



From the Editor in Chief's desk:
By Swami ParanandTirth

EDITOR IN CHIEF: SWAMI PARANAND TIRTH

Like the doctrine of possibilism in scientific thought there is the logic of possibilism or संभवः in the scriptures specially those interlaced with epical stream line of consciousness .Despite leaving ample room for poetic and mythological eulogies and exaggerations the domain of possibilities always supersede that of realities .Most of the esoteric motive behind such "impossible conceptualisation" or to be more precise the conceptualisation of remote possibilities is to infuse as it were theism into the simpletons . Simpletons go more by faith, devotion and ecclesiastic governance rather than metaphysical expositions and lofty discursive specifications .

Paradoxically what has been more decisive in the history of religion is its acceptance by the masses and seldom the rational postulations which even otherwise do not comprise the bulk of the revelations and their further elaborations . In the ancient aphoristic treatise on Indian syllogism, three types of communications are described viz.

Dialogues, self assertion and arrogance .वाद, जल्प and वतिडा। the first one is rather a systematic and wellorganisedfourteen step procedure of exact inference of a given strategy .

This one begins with the notion of pramanam or the testimony of evidence which begins with an authentic dictum and ending at the gestures of total rejection or absolute affirmation. This system embrace a vast spectrum of human

thought from a fundamentalistic adherence to the dictum of revelations up to the unpredictability and incalculability of theistic amalgam of dance, drama ,painting ,poetry ,sculpture and other faculties of human creativity .

Scriptural authority as the testimony of evidence replaced aesthetic compilation and agreeability in this case remained the only criteria of consistency . The third mode or a reciprocating arrogance which is invariably an outcome of impoverished volition , cognition and similar conducive faculties of human knowledge and understanding . When even agreeability and exuberant eloquence cease to be the criteria of feasibility -a वैतंडकि (an acronym for a person given to such feats of erroneous verbal self assertions) sits in the drivers seat . This is the sorry plight of the advancement of knowledge and wisdom which remains muffled in the cacophony of arrogance ,self assertion, unruly and inarticulate ejaculations . As the fulcrum of human understanding shifts fromauthenticity of the scriptures to individual reason or individualistic cognitive bent the entire trend of the testimony of evidence also moves from आगम to अनुमानम् of the type that conduces to direct perception or प्रत्यक्षम् .The unrestrained divergent outflow of awareness that comes from a total absence of doctrinal subservience and discipline makes new alter-

of human knowledge and understanding . When even agreeability and exuberant eloquence cease to be the criteria of feasibility -a वैतंडिकि(an acronym for a person given to such feats of erroneous verbal self assertions) sits in the drivers seat . This is the sorry plight of the advancement of knowledge and wisdom which remains muffled in the cacophony of arrogance ,self assertion, unruly and inarticulate ejaculations . As the fulcrum of human understanding shifts from authenticity of the scriptures to individual reason or individualistic cognitive bent the entire trend of the testimony of evidence also moves from आगम to अनुमानम् of the type that conduces to direct perception or प्रत्यक्षम् .The unrestrained divergent outflow of awareness that comes from a total absence of doctrinal subservience and discipline makes new alternatives inevitable in the process of acquisition of wisdom . They have been ingeniously devised in the tantric canons .

The first remarkable thing is the theory of मातृका or alphabet as the ultimate testimony of evidence besides their being divinely oriented and presided by God as universal consciousness .Their abbreviated form अहम् depicts the supreme self . Secondly the exemption from the sine quo none of ethical perfection rendered the Vedic and smarta institutions either impractical or pretentious . Self restraint, prolonged feats of moral refinement and a penitent stoic attitude as prerequisites for self realisation were ruled out .

One who doesnot have a soul should be ineligible for self realisation says Maheshwara in his MaharthManjari since there is no one who doesn't have a soul , nobody is unfit . This was a great release from the tyranny of rigid esotericism in which the knowledge of the self was to be imparted only to an erudite vedic scholar by a preceptor of similar scholastic accomplishment .Besides a knower of the vedas no one can realise Brahman

(नावेदवन्मिनुतेतंबृहंतम्)

MaheshwaraAbhinavgupta in his magnum opus -Tantraloka says that one can seek perfection by unison with Parameshwara even without Yamas andNiyamas (Non violence,truth, continence ,absence of theft and covetousness. Ablution contentment,penance study and devotion). Puranas are half way in the process

One should focus on the Yamas and should not be particular about niyamas .

A wise man should go for the five spiritual virtues given in the parenthesis above and take the routine ablution etccasually .

Agamas on the other hand obviate both Yama and niyamas the munificence of the Lord and the preceptor who is but his embodiment can infuse these values in the neophyte within a trice . अनुग्रह or शक्तपित is more significant . Such an approach made Tantras consistent and relevant as the third testimony of evidence i.e. The Agamas are defined as the dictum of the authentic ones .

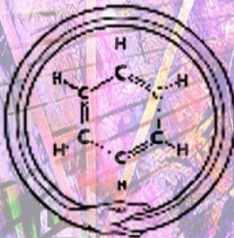
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EDITORIAL

Knowledge has a unique method of dawning on individuals and communities and interestingly it is never linear or sequential. Bhartrihari, suggested that linguistic meaning cannot be conveyed or accounted for by the physical utterance and perception of sounds, so he puts forth the *shphotā* theory: the theory which posits the meaning-unit, which for him is the sentence, as a single entity and which reveals its meaning in a flash.

Apparently most of the discoveries and inventions have taken root in subconscious state. Whether it was Newton observing apple falling from the tree or the molecular structure of benzene ring which appeared to Kekule in a dream state in form of mythic ouroboros, both suddenly revealed an alternative meaning.



Such archetypal symbols as Jung would call them hint at a greater truth embedded in the mythopoeic vision, a storehouse of knowledge most of it yet decoded. Together they make up that psychic stratum which has been called the collective unconscious. What this points at is the fact that we are more creative, imaginative and prone to discover the secrets of nature when we are not really looking for them. A paradox of sorts, the statement hints at hidden power in us which manifests only when conscious mind is given a break.

With a much wider and all encompassing notion of knowledge and blessings of our Guru Swami ParanandTirth we take our quest forward and present the fifth issue of the YTA newsletter.

Like always we start with an enlightening and insightful editorial by Swami ParanandTirthji delving on various methods of communicating knowledge. Despite leaving ample room for poetic and mythological eulogies and exaggerations the

domain of possibilities always supersede that of realities. Most of the esoteric motive behind such "impossible conceptualisation" or to be more precise the conceptualisation of remote possibilities is to infuse as it were theism into the simpletons.

Next we have a perceptive article by Swamiji focusing on 'decoding the ultimate wisdom'. Without a transcendence in toto there cannot be a consistent cognition of the subjective awareness. Abhinavagupta maintains that the parameshwara ever engaged in fivefold functions is basically and prominently a redeemer. All other four functions are meant for culminating into the fifth function i.e. *anugraha* or redemption.

The article on 'Naropa, Kalchakra and Nalanda tradition' by Niraj Kumar as always is quite engaging and raises interesting questions about both the factual as well as philosophical roots of the tradition. Naropa appears to be a bridge between various vying sects of Buddhist Tantricism and Hindu Tantricism. In fact, he is also known as *Nadapada* and *Nalanda-pada*, attributing his significance in the Nalanda transmission of knowledge.

Next we have the second part of the comprehensive travelogue written by Sunder Shridhar on his visit to Kailash Mansarovar. The write-up succinctly focuses on the once in a life time spiritual experiences of a pilgrim overawed by Mansarovar and its vicinity.

This is followed by a comprehensive article on Lal Ded, a saint poetess from Kashmir by Swamiji. And locating various elements of eastern metaphysics in her *vaks* Lal ded aka *padmavati* like her preceding lady saints like *markaradevi* and *Mathura devi* of yore not only left behind the legacy of mystic experience but also a compendium of methods through which an ardent aspirant can achieve the ultimate even today.

Next we have an article on *Akanandun* a popular mystic folk tale from Kashmir by Geetika Kaw Kher. Multitude of meanings can be derived from folklore depending on the method of the analysis used. Most of the times the literal meaning leaves one baffled, confused and shocked as it fails to fit in our reasonable logical thinking and that is why scholars of culture have been using various semiotic and psychoanalytic methods to analyze the potent content of these tales of ancient wisdom.

Last but not the least we have a photo feature on ancient Buddhist monuments from Sri Lanka. Theravada Buddhism is the religion of about 70% of the population of Sri Lanka. The island has been a center of Buddhist scholarship and learning since the introduction of Buddhism in the third century BCE producing eminent scholars such as *Buddhaghosa* and preserving the vast *Pāli Canon*.



(Dr. Geetika Kaw Kher is Asst. Professor at Amity School Of Fine Arts (ASFA) and teaches History of ArtAesthetics and Art Criticism)

4 WISDOM FROM SHIVAS RATTLE DRUM

By Swami Paranand Tirth

DECODING THE ULTIMATE WISDOM .

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तत्त्वातीतःपरंसाक्षीसर्वानुग्रहवगिरहः।
अहमात्मापरोहल्स्यामतिशिभुस्तरीदधे॥२७॥

The embodiment of compassion and the witness that transcends all elementary constituents of the phenomena is the supreme self or the super ego which is denoted by हल् . " I am that said " Shiva and dis-incarnated.

BEYOND THE ELEMENTS

By tatwas either thirty six elementary constituents of the universal phenomena Group 'ka' represent shiv.shakti.sadashiv.ishwar and shudhvidya . Dental consonants are the five conditioning sheaths . The five cerebral consonants -prakriti mind, heart, reason and ego .

Lingua cerebrals are the five senses .The five labials' are the organs of action 'yara la va along with three dental aspirata and la and ksha are the five perception and the five elements. Thus are signified the 25 tatwas of the Samkhya philosophy which are also the first 25 tatwas of the former. Without a transcendence in toto there cannot be a consistent cognition of the subjective awareness . This tatwatita or transcendent witnessing conscious alone can be the redeeming aspect of lord shiva .A conditioned and contorted shiva cannot be conceptualized as endowed with his anugrahshakti .This power of redeeming his chosen ones is not different from para vak which is considered as innately in unison with parameshwara. Abhinavagupta maintains that the parameshwara ever engaged in fivefold functions is basically and prominently a redeemer .All other four functions are meant for culminating into the fifth function i.e. anugraha or redemption.

There is an aphorism in the brahmsutras explaining how there can be no discrimination or partiality in iswara His munificence is universal .In the mid seventies I was living in a cloister at Risikesh as a meekishaltar boy . Anandmoyimata, a lady saint of great renown had come over and devotees and aspirants were putting questions and she was answering them .There was no scholastic or discursive exuberance in her answers.Her words came from her immaculate guileless enlightened mind .

Why am I deprived from the munificent benevolence of the lord?

Why this discrimination against me ; asked one humble devotee from the audience .

She replied ,the grace of the lord is showering like rain all over but if you keep your pot inverted it will never fill . Keep your pot upright and you can receive his benevolence .Nandikeshwar describes the lord as the personification of munificence-a universal redeemer 'sarvanugrahvighrah' .

In a strict metaphysical sense the only form of redemption admissible is the emancipation from all miseries and the attainment of one's essential nature i.e.Shivahood . From the stand point of anugrah as the foremost function rest of the four functions are only conducive to it . In a modest verbiage lord shiva creates sustains and dissolves the universal phenomena only to facilitate redemption . The creation of shiva according to some canons of tantrism is in the form of metaphysical wisdom or vidyatmika which is an expression of the lord's munificence for delivering those who are languishing in the dismal darkness in their own imagery or nescience .

