



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Volume 10, Issue 5, May 2023



INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.580



+91 99405 72462



+9163819 07438



ijmrsetm@gmail.com



www.ijmrsetm.com

Indian Naga Sadhus- Tradition, Food Habits, Dress and Ornaments

^{1,2}Mrs. Madhu Sharma

¹Research Scholar, University of Technology, Jaipur, India

²Associate Professor, Home Science, RD Girls College, Bharatpur, Rajasthan, India

ABSTRACT: Dasanami (IAST Daśanāmi Sampradāya "Tradition of Ten Names"), also known as the Order of Swamis,^[1] is a Hindu monastic tradition of "single-staff renunciation" (ēka daṇḍi samnyāsī)^{[2][3][4]} generally associated with the four cardinal mathas of the Advaita Vedanta tradition and, according to tradition, organized in its present form by Vedic scholar and teacher Adi Shankaracharya.

A swami, as the monk is called, is a renunciate who seeks to achieve spiritual union with the swa (Self). In formally renouncing the world, he or she generally wears ochre, saffron or orange-colored robes as a symbol of non-attachment to worldly desires, and may choose to roam independently or join an ashram or other spiritual organizations, typically in an ideal of selfless service.^[1] Upon initiation, which can only be done by another existing Swami, the renunciate receives a new name (usually ending in ananda, meaning 'supreme bliss') and takes a title which formalizes his connection with one of the ten subdivisions of the Swami Order. A swami's name has a dual significance, representing the attainment of supreme bliss through some divine quality or state (i.e. love, wisdom, service, yoga), and through a harmony with the infinite vastness of nature, expressed in one of the ten subdivision names: Giri (mountain), Puri (tract), Bhāratī (land), Vana (forest), Āraṇya (forest), Sagara (sea), Āśrama (spiritual exertion), Sarasvatī (wisdom of nature), Tīrtha (place of pilgrimage), and Parvata (mountain). A swami is not necessarily a yogi, although many swamis can and do practice yoga as a means of spiritual liberation; experienced swamis may also take disciples.^[1]

Daśanāmi Sannyāsins are associated mainly with the four cardinal mathas in four corners of India, said to be established by Adi Shankaracharya himself; however, the association of the Dasanāmis with the Shankara mathas remained nominal. The early swamis, elevated into the order as disciples of Shankara, were sannyāsins who embraced sannyasa either after marriage or without getting married.

Single-staff renunciates are distinct in their practices from Shaiva trishuladhari or "trident-wielding renunciates" and Vaishnava traditions of Tridandi sannyāsins

KEYWORDS: swamis, sadhus, yoga, disciples, traditions, married, mathas, bliss, yogi, shaiva, pooja

I.INTRODUCTION

In the 16th century, Madhusudana Saraswati of Bengal organised a section of the Naga (naked) tradition of armed sannyasis^[2] in order to protect Hindus from the tyranny of the Mughal rulers.

Warrior-ascetics could be found in Hinduism from at least the 1500s and as late as the 1700s,^[26] although tradition attributes their creation to Sankaracharya¹

Some examples of Akhara currently are the Juna Akhara of the Dashanami Naga, Niranjani Akhara, Anand Akhara, Atal Akhara, Awahan Akhara, Agni Akhara and Nirmal Panchayati Akhara at Prayagraj. ¹³Each akhara is divided into sub-branches and traditions. An example is the Dattatreya Akhara (Ujjain) of the naked sadhus of Juna Naga establishment. ²

The naga sadhus generally remain in the ambit of non-violence presently, though some sections are also known to practice the sport of Indian wrestling. The Dasanāmi sannyāsins practice the Vedic and yogic¹⁴ Yama principles of ahimsā (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), aparigraha (non-covetousness) and brahmachārya (celibacy / moderation).³

The naga sadhus are prominent at Kumbh mela, where the order in which they enter the water is fixed by tradition. After the Juna akhara, the Niranjani and Mahanirvani Akhara proceed to their bath. Ramakrishna Math Sevashram are almost the last in the procession.^[27]

