



# AGNIYOGANA

**AGNIYOGANA**

LOWER THE HEAD AND INVOKE THE FIRE

A DOCUMENTARY BY EMMA BALNAVES EXPLORING THE TRUE  
POTENTIAL OF THE ANCIENT YOGIC PATH IN THE MODERN WORLD.

# AGNIYOGANA

LOWER THE HEAD AND INVOKE THE FIRE

**Australia - 63 mins - Color**

HATHA YOGA FILM PRESENTS "AGNIYOGANA"

MUSIC BY MARIHIKO HARA RYUICHI SAKAMOTO EDITED BY LINDI HARRISON, ASE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY U MUT GUNDOZ CHRIS HERTZFELD DREW SAINSBURY  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER ALEXANDRA GILBERT EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JUDY YU DAVID LIPSUS EMMA BALNAVES PRODUCED BY EMMA BALNAVES DIRECTED BY EMMA BALNAVES

## CONTACT



### **Official Website**

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### **Instagram**

<https://www.instagram.com/agniyoganafilm/>

### **Hashtag**

#agniyogana

## **ABOUT THE FILM**

**AGNIYOGANA is a meditative inquiry into the lost art of classical Hatha Yoga.**

Offering an experiential collage of action and stillness, light and darkness, sound and silence, AGNIYOGANA explores the richness of traditional Hatha Yoga teachings.

**AGNIYOGANA takes the viewer on a journey through time and space to rediscover the inner dimensions of Hatha Yoga and the true meaning of “yuj,” (yoga).**

Our documentary film begins with a visual and aural initiation. The journey inward then explores the key requirements of Hatha Yoga: Firmness of mind; the importance of faith; the necessity of a qualified teacher; skillful moderation; the methods to restrain the senses; and the practice of universal equanimity.

Throughout the film we examine the microcosm of the internal self in relation to the macrocosm of the elements, seasons, time of day, and other external forces of nature. The narrative is woven together through commentary, wisdom, and insight from those who continue to uphold and live by the ancient ways of yoga.

Throughout, AGNIYOGANA offers rarely seen glimpses of traditional Hatha Yoga practices as expressed by modern day yogins.

**AGNIYOGANA is a meditation.**



## **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

EMMA BALNAVES

**AGNIYOGANA, the film's title, refers to the yoking of one's own inner fire. This inner fire is what transmutes and transforms every living being so they may become more fully awake, vibrant and alive.**

The commentary on the Vedas known as the Satapatha Brahmana states:

*'Then...when about to speak the morning prayer, he yokes the fire altar...and when yoked, he obtains all wishes.'* (9:4:4:1).

So how does one yoke the fire to obtain our wishes for ourselves and humanity? This question is the basis for my lifelong inquiry into Hatha Yoga.

As I studied the classical texts and systems of Hatha Yoga, and travelled the globe meeting those who were adept in the traditional forms, I saw the great potential of a film that illuminated the holistic practices of Hatha Yoga through the words and experience of authentic practitioners.

We needed to go back to the roots.

To reveal these traditional practices to others so they may be remembered and once again shared with a world in need.

To light the fire of inquiry in the next generation of spiritual aspirants.

**The tagline of AGNIYOGANA, "Lower the Head and Invoke the Fire," is an invitation to bow to the fire within each of us.**

**FILMMAKER**  
EMMA BALNAVES



Emma Balnaves is the producer and director of AGNIYOGANA and an internationally respected teacher of the traditional forms and philosophies of Hatha Yoga. She has been teaching yoga since 1998.

Emma was introduced to yoga in her early teens when she became intrigued by the mystery of the practices and the feelings they evoked inside her.

