

YOGA

MAGAZINE

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WARMTH & GRATITUDE

A Boy Encounters **PARAMAHANSA YOGANANDA**

BREATHE AWAY *Ageing*

Vedic Invocations

QIGONG WITHIN YOGA



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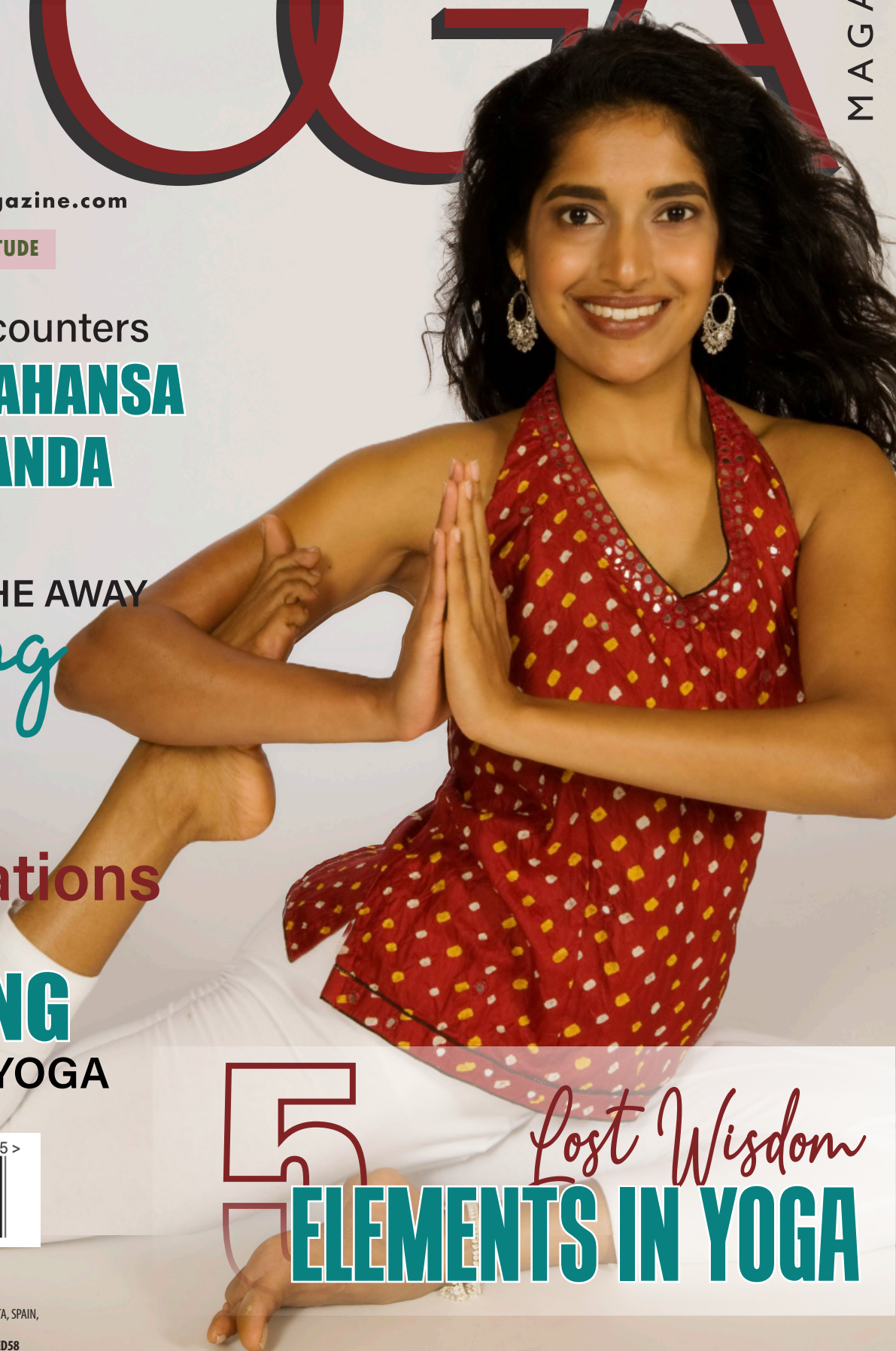
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Lost Wisdom

ELEMENTS IN YOGA



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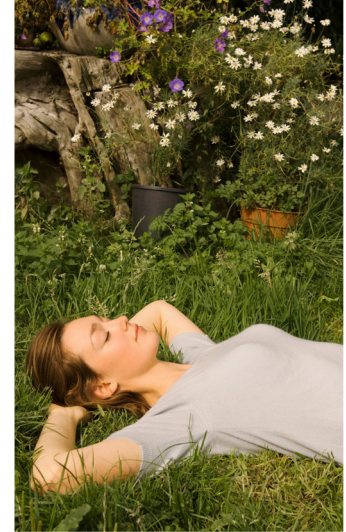
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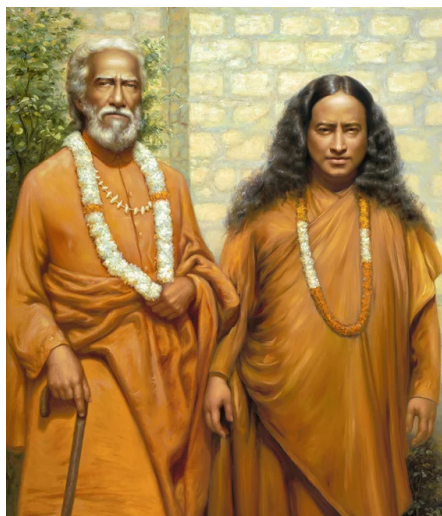


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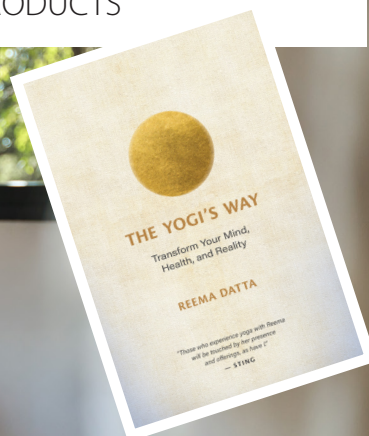
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The Absent Host



Words: Tara Thompson

The Retreat Host is leaving the retreat? Baffled and bewildered, I repeated, 'The retreat host is leaving the retreat!' Repeating the words in an attempt to make sense of it. To try and take it in.