There are Sadhus and Sadhus and then there are the Naga Sadhus. They are eccentric, emotional, unstable, threatening, and are without a doubt the works of art of the Prayag Kumbh. Among all the sadhus who rush here, everyone's eyes are anyway on the tricky debris spread, unmistakable stripped Naga Sadhu in Kumbh Mela.¹⁶ Getting a sensational Naga Sadhu photograph isn't simple as they are not in every case inviting the camera. However every state of mind is a second for the focal point. Their naked bodies are spread with debris from consumed wood of dead trees. In some cases they enclose themselves by rosary dabs and blossom laurels. There is a quality around them that is totally obvious as they smoke cannabis¹⁵ and it is their panache that you can't miss. Outfitted with harpoons, lances and different weapons they can be exceptionally volatile But who are the Naga Sadhus ? I have consistently been somewhat inquisitive about the Naga Sadhu history and where they came from. Evidently they were probably the most punctual local area of sadhus or holy people who are accepted to be prepared heroes in spite of the fact that they have revoked the world.⁴

These chaste men who love Shiva were athletic and solid and were proficient in wrestling . They were considered as a multitude of holy people and the respondents of the Hindu confidence against any incitement or intrusion.¹⁹ Evidently most Naga Sadhus live in the caverns or mountains or in the backwoods and they live in their own retreats with little contact with the rest of the world. Some of them are meandering holy people and they go with their local area starting with one spot then onto the next.¹⁸ Anyway they converge with the civilisation just during the Kumbh. It is a sight to see a few of the Naga Sadhu in Kumbh Mela where they stay in Akharas – the Niranjani Akharas and the Juna Akharas which were initially made more than 1000 years back. While we were strolling around the Juna Akhara, perhaps the biggest request of holy people in Prayag Kumbh, I met a few of them.¹⁷ Some honored us, some talked with us, some posturepedic for us while a couple pursued us away. However, the greater part of them were cordial despite the fact that they will visit you up for a more drawn out time if you offer them cash. You can likewise get the eccentric and emotional Naga Sadhu pictures that you need to take if you are patient and pay them well.⁵

II.DISCUSSION

When the 8th-century philosopher Adi Shankaracharya founded the Dashanami Sampradaya, he divided the ascetics into two categories:^[2]

- Shastradhari (Sanskrit: शास्त्रधारी, lit. scripture-bearers) intelligentsia.⁶
- Astradhari (Sanskrit: अस्त्रधारी, lit. weapon-bearers) warriors. This refers to the Naga sadhus (a sub-set of Dashanami Sampradaya), an armed order created by Shankaracharya to act as a Hindu army. These weapon-bearing sadhus used to serve as mercenaries and thus were divided into akhara or regiments.^[2] Akhara evolved into the "fighting martial force" of medicants likely as a reaction to the harsh and brutal treatment of Hindus by the Muslim Rulers.^[27] Akharas' act of self-defence of turning into armed monasteries of mystics,^{[27][2]} also led to the unintended consequence of their sectarian fights among themselves turning into violent armed clashes at Kumbh Melas with disastrous consequence including numerous deaths,^{[28][29][30]} which diminished only after the East India Company administration limited the warrior role of akharas.^[31] Presently, Naga sadhu still carry weapons, but they rarely practice any form of fighting aside from wrestling.⁷

Naga Sadhus are the ultimate advertisement for living a life that is in sync with all of nature. The western world and the westernized sections of Indian media are obsessed with their nakedness and forget to see them for their amazing grace and powerful existence. At a time when majority of the society is stuck in a consumerist mode and has no control over the impact they create on themselves and the environment,¹¹ the Naga Sadhus physically portray the possibility of living blissfully with the least number of physical accessories. Their weapons and powers are never used for aggression and used only to defend. Their immense internal strength and powers makes them non violent.¹⁰ All violence is the expression of your inner feeling of weakness.⁸

