

Roots of Yoga

*Translated and Edited
with an Introduction by*

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Penguin
Random House
UK

This edition first published in Penguin Classics 2017

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Set in 10.25/12.25 pt Adobe Sabon

Typeset by Jouve (UK), Milton Keynes

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Clays Ltd, Eleograf S.p.A.

ISBN: 978-0-241-25304-5

www.greenpenguin.co.uk



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The Yogic Body

One of the primary conceptual frameworks for the body of the yoga practitioner in today's modern, globalized yoga is the empirical, anatomical, biological and bio-medical body.¹ The predominance of scientific and medical realism in popular yoga discourse has tended to obscure or displace more traditional visions of the body, and has thereby, *mutatis mutandis*, reshaped the perceived function of the yoga practices themselves. This is true also (and perhaps especially) when terms from yogic physiology are imported into modern practices of yoga and reinterpreted within cultural and hermeneutic parameters far removed from pre-modern ones.

Prior to the modern period, the body of the yogi was commonly conceived of as a network of psychophysical centres (*cakras*, *granthis*, *ādhāras*, etc.) linked by conduits (*nādīs*) for the movement of various endogenous airs and vital forces (*vāyus*, *bindu*, *Kuṇḍalinī*, etc.). These nexuses, conduits and substances have varying levels of empirical existence: some are visualized in meditation and others are manipulated by means of physical techniques. Some, such as *Kuṇḍalinī* and the *cakras*, are to be visualized in their earliest teachings, but become increasingly corporeal and thus subject to physical manipulation. The yogic body is visualized or manipulated in order to attain special powers (*vibhūti*, *siddhi*) or to reach liberation from embodied rebirth (*mokṣa*, *mukti*, *kaivalya*, *nirvāṇa*). The body was also often conceived as a microcosm of the macrocosmic universe, complete with hells, heavens, planets, gods, etc.

Some appreciation of the predominant features and principles of such yogic bodies is therefore desirable if one wishes to understand the way yoga has been theorized and practised within the Indian traditions, particularly since the end of the first millennium CE. This

is, however, not a straightforward task, even leaving to one side the hermeneutic challenges and cognitive dissonances that sometimes characterize yoga's encounter with modernity. The yogic body is a vast subject and here, as elsewhere in the history of yoga's development, there is considerable variation through time and across traditions. Different traditions present different yogic bodies, some of which are complementary and commensurable, and some of which are not (to say nothing of the vast variety of bodies in other branches of pre-modern Indian thought and praxis, such as Āyurveda).² This is in part because yogic bodies arise according to the particular ritual, philosophical or doctrinal requirements of the tradition at hand, and because they are expressions of these requirements, rather than descriptions of self-evident, empirical bodies common to all humans. In other words, the goals of a particular system determine the way the body is imagined and used within its yoga practices. The yogic body was – and continues to be in traditional practitioner circles – one that is constructed or ‘written’ on and in the body of the practitioner by the tradition itself.³

Furthermore, scholarship on the yogic body is as yet undeveloped. In particular, there has been no comprehensive study of the multiple conceptions of the body taught in tantric texts, which form the basis of treatments of the subject in subsequent teachings on yoga. Nevertheless, our preliminary survey of the bewildering array of textual descriptions of the yogic body does reveal significant commonalities, patterns of development and, in later texts, a widespread consensus as to some of the basic features of this body. This is particularly true for systems influenced by the theory and practice of *hathayoga* (post-fifteenth century), which, notwithstanding some conflicting interpretations of practices of the yogic body,⁴ nonetheless offered a model which was widely accepted.

