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Introduction

Datta Cult, its Past, Present & Future

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Datta Cult, its Past, Present & Future

Dattātreya is the renowned Lord of Yogīs. His birth name is Datta. His father’s name is Atri\(^1\) and His mother’s name is Anasūyā. His physical form as observed in almost pictures, images, idols and even innumerable books on the Datta cult, places Dattātreya in the category of the Trinity of gods viz. Brahmā (the Creator), Viṣṇu (the Sustainer) and Rudra (the Destroyer) connected closely with the origin, sustenance and destruction of the Universe or the Cosmos (विश्व or ब्रह्माण्ड). Most of the western scholars like Hastings James\(^2\) and the Indian scholars like Joshi Hariprasad S.\(^3\) and Tripathi Gayacharan\(^4\) have tried to connect the three faced Dattātreya\(^5\) to the concept of Trinity (त्रिमूर्ति:) of not only the Vedic Literature but also with the Greek Pantheon.

Such efforts are not weightier than the ancient records of the Ṛgveda where the whole 05\(^{th}\) Book (पञ्चममण्डलम:) is ascribed to the

\(^{1}\) अन्तःपत्य पुमान्। on the strength of Pāṇini’ rule 04/01/122

\(^{2}\) Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XII, Edinburg, 1921.

\(^{3}\) Origin and Development of Dattātreya Worship in India, Oriental Institute, M.S. University of Baroda, 1965.

\(^{4}\) Vaidic Devata (Hindi), Bharatiya Vidya Prakashan, Delhi-Varanasi, 1982.

\(^{5}\) व्यापकत्वात् व्यास्यो जंतितो भास्मिनेति। ॥ ५/१० ॥
family of seer Atri.\textsuperscript{6} It is fact that the Trinity called Dattātreya is though presented mythologically in the Purāṇas,\textsuperscript{7} it has a clear presentation of the spiritual traits and philosophical background. The secret of the three faces and six hands\textsuperscript{8} but one body (not even six 0feet) lies in the clear understanding that Dattātreya’s spiritual teachings function in three ways\textsuperscript{9} and the six hands comply with the individual face in the order.

The terrestrial (पृथ्वि स्थानीय) deities of the Ṛgveda come to be known as Vasus in the Brāhmaṇa texts, the atmospheric (अन्तरिक्ष स्थानीय) deities of the Ṛgveda come to be known as Rudras in the Brāhmaṇa texts and the celestial (चुं स्थानीय) deities of the Ṛgveda come to be known as Ādityas in the Brāhmaṇa texts. These three were later on attained the oneness or single form in the Purāṇas i.e. Brahmā (the Creator) from 08 Vasus, Viṣṇu (the Sustainer) from 12 Ādityas and Maheśa (the Destroyer) from 11 Rudras. This speculation is difficult to be grasped and accepted by the common people rather by any devotee of Indian religion.

\textsuperscript{6} It contains 87 hymn and 727 verses in total.
\textsuperscript{7} Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa Ch. 16.
\textsuperscript{8} सभ्यकुणिडदमरुच्छुल् श्रव्यक्राहरो ब्रह्मल। ५/१०।।
माता बभुम्बलुः करपपुपुरः मधस्मुपाणियुग्यले डमसतित्तुले।
सत्यतं उद्धवं कर्योः शुभरंशुचक्रके बन्दे तमतित्तरं भुजपद्युक्तम्।।
\textsuperscript{9} गुरुः गुरुविष्णुगुरुदेवो महेश्वरः।
\textsuperscript{9} गुरु: साधुत् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरुवे नमः।।
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Some of the scholars like Joshi H. S.\(^\text{10}\) have also attempted to link the concept of Dattātreya being the Trinity of gods with the Ṛgvedic Fire-god, having the three heads\(^\text{11}\) but it does not hold water because of similar narration regarding the divine river Gaṅgā cut by Lord Śiva in three parts in three forms or currents \textit{viz.} Mandākinī in the Heaven, Bhāgīrathī on the Earth and Bhogāvatī in the Netherlands (पाताल).

The major Upaniṣḍs\(^\text{12}\) deal with the Creation, the Sustenance and the Destruction, sometimes including Merging of the Universe as the functions of the Supreme Reality called Brahman, though it is not clear whether the reality (mentioned in these Upaniṣḍs) is Attributive (समूण) or Embodied (साकार). These are 08 Upaniṣḍs revealing Dattātreya as the Holy Master who imparts the spiritual knowledge and adequate practice to the aspirant. These minor Upaniṣḍs are:

(01) \textit{Avadhūtopaniṣḍ} (अवधूतोपनिषद) belongs to the Black Yajurveda. It contains 32 verses (including some prose texts) in the dialogue form of Sāṅkṛti and Dattātreya. The Upaniṣḍ forms the answers of the questions regarding the identity, conduct, marks (or signs) (लक्ष्म) and worldly behaviour. It presents the derivation of word \textit{Avadhūta} by splitting the syllable अ for immutability (अक्षर:) व

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\(^{10}\) Origin and Development of Dattātreya Worship in India. P. 05

\(^{11}\) त्रिमूष्यनि सङ्कमितः।।

\(^{12}\) ऐस-केन-कठ-प्रशन-मुण्ड-माण्डल-तितिरिः।।

ऐतेऽये च छान्दोग्य वृहदारण्यकः तथा।। मुक्तिकोपिनिदो ०१/३०।।
for worthy of choice (वरेण्यः), धू for saking off the worldly bondages (धूतसंसारबन्धनः). त for having the goal of oneness with the Brahman (तत्त्वमस्यादित्यक्षः).\(^{13}\) Further same term is elaborated describing Avadhūta’s behaviour, rapport with the public or with monks, method of meditation and living style. It also presents Avadhūta’s way of thinking. The text incorporates Upaniṣadic prose text (न कर्मणा न प्रज्ञा धनेन म्यागेनक अमृत्तमामः), Māṇḍūkya-kārikā (न निरोशो न चोथ्यतिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः। न मुमुद्धृत्व वै मुक्त इत्येषा परमात्माता॥ माण्डूक्यकारिका ०२/३२॥) and also the verses from BG 02/70 (अपूर्व्यमायमचलप्रतिष्ठ समुद्रमापः प्रविश्नति यददृत॥ तदद्वक्षा यथ प्रविश्नति सर्वेऽस स शान्तिमापनोति न कामकामी॥).

(02) Bhikṣukopaniṣad (भिक्षुकोपनिषद्) belongs to the White Yajurveda. It contains only one prose texts. It discusses the conduct of 04 type of monks called (01) House dwellers (कुटीचकः), (02) Wanderers (बहुदकः) moving around with staff and the begging bowl (कमङ्गलः), (03) Hanisas (हंसः) staying in a village, a town or a holy place for a limited time for a day, five or seven days and (04) Paramahamsas (परमहंसः) who are 08 like Samvartaka, Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Jadabharata, Dattātreya, Śuka, Vāmadeva and Hārītaka.

\(^{13}\) अशोकवार्त्तयुपस्य-वायुप्तसंसारवन्धनः।
तत्त्वमस्यादित्यक्ष्यादवघृत इत्यतः॥ अ. उ. ०१॥
Moreover their way of life like dwelling, dressing, begging food, etc. is never fixed, yet they enjoy the trans (समाधि:).

