

What Is Tantra Maya?

In 1993 I was initiated into an ancient yogic meditation tradition. I adopted a healthy vegetarian lifestyle without drugs or alcohol and practiced meditation and yoga daily. Within a few months the kundalini began with what would be a very long and intense awakening. As a student of psychology and world literature, I had heard of kundalini and other mystical energies but I had never thought they were real, live forces. I thought it was just interesting archaic symbolism, and not an actual force within the human body that rises up through the spinal column to awaken higher states of awareness. The universal symbol for this force is the serpent. It is said to be a covert, spiritual force beneath the surface of conscious awareness, like a coiled snake. Kundalini is the fundamental intelligence behind life and evolution, waiting to be awakened when the mind finally desires liberation from finite mental bondages. As this divine “serpent power” rises through the spinal column, one experiences states of deep spiritual realization. For the yogi, kundalini is the force that unites the human with the divine.

One day after classes and a short meditation, at which I was merely a beginner, I laid down on my back due to exhaustion. I felt a soothing force begin to rise up my spine. As this point of white, soft energy rose up into the thoracic region of the spine, I began to hear the sacred Om sound. It became frightening because there was only Om and nothing else. I opened my eyes but could not see anything. My faculties of sight and hearing were unified and there only existed Om. I knew I was being dissolved in a force that was vibrating within every particle of the universe. It was ecstatic and exhilarating but terrifying. I felt my whole identity would disappear and never return. The kundalini was entering the medulla. I began to repeat my mantra for meditation but it only made the experience more intense. Instead, I began to repeat my birth name, William Enckhausen, over and over and trying to remember that I was a student in Austin, Texas on the physical plane of reality. The kundalini began to go back down as Om diminished. I couldn't take any more.

After that experience I became very confident but experienced a lot of mental turmoil. It was very productive turmoil in that all negative memories from my past were being quickly purged and purified. I began to feel completely whole and that I had already lived a very complete life. The second time the kundalini rose was a few months later. I saw the same light in my spine although this time it was an infinitesimally small point. Physical reality disappeared and I began to “see” from the crown of my head a turquoise bird flying closer and closer as the point rose higher and higher. The bird landed on the crown of my head at the same time the point rose to the same place. Heaven and earth had met and I was lost in an

infinite web of sound vibration where I could no longer see even this beautiful vision. My last thought before losing awareness of not just the outer world, but also the inner world of vision, was that the forms looked Meso-American. Only years later would I learn of the Mesoamerican concept of kundalini, what they call *Quetzalcoatl*, the Plumed Serpent. The quetzal is a colorful bird of Chiapas and the Mayan symbol for the *kundalini*, and is most often depicted as half bird and half serpent. The Quetzal-kundalini awakens the inner spirit that soars only towards the infinite sky.



Tantra Maya, like Tantra and Taoism, was developed by people who possessed almost nothing and lived in the forests or mountains. I continually find this as a source of inspiration and hope that others can see that there is a great potential to find practical forms of spirituality that aren't products of the historical dialectic, that weren't created for the convenience of empire, or for the comfort of the ruling class, or, in modern times, the pseudo-spiritual market. I don't ask that we all become ascetics like the yogis and taoists, but if they can find bliss with almost nothing, then perhaps those of us who are more "comfortable" can begin to understand what these mystics are speaking about.

Tantra Maya is a synthesis between some esoteric, ancient spiritual practices of the Maya and the classical tantric meditation system of India. Tantra is derived from 2 Sanskrit words, "ta", which means dullness, and "tra", which signifies expansion. Tantra is therefore "expansion from dullness." It is the rational and ethical spiritual practice of using yoga and meditation to expand one's spiritual potential. "Tantra Maya" has a dual meaning. One may interpret "maya" as the spiritual practices of the Mayan people. Although I am personally not well acquainted with the Mayan culture, these occult practices from the jungles and forests of Mesoamerica have been transmitted through lineages for centuries and are remarkably similar to the esoteric practices of asian forms of tantra. While writing about Tantra Maya, I interpret "maya" according to the Sanskrit definition: the divine mystery of how the infinite being hides itself in the finite realm through

each and every being only to eventually desire a return to a state of essential oneness with the infinite consciousness. Tantra Maya is therefore the advanced and experimental study of Tantra as a universal intuitive science as well as a system of Mayan meditation. Over the years I have developed some basic practices of meditation and yoga as a synthesis of these two lineages. In my books I have tried to explain the depths of these tantric philosophies in terms of modern, humanistic psychology.

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The practice of Tantra Maya also involves healing, herbology, and astronomy. They were all one science integrated science. I learned some meditation techniques necessary to merely begin to understand mayan astronomy, which is an intuitive science that requires direct, mystical experience. This requires one to unify one's little microcosmic existence into the Macrocosm, the universe as a whole. This type of mystical experience was very different than what I had previously understood as mysticism. I suppose my ideas were more classical. I always liked the Upanishads, Taoism, and contemplatives like Meister Eckhart, Plotinus and Ramana Maharshi. They represented the peak spiritual knowledge in my opinion. Tantra Maya is a very elevated form of nature mysticism. Its purpose is to understand the pure subjectivity of the inner self, like in classical mysticism, yet at the same time develop a deep connection with the natural creation. One contemplates the spirit within for self-realization while one connects to the subtle realms of nature to work with and serve the living, vibrant Macrocosm.

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