

Arunachala Śiva !

The Trishula Sadhana

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Khecari Devi Ashramam – Igreja Corazaõ de Jesus Christo

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Translated by Yamini (May 2019)

Arunachala is a magic place: this small mountain dominating the city of Tiruvanamalai in the Tamil Nadu, south of India, is considered as Śiva¹ himself, a large *lingam*.

It is at the foot of this mountain that has been built the *Annamalaiyar* temple, one of the biggest *Śivaite* temple in the south of India, possibly during the 7th century. That is why this place hosts millions and millions of pilgrims since many centuries. In between the contemporary one of the most famous is Ramana Maharshi. He was attracted in very young age by the place and remained the whole of his life in this location, and his presence is still inhabiting and feeding his *Ashram*. Another worth mentioning is Yogi Ramsuratkumar and his large quantity of *siddhis*: one example is having spent the last 40 years of his life without washing himself! Henri Le Saux, a christian mystic monk known as well under the name of Swami Abhishktananda² recognized in this mountain Jesus Christ's profile.

I met in Arunachala a lot of people that were called to come by this place; many Indians coming from different regions as well as a lot of foreigners: americans, asians, europeans...

Myself as well was blessed by being called by *Arunachala Śiva*...

I had seen once Ramana's picture shown to me by a friend, but it didn't keep my attention, one more Indian Saint... Summer 2017 during a yoga retreat in Charente the image of Ramana invites itself into my mind from the first day, and continue to manifest regularly. During a discussion I find out that one of the participants in the retreat is one of Ramana's disciples. That she returns in India every year at the feet of her Master. I

¹The Divine being present everywhere is also naturally present in the mountain. However this mountain possess something special as it will be discussed in this article, and that many persons had the possibility to witness.

²The one whose blessedness is Christ.

understand that she is channeling Sri Baghavan presence³.

Just in time we have a planned family trip to India of several months arriving at Chennai, my wife desiring to visit Auroville since a long time. I realise that Arunachala is just at 100 km from Auroville and that it will be easy to honour the call.

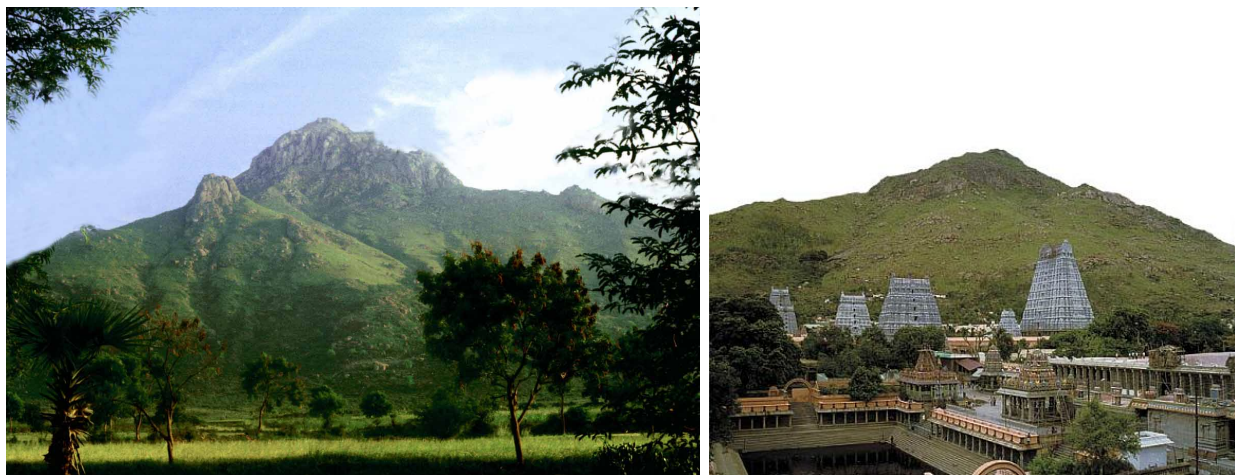


Fig. 1.— Arunachala. *Left:* The mountain is green thanks to the rainy season. *Right:* Seen from *Annamalaiyar* temple.

”Arunachala Mountain is Arunachala Himself”

Since Arunachala mountain is believed to be *Śiva* himself, devotees turn around the mountain, in particular once a month during full moon. It is called *girivalam*: *giri* means mountain and *valam* turning around. The walk is around 15 km. I join a Tamil group of pilgrims for a first *girivalam* in November. One of the devotees is the governess of a lady we had met in Auroville. That *Śiva* devotee comes and goes every month spending a part of the night walking and going back to Auroville in time to see her family and be at work. At the start of the pilgrimage we are nearly running with quick pauses in several temples along the way. Very fast there is a lot of people in these holy places in India. I try not to lose the sight of the small group I started with. I had planned to remain a bit longer and not going back with the group. Our guide when leaving advised me to “be careful”. That piece

³Sri Baghavan is one of the names of Ramana Maharshi. I don’t pretend that he needed that disciple to call me. However I had several experiences of that nature while practicing together with or guided by sincere *sadhakas*, I could feel the presence of their Masters.

of advice is not worrying me a lot but I'm not very relaxed as well at the idea of spending the whole night alone in Indian streets. I decide to be prudent.