(03) Dattātreyopaniṣḍ (दत्तात्रेयोपनिषद्) belonging to the Atharvaveda contains 03 sections (खण्ड:) of 01 prose text each. The first section deals with Brahmā’s question about the Supreme Person to which Nārāyaṇa replys that the sacred syllable द्रं is His Abode (नारायणधाम) and also Nyās, etc. of Dattātreya’s sacred formula. The second section presents Dattātreya’s sacred prose formula well known as Dattamālāmāṇtra. And the third section bespeaks of repeating the sacred prose formula.

The Dattātreyopaniṣḍ identifies Dattātreya as the Supreme Abode (नारायणधाम) which probably indicates that Dattātreya is the incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. Dattātreyopaniṣḍ presents Dattātreya’s characteristics. He is pleased with just by remembrance, removes great fears, bestows Supreme Knowledge, is pure consciousness, is dressed like a child or a mad or a goblin, a great Yogī, a monk abandoning everything, the son of Anasūyā and sage Atri, bestower

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14 The followers of H.H. Rāṅga Avadhūta in Gujarata offer oblation in the fire with the repetition of this Dattamālāmāṇtra in Dattasvāhākāra sacrifice.

15 This Upaniṣḍ does not include 03 formulas (01) Rv 01/22/17, Yv 05/15, Sv 1669 इदं विषुविचक्रमेः (02) Rv 01/22/18, Yv 34/43, Sv 1670 त्रिषणपदा विचक्रमेः and (03) Rv 01/22/20, Yv 06/05, Sv 1672 तद विषणोः.

16 These characteristics are in Dative because they are governed by the position नमः (salutation or obeisance) as per the rule of the Sanskrit Grammar नमः स्वस्ति स्वाहाः etc. (Pāṇini 02/03/16)
of desired objects, releaser from the bonds of the Worldly Existence, bestower of all riches, procurer of the exalted sages, the agitator of all dormant minds and is the long-lived one. Dattātreyas’s functions are also presented. He subdues and also attracts all. He destroys, agitates, stops and kills the enemies. He prospers and nourishes the devotees. He turns down the evil activities of the impious persons, avoids the effects of malignant planets (or stars) and removes issues as well as miseries and poverty.

Thus the Dattātreyopaniṣād reveals Dattātreyas as the embodied form of Lord Viṣṇu protecting the devotees and destroying the wicked person.

(04) Jābālādarśanopaniṣād (जाबालदर्शनोपनिषद्) belongs to the Sāmaveda. It contains 224 verses in 10 section (खण्डः). The Upaniṣad commences with the introduction of Dattātreyas as Mahāviṣṇu. Sāṅkṛti asks question to Dattātreyas about the Yoga of 08 steps which are defined and explained. It incorporates the topic like 06 Centres of vein (नाडिचक्राणि), the practice of their purification (rather cleaning) the major veins in the body, withdrawal of senses, followed by other steps of the Yoga in the section 04-10.

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17 From here Dattātreyas’s characteristics are presented having the sense of His 11 sacred syllables with नम्: and स्वाहा.

18 परिज्ञानाय साधृतं विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम्।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे।गीता ०४/०८।
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The Upaniṣḍ ends with Śāṅkṛti experiencing Liberation after the practising the path of Yoga instructed by Dattātreya.

(05) Jābālopaniṣḍ (जाबालोपनिषद्) belonging to the Atharvaveda contains 06 sections (खण्डः) of 01 prose text each. The first section discusses about the Kurukṣetra in the speech of Yājñavalkya and Atri as well as the second chapter is the reply of Atri about the knowledge of the Self. The third section talks about Yājñavalkya’s reply to the students (or disciples) (ब्रह्मचारिणः) is to repeat the recitation of the text Āguruudrī which leads to the immortality (अमृतत्वम्). The fourth section is Yājñavalkya’s to Janaka’s question about the secret of renunciation. The fifth section deals with Yājñavalkya’s reply to Atri’s question, the characteristics of a Brahmin monk (यज्ञोपवीति) and the sixth section names some of the exalted monks like Śvetaketu, Dattātrey, etc.

The Jābālopaniṣḍ enlist 07 names of the monk (संन्यासीः) like Śvetaketu, Durvāsā, Rbhu, Nidāgha, Jadabharata, Dattātreya and Raivataka whose marks (or signs) and conducts are not revealed as they behave like mad persons, though not mad ones. They hold three observances (त्रिदण्डम्). They forsake the tuft of hair and sacred thread in the water.

(06) Nāradaparivrājakopaniṣḍ (नारदपरिव्राजकोपनिषद्) belongs to the Atharvaveda. It contains 09 lessons (उपदेशः). The Upaniṣḍ
commences with the description of divine sage Nārada who on his arrival in Naimiśāraṇya, is questioned by Šaunaka and other sages about the means of Liberation. Nārada speaks of the performance of one’s caste-duties along with the duties of 04 stages of life. He adds the practice of the rules of the Vedānta to be practised in the stage of monk (संन्यासी). In the third lesson where Dattātreyas is mentioned the sage describes the procedure of monkhood beginning with one qualified with it. He talks about the different types of monk, the importance of the knowledge of the Self, the duties of a monk, the regulation as well as the importance of detachment and the study of Upaniṣād texts.

(07) Śāṇḍilyopaniṣad (शाण्डिल्योपनिषद्) belongs the Atharvaveda. It contains 12 prose texts interwoven with 76 verses in 03 chapters (आध्याय:). Sage Śāṇḍilya asks sage Atharva about 08 steps of Yoga, the path of Self-realisation. Sage Atharva elaborates 10 Restraints, 10 Regulations, 08 Postures, 03 types of Breath Control, 05 Methods of Withdrawing the Senses, Concentration, two-fold meditation and the Trance in the succeeding chapters. However the 3rd chapter refers to Dattātreyas as the Supreme Self gave (दत्त: ) Himself to sage Atri. It quotes the stanzas enumerating 24 names like Dattātreyas, Šiva,
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Śānta and others that are should be understood etymologically (निरुक्तानि).

(08) Yājñavalkyopanishad (याज्ञवल्क्योपनिषद) belongs to the White Yajurveda. It contains a prose and 24 verses in the form of Yājñavalkya’s answer to king Janaka followed by sage Atri. The Upanisad discusses the time of accepting the monkhood with two options – after completing 03 stages of life or any day of any of four stages of life (on the day one becomes detached). It enlists 10 names of the top most of the monks (परमहंसः) : Samvartaka, Āruṇi, Śvetaketu, Durvāsā, Ṛbhu, Nidāgha, Dattātreya, Śuka, Vāmadeva and Hārītaka.

The above given 08 Upaniṣads are more than enough to prove the historicity of Dattātreya in the age of Upaniṣads (though of the minor Upaniṣads) and there remains no doubts that He existed in the past, He is existing today and He will be existing in future. He is a long-lived one (चिररंजीवी).\(^{21}\)

Dattātreya is presented as Lord Viṣṇu Himself in Jābāladarśanopanishad\(^{22}\) and as Lord Śiva Himself in the Śaṅḍilyo-paniṣad\(^{23}\)

\(^{21}\) It is surprising why Dattātreya’s name is not listed along with as long-lived ones : (01) Aśvatthāmā, (02) king Bali, (03) Veda Vyāsa, (04) Hanūmāna, (05) Vibhīṣṇa, (06) Ācārya Kṛpa, (07) Paraśurāma and (08) Sage Mārkaṇḍeya.

