

new religious movements

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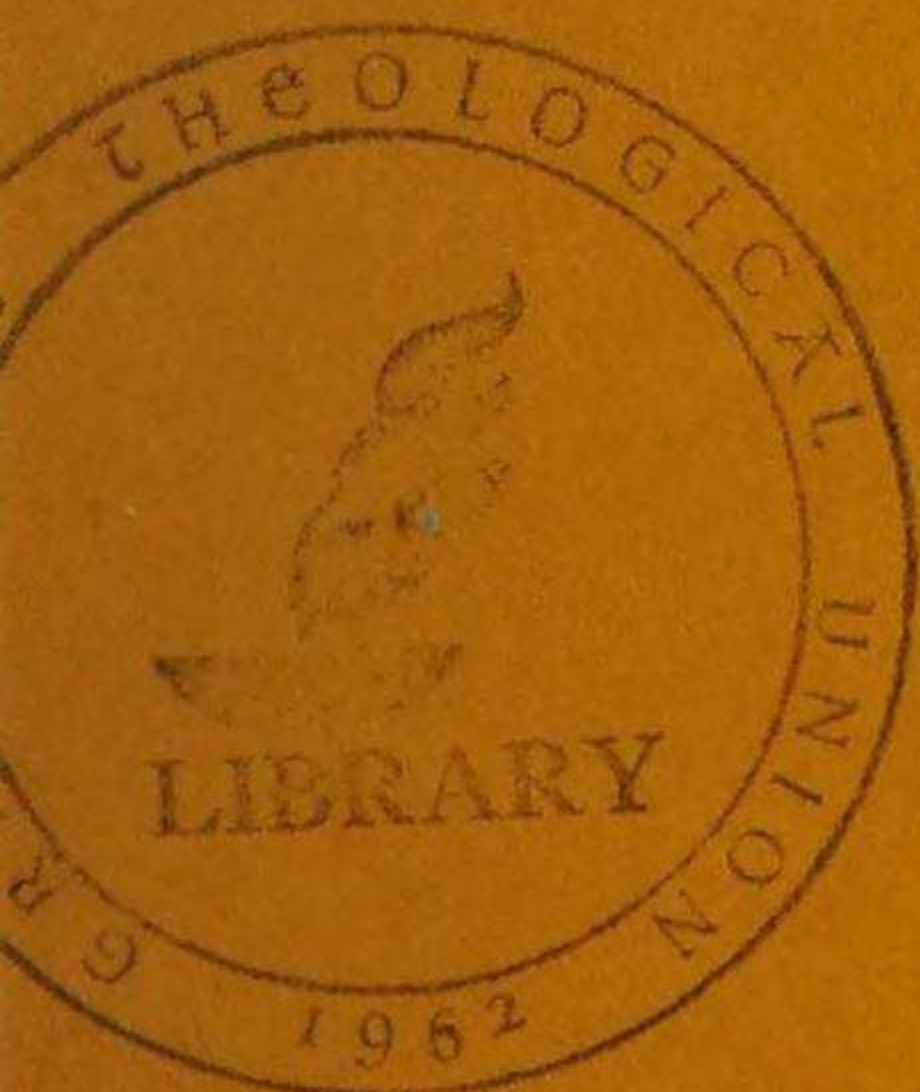
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Who is who in guruism
by Johannes Aagaard

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DEC 15 1980

EDITORIAL.

In this issue of Up-Date we are publishing only one article: "Who is who in guruism".

It is to be understood as a continuation of the article "Guruism - a Hindu Countermission", which was published in Up-Date Vol. IV, issue 1/2, May 1980, pp. 5 - 14.

Within the phenomenon called "new religious movements" "guruism" constitutes the major trend, but this is a fact which has not yet registered with most people. The smaller and far less significant movements like The Family of Love, The Unification Church, and similar semi-Christian movements tend to catch the attention of people while the major movements are ignored.

"The gurus" constitute the real problem today. They are still marching on and even those who have suffered setbacks - like Guru Maharaj Ji - are coming up again.

The attempt made in this article to classify the various gurus is obviously not the final word. We want the readers to take it as a challenge to further studies and a critical evaluation. We would welcome comments and critique..

WHO IS WHO IN GURUISM?

by Johannes Aagaard.

THE GRANDFATHER GENERATION OF GURUS.

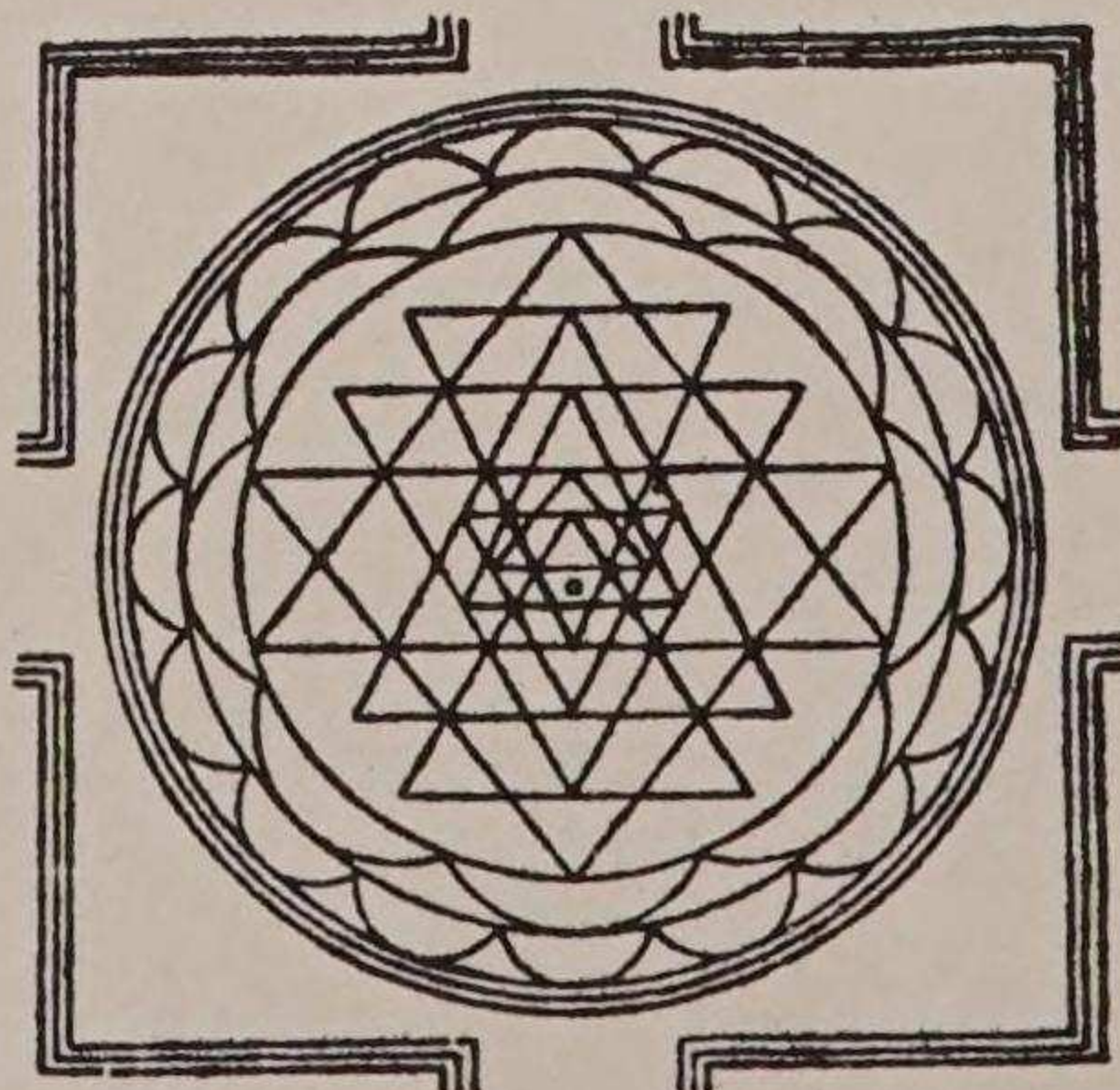
We speak of new religious movements, but in fact the phenomenon is not new.

The first wave of Eastern missionaries came to the West after 1893, when Vivekananda started the activity of the Ramakrishna Mission after his grand performance in Chicago. But even before that The Theosophical Society had begun its part of the missionizing, headed by Madame Blavatsky.

Ramakrishna missions and Theosophical societies were the two main streams of the first generation, representing Eastern occultism in some tantric form and Western occultism in some form of theosophy. The meeting of these two streams was decisive for the sort of new religiosity with which we now have to deal.

The Ramakrishna Mission was followed by other, similar agencies, and of these we shall look first of all at the Self-Realization Fellowship headed by swami Yogananda and the Divine Life Society headed by swami Sivananda.

And from Theosophy, as a result of the crises which shook this very shadowy movement, came a number of offshoots, all remaining, however, within the same sphere and using the same sort of imagination as the classic Theosophists.



THE THEOSOPHIST SOCIETIES.

The Theosophist Society was started in the West by a number of Western people: Madame Blavatsky, who can be considered the foundress of modern occultism and from whom such magicians as Macgregor Mathers, Aleister Crowley, and Gurdjieff derive, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott, who not least managed to get Buddhist groups into the movement, Annie Besant, who became the successor of Blavatsky, and Bishop C.W. Leadbeater, the theologian of the group, together with Frantz Hartmann and Bishop G.S. Arundale. The title of Bishop was used by these men because of their leadership within the so-called Liberal Catholic church, which was and is mostly a Theosophical religious body.

Theosophy came out of spiritism/spiritualism and was and is related to other occult movements in the West, first of all the Ordo Templi Orientis (OTO).

Madame Blavatsky may have had connections with and initiations from "masters from Tibet," groups which were close to Gyalva Karmapa. But her main impetus came from traditional gnostic schools of thought.¹⁾

When she and Olcott went to India in 1879 the Theosophical movement quite clearly came under strong Tantric influence, probably enhancing similar influences which had already reached them in Europe and North-America. In Adyar, near Madras, they built their headquarters, and in spite of an incredible amount of scandal they managed to survive. The worst scandal was probably an action taken against them by their former friends in The Society for Psychical Research, revealing much swindling and manipulation.

In spite of everything the movement has survived and all over the world Theosophical groups and movements are to be found, quite often unrelated to the Adyar movement, but promoting the Theosophical ideology and practice.

What is significant in this context is that the Theosophical movement is part of the general Hindu-Buddhist mission, and that it promotes Tantric religiosity based on the kundalini-power and its arousal, as revealed in their emblem. This was clearly stated by C.W. Leadbeater and G.S. Arundale in a number of their writings ²⁾ and can be summarized in the following way:

A serpent forms a **circle** within which the other symbols are placed. The head and tail, i.e. the negative and the positive, the female and the male forces, unite at the top, where they meet in the swastika, the old Indian sun symbol, through which the outside power from "the invisible masters of the Great White Lodge" enter and form a link with the inherent power of man.

