

In Search of the Yogis/ Jogis of Gandhāra¹

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Abstract: Yogi presence in Gandhāra (literally ‘Lake land’, generally identified with the valley of Peshāwar) during the Mughal period (roughly 16th – 17th century) is well known from contemporary literary sources. There is credible archaeological evidence to show that the Yogis reached Peshawar long before the advent of the Mughal rule (CE 1526) in India. At present, however, they are conspicuous by their total absence. But just like other nations and communities such as the Indo-Greeks, Scythians, Parthians, Oḍis, Apracas, Kushans, Ephthalites, Turks, Hindu Shāhis, Loharas, Bhīls etc have all left their identifiable traces behind in Gandhāra, the Yogis likewise must also have left their relics behind. The great challenge before us at present is how to remove the dust of time accumulated in the course of centuries and bring them into the limelight in their pristine beauty. For this, our strategy is based upon the critical examination of some curious place names, the unfolding of myths built around some long graves by presenting accurate historical data, the re-examination of the peculiar Yogi burial practices in the light of actual finds, and the presence of *Śivaliṅgas* or undressed monolithic columns near some graves. We have purposely avoided, except for a brief general introduction, to delve into the intricacies of Yoga philosophy, for, it is out of the scope of this article.

Keywords: Yogi/Jogi, Gandhāra, Tilla Jogiān, Śiva, Gorakhnāth, Gorgaṭhṛi, *Śivaliṅga*, Aṣhāb Bābā, Kalābat, Khalābat, Choā Waṛcchā.

Introduction

Etymologically the word Yogi (also pronounced as Jogi) is connected with English word ‘yoke’ and Hindi ‘jog’ meaning ‘union’. Yogi in Sanskrit means ‘yoking, joining, attaching, harnessing’ (Monier-Williams 1970:856). Loosely translated it may also mean ‘spiritual discipline’ implying religious exercises such as breath control, simple meditation and the adoption of specific bodily postures aimed at bringing about spiritual purification and self-understanding leading to union with the ‘divine’. It is also the name of a distinct school of thought, which laid special stress upon psychic training as the chief means of salvation. The pivotal point of this philosophy is mainly the belief in the power of man over nature, which comes through the exercise of austerities and the occult influence of the will.

The basic text of this school is the *Yuga Sūtra* of Patañjali, a celebrated grammarian born at Gonarda in Central India, and most probably a contemporary of Pushyamitra who is said to have assassinated the last Mauryan emperor Brihadratha and founded the Śuṅga dynasty

(Majumdar 1980:90). The *Sūtras* in their present form, however, appear to be of a later date (Basham 1963:325).

The Yogis are fervent votaries of Śiva, a popular Hindu god, who appears to have evolved from the fierce Vedic god, Rudra, with merged elements of a non-Aryan fertility deity, the *Liṅga* (Basham, op.cit.). He wears a garland of skulls and is surrounded by ghosts and demons. He is death and destroys all things. He lives in the wilderness of the Mount Kailash on the highest peak and is himself a great Yogi; hence the patron deity of ascetics.

The Yogi Headquarters

The greatest headquarters of the Yogis was a monastery on the summit of the isolated peak called Tilla Jogiān, or just Tilla. In the Mughal period it came to be known as Koh Bālnāth. Some writers in the past gave this name to the entire Salt Range. The peak rises to a height of over 3200 ft and is situated some 25 miles west of Jhelum. The chief of this establishment lived in the village

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Naugirān just at the foot of the same hill and was called the *Pīr* (spiritual mentor). He was popular both among the Hindus and the Muslims of the neighbourhood. The old *jāgīr* held by the Yogis of the village of Naugirān is referred to in a *sanad* (certificate) of Akbar as an ancient grant. There are numerous other *sanads* of later kings relating to this *jāgīr* in possession of the Jogīs (Gaz. 1991:35).