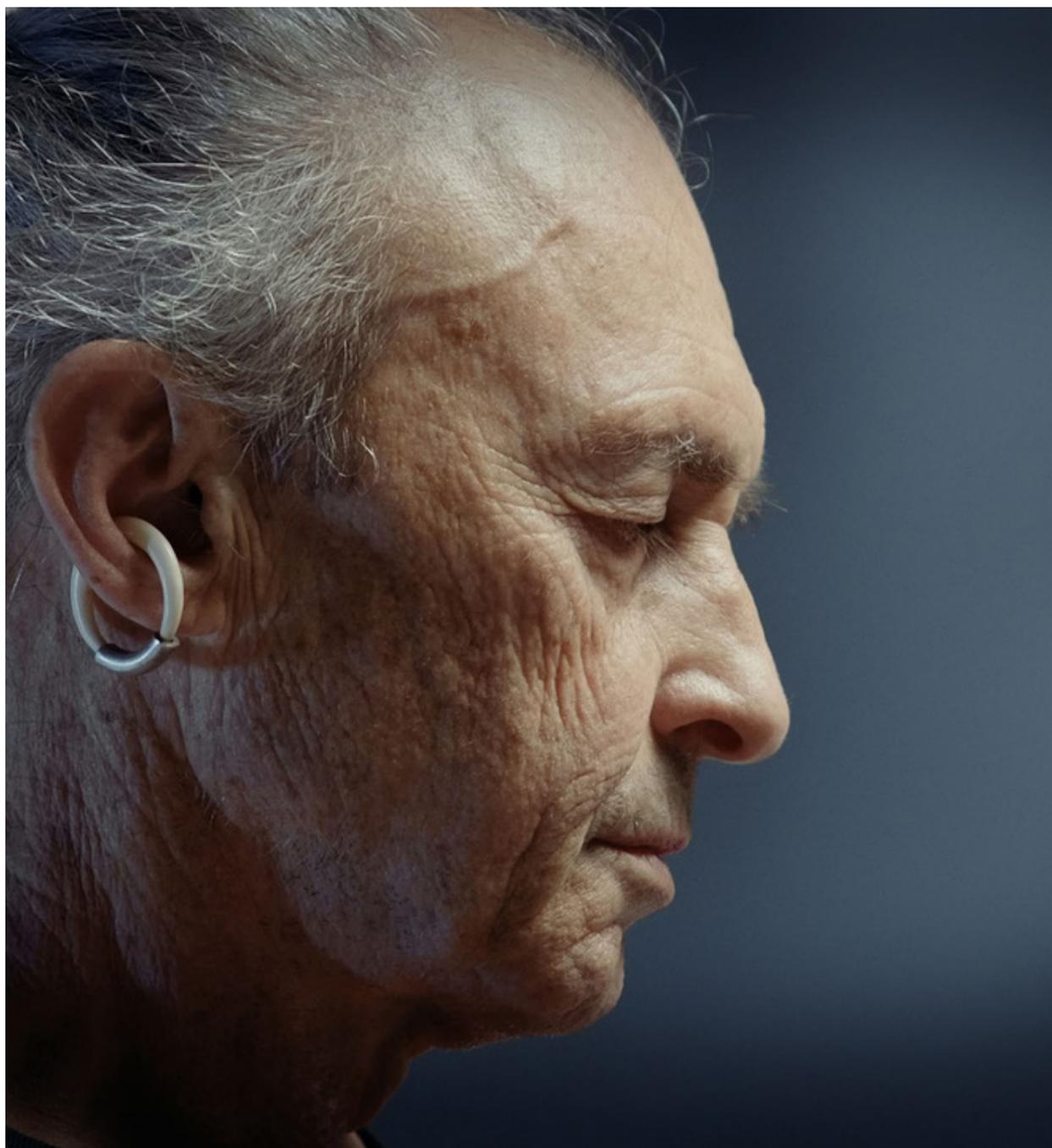
After studying visual communication, majoring in photography at university, and working in the creative arts in Sydney, New York, and London, Emma committed herself to a life of teaching yoga. Her early training began with a rigorous three-year apprenticeship at the Hatha Yoga Shala in Bondi Junction, Sydney, Australia.

After decades of in-depth study and research in yoga, Ayurveda, and other internal arts, Emma began incorporating the full spectrum of the yogic process in her teaching. AGNIYOGANA is her first film. She was inspired to create AGNIYOGANA as a way to share the essence of these teachings and bring greater understanding to all aspects of the practice.

