



DINAMICA

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TAI CHI CHUAN E ARTI ASSOCIATE

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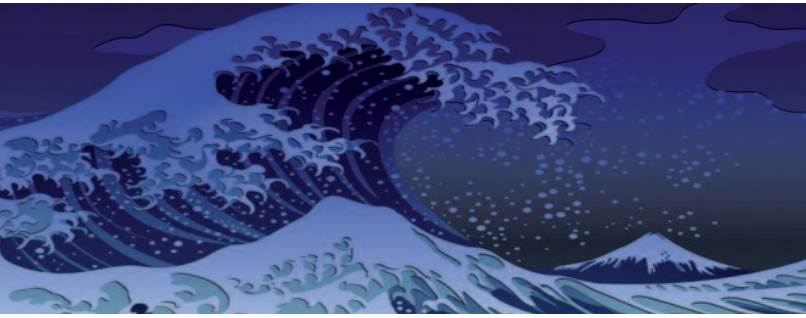
Drinking under the moon

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by Li Po

on the cover "plum tree flower and sparrow", dedicated to our teacher Anna Siniscalco, disciple of Grand Master Yang Jun, named "Yang Yamei", which is "plum tree flower". Water colour drawing by Donata Piccioli ©

The Association 'Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan e Arti Associate A.S.D.' was created by people who gathered in order to activate and share their potential through arts and psycho-physical disciplines, specifically Tai Chi Chuan. Alongside Tai Chi Chuan, it deals with other arts and activities, meditation techniques, breathing and Qi Gong, Taoist Yoga (Tao Yin) to name a few. The association is affiliated to the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association (IYFTCCA©). Its aim is to promote Tai Chi Chuan and to offer the opportunity to learn and practice the traditional Tai Chi Chuan following the method and teachings of Master Yang Jun, the current 5th generation lineage holder of the creator of the Yang style Tai Chi Chuan.



We have lived and will keep living in the next months an exceptional moment in our history. Those who were born before the war have already gone through a phase of total crisis. For the Italians who didn't go through that crisis, there may have been difficulties, problems, even dramatic moments - earthquakes for example - but so far nothing compared to an epidemic that has taken away many persons and that has forced people to stay indoors, to change their habits, to go out with masks and gloves, to follow with apprehension the daily count of the dead, the infected, the healed and, last but not the least, the terrible economic consequences. This has been a real shock for generations of women and men grown up thinking about their future welfare, their rights and possible consumption, as if nothing could ever touch them or upset their plans.

Unfortunately, our community has also paid a sad tribute: Lama Zopa Norbu (M. Roque Enrique Severino) passed away. The Covid took him away. Certainly he would have encouraged us not to be too sad, as Death is a passage, it's part of our Lives. Many of us have been lucky enough to meet him, to hear his lectures, to consult him, to appreciate his simplicity and profundity. In this issue of our magazine, in addition to remembering him, we have published the third part of his important conversation with Fausta Romano: carrying his words in our hearts is our humble way to honor his memory.

One day the storm will be over and all this will seem strange. It will be a distant history, exactly as it happened to our parents and grandparents after the war. Today their experiences seem to be part of another world. It will be the same for us. We will be able to tell our grandchildren: I was there, in the midst of the pandemic. And we will be able to explain to them that in the midst of that total upheaval we have understood, as never before, how important it is to be at peace and serene with ourselves, stable in the midst of a change, seeking the balance within ourselves and consequently with the world in which we are immersed.

This experience has offered us not only a lesson but also the proof of how important the study and practice of Tai Chi Chuan can be, particularly in everyday life; this center, this balance, the inner and outer stability, spiritual and material, are called Zhong Ding, which indicates the fifth direction, the fifth step. This concept is extraordinarily explained in this issue by our teacher Teresa Zuniga, with reference to an online joint class held with our teacher Anna Siniscalco.

We can tell that, in the middle of this storm, we have been really lucky to be Tai Chi Chuan practitioners and to have two great, beloved teachers to enlighten our path.

Roberto Seghetti

About Zhong Ding

By Teresa Zuniga



Photo by jeremy-thomas

This word is usually translated as keeping the centre, centrality, balance. Advanced students know that it is one of the 5 steps of the 13-position form, as Tai Chi Chuan (TCC) was formerly called. This 5th step, keeping the centre, as you may remember is associated with the movement of the earth (in the 5 movements) which means that everything is generated from the earth, which is the centre.

From a 'Chinese' point of view, however, it needs to be understood in a different way: the word ZHONG certainly means half, centre, but perhaps this terminology is too specific. Zhong in philosophical terms has a more dynamic meaning with connotations of morality; in Confucian doctrine it means balance as the golden rule that every individual who cultivates himself must pursue.

In traditional medicine the centre of man is the heart with its associations and, as you already might know, the heart is the home of the (our) spirit.

You might also know about the three adjustments. One of the three is to harmonise the heart and the mind. This means that the mind, in order to calm down from its emotions, has to return to

the heart, so it will not be absent, but vast and open, receptive; and if the mind is calm, it can concentrate. The Su Wen (an ancient book of traditional medicine) says: "the sky influences man with the weather, the earth influences man with food, man is influenced by his emotions". A person who is disturbed by his emotions cannot be balanced. So one must return to their heart (with their mind), that is, return home, feel at home. A bit like the parable of the prodigal son, who returns home healthy, and there is celebration (since he feeling of the heart is joy: joy as serenity and peace, not as hilarity or a high). Shakespeare said that we are made of the same stuff as dreams. In fact we are made of emotions, emotions alter our breathing rate, our heart rate, and even our structure and therefore they also have the power to disturb the concentration of the mind. It is no coincidence that the acupuncture point Heart 5 (5 like the earth - home) is called "coming home": it is used in those people who are never happy with where they are, who run away all the time (they feel the earth move under their feet, they are not anchored), they need to feel in touch with others to feel important, they are in that psychological condition that drives us to frequent places and people to achieve our goal, even to show off. Instead, we should *feel at home wherever we are*.

And be yourself, even when you don't achieve your goals.

This is the idea of the centre, the meaning of **ZHONG** (, for example: China is called the middle country, the country of the centre).

During the **Song** dynasty the neo-Confucians explained what **Zhong** means: to lean neither to the right nor to the left, to be impartial, without excess or deficiency. These concepts are expressed in ZhangSanfen's Treatise on Tai Chi Chuan and also in the words of Master Yang Jun , when he talks about the middle way.

