

# **Light on Hatha Yoga**

## **Module 1**

### **Lesson 4**

#### **Āsana**



ॐ ॐ ॐ  
श्री गुरुभ्यो नमः हरिः ॐ

Om Om Om  
Sri Gurubhyo Namah Harih  
Om

Salutations to the Gurus!

ॐ सह नाववतु ।  
सह नौ भुनक्तु ।  
सह वीर्यं करवावहै ।  
तेजस्वि नावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

om saha nāvavatu saha nau bhunaktu  
                saha vīryam karavāvahai  
tejasvi nāvadhītamastu mā vidviśāvahai  
                om śāntih śāntih śāntih

May that Brahman protect us together. May it nourish us together. May we both gain great vitality. May our learning be brilliant. May we never argue. Om peace, peace, peace.

श्रीआदिनाथाय नमोऽस्तु तस्मै येनोपदिष्टा हठयोगविद्या ।  
विभ्राजते प्रोन्नतराजयोगम् आरोढुम् इच्छोर् अधिरोहिणीव ॥१॥

śrī ādi nāthāya namah astu tasmai yena upadistā haṭha yoga vidyā |  
vibhrājate pronnata rāja yogam āroḍhum icchoḥ adhirohiṇī iva ||

I bow to the Almighty who taught the lore of Haṭha Yoga, which is held in high esteem as if it were a flight of steps for the aspirant who looks forward to climbing the highest peak of Rājayoga (spiritual achievement).  
[Kaivalyadhāma, 1998]

# Saṅkalpa

An inquiry into the nature of the principles and practices of Yoga by undertaking the study of the Hatha Pradīpikā.



## Verse 17 - Āsana - the first limb



Haṭhasya prathamāṅgatvādāsanam pūrvamucyate|

Kuryāttadāsanam sthairyamārogyam cāṅgalāghavam||17||

Āsana being the first component of Haṭha, is dealt with first, Āsana brings (mental as well as physical) sturdiness, health and (a feeling of) lightness

## Verse 18 - Tradition of Muṇis and Yogīs



वसिष्ठाद्यैश्च मुनिभिर्मत्स्येन्द्राद्यैश्च योगिभिः।  
अङ्गीकृतान्यासनानि कथ्यन्ते कानिचिन्मया॥१८॥

Vasiṣṭhādyaiśca munibhirmatsyendrādyaiśca yogibhiḥ।  
Aṅgīkṛtānyāsanāni kathyante kānicinmayā॥18॥

Some of the Āsanas adopted by sages like Vaśiṣṭha and Yogīs like Matsyendra are recounted by me (here).

Dhātu - ‘ ās ’ which means to abide or to sit

Amarakośa on āsana -

- piṭha
- āsana
- āsyā
- āsanā
- sthiti
- auśīra

Two broad meanings:

- as a seat (upon which one sits)
- posture of the body (for yoga sādhanā)

## Verse 19 - Svastikam

जानूर्वारन्तरे सम्यक्कृत्वा पादतले उभे।  
ऋजुकायः समासीनः स्वस्तिकं तत्प्रचक्षते॥१९॥

Jānūrvorantare samyakkṛtvā pādatale ubhe|  
Rjukāyah samāśīnah svastikam tatpracakṣate||19||

jānu - knee ; urvoḥ - the thigh

antare - between ; samyak - properly

kṛtvā - doing (inserting) ; pādatale - the soles of the feet

ubhe - both ; rju - straight ; kāyah - body (or spine)

samāśīnah - sitting properly ; svastikam - svastikāsana (auspicious)

tat - that ; pracakṣate - is described

## Verse 19 - Svastikam

Jānūrvorantare samyakkṛtvā pādatale ubhel  
Rjukāyah samāśīnah svastikam tatpracakṣate||19||

Sitting on the level ground with the body erect and settling properly (i.e. evenly) the two soles (i.e. feet) between thighs and knees (on the opposite sides) - that is known as svastika (āsana).