\(^{22}\) दत्तात्रे यो महायोगी भगवान्भूतभावः।
चतुर्ब्रह्मो महाविष्णुपरंसमालिन्यदीक्षितः ॥ जा.द.उ ०९/०९ ॥

\(^{23}\) दत्तात्रे यं शिवं शान्तिमिन्द्रनीलिनभम प्रभुः।
and all 08 Upaniṣads sometimes giving the list introduce Dattātreya as one of the top most monk (परमहंसः). This may give an idea how an exalted sage monk of high spiritual practice grows gradually high to the status of not only a god but a God. It is also observed that the Final Beatitude (पराकाष्ठा), the path of knowledge is compulsory treated upon with the means of 08 steps of Yoga.

The probable chronological order of these 08 minor Upaniṣads can be fixed on the interlocutors (प्रस्नोत्तरकथितं) time and the subject matter. Therefore the probable development of Dattātreya worship must have been as per the following order: (01) Dattātreyopaniṣad (dialogues between Brahmā and Nārāyaṇa), (02) Śāṇḍilyo-paniṣad (dialogues between sage Atharva and Sage Śāṇḍilya), (03) Jābālopaniṣad (dialogues between Yājñavalkya and Atri), (04) Yājñavalkyopaniṣad (dialogues between Yājñavalkya as well as king Janaka and sage Atri), (05) Jābāladarśanopaniṣad (dialogues between Dattātreya and Sāṅkṛti), (06) Avadhūtopaniṣad (dialogues between Sāṅkṛti and Dattātreya), (07) Nārada-parivrājakopaniṣad (dialogues between sage Nārada, Šaunak and others) and (08) Bhikṣkopaniṣds.

After the Upaniṣadic period the vast literature of the Epics and the Purāṇas followed by the Classical Literature where Dattātreya is
no more presented as a monk of high order or an exalted sage or even a sage but He has acquired the status of a saintly monk or the Holy Master rather the Supreme Reality Himself. Here below Dattātreyā’s personal account is given in detail as available in the Epics and Purāṇas.

The Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa (Ayodhya. 117-118) narrates that Śrīrāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā on their way happens to meet sage Atri and his wife Anasūyā who offers divine garments and talks about the duties of a chaste woman (सतीधर्मा:) to Sītā. Though the text refers to to Atri behaving with Śrīrāma as his son (भगवानत्रि: पुत्रवत् पत्यपदल 117/05) and Anasūyā is old with wrinkled body as well as with gray hair (शिशिलाविलितं बुज्जं जरापाणुर्घर्मर्घजाम्।117/18). There is no mention of even the name of Dattātreyā which prove that He must be renounced and would have engaged Himself in the austerities or the spiritual practice of the path of knowledge.

The Mahābhārata 12/49/36 mentions Dattātreyā only under great saint without His personal account therefore the Purāṇa texts remaining the only source to bring out Dattātreyā’s complete personal account and deeds. It is however observed that there is not a single Purāṇa furnishing Dattātreyā’s complete life-ketch, an attempt is here made to present in its fullness.

24 गुरुब्रह्मा गुरुविष्णुगुरुदेवो महेश्वरः।
   गुरुः साक्षात् परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरुवे नमः।
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The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa Ch. 16 narrates the story of Lord Dattātreya’s birth: Brahmin called Kauśika has lost all control over senses. But he has a chaste wife named Śāṇḍilī. Though his character is bad she considers him to be her Lord. Kauśika is attached to a harlot and spends most of his time with her. One day Kauśika becomes penniless so the harlot stops him from coming to her place. He returns home with broken heart. Śāṇḍilī welcomes him affectionately.

She observes that her husband is suffering from diseases and hence cannot move. One day Kauśika requests his wife to take him to the harlot. Obedient Śāṇḍilī collects her ornaments, places them on one of her shoulders, Kauśika on the other, takes him who has her shoulder’s support and starts for the harlot’s house. It is the time of the dark night and Śāṇḍilī walks cautiously in the darkness. On the way she meets with the another problem that sage Māṇḍavya (also called Aṇimāṇḍavya) on piked pillar (खूली) as a punishment of theft in the palace by some thieves, though the sage suffers the pain on the piked pillar without any offence is still alive because of his yogic power. Due to dense darkness Kauśika’s stretched leg pushes the sage who feels utter pain and consequently curses, “he who has
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given me pain will die before sunrise.” 25 On hearing this Śāṇḍili is
disturbed, yet sends an effective appeal to the Sun, not to rise. 26

The Sun has to obey the wish of Śāṇḍili, the chaste wife. The
activities in the world are stopped. The gods are bereft of their share
(i.e. oblation) of the sacrifices. The entire cycle of rain, grain and
daily routine stands still and the disorder prevails.

The gods approach to Lord Viṣṇu who instructs them to propitiate
Anasūyā, the chaste woman because only she can re-establish the
position that is lost due to Śāṇḍili’s strong appeal. The gods led by
Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa go to Anasūyā and requests her to
convince Śāṇḍili. Anasūyā accompanies them. After meeting and
discussing with Śāṇḍili, Anasūyā convinces her to withdraw her
statement of stopping the Sunrise because the whole world is in
trouble. Anasūyā assures her for regaining Kauśika’s life. The
withdrawal of the permits the Sun to rise and Kauśika dies. Anasūyā
revives him by her power of chastity. The gods are greatful for
Anasūyā’s deed, are pleased and offer her a boon.

Anasūyā prays them that the principal gods Brahmā, Viṣṇu and
Maheśa may be born as her son. 27 The gods grant the boon and

25 सूर्यदयेनवर्षा: प्राणवीर्योक्ष्यति न संशय: । मा. पु. १६/३०।।
26 तस्य भाषाः ततः: श्रुत्वा तं शापमिदादरणम्।
प्रोक्तात् व्यक्तिता सूर्याः नैवोदयमपर्नपरयति। मा. पु. १६/३१-३२।।
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retire. As time passes Anasūyā begets the three sons Soma (the partial incarnation of Brahmā), Datta (the partial incarnation of Viṣṇu) and Durväsā (the partial incarnation of Maheśa).

After some time Soma goes to heaven, Durväsā starts wandering in the world and Dattātreya desiring Liberation, renounces the world. Moreover the account states further that Dattātreya dives in the lake for a quite long period where there are the youth who do not leave the place. Dattātreya tries to test the youth but they became his staunch followers.

Bhagavat Purāṇa refers to the story of sage Atri and Anasūyā. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa being pleased by the penance of Atri, offer a boon. Sage Atri praises the triad of gods to take birth as his son. Later one the BhP (01/03) elaborates the creation from Brahmā though the Supreme Person (सहस्रशीर्ष पुरुषः)28 incarncates 22 (24 if Dharma and Manu are taken) times in the portion (अंश:) and among them Dattātreya29 is referred to as the 6th Portion-incarnation (अंशावतार:) Dattātreya is said to have imparted knowledge of self to

27 Some what about Anasūyā getting Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa as her sons is described in other texts.
28 सहस्रशीर्ष पुरुषः सहस्रशाश्च सहस्त्रपातः।
    स भूमिः सर्वत्स्रेयसीर्तविष्णुकृतमम्। ० १०/९०/०१।
    पुरुषं एवंद सर्वं यदूरं यद्य भावयम्।
    उत्तममुत्तमप्रातिभिः यद्यन्नातिरहित॥। ० १०/९०/०२॥
29 शष्टि अन्तःप्रत्यतं वृत्तः प्राप्तं ।नोन्यां।
    आन्तःनिःकोमलक्रिया प्रहाददिभ्य ऊपरिवान्। ० ० १०/३३/०६॥
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Alarka, Prahlāda. BhP 11/07-09 narrates the dialogue between Dattātreya and Yadu talking about 24 Teachers\(^{30}\) whose behaviour and peculiar conduct teach lessons to Dattātreya. The BhP 02/07/04\(^{31}\) gives the grammatical derivation of the name Datta (the son of Atri).

