
AFTER THE TEACHINGS OF DON JUAN MATUS
as transmitted by Carlos Castaneda

A TOLTEC BREVIARY

The Twenty-Two Questions of the Warrior

Compiled by Marc-Antoine Debrosse

THE KINGDOM OF ANGELIC HEALING
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Preface

I am Marc-Antoine Debrosse. A Toltec warrior in the lineage of Carlos Castaneda and Don Juan Matus, and the founder of the kingdom of angelic healing — The Kingdom of Angelic Healing. I work alone, from Guadeloupe. This book was born of those years of practice, reading, and direct experience.

This path imposed itself upon me. By that I mean I did not pick it off a bookstore shelf. It came forward in the course of a wider search into spiritual awakening — that question which sooner or later works on those who refuse to be content with the ordinary description of the world. Among everything that came into my hands to be read, Castaneda's corpus began to speak louder than the rest. It gave precise words to what I had glimpsed without being able to name it. It offered a clear architecture — Intent, impeccability, awareness of death, inner silence, silent knowledge — where other paths proceeded in half-tones. So this path did not present itself as an option; it presented itself as an evidence that strikes the body before reason has had time to argue. Don Juan would say that the spirit knocked at the door — and that, this time, my eyes were open enough to recognize that I was the one being pointed at.

Castaneda wrote nine books. Together, they amount to several thousand pages — dense, repetitive, sometimes apparently contradictory, often opaque on a first reading. Many readers give up before extracting the essentials. Others go through them without identifying the structure hidden within. I wanted, for myself first and afterward for those who might need it, a book that condenses — a breviary in the original sense of the word, from *brevis*, brief — a small book one reopens each day to be reminded of what is essential. The twenty-two questions that follow are the operational skeleton of the path, as I drew it out after several passes through the corpus and years of testing it in my own existence. The organization into four Movements — preparing the tonal, acting in the world, exploring the unknown, touching the root — follows the progression that Don Juan himself imposed on Castaneda, from the most ordinary to the most radical.

I make no claim to nagualhood. I am not Don Juan Matus. I have not inherited a direct initiatic lineage, and I teach no one under that title. I am a reader-practitioner who received what the books transmitted, tested it in his own life, and who, at his humble level, tries to keep this spiritual knowledge alive by making it more accessible to those who are starting out. This breviary is not a revelation: it is an honest work of condensation on material that already existed, and that deserved to be gathered into a more compact form than the original nine volumes.

This book is to be read as one wishes. In order for a first passage — the architecture of the Movements has been thought out for that. Freely thereafter. Each entry can be taken on its own, as a meditation for the day, a reminder, a passage to be chewed slowly. A breviary is not a manual to be skimmed. It is a book one reopens. What it contains is not to be understood at once, but to be allowed to act over the weeks and the months.

One thing must be said clearly, because everything else in my work depends on it. In the Toltec way, Intent is that universal force which makes one perceive, which organizes the world, which addresses the warrior through signs, edifices, orchestrated encounters. In the angelic tradition, the angel — from *angelos*, messenger — is a face cut to the measure of man, through which that same force makes itself recognizable. Intent and angel, in my practice, are exactly the same thing. The healings I offer on my site could just as well have been called healings of Intent. I chose "angelic" out of common usage, because the word speaks more directly to most people — but the force at work is precisely the one Don Juan teaches Castaneda. This Toltec breviary and my work as an angelic healer are the two sides of a single approach — one named in Toltec terms, the other in Western terms.

And this path is not isolated. All the great spiritual traditions of the world have lived, in their own manner and in their own tongue, the essence of what is kept here. The Buddha, beneath the Bodhi tree, called liberation what Don Juan calls losing the human form and alignment of the emanations; Sogyal Rinpoche speaks of it in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* as the recognition of the nature of mind. The Christian mystics wrote, each in his own way, of the constant presence of death, of detachment, of the inner fire, of obedience to an Intelligence that preceded

them. The Sufi masters, the Orthodox contemplatives, the Amazonian shamans, the Jewish mystics, the great Zen meditators — each, in his idiom and through his culture, points to the same real. This breviary is Toltec, and it intends to remain so. But what it transmits — the stopping of the chatter, the direct link with the universal force, the freedom born of the destruction of self-importance — belongs to no particular school. It belongs to every man who, somewhere, has decided no longer to live in the mere chatter of his own head.

This book is offered to you in that spirit. May it serve you if you need it. May it leave you alone if you do not. What you will find of importance in it is not what I will have placed there — it is what you yourself will pour into it, by the patience you will grant it, and by the experiences you, in turn, will let fill it.

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Movement I — Preparing the Tonal

The prerequisites. Without these, the rest is fatal.

1. How do I silence the chatter that inhabits me?

You talk. Endlessly. From morning to night, and at night again in your dreams. You believe this chatter is your natural ground — it is not. You were taught to talk to yourself, from childhood. Those around you forced you, through a thousand small injunctions, to fix your attention on words, until you became incapable of stopping. And it is precisely this chatter that fixes your assemblage point where it is — that holds you prisoner of a single world. Don Juan told Castaneda that the internal dialogue stops in exactly the way it starts: by an act of will.

This dialogue is not an innocent activity of the mind. It is an act of fixing. The world is what it is because we tell ourselves, without end, that it is so. A rock is a rock because we have told ourselves, millions of times, that it is one. You choose the same paths again and again because you repeat the same chatter again and again — until the day of your death. Cut the commentary, and the assemblage point, released from its moorings, begins to move. It is through this breach that the seer enters the unknown — and returns from it.

Don Juan calls this "the key to everything." Not one technique among others. The key. As long as the voice goes on, all the rest — visions, allies, other worlds — is only filler.

"Changing our idea of the world is the crux of sorcery. And stopping the internal dialogue is the only way to accomplish it. The rest is just padding."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, Tales of Power

Practice. The right way of walking. Walk for twenty minutes keeping your gaze unfocused, just above the horizon, open at 180 degrees — without fixing on any point. At the same time, curl your fingers into unusual positions (it doesn't matter which, what matters is that your body doesn't recognize them) and bring your attention to your arms. The tonal — your rational part, which spends its time classifying the world — finds itself overwhelmed by this flood of peripheral and tactile information it cannot sort. Unable to maintain its commentary, it saturates and goes quiet. This is not an act of will against thoughts: it is an overflow from below that drops them.

2. Why am I a prisoner of who I have been?

You believe you act freely. But look closely: most of your choices are made to confirm an image others have of you. Your family knows you that way. Your friends expect you to be that way. Your colleagues have classified what you are, what you do, what you would never do. And every time you cross paths with them, you are forced to renew that image through your words, your gestures, your silences. Don Juan called this machinery your personal history. He told Castaneda that it is your principal prison.

As long as you have a personal history, you must tell it — inform your parents, your family, your friends of what you are doing, what you are thinking, what you are feeling. And through these repeated accounts, they fix you. They keep you from changing. The warrior does the opposite: he erases. Little by little, he creates a fog around himself. He stops giving accounts. He stops announcing his plans. He stops explaining his silences. Until others no longer know what he does, what he thinks, what he is. Until he becomes uncertain again — until he ceases, at last, to be too real.

This is not a whim. It is a precise energetic operation. Together with the art of dreaming, the erasing of personal history is one of the two great techniques that hasten the stopping of the internal dialogue. When you stop renewing the story you tell about yourself, the chatter loses its raw material. Self-pity, which feeds on the past, no longer finds anything to sustain it. The personality, deprived of others' confirmations, becomes fluid. And it is in that fluidity that the assemblage point can finally begin to move.

A warning, however. Don Juan repeated to Castaneda that this technique was never to be practiced alone. It belongs to an inseparable block of four — erasing personal history, losing self-importance, taking full responsibility for one's acts, using death as an adviser. Whoever erases without applying the other three does not become a free warrior: he becomes sneaky, evasive, needlessly hesitant. A fugitive, not a man of power. Erasing is a gesture of liberation only for the one who, in parallel, takes responsibility for his acts, stalks his self-importance, and keeps death by his side.

"Little by little you must create a fog around yourself; you must erase everything around you until nothing can be taken for granted,

until nothing is any longer for sure, or real. Your problem now is that you're too real. Your endeavor must be to become less and less real."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan

Practice. The fog around oneself. Start with the simplest part: stop saying what you do. Not before, not during, not after. If someone asks what you are preparing, what you have planned, what you have just lived through — answer whatever you wish, but never tell exactly how you got there. Mystery must replace routine. Then, harder: gradually stop frequenting those who know you too well. Not through rupture, but through drift. The fog will thicken around you on its own, and with it will come a lightness you had forgotten. One absolute condition: never practice this alone. Apply it together with the three other techniques of the warrior — otherwise you will only become sneaky instead of free.

3. Why am I squandering all my energy?

You feel tired. Not physically tired — emptied. Mornings are heavy, evenings bitter, projects fall apart. You look for the cause in your sleep, in your food, in the pressure of your work. Don Juan would tell you: it is none of those. It is your ego. Self-importance — self-reflection, the contemplation of one's own person — is, according to him, the activity that consumes the greatest amount of energy in a human being. It drains you drop by drop, every day of your life, without your noticing.

Self-importance is not the naive vanity one usually thinks of. It disguises itself as wounded dignity, as touchiness, as righteous anger, as a sense of justice. At its core, it is self-pity in disguise. You feel too important for what is happening to you. Every criticism is an affront. Every setback, an injustice. Every glance, an evaluation. And to defend the image you hold of yourself, you mobilize constantly your attention, your anger, your cunning, your fear. This expenditure is invisible, continuous, enormous. It is an abyss.

On the Toltec plane, the stakes are vital: it is self-importance that keeps your assemblage point fixed in its habitual position. As long as you gaze at yourself in the mirror of your own importance, you cannot perceive otherwise. Breaking that mirror is the only way to free the assemblage point. The energy recovered can finally be used for something else: facing

the unknown, sustaining dreaming, healing. Be warned: for Don Juan, this combat is not a matter of morality. It is not bad to have self-importance. It is strategically ineffective. And the humility of the warrior is not the humility of the beggar: the warrior bows his head to no one, but neither does he permit anyone to bow before him.

A technical point, for those who truly want to understand. Don Juan warns Castaneda: you never get rid of self-pity completely. The island of the tonal — what you are, your description of the world, your personality — is finished. You cannot simply tear out one element and throw it away. What a warrior does is a change of façade. Instead of being the orchestra conductor that directs your entire life, self-pity is pushed to the background, stripped of its energy and of its central place. It is still there — but it no longer commands anything. And that is exactly enough. This displacement is not a frontal combat: it is a patient strategy, which recovers drop by drop the energy the ego was draining, day after day, since your birth. To sharpen this strategy in the real world and not in your head, Don Juan knows only one method: rubbing up against petty tyrants. The inventory prepares; petty tyrants decide (see further, Movement II, entry 10).

"Self-pity is the real enemy and the source of man's misery. Without a certain amount of self-pity, the man could not afford to be as self-important as he is."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Power of Silence*

Practice. The strategic inventory. Take a sheet of paper. Note, as honestly as possible, all the actions of yesterday whose purpose — even partial, even hidden — was to defend your image: the cutting reply to a remark, the effort to appear intelligent, the swallowed wound you had to repay, the post published to be seen, the offended silence. Be merciless. Then, before each one, ask yourself a single question: did this act make me gain or lose energy? Identify three you can stop today. Do it, without drama. Repeat this inventory each week. The energy will start returning in the days that follow.

4. How do I live with death by my side?

You spend your life not thinking about death. You push it far away, as something that will come later, to someone else, in some vague future. That is exactly where you go wrong. Death is not in front of you, nor behind — it is by your side, now, on your left, an arm's length away. Don Juan told Castaneda that death was stalking him, that it was his hunter, and that it would never leave him. The only reasonable thing to do, then, is to turn toward it. And to ask its advice.

When you let yourself be overrun by self-pity, by anger, by the fear that everything will collapse, you have taken the wrong adviser. Self-pity, Don Juan said, witnesses everything you do, always ready to whisper its lukewarm remedies — and it is worth nothing. Death, on the other hand, says only one thing: nothing matters except its touch. And it adds: I have not yet touched you. Your dramas become tiny. Your resentment, ridiculous. Your fear of being destroyed, one more illusion.

Living with death on one's left — that is what makes a man a warrior. No more putting things off. No more lukewarmness. Every act, every word, every encounter — you may not do them again. You engage in them entirely, because this could be the last time. And your decisions, in that contact with death, become irrevocable: you no longer have time to cling to them, no time to hesitate, no time to go back. This is what turns an ordinary act into an act of power.

Ceasing to flee death does not make you sad. It wakes you up. Without its constant pressure you would be apathetic, lukewarm, mired in your pettiness. It is death that drives you to move, that gives you the courage to be implacable without being vain, cunning without being self-important. Death is not your enemy — it is your only noble adversary, the only challenge worth the trouble.

"Focus your attention on the link between you and your death, without remorse or sadness or worrying. Focus your attention on the fact you don't have time and let your acts flow accordingly. Let each of your acts be your last battle on earth."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *Journey to Ixtlan*

Practice. Consulting death. Each time today you feel complaint, discouragement or self-pity rising — whatever the reason — stop. Briefly turn your head to your left, as if looking at someone standing there. Ask your death in silence: is what I am going through at this moment important? Listen to the answer. It is always the same: nothing is, except my touch, and I have not yet touched you. Begin again tomorrow. And the day after. Make a reflex of it, until death becomes your only adviser.

5. What does it truly mean to take responsibility for what I do?

You make decisions, but you leave them an exit. You choose a path, but you reserve the right to regret it. You commit, but with a part of you that stays back, just in case. The result: you live in a perpetual half-commitment, where every act can be canceled, justified after the fact, or disowned. Don Juan tells Castaneda: that is exactly the attitude of a man who believes himself immortal. A man who thinks he has eternity in front of him. And nothing he does carries any real weight.

Taking responsibility for one's acts, for the warrior, does not mean flogging oneself when one errs. It means something far more radical: making a decision with the full awareness that you might die before you can undo it. Before choosing, you doubt. You consider. You weigh. You ask advice of your death, which is on your left. But once the decision is made, there is no more doubt. No more remorse. No more turning back. You commit to the end, even if everything fails. Because you have no time to retrace your steps.

This attitude transforms everything. An ordinary act, accomplished in such a state, becomes an act of power. A trivial conversation becomes your last battle on earth. A minor choice carries the gravity of an irrevocable decision. Don Juan showed it to Castaneda through the story of the young man who sought power and who, finding gourds at an old man's place, smashed them in rage on discovering they contained only water. The young man's mistake is not that he chose the wrong target. It is that he did not take responsibility for his choice. He decided without knowing why, and reacted with anger when the real did not match his expectation. That is precisely the trap the warrior avoids.

One detail, in this story, is decisive. Before smashing the gourds, the young man had been fed by the old man. It is because his belly was full that he allowed himself his tantrum. Don Juan calls this "the daring of the full belly" — the arrogance of one who has been pampered and believes he can demand still more. Without awareness of death and without full responsibility for one's acts, a man always acts that way: like a spoiled child throwing tantrums. His acts, whatever they may be — even when they have the appearance of courage or of decision — remain, for as long as he lives, the acts of a timid man. An act becomes an act of power only when it is carried by a radical commitment, where death is in the equation and where no exit has been planned. Outside of that, you may act your whole life long: nothing of what you do will carry weight.

"Whenever a warrior decides to do something, he must go all the way, but he must take responsibility for what he does. No matter what he does, he must know first why he is doing it, and then he must proceed with his actions without having doubts or remorse about them."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan

Practice. The question of the heart. Before every decision today, even a minor one, ask yourself a single question: does this path have a heart? If yes, commit — totally. If no, do not take it. No compromise, no half-measure. Once committed, forbid yourself three things for the rest of the day: doubting your choice, justifying your choice to others, regretting your choice whatever happens. If something does not go as planned, you take it as it is, without anger or complaint. Begin again tomorrow. The reflex eventually settles in.

6. What does it mean to be impeccable?

It is often thought that impeccability is a moral matter — being good, being upright, being irreproachable. Don Juan cuts that short: impeccability is not morality. It only resembles it. Impeccability is a strictly energetic matter. Its definition is one of ferocious simplicity: doing one's best, each time one engages in something. And stated otherwise: the right use of energy. Nothing more. Nothing less.

Why is this so important? Because energy is the warrior's only currency. Without accumulated energy, you cannot stop the internal dialogue,

sustain dreaming, shift your assemblage point, or cleanse your link with Intent. Without energy, facing the unknown does not bring you freedom — it brings you madness or death. And energy is found nowhere: it can only be saved. Every botched act, every wasted word, every misplaced anger, every indulgence toward oneself — all of that leaks. The impeccable man is the one who has closed those leaks. One by one. Day after day.

