

## INFLUENCE OF NĀTHAYOGIS ON TELUGU LITERATURE

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### ABSTRACT

Nāthayogis were worshippers of Śiva and played an important role in the history of medieval Indian mysticism. Nine nāthas are famous, among whom Matsyendranātha and Gorakhnātha are known for their miracles and mystic powers. There is a controversy about the names of nine nāthas and other siddhas. Thirty great siddhas are listed in Haṭhapradīpikā and Haṭharatnāvalī. The influence of nātha cult in Andhra region is very great. Several literary compositions appeared in Telugu against the background of nathism.

Nannecoḍadeva, the author of Kumārasambhavamū mentions śaḍaṅgayoga and also respects the nine nāthas as ādisiddhas. Two traditions of āsanās after Vaśiṣṭha and Matsyendra are mentioned by Kolani Gaṇapatideva in Śivayogasāramū. He also considers vajrāsana, muktāsana and guptāsana as synonyms of siddhāsana. Śuka, Vāmadeva, Matsyendra and Janaka are mentioned as adepts in Śivayoga. Navanāthacaritra by Gaurana is a work in the popular metre dealing with the adventures of the nine nāthas. Phaṇibhaṭṭa in Paratattvarasāyanamū explains yoga in great detail. Vedāntavārtikam of Paramānandayati mentions the navanāthas and their activities and also quotes the one and a quarter lakh varieties of laya. Vaidyasāramū or Navanātha Siddha Pradīpikā by Erlapāṭi Perayya is said to have been written on the lines of the Siddhikriyās written by Navanātha siddhas.

### INTRODUCTION :

All the nāthas or nāthayogis are worshippers of Śiva and followers of Śaivism which is one of the oldest religious cults of India. The Śaiva cult is very ancient and is found in Vedas also. The rudrādhyāya in Yajurveda and other hymns are supposed to be the basis for the Śaiva cult. The remains at the Mohenjodaro civilization

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have also revealed some evidence showing the existence of Śiva worship.

The nāthayogis played an important role in the history of medieval Indian mysticism. These yogis or nāthas worshipped God as Nātha - the Supreme Master. The worshippers of Nātha were adepts in yoga, which was supposed to give them supernatural powers. Among the nāthas Matsyendranātha and his most able disciple Gorakṣanātha, are known throughout India for their marvellous performances of miracles and mystic powers.

There is a controversy about the names of navanāthas-the nine nāthas. Thirty great Siddhas of haṭhayoga are listed in Haṭhapradīpikā and Haṭharatnāvalī. An earlier work, entitled Nāthalīlāmṛta in Sanskrit also gives a list of siddhas, which appears to be the common source for the two later works. Haṭhapradīpikā and Haṭharatnāvalī. The only difference is that the name of Allamaprabhu, which does not find place in Nāthalīlāmṛta, is included in Haṭhapradīpikā and Haṭharatnāvalī. A list of the nine nāthas is also found in Gorakṣa Siddhānta Saṅgraha. In this list the name of Ādinātha as guru (preceptor) is found and then occur the names of Matsyendranātha, Udayanātha, Daṇḍanātha, Santoṣanātha, Kūrmanātha, Bhavanāji and Gorakhnātha, the son of God.

Though Andhra region is not supposed to be the birth place of nāthas, the influence of nātha cult in this region is very great. Nevertheless, the fact remains that the Andhra region was very favourable for the growth and spread of Nāthism. Nāthic practices permeated into the society of Andhra people. The religious rites and practices of this region were deeply hued with the practices of Nāthism.

All the varieties of literary creation in Telugu language have taken place against the back ground of Nāthism. Works on śaiva cult appeared in Telugu in various forms of poetry like dvipada kāvyas, prabandhas, yakṣagānas, śatakas, udāharaṇa kāvyas. geya kāvyas.

Apart from the above, Purāṇas and Sthalapurāṇas also appeared on śaivism in Telugu. Among all these, geyakavyas which are like folk songs, have been very popular.

## KUMĀRASAMBHAVAMU:

KUMARASAMBHAVAMU was written by Nannecoḍadeva, a śaiva poet around twelfth century (1130 A. D.). Telugu literature of early and medieval period does not abound in original works. Telugu works of this period were so completely immersed with the Sanskrit original that the material drawn, the language used, the technique employed and the ideas developed are translations or copies of material created originally in Sanskrit. But the work Kumārasambhavamu is an exception to this.

