

Dreamscapes-The Spirit of Things-Radio National, 2001

www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/spiritofthings/dreamscapes/3491176#transcript

Transcript

We are such stuff as dreams are made of.

Hello, I'm Rachael Kohn and this is Dreamscapes on The Spirit of Things, Radio National.

SONG - 'In Dreams', Roy Orbison

Rachael Kohn: All of us have them, but dreams are filled with mystery. Today we'll explore three different approaches to dreams. They all have in common the view that dreams contain spiritual truths, but each of my guests differs in the use to which they put this knowledge.

A Jungian depth psychologist, Barbara Davies, uses dreams as a key to mental health. A Tibetan doctor, Nida Chenagtsang, uses dreams to diagnose illnesses. And an Australian, who's been trained by the Pitjantjatjara people of central Australia for 20 years in the shamanic arts, Greg Snowdon, uses trances and dreams to get in touch with the fourth dimension.

SONG

Rachael Kohn: It's been said that if any one person was responsible for the New Age movement, it was the psychologist, Carl Gustav Jung. Why? Because of his special focus on dreams, not merely as a blueprint of individual neuroses, but dreams as the connection to a larger spiritual inheritance, the Collective Unconscious. In fact next week we'll be exploring Jung's relationship to the New Age movement with David Tacey, who's just published a book on it. But here, we'll take Jung's dream focus as our starting point.

According to Jung, dreams, like fables and scriptural texts, can harbour truths that are not necessarily apparent to the untrained eye. Swiss born Barbara Davies is an analyst who trained with one of Jung's close associates, Marie Louise von Franz, in Zurich, the home of Jungian psychology. She was in Australia to conduct a dreams workshop.

Barbara, you're in Australia to give among other things, a dream workshop. Now there are a lot of people out there claiming to be dream interpreters, but your approach to this is through the work of Carl Jung. Why are dreams so important in the Jungian perspective?

Barbara Davies: Dreams are very important in the sense that actually they do not give us something which is to our advantage, that really they correspond to who we are truly.

Rachael Kohn: So they actually reveal something about ourselves that we don't necessarily know?

Barbara Davies: Precisely, yes, that's exactly what they do.

Rachael Kohn: Now I guess in Jungian depth psychology and in psychoanalysis, the unconscious figures fairly dominantly. Are dreams the direct line to the unconscious?

Barbara Davies: Yes they are, they really link us to the unconscious. That's why it's so important to look at dreams.

Rachael Kohn: Barbara, a lot of people would say that they have certain dreams because they were stimulated by something they saw on television, or something they experienced that day, or something they read in the papers. How much of the unconscious is just a collection of these leftovers from the day, or how much of it is something deeper, a kind of repository of a deeper inheritance?

Barbara Davies: Well I think that the things that happen to you during the day definitely have an influence on what you're going to dream at night. But it does not necessarily have to be the program you've seen on the TV. Very often the dream picks up something which has moved you emotionally and then puts it into the dream. But it's not necessary that you have either eaten too much or that you have seen a horrifying picture of something. What you're dreaming about corresponds to the deeper layer of yourself in your own psyche.

Rachael Kohn: Now what constitutes that deeper layer? Are there specific things which you watch out for that are signs of the unconscious?

Barbara Davies: Well Jung actually has divided the unconscious into two main layers, one being the personal unconscious and the other one being the collective unconscious, which is a much deeper layer and a much broader layers in the individual unconscious which are more the things that you repress, or forget.

Rachael Kohn: So are both of those apparent in the dream?

Barbara Davies: Yes. You do make a difference, whether you have dreams coming from the personal unconscious, which are very often dreams linked to your shadow problems, or whether they are dreams, so-called the big dreams which then come from the collective unconscious which are also much more difficult to interpret, because they do not only concern you personally, but very often your surroundings, your country or even on a larger scale.

Rachael Kohn: Now you mention the shadow unconscious. Tell us about the shadow.

Barbara Davies: The shadow basically is that what you are unconscious of. The shadow can actually be also things that you know a bit about like jealousy, vanity and so on, but it's more like what you're unconscious of, and so the dreams talk to you about these things you are unconscious of with the purpose to make you conscious and to try and make you more whole.

Rachael Kohn: Make us more whole. Is that what is the aim of the psychological process in Jung? Tell me, when a patient comes to you, on their first day, what happens? Is it straight into the dream research as it were?