Channels, Winds and the Vital Principle

A network of channels (*nādīs*) within the body is fundamental to many systems of yoga. Such notions appear first in early Upaniṣadic sources, such as the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, which mentions 72,000 channels, originating in the heart (2.1.19).⁵ The

Kaṭha Upaniṣad refers to 101 channels which spread out in all directions from the heart, and singles out the channel ascending to the head as the conduit by which one can reach immortality (5.1.1), an idea which may prefigure later models of *utkrānti* ('yogic suicide') and the ascent of *Kuṇḍalinī* (see below, p. 178). In perhaps the earliest extant tantric text, the fifth- or sixth-century CE *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*, we find a very simple model of the yogic body in which there are just two channels, *Suṣumnā* and *Idā* (5.1.3). Unlike later models, where *Suṣumnā* is the name of the central channel, here it is the northern channel and collateral with *Idā*, the southern channel, and the yogi's life-breath circulates in the space between the two, rather than in some third, central channel.⁶ In vv. 140–46 of the *Vīṇāśikhatantra*, which may be as old as the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā*, *Suṣumnā* is the familiar central channel, flanked by *Idā* and *Piṅgalā*. This is the schema which, with variations, would subsequently become the predominant basic model for the yogic body.⁷ However, precisely what moves along the channels may differ across texts and traditions.⁸

The *Sārdhatriśatikālottara*'s tenth chapter describes a wheel (*cakra*) of ten primary channels in the navel. These are among 72,000 channels which emerge as shoots from a bulb (*kanda*) situated at the bottom of the navel region and this notion of a bulb as the source of the channels is widespread in later yoga texts (e.g. the passage from the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā*, found at 5.1.9).

Notions of winds (*vāyus*) which circulate through the body are also ancient. *Prāṇa* is mentioned in the *Rg Veda* (1.65.10.2); the *Atharva Veda* lists four more bodily winds: *apāna*, *vyāna*, *samāna* and *udāna* (10.2.13). In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* there are various systems of winds, numbering three, nine or ten (e.g. 2.1, 6.4, 29.3), and the *Jaiminiya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* gives a system of six, adding *avāna* to those mentioned above (2.6.6). But it is the five first mentioned in the Vedic Saṃhitās that come to be accepted as the most important. They are taught together in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (10.33.1–5), the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (e.g. 3.4.1), the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (e.g. 3.13), the *Carakasaṃhitā* (*Cikitsāsthāna* 28.5–11), the *Mahābhārata* (12.178)⁹ and the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra* (5.1.7). It is in the last that they are first taught in the context of yogic practice.

Note that *prāṇa* is both a generic name for these winds and the first of this primary set of five. In the *Niśvāsatattvasaṃhitā Nayasūtra* (5.1.8) to this primary set is added a set of five subsidiary winds, of which only three are named: *nāga*, *dhananjaya* and *kūrma*. The *Skandapurāṇa* (adhyāya 181, e.g. v. 46) and *Śivapurāṇa Vāyavīyasāṃhitā* (37.36) name the other two as *devadatta* and *kṛtaka*, and this system of ten winds became widespread in subsequent yoga texts.

The winds each have a habitual directional flow and location in the body (see, for example, the *Vasiṣṭhasaṃhitā* (5.1.9)). Yoga practices may manipulate or reverse the movement and direction of these breaths, usually with a view to inducting the primary breath into the central channel and raising it (breath-control practices are dealt with in detail in Chapter 4), but some practices also involve stopping the breath in particular locations. The *Vimānār-canākalpa* (5.1.6), for example, teaches a method of ‘withdrawal’ (*pratyāhāra*) in which the breath is raised through a sequence of eighteen *marmans* or ‘vital points’. The winds are said to take the form of the *jīva* or vital principle of the body, which is controlled by *prāṇa* and *apāṇa* in particular (e.g. 5.1.4), as well as the yogi’s good and bad deeds (5.1.9).

The Body as Microcosm

The body of the practitioner is often understood as a microcosmic manifestation of the macrocosmic universe, containing homologous rivers, mountains, planets and so on. Many of the systems of yoga in this book are based on such models of the body, which is not empirical or biological, but ritually and doctrinally constructed. For example, the *Parākhyatantra* (5.2.1) elaborates the movement of the *prāṇa* through the corporeally located realms of various deities. The *Amṛtasiddhi* (5.2.2) declares that all the elements of the three worlds are in the body, including planets, seers, sages and gods; and the *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati* (5.2.3) offers a detailed mapping of the realms of the cosmos on to the body of the yogi.