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swastika#Hinduism>

## Verse 19 - Svastikam

Jānūrvorantare samyakkṛtvā pādatale ubhel  
Rjukāyah samāśīnah svastikam tatpracakṣate||19||

Sitting on the level ground with the body erect and settling properly (i.e. evenly) the two soles (i.e. feet) between thighs and knees (on the opposite sides) - that is known as svastika (āsana).



## Verse 20 - Gomukhāsana

सव्ये दक्षिणगुल्फं तु पृष्ठपाश्वे नियोजयेत्।

दक्षिणेऽपि तथा सव्यं गोमुखं गोमुखाकृतिः ॥२०॥

Savye dakṣiṇagulpham̄ tu pṛṣṭhapārśve niyojayet|

Dakṣiṇe'pi tathā savyam̄ gomukham̄ gomukhākṛtih||20||

savye - to the left side ; dakṣiṇa - right

gulpham̄ - ankle ; tu - and ; pṛṣṭha - back

niyojayet - place properly ; dakṣiṇe - towards the right

api - also ; tathā - in the same manner ;

svayam̄ - towards the left ; gomukham̄ ; go - cow

mukha - face ; ākṛti - form of

## Verse 20 - Gomukhāsana

Savye dakṣiṇagulpham tu prsthapārśve niyojayet|

Dakṣiṇe'pi tathā savyam gomukham

gomukhākṛtiḥ||20||

Placing the right ankle by the side of the left hip and, similarly, the left (ankle) by (the side of) the right (hip) and thus imitating the shape of a cows head - this is called Gomuka (āsana).



## Verse 20 - Gomukhāsana

Savye dakṣiṇagulpham tu prsthapārśve niyojayet|

Dakṣiṇe'pi tathā savyam gomukham

gomukhākṛtih||20||

Placing the right ankle by the side of the left hip and, similarly, the left (ankle) by (the side of) the right (hip) and thus imitating the shape of a cows head - this is called Gomuka (āsana).



## Verse 20 - Gomukhāsana



## Verse 21 - Vīrāsana

एकं पादं तथैकस्मिन्वन्यसेदूरुणि स्थिरम्।

इतरस्मिंस्तथा चोरुं वीरासनमितीरितम्॥२१॥

Ekaṁ pādaṁ tathaikasminvanyasedūruṇi sthiram|

Itarasmiṁstathā coruṁ vīrāsanamitīritam||21||

ekaṁ - one ; padam - foot ; atha - beginning with

ekasmin - one of the ; vinyaset - properly placed

ūruṇi - thigh ; sthiram - steadily ; itarasmin - upon the other foot

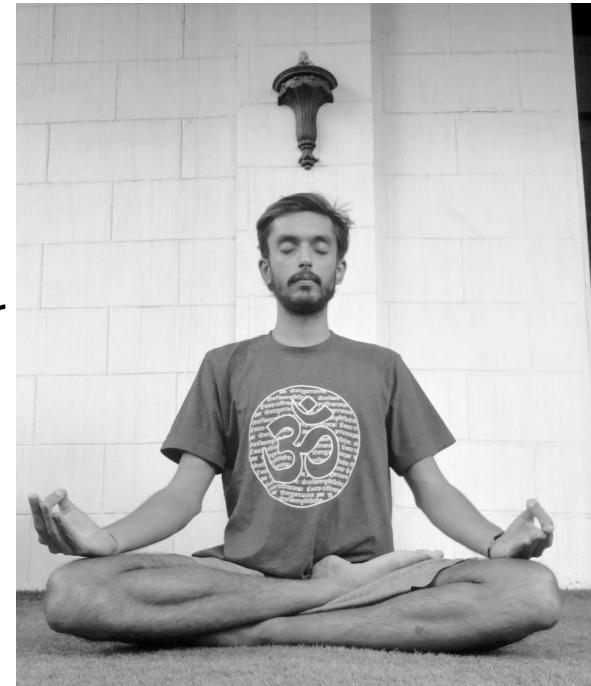
tathā - similarly ; ca - also ; ūrum - thigh ; vīrāsanam - the heroic posture

itīritam - is explained

## Verse 21 - Vīrāsana

Ekaṁ pādaṁ tathaikasminvanyasedūruṇi sthiram|  
Itarasmimstathā corum vīrāsanamitīritam||21||

