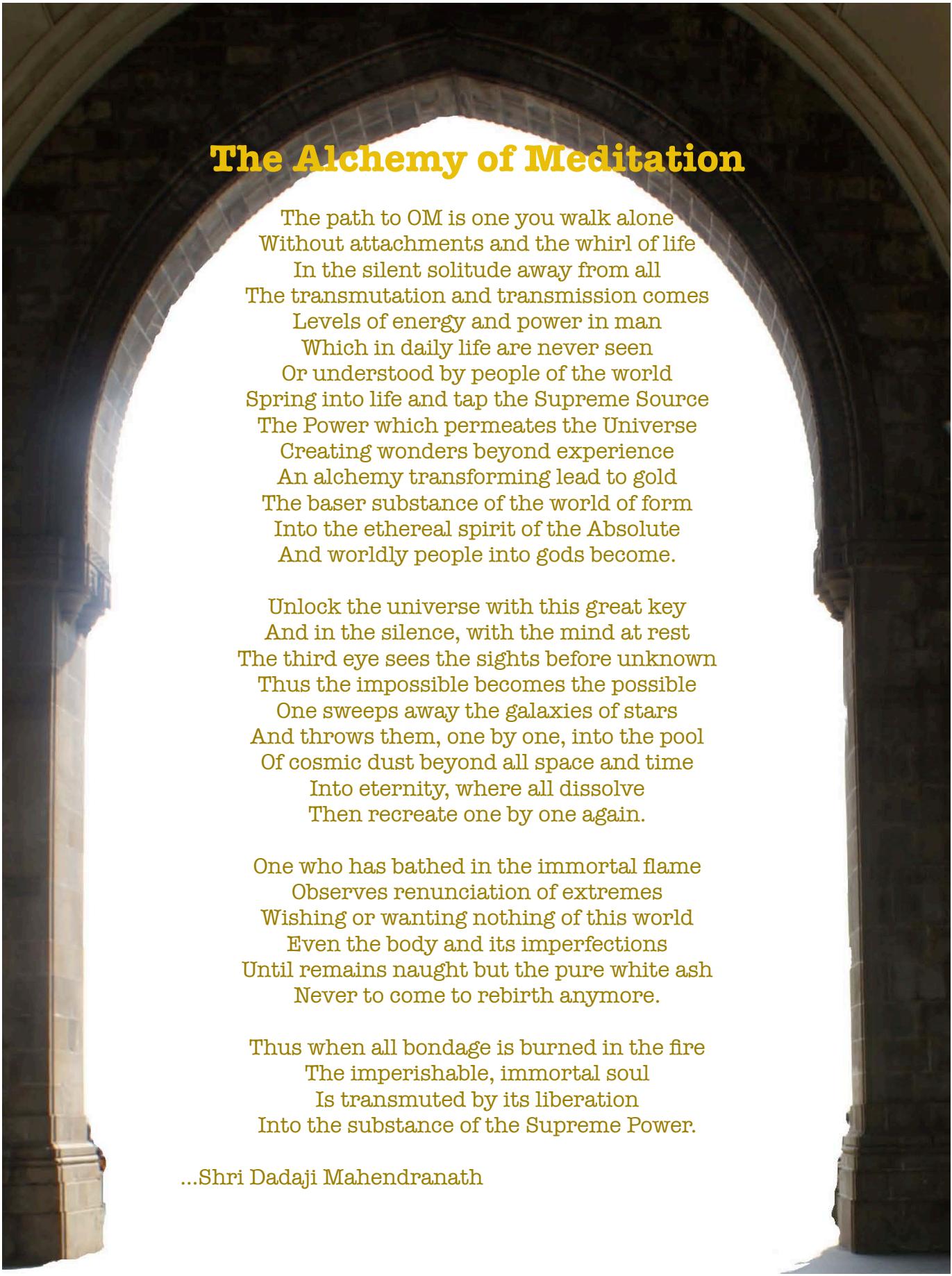


Nath Handbook

...From an Aipanth Perspective



Santainath



The Alchemy of Meditation

The path to OM is one you walk alone
Without attachments and the whirl of life
In the silent solitude away from all
The transmutation and transmission comes
Levels of energy and power in man
Which in daily life are never seen
Or understood by people of the world
Spring into life and tap the Supreme Source
The Power which permeates the Universe
Creating wonders beyond experience
An alchemy transforming lead to gold
The baser substance of the world of form
Into the ethereal spirit of the Absolute
And worldly people into gods become.

Unlock the universe with this great key
And in the silence, with the mind at rest
The third eye sees the sights before unknown
Thus the impossible becomes the possible
One sweeps away the galaxies of stars
And throws them, one by one, into the pool
Of cosmic dust beyond all space and time
Into eternity, where all dissolve
Then recreate one by one again.

One who has bathed in the immortal flame
Observes renunciation of extremes
Wishing or wanting nothing of this world
Even the body and its imperfections
Until remains naught but the pure white ash
Never to come to rebirth anymore.

Thus when all bondage is burned in the fire
The imperishable, immortal soul
Is transmuted by its liberation
Into the substance of the Supreme Power.

...Shri Dadaji Mahendranath



Introduction

This guidebook gives an overview of the history, background, appearance and skills of the Nathas of India. It provides some indications of future developments in the west, as two cultures meet on the most intimate basis.

The Aipanth has brought into play the householder on equal footing with those who have taken the sanyas vow. These householders will require innovation and new thinking to forge a path which has rarely been documented, which speaks to the particular circumstances of those who must remain deeply involved in the world and its demands.

The great majority of Nath panths identify with Lord Shiva thus following the paths of the unmanifest, of emptiness and the void. Aipanth is a shakta panth, deeply devoted to the Goddess, to liberty in this life through participation in the plenum, through enjoyment and the bliss of the Absolute.

There are no rules here, there is no hierarchy beyond personal guru/chela contracts. We have no central authority but we have a goal, a viewpoint and a technology that we share. The technology we bring from India has been developed and used for thousands of years. It has already started to change and transform in new hands.

In many ways, today resembles the heady time of change when Matsyendranath and the revolutionary Gorakshnath competed for supremacy. Gorakshnath completely changed the cult technology. Although both men were Yogis and unwavering non-dualists their methods were radically different.

Matsyendranath represents an earlier time in the Nath story. He started out as a Buddhist in the Tibetan style, moving towards Vedanta, finally founding one of the great Tantric Kaula kulas, Yogini Kula. Matsyendranath was a master of the tantric technology involving sexual fluids, interaction with the Yogini/Dakini beings, animal and human sacrifice and absolute devotion to Shakti. Legend says he lost his way and became a householder, breeding two sons with the Queen of Ceylon. Gorakshnath rescued him, breaking the spell under which domestic bliss held him.

Guru and chela battled in the mystic realms, competing with their magic powers and promoting their own views about the best way to liberate self and others.

Gorakshnath believed that the tantric path was too dangerous for most people and he developed more reliable methods through the use of Yoga, Hatha to Raja, breath control, austerities and a brilliant philosophy. He created ashrams and a clearly delineated path for the aspirant to walk

Both of these gurus lead straight to the high road of the Avadhoot. The Avadhoot, wonderfully described by Dattatreya, is the exquisite exemplar of spiritual success for one who seeks liberation in this lifetime. An Avadhoot is completely identified with the Absolute, the One, and through this union transcends all limitations of life on earth, indeed such a human transcends the gods themselves. They behave any way they chose, conforming or not as they see fit.

In the old legends Avadhoots behave like children, they hide their beauty, they are dirty, disheveled, usually silent and solitary, needing nor desiring nothing and filled to over-brimming with the pure joy of existence.

They act with unconditioned spontaneity which we term **Sahaja**.

They neither desire, need, fear nor are repulsed by anything. No concept captures their clear minds. We term this **Samarasa**.

They act purely from their own will, untainted by ideals, ethics, beliefs, compulsions, politics. They are self-created each moment. We term this **Svecchachara**.

In the Avadhoota Gita, the incomparable Dattatreys sings the song of one who has discovered his absolute freedom in the cosmos:

"The ultimate truth is simple, endowed with the beauty of sporting Self
....I am like the sky"

"I am freedom itself, full of joy."

"Swimming in a sea of Oneness. Avadhoota Dattatreya sings in his delight of a pure heart, the grandeur of truth."

The ocean of Dattatreya's blissful, ecstatic song is the very nectar of liberation in this life!

Often we commit to the path of awareness and consciousness expansion to lessen the pain of life as we experience it. Addressing our "dis-ease" with life is the first step we take. Healing our inevitable neurosis, trauma and ignorance, getting to know the mechanics of self and the body, are the important early steps that make a strong foundation for later work with meditiation, tantra, mantra, yantra and magic.

Basic yoga gives us a good strong "seat" for hours of meditation. Breath control yields control of our mind and is also basic to physical health.

Austerities range from the practice of "chastity of the senses" to fasting, to physically painful practices and postures. All of this begins to purify the mind and the intention. Through renouncement we gain knowledge of desire. When desire is no longer an uncontrollable lust it becomes possible to turn away from the attractions and distractions of ordinary life.

Through meditation, contemplation, quiet sitting and watching, our minds turn inevitably inward. We begin to make contact with our inner universe. Insight/intuition increases while white noise decreases. Eventually we are able to listen and hear our own bio-computer, our inner guide. Once self-reliant, our path is our own.

This entire trek is rendered unnecessary if we can simply realize to our bones that we are free and One with All.

We are on the brink of a revolution in the spiritual life of the western world. The past century has seen a transfer of Asian spiritual technology to the west. Naths are one part of this enormous cultural shift. We are acutely aware that we will change Nathism as deeply as it changes us. Here there are none of the social structures in place to support the outsider, transgressive lifestyle of the sadhu in India. Yet without some form of back door exit from the pressures of ordinary life, many potential escapees will not succeed.

In the west we have little concept of the life lived purely for the exploration and transformation of consciousness, for exploration of mystery and Self. Renouncement as a way of life or a useful tool is a revolutionary, unthinkable ideal in modern society. The mind/heart/body changes in all its qualities, in atunement to newly expanded realities. When this expansion is complete we hold the world as though it were spinning in the hand. We recognize the true nature of our immortality and like the burnt seed we return no more.

This handbook is full of information and clues, much of it is useless description of a byegone era in a foreign land. As you read the literature and start to learn the systems do not get lost. None of it really matters. Neither past nor future hold the information and bliss of the moment.

Santainath
Oct. 23, 2008
Reykjavik

**May Kal Bhairav, great Lord of Time and Death guide you quickly.
May Ai Devi sweeten your heart until it bursts into radiance.
May the Nine Naths inspire you to utmost effort
May Lord Ganesh open doors and remove the obstructions to your path
May Hanuman give you strength, humility and the power of love
May Lord Shiva entrance you with his Illusion and liberate you with his perfect Yoga
May Shakti embrace you and then release you....**

Sri Nathji Guruji ko Adesh!



The Naths

The Naths are an ancient cult of sadhus, householders, yoginis, siddhas and saints. Liberation and union with the Absolute are our goals. There have been Naths for thousands of years. Our origins are mythical and our Gurus have been spectacular immortals who to this day roam across the landscape and meddle in our lives. Our epitome is the Avadhoot, who dwells in the incomparable state of inner freedom that transforms us from humans to Gods.

The Naths are lords and magicians, our field is mystery, our path is experiment and our mood is dispassion.

OM IS THE IMAGE
AND THE SOUND
SIGNIFYING THE
ABSOLUTE

WE ARE
INTOXICATED
WITH THE JOY OF
EXISTENCE

WE ALL RIDE
UNDER THE
BANNER OF
LORD SHIVA



Ours is an inward-turning, left-turning, zigzag path.



Inward-turning because we are listening intently to our inner truth, left-turning because we follow the experimental path of pioneers and...

zigzag because that is the way of the Great Dao "to and fro goes the Way"

Aipanth

Aipanth is one of the original twelve panths, or parts, of the Nath whole. It was founded by a woman, Udayanath, one of the Nine Naths, considered to be a manifestation of Parvati and Earth. Originally we were called Maipanth. We are Sakta Naths thus we are especially devoted to the Great Goddess in all her forms.

