

The 'Secret' of Archetypal Deity Yoga ~ Shinzen Young

00:00:00 By the time Mahayana evolved into Vajrayana, the religious stuff was really intense.

00:00:13 So now the Buddha is a deity.

00:00:16 And to become a Buddha means to become a deity.

00:00:19 So how is that feasible?

00:00:21 Well, what they did is they did something very, very clever.

00:00:27 They showed people how they could become a deity, a god.

00:00:33 It's called deity yoga.

00:00:37 Yoga in the sense of merging, by the way.

00:00:40 Hlei Nenjor in the Tibetan language.

00:00:43 Now you've probably heard that Tibetan Buddhism is secret Buddhism.

00:00:48 They're the secret initiations.

00:00:52 So now I'm going to give away the secret to all of you.

00:00:55 Yes, that's right.

00:00:58 Here's the secret of secret Buddhism.

00:01:01 How do you become a deity?

00:01:05 In a way that is not insanity or possession, by the way.

00:01:11 How do you become a deity in a way that brings about the same insight and liberation as the

00:01:17 deconstructive process of early Buddhism?

00:01:21 Very clever.

00:01:22 Here's how you do it.

00:01:26 You replace your internal talk with the mantra of the deity.

00:01:32 You replace your self image with the image of the deity.

00:01:37 And you replace your normal human feelings with the feel of the deity.

00:01:42 And you form the touch of the deity by making hand gestures, mudras.

00:01:48 So touch, feel, image, talk of a myth, you become the myth.

00:01:57 As I say, not to be insane and not to be possessed, but to gain insight into what?

00:02:06 Insight into the arbitrary nature of self-identification.

00:02:10 Because you created this alternate identity from scratch.

00:02:14 And you know it's a myth.

00:02:17 But you become it.

00:02:19 Very clever.

00:02:20 It was a way of meeting the people where they were at.

00:02:22 They were worshipping these archetypes.

00:02:27 Buddhism had really moved from its early sort of Buddha is a spiritual scientist, just another

00:02:33 guy, but an extraordinary guy, to, okay, Buddha is an archetype, so now become the archetype

00:02:42 and you'll get the same insight into how the sense of self arises.

00:02:47 So once again, we're working with feel, image, talk, aren't we?

00:02:52 Broadly, it's another way to do focus on positive, as I define focus on positive.

00:03:01 So in Tibetan Buddhism, in the core of these, if you look at the surface, it looks like

00:03:06 they're doing these rituals.

00:03:07 But inside they're doing deity yoga, where they're becoming this deity, then becoming

00:03:12 this other deity, then becoming this other deity.

00:03:16 In order to see that when you work with those elements, those are the elements that create

00:03:21 the illusion of self.

00:03:23 If it can create the illusion of a mythical self, then it certainly can create the illusion

00:03:27 of your ordinary self, and you gain the same insights.

00:03:31 So one of the reasons that I define focus on positive so broadly is to allow some students

00:03:40 who wish to, to do deity yoga.

00:03:43 Some of my students that relate to that, I would never encourage a person to do this,

00:03:48 but some of them want to do it, and it can be very insightful.

00:03:51 Well, the focus on positive technique that I give you is so broadly defined that it includes

00:03:57 within it not only early Buddhist loving kindness, but deity yoga, because you're working with

00:04:03 those elements in a very systematic way.

00:04:06 A lot of times, Westerners, if they want to do this, will not choose the deities of India

00:04:15 and Tibet.

00:04:17 They'll choose Western archetypes.

00:04:20 That's certainly my case.

00:04:22 When I do this, I typically use La Virgen de Guadalupe, the Virgin of Guadalupe, because

00:04:31 I grew up seeing that in LA.

00:04:34 And that's very natural for me.

00:04:37 And I use Ave Maria.

00:04:38 Yeah, so you got the little Jewish boy from LA does the Catholic tantric practice.

00:04:46 Well, that's the world we live in.

00:04:52 But it works.

00:04:53 You can do it with any archetype.

00:04:57 And in fact, traditional way that you're supposed to be taught to do the rosary is you visualize

00:05:06 the mystery, you have the certain prayer and talk space, and you're supposed to experience

00:05:10 the emotions, and you're touch-wise engaged with the rosary.

00:05:14 It's the same elements.

00:05:16 It's right there.