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Raw Shakti e-Newsletter Issue 2 March 2005

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MALO SOIFUA (Greetings) FROM TAIALOFA

I hope everyone has had a happy and healthy start to their new year. Thank you kindly for reading about Raw shakti. We have been blessed to have had a variety of guests to stay with us over the past year. Thank you for all the support as it comes in many forms as we try to build our dream of world health one step at a time! I dream of guiding retreats where people can come to heal, refresh and learn realistic techniques for living a healthier, happier life. To be on the path towards our personal "evolution" rather than stagnating or regressing seems so important these days. Happiness comes when our process is enjoyable. I see life as one big process! It feels meant to be that I pursue my dream of global health starting back here in the place of my birth. The doors are opening here in Samoa and I am working to direct the vision for Raw Shakti!



I hope you enjoy the articles written from people about their stay with us. They will give you a feeling for what to expect if you choose to join us in Samoa and do yoga with Raw Shakti. Samoa is now a direct flight from LA and we would be happy to see you here for a yoga/lifestyle rejuvenating retreat! The past 12 months of gently easing into Samoa with the concept of yoga have been amazing. We arrived here one year ago on March 4th, my birthday! It has been a lot of work to describe what I am here to do

but since Samoa is on a health movement these days they are taking to it and inviting me to work in a variety of venues. As with many of you I am sure, I have to make sure to keep time for myself in the midst of all that is going on in daily life. I find that I have to remind myself that Sunday here is a day to rest. It is only through our taking time to relax that we can keep our dreams fresh and have the energy to work towards our goals. Lots of self care! My sincere hope is that you are feeling healthy and enjoying all that you do. It is dynamic time on earth right now and more than ever it seems we would do well to bring health and peace into our own lives however we can. Each day making time for reflection can be so beneficial. Enjoy who you are! The photo is of me at a waterfall and the other one is of us rock climbing at the waterfall!

FEATURE ARTICLES

HOT DIPPED IN RAW SHAKTI by Peter Ketcham

Imagine being picked up at the airport after 10 hours of air travel from Los Angeles at 2:30 AM in the morning by both Kevin and Taialofa. After a sweet night's rest in their home with no alarm clock allowed, imagine a ceremony prepared just for you. Welcome to the beautiful hospitality and warm care of Kevin and Taialofa and the pleasure of the Raw Shakti (pure energy) experience of being with them for a blissful month. There is nothing quite like it!

- Imagine two people through their love, caring, sharing, and grace, totally dedicated to your growth, development, and happiness. They nurture you through the vehicle of completely enfolding you in their gentle, yogic lifestyle. That was what the total, month-long experience turned out to be. This was the essence of my second Raw Shakti experience(my first was when they toured me through India for 12 days).

Having always been on yet another diet to lose the weight I had put on, I was used to eating diet food and was currently working hard doing heavy exercise in the form of walking six miles every day. Taialofa and Kevin taught me to take the yoga "middle path" with no extremes! I was skeptical as I embarked on their diet and exercise retraining. Kevin walked with me nearly every day for only about two miles and Taialofa re-taught me how to eat healthfully and prepare quick, healthful meals by throwing out the cook books!

One day, after several weeks of retraining, as dinner time approached, Taialofa turned to me and said, "Ok, your turn to cook dinner!" I thought that I was going to get away with taking an active part in washing dishes, helping to clean the house, and hanging up laundry on the outside lines! I was really worried! "I don't know what to cook," I stammered. Taialofa smiled sweetly and said, "There's the refrigerator, there are the fresh fruits and vegetables, and there's the spice rack. Go for it!" I took a deep breath and plunged in. My reward was our pleasure of enjoying my first healthful, vegetarian meal that I cooked. Taialofa showed me that I could eat three hearty meals and two snacks a day and still move towards my optimum weight! No more extreme dieting. I lost eight pounds during my month in Samoa!