These words should not be taken dogmatically, as a position of the body; they indicate a mental attitude, a natural centring of the spirit: the body can tilt, verticality exists within.

The Chinese word **Zhong Ding** as far as we know is a term used only in TCC and can be understood as centredness, as being stable, calm, well planted. According to some, of the five steps it is the most important, the one that is followed by the others (to advance - to retreat - to be alert to the right - and to the left). It refers to an *internal factor of movement, but not from a physical point of view*.

On the other hand, **DING** is a common expression: in Chinese it means to establish, fixed, certain; it can also be translated as definitive, to arrive at a decision, to be in place. The ideogram means to be in place, at home, it can be understood as a person coming home healthy, at peace. In the form this could refer for example to the transitions, as well as to the ending of the positions, which must be "clear and clean", - defined, as G M° Yang Zhenduo says - before moving on to the next movement, without the haste to perform the movement that will follow: to remain





happy and serene in what you are doing as if there were nothing else afterwards.

If balance cannot be maintained, no other technique or movement can be done skillfully.

These considerations are also applicable to everyday life and it is important to do so, because if we do not apply TCC in everyday life, we lose half of our practice. How to achieve such a balance? We will look at this in a later article.

COMMENTARIES BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS ON ZHONG DING

Wen Zee : According to this author, Zhong Ding cannot be translated as balance; the word

Zhong is centred and Ding is still. Balance in a position can be achieved even with effort, tension, even in a completely crooked position, whereas Zhong Ding is natural balance and in the Classics is defined as the body supported by all parts.

Zhang Yun: According to the author of *The Art of the Swordman*, being stable means that you have to keep your body centred; this condition is known as zhong ding. Being stable or keeping the centre does not mean that your body should not move; the goal is to keep the body stable in movement. If the movement is correct, the Qi sinks into the Dan Tien and as a result you have the feeling that your feet are extending into the earth like the roots of a tree. This feeling means that you have achieved stability, just as Yin always contains Yang and vice versa, stability always includes a sense of agility, agility a sense of stability.

Zheng Manqing (Chen Man-chi'ng): In his *Advanced Tai Chi instructions*, it is written that the Dan Tien is located in the abdomen near the navel, it is known in physiology as the "centre of gravity" and is located on the waist line (lumbar area). The centre of gravity is also what TCC knows as central balance. So in the Classics it is said: always keep your waist in mind, the waist is the commander. In other words we can say that TCC emphasises man's centre of gravity.

Chen Youzè : for this master, developing your waist awareness is the best way to find the centre, your waist is the pivot of the whole body, if you swing your hips you lose the unity of the body.

WuYing-hua: according to this master of the Wu style TCC, only when the waist is free, all movements can be done in coordination. Relaxing the waist favours the rooting and the descent of the Qi that sinks into the Dan Tien. The centre of gravity should remain as low as possible.

ROOTING

If we want to be stable, we need to be rooted: "Feet on the ground and a concentrated mind". We all know that the roots are in our feet; it is important that the weight is distributed on the Kidney 1 meridian YongChuan "gushing source", because in this way we stimulate the deep bands that cross the sole of the foot and that start from the little toe and big toe and extend

along the outer part of the leg to the chest and head, stabilizing the body. We know we are on the bubbling well when in one position it is possible to lift the heel and toe, without having to advance or retreat our weight.

We also know the process of rooting in the step -heel, forefoot, toes - *but this is not enough*. This process is achieved, as we know, with the gradual shift of weight, but the body is moving. Therefore, to maintain centrality, one has to root oneself with the whole body. After the foot is rooted, the knee bends following the line of the toe, then we have to root the hips which will be in line with the knee, then the shoulders. It's like building a skyscraper: foundation - first floor - second floor and so on.

This sense of stability and grounding in any movement and transitions is what we must search for in our daily practice. So, if while practicing we lose our balance, we don't continue, we stop immediately and try to understand why, changing alignment, speed of weight transfer etc. In this way we will grow and improve. *Lento pede (slowly step by step)* we are all advancing towards perfection!!!

Enjoy your practice!!!



Goodbye Lama Karma Zopa Norbu

By Anna Siniscalco



During your life you might have the possibility to meet extraordinary people – Lama Karma Zopa Norbu was one of them: an enlightening example among our community.

I met Roque almost 20 years ago during one of many journeys to Cina in order to study and practise Tai Chi Chuan with the Yang family. We have always been in touch with growing affection and respect. I could follow his teachings on Bud-dhism, meditation and Tai Chi Chuan in many seminars in Italy. Most of all I've had the opportunity to be close to a person sincerely full of compassion and devo-tion.

He was able to open your heart, pacify your mind and make you smile with his words.

Deeply erudity but humble, kind and generous in sharing his experiences and knowledge. Always tirelessly careful in awakening compassion, positive thoughts and honest actions.

In my quest i have alwasg wanted to share the opportunities that life offered me, it comes natural to me. For this reason I stongly wanted Roque to come to Italy in order to share his teachings

with disciples and members of Dinamica a.s.d. a, to know and experience directly a person who helped me clarify my journey, with a true teaching. I believe that experience is worthy, and when you have the opportunity to meet a Teacher, you should not let it go away. I felt almost an urgency, maybe some members perceived the strong determination driving me to share this experience. I was happy to have done this and grateful to Roque for coming so willingly. I remember that I had been working for about a year with a group of psychotherapists from the Istituto Psicanalitico di Formazione e Ricerca "A.B. Ferrari" and I proposed them a meeting with Roque – Lama Karma Zopa Norbu as well. The topics of that meeting required much more time than what we had at our disposal. As soon as the conference with Dr. F. Romano was over, sitting in a bar in front of a coffee, we decided to ask ad hoc questions in order to give continuity to what Roque had just started teaching. Then the interview became a document full of contents, thanks to Roque's willingness and to Dr. Romano's tenacity, who luckily speaks Portuguese and also translated it. The first parts of this interview have already been published in the two previous issues of our magazine, and we are now publishing the last part. I am glad to be able to open this door as well, for the benefit of our reader..

The complete document will be published on our site www.dinamicataichi.it

Roque will be deeply missed by us, the Jardim do Dharma community, his family, his wife Angela.

His light essence is back to the pure light where he could continue to indicate the way of love with his radiance; he will continue to reach to our hearts with his smile.