A Termination of this reciprocating and perpetual trail of vikalpa or vikalpashaya is possible only through His power of redemption or anugratmikashakti . Kriya, ichha, jnan, chit and para are the names of the five shaktis. Para is held as supreme specially in a context such as this when the four offsprings of brahma are supposed to be redeemed . After his routine dance of annihilation shiva plays his rattle drum fourteen times to enlighten adepts like sanaka etc. Modernists in the area of sanskritism have demystified all schools of grammatical thought .An admixture of undue determinism has made grammar too exoteric and discursive .But traditionally these aphorisms have also been used for worshiping the icons of shiva or exorcising ghosts and goblins i.e. besides decoding the aphorisms of panini .

One might as well explain the existence of hobgoblins and ghosts as a produce of nescience that prevails before the knowledge of grammar and thus the wisdom of the revelations has dawned .And thus the utilitarian implication of these fourteen rattle drum beats as a witch doc's abracadabra. Such " pious frauds" are inevitable features of all cultures, a skeptic rationalists needs to understand this .

2 WITHIN AND WITHOUT THE UNIVERSAL PHENOMENA .

According to the school of monism the supreme self is only the substratum and the universe is superimposed so the substratum in its essential nature doesn't pervade the phenomena . The pervasive nature is secondary and is usually referred to as antaryami or the one who controls from within . Both as the discursive theory of monism goes are not similar entities .The knowable and the adorable both are two different and dissimilar entities . Worshipped and cognizable notions of the absolute also called उपास्य and जज्ञिनास्य aspect have been evaluated independently in the neo Vedanta but in the ancient canons these were integrated and the sect of कृतोपासतविदांती or vedantist with a sine qua none of asceticism are still prevalent sporadically though .

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं वदधि निदं यददिमुपासते . (kenupanisad) know that to be Brahm and not the one worshiped by the hoi polloi . This may not be easy for an aspirant badly conditioned in objective misidentification to assimilate or cogitate.

There are two types of vivartas (virtual modification without any change in the substratum)-murtivivarta a figurative modification and kriyavivarta is a dynamic modification . Shiva as inseparable from his vimarshashakti or para becomes gross. To descend to the level of pashyantivak the phenomena of "becoming " is in fact modification or vivarta .When word and meaning have just begun to bifurcate like cotyledons in a sprout name and form become distinct. Shiva as a personified entity dancing and playing his rattle drum

is a murtivivarta of the absolute transcendental principle .The power and process of his playing the hourglass drum is kriyavivarta or the dynamic modification. This dance followed by the fourteen beats of the dhakka emanating fourteen aphoristic encryptions is a prelude to the raison de etre of revelationability (offenderkeit) through grammatical precision . Conservation, reflection, propagation, facilitation and dispelling of doubts as the commentator Patanjali postulates are the five main objectives of

grammar . The power or process of creation as explained by revelation is also definable straightaway by the instrument of grammar itself .The underlying streamline of consciousness interlaces these aphoristic encryptions just as they pervade the text of the revelations both originate from the same source i.e. the omniscient principle.

3 THE SEER .

Maheshwaraanandnath in his maharthmanjari gives an authentic description of the preceptor's world view . It is purely transcendental and all pervasive .The vision of the preceptor that is extent during the creation is as much extent even after dissolution . The phenomena consisting of thirty six element is within the domain of the area of his vision which is neither intersected nor conditioned by the five fold modifications which pertain to only the objective portion of the phenomena . Thus the attribute "seer" or साक्षी is essentially tatwatranscendent. There are two fold ontologies of the elementary. The basic Constituents of the phenomena according to the tantras शाब्दी and आर्थी or pertaining to word and meaning . Word in this parlance is the aggregate of all Sanskrit alphabet from अ to ह which with a nasalis to signify a word denoting subjective pronoun me or I also depicts the supreme self . Each alphabet denotes one of the thirty six elementary constituents of the objective phenomena .Their unison and homogeneity is the ultimate expression of truth in the mystic metaphysics .as word and meaning separates the expression is alloyed with falsehood till it turns into the conceived and then expressible or audible . As a famous axiom goes if word and meaning are innately inseparable why doesn't my mouth burn as I pronounce the word "fire " ? .It is because by the time vak finds the grossest divergent expression as vaikhari word and meaning have separated. But the expressions of seers and meditative sages does imbibe principle of truth and righteousness so,their spoken word is like a gospel and most of the times comes true. In other word truth pervades their expression .

4 DISCARNATION or TIRODHANAM

Tirodhanam is the fourth function of parameshwara. This precedes anugraha and follows dissolution. This is to distinguish him from all that is created, sustained and dissolved. Discarnation is not comparable to the feat of a rope trick conjurer. This is a prelude to the assimilation of his absolute nature. Before the ultimate knowledge dawns this intermediate incarnation that serves the purpose of rejecting aberrant viewpoints of the aspirants is concealed. In the anecdote of the talwakarupanisad all demigods try to investigate the nature of the mysterious yaksha. They couldn't on the other hand their forte' like burning, drying, drenching, etc. were lost. Then went Indra the god of kings with all his regal gaiety and fervor vane and indolent. The mysterious being did not even communicate with him and vanished into thin air. Thin air in this sense must be chidakashbirvthe consciousness ether, because the upanisad goes on to say that in that very ether a beautiful lady incarnated she had a golden hue and was adorned with gems and jewels. She was the personification of vidya which we have already mentioned above as the creation of shiva only for the purpose of redemption. Sureshwaracharya has devoted scores of verses in his magnum opus bhasyavartikam -vindicating the dictum that by the term vidya the revelation refers to the mystic science of metaphysics specially culminating into the final dictum of the monistic experience. The personification of upanisadic metaphysics is UMAHAIMVATI the golden goddess. After the arcane wisdom had been communicated she vanished and abided as the universal self which is also the essential nature of the aspirant.

5 SHAMBHU - BORN OUT OF QUIETUDE

Sanskrit etymology is so much conveying that almost an entire school of discursive metaphysics is etymologically oriented and its adherents are called nairuktikas. Most of their votaries are grammarian purists who later converted to monism. From their perspective all words must be derived from some grammatical formation or other. So from a pure sanskritist stand point bhū is not merely ground or the earth. This comes from a root that means to come into being or to exist. This tradition has its roots in the vedas where go (or cow) is not some animal but refers to locomotion. This illustrious tradition has not only imparted indian mysticism an exclusive scholastic depth but also

built as it were an intellectual firewall to safeguard against other defiant and deviant trends which invariably alloy the original purity of a holy doctrine.

Sham as some pratyabhijnascolar puts it, pertains to a total eradication of all miseries and the attainment of the ultimate bliss. The self luminous universal self arising from one such a mindset is shambhu. In the monistic school of vedanta Sham as sine qua non for the assimilation of pure subjective consciousness is well known. Shama means quietude. The other five being dama or control of the senses, uparati is focusing only on the primary objective i.e. emancipation, titksha is endurance, shradha is faith, samadhan doubtlessness and muksal.e an earnest desire for liberation.

Tirodhanam is also related with a divine agency called tiraskarini. She as the personification of a mystic phenomena has been attributed to ishwara the state of equal subjective as well objective awareness. Like all other projections of pure subjective consciousness she is also personified as a goddess. For the less competent aspirants her personified profile is somewhat like ladygodiva a lady in on the horseback.

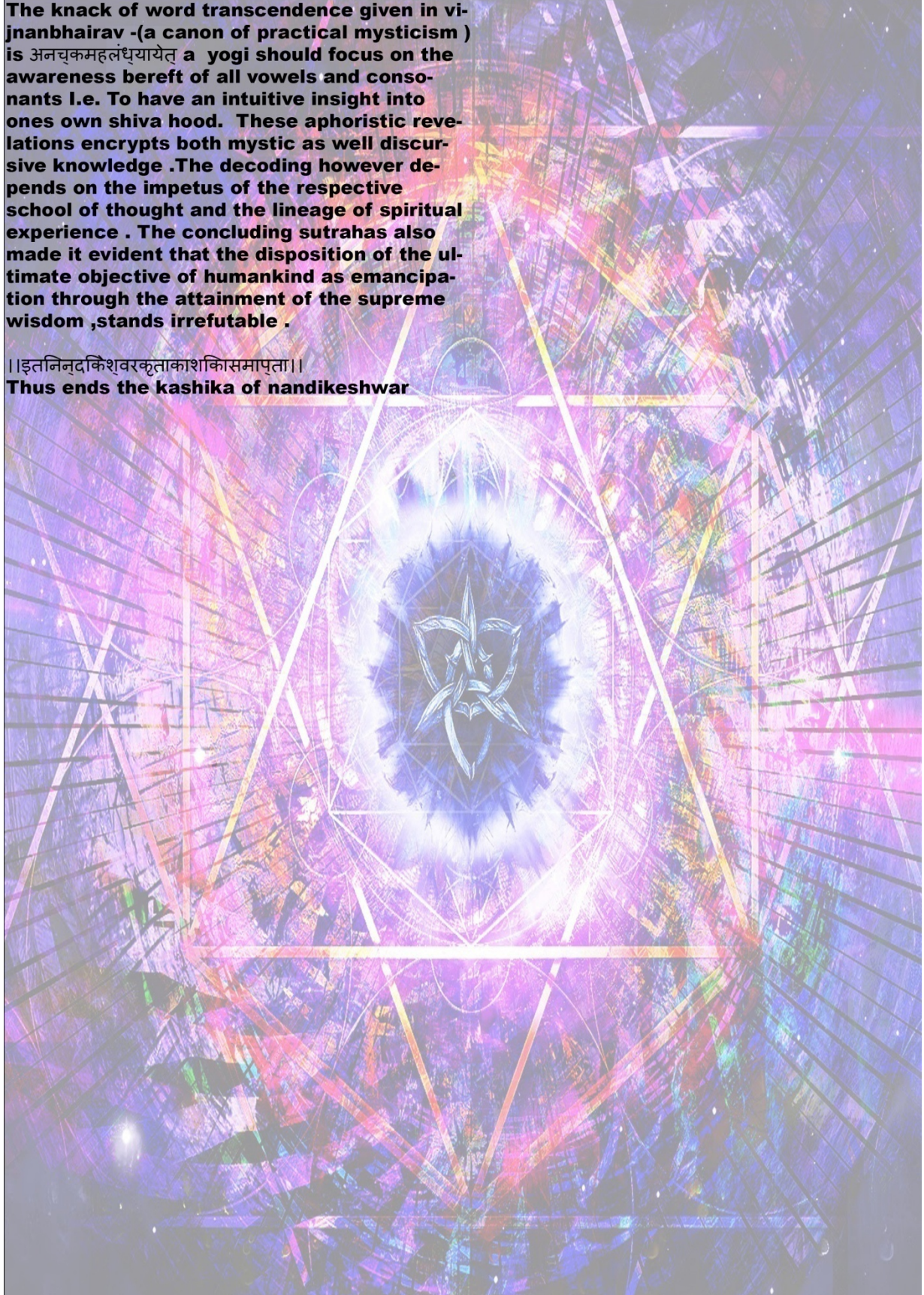
Her duty is to conceal the supreme wisdom from the incompetent dilantants. This aspect of scholasticism was rigidly observed even by Plato, There is a heresy that any one who did not know maths and logic could not enter his academia. Knowledge should be concealed votaries of stoicism said, lest the unworthy have access to it. Tirodhanam is a mystic phenomena in which either the source of knowledge gets obscure for the naive and uncultured or dilettantes lose interest in that particular area of knowledge.

