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## Siddha Mahayoga FAQ

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*([keutzer@eecs.berkeley.edu](mailto:keutzer@eecs.berkeley.edu))*

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This FAQ gives an overview of Siddha Mahayoga.

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introductory material that is good to read before reading this FAQ.

Two other articles are strongly related:

[Kundalini Yogas FAQ](#)  
[The Siddha Mahayoga Tradition of Swami Shivom Tirth](#)

I remember with gratitude those teachers who by their mere intention, glance, word or touch can accomplish what is otherwise obtained only with great effort and difficulty.

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## What is Kundalini ?

"Kundalini " literally means coiling, like a snake. In the classical literature of hatha Yoga Kundalini is described as a coiled serpent at the base of the spine. The image of coiling, like a spring, conveys the sense of untapped potential energy. Perhaps more meaningfully Kundalini can be described as a great reservoir of creative energy at the base of the spine. It's not useful to sit with our consciousness fixed in our head and think of Kundalini as a foreign force running up and down our spine. Unfortunately the serpent image may serve to accentuate this alien nature of the image. It's more useful to think of Kundalini energy as

the very foundation of our consciousness so when Kundalini moves through the sushumna and through our cakras our consciousness necessarily changes with it.

The concept of Kundalini can also be examined from a strictly psychological perspective. From this perspective Kundalini can be thought of as a rich source of psychic or libidinous energy in our unconscious.

In the classical literature of Kashmir Shaivism Kundalini is described in three different manifestations. The first of these is as the universal energy or *para-Kundalini*. The second of these is as the energizing function of the body-mind complex or *prana-Kundalini*. The third of these is as consciousness or *Shakti-Kundalini* which simultaneously

subsumes and intermediates between these two. Ultimately these three forms are the same but understanding these three different forms will help to understand the different manifestations of Kundalini .

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What does Kundalini have to do with spiritual enlightenment? What is the goal of Kundalini yoga?

First we need a few concepts: In yogic anatomy the sushumna is the central channel and conduit for the Kundalini energy that runs along our spine and up to the crown of our head. Along this

channel are placed additional channel networks called cakras. These cakras are associated with major aspects of our anatomy - for example our throat, heart, solar plexus, and in turn these aspects of our anatomy are related to aspects of our human nature. According to the literature of Kundalini yoga our experience of these centers is limited due to knots which restrict the flow of energy into these centers. Three knots are particularly important. The knot of *Brahma* which restricts the center at the base of the spine. The knot of *Vishnu* which restricts the heart center and the knot of *Rudra* which restricts the center between the eyebrows. These knots form an important framework in yogic thinking and the stages toward enlightenment are articulated in terms of breaking through

these knots in the yogic classic the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* as well as in some of the yoga upanishads. Specifically, four stages of progress are described:

*arambha*,  
*ghata*,  
*parichaya* and  
*nishpatti*.

*Arambha* is associated with breaking the knot of *Brahma* and the awakening of Kundalini. *Ghata* is associated with breaking the knot of *Vishnu* and with internal absorption. *Parichaya* the absorption deepens and in *nishpatti* the knot of *Rudra* is pierced and the Kundalini may ascend to the center at the crown of the head. In this state transcendence is integrated and, according to the yogic literature, the yogi has nothing more to attain.



Putting these elaborate physiological descriptions aside, the goal of Kundalini yoga is the same as the goal of any legitimate spiritual practice: To be liberated from the limited bounds of the self-centered and alienated ego. In Kundalini yoga this is associated with internal manifestations of the Kundalini but the external manifestations should be similar to any other legitimate spiritual practice.

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## So how do I awaken Kundalini ?

Indirectly Kundalini can be awakened by devotion, by selfless service, or by intellectual enquiry.

