

**Cloud Knight**



**Fighting**

The person we are fighting is our self. Our armor is covered with buttons ready to be activated.

**The Body: You in the here/now**

The figure in this card is completely covered in armor. Only his glare of rage is visible, and the whites of the knuckles on his clenched fists. If you look closely at the armor, you can see it's covered with buttons, ready to detonate if anybody so much as brushes up against them. In the background we see the shadowy movie that plays in this man's mind - two figures fighting for a castle.

An explosive temper or a smoldering rage often masks a deep feeling of pain. We think that if we frighten people away, we can avoid being hurt even more. In fact, just the opposite is the case. By covering our wounds with armor we are preventing them from being healed. By lashing out at others we keep ourselves from getting the love and nourishment we need. If this description seems to fit you, it's time to stop fighting. There is so much love available to you if you just let it in. Start by forgiving yourself: you're worth it.

One moment it was there, another moment it is gone. One moment we are here, and another moment we have gone. And for this simple moment, how much fuss we make - how much violence, ambition, struggle, conflict, anger, hatred.

Just for this small moment! Just waiting for the train in a waiting room on a station, and creating so much fuss: fighting, hurting each other, trying to possess, trying to boss, trying to dominate – all that politics. And then the train comes and you are gone forever.

**Cloud 6****The Burden**

Drop the load of shoulds and shouldn'ts. Walk without those characters on your back.

**The Heart: You in the here/now**

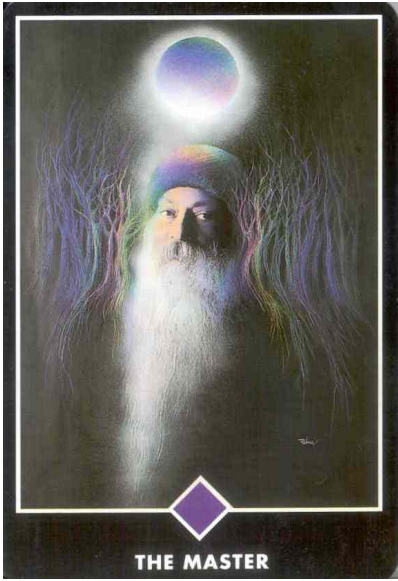
When we carry a load of shoulds and shouldn'ts imposed on us by others we become like this ragged, struggling figure trying to make his way uphill. "Go faster, try harder, reach the top!" shouts the foolish tyrant he carries on his shoulder, while the tyrant himself is crowned with an imperious rooster.

If life these days feels like just a struggle from the cradle to the grave, it could be time to shrug your shoulders and see what it feels like to walk without these characters on your back. You have your own mountains to conquer, your own dreams to fulfill, but you will never have the energy to pursue them until you release yourself from all the expectations you've gathered from others but now think are your own. Chances are they exist only in your own mind, but that doesn't mean they can't weigh you down. It's time to lighten up, and send them on their way.

A man's true life is the way in which he puts off the lie imposed by others on him. Stripped, naked, natural, he is what he is. This is a matter of being, and not of becoming. The lie cannot become the truth, the personality cannot become your soul. There is no way to make the nonessential the essential. The nonessential remains nonessential and the essential remains essential, they are not convertible. And striving towards truth is nothing but creating more confusion. The truth has not to be achieved. It cannot be achieved, it is already the case. Only the lie has to be dropped.

All aims and ends and ideals and goals and ideologies, religions and systems of improvement and betterment, are lies. Beware of them. Recognize the fact that, as you are, you are a lie. Manipulated, cultivated by others. Striving after truth is a distraction and a postponement. It is the lie's way to hide. See the lie, look deep into the lie of your personality. Because to see the lie is to cease to lie. No longer to lie is to seek no more for any truth - there is no need. The moment the lie disappears, truth is there in all its beauty and radiance. In the seeing of the lie it disappears, and what is left is the truth.

**The Master**



**The Master**

Don't lead but share,  
supporting each individual  
to find their light.

