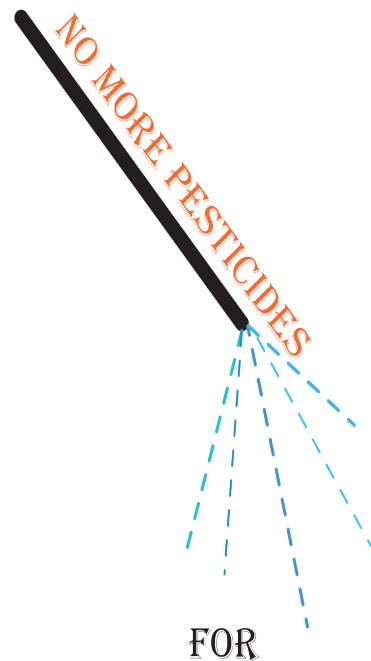


LIFE IN A SPIRITUAL POD. 1984 TO 1989.

It had been a peculiar time as a young adult who had left the family farm to study at an agricultural college near Brisbane. However after near completion of the diploma I became disillusioned with the practices being advocated, so decided to travel by bicycle from the Gold Coast so to visit permaculture farms. It was time to get away from the agricultural college and do a compare and contrast with other modes of farming practices. I believed the education to be advocating for large multinational corporations. The poetry of pesticides should be mitigated by the use of a

INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES



Biodynamic farming

PERMICULTURE

A bicycle and panniers, including a guitar to travel and learn about alternative agriculture and lifestyle: it was my initial sense of advocating to reform the agricultural system, and what became known as intentional communities. Another traveler had been experimenting with biodynamic organic farming techniques. As I traveled further, another farm constructed tipi lodges for basic accommodation, as well a sweat lodge, whilst another community had more of a contemporary art sense. Although the journey was in essence a search for meaning in Australian society, as a citizen in the nation, that advocated at the time, libertarian values.

High lights of cycle journey. 1983

Began journey at the Gold Coast, 1884. The first encounter with Raja Yogta through a five day

Worked on alternative intentional communitiets in northern NSW.

Attended the Sydney raja yoga centre for a week. Experienced living with members.

Worked on organic farms, and stayed at cyclist accomodation in Canberra.

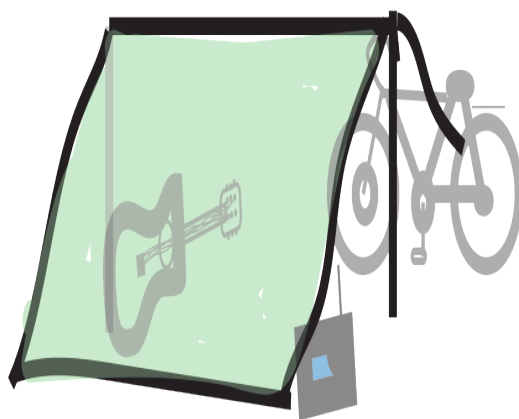
Stayed at a beach side country homestead, and surfed with fellow travellers'.

The main challenge was finding the right place to stay, given some farms really wanted to have visitors work long hours for food and a campsite. However, in general, it seemed like a fair deal and an educational opportunity.

I was interested in furthering my participation in the Raja Yoga group since it appealed to my sense of authentic spiritualism. So I left northern NSW intentional communities for towns along the East Coast, which proved interesting, and places to pass through till I reached Sydney.

CAMP SITE SET-UP

Arriving on the outskirts of Sydney with a bicycle was daunting, though luckily a campsite was located within urban bushland. The following day, it was off to Surry Hills, the national headquarters for the BK, Raja Yoga movement. Riding through the city had an alienating undertone, though counter-balanced, given the cheery welcome from the chief.



Life in Sydney surrounded by the closely ideologically aligned members of the BK raja yoga movement amidst the density of urban infrastructure proved to be an immersive environment. There was a constant movement

between the 'Pandav Bhavan' (brother's house) and the Raja Yoga center.