Cakras, Supports and Knots: Locations in the Yogic Body

The *cakras* ('wheels'), which are also known as *padmas* ('lotuses'), are subtle focuses for meditation distributed along the central channel of the body. In yoga traditions from the twelfth century CE onwards there is a widespread consensus that the *cakras* are six in number,¹⁰ although other numerical variations are also common. The *cakras* have become a mainstay of global yoga discourse over the past century, albeit sometimes radically reshaped according to their new hermeneutical environments (such as New Age religiosity and Jungian psychology).¹¹ However, as we shall see, the *cakras* were not always such a ubiquitous feature of yoga traditions and alternative or complementary schemata are common, such as supports for meditation (*ādhāras*, sixteen of which are enumerated in *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati* 2.10–25 (5.3.10)), and knots which must be pierced (*granthis*, usually three in number, e.g. *Yogabīja* 97–8 (5.4.4) and *Gorakṣasātaka* 74–86 (5.4.3)), but other schemata are found, such as a twelvefold list of knots at *Netratantra* 7.10–25).

As Sanderson puts it, surveying treatments of the yogic body in different tantric traditions: 'There are six "seasons", five "knots", five voids (*vyomas*), nine wheels, eleven wheels, twelve knots, at least three sets of sixteen loci, sixteen knots, twenty-eight vital points (*marmans*), etc.' (1986: 164). Even within single traditions, the array of locations within the yogic body can be highly complex, such as that taught in the *Netratantra* (5.3.1). What is more, unlike the *cakras*, some of these points (such as *marmans* and *ādhāras*) are not on the body's central axis (e.g. *Vimānārcanākalpa* 97 (5.1.6), *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati* 2.11 (5.3.10)), and *cakras* themselves may even be located outside the physical body (such as the *dvādaśānta*, on which see below, pp. 178, 301). This, once again, is because certain elements of yogic physiology, in particular the *cakras* and *ādhāras*, are not a result of the yogi's empirical observation, but rather parts of a visualized installation on the body of tradition-specific metaphysics and ritual schemata.¹² In this regard, it is also interesting to note that in the *Ṣaṭsāhasrasaṁhitā* (165–76) a person who is not capable of the internal meditation on the (five) *cakras* may undertake an external *pūjā* (ritual of

skull through which the yogi's self or vital principle exits at death. This location is also called the *daśamadvāra* or 'tenth door', and is said to be the top of the Suṣumnā channel (Mallinson 2007a: 205 n.240). The Sahasrā is also sometimes said to be beyond the body (e.g. *Sivasamhitā* 5.191–2). Similarly, several Śaiva texts mention a location called the *Dvādaśānta* ('at the end of twelve [finger-widths]'), which is a focus for meditation twelve finger-widths beyond the tip of the nose or above the *brahmarandhra*.

Kuṇḍalinī

Kuṇḍalinī (also Kuṇḍalī), meaning 'she who is coiled', signifies the power of the divine feminine (*śakti*) residing within the body of the yogi, which can be stimulated by means of yoga practices in order to actualize spiritual potential. The goddess Kuṇḍalinī is often symbolically represented as a serpent lying coiled and dormant at the base of the spine, with her head blocking the entrance to the central channel. By means of yoga practices such as visualization, breath-restraint, haṭhayogic seals, mantras and so on, the vital air (*prāṇa*) is forced out of its habitual location in the principle collateral channels (*Idā* and *Piṅgalā*) and into the central channel. When this occurs, Kuṇḍalinī – who resides at the entrance to the central channel (Suṣumnā), which in later sources is located at the base of the spine, but in earlier texts is sometimes said to be in the *cakras* of the heart or the navel, or in the *kanda*, a 'bulb' located somewhere below the navel – awakens, strengthens and rises up through the central axis of the body, passing through the various *cakras* or piercing the 'knots' (*granthis*) which lie along it (e.g. *Yogabīja* 93–9 (5.4.4)). This process gives rise to special powers (*siddhis*) and, ultimately – when Kuṇḍalinī reaches the seat of the deity in the head, or twelve fingers beyond the head (the *dvādaśānta*) – to liberation (*mokṣa*) or immortality. Liberation is effected by her dissolution (*laya*) into Śiva at the top of the central channel (e.g. *Gorakṣasātaka* 74–86 (5.4.3)); immortality by her accessing the nectar of immortality situated in the head and flooding the body with it during her return to the base of the central channel (e.g. *Khecarīvidyā* 3.8c–14d (5.4.2)).

