

Centering Practices:

112 ways to open the invisible door of consciousness.

Transcribed by Paul Repts.
From Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*

Zen is nothing new, neither is it anything old. Long before Buddha was born the search was on in India, as the present work shows.

Long after man has forgotten such words as Zen and Buddha, satori and koan, China and Japan and America - still the search will go on, still Zen will be seen even in flower, and grass-blade, before the sun.

The following is adapted from the preface to the first version in English of this ancient work.

Wandering in the ineffable beauty of Kashmir, above Srinagar I come upon the hermitage of Lakshmanjoo.

It overlooks green rice fields, the garden, of Shalimar and Nishat Bagh, lakes fringed with lotus. Water streams down from a mountaintop.

Here Lakshmanjoo - tall, full bodied, shining - welcomes me. He shares with me this ancient teaching from the Vigyan Bhairava and Sochanda Tantra, both written about four thousand years ago, and from Malini Vijaya Tantra, probably another thousand years older yet. It is an ancient teaching, copied and recopied countless times, and from it Lakshmanjoo has made the beginning of an English version. I transcribe it eleven more times to get it into the form given here.

Shiva first chanted it to his consort Devi in a language of love we have yet to learn. It is about the Immanent experience. It presents 112 ways to open the invisible door of consciousness. I see Lakshmanjoo gives his life to its practicing.

Some of the ways may appear redundant, yet each differs from any other. Some may seem simple, yet any one requires constant dedication even to test it.

Machines, ledgers, dancers, athletes balance. Just as centering or balance augments various skills, so it may awareness. As an experiment, try standing equally on both feet; then imagine you are shifting your balance slightly from foot to foot: just as balance centers, do you.

If we are conscious in part, this implies more inclusive consciousness. Have you a hand? Yes. That you know without doubt. But until asked the question were you cognizant of the hand apart?

Surely men as inspiritors, known and unknown to the world, have shared a common uncommon discovery. The Tao of Lao-tse, Nirvana of Buddha, Jehovah of Moses, the Father of Jesus, the Allah of Mohammed — all point to the experience.

No-thing-ness, spirit - once touched, the whole life clears.

DEVI SAYS:

O Shiva, what is your reality?
What is this wonder-filled universe?
What constitutes seed?
Who centers the universal wheel?
What is this life beyond form pervading forms?
How may we enter it fully, above space and
time, names and descriptions?
Let my doubts be cleared!

SHIVA REPLIES

[Devi, though already enlightened, has asked the foregoing questions so others through the universe might receive Shiva's instructions. Now follow Shiva's reply, giving the 112 ways.]

1. Radiant one, this experience may dawn between two breaths. After breath comes in (down) and just before turning up (out) — *the beneficence*.
2. As breath turns from down to up, and again as breath curves from up to down— through both these turns, *realize*.
3. Or, whenever inbreath and outbreath fuse, at this instant touch the energyless energy-filled *center*.
4. Or, when breath is all out (up) and stopped of itself, or all in (down) and stopped—in such universal pause, one's small self *vanishes*. This is difficult only for the impure.
5. Consider your essence as light rays rising from center to center up the vertebrae, and so rises *livingness* in you.
6. Or in the spaces between, feel this as *lightning*.
7. Devi, imagine the Sanskrit letters in these honey-filled foci of awareness, first as letters, then more subtly as sounds, then as most subtle feeling. Then, leaving them aside, be *free*.

