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## Dattātreya

Antonio Rigopoulos

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### Introduction

Dattātreya is a Purāṇic deity, in origin a Tantric antinomian *yogin* later sanitized and adapted to the devotional milieu of the Purāṇas. The mythical accounts present him as the son of the *rṣi* Atri and of his wife Anasūyā. Thanks to the help offered by Anasūyā to the *trimūrti* of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, she and her husband are bestowed the grace that the *trimūrti* would be born as their sons: thus are born Soma, Datta/Dattātreya (“The Given One,” “The One Belonging to Atri’s Lineage”) and Durvāsas, who are *avatāras* of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva, respectively. Significant Purāṇic *loci* are *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* 1.3.11, 11.7.24–11.9.33, and *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa* chapters 17–19, 37–43. The *vaiṣṇava* character of the deity is intertwined with antinomian traits, and from its inception Dattātreya’s theology appears as an inextricable mixture of *vaiṣṇava* and *śaiva* elements. Although Dattātreya’s presence is traceable even in Nepal, his heartland is the Marāṭhī cultural area. The oldest testimony of his presence is in the literature of the Mahānubhāvs, a monastic community conceived as heterodox by Brahmanical authorities. Apparently, the Mahānubhāvs received Dattātreya through the medium of the yogic sect of the Nāths. In Maharashtra, the advent of the *Dattasampradāya* (“The Tradition of Datta [Followers]”) dates to the mid-sixteenth century when the Marāṭhī *Gurucaritra* (“Life of the Master”) was written by Sarasvatī Gaṅgādhara. This hagiography presents the lives of Śrīpād Śrīvallabh (b. c. 1323–d. 1353) and Nṛsiṃha Sarasvatī (b. c. 1378–d. 1458), regarded as the first historical *avatāras* of Dattātreya. The *Gurucaritra* emphasizes Brahmanical ritual orthodoxy, in an effort to counter Islamic dominance and Tantric excesses. In fact, quite a number of Tantric works centered upon ritual practice are attributed to Dattātreya, among which is a *Dattātreyatāntra*, possibly dating to the twelfth century. Noteworthy is the circa 13th-century *Dattātreya yogaśāstra*, reputed to be the earliest work to teach both the eightfold system of Patañjali’s classical *aṣṭāṅgayoga* and the methods of *haṭhayoga*. The most popular texts ascribed to the deity are the *Jīvanmuktagītā* (“The Song of the Liberated-in-Life”), the *Avadhūtagītā* (“The Song of the Free”), and the *jñānakhaṇḍa* (“Section on Knowledge”) of the *Tripurārahasya* (“The Secret of [the Goddess] Tripurā”), which are all late compositions. On the whole, the Dattātreya movement exhibits ambivalent traits. On the one hand it expresses an integrative spirituality that accommodates even Islamic tenets, while on the other it is the catalyst of Brahmanical pride and of an assertive ritual orthodoxy.

### Overviews on Dattātreya

Joshi 1965 presents a detailed study of the deity, tracing its Sanskrit literary sources and the birth and growth of the *Dattasampradāya* up to modern times, while Bahadur 1982 portrays the triune god in the light of Advaita Vedānta philosophy and offers the translation and commentary of the *Jīvanmuktagītā* and *Avadhūtagītā*. Rigopoulos 1998 provides an in-depth study of Dattātreya from its Purāṇic emergence up to its development in the Marāṭhī cultural area and explores the deity’s myths, doctrines, rituals, philosophy, mysticism, and iconography; while Rigopoulos 2009 is an encyclopedia article offering a synthetic introduction to the deity and a select bibliography. Joshi 1974 is a Marāṭhī anthology detailing Dattātreya’s chief literary sources in both Sanskrit and Marāṭhī, devotional hymns, thousand names, *avatāras*, ritual and meditative practices, *sampradāya*, and pilgrimage sites; while Keshavadas 1988 is an English anthology on Dattātreya that includes translations of texts such as the *Jīvanmuktagītā*, *Gurugītā*, and *Avadhūtagītā*. Morse 2012 analyzes the normative weight of the *Gurucaritra*, the foundational text of the *Dattasampradāya*, which functions as the veritable *guru* for all Dattātreya devotees. White 1972 was the first to note the relevance of Dattātreya for an understanding of what the author calls the “Sai Baba movement,” while Babu 1981 offers an overview of the deity and his *avatāras*, which is significantly dedicated to Shirdi Sai Baba (d. 1918). Krishnaya 2005 documents the presence of Dattātreya’s cult in the state of Andhra Pradesh: Śrīpād Śrīvallabh, who is venerated as the first *avatāra* of the deity within the *Dattasampradāya*, was born in Pīṭhāpūr in the East Godāvārī district of Andhra Pradesh.

**Babu, Sarath R., ed. *Dattatreya: Glory of the Divine in Man. Dedicated to Lord Sainath of Shirdi. With the Blessings of Acharya Sri E. Bharadwaja. Ongole, India: Sainath Printers, 1981.***

An introductory publication on Dattātreya and his *avatāras*. The *ācārya* Ekkirala Bharadwaja (b. 1938–d. 1989), founder of the Sai Baba Mission in Ongole, Andhra Pradesh, is himself revered as a Dattātreya incarnation.

**Bahadur, Sri Jaya Chamarajendra Wadiyar. *Dattātreya: The Way and the Goal. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1982.***

Originally published in 1957 (London, George Allen & Unwin), this was the first English monograph written on Dattātreya.

**Joshi, Hariprasad Shivprasad. *Origin and Development of Dattātreya Worship in India. Baroda, India: Mahārāja Sayajirao University of Baroda Press, 1965.***

This study is divided into two parts: the first explores the god's origins by tracing its literary sources from the Vedic period up to the Purāṇas and Tantras; the second portrays the development of Dattātreya's worship, from the inception of the *Dattasampradāya* up to 19th- and 20th-century saints who are identified with him.

**Joshi, P. N. *Śrīdattātreyajñānkoś. Bombay: Surekha Prakashan, 1974.***

A veritable encyclopedia on Dattātreya. Written in Marāṭhī, it comprises images of the deity's major icons, *guru* figures, and places of pilgrimage.

**Keshavadas, Sadguru Sant. *Sadguru Dattatreya. Oakland, CA: Vishwa Dharma, 1988.***

This anthology offers an overview of Dattātreya's main Purāṇic stories, saints, yogas, mantras, hymns, and thousand names.

**Krishnayya, M. V. "Dattatreya Worship in the Popular Hinduism of Coastal Andhra." In *Incompatible Visions: South Asian Religions in History and Culture; Essays in Honor of David M. Knipe*. Edited by J. Blumenthal, 171–183. Madison, WI: Center for South Asia, 2005.**

This article offers an overview on the place of Dattātreya in the state of Andhra Pradesh, where the deity is quite popular.