He wrote in his book:

«I wish for each one of you to reach all the qualities of compassion and wisdom, and that you reach the last stage of enlightenment beyond life and death».



Buddha Amitābha and his careful bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (on the right, pictured as the feminine goddess Guānyīn) and Mañjuśrī (pictured as a feminine goddess too, Da Shì Zhì)

The relationship between mind and body

How Tai Chi Chuan can help us understand mental states

Dialogue among the practitioner and psychotherapist Fausta Romano, Anna Siniscalco, President of Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan and Associated Arts and of Dinamica-The Magazine and Severino Roque, Tibetan lama, on the themes of Buddhism (part three)*



QUESTION: You told us that “all conflicts come into harmony with each other like the instruments of an orchestra” and that “your mind must be centred and at peace, only in this way can you enter into conflictuality”. So does this concept of harmony include conflict? Is harmony a state, a condition, or a process of harmonising opposites? Does your concept of harmony also include the existence of its opposite, disharmony?

ANSWER: As I said with the previous answers, the point of “disharmony” or “cause of conflict” arises from the ego creating the separation between the “I” and the “other”; hence, the causes of the “science of good and evil”, that is, conflict. Conflict is specific to the human being because of the consciousness he has of himself and his habitat; he cannot avoid conflict which, in reality, arises because of his misinterpretation of the events he observes and experiences. Buddha affirms: “Even having the nature of a Buddha, we are victims of all the limitations of an ordinary person. This is due to the “veils of the mind”. When did these veils arise? In fact, they did not originate, but they have covered the mind since it has existed, that is, since time immemorial. And what are these veils? The first veil is that of ignorance. The fundamental mind is still called “the potential of departure to happiness”. It



Photo by sacha-styles

belongs to all beings. Not recognising it is ignorance and that is the main veil covering the mind. Our eyes enable us to see external objects clearly; but they cannot see our faces, not even themselves. Similarly, the mind that does not see itself does not recognise itself for what it is. This is what we call the veil of ignorance.

The second veil is that of latent conditioning. The first consequence of ignorance is duality. The mind falsely conceives of one self, the centre of all experience, conceives of perceived objects as others. By dividing the one mind into two, we live in the universe of subject-object duality, I and the other. This is the second veil, the veil of latent conditioning.

The third veil is that of conflicting emotions. From the notion of the ‘I’ necessarily derives the hope of obtaining what is pleasant and gives comfort to the ‘I’ in its existence, as well as the fear of not obtaining what is desired and experiencing threatening situations. Thus, from the notion of the ‘I’ comes hope and fear. In the notion of the ‘other’ are gathered all objects of the senses: shapes, sounds, smells, tastes, contacts or mental objects. Any object perceived as pleasant creates joy and any object perceived as unpleasant creates discontent. From these two sensations arise feelings that turn into attachment and aversion. In fact, they come from nowhere except from the emptiness of the mind and have, therefore, no material existence, no entity of their own. We do not recognise them, just as we do not recognise the true nature of phenomena, and we associate with them an undue reality; to this non-recognition we give the name of blindness or mental opacity. Thus, we arrive at a group of three basic conflicting emotions, which are attachment, aversion and blindness, from which three other elements are derived: from attachment comes greed; from aversion, jealousy; from mental opacity, pride.

The fourth veil is that of karma. Under the sway of conflicting emotions, we commit all kinds of negative acts with respect to body, speech and mind, acts that constitute the veil of karma.

Therefore, four veils are successively generated: the veil of ignorance: the mind does not recognise itself; the veil of latent conditioning: duality, the split between the self and the other; the veil of conflicting emotions: the 84 thousand disturbances arising from duality; the veil of karma: the negative acts committed under the domain of conflicting emotions.

In understanding these elements, the therapist can make use of a more acute instrument, which will enable him to know the mechanisms of his patients’ suffering. This intense suffering that

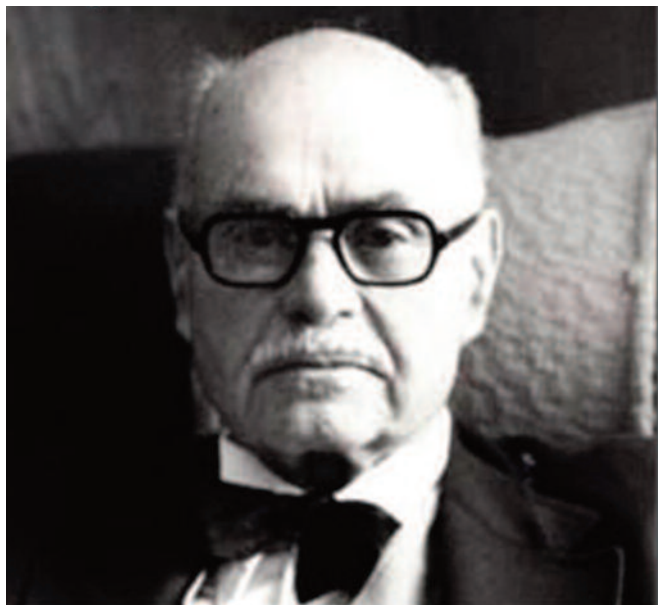
they experience is due to the consciousness and desire for an ideal of purity that, at the same time, makes them aware of the unpleasant, of disharmony.

The more we seek perfection, the more the opposite feeling of imperfection arises. The more we seek light, the more shadows we cast.

If this is healthy in a creative process (in the arts or in the lives of beings who are constantly trying to improve their careers and professions), the situation becomes pathological because of the attachment to the perception of 'disharmony'.

As long as the patient does not recognise that his happiness and his suffering originate in his own mind, as long as he cannot distinguish this situation, both the patient and the therapist will remain unable to define a state of genuine happiness and powerless to try to avoid the continuous relapses into suffering.

This is why it is so necessary for the therapist to practice meditation in calmness, so that he can penetrate the sick mind of his patient and recover the healthy mind that already exists within him.



QUESTION: Wilfred Rupert Bion, English psychoanalyst, born and raised in India for the first eight years of his life, who revolutionized psychoanalytic theory and technique by introducing the concept of mind as function, and considered by A.B. Ferrari as 'his master', stated, among other things, that the analyst should have access to the relationship with the analysand 'without memory and without desire'. This means that if the analyst enters the relationship full of his own theories, memories and preconceptions (the past) and of expectations about what should happen (the future), he cannot see anything of what is taking place in the hic et nunc of each session (the present) under his own and the analysand's eyes,

losing the transformative and experiential potential of each encounter. Similarly, if the analysand uses his own past history to justify his state of malaise, he remains a prisoner in his theories and there is little we can do for him, as everything has already happened in the distant past. Is it possible to see in this a point of assonance with his understanding of the use of the past, present and future?