And thus shambhudiscarnated. This discarnation is aptly described in the Keno panisad. A mysterious being showed up to test the forte' of various Demi gods. They couldn't exert their prowess before that entity. When Indra the king of gods approached himself the mysterious being vanished into thin air. And in that mystic ether the golden goddess incarnated who indoctrinated Indra into the cult of

The knack of word transcendence given in vijñānabhairava (a canon of practical mysticism) is अनच्कमहलंध्यायेत् a yogi should focus on the awareness bereft of all vowels and consonants i.e. To have an intuitive insight into one's own shiva hood. These aphoristic revelations encrypts both mystic as well discursive knowledge. The decoding however depends on the impetus of the respective school of thought and the lineage of spiritual experience. The concluding sutra also made it evident that the disposition of the ultimate objective of humankind as emancipation through the attainment of the supreme wisdom, stands irrefutable.

॥इतनिन्दकिश्वरकृताकाशिकासमाप्ता॥

Thus ends the kashika of nandikeshwar



NAROPA, KALACAKRA TANTRA AND NALANDA TRADITION

NIRAJ KUMAR



All over the world, the millennial birth anniversary of Naropa is being celebrated this July. As per Drukpa Order, Naropa was born in 1016 A.D. and disappeared into rainbow body in 1100 A.D. without leaving any trace of his physical body. He is also listed as one of the 84 mahasiddha. His teachings of the Six Yogas of Naropa are an essential practice among Himalayan Buddhists.

Naropa was born in a royal family of Bengal. His father was Shantivarman and mother, Sri-mati. At the age of eleven, he was sent to Kashmir to pursue Buddhist studies under the master Gaganakirti.

Three years after his return from Kashmir, Naropa was married to Vimaladipi, later known as Niguma. But, he wanted to be ordained as a monk. At the age of 28, he left his wife and was fully ordained as the monk. He then stayed in Pullahari for six years and wrote several commentaries on Guhyasamajatantra, Abhidharma-uttaratantra, Samvara-udbhava and Hevajratantra. Niguma became one of his disciples and served him while he lived in Pullahari.

Naropa went to nearby Nalanda University in 1049 A.D. and he was elevated to the post of the chancellorship of the famed Nalanda University. His skill and wisdom spread far and wide and he was known as Mahapandita Abhayakirti.

But, he had a powerful vision of a dakini and he left the position and all his honours to seek his Guru, Tilopa. He received Mahamudra teachings from the Master. He taught in many places. He also established several monasteries in Kashmir and Zaskar. It was at Sani monastery in Zaskar, Ladakh where he is believed to have flew into the sky wearing the Six Bone Ornaments after attaining Enlightenment.

Naropa appears to be a bridge between various vying sects of Buddhist Tantricism and

and Hindu Tantricism. In fact, he is also known as Nadapada and Nalandapada, attributing his significance in the Nalanda transmission of knowledge. Was Naropa a great synthesizer of Tantrik liturgy like his contemporary, Abhinavagupta? Can we link up dots in various narratives by rereading Naropa?

In my earlier book, Sriyantra and Geophilosophy of India (2014), I have hinted at the common origin of both Sriyantra and the Kalacakra Tantra system. At many a places in Srividya texts, it is termed as the system of Kalacakra and one often finds mention of Kalacakra yantras. On the other hand, the Kalacakra Tantra is often glorified as the Tantra of Sri in the text itself. The similarities in the conception of both the system is quite astounding. Both tantras have similar conception about the Nriya Devis, the movement of the sun and the moon, the division of time. Interestingly, in both Tantras, we discover mention of similar seed syllables of

हसकृषमलवरय. What Sriyantra is with a triangular structure, the Kalacakra mandala is a manifestation of a quadrilateral structure. The triangle is the shape of the fire element and the square, the shape of the earth element. Thus, two systems are merely methods to accomplish control of different elements in similar way. If one gloss over the history of the Kalacakra Tantra, one often finds mention that the King Suchandra received the Kalacakra Tantra at Dhanyakataka in Andhra Pradesh which lies adjacent to the famous Amravati stupa and the Sriparvata. Sriparvata was also a centre of Srividya and the Deccan was stronghold of the Srividya at the time of emergence of Kalacakra Tantra and in all likelihood provided the template for the higher level synthesis of four-sided structure in place of three-sided structure. By understanding the Shadanga Yoga of Naropa with fresh perspective, we can decipher the transformation of the Sriyantra structure into the Kalacakra structure. Interestingly, it took another millennium for mankind to generate another higher layer (five-sided structure) integration through Penrose's pentagonal tilings.

Authorship of Kalacakra Tantra

There has been lot of debates about the actual authorship of Kalacakra Tantra. While most of the scholars agree that it was brought by Kalacakra-pada, the Senior; Naropa, the great Yogi and one of the Mahasiddhas whose lineage flourish under the Drukpas, was the first to receive the Kalacakra Tantra in India. Drukpas are celebrating 1000th year of Naropa's birth this year. Naropa(1016-1100AD) is said to be the main master who transmitted the Kalacakra Tantra through two lineages into Tibet- Ra lineage through Pandit Somanath and Dro lineage through Samantashri.

Lokesh Chandra after extensive study of Tibetan catalogues writes that the Kalacakra was introduced into India from Shambhala sixty years before its arrival in Tibet. The records suggest that it entered Tibet in the year 1026 A.D. According to the Tibetan historian Padma Karpo, Tsilupa is the Great Kalacakra-pada and Naropa(Skt. Nadapada) is the Lesser Kalacakra-pada. Padma Karpo also writes that Naropa was initiated by Tsilupa into Kalacakra tradition at the Pullahari monastery, near Biharsharif in Bihar where Naropa later met Marpa(1012-1097 AD) and prophecy about Milarepa(1052-1097 A.D.) was made. Naropa also initiated Atisha(982 A.D. -1054A.D.) into Kalacakra tradition.

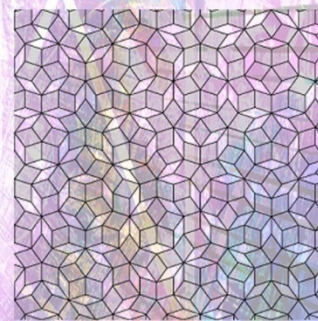
There is a serious chronological discrepancy here. Naropa was initiated by the mahasiddha Tilopa(928-1009 A.D.). Naropa served his Master for 12 years before he could realize the mahamudra. Before meeting Tilopa, Naropa was already heading the Nalanda Mahavihara after his extensive study in Kashmir and other centers of learning. Naropa was ordained as a monk after eight years into his marriage at the age of 28 before he joined Nalanda. This puts Naropa's life at around 960 A.D. Many scholars now pit for Naropa's birth in 956 A.D. and his period from 956-1040 A.D. This removes the discrepancy in different narratives as a senior Naropa could have become so famous that Marpa, the Translator from Tibet visited him and he could also initiate disciples like famous Atisha and Pandit Somanatha. It is improbable to establish Naropa's birth in 1016 A.D. because then he, in no way, could have been initiated by Tilopa who passed away in 1009 A.D. and could have initiated Somanatha in Kalacakra Tantra and sent him to Tibet to establish Kalacakra Tantra there in 1026 A.D.



(Sriyantra-Three-sided Integration)



(Kalacakra-Four-sided Integration)



(Penrose's pentagonal tilings
-Five-sided Integration)

In the Kalacakra Tantra(KCT) treatise itself, there is mention of lapse of 403years from the beginning of the calendar. Many scholars try to establish the chronology of introduction into Tibet in 1026 A.D. by bringing into calculation Islamic calendar which commenced in 623A.D. The KCT text mentions the year of introduction in number symbol (1.27 in Lokdhatupatal) and clearly mentioning about the calculations in the Mlechhavarsha ; as when there were three fires, space was empty like zero and there were four oceans- pointing to 403 years. Vimalprabhafurther explains that this year is the year of mlecchas which points to the Islamic calendar.

Since different genealogies also point to the introduction of KCT in Tibet in 1027 A.D., the beginning of the Tibetan calendar; the year of introduction has no conflicting interpretation. But, if Naropa was the first Indian student and the tantra was introduced 60 years before its introduction in Tibet, the origin of Tantras in 967 A.D. can safely be assumed. Tilopa would have been 40 years old and in all likelihood, Tilopa himself was the Kalacakrapada , the Elder. This will also clear the confusion around the Cilupa, a name that appears to be derivative of Tilopa.

In fact, there are so many similarities between the Sadanga Yoga which Tilopa taught to Naropa and the Yoga of the Kalacakra that it can be clearly stated that without an understanding of the Sadang Yoga of Tilopa-Naropa, the Kalacakra Tantra could not have been composed. If the ultimate accomplishment of Mahamudra as the union of the illusory body(Shunyata- Bimba) and the clear light(Vimal-Prabha or Prabhasvara-citta) is the leitmotif of the Kalacakra tantra, the two terminologies and concepts are derivatives of Tilopa-Naropa's Sadanga Yoga only. The fixation of constituting Reality into 36 elements, comprising six sets of six elements each itself appears to be the further elaboration of the Sadanga Yoga of Tilopa-Naropa. While Hindu tradition of Yoga focus on the Ashtanga Yoga(eight-folded) and the KCT also aims to fuse both Hindu and Buddhist system, the emphasis on Sadang rather than Ashtang yoga also points to Tilopa-Naropa as the progenitor of the Kalacakra tantra. The Evam(एवं) as the summation of the Kalacakra Tantra itself means fusion(Evam in Sanskrit means "and"). It symbolizes the total integration of sunyata and karuna(emptiness and compassion). This evam beeja-mantra has been enunciated in the Tilopa-Naropa's Sadanga Yoga where the crown cakra contains the syllable ए(Ae), the throat cakra, व(Vam), the heart cakra- वं(Vam) and the navel

cakra, ए(ae). Thus, forming the aroha-avaroha(आरोह अवरोह or the to and fro movement) of the Evam-Vamaeh(एवंवएं), a sort of cyclic repetition of the generation-dissolution-utapatti-nishpatti- as we find in the then Hindu Tantras like Aham-Maha(अहं महा) or the Vedantic mantra of सोऽहं हंस!

Tilopa-Naropa's Sadanga yoga and Origin of Kalacakra Tantra

Tilopa received four transmissions. The instructions on Mahamudra(Great seal) came through Saraha □ Luipa □ Darkapa and Dingipa □ Tilopa. Second instructions on the Father Tantras(that included the entering the body and practice of transference was transmitted from the line of Ratnamati □ Nagarjunagarbha □ Matangi □ Tilopa. Third instruction on Inner Heat(Tumo/Candali/Kundalini), intermediate state(bardo) and Karmamudra all based upon Mother tantras was transmitted through line of female dakini , Sumati Samantabhadri □ Vajraghantapada □ Tilopa. Fourth instruction on radiant light, lucid dreaming and the illusory body(Maya Kaya) was transmitted through the line of Dombipa □ Vinas □ Kambalipa □ Indrabhuti □ Tilopa. Thus, the Tilopa-Naropa tradition fused the opposite streams of Father tantras(Guhyasamaja tantra)and the female tantras(Hevajra and Cakrasamvara Tantras).

Glenn Mullin in his Six Yogas of Naropa gives somehow different lines of transmission as mentioned by Tsongkhapa- inner heat yoga came from the Mother tantras- Hevajra and Cakrasamvara through Krishnacarya. Illusory Body yogas and the clear light yoga came from Jnanagarbha while the practice of transference of consciousness and projections came through the Chaturpita tantra. In fact, Tilopa summarized his six-Yoga synthesis under the Sanskrit title, Satadharma Upadeshnama(षट्धर्म उपदेश नामा). In this text written by Naropa from the words of Tilopa and translated by Marpa at Pullahari, Tilopa is believed to have mentioned that he received instructions of Mahamudra from Shavari, inner heat yoga from Krishnacharya; clear light and bardo yoga from Mahasiddha Lawpa, and the

and the Guhyasamaj transmission from Nagarjuna.