Barbara Davies: Generally not. I first ask a person where that person is at and what the problem is about, and how that person lives, and maybe on the third session I will ask the person if he or she had a dream, but generally the people know who come to see me, they know that I work with dreams.

Rachael Kohn: So the people who come to see you are themselves probably quite interested in their dreams?

Barbara Davies: Yes, generally speaking yes, I would say so. But not everybody. I mean there are some people who don't know you at all and are quite astonished.

Rachael Kohn: Well I suppose a lot of people have a recurrent dream. Perhaps not the exact dream but with very strong sort of déjà vu elements, and they know when they wake up in the morning they say, 'I've had that dream again.' Is this bound to be the most important for the therapist?

Barbara Davies: Not necessarily, A recurrent dream actually means that there is something very unconscious which the unconscious is trying to tell and come up with, but the person just cannot link to or cannot make conscious, and if the unconscious thinks or believes it's very important, or would be

very important, it comes up with it. And very often, I would say it's trying to understand again the things which are very unconscious in you to try and make you more conscious.

Rachael Kohn: It sounds like the unconscious has a mind of its own, as it were.

Barbara Davies: Yes, I would say it does, yes. It's your companion after a while I would say, that's what I found out after many years that I have a companion, but it's not just any companion, but a companion that makes demands and then reveals a deeper truth, but naturally always at a rather high price.

Rachael Kohn: A high price. What is the price of delving into one's dreams, because I think a lot of people regard looking into their dreams as a kind of adventure, they're going to find out stuff about themselves. In a way they'll be spying on themselves. But what is the cost of that, what is the process?

Barbara Davies: Well very often you see, if you are in analysis for a couple of years, there comes a time when the ego has to step back a bit. At the beginning the ego has to work very hard to try and make it in the world, which is certainly in the first part of life, but then later on when you approach the individuation process and you approach the self, the ego has to work for the self and then to begin to submit, and that means a sacrifice, and that is not so easy because as you know, to submit the ego is a difficult task.

Rachael Kohn: Now when you say 'ego', is that like or parallel to Jung's notion of the persona?

Barbara Davies: Yes, the ego and the persona very often go together. But you can have a very, not so strong an ego and still have a strong persona, that's quite possible.

Rachael Kohn: So the persona has something like a mask, or the face you put on in the morning to function during the day?

Barbara Davies: Yes, the mask of the professor, you know I mean it's a protection, the persona, a necessary protection actually.

Rachael Kohn: Barbara, when someone works through their dream with a Jungian depth psychologist, what are they hoping to achieve, what are they hoping to find?

Barbara Davies: Well I think generally they hope to find harmony with themselves, because as you know I think most of us are in a very split state, and we're torn between our inner opposites and I'm sure that that is what we're trying to reach, greater harmony, and to also understand ourselves better on a deeper level.

Rachael Kohn: Is this where I think the term 'individuation' comes in, that there seems to be the ideal self or the ideal mode of functioning for the individual? Can you talk about that?

Barbara Davies: Yes, well the aim of the individuation process is really to find and embrace who you are really, who you truly are, to become one's unique self. And that is a lifelong pursuit.

Rachael Kohn: Gee, to be the person that one truly is, that's something of a conundrum isn't it, because is it something that we can be that's a never-ending journey?

Barbara Davies: I think that certainly the aim of the individuation process, and that's why it's such a difficult, such a long process. But it's also with a great moment of happiness.

Rachael Kohn: How difficult is it? Do people actually suffer during the process of exploring their dreams?

Barbara Davies: There are times where I think the process is really excruciatingly painful, that's true. That is to work through the unconscious part of yourself, to discover a very dark part in yourself, and

to get into what the alchemists call 'coming out of the negro' the darkness, the blackness, and 'going into the albedo' which is the whiteness, and then into the rubado finally, which is the redness, which is love.

Rachael Kohn: This is where Jung's thought emerges, with alchemy, isn't it?

Barbara Davies: Yes.

Rachael Kohn: Are these just metaphors?

Barbara Davies: No, I think it's very real.

Rachael Kohn: What do you mean by that?

Barbara Davies: I think that when the alchemists says what has to be produced is the sacred vessel, where the individuation process really takes place. That means that the vessel really means to have the right attitude, and the right attitude is a difficult thing to find.