Kumārasambhavamu is dedicated to Jaṅgama Mallikārjunadeva, who lived at śrīśailam and was a great pāśupataśaiva yogi. The Jaṅgama Mallikārjunadeva is supposed to be a contemporary of Allama-prabhudeva. Nannecoḍadeva had a very great reverence for his preceptor and he describes his guru as below :

Mallikārjunadeva was worshipped by all yogis, who are experts in all branches and the six aṅgas of yoga like prāṇāyāma etc, was the greatest doyen of yogis, was the embodiment of the knowledge itself, was well versed in the literature of Vedas, six aṅgas (branches of Vedas) sciences and philosophies (śāstra) purāṇas, epics, āgamas and all arts, was the preceptor of all vidyās and was the incarnation of or the form of supreme self.

These descriptive adjectives are applicable not only to his guru Jaṅgama Mallikārjuna, but to the Lord Jaṅgama Mallikārjunadeva, the deity of śrīśaila as well. Jaṅgama Mallikārjuna was a great yogi of śaiva cult.

The term Navanātha is found associated with the doctrine of siddha cult and this is probably the earliest use of the term in the available Telugu literature. Kumārasambhavamu refers to Jaṅgama Mallikārjuna as a follower of ṣaḍaṅgayoga-the yoga concept with six aṅgas (steps) only. ṣaḍaṅgayoga is mentioned in Gorakṣaśataka. The poet Nannecoḍadeva points out in the ninth chapter that the nine nāthas are to be highly respected as they are "Ādisiddhas".

### ŚIVAYOGASĀRAMU AND MANOBODHA :

The author of these two works, Gaṇapārādhyā, otherwise known as Gaṇapatideva, is the grandson of the brother of Indulūri Annaya, the great Brāhmaṇa General, who married Ruyyāmba, the daughter of Kākatīya Queen Rudramadevi (1258-1296 A. D.). The surname of the poet is Kolani and the poet's grandfather Indulūri Gannayarudra is known as Kolani Rudra since he ruled over Kolaniviḍu (Kolani region), the present Eluru in West Godavari district of Andhra Pradesh. Since the General lived during the time of Pratāparudra II (1295-1326 A. D.), Gaṇapatideva might have lived around 1400 A. D.

Chronologically 'Manobodha' is the first of Gaṇapatideva's works and it is also the first work on vedānta-philosophy-in deśi metre in Telugu literature. The following verse in Śivayogasāramu, the magnum opus of Gaṇapatideva mentions the authorship of the two works.

• I composed, in the deśi Telugu language (akin to spoken language), in an unparalleled way, the treatises Paśupāśapatijñāna and Suśārābhavavijaya Manobodha.'

The title kāntāsahodarūḍu (brother of ladies) found in Manobodha is also mentioned in Śivayogasāramu in a verse as 'anyāṅganāsahodarūḍu'-brother of women or wives of other men.

Written in deśi metre in popular language, Manobodha clearly explains the principles of vedānta in a manner that it is easily understood by the common folk. The revival of the deśi metre began during the time of Kākatīya rule primarily owing to the efforts of Śaiva poets who handled higher philosophical themes without the aid of Sanskrit technicalities and brought out the vedānta from ecclesiastical maṭhas and libraries to the understanding of ordinary folk in deśi language which was genuinely indigenous. This is followed by Gaṇapārādhyā. He adopted in Śivayogasāramu, the kāvya style for scholars and deśi style in Manobodha for the common people at large.

Āsanās : More interesting and informative is the history of yogic practices than the history of yogic terms. One, for example, is the

word "āsana". Meditative āsanās like padmāsana, siddhāsana, etc. are described in several ancient texts. There are some variations regarding the practices also. Two traditions are known with regard to āsanās\*—(1) Vasiṣṭha tradition and (2) Matsyendra tradition. This classification is found in haṭhayogic treatises like Haṭhapradīpikā and Haṭharatnāvalī. Śivayogasāramu is an earlier work than Haṭhapradīpikā, though some of the āsanās adopted by sages like Vasiṣṭha and yogis or siddhas like Matsyendra are described in both.

From the statement in Śivayogasāramu "āsanas are as accepted by sages like Vasiṣṭha and also by siddhas like Matsyendra etc." it is evident that Gaṇapatideva accepted the two traditions of āsanās after sage Vasiṣṭha and yogi Matsyendra.

