

NeoTantra Versus the Core Essence of Taoist Sacred Sexuality.
By Saida Désilets, PhD

“It is very important for people to understand exactly what is available and not be confused that NeoTantra has anything necessarily to do with traditional classical Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain Tantra.”¹

“A plethora of books exist on the topic and I am tempted to say most, but not all, are rubbish.”²

“My concern with NeoTantra revolves around the way it is marketed and what it promises. A number of misconceptions are propagated by many of these groups.”³

The modern day practice of NeoTantra and traditional Taoist training both address sacred sexuality, yet they are not of the same nature and intention. What is NeoTantra and traditional Taoist training? How does NeoTantra differ from ancient Taoist practices of sacred sexuality? How does lineage play a role with NeoTantra and traditional Taoist practice? Can a depth of understanding and practice be obtained through a self-study program and dedicated practice or must one train with a specific teacher for a number of years? Does NeoTantra

¹ Dr. Jonn Mumford, <http://www.llewellynjournal.com/print.php?id=360>

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have a place in modern society? How can couples find balance in an intimate practice? And what are some of the approaches to dual energy exchange for individuals who have done their own personal practice?

What is NeoTantra and Traditional Taoist training? "NeoTantra aka "Sacred Sex": This is the bulk of teaching and the most abundant. A lot of it is directly inspired by Rajneesh and follows his model of combining Pop Psychology and Western perception, or interpretation, of "Tantric Sexuality."⁴ NeoTantra is a title assigned to both kindergarden Tantra and kindergarden Tao. As the title implies, this expression of sacred sexuality teachings just barely scratches the surface a vast and ancient path wherein a practitioner would learn specific meditations towards total self-transformation. Traditional Taoist and Tantric training had their practices passed down through protected lineages wherein sacred sexual energy was one small component of a much greater picture.

How does NeoTantra differ from ancient Taoist practices of sacred sexuality?

"The bulk of Tantric teachings emanating from India have little to do with sexuality and much more to do with experiencing the reality of Shakti and Shiva through very serious meditation practices."⁵ One significant difference between NeoTantra and ancient Taoist practices lies in the education. With NeoTantra, education can be as short as an hour intensive or perhaps a weekend seminar. In more traditional lineages required acceptance into a system followed by

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training over a period of many years. Mandatory were many hours of practice alone and with highly qualified teachers who lived these practices as a lifestyle instead of a momentary experience.

NeoTantric education focuses mainly on sex, with a few rituals and OM's and nothing more. It tends to be a very superficial training, with experiencing immediate sexual gratification as its selling feature. Traditional Taoist training is more holistic, involving first harmonizing and opening the body's energy channels and cultivating the body-mind-spirit connection. There are a few immediate and exhilarating results, however the focus is more on developing a lifestyle from the practice; living with an integrated mind/body/spirit connection, and full vitality.

Both NeoTantra and Traditional Taoist practices offer means to identify core energies and teach how to direct them through breath and visualization. The Neotantra seminars do not have the time or attention span to completely identify and work with these energies. A brief introduction to the different energy centers is given along with basic meditative breathing techniques. Traditional Taoist training shares this knowledge slowly, using one lesson to build on another. The practitioner would not be given the next piece until they had sufficiently practiced what they already received and demonstrated some level of mastery in each of the practices. Initiation or energy transmission from a master is more common in traditional training and virtually impossible for modern NeoTantric teachers to genuinely perform.

“When the mind is agitated, it overflows with thoughts and feelings, reacts to everything, and often overreacts, causing the life-force to become scattered.”⁶

The modern mind’s ability to assimilate incredible amounts of information has the setback of very short attention spans or what is known by Taoists as poor ‘Y’ power. This ‘Y’ power is the ability to focus and concentrate, thus meditate on a subject for prolonged periods of time. Without this ability in place, most of the practices are only superficially felt.

“All systems of meditation aim to quiet the mind and nurture the spirit”.⁷ Having a clear mind and open body that can safely identify different qualities of energy and then circulate and cultivate these energies is the goal of a Traditional Taoist practitioner. True masters of the Taoist practices do not seek fame or disciples, instead it is their intention to impart practical knowledge that empowers the individual to blossom into self-mastery.

“There are no ultimate masters or gurus in Taoism because we become our own masters, capable of controlling our own destinies and knowing who we really are as we explore the marvelous powers hidden with the Tao of humanity.”⁸ Self-mastery is almost unheard of within the context of NeoTantra. “One could look at NeoTantra almost as though westerners suddenly became interested in being an Olympic athlete, yet were not willing to train to get there. So a NeoTantra teacher

⁶ Page 57, Awaken Healing Light of the Tao, Mantak & Maneewan Chia

⁷ Page 57, Awaken Healing Light of the Tao, Mantak & Maneewan Chia

⁸ Page 2, Awaken Healing Light of the Tao, Mantak & Maneewan Chia

would be like a coach saying, 'don't worry, just do this and that and you will have the gold medal.'⁹ This is not a realistically sound argument.