Rachael Kohn: Is the vessel yourself?

Barbara Davies: The vessel is basically it is your attitude towards the individuation process, making this vessel probably takes the three first years of analysis I would say.

Rachael Kohn: Barbara Davies has a psychological practice in Zurich, and she's my first guest traversing Dreamscapes on The Spirit of Things Radio National.

Her teacher and associate of Jung, the late Marie Louise von Franz, interpreted the visions of a 17th century saint, Nicholas von Flu, which have become instructive tools in the art of dream interpretation. But some things have to be taken on faith, they defy normal common sense reasoning. Like Von Flu's pre-natal vision which is the subject of Barbara Davies six hour dream workshop. I asked her what is the benefit of this vision to students.

Barbara Davies: Well in the pre-natal vision, there are four very important fundamental symbols, the first one being the star and then the stone and the holy oil. And then the old man at the baptism of Nicholas von Flu. And we actually spent three hours trying to understand in interpreting these big symbols. And I think that's going into the depths of the matter and that's I think what people are interested in, instead of staying on the surface.

Rachael Kohn: Well it seems to me that von Franz followed Jung's great interest in using the imagination when looking at these visions.

Barbara Davies: Imagination, exactly what you're referring to?

Rachael Kohn: Well Jung was famous for his fairly subversive readings. I'm thinking of how he interpreted the Biblical Book of Job in a very personal way, projecting onto it his own personal hostilities towards his father. So it seems to me that the idea of interpreting scripture or dreams or fairytales provides something of a tableau on which the individual can project his anxieties and really make much more imaginative use of the stories.

Barbara Davies: Well I think it's clear and natural that as soon as we interpret it, there is also something very subjective coming into it. But the psyche in itself, we talk about the objective psyche which as the dreams show, it is a very objective response from the unconscious. Now the interpretation itself can be seen as being subjective.

Rachael Kohn: And the subjective analysis of the dream or a fairytale or a vision is a way of then achieving individuation?

Barbara Davies: It should be. I would definitely say so, that's what you're trying to do in analysis, to try and link the person with her or his own individuation process.

Rachael Kohn: So when this kind of work, the books of the Bible or fairytales, can both be read as a means of interpreting the self. It's really what they tell us about the self rather than their objective plain truth or plain meaning?

Barbara Davies: Yes, I think so.

Rachael Kohn: Does that mean then that as a therapist you empower individuals to come to books or fairytales and read them from very personal perspectives?

Barbara Davies: Yes I think that the first approach is very individual and subjective. But then when you start interpreting the fairy tale and you spend a lot of time going through absolutely every single symbol, then it becomes a very objective matter.

Rachael Kohn: Tell me, what would the oil signify then?

Barbara Davies: The holy oil actually is the presence of the divine. It's the manifestation of the divine.

Rachael Kohn: And the stone?

Barbara Davies: The stone is the star which comes down to earth, because the star is a symbol of the oncoming individuation process which that person will have to do and he will have to become a star in the firmament and will bring light into the world. And as it has to be in the world, the star has to really incline and that is the process of coming down from the state of the star into the state of the stone, and then just stone becomes the holy oil which is then the spirit which is alive, or matter coming alive. And then you go into the human realm and that's where the fourth symbol is then the old man at the baptism.

Rachael Kohn: And who is the old man of the baptism?

Barbara Davies: He's an unknown figure, and that is a very famous symbol in many legends that you have, unknown visitors that come and link you to I would say even a divine person.

Rachael Kohn: So it's not John the Baptist, which was my immediate thought.

Barbara Davies: No, not in this case.

Rachael Kohn: The non-rational world of dreams. That was Jungian depth psychologist, Barbara Davies, speaking to me from Canberra, where she held a dream workshop sponsored by the C.G. Jung Society of Sydney.

ABORIGINAL STAMPING/CHANTING

Rachael Kohn: That's a bunch of whitefellas, painted up and dancing an inma, a dance of the Rainbow Serpent, at a kind of spiritual tourism experience which Greg Snowden organised with the Anangu Pitjantjatjara people. You might have seen this on the ABC-TV series, 'Selling Australia'.