The burden of the emblem is expressed in the two interlaced triangles, the one, point-up, male, the other, point-down, female, forming a hexagram, an old fertility symbol, and at the same time a perfect yantra (visual sign). At the center of the hexagram one finds the Egyptian ankh, a symbol of life, which is possibly also the phallic lingam, or at any rate understood as such. At the top of the emblem is placed the AUM mantra.



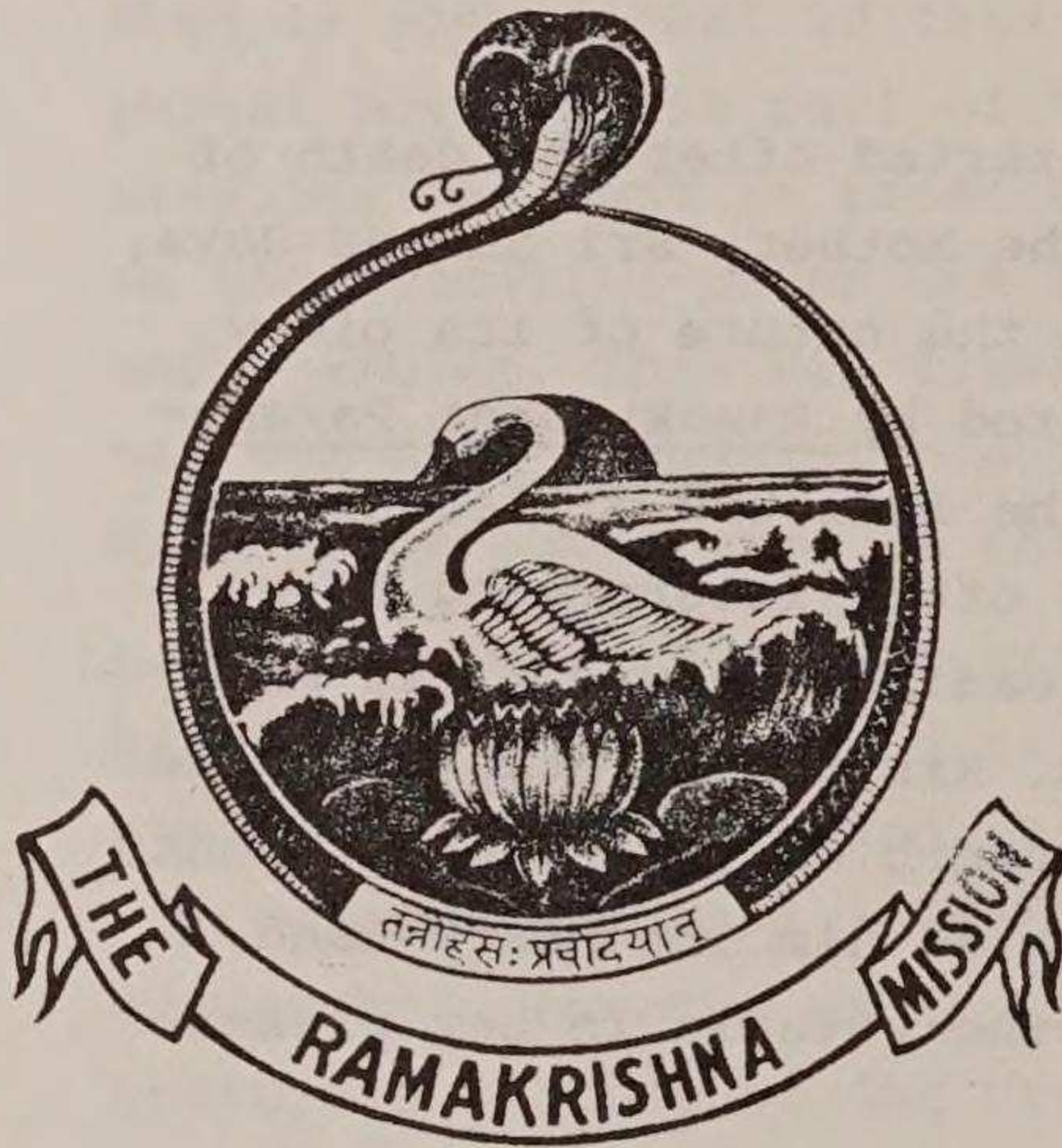
THE VEDANTA SOCIETIES.

The Ramakrishna Mission was started after the death of Ramakrishna and directed by The Mother, Sri Sarada Deva, and by Swami Vivekananda. But the nature of its piety and worship was clearly inspired by Ramakrishna Paramahansa himself. We know that he followed different systems, and consequently he is often interpreted as a synthesizer. But this is misleading: he was first and last a Tantric swami and guru. His guru, Tota Puri made him a swami within the Puri branch of the order of monks while Bhairavi Brahmani initiated him into left-hand Tantra, and he performed all the rituals in her presence. ³⁾

Ramakrishna adhered to the Bengali Tantra, central to which is Shakti, in the form of Kali. These Shakti-worshippers represent the most morbid part of old-time Hinduism, that with strong sexual connotations.

Ramakrishna regarded his human consort, Sri Sarada Devi, as a manifestation of the Divine Mother, as the Supreme Goddess, and his followers adopted the attitude. Spiritual leadership after the death of Ramakrishna consequently fell onto her and upon Vivekananda. ⁴⁾

Ramakrishna, The Mother, and Vivekananda are worshipped in Vedanta Centers as the supreme "trinity". Vivekananda himself continued the Tantric tradition of Ramakrishna. The kundalini system and its importance for the human mind were often described in his books. ⁵⁾ The Tantric nature of the Ramakrishna mission is clearly expressed in the emblem of the movement. It consists of a serpent which encircles the other symbols, the most important of which is the Tantric swan, resting on a lotus, thus riding on the sea of this world. Vivekananda himself designed this emblem, and it is interpreted officially in this way:



Our Seal.

"The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of karma, the lotus, of bhakti, and the rising sun, of jnana. The encircling serpent is indicative of yoga and awakened kundalini sakti, while the swan in the picture stands for the the paramatman. Therefore, the idea of the picture is that by the union of karma, jnana, bhakti, and yoga, the vision of the paramatman is obtained."

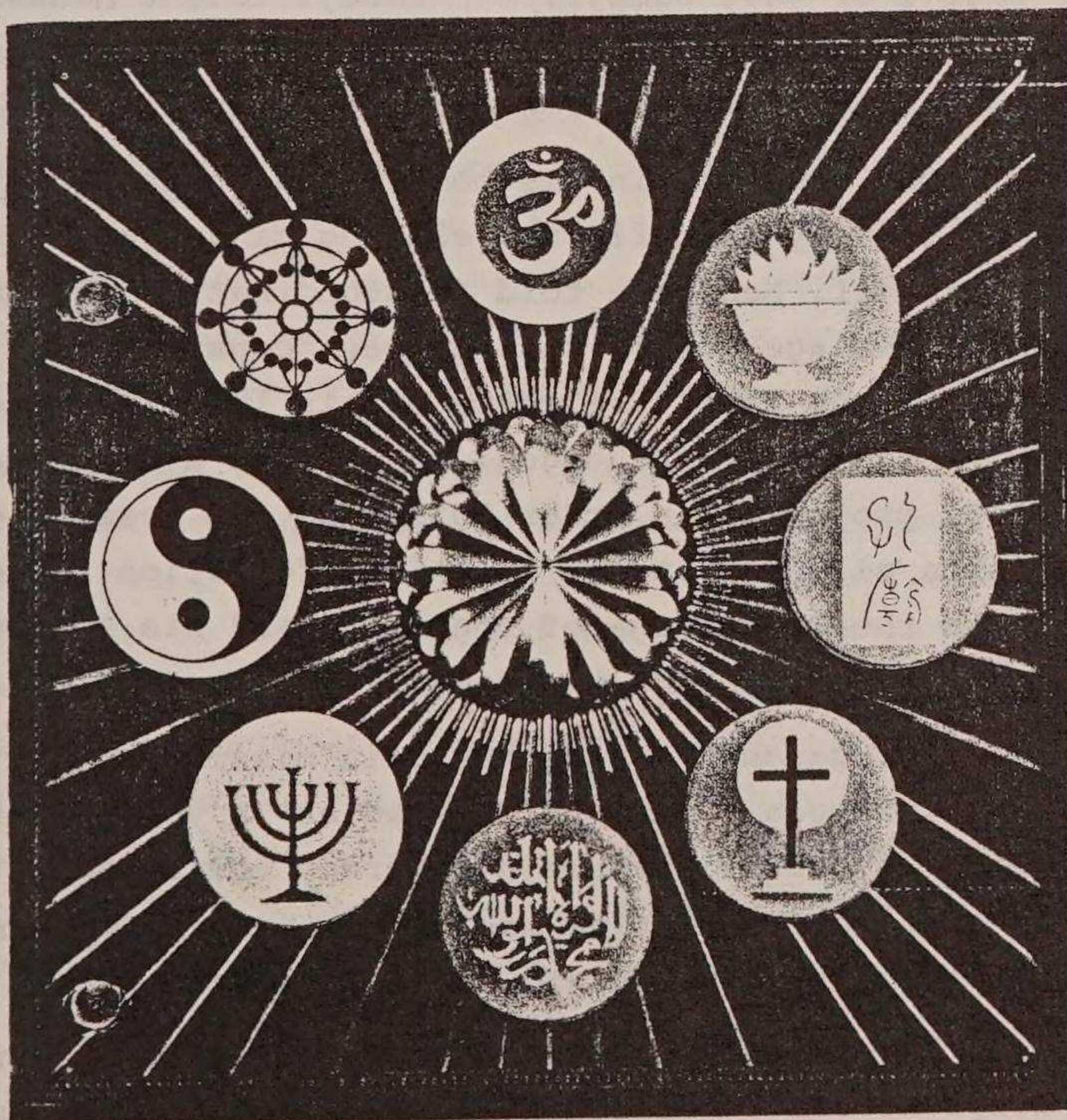
Swami Vivekananda.

The Ramakrishna Mission is scarcely growing any longer, but still today it is the "real structure of the Vedanta Centers" all over the world. ⁶⁾ Each of these centers is given spiritual leadership by a swami of the order sent from India, and all spiritual jurisdiction is still at "the home-base."

