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The Teaching of Juan Matus

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Today we are going to continue with reviewing schools of buddhi-yoga. We are already familiar with the trends of buddhi-yoga in Chinese Taoist Alchemy, Moslem Sufism, Tibetan Buddhism, Indian school of Rajneesh, and in our school. In this discourse I will discuss the school of buddhi-yoga founded by Mexican Indians, the most prominent leader of whom was Juan Matus.

This school was described in detail by Carlos Castaneda—our contemporary from Los Angeles. The books of his that we know of were published during the period between 1966 and 1987. These are 8 books of Castaneda, which were translated into Russian by volunteers: "The Teaching of don Juan", "A Separate Reality", "Journey to Ixtlan", "Tales of Power", "The Second Ring of Power", "The Eagle's Gift", "The Fire from Within", "The Power of Silence". We also know the book by D.C.Noel "Seeing Castaneda", which contains interviews with him. The overall volume of these books in typewritten form exceeds 2000 pages.

It must be noted right away that in his books Castaneda describes the period of his relationship with don Juan that lasted for about three decades. Over this period it was not only Castaneda who advanced in his development, but also don Juan himself. Reading Castaneda's books one can see both the early and the later personal spiritual quest of don Juan, which was not free from mistakes. This is why the spiritual concept of the school must be evaluated not based on what don Juan spoke and did over these decades, but on what he attained by the end of his earthly life.

I want to note that this discourse of mine is not meant to retell the books of Castaneda, but to provide systematization of the knowledge presented in them from the standpoint of methodology of spiritual development.

So, the future author of bestsellers about the school of Juan Matus, Carlos Castaneda was an undergraduate student at the University of Southern California, Los Angeles, majoring in ethnography. He was collecting material for his dissertation paper, so he went to Mexico in order to study the experience of Indians of that area in using medicinal plants. Upon arrival to Mexico with his car he started searching for people competent in this issue. He was introduced to an Indian, whose name was Juan Matus and who agreed to provide Castaneda with the data he needed free of charge.

So, they got acquainted and their joint work began. In due course Castaneda found out that don Juan possesses not only knowledge about qualities of plants, but also the ancient art of the Toltec Indians' sorcery. Moreover, don Juan turned out to be a sorcerer himself. For the first time in his life, Castaneda came across the things that were absolutely beyond the bounds of his usual secular and religious notions. So, lizards appeared able of speaking in human voices, people could fly with their bodies, extract various things "out of nowhere", and so on. Castaneda found himself captivated by all this and also increasingly interested as a scientist in this new, for him, area of knowledge.

Once don Juan invited Castaneda to a meeting where his associates were taking self-

made psychedelics. Castaneda tried them as well. And then occurred that, which for the first time made don Juan to look at Castaneda as a potential adept of his school.

Don Juan was a mystic and he perceived the whole world in a mystic way. In particular, he attached great importance to so called "signs" coming to him from the "separate reality".

What happened is that Castaneda, upon swallowing a few pills of peyote started playing a strange game with a dog. They began to urinate on each other... It was the dog's behavior, which was absolutely unusual for a dog, that had significance there. It was interpreted by don Juan as a sign from God (Who was referred to as Power in this school) indicating the significance of non-Indian Castaneda for the school. Since that moment Castaneda became a full member of the party (that is, the group) of don Juan's disciples. And don Juan started to gradually initiate him into the secret knowledge of his school.

So what was the conceptual outlook of the school?

The whole world consists of two parallel worlds, the first of which is called the "tonal" (that is, the world of material things) and the second—the "nagual" (the non-material world).

We communicate with the world of matter through the so-called "first attention", i.e. that carried out through the sense organs of physical body.

So that to become able of cognizing the nagual, one has to develop the "second attention", that is, clairvoyance.

There is also the "third attention", by means of which one perceives the Supreme Purusha (Sanskrit), that is the Creator—Ishvara, and His Radiance, which don Juan referred to as the "Fire".

According to mythology shared by don Juan's predecessors, the world is governed by the universal divine Eagle. This was their notion of God. However fantastic it seems, it is monotheistic.