So there I am in the centre of Tiruvanamalai, at 2 am. Quite tired I sit a moment on the sidewalk looking at the flow of pilgrims. Very soon I realise that the people passing by are observing me, some point their index at me. Not feeling very comfortable about that I cautiously watch them in the eyes and realise that they are friendly and smiling. It is the first time that I'm in a pilgrimage place and I am not aware that a yogi has his own place in such a context⁴. This is one of the teachings I will get in Arunachala. After a while I get a tuk-tuk to take me to Ramana's *ashram*, still closed at this time. In front of the *ashram* there is a temple also closed where some elders sit or lay down. I show them my intention to open my small rug and they welcome me. So I sit for one hour waiting the *ashram* to open... A child with his father is giving me a bag of cookies; I wonder which could be the motivation of such a gift... the elders seem much more needy than myself. I accept them before giving them to a beggar.

The *ashram* opens around 4/5 am; I greet the guardians that showed me in and enter in the *ashram*. Very soon the doors leading to Ramana's *samadhi* open up. I enter and see a lot of Ramana's portraits on the walls, his gaze is everywhere; I start to feel very weird, unsteady; my state of consciousness is modifying. I walk towards the *samadhi*. At the very moment I touch with my hand the barrier surrounding the *samadhi*, my body starts to tremble, in a short time the trembling transforms into convulsions; I kneel on the marble floor, tears flow down my cheeks and I feel totally shaken up: a detonating cocktail, a mix of a powerful grace descent and a rush of emotional catharsis; a kind of deep cleaning as well as a deep mending and a powerful spiritual opening... The room is nearly empty at that time and the few pilgrims don't care about me; I can let myself live peacefully what I have to live. I ignore how long I remain on the floor in front of the *samadhi*. I've just received the *darshan* of Sri Bhagavan...

"Everything just needs to be put at the feet of the guru."

The eve of my leaving to Arunachala, while I was swinging with my son an *evidence* suddenly appeared (in English) in my mind: everything just need to be put at the feet of

⁴It was during the first Indian trip that lasted several months (I had already spent two weeks in Rishikesh two years earlier). As a matter of fact I do not know India at all when I do my first *girivalam*, even if some of the yogic culture has already imposed itself on me. I was born in Afghanistan during the curfew that Russians were imposing on the country. My parents took refuge between India and Pakistan. I will reach France at 10 month of age, a time of my life that has no conscientious memories.



Fig. 2.— *Left: Ramana Maharshi. Right: His samadhi.*

the *guru*. The contact is very strong and unexpected since I don't have any physical *guru* yet. However it becomes an evidence that integrates in me that evening. I feel and perceive at the deepest of myself for the first time a surrender of everything at the feet of the *guru*.

Beyond the physical master it is a freeing, initiating and saving principle that I come in contact with. A quite clear vision enters my mind representing that evidence: I see a physical male form rather old, very thin with top knot *jatas* on his head, which is prostrating himself in front of something that I'm not seeing. This vision has not manifested yet any precise meaning to this day. However seen the clarity and the taste of that vision⁵ I'm inclined to correspond to a past life... could be my past life *guru* or myself in a previous incarnation?

"In reality the guru is an inner one and unless we discover our inner guru nothing can be accomplished."⁶

"God and our master are present in each of us. But at the start of a sadhana an external master is of crucial importance. At a certain stage we acquire the ability to grasp the

⁵With the time I learn to distinguish in between the "yogic visions", the "important ones" from the ones reflecting my projections and delusions of all kinds.

⁶Sri Anandamayi Ma.

essential principles inherent to everything and therefore the capability to progress by our means. My children, when the conscience of the target appears, the inner guru wakes up.

Learn to think of all beings as the living form of the Master and serve them in consequence.⁷”

What is the *guru*? I do not pretend to have the answer to this question. This word has a rather negative connotation in the western culture, thing quite understandable seen the scandals that have touched several *gurus*... In india the word *guru* has at times the generic meaning of “teacher, professor”. In this case it is someone having a knowledge and transmitting it.