We are devotees of Dattatreya, Matsyendranath and of Gorakshnath, the great Avadhoots and Gurus of the Naths.

In our disorganization we are unregulated, amorphous, fluid, and anarchic. Siva and Shakti Mai are our first Gurus.

The Nine Naths are our inspiration.

We are Lords and Magicians in all times and all places.





Our Deities

Ganesh the Elephant Lord is the Magician and Remover of Obstacles
 Hanuman is Brave, Strong and His Radiant Heart glows

Siva is Lord of Destruction, Illusion, Liberation

Above all is Shakti, dancing Form, Emptiness then Form again
 After these Ones are given their due, as Divine Founders, Patrons
 and Participants in our cult, we are free to wander where we will in
 the field of Divinities.



"I am freedom itself, full of joy."

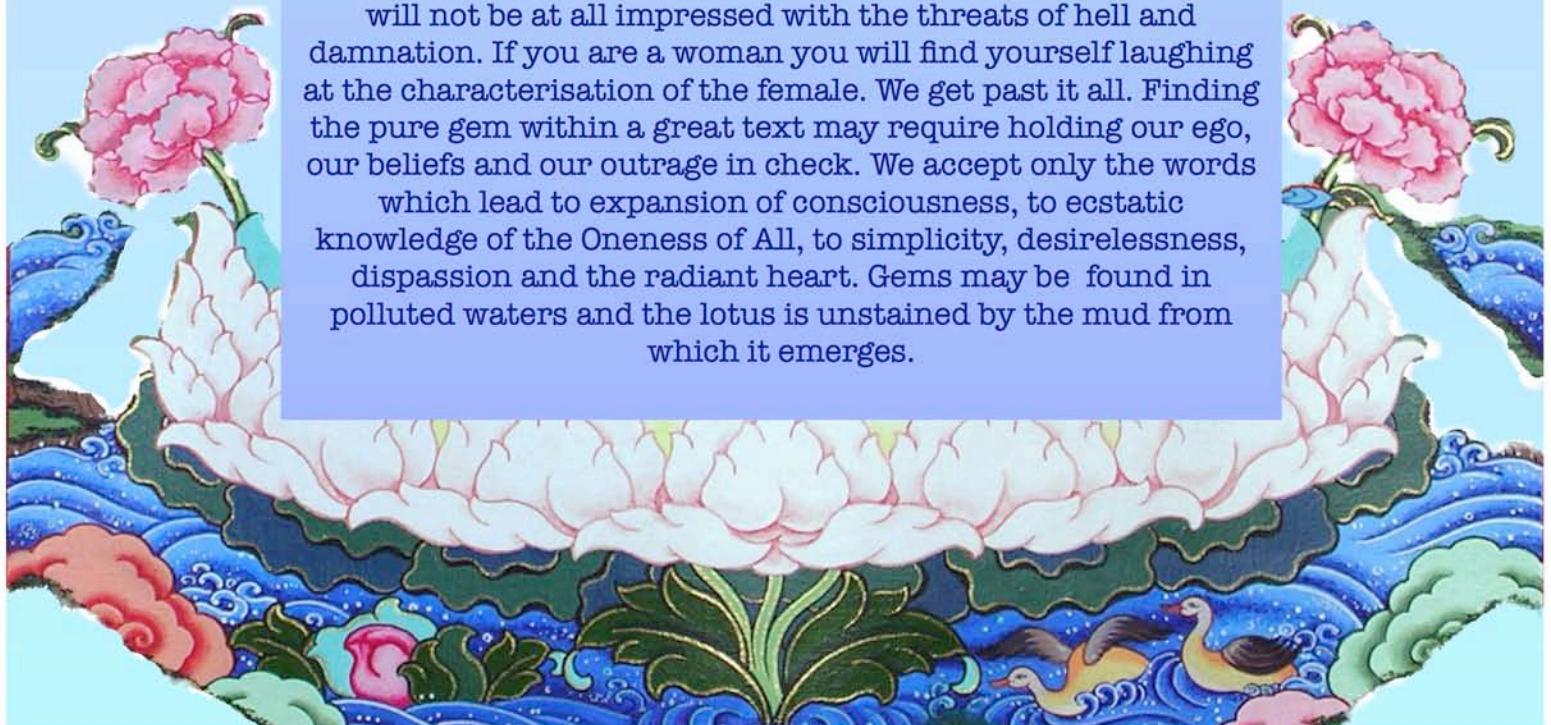
We are Non-Dualist

We maintain the view that liberates us. Among many competing philosophies, Nathas have chosen non-duality. This ideal will certainly be advanced and transformed in our hands. The non-dual vision is central to Nath technology. Austerities and yoga bring single-pointed concentration and deep, relaxed meditation. Bhakti or ecstatic devotion to the chosen deity is often required to give the emotional impact which can shift one beyond the intellectual to the feeling center, and thus closer to success.

The non-dual viewpoint, once thoroughly stabilized, is characterized as blissful, joyous, immortal, omniscient, childlike, unaccountable, irresponsible, needing and desiring nothing. They may conform to social and moral rules for their own reasons..or not. For those of us not in that state, this person is inscrutable, mysterious, possibly repulsive and somehow magical. All Nath texts stress the non-dual, the Self immersed and inseparable from the Absolute.

To immerse oneself in the non-dualist thought stream, few texts compare to "Avadhoota Gita" and "Tripura Rahasya" both written by our founder, Dattatreya. Although they usually use very different technologies, Matsyendranath and Gorakshnath never deviate from the view.

When reading non-dualist texts written thousands of years ago, it is necessary to understand the meaning and use of twilight language . If you are a non-theist you will not be able to stand the God talk, if you are rebellious you will not be able to stand the rules and injunctions and if you are modern you will not be at all impressed with the threats of hell and damnation. If you are a woman you will find yourself laughing at the characterisation of the female. We get past it all. Finding the pure gem within a great text may require holding our ego, our beliefs and our outrage in check. We accept only the words which lead to expansion of consciousness, to ecstatic knowledge of the Oneness of All, to simplicity, desirelessness, dispassion and the radiant heart. Gems may be found in polluted waters and the lotus is unstained by the mud from which it emerges.



The Goddess, Devi and Shakti

Esoterically the Goddess is manifestation, creation, the active part of the cosmic whole. Until she joins with Shiva the cosmos is inert potential. In our lives Devi is our fierce protector. She is the little girl, the pregnant, fertile earth, the over-arching sky and the compost heap. She is all of nature. She is the serene warrior, saviouress of the world, shelter from storms both inner and outer. She is Durga, Kali, Ai, Lakshmi, Tara and Mary.

Shakti is energy, electricity, the internet and waves of grace. She is the mysterious energy of the significant touch or glance which transmits bliss and information.

She promotes civilisation, dharma, the family, the hearth, prosperity, health and happiness.

In another form she is the death-dealer, the slaughterer, the mad hag roaming in the night, bloodthirsty.

In another form she is the innocent, apparently vulnerable child. She moves our hearts to love, thus we care for her, feed her sweets and bring her gifts.

In another form she is the dangerous whore, make-up smeared, a siren, luring the careless to a fast end.

In another form she is divinely beautiful, naked, Tantric Queen of the Kula.

She is the lone, wandering Yogini who conquers Shiva's heart with the power of her austerities.

She is the guru who teaches Shiva and then she is his student who listens.

She dances on the stars. Shiva drums the beat of her dance.



Story of Ai Devi

I am a pilgrim, tired, ragged and dusty. I have arrived at the cave after months of travel on foot. I am in the mountains, in the wilderness. The cave is a low dark opening in the rock face. I peer inside. Eventually I can make out an orange glow in the depths. I bow down to enter and slowly I approach.

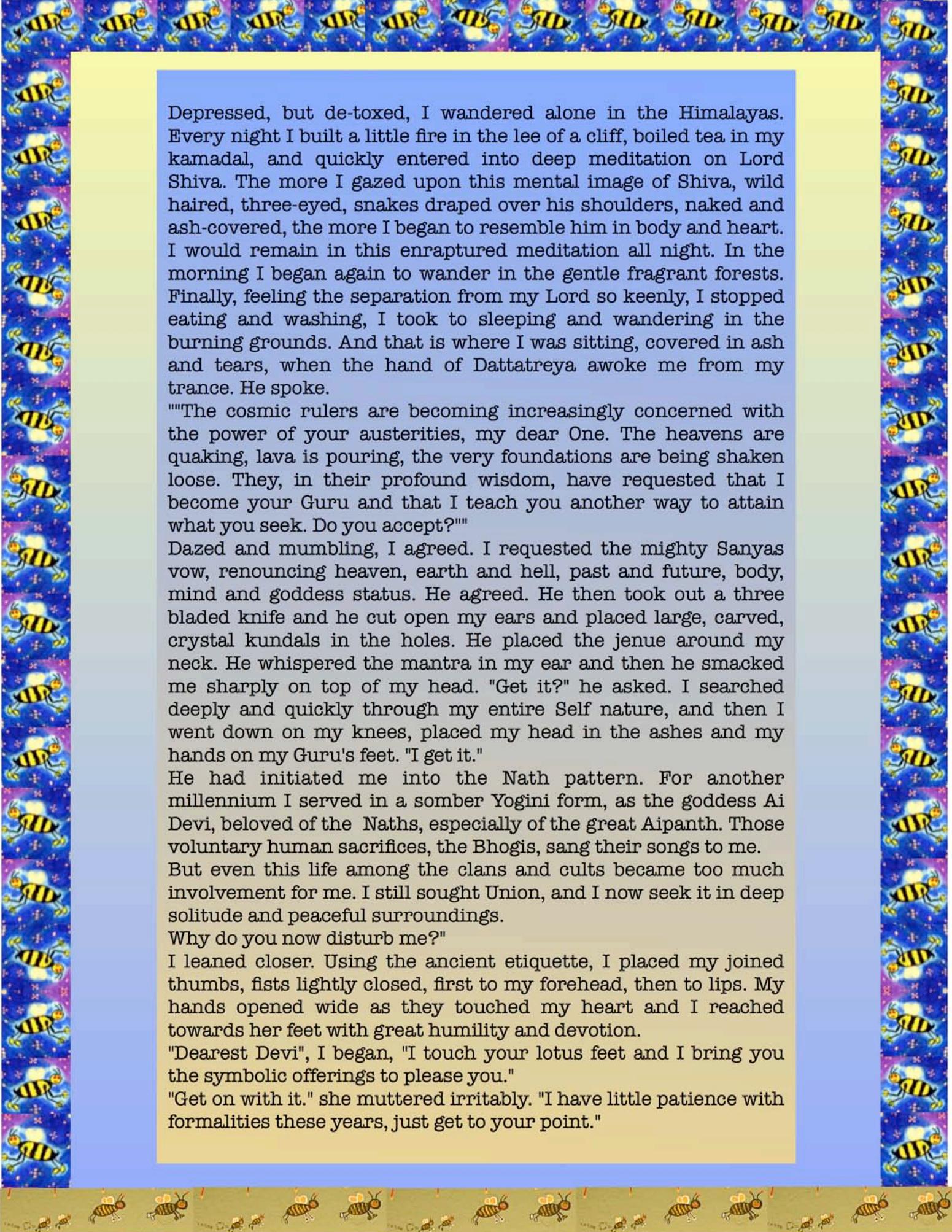
My first impression is of fire-lit gold. I lower my eyes. The floor is smoothly covered in very small white tiles. I can see better now in the darkness, and I see that the walls of the small cave are not smooth but rather entirely jutting and protruding angles of octahedrons shaped rock.

There is a red, square, cushion before the shrine. I sit there. I feed the tiny dhuni which smoulders redly and I light two incense sticks, an earthy tibetan and a fragrant rose. I put the sticks in a very ancient stone-carved bowl which is full of rice grains and ash. I fill a tiny stone bowl with water and drape garlands of marigolds and some rose petals. I add some brightly wrapped sweets. I raise the bowl above my head and I offer it to the goddess in front of me. For the first time I raise my eyes and gaze at the shrine. At first all I see is a blur as She manifests many forms twirling like a little hurricane.

