

Hatha Yoga Family Tree

NOT JUST A SINGLE TREE, yoga's history is more like a rainforest. In India, spiritual movements have always sprung up abundantly. Some intertwine until they become one; some divide but come together later in new forms; some wither and die, becoming fertile soil for later developments. Shiva worship, Vishnu worship, devotion to female deities; ritualism and magic; philosophical atheism: all these diverse practices—and more—have contributed to yoga, mingling in patterns as complex as the streams of the Ganges delta. In the West, the mixing and blending continues. To make sense of this complexity, we've focused on the branches of yoga that gave bud to current Western hatha yoga practices. We've also sketched some of the most important pre-twentieth-century developments in the history of hatha yoga. (One caveat: Many of the dates shown here should be regarded as guesswork. As yoga historian Georg Feuerstein has pointed out, "India's chronology is notoriously conjectural until we come to the nineteenth century.")—Todd Jones

ILLUSTRATION BY LEIGH WELLS

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

KRIPALU

SWAMI SIYANANDA SARASWATI

PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA

BABA HARI DASS

Integral Yoga
Swami Satchidananda (b. 1914)

Bikram Yoga
Bikram Choudhury (b. 1945)

Self-Realization Fellowship
Paramahansa Yogananda (1893–1952)

Various Kriya Yoga organizations

Mt. Madonna Center

Baba Hari Dass
(b. 1922)

Neem Karoli Baba
(died 1973)

Lahiri Mahasaya
(1827–1895)

Swami Sivananda Saraswati
(1887–1963)

Swami Vishvananda of Sringeri Math
(One of Shankara's 10 monastic lineages)

Babaji Nagaraj
(reputed avatar)

Hindu and hatha yoga renaissance. From c. 1850, Indian teachers begin offering yoga to a wider audience, eventually including women and Westerners.

Hatha Yoga Pradipika. c. 1350. Important early hatha yoga manual covers pranayama, bandhas, nada (the inner sound), cleansing practices, and 16 postures.

Many hatha yoga texts appear from c. 1300 on. A large number have been lost; many have never been translated.

Advaita Vedanta. c. 800. Shankara articulates the nondualist model of reality adopted by most later yogis. He also establishes 10 monastic lineages crucial in the transmission of yoga.

Tantric explosion. c. 500–1000. Tantra's mysticism influences both Hinduism and Buddhism. Embracing the body as the vehicle of enlightenment instead of an obstacle, Tantra provides a foundation for hatha yoga.

The Bhagavad Gita. c. 300 B.C.E. Part of the *Mahabharata*, the *Gita* is the best-loved yogic text in India. The god-man Krishna's teaching focuses on selfless action (karma yoga), devotion (bhakti yoga), and wisdom (jñana yoga).

The Vedic Era. By 2000–1000 B.C.E. Rishis—divinely inspired seers—compose hymns that become the *Vedas*, the four central spiritual texts of India. The *Vedas* touch on many yogic themes and practices: ritual, sacrifice, sacred sounds, devotion to the gods.

Pre-Vedic Shamanism. Before 4000 B.C.E. Purifying, healing, meditative, and ascetic practices.

KRISHNAMACHARYA

MUKTANANDA

RAMAKRISHNA

KUNDALINI YOGA

TIBETAN YOGA

HIMALAYAN INSTITUTE

Viniyoga
T.K.V. Desikachar (b. 1938; Krishnamacharya's son)

Ashtanga Yoga
Pattabhi Jois (b. 1915)

Iyengar Yoga
B.K.S. Iyengar, (b. 1918, Krishnamacharya's nephew)

Swami Chidvilasananda (Gurumayi)
(b. 1955)

Various Vedanta centers

Swami Vivekananda
(1863–1902)
Brought yoga to America at 1893 World Parliament of Religions

3HO Foundation
Yogi Bhaijan (b. 1929)

Five Rites of Rejuvenation
("The Five Tibetans")

Tibetan White Tantra
teacher Lihar Po

Trul-Khor
Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche

Yantra Yoga
Chogyal Namkhai Norbu (b. 1938)

Swami Rama
(1925–1996)

Shri Madhavananda Bharati (Baba Dharam Das)
(died 1982)

One of Shankara's 10 monastic lineages

Lineage of Kashmiri Shiva worship dating back to Abhinava Gupta (10th C.)

Ramakrishna
(1836–1885)

Lineage of Sikh gurus dating back to founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak (15th C.)

Buddhist siddha yogis c. 900–1100. Many Indian and Tibetan Buddhist masters of this era, including Naropa (956–1040) and Milarepa (c. 1038–1122), are also revered as great yogis.

The Yoga Sutra of Patanjali. c. 200. The classical statement of ashtanga (eight-limbed) yoga. Patanjali departs from mainstream yoga philosophy by proposing a dualistic model of reality dropped by most later yogis.

Brahmin heyday and Upanishads. By 800 B.C.E. Priests and formalized rituals dominate orthodox religion. At the same time, forest-dwelling ascetics seek direct experience of union or "yoking" (yoga) with the Ultimate. Their teachings are recorded as the *Upanishads*—"wisdom that must be learned at the foot of the guru"—and some become sources for the yoga tradition.

Indus Valley civilization. c. 4000–2000 B.C.E. Artifacts show figures in seated, cross-legged poses and symbols later associated with yoga.