This Eagle feeds on souls that leave human bodies. But the Eagle also confers the chance on some people to "skip" past his beak after their death and to obtain immortality, provided that during their lives they acquired skills necessary for this and developed their consciousness to the due degree, accumulated the required amount of power of their consciousness and the ability to act with it in the multidimensional world.

This concept contained a frightening element, which was supposed to force a person to make efforts on self-perfection. But, like Jesus Christ, don Juan strongly opposed this attitude towards God, which was based on fear. He said that in order to approach God, one has to take the "path with heart"—that is the path of Love. It is interesting that don Juan arrived at this understanding independently of the influence of other spiritual traditions. He was not familiar with the teaching of either Krishna or Jesus Christ, nor has he ever read Sufi or Taoist books. It is evident that he did not read the New Testament; otherwise he would quote it for sure.

At the basis of the don Juan's school's methodology of man's self-perfection there were three principles: Love, Knowledge, and Power (though these terms are not found in Castaneda's books).

A person who resolved to lay claim to immortality, first, has to become a "hunter". But not that hunter who kills game, but that for knowledge, who walks the "path of heart"—caring, loving both Earth and beings that live on it.

Having mastered the stage of "hunter", he can then become a "warrior"—that is the one who "traces" Power (God), striving to "stalk" and cognize It.

Don Juan taught Castaneda and his other apprentices often while walking in the desert and the mountains—in most natural conditions of direct contact with the multiform world

that surrounds us.

For instance, once they caught a wild rabbit. Don Juan knew that this rabbit's life on Earth was coming to an end, according to his destiny. And he suggested that Castaneda killed this rabbit with his own hands. Castaneda exclaimed, 'I cannot do this!'. Don Juan objected, 'But you have killed animals before!'. Castaneda replied, 'But I killed them with my rifle, from a distance, without having to see them die...'

Castaneda refused to commit killing, for the first time he questioned his ethic right to do this, he thought of the sufferings of the creature being killed.

However, the rabbit died by himself before Castaneda's eyes, because the time of his stay on Earth had really run out.

Once don Juan and Castaneda were walking down the street and saw a snail crossing the road. And don Juan used this example to explain the philosophy of the role of a person in the destinies of other creatures.

In such a way Castaneda, who at the beginning was very proud of his being a learned and civilized person, became increasingly convinced that true wisdom belongs not to him, but to the old Indian, a great spiritual aspirant and Teacher, who lived a life of a hunter and a warrior in harmony with the world around him.

After his disciples had mastered basics of ethics and wisdom, don Juan would proceed to teaching them psychoenergetic methods.

It should be noted here that only a very limited number of students were enrolled into the don Juan's school. A criterion of selection was the level of development of the energy structures of the organism—chakras. Of course, Indians did not use such words as chakras and dantyan. But they spoke of segments in the energy "cocoon" of man. And only disciples with developed chakras were considered to be promising and able to withstand the path of a hunter and warrior.

So, those enrolled in the school had a big experience in psychoenergetic work acquired in their previous lives on Earth. That is, they were ready for serious work from the psychoenergetical standpoint. This allowed them to start psychoenergetic training not with cleansing and developing of meridians and chakras, as it is done, for example, in our school, but immediately with development of the major power structure of the organism—hara (the lower dantyan).

When the work with hara was completed, the next stage followed: the division of the "cocoon" into two parts: the upper and the lower "bubbles of perception". Why "bubbles"?—Because these parts of the "cocoon" seen by means of clairvoyance look like swimming bladders of some kinds of fish. Why "of perception"?—Because one can perceive the tonal and the nagual from them, respectively.

Division of the "cocoon" into two "bubbles of perception" was regarded as an important transitional step to further stages of psychoenergetic self-perfection. And one had to master concentration of consciousness in both "poles" of the "cocoon" in such a way.

Further work was performed in order to develop the lower "bubble of perception". But it was commenced only after the consciousness had been properly refined, or, as it was called in the don Juan's school, after the luminosity of the "cocoon" had been cleansed.

