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Interview with Carol Tiggs, Taisha Abelar, and Florinda Donner-Grau.

by Concha Labarta

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All the answers were given by Carol Tiggs, Taisha Abelar and Florinda Donner-Grau.

You were, along with Carlos Castaneda, students of don Juan Matus and his sorcerer cohorts. However, you remained in anonymity for years, and it was not until recently that you decided to speak about your own apprenticeship with don Juan. Why this long silence? And what's the reason for this change?

First of all, we would like to clarify that each one of us met the man Carlos Castaneda calls the nagual don Juan Matus under a different name: Melchior Yaoquizque, John Michael Abelar and Mariano Aureliano. To avoid confusion, we always call him the old nagual; not old in the sense of old age but in the sense of seniority, and above all, to differentiate him from the new nagual, Carlos Castaneda. Discussing our apprenticeship with the old nagual wasn't at all part of the task he conceived for us. That's why we remained in absolute anonymity. The return of Carol Tiggs in 1985 marked a total change in our goals and aspirations. She was traditionally in charge of guiding us through something which, for modern man, could be translated as space and time, but which, for the shamans of ancient Mexico, meant awareness. They conceived a journey through something they called the dark sea of awareness. Traditionally, Carol Tiggs' role was to guide us to make that crossing. When she returned, she automatically transformed the **insular** goal of our private journey into something more **far-reaching**. That's why we decided to end our anonymity and teach the magical passes of the shamans of ancient Mexico.

Was the instruction you received from don Juan similar to that of Carlos Castaneda? If it wasn't, what were the differences? How would each of you describe don Juan and his male and female cohorts?

The instruction given to us was not at all similar to that given to Carlos Castaneda for the simple reason that we are women. We have organs that men don't have: the ovaries and the uterus, organs of tremendous importance. The old nagual's instruction for us consisted of pure action. Regarding the description of the old nagual's male and female cohorts, all we can say at this moment in our lives is that they were **exceptional** beings. To talk about them as people of the everyday world would be inane for us at this time. The least we can say is that all of them, and they were sixteen including the old nagual, were in a state of **exquisite** vitality and youth. They were all old and yet at the same time, they weren't. When, out of curiosity and amazement, we asked the old nagual what was the reason for their **exorbitant** vigor, he told us that what **rejuvenated** them every step of the way was their link with infinity.

While many modern psychological and sociological trends advocate putting an end to the distance between the masculine and the feminine, we have read in your books that there are notable differences between men and women in the way they each access knowledge. Could you elucidate on this subject? How are you, and your experiences as female sorcerers, different from those of Carlos Castaneda?

The difference between male and female sorcerers in the lineage of the old nagual is the simplest thing in the world. Like every other woman in the world, we have a womb. We have different organs from men: the uterus and the ovaries, which, according to sorcerers, make it easy for women to enter into exotic areas of awareness. According to sorcerers, there is a colossal force in the universe; a constant, perennial force which fluctuates but which doesn't change. They call this force awareness or the dark sea of awareness. Sorcerers assert that all living beings are attached to this force. They call this point of union the assemblage point. Sorcerers maintain that, due to the presence of the womb inside the body, women have the facility to displace the assemblage point to a new position. We would like to emphasize that sorcerers believe that the assemblage point of every human being is located in the same place; three feet behind the shoulder blades. When sorcerers see human beings as energy, they perceive this point as a conglomerate of energy fields in the form of a luminous ball.

Sorcerers say that since the male sexual organs are outside the body, men don't have the same facility. Therefore, it would be absurd for sorcerers to try to erase or cloud these energetic differences. Regarding the behavior of male and female sorcerers in the social order, it is almost the same. The energetic difference makes the practitioners, men and women, behave in different ways. In the case of sorcerers, these differences are **complementary**. The female sorcerers' great

facility to displace the assemblage point serves as a base for male sorcerers' actions, which are characterized by greater endurance and more unyielding purpose.

We also have read in your books that Florinda Donner-Grau and Taisha Abelar each represent a different category in the world of shamanism. One of you is a dreamer and the other a stalker. These are attractive and exotic terms but many people use them indiscriminately and interpret them in their own way. What's the real significance of such classifications? When it comes to action, what are the implications for Florinda Donner-Grau to be a dreamer and for Taisha Abelar to be a stalker?