Kuṇḍalinī is not mentioned in the *Pātañjalayogaśāstra*; her first

descriptions are in texts of tantric Śaivism. Perhaps the earliest is in the *Sārdhatriśatikālottaratatantra* (12.1–2), which mentions a ‘primordial coil’ (*ādyā kundalinī*) in the heart. One of the first texts to describe the Kuṇḍalinī śakti in a yogic context is the eighth-century *Tantrasadbhāva* (15.128–30), which may also be the first to say that she takes the form of a serpent. Kuṇḍalinī is a central feature of the yoga system of the *Kubjikāmatatantra* of the Paścimāmnāya or Western Transmission of Kaula Śaivism, in which she is equated with Kubjikā, the Western Transmission’s most important goddess. Like its *cakra* system, in which Kuṇḍalinī has an important role to play, the teachings on Kuṇḍalinī in the *Kubjikāmatatantra* were influential in shaping the yogic body as conceived within *hathayoga*.

In many Śaiva traditions Kuṇḍalinī is also the goddess of creation, the supreme energy which makes manifest the elemental principles (*tattvas*) and effects the evolution of sound. Her different functions result in her being analysed into types: Abhinavagupta talks of the *prāṇakuṇḍalinī*, the *śaktikuṇḍalinī* and *parākuṇḍalinī*, the life force, the power of creation and the supreme goddess, respectively (*Tantrāloka* 3.139c–140b). A small number of texts echo this threefold cosmogonic¹⁹ Kuṇḍalinī by locating three Kuṇḍalinīs – lower, middle and higher – in the yogic body (see *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati* 4.17 (5.4.5)). In the most common formulations, the ascent of a single Kuṇḍalinī reverses her cosmogonic role. As she rises through *cakras* associated with increasingly subtle elements, creation is resorbed until finally she goes to dissolution (*laya*) by uniting with Śiva, the supreme element (on dissolution, see Chapter 9).

Although ascent through the central channel is a shared feature across yoga traditions, there is, in practice, considerable diversity in conceptions of what ascends: ‘the soul or self’ – designated *jīva* ('life essence') or *hamsa* ('the gander') – vital air (*prāṇa*), seed or seminal essence (*bindu*), mantric resonance, Kuṇḍalinī, or, in Buddhist tantric systems of yoga, the fiery energy known as Cāṇḍālī.²⁰ In the c. tenth-century *Pādmasamhitā*, Kuṇḍalinī is not represented as a dynamic, piercing force, but as a coiled obstruction that must be straightened out with heat in order to allow breath to rise up the central channel (5.4.1; cf. *Netratantra* 7.21 which mentions a blockage called Kuṇḍalā). This is noteworthy in terms of modern yoga

5.1.6 *Vimānārcanākalpa* 97. Raising the breath through the eighteen *marmans*:³²

The eighteen vital points (*marmans*) [and] their characteristics.

Big toe, ankle, middle of the shank, root of the shin (*citimūla*),³³ knee, middle of the thigh, anus, middle of the body, penis, navel, heart, throat, root of the palate, bridge of the nose, the region of the eyes, the space between the eyebrows, forehead [and] crown: these are the eighteen locations.

Their measurements [are as follows]: the size of the foot is four and a half fingers. Then the ankle is one finger. Then the middle of the shank is ten fingers. Then the root of the shin is ten fingers. Then the knee is two fingers. Then the middle of the thigh is nine fingers. The region of the anus is nine fingers. Then the middle of the body is three and a half fingers. Then the root of the penis is two and a half fingers. The navel is four fingers. Then the middle of the chest is eleven fingers. Then the Adam's apple (*kanthakūbara*)³⁴ is twelve fingers. The root of the palate is six fingers. Then the bridge of the nose is four fingers. The region of the eyes is two fingers. The space between the eyebrows is two fingers. Then the top of the forehead is two fingers. The crown is three fingers.