Broadly speaking there are two radically different direct approaches to awakening Kundalini . One approach requires initiation by a guru and relies upon a technique called Shaktipat, or "descent of Shakti." It is variously called: Siddha Mahayoga,

Kundalini Mahayoga or Sahaja Yoga (Spontaneous Yoga). These approaches are treated in the [Siddha Mahayoga FAQ](#). The other approach uses intentional yogic techniques . The styles using intentional techniques include Mantra Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Laya Yoga or Kriya Yoga. These approaches are treated in the [Kundalini Yogas FAQ](#) .

Fundamentally the approach of Siddha Mahayoga and the Kundalini Yogas are different. In Siddha Mahayoga the guru awakens the Kundalini and after that the core of the practice is the inactive and non-willful surrender to Kundalini . In Kundalini Yogas the will is used to awaken the Kundalini and to guide its progress. Clearly these are different approaches. Nevertheless, elements of the each approach occur in the practices of the other. Siddha

Mahayogins may use asanas, pranayamas and other hatha yoga practices. On the other hand gurus in Kundalini Yoga may give infusions of Shakti to their students to help them at particular points in their practice.

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## What is Shaktipat?

"Shakti" is another word for Kundalini and "pat" means to descend. Shaktipat is a method by which an individual's Kundalini is awakened by the direct intervention of a guru. There are several varieties of Shaktipat depending on the facility of the guru and the receptiveness of the disciple.

It is probably not useful to try to resurrect the nine or more classifications of Shaktipat used in the

classical literature here.  
Practially speaking Shaktipat  
is known by its results: the  
awakening of of the student's  
Kundalini .

There are also a variety  
of mechanisms for conveying  
Shaktipat. These include: by  
glance, by word or mantra, by  
touch or simply by intention.

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How does Shaktipat  
work? If Kundalini  
awakening is so  
important how can  
someone else do it  
for you? How could a  
guru overcome my  
karma?

There is a rich literature  
exploring this point but a

couple analogies may help more. In the classical literature, such as the works of tantric scholar Abhinavagupta, Shaktipat is seen as able to occur when one's positive and negative karmas reach a sort of equilibrium.

Regarding the question as to how a guru is able to overcome the karma of a disciple, the Indian scholar Abhinavagupta argues that the ability to receive Shaktipat is the result of something of a neutralization of positive and negative karmas. He also investigates the common phenomena that some individuals experience Shaktipat more deeply than others. One might naturally further ask: "If Shaktipat is a manifestation of grace then why would anyone person experience Shaktipat more

deeply than another?"

These questions deserve deeper enquiry but I personally find a couple analogies helpful. Ordinarily it takes a long time to create a fire by rubbing sticks together but if someone else already has a fire then that fire can be used to ignite another fire. Similarly to make a magnet naturally may require thousands of years but if one already has a magnet then a metal can easily be magnetized using the magnet.

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## Who can give Shaktipat?

To continue the analogy, in theory "anyone on fire" can give Shaktipat, i.e. anyone who's Kundalini is already awakened. The more relevant

question is: "Who *should* give Shaktipat?" There are many opinions on this but at the very least the conveyer of Shaktipat should be aware of the movements of Shakti in his own body and in the body of the disciple. Giving Shaktipat is a science and it is helpful, if not essential, to be instructed in that science. The classical works of Abhinavagupta and the living oral tradition of contemporary masters, such as Swami Shivom Tirth, both indicate that improperly practiced Shaktipat initiation can be dangerous both to the disciple to the guru and to the disciple. Using the analogy again, it is easier to light a fire than to light it in such a way that it has a carefully managed burning.

Therefore, it is desirable that the guru be empowered to



give Shaktipat by his own guru and has been trained in an unbroken lineage back to a great master who was fully aware of the science of Shaktipat. In this way some quality control is maintained.

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## Who can receive Shaktipat?

There are even more opinions on this. Some gurus take an attitude of: "Initiate them all and let Shakti sort them out." Traditionally teachers were quite selective about who received Shaktipat. Sometimes Shaktipat was only given to one or two disciples in a generation. Among gurus these days you can see these two extremes of opinion and many other gradations in between. What is clear that some people

who have received Shaktipat from well-known gurus have apparently only manifested greater neuroses and unhappiness in their lives as a result. See the questions regarding kriyas below ( [What are kriyas?>](#) ).