The morning always began with meditation and yoga practice before breakfast. Though no alarm clocks were used, I soon joined Kevin and Taialofa in the habit of going to bed by nine at night and getting up between five and six in the morning. This was my own choice. No one ever came to my door to wake me up. I seldom began my practice before Kevin, no matter how early I got up. Watching the fluidity with which Kevin and Taialofa performed their asanas was inspiring. They told me that within five or ten years, I would be just as flexible and open as they were. I was inspired and not daunted by that thought! After all, no one wants to go out of this world drooling in a wheel chair! Up very early, Meditation, yoga asanas, and a healthy, hearty breakfast! What a way to start the day, refreshed and ready to go!

We went to Namua island. There is only one family on this island and a few fales for guests. We took gentle hikes on the beach and photo opportunities up the volcanic hill behind; went snorkeling, shell collecting and we meditated on a secluded and deserted beach surrounded by high cliffs and the sea; quiet, poignant, heartfelt talks while soaking in the sea; simple, vegetarian meals prepared by the extended family of the village, and your own private fale (house) to sleep in.

My last weekend in Samoa was on Savaii, Samoa's largest island, and the largest island in Polynesia outside of Hawaii and New Zealand. No towns or cities, just small villages and an incredibly beautiful waterfall!

The trip to the waterfall, driving very slowly on a jungle path through beautiful palm trees, was breathtaking. The steep climb down to the twenty-foot deep pool in front of the beautiful waterfall heightened the sense of seclusion. It was, as Taialofa said, truly a sacred place.

Jumping off the twelve foot high ledges into the waterfall pool, watching the funny crayfish with the unusually long arms with mask and snorkel, trying to stay in place while being pounded and massaged by the fifty foot high waterfall, meditating while facing the waterfall, having more earnest, heartfelt talks or silently reflecting alone were all both physically and mentally cleansing experiences. A thoughtful and hearty lunch created by Kevin and Taialofa suddenly appeared as we all relaxed in the embrace of this beautiful, sacred place. This island was where Taialofa was conceived and spent her first year of life. It was also where Kevin worked in the Peace Corps and where Kevin and Taialofa first met. Hearing the sequence of events that brought these two beautiful people together while actually seeing the beach where they met was truly magical. Cinderella never had it so good.

As the month continued, I soon became aware that, especially under Taialofa and Kevin's astute and special care, the total yoga experience not only opened up the physical body but the mind as well. Old issues came up; past buried or ignored thoughts began to assert themselves again. The old, inner, ignored, emotional, mental work began to require new attention for proper resolution. A month of healing; a month of growth, both mentally and physically; starting to clean out old, dark corners of my mind; these were some of the hallmarks of my month punctuated with wonderful, healthy meals, sage thoughts and ideas, total dedication to my needs, and Kevin and Taialofa's care for my ultimate wellbeing.

It was no wonder that many friends commented to me when I returned to the US about how healthy, alive, and rested I looked. They saw an energized smile on my face and they seemed to sense new hope and resolve in my heart. I gave all thanks to two beautiful human beings, Kevin and Taialofa, who are totally dedicated to bringing peace to this earth one person at a time for me. It was an instant revelation, as they waved me goodbye, that made me think that I had just awakened from the most beautiful dream of my life. I can't wait to return to Samoa for my next Raw Shakti experience.

RAINING IN THE RAINFOREST by Rena Kirsch

At the end of my first day in Samoa, I said to my fabulous hosts (Taialofa and Kevin) and brother (Ari), "If I were forced to go home tomorrow, I'd be okay with that." That first day was so fabulous that I would've had memories to last a life time (it helps to be writing this during another blizzard here on the east coast of the U.S.). You see, I have known Kevin since we were in third grade together and so we finally got ourselves to visit him and to participate in their growing Raw Shakti vision. We woke our first morning to a beautiful breakfast and a lovely welcome-to-Samoa ceremony that Kevin and Taialofa perform. I won't ruin all the surprises by explaining it. I imagine, like all ceremony, ritual means different things to different people, and far be it for me to influence your interpretation. So, I'll just encourage you to visit if only to experience the ceremony yourself.