How does lineage play a role with NeoTantra and Traditional Taoist practice?

“For thousands of years, political, philosophical, and religious cliques monopolized the key to decoding the book’s (Su Nu Ching) classical calligraphic text.”¹⁰ Though Neotantra is not based on authentic ancient lineage it does make its information available to all who desire to explore it. This was not the case with traditional Taoist lineages. Most of the sexual practices were kept secret and reserved only for royalty or those who were born into the lineage. The modern resurgence of these Taoist practices was released with some apprehension of possible misuse and misunderstanding. Thus making it important to investigate the authenticity of the teacher and their teachings, and understanding the quality difference between a NeoTantric teacher and an authentic Taoist practitioner.

To the extent where experts are desired to provide proper medical assistance, proper psychotherapy, and proper physical training and nutrition, why would a person not seek an expert in the field of sacred sexual energy cultivation? The issue with inaccurate information often found in NeoTantric courses cause problems for the practitioner. For one, revitalizing of the body with orgasmic or aroused energy is not considered part of Neotantric classes. This results in

⁹ Interview with Saida Desilets, http://www.rainmother.com/archive/saida_interview.html

¹⁰ Page 12, The Tao of Sexology, by Dr. Stephen T. Chang

ecstatic practitioners that burn out and perhaps suffer undue physical and mental problems related to unrefined energy stagnated in the brain. Secondly, the ability to condense and store the energy safely is also missing from NeoTantra training, yet is of utmost importance in Traditional Taoist training for the maintenance of vitality and well-being. Furthermore, providing greater understanding of why sexual energy is so powerful and why one would choose to cultivate it in a conscious way is literally left out of NeoTantric classes. Instead of the practitioners deepening their understanding, they just add to more of their own confusion about sex. “Moreover, in the absence of a traditional lineage, there is little accountability regarding authenticity of information.”¹¹

Can a depth of understanding and practice be obtained through a self-study program and dedicated practice or must one train with a specific teacher for a number of years? “There are many desperate people out there who think spiritual experiences can be obtained for a few dollars.”¹² In a world that believes in the ‘you get what you pay for’ mentality, it is difficult to understand the viewpoint from the traditional training that payment is often in the form of doing the actual practices. Furthermore, in Traditional Taoist training, the student studies both within group situations and private coaching as well as has many hours of assigned self-study. This format develops a person initiative and their ability to relate to others.

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¹² Dr. Jonn Mumford, <http://www.llewellynjournal.com/print.php?id=360>

Solo training and research enables a person to develop both discipline and their own unique ideas about their chosen path. It invites them to sit with what is 'real' for them instead of trying to be like the teacher or everyone else within a group. Time alone in sacred intent allows access and understanding of ones greatest potential, one's self-mastery and self-reliance.

"Sometimes we can feel alone in the world and in our perceptions of it, by sharing with another who has had similar perceptions we can start to see that separation is more a figment of the imagination."¹³ Having a resource such as a teacher can be invaluable when exploring new territory. Exchanging information with fellow practitioners also encourages a person to open up to different ways of perceiving the same information. Thus teachers, fellow practitioners and one's own internal guidance all play important and supportive parts to Taoist living.

"Another is the development of ego: if alone we can often feel like 'we have it' when in reality we don't. There is no one there to challenge us or invite us to challenge ourselves even more "¹⁴ The weakness of self-study is seen when a person learns only from books or tapes and never seeks out another who has walked the same path. There is great wisdom to be learned from experienced teachers as well as the ability to have an external feedback that prevents possible self-disillusion as well as encouragement and helpful insights while progressing in the understanding of this ancient art.

¹³ Interview with Saida Desilets, http://www.rainmother.com/archive/saida_interview.html

¹⁴ Interview with Saida Desilets, http://www.rainmother.com/archive/saida_interview.html

“However, there is a risk in group to exclude those who are not in the group or 'initiated', to look down on others who are not on the same path.”¹⁵ This sort of behavior is seen not only in the pursuit of self-realization, but in all avenues of human endeavor. When ‘clique’ behavior is noticeable it may be to the students advantage to separate from the group and apply what they have learned during solo cultivation. At time teachers or gurus may even command loyalty and service from this student even when they have outlived their usefulness for the student. It would be to the students’ great benefit to seek another teacher or time alone. A healthy balance of giving and receiving, alone and with others will ensure the true success of any practitioner.

