

## The Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel

Archaeology Today has published in its June issue exciting news of an ongoing excavation in the Bundelkhand region of the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh. In October of 2002, work on a site was begun about a kilometer west into the jungle from the main temple complex of Khajuraho. Beneath the eroded foundation of one of the more than 60 temples ruins, an access stairway was discovered leading down to an underground grotto.

A series of chambers, each with its own pool hollowed out of the golden sandstone and fed by a natural hot spring, forms what appears to be a subterranean temple for water healing. An ingenious system of conduits carved into the stone, and still functioning, channels the mineral water into a chain of pools to produce an average temperature of 35° C. The chambers are arrayed in a descending spiral, allowing the water to circulate once every twenty-four hours from pool to pool. This scheme would accommodate for natural and seasonal variations in the spring's temperature, making one or the other of the pools ideally heated for the healing rites that once took place there.

The six pools are uniformly elliptical, each with a level surrounding ambulatory space. The pools all measure 15 X 9.4 meters, having a depth ranging from 110 to 145 cm. owing to a gentle gradient. Broad steps descend into their shallow end. The high ceilings of the grottos feature beautiful figure carvings, not the erotic mithuna for which the nearby temples are renown, but depicting men and women, always in pairs, a priest or priestess standing in the water at about mid-chest level, giving support to the other, who floats horizontal. Some of the positions appear quite elaborate with legs draped over shoulders and thighs. At times the held figure is depicted as a dolphin, fish or bird.

The walls of each chamber are completely covered with well preserved Sanskrit inscriptions in relief, carved to a depth of about 20 cm. into the sandstone. This ornamentation forms a coherent text, including a title, translating as *The Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel*, one of the greatest archeological finds of the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus far and a priceless addition to India's cultural heritage. Moreover, in a sealed room, these same 141 sutras were found in manuscript form with commentary, astoundingly in ancient Greek, authored by one Georgeakopoulos, thus predating by 1000 years the rest of the above ground temples built by the Chandela Dynasty kings between 950 and 1050 AD.

A painstaking translation into English was undertaken by the pandits of the Benares Sanskrit College in conjunction with a team of scholars from Athens University. For the first time in two thousand years these lost Water Sutras and their accompanying commentary may now be read. This scripture consists of five sections: The Nature of Water, Body Mechanics of the Giver, Technique in Relation to the Receiver, Advancement, and Instruction.

It should be kept in mind that sutras, whether of Patanjali, Nadar, or of the Dharma or Vedanta, are scarcely intelligible without commentary. They are designed to aid the memory of one to whom they have already been communicated. We can imagine the devotees of this water cult performing their rites, looking up from time to time at the ceiling figures or glancing at the walls to read these 'poolside notes', the distilled wisdom of their tradition. (For photos of the figure carvings go to [archaeologytoday.org/khajuraho](http://archaeologytoday.org/khajuraho).)

And now, The Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel.

## **Invocation**

**Salutations to the Grandfather Lord of Pools, to the fierce Water Goddess Protector, and to the two-headed Deity, Arjanaman, Sovereign of the Underwater!**

**Oh Water, Divine Nectar, we honor Thee in our rites, in our hymns and in our prayers! You are the Giver of Life! Grant us health; refresh us with your libations!**

**Oh Water, warm and beckoning, Thou art the Comforter of this world! Lift us up, embrace us! We turn to Thee for relief! Yes, we turn to Thee!**

**Oh Water, most sublime of substances, flow abundantly, exhilarate us with your dance! We surrender to Thee!**

## **1. The Nature of Water.**

### **1.1 Breathe.**

- a. It is recommended to quiet and focus the mind through pranayama before the reading of scriptures. Master placed this instruction before all others in his treatise for the additional reason that conscious breath lies at the very core of our water devotions.
- b. In the sacred sharing, the Giver harmonizes his breath with that of the Receiver to better empathize with her. More than this, he endeavors to coordinate all movements with the breath of the Receiver.
- c. When spiritually graced, the Giver attains the exalted experience of the Breath of Life, the fundamental rhythm of existence that energizes and fills the universes. The mind stops, and in a state of transcendent peace, one so blessed knows himself to be a part of everything else. Love is everywhere, filling the air, fluttering the leaves of the trees, swaying the grasses. The vibrant lines of energy

circulating through the earth and all her creatures become visible and palpable.

### **1.2 Center.**

- a. Master graciously reminds us to be fully present and collected to derive the maximum benefit from the study of the Sutras.
- b. The process of coming to oneself is essential in the sacred sharing, as well. To center oneself and truly be with the Receiver, Master Nadar taught to close the eyes and place awareness in the body; to recognize the feelings and thoughts sending ripples across the surface of the mind; and then to focus on the heart.

### **1.3 Merge with the Universal Energies.**

- a. This final preparatory act brings us into Cosmic Consciousness, in which the Truth may find access into our hearts and minds.
- b. As with the two previous Sutras, the Giver's preparation for the sacred sharing is mirrored. Time must be allowed to surrender to the all-encompassing Life Force and achieve resonance with the Receiver before beginning. Then Life may channel itself through the Giver.

### **1.4 Now begins the portion on the Nature of Water.**

- a. What could be more fascinating, more central to us whose path lies through the waters? They are our world, our all, our Alpha and Omega. In the sacred pools our women give birth, our children play, and as adults we worship, heal, offer our service and finally pass on to the next world in the Rite of Transition. Our bodies consist primarily of the mysterious element and delight to move through it. Nadar invites us now to study the source of so many blessings.

**1.5 The Divine is omnipresent as conscious energy forming the primal atoms of Nature.**

- a. Even as Brahman is centralized in location at the hub of all universes, vast beyond human imagination, so are portions of His Being everywhere present. His Divine Consciousness dances as energy minutia, myriads forming a single atom, constantly disappearing and reappearing across the universes. The Holy Om is the sound of this dance; the universes are His body.

**1.6 Beyond this even, water is alive. Like the ether, it harbors prana.**

- a. How beautiful the world becomes when we realize that all is alive, that there is no death! Our beloved water is especially vital, as it is filled with luminous energy bodies, vibrant prana, gifts of the Creator's Presence.

**1.7 Water is the Earth's lifeblood. It exists for humankind's health and refreshment.**

- a. If only all peoples understood this as we do! Truly, the key to health and happiness lies in pure water, vitalized water that is imbibed with appreciation, that in holy ablutions heals all whom it touches.
- b. The seas and the deep waters of the Earth carry the primal rhythms of life. Our yearly pilgrimage to the coastal region of Mendo Cino does honor to this reality and balances our relation to water. The ocean is vast and powerful like the Holy One; we could no more live apart from it than we could live without Him, who gives us life.

**1.8 Imbibing the holy waters, the smallest groupings of its primal atoms freely enter the smallest units of the body, promoting their well being.**

- a. Even as water clings to the body, its tiniest constituent components do not slide freely past each other; they demonstrate a preference for groupings through a vacillating attraction to each other.
- b. The Master is elucidating a secret teaching that when pure, vitalized water shines with prana, its molecules arrange into tiny rings, smaller than the unstructured clumpings it would otherwise form. Our cells (*Greek 'smallest bodily units' Trans.*) are chronically dehydrated, they thirst for the inner sea surrounding them, but insufficient enters until it is so structured.
- c. Water with this microstructure is restored to its Primal state, as it was in the days of our planet before pollution was, when all water cycled naturally. The abundant growth in plants and greater health it promotes in humans show us the earth's original gift to her children.

**1.9 In the same way that water suffuses throughout the body, its subtle nature is meant to illumine the soul.**

- a. Water is our Teacher, that part of Prakriti, the natural world that best serves as a metaphor of spirit realities. Daily contemplation of the many excellent qualities of water brings Light into the soul. In the Upanishads it is said, "He who meditates on water as Brahman, obtains all wishes, he becomes satisfied; he is, as it were, lord and master as far as water reaches, he who meditates on water as Brahman."
- b. According to the Vedas, meditation near a body of water will double its beneficial effect. This is clear to those of our order from an early age, as we are initiated in the temple pools and each receive our private mantra. We carry this injunction to meditate near water even farther, meditating in the sacred pools themselves, either

sitting immersed to neck depth or floating supine, supported by the 'Hajara noodles'. (This term appears to be a reference to the resemblance of the long buoyant stalks of the Hajara vine to the shape of a type of pasta prepared from it in central India to this day. Trans.)

**1.10 Water that appears to be dead is only sleeping and may be reawakened through prayer, song and movement.**

- a. When water is polluted and abused it falls asleep, just as would a person. The prana goes dark, literally. In the course of the healing rites many negative energies are released into the pools to the detriment of the sacred waters. Through our morning ceremonies of gratitude and hymns of praise the sacred waters regain their power and vitality. The play of our children as well as the exuberant, swirling movements of the healing rites also revitalize our water; it reawakens and is once more joyous, eager to offer its healing energies to all who imbibe it or enter it to bathe.

**1.11 Water carries whatever energy it is imprinted with.**

- a. As powerful as water is, it is mutable and sensitive; water registers and transmits faithfully any frequency it is exposed to. For this reason we are vigilant to appreciate the sacred waters in which it is our honor to share healing. Inharmonious thoughts and feelings are out of place in the temple precincts. It is our custom when passing polluted waters elsewhere to stop and empathize, to offer them the Divine Light that they may be purified and restored. Even as water serves us, we are its servants.

**1.12 Therefore, enter the sacred pool with gratitude; bless the waters that they may bless you in return.**

- a. We understand from experience that performing a benediction over the sacred waters is no different from consecrating a meal to the Deities before consuming it. Then, on imbibing or entering the water, we absorb the Higher Energy it has become imbued with.

**1.13 Through immersion in the sacred sharing, warm water offers many physical benefits.**

- a. In the centuries our order has been active, we have tabulated the positive changes Receivers report following the sacred sharing. These include diminished muscular tension, increased range of motion, reduction of pain, augmented peripheral circulation, fuller respiration, improved posture, normalization of muscle tone, reduced stress and anxiety, increased body awareness, release of emotional stress, more peaceful sleep, improved disposition and reduced fatigue.

**1.14 Warm water meets and cradles the psychophysical being of man, healing all manner of ailments.**

- a. A general list of the conditions improved or eliminated through the healing rites include chronic and acute pain, neuromuscular disorders, migraine, peripheral muscle dysfunction, chronic head pain, poor disposition, hyper-tension, disordered relating associated with stress/anxiety, depression, insomnia, and chemical substance abuse.
- b. The sacred waters possess a powerful trio of qualities: warmth, pressure and buoyancy. Through their agency, in combination with the ministrations of the Giver, these wonderful effects are manifested.

**1.15 The state of weightless suspension in water is natural and pleasurable to man; it is that of the pre-incarnation state, of dreaming, and of the physical brain.**

- a. Although the vehicle of the physical body is a blessing from the Creator to each incarnated human, the buoyancy of water gives a needed respite from the oppressiveness of gravity.
- b. Man delights in the moments of weightlessness in his play and sports; he loves to experience the top of the jump; he identifies with the flight of the ball and feels free. In the technique of the healing rites this suspended quality is highly valued, as explained in Sutra 4.20 in the portion on Advancement.
- c. Floating weightless in water the Receiver is reminded of the state of bodiless consciousness that preceded his incarnation. Similarly, in his dreams man also escapes from the earthbound condition of the body, and may fly and float effortlessly.
- d. The human brain is immersed in cerebrospinal fluid, which serves, among other things, to reduce pressure at the base of the brain. The brain literally floats, its weight reduced from 1,400 grams to a mere 50 grams.

**1.16 In the water healing rites the entire body takes on the sensitivity of the brain, becoming less an instrument of action, and more an organ of sensing and feeling.**

- a. The brain and the epidermis of the skin both develop from the same tissue, the embryonic ectoderm. Considering that in fetal life sensory nerves grow inward from the skin, linking up to the spinal cord, the skin could rightly be viewed as the surface of the brain.
- b. In the warm waters, the body shifts into a mode of heightened awareness; the normal sensory filters are removed and impressions are received in full volume, like before falling asleep. The body

becomes attuned to touch, movement, sound, light, and finer energetic sensations.

- c. A state of surrender is the key. Throughout many ages and climes man has bathed gladly, but seldom with the fullest reverence for and surrender to water. By cultivating these virtues we of our order become receptive to all of her gifts. We conjecture that in times to come she will reveal herself to an even greater extent, as we evolve to higher states of receptivity.

**1.17 The womb-like comfort of warm water returns the Receiver to his original innocence.**

- a. The sacred sharing reproduces several of the conditions of the womb. By the power of association, Receivers are transported back to the beauty of this stage of existence. The warm water recreates the amniotic fluid. The muffled, omni-directional quality of sound, in which what is heard is not comprehended, duplicates the experience of the fetus. The Receiver is passively moved as she was while still within her mother, and the nurturing presence of the Giver, holding her in the folded up fetal position, evokes a mother's enveloping presence, lovingly carrying her through nights and days.
- b. The forgotten, pre-incarnate Self reawakens in an environment surrounded by support and acceptance, free of discord, doubt and shame.

**1.18 Then, that which is out of harmony with his essential nature melts away.**

- a. For the Receiver, the slate is wiped clean; she is given a fresh start. In recognizing, "This is who I am," she gains a new baseline of identity, making it harder to re-engage with illusion and easier to sustain her new sense of Self.

**1.19 The flowing nature of water resonates into motion the atrophied emotions from the past.**

- a. The dynamic waves, spins and releases of the more advanced techniques unblock tissues, which release into consciousness the forgotten cause of the holding.
- b. The liberation of energy can occur as laughter, tears, pins and needles, a vibration filling the body, or as spontaneous kriyas and waves. Feeling content may or may not accompany these releases.

**1.20 Thus imbalance balances, the unresolved resolves.**

- a. Awareness and feeling expression, when blocked, imbalance the flow of vital energy, causing areas of the body and mind to close off. This protective mechanism, originally shielding an immature organism from catastrophic realizations, can be relinquished. With restoration of the totality of awareness, memory and sensation are recaptured.
- b. This resolution does not lead to enlightenment necessarily, but it is certainly an encounter with personal truth. Thereafter, the Receiver lives with more integrity, less compensatory behavior. She is able to move on, living her life in the present, not tethered to the past. The body ceases to be at war with itself.

**1.21 Still waters still the mind.**

- a. In the sacred pools, the Receiver's psyche senses a receptive space, the peace of still waters. Depending on internal readiness, a natural homeostatic process of balancing occurs, the aftermath of which is inner stillness. Stress has been processed through and released. And then the mind, like a quiet lake on a clear morning, can reflect the rising sun.

- b. The stillness of the opening moments of the sacred sharing initiate a process of cellular breathing in which individual cells balance themselves internally and with the system. At intervals through the sharing, pauses for stillness allow the bodymind to integrate the stimuli it has received.

**1.22 In the totality of water-induced receptivity, guidance from the Atman gains entrance to consciousness. The Receiver becomes attuned to the finer frequencies of her Being arising from the past, present and future.**

- a. The Atman, our faithful guide and companion, always whispering counsel, may be more clearly heard in the still trance states attained in the water healing rites. It whispers of Destiny, of the heart's true desire, of the path to be taken and how to walk it. As a special blessing, it may afford a glimpse of Itself, a foretaste of that day when we shall experience conscious fusion with it for all eternity.

**1.23 All this is healing, a state of self-referential completeness.**

- a. Emerging from the thicket of emotional turmoil, the fullness of self-knowledge dawns. Abandoning "that which I am not", and identifying more and more with the Self, the aspirant can one day say, "I am that which I sought."

## **2. Body Mechanics of the Giver**

**2.1 Now the exposition of aquatic body mechanics of the Giver is being made.**

- a. Heed well, for Nadar is not passing on theories or opinions, but the actual technique of the Giver. Reading of the scriptures is indispensable, but do not think for a moment there can be any substitute for practice under the watchful eye of a living Master! (*Throughout the text different terms are used to denote the two participants in the healing rite: priest and supplicant, sharer and receptor, the active and passive one. To reduce confusion, we have chosen the terms, Giver and Receiver to denote the standing and recumbent persons, respectively. The Giver shall be referred to as 'he', the Receiver as 'she'. Trans.*)
- b. This section concerns itself with the Giver only. In section 3, Technique in Relation to the Receiver, the principles governing touch, support and movement of the Receiver, are imparted.

## **2.2 Every physical discipline organizes the body according to a goal. How energy passes through the body is the organizing principle.**

- a. The tacit questions that Master Nadar poses are, "What is the goal of the sacred sharing?" and "How does energy pass through the body in it?" Only by first answering these questions can we proceed to formulate principles of body mechanics. Let us see how he addresses each question in the following two Sutras.

## **2.3 The goal of the sacred sharing is to maintain the Receiver in comfort and safety, transgressing neither physical nor emotional boundaries, while supporting, administering bodywork, and offering movement for purposes of relief from physical suffering, for emotional healing, and for inner spiritual journey.**

- a. Here Master pronounces the first of the Great Definitions in his Water Sutras. He is summarizing the intent of the entire second section, emphasizing that the purpose of body mechanics ultimately

is to facilitate the experience of the Receiver. It is understood that the Giver, too, must remain in safety and comfort, and derive personal benefit from offering the sharing.

**2.4 Movement is generated from the pool bottom up through the Giver to his arms, to support and move the Receiver while standing still in stance, transferring weight or travelling with steps through a low gravity, high viscosity medium.**

- a. Here is the Second Great Definition formulated by Master Nadar, the basis for understanding all else that follows in this and the next section of the Sutras expounding body mechanics and technique.
- b. We see Master's emphasis on the transmission of force from the pool bottom upwards, rather than on centeredness. In the water, alignment has more to do with this correctly channeled force vertically up than weight vertically down, as on land. The upward traveling force of the movement can easily exceed that of the body's descending weight.

**2.5 Groundedness, leverage, force transmission, stabilization, stance, alignment, and weight transfer constitute the simplest and purely physical elements of body mechanics of the Giver.**

- a. In one bold stroke Master Nadar lays out the principles he proposes to consider, then commences to define them.
- b. In action, these principles are so interrelated that they blend into each other, but for purposes of analysis they may be teased out from one another and regarded separately.
- c. Steps and traveling, referred to in Sutra 2.4, will be considered in Sutra 4.11 of the portion on Advancement.

