

[Back to Newsletter Archives](#)

[Raw Shakti Home](#)

Raw Shakti e-Newsletter Issue 3 June 2005

Issue 3

www.taialofa.com

June 2005

Visit:

yoga@taialofa.com

Email:

In This Issue:

ALOFA (LOVE) FROM TAIALOFA

FEATURE ARTICLES Making Decisions from your Sacred Center - Waterfall Yoga

WHAT'S NEW WITH RAW SHAKTI Brochures - Raw Shakti Yoga Retreats - Online Coaching -
Yoga in Savai'i and Namu'a Island - Yoga Tour USA

2005 YOGA RETREATS CALENDAR Exploring the Flow in Samoa - Yoga in Peru

EXPANDING THE PRACTICE Yoga Tip - Highlighted Asana - Hana's Cooking Corner -
Highlighted Chant

PEOPLE OF RAW SHAKTI Kellie - Isabel - Rebekah

ALOFA (LOVE) FROM TAIALOFA

• Hello from the South Pacific! I hope you are all feeling healthy and living the life you dream. We are full on pursuing our dreams here and are now, after a year of work, set up to guide yoga retreats around the Samoan islands. We hope to take you to the most beautifully lush and serene tropical places. Even while immersed in the details of setting up our Raw Shakti vision in Samoa, I knew I needed to go back to America to see my family and to teach a few yoga sessions. In May, I began a 3 week journey to New Hampshire, New York, Washington DC and Virginia. I went home to see my sister, Veronica, graduate from Skidmore college in New York (she is the last of us 4 "kids" to graduate college and is 9 years younger than me). All 4 of our grandparents were there to celebrate her graduation. I feel blessed to have them all alive and supportive of the younger generation. We sat around them one night and listened to their stories, jokes, and wisdom and had a lot of fun and laughs. Veronica will go to New York City for the summer, to volunteer in the Bronx in the city's poorest (financially) neighborhood, at a community center. This is an example of karma yoga or selfless service which we support.

While in New Hampshire, my mother and I hosted a "Yoga Party" to celebrate our yoga students and teachers (we invited everyone we could think of in the yoga community there) and hoped to encourage the yoga community to get to know each other better. Everyone brought a vegetable for a soup which we threw into one pot to make a "stone soup". It was surprisingly delicious and we ate it along with fruit, salad, and home made bread. We played yoga games in the grassy yard with a parachute and then told stories in a circle about our experiences with island vacations or island life. Everyone had an island story. Some told about islands off the coast of Maine, some of the Caribbean, and it was a nice chance to introduce Samoa. I took four yoga classes from my mother, all fabulously rejuvenating. I try to soak in as much of her wisdom as I can when I am fortunate enough to take her classes. I worked with a few people as well. I was surprised how even after having come and gone from America for more than a decade now, I still have reverse "culture

shock" for the first few days. So much beautiful luxury everywhere. We have so much "stuff" to use and play with! There are so many options at the stores (organic health food stores being one of my favorites), and people were always on the move, which is very different from Samoa, where to motivate anyone for anything there needs to be an extremely important reason. But in America, most of us just go go go, myself included. I laughed at myself a few times noticing that I carried with me my "planner" for the time I was home and it was totally booked in with scheduled events! I realized how every single day we need to choose to be happy, for in the journey of life, no matter at what pace we choose to take it, being present and "awake" and in touch with our heart's center so that we can feel all the moments as they pass, seems the only way to experience joy! Once the moment is gone, it is over, an obvious point but profound for me. This practice of being in the moment seemed to extend everything for me. Time went by slowly and I felt satisfied with my time in the US. I will always be going back to teach and to be taught. I remember learning from CS Lewis that reflecting on good times is part of the experience of the good time. For years I plowed through my life barely taking a moment to reflect. Now I am taking time now to reflect which does seem to complete the precious moments of the past.