Aboriginal culture is grounded in the stories of The Dreaming. When Greg is not taking groups to the bush and the desert to experience it, he's training as a shaman with the Aboriginal people and other indigenous teachers. He's learned the stories, the songs and the dances of the Pitjijinjara people of Central and South Australia. But as you'll hear, he was instructed to use his knowledge in his own way, and for the benefit

of non-Aboriginal Australians. For Greg, the most important benefit is a recognition that life is to be enjoyed by getting in touch with the spirits that animate the material world. This is Greg's story.

Greg Snowdon: The work that I do is based upon my 20 years of living and learning with Pitjantjatjara people, particularly the senior men and women, the men and women of high degree. And it's based upon the experiences I've had where they've taken me into their country, they've shown me sacred places, they've told me stories, they've taught me dances of the Dreaming stories, and been involved in songs. But what they've said is, 'We don't want you to copy this, we want you to take this way of being in the country, back to where you live, and back to the people from your culture, the non-Aboriginal people, and for them to find a way to do these same things, but in their way, or in our way.'

What's important is that you honour the land, what's important is that you sing and dance the spirit of the land. What's important is that you respect that there is this other world that operates, weaving its way between the material world and then this other world is full of spirits, it's full of energies and that these spirits need to be fed and nurtured so that they can infuse the material world with their life.' Then we need to find doorways to go into that other world.

And so the shaman is the one who learns to travel between dimensions, he's the one who has experience of meeting with the spirits, who talks to them, he listens to them, knows how to hear them in the wind, how to hear them in the sound of the birds, how to hear them in what happens in his own life, or her own life, day by day, and directs people to see that in what very often they consider is ordinary everyday reality, there is the play of spirit happening moment to moment, and that the shamanic doorways are there in nearly every situation, but we have to learn how to recognise them and then how to go through them to see this world of spirit, to feel it, to hear it, and then to be able to access that world in our day to day life, and we do this so that it makes our daily life richer, it makes it full of life, it makes it full of spirit.

It also takes away from our daily life the sense that this is all there is, because if this is all there is, then for most of us it's a pretty serious and disheartening place. By accessing the world of spirit, and this is something the Pitjantjatjara people taught me time and time again, the world of spirit is a serious world; the world of spirit is where you have to pay absolute attention, because you're dealing with extraordinary energies and spirit and being that have the potential to cause great havoc if they're not honoured and if they're not fed and if they're not nurtured. And they cause havoc by either withdrawing themselves from this world or by coming in with the fullness of its energy, and that can be in huge storms or cyclones or earthquakes or causing accidents to happen.

Once you recognise that, then this world is a place of entertainment, it's a place of enjoyment, it's a place where you operate and you live in it to be entertained, entertained by the beautiful views of the hills, of the sounds of the cockatoos, or the wind rustling through the trees, or falling off a camel is a source of incredible amusement.

And it's like this is not a serious place to be, it's actually a place of fun, and it's what I have got, amazingly from my 20 years of the people in the bush and the groups that I've taken out to spend time with Pitjantjatjara people is the one constant is how much the Pitjantjatjara people laugh, how much they enjoy their life, even though at a material level they've got very little, hardly any money, no clean clothes, broken down motor cars, not much food, no house, but moment by moment they are in this state of almost ecstatic bliss, where all you can do is enjoy the moment.

That's what I want to bring. I've been given fairly clear direction by people out there to take this understanding and this attitude to life and to this country and bring it up to people of my own culture who are living on this land, who have a responsibility to the land, to look after it, to take care of it, but it's also to encourage people to take the rights of being on this land, which is the enjoyment of this amazing country we're in, and the enjoyment of the spirit, the powerful spirits and the nurturing spirits and the spirits that want to support us and help us to enjoy the life in this material plane.

ABORIGINAL STAMPING/CHANTING

Greg Snowdon: Most of the techniques that I have, that I've learnt either from the Pitjantjatjara people or in my other trainings with other shamanic teachers from our own culture, has been about that there are many, many other worlds of reality, that operate at the same time as this third dimensional world, and in actual fact these other levels of reality are extraordinarily complex and incredibly beautiful. They're amazingly full and rich, far beyond anything that we see with our eyes in this world.

With the Pitjantjatjara it was constantly around the Dreaming, and for them the Dreaming was that dimension of reality wherein the world was created and a whole range of understandings about the human condition and the possibilities of the human condition were laid out in like a template form, and this template form in the Pitjantjatjara model was often based around beings who had attributes of the animals.