Of the popular traditions regarding the Tilla there are plenty: Rāja Vikramāditya of Ujjain may be taken to be an historical personage, but the popular story connecting him with the Tilla has no foundation in history. The tradition states that his brother, Rāja Bharthri, resigned the throne to become a disciple of Gorakhnāth – the legendary founder of the monastery. One of the oldest *samādhis* on the hill is known as that of Rāja Bharthri. He is also said to have founded similar institution on the Koh Kirāṇa in Sargodha. Another tradition connects the Tilla with the folklore hero Pūran Bhagat, a son of Rāja Salwāhn of Sialkot. Whatever the value of these stories, the Tilla flourished till it was sacked by Aḥmad Shāh Durrāni about the year CE 1748 (Gaz. 1991:35).

No history of the Tilla that is believed to be one of the oldest religious institutions in Northern India (Ibbetson 1911:1, 289), was ever written or, at least, it has not survived. To find out the

real name of the founder *guru* (teacher) from the jumble of conflicting traditions, is an uphill task, though the most celebrated personage appears to be Gorakhnāth (literally the 'master who tended or guarded cows'). He was a *guru* and all the other branches of the monastery founded by him came to be known after his name. His fame would appear to have been eclipsed in the Mughal times by one of his disciples, Bālnāth, but his name could not be completely effaced from the memory and continued to live long afterwards.

The Jogīs do not marry, nor wear the sacred thread and scalp-lock, but wear ropes of black wool, and many of them have their ear-lobes pierced (hence called *Kānphaṭā*) for wearing large rings of coarse glass or wood; those who do not, are called *Augar*. They do not abstain from flesh and spirits and, unlike the other Hindus, bury their dead in a sitting position (Gaz. 1994:81). Nearby the grave was installed a monolith which in some cases resembles the *Śivaliṅga*. At the southernmost terminal point of the Salt Range, near the village Choā Warchhā there still exist graves having the *liṅga* headstone (Fig. 1). These are now fast disappearing. In the Salt Range again there are several long graves, but nobody knows who is buried in them.

Om adītyasya (dī) nia...
(ādītyasya nia...)
Trans. Auspicious of Aditya



Figure 1. Headstone from Choā Warchhā (Photograph courtesy: Dr. M. Salim)

Dating Problem

When was the Tilla monastery established, there is no definite answer? Cunningham (1990:139) believed that the name Bālnāth was not only older than Gorakhnāth, it was most probably even older than the time of Alexander. In his view, the original form of this name was Fīlnāth² (meaning lord of elephant). Concluding his argument, he writes ‘The Hill of the Sun is only a literal translation of *Bālnāth-ka-Tīla*, but Plutarch goes on saying that it was afterwards called the Hill of the Elephant’. All this is mere conjecture, which does not inspire confidence. In another place (see Jaffar 1945: 84), however, he is somewhat rational and dates the Jogīs to the 15th century CE. According to Ibbetson (2007: 1, 289), Guru Gorakhnāth settled at Tilla in the *Tretāyuga*³ after Ramchandra and adopted Bālnāth as his disciple. *The Gazetteer of Shahpur District* (1994: 81) records that ‘Gorakhnāth is said to have lived 1800 years ago’. The above information will help us in tracing and identifying the relics left behind by the Yogis in Gandhāra.

Relics of the Yogis in Gandhāra

With the almost complete exodus of earlier inhabitants (mainly Dilazāks and Shalmānis) from the plains of Peshāwar (Gandhāra) early in the 16th century, caused by the Pushtūn / Pakhtūn blitz, spearheaded first by the Yūsufzais and allied tribes (about CE 1525) to the north of the Kābul river (also called Landae), and then a little later (between 1530 and 1545) by the Ghorias Khel with the active support of the ruler of Kābul, Mirzā Kāmran, no memory of the once prolific existence of the Gorakhnāthi Jogīs, could be expected to have survived; although it is distinctly visible in the name Gorgaṭhri (correctly Gorakh Kaṭri meaning Gorakh’s Enclosure) – an ancient site of great archaeological importance situated within the city at a short distance to the east of the famous Chowk Yādgār (Hastings’ Memorial) and Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower) in the Bāzār-i Kalān (the Great Street) almost at its eastern end.