Place one foot on the opposite thigh and on the other foot the other thigh. This is known as Vīrāsana



## Verse 22 - Kūrmāsana

गुदं निरुद्ध्य गुल्फाभ्यां व्युत्क्रमेण समाहितः।  
कूर्मासनं भवेदेतदिति योगविदो विदुः॥२२॥

Gudam nirudhya gulphābhyaṁ vyutkrameṇa samāhitah|

Kūrmāsanam bhavedetaditi yogavido viduh||22||

gudam - anus ; nirudhya - closing/pressing

gulphābhyaṁ - both the gulphas ; vyutkrameṇa - the opposite sequence

samāhitah - with a composed mind ; kūrrmāsanam - the tortoise posture

bhaved - becomes ; etat - this ; iti - this ; yogavidaḥ - knowers of yoga ;

viduh - recognise

## Verse 22 - Kūrmāsana

Gudam nirudhya gulphābhyaṁ vyutkrameṇa samāhitah|

Kūrmāsanam bhavedetaditi yogavido viduh||22||

Pressing the anus with the two heels, (ankles) everted,  
and remaining well-balanced (in this position) thus  
forms Kūrmāsana as declared by the knowers of yoga.



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurma>

## Verse 22 - Kūrmāsana



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurma>



## Verse 23 - Kukkuṭāsana

पद्मासनं तु संस्थाप्य जानूर्वरन्तरे करौ।  
निवेश्य भूमौ संस्थाप्य व्योमस्थं कुक्कुटासनं॥२३॥

Padmāsanam tu samsthāpya jānūrvorantare karau|

Niveśya bhūmau samsthāpya vyomastham kukkuṭāsanam||23||

padmāsanam tu - padmāsana ; samsthāpya - properly established ;  
jānu - knee ; uru - thigh ; antare - in between ; karau - hands ;  
niveśya - insert ; bhūmau - on the ground ; samsthāpya - firmly placing ;  
vyomastham - elevated from the ground in the sky ; kukkuṭāsanam

## Verse 23 - Kukkuṭāsana

Padmāsanam tu samsthāpya jānūrvorantare karau|

Niveśya bhūmau samsthāpya vyomasthaṁ  
kukkuṭasanam||23||

Adopting the Padmāsana (pose), fixing the palms on the ground by inserting the arms (at a convenient spot) between the thighs and knees and remaining aloft is known as Kukkuṭāsana.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken#/media/File:Gallus\\_gallus\\_male\\_Kaziranga\\_0.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken#/media/File:Gallus_gallus_male_Kaziranga_0.jpg)

## Verse 23 - Kukkuṭāsana



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken#/media/File:Gallus\\_gallus\\_male\\_Kaziranga\\_0.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicken#/media/File:Gallus_gallus_male_Kaziranga_0.jpg)



## Verse 24 - Uttānakūrmāsana

कुक्कुटासनबन्धस्थो दोभ्या सम्बद्य कन्धराम्।  
भवेत्कूर्मवदुत्तान एतदुत्तानकूर्मक्रमम्॥२४॥

Kukkuṭāsanabandhastho dorbhyaṁ sambadhyā kandharām|

Bhavetkūrmavaduttāna etaduttānakūrmakram||24||

kukkuṭāsana ; bandhasthah - established in ; dorbhyaṁ - with the hands

sambandhya - encircling ; kandharām - back side of the neck ;

