

Image © 1996 Photodisc, photo by C. Sherburne.

*Can we combine
Hindu and Pagan
practice?
More and more of
us are saying "yes."*

The

Emerging Indo- Pagans

by Devi Spring
Illustrations by
Carol Snedeker Martinez

IndoPagan. You may have never heard the term before, but among a growing number of people, this name describes their spiritual path. It is a path that blends the Western tradition of NeoPaganism with Eastern traditions of South Asian origin, most commonly with Hinduism. Up until fairly recently the bulk of those following an IndoPagan path believed themselves to be alone. But as knowledge of this combined-tradition path spreads, its practitioners are beginning to meet one another — and even form nascent communities. This is our story.



“Why are there (seemingly) so few IndoPagans within a spiritual community renowned for its eclectic inclusion of elements from a variety of ancient cultures?”

I came into my IndoPagan-hood through my experiences as a misfit Wiccan. I felt a deep resonance with the Wiccan spirituality, the myth-cycle that accompanied it, and the freedom that it granted to those who embraced it. I found a place where I could learn to love all the things that I had previously hated about myself. However, after a while I stopped identifying myself as Wiccan, because I never felt at home in Wiccan worship. No matter which particular tradition it was, something about the “vibration” felt wrong to me. I never felt a connection to the Celtic, Norse, Greek, Roman, or even Egyptian pantheons, despite several years of trying to commune with Them.

What *did* send chills up my spiritual spine was Hinduism, which I had been introduced to while pursuing my Religious Studies degree. However, none of the NeoPagans I knew had any interest in Hinduism, or in worshipping Hindu deities in a NeoPagan context. To my surprise, there was also next to no information on the internet regarding this particular blending. I resigned myself to a *very* solitary practice, and over the course of seven years developed a working system of my own that combined the Goddess-tradition of Hinduism, Shaktism, with eclectic Wicca. I called it Shakti Wicca.¹

Hungering for fellowship after many years as a solitary, I decided to try and reach out once again. I invoked the aid of Ganesha (the Hindu deity who removes obstacles) and posted a few listings on Witchvox, including one for an IndoPagan Paths Yahoo discussion group that I had created.² I was met by about a month of silence, and I began to think that maybe I really *was* the only one interested in an IndoPagan practice. Then the inquiries and group subscriptions started trickling in ... and then pouring in.

A Community Looking to Define Itself

It turned out there really *were* IndoPagans out there. They called themselves Hindu Wiccans, IndoWiccans, IndoPagans, Saiva Wiccans, and Samkhya Wiccans; others never knew their path could even *have* a name, or had never felt the need to name it. Almost universally, the people who showed up at the Yahoo group were flabbergasted to have found others who followed a similarly inspired path. The fact that there were so many of us, and that we had remained virtually invisible in the NeoPagan world, fascinated me.

Many who contacted me were new to NeoPaganism in general; what I had not at all anticipated was the handful of elders who had been practicing as Hindu-Pagans for well over twenty years and who were still struggling to define their blended path. I composed a survey and distributed it through discussion groups and through word-of-mouth referrals to others who may have fit the profile of the elusive “IndoPagan.” The intent was both to find out how we defined ourselves and also to compose a document that would help introduce ourselves to the NeoPagan community as a whole.

One of the first questions was “Why are there (seemingly) so few IndoPagans within a spiritual community renowned for its eclectic inclusion of elements from a variety of ancient cultures?” June McDaniel, a scholar on Bengalese Shakta traditions, commented upon this phenomenon:

The worship of Hindu Goddesses in the West has never really caught on with the New Age. Worship among modern feminists and syncretists has tended primarily toward the classical goddesses of Greece and Rome, and the Celtic goddesses which have been glorified in modern Druidism and Wicca. It is curious how many feminist groups lament the dearth of living goddess traditions, yet ignore the actual living goddess traditions of India.³

Len Rosenberg (aka Kalipadma), a Proteus Coven member since 1981, weighed in, saying,

Many Reconstructionist Neo-Pagans are seeking their roots. “My great-grandpa came from County Cork, so I’m a Celtic Pagan...” is typical. Lots of these folks figure, “None of my ancestors came from Bangalore — why should I follow Indo-Wicca?”⁴

Kerri-Leigh Grady, who was initiated into a “West Coast Eclectic Gardnerian” tradition in 1998, and who works closely with Kali and Shiva, added,

