

The arrival of Tejas: Our Exquisite Unassisted Home-Waterbirth



Our little one was conceived in Mount Shasta during a spiritual retreat in 2005. Quite a potent window for a new being to jump through! Although not a planned event, we were aware of a soul hovering near us for many months that year in our Maui home, and welcomed their presence - stating that they could come on through if the time and path was right for them.

Our journeys brought us back to the mainland, and after full knowledge that this being had indeed arrived in my womb, we traveled to the midwest to establish temporary residence and work to save money through the winter. Their arrival date was set for May 5th, 2006.

My pregnancy went fairly smooth, my work as a nutritional consultant and Ayurvedic background gave me a strong foundation for knowledge on health for myself and my developing child. I made Super Mama shakes everyday (the recipe is at the end), took a fabulous daily prenatal, an iron supplement, and fish oil capsules (*Super Nutrition, Prenatal Blend; Floradix Liquid Iron & Herbs*, and *Country Life's Omega Mom*). Gentle daily prenatal yoga kept me in shape and I kept up on some fantastic reading to increase my knowledge about the whole process. Stress and moving back to California during my 6 & 7th months of pregnancy were my main challenges, both remedied by lots of self-nurturing and proper diet and lifestyle. I received 2 pre-natal visits with a traditional midwife during the 2nd trimester to have a basic checkup on mine and my baby's health.

Everything was fantastic!



We headed full circle back to the magic mountain that is Shasta, tears of relief and joy upon returning confirmed that this was where my baby wanted to be born. As we spent a month settling into our little cottage in the woods, we discussed plans for the approaching birth. In choosing between having a midwife attend the ceremony or not, we concluded that an unassisted birth was the best choice for us.

Being fairly private people, we relished in the daydream of bringing our little one into this earth realm ourselves - no other energies to influence or interfere with our chosen process. Our friends living next door had delivered both of their beautiful children at home; one of them unassisted. Their parents were inspiring and wonderful reference guides for us in our planning. It did take a bit of meditation on my part to feel completely sure in not having a 'more experienced' person around for help. Moksha, my partner was very confident in our abilities - he was the one who had initially suggested it! (I did make plans to have my closest friend attend the birth for her radiant, loving support - but timing is everything....)

My gemini thirst for knowledge lead me to many wonderful books in support of a water birth at home, unassisted. (*The Waterbirth Book*, Janet Balaskas; *Water Birth*, Napierala; *Herbal for the Childbearing Year*, Susan Weed.) The information on practises and facts surrounding most hospital births astounded me, adding to my full support of homebirthing. Midwife stories were uplifting (*Ina May's Guide to Childbirth*, Ina May Gaskin) but ones involving partner and self birthing were the most inspiring for me. (*Unassisted Childbirth*, Laura Kaplan Shanley; *Primal Mothering*, Hygeia Halfmoon)



We were giddy with excitement of the fast approaching due date. We had everything we needed, organised and on hand - from the inflatable pool (a *Sevlyor*), to the homeopathics and herbal tinctures (my labour blend: *red raspberry*, *false unicorn*, *black cohosh*, *squaw vine*, and *lobelia*) a motherwort tincture, Arnica 30c, Pulstilla 30c, *Bach's Rescue Remedy*, and liquid chlorophyll), and all the emergency supplies, towels, and tools that we might possibly need. I made an easy-to-read birthing plan for us - as a quick reference guide for the signs and steps of labour, as well as an emergency list for Moks to follow in case I couldn't express myself or concentrate. We had our neighbors and a hospital right down the street in case of an emergency. (We did have one check up pre-birth to make sure all was on track. The nurses in the O.B. ward were very kind and supportive of our home birthing choice.)

Our home was labour ready and our anticipation was high, a week and a half to go! On April 25th we decided make a cast of my belly. Moksha was my sculptor - what fun it was to capture such a beautiful full moon belly! As dusk settled in, and my cast was drying - I started feeling moonflow type cramps, light ones that increased to medium strength by the later evening. We looked at each other around 9 pm when they started to bring more of my attention to breathing through them. It wasn't 'officially' time yet, but I knew that labour was not too far away. Not

knowing how fast the contractions would progress, we made the decision to inflate and fill the pool.

Throughout the night and the following day, we readied our home for the birth. Soft lighting, inspiring decorations, and soothing music (*Shamanic Dream*) set a serene atmosphere. The pool took up in most of our living room - very spacious and difficult to fill and keep the water warm! Our water heater gave way, so Moks began heating pots of water on the stove - 4 at a time, scooping water out of the pool and rotating them on the burners. Quite a task! I meanwhile completed two enemas to clear out my system, took my tinctures, chlorophyll, and arnica as I breathed through the increasingly intense contractions.