The key, Don Juan said, lies in the feeling you have about time. As long as you live as though you were immortal, you cannot be impeccable — because you defer, you put off, you botch, you tell yourself you will correct it later. The warrior, on the contrary, acts with the urgency of someone who has no time to lose. Don Juan gave a precise example: he held himself, toward Castaneda, as a paragon of patience and consistency, never expecting any reward — even though the dullness of his apprentice sometimes made him want to vomit. That is impeccability: giving one's best, freely, whether the other deserves it or not. This impeccable gesture did not tire Don Juan. It rejuvenated him.

This rigorous expenditure of energy has a consequence no one expects: it entirely redefines self-confidence. The ordinary man draws his confidence from the gazes that approve him, the compliments he receives, the social validation of his acts. Don Juan calls this disguised arrogance — a permanent begging at the eyes of others. The warrior does not seek that mirror. He seeks to be impeccable in his own eyes, and he calls that humility. It is his only judge — and it is a relentless judge, deceived by no evasion. You cannot control how the world will react to your acts; you can only control the perfection with which you engage in them. That humility has nothing whimpering about it. It is the highest form of confidence: that of a man who no longer depends on anyone's judgment, because he has placed within himself his only true tribunal.

"Impeccability is nothing else but the proper use of energy. My statements have no inkling of morality. I've saved energy and that makes me impeccable."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Fire from Within*

Practice. The act of the day. Today, choose a single act — only one — that you will accomplish impeccably. Not spectacular: ordinary. A task you usually botch. Answering a message. Cleaning a space. Listening to

someone. Carry it out putting into it everything you have, without seeking recognition, without expecting a return, without counting the time you spend on it. At the same time, feel physically the urgency of your death behind your shoulder — you have no eternity before you. When the act is finished, do not tell anyone. The next day, choose another. Impeccability settles in, act after act, until it becomes the very texture of your life.

Movement II — Acting in the World

The art of stalking. Once the tonal is cleansed, how to stand among men.

7. How do I go toward knowledge?

You believe that going toward knowledge means choosing a good path among others, following it straight, and arriving at understanding the way one arrives at an address. Don Juan strips that away at once: there is no destination. No path leads anywhere. All of them — absolutely all — end at the same place: in the brush, with no signpost, no arrival, no reward. The ordinary man wastes his life asking which one to choose according to what it promises. The warrior knows that question is rigged from the start. He asks another, only one, and that question makes all the difference between a life of power and a life squandered.

The question is: does this path have a heart? Not: is this path useful, profitable, prestigious, reasonable? Not: does it lead somewhere? Just that — does it have a heart? Don Juan gives the criterion with disarming simplicity. A path with a heart makes for a joyful journey; however long, you are strong on it, you are at peace. A path without one dries you out, wears you down, curses you as you walk it. You can go very far on a path without a heart — and end up only an exhausted, embittered man cursing his life. Both paths lead nowhere. But one makes you live, the other kills you slowly.

To know if a path has a heart, you must enter it in a certain way. Not with the ambition of arriving. Not with the fear of failing. The ordinary man rushes into a path because he is afraid of having nothing, or because he wants to prove something. Both attitudes blind him. Don Juan teaches you to enter a path the way a sorcerer travels: without an agenda, with the long view. The man of knowledge, he says, chooses a path with a heart — and then he watches, he rejoices, he laughs. No tears: self-pity has no place here. The sorcerer knows he is going nowhere, that he will die far too soon like everyone else, and it is precisely because of this that he enjoys the journey to the full. The one who has stopped hoping to arrive begins, at last, to see where he is.

Once the question is asked and the answer received, the attitude shifts. If the path has no heart, the warrior abandons it — without drama, without justification. He does not tear it up shouting that he was deceived: he simply turns away. Don Juan warns: as soon as you realize you have chosen a path without a heart, that path is ready to kill you; and few men have the

strength to stop and reflect and change paths. If the path has a heart, on the contrary, the warrior commits to it whole, forever, without ever asking what it brings him. That decision then becomes the secret axis of his life. It does not matter that he suffers, it does not matter that others do not understand, it does not matter that no visible result comes: he is there, and he stays there.

One last point, and it is perhaps the deepest. A path with a heart is not merely a matter of personal well-being. It is the sorcerer's strategy of survival in the face of what he sees. For a man who sees knows that nothing is more important than anything else, that no path leads anywhere, that his life will end far too soon, that the Eagle will eventually devour him. That knowledge, raw, could destroy him — pull him into absolute void. Don Juan then teaches him a decisive maneuver: controlled folly. The sorcerer chooses a path with a heart and uses it as a shield against the immensity of the unknown. He acts as if it mattered, while knowing perfectly that nothing does. This is no deception: it is the only way a man of knowledge has found to live fully while knowing that death may touch him at any moment. The path with a heart is the concrete form his controlled folly takes. Without it, no shield — and the unknown becomes lethal. That is how one goes toward knowledge. Not by pursuing it. By settling onto the only path where, in the end, knowledge comes and sits down beside you.

"Look at every path closely and deliberately. Try it as many times as you think necessary. Then ask yourself, and yourself alone, one question. Does this path have a heart? If it does, the path is good; if it doesn't, it is of no use. Both paths lead nowhere; but one has a heart, the other doesn't. One makes for a joyful journey; as long as you follow it, you are one with it."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan*

Practice. The test of the heart. Take the three main axes of your present life — your work, an important relationship, an ongoing project. For each, with a clear head, apply Don Juan's three exact indicators. First: a path with a heart is easy to love — you don't have to strain to attach yourself to it. If you have to convince yourself, reason yourself, force yourself to love it, the answer has come: it has none. Second: on this path, you and it are one — there is no separation between you and what you are doing. Third: it gives you immeasurable peace and pleasure as you walk its full length,

not only in its bright moments. If any of your three axes fails these tests, decide today: either abandon it, or stop placing your energy in it. Do not wait. Don Juan says it without softening: a path without a heart is ready to kill you, and few men have the strength to stop in time.

8. How do I act without expectation and without regret?

Look at how you live most of your days. You are either in expectation — acting in the hope of a result, a recognition, a return — or in regret — chewing over what you should have done, what you missed, what you said badly. Expectation pollutes the present with the anxiety of the future. Regret pollutes it with the smoke of the past. Between the two, you have barely a few moments left in which you are truly inside what you are doing. That is why you feel empty, even after busy days. You were hardly there.

Don Juan's answer is brutally radical: act for the sake of acting. The act is its own end. It needs no result to be justified. It needs no witness to be done well. Don Juan imposed absurd chores on Castaneda: arranging firewood in patterns, encircling the house with an unbroken chain of concentric circles drawn in the earth with one finger, sweeping garbage from one place to another. And as soon as these tasks became a routine, he ordered him to forget them and change. No meaning. No utility. No reward. The exercise aimed at weaning the apprentice off the infantile mechanism that only knows how to act in exchange for something — and at the same time, to trap his attention until it hastened the stopping of the internal dialogue. A warrior acts with impeccability because it is the only way he knows how to act — not because he expects a gain from it.

Be careful: this detachment is not indifference. Don Juan names it precisely — it is controlled folly. The warrior acts as if every act mattered, while knowing perfectly that none of it does. He loves to the full, works to the full, commits to the full. But his acts are dictated by no personal benefit, and this is precisely why he can be neither disappointed nor offended. The ordinary man confuses commitment with possession. He believes that to love is to hold, to act is to claim, to give is to expect. The warrior dismantles this equation. He gives entirely — and he lets go entirely. His strength comes not from some extinction of desire: it comes from the fact that he acts under the eye of his own death, which leaves him no time to cling to

the fruits of his acts. Each thing he receives then becomes a true gift, precisely because he was not expecting it.

Concretely, this changes the very texture of your life. When an act is laid down, it is laid down. You do not chew over it, you do not hope on it, you do not mentally return to take stock of it. You pass to the next, with the same intensity. Don Juan says it: death stalks him, he has neither the time for doubt nor the time for remorse. This lack of time, which seems a pressure, is in reality an immense liberation: no one left to satisfy, nothing to prove, no past to rewrite. In that state, the warrior becomes what Don Juan calls unavailable — or sober. He touches the surrounding world without squeezing it to its pips. He does not wear out either things or people, because he expects nothing of them. It is the exact opposite of self-importance, whose hidden engine is precisely the expectation of a return — that people validate you, that the world reward you, that your acts be recognized. The impeccable warrior, emptied of that self-importance, becomes sober in his acts as in his emotions. Capable of sharp joy, capable of sadness, never crushed. Being crushed is the mechanics of a man who expects and regrets — it does not belong to the world of the warrior.

"His controlled folly makes him say that what he does matters and makes him act as if it did, and yet he knows that it doesn't; so when he fulfills his acts he retreats in peace, and whether his acts were good or bad, or worked or didn't, is in no way part of his concern."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *A Separate Reality*

Practice. Acting for nothing. Today, choose an act you will carry out with everything you have — without witness, without visible utility, without reward at the end. Tidy a place no one looks at. Write something you will not publish. Prepare a simple meal with extreme care, and eat it alone. During this act, hold yourself to two absolute prohibitions: do not expect a return of any kind, and do not stir the past for a single moment. You are in the act, you are the act, and when it is finished, you move on. Tell no one. Don Juan prescribed this to Castaneda: as soon as such a task becomes a routine, abandon it and change. The purpose is not to manufacture new habits — it is to unlearn the mechanism of expectation. The gratuitous act, repeated and then forgotten, gradually cleans out that habit. And with it

falls regret — because there is no more imagined result to which reality could have failed to correspond.

9. How do I break my perceptual routine?

Before answering the question, the enemy must be named. What holds you prisoner of the same world, day after day, is not your action — it is what Don Juan calls doing. Doing is not what you do; it is the perceptual and social machinery that welds the description of the world into a block of concrete. Doing is what makes a rock a rock and a bush a bush. Doing is what makes you yourself and me myself. Each of your gazes, each of your gestures, each of your relations to others confirms a thousand times a day the same description. That is why the world seems so solid. It is not: you are the one holding it up, through a constant, unconscious doing, repeated since childhood.

Not-doing is the exact reverse of that machinery. Be careful: it is not inaction. The warrior is never in inaction — Don Juan hammers this. You always act. Simply, your action can be directed in two opposite senses. If you act to confirm the description, that is doing. If you act to crack it, that is not-doing. Don Juan's exact formulation is surgical: the ordinary man worries whether things are true or false; the warrior does not. If things are said to be true, he acts so as to do; if they are said to be false, he acts still, but so as to do not-doing. The act is always there — what changes is the meaning it carries.

Here is the revelation few grasp. Not-doing is not one technique among others — not merely looking at shadows rather than leaves, walking backward, or sleeping with one's head to the east. Don Juan tells Castaneda explicitly: "Everything I have taught you up to this day has been a recipe for not-doing." Dreaming is the not-doing of sleep. Erasing your personal history, destroying your self-importance, is the not-doing of the self. Acting for the sake of acting without expecting reward is the not-doing of human action. Controlled folly is the not-doing of human importance. Taking death as adviser is the not-doing of the sense of immortality. Each question of this breviary, each practice it proposes, is only an application of not-doing to a precise domain of life. Once you hold this key, the entire Toltec way fits in your hand.

How does it work mechanically? By saturation. Not-doing introduces into your perception an element your tonal cannot classify — something unassimilable. To handle this dissonant element, the tonal must mobilize all its energy, and the internal dialogue falls silent. When the dialogue falls silent, the assemblage point, deprived of what locks it in place, becomes fluid and begins to move. That is how one reaches what Don Juan calls stopping the world — and, beyond it, seeing. Three traps, however, Don Juan signals without pity. The first: trying to understand not-doing intellectually. He will answer that it is the body that does this, not the head; if you seek to grasp it with the mind, you remain in doing. The second: turning a not-doing practice into a new routine. As soon as it is ritualized, not-doing becomes doing again — so you must let go of it and change. The third, the most insidious: folklore, indulgence in the bizarre. Whoever practices not-doings to feel special has only fed his self-importance through another channel. Don Juan warned: the body indulges in strange sensations. Not-doing is never a spectacle.

"Not-doing is very simple but very difficult. It is not a matter of understanding it but of mastering it. Seeing, of course, is the final accomplishment of a man of knowledge, and seeing is attained only when one has stopped the world through the technique of not-doing."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, Journey to Ixtlan

Practice. Introducing a dissonance. Identify today a doing that fixes you — something you execute automatically, without thinking, and that contributes to maintaining your sense of being you. Your way of looking at people, of seating yourself at table, of starting a conversation, of speaking about your work, of dressing in the morning, of entering a place. Choose one, only one. For three days, reverse it deliberately. If you always look straight into people's eyes, lower your gaze. If you always start by speaking of your work, no longer do so. If you always sit on the same side, change. No folklore: no one should notice. Not-doing is never a spectacle. On the fourth day, abandon it — do not let it become a new routine, or it becomes doing again. Choose another. Begin again. What matters is no particular exercise; it is the capacity, acquired little by little, to introduce at will a dissonance into your own description of the world.

10. How do I use unbearable people to move forward?

You know them. Office tyrants, toxic parents, exes who harass you, odious neighbors — those beings who make your life impossible. Your first reaction is to flee or to fight them. Don Juan teaches you something else: he teaches you to use them. The Toltec seers of the time of the Spanish Conquest, facing conquistadors who held the power of life and death over them, had no choice. They invented a maneuver of rare intelligence: turning their tormentors into involuntary masters. They called them petty tyrants — *pinches tiranitos*. And they became, according to Don Juan, the undisputed masters of the art of stalking.

A petty tyrant is a tormentor: someone who has the power to persecute you, to make you suffer, sometimes even the power of life and death over you. For the ordinary man, this is an ordeal. For the warrior, it is a tool of refinement no solitary practice can replace. It forces you to sharpen four indispensable attributes: control (not reacting in the heat of the moment), discipline (staying precise despite humiliation), forbearance (not bending), and timing (knowing when to act, when to be silent, when to strike). A fifth exists — will — but Don Juan reserves it for the ultimate confrontation, the one with the unknown. Facing the petty tyrant, the first four suffice. And if you acquire them, nothing in ordinary life can touch you anymore.

Don Juan told Castaneda about his own petty tyrant: a monstrous foreman in a sugarcane mill. As a young man, Don Juan had fled that hell, wounded by a bullet in the chest. His benefactor took him in and healed him. Then, three years later, once recovered and trained in the warrior's strategy, his benefactor deliberately sent him back to face the man. A petty tyrant like that, he said, comes one in a million — one cannot afford to let him slip. That is the whole teaching: one does not flee the petty tyrant once one is ready. One returns to him. Armed.

The method is precise. You take inventory: while he abuses you, you observe his strengths and his weaknesses. You carry out with a smile the most humiliating chores — that is control: keeping morale when one is trampled. You find yourself a shield, a higher authority that protects you; Don Juan used the lady of the house, prostrating himself before her and praying to her medals until the foreman was driven mad with rage. Finally, you wait for the strike — that unique moment, "the gate of the dam," when

the tyrant is vulnerable or cannot retaliate. Don Juan lured the man into the stall of a wild stallion; the kick did the rest. And throughout the maneuver, you remember one thing: defeat, before a petty tyrant, is losing your temper. Acting in anger, without control or discipline, is to have lost before beginning.

"Nothing can temper the spirit of a warrior as much as the challenge of dealing with impossible people in positions of power. Only under those conditions can warriors acquire the sobriety and serenity to stand the pressure of the unknowable."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Fire from Within*

Practice. Starting the stalking. Identify your petty tyrant — the person who, in your current life, makes things the hardest for you. Do not flee, do not confront yet. Today, begin the inventory: what are his strengths, his weaknesses, his hidden fears? Choose one attribute to sharpen as a priority (control, discipline, forbearance, timing). The next time you find yourself under his influence, carry out with a smile the most thankless task he imposes on you. Watch for the exact instant when you begin to lose your temper — that is the instant you are defeated. Come back to calm. Begin again.

11. How do I act fully while knowing that nothing matters?

It is not a matter of thinking that nothing matters — that is parlor nihilism, and it leads nowhere. It is a matter of seeing that nothing matters. The distinction is total. This truth is strict and technical: it follows from the act of seeing. The sorcerers call "emanations of the Eagle" the energy fields that compose the entire universe — living, vibrating filaments of light, radiating from an immeasurable source Don Juan metaphorically names the Eagle. The ordinary man perceives only an infinitesimal fraction of them, the fraction his assemblage point, fixed in its habitual position, allows him. The sorcerer, by contrast, learns to shift that point and to perceive the emanations directly. Before them, the illusion of the world of objects collapses: he finds that everything — a rock, a plant, a man — is fundamentally only an arrangement of the same luminous filaments. All things are energetically equal. He knows, because he sees, that nothing is more important than anything else.