There is no popular mystique to Indian culture in movies and [on] TV... I find this is [also] true when you consider how few NeoPagans look to oriental gods and Australian Aboriginal traditions.”⁵

Others echoed the idea that the lack of exposure to Hindu culture and spirituality in the West was a reason for the small number of NeoPagans attracted to Hinduism. Michael of Fort Wayne, Indiana, a Hedgewitch who describes his path as “Universal Mystic Wicca” states,

Many people see Hinduism is a religion in and of itself, and therefore if you are not “Hindu” but “Wiccan” then you stick with what you know – or at least what you can find in the bookstore.⁶

With these answers in mind, I asked the Yahoo community members why they had not simply converted to Hinduism. While many admitted to having considered it, and some like Rosenberg have even been initiated by a traditional Hindu guru⁷, most answers were quite simple. Grady’s reply was typical, “Pure Hinduism doesn’t quite capture the path I need to be on.”⁸

Barriers to Belief

Many members of the group reported experiencing a feeling of coldness and confusion when they approached traditional Hindus and Pagans about their beliefs.⁹ Phoenix ShadowStar, who had been practicing various forms of NeoPaganism since 1993, stated,

Some people have thought it strange that I am not drawn to any of the Greek/Roman/Celtic/Native American pantheons ... I have actually been told by other Pagans that there was something wrong about using Shiva/Shakti or Buddha/Quan Yin statues on my altar . My fascination with Hinduism and temples confuses some and makes others angry.¹⁰

Others stayed silent because they did not feel completely comfortable with their practice. A man who identified himself as “Michael” wrote, “I truly felt that I was doing something ‘wrong’ that might offend someone.”¹¹

His misgivings are not entirely unfounded. One survey I sent out (from a word-of-mouth referral) came back with a strongly negative response. Western-born Salamandir, who had been identified by one group member as holding similar views as many IndoPagans, turned out to be a Hindu convert, and did not hold a high opinion of NeoPagans that incorporated Hinduism into their spirituality. In response to the question “What do you feel that the IndoPagan community needs most at this point?” he wrote, “to acknowledge that they are a ‘feel good’ religion for people who aren’t interested in pursuing *moksha* [Sanskrit for spiritual liberation].”¹²

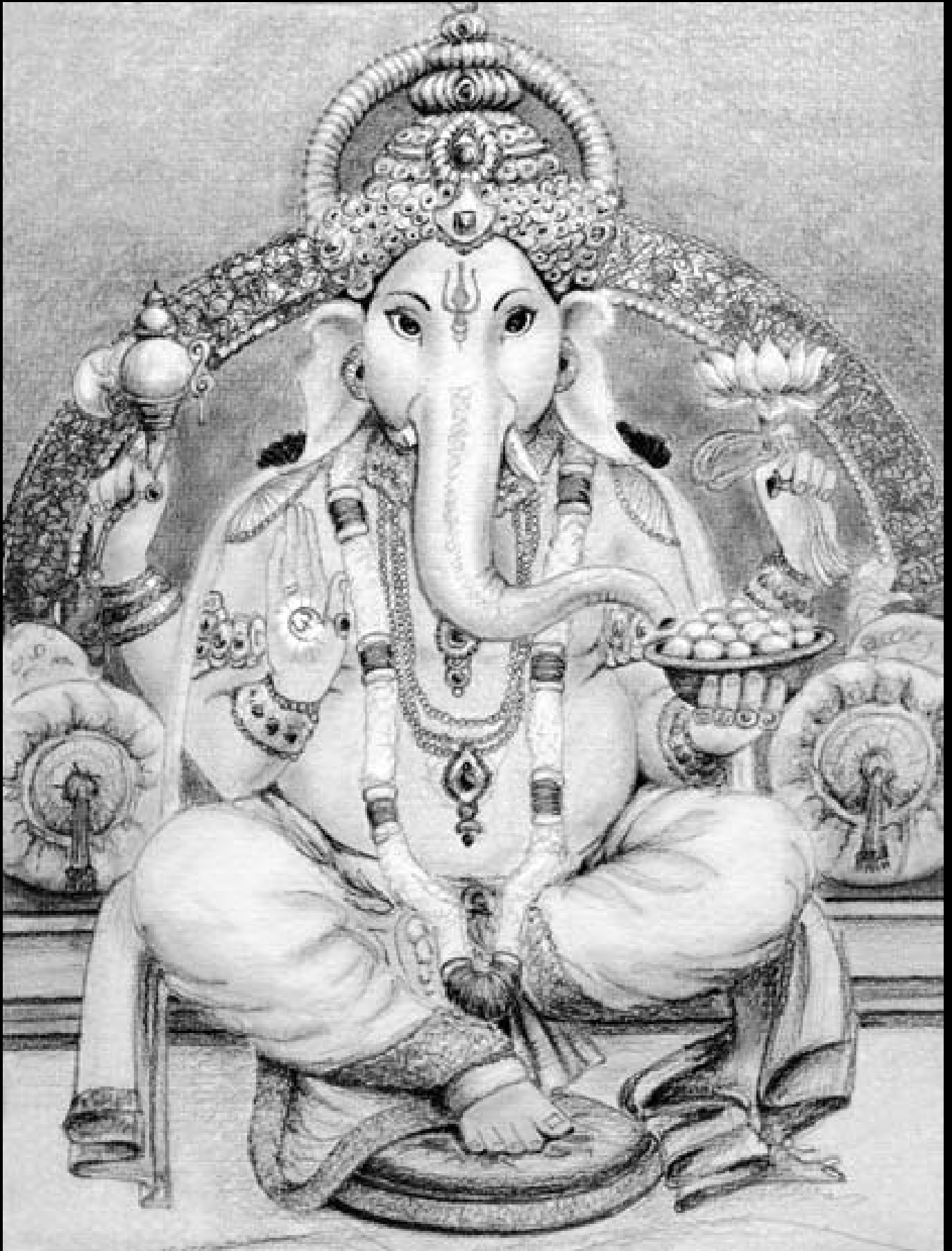
“Cynthia,” an initiate of a Gardnerian tradition, reported difficulty in gathering information from traditional Hindu resources. She recounted,