Another important fact is that Gaṇapatideva considers āsanās like vajrāsana, muktāsana and gulphāsana or guptāsana to be synonyms of siddhāsana\*\*.

The relevant passage runs : among these āsanās, the siddhāsana, which is revealed by Matsyendra is called by some as vajrāsana, by others as muktāsana and also as gulphāsana by some others.

Svātmārāma later followed the same view. It is possible that both might have drawn this from another common source. Other texts, however, differentiate these four āsanās.

While describing the greatness of yoga (yogamahimā) in Śivayogasāramu, Gaṇapatideva mentions śuka, Vāmadeva, Matsyendra and Janaka as the mahātmas (great souls) who are adepts in Śivayoga.

The prevalence and influence of haṭha yoga during the period can be assessed from the following sentence : It is only due to the influence of haṭha yoga that the very great saints like Ādinātha, Matsyendra and Gorakṣa wander in this universe according to their will and pleasure having conquered the daṇḍa weapon of kāla (time or yama,

\*Śivayogasāramu first mentioned this tradition.

\*\*Gaṇapatideva considers vajra, gupta and mukta āsanās as synonyms for siddhāsana. The Telugu tradition is different to Gheraṇḍa Samhitā, a Bengali tradition.

the god of death) i.e. death and having acquired and adorned themselves with endless knowledge.

Ganapatideva's work *Śivayogasāramu* has proved to be a source of inspiration for many a later writers on haṭhayoga as is seen from the treatises in Sanskrit and Telugu.

#### HARAVILĀSAMU OF ŚRINĀTHA :

Śrīnātha, the famous Telugu poet known as the Emperor of poets-kavisārvabhauma—was the Vidyādhikārin (Minister of Education) in the court of Pedakomati Vema Reddy (1403–1420 A. D.) of Koṇḍaviḍu. He was the son of Mārāya and Bhīmāmba. He composed many works in Telugu and also the inscriptions of Vema in Sanskrit. He praises Matsyendranātha in his *Haravilāsamu* as follows :

By worshipping the mother goddess, Matsyendranātha and others became the authorities of yoga.

#### SVARAŚĀSTRAMANJARI OF GANAPĀRĀDHYA :

Another work "Svaraśāstramañjari" by Gaṇapārādhyā is a Telugu rendering of original Sanskrit work which explains how good or bad events can be foretold according to the position of the Sun and the Moon. While mentioning various philosophical sects in this context, the name of Gorākṣa is mentioned.

#### NAVANĀTHACARITRA :

Navanāthacaritra, an important Telugu poetic work on nātha cult, and a contribution by Gaurana, is a śaiva work in dvipada metre describing the adventures of Navanāthas i.e. the nine nāthas or yogic siddhas. The nine nāthas are 1. Śiva 2. Mīnanātha 3. Cauraṅgi 4. Gorākṣanātha 5. Meghanātha 6. Nāgārjuna 7. Siddha-buddha 8. Virūpākṣa and 9. Kanika.

Navanāthacaritra by Gaurana, composed about 1376. A. D. gives a coherent account of the lives of the nāthas in Telugu and makes it clear that siddhas and nāthas are identical. This view is confirmed by other sources. The most important personage among them is Mīnanātha who is said to be the son of Śiva-Pārvatī, sent to this world for the propagation of the śaiva cult and faith. It is also said that the last six siddhas went all over the world preaching the siddhakriyas.

There are no indications as to whether the poet Gaurana had any work as the basis for his treatise.

Gaurana dedicated Navanāthacaritra to Muktiśāntibhikṣāvṛttiśvara, the head of the important maṭha in Śrīśaila. by the inspiration of Mallikārjuna of Śrīśaila.

In Andhra region Śrīśaila and Kālahasti, and the five āramas. Amarārāma at Amarāvati and Dākṣārāma and others have been the important śaiva centres of pilgrimage. There is a lot of śaiva literature developed not only as translations and adaptation of the original Sanskrit texts but also as accounts of the greatness and efficacy of these śaiva centres.

Gaurana was the son of Ayyalāprabhu and Poṅcāmba of Gautama-gotra. His father was the nephew of Potarāju, the minister of Siṅgay-mādhava of Recarla family who ruled from Devarakonda.