Emma is the author of three publications, "Nataraja - the Lord of Multiple Forms," "Yoga for Women," and "Seasonal Mandala". She is co-founder and director of Shadow Yoga (a form of classical Hatha Yoga) and Nŗtta Sādhanā. Emma resides in Adelaide, Australia with her husband and teaching partner, Shandor Remete.

[www.shadowyoga.com](http://www.shadowyoga.com)

**FEATURING:  
NARRATION/YOGA**



**Sundernath (Shandor Remete)**

Lineage: Nath Sampradaya

Origin: Hungary

Filmed on Location: Hendon Studios,  
South Australia

Shandor was fortunate to be born into a household at the south eastern tip of the great Hungarian plain where the art of yoga was a daily presence. From this seed his destiny on the path of yoga unfolded.

He is an initiate of the Kanpatha Hatha Yogins of Nepal, descendants of Sri Gorakhanath and his Guru Sri Matsyendranath. These great Yogins, were the forefathers of Shadanga (six-limbed) Yoga, the heart of which is Hatha Yoga - the science bestowed on humanity by Adinatha (the Lord Shiva).

## INTERVIEW SUBJECTS

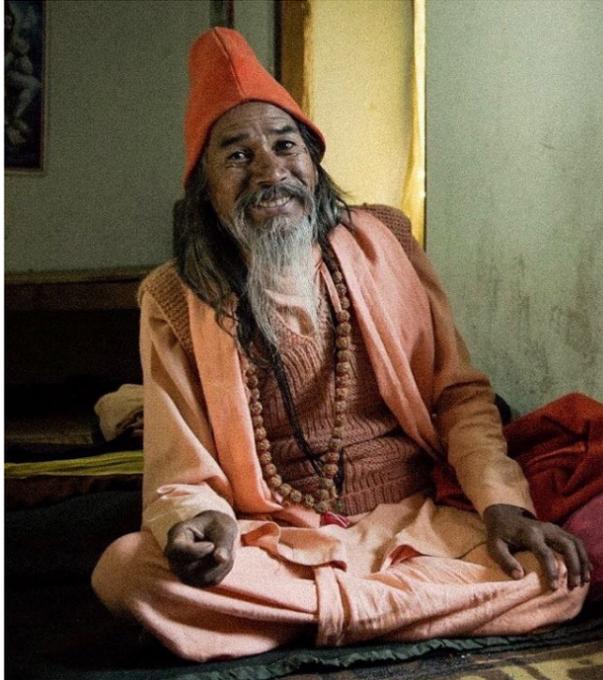


### **Dr. Manmath Gharote**

Lineage: Hatha Yoga Historian /  
Researcher  
Origin: Lonavala, India  
Filmed on Location: Lonavala Institute,  
Lonavala India

Dr. Manmath Gharote is the Director of The Lonavala Yoga Institute in India. He was born and brought up in the Kaivalyadhama in an atmosphere and conditions devoted to yoga and was inspired to specialize in yoga through his tremendous respect for Swami Kunalayanandaji.

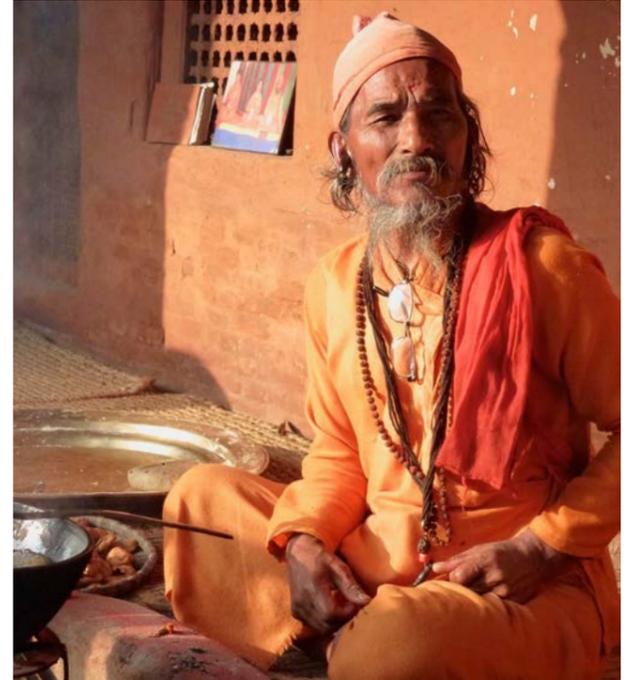
He is fully devoted to the field of yoga and committed to fulfill the mission of The Lonavala Yoga Institute, continuing to further the task which was left as a legacy to him by his beloved father Dr. M. L. Gharote.