**Morse, Jeremy G. "The Literary Guru: The Dual Emphasis on *Bhakti* and *Vidhi* in Western Indian Guru-Devotion." In *The Guru in South Asia: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Edited by J. Copeman and A. Ikegame, 222–240. London and New York: Routledge, 2012.**

Based on the author's ethnographic work in Maharashtra, this article highlights the function of the *Gurucaritra* as the authoritative *guru* for all contemporary devotees within the Dattātreya cult.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. *Dattātreya: The Immortal Guru, Yogin, and Avatāra: A Study of the Transformative and Inclusive Character of a Multi-Faceted Hindu Deity. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.***

The revised version of the author's PhD thesis, this book is a comprehensive study of Dattātreya from its Purāṇic emergence up to modern times, focusing on its foundational Sanskrit and Marāṭhī texts.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. "Dattātreya." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism. Vol. 1*. Edited by K. A. Jacobsen, H. Basu, A. Malinar, and V. Narayanan, 513–516. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009.**

This article offers a general introduction to the deity.

**White, Charles Sidney John.** “The Sai Baba Movement: Approaches to the Study of Indian Saints.” *Journal of Asian Studies* 31.4 (1972): 863–878.

The first scholar to coin the expression “Sai Baba movement,” linking Shirdi Sai Baba—along with a few disciples and connections of his—to Sathya Sai Baba. C. S. J. White was the first to highlight the relevance of the god Dattātreya and of the poet-saint Kabīr for understanding these charismatic figures.

## The Place of Dattātreya among the Mahānubhāvs

Raeside 1976 offers the first scholarly presentation of the Mahānubhāv sect within its Marāṭhī historical and literary context, while Raeside 1982 focuses on Dattātreya's relevance within it. In Maharashtra, the oldest presence of the deity is in Mahānubhāv literature: this tradition is said to have originally been founded by Dattātreya himself and later to have been refounded by the Brahmin Cakradhar in the thirteenth century. Rigopoulos 2011 provides an introduction to the history, texts, and doctrines of the Mahānubhāvs and highlights their nonconformity to tradition. Novetzke 2016 examines the foundational *Līlācaritra*—i.e., Cakradhar's biography—and dedicates a chapter to Mahānubhāv ethic. Feldhaus 1983 is a critical edition and English translation of the *Sūtrapāṭha*, an epitome of Cakradhar's teachings culled from the *Līlācaritra*. In *Sūtrapāṭh* 10, 282–285, Dattātreya is said to manifest in each of the four ages and to be the first cause of the Mahānubhāv tradition. Feldhaus 1988 offers an overview on the Mahānubhāvs that documents their presence in contemporary Maharashtra. Raeside 1989 is the English translation of the *Gadyarāja*, a 14th-century Marāṭhī version of the Kṛṣṇa legend: five verses of it (232–236) are devoted to Dattātreya and refer to his epic and Purāṇic legends as well as to his connection with Paraśurāma. Kolte 1964 is an edition of the 14th-century *Sahyādrīvarṇan*, a Mahānubhāv source on Dattātreya and his pilgrimage place of Mātāpur/Mahur. It also includes as an appendix the *Sahyādralīlā*, seven short prose stories concerning Dattātreya. Feldhaus 1984 offers the edition and English translation of the late-13th-century *Ṛddhipurcaritra* centered on the life of Guṇḍam Rāuḷ, the most strange and unorthodox of the five manifestations of Parameśvar (*pañcakṛṣṇas*). This account is especially revealing since the model of his behavior as a madman and as one possessed by demons is Dattātreya in his well-known characterization as a child (*bāla*), an intoxicated lunatic (*unmatta*), and a demon (*piśāca*). Skultans 1991 focuses on the reputation of Mahānubhāv temples as healing centers, which is also a characteristic of Dattātreya temples.

**Feldhaus, Anne.** “The Orthodoxy of the Mahanubhavs.” In *The Experience of Hinduism: Essays on Religion in Maharashtra*. Edited by E. Zelliott and M. Berntsen, 264–279. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.

The article presents the main features of the Mahānubhāvs by focusing on their present-day situation. In its last paragraph, the author poses an intriguing theological question: If only the presence (*sannidhāna*) of an *avatāra* of Parameśvar can grant one liberation (*mokṣa*), how can 20th-century Mahānubhāvs hope for salvation given that there has been no *avatāra* of Parameśvar since the end of the 13th century?

**Feldhaus, Anne, ed. and trans.** *The Religious System of the Mahānubhāva Sect: The Mahānubhāva Sūtrapāṭha*. New Delhi: Manohar, 1983.

An epitome of Cakradhar's teachings produced by Kesobās around the end of the thirteenth century. This collection of aphorisms is the “Bible” for all Mahānubhāvs and was culled from the *Līlācaritra* under Nāgdev's direction. It consists of nine short chapters and four longer ones.

**Feldhaus, Anne, ed. and trans.** *The Deeds of God in Ṛddhipur*. With Introductory Essays by A. Feldhaus and E. Zelliott. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984.

The *Ṛddhipurcaritra*, “The Deeds [of God] in Ṛddhipur,” is ascribed to Mhāim̐bhaṭ and dates to the late thirteenth century. It consists of over three hundred stories narrating episodes in the life of Guṇḍam Rāuḷ.

**Kolte, V. B., ed.** *Ravalobāskṛta Sahyādrīvarṇan*. Poona University Press: Poona, 1964.

A Mahānubhāv source in 517 *ovī* verses on Dattātreya and his pilgrimage place of Mātāpur/Mahur, composed by Ravalobās around 1333.

**Novetzke, Christian Lee.** *The Quotidian Revolution: Vernacularization, Religion, and the Premodern Public Sphere in India.* New York: Columbia University Press, 2016.

The author examines the pivotal moment of vernacularization by investigating courtly donative Marāṭhī inscriptions alongside the first extant texts of Marāṭhī literature, such as the *Līācaritra*.

**Raeside, Ian M. P.** “The Mahānubhāvas.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 39 (1976): 585–600.

The first scholarly article to portray the Maharashtrian sect of the Mahānubhāvs and its historical and literary relevance.

**Raeside, Ian M. P.** “Dattātreya.” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 45 (1982): 489–500.

A seminal article on the place of Dattātreya in the literature of the ascetic and devotional movement of the Mahānubhāvs. The deity is revered as one of the five manifestations (*pañcakrṣṇas*) of Parameśvar.

**Raeside, Ian M. P., trans.** *Gadyarāja: A Fourteenth Century Marāṭhī Version of the Kṛṣṇa Legend.* Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1989.

A poem of 279 *ślokas* dated to c. 1320 and ascribed to Hayagrīvācārya. Five verses of it are devoted to Dattātreya and refer to his epic and Purāṇic legends as well as to his connection with Paraśurāma, for which the only Sanskrit parallel is in the *Reṇukāmāhātmya*, an appendage to the *Sahyādrīkhaṇḍa* of the *Skanda Purāṇa*.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio.** *The Mahānubhāvs.* London: Anthem Press, 2011.