1. Gorgaṭhri

The name Gorgaṭhri, as it is presently pronounced,

is first mentioned by Babur (1986: 230, 394) in his autobiography and is written as ‘Gūr-Khattri’; *Akbarnāma* (Beveridge 1939: 111, 528) has ‘Kūr Khattri’; *Tuzuk-i Jahāngīrī* (Rogers 1978: 102) ‘Ghorkhattri’; Gopal Das (1874: 153) ‘Gorakh hatri’; S.M. Jaffar (1945: 74-87) ‘Kor Khattri’; A.H. Dani (1969: 171-73) ‘Gor Khuttree’; and Ibbetson (2007: 1, 679) ‘Gorakh hatri’.

Different meanings such as ‘grain merchant’s house’ (Jarret in Beveridge), ‘Gorakh’s shop’ (Gopal Das), ‘Baniyā’s House’ (Cunningham 1990: 68), ‘Shrine of Hindus’ and ‘place of Hindu worship and residence’ (Jaffar) owe entirely to incorrect etymological derivations. Gorgaṭhri is, in fact, a composite name comprising Gorakh and Kaṭri. The initial letter of the second part (k) is merged into the last letter (kh) of the first part because they cannot be pronounced separately unless one decides to give a gap between them. The first part, Gorakh, is easily understood. It is a Prākṛit form of the Sanskrit Goraksh or Gorakshī meaning tending or guarding cattle, particularly cows (Monier-Williams 1970: 366). It is obvious that here it stands for the personal name of an individual.

The second part ‘Kaṭri’ is a diminutive form of Kaṭra meaning ‘enclosure’ in the Hindko language of Peshāwar. It appears that Kaṭra is the Hindko form of the Persian word ‘Kada’, evidenced in the names ‘Ātishkada’ (enclosure or house of fire) and ‘Butkada’ (house of images), pronounced in Swat as Butkaṛa. Babur’s reference to Gorgaṭhri as ‘a smallish abode’ is precisely what Kaṭri (a small enclosure) implies.

Gopal Das (1874: 142-44) tells us that there were several Kaṭras in Peshāwar, and that wealthy merchants used them as ware-houses for storing merchandize, for the simple reason that each Kaṭra employed guards for keeping watch and ward. Some of the Kaṭras had double storey buildings and offered lodging facilities to travellers. Of these, Kaṭra Bazzāzān (Enclosure of cloth merchants) was square, and Kaṭra Abresham Garān (enclosure of the silk dealers) was octagonal in plan. An ancient *Sarai* (inn) facing Masjid Mahābat Khān is still known as Kaṭra Mahābat Khān (Shah 2000).

Babur’s curiosity to see how the majestic tree

of Peshāwar and the Gogaṭhri of the Jogīs looked like was boundless. He wanted to visit them at the earliest possible opportunity. In CE 1505 (Beveridge 1987: 230) when he was on the way to Bigrām (Peshāwar), the opportunity presented itself and he took full advantage of it. As soon as he reached Jamrūd, where the army encamped for the night, he himself took a guide and rode out for Bigrām where he saw the great tree, but his guide, thinking perhaps that the Gorgaṭhri, an untidy home of some shabby Jogīs, was not worth the visit of an emperor, avoided to show him the place.

The next opportunity came up in CE 1519 when, on his way back to Kābul, he reached Bigrām and visited Gorgaṭhri (Beveridge 1987: 394). 'This is a smallish abode', he writes 'after the fashion of a hermitage, rather confined and dark. After entering at the door and getting down a few steps, one must lie full length to get beyond. There is no getting in without a lamp. All round near the building there is let lie an enormous quantity of hair of the head and beard which men have shaved off there. There are a great many retreats (*hujra*) near Gūr-Khathri like those of a rest house or college'. At an earlier visit to Peshāwar, he concludes 'we regretted at not being able to see this place, but it does not seem a place to regret not seeing'. Whatever the feelings of Babur, his visit to the place shows that the Jogis had already established themselves at Gorgaṭhri and that their reputation had spread far and wide to inspire his fondness while he was still in Kābul.