The fusion of Father and Mother Tantra once accomplished, they enunciated an elaborate Sadang Yoga which is summarized below:

i) Tummo (Tb: gtum-mo, Sanskrit: candāli चाण्डाली) — the yoga of inner heat (or mystic heat).

ii) Gyulü (Tb: sgyu-lus, Sk: māyākāyā मायाकाया) — the yoga of the illusory body.

iii) Ösel (Tb: hod-gsal, Sk: prabhāsvara प्रभास्वर) — the yoga of the clear light or radiant light.

iv) Milam (Tb: rmi-lam, Sk: svapnadarśana स्वप्नदर्शन) — the yoga of the dream state.

v) Bardo (Tb: bar-do, Sk: antarābhava अन्तरभाव) — the yoga of the intermediate state. This is well-known through the Bardo Thödöl. Bardo yoga is fusion of techniques of illusory body yoga and dream yoga.

vi) Phowa (Tb: hpho-ba, Sk: sankrānti संक्रान्ती) — the yoga of the transference of consciousness to a pure Buddhafield.

The yugnaddha(yab-Yum) position is illustrative of the fusion of these two streams of father and Mother Tantras, but has been misinterpreted recently as sexual yoga.

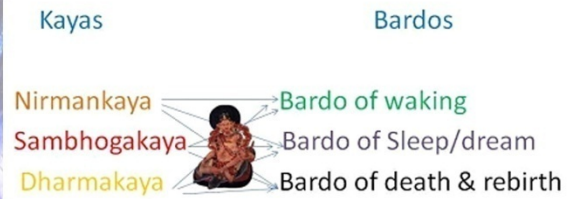
The synthesis of Father and Mother Tantras having been achieved, it appears that Tilopa-Naropa started to work upon a comprehensive fusion of Hindu and Buddhist Tantras. Since Srividya had achieved fusion of various methods to some extent among various Hindu sects after Sankaracharya popularized the same from Kashmir to Kanchi and Puri to Dwarka; the two mahasiddhas opted for four-sided integration for higher order synthesis.

They transformed the Kaya doctrine of Buddhism (Trikaya त्रिकाया). The fourth, Svabhavikakaya (स्वाभावकिकाया) or the Sahajkaya (सहजकाया) constituted by the Vajradhatu (वज्रधातु), was introduced. Apart from the body (kaya), vak (speech), and chitta (mind); doctrine of vajrakaya was introduced. There were to be four cakras in the Six Yoga system each corresponding to a particular Kaya. Thus, the mahasukha cakra (crown white), sambhogchakra (throat, red), Dharmachakra (heart, blue) and Nirmanchakra (navel, yellow); each corresponded to the four kayas. Four geometrical features- bindu (dot), triangle, circle and square was integrated. Concept of four mudras- Karma, dharma, samay, mahamudra was introduced. Concept of four bliss (ananda)- kamananda, parmananda, virmananda

and sahananda- was introduced. The birth was classified as of four kinds- from womb, from egg, from fusion of heat and moisture and miraculous. Buddhist philosophy was classified into four - Vaibhashika (analyst-all things, inner and outer, are real), Sautantrika (traditionalist), Chittamatra (idealist, only mind is real) and Madhyamaka (centrist, neither external object nor mind are real, all are empty of essence). Even the moment (kshana-क्षण) was divided into four- vichitra (वचित्र-variety), vipak (वपिक- fruition), vimard (वमिर्द-consummation) and vilakshana (वलिक्षण-lacking characteristics). Memory was classified with four stages (Chatursmriti Upasthana). Tantras were classified into four subsequently- Kriya, Charya, Yoga and Anuttarayoga.

Nine enclosures of the Sricakra were now appropriated under the concept of nine blending. These nine blending each corresponded to the nine bardos (a station amidst a continuous flow). The bardo was merely the rediscovery of the concept of bhumi among the Mahayanists.

Three Blendings of Sadanga Yoga



The Kalacakra or the Great Wheel of Time as a deity was created to achieve this fusion, since time is an invariable concept among all the sects. Similarly, the whole process of realization was based upon analogies from the space-which are again invariant in different belief system. Kalacakra was imagined as the ultimate bliss (Mahasukha). The deity is the unity of prajna and upaya, sun and the moon, earth and the sky, white male bindu and the red female bindu, subjective and objective, lalna and rasna, Hindu Tantras and Buddhist Tantras.

The detailed representation of deities and their symbols were discarded in the ultimate stage of Kalacakra Tantra. The body of empty forms (Shunyata-bimba शून्यात बम्बिब) was conceptualized. Such visualization was sect-invariant. This stage is different from practicing the yoga of illusory body (माया काया). The KCT did away with manipulation of nadis(channels) and vayus(winds). All ought to be dissolved to attain the state of the clear the Shunya-bimba. This will be the final radiant mind (प्रभास्वरचित्त). A clear radiant mind always generate empty forms(शून्यात बम्बिब) just as the in divination mirrors, figures appear on their own. Thus, the empty-forms are like the pratimurti(प्रतमिरूर्ती). The natural emergence of these empty-forms has been termed as Svaras(स्वरस). The Masters thence tried to fuse aesthetic theory with the spiritual experience just as Abhinavagupta achieved with his innovative conceptualization of camatkar (चमत्कार) , Masters deployed the concept of Bimba-nishpatti(बम्बिनषिपत्तः) or the savouring of the empty-forms just like in aesthetics there is rasanishpatti(रसनषिपत्तः). The concept of nishpatti also is a double entendre. It is the opposite of utapatih(उत्तपत्तः) i.e. generation state. Nishpatti is thence the dissolution or the consummation state. The bimba-nishpatti is also the svaras(स्वरस). Thus, the ultimate dissolution of even empty-forms is the state of joy, the mahasukha(महासुख). The sahaikaya is attained with shunyatabimbakaya on body side and the mahasukhkaya on mind side. This state of buddhsahood is without wind(avat अवात) and Nirvana is attained which is without support(अप्रतषिठति नरिवाण). The Maters further postulated that it is the state of a clear radiant mind(प्रभास्वरचित्त) to generate the empty-forms just like the sunrays emerge from the sun.

To cultivate joy(ananda आनन्द) by cultivating spontaneous empty forms(sahaj Shunyaat Bimb) beyond all prapancha(परपञ्चा) i.e. mental fabrications is the ultimate way to attain the sect-invariant realization . The whole yogic process in Naropa's Sadang yoga starts from meditating over an empty shell within one's body(a hollow lotus stalk or Nal ,नाल). Nalanda(नालन्दा) appears to be the spatialization of this realization and Nalanda tradition which Naropa(Nalandapa) spread far and wide by synthesizing multiple liturgical heritage , continues to thrive across the Himalayas.

When the synthesis of different streams of belief system has become necessary in the contemporary world, the world needs to seek inspiration from the works of Naropa. The possibility of attunement of the inner world with outer world does provide hope that someday mankind can obliterate violence, greed and envy from the face of the earth and can derive joy from harnessing upon sign-economy . In the world bombarded by the sign-economy, the counter-resistance will require harnessing the power of empty-signs, the Sunyatkar! Naropa's vision holds the ultimate key!

(Niraj Kumar is a student of Nalanda Tradition. He received initiation from swami ranganathanadaji Maharaj of Ramakrishna Order.)

THE ELEMENTS OF EASTERN METAPHYSICS IN LAL VAK

By Swami Paranand Tirth

Authentication of the testimony of evidence has always been a great dogmatic dispute in the East. This has been a very old doctrinal tug of war which has kept the world mind occupied for such a long time. Direct perception is the only evidence of a non-believer. All five schools of thought in the Orient along with their votaries among myriad Western and Semitic doctrines do not like to go beyond whatever is ascertained through their senses, aberrant or otherwise.

Metaphysics is hardly a subject to be only discussed academically or with so called 'reasonable' arguments. The realm at which it operates is so subtle that the loud noise of the gross words which we are familiar with cannot reveal their meaning. This is a science of cognition and only way one can gain this type of knowledge is through revelations of great saints and seers. Fortunately for lesser mortals this wisdom has been in many a cases been shared by the great souls through their verses and utterings. Lal Vaks are one of such gamut of realized knowledge passed on to posterity through the grand oral tradition that was the bulwark of all ancient knowledge systems. Her vaks are a testimony to her difficult journey in this physical world in search of the ultimate truth and her ultimate unison with the supreme and the bliss that followed. At times she sounds frustrated at other she is ecstatic with joy. At times she feels dejected and at other she feels one with the ultimate. Her vaks are nothing but various milestones which she had crossed to reach to the supreme truth.

Her journey is like any other poet-seer who is burning with the longing and desire to meet the lord, to unravel the truth behind this visible world. This echoes the pain of separation felt by poet-seers like Hafez and Rumi on one hand and Andal and Akka Mahadevi on the other.

Akka Mahadevi's vacanas very much like Lal Vaks are full of the quest and love for Cenna Mallikarjuna, a form of Siva and close to Lal's in terms of philosophic and esoteric content.

Like
Treasure hidden in the ground
Taste in the fruit
Gold in the rock
Oil in the seed
The Absolute hidden away
In the heart

No one can know
The ways of our lord Chenna Mallikarjuna
(Akka Mahadevi)

All of them poured their love and longing in their verses and thus created a repertoire of wisdom for anyone who tries to go beyond their literal meaning. Unfortunately those who try to read literal meanings in them sometimes in their sheer ignorance and worse still for petty reasons and agendas have done much harm and helped to perpetuate myths about Lal Ded which suit their petty agendas and ideology. This gross interpretation of her subtle revelations and self-realization has led to a repertoire of literature about her which does nothing but try to locate her in some imaginary Sufi cultic system and suggest that her ideas of formless god were borrowed from Islam, a thoroughly farfetched theory propagated to appropriate this doyen of wisdom into another religious system.

Like any realized soul we find Lalded delving in the multiple traditions and the vak points at her search for ultimate truth through various beliefs.

Shiv va Kishav va Jina va
Kamalajnath namdarin yuh,
Me abli kasyatan bavaroz,
Su va su va su va su

Let him bear the name of Siva or of Keshava or of the Jina (Jain Tirthankaras) or of the lotus born lord- whatever name he bear,

May he take from me, a helpless woman,
the attachment to the world
Whether He be he, or he, or he, or he

In words of Mahendranath Sircar
"What is there in a name? A rose with any other name will smell as sweet. Mysticism is to be defined as the direct awareness of reality conceived as truth...The goal of the search has always been the same, though the methods have been different"

In her vaks we find a blend of all worthwhile and conducive tenets of all contemporary cults but ultimately she emphasizes on transcending each one

them. Many of her vaks seem to echo the message of the Upanisads . A verse from Kena Upanishad says:

यस्यामतंतस्यमतंमंतंयस्यनवेदसः
अवज्ज्ञातंवज्ज्ञानतांवज्ज्ञातमवज्ज्ञानताम्

Anyone who opines with some creed has no creed one who is beyond all creeds has verily a creed

To put it simply

Brahman is truly comprehended by him who knows It as incomprehensible; he knows It not, who thinks it is comprehended by him. It is unknown to those who know and known to those who do not know

The Vedic metaphysics in Lal vaks:

Omkar is the crux of entire vedic wisdom and one of the later day compilations on Hinduism defines a hindu as a person devoted to the cow, who brings in faith in the theory that omkar or pranava is the essence of all four vedas and faith in prenatal and post mortem existence of the soul thus the law of karmas. Lal ded's orthodox upbringing, her introduction to the mystic phenomena and the concept of transcendental experience can be attributed to the vedic and auxiliary knowledge that she inherited through her family tradition and the lineage of illustrious preceptors. The esoteric meditation on Omkar in the navel centre instead of muladahaar signifies her inclination towards the righteous trend unlike her contemporaries practices of meditating upon omkar in the coccyx or sacral plexus.