A confounding mix of light-hearted banter using quintessential cult jargon and the formal tone had a sense of authenticity.

This lifestyle was similar to what I had

experienced in Northern NSW. However, this was city life with a new religious millenarian movement.

In group terms

OM

SHANTI- self
is peace

SHIVA BABA-
leaders name

Sanskars- memories

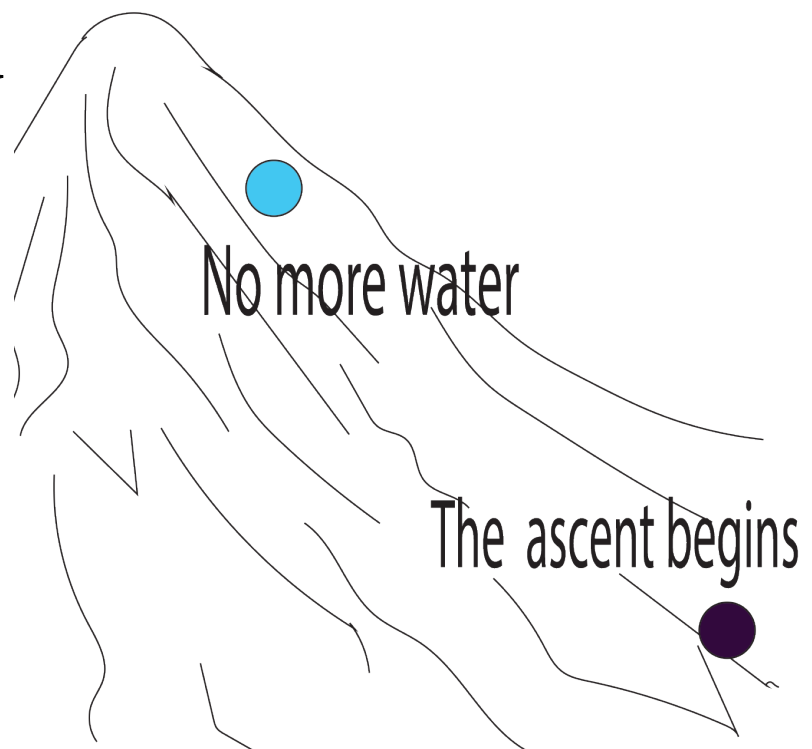
soul consciousness- theory of mind

eternal world drama- ideology

murli- readings from leader

borg - food offered to leader

It was the most challenging cycling slog of the journey where the mighty dividing range posed the most significant challenge. I had run out of bottled water at some point, cycling up the long and winding ascent, so I decided best to hitch a ride. After a couple of hours, a utility driver kindly offered to take me to the nearest town. The Willing Workers on Organic Farms system had a guide to locations and contact details. A farm not too distant from the township seemed like an excellent opportunity to take rest and change my social environment from what had been the yogic lifestyle.