**The Mind: You in the here/now**

The Master in Zen is not a master over others, but a master of himself. His every gesture and his every word reflect his enlightened state. He has no private goals, no desire that anything should be other than the way it is. His disciples gather around him not to follow him, but to soak up his presence and be inspired by his example. In his eyes they find their own truth reflected, and in his silence they fall more easily into the silence of their own beings. The master welcomes the disciples not because he wants to lead them, but because he has so much to share. Together, they create an energy field that supports each unique individual in finding his or her own light.

If you can find such a master you are blessed. If you cannot, keep on searching. Learn from the teachers, and the would-be masters, and move on. Charaiveti, charaiveti, said Gautam Buddha. Keep on moving.

Beyond mind, there is an awareness that is intrinsic, that is not given to you by the outside, and is not an idea – and there is no experiment up to now that has found any center in the brain which corresponds to awareness. The whole work of meditation is to make you aware of all that is “mind” and disidentify yourself from it. That very separation is the greatest revolution that can happen to man.

Now you can do and act on only that which makes you more joyous, fulfills you, gives you contentment, makes your life a work of art, a beauty. But this is possible only if the master in you is awake. Right now the master is fast asleep. And the mind, the servant, is playing the role of master. And the servant is not even your servant; the servant is created by the outside world, it follows the outside world and its laws.

Once your awareness becomes a flame, it burns up the whole slavery that the mind has created. There is no blissfulness more precious than freedom, than being a master of your own destiny.

**Water 5****Clinging to the Past**

Your past is gone and you are not seeing the blessings available here and now.

**The Body: Partner in the here/now**

The figure pictured in this card is so preoccupied with clutching her box of memories that she has turned her back on the sparkling champagne glass of blessings available here and now. Her nostalgia for the past really makes her a 'blockhead', and a beggar besides, as we can see from her patched and ragged clothes. She needn't be a beggar, of course – but she is not available to taste the pleasures that offer themselves in the present.

It's time to face up to the fact that the past is gone, and any effort to repeat it is a sure way to stay stuck in old blueprints that you would have already outgrown if you hadn't been so busy clinging to what you have already been through. Take a deep breath, put the box down, tie it up in a pretty ribbon if you must, and bid it a fond and reverent farewell. Life is passing you by, and you're in danger of becoming an old fossil before your time!

These tenses – past, present and future – are not the tenses of time; they are tenses of the mind. That which is no longer before the mind becomes the past. That which is before the mind is the present. And that which is going to be before the mind is the future.

Past is that which is no longer before you.

Future is that which is not yet before you.

And present is that which is before you and is slipping out of your sight. Soon it will be past....

If you don't cling to the past ... because clinging to the past is absolute stupidity. It is no longer there, so you are crying for spilled milk. What is gone is gone! And don't cling to the present because that is also going and soon it will be past. Don't cling to the future - hopes, imaginations, plans for tomorrow – because tomorrow will become today, will become yesterday. Everything is going to become yesterday. Everything is going to go out of your hands. Clinging will simply create misery. You will have to let go.

**20 Beyond Illusion****Beyond Illusion**

The outer, constantly moving, is not real but an illusion. Look inward to that which is eternal.

**The Heart: Partner in the here/now**

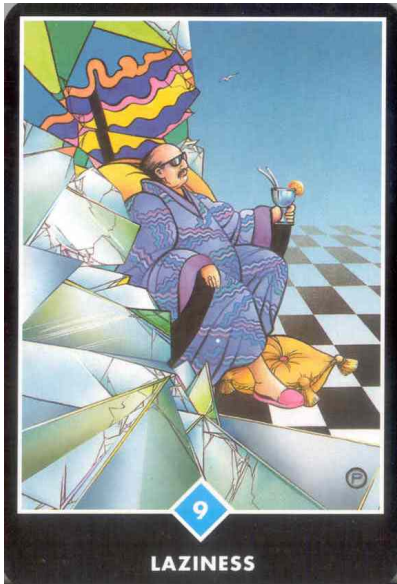
The butterfly in this card represents the outer, that which is constantly moving and that which is not real but an illusion. Behind the butterfly is the face of consciousness, looking inward to that which is eternal. The space between the two eyes has opened, revealing the lotus of spiritual unfoldment and the rising sun of awareness. Through the rising of the inner sun, meditation is born.