Naga Sadhus are seen in large numbers during the Kumbh Mela. It is about time human beings took a second look at the majority world view versus the possibilities that Naga Sadhus represent.²⁰

The order of Naga Sadhus was founded by Dattatreya. The time when the order was found in not known. Our tradition used to record aspects that are critical for human consciousness to evolve. Later, Shankaracharya organized the Nagas to protect Sanatana Dharma.⁹



Sanatan Dharma is the lifestyle that expands our consciousness. In the modern day, Sanatan Dharma has been classified as Hinduism. The founders of this set of tenets saw this as applicable for all human beings and has no foundation in artificial divisions of human beings based on religion.²¹

Modern society is stuck with creating name and fame for oneself and for their near and extended families. A glance at political and business families will reinforce this statement.

Naga Sadhus on the contrary have no need to reinforce their identity. They are dissolved in their Bhakti (devotion) for Mahadeva (Shiva). They smear their body with sacred ash or bhasma. Sacred ash denotes the fleeting nature of life. Smearing it on their body symbolizes that the body is ephemeral and is a reminder of the critical and immediate need for a human being to seek what is permanent and one's true Self.¹⁰

III.RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

The proliferation of pornography in whichever medium human beings have invented shows the unabated nature of lust in human society.⁹ Internet is the latest on this list of mediums.²²

Naga Sadhus know that lust is a powerful energy which, when transformed, can be channelized to achieve the peak possibility of awakening the latent kundalini energy and merging with pure consciousness. The naga sadhus practice strict celibacy to achieve the highest states of consciousness.¹¹

The per-capita carbon footprint is an indication of the extent of material comfort that human beings seek. The so-called developed countries are those that have the maximum consumption. If the world population were to live with the per-capita energy utilisation as that of USA, we will need nine earths to satisfy that demand – completely unsustainable.²³

Naga sadhus are like Mahadeva. Mahadeva is the embodiment of non-possessiveness. He keeps all the useless things for himself and gives away the best things to the society. During the churning of the Milky Ocean, the best fragrant flower trees were given to the Devathas; Shyamantaka jewellery was given to Lord Vishnu, Devi Lakshmi was given to Lord Vishnu as well.¹²

Mahadeva kept only one thing for himself – poison! The Halahala poison that came out of the ocean was swallowed by Mahadeva. His ornaments are the snakes which drink that poison. Same way, Naga sadhus keep all the useless things of the society with themselves. They do not even wear a dress. They did not keep the best things with themselves. But all the best things they gave to society.²⁴ They don't bother about the materialistic world. Because they do not want anything that someone has, the Nagas are the most peaceful of humans. They have no enemies since they do not value even their lives. They leave the least destructive impact on the mother earth. At the same time they do not fear anyone. Society portrays them as fearful because society controls us by fear and greed. The Nagas – who are not bound by either – strike terror at the hearts of the system that is based on command and control. But in reality there is no group of people who are as non violent as the Nagas. Their weapon and powers are only used for self defense. Their inner strength makes them non violent. Since violence always comes from the inner feeling of weakness. The strong are never violent.²⁵

The Nagas are known to perform great acts of penance that would seem impossible to normal human beings. Many do things like spend years with one hand raised into the air, standing on one leg or lying on a bed of thorns. Some sadhus bury themselves neck-deep in sand, meditate for hours while suspended from a rope or have been silent for years.¹³

- Sadhus sometimes even bury their head, a feat of breath control that requires mastery of yoga techniques. In 1837, a yogi named Hari Das was buried alive without air, food, liquid or any attention, After being excavated he was easily revived and went on to live a long life.²⁶
- One sadhu at the Pushkar Fair became famous for lifting a 35-kilogram brick with his penis.²⁷
- Some sadhus are said to have the ability to talk with monkeys. Sometimes they are sought out by people for help keeping monkeys from raiding their gardens.²⁸
- According to the Guinness Book of Records, the silent Indian fakir Mastram Bapu stayed in the same spot by a road in the village of Chitra for 22 years, from 1960 to 1982. Swami Maujgiri Maharaja stood for 17 years (from 1955 to November 1973) performing Tapasya (penance) in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh. When sleeping, he leaned against a plank¹⁴