After raising the breath through these locations by means of the mind, one should draw it upwards or downwards from [each] location in sequence and hold the breath [there]. After raising the breath through the *Idā* and *Piṅgalā* channels on both sides of she who is coiled (*kundalī*) one should inhale, then raise the breath that is in the abdomen through the nostrils and inhale, then raise the two [?] (*kurcau*) into the space between the eyebrows and hold them there. One should regularly practise in this way. It is known that after raising the breath of the self up to the space between the eyebrows by way of the *Suṣumnā* channel one should restrain [it] until the rising of the orb (? *mandalodaya*).

5.1.7 Pātañjalayogaśāstra 3.39. The five winds:

By mastering the *udāna* wind, water, mud and thorns do not stick [to the yogi] and [he is able to perform] yogic suicide (*utkrānti*).

Life is activity of all the sense organs, characterized by [the flow of] *prāṇa* and the other [winds]. Life's actions are fivefold. *Prāṇa* flows through the mouth and nose [and] is active as far as the heart. *Samāna* [is so called] because it carries [nourishment] equally [through the body]; it is active as far as the navel. *Apāna* [is so called] because it carries away [food, drink, faeces, urine and semen]; it is active as far as the soles of the feet. *Udāna* [is so called] because it carries [bodily fluids] upwards; it is active up to the head. *Vyāna* is so called because it pervades [the body]. The most important of these is *prāṇa*.

5.1.8 Niśvasatattvasamhitā Nayasūtra 4.119–33. The breaths:³⁵

(119) These [five breaths] beginning with *prāṇa* are situated [respectively] in the heart (*prāṇa*), anus (*apāna*), navel (*samāna*), throat (*udāna*) and all joints (*vyāna*). Hear from me [their] colour[s] and sound[s]. (120–21) Having the appearance of molten silver; yellow; like a firefly; milky; crystalline: this is the definition of the colours of the five [breaths]. Bell; gong; sweet; elephant-trumpeting; many/much sounds: this is said to be the [group of] sound[s] of the five beginning with *prāṇa*.

(122–5) Talking, laughing, singing, dancing, fighting, the arts (?), craft, all tasks: these are the activities of *prāṇa*. The downward breath (*apāna*) allows food and drink to enter the body; it causes human waste to flow down [out from the body]; it will also cause blindness and ear disease. *Samāna* homogenizes what is eaten, licked, drunk. The function[s] of the rising breath (*udāna*) are sneezing, hiccoughs, vomiting and coughing. These are the functions of *vyāna*: horripilation, sweating; it causes [stomach-]pain; it causes the limbs to bend, and it knows the sense of touch.

(126–8) In the big toes, the knees, the heart, the eyes and

the head are the [five subsidiary breaths] beginning with *nāga*, which have various forms; hear from me their function[s]. [The first four] produce pleasure, excitement, drying, terror. The other, *dhananjaya*, who joins [the soul to its next embodiment], produces sleep and weariness. (129) The *kūrma* alone remains [at death] and does not leave by exiting [the body]. The *kūrma* causes the corpse to contract and dries it out.

(130) It is *prāṇa* that he should conquer first; once *prāṇa* is conquered, the mind is conquered; once the mind is conquered the soul is calmed. (131) *Prāṇa* together with *apāna* one should visualize in the anus; *prāṇa* together with *samāna* in the navel; *prāṇa* together with *udāna* in the throat; *prāṇa* together with *vyāna* [one should visualize] everywhere [in the body].

(132–3) He should restrain *nāga* and the other [five breaths, [each] together with *prāṇa* in their proper places. I will teach [you] the time for [which] each one [should be] restrained: listen. [Each breath] should be held for [a period] from one *tāla* going up to 500 [*tālas*]. In this way breath will be conquered; [it will be capable of] performing the functions of migration [into another living being's body] and [yogic suicide by] exiting [the body].

[Hereafter, (134–44) describe the joining of the breaths in different parts of the body, the application of mantras and the experiences that arise as a result, e.g. by joining *prāṇa* and *apāna* in the navel, trembling arises (137); by joining them in the heart, the yogi faints (138); by blocking *prāṇa* in the centre of the eyebrows, he will fall into a deep sleep and instantly awaken (140). Finally, he attains the special power (*siddhi*) of omniscience (143–44b).]