Often we think to a physical person, an outer guide. We can consider the *guru* as a transformative principle, as an initiator that is acting from inside. This principle can pass, being catalysed or not by a physical person. An apprenticeship, one consciousness rising that integrate itself: *guru* is acting⁸. At times the message is difficult to understand, to decode as it could be in the case of an accident or a disease. *Guru* is everywhere in each of us and constantly active; in each and every experience and met especially in the difficult moments. In any interactions, positive or negative, pleasant or unpleasant *guru* is always acting.

It is advisable to serve and cherish *guru*. An example: if I’m washing dishes for the family, friends or unknown people it is convenient to do it with the same devotion as if I was preparing the cloth to be worn by Divinities in a temple. Those people *are* Divinities. In this case that dish washing becomes an act of yoga, maybe more powerful than a series of complicated *asanas* and exigent *pranayamas*. Getting dressed with those dresses their divine nature is going to be stimulated; those dresses are going to take part in revealing them their divine nature... I’m cooking with the same devotion that if I was cooking for Sri Baghavan himself. As a matter of fact it is well to Sri Baghavan that that meal is intended to ! How could it be otherwise ? Those persons for whom I cook are they not divine manifestations ? any one of them is a pure emanation of the source, all of them ARE *guruji*...

The relation with *guru* is framed by a devotional dynamic of *bhakti*. The faith in the principle must be absolute to the point of blindness. I find myself thinking that the more I abandon myself with sincerity to this principle the more the teachings and the grace invite themselves in my *sadhana*.

Sincere gratitude to Ramana for his *darshan*... Ramana *Satguru*...

⁷Amritanandamayi Devi.

⁸I use the word *guru* rather than *the guru* to underline the fact that it is an active principle beyond the physical person.

I spend the whole morning in the *ashram* soaked into pure beatitude, then I take the small walk to the caves where Ramana had been meditating. A bit of tourism and then I go back to my family at Auroville; we remain there a few more days before returning to Arunachala to spend a whole month there.

”An idol consecrated by an authentic spiritual Master that has achieved the Union with the divine possess a very peculiar power.”⁹

”If the cult can look like an idolatry directed towards objects, in reality its final target is the pure subjectivity.”¹⁰

Next room from the Ramana *samadhi*’s one is a temple at the centre of which can be found his mother’s *samadhi*. Several representations of divinities are to be found in this room. Black magnificent sculptures. Every morning before sunrise those divinities are washed, dressed, decorated with flowers, sandal paste and cumcum. Twice a week the statue of Durga is washed with milk; when the milk is flowing all seem to happen as if Durga was becoming alive and was giving a *darshan*. Several times during my stay in this temple and later also in other temples I can feel and contact the divine presence through the idols, those pieces of stone consecrated by some Saints, nourished by the devotion of unending devotees become a trampoline towards the Divine dimension, which reconnect us to the self, the form that leads us to non form...

Beyond that “trampoline” dimension I observe a sharing and exchanging with the idols: I feel¹¹ a continual *prana* circulation connecting my spine with the vertical axes of the idols. At times the direction of the circulation changes. I had already felt that with some physical persons. Later on during the trip to Angkor Wat and at Varanasi such a circulation of *prana* activates when I stand in front of the idols, or of statues. Since then this dynamic is present, I’ve observed such circulations becoming active between myself and another physical body, a place, a trident, a crystal, an altar... Trusting *prana*, usually I let myself go to the natural movement I’m observing.

⁹Sri Amritanandamayi Devi.

¹⁰B. Bhattacharya, *World of Tantra*.

¹¹I have a specially developed *prana*’s sensitivity, it has been that special sensitivity to *prana* inside my body that brought me to yoga actually. In between the 5 senses are the ones of sight and touch that are intervening, which means that I see (even with closed eyes, I refer to the view as an interior sense) and touch (without necessarily using my physical hands) *prana*. I’m discussing this subject in my booklet on *Khecari Mudra*, to be found on khecaridevi.com and academia.edu.



Fig. 3.— Arunachala during *Maha Deepam*. On each image, *Śiva* & *Śakti*, Tamil style.

The *girivalam* pilgrimage is at its maximum during *Maha Deepam*. The full moon night is lit a giant fire on top of the mountain, and during the next 9 nights, huge quantities of *ghee* are burnt to keep that fire alive. In 2017 we had the blessing to be there at that time of the year, and to actively participate to all that. The number of pilgrims is valued to several millions. Two or three millions of devotees come to walk around the mountain during 48 hrs. I'm not very fond of crowds, but in such an ambience of devotion and celebration is different, I feel comfortable, a good familial ambience... Some pilgrims arrived in advance and tents and camps have been set up under a pouring rain. The weather forecast is very bad, how could they lit the fire on top of the mountain? Walking in the rain, why not? I talk about the weather with an Arunachala's friend and he answer me: *Do not worry the Lord will make it perfect!*, his eyes shining with devotion and his head balancing in the Tamil's way. The morning of the first day of celebration the rain stops, clouds open up and the crowds unite for a start. I do *girivalam* with my family during the afternoon, it will take nearly 6 hrs since some places like the arriving to the grand temple of Tiruvannamalai are saturated with people. My children are proud and happy to have achieved such a walk, a good family moment.

