



The Vital Force

Journal of the Tai Chi Chih® Community

"Tai Chi Chih is a Service to Humanity. It is a Form of Love." —Justin Stone, Originator

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Contributors

Jan Arrott remembers literally skipping down the street to her first Tai Chi Chih class that Carmen Brocklehurst was teaching at a nearby community center a few blocks from her house. Jan was newly retired at 58 years old, and felt like celebrating with something new. It took her a long time to feel the flow of the chi, several years actually. You see, Jan says she was very reserved and physically rigid. But she is stubborn and she persisted. It was during Carmen's teacher prep class that she first felt a glimmer of the chi. "I cannot tell you how much softer I am, now, in everything I do, with still a ways to go," says Jan. "At 71, I feel the presence of chi moving within me even when I am not practicing and I am grateful."

Linda Braga was accredited in 1985 by Justin Stone and has been teaching TCC ever since. She offers classes through the San Leandro Adult School, and presents workshops and retreats in a variety of locations. She recalls that she taught her first TCC class in her pajamas at an acupuncture retreat when some people banged on her door at 6 a.m. and said, "Is there someone in there that knows Tai Chi? Get up! We want to learn!" She recently retired from a successful career teaching Special Educational students (grades K to 5) for 39 years. She is passionate about teaching TCC at the highest level, and has shared her knowledge about Best Practices and Partner Practice techniques at the TCC Conference in Canada in August 2003.

James Braswell is a student of Lisa Thorburn. He lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Carmen Brocklehurst has been an accredited Tai Chi Chih instructor since 1980 and an accredited Seijaku instructor since 1986. She lives in New Mexico and was one of the founding board members of the Tai Chi Chih Association in Albuquerque, NM. Carmen's goal is to help as many

people as possible learn Tai Chi Chih, which she believes has many levels, beginning with physical ones like quieting the mind and spirit. She believes that with time and sincere practice, practitioners open up paths to great spiritual truths.

Rebecca Busching lives in the middle of a juniper and pinion forest with glorious views north to Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico. The pinions are dying and the juniper is dumping pollen — ahoy city life?

Debbie Cole was accredited in October 2000 and lives in Severn, MD. She has been active in the greater Tai Chi Chih community ever since, attending conferences, workshops and retreats all over the US and now Canada. As a child, Debbie dreamed of being an astronaut. As an adult, she found great adventure while scuba diving and flying a small airplane. These days the adventure she seeks is within and she finds it can be just as fascinating. Tai Chi Chih practice reminds her of a first solo flight. You can enjoy the view, revel in your freedom and realize you hold your future in your own two hands. As a home-schooling mom to two young boys, Debbie continues her exploration of things around her while enjoying her children and exploring her own inner landscape.

Sr. Antonia Cooper is Tai Chi Chih's Guide. She is a spiritual director and an artist.

Holly Davis was accredited as a Tai Chi Chih instructor in 1995 in Chicago. After selling her business as a distributor of interior finishing products to the contract interior design business, she moved to sunny southern California in 2000. Believing totally in the healing modality of TCC, she courted Eisenhower Hospital with success. Now teaching 11 classes in the Coachella Valley (Palm Springs) she also pursues a career in real estate. Yes, this woman knows about the balance of yin and yang.

Sher Dano, with Pam Towne as her teacher and mentor, has been an accredited Tai Chi Chih Joy thru Movement and Seijaku teacher for almost seven years. Having to take an early disability retirement from being an elementary school librarian, Sher says she has had to pace herself with only seven to eight classes per week, which consist mainly of seniors. Tai Chi Chih presented itself to Sher when she was looking for tools to put in her management kit to help her deal with the chronic pain of Systemic Lupus, Fibromyalgia, and a really messed up spine! Of course, she gained so much more and endeavors to share it with others. Along with her Tai Chi Chih "sister" Deanne Hodgson, Sher is currently involved with a National Council on Aging (NCOA) pilot project, a collaboration with three other organizations to promote interest, availability, and funding for more research of Tai Chi and Qigong for seniors. (Funny how we have to re-search something that has been successful for thousands of years, Sher notes.)

Margery Erickson started looking for balance in her life in her mid-20s, long before she knew of Tai Chi Chih. She attended spiritual retreats, meditated, became a vegetarian, etc. She also visited an astrologer. During her visit she was told her chart was similar to a table with only three legs. The house she was weak in was Taurus. She thought about this and then realized that the sun sign of the man she was dating was Taurus. They have now been married almost 20 years. According to Chris, Margery has developed an inner stillness, a quiet spiritual centering and better personal balance after having become a Tai Chi Chih instructor.

Marjorie Fremont has been practicing the Tai Chi Chih form since February 2004. As an artist, she likes to think

outside the box. She always likes to try new things and thought this would be a good thing to do with her husband. They live in the San Francisco bay area and are students of Lisa Thorburn.

Kathy Grassel enjoys vegetarian cooking and rattling her hand-held Tibetan Damaru drum at anti-war rallies. Since the Damaru drum is also carried by the Hindu Lord Shiva, and all rhythms of manifestation are said to have emanated from this instrument, Kathy doesn't think these pastimes are related to her getting searched at airports.

Rev. Deanne Marie Hodgson, RN was baptized in the Dutch Reformed Church, confirmed in the Episcopalian Church, married in the Catholic Church and then joined the Presbyterian Church (USA) where she was ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament. She then married David Hodgson, also a Presbyterian Minister. Between them, they have five wonderful children and two grandchildren. As Associate Pastor at Faith Presbyterian Church, a congregation of 1,000 retired persons in Sun City, AZ, Deanne is responsible for the Health Care, Fellowship and Spiritual Life Ministries. Each Monday 60 to 100 people attend her Tai Chi Chih classes. Rev. Hodgson has taught TCC at churches and religious gatherings across the nation, at hospitals, colleges and athletic clubs. Prior to moving to Arizona 13 years ago, she developed a Pastoral Care Department and served as Interfaith Chaplain at a 270-bed hospital. The chapel that she designed at Chilton Memorial Hospital in New Jersey was later used by St. Antonia to teach TCC. She has led workshops, seminars and retreats on life issues: coping with illness, loss and bereavement, making effective visits to hospitals and nursing homes, creative aging: "49 Ways to Pray Your Way Through the Day," and Standing on Holy Ground, a Journey of Spiritual Re-

newal. She founded the Oakland Area Human Relations Council in response to housing discrimination and inner city poverty and two self-help groups for widowed persons. Discovering the beautiful and extraordinary in everyday things through the lens of her camera is her joy and avocation. Email Deanne at dnh3@att.net.

Carol Houtkooper teaches T'ai Chi Chih in a small town in the state of South Dakota and is the only teacher in the state. She has been teaching since 1998 and presently teaches classes weekly at The Body, Mind, Spirit Center in Yankton. Her home is on the beautiful Missouri River where she frequently feels she is living in a National Geographic Special with Bald Eagles, Canadian Geese, ducks, deer and numerous birds and other wildlife in her backyard.

Michael Isaacs has had two life work careers. First as a lawyer. Second as a psychoanalyst. Presently he is a psychotherapist, who, when appropriate, offers a spiritual dimension to the solution of problems. For many years, he has practiced, studied, and taught yoga, deep breathing, meditation, guided imagery, holistic health, and spirituality to individuals and groups. He gives workshops on these subjects to anyone who will listen. Among his life heroes have been Micky Mouse, Joe DiMaggio, Cat Stevens, Joan Borysenko, Sigmund Freud, Joseph of the Old Testament, Jesus of the New Testament, Vivekenanda, and mystic Joel S. Goldsmith. As of late, new heroes have appeared on the scene: metapsychiatrist Thomas Hora, Chinese Dr. Nan Lu (Wu Ming qigong), and most importantly, Justin Stone. Michael, together with wife Faith of 38 years, plans to move from New Jersey to California this summer to live near daughter Elana, a graduate student in expressive arts, daughter Nora, senior editor of *Yoga Journal*, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and warm weather. Contact Michael S. Isaacs. Accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher, by e-mail at MIFA32@aol.com, and website www.MICHAELISAACS.com

Nancy Lecraw was accredited in September 2003 in Chicago. Prior to beginning her T'ai Chi Chih practice, she was a counselor at a community college, and has also been a social worker and a recreation specialist.

Athene Mantle's life-long love affair with physical movement and nature began at birth. She was born into a family whose gatherings centered on athletic activities and the out of doors. Already at the age of one year, she was hiking through the splendor of Yosemite perched in her dad's own prototype of the modern-day baby back pack. At the age of three weeks she was on the beach of Capitola, California where she spent her childhood summers either in the water or watching the water. Saturday nights the family rolled back the rug and danced in front of the Lawrence Welk Show. She explored her love for dance through a 14-year study of formal ballet, then on to Modern Dance, and now she goes ballroom dancing with her 86-year-old mother. Now gray-haired, Athene has given up mountain biking and the bone-bruising martial arts. However, she can still be seen floating in and out with the ocean waves and drifting in the river currents as if to blend with the rhythms of mother earth's waters. Watching the pair of hawks nesting behind her home is her great joy. And she is grateful.

Carolyn Perkins has been teaching T'ai Chi Chih in New York City since 1996. She is also a licensed massage therapist and a Certified Ingham reflexologist. She currently teaches T'ai Chi Chih at the United Nations, 92nd St. Y, Hospital for Special Surgery, Integrative Care Center, National Council of Jewish Women, the Harmonie Club and the Harvard Club.

Ann Rutherford picked berries for summer jobs as a teen, marched with Cesar Chavez in college, rioted against the Vietnam War in Berkeley and got tear-gassed. None of that is Real. God is no longer on her side, Ann muses. Now, it's "the mind is moving." What delusions we all weave when we grasp at permanence.

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Lisa Thorburn received her T'ai Chi Chih accreditation in September 2002 and teaches at Kaiser Permanente in Fremont, CA. She grew up in Michigan, but now calls the San Francisco Bay area "home." In addition to teaching the TCC form, she co-owns an engineering firm and is the web mistress for both the International TCC web site (www.taichichih.org) and the Northern California TCC web site (taichichih-norcal.org).

Judy Tretheway's 1996 teacher accreditation in San Diego (Steve Ridley's last class) was the calm eye in the middle of a tornado-like year of trauma and chaos. And out of that storm, and supported by the flow of chi generated by the practice, she has shifted into an entirely new calling. Judy has volunteered for 3.5 years (perhaps 200+ weekly trips inside) as the facilitator and teacher for the Folsom Prison program. She has become a Hospice Chaplain and Spiritual Director and taught Qigong classes for Kaiser in the Sacramento area. Fundamental to all her work is the understanding of the principles of life force energy that one finds when connected to and moving from one's divine core engaged without resistance to all that surrounds us.

Robin Spencer is an accredited TCC teacher in Phoenix, AZ.

Justin Stone leads a weekly teacher T'ai Chi Chih practice every Tuesday morning at the TCC Center. He also leads a group in meditation three nights a week. He lives in a house in Albuquerque's northeast heights that his Indian friend Sri Dadubhai describes as a "holy ashram."

Pam Towne is a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, Teacher Trainer since 2002, and most recently, Seijaku Trainer.

Nancy Werner-Azarski is a nurse dividing her time between Minneapolis and Finlayson, MN. She has been practicing TCC since 1996 and became a teacher in 1998.

News from the Guide

Pam Towne to be Seijaku Trainer

by Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF

It is with great joy that I wish to announce the appointment of Pam Towne as Seijaku Trainer for the TCC Community. As you read her interview, you will see that she is highly qualified to offer Seijaku Trainings and Retreats.

I have had the pleasure of working with Pam since November and find her to be open, receptive and cooperative in her trainer/leadership role in the TCC community. This is truly a place of service to teachers and students as we strive to offer trainings, workshops and retreats to help deepen the awareness of the TCC form in keeping with the guiding principles outlined by Justin. As each teacher endeavors to move deeper into her/his personal practice, teach TCC classes and prepare students for teacher accreditation, it is vital that our standards remain clear and pure.

Teachers interested in sponsoring a Seijaku training are encouraged to contact Pam directly to discuss the requirements, set up the date, place,

etc., which would then appear in the Calendar of Events.