8. Attention between eyebrows, let mind be before thought. Let form fill with breath-essence to the top of the head, and there *shower as light*.
9. Or, imagine the five-colored circles of the peacock tail to be your five senses in illimitable space. Now let their beauty melt within. Similarly, at any point in space or on a wall — until the point *dissolves*. Then your wish for another comes true.
10. Eyes closed, see your inner being in detail. Thus *see* your true nature.
11. Place your whole attention in the nerve, delicate as the lotus thread, in the center of your spinal column. In such *be transformed*.
12. Closing the seven openings of the head with your hands, a space between your eyes becomes *all-inclusive*.
13. Touching eyeballs as a feather, lightness between them *opens into heart* and there permeates the cosmos.
14. Bathe in the center of sound, as in the continuous sound of a waterfall. Or, by putting fingers in ears, hear *the sound of sounds*.
15. Intone a sound, as *a-u-m*, slowly. As sound enters soundfulness, *so do you*.
16. In the beginning and gradual refinement of the sound of any letter, *awake*.
17. While listening to stringed instruments, hear their composite central sound; thus *omnipresence*.
18. Intone a sound audibly, then less and less audibly as feeling deepens into this *silent harmony*.
19. Imagine spirit simultaneously within and around you until the entire universe *spiritualizes*.
20. Kind Devi, enter etheric *presence* pervading far above and below your form.
21. Put mindstuff in such inexpressible fineness above, below, and *in your heart*.
22. Consider any area of your present form as *limitlessly spacious*.
23. Feel your substance, bones, flesh, blood, saturated with *cosmic essence*.
24. Suppose your passive form to be an empty room with walls of skin - *empty*.
25. Blessed one, as senses are absorbed in heart, reach the *center* of the lotus.

26. Unminding mind, keep in the middle - *until*.
27. When in worldly activity, keep attentive between the two breaths, and so practicing, in a few days be born *anew*. [Lakshmanjoo says this is his favorite.]
28. Focus on fire rising through your form from the toes up until the body burns to ashes *but not you*.
29. Meditate on the make-believe world as burning to ashes, and become *being above human*.
30. Feel the fine qualities of creativity permeating your breasts and assuming *delicate configurations*.
31. With intangible breath in center of forehead, as this reaches heart at the moment of sleep, have direction over dreams and *over death itself*.
32. As, subjectively, letters flow into words and words into sentences, and as, objectively, circles flow into worlds and worlds into principles, find at last these converging *in our being*.
33. Gracious one, play the universe is an empty shell wherein your mind frolics *infinitely*.
34. Look upon a bowl without seeing the sides or the material. In a few moments *become aware*.
35. Abide in some place *endlessly spacious*, clear of trees, hills, habitations. Thence comes the end of mind pressures.
36. Sweet-hearted one, meditate on knowing and not knowing, existing and not existing. Then leave both aside that you may *be*.
37. Look lovingly on some object Do not go on to another object. Here, in the middle of this object — *the blessing*.
38. Feel cosmos as *translucent ever-living presence*.
39. With utmost devotion, center on the two junctions of breath and know the *knower*.
40. Consider the plenum to be your own *body of bliss*.
41. While being caressed, sweet princess, enter *the caressing* as everlasting life.
42. Stop the doors of senses when feeling the creeping of an ant. *Then*.

43. At the start of sexual union, keep attention on the fire *in the beginning*, and, so continuing, avoid the embers in the end.
44. When in such embrace your senses are shaken as leaves, *enter this shaking*.
45. Even remembering union, without the embrace, *the transformation*.
46. On joyously seeing a long-absent friend, *permeate this joy*.
47. When eating or drinking, become the taste of the food or drink, and *be filled*.
48. O lotus-eyed one, sweet of touch, when singing, seeing, tasting, be aware you are and *discover the ever-living*.
49. Wherever satisfaction is found, in whatever act, *actualize this*.
50. At the point of sleep when sleep has not yet come and external wakefulness vanishes, at this point *being* is revealed. [Lakshmanjoo says this is another of his favorites.]
51. In summer when you see the entire sky endlessly clear, *enter such clarity*.
52. Lie down as dead. Enraged in wrath, stay so. Or stare without moving an eyelash. Or suck something and *become the sucking*.
53. Without support for feet or hands, sit only on buttocks. Suddenly, *the centering*.
54. In an easy position, gradually pervade an area between the armpits *into great peace*.
55. See *as if for the first time* a beautiful person or an ordinary object.
56. With mouth slightly open, keep mind in the middle of tongue. Or, as breath comes silently in, feel the sound HH.
57. When on a bed or a seat, let yourself become *weightless*, beyond mind.
58. In a moving vehicle, by rhythmically swaying, *experience*. Or in a still vehicle, by letting yourself swing in slowing invisible circles.
59. Simply by looking into the blue sky beyond clouds, *the serenity*.
60. Shakti, see all space as if already absorbed in your own head *in the brilliance*.
61. Waking, sleeping, dreaming, know you as *light*.
62. In rain during a black night, enter that *blackness* as the form of forms.

