

The Himalayan Musk Deer

traditional story as told by Paramahansa Yogananda

Musk is a valuable, extremely fragrant substance found in a sac under the skin of the abdomen of the male musk deer, a habitant of the highest Himalayan mountains of India. The ravishing odor of musk secretly oozes out when the musk deer reaches a certain age. The deer becomes excited by the attractive odor and frisks about, sniffing under trees, and searching everywhere, sometimes for many weeks, to find the source of the fragrance. He grows angry and very restless when he is unable to do so, and has been known to jump to his death from the high cliff, trying in a last desperate effort to reach the source of the rare fragrance. Then hunters seize his body and remove the pouch of musk.

An enlightened bard once sang: "O you foolish musk deer, you sought for the fragrance everywhere but in your own body. That is why you did not find it. If you only had touched your nostrils to your own navel, you would have found the cherished musk and would have saved yourself from suicide on the rocks below."

Don't you agree that most people act like the musk deer? As they grow, they seek the ever fragrant happiness everywhere outside themselves--in play, temptation, human love, and on the slippery path of wealth; until finally they jump from the cliff of high hope onto the rocks of disillusionment, unable to find the real happiness which lies hidden within the secret recesses of their own souls.

If only you would turn your mind inward, in deep daily meditation, you would find the source of all true, lasting happiness existing right within the innermost silence of your own soul. Beloved seekers of happiness, don't be like the musk deer and perish seeking false happiness in the wrong place. Awake! and try to find your happiness within the cave of deep contemplation.