

# What is a Siddha?

In Western literature, a Siddha refers to "one who is accomplished".

“Tantra” describes the ethos of Indian culture of this time; the men who embodied that ethos and the aims and ideals of the culture, the generators and directors of the creative energy that converted the people and transformed society, the guides and exemplars on the path of Tantra, these men were called Siddhas.

Source: [Keith Dowman](#)

When one learns about Siddha Dharm, one will also hear of "prayoga" (प्रयोग). In Sanskrit, this means "experiment" or "practical application." In yogic traditions, prayoga refers to experimental practices or applications of yogic techniques.

With Shaman (Gur) or Siddha traditions we enter the path of the “psychonaut,” explorers of the subtle realms of dream, death, and all “between” states. Such people are known as Gur in indigenous traditions and as “Siddhas” or “Adepts” in Buddhist and some Hindu Tantric traditions. Gur and Siddha have informed one another over the centuries. As have other traditions.

## The history of the Himalayan Siddhas

In ancient times, the Siddhas emerged from the Kapalikas, who were ascetic Pashupatas emerging during the sixth century. In the following, this text refers to the Siddhas (and Kapalikas) in a tradition of Maha Matsyendra Nath.

Today, not much of the authentic Himalayan Siddha (and Kapalika) traditions is available outside [Kaulantak Peeth](#).

Even though Mahasiddha Ishaputra is referred to as Kaulantak Nath, there is no direct association with the Nath Siddhas. There are commonalities, but there are also differences. In the basic part of this Wiki book, a side by side comparison is out of scope. The traditions have informed one another over the centuries as well. In the following, the perspective of this text is related to the **Kaulantak Sampradaya**.

- It should be mentioned that this is **not** this "*Siddha Yoga*", which has been subject to scandals.

- It also is **not** the *Kaula Tantra*, which is known through various literature in the West.

From the perspective of this text, the Himalayan Siddhas developed in the Himalayan mountains, in a certain area which may have been known as Oddiyana (The Paradise of Dak and Dakinis). There, as oral tradition tells, Bhagvan Adi Nath Ji was among the first Adi Mahasiddhas who redefined Siddha Dharm. The basis for this were local traditions (Desasj parampara), various familial and ancestral lineages, Shamanic influences and the experiences of the early Siddhas.

Siddha Dharm is not a Puranic philosophy, and follows different rules. The rules and practices of Kaulantak Peeth aren't relevant to the public. These rules are rooted in tradition and community. For example, the Vidya (knowledge systems) related to the deities (like Devi Kurukulla or Bhagvan Vanshira), are taught directly from Guru to disciple. A disciple who receives Deeksha (initiation) from Mahasiddha Ishaputra (Kaulantak Nath) is a Siddha.

Reaching the area of Kuluta in ancient times was a perilous challenge because there were no roads, which could easily be travelled. When the seekers arrived, it was often necessary to heal them. The Guru had to be proficient at certain types of medicine. Therefore, there are healing arts associated with the Himalayan Siddhas. Siddha Dharm, however, is not limited to Ayurvedic disciplines.

The Himalayan Siddhas associate 56 Mahasiddhas with the Kaulantak Sampradaya. Some of them are also known in Vajrayana Buddhism, like Mahasiddha Vairocana Nath for example.

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Revision #10

Created 26 April 2025 20:17:36 by Marius

Updated 27 April 2025 20:00:27 by Marius