Among Hindu people that I have met there is a guarded, even contemptuous attitude towards a white woman asking questions about Hinduism. So finding knowledgeable people to talk to who respect women and are not caught up in the ugly side of Hindustani culture [is difficult]. Hindustani disrespect of women, contempt of one not viewed as of one’s caste, hostility towards a fair-skinned, blue-eyed woman for her looks are huge obstacles. Then of course, there is the problem of the dearth of literature on the areas of information I am interested in – the magical rituals done in the woods.”¹³

Anxiety surrounding the reaction of exclusionary aside, the other main obstacle to syncretizing Hinduism and NeoPaganism just seemed to be a matter of a lack of reference points. Kalipadma says,



“It is curious how many feminist groups lament the dearth of living goddess traditions, yet ignore the actual living goddess traditions of India.”



I usually state that I'm traveling two spiritual paths — Gardnerian Wicca and Shakta Hinduism. My early Wiccan training seldom incorporated Hindu spirituality or Deities and I've been reluctant to mix the two traditions. Students in my coven learned that I incorporated Hindu holidays and worship in our practice, but most Neo-Pagans I've met are only superficially attracted to Hinduism — taking Sanskrit names, for example, but unfamiliar with basic precepts [of Hinduism]. It's only now, that I've discovered Shakti Wicca, that I'm beginning to think of myself as an Indo-Wiccan.¹⁴

Grady feels similarly,

A lot of folks believe that it's too difficult to combine any non-Wicca tradition with Wicca. I have a feeling it's because most come from a very dogmatic background, in which religion must be "untainted" by conflicting or competitive dogma or deities. They don't look at Neopaganism as the "glue" to form their individual paths, so they can't find ways to resolve the conflicts they believe exist.¹⁵

Hindu spirituality without Indian culture?