The card reminds us not to look outside for what is real, but to look within. When we focus on externals, we too often get caught up in judgments – this is good, this is bad, I want this, I don't want that. These judgments keep us trapped in our illusions, our sleepiness, our old habits and patterns. Drop your opinionated mind, and move inside. There, you can relax into your own deepest truth, where the difference between dreams and reality is already known.

This is the only distinction between the dream and the real: reality allows you to doubt, and the dream does not allow you to doubt....

To me, the capacity to doubt is one of the greatest blessings to humanity. The religions have been enemies because they have been cutting the very roots of doubt, and there is a reason why they have been doing that: because they want people to believe in certain illusions that they have been preaching....

Why have the people like Gautam Buddha been so insistent that the whole existence – except your witnessing self, except your awareness – is just ephemeral, made of the same stuff as dream made of? They are not saying that these trees are not there. They are not saying that these pillars are not there. Don't misunderstand because of the word 'illusion'.... It has been translated as illusion, but illusion is not the right word. Illusion does not exist. Reality exists. Maya is just in between – it almost exists. As far as day-to-day activities are concerned, it can be taken as reality. Only in the ultimate sense, from the peak of your illumination, it unreal, illusory.

**Water 9****Laziness**

You've achieved, but it's time to move on. More waits for your exploration.

**The Mind: The Partner in the here/now**

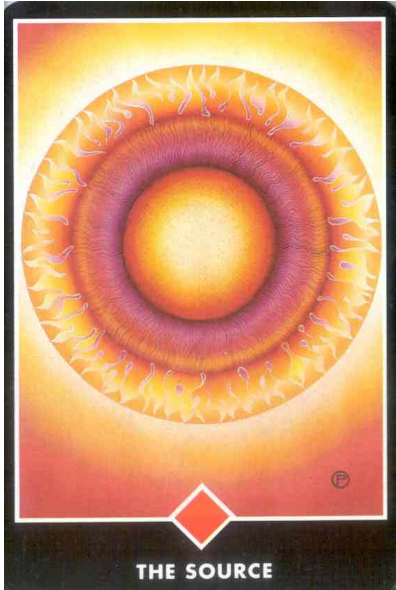
This gentleman clearly thinks he's got it made. He sits in his big overstuffed chair, wearing his sunglasses, shaded by his umbrella, with his pink slippers and his pina colada in his hand. He doesn't have the energy to get up and do anything because he thinks he's done it already. He hasn't yet turned to see the mirror cracking around him on his right, a sure sign that the place he thinks he's finally arrived at is about to shatter and dissolve before his very eyes.

The message this card brings is that this pool side resort is not your final destination. The journey isn't over yet, as that white bird flying into the vastness of the sky is trying to show. Your complacency might have arisen from a real sense of achievement, but now it's time to move on. No matter how fuzzy the slippers, how tasty the pina colada, there are skies upon skies still waiting to be explored.

When you are lazy, it is a negative taste: you simply feel that you have no energy, you simply feel dull; you simply feel sleepy, you simply feel dead. When you are a state of non-doing then you are full of energy – it is a very positive taste. You have full energy, overflowing. You are radiant, bubbling, vibrating. You are not sleepy, you are perfectly aware. You are not dead - you are tremendously alive...

There is a possibility the mind can deceive you: it can rationalize laziness as non-doing. It can say, "I have become a Zen master," or, "I believe in Tao" - but you are not deceiving anybody else. You will be deceiving only yourself. So be alert.

**Fire Ace**



**The Source**

Tape in the vast reservoir of energy available to us, giving us everything we need.

**Melting and Merging (Intimacy): Outer Manifestation of the partnership**

When we speak of being 'grounded' or 'centered' it is this Source we are talking about. When we begin a creative project, it is this Source that we tune in to.