So there's a Goanna Man and a Kangaroo Man and the Lizard Man and Emu Man, and the women, the Seven Sisters Women, and the women, the Lizard Women. And it's like every place we went, I would go in their country, they would have the story and they would say, 'This is the place of the Goanna Man and he's come from the west, and he's travelling to the east and this is where he stopped.' And each time we'd go to a place they would retell the story as if it were the first time they were telling it.

They were telling it from the place where it is still happening, where it happens, the eternal present if you like. And that it has important messages for us in our day to day life. But they would never say what the story meant, whenever I would ask 'Well what does this story about the Goanna Man really mean?' they would just start telling me the story again, and say, 'It's the story'.

So for me it's what does a shamanic world mean, is always in story or in myth or in experience because it's beyond being able to describe in words, which are doing much related to a particular dimension of reality in the third dimension.

How can we describe something like heaven in terms of our Christian spirituality or the Christian world? We use words that they're only a description from this third

dimension of reality for something else, and time and again with the Pitjantjatjara, it was always experience this, and the Dreaming was nearly always experienced through dancing the inma, dancing the story, to get painted on and to take on the attributes of the spirit of this Dreaming story and to dance it in this world.

So it's like it takes it away from the left brain, the logical brain and into the right brain, the creative, the one that is holistic, it sees the connections. And in the dance, we get a sense of what it is that we are dancing, but even then there have been times when I've done a dance, say the Rainbow Serpent dance, and had senior men call me over and say that they'd seen the Rainbow spirit dancing with me, or they'd seen their father dancing who had died many years ago, who was a custodian for that Dreaming. And it made me incredibly humble, because while I'm doing it, it feels like I'm getting all the steps wrong and I'm messing it up and that I must look really stupid and feeling a bit embarrassed dancing this traditional Pitjantjatjara story as a white man in front of a group of Aboriginal people.

But now that these senior lawmen could see that I was dancing their Dreaming, or the Dreaming of the land, it's not so much their Dreaming, it's the Dreaming from the country. It continually sort of takes me to the point that I'm doing so much that I really don't know the other ramifications, and so being a shaman is like accepting that there are many things, many levels of reality happening at the same time and that it is part of our challenging life to find as many levels of reality that operate at the same time because it builds the incredible richness of why we are here, why we are incarnated into material form.

ABORIGINAL CHANTING

Greg Snowdon: I've very rarely heard people talk about individual dreams, but they would always be talking about the Dreaming, and things that I probably would have described as a dream, they would be talking about things that they did at night while their body was asleep. So I suppose it's conscious dreaming.

There was one time we had a group of men camped out in the bush and we were working with some of the senior medicine men, law men, and one of them said that he wanted us to all sleep next to him at night, very close. And we all did, and the next day we were talking about it and we said 'Well how come you wanted us to sleep so close?' and he said, 'Well at night when everyone's asleep I come around and I pick up your spirits, like leaves on the branches of a tree, and I pick you all up and then I fly like an eagle up to a nest in the sky, it's like a hospital, a medicine man's hospital, and I clean all your spirits and take out all the bad spirits, and I give it a good wash and a cut and polish, and then I bring it back in the mornings and put you all back, and you wake up, and then it's time for me to have a sleep because I'm really tired after all that work.'

And for us it was an extraordinary thing that he was describing that he was doing. And he was in the Dream state, but it was like he was totally conscious of what it was that he was doing and what he had to do in that place. For me, the connection with dreams and with dreaming is that it's like images that come to us when our brainwave state drops to a certain frequency level, and that in that level we can access images

and information that we're not able to access when we are in sort of an alert, waking state in third dimensional reality.

And that accessing the dreaming for the Pitjantjatjara is very much around being in a time when you are sung, and the songs have a very measured rhythm, which it's like it trains the mind and trains the brain to slow down, to reach a point of greater depth, and effectively a different frequency level where you can access the Dreaming.

And so a lot of the work that I do is what could be called taking people into a trance state, where you are conscious but in an altered state of consciousness and it's very much slowing down the brainwaves to the point where you are in the same sort of state that you are when you have dreams when you sleep, except that you also maintain your awareness so that you can direct where you go and what you do and remember what happens, and it's much more coherent, not necessarily logical in the third dimension form of logic, but it's very logical in that dream state.

