

Denise Kaufman introduced me to the verses known as *The Radiance Sutras* in 2007, at a surfing, yoga and music retreat we were collaborating on in Mexico. High on a cliff above the Pacific, twilight ascending and waves crashing below, we were singing in a circle, improvising melodies, trading phrases, dancing, drumming. The words spoke so eloquently of our ecstasies and agonies, and from a point of view so unbounded by them, that I was literally leaping with joy. I sang the Sutras until they sang in me.

Coiled intricately in meters of Sanskrit, the verses of the Vijnana Bhairava Tantra sit in a state of potentiality. They spring into life as the translator teases out their meaning, or the singer beckons them, cajoling them into an act of intimate congress. They are reckless and modest, self-assured and self-effacing, bashful and bawdy. They want to be danced with, and meditated upon. They love to get up early and chant at the temple, and they also love to go out for a night on the town.

Capturing Lorin Roche's electric, poetic riff on this sacred text in a recording meant taking an approach that was faithful to the meaning of the Sutras but also left us free to experiment and play. For five years, Denise, Joni, Donna, Lorin, his wife Camille, and I workshopped an enormous number of the Sutras. We recorded the jams with many different participants, noting the patterns that recurred, and the most memorable moments.

From 2012 to 2014, we composed the songs in intensive bursts, recording them while they were still fresh, letting them simmer in between sessions. Lorin encouraged us to play with the poetry, creating rhymes where needed, or adding words to clarify the concepts. In this way, the Sutras continued to uncoil, metamorphosing from a densely packed caterpillar of Sanskrit DNA into living wings of culture, taking the form of *bhangra* grooves, country anthems, and sultry ballads.

It is astonishing how much art, joy, and originality of expression arises in the people who get up and rock a Sutra at our workshops, many of them reciting poetry with musicians and a crowd for the first time. I learn so much from them. The songs we bring you here are versions that emerged from our process, but they are only some of many possible settings and interpretations, and only 10 Sutras out of a cycle of 112! Every encounter with *The Radiance Sutras* has the potential to generate new versions, new revelations. The Sutras sing of the infinity of potential in all of us, each verse an invitation to awareness, to wake up to the extraordinary in the midst of the ordinary. The Sutras sing in everybody, and they sing for you.

Dave Stringer

The Radiance Sutras is a sensuous, poetic version of the Vijñana Bhairava Tantra, a classic yoga text from around 800 AD in Kashmir. Unfolding as a conversation between the cosmic lovers Shakti and Shiva, the text is full of wonder and delight. Listening to music, making love, savoring food, wandering in nature, gazing at the sky in astonishment: all are contemplated as pathways to ecstatic union with the Divine.

The seeds for this recording were planted in 2007 when Dave Stringer and I collaborated on a surfing, music and yoga retreat at Haramara on Mexico's Pacific Coast. I had been working with Lorin Roche on rendering the dense Sanskrit of The Radiance Sutras into lively, poetic English. I was in love with our evolving text and brought it to the retreat.

One evening I suggested that we jam with these words over melodies and grooves that Dave and I and drummers Doug Brush and Jeff Andrews improvised. Zoe Elton jumped up to rock Sutra 18: "Immerse yourself in the rapture of music." Others responded, echoing back the lines that moved them. "You know what you love. Go there!!" The effect was intoxicating, electrifying and unifying. We started improvising with the Sutras every night in ecstatic play.

Upon returning to Los Angeles, we organized our first community Radiance Sutra Jam. It was an immediate sensation with the LA yoga and music tribe. These sessions expanded over the next five years, inviting the collective intelligence of many people all over the world. The album began to flower through these sessions – for example Dearbhla Kelly and L.B. Iddings improvised an unforgettable version of Sutra 80 which influenced the style and tone of what became 'Dancing Ground'.

The Sutras were calling out to become songs. This recording is our first offering of fruit in answer to that call. I hope you sing, dance, chant, and immerse yourself in this flow. Invent your own versions! In the words of Sutra 16: "The ocean of sound is inviting you into its spacious embrace, calling you home. The great hum is calling you home."

Denise Kaufman