I am also very encouraged to see area teachers throughout and beyond the United States sponsor local events to strengthen and support one another in an effort to help refine the movements (as we all know how easily bad habits can slip into one's form). Pam and Sandy offer a variety of programs to help teachers and students develop a deeper awareness through programs such as a Teacher Renewal, an Intensive, a Retreat or Workshop that will fit the local teachers' needs.

I encourage you to attend this year's Annual International T'ai Chi Chih Conference in St. Louis, MO. I am looking forward to meeting you there as we together envision the future of T'ai Chi Chih.

Long-range plans are well underway by area teachers in Albuquerque, NM who will host the Conference in 2005. In 2006 the Conference will be hosted by teachers in Minneapolis, MN.

Note from the Web Mistress

Just wanted to let you know that Sr. Antonia's bio is now posted to the web site with an active link :-)
Just click on her name at the bottom of the main page (www.taichichih.org) and the link will take you to her page. — Lisa Thorburn

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19th Annual T'ai Chi Chih® Teachers Conference St. Louis, Missouri 2004

"Gateway to the chi - Flowing from the center"

Community ... What do we think of when we hear the word "community"? For us, the T'ai Chi Chih® Community means unity, support, openness, inner strength to be shared, respect, and flowing from the center with purpose, towards a worthy goal.

We, the St. Louis area community of teachers, invite you to attend the **2004 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers Conference!** This year also marks **30 years of T'ai Chi Chih® Joy Thru Movement** originated by Justin Stone. We encourage you to come to renew your own practice, teaching skills, and sense of community. Through T'ai Chi Chih practice, we are better able to flow from our center, setting ego and judgments aside. Together, we can bring out the best in each other and feel the strength of our community. We come with respect and caring, especially for those who play crucial teaching and supportive roles. Let us look within, move from our center and allow the chi to flow freely from the "path of least resistance." Come feel the unity of our community as we practice and learn together, sharing the joy of T'ai Chi Chih® movement.

The theme for the **19th Annual TCC International Teachers Conference in St. Louis, 2004**, is *"Gateway to the Chi - Flowing from the Center"* ... As we welcome you from all directions to the center of the U.S., let us all flow from the center. Let us flow with love, peace, harmony, openness. Let us flow with respect by honoring the spiritual place within us all. *Let us flow as One.*

We look forward to seeing you in St. Louis!

—The St. Louis TCC Conference Community

Registration now thru May 1, 2004 is \$350, after May 1 - July 15 is \$375

Mail registration check and form to Deedie Cote/Conference, 6615 Arsenal St., St. Louis, MO 63139.
Phone: 314-645-6978.

Sheraton Westport Hotel and Conference Center 800-833-3533 or 314-434-5101 direct

www.sheratonwestporthotel.com

Free shuttle from the Lambert-St. Louis International Airport (STL) 314-426-8000

St. Louis Visitor Center and Info. 800-916-0092

St. Louis Visitors Guide www.explorestlouis.com

St. Louis 2004 Info. www.celebrate2004.org

If staying in St. Louis before or after conference, a special rate of \$79 per night per room is available at Sheraton Westport if reserved in advance by Gale. Other conference site and meal questions can also be directed to galeportman@sbcglobal.net or 636-225-7127.





T'ai Chi Chih® International Teachers Conference
GATEWAY TO THE CHI ~ FLOWING FROM THE CENTER
St. Louis 2004, July 15-July 18

Meet us in St. Louis to celebrate 30 years of T'ai Chi Chih® Community at the 19th International T'ai Chi Chih® Teachers Conference held at the Sheraton Westport Hotel and Conference Center. The conference begins with registration at 3:00 pm on Thursday, July 15, and concludes at noon Sunday, July 18.

	Double Occupancy		Single Occupancy
	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Residents</u>	<u>Commuters</u>
Early registration and payment by Dec. 30, 2003	\$325	\$460	\$225
Registration and payment by May 1, 2004	\$350	\$490	\$250
After May 1 st to July 15, 2004	\$375	\$515	\$275
Out of USA Teachers	\$325	\$460	\$225

Residents: Includes conference fee, free airport shuttle, all meals beginning Thursday dinner through Sunday breakfast, and overnight accommodations with swimming pools (indoor & outdoor), hot tub and exercise room.

Commuter: Includes only conference fee and all meals beginning Thursday dinner through Sunday breakfast.

Registration: Please complete the following information and mail this form with the appropriate check amount made payable to: Deedie Cote/Conference, 6615 Arsenal St., St. Louis, MO 63139. Phone: 314-645-6978. (e-mail questions to galeportman@sbcglobal.net). Room occupancy available after 3 pm Thursday registration.

Please keep above portion for your records and cut off bottom to send with your check.

Payment:

Conference cost: Double, Single or Commuter (circle choice & refer to rates above) \$ _____

Vendor Table fee (\$20 - see back for details) \$ _____

Voluntary Scholarship Donations (see back for details) \$ _____

Royal blue polo shirts, 100% cotton, embroidered with logo, additional \$25 \$ _____

Circle your size: Woman's: S, M, L, XL, XXL. Man's: M, L, XL, XXL

Total check amount (payable to Deedie Cote/Conference) \$ _____

Please note: The usual \$50 fee will apply for all cancellations

Attendee Information:

Name: _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____ Fax: () _____ email: _____

Double occupancy roommate preference:

If you have a special dietary requirement, please specify: _____



The Sheraton Westport Hotel is offering a reduced rate of \$79 per room for conference attendees who wish to extend their stay. The Sheraton has charming courtyards with restaurants and shops just outside its doors. Within the city and county limits are outstanding attractions like The Arch and Old Courthouse downtown; the Zoo, Science Center, Art Museum, Missouri History Museum, and Muny Outdoor Theater all in Forest Park—site of the 1904 World's Fair; the Missouri Botanical Gardens with world acclaimed Zen Japanese Gardens; the exceptionally creative and fun City Museum; Laumeier Sculpture Park; Grants Farm; Ted Drewes Frozen Custard; and more! The hotel's complimentary shuttle service travels to and from the airport every 30 minutes, 6:30 AM – 10:30 PM. The St. Louis Metrolink (available at the airport) is an easy 30-minute ride to downtown. Within an hour drive of St. Louis are other places to explore like Cahokia Mounds – a Native American sacred archeological site, Shaw Nature Reserve, enchanting caves, floatable rivers, wineries, and historic towns. St. Louis is also hosting *Lewis & Clark: The National Bicentennial Exhibition*. Here in the center of the U.S., the four directions really do come together with geology, flora, and fauna from North, East, South and West and three major rivers, the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Illinois converging near St. Louis to flow as one to the Gulf of Mexico. For more information, go to www.exploreslouis.com. If reserving extra nights or bringing family, please call or email Gale Portman at (636) 225-7127, galeportman@sbcglobal.net.

Come participate in the first *T'ai Chi Chih* T-shirt silent auction! We're accepting donated new or used (freshly laundered) *T'ai Chi Chih* T-Shirts. These donated T-Shirts will be on display for your bidding at the silent auction. All proceeds will go toward assisting potential *T'ai Chi Chih* teacher candidates who are not able to afford the full cost of Teacher's Training. This fund has yet to be established, but the St. Louis *T'ai Chi Chih* community aspires to have this auction become a way to honor Justin Stone's request to make Teacher's Training more affordable. The St. Louis Conference Committee is searching our inventory and closets and perhaps you will too! Please bring your donated T-Shirts, send them along to the Conference with a friend, or mail them to: Catherine Millman, 1828 Orchard Hill Drive, Chesterfield, MO 63017-5216.

Vendors:

Vendor tables will be available. There is a \$20 fee per vendor (nonprofit excluded). This money will be used to help newly accredited teachers to attend the conference at a slightly reduced rate. Tables will be available but bring your own table coverings and displays. Please note that **only** items relating directly to *T'ai Chi Chih* will be allowed. Contact: Kathy Vieth Albers, 314-781-5942, kayessence@earthlink.net.

Scholarships:

Our scholarship program is intended to assist our colleagues who are not able to afford the full cost of attending the conference. Priority will be given to those who have not been given a scholarship before. To apply for assistance, please fill out the following:

Please explain your need: _____

If you have received a scholarship in the past, please explain under what circumstances.

Talent Show:

If we have a talent show, what talent do you have to share? _____



A few pointers in T'ai Chi Chih

by Justin Stone, Originator



The two most important points in doing T'ai Chi Chih are: (1) How you move (not what you move but how you move, flowing from the center), and (2) coming to understand the movements.

Muscular movement is out. For instance, in the movement, "Carry the Ball to the Side," it is the wrists that do the important moving, not the arms. When the arms are swung wildly and the wrists are held stiff, that is arm exercise, and TCC is certainly not meant to be exercise as we know it.

In "Push Pull" and "Passing Clouds," it is important that the hand opposite the Yang leg (the one on which the weight rests and which is bent) be emphasized, and the moving hands be slightly cupped. Stiff, straight wrists will not enable the practiser to pull in the Chi.

At the Conference this year, I expect to have a video (taped by Brock Brocklehurst) that goes over the important features of quite a few movements. I hope you will be there to see it.

As to understanding the movements, both singly and as the whole of T'ai Chi Chih, this should come through experience. Practicing every day should eventually bring you the feeling that no-one is doing anything, that TCC is doing TCC. It should also enable you to feel the growth of the Chi that is circulating, and what it is that causes the flow. There is more to being a TCC teacher than simply showing students where to place their hands. Some teachers never outgrow the idea that TCC is a hand and shoulder exercise.

In "Working the Pulley," the turn is from the waist, not from the head and shoulders. The latter two turn hardly at all, so that when one hand is all the way forward, the head and shoulders are squared and face forward (of course, there must be some give as the waist turns sharply and the head and shoulders move a small bit, still facing forward), but it is the waist that is mostly active.

In my video last year, I showed how various movements were performed

the TCC way. I particularly emphasized the movement of the hips (swiveling) and the turning of the waist, and showed how these are performed in three sports—baseball, tennis, and golf. I hope that tape will be played again at this year's conference as many teachers inquired whether they could buy copies of the video. Carmen Brocklehurst at her own expense has tried to satisfy this request.

This article is in no way complete, just giving you the idea that to teach you must understand each movement and the purpose of TCC in general.

I am often asked whether my age (87) handicaps me in demonstrating these principles. The answer is "yes," but I do the best I can.

I hope you take this article seriously. At next year's conference in Albuquerque, I hope to be able to demonstrate in person, but I will be almost 89 at that time, so, who knows?

[Photos from the textbook T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement, by Justin E. Stone, the Originator. Photos by Kim Grant.]



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Feature Interview

Pam Towne takes T'ai Chi Chih on the road

This year is Pam Towne's 20th anniversary of being an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher. For the past two years, Pam, along with Sandy McAlister, has been a national teacher trainer. Her love of T'ai Chi Chih and her love of traveling combine to make this an ideal life for her. On the road a great deal these days, Pam was in Phoenix finishing up an intensive when she took a break to talk about where she came from and where she is going.



Pam: Something that most people don't know about me is that I was educated to be a teacher. I have a lifetime secondary teaching credential. When I got my credential, I did not want to teach in a regular classroom. I was scared to death

to stand up in front of 30 people. So I went into individualized study, and taught in an adult school. I set up a study lab where I could work one-on-one with my students. It was an individualized study lab where people could come back and work on classes for their high school diploma at their own pace.

VFJ: Are you still that way with TCC? Do you prefer one-on-one with that, too?

Pam: Now I enjoy working both with groups and one-on-one. In fact, the largest workshop I ever led had 200 people. That was in 1987.

VFJ: You've been doing this for a while, obviously.

Pam: I was accredited in November 1984 by Justin in Santa Barbara.

VFJ: He remembers you back then. He still talks about that.

Pam: Yeah, he does. I did TCC really badly. He used me as an example of how NOT to do Pulling Taffy. I was a mess. Well, I hadn't been doing TCC very long—just a few months—and in those days, anybody that basically knew the movements and had the time and the money and wanted to hang out with Justin could go to teacher training. There were no prerequisites, really, except that you had some familiarity with the movements.