However, we think that we 'are our history' and that living continually transforms us, just as the morphology of the neuron is its history: it continually transforms itself through its functioning. And so it is clear that: you cannot go back in time. What is your opinion?

ANSWER: The wise Seneca says: "It is not true that we have little time, but rather that we waste a lot of it". "The analyst should have access to the relationship with the analysand "without memory and without desire". If the therapist succeeds in realising this ideal, he is already an enlightened being! Actually, this is the result of advanced and well realised meditation.

In the tradition of the school I belong to, this state is called 'mahamudra', or 'great symbol', or 'great gesture'. An essential definition of mahamudra is the mind in its state of rest, in which it experiences the inner freedom that allows it to observe the nature of all things; in this case, it

would be a matter of penetrating deeply into the mind of the patient, where the therapist would find the fundamental cause of his suffering. However, in order to reach this state, the therapist must realise the “wisdom that surpasses all concepts, thus understanding the unity of “clarity and emptiness”. This element would need to be developed in the future, if your group wished to implement deep meditation practices.

As for the fact that the analysand, if he uses his past history to justify his state of malaise, remains imprisoned in his theories and there is little we can do for him, since everything has already happened in the distant past, I think this is the fundamental problem, for which the therapist urgently needs to possess a mental discipline that makes it possible for him to remain profoundly calm.

In fact, the patient is constantly ‘reinterpreting his own history’. We also live in this way. Every time we tell our past to a friend, we are reinterpreting it and, each time, we add a judgement. In Buddhism, it is said that when we are not present in any situation in our lives, events happen to us and we simply live in constant ignorance, as if we were constantly drunk.

Thus, the term ‘Samsara’ appears here, which can be understood as a rebirth of consciousness that becomes present in attachment to experiences (a concept described in the second noble truth).

But “Samsara” can also be interpreted as “eternal repetition” or “eternal frustration”, because we live in a state of fragmented consciousness, alternating between moments of distraction, desires, destructive emotions etc., waking up for some moments of attention, understanding and lucidity. The problem is that these moments of distraction, in moments of lucidity, appear so quickly that they give us the false impression of ‘continuity’. Let us not forget that the duration of a thought is 70 thousandths of a second.

Think of what cinema was like before digital, with films on film. The camera recorded 36 pictures per minute. Our mind works like the light of the projector lamp, and the movement of the reel gives us the “illusion” of the actors moving, but in reality everything is still, static.

Buddhist meditation teaches that, through careful observation of the mind, it is possible to see ‘mental objects’ as a sequence of conscious moments, rather than continuous self-consciousness. Each moment is the experience of a specific mental state: a thought, a memory, a sensation, a perception. A mental state comes into being, exists and, being impermanent, ceases, giving way to the next state. This illusory continuity is constantly transformed by our ‘subjective interpretation’, having - at its base - the previously described emotions and fundamental ignorance, i.e. ‘basic non-knowledge’.

If the therapist is not clear about this process, it will be very difficult for



him to understand the fundamental cause of his patient's distress.

As for your statement that 'the morphology of the neuron is its history: the neuron is constantly changing because of its own functioning. And so it is clear that: you cannot go back in time', I am thinking of a scientific study underway at USP (University of São Paulo): it concerns the 'mind-body' relationship and is aimed at scientifically proving the functioning of the cerebral amygdalae; how traumas affect their functioning, producing cortisol. There will be more details on this research shortly.

QUESTION: Can you clarify the meaning of mind, spirit, soul according to Buddhist philosophy? And in what relation are these three aspects?

ANSWER: The concept of spirit and soul, for Westerners approaching Eastern thought, can be somewhat confusing. In the West, the word 'spirit' has its etymological root in the Latin 'spiritus', which means 'breath', 'breath', but can also refer to 'soul', 'courage' and 'vigour'. In Western religious systems, 'spirit' is defined as the sum total of all intellectual faculties.

In the ancient world, the breath and what it brought (the sound, the voice, the word, the name), contained life. According to the Judeo-Christian religious point of view, God would have animated the earth with his breath to generate man (to be in man). To give a name to living beings, to make them resonate through the emission of the vocal breath, was to possess (to have what is theirs, the flesh, the voice, to own). Thus, it is also said that in naming animals, ancestral man took possession of them, took something from them and gave them representation, the spirit. According to Cartesian duality, the body and the spirit are two non-miscible substances, each with a different nature: the spirit would belong to the world of rationality (res cogitans), while the

body would belong to the things of the world with extension (res extensa), to the world of measurable things. Descartes believed that the function of the pineal gland was to unite the soul/spirit with the body.

According to Buddhist thought contained in the Abhidharma (Buddha's teachings on mind and mental states), what is commonly known or referred to as spirit is not considered a real entity, but a succession of instants of consciousness, otherwise known as the mental continuum, which, thanks to memory, would be clothed in an apparent continuity

and compactness. This does not mean that one does not believe in spirit. Quite the contrary. It is known by means of its two inseparable aspects: vacuity and clairvoyance, which give us the faculty of knowing.

In this case, the concept of spirit is configured together with the concept of 'mind'. We have a superficial notion of mind. For us, mind is that which experiences the feeling of existing, that which thinks 'I am me', 'I exist'. And again: the mind is what becomes aware of thoughts and feels emotional stirrings; it is what, depending on the circumstances, feels happy or unhappy. But, apart from that, we do not really know what the mind is.

It is evident, in the first place, that the mind has no material existence. It is not an object whose colour, size, volume or shape can be defined. None of these characteristics can apply to the



mind. We cannot point to the mind and say, 'Here, this is the mind'. In this sense, the mind is empty. However, although the mind is devoid of form, colour and so on, this is not sufficient to conclude that it does not exist, since the thoughts, feelings, conflicting emotions that the mind experiences and produces prove that 'something' exists and functions, that the mind is, therefore, not just empty.

QUESTION: But what is the relationship between mind and body? Between mind and consciousness?