The Vāyu Purāṇa (70/72-77) gives the information that sage Atri had 10 sons like Svasti and others and a sister though specifically it remarks that 02 (Dattātreya and Durvāsā) of them are illustrious ones.

The Skanda Purāṇa (05/03/103) furnishes Dattātreya’s birth-story similar to that of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa.

After the material gathered from the Purāṇa-texts, the two references of Māgha and Śrīharṣa must be noted here. Poet Māgha writes in his Śīṣupālavadhami 14/79\(^{32}\) that sage Atri’s son Dattātreya incarnated to establish the path of righteousness as well as one appearing in front of a devotee immediately when remembered. Śrīharṣa writes in the that Naiṣadhitīyacarita m (21/93)\(^{33}\) Dattātreya known by the name Anagha (sinless) imparts the knowledge of the Self to Sahasrārjuna and Alarka.

\(^{30}\) For details see App 06.
\(^{31}\) अन्तरपत्यभक्षणात आह तुशो धनो मयाहिन्ति यदू भगवान् स दत:॥
\(^{32}\) समर्पद्वियागमादुपुष्यी—रेणमाशविनाशिविश्रावः॥
समर्पद्वियागमादुपुष्यी—रेणमाशविनाशिविश्रावः॥
\(^{33}\) नौमी योगजनितानाशस्म्यं त्वामलकेभवमोहतमोक्षम्॥ नौमी योगजनितानाशस्म्यं त्वामलकेभवमोहतमोक्षम्॥
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In the vast literature on the Dattātreya worship and His Cult there are many texts are available in Marāṭhī and hence it is a fact that Maharashtra has been the biggest centre of the holy masters, devotees and the followers of his cult. Joshi H. S. writes in his book “Gurucaritra (Chap 04) of Sarasvatī Gaṅgādhara written in Marathi which is highly respectable by the worshippers of Dattātreya, traces the origin of Dattātreya in a Paurāṇic form. The candidate of the present thesis has not traced this data in main 18 Purāṇas. But there is no reference to the jealousy of the wives of the three gods.

Coming to the period of the modern literature, there are important texts on the Dattātreya worship which have given rise to Datta Cult (वर्ण:) up to the height of Datta Sect (सम्प्रदाय:). They are 01 H. H. Ṭembesvāmī of Garudeshwar (Gujarat) and his works in Sanskrit like Dattapurāṇam, Dvisāhasī (Śrīgurucaritam) and Samaślokī Guru-caritra (Marāṭhī text composed in sanskrit). 02 H. H. Yogānanda Sarasvatī of Gunj (Maharashtra) and his work Śrīgurumūrticaritam in Marāṭhī and 03 H. H. Raṅga Avadhūta and his work Śrīgurulīlā-mṛta in Gujarāṭī.

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35 Though Dubois J. A. (Hindu Manners, customs and ceremonies P 552), Thomas P. (Epics, Myths and Legend of India P 96) have noted that this episode is in the Bhāvīṣya Purāṇa.

36 Late Prof. Dr. Arunodaya Jani translated this text in Gujarāṭī, Published by Indian Culture and Education Foundation, Vadodara, 2004.
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These three texts have come down from a single source (not known so far) and hence the data are surprisingly similar though different in style, narration and description. The reason is obvious because H. H. Ṭembeśvāmī’s Dvisāhasrī contains 2208 verses, H. H. Yogānanda Sarasvatī’s Śrīgurumūrticarita contains 14411 verses of three lines technically called Ovi and H. H. Raṅga Avadhūta’s Śrīgurulilāmṛta contains 19005 verses called Dohā. The striking yet enormous development in the textual description leaves no doubt about the enormous rise of the followers and devotees.

The story of Dattātreya’s birth and other description are elaborated in two successive texts but the main depiction of the birth of Dattātreya is similar as under:

Lord Viṣṇu creates Brahmā who creates 07 Mind-born sages for the further creation. Sage Atri is one to them. Sage Atri’s wife is Anasūyā who is famous for her chastity in the three worlds. The earth, the Sun, the Fire and the Wind are afraid of her.

One day sage Nārada talks to Lord Brahmā, Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Maheśa about Anasūyā who is devoted to her husband and is inclined to serve guests. Their consorts hear this and being

37 112 verses of Śrīgurustuti + 2008 of Dvisāhasrī (821 verses in Jñānakāṇḍa + 588 in Karmakāṇḍa and 599 in Bhaktikāṇḍa) + 43 of Yogarahasya + 44 of Bodharahasya = 2207
38 3361 verses in Karmakāṇḍa, 4230 in Upāsanākāṇḍa and 6820 in Jñānakāṇḍa = 14411 verses
39 7280 verses in Jñānakāṇḍa + 6772 in Karmakāṇḍa + 4953 in Upāsanākāṇḍa = 19005 verses.
40 Dvisāhasrī Chap. 03, Śrīgurumūrticaritaṁ Chap. 58 and Śrīgurulilāmṛta Chap. 06
intolerable faint. The three appease their wives considering themselves as to be the best of the chaste women. Consequently the Trinity of gods assumes the form of guest and goes to test Anasūyā’s chastity.

Anasūyā sees them and understanding their originality, welcomes them and asks what they want. The gods ask for the suitable food without any delay. She offers the food, but the gods wish to accept the food, if she is clothless. She thinks of her penance and of her husband and hence she has no lust. In case of not following them, they may curse. She then puts off her clothes.

The three gods become innocent children by her chastity. The motherly milk flows out of her breasts. She feeds them. They drink her milk and get supreme relief. She places them in the cradle and sings songs. Meanwhile sage Atri returns. She tells him the thing and the sage bows down and recites a hymn in honour of them. After hearing that the Trinity of gods assume their original form and offer a boon to sage Atri who asks her wife for the boon. She tells him to request Lord Viṣṇu to take birth as their son. The power of Anasūyā’s chastity has changed the gods into infants and hence Atri names Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Maheśa as Datta, Candra and Durvasā respectively. Lord Dattātreya is the complete manifestation, as He has offered (दत्त:) \(^{41}\) Himself fully.

\(^{41}\) पृथिव्यनामानि बालेभ्यो ददि येष्यो धर्मविन्मुनि:।
पूर्णत्वेन मयाः से ददि इत्युक्तवानू स्वयम्।। दि.सा.०३/४२।।
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Datta bestows the desire in the path of Yoga, Durvasā blesses the righteous ones and Candra (the Moon-god) nourishes the people. Lord Viṣṇu incarnates due to Durvasā’s curse and withdraws after the task is over, but Lord Dattātreya does not withdraw His body.

In addition to the personal account of Dattātreya, there must be a clarification regarding Dattātreya being either an incarnation (दत्तात्त्वतार:) or a saint (प्रादुर्भाव:). Hopkins and Mrināl Das Gupta have tried to explain both the term. The word Prādurbhāva means an incarnation to serve somebody’s motive or wish, while the incarnation has the motive of helping the mankind. The soul of Prādurbhāva is a saint or an exalted sage (सिद्ध:) while incarnation has motives (01) protection of the righteous person and (02) destruction of the unrighteous person. But it is accepted by all the scholars of the Datta Cult names him to be दत्तात्त्वतार: or भगवानदत्त:.