I carefully place the bowl of offerings back on the mud platform in front of her image. After such a colourful and panoramic parade of iconic forms I am surprised to see that her form is actually an ancient, roughly carved female figure cut into the raw rock. She stands in an active pose, she wears an aura crown of leaves. She is further obscured by the smeared red kumkum, greasy with ghee, stuck over with rice grains and rose petals.

She spoke, "I am ancient. I am made of the earth which nourishes me. This cave is my home. A few pilgrims and sadhus with long memories bring me offerings enough to sustain me in my meditation. No longer am I the Bollywood beauty, the flighty party goddess. I have taken every form of the female in all of nature and in all of time. I was lavish with my gifts of prosperity, health, children and sexual adventure. My devotees gave me their life blood to sustain my enjoyment. Flowers and incense, exotic foods, red wine and the kulagama flowed to me. My vehicles were elephants and tigers, swans and dragonflies, my attributes were sung with joyful mantra, painted in yantra and in the night I was delighted with the worship and play of the tantric Kula clans.

"After a millennium of delights, the party slowly faded. I lost interest, although my devotees continued the feast for a long while after I had left that heavenly scene.



Depressed, but de-toxed, I wandered alone in the Himalayas. Every night I built a little fire in the lee of a cliff, boiled tea in my kamadal, and quickly entered into deep meditation on Lord Shiva. The more I gazed upon this mental image of Shiva, wild haired, three-eyed, snakes draped over his shoulders, naked and ash-covered, the more I began to resemble him in body and heart. I would remain in this enraptured meditation all night. In the morning I began again to wander in the gentle fragrant forests. Finally, feeling the separation from my Lord so keenly, I stopped eating and washing, I took to sleeping and wandering in the burning grounds. And that is where I was sitting, covered in ash and tears, when the hand of Dattatreya awoke me from my trance. He spoke.

"The cosmic rulers are becoming increasingly concerned with the power of your austerities, my dear One. The heavens are quaking, lava is pouring, the very foundations are being shaken loose. They, in their profound wisdom, have requested that I become your Guru and that I teach you another way to attain what you seek. Do you accept?"

Dazed and mumbling, I agreed. I requested the mighty Sanyas vow, renouncing heaven, earth and hell, past and future, body, mind and goddess status. He agreed. He then took out a three bladed knife and he cut open my ears and placed large, carved, crystal kundals in the holes. He placed the jenue around my neck. He whispered the mantra in my ear and then he smacked me sharply on top of my head. "Get it?" he asked. I searched deeply and quickly through my entire Self nature, and then I went down on my knees, placed my head in the ashes and my hands on my Guru's feet. "I get it."

He had initiated me into the Nath pattern. For another millennium I served in a somber Yogini form, as the goddess Ai Devi, beloved of the Naths, especially of the great Aipanth. Those voluntary human sacrifices, the Bhogis, sang their songs to me. But even this life among the clans and cults became too much involvement for me. I still sought Union, and I now seek it in deep solitude and peaceful surroundings.

Why do you now disturb me?"

I leaned closer. Using the ancient etiquette, I placed my joined thumbs, fists lightly closed, first to my forehead, then to lips. My hands opened wide as they touched my heart and I reached towards her feet with great humility and devotion.

"Dearest Devi", I began, "I touch your lotus feet and I bring you the symbolic offerings to please you."

"Get on with it." she muttered irritably. "I have little patience with formalities these years, just get to your point."

"I came from the western world on a long pilgrimage to seek your favour."

"Canada, Mexico, the States? Oh no matter."

I continued. "The ancient and honoured Nath cult has moved west. The Aipanth has established itself in the new world. We are uncouth and ignorant barbarians. The understanding and knowledge of god and goddess is foreign to us, as is all memory of the spirit world, the art of magic, the very art of living has been lost. I know your yoga and tapas are impeccable, that your guru is Dattatreya himself. Your meditation is as rooted as Mount Kailash and you have little inclination to interrupt yourself, once again, with worldly matters. I can offer you little in return for your great service to us. We are ignorant of the rites and rituals of your worship. We live in cold snowy places where fragrant flowers are rare. We have no temples. Because we are fickle and lacking in any hint of true wisdom I cannot even claim that your worship will be sufficient."

She cackled, " Oh stop! I am a goddess, omniscient and deeply attained in the mystic arts. I cannot be bought with cheap trinkets and empty promises. I act only from my own will, spontaneously and dispassionately. I care nothing for you and your bribes."

I sank back in deep disappointment, even despair. Alas!

"Yes, keep your distance please."

I sat in silence for a few heartbeats. Our need was too great. With renewed determination, I said, "In consultation with the naths of the west I am authorized to offer you the the white buffalo as your vehicle."

"How archaic," she retorted. "Horns were the style in the age of Taurus, in the time of the great Goddess Hathor." She took a sip of the red wine I offered her in a crystal skull cup. " But now I think of White Buffalo Woman. She was a perfect blend of benevolence and wrath, a sublime teacher of the dharma. Ahh! I see the white buffalo has returned to this world and the ancient herds begin to grow again. Yes. I accept the white buffalo as my mount."

"We offer you the poppy, in all its colours and tastes."

"A flower without fragrance! This is no offer at all." She lit the chillum I had prepared for her and let out a bellowing roar with the immense cloud of smoke. "Bolenath!" and then quietly, "Ah Bagwan." After a long silence she spoke again. "The poppy is a weed, it grows anywhere. It is full of life-loving energy. Its extraction is pain-killer and sleep bringer, a comfort to the dreaming aged and then, when fully mastered, it brings the alert awareness necessary to do all-night puja in the burning ground! Terribly constipating. The poppy is a rough and tumble refugee from man's eternal vegetable wars, yet it returns us the pleasure of the eyelid movie. On second thought, I accept the poppy. She blew out another cloud of heavy fragrant smoke.



"For messengers and companions we offer you bees." I spoke after another few minutes of silent communion over the clouds of smoke.

"Goddess Cybele was accompanied by bees too. They sing their buzzing song for me when I am in the golden honey of deep meditation. You offer such antiques. I was hoping for an Ai-pod. Alas, no celestial being can bear to linger in the realm of passionate desire for long."

"So you will join us in the west? Be our Goddess, our guide and Guru?" She returned to her ancient rock form and was silent for hours, "I shall return to the world for a time. I will be available to the Naths, as they once again seek Liberation under all conditions on earth.

"Now, take me in your arms and lift me to your left shoulder. Cover us with this red cloth, so we can just barely see out and let us leave the cave together," she instructed.

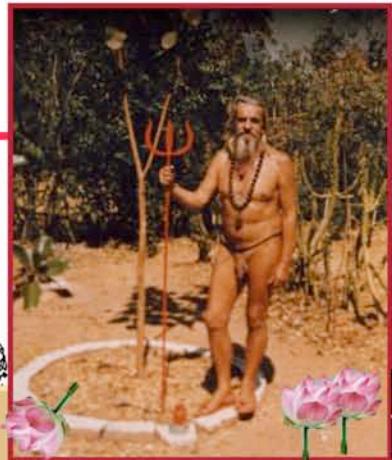
With infinite care I gently dislodged her from the embracing rock. As soon as she was separate from the rock she no longer had any weight and became less and less substantial. I lifted her small stone body and balanced her on my left shoulder. I threw the cloth over both of us with a sweeping motion of my free right hand. I gathered the ends of the cloth in one hand and peering out with only one eye, I felt my way out of the cave. It was very much further to leave than to enter.

We emerged into early morning, gentle, pink light. The dew glistened on grass and leaf. With a strong jerk, the cloth flew out of my grip. A child jumped down from my shoulder. She was a little girl, with short, curly, blond hair and bright blue eyes. She looked up at me, shining and blissful, "I forgot how beautiful it is to be alive to the world." She smiled and gave the mudra of blessing. She was suddenly crowned, dressed in jewels seated on the lotus throne, six-armed, serene. Then she blinked out with the fading words, "I have agreed to your request. Travel safely pilgrim. God and Guru speed you on your way. Remain steadfast in your resolution to become liberated in this life. Liberated while Enjoying!" She winked and tossed me an apple.

"Om shanti shanti shanti"

"I shall have a tiger too! A white one. With a pink tongue and very fierce. Now I must be off, beyond the Himalayas!"

She was gone.



Some of Our Saints and Siddhas

Dattareya is the semi-divine founder of the Nathas. He is our ideal Saint and Avadhoot. He had twenty-four gurus such as earth, sky, water, fire, insects and animals. From these he learned what he needed, without cluttering his clear mind with concepts.

Matsyendranath is born of a fish, heard the truth directly from the mouth of the Goddess Herself, founded the Yogini Kaula clan, is forever welcome in the Land of Women and is one of the Immortal Nine Nathas. He is our tantric Guru.

Gorakshnath, born of ash, is the chela and the guru of Matsyendranath. He systematized the Nath tradition. He developed our philosophy, Yoga, ashrams, and cult marks. He revolutionized our approach and deeply changed our technology. He is also one of the Immortal Nine Nathas, often associated with Babaji. He was the first great teacher to write in the common languages of the people. His spiritual and magical adventures are still the subject of marvelous tales all across India. Immortality is not his only trick.

Mahendranath was the naked English Avadhoot, one of the siddhas who made the transfer of Nath technology to the west. He was the Great Swan who could pick the pure milk of liberation technology out of the diluting water of tradition and usage.

Using poetry and tantra, meditation, the I Ching and the power of his own clear thinking, he distilled thousands of years of experiment in India into Amrit for our delight.

.....Many new Nath saints will one day shine their light and spread their mischief in the new world.





"This is not an easy knowledge, that simply makes one a learned man."



Om Guru Om GURU Om Guru Om

Traditionally in India, once a guru was chosen, he or she became the object of single-pointed devotion and obedience. The student would attempt to choose a guru who most closely resembled the ideal saint, the Jivanmukti, the liberated one. Unlike the "whisperers" of modern times, the traditional guru

was usually brutal in breaking down the ego, destroying conditioning at the root, and ripping apart the veils of clouded thinking. As this was the accepted way, the chela knew the game and was willing to undergo any privation, discipline or test, sustained by the stories and legends of the super-human efforts made by successful aspirants. Absolute trust was the keystone of this method. No extreme and no subtlety was overlooked by teacher and student as they attempted to breach the gates of immortality.

Very little of this resonates with the modern person. It is likely new methods must be found.

We inevitably find our Guru when we reach the end of our rope.

Dattatreya with his 24 gurus demonstrates how to find the hidden guru. The perceptive student can learn from everything and anyone. Initiation is received by the receptive.

The worthwhile initiation brings us closer to liberation.

The western belief that the guru is always kind, gentle, clean, expensive and perfect is very funny. The guru is human and has all the attainments and failings of a human, but ideally we have chosen one who knows the way and has the means to guide us forward for a while.

Eventually we graduate. We discover that we are not separate from the goal, we become our own guides having realized the Self. From there the path is our own. Patience, loving kindness and compassion overflows in our hearts.

OM GURU OM GURU OM GURU OM GURU OM GURU OM

Dattatreya's Twenty Four Gurus

From the **Srimad Bhagavatam**

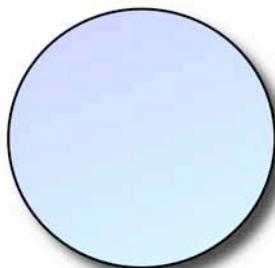
King Yadu met Lord Dattatreya the Avadhoot in a forest and said to him "Sir, you are capable, energetic and wise. Why do you live in the forest, free from all desires? Even though you are alone in this world how can you be so blissful and contented with yourself?"

The **Avadhoot** replied, "My bliss and contentment are the fruits of realizing my Self. I have gained wisdom from the whole of creation through my twenty-four Gurus. I shall tell you now".

