

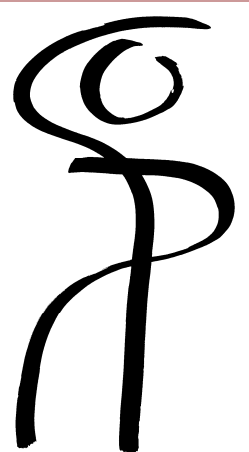


RDTTC Founder's Newsletter

Winter 2011 No 5

Special points of interest:

- Dates for
Spring
Summer 2011
- Article -
Heavy is the
Root of Light
- School News
- RDTTC Soul
Food Summer
Gathering
Weekend
- RDTTC Soul
Moves day in
Herefordshire
April
- TMW Training



Heavy is the Root of Light!

It is said the best place to understand Tao is to understand Nature.

It is said that Tai Chi is Tao in movement.

Tai Chi is Tao is Nature.

To be Tai Chi Movement is to return to our Nature. To return to a place where there is balance and where things move in a harmony.

When we start our path in Tai Chi Movement, we do so because at some level we are seeking to rebalance, whether it is our health, or our mind and emotions, or a wish to understand better where we are and how we can live more in harmony with our world. We are seeking to find a natural balance once more.

Yet who is it that begins this journey? One who is out of balance. What I have observed in myself and in the thousands of people who I have had the privilege to introduce to Tai Chi Movement, is that imbalance is doing Tai Chi practice. This makes the path very difficult and long.

There is a saying, when Yang is in the yang place then the Yin can find its own place. When these two find balance there is harmony and the natural balance is restored. This is what is meant by "Heavy is the Root of Light" which is a line in the Tai Chi Classics - a body of writing from the masters of times past who wrote what they considered to be the essence of Tai Chi.

If you consider what happens when we are caught by tension, there is a tightening of muscles and mind, a 'going up' as it were. I suffered from asthma for a long time and to have the breath of life hindered in some way is very frightening, so I have a lot of experience with tension. Asthmatics are famed for their tight shoulders, partly because they lift them trying to get more air and partly because the experience of breathlessness is so frightening. At the age of 12 I was introduced to what was actually meditation but was called 'Self Hypnosis'. The essence of it was to relax my mind in the face of this tension, this fear of breathlessness and potential death. It was the opposite of what I wanted to do, which was to fight and tense

Because the Yang is underneath the tree can grow upwards without falling over.

and pull air in. Instead I had to learn to lower my mind.

This is very Tai Chi. 'Sung' is a prime quality of Tai Chi Movement. To Sung the mind, to let the mind sink to the Tan Tien, is again taken from the Tai Chi Classics. To Sung means to sink, which means to relax, to soften.

When I look at people who come to learn Tai Chi Movement, what I often see is a lifting where there needs to be a lowering, a hardening where there needs to be more transparency, a tension where there needs to be softness and a collapsing where there needs to be something firm. In other words they are out of balance, out of harmony with themselves. No matter how well they know the sequence, it is done out of harmony or from an unbalanced place.

So if Sung is important in Tai Chi Movement, then relaxation is also important. However if there is nothing to support you, why would you let go? Would you really relax into a void? No.

So to relax, first there needs to be something else there, we need to be able to relax around something.

If we come back to tension, and its manifestation in tight and lifted shoulders, we will see that the yang element is on top of the shoulders. But if we look at Nature, the heavy,

the Yang is usually underneath.

Think of a tree. Because the Yang is underneath, the tree can grow upwards without falling over.

Heavy is the root of Light. When the Yang is in the yang place, the Yin finds itself.

Ushiba, the Founder of Aikido, talked about keeping the weight underside. Again if we look at how un-naturally people move, we see that they move with tension. The Yang is above, making them unstable below and they lose their balance. Not only that, but because movement is fighting itself, there is a woodenness to the movement. Harmony has been lost, flow has been lost, which hinders the flow of energy in the body, the Chi.

When the weight is kept underside, when there is Sung, there is natural harmony and flow. When the weight is underneath there is a lightness on top. How to enable this?

For me, the crucial element is to have a poised spine, a balanced spine. If the spine is puffed up or collapsed then harmony is lost. When we centre in the spine, the shoulders can relax because they are supported. When there is Spine, the weight descends into the pelvis and down through the legs, but when there is tension in the shoulders, when the Yang is above, this tension is mirrored in the lower back which blocks the flow in the

If there is nothing to support you, why would you let go?

legs making them more empty yin.

