

EVOLUTION THROUGH CHI

From the 1990 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference

by Justin Stone

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Zen training has a good deal in common with T'ai Chi Chih training because both Zen and TCC do not feel that words are important. Zen is a transmission without the benefit of words or doctrine, leading to seeing your own true nature. Of course, that could be said of TCC as well. It is true that you have to use words to communicate and you teach with words. But it is the circulation of the *chi*, not the words, that brings about the changes.

We see the difficulty that's going on in the Middle East now. When there is enough evolutionary force put in motion with TCC, things will be quite different and I think you'll see the role that TCC is going to play.

Now Huang-Po was one of the greatest Zen teachers and he was the teacher of Rinzai, who was also known as Lin Chi. His Rinzai Zen is probably in ascendancy today, as the number one Zen sect or type of teaching in the world. Now Huang-Po said, "I would say that if you attain realization in the exercise of the *chi* you will occupy the pinnacle of attainment and will allow not even the Holy Ones to spy on you." If you attain your *satori*, if you attain your *kensho*, your great realization, through the exercise of the *chi*, you will occupy the pinnacle of attainment.

D. T. Suzuki, who recently made Zen popular in the West, said, "At the moment of enlightenment there is a complete revulsion of the *prana*." (*Prana* is Sanskrit for *chi*.) That's a tremendous statement because you can work that backward: "With the moment of enlightenment there is a complete revulsion of the *chi*." But how about saying: "Where there is a complete revulsion of the *chi*, there is the moment of complete enlightenment?" I think that shows you where your practice takes you.

Now Gopi Krishna, who I feel is one of the most important people of our time, wrote a book called Kundalini, in which he told of the rising of the *kundalini* force. What happened in his case is practically unique even in India. And this went on for forty or forty five years. He started a school of *kundalini* in the Kashmir and he matured so much from the experience that if you read his first book, Kundalini, then go on and read an exceptionally important book (that I think is probably the most important book I've ever read), called Higher Consciousness by Gopi Krishna, you'll see the tremendous strides he made. He was very much bewildered by the

experience when he first had it. Years later, when it had time to mature, he spoke and wrote about it. It's the first time that I've ever read anything that corresponded to my own experience. There are one or two topics about which I don't think that he was well prepared to speak, such as meditation. He knew only the forms of concentration that he had practiced. And some of his conclusions may not have been correct about the others. But I'm going to quote quite a few things that he said because he is talking about evolution.

Doctors, politicians, and everybody else talk as though man has reached his ultimate state right now, and that all the world's problems will always be with mankind. In other words, everything came to a halt at this exact minute because we are living at this exact minute. But Paul Rebs, who died recently, put it quite differently. He said, "The universe is so young. While we're waiting for it to mature, why not poem a little?" He realized what is happening.

The great metaphysical mystery is that all the time that we are evolving, nothing is changing. At one level, there is no change. That's the level of the "uncarved block." But at the level that we live everyday, we are changing, and we are changing rapidly. Some are changing more rapidly than others. We are all evolving, and we are all evolving, according to Gopi Krishna, to a very high spiritual state in which eventually this earth will be a paradise. Some of these statements of his are all leading in one direction. I picked them out for that reason: All have to do with TCC practice.

He says, "The religious impulse is an expression of the evolutionary force in human beings. *Kundalini* (*kundalini* and *chi* are the same thing) is not a metaphysical force. It should be understood as a psycho-physiological operation of body." This corresponds very strongly to what my teacher in India used to say: "For every spiritual change there is a physical change. For every physical change there is a spiritual change." He said that, "The good (we use the words good and bad quite loosely) is that which aids evolution. That which forwards evolution is the good."

Gopi Krishna points out so many things we do in our lives, collectively and individually, that deter evolution. In the same way, people constantly taking pills for chronic illness, and so forth, are not only experiencing purification. They are setting up the need for new purifications because what is *in* those pills has to be purified. Life is essentially a purification. If you think of it in an overall manner rather than thinking of, "Gee, tomorrow I've got to make more money. I've got to do something of that nature," you will realize that this is so. Animals seem to realize it very well because

different species of animals know which herbs to turn to when there is illness, when there is something wrong. Fish have been known to come out of the water and take an herb from the shoreline.

