

[Siddha Siddhanta](#)

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Siddha Siddhanta, or Gorakshanatha Saivism, is generally considered to have come in the lineage of the earlier ascetic orders of India. Gorakshanatha was a disciple of Matsyendranatha, patron saint of Nepal, revered by certain esoteric Buddhist schools as well as by Hindus. Gorakshanatha lived most likely in the tenth century and wrote in Hindi. Historians connect the Gorakshanatha lineage with that of the Pashupatas and their later successors, as well as to the siddha yoga and Agamic traditions. Gorakshanatha adherents themselves say that Matsyendranatha learned the secret Saiva truths directly from Siva, as Adinatha, and he in turn passed them on to Gorakshanatha. The school systematized and developed the practice of hatha yoga to a remarkable degree, indeed nearly all of what is today taught about hatha yoga comes from this school. Gorakshanatha, the preeminent guru and author of Siddha Siddhanta Paddhati ("tracks on the doctrines of the adepts"), was a man of awesome spiritual power and discerning practicality. As a renunciate, his early life is unknown, though he is thought to have been a native of Punjab. He mastered the highly occult Natha yoga sciences after studying for twelve years under his famed guru, Matsyendranatha. Roaming North India from Assam to Kashmir, he worshiped Siva in temples, realizing Him in the deepest of samadhis and awakening many of the powers of a Saiva adept. By creating twelve orders with monastery-temple complexes across the face of North India, Gorakshanatha popularized his school and effectively insulated

pockets of Saivism from Muslim dominance. Matsyendranatha had already established it in Nepal, where to this day he is deified as the country's patron saint. Scholars believe that Gorakshanatha's yoga represents a development out of the earlier Pashupata and related ascetic orders, as there are many similarities of practice and philosophy. To outer society, Gorakshanatha's siddha yogis were mesmerizing, memorable men of renunciation-dressed in saffron robes, with flowing, jet-black hair, foreheads white with holy ash, large circular earrings, rudraksha beads and a unique horn whistle on a hair-cord worn around the neck, signifying the primal vibration, Aum. Muslims called the Gorakshanathis "Kanphati," meaning "split-eared ones," referring to the rite of slitting the ear cartilage to insert sometimes monstrous earrings. Some Muslims even joined the Kanphatis, and heads of a few Gorakshanatha monasteries are known by the Muslim title pir, "holy father." This unusual ecumenical connection was of enormous benefit at a time of general religious persecution. These Nathas perceived the inner and outer universes as Siva's cosmic body (Mahasakara Pinda), as the continuous blossoming forth of Himself as Shakti (power) into an infinity of souls, worlds and forces. Earth and life, human frailties and human Divinity are Siva manifest. As such, these men expressed spiritual exaltation in mankind and joyous devotion through temple worship and pilgrimage. But their daily focus was on internal worship and kundalini yoga. Inside themselves they sought realization of Parasamvid, the supreme transcendent state of Siva. Gorakshanatha, in Viveka Martanda, gives his view of samadhi: "Samadhi is the name of that state of phenomenal consciousness, in which there is the perfect realization of the absolute unity of the individual soul and the Universal Soul, and in which there is the perfect dissolution of all the mental processes. Just as a perfect union of salt and water is achieved through the process of yoga, so

when the mind or the phenomenal consciousness is absolutely unified or identified with the soul through the process of the deepest concentration, this is called the state of samadhi. When the individuality of the individual soul is absolutely merged in the self-luminous transcendent unity of the Absolute Spirit (Siva), and the phenomenal consciousness also is wholly dissolved in the Eternal, Infinite, Transcendent Consciousness, then perfect samarasattva (the essential unity of all existences) is realized, and this is called samadhi." Having achieved samarasattva (or samarasa), the yogi remains continually aware of the transcendent unity of God, even while being aware of the ordinary material world. This is the supreme achievement of the system. The school is noted for its concept of kaya siddhi, extreme physical longevity, and even the claim of immortality for some. Indeed, Gorakshanatha himself and many of his followers are considered to be alive today, carrying on their work from hidden places. The precise methods of this are not delineated in their texts, but are taught directly by the guru. Among the central scriptures are Hatha Yoga Pradipika by Svamarama, Gheranda Samhita, Siva Samhita, and Jnanamrita, which are among forty or so works attributed to Gorakshanatha or his followers. Most deal with hatha yoga. The Siddha Siddhanta theology embraces both transcendent Siva (being) and immanent Siva (becoming). Siva is efficient and material cause. Creation and final return of soul and cosmos to Siva are described as "bubbles arising and returning to water." Siddha Siddhanta accepts the advaitic experience of the advanced yogi while not denying the mixed experiences of oneness and twoness in ordinary realms of consciousness. Through the centuries, a large householder community has also arisen which emulates the renunciate ideals. Today there are perhaps 750,000 adherents of Siddha Siddhanta Saivism, who are often understood as Shaktas or advaita tantrics. In

truth, they range from street magicians and snake charmers, to established citizens, to advanced sadhus. The school fans out through India, but is most prominent in North India and Nepal. Devotees are called yogis, and stress is placed on world renunciation-even for householders. Over time and still today, the deeper theology has often been eclipsed by a dominant focus on kundalini-hatha yoga. Values and attitudes often hold followers apart from society. This sect is also most commonly known as Natha, the Goraksha Pantha and Siddha Yogi Sampradaya. Other names include Adinatha Sampradaya, Nathamatha and Siddhamarga. The word gorakh or goraksha means "cowherd." (The name Gorkha means an inhabitant of Nepal and is the same as Gurkha, the famous martial tribe of that country.)