The issue of whether Hindu spirituality can (or should) be divorced from Indian culture is another issue that weighs on many IndoPagans. Moss Bliss, initiated into Gardnerian Wicca in 1982, and who tentatively calls his present path Universal Western Saivism, observes,

I believe that Hinduism has attempted to sell itself to the West without divorcing itself from the Indian culture. This [Indian] culture is largely denigrating to females by defining what their place in society is and not allowing women outside of those roles.¹⁶

Others in our group also named Indian cultural issues, such as the subservient role of women and the caste system, as what kept them from converting fully to Hinduism, or from utilizing more traditional Hindu elements in their practice. Many agreed with Bliss, however, that cultural elements were not truly central to Hinduism as a spiritual path. As he says, "If it [the religion of Hinduism] is truly universal, the form should not be an impediment... if it is not, then you have to make a choice. I believe the former."¹⁷

I believe, along with many others, that *Sanatana Dharma* (the true spirit of Hinduism) is not about specific cultural mores and customs. I agree with David Frawley, who defines *Sanatana Dharma* as,

A universal tradition [that] has room for all faiths and all religious and spiritual practices regardless of the time or country of their origin. Sanatana Dharma ... gives reverence to individual spiritual experience over any formal religious doctrine. Wherever the Universal Truth is manifest, there is Sanatana Dharma — whether it is in a field of religion, art or science, or in the life of a person or community.¹⁸

The majority of those I surveyed were looking both for reference points for syncretization and for Westernized versions of Hindu rituals to use in their practice. *Puja* (Hindu ritual worship) is conducted exclusively in Sanskrit, a language most NeoPagans are unfamiliar with. While available handbooks on *puja* often include an English transliteration of the ritual language, most do not include an intelligent, culturally appropriate English translation.

Volmarr Wyrd, who began as a Norse Wiccan, but now defines his path as "Hindu with strong metaphysical/occult/magick/somewhat-pagan leanings," believes that problems with language is the biggest roadblock for IndoPagan practice. He comments, "Someone really needs to write some publicly accessible rituals to get us started."¹⁹ To his credit, Wyrd has himself authored two English *puja* translations, which he published (for free) on the IndoPagan Project website as a service to the community.²⁰

Others disagree, feeling that the beauty of blending Neopaganism with Hinduism is that one is not bound to a particular liturgy. Moss Bliss states, "*Puja* is one of the things that ties Hinduism to the Indian culture, and thus I do not currently consider it necessary to my worship as a Hindu."²¹ Many *puja* elements turn-off NeoPagans from performing traditional worship, as Kalipadma notes,

Puja is much more structured than most Neo-Pagan devotionals. It involves learning prayers in Sanskrit, and learning techniques of waving lit camphor, throwing flower petals, and remaining in the lotus posture for long periods of time. Pujas are often scheduled according to astrological events and require knowledge of what items a divinity likes (and avoiding ones the divinity dislikes).²²

Many on the list believe that the decision of whether to include traditional *puja* should be left up to the individual practitioner. Cynthia's comments were fairly typical,

Most Western Pagans are going to do what they want to do. They should have the teaching available to them but no insistence that something has to be done one way. We know "the one way" thinking is fallacious. Encourage openness of teaching puja and its deeper meanings. Then Western Pagans will make it their own if they so choose.²³

Creating an IndoPagan tradition — SHARANYA

In my search for IndoPagan community I discovered SHARANYA, The Maa Batakali Cultural Mission, a well-established IndoPagan syncretist group in San Francisco, and spoke to its founder Chandra Alexandre. SHARANYA is home of Sha'Can, which describes itself as a tradition that is "based on the tenets of the Craft (commonly referred to as Wicca) and the Shakta path (Goddess-worshipping path of Hindu Tantra)."²⁴ SHARANYA is also a federally recognized non-profit religious organization which holds open rituals, *puja*, and study groups. SHARANYA also provides clergy services to its members, including clergy-training in the Sha'Can tradition. I felt that Ms. Alexandre would have a unique perspective on Indo-Paganism.