## **2.6 Sink down in the water to be buoyant; stand up to be grounded.**

- a. This is the very exercise first given the neophytes on entering the healing pools. It demonstrates by direct experience how lightness and heaviness depend on sinking into the water and standing up out of it.
- b. Buoyancy is the key factor affecting body mechanics in water. Reduced groundedness is the drawback to buoyancy; its blessing is the ease with which it allows us to support another.
- c. According to oral tradition, it was the early water rishis who first spoke of *sinkers* and *floaters*, people whose proportion of body fat to overall weight renders them less or more buoyant. They did not hesitate to recommend cloth tubes filled with sand tied around the ankles to help ground those givers tending to float away.
- d. Each aspirant must find the right depth of water for their stances as determined by their specific gravity, height and joint flexibility. The deep end of the pool is best suited to tall persons and to be avoided by the ultrabuoyant if they are to remain grounded.
- e. The ultrabuoyant are almost always women; every part of their luxuriant forms floats. Ultrasinkers go directly to the bottom even holding air; men comprise this category. The third body type as regards buoyancy has sinking legs and a floating upper body, and can be of either gender. In stances low in the water these last mentioned experience groundedness from the hips down while the ribcage floats up, producing a lengthening of the waist.
- f. Paradoxically, when standing upright in hip deep water, the legs are very light but the upper half of the body has weight, just the opposite of their behavior in the horizontal submerged position.

**2.7 Relax and let the weight drop down through the legs while exhaling.**

- a. Lack of connection to the pool bottom can be a result of how the Giver organizes his body. Upper body tension artificially holds the weight up and the body is far less grounded than when the weight is allowed to flow downward through the legs. Among the first lessons the young neophytes grasp is that weight responds to mental direction and breath releases.
- b. The Giver surrenders to experience unity with the earth; he gives his weight to the earth to find groundedness. Surrendering to the Receiver's breath, he experiences unity with her

**2.8 Place the awareness in the feet and sense the texture of the pool bottom.**

- a. Nadar at times had his pupils imagine their feet to be double in size, like great lotus pads, melting softly into the slime. By contrast, he also recommended visualizing the legs like a bull elephant's or a prowling tiger's, strong and gaining purchase on the bottom. The particular imagery that speaks best to the aspirant will vary. In any case, placing the attention on the feet and pool bottom sensitizes them to whatever degree of leverage is possible. This habit illustrates for us how appreciation brings us closer to another.
- b. Despite the emphasis placed on being as grounded as possible, small shifts, adjustments, slides, pivots and steps are unavoidable. Master admonished his pupils to have an easy relation to the bottom even while seeking a grounded one. His advice was, "Do not perspire over the little things."

**2.9 Thus grounded, there is friction of the feet against the pool bottom, and the leverage to move arises.**

- a. Leverage is dependent upon the feet having traction on the pool bottom. A slippery pool bottom reduces friction and hence leverage. For this reason the sacred pools all have a layer of sand on which to stand. Although it rarely happens, a neophyte still from time to time loses his balance and slips in the sand, dunking himself and his Receiver! The conch is blown merrily throughout the temple to commemorate such an event.
- b. On the serious side, we take this simple phenomenon of body mechanics described in the Sutra to demonstrate that the capacity for powerful, directed action is born out of a state of surrendered unity.

**2.10 A chain of leverage beginning in the feet and passing up through the legs transmits force through the body to the hands. Thus, movement begins with the feet.**

- a. The concept of the chain of leverage was more important to Master Nadar than moving from the center. The difficulty of maintaining groundedness in such a buoyant medium was his rationale. He was content to speak of the necessity of stabilizing the trunk, but did not see the center as the primary source of movement in aquatic body mechanics, as it is on land.
- b. The chain of leverage begins with the pool bottom and passes sequentially through the feet, ankles, knees, hips, spine, shoulder joints, elbows and wrists to the hands. Each part of the body has a role to fulfill. If strength and control are not present low in the body, the higher segments must work harder to compensate.
- c. The elbows may be braced against the sides of the ribcage like dolphin flippers to more efficiently translate the power of the torso through to the hands.

## **2.11 Use the power in the feet and legs to thrust, lower, sink or balance.**

- a. Nadar liked to say that the technique is in the legs. Each part of the body has a role to fulfill, but if strength and control are not present low in the body, the higher segments must work harder to compensate. Therefore, get the power from low in the body!
- b. Thrusting, the legs carry the trunk to the front, back, sides or straight up. Movement is achieved in the opposite direction to which force is exerted. This is concentric contraction, usually of one leg, in which the muscles shorten.
- c. Lowering, the legs control the descending weight through the foot (ball of the foot first, then the heel) on one leg, controlling a landing from a weight transfer or step. This is eccentric contraction, a lengthening of the muscles.
- d. Sinking, the legs control the descending weight on two legs in a stance, the feet flat on the bottom. This, too, is eccentric contraction.
- e. Balancing, the legs maintain stance on two legs or find equilibrium after a weight transfer onto one leg, aiming the weight into balance. This involves isometric contraction and the synergist muscles, producing no movement.

## **2.12 Simplification of the Giver's movement is key.**

- a. Just as the most skilled temple dancer conceals her technique and makes all movements appear natural, the Giver eliminates extra movements, accomplishing each move in the simplest, most effortless manner possible. Of those who attain the highest level of technical expertise, a large percentage are graduates of the temple dance academies.
- b. Expressing this principle in another way, the Giver stands in absolute stillness of body and mind at the beginning of the healing

rite, establishing a reference point, a psychological fulcrum, for all phenomena to follow.

**2.13 This is achieved through stabilization of the legs to the trunk, internal stabilization of the trunk, and stabilization of the arms to the trunk.**

- a. Muscular stabilization maintains the relationship (alignment) between body segments, eliminating extraneous movement, and makes force transmission through them possible. Greater attention to stabilization in water than on land is necessary on account of the greater viscosity that water possesses as compared to air.
- b. The trunk stabilizes against three forces: (1) the energy passing through it to generate movement; (2) the water resistance generated by its own mass in motion; and (3) the water resistance generated by the mass of the Receiver.
- c. The pelvis is stabilized to the legs by the thigh musculature (four compartments consisting of flexors, adductors, abductors and extensors) and the powerful ligaments of the hip joint. The pelvis is stabilized to the trunk by the back and abdominal musculature.
- d. The trunk, pelvis and thigh are further knit together by the psoas muscle, spanning from the vertebral bodies of T12 downward to insert on the lesser trochanter of the femur.
- e. The shoulder girdle, consisting of the clavicle and scapula, is the mobile platform from which the arm operates. It anchors to the trunk at the sternoclavicular joint and through the muscles of scapular stabilization (trapezius, rhomboids, levator scapulae, serratus anterior, and pectoralis minor).

**2.14 When stabilized, the trunk maintains its shape in the midst of any movement.**

- a. The natural movements of the trunk—spinal rotation, flexion, extension, and lateral flexion--are restrained.
- b. Nadar is not speaking of rigidity in any sense, rather an ongoing visualization and intention that the hips, ribcage and shoulders effortlessly face in the same direction.
- c. This stabilization must allow for the modulation of force and the refinement of impulse direction. The raw power generated in the legs passes up through the body and transmutes into the soft sensitive touch and guidance of the hands.

**2.15 Responsible for this restraint is isometric contraction of the muscles of the back, waist and abdomen.**

- a. Master refers to all the muscles that when contracted bilaterally prevent movement from occurring. This is a good thing, as it allows the trunk to function as a unit, a coherent structure able to channel force up from the legs and to be a secure platform for the arms
- b. These muscles are the paravertebrals, the erector spinae, quadratus lumborum, the abdominal obliques, transversus abdominis, latissimus dorsi and rectus abdominis. Oh yes, Nadar knew his anatomy all right, but he didn't want the Sutras to run too long by naming all the muscles!
- c. In the temple school it is taught that muscular stabilization symbolizes how one who is constant has the capacity for greater responsibility.

**2.16 And now stance shall be explained. By stance is meant the different positions that the feet and legs assume.**

a. Even in the traveling techniques, knowledge of stance is of primary importance; it is the first skill. Stance provides the broad, triangular or quadrilateral base for still support, the platform for weight transfers, and the launching position for steps in any direction. The aspirant acquires balance and the ability to support first in stances before mastering movement in and out of them.

**2.17 In stance the feet and legs are arranged so as to facilitate still, stable support. Yet, a stance is not without potential energy, a readiness to transition easily into weight transfers, other stances, and steps.**

a. In so many words Nadar lays out the purpose of stance and its elements, a basis for understanding this fundamental element of body mechanics.  
b. With the aid of the instructor, each aspirant discovers his optimal alignment in each stance, requiring the least effort to maintain. Often, issues relating to one's 'stance' in life must be brought into awareness before this aspect of body mechanics can be mastered.  
c. Nadar exhorted his pupils to be in stance like the tiger at rest-- completely at ease but able instantly to spring into action.

**2.18 The variables of feet placement are their distance from each other, their orientation, and how they contact the bottom.**

a. The width of a stance determines the size of any weight transfer in it, and thereby, how long the transfer will last and how much sense of motion and pleasant turbulence it can generate on the Receiver's skin.

- b. The angle at which the feet point out to the sides fixes how wide a rotation can be made without pivoting the foot that comes to bear the weight in the transfer.
- c. The feet contact the bottom with either the ball of the foot and the heel, or with the ball of the foot alone, as does the back foot in the warrior stance. This determines whether a stance has a quadrilateral or triangular base, respectively.

**2.19 The depth of water, the movement the Giver wishes to execute, and his physique determine stance. The aspects of physique affecting stance are height, leg length, and flexibility of joint and muscle.**

- a. Shallow water necessitates wider stances and their adaptations, especially for tall individuals. The width of the horse stance determines what degree of rotation will be possible, and how broad a lateral weight transfer can happen. Givers with limited external rotation in the hips or decreased flexion in the ankles or knees will find the horse stance difficult in shallow water. In the warrior stance alone are weight transfers to the front and back possible; sideways rotations and weight transfers are not.

**2.20 The stances of aquatic bodywork are the horse and the warrior. The horse stance may be little, big, or seated. The warrior stance may be of normal size or mighty.**

- a. Although aquatic stances are adapted from those of martial arts, they differ in significant respects. Two bodies are involved in a viscous, buoyant medium, forming an interlinked system with a common center of gravity that is quite high and often lying outside of either body. A top-heavy, segmented and unstable structure is the outcome. An extra broad base then, gives the added stability needed to move the Receiver at chest level. The buoyancy of water

makes this wider stance possible without the added effort it would cost the legs on land. Therefore, as Master would remind, "Stand like a mountain."

**2.21 In the little horse, the feet are placed slightly wider than the shoulders. They angle 45° to the side to facilitate hip figure 8's and rotating weight transfers.**

- a. The balls of the feet and the heels form a stable quadrilateral base. If the feet were to be externally rotated too far, the balls of the feet and the heels would lie more on a line, making balance less secure. If the feet are internally rotated too far, the degree of hip rotation in weight transfers is limited.
- b. When the Receiver's head rests on the shoulder, the Giver may stand in the little horse stance in deep water for the comfort of his back. The knees are more extended in this case.

**2.22 The big horse is identical to the little horse, but with the feet more widely separated; wide enough to create an ample lateral weight transfer or to pivot 90° into the warrior stance.**

- a. The big horse stance is assumed by those long of leg when they stand in shallow water in order to raise the water level to the mid chest.
- b. Take care to avoid lumbar hyperextension in this stance, for the back has less support from the legs (they are not under the pelvis) and must maintain its alignment more on its own.

**2.23 The seated horse is like the little horse, but sitting back low in the water.**

- a. The seated horse stance is another adaptation to shallow water. As the seat drops down and back the ribcage buoyantly counterbalances

forward and up. The seated horse is employed as well in the traveling techniques to begin walking backwards.

- b. When the Receiver is supported across the Giver's thighs in this stance, her body counterbalances the Giver's, who need not lean forward.
- c. The seated horse is the relaxed pose receivers often assume at the commencement of the sharing.

**2.24 The warrior stance has a front and back leg. The front foot is directly forward of the hip, flat on the bottom, pointing to the front, the knee bent and aligned over it. The back leg is more extended, behind and slightly out to the side of the hip, contacting the bottom with the ball of the foot only**

- a. The warrior stance is a more dynamic pose than the horse stance. The back foot is halfway into a step, poised to rock forward or back. This stance is not suited for sideways rocking or rotations. Think of the warrior who either advances or retreats, but does not expose his flank to the enemy. The ball of the back foot placed out to the side creates a triangular base, conferring stability on the pose.
- b. When the Giver must stand low in the water, such as when the Receiver's head rests on his shoulder, the warrior stance is recommended over the big horse, for the leg behind provides good support for the Giver's back.
- c. The mighty warrior stance, wider and therefore lower in the water, is a variation suited to shallow water. Kneeling is another adaptation based in the warrior stance. The hips lower and the back knee bends until it rests on the bottom.

**2.25 Alignment reflects man's existential condition: a bridge between Heaven and Earth.**

- a. In the temple schools it is taught that the lotus flower is like man: though rooted in the slime, it grows upwards to offer its finest flower to the sun. Like the lotus, man is tethered and floating, sinking down while aspiring upward. He is temporarily anchored onto the earth plane but yearns for the stars. Just as the poles of his being reach in two directions, so does his physical body. His weight descends through the sacrum and legs at the same time his spine and crown nobly ascend. The spanning and joining of Heaven and Earth is the theme and greater meaning of alignment.
- b. Water works in favor of this vertical alignment. The center of gravity, located in the pelvis, sinks; the center of buoyancy, located in the chest, floats up over it in vertical alignment. As described in the commentary to Sutra 2.6, this behavior of the pelvis dropping down as the ribcage floats up produces a beneficial lengthening of the back.

**2.26 Alignment signifies the relationship between the various body segments. Alignment is balanced weight transmission through the bones, rather than through the periarticular soft tissues. Then the Giver abides in his center, free of any muscular compensation.**

- a. This definition applies to still positions, but fails to take into account how an individual may need to discover his own alignment or the more complex phenomenon of alignment in movement, which includes off balance transitional moments, as Master Nadar proceeds to explain in Sutra 2.28.
- b. When the knees bend too far, they project out beyond the toes, and the weight passes stressfully through the patellar ligament instead of directly through the femur and tibia. When the knees bend too far the thigh muscles become fatigued. When the knees are too

extended, the weight cannot sink, balance becomes problematic, and weight transfers are circumscribed.

**2.27 Alignment is essentially vertical. In the ideal, the head, ribcage, pelvis, and the point midway between the arches align vertically. The knees bend out over the feet, and the hips drop down as the spine ascends vertical to the pelvis.**

- a. Alignment is achieved first through a conceptual understanding; then by an actual experience of it in the body; and finally with the use of appropriate mental imagery to re-find it moment to moment in movement. The neophyte is instructed in the principles of alignment as outlined in this and the previous Sutra. He is then guided into the optimal alignment his body can achieve. Finally he and his instructor arrive at the best mental imagery by which he can recreate his alignment on his own. Often used imagery includes relaxing effortlessly upward, visualizing the spaces between the vertebrae widening, the head floating lightly up between the shoulders as the pelvis sinks down and water flows down off the shoulders.
- b. Just as the transmission of physical force from the pool bottom upwards provides the raw power for movement, the top of the body, that is the head, plays its role in extending the spine upward and tilting the weight of the upper body in the desired direction.
- c. Faults in alignment may be traced to poor breathing, muscular weakness, straining, and emotions in the sub conscious generating holding patterns. Owing to the complexity of factors influencing alignment, it is more an ongoing work in progress than an achieved goal.
- d. The most common misalignment of the legs is collapsing of the knees inward, stressful to their medial collateral ligament. Gluteal weakness, tightness in the adductors or weak arches can exacerbate this tendency. By utilizing the rotational capacity of the buttocks and focusing on the sensation of the little toe and the lateral arch

of the foot bearing their share of weight, the tendency to collapse the medial arch and misalign the knee inwards is countered.

**2.28 Alignment modulates in movement. Leans to the front, back and sides sometimes accompany weight transfers in each direction. The head leads with an inclination in the direction of the weight transfer, causing a reflexive increase in tonus in the leg receiving the weight.**

- a. Balance is not static; it is an evolving equation responding to the flow of movement. More will be said of this in Sutra 4.9 in the Portion on Advancement discussing creative imbalance.
- b. As mentioned in the previous Sutra, the role of the head is to initiate a lean of the trunk, ensuring that the weight of the upper body is properly placed in the movement.
- c. In the temple school the symbolism of the lean is taught as a departure from the pure, vertical axis connecting us to Heaven and Earth. It is seen as a way to bring the fruits of Heaven down to earth, an inclination toward the more horizontal theater of daily action and relating with one's fellow man.

**2.29 The rotational range in the knee and hip joints, combined with inversion and eversion in the foot, allow for the imprecision of life.**

- a. Surfaces are not always even, and a person may change directions in the middle of a movement or simply misstep. In anticipation of these realities, our legs come endowed with quite a bit of play. Toward the end of his career, Nadar himself would occasionally lose his footing while demonstrating the traveling techniques. (Some suspected he did so to put his students at ease, but he denied this.)
- b. External rotation in the hip sockets allows the feet to orient out to the sides in stance. Tightness in the hip adductors limits external rotation and interferes with the horse stance. The Butterfly and

Frog asanas can stretch these inner thigh muscles and make this stance more accessible.

- c. The range of passive axial rotation of the knees allows the femur to rotate on the tibia when the foot is fixed on the bottom in stance and the knee is flexed. This range of 45-50° of external rotation and 30-35° of internal rotation is slightly greater than that of active axial rotation.
- d. The range of inversion (adduction plus supination) and eversion (abduction plus pronation) allowed by the joints in the foot allow it to hold the floor in wide stances.
- e. In the ideal the knee would always be vertically aligned over the foot, neither too far forward, back or to the sides. Thankfully, when the Giver miscalculates, the knee joint still offers support within a range, not like a mechanical doll that can only flex and extend rigidly.

**2.30 Reduced weight bearing and the absence of impact in the aquatic stances and movements lower the risk of injury due to misalignment. Nevertheless repeated stress to the ligaments and muscles from errors of alignment can lead to injury.**

- a. The Giver must take care when working with large or heavy Receivers to move slowly and reduce the range of rotations, allowing time to change directions. Otherwise the extra mass of the Receiver can continue too far with its own momentum, creating a back wrenching moment for the Giver.

