

African Reflections through the Lens of Jin Shin Jyutsu

By Adele Leas

I could not have known by the looks of the email in my box what kind of adventure it held for me. Every few days I get emails from animal lovers with questions about sore backs or itchy skin or separation anxiety. This one was titled “Zoë is sick” with a brief explanation about Zoë not drinking or urinating normally. There were several unanswered questions in my mind...like what species was Zoë and did her person know JSJ? But because of the Universal Energy that is at the center of this Art, I simply wrote back a very general description of the Self-Help Bladder flow, using body locations instead of Safety Energy Lock numbers in case her “mom,” Melanie, did not know the Art. A joyful note arrived the next day; subject...“Zoë is better!” The note said that the kitty had really enjoyed the session, rested deeply and awoke happier and more animated. A picture of a small, sweet, elderly cat was attached.

Melanie had indeed taken several JSJ classes and had a good understanding of the Art but simply felt unsure about working with other species. We corresponded several more times and Zoë enjoyed all the attention. One of Mel’s messages was sent from her husband’s email and had his website address on the bottom www.space4elephants.org. I had to go look. It was then I found out I had been corresponding with a student from South Africa.

The website posted their mission statement:

“Space For Elephants Foundation as a national organization endeavors to create more space through a network of corridors throughout the country to give back to the elephants their SPACE and to create a sound economic base to the people living along these corridors. Elephants need to be included in the economic equation to become an asset to the people of Africa. We will incorporate the people and wildlife in a vast network of conservation and economic partnership, protecting our natural and cultural heritage for our future.”

I wrote back immediately saying how in awe of elephants I have always been. The response came back, “Come visit.” Due to an entire series of miracles and the help of many wonderful people, my partner, Blaine, and I departed for a 21-day trip to the northeast province of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal, in mid-October 2010. The tour books called this “the most African of all parts of South Africa.”

Melanie’s husband, Digs Pascoe, is one of the world’s foremost experts on elephants and rhinos. They had offered to take us with them on his monthly rounds of the various reserves and the Thanda Elephant Research Center. Since Blaine is a gifted massage therapist of 33 years, we offered massages and sessions in trade. The lessons of this trip were very different from those I usually experience when I travel teaching JSJ and how to share it with domesticated animals. While the wild lands and animals surrounding us were much more exotic than I am used to, some of the deepest realizations were about my Self.

In order to view animals in the wild, one must be patient and silent. Over time I became aware that the animals seemed to appear and come closer when the energy we were radiating was that of deep, connected peace. I have a new understanding of Safety Energy Lock 4 and one’s ability to Assume the Pace of Nature. We arrived just at the end of the spring monsoons, and the bush was so lush that parts looked more like Ireland than the pictures I had always seen of South Africa. I had the rare opportunity to observe a lone elephant doing what appeared to be a solo ballet at the watering hole, and I was filled with the awareness of breathing with and as part of the whole forest as I watched.

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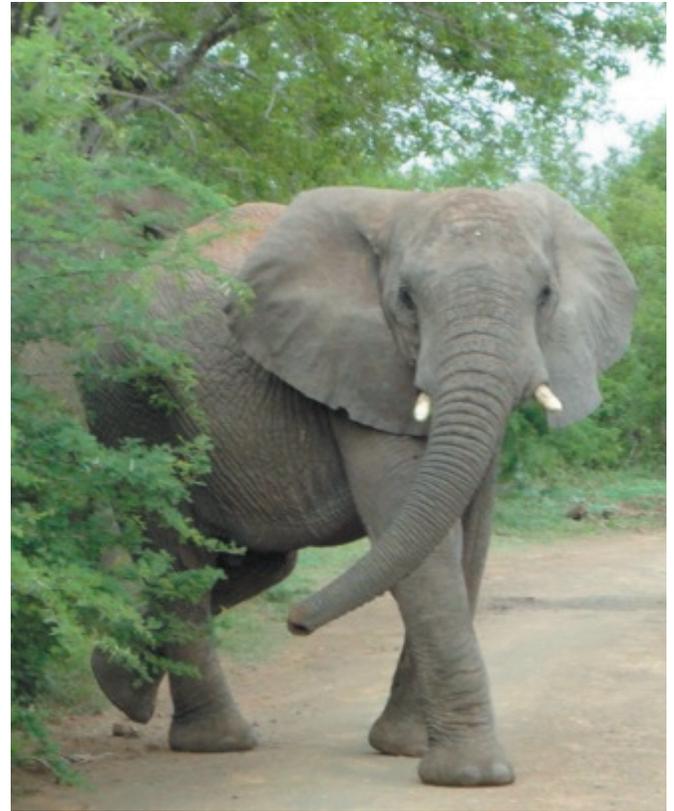
Blaine and I also had the life changing opportunity to share “hands-on time” with a semi-habituated 5 ton bull elephant, Rambo. We also got to feed his mate, Rachel, with their 9-month-old son, Jabulani (meaning “Happiness” in Zulu) close by. Rachel and Rambo were infants when the rest of their herd was culled as a form of population control. Somehow the babes escaped and, in their confusion, turned to their family’s killers for help. These hunters did not have the hearts to kill them and so they matured into full-grown adults in the wild but without a real herd. They choose to come visit people each day for a brief while and act as wonderful teachers and ambassadors, displaying their great intelligence, sensitivity, sense of humor and compassion.

