

Grassroots Global Ministry

The Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan Singh Khalsa Yogiji established the Sikh Dharma Ministry in 1971 to serve the organizational, leadership and spiritual needs of our Dharma, rekindling the *manji* tradition started by Guru Amar Das.

We have a diverse, rich resource of people that make up our Sikh Dharma Ministry. It's time that we learn more about each other, about what other Ministers are doing, and about how they are doing it. For our third volume of our Global Ministry in Action, we received inspiring stories of service from our brothers and sisters in Asia and Australia. Our theme for 2015 is the service and compassion of the eighth Sikh Guru—Guru Harkrishan Singh. We reflect upon his qualities in this newsletter as well.

Future issues will explore our service in other parts of the world...please enjoy these stories and may they inspire your service to humanity. We would love to hear from Ministers around the globe about your service projects as well!

Humbly,

The Sikh Dharma Ministers' Newsletter Team

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Serving with Empathy and Compassion

Reported by Gian Jiwan Kaur
Sat Nam Rasayan and Kundalini Yoga Teacher
Sydney, Australia

How do we reach those most in need to support and serve by the grace of Guru Ram Das and Yogi Bhajan? A few stories from “down under” are shared here. The devotion is stretched across this vast land to all walks of life and we will continue to serve and spread the teachings.

A History of Service

Following the request of Yogi Bhajan to spread the teachings of Kundalini Yoga as taught by Yogi Bhajan, Gurujivan Kaur left for Hong Kong in 1973 to teach teachers. In 1982, she moved to Australia to continue her mission.

As a Sikh Dharma Minister and Kundalini Yoga teacher, Gurujivan Kaur has mentored hundreds of people to become teachers and lead a conscious existence reaching out to others in the community and building a solid and thriving Kundalini Yoga Sangat in the region.



Gurujivan Kaur Khalsa
Sikh Dharma Minister and Kundalini Yoga Teacher
Melbourne, Australia

New Zealand and Southeast Asia are also experiencing strong Kundalini Yoga growth from Gurujivan’s ongoing efforts in the region. The close community gathers regularly to celebrate the teachings of Yogi Bhajan and share this sacred science. Each year we are blessed to have international teacher trainers visit our shore to extend and deepen our experience and teaching.

Yoga Therapy in Sydney

In 2012, we were honored with the grace of Dr. Shanti Shanti Kaur Khalsa when she first brought the *Foundations of Kundalini Yoga as Therapy* to Sydney. Since then she has continued to bring the therapy side of Kundalini Yoga to the Australian teachers every year. From this knowledge a number of teachers have been able to reach those most in need and watch the incredible transformative impact Kundalini Yoga and Kundalini Yoga as Therapy has on society.



Billie Atherstone, co-founder of Kundalini House in North Melbourne, immediately offered classes to those in need. Billie noted: “The course immediately generated a lot of interest. People were so enthusiastic and were so thankful for the access to a course that gave them an opportunity to work on the Self with such intention and to learn an effective tool for their recovery.”

One of Billie’s students shared how profound and healing she found the experience: “Billie’s trauma course has challenged and moved my trauma in ways that prior to starting I didn’t think was possible. It has been transformative. I have found that even through this trauma I have an inner teacher in myself too.”

“The course (PTSD) helped me to get to know me and to feel my pain in a good way and feel my emotions. I do not rely on food to squash my feeling as much as I used to and I am more confident with my capabilities. The support from Rut (the teacher) and Jo (the support person) was fantastic and I know their support held the space in just the right way for each person in the group. I am very happy I participated in this course.”—Nyrie

Serving and Healing

Harbir Kaur has transformed her home in Diamond Valley into a healing sanctuary. After training in 2009, Harbir found herself drawn to Sat Nam Rasayan (SNR) and the healing power of the Naad and the gong. Following Dr. Shanti Shanti’s course, Harbir’s hands-on healing work/SNR shifted into work with patients diagnosed with various health conditions. Many souls have since come for healings. In the tradition of all Kundalini Yoga teachers, Harbir experiences service as a privilege, and she thoroughly enjoys serving the Khalsa and so many souls to regain their strength, light, and connection to the Divine through these practices.





