I believe that “engage in *drag po'i sbyor ba*” could mean the practice of forcing or coercing the air into the central channel, a practice that is emblematic of Haṭha Yoga.

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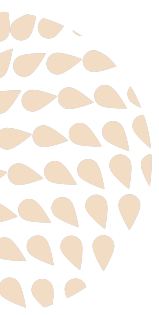
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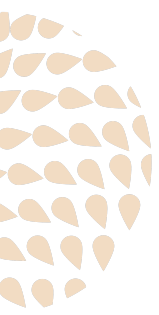




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