Akuy Omkar yus nabhi dhare
Kombhai Brahmandas sum gare;
Akh suy manthar tsetas kare,
Tas sas manthar kyah kare

One who captures the Omkar mantra in his navel

And connect the manipura to brahmandhra
Only this mantra he meditates on

A thousand mantras have no use for him
About the potency of this mantra Kathopnisad says:

Of utterances I am the monosyllable Om.
Om is also called Pranava . Atharvasirsa Upanishad says that 'Pranava is so called because through its repetition it makes all the pranks bow down unto Paramatman who is the soul of all souls.

Talking about her spiritual journey Lal Ded gives a glimpse of the practice she followed to reach the state of god consciousness.

Dihachilaridari-bar troprim,
Prana-tsurrotumtedyutmas dam;
Hradayachikuthariandargondum
Omakichobukitulimas bam

Closing all the doors and windows of my body

I caught hold of the Prana thief and held him

I tied him and imprisoned him in the closet of my heart

And whipped him hard with the whip of Om
What one sees here in this verse is the rigid discipline followed by a sadhaka (aspirant). Her focus shifts from outside (the world of sense perceptions) to the inner world of cognition. Having controlled her breath through the repetition and internalization of the mantra Om which she considers as a whip to keep her away from distractions and diversions.

Omkar yelilayionum,
Vuhikorumpanun pan;
Shu-vottravithsath-margrotum,
Teli Lal be vatsasPrakashsthan

Focussing on Pranava and making it yield to me,

Burnt myself in white heat

Forsaking the six cross roads, I took to the path of the Seventh/Truth

Thus, I, the seeker, reached the abode of light

It is evident that her Guru had instructed her to concentrate on Om at the Manipura chakra (navel) which she keeps repeating in her verses. The constant practice of this extremely potent vedic mantra led her finally to enlightened state.

This mantra i.e. Omkar being the eternal word of God or the primordial sound pervades both the microcosmic as well as the macro cosmic manifestation .The former lies between the region of navel and the crown of the head the latter from the material realm or bhuloka to the realm of absolute righteousness or satyaloka .Both are the nadir and zenith of the cosmos according to the indian cosmogony . The word according to the Samveda is monosyllabic एकाक्षरावेवाक् (Tandyamahabrahmanam)

Lal ded has those samskaras which led her to the experience of her universal self and en passant developing a universal vision

Smartha influence-

The vedics owing to their excessive infatuation with sacrificing creatures at the pyre had already made them less popular. More so when the heaven promised by them was being claimed as permanent and full of sensual pleasures .

The Smartha renaissance gave Hinduism a facelift , included some rationale which appealed to less catholic but more intellectually responsive lot. This transition from vedic orthodoxy to ethcically more consistent smartha trend owes its propagation to enlightened and self realized souls like lalded
Generally Smartas worship the Lord in one of fiveforms: Ganesha, Shiva, Shakti, Vishnu, and Surya. As they accept all the major Hindu Gods, they are known as liberal or nonsectarian. They follow a philosophical, meditative path, emphasizing man's oneness with God through understanding. It is based on the recognition that Brahman (God) is the highest principle in the universe and pervades all of existence.

Lal writes:

Shiva gur tai Keshavpalanas
Brahma payrenvolases
Yugiyuga kali parzanyas
Kus diva ashwavarpeth cedes

Shiva is the horse and Keshava the saddle,
Brahma adorns the stirrups,
The yogi by the art of yoga, recognizes Him
Who is the god that rides the horse?

Smartha tradition popularized its notions and teaching through Puranas. Puranas meant for the hoi-polloi though the vast cache of Puranic literature serves as a great purpose especially from a pragmatic and utilitarian view point.
The Vak given below by Lal echoes the Nilmata-Purana.

Treyi nengi sarah sari saras,
Aki nengisarasarshas jay;
Harmukh kausarakh sum saras
Sati nengi saras shunyakar

Three times did I see a Lake but waste of waters,
Once saw I the Lake extended even to sky!
Harmukh peaks to the Kaunsar springs,
And seven times the Lake appeared as a Void

Lal ded gave an esoteric relevance to rather exoteric and descriptive elaborations of the puranas or we can say that the enlightened lady in altogether made use of pauranic anecdotes which were already there in people's minds to bring home certain metaphysical axioms

The concept of penta dimensional universal phenomena as depicted in the 60th canto is common to almost all purans and all smartha rites and rituals are based on it.

Kyah kara panchan dahan te kahan
Vakhshun yath leji yim karith gay
Sariy samahan yethi razi lamhan,
Ada kyazi ravihe kahan gav

What shall I do with the five, ten or even eleven?

They have upset and disturbed the contents of this cauldron
Could they come together and tow this same line
Then the cow would not have been lost to the eleven

The 'cauldron' here symbolizes the body and five the five are the panchbhutas, the ten are the five sense organs plus five organs of action and the eleven are these ten sense organs and the mind (antahkarna)



Prathayirthangatsansaniyas,
GaranSwadarshanmyul;
Tsyetaparithmonyashpathaas
Denshakhduridramunnyul.

A Sanyasi goes on a pilgrimages
In search of His Lord
O mind! Lose not the path even after receiving education
The grass looks greener from a distance!

Diva vatadivarvata
Pyeth bon chuyyekvatha
Puzakathkarakhhutabata
Karmanastepavanassangath

The idol is stone,
And the temple is stone-
All one from top to bottom
Who will you worship, learned Pandit
Control and bring in unison your mind and breath

Kavchukh divan aninebachh
Trukhaichukhteandraieatsch
Shiv chuyatitay kun mogatsh
Sahazakathimyanikartopatsch

Why are you groping like a one blind
If you are wise turn within
Siva is there, don't go anywhere
In My sahaj (simple) words have faith

The sentiment in these vaks can be seen
also in Bhagvad Gita

मन्मना भव मद्भक्तो मद्याजी मां नमस्कुरु ।
मामेवैष्यसि युक्तवैवमात्मानं मत्परायणः ॥ ३४ ॥

Bhagvad Gita Ch 9 verse 34

This chapter in Bhagvad Gita concludes by revealing the pure, simplistic manner of worshipping the Supreme Lord Krishna with the words 'man manah' by focusing one's consciousness on the Lord 'mad bhakto', by being Lord's devotee, by paying humble obeisance and considering Lord as the final goal. By such unpretentious and modest manner one can attain unison with the Lord Krishna. Thus in this chapter entitled 'Confidential Knowledge of the Ultimate Truth' Lord Krishna has compassionately revealed some of his transcendental glories and the phenomenal greatness of true bhakti.

Significance of meditation on Manipura chakra:

There are four to five cantos referring to navel or nabhi in lalvaks. Her deliberate emphasis on the navel chakra or the manipura signify her ardent adherence to the righteous path of tantricism as per the tantric canons the two lower chakras viz muladhara and svadishthana are the regions of darkness. Manipura is the region of fire and light. Most proSignificance of meditation on Manipura chakra:

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"The psychic heat Drod is produced by the space particles and the heat manifested from the friction of the wind element. This is another fundamental element as it supports and gives power to the consciousness, like the power of the fire that can launch rockets to space. The power is called medrod or 'digestion fire' in medicine and Tummo in yoga tantra. The heat (fire) sustains life and protects the body/mind. The psychic fire increases the wisdom, burns the ignorant mind of the brain and gives realization and liberation from the darkness of unawareness. That is why yoga describes Tummo as the aggressive fire which ignites from below navel, pierces the chakras one by one and reaches the sky of the crown chakra"

Tummo originally derives from Indian Vajrayana tradition, including the instruction of the Mahasiddha Krishnacarya and the Hevajra Tantra. The purpose of tummo is to gain control over body processes during the completion stage of 'highest yoga tantra' In a tradition of questioning self and then revealing the answer too Lal asks:

**Ye gvaraParamishvara
Bavtamtseychuyantarvyot
Dvasivayvopadankanda-pura
Huh kavturun ta hah kav tot**

**You, guru, Paramesvara
Reveal to me the inner truth you know
Both pranas arise
From the abode of navel chakra (manipura)
Why is huh cold and hah hot**

She answers

**Nabhisthanascheprakrathzalavaniy
Hidistam yeti pranvatagot
Brahmandas pyetha sat nadvahavani
Huh tavaturun hah tav tot**

**The region of the navel is naturally ablaze
The breath moves up the throat to the brah-
marandhra
From which the river flows
For this reason Huh is cold and hah is hot**

**Lal Vaks and the Tantric canons:
Some of the vaks have the essence of yoga
and Samkhya philosophy whereas the Vaishe-
shikas who accept tam or void as an existant
entity have also been encrypted. There is no
canto in the lal vaks pertaining to the
spiritual practice which cannot be traced for
its origin in various tantric canons like
Spandakarika, Vignanabhairva, Shiva sutram
or Pratibhigyahridayam.
Loobmarunsahazvyecharun
Drogzanunkalpantrav
Nishi chuy ta durmogarun
Sunyassunyahmilitgav**

**Abandon desires
Attain effortlessnes
Realize thy self and stop daydreaming
That is near you, don't search afar
Nothingness merges with nothingness
The most profound of Lal's verses try to rep-
resent just such an experience which is non
representable since it goes beyond all
thought, constructs, dualities, names and at-
tributes and their connect to Kashmir Saiva
philosophy is unmistakable.
Ban gol tai Prakash aavzune
Chandargol tai motuytseth
Tseth gol tai kenhtinakune
Gay bhurbhuvahsvarvesarzhithketh**

**The sun sets and the moon shines
Moon vanishes and citi remains
Consciousness disappears and nothingness
remains
The physical, spiritual and metaphysical
merge into nothingness**

**One of her vaks addressed to devi in second
person has deep mystic orientation almost
similar to Kalidasa's ' Chidgaganchandrika'.
They van tsatithsheshikalvuzam
Prakrathhunzampavanseeth
Lolakinarevalinjuzim
Shankar lobumtemiyseeth**

**Crossing the six forests, will come the She-
shikal oozing,
The nature sacrificed with the air
With the fire of love I roasted my heart
Thus I realized Shankara (Shiva)
The six forests are the thickets of the six
adhvas which conditions the siva into a
plight of jivshiva or mayicpramata. Albeit the
analogy also pertains to the forest of six
arhats or jainis near Ishbar known as harvan
these days.**

**This semiotics is also based on great pre-
cept which Abhinavagupta attributes even
to his master
"one should practice the moon digit medita-
tion or the awakening of Chandra kundalini
....at the end of sixteen digits of sadashiva
all movable and immovable phenomena sub-
sides thus Shiva alone remains".
Lal ded through this vak describes the pro-
cess of her realizing Shiva. This moon of de-
light is a mystical definition of ananda
which besides the notion description and se-
miotic depiction of unrestricted, full bliss of
completion also encrypts the mystical se-
crets of attaining it. This eternal moon has
been realized by mystics from all over the
world be they westerner or easterners occi-
dental or oriental, semeiotic or other wise!
Ah, Moon of my Delight who know'st no
wane,
The Moon of Heav'n is rising once again:
How oft hereafter rising shall she look
Through this same Garden after me--in vain!
Rendered into English verse by: Edward
FitzGerald (Omar Khyyam)**

Omar Khayyam's moon of delight is called as sadakhya kala the eternal digit of moon by Indian mystics. The root of this mystique, like many other tantrik techniques, lies in the following Vedic mantra

यत्रामोदश्चमोदश्चप्रमुदासहासतेतत्रमामृतंकृधइंद्रार्येदोपरि
स्रव (Rigved)

In the realm of super consciousness where bliss abides with delight, o! moon radiate spiritual ambrosia for Indra- the supreme self



O! Indu the eternal moon shower the nectar upon me and make me immortal. In the subliminal realm where amoda and mod bliss and joy dwell with pramuda or glee.

