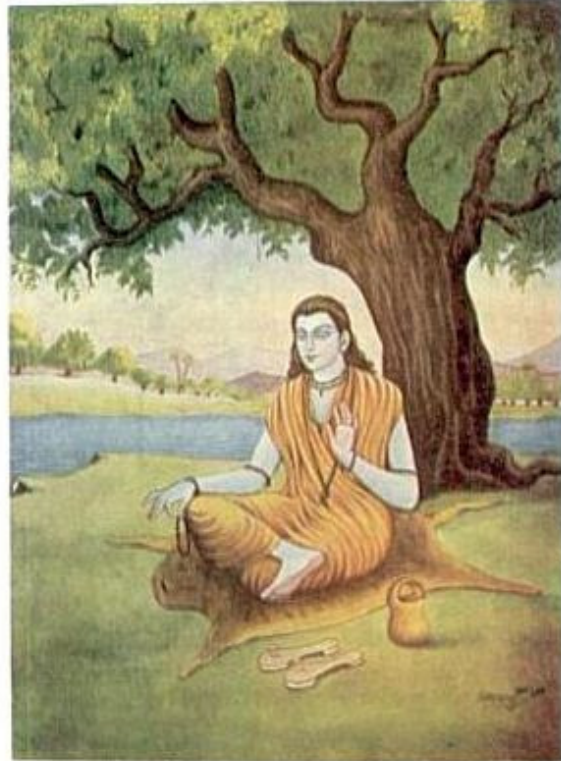


Navnath, the nine gurus, are famous in the tradition of the Nath sect. They are Matsyendra, Gorakh, Jalandhar, Kanif, Revan, Naag, Charpati, Bhartrihari and Gahani. Their first *Acharya*, Adinathji, was an *avatar* of Lord Shiva. Adinath's disciple was Matsyendra and his disciple was Gorakhnath. The Nath tradition and *siddha yogi* tradition owe their success to Gorakhnath. He surpassed his guru, was more popular and was an accomplished *siddha*.

It can be said that the period of Gorakhnath was around the first century of King Vikram's calendar. It is believed that he initiated Bhartrihari on the path of yoga and Bhartrihari came around the same period. Gorakhnath was born in the village of Jaysi near Ayodhya. Legend has it that Matsyendra Nath came to village Jaysi while on a tour. A childless Brahmin woman served and looked after him. The yogi gave her some *vibhuti* (divine ash) and asked her to eat it so that she could bear a child. The woman was suspicious and threw the *vibhuti* in a compost dump. Mastyendra Nath returned to the village after twelve years and inquired about the child. The Brahmin woman told him the truth. The guru went to the compost dump and said, "Come out, dear child." Suddenly, a dazzling twelve-year old boy emerged from the dump. The guru took the child with him and named him 'Goraksh' or 'Gorakh', because he grew up in cowdung.



Once Gorakhnath heard that Guru Matsyendra Nath has cast off the sadhu's clothes and was having a merry time with Queen Tilottama and her courtesans at the female-dominated kingdom of Kamarupa. He undertook an arduous trip to Kamarupa to seek the release of the guru and bring him back. In Kamarupa, Gorakhnath saw that the guru

was with the Queen. Gorakhnath started playing his *mridanga*. The *mridanga* sounded as though it was saying, *Chet Machhandar Gorakh aaya*, meaning, 'Watch out, Matsyendra; Gorakh is here.' The guru came to his senses, walked out of the harem and both started walking to the *ashram*. On the way back, the guru disappeared. Gorakhnath came back to the *ashram* and inquired from his fellow-disciples whether Gurudev had come there indeed. The disciples were surprised and said that the guru was indeed there and was in a deep *samadhi* since the last twelve years. Gorakhnath realised that his guru had played a trick on him to break his pride—the pride of being the saviour of his own guru. Gorakhnath apologised and Guru Matsyendra Nath declared him a *siddha*. "Go and spread the tradition of Nath *sampraday* throughout India," blessed the guru.

Gorakhnath took out his eyes and gave them to a Brahmin woman to buy *vada* for guru as food. He created rain in Nepal during a famine; gave wealth to a poor Brahmin; brought back to life the dead Min Nath, who was beaten to death; created a golden mountain; and drove away a farmer's ghost. These and several other tales of Guru Gorakhnath's miracles are widespread in India even today.

The people of Nepal believe Matsyendra Nath was an *avatar* of Avalokiteshwar and Gorakhnath was an *avatar* of Pashupatinath. The reigning deity of the kingdom of Nepal is Guru Matsyendra Nath. Name of Shri Gorakhnath is inscribed on the coins of Nepal. The Gorkha race came into being because they were disciples of Gorakhnath. One of the provinces of Nepal is called Gorakhnath. Innumerable *ashrams* of the Nath cult can be found in Nepal even today. Gorakhnath built Gorakhpur, where he performed *tapas*. The temple of Gorakshanathji is situated here and it is a renowned place of pilgrimage for Gorakhnath's followers. An *ashram* in Maharashtra is situated near Nagnath and the Gorakhmadi village is situated a little away from Prabhas Patan in Gujarat. The Nath cult was widespread in several places of India, including Uttar Pradesh, Madras and Rajasthan.

Yogic Way of Nath Panthi

The Nath cult leaves out the philosophical part of *Patanjali Yoga*. The followers try to purify the body through *hatha yoga* (fierce physical effort) and achieve *samadhi* through concentration. The aim is not to torture the body, but give up unrestrained bodily pursuits and achieve *moksha* through the body itself. The practice of awakening the *kundalini* and *khechari mudra* is widespread. They also practice *rasvidya*, the study of body juices, to increase physical vigour and gain victory over the five elements of the body. *Yogis* of Nath cult raise *alakh* and worship their God with this word. Many *yogis* of this cult have mastered unbelievable mystical achievements.

Works of Gorakhnath

He is believed to have written about eighty volumes in Sanskrit and Hindi including *Amanask*, *Avadhut Gita*, *Amaraudh Sashanam*, *Goraksh Paddhati*, *Goraksh Samhita*, *Goraksh Kalp*, *Yog Chintamani*, *Vivek Martand* and *Hathayoga*. From these works, it becomes evident that Gorakhnath gave a very distinct and systematic shape to the path of yoga.