In this newsletter, two yoginis have written about their experiences in Samoa on an island yoga retreat with us. The articles will give you a feeling for what to expect if you choose to do a retreat with Raw Shakti. Please note that Samoa is now a direct flight from Los Angeles! Every guest that we bring around Samoa seems to have a unique experience all their own of healing and relaxing and cultural interaction. Thank you kindly for reading about Raw Shakti. Thank you for all the support as it comes in many forms as we try to build our dream of world health and peace, one step at a time! By the sea in Samoa you can come to relax and nourish your mind, body and soul. Please email us if you would like Kevin and I to design a retreat for you. Give us the dates and we will greet you at the airport with smiles and leis!

FEATURE ARTICLES

Making Decisions from your Sacred Center by Isabel Thompson

- A Raw Shakti Yoga Retreat with Taialofa and Kevin is a sacred journey into your own center. For me it was a journey that deepened each day that I was there. They helped me to understand my challenges regarding decision making and gave me healthy yoga methods to handle the decision making process. For as those who are close to me well know, I am sometimes pierced to the core by the decision making process.

My healing transformation surprisingly began before I arrived in Samoa! I purchased my ticket in January for my April trip to Samoa and invited my wonderful friend Rebekah to join me. She is from New Zealand. With plans in place, I felt greatâ€”and then the conflict! A month before my scheduled departure, my spiritual teacher Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj announced a tour stop to my home town that conflicted with my Samoa trip. I wanted to be able to support my local spiritual group while he was in town, yet obviously felt committed to my trip. Also, Rebekah could not change her flight dates! I felt deeply conflicted.

The yes-no-yes-no-and-back-again dance began. Finally, I decided to stick with my original plans. Taialofa and Kevin were so loving when I arrived, allowing me the space and time to discuss the many blessings that my spiritual teacher has showered upon my life. Usually I have to be more quiet and reserved about personal things. They helped

me to feel at peace with my decision by acknowledging the possibility that I was meant to be in Samoa and my teacher would likely be happy that I was allowing myself to be on retreat to nourish myself. Taialofa helped me to experience what I know that my spiritual teacher is always with me. She told me this under the full moon on the most pristine beach of a deserted island called Namua. Then Kevin led us in a Samoa meditation inhaling Sa (sacred) and exhaling Moa (center). Connecting with my own sacred center does not directly lead to easier decision-making, but deepening my body-mind-spirit connection through the practices of yoga and meditation helps me to drop the worry, the mental wrangling, and recognize a deeper level of truth where decisions come easier.

However, even after the yoga retreat I struggled with another simple decision "should I do my scuba certification or just explore scuba for one day? The old anxiety emerged as the time came to decide "this or that, this or that. Only now I was better equipped to deal with the anxiety. I took time out, rested on my bed in Savasana, and connected deeper inside myself without grasping for an answer, as I had been learning to do. Inside, I found the familiar refrain "I asked myself what would please other people? And then I let it go, the need to please, and connected finally to what I wanted for myself. I wanted to drop my hectic schedule! By pushing to complete so many things I was not giving myself true down time which is what vacation and retreat are suppose to be! So I chose to do a scuba experience for just one day and will save the certification for another time. I still had a twinge of anxiety even as I voiced my decision "am I making the right decision? Yet I found more peace and greater capacity to relax into the decision-making process.

So coming to Samoa was a great decision with positive outcomes that continue to unfold! But as a 25 year old woman, I am currently facing other decisions regarding my career path and love. My challenge is to relax throughout the process and let my decisions emerge from my sacred center, where the answer always lies. During an amazing private yoga session, Taialofa helped me see that all the effort is actually getting in my way. Even with each regular breath, I was efforting as if deciding to inhale with each new breath was a choice. I now understand that the root of my anxiety with decisions is a build up of too much effort making breathing more difficult than it has to be. I am learning to relax my breath and deal with each decision as it comes. My analytical mind that felt it must be in control of everything in order for me to feel safe is now relaxing. With this new realization that my next breath will always come. My experience on retreat in Samoa with Taialofa and Kevin was a journey into my own sacred center, teaching me to trust the truth of my own body and providing me with the direct experience of relaxing into myself. Now I trust that as I relax, decisions will emerge naturally without all the effort.

