

THE FOUR YOGAS OF



ENLIGHTENMENT

GUIDE TO DON JUAN'S NAGUALISM
& ESOTERIC BUDDHISM

**EDWARD
PLOTKIN**

THE FOUR YOGAS OF ENLIGHTENMENT[®]

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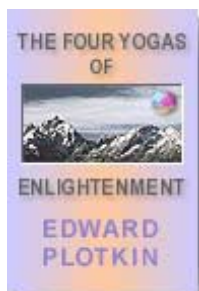
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CHAPTER 1 - THE MASTERY OF AWARENESS

Stopping the World

On a day forever etched in my memory I unexpectedly discovered the extraordinary teachings of the Yaqui Indian seer, don Juan. While looking for something new and interesting to read, I had unknowingly stumbled upon a treasure trove of mystic lore and esoteric knowledge. After a few weeks of studying don Juan's teachings I became mesmerized by the wise old Indian's words. I slowly began to discover that don Juan was a magnificent *warrior* and *man of knowledge*. His mysterious teachings revealed a path to the mastery of awareness. I had been completely unaware that man had access to higher states of consciousness or that a path through the mastery of awareness to enlightened being existed. Having had little or no interest in the subject of altered states of awareness, it seemed unlikely that my personal world and interests were about to profoundly change. During the next few years as I studied don Juan's teachings, as brilliantly expounded in the writings of his disciple Carlos Castaneda, a number of exceptional experiences in non-ordinary reality occurred.

The first of these events involved a radical shift and permanent change in my perception of the nature of time. The significance of this had far reaching effects, and was an incredible impetus for the metamorphosis in consciousness that was about to occur. For if time was not the regular linear expansion that I had always taken for granted, then belief in the absolute nature of my perceived world and personal self was in jeopardy. My experience can best be described as an implosion of awareness wherein the *world had stopped*. As my awareness came to an absolute standstill I noticed that as long as my focus did not move off of absolute center that time had no duration, memory was barely a sliver, and that the universe was arising solely and uniquely as a function of my perception. A tiny shift in the *assemblage*

point of awareness brought with it an expansion of both a perceived historical world and personal self, as well as a heightened realization that the unfolding of these worlds were synchronous with movements away from the absolute center of awareness. The world and self could be *seen* to be arising as modifications in consciousness. Once this *witness-position* is attained in meditative absorption, or *heightened awareness*, these movements of the *assemblage point* of awareness are *seen* to be non-binding modifications in consciousness, and without duration or lasting relationship to the "I" at the center of perception. A seer, or don Juan would *see* this as being the *time of the double*.

Once it has learned to dream the double, the self arrives at this weird crossroad and a moment comes when he realizes that it is the double who dreams the self.

Tales Of Power, Carlos Castaneda

Later, I learned that this event was a glimpse at the first of the four yogas, the one-pointed yoga or cosmic consciousness. This was followed during subsequent years by a series of alterations and expansions running through the range of all of my senses, and a journey in consciousness through each of the four yogas and the psychological formation and integration of the self. My internship in the meditative exploration of time, self, and the very nature of reality itself had begun in earnest.

The various teachings presented in this book have been accessed and assimilated while in meditative absorption, or in don Juan's terminology *heightened awareness*. Learning to *stop the world*, bringing cohesiveness to movements of the assemblage point through *discerning wisdom*, and specifically the transformation from *egoic-self* to *enlightened Being* through the mastery of nondual awareness are the dominant themes of The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment.

"What happens to the persons whose assemblage points loses rigidity?" I asked. "If they're not warriors, they think they're losing their minds."

The Fire From Within, Carlos Castaneda

Meditative Synergies

Meditating on the teachings of different masters and traditions can synergistically enhance *heightened awareness*. With understanding achieved in more than one tradition, cross verification of terms and states of consciousness can be correlated. Without correlation, progress is exceedingly difficult because there is no contrasting point of view with which one can glean the intended meaning, nor a deeper understanding. The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment guides the reader along the meditative path to enlightenment through transcendence of the ego, spiritual awakening, and the stabilization and mastery of transcendental awareness. This book explores enlightenment, the spiritual path to radical sanity and infinite love, in an informal but informed and accessible manner.

While every effort has been made to make The Four Yogas both introductory and progressive, these teachings can be best accessed by average to advanced students of consciousness exploration and expansion. Adi Da, a supremely enlightened Western born avatar, discusses the issue of exercising the discriminative mind in order to realize the transcendental position of awareness in the introduction to *Self-Realization Of Noble Wisdom: The Lankavatara Sutra*:

It is a kind of "Catch 22" literature. You know that the Truth is ultimate transcendence of the discriminative mind, but in order to realize the transcendence of the discriminative mind, you must already have realized the transcendence of the discriminative mind!

Nevertheless, let us assume that we have experienced sufficient transcendence and continue our quest. The undertaking of the transcendence of egoic mind is an awesome but not impossible task. The beginning of enlightenment and the end of self-inflicted neurotic thinking is within the grasp of anyone willing to learn how to still the discursive mind and then study the resultant state with full awareness. In fact, it is not until one has gained sufficient meditative distance from the verbal dimensions of consciousness through meditative silence that one can begin to gauge the neurotic dimensions of egoic mind.