A Beginner's Guide to Hindu Deities

- **BRAHMA** — The Creator deity, Brahma takes an aloof role in the events of post-creation manifestation. Often portrayed in myths as a wise Grandfather-type from whom the “younger” gods may seek advice in times of trouble. He does not have a cult of his own, but is still honored as an important deity. (*Not to be confused with Brahman, which is the Supreme Undifferentiated Source in Hindu philosophy and theology.*)
- **DURGA** — The Great Warrior Goddess, Durga is most often depicted riding upon a lion or tiger and holding a panoply of weapons in her hands. She manifested in answer to the prayers of all the deities when none of the other gods were able to dispatch a demonic threat to the Three Worlds — only a goddess was capable of saving the universe! Often portrayed as the consort of Shiva and an aspect of Parvati, but also considered an independent goddess in her own right. One of the two central goddesses in the Shakta sect, Durga is often considered Mahadevi — The Great Goddess and the supreme personality of Brahman.
- **GANESHA** — The elephant-headed gatekeeper deity. Ganesh is to be honored before any other god/dess. The Remover of Obstacles. Son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesh known for his cleverness and sense of humor. The most universally worshipped deity in the Hindu pantheon, he is prayed to before undertaking any new venture or important activity.
- **KALI** — The Goddess of Chaos and (Transformative) Destruction, Kali is (in)famous for her striking iconography wherein She wears a garland of skulls, and displays her lolling tongue. Kali is also said to be the consort of Shiva, and in many cases the most wrathful manifestation of Parvati/Durga. Despite Her violent imagery, She is experienced as a strict but ultimately loving and compassionate Mother Goddess by many of her devotees. She is also one of the central Shakta goddesses, and has strong Tantric ties.
- **LAKSHMI** — The Goddess of Abundance and the eternal consort of Lord Vishnu. Lakshmi has a sweet and gentle nature, and always incarnates along with Vishnu. She appears as Sita for Lord Rama, and Radha for Lord Krishna. Lakshmi's worship also crosses sectarian lines, due to her role as the provider of all forms of wealth. In India money is often referred to as “Lakshmi,” and her iconography depicts her with golden coins spilling from her hand.
- **SARASWATI** — The Goddess of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Spirituality, Saraswati is one of the oldest deities in the Hindu pantheon. She has her roots in the ancient Vedas as the personification of the holy river Saraswati, and of the faculty and power of speech. All activities that utilize the voice fall under Her patronage, as well as artistic and academic pursuits. She is said to be the consort of Brahma, although some myths portray Her as His daughter.
- **SHIVA** — Lord of the Dance and Yoga, Shiva is also the personification of the male principal of inert but infinite consciousness and potentiality. In his Lord of the Animals aspect, Pashupati, He bears a striking resemblance to the Cernunnos from the Gundestrup Cauldron. Shiva is considered to be the Destroyer aspect of male divinity. Most of His manifestations have heavily shamanic connotations, and He is a central Tantric deity.
- **SHAKTI** — Can be personified as a goddess, “Shakti” also refers to the feminine principal of deity — the dynamic energy of manifestation. The process of creation, preservation, dissolution, and re-creation are said to be the dance of Shiva-Shakti, not unlike Yin and Yang, or the concept of the God and Goddess in Neopagan paths.
- **VISHNU** — The Great Preserver deity, often playing a Savior-like role, Vishnu incarnates in a physical form whenever the cosmic order (*Dharma*) is in danger. He has ten avatars, the most popular of which are Lords Krishna and Rama. Vishnu and his avatars are known to be wise, benevolent, and always ready to take action for the greater good.

Resources for Further Study on Traditional Hinduism

- **THE HIMALAYAN ACADEMY** — (www.himalayanacademy.com) has a wealth of introductory information online including their wonderful book, *Loving Ganesa*. Despite coming from a somewhat conservative Shaiva sect, the information is nonetheless valuable and accessible for those just starting to educate themselves in Hinduism. Be sure to make use of their online Hindu glossary and educational pamphlets, and check out their magazine *Hinduism Today*.
- **THE DEVI MANDIR** — (www.shreemaa.org) based in Northern California, the Devi Mandir is home to Shakta Saint Shree Maa, and the Western-born Swami Satyananda Saraswati. This temple has as its sole goal giving Westerners a wonderful education in traditional Hindu thought and practice. They have a gift for making scriptures and practices clear and easy for the modern mind, and applicable to anyone's life. Their translations of *pujas* (ritual worship) and scriptures are easy to understand, and the accompanying material — podcasts, videos, cds, online streaming audio — help elucidate the material further. A majority of their classes are available for free through their site, and all their books are quite affordable; and their offerings span the spectrum from absolute beginner to advanced practitioner. The Devi Mandir also run an e-group (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Devi_Mandir/) where members can ask whatever questions come to mind, and one is always guaranteed a supportive reply — often by Swami himself. ▲

I began by asking her about her religious background. Like most Indo-Pagans I contacted, she began with Pagan roots, and then discovered Hinduism. She described her journey this way:

