




# LAWU RETREAT SESSIONS: RETROSPECT OVERVIEW

◀ Recordings ✧ #GO.001 ✧ LINK  OGG  PDF 

**Words:** 2754 ✧ **Length:** 25:37 min

✧ **Created:** 2025-03-02 ✧ **Updated:** 2025-06-21

Walkthrough of our sessions in a four-day retreat-workshop at Mt. Lawu. Covering the many modalities of meditation, the practice of mantra and the use of sound, and the philosophy and applications of the four primal elements.



- Modalities of Meditation Overview
- Mantra Primer and In-Depth on Practice
- Mangku Jito's Three-World Hybrid Cultivation

- Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space
- Workshopping the Elements in Real Life
- Concentrated Compassion Generation

## ❖ TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ¶ First Day Sessions ↴

#### ¶ Session 1.1 – Sharing, Orienting and Setting Our Baseline ↴

#### ¶ Session 1.2 – Modalities of Meditation Overview ↴

### ¶ Second Day Sessions ↴

#### ¶ Session 2.1 – Mantra Primer and In-Depth on Practice ↴

#### ¶ Session 2.2 – Mangku Jito's Three-World Hybrid Cultivation ↴

### ¶ Third Day Sessions ↴

#### ¶ Session 3.1 – Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space ↴

#### ¶ Session 3.2 – Mantra Songs and Consultations ↴

## ¶ Fourth Day Sessions ↴

### ¶ Session 4.1 – Workshopping the Elements in Real Life ↴

### ¶ Session 4.2 – Village Cosmology and Night of Shiva Ceremony ↴

### ¶ Session 4.X – Concentrated Compassion Generation ↴

### ¶ Our Four Days – In Conclusion ↴

Greetings. So we've concluded a four-day retreat, sessions of teaching and practice at Mount Lawu in the village of Demping, hosted by Mangku Jito, the good old wise man priest of the village.

I wish to share a summary of the topics that we explored during our four days. The full measure of it has been recorded and will be available in due time. For now, let us touch again on everything that we've touched upon.

## **First Day Sessions**

### **Session 1.1 – Sharing, Orienting and Setting Our Baseline**

On the first day, because our group was a group of returning visitors and old friends, we simply took our time to share our present states, our backgrounds, what we are working with, and where we hope to go – to establish a baseline of our shared sessions.

It was a fascinating, rewarding and often also emotional session of sharing with many, if not most of us, at a point where our practice and our insight is not only in the mind – but is also touching the heart, touching the soul, going deeper into the core of our being.

### **Session 1.2 – Modalities of Meditation Overview**

In our first session, during the first day, for a general frame of reference, we explored the multiple paths and ways of meditation that are not really separate paths – but that can be integrated into more singular, multi-

modal practice. We did indeed put much of it into practice over our four days.

There is expanding and contracting meditation.

Expanding open awareness that exposes us to the full spectrum of our mental contents, the full spectrum of our environment. Where we observe the rising, presence and falling of all things inner and outer. Where we understand where things come from, where they go, and also why they arise and what to make of their presence — how to integrate all of that into a harmonic field of broad awareness. It is like the telescope of our minds.

At the other end, concentration, focused attention on more singular objects or zones, such as visualizations and sounds, mantra, even spontaneous sound, or singular monosyllabic sound — or the breath, importantly a practice that carries with us in all contexts of life, an important anchor of concentration and deeper attention.

Beyond that, we have emotional and empathic cultivation, importantly kindness, universal goodwill, compassion, but also forgiveness, gratitude, and so on, that we can attend to either more free-form

spontaneously, or methodically attending to ourselves – attending to our loved ones, those neutral to us, and even those we hold a grudge against, or who hold a grudge against us. To our families, to our communities, to increasingly broader spheres of sentient beings.

Again, we have contemplative meditation. In there, the more devotional contemplations and the more intellectual, philosophical contemplations – a separate field of meditation.

Again, there are methods of energetic cultivation, whether Qi, Kundalini, and so on, attention to the different psychic and psychosomatic centers, fields in our being, whether with the chakras, with the elements, etc.

And finally, we have the class of embodied somatic-kinetic meditations through movement, whether on its own or in combination with other practices where we, for example, use our postures, our palms, our arms, and so on, to direct our attention, to stimulate presence in different aspects of our being. So those were our meditation overview sessions.

## **Second Day Sessions**

## **Session 2.1 – Mantra Primer and In-Depth on Practice**

On the second day, in the second theme and set of sessions, we turned our attention specifically to the topic of mantras, chants, incantations. Both those in Sanskrit, and the general principles that carry over to any and all parallel traditions, whether you are reciting in Tibetan, Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, or Mongolian. The same principles apply.

