CHAPTER 2

Metaphysical Practices

Before we dive in much deeper, I think it would be helpful if I was to introduce you to some of the practices that sprang directly from my awakening. This will give you an idea as to who I am and what motivated me to undertake this project of sharing that with you.

The legendary Buddhist mystic, Naropa, stitched together his Six Yogas from core Tantric spiritual practices that originated with his master, Tilopa, sometime in the 11th century C.E.. Dream Yoga is most often considered as one of those six yogas, although a more contemporary view of those six categories would include Dream Yoga as a part of either Illusory Body Yoga or Clear Light Yoga, depending upon the source of that information. My first exposure to it was through *The Tibetan Yogas Of Dream And Sleep* by Tenzin Wangyal.

I must say up front in this discussion that I am not a Buddhist. I would mostly concur with Evan Thompson in his respectfully written book entitled, *Why I Am Not A Buddhist.* The truth is that after my childhood brush with Catholic priesthood I shied completely way from organized religion, even as I, at first somewhat unconsciously, became more and more spiritually inclined. But as I slipped deeper into the current that seemed to be guiding me, I was beginning to realize that it was going to be from the physical realm that I would find my way onto the path that I could see forming in front of me and that that path was leading me in a spiritual direction.

I soon began to realize that these relatively ancient Buddhist mahasiddhas had some connections to that path. It's a good bet that Nagarjuna was not walking around looking at his cell phone. Instead, he spent his time in the fourth Mahamudra state of Non-Meditation, fully in touch with his higher self, fully immersed in the very conduit that I was now seeking…..the clear light, still-point axis that leads directly to Source. So, soon after my introduction to Dream Yoga, I immersed myself in a study of the more ancient Tibetan based experiential Buddhist perspectives.

One of the first books I picked up was *Tibetan Yoga: Principles and Practices* by Ian Baker, a beautifully illustrated book that gave me a broad perspective of the landscape that I seemed to be walking into. And there were others, including the classic *Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines* by W. Y. Evans-Wentz. It became more and more clear as I read that there was a physiological methodology that could be used to gain access to some primordial state of being, but it was a re-reading of Father Francis Tiso's *"Rainbow Body and Resurrection"* with its multiple accounts of the transformation of the material body into a body of light that locked me onto a path of metaphysical practice.

But I get ahead of myself. Let's go back to my first meaningful experience with a physical practice that was designed to go beyond the physical body.

In 1975, at the age of twenty-three, I took a ten week course in T'ai Chi. The course was offered by the Church Street Center For Continuing Education, an extension service of the University of Vermont. It was led by a wonderful woman named Anne Borys. Anne had learned a soft style of T'ai Chi, T'ai Chi Chuan, from a teacher in

Montreal whom she called Master Li. This particular format consists of one hundred eight postures that are broken down into three “movements”, the first movement being the shortest and so becoming the main practice focus. The classes were held in an unused storefront space in downtown Burlington and were attended primarily by medical students from the university. I took to the practice naturally, extending my attendance by two more sessions. Soon I was leading the group. Anne got sick after that and she asked me to take over the classes. Yes, that’s right……after thirty weeks of classes I was now teaching T’ai Chi.

Those sessions continued for over two years after that with folks coming in from all walks of life. They turned into very powerful experiences as, I closed each session with a “power circle” where the twenty or so practitioners joined hands and became one entity, swaying to the gentle cosmic breeze of combined chi flow.

Even as those original sessions were ongoing, impromptu sessions would spring up wherever I was with, friends and neighbors practicing in driveways, fields, parking lots….anywhere that we found ourselves. As I write this I find myself wondering how many of those folks still have T’ai Chi in their lives. I do, but it has become more of a “non-practice”, that is, a way of movement and breathing that has become natural. When I do practice that first movement now it brings me immediately into oneness with the flow of cosmic energy.

T’ai Chi was my first brush with metaphysical power. I learned that the path to Source was opened up with the breath. By breathing in the energy of the universe one becomes that universe. The physical plane is transcended. As Al Huang says in his essential reading book entitled *Embrace Tiger, Return To Mountain*, ”*There are no*

beginnings and no endings. The universe is process and the process is in me." This was seminal stuff for me back then and that simple statement of oneness holds strong with me right to this day. But my soft style T'ai Chi practice took a bit of a dynamic turn in 1976.