5.1.9 *Vasiṣṭhasamhitā* 2.1–55. The purification of the channels (*nādiśuddhi*) and the location of the breaths:

[Śakti said:]

(1) Blessed lord, teach me the purification of the channels according to the rules: by what method are the channels of all embodied beings purified? (2) And [teach me] the origin of the channels and their correct maintenance. What is the bulb (*kanda*) said to be like? How many breaths are there? (3) And [I] must know the locations of the breaths and their various separate functions in the body, O best of embodied beings. Please teach [them] as they truly are; no one other than you knows.

(4) Having been spoken to thus by Śakti, the yogi [Vasiṣṭha], his mind duly focused on that [subject], looked at his son with compassion and explained everything.

Vasiṣṭha said:

(5) First, O Brahman, you should know this: the body of all creatures is ninety-six fingers [long] when measured by its own fingers. (6) In the body there are thirty-two bones on either side of the spine and 72,000 channels are fixed [in it], too. (7) *Prāṇa* measures twelve fingers more than the body. The breath (*vāyu*) causes activity (*prayāṇa*), which is why it is called *prāṇa*. (8) In the middle of the body is the place of fire, which resembles molten gold. In humans it is triangular, in four-footed animals square and in birds it is circular. I am telling you what is true. (9) In the middle of that a slender flame constantly burns.

If you want to hear where the middle of the body (*dehamadhyā*) is, listen. (10) The region [measuring] one finger [wide] in the middle of the area two fingers above the anus and two fingers below the penis is called the middle of the body. (11) There is a bulb in this body nine fingers from the middle of the body. It is four fingers wide and four fingers high. (12) It resembles an egg in shape and is surrounded by skin and bone. Its middle is called the navel (*nābhi*) and from that a wheel (*cakra*)

supreme Lord (Parameśvara) is the deity there. He resides within the body as the state of *parāpara* ('beyond and not beyond').

The realm of the goddess (*śakti*) is at the place of the three peaks (*trikūṭa*). The supreme goddess (*parāśakti*) is the deity there. She dwells within the body as the states of existence and omnipotence found in all [goddesses].

Thus [concludes] the discussion of the twenty-one locations in the egg of Brahmā [that is] the body, together with the seven underworlds.

5.2.4 *Śivasamhitā* 2.13–20. The channels:

(13) There are 350,000 channels in the human body. Of these, fourteen are the most important: (14) Suṣumnā, Idā, Piṅgalā, Gāndhārī, Hastijihvikā, Kuhā, Sarasvatī, Pūṣā, Śaṅkhinī, Payasvinī, (15) Vāruṇī, Alambuṣā, Viśvadarī and Yaśasvinī.

Of these, three are pre-eminent: Piṅgalā, Idā and Suṣumnā. (16) Of the three, Suṣumnā is the most important, the sweetheart of the master yogis. The other channels in embodied beings are connected to her. (17) The three channels face downwards and resemble lotus fibres. They are joined to the spinal column and take the form of the moon, the sun and fire. (18) In their middle is the Citrā channel. She is beloved of me. In her is the aperture of Brahman (*brahmarandhra*), which is considered to be extremely subtle. (19) Resplendent in five colours, she is pure, goes through the middle of Suṣumnā, is the substrate of the body and has a different appearance from Suṣumnā. (20) This divine path is said to bestow immortality and bliss. Merely by meditating on it the master yogi destroys all his sins.

5.3

Cakras, Supports and Knots

5.3.1 *Netratantra* 7.1–5, 28c–30d. Subtle meditation using the yogic body and the six *cakras*:

(1) Next I shall teach the peerless subtle meditation. Possessing six *cakras*, sixteen supports (*ādhāras*), three focuses (*lakṣyas*), five voids (*vyomas*), (2) twelve knots (*granthis*), three powers (*śaktis*), a pathway to the three abodes [and] three [main] channels: (3–5) knowing the beautiful body to be thus, but [finding it] filled with the pathways of ten [other main] channels, overrun with a mass of [yet more] channels, 35,072,000 of them, filthy and rife with diseases, the yogi nourishes either his body or someone else's with the nectar of immortality that has arisen from the great subtle meditation [and] gets a divine body free from all diseases. [...]