An introduction to the history, texts, and doctrines of the Mahānubhāvs, who believe in five manifestations of the one god Parameśvar. A possible solution to the theological crux of the impossibility of achieving liberation in the absence of an *avatāra* of Parameśvar lies in the belief of Dattātreya’s eternal—though most often hidden—presence—i.e. his everlasting *avatārahood*.

**Skultans, Vieda.** “Gender and Experience of Affliction: Family Relations, Beliefs and Attitudes towards Mental Illness in Maharashtra.” In *Gender, Caste and Power in South Asia: Social Status and Mobility in a Transitional Society.* Edited by J. P. Neelsen, 139–171. New Delhi: Manohar, 1991.

Mahānubhāv temples, Dattātreya temples, and the tombs (*dargās*) of Muslim holy men have a reputation as healing centers. The author’s findings are based on her field research at the Mahānubhāv temple of Paiṭhaṇ, renowned both for its healing powers and trance-inducing properties.

## The *Dattasampradāya* or the Tradition of Datta Followers and the Foundational *Gurucaritra*

Where 1964 is the first scholarly work to present the origin and development of Dattātreya as a deity and a tradition within its Marāṭhī cultural milieu. Deák 2005 investigates the link between Eknāth (b. 1533–d. 1599) and his *guru* Janārdan Svāmī/Chānd Bodhle, who in Marāṭhī sources appears as a *faqīr* of Muslim background and is understood to be an *avatāra* of Dattātreya. Kāmat 1990 is the standard edition of the *Gurucaritra*, “Life of the Master,” written by Sarasvatī Gaṅgādhara around 1550. It is divided into fifty-one chapters containing more than seven thousand verses (*ovīs*) and presents the lives of Śrīpād Śrīvallabh (b. c. 1323–d. 1353) and Nrsiṃha Sarasvatī (b. c. 1378–d. 1458), the two saints venerated as the first historical *avatāras* of Dattātreya. Rao 1995 offers an abridged English version of the *Gurucaritra*. Rigopoulos 2005 investigates the significance of the insertion of the Sanskrit poem of the *Gurugītā* within the Marāṭhī *Gurucaritra*. Morse 2017 shows how the origin and development of the *Dattasampradāya* was due to the combination of multiple literary, social, religious, and political factors that led to the amalgamation of devotion and *śāstric* ritual in the tradition’s texts and practices, while Morse 2019 examines this peculiar *śāstric bhakti* highlighting how the *Gurucaritra* promotes an

articulate vision of ritual activity and devotion to the *guru*. With regard to Brahmanical orthodoxy, it is significant that Dattātreya figures as the author of a law-book (*dharmaśāstra*; see P. Olivelle, ed. and trans. *Rules and Regulations of Brahmanical Asceticism: Yatidharmasamuccaya of Yādava Prakāśa* [Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995]). Yeolekar 2014 explores the various ways in which contemporary urban *bhaktas* within the Dattātreya tradition ritualize the *Gurucaritra* so that it may respond effectively to their everyday needs, while Yeolekar 2022 presents the contemporary ritual practices that are centered upon the *audumbar* tree, thought to be especially sacred to Dattātreya. Bhatt 2019 is a recent hagiography from Andhra Pradesh on the life of Śrīpād Śrīvallabh, proving the vitality of the *Dattasampradāya*. The claim is that it was written during Śrīpād Śrīvallabh's lifetime and that from the fourteenth century it was kept secret, being meant to come to light during the 33rd generation of his maternal grandfather, which would have happened in 2001.

**Bhatt, Shankar. *Sripada Srivallabha Charitamrutam: Biography of a Dattatreya-Avatar*. Foreword by Dr. K. Parvathi Kumar. Münster, Germany: Kulapati, 2019.**

This contemporary hagiography from Andhra Pradesh on the life of Śrīpād Śrīvallabh was originally published in Telugu. Besides this English translation, there also exists a German one.

**Deák, Dušan. "Maharashtra Saints and the Sufi Tradition: Eknāth, Chānd Bodhle and the Datta Sampradāya." *Journal of Deccan Studies* 3.2 (2005): 22–47.**

This article explores Eknāth's hagiographical accounts, showing how the characterization of his master Janārdan Svāmī/Chānd Bodhle as a Sufi and as a Dattātreya incarnation are inextricably related.

**Ḍhere, Rāmacandra Cintāmaṇa. *Datta Sampradāyācā Itihāsa*. Puṇe, India: Nīlkaṅṭh Prakāśan, 1964.**

In this seminal work, the author views the *Dattasampradāya* as a response of medieval society to the fragmentation between *vaiṣṇavas* and *śaivas* and the encounter with Islam.

**Kāmat, Rāmacandra Kṛṣṇa, ed. *Gurucaritra*. Bombay: Ḍhavlē Prakāśan, 1990.**

The standard edition of the Marāṭhī *Gurucaritra*, the foundational text of the *Dattasampradāya*.

**Morse, Jeremy G. "Devotion According to the Rules: Guru-Bhakti in the Texts and Practices of the *Datta Sampradāya*." PhD diss, University of Chicago, 2017.**

The author investigates a wide range of literary, social, religious, and political forces that were at work in 15th- to 17th-century western India and how their combination contributed to the rise and development of the *Dattasampradāya*.

**Morse, Jeremy G. "The *Datta Saṃpradāya* and Its Others." In *Regional Communities of Devotion in South Asia: Insiders, Outsiders, and Interlopers*. Edited by G. Ben-Herut, J. Keune, and A. E. Monius, 137–159. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.**

This article examines *śāstric bhakti* in the *Dattasampradāya*. It points out that its scripture, the *Gurucaritra*, displays special concern about the conduct of unorthodox Brahmins and their errant behavior, such as overlooking caste distinctions.

**Rao, K. V. R., trans. *Guru Charitra*. Apta, Panvel, India: Shree Swami Samartha Vishwa Kalyan Kendra, 1995.**

One of the few abridged English versions of the Marāṭhī *Gurucaritra*. For another one, see B. Ramabai Shenoi, ed. and trans., *Sri Guru Charithra* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1994).

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. "The *Guru-gītā* or 'Song of the Master' as Incorporated in the *Guru-caritra* of Sarasvatī Gaṅgādhara: Observations on Its Teachings and the *Guru Institute*." In *Theory and Practice of Yoga: Essays in Honour of Gerald James***

**Larson.** Edited by K. A. Jacobsen, 237–292. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2005.

The article presents the articulation of the *Gurugītā*'s three ideal phases in the master-disciple relationship, highlighting the context in which the hymn was inserted within the *Gurucaritra* and the significance of this appropriation.

**Yeolekar, Mugdha.** “Gurucaritra Pārāyaṇ: Social Praxis of Religious Reading.” PhD diss., Arizona State University, 2014.

This study is based on ethnographic work done in Maharashtra during 2010–2012. It analyzes the many ways in which devotees of the *Dattasampradāya*, particularly in urban contexts, ritualize their foundational text in terms of everyday issues and concerns.

