

# The Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

Volume 28, No. 4

for teachers & students

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## Justin Gives Thanks

*“The jewel of T'ai Chi Chih is in its teachers.”*

*— Justin Stone*



*Editor's Note: Much of this issue was laid out and edited over the course of two weekends, next to Justin's bedside. He dozed and talked while the glow of a Macbook Pro lit his dimmed room. He was curious about the new T'ai Chi Chih photo text app demonstrated on an iPad.*

*For a postscript to this, see page 22.*

*Among many other eager communiques, he said, “Be sure to tell them thank you.”*



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*“TAI CHI CHIH IS A SERVICE TO HUMANITY. IT IS A FORM OF LOVE.” JUSTIN STONE, ORIGINATOR*

• • •

# May The Vital Force Be With You

## WWW.TAICHICHIH.ORG

Our new website redesign makes building community and connecting students and teachers so much easier. Take a look at this typical exchange (to the right). And speaking of building community, our TCC Facebook community went from about 600 “likes” (aka “friends”) to about 825 within two months of launching the new website – just from including a “plug-in” at the bottom of each website page. That’s an increase of about 40 percent, of folks who are reading weekly quotations by Justin, chiming in about their experiences with certain movements and more. Little grains of sand, little grains of sand.

## WEBSITE FUNDING & YEAR-END TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

The major website overhaul was partially funded with a (previous) generous contribution. But it is not entirely funded. If you would like to make an outreach donation, please visit [www.taichichih.org/donate/](http://www.taichichih.org/donate/). You can see that your money is/will be/has been put to superb use already. Thank you. (As a reminder, your *Vital Force* subscription does not cover website expenses at all. The website is pure, free, added-value for all community members.)

BY KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM



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## Submission Guidelines

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to [tcc@kimgrant.com](mailto:tcc@kimgrant.com). If possible, please tailor your submission to a particular section; the newsletter will hang together better that way. A 1/4 page in this newsletter runs about 200 words; a 1/2 page is 400 words.

We are always in need of photos and artwork. Please send high resolution jpgs, which the Editor will crop and edit. If you have 10-12 pieces of related artwork – calligraphy, drawings, photographs, or something that will reproduce well in B/W – please submit them for consideration in an entire issue. *The Vital Force* reserves the right to edit submission for length and clarity.

## Web Site Updates

The on-line database (for [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)) will be updated within a week of the following deadlines: January 15, March 1, April 15, June 1, July 15, September 1, October 15, & December 1.

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**Deadline: Jan 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Feb**  
 Overcoming Obstacles to  
 Preparing Teacher Candidates  
*Cosmic Consciousness Pose*

**Deadline: April 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-May**  
*Climb The Joyous Mountain:*  
 What do you like about it?  
 How do you use it in your classes?

**Deadline: July 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Aug**  
*Spiritual Odyssey:*  
 What do you like about it?  
 How do you use it in your classes?

**Deadline: Oct 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Nov**  
*TCC Photo Text:*  
 What do you like about it?  
 How do you use it in your classes?

# From Form To Formless

By LINDA ROBINSON, SEATTLE, WA

After feeding the cat, drinking my morning shake, tidying up the living room and pulling up the shades, my eyes land on the lush green courtyard, rhododendrons, ferns and a large cedar tree bowing to all passersby. The stage is set and I've "come home." Without thought, my body starts the slow familiar rhythmic glide. With quiet attention I notice areas of tension – shoulders/neck, hip, tender foot. The body adjusts miraculously, finding a way toward more ease, releasing closed areas and welcoming that innate fresh energy lying dormant while sleeping. Chi flows through the limbs, rising slowly up from the "bubbling spring," swirling around the tan t'ien, traveling to the fingertips, temples, top of the head.

Some mornings my mind is full of chatter, and I've gone through many movements before I realize "Where am I?"... "Daughter on the Mountain Top or in the Valley?" After refocusing, I'm ready to start again, allowing the *tan t'ien* to lead, sensing the connection between each part of the foot as it touches the earth and peels away. When the shifting rhythm is established, there may be mind murmurings, but they are behind the stronger awareness of gentle rocking in the body.

There are special moments, when I'm so engaged in the experience that I'm no longer thinking. As Justin would say, "TCC is doing TCC." It's an intimate state of connection to being, to silence, to a moment of "no self" – just presence, ease and spiritual delight. And then, the returning to what's around me: the clock ticking, the sharpened hues of colors outside, rising up to Cosmic Consciousness Pose and settling down to rest. My heart opens, bows to the Tao. How grateful I am to have touched such an intimate place and returned again to a renewed and deeper sense of home.



## TCC In Physical Therapy

By SARA NELSON, KENNEWICK, WA

As a physical therapist and accredited Tai Chi Chih instructor, I've seen through teaching that TCC is effective for people with fatigue, balance problems or pain. I often pick one or two movements to address a specific condition. For instance, Working The Pulley can be used as a shoulder exercise that improves range of motion, gently awakens the rotator cuff without strain and coordinates the movement of the rib cage and shoulder girdle. In another instance, one client consistently reduced his headaches by doing TCC. The wonderful research using TCC has provided a great justification for its use in a rehab setting.

Many in my practice are dealing with chronic conditions or recovering from cancer treatment, so a modified class format fits well. Classes are 30 minutes and consist of teaching two moves and discussing a principle (softness, moving from the *tan t'ien*, an introduction to *Chi*). Many students learn only a few movements but still seem to enjoy the benefits. I am very grateful to my inspirational teacher, Ray Payne, who has taught at the clinic for years – and to Justin Stone for creating TCC.

## Ocean Of Life

By BETH PRESTON, SNOHOMISH, WA

After moving to Washington seven years ago I was compelled to find a teacher so that I could finish my T'ai Chi Chih classes, barely just begun in California. Patricia Strand had also recently moved here, so naturally I began working with her. The momentum picked up from there, enriching my life in many ways. Now I teach at a community college and YMCA, occasionally rent space at our local theater and lead a free, guided practice at the library. Attendance can be spotty but it offers continuity for practice and brings attention about the practice to the public. Two other teachers, Linda Robinson and Donna Jungbluth, joined us last spring. Most recently I am now involved in a Women's Support Group recovering from cancer.

My life is filled with teachers (who may or may not be involved in TCC) – all traveling or flowing through life on waves of joy and/or pain, which I am beginning to see are just opposites on the same coin. Through these experiences a sense of community is coalescing. Thank you to my accredited teachers and my students who teach me. We are all droplets of water in the great ocean of life.

# A Long Perspective

INTERVIEW BY LINDA ROBINSON, SEATTLE, WA

*Editor's Note: The Bainbridge Island (Washington) Senior Center has a weekly T'ai Chi Chih group that has been meeting for about twenty years. It's so popular that new students want to take the beginner's class so they can join the ongoing group. The group's founding teachers, Donna Moore (age 79) and Arlene Daisy Hobbs (age 90), were interviewed by their former student.*

## **What sparked your interest to take your first TCC class?**

**Donna:** When I retired from the federal government in 1985, I wanted to explore more right brain things, so I went to a personal growth retreat. Each morning participants warmed up with a 15-minute TCC session, and I was really taken by it. I then discovered that Lillian Susumi taught TCC on Bainbridge so I signed up for her class. And a group of students and I kept meeting to practice and stay connected."