śete - lie down ; kūrmavat - like a tortoise ; uttāna - on the back

etat - this is ; uttānakūrmākam

## Verse 24 -

कुक्कुटासनबन्धस्थो दोभ्या सम्बद्य कन्धराम्।  
भवेत्कूर्मवदुत्तान एतदुत्तानकूर्मक्रमम्॥२४॥

Kukkuṭāsanabandhastho dorbhyaṁ sambadhyā  
kandharām|

Bhavetkūrmavaduttāna etaduttānakūrmakram||24||

Adopting the Kukkuṭāsana lock and winding the arms  
round the neck, lying supine like a tortoise - this is  
Uttānakūrmaka Āsana.



## Verse 25 - Dhanurāsana

पादाङ्गुष्ठौ तु पाणिभ्यां गृहीत्वा श्रवणावधि।  
धनुराकर्षणं कुर्याद्धनुरासनमुच्यते॥२५॥

Pādāṅguṣṭhau tu pāṇibhyāṁ gṛhītvā śravaṇāvadhi|

Dhanurākarṣaṇāṁ kuryāddhanurāsanamucyate||25||

pāda - feet ; aṅguṣṭhau - both the toes ; pāṇibhyāṁ - both hands ;

gṛhītvā - holding ; śravaṇa - ear ; avadhi - upto ;

dhanur - bow ; ākarṣaṇa - stretching ; kuryāt - do or make ;

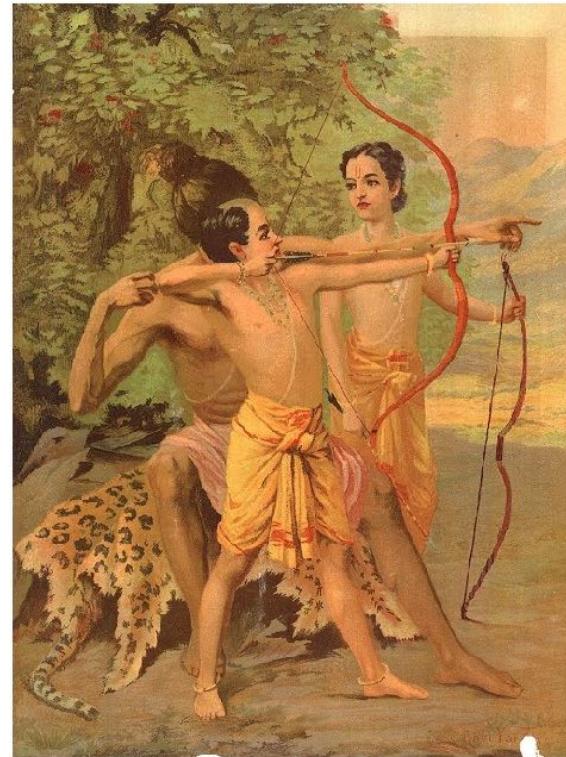
dhanurāsana ; uchyate - is said

## Verse 25 - Dhanurāsana

Pādāṅguṣṭhau tu pāṇibhyāṁ gṛhītvā śravaṇāvadhi|

Dhanurākarṣaṇāṁ kuryāddhanurāsanamucyate||25||

Holding the two toes (respectively) with the two hands, pulling them from the back side (the toes) up to the (corresponding) ears, (and thus) assuming the shape of a stretched bow - this is called Dhanurāsana.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archery#/media/File:Vishwamitra\\_archery\\_training-1.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archery#/media/File:Vishwamitra_archery_training-1.jpg)

## Verse 25 - Dhanurāsana



## Verse 26 - Matsyendrāsana

वामोरुमूलार्पितदक्षपादं जानोर्बहिर्वेष्टितवामपादम्।  
प्रगृह्य तिष्ठेत्परिवर्तिताङ्गः श्रीमत्स्यनाथोदितमासनं स्यात्॥२६॥