### **Yogi Narinath**

Lineage: Nath Sampradaya Vamsa  
Origin: Jumla, West Nepal  
Filmed on Location: Gorakhanath  
Temple, Mrigasthali, Kathmandu, Nepal

Yogi Narinath is a yogi and hermit from the Nath tradition of Gorakhanath. He was the caretaker of the famed Goraknath shrine in the heart of Nepal at the ancient Mrigasthali (deer park) and now the retired mahant of the Gorakhanath Temple.



### **Yogi Shirshnath**

Lineage: Nath Sampradaya  
Origin: Gulmi, Nepal  
Filmed on Location: Gorakhanath  
Temple, Mrigasthali, Kathmandu, Nepal

Yogi Shirshnath is a Yogi of Nath tradition and he is serving as the Mahanta of Gorakhanath Temple, Mrigasthali. Located near the famous temple Pashupatinath.

## INTERVIEW SUBJECTS



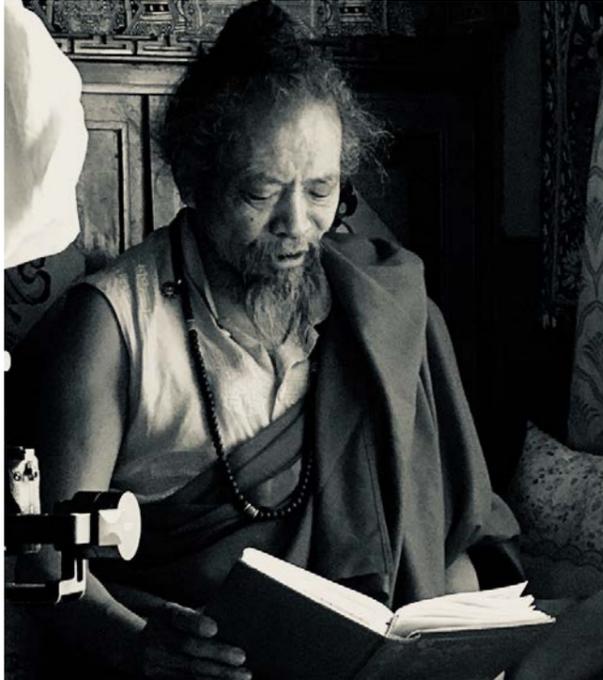
### **Dr. Govinda Tandon**

Title: Former Member Secretary of Pashupati Area Development Trust  
Origin: Kathmandu, Nepal  
Filmed on Location: Pashupatinath Area, Kathmandu, Nepal

Dr. Govinda Tandon is a leading scholar of Nepali history, culture and archaeology. He spent eleven years as the Treasurer and Member-Secretary of Pashupati Area Development Trust, a holy site of the Hindus worldwide.

Also a well-known figure of Dharma and spirituality in Nepal, he has published various books in Nepali and English, including 'Thoughts for Superb Living' (2016) and 'Masterly Living' (2017).

He is the founder and Chairman of Thoughts For Superb Living (The Real Life Making Movement) and Chief Patron of Manav Seva Ashram.



### **Dordzin Dondrup Palden Rinpoche**

Lineage: Drikung Kagyu  
Origin: Birzong, Tibet  
Filmed on Location: Boudhanath District, Kathmandu, Nepal

Dordzin Dondrup Palden Rinpoche is a Drikung Kagyu scholar and senior yogic retreat master who lives in a semi-permanent mountain retreat in the southern Himalaya.

He is a leading instructor for Drikung retreat practitioners, especially at the important Lapchi retreat center in eastern Nepal.