We have many teachers spread across this vast land doing amazing things. Didar Kaur from Mackay, North Queensland, Australia has raised more than \$40,000 (AUD) over the past few years to assist the homeless women's shelter in Mackay.

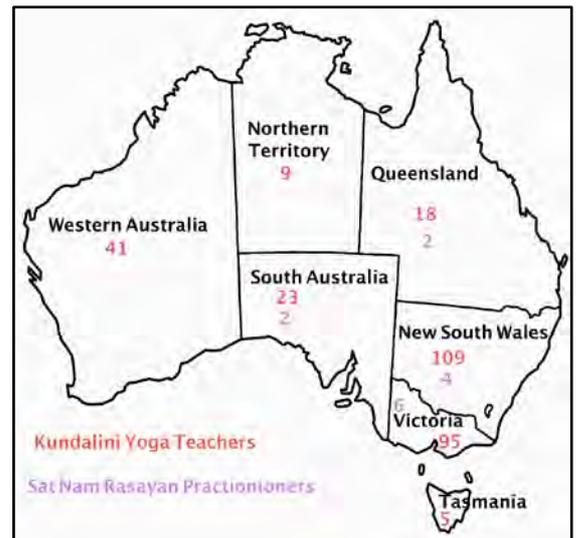
She offers Kundalini Yoga and Meditation classes and early morning Aquarian Sadhana where the community attends

and donates to the fundraising effort to provide for the needs of the women's shelter. A number of teachers are also reaching out to work one-to-one with individuals to bring them to a state of strength and calm, reconnecting with their inner resources through Kundalini Yoga and Meditation. Many teachers offer open Sadhana sessions by donation, bringing the community together in harmony and peace.

Sat Nam Rasayan

We are also blessed to have many SNR practitioners offering the healing aspects of this powerful practice to the community.

The compassion and empathy expands in the local communities of all Kundalini Yoga teachers and SNR practitioners, helping forge a more peaceful and holistic space for people to live with empathy and greater awareness. Wahe Guru!



Guru Dev Singh Khalsa at SNR assessment 2015 in Melbourne, Australia

Loss and Hope in Japan

Reported by Harinderpal Kaur
KRI Certified Yoga Teacher



March 11, 2011 changed many of our lives in Japan. When northern Japan was struck with the mega earthquake, the tsunami, and the explosion of the nuclear plant in Fukushima, many families lost literally EVERYTHING: including— and of foremost importance—their loved ones. The Japanese National Police confirmed 15,891 dead, 6,152 injured, and 2,584 missing until this day.

In 2011, the tour bus companies started volunteer trips to the northern villages and towns, making it widely accessible for people to join the recovery work from other regions, including overseas (thank you). Prior to the earthquake, many of us had never volunteered to serve the families and devastated towns, let alone held a shovel, axe, or saw to break down the houses, ranches, and greenhouses.

Many of us joined the volunteer trips simply because we wanted to help. What we witnessed was a pure grace and hope in the cold and dark chaos. In response to our efforts, people who had lost family members, homes, and jobs supported *us* in return. The towns



they grew up and lived in were wiped out by the tsunami. Yet, in spite of their despair, the people were ready to serve one another. It is in the midst of crisis, when we are stripped of our attachments, that we realize we are the instruments of God's peace. It is in our

human instinct to give a helping hand when we see someone that needs help. Through serving others we are all serving God in each other.

In April 2012, Minami-Soma, a city next to the Fukushima nuclear plant, permitted entry for the recovery work. Much of the fieldwork in Miyagi region had been completed and the tour bus companies stopped offering volunteer trips. Over the course of a year, a group of us had become very close, as many of us went every weekend to help out. We decided to form a private volunteer group. We began the trip to Fukushima in July 2012.