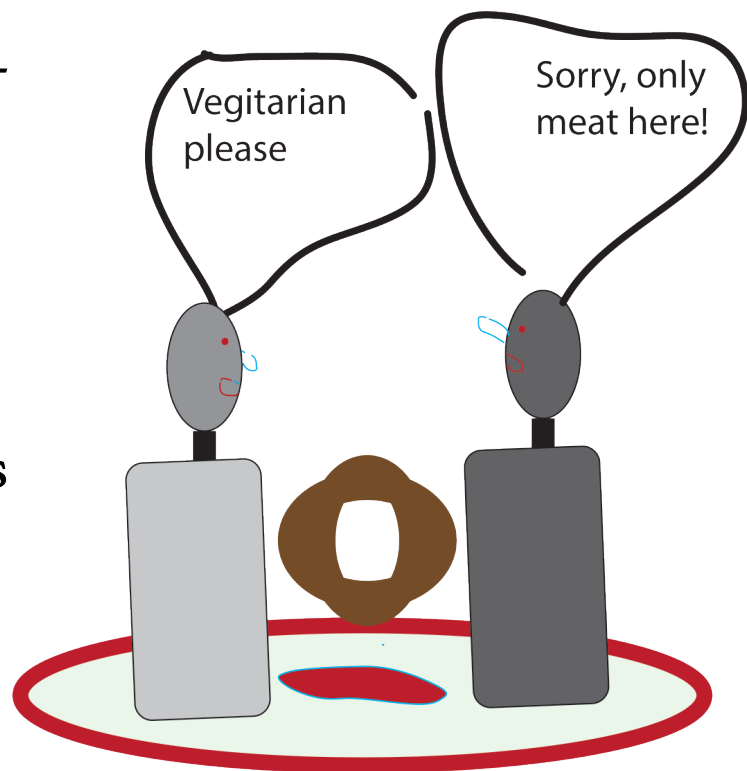


Surry Hills had a magnetic quality with all its grungy buildings and narrow streets. The haven of the Pandav Bhavan was a real base camp which gave solidity to the city life. Though the novelty wore off eventually, and I had to decide on where to further explorations. My quest was to discover valuable innovative farming practices that seemed to be lacking at the Gatton agricultural college. So

I rode towards Canberra in search of farms and an encounter with the capital.

However as I began reading the literature and taking to vegetarian diet, it became apparent that this was a lifestyle distinct to the mainstream of Australian values.

My initial surprise was when I stayed at a farm but requested vegetarian, it was taken as a mild offence to the other farm volunteer and orchardist farmer, and so soon left for the city.



It was whist in the capital city of Australia that I began to have a sense of identifying with a notion of the choice pertaining to national identity. That is being the kind of citizen within the national identity frame of reference. So choosing to have a lifestyle of the sort that aligned with the rhetoric of spiritual values had a sense of authenticity. I felt a sense of affiliation to alternative Australian culture with its genesis in biker group sojourns of my Late and post high school years.



The transition from a local boy of a small country town where to ride a motorcycle had a symbolic status tone, to the ascription of Australian larrikinism, FNQ style. This included motorbike rides to Ravenshoe or the Mareeba rodeo with the Tully motorcycle enthusiasts. It was, in a sense, the passage rights in a secular/religious methodology etched in the times. However, I had an individuality by donning a long coat that was an homage to a character in the Doctor WHO series.



It was the city with its formality and status as a capital that may have impacted how the Raja Yoga center influenced my interpretation of the ideological content. The members had a style quite distinct to the other yoga centers. There were all the familiar settings of religious paraphernalia, but the sense of Australian national elite had an international relations mandate. It gave the movement a gravitas that enhanced its philosophical merit somewhat artificially. On the surface, I felt part of the contemporary Australian lifestyle that transcended parochialism and the cultural cringe of the age.

Depiction. From organic materialism to urban spiritualism. 1. banana plant with meditator contrasted with city street with meditator.

A full circle that began at the Gold Coast eventually led me, a little further north, to the Sunshine Coast. I felt the urge to take up study with the group more intensely than I had ever felt in formal education. It was my intension to study the teachings and meditate on being a non physical mind, with the focus on the concept of God as integral. The group environment was essential for the creation of a utopian cyclic world. India was a place of heavenly delights. A yearly journey to a hill station on the Indian sub continent became a mission. A divine madness ensued taking myself and others on a trip of a life time.

Place a depiction of me siting as meditator with themes like god, soul and cycle emanating from my head.

The sunshine coast was a tiny Raja Yoga centre run by Maria who had a dynamic Queensland country womens style but adapted in a pragmatic sense to the BK ideological beliefs. It was at this time that I deeply contemplated if I should return to complete agriculture or take up a full time dedication to the movement that was seemingly offering a lifestyle that I could relate to on a deeply personal level. Group idealization was the beginning of a journey into what was to become the personal is political movement.