We are in a constant state of purification. This corresponds very closely to what happens in music. We have dissonance; we set up a dissonance and then we resolve the dissonance and there is a feeling of rest. It's also true in good painting and in all fields of the arts. Life is a matter of expansion/contraction, dissonance/consonance. Or if you prefer, a state of ill-ease, un-ease, dis-ease. This disease then becomes ease; it then comes back to a pure state.

Gopi Krishna says that "it is only when the brain is fed by this radiant psychic energy (psychic energy is what he calls *prana* or *chi*) that the otherwise impenetrable realm of consciousness becomes perceptible to the inner vision." He is saying that one day we may view the entire realm of Consciousness! Many of the greatest thinkers have said, "There is nothing but consciousness." Yogacara Buddhism says "Consciousness only." And Gopi Krishna says, "The world that we observe with our senses is very small, very limited. But the inner realm (which is not only inner) of consciousness is unlimited."

He had a feeling (all through the last forty years of his life) of swimming through this vast ocean of consciousness. So he says, "It is only when the brain is fed by this radiant psychic energy that the otherwise impenetrable realm of consciousness becomes perceptible to the inner vision." He says, "The human brain can rise to higher states of consciousness by certain biological readjustments in which the cerebral-spinal system plays a decisive part." You don't have to know all this in order to do TCC. But now you know what you are working with in TCC.

"Human consciousness can move to a state of transcendence through the working of certain physiological processes." Physiological processes, not mental. This is why you could listen to a thousand sermons. People listen to them every Sunday in church and then, on Monday, are they changed? Do they no longer cheat or lie? You can lie on a couch in a psychoanalyst's office for eight years and talk about yourself, which is very pleasurable, but has the *chi* changed at the end of eight years?

Of the hundreds of well known yoga Saints and Adepts of India's past, there is not one in whom the bloom of the mystical state can be traced to drugs. Disproportion in the pranic spectrum (that is, disproportion in the spectrum of *chi*) implies disproportion in Consciousness. And this is why TCC balances as well as stimulates the Vital Force. Aerobics and so forth don't attempt that.

They are exercise. Gopi Krishna says, "Any reagent that can cause an alteration in the pranic spectrum [that is the spectrum of *chi*] can also cause a change in consciousness."

Is this boring anybody?

He says, "The higher state of consciousness, despite its enrapturing radiance, is as void of visions as the consciousness of a healthy, clear thinking human being." This is quite in contrast with what most people think. There was a teacher in New Mexico, up in Taos, who had many, many followers, and he was always painting pictures of these visions he was having. Somebody asked me about it once and I explained, "That's not enlightenment. That's a troubled mind."

The human brain already has a potential to express a higher dimension of consciousness when fed by a more potent form of bioenergy -- bioenergy being a euphemism or a synonym for *chi*. Gopi Krishna says, "Every human being, every animal, and every plant is the handiwork of an all-pervading, tireless, intelligent energy." And I'll add that energy is also wisdom. There is no place in the cosmos and beyond the cosmos that is not energy and not wisdom. The Science of Physics is coming very much to that realization.

All these extraordinary manifestations of consciousness, for which science as yet has no explanation, depend mainly upon the transformation of *prana* or bioenergy. That is *chi*. Gopi Krishna is saying that the extraordinary manifestation of consciousness depends upon the transformation of *chi*. "The whole gamut of evolution has occurred mainly through changes in the spectrum of bioenergy. It is not difficult to infer that the human mind is evolving in a direction where a new channel of perception (superior to the existing senses) and a new source of knowledge (superior to the intellect) will adorn the consciousness of evolved human beings." It's very difficult to convince an intellectual of that.

We are evolving to something very wonderful. Many people, of course, who do meditation and who combine meditation with TCC, know that this is so -- because certain things are realized, certain things are seen. And it has nothing to do with the eyes or touch or taste and so forth. It goes far beyond that. And practically everybody here will have (at some time) psychic experiences and (maybe) visions of the future. It's very easy if you are a matter-of-fact person to say, "Oh, that didn't really happen" and to put it out of your mind.

The story Gopi Krishna is telling you is this. As there is a change in what he calls "bioenergy," there is a spiritual change.

And the direction that man is going in is one we would think of as superhuman. That is, he is heading in the direction of spiritual attainment.

