



## Adjustments and Jellyfish

by Amy Tyksinski

Last year I taught a particularly challenging T'ai Chi Chih class. I suppose one could equate the discomfort I experienced with my rowdy students to a notion of form and formlessness and raise the question again (an ongoing one for me): Where is the form in the formless? Where is the formless in the form?

Without getting too heady about it all, let's turn to our friend the jellyfish. In all its diaphanous nature, the "fish-of-the-jelly" is expansion and contraction, movement and shape, substance and essence. Can you feel it? Pulsing through the sea? Power and softness in complete accord with nature?

Turn now to the t'an t'ien. Are we not expanding and contracting in accord with nature, like the Jelly, whether we know it or not?! (But how exciting that it *can* be consciously felt....)

Can you sense what emanates from this remarkable "True Home" (yes, yes, mixing metaphors, but really, WHO CARES! You get the picture!)

Onward back to form. The structure of my classes is tighter this year. The teenage students find groundedness in more concrete ways. What is my true job? Via T'ai Chi Chih, to facilitate their connection to themselves (or Selves—dare I say it....) They come in as blobs, untrusting, flopping around: Who am I? Where do I fit? What do I believe? Where is my body in space? Can I feel it? Do I exist?

Rooting downward, into the soles of the feet, tangibly, earth between the toes, you are HERE. Whoops. You went away again. Downward flowing attention. Feeling awareness in the feet, pressure of gravity into the floor, weight shifting, expanding forward, backward, settling into a natural rhythm. Ah yes. A welcome return. You Are.

We help one another. One student kneels next to her partner and, placing her hand on the ankle of the standing student, puts a slight pressure on the back heel. The standing student shifts the weight and as the back heel rises, connects to the pressure of the hand on her foot. Slight resistance, increased awareness and presence.

Is anyone amazed at the direct line of communication between the swirling, whirling, aliving t'an t'ien and the responsive back heel?

Dear Jellyfish, teacher of the intrinsic, the organic. Dear t'an t'ien, teacher of strength and flow, essence and substance. Nothing extraneous about either one; complete in the form AND the formless.

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