This card reminds us that there is a vast reservoir of energy available to us. And that we tap into it not by thinking and planning but by getting grounded, centered, and silent enough to be in contact with the Source. It is within each of us, like a personal, individual sun giving us life and nourishment. Pure energy, pulsating, available, it is ready to give us anything we need to accomplish something, and ready to welcome us back home when we want to rest.

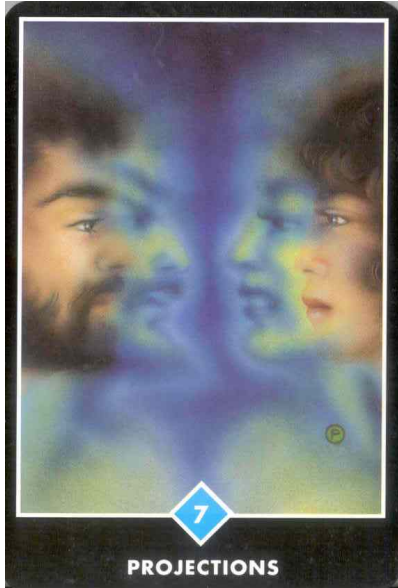
So whether you are beginning something new and need inspiration right now, or you've just finished something and want to rest, go to the Source. It's always waiting for you, and you don't even have to step out of your house to find it.

Zen asks you to come out of the head and go to the basic source.... It is not that Zen is not aware of the uses of energy in the head, but if all the energy is used in the head, you will never become aware of your eternity....

You will never know as an experience what it is to be one with the whole.

When the energy is just at the center, pulsating, when it is not moving anywhere, neither in the head nor in the heart, but it is at the very source from where the heart takes it, the head takes it, pulsating at the very source - that is the very meaning of Zazen.

Zazen means just sitting at the very source, not moving anywhere, a tremendous force arises, a transformation of energy into light and love, into greater life, into compassion, into creativity. It can take many forms. But first you have to learn how to be at the source. Then the source will decide where your potential is. You can relax at the source, and it will take you to your very potential.

**Water 7****Projections**

You project an image constructed in your mind to cover the face of the person in front of you.

**The alchemy of togetherness (transformation): Outer manifestation of the partnership**

The man and woman in this card are facing each other, yet they are not able to see each other clearly. Each is projecting an image they have constructed in their minds, covering the real face of the person they are looking at.

All of us can get caught up in projecting movies of our own making onto the situations and people surrounding us. It happens when we are not fully aware of our own expectations, desires and judgments; instead of taking responsibility for them and owning them, we try to attribute them to others. A projection can be devilish or divine, disturbing or comforting, but it is a projection nonetheless – a cloud that prevents us from seeing reality as it is. The only way out is to recognize the game. When you find a judgment arising about another, turn it around: Does what you see in others really belong to you? Is your vision clear, or clouded by what you want to see?

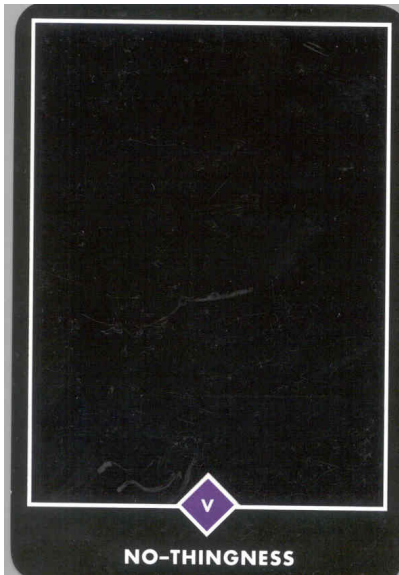
In a cinema hall, you look at the screen, you never look at the back - the projector is at the back. The film is not there really on the screen; is just a projection of shadow and light. The film exists just at the back, but you never look at that. And the projector is there.

Your mind is at the back of the whole thing, and the mind is the projector. But you always look at the other, because the other is the screen. When you are in love the person seems beautiful, no comparison. When you hate, the same person seems the ugliest, and you never become aware of how the same person can be the ugliest and the same person can be the most beautiful....