VFJ: Was he then like he is now, kind of demanding, curt, you know...?

Pam: He's actually mellowed over the years.

VFJ: [Laughter] I can't imagine. He had me in tears once.

Pam: Oh, me, too.

VFJ: I guess we wouldn't be the only ones.

Pam: He said he really didn't have any hope for me the way I moved, until.... I gave my presentation. Then he saw that I had an understanding of the spiritual nature of TCC, and that my movements would catch up with my understanding eventually, ha, and that I would be a good teacher. **VFJ:** Nowadays, I've heard him say, "First you need to do the moves correctly." He says that a lot. It appears that back then it was the reverse? You understood the spiritual nature of TCC before you did the moves well?

Pam: Yes. But one of the gifts of TCC in my life has been its gentleness. The gentle movements have nourished my soul—body, mind, and soul. And, it has helped me be more gentle and loving, and accepting with myself, as well as with other people. I was for most of my life critical of myself, and of other people. TCC has really helped to shift that.

VFJ: That's already an enormous accomplishment.

Pam: Oh, yes. There's so much that I have received from TCC, and that's why I wanted to teach it. I wanted to share the benefits with other people. And the truth is, I'm a teacher at heart. I knew that I wanted to be a teacher when I was a young girl, but I didn't know *what* I wanted to teach. And when I found the TCC, I found my niche, what I wanted to teach, what I wanted to share with people. **VFJ:** And you really haven't moved away from that since 1984. It's passed the test of time.

Pam: It has. It's amazing to me sometimes that I have stayed with the TCC because I'm a Sagittarian sun



Pam joyously "Working the Pulley" from the early age of 6 months

sign. I love variety and freedom and always tried new and different things, and I've never stayed with anything this long.

VFJ: So it's never gotten old or stale, or you've never burned out?

Pam: Well, yeah, it has, but it's been renewed.

VFJ: Does it happen in spite of you, or because...?

Pam: [laughter]

VFJ: When you say renewed, it's like an external force comes in and then shakes you to renew?

Pam: Or something shifts internally.

VFJ: So you always knew, already from childhood, that you would be a teacher. Were you always spiritual?

Pam: No, I don't think so. Well, actually, yes. Nature was my church. I felt very close to nature and to animals. Church was something you did on Sunday, but being out in nature, watching a beautiful sunset, or listening to the sound of the breeze in the trees, I would just get these chills going up my spine. And now I know it was the flow of the chi. I didn't know it then. Nature and music have always moved me that way.

VFJ: What kind of music?

Pam: The first I remember was "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." I got that same flood of chi through the body with tingles all over. And I'm not musically inclined, just so you know. When I was 10 in 5th grade we had an all-school chorus. We had to audition to see what part we were going to sing. My music teacher put me in the alto section because she thought I would do the least damage there. She said, "Just mouth the words, dear." At the time I thought, "Oh, I better keep my mouth shut," but I couldn't. I loved the music so much that I sang anyway [laughter].

It wasn't until many years later that I was taught how to listen and sing on key. It was a learned experience.

Back to 5th grade, we sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" with this all-school chorus. There was a whole gymnasium with bleachers from ceiling to floor covered with 5th graders singing. At one point I couldn't sing anyway—tears were just flooding out of my eyes, my throat was choked up, I was feeling this incredible energy flowing through me. So, music and movement and nature have been the basis of my spirituality.

VFJ: I don't know if you would need to get any more theological beyond that.

Pam: My first spiritual movement was swinging. I would feel that same kind of blissful feeling, swinging as a child, and then roller-skating. I still love roller-skating. It feels like being one with the flow of life.

VFJ: The Tao of Roller Skating, in the groove requiring no effort...

Pam: And Sufi dancing. I do that, too. It's another of my spiritual practices.

VFJ: Could that also be considered aerobic?

Pam: No, no. Sufi dancing is like sacred circle dancing. It's done in a circle, sometimes with a partner, sometimes not. It's another form of moving meditation. It takes you beyond the judgments and thoughts of the mind to that still place within where you recognize that you are looking into the eyes of God as you look into your partner's eyes. It's God beholding God so that there is only One there.

VFJ: That's beautiful.

Pam: I'm always left with this feeling of peace, love, and joy—well, just like I feel like after doing 'T'ai Chi Chih [laughing].

VFJ: It seems like your whole life revolves around these activities, like



you don't have to go do bookkeeping or the like in some boring office, you know?

Pam: I made the choice many years ago to teach T'ai Chi Chih as my path of service rather than do that—and this was a bone of contention with my former husband, which is why I'm no longer married to him [laughing], among other things. He really wanted me to go out and get what he called a real job and make \$50 grand a year so we could live in a big house and have the kind of country-club life that he wanted. My choice was to live more simply in a rented two-bedroom duplex and do the work that I love.

VFJ: Many spouses may wish for their spouse to be more in that material groove because it enhances their status in life. If you just want to do T'ai Chi Chih in a two-bedroom duplex, maybe there is something "wrong" with you?

Pam: I don't think so.

VFJ: How about him doing the whole thing?

Pam: He did support me financially for several years so that I could do the TCC. He was making good money as a

textbook salesman, but when he left that to start his own business, and that didn't work out, then we were in a very different financial place. Then the pressure was on to contribute, which I did, but not to the standard that he would have preferred. Now he is happily married to a nurse who works very hard, and they have a home on a golf course. I am very happy teaching T'ai Chi Chih. So these things work out.

VFJ: You are definitely traveling a lot.

Pam: And I love to travel. That's another thing about Sagittarius; we love to travel. And I love T'ai Chi Chih, and when I can travel and teach T'ai Chi Chih, I am a very happy camper. And I have met such wonderful friends through TCC. I have friends all over the country.

VFJ: What was your first exposure to T'ai Chi Chih?

Pam: It was at Asilomar, a conference grounds on the Monterey peninsula. The Church of Religious Science has its annual conference there in August. It was there at a spiritual retreat in 1984 that I first learned TCC from Corinn Codye. I remember distinctly when the workshop leaders got up and did a two-minute introduction of what they were going to be doing during the week. Corinn got up and silently did Bass Drum. I was so moved by that. I could feel this incredible energy from that movement. I thought, "Oh, I would love to be able to move like that." I couldn't tell you what she said, but I still in my mind's eye see her moving. So I went every day. We learned all the movements in five hours—one hour a day for five days. At that time there was no video. I bought the book and went home and kept doing it as best I could, which was very badly. But, I felt so peaceful during and after doing these movements that it just drew me to keep doing it.

VFJ: And you went to Teacher Training?

Pam: That would have been just three months later in November. Not that great, but apparently there was some broader design plan in all of this.

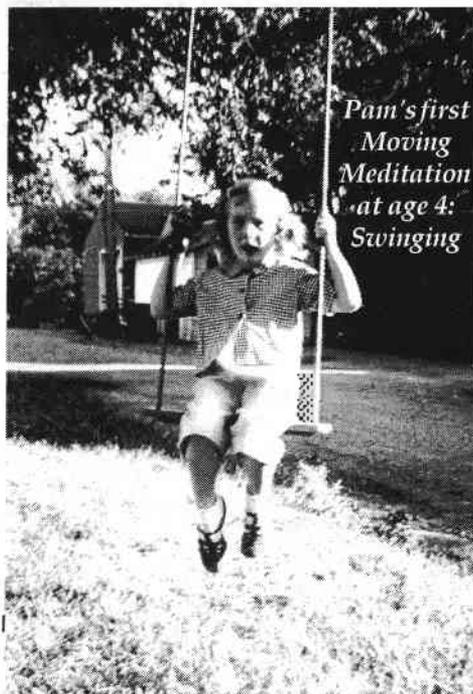
VFJ: People have an idea of what TCC is and what it has done for them. For you, is it something separate from anything else, or is it bound up with an earth-based spirituality, or would you call it a way to get healthy, to heal, or all of those things? What is T'ai Chi Chih anyway?

Pam: It's a holistic practice that brings body, mind, and spirit into balance. It has wonderful benefits for the body. Physically, I am stronger, healthier, more balanced, more coordinated certainly than I was when I was 20 years younger. I am much more flexible mentally. I used to have very rigid thinking. Now I am more able to flow from one activity to another. I'm just much more adaptable than I used to be. More creative, more intuitive. Emotionally it has been very balancing, and very healing of early childhood traumas.

VFJ: And spiritually?

Pam: It has become a spiritual practice for me, in which I feel at One with all of life. I had searched through the world of 10,000 things, you know, through the realm of religion, education, philosophy, metaphysics, psychic phenomena—you name it, I'd explored it. Transformational trainings, personal growth—all those arenas I had investigated. I had this head concept about God and life, but it was the practice of T'ai Chi Chih that moved that into my heart, and opened my heart. I lived my first 40 years from the neck up. I lived in my head. T'ai Chi Chih got me into my body and into my heart.

VFJ: And therein lies the holism. What we need to accomplish before we can see... Do you see that there's a



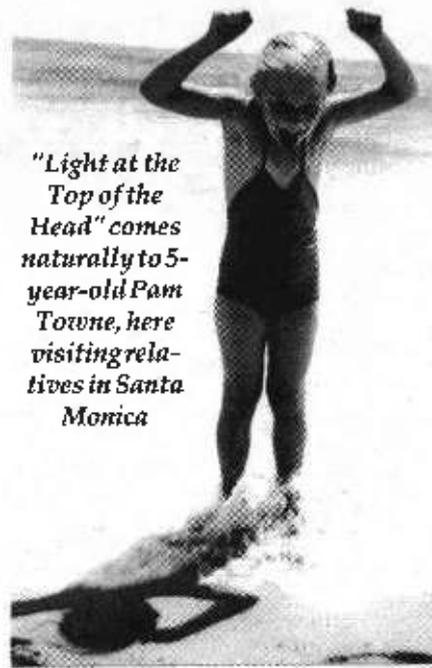
*Pam's first
Moving
Meditation
at age 4:
Swinging*

collective spirit in TCC, like we're all doing it together, like there's a rise in collective consciousness?

Pam: My sense is that there is only One, period. And then we try to talk about that. The chi that flows through me is the chi that flows through you. And that connects us. To me it is the chi. You can call it chi, you can call it God, you can call it Spirit, you can call it whatever you want. But it is that life force that flows through everything—all of nature, all of life, every person—that connects us all. I believe that is how prayer works, how healing works—long distance healing works, because there is this universal energy that we are all a part of, that we can all tap into, become consciously attuned to anytime.

VFJ: Are you an optimist? Justin says TCC can bring world peace.

Pam: I believe that's true. Part of my vision for life is to have peace on earth. I'll share an experience. I was in a weekend workshop where at the end we were invited to make a declaration for our life, and my declaration was, "I am Peace." And that was at a time when there was not a lot of evidence of that in my life. Very tumultuous marriage relationship—physical stuff going on. I had just started doing TCC about a month before that, but my declaration was, "I am Peace." I then went to a women's retreat, and the keynote speaker Peggy Bassett invited us to ask how Spirit wanted to express newly through us. And so I did. I asked, "Okay, God, how do you want to express newly through me?" I got a flyer through the mail from Corrin, saying that she was going to be in my area doing a weekend workshop to prepare people for a TCC training. I called her and I said I would really like to get more instruction in this TCC, but that I



"Light at the Top of the Head" comes naturally to 5-year-old Pam Towne, here visiting relatives in Santa Monica

wasn't interested in the teacher training. Could I come? Oh sure. So, there were seven of us at a home in Long Beach and she had each of us taking turns in front of the group leading a movement. And I said, "Oh, no, no, no, I don't want to do that!" And she made me do it, so here I was in front of the others, leading Bass Drum. This incredible rush of energy flowed through me, and that got my attention. And so I started asking questions. "What is this T'ai Chi Chih anyway?" "Can a person make a living doing this?" Out of the seven people, I was the only one that went to teacher training.

VFJ: So that was the manifestation of your declaration then, wasn't it?

Pam: It was. Wanting to be Peace, and asking how Spirit wanted to express newly through me. And so that's how I went to teacher training.

VFJ: And the rest is history.