**Daisy:** I volunteered with a student in one of Lillian's classes, and she encouraged me to join her and her friends. TCC was love at first sight.



## **What led you to teach TCC and when did you get accredited?**

**Donna:** I also grew to love TCC. After retirement and after practicing for a good number of years, I knew that I really like teaching things that I like to do. So I went up to Vancouver to become accredited in 1990 and started offering a quarterly class with the Bainbridge Parks Department.

**Daisy:** I felt TCC was a spiritual experience and that it was important to coordinate the body and feel at peace with the world. I did not intend to teach but you know Donna. She was very persuasive. Upon retirement (from teaching) I went to San Diego in the late 1990's and took the training with Steve Ridley. Teaching TCC was much more tranquil than working with second graders. It really fulfilled a need I had at the time, and I received lots of encouragement.

## **You have been practicing and teaching for over twenty years. How has your own practice evolved?**

**Donna:** It's not just exercise; I get a deeper meditative calm from it. I've never been very good at sitting meditation because my mind is always galloping. But with TCC I could discipline this monkey mind while doing something useful with and for my body. It developed into a moving meditation.

**Daisy:** It's a spiritual practice and a group activity – quiet, silent and inward. And once you've learned it and the body gets it, you can let go of your mind and body. It becomes its own inner force.

## **Is there anything you would like to share with beginners?**

**Donna:** TCC keeps opening up like a rose. At the beginning it seems simple and unpretentious. And the more you get into it, the further you can go. It's totally up to you. You can do it on any level you want to. It lets you discover the richness for you. I think that's the essence of a spiritual practice. It's like when Japanese talk about not "getting misled by the finger that points at the moon." The finger is just guiding you to find your way. If students want to discover that kind of deepness, it's there for them. And if they don't want it, that's okay too. I seek the point where TCC starts doing TCC, and I am flowing with it.

**Daisy:** Each beginner needs to understand how to relax and feel totally in the body. They need to accept small steps at first. With regular practice, the rest will come.

## **Since you've gotten older and had more experience with seated TCC, could you speak to the differences between standing and seated practice?**

**Donna:** Seated TCC doesn't work as well for me, but it's better than nothing. It has some other benefits -- like breathing. When you are sitting in bed or seated in a wheelchair, you have a tendency to not breathe deeply enough. With TCC, you're moving forward and back so that your lungs are definitely getting some exercise. And the same thing with my legs: even though I wasn't able to stand, I could press my feet into the floor and move the Chi through my legs. It's important when you can't walk that you feel some control, do some good things for your body. So TCC helped focus my mind and live with pain, but it also gave me some control in my life at a difficult time.

**Daisy:** I have been able to stand, but I have trouble with balance now. I can do the forward and back movements, but side-to-side movements are difficult. When I'm seated I still coordinate the feet (forward and back) with the upper body movement. It's reassuring to have a chair when you have a balance problem. Don't try to tough it out because this will lead to problems. You do want to keep moving. It's important to your mindset, your emotions, your whole being – to be moving with others.

**Donna:** Continuing from what Daisy was saying about being in community when you're not feeling well, or coming out of an illness or an accident, it doesn't really matter how well you do TCC. It's that you are there, with the energy and that you are doing it the best you can. This is why having a practice group is so meaningful. Teaching is almost secondary. The quiet, meditative breathing, being in community, that's what I like. For elders, the point is we are showing up and doing something healthy and good for ourselves together.

## Rainy Day TCC

By DONNA J. MOORE, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WA

**K**nowing T'ai Chi Chih has really paid off since I broke my right femur on July 20, 2010. This was no ordinary break; the prosthesis from a previous hip replacement had been forced into and exploded the femur. I ended up in a wheelchair for over eight months while the bone healed sufficiently to allow a second operation. During this period I could not put any weight on my leg; I had no hip joint. After being discharged from the hospital, I was in assisted living for three months and decided to resume TCC. Being confined to a bed or wheelchair, my first efforts were minimal. However, I soon was able to manage more repetitions of the simpler moves from a seated position. The arm movements helped build upper body strength and flexibility and the emphasis on breathing deeply kept me from slumping, which allowed more oxygen to enter my lungs. Gradually I added leg movements by reminding myself to press my "bubbling springs" on the floor even though I wasn't able to stand.

Most helpful was the focused breathing and deep relaxation that taught me to better manage the pain. One tends to tighten affected muscles when pain spasms strike which, of course, only makes it worse. However, 20 years of TCC practice had given me a mindfulness process to follow, and eventually I was able to breathe through my pain. While TCC doesn't remove the pain, it helps manage it. Depression and the dread of never walking again were frequent companions, but TCC helped control that "monkey mind" when it rampaged.

Over the ensuing 14 months since the accident, I've come to rely on this daily moving meditation to focus and deepen my breathing, strengthen my body, calm my mind, and ease my pain. I'm now standing for most of the movements and adding in the more difficult ones as my balance improves. I'm not up to the "Taffies" yet, but I'm getting there. Investing in a daily TCC practice turned out to be my way of banking the skills needed for that infamous rainy day. Heartfelt thanks to Teresa Hatten and Bill Nakao, long-time students who kept our 15-person, weekly TCC practice going for over two years.

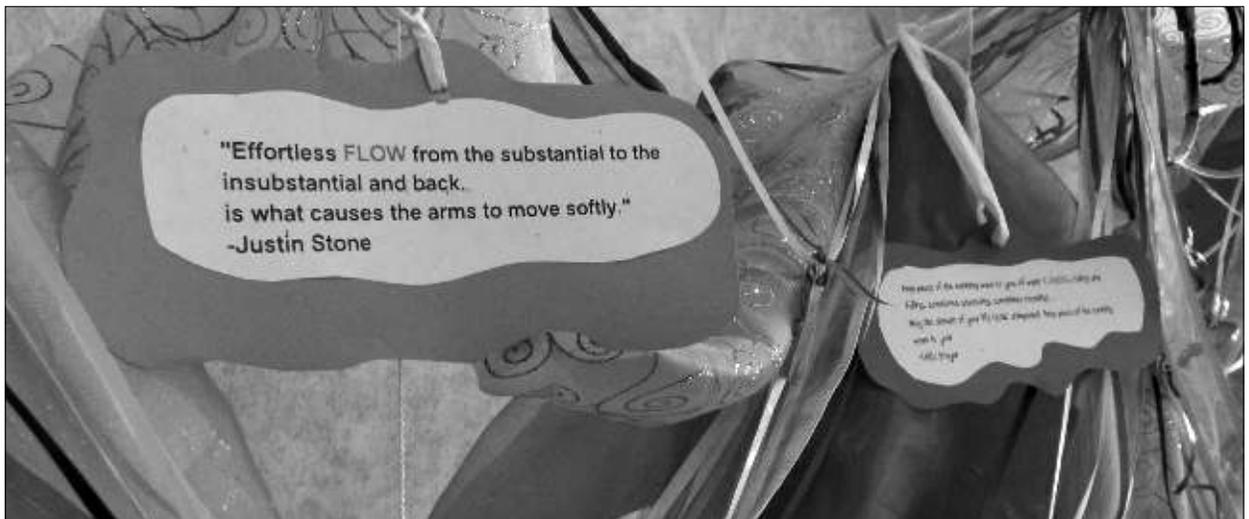
## Pain Release

By PHYLLIS BAGWELL, MARYSVILLE, WA

**A**fter many years of normal, everyday professional and personal stress, I developed my own coping mechanisms for jaw, right shoulder and right arm pain: clenching my jaws, tightening my neck and hunching my shoulders. Of course, this just made it worse. I tried chiropractic manipulation, massage and acupuncture. All of these were very helpful, but relief was short lived; it always returned within a couple of hours.