H. H. Ēmbeśvāmī (Dvīśāhasrī GS 94-96) identify Lord Dattātreya as Omnipresent thus: GS 94-96 He who sleeps in the Māhuragaṇḍh, resides on the Mt. Sahya, takes bath in the river Gaṅgā, engaged in meditation in the city of Gandharvas, performs the rite shipping water in kurukṣetra, applies the holy ashes in the

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42 Both quoted by Joshi H S p52
43 यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिभवति भारत।
अथुपाध्यायंधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सुनाम्यहमी।
परित्राणाय साधृयं विनाशयाय च दुमकृताम।
धर्मसंस्थापनायाय संभवामि युगे युगे।। गीता ०४/०७-०८।।
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Dhūtapāpeśvara near Himālayas, performs twilight (संध्या) rite in Karahāta, begs alms in kuravapura (सुरे in the city of goddess Lakṣmi), anoints perfume (सुगन्धित्रयः) i.e. sandal paste in Panḍharapura (the city of Viṣṭhala, takes meals at Pancāleśvara (सारपुर) and performs the evening rite on the western sea-coast. Such Lord Dattātreya may please reside in my heart and let He be His remembrance in the activities of the heart, the mind and senses.44

Works of Dattātreya: The literary works indicates the narration in the Purāṇa texts on Dattātreya are in considerably good in number. But there are only 03 texts ascribe to Dattātreya.

01 Avadhūtagītā45: It contains 200 verses in 08 chapters (अध्यायः). The 01st chapter discusses that the detachment produced through the grace of the Lord, instructs to the soul esp. to the mind and the state of Avadhūta in 76 verses. 02nd chapter talks about the greatness of the Holy Master (गुरुः) and characteristics of the Consciousness in 40 verses. 03rd chapter contains salutations to Lord Śiva of the form of the Earth. 04th chapter discusses about the path of Liberation-wishers

44 यस्तातसित माहु: निद्रा निवास : सदा पवते।
भागीरथ्यां सदास्यान सदांन ध्या: न गन्धर्व पत्तनेऽ
कुरुस्ते चाचामनं धृतपापेश्वरे तथा।
विभूतिभारणं संध्या करहारे हिर्य: पुरे।II
भिक्षाबिभुतिपुर्यस्य सुगन्धित्रयधारणम्।
भुविति: सारपुरे सर्वं-सन्ध्या पक्षद्वासारे।II
स एव भगवान्दत: सदा वस्तु मे हंदिद।
हस्तिनिर्यथापयारे सदा तत्मूतितस्तु मे।। द्वि.सा.९४—९७।।
in 25 verses. 05\textsuperscript{th} chapter discusses the great utterance ‘Thou Art That’ (‘तत्त्वमसि’) in 32 verses. 06\textsuperscript{th} chapter presenting the concept of Liberation puts forth different queries about the necessity of the objects as well as the standard of comparison, sacrifices as well as austerities understanding the Reality beyond the reach of the mind and speech, the difference between the individual as well as the Cosmic Intelligent, etc. in 27 verses. 07\textsuperscript{th} chapter elaborates the state of Avadhūta in 15 verses. 08\textsuperscript{th} chapter furnishes the definition each letters of the word Avadhūta.

The printed edition seems not to follow the norms of editing because the concluding statement reads स्वामिकालिकंसंवादे in chapters 04-08, but no such reference either in 1\textsuperscript{st} chapter or in the text of the rest of the chapters.

(02) Dattātreya Tantra\textsuperscript{46}: It comprises of 285 verses including prose text in 24 folds (पट्ल:). It discusses various ritual of the black magic (तन्त्रम्) such as killing (मारणम्), mesmerism (मोहनम), stupefying (स्तम्भनम) and so on. It is dialogue form between Dattātreya and Lord Śiva. Most of the chapters ends with the black magic formulas.

(03) Jīvanmuktagīt\textsuperscript{47}: It\textsuperscript{48} comprises of 24 verses only discussing the characteristics of the Liberated one.

\textsuperscript{46} Edi.: Ācārya Pt. Śivadatta Mishra. Varanāsī, 1985.
\textsuperscript{47} Edi.: Dhere R. C. Nilakantha Prakashana, Puna 1936.
\textsuperscript{48} Forms the part of appendix of the book Datta Sampradāyā ce itihāsa.
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Over and above this composition, Dattatreyas teaching to the direct disciples is well known in Purana texts of medieval as well as modern literature. His famous disciples are Yadu, Alarka, Parašurāma and Sahasrārjuna.

After discussing all about Lord Dattatreyas birth, life, deeds, works, etc. Lord Dattatreyas 02 incarnations Śripādaśrivallabha and Nṛsimhasarasvatī as well as their life and deeds.

(01) Śripādaśrivallabha (14th-15th Cent. AD): In the city Pīṭhāpura of Eastern part of India there lives a Brahmin named Rājā with his wife Sumati. Both are devoted to Lord Dattatrey. One day Lord Dattatreya comes to his house in the guise of a mendicant and begs the food. She offers the food, though the performance of the ancestral right is yet to over. The Lord is pleased and reveals His original form (described). She offers Him food with the firm belief that He is the partaker of the food. He offers a boon.

The Brahmin lady says that she along with her ancestors have blessed, because He has showed His form. She asks for a virtuous son, because He has addressed her as “O mother.” The Lord Okays it and adds that she will get a son like Him. The Lord disappears. She reports everything to her husband, both get delighted. She asks her husband to forgive for offering meals to the Lord before the ancestral rite.

49 स्वकुणिण्डमर्च्छूतं—श्रीकुणिण्डपववात्वे।
व्याप्राप्तिनवंत्ते! जातिलो भस्ममूर्तिः। ॥ ५/१० ॥

50 में सुप्रक्षेिव जनसेििि मातरंि्नुिक सम्बोधिि सिद्धपुरवििम्। ॥ भि.सा. १४कड।
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The Brahmin because happy because she has offered directly to Lord Viṣṇu Himself. She has sanctified their lineage and has archived boon beneficial to the world. She gives birth to the Unborn Lord. Astrologers say that He is born as the fruit of the Brahmin’s merits. He is Lord Dattātreya Himself who has taken incarnation for the path of devotion. The father names him Śrīpāda on seeing marks on his foot-soles (पाद:) with auspicious sign (श्री). He grows fast. The boy is initiated. The father teaches Him the three Vedas. The boy denies the marriage.

Śrīpāda says that after renouncing the world, He would marry the Yogaśrī. The parents tell him that they would not be able to survive without Him. He should not forsake them in the ocean of misery. His (i.e. Śrīpāda’s) remembrance releases them from the fetters of the worldly Existence, but that would run away as the time passes. The other (two) children are lame and blind. He listens to their words and places His hand on the head of both the children. Both are cured and become knowledgeable miraculously. On seeing this miracle the mother remembers His words.Śrīpāda circumambulates his parents, bows down and being permitted goes to Vārāṇasī and then to Badarikāśrama. He then comes to Kuravapura on the bank of river Krṣnā.