The first time I went, I was shocked and speechless. It felt as if time had completely stopped on March 11, 2011. Nothing had changed. Huge numbers of cars and large ships stood in the middle of the rice fields. Some houses remained torn apart from the earthquake. The fields were covered with overgrown grass. There were no children; there was no one working in the rice fields; stores were filled with broken glass. The town was deserted. It remained this way for at least another year.

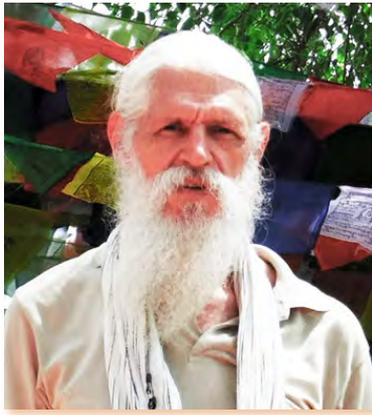
Minami-Soma, unlike the towns in Miyagi, faces issues that are not only visible to the eye. The people are living with emotional trauma of knowing that they can't go back even though they want to live in the town where they grew up. This beautiful town of 100 cherry trees that blossomed every spring has been devastated.

Now, wild animals roam where humans once lived. Currently, a man who has never missed a weekend leads these volunteer trips. He and a few more retired men have been steadily going to Minami-Soma twice a month, even though many others including myself go less and less. In their selfless service, they exemplify Guru Harkrishan, who sacrificed himself in his healing of the people suffering from smallpox.



It is my honor to introduce the men and women who are devoted to help heal our people and our land. It is said that it will take 40 years for the northern part of Japan to heal from the earthquake and tsunami, so our journey of seva continues. Sat Nam.

Harinderpal Kaur studied with SS Mahan Rishi Singh and SS Nirbhe Kaur Khalsa in Yardley, PA in 2008-2009. Shortly after finishing up the KRI Level 1 teacher training, she went back to her native Japan. She currently teaches Kundalini Yoga in Ibaraki and Tokyo regions. She and other Kundalini Yoga teachers in Japan are working to offer Level 1 teacher training and develop bigger Kundalini Yoga communities in different areas of Japan.



Universal Compassion in Cambodia

**Reported by Tonie Nooyens
KRI Certified Kundalini Yoga Teacher**

Many people probably know Cambodia first of all for the ancient temples of Angkor Wat, which bear witness to the great history of Southeast Asia with powerful kingdoms and enlightened rulers supporting the arts, science, philosophy and spiritual practice—Hinduism, Brahmanism, Buddhism—in a magnificent architectural expression.



Others will know Cambodia for more recent historical events: the Vietnam War and its overflow into Cambodia and Laos, followed by the genocidal communist regime of the Khmer Rouge that displaced and killed more than two million people in just a few years.

Travelers know the country for the kindness of the people of the land, their warm-heartedness, and their smiles. Few people know of the deep scars that historical events have left in Cambodian society and in the mind of the Cambodian people. Few know of generations of spiritual teachers being killed and of the traditional Buddhist tradition and practice being uprooted.

Only since 1993 was Cambodia able to escape from civil war. International organizations, NGOs and religious groups have been supporting government and civil society to restart social and economic development. But the trauma, poverty, low education levels and loss of ethical and spiritual foundation have led to a society in which greed, violence, and abuse are widespread. Basic values, respect for life, protection and security for those weak and vulnerable are fundamentally flawed.



The gap between rich and poor, between the powerful and those that depend on them, has led to a culture of excess and conspicuous consumerism. Only recent generations of young people have access to better education. They start asking questions, search for values, references, touchstones, but often can't find these, often being confused by the mass of unfiltered information that reaches them through the internet.

Kundalini Yoga in Cambodia

Kundalini Yoga Cambodia started its activities in 2005, with the aim to train Cambodians to become Kundalini Yoga teachers. The intention is to share the technology of Kundalini



Yoga and meditation with vulnerable groups in society so that these groups can find healing for the trauma of past conflict and for the pain inflicted by poverty, illness and injustice.

