

Dancing with Geese, and Qigong with Tarka... Part 2 of Reiki III at Brighthaven

(For those who missed Part 1: *Dancing with Horses, Meditating with Cats, see newsletter archive link.* All photos courtesy of Brighthaven.)



Brighthaven Healing Arts Center for Animals, located in Sebastopol, CA, has a wide variety of animals living there. Everything from chickens and geese, cats, dogs, horses, and even a donkey and a goat. This is an ideal setting for holding Reiki classes, because students have the opportunity to practice on many different types of animals. Kathleen Prasad, owner of **Animal Reiki Source**, teams up with Gail and Richard Pope, founders of Brighthaven, to create a win-win situation for all concerned: animals receive even more love, attention and healing Reiki; Kathleen has an ideal and beautiful setting in which to teach, the students can practice Reiki, and Kathleen donates 50% of the tuition to Brighthaven.



Chanting with Geese

Part of Kathleen's unique approach to Reiki includes chanting. Students and practitioners of Reiki know about the symbols and what they are called; however, in this particular school of Reiki, the name of the symbol is also used as a mantra. As within other systems, chanting is done to balance, harmonize and uplift our energetic vibration. When chanting the names of the Reiki symbols, it helps us to better align with the qualities associated with the symbols.

I was asked to chant sitting next to the large enclosure where the chickens, ducks and gander were actively moving about. I have to interject here that I am a quiet introvert. I don't mind chanting as part of a group of people, but alone and close to a gander (Otis) who seemed to have plenty on his mind and who might not appreciate my vocalizing.. well, it felt awkward at first. I started chanting, and he approached the fence and "honked." At first, he seemed

perplexed and somewhat agitated. Just what the heck was this odd human doing? So, I decided to sink into meditation and share Reiki while chanting. I also experimented with loudness and pitch, and found he much preferred medium volume at a slightly higher pitch. After a few minutes, he became still and just stood in front of me, watching quietly. This continued for some minutes.

Tarka: the Qigong Kitty



I arrived 30 minutes early on the third morning of class, so decided to go the back garden area to do some qigong (which helps my back tolerate a lot of sitting). I had completed the first exercise when Tarka, a lovely old orange tabby, came racing across the yard and weaved around my feet. At first, I thought that perhaps he remembered me from the prior day. I had shared Reiki with Sam (another elderly feline gentleman), and Tarka had been nearby, along with a couple of other cats. So I petted him, sat in a nearby chair, and began Reiki, thinking that's what he wanted. He stopped, did the equivalent of a kitty shrug, and walked off. So I stood up and resumed my qigong. Again, Tarka raced across the grass and weaved around my feet. So I thought, "Hmm. He seems to like energy with movement, rather than the stillness of Reiki."

So I continued to do qigong and he stayed engaged, probably for 10 minutes, when Kathleen and the other student arrived through the gate. She thought it was very interesting that he was enjoying the qigong. I said goodbye to Tarka, and headed inside. To everyone's surprise, Tarka followed us into the living room (past numerous other cats and dogs), greeted Gail and then jumped up on Kathleen's lap. As she started class, she opened up Reiki for him. He was very Buddha-like, curled up and still on her lap, just soaking it up, probably for a good 20-30 minutes. Gail said this was unusual behavior for him, as he hasn't engaged with Reiki before, and doesn't often come into that part of the house. Kathleen said she thought something about the qigong "opened him up to receiving Reiki." That was inspiring and fun to witness.





As I continue to work with Reiki, qigong and tai chi, I'm increasingly convinced that chi or subtle energy is a sort of "language" that animals understand and to which they respond. Reiki helps us meet them there.

We humans have become so identified with our thoughts and mental processes, and have become so distracted (like it's our main goal in life), that we may feel disconnected from this Universal Life Force or Spiritual Energy. Practicing Reiki helps us reconnect to this source energy, to discover a larger sense of true self. It is at the same time expansive and grounding, and shows us the way to a door that opens to a larger reality and essential life energy which supports compassionate being and communication at a subtle level. (Photo left: Sam)

What's Next: I will be offering my first Shoden / Animal Reiki I class soon, as I'm now in the process of inquiring about possible places locally for "field trips" to give students the opportunity to work with a variety of animals. And although this training is centered on animal Reiki, there will also be a lot of instruction on how to offer Reiki to the people in your life. We will practice Reiki with each other before we work with animals, so you'll know what it feels like, and also offer it, with group feedback. I will announce the day/time in my next blog and on my website AcuReikiHealingArts.com.