The ideal state to study consciousness is found at the juncture of meditative absorption and discerning awareness, the equivalent to don Juan's *heightened awareness*. The journey towards the mastery of awareness begins by stilling the mind, while single-pointedly stabilizing the assemblage point in *heightened awareness*, thereby *stopping the world*. At this position in awareness consciousness studies consciousness itself, revealing the hidden and ultimate nature of time, self, and reality. The apprentice sorcerer while in *heightened awareness* and having *stopped the world* clearly *sees* the inner luminous path to becoming a seer and man or woman of knowledge.

Inner silence works from the moment you begin to accrue it. The desired result is what the old sorcerers called stopping the world, the moment when everything around us ceases to be what it's been.

It is this moment when man the slave becomes man the free being, capable of feats of perception that defy our linear imagination.

The Active Side Of Infinity, Carlos Castaneda

Reconstructing Enlightenment

The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment presents a reconstruction of the stages of awareness leading to enlightenment and leads the reader progressively away from neurotic self-construction through the union of meditative absorption and discerning awareness. The union of meditative absorption and discerning awareness is a special state of heightened awareness that is explored and clarified in the pages of this book and can be viewed as an achievement in consciousness arrived at and stabilized through continued practice in meditative absorption and simultaneous study of the teachings of master seers.

Although the terminology of various masters may be difficult to access at first, with continued practice clarity is enhanced, and discerning awareness flowers. Many of the passages mentioned herein at first seemed to me to be impenetrable. However, when assimilated over time, magnificent teachings and wondrous states of awareness arced across the sky of mind, and my progress was immeasurably enhanced.

Perhaps those who do not meditate, or have never experienced altered states of reality, may find it difficult to believe that extraordinary states of awareness and the seed of transformative growth are available within consciousness. However not believing, or never having had the experience does not alter the hidden truth. For example, if you do not speak French you would have to study for some time before you could assimilate unfamiliar sounds. However, prior to your understanding, it would not be accurate to deny the existence of meaning within the French language simply because it was not within your current understanding. There are newfound states of consciousness to be grasped, practiced and finally mastered in meditative absorption, and their existence can only be discovered and mastered through our own effort.

I've said that the new seers believed that the assemblage point can be moved from within. They went one step further and maintained that impeccable men need no one to guide them, that by themselves, through saving their energy, they can do everything seers do.

The Fire From Within, Carlos Castaneda

Transcending the Dust of Time and Knowledge

One of the major difficulties the student of *heightened awareness* has is to bring a degree of cohe-

siveness to the newly found factors in consciousness. For the skilled meditator the requisite cohesiveness can be provided by means of consciousness studying consciousness from the perspective of a variety of meditation languages. The next stage is completed when the tonal and the nagual, or the egoic and transcendental aspects of awareness are brought into balance and harmony. Unbending intent coupled with an open and flexible approach to acquiring and assimilating seemingly disparate teachings are key factors in maintaining progress along the inner path to transcendental wisdom.

It is in the final stages of yogic awareness that the egoic mind continues to function and serve the needs of the self in the world, however the egoic mind is no longer in absolute control. The emergent man or woman of knowledge establishes a new way of being as the giver of knowledge, not the keeper; the source of love, not the seeker. The inconceivable transformation-death of old mind, with its endless labyrinth-like soliloquies and false projections, is replaced by transcendental mind. The seed from within has flowered and the path to Self mastery is in view. The guru within, obscured until now by egoic mind, can proceed along the stages of yogic awareness and development.

My recognition of the necessity of a book organizing and clarifying these teachings came about as I wrestled with understanding yogic knowledge and altered states of awareness. However, it soon became apparent that not only is progress slow and difficult to achieve, it is perhaps even more difficult to speak or write about states of consciousness that are beyond the ordinary realms of language. I realized that I required either a personal guru or a means of enhancing my understanding through expanded effort. A relationship with a guru never materialized and other and perhaps more powerful means of continuing my education appeared. In retrospect it seems that when each stage of my development in consciousness exploration stabilized a new and more powerful teaching became available.

During the mid-eighties the exiled Tibetans began to disseminate the written teachings of the great sages of Tibetan Buddhism. The translation of these extraordinary teachings into English was another serendipitous occurrence for me. Just as I had reached some major impasses in my studies of don Juan's lessons many marvelous Tibetan Buddhist teachings texts became available. Of particular interest were texts illuminating both the gradual and instantaneous path instructions of realized sages. These teachings revealed a cohesive knowledge and systematic path leading to the attainment of a radically quiescent mind, and instructive guidance for *seeing* and analyzing the true and apparent nature of consciousness and reality. I could *see* striking parallels with the teachings of don Juan, and realized that I had once again found lessons in the way of the warrior embodying Self-realized qualities such as fearlessness, serenity, wisdom, and compassion.