A small team of young, Level 1 certified Cambodian Kundalini Yoga teachers has been built that offers regular classes to Cambodians and international students. Most importantly the team reaches out to local groups and communities in the capital and in rural areas, sharing basic yoga and meditation techniques that have proven to be helpful in situations of stress and trauma. The team provides training to staff of community-focused organizations and trains local people interested in sharing these techniques in their communities.

The overriding aim of the program is to share the benefits of basic yoga and meditation as widely as possible with vulnerable groups and people that normally do not have access to these techniques.

Dharma in the Midst of Adversity

Cambodia, as most countries in Southeast Asia, has a population with a mix of ethnic groups and a mix of religions—Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and Animist. In Cambodia, as in many other countries, there are sensitivities between ethnic groups, between culturally and ethnically dominant and minority groups, between religious groups.



The longtime political and economic dominance of the main ethnic group has resulted in the indigenous and minority groups being vulnerable and insecure. Poverty and exclusion, along with the fluidity and weakness of social and spiritual values has created a conducive environment for diverse religious group and organizations to pursue more or less open or hidden agendas to convert people into their faith.

Whereas Cambodian society is fairly open for such groups to operate, governments and religious groups in other countries in the region tend to be much more restrictive in allowing religious and spiritual activities that do not conform with the main religion in that country.



Given the ethnic and religious diversity and the sensitivities about proselytism, the Kundalini Yoga Cambodia program is strictly secular, non-discriminatory and inclusive. The focus is on sharing the basic yoga and meditation technology in a neutral and practical manner with emphasis on the balancing and healing benefits.

Teaching in a Buddhist environment it is relatively easy to relate yogic dharma concepts to commonly known Buddhist precepts and lifestyle, and to explain and discuss yogic philosophical thoughts. Moving into environments that are not Buddhist or that do not relate to spiritual practices rooted in the Indian philosophical and religious traditions, the introduction of dharma and philosophical concepts can be very delicate. It needs to be done with care, avoiding any impression of religion. Teaching in a religious context, the program refers to universal human values of kindness and compassion, of respect and tolerance. It is non-confrontational in respect to the outlook and the religious and spiritual understanding of the students in each environment.

Basic Teacher Training

Apart from the regular KRI Kundalini Yoga Level 1 Teacher Training, Kundalini Yoga Cambodia offers a condensed Basic Teacher Training course that aims to transfer



selected key techniques and principles of Kundalini Yoga and Meditation to Cambodian students in their own language and related to their specific circumstances.

This course is practical and interactive, with trainees from local communities and organizations presenting and sharing from the very start, enabling them to teach and use

the techniques correctly and confidently in their social and professional environment.

The focus of the course is on improving general health and well-being, relieving stress and trauma, dealing with addictions, and building confidence, identity and perspective.

Community Focused Yoga and Meditation

Since 2005 Kundalini Yoga Cambodia has implemented outreach activities in the capital Phnom Penh, supporting youth in deprived and insecure areas with a high incidence of crime, violence, prostitution, and addiction. Yoga and meditation help them ease their stress levels, to process feelings of anger, despair, and depression. These practices are building their confidence and perspective, making it possible for them to break the cycle of deprivation.



In the province of Prey Veng, Kundalini Yoga Cambodia works in partnership with a rural development NGO that provides shelter and education to young female victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and human trafficking. Using Kundalini Yoga and meditation techniques the women can process their experience and emotional pain, anger and depression. They can rebuild their self-image and re-gain confidence in themselves. They can also learn about a healthier lifestyle and get help with drug addiction.

Basic Kundalini Yoga and meditation techniques have been shared with community groups of people living with HIV/AIDS. Feedback from participants indicated that stress levels were reduced, feelings of well-being increased and symptoms such as sleeplessness became less. Staff members of NGOs working with these communities have been trained in sharing these basic techniques for integration into their working strategies.