That is, as in all other advanced spiritual schools, the techniques aimed at the refining of consciousness preceded the large-scale process of its "crystallization". However, Castaneda does not describe methods of "cleansing the luminosity" except the one, which can be viewed rather as a joke, namely—inhaling the smoke of a campfire.

Due to the refining of consciousness and the work with the lower "bubble of perception", disciples attained the state of Nirvana (though they were not acquainted with

this term). First, they mastered the static variation of Nirvana in Brahman, and after this—the dynamic one.

Once don Juan clapped Castaneda on the back with his palm (he often used this technique so that to shift the "assemblage point", that is the zone of distribution of the disciple's consciousness)—and Castaneda, prepared for this by preceding exercises, entered the static variation of Nirvana. At that moment he for the first time experienced the state of deep peace, for the first time he perceived God, he perceived that God is indeed Love. But suddenly he heard don Juan's voice who was saying that this state was, though fine—not that, to which he had to aspire now. He had to advance further! "Do not think that this is the limit of your abilities..." With these words don Juan called on Castaneda, who had cognized the supreme bliss of Nirvana not to "get attached" to it, but to keep on going further... At first, Castaneda got offended and angry at don Juan, but the latter was unbending: further advance is necessary!..

And what is further? Further is the dynamic aspect of Nirvana when "crystallized" consciousness is active within the bounds of Brahmanic dimension. In this state one can touch with his consciousness any being within the bounds of Earth and around it; everything that is required—just information about this being.

Then disciples of Juan Matus also mastered the state of Nirodhi, known in all developed schools of buddhi-yoga. This state don Juan also described in endemic terms, which were specific to his school. Disciples were taught that there exist energy waves, which are constantly rolling on all living creatures, and from which we are shielded by our "cocoon". And that there is a possibility to use the power of these waves so as to transfer oneself into the unknown worlds with their help. These unknown worlds are other spatial dimensions. To make it happen, the "rolling force" had to be allowed to flood the "cocoon". Then a person turned into "nothing", his "I" died.

And it is only after attaining the state of disappearance in Brahman that it became possible to cognize the "Fire"—the Radiance of Ishvara—and disappear in Ishvara forever, having conquered one's death.

It should be noted that with the help of the "Fire" it is possible to master dematerialization of one's physical body. This is what Juan Matus and his companions performed.

So, we have considered principal stages of work in the buddhi-yoga school of Juan Matus. They turn out to be common for all school of buddhi-yoga, regardless of the location of these schools on Earth's surface, whether they are connected with each other or not, as well as the languages spoken in these schools and the terms used by them. This is so due to the fact that it is according to the same laws that God guides the people who devoted their lives to Him.

And now, let us consider in detail the specific methods of work in the school of Juan Matus—which have been described by Castaneda in detail and which we can apply to ourselves.

They can be divided into two groups: preliminary and basic ones.

The first of the preliminary methods is the "recapitulation". In essence, this is the same as penance, which is one of the major practices in all major religions. Disciples had to—mainly in seclusion that lasted several days—recall all the mistakes they had made in their lives, and to re-live those situations anew, this time correctly. So that disciples had more "personal interest" in this very hard work, they were told that during "recapitulation" they would regain the energy wasted as a result of their incorrect emotional reactions. The quality of penitential work did not deteriorate because of this trick, since its major goal—to learn to react in the ethically correct way and to avoid sin—was achieved with due efforts.

They also had to destroy the feeling of “self-importance” and “self-pity”—as those qualities that result in the tremendous waste of the person's energy. Indeed, if one views himself so too important and someone else encroaches on this importance with their disrespectful attitude, the person reacts with emotional discharge of resentment, anger, and so forth. In this process the energy of the organism is intensively wasted.