**2.31 The teaching on weight transfer begins. All natural, full body movements are created through weight transfers.**

- a. Just as in land-based modalities of bodywork, body weight is utilized to generate force. In the advanced subaquatic techniques the Giver aligns with the direction of gravity and falls from above onto his

Receiver as he submerges and guides her underwater. In the advanced surface technique some of the movements have a diagonally downward vector. Otherwise, the weight comes into play on the horizontal plane, transferring sideways from leg to leg.

- b. Weight transfers develop easily into steps for the purpose of extending movements even farther. In Section 4.11, the Portion on Advancement, steps and traveling in the pool will be dealt with.

**2.32 Weight transfers consist of overcoming the inertia of stance with a push into the ground through one leg; accomplishing the transfer in the desired direction; lowering the weight onto the second leg; re-establishing equilibrium; and finally overcoming the inertia of movement to change directions for the return weight transfer in the two part cycle.**

- a. Weight transfers are understood as an intermediate stage between the stability of stance and traveling steps. They do not depart from stance as do steps, but they are less grounded and more dynamic than stance as the weight shifts from leg to leg.
- b. The Master has defined and broken down the movement completely. It is for the aspirant to re-assemble it into a flow.
- c. The initial thrust is on a downward diagonal, producing a lateral displacement of the body in the opposite direction.
- d. The leg communicates its force to the pelvis. The trunk rides across above the pelvis. Muscles of the torso contract isometrically to keep it positioned over the pelvis against the displacing factor of water resistance. This stabilizing contraction of the torso also provides solid leverage for the arms to support and move partner.
- e. Allowing the weight transfer to complete unhurriedly, less force will be required to change directions and reverse the movement.
- f. Nadar next identifies six different weight transfers.

**2.33 Weight transfer up and down in stance is mostly an outcome of the Giver's breath joining the Receiver's and is less an action of the legs than of the lungs.**

- a. Nadar refers to the Position of Repose beginning the water sharing. The occipital bone is supported under one forearm and the apex of the sacrum under the other. He reassures us that if both parties breathe together, there will be a lifting and falling that the legs allow but do not create.
- b. With the ultrabuoyant and the ultraheavy the breath will generate little or no movement. In this case we are to focus on empathy alone.
- c. Nadar admonished his disciples not to produce this rising and falling moving with the arms, betraying our principles to create the verisimilitude of authentic movement!
- d. The simplicity and heightened sense of Oneness in the Position of Repose make it most pleasurable. It is as if the entire length and breadth of the rite is contained in this one pose.

**2.34 The Figure 8 weight transfer begins in the little horse stance with a push of the weight off one leg, diagonally forward and across. Arriving on the new leg, the weight circles sideways and to the back. Without pause, it transfers back across and to the front onto the first leg again.**

- a. The Figure 8 of the hips belongs to the indigenous dances of peoples of the warmer climes. It may rightly be regarded as a universal movement natural to the body and psyche of womankind. Is it not strange that a movement of such sensuality can at the same time be so functional?
- b. In the Position of Repose, the Figure 8 communicates up through the arms to produce a syncopated rock of the Receiver's pelvis and upper body.

- c. This movement may be done in a slow, soothing rhythm or more quickly to release ingrained holding patterns. It may be done on the horizontal plane or incorporate a roll on the Receiver's longitudinal axis.

**2.35 In a rotational weight transfer in the little horse, the push off is from the foot foot, turning the trunk 45° over the head foot. Neither foot adjusts on the pool bottom, except for the unweighting of the heel after pushing off. Letting the bottom drop transfers the weight back to center, from where a rotation of 45° may be done out over the foot foot.**

- a. As the trunk rotates only 45° to either side, the feet and knees are able to retain their original alignment; the degree of rotation in the knee can accommodate the movement.
- b. This rotation is utilized in the Offering Movement. By breathing in on the offering phase, the breathing out will logically coincide with the sinking back to center.

**2.36 Linear lateral weight transfer is from one leg to the other in the big horse stance.**

- a. With persons of substantial mass, the momentum must not overcome the Giver's ability to stop and reverse directions. Watch out, or you will be hopping on one leg across the pool!
- b. The only purpose in executing such a weight transfer is for it to be felt; unless it is of adequate size and speed the Receiver will not be aware she is being moved. This weight transfer forms a part of the technique of the Prana Rock, the Bandoneon, and the Wings of the Deva.

**2.37 In the rotational weight transfer in the big horse, the trunk rotates 90° in the direction of the Receiver's head into the warrior stance, as the head foot pivots out to face that direction and the heel of the foot foot comes off the bottom. After the Receiver's body swings out into suspension to complete the movement, the return begins with a weight transfer straight back. Then the return rotation begins, entailing a lean of the torso to the side and back, with a pivot on the ball of the foot foot.**

- a. This is the dreaded 2.37, the longest of Nadar's Sutras and the most difficult to commit to memory. The thoroughness with which he describes this weight transfer (which is actually three linked transfers) almost precludes the need for commentary.
- b. Having said that, one detail remains to be clarified: the final pivot on the ball of the foot foot is possible because there is so little weight on that leg, the Receiver's body acting as a counterbalance and "parachute".

**2.38 The front to back weight transfer in the Warrior stance may be done low or high in the water, depending on if the head is resting on the shoulder, cradled in the elbow or held in the hand.**

- a. When the Receiver's head rests on the shoulder, the Giver remains low in the water at the same level in this weight transfer.
- b. Cradling the head in the elbow, the Giver may not stand up too high in either direction.
- c. Holding the head in one hand and the distant leg in the other, the Giver has the option of standing up when rocking forward. On rocking back he may then lower his pelvis and bend the back knee, remaining on the ball of the foot. This weight transfer may be extended with steps in either direction.

### **3. Technique in Relation to the Receiver,**

#### **3.1 Technique in relation to the Receiver is a reflection of values; unity or duality is the only choice.**

- a. The choice is to be with or do unto, move with or manipulate, feel one with or objectify. The choice reflects core attitudes toward relationship and will manifest throughout technique.
- b. Empty technique lacks the sweet fragrance of conviction. It is a saying in our order--Better the sharing of the heartfelt novice, than that of the indifferent adept. The integration of compassionate presence with technique is the goal.

#### **3.2 The sacred sharing is nurture, bodywork and movement.**

- c. The Master means to say that at any moment in the sacred sharing, one or a combination of these three is taking place. The adept is able to flavor any of the set moves in whichever of these directions is appropriate.
- d. By nurture, compassionate presence and sensitive touch are meant. By bodywork, massage and stretching are understood. When movement is emphasized, it speaks to the Receiver through its beauty, power and sensitivity.

#### **3.3 In bodywork, enough but not too much is the goal. Better not to massage at all, than to massage poorly.**

- a. Massage is more personal than movement; it is localized attention and a pressure that penetrates the body's external boundary, directly impacting its deeper spaces. Massage evokes surrender as it 'invades' past the layer of superficial defense. It evokes deeper stresses and tensions that in their way long for resolution. A desire

for release, once awakened but frustrated, is indeed a disappointment. The dissatisfied Receiver won't be coming back any time soon!

- b. Bodywork calls for both sensitivity and power, the union of yin and yang. It requires the development of a particular sense, that tells the Giver how much pressure is enough but not too much, how much stretch is effective, but not stressful. A zone exists within which real change takes place in the tissues and the Receiver is at ease, taking pleasure in the process. Only through much receiving and practice with feedback can this sense be cultivated in those who do not have it naturally. Personal issues residing in the tissues must be brought into awareness before this sense can flourish.

**3.4 The elements of technique in relation to the Receiver are touch, water level, head support, hip support, leg support, traction, movement completion and full body movement.**

**3.5 In the water sharing, touch the Receiver first with your heart.**

- a. Master stresses that the Giver's friendly presence, that acceptance and empathy with which he relates to his Receiver, outweighs in significance any physical touch. This holds true whether before, during or after the sharing. When the Giver's voice and eyes are from the heart, the Receiver will begin to feel the trust that leads to surrender.
- b. The Giver holds the Receiver in a heart space, sometimes pressed to his chest, at other times at a distance, but always in the space directly in front of him, radiating out from the heart. The arms, when understood to extend out from the heart, cultivate this space as if it were a garden.

### **3.6 Harmonize your touch with the touch of water.**

- a. Remember that water touches the Receiver more than we ever could. With pressure, temperature, buoyancy and turbulence it engulfs squeezes, sedate and entrances. The Giver's touch should align with how water touches, extending and humanizing its effect. Harmonizing his touch with that of water, the Giver, like a guest, honors his host.

### **3.7 In touch, quality matters over technique. Let your touch be sometimes gentle, sometimes firm, sometimes disappearing, never with tension, and always with awareness. Touch the person.**

- a. Touch communicates who you are; it cannot conceal, only reveal. Even as you attune to the Receiver, she attunes to you. In the undefended, sensorily open state reached by the Receiver, impressions register as fully as if she were an infant, wide open to the world.
- b. Gentle touch and firm touch communicate different messages to different people. Both can be appropriate, as can be minimizing the hands to leave the Receiver more alone with the water. In general let your hands melt into the Receiver, warm and 'listening'.
- c. In the sacred sharing, touch is communicated through the hands, arms, chest, shoulder, cheek, belly and thighs. Be particularly aware of secondary contact: when to allow it and when to avoid it. A boundary of intimacy may more easily be crossed inadvertently than in table massage, as the Giver is closer and holding the Receiver. When giving, Master reminded us to wonder, "What touch is appropriate for this person?"

### **3.8 Know your body and how to soften your touch.**

- a. Master gave novices the exercise to examine their hands, arms, chest, and shoulders to get familiar with the topography of their own instrument from the viewpoint of providing soft, comfortable support. For instance, the flats of the fingers and the palms offer broad, fleshy support; the fingertips do not. (Although he lived over a thousand years ago and no one can say for sure what he looked liked, tradition has it that the Master was quite slender, skinny in fact, and that he developed his skill at providing comfortable support out of necessity.)
- b. The Giver does well to ask himself, Is my arm lean and hard muscled or ample and well upholstered? Is my shoulder wide enough for the head to rest comfortably? Where can the head rest on my arm or shoulder without being on a bone? What is it like to rest against my chest? Is my cheek smooth or raspy? How can I compensate for lack of space, for bonyness and leanness?
- c. Unconscious tension may enter the hands when the Giver forgets to breathe, breaks the flow of movement, has distracting thoughts, or in some other way leaves the moment and the connection he has with the Receiver. For this reason it is good practice to soften the hands on arriving in a new grip following a transition.
- d. Technically speaking, tall men with long legs, a wide arm span and strength are favored over women of shorter stature, a less athletic build and shorter arms. The former may need to learn to modulate their strength and cultivate a feeling presence, while the latter may be at home in the emotional depths of the work, but need to find ways to compensate for their buoyancy and lesser strength. In portraying these extreme male and female poles it becomes clear that a modulation in toward the middle, toward balance, while retaining his or her defining strength, is the aspirant's goal in training. In our order we honor what men and women contribute to the sacred sharing. In the higher councils, men and women are

equally represented, equally active in steering the destiny of our community.

**3.9 Head support is maintenance of the face out of the water, control of the roll of the head sideways, and vigilance against cervical hyperextension.**

- a. Head support is one of the last areas of technique to be mastered. It comes only with experience, much experience with many different body types. When an aspirant realizes that each moment matters, that at no time may he fall asleep, that the neck requires more attentiveness than he ever imagined, then he has arrived at the finishing stage. The constant attention the Giver bestows upon the head and neck is the prime demonstration of his caring presence.
- b. The necks and heads that require the most constant attention throughout a session are precisely those that are most surrendered. So before you rejoice over the loose-necked, easy body Receiver, know that you have your work cut out for you!
- c. At the outset of a water sharing, as the Receiver comes into the horizontal, it is good practice for the Giver to exhale and relax his entire body. The softness that thereby comes into his head arm allows him to better feel the weight of the head. Weighing the head belongs to the opening of the sacred sharing, sensing how much support the water can give and how much the Giver will need to supply.
- d. In the water, the head and neck behave as an anatomical unit. The Giver notices if the head is heavy or light, if the neck is long, short, thick or thin, as well as the degree of surrender. Requiring the most attention and technique is the combination of a long, surrendered neck with a sinking head. For this Receiver a narrow float worn as a headband can be helpful. A very short, stiff neck combined with a tendency to flex the chin forward is another challenging configuration.

- e. Even with proper technique, some heads will tire the Giver's head arm, but in general fatigue of the head arm is an indicator of oversupport, and that the water may be allowed to play a greater role.
- f. The Giver sinks down, drops his elbow, and raises his forearm to roll the head toward him. He stands up, raises his elbow, and lowers his forearm to roll the head away.
- g. The psychological import of having the head rolled toward and away from the Giver is good to be experienced. It can be important for Receivers to discover preferences and perhaps the underlying causes for those preferences.
- h. Master considered neck traction so important a principle of technique, that he devoted the entire Sutra 3.11 to it.

### **3.10 The point of the support of the head is beneath the occipital bone.**

- a. Now we consider one of the most critical aspects of technique—head support. But first some background information. The greater a joint's range of motion, the greater its susceptibility to injury. The cervicals, from the atlanto-occipital joint down to the C6-C7 intervertebral joint, form the most mobile segment of the spine. The upper segment of the neck is anatomically and functionally distinct. It consists of the atlanto-occipital and the atlanto-axial joints. Their combined range of motion in flexion-extension and rotation equal that of the sum of the remaining neck joints. This is to say that the neck, already quite mobile, is even more so in its upper, suboccipital segment. It requires special attention in the form of certain support, stabilization and traction.
- b. In the sacred sharing, the neck is more vulnerable to misapplied technique than any other area of the body. It is not designed to lie passively, face up in water. The neck is designed for action, primarily in the vertical, bipedal stance. The muscles crossing its

suboccipital segment (suboccipitals, longus cervicis, rectus capitis anterior and rectus capitis lateralis) have the strength to stabilize and move the head in a balanced vertical alignment. They are not equipped for sustained periods suspended backwards without head support, as in the water. In this case, the Giver's support must take over for the muscles.

- c. In the Position of Repose, arm support of the head beneath the occipital bone is with the forearm (palm turned downward) or in the crook of the elbow (palm facing up). If support is given slightly inferior to the occipital bone beneath the atlanto-occipital joint, there is the possibility that compression of the delicate soft tissue structures there will become painful. Also, in the absence of traction, the head will fall back, giving rise to hyperextension.
- d. Tractioning support with the back of the wrist creates space for the near shoulder and may be utilized if conditions allow for support to slide easily back to the elbow.

**3.11 The bony structures on which the head arm gains purchase to traction are the natural roundness of the back of the head, the external occipital protuberance (the inion) and the superior and inferior nuchal lines.**

- a. The last structures Master describes are muscle attachment sites-- a little bump and two little ridges, respectively. Depending on how far this bony topography on the Receiver's occipital bone protrudes, it will be more or less easy to administer traction from the point of support.
- b. If the point of support is placed too far superior on the skull, it cannot catch the roundness of the back of the skull for traction and the arm slips off.
- c. If the Receiver tucks her chin in, if she flexes her head out of the water, if the back of her head is flat in shape, and if the inion and nuchal line are not so prominent, there will be little leverage for

traction. An insider's tip: if a Receiver's hair is long and can be bound into a compact bun just superior to the inion, it can serve as a knob against which to traction.

### **3.12 Keep your hands off the neck!**

- a. Master Nadar was said to have been zealous, even vehement in correcting this fault of technique. Holding the neck in your hand allows and even encourages the hypermobile upper segment of the neck to over extend. Instead, support completely up on the occiput. When palming the head in the Position of Freedom, for example, support exactly under the middle of the occiput.
- b. Other head grips in the advanced techniques include (1) the 'Horns of the Bull' traction with the thumb and index finger on the occipital bone in the Matador and Vortex movements; and (2) the 'Monkey Frisbee', an overgrip traction around the occipital bone used in Whirlpools and subaquatic Head Snakes. The name derives from the position in which monkeys in the jungle have been observed to grasp and let fly from tree to tree the makeshift Frisbees they fashion.

### **3.13 Encountering neck hyperextension, the Giver resolves it with traction.**

- a. Traction is an intrinsic, ongoing element of head technique. It should be administered in the water on the horizontal plane, not raising the head up on an angle, and with a minimum of lateral flexion. Nor should it tuck the chin too far forward, okay?
- b. A certain amount of cervical lordosis is natural. It promotes a level bite, the equilibrium of the head anterior to the fulcrum point of the occipital condyles, and the normal, level gaze of the eyes. Reid's base line, from the inferior margin of orbit through the center of the auditory canal and the center of occipital bone, will be ideally horizontal when the neck has a slight, posterior concavity. In

general then, the chin is neither tucked exaggeratedly down toward the chest, nor pointing straight up, indicative of neck hyperextension. Recognizing these two extreme positions is the neophyte's first order of business.

- c. Some Receiver's are extremely sensitive to the slightest degree of neck hyperextension in the water. Others are quite comfortable with a bit of extension through the neck, even arching into the position. When cervical lordosis becomes accentuated through misapplied support in the middle of the neck, rather than tractioning at the juncture of the neck and skull, discomfort is immediate. (Nadar gave us this handy way out of such an impasse: reach through under one or both legs and grasp the distant wrist in order to traction the distant arm, thereby pulling the head onto the arm.)
- d. In almost all cases of hyperextension, the Giver's responsibility is to resolve it with traction and by repositioning the arm, if necessary.
- e. Some Receivers actively arch their necks for extended periods. The Giver observes and wonders what is going on. Should he allow or intervene? As a strategy, he might check in, "How is your neck?" or re-offer good alignment, or simply trust the Receiver's intuition. Above all, he should not project onto the Receiver how he himself would be feeling.

### **3.14 The waterline submerges the ears and crown; the chin and eyes are dry.**

- a. Master is speaking of the supine head. The crown is submerged but the chin is dry. The waterline traces the edge of a mask around the face; the head is more than half submerged. Who among us cannot remember from the years of our apprenticeship the constant admonition, "Ears in the water! Head lower!"
- b. When the water level laps at the corners of the eyes and mouth, a conscious or subliminal vigilance on the part of the Receiver is the

outcome; quite the opposite of the safe, peaceful space the Giver wishes to establish.

