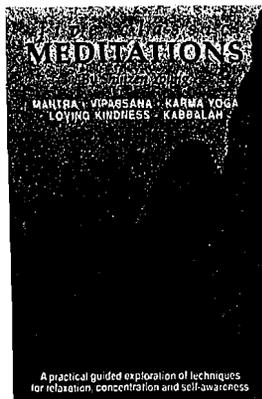


Audiotape Review

by Charles T. Tart



Five Classic Meditations

by Shinzen Young

Audio Renaissance Tapes; 1989

60 minutes, audiotape

To order see page 45.

Readers of the *Review* will recall reading (Noetic Sciences *Review*, Autumn 1988) excerpts of a stimulating conversation between

Shinzen Young and me on the practice of meditation¹ and other mindfulness techniques. Shinzen Young is an American who studied classical meditation practices in the East for many years before beginning to teach in the Los Angeles area. I have always been impressed by the depth of his understanding and consider him one of the leading pioneers in adapting the vital essence of meditative practice to contemporary Westerners.

Five Classic Meditations is an excellent series of guided meditations for those who want to practice, rather than just think about, meditation. After general instructions applicable to most forms of meditation, Shinzen guides the listener through classic concentrative meditation in the form of mantra (special sound) meditation and then into traditional mindfulness (Vipassana) meditation where we learn to objectively observe and flow with the natural processes of mind and body instead of psychologically freezing around them.

1. The full dialogue appears in Chapter 25 of *Open Mind, Discriminating Mind: Reflections on Human Possibilities*, C. Tart (Harper and Row, 1989). To order see page 45.

Concentrative and *mindfulness* meditations are the foundations of classic Buddhist practice and are found in some form in almost all the great spiritual traditions. They can produce an increased ability to focus that applies in all areas of life, not just formal meditation, and increased insight into and understanding of all our life. These instructions alone, with Shinzen's excellent guidance, would be sufficient to call this an excellent tape. Yet there are three other guided meditations to further flesh out the spectrum of meditation.

The third is *metta*, a meditation on loving kindness, which infuses a vital human warmth into life and practice which might otherwise be too "cool" and detached. The fourth is *karma yoga*, which further integrates meditative practice with the rest of life by showing how your daily activities can lead to concentration and insight. This direction is strengthened in the fifth meditation from the Jewish *Kabbalah* tradition on accepting and integrating the forces of the flow of life in and around us.

If you are a beginner to meditative practice, this tape will get you off to a good start in a way a book alone cannot. If you are already accomplished in meditation, you will appreciate the knowledge and caring that come through in Shinzen's guidance and probably want to give this tape to friends who are just starting.

Charles Tart is a Fellow of the Institute.

Update: Conscious Living, Conscious Dying Project

Helen Ansley's proposal for a "Last Resort", as reported in the Spring *Noetic Sciences Bulletin*, has materialized into an eighteen-month exploratory project called Conscious Living/Conscious Dying. Its principals are Helen Ansley and Susannah Arnold, who are being assisted by the Institute of Noetic Sciences in getting it organized.

The purpose of the project is to explore innovative ideas on conscious living and dying, including Helen Ansley's ideas on setting up an "Ultimate Finishing School", "A Way Out Inn", where she can live while she explores the way to die "with style".

The ideas will be disseminated many ways, including a videotape and a book by Helen which the Institute will publish in the fall. Both will be distributed through the Institute's order service. An announcement will be forthcoming.