I had just finished doing a demonstration of all one hundred eight postures of T'ai Chi in front of a sizeable auditorium crowd when the Sensei of the local Aikido club asked me to help spot the mats for their demonstration. I took a position at the corner by the stage front and soon there were bodies flying everywhere around a small but powerfully built man wearing a black skirt and a white cotton top. I was mesmerized. He moved effortlessly across the mat as his students attacked him from all angles. The most amazing thing of all was that they were all smiling as they bounced off that mat and came up to immediately attack him again. That Sensei, Michael Friedl, approached me after and invited me to sign up for the classes.

So began the next stage of my training. Aikido was the perfect extension of what I had learned from T'ai Chi…..breathe in, breathe out, and the physical world becomes that breath. Two years later, Michael Sensei left for the west coast and, once again, I found myself "grandfathered" into a teaching role. Now, with my own flowing black hakama, I was Sensei. Ten years later an injury took me off the Aikido mat. I never did get that black belt. I couldn't afford the time away from work and family to go to the required seminars for testing so I wore my original white belt until most of the white threads had worn off leaving the black felt liner as a testament to those years of diligent practice. Michael Sensei was teaching at the seminar where I was injured and, as I laid out on the floor in the vestibule in pain, my students gathered around me. Michael took

off his belt and laid it on my chest. Interestingly, most of the outer black threads of that belt had worn away leaving a white interior to shine through.

After those Aikido years, T'ai Chi was always there for me. Through these deeply physical practices that are grounded in the metaphysical I had inched closer to that fractally nested and perfectly aligned axis that is the still point core of the universal toroidal field that is this universe. That axis, of course, is the conduit that leads, recursively, to Source.

While you ponder all of that, let me bring us back to Dream Yoga and Naropa's other seminal yogas.

Lucid dreaming gave me agency in the dream. That agency led me to the choice of Service-To-Others….as a choice must be made once one gains agency on that higher plane. STO led me to Dream Yoga where I learned to practice projecting that agency by changing perceived reality in a passive yet positive way. At the same time, my ever expanding library led me to Lama Glenn Mullin's excellent translation of Tsongkhapa's *A Book of Three Inspirations: A Treatise on the Stages in Training in the Profound Path of Naro's Six Dharmas,* more commonly referred to as *The Three Inspirations.* The first of those "inspirations" is Inner Heat Yoga.

Often called Tummo, Inner Heat Yoga teaches one, in essence, and through the diligent practice of very specific breath and concentration protocols, to abide in their "central channel". I know that this is a very simplified description of a somewhat complex practice, but it is not my goal to teach or even deeply describe this practice. In

agreement with Alice Bailey in *A Treatise on White Magic,* I feel that a prospective student must have the will, the imagination and the emotive power to embark on a journey like this…..they must start the journey on their own in order for the tools that they need to find them. That said, Inner Heat Yoga became the foundational support for the scaffolding of my seven year transcendency.

In the practice of Tummo the initiate dissolves their physical presence to emptiness. This is not the emptiness of nothingness. It is the emptiness that contains an interdependence of all things. It is infinite wisdom and infinite potential. When one finally melts the drop at the heart chakra, form becomes emptiness and emptiness becomes form. This is the Clear Light, the third of Naropa's yogas and one finds that light by at first learning to abide in their Illusory Body (the second).

For a little over four years I practiced Tummo every night in conjunction with the classic lucid dreaming protocol of Wake-Back-To-Bed. The WBTB practitioner rises during the night….for me that was generally around 2:00 AM….. and stays awake for a period of time before going back to bed in search of dream lucidity. By this time, though, I was seeking something more. During my WBTB I would sit comfortably in the music studio and practice Tummo until earth dissolved into water, water dissolved into fire, fire dissolved into air and air dissolved into that Clear Light of emptiness. Four years….every night. I would then go through the Tummo protocol again in the morning in my empty work office at 6:00 AM. I say all of that to underline the tenet that when on a journey that has an elusive but important destination, one must persevere with sincerity.