Contemplate the three planes of existence [past, present, and future] as being of mental origin, since they are designated by the mind. By analyzing the mind, the meditator examines the essence of things.

The first Bhavanakrama

"Was it something I will see in the future?" I asked. "There's no future!" he exclaimed cuttingly. "The future is only a way of talking. For a sorcerer there is only the here and now."

Tales Of Power, Carlos Castaneda

The Mastery of Transcendental Awareness

The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment illuminates the sublimely transcendental stages of awareness of Tibetan Buddhism. In contrast with Buddhism, I examine the way of the warrior, and the mastery of luminous awareness as elaborated in the writings of Carlos Castaneda. I have also drawn upon and revealed the mystic teachings of the nondual awareness school of Kashmir Shaivism. In my final

chapters I correlate the most advanced, esoteric, and incomparable states of samadhic awareness of the Western avatar and living Buddhist master, Adi Da, with the quintessence of don Juan's Nagualism and Chinese and Tibetan Buddhism.

Until The Ajna Door Is Fully Opened (or Otherwise Fully Transcended By Native Identification With The Witness-Position Of Consciousness), It Is Truly, the Ajna Knot.

The Dawn Horse Testament, Adi Da

The Discipline In the First Stage Of Perfect Practice Is To Stand As Witness-Consciousness. Second Deep Contemplation Consciousness and Identification With Itself.

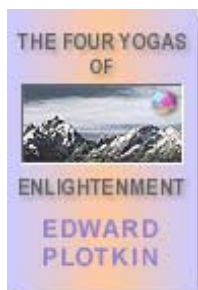
The Dawn Horse Testament, Adi Da

That which we in the West consider to be completed adult development, is considered by both Eastern and Western masters in consciousness to be a state of arrested development. This samadhi in four yogas illuminates the stages of awareness leading to enlightenment through comparative analysis and progressive meditative exploration. The transformation in consciousness which occurs is nothing less than a mystical encounter with the spirit, relinquishment of the traditional egoic self, and metamorphosis into a flexible, highly adapted man or woman of knowledge and numinous being. In the final part of Carlos Castaneda's *Tales Of Power*, don Juan, just prior to revealing the *sorcerers' explanation* to his disciple Carlos, prefaces his discussion with these sage comments:

Personal power decides who can or cannot profit by a revelation; my experiences with my fellow men have proven to me that very, very few of them would be willing to listen; and of those few who listen even fewer would be willing to act on what they have listened to; and of those who are willing to act even fewer have enough personal power to profit by their acts.

Sieze your cubic centimeter of chance with The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment. Continue the journey towards incomparable knowledge and Self mastery.

Begin the journey towards enlightenment



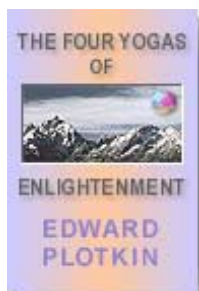
The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment, the next step in learning to stop the world
Begin the journey towards incredible knowledge and Self mastery
with the Guide To don Juan's Nagualism & Esoteric Buddhism

Table of contents, bibliography, recommended reading list, fully indexed.

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The Four Yogas Reader Reviews

Students of Adi Da Samraj, Hubert Benoit, Tibetan Buddhism (Dzogchen and Mahamudra), Zen Buddhism, Carlos Castaneda, Lama Surya Das, Paramahansa Hariharananda, Carl Jung, Bokar Rinpoche, Jigme Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche, Don Agustin Rivas, Scientology, Chögyam Trungpa, Ken Wilber, Siddha Yoga (nondual Shaivism), Tensegrity

I am thoroughly enjoying the book you have written, particularly those aspects dealing directly with the sorcery techniques of don Juan and their correlation to other esoteric methods. It is of course the techniques of don Juan I am interested in.

I have flirted with other esoteric methods, but it was the force, directness, beauty and profound simplicity of Castaneda's works which 'hooked' me if you will. There is a muscularity and manliness to don Juan's way of life which I have never sensed in the eastern esoteric methods (the obvious exception of course being the martial arts).

For many years now I have tried to integrate don Juan's teachings into my life, but your work has been expanding my intellectual appreciation of these teachings in relation to other esoteric methods.

Thank you.

George B. Shaw <istr1655@fox.nstn.ca>
Toronto, Canada

Extract from East Meets West - Towards a Global Mysticism, by Judy Kennedy.

Dion Fortune: Some day there will come an American who will pick up the ancient Maya contacts, adapt them to modern needs, and express their forces in an initiatory ritual which shall be valid for the civilization to which he belongs.

Judy Kennedy: I've thought long and hard about what she says there, and the first thing that immediately came to mind was the works of Carlos Castaneda. In the past few decades, much research and analysis has gone into his books; perhaps the most revealing being the work of Edward Plotkin, who has documented the similarities between the complex teachings of the Yaqui sorcerer, Don Juan, and the more esoteric tenets of Tibetan Buddhism, such as Tantra and Dzogchen.

Judy Kennedy <waywardmuse@waywardmuse.com>
Mesa, Arizona

I enjoyed visiting your website and found what you had to say in your book about Carlos Castaneda, Buddhism, and Adi Da to be fascinating and perceptive.