Rachael Kohn: That's professional shaman, Greg Snowdon, who learned some of his techniques from the Pitjantjatjara people in Central and South Australia.

TIBETAN MUSIC

Rachael Kohn: The next time you go to the local medical clinic you might find that acupuncture is among the available treatments, a sign that healing techniques from the East are gathering some legitimacy in the West. But it is likely to be a very long time until you find the diagnostic practices of my next guest on offer at the local surgery. He uses dreams to diagnose physical illnesses, a traditional practice in his native Tibet. For one thing, pharmaceutical firms would not be happy at the treatment he prescribes, which may require you to open your mouth, but only to chant a mantra.

Nida Chenagtsang is currently practicing in Italy, and he visited Australia to give a number of lectures and workshops on the Tibetan use of dream analysis to treat people with illnesses, or prevent them from occurring.

TIBETAN MUSIC

Rachael Kohn: I want to ask you about the role of dreams in medicine, because this is something that really distinguishes Tibetan medicine from other kinds, particularly Western medicine. Can you tell me generally what is the role of dreams in Tibetan medicine?

Nida Chenagtsang: So according to Tibetan medicine we think dream it's a very important part of Tibetan medicine because we use dreams also for diagnosis and in this case if people have problems we ask in general also what dream they have, and we think dream is manifestation of our unconsciousness. We believe unconsciousness has a special function, so can give us the information of real condition of the body and the mental level as well as the energy. In Tibetan medicine we pay a lot of attention for the mental level, and the energetic level.

Rachael Kohn: What do you mean by energy?

Nida Chenagtsang: Energy button, there are three energies, like we call Air energy, Bile energy and Phlegm energy. So in general, these three energies connecting with five elements, the space and wind and the fire, water and earth, so this is a very ancient philosophy. And also we believe everything is manifested through these five elements.

Rachael Kohn: Now can we go back to dreams? If I came to you with a good dream, I would expect to feel quite happy. If I came to you with a bad dream I would expect to feel quite bad, unhappy. What does the dream actually indicate to you as a doctor?

Nida Chenagtsang: Dream in general we call the negative dreams and the positive dreams. In general, when we know what is the situation of the dream, and then we must analyse the dreams, and also not only use the dreams and we try to understand the mentality of that person, and also we should know the physical condition of that person.

In general if one patient come to me, so I ask you the dreams and then you tell me dreams, you can tell me one dream, two dreams, three dreams and sometimes some dreams are repeats you know. So we ask specially this kind of dreams and then we try to find out what is really saying, the symbolic meanings and with these dreams. So sometimes the real meaning is there is something wrong emotionally and sometimes there is something wrong with physical organs And sometimes we call it energy disorders.

Rachael Kohn: Now you mentioned symbolic meaning: when you're analysing a dream are you looking for certain signs or symbols?

Nida Chenagtsang: In general, yes. For example if somebody often dreams of water, a river, we think that if somebody repeats this dream to always see the river, or lake or like this, of course sometimes even the people do like water, and they have this memory, they can repeat these kind of dreams, and also the water for us is a symbol of consciousness, and then through this we can see what is their emotional block, or what is their condition of unconsciousness. So that means through this symbol we can see the condition of their psyche.

And sometimes these waters can be also symbols for the physical body, in this case we believe that if there's kidney or urinary system problems, and then we're thinking there are some disorders also physically. So I tell you, that is also one big difference between Western medicine and other new psychology schools, many different schools and they use the dream for psychology studies.

But in Tibetan medicine of course we use that mental part because it's very important, and also we use the dreams or the symbols for the physical part.

Rachael Kohn: So that's based on the idea that one's mental state is connected to one's bodily state?

Nida Chenagtsang: Yes.

Rachael Kohn: What sort of theory or system informs your symbolic analysis? Is it Buddhist

Nida Chenagtsang: We are basically in the Buddhist yes. In general many people they think like symbolic things are like different from person to person, people to people, culture to culture, country to country like this. But according to my understanding, I think all human beings have same symbols and the symbolics are not limited through the cultures and persons ideas like this.

Personally I believe all human beings, the basic constructure of the physical body, and also the construction of the consciousness, the sense consciousness, self consciousness, base consciousness, all these levels are I think always the same, there is no difference.

Rachael Kohn: So they're universal you're saying?

Nida Chenagtsang: Absolutely.