So when the Yang is in the right place, i.e. the vertical alignment of the body, then around that foundation, the muscles relax because they are supported. This relaxation is Sung. With this Sung the Yang sinks and the Yin is free to be light, making the moves seem like you are floating but well rooted.

The Tibetans talk about the mind riding on winds in the body. If the winds are blocked or out of balance then the mind becomes tight and "chatters". When there is good alignment in the spine, the winds are more channeled, less frenetic so they become more harmonious and it is possible to sink the mind more easily.

When we sink the mind, the body relaxes, because of course the body follows or mirrors the mind. It is a circle.

We come to Tai Chi Movement with this circle revolving in an un-natural way. Tension in the mind creates tension in the body and unbalances the system which in turn creates tension in the mind. By understanding the correct use of the Yang principles in the body we can reverse this cycle into a harmonious and natural flow. This allows us to move harmoniously in mind and body.

When the Yang is in its rightful

place, order is restored. Again if we think about the tension of self-protection, the tension is a wall or armour between us and what we are afraid of. It is a surviving but from a cut off and often historical and un-listening place. That wall of tension is often there because there is nothing in the middle, there is no root or centre. When the Yang is in the middle, when the root, the centre is present, it is this root or centre which can protect us. Because of this reassuring presence, the muscles, instead of freezing into a wall, remain fluid and able to move and get us out of trouble.

This is true in all things. In Tai Chi Movement we begin with the body learning these principles through movement, whether it is in the Tai Chi Form or through, say, Shibashi. As we see that it is true, we move our exploration into the body of the mind - what I call studying the "dynamics of the mind". At this point we may use the study of meditation to refine our exploration.

As we see that this is true in both body and mind we begin to explore it in our lives. We see there are places where we hide, where the Yang is displaced by hiding and the balance of Yin and Yang is out of harmony. So we begin to explore standing up, letting the Yang be in its rightful place. There is a 'showing up' rather than a hiding, a revealing rather than an obscuration, because the Yang is in



By understanding the correct use of the Yang principles in the body we can reverse this cycle into a harmonious and natural flow.





When you move, pay attention to your spine and follow poise.

Give attention to relaxing, to sung and allow sinking.



its rightful place, Yin is in its rightful place.

We are not alone. We belong to lots of different families and structures and organisations. Each of these, like our body, is a closed unit, but if one component takes its natural place, this has a knock-on effect throughout that structure. As we stand up in our natural harmony, that has an effect on those around us. They too then have to make a choice to go with the old un-harmonious balance or to flow with a new more natural balance.

When you move, pay attention to your spine, and follow poise. Give attention to relaxing, to Sung and allow sinking.

I began learning Tai Chi Movement thinking of it as an exercise. And yet now I see it in everything. There is not one aspect of my life that it does not touch. It is an extraordinary guide to bringing harmony where there is none. It brings life where there is deadness. It brings movement where there is stagnation. It brings stillness where there is frantic activity.

How can we make a difference? How can we bring harmony to our life? To our world? It starts with me. It starts with you. It starts now. Let the Yang take its rightful place in you and the Yin can relax and become receptive. By being receptive you will listen. If you

listen enough, you will understand. When you understand you will know what to do. In that "doing" will be more harmony. More Nature. More Tao. Because we are not alone. Like a ripple from a stone dropped in a lake, the ripples flow out endlessly and touch all things. When enough of us do this, a tipping point is reached and Nature is restored.

Heavy is the root of light. Let the Yang be in its rightful place!



RDTTC News



Gloria Scott Gloria passed away on New Year's Eve 2010 after suffering from cancer for a relatively short time. Her wish was to go quickly but first to have Christmas with her family and so she did.

Gloria had been with RDTTC for over 15 years. She started out in Llandrindod Wells with Heather Williams learning the Short Form. She wanted to get to the essence of Tai Chi and expressed a wish to join the Deepening in its old form, but I



felt she was not ready. What this precipitated was her exploring the essence of her Tai Chi path through what I called Soul Moves and then Living Transformation. She became part of a dedicated group of students who really wanted to dive deeply into growing through the RDTC Tai Chi principles. When the New Deepening Series began, she along with this group, joined and they journeyed through it together. When the Next Step Series began, she, along with her group, signed up for this but unfortunately her illness stopped her coming to the second meeting, which was in December 2010.