When this truth imposes itself on a man without his being prepared for it, it can kill him. Don Juan warns without softening: whoever sees that nothing matters and stays alone with that knowledge may collapse into a cold melancholy, cease to act, slide toward death. Seeing without a shield is a poison. That is why the Toltec way never teaches seeing without simultaneously teaching what makes it possible to keep living among men once one has seen. The sorcerer needs an exact counterweight to this truth — a way of standing in the world that betrays neither what he knows nor what lives in him. This counterweight, Don Juan calls controlled folly.

Controlled folly is not the truth; it is the social strategy that follows from it. The sorcerer, knowing that nothing matters, nevertheless chooses to act as if everything did. He commits fully to his acts, his words, his relations, his battles. He puts his whole being into what he does. But at the center, he knows. He does not buy his own act. Don Juan puts it this way: "My acts are sincere, but they are only the acts of an actor." The actor is sincere because he fully embodies his role; he remains an actor because he never forgets it is a role. This double posture — total commitment and intact awareness — is the warrior's signature. Neither cynicism nor naivety. Neither withdrawal nor illusion. A full presence, crossed by a knowledge that does not weigh it down.

Be careful, controlled folly has strict limits Don Juan sets out clearly. It is exercised only with one's fellows — other human beings, caught in the same description of the world. One does not practice controlled folly with the unknown, with an ally, with Mescalito, with the forces one encounters in non-ordinary states. There, one must be exactly what one is, without a role. Controlled folly is a human shield for dealing with the human. Outside the human field, it has no place. And its measure is the final formulation: for the sorcerer, there is neither victory, nor defeat, nor void. Everything is full to the brim and everything is equal. It is in that full equality that he acts — and it is that full equality that makes it possible for him to act to the full.

"Since nothing is more important than anything else, a man of knowledge chooses any act, and acts it out as if it mattered to him. His controlled folly makes him say that what he does matters and makes him act as if it did, and yet he knows that it doesn't."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *A Separate Reality*

Practice. The sorcerer-actor. Choose today a human encounter that ordinarily costs you something — a difficult conversation, a negotiation, a social obligation, a latent conflict. Before entering it, take a minute and lay down within yourself, clearly, two things that seem to contradict each other. First: nothing in what is about to unfold matters absolutely. Not your reputation, not your comfort, not even the outcome of the exchange. Energetically, this scene is equal to all the other scenes of your life. Second: you are going to enter it as if everything did matter. You are going to listen with total attention, speak with total care, commit your body and your speech entirely. You are going to play the role — that of the colleague, the parent, the neighbor, the friend — with intact sincerity. Throughout the encounter, hold these two crossed attitudes within yourself. Do not try to reconcile them intellectually; let them coexist. At the end, observe. You were entirely present without being entirely caught. That is precisely controlled folly.

12. What enemies await me on the path?

Don Juan draws a map no one has forgotten. The path that leads to knowledge is long, and on that path, four natural enemies await man. Not accidental obstacles, not optional trials — structural enemies, each aspirant must face in order. The first is fear. It rises as soon as a man truly begins to learn. His intentions are imperfect, the teaching resembles nothing he had imagined, and each new step seems more frightening than the last. It is a treacherous enemy, hiding around the bend of the path. If the man yields to fear and runs, his search ends forever. He will not die — he may even live a long time — but he will never become a man of knowledge. He will be, Don Juan says, "a bully or a harmless, scared man; at any rate, he will be a defeated man." The rule is single and surgical: do not run. The apprentice has the right to be terrified. He has no right to stop.

When fear recedes and is definitively defeated, the second enemy springs up at once: clarity. This is one of the most vicious paradoxes of the path. Clarity — that state in which nothing seems hidden anymore, in which the mind sees things limpidly — is a victory that becomes a trap. It dispels fear, true, but it blinds the man. It gives him a new assurance: he no longer doubts, he believes he can do anything he wants since he sees clearly.

Haste replaces patience. The apprentice, who had begun in caution, starts charging ahead. If he yields to this false power, says Don Juan, he becomes "a buoyant warrior, or a clown" — but he learns nothing new anymore. The defense is the same in principle and different in texture: clarity must be defied as fear was defied. Use it only to see, wait patiently, weigh every step. And above all remember that clarity is almost a mistake, until the day one understands it was only a point before the eyes.

The third enemy is power. It is the strongest of all, and it is the one that has felled the greatest number. Power arises when clarity has been mastered. The man then knows that the power he was pursuing belongs to him at last. His wishes become law. He begins by taking calculated risks and ends, almost without noticing, by imposing his own rules. Power fascinates, swells the ego, and gradually turns the warrior into "a capricious and cruel man." If he succumbs, he dies without ever truly having learned how to use that power — which will have remained only a heavy burden on his destiny. The defense, says Don Juan, is to defy power deliberately, to dominate oneself at every instant, and to understand a thing most refuse: that power one seems to have conquered will in fact never be one's own. One is only its temporary holder. It is on this third enemy that the old seers collapsed, subjugated by their ease in manipulating the assemblage point. Power turned them into morbid, obsessed creatures. The new seers — those of whom Don Juan is the heir — drew the lesson: they replaced the quest for power with the quest for freedom, and anchored it in impeccability. Without that anchor, power devours.

The fourth enemy is old age. It rises almost without warning, when the man has mastered fear, clarity, power, and stands at the end of his journey. It is the obstinate desire to rest, the physical and mental fatigue, the wish to lie down and forget. Don Juan is without illusion: old age is the only enemy man can never fully defeat. He can only hold it at bay. If he abandons himself to fatigue and lies down to forget, his last battle is lost — his desire to retreat will dim his clarity, his power, his knowledge, and he will be cut down like a defenseless creature. But if he succeeds in fending off this invincible enemy, even for a brief moment of clarity and power, that short instant suffices for him to be called a man of knowledge.

The victory, here, is not total. It is the ultimate gesture of a warrior who, until the end, refuses to give up.

There is the classic map. But if one follows Don Juan throughout the entire corpus, one sees that this map is a first level of teaching — an architecture meant to keep an apprentice standing, and that the master himself will complete later. In *The Power of Silence*, Don Juan shifts the battlefield. The real enemy, the one that energetically blocks man, is none of the four above — it is self-pity, disguised as self-importance. "Self-pity is the real enemy and the source of man's misery." As long as that inner enemy stands, none of the victories over the other four is stable. And death itself — which seemed to be the fourth enemy through the figure of old age — is redefined. Don Juan says it explicitly: death is not an enemy. It is our only noble adversary, our only true challenge. It does not destroy the man of knowledge: it spurs him on. And when the warrior becomes impeccable, death itself draws back — it stops challenging him, that is all. Holding this is to understand why the Toltec way is not a checklist of trials, but a deep transformation: the four enemies are not defeated by confronting them frontally one after another. They are defeated by becoming impeccable — that is, by liquidating, at the center, the self-pity and self-importance that feed them all.

"Self-pity is the real enemy and the source of man's misery. Without a certain amount of self-pity, the man could not afford to be as self-important as he is."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Power of Silence*

Practice. Stalking the enemy in situation. An enemy is not stalked on a sheet of paper. He is stalked in life, as life exposes you. For the next seven days, hold yourself in a stalker's vigilance. Each time a resistance rises in you — a fear that fixes you, a certainty that pushes you ahead, an urge to impose, a fatigue that makes you want to give up — do not let it pass like a simple mood. Stop right there, in the moment itself. Name the enemy at work: Fear, Clarity, Power, Old Age. You will know which; each has a recognizable signature. Then, without moving, look at the center of yourself for the inner voice that whispers: this is unfair, I deserve better, I have already done so much, why me, I have the right. That voice is the wedge of self-pity. That is what feeds the enemy. Do not fight it, do not reason with it. See it for what it is — a self-importance in disguise — and

simply withdraw your assent. The enemy loses its fuel that very instant. Repeat the operation each time an enemy appears. No formal session, no extended introspection: a continuous, brief, relentless stalking, in the flow of your life. That is how a warrior advances — not by analyzing, by stalking.

Movement III — Exploring the Unknown

The art of dreaming and seeing. The left side. The second attention.

13. What does it really mean to see?

First, what the word seems to say must be defused. Seeing, in the Toltec way, is not an intensification of looking. It is not "looking better," nor "looking with more attention," nor "perceiving a hidden meaning behind things." The distinction between looking and seeing is radical and technical. Looking is the ordinary way you perceive the world — through the filter of a social description learned in childhood, which tells you that a tree is a tree, a man is a man, a piece of furniture is a piece of furniture. That filter holds you to the surface of things. When you look, things always seem the same one time after the next. Seeing, by contrast, is the act through which a man of knowledge directly perceives the energetic essence of everything, by setting that filter of interpretation entirely aside. When he sees, he no longer sees a tree, a man, or a piece of furniture — he perceives the energy that constitutes them. And that energy, unlike objects, is each time perceived differently while remaining the same. That is the signature of seeing: energetic identity under an ever new presentation.

Mechanically, seeing has nothing to do with the physical eyes. The sorcerers reveal it to Castaneda in *The Eagle's Gift*: the eyes serve to catch Intent, not to see. Seeing is exclusively a matter of alignment. Ordinary perception occurs because the assemblage point — that point of intense luminosity located on the human energy cocoon — is fixed in its habitual position, and selects from there an infinitesimal fraction of the emanations of the Eagle. That fraction generates the world of objects you know. Seeing occurs when the assemblage point moves and aligns other inner emanations, usually dormant, with the corresponding free emanations outside. This new alignment yields a new perception. The world of objects fades, not because it has disappeared, but because another level of reality — energy itself, as it circulates — is directly perceived. That is why Don Juan says seeing is the perception of the universe as it really is, and not as the description presents it to us.

When a sorcerer sees, the universe appears to him as an infinity of luminous filaments, incandescent, aware of themselves. A human being, seen up close, takes the shape of a giant luminous egg or ball, crossed by fibers that stretch, shine, vibrate. Seen from a distance, he may appear as a mushroom — a luminous silhouette against a dark ground. Awareness

itself, when seen, is an amber-colored glow on the right side of the cocoon. The allies, those inorganic beings the sorcerers speak of in low voices, appear as opaque clusters of energy, sometimes elongated like candles, sometimes as formless energy fields. The whole world — animals, plants, stones, emotions, thoughts — becomes visible as a specific arrangement of filaments. Each is unique, each is the same energetic material configured differently. That is why Don Juan insists: seeing definitively undoes every hierarchy, every importance, every illusion of separation between things. What you called a rock and what you called a human are, under the sorcerer's gaze, arrangements of the same luminous fabric.

But seeing is not a technique one applies to obtain a result. It is a capacity that opens only under strict conditions, and Don Juan leaves no room for doubt about the prerequisites. The first is energy — and considerable energy. The assemblage point is heavy, locked in place by decades of description of the world. To shift it sufficiently and to hold it in its new position, one needs an energetic reserve that only impeccability can build. A man who squanders his energy on self-importance, self-pity, ceaseless internal dialogue, and the dramas of his ordinary life will never have enough energy to see. The second prerequisite is stopping the world: the internal dialogue must have been silenced through not-doing, because as long as you are telling yourself the world, you are in description, not in direct perception. The third is sobriety, absolute moderation. An emotional man who sees is instantly carried away by fear or self-pity at what he perceives — he does not understand what he sees and collapses. That is why Don Juan teaches several disciplines simultaneously, working together to make seeing possible: impeccability, which accumulates energy; not-doing, which stops the world; the art of stalking and the art of dreaming, which dislodge the assemblage point from its habitual position. These disciplines do not follow one another in linear sequence — they are pursued in parallel, each reinforcing the others. And it is the accumulation of their effects which, when the man is ready, allows seeing to open. Trying to see before being ready is a dead end, and sometimes a disaster.

One last point, decisive, which many readers of Castaneda have not understood. In the first books — *The Teachings of Don Juan* and *A Separate Reality* — Don Juan claims that power plants (datura, mescalito, and especially the "little smoke" of mushrooms) are indispensable to provide

the speed needed for seeing. Generations of readers, and self-proclaimed apprentice sorcerers, believed plants were the key. They were not. In *Tales of Power*, Don Juan reveals that he had used the plants as a subterfuge: Castaneda was a rationalist too stubborn for the assemblage point to shift through discipline alone; the plants were a battering ram to break that stubbornness. From *The Fire from Within* and *The Art of Dreaming* on, the cartography is cleansed of all the folkloric shamanic layer: seeing is exclusively the consequence of a disciplined shift of the assemblage point, achieved through the art of stalking, through directed dreaming, and through Intent. Without any plants. The new seers, of whom Don Juan is the heir, banished plants from their way. This is a crucial precision: the true Toltec way does not pass through substances. It passes through impeccability, sobriety, discipline — and seeing then opens naturally, as a ripe fruit falls from the tree.

"The alignment of emanations which are never ordinarily used is what seeing is. One sees when such an alignment takes place. Seeing, being the consequence of an unusual alignment, cannot be something one can simply look at."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Fire from Within*

14. What is the true structure of the world?

Don Juan never presents an abstract cosmology. With him, to describe the structure of the world is to describe the place of man within that structure. At the summit — if the word still has any meaning for what has none — there is what the seers call the Eagle. It is not a biological being, not a god, not a mere metaphor. It is a universal force, immeasurable, impersonal, and indescribable, which governs the destiny of all living beings. The seers named it so because, in the rare flashes when they can sustain its vision, it appears under the aspect of a black and white eagle, immense, rising to infinity. The Eagle is the source of awareness. It creates sentient beings and lends them awareness at birth, so that they may enrich it through their experiences of life. At death, it takes back this enriched awareness, devours it, and feeds upon it. That is the cosmic fact — raw, pitiless — which serves as the foundation of the entire Toltec way. Everything Don Juan teaches — impeccability, not-doing, stalking, dreaming — has only one final aim: to give a man the means to escape this rule of the Eagle.

The Eagle does not act upon the world directly. It emits. What it emits — those immutable energy fields that compose the entire universe — is called the emanations of the Eagle. A seer perceives them as filaments of incandescent light, alive, vibrating, aware of themselves. These emanations are not scattered at random: they are gathered into immense bundles called the great bands of emanations. On our Earth, Don Juan is precise: there are exactly forty-eight great bands. One single one of these forty-eight bands engenders organic life — that which has awareness and a living body, that is to say all the flora and all the fauna of the planet. Seven bands engender inorganic beings: shapeless, opaque receptacles which possess awareness but no organism in the ordinary sense — these are what the sorcerers call the allies. The remaining forty bands engender no awareness. They form what Don Juan calls the vessels: immense configurations of inanimate energy. That is what the cosmos is for a seer: forty-eight great bands, of which only one — the one where you are — gives birth to life as we know it.

The human being, in this cosmology, is not a physical object. He is an energy field. Seen up close by a seer, a man takes the shape of a luminous egg, or of a giant ball of energy, whose surface lies about an arm's length behind the shoulder blades. Seen at a distance, this shape becomes that of a mushroom, a luminous silhouette against a dark ground. This egg is not homogeneous: it is divided into two great parts. The right side is that of the tonal — reason, the everyday world, all that a man is capable of thinking and naming. The left side is that of the nagual — pure perception, the unknown, all that man is capable of without being able to speak it. In a Nagual — a technical term designating certain particular sorcerers like Don Juan himself — the luminous egg bears an energetic anomaly: it is divided into four compartments (sometimes three). This rare structure is what makes a man a leader of a lineage. Finally, on the far right of the cocoon, there is a narrow vertical band: it is the band specific to the human emanations. It is this — this narrow, circumscribed band — which engenders the ordinary perception you have of the world. Everything you know, everything you are capable of living as a human, plays out on that narrow band.

Upon this luminous being, Don Juan transmits to Castaneda a precise cartography of the human faculties — what he calls "eight points on the

fibers of a luminous being." Twice in the corpus he traces this diagram on the ground to make it visible: first in *Journey to Ixtlan*, marking eight points on the earth with a twig and connecting them to form a trapezoidal figure; then in *Tales of Power*, throwing ashes on the ground and tracing the same eight points again, this time naming each one precisely. These eight points, he says, represent "the totality of oneself." They are not a metaphor: they correspond to precise zones of the physical body. Reason and talking stand in the head. Feeling radiates from the tip of the breastbone. Will is lodged in the area below the navel. Dreaming stands on the right side, against the ribs. Seeing stands on the left side, symmetrically. These six centers are accessible to the warrior's awareness. Two further points exist, isolated from the previous six and from each other; Don Juan refuses to reveal them, and specifies only this: these two points will never submit to reason, and only the will can manipulate them. Don Juan's diagnosis is blunt. The ordinary man spends his entire life in a sterile back-and-forth. In the first diagram of *Journey to Ixtlan*, Don Juan describes this trap as the oscillation between feeling and understanding: each thing must be felt, then understood, then felt again to be understood again. In the second diagram of *Tales of Power*, he completes the picture by naming reason and talking — which form the first ring of power that holds the world in place, man thinking what he speaks and speaking what he thinks in a closed loop. Both versions point to the same mechanism: man condemns himself to revolve on the upper axis of the figure, ignorant of all that lies lower in his luminous being. The other six centers — feeling, will, dreaming, seeing, and the two unknowables — are the true worlds accessible to man, worlds that most men do not even suspect to exist. The whole Toltec way is a methodical exploration of these six centers left fallow by civilization.

