

Kriya Babaji Nagaraj

by Marshall Govindan

In 1946, Paramahansa Yogananda, one of modern India's greatest yogis, revealed in his classic "Autobiography of a Yogi" the existence of a Christ-like saint, an immortal yogi, Mahavatar Babaji. Yogananda related how for centuries, Babaji lived in the Himalayas guiding many spiritual teachers at a distance, usually without their ever knowing about it.

Babaji was a great siddha, one who had overcome ordinary human limitations and who worked silently for the spiritual evolution of all humanity, from behind the scenes. Babaji was revealed to be who, in 1891, taught Lahiri Mahasaya, a powerful series of yogic techniques, known as "Kriya Yoga." Babaji also taught Lahiri's own Christ-like guru, Sri Yukteswar, some thirty years earlier. Yogananda says that he spent 10 years with his guru before Babaji himself appeared to him and directed him to bring the sacred science of Kriya to the West. Yogananda fulfilled this sacred mission from 1920 to 1952, when he attained mahasamadhi.

In the year 203 A.D. a boy born under the same star as Lord Krishna some 3,500 years earlier, was given the name Nagaraj. Nagaraj was born in what is now the seaport of Porto Novo (Parangipettai), in Tamil Nadu, on the eastern coast of India. The name *Nagaraj* means "serpent king" and refers to *kundalini*, our great divine potential power and consciousness. His parents were Nambudri Brahmins who had immigrated there from the Malabar coast on the western side of South India. His father was the priest in the Shiva temple in the village, which is today dedicated to Muruga. At the age of five years, the boy was kidnapped by a trader, a Pathan and taken north to Dacca. He was later released and joined a band of wandering monks and became learned in the sacred religions and philosophies of India. He migrated to Benares and shone as a Sanskrit scholar of great eminence.

Discontent with this early success and destined for a greater end, Nagaraj sailed to the powerful shrine of Kataragama on the southern coast of Sri Lanka. There he met the Siddhar Boganathar and for 18 months, Nagaraj plunged into meditation where his astute intellect analyzed the different philosophical systems threadbare. Drawing inspiration from the great Siddha of Science, Boganathar, he was able to appreciate and understand the full significance of Siddhantha Yoga and Soruba Samadhi and he accepted the challenge of attaining this mystic goal, supreme, samadhi, or cognitive absorption of Lord Muruga.

At the age of 15 and following an inner call, Nagaraj wandered throughout South India and was extremely fortunate to be initiated into the mysteries of Kundalini Yoga by the great Tamil Siddha, Agastya Maharishi at Courtrallam.

Now retiring to a lonely Himalayan cave, he remained absorbed for years in the intensive Yogic sadhana taught to him by Boganathar and Agastya. When he finally emerged eighteen months later, he had surrendered his ego, all the way down to the cells of his

physical body. The divine descended into him. He was a siddha, one who has surrendered to the power and consciousness of the Divine. His body was no longer subject to the ravages of disease or death. Transformed, as a maha siddhas, he dedicated himself to the upliftment of suffering humanity.

The immortal Babaji made his own contributions to the nucleus given him by Sage Agastya, renamed it, “kriya” and has retained his form through the centuries tapping many, speaking to a few and materializing to give darshan to his saintly chosen. For centuries he worked behind the scenes as the source of inspiration and guidance to past Kriya Masters like Adi Shankara, Kabir Das, Lahiri Mahasaya and many others.

Thus He is the climax of the 18 Tamilian Yoga Siddha tradition, which includes Thirumoolar, Ramdevar, Kumbamuni, Konkanavar, Sattamuni, Karoovurar, Sundarnandar, Valmiki, Nandi Devar, Paambati, Boganathar, Maccahmuni, Patanjali, Dhanvanthri, Goraknath, Kudambai, Idaikadar and Kamalamuni.

The rich variety of techniques of Kriya Yoga involves the cultivation of detachment, self-study, and devotion to the Lord, and includes Tantra, the cultivation of kundalini through the use of breathing techniques (pranayama), mantras and devotional practices. During the level one initiation, one learns how to communicate with Babaji in the “Babaji Samayama Kriya,” which involves a deep state of inner communion with the Satguru. Babaji gradually reveals himself to his devotees and disciples, capturing their heart in various types of personal devotional relationships and guides them in their development. His relationship with each of us is unique and according to our individual needs and nature. He is our personal Guru. As our heart expands our communion with Him culminates with the “universal vision of love,” wherein one witnesses Babaji in everything.