"It is advised to plant trishul¹² with awareness and devotion, to be honouring and celebrating Śiva. That simple act is a powerful sadhana."

Later on that night , alone, in the company of *Maheśvari*¹³, I direct myself to the foot

¹²Trident in sanscrit. *Trishuladhara*, the trident carrier, is one of *Śiva*'s name.

¹³A friend had offered me some hemp pills called *Maheśvari*. I took one in the evening before leaving

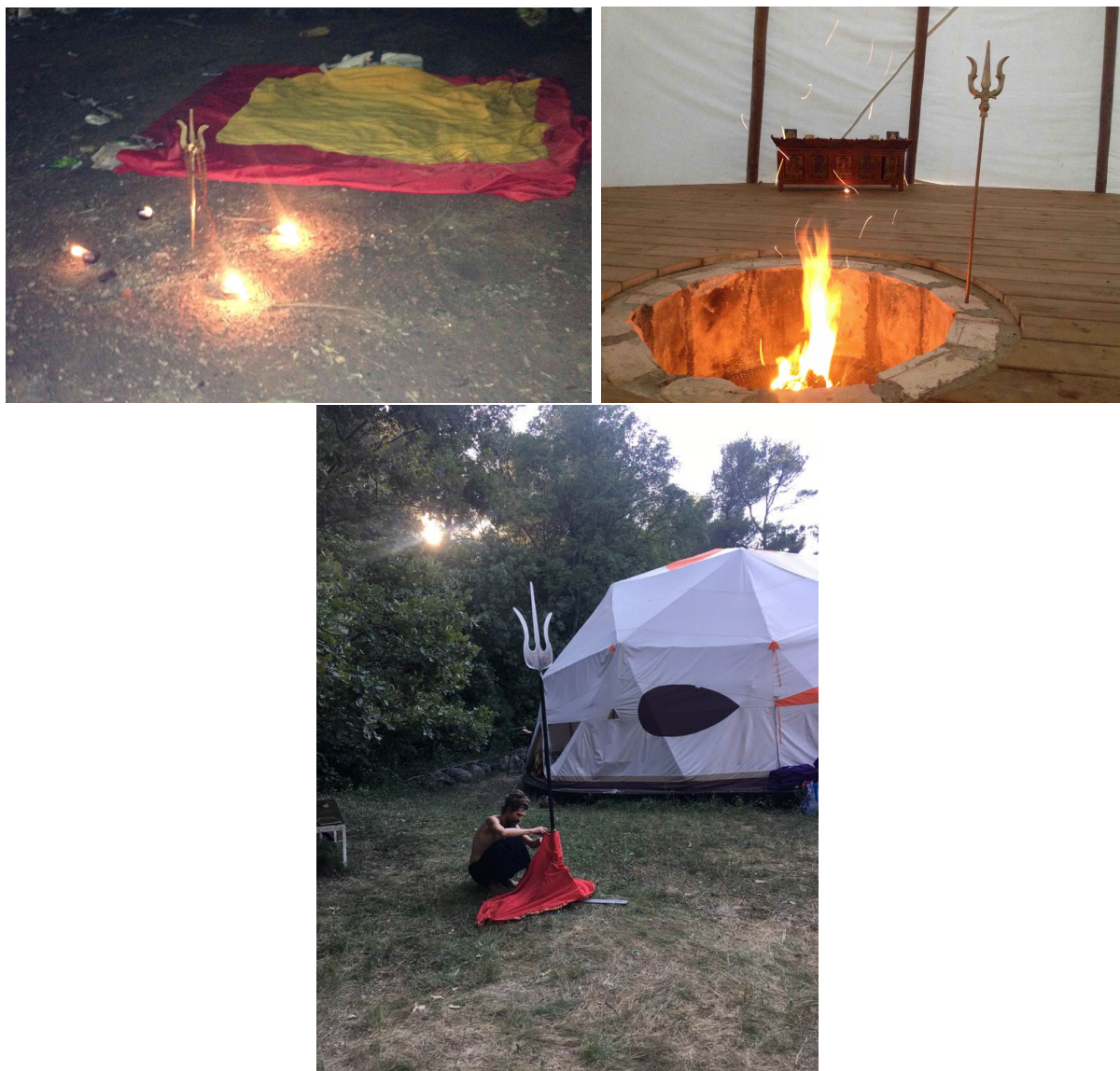


Fig. 4.— *trishul* planting. *Top Left:* at Arunachala during *Maha Deepam*. *Top Right:* at Khecari Devi *ashram*, under the tipi. *Bottom:* at Layama yoga festival.