Alongside this cartography of the faculties, the corpus develops a second cartography, purely perceptual and energetic, which does not overlap the first but completes it. On the luminous cocoon, the seers identify two points of capital importance. The first is the assemblage point. A point of intense brilliance, the size of a tennis ball, located on the surface of the cocoon, about an arm's length behind the right shoulder blade. Its function is to assemble perception, by aligning the emanations inside the cocoon with the free emanations outside. Its position determines what you perceive. In its habitual position, it selects the narrow human band and engenders the ordinary world. If it shifts, it aligns other emanations, and other worlds

give themselves to be perceived. Don Juan specifies that across the entire luminous sphere there are about six hundred possible positions where this point can fix itself to render a complete world perceivable. The second point is the glow of awareness: an amber-colored glow that radiates on the right vertical band of the cocoon, and which, by interacting with the assemblage point, engenders awareness itself. Such, then, is the complete energetic structure of the human being according to Don Juan: a luminous egg, traversed by the emanations of the Eagle, bearing on its surface the assemblage point and the glow of awareness, and harboring within it the eight centers of the human faculties — of which six awaken in an accomplished way, and two remain inaccessible beyond the edges of reason.

From this architecture — the Eagle, the emanations, the great bands, the human cocoon with its eight centers and its assemblage point — Don Juan derives three domains of the universe, which are not places but zones of possible experience for a man. The known: this is the infinitesimal fraction of the Eagle's emanations that your assemblage point picks up in its habitual position. It is the world of everyday life, of rationality, of all that you share with other humans. The unknown: these are the emanations which lie inside the human band of the cocoon, but which are usually idle, unaligned. When the assemblage point shifts within this band, it aligns those emanations, and man enters the unknown. Don Juan is precise: in the face of the unknown, the man of knowledge becomes daring, feels vigorous and full of hope. The unknown is never dangerous in itself — it is merely different, and it waits to be traversed. The unknowable, on the other hand, is of another order. It is the incalculable immensity of the other forty-six great bands, those which carry no human characteristic. Don Juan is categorical: the man of knowledge must not break into the unknowable. Direct contact with these emanations foreign to human awareness is fatal. It exhausts energy, paralyzes reason, breeds confusion and destruction. The wisdom of a sorcerer consists precisely in knowing where the boundary lies — and never crossing it out of vanity.

There remains the last piece, the one that gives meaning to all that precedes. The Eagle commands all creatures to return, at death, the awareness it had lent them. That is the rule — impersonal, pitiless, with no apparent exception. But the Eagle, though insensitive, has granted a gift.

It has left an opening — only one — that allows a man to escape its rule. It is this gift that the seers discovered after generations of search, and which founds the ultimate aim of the entire Toltec way. That aim is not physical immortality. Nor is it power, nor knowledge, nor wisdom. It is total freedom. It is obtained at the precise moment of death, by an act of mastery that only a lifetime of impeccability can render possible: the warrior aligns simultaneously, in a single inner gesture, all the emanations inside his cocoon. He then burns with the fire from within — that inner fire which consumes the totality of his luminosity at once. Instead of being swallowed by the Eagle like any other awareness, he passes through death with his life force intact, and crosses into what Don Juan calls the third attention — eternity, freedom, the beyond of the rule. That is the structure of the world, and that, within this structure, is the place and the possible destiny of man. All the rest of this breviary, all the questions that precede and all that follow, are practical steps to make this final act possible.

"Freedom is the Eagle's gift to man. Unfortunately, very few men understand that all we need, in order to accept such a magnificent gift, is to have enough energy."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Fire from Within* (Epilogue)

15. What does it mean to lose the human form?

The human form is not your physical appearance or your personality. According to the terminology of *The Fire from Within*, it is the irresistible force of alignment of the emanations lit by the glow of awareness at the habitual location of the assemblage point. In plain terms: it is what holds your assemblage point riveted to the position that produces standard human experience. As long as this force acts, you can be nothing but human. To lose the human form means to break this force of alignment — to free the assemblage point from its mooring.

La Gorda speaks of the human form as a sticky force that makes you stick back to what you have always been. You can change your outer life, move, leave your habits, adopt another vocabulary — the human form will pull you back to your initial position by an inner gravity. As long as it operates, every change is merely a change in words. Only the real shift of the

assemblage point produces a true transformation, and this shift demands that the sticky force has been broken.

Don Juan teaches a way to break this force, and he returns to it tirelessly book after book: impeccability nourished by the awareness of death. The awareness of death is not morbid; it is the goad that forbids self-importance. When death is your adviser on the left, you can no longer afford complaint, self-importance, self-pity, internal dialogue — all that dissipates energy. Impeccability is not a morality; it is an economy. This energy, once accumulated, becomes the critical mass that allows the assemblage point to dislodge itself. Total freedom, says Don Juan, is the Eagle's gift, but that gift demands that you have enough energy to receive it. Impeccability is what builds this energy, act after act, within the very flow of ordinary life.

In his later teachings, Don Juan reveals another mechanism that releases the energy trapped in the past: the recapitulation. Revisiting every encounter of one's life through a swept breath allows, according to the corpus, the retrieval of the filaments of energy left in others and the return of those they have left in oneself. Don Juan presents it as one of the greatest projects of sorcery. But it is a particular practice that requires a frame, a retreat, and a mastery that few can afford on their own. It remains a piece of the same way, not a competing path: what it accomplishes energetically — to free energy — joins what impeccability accomplishes in the present, which is to cease wasting it.

When the human form gives way, it is not a psychological event; it is a bodily crossing. The corpus describes the passage with precision. An enormous pressure descends from the chest toward the legs. The feet burn. One eye seems to float out of the skull. The sensation resembles that of a heart attack, except that it does not kill. It is the moment when the force of alignment that held you in place collapses. It is not metaphorical: it is an energetic repositioning felt in the physical body as an inaugural shock.

Once the human form is lost, the warrior ceases to be a fixed being. He becomes fluid. He no longer tells himself. He has no more personal history to defend. His assemblage point, freed from its mooring, can shift to other positions — and from there the unknown truly opens. Without this loss,

every exploration of the unknown is only a projection of the human into the unknown. With it, the unknown becomes effectively accessible. It is the threshold that separates the two halves of the warrior's path: before, one cleans the tonal; after, one explores the nagual.

"Impeccability is nothing else but the proper use of energy. My statements have no inkling of morality. I've saved energy and that makes me impeccable."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Fire from Within* (ch. 2)

16. What has stripped man of his power?

Don Juan gives a definition of the warrior that must be read with precision before going any further. In *The Power of Silence*, he declares: "The war for a warrior is the total struggle against that individual self that has deprived man of his power." This sentence is not a psychological metaphor. The warrior is not a man who works on himself in order to know himself better. He is engaged in a literal war against something that inhabits his interior, that presents itself as "him," and that has stolen his original power. The capital question then becomes: who is this enemy, and who has stripped us of our power?

In the early books, Don Juan gives this enemy a simple name. In *The Power of Silence*, he states bluntly: "Man does have an evil side, yes, and that side is called stupidity." And he insists — it is a strange stupidity, which coexists with real intelligence. Man knows how to build bridges, computers, mathematical systems. And at the same time, he locks himself into absurd beliefs, contradictory behaviors, derisory preoccupations that devour his life. This contradiction between intelligence and stupidity has no natural meaning. It is the symptom of a deeper cause that Don Juan will only reveal at the very end of his teaching.

The revelation comes in *The Active Side of Infinity*, in the chapter "The Mud Shadow." Don Juan reveals to Castaneda what the sorcerers have always known and what ordinary men refuse to look at: "What we have against us is not a simple predator. It is very smart, and organized. It follows a methodical system to render us useless. Man, the magical being that he is destined to be, is no longer magical. He's an average piece of meat." The sorcerers name this predator the flyer, or the dark shadow —

the mud shadow in Castaneda's tongue. It is an inorganic being, issued from one of the seven bands that engender beings without organism. Its function, in the cosmic economy as the sorcerers see it, is to feed on human awareness.

The energetic mechanism is precise. The human being is the only species that carries the glow of awareness on the outside of its luminous cocoon — a brilliant coat, accessible, consumable. Don Juan explains: "By playing on our self-reflection, which is the only point of awareness left to us, the predators create flares of awareness that they proceed to consume in a ruthless, predatory fashion. They give us inane problems that force those flares of awareness to rise, and in this manner they keep us alive in order for them to be fed with the energetic flare of our pseudo-concerns." Here everything converges. Self-importance, self-pity, the ceaseless internal dialogue, smugness, complaint, rumination — these are not mere flaws of character. They are the flares of energy that the predator provokes and consumes. Each time you ruminate, you feed the dark shadow.

But the predator's masterstroke, revealed without ambiguity in the same passage, goes further. It does not content itself with consuming the energy of human awareness. It has replaced man's mind with its own. Don Juan says it with a force that admits no equivocation: "In order to keep us obedient and meek and weak, the predators engaged themselves in a stupendous maneuver — stupendous, of course, from the point of view of a fighting strategist. A horrendous maneuver from the point of view of those who suffer it. They gave us their mind! Do you hear me? The predators give us their mind, which becomes our mind. The predators' mind is baroque, contradictory, morose, filled with the fear of being discovered any minute now." That is, technically, the individual self that has deprived man of his power. What thinks in you, what self-reflects, what complains, what worries, what ruminates without end — is not you. It is a foreign installation. The sorcerers, in *Magical Passes*, locate this installation at the top of the head, with a repugnant pendulum-like movement distinct from the energy of the other centers. The man who believes he is his own personal self is mistaken about his own identity.

The way to defeat this enemy is precisely the one Don Juan has been teaching since the first book. Discipline — another name for impeccability — exhausts the foreign mind in the long run, because an impeccable act is

energetically beyond its reach. Inner silence cuts off its source of food, because a man who has ceased internal dialogue ceases to produce the flares the predator consumes. The awareness of death gives the warrior the implacability needed to no longer be manipulated by the contradictory fears the flyer injects. Each act of impeccability is an act of direct war against the predator. Each instant of self-pity is a meal offered to it. That is why the Toltec way is technically a war, and why impeccability is not a virtue but a matter of energetic survival. The warrior does not fight against himself. He fights against what has installed itself in him and passes itself off as him.

"In order to keep us obedient and meek and weak, the predators engaged themselves in a stupendous maneuver. They gave us their mind! Do you hear me? The predators give us their mind, which becomes our mind. The predators' mind is baroque, contradictory, morose, filled with the fear of being discovered any minute now."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Active Side of Infinity* (ch. "The Mud Shadow")

17. What is dreaming?

Dreaming, in the sense Don Juan means it, has nothing to do with ordinary dreams. It is, by his own definition, a most sophisticated art: the art of shifting the assemblage point at will from its habitual position, so as to enhance and enlarge the scope of what can be perceived. Ordinary dreaming is an erratic, uncontrolled drift of the assemblage point. Dreaming is the deliberate act that turns this drift into an instrument of exploration. Through it, the warrior enters the second attention and gains access to what Don Juan calls, without detour, other worlds, as real as this one. "What you call dreams are real for a warrior."

The corpus traces a cartography of four thresholds — the four gates of dreaming. The first opens when the dreamer manages to glimpse his hands in a dream and to know that he is dreaming. The second, when he wakes up from a dream into another dream, without returning to the ordinary world. The third, when he sees himself sleeping — the moment when the energy body, that double of pure energy Don Juan also calls the double, consolidates and begins to move on its own. The fourth, when the energy body travels to concrete places, in this world or in others. Don Juan specifies that dreaming never goes alone: the art of dreaming shifts the

assemblage point, the art of stalking fixes it. Without stalking, dreaming is only a scattered chaos.

The dangers of dreaming are real and named with precision in the corpus. The inorganic beings — the allies, the scouts — capture the dreamer who is not yet impeccable, drawing him into their realm by curiosity or by fear, and do not let him go without a fight. The freshly freed energy body is like a dazzled child who hypnotizes itself on the smallest detail and no longer knows how to return. The old seers, who ventured too far, never came back — or came back burned by the fire from within without having been prepared for it. Castaneda himself, who approached the third gate with an incomplete recapitulation, woke up screaming night after night. Don Juan sums up the rule in a single sentence: "Dreaming has to be a matter of utmost sobriety. No single false move is permitted."

The prerequisites Don Juan lays down are uncompromising. Dreaming demands considerable energy, which only a thorough recapitulation and an accomplished impeccability can build. "Dreaming requires the use of every bit of energy we have." And above all, dreaming demands the presence of a nagual or a benefactor — someone who holds the line from the waking world while the dreamer ventures forth. Without that line, the apprentice is irremediably alone, Don Juan says; there is no railing. Castaneda, on several occasions, was saved from an energetic death by the direct intervention of Don Juan or of his companions. An isolated dreamer who plunges into the gates without that support does not come back intact.

One last truth must be named, one the corpus clearly confesses: the true operative techniques of dreaming have not been delivered in full in the books. Castaneda admits in the introduction to *The Art of Dreaming* that he kept silence on a second group of apprentices — "Don Juan had forbidden me to do so." And the corpus lets surface, without ever fully explaining it, an entire operative apparatus: a forehead band with a strap crossing the top of the skull (*Journey to Ixtlan*), a gold ring tightened on the finger as an energetic bridge, quartz crystals held in the palm, pressure of the tongue against the palate, river pebbles placed on the belly, precise twin postures to initiate the dream. These elements are not metaphors. They are tools. And they are not transmitted through reading. It is for this reason that this breviary names the territory of dreaming and

stops there. The safe way, the only one that can be practiced alone and without a master, remains the one already traced: impeccability nourished by the awareness of death. It builds, day after day, the energy that one day — perhaps — will make exploration possible. On that day, you will have a benefactor. Not before.

"Dreaming has to be a matter of utmost sobriety. No single false move is permitted."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Art of Dreaming*

18. What presences inhabit the invisible world?

What you see of the world is only a tiny fraction of what is there. The Toltec warrior learns to cross a territory peopled with presences — beings, forces, spirits, imprints, entities — that ordinary perception does not pick up. Castaneda's corpus draws a vertiginous map of it. What follows is not a fantastic catalogue meant to make one dream. It is the real topography of the world as the sorcerers see it, and which a warrior learns, as he disciplines himself, no longer to ignore.

Beyond our organic world — populated by luminous eggs, humans and animals — there exists a twin universe peopled by entities that are conscious but devoid of metabolism. For the seer, these creatures appear not as bright spheres, but as long candle-shaped, opaque forms. Don Juan distinguishes several families among them. The allies: mysterious, aggressive forces that the sorcerer can subdue to make of them a vehicle of power. The scouts: charges of foreign energy, spies sent from the inorganic realm, who infiltrate dreams. The emissaries: disembodied voices that teach in dreams, but whose price is exorbitant — they seek to retain the dreamer's awareness for eternity. The flyers: the cosmic predators, the mud shadows who imposed stupidity on humanity in order to feed on it. The death defier, or the Tenant: a monstrous old seer, thousands of years old, who defied death by manipulating his assemblage point, and who at every generation extorts energy from the nagual in exchange for gifts of power. And finally, the old seers themselves — those who, captivated by the allies' promises, chose to merge with that realm in order to live forever, prisoners, having lost their human condition.

In the early books, Don Juan teaches Castaneda that behind each psychotropic plant stands an entity with its own absolute temperament. Mescalito, the spirit of peyote, is neither an ally nor a tool. It is a benevolent protector and a teacher, who teaches the right way to live, and who appears as an amber-colored light or in the form of a green anthropomorphic being. The Devil's Weed, datura, is a strictly feminine entity — passionate, jealous, possessive, and violent. It grants the power to fly physically, but flatters the ego unto destruction. The Little Smoke, the mushrooms, is Don Juan's personal ally: a noble force with a pure heart that demands strength, gives the speed required for seeing, but tears the sorcerer from his physical body and casts him into terrifying dimensions. In his later teachings, Don Juan will set all these plants aside from the pure Toltec way. But their existence remains as a reality of the corpus: they are not drugs, they are presences.

The physical world itself is not neutral. It is an energetic checkerboard. There are sitios of power — beneficial spots that regenerate the warrior's energy — and there are enemy places that drain it. Certain caves were artificially endowed with awareness by the old seers: the rock there was sculpted to infuse an ill-omened charge that shifts the assemblage point of whoever enters. And beyond particular sitios, the Earth itself is seen by the seers as an immense sentient being, with its own cocoon, whose impulse can one day propel the sorcerer toward total freedom at the moment of the fire from within.