Tummo practice, that is, learning to journey in my illusory body….or what Djwhal Khul would call my etheric body…..through the portal to the clear light, is what led me in subsequent dream states to the Grey Eyed Dude and the Commander along with other more nebulous but very real entities. It also led me to some other experiences that could only be called metaphysical, that is, experiences that occurred beyond the physical world and were unable to be measured through standard science. One January morning, while in that elusive state of hypnopompia, I was whisked bodily out of bed and into my back yard in the early light of day. I was awake when this happened and I watched the rooms fly by as I flew through the bathroom and out the wall to find myself hovering over the yard peering down at the surrounding homes through a whiteish mist. I took the opportunity to fly out over the neighborhood at treetop level, and when I was suddenly back in my bed, I got up and went to peer out the bathroom window. The backyard was filled with an eerie January fog.

I knew that this intensity of practice was not sustainable, but it did not need to be. In *A Lamp to Illuminate the Five Stages: Teachings on Guhyasamaja Tantra,* Tsongkhapa writes of the Tummo maintenance practices of Vajra Repetition and then Two Meditative Absorptions. These are simple breath related practices that maintain the connection to that still point axial core that exists at the singularity that is Source. These I now practice somewhat unconsciously throughout my days.

I felt that these descriptions of my personal lifetime experiences with metaphysical practices were important to lay the groundwork for my upcoming perspectives. These experiences have shaped the aforementioned scaffolding of a

somewhat personalized multidimensional model of the cosmos that I'll be sharing with you in the ensuing chapters. The human body is an amazingly powerful metaphysical tool. We can use these bodies…..to transcend them.

With that in mind, and before we leave this discussion on metaphysical practices, I'll leave you with one more. This is one that you can try at home….after fifty years of T'ai Chi practice, twelve years of dynamically extending that on the Aikido mat, and four or five years of intensive middle-of-the-night lucid dreaming, dream yoga, and tummo practice.

Lay on your bed at 2:00 AM and breathe. Place a single-terminated six-sided natural quartz crystal over your navel chakra with the apex pointing toward your heart. Place a Vogel-cut 12-sided quartz crystal over your heart chakra with the smaller apex pointing toward your head and a tiny double-terminated quartz crystal over your throat chakra. It helps if that tiny throat crystal is one that you wear around your neck twenty-four hours a day. Make sure that all those crystals are lined up over your central channel. Press the navel crystal and the heart crystal firmly into your flesh. Feel that axial connection start to form.

Now let your hands rise off the bed and begin to circle counter-clockwise over your body in a motion similar to Wave Hands Like Clouds. Feel them begin to tingle as you expand and contract that circle. Let the energy of that circle connect with the toroidal spin of your body-field and then the spin of the planet. Feel it. Now visualize your hands as the spiraling arms of our galaxy, spinning slowly and majestically around the fractal axis of the universe. Your body will start to convulse slightly as your legs begin to rise off the bed, followed by your upper torso. It will start to feel like there is an

electric current coursing through your body like a live wire. Ride that current as long as you can.

Then let it go and bring your hands back to those crystals. You'll unconsciously press them hard into your flesh as they fortify the polarized energy that has turned your body into an organic antenna….a transceiver for the positive energy of the stars as that energy flows in to meet with the negative energy of the planet. For added effect you can now roll those crystals across your body in opposite directions, stopping with the heart crystal over your spleen and the navel crystal over your liver. Hold them there and feel the energy transfer. Then let them rest gently in their original positions while you breathe gently.

I jest, of course, about those aforementioned required preconditions. But I offer this exercise as further testament to the incredible tool that we have that is the vessel in which we spend our limited and constrained time on this physical plane.

And one final thing…….after you try the above exercise a few times, stop at some point during the day when you have a calm envelope for a minute or so. Close your eyes….and gaze into the distance deep within. Look for that one point of light; it may even come as a small undulating circle. When it comes hold onto it as long as you can, for you have found the axial conduit to the nested fractal core of our multidimensional universe.