

Suggestions for opening to images in practice taken from Rob Burbea's dharma talk "**Heart Art, and an Introduction to Image**"

All right. Let me zip through some practice possibilities. In talking about intrapsychic images, how can we work with them? How can we kind of support contacting them, etc.?

- (1) Number one: **play with any practice that liquefies. Any practice like samādhi**, or emptiness practices that you know, or mettā – actually what they're doing, in technical language, is they're fabricating less. In that less fabrication, there's a kind of liquefying. So you do that, and you enjoy it, and then after a while you can kind of just come out a little bit, just relax the attention a little bit. Everything has got kind of liquefied, and that can be a very fertile kind of ground out of which images may arise.
- (2) Second, I've already touched on, is **an emotion that's there** – whether it's difficult or whether it's beautiful – has enough energy in it that, if I feel it in the energy body, it can give rise to an image. It's got some kinetic energy in it. So through the emotion, emotion has energy wrapped up in it; that energy, felt in the energy body, can give rise to image.
- (3) Third: when I was first trying to explore all this, what I found really helpful was imagining, actually **deliberately imagining going to certain places**. There would be places where I would just wait, and an image would arise. I don't do it any more, but one that became quite common for me was somehow a prison cell, down in a basement. I would go down, and I would be in this prison cell – as the prisoner, usually. And there different images would come. But it might be under a big tree, or down another staircase somewhere, or whatever. It might be a certain place that you go that just becomes the place where you can meet images.
- (4) Fourth: **you already have plenty of images or potential images in your life – people, historical figures, places**. Gaia House might be an image to you, or certain teachers, or memories. There's lots in your life that's already potentially imaginal. Sometimes you can deliberately bring that. I never met John Coltrane. He's an imaginal figure for me. Or some other musicians, or loads of people. They're historical figures, but they function in my psyche as potential imaginal images. So you can bring them.
- (5) Fifth one: **it might be you've worked before with an image and it felt fruitful**. You can deliberately bring that back.
- (6) Sixth: **a dream** that feels like it's really touched you in some way. Potentially you can bring that and work with that dream image.
- (7) Seventh is **a prescribed image [like an archetype]**. Sometimes we're teaching and we just pick up on an image, or offer an image, or an image from somewhere else – a tantric deity or whatever. That's another option.