For some unknown reason (except that I had no idea what T'ai Chi Chih was and was curious), I decided to take a TCC class at the local YMCA taught by Beth Preston. After a few weeks, I heard my instructor saying, "Notice where you are holding your stress. Concentrate on the soles of your feet. Breathe." It was a trigger that allowed me to immediately unclench my jaw, relax, lower my shoulders and take a few good deep breaths.

TCC is the one set of movements that teaches students how to be still, calm and create inner peace wherever they are. It can be done in a group or alone. It can be done with an instructor, in one's home or in one's mind. (That is how I get to sleep at night, when I rarely get beyond Bass Drum.) TCC is one exercise that is helpful throughout a lifetime.



## Moving & Stilling

By ERIC BRAFF, SNOHOMISH, WA

**I**love T'ai Chi Chih. From the beginning I found it easy to pick up, and I felt the soothing effects immediately. Sitting and meditating is difficult for me after a busy day. TCC is the perfect blend of moving in stillness and calming my mind, so it's really a wonderful moving meditation. Focusing on *Chi* moving through space is the perfect focal point for stilling my mind. My favorite move is Passing Clouds – the circularity and syncing of the shifting weight is like a beautiful breeze cleansing my soul.

# Rediscovering *Seijaku* Again, For The First Time

By Sr. ANTONIA COOPER, OSF, NORTH PLAINFIELD, NJ

Isn't it amazing how the T'ai Chi Chih journey never ends. Back in the 1970's I saw a bumper sticker that stated: "The longest journey is the journey inward." My first journey to Albuquerque was back in latter part of January, 1994, to attend a *Seijaku* training led by Justin. My preparation for this course was having practiced and taught T'ai Chi Chih for three years. I really don't remember much about that training, other than being excited about meeting Justin, having heard so much about him and read his articles in *The Vital Force*. There may have been 25 to 30 in attendance which stirred up a great flow of *Chi*. One thing that did impress me was feeling very grounded after the final practice and finding it difficult to put one foot in front of the other as we left the practice space.

Once home, *Seijaku* became my daily practice. I didn't remember hearing any cautions although Justin did say that a great deal of energy would be experienced from *Seijaku* practice. Little did I know that it would be sexual energy. With my lifestyle, I didn't need such an abundance. Being a Spiritual Director, and knowing full well that the spiritual, creative and sexual energies are the same, I was nevertheless overwhelmed by the power of the practice and decided to stop *Seijaku* altogether and return to daily TCC practice.

Moving forward a mere 17 years to the July 2011 *Seijaku* training following the Ohio conference, I once again decided to renew this practice. Even though I was not practicing *Seijaku* all those years, I do believe in the gift that Justin intended to give to the teachers, and wanted to see *Seijaku* presented during the past few conferences. These presentations would invite those in attendance to have a renewed opportunity to experience and receive this gift. Justin was behind it one hundred percent. So, did I have any other choice than to attend? The previous year Ann Rutherford was sharing her insights with me about the practice and how her experience of it was evolving. In learning it back in 1994, we were imaging moving through the resistance, which was described as a brick wall. I was experiencing more physical force than necessary, or that was even

good for my body. As Ann explained in her conference talk this year, the resistance she is focusing on in her *Seijaku* practice is the resistance that is finds in daily life.

This new insight is the change that made me want to audit the *Seijaku* training. It is only natural for me/us to resist that which I/we resist the most in life. But to acknowledge resistance, to focus on what that resistance is, to hold it, to carry it, to move through it, and come out the other side gives me/us the ability to face it, and most importantly, to release it. And let's face it, we all hold resistance. Anyone who doesn't acknowledge resistance in life is not honest.

There were so many insights during this training. I learned that *Seijaku* can easily be integrated into a regular TCC practice. I experienced the importance of both feet being flat during the weight shift forward while holding and moving through the resistance. This is truly a very grounding experience. How else could this process take place without being grounded in the soles of the feet. As the back heel rises in the forward shift, one breaks through the resistance, which is the moment of release. Holding fast and letting go is the essence of the form – repetition after repetition, movement after movement. Practicing *Seijaku* in this way has opened up a deeper awareness of honesty, facing resistance and being willing to release it into gently letting it go. This in no way diminishes one's ego, rather allows one to release all that is false.

I am most grateful to Justin for creating *Seijaku* as his gift to teachers. You are invited to receive this gift, open it and discover for yourself how it will transform your practice and your life. We do not know how much longer Justin will be with us as his health continues to diminish. One thing that will live on is his encouragement to practice, practice, practice TCC, and to learn and practice *Seijaku*, the advanced form of TCC.

It is only in the last few years that Justin has changed his directive on how one learns *Seijaku* from only by attending a training, to learning it from any accredited *Seijaku* teacher. Once learned and practiced for six months, the *Seijaku* training will be the rich experience Justin intended it to be. It my hope that many teachers will be open to experience the gift of *Seijaku* practice. Peace and all good.



## Prajna (Or Innate Wisdom)

BY SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CA

“There is within you *That Which Knows*, and that is your teacher. That is the true teacher.” This quotation is taken from a talk Justin Stone gave in 1992 at the annual T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Conference. He goes on to say that we are all born with this inner, innate wisdom, called *Prajna*. But, because of our habit energies, *vashanas*, it is impossible for that wisdom to shine through to the conscious mind. TCC is one tool to help disturb and break into the cycle of these habit energies through the circulation of the *Chi*. Another is through practices that quiet our mind chatter, our habitual thought patterns, and our automatic response patterns.

Consider those times when things fall right into place with little effort or we have a chance meeting with a friend, and we call it kismet or serendipity. What about coincidences that happen because of an unexpected turn we take or choice we make. How many times are we in the right place at the right time, quite unexpectedly, and something wonderful happens? Often heard advice is “go with your gut reaction.” Could these all be examples of inner wisdom at work? We cannot hear that inner voice if *we* are always in the director's chair of our life. I have witnessed over and over at teacher training courses a candidate become so challenged or overloaded that they give up in frustration. They give up trying, thinking, and wanting, and basically are not in the “director's chair” anymore. That is often when they have a breakthrough. In the conference talk Justin says, “My advice is to trust your inherent, intuitive wisdom... rather than the accumulated knowledge that we all pile up.” “Whether you call it God, *Prajna*, your own true nature, whatever, my advice is to know it and listen to it. This means to come to know who and what you are.”

In *Heightened Awareness* Justin leads the reader through practices designed to bring about a heightened awareness: “When Consciousness is dull and obscured, our awareness is extremely limited. As the clouds are brushed away, that is, the habit energies and other obscuring factors are weakened, awareness grows from the inside and it always goes from the limited individual outlook to the far-reaching Universal.”