In the nagual, the natural world bursts with awareness. The wind is not a meteorological phenomenon: it is an entity that stalks. Don Juan one day shows Castaneda what hides within the wind — a whirl, a cloud, a mist, a face turning upon itself. Water has its own awareness, terrifying: Castaneda, gazing at a spring, almost drowns when he perceives in it giant greenish bubbles. Power animals are agents of spirit. A mountain lion is not a wild beast, it is a teacher. Coyotes are pitiless tricksters. The day Castaneda hears a coyote speak, it is his energy body that has slipped between worlds — "the coyote was a fluid, liquid, luminous being. Its luminosity dazzled me."

Every gate to the unknown is guarded. Castaneda, under the effect of the Little Smoke, one day comes up against the sentinel of another world. It is not a metaphor; it is a monster that bars his way with unheard-of brutality.

"Suddenly the guardian appeared on the horizon. He stood there with his mouth open like a great toothless cavern. He vibrated his wings, and all of a sudden he charged. He rushed toward me as a bull would have, and with his gigantic wings he slapped my eyes." Every threshold has its guardian, and the guardian lets through only what possesses enough energy to sustain the crossing.

For the Toltec sorcerer, death is not a concept — it is a physical presence. It stands on your left, an arm's length away, and it never leaves you. Don Juan affirms that it is our only noble adversary, the goad that forces the warrior into impeccability. Sorcerers perceive it as a black shadow. Castaneda one day sees it strikingly in his rearview mirror, and Don Juan delivers the vision to him: "On the head of death there are lights. Death sets them in place as one puts on a hat, and then off it goes at a gallop. Those are the lights of death galloping behind us."

When the description of the world collapses, the sorcerer sees what prowls in the space that ordinary perception leaves empty. Ghosts and apparitions wander on our earth. To a seer, they are energy fields with awareness. Don Juan teaches Castaneda to see in the night and in the shadows. There, the spectacle widens: massive shadows roll, black silhouettes walk, dreadful faces emerge — proof that a multitude of presences cohabit the same space as us, invisible to those who sleep on their feet.

There exist, at the boundary of humanity, creatures that are no longer quite men. La Catalina, Don Juan's enemy-ally sorceress, is the most striking example: she masters the shift to the region below, changes form at will, one day attacks Castaneda in the form of a giant worm. The diablos and brujos — dark sorcerers who use power not for freedom but for power — can possess souls, transform themselves into birds (Don Juan himself, on several occasions, becomes a crow), or hurl deadly grains of corn that physically embed themselves in their victims. The warrior's path is not without real enemies.

What happens between two human beings does not happen on the psychological plane alone. Every interaction leaves luminous traces — filaments that hook onto the energetic cocoon. Sexual relations, affective bonds, confrontations, repeated encounters: all leave behind a luminous spider's web. The luminous body projects and receives these filaments

without cease. That is why the recapitulation is so decisive a piece of work: it is the breath that inhales to take back what belongs to us and that we left in others, and that exhales what does not belong to us and that we carry in their stead. Before being an exercise, it is a cleansing of the web.

Above this entire bestiary reigns the source. The Eagle: not a bird, but an immeasurable, unspeakable cosmic force that gives awareness to beings in order to feed on it. The seers, in rare flashes, perceive it as a black and white eagle of infinite dimension. At death, it devours the awareness it had lent. And, opposite this implacable rule, Intent: the universal force that organizes perception, intelligent, alive, which listens to the warrior who knows how to call it. "The only way to know intent is to know it directly, through a living connection that exists between intent and all sentient beings." It is not a concept, it is a presence.

This bestiary is not an esoteric inventory. It is the real topography of the world in which the warrior moves. The ordinary man and the sorcerer do not walk in the same space. The one sees a road, a town, faces. The other sees, in addition: the shadows that prowl in the corners, the filaments that weave the bonds, the places that drain or that give, the coyotes that speak, the guardian standing watch at the gate, and death that stands on the left. Knowing that all this exists does not immediately make one able to see it. But it changes the quality of the gaze. The warrior ceases to believe that the world is limited to what his reason can name.

"On the head of death there are lights. Death sets them in place as one puts on a hat, and then off it goes at a gallop. Those are the lights of death galloping behind us."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda

Movement IV — Touching the Root

Where the whole path leads. What Don Juan reveals only at the end.

19. How does the spirit manifest itself?

There is a force that speaks to the warrior. It makes no sound, it has no face, but it is there, constant, attentive. Don Juan calls it the spirit. He also calls it the abstract, the nagual, Intent. Four names for a single reality: the very force that sustains the universe, and which, through a thousand forms, seeks to enter into contact with the awakened man.

Don Juan specifies that this force is not a personal god in the sense the religions mean it, nor a devout metaphor. It is an awareness without named figure, alive, capable of manifesting itself to whoever knows how to listen. Each living being, he says, is connected to it by a filament — a link. In modern man this filament is fouled, forgotten, almost cut beneath the dust of internal dialogue. The warrior's work consists in reopening it.

Don Juan teaches that the spirit manifests itself to the apprentice in four moments — what he calls the four abstract cores. First, the manifestations: three signs, three improbable coincidences that strike the future warrior's life as if to single him out. Then the knock of the spirit: a brutal event, a door kicked in, which forces the ordinary man out of his slumber. Then the trickery: the nagual adjusts the apprentice, dusts him off, makes him able to stand upright in a world he does not yet understand. Finally the descent: a last shock, the one that definitively shatters the cohesion of the old self. These four moments are not stages one fabricates. They are visits. The spirit knocks, and the man either recognizes or does not.

Here, an attentive reader will notice something. This force which sends signs, which organizes improbable encounters, which knocks at the door, which adjusts, which guides — this mechanism is not peculiar to the Toltec sorcerers. Other spiritual paths, sometimes very distant in their form, describe the same thing under other names. The word angel, in Greek *angelos*, means nothing other than messenger: the one through whom a vaster intelligence takes a face cut to the measure of the man who is to receive it. What Don Juan calls an edifice of Intent, the angelic tradition calls an orchestrated encounter. What he calls the three manifestations, the angelic tradition calls signs. What he calls the knock, the angelic tradition calls the call. The difference is not one of nature — it is one of vocabulary and form of access.

Toltec Intent manifests in forces and signs without named figure: coincidences, scenes, presences. The angelic tradition personalizes those same manifestations into named figures, because man more easily enters into contact with a face than with an abstraction. But the law is strictly the same: no one receives Intent in the lump; everything passes through an intermediary, a messenger, cut to the measure of the one who is to hear. Castaneda himself, in the later books, names these intermediaries: scouts, allies, presences. The Toltecs speak of an impersonal force that delegates; the angelic traditions speak of messengers sent. The words differ. The function is identical. Whether one calls it an angel, an ally, a scout, or an edifice of the spirit, it is always the same gesture: Intent which, through a sensible detour, makes itself recognizable to man.

At the bottom of all this lies what Don Juan calls silent knowledge. It is the original state of humanity. A direct knowledge, without thought, without language, in which man was connected to all that is and heard the spirit without effort. This knowledge we lost the day the individual self took power — the day each man began to say "I think," "I want," "I know." The self covered the link with a thick layer of chatter. Since then, the messengers speak and no one hears. The warrior does not seek to invent a new wisdom: he seeks to recover what has always been there, beneath the noise.

The way of access to this listening has a name: inner silence. Not a silence manufactured by meditation, not a conceptual void, not a mystical performance. A silence that accumulates second by second, every time you do not fill the space with commentary about yourself. Don Juan said that it takes years to accumulate enough inner silence for the spirit to deign to speak. But once the threshold is reached, something tips. You cease to live in your head. You perceive the signs the spirit addresses to you at every turn, the messengers it places on your road, the edifices it builds beneath your steps.

Castaneda recounts scenes that are so many living proofs. Don Juan, as a young man, takes a bullet in the chest, and it is that bullet which singles him out for his way. Castaneda, in a Los Angeles bus station, suddenly sees played out before him a scene so precise, so improbable, that he understands the spirit has just spoken to him. Don Juan, as a child, encounters a jaguar in the mountains of Chihuahua, and the jaguar

initiates him without a word. These scenes are not anecdotes: they are edifices of Intent. The spirit builds for the one it calls perfect scenes, made-to-measure, charged with meaning at the precise instant they are needed. The apprentice must have eyes open enough to recognize that he is being invited in.

Don Juan describes four stages in this link with the spirit. First, the rusty link, that of the ordinary man, who barely perceives the signs. Then the cleaned link, recovered through impeccability and the awareness of death. Then the living link, in which the warrior recognizes the messengers at the instant they pass. Finally, the ultimate stage: following the designs of the spirit, letting oneself be guided by this intelligence vaster than oneself, consenting to the edifices it constructs. At this stage, the way ceases to be an effort. It becomes a continuous conversation between the warrior and the force that has always been calling him.

"Sorcerers call intent the indescribable, the spirit, the abstract, the nagal. And it's with this that they're concerned."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Power of Silence*

20. What is the force that makes me perceive?

In the previous entry, we saw that the spirit manifests itself to the warrior through signs, edifices, messengers. There is an aspect of this same force that must now be named separately, because it is more radical still. Intent does not merely send you messages. It is what allows you, at this very instant, to read these words. It is the silent cause of the least tree you see, of the least sound you hear, of the least presence you feel. You do not perceive by yourself. It is Intent that makes you perceive.

Don Juan formulates this with a precision that takes the breath away. The ordinary man believes that he becomes aware because he perceives — that perception comes first, and that awareness results from it. The Toltec sorcerers say the reverse. You perceive because Intent presses upon you. It intrudes, it presses, it forces the world to appear in your field. Without that pressure, nothing. No tree. No sound. No you. The world as it appears to you is not a raw given — it is the result of a constant contact between your energy body and this universal force that presses upon it. Change the

pressure, and another world appears. That is why, in the Toltec vision, perception is never innocent: it is always the product of a balance of forces.

Don Juan carefully distinguishes two levels within this force. Will — the willing — is a blind, impersonal, incessant energy: the raw current that issues from the alignment of the emanations and pushes us to act. It chooses nothing. It pushes. Intent, on the other hand, is the higher stage of that same energy: the deliberate, precise, directed manner of guiding that current. It is the most refined control of the force of alignment. It is the difference between the wind that blows anywhere and the hand that holds the helm. Both are real. Both come from the same energetic ground. But only Intent is intelligent.

From this follows a consequence that commands the whole way. If to perceive is to be traversed by Intent, then Toltec sorcery, at bottom, can be only one thing: the procedure of cleaning one's own link to this force. All the rest — the techniques, the dreams, the shifts of the assemblage point — is only consequence. The warrior does not move his assemblage point by himself: it is Intent that moves it, once the link is clean. And how does one clean this link? That is the question the next entry will answer.

"Intent is the universal force that makes us perceive. We do not become aware because we perceive; rather, we perceive as a consequence of the pressure and intrusion of intent."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Power of Silence*

Practice. Calling Intent. When night has fallen, withdraw to a dark room, alone, without your phone. Light a candle, place it on a dark surface a few inches from your eyes, at the exact height of your gaze. Fix the flame until your body stills and the chatter drops. Then pronounce aloud, clearly, slowly, the word Intent — as often as you must. Do not murmur it. This is not a prayer. It is a command. While you speak, focus entirely on what your precise intent is. The seers do not call Intent by reason — they call it by the voice and by the brilliance of the gaze. Repeat until something shifts in the silence around you.

21. How do I clean my link to Intent?

The previous entry ended on a question: if to perceive is to be traversed by Intent, then how does one clean this link that has fouled itself over the

course of an ordinary life? Don Juan absolutely refuses the esoteric answer. No secret techniques. No incantations. No rituals. He brings everything back to a thing of a simplicity that disappoints those who were waiting for a mystery: energy. The link is fouled because we waste our energy. To clean it is to cease that waste. That is the whole of it. And that is why it is so difficult.

The thesis is formulated by Don Juan in *The Power of Silence* with a precision that cuts short any attempt to embellish the way. Sorcery, he said, could be defined as the procedure of cleaning one's link of communication with Intent. The whole of sorcery. Not a part, not a stage — the totality. Visions, shifts of the assemblage point, direct perception of energy, dreaming, silent knowledge: all of this is only consequence. Once the link is clean, these things come of themselves, because it is the very nature of a clean link to open to such perceptions. As long as it is fouled, no technique, however sophisticated, will produce anything lasting.

Here a parenthesis must be opened on the word sorcery. Don Juan uses it throughout the corpus, but he warns Castaneda that it is not the right word — and that there is no right word. He tried nagualism, too obscure; knowledge, too vague; magic, demeaning; mastery of intent, too abstract; the quest for total freedom, too long and metaphorical. He stayed with sorcery for lack of better, conceding without detour that the term was not really exact. This multiplicity of names is not a wavering of vocabulary. It is a deliberate maneuver. To fix the way under a single label would be to subordinate it to the tonal, to reason, to the inventory — and what it aims at is precisely what escapes the inventory. Each name lights only one aspect of the thing. Warrior names the ethic, the basic energetic status. Seer names the direct perception of energy in the form of filaments. Nagualist names the mastery of the abstract. Man of knowledge names the accomplishment, the one who has vanquished the four enemies. Sorcery is the bait for the ordinary man; knowledge speaks to the rational mind; seeing addresses the one who has begun to perceive.

And there is one last name, which Don Juan uses with particular insistence in the later books: Toltec. He does not give it the sense of the historians. For him, the word Toltec meant man of knowledge and designated a brotherhood of healers, dreamers, dancers, stalkers, spread throughout Mexico, dedicated to the mysteries of awareness. La Gorda, in *The Second*

Ring of Power, gives its sharpest definition: a Toltec is one who receives and holds mysteries. It must also be known that Don Juan himself, in *The Fire from Within*, categorically refuses the title of sorcerer: "I'm not a sorcerer. I'm a warrior who sees. In fact, we are all the new seers. The old seers were the sorcerers." He distinguishes two lineages. The old Toltec seers, obsessed with power and domination, lost themselves in morbidity and ritual; they were exterminated at the time of the Spanish Conquest. The new seers, emerging from the ruins, abandoned the thirst for power in order to seek the abstract and total freedom. It is to this second lineage that Don Juan belongs, and it is this lineage that this breviary claims as its own. Among all the words he uses, Toltec is the one that names it most completely — because it names at once the lineage, the charge (to receive and hold mysteries), and the orientation (knowledge, not power). It is under this name that we can designate the way. The other words remain useful, each pointing at one angle. But when one must decide, we say: the way of the Toltecs.

The first pillar of the cleaning is impeccability. Don Juan is categorical — and he repeats it to Castaneda as if to leave no room for misunderstanding: impeccability is nothing other than the proper use of energy. Not a moral virtue. Not a virtuous discipline meant to make of you a good man. A rigorous energetic mechanic, with no inkling of morality. Each impeccable act is an act that deposits something in the cup of your link. Each mediocre, hurried, slipshod, slack act — each useless word, each nursed resentment, each indulgence — is a leak. And the Toltecs, says Don Juan, need energy in order to command the spirit. Nothing other than this slow accumulation, act after act, cleans the link.

The second pillar is the destruction of self-importance. Don Juan designates it as the greatest energy leak of modern man. It is incarnated under two twin faces: smugness and self-pity. Smugness is the force generated by the image you have of yourself — and it is this force that holds your assemblage point nailed to the ordinary position. Self-pity, its reverse, is the real enemy: without a certain degree of self-pity, said Don Juan, man could not afford to be as smug as he is. The two stand together. Both bleed energy. As long as this machine turns, the link cannot clean itself, because everything you deposit on one side by your effort flows out the other through your preoccupations with yourself.

The third pillar is the awareness of death. Without it, one holds neither impeccability nor the destruction of self-importance. One tries, runs out of breath, falls back. Death, set on the warrior's left, gives him the absolute concentration that alone allows the crossing of inner resistances without softening. It rules actions and feelings. It pushes implacably. It reminds, at every leak, that time is not stretchable. The cleaning of the link is a race against it — not a desperate race, but a precise one, because each drop of energy not wasted deposits itself exactly where it must.

The fourth pillar is the recapitulation. In the late books — *The Active Side of Infinity*, *The Art of Dreaming* — Don Juan raises it to the rank of a fundamental magical act, on the same level as the three preceding. It is not a memory exercise. It is not a therapy. It is an energetic redeployment. Every event lived has left a part of your energy imprisoned in the past, and has left in you a part of others' energy. The warrior, by a precise sweep of the head coupled with the breath, exhales to throw off the foreign energy and inhales to call back his own, event by event, person by person. This gesture frees the energy imprisoned in memory and settles the invisible debts that every life accumulates. The effect on the link is immediate: fluidity recovered, perception clarified, chatter lightened. Recapitulation, said Don Juan, stirs up all the rubbish of our lives and brings it to the surface. That is exactly where it can be discharged.