**Yeolekar, Mugdha.** “Texts and Trees: Ritual Engagements with Audumbar Tree in the *Dattatreya Sampradāya*.” In *Religion and Sustainability: Interreligious Resources, Interdisciplinary Responses; Intersection of Sustainability Studies and Religion, Theology, Philosophy*. Edited by R. D. Sherma and P. Bilimoria, 127–134. Berlin: Springer, 2022.

By focusing on the ritual practices centered upon the *audumbar* tree in the *Dattasampradāya*, this article examines the idea that as much as humans can change the existence of trees, trees can change the course of action for humans.

## The Presence of Dattātreya in Marāṭhī Literature and Culture

Bouillier 2017 offers a comprehensive survey of the pan-Indian Nāth tradition in which Dattātreya plays a noticeable role, particularly in its Western branch. The book focuses on the Nāths present organization and explores the dialectics between the wandering *yogīs* and the monastic settlements. Loṅkar 1995 investigates the Maharashtrian traditions of both the Nāths and the Saints. Abbott 1981 offers an English translation of the hagiographical account of Mahīpati (b. 1715–d. 1790) on the life of the 16th-century poet-saint Eknāth in which Dattātreya manifests himself at crucial junctures, while Keune 2021 critically compares multiple versions of stories about Eknāth—in traditional texts as well as in plays and movies—and examines the social significance of sharing food. Abbott 1927 provides an English translation of the anonymous and incomplete 17th- or 18th-century *Dāsopant Caritra* on the life of the poet-saint Dāsopant (b. 1551–d. 1615), a most prolific writer whom tradition extols as an *avatāra* of Dattātreya. Deák 2010 concentrates on the representations of Dattātreya as a Muslim *faqīr* and argues that such portrayals of the deity are the outcome of negotiations between various religious actors and groups. *Śrī Dattaprabodh* 1999 was written in 1860 by Anantasūta alias Kavaḍībābā (b. 1776–d. 1863), a famous *bhakta* of Dattātreya, and consists of sixty-one chapters for a total of more than fourteen thousand verses. One fourth of the *Dattaprabodh* is devoted to stories of saints (*siddhas*) associated with the deity. *Śrī Gurulīlāmṛt* 2016 is another prominent work which was written in 1863 by Vāmanrāo Vāmorikar and focuses on the life of the Svāmī of Akkalkoṭ (d. 1878), who is revered as the third historical *avatāra* of the deity within the *Dattasampradāya*. Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī 1999, the “Glorification of Lord Datta,” in 5,513 verses, is a popular text and presents the main Purāṇic deeds of the god, while Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī 1954 portrays the life and works of Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī (b. 1854–d. 1914), an important figure in the *Dattasampradāya* of the nineteenth and early twentieth century who wrote in both Marāṭhī and Sanskrit: his devotees and pupils—among whom is Raṅga Avadhūta (b. 1898–d. 1968)—exercise a noticeable influence on the present-day practice of religion in Maharashtra.

**Abbott, Justin E., trans.** *Dāsopant Digambar: Translation of the Dasopant Charitra. Poet-Saints of Maharashtra Series 4.* Pune, India: Scottish Mission Industries, 1927.

The anonymous and incomplete *Dāsopant Caritra* is our only available source on the poet-saint Dāsopant. He is credited with a *Dattamāhātmya* and various collections of devotional hymns to Dattātreya.

**Abbott, Justin E.** *The Life of Eknāth: Śrī Eknāth Charita. Translated from the Bhaktalīlāmṛta.* Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1981.

The hagiographer Mahīpati offers accounts of the *darśans* that Dattātreya, as a Muslim soldier and a *faqīr*, granted to the poet-saint Eknāth. He also narrates stories of the meetings between Eknāth and Dāsopant, in which Dattātreya appears to the latter as the guardian of Eknāth's house. First published 1927.

**Bouillier, Véronique.** *Monastic Wanderers: Nāth Yogī Ascetics in Modern South Asia.* London and New York: Routledge, 2017.

An in-depth survey of this pluri-secular tradition of asceticism which is said to have been founded by Gorakhnāth, known for his strong link to *haṭhayoga*. The history and expansion of the Nāth sect are linked to its rich legendary corpus.

**Deák, Dušan. “Śahādat or Śahā Datta? Locating the Mysterious Fakir in the Marathi texts.” In *Muslim Cultures in the Indo-Iranian World during the Early-Modern and Modern Periods*. Edited by D. Hermann and F. Speziale, 501–532. Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2010.**

This article focuses on Dattātreya being represented as a Muslim *faqīr* and points out that such depiction evolved gradually, reflecting the sociocultural changes in premodern and early modern South Asia.

**Keune, Jon. *Shared Devotion, Shared Food: Equality and the Bhakti-Caste Question in Western India*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.**

This book explores the relationship between inclusive religious imagery and the hard realities of social hierarchy. The author provides an in-depth study of several stories about Eknāth, reviewing its different versions across time.

**Loṅkar, B. M. *Śrī Dattagurū Yañcā Nāth Sampradāy āṇi Sādhu Santānce Kāryacī Mimāṃsā*. Puṇe, India: Vimalābāi Loṅkar, 1995.**

A study on the significance of Dattātreya as the primeval divine teacher (*ādiguru*) within the yogic tradition of the Nāths and the Maharashtrian Sant tradition.

**Śrī Dattaprabodh: *Dattāvatār Māhātmyāce Subodh Nirupaṇ*. Puṇe, India: Sārathī Prakāśan, 1999.**

Influenced by both the Nāth and Vārkarī traditions, the style of this text is more philosophical than that of the *Gurucaritra*.

**Śrī Gurulīlāmṛt. Mumbai: Dharmik Prakāśan Sansthā, 2016.**

This popular text presents the life and deeds of the Svāmī of Akkalkoṭ, popularly known as Svāmī Samarth, believed to be the third incarnation of Dattātreya after Śrīpād Śrīvallabh and Nṛsiṃha Sarasvatī.

**Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī. *Datta-Purāṇa and Other Works, Together with His Biography Gurudeva-caritra*. V. D. Gulwani: Puṇe, India, 1954.**

An eminent figure of the modern *Dattasampradāya*, Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī wrote important texts such as the *Dattapurāṇa* (i.e., the *Dattamāhātmya*), the *Gurusamhitā*, and the *Dvisahasrī*. For an Italian translation of one of his Sanskrit hymns, see A. Rigopoulos, “Il *Dattāparādhakṣamāpanastotra* di Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī,” in *Atti del X Convegno Nazionale di Studi Sanscriti*, edited by O. Botto, R. Perinu, and V. Agostini (Torino: Cesmeo, 2003), pp. 119–39.

**Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī. *Śrī Dattamāhātmya*. Puṇe, India: Siddhayog Prakāśan, 1999.**

This “Glorification of Lord Datta” offers a comprehensive survey of the main Purāṇic stories of the deity.