After applying a nice thick layer of sunscreen Ari, Kevin and I set of for some childhood fun re-enactment -- water sport! Just outside Apia, the only city in Samoa, are amazing lava flows fed by natural springs that make the ideal water slide (never again will I find satisfaction from visiting a 'water park'). We hiked down through my first rain forest (the buttress roots took my breath away). Once there we slid and climbed, feasted and giggled. The cold water was super refreshing and rejuvenating. Instead of feeling jetlagged, I felt super invigorated and best yet, managed not to get sunburned. You see now why I was content enough at the end of my first day in paradise to exclaim that I could go home happy. Lucky for me, I wasn't forced to go anywhere.

After a morning of hiking in the rain in a rainforest, I went with Taialofa to her all women's yoga class (if you're lucky enough to have more X chromosomes than Y), that she's teaching in a women's center, a giant fale in the middle of Apia (be sure to check out the really beautiful shell murals along the balcony's edge). My brother and I had gotten to hear about Kev and Taialofa's goals in Samoa during those first 2 days (we had incorrectly sort of assumed that their lives in the South Pacific were all relaxed, all the time), so seeing Taialofa at the front of this group of women, doing what she set out to accomplish, less than a year into trying, was really a nice sight.

I'd tried yoga once or twice before, at a Y, or following some magazine directives. But never had I enjoyed it, or really been intrigued by it. Because so many of my friends do it and love it I thought I must have been missing something. At the end of that first session I got it. I breathed happily through the final rest (shavasana) thinking for the first time ever about anything exercise related, "now this is something I could really get into." I felt wonderful during (I'd never felt that at the gym!) and after it.

Through the next two weeks of my time in Samoa, I did yoga with Taialofa at each of her outdoor classes (as you probably know, she also teaches at this beautiful resort on the south side of Upolu), and did yoga under Kevin's tutelage on Savai'i at the beach fale we stayed at.

I think about the trip all the time (I've only been back a little over a week and dream I'm there still), I wonder what my time in Samoa would've been like without the yoga, without the delicious food and special mealtimes (you've all heard of the slow food movement, I'm sure). It would've been spectacular -- there're no bones about that -- Samoa is an amazing, untouched pure country. I admired the culture so much, family is an important value, money is not, and everyone we met was so warm and welcoming. It's the perfect place to escape American society if you need that, however my introduction to Kevin and Taialofa's goals, and learning about their vision for Raw Shakti was ultimately the best part of my vacation.

When I got back to NY, I was catching up with a friend from Boston, who'd just been to Boulder (I couldn't help but interrupt, "that's where Kev went to grad school, you know."). She was feeling excited to get back to the gym and the grocery store, back to non-vacation living. I suppose that's the way most people feel when returning from vacation, ready to get back to 'the real world.' I'm pleased to report that's not at all the way I've felt since returning from Samoa. I hope all y'all get to experience that, too. And when you do, I look forward to reading about your journey.

YOGA AND SCUBA DIVING by Peter Ketcham

The world's first Yoga and Scuba Retreat. As a professional diver, I was most interested to try out this experience. There were six participants and the home base for the retreat was at Coconuts Beach Resort where Taialofa teaches yoga to the guests. The diving was highlighted with incredible shapes of hard corals, several close encounters with green or hawksbill sea turtles, schools of small colorful fish, schools of bigger fish, and occasional visits by Moorish idols, oriental sweet lips, bat fish, trumpet fish, emperor angel fish, long nose butterfly fish, as well as blue striped grunts, snappers, and assorted types of clown fish protected by their sea anemone partners.