of the mountain. I walk for a time then I enter a temple, then a second... I feel a bit out of focus, I'm looking for my place inside what is going on. I know that that place exist and

for an immersion. Usually is called *bhang* in India. The use is forbidden, but is tolerated for spiritual and celebration rituals. It is called *Śiva's* grass or *Kali* weed. A powerful mistress plant with a double cut like all powerful things.

that is calling me... *Maheśvari* takes more and more room inside my body; she is welcome! Some reticences, some fears connected to what I'm supposed to do invite themselves into my mind: they are welcome as well!

That's it, my sight stops on a small space with grass on the side of the tarmac road where devotees walk, beside a temple. It is there that I open my mat and with consciousness, devotion and simplicity I plant *trishul* (Fig. 4).

In those days I had the habit to walk around with a ~ 20 cm bronze *trishul* planted in my jatas¹⁴. That is the *trishul* I plant in front of my mat. I sit in a comfortable position and watch the people passing by. I profit to estimate the flux of pilgrims: in a given time I evaluate the quantity of people passing by; I multiply for 48 hrs and the million is easily overcome. These calculations become soon too erudite for a brain drunk on *Maheśvari*... Now the flame on top of the mountain has been lit, the vibration of the place is strong, very strong, *trishul* is transfigured, a real cosmic antenna, generating an energy vortex. That night I'm far from understanding the implications of such a simple act, *planting a trident*. An implication difficult to verbalise. Taking a bit of distance I realise that all happened as if there had been an injunction: *plant trishul and take a sit*.

Planting *trishul* in a holy and animated place full of hindu pilgrims takes a special meaning: I feel perfectly at my place, being part of the landscape. I realise that as a yogi planting *trishul* is a must; that action nourishes me, I become also aware that the earth needs yogis on her ground, an exchange takes place. It is a reconnection, I feel I've been planting *trishul* since always. That activity has a right feeling, an evidence, a dharmic¹⁵ one, it is self sufficient. Once the planting is done what else remains to be done? In waves, pilgrims groups come to visit this ephemeral temple, they ask me a benediction and as a matter of fact they show me how to do it! Coins and small cash start to cover my mat. With a few rupees I go to buy some oil lamps to a neighbour; fire is on, pilgrims provide fuel tablets, so the fire is on and at time too many tablets make it at risk. Till I had to move my mat that was starting to be on fire¹⁶! Donations are not to be refused, I take them and share them later with beggars.

In short: a *trishul*, a fire, a yogi; that is sufficient to establish the conditions to experience

¹⁴*Jata* means dreadlocks; *Jatadhara* is one of *Śiva*'s names. See the article "*The Pilous System, a Yogic Tool*", 2018, available on kecharidevi.com and academia.edu.

¹⁵In harmony with the Universe laws.

¹⁶During this trip I had read on Kerala local newspaper some recommendations done to pilgrims not to light fires inside trains while they do their *pujas* for security reasons!

the Divine. I am sensitive to the minimalist, purified trend of this *sadhana*. It is not implying a lot of things but at the same time there is nothing else to add, all is in place; the "marrow essence" has been drawn. This is a great contrast with the complexity and sophistication of the Vedic rituals which, by the way, I respect greatly. *Pujas* usually imply a great number of ingredients and materials; how many years of study are necessary to undertake a *lingam puja* in the proper way? At least as much as for a PhD! If I push further the reasoning I realise that also the *trishul* could be eliminated, "forgotten" as all the rest... It would remain just a naked yogi sitting on the floor: why not?

I imagine that the orthodox *brahmans* may not agree with me: what I like most about hinduism is the freedom of spiritual expression that I had the opportunity to experiment, beyond the different cultures, the different skin colours, the different spoken languages. Who cares about the "form"? If there is sincerity, *bhakti*, all is simplified, everything becomes possible.

Here is an example of something pointing to this freedom: In the big Tiruvanamalai temple, in the room where Ramana achieved his deep samadhi, so deep that he was eaten by insects. In the room there is a *lingam*, not very original indeed, I'm in there with my older son, the brahmin in charge of applying the ash to devotees is not there, a small group of pilgrims turns towards me and ask me to replace the brahmin. I take some ash with my index finger but they show me to use the ring finger! I pass the ash on their foreheads and, *namaste*, they continue their visit of the temple.

"Hash is the material part of light.