## Sanskrit Texts Related to Dattātreya

Dīkṣit 1975 is an edition and commentary of the *Dattātreyantra*, possibly dating to the twelfth century, in which Lord Śiva instructs Dattātreya on magical spells and alchemical practices, including the six acts for inflicting various kinds of injury on enemies. Mallinson and Singleton 2017 explores the significance of the circa 13th-century *Dattātreya yogaśāstra*, reputed to be the earliest work to teach both the eightfold system of Patañjali’s classical *aṣṭāṅgayoga* and the physical methods of *haṭhayoga*. Dalādanamuni 1999 is an Italian translation of a hymn (*laharī*) in 102 stanzas that magnifies Dattātreya. Though a late composition perhaps dating between the

seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, its author is celebrated as one of the oldest worshippers of the deity. Ashokananda 1988 and Thomi 1996 offer an English and German translation, respectively, of the popular *Avadhūtagītā*, a nondualist poem of possibly Nāth inspiration in 289 stanzas divided into eight chapters, tentatively dating to the seventeenth or eighteenth century. Kavirāj 1965 is an edition of the *jñānakhaṇḍa*, or “section on knowledge,” of the *Tripurārahasya*, “The Secret of [the Goddess] Tripurā,” a late medieval *śākta* text from South India in 2,163 stanzas divided into twenty-two chapters in which Dattātreya figures in the role of supreme teacher, while Saraswathi 1959 offers the first English translation of the *Tripurārahasya*’s *jñānakhaṇḍa*. Rigopoulos 1996 is an annotated translation of a nondual *śaiva* poem in twenty-four verses attributed to Dattātreya, the late *Jīvanmuktāgītā*, “The Song of the Liberated-in-Life.” Śāstrī 1987 is a 20th-century presentation of Dattātreya’s “system of thought,” while Ācārya 1953 provides a fine collection of Dattātreya hymns.

**Ācārya, Nārāyaṇ Rām (Kāvyaīrth), ed. *Bṛhatstotraratnākara*. Vol. 2. Bombay: Nirnaya Sagar Press, 1953.**

This anthology comprises a collection of Dattātreya hymns such as the *Dattalaharī*, the *Dattāmapūjāstotra*, the *Dattavedapādastuti*, the *Dattātreyaḥkṛtīrūpaṇastotra*, and the *Śrīdattātreyaḥkṛtīrūpaṇastotra*. See pp. 589–630.

**Ashokananda, Swami, trans. *Avadhūta Gītā (Song of the Free)*. Madras, India: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1988.**

An English translation of a late nondualist text of possibly Nāth inspiration. For the Sanskrit edition of this work ascribed to the immortal *guru* Dattātreya, see *Śrīdattātreyaḥkṛtīrūpaṇastotra (Avadhūtagītā)*, *Bhāṣāṅgīkāḥvivecana-karttā* (Ahmedabad: Vedāntakavi Hīrālāl Jadavarāya Buca, 1923).

**Dalādanamuni. *Dattalaharī: L'onda di Datta*. Edited by Antonio Rigopoulos. Venice: Cafoscarina, 1999.**

Italian translation of a hymn in the deity’s praise. It appears to be a late composition, though its author, the Brahmin ascetic Dalādanamuni, is traditionally thought to be one of the oldest worshippers of Dattātreya.

**Dīkṣit, Rājeś, ed. *Dattātreyaṅtram: Bhāṣāṅgīkāyā Sametam*. Delhi: Dehātī Pustak Bhaṇḍār, 1975.**

In this medieval text, Śiva instructs Dattātreya on various magical and alchemical practices. On the *Dattātreyaṅtra*, see also Jīvananda Bhaṭṭa, *Indrajālavidyāsaṃgraha* (Calcutta, 1915), pp. 132–179.

**Kavirāj, Gopināth, ed. *Tripurārahasya (Jñānakhaṇḍa): With the Commentary Tātparyadīpikā by Śrīnivāsa*. Varanasi, India: Varanaseya Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, 1965.**

The *Tripurārahasya*, “The Secret of [the Goddess] Tripurā,” is said to be an abbreviated version of an original *Dattasaṃhitā* in 18,000 verses ascribed to Dattātreya. There are several critical editions of its “section on knowledge” (*jñānakhaṇḍa*); one was published by Kavirāj himself together with Nārāyaṇ Śāstrī Khiste (Varanasi, 1925–1928).

**Mallinson, James, and Mark Singleton. *Roots of Yoga*. London: Penguin, 2017.**

In this anthology of *yoga* texts, the authors examine the *vaiṣṇava* *Dattātreyaḥkṛtīrūpaṇastotra*, a 13th-century treatise that integrates Patañjali’s classical *yoga* with *haṭhayoga*, *mantrayoga*, and *layayoga*. James Mallinson’s “Dattātreya’s Discourse on *yoga*,” a translation based on his critical edition of the Sanskrit text, is forthcoming.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. “Notes on the *Jīvanmuktāgītā* and the Concept of Living Liberation.” *Asiatica Venetiana* 1 (1996): 129–140.**

The article offers an annotated translation of the short *Jīvanmuktāgītā*, “The Song of the Liberated-in-Life.” The poem is attributed to Dattātreya and possibly dates to the eighteenth century.



**Saraswathi, Swami Sri Ramananda (Sri Munagala S. Venkataramaiah), trans. *Tripurā Rahasya; or, The Mystery beyond the Trinity*. Tiruvannamalai, India: Sri Ramanasramam, 1959.**

This is the first English translation of the *jñānakhaṇḍa* of the *Tripurārahasya*. For a fine, more recent Italian translation, see *Il segreto della Dea Tripurā. Sezione sulla gnosi*, Traduzione, introduzione e note a cura di A. Pelissero (Torino: Ananke, 1995).

**Śāstrī, Mukunda Lāl, ed. *Kāthabodha: Sājanikṛtaṅkopetaḥ; On Dattātreya System of Thought with the Commentary of Sājanī*. Re-edited with Hindī Translation and Preface by Mahāprabhulāl Gosvāmī. Varanasi, India: Chowkamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1987.**

Originally published in 1926, this apparently late text edited by a Sāṃkhya-Yoga scholar (*śāstrācārya*) extols Dattātreya's "system of thought" by portraying the deity's role as supreme *yogin* and renouncer who teaches liberating knowledge.

**Thomi, Peter, ed. *Avadhūtagītā: Sanskrit-deutsch*. Wichtrach, Switzerland: Institut für Indologie, 1996.**

A German translation and commentary of the *Avadhūtagītā*, with detailed notes on its style and metrics and a *pāda* index. This edition avails itself of manuscripts that are part of the Nepal-German-Manuscript-Preservation-Project (NGMPP).