63. When a moonless raining night is not present, close eyes and find blackness before you. Opening eyes, *see blackness*. So faults disappear forever.
64. Just as you have the impulse to do something, *stop*.
65. Center on the sound *a-u-m* without any *a* or *m*
66. Silently intone a word ending in AH. Then in the HH effortlessly, *the spontaneity*.
67. Feel yourself as *pervading* all directions, far, near.
68. Pierce some part of your nectar-filled form with a pin, and gently enter *the piercing*.
69. Feel: My thought, I-ness, internal organs—*me*.
70. Illusions deceive. Colors circumscribe. Even divisibles are *indivisible*.
71. When some desire comes, consider it. Then, suddenly, *quit it*.
72. Before desire and before knowing, how can I say I am? Consider. Dissolve in the *beauty*.
73. With your entire consciousness in the very start of desire, of knowing, *know*.
74. O Shakti, each particular perception is limited, disappearing *in omnipotence*.
75. In truth forms are inseparate. Inseparate are omnipresent being and your own form. Realize each as made of this *consciousness*.
76. In moods of extreme desire, be *undisturbed*.
77. This so-called universe appears as a juggling, a picture show. To be happy look upon it *so*.
78. O Beloved, put attention neither on pleasure or pain but *between these*.
79. Toss attachment for body aside, realizing *I am everywhere*. One who is everywhere is joyous.
80. Objects and desires exist in me as in others. So accepting, let them be *translated*.
81. The appreciation of objects and subjects is the same for an enlightened as for an unenlightened person. The former has one greatness: he remains *in the subjective mood*, not lost in things.

82. Feel the consciousness of each person as your own consciousness. So, leaving aside concern for self, *become each being*.
83. Thinking no thing, will limited-self *unlimit*.
84. *Believe omniscient, omnipotent, pervading*.
85. As waves come with water and flames with fire, so the universal waves *with us*.
86. Roam about until exhausted and then, dropping to the ground, in this dropping *be whole*.
87. Suppose you are gradually being deprived of strength or of knowledge. At the instant of deprivation, *transcend*.
88. Listen while the ultimate mystical teaching is imparted: Eyes still, without winking, at once become *absolutely free*.
89. Stopping ears by pressing and rectum by contracting, enter the *sound of sound*.
90. At the edge of a deep well look steadily into its depths until — *the wondrousness*.
91. Wherever your mind is wandering, internally or externally at this very place, *this*.
92. When vividly aware through some particular sense, keep in *the awareness*.
93. At the start of sneezing, during fright, in anxiety, above a chasm, flying in battle, in extreme curiosity, at the beginning of hunger, at the end of hunger, be uninterruptedly *aware*.
94. Let attention be at a place where you are seeing some past happening, and even your form, having lost its present characteristics, *is transformed*.
95. Look upon some object, then slowly withdraw your sight from it, then slowly withdraw your thought from it. *Then*.
96. Devotion *frees*.
97. Feel an object before you. Feel the absence of all other objects but this one. Then, leaving aside the object-feeling and the absence-feeling, *realize*.
98. The purity of other teachings is as impurity to us. In reality know *nothing* as pure or impure.
99. This consciousness exists as each being, *and nothing else exists*.

100. Be the *unsame same* to friend as to stranger, in honor and dishonor.
101. When a mood against someone or for someone arises, do not place it on the person in question, but *remain centered*.
102. Suppose you contemplate something beyond perception, beyond grasping, beyond not being, *you*.
103. Enter space, *supportless, eternal, still*.
104. Wherever your attention alights, at this very point, *experience*.
105. Enter the sound of your name and, through this sound, *all sounds*.
106. I am existing. This is mine. This is this. O Beloved, even in such know *illimitably*.
107. This consciousness is the spirit of guidance of each one. *Be this one*.
108. Here is a sphere of change, change, change. Through change *consume change*.
109. As a hen mothers her chicks, mother particular knowings, particular doings, *in reality*.
110. Since, in truth, bondage and freedom are relative, these words are only for those terrified with the universe. This universe is a reflection of minds. As you see many suns in water *from one sun*, so see bondage and liberation.
111. Each thing is perceived through knowing. The self shines in space through knowing. *Perceive one being* as knower and known.
112. Beloved, at this moment let mind, knowing, breath, form, *be included*.