Once again, as in the preceding question, the difference is very simple because it is dictated by each of our energies. Florinda Donner-Grau is a dreamer because she has an extraordinary facility to displace the assemblage point. According to sorcerers, when the assemblage point, which is our point of attachment to the dark sea of awareness, is displaced, a new conglomerate of energy fields is assembled, a conglomerate similar to the habitual one, but different enough to guarantee the perception of another world which is not the world of everyday life. The gift of Taisha Abelar as a stalker is her facility to fix the assemblage point in the new position to which it has been displaced. Without this facility to fix the assemblage point, the perception of another world is too fleeting; something very similar to the effect produced by certain hallucinogenic drugs: a profusion of images without rhyme or reason. Sorcerers believe that the effect of hallucinogenic drugs is to displace the assemblage point, but only in a very chaotic and temporary manner.

In your most recent books, *Being-In-Dreaming* and *The Sorcerers' Crossing*, you talk about personal experiences that are difficult to accept. Accessing other worlds, traveling into the unknown, making contact with inorganic beings, are all experiences which challenge reason. The temptation is either not to believe such accounts at all, or to consider you as beings that are beyond good and evil, beings that are not touched by sickness, old age or death. What 抰he everyday reality for a female sorcerer? And how does living in chronological time fit with living in magical time?

Your question, Miss Labarta, is too abstract and farfetched. Please forgive our frankness. We are not intellectual beings and are not in any way capable of taking part in exercises in which the intellect engages words which in reality don't have any meaning. None of us, under any agreement, are beyond good and evil, sickness, or old age. What happened to us was that we were convinced, by the old nagual, that there are two categories of human beings. The great majority of us are beings which sorcerers call (in a pejorative manner, we would add) "the immortal ones." The other category is the category of beings that are going to die. The old nagual told us that, like immortal beings, we never take death as a point of reference, and we therefore allow ourselves the inconceivable luxury of living our entire lives involved in words, descriptions, polemics, agreements and disagreements. The other category is the category of sorcerers, of beings that are going to die, who cannot, at any time and or under any circumstances, allow themselves the luxury of making intellectual assertions. If we are anything, we are beings without any importance. And if we have anything, it is our conviction that we are beings that are going to die and that someday, we will have to face infinity. Our preparation is the simplest thing in the world: we prepare ourselves twenty-four hours a day to face this encounter with infinity. The old nagual succeeded in erasing in us our confounded idea of immortality and our indifference to life, and he convinced us that, as beings that are going to die, we can enlarge our options in life. Sorcerers maintain that human beings are magical beings, capable of stupendous actions and accomplishments once they rid themselves of ideologies that turn them into ordinary human beings. Our accounts are, in reality, phenomenological descriptions of feats of perception that are available to all of us, especially to women, feats that are bypassed due to our habit of self-reflection. Sorcerers assert that the only thing that exists for us human beings, is Me, ME, and only ME. Under such conditions, the only thing possible is whatever concerns Me. And by definition whatever concerns Me, the personal I, can lead only to anger and resentment.

Carlos Castaneda is the new nagual. What's the meaning of this for you as women, as well as for your female cohorts? Is it impossible for a woman to be a nagual?

All this means for us is that Carlos Castaneda is our counselor, our lawyer who knows where to sign documents related to infinity. He's our legal counselor in questions regarding infinity. Certainly a woman could do the same thing but, as sorcerers say, if you can do it lying in your bed, why get up? To be a counselor of this kind is a real nuisance. The old nagual used to joke about this, saying that being a nagual is the equivalent to being a servant. "Damn it James, go to the kitchen and bring me the salt. I'm too tired to get up." And, of course, James has to get up, go the

kitchen, and bring the salt.

The physical presence of a teacher may not be **indispensable** but, in any case, it is of great help. You received direct instruction from don Juan and his cohorts to guide you into the world of shamanism. Do you really think that that world is accessible to anyone, even when they don't have a personal teacher?

In a way, the insistence on having a teacher is an aberration. The idea of the old nagual was that he was helping us to break away from the dominion of the Me. With his jokes, and his terrifying sense of humor, he succeeded in making us laugh at ourselves. In this sense, we firmly believe that change is possible for anyone, a change similar to ours, for example, by practicing Tensegrity, without the need for a particular and personal teacher. The old nagual wasn't interested in teaching his knowledge. He was never a teacher or a guru. He couldn't have cared less about being one. The old nagual was interested in perpetuating his lineage. If he guided us personally, it was to **inculcate** in us all the premises of sorcery that would allow us to continue his lineage. He expected that someday, it would be our turn to do the same. Circumstances outside of our volition, or his, conspired to prevent the continuation of his lineage. In view of the fact that we cannot carry out the traditional function of continuing a sorceric lineage, we want to make this knowledge available. Since the Tensegrity practitioners are not called upon to perpetuate any shamanistic lineage, they have the possibility of accomplishing what we have accomplished, but via a different path.

The possibility of an alternative form of death is one of the most striking points of don Juan Matus' teachings. According to what you have told us, he and his group attained that alternative death. What is your own interpretation of their disappearance, when they transformed themselves into awareness?