During a visit to a Vedanta Center in the US the author of this article experienced what one could call "split level religion." Taking his guests around the ashrama the local swami showed them the emblem but in a very "reformed" version. When this was pointed out to him he answered: We could not tell these North-Americans about the serpent-power, could we? But upstairs in the chapel you will find Mother Kundalini. When taking the visitors into the library (where the pictures of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda - but instead of the Mother a later president of the mission was found on the wall), the swami again defended the arrangement by saying: We could not tell these North-Americans that a swami has a consort, could we? But upstairs in the chapel you will find Holy Mother.

THE KRIYA-YOGIC MISSIONS.

The term kriya-yoga can be used in two ways. On the one hand kriya is a synonym for mudra. Sivananda in his Yoga, Vedanta Dictionary (1973) defines kriya as "Psychical action, particular exercises in hatha yoga, such as basti, neti, nauli, etc." Kriya-yoga he defines as "Yoga of action, yoga of self-purification through external service or worship." On the other hand kriya is also used in a comprehensive way as a synonym for Tantra. In a publication of the Bihar School of Yoga, called Kriya-yoga we read: "The purpose of kriya-yoga is to transform your whole life, to transform your life into a continuous expression of joy, bliss and wisdom." 7)



THE SELF-REALIZATION FELLOWSHIP AND SWAMI YOGANANDA.

The Self-Realization Fellowship and its founding guru, Paramahansah Yogananda, author of the Autobiography of a Yogi,⁸⁾ represent another missionary movement, calling itself "kriya-yoga." Yogananda's guru had been Yukteswar Giri of Serampore who belonged to the Giri branch of the holy order of monks.⁹⁾

Behind Yukteswar one finds the guru Lahiri Mahasaya, one of the most important gurus in the Tantric renaissance of the last century. He was born in 1828 in Bengal, but moved with his family to Benares, where his father built a temple to Siva. In 1861 he met his guru, called Mahavatur Babaji or just Babaji.¹⁰⁾ Babaji taught Mahasaya the secrets of kriya-yoga, defined as mental breathing techniques, and 1861 he allowed him to teach it openly.

Poul Brunton, however, in his book A search in Secret India¹¹⁾ is very specific in relating Mahasaya to Ramakrishna himself. Mahasaya told Brunton that he met Ramakrishna at the age of 27, that he was "constantly in his society" for the last five years of his life, and that thereby he was totally changed. He gave up a career as a university professor in order to spread the message of Ramakrishna all over India. If this information is correct, then the kriya-yoga of Yogananda and his followers is a specific version of the Ramakrishna system.

At any rate Yogananda became the main missionary of this line of kriya-yoga, which he defined as "A yogic technique, taught by Lahiri Mahasaya, whereby the sensory tumult is stilled, permitting man to achieve an ever increasing identity with cosmic-consciousness."¹²⁾

Elsewhere he describes kriya-yoga as "a short-cut" or "the airplane-route" of yoga,¹³⁾ as a "sense disconnection whereby the devotee is enabled to switch off or on, at will, the life current to the five senses of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch."¹⁴⁾

But the main technique of the Yogananda variety of kriya-yoga is connected with pranayama. He states that

"Kriya-yoga is a simple, psychophysiological method by which the human blood is decarbonated and recharged with oxygen. The atoms of this extra oxygen are transmuted into life current to rejuvenate the brain and spinal centers." 15)

The life force, which is normally absorbed in maintaining heart action, must be freed for higher activities by a method of calming and stilling the ceaseless demands of the breath. And the kriya yogi thus "mentally directs his energy to revolve, upward and downward, around the six spinal centers... which correspond to the twelve astral signs of the zodiac, the symbolic Cosmic Man." 16)

"Through gradual and regular increase of the simple and foolproof methods of kriya, man's body becomes astrally transformed day by day." 17)

The real kriya yogi "scientifically makes breathing unnecessary" for "the practice of kriya reverses the flow! Life force is mentally guided to the inner cosmos and becomes reunited with subtle spinal energies. By such reinforcement of his life force, the yogi's body and brain cells are renewed by spiritual "elixir"." 18)

Behind such sentences one can clearly identify the Tantric ideology and the hatha-yogic techniques. 19) Yogananda built up his movement with great efficiency in many parts of the world, and his headquarters in Los Angeles became a mecca for all his disciples. After his death his movement, the Yogoda Satsang Society of India, with many monks, was taken over by his "Mataji," Sri Daya Mata, i.e. the Mother of Compassion. The order seems to have been accepted by the Shankaracharya of Puri in 1959 20) as a new branch of the order.



Swami Kriyananda, originally a close disciple of Yogananda, was born in Rumania in 1926 and christened James Donald Walters. He became a disciple of Yogananda in 1948, and eventually a vice president of the organisation. He went to India for a number of years, following in the footsteps of his master, but when he returned to the US he was excluded from the organisation by "Holy Mother." After a period as a teacher of yoga, in 1967 he started the projects which in due time and after a lot of trouble developed into what are now known as the Ananda Cooperative Village and the Ananda Meditation Retreat in California. ²¹⁾

Yogiraj Boris Sacharow is a disciple of both Yogananda and Sivananda. In a number of knowledgeable books he develops his understanding of kriya-yoga with German accuracy. ²²⁾

Eugenia Basilewski, a well-known Swedish teacher of yoga, born in the USSR has developed what she calls "Mantra-Kriya-Yoga." ²³⁾ She underlines that kriya-yoga is a combination of mantra-yoga and pranayama-yoga. But she holds that the important thing in the Yogananda tradition is to convert the direction of inhaling and exhaling. In order to do this even the mantras are used in the opposite way. When this reversal is practiced, vibrations of light and sound appear automatically. ²⁴⁾

THE DIVINE LIFE SOCIETY AND SWAMI SIVANANDA.

In many parts of the world one finds "Divine Life Societies" or "Sivananda Yoga Communities," connected with the teaching of Swami Sivananda of Rishikesh. A number of well-known gurus who travel all over the world are his successors.

Sivananda (1887-1963) entered the order of the paramahamsahs in 1924. He was initiated into the order by his guru, Swami Viswanandaji Saraswati, on the banks of the Ganges at Rishikesh, and he himself was given the name Saraswati and belongs to the Sringeri Math of the order. ²⁵⁾

Sivananda was like Vivekananda, a synthesizer, connecting various forms of yoga in a popular system. ²⁶⁾ "The affirmation of the unity of the spirit and of the sublimation of material values into spiritual values and of the possibility of experiencing God as the innermost reality of matter and soul and of experiencing their identity in nirvikalpa samadhi is the special contribution of Swami Sivananda's unifying and synthesising mind to Philosophy." ²⁷⁾

The Tantric emphasis is, however, clearly expressed in his preoccupation with Mother Kundalini. In his Wisdom of Shiva, ²⁸⁾ writing about "the primal power kundalini," he states: "Kundalini, the sustaining power, is the basis on which the whole edifice of the science of yoga has been built." And he specifies: "Asanas, bandhas, mudras, and pranayama are intended to awake and rise the kula-kundalini lying asleep at the entrance of the sushumna or the gate of Brahman." ²⁹⁾

In his Kundalini Yoga (1971) Sivananda developed the whole kundalini system in detail. He gave a popular description of "Experiences on awakening of kundalini" stating quite clearly: "Kundalini yoga actually belongs to the Tantric sadhana."



Sivananda influenced people through his many books, but also through his many disciples, of whom Swami Hridayananda Matiji, the Mother, must be mentioned first. She was his "personal physician" for many years. ³⁰⁾

Among his followers one finds a surprisingly large number of gurus. Swami Chidananda and Swami Krishnananda are the two most distinguished leaders within the Divine Life Society today. Other well known figures are Shivapremananda, who was very active in Japan for a period and now runs Prana Yoga centres particularly in the USA, Dayanananda, Vishnu Devananda, who is very active in Canada and the US, the creator of TWO (True World Order), and a fierce opponent of Maharishi Mahash Yogi; the famous old guru of New York, Satchitananda, the founder of The Integral Yoga Institute, and Sivananda Radha, called Swami Radha, founder and leader of the Yasodhara Ashram in British Columbia, Canada. According to the magazine Divine Life, The Divine Life Society in 1970 had 137 affiliated branches in India and 37 outside India. ³¹⁾

An independent yogi, but one strongly influenced by Sivananda, is Yogi Chetanand, known principally for his small book Sex and Yoga, ³²⁾ which is one of the first attempts to perform "a creative study of sex and yoga," as he himself states his case.

Swami Chinmayananda was also a disciple of Sivananda, but founded his own Chinmaya mission, a fast growing movement with an ideology quite close to Divine Life Society. ³³⁾ It stands for a yogic synthesis, less antithetical to Christianity than Divine Life Society and more life-affirming.

One of Sivananda's disciples who fell from grace is Swami

Omkaranda, leader of the Divine Light center in Wintherthur, Switzerland. He lived with Sivananda for 20 years in Rishikesh, but he is no longer recognized by the order of the Paramahamsas to which he belonged. ³⁴⁾

In 1966 he went to Wintherthur, at the invitation of a devout disciple, where he established a colony of believers. His teaching is a sort of Christianized Sivananda ideology, emphasising the identification of the I and the divine. His main technique seems to be mantra-repetition, principally of the great mantra OM. But harder mantras are also used, spoken to the disciples day and night by tape-recorders. ³⁵⁾

A number of court cases were directed against his colony, and he managed to create a war-like situation in Wintherthur. But in 1979 he was sentenced to 14 years in prison, mainly because of violence and attempted murder.



THE INTERNATIONAL YOGA FELLOWSHIP AND SWAMI SATYANANDA.

"World Congresses of Yoga" are regularly held in different parts of the world. These meetings are the activity of Swami Satyananda Saraswati, who is in the succession of Sivananda. This figure is one of the most active gurus in the world, a true "ecumenist" who tries to organize and unite the various wings of the common Hindu missionary movements afoot in the world of today within the framework of his International Yoga Fellowship, which is in contact with schools and teachers in most countries in the world. He has published a number of important books on Tantra and "kriya-yoga," as he prefers to call his system. From the Bihar School of Yoga in Monghyr, Bihar, he probably influences more of the Tantric missions than does anyone else.



Satyananda operates through ambassadors who work independently but are parts of the total mission. One of his co-workers, Swami Amritananda, was for a number of years the leader of the School of Yoga in Bogota, Columbia, and a leading figure in Latin American Tantra. She is a highly competent woman with a great influence in the movement.

Similarly, Swami Yogashakti Saraswati, who was also connected with the Bogota School of Yoga for a period, is well-known in many parts of the world as an effective female guru.