Vāmorumūlārpitadakṣapādam jānorbahirveṣṭitavāmapādam|

Pragṛhya tiṣṭhetparivartitāṅgaḥ śrīmatsyanāthoditamāsanam syāt||26||

vāma - left ; urumūla - the root of the thigh ; arpita - placed properly

dakṣa - right ; pādam - foot ; jānoḥ - knee (right) ; bahiḥ - outside

veṣṭita - encircling ; vāma pādam - left foot ; paragṛhya - holding

tiṣṭhet - sits ; parivartitāṅgaḥ - changing the position of the body (twist)

śrīmatsyanātha ; uditam - said ; āsanam ; syāt - exists

## Verse 26 - Matsyendrāsana

वामोरुमूलार्पितदक्षपादं जानोर्बहिर्वेष्टितवामपादम्।  
प्रगृह्य तिष्ठेत्परिवर्तिताङ्गः श्रीमत्स्यनाथोदितमासनं स्यात्॥२६  
॥

Vāmorumūlārpitadakṣapādam  
jānorbahirveṣṭitavāmapādam|

Pragṛhya tiṣṭhetparivartitāṅgaḥ  
śrīmatsyanāthoditamāsanam syāt||26||

Placing the right foot at the root of the left thing,  
encircling the )right) knee by the left leg, holding (the  
two feet by the opposite hands), twisting the body,  
staying in this posture is the āsana declared by Śrī



# Verse 26 - Matsyendrāsana



## Verse 27 - Matsyendrapīṭha

मत्स्येन्द्रपीठं जठरप्रदीप्तिं प्रचण्डरुग्मण्डलखण्डनास्त्रम्।

अभ्यासतः कुण्डलिनीप्रबोधं चन्द्रस्थिरत्वं च ददाति पुंसाम्॥२७॥

Matsyendrapīṭham jatharapradīptim pracanḍarugmaṇḍalakhaṇḍanāstram|

Abhyāsataḥ kuṇḍalinīprabodham candrasthiratvam ca dadāti pum̄sām||27||

matsyendra pīṭham ; jaṭhara - gastric fire ; pradīptim - increases ;  
 pracanḍa - very difficult ; rugmaṇḍala - group of diseases ;  
 khaṇdana - destroys ; astraṁ - weapon ; abhyāsataḥ - with regular practice  
 kuṇḍalinīprabhodham - arousal of kuṇḍalinī ; candra - moon (nectar)  
 sthiratvam - stabilises or stops ; ca - also ; dadāti - bestows  
 pum̄sām - to the practitioner

## Verse 27 - Matsyendrapīṭha

मत्स्येन्द्रपीठं जठरप्रदीप्तिं प्रचण्डरुग्मण्डलखण्डनास्त्रम्।

अभ्यासतः कुण्डलिनीप्रबोधं चन्द्रस्थिरत्वं च ददाति पुंसाम्॥२७॥

Matsyendrapīṭham jatharapradīptim pracaṇḍarugmaṇḍalakhaṇḍanāstram|

Abhyāsataḥ kuṇḍalinīprabodham candrasthiratvam ca dadāti pum̄sām||27||

The practice of Matsyendrāsana, which stimulated the gastric fire in the stomach and is a weapon of destruction for a group of terrible diseases, bestows upon (those) persons (who practice it) (the gift of) arousal of the Kuṇḍalinī and the stability of Candra.

