

NALANDA INSTITUTE *for Contemplative Science*

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Instructor: Dr. Joe Loizzo
Spring, 2009, 12 Mondays, 6:00-7:30 pm
Tuition: \$800 full/\$600 reduced

Being Medicine: The Science of Self-Transformation in the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras

Course Description

This intermediate-advanced course unpacks the incomparable science and art of self-change found in the optimal integral process (*anuttarayoga-tantra*) teachings of Tantric Buddhism. Following the modern Tibetan tradition of integrating the liberative arts and sciences of Buddhism with Tantric meditation, it will explore the theory and practice of self-transformation in a workshop geared to helping students approaching or travelling the Tantric path, whatever their level or system of practice. The course will clarify the guiding principles and working practices shared by all Tantric systems, from introductory Tantras like Tara/Lokeshvara or Manjushri/Prajna to the definitive systems of Guhyasamaja, Heruka/Vajrayogini and Yamantaka. Guided meditations and class discussion will revolve around a contemporary optimal integral practice text (*sadhana*) of the Healing Mother/Father (*Baishajyaguru/Prajna*) based on the Kalacakra teachings of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Medicine Buddha teachings of his former personal physician, Dr. Yeshe Donden.

After reviewing the preliminaries distilled within the mentor-bonding practice called the six session yoga, the discussion will unpack the way the healing iconography and narrative of the coarse and subtle creation stage serve to transform traumatic perception of one's self and world into an embodied contemplation of the truth of the Buddha's pure science (*abhidharma*). The focus here is on the contemplative art of de-reifying the traumatized sense of self by imaginatively creating a divinely self-confident yet self-dissolving "self of selflessness" which serves as a psychic prosthesis and bridge to the genuine divine self refined in the perfection stage.

Next we decode the outer, social mandala and the inner, body mandala as maps meant to guide the intimate journey of the perfection stage through the deepest layers of consciousness, life energy and chemistry normally locked within the complexes and channels of the yogic central nervous system. The focus here is on the art of disarming the addictive, self-protective and self-reifying instincts that anchor traumatic memories and the self-limiting reflexes of the stress response, by using the yogas of kindling and recitation to tap the innate bliss and translucent intuition normally locked within the core of the central nervous system. The course closes by exploring the profound culmination of this process in the final integration of translucent mind and blissful energy body accessible the yogas of lucid sleeping, dying and intimate partnership.

Prerequisites: gradual contemplation, mind clearing, visualization or their equivalents.

Syllabus

- February 23: Tantric Psychiatry: The Neuroscience of Self-Creation
Vajrayana Buddhism (VB), 1-16
- March 2: Refuge and Spirit: The Moon and Sun of Compassion
Introduction to Tantra (IT), 13-67;
Union of Bliss and Emptiness (UBE), 11-61
- March 9: Congenial Influence: The Yoga of Mentor-Bonding
VB, 16-26; *UBE*, 62-91
- March 16: Pure Passion: Tantric Confession and Offering
The Tantric Path of Purification, 3-66, *UBE*, 92-116
- March 23: Consecration: Gateway to the Original Buddha
UBE, 117-137
- March 30: Coarse Creation: Rewriting the Tragedy of Stress and Trauma
IT, 111-127; *VB*, 26-31
- April 6: Transparent Selfhood: Divine Pride and Void-Appearance
IT, 129-142
- April 13: Fine Creation: Injecting the Mandala into the Body
VB, 31-33; *Bliss of Inner Fire (BIF)*, 67-120
- April 20: Kindling the Rush: Sublime Vision and Love's Perfect Body
VB, 33-37; *BIF*, 121-141
- April 27: Diamond Breathing: Sublime Energy and Love's Poetic Speech
VB, 37-39; *BIF*, 143-164
- May 4: Merging Partners: Sublime Clarity and Love's Ecstatic Mind
VB, 39-41; *BIF*, 165-185
- May 11: Integration: Where the Rainbow Joins the Light
VB, 41-51

Required Readings

- Dalai Lama, H.H. *The Union of Bliss and Emptiness* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1988)
- Loizzo, J. "Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibetan Perspective," in P. Bilimoria ed., *Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophy* (London: Routledge Press, forthcoming 2010) (PDF download from [NalandaScience.org Resource Page](http://NalandaScience.org))
- Loizzo, J. *A Brief Six Session Yoga* (New York: Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science, 2009) (Download from Class Page).
- _____. *Being Medicine: The Optimal Integral Process of Bhaishajyaguru* (New York: Nalanda Institute for Contemplative Science, 2009). (Download from Class Page).
- Yeshe, Lama T. *Introduction to Tantra* (Somerville: Wisdom, 1987)
- _____. *The Tantric Path of Purification* (Somerville: Wisdom, 1995).
- _____. *The Bliss of Inner Fire* (Somerville: Wisdom, 1998)

Recommended Readings

- Thurman, R. *The Jewel Tree of Tibet* (New York: Free Press, 2005)
- Thondup, T. *The Healing Power of Mind* (Boston: Shambhala, 1998)
- Mullin, G. *Tsong Khapa's Six Yogas of Naropa* (Ithaca: Snow Lion, 1996)
- Birnbaum, R. *The Healing Buddha* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1979)
- Lodoe, Y. *Paths and Grounds of Guhyasamaja* (Dharamsala: LTWA, 1995)