Here is an interesting and instructive fact of the Castaneda's biography: when his study in don Juan's school came to an end, he and his closest companion, la Gorda—though Castaneda became a millionaire after his books had been published and they could lead a life free from material limitations—got hired under other people's names as servants in the house of a rich man and suffered humiliations from rudeness and treachery of other servants. They resorted to this in order to completely destroy the feeling of “self-importance”, to erase their own "personal history” from their memories—so that to attain humility. Truly, everything that happens to a warrior on the physical plane, as Castaneda put it—does not matter, the only thing that matters is the state of his consciousness.

Indeed, it is of no importance compared to the Supreme Goal! And what is of principal significance is the ability to be naught, the ability not to protect oneself when someone is unjust to one, but to be protected—so taught don Juan. And the state of being protected comes only when "there is no myself", when there is only God.

One of the most essential preparatory elements of work in the school of Juan Matus was "sweeping of the tonal", which corresponds to observance of aparigraha in the ethics of Hindu yoga.

We have already discussed don Juan's wise ability to explain most complicated philosophical matters in an easy to understand manner using natural examples from the everyday life. This time he did the same, explaining this principle to his disciples.

Once don Juan assembled his disciples, took a sack and put into it the radio, the tape recorder and several other things that he found in the house of one of them, then he put the sack on that man's back, put a table on another disciple's back and took them to the mountains. In the middle of the valley he told them to put the table down and emptied the contents of the sack onto it. Then he took the disciples away and offered them to say what they saw?

They started to tell that they see a radio set... and so on and so forth...

Then don Juan came to the table and whisked all the things off from it. ‘Take another look and tell me what you see now?’—he said. Only then disciples understood don Juan: he wanted them to see not only the things on the table, but the table itself, and moreover,—the space around the table. But the things on the table prevented them from seeing this by drawing their attention to themselves.

In this way don Juan demonstrated to his disciples that in order to cognize the nagual, and then also—God, one has to cleanse the tonal around oneself.

Perhaps, it would be appropriate to recall the example of observance of the same principle in the history of Christianity: beside icons and a few books monks had a coffin in their cells, in which they slept, so that to constantly remember of their inevitable death, which urges those who remember about it to intensify their spiritual efforts.

Also, don Juan taught to destroy stiff patterns of material life, as for instance, strict observance of one's routines. For what purpose? In order to attain freedom. This is one of those steps that we have to make so that to finally "undress" our souls, shedding all casings and that armors that we imposed on it ourselves. Only when we can "undress" in such a way that we can carry out the precept of Jesus Christ: that one has to worship God-Spirit, Universal Divine Consciousness "in spirit", that is, with one's consciousness, which is free of bondage, open, and liberated.

Destruction of unreasonable patterns of behavior, thinking, and reacting, inculcated in the process of upbringing by traditions and morality, should result in the "loss of human form", that is, attaining the state when a person learns to act not according to his reflexes or because it is customary to act so, but in accordance with objective expediency. The "loss of human form" is not a short-term mechanic action, as some disciples of don Juan fantasized, but a prolonged process, accompanying the man's gradual approaching God. This process comes to an end when an aspirant learns to look at all situations with the eyes of the Creator.

But attaining the "loss of human form" does not mean in the least that a person starts to behave "not like everyone else" in the society, because, firstly, inevitable conflicts with other people would prevent him from fulfilling his main duty. Secondly, the conduct, which is "defiant" by form, in many cases turns out to be a breach of the basic laws of objective ethics—the non-harming of other living beings. This is why disciples were prescribed to observe conventional norms of behavior, sometimes secretly ridiculing them and resorting to the so-called "controlled folly".

To illustrate this, don Juan once astounded Castaneda by taking off his usual Indian garment and putting on an immaculate European suit during his trip to the town.

In connection with this, don Juan also taught his disciples to talk to people in the language that they can understand. So, once he and Castaneda were sitting on the bench near the Catholic church and saw how two not too old ladies, after coming out from the church were too hesitant to descend a few steps. Then don Juan elegantly jumped up to them, helped them go down, and advised them that in case some time in the future they fall, they should by no means move until the doctor arrives. The ladies were sincerely grateful to him for this piece of advice.