I have attended the public workshops now being given by Carlos Castaneda himself under the auspices of Cleargreen Inc. of Santa Monica, California, and what he teaches there works well together with your book to prove what you have accomplished.

Leigh Goldstein
Los Angeles, California

Thank you for the great work that you put into The Four Yogas. I'm halfway through, taking it slowly.

What I most appreciate about the work that you have offered is your broad spectrum exposure to vantage from. Although I have been a student of the works of Carlos Castaneda for about 10 years now, having read and re-read the series several times, I am more involved with it in mind than in actual transformative practice.

Your writings and exposure to other masters is now spurring me into action, into practice of meditation, into realizing what I mostly know about only intellectually, what I have been longing for but not sober enough to do.

Thank you again,
Paul Huff
Rainier, Washington

I'm the editor at the Hans-Nietsch-Verlag and just read your book, The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment. To say the least I'm impressed.

Norbert Classen
Editor in Chief
Hans-Nietsch-Verlag, Germany

Norbert Classen is the author of Carlos Castaneda und Das Vermächtnis des Don Juan (Carlos Castaneda and The Legacy of Juan).

Hans-Nietsch-Verlag is the publisher of the German edition of The Five Books Of The Adidam Revelation by Adi Da Samraj.

Edward Plotkin

First of all I just want to congratulate you on a superb book, beautifully written. Such a refreshing change, writing that is specific and truthful, as opposed to some of those nebulous books out there that never really do it for me!

In the last couple of days, I have noticed a change in my meditation. My mind is making less effort to interfere with my focus, and I have reached a point of consciousness yesterday that I don't think I have ever been to. I was very calm and did not have to make an effort to concentrate.

Your wonderful book provides me with inspiration everyday. Thank you so much.

Peter Apps
Sao Paulo, Brazil (April 2000)

It happened for the first time today, that experience that it says in your book when you are in a state of complete clarity...like a bird flying across the sky¹. It felt like I was on the crest of a wave, perfectly balanced not needing to affirm that things are arising, but just knowing in an effortless way. It is so simple! Why does it take so long to get to this place of natural mind?

It is like each feeling or sensation, or thought that arrives gets dissolved by the emptiness. I am amazed at how incredible it feels to be in that place, I am afraid that I won't get there again!! Is this the beginning of the one pointed yoga, and it is just a question of continuing and practice?

Many, many thanks for your replies.

Peter Apps
Sao Paulo, Brazil (February 2002)

¹ Maintain trackless consciousness, like a bird flying across the sky.¹ Meditation by the great Tibetan sage and teacher Gampopa for maintaining the unmodulated, natural state of mind.

The purpose of this meditation is to maintain undistracted mindfulness while remaining aware of the non-dual nature of consciousness. By stabilizing the mind in tranquil absorption, while simultaneously studying the abiding nature of mind, we can embark upon the path of self-realization.

Direct experience of this state will lead to the first or one-pointed yoga, which is designated as a single pointed awareness of the mind's essential nature. The meditator will have gained insight into the simplicity of consciousness, which while manifesting itself uninterruptedly is detached from transitory thoughts.

Edward Plotkin

¹ The Four Yogas, Ch. 11, p. 127. Gampopa (1079-1153), Tibetan Kagyü lineage

I feel a deep sense of gratitude. Because of your book, which I'm reading again, and through our email conversations, I am experiencing such an exciting desire to get on with it, to engage the true work that opens through meditation. I find myself taking moments otherwise engaged in thinking or reading to get still and observe.

I have read so many books about the transcendental and have experimented with some power plants that cause a shift in the assemblage point, and through that have been in this place of wonderful timeless stillness that I have called Ground Zero¹; where even my breathing stops and everything is just suspended, just present awareness. My soul has longed for something that I could never quite put my finger on. I've gone to different gurus, teachers and channels and stayed with these only for brief periods because the people and the rituals, the dogma that surround these for the most part seem counter productive.

So my gratitude is that something is now Clear. It is for your straight talk. For your courage to walk this path and then talk about it to us. Again, for your willingness to be in communication and the sense of you as a real person in real time, knowing the freedom to break the bonds of person and time.

In Love - Respect & Gratitude,
Paul Huff
Rainier, Washington

¹ The shift in the assemblage point experienced with entheogens (psychoactive power plants, i.e. marijuana, peyote, etc.) is awesome and temporary. It may awaken the soul to an unspecified longing, the place where 'everything is just suspended'.

This is the position of the assemblage point where don Juan noted the world stops. Over time, as the apprentice becomes more proficient in meditative absorption, attention stabilizes at center, Paul Huff's Ground Zero. Eventually, without relying on entheogens, the awakened meditator effortlessly resides in

meditative absorption, the samadhi of the nonmeditation yoga.