Kundalini Yoga Cambodia has also shared its community yoga program with Community Based Organizations (CBOs) in Myanmar that have active grassroots development links in remote parts of the country; and with Kundalini Yoga teachers in other countries interested in this basic community-focused yoga and meditation program.

***Tonie Nooyens** is a practitioner of different traditions of meditation, meditational yoga and healing. He is a certified Kundalini Yoga teacher, having studied with SS Sunder Singh in Thailand since 2001. He is one of the lead trainers in the Kundalini Yoga Asia Teacher Training Program. Tonie travels widely, facilitating teacher training, workshops, and retreats throughout Asia.*

Tonie has been living in Southeast Asia since 1990. Since January 2005, he has been based in Cambodia, conducting a Yoga and Meditation training program for Cambodians, and setting up stress and trauma relief activities, as well as communication and personal capacity training for vulnerable groups.

Healing in Australia

**Reported by Beantjeet Kaur (Christine Goodman)
Sydney, Australia**

My goal after completing KRI Teacher Training in 2011 was to bring light to darkness, to take the teachings of Kundalini Yoga to people who were walking a darker path through life.



Initially my regular weekly classes included a low-cost community class to access people with depression, mental health and addiction issues. I also became involved with the Life Force Cancer Foundation.

What a gift when Sardarni Sahiba Dr. Shanti Shanti Kaur came to Australia in 2013 to teach Foundations of Yoga Therapy with a focus on cancer and immune disorders. The clarity of her teaching was incredible! I began to develop as a yoga therapist, skills which have proved invaluable in working with the diverse populations who show up in my classes and in my life.

"[This course was] a beautiful way to create healing energy for anyone, either as a way of recovery therapy or simply as a means to enjoy and appreciate the here and now. I really look forward to the weekly sessions which are tailored around the particular needs of the participants. Christine is a very knowledgeable and caring instructor and supports a warm, welcoming group."— Jenny

The students come with an infinite variety of symptoms, conditions, and stories. Dr. Shanti Shanti imparts the ability to be so present in the moment that one intuitively knows what to do, by trusting in the connection, trusting in the teachings to deliver, trusting in the Self to hold the space for healing. She reminded us that "less is more."

My association with Life Force continues and I now teach two classes per week for people recovering from cancer and chronic illness in Inner West Sydney. In 2014 we initiated open "yoga therapy" classes at a donation-based studio in Inner Sydney, followed by a successful course for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The

most consistent participants were two incredible ladies in their 60s. The benefits they received from the series highlighted how there are no boundaries to healing.

I also volunteer at a local center to help asylum seekers find a still point amid uncertain times. The universal language of breath brings prana to the hearts of those whose journeys are unimaginably traumatic. Many of the participants are able to relax for the first time in months, maybe even years.



Here is a testimonial by one of the students in the cancer recovery class:

“Because the yoga course focused on gentle stretching and breathing, I have improved my lung capacity and mobility and have started regular exercise again for the first time in months. Thank you for this course. It has made a great difference to my healing and I am looking forward to the next one.”—Vicki

This July, the classes will celebrate their one year birthday. Wahe Guru! Word is spreading and a beautiful healing energy is building in the space and among the participants.

A flyer for an 8-week series of yoga meditation and deep relaxation for people recovering from cancer, immune, and anxiety disorders. The text is arranged in a vertical layout. At the top, it says "8 week series of yoga meditation & deep relaxation for people recovering from". Below this is a photograph of pink plumeria flowers. Overlaid on the flowers is the text "cancer immune & anxiety disorders" in bold, yellow, sans-serif font. At the bottom, it provides the schedule: "Thursday 10.30-11.30am", the location: "Whites Creek Cottage 31 White Street Lilyfield / Annandale", and contact information: "contact Christine : 0410 289 519".

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**"You answered the call of duty—
that's the beauty of life."**

**Siri Singh Sahib Bhai Sahib Harbhajan
Singh Khalsa Yogiji
(July 7 1977)**