This may seem like a simple question, but it is very difficult to answer. We are practitioners of the teachings of the old nagual. It appears to us that, with your question, you are soliciting a psychological justification, an explanation equivalent to the explanations of modern science. Unfortunately we cannot give you an explanation outside of what we are. The old nagual and his cohorts died an alternative death, which is possible for any one of us, if we have the necessary discipline. All we can tell you is that the old nagual and his people lived life professionally, meaning that they were responsible for all their acts, even the most minute ones, because they were extremely aware of everything they did. Under such conditions, to die an alternative death is not such a farfetched possibility.

Do you feel ready to face the last jump? What do you expect in that universe, which you regard as impersonal, cold and predatorial?

What we expect is an endless fight and the possibility of witnessing infinity, either for a second or for five billion years.

Some readers of Carlos Castaneda's literary works have **reproached** him for the lack of a bigger spiritual presence in his books, for never having used words like "love." Is the world of a warrior really that cold? Don't you feel human emotions? Or do you perhaps give a different meaning to those emotions?

Yes, we give them a different meaning, and we don't use words like "love" or "spirituality" because the old nagual convinced us that they are empty concepts. Not love or spirituality themselves, but the use of these two words. His line of argument was as follows: if we really consider ourselves immortal beings who can afford the luxury of living amongst gigantic contradictions and endless selfishness; if all that counts for us is immediate **gratification**, how can we make love or spirituality something authentic? For the old nagual these concepts were **manque**, **lifeless**, words that nobody is prepared to back up. He said that every time we are confronted with these contradictions, we solve them by saying that, as human beings, we are weak. The old nagual told us that, as a general rule, we human beings were never taught to love. We were taught only to feel **gratifying** emotions, pertinent exclusively to the personal Me. Infinity is **sublime** and without pity, he said, and there's no room for fallacious concepts, no matter how pleasant they may seem to us.

It seems that the key to expanding our capabilities for perception lies in the amount of energy we have at our disposal, and that the energetic condition of modern man is very **meager**. What would be the essential premise for storing energy? Is this possible for someone who has to take care of a family, go to work every day, and participate fully in the social world? And what about celibacy as a way of saving energy, one of the most **controversial** points in your books?

Celibacy is recommended, the old nagual told us, for the majority of us. Not for moral reasons, but because we don't have enough energy. He made us see how the majority of us have been

conceived in the midst of marital boredom. As a pragmatic sorcerer, the old nagual maintained that conception is something of final importance. He said that if the mother wasn't able to have an orgasm at the moment of conception, the result was something he called "a bored conception." There is no energy under such conditions. The old nagual recommended celibacy for those who have been conceived under such circumstances. Another thing he recommended as a means of storing energy was the dissolution of patterns of behavior that lead to chaos, such as the incessant preoccupation with romantic courtship; the presentation and defense of the self in everyday life; excessive routines and, above all, the tremendous insistence on the concerns of the self. If these points are achieved, any one of us can have the necessary energy to use time, space and the social order more intelligently.

The magical passes of Tensegrity, which you consider to be of great importance, are your most recent contribution to those interested in don Juan Matus' world. What can Tensegrity bring to those who practice it? Can this be equated with any other physical discipline, or does it have its own characteristics?

What Tensegrity brings to those who practice it is energy. The difference between Tensegrity and any other system of physical exercises is that the intent of Tensegrity is something dictated by the shamans of ancient Mexico. This intent is the liberation of the being that is going to die.

What are the motives for spreading your knowledge on a major scale through public seminars? Do you consider this kind of approach, which implies the use of commercial means and large gatherings, to be really effective for someone seeking to achieve individual change?

The great contribution of a large mass of practitioners has been quite a surprise to us. The old nagual never spoke to us about such a thing because he never had the opportunity to witness it. Human mass is what gives Tensegrity a common purpose and spurs the practitioners individually to achievements that we would ordinarily say were impossible within the time frame of the seminars.

You have asserted that you are the end of don Juan's lineage and that you are doing new things that were never done by the shamans who preceded you. Maybe the purists will reproach you for not being faithful to the original teachings. To what extent have you departed from your shamanic tradition as it was taught to you by don Juan? And what is the new direction of your work?

We haven't deviated in any way from the teaching of the old nagual. He gave us the task of closing his lineage with a golden clasp and that is what we are trying to do. For us, the seminars are the only way to approach you and keep your attention. Carlos Castaneda taught Tensegrity for ten years to those who approached him. He gave lectures and lessons to those who requested them and the only thing he accomplished was to provide vocabulary for individuals who made careers out of exploiting Carlos Castaneda.

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