

# THE OCEAN FRONT WEEKLY

23 June 1980

## From Himalaya with Love - by Ronnie Cohen

In order to best describe who Raam Pandeya is and what he does, it is necessary to begin by describing who he is not, and what he does not do.

Raam is not some "phony guru" from India pretending he has the only solution to the ills of modern, industrialized society. He doesn't live in Beverly Hills or own a Rolls Royce, nor does he spend 12 hours each day contemplating his navel.

Raam is a former journalist from India who holds a B.S. degree in Microbiology. He rebelled against his economically secure Hindu background, became involved with politics, and edited an economic and political magazine called *Employees Voice*.

"I always fought for the welfare of the youth and the working class people of India", says Raam, a dark, slightly built man of 33 clad in sandals and a loose fitting colorful Indian shirt. He pours a glass of fresh carrot juice.

"I thought that politics is an endless game, so I thought of healing people in the West," Raam says.

A doctor of Homeopathic Medicine and Surgery, Raam claims that in this country, he is the sole practitioner of Kayakalpa – a Himalayan healing technique that involves deep skin cleansing massage.

Originated in India along the Himalayan Belt, Kayakalpa was practiced as a physical therapy and as a skin rejuvenator. In ancient times Kayakalpa was used by monks and kings to "burn away" their Karma – the cosmic operation of retributive justice according to which a person's status in life is determined by his own deeds in a previous incarnation.

The Kayakalpa treatment is available at the Aspen West Academy of Martial, Healing and Movement Arts on Main Street in Venice, where Raam takes his clients into a dimly lit room, the walls of which are adorned by Indian tapestry-like wall hangings. Raam plays soothing Oriental music on his cassette tape player while he applies an herbal paste to his client's skin. The paste, handed down to Raam from his father, consists of 36 herbs.

Raam explains that the skin has two layers, the epidermis (the outer layer) and the dermis. Raam says that emotions such as fear and frustration deposit themselves at the dermis level. When the epidermis is clean, all the "negativity in the dermis layer flows out of the body".

"Until your body is clean, you cannot think of a clean heart or a clean mind," says Raam.

Raam, echoing Walt Whitman (whom he has never read) believes the body, mind and soul are linked to each other.

"I don't have any religion to offer people, but a technique of better healthy living," says Raam.

As millions of Americans and other Westerners have turned towards yoga, vegetarianism and other practices of the East, Raam regrets that certain "phony gurus" have exploited this merging of Eastern and Western ways.

"Everybody's the same, the Eastern man or the Western man – they are equally rich, equally powerful," says Raam, who met the Western guru Baba Ram Dass (formerly Richard Alpert, a Harvard professor) occasionally in the Himalayas.

Although he proclaims equality between the East and the West, Raam does have a few criticisms about the way things are done in the West.

"I don't appreciate being a slave of Western medicine because it has many side effects. If you take an aspirin for a headache, it will cure your headache, but it will cause a stomach upset," says Raam.

Also, Raam is not impressed by some methods of exercise in this country.

"Jack LaLane is mechanical, but my approach is very simple and natural because you don't need to be a slave to weight-lifting machines," he says.

Raam says he prefers getting exercise by taking advantage of nature and climbing a mountain or swimming in the ocean.

He believes in his Kayakalpa technique because "people should be aware of self-force and self-energy – the voice and the energy within us."

Nevertheless, Raam does not fanatically tell people that his way is the only way.

"We are all looking for something – it's a great search to find peace. There are many ways to find peace – somebody might find peace by my Kayakalpa, somebody might find peace by seeing a movie with Jane Fonda." he says.

For Raam Pandeya, living and working in the Venice-Ocean Park area is fulfilling. For one thing, he's found a few gurus here.

"Everybody is my guru – I learn something from everyone," he says.