ANSWER: If the mind is in the body, in what part of it is it located? Can we identify its location? Can we measure its size? Does it have a shape? What if it is in our body, in some specific organ? The flesh, the blood, the bones, the nerves, the veins, the lungs, the heart? If you think about it carefully, you will admit that no limb, no organ claims its own existence by saying 'I'. Thus, the mind cannot be assimilated to a part of the organism. Take the eye, for example. The eye does not proclaim its own existence. It does not say to itself, 'I exist,' or, 'I have to look at a certain external form; this is beautiful, that is not; I attach myself to the first and reject the second. The eye, in itself, has no will, it experiences no feeling, no attachment, no aversion. It is the mind that has the feeling of existence, that perceives, judges, attaches itself to something or rejects it.

The same applies to hearing and sounds, smell and aromas, taste and flavours, skin and physical contact,

the mental organ and phenomena. It is not the organs that perceive, but the mind. The organs are only the vehicle through which the mind develops the process of knowledge, of itself and of others. The organs of the body are unconscious by nature, they are not the mind, they are like a house in which one dwells.

The inhabitants are what we call consciousnesses: visual consciousness; auditory consciousness; olfactory consciousness; gustatory consciousness; tactile consciousness; mental consciousness. These consciousnesses do not exist on their own. They exist because the mind, through the organs of sense, connecting with external objects, has a clear sense of its existence, and thus begins to create an intricate and subtle process of knowledge, hence they are called the six consciousnesses.

It could also be said that the body is like a car, and the mind is the driver. When the car is empty, even though it has all the tools to run - the engine, the wheels, the fuel - and is in perfect condition, it cannot go anywhere. Similarly, a body without a mind, even if it has all the organs, is nothing but a corpse. Even if it has eyes, ears, nose it cannot see, hear, smell.

Some will think that death affects not only the



body but also the mind: the former becomes a corpse, the latter simply ceases to exist. But that is not what happens. The mind is not born and does not die, it is not prey to disease. It is eternal! For this reason, Western researchers, when approaching Buddhist teachings, have associated the mind with the concept of spirit.

So, to describe the mind we will consider its three aspects: its essence, emptiness; its nature, clairvoyance; and its mode of functioning, intelligence.

More specifically, the essence of the mind is to be empty. Which means, as we have already said, that it has no material existence. It has no form, no colour, no volume, no size. It is intangible and indivisible, similar to space.

However, the mind is not like a dark space in which not even the sun, the moon or the stars can radiate light; it is like daylight space, like the space of a lighted hall. Of course this is only an approximate comparison. It means that the mind is endowed with a certain power of knowledge. It is not the knowledge itself, but the light, the conscious faculty, that makes it possible. This power also includes the faculty of producing manifestations in the most diverse forms. We can say that all creation in this world is a projection of the minds of the creators (a definition that can also be applied to the sickest states of the human psyche).

Thanks to light, we can see objects in their environment and be aware of their presence. Thanks to light, the mind has the faculty of knowledge. For this reason, in the I Ching Book of Changes, when it talks about the Li Trigram being the sun, the light, it also says that it is the ability to know, that is, that it is not possible, in any way, to know something in darkness. For this reason, darkness is always associated with ignorance and light with wisdom.

Clarity of mind is something somewhat different from clairaudience in the ordinary sense. The latter allows only the exercise of the visual function, whereas the clarity of mind offers the

possibility also of listening, feeling, tasting, touching, and being aware of the pleasures or displeasures of the mental. For example, it is enough to have a little appetite or thirst and, thinking of a delicious food, to have our mouth water even if the dish is not in front of us: we perceive the aromas, the taste.

This is the complete capacity of the mind's clarity, that is, the five senses function completely in it and with it. Here, too, is explained the capacity for dreaming that is peculiar to us: dreaming with our eyes closed during the night and with our eyes open when we think of an ideal situation.

But this is not enough. The room

you are sitting in contains vacuity (the space of the room) and lightness (the illumination). However, this is not enough to attribute the concept of mind to the room. We need to identify a third element of description. In order for mind to exist, one must add to vacuity and clarity an unobstructed intelligence. It is this intelligence that actually allows everything to be known, without confusion. Not only is the mind aware of phenomena - the flare - but it recognises them without confusing them - the intelligence.

For example, in front of the spectacle it is looking at, it knows what the sky is, what a house is,



what a man is, and so on. In other words, unobstructed intelligence is the faculty of identifying, evaluating, understanding.

In conclusion, the mind is at the same time emptiness, clarity and intelligence. Can we say that the mind is small? No, because it possesses the faculty to make the whole universe appear and embrace, it offers us the ability to understand the most subtle and metaphysical aspects of existence, it leads us to probe the universe and its mysteries, it makes us dream of other galaxies and constellations, in short, it offers us the sense of eternity.

So is it great? We cannot say that either, since if we experience a sharply localised pain, in a precise point of the body, caused, for example, by a puncture, we assimilate our mind to this tiny point, saying: 'it hurts'. In fact, the mind, outside of any assimilation, is neither small nor large. It escapes this category of concepts but, when we begin to practise Tai Chi Chuan or sitting meditation in a more mature way, we can take note of the states of restlessness and intemperance of the mind.

One of the characteristics that we have to observe when practising Tai Chi Chuan is that we have found a tool that helps us to know and tame our mental states.

**(the full version can be read at www.unoebino.it)*



Fasting of the heart

By Roberto Seghetti



"Blowing and breathing, exhaling and inhaling, expelling stale air and absorbing pure air, stretching in the manner of the bear or the bird that spreads its wings, all this aims at longevity. This is held in high esteem by him who endeavours to direct and induce life energy.... "*.

As Anne Cheng writes in the first volume of the History of Chinese Thought, Chuang Tzu - a Taoist philosopher of the 4th century BC - believes that the body is qi at its densest and most compact state. "In order to merge with the Dao, the saint must therefore refine his body until he reaches the tenuousness and subtlety of the quintessence (jing), that is, the spiritual state (shen)". Anne Cheng explains, referring to the work of the great Taoist thinker, the refinement would concern the excessive heaviness of the body, but also, inevitably, the excessive heaviness of the ego, "which is too cumbersome to enter into the fluidity of the Dao".