Blaine and I both loved our time with the elephants, but sensed different things. Here again was a wonderful lesson.... What we perceive of a situation is based largely on our past experiences and frames of reference. We each took away different impressions of this opportunity. The feel of Rambo’s musculature overawed Blaine, and I was absolutely rocked by the feel of his pulses throbbing not only in my hands but through my entire body and down my legs into the earth. Universal Life Force indeed! And yet, if something is not done soon to slow the human population growth and the paving and development of lands, it is predicted that these walking miracles will become extinct within the next hundred years.

We had the magnificent opportunity to observe wildebeests, giraffes, zebras, warthogs (who move very much like my old dog, Scooter); white and very rare black rhinos, elephants and a lion ... all in their natural habitat. Surely we are meant to be a part of the picture, finding our place among this majesty. Being awakened at sunrise by thousands of birds filled my heart with joy and gratitude, and I could not help noticing how different our “modern man’s lifestyle” rhythms are. Since these were all wild animals, I did not share actual hands-on sessions with them. Instead I rode in the land rover and held fingers. I also did lots of 25s, “lazy man’s exercise,” as one does not get to walk where the lions are in charge.

I also had the opportunity to share sessions with a number of Thonga and Zulu people in the villages where we stayed

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ABOVE: Rambo

BELOW: Adele with Rambo

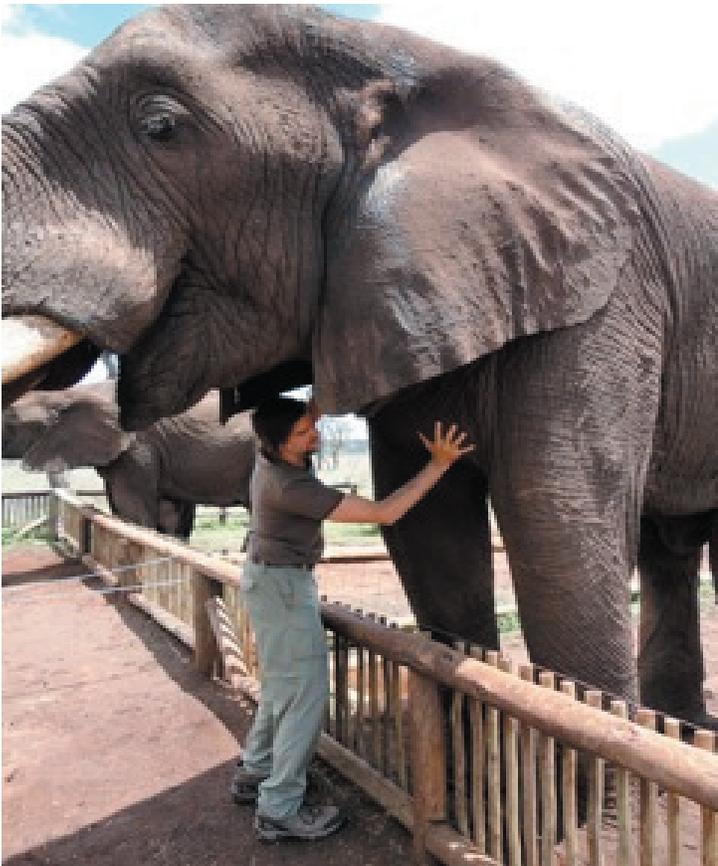


and visited. I was thrilled that there seemed to be an innate understanding and acceptance of the work whenever I offered it, even though none of these folks had ever actually heard of Jin Shin Jyutsu before. Doesn't Mary tell us it is "our Spiritual inheritance?" It was very clear to me that not having formally studied did not keep these people from a profound understanding of the energy and inter-connectedness of life. It was truly unique to share outside sessions at dawn with the sounds of the birds and the hippos moving down to the waters edge from their beds along the banks. There is a real lack of good medical care available to many indigenous peoples in KwaZulu-Natal, and AIDS is at an epidemic level. I am pleased to say I have a few new friends who are practicing Main Central and holding fingers every day now.

The whole experience was a chance to live in FUN (Fulfillment, Understanding, No-thing), and I see every day differently now because of insights gained from the trip. It is our hope to return next year, offering some JSJ self-help classes, and to assist Digs to pen a book sharing the lessons that seven decades in the bush have taught him which he believes could not only guide modern man but also help maintain "A Space for Elephants."



ABOVE: I mostly ended up working with the zulu and thonga villagers where we stayed. This picture is my new improved treatment room! I ended up working every day at sunrise...when we could see the hippos coming down to the water!



LEFT AND BELOW: Blaine with Rambo.