"Many are my guides," he told King Yadu, "selected by my keen awareness. I have acquired wisdom freely. Now I wander in the world, joyful and at ease.



1. Earth: All creatures, according to their previous store of karma, assume different physical forms and come to live on earth. People plough, dig and walk the earth. They light fires on it, yet the earth does not swerve from its course even by a hair's breadth. The earth feeds and houses all creatures. Seeing this, I learned that the wise one never swerves from his vow of patience, love and righteousness under any circumstances and dedicates his life for the welfare of beings. The broad earth along with its mountains and rivers is my first guru.



2. Air: I observed that air is pure and odorless in itself. It blows on both sweet and foul-smelling things without discrimination or preference. Though it momentarily seems to take on the smell of its surroundings, in a short while, it reveals its pristine quality. From this I learned that a spiritual aspirant should live in the world while remaining unaffected by the dualities of life such as joy and sorrow and unmoved by the objects of the senses. He should keep his heart's feeling and his speech unobscured by vain objects. I have learned all this by observing it, thus air is my second guru.

3. Sky: The soul is like the sky, it is omnipresent. I noticed that sometimes the sky gets thickly overcast or filled with dust or smoke. At sunrise and during the night it seems to take on different colors. In fact, it remains its colorless self, and is never touched or stained by anything. From this I learned that a sage remains pure like the sky, untouched and unaffected by anything in the phenomenal universe through time, including his own physical processes. His inner being is totally free from emotional reaction to things and events. Thus I accepted the sky and space as my third guru.



4. Fire: My fourth teacher is fire. Sometimes it manifests as blazing flames, sometimes as smoldering embers covered by ash. It is always present in all objects as latent heat. The god of fire accepts everyone's offering no matter his moral worth, then burns up his sins. It remains the ever-pure divinity. Fire is untainted by the sins of such devotees. A sage of perfect realization accepts food from everyone, burns up his sins and blesses the giver. Though fire has no form of its own, when it burns, it assumes the form of that which it burns. So too, the true Self, though formless in itself, appears in the forms of deities, human beings, animals and trees when it is associated with those physical structures. The source and end of all forms in the universe remains ever mysterious. All things are manifest only in between their origin and their end. Their source and end is the true Self which is eternal, unchanging, unmanifest and omnipresent. This is also the nature of fire. Fire transforms the various things it consumes into the same ash. So too, the wisdom of self-realization rejects the manifest forms and properties of things as illusion and realizes their one original essence as itself. Thus the element of fire is my fourth guru.



5. Sun: My fifth guru is the sun. Although the sun we see every day is one, it appears as many when reflected by water in different vessels. Similarly, the one real Self manifests itself as the many selves of living creatures when reflected in their physical structures. As the Sun illuminates the many forms of nature, so the sage illuminates the true nature of all things to his devotees.





6. Pigeon: A pair of pigeons lived together in a tree. They bred their young and were bringing them up with deep affection and love. One day a hunter caught the young fledglings in a snare. The mother bird, returning from the forest with food for its young, saw their danger and unable to leave them, she flew into the snare to share their fate. The male pigeon, unable to bear the separation from his loved ones, also flew into the snare and met its end. Reflecting on this, I realized how, even after being born as an intelligent human being, man is caught in the coils of possessiveness and brings about his own spiritual destruction. The self, which is originally free, identifies with the physical body and thus gets caught in the endless cycle of birth, death and misery. Thus the pigeon was my sixth guru.



7. Python: The python is a sluggard, unwilling to move quickly for its prey. It just lies there and devours whatever creature crosses its path. From this I learnt that the man in search of wisdom should refrain from running after pleasures and accept whatever he gets spontaneously, with contentment. Like the python, he should shake off sleep and wakefulness and abide in a state of incessant meditation on the Self. Thus the python was my seventh teacher of wisdom.



8. Sea: Contemplating the marvelous nature of the ocean, I have gained much wisdom. Any number of overflowing rivers may join it, yet the sea maintains its level. Nor does its level fall even by a hair's breadth in summer when all the rivers dry up. So too, the joys of life do not elate the sage nor do its sorrows depress him. Just as the sea never crosses its threshold on the beach, the wise one never transgresses his highest standards under the pull of passions. Like the sea, he is unconquerable and cannot be troubled by anything. Like the unfathomable ocean, his true nature and the depths of his wisdom cannot be easily comprehended by anyone. The ocean, which has taught me thus, is my eighth guru.



9. Moth: I have often observed that the moth is tempted to fly into the fire and get burnt up. So too, the unthinking man is enticed by the illusory pleasures of the senses and thus gets caught in the ceaseless cycles of birth and death. On the other hand, the wise one, when he catches even a glimpse of the fire of wisdom, leaves everything aside, leaps into it and burns up the illusion of being a limited self. Thus the moth was my ninth guru.

10. Elephant: The elephant was my tenth guru. Humans use a stuffed cow-elephant to lure the wild male tusker which mistakes it for a mate. He approaches it and is then skillfully bound in fetters by the cunning humans. So too, one who lacks self control is tempted by the opposite sex and is bound by the chains of infatuation. Seekers after liberation should learn to be free from lust. The elephant was thus one of my teachers.



11. Ant: The ant stores great amounts of food which it neither eats nor gives away in charity to other creatures. In consequence, other more powerful creatures plunder the ants. So too, the man who gathers material treasures becomes a victim of robbery and murder. The ant also has something positive to teach us. It is a tireless worker and is never discouraged by any number of obstacles and setbacks in its efforts to gather its treasure. So too, a seeker after wisdom is tireless in his efforts for Self-Realization. This noble truth has the little ant taught me and became my eleventh guru.



12. Fish: The fish greedily swallows the bait and is at once caught on the hook. From this, I realized how man meets his destruction by his craving for delicious food. When the palate is conquered, all else is conquered. There is also a positive feature in the fish. It never leaves its home, water. So too, man should never loose sight of his true Self, but should ever have his being in it. Thus the fish became my twelfth guru.



13. Pingala: The thirteenth guru that has awakened my spirit is a prostitute named Pingala. Eagerly she awaited a particular client in the hope that he would pay her especially well. She waited and waited till late into the night. He did not turn up. In her disappointment she thought: "Alas! How stupid I am! I have neglected my own divine nature, which is eternal bliss and foolishly spent my time waiting for someone who inspires my lust and greed. Henceforth, I shall expend myself on the Self, unite with Self and exist in eternal joy. Through such realization she was blessed. I also realized that a spiritual aspirant should thus reject the lure of lesser spiritual powers which are merely the by-products of spiritual practice. I learned that the temptation to possess things from other's hands is the seed of misery. Renunciation of these is the means of realizing infinite joy.





14. Arrow-maker: Once I observed an arrow-maker who was completely absorbed in creating a sharp arrow. He was so oblivious that he did not even notice a royal pageant passing by. This sight awakened me to the truth that such single-minded, all-absorbing contemplation of the Self spontaneously eliminates all temptation for the trivial interests of the world. It is the secret of success in spiritual discipline. Thus the arrow-maker is my fourteenth guru.



15. Playful Boy: Little children know neither honor nor dishonor. They bear neither a grudge nor a prejudice against anyone. They don't know what is their own or what belongs to others. Their happiness springs from their own selves, their innate creativity and they do not need any external objects or conditions to be happy. I realized that the perfect, enlightened sage is also like this. A playful boy thus happened to be my fifteenth guru.



16. Moon: Among all things in nature, the moon is unique. It appears to wax and wane when in fact the lunar globe always remains the same. In this it resembles the Self. A man appears to pass through the stages of infancy, boyhood, youth, maturity and old age but his real Self is unchanged. Change pertains to the body, not to the Self. The moon reflects the light of the sun but has no light of its own. So too, the soul or mind of man is only a reflection of the light of awareness which is the real Self. Having taught this truth, the moon became my sixteenth guru.



17. Honeybee: Honeybee wanders from flower to flower and without hurting them in the least, draws honey. So too, a spiritual seeker should study all the good books but retain in his heart only that which is essential for his spiritual growth. Such is the teaching I imbibed from my seventeenth guru, the honeybee.

18. Deer: It is said that deer are very fond of music and that poachers employ it to lure them when hunting. From this I learned that passions and sensual desires will soon drag down a spiritual aspirant who has a weakness for merely exciting music, till he ultimately loses whatever spiritual progress he has achieved earlier. The deer that taught me this truth is my eighteenth guru.



19. Bird of prey: A bird of prey is my nineteenth guru. I saw one carrying off a dead rat. Many other birds attacked it, knocking it on the head and pecking at it, trying to steal his rat. The poor bird was terribly harassed. At last it wisely let its prey fall and all the other birds rushed after it. Thus freeing itself from the prize, it sighed in relief. From this I learned that a man who runs after pleasure will soon clash with his fellows who run after the same things. He will face strife and antagonism. If he learns to conquer his craving for worldly things, he can spare himself much unhappiness. I realized that this is the way to live in peace in the world.



20. Maiden: A maiden pounding grain wished to work in silence but her bangles kept clattering against each other. Finally she removed all but one bangle so she could work without making any noise. Reflecting on this, I realized that when a number of spiritual seekers live together, a lot of unwanted gossip ensues and no spiritual practice can be pursued with single-minded effort. Only in solitude can a spiritual aspirant carry out his task. Knowing this truth, I henceforth resorted to solitude. Thus, a maiden happened to be my twentieth guru.



21. Serpent: I observed that a serpent never builds a dwelling for itself. When white ants have raised an anthill the serpent eventually moves in. Similarly, people have to endure many hardships to obtain a house, while a recluse monk does no such thing. Men raise the monasteries and the monk lives in them. He lives in old dilapidated temples or under shady trees. The serpent molts, discarding its old skin. So too at the end of his life a Yogi leaves his body deliberately and in full awareness of his own true Self. He is not frightened by death. He casts off his old body as happily as he does his worn out clothes and then dons new ones. Thus has my twenty first guru taught me.



22. Spider: The spider is my twenty second guru. It weaves its web from a thread in the form of a fluid. After some time it re-absorbs the web into itself. The Creator projects the whole of creation out of Itself and after some time, withdraws it back into Itself at the time of dissolution. The individual soul carries the senses and the mind within itself. At its birth as a human being or any other living creature, it projects them out as the sense organs, organs of action and the whole body. According to its latent tendencies, the creature thus born, gathers up all the means and objects needed for its survival. At the end of its life's duration, the soul again withdraws the senses, mind and acquired tendencies at the hour of death. Thus have I learned from the spider.



23. Caterpillar: The caterpillar is also one of my teachers of wisdom. The wasp carries its caterpillar to a safe corner and closes it up in its cocoon and then keeps buzzing around it. The young caterpillar is so frightened by the incessant buzzing that it can't think of anything except the buzzing wasp. Through such uninterrupted contemplation of its mother the caterpillar soon grows up to be a wasp! In a like fashion, a true disciple is so charmed and over-awed by the spiritual eminence of his own guru that he cannot think of any one other. Through such contemplation he soon blossoms into a great spiritual master himself. The caterpillar is thus my twenty third Guru.



24. Water: Water is my twenty fourth Guru. It quenches the thirst of all, sustaining countless trees and creatures. Water serves all living beings yet it is never proud. It humbly seeks the lowest place. The sage too, bestows health, peace and joy to every creature that resorts to him yet he lives simply.



With humility and devotion I have looked upon the whole of God's creation as my teacher. I have gathered up wisdom and through patient effort I realize my goal of spiritual enlightenment.