In the [place] called [the organ of] generation (*janma*) is the *Nādi cakra*; in the navel the great [cakra] called *Māyā*; (29) the Yogi *cakra* is in the heart; [the *cakra*] at the palate is called *Bhedana*; at the *bindu* [in the forehead]⁴³ is the *Dīpti cakra*; the *cakra* at *nāda* is called *Śānta*. (30) [The yogi] should pierce all the [*cakras*] which have just been taught with the spear of knowledge.

5.3.2 *Brahmayāmala* 12.60c–62d. The sites of *nyāsa* ('mantra-installation'):

Having installed the sacred syllable called *Bhairava* (*hūṃ*) on the crest + . . . + (61) and *Raktā* on the forehead, he should install *Karāla* on the mouth. He should install *Caṇḍākṣī* on the throat lotus [and] *Mahocchuṣmā* on the heart. (62) *Karālī* is on the lotus of the navel, *Danturā* on the lotus of the genitals, *Bhīmavaktrā* on the knee, *Mahābalā* on the lotus of the feet.

of colour and shape. She who looks like a sleeping serpent is the great Kunḍalinī. (10) Gaṅgā and Yamunā are called Idā and Piṅgalā. [The yogi] should insert that goddess, in the form of the supreme *amṛta*, between Gaṅgā and Yamunā, (11) as far as the abode of Brahmā, O goddess. Truly he becomes identical with Brahmā and automatically gets an immortal body for ever. (12) The goddess, having reached the abode of Śiva, the place beyond the Supreme Lord, satiated by the pleasure of enjoying that place and filled with supreme bliss, (13) sprinkling the body of the yogi from the soles of his feet to his head with the dewy, unctuous, cool nectar, O supreme goddess, (14) proceeds again by the same path to her own home, O goddess. This is the secret yoga taught [by me], O you who are honoured by the master yogis.

5.4.3 Gorakṣaśataka 74–86. Kunḍalinī:

(74) The mind is absorbed into the Suṣumnā and the breath does not rush forth. As a result of his secretions being dried up, the yogi's journey is set in motion. (75) He should force the downward moving *apāna* breath to move upwards by means of contraction. Yogis call this the root lock (*mūlabandha*). (76–7) When the *apāna* has turned upwards and goes together with fire to the place of *prāṇa*, then – now that fire, *prāṇa* and *apāna* have quickly come together – the coiled, sleeping Kunḍalinī, heated by that fire and stimulated by the breath, (78) makes her body enter the mouth of the Suṣumnā. Then, having pierced the knot of Brahmā, which is born of the quality of passion (*rajas*), (79) she quickly flashes like a streak of lightning in the mouth of the Suṣumnā. She hurries up to the knot of Viṣṇu and, after stopping at the heart, (80) with great speed she moves on, having pierced the knot of Viṣṇu, and goes to where the knot of Rudra is found, (81) between the eyebrows, having pierced which she goes to the orb of the moon, the *cakra* called Anāhata,

which has sixteen petals. (82) Once there she automatically dries up the fluid produced from the moon.

When the sun has been moved from its abode to the place of blood and bile by the force of *prāṇa*, (83) Kuṇḍalinī, having gone to where the *cakra* of the moon is found, which consists of the white fluid of phlegm, consumes there the heated phlegm which has been discharged and is by nature cold. (84) In the same way the white image of the moon is heated forcefully; agitated, Kuṇḍalinī moves upwards and thus [the fluid] flows even more. (85) As a result of tasting this, the mind is barred from the objects of the senses. Having enjoyed the best of what is inside him, one [becomes] intent on the self. (86) And Kuṇḍalinī goes to the place which takes the form of the eight constituents of nature. Having embraced it, she moves on to Śiva, after embracing whom she disappears.

5.4.4 *Yogabīja* 93–9. Kuṇḍalinī and piercing the knots:

(93) By strongly restraining the breath and using the ‘stimulation of the goddess’ technique (*śakticālana*)⁵⁵ in order to straighten Kuṇḍalinī, who is coiled eight times, (94) [the yogi] should contract the sun and then stimulate Kuṇḍalinī. Even for one in its jaws, there is no fear of death.