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## Are all Shaktipat initiations the same?

There are many ways of classifying Shaktipat initiations but a method used by Swami Vishnu Tirth is very simple and clear. In *shaktopaya* initiations the Kundalini Shakti of the disciple is awakened by the guru. In *shambhavopaya* initiations the Kundalini Shakti of the disciple is awakened and led up through

the bodies energy centers bringing a glimpse of the highest realization. Due to the current state of disciples, and contemporary gurus, almost all initiations can be termed *shaktopaya* initiations.

Some contemporary yoga teachers and gurus lump a wide variety of phenomenon under the term "Shaktipat." For example, I have seen teachers of Kriya Yoga infuse their students with their Shakti at various stages of the student's practice with the purpose of eliminating blocks in the student's channels. These teachers called this practice "Shaktipat initiation." According to the tradition of Siddha Mahayoga such infusions are not considered "Shaktipat initiations" because neither their aim or their result is

to awaken Kundalini .  
Moreover, the resulting  
practices are not Siddha  
Mahayoga because after these  
infusions of Shakti the  
student returns to their  
original practice, such as  
Kriya Yoga.

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Can one receive  
Shaktipat just by  
being in the  
presence of those  
with awakened  
Shakti?

There is no doubt that Shakti  
is contagious. The mere  
presence of a single being  
whose Shakti is strongly  
active can awaken the Shakti  
of those around him. Similarly  
being in the presence of many  
people whose Shakti is

awakened to some degree can awaken one's own Shakti.

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So what happens after Shaktipat? What's the practice of Siddha Mahayoga?

The unique perspective of Siddha Mahayoga is that because Kundalini is an intelligent force it will, upon awakening, naturally direct the practice of the student. All that is required is that the student completely surrender to this force. As a result of Kundalini's unfoldment spontaneous purifying movements, called *kriyas* will occur. In addition the practices of Hatha, Laya and Raja Yoga will naturally manifest. Because all other yogas naturally manifest as a

result of Kundalini awakening this yoga is called "Mahayoga" or "great yoga." Because the Kundalini awakening is induced by a perfected individual or "Siddha" this yoga is called "Siddha Mahayoga." Because all other yogas and their results occur spontaneously ("sahaja") and without effort this yoga is also called "Sahaja Yoga."

Even to reach the point of simply surrendering to Shakti takes some practice for people. Some aids in cultivating surrender are chanting and selfless service. These practices open the heart and make one more susceptible to the influence of Shakti.

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## What are kriyas?

Kriyas, literally "activities", are spontaneous

movements that occur after Kundalini awakening. These include bodily activities such as trembling, shaking and spontaneous yoga postures; vocal activities such as yelling, or spontaneous chanting and mental activities such as visions. These kriyas eliminate the blocks to Kundalini rising within the spine or central channel.

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## How do kriyas purify one's consciousness?

Blocks, known as *samskaras* or impressions, do not just obstruct Kundalini, but they embody attachments, conceptions and other mental afflictions that limit the freedom of our consciousness. Left unattended these

attachments lead to actions which only reinforce the attachment. For example if we have impressions of anger then we will manifest anger in our activities which only reinforce our impressions. As Kundalini rises it will purify the anger and as a result of the purification process the kriyas will occur. Speaking of Kundalini as an intelligent force which manifests its intelligence in particular activities, such as spontaneous yoga postures, to purify the blocks to its progress may sound a little mystical but there is a less mystical way of understanding what that means.