These are the Names and Mantra of the Nine Naths

(one of many versions)

Adinath Shankar: form of sky, air

Udayanath Parvati: form of earth

Satyanath Brahma: form of water

Santoshnath Vishnu: form of sword, sceptre, wand

Achalachambanath Laxman: form of Sheshnag, serpent

Gajbeligaj **Kantarnath** Ganesh: form of moon, herbs

Gyan parakhi Siddh **Chauranginath**: one fully versed in wisdom

Mayaswaroop Dada **Matsyendranath**: form of Maya, illusion, wealth

Alakhswaroop ayoni Shankar trinetre: invisible, born of ash, Shankar
three-eyed

Sat Sri Shambu, jati Guru **Gorakshnath**: true blessed Shiva, dreadlock
guru Gorakshnath

Itna Naw Nath ka naam: thus the mantra of the names of the Nine Naths

Mantra jap sampurn baya: is complete

Sri Nathji Guruji ko adesh: greetings to the blessed Nath Guru

A new English version

sky

earth

water

*

wand

snake

moon

*

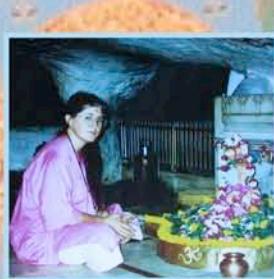
wisdom

magic

ash

*

Sat Sri Shambu, three-eyed Shankar,
Our dreadlock Guru,
The Mantra of the Nine is complete
Sri Nathji Guruji ko Adesh!



Sadhu life

A sadhu's only goal is Liberation in this life.

A sadhu seeks the Avadhoot, to become the Avadhoot.

A sadhu has renounced the world, its involvements
and its responsibilities.

A sadhu expects no reward in heaven and no
punishment in hell.

A sadhu is loathe to work for a living.

A sadhu tries to own no more than fits in a suitcase.

A sadhu takes on no responsibilities.

A sadhu remains unmoved by the seductions of three million
worlds..it is all the burning ground.

A sadhu is proficient in many things related to survival of self
and others.

Sadhus maintain equal to equal relations with all Beings.

Sadhus call on the helpers when in need.

Sadhus are equally intolerant of all sentient Beings.



Nath Householder life

A householder lives in the world but remains aware
and unattached as well as involved.

A householders' work and family life is their path and
the Dao is their guide. Unity with the Absolute is their goal.

A householder's arts are Dharma, Artha, Kama and
Liberation.

A householder accepts responsibility for now,
it will be shed in time.

A householder remains unseduced by life, ever aware
of death and change.

Without set patterns, householders are experimental.
Householders and sadhus use different technologies to arrive
at the same goal with equal success. The borders between us
are porous.



These are our Rites

We make a **dhuni** wherever and whenever we can

The dhuni is our guide and intimate companion

Ash is our symbol, our teaching and our medicine

We make **offerings** in the fire and contemplate emptiness and form

We **initiate** with pure intent and the power to bring the initiate into the nath stream

Guru is a very fluid interaction with wisdom and transformation

We request entry to another's dhuni with **ritual words**

We chant our **mantras**, perform our **mudras**, **drum** and blow the conch shell and the singgi whistle

Our **mantras** are passed from mouth to ear

Our **puja** is our self expression

We alter our **consciousness** skillfully

We offer our impersonal **respects** to Saints, Gurus, Rakshasas, Spooks, Aliens,
sacred places and sacred objects

We maintain the mind of the **Avadhoot** as best we can at all times...

We decondition, reinvent, mythologize and multiply **ourselves** constantly

We control the time and place of our **death**

We are **pilgrims and wanderers**

Self disciplined and austere

Indulgent and excessive

Aware of invisible worlds and signs, omens and puns

We are **naked**

We **dance**

We make **music**

We are fond of **silence**

We seek **solitude**

We **slack off**

We ask for **help**

We howl and pray in the **Sweat Lodge**

We are deeply grateful at the **Medicine Wheel** and we know our **directions**

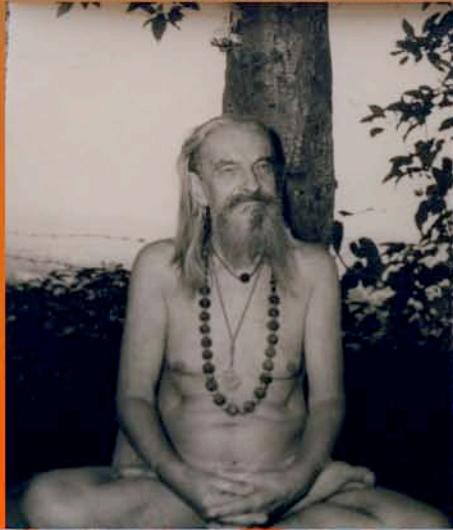
We make up our rituals as we go



Sadhu Song

With sacred robe on body hung,
My bowl to beg my bread;
This is the path of natural law
By which the birds are fed.
From house to house a silent guest
And then a shady tree
While others toil, I contemplate
So independent free.
Each day I live is life enough
Not of tomorrow think,
Nor care what happened yesterday
But this day's wisdom drink.
The robe aside, the sacred fire,
In deep samadhi's bliss:
I would not change for all the world,
The simple life like this.

—Sri Dadaji Mahendranath



Sex and Money

THE WISE NATH, RECOGNISING THE COST, TURNS AWAY FROM SEX AND MONEY AND NEVER LOOKS BACK

Thus we have no rites for luring sex and money.

The rest of us, our karmas raw and hearts full of hope and delusion, use whatever skills we have to survive these minefields which define most lives on earth.

A passion for sex or money usually leads to regret for the past, amnesia in the moment and hope for the future. It leads to belief in God, Karma and Reincarnation, which provide the only hope for those with large, accidental responsibilities and an aspiration for freedom.

While purity of intent protects us from karmic backlash to some extent, stupidity cannot be helped.

The Union of Shiva and Shakti is the occasion for consciousness on all levels. In the great debate among tantric practitioners we come down firmly on the side of spending seed and juices freely and joyously.

"Let puritans in snuggy snot,
conserve their semen til it rot..."

Naths prefer to enter into Gandharvan union, voluntary association, rather than marriage sanctioned by state, church, lawyer and taxes.

Naths prefer not to breed any children. However if a child is born, it is welcomed and Nath Householders become dutiful servants until the child becomes self-sufficient. The child is served first.

Naths may have to work. We calculate carefully how much of our time and life energy we are willing to give.

We can look to the Sufis for guidance in this field as work brings them freedom.

We know a way out of these old traps is insight and intuition, reduction of neurosis and endless churning with kleshas and conditioning.

Charisma, charm and unpredictability are helpful.

The embodiment of what we seek from life is the Guru, who is helpful when obeyed implicitly.

We seek experience and understanding of our biological energy system which leads to reduction in pain and neurosis and opens pathways to the inner guidance system, the inner bio-computer in which we can safely put all our trust

WE RELAX, WE
ACCEPT
OURSELVES, OUR
LIVES AND THE
WORLD, WITHOUT
JUDGEMENT

WE DO WHAT WE
DO AND WE GET
WHAT WE GET

Liberation while Living!
Liberation through Enjoyment!
Liberation!

This is what we eat

We are not burdened by food rules. We feast on everything and anything, turning poison, allergy, rot and corruption into the nectar of de-conditioned awareness. This is accomplished through intention and impeccable samarasa...thus we penetrate the mystery of form and nutrition.

Practices and Magic

Rituals and steady practice may provide the householder with an oasis of serenity in a busy day.

Patterning of any sort is avoided. We seek non-preference and spontaneous and self-willed action which can more easily arise in the relaxed un-conditioned mind.

Ritual becomes spontaneous, intimate and profound, though it be nothing more than feeding the fire.

With our human history of poor relations with the spirit world it would be the wise Nath who consorts with the other side bearing gifts, offerings and invitations to good parties.

Sorcery is meddling and therefore karma-producing. A Nath removes spells and curses from the ignorant, for fun.

Naths are psychonauts and explorers. We explore our inner world with its links to mystery, knowledge, intuition and guidance.

Accessing the power for a magical act of will may be done through imagination, anger, stress and many other routes. The intelligence to know when and why to act is accessed through meditation and quiet contemplation of the Dao.

Our greatest practice is relaxed, contemplative solitude, perhaps sitting by the dhuni. This can turn to swift action.

Our greatest magic is witnessing the harmonious Cosmos aid and achieve our work.

We are deeply grateful for all of creation.

The dedications and vows we make influence our decisions forever after. We vow wisely and deeply. If we are guided by bodhicitta, compassionate enlightenment, we work for all. Working only for our own interest is a lonely, bitter path.

These are our natural divisions

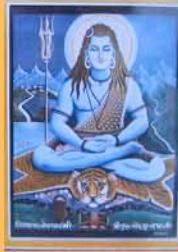
Householders
Renounced Sadhus
Ashramites
Often solitary, experimenting
wanderers and magicians
Ally cults eg, Kaulas, Wolf Clan,
Aghoris, Sufis,
The uncommitted
The uninitiated

Some cult words and sayings

Ma or Mai is uttered with every breath
Aadesh is our greeting to each other
Samarasa Svecchachara Sahaja
Peace Freedom and Happiness
Karmas Kleshas Konditioning
Iccha Jnana Kriya
Disperse and disorganize
“Bom! Bolenath
Saab ki sat
Alakh Niranjani
Api ap”
when lighting a chillum
Aaalakh! said loudly and forcefully
"Ya lal shabaz Q'alandari" honours the wanderer
Thank you Grandfather and Grandmother



These are our special skills



Advising Kings
Intense meditation
Intense austerities
Prestidigitation
Magic



Excellent relations with people, animal, plant and stone

Excellent relations with the spirit world

Knowledge of amulets and shaktipat

Dignity and intensity

Living off the land and city

Lucky gamblers

Breaking spells and curses

Weather control

Not seduced by anything or anybody, any system, any idea

Equanimity, spontaneity, self-created

Eft/Energy Medicine/Energy Psychology, NLP

We charm animals, snakes and children

Well acquainted with outer improbability zones and temporary autonomous zones and how to get there

Yantra Mantra Tantra

Chillum Chai Chod

Drug use and abuse

Transforming poison into Amrit

Repulsive, invisible, scary, eat bugs, shapeshift

See in the dark, naked, dirty and mad

Unpredictable

Charismatic



These are some texts

This is a sampling of the useful and amusing. Many of these books are written in twilight language.

Be patient and they will become clear. Most of these books are dangerous! Do not get lost in any of them.

Pick out the gems and
keep walking.

I Ching
Avadhoota Gita

Dao Te Ching
Pantanjalis Yoga Sutras

The collected works of Mahendranath

Tripura Rahasya

Mahabharata

Srimad Bhagavatam

Kaulajnananirnaya

**

Songs of the Dakini, story of Yeshe Tsogyal
Eternalicious

Defense Against the Dark Arse
Discordian Bible and where that leads

Gurdieff

Crowley

**

Aghora: at the Left Hand of God

Castenada's series

Passionate Enlightenment by Shaw

**

Chogyam Trungpa, Kalu Rimpoche, Drukpa Kunley
Great Sufi Saints, Poets, Mystics and Dancers

Timothy Leary

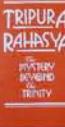
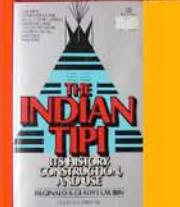
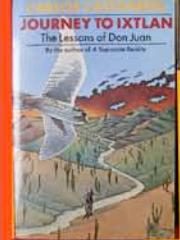
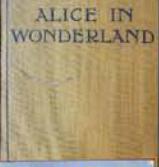
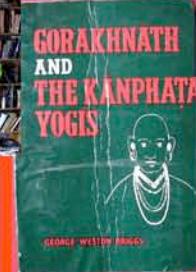
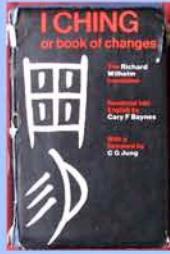
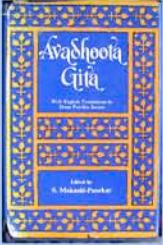
Generation Hex & Ultraculture by Jason Louv

Snow Crash & Diamond Age by Neal Stephenson

Comic books written by magicians

Music written by everybody, everywhere

Our own image banks and blogs, websites and publishing houses





This is what we wear and what we carry

"If you want to become a tiger first you
put on a tiger's skin .."