But how can this be achieved? Only at the cost of long and rigorous practice. Learning to look at the material reality as a mirror would (a metaphor that would later be used a lot also by Buddhists). To remain centred, so as not to be diverted by sensations and events, desires,

passions. And at the same time by means of very concrete activities, "grouped under the generic denomination of work on qi (qigong): control of breathing, gymnastics, meditation, sexual discipline etc.". To point at such aspect, Zhuangzi prefers the more poetic name of fasting of the heart, described in a dialogue between Confucius and his favourite disciple Yan Hui":

*"To Hui, who urges the master's teaching on fasting of the heart, Confucius replies, "Unify your attention. Instead of listening with the ear, listen with the heart. Instead of listening with the heart, listen with the qi. Hearing stops at the ear, the heart stops at what accords with it. Qi is the emptiness that receives all things. Only the Dao receives all things. Only the Dao accumulates emptiness. This emptiness is the fasting of the heart."**

*Both quotes from Zhuangzi are quoted in Anne Cheng's translation (p.127 of "Storia del pensiero cinese, libro primo", Einaudi Editions).

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Planetary health

By Alberta Tomassini



As with any self-respecting story, I will start from afar. Once upon a time, way back in 1958, there was...

A certain Halbert L. Dunn proposed a "universal philosophy of life". His proposal focused not on what people were "against," but what they were "for": "a philosophy that would encompass minds and hearts...to which men and women of good will could adhere, beyond race, creed and nationality. A kind of unifying philosophy that could be embraced and lived by all, within their own cultural backgrounds."

Dr. Dunn was the head of the National Office of Vital Statistics, Public Health Service, of the U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, whose headquarters is in Washington, D. C. The visionary article of which I offer excerpts, entitled "High-level wellness for man and society," was presented before the *Second General Session of the Ninth Annual Meeting of the Middle States Public Health Association in Milwaukee, Wis., April 29, 1958, and, partially, before the Statistics Section of the American Public Health Association at the Eighty-Sixth Annual Meeting in St. Louis, Mo., October 30, 1958.*

A.D. 1958

HIGH LEVEL OF WELL-BEING FOR MAN AND SOCIETY

... (we live in) a contracting world. Communication times have shortened enormously. Knowledge of events can circulate around the world in a matter of seconds and can be known to the masses in a matter of hours. Travel times from the most remote points on earth have shrunk from years and months to days and hours....

...It's an older world, in terms of population, productivity and resources. One consequence of the revolution brought about by the medical sciences is that relatively more people are living to a relatively longer age. Economic and productive demand per capita is increasing all the time. Consequently, it is probably wrong to assume, as many of us have done, that an expansion of scientific knowledge can indefinitely offset the earth's rapidly depleting natural resources....

... A wide variety of neurotic and functional diseases, which rarely destroy life but interfere with a full and productive life, are increasing....

...A preventive attitude toward the future, both for medicine and in public health, is fundamentally based on strongly redirecting interest and energy toward increasing overall levels of well-being in all populations...

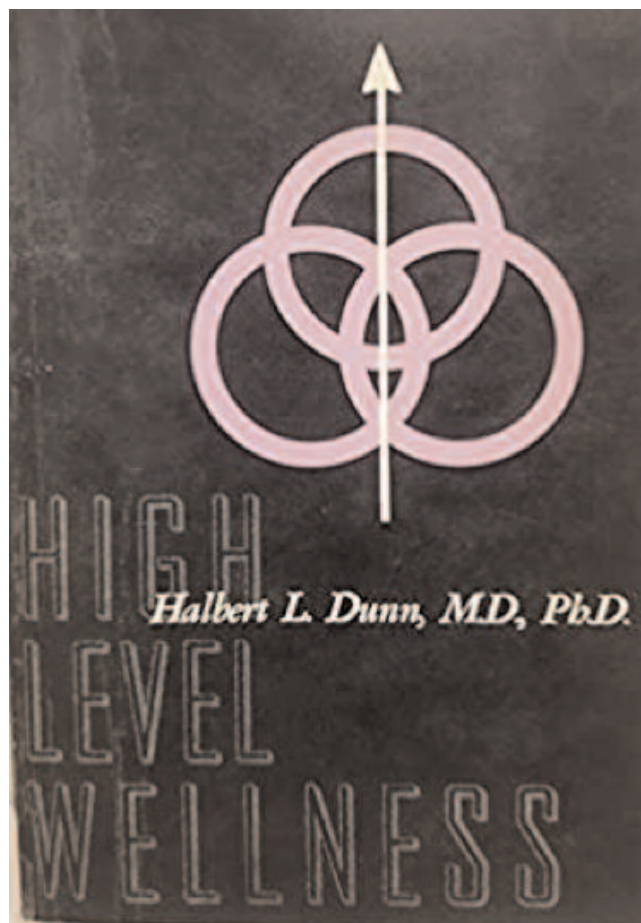
....we cannot ignore the spirit of man any longer, as a factor in medical and health disciplines. If we are to move toward a direction of high-level well-being for man and society, we cannot ignore the spirit of man in any discipline. Indeed, the essence of the task before us may be to model a rational bridge between the biological nature of man and the spirit of man, the spirit being that intangible something that transcends physiology and psychology. Man's spirit largely originates from within. Consequently, we must find ways to make man more conscious of his inner world through which he interprets his perceptions of the outer world....

...For most of us raised in the West, there is a deep rift between the world of the spirit and the world of the body. Consequently, we have divided the study of man into three main areas: the body,

responsibility of the physician; the mind, responsibility of the educator, psychologist, and psychiatrist; and the spirit, entrusted to the custody of religious preceptors...

...Harmony will be achieved when we understand that man is a physical, mental and spiritual unity, a union that is constantly undergoing a process of growth and adaptation in a constantly changing physical, biological, social and cultural environment... Without awareness of our inner selves, knowledge of the outer world can have neither breath nor depth. A mind tormented by prejudice, hatred, and fear, projects itself into distorted human relationships....

...In the pursuit of a high level of well-being, an action to increase the importance of creative



High Level Wellness

Wellness is not the *absence* of disease, illness, and stress but the *presence* of:

- Purpose in life
- Active involvement in satisfying work and play
- Joyful relationships
- A healthy body and living environment
- Happiness



Dr. Halbert Dunn



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expression in our culture is imperative. Creative expression is an element of the utmost importance in the relationship between biological nature and the human spirit. The creative spirit resides within each individual person.

"What is the creative spirit?" you may ask.

I once defined it as "an expression of self that ventures into the unknown in search of universal truth."

However defined, we need to value it and nurture it deeply.