In our common language there are many colloquial phrases which allude to the natural state of our body-mind as being "straight" or "upright" and the unnatural



state being "kinky" or "entangled." We say positively: "He's an upright individual." "She's as straight as an arrow." We say negatively: "He's too kinky. He's all tangled up in himself." "She's tangled up in knots." There seems to be some subtle awareness of the value of straightness. So it seems to be a good metaphor to view our mind-body continuum as a garden hose and the Kundalini as water running through it. If you have a moderately tangled garden hose a simple way of making it straight is to increase the pressure of water through it. As you do so the hose will naturally flip around to straighten itself. To an observer it might seem as though the hose itself were intelligent in the way it straightens itself and in fact because the motion of the hose is governed by physical laws

it does reflect a deep intelligence.

In the same way we don't need to think of the Kundalini as an independent autonomous force cogitating as to what asana, pranayama or verbal activity might purify a block inside us. It seems more useful to think of Kundalini as a natural intelligent force whose natural movement untangles the knots which limit its expression.

The garden hose analogy makes another point clear as well. Imagine what happens if the hose is very tangled. Turning up the water pressure may be a very dramatic and perhaps even counter-productive process. This seems to be what is happening in a number of cases where individuals, after receiving Shaktipat, may have severe mental breakdowns. Thus it

does seem to be important for individuals to have a certain level of stability and preparation before receiving Shaktipat initiation.

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Are these kriyas some sort of self-hypnosis or some sort of New Age phenomenon?

This yoga is at least 1000 years old and is documented in the Kularnava Tantra and in the works of the great Tantric scholar Abhinvagupta and particular forms of kriyas can be found there. Some popular yogis and scholars have doubted the authenticity of this path but none who have done so show any familiarity with the classical literature

of this tradition. This approach has gone under many names such as siddha yoga, sahaja yoga, mahayoga or siddha mahayoga. Similar phenomena to kriyas also occur among some Qi Gong students. Spontaneous trembling, shaking, verbal noises, and body movements are common there as well.

Nevertheless gatherings of siddha mahayoga practitioners share many of the same characteristics of any other group gathering. Some people will try to fit in by emulating the behavior of those around them. There is no doubt that some people may feel the need to affect kriyas and others will accentuate kriyas that they have. This may not even be conscious behavior. Gurus of this yoga must try to maintain a balance between interfering with the

activity of the Kundalini as manifested in the kriyas and encouraging the affectation of kriyas because kriyas are seen as "progress." Ultimately the validity of any spiritual tradition rests in its ability to transform the beings of its followers. The real value of siddha mahayoga is in transforming the minds of those who practice it.

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Haven't a number of well-known teachers criticized kriyas? Don't they say that Kundalini is a force that needs control?

Some teachers do speak that way. For example the well known Kundalini yoga teacher, Yogi Bhajan, apparently called

the process of experiencing kriyas "jerk yoga." Tibetan practitioners of gTummo yoga, Indian practitioners of kriya yoga and other noted authorities on the Kundalini yoga process have clearly emphasized to me the importance of carefully controlling the Kundalini process and not allowing the Kundalini to act uncontrollably. Their sincere words cast doubt on my practice for many years.

So why do these teachers say these things? To be an adept of Kundalini yoga practices does not imply that you are omniscient. All the information that people like Yogi Bhanjan are really conveying is that in their experience in their style of practicing Kundalini yoga the Kundalini is controlled. I do not believe that they have

special insight into other alternative ways of approaching the practice of Kundalini yoga. Some people have quite frightening movements in meditation and without prior experience of kriyas the natural reaction is that such a person will almost certainly become physically or mentally unstable. Experienced masters of Siddha Mahayoga, such as Swami Shivom Tirth, have seen it all before and their simple counsel is: "Do not resist kriyas in any way."

For the individual who does surrender to the kriyas of Kundalini Shakti the perspective is radically different from the view espoused by teachers such as Yogi Bhajan. For the individual who spontaneously and effortlessly performs kriyas such as intricate pranayamas, asanas and bandhas

during their meditation the intentional exercises of the Hatha yogin are a merely a clumsy mockery of the subtle activity of Kundalini . In fact some claim that the entire corpus of Hatha yoga, as well as many of the Qi Gong exercises are simply imitations and classifications of the spontaneous movements of the Siddha Mahayogin.