- c. When the head is supported on its side, one ear and the cheek on that side remain in the water. In this position the waterline can more easily reach the nose, so more attention is required to keep the Receiver at ease. The image of a Receiver in the side position turning her face upward out of the water to avoid a nose-full comes easily to mind...
- In the advanced subaquatic techniques the waterline may come slightly higher without disturbing the Receiver. Why? Firstly, the intention is already to submerge. Secondly, the Receiver becomes accustomed to water playing across the face. Finally, the nostrils are safely sealed by the noseclip. Any small amounts of water entering the mouth are more easily expelled and less threatening than water entering the nose. Nevertheless, to avoid distraction the Giver must be impeccable regarding the waterline reaching the mouth. As Master Nadar was known to say, "All that choking and coughing spoils the mood..."

### **3.15 The properly supported head appears to float.**

- a. When the advanced subaquatic techniques were developed hundreds of years ago and incorporated into the water healing rites, the heightened dimension of freedom and support that the head and neck experienced underwater led the early Masters to re-define what would be an appropriate water level for surface support. They saw that the head could be more submerged than previously thought and that a degree of over protectiveness had been present in their approach to head support up to that time. Thus, a new standard of comfort for the head came into being. Low riders were born!
- b. Paradoxically, a correctly supported head looks unsupported, as if it floats unsupported. This is precisely because the Giver allows the water to do most of the work. The head normally floats more than

half submerged. All else being equal, the head should be supported only enough to maintain the waterline below the eyes, nose and mouth, and to afford enough weight for occipital traction.

- c. It is known now that muscle tone is maintained by proprioceptive feedback registering weight. This means that if the head is sustained even slightly out of the water the neck musculature will not relax completely.
- d. It is a paradigm shift for many inexperienced givers to think of the head as a boat, the body as an iceberg, and the water as a friendly, non-threatening medium. Neophytes raising young children often hold not only the head, but also the rest of the body out of the water, unable to entrust their precious 'child' to the uncertainties of the water world. This admirable parental instinct may be appropriate to times of infancy, but in the end does a disservice to the Receiver. The consequences of such overprotectiveness are a loss of total ease and of the opportunity to surrender the part of the body most identified with to the water. In the refinement of technique, givers identify and eliminate unconscious moments of oversupport in their movement flow.
- e. There are exceptions to this rule of 'deep support'. A Receiver may initially not feel safe to let the head lie back in the water and might flex it forward and up out of the water. If negotiation fails to reassure the Receiver, the Giver of course accommodates her, understanding that this is a transition phase and eventually she will find more comfort surrendering the head to the water.
- f. "Watch the face," is the constant reminder given the neophyte as he is instructed in the techniques of the healing rite. He keeps in rapport with the Receiver's ongoing reactions as evidenced in the facial expression, he checks the waterline of the head, and remains vigilant for cervical hyperextension.
- g. Current technical trends eschew a former tendency to traction the head or other body parts vertically out of the water. Givers should have a very good reason to lift the head out of the womb-like

security of the water, out of trance, in effect dividing the body in two and losing totality. Certainly, holding the head against the heart at the end of a sharing is appropriate, a gentler transition into the vertical posture and the mindset of self-reliance that comes with it. Beyond this, however, Master Nadar saw little else to justify disrupting the trance and continuity of the rite.

**3.16 Just as any movement repeated too often leads to stress, any head position maintained too long becomes uncomfortable. Therefore, vary your support.**

- a. Master taught that there are no perfect positions; at some point they all must be abandoned for change. Like a sleeper who shifts her position at intervals during the night, the Receiver needs slight variations to refresh her neck. She must not be held statically stabilized for too long in one position. By varying the head's support, the muscle fibers in the neck will be fired more randomly and fatigue from repetitive firings in a static position will be delayed.
- b. Let the Giver neither overstabilize nor understabilize the head, instead supporting like a wise parent: setting limits, but allowing a degree of freedom so that tiny movements of adjustments are possible. This will also allow movement to sequence through the spine. An occipital-sacral counter-traction will facilitate this, working with water's natural joint decompression effect.

**3.17 The head may be briefly without support.**

- a. When the head is unsupported, it sinks lower with the risk that the nose will go under. To prevent this the Receiver may participate with protective contraction, which can cause neck strain. A sense of loss of support can generate anxiety. On the positive side, such moments give a feeling of freedom. Moving the body laterally, supporting under the back and tractioning the arms out of the water

all help sustain the unsupported head on the surface. A few seconds in a transition or a short interlude without support are generally okay. Differences between individuals are considerable, though. A Receiver with a long neck having weak muscles and loose ligaments (a swan neck) needs constant support and traction. The greater thickness of such a neck's intervertebral discs further compounds its hypermobility. A Receiver with a short, thickly muscled neck (a bull neck) and limited mobility may be quite comfortable for extended periods without support.

### **3.18 Neck pain that has not yet occurred may be avoided.**

- a. It is whispered that in the dawn of our order, before the principles of technique had been clearly formulated, students complained of neck pain during their initial trainings. In this connection, one of Master's first students, one Patanjali, was said to have been a promising but erratic student, notoriously derelict in the technique of head support. Tradition has it that this Sutra was the very correction that the Master continually impressed upon this unfortunate pupil and that the two eventually parted company tensely. We cannot help but conjecture that the Master's relentless hounding of the young Patanjali scarred him to some degree, even as he went on to achieve great distinction in the realm of yoga.

### **3.19 Hip support is maintenance of the pelvis just below the surface and vigilance against lumbar hyperextension.**

- a. Supported at the surface in the Position of Repose, the body is not truly horizontal. With the head at the surface and the hips maintained discreetly submerged in the water, the body angles slightly downward from head to foot.

**3.20 The point of pelvic support is beneath the apex of the sacrum.**

- a. The forearm provides broad, even support across the back of the hips. The back of the hand can also lever the sacrum well. Supporting with the palm on the sacrum may be too intimate for some Receivers, especially at the outset of the sharing.
- b. The 12th thoracic vertebra down to the hip joints constitutes a linked chain of articulation, in which compensation through the pelvis and lumbar spine facilitates leg movements at the hip socket in all directions. The strong Y ligaments across the front of the pelvis require that we support under the sacrum, lest the weight of the legs tilts the pelvis forward and hyperextends the lower back. We can alleviate this by moving our support inferiorly down to the apex of the sacrum or even onto the backs of the thighs or by using leg floats.
- c. Leg flotation must allow some heft in the legs, otherwise hip support cannot gain purchase across the pelvis and there can be no traction. Moreover, over-flotation of the legs obstructs their natural hydrodynamic movement and prevents the hips from rising and falling with the breath.
- d. The body's center of gravity resides in the pelvis. Owing to the linked chain of articulation referred to in commentary a., to support the hips is to support the legs. Thus, they are the heaviest part of the body. The hip arm is likely to tire before the head arm in sustained positions, especially if the hips are supported at a distance by the hand alone, as in the Position of Freedom.
- e. The Position of Repose is not the ideal support for the body. Many Receivers exhibit some tendency to protect the lower back with contraction of the abdominal muscles. Counter-traction between the occiput and the sacrum serves to protect the low back, alleviating compression at L5-S1. Support under the knees, on the

other hand, allows the lumbar curve to reverse, stretching the back muscles in a safe position for those with low back pain.

### **3.21 He who controls the knees controls the body.**

- a. The depth and stability of the hip socket means that grips at the knee, using the femur as a lever, can easily push, pull or rotate the pelvis, and thus the rest of the body via the tightly knit intervertebral joints.
- b. The advanced subaquatic techniques employ this principle to a great extent. With no need to support the upper body, grips at one or both knees create powerful underwater snakes and rolls.

### **3.22 Leg support introduces movement of more interest, imparts a fuller sense of the body and sets up stretches and twists.**

- a. Levering the body from the point of support at the back of the knee, the legs do not merely react, they are pushed and pulled to create rolls, stretches, swings, and rotations of greater scope than are possible in the simplicity of supporting beneath the head and hips alone. Examples of such large scale moves include Shakti's Arms, Arjuna's Bow and the Chapati Toss.
- b. Supporting under the legs introduces a flavor of totality to the work. The body is spanned; touch reaches across the length of the body, from head to calf.
- c. Hip stretches in every direction (adduction, abduction, flexion, and extension) as well as elongated spiral twists can be done using leg grips.

**3.23 The leg is supported beneath the knee with the heel of the hand, the back of the wrist, or in the crook of the elbow.**

- a. All three of these 'approved' grips have in common that they do not grasp the knee directly, holding the leg in the palm like a ball with thumb and fingers in opposition. Instead they employ broader, softer surfaces of the hand and arm to avoid irritating the hamstring tendons across the back of the knee.
- b. When holding the back of the knee, do so with all five fingers visible on the far side of the leg, with the heel of the hand (the fleshy thenar and hypothenar eminences) creating the push and pull.
- c. Another option is to support with the back of the wrist with the palm turned down. This grip, shifts easily to lever the back of the hand on the calf, enabling an elongated spiraling twist with counter-traction at the distant shoulder, on return rotations in Rotating Bandoneon and Distant Leg Rotation.
- d. Supporting the back of the knee with the elbow crook is good for power. It allows the Giver to reach through to take the distant hand or the ankle in transitions, but doesn't allow much range of motion or articulation in rotational movements.
- e. Overgrips, utilized more in the subaquatic modalities, allow the Giver to stand up when bending the knee to the chest and also make it possible to easily position the shin across the belly.
- f. When either knee is draped over the shoulder, the Giver should take care to place it well back, so that the back of the knee catches the trapezius muscle. If the Receiver is wearing floats on the thigh or calf, be sure that they are at least a hand's width from the knee so the leg can rest securely.

**3.24 Holding the leg with the thumb opposite the fingers, lifting the legs out of the water, causing the legs of timid Receivers to open, knocking the knees together, fumbling in transitions, pulling on the leg hairs, colliding the feet into walls, and letting them brush the bottom, is ignorance.**

- a. The most natural grip, with the thumb in opposition to the four fingers grasping around the leg, is ill advised. It too easily brings irritating fingertip pressure to bear on the hamstring tendons behind the knee. The amount of force required to execute leg movements can unconsciously communicate to the fingers in this grip.
- b. Lifting the legs too high out of the water in the Basic Moves strains the Giver's upper body. Instead, let the water support them safely below the surface.
- c. It is extremely important in order to retain the Receiver's trust and to maintain her in comfort that moves which open the legs via water resistance not be done prematurely in the water sharing. This can mean avoiding these moves or performing them at a very slow tempo.
- d. In the Bandoneon the Giver wants to leave a slight space between the knees, so that they do not press together, bone on bone.
- e. Invisibly shifting from one grip to another on the legs does not subject the Receiver to the distraction that fumbling causes.
- f. A leg grip that slides will painfully pull the little hairs on the legs of men, useful if the intention of the sharing is to contact anger, but otherwise undesirable. This fault must be avoided at all costs in the move Hanuman's Leap.
- g. The Receiver's feet collide into the walls when the Giver is insufficiently aware of his spatial coordinates in the pool and of the shape of the movement he executes.
- h. The feet brush the bottom, performing 'pool maintenance', through inadequate hip support or faulty technique in transition.

**3.25** The raw power and direction of movement is generated from the legs; passing through the trunk it is channeled into a rotation, rock or swing; then passing through the arms and hands the impulse is further refined, transmuting into touch that nurtures, levers or massages.

- a. Nadar has expanded his definition of the overall phenomenon of force transmission in body mechanics, given in Sutra 2.11, to include the final link, the contact with the Receiver.

**3.26 Traction is the spice that seasons the movement.**

- a. Traction is the spice ('curry'. Trans.) says Nadar; without it, movement soon grows unpalatable. Traction ensures that the neck and lower back remain refreshed. This is an instance of how the approach to those with special needs has informed general technique. Almost all movements include an element of traction. To be a good technician is to traction incessantly.
- b. Traction is on a horizontal plane, not angled up slightly. Think of it as 'deep traction'.
- c. We see head traction powerfully utilized in the transitional movement in which the Giver quickly turns in place. The traction keeps the legs close to the Giver and afloat near the surface, safeguarding the lower back from hyperextension, in a moment when the legs temporarily have no support.
- d. In counter-tractions, the force vectors of two simultaneous tractions fall into a polar alignment. They pull in opposite directions to create a synergistic effect, thereby increasing the efficiency of each traction. Examples of this are the Dance of Water and Prana, the Matador, and the shoulder- calf twists in Rotating Bandoneon and Distant Leg Rotation.

**3.27 Initiating traction, give space to the body to trail after and lengthen; go neutral on the other grip.**

- a. Most movements are pulling the body; even what appears to be a push is still a pull, so long as the body trails behind the point of contact. The body demonstrates a clear preference to be pulled.
- b. Another way to formulate this principle is to say, "The stretch leads the movement." This principle demonstrates how, with a minimum of contact, the maximum effect is achieved by allowing the stretch to sequence through the entire body.
- c. Nadar taught his pupils that to understand a movement they must ask, "From where does it originate? From where is it led?"

**3.28 Give movements time to complete.**

- a. Most of the aquatic movements are two part cycles: A followed by its reverse, B, the return. The movement needs to complete before starting off in the other direction. The cycle has to include a turn around point, a zone of mystery. What really happens here? Does the flow die and reincarnate? Does it circle around, part of the same continuity? The Giver does well to ask himself, "How long can the moment of suspension be sustained in the turn around zone before it goes stale?"
- b. If the Receiver is fully relaxed, her body behaves like trailing strands of seaweed, continuing on with the original impetus from a move until, with a gentle "snapping of the whip" effect, it reverses directions. If the Giver's rhythm doesn't allow time for this follow through, the Receiver can feel rushed and manipulated.
- c. Very large persons move slowly and grandly through the water and must not be rushed. Think oceanic.

### **3.29 Offer full-body, organic movement using weight transfer, not arm strength.**

- a. The principle of moving with the whole body to generate movement is hardly unique to water sharings; it is found all throughout the martial arts, and in the healing arts, as well. In circulatory, deep tissue, barefoot massage, and trepidations, the Giver leans and falls with gravity, using his weight to administer pressure and movement.
- b. Movement so generated has a qualitatively different feel to it for the Receiver, a rightness. Master Nadar found the symbolism of this mode of generating movement to be that we ourselves must first do what we would desire of another; that it is better to accompany our friend on the journey than to demand he go where we will not.

## **4. Advancement**

### **4.1 The aspirant advances through instruction, supervision, practice and receiving.**

- a. The stages of initiation into the rites span several years and trainings, progressing from the basic surface technique onward to the subaquatic modalities. It's a long road! The neophyte begins apprenticeship cleaning and maintaining the pools, and after some time, is permitted to begin instruction. Next he graduates to novice classification, then through several degrees to become an adept. Only a few go beyond to attain the final degree, earning the coveted black floats and noseclips of Mastery.
- b. Along the water path, periodic supervisions are required to ascertain that the aspirant is progressing. What may appear correct and comfortable to the observer may not be so in reality. For this reason the aspirant must practice on one qualified to supervise and receive his feedback. Supervisions keep the aspirant

on track should he be drifting into bad habits. Supervisions are also the gateway to each successive level of instruction, should the adjudication be positive.

- c. Understanding gained through practice has no substitute. Only through the broad experience of working with a variety of physiques and physical conditions can an aspirant hope to advance. The hundreds of sessions required of each level ensure a reliable, if not rapid, progress.
- d. Receiving the sacred sharing is considered key in understanding the intent of the techniques and the essence of the experience. Aspirants remain in intimate contact with the healing work through receiving, ensuring movement forward in their personal evolution.

#### **4.2 Advancement is the refinement of technique, the acquisition of physical strength and coordination, and the integration of new principles.**

- a. Progress in our order is first of all a continuation and development of previously learned, but not mastered, skills. What has been studied needs to become solidified, to become second nature, so that the attention is freed to be more attuned to Receiver. Thus, discipline leads to freedom.
- b. Becoming adept in certain learned moves, the advancing aspirant is able to modulate them, adding in stretches, bodywork, and changing their dynamics according to purpose.
- c. Skill in any activity is specific to it; only through the repetitive practice of the activity itself can the strength and physical coordination it requires be developed. Knowledge of theory is indispensable, but the ability to execute is the goal. Through repetitive practice the nervous system learns and incorporates the specific coordinations entailed. Thus, the instrument transforms itself through the work.

d. Recognizing the truth of new concepts of movement and personalizing them is the path of advancement in the higher degrees. Believing in the power of certain principles renders the aspirant receptive to the inherent power residing in them. His belief establishes a field of possibilities for the Receiver. Thus advancement lies in the internalization of approach.

#### **4.3 Refinement of technique is consistency and deepening of learned skills. These include flow, breath, transition and balancing movement with stillness.**

- a. Progress is in realizing that the movement skills discovered in one move may be applied overall. The aspirant seeks to extend these moments of kinetic insight throughout the sequence, reducing moments of unconsciousness where technique is deficient.
- b. The aspirant now endeavors to traction constantly, always vigilant for the neck and lower back; to maintain the head deep in the water; to breathe with all movements; to soften his hands at every opportunity; to move always in relation to the pool bottom; and to transition smoothly at the right moment in the movement flow.
- c. Mindfulness is the path to greater refinement of technique. The attention of the aspirant naturally alternates between the Receiver and himself. Mentally roaming through the body and monitoring what is going on becomes habit. This head to foot scanning confirms correct grounding, stance, alignment, breath, and so on. It refreshes and restores muscular responses as they begin to fatigue. Over time, with enough reinforcement, all these responses become second nature, like walking, and require little maintenance.