Whether through TCC or other awareness practices, getting in touch with that inner voice, and having the clarity to listen and hear, takes conscious effort and practice in the beginning. How much farther along our spiritual path would we be if we could easily hear that inner guidance and wisdom? All beings benefit when we make choices coming from a universal perspective rather than an individual outlook.

*Editor's Note: Justin's complete 1992 talk referenced above is available through the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association for a small fee ([www.taichichihassociation.org](http://www.taichichihassociation.org) and 505-299-2095) or as free PDF download on <http://www.gkpub.com/talks.php>.*

## Embracing Seijaku

BY PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CA

Positive feedback on *Seijaku* practice has been coming from those just beginning to explore it as well as those who learned it many years ago. Repeatedly I hear from teachers who are finding it richer and more potent than ever. This isn't surprising. When Justin Stone first taught this practice to TCC teachers in November, 1986, he said the most important event in his life was discovering *Seijaku*. That is a powerful statement.

Justin also said that starting *Seijaku* was a “key turning point” in both his health and jazz piano playing. He had had triple by-pass surgery, after which his surgeon said his heart was good for another five, maybe ten years. After just two years of practicing, Justin said at a 1989 course in Monterey, California, that “*Seijaku* has given me the confidence to look forward to many years of continued health and strength.” The practice let Justin forward to many more years of health and strength, which was obviously well placed, since his heart has lasted twenty years longer than the surgeon predicted. This is a form of health insurance we cannot only afford, but would be wise to utilize.



We know that the benefits of practicing TCC come from circulating and balancing the *Chi*. *Seijaku* greatly steps up the flow, so it naturally accelerates the resulting health, creativity and spiritual benefits. Try it and see for yourself. If you have practiced TCC for at least a year and received benefits from it, I encourage you to also learn and practice this advanced form. You can learn from Justin's *Seijaku* DVD and

from accredited teachers listed in the teacher directory with a “yes” in the far right hand column. If you are a TCC teacher who has taught for at least a year, it's appropriate for you to learn *Seijaku* and prepare for accreditation next year. If you are a *Seijaku* teacher who hasn't practiced for a while, I sincerely recommend that you re-visit it and see what it has to offer you at this time. You are invited to join us for the Portland conference in July 2012 and stay for the *Seijaku* accreditation course. You'll be glad you did.

## Post Surgery TCC (With Tips On Seated Practice)

By ANNA VAITH, RACINE, MN

I had abdominal surgery in late May which left me with a six-inch incision across my lower abdomen. I am so grateful for T'ai Chi Chih during this time of healing my body, mind and spirit. Mental TCC practices helped me fall back asleep in the early mornings in the hospital. It helped decrease physical pain, enabling me to use less narcotics, and it helped decrease anxiety and accept the temporary loss of good health.

And as I started to walk through the hospital halls, I was so grateful for the effects TCC has on improving one's balance. Despite weakness and persistent dizziness for 2-plus weeks, I was able to walk safely without falling. I watched other patients walking and wished they'd had the experience of TCC to help them with balance and confidence. As I improved, I started daily, seated TCC practices. (I was not aware seated TCC used so many abdominal muscles.) From this experience, I've made a few notes on seated TCC to help others.

- If the weight shift hurts, only shift a quarter inch or not at all. As your body heals, the weight shift will improve as well.
- TCC is an excellent exercise for someone after surgery, especially abdominal surgery. The slight weight shifts help gently stretch repairing muscles.
- Thank goodness TCC is a slow, moving meditation. There is no rush. You can move as slowly as you want.
- As your body improves, try a few moves standing. I found it easiest to do some standing moves in the middle of the practice after my muscles were more relaxed and my mind was at ease.
- You can feel just as much energy with a seated TCC practice as with standing.

I would encourage anyone who knows TCC to try seated practices while recovering from a serious injury or illness. The practices helped me stay positive despite the pain and a difficult emotional situation. They helped me keep a higher perspective on my healing, allowing the opportunity to be grateful for the experience.

## Growing A Minnesota Facebook Group

By SUE BITNEY, RICHFIELD, MN

One evening, as our beginning T'ai Chi Chih class came to an end, one of my students asked, "Why don't you have a TCC Facebook page?" I hoped she didn't notice me recoiling in horror as I to casually mention, "I don't really Facebook." She was undaunted: "It's easy; I'll show you." The following week she called up the page she had set up with me as administrator. All I needed to do was enter some information and launch it. I went home and played with it – adding information, times and dates about free classes being offered by local teachers. Now, when a teacher begins offering a new class, I post it on the Minnesota Facebook page. Last week we needed to cancel practice because of the heat, so I put a notice on our page.

I had resisted modern technology, thinking it had no place alongside TCC. I was wrong. The first night of our summer practice brought two young women, neither of whom I had seen before. Of course they had found it on Facebook; they said they had been looking for TCC practices for a long time. Three days later, I was leading the Saturday morning practice at Lake Harriet, and another student shared that she had found the practice on Facebook and was very

excited. I am not technologically savvy, but I can type. From [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), search for us under "MN tai chi chih community." And while you're at it, check out the new [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org); it is amazing.



## Pyramid Poems

no  
blunder  
could be a  
catastrophe  
unless it  
thundered  
'no'  
– JEFF HOEPNER

feel  
feeling  
what is it?  
rocking motion  
encased me  
a clear  
wrap  
– BROCK

fear  
will leave  
me so that  
I can flourish  
and allow  
myself  
peace  
– BO WADDELL

locked  
doors barred  
windows but  
freedom inside  
t'ai chi chih  
I flow  
free  
– L.O.

new  
green leaves  
on old trees  
morning light shines  
sparkling bright  
new life  
born  
– MARGY GATES

## Give 100 Hours

BY STEPHEN THOMPSON, TUPELO MS

Here's a novel idea: Volunteer 100 hours a year teaching T'ai Chi Chih. A commitment like this deepens your understanding of the form and makes the world a better place. Plus, your life will be blessed by the people TCC touches. At the teacher conference in 2007, Peter Gregory (who had taught TCC to jail inmates) challenged me to teach TCC to folks in a 12-step recovery program. When I asked why, he quoted the 11th step: *"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out."* Peter said that "Most people know how to pray, but very few know how to meditate. As instructors, we are in a perfect position to teach moving meditation to those in 12-step programs."

Men and women in recovery programs typically try to live one day at a time, attend daily meetings and, because they may have recently hit rock bottom, often have no money. You might think that teaching those who are struggling, down and out and are often penniless would not be worth your time, but that's not so.

The benefits of teaching TCC as a volunteer are many – both you and those in recovery. By regularly volunteering you'll have ample time to test and tweak different teaching techniques. You'll realize class time presents you with another opportunity to vary your teaching style, try out different instructions, even different lineups – teaching in straight lines and rows, from within the center of a circle or from within half-circles. Through frequent exposure, you will learn to quickly read your audience – adapting your presentations on the fly – to better hold their interest and increase participation.

