

THE ESSENCE OF BEINGNESS

Zen, Tantra and Tantsu

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Excerpt from the book: TANTSU: A Yoga of the Heart

The essence of both Zen and Tantra live inside the practice of Tantsu. Two paths that seem to be contrary flow together as one as we hold another in a Tantsu cradle. Both Zen and Tantra practice the deep acceptance of what is arising in each moment. The wave of Tantra rides the present moment to its fullest in ever-widening acceptance; to the point of transmutation into the bare still elegant "beingness" of Zen.

In Tantsu, we practice "being with, rather than doing something to" our partner. When we do not impose action or a diagnosis, we can arrive at a precious opportunity to engage in a meditative dance of rising and dissolving energies with our Tantsu partner. The cradle becomes the ocean, and us, like surfers. We observe, listen and simply "be" with the other, and when waves of movement and flows of breath arise, like a surfer, we ride them. As we wait for waves of movement, we learn to sense the subtle currents of micro-movement that are ever present between us. As every wave eventually lays itself down on the shore, we too find moments where the more active aspects of a Tantsu session flow into a place of vibrant stillness. It is here that the "individuality" of the wave dissolves back into the wholeness of the ocean. The in flow and out flow of our shared breath remains a constant moving tide, connecting us and reminding us of the ever changing nature of life. We choose not to predict what might arise in a Tantsu which allows us to be in the present, accepting the mystery of the moment without need to explain it.

These moments of dynamic stillness are the jewels of Tantsu; the infinite fullness of Tantra meets the vast emptiness of Zen in a simple shimmering still point of Beingness. It is here that the potential of life pulses.

Zen aims moment by moment to harmonize with the constant flux of life and Tantra harvests the inherent energy of life's polarities as a vehicle of transformation. In Tantsu, as in Zen and Tantra, nothing is turned away; all that we experience in a session becomes means for embracing and elevating what we are born with.

Tantra and Zen are alive. At the core remains a relationship to life and its processes. To negate, go against, control or to try to stop the flux is to deaden its inherent energy. An ancient Tantric meditation describes that when riding in an ox-cart on a bumpy road, to simply allow one's entire

body to move and jiggle and absorb all the ups and downs of the road. Full acceptance of what is, even in the physical body. By liberating ourselves from the clutches of control, we have access of boundless life force energy that can be channeled into more and more refined states. Sexual energy is one of the most powerful forces in nature and historically, Tantra has utilized sex in some of its meditations by accepting its momentum and elevating its inherent energy into more refined expressions. In both Tantra and Zen, nothing is turned away, every experience can be useful.

Tantsu provides a safe contained environment in which to explore acceptance of our vital life force in its wide and varied expressions.

A Zen Haiku poem inspires: *Sitting still, doing nothing, the grass grows by itself.* While Zen practice includes formal sitting meditation, the essence of the tradition is that every action becomes a meditation. Even the mundane task of washing dishes or clearing a garden of weeds is done with an attitude of mindfulness. At the core of Zen, the present moment becomes the teacher.

Tantsu continues in this essence of simplicity by disengaging from spiritual credence, philosophical stances or esoteric meanings and offers us a possibility of knowing our humanness more fully. As we open to the wide spectrum of human nature, no authority decides our actions for us, and we can become more fully ourselves. The person in our Tantsu cradle is our doorway to the mystery, what happens from there is the unknowable alchemy of relationship.

As we learn experientially to control less and allow more, the essence of our human nature shines through as joy. Giving or receiving a Tantsu becomes an expression of our joy. We allow the world to be brand new in each moment, riding the flow and flux of vitality itself, accepting all as it is, we learn that life IS change and our ecstasy arises in riding this joy.

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