#### **4.4 Flow like a river, deep and sure.**

- a. Master taught that flow is about joy, forward motion, faith in life, and the interconnectedness of things and people. The procession of

life flows in majesty. Flow is that natural state in which one event leads seamlessly into the next. Flow is the gracefulness of life. It is the continuity of experience, the perfect synchronicity and coordination, that divine quality of rightness in the unfolding

- b. In the natural world, in God's Prakriti, flow is the unbroken continuum by which day blends into night, and physical bodies grow imperceptibly. It is bone, tendon, and muscle interpenetrating each other. It is river and wind, blood and lymph, circulating in unending cycles; it is one breath following another.
- c. Flow is present in thinking, feeling, being and doing. It is the foundation of dance in which each movement arises out of the previous one. Flow is in the stroke of the painter's brush, in the melody of a song, and in the spontaneity of speech and writing in which one thought leads effortlessly to the next.
- d. Flow is a quality innate to movement. Movement is symbolic of change, but flow is the principle of collective progress, of a universal interconnectedness. In the sacred sharing, flow encompasses movement, position and transition. Even when the movement flow would seem to stop in moments of stillness, a subtler inner flow of realization takes over; the flow goes to finer levels. A Receiver becomes pregnant with input and begins to integrate it.
- e. Like palm fronds moving to an invisible wind, the body in water shifts and sways to the rhythmic currents generated by the Giver. When the body participates in a movement flow, it releases. In the water, out of the full effect of the gravitational field in which contraction is a given, the body relaxes and assumes positions of innocence, open and undefended. It takes on a beautiful appearance not seen on land, becoming more like water: simple, responsive, surrendered, and humble.
- f. When the body is in a movement flow, its feeling flow is enhanced. Blockages and resistance tend to dissolve. Feelings begin to flow into and out of each other. One feeling energy overlies another and awakens it as awareness leads to awareness, as sequences of feeling

unlock and express. Flowingness within the Giver's being facilitates the Receiver entering a flowing state of consciousness. The Giver's capacity to be present with himself, to feel, and to accept the feelings of the other creates a healing space of freedom for the Receiver.

#### **4.5 Move with the breath.**

- a. Breathing is integral to the water sharing. Indeed, it could be considered a breath therapy, inducing breath-generated states of consciousness. The support and heat of body temperature water slow down the metabolism, reduce the need for oxygen, and produce a shallow breath, sometimes stopping the breath completely. This sets the stage for trance states in which personal truth emerges. On the other pole, the Receiver may be breathing deeply and catharting. Emotional energies circulate more freely, especially when the diaphragm and abdomen are massaged and loosened.
- b. Breathing together with the Receiver at the beginning of a session brings both parties into the present in a state of greater awareness. There is a tendency for the breathing to synchronize, which can energetically attune you to each other. To the degree to which you achieve this resonance, your intuition in relation to your Receiver will be unerring. Moving with her breath also demonstrates that you are sensitive to her and will deepen her trust in you. And speaking of sensitivity, the considerate Giver includes a supply of betel in his equipment bag, ensuring that his breath is sweet and inoffensive.
- c. As the Giver, your mode of breathing forms a part of the rhythmic field within which the sacred sharing takes place. Full, audible breaths also model a state of connectedness with the body for the Receiver to entrain with. Sighing and humming quietly on the exhalation soothe Receivers, generally. So, be a relaxed, breathing sharer; your movement will remain organic and flowing.

- d. A useful technique is to take a deep breath, followed by a sighing release with a conscious letting go and sinking down of your body in the water. This is 'finding zero'. The lower you sink in the water, the less effort you expend. Overexerted muscles can then let go more easily as the demands made upon them are reduced.
- e. He who fears himself cannot breathe consciously. The full breath does not come to one who suppresses feeling. For him only a shallow technique and presence is possible, without breath, without depth, a two dimensional surface presence. He who fears himself fears the other. For him there can be no real sharing. His own presence is unknown to him, latent beneath the layers of defenses he identifies with and presents to the world as himself.
- f. The movement capacity mirrors the feeling capacity. It is difficult to flow when the psyche is blocked, when the feeling capacity is not fluid. Depression is an unfeeling condition, the curtailment of movement, of vital energy flow. Progress into the advanced degrees requires emotional translucency.

#### **4.6 To master transition in the water, first master it in life.**

- a. Life transitions are one of the most challenging areas of experience to traverse. They entail realization of the necessity to change, trust in the unknown, release of the old, reaching toward the new, and finally establishing a new balance and stability. There is uncertainty and risk inherent in transitions, but they are necessary in order to advance. Transitions have so much to teach us. A successfully accomplished transition is so exhilarating, a victory!
- b. In the sacred sharing, as in life, transitions are the most difficult part of technique and at the same time the key to mastery. In the water, transitions relinquish one position for the next; the hands must let go. The hands and holding are symbolic of manipulation and control. As in climbing a ladder, we must release each rung to attain the next; we must lift our foot away and find the next rung. Fear of

change distorts movement, either inhibiting it or rushing it. Rather than a leisurely walk in the park, the transition becomes a hastening through a dangerous alley.

- c. Nadar noticed that early life transitions seemed to have an effect on aspirants' 'transition styles'. One novice freezes, fumbles or goes blank, the other tosses the head or dunks it. The divorcing of parents, the death of close ones, moving to another region or school, all happening when a child lacks the resources to cope can leave their impact. How regrettably easy it is for a child to experience change as loss.
- d. An examination of beliefs about life transitions can be useful to the aspirant experiencing difficulties with them in the water. Graceful transitions come with the belief that they belong to the flow and are not cruel accidents to be avoided. On the level of technique, we must learn them as separate moves outside the repeating movement cycles, but in our minds we need to re-integrate them back into the flow. Let them be the flowing links between cycles. Here are some tips, the sayings of Master Nadar:
  1. Transition invisibly as part of the flow.
  2. Imagine your partner is asleep and you wish not to awaken her.
  3. Know which transitions require directness and speed and which are best performed slowly.
  4. Traction the head to keep the body afloat.
  5. Align the body on its longitudinal axis for rolls.
  6. Catch a leg or step in at exactly the right moment in the movement flow.
  7. Time your own body mechanics of turning, traveling, sinking and rising exactly to the spatial behavior of the Receiver.
  8. As in life, have faith in self and vision of the goal. Cultivate courage.
  9. Try the mantra, "It's easy."

#### **4.7 Balance movement with stillness.**

- a. Essential to the yin nature of the healing rites are pauses for stillness, providing rest from movement. The nervous system needs these for assimilating, so as not to overload with sensation. They offer a chance to collect oneself and to feel. During the pauses, movement does not cease altogether; it subsides externally but continues on subtly as the pulsing of blood and breath and as emotion and thought. Our very cells take advantage of the absence of stress to release internalized shock in a process referred to as cellular breathing. This is movement within stillness.
- b. The spirit in which an action is initiated sets a wheel in motion. Lao-tzu (a Chinese philosopher with whom Nadar spent some time—they were said to have been great friends) asks, "Can you remain unmoving until the right action arises by itself?" In another verse of his *Tao Te Ching* he tells us, "The unmoved is the source of all movement." Stillness, then is the starting point of a session. Sense the Receiver's weight; notice the difference between the weight of the head and the weight of the hips. Attune to the Receiver and the universal energies and wait. Rather than beginning the session, allow the session to begin of itself out of the experience of unity. This is relating, perfectly poised and connected to all the living elements present in the moment. Above all feel the Receiver's essence; she feels you feeling her. The principle of relating supercedes any set movement.
- c. The source of the stillness is the Giver's own centeredness which guides him to meet his partner with respect. Have faith in stillness, in being without doing.

#### **4.8 Advanced principles of technique are creative imbalance, moving by example, traveling, and rhythm.**

#### 4.9 Generate movement through creative imbalance.

- a. Life is lived less as a steady direction than as a process of constant course correction, of zigzagging, one movement arising opportunistically out of the next. Equilibrium then, is also a process, not a static centeredness. Natural movement is alternately losing and recovering balance; walking on land entails a fall forward onto the foot receiving the body's weight. Moving in water also includes an off balance phase. Yet moving in water is not at all the same as on land. It is much slower due to the viscosity of water meeting the mass of the bodies of Giver and Receiver.
- b. In water the Giver can lean and fall quite far sideways or backwards and still have plenty of time to smoothly recover equilibrium. This enables a new logic of moving: conscious slow motion falling, or creative imbalance. It is the most effortless way to generate movement. The Giver's own body weight transmits movement to the Receiver. Expenditure less effort, we find the way of least resistance. Nadar emphasized how easy and simple this falling was, saying it was not, after all 'the science of projectiles' (*The Greek words represent 'science' and 'flying cylinder'. The meaning is not clear to us. Trans.*)
- c. The fall begins with the head at the top of the vertebral column. As it tilts in the desired direction, the vertebrae, one by one from the top down, join in the movement, like a stack of blocks tumbling. Furthermore, a vestibular mediated reflex activates in which the leg tenses in the direction of a head tilt in preparation for receiving the body's weight.
- d. In Close and Distant Leg Rotation and Rotating Bandoneon of the basic surface technique, the lean backwards pulls partner sideways through the water. The Close Leg 8 leaning back pulls partner down in the water; the Receiver floats up on her own with the breath. In the Carousel the lean backwards carries the Receiver down in the

water. In the Geisha steps the Giver sits and falls backwards, low in the water. The Godzilla steps lean back with each step on the diagonal. In the Whirlpools and Parachutes, the Giver falls backwards in a tight circle.

#### **4.10 Move by example.**

- a. Nadar was adamant that his pupils understood that the most honest, the most humble way to share movement is to be that movement and thereby transmit it to the Receiver. To spin the Receiver in a Whirlpool, the Giver must himself embody and execute a rapid spin. The Giver guides the Receiver through a Figure 8 by himself walking a figure 8 and taking the Receiver with him. When the Giver walks backwards like a wave, like a river through the stillness of the pool, his Receiver experiences a wave and a river of turbulence flowing down her body.

#### **4.11 Travel to enlarge movements, to save the back and arms, to move dynamically while generating friendly turbulence, and to create the illusion of space.**

- a. Master is speaking of taking steps, of walking. In what are classified as the traveling techniques, the Geisha and Godzilla Waves travel smoothly and vigorously backwards. Steps are added into weight transfers in the warrior stance to slow down and extend swinging movements. Rapid backwards circling steps generate spinning Whirlpools. Specific patterned footwork can create the Matador, the Vortex and Waves in a Circle in the smallest of pools.
- b. The step is free of impact, sliding and lowering through the foot, toe-ball-heel, like a temple dancer alighting from a leap. The technique is in the legs. The big muscles of the legs and trunk overcome water resistance, not the weaker arm muscles. The arms merely stabilize to the trunk and ensure that the Receiver comes

- along for the ride. Whether taking large or small steps backwards, avoid arching the back or supporting the Receiver on the chest; these are bio-mechanically unsound positions in which to bear weight. Leaning back is safe, however, when done with a 'neutral back', that is, with the back straight and the pelvis tilted under.
- c. With every step, whether on land or in water, the nervous system is making adjustments without conscious involvement. However in water, these skills must first be learned and imprinted before they become automatic. Like a teenager whose growth is so rapid his coordination is unsure, the neophyte experiences some awkwardness learning to move through a new medium, the water. Stepping is an advanced technique, for the water level and sensitivity of the grip must be maintained in the midst of traveling.
  - d. When traveling backwards, a beneficial low pressure area is generated immediately in front of the Giver in which the Receiver rides, a sort of "water pocket", similar to the draft created by the lead chariot in a race. The Giver may visualize that he cuts a canyon through the water and pulls his Receiver between its walls. By traveling quickly, the Giver generates 'virtual currents' in which the Receiver rides. These sustain her at the surface while leaving much of the body free to wave. The turbulence of the water on the skin's surface contributes toward inducing trance through sensory overload and quite possibly cleanses the aura, like standing beneath a waterfall. There is also a sense of going forward, of leaving the old behind. Waves and spirals performed while travelling backwards release blocked energy, channeling it out the feet. The legs become more like a fin or tail, bringing some receivers back to earlier developmental states.
  - e. On land it is more efficient walking forwards than backwards. In water the reverse is true; walking backwards is clearly an easier and faster mode of travel. Why is this? First of all, our weight is already falling backwards effortlessly. Secondly, the back is more hydrodynamically rounded than the front of the torso, allowing

water to slip around it more easily. When we walk to the front our thigh leads, but in walking backwards the heel is the first part of the body to cut through the water, and it offers considerably less resistance. In contrast to walking forward in water, the foot is in complete contact with the bottom for a longer time when walking backwards, resulting in more leverage and hence more push from the bottom to power the walk.

- f. The step is a metaphor for transition and uncertainty. From a place of familiarity and support, a step reaches out into new territory, already reducing support by half. It then falls into the unknown, where it is necessary to re-establish balance and security. Steps are to the feet what transitions are to the hands.
- g. The traveling techniques require the aspirant to develop new spatial senses. He needs to know where he is in the pool in relation to other couples. He needs to know when he approaches a wall in order to have time to turn around. He needs to make constant adjustments for changes in depth. Until these skills are acquired, practice sessions will be marred by dunkings, 'soft bonks' (head to head collisions, 'hard bonks' (head to wall collisions) and 'foot whippings" (the feet of one Receiver brushing the head of another). Some instructors routinely require Receivers to wear leather helmets for their own safety in the initial pool sessions in which traveling is practiced.

#### **4.12 Establish a rhythmic field.**

- a. According to Nadar, rhythm in space is created in three ways: by movements that reverse directions; by repetition of movement shapes; and by sustaining a common interval between like movements.
- b. One in tune with the rhythms of nature and with his own bodily and emotional rhythms can translate rhythm into movement. He is able to generate rhythms because he is a rhythmic being.

The body is polyrhythmic, with heart beat, respiratory rate, craniosacral rhythm, energy flows, brain waves and other cycles playing in counterpoint to each other. Equally is the external environment a world of rhythms. Thus it is natural to be able to align with rhythm, trust it and surrender to it. The bodymind is constantly enveloped in an ongoing rhythmic environment, a rhythmscape, which activates its attunement to form and pattern in space.

- c. Movement is more elegant than any verbal induction, speaking directly, wordlessly to the nervous system and tissues. Just as the ears pick up sound, the inner ear labyrinth mechanism and the proprioceptors distributed throughout the body are the brain's antennae for movement and rhythm. Just as the ear scans noise for pleasing sounds and patterns, leading our awareness to switch into a mode of aesthetic enjoyment when music plays, the body attunes to the appreciation of spatial rhythms and an openness to their effects when dancing or being 'danced'. Rather like how the deaf enjoy the vibration of music tactiley, it switches to a 'touch minded' state, in contrast to a predominantly 'eye minded' and 'ear minded' mode of experience on land.
- d. At the outset of a water sharing, the Giver establishes a rhythmic field. Through his intention he attains a state of mind in which he embodies rhythm in his breath and movement. This rhythmic field induces a subjective sense of time, a world of virtual time. Indeed, the rite could be understood as silent music, consisting of rhythmic impulses of pressure, touch and movement played upon the proprioceptors, including the vestibular apparatus of the inner ear.
- e. The Giver sings a song in movement to his Receiver. Just as in listening to music, the Law of Entrainment becomes operative and internal biological rhythms shift, which in turn precipitate

changes in consciousness. Like great dance music, let your rhythmic field be so compelling, a Receiver must entrain.

- f. Rhythm encourages and magnetizes back into motion those parts of us that have slowed down or ceased to move; energies locked in isolated cycles are reintegrated into the overall flow.

#### 4.13 Find the rhythm of awareness.

- a. A session is a season of experience. Our responsibility as givers is not to fix or change anyone, but to hold a compassionate space in which awareness may expand. We are conscious of the impact of rhythm and able to modulate its use. For any given move and Receiver, there is an ideal rhythmic range. This is the rhythm of awareness. There is space for new understandings to surface when the Receiver is not reacting to the stress of sensory overload. A Receiver moved in her rhythm of awareness is able to feel the reverberations of the movement in body and soul.
- b. If the Giver is not fully aligned with his Receiver, not entering into a resonance with and sensitivity to her, it is possible he will be drawn to work in rhythms that feel right but are inappropriate for the Receiver. He will perhaps be in his own flow, but a flow unrelated to and not fully answering the Receiver's needs. Also, be sure to distinguish between rhythms the Receiver's body can move in and the rhythm her psyche requires. To find an appropriate rhythm, ask yourself, "What rhythm is this person calling for?" Posing this question creates a context for a response and a release from the Receiver.
- c. Some Receivers enjoy the exhilaration of quicker rhythms, the water rushing by, the variety, and the unexpected. At the opposite pole are those who most enjoy being held in stillness, feeling the security of another body in a non-sexual, transpersonal relation. Slower rhythms sedate and allow

expansion into self, inducing trance states when carefully sustained. This is powerful way of sharing. Only in slower rhythms is the timeless, exquisite moment of weightlessness at the end of waves, swings, and rotations possible. A rhythm is too slow when it "dies", when it loses forward momentum and the Receiver is more conscious of the mover than of her own body and grace. A rhythm is too fast when it induces fear or when the body is not given time to follow through luxuriously to sense its weightlessness and softness.

**4.14 Establishing his stance on the causal plane of Self Realization, the subtlest levels of technique open up for the Giver. These are visualization, spatial mandalas, positional sanctuaries, wondering, weightlessness, gentleness, mirroring and dance.**

a. On the steeper slopes of Mastery, the path forward is one of internal Realization. The evolving aspirant learns to stop manipulating external reality and, instead of pursuing effect, he becomes cause. He begins to see his internal world as the template for his experiences and manifests the people and events of his life purposefully. From this point forward as he embodies higher principles, his sharings reflect attainment. The movements become kinetic teachings of truth, carrying more information. They are a celebration of faith, love and surrender, not a painful service rendered as sacrifice. They are imbued with a power and grace, touched by the frequency of Light the Giver represents. To be in the presence of such an enlightened being naturally brings joy and upliftment. Thus are the sharings of the Masters.

**4.15 Visualize ideal movement shapes.**

a. The Greek roots of the word 'ideokinesis' stand for 'idea' and 'movement'. Ideokinesis is the concept developed by the priestess,

Lulu Schweigaard, coming from the temple dance tradition, describing the process whereby an idea held in the mind is executed in movement without the doer consciously knowing the means. One need only have a picture of a movement, and the nervous system recruits all the right muscles to perform it in the most economical fashion. Another way to state this principle would be, "Visualize movement shapes as you work." Therefore, the aspirant sees the ideal movement—beautiful, full, peaceful and alive—before performing it.

- b. But let us be realistic, too. Imagining movement can refine how it manifests, yet the power of imagination alone will never transmit a movement. We must act, and this requires effort, no matter how perfect our execution. Muscles will contract, calories will be burned. Life is not only thinking and being, but action! Movement is shared to be felt; slow, formless movements do not register, do not reach the receiver's tissues or awareness. Stretches done with inadequate force are more a frustration than if they had been omitted. Nothing evokes surrender more surely than sensitive force. The integration of masculine and feminine qualities is as necessary in our work as the presence of mother and father in a home.