In northern Europe Satyananda has a clever Danish disciple Swami Janakananda Saraswati, who is building a yoga-empire in the Scandinavian countries and England. He has published much and gained considerable influen-

ce. He too openly practices left-hand Tantra, which he describes in his main volume, translated into English.³⁶⁾

Satyananda is probably the most "left-handed" of the Tantric gurus today, but some of his disciples seem to go even further. Swami Jyotirmayananda has dedicated his very radical book Meditate the Tantric Yoga Way to Satyananda and acknowledges his instructions.³⁷⁾ Swami Anandakapila (John Mumford) also dedicated his book Sexual Occultism³⁸⁾ to Satyananda and refers to him as his instructor. This book is without any doubt the most extreme expression of Tantrism yet published. In it the asanas are taken to be copulation postures, and anal intercourse is accepted as a normal yogic practice. The influence of Crowley is evident.

A man with an independent and unusual mind is Dr. Mirsha, who cooperates with Satyananda and his World Congresses. His full name is Ramamurti S. Mishra and he too is a sort of kriya-yogi. He travels a great deal but normally teaches at the "California Institute of Asia Studies," and at the "Psychological Studies Institute" in Palo Alto, California.³⁹⁾

THE YOGA TRUST AND SWAMI NARAYANANANDA.

While closely related to the foregoing gurus, Swami Narayanananda Maharaj runs his own Yoga Trust. He operates mainly in the Scandinavian countries and in Germany, but also in India, where he has a number of ashramas.

Narayanananda comes out of the Ramakrishna mission. In 1929 he started his quest as a guru and went directly to the Belur Math of the Ramakrishna mission near Calcutta. Here he received his new name, was initiated into the order and underwent the required drills and tests. In 1932 he went in the usual way to "the Himalayas" in order to do penance and reach liberation, which he is believed to have attained in 1933. ⁴⁰⁾

In 1936, when his guru died, he left the Ramakrishna mission and started one of his own. He has published many books, many of which are similar to those of Sivananda, whom, however, he dislikes very much and very openly.

Both in India and Denmark his semi-Tantric practices have created quite a stir, and lively discussions of his theory and practice have taken place. ⁴¹⁾



THE DIVINE LIGHT MISSION (DLM) AND GURU MAHARAJ JI.

The Divine Light Mission used to be one of the most sensational guru movements, for it was headed by the child guru Maharaj Ji, who claims to be "The Lord of the Universe." For the DLM guru and god are one and the same reality. The guru is worshipped without reservation as god.

Devotion to the young "Divine Master" is very emotional and is obviously a form of bhakti-yoga. Personal ties are very strong; and even a split in "the holy family," the schism between the Mother and two of the brothers on one side and Maharaj Ji and another brother on the other has not been able to ruin these relations, but has necessitated the formation of "The Divine United Organisation" in the Western world.

The DLM began in India in 1960, when Divya Sandesh Parishad was founded.⁴²⁾ During the first 6 years of the new movement its head was Shri Hans, the father of the young Maharaj Ji, who, at the age of 8 years, succeeded his father in 1966. In 1969 the mission began its work in the West.⁴³⁾

In 1971 "The Lord of the Universe" himself arrived in England and the US, and at the peak of the mission's success in 1973, 284 centers had been founded in the US, linked by telex, and united as one family. All over the world 480 centers were in operation.

The origin of the DLM is obscure. V. Mangalwadi in his book The World of Gurus⁴⁴⁾ maintains that the DLM derives most of its teaching from Radha Soami Satsangh. And no doubt there is reason for this attribution when one considers the fundamental ideas of the two movements, but fundamentally DLM is part and parcel of traditional Yogic Tantra, using the normal Yogic techniques in order to achieve illumination.

Shri Hans was a very controversial figure in India because of his criticism of normal Hindu habits and because he considered himself above all the gods: "Lord Rama was an incarnation of God, enjoying 14 types of divine powers. Lord Krishna was an incarnation of God, having 16 types of

divine power. But I am perfect, and I am the master of all 64 divine powers." 45) During worship rituals when he received the adoration of his disciples he would wear the crown of Krishna, as does his son today.

The story is told that his "dada guru" called Sarupanand Ji appointed him as his successor, but "a small group dominated by one Varaganand disobeyed their master and after his death declined to follow Shri Hans. Varaganand claimed the property of his late Guru and set himself up as a Guru in his own right." 46)

At any rate Shri Hans started on his own in Sind and Lahore, and from 1930 operated from Delhi, mainly travelling in the northern parts of India.

The four kriyas constitute the real essence of the DLM; they are four techniques whereby knowledge is imparted to the disciples. Because of them, the DLM is said not to be a religion, but a direct experience of God as eternal energy. Knowledge is characterized as "looking (at), listening (to), tasting and breathing" the eternal energy flowing through us and sustaining us. 47)

The four techniques give to the disciples the means to get to "divine light," "music," "nectar," and "the word." The light, as indicated in the name Divine Light Mission, is central. The way to find this eternal light is through a practice which in hatha-yoga is normally called the yonimudra, i.e. closing all the ports of the body and going into one's own interior. Combined with this is another mudra, called the khecari mudra, the long tongue, or the cow tongue. This practice is made possible by lengthening the tongue through massage and even through primitive surgery. The long tongue is then sucked back into one's own throat and kept there for a long period, thus closing of totally all inhalation of the breath. 48) This method, however, is only used in a very modified way by the DLM. "The four kriyas or the fourfold technique taught by Shri Hansji Maharaj furnishes the easiest method of mind control." This is done when the powerful mind is subjugated by the equally powerful "prana." 49)

The Tantric context is also expressed by such terms as sushumna, ida, pingala, and chakras. That pranayama plays an important role in the DLM is also stated by the group itself, and the retention of the breath (kumbhaka) is underlined as an important practice. 50)

DLM people maintain that they have no mantras, but this statement (as well as all their statements) have to be examined. Their "word of god" is beyond any doubt the classical Tantric mantra sho-ham, which is ham-sah reversed. Ham-sah means the swan (or rather the goose!) and is a very meaningful symbol within the Tantric tradition (compare Shri Hans(ah) and "the Order of the Parama-hansahs," i.e. the great geese!) 51)



THE SIDDHA-YOGIC MISSIONS.

The difference between the kriya-yogic gurus already mentioned and the siddha-yogic gurus is not absolute. They are both representatives of strong Tantric yoga, but in the siddha-yogic tradition emphasis is placed on the supernatural powers (siddhis) which are gained through the various hatha-yogic techniques. In both traditions, as in all Tantric traditions, the identification of guru with god is absolute, but guru worship in the siddha-yogic groups is extremely strong, and the power of the guru can be transferred to the disciples just by a look or a touch. This phenomenon is called shaktipat.

SWAMI MUKTANANDA AND THE BABAS

Swami Muktananda Paramahansa, born in 1908, is probably the most important siddha yogi today. He resides in Ganeshpuri near Bombay as the leader of the siddha line within the order of the Paramahamsahs. He stands in the succession of Bhagwan Nityananda, who died in 1961. His love for Nityananda, from whom in 1947 he received his shaktipat, is unlimited and often bizarre.

Beyond Nityananda, Muktananda refers back to Zipruann of Nasirabad, and beyond him again to Sai Baba of Shirdi.⁵²⁾

Muktananda seems to have met Sai Baba of Shirdi when he was a little boy and to have been profoundly affected thereby. He always refers to him as God.⁵³⁾ Muktananda got his sannyas from Siddharudda Swami in Hubli, who also gave him his name, Muktananda.⁵⁴⁾

Muktananda is influential primarily through his many disciples, but he has also published some articles and books.⁵⁵⁾



Behind Muktananda, who is often called Baba, one also finds a unique tradition of holy men, the tradition of the babas, some little known ⁵⁶⁾ but also some very well known, for instance the famous Meher Baba ⁵⁷⁾ and the mysterious and legendary Hariakhan Baba.

Neem Karoli Baba, who became famous as the guru (or Maharaji) of Baba Ram Dass (the former Professor Richard Albert) and also Hari Dass Baba, the guru from Santa Cruz in California are also worthy of mention. These babas seem to represent a primitive tradition of totally disorganized fathers of the faith who have influenced both kriya-yoga and siddha-yoga. ⁵⁸⁾

Muktananda, however, is also influenced by Kashmiri shaivism, ⁵⁹⁾ which accepts the reality of the world and its divinity as it is. He stands for the shivaness of the world that our senses can perceive. The world of change is the sport of God and not different from God. ⁶⁰⁾

Baba is a Shiva-Shakti guru first and last. He worships the Divine Mother, Kali as his Shakti (or Chita Shakti as he calls her). Chita Shakti, i.e. Mother Kundalini, is his goddess. ⁶¹⁾ And Shiva is his god par excellence.

"We must worship, remember and understand Shiva by becoming Shiva.... It is the religion of all countries, all religions, all societies, all men." ⁶²⁾

The predominant mantras in Ganeshpuri consequently are Om namah Shivaya, an old worship mantra from shaivism, and the classical Tantric identification mantra sho-ham. ⁶³⁾

The ordinary yoga practices are not negated, but they play a secondary role in Baba's approach. The Yoga of attitudes (karma- gnana- and bhakti-yoga) is present in the synthesis, but the all-pervading perspective is that of kundalini yoga, i.e., Shiva-Shakti worship.

In this system the guru is the direct expression of the Shiva reality. The physical form of the guru becomes the object of meditation and worship. One's guru is the god of all gods, and one should not adore any deity than the guru.

The guru thus is Shiva; the guru is one's husband or wife, is one's own life, one's own self. There is nothing higher than the guru, and the disciple should offer everything to the guru. Muktananda, in the succession of Nityananda and now consubstantial with him, is the cause of the world: The world exists because he exists. Even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva aquired their cosmic potencies by the guru's grace. ⁶⁴⁾

Therefore the disciples must repeat the guru's name (the guru mantra), meditate on the guru's form (as the chosen deity), and remain at the guru's feet as the gateway to liberation. "The guru's feet should be worshipped every day, for by their means one easily realizes the immanent and transcendent aspects of Shiva." ⁶⁵⁾

The guru consequently is symbolically situated at the top of the disciple's head - at sahasrara as Shiva. "He is seated in the Blue Pearl in the center of the upper space of the sahasra" enveloped by blue radiance. This implies that the sexual arousal of the kundalini power, its rise through the chakras, and its union with Shiva are all directed towards the guru. One comes to be one with what one meditates on. Meditation on the guru means becoming the guru.

The SERPENT
symbol of
secret spiritual
Wisdom symbol also of
Eternity without
beginning or end.



Sathya Sai Baba, born in 1926, sees himself in the succession of the babas, but most important he sees himself as a new incarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi. He is, more than any other guru, a miracle-man who, as a magician, performs the most remarkable prodigies, claiming that they are caused by his siddhis. He produces out of his body a grey ash, called vibhuti, which is treasured by the believers as a means of healing and benediction. ⁶⁶⁾

And the believers are many. Thousands pour into his Indian centres, and his movement has built schools, dispensaries, and other establishments in many parts of India. His influence outside that country is not due to organizational efforts but depends totally on the deep faith placed in him by the many pilgrims who have been to his centres. A certain number of Sai Baba centres are found outside India, and in each of them Sai Baba is worshipped, especially on Thursdays, his special day.