The next most essential methodical technique is remembering about one's own death. The majority of people today are accustomed to fighting the thought of their death. And even when we come across facts of passing away of other people we by no means try to imagine ourselves in their place. We assure ourselves that even if this is going to happen to us, it is still very long time ahead.

But, if each of us asks himself now: "When will I die?"—the dates will be very far-off, although theoretically everyone knows that people die at any age.

So, don Juan suggests that we imagine that our personified death is always by our side. And if one looks back quickly over the left shoulder—one can spot it as a shade that has flashed. 'At the moment, death is sitting next to you on the same mat, waiting for your mistake' – he said to Castaneda. And no one is aware of the moment when he is going to die, that is why we should not have any unfinished affairs in one's life.

Below is what don Juan said about death.

"...How can anyone feel so important when we know that death is stalking us?"

... The thing to do when you're impatient is to turn to your left and ask advice from your death. An immense amount of pettiness is dropped if your death makes a gesture to you, or if you catch a glimpse of it, or if you just have the feeling that your companion is there watching you.

Death is the ...wise adviser that we have... One... has to ask death's advice and drop the cursed pettiness that belongs to men that live their lives as if death will never tap them.

If you do not think of your death, all your life will be just personal chaos.

(A warrior) knows his death is stalking him and won't give him time to cling to anything... And thus with an awareness of his death,... and with the power of his decisions a warrior sets his life in a strategical manner... and what he chooses is always strategically the best; and so he performs everything he has to with gusto and lusty efficiency.

Life for a warrior is an exercise in strategy.

Without the awareness of death everything is ordinary, trivial. It is only because death is stalking us that the world is an unfathomable mystery.

You have little time and no time for crap. A wonderful state! The best of us always comes out when we are against the wall, when we feel the sword dangling overhead. ...I wouldn't have it any other way.”

Another most essential aspect of the work with disciples was mastering the "mental pause" or, in other words, stoppage of "internal dialogue" (the first term is preferable whereas besides "internal dialogues" there are also "internal monologues").

This is an absolutely necessary prerequisite for mastering the nagual, because the nagual is mastered by means of meditation, and meditation, as Rajneesh put it nicely, is the state of "non-mind". That is, so that to learn to immerse one's consciousness into the nagual one has to learn to stop, to switch off the mind.

For the purpose of attaining the "mental pause" don Juan employed the following techniques:

1. Psychedelics. But it should be noted that, firstly, don Juan used this method only at the very beginning of their joint work and later he gave it up. Secondly, Castaneda complained afterwards that though he was immensely grateful to don Juan for everything that he had done for him, but nonetheless his (Castaneda's) liver was still marked with scars. Hence, it is absolutely unadvisable to follow his example as to using psychedelics, all the more so, because there are other, far more effective and harmless means of mastering the "mental pause" at our disposal.

2. "Gazing". One had to look at some object for long time and in fixed manner, for example, at a ravine, flowing water, and so on. As a result the "first attention" got exhausted and switched off leaving room for the "second attention".

3. Prolonged suspension of one's body on devices like a swing.

The training mentioned above resulted in attaining the state that in Chinese is called yoga "wu-wei"—"not-doing", that is being inactive on the physical plane, when one's mind ("manas", in Sanskrit) stops and an opportunity for directed meditation, for activity of consciousness (in Sanskrit, buddhi), arises.

Manas and buddhi are in reciprocal relations: they cannot act simultaneously, at a given point in time either one or the other operates. (That does not mean that a person without a body or in the state of meditation loses reason. No. Developed "crystallized" consciousness can think. But it thinks in another way, not in the "earthly" manner).

And one more unique technique that was developed in this school by don Juan's predecessors: intentional interaction with people-tyrants. The technique was employed for attainment of "faultlessness of warrior", that is the ability to follow ethical principles and adhere to strategy of objectively valid behavior in situations of urgency. Some time in the past don Juan himself was sent by his teacher to a fierce overseer-tyrant for such a training. In Mexico such ones were considered to be very rare and to find one was regarded a big luck by warriors.