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## 16. What is the philosophy of Siddha Mahayoga?

Perhaps its best to say that contemporary forms of Siddha Mahayoga have a core of underlying tenets but not a philosophy. These tenets include: the central role of Kundalini in the manifestation of the universe and the



evolution of the individual and the culmination of the evolution of the individual in a state of complete unity.

Different teachers have expounded Siddha Mahayoga in different ways. Swami Muktananda drew on a wide variety of Indian literature but principally relied upon the Shiva Sutras, the Spanda Karikas and other literature of the Trika school of Shaivism. Swami Shivom Tirth has also relied up on the Shiva Sutras to define the different stages of evolution. Both Swami Shivom Tirth and Swami Kriplavananda have used Patanjali's Yoga Sutras for their elucidation of the states of samadhi. All of these teachers are quick to note that the use of these scriptures does not imply that Siddha Mahayoga is a form of Hinduism. Instead the emphasis

is that each of us has the force of Kundalini within us and having awakened the Kundalini our life and religious practice will be enriched.

There are really only a few tenets of the practice of siddha mahayoga. The first is that the process begins with Shaktipat initiation by the guru. This initiation may begin with a formal request from the disciple and culminate with a formal initiation ceremony or it may occur informally through a impromptu manifestation of the guru's grace in intention, glance, word or touch. Through the initiation the Kundalini Shakti is awakened and begins to move in the disciple's body. The practice then consists of deeply surrendering to the spontaneous manifestations of

Kundalini Shakti, as described above.

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## What is the precise role of the guru in Siddha Mahayoga?

The role of the guru is laid out in the text the Shiva Sutras where it says "gururupaya"; the guru is the means. Because it is the guru who awakens your Kundalini the guru is given great reverence in this tradition. The awakening of Kundalini that many people struggle, with effort and danger, to accomplish in a lifetime a true guru can accomplish in a few seconds. Nevertheless the role of a guru is to awaken the Kundalini within you; then the practice takes place between you and your Kundalini

. The guru is a facilitator in the process of awakening Kundalini not an ongoing intermediary between the disciple and Kundalini .

With respect to the guru the classical Shaivist literature takes an especially pragmatic attitude. Classical literature of Shaivism, such as the Shiva Purana, states that if after one year the disciple has not arrived at some direct inner experience through the agency of the guru then there is no fault in seeking another guru. What I read from this is that this path is not one of years of wondering : "Is something happening?" but a practical approach in which one should, through the grace of the guru, be brought into direct experience of Kundalini .

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# Is Transcendental Meditation a kind of Siddha Yoga?

In Transcendental Meditation practice individuals are given a mantra. If one believes that this mantra, through the preliminary puja, is "awakened" or infused with consciousness then this technique is precisely the same method that is used by some teachers to initiate their students into the practice of Kundalini yoga. The idea as expounded by these Kundalini yoga teachers is that the consciousness of the mantra resonates with the slumbering Kundalini and awakens her. This is not the same as the exposition of the Transcendental Meditation practice nor is it

straightforward to resolve these two models of mantra meditation.

In practice many TM practitioners experience Kundalini awakening. Some experience it quite violently. Survey books on Kundalini experience, such as Sannella's The Kundalini Experience contain many such case histories although these case histories are not comprehensive enough to indicate what other factors might have led to the Kundalini awakening. Through checking notes and Teacher Training Courses TM checkers and teachers are minimally prepared for the possibility of Kundalini awakening. So while not entirely outside the range of TM practice one would assume that a strong Kundalini awakening is not central to TM practice or a high probability

result.

In the use of the flying sutra in the TM Sidhis program it is much more the norm to have Kundalini related experiences. Many, perhaps most, Sidhas will experience a wide range of activities, technically know as *kriyas* during the practice. The mechanism by which the flying sutra actually awakens the Kundalini is unknown to me. I'd be interested to hear any explanations.

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## 20. Who gives Shaktipat initiation?