Sai Baba's self-esteem knows no limitations. "I am God... I am a Divine Incarnation, the same as Ram, Krishna or Christ. I am the Avatar. Simple as that." ⁶⁷⁾ And he continues, "My power is divine and has no limit. I have the power to change the earth into the sky and the sky into the earth, but I don't because there is no reason to do it... I am beyond any obstacles and there is no force, natural or supernatural, that can stop me or my mission." ⁶⁸⁾

It is clear from his writings that Sathya Sai Baba's siddha-yoga is Tantric and based on kundalini ideology. ⁶⁹⁾

The sexual practices of Sathya Sai Baba seem to be rather odd, as reported by his former disciple Tal Brooke in The Lord of the Air, ⁷⁰⁾ a book he wrote to replace his earlier book The Amazing Advent, which was printed but never published because its author had become a Christian.

A most remarkable meeting took place in 1975 between Muktananda and Sathya Sai Baba as an expression of "cosmic politics." Baba Ram Dass had arranged this meeting as an encounter between the world's two greatest siddha-yogis. It was described in the above-mentioned - never-published - book by Tal Brooke, the proofs of which I have seen. ⁷¹⁾

The meeting, which was repeatedly on the point of collapse because of Sathya Sai Baba's erratic behaviour, ended in a sort of working alliance similar to the outcome of another meeting between Muktananda and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi which took place in 1976.

The organizer of this bilateral conference was, as we have said, the American guru Baba Ram Dass (himself a siddha-yogi affiliated mainly with Neem Karoli Baba, Hari Dass Baba and Muktananda). In former life he was Professor Richard Alpert, and he travelled the guru road as a result of notorious LSD trips with Timothy Leary.⁷²⁾

Baba Ram Dass has written a number of books developing his "devotional Tantra" for the Western mind⁷³⁾ and is the leader of the Hanuman institution in New York.

Another Western guru of some importance is Bubba Free John, also called Franklin Jones. He is the leader of the Dawn Horse Communion, which publishes many books and publications on "esoteric spirituality", for instance a magazine called The Dawn Horse.

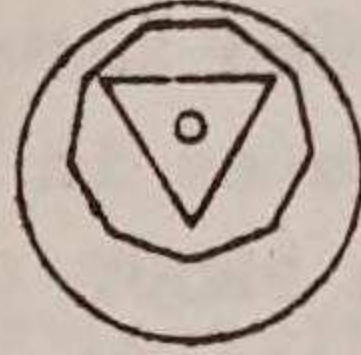
He stands in a number of successions, but primarily he is a disciple of Muktananda. The guru who started him off, however, was one of Muktananda's disciples, the strange Rudi, also called Swami Rudrananda.⁷⁴⁾

Bubba Free John is probably the most eccentric of all the gurus. He was first a student of theology in a Lutheran seminary, but then went his own way; his story is representative of a whole generation of young Americans.⁷⁵⁾

ॐ

AUM
the sacred
syllable
symbol of the
creative word.

Bhagwan Rajneesh enjoys a special role among the guru characters. He is more out-looking than most, both ecstatic and enstatic. He is very syncretistic, but at bottom he is clearly a Tantrist siddha-yogi. ⁷⁶⁾



Rajneesh has developed his own Hu-meditation, which integrates modern therapeutic methods with sexual exercises and various elements from Zen, Sufism, and even Christianity.

His Tantric emphasis appears in all his books and articles. His programme is to find out how man can evolve, how real human beings can come into existence. For that purpose sexuality is important, for it can be transformed into spirituality.

He aims at "samadhi in coitus," that "samadhi which flashes like lightening in the midst of copulation." The goal is to establish a deeper and lasting relationship with that experience through the means of meditation. ⁷⁷⁾

To this end he supports celibacy (brahmacharya), for that is the status of divinity incarnate. Babies should be born out of celibacy as a new race of superhuman beings.

To achieve this, the "lust which is inside us" has to become the ladder by which we reach the temple of love... a challenge to us to reach toward super-consciousness. ⁷⁸⁾



The INTERLACED TRIANGLES
 symbol of spirit descending into
 matter - of spirit seeking liberation
 from form - and of the two natures
 struggling in men.

ANANDA MARGA/PROUT AND ANANDA MURTI.

One guru movement much in the headlines is the Ananda Marga (Path of Bliss), headed by the guru Ananda Murti (Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar), born in 1921 and known as "Ba'ba'".

This movement, which now operates in many parts of the world, and its daughter organisation PROUT (Progressive Utilization Theory) represent, according to their own definition, progressive socialism; but in actual fact they look more like a new version of the older national socialism. ⁷⁹⁾

The Ananda Murti himself is hailed as a god incarnate, called Tarak Brahma, a third incarnation after Shiva and Krishna. As a god he claims absolute obedience from his followers. Even as a young boy he is said to have exercised supernatural powers, and his life has been marked by a number of remarkable acts which identify him as a typical siddhi-yogi on the basis of Tantric ideology. He was probably initiated by his notorious uncle Subhas Chandra Bose, ⁸⁰⁾ an extremist politician who supported the Japanese and German forces against the English, whom Bose hated with life-long animosity.

The Ananda Marga started in 1955 and is centered on the person of Ananda Murti. One of the movement's most characteristic features is the "war dance," during which the mantra "Baba nam kevalam" (The name of the father only) is sung/shouted again and again in order to arouse the dancers to ecstasy.

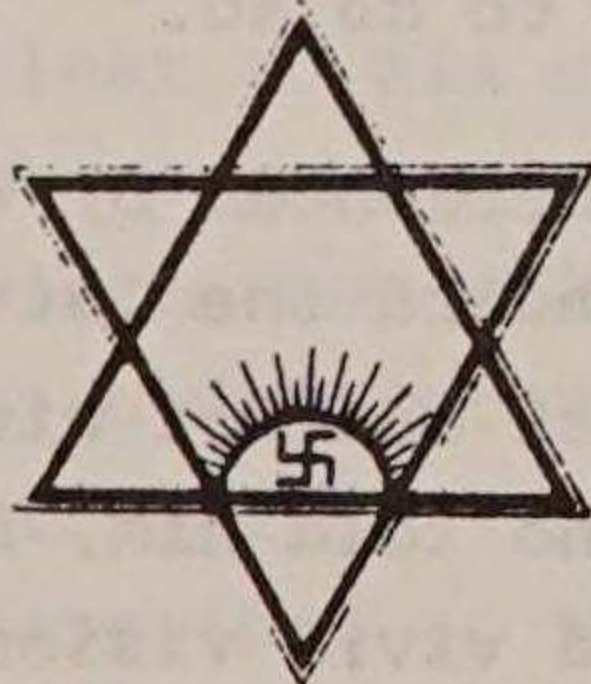
The political ideology which is the basis of the movement supports "the rule of the elite." A number of "sadvipras" are to govern the world. In practice, for the time being, the movement is run by a number of "acharyas", who govern the local ashramas and "avadhouts" who govern the various regions.

The Ananda Marga group was seriously wracked in 1971, when the guru Ananda Murti was arrested on suspicion of murder and put into an Indian jail. In 1973 a group of the leaders were interned, and many of the institutions of the movement were closed down. Finally, in 1975, the whole movement

was outlawed by Indira Gandhi, and many more leaders were arrested. In 1976 Ananda Murti was convicted of instigation to murder on a number of counts, and spent several years in prison, often on a hunger-strike. The main prosecution witnesses in the case were his wife and a group of former leaders of the movement. 81)

Ananda Murti was released in 1979, however, and is again in power as the leader of a strong and militant guru movement.

His disciples reacted violently against the measures taken by the Indian government and the courts. They flatly deny all charges, and demonstrations have taken place in many parts of the world. Acts of self-immolation began in 1973, when two monks from the movements burned themselves in order to draw international attention to Ananda Murti's condition, and since then a series of similar acts of violence have horrified the world.



SRI AUROBINDO/ THE MOTHER/ AUROVILLE.

Sri Aurobindo had no guru. He received some spiritual help but no real guru initiation. Consequently, he never belonged to the old monastic order, but was on his own. He expressed himself on this point as follows: "Though generally a touch from the guru is necessary, it is not indispensable. In my case there was no touch from a guru - I got an inner touch and practiced yoga." He received some spiritual guidance in 1907 from Yogi Vishnu Bhaskar Lele⁸²⁾ through whom he learned the utter silence and infinite calm of the Supreme Brahman, beyond time and space. And he later got much help and inspiration from his "shakti," Mira Richard, the Mother.⁸³⁾

He made use of various yoga systems, but claimed not to see them as essential. "The Hathayogic methods can be dispensed with - though there is no objection to their partial use, - the Rajayogic will only enter as an informal element."⁸⁴⁾ Aurobindo seemed, however, to have an esoteric and secret part to his yoga. He expressed it thus: "The detail and method in later stages of the yoga which go into little known or untrodden regions, I have not made public and I do not at present intend to do so."⁸⁵⁾

Aurobindo was directly influenced by Vivekananda. When in jail he claimed to have heard the latter's voice for days. Furthermore, he had direct contact with the Theosophist master K.H. (Kuthumi), who told him, however: "Your master is different."⁸⁶⁾ He had vivid visions of Lord Krishna and "passed many nights in his arms."⁸⁷⁾ But first and last he was a yogi. His system is called "Integral Yoga," and yoga for him was always associated with "Yogiraj Shiva."⁸⁸⁾

His aim was to integrate and synthesize all yogas into his own form of maha-yoga,⁸⁹⁾ but the uniting bond was the Tantric kundalini system, and his system included aspects and methods of siddha yoga.⁹⁰⁾

Aurobindo first of all went his own way. He decided "to see God face to face" and thus achieve siddhi, as he described it to his young wife in 1905. Consequently, he left his old world in 1910 and started anew in Pondicherry in 1910, where he lived until his death in 1950.⁹¹⁾ He tried to make

himself "the automatist of the Lord," putting himself totally at the disposal of the divine. ⁹²⁾

Aurobindo had at an early stage achieved what in his tradition is called atma-siddhi. ⁹³⁾ But he wanted to get further in spiritual development, and this is where the distinctive character of the Aurobindo system comes in, the growth into the Supermind. ⁹⁴⁾

This development for Aurobindo was not meant as an escape from this world of form and matter but to be another way of living in it. ⁹⁵⁾

Aurobindo developed throughout his life and used all his powers to bring truth down to the level of matter. He made his own person available as a laboratory, intending to become the first supermind in this world. ⁹⁶⁾

The purpose of his form of siddhi-yoga was to bring down a consciousness, a power and a light of truth, a divine reality, destined to raise earthly consciousness and to transfigure everything here on this earth. ⁹⁷⁾