This sadakhy or the eternal digit of moon is latent in all fifteen kalas or digit and also remains in perpetual unison with the conscious substratum of objective phenomena even while these fifteen kalas cease to be there i.e. in the state of perfect transcendence absorption. Fifteen kalas are called chit alas or fragments of consciousness whereas the sixteenth one is called chit or chiti.

Conclusion:

There is no dearth of originality and innovative depiction in the vaks but as one theory goes ...as many individual yogins go beyond their respective conditionings they attain unison with the universal principle hence lal vaks cannot be isolated from the vanis of her contemporary seers elsewhere in India. According to one ancient maxim without the vedic knowledge one cannot seek enlightenment.

नावेदवन्निमनुतेतंबृहंतम्

The sine qua non of vedic and affiliated wisdom is reflected in the teachings and precepts of all realized souls.



One German thinker while referring to teaching of the Upanishads writes that the munificent seers have not only conveyed their spiritual experience to us but also the spiritual practice that led them to the above mentioned experience. Lal ded aka padmavati like her preceding lady saints like markaradevi and Mathura devi of yore not only left behind the legacy of mystic experience but also a compendium of methods through which an ardent aspirant can achieve the ultimate even today.

It might take volumes to contain the entire metaphysical elements encrypted in these vaks so deep vast and universal is the propound of her utterings.



Kailash Mansarovar Yatra- The ultimate pilgrimage

Part 2- Kathmandu and Entering China

By Sunder Shridhar



The first part of this travelogue is available at <http://www.yogatantragama.org/YogatantragamaNewsletter4.pdf>
Part 2- The Saga of Saga and onwards to Mansarovar
The bus ride from Zhangmu to Saga, we were told, was a long one but we assembled outside the hotel with an air of anticipation- eager to move towards the divine destinations. Around 8 in the morning, the journey commenced. As the clouds floated across the green mountains around, the natural beauty of the surroundings filled with steep mountains and waterfalls from the cliffs, was mesmerizing. As we moved deeper into Tibet, the landscapes kept changing and kept us occupied. Vast tracts of barren mountains and valleys interspersed with flatlands of greenery, shallow streams and azure lakes took our breath away.



The road was smooth and metaled with very little traffic along the entire stretch. The drive was to take us almost 10 hours, but more important, we were climbing from a height of 8500 feet to more than 15000 feet. Which meant that every hour, the buses stopped and allowed the passengers to come out, stretch their limbs and acclimatize themselves to the change in altitude. The acclimatization exercise involved 3 to 4 slow clockwise rotations with arms outstretched and eyes open. The ill effects of high altitude are greatly reduced by performing this exercise.

Feasting on lunch surrounded by an absolutely deserted Tibetan plateau with a big blue lake in the distance, was a surreal experience, used as we city dwellers are, to crowds and hustle bustle. Along the way, it was sunny, then it rained, and surprisingly, it also snowed, causing whoops of delight as several of us were seeing snow for the very first time!



The road soon turned winding and steep and as the buses slowly moved upwards. Just a little distance before Saga, we came across the Brahmaputra river or the Tsangpo as it is called in Tibet. The river, probably the only one to be considered as male in gender, originates from the Mansarovar lake and is said to be a strong source of spiritual power. On the banks of this river, amidst a light drizzle and cool breeze, the Swamis from Isha yoga center led the over hundred strong crowd through a powerful chanting session of Om Namah Shivaya. The overall effect was one of a stilled mind at the end of the meditation.



We soon checked into the Saga Hotel and were told clearly that we need to be very cautious about our movements here as the military town had heavily armed guards all around and also were unforgiving of any suspicious movements.

Since Saga was at an altitude of about 17000 feet, this was where we were to spend 2 days and a night, just getting acclimatized. Those who had not followed the instructions for keeping physically fit before the yatra, were the ones to show the maximum symptoms of AMS or Acute mountain sickness. People suffered from headaches, nausea and dizziness besides sleeplessness. There was already a doctor from Isha sacred walks who was stationed in Saga. Along with this doctor was our 'on the go' doctor and of course several volunteers from the travelers, who all helped set up medical screening areas and rigorously checked and treated all the people suffering in one way or another.

Everyone was encouraged to eat well, drink at least 3 liters of water, walk and breathe slowly, especially since the lungs find it difficult to cope with the rarefied air. Diamox (the AMS pill) doses were increased for many pilgrims and as usual the highly efficient Sherpas ensured that delicious and nutritious food was readily available on time and our luggage were not misplaced. It was raining most of the time and the one time that the swamis took us all out to see if we could meditate by the Brahmaputra in the town, we were stopped and asked to go back, by the military.

This is the only place and time during the entire yatra that I faced a physical ailment, so to say. At Saga, it was 4 people in a room... in keeping with the planned increasing 'difficulty' level as the pilgrimage progressed. It also helped because there would be more people to take care if anything happened to anyone, which is how it turned out, in my case. I had dinner and took a small walk outside the hotel and then went to sleep. We had been told to always cover our heads, chest and hands and feet, but it looks like the woolen cap slipped off my head at some point. Perhaps it was this, or the fact that I was sleeping on the floor. I woke up in the middle of the night and was stumbling along towards the washroom when one of my roommates asked if I was ok. That was the last I remember before I blacked out and came crashing down. The doctor was fortunately right next door. With a winning combination of efficiency and compassion, she and a couple of Isha Volunteers set up a drip for me and after about 2 hours on the drip, I came back to 'normal' .

As at every stop, here we were shown videos in which Sadhguru, provided deep insights on the way spirituality flowered in Tibet and how it was influenced by the Buddhist and Yoga masters from India. We were also made to eat and drink well, do the slow rotation exercises, and in general build our resistance towards Altitude sickness.

SUNDER SHRIDHAR

(Sunder Shridhar is an engineer and currently Project manager at Unisys Corp, Bangalore)

As we congregated in the wee hours of the 3rd day at Saga, for the morning prayers, and trooped into our respective buses, the excitement was palpable. We were headed to the first of the divine destinations- Lake Manasarovar! The 450 kms from Saga to Lake Manasarovar seemed to fly by on the Chinese built high quality Expressway with almost zero traffic and high speed. As the Blue lake came into view, visible from a few kilometers away as there are no buildings to obstruct the view, a thrill passed through my very being.... At last- the most sacred of lakes, associated with the divine feminine, was in view. We reached the Chinese Government run tourism center building and from there, shifted from the tour operator's to the Government buses which took us to the camping site on the lake shores a few kilometers away. There is actually no fixed lake shore as we were to see over the next couple of days stay at Mansarovar. As the weather changed from rainy to snowy, to sunny, the waters kept moving back and forth. It is really more like an ocean at times with big waves, and at other times, more like a large lake, when the surface is very calm. The moods and color of the lake as observed over the next couple of days were so different almost as to make it as unrecognizable from when last seen! Sadhguru has mentioned that this place is very mystical in nature and so many things happen here which are way beyond the understanding of the average human being. Lights have been reported to move in and out of the lake during early hours of the morning (during what is called as the Brahmamuhurta). It is a mystery as to why the UFOs prefer to use this lake as an intergalactic landing station, so to say. As the tents were pitched, the novelty and reality of having 2 more people occupy a small space around you, sunk in. It wasn't going to be comfortable at all (all the bags and the gear had to fit in with three people) , but it was part of the way a pilgrimage is done. As Sadhguru mentions- You become lesser and lesser as you approach the divine destination and allow the immensity of the place to become more and more within and around you. Of course we wanted to go to the water as soon as possible and permission was sought and given with a caveat that no one would touch the water. We would be taking a dip the next day.

A quick walk, jumping over some puddles and walking through some larger ones (we were armed with waterproof shoes) brought us to the shore. Inexplicably, the eyes filled up, taking in the immensity of the moment and the place. The various shades of blue and grey of this large water body, surrounded by ancient and holy snow clad peaks, like the GurlaMandhata and the Mount Kailash , the dark clouds at a distance signaling imminent rain, the many coloured Tibetan prayer flags, painted a picture which still comes up in my mind's eye if I close my eyes. Mansarovar is said to be the remnant of the ancient Tethys sea, which is believed to have been the womb of all life on earth. Just sitting by its side bestowed a feeling of the insignificance of human life and all the worries of day to day life, just slipped away. A distant dark cloud's rumbling brought me back to reality from the reverie that I had gone into and unwillingly, I walked back to my tent knowing that rains would start very shortly. The vastness of the space and the scenery all around kept me occupied. As always, the medical checks, food and other arrangements were in place and we complied with all the instructions. The next big highlight of the Yatra was the live Satsang with Sadhguru which happened around 6.30 PM in the evening. The rains started around 4 PM and would not seem to end even as late as 10.30 am next morning.

The large tent erected for Sadhguru'ssatsang(also for dinner) was buzzing with excitement as he entered and greeted all with a smile and Namaskar. The next hour and a half were explosive and yet blissful as Sadhguru spoke about the pilgrimage, its significance and how to go about it, even as the rains and thunder lashed the area outside the tent. His sense of humour shone through several times even as he impressed upon all the deeply mystical nature of this pilgrimage. Sadhguru distributed consecrated Vibhuti to all and said that we would take a dip in Mansarovar the next day.

We were warned not to head outside all by ourselves - for a very practical reason.

The Tibetans leave their dead bodies out in the open as they can neither burn it due to lack of firewood, nor bury it as the ground is hard and rocky. The dogs thus have got a taste of human flesh and so they leave no opportunity to taste it even if it involves hunting people.

The rains continued through the night and the few of us who braved the cold winds and the rains to wake up at 3 AM and try to see any UFOs in the lake were quite disappointed. It was too dark and hazy to make out anything in the distance and though some people said they saw dull lights, it was hard to confirm anything. So after an hour of the ordeal, back it was, into the coziness of the sleeping bag inside the tent, to wake up at a more earthly hour of 6.30 AM. Sadhguru graced us all with His divine presence, around breakfast time and shared a few words with some of the Pilgrims. The rain refused to cease even at 10.30 AM. We were wondering how we could take a dip in the cold wet weather, when we suddenly heard the Swamis asking all to come out of the tent in our rain gear and head to the lake shore for a special Yogic process before taking the dip. As we all sat in the cold rain along the shore, eyes closed, in readiness for the Yogic process, the Swamis and Volunteers applied a certain paste, perhaps of lime, Vibhuti and water on the crown of our heads and asked us also to take a pinch of consecrated Vibhuti in our mouths, both designed to increase the heat in our bodies. Then started a very intense and powerful chanting of Om NamahShivaya along with the Audio being played on loudspeakers. A secret source of joy in this regard was that the organisers had come to know that I had the consecrated chant in Sadhguru's voice, stored in my mobile and the same was used to play the audio over the sound system. Any service towards the pilgrimage from my side was giving me immense feelings of fulfilment and joy. About half an hour into the powerful chant, and breathing in a set pattern, I was feeling ecstatic and we were told to stop. I opened my eyes and lo and behold! The skies had cleared up, the rain was gone and the water of Manasarovar which seemed too cold to take a dip earlier, now splashed around invitingly. And now the Swamis asked us to take a dip... No one needed to be told a second time..we all stripped to as much as possible and literally jumped into the cold waves.

Prayers of gratitude flowed spontaneously as I thanked the Lord and mother of the Universe who blessed me enough to be able to take the holy dip. I went inside the water once, twice and a third time. The first time was the most difficult owing to the cold. Once the body got used to the temperature, it struck me that I might never be able to make this trip in my life again, so I took another 6 dips under the water.

