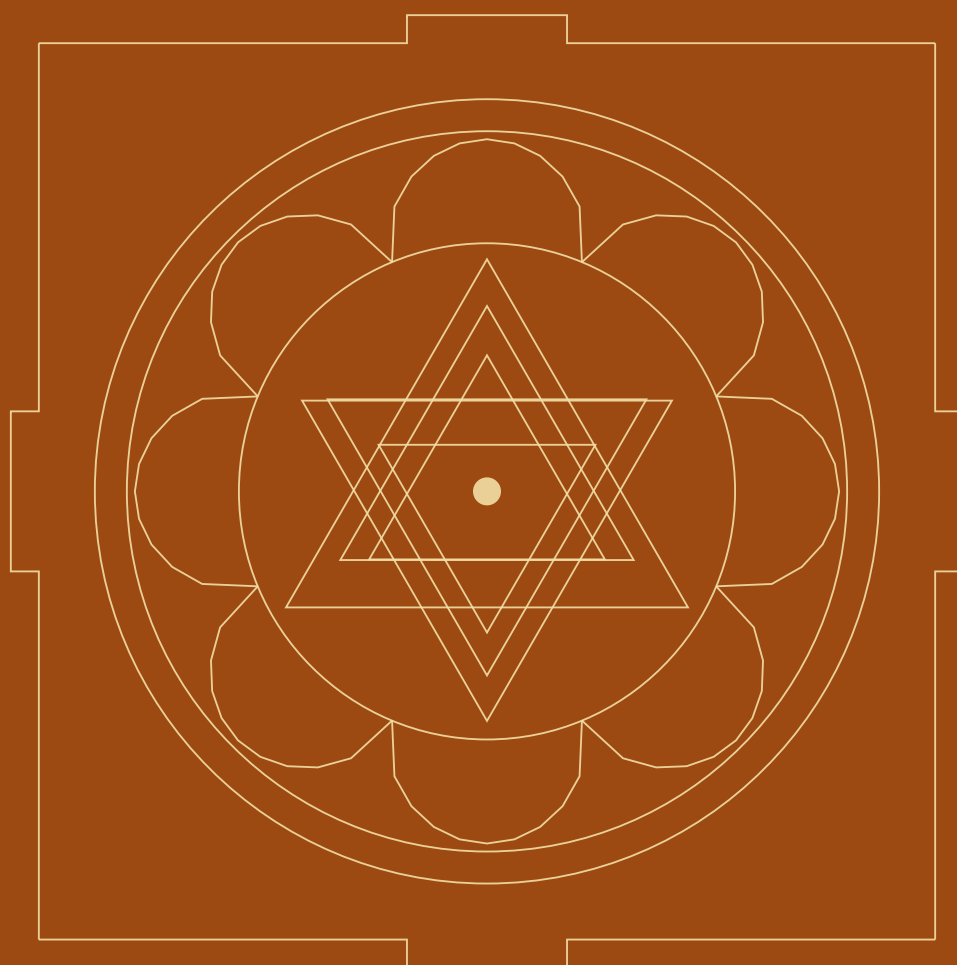


PRACTICE

Kriya Yoga: Patañjali's Path and the Lineage of Lahiri Mahasaya

The two kriya yogas explained: the threefold practice of Yoga Sutra 2.1, which you can begin tomorrow, and the initiatory lineage of Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar and Yogananda, told from the published sources



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yoga

YOGIDE

Free sample

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teacher or medical advice. Questions: administration@lacangel.fr

Before you begin

Type "kriya yoga" into a search engine and you will meet three different things under one name. A sentence of Patañjali, written some sixteen centuries ago, that defines kriyā-yoga as discipline, study and devotion. A set of cleansing techniques of haṭha yoga, often called "kriyas" in English, which involve swallowing cloth, washing the nose and churning the abdomen. And a meditation practice handed down since 1861 from teacher to student in the lineage of Lahiri Mahasaya, made famous worldwide by Paramahansa Yogananda's *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946), and taught only after initiation.