So the only way to reach to truth is to learn how to be immediate in your vision, how to drop the help of the mind. This agency of the mind is the problem, because mind can create only dreams.... Through your excitement the dream starts looking like reality. If you are too excited then you are intoxicated, then you are not in your senses. Then whatsoever you see is just your projection. And there are as many worlds as there are minds, because every mind lives in his own world.



**05 No-Thingness**



**No-Thingness**

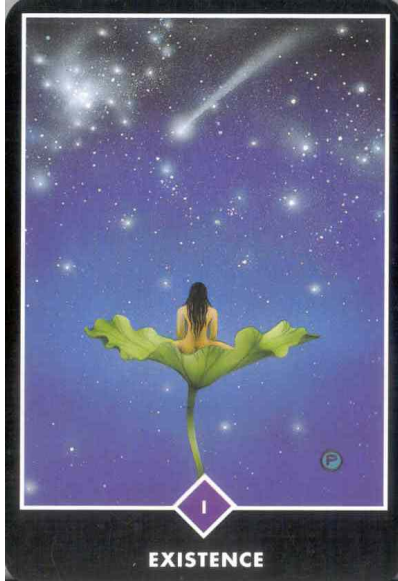
State of pure potential, relax into this nothingness, fall into the silence between the words.

**The blessings (benefits and gifts): Outer manifestation of the partnership**

Being 'in the gap' can be disorienting and even scary. Nothing to hold on to, no sense of direction, not even a hint of what choices and possibilities might lie ahead. But it was just this state of pure potential that existed before the universe was created. All you can do now is to relax into this nothingness, fall into this silence between the words... watch this gap between the outgoing and incoming breath. And treasure each empty moment of the experience. Something sacred is about to be born.

Buddha has chosen one of the really very potential words - shunyata. The English word, the English equivalent, 'nothingness', is not such a beautiful word. That's why I would like to make it 'no-thingness' – because the nothing is not just nothing, it is all. It is vibrant with all possibilities. It is potential, absolute potential. It is unmanifest yet, but it contains all.

In the beginning is nature, in the end is nature, so why in the middle do you make so much fuss? Why, in the middle, becoming so worried, so anxious, so ambitious – why create such despair? Nothingness to nothingness is the whole journey.

**01 Existence****Existence**

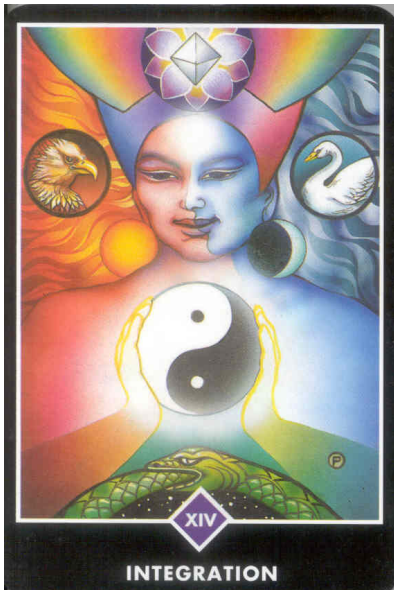
Feel "at home" wherever you are.

**Melting and Merging (intimacy): Inner Spiritual Purpose**

This naked figure sits on the lotus leaf of perfection, gazing at the beauty of the night sky. She knows that 'home' is not a physical place in the outside world, but an inner quality of relaxation and acceptance. The stars, the rocks, the trees, the flowers, fish and birds - all are our brothers and sisters in this dance of life. We human beings tend to forget this, as we pursue our own private agendas and believe we must fight to get what we need. But ultimately, our sense of separateness is just an illusion, manufactured by the narrow preoccupations of the mind.

Now is the time to look at whether you are allowing yourself to receive the extraordinary gift of feeling 'at home' wherever you are. If you are, be sure to take time to savor it so it can deepen and remain with you. If on the other hand you've been feeling like the world is out to get you, it's time to take a break. Go outside tonight and look at the stars.