A man named Le Compte de Nouey wrote, Human Destiny, in which he tried to prove that evolution is spiritual. All through it he is saying (just as Garma C.C. Chang in your teacher's manual is saying) that through moving meditation you can reach a complete state of enlightenment. Now, reaching that complete state of enlightenment will entail certain things first. When my Indian teacher was asked, "Can you reach enlightenment through devotion?" (*bhakti*), he said, "You've got it backwards. Only the enlightened man is capable of devotion." Do you see how that ties in with what Gopi Krishna said? As this physical energy or this physical body evolves and makes itself ready, it will be a suitable vehicle for this higher state of consciousness. You can't take a radio set and expect to get television pictures on it. It has to be made ready for it. Now, does this give you a different picture of what you are doing in your TCC practice?

Are there any questions or any statements?

Questioner: Can you get addicted to TCC? Maybe that's just a distorted word but I'm wondering, can you have balance in your practice or do you become addicted to it?

Justin: That is the meaning of addiction, of course. What you mean is, can practice become a habit? I hope you become addicted to it. So many people suffer addictions without knowing it. Caffeine is a very big one. There are a million others. Once you begin to get the benefits of TCC and realize what is happening, it's a remarkable high. It's the only high without a low. Ramakrishna, a great Hindu Saint, said, "Some people are addicted." And he said, "The only difference between me and them is that I'm addicted to God. And that is my spiritual practice." There is also a book, Positive Addictions, that's about addictions that don't have a negative.

Questioner: I have a friend who wouldn't become a student because she thought I was addicted to TCC.

Justin: I think from a personal standpoint that when a teacher has gotten to a certain level, the teacher will want to take Seijaku and go on as far as possible. And there are going to be other things later on.

To the person who is, perhaps, not as steadfast (I don't want to use an uncomplimentary word) but who is more superficial, he or she will go from thing to thing out of curiosity. This is why Idries Shah wrote Learning How to Learn. "Teach me Master." ... "Are you ready to learn?" ... "Teach me how to learn." ... "Are you

ready to let me teach you how to learn?” What he is saying here (and this is exactly what is happening) is that we are tuning the instrument. The instrument is being tuned upward so that you'll be ready to take everything in. You'll be ready to learn how to learn. Many of you will go far beyond being ready.

It is my feeling -- and this has been strengthened after 35 years of study, travel, practice and so forth -- that we're working with a great secret here in T'ai Chi Chih. Shah is saying that this is biological and has to do with the physical organism. As the *chi* changes, vibrations change and, of course with it, lives change. So let me ask you this, “Do most of you get the import of what he is saying?” It really bowls you over.

Questioner: I've noticed that since I've started TCC my body is very good at discerning what it likes. I'm more sensitive to certain foods and I've wondered if I was growing. I guess I'm looking for balance. Is there anything you could say about diet to go along with practice? Sometimes I wonder if it matters. I'm just curious about your response to diet and what we eat.

Justin: To diet? That would take us into a long, long discussion. In India they talk about a *satvic* diet. Many of their conclusions I don't agree with. Last night I was reading Swami Ram Dass (the real Ram Dass, the original Ram Dass, he one who died). And he talks about going on fasts where he is drinking only milk. First he starts with fruit and milk, then only milk, and then he tries only water. Fruit and milk are not a very good combination. I know many who tried to do that, and as the body is refined -- as the *chi* is refined -- the desire for food will change.

When one (and I hope this won't be resented by a friend of mine here) is so overpowered by taste or sex or something sensual, that is being like an animal. That is a carry over from the animal. I think that is very obvious. As TCC or meditation practices further, the body tends to purify. And those appetites disappear.

Eating is important so that you stay alive and healthy. And the middle path, *madhyamika*, is a very good one, but where there are strong animal appetites, it is very hard for those to be overcome. They may continue through many lives. Gradually, as the *chi* is purified (this bioenergy that he is talking about), those appetites will drop away. All wisdom, just as all energy, is within you and that will guide you. I think TCC actually is a guide to each one of us in our lives.

Questioner: I'd like to share something about TCC as a guide. Recently one of my students shared that she is at a crossroads in her life, not knowing which way to turn. One day while she was practicing, her father came home and she asked him, “Which way

should I go?" And she received the wonderful reply, "Your answers are on the path you choose."