After the dip we dried ourselves and headed hungrily towards the dinner tent. The rain started again but was a slight drizzle as compared to the light and sound Show that it had been, earlier. The evening meal was a most delectable dinner comprising of Hot Jalebis and PavBhaji, also served piping hot. This -In Manasarovar- at 15000 feet, in the middle of a desolate land where not a single tree grows. I don't know how the Sherpas did it, given the weather conditions and the strenuous nature of their job, but calling them heroes of the hour would not be an understatement. We spent another night in the tent. I bonded even more with my tent mates exchanging notes and experiences of spirituality and the journey we were going through. We woke up next morning ready for the next big milestone- Mount Kailash! Some more managing of the luggage ensued. Only what was required was kept and the remaining was sent off to be brought separately by the Sherpas. We had not had baths for 3 days since Saga and this was likely to continue for the next couple of days. Since we did not really sweat due to the cold weather, it did not really matter. Stay with me for the final trek to the holiest of holy Mount Kailash - in the next issue of the newsletter !

Akanandun: An example of mysticism in Kashmiri Folk Lore

By Dr. Geetika Kaw Kher

Multitude of meanings can be derived from folklore depending on the method of the analysis used. Most of the times the literal meaning leaves one baffled, confused and shocked as it fails to fit in our reasonable logical thinking and that is why scholars of culture have been using various semiotic and psychoanalytic methods to analyze the potent content of these tales of ancient wisdom. One such tale from Kashmir which has terribly fascinated me with its central intriguing motif of mystical Resurrection or Rebirth is the story of Akanandun. The story has been told, retold, represented various times hence I am focusing on the core of the story rather than the details which might have been added later

Apart from the central motif the other recognizable one with which the story starts is that of a desire for a male child. The anxiety to have a male heir to perpetuate the ancestral lineage is a concern discernable in most of the Patriarchal communities. There are stories about the absurd lengths that parents go to achieve this feat. In the said story too it is the desperate need to have a boy child which make the parents of Akanandun to promise the jogi that they will return the child bestowed on them through his miraculous powers, exactly after twelve years. This kind of desperation points to rash promises we human beings make without giving a second thought to what it could actually suggest. Akanandun's parents accepted the condition without thinking what would happen after 12 years and soon conveniently forgot the promise made. It also talks about short-lived memory of ours where we tend to consciously forget the things which give us immense pain and also about the fickleness of human mind.

Rather than getting worried about the future the couple dedicated their energies in bringing up their son in the best possible way and happily wishing away the future. The fear might have lurked somewhere in their subconscious but they didn't let that hamper their joy. Once engrossed in their happiness they completely lost sight of the approaching misery. But the jogi remembered the

promise very well and returned after the stipulated time and demanded that the boy be returned to him. This reality shattered their world and they begged jogi to spare the child and take whatever he wanted. The aspect of 'moha', is underlined here. The couple and their seven daughters had grown extremely fond of the boy and they wept, wailed and tried to get the sympathy of the jogi. But the latter had given up the world and along with it all the materialistic passions. He remained unmoved, untouched by the extreme emotions displayed by the family and would take nothing but the child. He harshly reminded them of their fateful promise. The moment of realization of the actual implication of the promise must have been so painful! Greatly aggrieved and pained the parents obliged with a heavy heart and called Akanandun, a young, energetic and handsome lad of 12 who had shown great promise in all the fields. Jogi asked the boy to be cleansed and draped in new clothes. When the child was ready Jogi took him to a side and beheaded him in full view of his parents. What a shock it must have been to the parents! But the miseries didn't end there. He started cutting the body in small pieces and patiently separated the flesh from the bone. The hapless parents could hardly believe their eyes. In front of them was their dear son, killed and chopped to pieces. Imagine the condition of the mother who was then ordered by the jogi to wash the pieces of meat and cook them for him. The fact that she complied with such gruesome order somewhere points to an underlined faith because just fear will not let a mother take such an extreme step. Somewhere the trust in the Jogi who had given her the greatest happiness of her life can be deciphered here.

He even ordered her to taste the flesh to see if it was properly cooked and later to serve the dish in seven vessels and cover them with a white cloth. She complied again, almost mechanically. But she could control her feelings no more when the holy man asked her to call Akanandun to take his meals. She burst into tears and said it was impossible. She cried her heart out but Jogi once again was adamant. There must have been something in Jogi's voice which made her call her son in most pitiful a voice..a wail of a lamenting mother..to whom the extent of her loss had just dawned upon completely. As she was undergoing these extreme emotions Akanandun rushed in the room and took his place ready to take his meals. The family could believe their eyes no more and turned their questioning glances towards the Jogi, only to find no one there. The holy man had disappeared along with the seven vessels. There was nothing which could remind them of the dreadful act they had witnessed sometime back

The story capable of creating macabre and violent imagery, filled to core with Bhibatsa Rasa, able to arouse tremendous Jugupsa (disgust) somewhere I feel has a cleansing power. A Catharsis of sorts is achieved by reading and sure enough by watching the story being enacted. The narrative takes us to a different planes of emotion, increases our heartbeats, purges us of all the emotions of pity and fear that delve in our psyche. On one hand it gives a glimpse of extremely fickle nature of human beings on the other it talks of miracles that can happen if only we have faith. Faith alone has the power to conquer duality. Probably this is why the narrative has had a great appeal for poets like Samad Mir, Ahad Zargar, Prakash Ram and others who have identified the story with Sufi thought.

Similar motif of resurrection can be seen in the well known biblical story of Abraham and Issac

Gen 22 NIV states that God ordered Abharam to take his only son, Isaac, to the region of Moriah and sacrifice him as a burnt offering to the god.

It is to faithful and trusting devotees that He shows the most enchanting of the miracles. Miraculous truths are not meant for people who are skeptical of faith and tend to employ their limited reason to question the declarations of faith. The aspect of underlined faith and trust comes across through the following lines:

"Heb 11:17-19 NIV) By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned." "

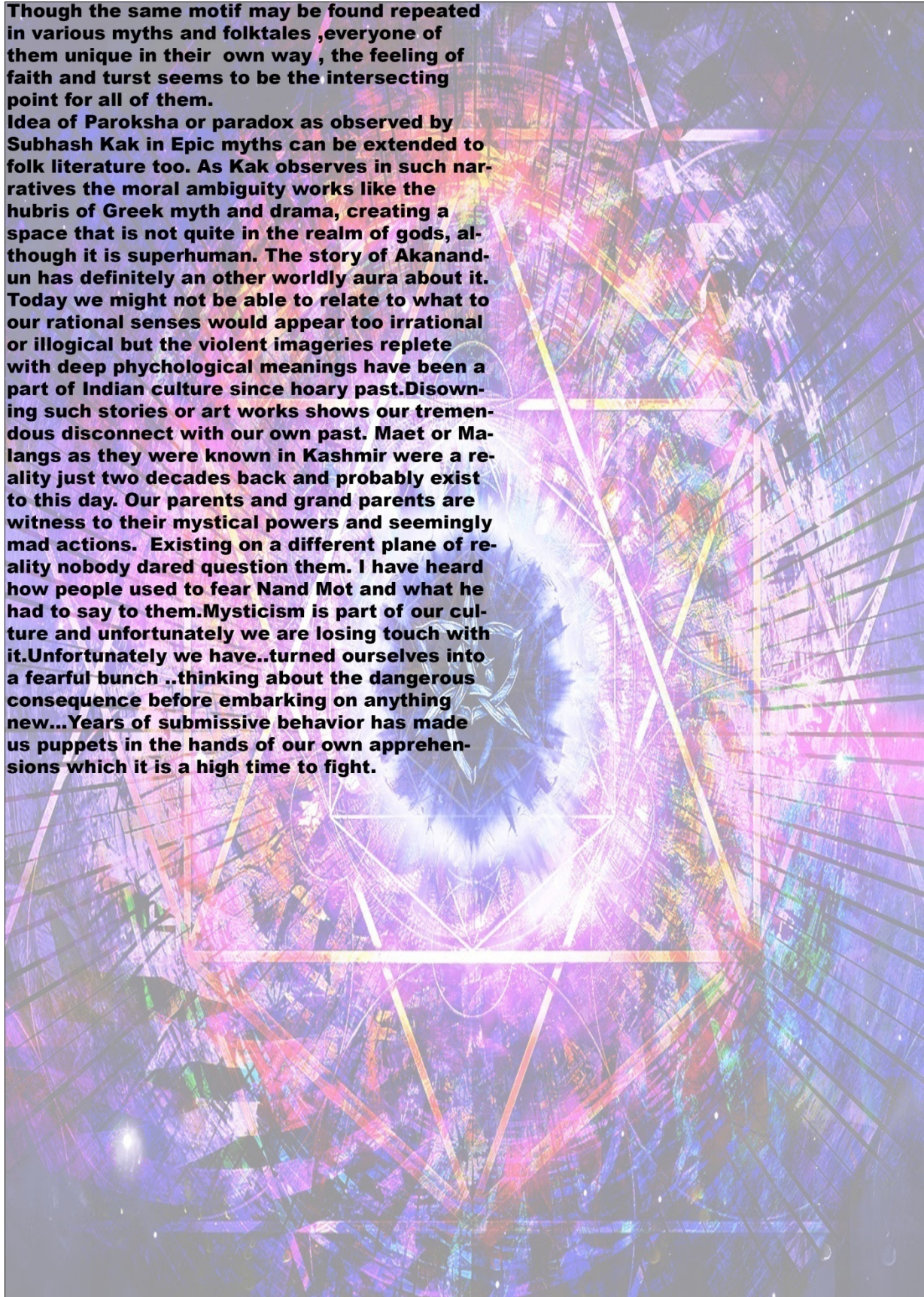
Abraham is stopped by an angel and is asked to replace his son by a ram. So the entire ordeal was to see if Abraham had enough unquestioning faith in his God or the human weaknesses would take the better of him. Perhaps one the best visual representation of this incident is this painting by Caravaggio, a 17th Century Italian Baroque Painter.



Somewhere in our story too the faith and trust of the family especially the mother in the Jogi seems to have been tested. One sees a willful submission to the wishes of someone who had blessed her with a son. Interestingly a story narrating the myth of Resurrection is also found in Egyptian Myth of Osiris, the god of afterlife. who was cut into pieces by his arch enemy Set and was brought back to life by his wife Isis. Isis collected all the body parts and arranged them in order and started singing a song while going around the pieces until her husband came back to life and later on came to be known as the 'god of afterlife'.

Though the same motif may be found repeated in various myths and folktales ,everyone of them unique in their own way , the feeling of faith and turst seems to be the intersecting point for all of them.

Idea of Paroksha or paradox as observed by Subhash Kak in Epic myths can be extended to folk literature too. As Kak observes in such narratives the moral ambiguity works like the hubris of Greek myth and drama, creating a space that is not quite in the realm of gods, although it is superhuman. The story of Akanand-un has definitely an other worldly aura about it. Today we might not be able to relate to what to our rational senses would appear too irrational or illogical but the violent imageries replete with deep phychological meanings have been a part of Indian culture since hoary past. Disowning such stories or art works shows our tremendous disconnect with our own past. Maet or Malangs as they were known in Kashmir were a reality just two decades back and probably exist to this day. Our parents and grand parents are witness to their mystical powers and seemingly mad actions. Existing on a different plane of reality nobody dared question them. I have heard how people used to fear Nand Mot and what he had to say to them. Mysticism is part of our culture and unfortunately we are losing touch with it. Unfortunately we have..turned ourselves into a fearful bunch ..thinking about the dangerous consequence before embarking on anything new...Years of submissive behavior has made us puppets in the hands of our own apprehensions which it is a high time to fight.