### **Nubpa Konchok Tenzin Rinpoche**

Lineage: Drikung Kagyu  
Origin: Drikung, Tibet  
Filmed on Location: Nayapati, Rinchen Ling Gompa, Kathmandu, Nepal

Nubpa Konchok Tenzin Rinpoche is the 12th Nubpa Rinpoche of the Drikung Kagyu lineage. While still in his mother's womb, he was recognized by H.H. The 34th Drikung Kyabgon Konchok Tenzin Shiwai Lodro as one of the six important reincarnated lamas who looked after the Drikung Thil Monastery.

## INTERVIEW SUBJECTS



### **Ani Chonyi Zangmo**

Lineage: Nyingma-Pa  
Origin: Shegatse, Central Tibet  
Filmed on Location: Ewam Gompa,  
Pharping, Nepal

Ani Chonyi Zangmo is a Tibetan Buddhist nun and teacher at the Ewan Ani Gompa in Pharping, Nepal.



### **Dr. Sherab Tenzin**

Lineage: Nyingma  
Origin: Eastern Bhutan  
Filmed on Location: Boudhanath  
District, Kathmandu, Nepal

Dr. Sherab Tenzin is a Bhutanese Doctor and Master of Traditional Tibetan Medicine (Sowa Rigpa).

This ancient Himalayan knowledge of healing is based on centuries of experience, a systematic, logical approach which gives the complete understanding of inner body and its relation with the outer environment. His father who was a Dorji Lupon (Vajra Master), was an emanation of a great yogi from PemaKod, Tibet.

Dr. Sherab received many teachings and transmissions from many important masters from Kagyu and Nyingma lineages. He has degrees in Tibetan Medicine and Surgery. He is the founder and director of Pure Vision Sorrig Healing and Research Center in Nepal.

## INTERVIEW SUBJECTS



### **Dr. Robert Svoboda**

Lineage: Sampradaha, Sampradaya  
Origin: Texas, United States  
Filmed on Location: Mumbai, India

Dr. Robert Svoboda is one of the first Westerners to graduate from a college of ayurveda and be licensed to practice ayurveda in India.

He is the author of 12 books and often speaks on ayurveda, jyotish, tantra and allied subjects around the world.



### **Dr. Martina Ziskova**

Title: Neurologist / Ayurveda Practitioner  
Origin: Jicin, Czech Republic  
Filmed on Location: Budapest, Hungary

Dr. Martina Ziskova is a Czech ayurvedic doctor. Besides working with people on almost all continents, she writes extensively and is a former editor-in-chief of Light on Ayurveda Journal (now Ayurveda Journal of Health).

Her current work and life journey is bringing her deeper into the psychological and energetic aspects of ayurveda and yoga with a quest to get to the core issues of who we are, how we function and what we need as individuals and society.

# CREW

## **Director/Producer**

EMMA BALNAVES

## **Editor**

LINDI HARRISON, ASE

## **Composers**

MARIHIKO HARA

RYUICHI SAKAMATO

## **Executive Producers**

JUDY YU

DAVID LIPSIUS

EMMA BALNAVES

## **Associate Producer**

ALEXANDRA GILBERT

## **Assistant Editor & Colourist**

DANNY PHILLIPS

## **Sound Design/Mixer**

CARLOS MANRIQUE CLAVIJO

TOM HEUZENROEDER

## **Copy Editor**

JOHN EVANS

## **Production Consultant**

KATRINA LUCAS

## **NEPAL/INDIA**

### **Principal Cinematography**

UMUT GUNDUZ

DREW STANSBURY

### **Additional Cinematography**

TARUN JASANI

EMMA BALNAVES

### **Nepal Sound Assistant**

ALEXANDRA GILBERT

## **SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

### **Studio Yoga Shoot**

HENDON STUDIOS

### **Cinematography**

1ST DOP CHRIS HERZFELD

2ND DOP UMUT GUNDUZ

### **Gaffer**

RICHARD REES-JONES

### **Translations**

CHAMPA HUNDRUP

BHARAT GIRI

RATNA TASHI

CHAMPA HUNDRUP (TIBETAN)

MILA PRODUCTIONS (NEPALESE)

### **Subtitles**

JAMPA (TIBETAN)