Now we shall list the methods of psychoenergetic work used in the don Juan's school:

1. Cleansing of the inner luminosity (i.e. the refining of consciousness).
2. Employment of "places of power" (of which we spoke in a separate lecture).

3. "Dreaming", which was given much attention. What is this? Many people, having read Castaneda's books, try to use their night sleep for this purpose, and without success. No, this is not the way it must be done. "Dreaming" is the synonym of the word "meditation". Due to being unfamiliar with the terms commonly accepted in other countries, Central American Indians had to find their own words to denote some key techniques, phenomena, and objects of spiritual practice. This is how the term "dreaming" was born, since meditative images sometimes really bear similarity to the images one sees in one's dreams.

Special training in "dreaming" allowed disciples, getting detached from body, to run on the walls, climb along energy beams (the "lines of the world"), and so on.

4. Learning to act in extremal magic situations, created by the preceptor on purpose. For this purpose, ethical vices of disciples were used. For example, when a disciple still had an inclination towards selfish attacks on other people, he was suggested to take part in a deliberately losing magic fight, which turned out beneficial for all its participants.

5. The technique of shifting the "assemblage point" as a result of energetic impact of the preceptor (this was called "the nagual's blow"; the term "nagual" had another meaning in this case: a leader who has mastered the nagual and is capable of acting in it and from it).

6. "Practice of meditative leveling-off of energetic "emanations" inside the "cocoon" in accordance with outer "emanations" of the highest spatial dimensions.

7. Work with hara aimed at developing the power aspect.

8. Employment of "allies" (that is, spirits). This was done in two variants.

The first one—the "taming" of spirits who had to, according to the plan, become assistants and protectors of a sorcerer. Both don Juan and his friend Genaro had such "allies" in the beginning of their spiritual quest.

But all must be warned that this is an erroneous and dangerous practice, which one in no way should try imitating. By the way, both don Juan and Genaro themselves gave up this practice later on.

The other variant of the work with "allies" consisted in hunting them. No wonder that such tendency was created by Indians who lived in a constant communion with wildlife. So, disciples were told that at some moment they were sure to come across some "ally" in the male human form who would challenge them to a combat. One can lose in this combat, giving way to fear, but it is also possible to win. In the latter case the warrior acquires the power of that spirit.

And disciples prepared themselves for such a fight, which could take place any moment, by developing alertness (readiness) and other necessary qualities of the warriors.

On the basis of this educational game, disciples performed, in particular, the work for developing the lower "bubble of perception".

To sum up the above said, we will point out basic aspects of this teaching, which is exceptionally rich in terms of most valuable theoretical and practical elements. Don Juan pointed out three sections in it: a) the art of stalking, b) the art of intent, and c) the art of consciousness.

In the history of the Indian spiritual tradition under consideration the art of stalking initially consisted in the ability to sneak, to stalk unnoticed among the people who do not understand you (that is, people of lower stages of psychogenesis)—and to achieve your Goal.

But afterwards, owing, in particular, to personal contribution of don Juan, this trend was considerably expanded to include also stalking one's own vices. We have discussed this enough. Let me just quote one brilliant formula, given by don Juan: God (in his

parlance, Power) provides according to our impeccability. That is, God gives us an opportunity to approach Him, to immerse into increasing happiness of mergence with Him—as we perfect ourselves ethically.

The second section—the art of intent. "Intent" is the same as "aspiration" to the Supreme Goal, or, according to Gurdjieff, the correct "magnetic center". True warrior, in don Juan's sense of the word—is a person with the correctly developed "intent".

The lifestyle of a warrior would bring him to the "totality" of himself, that is, that state that in Indian yoga is called "advaita"—"non-duality", being “non-split” regarding the major and the minor things, the "integrity" in devoting himself only to the Supreme Goal.

The third aspect is the art of consciousness—which is what buddhi-yoga is.

So, we could see once again, that God leads all people who have attained a certain level of maturity in their psychogenesis, irrespective of the country and religious culture they live in, using the unified methodological pattern. We must study these principles and trends and apply them to ourselves and to the people who follow us.

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