One thing must be held firmly: none of these pillars is played out in the spectacular. Don Juan spent years breaking in Castaneda the fantasy of impressive ritual, secret incantation, grand ceremony. He calls this morbidity — and he warns that the old seers lost themselves in it. The cleaning of the link is done in the ordinary. In the way you do your dishes. In the way you speak to your mother. In the way you keep a promise that costs you. In the way you take a humiliation without striking back through self-pity. In the way you let a petty tyrant teach you mastery. There, and nowhere else, is the link cleaned. Whoever waits for his cleaning from a secret practice merely displaces, under a nobler vocabulary, the exact same waste of energy that fouled it.

Don Juan then describes four stages in the evolution of the link with Intent. The first: the rusty link, untrustworthy — that of the ordinary man, who barely perceives anything anymore. The second: the cleaned link, recovered through impeccability and the pillars just named. The third: the

link the warrior learns to handle — that is, to engage deliberately, consciously, in order to accomplish what he must accomplish. And the fourth: to accept the designs of the abstract. At this stage, the warrior no longer handles the link as an instrument that belongs to him. He consents to be guided by it. The link ceases to be a tool he owns and becomes a conversation in which he lets himself be led. It is the threshold where the way tips — and it is this threshold that the last entry will name total freedom.

"Sorcery could be defined as the procedure of cleaning one's link of communication with intent."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *The Power of Silence*

22. What is total freedom?

Don Juan delivered only one complete definition of total freedom, in *Tales of Power* — and it stands in three words. Freedom is joy, efficiency, and abandon in the face of any odds. These three words must be weighed, because they are the exact opposite of what the modern imagination associates with spiritual liberation. No passive serenity. No ascetic withdrawal. No absence from the world. Joy. Efficiency. Abandon. And this freedom is exercised, Don Juan specifies, in the face of any odds — that is to say, in the exact concrete of life, not in some mystical elsewhere.

From what does this freedom liberate? From one and the same machinery, which Don Juan designates under different names according to the books. The flyer — the foreign installation that gave us its mind and feeds on our energy. The human form — the collective mold, the glue that makes us all interchangeable in internal dialogue, self-pity, repetition. Self-importance — the way this hold drains our energy day to day, under the twin faces of smugness and self-pity. Three names for the same hold, seen under three angles: the foreign cause, the collective effect, the individual effect. The twenty-one preceding entries have described nothing other than a procedure for undoing it. When it falls, freedom appears — not as an acquisition, but as what has always been there, beneath the machine.

What appears then is not a new capacity. It is access to what had been compressed. The assemblage point becomes fluid. The inner emanations align, no longer on a rigid point, but on a wide stretch that can shift at will.

The warrior sees. He silently knows. He welcomes the designs of the spirit without resistance, because there is no longer in him a self solid enough to resist. His awareness, instead of being compressed in the narrow keg of the individual self, breathes on the scale of the cosmos.

An attentive reader recognizes something here. This liberation from a collective hold followed by an awareness expanded to the measure of the universe is not peculiar to the Toltecs. The Buddha, beneath the Bodhi tree, went through a process of the same form — liberation from the three poisons (ignorance, attachment, aversion) whose Toltec equivalents are called the flyer's stupidity, self-importance, the human form. What he attained, Buddhism calls nirvana, or awakening. Sogyal Rinpoche, in *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying*, describes this awakening as the direct recognition of the nature of mind — that nature which has always been there but which the chatter of the self covered. The Toltecs speak of alignment of the emanations. The Buddhists speak of recognition of the nature of mind. The tools differ — recapitulation is not zazen — but what they free is the same. Don Juan does not use the word awakening, and he would not have liked to hear it. But that is exactly what it is about, and there is in the spiritual history of humanity a convergence that this breviary should not conceal.

And this convergence does not stop at Buddhism. Japanese Zen speaks of satori — that sudden awakening in which internal dialogue gives way and the real gives itself such as it is, without filter. Sufism speaks of fana — the extinction of the self in God, where what was "I" is consumed in the One, exactly as the warrior is consumed by the fire from within. The Desert Fathers speak of the inner desert — that bare space, stripped of every image and every consolation, where the soul stands without a net before the Abstract. Christian mysticism speaks of illumination — that moment when, as Meister Eckhart said, God begets his Son in the soul that has made itself empty. The words differ. The cultural contexts differ. The techniques differ. But what is freed, in every case, is the same thing: an awareness that had been compressed in the individual self, and which finds its proper dimension again. Don Juan had probably never heard of satori or fana. That changes nothing in the fact that the old Toltec seers, the Sufis of Andalusia, the desert monks of Egypt, the Zen masters of Kyoto — all perceived the same hold, and all found ways out of it. The Toltec way is

one of these roads. It is not the only one. It is the one that has been transmitted to us.

Let us return to the three words. Joy first. Don Juan is categorical: the free warrior laughs. He laughs to the point of losing his breath. This laughter is not a sage's performance — it is the direct energetic expression of the absence of self-importance. The joy a warrior feels, he said, comes to him from having accepted his fate, and from having appraised in all honesty what lies before him. And this joy is an active choice: I am happy because I choose to look at the things that make me happy, and then my eyes catch their amusing side, which makes me laugh. When Castaneda, in a moment of self-pity, laments the idea that one day he might regret the way, Don Juan and Genaro start mimicking each other with mock-perplexed faces before yelling in unison a thunderous Certainly not! Genaro, to dumbfound his apprentice, walks bending his back until his thighs touch his chest, swims on the dry ground, balances perfectly on his head. Lightness is their sign.

Efficiency next. The free warrior is not a passive contemplative. Don Genaro formulates it in a sentence in *Tales of Power*: The cornerstone of the warrior is humility and efficiency. The free man acts. He does what he has to do, with pleasure and competence, wasting nothing, postponing nothing. His awareness of death dictates this surgical efficiency to him. And this efficiency is exercised in the ordinary world, not in a cave. At a lunch in Mexico City, Castaneda sees Don Juan in a brown three-piece suit of impeccable cut, folding his clothes with meticulous care and supreme indifference, straightening his tie. A free man, he said, must be fluid and move harmoniously in the world. The tonal — the everyday, the social, the ordinary — is no longer a prison. It is a ground where elegance becomes possible.

Abandon, finally. It is the most subtle word. It does not mean to lose interest, nor to flee. It means to act intensely without grasping. The warriors of Don Juan's lineage formulated this abandon in a phrase they passed to one another as a key: I am cling to nothing, so I will have nothing to defend. I have no thoughts, so I will see. I fear nothing, so I will remember myself. This formula is the daily texture of total freedom. Hold nothing back. Impose nothing. Flee nothing. Let what flows flow. And since there is no longer in you a self that calculates, Intent can finally pass. The

art of sorcerers, Don Juan would say again, is not to choose, but to be subtle enough to consent.

The free man loves, too. But he loves in a way that bewilders the ordinary man. The nagual Julian, Don Juan's benefactor, embodies this mechanic in its pure state. He was charming, loving, warm, gave away even his shirt. He took an interest, ceaselessly, deeply and sincerely, in everyone around him. And everyone loved him in return. But Don Juan specifies, and it must be read word for word: being a master stalker, he conveyed to them his real feelings — he didn't give a damn about any of them. What seems a contradiction is none. A man of knowledge loves, that is all. He loves what he wants, but he uses his controlled folly so as not to take an interest in it. Because his own acts no longer matter to him, he can love without calculating, without holding back, without protecting himself. It is this absence of personal weight that frees the heart to its full dimension.

And above all, there is the love for the Earth. There is in *Tales of Power* a scene that must be kept as it is, because it speaks the source. Don Juan, sitting on the ground of his patio, one day begins to caress the soil with an unprecedented tenderness. He murmurs — Castaneda transcribes the exact words: This lovely being, which is alive to its last recesses, has soothed me and cured me of my pains, and finally when I fully understood my love for it, it taught me freedom. There is the knot. Total freedom is not a conquest. It is a gift — and the gift is given only to the one who has first recognized the love. The love for that living, sentient thing which is the Earth. Only that love, said Don Juan, can give freedom to the spirit of a warrior.

Castaneda himself touched this state in flashes, and he always describes it with the same words: a sensation of exquisite peace, a wild elation, a feeling in which the fact of living or dying no longer mattered. A laughter coming from the depth of the bowels. A peaceful waking without internal dialogue. The world that stops. That is what, from within, freedom looks like. And Don Juan, in his last conversation reported by *The Active Side of Infinity*, gave the formula that crowns the whole way: The art of the warrior-traveler is to have the proficiency to move with the slightest insinuation, the art of yielding to every command of infinity. For this, the warrior-traveler needs prowess, strength, and above all, sobriety. The

three of these together yield, as a result, elegance. Prowess, strength, sobriety: elegance. That is the final face of total freedom.

There remains the last moment — that of the passage. Once the warrior is free in his life, it remains for him to cross the threshold to the other side, and only here does the technical mechanic take on its meaning. Don Juan calls it the fire from within. Instead of dying by abandoning his awareness to the Eagle that would devour it — the ordinary rule that applies to all living beings — the seer who has accumulated enough energy provokes a continuous shifting of his assemblage point to the limits of the unknown, then brings it back at one stroke. This movement aligns all the emanations of the Eagle contained in the luminous cocoon. The seer burns from within. He crosses into the third attention, where each cell becomes aware of itself and of the totality. And Castaneda saw this passage with his own eyes. On a flat, arid summit of the Sierra Madre, at the last meeting, while the apprentices were leaping into a precipice, Don Juan, Don Genaro, Silvio Manuel, Vicente, the women — the whole lineage — caught fire. In the arid sky, there remained only a line of marvelous lights, stirring as if blown by the wind, shining with an unbearable brilliance at the tip. I thought of the feathered serpent of the Toltec legend, writes Castaneda. Then the lights disappeared. They were free — they had been so for a long time already. The sky had only made it visible.

There is the term of the way. A Toltec breviary cannot conclude otherwise. And this paradox must be held to the end: total freedom is not attained by aiming at it. It is attained by doing the dishes properly, by keeping a promise that costs, by refusing an act of self-pity, by accepting a petty tyrant, by recapitulating a memory one would prefer to forget, by setting death on one's left, by ceasing to chatter with oneself, by loving the Earth. It is attained by being impeccable in a world that will never notice. Freedom is given, not conquered — and it is given only to those who have had the discipline to make themselves available. The rest, as Don Juan said, is the affair of the spirit.

"Only the love for this splendid being can give freedom to a warrior's spirit; and freedom is joy, efficiency, and abandon in the face of any odds. That is the last lesson. It is always left for the very last moment, for the moment of ultimate solitude, when a man faces his death and his aloneness. Only then does it make sense."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, Tales of Power

Complementary Entry — The Sensitivity of the Warrior

*Outside the twenty-two questions. What rises from the body when the link with
Intent is cleansed.*

How to feel what reason cannot see?

There is in the warrior a sensitivity that ordinary man has lost. It is not a gift. It is not an innate quality some would have and others would not. It is a faculty every human being possesses at birth, but which the internal dialogue covers so quickly that by adulthood one no longer even suspects its existence. Don Juan almost never names this sensitivity. The word mediumship, when uttered today, immediately drags along a procession of images — tables that turn, spirits called up, voices from beyond — which he wants nothing to do with. It is not about communicating with the dead. It is not about contacting invisible presences. It is about something else, more sober and more decisive: feeling directly the energetic charge of the natural world around you. Places, beings, signs. Nothing more, nothing less. And that is already immense.

Don Juan first teaches Castaneda this: the ground is not neutral. There are places that nourish the warrior's energy and others that drain it at slow heat. The sorcerers call them sitios of power, or, conversely, enemy places. The founding scene takes place on the porch of Don Juan's house. Castaneda, exhausted, does not know what his host expects of him. Don Juan orders him to roll on the ground, in the dark, until he finds his spot. For hours, Castaneda rolls, gets up, starts again. At one moment, his body perceives a change — a coloration of the ground he had not seen until then. He lies down on it. He falls asleep instantly, regenerated. Later, in the mountains, the same experience but reversed: one place tightens his stomach for no reason, another, very close by, gives him an immediate physical comfort. It is never the head that knows. It is the body that says it.

Here is the postulate on which all Toltec mediumship rests. Reason is blind to the facts of energy. It is the body — the physical body, and behind it the energy body — that perceives. Don Juan formulates it without detour: it is the body, and not reason, that can bear witness to the facts of the nagual. When an apprentice, Benigno, claims that he knew he was awake, Castaneda asks him how. The answer comes at once: my body knew. And when Castaneda is astonished at having built in himself the image of an ally, Don Juan specifies — and it must be heard word for word — fortunately it is not reason that builds the ally, it is the body; every perception has been preserved in your body. The whole mediumship of the

warrior holds in this single statement: it is the body that knows, and it is the body that must be listened to. The head, at this level of perception, only interferes.

Don Juan imposes on Castaneda exercises that seem strange and that all have the same function: to short-circuit ordinary visual interpretation in order to let the body perceive. In the desert, he orders him to sweep the landscape with quick crossed-eye glances, in order to separate the images from each eye, and to carry his attention to the blurry zone between them. The trick, he says, is to feel with the eyes. Another exercise: the contemplation of shadows. Lidia, one of the apprentices, explains that she is a shadow-gazer and that shadows tell her things through their variations of temperature and color. Yet another: running in total darkness, at night, at a brisk pace, without focusing the gaze on anything, letting the body avoid obstacles by itself. In each of these exercises, perception is never built by thought. It rises from the body — as soon as the head has yielded the place, it appears naturally.

There is in *Tales of Power* a scene that lays bare what the energetic reading of a human being is. Don Juan takes Castaneda to a public square in Mexico City and has him observe the passersby. Faced with old women walking away, he says: the tonal of those women is weak and timid, they are decrepit. Faced with a young man with a disjointed gait: look how weak his body is, his arms and legs are thin, there is something off about him. Then he points at a balanced young woman and says: there is a true tonal. It is not psychology. It is not social intuition. What Don Juan reads is the state of the tonal — that everyday energetic organization which, in each one, bears a precise signature. Some tonals are fragile like those of children, others worn out like those of bedridden old men even though the person is still young, others already dead though still standing, others solid and balanced — those are rare. The warrior scans. He does not judge: he registers the energetic texture, as one registers the texture of a fabric. It is information. He does what he wants with it.

Intent speaks to the warrior through omens. Not through abstract coincidences: through acts of power. A flight of birds at a precise moment. A coyote crossing the path at the exact instant a question was left unanswered. A meeting whose coincidence is too perfect to be merely chance. A word overheard in passing that resolves exactly what was

preoccupying you. Don Juan specifies that the spirit reveals itself to everyone with the same intensity, but that only the sorcerers, and especially the naguals, are in unison with these revelations. What distinguishes a true sign from an ordinary coincidence is not its nature — the spirit does nothing different for the warrior and for the ordinary man. It is that the sorcerer has cleaned his link enough for the sign to strike him directly in the body, and to impose its meaning on him before the head has had time to argue. The warrior knows what the omen means, writes Castaneda, without having the slightest idea of the means by which he knew it.

This must be held firmly: the warrior's mediumship is not an additional power. It is not an extraordinary faculty that would be added to ordinary man to make of him an augmented being. It is the return to a natural state that man has lost. Don Juan calls this state silent knowledge. A direct knowledge, without thought, without language, that short-circuits reason. This knowledge, he says, we all have; it has the complete mastery and the complete knowledge of everything, but it cannot think, and therefore cannot speak of what it knows. The warrior invents nothing. He adds no new faculty to his human equipment. He removes, patiently, the layers of chatter that covered the knowledge. And the knowledge, from then on, shows through — because it was already there, because it has always been there, and because it asked only to speak to the body.

Don Juan pitilessly castigates Castaneda whenever he confuses his intimate troubles with a true energetic sensitivity. When Castaneda complains of his existential distress, Don Juan cuts him short: you let yourself go, you believe that the mark of a sensitive man is to surrender himself to doubts and tribulations; well, to be frank, there is no being less sensitive than you. And he specifies, taking all romance from the word itself: sensitivity is a natural condition of certain people; you have none, but neither do I, what matters is that a warrior be impeccable. Another trap, more widespread: the complex hallucination taken for a vision. One day, Castaneda proudly recounts a scene teeming with details. Don Juan sweeps it aside: you saw, but you saw only nonsense; information of this kind serves the warrior in nothing; to see really means to see, that is, to find one's way through absurdity. Last trap, the most flattering for the ego: the half-baked sorcerer who tries to explain everything in the world with

interpretations he is not even sure of, and for whom everything becomes sorcery. In all three cases, it is self-importance in disguise that parasitizes perception. A true mediumship is sober. It is boring for the ego. And that, very exactly, is how one recognizes it.