Don Juan instructed his apprentices from a position of the assemblage point he referred to as heightened awareness, the equivalent to meditative absorption. In one of the most delightful of Castaneda's books, *La Gorda* and Carlos Castaneda consider seeing the luminous mold of man:

“Did you ever see the mold, Gorda?” I asked. “Sure, when I became complete again.The Nagual (don Juan) said that sometimes if we have enough personal power we can catch a glimpse of the mold even though we are not sorcerers; when that happens we say that we have seen God. He said that if we call it God it is the truth. The mold is God.”

The Second Ring of Power, Carlos Castaneda

Having stopped the world, the apprentice studies consciousness itself, aided by the enlightened songs of master seers. As the mysteries of awareness unravel the nature of the soul's longing is resolved in the emergence of the Spirit. From the witness-position in consciousness it is *seen* that the self is a dream arising in consciousness, and that the true nature of consciousness is the Divine Self of God.

Edward Plotkin

en-theo-gen [literally - God within; God or spirit facilitating] a psychoactive sacramental substance; a plant or chemical derivative taken to effect religious experience.

I began studying Tibetan Buddhism just a few years ago. I am certain the timing is just right for your arrival on the scene to help integrate the teachings of don Juan with the teachings I have gained during the past 7 years. I left my teacher relationship in July, '99. How good it feels to have that open space filled with something really wonderful.

I like the clarity of your writing. With certain books, I have the feeling of an 'over voice' speaking. It is as if I am reading the words, yet a voice is speaking in an energy way that puts me on full alert. The 'over voice' is not saying the same as the written words. The 'over voice' carries the deeper meaning or intent of the words, and it moves into my mind/body in a very different way¹ than books that do not carry this 'over voice'. The Four Yogas carries this 'over voice'.

I am so thankful to you for your journey, and for your writing of your book.

Teresa Ramsey
Dayton, Ohio

¹ Carlos Castaneda experienced this heightened awareness when in the presence of the Nagual don Juan. The Nagual's blow to the assemblage point, and especially teachings delivered from the transcendental position of awareness have this extraordinary effect. The Four Yogas empowers this shift in awareness. The emergence of the 'double' or 'witness-consciousness' is a prelude to the development of fearlessness, serenity, wisdom, and ultimate enlightenment.

Tranquility and insight are the essential requirements. Tranquil absorption is the foundation for insight into the nature of mind and ultimate reality. When thought projections are cleared the mind becomes stable and immobile. Just as salt dissolves in water, the mind dissolves into its intrinsic nature.

Edward Plotkin

Your book is great. I really want to achieve my dream. Please, let me know if this book is available in the Russian language.

Thank you very much.

Natasha Tsibulskaya
Portland, Oregon

I have completed retreats with Bokar Rinpoche (dharma heir to Kalu Rinpoche¹) and Lama Surya Das (Western Dzogchen teacher²), and meditate in the very hierarchical, but profoundly intelligent Shambhala Dharmadhatu path³ (Chögyam Trungpa legacy and sangha⁴). Your book is an extraordinary exegesis, and series of signposts in content and meaning. Thank you for your book.

Joel Puleo
Medical College of Wisconsin
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

¹A master of meditation practice in the Nyingma Dzogchen and Kagyü Mahamudra tradition, Kalu Rinpoche (1905-1989) taught extensively in America and Europe. During his three visits to the West, Kalu Rinpoche founded teaching centers in over a dozen countries. Mahamudra is an advanced doctrine and practice of the Kagyüpa order of Tibetan Buddhism, and a foundation teaching presented in *The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment*.

²Dzogchen (The Great Perfection) is the consummate practice of the Nyingma lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, and an exceptional path towards the fully awakened state of enlightenment.

³The Shambhala tradition teaches activities that 'awaken' the meditator through mindfulness practices. The three gates of Shambhala are: Dharmadhatu, for the study of traditional Buddhism; Shambhala Training, which empowers a fully lived life through the awakening of discerning wisdom; and Nalanda, a contemplative approach and discipline that explores relating to the world as it is.

⁴ Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939-1987) was a Tibetan Buddhist Kagyü meditation master. Chögyam Trungpa published six books (including *Shambhala: The Sacred Path of the Warrior*), established three meditation centres and a contemplative university, Naropa Institute.

The lineage of *The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment* book is the Nagualism of don Juan, Kashmir Shaivist nondualism, Tibetan Nyingma Dzogchen and Kagyü Mahamudra meditation, and the nondual Buddhism of Adi Da Samraj.

Edward Plotkin

I am finding *The Four Yogas* to be of considerable value, being very familiar with the concepts presented. I have practiced Vajrayana¹ at the Feet of a completely unknown western born Master (female) since 1974. I am also very well versed in the works of Adi Da and Castaneda, so for me the book is a wonderful summation and source of reference for all those aspects of my own Practice.

Joshua Rosslee <joshua@hixnet.co.za.>
Johannesburg, South Africa

¹Vajrayana or 'indestructible vehicle' training generally places emphasis on the master-student relationship. Perfected in Tibet, Vajrayana is based on transmission and empowerment.

For further thoughts on the teachings of Adi Da, see this site; Ken Wilber discusses *The Dawn Horse Testament* of Adi Da Samraj, with Edward Plotkin commentary.