Jenue
Earrings Kundal Mudra
Tilak
Red Black Geru Yellow
Waterpot Kamandal
Drum Dameru
Trishul Trident
Fire tongs Chimtah
Jholi Shoulder bag
Conch
Mala
Dreadlocks Long hair
Survival gear
Portable internet device
I Ching
Rudrakshas
Offerings
Chillum
Vibhuti
Power objects
Shoes..or not
Pockets pockets pockets
Slingshot



Jenue or janeo

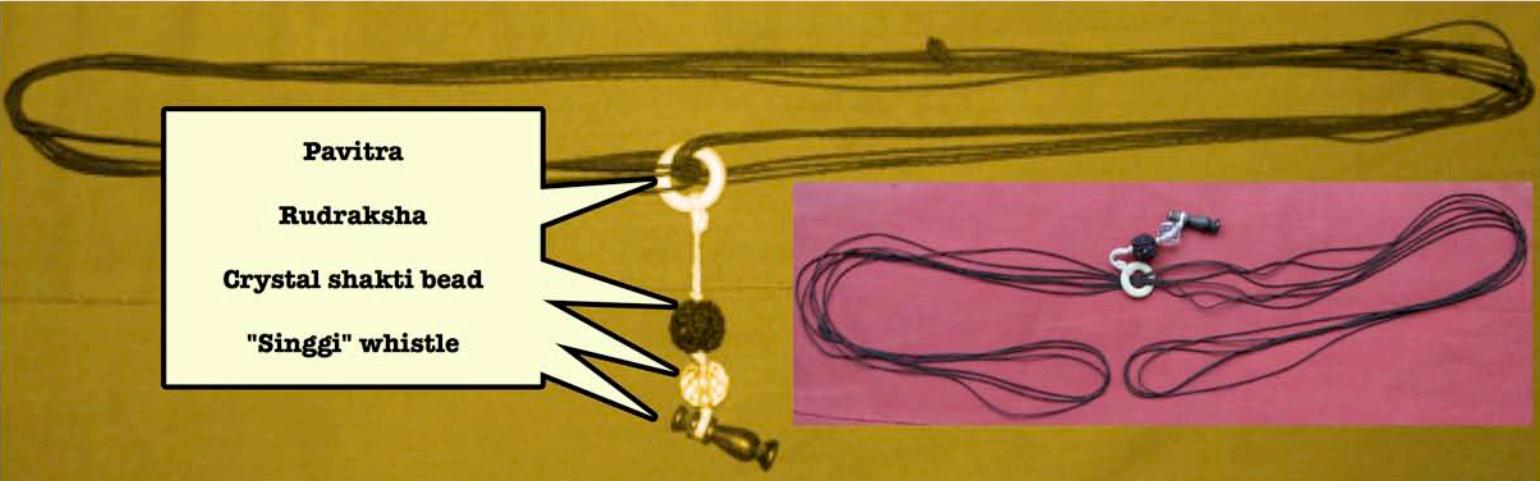
This is the sign of the Nathas. It is a necklace made from a very long, multistranded string made from goat hair. It is one of the earliest duties of the young initiate to weave his own jenue and perhaps a few more as gifts for older naths. This thread is folded 3 times and then passed through the pavitra. The three strands on either end are twisted once and joined together to form a ring of 6 strands and the strings now crisscross through the pavitra in an orderly manner. Put over the head. The whistle at the end of the jenue should hang to the navel. A string is knotted to the pavitra and on it are strung a rudraksha bead (Shiva), a crystal bead (Shakti), and a little whistle, the singgi, tied on at the end. Keeping the complex string arrangement untangled is the sign of an ordered mind. The whistle is blown when greeting ones' Guru, when doing puja, when worshipping at a shrine.

Pavitra

Rudraksha

Crystal shakti bead

"Singgi" whistle



Kundal, Earrings

This is the way a Nath's ears are pierced when they become Darshani, when they wear kundals. The whole inner part of the ear is bored out with a three-sided knife by one's Chira Guru. There are esoteric reasons to have the nerve center in this area of the ear removed. A large percentage of naths die of shock when the knife cuts the ear. The healing is long and is accompanied by instruction. Aughars, non-kundal wearers, may prefer a simple piercing of the lobes, with plain rings. The kundals can be made of many things from clay to ivory, crystal, silver or gold. Darshanis and Aughars hold each other in mutual contempt.



Tilak

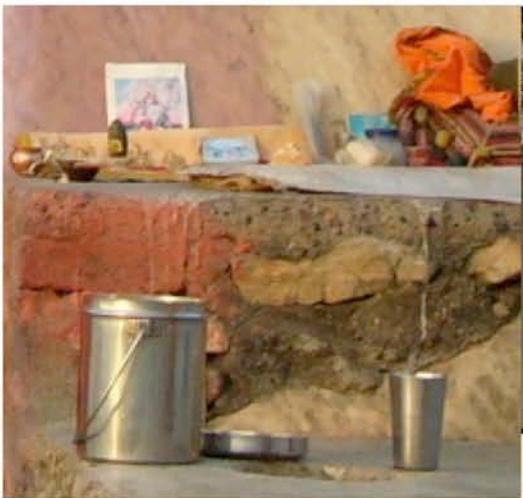
We mark our bodies with ash from the dhuni when we do rituals, three horizontal lines at forehead, throat, hands and when naked, breasts, navel, pubes, thighs, feet. We find these marks stabilizing. In India, face painting is an art and a code. Ingredients include ash, ochre lumps, sandalwood paste and kum kum powder. Our facepaint can become very expressive.



Red, Black, Geru, Yellow

These are the colours we wear when dressed in robes. A yellow underskirt under a black robe are the usual colours of a magician. Geru is traditionally obtained from an ochre rock paste. Today the artificial shades of orange are infinite. Shaktis and Saktas often wear red.





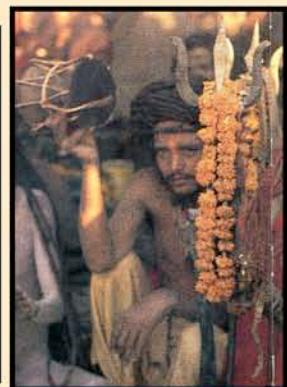
Kamandal Waterpot

Traditionally sadhus carried large seedpods, and various other ingenious watertight containers. Now we use the stainless steel cormundel (also kamandal) which is a metal pot with a well sealed lid. We can carry water, cook in either the pot or the lid, accept food offering in the pot and share it with the lid. It has a handle for easy handling over a fire and carrying as we walk.



Drum or Dameru

are intimate companions, powerful voices, guide into the underworld and the sublime dissolving world of Pure Sound. They are part of all rituals and ceremonies and temple activities. The drum keeps the beat of our dance. The Dameru, the two headed drum, is associated with Lord Shiva who keeps the beat of Devi's ecstatic dance..



Trishul (Trident) and Firetongs (Chimta)

The trishul or trident is one of the signs of Lord Shiva. It is full of symbolism and it is a weapon. Ancient trishuls encrusted in centuries of orange paint hold the energies of byegone sadhus at great dhunis in India.

We begin to plant ours here by our own dhunis. Bolenath!

Chimta are also used as weapons but for managing a fire they are indispensable. Certain chimta have little cymbals running down the length which makes them very useful musical instruments as well!

Jholi, Shoulder Bag

The jholi is where we keep all our tricks, offerings, spices, alterants and perhaps even money. It is ornately embroidered and decorated, and is full of pockets, both obvious and hidden. We make our own or patronise old or talented naths who create these special lucky bags, in many clever shapes as a source of income.



Conch

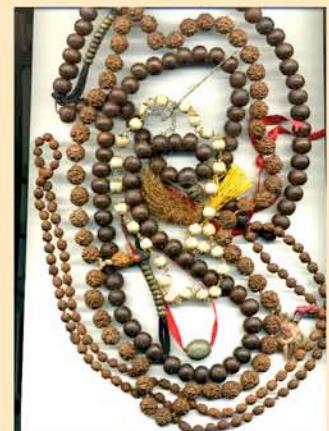
The conch shell is used as a horn to herald the rising and setting sun. It calls out that a ritual is about to begin. Water is poured through the conch, lips tightened and then blow with all might until a smooth rich sound emerges. Practice in private.



Mala

Japa Mala is used to count mantras. There are variations of 108 beads (half or a quarter of 108) on a mala, plus the sumeru bead which is the larger bead. It alerts you that it is time to turn back and start a new round.

The type of mala bead is significant. Shakti mantras are best said with crystal mala, Shiva with rudraksha mala, Laxmi with lotus seed, Vishnu with tulsi seed...and skulls carved of human bone mala is good for Tibetan mantras. This is, of course, all complete nonsense. Saying the Mantra is the key!



Dreadlocks, Jata, Long hair

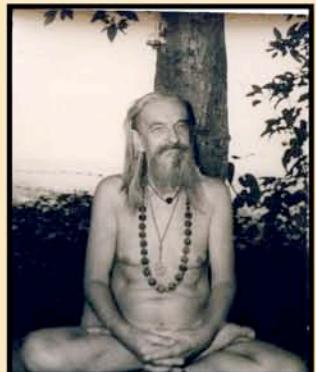
Dreadlocks and long hair are preferred because hair receives and transmits energies that are of interest to us.

Dreadlocks mimic and honour Lord Shiva and are common among us. Jata are easy to care for and we soon lose our fascination with our hair. They render us unacceptable in society.



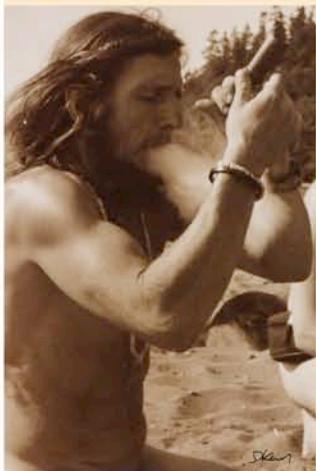
Survival gear, PID's

survival in the temperate and freezing zones requires gear until tumo is perfected. Although internet devices are not appropriate to retreat times, their usefulness is obvious. We possess knowledge that can help people survive terrible times. Hexayurts, solar ovens, water purification, food preservation, off-grid technologies and energy therapies are things that we want to know about and know how to use. Living off the land is easier if we have basic survival gear.



Offerings

are made to the fire, the rising and setting sun, the moon, rocks, animals, wanderers, saints and gods. Offered flowers should be fragrant! Offered food should be tasty. Amount of money offered should not end in a 0...always add an extra 1. If offering blood, we give our own blood. Sage, cedar, sweetgrass, rose petals, juniper berries, pine gum, copal are all locally available. Frankincense, samagri, agarbattis, dhoops and perfumes are exotics. Offer as well, milk, ghee, curd, honey, dried coconut. The finest offerings are endless mantras, burnt kleshas, destroyed delusions, all offered at the dhuni. with the sincere desire for liberation in this lifetime.



Chillum

is a conical pipe used for smoking dope and tobacco mixture. Keeping that chillum filled is a sadhu's pastime and curse. Charas subdues hunger and sleepiness and helps pass time pleasantly. Unhappily smoking annoys authorities. When either deep concentration or total slack is important it is the best ally.

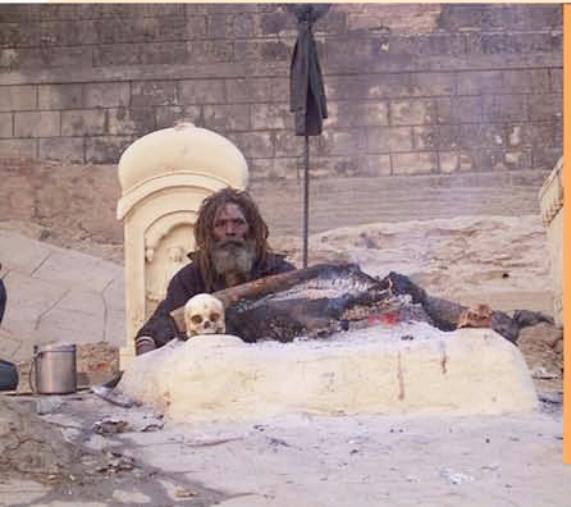


Rudrakshas

are the seeds from a large tree that grows across Asia. The especially fine ones come from Nepal. These seeds are sacred to Shiva and they bestow the protection of Rudra. Strings of these seeds are used as malas and they are worn on the wrists, upper arms and chest as a tapas. They are truly uncomfortable. Rudrakshas are naturally sectioned and each section is called a face (mukhi). The number of faces can range from one to perhaps 26. Certain numbers have significance, 5 is always Shiva's number. Some are so rare they are worth a king's ransom. While the magical qualities of these beads are soon apparent, science is finding they have healing, purifying and energetic properties that are quite inexplicable! Bolenath!!