- According to the Guinness Book of Records, Radhey Shyam Prajapati stood motionless for world record of 18 hours, 5 minutes and 5 seconds in January 1996. Rajikumar Chakraborty did the static wall sit (Samson's chair) for 11 hours and 5 minutes at the Panposh Sports Hostel in April 1994.¹⁵

Modern society deals with all sorts of lifestyle induced diseases like diabetes, hypertension etc. Au contraire, naga sadhus train on yogic practices to maintain highest physical fitness that can withstand extreme weather conditions even when naked. A member of a Naga Akhara is expected to be ready for a wrestling match at any time.²⁹

REFERENCES

1. Yogananda, Paramhansa (1946). "Autobiography of a Yogi - Chpt 24: I Become a Monk of the Swami Order - pg 218". www.CrystalClarity.com. Archived from the original on 6 April 2019. Retrieved 30 October 2019.
2. ^ Journal of the Oriental Institute (pp 301), by Oriental Institute (Vadodara, India).
3. ^ Govind Sadashiv Ghurye, Indian Sadhus
4. ^ Lalit Kishore Lal Srivastava, Advaitic Concept of Jīvanmukti
5. ^ A. C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī, Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.
6. ^ Michaels 2004, p. 40-41.
7. ^ Michaels 2004, p. 40.
8. ^ Nakamura 2004, p. 687.
9. ^ Van Buitenen; The Mahabharata – 1; The Book of the Beginning. Introduction (Authorship and Date)
10. ^ Swāmī Parmeshwarānand, Encyclopaedia of Śaivism, p.82
11. ^ Shanmuga Velayutham Subramanian, Heritage of the Tamils: temple arts, p.154
12. ^ Bhagwati Charan Verma, Socio-religious, Economic, Literary Condition of Bihar
13. ^ R. Tirumalai, The Pandyan Townships: The Pandyan townships, their organisation and functioning
14. ^ Kiyokazu Okita (2014). Hindu Theology in Early Modern South Asia: The Rise of Devotionalism and the Politics of Genealogy. Oxford University Press. p. 48. ISBN 978-0198709268.
15. ^ Michaels 2004, p. 41-43.
16. ^ Michaels 2004, p. 41.
17. ^ White 2000, p. 25-28.
18. ^ Michaels 2004, p. 42.
19. ^ McRae 2003.
20. ^ Karigoudar Ishwaran, Ascetic Culture
21. ^ Wendy Sinclair-Brull, Female Ascetics
22. ^ H.A. Rose, Ibbetson, Denzil Ibbetson Sir, and MacLagan, Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province, page 857
23. ^ Nakamura 2004, p. 782-783.
24. ^ Nakamura 2004, p. 680.
25. ^ Nakamura 2004, p. 680-681.
26. ^ A history of Dasnami Naga Sanyasis, Sir Jadunath Sarkar, Sri Panchayati Akhara Mahanirvani, Allahabad, http://dspace.wbpublibnet.gov.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/10689/9526/5/Chapter%201_1%20-%20108p.pdf Archived 2 December 2013 at the Wayback Machine
27. ^ Naga sadhus steal the show at Kumbh, Nandita Sengupta, TNN Feb 13, 2010://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2010-02-13/india/28140014_1_naga-sadhus-juna-akhara-holy-dip
28. ^ Book: Shri Gowdapadacharya & Shri Kavale Math (A Commemoration volume). P. 38.
29. ^ Sharma 2000, p. 525.



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT



+91 99405 72462



+91 63819 07438



ijmrsetm@gmail.com

www.ijmrsetm.com