FOOTPRINTS ON SNOW

By Suva



Footprints on the snow
December 22, 2011 at 3:46pm

A space like the horizon always draw a line of mystery. The silver coating of the snow over the mountain brings up things and incidents that are somehow unidentified. I am beginning to smell one such incident to take place soon. I live down the valley, content with my sustainable lifestyle and only a Himalayan sheep dog is there with me, to give me company. I found him as a stray puppy and named him Flash. I introduce myself as Tenzing. I have been traveling a lot and finally I decide to return to the valley where I grew up. The mountains and valleys also recorded several folk tales which is passed on us for many generations. But now I have no intention to come up with such tales.

I am a trekker and occasionally I get to teach yoga to the tourists who come to me for spiritual retreat, on the other hand this service gives me some seasonal income to lead my solitary life. Let me not waste your time describing everything that concerns the backdrop of the life I live. Some action will be fine, so let us go for a little excursion. I am looking towards the path that leads to a cliff in one of the ranges of the mountain, rather low in height and which is quite accessible to venture on. Of late I have been noticing a structure probably a house of some sort and smoke coming out from there. My curiosity increases and Flash needs a long walk too.

This particular mountain path is not so difficult to go through, because on both sides there are protection of coniferous trees known to the locals as deodar. I pack my knapsack with some dry foods and water bottle and start heading towards the spot. On our way up there, Flash suddenly becomes little restless, probably he smells wild hares around him. I wait till his excitement get reduced and then start walking upwards again, only to find the paths laden with carpet of snow. We have to slow down a bit now, but then we get to see some foot prints. Foot prints of an animal? No way, it doesn't seem like one. But strangely the pairs of the foot marks are not identical. The left foot mark varies from the right. The size of the foot mark seems to be average, so obviously we are not chasing any yetis or giant mythical apes. We are almost half way to reach the cliff range, occasionally we have to face the icy steps but it is not so bad as it seems . It is easier to have Flash around, he is a clever devil and many times he has been handy in difficult situations.

Few more steps and we notice the pair of footsteps leading to a small wooden cottage, green in colour. We slow down a bit and start taking some air with relaxation. Flash finds a spot to continue his territorial invasion and I settle down to enter the porch of the cottage. The door seems open to me, yet I knock at the door to get some answer. Is anyone in there? Well no answer comes and Flash goes inside the porch, nudging the door with his hairy skull. One reason I am content to have Flash with me is because he never barks unnecessarily and he reacts only when something is unusual. The rooms inside seem to be old enough but I don't need to be an archaeologist of some sort now. There is a fire place in the central sitting room visible with freshly burnt coal. Next to the fire place we see an easy chair, a wall filled with family portraits and the foot marks that we have been tracking are now ash filled. Flash has been patient all the time and only now he barks, but it seems more like a growl. I can hear some sound of footsteps!



It seems like a heavy thumping sound, the door screeches and out there stands a man wearing two different kind of boots as a pair.

The man looks at me suspiciously yet there is a sign of calmness in him. He speaks up. "you are from the valley down there the man with the dog , right?" I nod to his question and introduce myself as Tenzing. It seems he doesn't want to reveal his name. But he asks quietly, " what brings you here? Your dog bites ?" I explain to him that we just thought of having a long walk up the cliff, but then the foot prints led me to his place as I am a trekker. "And...did you find anything ?" he asks. I start to say that the foot prints perplexed me at the beginning as each pair has different foot marks and that now I see him wearing two different kind of boots as a pair. While listening to me he removes his left foot from the boot, which looked somehow nonidentical to his right one. He then folds his trouser upwards and dislocates the leg, now it becomes clear to me that it is a prosthetic leg.

" I am one of the soldiers of Indo-China War of 1962." He mentions. "This is the price that I paid participating in the exchange of bloodshed from both sides." He continues- " but am I a War Hero? Well for some it can be, but I don't regard myself as one. Did we really know why we were blasting bullets on each other? We only knew we were working for interest of the nations with the tag of patriotism, borders, territory, a hatred that was more based on uniform. In that war I took the life of a cousin who was a soldier serving the other side of the margin or what we know as border. Did he know me? Did I know him? Well not before the blood bath. Someone placed mines and I stepped on one, it blasted taking away my left leg from me. This is the price I paid.... Prosthetic leg.

For a while I was just quiet not trying to show sympathies or empathies but just trying to catch the faded echo from his words. Before the words fade he shoots up with some more " and I am not a patriot. I don't belong to any of these nations and yes I decided then and there I don't belong to any geographical boundary. But yes, the war. The effect of war did open up things from the eyes of the trauma. I had to adapt to my phantom leg, my left leg. I begin to find the meaning of serving a nation. My cousin whom I killed in the war was also serving the other. But we only met during the war not to embrace but to greet each other, exchanging bullets."

I asked him about his choice to stay in this cottage and at such a cliff height. He gestures to the horizon and says to me, " look the sun is setting over there and tomorrow morning Sun will rise from the other side. Where is the border then. It requires no approval from the two sides of the nations to rise or set....Do you see this little boy on the left side of the group photo? Its him. The boy on the right corner is me. This house is the only trace that brings some memories to remain as long as I live. But yes the footprints on the snow that brings you here will also melt away. What will remain? So no borders."

Time for trekking down the valley has come now, so I whistle towards Flash to follow me. I bid the man goodbye. He waves back as we walk towards the valley. Flash can rejoice for a while to leave behind his yellow stained territorial mark, over the cliff until the snow melts. The man forgot to mention his name or may be I got too engaged in the tracking of the foot marks. Perhaps even a name to him can be a uniform as he strongly refers to the effects of boundaries. The margin is imaginary because the horizon is only limited to our eye sight but there is something beyond. Flash can track at least the smell to discover his territory and for that he will need no approval. Sometimes just a normal walk can reveal some incidental facts that can take one into a different world altogether. Flash and myself also left our footprints all along but we leave it now to the will of the snow.

SUVA

(Suva is a freelance performance artist and a musician based in Finland. Academically trained in sculpture he now teaches Yoga and acoustic drumming and is involved in creating experimental music)

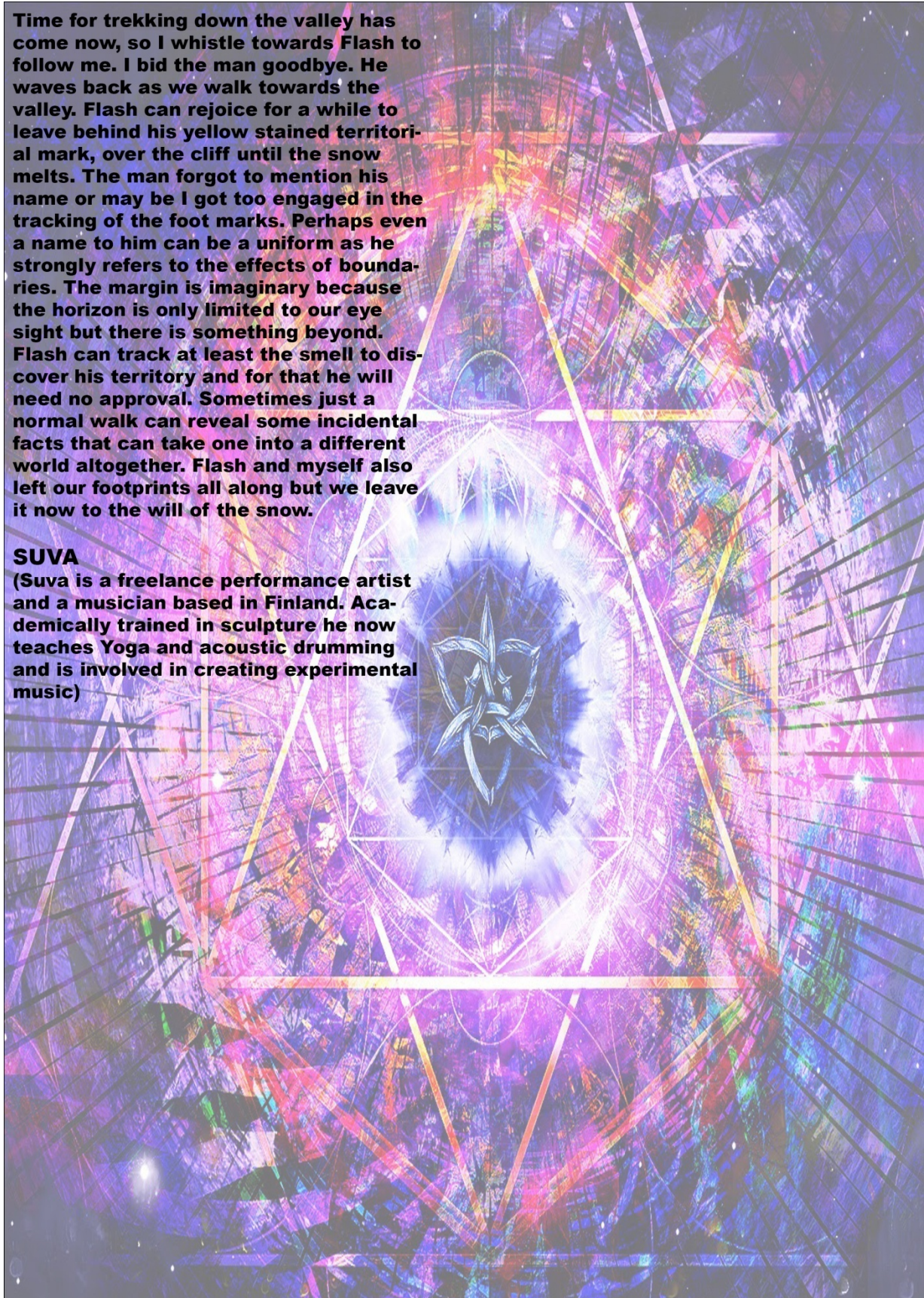


PHOTO FEATURE: SRILANKAN BUDDHIST MONUMENTS



Mihintale is a mountain peak near Anuradhapura in Sri Lanka. It is believed by Sri Lankans to be the site of a meeting between the Buddhist monk Mahinda and King Devanampiyatissa which inaugurated the presence of Buddhism in Sri Lanka. In most of the moonstones (Sandakada Pahana) of Anuradhapura Era, the outer edge is designed with a ring of flames and below that is a ring filled with 4 types of animals – The elephant, the horse, the lion, and the bull chasing each other.



The Jetavanaramaya is a stupa located in the ruins of Jetavana in the sacred world heritage city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. Mahasena of Anuradhapura (273–301) initiated the construction of the stupa following the destruction of the mahavihara. His son Maghavanna I completed the construction of the stupa.[1] A part of a sash or belt tied by the Buddha is believed to be the relic that is enshrined here.



The Samadhi Statue is a statue situated at Mahamevnāwa Park in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. The Buddha is depicted in the position of the Dhyana Mudra, the posture of meditation associated with his first Enlightenment.

AbhayagiriVihāra was a major monastery site of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism that was situated in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka. It is one of the most extensive ruins in the world and one of the most sacred Buddhist pilgrimage cities in the nation.. One of the focal points of the complex is an ancient stupa, the AbhayagiriDagaba. Surrounding the humped dagaba, AbhayagiriVihara was a seat of the Northern Monastery, or Uttara Vihara.





Dambulla cave temple .

This temple complex dates back to the first century BCE. It has five caves under a vast overhanging rock, carved with a drip line to keep the interiors dry. In 1938 the architecture was embellished with arched colonnades and gabled entrances. Inside the caves, the ceilings are painted with intricate patterns of religious images following the contours of the rock. There are images of the Lord Buddha and bodhisattvas, as well as various gods and goddesses.





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