51 पुजस्वे भविता मानदृत्तलक्ष्ये मा तिरस्कुरू। द्वि.सा. ५/१५कड।।
Chapter 01

There lives a Vedic Brahmin with his wife Ambikā. She gives birth to a son who is fool, stupid, less-intelligent and stubborn. Though he is initiated with the sacred thread he is unable to chant even the Gāyatrī formula. The father beats the son and the mother stops. He promises not to beat him. The Brahmin then dies soon. The mother and the son pass their life on begging. After some time other Brahmins censure them. They ask him to leave the place or to die. He goes to river Kṛṣṇā for dying. The mother follows him. Śrīpādaśrīvallabha sees them, stops them and says compassionately that suicide is very difficult to bear. He instruct her to propitiates Lord Śiva who will released them in next birth. She said that it is difficult to spend life with this (i.e. dull son). She asks the boon for the blessedness of this motherhood.

Śrīpāda is pleased and places His hand on his head. The boy becomes a scholar. Śrīpāda asks her to spend her life in worshipping Lord Śiva. She will obtain a son like Him (in the next birth). She returns to her village and worships Lord Śiva. The Lord thinks to become her son and disappears in order to incarnate. Though he is invisible, He fulfills the desires of the devotees.

(02) Nṛsimhāhasarasvatī (15th Cent. AD) : The Brahmin lady who was survived by Śrīpāda passes away and born with intellect, beauty, character and with good signs and with good virtues in the northern direction of Kuravapur (i.e. in modern Kāraṇjā). She is known as
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Ambā. (lit. the mother) as H.H. Śrīpāda had addressed her as the mother.52 Her father meets a Brahmin of the same city named Mādhava, a Śiva devotee and gives her to him in marriage. She observes the vow of chastity and because of her previous impressions she worships Lord Śiva. The mutual love and the binding of heart make them joyous. Living thus Ambā conceives (a child). The Brahmin performs the rite of conceiving in its proper order. At the auspicious time He takes birth reciting the sacred syllable ‘Om.’ The World become well wishing and the people are wonderstruck on hearing the sound of the sacred syllable Om. The astrologers calculating the planets unseen before indicating renunciation become happy.

The astrologers say this is the fruit of Mādhava’s merits. Wealth, attainments, and the treasures will follow his footsteps. He will not be a house holder, but a man uplifting others. There is no doubt about it. The astrologers go home. The people hearing about His Miraculous birth come to see him. The father places him in a solitary place and protects the child with the thread of protection thinking the Lord as a normal child. The Brahmin names the child to be Narahari thinks Him the remover of the sins, agony and the poverty of the people. When the mother asks for a foster mother as she is not getting milk, the child touches her breast and they give milk. She being afraid of the evil sight (of others) on the child does not express

52 पुजों भाविभर्ष्ये मादृक्षेऽभिषव्यति वा हि (द्र.सा. ०७/२८)
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such and other miracles. The ignorant cannot understand Him, how can one able to think about His Brahman-hood.

He behaves like a dumb at the age of three years, His mother starts practicing remedies. But the boy does not speak a single word. The parents speak that the boy is dumb, how can they initiate Him with sacred thread. He then shows with the gesture that he will speak after the initiation. He touches iron and transforms it into gold for making them joyous. Mādhava invites the Brahmin priests and initiates his son with the sacred thread. He receives the Gāyatrī formula by His preceptor, begs the alms and Practises the duties of a celibate, recites the four Vedas. He bows down to his parents and asks the permission to take renunciation and says that they should cut the discriminating knowledge in Him. They will get sons (and daughter). The mother tells that He is her only son, He should not leave them. The celibate should take renunciation after enjoying the household life and the forest life.

Nṛsimhāhasarasvatī says that this order is for those who are attached to the pleasures which are the sources of the miseries. This body of a twice born is the best instrument for (acquiring) the knowledge of the self. His mother should not be a hurdle in His way. He says that she will beget a son and cross over the ocean of existence. He shows her His own Divine Form. She knows their previous birth and speaks, that she had seen Him when she was dying due to her dull son. Even Lord Brahma does not know His Form and virtues. She is
grateful that He imparts the knowledge of the self. He, possessing the whole cosmos in His bally has taken birth from her bally. He has purified her families.

Let there not be any obstacle in His way. She requests Him to reside in her and also in that place till she begets a son. The Lord accept it. The parents pay full respect Him. He teaches scriptures to the students there. After some time Ambā begets two auspicious sons. The children become three months old. He starts for renunciation when He gets their permission.

His face looks gorgeous with turban. His lotus-feet look decorated with the wooden sandals. His tender body is covered with the scarlet cloths. He wears lion-cloths and holds a staff with smiling face. She said that Lord has to forgive her offence that is committed out of misunderstanding Him as a child. He says that she will meet Him after thirty years, He will just be with her as soon as she think of Him. He leaves the place.

Being praised by the people He, the Lord himself, starts for the - Badrikāśrama, comes to Vārāṇasi.

He practices the Khecari Mudrā and the penance. His breath becomes free from inhalation and exhalation though he is living in Vārāṇasi. Other monks watch him who is practicing the yoga of
eight steps, seated in the posture of siddha. They bow down with eight limbs to Him. They speak that He is not a mortal but Supreme Lord.

In this terrific Kali Era He deserves to bestow the Bliss of spirituality. He selects Kṛṣṇasarasvatī as Holy Master. He i.e. the boy Narahari accepts the path of renunciation and becomes famous by the name Nṛśimhasarasvatī. Now He shines elegant without sacred thread and tuft of hair. The path of renunciation introduced by Ādiśaṅkarācarya has gone in oblivion, Kṛṣṇasarasvatī extends it on Him. This path is disrupted by ignorant.

He explains the path of renunciation to the liberation wishers.

H. H. Ṭembesvāmī explains many divine sports of Nṛśimhasarasvatī in 02 verses of the present text Dvisāhasrī.

Who is able to know Your prowess and other because you revived the dead Brahmin, transformed of a barren buffalo in to a milch one, generated the dry wood in a leafy tree and uplifted a low cast person in a moment (DS 20/09).

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53 मृतो नीचिस्तो येन दुष्भा लुतापी
वशा शुषकां तत्त्वं प्रणीतम्।
क्षणाद्वद्धाम् युद्धात्तते नुभवाय
क्षति को उपायं ज्ञातमन्यन्तवापि॥ द्वि.सा. २०/०९॥
Chapter 01

O Nṛsinhahasarasvatī, I bow down to the best lotus-feet of yours. Your unequal greatness in three words is such that you have given speech to a dumb, sight to a blind, a virtuous son to a barren woman, life to a dead one, a long marriage life to a widow and leaves to the dry wood-stem. (20/70)\(^{54}\)

After discussing all about Lord Dattātreya’s 02 incarnations, the saints and the Monks of Dattātreya Cult of medieval age and present time must be taken notice.

(01) Janārdanasvāmī (1504-1575AD) was Deśastha Brahmin of Āśvalāyāna branch of the Rgveda and follower of Śaṅkarācārya. He influenced the king that the Thursday being a day of Dattātreya was observed as a holiday. Dattātreya used to give vision. Dattātreya approached him and placed His hand on his head. Janārdanasvāmī not only lived a married life but also worked in society for guiding the path of Dattātreya worship. Some scholars identify Nṛsimha-sarasvatī as the preceptor of Janārdanasvāmī\(^{55}\) and it is said that Dattātreya directly gave Upadeśa to him. It is believed that he has composed Pañcīkaraṇa, Śrīdattastuti, Yogāgītā, etc.