Pam: [Laughter] Well, in between there was a lot of me just showing up. It was like Justin just couldn't get rid of me. I kept showing up at every training, every conference.

VFJ: Do you suppose that would be one reason why he chose you to be the trainer? He had to think about that, that if he didn't name you, you would be following him all over until he did. I don't think he thought too long and hard about whom he wanted. When did that happen?

Pam: December 2001. I've been leading for two years, so I'm into my third year.

VFJ: So you think that this is your calling right now?

Pam: I do. I'm happy to be of service to the community as a teacher, and a teacher of teachers. Sr. Antonia has asked me to lead the Seijaku teacher trainings as well. I was in the first Seijaku class that Justin taught in November of 1986, just two years after teacher training, and I've taught usually a spring and fall Seijaku class ever since.

VFJ: What kinds of classes have you taught?

Pam: I've taught quite a lot in corporate settings, cancer centers, senior centers, in retreat settings. My students total number in the thousands now.

VFJ: What are your plans for the future?

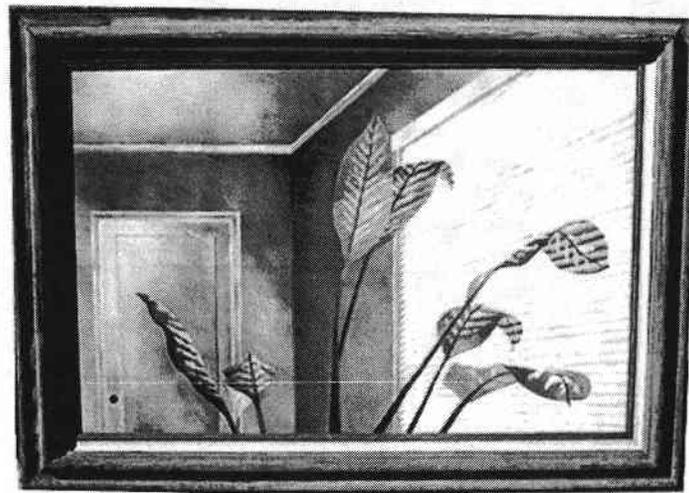
Pam: Well, I am thrilled to be a part of watching T'ai Chi Chih grow. I wholeheartedly agree with Justin that it has a purpose here and that it is a service to humankind. And part of that mission of TCC is to bring peace to people's hearts and to our world. I'm delighted to be a part of having it spread around the world. Part of my vision is to have TCC become a household word.

VFJ: Well, Pam, I think that if you keep it up, it's going to be a household word.

Pam: All right! Feel free to print that!

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Ch'i at Work



Lao-Tzu, Justin, Quantum Physics, and Seijaku

by Ann Rutherford

In the *Tao Teh Ching*, Lao-Tzu said, "There is a thing, confusedly formed...indistinct and shadowy; yet, within it is an image, shadowy and indistinct. Yet, within it is a substance, dim and dark. Yet, within it is an Essence."

And Justin adds, "And this Essence is the Real."

In Justin's *Spiritual Odyssey*, pg. 18, he says, "Empty space seems to be a vast continuum of Energy, and that energy is Wisdom. Energy appears in many forms, including matter, and it's always there for us to use in recharging ourselves."

David Bohm, a quantum physicist, said, "When matter is investigated, it is revealed as an ocean of energy and light. Modern physics understands light in a many-sided way: it is energy and it is also information: content, form and structure. It is the potential for everything."

I use all of these insights when teaching Seijaku. I ask my students, when passing through the "Matter" section of the movement, to feel, see, smell and sense it. Much as a white egg dipped repeatedly in and out of a cup of purple dye will slowly turn purple, so too will they be affected by the wisdom that is found in the "Substance" section of Seijaku. But do not look for words; continue to keep the mind in the soles of the feet. The results of this teaching method astound. Instead of resenting having to push through a "wall" before arriving at softness, they joyfully meet and pass through the congealed energy. Sometimes they see the congealed energy as a wall, but often it has more "give" to it, such as an icefall, thick sticky fog, or a strong current. One student said, "Some students had told me how angry and annoyed they got doing Seijaku (and therefore didn't practice it), but this is the first time I've enjoyed doing Daughter On The Mountaintop!"

Waving Wallpaper and Trembling Hands

by Rebecca Busching

In preparation for beginning a new business venture, I have been attending a series of business and personal development seminars. In late January I was in Los Angeles at one of the seminars and quickly found a place to do a T'ai Chi Chih movement or two during our short breaks. As soon as the room would clear, I would move over into a corner of the room that was visibly blocked from the doors, and I would begin to move.

I was just finishing up "Daughter on the Mountaintop" when I heard people returning to their chairs behind me. I closed the movement and turned around to see a woman staring

at me with a strange expression on her face. As I returned to my seat she leaned over and asked what on earth had I been doing? I told her that it was a series of T'ai Chi Chih movements, which is a movement meditation that I practice and teach. She then told me that she must have been seeing things, because every time my hands would come up, the wallpaper would wave! I offered what I thought was a very logical and familiar explanation, explaining that it was not unlike the same kind of visual phenomenon that we see on the pavement on a hot day, and that what she was seeing was the wallpaper through the Chi that was flowing out of my hands as I moved. I finished my explanation only to see

that she still looked puzzled, so much for my logical and familiar example.

Later that same day we were doing some stretches and deep breathing exercises, and as I brought my arms up I could feel the Chi begin to flow and my hands and fingers began their familiar trembling and fluttering. A woman who was standing behind me gently reached out, and taking my hand, asked me if I was okay and if I needed to sit down and relieve my tremors! This time I decided against offering an explanation but simply assured her that I was indeed okay, and that the "tremors" were only temporary.

Waving wallpaper and trembling hands, all in a day's movement.

A letter to Justin Stone describes T'ai Chi Chih as...

A gift beyond words

by Marilyn Irwin

Dear Justin, T'ai Chi Chih has been a part of my life for one year. Already the changes are profound to me; i.e., more energy, a more even disposition, a sense of inner calm, a greater ability to take things in stride, better teeth and gums, no affliction of garden-variety viruses, disappearance of a callous on my left foot, and a feeling of being vital again.

Fourteen years ago I was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and lost the life I'd had. At one point, I

went to an acupuncturist, as I'd read acupuncture could better circulate the chi and give one more energy. The acupuncturist could not find the chi in me. I was dead in every sense except my heart and lungs were functioning.

After practicing T'ai Chi Chih for a year, I feel more like my former self, only better, than I have in years. My mind is sharper, memory is returning, and laughter comes readily.

I am grateful to you, Justin, for sharing T'ai Chi Chih with the world. It is a gift beyond words. Thank you.

Walking on Ice

by Margery Erickson

Have you ever walked on ice or watched someone else do this? What happens to the body? You see or feel tension, stiff legs, stiff arms, and robot-like walking. As I returned one very cold evening from teaching a T'ai Chi Chih class I had to walk from the garage to the house. On this night the 50-yard walk was mostly a sheet of ice. My inner voice said, "Think soft knees, sink down, slow and continuous moves." I listened. The walk on ice was much easier. A lesson applied.

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Trainings, Intensives, Workshops, Retreats

"And still deeper we go!" 27 teachers take Seijaku training

by Athene Mantle, course host



Once again T'ai Chi Chih teachers gathered together among the redwoods of the Santa Cruz Mountains in

Northern California. This time it was for an amazing Seijaku Teacher Training. Forty-seven teachers assembled from all around the country.

Redwood Glen Camp and Conference Center, run by the Salvation Army, proved to be an excellent location for our training. Nineteen auditors, including teacher trainers Sandy McAllister and Pam Towne, joined with 27 teachers who were seeking Seijaku teacher certification. Ed Altman led us skillfully through what was to be his final Seijaku training. His enthusiasm was quite apparent for what he feels is "Justin's greatest contribution."

"This is a mystery, a great mystery," he proffered as we explored Seijaku together. We also went through the Maximum Chi Program and the overall result was, as one participant put it, that we were "propelled into new territory."

The tone of the three-day weekend was a happy one as Ed invited us to "yield to the flow of chi."

"Feel that wave of softness flow through the body" and be "absolutely soft," he said. As first-timer Barbara Lippert practiced Seijaku's cycle of

moving from softness through resistance, and back to softness, she shared her insight that "the pain is in holding on." Learning to move through resistance helped us to explore and expand the boundaries of our softness. Ed explained that the softness is the foundation upon which the resistance is built and suggested that it is in the softness that we should linger. His guidance brought us to the joy of truly "letting go." Even though we were all very aware that this marked the coming end of Ed's teacher training career, it was the joy of the experience in which we chose to linger.

Lisa Thorburn who came for certification said, "The weekend was all that I hoped it would be. The training was the most intense experience of my life and at the same time the most soothing and relaxing." Michael Issacs said, "Learning Seijaku will add a very vital aspect to my T'ai Chi Chih practice. I am grateful to Ed for imparting the material in such a clear, instructive and joyous manner!"

Another participant shared, "This was a week of expansion. My practice has already been rejuvenated and I anticipate continued growth as Seijaku becomes a part of my life just as T'ai Chi Chih has." Auditor Debbie Cole said, "How wonderful it is to re-discover the beauty and power of this practice! Each time I audit, I shave off more and more of the excess in my practice." As first timer Pat Flynn put

it, "And still deeper we go!"

The opportunity to build community and friendships was not passed up by this North to South and East Coast to West Coast group. After long hours of intensely working side by side, mealtimes saw much laughter, discussion and exchange of ideas. We gathered around the lodge fireplace for two lively evenings that were enhanced by popcorn, roasted marshmallows, and a fabulous array of cookies and chocolates. The Bay Area teachers were able to offer their hospitality by taking care of the needs of the out of town travelers. All 21 of the teachers who flew into the area were met by friendly faces at the airport and returned to the airport in the same way.

Auditor Bobbie Anderson summed it up very nicely when she said, "The Seijaku training in California was outstanding. The accommodations and food were excellent. The meeting of new T'ai Chi Chih friends and renewing prior friendships was great fun. The Seijaku training was enlightening and exciting. I am so glad I was able to attend. Ed did a wonderful job!"

It is weekends like this that remind us once again of the joy and privilege of being a part of our phenomenal T'ai Chi Chih community.





Why resist?

by Holly Davis

Why did I resist Seijaku for nine years? Oh, I could give a number of excuses. Excuses like, it's too far away, the timing isn't right, it's too expensive or what's the point? All part of mental resistance.

Now as I softly reflect this power-filled weekend full of cosmic recognitions, a bunch of "ahas," and many belly laughs, I acknowledge the obvious answer to the question of what was in my way — ME. Hey, no judgment here. It's all in Divine Order! This *was* my time and I am glad I finally let the resistance dissolve and move forward.

The journey has just begun, but oh, what a kick start! Thank you lovely fellow teachers, I enjoy being on the path with you. Thank you Athene for your exceptional organizational skills and absolutely amicable personality. Thank you Ed for once more revealing treasures of the universe. It is after all, one song, sung and danced by many.

Seijaku

Fog softly rolling
Chi softly flowing
Resisting, Releasing, Letting Go
Absolutely Soft...

Mist drifting through the trees
Sun shining on the leaves
Resisting, Releasing, Letting Go
Absolutely Soft...

Serenity in the midst of activity
Maximizing the flow of the Chi
Resisting, Releasing, Letting Go
Absolutely Soft...

by Lisa A.
Thorburn, inspired
to write after the
Seijaku training

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Soft Hands

by Debbie Cole

The softness of his hands I
Haven't seen surpassed
The integrity he inspires will
Also ever last
The fluidity in his movements
Exudes from every joint
Any label he may hold is really
Beside the point

Her Veils Whisper of Integrity

by Debbie Cole

Her veils whisper of
The integrity within
Her 'habit' of simplicity is
Where she does begin
Flow and form, she has the
Power of inner peace
Loving and calming may her
Joy never cease
May you show us the way to
Our own inner strength
Wrapped closely 'round our
Wisdom of great length
Our community is strong in number
And in spirit
Now let us all rejoice so that the
Whole world can now hear it!