JORGEN (NEPALESE)

### **Graphics**

ABRA REMPHREY

(DETOUR DESIGN)

### **Shiva Samhita translated into English by**

RAI BAHADUR SRISA CHANDRA VASU

## CREW:

EDITING / COLOURIST / SOUND DESIGN & MIX



### **Lindi Harrison**

Lindi Harrison is a highly acclaimed editor of award-winning Documentary, Drama and Arts programs for local and international broadcast and cinema release. She has edited a range of award winning feature length documentaries and has been nominated for several awards, including an AACTA Award for Best Editing in a Documentary.  
[www.imdb.com/name/nm0365710/](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0365710/)

### **Danny Phillips**

Danny Phillips is an editor and colourist with over 15 years experience as a post-production professional. He has worked both nationally and internationally on projects ranging from small scale 3 minute micro-documentaries, to fully funded television broadcast series.  
[www.dannyphillips.com.au](http://www.dannyphillips.com.au)

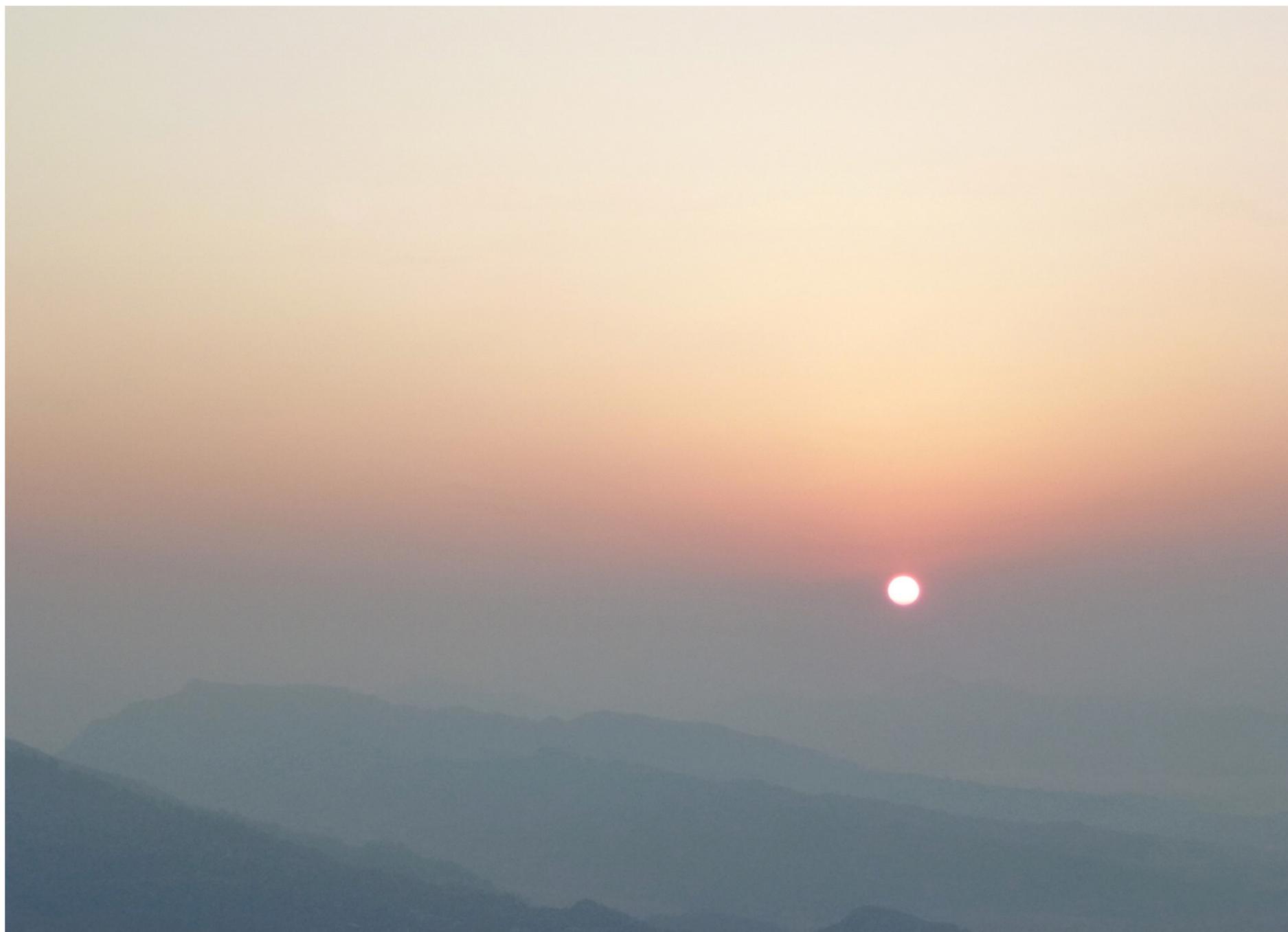
### **Carlos A. Manrique Clavijo**

Carlos A. Manrique Clavijo is a sound designer who has worked on several award-winning productions including fiction, documentary and predominantly, animation.  
[www.karu-karu.com](http://www.karu-karu.com)

### **Tom Heuzenroeder**

Tom Heuzenroeder is a Primetime Emmy Award nominated sound designer and has worked in film and television sound post-production for over 20 years in Australia and abroad. He ran a studio in Adelaide writing and recording music for commercials and corporate productions before turning to feature films and establishing a sound facility at the South Australian Film Corporation. He has been recognized for his sound design work with an AFI award and the Australian Screen Sound Guild's Andrew Plain Award for Best Film Sound Design.  
[www.imdb.com/name/nm0381928/](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0381928/)

**CREW:**  
MUSIC



**Marihiko Hara**

Marihiko Hara is a composer residing in Kyoto, Japan. His main interest is to compose serene silence in music and to pursue his own texture of sounds, through electric/acoustic sounds and field recordings.  
[www.marihikohara.com](http://www.marihikohara.com)

Our friend, **Ryuichi Sakamoto**, created a new piece of music for this film. [www.sitesakamoto.com](http://www.sitesakamoto.com)

**CREW:**  
CINEMATOGRAPHY



