

**“THE SERPENT AND THE TIDE”**  
***ON KUNDALINI AND OTHER YOGIC PHENOMENA ARISING***  
***DURING CRANIOSACRAL THERAPY SESSIONS.***

*BY LIZA BORODKIN, C.S.T*

It was that time in the Foundation training when “Strange Things” began to happen. It was like magic, and we felt like kids playing with fire for the first time. Hey, look what happens when you feel the Tide, and press the “On” button! Each time we returned to Devon, fellow students were dishing out success stories left and right. One guy’s blood sugar level dropped to normal after just one session! Another woman’s vision improved after 2 sessions! In my case, both mine and my client’s bodies started embodying a snake. Go figure if that’s a success story or an experiment in mutation.

The first sighting of a snake occurred when I was still learning to tune into my own Tide, early on in the training. As I was lying on the floor, and the feeling of the tide came full-on, some force started to awaken inside me, and the body launched into physical movement. At first it was producing undulations in the chest area, then the hips followed with wave-like movements, upper back and neck began to arch, lifting the head and tilting it back. I knew with all my being that it was not my brain in action. Meanwhile, I watched in amazement how the body grew a brain of its own and started to move without any conscious command of my intellect. Some undulations acquired so much amplitude, they would lift my hips in the air, and roll my torso in spirals as the arms and legs followed along. I felt something between fear of exorcism and joy of no longer needing to invest in belly-dancing classes!

Having written this experience off to the body’s need to “unwind”, I put it on the shelf until... it happened in the very next

palpation of my Tide, and then again, and again, and again. Each time the undulations were different, but always felt organic, liberating and coming from a place far beyond the “frontal lobe”.

Not having found references to any serpents or their undulations in any craniosacral or related texts, I, with the naïveté of a 5-year-old ran to Mom-and-Dad tutors with the: “Look what happened to me! What is that?” This was met with a deep voice of Buddhist wisdom to just Drop Underneath that. The more I was trying to dive down there, the less the snake wanted to have anything to do with that, as if saying to me “You are trying to Drop Underneath what? Where do you think *I* came from?”. As this unwinding was not something that was taught or even encouraged in the foundation training, I was very conscious about keeping it as my own craniosacral miracle to explore. However...

“Strange Things” have a tendency to survive and persist, and as I stayed with this Snake phenomenon, I began to see it happen in my practice sessions with clients. One of these clients - a long-time yoga practitioner, came for her first craniosacral session. Fluid and communicative, her system easily gave itself to the Tide. A few minutes of Tidal how-are-you’s, handshakes, energetic mutual adjustments, a fulcrum resolved, and then it came ...a moment of stillness, just pure awareness without any object associated with it, not even curiosity about what might be transpiring. Inside me there was a sense that something was about to happen, and there it was – such a surprise, and not at the same time. Yael’s body began embodying a snake. My secret was busted; the Snake was no longer just my personal idiosyncrasy; it turned out to be a common human phenomenon. I was watching Yael as she was both perplexed and pleasantly entertained by the beautifully-elegant undulations of her body. Not only did she not seem to mind, but was thoroughly enjoying the serpentine workout on the couch. The next moment, Yael’s abdomen got literally sucked back in towards the spine. The

muscular contraction was so intense, it left her holding her breath. As she forcefully exhaled, the body continued to undulate yet stronger. I was observing how throughout this experience, Yael's breath was gradually changing into soft aspirant throat-restricted inhales and exhales. At some point, she began to take long expansive inhalations, and expel short forceful exhalations.

All of this started to look a little too familiar. As a long-time yoga practitioner, my awareness of Kundalini Shakti force was more than theoretical. This powerful creative serpent force lies dormant at the root of our spine at the pelvic floor. When time is ripe, something prompts this energy to rise up the central channel, and travel along the automatically-shifting fulcra (chakras) until it finally exits through the crown of the head somewhere along the saggital suture to unite with the Universal force above. The rising of Kundalini is documented to take many manifestations, as this force climbs up the midline and helps resolve any indigested current- or past-life experiences. This rising of Kundalini is known to bring about great spiritual insight and awakening.

The suction of the belly towards the spine looked like none other than Uddiana Bandha – a “flying upward energy lock” that draws energy up to the heart and into the central channel. As to the aspirant throat breathing, it was likely a naturally-occurring Ujjayi (glorious) yogic breath, and the forceful exhalations were a spontaneous KapAlabhAti – a well-known yogic breathing exercise.

It would be logical to assume that these phenomena occurred on a craniosacral table only to those privy to yogic practices, but experience proved otherwise. The snakes, the flying locks, and “Picasso faces” (my name for facial muscles involuntarily morphing into grimaces) were happening to those who would have trouble spelling yoga in English. Cranio-yogis began to

include my long-distance CST clients. Without me being present in the room with them, many would afterwards recount the undulations and unusual breathing.

Let's travel to the roots of yoga. Not literally, although a trip to the Himalayas is always nice. How did yogic practices emerge? As Indian sages sat in deep meditation, they began to tap into various energies inside their bodies. These internal energies would at some point begin to manifest physically, and the body would start to move. These movements would take various shapes that later became known as postures or asanas. The same happened with the energy locks and breath-control exercises (pranayama). This is what the world practices today – perceptual and physical experiences of those who touched stillness in their mind... and stillness resonated back.

So where did these experiences leave the clients who by no intention of their own became yogis (whatever that means)? The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The physical movement would almost always leave the client somewhat tired, as if after a real workout, but at the same time liberated and refreshed, with a significant improvement in any physical symptoms they may have had. Clients cite that the movements continue far past the sessions, sometimes for weeks on end. They rarely interrupt the daily flow of their lives, but clients seem to easily bring them back whenever their brain waves slow down – before sleeping, right after waking, at times even while cooking. Those clients who regularly meditate, experience deeper connection to themselves and opening to new perceptual horizons.

Perhaps it's possible to say that in his own way Dr. Sutherland was also a yogi, who in a state of deep meditation touched The Tide with his hands. Or perhaps the ancient yogis were wonderful craniosacral practitioners?