## Pilgrimage Places of Dattātreya

Feldhaus 2023 offers an in-depth appreciation of religious geography, contextualizing the Dattātreya pilgrimage places (*tīrthas*) in the various regions of the Marāṭhī cultural area. Mate 1988 and Kulkarnī, n.d. provide a presentation of Gāṇagāpur and its Dattātreya temple, detailing its ritual activity: located at the confluence of the Bhīma and Amarajā Rivers, in the Afzalpur *taluk* of Gulbarga district in the State of Karnataka, this is the most important pilgrimage site of the *Dattasampradāya*. Jere 2000 is an account of the Dattātreya pilgrimage site of Nṛsimhavāḍī, also known as Narsobāvāḍī, located on the banks of the Kṛṣṇā River close to the Jayasingpur station on the Miraj-Kolhapur railway. *Śrī Kṣetra Audumbar Darśan* offers a sketch of a third, most important, pilgrimage place of Dattātreya—i.e., Audumbar located near Sāṅglī, on the western bank of the Kṛṣṇā River in the vicinity of Bhilavāḍī, Palus *taluk*. Gāṇagāpur, Nṛsimhavāḍī, and Audumbar all derive their sacredness from the fact that Nṛsimha Sarasvatī, the veritable founder of the *Dattasampradāya*, resided in these locales. Deśpāṇḍe 1969 presents the pilgrimage place of Kuravpūr, located on the banks of the Kṛṣṇā River not far from Raichur, in the Raichur district of the state of Karnataka. This site was sanctified by the presence of Śrīpād Śrīvallabh, the first historical *avatāra* of Dattātreya. The *Gurucaritra* narrates that it was here that he "left the body" by disappearing in the waters of the river. White 1996 highlights the relevance of Dattātreya temples and pilgrimage places beyond the Marāṭhī cultural area: on the peak of Girmār, an ancient hill in Junagadh in the state of Gujarat, and on Mount Abu, in the state of Rajasthan. These places of worship evidence the deity's connection to the Nāth Siddha lineages of Western India. Rigopoulos 1999 focuses on the characterization of Dattātreya temples and *tīrthas* as places of exorcism and liberation from spirits (*bhūts*) and demons (*pretas*, *piśācas*), practices that are regarded as impure and non-Brahmanical. Saptarshi 1988 and Sikand 2003 document cases of the clash between orthodox Brahmins and Dalits as well as the Muslim minority over access to and control of Dattātreya shrines.

**Deśpāṇḍe, S. S. *Siddhabhumī Kuravpūr*. Puṇe, India: Śrīpād Gaṅgādhār Jośī, 1969.**

A presentation of the holy site of Kuravpūr on the banks of the river Kṛṣṇā. This place is sacred to all Dattātreya devotees, having been sanctified by Śrīpād Śrīvallabh's presence.

**Feldhaus, Anne. *Connected Places: Region, Pilgrimage, and Geographical Imagination in India*. Delhi: Primus Books, 2023.**

This study draws upon the author's decades of experience visiting holy places in Maharashtra. The region's receptivity to influences from both the north and the south has contributed to the development of a unique cultural area with a profound sense of unity in diversity.

**Jere, R. S. *Śrī Kṣetra Nṛsimhavāḍī Darśan*. Sāṅglī, India: Gokhale Granth Prakāśan, 2000.**

An account of the Dattātreya pilgrimage place of Nṛsimhavādī and its main temple, detailing its ritual activities. It is known as *sarvatīrtha* and was sanctified by the presence of Nṛsimha Sarasvatī. The temple houses his *pādukās*.

**Kulkarnī, C. S. *Śrī Kṣetra Gāṇagāpur Māhātmya kimvā Varṇan*. Belgaum, India: Sarasvatī Pustak Bhāṇḍār, n.d.**

An account of the major pilgrimage site of the *Dattasampradāya*, detailing its ritual activities, where Nṛsimha Sarasvatī resided for more than twenty years and where his *pādukās* are worshipped.

**Mate, M. S. *Temples and Legends of Maharashtra*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1988. 79–101.**

In this book, originally published in 1962, the author dedicates a chapter to the pilgrimage site of Gāṇagāpur and offers a description of its main ritual activities, focusing on the significance of *pādukā* worship.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. "Forms of Possession in the Marāṭhī Cultural Area: The Cases of Khaṇḍobā and Dattātreya." In *Shamanic Cosmos: From India to the North Pole Star*. Edited by R. Mastromattei and A. Rigopoulos, 207–220. New Delhi: D.K. Printworld, 1999.**

A characteristic of Dattātreya pilgrimage sites is their reputation as places of exorcism. People believed to be possessed by evil spirits or to be victims of black magic (*karrī*), especially women, come to these places in great numbers in hopes of being healed by the deity.

**Saptarshi, Kumar. "Orthodoxy and Human Rights: The Story of a Clash." In *The Experience of Hinduism: Essays on Religion in Maharashtra*. Edited by E. Zelliot and M. Berntsen, 251–263. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.**

An account of the clash between Brahmanical orthodoxy and Dalit and low-caste communities that took place in the mid-1970s at the Dattātreya temple at Shedgao in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, famous as a healing center that attracts people believed to be affected by evil possession.

**Sikand, Yoginder. *Sacred Spaces: Exploring Traditions of Shared Faith in India*. Delhi: Penguin, 2003.**

In a chapter of this book ("Sri Guru Dattatreya Baba Budhan Dargah," pp. 53–68), the author examines the controversy over the control of a disputed shrine of Dattātreya in the mountainous locale of Baba Budhan Giri in the Chikmagalur district of southern Karnataka.

**Śrī Kṣetra Audumbar Darśan (Paricai āṇi Nityakram)**. Sāṅglī, India: Gokhale Granth Prakāśan, n.d.

A Marāṭhī booklet on the Dattātreya shrine of Audumbar, detailing its ritual activities. Nṛsimha Sarasvatī is reported to have resided here under an *audumbar* tree during the four months (*caturmāsya*) of the rainy season.

**White, David Gordon. *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.**

This groundbreaking work documents the place of Dattātreya within Nāth Siddha lineages and literature and links it to important pilgrimage places of the deity such as the ones on the hill of Girnār, in Gujarat, and on Mount Abu in Rajasthan.