These three are related, but they are not the same thing, and confusing them leads to real mistakes: people try cleansing techniques from a video thinking they are "doing kriya", or they look online for the "secret" technique of the lineage and find either a distortion or a sales page. This book untangles the three. It does four things.

First, it gives you Patañjali's kriya yoga in full: Yoga Sutra 2.1-2.2 word by word, in Devanāgarī and transliteration, with the related sūtras, and then one chapter each on its three parts, tapas, svādhyaṃ and īśvara-praṇidhāna, as things you can practise from tomorrow morning. This kriya yoga needs no initiation. It is printed in a public text for everyone.

Second, it explains the haṭha "kriyas", the six purifications (śaṭkarma) of the Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā and the Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā: what the texts say, who they are for, what can go wrong. They are described here, never taught step by step.

Third, it tells the history of the Kriya Yoga lineage as it has been published: Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, Sri Yukteswar, Yogananda, with dates checked against reliable sources, and with a clear line between documented facts and the account of the lineage itself. It names the organisations that teach this Kriya today, without recommending any of them.

Fourth, it gives you eight weeks of practice: a journal of Patañjali's kriya yoga, with boxes to tick and lines to write, which prepares you for any serious path, initiatory or not.

About the translations.

All translations of Sanskrit verses in this book were written for Yogide from the Sanskrit. They are not copied or adapted from any modern published translation. The word-by-word glosses of the Yoga Sutras are those of our companion book *The Yoga Sutras of Patañjali*, Sutra by Sutra, from the same Sanskrit text. Short quotations from the first edition of *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946) are given in its original English; that edition is in the public domain in the United States according to Project Gutenberg.

What this book will not do.

The techniques of the Kriya Yoga lineage are traditionally given only by initiation. We respect that rule. You will find here what the published sources say about them, in general terms, and nothing more: no breath counts, no mantras, no instructions. If someone offers you "the secret Kriya technique" in a free

video or a cheap PDF, Chapter 9 explains how to think about it.

Health first.

This book contains no technique that strains the body. The practices of Chapters 3 to 5 and 10 are study, reflection, simple discipline and quiet sitting. The haṭha purifications of Chapter 6 are described only: do not attempt them from a book. If you have heart disease, high blood pressure, epilepsy, glaucoma, a hernia, a stomach or bowel condition, if you are pregnant, or if you have a psychiatric condition, speak to your doctor before any breathing technique or cleansing practice, and learn it only from a qualified teacher. Stop and seek help at once if you feel chest pain, breathlessness out of proportion, a sudden severe headache, faintness, or numbness or weakness on one side. Emergency numbers: 911 (US, Canada), 999 or 112 (UK), 112 (EU, India), 000 (Australia).

Which texts and numbering we follow

- **Yoga Sutras (YS)**: the text of Kāśinātha Śāstrī Āgāśe's edition (Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series 47, Pune, 1904), in the digital version by Philipp A. Maas on GRETIL (Göttingen Register of Electronic Texts in Indian Languages), version of 31 July 2020. Same numbering as in our Yoga Sutras book.
- **Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā (HYP)**: the electronic text of GRETIL (version of 31 July 2020), as in our book Hatha Yoga Pradipika Explained. The verses on the six purifications are HYP 2.21 to 2.38 in this text.
- **Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā (GS)**: the GRETIL text typed by Peter Thomi from his edition (Wichtrach, 1993). The six purifications are GS 1.12 to 1.60.
- **Bhagavad Gītā (BG)**: the critical edition of the Mahābhārata (Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute), electronic text on GRETIL.
- ***Autobiography of a Yogi***: the first edition (New York, Philosophical Library, 1946), as digitised by Project Gutenberg (eBook 7452). We refer to chapters by their titles, because later editions added a chapter and changed some numbers.

How to use this book

Read Chapters 1 and 2 in one sitting: they are the key to everything else. Then read Chapters 3, 4 and 5 slowly, one per evening, and begin the small practices they suggest. Read Chapter 6 for understanding only. Chapters 7 to 9 are history and discernment: read them before you choose a teacher or an organisation. Chapter 10 is the eight-week journal; start it on a Monday.