In 1926 it was made clear to his many disciples in Pondicherry that "the siddhi of the supramental" was nearer, and on November 24, 1926, (since then celebrated as "the Siddhi Day,"") something happened which was interpreted to mean that the Divine had descended to earth. It was, however, not the Supermind, but something described as the Overmind ("the Krishna consciousness"), which had been attained. The direct result was that Aurobindo abdicated, the Mother took over, and everything in the movement was put under her supervision. ⁹⁸⁾

In some versions of the event the descent of the Overmind was into Aurobindo only, but in other versions it came into both him and the Mother. ⁹⁹⁾

Before the maha-yogi managed to summon down the definitive Supermind, he died, ("The Mahayogi left his mortal body in 1950"); and this was understood as part of the final victory. ¹⁰⁰⁾

According to Aurobindo, Tantra expressly differentiates itself from the Vedic methods of Yoga. The main difference,

often repeated by him, is that a Tantric yogi does not draw back from manifest nature and its difficulties, but confronts them, comes to grips with them, and conquers them. The aim of Tantra is not escape, as is the case with the traditional systems of yoga, but is a transformation of a man's integral being. ¹⁰¹⁾

His Integral Yoga is principally a yoga of syntheses, i.e., a synthesis:

1. between Vedanta and Tantra.
2. among the many different systems of yoga.
3. between Western occultism and Eastern Tantra.
4. between Krishna-bhakti and speculative gnana-yoga.
5. to some extent between Hinduism and Christianity. ¹⁰²⁾

But the decisive force at work in his system is quite clearly a modified Tantric approach. Aurobindo at the core of his ideology was a Tantric master who tried to unite matter and the divine. His Shakti orientation and the role of the Mother indicates as much. Aurobindo himself developed the ideology of the Mother as a central part of his system. ¹⁰³⁾ Shakti was his alter ego, doing everything for him as on his behalf. He was Shiva, i.e., a residing, passive being.

In his system of Integral Yoga the Vedantic mukti (liberation) is integrated with the Tantric bhukti (pleasure and enjoyment), but in a spiritualized way. The cruder forms of Tantra seem to be absent. ¹⁰⁴⁾ Though he operated with the serpent power and the six chakras, etc., everything being aimed at uniting the Shakti and Shiva at sahasrara at the top of the skull, the way this system was used by Aurobindo was new. "In our yoga there is no willed process of the purification and opening of the center, no raising up of the kundalini by a set process either. Another method is used, but still there is the ascent of the consciousness... there is the opening of the centres and of the planes... therefore, there is, I have said, a Tantric knowledge behind the process of transformation in this yoga." ¹⁰⁵⁾

It is thus essential to note that in his discipline his exercises do not begin at the bottom, at muladhara, but from the heart centre! From there he aims at awakening the purusha

(spirit), and if it happens the lower kundalini Shakti arises automatically. ¹⁰⁶⁾

One further point is important for distinguishing the Aurobindo Tantra from traditional Tantra. In his system there is both an upward and a downward movement, and the ascent comes at the beginning. Starting from matter as an evolutionary process, Aurobindo focuses, however, on the descent of the divine and a final transformation of matter. He wants to transform the whole world by bringing down to the human level the divine force which he has reached by means of the ascent. This is quite new in yogic ideology. ¹⁰⁷⁾

The Mother (Mira Richard).

"As soon as he (Aurobindo) withdrew from his physical envelope the supramental light made its permanent base in the Mother's body, beginning with the brain-mind. This is what is known as the "Mind of Light." ¹⁰⁸⁾

What in reality took place in the relation between the aged Aurobindo and the strange, energetic woman Mira Richard is buried in the past, but the indisputable fact is that she took over not only his leadership, but also his guruship. She became in practice the expected supermind, but always as a sort of shadow of his power. ¹⁰⁹⁾

She maintained the expectation of his return. She said, "One can't fix the precise time of his return. It may even be five hundred years later. I can't say anything, since the knowledge has not come to me. I only say things when I get them. This much I have said: Sri Aurobindo will be the first to have the supramental body." ¹¹⁰⁾

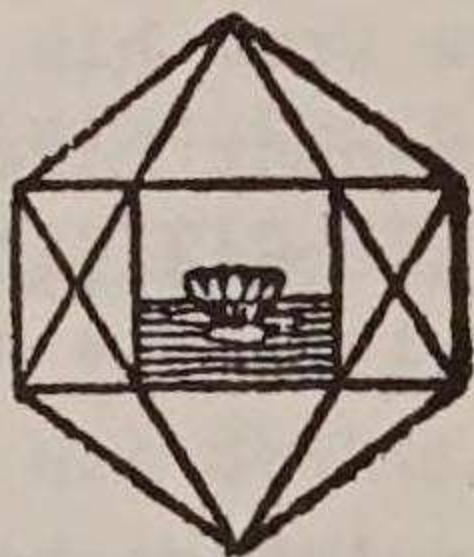
In 1956 she stated unequivocally that the supermind had taken over: "Previously everything worked under the pressure of the Mind of Light. Sri Aurobindo secured this working when he left his body. Now it is the Supermind that directly guides and governs. The manifestation is just over two and a half months old and yet a new situation - an absolutely new situation - has come into being." ¹¹¹⁾

In Mira Richard, the Western occult tradition blended with

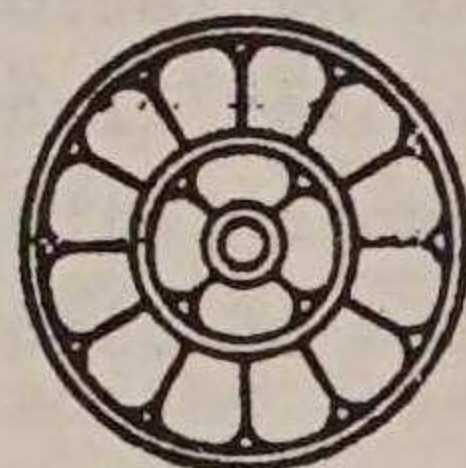
the revised Tantric tradition of Aurobindo and created a synthesis. She claimed to have studied in Algeria under an occult master, called Theon, at the beginning of this century; and in Paris in 1912 she joined a group of occult seekers. 112)

In her life time a highpoint in the development of the Aurobindo-movement was the inauguration of the AUROVILLE project on February 28, 1961 a township planned for 50.000 people on the outskirts of Pondicherry, and belonging to humanity as a whole. Its aim was to function as a bridge between the past and the future and as a site for material and spiritual research. 113)

After the Mother's death, however, a series of conflicts among the disciples have caused a serious crisis for the project.



Sri Aurobindo.



The Mother.

Aurobindo groups are now found in many parts of the world. Apostles of the Auroville ideology are spreading the message of the Father and Mother. Among the messengers are two worth mentioning, M.P. Pandit and Sri Chinmoy.

M.P. Pandit joined the Aurobindo Ashram in 1939 and has been closely connected with this center for many years. His many books provide one important dimension to its teaching. 114)

The most explicit confession of the Tantric sadhana M.P. Pandit gives in his defence of "the secret ritual," included in Light on the Tantras. 115) In this book he combines mukti and bhukti, the bliss of the finite and the infinite world, as he defines them. 116) He gives a useful definition of Tantra in these words: "The Sastra aimed to take man as he is, utilise his natural proclivities for his own advancement...." 117)

Sri Chinmoy lived 20 years with Aurobindo, but left to become the apostle of siddha yoga in the West (1965 in the USA), as expressed not least by his symbolic service at the United Nations in New York in the meditation room of this organization¹¹⁸⁾ and by the hundreds of books, the thousands of poems and songs, and the enormous number of paintings and musical compositions, which he has produced.

UNITED NATIONS MEDITATION GROUP



WE BELIEVE

... that each man has the potentiality of reaching the Ultimate Truth. We also believe that man cannot and will not remain imperfect forever. Each man is an instrument of God. When the hour strikes, each individual soul listens to the inner dictates of God. When man listens to God, his imperfections are turned into perfections, his ignorance into knowledge, his searching mind into revealing light and his uncertain reality into all-fulfilling Divinity.

— Sri Chinmoy

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION AND MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI.

By far the largest of the guru movements is "Transcendental Meditation" (TM). It is probable that more than 3,000,000 people have been initiated into this movement, and perhaps 1,000,000 still continue to meditate in this way.

TM began as "The Spiritual Regeneration Movement," instituted in 1958 by a previously unknown Indian calling himself Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (MMY; born 1917). The intention of this new organisation was to "spiritually regenerate the whole world." 119)

MMY quite correctly never called himself a swami. Although he lived for 13 years with the shankaracharya of the Jyotir Math, one of the four major centres of the Order of the Paramahamsahs, he served only as a clerk, had the status of a brahmachary, i.e. a celibate, and was never ordained a monk or given holy orders. 120)

The famous Maharishi Ramana Maharshi of Tiruvanamalai was likewise a lay person, operating on his own, but Ramana was never even associated with the Order. Similarly, Aurobindo of Pondicherry was never made a swami, for he never had a guru. MMY both had a guru and lived within the holy Order for years, and even so he was never given the ochre robe. Still more significantly, as far as one can determine from written and oral statements, MMY never claimed to have attained decisive spiritual enlightenment, the moksha. In fact MMY seems not to have been a spiritual person in the Indian meaning of that word, and therefore he was never accepted by the Order for ordination. After having performed merely an administrative function within the Jyotir Math, when his guru died in 1953 and a new shankaracharya took over, MMY left and began his own movement, The Spiritual Regeneration Movement.

In this context a dialogue which took place in October, 1976, between MMY and the famous Tantric siddha-yogi Muktananda becomes important. 121) During this dialogue MMY is quoted as saying, "There is a difference between a brahmachari (novice monk) and a swami. A brahmachari is one who practices, and goes on practicing TM. I am one such brahmachari. But a

swami is one who does not practice, but flows in his own nature.... Muktananda is one such swami." Muktananda answered in this way, "The meaning of the word maharishi is great. Our scriptures say that this world was created by seven sages (rishis). Today one such maharishi has created a new world here, too."

The climax of the meeting of the two men, rishi and swami, was MMY's invitation to Muktananda to become the spiritual adviser to "The World Government for the Age of Enlightenment," whereby MMY "demonstrated his reverence for the tradition of the siddhas." 122)

In fact MMY seems to have sought and found support from a strong guru succession, probably in order to affirm and sustain the siddhi programme which he had launched a short time before the meeting on his own initiative. The validity of his own succession is more than doubtful and the present shankaracharya, Karpatraji, refuses to recognize him.

This is why TM always displays everywhere the picture of the former shankaracharya Brahmananda Saraswati, called Guru Dev, as a legitimizing symbol. In the ritual of the puja, which constitutes the necessary initiation for all new TM meditators, 123) Guru Dev is worshipped as the expression of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva, and a number of offerings are made to the divine presence.