Waterfall Yoga by Rebekah Goldstein-Hawes

Samoa, Raw Shakti Yoga retreat, 2005

- In Samoa, on the Raw shakti Yoga retreat, it was a time for me to shed a skin. Finally I was in a space that was safe enough for me to be soft and pink and new for that little while after shedding some of my feelings of sadness that I had carried with me far too long. My transition was protected and aided by Samoa's slow pace, the thick rich air, the pull of the ocean and the moon and the daily Luna yoga sessions guided by Kevin and Taialofa.

During the retreat we visited a pristine waterfall tucked discretely in a lush green valley on Savai'i. After exploring on our own with time to swim free below the waterfall, we all came together for yoga in the pool. Standing in the pool beneath the waterfall, I realized that we were representing the four elements with our own sun-signs (Taialofa-Water, Kevin-Fire, Isabel- Air, myself- Earth). The air was thick and pervasive, the water was pouring down around us, (and within us) and the smooth rocks were firmly beneath our feet while the hot sun hit our shoulders. As I stood firmly, connecting with the earth, knee deep in the crystal clear water, I acknowledged my solidity. It became more heartfelt as we did a charka meditation and then it all became overwhelming. Feelings, sensations, hurts, and sadness along with love not fully felt came to the surface for me to deal with. For years I had been tucking them away until a safer time.

After the yoga, Taialofa and Isabel pulled me up from the edge of the rocks where I had nearly tumbled, and I got the signal that my mind was trying to split off again, trying to avoid the difficult feelings that were coming up by hiding in a small safe intellectual closet. But the scene was set, I was well grounded and had opened myself up to the balancing forces of the elements and there was no turning back. I allowed myself to be cradled by the earth as feelings arose. I cried for the accumulated small sadnesses of fifteen years. The earth absorbed my tears, filtered them slowly as they became the waterfall, the papaya trees, the red ants, and the gently uncurling fern fronds.

I promised myself that I would continue in the process of awakening to my emotional core and allowing my feelings the space they needed, uncurling slowly like a fresh green fern frond. During the rest of the retreat I was able to proceed on this journey feeling refreshed and light-of-heart.

WHAT'S NEW WITH RAW SHAKTI



- Brochures
- Raw Shakti Yoga Retreats
- Online Coaching
- Yoga in Savaii and Namua island
- Yoga tour USA on the East Coast

Brochures Kevin has just finished designing our *first* yoga offerings brochure. You can see people exploring Samoa on retreats we have lead over the past year. It will give you a taste of what you can look forward to. Inquire for a brochure at yoga@taialofa.com.

Raw Shakti Yoga Retreats Come to Samoa for a once in a lifetime experience! There are now direct flights once a week from Los Angeles to Apia, Samoa. Taialofa and Kevin will guide you on your own personal or group yoga retreat! They are organizing personalized trips for singles, couples and groups into the heart of Samoa. On a personalized retreat, you may go to Namua island, and the big island of Savaii and do yoga and meditation beside the turquoise lagoons and sparkling waterfalls. 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, techniques 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 and along with the retreat you will be experiencing the traditional living island culture of Samoa. Inquire for pricing and available weeks in 2005/6 at yoga@taialofa.com

Online Coaching This is a great opportunity for you to get motivated to do your yoga! Taialofa inspires and gives expert guidance in establishing yoga routines that suit your lifestyle.

Yoga in Savaii and Namua Island These are two very sacred islands in Samoa. We are now leading tours to these exotic locations. Enjoy island living, interacting with the Samoans, seaside sleeping, swimming and of course yoga!