Gorgaṭhri is next mentioned by Khwājū (see Raverty 1976: 227) who says that after the defeat of the Ghorias Khel at Shaikh Tapūr (between CE 1530 and 1545), Khān Kaju pursued them hot in the heels and that during this pursuit a tent was pitched for him at a mound at 'Gol Katlae' (Gorgaṭhri). Khwājū does not mention the Jogīs but they must have been there.

The Jogīs continued to attract Mughal emperors for a long time. Babur's grandson, Akbar (1556-1605), is also known to have met the Jogīs of Gorgaṭhri and to have distributed presents amongst them. Akbar's highly talented historian, Abu al-Faḍl, says that 'within the Kūrkhattri there is a cave in the midst of which

is the way to the secret chamber of the saints of old times' and that 'it was the prayer-spot of the great ones of God' (Beveridge 1939: 528, 855). Akbar's son Jahāngīr (1605-1627) likewise visited Gorgaṭhri, in CE 1607, expecting to obtain grace from the *faqīrs* (Jogī) of that place. But he was greatly disappointed to see there 'a herd (or small fraternity of Jogīs) without any religious knowledge' (Rogers 1978: 1, 102), 'the sight of whom filled my heart with nothing but regret'. Jahāngīr's critical remarks regarding the Jogi community of Gorgaṭhri clearly indicate that it was on the decline and had passed the time of its greatest strength.

Shāh Jahān (1628-58) neither mentions Gorgaṭhri nor Jogīs. He is said to have built a tank to collect the water of a natural spring at Gorakh Tibbi in the vicinity of Peshāwar to its west (Jaffar 1945: 82). Was this Gorakh of the Tibbi (meaning a little mound) the same as his namesake, the legendary founder of the Tilla monastery, is hard to say. But on the face of it, no chronological relationship between the two can be visualized. The story invented to explain this name (as recorded by Gopal Das and Jaffar) relates that a certain Hindu Jogi, named Gorakh, came from India and settled at the site of the ruined mosque during the Sikh period and built a house for himself, but being oppressed by the Muslims, he plunged into the well which already existed there and emerged at Gorakh Tibbi, hence this name. But the story loses all charm when we know that during the tenure of Avitabile (1838-42), the notorious Sikh governor, Gorgaṭhri was transformed into a governor house which also housed several government departments leaving no room for the house of a Jogi. Even the Jāmi' Masjid, the only public outfit, which attracted Muslims of the neighbourhood, was pulled down to stop the entry of unofficial persons. Thus, Gorakh of the Gorakh Tibbi, whatever his personal name, was merely a Gorakhnāthi⁴ of the Gorgaṭhri community.

During the reign of Shāh Jahān, Gorgaṭhri underwent a fundamental change. The number of the Jogīs was already fast dwindling in the preceding reign, as noted above and the site was perhaps abandoned for ever sometime in the reign

of Shāh Jahān. In this derelict condition, the site would seem to have caught the attention of Jahān Ārā Begam, the eldest daughter of Shāh Jahān, who built a caravan sarai upon it in CE 1640. The ancient name of the site was changed. Henceforth it came to be known as Sarai Jahānābād, Sarai Du Dar (two entrances) and finally Tehsīl, when, during the British period, it became Tehsīl headquarters.

If no buildings of public interest were allowed to be built within the perimeter wall of Gorgaṭhri during the Sikh period for security reasons, when were the temples which still exist built? Raverty who visited Peshāwar in 1850 describes 'Gorkhuttree' in some detail and mentions a 'jogee' or hermit who took up his residence close to the well (Raverty 1852; see also Dani 1969: 172) but makes no mention of any kind of a temple. 'Gorakh+haṭhri' is next mentioned by Gopal Das whose *Tārīkh-i Peshāwar* was in the process of compilation in 1871⁵. He is more accurate in fixing the spot where the Indian saint built a house. It is the same site, he tells us, where in former days stood a mosque. But, just like Raverty (1852), he says nothing about the existence of a temple. From this, we can safely conclude that the Śiva temple mentioned by subsequent writers did not exist before 1871; it could have been built any time after this date.⁶