Hence Gaurana, his nephew, must have lived some time later i. e. about 1400 A. D. Gaurana is already known to the Telugu world by his Hariścandropākhyāna in dvipada metre which is considered as a work of high literary merit in Telugu literature. Gaurana was a poet both in Telugu and Sanskrit. He was a devotee of Bhramarāmbika, the goddess of Śrīśaila who blessed him with poetic talents.

The upper classes of the society during this period were influenced by Brahmanism and the appeals of the śaivas were generally made to the masses and hence they chose the simple dvipada form of metre for their literary compositions. Even this story of Navanāthas was earlier written in the classical form i. e. Padya Prabandha by Śrīgirikavi. Poet Gaurana rendered it into the dvipada form as required by his patron, to popularise it among the masses.

The first two chapters while describing the adventurous wanderings of the śaiva guru Mīnanātha, particularly deal with the story of Śārṅgadhara. There is a general tradition among the Telugu people, centering this story around Rājarājanarendra-the Eastern Chalukyan king, who ruled the Telugu region in the early part of 11th century

A. D. from the capital Rājamahendravaram. But the scene of the action of the whole story of Śārṅgadhara is said to be Malwa region. Only the name of the king coincides and it is perhaps this coincidence that made Telugu people attribute the whole story to the Chalukyan king of Rājamahendravaram.

Though the story and the incidents have become popular in the Telugu region, it is likely that they did not gain currency in the Telugu country before 16th century A. D. since Gaurana would not have failed to connect the story with his own province. The two Andhra translators of Haṭhayogapradīpikā-D. Y. Doraswamaya (1904) and Racakoṇḍa Annamayyaśāstri (1907) have connected the story of Cauraṅgi with the King śārṅgadhara of Rājamahendravaram (Rajahmundry). Cauraṅginātha, another disciple of Mastyendra belonged to the Pāla dynasty of Bengal. Cauraṅginātha's step mother had his hands and feet cut off and his body thrown into a forest. Here, he was discovered by Mastyendra, who initiated him and restored to his former self after 12 years of self-discipline by yoga. Cauraṅgi is believed to be the son of king Devapāla and Queen Māyāmati. The analogy of this story with that of śārṅgadhara is significant in explaining this confusion.

The remaining three chapters of Navanāthacaritra deal with the further wanderings of Mīnanātha and his disciples and their pursuits in alchemy, parakāyapraveśa (entering into the body of others-transmigration) and then attainment of vajradeha. They exhibited various powers of the siddhas.

The complete work written in Telugu is in a very simple style, keeping at the same time the dignity of the theme.

One important point in this topic deserves to be noticed. In Kaulajñānanirṇaya both the names Mīnanātha and Matsyendranātha are found in the colophons, and also in different copies of manuscripts of Akula Vīra Tantra. They have been proved by Bagchi to be identical persons. Navanāthacaritra also mentions these two names as identical.



## PARATATTVARASĀYANAMU :

Telugu poets of the prabandha (classical) period generally selected some story for their theme from Pūraṇic legends. Almost all poetic works in this period narrate some Purāṇic story or fiction in the prabandha style. Paratattvarasāyanamu of Phaṇibhaṭṭa is one of the very few prabandhas in Telugu literature that have vedānta or philosophy as their theme.

Phaṇibhaṭṭa explains yoga in great detail under Hāṭhayoga. Śiva is said to have taught 84 lakhs of āsanas though the sages practised only 84. It also mentions the two siddha traditions of āsanas-Vasiṣṭha and Matsyendra. The efficacy of the āsanas is also brought out. The philosophic subjects like sāṅkhya and yoga have no doubt been part of purāṇas and other works but in a very acute form. Telugu poets like Potana, Phaṇibhaṭṭa and Vemana have tried to give them a more popular treatment. Phaṇibhaṭṭa (1450-1500 A.D.) has given a reference cited above in this work "Paratattvarasāyanamu" as follows :

"There are several schools or opinions propagated by siddhas like Vasiṣṭha and Matsyendra." The style of Phaṇibhaṭṭa is so simple and clear that the abstract ideas of vedānta and yoga are made sufficiently clear and interesting.