\(^{54}\) मूके गा दृशमन्दके सुतन्त्रं कन्यासु कचामुन्मुनेः
सोबार्ग्यं विधवासु पल्लवमो दर्तं सुसुण्दकेन्द्रे।
एवभूत इत्यात्वेष महिमां त्रैलोक्यसंस्कारमो
वर्ते श्रीतस्य सरस्वति वर्ते श्रीपदमण्डलम्। द्विस्तम। २०/७०।।

\(^{55}\) Citrāv Śāstrī: Madyayugin Caritrakosa P.391
(02) Ekanātha (1533-1599AD) a famous Yogi and renounced saint of Maharashtra. His father is Sūryanārāyaṇa and mother is Rukminī. He is the direct disciple of Janārdansvāmī. In his time religion had lost its wide outlook the whole country was without any strength and was suffering from complete degradation and virtues. He established true powerful school of spiritualism through his life and literature. His literature speaks mainly of Kṛṣṇa-Bhakti and Rāma-Bhakti. Ekanātha’s name is respectfully taken among Dattātreya devotees. The prayer sung at the time of waving round the lighted lamps (आरति) written by him is sung at noon time even today (at Narasobāvāḍī). He has written a life-sketch of Dattātreya. It is said that the Lord graced him that Ekanātha being great bhagavata devotee would uplift thousands of souls during his life. Ekanātha is said to have sat for religious austerities and meditation for about six years in Devgiri. He travelled all over India before he married Girijābāi. He has composed Catuślokī Bhāgavataṭīkā, Ekanāthī Bhāgavat, Ānandalahari, Gītāsāra, Śivpārvatīvivāh, etc.56

(03) Dasopanta (1551-1615AD): Digambarapanta and pārvatībāi are his parents. He established a relation between the Nāth school and Dattātreys school. He went to Mātāpura on the Sahyādri hills (the sleeping place of Dattātreya) and practised severe penance for many years. He got the vision of Jagadambā and call from Dattātreya there. He takes wooden shoes (पादुका) of Lord Dattātreya and

56 Vide: Citrāv Śāstrī: Madyayugī Caritrakośa P. 173
worshiped them. He got vision of Lord Dattātreya though was initiated in the Nāth school.\(^{57}\) He always worshipped Lord Dattātreya in the form of wooden shoes and that propagated the worship of Dattātreya’s wooden shoes (पादुका).

(04) Bhairava Avadhūta Jñānsāgara (alias Appājibova) (18\(^\text{th}\)-19\(^\text{th}\) Cent. AD): He was Deśastha Brahmin of Viśvāmitra clan belonging to Aśvalāyana branch. He was born in at Viṭ in the district of Khanpur (Satara). On the strength of his devotion Lord Dattātreya’s idol arrived at his place.

(05) Nirañjana Raghunātha (1782-1855Ad): He was Deśastha Brahmin of Kauśika clan belonging to Aśvalāyana branch. His father was Śrīdharapanta and mother was Lakṣmī. He was born at Kālamba on the bank of river Vañjarā near Parḷi Vaidyanātha. His original name was Avadhūta. He went to Nāsika where he met Raghunātha who initiated him. It is said that Dattātreya directed him in a dream to witness the celebration at Nāsika.

(06) Dattanātha Ujjjanīkar (1713-1849AD): His father was Nārāyaṇa and mother was Lakṣmībāi. The childless parents took up vow to land over their son to Anantanātha. He travelled all over India and then settled at Ujjain. He was great devotee and an Avadhūta. He wrote many books on Yoga.

\(^{57}\) Joshi H S states this information in such a way that the Dattātreya worship and the Nāth Yogies are two different sects though Dattātreya’s connection with Matsyendra Nāth and Gorakṣa Nāth is well Known.
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(07) Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja Jālavaṇākara (1807-1867 AD) : He was born at Jalavana near Jhansi, worshipped Lord Dattātreyā at the age of twenty and got the vision. His father was the Purāṇa reciter in the royal families. He is said to be initiated in the Haṭha-Yoga initially and later on to the path of devotion to Dattātreyā. It is said that Dattātreyā came to take meal when he used to give him food offered (नैवेद्य). He has composed Ānandaśāgara, Śāntiśāgara, Bodhaśāgara, Aṣṭāṅgayoga, etc.

(08) Māṇikaprabhu (1817-1855AD): He was Deśastha Brahmin of Vatsa clan belonging to Rgveda. His father was Manohara-nāyaka. Māṇikaprabhu was believed to be the incarnation of Lord Dattātreyā. He was expert in Yoga. He settled at Maniknagar.

(09) Svāmī of Akkalkot (18th-19th Cent. AD): He was born at Chelikhedi near Hastinapura. He is believed to be an incarnation of Nṛsi mhasarasvatī. He moved many places and finally settled at Akkalkot. The highly spiritual life of Svāmī was clearly observed in his daily routine.

(10) Vāsudevānandasarasvatī (alias Ćembesvāmī) (1854-1914AD):
He was Karhāde Brahmin belonging to Atri clan, belonging to Āśvalāyana branch of Rgveda. His father was Gaṇeśa and mother
was Ramābāī. He is believed to be the incarnation of Lord Dattātreya. H. H. Ėṃbesvāmī’s Dvisāhasrī is the problem of the present research, the detailed life-sketch is given in the next chapter.

(11) Yogānandasarasvatī (alias Gāndā Mahārāja) (1869-1938AD): He was a worthy disciple of H. H. Ėṃbesvāmī. He was Anāvila Brahmin. He was born at Talangpur near Surat. His father was Dāhyābhāī. His original name was Kalyāṇa. He earned the name Gāndā (lit. crazy or mad) due to his strange behaviour. He lived a normal life in initial stage and then met Ėṃbesvāmī, worked mostly with him and moved with him. If we look into the strict disciplined life of Ėṃbesvāmī, we can understand the sincere behaviour and devotion of Yogānandasarasvatī. Yogānandasarasvatī guided people through his devoted actions and selfless devotion. He had only of modicum knowledge of any language so he has written Gurumūrticaritra a big book in Maṟāṭhī language, dealing with the life of his Holy Master. He has also written another short life-sketch his Holy Master and Strīdharmanirūpaṇam, deals with the duties of women. After the Samādhī of his Holy Master (i.e. Ėṃbesvāmī) he stayed for some time at Braruch and then travelled many places and finally settled at Guñja. on the bank of river Godāvarī in Maharashatra.

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58 In this connection H. H. Raṅga Avadhūta Mahārāja (Nareshwar) praises him as an unparallel devotee:

गांडा सम गुरुभक्ति ना दीठो बीजो व्यायं।
जाईं वाय्री तन्त्रामय वैदन कसूं सदय।। श्रीगुप्तलितामृत ० ३/०७/५७।।
(12) Śrīpanta Mahārāja Bālekundrīkar (alias Dattātreya) (1855-1905AD): It is said that Nṛsimhāhasarasvatī had given a dream to one of his ancestor and consequently Śrīpanta Mahārājais born who is also known as Dattātreya. He came in the contact with Bālavdhūta who became his preceptor.

(13) Sāibābā (19th-20th Cent. AD): no information is available about his birth, caste and even the line on which he worked. He lived for a considerable long period in Shirdi (Maharashtra). His chief disciple Upāsanī Mahārāja of Śākori (Maharashtra) believed him as Rāma. Many devotees and scholars accept his identity with his oneness with Svāmī of Akkalkot and Dattātreya. In one of the discourses he said that the world is our village, Brahmā is the father and Māyā is the mother. He laid stress on constant faith (श्रद्धा) and patient (संतुष्टि).