This was beginner diving at its best! Warm, eighty five degree water, virtually no current or surge, and visibility between sixty and one hundred feet all contributed to make the dives memorable. Several of the divers were not even certified to be divers yet and they participated under the direct supervision of the dive masters through the gentle, PADI, Discover Scuba program. With one dive in the morning, the afternoon was dedicated to the yoga part of the retreat. At the beginning of the retreat we were all given custom- embroidered journals to write in as well as a syllabus of our five-day yoga journey. Sometimes challenging, sometimes gentle, we were all introduced to new yoga asanas and we were encouraged to gently

explore our physical and emotional edges.

Each day was different: Perhaps an extended period of yoga asanas, meditation, asana practice by and swimming in a waterfall, chanting a personal, walking mantra while walking on the beach on the way to a river, making up our own asanas while sitting in the river, very tasty meals at the resort, an evening lesson on the history of yoga and the history of scuba diving, an evening feast followed by the *fiafia*, or fire dance, were all very memorable parts of the retreat. At the *fiafia*, children as young as four twirled the fiery batons to a heavy drumbeat! The skill with which these youngsters twirled their batons was jaw-droppingly awesome! Kevin later informed us that Samoa had just won the international fire dancing contest. Some of the older children twirled as many as two of their fiery batons so fast and with such precision, all over their bodies, that the batons became a fiery blur! It was an incredibly powerful event!

A unique part of the retreat which all of the participants experienced was Taialofa's graciousness in dedicating many hours to discuss privately each participant's reawakened issues. All of my revelations were treated with the utmost intuition, care, understanding, grace and love. I am sure that all of the yoga retreat participants and I sensed that being with Taialofa was a very emotionally safe place to be if such memories or thoughts came up as they naturally seemed to do. It was a wonderful retreat and the combination of yoga and scuba in Samoa is one that I hope many of you will choose to experience! They will have this retreat again in January of 2006!

WHAT'S NEW WITH RAW SHAKTI



- On line yoga lifestyle coaching
- Transformative yoga vacations
- Updated website
- Advertisement in the Yoga Journal march/april issue
- DVD is now only \$20

Online Yoga Lifestyle coaching For inspiring yoga ideas and personalized yoga practices along with recipes and healthy living cooking tips. Inquire for brochure at yoga@taialofa.com.

Transformative Yoga Vacations Come to Samoa for a once in a lifetime experience! There are now direct flights once a week from LA to Apia, Samoa. Beside the sea Taialofa will guide you on your own personal or group yoga retreat! She is organizing personalized trips for singles, couples and groups into the heart of Samoa. On a personalized retreat, you may go to Namua island, Savaii and do yoga and meditation beside the clear water. You will have plenty of time to enjoy contemplative seaside relaxation. You can choose to include in your personal journey; healthy cooking lessons that suit your needs, private yoga sessions to encourage your optimum health, and be encouraged to relax into your own true happiness right now! If you have 2 weeks this year, perhaps you would enjoy refreshing your spirit with yoga along with experiencing the traditional living island culture of Samoa. Inquire for pricing and available weeks in 2005/6 at yoga@taialofa.com

Updated Website Ahmad, the web designer has done a great job setting up and updating taialofa.com. Fa'afetai lava! You can now register on line for yoga retreats through paypal.

Advertisement in Yoga Journal march/april issue This is Raw Shakti's debut AD in Yoga Journal. We will have yearly advertisements as well as hopefully getting an article published one day.

DVD is now only \$20 Thanks to Take 1 Video, our grassroots video production company, we are able to get the video made for less now. Thanks for your support in choosing to view it! We know you will enjoy the scenery as well as the yoga!

2005 YOGA RETREAT CALENDAR

▪ **Yoga in Peru!!** If we get a few more people then Taialofa will be joining too as her mother's, Josephine, co-leader! This is a journey to Machu Picchu. Enjoy the walking and yoga along with the spiritual journey that is possible at this sacred site! All inclusive retreat. Check out www.willkatika.com to see the guest house and facilities where you will be staying for part of the trip, it is a beautiful first class place! If you have an interest please inquire for details at yoga@taialofa.com.

