

CHAPTER 11

Focusing the Intention

I'd like to mention a few of the techniques that I have briefly spoken about before. These techniques are straightforward, and they are as simple as you allow them to be, in the sense that they require two things which are both fundamental to us in the Tradition and also fundamental to anything which is of a positive and useful nature.

First is what we call *nyat* (pronounced neeat) or intention. We hold that before one does anything, especially within the context of the Tradition, one should have a positive intention. It's no good merely saying : "I intend to this or that" or "I suppose I'd better do this and that and so forth," it has to be a deliberate affirmation to oneself that one intends to do something for a particular purpose. It's not a great consecration ceremony with bell, book and candle, it is a thing which one does to oneself with oneself as an individual, just as it is done in a group. It affirms the intention and directs the activity.

The second thing which should accompany the establishment of one's intention is the mobilization of a relaxed concentration on whatever activity or exercise one is engaged in so as to make the best possible use of the energy available. One of the particularly important exercises or secrets in the Tradition is a combination of self-examination and observation.

To digress a moment : the word secret in the Tradition means confidential. There is a difference between secret and confidential. Some people say "secrets" because they want to get a little bit of a thrill and excitement : they are doing something Secret with a capital S. We are not a secret society: we are a society of friends, a confidential association of like-minded,

like-thinking and like acting people, and what we do is not obnoxious, horrid, or anything like that. These are just our own private affairs, our own private activities. These techniques and exercises are confidential and private for another reason : if they are performed by a person who hasn't been instructed how or in what circumstances to use them, they can cause perplexity or confusion. They won't cause damage or harm because they are not dangerous, but they can cause confusion, so they are kept confidential and limited to a circle of people whose intention to use them will be beneficial to them.