Seijaku in the Redwoods

by Pam Towne

What an empowering weekend reviewing the advanced form of TCC with a wonderful group of TCC teachers! Since being accredited to teach Seijaku in Justin's first course in November 1996, I've attended most of the Seijaku courses as a reviewer. Each time, there has been a deepening of my practice, and a special gift to take home. This time was no exception. The gem I left with was Ed's image of the weight shift "coasting" onto the front foot after pressing through the resistance...just like a boat coasting up to the dock with its motor off. "Absolutely soft" appears to be relative...and I continue to discover a softer "soft" ...both in Seijaku and in TCC practice.

What IS Seijaku?...and is it for you?

Seijaku is a Japanese word that means "stillness...or serenity... in the midst of activity." It's a term Justin has used to describe that quality of inner serenity in the midst of busy daily life that is cultivated by the practice of TCC. It is also the name he gave to the advanced form of TCC.

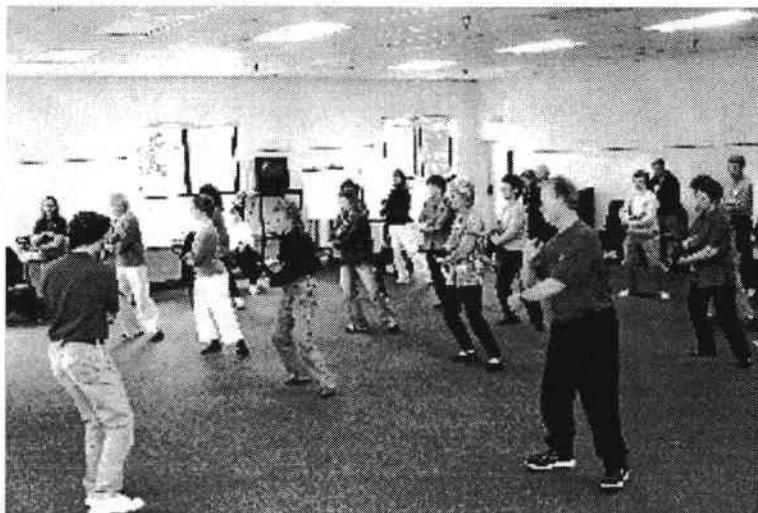
TCC is complete in itself, and will take us as far as we want to go on the path of self-unfolding. For those of us who want to speed up the process, or experience a stronger flow of Chi, there is Seijaku. Justin has likened go-

ing from TCC to Seijaku to going from a 60-watt light bulb to a 1000-watt one in terms of the flow of the Chi, and I don't think that's an exaggeration!

One of the interesting benefits of learning Seijaku is that it improves our TCC practice. It was from Seijaku that I learned to keep my back heel down low in the forward weight shift of TCC...and what "moving with softness" really means.

If you are a student who has been practicing TCC for at least a year and want to learn Seijaku, ask your instructor if they are accredited to teach Seijaku. If not, they can refer you to a teacher who is certified.

If you are a TCC teacher who has been teaching at least a year and want to learn Seijaku, I invite you to attend a Seijaku Teacher Training. You will learn the basics of the form and receive accreditation to teach it when you feel you are ready. The course fee is just \$300. If you are interested, call (760) 944-9544 or e-mail me at ptowne@inreach.com. When there are 15 teachers committed to doing it, a course will be scheduled.



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How intense the Intensives!

by Athene Mantle

I was in the final last minute preparations for the training as well as receiving two house guests, Nancy Adams and Janel Oussaty. I then jumped into that TCC time warp with the two trainings in a row. Very intense! Oh so lovely — like a deliciously hot, hot bath. Ouch! But oh so good! Afterwards we continued with our own little intensive/immersion experience going to classes and practicing together. We've had some wonderful awarenesses and shifts in our practices. Ed really had us into the softness and flow of chi at the intensive. I had a very intense all pervading experience of seeing/feeling the chi at the feet of my seated circled classmates and then all throughout the room and then pervading me the most intensely to date. I wanted to burst out laughing (didn't though) and at the same time I was crying, tears streaming down my face. It was one of the most special life moments yet. When we drove back from Santa Barbara, we stopped at the beach and Nancy and I laid in the sand only to feel a kind of internal vibrating reverberating feeling throughout our bodies. It was quite intense. We then both observed a sea of tiny almost star-like sparkles dancing before our eyes as we lay there. Wow-e-wow!



"Life is like a box of chocolates": Linda Braga (CA) and Bonnie Sokolov (MN) on either side of Sandy McAlister pondering the delightful decision of which chocolate to select. Photo: Athene Mantle

January 26, 2004

Dear Justin,

The Seijaku Training held in California in January was an exceptional weekend. Tai Chi Chih teachers from all over the US came to learn and to audit the course, with a total of 49 attending. We came together in an atmosphere of anticipation, trust and sincerity. We gathered in a campground retreat setting that Athene Mantle had reserved for our exclusive use, so there were no situations to arise that would detract from our event.

Ed Altman's leadership and guidance was impeccable. You would be most proud and pleased to know that his every word and gesture reflected softness and continuity in his thoughts, words and demonstrations. His guidance and teaching skills are mature and intuitive. He has developed these from his own Seijaku practice and from teaching other teachers for many years. He always referred to concepts and wisdom learned from studying with you. This all served to foster a very high level of learning and understanding for everyone.

As an auditor, I experienced a greater understanding and experience of Seijaku this time. I feel that several exposures are necessary and are important in order to sink deeply into Seijaku. It takes time and repetition for this to happen. It is my hope that Seijaku will continue to be offered throughout the US, with opportunities to be accredited and to audit. Its value to TCC teachers is profound, and it needs to be available annually or more often. As more TCC teachers learn Seijaku, the more we will be able to form support group in our areas to practice the skills, review the deeper concepts, and share the benefits with each other. Our weekend was filled with Joy, Joy, Joy! Best regards to you, Justin.

In Gratitude,

Linda Braga, Castro Valley, CA

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Mountaintop Experience in Santa Barbara, CA

by Pam Towne

On January 27th, 12 teachers, eight students and four community leaders found their way up the narrow, winding mountain road to what felt like the top of the world to the Mt. Calvary Retreat House. All became students for four days, as together we each explored our TCC practice at the first West Coast TCC Intensive.

This mountain ridge overlooking the blue Pacific provided a peaceful setting that was perfect for relaxing and immersing ourselves deeply in the essence of TCC. As Ed Altman skillfully

led us, the theme of "discovery" emerged on the first morning and developed over the next four days. Together we explored how to move for a greater flow of Chi, and discovered the JOY in "Joy thru Movement"!

We each made great progress in refining our Tai Chi Chih movements. Teachers left with "ahas" about their own practice, and greater knowledge of how to prepare their students for Accreditation. Students interested in becoming teachers left knowing clearly what they needed to correct in their movements before going to

Teacher Training.

The final practice before lunch on the fourth day was bittersweet. As the Intensive experience came to a graceful conclusion, so did Ed's duties as the Head of our TCC community. His leadership will be greatly missed!

The consensus was that we want to return to this facility next year, and Sr. Antonia has offered to lead two TCC Retreats, which Pam Towne will host. See the Calendar for February 2005 dates and register early to reserve your space.

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Participants loved it!

Compiled by Pam Toume

"I learned a lot! I still have a lot to work on and explore – both as a student and as a teacher."

—*Rosnie Sokolow,*
teacher from Rochester, MN

"I feel very fortunate to have been an attendee at the TCC Intensive. I've met many new friends and expanded my knowledge of flowing through movement."

—*Terri Denison,*
student from Rochester, MN

"It was wonderful to have the quiet, serene environment with so much natural beauty in which to explore the basics and subtleties of TCC."

—*Margaret Talbot,*
student from San Jose, CA

"This was a great opportunity to share with my student who is preparing for accreditation, and to have the master teachers work with her on specifics. Now we both know what to work on when we get home."

—*Mary Pat George,*
teacher from
Atascadero, CA

"We arrived to a most glorious morning on top of the world, the city and sea spread out at our feet. In this environment, "Intensive" became an experience of profound inner growth. In-

trospection became the natural order, and "softness" and "flowing" not the consequence of effort, but of allowing ourselves to be present in such a blessed moment."

—*Carol Nelson-Selby,*
student from Atascadero, CA

"This was truly a deepening of my TCC practice with a very heightened awareness of Chi flow."

—*Faye Mohr,*
teacher from Calgary, Canada

"I felt the flow of the Chi for the first time!"

—*Jan Kovac,*
student from Newport Beach, CA

"I came not knowing what to expect from the TCC Intensive. Wow! TCC taught me so much. In moments of pure delight and wonder, I moved from my intellect into my heart."

Words such as 'moving from the T'an T'ien' actually became a reality. My practice came alive! I had breakthroughs and insights into the weaknesses in my practice. I have finally found the joy in my movements.

It was wonderful to have Ed, Sr. Antonia, Pam and Sandy all here together sharing their experience and skills with us, to see the transition in leadership occur and yet have the continuity of TCC remain the same.

I hope that many more Intensives will be offered. They are such a blessing to anyone who desires to see their weaknesses, let them go, and emerge with a deeper understanding of what TCC can become. What an incredible 'gift of life' we have been given through TCC. Thank you, Justin. Thank you!"

—*Holly Sanders,*
teacher from Indian Rocks Beach, FL



Four days, one experience

by Debbie Cole

I lit a candle of remembrance and gratitude for the beautiful experience I had at the TCC Intensive in Santa Barbara and pondered my ability to adequately share the deep sense of peace with which I was blessed while in the presence of so many loving members of our T'ai Chi Chih community.

I was reminded that "knowing" and "being" don't require words, but are facilitated by an inner vibrational awareness to those around us. By the end of the four days, as we started Rocking Motion, it was as if we were all breathing for each other—one body, expanding and contracting, in the name of respiration.

Who would have thought that a simple gas exchange could be so beautiful and so deeply felt—or the warm embrace of moving through very heavy air would be so accepting and nourishing—or that my soul would cry out in ecstasy at moving as one?

One
Single
Soul is here
We together
Form a cell
Living
Truth

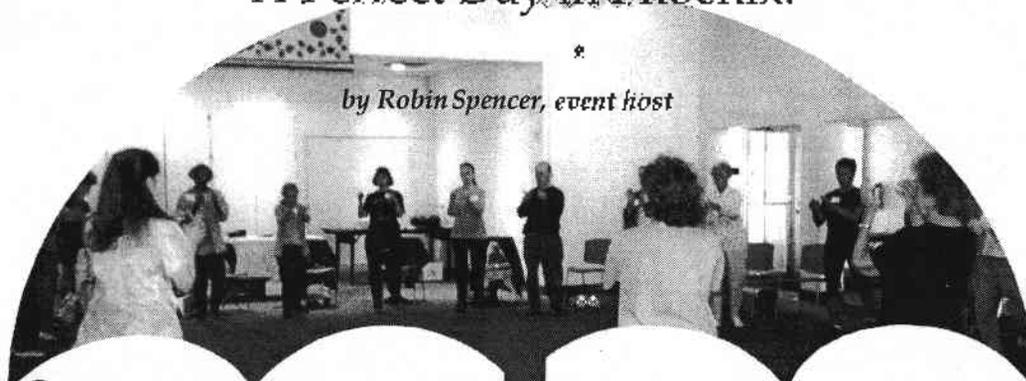
As we bask in the stillness of
our practice
Our soul sings out a joyful
noise.

Go within and discover so
much more
than there is in all the uni-
verse.

It is a unique gift to explore
oneself.
—Debbie Cole

A Perfect Day in Phoenix!

by Robin Spencer, event host



On a beautiful spring day in Phoenix, Arizona, 25 of us gathered for a day of discovery and renewal of our T'ai Chi Chih practice. Some of us were teachers, some were students. But all of us found we had much to learn at the one-day workshop.

The word "perfectionism" was discussed early in the morning. And although we strive to be the best we can be, there seemed to be a consensus to let go of the pressure of "being perfect." Instead we learned to relax and enjoy the T'ai Chi Chih moves.

Led by certified teacher trainer Pam Towne, we reviewed the principles of T'ai Chi Chih: flowing from the center, softness and continuity, yinming and yanging correctly, polarity and circularity and always keeping our attention directed to the soles of our feet.