The technique of Siddha Mahayoga is taught in a number of ashrams and centers in India, the United States and

around the world. The following is a list of known centers in the United States and each of these serves as one of the principal seats of the teacher . Not every teacher who employs Shaktipat in their teaching is listed here; this list is limited to those who teach the practice of Siddha Mahayoga as outlined in this FAQ.

Although I am no expert or authority on any of these teachers, where I have some first-hand information I thought it would be useful to add it - it may be a bit anecdotal for some tastes. If anyone finds any of the information below is inaccurate PLEASE INFORM ME and I will update it. Good luck!

Swami Shivom Tirth/Swami



Shiv Mangal Tirth

Swami Shivom Tirth Ashram  
1238 Rt. 97 Sparrowbush,  
NY 12780

email: [sstirth@hotmail.com](mailto:ssstirth@hotmail.com)

[Swami Shivom Tirth Web Page](#)

Swami Shivom Tirth is the successor to Swami Vishnu Tirth who wrote the well known reference on Siddha Mahayoga entitled *Devatma Shakti*. First brought to the United States by the well known Qi Gong teacher Bruce Kumar Frantzis, Swami Shivom Tirth discretely visited the United States for over twenty years. Those who met him were introduced to him by other students or were already his students in India.

The majority of Swami Shivom Tirth's students are Indians, either living in the United States or in India, but there is a good percentage of Westerners as well. Swami Shivom Tirth is now going into

retirement to meditate and write. He will no longer give initiations. He has left a few ashrams in India and his named successor, Swami Shiv Mangal Tirth, runs a small ashram in Sparrow Bush, NY where he gives Shaktipat to qualified students. The lineage of these teachers, extending now into its sixth generation is perhaps the longest lived of any of the contemporary teachers of Siddha Mahayoga. I have had the good fortune to spend a few weeks with these teachers over the last four years and have been personally impressed by the great spiritual purity, the high level of integrity and great depth of practical knowledge of these teachers. Perhaps because of the relative maturity of their lineage these teachers seem to have the fullest understanding of the path of Siddha Mahayoga

among contemporary teachers.

Anandi Ma  
Dhyanyoga Center  
P. O. Box 3194  
Antioch, CA 94531  
(510) 757-9361

[Dhyanyogi Center's Web Page](#)

Anandi Ma is the named successor to Shri Dhyanyogi Madhusudhanandaji. Shri Dhyanyogi's precise lineage is unknown to me. He was initiated by a mysterious yogi in Mt. Abu in Rajasthan state by the name of Shri Yogiraj Parameshwardasji. The predecessors of Parameshwardasji are unknown to me. Anandi Ma lives in Antioch, CA with her husband Dileepji who was also a student of Shri Dhyanyogi. Meeting Shri Dhyanyogi at a very young age Anandi Ma passed very quickly into advanced states of samadhi. Shri Dhyanyogi subsequently

began to train her to become a teacher in her own right. Anandi Ma gives Shaktipat initiation in various locations around the Bay Area and the rest of the country. Personally, I have only attended one of Anandi Ma's lectures but I have a few friends who have known her since she was a child and vouch for her genuineness and integrity. The Dhyanyoga Center's web site gives an excellent overview of their teachers and programs.

Swami Chidvilasananda  
Siddha Yoga Dham of  
America

1107 Stanford Ave.  
Oakland, CA 94608  
(510) 655-8677

or

SYDA Foundation  
371 Brickman Rd.  
PO Box 600  
South Fallsburg, NY 12770-

0600

(914) 434-2000

Swami Muktananda is the man responsible for the great level of awareness of siddha mahayoga that there is today. Muktananda tapped into a vast storehouse of Shakti to give Shaktipat to dozens of people at a time. In 1974 I sat crosslegged in a retreat house in Indiananapolis, Indiana with a few new students and a number of disciples from around the world. As Swami Muktananda walked by he stroked my forehead a few times. As he did a blue light streamed down from my forehead and an energy was awakened within me that immediately set my body trembling. In this simple but direct way my Kundalini was unmistakably and irresistably awakened and I joined the thousands of people who were thus introduced to