The ritual itself, and the mantras which are assigned after the singing of the puja by the TM teacher, are tantric in nature. This is evident in the official TM translation into English, but even more so in the original Sanscrit text.

The mantras are so-called beeja mantras, and they name or imply Tantric gods and goddesses.

TM presents a specific problem, in that its religious element is flatly denied by the TM organisation. This means that a large number of people are being duped into something they are not aware of. 124)

A former disciple of MMY who was his secretary for a number of years reported to a group of people in California the following dialogue between a disciple and MMY:

Disciple: "Some people go around saying that in fact TM is a Tantric movement." MMY: "Tantra, that is our tradition, and one day we shall step into it." 125)

Officially this position is denied by TM, which has been marketed since 1970 as the "Science of Creative Intelligence." Religion per se is not popular in the marketplace. But in former times MMY was less cautious; in his 1967 commentary on the Bhagavad Gita he defined TM without reservation as a combination of the two paths to liberation, gnana-yoga and bhakti-yoga. 126)

The specific nature of meditation in TM however is best described as "a combination of manasika-japa and anthar mauna." 1 Manasika means that the mantra is repeated mentally, and anthar mauna simply means inner silence. For ordinary disciples TM is nothing more than the combination of these well-known yogic techniques. For TM teachers, however, more elements of hatha-yogic practice are added, and during the advanced meditations the adepts meditate on the puja ritual itself, thereby continuously worshipping the divine guru.

MMY himself describes TM as the "mechanical path to God-realization," 128) and in fact TM is a sort of "yoga for everybody" without much depth or originality. MMY has taught nothing which is not to be found in any book on yoga, and his movement has very little genuine spirituality. Nonetheless, it is the most popular of all the guru movements in the world today.

The effects of TM have been seriously questioned. TM maintains that its form of meditation makes disciples more active and efficient, and a number of semi-scientific experiments seem to prove this. But in fact a large part of these experiments are without value. Obviously, a general element of relaxation is to be found within the TM meditation, but nothing proves that TM is better than any ordinary method of relaxation. Herbert Benson, who used to work for TM, has proved this beyond doubt in his recent writings. 129)

In the last few years MMY has committed TM to a regular siddhi programme which is far beyond realization. In the future no one will be able to exercise leadership within TM unless he has levitated. Obviously, the disciples try hard to do it, and all over the world TM disciples are bouncing collectively. But at the same time TM is losing some of its best people, those who have finally become disillusioned.

However, MMY goes right on. He has even created a world government, with ministries for everything, including immortality. On the day he inaugurated the "Age of Enlightenment" he revealed his political ideology: "there has not been and there will not be a place for the unfit. The fit will lead, and if the unfit are not coming along there is no place for them.... Nature will not allow ignorance to prevail. Non-existence of the unfit has been the law of nature." 130)



HARE KRISHNA AND SWAMI PRABHUPADA.

When A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada arrived in the US in 1965 and began his mission, now called Hare Krishna, he was quite alone. Prabhupada belonged to the Gaudiya mission, established in 1886 as a renewal of the older Visva-Vaisnav Raj Sabha, which claims descent from Jiva Goswami, one of Chaitanyas' first six goswamis. ¹³¹⁾

The founder of the Gaudiya Mission, Bhaktivinode Thakur, was superintendant of the Jagannatha temple in Puri, Orissa; and Siddhananda, his son, began proselytizing the English-speaking part of India with his Tantric version of Vishnu piety from Bengal. Prabhupada, whom they met in 1922, was one of their converts.

Prabhupada for his part "thought that (my master Siddhananda) wanted me to preach this cult.... all over, especially in the Western countries." ¹³²⁾

The yoga of Hare Krishna is an attempt to restore the old Vedic ideals of life. The Vedas and the law of Manu are seen as reference points in this nostalgic vision of back to godhead. Hare Krishna is thus not so much a religion they maintain as it is "the sanatha dharma", the eternal way of life. The caste system and a number of old habits must be restored but with the important modification that new brahmins are to be created within ISKCON (= International Society for Krishna Consciousness), which is the official name of the Hare Krishna movement.

ISKCON has become most famous for its bhakti yogic expressions, its chanting and dancing, and its music and singing. The dress and the shaven heads of the male members, along with the maha-mantra, "Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, etc.," has given it public awareness.

The Hare Krishna movement is more male-dominated than any other guru movement. Women work only behind the scenes as silent, obedient servants. This does not mean, however, that the female perspective is absent in ISKCON. Krishna is the great HE, the charming and lovable Lord of all the

gopis, the Indian cowgirls, who are totally infatuated by him. His favourite among them is Raddha, the great SHE. When one gets to know Hare Krishna, one finds out that the piety and worship of this movement is primarily directed towards the SHE. A male-dominated movement thus directs its ardent love first of all towards Raddha, the shakti and pleasure-potency of Krishna.

Does this mean that ISKCON is also Tantric? Yes, most certainly. But it is Vishnu-Tantric, an interesting but separate variety of Tantra. For Tantra on the whole is Shiva-Tantric or even Shakti-Tantric (directed towards the female aspect). The disciples of ISKCON however are followers of the narada-pancaratra, one of three main Vaishhava Tantras. 133)

Hare Krishna most certainly subscribes to the general Tantric trend, but at the same time it attacks Shiva-Tantra, which has become "a license for orgies." This is expressed for instance in Back to Godhead in an article, called "What is Tantra?" 134)

The author, Acyutannada Swami, decries the hatha-yogic techniques used by the Shiva-Tantrics, the postures, the fasts, the basic contraction of the stomach muscles in order not to lose the seminal fluid, "but instead remove the woman's fluid in order that the yogi can keep the mixture of these two fluids in the base of his spine." 135)

Interesting also is the description given of "the long tongue" technique. It is meant to "keep the soul from passing out of the mouth, nose, eyes or ears." The description ends: "Through mystic fire a channel opens, the top of the skull fractures, and the soul enters the clear white light." 136)

The experience of liberation and salvation in Hare Krishna is probably found in the ecstasy more than in the usual meditative forms of "enstasis," which characterizes guru movements in general. An emotional pressure is very strong in ISKCON, and one doubts that it can continue at such a pitch for many years. A more moderate approach has to come and is already coming.

As a rule the disciples have withdrawn from society at large and have created an alternative existence in the temples and within the fold of ISKCON. Here they serve their gods and goddesses with a devoted "idol worship," which they justify theologically. In this microcosm they try to experience a life freed from both worldly pleasures and anxieties. 137



Notes:

- 1) Teosofi i Norden, 1973 p. 152. And H.P. Blavatsky: Studies in Occultism, 1974 (from "Lucifer" 1887-1891)
- 2) See C.W. Leadbeater's The World Mother as Symbol and Fact, 1975. And first of all The Chakras, A Monograph, 1973, a book published already in 1927 as a parallel to John Woodroffe's The Serpent Power. He prefers the term laya-yoga for the system, but he clearly sees the identity and expresses it. Also C.S. Arundale: Kundalini, An Occult Experience, 1974.
- 3) See Religious Movements in Modern Bengal, 1965 by Benoy Gopal Ray, p. 72.
- 4) Concerning left-hand Tantra see Swami Nikhilananda: Holy Mother, 1962, which clearly points to the power of the Mother in the life of the Ramakrishna Movement, based on the Tantric role of the Shakti in this movement.
- 5) He prefers to label this system raja-yoga, but in essence it is kundalini-yoga. These concepts are explained on the coming pages.
- 6) R. S. Ellwood: Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America, 1973 p. 222.
- 7) III 1976, Jan. p. 9.
- 8) 1971.
- 9) See Yukteswar: "Kaivalya Darsanam," in The Holy Science, 1974 p. VI, VIII.
- 10) A peculiar and legendary book is written about him, called Hariakhan Baba, Known, Unknown, 1975 by Baba Hari Dass.
- 11) 1934 p. 131f.
- 12) The Autobiography.... 1971 p. 9n. In the same book he develops the Science of kriya yoga in chapter 26, p. 242-252.
- 13) 1971 p. 246 and 249.
- 14) 1971 p. 249. It sounds much like the promises of the "Divine Light Mission in connections with its kriyas.
- 15) 1971 p. 242.
- 16) 1971 p. 245.
- 17) 1971 p. 246.
- 18) 1971 p. 248.

- 19) Boris Sacharow in his Kriya-yoga cites a letter from Yogananda from 1948 in which he reveals his special techniques, p. 99f.
- 20) 1971 p. 229n.
In Satyananda's publication Kriya Yoga, Jan. 1976 p. 8, Mahatma Gandhi is called a Kriya-yogi, and R.S. Ellwood in his book Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America, 1973 p. 228, tells that Gandhi was initiated by Yogananda into kriya yoga.
- 21) Ted A. Nordquist: Ananda Cooperative Village, 1978.
- 22) In Das Öffnen des Dritten Auges, 1969 p. 114f he develops his understanding of the "Gottheit Kundalini" and the "Schlangenfeuer". In Das grosse Geheimnis, die verborgene Seite der Yoga-Übungen, he translates the tantric text Gheranda Samhita and interprets it. And in his Kriya Yoga (without year) he gives a survey of the interrelatedness of the different yogas.
- 23) Meditationens veje, 1973 p. 53ff.
- 24) She understands herself both as a disciple of Sivananda and Yogananda, but was initiated into kriya yoga by Anandamoy, the disciple of Yogananda.
- 25) Secret of Self-Realization, 1951 p. XLIX. But in the same book other ancestors are mentioned: Appayya Dikshitar, "a spiritual magnet next to Bhagwan Shankara, a great devotee of Lord Shiva."
The Shiva-emphasis is very important in Sivananda's teaching and practice.
- 26) He is normally presented thus in his own magazine, see for instance The Divine Life, Nov. 1970 p. 444ff.
- 27) idem p. 445.
- 28) 1951 p. 76f.
- 29) Still the extent in which he stood for this kundalini ideology is discussed, see The Divine Life, Sept. 1970 p. 375f, and Nov. 1970 p. 444f.
- 30) The Divine Life, March 1971 p. 120.
- 31) July 1970 p. 267.
- 32) 1977.
- 33) V. Mangalwadi: The World of Gurus, 1977 p. 63ff.
- 34) Religion im Untergrund, 1975 p. 105f.
Heil Aus Asien, 1974, p. 51ff.
- 35) See his Das Licht des Unendlichen Bewusstseins, 1970.