During the day's final group practice, all of us noticed subtle (and some not so subtle) modifications that each of us had made to our moving. With a greater understanding, we were grateful that we could continue to improve our T'ai Chi Chih practice without the need to "be perfect."

Thank you Pam!

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Minnesota teachers hold T'ai Chi Chih Workshop

by Nancy Werner Azarski

The Minnesota T'ai Chi Chih community held a one-day workshop on Saturday, February 21, 2004, for both students and teachers. We wanted to address the areas of their practice that the attendees wanted to work on.

The workshop was held at a local church that could accommodate the group. Judy George and Marie Dotts, two local teachers, led the day and kept us moving. Twelve teachers and 18 students attended. We were excited to have so many students in the group! We also were very lucky that two teachers had just returned from an intensive and a Seijaku class. It all added up to a fun day that gave us an opportunity to deepen our practice.

We started the day with a complete

TCC practice. After the practice, Judy used some readings to focus our thoughts. Throughout the day, Judy read or discussed the importance of three words—Willingness—Awareness—Acceptance—in deepening our practice and not just repeating our same old habits.

Judy and Marie developed a form with two questions on it. They passed the form out as we registered and asked us to complete it and give it back to them before we started. The questions were, "What movement would you like to work on?" and "What principle would you like to work on?" A bowl containing the forms was used so that an individual could pick one out. Then a teacher got up and addressed the movement.

Throughout the day, we covered about half of the movements and discussed the principles of TCC. We also had a small presentation about the local and national community events and the *Vital Force*. One teacher also discussed the books of Justin Stone and how they are a good way to learn more about Justin. The day ended with a practice and smiles all around. I am sorry that we took no pictures, but just imagine 30 faces with big smiles and you got the idea of what we looked like!

We hope to welcome many more of the TCC community to our area when we hold an Intensive this September and a Teacher Training in March of 2005.

UnWinding

by Debbie Cole

By the end of that Seijaku teacher training weekend, the last one Ed Altman would be leading, I was inspired with the following words:

Unfold and experience the peaceful joy of flight

As our practice of Seijaku has moments of 'just right.'

Thanks for being the conduit from which we've learned.

Our undying gratitude you have overwhelmingly earned.

With much love and gratitude to Justin for his original inspiration and to Ed Altman for being the conduit of this knowledge over the last several years.



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Our Students, Our Selves

Simple Movements, Deep Meaning

by Carmen L. Brocklehurst

As one student said, T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement seems like a simple set of movements when you first start. However, she continued, "The longer you study them, the more you realize there is so much to them."

This was especially true for one student who came into class. He walked into class depressed, looking like death warmed over. He seemed thin and kept a stocking hat on during class. I didn't think it was too strange since it was winter, but I did notice that he didn't seem to have any hair under his hat. He was very faithful about coming to class, never missing a single one, even when we had a snow storm. During class, I usually invite students to talk about their practice, in 25 words or less, and encourage them to ask questions. This particular student always said that he did his movements faithfully and was enjoying them very much.

At the end of Week 7, he opened up,

telling us he had come to class because an advertisement mentioned that several TCC teachers were ex-cancer patients. He then revealed that he had been diagnosed with incurable cancer, that the news was devastating. But he quickly smiled and added, "That was before I started doing T'ai Chi Chih.

Now I know that it isn't how long you live, but how well you live, that's important. Now I am no longer waiting for the day I die, but rather enjoying today." He finally removed his hat, saying, "Thank you for not minding that I've been wearing this hat. The radiation took all my hair."

For the last class he came wearing a smile, and he spoke highly of what he had learned from the movements. I mentioned giving a two-weekend summer class, that it would be great if he would come as my guest. He came. Whenever he shared what he was learning, I felt like I should sit down, that he should be leading the class. His depth of understanding was a wonder.

He also came to some review sessions, and always with a smile even though he was growing thinner. Again, I invited him to the next series of classes. He said he'd try to make it. But Fall came and Joe didn't show up. After the third class I called his home but there was no answer. I left a message to call. The class finished but still no Joe.

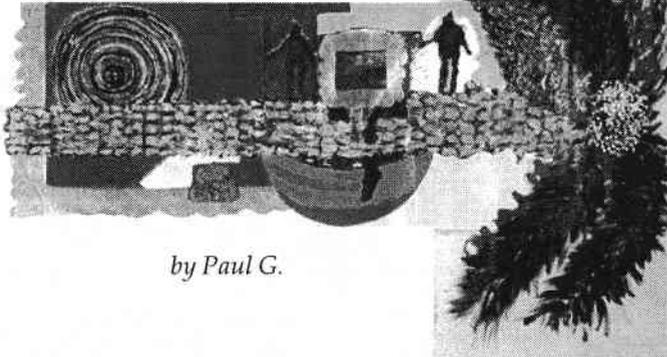
In mid-January I call his home again. This time his wife answered. She told me Joe had passed away. She apologized for not having returned my call but, of course, there was a lot to do. She thanked me for the way Joe had spent his final months. She said Joe had been very depressed before coming to T'ai Chi Chih, but that because of the class, he had developed a new attitude toward himself and his family. She said he died happy.

At the end of our days, if all of us can say that, we will have been true to the "Joy" in "Joy Thru Movement." And as we live this joy, we will love and share the chi.



Ash Wednesday

This is my life like dust



by Paul G.

This is my life,
my life like a pile of dust,
that
only follows the wind
and the wind that
I have followed only
blew me into
a place where I was
not wanted, and
because I got into
the wrong winds,
that's how my life of
dust disappeared in the
world of winds,
and that is my life that
is like a pile of dust.

Paul was only 12 when he came to the juvenile detention center and then into my T'ai Chi Chih class. A painfully shy boy, only after some weeks would he make eye contact or want to talk, even though he always asked to come to TCC class. He was facing very serious charges. He had been with an older relative (18 years old) when a fight in an alleyway resulted in the death of another young man. Paul was tried for manslaughter along with the adult man. This was a very depressing turn of events for him in his thus-far short life. Like so many children who end up in detention, they are not bad, but hang out in bad company. He will be freed when he turns 21. His poem above won first place in the Unit B Poetry Contest.
—Kathy Grassel, his TCC teacher

Folsom Prison TCC program in jeopardy

Dear Chi-mates,
I need your supportive prayers for our program at Folsom prison. The effect of lock-downs, budget cuts and administrative scandals has suspended the Tai Chi Chih program inside Folsom prison now for two months (February and March), and now I have received word that it will be suspended for another undefined period of time as the men must go back in their cells at 1:30 in the afternoon rather than 3:30, which prevents them from coming to class.

Please help me pray that the men continue their practice and discover truths of the chi on their own, and that the cultivation of the chi inside the institution will bear fruit in new ways without our class. Help me pray that if this is a door closing, that another fruitful door(s) will open. We give thanks for all that has opened for us these past five and one-half years.

Thank you for your support in this time of limbo and sorrow for me and the work at Folsom.

Judy Tretheway
judyt@accessbcc.com



Time
For Me
Enjoyment
Moves in Circles
Releasing
Enjoy
Peace

—James Brastwell,
Continuing Student of Lisa Thorburn

If
Practice
Quiet my Mind
Release Tension
Allowing
Transfer
Soft

—James Brastwell,
Continuing Student of Lisa Thorburn

Oh
Lisa
How You Taught
Us Mosquitos
Patiently
With Love
Thanks

—Majori Iremont,
Student of Lisa Thorburn

Chi
So Soft
Moving Through
My Body Now
Oh What Joy
T'ai Chi
Chih!

—Lisa Thorburn

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T'ai Chi Chih and Spirituality

Spiritual dimensions of T'ai Chi Chih

by Michael Isaacs

The spiritual dimensions of T'ai Chi Chih practice are fascinating to ponder. How do nineteen movements and one pose contribute to spiritual awareness, growth, and discernment?

In doing the movements, I have formulated three aspects of spirituality: "It", "Is", and "As". I realize that everyone has his or her concept of what spirituality means. So I invite the readers of the *Vital Force* to write their own views on this subject.

"It" is from Justin Stone's writings that "T'ai Chi Chih does T'ai Chi Chih." That is, an invisible entity can emerge to do the movements for us. This "It" is the "chi", which I consider another name for Spirit. It has also been called intrinsic energy, vital force, universal energy, eternal energy, and ultimate energy. Most teachers and many students gain glimpses of this transcendent phenomenon at various times in the practice.

Right now I can say that I yield, at times, to the "It" of Spirit during Working the Pulley.

I hope that I will have more "It" experiences as I proceed on my path in the T'ai Chi Chih discipline.

The second aspect of spirituality I will label "Is". It is being focused and concentrated in the present moment. In our practice, "Is" moments can be on the soles of the feet or the T'an T'ien

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or, at times, on softness, continuity, slowness, shift of weight, alignment, circularity, polarity, and flowing from the

center. Whatever the focus of awareness, thoughts and feelings about the past and the present are minimized or eliminated. In this attunement with the present moment, T'ai Chi Chih practice is similar to meditation. The mindfulness meditation of American Buddhists comes to mind.

As of late, I experience "Is" most while moving in Daughter in the Valley.

The third aspect of spirituality is "As". Oneness appears and is reflected as attributes of the Divine such as circularity, peace, stillness, joy, beauty, and transcendence. It is harmonious connection with the oneness of the universe. In this oneness we are attuned with the ways of nature and life that lead to peace, serenity, harmony, and balance. In our practice we feel best when our entire body moves as one.

Synonyms for Oneness in the natural universe are wholeness, balance, allness, infinity, eternity, and perfection—all spiritual concepts and verities. Since we human beings are part of the universe, being mentally and physically in harmony with these principles is in accord with all T'ai Chi.

Oneness appears and is reflected AS circularity.

Circularity is ever present in our world. For example, the moon, the earth and other planets, and eggs are circular. The minute cells that constitute our body are circular. Even within the individual cell there are

countless circles, including the nucleus, nucleolus, centrioles, and droplets.

As we know, the symbol of the "Tao" or "T'ai Chi" (Supreme Ultimate) is a circle with the light half, yang, the dark half, yin. Circles have no beginning or end. To me that signifies unity. It is interesting that one of the usages of the word "circle" in the dictionary for "come full circle" is to find oneself back where one started.

The complete and connective nature of circles is reflected in the name given to many groups, such as a woman's circle, social circle, and circle of friends. The ultimate connection between husband and wife is symbolized by a wedding ring.

For me, the oneness of circularity is most pervasive in Cosmic Consciousness Pose. The circularity is in the oblong connectedness of the arms. In this still pose, I sometimes feel the archetype of a divine beholder and witness of the whole universe.

My beginner's class begins in a circle with Rocking Motion and Bird Flaps Its Wings. I do the same at the end of the class for Cosmic Consciousness. In the full practice, when appropriate, the class is in a circle all the time.

Oneness appears and is reflected AS peace.

Peace can be found in flowing rhythm.

We see peace and serenity in the continuous motion of brooks, rivers, streams, and in the rolling waves of the ocean. We observe and experience

this pleasant relaxed feeling in rocking chair, cradle, and playground swing. We notice calm in the flight of birds and the graceful movements of deer and members of the cat family. We see harmony in the willow tree that moves with the breeze, almost flows with the breeze. We feel peaceful when we witness the falling leaf, the floating snowflake, and the passing cloud.

Rhythmic movement reminds me of the mythical Chinese dragon, the symbol of wisdom and strength. I imagine this dragon moving gracefully between heaven and earth. It moves beyond time and space, with a freedom of body, mind, emotions, and spirit.

Lately, I experience this flowing relaxed feeling most during Rocking Motion. I also feel it in all the forward and backward yin-yang movements of the legs, especially as I glide back and forth in Bass Drum.

Oneness appears and is reflected AS stillness.

Alternation between movement and rest is found frequently in life. In the daytime we are up and moving. But at night we sleep. The heartbeat is regular, but rests briefly in between each beat. In breathing there is a slight pause of quiet and rest after each inhalation and exhalation. We have heard it said that we should move like a river but rest as a mountain.