siddha mahayoga by Swami Muktananda. Because of his nearly unrivalled ability to deeply and directly awaken other's Kundalini Swami Muktananda's world movement rapidly grew. In particular the Siddha Yoga Dham of America (SYDA) grew quickly around the United States with major ashrams in South Fallsburg, New York and Oakland, California. Thousands of people are currently involved in SYDA today and many people from all walks of life are always happy to confirm the value that siddha yoga, as taught within SYDA, has brought to their life. Nevertheless, there is another side to the history of this organization.

A young woman known as Shri Yogini Malti Devi served as Swami Muktananda's translator for many years and

shortly before his death in October 1982 Swami Muktananda passed on his lineage to Yogini Malti Devi (who became a renunciant under the name Swami Chidvilasananda) and her brother Swami Nityananda (see below). Unfortunately much controversy hung over this movement from Swami Muktananda's last days and a very critical article was published in CoEvolution Quarterly in Winter 1983, one year after Swami Muktananda's death. After Swami Muktananda was succeeded by Swami Nityananda and Swami Chidvilasananda controversy continued and Swami Nityananda admitted to conduct that was inappropriate for a Swami and spiritual leader. On November 3, 1985 in a public ceremony Swami Nityananda formally renounced his status as a renunciant and was removed from his position within SYDA.

Later in the press (The Illustrated Weekly of India, March 16-22, 1986) Swami Nityananda contended that his abdication was due to his own concern that resistance to Swami Chidvilasananda's wishes might cause further dissension and even bloodshed. More recently in a New Yorker article of November 14, 1994, Liz Harris wrote an investigative article that was very critical of SYDA.

Currently the brother and sister now run independent groups. Swami Chidvilasananda runs the prospering SYDA and Swami Nityananda runs a small center in Pine Bush, New York. Personally I have never been able to reconcile the many problems and controversies surrounding these teachers and SYDA with my own direct experience of Swami Muktananda. All I know is that



Swami Muktananda gave me a great gift and I am grateful. Pressed to form my own opinion regarding such a diversity of different perspectives and information, I can only compare Swami Muktananda to a natural phenomenon or to nature itself. Every day in nature we see the full range of creation, maintenance and dissolution around us. We can judge nature, but that neither diminishes her power nor enriches our experience of her.

Swami Nityananda  
Shanti Mandir  
Pine Bush, NY  
(914)-744-6462

<http://www.shantimandir.com/guruji.htm>

I do not know at what time Swami Nityananda began to teach again but he now has a center in Pine Bush and he

gives intensives around the country.

Swami Chetanananda  
Nityananda Ashram  
P. O. Box 13310  
Portland, OR 97213  
(503) 231-0383

<http://http://www.europa.com/~ni/>

Swami Rudrananda (born Albert Rudolph) was an American disciple of the south Indian Avadhuta known as Bhagavan Nityananda. Swami Rudrananda also received sannyas diksa (initiation as a swami) from Swami Muktananda. The American Swami later broke with Muktananda.

Swami Chetanananda (born Michael Shoemaker) was the closest disciple of Rudrananda and ran his ashram in Bloomington, Indiana. Swami Rudrananda died unexpectedly in an airplane crash in late

1973 and Michael Shoemaker began to consolidate Swami Rudrananda's various ashrams. Michael Shoemaker received sannyas diksha in the Saraswati order of the Danda sannyasis from Swami Muktananda and was named Swami Chetanananda. Swami Chetanananda moved his prospering ashram first from Bloomington, Indiana to Boston, Massachusetts and most recently to Portland, Oregon.

I only had the opportunity to attend one lecture by Swami Rudrananda but found him to be a man of immense power and although I have only met Swami Chetanananda a few times I can personally attest to the fact that Swami Chetanananda carries the same power and intensity of his teacher. Swami Chetanananda has worked hard to express the practical down-to-earth wisdom of Swami

Rudrananda within the vast theoretical framework of the philosophy of Trika Shaivism.