Be persistent. Giving away 100 hours of TCC instruction might take time to cut through bureaucratic red tape. During 2007 and 2008 I tried to follow Peter's path, asking to teach TCC in jail, but Mississippi jails are tough. I couldn't break in. If a similar stone falls across your pathway to volunteering, flow around it another way to volunteer. In early 2009 I began volunteering inside NMHS Behavioral Health Center, teaching TCC to short-stay (1- to 4-week long) inpatients. Lessons are one hour and taught twice weekly before supper. It took six months of discussion with management before TCC was accepted and worked into their schedule. Was it worth it? Most definitely. Would you find it worthwhile? Commit to 100 hours and see for yourself.



## Six Healing Sounds

BY RON RICHARDSON, TUPELO, MS

First on my agenda each morning is to experience the beginning of the day with a T'ai Chi Chih practice. Unless there is inclement weather, I prefer to be among the oak, pine and magnolia trees. As with eating three meals a day, I cannot fathom getting through a day without TCC.

At workshops and annual conferences I often hear questions about what movements are least and most enjoyed. There was a time when, without hesitation, I could name my least favorite movement, but this is getting harder to do. I'm now most fond of Six Healing Sounds. I once wondered if I enjoyed this simply because it was close to the end of practice. But no, it's the sounds. They have a distinct character that captures the healing and wholeness generated by the movements. During the early morning hours, geese fly overhead from one local pond to another, sometimes right when I am doing Six Healing Sounds. Their squawking synchronizes with a motion resembling TCC. Totally engulfed in nature, my experience is, indeed, a blooming of the flower.

My immune system has improved over the years

to the point that illnesses, even common colds, are few and far between. Why? I do not have a clue. I remember Justin saying that it is not as important to understand the why of the movements as it is to reap the benefits of the movements. Works for me.

## Six Healing Sounds

BY AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

*Editor's Note: Amy attended a recent TCC retreat given by Carmen Brocklehurst and has written up what Carmen taught for each movement in the hope that others may benefit.*

If the mouth gets cottonmouth, it suggests you became *yin*, more receptive, pliable, flexible. Can you hear the sounds inside yourself? Can you feel the sounds inside the *tan t'ien*? The body is a symphony. It makes a song. If one organ is giving you trouble, repeat that corresponding sound over and over.

*Editor's Note: The most important resource for teaching tips is Justin Stone. Watch and listen to him on his instructional DVD. And read about and inspect his movements in the Photo Textbook. Both are available from Good Karma Publishing. His words are also available in the essential booklet, T'ai Chi Chih Teaching Tips, available through the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association for a small fee ([www.taichichihassociation.org](http://www.taichichihassociation.org) and 505-299-2095.)*

## Parkinson's Stresses

By CAROL CHAMBERLAIN, SIERRA VISTA, AZ

After being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, I learned that many neurologists recommend T'ai Chi Chih for patients like me, so I began taking TCC classes about a year ago. At that time I often required a cane and my physical activities were quite limited. With the help of medications, TCC and other exercise classes, I am now able to function almost normally. I believe the main thing TCC helps me with is stress management; any amount of stress makes tremors and other Parkinson's symptoms worse. For this reason alone, I will continue to practice, and I am very grateful to have learned it.



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## A Play, A Trinity

By MARI CONN, OCEAN GROVE, NJ

The setting was idyllic. After eating, swimming and conversing at the goodbye picnic at the Mt St Francis convent in Ringwood, NJ, in July, we did a silent T'ai Chi Chih practice. I felt the cool grass under my feet, heard birds chirping and followed the movements of my teachers. Imagine my surprise when in the middle of this practice an entire short play was revealed to me. I wrote the entire play the next day and two other plays have followed to make a trinity. (I should mention I am an actor and a playwright. But playwriting does not come easily to me. But that day it did.) So I have made a promise to myself that no matter what, I will do TCC everyday – whether it be an entire practice or one movement.

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## Remembering Movement Names

By MARIEE MITCHELL, OXNARD, CA

*[From Lisa Otero: In my goal to have all my students know the names of the movements in order by the end of the year, I suggested that coming up with a story linking the names would be a good way to remember them. This is one such story.]*

While doing the Rocking Motion, I fall into a hole. A Bird Flaps Its Wings and flies to get help from the T'ai Chi Chih'uns who are sitting Around The Platter. The info ball is passed Around The Platter [as a Variation] and the alarm is sounded on the Bass Drum. Word is sent to the Daughter On The Mountaintop and to the Daughter In The Valley and the info ball is "carried to the side" regions as well. Meanwhile I'm trying to Push Pull my way out. After setting their vision on a star and Pulling In The Energy, the T'ai Chi Chih'uns decide to do the Pulling Taffy motion to try and get me out. They move sideways stepping first to the left and then to the right. It won't work; I'm an Anchor. Now they're wringing their hands and making Wrist Circles. Lisa says to remember that circularity is very important, so try the Perpetual Motion working the pulley. Suddenly there's Light At The Top Of The Head and Light At The Temple. I'm out. I breathe a Joyous Breath as the Passing Clouds reveal the sun. I give Six Healing Sounds for anybody else left in the hole and assume the Cosmic Consciousness Pose for thankful awareness. Then all us T'ai Chi Chih'uns bow to one another for a job well done.

## Transitions

By DIANNE MOODY, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

For years I had heard or seen snippets about T'ai Chi Chih and I always knew that at some point I would learn how to do it. About three years ago that opportunity came. I was at an absolute low in my life, having just left an overwhelming corporate job that left me more stressed and exhausted than I had ever been in my entire life. I was so depleted that I could barely struggle to the backyard to lie in the hammock where I would read again and again the story relating the struggles that Odysseus encountered in returning to his home, Ithaca, after years abroad with his heroic adventures. Looking back on it, I was facing some of the same life issues: leaving the time of outer achievement and establishment of my personal identity and transitioning to a deeper, more internal and spiritual time.

Unknown to me at the time, the practice of TCC would become a huge part of that transition. A couple of months later, I had a very gentle and pleasant introduction to TCC with my first class taught by Judy Hendricks who really motivated me to practice. Since then, I have taken many more classes, attended retreats and participated in teacher prep training and *Seijaku* classes. Sometimes I went on this journey kicking and screaming, but with the love, support and encouragement of my teachers (Carmen, Dora and Judy), I have stuck with it and received great benefits. I would sometimes arrive at a class or retreat being totally whacked out of shape for various reasons and would leave feeling joyous and very connected to myself.

The result of this whole journey is that I am feeling better on all levels than I have for a long time. I am maintaining my ideal weight (after losing almost 50 pounds) and getting regular exercise. I am more mindful and more clear and consistent with my spiritual practices. TCC has allowed me to face several unpleasant things about myself, and I suspect that growth opportunities will never stop. My next challenge is to improve my practice as much as I possibly can before participating in November's teacher accreditation. I feel great appreciation for the mentoring I have received on many levels, and I feel TCC will always be a source of growth and transformation as I move forward in life.

## Bone Density Improvements & More

*By Gloria Mancusco, River Edge, NJ*

In late 2008, I started a beginning T'ai Chi Chih class with Dorene Krause and have enjoyed three courses with her; I believe she gave me a very good foundation. Then I was lucky to find an early morning class with Bill Moore, who continues to fine-tune my movements; I especially enjoy our circle practices. When I began TCC classes, my blood pressure, cholesterol and triglycerides were considered borderline high. Recently, my blood work came back in the normal range; my blood pressure is now also normal. My bone density test showed a significant improvement, as well, which is the biggest surprise to my doctor. I believe these benefits are due to regular TCC practice (as Justin Stone suggests). I am also more centered, energized and focused, and I find my physical balance has greatly improved. Thank you to Justin Stone, Dorene and Bill, who have given me these tools.