It is in the rest position in T'ai Chi Chih practice that we replicate the stillness and silence in the natural order of life. In an early Chinese classic text, the earth has been identified with stability, immobility, motherhood, the center, and the calmness of origin. In rest we concentrate on the soles of the feet. The body sinks, firmly rooted to the ground. We adopt the nature of earth.

For me, the rest position, the reuniting of the yin chi and the yang chi, can be indeed a spiritual moment. It is then when I can experience in my own body and mind the scriptural prescriptions "beside the still waters", "be still and know that I am God", and "peace be still".

Coming into the rest position softly, with a graceful conclusion and a deep breath, is an auspicious way to prepare body and mind for glimpses of this sacred silence.

Oneness appears and is reflected AS joy.

Joy can often be found in circular movement. As a youth, I remember the joy of blowing bubbles, riding on a carousel, and running around a school athletic track. And then there was the excitement in watching a three-ring circus, "Wheel of Fortune" on television, children playing with a hoola hoop, and drooling at a round pizza pie.

As a young adolescent I loved bouncing a round pink rubber ball against the wall in my bedroom. Unfortunately, my parents did not share my joy and enthusiasm. They were more involved in the constant pounding noise that reverberated through the walls of the house.

In my current practice, I have the most moments of joy in the circular movement of the arms and hips during Carry the Ball to the Side. The motions feel right when I allow the revolving arms, wrists, and hips to truly "let go". I can also experience this heightened joy during the elliptical movement of the arms in Push Pull. Their course of movement illustrates that the most harmonious and natural line between two points is a graceful curve.

Oneness appears and is reflected AS beauty.

So much in nature is beautiful. We do not have to look far to behold beauty as we behold sunrise, sunset, rainbow, flowers, clouds, grassy fields, mountain peaks, and running brooks. As the poet wrote "Only God can make a tree".

Lately, I feel a kinship and identification with beauty as I move in Passing Clouds and Push Pull.

Oneness appears and is reflected AS transcendence.

By transcendence I mean lifting up and raising consciousness (awareness) to the Divine. To the native American Indian the sky represented the Father of the universe. In the Old Testament we have many examples of God's intervention from above. One is manna coming from the sky above to feed Moses and the Jews in the wilderness as they fled from the Egyptians. In the New Testament, we have the ascension of Jesus. Phrases with derivatives of the word "high" are often used to describe the Divine essence. One example is the phrase "higher power" which is used in 12-step recovery programs. Other examples are the high holidays and high priests in Judaism.

So in our form, it is important to have proper alignment. Proper alignment is in accord with spiritual principles. That is, the crown of the head is upright, as though suspended by a rope coming from the ceiling. We aspire upwards towards the Divine. The importance of this auspicious upward position is emphasized in meditation postures strived for in many spiritual traditions. The ones I am most familiar with are in Hindu

yogi and Zen Buddhist meditation. There is an emphasis on a straight spine, shoulders arched back but relaxed, and an upward gentle lifting of the neck and head.

This uplifting transcendental feeling comes to me most often as I do the upward movements in Wrist Circle Taffy and in Light at the Top of the Head and Light at the Temple. This feeling particularly resonates in the raising of the T'an T'ien, as well as the moving of the upright crown point of the head. I occasionally experience a spiritual moment when I move my hands and arms upward in Daughter on the Mountaintop culminating with the crossing of the hands. This positioning reminds me of the raising of hands and arms to heaven in prayer.

An illustration of how "It", "Is", and "As" are related to each other can be seen in the planet earth. The invisible source of energy that created the earth, sustains it, and moves it is the "It". The actual rotation of the earth in the present moment of time is the "Is". The soil, air, plant life, animals, bodies of water, and clouds appear "As" tangible objects in the visible world.

T'ai Chi Chih practice is infinite in the opportunity it affords us to grow spiritually. We are indeed fortunate to have this resource to allow us glimpses of the "It", "Is", and "As" of Spirit. We have access to cherished effects of circularity, peace, stillness, joy, beauty, and transcendence.

Thank you Justin, our T'ai Chi Chih teachers, and all our spiritual teachers!

— It wrote itself inside the rhythm of Rocking Motion one early morning as I was awakening. —

A prayer for a chiful class

by Judy Trelhecoy



Oh divine spirit, drench us with your presence

Open our bodies, our hearts,
our minds, and our souls
to the infinite love that surrounds us,
pulses through us with each breath, and
is within every cell of our being.

Give consideration to our deepest yearnings,
sustain us in our sufferings, and
entreat us to enter fully into our wholeness with you.

Here we are in all our uniqueness,
in all our potential, in all our sameness,
in all our confusion.

Help us empty of expectations and of regrets,
empty of wisdom and of doubts,
empty and release, empty and let go.

Empty, and allow your ever-present loving energy
to flow through us and fill us.

Bring forth from within ourselves the knowledge that
within each breath, within each moment,
within each relationship, you are there,
and in all our potential, we are one.



Sky Mind in Wide Open Spaces

by Jan Arrott



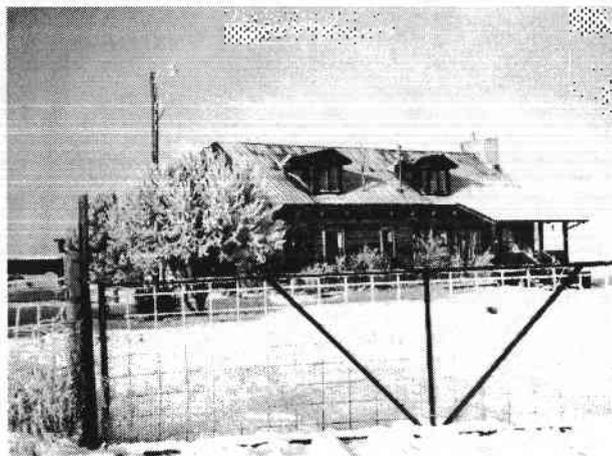
I live in the "window" between the prairie grasslands and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. All around me is this feeling of endless spaciousness, expanding to the east. To the west, the mountains arise before me. Hermit's Peak most central, where a hermit priest lived, years ago, in a cave that has a spring still dripping from the ceiling. I wonder if he survived on his chi-enhancing practices.

For me, to practice my FCC, outside in the midst of this background, seems to be my daily mission. Usually one or the other, my front or back porch, has the protection I need from the weather to do this. I rarely have to face practicing inside, and in those times, I choose a place by the window. It isn't that I am looking around while I practice. I do stay in my movement, generally, but my awareness is everywhere. Living here, I have developed a keen eye for movement, trained by the coyotes and the birds. This is a wildlife refuge and wildlife are forever showing up, unexpectedly. Confession: I do keep my binoculars with me, just in case,

for wonderful species that I "must" see that will sometimes wander in during my practice.

Tuesday, it had been snowing all night and continued all day. Gratitude and snow, simultaneously falling at about a quarter inch an hour, lightly, softly, silently wrapping everything in a state of grace. My back porch was perfect for practice, protected from all intrusion, for the whole countryside

Strange,
amid
sad losses;
consequences,
wonder-filled,
open
new



was "socked in." The white Charolais cattle were apparitions, stolid white phantom ghosts quietly grazing on the barren, drought-stricken land. I call it the "grazing of no grazing" for there is no grass left to eat, after this persistent drought. The ubiquitous red-winged blackbirds were singing their song of gratitude with constant visitations to my feeders.

What happens within me during these solitary practices? Although I am "alone," I am not alone in this vast arena of all-pervading life. There is some great thing at work, in me and outside me, that brings us all together into the oneness of the chi. I trust and feel it, that what Justin says is true, our inner transformation is accelerated with our practices. The softness, the continuity, the congruity, the openness gradually comes, over time, whether we practice inside or outside, as the gift to our being-ness, and I am grateful. [Jan's story first appeared in the *T'ai Chi Chih News-Ltd.*]

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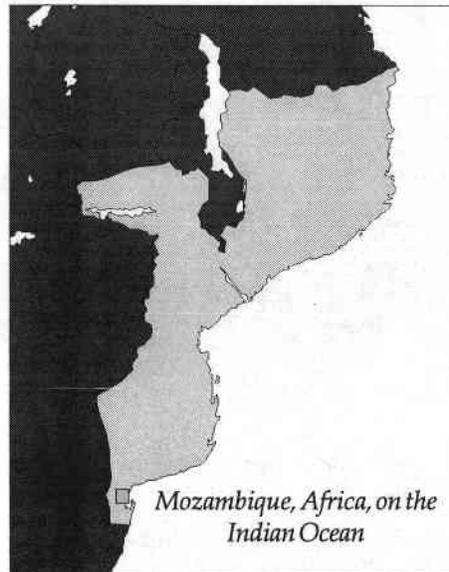
A haunted beach, T'ai Chi Chih, and peace

Dear Sr. Francis,

We finally find time to write to you about our experience in Mozambique. We arrived at a campsite and our stand was facing the beach. A lovely place. The kids went to the beach playing; meanwhile we built up our tent. After supper we were all very tired and went straight to sleep. We all slept well that night.

The next day we had a lovely breakfast and a wonderful day at the beach. We had bought some fish for that evening. We cooked and ate outside the tent, with coconut trees all around us and millions of stars looking down to us. At 7:00 the kids went to sleep. We stayed outside chatting and enjoying ourselves. At 10:00 we decided to go to sleep as well.

When we lay in our tent, Sam told me that he was not feeling well, sort of dizzy and he failed to sleep. I suspected food poisoning, but the kids were sleeping deeply and they ate a lot of that fish. When I closed my eyes to sleep, I felt suffocated, drowned and I tried to scream, but I was paralysed. It took all my will to force myself to open my eyes and then all was normal



again. My husband went through the same experience. As soon as one of us closed the eyes, a dark power tried to get hold of us. We both had never had an experience like this before and were very scared. After one hour of no change, we decided to come out of our tent and pray for help.

After praying, we felt we had to become one with our surrounding environment and ask for peace. So we decided to do Tai Chi Chih.

Up to this time we had hardly ever done Tai Chi Chih together, because

we were both more comfortable to do it by ourselves. So around 1:00 a.m., we did Tai Chi Chih facing the ocean, because we felt the negative energy presented itself in waves from the seaside. Slowly all our fear faded as we felt protected and in tune with the surrounding environment.

We sat after Tai Chi Chih on the floor for a while to praise the universe for its helping hand and then we went to bed. I could close my eyes and felt better. Sam felt also much better, although I had a light sleep that night.

From that day we did every evening Tai Chi Chih. We stayed there five nights as planned and felt after that night protected and welcome.

On our checkout, I had a chat with the manager and she pointed out that the campsite was haunted and they had a cleansing ceremony conducted to clear the area. I then told her about our experience and she was shocked because she thought it all had passed. This experience was very bonding for the two of us and since then we enjoy to do Tai Chi Chih together.

Thanks again for having taught us these wonderful movements.

Your Ruth and Sam

An evil legacy binds the innocent

I have not edited the article from Ruth (a German doctor) and her husband, Sam (a Zimbabwean sculptor); it did not seem feasible. There is one point I believe is extremely important, which they did not include. Before leaving this area, they were told that in the early days, the slaves were brought here, viciously beaten, and dragged onto the slave ships, destined for the West. This place had been exorcised, but at times, the energy from those days will show. The beaches on the Indian Ocean here are beautiful - so sad to think of greed, which binds the innocent. How fortunate to have had this family bring the peace-filled energy of Tai Chi Chih to this area!

Blessings for this week and the Eastertide.

Peace,
Sr. Francis A. Kay



Mask of a water spirit, Nigeria

T'ai Chi Chih and Health

Pilot project uses the Chi to improve seniors' quality of life

by Sher Dano, with Deanne Hodgson

Approximately 20 people across the U.S. have been selected to participate in a collaborative project of the National Council on Aging (NCOA), The Healer Within Foundation (HWF) and the Institute of Integral Qigong and T'ai Chi (IIQTC).

Deanne Hodgson and myself, Sher Dano, both accredited T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement instructors living in Arizona, are among those selected. The project began in February and ends in April 2004.