Rachael Kohn: Now do Bodhisattvas or Buddhas ever appear as symbols in someone's dreams?

Nida Chenagtsang: Yes, of course. So we think a Buddha is not something existed outside, the real part of Buddha or Bodhisattva, all these things, are unconsciousness. Of course everybody we have the positive parts and negative parts in the consciousness because we have engendered the idea of the

object and subject. That is the reason why also in the dreaming we have these two parts. So in the dream we can dream Buddhas or Bodhisattvas all these things we can have these symbols. But we just believe it's a manifestation of our unconsciousness, maybe the positive part.

Rachael Kohn: Yes. OK, well can you give me some other examples of symbols and what they mean? You mentioned water for example.

Nida Chenagtsang: Well then, let's say fire, and fire is in general also one of the basic five elements. In general, the people dream fires, or they have the feeling of hot and the dream are like this. In general some people when they have fever or they have bile disorders and they have temperature disorders like this, so many people they have this kind of experience and a dream. In that case we call the dreamstate the fire, the feeling of the hot, and then so these give us the information that there is something wrong, with the heat of the fire energy. And emotionally if the people who dream hot and there is like excess of anger emotion. And then physically like there's liver problems, or blood problem, or gall bladder problem.

Rachael Kohn: So can you actually diagnose a person's particular physical illness from their dream?

Nida Chenagtsang: We do it, specially my own system if I visit a patient and I really focus on the dreams for all physical problems because I think the physical disease is coming from energy, and energy problem is coming from the mental level.

What we call the disease is the disease already apparent on the body. For example let's say cancer; cancer is already there in the liver or in the stomach, so in that case the disease is developed already, in the physical part, maybe it's too late to give a cure for this. So in Tibetan medicine our idea is before the cancer developed in the physical part, and before that there was a losing the balance or the energy disturbance. And then that one slowly can manifest or develop until the physical part. Why we use the dreams, in the dreams we always can find when the mental part or energy part of their problem is in the beginning.

Rachael Kohn: So you're saying that you can prevent a disease from occurring.

Nida Chenagtsang: Yes, exactly, in general we do it through the dreams, yes.

Rachael Kohn: Now if you can prevent something, you also obviously have ways, or prescriptions of cures. Is spiritual practice a part of the cure?

Nida Chenagtsang: For us the spiritual practice is very, very important treatment part. We believe our mind is the owner of everything, is the most powerful that we have is our mind, it's not our body or our organs. So that's why if when we do the spiritual practices in general it's a kind of treatment with the psyche part, with the mental part, with the mind, and that is the most powerful part. So if we can work on it and then easy to cure the energy disorders, also the physical problems.

Rachael Kohn: What kind of spiritual practice are you referring to, is it just meditation?

Nida Chenagtsang: Well we use meditations, so there are many different ways to do meditations. And in general, first we have these philosophy studies, so you must understand why you are doing meditations and what is the meaning of the meditations and like this. And the philosophy, it's very important in the beginning to have these kind of ideas. So in Tibetan Buddhism specially we're speaking about emptiness, impermanent, and so these kind of basic Buddhist philosophies are very, very important. And so that means first you study a little bit of philosophy, and then you do the practice at meditations, and then there is also healing with rituals, music and healing with the mantras, with the sounds.

Rachael Kohn: Are there specific mantras that you might prescribe for a particular kind of problem?

Nida Chenagtsang: Yes. In general there are many different mantras, so we can say there are specific mantras for specific diseases. And then another type of mantra we can use means one mantra we can use for a hundred diseases. So that one is a general one.

Rachael Kohn: One mantra fits all. That's Nida Chenagtsang, Tibetan doctor practising in Italy and sponsored by the Dzogchen Community of Australia.

MUSIC

Well that's Dreamscapes on The Spirit of Things Radio National. This program was produced by me and Geoff Wood, with technical production by Angus Kingston.

Next week we take you further down dreamland, but with a special focus on Carl Gustav Jung and the New Age., So much of Jung's terminology has become part of the New Age lingua franca, like archetypes and the collective unconscious. But how much of its popularity has debased the man's real message? David Tacey, Jungian and one of Australia's most trenchant commentators on religious trends, is real mad and he's not gonna take it anymore! And he tells us why, next week on The Spirit of Things. So don't miss it.

Till then, so long from me, Rachael Kohn.

TIBETAN MUSIC