I am a hereditary witch, initiated by my grandmother at puberty. My mother line is Roma (Gypsy), so we follow what might be called an interesting twist on the Old Religion. I was initiated into Shakta Tantra in Puri (India) in 1998 and into the Aghori Marga in 2003 at Kamakhya in Assam (India).²⁵

When I asked why she decided to blend Wicca and Hinduism, she explained,

It was an organic process. I am first and foremost a witch. A dream brought Kali to me in 1992, and my path grew from that place of awakening. I had previously not been drawn to the Hindu pantheon and knew nothing of it, really. The dream awoke something in me and I began learning more about Maa. When asked if I would 'convert' to Hinduism by Shyam [her first Hindu teacher], and then in readying for diksha (initiation), I had to think deeply about what I would be giving up and what I would be gaining. It was only when my time for receiving diksha was set — for August 2, the festival of Lamas in the Witch's Wheel of the Year — that I realized Maa was telling me it was okay to be a witch and a Hindu — the two were not irreconcilable.²⁶

She now calls her tradition Sha'Can, a term she coined "to express a coming together of Eastern and Western roots, lineages, and inclinations."²⁷ As to her practice, she describes that "I work with Kali (in all Her manifestations — through the *dasa mahavidyas*, *matrikas* and *yoginis*), [and with] Shiva, Ganesh, and Shyama Krishna (Black Krishna)."²⁸

Ms. Alexandre had a slightly different perspective when it came to the issues of acknowledging the culture of India in combining Western occult and Hindu traditions. Speaking of her own tradition, she explained,

The Sha'Can tradition has a very potent Hindu component in order to honor the lineages I carry and to help create the structure for worship of Kali in the West. I believe that to understand Her fully, we must honor Her origins fully — and those origins are in India. Only with this understanding can we create a new tradition birthed in the West and fully honoring of our unique call to the Divine as Maa. We are not, after all, a Hindu organization or tradition. With reverence and respect for Maa's homeland, we can then, as Westerners, create our own way of worshipping Her.²⁹

She believes that the hesitance of many Neo-Pagans towards adopting traditional Hindu practices such as *puja* is due to cultural bias, noting,

They [Neo-Pagans] often don't understand pujas at all and think they're too complicated. Pujas [are] conducted in a foreign language and most people don't want to bother getting a translation. Also, by and large, pujas are still done by male priests. One has to delve deeply into the tradition to find woman-centered, woman-created spaces of spiritual leadership. India gives us a vibrant, living tradition and if we are drawn to Hindu gods, then we need to honor Their homeland, rites, and rituals as they exist in the world today.³⁰

When asked if she thought it was necessary for Indo-Pagans to practice *puja*, she answered, "It's important for those wishing to work with Hindu deities."³¹

India gives us a vibrant, living tradition and if we are drawn to Hindu gods, then we need to honor Their homeland, rites, and ritual as they exist today."

The question of clergy

Another major issue is one of clergy, and this was the area that had the widest divergence of opinion in my survey. Some felt that, since Hinduism forms much of the basis of theology and liturgy in IndoPagan practice, IndoPagan clergy should conform to Hindu clerical training and restrictions. For example, those who undergo the clergy training through SHARANYA are required to learn Sanskrit just like traditional Hindu clergy.³²

Shakta scholar McDaniel, however, cited examples of tribal and folk-clergy in West Bengal who do not know Sanskrit (many being illiterate, or of too low a caste to be eligible for Vedic clergy training), but effectively serve as village priests and priestesses.³³ The majority of respondents to my survey noted that since learning Sanskrit was not necessary to their IndoPagan practice, it seemed unnecessary to require it of clergy. Other requirements for traditional Hindu clergy, such as celibacy and joining a religious order, also seemed to many unnecessary for Indo-Pagan clergy.

Kalipadma considers himself to be a Pagan clergy-person. However, when asked about whether he considered himself to be an IndoPagan clergyman, he answered that he did not. "Hindu [laypeople] can perform household *puja*, but to become [a member of the] Hindu clergy would involve taking vows of celibacy and joining a religious order. I'm not ready for that!"³⁴ Grady was also hesitant, noting,

Since Hinduism is an established religion with thousands of years of tradition and rules, the Indo-Pagan community needs to be very careful in how clergy are chosen, trained, and identified. The requirements need to be laid out as to number of years of study, requirements for continued study and community service to maintain clergy status, etc.³⁵

Moss Bliss, a Pagan clergyman and co-founder of Pathways Seminary, has expressed a desire to determine criteria for IndoPagan clergy and to provide suitable training.³⁶ In the meantime, those of us who identify as IndoPagan will have to rely primarily on lay-clergy, which, in many cases, will mean relying on ourselves.