#### **4.16 Transform movement shapes into spatial mandalas.**

- a. A movement cycle is a repeating pattern of relative stability. The major elements of human existence, such as work, relationship, health, and nature follow cycles. Likewise, the rounded, water-like movements of the sacred sharing are cyclic. These are waves, spirals, circles and figure eight's. These movements are experiential spatial mandalas. Executed with awareness, as a sacrament, they can be a teaching in themselves. Thus, they are also self-extinguishing. As a cycle repeats, the Receiver takes it in, uses it in some way, and becomes ripe to move on to new experience. The Giver senses this and allows the next thing to happen. As we move in

tune with our partner, we might ask ourselves, "What is the Receiver to experience now? What movement is this person calling for?"

- b. The word 'mandala' is Sanskrit, signifying 'sacred circle'. Mandala paintings have been objects of meditation in several spiritual traditions. Carl G. Jung reported that psychiatric patients would spontaneously draw them in an attempt to order and heal their own psyches. Mandalas mirror the form of the Universe and symbolize the Self, serving as interdimensional gateways linking human consciousness to the infinite and to the archetypes. The center point, referred to as the 'bindu', has a symmetrical relation to the whole, symbolic of the individual's place in his self-created universe.
- c. Spatial mandalas are not unique to the advanced techniques of the sacred sharing. Walking the Native American Medicine wheel and circumambulating the Buddhist stupa are other examples of meditative practices in which the entire body moves through a sacred shape. In the water sharing, the Receiver's extreme openness and the mindful repetition of the movement correspond to the meditator's sustained open-eyed focus on the mandala painting.

#### **4.17 Stillness is illusion; Reality is movement**

- a. Position is a place to linger, a pause on the journey. Position is a snapshot in time, a temporary resting place. A physical position may appear to our limited senses to be still, but our expanded awareness registers the movement of the cosmos in which we are all passengers. The earth, solar system and galaxy each spiral through the universe: our position in space is ever changing. The body's internal processes are likewise never still, even when asleep. Nor does the psyche ever pause from its constant activity in other dimensions.
- b. In the healing rites, as in the "big picture", positions move. We could think of positions as staging points for movements, giving us

different leverages to move the Receiver. Unique to our work in the water are movements which integrate stability and change, whereby part of the body is securely anchored in nurturing contact with the Giver while the rest waves and stretches. The contact with the Receiver via the hands, arms, chest, neck, head, and legs defines each position and contributes to its particular emotional flavor.

#### **4.18 Make sanctuaries of positions.**

- a. Nadar helped us to see that positions may be considered as sanctuaries, glowing with heart and devotion, refuge from the turbulence of the world, the safe harbor imbued with protective maternal qualities. The positions in which we feel comfortable as Giver or Receiver provide a measure of our capacity to give and receive loving nurture. The Giver who only briefly embraces and holds his Receivers, or the Receiver who cannot enjoy the comforting closeness, may each be able to learn something from their preferences and aversions. To nurture with presence in positional sanctuaries the Giver must first be able to allow himself to be nurtured. How can he truly give another what he forbids himself?

#### **4.19 Wonder.**

- a. It is the nature of the universe to respond immediately to a question. With an inquiring, curious mind, the Giver's attitude to the Receiver produces a receptivity and attunement to a response, thereby evoking one without any conscious action on our part. When he, nonverbally asks a question, the bodymind's answer is biological--a release, a shift in physiology.
- b. One of the early Masters formulated the question, "What could be lighter, freer, softer? This mode of wondering has survived the test of time, showing itself to be almost alchemic in its efficacy.

- c. Wondering operates reflexively, too, when we ask ourselves such questions as, "Am I grounded in my breath?" "Is my body in comfort and flow?" "Am I effortlessly present?" Envision your approach, how you wish to relate to the Receiver, how you wish your body to feel. Formulate questions to ask yourself if it is happening.

#### **4.20 Access weightlessness.**

- a. Buoyancy is water's gift to humankind and to all water-loving creatures. With buoyancy, the healing rites become possible; the Giver is able to easily support a person in his arms for extended periods. Receivers sense this ease and feel light, sometimes remembering times in their childhood and infancy when they were effortlessly held and carried.
- b. When we let ourselves be heavy and allow our weight to sink down, we feel lighter; a paradox, certainly. That same Chinese philosopher, Lao-tzu, put it this way: "The heavy is the source of the light." Similarly, in the water, sensitivity to the Receiver's weight allows her to feel her own lightness. At the beginning of a session as the Giver assesses proportions, flexibility and mass, he asks himself, "Where's the weight?" The weight in each person's physique is naturally unique as determined by the overall specific gravity and by the varying specific gravities of its parts. Then, as he continues with curiosity, wondering, "What could be lighter, freer, softer?" he becomes more receptive and respectful of these qualities, preserving them and permitting them to expand. When lightness is allowed to expand it becomes weightlessness. Most amazingly, weightlessness plus movement equals flying!
- c. Like the pause between breaths in yogic breathing in which ecstasy can be experienced, the sensation of weightlessness in movements in water is "out of time". It has an indescribable sweetness Receivers long to savor again and again. With practice, the Giver is able to create and extend these timeless moments. Where are they in the

flow of movement? At the end of rotations and swings, on the upswing of waves, spirals and figure eight's. After receiving an impulse from the Giver, the Receiver's body follows through or 'responds', completing the movement. Integral to this approach is allowing time; watch the body and wait.

#### **4.21 Be gentle.**

- a. Beyond merely noting how much weight is present is gentleness. Nadar wanted his pupils to handle the Receiver as if she were as fragile as an infant, wide open to every incoming impression. Indeed, those parts of our psyche corresponding to our level of development in infancy and childhood are so sensitive. When treated with sensitivity a response in kind is evoked; our sensitivity resonates her sensitivity. Love calls forth the desire to be loved, the need for love. Love is the Great Opener, the Healer. We closed in its absence and open again in its presence by feeling the hurt that caused the original pain.
- b. A loving manner is one that gives time for stillness, time for the Receiver to feel herself, to be at peace. Nothing is forced or rushed. Forcing implies that there is something wrong that must be changed. Rushing devalues the moment, saying something else is more important than right now. Offer acceptance instead. Communicate through touch and presence that the Receiver is beautiful, loved, and okay as she is. Feel this to be true for yourself. Isn't this the message you have been waiting to hear, to receive all these years? Isn't this what you have striven after with all our achieving? You can give it to yourself.
- c. A loving manner can be playful, suggesting that there may be a lighter and freer way to reside in a too serious body. Give the opportunity to choose that way, rather than forcing through resistance. Resistance is something that is relinquished from within by choice. The Giver can open a door, but it is up to the Receiver to

walk through it. The Giver focuses attention and creates awareness in the Receiver who then may choose to let go and surrender. This is why stretches are done slowly and gently, giving time for awareness and choice. This is why moves in general are done slowly.

- d. An exception might be the Receiver who is already open and turns to the water healing for sheer pleasure and exhilaration. In this case, fear has already been released and the surrender to power and to flow can be freely experienced. We are all so different: where we stand on our paths and what is most beneficial for us on a given day is in continual flux.

#### **4.22 Recognize and mirror key movements.**

- a. The Giver is on the lookout for reactions indicating key movements. Sighs, moans, smiles, laughter and tears are all moving in the same direction, back to wholeness. Whatever movements evoke them are significant, shedding light on the mystery of the self. A key movement may also arise from the Receiver. In this case the Giver's responsibility is to take note and to honor it. By giving it time to play out and even encouraging it, the motivation behind the movement may surface into awareness.
- b. Nadar taught to mirror the Receiver by allowing adequate time and space for her interactive movements to complete, by getting out of the way, and by supporting and extending the movements. Should the breath create a movement, follow that; should other movements arise mirror them. Other verbs that come to mind are encourage, celebrate, amplify, and smile upon.
- c. Incipient movements of the Receiver, when mirrored, encourage her to continue, to expand into their spell. Mirroring opens up a free space of self-expression for the Receiver. It is the "yes" from life that affirms self-expression. Earn the Receiver's trust by sensing and following her subtlest movements in all directions.

d. The Giver may also set impulses. Subtler levels of sensing inspire him to move and dance in a full body response to his Receiver's essence. Sensitively preserve partner's sense of being while continuing into more structured movements. The Receiver feels the Giver feeling her; do not forget her.

#### **4.23 Dance.**

- a. The Master's final word on body mechanics points beyond what has been touched upon so far. In dance, technique is learned to be forgotten; in performance one gives oneself to the dance. "Just dance it," says the coach to the dancer heading on-stage. He might add, "Don't think, don't worry, just do it."
- b. We each have a very private mode of being which, from the outside, appears as movement and is called "dancing". Perhaps it is a way of entering into the Greater Flow or the Universal Ecstasy. Whatever it is, this dance has a rightness and power to it. It expands us and attunes us to our environment. The imagery around dance is rich: "Dance with yourself, dance with your partner, dance with the water, dance in the Light, dance with the blocks, dance from the heart," and so on. In short, dance!

### **5. Instruction**

- a. Master Nadar addresses this portion of the Water Sutras to those who aspire to teach, whose passion it is to preserve and guide onward the tradition of our order.

#### **5.1 Teaching is instinct; teaching is craft.**

- a. Who would not recognize that by virtue of our personality constellation and our natural gifts we excel in one calling or another?

The import of this Sutra is that for some, teaching is their life purpose, their born profession. The best teacher may never have studied it, may not know exactly what he is doing. He may not even be aware of his genius.

- b. Nadar also means to say that even the born teacher may benefit from the study of teaching as a craft. However, much of what we understand about teaching comes from observing what inspired teachers do.
- c. We might believe that every Master teacher is fulfilled in the practice of his calling. We might expect that the garden of his Soul blossoms in the act of teaching. Yet, if the oral tradition of our order is correct, there have been many Masters who simply taught as water flows, as the sun shines, unconscious of their attainment, without any special relation to their art. In this lies enigma.

## 5.2 Teaching is resonance.

- a. The mind of each human being is a bestowal, part of the Universal Mind. Communication between minds is therefore natural on account of the common source of these divine gifts. Resonance is the phenomenon whereby the frequency of one mind finds agreement in another, vibrating into awareness what was latently present. A shared thought or quality of being finds immediate acceptance, is recognized as a higher value, as that which has been sought. Love is awakened in this way, through 'infectious' contact with one who lives it.
- b. The Master teaches by embodying that which he would transmit. It finds resonance within the aspirant, awakening latent understanding and wisdom. In this sense, learning is a process of self-discovery.
- c. The teacher attunes to the level of each student and presents his material in such a way that it can reach the student and be assimilated.

### **5.3 Teaching is co-creation.**

- a. The principle of co-creation is a long recognized phenomenon whereby the presence of those seeking knowledge causes it to manifest through the vessel of the teacher, activating him, so to speak. Therefore, the teacher engages fully with the group; he opens a conduit to each student to facilitate the exchange.
- b. It is the receptivity of the aspirant that activates the Master: without the empty vessel to pour into, his own would not overflow; without the aspirant's thirst, the Master's cistern would be dry. The relationship is symbiotic and mutually empowering.
- c. For this reason teachers of our order acknowledge their students at the conclusion of each day, thanking them for their role in co-creating.

### **5.4 The sacred sharing itself is the model for teaching.**

- a. Master is saying that the comportment and approach of the sacred sharing is exactly that required to teach it. He who would teach as he offers the sacred sharing comes in with humility and gratitude to Spirit, recognizes the group as a living system; trusts natural processes; practices mindfulness, non-violence and playfulness; and supports unity and integration.
- b. In the sacred sharing the ancient Masters found all the criteria for being and relating nobly represented. The sacred sharing was their spiritual practice, their path to Oneness. For the scores of generations that have followed them, the enlightened states so easily accessible during the sharings have served as the model and inspiration for daily living.

## **5.5 Teaching is inspiring, holding a space and passing on information.**

- a. Master distills the essence of his craft into three overlapping tasks. Each of these he elaborates in the following Sutras.

## **5.6 To inspire, model the qualities of presence essential to the sharing.**

- a. It is said of Nadar that he inspired by showing himself to be human: natural, without pretension and tolerant. He allowed things to flow and was not overly controlling. He was helpful, patient and the 'friend of the shadow', the wounded and hidden part of the psyche. He preferred to disappear, to be the guide on the side, rather than the 'sage on the stage'.
- b. A teacher earns respect and trust through demonstrating sensitivity. He accommodates to the country, professions, personalities, and learning styles of the participants, and to the processes they must undergo in encountering the power of the work. For instance, he might ask in the opening circle, "Are there any physical conditions I and the class need to know about? And do you know how you learn best, what your learning style is? Are you aware of any negative associations with classroom situations, teachers, study, or self worth that might come into play?"
- c. A teacher inspires by remaining curious, ever the student himself, sitting on the same level as his students in the circle. Only by continuing to learn may he grow and teach with authenticity.
- d. The most inspiring teachers share their passion. They are alive in the moment, rediscovering the truth of the principles they teach and having new insights. They themselves are in touch with inspiration, communicating the love of their craft.

- e. Spirit is the source of all inspiration. A teacher inspires by channeling Spirit in meditations and in instruction. The teacher who invites Spirit into his course makes it more easily accessible to all.
- f. Nothing is more important than believing in the student. The teacher acknowledges each student for his struggles and successes and does not support any form of self-negation the student may indulge in. One way or another, sooner or later, he can do it!

### **5.7 To inspire, model the techniques in their ideal form.**

- a. A teacher's responsibility is to embody idea, to carry it in order to transmit it. He demonstrates the technique in all its beauty, power, and sensitivity, the wedding of therapy and art. Students have the assurance that what they aspire to can be realized; the summit has been reached and there exists a path and a guide.
- b. When these qualities are manifested, they cannot fail to impress on the deepest level. They trigger an activation in those who are called. The neophyte's true moment of initiation is when he first witnesses or receives from an instructor or adept, and then resolves, "This I must learn. This is my path." He thereby claims membership in a global community, a culture of touch and movement, that recognizes their power and speaks a common nonverbal language across all national, racial and religious borders.

### **5.8 The inspired student believes in himself; he can surmount any obstacle.**

- a. The inspired student has a sense of discovery and expansion. He is full of confidence and enthusiasm to learn. Even as he experiences a quickening, it is very important that a teacher remain patient and accepting. He must make it clear that mistakes are inevitable, part of the process; that only through trial and error do human beings

learn. Only after falling down 100 times does the toddler manage to stand on his own. And even with the best of intentions, we have bad days. When a student experiences that he has the time and help he needs, he is less likely to become discouraged.

- b. A student's pure desire to learn is a teacher's inspiration.

### **5.9 To hold space, promote communication, emotional awareness, a team spirit, and creativity.**

- a. This is the formula that Nadar established in his day. It has proven adequate to allow succeeding generations of teachers the leeway to find their own style of presentation. It is predicated on these understandings: (1) Communication is essential in a group joined together in the pursuit of higher ideals. Misunderstandings naturally arise and must be resolved. (2) Only through feeling can an individual or a group remain healthy. (3) Harmony within a group is good, but synergy through a team is better. (4) Learning and discovery are fostered through encouraging creativity.

### **5.10 Establish an etiquette of communication.**

- a. A training is an experiment in socialization. Good communication skills and emotional self-responsibility go hand in hand. A teacher's role is to model communication in his circle sharings, in interactions with students, and in staff meetings. In this way he demonstrates that communication has value not only to increase understanding between people, but as a doorway to understanding oneself, as well.
- b. If all was flowing smoothly in a course, Nadar thought it better to have an unspoken agreement than a posted list of rules, with only the occasional intervention when circle sharing lost coherence. If some members of the group are communicating poorly, however, it is an aid to post and discuss an etiquette, such as the one below:

- 1) Allow one person to speak at a time.
  - 2) Speak for yourself only.
  - 3) Share what is present in the moment and avoid 'story'.
  - 4) Take responsibility for your feelings, using 'I' statements where appropriate and owning your projections.
  - 5) Notice if you tend to share much more or less than others and come into balance.
  - 6) Give attention to the one speaking.
  - 7) Listen from the heart.
  - 8) Look inside to feel what a sharing evokes rather than rescuing or processing the one entering a feeling state.
  - 9) In the event of considerations needing to be communicated, speak to the person concerned, not to anyone else.
  - 10) Be sensitive around issues of race, religion and gender.
- c. Trainings consisting only of women have sharings that tend to be more free-flowing, candid, and yes, raunchy! Women will interrupt each other and cross-talk more—and it's okay. The normal etiquette of sharing can be suspended, as the group functions more as a coherent organism than in mixed gender trainings.
- d. A teacher need not shy away from giving students time to speak of their difficulties in the course. In fact, it is positive. Even if there may be no solution, and the situation may be temporary and resolve itself shortly in any case--still, in the expression there is awareness and more significantly, a pressure valve for frustrations.

### **5.11 In a healing space, everyone has the permission to feel.**

- a. The disordering of the psyche begins with the disease of feeling, the suppression of feeling that locks down awareness. Without feeling, life narrows down, the self literally shrinks as areas of the brain and psyche are outlooped from consciousness. In the release

of blocked feelings, the liberation of the feeling nature into a flowing state of expression occurs.

- b. Feeling should not just be tolerated, but encouraged and valued as an integral part of the course, as the goal of the work. Feeling keeps courses alive and real, breaking the unhealthy taboo against transgressing social decorum.
- c. Trainings evoke projections based on the family and schooling experiences. Interacting in close proximity over several days in situations of great openness and challenge make this inevitable. AtTRACTIONS and repulsions, likes and dislikes, will arise having deeper roots in the past. If this is presented as a given and an opportunity to learn, participants can consciously work with these feelings as they are triggered.
- d. Classes will be graced with emotional healing to the extent that the instructor himself allows his feelings; the frequency is set from the top down. The class needs to feel that not only curriculum matters, but the human equation as well, that what people are going through has an equal value. This is the holistic model of learning.
- e. A teacher ponders how the special needs of individual students can be honored without sacrificing the forward motion of the class, his own boundaries or the rights of other students. He makes space for emotional process, if not always letting it be the centerpiece of group attention, then arranging for somewhere more private with an assistant, while the group continues its activity.
- f. A wise teacher shows compassion for the wounded male and the wounded female by giving them equal time and attention. He gives attention to all without special attention to anyone. This is fairness.
- g. A teacher tracks dislikes and attractions internally and in staff meetings. It may not be appropriate to feel all his feelings in the moment when holding a space; he does so outside of structured class time, instead.