Death and the Burning Ground

We all end up here but Naths often visit for prolonged periods of time beforehand. Surrounded by burning pyres and ash, bones and body parts, we meditate on death, change and impermanence. The spirit world is apparent in such a place. Dispassion and fearlessness are found. Death is devoured. Traditionally, Naths were voluntarily sealed into a vault to await death. Death is encountered while still full of strength and spiritual power. By dying in this way, we maintain the use of a physical form to act in the material world while being also part of the formlessness of dissolution. Ancient Nath temples have rooms full of rows of these zindi samadhis. Success is quickly apparent, contact easily made, bad trouble easily found.



I Ching

Until it has imprinted itself upon our neurons we carry a copy of the I Ching wherever we go. If we have not yet found the Guru, the Sage of the I Ching will guide us without fail. The Richard Wilhelm version is still the gold standard, but Anthony and Moog have made a major contribution to the huge pile of great translations that are available. Multiple versions are helpful for understanding the cryptic response, but nothing helps understanding like contemplation, study, time and practice. It is a new language and a very new, to us, way of understanding the worlds. Mahendranath wrote a short poem about the I Ching called

The Fantasy of the Activation of the Transformations

The transformations of light and dark:
How colorful!
Some things at rest and some in motion:
What a Creation!
Sevens and eights and nines and sixes:
What calculation!
The cosmic forces of ceaseless endeavour;
How miraculous!
The ebb and flow of the ocean of life:
How expansive!
When we open our eyes to the changing cosmos;
What a spectacle!

Vibhuti Bhasma Ash

is the power-laden ash produced ritually, with many mantras and offerings, at a dhuni. Nathas use this ash to transmit healing and spiritual grace. In this world everything is reduced to ash. We cover our naked bodies in ash, we sit and sleep in ashes, ash is our medicine.

A man requested a son from Matsyendranath who gave him some ash and told his wife to eat it; she would soon have the son she desired. Disbelieving, she threw the ash in the dung heap. When

Matsyendranath returned 12 years later and made inquiries about the boy, he was told the ash had not been used, but had been tossed away. Matsyendranath went out back, dug around in the shit and pulled out a 12 year old boy which was the miraculous origin of the incomparable Gorakshnath.

Lingam and Yoni

This is the supreme icon of Shiva and Shakti. The lingam depicts the unmanifest state of creation. The lingam is never shown alone. It appears within the yoni, depicting the moment of creation. From the seed, the bindu, all things have their beginning in the material world. All of creation changes, dies and dissolves until the moment of creation re-forms us into flesh once again.

The Lingam is worshipped with water, milk, ghee, curds, five-petaled flowers and incense. Liquids are often poured perpetually on the lingam from a pot which hangs above it.

Power Objects

Generally we avoid the power objects of others and create our own. A simple stone imbued with the power of accumulated meditation and attention becomes a touchstone, an anchor to remind us of our true nature as eternal Self.



Slingshot and other Weapons

When walking alone at night, or trying to sleep late in the morning, one inevitably encounters dogs and monkeys that need to be discouraged with the chimtah or better yet, shot at from a distance with a slingshot. Be prepared.

Energy Therapies

Begin here! Energy therapies heal the emotions and the body. A child who knows how to tap on the energy meridians can save a life. A deeply thoughtful approach will clear obstructions from the path with surprising efficiency. Anxieties, traumas and neuroses prevent us from attaining deep meditative states, equanimity, and basic comfort within the body.

Energy therapies demonstrate the individual's relationship to the energy field, the very stuff of creation and dissolution. This technology can serve a new understanding of magic and "siddhis" which hold such fascination for the curious. These techniques may render us so comfortable within our own skin that we may abandon a path that is not meant for us and we return to householder life with a light heart and a chance of success in life on our terms.

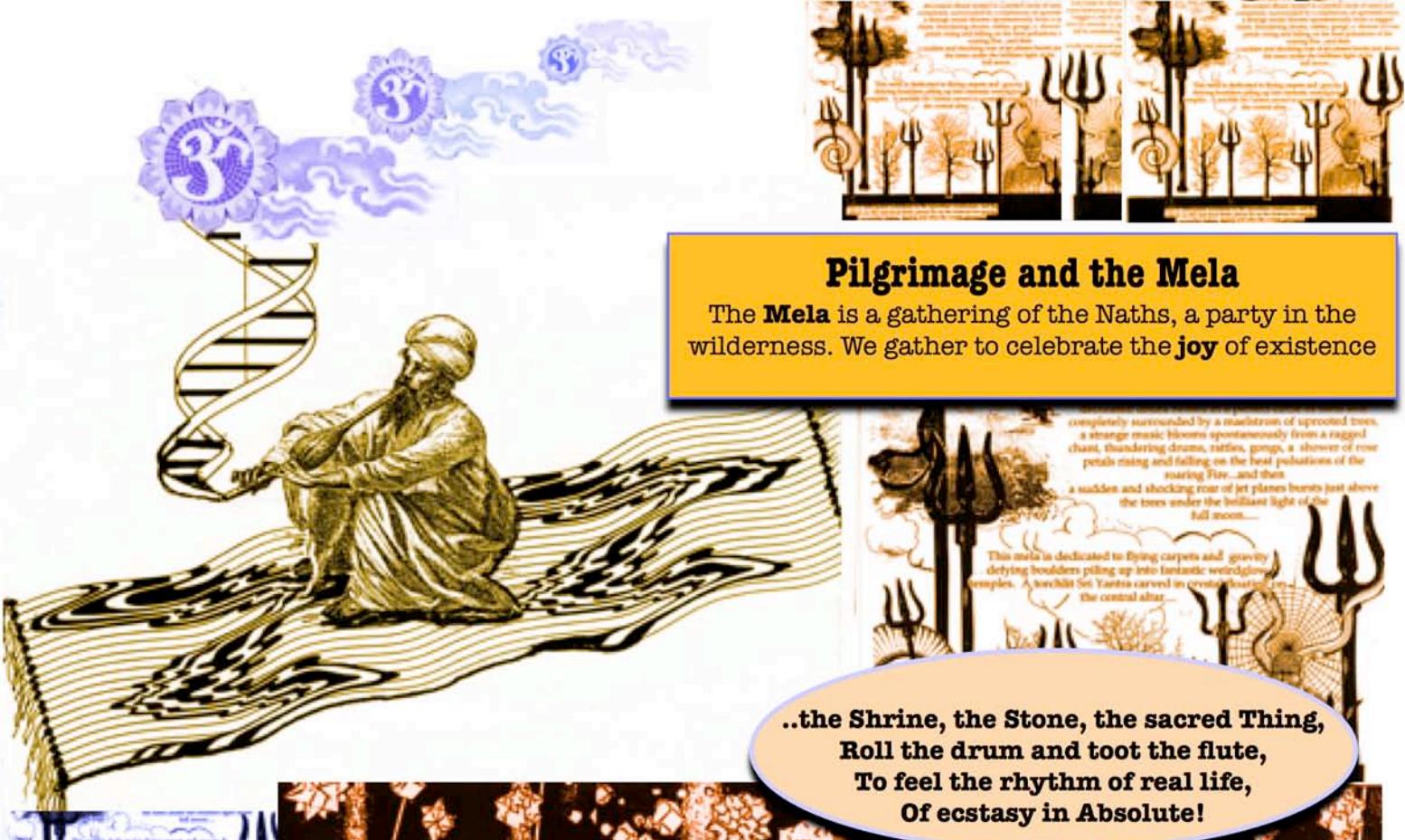
There is a danger on the path to unity, of dividing oneself between the acceptable self and the shadow, the unacceptable and discarded selves. As we attempt to attain dispassion we are most likely to suppress emotions and body states, to our great disservice. Inner unity leads to communication with and healing of the fragmented selves which can be created as a by-product of inexperienced spiritual growth.

Keeping our energy harmonious and flowing without obstruction, in, through and out of the body leads naturally to knowledge of the Self. Because Self is All, without division, we naturally begin to experience intuition, insight, compassion and clarity. Past lives become accessible. The patterns of "others", human, animal or inanimate become clear. Healing at a distance, healing and communicating with animals, perhaps even changing the local weather becomes part of our technology, our usefulness in this world.

This technology is easily acquired. Practice on oneself and others will bring surprising reward.

Start your research at www.emofree.com. Gary Craig is a hidden guru for the Naths. He gives us the most powerful of mantras; "I deeply and completely love and accept myself without judgement." This deep acceptance of self leads to acceptance of the world and the way it is. This leads to less and less accumulation of karma and entanglements as we stop meddling with the world and its inhabitants. We slowly harmonize with the harmonious cosmos..

As we age we lose our abundance of youthful energy. Seeking out the energy blocks where we have stored emotionally charged memories and healing and liberating that energy is the elixir we seek.



Pilgrimage and the Mela

The **Mela** is a gathering of the Nathas, a party in the wilderness. We gather to celebrate the **joy** of existence



..the Shrine, the Stone, the sacred Thing,
Roll the drum and toot the flute,
To feel the rhythm of real life,
Of ecstasy in Absolute!

Ideally a pilgrim travels penniless and barefoot, carrying no more than a single blanket, a jholi, a kamandal and chimtah. Traveling, in danger, hungry and at the mercy of circumstances, is cleansing and informative.

If mantra and ecstasy become part of the voyage the destination will reward with waves of grace. Such waves are the finest spiritual fuel. In India pilgrimage places have been established for thousands of years. Naths travelled from Kabul to Cambodia and from Parasuramakund to Kanyakumari, walking the outer pattern of our inner transformation. A knowledge of ley lines, power spots and earth energy grids help us to establish our new pilgrimage places. Native Americans and Euro pagans have established grids of power spots across these landscapes and we share these natural wonders, learning the practices and ways that honour their knowledge, their ancestors and their precedence.



Pilgrimage places can also be personal, chosen through inner promptings and dreams. A pilgrimage can be an extended voyage that lasts a lifetime.

Offerings are made at every opportunity, to all sentient beings, to rocks, to rivers, to the joyous pond and the still hill, to the rising and setting of sun, moon, planet and star. We accept offerings. No pilgrimage can be completed without the help of the cosmos, good luck and the kindness of strangers.



Bhairavs Bhairoms Berus and Bogeymen

Bhairav emerged from the angry third eye of Lord Shiva to take vengeance on Brahma for his arrogance. He chopped off one of Lord Brahma's five heads. In his iconic images he always carries it as his penance.

There are 52 Bhairavs. They are also called Bhairom in the east and Beru in the west.

Bhairav is the protector of Yogis as well as protector and friend of the Yogini hordes. His consort is the Mahavidya, Bhairavi. Bhairav shrines and temples always accompany and protect Shakti shrines. Bhairav is a ferocious form of Siva, fearful in appearance, fanged, carrying one of Brahma's heads, armed with a large club, wearing large earrings, snakes and skull garlands, he is blue-black and covered in ashes. He always has three eyes. Batuka Bhairav is in the form of a young lad and promises to dispense siddhis, were one fool enough to ask.

Kala Bhairav Is the implacable Lord of Time and Death. His mount is the black dog and it is through feeding dogs that his favour is sought. He reminds us that life is short and liberation is rare. Kal Bhairav's worship is always included in Nath ritual in India and Nepal. He is invoked by those who lack a sense of urgency. He reminds us that we live in a house on fire. In Nepal, the Bhairav is the local guardian against the destructive forces of nature. Usually he is represented by a rock which has been covered in centuries of orange paint, dripping in ghee, rice grains, dried coconut and flowers. Each one has his own legend about how he got trapped and is now constrained to help rather than harm. These guardians are worshipped by the local people as part of their daily rituals.