*By Kathleen "Kay" Spaloss, River Vale, NJ*

There is an old joke about a musician who asks, "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" The answer, of course, is, "Practice, Practice, Practice." My question is, "How do I get the most benefits from T'ai Chi Chih movements?" The answer, again, is, "Practice! Practice! Practice!" I enjoy this with Bill Moore at a "Prime Time" class at Valley Hospital in Paramus. The most significant benefit is that my bone density tests have changed to normal for the first time in over 10 years, and I no longer take medication for this issue anymore. My overall strength has increased, as evidenced by being able to lift and care for my young grandchildren. And my overall energy has increased, as I now keep up easily with the older children. I can practice TCC movements anywhere and any time, but I receive and enjoy the most benefits when attending Bill's classes. There is always something new to learn.

## Both Partners, Stronger With Each Practice

*By John H Schwartz, Spokane, WA*

I've been practicing T'ai Chi Chih for two and one-half years thanks to Pat Moseley. After being diagnosed with cancer in my spinal canal and breaking a hip, I was using a walker and had little feeling in my feet. I also had terrible balance and walking issues. Pat informed me that she was starting a weekly TCC class that might be beneficial. Forever the skeptic, I agreed – not realizing what lay ahead. My first session began with seated TCC, completely convincing me this was not going to work or help. However, I continued to attend class and practice at home and work during the week. Pat had placed the fear of God in me and I didn't want to disappoint her good intentions. It was discouraging in class to realize that I was working and sweating like crazy, but everybody else was calmly flowing through the movements. Gradually I noticed small changes in my ability to maneuver. Perhaps this really works. Pool therapy was the only other thing I was doing, and I had been doing that previously.

Pat was very patient and allowed me to get away with some really bad habits. She was always encouraging even when it was a struggle for me to practice. The improvements continued so I continued. It has been difficult for me to master the movements (I still struggle), but I'm actually at a point of knowing what I should be doing, and I frequently move correctly. When I do it brings a special feeling. After a full session I'm energized and ready to go physically, mentally and spiritually. The class has also introduced me to many new friends who share my thoughts and interests. I recommend TCC to all of my friends, especially those suffering physically. Last year my wife started practicing as well, always using the video at home and making me feel guilty if I don't join her.

In retrospect I really never thought I could move and enjoy life as I currently do again. I have not fallen in over six months, which is a huge change. I've not ridden a bike in five years but soon that will change. I can walk without crutches on occasion, and next week I will hook up our trailer to spend a week on the Pacific Coast. Yes, there are limitations, but TCC has given me back a large part of my once-active life. Thank you, Pat, for introducing me to this experience and constantly motivating me to do more.

*By Laura Schwartz, Spokane, WA*

I have been practicing T'ai Chi Chih for about two years now, and I have experienced a huge improvement in my health. In fact, in my wildest dreams, I could not have imagined that it would be so improved. I was born with rickets and suffered a crack in my right femur about 10 years ago that never quite healed. So when I began TCC classes with my wonderful instructor, Pat Moseley, I walked with a pronounced limp and was unable to walk up and down stairs "one-foot-to-one-step" at a time. My balance was quite poor, and I was unable to exercise without significant pain. I was also more than a few pounds overweight, which added to the discomfort.

The first thing I noticed about the practice was its ability to help me relax and the feeling of wellbeing it brought. I really loved that, so I began to practice daily. I bought a video and took it to work with me so that I could use it during my lunch hour. This helped me stay alert throughout the afternoon, whereas before I had been so sleepy. Then I began to realize I was getting stronger. With each practice session I saw improvement in my balance; my sessions no longer involved pain. I was hooked. I have now dropped over 50 pounds and have begun modest weight-bearing exercises. I've stopped smoking, too. And my mood is certainly improved – just ask my husband. I am very thankful to the God that brought it, my instructor, her husband and the great group who practices together.

# Gateway To Eastern Philosophy & Religion

By JUSTIN STONE

## THREE STORIES: WHO AM I?

Those of you who've been with me in T'ai Chi Chih have heard me say over and over again, "Your task in this life is to find out who and what you are. You can't find out what you are until you find out who you are!"

Here are two stories about two different men trying to answer the question "Who am I?" When Rabindranath Tagore, the great poet of India and a great translator (he translated the Kabir poetry I read the first night), asked himself "Who am I?" this is his response: "The first day's sun asked at the first manifestation of being, 'Who are you?' No answer came. Year after year went by. At the last sun of the day, the last question uttered on the western seashore in the silent evening was, 'Who are you?' Rabindranath got no answer." He must have been an unhappy man, a tortured man, albeit a very brilliant one. He didn't know who he was.

Contrast Rabindranath's response to the question "Who am I?" with Tako-san's answer. Tako-san was a very simple man who lived in Japan. He founded a place called Itoen, a small organization called the Conscience of Japan (I'm afraid Japan needs it now), a place you have to be invited back to every night. The sole purpose of Itoen is to give help to others. They go out in the daytime and do various services. Tako-san had been a Zen Buddhist monk. When you hear this quotation, you wonder if he didn't continue as a Zen Buddhist monk. When he asked "Who am I?" this is his response: "Who am I? With one rice bowl, a thousand homes, alone I roam for countless autumns, being neither empty nor phenomenal, returning to life without pleasure or pain. Warm days and green grass at the river's bank. Cool breezes sweeping calmly beneath the bridge. Should you ask, by chance, who are you? A bright new moon floating over the water." See, he knows who he is! "A bright new moon floating over the water." What a difference. Tako-san is, I think, a happy man.

One time, some T'ai Chi Chih students came with their teacher to see me in Carmel. They'd come quite a long way. We sat in my house overlooking a garden. As always happens, one asked about reincarnation. That's not a very accurate term. I answered, "I'm not very sure what you mean by reincarnation. Is this what you mean? There is a tree in the yard; leaves are falling from the tree. It is autumn. It is the nature of the tree to shed its leaves in autumn. But they'll be back in the spring time." The student immediately piped up, "But they won't be the same leaves!" My answer was: "Why identify with the leaves; why not identify with the tree?" She was getting into individuality, speaking about herself. We

*Knowing  
the Self is  
being the Self.  
Self cannot  
be objectified.  
You can't  
make an object  
out of yourself.*

hate to give up our individuality. I actually think that people love their suffering: "Doctor, don't take away my suffering, what would I have left?"

Mind and Breath, as thought and action, fork out into two branches. But both spring from a single root. That is something for you to think about. Mind and breath spring from a single root. Is there anything more basic than breath? Knowing the Self is being the Self.

Self cannot be objectified. You can't make an object out of yourself.

