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Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia
Influence, Entanglement and Confrontation



EDITED BY

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COVER IMAGE

Shree Hinglaj Mata Temple
Siddhpur, Gujarat.

© Haṭha Yoga Project, 17 March 2017.

The surroundings of the Shree Hinglaj Mata Temple in Siddhpur are filled with the *samādhis* (graves) of *sādhus* belonging to different *sampradāyas*. Pictured is the heavy wooden *mudgar* (club) used by Guru Mastrām (circa early mid-20th century), known for being a yogi and a *pahlvān*. The *mahant* of the place claimed that the *bābā* used to face ghosts in the night with that mace.



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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	v
List of Contributors	vii
Note on Transliteration and Style	xiii

INTRODUCTION

<i>Daniela Bevilacqua and Mark Singleton</i>	1
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I. PRELUDE

1. Premodern <i>Yogāsanas</i> and Modern Postural Practice: Distinct Regional Collections of <i>Āsanas</i> on the Eve of Colonialism <i>Jason Birch and Jacqueline Hargreaves</i>	31
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II. YOGIS, ACROBATS OR DANCERS?

2. Yogi Sculptures: Complex <i>Āsanas</i> Across the Deccan <i>Seth Powell</i>	85
3. Royal Amusements, Sports, Acrobats and Yogic Practices According to the <i>Sāmrājyalakṣmīpīṭhikā</i> <i>Saran Suebsantiwongse</i>	113
4. Dance as Yoga: Ritual Offering and <i>Imitation Dei</i> in the Physical Practices of Classical Indian Theatre <i>Elisa Ganzer</i>	137

III. MARTIAL ARTS, POLE AND EXERCISE

5. <i>Zurkhāneh</i> , <i>Akhārā</i> , <i>Pahlavān</i> , and <i>Jyeṣṭhī-mallas</i> : Cross Cultural Interaction and Social Legitimation at the Turn of the 17th Century <i>Philippe Rochard and Oliver Bast</i>	175
---	-----

JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

- | | | |
|-----|--|-----|
| 6. | Poles apart? From Wrestling and <i>Mallkhāmb</i> to Pole Yoga
<i>Patrick S. D. McCartney</i> | 215 |
| 7. | Uncovering <i>Vyāyāma</i> in Yoga
<i>Jerome Armstrong</i> | 271 |
| 8. | Prostration or Potentiation? Hindu Ritual, Physical Culture, and the
“Sun Salutation” (<i>Sūryanamaskār</i>)
<i>Stuart Ray Sarbacker</i> | 303 |
| 9. | Managing Wind and Fire: Some Remarks from a Case Study on
<i>Kālarippayārṟu</i>
<i>Laura Silvestri</i> | 331 |
| 10. | Firm Feet and Inner Wind: Introducing Posture in the South Indian
Martial Art, <i>Kālarippayārṟu</i>
<i>Lucy May Constantini</i> | 347 |

IV. EXCHANGES WITH CHINA AND TIBET

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 11. | Is There Such a Thing as Chinese Yoga? Indian Postural Therapies in
Mediaeval China
<i>Dominic Steavu</i> | 375 |
| 12. | Knowledge Transfer of Bodily Practices Between China and India in
the Mediaeval World
<i>Dolly Yang</i> | 413 |
| 13. | Tracking the Illusory Magical Wheel: Physical Yoga in Tibetan
Tantra and Dzogchen
<i>Ian Baker</i> | 441 |

AFTERWORD

- | | | |
|-----|---|-----|
| 14. | The Embodiment of Meaning and the Meaning of Embodiment:
Theoretical and Methodological Concerns in the Study of Postural
Practice
<i>Joseph Alter</i> | 491 |
|-----|---|-----|

JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

His field research on Tibetan “hidden lands” (*beyul*) led to National Geographic Society designating him as one of seven “Explorers for the Millennium.”

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Lucy May Constantini began doctoral research at the Open University in 2019, exploring the relationship between practice and textual traditions in *kaṭarippayār̥*, funded by the UKRI’s Open-Oxford-Cambridge Doctoral Training Partnership. In 2018 she completed an MA with distinction in South Asian Area Studies at SOAS. Her initial

JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

undergraduate and post-graduate studies were in English literature, theatre and dance at King's College London, RADA and Trinity Laban in the 1990s. After these, she worked as a maker, performer, facilitator and educator in theatre and contemporary dance focussing on the confluence of her praxes of postmodern dance, martial arts and yoga. Her present academic methodology is informed by her background in dance and somatic practices.

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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

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JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

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NOTE TO TRANSLITERATION AND STYLE

We have not always maintained strict consistency with regard to writing foreign-language terms used in this book, in some cases departing from conventional usage, and indeed from the in-house style of the *Journal of Yoga Studies*. This is particularly true with regard to the physical disciplines that are the topic of this volume. The term *haṭhayoga* is a case in point. We generally write it as a single, lowercase, uncapitalised word, using IAST conventions for diacritics, and in italics, reflecting standard style for transliterating foreign words in English. We do not generally write it in other ways the term is commonly seen in English today, for example with an initial capital letter and as one word (*Haṭhayoga*/*Hathayoga*) or two words (*Haṭha*/*Hatha Yoga*)—that is, as a proper noun is written according to style conventions such as the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).

Although this is a stylistic choice, it is also in some respects a tactical decision: by writing *haṭhayoga* and certain other terms in this way, we seek to point towards and maintain the historicity, ambiguity and “strangeness” of the Sanskrit compound, before it “flips” into English usage. Some will find such moves superfluous or tendentious. Nevertheless, we make a comparable tactical choice in this volume with regard to other terms (especially those pertaining to body practices) that are the site of confrontation and contested meaning, within or across history, geography and “traditions.” For similar reasons, words that have passed into English usage, but that have a technical meaning in Sanskrit texts are generally written in lower case, in italics and with diacritical marks: e.g. *āsana*, *prāṇa*, *rāja*, *prāṇāyāma*, etc.

Place names are mainly transliterated without diacritical marks, unless they are religiously significant, or where diacritical marks are essential for disambiguation. Author names and well-known persons from the modern period are mostly written without diacritical marks, as *per* their organization’s convention or the author’s name used in their publications. For the transliteration of titles of literary works and technical terms in languages other than Sanskrit or Hindi, scholars have chosen the transliteration systems of their preference.

JOURNAL OF
YOGA STUDIES

Yoga and the Traditional Physical Practices of South Asia

Perhaps obviously, given that they are different languages, spellings sometimes change according to whether a term is used in a Sanskrit or a Hindi context—for example, *sūryanamaskāra* (Skt) vs. *sūryanamaskār* (H).

That said, there may be some variations in the stylistic presentation of terms across chapters, especially in cases where authors wish a term to reflect a specific, intended usage. We have tried to respect authors' wishes in this regard, especially given the multi-author, multi-language and multi-disciplinary nature of the volume.