The warrior's mediumship is not a specialty one works on apart. It is the natural state that settles in as the link to Intent cleans itself. It is not cultivated head-on. One does not sit before it and pray for it to appear. One washes the dishes impeccably, one keeps a promise that costs, one ceases to chatter with oneself, one places death on one's left, one recapitulates — and one day, without noticing it, one begins to know in the body what one did not know in the head. One feels the place before entering it. One reads the passerby's tonal without really looking at him. One recognizes the sign at the very instant it passes. That sensitivity makes no noise. It does not show itself. It does not sell itself. It serves. And it is precisely because it serves, and because it serves only that, that it is the true one — against all the spectacular mediumships the age delights in.

"It is the body and not reason which can give testimony of the facts of the nagual."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, *Tales of Power*

Epilogue — The Warrior's Note

On what this book deliberately omits.

The Warrior's Note

This breviary is ending. Before closing these pages, one last thing must be told to you — not about what they contain, but about what they do not contain. Because a book that transmits a path must also account for its silences. There are, in Don Juan Matus's corpus, precise materials that have been deliberately left outside these pages. They are not omissions. They are not gaps. They are choices, and choices that stand on the warnings of the lineage itself.

The Toltec way is not a frozen block. It evolves. Don Juan, in *The Fire from Within*, rigorously distinguishes the old seers — obsessed with power, domination, pacts with inorganic beings, physical longevity, dark rituals — from the new seers, of whom he is one, who inherited from the first, learned from their mistakes, and selected what deserved to be transmitted. This selection is not finished. It continues at every generation, in every transmission. This breviary inscribes itself in the same gesture: to keep the essential framework — impeccability, inner silence, awareness of death, destruction of self-importance, cleaning of the link to Intent, silent knowledge, oriented recapitulation — and to leave aside everything that weighs down, deflects, or endangers the one who would attempt to seize it alone from a book.

First omission: the power plants. Peyote, datura, psilocybin mushrooms — everything Castaneda consumed in the first ten years of his apprenticeship. Don Juan admits it without detour in *Tales of Power*: not all people are capable of acting on simple recommendations; you and I, under such circumstances, needed something else to be shaken; we needed those power plants. It is a subterfuge to break a particularly rigid rational shell — not a royal road. Don Juan even specifies that he departed from tradition on this point: one should arrive at the nagual without speaking ill of the tonal, and above all without harming one's body. And use without a nagual is fatal: to give the little smoke to just anyone risked causing deaths, for who would guide those people? The breviary therefore transmits nothing of the plants, and nothing of the protocols that go with them. Whoever has a way of his own to them will find it elsewhere, or will not find it — that is a decision not made in a book.

Second omission: the advanced techniques of dreaming. The breviary names dreaming. It gives its entry-gate — to see one's hands in a dream, to hold the dream a few seconds, then return. It does not go beyond. What it does not transmit is what follows: the scouts who draw the dreamer into the inorganic realm, the emissaries whose voice flatters in order to capture, the successive gates of dreaming, entry into the second attention, the fight to come back from it. Don Juan is categorical in *The Art of Dreaming*: the inorganic beings do not let anyone go, certainly not without a real fight. Their strategy is known — they give the dreamer the feeling of being unique. Power and uniqueness are unbeatable forces of corruption, says Don Juan, take heed. And the old seers who lost themselves there found refuge in the world of the inorganic beings. The price to pay is to live in that world a quasi-eternity. These stages require a living nagual to adjust the assemblage point as it drifts. They are not crossed with a book. They are crossed with someone who knows — or they are not crossed at all.

Third omission: recapitulation in its intensive version. The breviary transmits oriented recapitulation — by themes, by persons, by precise periods. Recall the relationship, breathe to give back what is not yours and take back what is, advance methodically. That version is practiced alone, it cleans, it gives back energy. What the breviary does not transmit is the complete recapitulation — the exhaustive list of every person met since birth, the wooden box in which the warrior sits, the systematic respiratory sweep over every second of a life. That version is a total magical act. It physically moves the assemblage point. It frees the energy imprisoned in the past, yes, but it also brings back to the surface everything an entire life has buried — and Castaneda himself woke up screaming, because, writes Don Juan, lives are filled to the brim with heavily charged emotions, such as memories, hopes, fears. Without supervision, the assemblage point can remain trapped in an old traumatic position with no return. That version requires a face-to-face with the lineage. It is not transmissible in writing.

Fourth omission: the morbid heritage of the old seers. To capture an ally and make of it a vehicle of power — Don Juan himself paid for that maneuver with a bullet in the chest that nearly killed him; he never transmitted it to Castaneda within the cleaned-up way of the new seers.

Power objects — charged crystals, pinto corn, fetishes, seeds, talismans — Don Juan sweeps them aside: these objects of power are nothing but children's toys; power resides in the knowledge one possesses. The shifting of the assemblage point toward the lower part of the cocoon, which turns the sorcerer into a beast — crow, jaguar, worm — Don Juan refuses in *The Fire from Within*: to head downward is contrary to our interest; it is the domain of the beast. Physical immortality, the death defier, the Tenant who at every generation siphons energy from the nagual in exchange for gifts of power — those sorcerers of old were extravagant, obsessed, capricious men, who were caught in their own machinations. And above all, the dark rituals, the morbid ceremonies, the black altars, the spectacular incantations — morbidity can lay upon our awareness the heaviest privileges and the heaviest mortgages. None of this is in this breviary, because none of this is the way of the new seers. It is the way their ancestors abandoned, for reasons that Don Juan took care to make explicit.

Fifth and final omission: what simply does not transmit through writing. Don Juan divides his teaching into two registers. The first is meant for the state of consciousness of everyday life — it goes through language, can be written, read, transmitted in a book. The second is meant for the states of heightened awareness, in which, he says, the sorcerers drew knowledge directly from intent, without the troublesome intervention of spoken language. This second register, by definition, is not transmissible through words. This breviary belongs entirely to the first. It prepares, it orients, it gives the frame, it sorts. It does not claim to deliver what requires the presence of a living nagual, the direct contact of energy, the shifting of the assemblage point by another who knows how to do it. Words, said Don Juan, force us to feel enlightened, but when we turn to face the world they always fail us. A book that claimed to deliver the nagual would be, at best, useless — at worst, a fatal lie.

The Toltec way evolves. It purifies itself at every generation. This breviary partakes of the same movement: it keeps what can be transmitted in writing without loss and without danger, and it leaves everything else outside. What stays outside is not lost. It is simply reserved for another mode of access — the direct encounter with Intent, the presence of a living lineage, the energy of one's own accumulated through an impeccable life. If you arrive at the end of these pages with the feeling that much is still

missing, that is a good sign. It means you have felt what the book gave you, and you have also felt what it could not give. From there, it is up to you. Intent, said Don Juan, never abandons the one who calls it. It merely answers in the exact measure of what that one is capable of receiving. The one who is ready will find what he needs, by ways that are not programmed in a book. The one who is not yet ready will not have it, however large the library he has read. This, since always, is the affair of the spirit.

"Words force us to feel that we're enlightened. But when we have to face the world, they always fail us, and we end up facing the world as we always have, without enlightenment."

— Don Juan Matus, transmitted by Carlos Castaneda, Tales of Power

Appendix A

Glossary

Toltec and transversal

This glossary gathers sixty entries. Forty-eight define the properly Toltec vocabulary transmitted by Don Juan Matus to Carlos Castaneda. The other twelve, integrated into a single alphabetical order, throw light on the bridges between this way and the great spiritual traditions of humanity — Buddhism, Christian mysticism, Zen, Sufism — wherever the book evokes them. The definitions are brief by choice: a glossary points, it does not teach. To understand a term in depth, return to the entry of the breviary that carries it.

Allies. Aggressive inorganic forces, perceived by the seer as opaque candle-shaped figures, which a sorcerer can vanquish and harness in order to acquire and manipulate power. (The Teachings of Don Juan.)

Angel. In the Abrahamic tradition, a messenger of God (from the Greek angelos, "messenger"). In the Toltec reading proposed here, angel and Intent are one and the same force: the universal awareness that speaks to the warrior through signs and through bodily impulses. (Judeo-Christian tradition; correspondence with Intent.)

Art of dreaming. The practice of deliberately shifting the assemblage point during sleep, then fixing it rigorously, so as to turn ordinary dreams into gateways to other real worlds. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Art of stalking. The art of impeccably controlling one's behavior in the midst of the world, in order to detach oneself from the ego. It is also the technique that fixes the assemblage point on the new position to which it has been shifted. (The Power of Silence.)

Assemblage point. A point of intense brilliance located on the surface of the luminous cocoon. By selecting and aligning the inner and outer emanations, it assembles the perception of entire worlds. (The Fire from Within.)

Awakening (spiritual). Generic term designating the recognition, by the human being, of his true nature beyond the mental self. According to traditions: illumination (Buddhism), satori (Zen), fana (Sufism), total freedom (Toltecs). (Transversal term.)

Awareness of death. Tactic of using one's own ineluctable death as adviser, always crouched on the left. It is the only force capable of cutting through self-importance and giving an edge to one's actions. (Journey to Ixtlan.)

Benefactor. The nagual who operates from the outside to break the apprentice's bubble of perception by initiating the trickery of the spirit and violently shifting his assemblage point toward the second attention. (Tales of Power.)

Contemplation. State of silent attention to the presence of the divine, at the heart of Christian mysticism (John of the Cross, Teresa of Ávila). Direct kin of

Toltec inner silence: one ceases the dialogue so that the Spirit may act within. (Christian mysticism.)

Controlled folly. The stalker's attitude of engaging with perfection and passion in action, while knowing intimately, as a seer detached from everything, that nothing he does has any real importance. (A Separate Reality.)

Death defier (Tenant). An ancient seer of monstrous longevity who, by manipulating his assemblage point, has defied death for millennia. At each generation he extorts energy from the lineage's nagual in exchange for gifts of power. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Description of the world. Social convention imposed on our perception from birth, forcing us to interpret the universe as a set of solid objects rather than as flows of pure energy. (Journey to Ixtlan.)

Detachment. Mystical way of letting go of possessions, self-images, and spiritual consolations, theorized by Meister Eckhart and John of the Cross. Christian equivalent of losing the human form: one empties oneself so that the Spirit may descend. (Rhenish and Carmelite mysticism.)

Eagle, the. Immeasurable, indescribable force that lends awareness to all sentient beings at their birth. At their death, it devours them in order to feed on their awareness enriched by the experiences of life. (The Eagle's Gift.)

Edifices of Intent. Energetic architectures or situations orchestrated by the Spirit, which the warrior learns to recognize in the world in order to enter them by letting himself be guided. (The Power of Silence.)

Emanations of the Eagle. Primordial energy fields, immutable and aware of themselves, which compose the entire universe. A seer perceives them directly as myriads of filaments of incandescent light. (The Fire from Within.)

Emissary (dreaming). Disembodied voice from the inorganic realm that informs the dreamer. Extremely flattering, it constitutes a dangerous trap that seeks to imprison the apprentice within its world. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Energy body. The energetic counterpart of the physical body, made of pure energy. It is forged, consolidated, and made functional through the art of dreaming, allowing one to act beyond the limits of the ordinary world. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Erasing personal history. Image and routines of self that one keeps up in order to exist in the eyes of others. Erasing it is a vital technique for freeing oneself from expectations, conserving one's energy, and becoming fluid. (Journey to Ixtlan.)

Fana. In Sufism, extinction of the self in God, annihilation of the individual ego in the divine presence. Muslim counterpart of losing the human form and of the fire from within: what was "I" is consumed in the One. (Sufism.)

Fire from within. Total energetic combustion that consumes the human being when all the emanations inside his cocoon are simultaneously aligned and lit by awareness. (The Fire from Within.)

Four enemies of the warrior. Fear, clarity, power, old age. Successive natural obstacles on the path of knowledge. To succumb to a single one condemns the apprentice; to vanquish them all allows him to become, for a brief moment, a man of knowledge. (The Teachings of Don Juan.)

Human form. Irresistible force of alignment (felt as a sticky force) which freezes the assemblage point on the human inventory and sustains self-importance. (The Fire from Within.)

Illumination. In Buddhism, the direct recognition of the nature of mind, awakening to emptiness and compassion (bodhi). Eastern equivalent of the seers' total freedom, obtained by another route — meditation rather than stalking. (Buddhism.)

Impeccability. The perfect, optimal tactical use of one's energy. Devoid of all morality, it consists in always doing one's best in each action, thereby saving the energy required for the journey into the unknown. (The Fire from Within.)

Inner desert. Space of radical self-stripping, inherited from the Desert Fathers, where the soul stands naked before God without thoughts or images. Resonance with stopping the world: the description is dropped in order to meet the abstract. (Christian eremitical tradition.)

Inner emanations. Specific fraction of the Eagle's filaments encapsulated inside a being's cocoon. The pressure they undergo from the outer emanations fixes their awareness. (The Fire from Within.)

Inner fire. Image common to several traditions (Christian mysticism, hesychasm, tantra) designating the spiritual energy that transforms the being from within. Direct cousin of the Toltec fire from within: the combustion that liberates. (Comparative mystical traditions.)

Inner silence. State of natural perception without words or thoughts, obtained by the deliberate stopping of the internal dialogue. It breaks the fixation of the assemblage point and allows access to direct knowledge. (Magical Passes.)

Inorganic beings and inorganic realm. Conscious entities devoid of organism, inhabiting a spongy, closed twin world. They feed on the fear and the ego of the dreamers they seek to enslave. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Intent. Universal, indescribable, conscious force which permeates the universe and engenders perception. It is the deliberate manner of guiding the energy of alignment in order to shift the assemblage point. (The Power of Silence.)

Internal dialogue. Ceaseless mental chatter that sustains reason's inventory and freezes the perception of the world. To interrupt it dislodges the assemblage point and constitutes the absolute key of sorcery. (Tales of Power.)

Losing the human form. Radical perceptual leap in which the assemblage point definitively breaks its moorings to human patterns and self-importance, engendering an absolute detachment and silence. (The Eagle's Gift.)

Luminous cocoon. Energy field forming the true envelope of a human being, perceived by seers as a sphere or egg of light. It contains our individual share of the Eagle's emanations. (The Fire from Within.)

Nagual (the unknown side of the being). The indescribable dimension of the universe and of man, void of words and explanations. It is the realm of the Unknown, of power, and of pure action in the second attention. (Tales of Power.)

Nagual (person, leader of a lineage). Man or woman of exceptional energy (a cocoon with four or three compartments), serving as a direct conduit of the Spirit to instruct and guide his group toward total freedom. (The Power of Silence.)

Nature of mind. In Tibetan Buddhism (*rigpa*), clear, empty, luminous awareness, the ultimate ground of every phenomenon. Sogyal Rinpoche presents it as what remains when the mind falls silent — Eastern equivalent of the Toltec abstract Spirit. (The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying.)

Nirvana. Sanskrit for "extinction" of the three poisons and of the suffering that issues from them. State of definitive liberation from the cycle of becoming. Direct kin of total freedom obtained through the fire from within. (Buddhism.)

Not-doing. Perceptual and physical practice of acting against the routines set down by the description of the world (for example, looking at the shadows instead of the objects) in order to force the world to collapse. (Journey to Ixtlan.)

Old seers and new seers. The old seers became aberrant sorcerers drunk with domination, trapped by the inorganic beings. The new seers rejected ritual to aim solely at total freedom through sobriety. (The Fire from Within.)

Petty tyrant. Abusive, unbearable individual whom the warrior uses pragmatically to forge his endurance, his control, his discipline, and to eradicate his self-importance in the ordinary world. (The Fire from Within.)

Power plants (peyote, datura, little smoke). Hallucinogens originally used as mere temporary vehicles to break the rational shell, but set aside from accomplished Toltec practice because they are highly damaging to the body. (Tales of Power.)

Recapitulation. Magical act, accompanied by a sweep of the breath, consisting in reliving every past experience in order to give back foreign energy and recover one's own life force left in human relations. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Scouts. Charges of foreign energy sent from the inorganic world, infiltrating our dreams under various disguises. If discovered and followed, they project the dreamer into the unknown. (The Art of Dreaming.)

Second attention. State of heightened awareness linked to the left side and to the nagual. It is accessible by shifting the assemblage point and allows the perception of the energy body and of the worlds outside the human band. (The Eagle's Gift.)

Seeing (to see). Direct perception of the true nature of the universe and of the energetic essence of beings (the cocoon, the Eagle, the emanations), occurring independently of ordinary visual sight. (The Fire from Within.)

Seer. Practitioner who has tamed his self-importance, shifted his assemblage point, and accumulated enough energy to see directly the flows of energy circulating in the universe. (The Fire from Within.)

Self-importance. Force of egocentrism that drains the totality of our vital energy. The warrior's supreme enemy, it holds the assemblage point rigidly fixed on self-reflection. (The Power of Silence.)

Self-pity. Destructive emotion, accomplice and root of self-importance. It imprisons man by forcing him to waste his energy lamenting his own fate and contemplating his unreal image. (The Power of Silence.)