We owe a great debt of gratitude to S.M. Jaffar for being the only one who had the leisure of visiting the temples and recording his own observations before they were plundered soon after 1947, when a vast majority of the Hindus migrated to India. Throwing light on the temples, not found in any other source, he observes:

'Though the hermits' dark cells and underground galleries are no longer in existence either on or about the site, it still wears a Brahmanical appearance. This is evident from the two miniature temples, one of which is of Shiva and the other of Bheroji. These two temples stand near the western gateway a little to the south. The Shiva temple has a *lingam* or phallus of red marble, fixed in the middle of the floor, and some idols, representing Brahmanical deities, fixed in the walls. The temple of Bheroji

has idols of Brahma, Shiva, Ganesha and *Guru Gorakhnath* fixed in its walls, but it is conspicuous by the absence of the *lingam*. A little to the south of these temples is a small room which has, within it, a raised platform (*Gaddi*) where the *Guru*, it is said, used to sit and worship. Within the same enclosure is a big ancient well which has on its upper edge two tiny foot-prints of white marble. These foot-prints are popularly believed to be those of *Guru Gorakhnath*'... (Jaffar 1945: 81-82)

The occupational profile of Gorgaṭhri exposed by the excavations of 1992-93 and 1995-96 (see Durrani, F *et al.* 1997: 199) in which each occupational level was identified by the discovery of coins, shows a wide gap, extending almost over 335 years, marked by the coins of Muḥammad b. Sām (1193-1205) on the one end and those of Sher Shāh Sūri (1540-1545) on the other. No coin of the Khiljis, Tughlaqs, Sayyids and Lodhis came to light. This may partly be due to the limited area brought under investigations and also to the inconclusive nature of the work. But it seems to be certain that it was probably sometime during this period, when the site was left unoccupied, that the Jogīs moved in and established their seat at Gorgaṭhri. Why did Gorakhnāth, if at all he himself came to lay the foundation of a new branch, select this site in the centre of the city – a circumstance which went against the general aptitude of the Jogīs who loved solitude rather than hustle and bustle of a city? It seems that the sanctity of the site had already been established for housing a religious establishment in the past. This might have helped Gorakhnāth to decide in favour of Gorgaṭhri. What kind of a religious centre, of which the name is not recorded anywhere, was there in the past is not known for certain, though the name Peshāwar, recorded by al-Birūni as Purushavar, among other variants, has a definite clue which may resolve this mystery. Purushavara was also the name of the god Vishṇu (Monier Williams 1970: 637). It seems that Gorgaṭhri, previous to the arrival of the Jogīs contained an enclosure, which became famous for the worship of Vishṇu. This Vishṇu shrine, it seems, deteriorated with the lapse of time but the name Purushavara persisted to become the name of the town that grew around it.

2. The Laka Tīgah

The most distinctive feature of the grave of a Jogi is an undressed free-standing monolithic column often more than the height of a person fixed anywhere near it. In Pushto it is called Laka Tīgah and in Hindko Khalābat of which the softened Pushto form is Kalābat. 'Khalā' is a variant of Kharā meaning 'standing' and 'bat', a variant of *baṭṭa* or *vaṭṭa* (etymologically the same as the English word 'weight') means 'stone'.

Both Khalābat (in Hazāra) and Kalābat (in Swābi), particularly the former, have now grown into sizeable towns. At the beginning, each of these towns was founded near a Laka Tīgāh simply to benefit from the multitudinous favours of the Bābā buried nearby. We have noted above that such stones (*Laka Tīgāhs*) were given the shape of a 'Śivaliṅga' in the Choā Warcchā cemetery.