...We must dare to dream, "dreams are the seeds of reality"....

In another article in the Canadian Journal of Public Health in 1959, Halbert L. Dunn wrote:

"Well-being is seen as something dynamic, a condition of change in which the individual moves ... maximising the potential of which he is capable, within the environment in which he lives and ... includes the total integration of the individual, body, mind and spirit, in the process.

The high level of well-being is also applicable to the organisation, the nation and to humanity as a whole.

In other words, Dunn, as early as 1959, was acutely aware of how achieving the capacity for individual well-being was linked to the health of the planet, and how life (from the Greek bios) could not be separated from our individual and collective way of living (from the Greek biosis).

A. D. 2018 - Sixty years on...

Sixty years later, there are numerous proposals that, with a holistic and multidisciplinary approach, aim to protect health while also taking into account the physical and animal environment. The three best-known proposals are One Health, EcoHealth and Planetary Health. Seen from the outside, they may appear to be synonymous, but in reality, some differences are evident.

One Health has been defined as a collaborative effort of health professionals to work locally, nationally and globally to achieve optimal health for people, domestic and wild animals, plants and the environment.

EcoHealth is committed to promoting the health of people, animals and ecosystems through research that recognises the links between the health of all species and their environment. A basic principle is that health and well-being are incompatible with a planet of depleted and polluted resources and social instability. Particular emphasis is placed on biodiversity and all living creatures including parasites, single-celled organisms and even viruses!

Planetary Health has been presented as an alternative to One and Eco Health. In 2018 Richard Horton, editor-in-chief of the Lancet journal and one of the leaders of the Planetary Health movement, wrote thus:

" ... Planetary Health, is conceived as an enquiry into our world as a whole. Into the unity of life

and the forces that shape that life. On our political systems and the headwinds that challenge them. On the failure of technocratic liberalism, and the populism, xenophobia, racism and nationalism that follow in its wake. On the intensification of market capitalism and the desire of states to sweep away any obstacles to those markets. On power. The intimate and intricate effects of wealth on the institutions of society.... On the origin of war and the search for peace. On economic problems and economists..."

This approach, which explicitly refers to Dunn's welfare, has been criticised for being overly anthropocentric, all about human health.

InVivoPlanetary Health, a planetary health organisation in which entities and scientists from around the world participate, held its eighth conference in Detroit in May 2019. The report stated verbatim: 'We are a scientific movement that provides evidence,

support and inspiration to align the interests and livelihood of people, places and the planet. Our goal: to transform personal and planetary health through awareness, behaviour and action and a deeper understanding of how all systems are interconnected and interdependent'.

In summary, inVIVO members share Dunn's vision that health is vitality understood as "approaching life with enthusiasm and energy, feeling vigorous and enthusiastic; living life as an adventure; feeling alive and active; enjoying life". Vitality is both a cause and a consequence of a healthy diet, physical activity and social support. In addition, life in the open air and contact with nature are linked to personal vitality by increasing protection from or modifying disease patterns'.

In conclusion, recalling with Dunn that "Well-being is seen as something dynamic, a condition of change in which the individual moves, maximising the potential of which he or she is capable within the environment in which he or she lives. That it includes the total integration of the individual - body, mind and spirit - in the process, and that "harmony will be achieved when it is understood that man is a physical, mental and spiritual unity. That without awareness of the fact that the individual is a physical, mental and spiritual unity, there is no need to be aware of the fact that he or she is in a state of well-being. That "harmony will be achieved when it is realised that man is a physical, mental and spiritual unity and that without awareness of our inner self, knowledge of the outer world can have neither breath nor depth" and that "in order to pursue a high level of well-being, action to increase the importance of creative expression in our culture as an element of the utmost importance in the relationship between man's biological nature and spirit is imperative".

In conclusion, how could I, a Tai Chi Chuan practitioner and member of *Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan*



& *Associated Arts*, not already feel part of this project?

* I have been pondering about writing this article for some time and, in the light of what has happened around the world, I was convinced that the time was right.

It's funny to think how a period of forced isolation can lead to a reflection on a vision based on the antithesis of isolation.

Declaration of Principles for a 21st Century Agenda for Global Health

1. **Livelihood:** Planetary health, inextricably linked to human health, is defined as the interdependent vitality of all natural and anthropogenic ecosystems; it includes biologically defined ecosystems (at the micro, meso and macro scales) that support biodiversity; it includes social, economic and political ecosystems that support equity in health, and the opportunity to strive for high levels of well-being; it also includes economic ecosystems that influence sustainable trade.
2. **Values and purpose:** attitudes, values, behaviours and relationships are the basis for achieving the goals of planetary health; that is, human vitality (well-being) is closely dependent on the vitality of the planet which in turn depends on humanity, kindness, empathy, symbiosis, responsibility and reciprocity at individual, community, societal and global levels; thus, the achievement of planetary health must be the product of interconnected systems of life.
3. **Integration and unity:** planetary health is rooted in the ancestral concepts of the oneness of life; the complexity of the challenges ahead confront us with integrative approaches; responsibility towards the goal requires us to abandon the usual professional, social and cultural divisions...
4. **Narrative health:** promoting awareness towards solutions requires a narrative-based process that includes traditional knowledge as well as science, and understanding the power of language; in health, this involves a role for researchers, clinicians, doctors and nurses in engaging patients and the wider community (with their political representatives) in highlighting the importance of natural systems and biodiversity for human health and well-being.
5. **Planetary awareness:** planetary health requires a commitment to self-awareness, cultural competence and critical consciousness; it requires reducing the ways in which social, economic and political systems oppress groups and communities; it requires challenging political hierarchies to stop health inequalities; it requires correcting the sources of misinformation in personal, public and global health practices.
6. **Relation to nature:** it should educate on the importance of emotional connections with land, nature and biodiversity; on considering the psychological resource of contact with nature in the clinic and beyond. On encouraging research aimed at understanding how mental and emotional relationships with places and the planet develop, and the biopsychological implications of experiences (or lack thereof) with nature.
7. **Biopsychological interdependence:** in the context of personalised or precision medicine, where possible, we should promote understanding of our dependence on the environment that surrounds us (flora, fauna and the physical world) or that is integral to us (the human microbiome); use opportunities to illustrate and educate on how physiology (in health and disease) and dysbiosis can be linked through ecosystems operating from micro to macro scales.
8. **Support:** we should support greater inclusion in the training of health personnel from a planetary health perspective; support early education in the sciences that 1) illustrates the interconnectivity of human life with biodiversity and natural systems; 2) illustrates how individual well-being is based on how we live in relation to other people and other life forms.