From there onward, we went into pure sound, the geometry of sound, vowels, consonants, the spaces and forms we invoke into being – the very atoms of our mantras, how they combine into melodies, how we use tone, pitch, in directing our concentrated attention.

Beyond that, we also looked at the different classes of mantras – from the seed sounds to root mantras, to three-part mantras, to verses that are more typically used for invocation in openings and closings, in establishing the scene in which we contemplate.

With the metaphor being of an entire environment, the broadest field in the environment, like unto a shrine where we concentrate to the specific target of a

mantra. And in the shrine, an altar, the root mantra – on the altar, seated the pulsating core, the seed sounds, the primal essence of the mantra.

And again, we expand, we concentrate again, depending on our flow of attention, and in tune with our capacities. Overall, a good exploration of the broader field of the use of mantra and attention in meditation, inner cultivation.

With our microscope of concentration, we deepen our attention to particular things, we crispen the definition of our perception, we enter a particular field of attention – and that field of attention becomes like unto a lens, it becomes a platform of insight. And then, when we turn our attention from that particular concentration to the rest of all of existence, we perceive deeper, we perceive clearer, and we perceive specific particularities on a level that is inaccessible to our regular day-to-day awareness.

This high-definition concentration supplements the broad expanding field of our holistic attention, the integrative open awareness, where we witness all that is going on, and we witness it in increasing clarity, in increasing depth, and with increasing perception on the



relations between all the things that filter through our senses, from actuality into the mirror of our minds.

## **Session 2.2 – Mangku Jito's Three-World Hybrid Cultivation**

In continuing our sessions on mantra and sound, we asked Mangku Jito to join in to elaborate on that which is beyond and behind the mantra – that source from which mantras manifest and to which mantras point to, how we can engage the mantra as a vessel and a vehicle of our attention and intentions.

In the session that followed, he shared with us a three-world method of cultivation. Three worlds in the microcosm, three worlds in the macrocosm, bringing in the dynamic elements, water, fire and air. And with the help of seed syllables, basic sounds, with the movements of hands, directed with the eye of Shiva in the governing forehead, and with the intentional directed breath, we bring the dynamic elements from the macrocosm into our inner being, into different organs, parts of our body, and again we exhale them.

A practice of unification, a good integration, with four modalities of meditation and cultivation brought into a

single package. From there, Mangku Jito continued to a series of other topics, core teachings or lessons, that we explored for the remainder of the day. So that was day two, and while we had some remaining topics from my side to explore, we had the full of four days to wrap up any loose ends, with the understanding that we are never ever going to cover everything that could possibly, potentially be covered.

So it was a day well concluded. At the very end of the night, we entered a yoga-nidra guided relaxation. Letting loose all tensions in our physical bodies, in our breath, in our senses, in our emotions, in our minds, entering into a peaceful slumber of regeneration, and retired for a good night's rest until the morning that followed.

## Third Day Sessions

### Session 3.1 – Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space

On the third day, we opened the chapter on the four elements – earth, water, fire and air.

Looking at them – earth, the cradle of our lives, the foundational structures and substance. Water, the spring of our lives, the continuity, cohesion and adaptation of our stream. Fire, the encounters, interactions, challenges and transformations, the forge in which our lives are cast. And then air, the parasol canopy over our skies, the macro-perspective of all of our being, relations between all things, the meanings of all things, our life-cycle and process as a whole – as the wind touches all things, high and low.

And of course the fifth element of space itself, that creates a container for the four elements to combine, interact within space – that shouldn't be excessive in order to keep things together, to prevent entropy, and that shouldn't be too enclosed in order to prevent collision – to provide the optimal space for all things to

negotiate, reconcile, harmonize amongst themselves. And we did some trial meditations exploring the elements in our bodies and in our minds.

And that was the morning until noon of the third day. After the noon break, we were wondering if Mangku Jito would join us to continue wrapping up his remaining headlines from the core package he wished to convey. But sadly, with the relentless activities of the weeks that preceded, his health took a dip. He was at a capacity and with a drop in his blood pressure.

So he spent the day until the noon of the next day recovering, recuperating, regathering his energy. After the break, we returned to simply share, discuss whatever each of us had remaining in their field of contemplations, things to process, a free-form session with many, many good topics churned out as we shared and learned all from each other.

### **Session 3.2 – Mantra Songs and Consultations**

Later in the evening, we took a break from relentless learning and switched back to the topic of sound, but now not in mantras that are spoken out loud or

whispered or mentally repeated. We turned to song. We didn't turn to dance yet, but we turned to song.

We had a kirtan song session for half an hour or so, playing with sound floating on the melodies paced by the rhythm, capturing our senses through the expression of a meaningful sound. And with this, we wrapped up the third day.