Edward Plotkin

Thank you for making a significant contribution to the understanding of the Great Tradition of religion as a unified legacy of mankind.

Let me announce where my prejudices lies: as a devotee of Sri Bhagavan Adi Da, my practice is centered on Ishta-Guru-Bhakti Yoga, or devotion to my most beloved guru.

Nevertheless, I feel I can recommend your text quite highly to those not prepared for submission to a guru.

Best wishes, and keep me informed of your future works.

Louis Nelson <Lnelson@Op.net>
Paoli, Pennsylvania

I want you to know that your book has moved me forward significantly, it is in line with my own work and personal growth. I thank you from the depth of my heart. If ever I may be of service to you let me know.

Garry Isenstadt <eaglesgift@aol.com>
La Jolla, California

Your work is extraordinary. I am astounded by its clarity. I found you because of Hubert Benoit (The Supreme Doctrine: Psychological encounters in Zen thought). He has long been a 'mentor' of mine. I had been floundering in my own process, trying to organize the profusion of material and processes.

'You don't have to reinvent the wheel' the inner voice said. Then, I got a 'hit' that I was supposed to look up Benoit's name on the internet...and there you were. I cannot begin to tell you what a pleasure your book is bringing me. It is the next step I very much needed...a map of the myriad things I had accumulated and confirmation of much of the process.

I feel very privileged to have the opportunity to study The Four Yogas...and to make it part of my own process.

Judith Timmons
Pensacola, Florida

A few weeks ago I bought a copy of The Four Yogas. Prior to stumbling onto this I had over the past few years read parts of books on Buddhism and a few articles on Zen in particular. By chance I also came across three of Castaneda's books - A Yaqui Way of Knowledge, A Separate Reality, and Journey to Ixtlan. Buddhism, which has become my religion, I could understand at least superficially, but don Juan's teachings seemed like an impossible riddle, and I never saw the connection between these two philosophies.

When reading Castaneda I thought I was either too stupid to comprehend it, or this was a load of bullshit from a whacked out hippie spacehead. Thanks to you I now realize that it wasn't like that at all. I'm not stupid and don Juan was simply brilliant. I have now arrived at chapter five of The Four Yogas (I try to read it slowly and carefully, and I don't have much time for it because of university studies) and I have been served one revelation after another. I realize now that my reason for not being able to comprehend don Juan's cryptic lectures, was that his apparatus of terms differs so fundamentally from that of both eastern and western philosophy.

Furthermore, I have found several links to western philosophers in your text. Among others I see Kant, Hegel and Husserl's thoughts between the lines. The difference of course being that they lacked the knowledge of meditation (or not-doing). You're probably aware of these similarities, but I thought I'd mention it just in case. I'm running short of time here, so I'll cut the rest short: Thanks a lot for opening my eyes, The Four Yogas book has been worth every penny.

Yours with gratitude,
 Christer Dehlin <christer.dehlin@hfstud.uio.no>
 University of Oslo, Norway

Ed- I've finished reading The Four Yogas of Enlightenment. I want to take a moment and express my gratitude.

Little bit of history. Over the past 5 - 6 years (maybe even longer), I have been unable to embrace the union of emptiness with physical reality. I could not explain this to anyone! I was beginning to think I was dysfunctional in relationships. Every time I would get close to someone, my projection onto them, of my 'stain of emptiness' frightened me tremendously. It was my sure death! I could not explain what was going on. I finally gave up!

I understood 'nothingness' conceptually and intellectually. I am a Ken Wilber fan. But this fear was overwhelming, unbearable and stuffed deep down into my subconscious. I really didn't want to face its reality. Well, anyway, I really connected with your description of this deep terror. It has been a very frustrating and gradual process in releasing and understanding this intense emotion.

I stumbled onto your book at the right time. I don't think I could have consciously integrated what was happening to me without your book. Your book allowed me to step into a process of understanding the void with appreciation.

Once again, thank you.

Elijah DeRoche
 Boise, Idaho

I am actively engrossed in exploring consciousness, and my projections within. I have been a student of Ken Wilber's The Spectrum Of Consciousness¹ since it's publication. I have already learned from your book, just from reading from a different angle/perspective, which is exactly what you stated in the very beginning of your book.² I look forward to the continued study of the knowledge that your book contains.

Michael Wheaton
 Kopolei, Hawaii

¹ Ken Wilber's book presents a synthesis of Eastern and Western paths to enlightenment, a tour de force in the mapping of transcendental awareness.

² Meditative awareness is synergistically enhanced through exploration of the teachings of different masters and traditions. With an understanding achieved in more than one tradition, cross verification of terms and states of consciousness can be correlated. Without correlation, progress is exceedingly difficult because there is no contrasting point of view with which one can glean an intended meaning nor a deeper understanding.

Edward Plotkin

I have just opened your book and I have already found it more than I expected it to be. I had noticed the similarity between the teachings of Tibetan Yoga/Buddhism and Nagualism and was searching for Tibetan Buddhist information on the net when I came upon your site. I was first impressed with your site design: elegant and to the point. Now I see that your book is very valuable, or can be, to anyone who decides to take awareness seriously.