As the practice of qigong and t'ai chi modify and accelerate the body's own self-regulating physiological and bioenergetic mechanisms, Deanne and I, acting as facilitators, will help seniors learn the practical steps that a person can take to support her or his own healing process. These techniques are easy to learn, easy to apply, need no special knowledge or training, require no special equipment or clothing, and can be practiced by any one of any age or physical ability, standing or sitting.

The mission of the project: To create a simple, easy to replicate, fun, effective approach to Qigong and T'ai Chi for seniors that will be disseminated through senior centers and other senior programs by facilitators who may or may not be certified Qigong or T'ai Chi instructors (such as activities coordinators, resident care providers, etc). They have drawn upon a wide array of original traditional Chinese resources to develop a menu of prac-

tices that facilitators will draw from to create their practice sessions. This includes posture and movement, breath practice, self-massage and meditation.

The findings from pre- and post-assessments will be forwarded to the HWF and IIQTC office, where they will create a presentation for the American Society of Aging / National Council of Aging annual conference in San Francisco in mid-April. The NCOA feels that if the response is positive, they can collect some funding to do some larger outcome studies with high quality research parameters in place.

Also, the prestigious Research Department of the University of Illinois is now involved and has helped to improve the chances to get future money for much more rigorous research.

Deanne and I had an initial phone bridge, along with the other facilita-

tors across the nation, with Roger Jahnke, OMD, of The Healer Within Foundation, and author of a wonderful book titled, *The Healer Within*. Much of the material for this pilot project is from this book. He also stays in touch with us by email, informing us of updates, sending assessments, documentation, and always thanking us for participating and offering encouragement.

This is a wonderful learning experience for Deanne and I. It's also a lot of fun, which is one of the key elements. Within our lesson plans, during creative time, we "change hats" from facilitator to teacher, and teach T'ai Chi Chih Joy Thru Movement. The response, so far, has been very favorable and naturally gratifying. Needless to say, we are very excited and honored to participate in what could be a historic project!

A request for collating research for the website

Is it possible to send out a request in the *Vital Force* for people to submit TCC research articles/publications? I know there is a wealth of information in our community and feel that much can be benefited by sharing our knowledge and resources.

My thought on consolidating TCC research is to incorporate these findings into our TCC website so anyone who wanted to know more about TCC, its scientific research, and derived benefits could view it.

—Catherine Millman, millmunst@juno.com

Martha Stewart and Mom do T'ai Chi Chih on TV

by Carolyn Perkins

I actually got onto the program through a client of my husband (a stockbroker) who suggested we send info to the Martha Stewart TV people. Since she was prerecording pieces on Yoga, Pilates etc., T'ai Chi Chih fitted in with her health-related segments so they asked me to come for the day to Westport where she has a house solely for the purpose of filming her program. They sent a car to pick me up in the morning and when I arrived the producer of my segment told me that Martha wanted her 89-year-old mother to appear with us. Since she was suffering from acute sciatica after having both hips replaced, and was walking with a cane, I suggested that she should do it seated.

The producer explained that there would only be time for three movements as the segment in total would run for approximately six minutes. I would not be able to work with Martha in advance so I decided it would be easier to just

do Rocking Motion, Bird Flaps Its Wings, and Passing Clouds. I felt the forward and backward movements need much more explanation and when done wrong can be injurious to hips, backs, etc. The Producer seemed very nervous of Martha and said I shouldn't oppose her in any way!!!!

Martha was quite insistent that her mother try it standing, but I finally won out when I said it would be good for her audience to see that it can be done seated. Her mother told her that if she could stand she would but that she couldn't!!! Martha is quite a Diva but once the camera rolls she completely changes and purrs like a kitten!! The voice softens and her whole demeanor transforms itself into this

sweet, smiling person. She is a true professional!!

I was able to tell her before we went on air that she should refer to the form as T'ai Chi Chih, so apart from the beginning intro she did refer to it as that. We had to do several takes on the pronunciation!!

I had e-mails from people from all around the country asking me where they could purchase a video or find a teacher, and they seemed very impressed by the movements even though it was a limited example of TCC.

Altogether it was a fun experience as I am always happy to get as much exposure for TCC as possible and to make people aware that this

simple form exists.



Carolyn Perkins, Martha Stewart's 89-year-old mother, and Martha Stewart, in the studio following the show. The photo was originally posted on marthastewart.com, and is now included, along with text, on Carolyn's website www.chibalance.net under the Bio title.

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National Geographic

The high dunes of the Sahara Desert embrace T'ai Chi Chih



by Carolyn Perkins

Travel is a hobby of ours and whenever we are in a special place my husband and I try to do T'ai Chi Chih. Some of the places have included Chaco Canyon, New Mexico; on a volcanic mountain in Sicily; Ankor Wat in Cambodia; at Pompeii in Italy; and beside Vdaipur Lake in Rajasthan, India; to name a few.

On a recent visit to Morocco to visit my brother, who has bought a house in Marrakech, we decided to spend New Year's Eve in the Sahara desert. After driving 12 hours on a zigzag road through the High Atlas Mountains, we arrived in Meezouga where the road ends!

The next day we climbed the dunes of the Sahara desert where my husband Michael took some photos of me doing T'ai Chi Chih on the highest dune. It was an amazing experience and a great way to start the New Year.

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The Lighter Side

My 11-year-old grandson, who is learning Tai Chi Chih, and I were on a long road trip. To pass the time, he was reading from Justin's TCC Manual. After he read a few paragraphs he would explain what he had learned. At one point he said, "The best time to do TCC is early morning, late afternoon or early evening, or after a math class." (What the manual said was "...a feeling of well-being, somewhat like the aftermath of an internal bath." After explaining the meaning of aftermath with a straight face, I told him it probably would be a good idea to do TCC before a math class. —Carol Houtkooper, Yankton, SD)

From the recent Seijaku training in Scotts Valley, CA comes this funny anecdote. We had been discussing the Seijaku practice when Ed Altman said, "We're not going to come to any clarity discussing this in a circle." As we all prepared to stand and start practicing, Linda Braga piped up, "Maybe if we sit in a square?" We all experienced the release that only laughter can bring! —Debbie Cole, Severn, MD

While setting up for class at a Senior Center, Gerry, who gives up his weekly poker game to attend T'ai Chi Chih Joy thru Movement and has never missed a class, is at least 99 years old, very fragile, walks with a walker, and has to look at you sideways because he can't lift up his head, enters the room. While handing me his participation ticket, another older gentleman comes in and asks what's going on in this room. Before I could answer, Gerry says, rather loudly, "Tai Chi." The other man asks what kind of food is that. Gerry says, a little bit louder, "It isn't Chai Tea, it's T'ai Chi!" So then the other man asks what does it do for you, to which Gerry answers even more loudly, "If you do T'ai Chi, you won't need Viagra!" —Sher Datto, Surprise, AZ



But, Teacher, what do you mean my T'ai Chi Chih form is wishy-washy???

Many of the students in our class at a senior residence were not able to do all the movements standing; some could only do movements sitting. During a recent session, one of the ladies asked why, when we did forward movements standing, we moved the left foot forward first and later moved the right foot forward. Without batting an eye, another senior volunteered, "Because the first leg gets tired."

A week later, at the same facility, the class was asked if they had any questions about doing the movements. There was no response, so the group was then asked what their favorite movement was. The same resident who had made the comment about tired legs replied. Hoping she could really confuse the teacher, and taking the question quite literally, she said, "Why, it's when you stand on your head, of course." —Nancy Lecraw, Chicago, IL

Two of my teenage students, a young man and young woman, make sure to stand next to each other in class. Amazingly, they are the same height and size, do the moves exactly together, exactly the same pace, and perfectly. To top it off, they both wear these huge beaming smiles throughout. During Working the Pully, another student looked across and said, "Look, Synchronized Swimming." —Kathy Grasseel, Albuquerque, NM

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Karmic Komments

from Kim Grant



reetings. Justin said it so obviously, "Now you really have the chance to

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Join the TCC community thru the Vital Force

by Justin Stone

The *Vital Force Journal* has been the means that ties together the members of the Tai Chi Chih Community. The love that is so evident now can be traced to the means of identification that the *Vital Force* made possible. It was started by teacher Corinn Codye and named by me. It was somewhat disjointed in the beginning, but under Noel Altman and now, Kathy Grassel, it has developed into an attractive and useful publication that most teachers read at one gulp when they receive it. A few have lost contact with the *Vital Force*, however, and so have lost the means of knowing what events are going on and what is happening, physically and mentally, to the growing body of teachers. The ideals of Tai Chi Chih have been established through this journal, and many good ideas have come to light through the communication it affords. I am asking that the teachers who used to take the *Vital Force* once again subscribe to it, and so rejoin our tightly knit community. I don't think you'll regret it.

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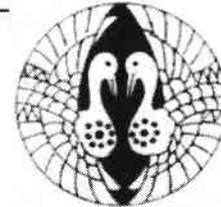
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E-mail Kathy Grassel at kgrassel@unm.edu with your questions and suggestions

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Events

Calendar

Dates	Activity	Location	Contact
April 22-25, 2004	TCC Intensive *** w/ Sandy McAlister Private room/common bath w/ cont. breakfast and noon meals, 4 nights Attendance fee: \$140	Houston, TX	Sr. Carletta LaCour 6505 Alameda Road Houston, TX 77021 (713) 741-8298. Register with Caroline Guilott by e-mail: rcsguilott@aol.com
May 13-16, 2004	TCC Intensive*** w/ Pam Towne Fee: \$200 Discounted rates at Howard Johnson's \$50, airport to/from Center, 1-800-877-4852	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com (505) 292-5114
June 23-26, 2004	TCC Intensive*** w/Sandy McAllister Fee: \$200	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak 732.988.5865 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
June 28 - July 3, 2004	TCC Teacher Training w/ Sandy McAlister Fee: \$450 No fee for Auditing Teachers On site accomodations	San Anselmo, CA San Francisco Bay Area	Athene Mantle 1717 "D" Street Hayward, CA 94541 Mail checks to PO Box 34 Hayward, Ca. 94543 (510) 886-3829 e-mail: chigoddess@hotmail.com
July 15-18, 2004	19th Annual International Tai Chi Chih Teachers Conference. Registration and payment dead- lines for double occupancy room & board: by May 1, 2004 \$350 by July 15, 2004: \$375 Non-US teacher fee: \$325	St. Louis, MO	Deedie Cote 6615 Arsenal St. St. Louis, MO 63139 (314) 645-6978 e-mail: galeportman@sbcglobal.net
Sept. 3 - 5, 2004	TCC Workshop w/Sandy McAlister	Mantova, Italy	Cristina Minelli taici@tin.it
	***For all Intensives: \$100 for re- viewers if space is available.		

Calendar (continued)

Dates	Activity	Location	Contact
Sept 9-12, 2004	TCC Intensive *** w/Pam Towne Student/Teacher attendance fee: \$200	St. Paul, MN	Cathy Dalton (651) 426-9284 e-mail: csdalton1@comcast.net
Sept. 16-19, 2004	TCC Retreat w/ Pam Towne Fee: Contact Donna for cost.	Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada	Donna Aldous (306) 236-4610 e-mail: aldous.home@sasktel.net
October 17, 2004	TCC Teacher Renewal w/Pam Towne Fee: \$50	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak 732.988.5865 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
October 19-24, 2004	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/Pam Towne Fee: \$450 (no fee for auditing teacher)	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak 732.988.5865 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Nov. 13, 2004	Teacher Renewal w/ Sandy McAlister Fee: \$35	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com (505) 292-5114
Nov. 15-20, 2004	Teacher Training w/ Sandy McAlister Fee: \$450	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com (505) 292-5114
Feb. 1-4 or Feb. 15-18, 2005	TCC Retreat w/ Sr. Antonia Mt. Calvary Retreat House	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne (760) 944-9544 ptowne@inreach.com
POSSIBLE August 16 - 21, 2004	POSSIBLE Teacher Training w/ Pam Towne w/ Sr. Antonia for last half Providence Renewal Centre	Edmonton, Alberta, Canada	Yvette Bowman 255 Heath Road Edmonton, AB T6R 1T6, (780) 441-3911 cybowman@shaw.ca
POSSIBLE Fall 2004	POSSIBLE Seijaku Training	Lubbock, TX	Larry Sava

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