Exploring the Flow Yoga Retreats with Taialofa

Coconuts Beach Club, Samoa Come and enjoy this nourishing yoga retreat set beside the clear blue sea of Samoa! Take the time to explore the natural flow within yourself as a way to create optimum health in today's busy world. You will be guided in vinyasa yoga, walking meditation, trance dance, the roots of yoga, elements of a daily practice, and asanas in the sea.

Cost: USD \$425/person for the yoga portion of the retreat.

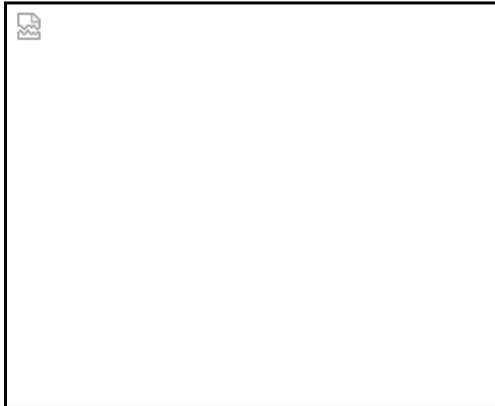
Visit www.coconutsbeachclub.com to view the site of this retreat. There is wonderful lodging available at Coconuts Beach Club.

To find out more information regarding the yoga retreats and to register visit www.taialofa.com.

EXPANDING THE PRACTICE

Yoga Tip:

It is important to do a bit of yoga each day for the energy force that it provides. We could probably all use a bit more energy through our day through our natural resources rather than through caffeine or chocolate. :) Know that during the times when we say we are too busy are the exact times that we need yoga the most. Just roll out the mat and get on it! Even if you don't know where to start; either start with a few sun salutations or even by just lying on the back and working into a gentle knee down twist and going on from there as your intuition tells you. As with anything, the hardest part is just to begin. The rest will begin to flow naturally. Even 5 minutes of yoga can help us to restore a sense of balance!

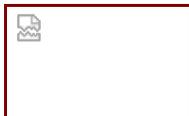


Highlighted Asana:

Seaside open facing warrior - Beside any water's edge whether it be a river, lake, pond, the ocean, or even a tub full of water, bring yourself into virabhadrasana II (warrior II) and then rest your back hand onto your back leg. Reach your front arm toward the sky as you arch your back and lift your heart toward the sky. Take 6 full yogic breaths. Enjoy the strength soaring through your body as you become the peaceful warrior. Encourage your shoulder of the raised arm to drop back to expand through the chest more. Lengthen the back leg and keep the front knee over the ankle. This asana tones through your core, ignites the legs and lifts the heart. Breathe your whole body! Let every cell receive the breath! Where water meets the air is where prana is formed in the greatest quantities. Beside the water you will receive

the highest levels of prana, or life-force. I did this warrior asana on the uninhabited Samoan island of Namua.

"YOGA IN NEW ENGLAND" Video *An Active Yoga Practice Sequence.*



Add this 60 minute video to your yoga/exercise routine! It is an active yoga practice filmed by a beautiful lake in Surry, New Hampshire. You will be guided in meditation, asanas and relaxation. This is truly an organic video created by local people of talent. John and Roberta Barry of NH kindly filmed and edited this video.



The soundtrack of soothing piano ballads are composed by Mark Polifrone of NH. The graphic art on the cover is done by another talented and professional graphic artist Kellie Williams of NH. A community project! People told me I had to go to Hollywood to create videos and to pursue going global with my health mission, but my heart told me I could start out right at home where I was raised in NH and do the same! So here it is, my first yoga video, and I am hopeful it will be one of many. My next one will be yoga in Samoa! Now the DVD price has been reduced from \$30 to \$20! Buy today and you will help with the Raw Shakti mission of creating health on earth by helping yourself to become more healthy. Available on DVD, VHS, and PAL. Visit www.taialofa.com to order.