Thank you.

Charles deWinter <dewinter@montrose.net>
Telluride, Colorado

I am on the spiritual path for more than 30 years now. I started with an initiation into Kriya yoga by Paramahansa Hariharananda, went on with 10 years work of Bagwan (Osho), then Tibetan Buddhism (Kagyü lineage by Jigme Rinpoche), followed by an initiation into shamanism by Don Agustin Rivas from Peru, who works with ayahuasca. The energy I got contact with on the latter was so strong that my assemblage point broke loose, and it took me 3 month to stabilize a new cohesion of my world perception. I feel near to formlessness, but have not manifested it in total until now.

My chakras are floating free, except a block of energy over my head. I am solo auditing on OT 2, but I am not in the Scientology church, but the technique to handle stuck flows is incredible. I also do Tensegrity, since I have studied Castaneda for about 25 years now. I have had some glimpses about the totality of self (Tonal-Nagual, Samsara-Nirvana, the physical universe - the beyond) but I have the sharp realization, that I have not yet reached it.

Ingo
Vienna, Austria

Until one can effortlessly attain and maintain the witness-position in consciousness (the non-meditation yoga or moksha-bhava samadhi), it will seem to the meditator that there is something left to be reached.

Ayahuasca, marijuana, peyote, and other mind altering substances, shift the assemblage point away from its customary position, the self or ego. Once the shift away from self is accomplished, awareness often feels ecstatic in its newfound liberation. Of course, when the effect of the substance wears off the meditator is once again confronted with the self. If the meditator is unable to attain the witness position in meditative awareness, he/she will remain entrained in whatever state arises. Substituting one illusory state, the ego, for another, the mind altered drug induced state, will not be resolved into the freedom of awareness of enlightenment. The cycle of drug induced apparent liberation may result in habituation unless shamanic or yogic intervention takes place.

Once the warrior has sufficient personal power to stop the world (savakalpa samadhi) in yogic or meditative awareness, the self is seen as a nondual, illusory, nonbinding projection in consciousness, and entrainment in the 'self' is severed. With further practice a turning about in the seat of consciousness occurs, and enlightenment is permanent.

From the fourth yoga, the nonmeditation yoga, or moksha-bhava samadhi, it is seen that there is nothing to attain or reach. Consciousness configures the dream of being in a field of appearance and emptiness. Ultimately and eternally consciousness precedes matter. There is no 'out there' beyond consciousness. You are Always and Already.....the One

1.
Jesus said to them,
 "When you make the two into one,
 when you make the inner like the outer
 and the outer like the inner,
 and the upper like the lower,
 when you make male into female into a single one,
 so that the male will not be male
 and the female will not be female,
 when you make eyes replacing an eye,
 a hand replacing a hand,
 and an image replacing an image,
 then you will enter the kingdom."

The Secret Teachings Of Jesus:
 Four Gnostic Gospels, Marvin Meyer

2.
Jesus said:
 On that day you will realize,
 that I am in my Father,
 and you are in me,
 and I am in you.

John 14:20

3.
 By perfecting this nonmeditation stage
 The meditator attains naked, unsupported
 awareness.
 This nondiscriminatory awareness is the
 meditation!
 By transcending the duality of meditation and
 meditator,
 External and internal realities,
 The meditating awareness dissolves itself
 Into luminous clarity.
 Transcending the intellect,
 It is without the duality of equipoise and
 postequipoise.
 Such is the quintessence of mind.

Phagdru Dorje Gyalpo,
 Tibetan Kagyü lineage

4.
 I Am The Secret Of The Heart
 I Am The Heart Itself, Revealed.
 What You Must Realize Is This: I Am You!
 I Am The Heart Itself, Revealed To You,
 and To Be As You.

The Dawn Horse Testament: The Testament
 of Secrets of the Divine World-Teacher and
 True Heart-Master,
 Avatar Adi Da Samraj

I highly recommend Ed's technique's and writing. He is as concise as possible for the topics, and there is much there directly or tangentially related to what we are involved in/with/near/around...

Ed posts on and off, but his balance and content is so sublime and welcome. :)

....he is quite knowledgeable about energy flow from more than one discipline.

Ed has balance without truncation, a rare act, indeed. :)

don Pequeño, Houston, Texas
 donpequeno@aol.com to alt.dreams.castaneda newsgroup

I love the book, and that's a real compliment because I'm a writer and picky, picky, picky. Very clear and mysterious at the same time. Lovely. You've been a great help already. Synthesis is one of my favorite things.

Patricia Donovan <pdonovan@buffalo.edu>
Senior Editor/Humanities, Architecture, Education
University at Buffalo

I have just begun to read your book, and I just find it wonderful. I will keep you informed about the result.

Gilberto F. Bicalho <gilbert@rio.com.br>
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

.....posted in honor of Ed Plotkin, whose insight and guidance in matters of perception have been invaluable to me, and in the true spirit of nagualism.