Where do we go from here?

When asked to provide advice for those who may be struggling to find their foothold in IndoPaganism, most respondents recommended common sense and diligence. Fergus Grim, a self-initiated Wiccan, suggested,



“One of the best things I learned was to ‘just do it.’ Sit down and start praying. Perform a small ritual. Sing to the gods. Once you start, you’ll be on your way.”

Drop all your Pagan and Wicca books for a while and study Hinduism. Once you get a good grasp of what it is and who the gods are, then relate the two faiths together. Where do they differ and where do they mesh? I understand Karma, spiritual bodies, and morality better through the Hindu sources than the Wiccan ones! One of the best things I learned was to “just do it.” Sit down and start praying. Perform a small ritual. Sing to the gods. Once you start, you’ll be on your way.”³⁷

Grady responded, “Research, read, and practice. Find where you are comfortable, where you are challenged, and where boundaries you absolutely can’t escape exist.”³⁸ Kalipadma offered, “Read. Talk to members of the Hindu community, and of the Wiccan community. Respect all teachers, and seek a Guru of some sort — especially the one already in your heart.”³⁹ And finally, Chandra Alexandre of SHARANYA extended an invitation:

Come join one of our pujas! And if you’re not in the [San Francisco] Bay Area and can’t come visit us, then find a Hindu temple and experience what worship is like there so you have an embodied experience to work from. Try to honor the living tradition and understand it before you attempt to synthesize anything.”⁴⁰

Overall, IndoPagans I contacted seemed pleased simply by having found out that there are others who share their spiritual inclinations. Kalipadma expressed the excitement felt by many when he said, “I’m amazed by the existence of Shakti Wicca. I feel like the Ugly Duckling, having discovered the Swans!”⁴¹ When asked about the future of the IndoPagan community, most list members were optimistic. Cynthia describes the IndoPagan future as simply, “Gorgeous.”⁴² Another one commented,

I think there are lots of us out there but most are isolated, and think maybe they are the only one like this. As a community is built and the general NeoPagan community comes to know about the existence of this then more of us will come together, and then, once the basics are built new people will come. Right now we are the “early adopters.”⁴³

Now that the IndoPagan community has discovered itself, it is starting to work towards creating a viable community with publicly accessible resources. Already the IndoPagans have exercised their creative skills by writing blended rituals. The IndoPagan Project website (<http://indopaganproject.tripod.com>) hosts original ritual resources, and also provides links to other IndoPagan resources, including an extensive suggested reading list for those who wish to study Hinduism and also Wicca and NeoPaganism. Another website that hosts helpful information regarding syncretizing Wicca and Hinduism is the Samkhya Wicca site at <http://samkhyawicca.50megs.com>. Taking the bulk of her inspiration from the Samkhya school of Hinduism, the webmaster has created numerous IndoPagan rituals and practices, which she makes available through her site.

There are many sites that can be useful to those trying to piece together an IndoPagan practice. One such site is the Pagan Ganesha site at www.geocities.com/pagan_ganesha. One note: this site hosts many NeoPagan rituals that call on Ganesha, but otherwise there is nothing Hindu about the rituals at all. This may suit some practitioners, especially those still exploring the use of traditional Hindu elements in Neo-Pagan practice. Members of the IndoPagan Paths Yahoo discussion group (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/indopaganpaths>) regularly post ideas, information and scripts for such things as Hindu Quarter Calls, or Circle Castings. An online campus, The Shakti Wicca Training Chakra (<http://>

shaktiwicca.knowplace.ca) has also been launched to address the need for IndoPagan educational resources. It specializes in instructing Western NeoPagans in various fundamental aspects of Hindu thought and practice, with a focus on learning effective techniques of incorporating those elements into a Pagan practice.

There can be no doubt that an increasing population of NeoPagans exist that feel a deep resonance, and find the greatest inspiration in the Eastern tradition of Hinduism. A long period of time has passed when IndoPagans thought that we were alone, and were met with confusion, cynicism, or disdain by our own NeoPagan community. This new community is in flux, and working towards defining itself and its practices, as well as generally becoming more visible and accepted.