At the start of her adult life Gloria had been a midwife which she loved, as to bring life into the world was a way to compensate for the suffering and death of the war years. Just that gives you an idea of this inspiring woman! Often much older than her fellow Tai Chi explorers, for many she represented the grace of aging. She loved to dance wildly! That gives you an idea of her

sparkling spirit.

For many of us, those who are aging do so in a way which seems to represent going to sleep. Gloria's path was one of waking up and even though her hearing deteriorated as time went on, her bright eyes and sharp intellect took it all in.

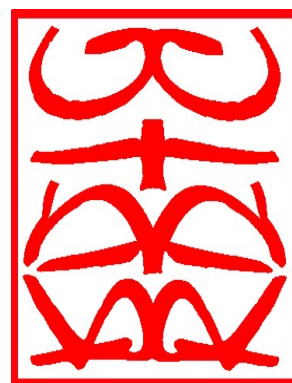
I saw her in early December and although confined to her bed and in a lot of pain, she shone. She said that she felt she had finished her journey and was ready to die without fear. She thanked me for the teachings and said they had helped her come to this point. She said that although at times her illness was painful and difficult, she had moments of such light and love that it was almost overwhelming.

Gloria is and was a great inspiration. She leads the way for us as we all follow her one way or another. From my time with her at Poulstone over the years, I know her to have re-found her spirit, her true self, and she let the light of it shine through, even through the process of death. Keep dancing Gloria, and thank you.

SOUL FOOD - RDTC

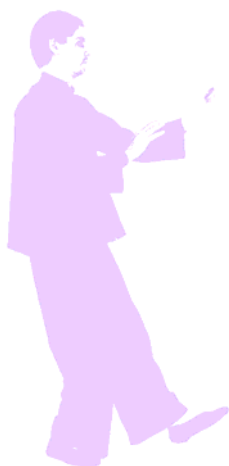
Summer Gathering 8th - 11th July 2011

For those of you who have been following these Founder's Newsletters since they began a few years ago, you will know that this



Gloria had been a midwife and she felt that this was a way of giving back to the world after the war years which created so much suffering and death. Just that gives you an idea of this inspiring woman!





School has been going through a transformation.

Since its inception in 1979, RDTTC has been exploring the essence of Tai Chi through Form - the living of it rather than the technique of it. In the last decade I have developed two strands of the work - one through the formal sequence of Tai Chi and one through Shibashi which I call 'Soul Moves'. These two strands came together in the New Deepening Series which began in 2006, the current one being the third.

Whilst this has been happening, the RDTTC Summer Gathering has been on the back burner and I would like to resurrect it this summer but in a new form.

What is that? Well an opportunity for those who are part of RDTTC to come together and deepen their understanding and to meet others of like mind. So at some time those who want to explore the Form may and whilst they do that, others will be exploring something else. I would like to explore the Duo aspect of Tai Chi and give everybody an opportunity to share what they know and learn something new. There will be Tai Chi Teachers and Soul Moves Teachers on hand to lead different sessions and bring the rich weave of the School to you.

Of course Poulstone has been RDTTC's home for many years but some of you have never been, so this will be a great opportunity to enjoy Poulstone, its great food, the garden and countryside, as well as the river. What a joy! Look out for the flyer and book your space now!

SOUL MOVES DAY HEREFORD

10th April 2011

In early spring of 2012 there will be a new intake for RDTTC's famous "Deepening"! To be eligible for this your must have attended a class or day with RDTTC. This Soul Moves day will qualify you to join this extraordinary ongoing course whether you do Tai Chi or not. A perfect opportunity for you, your family or friends to join the RDTTC journey. This year there will be a Soul Moves day in Hereford.

What is it? A day of introducing the RDTTC Principles to those who would like to explore living their Life rather than just surviving it. A day to feel into the stillness that lies behind the busyness, to learn how to access this easily in every day life. Participants will be taught a simple sequence of moves that embody the very essence of the RDTTC Tai Chi Principles so that what they learn on this day, they can use when they get home.

Look out for the flyer!



In the last couple of newsletters I have been sharing with you the development of Tai Chi Movements for Wellbeing (TMW) and my experiences as I offered it to a group from the Brain Injury Unit in Hereford.

WHAT IS TMW?

It is a unique distillation of gestures and movements taken from the tradition of Tai Chi and Qi Gong but without the complications of technique or of an Eastern culture. Its effectiveness comes from its simplicity, its grace and its ease of all round movement and the fact that it can be done equally well whether you are sitting or standing. In just 10 minutes participants will be guided from inertia into an embodied and energised aliveness.