(14) Nūri Mahārāja (1869-1923AD): He is believed to be an incarnation of Dattātreya on the evidence that his photograph showed three faces like Dattātreya. Actually lineage of his traditional initiation comes down from the Mohmedan saints.

(15) Śrīdatta Mahārāja (1894-1925AD): His original name was Narahari. He was a Rgvedi Deśastha Brahmin of Śākalabranch that belonged to Gautama clan. His father was Vāsudevarāva and mother
was Muktābāi. He was eight from Ekanātha in his lineage. His preceptor directed him to go to Ēṃbēsvāmī to learn the practice of Yoga. He travelled many place and finally settled at Aṣṭe.

(16) Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja Kheḍagaokar (1885-1945): His father was Bhīmarāv and his mother was Lakṣmī. They pass away when he was only 05. He moved many places and settled at Kheḍagāv. He is connected with Śrīvdyānandasvāmī of Belapur. He has not composed any literature but perceptive devotion and action as well as his manner remain attractive even today.

(17) Raṅga Avadhūta (1898-1968 AD): He was born at Godhara (Gujarat). His original name was Pāṇḍuraṅga and was Vaḷāme by surname. His father was Viṭṭhala who died when Pāṇḍuraṅga only 05. His mother was Rukmāmbā. His school carrier was bright. After completing his graduation he worked at Ahmadabad and then as tutor in English Deptt. (faculty of Arts, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda)59. He took part in the social as well as political activities and wrote many articles. He met Gāndhījī and worked actively in freedom fight.

After his sacred thread ceremony his maternal uncle took him to Narsobāvāḍī. At that time Ēṃbēsvāmī was there. He addressed him as his own child. Ēṃbēsvāmī instructed him to read the holy book.

59 the University authority have made small board in his pious memory with the words, “...”
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This indicated that he was born to increase the school of Dattātreya. He was instructed to repeat Dattapurāṇa for 108 times so He prefers Nāreśvara on the bank of river Narmadā. He composed Gurulīlāmṛta, a big treatise, describing the divine sports of Lord Dattātreya, His two incarnations Vīz. Śrīpādaśrivallabha as well as Nṛsimhhasarasvatī and Holy Master Ēmbesvāmī.

(18) Narmadānanda (1928 AD -): He was born at Vansada (Valsad, Gujarat). His birth name was Ashwinkumaran and was Dhebar by surname. His child-hood passed in Vansada and later on he hailed to Mumbai. He met H. H. Raṅga Avadhūta at the age of 28. Ashwinkumar has performed the circumambulation of the river Narmadā without having shoes, so H. H. Raṅga Avadhūta gave him name Narmadānanda. Now a days he is living in Uchhali near Ankleshwar in a hermitage.

(19) Viśvanātha Avadhūta (The date of birth not known by any one)\textsuperscript{60} : His Hermitage in Rampura, Surat. His schedule is unknown. He hardly comes out. He spreads Datta devotion in south Gujarat.

(20) Prema Avadhūta: (1931-2012AD): He was born at Liṅca (Mahesana). His birth name is Premśṅkara alias Bacubhai His was Krupaśṅkara and mother was Šāntāben.. He was born 13\textsuperscript{th}

\textsuperscript{60} The candidate of the present thesis has met Mahārājśrī personally who refused to offer any information for the reason that he keeps himself away from the popularity.
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September. He was a staunch devotee of Raṅga Avadhūta. He spreads Datta devotion not only in India but also in foreign countries. He has had many works of public welfare in north Gujarat.

There are many centres of the Avadhūta sect in India and in abroad but a few world famous centres and their religious as well as spiritual activities are depicted here below to project the future of the Avadhūta sect in the modern greater scenario.

(01) Pīthāpura: Pīthāpura is a birth place of Śrīpāda Vallabha where thousands of people pay their visit and participate in the celebration of Datta Jayanti (fullmoon-day of bright Mārgaśīrṣa) and Gurururṇima (fullmoon-day of bright Aśāḍha) every year. The Infrastructure and place is well developed and provide every facility to the visitors-followers. Brahmin Feeding tradition has great importance there. The place propagates Datta devotion in South India.

(02) Garuḍeśvara: It is well connected with HH Ṭembesvāmī (the authors of the Dvisāhasrī the problem of the present thesis). After the completion of the country-wide journey of India, H. H. Ṭembesvāmī spent much time there. He built Datta temple during his stay. The place acquires great importance for the devotees. It acquires the divine power to fulfil the desires of the devotees.
(03) Nāreśvara: It is said that after seeing a peacock and a snake together, H. H. Ranga Avadhūta decided to stay and recited Datta Purana 108 times. During his stay, many people used to visit the place. The temple was built in his memory. Hundreds of people visit the place daily to pay their homage. Thousands of people visit the place on various festivals such as Datta-Jayanti (fullmoon-day bright Mārgaśīrṣa), Guru Purnima, and the full moon days as well as Thursday. Highly developed infrastructural facilities are provided to the devotees. It propagates Datta devotion not only in India but also in the world.

(04) Guñja: The place is situated in Parabhani district of Maharashtra. It is closely connected with H. H. Yogānanda Sarasvatī (Gāndā Mahārājā), one of the Great disciples of H. H. Țembesvāmī. He passed his last days there. Innumerable people from all over the world pay their tribute to the holy saint on his date of Nirvāṇa (12th day of dark Fālgun). The place is blessed with the power to fulfil the wishes of the devotees who visit the place with the pure love. The place contributes in the propagation of Dattātreyā devotion in the state of Maharashtra.

(05) Talaṅgapura: The village is located in Surat district in Gujarat. It is the birth place of H. H. Yogānanda Sarasvatī (Gāndā Mahārājā). The festivals like Datta Jayanti and Guru Purnima are being celebrated regularly by the people of the village. It is to note
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that the very Datta Jayanti is the birth-date of H. H. Yogānanda Sarasvatī. The place plays an important role to propagate Datta devotion in south Gujarat region.

Conclusion

Thus this chapter provides a clear evidence of the fact how an individual endowed with righteous conduct, divine qualities and Supernatural virtues, treads on the path of practices of Yoga and spirituality which leads him up from the normal status of a monk (संन्यासी), to an exalted sage (अवधूत:), Culminating himself into a teacher (उपदेशक:) then a preceptor (गुरु:), then the Holy Master (श्रीगुरु:) then a god (देव:) and finally God (परमेश्वर:).

The Vedic Literature including the Upaniṣads puts Dattātreya’s name in the list of monks exalted sages followed by the Purāṇas and classical literature introduce him as the teacher of Yadu (predecessor of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa), Alarka (Madālasā’s son), Paraśurāma (Reṇukā’s son), Sahasrārjuna (Kṛtavirya’s son) and so on. The Time passes and brings into the effects famous statement of Poet Bhavabhūti.

कालोद्वायं निरवधिविपुला च पृथ्वी।

“The Time is limitless and the earth is capacious.”

The commencement of the medieval literature (in Sanskrit as well as in Marathi) seems to widen horizon and extends beyond all
worldly limits to establish Dattātreya to be not only one of the important god of the trinity but also to be the trinity but also to be the Attributive Lord (सच्चासन).\\n
The chapter also aims at the fact that the tradition of Dattātreya worship places ample illustrations of the Holy Master changing the devotees self into the Holy Master’s Self.\textsuperscript{61}