There were still many one-on-one conversations that followed – each with their different temperaments, capacities, and so on. Not all things can be shared in a group, otherwise some will spill over, some will feel a lack. We have to adapt to each individual, even in a more intimate group setting with experienced practitioners gathering together.

## Fourth Day Sessions

### Session 4.1 – Workshopping the Elements in Real Life

On the fourth day that we had booked for our day of synthesis and integration, and for whatever loose ends that remain, in the morning we returned to the elements to bring the elements into a living application.

We explored a scenario where me and Gorka were setting up a yogic-shamanic community in the Pyrenees somewhere on the mountainside, and we looked at the parties involved. First the founders, second the community of people participating, and as the third party that comes into being, those two in one, the project itself as an entity, a being unto itself, and its needs.

And these we explored through the lenses of the elements – where is the earth in us, in them, and in all of it together. Where is the water, where is the fire, where is the air, and how these elements are fundamental aspects to consider, influences to navigate in any undertaking pervading all spectrums of life.

In the end we ended up appointing elemental ministers. The minister of earth, the warden, who ensures that all foundations are in place and things remain stable. The minister of water, the counsellor, harmoniser. The minister of fire, the executive, the resolver. And the minister of air, the guide strategist. And finally the minister of balance, who only emerges from his or her lair or cave when other elements fall out of balance and re-harmonisation is required.

So all in all a very entertaining and engaging workshopping through the elements, their application in all of life's situations. With that, we wrapped up our exploration and teachings on the elements. Necessarily at a limited length – we only had a day or so in total to explore them.

## **Session 4.2 – Village Cosmology and Night of Shiva Ceremony**

And after that, we were joined by Mangku Jito again to conclude the remaining teachings he had in his pocket. And also for a walkthrough of the sites in the area: The lower spring of purification; the middle spring, the navel of life under the beautiful mother tree; and the

high spring up on the fields, the gifts that are given in response to our righteous lives and occupations. Also the well of the victory flower and the necessities we receive for our lives; and the liberation stone, the end of things where all must be let go. The cosmology of the village of Demping.

And toward the end of the fourth day we prepared for the ceremony of Shivaratri, the night of Shiva, with elaborate offerings, both as our ceremony of departure and in entering the silent dark night of Shiva, into the basis of our consciousness.

We did a classic Upachara ceremony with a full measure of mantras and offerings, and with a little prayer we returned to a shared session of chanting, concluding at an hour well past the midnight. It was an appropriate conclusion for the time we had spent together. So that was our four days of sharing with Gorka, his six friends, myself, the eight of us.

### **Session 4.X – Concentrated Compassion Generation**

Alas but I forget, on the morning of the fourth day with Mangku Jito still recovering, he was brought to a hospital nearby. Our friends were asking, is there



anything we can do – can we do a session of mantra recitation to aid in his well-being?

So we ended up doing that. We went with a mantra of Om Mani Padme Hum, an invocation of universal compassion, the jewel in the lotus that we charged with our intentions of compassion and healing, reciting the mantra all together in sets of eight.

Attending to ourselves, reflecting to each other, directing to our respective villages and lands, to the local village, to the entire country, to the entire world – and this collection of energy finally we concentrated, and we directed toward the one who was in need of any support available at the time.

And with this, again, we combined empathetic meditation, the use of sound, and aspects of energetic cultivation – a worthwhile application of all that we had been exploring for the benefit of sentient beings.

This pure intention to help others resolve their sufferings, find a path that is free of grief arising from our thoughts, words and actions, for a healing and well-being that lasts in all situations in life, in all


environments, throughout all challenges – this is the heart of our practice.

If this is not there, the rest of it matters not, because the rest of it does not integrate with nature, integrate with other sentient beings, integrate with the greater universe, leading to well-rounded and thorough unification, harmonization, liberation, consummation of every potential in our existence.

## **Our Four Days – In Conclusion**

So these were our four days of sessions at Mount Lawu, on meditation and its different modalities, on the use of mantra and sound, on the application of the elements internally and in various living contexts, toward synthesis of all that we may ever think, feel and do, for our fulfillment and well-being in the here and now, and for our perfection as the journey of our lives continues and flows into the future.

With this, we hope that some insight has arisen, some peace and satisfaction has been touched upon, and that all of us will carry more of the best and purest and truest of lives into our respective environments, touching all living beings we interact with – shaping our environments into a better world for us, for others, playing our roles in the ever-evolving universe. With that, may all beings live happily and consummate every essence of their lives.

 <https://ananda.icu/notes/recordings/go001-lawu-retreat-sessions-retrospect-overview>