With the increasing financial and social pressures on our society, and rising demands on our health system, there is a need for a simple and yet effective way to improve mobility, relaxation and health of both body and mind. There are not enough Tai Chi teachers in the country to meet this need, nor is there enough money to fund them, but by teaching existing health practitioners within the NHS to offer TMW to their client groups, we can make this possible.

In addition by training members of the public to lead groups in TMW in their local communities, the benefits of Tai Chi and the essence of RDTTC becomes easily available to all.

I have distilled the experience of 35 years of teaching Rising Dragon Tai Chi into a simple sequence and I want to help others share this with those who have a need of it, but who do not have the time or even the inclination to

study the intricacies of Tai Chi over a long time. In other words making accessible the amazing gift of Tai Chi Movement to those who would not normally get a chance to experience it.

WHO IS BEING TRAINED AT THE MOMENT?

We now have funding to teach TMW to 15 NHS health professionals in Herefordshire so that they can lead groups in their NHS Departments. This begins on 3rd February and is fully booked with a waiting list. We would like to expand this further and not only train NHS professionals in Herefordshire but throughout the country.

This Spring roughly 23 of those on the RDTTC Facilitators Training will qualify as TMW Trainers and they will begin offering the essence of Tai Chi in a wide range of settings.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A TMW TRAINER?

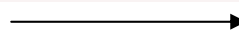
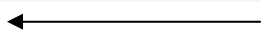
Would you like to work in your local community sharing the benefits of Tai Chi? If so we are starting another training course opening in October 2011. The training consists of 3 modules of two days each, over a period of 2 months, finishing in December. You could be working and sharing TMW by the New Year! If you would like to do this, do get in touch and we will send you the details of fees, course times, venue etc.

DO YOU HAVE ANY CONTACTS WHO WOULD BE INTERESTED IN TMW TRAINING?

In addition if any of you know of NHS professionals who might like to train in TMW and offer it to their clients or in their surgeries or clinics, do get in touch and we will send them an information pack.

The TMW website is coming online towards the end of January, beginning of February - www.tmwtraining.com - and all the information needed will be there too.

I do hope some of you will take this up as it is an amazing opportunity and a wonderful way to help those who need it, as well as a quite extraordinary way to deepen your understanding of Tai Chi.



Some important dates

Most, if not every participant who comes to one of these courses, walks away with something that adds to their understanding of the meaning of their life. This is because of the richness that RDTC members bring and because of where you listen from. Please look at the options open to you and if you want to come, book your place straight away, as space is usually limited. We look forward to seeing you!



Open Courses

RDTC Scotland (Ardfern)

Contact Susanne at 01852 500361 or email susannemccardel@hotmail.co.uk

- **7th & 8th May 2011**

Soul Moves Day in Herefordshire

contact Richard on 01989 740 590 or email richard@risingdragon.co.uk

- **10th April 2011**

Soul Food - RDTC Summer Gathering at Poulstone Court,

contact Richard on 01989 740 590 or email richard@risingdragon.co.uk

- **8th - 11th July 2011**

Ongoing Residential Courses

New Deepening Series III 2010/2011 Poulstone Court

- Meet 3 4th - 7th March 2011
- Meet 4 9th - 12th September 2011



Next Step Series Group 1

Poulstone Court

- Meet 3 20th - 23rd May 2011
- Meet 4 25th - 28th November 2011

Next Step Series Group 2

Poulstone Court

- Meet 3 10th - 13th June 2011
- Meet 4 2nd - 5th December 2011

Training Courses

RDTC Facilitators' Training

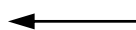
- Meet 3 8th - 9th January 2011
- Meet 4 2nd - 3rd April 2011
- Meet 5 25th - 26th June 2011

- Meet 6 15th - 16th October 2011
- Meet 7 7th - 8th January 2012
- Meet 8 April 2012

TMW Training

- Facilitators 29th & 30th January **Full**
- NHS Hereford Module 1 3rd /4th Feb. **Full**
- Facilitators 19th & 20th February **Full**
- NHS Hereford Module 2 24th/25th Feb **Full**

- NHS Hereford Module 3 31st March/1st April **Full**
- Open TMW Training beginning 22nd & 23rd Oct - **SPACES**



RDTC's webpage is at: www.risingdragontaichi.com