*To cover oneself with it means to dress oneself with stars.*¹⁷"

Ashes are very present in hinduism. It is used as a mystical make up, in particular on the forehead. Its character is highly symbolic: once the physical body will be burned what will remain? Ashes... To utilise the ash is a remainder of our impermanence, fragility, temporariness. A category of *sadhus*, the *Nagas*, cover all their body in ashes twice a day, and they do not use any other kind of dress both in winter and summer, they say they "dress with light"¹⁸. To prepare the ashes is not that simple it demands time and skills: in short is itself a *sadhana*. Ashes come from *yagna*, from *dhuni*, that is holy fire. The fire at times is supposed to last for very long periods, often kept on dried cow excrement. That fire testify of the *sadhana*, the *puja*, the celebration. It becomes charged with those sacred vibrations. The ashes produced under those circumstances are precious.

¹⁷*Naga, the Eternal Yogi*, Journeyman Pictures.

¹⁸*Digambara*, the one dressed with the cosmos, is one of the names of Lord *Śiva*.

Often blessings are given by imposing such ashes on the forehead of people. However is not necessary for a *sadhaka* to use ash to give blessings. Blessings are automatically produces by the *sadhaka*'s practice when his/her engagement is sincere and authentic. Again no physical contact is necessary. Even an hermit yogi, isolated by everyone, functions like a transmitter giving informations to others who will collect those informations beyond space and time. It is thanks to this dynamic that some teachings can be "hidden" and later on "recovered" by others granting this way the immortal and intemporal nature of the teachings and associated lineages. This way the permanence of the teachings is assured even if the actual texts might be lost or destroyed. As a matter of fact, regularly men and women, heir of those teachings, come back to earth to embody those traditions, like *witnesses*, *messages*, the tradition is brought back and the transmission achieved. This mechanic is constantly at work and allow the tradition to pass on. *Śiva* remembers himself. In Tibetan yoga such discoverer are called *Tertön*, specialised in re-discovering such teachings, at times as hidden texts, at times in an intuitive framework that come to settle into their bodies.

Actually is a real blessing that some people dedicate the whole of their lives¹⁹ exclusively to *sadhana*, *tapasya*, to spiritual practice. The yogi or yogini that retire from the world, the one remaining all his life with an arm stretched over his head, the one taking care of a temple, the one helping the destitute, have a capital importance for humanity and its development. The example of their austerity, their renunciation, their commitment diffuse and inspire.

*"Decorated by the panache of the four unlimited virtues,
Keeping at the top the arrow of a refined spirit,
He places it in the stretched bow of the spiritual wisdom.
And fixing the arrow in the wisdom's path and in the right Method,
He throws in the centre of the infinite communion,
And continuing to throw all the arrows fall in all of the Nations.
They reach those that are full of faith,
And they kill all forms of egoism.
This way all enemies are killed, all the bad passions;*

¹⁹I use lives plural since *sadhanas* are a long term investissment, that is beyond this incarnation. I think is better to start the practice knowing that the fruits will be collected not only during this life but also during next lives. I notice that realising this my *sadhana* takes a special flavour: more strength and assurance. The fact that is no longer limited to this unique small vehicle is reassuring to me. This is pushing me not to identify and hold on to this fleeting form and to get closer to that immortality that texts are pointing at. In the *Khecarividya* (I:7): *Carrying out the practice, which has been obtained by means of correct emotional attitude, after many lives the yogin attain melaka, O Goddess, sometime in a later life.*

*And all our brothers are protected.*²⁰

I love to share ashes, to smear it over my body, and more precisely on my forehead and on those of other people. Am I actually giving "blessings" through those gestures? What does it mean? I do not have clear answers to this question. Certainly it is a way to share with others the fruits of my *sadhana*. Once I did experiment, during a ritual in which the *pranic kite*²¹ took residence inside my body, a parallel between "giving a blessing to someone" and to "prostern myself in front of the same person". The way I see it is that there is no difference between me giving the blessing to someone and prostrating myself at their feet since they are a Divine manifestation. That action done in full consciousness allows kindling the Divine in the person receiving the ashes as well as in the person giving it. The seeming hierarchy is deleted, court circuited and the exchange can be horizontal.