Recently I had the opportunity to visit Swami Chetanananda's Portland Ashram. The Ashram is a beautiful and powerful tribute to Swamiji's commitment to maintaining the tradition of his lineage. Earlier I had been unclear on Swamiji's precise approach to his teaching. In particular I was unclear about the role of effort and his attitude toward kriyas but on this visit Swamiji was kind enough to clarify that his approach to practice is precisely that of Siddha Mahayoga.

Swami Shankarananada  
Shiva Ashram  
27 Tower Road  
Mount Eliza, Victoria 3930

Australia

phone: (613) 9775-2568;

fax (613) 9775-2591;

email swamiji@ibm.net

Swami Shanakarananda was one of the sannyasis initiated by Swami Muktananda before Swami Muktananda's death and was at one time an influential individual within Swami Muktananda's organization, the Siddha Yoga Dham of America (SYDA). Unfortunately I have not had the opportunity to meet him but I have enjoyed an electronic correspondance with him. The following is a distillation of my electronic conversations with Swami Shankarananda and his students.

Swami Shankarananda left SYDA in 1986 and he subsequently ran the Shiva Insitute in Santa Monica for four years. The Swami ran the Melbourne ashram for SYDA for

three years in the early '80's and in 1990 he was invited by a group of Australian devotees to do a tour. It was so successful and they were so happy to see him again that they invited him to return permanently. In 1991 they organised an association called Shiva Meditation Centre and Swamiji was granted residency. The Shiva Centre is residential, 5 to 7 people at any given time. Swamiji runs courses and holds satsang on Saturday evenings.

Swamiji teaches a form of self-inquiry he calls the Shiva Process which is an assimilation of everything he learned from Baba Muktananda with an emphasis on the relationship between thought, feeling and the Shakti. He does private meditation sessions and runs Shiva Process groups 3-4 times a

week. The Shiva Process works with the contraction and expansion of energy in the chakras. Thoughts and feelings which show up in the chakras are. By using awareness to investigate which thoughts create an expansion and which thoughts create contractions insight into the various unconscious negative tendencies that we carry within us can be gained. The Shiva Process is powerful and non-dogmatic. It focuses on the individual's experience of themselves and their relationship to the Shakti within them.

Swami Shambhavananda  
Shoshoni Retreat Center  
Shoshoni Yoga Retreat  
PO Box 410  
Rollinsville, Colorado  
80474

[Swami Shambhavananda's  
Shoshoni Retreat Center Web](#)

## Page

Like Swami Chetanananda, Swami Shambhavananda was originally a student of Swami Rudrananda's who subsequently received initiation into the renunciate order by Swami Muktananda. Swami Shambhavananda began teaching for Swami Rudrananda in 1972 and was subsequently empowered to give Shaktipat initiation by Swami Muktananda after their meeting in 1983. Swami Shambhavananda operates a residential ashram in Eldorado Springs, Colorado and a rural retreat center, called Shoshoni Yoga Retreat Center, up in the mountains near Rollinsville, Colorado.

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21. Where can I learn more?



Good introductory survey:

White, John (Editor)  
(1990). Kundalini - Evolution  
and Enlightenment. New York:  
Paragon House.

Selected works by the  
teachers mentioned. These are  
available from the respective  
centers. (I am aware that each  
of these teachers has  
published numerous works):

Chetanananda, S. (1991).  
Dynamic Stillness. Cambridge,  
Massachusetts: Rudra Press.

Madhusudanasji,  
Dhyangyogi (1978). Light on  
Meditation.

Muktananda, Swami  
(1989b). From the Finite to  
the Infinite (First ed.).  
Volumes I &II, South  
Fallsburg, NY: Siddha Yoga  
Dham of America Foundation.

Tirtha, Swami Vishnu

(1980b) . Devatma Shakti (Fifth ed.) . Rishikesh: Yoga Shri Peeth Trust.

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