

[Youths Learn to Farm Vedicly with Fire and Love](#)

Category : [June 1990](#)

Published by Anonymous on Jun. 02, 1990

Youths Learn to Farm Vedicly with Fire and Love

Boys Live 3,000-Year-Old Gurukulam Lifestyle Discovering the Secrets of the Homa

Out of the flat Maharashtra plains springs a lone, living portrait of ancient Vedic education - the four-year-old Shri Yogiraj Ved-Vijnan Ashram. It looks like an epic India movie set. Three thatched enclosures with mud/twig walls surround a courtyard with a brick-tiered homa pit. As the first pink rays of dawn splash across the sky, young, yellow-robed priests gather for the day's first ceremony. Flames crackle in response to offerings of ghee, made from milk from ashram cows. A chorus of high voices pierces the still morning air with Sanskrit verses chanted just as they were three millennia ago. Making sure this continues is Nana Kale, one of India's 80 recognized Agnihotris (fire priests) and founder of this isolated, desert school. "Our ashram was started in 1986 to keep alive the age-old recitation tradition of all Vedas and performance of yajnas (sacrificial fires) - the most unique feature of Hinduism," he summarizes. But this once All-India wrestling champion is doing more than that. He insists everything be done strictly according to the Vedas. For example, no easy flick of a cigarette lighter starts the day's homa. Instead, his wife and another young agnihotri sit a few feet apart strenuously spinning a rope-coiled Pippal branch between the legs of Nana Kale who forces it against another to ignite a blade of dry grass. This is clearly a family ashram - the old-style householder/gurukulam type. And the wives of the priest/teachers are an integral part of this 28-acre community, often assisting their spouses with the rituals.

Nana Kale has three sons and daily stays busy mixing the duties of father, priest and ashram head. But quietly, he is also unfolding a visionary experiment. As one of India's most honored progressive agronomists, he is determined to prove the efficacy of the homa rite to bring rain and to enhance natural methods of farming over sad alternatives like chemicalizing the earth. In one test, he planted wheat seeds that were removed from the dung of a cow that had been fed the seeds the day before. They produced a field of big, healthy wheat that dwarfed the control field of stalks treated with ordinary sulphur additives and planted with "undigested" seed.

So, while the rest of the world is feverishly defining "civilized life" in terms of electric backscratchers and a "good education" in terms of its money - making power, Yogiraj Ashram is not. For them the soul of civilization is not things, and true learning starts with understanding and respecting all life.

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Nature Spirits: The Real Farmers

Unbeknownst to most of humanity, vast legions of little light - beings called elementals - Adhibautas in Sanskrit - subtly inhabit the world of form. They range in shape, size and energy from the feminine, human - like water sprites that play in the spray of secluded waterfalls to giant devas of the earth that help erupt a volcano. They dance inside the cells of form - inside the leaf, in the wind and rain, within the leaf, in the wind and rain, within the humus of the soil - tirelessly manifesting the micro-blueprints of nature. They are loving, in harmony with the One and definitely respond to human kindness. The little boys of Yogiraj Ashram, sitting in their wheat fields doing mini-homas, chant special Sanskrit mantras to beckon the friendship and cooperation of these pure-souled elemental engineers, the world's real farmers.

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