**Umut Gunduz**

Umut Gunduz is a UK based filmmaker. He has worked as a director, editor and cameraperson for major broadcasters (CA, BBC) and various international companies and organisations.  
[www.visionthingstudio.com](http://www.visionthingstudio.com)

**Chris Herzfeld**

Chris Herzfeld is a filmmaker and the founder of Camlight Productions, specializing in high quality imagery. He was the cinematographer and co-Producer of the short film "Alistair" and has worked on five feature films.  
[www.camlight.com.au](http://www.camlight.com.au)

**Drew Stansbury**

Drew Stansbury is a multidisciplinary digital producer with more than 20 years experience in bringing digital products to life. He is an Executive Producer for 'I'm Content'  
[www.imcontent.com.au](http://www.imcontent.com.au)

## Q&A WITH DIRECTOR EMMA BALNAVES



### **Q: There are many films about Hatha yoga— how is your film different?**

A: The idea of making this film evolved over the last ten years as I witnessed widespread confusion around the term “Yoga.” I saw the great potential of a film that illuminated yoga’s original traditions and holistic practices through the words and experiences of authentic practitioners.

Our story begins in Nepal at the heart of the Pashupatinath temple where Gorakhnath, one of the forefathers of Hatha Yoga opened up the practice in the 11th or 12th centuries. He believed that yoga and the pathway to spirituality it provides should be accessible to people from all walks of life. In the course of the film we travel around the world meeting many practitioners of the spiritual arts who offer their insights on what is most important to the practitioner today.

Our goal is to inspire our audience to take a deeper look into the origins of yoga so that they may gain a better understanding of the true potential of the yogic journey and how it can extend far beyond the physical practice. The film explores the holistic practice and shows how Hatha Yoga evolved as a Tantric Science. Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath, and the eighty four great Siddhas (Adepts) were all Tantrika Gurus. The Hatha Yoga they practiced was interwoven with worship, a dimension largely absent from contemporary practice of yoga.

This film points to what is available to those seekers who wish to delve deeper and uncover the ancient secrets that are still relevant in the world today.