Chapter 1. Kriyā: action, rite, purification

One word, several meanings

Kriyā (क्रिया) is a feminine noun formed from the verbal root कृ, "to do, to make". It is a cousin of karman (कर्मन्), "action", the word that gives us karma. The Sanskrit-English dictionary of Monier Monier-Williams (1899), which remains the standard reference and is available online from the University of Cologne, gives a long list of meanings for kriyā. Among them:

Meaning in Monier-Williams	Where it fits in yoga
doing, performing, action, activity, work	Patañjali's kriyā-yoga: yoga as something done, daily
bodily action, exercise of the limbs	the physical practices of haṭha
medical treatment, applying a remedy	the cleansing practices described as remedies for imbalance
a religious rite or ceremony, sacrifice	the sense of a practice as an offering
purificatory rites (in the sense of rites after death, ablution)	the idea of purification
study, means, expedient	a method, a way to reach a goal

So the word itself already holds the three kriya yogas of this book: action and discipline (Patañjali), physical and cleansing practice (haṭha), and a rite received and performed (the lineage of Lahiri Mahasaya, which Yogananda explains as "union with the Infinite through a certain action or rite").

The three kriya yogas at a glance

	Patañjali's kriyā-yoga	The haṭha "kriyas" (ṣaṭkarma)	Kriya Yoga of Lahiri Mahasaya's lineage
Source	Yoga Sutra 2.1-2.2 (about 4th-5th century CE)	Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā 2.21-38 (15th century); Gheraṇḍa Saṃhitā 1.12-60 (around 1700)	Lahiri Mahasaya (initiated 1861, according to the lineage); Autobiography of a Yogi (1946)
What it is	discipline (tapas), study and recitation (svādhyāya), devotion and offering (īśvara-praṇidhāna)	six purifications: dhauti, basti, neti, trāṭaka, nauli, kapālabhāti	a meditation practice centred on breath and life energy, with several stages
Who teaches it	a public text; any reader can practise	traditionally a teacher; the texts call them "to be kept secret"	given only by initiation, within a lineage or organisation
In this book	taught in full (Chapters 2 to 5 and 10)	described, never taught (Chapter 6)	history and published descriptions only (Chapters 7 to 9)

Why the confusion matters

The names are the same; the risks are not. Patañjali's kriya yoga carries no physical risk: its worst misuse is pride or harshness with oneself, and Chapter 3 addresses that. The haṭha purifications carry real physical risks when done without guidance (Chapter 6 gives a published case of injury from forceful breathing). And the initiatory Kriya carries a different kind of risk: being exploited by someone who claims a lineage he does not have, or practising a technique learnt from a garbled source.

There is also a link between the three, and it is not an accident. Yogananda himself, in the chapter "The Science of Kriya Yoga" of his Autobiography, writes that Kriya Yoga "is mentioned twice by the ancient sage Patanjali", and he quotes Yoga Sutra 2.1 and 2.49. In his reading, Patañjali was referring "to either the exact technique taught by Babaji, or one very similar to it". That is the lineage's interpretation. Historically, Patañjali's commentators, from the Yoga-bhāṣya attributed to Vyāsa onwards, read 2.1 as the threefold discipline of tapas, svādhyāya and īśvara-praṇidhāna, and nothing in the sūtra names a breathing technique. Both readings exist; we present each for what it is.

Practise: three columns

Take a sheet of paper. Draw three columns: action, body, rite. Under each, write one thing you already do every day that fits it (a task you never skip; a habit of the body; a small ritual, even lighting a lamp or making tea in silence). You already have the raw material of a kriya yoga. The next chapters give it a shape.

End of the sample

Thank you for reading this far. We hope these first pages already help your practice, and that they show how the rest of the book is built: clear steps, texts quoted with their source, nothing invented.

The full book has 39 pages.

Get it here:

<https://yogide.com/books/kriya-yoga-patanjali-s-path-and-the-lineage-of-lahiri-mahasa/>

One-time payment, instant PDF.