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## The Iconography of Dattātreya

Rigopoulos 1998 offers an introduction to Dattātreya's iconography over the centuries, from its oldest one-headed (*ekmukhī*) portrayals to its modern three-headed (*trimukhī*) representations. Kunden 1997 provides a comprehensive survey of the temples that house one-headed images of Dattātreya both in the Marāṭhī cultural area as well as in Himachal Pradesh and Nepal. Auer and Gutschow 1974 comprises an examination of the Dattātreya temple in Bhaktapur, Nepal: located in today's Dattātreya Square, it was built around the middle of the fifteenth century by the Malla ruler Jayayakṣa (b. 1428–d. 1482). Mathothu 1974 and Rigopoulos 2014 present the origin and development of the concept of *trimūrti* (lit. "having three forms") which is seminal to an understanding of Dattātreya's three-headed

portrayal. The first representations of the triad of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva—each with his own distinctive marks—date from around the sixth or seventh centuries CE. Sibal 2016, Tulpule 1991, and Rigopoulos 2010 present some fundamental attributes (*lakṣaṇas*) of the deity's iconography: the cow, understood to be none other than Kāmadhenu—the mythical wish-fulfilling cow that was produced at the churning of the ocean (*samudramathana*)—three or four dogs that are said to represent the *Vedas*—Dattātreya's connection with dogs is old, dating back to the thirteenth century in Mahānubhāv literature—and the *audumbar* tree under which the god is believed to constantly reside. Pain and Zelliott 1988 offers an account of the Dattātreya temples present in the city of Puṇe around the end of the 1960s—most of these were built at the beginning of the twentieth century and house the god's wooden sandals or footprints (*pādukās*), the main focus of worship in all Dattātreya temples. Rush 2022 offers a testimony of the deity's ubiquitous nature, documenting the presence of Dattātreya's iconography along the West African coast: the local, multi-headed deity known as Densu, husband of the water spirit Mami Wata who is the bestower of wealth and beauty, is understood by Hindus to be none other than Dattātreya who travels from India across the waters to the West African coast and back at his spouse's behest.

**Auer, Gerhard, and Niels Gutschow. *Bhaktapur: Gestalt, Funktionen, und religiöse Symbolik einer nepalischen Stadt im vorindustriellen Entwicklungsstadium*. Darmstadt, Germany: Technische Hochschule, 1974.**

This study on Bhaktapur/Bhatgaon in Nepal comprises an examination of its Dattātreya temple which is one of the town's oldest temples, housing a one-headed (*ekmukhī*), two-handed (*dvibāhu*) icon of the god.

**Kunden, H. N. *Ekmukhī Śrīdatta*. Puṇe, India: Uihās Cintāmaṇī Lāṭkar, 1997.**

This rich resource in Marāṭhī offers an overview of sixty-one temples with one-headed (*ekmukhī*) images of the deity in Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Bhaktapur, Nepal. The author argues that the *ekmukhī* images of Dattātreya are the oldest, whereas his three-headed representations are of recent origin.

**Mathothu, Kurian. *The Development of the Concept of Trimūrti in Hinduism*. Palai, Kerala, India: St. Paul's Press Training School, 1974.**

This work is the author's dissertation, presented to the Pontifical Urbanian University of Rome in 1971. It is one of the rare monographs on the subject of *trimūrti*, also attempting to formulate an Indian Christian theology.

**Pain, Charles, with Eleanor Zelliott. "The God Dattatreya and the Datta Temples of Pune." In *The Experience of Hinduism: Essays on Religion in Maharashtra*. Edited by E. Zelliott and M. Berntsen, 95–108. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988.**

An insight on the contemporary Dattātreya cult, typically urban and Brahmin-dominated, based upon the author's stay in Puṇe in 1969. The most popular Dattātreya temple is said to be the Dagadu Halwai Datta Mandir. The one-headed Kala Datta Mandir in Kasba Peth is revered as an especially old temple.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. *Dattātreya: The Immortal Guru, Yogin, and Avatāra: A Study of the Transformative and Inclusive Character of a Multi-Faceted Hindu Deity*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998.**

This book includes a chapter ("The Development of Dattātreya's Iconography," pp. 223–248) that presents the development of Dattātreya's iconography over the centuries, from its oldest one-headed form up to its three-headed portrayal, which became popular from the sixteenth century onward.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. "The Sanctity of the *Audumbar* in Mahārāṣṭra." In *Tīrthayātrā: Essays in Honour of Stefano Piano*. Edited by P. Caracchi, A. S. Comba, A. Consolaro, and A. Pelissero, 349–365. Alessandria, Italy: Edizioni dell'Orso, 2010.**

Dattātreya is often depicted as standing or sitting cross-legged under an *audumbar* tree. Said to symbolize renunciation and higher wisdom, he is thought to always reside in its shade, albeit invisibly. This article focuses on the symbolical significance of the *audumbar* in the *Gurucaritra* and the deity's cult.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. "Trimūrti." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism*. Vol. 6. Edited by K. A. Jacobsen, H. Basu, A. Malinar, and V. Narayanan, 81–90. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2014.**

This article examines the origin and development of the concept of *trimūrti* and helps to contextualize the emergence of Dattātreya's three-headed iconography. From at least the sixteenth century, the *trimukhī* Dattātreya is worshipped as the embodiment of the *trimūrti*.

**Rush, Dana. "India Spirits, Hounkpodé Baba, and Powers of the Sea in the Republic of Bénin." In *Devotional Spaces of a Global Saint: Shirdi Sai Baba's Presence*. Edited by S. Srinivas, N. Jeychandran, and A. F. Roberts, 202–208. London and New York: Routledge, 2022.**

This article documents the fascinating presence of Dattātreya's iconography along the West African coast of the Republics of Togo and Bénin.

**Sibal, Rajni Sekhri. *Kamadhenu: Cows of India*. New Delhi: Wisdom Tree, 2016.**

This book offers an overview of the symbolism of the cow in Indian culture. The cow's presence in Dattātreya's iconography developed under the influence of the *Dattasampradāya* in the sixteenth century. The animal is a symbol of Brahmanical orthodoxy, of Mother Earth, and is worshipped as a form of the goddess (*devī*).

**Tulpule, Shankar Gopal. "The Dog as a Symbol of Bhakti." In *Devotion Divine: Bhakti Traditions from the Regions of India: Studies in Honor of Charlotte Vaudeville*. Edited by D. L. Eck and F. Mallison, 273–285. Groningen, The Netherlands: Egbert Forsten, 1991.**

An essay on the dog in Marāṭhī religious literature. In Dattātreya's iconography, the deity is surrounded by three or four dogs. In Maharashtra no other deity besides Kāḷ Bhairav and Khaṇḍobā is so closely associated with dogs, generally regarded as a symbol of impurity.