9. Countering privilege, social dominance and marginalisation. Planetary health requires greater awareness of the impact of authoritarianism and strong advocacy against collective narcissism, arrogance and social dominance: factors that reduce empathy, marginalise voices outside the choir, and prevent the World Health Organisation from setting targets for the promotion of global health...

10. Personal involvement to design new behaviours: we should strive to set an example in life: in the clinical/academic/public sphere and beyond, we should strive to include the principles and practices of the planetary health lifestyle; in daily behaviour, we should aspire to be part of the solution and not part of the problem; remain involved in the planetary peace agenda; encourage mutualism, empathy and community cohesion; and emphasise that aggression, conflict and violence are destructive to people, places and the planet.

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HIGH-LEVEL WELLNESS FOR MAN AND SOCIETY

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The music of energy

In memory of Ezio Bosso

By Paola Corsaro



Photo by Francesco Modeo

People who listened to Maestro Ezio Bosso have been able to perceive that his music, which assumes a dimension outside the space-time coordinates, reveals a thickness such that you perceive with the senses and which reveals itself in energy.

In concert halls, the audience's final ovation, up to 15 minutes, is not paid only to the creator of musical harmonies, but also to the impalpable and real presence that carries the soul elsewhere.

«I believe in those who believe, I believe in the magic of things. I think - somehow - we are impregnated with divine matter ».

Words by Ezio Bosso. Energy and music. The alphabet of God in its various manifestations. Music becomes the "form" of Tai Chi Chuan and the energy expressed is dripping with musical notes . *"Music is like life, it can only be played in one way: together".*

Words by Ezio Bosso. *«Music is a fortune that we all share and that teaches us the most important thing: listening ».*

Words by Ezio Bosso. Words and music of a Maestro. We don't want to add more. Indelible memory is the evening of summer 2019, his last concert in Rome. Perceived images of a parallel universe that, as in dreams, becomes real. The Tai Chi Chuan universe, moved, thanks Maestro Ezio Bosso.



Photo by Francesco Modeo

A silver lining

By Diana Alliata



It's true, my eyes are tired. All these hours behind a screen wear me out. My head is heavy sometimes, and I feel the need to stand, to move. Nevertheless, there is a silver lining in this forced lockdown which I discovered as a teacher and as a student.

I discovered I have a kind of 'hut syndrome', finding myself too much at ease in my little nest. Relationships are as vital as my job is to me, so I immediately got ready and organised on line lessons. And had fun too! In my space and at my rhythm.

Technology is fascinating, there are always new things to learn. With a little bit of curiosity and an open mind, so much could be done.

Through the screen you can notice details, you can stop and rewind movements, everything is revised and changed, in order to move from paper to digital.

As a Tai Chi practitioner, thanks to GM Yang Jun and his Covid 19 campaign, I have seen teachers from all over the world explaining, each one in a different way, movements I have been doing like forever. With great enthusiasm, I found little changes, little new things to add to my experience, that I hadn't noticed so far. I could practice short sequences, and focus on little details thanks to my teacher Anna, dig deeper in this art. Nothing new, in reality, but it was as if the camera

could focus on a detail that I had missed before.

As a teacher, I planned my English lessons changing them in order to make them online friendly, cards into pictures, for example, or worksheet into presentations, and experimenting new ways, new techniques, using the camera on or off, mute or sound., Giving the kids the control of the screen, which becomes a board where we can interact. I also had access to a thousand free resources that the English publishers and English teaching sites provided in order to help teacher to cope with this difficult time.

Moreover, being at home, I had the possibility to attend free seminars

where I met extraordinary teachers, who passed on their energy as well as their knowledge. yes, also though a screen you can create a connection.

You can turn a show into a movie, discovering the possibility to rehearse, perfect details and put all together in a creative and satisfactory way.

Online teaching leaves room for thoughts, to organize thinking, actions and movements. The camera protects from immediacy and leave time to consider, to replay, to visualize details and also room for creativity, searching of new ways to get in touch, to send and receive information, in a world that is surely digital but not necessarily superficial or lacking emotions. emozioni.



Photo by Etienne Boulanger

What Diana says is true. We all, either for work, for practice, or for other reasons, discovered we can keep in contact, usefully and satisfactorily. Nevertheless, we cannot forget that collective practice face-to-face and the personal transmission of teaching have great value, in many aspects irreplaceable. Just remember three, for example: energy moving, circulating, powering all participants during a collective practice; the subtleness of the teaching that the teacher can transmit with their example, their body, the knowledge of the student and the direct, personal correction you can receive regarding practice when the teacher is physically close to you.

RS

The classroom is a workshop where concrete experiences are made

By Anna Siniscalco



Besides the relationship teacher/student we have to consider the class; it is a community of learning, and learning is sharing. In this community the teacher, who is first of all a model to copy in the movements, also activate in a maieutic way the potential of the student while they are practising.

The class becomes a workshop of life, comparison and relationship among students. The teacher creates an appropriate context where you can develop your abilities to listen and compare in order to direct them to develop balanced relationships among students. These relationships become a mean for a personal and collective growth. Let us not forget that the purpose of the Tai Chi Chuan practice is far more than learning the movements. It is knowing ourselves also through the other, understanding that a constant in life is transformation, knowing you can change. Without working on contact, Tai Chi Chuan practice is not complete. The whole part about perceptive dimension would be missing, the part that develop the human potential of perception and understanding which is not about words, and this is another story...

Drinking under the moon

By Li Po*



*Among flowers and a jug of wine
Alone, not a friend with me.
But I rise my glass and invite the moon,
And the shadow in front: we are three.*

*Moon, who doesn't know how to drink,
Shadow, naturally following my body.
This is company now, the moon and the shadow it gives,
And I am happy as long as it is spring .*

*If I sing the moon trembles up and down
If I dance jumps the shadow confused.
Till reason is awake, all together sharing joy ,
When drunk , each one searching its own way*

Eternally joining my roaming without sentiment.

Together in time we will meet far in the river of star.

*Li Po, in *Le trecento poesie T'ang*, Milano 1972, Oscar Mondadori, p. 89.



DINAMICA

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太極拳

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