I spent the passing time rolling on my pilates ball (my best friend throughout pregnancy, birth, and post-partum!), lightly stretching, rinsing off in the shower, walking around, downing water and Recharge juice (my second best friend), munching on light foods, and small periods of rest. During the day, my contractions had waned a bit and seemed to be at a plateau. Luckily, Moksha and I had the time and privacy for intimacy (a well known remedy for stimulating contractions!)

Finally, transition set in the following evening - and I was riding through very intense, fast waves of pain with the assistance of my partner. Moksha was with me in the pool now, massaging my lower back, legs and gluteal muscles as I tensed during each peak. Adrenaline kicking in, I was squatting in the warm water, all my focus and energy on keeping my mouth soft and breathing deep. I knew when it was time to push (it actually was a relief to do so); in 2 waves a little head peeked out (the ring of fire!), Moksha was supporting my perineum and could feel the face underwater. One wave more and he slid all the way out, into Moksha's hands, 9:09 pm.

Our first child, a little boy!! We cradled him in the clouded water for about 40 seconds, gently bringing him to rise to the surface. We saw the cord was wrapped around his neck several times and gently unlooped it as he half floated in the water.



What a perfect little man! Like a peaceful monk, with his smooth bald head and contemplative demeanor. I was high with amazement at this wonderful being in his father's arms, who gave a few little squawks as his lungs began to kick in for the first time. We helped clean some of the mucus out of his mouth as he began breathing easier. Moks passed him to me and snapped some pictures as I laughed with joy, cradling our little boy in my arms.

Tejas (Tey-jas) was the name we had decided on if he was a boy, and here he was, all 7 lbs of him, our 'radiant fire, internal flame' as his sanskrit name declared. I snuggled him to my breast, where he immediately tried to suckle. (this took a few attempts) We spent about 20 minutes longer in the pool, admiring him as he calmly floated with us. I delivered the placenta in a

few light contractions, then carried Tejas - still attached - out to dry. He lay on my belly for awhile as I relaxed with Moksha. His colouring had now warmed from the newborn gray to a healthy rosy pink.



We remained in a state of elation and exhaustion for the rest of the night, the three of us, snugly and warm. 8 hours after the birth, when we felt Tejas had received the utmost of what he needed from his placenta, we cut the cord and officially welcomed him to his new home. Later, Moksha buried the placenta under the small plum tree that we bought for Tejas, to nourish and to grow with him.

Our experience as a trio for the birth was simply an amazing and very intimate one. The soothing qualities of water for birthing was a wonderful experience for me; I could gently float instead of fighting gravity, and no tearing! Not to mention what a lovely way to enter this world - from one soft, watery womb to another.

Although I think midwives and doctors provide a wonderful (and necessary) role for some couples, we felt that this experience was perfect for us. Enjoying privacy, and being very sensitive to people and our surroundings, we could not have asked for a better way to bring our child into the world. Most of our friends and family were shocked about our decision, (glad we chose to tell them after the fact!) but amazed that everything turned out so well. They thought it took a lot of guts, but really, it seemed natural for us.



I think that most people don't believe that they have the ability to deliver their own baby, it seems beyond them. Granted, there are emergency situations where more experienced help is necessary, (those cases are surprisingly rare, according to studies.) but fear, installed into labouring women for various reasons, seems to be what takes the power from them and hands it over to

others. With so much knowledge to gain from other couples, midwives, and doctors; it was easy to have the confidence to carry my child for 9 months and deliver it by my own hands. There is simply nothing I can compare it to. It is the ultimate experience and one of the most beautiful things that I have done - to carry and birth my own child.

Having a fully supportive and loving partner was a major key for me; he was right there with me throughout it all, and still is. And now, 3 months after Tejas' grand entrance - our son is bright, happy, and very healthy! I, like all parents, am deeply in love with my child. And I have with me, the memory of bringing him here in such a lovely way, knowing that I have provided him the best welcoming party I could.

May this inspire you, as I was inspired by others, to really be conscious of the little being that is excitedly awaiting their arrival through you, and make it the highest experience possible. Even if you don't have an unassisted birth, then at the most, keep your mothering power! Gain all the knowledge you can about it all, so *you* can make the decisions as to how you want your child to arrive. It could be the single most important thing you can do for them.

Many blessings and gratitude!



Melinda, Moksha, and Tejas

Mel's Super Mama! Daily Shake recipe:

*2-3 bananas

**Udo's Oil* (or any Flax oil)

*Raw cacao nibs, ground (or cocoa powder)

*Hemp Protein powder (or any protein powder)

**Superfood*: "*Nature's First Food*" (or any superfood greens powder!)

*Almond milk/coconut water (or any milk, juice or water)

*Bee pollen

*A Cal-Mag liquid supplement, flavoured

*any additional fruits (blueberries, strawberries, papaya...)

*Follow supplemental directions & adjust to need and taste! Add all to a blender and mix well.
(Keep in mind dairy & soy products don't mix or digest well with fruit)