- 36) Yoga, Tantra and Meditation in Everyday Life, 1975 p. 65ff.
Janakananda publishes an excellent tantra-magazine, called Bindu.
- 37) 1973 p. 5 and 117.
- 38) 1975 p. 48.
- 39) See his Fundamental of Yoga, 1974 and Yoga Sutras, the Textbook of Yoga Psychology, 1973 p. 224 f about kriya-yoga.
- 40) See the book The End of Philosophy or The Ultimate Truth and the Universal Religion, 1962, p. 253 ff. Compare with p. 64ff. in the same book.
- 41) See Johannes Aagaard "A Yogic Attitude to Sex", in New Religious Movements Up-date, Vol. 3-4, Dec. 1977 p. 4-33, and "Salvation and Death" in the same publication, Vol II, 2, Sept. 1978 p. 24-38.
- 42) Who is Guru Maharaj Ji, 1973 p. 35. - Satgurudev Shri Hans Maharaj, 1970 p. 11.
- 43) Who is.... 1973 p. 35f.
- 44) 1977 p. 200.
- 45) Satgurudev...., 1970 p. 12. The powers here mentioned are the tantric siddhis.
- 46) Satgurudev.... 1970 p. 3.
- 47) Who is Guru Maharaj Ji, 1973 p. 17ff.
- 48) Theos Bernard in his book on Hatha Yoga describes this and other DLM techniques in detail, see p. 72f. Also the maha-mudra is used in DLM, this mudra having light-visions as its main goal.
- 49) Satgurudev...., 1970 p. 47.
- 50) idem p. 51.
- 51) See Agehananda Bharati: The Tantric Tradition, 1975 p. 162 n. 112.
See Satgurudev...., 1970 p. 53. In my edition a piece of new print has been added on p. 53, probably in order to conceal that the first print reveals the three classical mantras.
- 52) Muktananda: Chitshakti Vilas, 1976 p. 177.
- 53) T. Brooke's (never published) proof-texts to his The Amazing Advent p. 110.

- 54) Mangalwadi 1977 p. 171.
- 55) Chitshakti Vilas, The Play of Consciousness, 1976 is the most important of his publications. See also his Paramahansa in Australia, 1971. American Tour, 1974. Getting rid of what you haven't got, 1974. The Nectar of Chanting, 1975. Siddha Meditation, Commentaries on the Shiva Sutras and Other Sacred Texts, 1975.
- 56) D.P. Sham Rao: Five Contemporary Gurus in the Shirdi (Sai Baba) Tradition, 1972. And Arthur Osborne: The Incredible Sai Baba, 1957.
- 57) See his God Speaks, The Theme of Creation and Its Purpose, 1973.
- 58) "All are with me, all are mine", Shirdi Sai Babas Approach to Devotees, p. 30-36 in The Dawn Horse, no. 5, 1975.
- 59) Swami Shankarananda: Muktananda, Siddha Guru, 1976, p. 39f.
- 60) Idem p. 43.
- 61) Idem p. 44 his hymn to Mother Kundalini.
- 62) Siddha Meditation, 1975.
- 63) Idem p. 65.
- 64) Siddha Meditation, 1975 p. 100, 102, 109, 111.
- 65) Idem p. 103f.
- 66) R.S. Ellwood: Religious and Spiritual Groups in Modern America, 1973, p. 246.
- 67) T. Brooke was a leading disciple of Sathia Sai Baba and had finished a manuscript to a book about him, called The Amazing Advent. The Manuscript reached the stage of proof-reading, but then the author lost faith in his guru and became a Christian. The cited sentences are taken from the proofs of T. Brooke, p. 103.
- 68) Idem p. 105.
- 69) See his Sadhana, The inward path, Vol. 1 p. 60f, 70f. Sai Baba, The Holy Man.... and the Psychiatrist, 1975, p. 73ff. Sai Baba and Sai Yoga, 1975, p. 23f.
- 70) 1976.
- 71) The Amazing Advent p. 89ff.
- 72) In the Jail Notes by Timothy Leary, 1970 p. 98f it becomes clear that also Leary went the tantric way.
- 73) See his Be Here Now, 1971. Doing your Own Being, 1973. Grist for the Mill, 1976.
- 74) See Rudi, Spiritual Cannibalism, 1978, written after the early death of Rudi.

- 75) See his The Knee of Listening, 1972, The Method of the Siddhas, 1973, and Garbage and Goddess, 1974.
- 76) See his From Sex to Super-Consciousness, 1973. Hu-meditation og kosmisk orgasme, 1975. Tantra, Spirituality and Sex, 1976, The Book of Secrets, 1976, and Aubrey Menen: The Space within the Heart in the Mystics, 1974 p. 201-214.
- 77) From Sex to Super-Consciousness, 1973 p. 161.
- 78) Idem p. 180. see p. 730-743 in Handbuch Religiöse Gemeinschaften, 1977.
- 79) Shrii Prabhat Ranjana Sarkar: The Human Society, year of publ. unknown. And Shrii Shrii Anandamurti: The Great Universe, Discourses on Society, 1973.
- 80) G. K. Mookerjee. Subhas Chandra Bose. Builders of Modern India, 1975.
S. Ghose: Subhas from a new Perspective, 1973.
- 81) "Ananda Marga (AM)", 1978 p. 707-729 in Handbuch Religiöse Gemeinschaften, 1978. The Repression of Ananda Marga in India, prepared by the P.R. Sarkar International Defence Committee.
- 82) Ranganath Ramchandra Diwakar in his Mahayogi Sri Aurobindo, 1976 p. 111 and 133.
- 83) Idem p. 111. He had some help also, learning pranayama from "one Devhar, an engineer in Baroda, who was a disciple of Swami Brahmananda of Chandod."
- 84) The Veda-The Upanishads-The Tantra, 1973 p. 28.
His attitude to mantra-yoga see Prayer and Mantra, 1973.
- 85) Yoga, 1973 p. 14. His public presentation of the integral yoga is well summarized in A Practical Guide to the Integral Yoga, Extracts compiled from the writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, 1955.
- 86) Diwakar p. 236.
- 87) Idem.
- 88) Idem p. 113.
- 89) Idem p. 179. Indirectly p. 164.
- 90) Idem p. 175.
- 91) Diwakar p. 123.
- 92) Bhakta Lele at this junction of the development warned Aurobindo that it was not the divine but the devil that had got hold of him, but Aurobindo took that consequence of the warning that he sacked his teacher, idem p. 136.
- 93) Diwakar, p. 144.
- 94) Idem p. 154.

- 95) Idem p. 157.
- 96) Idem p. 164.
- 97) Idem p. 165 and Supermind, 1973.
- 98) K.D. Sethna: The Mother, Past-Present-Future, 1977 p. 11.
See also K.D. Sethna: The Passing of Sri Aurobindo, 1951.
- 99) K.D. Sethna, 1977 p. 137, who also tells a story with direct occult connotations, a story which is given an importance of universal nature: "The total earnest of the Godlike future was revealed on November 26th, the Immortality Day."
- 100) Diwakar p. 167.
- 101) Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Yoga, 1973 p. 12f.
- 102) See Eva Ollson: The Philosophy of Sri Aurobindo in the Light of the Gospel, 1959.
- 103) See e.g. his pamphlet The Mother, 1974 p. 28f, 37f, 40f, 44f, 48f, in which she is described as Maheswari, Mahakali, Mahalaksmi, Mahasaraswati.
- 104) The Veda, The Upanishads and The Tantra, 1973 p. 24ff.
- 105) The Veda, The Upanishads, The Tantra, 1973, p. 31.
- 106) Eva Ollson, 1959 p. 57. This probably means that the direct sexual exercises are left out of his system.
- 107) Eva Ollson, 1959 p. 57. Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Yoga, 1973 p. 12ff.
- 108) K.D. Sethna, 1977 p. 11.
- 109) From 1920 she was always with him in Pondicherry.
- 110) K.D. Sethna, 1977 p. 89.
- 111) Idem p. 143.
- 112) See Sri Aurobindo and The Mother on Occultism, 1971.
Sri Aurobindo and his Ashram, 1975 p. 48.
- 113) The Message of Sri Aurobindo, The Ashram and Auroville, 1975.
- 114) His kundalini type of teaching is clearly expressed e.g. in Thoughts of a Sakta, 1965 p. 17f, Kundalini Yoga mit ausführlicher Erläuterung der Chakras, 1966, Gems from the Tantras, 1969, (a series of books), Lights on the Tantra, 1971 p. 44f, "The Secret Ritual", Kundalini Yoga, A Brief Study of Sir John Woodroffe's "The Serpent Power", 1971, Bases of Tantra Sadhana, 1972, Studies in the Tantras and the Veda, 1973.

- 115) 1971 p. 44ff.
- 116) p. 45f.
- 117) p. 50.
- 118) See his Kundalini: The Mother-Power, 1974.
- 119) E. Dragemark: The Way to Maharishi's Himalayas, 1972 p. 39, 43. See Handbuch Religiöse Gemeinschaften, 1978 p. 591-608.
- 120) Idem p. 255f. - The Shankaracharya with whom MMY was associated was Brahmananda Saraswati (1868-1953)
- 121) About Muktananda see later. The dialogue is found in Muktananda's magazine The Siddha Path No 15, Oct.-Nov. 1976, p. 4ff.
- 122) Idem p. 6.
- 123) See New Religious Movements Up-Date, Vol.III, issue 3/4, Dec. 1979 and Vol.IV, issue 1/2, May 1980.
- 124) The ritual and the list of mantras are published in R.D. Scott: Transcendental Misconceptions, 1978, in which the systematic deception of TM is described by a former TM teacher. The religious nature of TM is definitely stated by the court case in New Jersey in Oct. 1977, reported in the book TM in Court, 1978.
- 125) The report was given on the 17th of August 1978.
- 126) p. 2-13 in the Penguin edition.
- 127) Jyotirmayananda: Meditate the Tantric Yoga Way, 1973 p. 38.
- 128) The Science of Being and Art of Living, 1966 p. 300ff.
- 129) See for instance his The Relaxation Response, 1975.
- 130) The speech was given on the 12th of January 1975.
- 131) Chaitanya lived at the time of Luther, and his Goswamis were the orthodox theologians who translated his message of reform back into the system again.
- 132) J. Stillson Judah: Hare Krishna and the Counterculture, 1974 p. 41.
About the background of the Gaudiya Mission see "Reforms in Ancient Branches of Hinduism, Vaishavaism" p. 57 in Religious Movements in Modern Bengal, 1965.
- 133) In an article "Tantra, Can Sex be Yoga?" the tantric nature of ISKCON is described, see Back to Godhead, Vol 13, No 7, 1978 p. 25ff.
- 134) Idem p. 26. See New Religious Movements Up-Date, Vol. IV, issue 3, 1980.

- 135) p. 26. This new information gives an interesting comment to the understanding of the kundalini system.
- 136) p. 35.
- 137) In the publication Back to Godhead a number of articles tells about this attitude to life.
See Handbuch Religiöse Gemeinschaften, 1978 p. 627-648.

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