## Verse 28 - Paścimatānāsana

प्रसार्य पादौ भुवि दण्डरूपौ दोभ्या पदाग्रद्वितयं गृहीत्वा।  
जानूपरिन्यस्तललाटदेशो वसेदिदं पश्चिमतानमाहुः॥२८॥

Prasārya pādau bhuvi dañḍarūpau dorbhyāṁ padāgradvitayāṁ gṛhītvā|

Jānūparinyastalalāṭadeśo vasedidam paścimatānamāhuḥ||28||

pryāsyā - extending ; pādau - legs ; bhuvi - on the ground ;

dañḍarūpau - like a stick ; dorbhyāṁ - with the two fingers ;

pādāgra - the big toes ; dvitivāṁ - both ; gṛhītvā - catching hold of ;

jānūpari - upon the knee ; nyasta - properly placed ;

lalāṭadeśe - the forehead ; vaset - sit ; idam - this ; paścamiātānam

āhuḥ - said

## Verse 28 - Paścimatānāsana



प्रसार्य पादौ भुवि दण्डरूपौ दोभ्या पदाग्रद्वितयं गृहीत्वा।  
जानूपरिन्यस्तललाटदेशो वसेदिदं पश्चिमतानमाहुः॥२८॥

Prasārya pādau bhuvi dañḍarūpau dorbhyāṁ padāgradvitayaṁ gṛhītvā|  
Jānūparinyastalalāṭadeśo vasedidam paścimatānamāhuh||28||

Stretching both the legs straight on the ground and holding with the arms the two big toes, one should stay (in this position) with one's forehead placed on one's knees - this is called Paścimatāna (āsana).

## Verse 28 - Paścimatānāsana



## Verse 29 - Paścimatānāsana Phala / Effect

इति पश्चिमतानमासनाग्र्यं पवनं पश्चिमवाहिनम् करोति।  
उदयं जठरानलस्य कुर्यादुदरे काश्यमरोगतां च पुंसाम्॥२९॥

Iti paścimatānamāsanāgryam pavanam paścimavāhinam karoti||  
Udayam jaṭharānalasya kuryādudare kārṣyamarogatām ca puṁsām||29||

iti - this ; paścimātāna ; āsana ; agryam - foremost ; pavanam - prāṇā ;  
paścima - posterior ; vāhinam - flow ; karoti - directs ; udayam - kindles  
jaṭharānalasya - gastric fire ; kuryāt - bestows ; udare - abdomen ;  
kārṣyam - thin ; arogatām - health ; ca - and ; puṁsām - practitioner

## Verse 29 - Paścimatānāsana Phala / Effect



इति पश्चिमतानमासनाग्र्यं पवनं पश्चिमवाहिनम् करोति।  
उदयं जठरानलस्य कुर्यादुदरे काश्यमरोगतां च पुंसाम्॥२९॥

Iti paścimatānamāsanāgryam pavanam paścimavāhinam karotil|

Udayam jaṭharānalasya kuryādudare kārṣyamarogatām ca puṁsām||29||

This Paścimatāna - foremost among the āsanas - directs the pavana along the back, kindles the gastric fire, reduces the belly and bestows health upon the aspirants.

# References

1. Haṭha Pradīpikā (Digambar Ji, Kokaje, Kaivalyadhama)
2. Haṭha Pradīpikā Jyotsnā (Maheshananda et al, Kaivalyadhama)
3. Sanskrit Text:  
<https://www.sanskrit-trikashaivism.com/en/hatha-yoga-pradipika-asana/622>
4. Excellent online dictionary source:  
<https://shlokam.org/sanskrit-glossary/>

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु  
मा कश्चिदद्दुःखभागभवेत् ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

om sarve bhavantu sukhinah  
sarve santu nirāmayāḥ  
sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantu  
mā kaścid duḥkha bhāgabhavet  
om sāntih sāntih sāntih

May all be happy, may all be free from disease, may all see  
goodness,  
may none suffer from sorrow.

ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय ।  
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।  
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ हरिः ॐ तत्सत् ॥

asato mā sadgamaya  
tamasmā jyotir gamaya  
mrityormāamritam gamaya  
Om śhānti śhānti śhāntih harih om tat sat

Lead me from changing existence to unchanging being,  
lead me from the darkness of tamas to the light of  
knowledge,  
lead me from death to immortality. Harih om that is truth.