## VEDĀNTAVĀRTIKAM :

Vendāntavārtikam of Paramānandayati or Paramānandatīrtha (around 1600 A.D.) the true follower of Dattatreya cult, describes the fourfold classification of yoga. These are mantra, laya, haṭha, and rājayoga. According to him Ādinātha was the oldest among the navanāthas. Laya is mentioned by Ādinātha as of "one lakh and a quarter varieties". In this connection Paramānandatīrtha cited the following verses from Haṭhapradīpikā : "Among these, laya is described as of one and quarter lakh varieties. Authority for this is the sentence 'Ādinātha has mentioned one lakh and a quarter (lakh) varieties of laya' in Haṭhapradīpikā. Hence layayoga is in the form of a continuous flow".

Paramānandatīrtha mentioned various non-vedic philosophical sects of Cārvāka, Jaina and Buddha. The names of navanāthas and their activities are also given. Satyanātha, Sālokanātha, Ādinātha, Anādinātha, Matsyendranātha, Ghaṭayantranātha, and Gorakṣanātha are identified. These names are mentioned in Gorakṣa Siddhānta Saṅgraha also.

#### NAVANĀTHA SIDDHAPRADIPIKĀ :

The influence of navanāthas is not only on yogic works but is also found on the Telugu medical works on Rasaśāstra and Āyurveda. Vaidyasāramu or Navanātha Siddhapradīpikā is said to have been written on the lines of the Siddhikriyas written by Navanāthasiddhas. The work has been dedicated to Śrī Rāma, worshipped at Bhadrācalam in Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh. The name of the author is Erlapāṭi Perayya who belonged to Hārīta gotra and was the son of Vīrana and Sāvitrī. The scribe of this manuscript Mājeṭi Sarveśalingam was a close associate of C. P. Brown and it was copied before 1840. A.D.

M. Somesekharasharma, the well known authority on the history of Andhra, summarised thus the influence of nāthas, siddhas and the śaiva schools, on the Andhra region.

‘The popular śaivism seems, however, to have been encumbered by a number of religious practices and beliefs, gathered around it during its contact with other schools of śaivism, namely, Yogaśaiva cult of the Nāthasiddhas, and the śākta Tāntric cult which flourished in this period (1325-1448 A. D.) and had their own respective following. These two cults also had an indelible impression both on the Telugu literature and on the religious life of the people’.

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सारांश

## तेलुगु साहित्य पर नाथयोगियों का प्रभाव

एम. वेंकटरेड्डी और बी. रामाराव

नाथयोगी शिव के उपासक थे और उन्होंने ने मध्यकालीन भारतीय रहस्यवाद के इतिहास में महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। नौ नाथ प्रसिद्ध हैं, जिनमें मत्स्येन्द्रनाथ तथा गोरखनाथ अपने चमत्कार एवं रहस्यवादी शक्ति के लिए जाने जाते हैं। नौ नाथों और अन्य सिद्धों के नामों के बारे में विवाद है। हठप्रदीपिका और हठरत्नावली में तीस महान् सिद्धों की सूची है। आंध्रक्षेत्र में नाथ सम्प्रदाय का बहुत ही महत्त्वपूर्ण प्रभाव है। तेलुगु में नाथवाद के बारे में अनेकों साहित्यिक रचनाएँ दिखाई देती हैं।

कुमारसम्भव के लेखक नन्नेचोडदेव षडंगयोग का उल्लेख करते हैं और नौ नाथों को आदिसिद्धों के रूप में भी मानते हैं। कोलनी गणपतिदेव द्वारा शिवयोगसारमु में वशिष्ठ और मत्स्येन्द्र की दो आसनों की परम्पराओं का उल्लेख किया गया है। आप वज्रासन, मुक्तासन और गुल्फासन को सिद्धासन के पर्याय मानते हैं। शुक, वामदेव, मत्स्येन्द्र और जनक का शिवयोग में निपुण होने का उल्लेख है।

गौरना का नवनाथ चरित्र नौ नाथों के लोकप्रिय वृत्तसे सम्बन्धित अभूतपूर्व कृति है। परतत्त्व रसायन में फणिभट्ट ने योग के महत्त्व को स्पष्ट किया है। परमानन्दयति का वेदान्तवार्तिकं नौ नाथों एवं उनके कार्यकलापों का उल्लेख करता है और लय के सवालाख प्रकारों की विविधता को भी उद्धृत करता है। एर्लापाटि पेरय्या द्वारा लिखी गई वैद्यसारमू अथवा नवनाथसिद्धप्रदीपिका नवनाथसिद्ध द्वारा लिखित सिद्धिक्रिया के आधार पर लिखा गया बतलाया जाता है।