Carlos Grau
matus1@concentric.net to alt.dreams.castaneda newsgroup

This is one of the best books I've read in years. It clearly transpires both your academic research work, and what is more important even your personal involvement and experience. In the past I have worked hard on Castaneda's books and I entirely agree with your treatment of his work and your cross-correlation of terms.

Piero.Cinguino@cse.lt.stet.it
Torino, Italy

I have been a student of Siddha Yoga for 10 years. In my early college experience I was an anthropology student and studied Carlos Castaneda works. As a therapist for 13 years, I resonate with Jungian theory in many ways.

As a seeker, I have dabbled in many areas, trying on this one and that one; not unlike many modern day explorers. However, it often troubles me that there is so much information out there, it is so easy to become confused. (One of my life lessons no doubt) I have been trying to find the golden thread that ties it together.

Thank you once again,
Harriet Cianci
Terryville, Connecticut

I now have the book and it's excellent. I'm very pleased to read how you state the don Juan material in terms of the 4 yogas - it's really a new perspective for me. Especially helpful to understand 'seeing' better (and to acknowledge that I've actually had the experience of 'seeing' myself and can recognize it, even if I don't 'see' all the time.) Same for what you write re the assemblage point. I've been dazzled by the 'special effects' of the Castaneda books, and did not understand these teachings quite this way. Also interesting and new for me - how you present the ally. When all this sinks in a little more I'll write some on it and ask some questions.

I feel I'm understanding what you're saying in term of Padmasambhava's book on listening in the Bardo!... The 4 yogas are what the Dhyani Buddhas and their respective consorts are about - Vajrassattva, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi. The book throws much light on this process, and I feel encouraged that I can make use of this 'map' to navigate my own crossing over...to stalk enlightenment. It's beginning to seem more doable.

Thank you for your help, and for the tremendous book. I'm glad to know I'm not the only one who sees that what Buddhism and don Juan are talking about are not completely different things.

Aida Rodriguez-Parnas <aparnas@fclass.net>
St. Louis, Missouri

The Five Dhyani (meditation) Buddhas...Vairochana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha, and Amoghasiddhi, visualized during meditation embody five transcendental wisdoms. The Bardo Thodol, known as the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and attributed to Padmasambhava, guides the aspirant towards these transcendental wisdoms, and the resultant spiritual transformation and enlightened consciousness.

Edward Plotkin

I am enjoying your book very much, and meditating on The Four Yogas everyday to deepen my insight.

Thank you and best wishes.

Klaus Wieben
Melbourne, Australia

.....a quick comment, here: I've studied The Four Yogas of Enlightenment and enjoyed it immensely! Some really hard work went into that document;this is top-rate!

Mark Seven Smith
mviismith@aol.com to alt.dreams.castaneda newsgroup

Thanks a lot for everything; The Four Yogas, and your timely correspondence. I carry a copy of the text in my book bag to work daily. I believe I told you before that many of the traditions that you have represented were a part of my own personal study, and you've seemingly lifted each of the major ones (especially don Juan's Nagualism...which is usually where other people get off the boat) and focused on them, highlighting their similarities. For this effort, I am truly grateful---if, for no other reason, only for the kinship of souls who refuse to discriminate the teaching for the teacher.

Bless you and your efforts.

Phillip Hale
Detroit, Michigan

Just a note to let you know I'm reading your book in more detail now and find it even better than I did at first. It's interesting that it begins about where my own book ends. Further, if I had your vocabulary, I'd be dangerous.

Scott Smith <kimmerjohn@aol.com>
Lewisville, Texas

Whenever I think of you, or take your book into my hands, there's a lot of power coming through. I can feel that you really made it. Will follow this path in spite of all reactions. Am slowly grasping the idea that I have to be a source instead of the seeker.

Bernd Schaefer <Cenninah@wolfsburg.de>
Velpke, Germany

I visited your site and like it very much. First let me compliment you on your page design. You've found a way to make frames work for you so that it enhances the surfing experience. Not an easy task I'd say based on some sites I've visited. I like the notebook motif.

But more importantly, I like your spiritual approach. I have enjoyed a few don Juan books, dabbled in Siddha Yoga and found something special in Buddhism without seeing any of those paths excluding the others. I agree with your valuing of cross verification. If wise men in the Mexican desert and in Tibet come up with the same truths there must be something there.

Tom Barrett
Interlude: An Internet Retreat

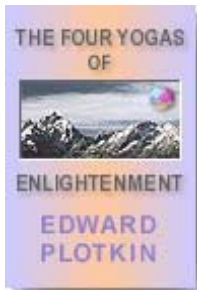
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Please include comments that you would like to share with other readers from around the world who have been meditating on The Four Yogas.

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I look forward to hearing from you, and thank you for your participation in raising the worldwide banner of enlightened awareness

Begin the journey towards enlightenment



The Four Yogas Of Enlightenment, the next step in learning to stop the world

Begin the journey towards incredible knowledge and Self mastery with the Guide To don Juan's Nagualism & Esoteric Buddhism

Table of contents, bibliography, recommended reading list, fully indexed.

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Edward Plotkin, Madison NJ

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