Khwāju (1977: 105) refers to a Laka Tīgah in Bajaur at the place from where Malik Haibu, chief of the 'Umar Khel Dilazāks, moved to confront the Yūsufzais and their allies who had gathered to dislodge him from the Jandūl valley. Nearer at home a Laka Tīgah still stands near Gadar across the *Khwar* (seasonal stream), in a small graveyard, which occupies an ancient mound where copper coins of the late Kushan period often come to light during rain when top soil gets washed away. A small hamlet of peasants has just come up nearby. It was at this place that the Dilazāks suffered defeat in about CE 1525 at the hands of Malik Aḥmad and his allies. At Sāwaldher, Mr. Garrick, an officer of the Archaeological Survey of India, found an 'inscribed obelisk' used as a headstone in a graveyard which covered part of the ruins of an ancient fort (*ASIAR* 2000: 117). This he transported to Lahore but unfortunately 'it is no longer traceable'. At Allahdher near Jahāngīra (district Swabi), he found two 'pillars' lying on the ground. One of these measured 21ft 2 inches and the other 13ft 9 inches in height. He expected to find an inscription upon them but having found none, he took them for parts of a gateway. But their unequal height suggests that they were used for some other purpose. They were most probably Laka Tīgahs of some Jogi graves.

The most convincing proof that the graves marked by monolithic columns actually belonged

to the Gorakhnāthi Jogīs was found by Gopal Das (1874: 237) at Jagannāth Dheri north of the village Yār Husain (district Swabi), though he could not understand the real significance of the evidence he had found. In the vicinity of Yār Husain, he says, is a mound where several large stones are lying on the ground and when the ground near them is excavated human skeletons in sitting position come to light. We have noted above that the Jogīs were buried in sitting position⁷

Near the village Asoṭā is a large circle of 'standing stone' generally assigned to the Megalithic Age. But this interpretation is based merely upon the great size of the stones, not upon any scientific probe. Even the implication of the name Asoṭā (correctly Aśva+vaṭa meaning 'horse stone') has not been properly understood. A proper investigation of the site may yield different results.

3. Orientation

The Jogīs followed no rigid practice of orienting the graves from north to south (as the Muslims do) or from East to West. Representing the latter practice two graves still exist. One of these can be seen near the Government College in the historic cemetery of Charsadda. This has recently been rebuilt in conformity with the Muslim practice. But its old Pushto name which may be translated as 'the East-West Bābā' still persists and helps us in determining the true nature of this grave. The other is the well-known grave of Aṣṣhāb Bābā near Chagharmatti (see below).

4. The Bābās

Bābā is literally synonymous with the English word Papa, meaning 'father', but it is also used for an old man. Just like the Buddhist Kāśyapas, some of the Bābās commanded great respect, particularly after their death, among the Pakhtūns of the Peshāwar valley. The grave of a Bābā is called '*ziyārat*' or sacred shrine and is habitually visited by all classes and both sexes. At these places the devotees, in the full belief of a sure hearing, implore forgiveness and unburden their hearts of all manner of secret desires beseeching favours. The wayfarer never passes a grave

without slowing down his speed and offering *fāteḥa* normally comprising a few words such as *Khudā-e de obakhā* (may God forgive you). The superstition attached to such shrines is boundless.

There are different categories of the Bābās differentiated on the basis of the length of a grave. If the grave is 9 yards (27ft) in length, the Bābā buried there is called ‘Nau Gazā’ (9 yarder); graves measuring 20 yards (60ft) and 40 yards (120ft) have ‘Shal Gazā’ and ‘Chihl Gazā’ Bābās respectively. In conclusion, the evidence of Gadar, Jagannāth Dheri and Choā Waṛcchā detailed above shows that these Bābās were no other than Gorakhnāthi Jogīs. At Choā Waṛcchā and Gadar the headstone in each case is to the north of the grave.