(95) What I have told you, Pārvatī, is the supreme secret. Practise it regularly for a fortnight, sitting in the thunderbolt pose (*vajrāsana*).

(96) The fire kindled by the breath continually burns Kuṇḍalinī. Heated by the fire, that goddess of the channel, who entrances the three worlds, (97) enters into the mouth of the Suṣumnā channel in the spine [and] together with the breath and the fire pierces the knot of Brahmā.

(98) Then, after piercing the knot of Viṣṇu, she resides in the knot of Rudra. Then, having inhaled again and again, when breath-retention is intense, (99) the yogi should

practise the four breath-retentions (*kumbhakas*) called 'accompanied' (*sahita*): piercing the sun (*sūryabheda*), victorious (*ujjāyī*), cooling (*śītalī*) and bellows (*bhastrā*).

5.4.5 *Siddhasiddhāntapaddhati* 4.14–27. Kuṇḍalinī:

(14) Kuṇḍalinī is of two kinds: awakened and unawakened. The unawakened kind is in all bodies in the form of consciousness, naturally taking the form of various thoughts, actions, efforts and phenomena. She is sinuous by nature and [so] is known as Kuṇḍalinī ('she who is coiled'). It is she who is the well-known Kuṇḍalinī who goes upwards in yogis, her nature being to try to prevent the disturbances that have appeared in each of them.

(15) 'Upwards': all elements and their own forms exist on high, as a result of which she is well known as 'she who takes the form of investigation', because [thanks to her] yogis realize their true forms.

And it is said in the *Rulaka[tantra]*:

(16) By means of the awakening of the central goddess (*madhyāśakti*) as a result of the clenching of the lower goddess (*adhaḥśakti*) [and] by means of the descent of the upper goddess (*ūrdhvāśakti*) the supreme level is attained. (17) She is only one [but] by being classified as central, upper or lower she has three names. (18) When she consists of various thoughts produced by the activities of the external sense organs she is called the lower goddess. It is because of this that yogis are intent on contracting her. Contracting her is perfected by locking the Base support (*mūlādhārabandhana*),⁵⁶ from which this [entire] universe, moving and unmoving, conscious and unconscious, is produced. That is the Base support, which is well known as the source of consciousness.

Śivānandācārya has said:

(19) Without doubt, the creation and destruction of the universe happen because of all the emissions and

contractions of the goddess. As a result she is called the Base (*mūla*). [And] that is why almost all adepts are devoted to the Base support (*mūlādhāra*).

(20) She who is always inherently able to hold in the middle of her light the individual self, which is restless by nature and wanders in vain, is celebrated as the central goddess [manifestation of] Kuṇḍalinī. It has been ascertained that the Great Adepts know her in her gross and subtle forms.

(21) 'Gross': she who wanders through different objects in the form of consciousness even though she is by nature [both] the support of all that which is perceptible and perceptible herself is Kuṇḍalinī with form, [i.e. the] gross [Kuṇḍalinī]. Moreover that same Kuṇḍalinī, who has been determined to be the bringer of great bliss to yogis, because of her skill at extending herself, is known in the teachings of the Great Adepts as subtle, formless and awakened.

(22) Creation is called Kuṇḍalinī; she has two states. In one she has a gross form and is the individual soul in people. (23) In the other she is everywhere and subtle; she does not pervade nor is she pervaded. He who is confused by convictions does not understand her division. (24) So the supreme subtle Kuṇḍalinī, the central goddess, whose own form is consciousness, is to be awoken when she is in her own natural state by yogis who have learnt [how to do so] from the mouth of a true guru in order for them to perfect their bodies.

Now the descent of the upper goddess is taught:

(25) Because the nameless supreme place is above all the elements it is known as 'upper'. She whose nature is to reveal and point to various objects by means of self-perception is called the upper goddess. Her descent is not merely the extinction of the fallacy that one's true nature is twofold; on the contrary, it happens because of the indivisibility of one's own true nature.