Hana's Cooking Corner: **Potato Leek Soup**

Here's a hearty soup to provide warmth before the cold days in late winter leave us for spring here in New England. The light green color provides a cheery hint of spring

2 Tbsp olive oil
 2 large leeks (white and light green parts only)
 3 carrots
 8 medium Yukon gold potatoes
 4 cups vegetable broth
 fresh ground sea salt
 fresh ground pepper

Thoroughly rinse the leeks and carrots. Slice leeks and carrots. Place large pot over medium heat. Add olive oil, leeks and carrots. Cook until leeks are tender. Meanwhile, cut potatoes into 1 inch pieces then add to pot with leeks and carrots. Add vegetable broth, enough water to cover all ingredients and salt. Bring to a boil and reduce heat to simmer for about 30 minutes or until potatoes easily break apart. Mash some of the potatoes against the side of the pot with a spoon until soup reaches desired thickness. Add salt and pepper to your liking and enjoy. Serves 4

Hana's cooking tip: *Fresh is best! One of the main ways we get our life force is from our food so be inspired to choose fresh vegetables and feel the difference!*

Highlighted Chant

Om Shanti Shanti Shanit
 Peace. Peace. Peace.

(Chant 3 times before your daily yoga practice or before a meal to increase the feeling of peace)

PEOPLE OF RAW SHAKTI

John and Roberta Barry

John and Roberta Barry are now retired educators who spent twenty years juggling their careers in education with shooting special event videos. They call their business, **Take 1 Video**, because in the early days of shooting video, they had no editing capability, so it was just shoot and hand the tape to clients. Editing quickly became necessary in order to produce quality creativity, and now it is essential to make DVDs. Taialofa and Kevin became a part of their lives in yoga and video as a result of creating their wedding day "moving" memory video. The creation of "Yoga in New England" came next. They are proud and happy to be a continuing part of this young couple's lives and to see them move forward with their mission of bringing love, peace, and health to all they meet through their yoga life. Yoga in New England will allow you to see the area where Taialofa grew up and join her in one of her daily practices. While John and Roberta remain in New Hampshire continuing to help people create videos, they stay connected with

Taialofa and Kevin in Samoa via cyberspace! It is their hope that others will experience Yoga in New England with Taialofa by simply clicking onto their web site and ordering Yoga in New England.

▪ **Peter Ketcham**

Peter is currently living in Keene, NH. He sings barbershop harmony and he enjoys the outdoors. He has traveled to 57 countries on scuba diving expeditions. He enjoys the ocean and life below the surface. He particularly likes to dive with sharks and he would be quick to tell people that sharks have a very undeserved reputation! Pete began meditation back in 1972 through the TM movement and he has recently renewed his interest in meditation through learning yoga asanas and about the yoga lifestyle from both Kevin and Taialofa. Pete currently takes yoga lessons from Taialofa's mother, Josephine, and he practices yoga every day. As the result of his yoga practice, Pete is dedicated to pursue yoga to continue to improve his health and wellbeing.

Rena Kirsch

▪
Rena is currently living in New York City and is working as a librarian for Newsweek Magazine. In addition to being a walking good time, she connects with her artist ways by throwing paint onto canvases or walls. She paints murals, enjoys reading, pursuing inspiring friendships, walking and visiting the islands. She is a thoughtful woman full of insight into world events.

In future issues of this newsletter we will be highlighting Ahmad, Kellie, Soho, Scott & Mary, Rose, and others who are contributing to the Raw Shakti vision! Thanks to all of you! If you would like to see our past newsletter just ask and we will send you one.

Please feel welcome and invited to FORWARD this newsletter to all whom you think might enjoy this journey toward health and peace! We kindly appreciate your sending this newsletter to others! Thank you so much for reading!

Raw Shakti is a Yoga Enterprise Dedicated to Promoting Health and Peace on Earth.



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