## Modern and Contemporary *Gurus* Identified with Dattātreya

Dīkṣit 2004 is a biography of the saint of Akkalkoṭ, also known as Svāmī Samarth (d. 1878), revered as the third historical *avatāra* of Dattātreya after Śrīpād Śrīvallabh and Nṛsiṃha Sarasvatī. Often exhibiting a childlike (*bāla*) and mad (*unmatta*) behavior, he is famous for his miraculous powers. Sonde 1995 is a biography of Māṇikprabhu (b. 1817–d. 1865), a saint from Māṇiknagar near Gulbarga. Like the devotees of the saint of Akkalkoṭ, the followers of Māṇikprabhu worship him as the third historical *avatāra* of Dattātreya. Fuchs 1992 presents the figure of Vāsudev Balvant Phaḍke (b. 1845–d. 1883), leader of an anti-British movement who was recognized as an *avatāra* of Śivāji (b. 1630–d. 1680) and a saint within the Dattātreya cult. Kher 1994 is a biography of Pant Mahārāj (b. 1855–d. 1905), an ascetic (*avadhūta*) revered as an *avatāra* of Dattātreya. His ashram is located in the village of Balekundri on the outskirts of Belgaum in the State of Karnataka. Joṣī, n.d. presents the life and works of the orthodox Brahmin Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī (b. 1854–d. 1914), a great saint within the *Dattasampradāya* and the chief contributor to its literary development in modern times. His devotees and pupils—among whom is Raṅga Avadhūta (b. 1898–d. 1968)—exercise a noticeable influence on the present-day practice of religion in Maharashtra. Conlon 1982 sketches the life of Svāmī Pāṇḍuraṅgāśram (b. 1847–d. 1915), eighth *guru* of the Chitrapur Saraswat Brahmin community in Shirali, in the North Kanara district of the State of Karnataka: a *yogin*, a Sanskrit scholar, and an astrologer, he is revered as a Dattātreya incarnation. Dabholkar 1999 offers the life of Sāī Bābā (d. 1918), a *faqīr* identified as an *avatāra* of Dattātreya who resided in a dilapidated mosque in the village of Shirdi in the Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. Nowadays, he is undoubtedly the most popular saint of India, and the *Śrī Sāī Saccarita* is revered as the modern *Gurucaritra*. Rigopoulos 2021 reviews the theological motifs that have led to the identification of both Shirdi Sāī Bābā and Sathya Sāī Bābā of Puttaparhi (b. 1926–d. 2011) with Dattātreya. Nisargadatta Maharaj 1993 is noteworthy given that Śrī Nisargadatta Mahārāj (b. 1897–d. 1981) was linked to Dattātreya and the Navnāth *sampradāya* via his *guru* Śrī Siddharamēśvar Mahārāj (b. 1888–d. 1936). Gaṇapati Saccidānanda Swāmīji 1993 is a text written by the founder of the Avadhūta Datta Pīṭham in Mysore. Śrī Gaṇapati Saccidānanda (b. 1942), revered by his followers as a Dattātreya incarnation, is renowned for his meditation music and charitable activities.

**Conlon, Frank F. "A Nineteenth-Century Indian Guru." In *Charisma and Sacred Biography*. Edited by M. A. Williams, 127–148. Chambersburg, PA: *American Academy of Religion*, 1982.**

This article focuses upon Svāmī Pāṇḍuraṅgāśram, an orthodox Brahmin *guru* regarded as a Datta incarnation. From 1864 up until his death, he served as the head of the Shri Chitrapur Matha at Shirali.

**Dabholkar, Govind R. (Hemadpant). *Shri Sai Satcharita: The Life and Teachings of Shirdi Sai Baba*. Translated by I. Kher. New Delhi: Sterling, 1999.**

The official hagiography of Shirdi Sāī Bābā, who is revered as an *avatāra* of Dattātreya. He is the most popular saint of India to whom thousands of shrines and temples are dedicated in Maharashtra and throughout the country.

**Dīkṣit, Māḍhavrāv. *Śrī Akkalkoṭ Svāmī Samartha*. Puṇe, India: Utkarṣa Prakāśan, 2004.**

This Marāṭhī biography presents the life of the saint of Akkalkoṭ, alias Svāmī Samarth, who is most popular in Maharashtra. His shrine and tomb (*samādhi*) are in Akkalkoṭ, which is located in the Solapur district: here the saint resided for over two decades. For an English biography, see V. R. Prabhu, *Shree Swami Samarth Akkalkot Maharaj (As the Eternal Sage)* (Mumbai: Jaico Publishing House, 1997).

**Fuchs, Stephen. *Godmen on the Warpath: A Study of Messianic Movements in India*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1992.**

In a chapter in this book ("A Maratha Brahmin's Messiah," pp. 165–173) the author presents the life of the Chitpavan Brahmin Vāsudev Balvant Phaḍke, a political figure and founder of an anti-British movement revered as a saint within the Dattātreya cult. His ideal was to restore Hindu *dharma* to its pristine purity. Arrested by the British on 20 July 1879, he went on a hunger strike and died in prison on 17 February 1883.

**Gaṇapati Saccidānanda Swāmiji, Śrī. *Śrī Datta Darśanam (Vision of Datta)*. Dattanagar, Mysore, India: Śrī Avadhūta Datta Pīṭham, 1993.**

An overview of the main Purāṇic stories concerning Dattātreya. Śrī Gaṇapati Saccidānanda is the founder of the Avadhūta Datta Pīṭham at the Śrī Gaṇapati Saccidānanda Ashram in Mysore in the State of Karnataka.

**Jośī, L. N. *Śrī Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī (Ṭembe Svāmī Mahārāj)*. *Caritr va Śikavaṇ*. Puṇe, India: Rājeś Prakāśan, n.d.**

Written in Marāṭhī, this book offers an account of the life and writings of Vāsudevānanda Sarasvatī, popularly known as Ṭembe Svāmī.

**Kher, Indira. *Avadhuta Yogi Pant Mahārāj of Balekundri*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1994.**

A biography of the Deśastha Brahmin Dattātreya Rāmcandra Kulkarnī, alias Pant Mahārāj or Mahārāj Balekundrikar, revered as an incarnation of Dattātreya. He was born in Daddi, a town in the Belgaum district of the State of Karnataka. The *Datta Prem Laharī*, a hymn in praise of the deity, is regarded as his most important work.

**Nisargadatta Maharaj, Sri. *I Am That: Talks with Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj*. Translated from the Marathi Taperecordings by Maurice Frydman. Revised and Edited by Sudhakar S. Dikshit. Bombay: Chetana, 1993.**

These talks were originally published in 1973. The Vedāntic mystic Māruti Kampli alias Śrī Nisargadatta Mahārāj was linked to Dattātreya and the Navnāth *sampradāya* via his *guru* Śrī Siddharmeśvar Mahārāj. The connection of Dattātreya with Nāthism continues to be strong given that he is revered as the tutelary deity of the nine mythical Nāths.

**Rigopoulos, Antonio. *The Hagiographer and the Avatar: The Life and Works of Narayan Kasturi*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2021.**

Chapter 6 of this book (pp. 217–262) presents the main reasons why both Sathya Sāī Bābā and Shirdi Sāī Bābā are regarded as Dattātreya incarnations. Besides Sathya Sāī Bābā, another contemporary saint from Andhra Pradesh that is linked to Dattātreya is Anasūyā Devī (b. 1923–d. 1985) of Jillellamudi; see T. Conway, *Women of Power and Grace: Nine Astonishing, Inspiring Luminaries of Our Time* (Santa Barbara: The Wake Up Press, 1994), pp. 187–227.

**Sonde, Nagesh D. *Shri Manik Prabhu: His Life and Mission*. Maniknagar, India: Shri Manik Prabhu Samsthan, 1995.**

Māṇikprabhu was an older contemporary of the saint of Akkalkoṭ. Founder of the *Sakalamatsampradāya*, he disregarded affiliations of religion, caste, and creed and accepted all faiths as different paths leading to the one ultimate goal.

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