## **5.12 Learning flourishes in community.**

- a. Since its inception, the sacred sharing has been taught to groups of aspirants and practiced collectively by members of our order. It is the foundation of our community, the point around which we structure our existence and grow toward the Divine. The understandings we have been able to reach together through the centuries of evolving tradition far exceed what the genius of any one individual could have achieved.
- b. Eating, sleeping, working and playing together foster bonding, the unique collective feeling of each course that remains as the foundation experience from which participants draw from afterwards. Some say that each training has a soul, a living energy presence that is the sum of the dedication, intention and personality of its participants.
- c. When aspirants sit together in the circle for meditation or practice together in the pools, there arises a flow of energy and an amplification of thought power. In the same way, for the duration of a training, a psychic link comes into being between all who participate.
- d. This empowerment, this natural strengthening that occurs in the group, is a hearkening back to our tribal existence, revealing a forgotten dimension of being. The wholeness, the sense of 'home', is like a fertile garden plot, fostering growth on different levels. We learn that group and personal goals are not mutually exclusive.

## **5.13 Vision the team spirit.**

- a. There is no higher goal for a group than to function as a learning team. A teacher elevates the group phenomenon to a team phenomenon by visioning the team spirit. Master Nadar used these words in the opening meditation: "May we be a learning team,

supporting and assisting each other in the journey we begin. May we advance together and leave no one behind."

- b. Games and processes that involve group problem solving, cooperation and team strategy foster this team spirit. As an example, in the water, the teacher sets a group challenge: "Let's make an alphabetical name snake. The person whose name starts with A is the head, the person whose name starts with Z is the tail. We'll hold onto the waists. Okay, go for it!" or the game Knots: "Let's stand in circles of 6 to 8 people. There are three rules: 1) Everyone in a circle holds hands; 2) You can't hold hands with the person on either side; 3) You can't hold both hands with the same person. Without releasing hands, everyone attempts to undo the knot. Got it?"
- c. The team spirit can be given actual form in this way: have all face into the middle of a small circle in the water and create a joint symbol, a team logo, with the hands and arms.
- d. When it is appropriate, devolve decision making to the group: "See if you can come to a decision together about..." or "What would serve you best now—review or moving on to new material?"
- e. In land bodywork arranging the couples in a geometric pattern such as a circle or star allows a synergistic energy flow. Performing each technique in unison creates a stronger sense of group identity. In the water, having all couples face in the same direction for follow along practices leads to the same increase in coherence in the group.

#### **5.14 Foster creativity to empower and acknowledge each aspirant.**

- a. To foster creativity, emphasize that aquatic bodywork teaches sequence and principles as a foundation for further exploration. The sacred sharing is relation; our moment by moment attunement to the Receiver inspires new techniques, moves and approaches. The work takes life in each of us, becoming uniquely modified by the living vessel transmitting it.

- b. Nadar himself admitted that many of the techniques came to light through accidents and mistakes made by students, Other innovations arose through spontaneous play. We have witnessed through the centuries that the work evolves not as a steady process, but in a wave-like manner, with a life and rhythm of its own. A period of quiescence ends as a new principle dawns and its shock wave sequences through the structure of the tradition, subtly altering and renewing it. The conquest of the underwater was one such revolution.
- c. A creativity-friendly atmosphere encourages aspirants to adapt to their receivers and to their own limitations, to think on their own, and to allow solutions to dawn on them. A teacher does well to encourage creativity as a way of discovery; rote repetition will not do, for each student must find his own way to reinvent the techniques in his nervous system and body.
- d. Set the tone at the beginning, affirming in meditation, "We bring our love, creativity and intention to the class. Together we create."
- e. In movement exercises on land and in water, use the words, "Pretend..." "Let's become..." "Let's imagine..." "Explore..." "Find..." "In your own way..." thus inviting active participation, a completely different mindset than when a student is called upon to simply duplicate movements. Enjoying the process is better than striving toward results.
- f. Give dance exercises involving group improvisation, free movement, imaginary movement, and pantomiming the sacred sharing as if in a dream or fantasy.
- g. In the pool, challenge students with the occasional, "Invent a finish on the steps." or "Discover a way to get to the second side now."
- h. Set group creativity challenges on land and in the water, such as, "Find as many ways as you can in the next ten minutes to play together with this candle, cloth and ball," or "Create a group aquatic sculpture."

### **5.15 Passing on information is a human interaction.**

- a. Nadar means to say that first of all, teaching is not a mechanical transfer of information; it is an interaction between two complex living systems. The quality of the transmission depends on the conduit opened between teacher and student in yang and yin roles, respectively. This conduit relies on a willingness from both parties to maintain its openness from either end.
- b. The passing of information, in being a human interaction, is inescapably subjective. Teaching will always have a flavor, as well as its accompanying overtones and undertones, like those produced by any musical instrument, endowing it with its unique timbre. What is unsaid, but implied, rides along with the more tangible information.

### **5.16 The frequency in which information is embedded renders it more or less palatable to digest and assimilate.**

- a. By associating information with feeling, larger areas of the brain become involved, making memory retrieval easier. Feeling and thinking integrate and a phenomenon characterized by totality is the result.
- b. The mind naturally gravitates toward pleasure; it focuses effortlessly on what causes it delight. Therefore, season instruction with humor, and radiate your love and respect for the work.
- c. A light, natural atmosphere conveys flow and ease, relieving the stress associated with learning that so many aspirants carry from earlier classroom settings. There is nothing better than a good joke in the middle of a practice to lighten up the atmosphere when challenges are turning it overly serious.
- d. Even the revered water rishi recognized that there is a time to be serious and a time to be silly. Make learning fun by associating the movements with jokes, silly sounds, and exaggerations in pantomime reviews.

## **5.17 Teach not only technique, but also a philosophy to illumine it.**

- a. Although we teach a philosophy to accompany the work, we see it only as a temporary scaffold. Our preference is to turn to the youngest children, the newest initiates, and ask them what the sacred sharing is about and how it should be conducted. They seem very much in contact with Source.
- b. We make no attempt to coerce any aspirant into accepting a philosophy; in truth, we eschew structure and system. Ideas should remain fluid, should be proven for each generation. We witness over the centuries various trends, but they run in cycles that evolve and self adjust.
- c. Belief is a personal affair; religion is the attempt to socialize worship. Each individual has his own internal star to guide him. How could we or anyone else dictate to him what to believe? We are only in agreement about the goal, return to the Creator, but as for means and form of worship, we respect diversity. Our wish is that the aspirant be true to his path.
- d. If a teacher inspires, if his words resonate in the aspirant, he has simply spoken what was already embraced, though perhaps not formulated. More than his words, though, his actions and the quality of being he radiates will register as a 'philosophy' for the aspirant.

## **5.18 Learning is holistic.**

- a. A training is a space of heightened reality, of intensity. The light and shadow mix together. Nothing exists independently; each thing affects everything else. The deeper personal lessons that eventuate in the close group atmosphere are to be honored and given their space alongside the formal instruction. The learning in a class is the whole—the personal lessons gleaned in the group intertwined with the assimilation of the course material.

- b. The study of technique is influenced by all else that transpires during the course. Some students process so much they are unable to focus on the material; others cannot advance because they fear to look within. Emotional release and personal realization can be precisely the key that opens the student to deeper qualities of presence and touch.
- c. Learning is holistic in another sense: the mind most easily grasps the whole before details. It prefers to see the pattern, the overall structure, to know the end at the beginning, then fill in the details. Knowing this, the wise teacher sketches out the whole of the material first, provides an overview of the course and teaches a unifying principle to inform each step of the way.

### **5.19 Let work and order alternate with play and chaos.**

- a. Throughout our journey and evolution through the cosmos, we will have tasks and then periods of recreation. It is a fundamental rhythm with origin in our Source. The Creator is both serious and playful. His nature is revealed in the high ideals and strivings of adults, but just as much in the play of children and animals.
- b. In a training, this alternating rhythm between work and play keeps the psyche in balance. Our tradition has evolved many games. They are valued for several reasons. Nadar formulated The Eightfold Way of Play to ...

#### **(1) Build the group.**

Creativity is shared, a cooperative team spirit is fostered, challenges are set and overcome. The group bonds in acting together and experiencing successes.

#### **(2) Allow individual expression.**

Participants speak and act spontaneously in these activities. When self expression has a place in the form of inspirations, jokes, and impulses people feel more comfortable. Fun and

laughter cut through early life problems, a ray of lightness and sanity.

(3) Activate primal energies.

Themes lodged deep in the psyche become activated through play and movement exploration in the water: the issues of death and survival; the male-female polarity; winning and losing; being "okay" or not. The inner child and the shadow have occasion to come out and play.

(4) Provide physical contact.

Games give a context to ignore societal taboos about touching, a sort of joyous 'end run' around the heavies of conformity.

(5) Dissipate tensions within the group.

Interpersonal tensions, such as grudges and jealousies, tend to diminish through play. Also, when the processing of feelings gets intense, shared laughter and silliness are a relief and balance.

(6) Warm-up the body in the morning.

People groping their way into pools as the sun rises need to wake up their bodies before attempting aquatic techniques.

(7) Provide the opposite pole to sensitivity.

By allowing the competitiveness and insensitivity of games, the sensitivity and cooperation of the water work is more easily accessed. Lao-tzu tells us, "If you want to shrink something, you must first let it expand." If he were teaching the water sharing, you could count on a lively course.

(8) Allow chaos.

Chaos is the opposite pole to over-control. Counter-intuitively, its presence assists in maintaining order in a training. Students are more amenable to structure and discipline when they know that fun, chaos and personal expression also have a space. In water trainings, we wish to integrate fun and discipline, allowing them to co-exist. A disciplined atmosphere unrelieved by play generates rebellion. Spontaneous, rascally play frees up the child, who is a fountain of creativity. Games offer a space to be 'bad', to rebel

against authority in an acceptable way that doesn't undermine the student's goals or the group's direction.

c. Teachers are provided with the following guidelines for leading play:

(1) Lead in the spirit of play.

If you would like people to have a good time, you'll have to model that. Be a little crazy and enjoy yourself.

(2) Allow jokes and comments.

Games are not about being serious; everyone should be able to unwind and have fun. Relaxation and refreshment happen when people are free to horse around.

(3) Stay attuned to the group.

Don't lose sight of the group's mood. Know when you are encouraging and when you are forcing. Ascertain that the interest of the group justifies a given game.

(4) Allow games to evolve.

You will need to make quick judgement calls. The great idea that you or someone else comes up with may or may not fit for the group in the moment.

(5) Allow cheating!

This is half the fun! A chance to break the rules! Yeah!

(6) Nobody gets hurt.

Smaller, gentler people may not go for some of the more boisterous games. Yang energy is great, but only when it is sensitive. The physicality of some games needs to have limits.

Your job may be to have a discreet word with an overly enthusiastic player. Anyone should feel free to step out or decline to play a game and watch from the side. Sometimes there are less vigorous roles to be filled, like referee, timekeeper or flagman for races.

d. The communal nature of our order ensures that children are never very far away. They accompany us in our daily activities, a part of life. Trainings are no exception. Mothers and fathers typically bring their children to trainings, where their presence in the pools and in the land circles sweetens the atmosphere and reminds us of the child that still resides within the man and woman.

## 5.20 Have structure, but be flexible. Avoid rigidity.

- a. As in a water sharing, so in a training. Not everything can or should be planned in advance. A certain amount of structure is necessary, such as covering the salient points in the curriculum, but the rest should be flexible, accommodating to the specific needs and wishes of a group. Every group is unique, with its own direction. When the realities at hand are disregarded in favor of a pre-determined program there is a disheartening effect; the teacher has removed himself from liaison with the group and lost touch.
- b. Speaking practically, a teacher must follow the energy. If an individual sharing is animated and meaningful, he can well allow it to run over the allotted time. If a group discussion goes in an unplanned but relevant direction, better not to interfere. If a water exchange takes longer than anticipated due to encountering and resolving difficulties, better to run over than finish on time. As with movements in the sharing needing time to complete, processes in a training like to reach a natural conclusion.
- c. In regards to technique, let the teacher beware the temptation to define too exactly. The teaching of technique must not become pedantic or overly codified. By pointing the way and stepping aside, students are left with time and space to personalize and grow into their body mechanics. The results may appear simple and nearly uniform from person to person, but how each arrives there varies and is known only to the individual. Teach principles over forms.

## **5.21 Interrelate all elements of a course so that they support learning.**

- a. Nadar is speaking of a logical progression, a spectrum of activities arranged in the right order so that one prepares the next. For instance, beginning a course with a meditation to bring everyone into the present and create awareness of intention, followed by a circle sharing out of this awareness. Next might come a clarification of the course schedule, perusal of the written materials and general introduction to the technique, including an outline of the sequence. An exercise for body mechanics on land would precede repeating it in the water. Demonstration of techniques prepares a follow along.
- b. Another principle in structuring a training is balance, whereby an activity balances and consolidates what preceded it. Examples of this are feedback following exchanges; grounding land bodywork, video review (*We were at a loss to understand what was meant by the Greek 'image-record-moving' and so have translated 'video' as the nearest modern day equivalent in meaning. Trans.*), and sharing circles after time in the water.
- c. A third principle Master Nadar practiced in his trainings was following the class rhythm. Experience has shown that when students are well rested and comfortable, they perform better than when subjected to bootcamp-like conditions. For example, not beginning too early or finishing too late; allowing adequate rest after meals; not giving too much new material before reviewing; giving students adequate time to complete feedback to each other following exchanges; checking in with the group to allow them to determine the next step; granting a free afternoon to unwind and reflect; and giving time for unsupervised practice sessions to focus on areas of difficulty.
- d. A fourth principle is the Matrix! What is the Matrix? The Matrix is everywhere; it is all around us. It is a web connecting each node of information with multiple links to other nodes. It is a network with

numerous pathways of association to facilitate memory. The sequence is part of the Matrix. The principles of body mechanics and technique form another dimension of it. A unifying philosophy or approach is yet another aspect of it. The Matrix is modeled after the structure of the brain, in which neurons are so interconnected to each other that communication between them is rapid and efficient. Information belonging to such a structure is never isolated; it has its location and relation to the whole. What could be overwhelming or confusing is seen in a context as part of a pattern that makes sense.

- e. Group coherence is not a higher priority than each getting what he needs. It is quite acceptable to have students at different paces in the same follow through, letting an assistant preside over slower tempo students and giving faster students permission to work at their own tempo. A teacher welcomes emotional release and process but does not allow it to derail the forward motion of the group as a whole.
- f. Realistically, no class structure can be perfect; none can accommodate to every individual. There will always be some measure of dissatisfaction, something left out or included that didn't suite a participant. A teacher doesn't force activities on a group. He takes it as it comes, responsive to what is happening. A harmonious course supports learning; one beset by discord impairs it.

## **5.22 Teach through all modes to accommodate all learning styles.**

- a. Aspirants learn through written explanation, photographs\*, video, body mechanics practice on land, body mechanics practice in water, demonstration with verbal explanation, giving with correction, receiving, giving and receiving feedback, pantomime review, coaching other students, unsupervised practice and individual instruction.

*\*(We were perplexed by the Sanskrit 'images-record-still' and so have translated 'photograph' as the nearest present day equivalent in meaning. Trans.)*

- b. This range of activities has proven effective for nearly every aspirant. The teacher does well to generate awareness around each student's learning style, so there is a conscious cooperation, a sense of joint problem solving when difficulties are encountered. Even so, and with the best of intentions, some students succeed only with private supervision. Other students are only able to bring it all together on their own outside of the training, after it has ended.

### **5.23 Teach generally, then adapt personally.**

- a. Nadar's method was first to show the idealized movement; he described it in terms of the interaction of the principles of body mechanics and technique. He gave time to see if this would be successful, if it would translate over to the student explained thus.
- b. Adaptation was his next step, taking into account the human side of the equation. Both movements and people come size-, strength-, flexibility-, and intimacy-graded. There must be a congruence between the move attempted, the particular Receiver, and the Giver. To assist a student in learning how to adapt to various moves and types of Receivers is the teacher's task.
- c. It is for the teacher to assess the 'starting point' of the aspirant—In regards to physique, what characteristics form assets and liabilities affecting the work? Is there a natural body awareness and movement ability or not? Is there an adequate base level of physical strength? What degree of emotional intelligence is present? How developed is the capacity for empathy?

## **5.24 Give confirmation rather than praise.**

- a. Praise that carries with it a positive personal judgment rewards performance with approval. This scheme is manipulative and maintains an unhealthy dynamic: "I give you your okayness" or "Get good at something and feel better about yourself," instead of a healthy, "You're okay just the way you are, whether you get it or not." The latter message, implicit or stated, is one between two equal beings.
- b. Master taught that tainted praise that confers worthiness upon the lucky recipient is bad for all concerned in a training. It leads to jealousy and resentment among those passed over. In elevating a favorite, a level gradient is created down which everyone else slides. Selectively bestowed praise is an irritant in the wound cut deep by the words and behavior of a lifetime of thoughtless parents, relatives and teachers.
- c. When as a teacher we recognize in a student low self-esteem or the need to be valued, it is tempting to lavish praise in the mistaken belief that it is a loving and beneficial act. However, getting caught up in helping someone to "feel better" is not healing to anyone involved. It is still operating within the old system.
- d. In our order, a teacher's role and responsibility is to model, to encourage, to give feedback and to provide confirmation. The giving and seeking of approval do not belong to this equation. If a lack of confidence is triggered when a teacher "plays straight", more awareness about it can be generated. This does not mean a teacher should be unsupportive. He can still give the "yes" but not with the embellishment that makes someone an okay person. He leaves out a positive personal judgement because a negative is implied, hovering nearby if the situation should change.
- e. And it is certainly fine to be enthusiastic for students, to be happy for the student. Let him take care though, that he is equally enthusiastic about guiding the student toward the desired

execution, putting an equal amount of energy into being accepting of failure, optimistic and patient with blockages.