Justin: We are all getting answers every minute and we all have the way pointed to us in every experience. Practically everything that has happened in my adult life has been something that just came along and pointed out the way. But the point I want to make here is difficult. I would go much deeper into this if you were not a captive audience. Some would rather be sleeping, some would rather be chatting with others...

Questioner: I don't think so. I think you have a willing audience.

Justin: At the end of February and in early March, I went to Albuquerque and gave ten hours of lectures on Oriental Philosophy, on things that are not available in this country. And Carmen [Brocklehurst], at her own expense and effort, videotaped them. At the Seijaku course in Canada I was amazed that, after a long day, people would listen to a tape for two hours and then they wanted to listen to another two hours. Maybe later Carmen will tell you a little bit about that -- because we're trying to determine now what to do with those tapes. [*Editor's Note:* They were published as Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion by Good Karma Publishing in 2006.] Obviously, they are not for casual listeners or viewers. But for those who are really interested, it's like being in a candy factory because so much is made available in ten hours that really should take several hundred hours.

Gopi Krishna says, "Every human being, every animal, and every plant is the handiwork of an all pervading, tireless, intelligent energy." It's very interesting. He's not getting into the matter of God or religious doctrine or anything. He says, "All pervading, tireless, intelligent energy." And during this experience that Gopi Krishna had (which, in my memory, is unique in India), he had the feeling that this energy rushing through him, which he could see (he tells about the colors he sees), was all-intelligent and knew exactly what it had to do.

[interruption in recording]

...would set off a million years of evolution that was going to take place in a few years. And it almost drove him to insanity and almost caused a complete physical breakdown. It wasn't until much later that he was able to adjust to it. This happens when you have a very strong practice, such as Zen practice. At first so much happens that you're not able to handle it. This happened to the young fellow who came down from the edge of the Arctic Circle for a Seijaku course. He was not prepared (although he's a very fine person) to handle all this and he was not a TCC teacher. TCC

teachers have been accustomed gradually to this inrush of energy. And he left early. Later he wrote to me: "Too fast. Much too fast." It was like putting 1000 watts into a 60-watt bulb. He was wound up and ready to explode. I remember when Suzanne Webster wrote to me after a Seijaku course. She said she had driven back to San Diego with Pam Towne but she didn't really need the car.

"There is a definite evolutionary target prescribed for human beings." Gopi Krishna is saying this is all not happening by accident. If you think about it, it isn't an accident that each one of you is a TCC teacher and you are here. This is the very early, pioneer stage of TCC. Later, when there are tens of thousands of teachers and it has spread throughout the world (as it's doing quite rapidly now)... John has written to Corinn about translating it into German in Switzerland and Lisa has translated the names of the movements into French and is interested in going on from there. Mané translated part of it in Santiago, Chile, into Spanish.

Questioner: You mentioned that there are no accidents for those who are teaching TCC. Are there any accidents?

Justin: I would doubt it, wouldn't you? I would doubt it because when you look back through your life, the things that you're not supposed to do, you were not meant to do, something happened to halt them. The phone didn't answer when you called. Or you got on the wrong road. Something happened. You are led. And so Krishna says, "All this is the handiwork of an all pervading tireless, intelligent energy."

Now I'll share a little bit about a very deep experience I had recently. I don't like to go into spiritual experiences. I have been having quite a few of them recently and have the expectation on the 19th day of August that I will have one that will be very important. In one experience it was made very apparent. These were the exact words that were used: "You don't have to do anything. She will take you exactly to where you are supposed to be." And then there was a journey in a vehicle, and when we got there, there were four people and a vial of something. Mind you, "She will take you where you are meant to be."

I work for *Shakti* in meditation. *Shakti* is female. *Shakti* and *chi* are also *kundalini*, of course. And they kept urging me to drink from this bottle and I was very loath to do it. Finally I did. And these words were said, "You will be teaching the rest of your life." Actually it said, "You will be teaching children the rest of your life." And I realized that puzzled me -- children. I'm sure it meant students. "You will be teaching students the rest of your life." It had a very decisive effect on my life because I retired with the idea that I would be going to the desert and spending my days in

meditation, TCC, Seijaku -- away from people. And now I see that that isn't going to happen. ... I am convinced that we are doing the most valuable thing we can do.