Does NeoTantra have a place in modern society? “Notwithstanding this I have to add that "NeoTantra" and "Sacred Sex" are here to stay and much good can come from these movements in America in terms of divinization of sexuality.”¹⁶ Perhaps NeoTantra’s greatest contribution to modern society is the reintroduction of the idea of sacred sexuality. Though not very high in quality, the very fact that these ancient practices have kindled an interest in western populations is a significant breakthrough. Many people, both singles and couples, will highly benefit from this increased awareness and availability of sacred sexual teachings. Learning to cultivate what Traditional Taoist revere as priceless, the sexual chi, not only improves one’s sex life but also serves to have an overall

¹⁵ Interview with Saida Desilets, http://www.rainmother.com/archive/saida_interview.html

¹⁶ Dr. Jonn Mumford, <http://www.llewellynjournal.com/print.php?id=360>

benefit to physical, emotional and mental health and spiritual awareness.

How can couples find balance in an intimate practice? “The easiest way for couples to stay in balance is to balance themselves first.”¹⁷ Solo cultivation practices are not as popular as dual cultivation practices within the NeoTantric movement, yet they are an essential beginning within traditional Taoist training. By individuals caring for themselves, rebalancing themselves and building deeper intimacy within, they will have greater riches to offer their partner. Fully understanding ones essential nature provides solid ground for dancing with the other ‘mysterious’ sex.

“The Taoists knew that these differences in male and female sexuality are the cause of much discontent in the bedroom, and they sought to harmonize male and female sexuality.”¹⁸ Men and women have different energy when it comes to sexuality. Men tend to be more hot (YANG) and ready to ‘go’ at the drop of a hat. Women tend to be colder (YIN) and need more care and attention to stoke their inner fire. When couples learn how these energies work and how to harmonize them, they have greater chance of creating beautiful and harmonious sexual union.

Once the difference in energy is understood, the couple can progress from solo-

¹⁷ Interview with Saida Desilets, http://www.rainmother.com/archive/saida_interview.html

¹⁸ Page 94, The multi-orgasmic couple, by Mantak & Maneewan Chia, Douglas & Rachel Abrams, M.D.

cultivation to dual-cultivation practice. In dual cultivation couples learn both how to be more ecstatic together and how to help each other heal and develop on all levels of their consciousness. "If one is out of balance then there are two options: 1) meditate together with the intention to enable the unbalanced person come back to center, 2) meditate apart and the unbalanced person spends time alone returning to their center."¹⁹ This way the individual within a couple takes responsibility for themselves and for sharing only of the highest virtues with their partner.

"...as our desires waxes and wanes with the cycles of family, work and health, it is important to learn how to accommodate our sexual relationship without feelings of mistrust or betrayal."²⁰ Occasionally within long-term relationship sexual passion seems to diminish with passing time. Neotantra relies on this phenomenon as a selling feature for its promises of better, juicer sex. In traditional Taoist understanding, however, this phenomenon is recognized as the neutralization of the Yin and Yang energies. Through a simple process of having the couple invests more time in their solo-cultivation, the polarity or magnetism that was once neutralized is re-stimulated. Men return with more presence (yang) and women with more succulence (yin) and once again the fire of passion is ignited. The same wisdom is not just for heterosexual couples, but same sex couples can also work with the energies of Yin and Yang to create more juice in

¹⁹ Interview with Saida Desilets, http://www.rainmother.com/archive/saida_interview.html

²⁰ Page 94, The multi-orgasmic couple, by Mantak & Maneewan Chia, Douglas & Rachel Abrams, M.D.

their connection. Unfortunately modern couples do not have the awareness or training to understand this simple energetic occurrence and hence our high percentage of unhappy and broken relationships.

And what are some of the approaches to dual energy exchange for individuals who have done their own personal practice? “In Soul-Mating you actually exchange energy with your partner. This experience is profoundly intimate and can lead to a feeling of union and oneness...”²¹ The simplest way in traditional Taoist practices to exchange energy is through the process of sending and receiving chi through certain open channels in each person (‘Soul-Mating’). “This balance generates a cycle of harmony, creativity, and spirituality – or True Love.”²²

Sacred sexuality is more than the attractive NeoTantric ideas of exciting and ecstatic sex. Taoist sacred sexuality is the art of cultivating sexual energy and harmonizing it with other energies in the body to improve health, vitality, intimacy and spiritual evolution. However due to Neotantra’s mainstream popularity it opened the door for ancient wisdom of traditional Taoist practices. In this way they both serve modern society, one to perk the interest of the common person and the other to provide rich, vast and well-founded training in the ancient art of sacred sexual energy cultivation.

²¹ Page 167, The multi-orgasmic couple, by Mantak & Maneewan Chia, Douglas & Rachel Abrams, M.D.

²² Page 157, The Tao of Sexology, by Dr. Stephen T. Chang