### **Q: How is the film structured and what is its the core message?**

A: The film’s sub-title ‘Lower the Head and Invoke the Fire’ contains the central message of the film. The essence of Yoga is energetic work only possible when the mind is pacified through the process of worship. Although the physical practices are crucial, neither intellectual faculties nor physical attributes can initiate the energetic transformation.

Over the last several years I have travelled to India and Nepal for research and filming. During that time I interviewed extraordinary people who shared their knowledge and practices with me and the film is structured around these conversations. We learn from their personal experience what it takes to prepare for the path and the obstacles that are encountered. In many cases these people share rare and esoteric knowledge that is in danger of being lost. It was a privilege to speak with them.

Agniyogana is for both those engaged in the practice of Hatha Yoga and those considering it. In the film, wisdom and tools are generously shared by a few of those who have traveled this path for many years that others may undertake this practice successfully.

## Q&A WITH DIRECTOR EMMA BALNAVES



**Q: You did a lot of film interviews with sadhus in Nepal at the Pashupatinath and Gorakhnath Temples. These are notoriously private sects, how did you gain access to interview them? Could you expand on your experiences interviewing these yogis and the role the Nath lineages have had in the evolution of Hatha Yoga?**

A: I was introduced to Dr Govinda Tandon, Secretary of Pashupati Area Development Trust, who gave us access to the temple and the sadhus who gather there during Shivaratri festival. My husband was initiated into the Gorakhnath Sampradaya and this led to further access to the Gorakhnath lineage. We had to demonstrate our serious and sincere intent and establish trust so that the yogis could relax and begin to communicate directly from their experience.

Some were happy to chat with us about anything off camera but felt that they could not discuss everything on film without betraying vows made to their guru. We were fortunate that our interpreters were able to give the translations of what was being said so that the questioning could be directed precisely without breaking the rhythm of what was being communicated.

There is a lot of controversy surrounding the roles of the different lineages in the evolution of Hatha Yoga. Each temple and each tradition has its own agenda and every scholar their own interpretation. Some state yoga came from Adinath (Shiva) through the Nath Sampradaya alone.

Some argue its origin in Lord Dattatreya and evolution through several lineages including the Naths. Some claim Kapila Rishi as the originator and others the Rishi Markandeya. A person who chooses to tread the path of yoga is not interested in who was the originator or the historical succession. They want to learn from someone who genuinely knows and to arrive at their own understanding through an investigation of their own experience.

In the Hatha Yoga Manjari, Shri Sahajananda explains *“The scholar may tell you the meaning of the word, but it is the Guru that will take you to experience the meaning of the word since it lives in him while it is devoid within the scholar.”*

The procedures of Hatha Yoga evolved through the yogis of the Nath Sampradaya. Matsyendranath integrated the Hatha practices with the tantras and Gorakhnath revived the Pashupata practices through his exposition of Hatha Yoga. They made famous the science of yoking the energies of sun and moon, which is Hatha Yoga. In this process Mantra-Laya was utilised for the perfection of the inner anatomy. Mantra and Laya practices form the core of pranayama, which is then further internalised through the system of mudras. These aspects are sadly neglected in contemporary yoga schools yet they are vital to the fulfilment of the yogic sadhana. In his commentary on the Hatha Yoga Pradipika, Balakrishna states ...

*“There is no difference between Hatha Yoga, Raja Yoga or Avadhuta Yoga – the first is the means, the other two the fruit.”*

## ENDORSEMENTS

Control of fire is what makes us human, and yoking that fire judiciously is what permits us to transcend our human limitations. The many varieties of yoga all entail transmutation of our inner fire.

As today's world relentlessly commodifies everything it touches, including yoga, the need for reminders of what yoga really is, and how it can transform lives in our urban jungles, becomes ever more critical.

Fortunately, as this film illustrates, genuine traditions still exist, and serious individuals still follow them, as can anyone who is willing to invest the time and energy to awaken and cultivate the fire within.

### **Dr. Robert Svoboda**

Author, Speaker, Teacher & Practitioner of ayurveda, jyotish, tantra and allied subjects