Let's go back to Tamil Nadu. I will have a new occasion to plant trishul at the feet of Arunachala a few months later during a full moon *girivalam*. On the other hand is during a non full moon *girivalam* that I will experiment the *trident walk*. If the pilgrims rush at the full moon, *girivalam* is not limited to full moon nights. I've been doing the practice without

²⁰Life of Jetsün Milarepa. Translated from Tibetan by Lama Kazi Dawa-Samdub. Edited par Evans-Wentz. The editor comments as it follows: *In this context Milarepa justify the ascetic seclusion from the world. The yogi, thanks to his strength and his thoughts, sending silent, invisible arrows to all nations the goodness and virtues are vivified in the whole world and the road leading to the Olympus is protected and remains open.* Again in the introduction of the book Evans Wentz writes: *Milarepa like one of those who gained the right to be in the circle of the enlightened ones is telling us in one of his chants (the one that is partly reproduced here), how himself "great yogi" projects like arrows inside the world his thoughts charged of Grace and spiritual power, and how those thoughts acts on those that are potential recipient, and how they bring blessing in the hearts of men. In the same way that powerful electric stations, charged virtually of great thoughts, the Initiated ones are diffusing on earth that vital spirituality that only make possible human evolution.* Concerning the last verse quoted earlier on Evans Wents points out: *It is the whole beings of the six lokas of samsara. Therefore not only the saint is the most indispensable of the human society, but the field of his activity is the whole of the universe.*

²¹Spring 2018 during Yogastival (not to mistake with yoga festival!), the energy level was so high that I spent more than one hour and a half with my arms extended over my head with the palms turned towards the sky to play the *pranic kite*. Actually it all happened as though my arms were drawn towards the sky, playing a sort of dance as if they were attached to the moments of a kite. What was the equivalent of the wind was the ritual's energy, the participants, the drums, the mantras that permitted my slender arms to keep on the air without effort. My tongue was clinging to the sella turcica in *khecari*. It had a lot to do with the achievement of this *asana*. See the paper "*Kechari Mudra, Beyond the Pituitary*", 2019, currently being translated in english. In the 18th century, Puran Puri kept both his arms in the air during the whole of his life. He travelled in Asia, Arabia and Russia 30 years of his life (source: *Hatha Yoga Project*, <https://erccomics.com/comics/hathayoga/4>).

full moon and I've been meeting other people doing the same. An ashed *sadhu* (they are rarer in southern india than in the north) who is living at the feet of the mountain is doing the tour every day at the same time. In short any time of the day or of the night someone is turning around the mountain, bare feet, so that that dynamic never stops, a constant movement participating to the energy vortex that some call *Arunchala Śiva*.

That evening, together with Jee, a friend living in Arunachala and that let me profit of his knowledge of the place, we walk around the mountain. The air is "cool" therefore I profit to open the *jatas*. I therefore take in my hand the *trishul*, the stick between the thumb and the middle finger. That right hand is doing a movement back and forth following the walking rhythm. At a given moment I realise that I'm making the stick turning in between my fingers, *trishul* at moments goes on the right and then on the left. When my arm is in front *trishul* goes on the right, when on the back *trishul* goes on the left. I let it happen and follow the movement. Then at some point I realise that I am walking quite fast and that I do not feel anymore at all my legs, all happens as though *trishul* was the one giving the necessary energy for walking and that I could walk this very fast way without getting tired for a very long time. The *trishul* movement makes me think of the rotor of a ship permitting it to advance. I continue without giving any conscious effort.

Since then I plant *trishul* in France during festivals, yoga meetings, but also in crowded city centres. I tame this *sadhana*. At times this is welcomed by the passers by and other times not at all. It is not only India that needs yogis is the whole planet. The difference is that in India the yogi has his place in society and *trishul* planting can be perceived as a full time activity supported by the rest of society (at least in pilgrimage places). In France is not so obvious, but it doesn't matter when a *sadhana* invites itself it is better to honour it with enthusiasm and devotion. During a discussion with a friend did come out the analogy between planting tridents into the earth and giving acupuncture remedies where pins are planted in the human body. *Trishul* planting for the health of the planet? Let us talk about it to the ecologists!

I don't know exactly when my affinity with *trishul* has become conscious. In the same line of other yogic activities that I'm developing I think that it happened progressively with some significant jumping here and there. During the winter 2015/16 I had bought a small trident on a pedestal in Haridvar, nothing more. It was during the 2017 spring, while I was giving a talk about *Khecari Mudra* in a yoga school, that a friend gave me a *trishul* coming from Varanasi without a pedestal. I didn't know where to put it so he told me to put it inside my *jatas*. So I did, and it was at that time that I started to stick to *trishul*. Next summer, in a very natural way I started to build a *trishul* profiting of the skills of a cousin (Fig. 5). Since then other projects of *trishul* creations are developing, different models, sizes, materials...

Even if those projects are strictly personals and I'm not doing any kind of proselytism, I could observe that my devotion and my commitment for that attribute of the Lord seem to be contagious, so much so that I start to conceive some production of *trishuls* with the aim of diffusion to respond to the demand of several yogis and yoginis.

With which target in mind? Only to celebrate and honour *Śiva*. Is there any more meaningful activity than this one? The devotional *Bhakti* view is essential in my *sadhana* and it is a real blessing; is there a more sure, rapid and extatic path than this one?