You are not accidental. Existence needs you. Without you something will be missing in existence and nobody can replace it. That's what gives you dignity, that the whole existence will miss you. The stars and sun and moon, the trees and birds and earth - everything in the universe will feel a small place is vacant which cannot be filled by anybody except you. This gives you a tremendous joy, a fulfillment that you are related to existence, and existence cares for you. Once you are clean and clear, you can see tremendous love falling on you from all dimensions.

**01 Existence****Integration**

Create a unified whole, communicating between dualities of life, resolving the conflict in your mind.

**The alchemy of togetherness (transformation): Inner spiritual purpose**

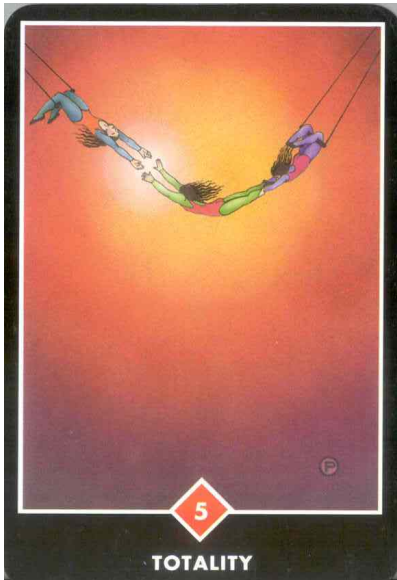
The image of integration is the unio mystica, the fusion of opposites. This is a time of communication between the previously experienced dualities of life. Rather than night opposing day, dark suppressing light, they work together to create a unified whole, turning endlessly one into the other, each containing in its deepest core the seed of the opposite.

The eagle and the swan are both beings of flight and majesty. The eagle is the embodiment of power and alones. The swan is the embodiment of space and purity, gently floating and diving upon and within the element of the emotions, entirely content and compete within her perfection and beauty.

We are the union of eagle and swan; male and female, fire and water, life and death. The card of integration is the symbol of self-creation, new life, and mystical union; otherwise known as alchemy.

The conflict is in man. Unless it is resolved there, it cannot be resolved anywhere else. The politics is within you; it is between the two parts of the mind.

A very small bridge exists. If that bridge is broken through some accident, through some physiological defect or something else, the person becomes split, the person becomes two persons – and the phenomenon of schizophrenia or split personality happens. If the bridge is broken – and the bridge is very fragile – then you become two, you behave like two persons. In the morning you are very loving, very beautiful; in the evening you are very angry, absolutely different. You don't remember your morning... how can you remember? Another mind was functioning... and the person becomes two persons. If this bridge is strengthened so much that the two minds disappear as two and become one, then integration, then crystallization, arises. What George Gurdjieff used to call the crystallization of being is nothing but these two minds become one, the meeting of the male and the female within, the meeting of yin and yang, the meeting of logic and illogic, the meeting of Plato and Aristotle.

**Fire 5****Totality**

Be totally present in responding to whatever comes, as it comes.

**The blessings (benefits and gifts): Inner Spiritual Purpose**

These three women are high in the air, playful and free, yet alert and interdependent. In a trapeze act, nobody can afford to be a little bit 'absent' even for a split second. And it is this quality of total attentiveness to the moment at hand that is represented here.

We may feel there are too many things to do at once, but get bogged down in trying to do a bit here, a bit there, instead of taking one task at a time and getting on with it. Or perhaps we think our task is 'boring' because we've forgotten that it's not what you do but how you do it that matters. Developing the knack of being total in responding to whatever comes, as it comes, is one of the greatest gifts you can give yourself. Taking one step through life at a time, giving each step your complete attention and energy, can bring a wondrous new vitality and creativity to all that you do.

Every moment there is a possibility to be total. Whatsoever you are doing, be absorbed in it so utterly that the mind thinks nothing, is just there, is just a presence. And more and more totality will be coming. And the taste of totality will make you more and more capable of being total. And try to see when you are not total. Those are the moments which have to be dropped slowly, slowly. When you are not total, whenever you are in the head - thinking, brooding, calculating, cunning, clever - you are not total. Slowly, slowly slip out of those moments. It is just an old habit. Habits die hard. But they die certainly - if one persists, they die.