5. Cases of Misappropriation

Two cases of misappropriation of the Bābā graves are known so far. These are as follows:

1. **Aṣḥāb Bābā.** This shrine contains a long grave in which, as the present care takers allege, are buried Sinān b. Salma (a *Ṣahābi* or Companion of the Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH) and his soldiers who fought against the Buddhist army of Gandhāra and fell in the battle. But history tells us that Gandhāra was in fact too far away from the field of Sinān’s operations. When he was treacherously martyred by the enemy, he was passing through Budhia – a district lying between Sibi and the river Indus – in modern Sindh province (see *Chachnama* 1963: 108), in between CE 670 and 676. It can be seen that this is a case of outright misappropriation of a Jogi burial (see Rahman 2019).
2. **Turangzai Bābā.** In the Turangzai village near the roadside is a long grave assigned to Zaid b. Thābit al-Anṣārī by the local community. Zaid b. Thābit was no doubt a distinguished companion of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). He worked as the head of various departments such as Justice, Revenue, *Bait al-Māl* (Treasury) etc. and at various occasions was left in charge of Madīnah when the Prophet (PBUH)

or Ḥazrat ‘Umar had to go out of the capital. He collected loose pages of the Qurān under instructions of the Khalifah Abū Bakr. He was certainly an educated person and used to read Jewish books for the Prophet (PBUH). Ibn al-Athīr (1979: 111, 452) writes that he died in the Hijri year 45 / 665 CE or, as some people say, in the year 55/ 674-75 CE. The place of his death is not known but it is quite certain that he never came anywhere near Turangzai during his life. This appears to be another case of gross misappropriation of the grave of a Jogi.

Conclusions

Except for a few brief notices of Mughal emperors, nothing is known about the Yogis/Jogis of Gandhāra. Even the term Yogi is unknown on the country side, and, if per chance you ask somebody to take you to an ancient Yogi site, you will surely get the answer that there are no Yogis at present, but in good old days there did exist wonderful *Bābās* (elders) who, believe it or not, measured 9, 20 and 40 yards in height and whose burials still exist and even in these degenerate times people visit their shrines and receive favours and blessings. These *Bābās* are also known as *zbergs* (a corrupted form of the Persian word *Buzurg* meaning ‘great, grown up, elder, an honourable old man’).

Some of the Bābās, as we came to know during our investigations, are genuinely Muslim, as their pedigree is known by their devotees. But there are several others who still remain unclaimed and nobody knows who is buried in such bābā graves. A very useful and reliable clue, which helped in undoing this knotty problem was found in a small graveyard perched upon an ancient mound. The graveyard belongs to a small hamlet that has recently grown up in its vicinity. It is called Laka Tīgah and is located near the town Gadar (in Swābi district). It is known as such because of the monolithic headstone of a grave which stands prominently in the graveyard. In Pushto, this headstone, which stands to the north side of a long grave, is called Laka Tīgah (standing stone). It can be seen that it is because of the existence of

such a headstone that the hamlet also came to be known as such. Such monolithic columns and also others in the shape of *Śivaliṅgas* are abundantly known from Choā Warcchā (Figs. 2, 3). this led to the discovery of other Yogi burials. The significant features of the data collected during the survey are as follows:

1. The Yogis did not practise cremation and buried their dead in sitting position as found at Jagannāth Dheri. There is a story in the Yogi lore which explains this peculiar practice.
2. Of these headstones, only two were found *in situ*. The one found at Gadar, just mentioned above, bears no inscription. The other was found by Mr. Garrick (1881-82) at Sāwaldher. It showed an inscription, most probably in Śāradā letters, but unfortunately the headstone is no longer traceable.
3. Several other monoliths fallen flat on the ground are reported mainly from Jagannāth and Allahdher sites. The so-called Asoṭa 'megaliths', not so far properly investigated, may also, presumably mark a similar site.
4. The Choā Warcchā headstone bears a Śāradā inscription (Fig. 1)
5. In Hindko, the dialect spoken in Peshāwar and Hazāra, such a headstone is called

Khaṛāwaṭṭa (standing stone) generally pronounced as Khalābat. The Pushto form of Khalābat is Kalābat.