Silent knowledge. Original state of human awareness, without words or thoughts, in which the knowledge of all things is instantaneous and immediate. Man accesses it through a radical shifting of his assemblage point. (The Power of Silence.)

Signs and omens. Manifestations through which the Spirit reveals its will. They are not coincidences but tangible acts of power that the sorcerer interprets via his silent link with Intent. (The Power of Silence.)

Satori. In Zen, sudden awakening to the true nature of things, often brief, sometimes lightning-like. Moment when the internal dialogue gives way and the real gives itself such as it is. Direct resonance with stopping the world and silent knowledge. (Japanese Zen.)

Spirit (the abstract). Synonym of Intent or of nagual. It is the supreme, impersonal force that guides the warrior's life, communicating with him exclusively through manifestations, trickery, and omens. (The Power of Silence.)

Stopping the world. Decisive moment of perceptual tipping in which the system of interpretation and the internal dialogue collapse, revealing the true energetic, fluid, and terrifying nature of the universe. (Journey to Ixtlan.)

The flyer (mud shadow, predator). Predatory inorganic entity that has secretly imposed its own routine mind upon man. It feeds exclusively on the flares of energy generated by our self-importance. (The Active Side of Infinity.)

Third attention. Immeasurable awareness in which the entire body, consumed by the inner fire, blazes with total knowledge. It is the state of total freedom in which awareness escapes the Eagle. (The Eagle's Gift.)

Three poisons. In Buddhism, the roots of suffering: greed (attachment), aversion (anger), and ignorance (delusion). The Toltecs designate the same mechanic under other names: self-importance, self-pity, internal dialogue. (Buddhism.)

Toltec. Title of energetic nobility, and not tribal belonging, designating a "man of knowledge," a receiver and holder of the ancient mysteries of stalking, dreaming, and intent. (The Fire from Within.)

Tonal. The part of the human being that organizes and describes the everyday world. It is the social person, reason, and the inventory of all that can be named and thought in the first attention. (Tales of Power.)

Total freedom. Ultimate aim of the new seers, who, by lighting the fire from within, evade ordinary physical death and the Eagle, in order to escape into infinity while preserving their awareness and life force. (The Fire from Within.)

Warrior. Impeccable hunter of personal power who carries on a relentless struggle against stupidity and the individual self, balancing the terror and the absolute wonder of being a man. (Tales of Power.)

Appendix B

Annotated Bibliography

twenty-one works to continue with

This bibliography does not aim at exhaustiveness. It proposes a passage. Twenty-one works, gathered into three concentric circles: first, the entire Castaneda corpus, in the order in which it was written; then the books of the extended lineage, written by the women of Don Juan's group; finally, the great bridges with other spiritual traditions evoked in the breviary. Each notice indicates what the work treats of, where it stands within its author's body of work, and what a reader of this breviary will find in it that he will find nowhere else. The dates are those of the original publication.

I. The Castaneda corpus — Don Juan Matus

Twelve books, published between 1968 and 1999, which form the complete works of Carlos Castaneda. This entire breviary is drawn from them. They can be read in chronological order (my advice), in thematic order, or dipped into according to need. In every case they reread well: each reading reveals strata one had not perceived before.

The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge (1968)

The book of entry, centered on the power plants — peyote, datura, the little smoke. Castaneda is still a student in anthropology, and seeks to frame his experiences within an academic grid. This book is at once the door and the trap: it seduced a generation through its hallucinogenic visions, but Don Juan himself made clear, throughout the later works, that the plants were only useful crutches to break the rational shell of a stubborn man like Castaneda, never the way. To read first, in order to measure the road traveled — then to leave behind.

A Separate Reality: Further Conversations with Don Juan (1971)

The second book marks a shift. Don Juan introduces the notion of the ally, the difference between looking and seeing, and the first elements of controlled folly. Castaneda begins to understand that ordinary perception is only one interpretation among others. The power plants are still present, but the true way begins to surface. It is the book of the transition.

Journey to Ixtlan: The Lessons of Don Juan (1972)

A major turning point. Castaneda reveals here that from the very beginning, Don Juan had been teaching him, in parallel, techniques that had nothing to do with the plants: erasing personal history, using death as adviser, stopping the world, practicing not-doing. The Toltec way appears at last in its true form — a discipline of the tonal, a stalking of self-importance, an extreme sobriety. The founding book for whoever wants to enter the way, not merely read it. If you are to read only one before this breviary, it is this one.

Tales of Power (1974)

The book of synthesis of the first period. Don Juan finally systematizes: the tonal and the nagual, the two natures of man, are set forth with an unprecedented philosophical precision. It is also the book in which the densest formulas of the entire work appear — on the warrior, on controlled folly, on the love for the Earth, on total freedom. Don Juan's farewell at the end of the book, on the arid mesa, closes a cycle. To read fourth, and to reread regularly.

The Second Ring of Power (1977)

After Don Juan's disappearance, Castaneda returns to Mexico and discovers that other apprentices — especially women — had been trained in parallel. The book is rough, often disjointed. One sees in it a disoriented Castaneda, confronted with warrior women more advanced than himself. For a first reader it is bewildering. For whoever wants to understand that the Toltec way is not a matter of solitary master-disciple transmission but a group art, it is indispensable.

The Eagle's Gift (1981)

The great cosmological book. With the help of La Gorda and the other apprentices, Castaneda restores the teachings on the Eagle — that force which lends awareness to all living beings and which devours it at their death. The recapitulation is here set forth as a central technique. The distinction old seers / new seers appears for the first time. An essential book for understanding the energetic stake of the way: to escape the Eagle through total freedom.

The Fire from Within (1984)

The theoretical summit of the work. Don Juan, through Castaneda's voice that restores him, sets forth the complete mechanic of the emanations of the Eagle, of the luminous cocoon, of the assemblage point, of losing the human form, and finally of the fire from within — that combustion which allows the seer to cross the third attention without dying. The most technical, the densest, the most demanding book. To read once one has already read the previous ones and wants to understand the energetic map in its detail.

The Power of Silence: Further Lessons of Don Juan (1987)

The most spiritual book of the work. Don Juan speaks of Intent, of silent knowledge, of the edifices of Intent, of signs and omens, of the manifestations of Spirit. The four abstract cores — decisive moments when the Spirit reveals itself in the warrior's life — are set forth with a solemnity found nowhere else. This is the book to slip to whoever wants to understand that the Toltec way is not a cold technique, but a love affair with Intent.

The Art of Dreaming (1993)

The practical manual of dreaming. The seven gates, the inorganic beings, the scouts, the emissaries, the twin realm — the entire art of shifting the assemblage point during sleep and of fixing a dream as one fixes a world. It is also the most dangerous book of the corpus: Don Juan himself warns that this practice, without supervision, exposes the apprentice to fatal traps. To read with prudence. To practice only with a guide.

Magical Passes: The Practical Wisdom of the Shamans of Ancient Mexico (1998)

Castaneda reveals belatedly a bodily transmission: a series of movements, called magical passes, which Don Juan is said to have taught the apprentices, and which redistribute energy in the energy body. This is what would become Tensegrity. A practical book, with photographs. Some find the approach belated, almost commercial. Others see in it a true complementary transmission. To read as a complement, not as a basis.

The Wheel of Time: The Shamans of Mexico, Their Thoughts About Life, Death and the Universe (1998)

An anthology of the most powerful formulas of the work, organized by Castaneda himself in his last months. Each sentence is presented bare, without context, with a brief commentary. For a reader who already knows the books, it is a breviary of breviaries — a collection of beacons to meditate upon. For a beginner, it is dry. To keep within reach to open at random.

The Active Side of Infinity (1999)

The last book, published shortly before Castaneda's death. It is here that, exposed frontally for the first time, the doctrine of the flyer appears — that inorganic predator which has given us its mind and feeds on our self-importance. Castaneda also recounts, in an unprecedented autobiographical mode, the key events of his life that Don Juan had had him recapitulate. A testamentary book. To read last, after everything else, so that the revelation of the flyer arrives in its proper place.

II. The extended lineage

Don Juan did not train a single disciple. The women of his group — Taisha Abelar, Florinda Donner-Grau, Carol Tiggs — were all warriors in their own right. Three of them wrote, and their books extend the transmission through other gates of entry. A precious complement to Castaneda's corpus, which remains, it must be said, written from a masculine point of view.

Taisha Abelar, The Sorcerers' Crossing: A Woman's Journey (1992)

The apprenticeship account of one of the three warrior women of Don Juan's group. Abelar describes techniques that barely appear in Castaneda: the tree

pass, the recapitulation in a wooden cage, a practice much more physical and more intimate than that of the masculine corpus. An essential counterpoint for whoever wants to understand that the Toltec way is not the exclusive concern of men, and that energetic femininity has its own instruments.

Florinda Donner-Grau, *Being-in-Dreaming: An Initiation into the Sorcerers' World* (1991)

The other side of the feminine transmission. Donner-Grau writes with a literary intelligence often lacking in Castaneda. She recounts her entry into the other world through the gate of dreaming, and she does so with a rare emotional precision. The best book to feel — rather than to understand — what the life of a Toltec apprentice woman looks like from within.

Florinda Donner-Grau, *Shabono: A Visit to a Remote and Magical World in the South American Rainforest* (1985)

Earlier than her Toltec book, this one tells of her stay among the Yanomami of Amazonia. It is not, strictly speaking, a book of Don Juan's way, but it illuminates something: the porosity between Amerindian shamanism and the Toltec way, and the manner in which Donner-Grau was prepared by another tradition before joining the group. A useful complement, not indispensable.

III. The traditional bridges

Don Juan would probably not have approved of comparing his way to others. He held to the singularity of his lineage. But a contemporary reader, who has lived in a spiritually hybrid world, gains from recognizing the resonances between the Toltec way and the great traditions of humanity. Six books, one for each tradition evoked in the breviary. They are not the only ones one could cite — they are the ones whose reading, alongside the Toltec way, was most useful to me.

Sogyal Rinpoche, *The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying* (1992)

The great bridge with Tibetan Buddhism. Sogyal Rinpoche sets forth the nature of mind (rigpa), the art of dying consciously, awareness as ultimate ground. The Toltec reader will recognize the kinship at once: what the Tibetans call recognition of the nature of mind is almost exactly what the new seers call alignment of the emanations. The tools differ — recapitulation is not zazen — but the target is the same. To read absolutely.

John of the Cross, *Dark Night of the Soul* (16th century)

The bridge with Carmelite Christian mysticism. John of the Cross describes the self-stripping required of the soul that wants to unite with God: purification of the senses, purification of the spirit, passage through the night. What the Toltecs call losing the human form, John of the Cross calls dispossession of all consolations.

The form differs (a personal God on one side, an impersonal Intent on the other), the inner mechanic is strangely close. To read in order to see what a 16th-century Catholic warrior would have said.

Meister Eckhart, German Sermons and Treatises (14th century)

The bridge with Rhenish mysticism. Eckhart, a German Dominican, preached from Strasbourg and Cologne a radical uprooting: the soul must make itself empty so that God may beget his Son within it. His formula "God and I, we are one" earned him posthumous censure. For a Toltec reader, Eckhart is a brother in tongue: the same sobriety, the same refusal of images, the same radicality in self-stripping. To read in small doses, one sermon at a time.

The Philokalia of the Neptic Fathers (4th-14th century)

The bridge with the desert tradition and Orthodox hesychasm. The Desert Fathers — Antony, Evagrius, Macarius — and then the Byzantine hesychasts elaborated a science of inner silence, of the guarding of the heart, of unceasing prayer, which strikingly resembles the Toltec way stripped of its cosmologies. The warrior will recognize his stalking and his silence in it. To read in selection: the complete anthology runs to five volumes.

Shunryu Suzuki, Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind (1970)

The bridge with Zen. Suzuki, a Japanese master settled in San Francisco in the 1960s, transmitted the essence of Sōtō Zen to the West in a deceptively simple book. The notion of beginner's mind — that mind which has not yet learned to know and therefore perceives directly — is a close cousin of Toltec silent knowledge. To read in order to lighten the breviary when it grows too dense.

Rumi, Mathnawi (13th century)

The bridge with Sufism. Rumi, a Persian mystic, formulated the way of fana — the extinction of the self in God — in poetry of unequalled beauty. The Sufi's intoxication is not the warrior's sobriety. But at the end of both paths, what disappears is the same: the individual self, that narrow keg in which awareness had been confined. To read at the end of the journey, when the Toltec way has dug its own bed within you, and another accent will enchant you without diverting you.

Appendix C

Index

of questions and concepts

This index refers to question numbers (Q1 to Q22) rather than to pages, so that the references remain valid regardless of the edition or the format of the book. Two complementary abbreviations: CE for the Complementary Entry (sensitivity of the warrior), WN for the Warrior's Note (epilogue). The index is read in two parts: first, a synthetic table of the twenty-two questions, in order to find a theme by its number; then an alphabetical index of concepts, in order to find a concept across the whole book.

Table of questions

- Q1** The internal dialogue
- Q2** Personal history
- Q3** The waste of energy and self-importance
- Q4** Death as adviser
- Q5** Total responsibility for one's acts
- Q6** Impeccability
- Q7** The path of knowledge
- Q8** Action without expectation and without regret
- Q9** Breaking perceptual routine (not-doing)
- Q10** The petty tyrant
- Q11** Controlled folly
- Q12** The four enemies of the warrior
- Q13** Seeing
- Q14** The structure of the world (Eagle, emanations, cocoon)
- Q15** Losing the human form
- Q16** The flyer — what has stripped man of his power
- Q17** The art of dreaming
- Q18** Inorganic beings and the invisible world
- Q19** The manifestations of the Spirit
- Q20** Intent
- Q21** Cleaning the link to Intent
- Q22** Total freedom
- CE** Complementary Entry — The warrior's sensitivity (mediumship)
- WN** Warrior's Note — the deliberate omissions of the book

Alphabetical index of concepts

Allies : Q18.

Art of dreaming : Q17, WN.

Art of stalking : Q8, Q9, Q10, Q11.
Assemblage point : Q1, Q13, Q14, Q17, Q20, Q22.
Awareness of death : Q4.
Benefactor : Q16, Q22.
Castaneda, Carlos : mentioned throughout; see Appendix B for the corpus.
Cleaning the link to Intent : Q21.
Cocoon (luminous) : Q14, Q17, Q22.
Controlled folly : Q11, Q22.
Death (as adviser) : Q4.
Description of the world : Q9, Q14.
Dialogue (internal) : Q1, Q9, Q15.
Don Genaro : Q11, Q22.
Don Juan Matus : central figure of the book, present in every entry.
Dreaming (art of) : see Art of dreaming.
Eagle, the : Q13, Q14, Q22.
Earth (love for) : Q22.
Edifices of Intent : Q19.
Emanations of the Eagle : Q13, Q14, Q20, Q22.
Emissary (dreaming) : Q18.
Enemies of the warrior (the four) : Q7, Q12.
Energy (recovering one's) : Q3, Q6, Q15, Q17.
Energy body : Q17, Q18.
Erasing personal history : Q2.
Fire from within : Q22.
Flyer (mud shadow, predator) : Q16, Q22.
Fog (wrapping oneself in a) : Q2.
Four enemies of the warrior : see Enemies of the warrior.
Human form : Q15.
Impeccability : Q6.
Inner silence : Q1, Q19.
Inorganic beings : Q18, WN.
Intent : Q19, Q20, Q21, Q22.
Internal dialogue : Q1, Q9, Q15.
Inventory (strategic) : Q3.
Lineage of Don Juan : Q16, Q21, WN; see also Appendix B (section II).
Losing the human form : Q15.
Mediumship : see Sensitivity of the warrior.
Nagual (the unknown side of the being) : Q13, Q14, Q17, WN.

Nagual (person, leader of a lineage) : Q16, Q21, Q22.
New seers : Q13, Q21.
Not-doing : Q9.
Old seers : Q21, WN.
Perceptual routine : Q9.
Personal history : Q2.
Petty tyrant : Q10.
Power plants : WN.
Recapitulation : Q17, WN.
Responsibility (total) : Q5.
Scouts : Q18.
Second attention : Q13, Q17, Q18.
Seeing (to see) : Q13.
Seer : Q13, Q21, Q22.
Self-importance : Q3, Q15, Q16, Q22.
Self-pity : Q2, Q3, Q15.
Sensitivity of the warrior : CE.
Seven gates of dreaming : Q17.
Signs and omens : Q19, CE.
Silent knowledge : Q19, Q20, CE.
Sitios (places of power) : CE.
Smugness : Q3, Q15.
Sobriety : Q22.
Spirit (the abstract) : Q19, Q20.
Stopping the world : Q9, Q13.
Third attention : Q22.
Toltecs (as a title) : Q21.
Tonal : Q3, Q14, Q22, CE.
Total freedom : Q21, Q22.
Warrior's bearing : Q6, Q8, Q11, Q22.
Warrior-traveler : Q22.