All of you in T'ai Chi Chih have seen the Tao symbol. A synonym for Tao is T'ai Chi. It is called the Supreme Ultimate, the basis of Chinese cosmology. For those of you who have not taken T'ai Chi Chih, here we have the ineffable, the unspeakable reality, the Tao about which nothing can be said. Lao Tzu said the Tao is always in motion. The Tao breaks up into two energies, *Yin* energy and *Yang* energy, both of which existed before there were people or place. The first manifestation is the *Yin-Yang* energy. From the *Yin-Yang* energy come heaven, earth and mankind. Mankind is the wedding of the *Yang* of heaven and the *Yin* of earth. This is why Japanese flower arrangements (*Ikebana*) are always three pointed: Heaven, earth and man.



From heaven, earth and man, come the ten thousand things, which means the world of phenomena. Most philosophers and others try to understand life through the analysis of the ten thousand things. But there's no end to phenomena! That isn't the way to do it. The way the sage does it, and the T'ai Chi person does it, is to work backwards. From the world of the ten thousand things, we work back to heaven, earth, and man. Then balancing

the flow of the *Chi*, we return to the *Yin* and *Yang*. When it is balanced, we are back to the 'Uncarved Block'. The Uncarved Block is the way things were before anything altered them, before the beginning of the world. In my friend Dr. Ch'ang Chung-yuan's great book, *Creativity and Taoism*, he has a drawing of the Uncarved Block. He also has some very lush drawings by Chinese artists with it. But he says about the drawing of the Uncarved Block, "Those who like this will be heard from." I used it for an X-mas card. Most who view the drawings prefer the very lush sketches of bamboo, but the Uncarved Block is Original Essence.

Chinese cosmology differs vastly from India's *Samkhya* with its quest for knowledge through enumeration and classification of the twenty-five characteristics of our world of experience. In contrast,

*From the book Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion, excerpted and reprinted with permission from Good Karma Publishing, and available on www.gkpub.com.*

# Justin Stone: Gateway to Eastern Philosophy

Chinese cosmology says first there is Reality, from that comes *Yin* and *Yang* energy, from that comes heaven, earth, and man, and then the ten thousand things, the world of phenomena. Work backward, which is a form of yoga, and you come to the ineffable Reality that is the Uncarved Block.

## THE RECIPROCAL NATURE OF MIND AND PRANA

... For those of you who are doing T'ai Chi Chih, *Seijaku*, or are interested in Chinese philosophy, I want to talk about the reciprocal nature of mind and *prana*. I'm going to use the word *prana* instead of *Chi* because it's written that way. But *prana* and *Chi* are the same thing. Wars have been fought over different words used to describe the same thing: God is Allah, no, he's Jehovah, no, he's called something else. It's a difference in language! Does that mean there are three different Gods because there are three different words for it? Just go back to the Crusades and other wars to see the truth of this. People will kill for a difference in a word. It's beyond me.

The reciprocal character of mind and *prana*, *Chi*, means that a certain type of mind or mental activity is invariably accompanied by a *prana* or *Chi* of corresponding character, whether transcendental or mundane. For instance, a particular mood, feeling or thought is always accompanied by a *prana* of corresponding character and rhythm. This is reflected in the phenomenon of breathing. Now that is a very deep statement. A *prana* of corresponding character

*every emotion,  
every thought,  
is accompanied  
by a  
corresponding  
Chi or prana.*

and rhythm, which is reflected in the phenomenon of breathing. When you're angry, you take short breaths, but when you're concentrating on a problem, your breath becomes very fine and almost passes away. Thus anger produces not only inflamed thought feeling, but also a harsh and accentuated roughness of breathing. On the other hand, when there is calm concentration

on an intellectual problem, the thought and breathing exhibit a like calmness. When the concentration is deep, as in an effort to solve a subtle problem, unconsciously the breath is held. When one is in a mood of anger, pride, envy, shame, arrogance, lust and so on, this particular *prana* or air can be felt immediately within oneself. In deep *samadhi*, the super conscious state, no thought arises so there is no perceptible breathing. At the initial moment of enlightenment, when normal consciousness is transformed, the *prana* undergoes a revolutionary change. Accordingly, every mood, thought, and feeling, whether simple, subtle, or com-



plex, is accompanied by a corresponding or reciprocal *prana*.

If you are sensitive enough to detect the vibrations of the other, you know all about the other person, don't you? In the advanced state of *Dhyana*, meditation, the circulation of blood is slowed down almost to cessation. Perceptible breathing also ceases, and the yogi experiences some degree of illumination in a thought free state of mind. Then, not only a state of consciousness occurs, but also a change in the physiological functioning of the body. With enlightenment comes a physiological change in the functioning of the body. That's why it is said in Buddhism, "When the body is mastered, the mind is mastered." Master the mind, and the body is mastered.



It's very interesting that every emotion, every thought, is accompanied by a corresponding *Chi* or *prana*. In India, they speak of five *pranas*. Those of you who are doing T'ai Chi Chih know as you are doing "Pulling In The Energy," you visualize the five colored *pranas* coming in through the fingers: red, white, blue, black and yellow or green. Instead, T'ai Chi Chih teachers tell you to visualize the energy from the most distant star coming through the fingertips. Unless you're going to devote your whole life, your every moment to it, it would be hard to visualize the five *pranas* coming in.

They talk about the *prana* that takes things this way, the *prana* that causes elimination and so forth. The study of *prana* is a very big one in India. I believe all the *Roshi* or the sages knew how to use the *prana*. It is interesting how, very often, when we meet people, we talk about "bad vibes." Then we talk ourselves out of it. Those bad vibes have to do with the *Chi*, the *prana*. Zen Masters can look at your face and not only see what you are and what you've been, but also tell if you are failing. Roshi Sasaki told me that Alan Watts was failing. (I don't want to pick on Alan; he was very brilliant and a nice person.) Roshi said, "He's giving the impression to young people that he is enlightened, and he's going downhill very rapidly and won't last very long." Then he said to me, "I'd like you to write a book refuting what he has said." I'm not a debunker! I said, "No thank you." I wouldn't do it. I don't know how old Alan was when he died, 55 or something like that. A Master can look at you and see.

As you do T'ai Chi Chih, you will be able to look at others, and, particularly on the cheeks, you will see pinpoints of red if the *Chi* is flowing. Or you will see it in the eyes and be able to tell a great deal about the other person. If you look at someone who is drinking too much coffee, or who smokes a lot, you'll see that not only the *Chi* isn't flowing properly, but the cells are not taking in the oxygen they need. It's very easy to spot someone who is a habitual smoker. It interferes with the flow of the *Chi*.

# Transformation & Empowerment

BY HANNAH HEDRICK, FERN FOREST, BIG ISLAND, HI

*Editor's Note: During two conference breakout sessions on "T'ai Chi Chih: Part of All You Do," facilitator Hannah Hedrick invited participants to reflect on how TCC manifests in their ordinary, mundane lives, beyond their practice. More than 20 teachers participated in each session, yet almost all of the "testimonials" reflected transformation (of behavior, perception or attitude) or empowerment (experienced or observed). Hannah invites session participants to expand on their comments; others are also encouraged to write about how TCC is a part of all they do.*

## Balance & Creativity, Steering The Course Of Our Lives

Without exception, TCC teachers themselves benefitted from making TCC a part of all they do. They were able to be more patient and compassionate in the face of challenges and resistance; they learned to respect the ways in which others achieved balance, whether through computer games or crafts.