Bhairavs are difficult to please without great sincerity. Those who feel they deserve more ask for boons from Bhairavs, bribing and paying them, often with animal sacrifices. They have voracious appetites to match the voracious appetites of their petitioners. Once caught up in the snares of passionate desires, having lost all interest in liberation in this lifetime one may as well sink deeper into delusion with the help of these beings.

Bhairavs are happy to fulfill our deepest desires, thus the phrase, "Be careful what you wish for!"



Kavachas Amulets and Helpers

Amulets are objects into which a protective or healing energetic charge has been placed. Great amulets feel like safety when we are endangered by real or imagined situations. Paranoia happens to us all and amulets are great helpers through those periods.

Cambodia is considered the source of the very best functional amulets, the Thais are also very adept. An amulet from your guru is the ultimate protection. When we put our amulets aside we know the sun is shining for us again.

Creating amulets for oneself or others is one of our skills. If the amulet is too strong or inappropriate the recipient will lose it within days or even hours. Placing shaktipat into an object is a skill gained by practice. Inducing life in an object takes time, love and concentration...once it has been created only long periods of boredom will disperse it again so please be contemplative! Another use for amulets is to anchor a feeling or viewpoint in order to be able to retrieve it easily.

The helpers are the invisible actors/forces/attractors which lie behind the power of amulets. The helpers are aspects of nature and of the cosmic tendency towards harmony, health, contentment and liberation. When we feel alone, abandoned, compulsive and sick, monstrous and ego-ridden, we need help to get us back into harmony with ourselves and the Dao. Asking for help begets help naturally. The invisible world is pleased to be asked for help and are always ready, willing and able. Ask, then get on with life and let the helpers do what they do without interference. Rituals, bribery and rude demands will block them. Harmony with things-as-they-are is the beginning of the magical life.





* **Ai Devi Explains Two Paths**

At first I see a dancer twirling on a music box. She twirls faster until she is just a blur and then we are on a beach. She is fire orange and her many hands, full of attributes, are appearing and disappearing among the flowing orange tatters of her robe. Her back is arched in the ecstasy of her dance, lightly balanced on a single toe. I pranaam her with great devotion.

The scene settles into a beach at sunset, there is a warm breeze, the golden sand is slightly damp under my bare feet. The beach is a bay, surrounded by black sheltering cliffs but directly in front of me the dark distant horizon touches the brilliantly lit sea.

The dancer stops twirling and settles into the solid form of a little girl with blonde curls and blue eyes. She solemnly pranaams me back.

Seeing that I am stunned by her action, she says, "I am the Self, the One. I am you and you are me. Worship of another is useless. Attain union with the Self and you attain union with All. Liberate yourself from ideas of subject and object. "You" and "Me" are not separate, "They" do not offend, "We" are not many but only One. Space and Time are the forces which generate the illusion of separate existence, that generate the great and terrible story of humankind roiling and boiling to and fro across the broad stage of earth throughout the 10 directions of space and through endless Ages.."

"Immortal Goddess, Ai Devi, you are wisdom and power and All Form. How can I, foolish and ignorant human, resemble You in any way?"

"Don't flatter yourself," she said, drily. Then she smiled with great compassion and humor. "There are many ways to go about this. The first path is simple and easy. In deep contemplation you realize you are, and always have been, the immortal Self, encompassing the cosmos, free and Divine. This is the art of the Avadhoot.

Naths relish the hard path, seeking life beyond decay and reincarnation through great unremitting effort. They seek the mystery of Sound, of the sound without source, Anahat Shabd. It is said, endless mantra spoken and silently voiced, with deep absorption eventually creates the immortal mantra body. We are both form and formless, Shakti and Shiva. When these become intimately unified, the yogi has the ability to appear in any form, in all of time and space. These difficult pathways are attempted by many, success is very rare.

The first step is to give up your self and the ego sense of a separate 'I'. This is achieved through devotion and submission, or through single pointed absorption, or through infinite expansion into the unified energy field of the cosmos. The individual ceases to desire, urge to action dissolves, Maya is no longer generated. The universal creative urge is transmuted into the effortlessness of Self, moving without preference or repulsion, spontaneously, unchanged by outside force, since All is now within.

To die is to disintegrate into component parts, to be recycled, to feed the Moon. Continuous consciousness through lifetimes is a delusion. Liberation can only be achieved while living in the body. Pray that Kal Bhairav, dark and relentless Lord of Time, spur you on to greater effort. Death is close, this path is long."

"Dear Goddess, Ai Devi, thank you for this knowledge. I shall waste no time." "Hmmm. You don't quite understand, do you? The hard path for you then. Get to it."

* **Ai Devi explains Basics**

I release the grip of attention of my multitude of selves, sink into deep receptivity and tune into my senses and the passing show playing on my eyelids. In the usual way she creates Herself out the stuff of emptiness and appears before my mind's eye. This path is easier now. I am in a vast plain, full of wild grasses. Only the sky changes, pink dawn to golden daylight, sinking into sunset and then the twinkling stars in blackest night. The sky is changing at dizzying speed. In the distance, approaching fast, I see an old bearded man, shoulders covered in a great fur blanket, tiny ankles in little clouds of dust. No, it is a buffalo, a snorting, prancing, dancing white buffalo, sparks emitting from its hooves and smoke from its great nostrils. I look up and I see a child, a little girl, standing on the great furred back steadied by reins of sweetgrass. His great neck is looped with garlands of roses and rudrakshas.

"Ai Devi, great Goddess! what a sight!"

"Do you like my friend? He is known as Sundance." He paws his great hoof into the matted turf and tosses his heavy, horned head.

With deepest devotion I pranaam them both.

"Dearest Devi, I have contemplated long and hard and I cannot find this 'Self,' nor do I understand the meaning of 'the Absolute', although such things should be clear to me by now."

"Indeed!" She dropped the reins, turned from astride the great beast to a sitting position, her little hands in the mudras of blessing and teaching. The buffalo disappeared and she was now floating on a hovering lotus throne, dressed in overalls and a T shirt.

"The Absolute and the Self are not perceptible to the mind alone. The mind works at breaking down the stuff of manifestation into ever smaller particles. But this is the work of unifying, first within the self, and then step by step, the unified self seeks to demolish all barriers, marshaling ever greater intensity, effort and grace until it recognises it is immortal Self, forever at play in the Infinite.

"Imagine your body is the computer and the internet is access to all human knowledge. This is the current, limited modern metaphor. Our living body is our lens through which to perceive the All but the sense of "I am" limits and separates us from the Absolute which contains, of course, more than just the internet. As long as we are reacting to the play of illusion, of Maya, we forget to turn inward, to turn left, focus and contemplate our own nature. Perception of Self increases step by step, through refinement of relaxed and steady meditation. The Self and the Absolute are in no way separate. The Self is an aggregate of dispassionate consciousness existing in the continuum of all and everything, formless energy flowing into the stuff of the cosmos and flowing out again. Without barrier or division, without name or desire and yet, unique and active, the avadhoot immersed in Self, roams the cosmos, at home in the One, the Absolute, in the sea of delight, singing of the joy of existence."

"Dearest Ai Devi, that could be fun or that could get boring after a while."

"Welcome to existence, frivolous one. To and fro goes the way, sometimes this and other times that. From my dark astral cave to the bright lights of B'way, I move, unobstructed and indifferent. I am inscrutable yet harmonious. Boredom is not my problem."

I bowed my head. "Thank you Ai Devi, cosmic voyager from among the stars."

"Turn left at Arcturus and head straight for the gates of the Pleiades!" She laughed as she grabbed the heavy fur of Sundance's coat. He had just blinked back into manifestation. She pulled herself up on his back with one graceful leap, lifted the sweetgrass reins and riding off, she called back to me, "I have an appointment back of the Himalayas. We will meet again at the horizon."

* Ai Devi explains Limitations

I follow a beam of light in my mind's eye. It leads to a little courtyard where a child is playing, sitting on the ground knocking about little beads of hard dung with a twig. She is so deeply absorbed in her game, she does not hear my approach. A bee lands in her white curls and buzzes close to her ear. Without looking up or stopping her game she says, "Welcome pilgrim, nathji. What brings you here? As you can see, I am very busy."

"Dearest Devi," I replied, forgetting all form and formality, "this is exactly our problem. The naths complain that family, rent and taxes and television take a toll on their attention. Finding the time and money to go on even a month long retreat seems impossible for many of us. We scramble for the money to keep body and soul together and the sherif from the door. All land is owned, wandering is forbidden, identity must be maintained, even dhuni space is hard to find. How can we be sustained in this modern world?"

"Are you quite finished whining? Look, my dungball has slumped with the sogginess of your lament." It was true, the little ball had lost all shape.

"Every time is the same time. It is always difficult and easy, it is always corrupt and inspired, always golden here and dark there. The limitations are always present, often for the better. Limitation is the very stuff of inspiration. At the beginning we must be warriors. We must each carve our unique solution to life out of the solid rock of our time and place. We must war with ourselves with clear intent to liberate ourselves from all self-made limitation. That creates a dramatic field within which to learn and strive for command of our own consciousness, command of our own attention. The householder will seek scraps of time, tired, late at night. Dropping all care for the world, for the moment, they will grab for liberation with tremendous drive and crafty skill because Kal Bhairav has blessed them with limited time and increased intensity.

The first meaning of left-turning path speaks of the effort needed to turn away from all distraction, involvements and concerns. Make no mistake, this is a painful wrench that must somehow be achieved if the process is to begin. It is the first and hardest step, and usually remains painful for much of the journey. But this is not the only path, nor is it for everyone, is it?"

"You are scaring me." I said, feeling a cold, lonely shiver running up my spine. "It's just a game, just another flow of the Dao" she giggled, "but the stakes are the highest. Our path through life is inevitably littered with failures and wrong turns. Those dry times in the desert, amnesiac and dying of thirst, test us all. More than once. Our great visions crumble into dust and we reach for prizes which rot to the touch. But ash and dust is the material we seek. Though we are repeatedly burnt to the core steering this path, the remaining ash endures, animates and continues, purified and potent. Not for sissies." She nudged one dung ball into place and then whacked it with the stick. It flew into the air and disappeared in a tiny burst of rainbow light. "Old egyptian trick!" she said brightly.

"What do you mean, about ash re-animating?"

"That is called a metaphor, silly! Ash is the end of the road, the substance purified of form, it no longer carries the attributes of its former state. Naths use this ultimate substance to transmit healing and the energy of initiation. We seek to burn our limited selves down to ash, to be reborn, without attributes or desires, yet active and Self-willed."

"I am inspired by your words great Ai Devi. May all Naths find their way to your eternal spring of wisdom and guidance."

"Off you go, then. Get on with it. Now, I want to play my game."

Old Pu-tai

The Old God of Hippieness,
Pu-tai the rotund rollicker;
Leading his crazy army
Of tangle-trash tramps
And hermits full of joy:
Drop-outs of another age,
The sacred and the insane,
Who sang with mystic madness,
With hearts so full of gladness.
The loafing larikins,
The laughing rogues,
Monks, mumpers, mockers,
Renegades and shockers,
Who lampoon everything on earth
And even gods in heaven:
All wild abandonment
And absolute delight,
Living their joyful hours
Throughout the day and night.
Can those who talk now,
And find life one long tease,
Ever hope to capture
The joy of men like these?

—Shri Dadaji Mahendranath

Ne Plus Ultra

There can be no realization,
The soul has always known the truth.
How can there be reunion with OM
When we are already part of it?
There can never be liberation,
For the soul has always been free.
There can be no gods or goddesses
Except inferior relative concepts.
There can be neither birth nor death
For the soul which is permanent,
And where can rest concepts of space and time
To limit the eternal Infinite?

—Shri Dadaji Mahendranath



Michael Asti Rose