- f. A teacher is faced with the choice to be straight or be a rescuer, clean or manipulative. Confirmation stands out as the "clean" counterpart to ego bolstering praise. Confirmation is an integral part of the learning process when acquiring technique. Confirmation is crucial, for only then can the student begin to confidently imprint the movement into her nervous system. By repetition, the many details of execution enter short term memory, then long term memory. Eventually, through practice, the movement becomes second nature, copied into 'hard drive' (*We have no idea what is meant. We provide the literal Sanskrit. Trans.*) along with other acquired skills such as sitting, walking, and running, which no longer require conscious attention.
- g. Examples of confirmation of the short kind: "Right." "That's it." "You have it." "There." "Ahh." "Okay." "Yes." "Teeka, teeka" "It looks like you've got it."
- h. Examples of confirmation of the detailed kind: "I see you doing that movement with flow and rhythm. How does it feel to you?" "You're paying attention to the water level at the face, the rotations are at a relaxing tempo, and you're turning from your hips. It looks like you have the movement. How does it feel?"
- i. Examples of encouragement: "You can do it." "Keep practicing." "You'll have it soon." "Almost." "You're nearly there." "You'll get it." "You're close."

### **5.25 Allow students to individualize, to personalize movements with their own names and ways of accomplishing them.**

- a. Learning the techniques of the sacred sharing is a process of personalization, not duplication. Each student reinvents and makes the moves his own, adapting according to his temperament and kinetic aptitude. Movement cannot stay as a foreign body within his

system; he has to be able to identify with the movement, to convert it into a set of personal impulses. As any teacher knows, this can be a very simple proposition or an exasperatingly complex one.

- b. The official name of a move is important only as a common reference. It may convey something of the intent and essence of a move, but it is not important in itself. What a student chooses to call a move is his own business. Allowing students to invent their own names for moves can be fun, aid the memory, and assist in owning the movement.
- c. The process of personalization, of owning a move, is well on its way when the student practices alone, free from the teacher's scrutiny and realizes, "I know it." When he can describe the technical elements and actually teach it to another student is the next step. Being able to accomplish the move with various body types in exchanges is the final confirmation to the student that he has gotten the move.

#### **5.26 Allow information to circulate and be owned by the participants.**

- a. We possess ideas only when we give them away. Teachers possess what they know in passing it on, thereby having the experience of knowing it. It is the same for students. They need to be assisting each other, and coaching the moves in feedback and in triad practice sessions, to make the material their own.
- b. The pattern of circulation or flow of information in a training begins as it emanates from the instructor and is picked up and assimilated by students. Next it circulates between students, gaining force. Finally it may circle back to the instructor as the student demonstrates on him. Otherwise the flow continues on to reach the models at the conclusion of a training and beyond as it touches each new Receiver.

## **5.27 Wean students from instruction; foster self-reliance.**

- a. Life may be viewed as a series of stages leading to greater freedom and independence. We leave the womb, our mother's breast, and learn to walk unassisted. One day, years later, we leave our parents' home and learn to live on our own.
- b. This cycle is recapitulated in miniature in a training. A teacher's commitment is in every way to be present to guide and fine-tune the aspirant, but then at some point to start fading away, to remove the scaffolding, and leave the student standing unassisted on his own in possession of the knowledge he sought.
- c. In studying the sacred sharing, the student begins to internalize the teacher. He learns enough to correct himself, using his own proprioceptive feedback. Following the course, he will still require supervisions to refine and evolve his technique in the right direction. In the world of temple dance, even the very best dancers require the watchful eye of a teacher daily. In class they recreate their technique from the ground up each day, paying attention to basics and culminating in the most advanced steps.
- d. In a training, the weaning principle begins early on. The teacher sources the movement with demonstration and verbal explanation. In initial follow throughs he repeats the name of the move and reviews all the technique involved as it is executed. As time goes by, he will name only the move and see if the technique is still there. Next the teacher will direct the class to remember the next move and its technical details while finishing up the present move. In effect, he is showing the student how to think and memorize, taking him by the hand until reminders are no longer necessary.
- e. In the process of letting the student take over, the teacher must restrain himself from being too helpful. He must give the student time to remember on his own, or not, letting him recognize what he doesn't know yet in order to focus on it later. In this connection, Master liked to allow short, free practice periods following

sequence practice to provide the opportunity to focus on areas of uncertainty.

- f. These initial stages of learning are about doing with awareness, working mentally and technically, not with the balanced focus that includes presence, the key element in the sacred sharing.

**5.28 Provide tools to support learning beyond the original instruction.**

- a. The transfer of information from short term memory in the frontal cortex to long term storage in the rear brain occurs with time and repetition. It may only happen after a course finishes. Even then, if not a first level training, the material must integrate into the techniques the student has already been using.
- b. The goal of a training is not to perfect any technique, but to ground it in memory and execution well enough that it may continue to grow through dedicated practice. Assisting this process are the following conditions:
  - (1) access to a pool and receivers
  - (2) poolside notes, such as the temple figure carvings and these very Sutras
  - (3) the written notes, describing each move in detail
  - (4) the video of the sequence
  - (5) contact with other course participants for exchanges
  - (6) the possibility of having supervisions

**Here end the Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel.  
Om shanti, shanti, Om tat sat!**

# **The Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel**

## **1. The Nature of Water.**

**1.1 Breathe.**

**1.2 Center.**

**1.3 Merge with the Universal Energies.**

**1.4 Now begins the portion on the Nature of Water.**

**1.5 The Divine is omnipresent as conscious energy forming the primal atoms of Nature.**

**1.6 Beyond this even, water is alive. Like the ether, it harbors prana.**

**1.7 Water is the Earth's lifeblood. It exists for humankind's health and refreshment.**

**1.8 Imbibing the holy waters, the smallest groupings of its primal atoms freely enter the smallest units of the body, promoting their well being.**

**1.9 In the same way that water suffuses throughout the body, its subtle nature is meant to illumine the soul.**

**1.10 Water that appears to be dead is only sleeping and may be reawakened through prayer, song and movement.**

**1.11 Water carries whatever energy it is imprinted with.**

1.12 Therefore, enter the sacred pool with gratitude; bless the waters that they may bless you in return.

1.13 Through immersion in the sacred sharing, warm water offers many physical benefits.

1.14 Warm water meets and cradles the psychophysical being of man, healing all manner of ailments.

1.15 The state of weightless suspension in water is natural and pleasurable to man; it is that of the pre-incarnation state, of dreaming, and of the physical brain.

1.16 In the water healing rites the entire body takes on the sensitivity of the brain, becoming less an instrument of action, and more an organ of sensing and feeling.

1.17 The womb-like comfort of warm water returns the Receiver to his original innocence.

1.18 Then, that which is out of harmony with his essential nature melts away.

1.19 The flowing nature of water resonates into motion the atrophied emotions from the past.

1.20 Thus imbalance balances, the unresolved resolves.

1.21 Still waters still the mind.

1.22 In the totality of water-induced receptivity, guidance from the Atman gains entrance to consciousness. The Receiver becomes

attuned to the finer frequencies of her Being arising from the past, present and future.

1.23 All this is healing, a state of self-referential completeness.

## 2. Body Mechanics of the Giver

2.1 Now the exposition of aquatic body mechanics of the Giver is being made.

2.2 Every physical discipline organizes the body according to a goal. How energy passes through the body is the organizing principle.

2.3 The goal of the sacred sharing is to maintain the Receiver in comfort and safety, transgressing neither physical nor emotional boundaries, while supporting, administering bodywork, and offering movement for purposes of relief from physical suffering, for emotional healing, and for inner spiritual journey.

2.4 Movement is generated from the pool bottom up through the Giver to his arms, to support and move the Receiver while standing still in stance, transferring weight or travelling with steps through a low gravity, high viscosity medium.

2.5 Groundedness, leverage, force transmission, stabilization, stance, alignment, and weight transfer constitute the simplest and purely physical elements of body mechanics of the Giver.

2.6 Sink down in the water to be buoyant; stand up to be grounded.

2.7 Relax and let the weight drop down through the legs while exhaling.

2.8 Place the awareness in the feet and sense the texture of the pool bottom.

2.9 Thus grounded, there is friction of the feet against the pool bottom, and the leverage to move arises.

2.10 A chain of leverage beginning in the feet and passing up through the legs transmits force through the body to the hands. Thus, movement begins with the feet.

2.11 Use the power in the feet and legs to thrust, lower, sink or balance.

2.12 Simplification of the Giver's movement is key.

2.13 This is achieved through stabilization of the legs to the trunk, internal stabilization of the trunk, and stabilization of the arms to the trunk.

2.14 When stabilized, the trunk maintains its shape in the midst of any movement.

2.15 Responsible for this restraint is isometric contraction of the muscles of the back, waist and abdomen.

2.16 And now stance shall be explained. By stance is meant the different positions that the feet and legs assume.

2.17 In stance the feet and legs are arranged so as to facilitate still, stable support. Yet, a stance is not without potential energy,

a readiness to transition easily into weight transfers, other stances, and steps.

2.18 The variables of feet placement are their distance from each other, their orientation, and how they contact the bottom.

2.19 The depth of water, the movement the Giver wishes to execute, and his physique determine stance. The aspects of physique affecting stance are height, leg length, and flexibility of joint and muscle.

2.20 The stances of aquatic bodywork are the horse and the warrior. The horse stance may be little, big, or seated. The warrior stance may be of normal size or mighty.

2.21 In the little horse, the feet are placed slightly wider than the shoulders. They angle 45° to the side to facilitate hip figure 8's and rotating weight transfers.

2.22 The big horse is identical to the little horse, but with the feet more widely separated; wide enough to create an ample lateral weight transfer or to pivot 90° into the warrior stance.

2.23 The seated horse is like the little horse, but sitting back low in the water.

2.24 The warrior stance has a front and back leg. The front foot is directly forward of the hip, flat on the bottom, pointing to the front, the knee bent and aligned over it. The back leg is more extended, behind and slightly out to the side of the hip, contacting the bottom with the ball of the foot only.

2.25 Alignment reflects man's existential condition: a bridge between Heaven and Earth.

2.26 Alignment signifies the relationship between the various body segments. Alignment is balanced weight transmission through the bones, rather than through the periarticular soft tissues. Then the Giver abides in his center, free of any muscular compensation.

2.27 Alignment is essentially vertical. In the ideal, the head, ribcage, pelvis, and the point midway between the arches align vertically. The knees bend out over the feet, and the hips drop down as the spine ascends vertical to the pelvis.

2.28 Alignment modulates in movement. Leans to the front, back and sides sometimes accompany weight transfers in each direction. The head leads with an inclination in the direction of the weight transfer, causing a reflexive increase in tonus in the leg receiving the weight.

2.29 The rotational range in the knee and hip joints, combined with inversion and eversion in the foot, allow for the imprecision of life.

2.30 Reduced weight bearing and the absence of impact in the aquatic stances and movements lower the risk of injury due to misalignment. Nevertheless repeated stress to the ligaments and muscles from errors of alignment can lead to injury.

2.31 The teaching on weight transfer begins. All natural, full body movements are created through weight transfers.

2.32 Weight transfers consist of overcoming the inertia of stance with a push into the ground through one leg; accomplishing the transfer in the desired direction; lowering the weight onto the

second leg; re-establishing equilibrium; and finally overcoming the inertia of movement to change directions for the return weight transfer in the two part cycle.

2.33 Weight transfer up and down in stance is mostly an outcome of the Giver's breath joining the Receiver's and is less an action of the legs than of the lungs.

2.34 The Figure 8 weight transfer begins in the little horse stance with a push of the weight off one leg, diagonally forward and across. Arriving on the new leg, the weight circles sideways and to the back. Without pause, it transfers back across and to the front onto the first leg again.

2.35 In a rotational weight transfer in the little horse, the push off is from the foot foot, turning the trunk 45° over the head foot. Neither foot adjusts on the pool bottom, except for the unweighting of the heel after pushing off. Letting the bottom drop transfers the weight back to center, from where a rotation of 45° may be done out over the foot foot.

2.36 Linear lateral weight transfer is from one leg to the other in the big horse stance.

2.37 In the rotational weight transfer in the big horse, the trunk rotates 90° in the direction of the Receiver's head into the warrior stance, as the head foot pivots out to face that direction and the heel of the foot foot comes off the bottom. After the Receiver's body swings out into suspension to complete the movement, the return begins with a weight transfer straight back. Then the return rotation begins, entailing a lean of the torso to the side and back, with a pivot on the ball of the foot foot.

2.38 The front to back weight transfer in the Warrior stance may be done low or high in the water, depending on if the head is resting on the shoulder, cradled in the elbow or held in the hand.

### 3. Technique in Relation to the Receiver,

3.1 Technique in relation to the Receiver is a reflection of values; unity or duality is the only choice.

3.2 The sacred sharing is nurture, bodywork and movement.

3.3 In bodywork, enough but not too much is the goal. Better not to massage at all, than to massage poorly.

3.4 The elements of technique in relation to the Receiver are touch, water level, head support, hip support, leg support, traction, movement completion and full body movement.

3.5 In the water sharing, touch the Receiver first with your heart.

3.6 Harmonize your touch with the touch of water.

3.7 In touch, quality matters over technique. Let your touch be sometimes gentle, sometimes firm, sometimes disappearing, never with tension, and always with awareness. Touch the person.

3.8 Know your body and how to soften your touch.

3.9 Head support is maintenance of the face out of the water, control of the roll of the head sideways, and vigilance against cervical hyperextension.

3.10 The point of the support of the head is beneath the occipital bone.

3.11 The bony structures on which the head arm gains purchase to traction are the natural roundness of the back of the head, the external occipital protuberance (the inion) and the superior and inferior nuchal lines.

3.12 Keep your hands off the neck!

3.13 Encountering neck hyperextension, the Giver resolves it with traction.

3.14 The waterline submerges the ears and crown; the chin and eyes are dry.

3.15 The properly supported head appears to float.

3.16 Just as any movement repeated too often leads to stress, any head position maintained too long becomes uncomfortable. Therefore, vary your support.

3.17 The head may be briefly without support.

3.18 Neck pain that has not yet occurred may be avoided.

3.19 Hip support is maintenance of the pelvis just below the surface and vigilance against lumbar hyperextension.

3.20 The point of pelvic support is beneath the apex of the sacrum.

3.21 He who controls the knees controls the body.

3.22 Leg support introduces movement of more interest, imparts a fuller sense of the body and sets up stretches and twists.

3.23 The leg is supported beneath the knee with the heel of the hand, the back of the wrist, or in the crook of the elbow.

3.24 Holding the leg with the thumb opposite the fingers, lifting the legs out of the water, causing the legs of timid Receivers to open, knocking the knees together, fumbling in transitions, pulling on the leg hairs, colliding the feet into walls, and letting them brush the bottom, is ignorance.

3.25 The raw power and direction of movement is generated from the legs; passing through the trunk it is channeled into a rotation, rock or swing; then passing through the arms and hands the impulse is further refined, transmuting into touch that nurtures, levers or massages.

3.26 Traction is the spice that seasons the movement.

3.27 Initiating traction, give space to the body to trail after and lengthen; go neutral on the other grip.

3.28 Give movements time to complete.

3.29 Offer full-body, organic movement using weight transfer, not arm strength.

## 4. Advancement

4.1 The aspirant advances through instruction, supervision, practice and receiving.

**4.2 Advancement is the refinement of technique, the acquisition of physical strength and coordination, and the integration of new principles.**

**4.3 Refinement of technique is consistency and deepening of learned skills. These include flow, breath, transition and balancing movement with stillness.**

**4.4 Flow like a river, deep and sure.**

**4.5 Move with the breath.**

**4.6 To master transition in the water, first master it in life.**

**4.7 Balance movement with stillness.**

**4.8 Advanced principles of technique are creative imbalance, moving by example, traveling, and rhythm.**

**4.9 Generate movement through creative imbalance.**

**4.10 Move by example.**

**4.11 Travel to enlarge movements, to save the back and arms, to move dynamically while generating friendly turbulence, and to create the illusion of space.**

**4.12 Establish a rhythmic field.**

**4.13 Find the rhythm of awareness.**

**4.14 Establishing his stance on the causal plane of Self Realization, the subtlest levels of technique open up for the Giver. These are visualization, spatial mandalas, positional sanctuaries, wondering, weightlessness, gentleness, mirroring and dance.**

**4.15 Visualize ideal movement shapes.**

**4.16 Transform movement shapes into spatial mandalas.**

**4.17 Stillness is illusion; Reality is movement**

**4.18 Make sanctuaries of positions.**

**4.19 Wonder.**

**4.20 Access weightlessness.**

**4.21 Be gentle.**

**4.22 Recognize and mirror key movements.**

**4.23 Dance.**

## **5. Instruction**

**5.1 Teaching is instinct; teaching is craft.**

**5.2 Teaching is resonance.**

**5.3 Teaching is co-creation.**

**5.4 The sacred sharing itself is the model for teaching.**

**5.5 Teaching is inspiring, holding a space and passing on information.**

**5.6 To inspire, model the qualities of presence essential to the sharing.**

**5.7 To inspire, model the techniques in their ideal form.**

**5.8 The inspired student believes in himself; he can surmount any obstacle.**

**5.9 To hold space, promote communication, emotional awareness, a team spirit, and creativity.**

**5.10 Establish an etiquette of communication.**

**5.11 In a healing space, everyone has the permission to feel.**

**5.12 Learning flourishes in community.**

**5.13 Vision the team spirit.**

**5.14 Foster creativity to empower and acknowledge each aspirant.**

**5.15 Passing on information is a human interaction.**

**5.16 The frequency in which information is embedded renders it more or less palatable to digest and assimilate.**

**5.17 Teach not only technique, but also a philosophy to illumine it.**

**5.18 Learning is holistic.**

5.19 Let work and order alternate with play and chaos.

5.20 Have structure, but be flexible. Avoid rigidity.

5.21 Interrelate all elements of a course so that they support learning.

5.22 Teach through all modes to accommodate all learning styles.

5.23 Teach generally, then adapt personally.

5.24 Give confirmation rather than praise.

5.25 Allow students to individualize, to personalize movements with their own names and ways of accomplishing them.

5.26 Allow information to circulate and be owned by the participants.

5.27 Wean students from instruction; foster self-reliance.

5.28 Provide tools to support learning beyond the original instruction.

Here end the Water Sutras of Nadar Xeel.  
Om shanti, shanti, Om tat sat!