Hoping to foster open communication lines within our own ranks, and also create awareness and understanding within the NeoPagan world at large, an IndoPagan presents this information to you in good faith. It has been my pleasure to compile the interview material, and I extend a hearty thank you to all those who took the time to complete what was a much more lengthy survey than I had originally intended. I invite anyone who is interested in learning more about IndoPaganism to join our Yahoo discussion group; we will be more than happy to have you! OM Shanti, and Blessed Be.

Backnotes

¹Shakti Wicca Website, Devi Spring author and editor, copyright 2006, reference taken 1/22/07. <http://shaktiwicca.tripod.com>

²IndoPagan Paths Yahoo Group, founded 11/30/05 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IndoPaganPaths/>

³June McDaniel, *Offering Flowers, Feeding Skulls: Popular Goddess Worship in West Bengal*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England, 2004, pg. 284.

⁴Kalipadma, email interview, 1/20/06.

⁵Kerri-Leigh Grady, email interview, 1/20/06.

⁶"Michael," email interview, 1/19/06.

⁷Kalipadma, email interview, 1/20/06.

⁸Kerri-Leigh Grady, email interview, 1/20/06.

⁹IndoPagan Paths Yahoo Group, founded 11/30/05 <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IndoPaganPaths/>

¹⁰Pheonix ShadowStar, email interview, 1/23/06.

¹¹"Michael," email interview, 1/19/06.

¹²"Salamandir," email interview, 1/20/06.

¹³"Cynthia," email interview, 1/23/06.

¹⁴Kalipadma, email interview, 1/20/06.

¹⁵Kerri-Leigh Grady, email interview, 1/20/06.

¹⁶Moss Bliss, email interview, 1/20/06.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸David Frawley, "Sanatana Dharma and Religion of

the World," HinduNet's Hindu Books Universe, 1994-2003. www.hindubooks.org/david_frawley/hinduism/sanatana_dharma/page1.htm.

¹⁹Volmarr Wyrd, email interview, 1/21/06.

²⁰The IndoPagan Project website currently hosts many resources of use to IndoPagans, and is aiming to host many more, so there is a ready store-house of ritual inspiration for those who are seeking it.

The IndoPagan Project Website, Devi Spring author and editor, copyright 2006, reference taken 1/22/07. <http://indopaganproject.tripod.com>

²¹Moss Bliss, email interview, 1/20/06.

²²Kalipadma, email interview, 1/20/06.

²³"Cynthia," email interview, 1/23/06.

²⁴Sharanya: The Maa Batakali Cultural Mission, Inc. Website, no author listed, 2005.

www.maabatakali.org/shacan/

²⁵Chandra Alexandre, email interview, 1/22/06.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Sharanya: The Maa Batakali Cultural Mission, Inc. Website, no author listed, 2005. www.maabatakali.org/shacan/ordination.php4

³³McDaniel, *Offering Flowers, Feeding Skulls*, pp. 55-58.

³⁴Kalipadma, email interview, 1/20/06.

³⁵Kerri-Leigh Grady, email interview, 1/20/06.

³⁶Moss Bliss, D.D., Pathways Sanctuary and Seminary Website, 2005-2006. www.pathwaysseminary.org

³⁷Fergus Grim, email interview, 1/23/06.

³⁸Kerri-Leigh Grady, email interview, 1/20/06.

³⁹Kalipadma, email interview, 1/20/06.

⁴⁰Chandra Alexandre, email interview, 1/22/06.

⁴¹Len Rosenberg, email interview, 1/20/06.

⁴²"Cynthia," email interview, 1/23/06.

⁴³Volmarr Wyrd, email interview, 1/21/06. ▲

– DEVI SPRING is the founder of Shakti Wicca and creator of The IndoPagan Project, and moderates the IndoPagan Paths Yahoo!Group. She holds a Religious Studies B.A. from the University of Toronto, and teaches classes on NeoPaganism and IndoPaganism through her online campus The Shakti Wicca Training Chakra, located at <http://shaktiwicca.knowplace.ca>. Devi lives in Toronto with her partner and soul mate, Banger. She may be contacted at DeviSpring@gmail.com.