Yoga tour USA This past month Taialofa could be found doing and teaching yoga on the East Coast. As part of the tour, Taialofa and her mother had a Yoga party with fun yoga postures under a parachute, healthy delicious soup, and stories to share. We had a grand time. Even my mother's parents participated by sharing stories about their time in the

islands, especially the one about when they flew to my mom and dad's Hawaii wedding after they had known each other only 11 weeks! They are still happily together to this day, we are glad to report :) Looking forward to 2006 tour!

2005 YOGA RETREAT CALENDAR

▪ **Yoga in Peru!!** *There are a few more days to register for this amazing journey. This is a journey to Machu Picchu. Enjoy the walking and yoga at this ancient 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! 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

▪ Having fun with your practice. It is so important to enjoy your practice. This means at times we should be playful and free with how our bodies want to be. Also when we are in a challenging pose it is a good to remind yourself to smile! How many times are we holding a pose and finding that our faces are all scrunched up. Relax, breath and smile. The perfect relaxed state! Here is Isabel, the author of "Making decisions from your sacred center", enjoying herself on the mat with the morning south pacific sun on her face. We caught her in this moment of laughter and realized how important this is to each of our own practices. As a wise man once said to me, "Have some fun!"

Highlighted Asana

▪
 Utthita Parsvakonasana. The extended lateral angle pose. This is a dynamic pose which creates strength in the legs. It also balances the apana and the prana. Start this pose by coming into mountain pose. Standing tall and strong like a mountain. Then widen your stance so that there is approximately 3-4 feet between your feet. Reach your arms out to the side of your body and extend through your fingers and relax the shoulders. Take a breath. Now turn your right foot 90 degrees to the right and your left foot 45 degrees to the right. Feel the feet firmly connected with the earth. Now bend your right knee out over your right ankle. Your right thigh should be parallel with the floor and your right shin should be perpendicular. Adjust your feet if necessary. (Remember how you adjusted your feet this time so next time you come into the pose you can know your correct spacing between your feet.) Now, the right thigh is engaged and the left leg is actively extended. Now reach down in front of your foot and place your hand on the ground. If your hand does not reach the ground use a few books or yoga blocks to place your hand on. Now reach your left arm up and over your head and turn and face the sky if your neck is comfortable. Rotate your torso toward the sky and breath! Enjoy this strengthening posture. Breath here for a few breaths then mindfully reverse your movements and come back to a comfortable standing position. Now do it on the other side for balance.

Hana's cooking Corner: Grilled Asparagus over Quinoa

Serves 4

Asparagus is a harbinger of warm weather and using a grill for vegetable preparation is a great way to celebrate the summer season. Last summer I fell in love with quinoa on a trip to Peru where it is a staple of local cuisine. I've chosen delicious and nutritious quinoa to accompany the asparagus because of its unique texture and delicate, nutty flavor. Enjoy!

Ingredients (remember: fresh and local ingredients- when available- are best!)

1 bundle asparagus

2 cloves garlic (minced)

2 TBSP hazelnut oil, macadamia oil or your favorite nut oil

1 TBSP fresh squeezed lemon juice

1 TBSP maple syrup

2 cups quinoa

6 cups vegetable broth or water

Begin by placing quinoa in a bowl of water, stir and drain. Repeat several times until water is clear. This prevents quinoa from tasting bitter. If using a rice cooker to make the quinoa, combine quinoa and 6 cups broth or water in rice cooker and follow directions in user's manual. To make it on the stovetop, bring water or broth to a boil in a saucepan, add quinoa and reduce heat to simmer. Continue until liquid is absorbed (about 15-20 minutes). Be sure to fluff grains with fork after either method of preparation before serving.

While the quinoa is cooking, start the grill and maintain medium heat.