“All these extraordinary manifestations of consciousness, for which science has as yet no explanation, depend mainly upon the transformation of *prana* or bioenergy. The whole gamut of evolution has occurred mainly through changes in the spectrum of bioenergy.”

I've had certain experiences after meditation and so forth in which I've come to know Gopi Krishna is right. I realize that it is exactly what he says, and I'm sure some of you have been aware of it. ... Remember, that which aids evolution is the good. And everything he says in there is good. Now if it goes contrary to some of your desires, your appetites and so forth, then your appetites are hindering evolution and therefore, hindering you -- and those who study through you. And you will not attract those who might study through you.

I'm just going to read one more quotation because I don't want to keep you up.

Gopi Krishna talks about readjustments in which the cerebral-spinal system plays a decisive part. You have all read about *kundalini* in Tantric practice -- going up through the channels -- the *ida*, *pingala*, and so forth and the *sushumna* goes up through the really to the *sahasrara* -- which is at the top of the head where there is the wedding of *Shakti* and *Shiva*. This is told in the religious terms of Tantra. But Krishna is saying that this spinal system plays the decisive part. The Chinese understand this. Many in China concentrate not on the *tan tien* but on the tailbone for that very reason. There won't be time in this Conference to teach you the way to mentally take the *chi* through the through the various channels -- the meridian channels of the body -- it can be done.

Krishna says, “Human consciousness can win to a state of transcendence through the working of certain physiological processes.” Now what does he mean by transcendence? He means many things, of course. Transcendence of the senses is one. When this happens you will become aware that all states are right here -- now. The past is right here now. The future is right here now -- other worlds, other creatures. Science fiction always has them on some remote planet in the distance. They are remote only because of our size. All these planes are here right now. And as consciousness is raised, they will become apparent to you. Sometimes for a very short time, sometimes for more. You may even find that you become aware of the future. And if you are

without prejudice and open to it, your way may be guided in that manner.

Now think about this. I met Jim Burns through accident. I had just arrived in Albuquerque. I didn't know people but I started to teach T'ai Chi Ch'uan and I got a call from Dr. Archie Bahm, a very well known teacher in the philosophy department at the University of New Mexico. He had laryngitis and asked if I would be willing to come and talk to his class that night. I did and I demonstrated T'ai Chi Ch'uan. The next day this nice young fellow came to see me, Jim Burns. He'd been a finalist in a national karate tournament. Jim became very close to me. We began with a Zen meditation group that met four times a week. He rented a place where we met. Jim studied T'ai Chi Ch'uan with me and later he was the first one to study T'ai Chi Chih. He came with me to Los Angeles to give the first teacher training class. But if this professor hadn't gotten laryngitis, I wouldn't have met Jim Burns. If I hadn't meet Jim Burns, then Steve Ridley the [former] head of T'ai Chi Chih wouldn't be here tonight. ... There are some very capable people here. And I think that what I've tried to show you here is the deeper meaning of what you are doing. You are not expected to talk to your students about this, but if they practice faithfully, they are going to become curious, and they are going to come to you and ask.

There will be other students who will be wildly enthusiastic in the first couple of weeks, and you'll bump into them six months later and they won't be doing T'ai Chi Chih. "I thought you were getting so much out of it." ... "Yeah, I was. But one night there was a good television program on and..." There is nothing you can do. You can't argue with it. That is the level of evolution of that person at that moment. If I had my way we would all be here or at the eventual T'ai Chi Chih World Center that Carmen [Brocklehurst] is so ably trying to set up -- so that those who want it would stay on and we would have days filled with T'ai Chi Chih, Seijaku, Toning, movement, and meditation. And if we did that, if we had two hours of meditation a day along with the other disciplines, so many things would develop from that. And for many of us it would be the most important time of our lives.

It's my hope that one day that will happen. And it's my hope that one day, teachers will want me to give a little more to them than I have given to them. I am doubtful about that -- whether teachers do want me to give more to them. And this is why I am putting it in the words of Gopi Krishna and commenting on it. Put very bluntly, which may scare you: you are agents, you are Divine Agents of evolution. You are causing man to evolve -- perhaps past

the point where he can hurt himself, shoot himself, blow himself up, show cruelty to animals, and do all the other things that are done. That puts it in an entirely different light, doesn't it?

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