The great yoga cannot be perfected without my worship, even by the yogin who, while wandering through the three worlds, is constantly devoted to the practice and who practises the vidya obtained from the mouth of his guru, with his mind always focussed on Khecarimelaka and such like.

For those bound souls caught in bondage who do not have my grace and who are intent on scorning me, yoga is a source only of suffering. For him who abandons my worship, which I, the all-knowing Śiva, have taught, even if he constantly practises yoga, yoga leads to destruction.

The yogin should worship the universal Śiva with devotion.

All the gods and goddesses are pleased by him whose mind is focussed on me alone.

Therefore the yogin should worship me and practise the yoga of Khecarī with my grace.

Otherwise there will be only trouble and no siddhi even in ten million births.

For him who is keen on worshipping me and whose mind is intent on me alone all mantras and yogas are successful, O supreme Goddess.

Therefore, to advance in all types of yoga, the yogin should worship me, O Goddess, and, delighting in Khecarī, he should practise her yoga.²²

The *Yantra* of the Kashmir's school *Trika* entails a trident in its centre (Fig. 6), each of its heads represents a certain energy, a specific Goddess. Being myself a *Khecara* I'm sensible to the link existing between *Khecarī mudra* and *trishul*... In *Hata Yoga Khecarī* is an "essential *mudra*²³" implying the freeing of the tongue from its frenum and the stretching

²²*Khecarividya*, Patala III, 58-65, praise of *Khecarī* and devotion to *Śiva*. Critical edition and translation by James Mallinson, 2007, Routledge and Indica editions. According to James Mallinson, this quotation appears in the more recent manuscripts of the *Khecarividya* and replace a passage in which was described the use of alcohol during rituals (like in the *Matsyendrasamhita*). It seems that during the passing of time the manuscripts have lost their "left hand" tantric roots to become more "politically correct". Get drunk on what? Alcohol or devotion? Both!?!

²³Tara Michael, 2016, private communication.



Fig. 5.— *Trishul* building. *Left*: Soldering. *Right*: At *Khecari Devi Ashram*, in the *yantra*'s centre.

of the tongue to be able to go up the nasal passages to reach the point in between the eyebrows²⁴ In kashmir *Śaivism* practices seems to be quite internalised; which means that the practitioners utilise rather visualisations than the physical body.

In france I had met Yogi Matsyendra Nath and we had an exchange about *Khecari mudra*. He told me about Mark Dyczkowski who is living in Varanasi and works on the *Tantraloka* translation in which it is said: "*Of all mudras the most important is Khecari since its essence is Divine.*" I spent five weeks in Varanasi during *Śivaratri* 2018, a real blessing for my *sadhana*, in particular about my practice of *Khecari mudra*²⁵. I had the occasion to visit M. Dyczkowski who, with a little group of students was proposing to evoke *Khecari mudra* as taught in the *Tantraloka*. I was nicely surprised to find out that *Khecari mudra* had nothing to do with the tongue! It is first of all a *seal* (*mudra* can be translated as seal), the seal of a specific Goddess, *Khecari*. *Khecari* corresponds to a special flavour of the *Śakti*, the one free to fly in the inner space to be able to unite with her cosmic lover...

²⁴See my booklet about *Khecari mudra*.

²⁵See the paper "*Kechari Mudra, Beyond the Pituitary*", 2019, currently being translated in english.

Clearly the physical *mudra* is a way to achieve that take off.

In kashmir *Śaivism* one is proposed to visualise *trishul* all along the spine (Fig 6). On top of every point of *trishul* one visualises a Goddess.

A similar practice had already invited itself inside my body, the same body that received the physical *mudra* initiation of the same name; the same body inspired by this specific symbol of the Lord, *Trishul*...

While sitting comfortably one can plant *trishul* inside the body. The base of the stick at the base of the spine to be deeply grounded in the earth. From that base I visualise roots that descend and descent till they reach the centre of the earth and they clinch it. Those roots stretch the axis, the spine, towards a downcast position²⁶. I remount through the trident, along the spine, I continue the stretch of the axis utilising the ascending power of *trishul*, the same power echoing the descendent one. Constantly I straighten the top of the skull in relation to the base's position; the three tips of the trident soar towards the sky, catalysing, calling "what is coming from the higher", the Divine Grace, the same one that is constantly flowing without ever running out, always abundant, a perpetual movement... Once I leave the sitting position I can continue visualising a trident along my spine all the time.

²⁶A spine stretches on both direction: the base towards the earth, the top towards the sky. That stretch creates some space between the vertebra and prepare *sushumna nadi* to host the passage of *Śakti*.