As the morning sun rose in Mandrem Goa, a group of women sat huddled around a Hotel breakfast table, staring back at each other blankly. Mouths open, eyes wide in disbelief.

The Retreat host is leaving the retreat. The host that never really hosted, was leaving her own retreat. Leaving a group of women who had travelled to the other side of the world, alone.

Never in my wildest dreams could I have expected such an outcome from my bucket-list retreat.

The idea of India, a Retreat in India, had caught my attention right from the start over, a year ago.

A retreat promising Yoga, to experience culture, all while staying in a luxury Villa. I was in. Hook, link and sinker.

For 12 months, I had saved and really looked forward to the trip of a lifetime.



Having qualified as a Yoga teacher my year had been spent planning, and setting up my own business. Teaching Yoga and hosting my own events and day retreats. India was to be my reward.

It stood for so much, represented so much. All the effort, all the planning I had been putting into my events, my retreats. For two weeks I could forget all that. Forget being the host and have someone else entirely take the reins.

So on the 4th of January I excitedly boarded a plane to Doha. A short stop-over, before finally arriving in the early hours of the morning to glorious Goa.

As a solo traveller I was delighted to discover that two other retreat guests had made similar plans to arrive before the retreat was to begin.

Three nights followed staying in an Eco Village. Run by the most beautiful host. Who was gracious and couldn't do enough. Nothing was too much. It was a glorious blur of laughter, of sunsets, of flavour and of ease. Which all came to a sudden and abrupt halt on Day One when the Retreat began.

Arriving into the Hotel reception on Day 1 of the Retreat I could sense the disorder. A mix up with the Hotel Rooms, meant the Host was now staying at another location.

Later that evening, a confusing opening ceremony followed by an impersonal dinner. A flippant and flighting suggestion to introduce ourselves, was how the Retreat began.

A melody of malfunctions followed over the next few days;

- Issues with Guests bedrooms that were visibly damp and no real suggestion to rectify or get an alternative.
- An ever changing Schedule
- A disjointed and disconnected display from the Host of not eating Breakfast or lunch with her Guests.
- The host declared they wouldn't be attending a scheduled excursion.

As a result of these, and many more malfunctions, three of the Guests choose to make alternative plans and not continue with the Retreat.

The remaining guests hoped a sense of coming together or comradeship would follow. All hopes were dashed when the calamity of chaos came to a climax when the Host suggested an evening out.

The evening began with the Host leaving two of the Guests behind.

On Arrival to the suggested location for the "ecstatic dance" we were met with an Isolated, run down shack in the middle of nowhere.

As we started to display our discontent, even the taxi driver was shaking his head with distaste.

Returning to the safety of Mandrem for a group dinner, provided an

"The retreat host is leaving the retreat. The host that never really hosted, was leaving her own retreat."

opportunity to sit chatting, getting to know each other. Yet our host sat sullen and sulking. The remaining days felt awkward and disconnected.

So, there we were, back to the start of this Story having breakfast at the Hotel together minus our host.

It was there we found out our host was leaving her own Retreat flying out later that evening.

A comical suggestion of a closing ceremony was suggested. An invitation to wear white. To stand smiling stupidly for the pretend picture of the pretend Retreat was just a step too far.

So, I declined and my response? How could I possibly attend a closing ceremony to close something which had never really opened, and that was the last thing I heard. Bizarrely, the Host began blocking her guests.

I had travelled the world on Retreats. Attending retreats while going through the lowest points on my Healing Journey and I started to thank God's Grace for the professional, competent,



Hosts that I had been lucky enough to have been held by over the years.

I had travelled to India to a Retreat not to host, not to hold space but, in the absence of a Host at times, I felt I had to almost step into a role.

The last days passed by with the remaining guests trying to make the most of it. As each guest left, they were seen off safely. Guided home. One by One. Until there were three.

Back to that pre-retreat bubble of laughter, of connection and of safety. Yet that too had been tainted by the previous day's events.

Tired and frustrated we watched our last Sunset and as we left Mandrem beach, a lone Pink Sun Hat sat surrendered.

As I said goodbye to Goa that evening, I found myself also saying Thank You.

Thank you for the important lessons learnt on this Trip, lessons I will hold dear and remember but also, Thank you to the incredible Women (and Man) that I shared this crazy Journey with.

In the absence of a Host, we all in our own ways stepped up and in doing so, Stepped closer together. Coming together in absence of a host. The "Mandrem 12"

We started as a group of strangers, and even despite the calamity and chaos, became a group of friends.

"Travelling, it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller."

Tara Thompson is the Owner of - "The Quest Yoga." She is a Trauma informed Yoga Teacher, Restorative Specialist and Retreat Host.

The Quest Yoga was born out of Tara's own healing journey from Trauma from which she learnt some powerful lessons. Her intention for her Events/Retreats is to help people discover those lessons for themselves.

Tara is passionate about her work. She believes it is a privilege to hold space for people and that the work of Hosting and Holding Space for people, deserves a level of Respect and Integrity.