6. At present Khalābat (Hazāra) and Kalābat (Swābi) are the names of two towns. It is reasonable to say that these towns mark the sites of two 'standing stones'.
7. In two cases, the Yogi graves show east to west orientation.
8. Some Yogi graves have been misappropriated by Muslims. Two such important cases have been discussed above.
9. The name Gorgaṭṭri, the main headquarters of Yogis in Peshāwar, is a corrupted form of Gorakh Kaṭṭri (Gorakh's enclosure). The Yogis arrived at this site, as the evidence at our hands at present shows, sometime in the period 1193 to 1540.
10. The earliest foundation of the Śiva temple in Gorgaṭṭri needs to be understood in its historical context. Any date based merely upon traces of sculptural remains may only be conjectural in nature which do not inspire the confidence of serious researcher (see also Note 6. --- Editor).
11. S.M. Jaffar, a former director of the Peshawar Museum, visited Gorgaṭṭri in 1946 and saw two temples, one of which

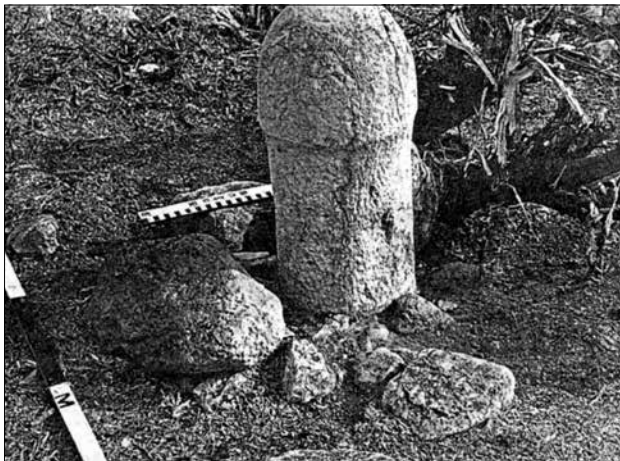


Figure 2. Warccha, *liṅgam*
(Photograph courtesy of Dr. M. Salim)



Figure 3. Warccha, broken *liṅgam*
(Photograph courtesy of Dr. M. Salim)

belonged to Śiva and other to Bheroji. He saw a *liṅga* fixed in the floor of the Śiva temple and 'some idols representing Brahmanical deities fixed in the walls. The temple of Bheroji has idols of Brahma, Śiva, Ganesh and Guru Gorakhnāth'. The present writer visited these temples in 1962 as a student of M.A. Archaeology and could only see the *liṅga*. The rest of the images had disappeared by that time.

Notes

1. The present writer is thankful to Professor M. Farooq Swati, the then Chairman of the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, for allocating funds for a survey of Yogi/Jogi sites in Gandhāra. My thanks are also due to Mr. Muhammad Naeem Bacha (draughtsman), (late) Asad Ali (photographer) and Raj Wali (driver) for accompanying me during the survey.
2. It is a strange combination of Persian and Sanskrit. *Fīl* (elephant) is Persian (Naqvi 1994:745) and *nāth* (lord, owner, patron) is Sanskrit (Monier-Williams 1970:534).
3. Each *mahāyuga* is divided into four *yugas* or ages, called Kṛta, Tretā, Ovāpara and Kāli. We are at present in the Kāli-yuga, which began in 310 BCE (see Basham 1963: 321)
4. A Jogi following the way of Gorakhnāth.
5. This date is mentioned by Gopal Das himself in his *Tārīkh-i Peshāwar* (p. 163).
6. For an earlier date of the temple construction (i.e. 1823-30), see Shah 2013a,b. --- Ed.
7. To explain this unusual position the Jogīs have concocted a story. Once upon a time, as the story goes, a Jogi came face to face with a Muslim and exclaimed 'what are you doing here'. To this the Muslim retorted 'This is my land, I have conquered it'. 'If it is so and the land is your then come along we shall decide right now to whom the land belongs'. Saying this he pointed to the earth which split up at once resulting in the formation of a ditch. The Jogi jumped into it and made himself

comfortable in sitting position. Then he told the Muslim to follow suit and do the same, but he refused. On his refusal the earth moved again and filled up the ditch. The sitting Jogi thus got buried. Henceforth, the Jogīs says it became a practice to bury the dead Jogīs in sitting position.

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