Whisk garlic, oil, lemon juice and maple syrup in a small bowl until well combined. Rinse the asparagus and place in shallow bowl. Add more of each ingredient until the taste suits you. Brush the garlic mixture over asparagus and place asparagus on the grill. Continue brushing the asparagus with the garlic mixture while grilling as needed to prevent sticking and maintain moisture. Turn asparagus regularly to avoid uneven cooking. Asparagus should be tender and ready to eat in just under 10 minutes.

Divide quinoa among 4 plates and top with asparagus. Garnish with fresh herbs from the garden when available.

About Quinoa: Quinoa has excellent reserves of protein, and unlike other grains, is not missing the amino acid lysine, so the protein is more complete (a trait it shares with other "non-true" grains such as buckwheat and amaranth). The World Health Organization has rated the quality of protein in quinoa at least equivalent to that in milk. Quinoa offers more iron than other grains and contains high levels of potassium and riboflavin, as well as other B vitamins: B6, niacin, and thiamin. It is also a good source of magnesium, zinc, copper, and manganese, and has some folate (folic acid). An ancient grainlike product that has recently been "rediscovered" in this country, quinoa has a light, delicate taste, and can be substituted for almost any other grain. (This information is from the wholehealthmd.com website)

Highlighted Chant

Jai Ma Shri Ma Jaia Jaia Ma!

Praise to the mother!

(Chant 3 times before your daily yoga practice to create peace and harmony between you and your first teacher, your mother!)

"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.

PEOPLE OF RAW SHAKTI

Kellie Williams

- Kellie is a long time friend of Taialofa's. Together they were actresses in their local high school plays and became close on and off the stage. They both grew up in New Hampshire, where Kellie is settled with her husband. She currently lives in Fitzwilliam, a historical town that brings in most of its business through antique shops. She has been very fortunate to earn a living doing graphic design work. Her graphic arts are unique and inspired! She works on a variety of projects and is available for everything from logos to brochures. Thanks to computers she says she is able to live in her small NH town and work with people all over the world. She even designed her own home that her husband built for them! She has had the pleasure of working with Taialofa on many of her Raw Shakti materials including designing her Raw Shakti Logo and the Yoga in New England DVD packaging. You can reach Kellie at kdesigngraphics@aol.com for information about her graphic art.

Isabel Thompson

- Isabel was born in the Ivory Coast and lived in Bangladesh and India as a young child. She moved to the USA when she was nine and has lived in Florida for the past ten years. She is a current Master's student in the Mental Health Counseling Program at the University of Central Florida. She is a certified Sivananda Yoga teacher and has taught yoga for the past four years. Her dreams include incorporating yoga with traditional mental wellness modalities like counseling. She met Taialofa in January 2001 at the Sivananda Ashram in the Bahamas. She decided to travel to Samoa with her soul sister Rebekah from New Zealand to take a Raw Shakti Yoga Retreat with Taialofa and Kevin. Her vision is to nourish her spirit and bring her daily life in alignment with her spiritual ideals.

Rebekah Goldstein-Hawes

- Rebekah currently lives in Wellington, New Zealand. Born in Baltimore MD USA, and raised in an intentional community in West Virginia, and then later on a sheep farm in New Zealand she learned about hard work. She has been working for the New Zealand government, the Ministry of Social Development, as a research analyst. She tries to encourage an understanding between people of different groups within NZ society, of their equal value and importance, and their different cultural understandings and practices. She will soon be "full time" running the company she is creating; Karebeh Holistic Body Care. They make natural body care products from New Zealand natural resources (from our own herb garden

wherever possible!), ensuring that everything you put on your skin is healthy and pure enough to eat! (email karebehnz@yahoo.co.nz for more information). One day, she dreams of having her own retreat center, complete with a giant garden, karebeh kitchens, and a community of creative energies.

In future issues of this newsletter we will be highlighting Soho, Scott & Mary, Ahmad 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.



Raw Shakti - P.O. Box 684 - Western Samoa

Phone: 011 685 779 6400

Email: yoga@rawshakti.com

Web site: www.rawshakti.com