Mark Moloney, who was unable to attend either session, provided a written statement. Mark wrote that TCC "has reinforced awareness of *yin/yang* balance inside me and all around me. When strong emotions have pulled me off center, TCC has helped me sense those emotions and find a balancing antidote, a *yang* for too much *yin*, or some *yin* for *yang* that's gone overboard. TCC stimulates people in creative endeavors (which includes all of us because steering the course of our lives and choosing to go with the flow are among the most creative things we do), helping me to overcome blockages of ego confusion."

## Response Of Others To Chi

**Non-humans:** A surprising number of observations related to TCC's positive impact of TCC on non-humans. As Suni McHenry commented, "Animals sense enhanced *Chi*." Several people reported butterflies landing on their hands during their practices. Cats purr and come close. Fish form schools when TCC is done near the water. Ravens and eagles "pay attention" when TCC is done in their habitat. Curly, a bossy little bird, was so mesmerized by a TCC practice done near him that he swayed back and forth and then fell off his perch; now he falls asleep during the TCC practice. A parrot that usually prefers to stay on its perch gets on the floor when its owner practices TCC and bobs and weaves. Rabbits and shy animals can be so entranced that they do not move, even when cars drive by.

**Spouses, family members:** Some spouses do not have a positive attitude toward TCC and report that they feel shut out from something important in the world of the loved one. But several TCC teachers described the "transformation"

in their spouse's or family members' perception of TCC. Initially, some spouses felt resentful and threatened when their partners went to or taught classes or practiced TCC. Some "acted out" by being demanding or grumpy or by creating distractions. But most teachers reported that over time, family reactions became more accepting and loved ones were able to appreciate something that so obviously benefited their loved ones. In one case, a spouse tagged along to a TCC conference; when asked by a teacher if he was with the conference, he felt so left out he later learned the movements, went to a TCC retreat and felt honored when Justin corrected him.

Some spouses feel that they benefit by "osmosis" from being around a partner practicing TCC. One husband revealed that over several years, he moved from his initial impression of "Doing this stuff can't be good" to becoming an accredited teacher himself. In a case with a very different outcome, a husband felt that TCC was creating distance between him and his wife. He kept saying he wanted to learn TCC, but finally took a class only when separation was imminent. Ironically, TCC helped him become the man his former wife wanted him to be.

**Health care facilities:** Seeing an "attitude adjustment" in health care facilities appeared to be a common experience for TCC teachers. Because many teachers are older and have survived chronic conditions, surgeries and other hospitalizations and rehabilitations, they have lots of opportunities to practice in health care settings, where practitioners and fellow patients frequently reported that just watching someone do TCC helped them reduce stress. Similarly, grandmother-aged teachers have seen that TCC calms down an 8-week old, while an 8-month-old granddaughter sways as the grandma is *yinning* and *yanging*.

## "Evolution through Chi"

Powerful examples of overcoming grief, fear and other unbalancing emotions (including feeling "weird") emerged during the session. Most teachers noted a significant "transformation" in the way they responded to death and other losses, extreme stress and volatile situations. After becoming TCC teachers, they could see the "mystical" aspects of distressing situations. Instead of re-

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sponding with tears, anger and feelings of helplessness, they were able to be direct without being upset in situations such as spouse job changes, accusations of being self-centered, verbal attacks and emotional abuse. TCC empowered people to be themselves even when other people perceived them as being “weird.” *Seijaku* was specifically cited for its benefits in self-acceptance and for being tranquil in the midst of disruptive behaviors.

The younger people were when they started doing TCC, the more quickly benefits accumulated, including the courage to make TCC a part of all they do, at the risk of not being accepted by others. One younger teacher reported that TCC allowed him to be himself, and that he is very grateful to be at to this point of acceptance where he can talk about it with other people. An older teacher expressed gratitude for being able to become the kind of calm, centered person she used to admire many years ago. Another commented on the ability to work through the many layers of “being” and to see that everything is okay.

Other examples of “evolution through *Chi*” included no longer feeling that you have to explain or defend something, the ability to “disengage” or “not go there” and the ability to “detoxify” without having to “defend, explain, justify.” At other times, people can sincerely “apologize for the impact” or say “You may be right” without feeling they have to defend themselves.

An extreme example of the positive impact of “embedding” TCC was reflected in the story of a teacher whose husband’s friend was killed in an accident when the husband was driving: “TCC saved my life that day.” The “empowerment” aspect of the story was enhanced when a small boy “with joy in his eyes” joined her when she did rocking motion while waiting for a prescription at the pharmacy.

“Joy through Movement,” the subject of a morning presentation, was referenced in an empowerment story about a woman named Joy who came to class using a walker. The teacher invited her to participate while sitting or lying down. Joy persevered, eventually walking with a cane and learning to do TCC well and volunteer in a health care facility, although she walks with difficulty.



## Honoring Justin

BY CARMEN BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Justin says hello and “Please tell everyone I send my love for a good conference.” It is hard to believe how quickly things change. Ever since conferences began in 1985, Justin looked forward to going and he began preparing early. The first one

he missed was our first international conference, in Banff, Canada, in 2003. And when Justin was no longer able to attend, he asked Brock to videotape a message from him. Last year Justin let us know that at age 93 it would be too difficult to keep up with answering mail.

Some people feel sad about Justin aging, but please know that Justin is wise; he knew these days would come, and so he left us bountiful gifts. First and foremost is our wonderful discipline of TCC, but of course he’s left us his demonstration of TCC on his DVDs, as well as his writings. I’m sure each person here has felt blessed to have Justin’s writings and to do TCC with him through his DVD.

Know those and you will know his *teh*.

And by association, you will know your own inner sincerity; you will have Knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate within.

If we have gotten so much from his writings and media, it is up to us to honor him by sharing it with our students and others. And we do. The ripple in the pond of life begins its journey each time we share TCC. In his booklet, “*Evolution Through Chi*,” Justin says that TCC is like Zen – it does not rely on words. This is one of our most important lessons. The language of the heart goes beyond words. TCC holds the key that unlocks the heart.

*Justin says  
that TCC is  
like Zen –  
it does not  
rely on  
words*

To truly know Justin we must look to his gift of TCC. Here we can always find our connection to him and to each other. Would you please join me in a silent practice of TCC? Antonia, Justin’s appointed Guide of TCC, set the course for this conference; TCC will lead us. Begin this conference by once again experiencing the *teh* you have come to know through TCC.

*Author’s Postscript: Everyone was invited to feel Justin’s presence during the movements, knowing that each time we do TCC, Justin is with us. Many people confirmed feeling this after the practice.*

## Seijaku, A Heightened Awareness Practice

By ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Justin Stone often tells his T'ai Chi Chih teachers, "It is no accident that you have become TCC teachers." His deepest wish is that all TCC teachers evolve their spiritual consciousness to a very high state, and he feels that TCC is fundamentally a spiritual practice. In *Spiritual Odyssey*, he says, "I define Spirituality as identification with the Real."

Justin created TCC as a service to humanity. We all know the miracles that often happen when the *Chi* is circulated and balanced. In addition, he created *Seijaku* for his teachers and advanced TCC students. I teach *Seijaku* as a practical method of heightening spiritual evolution, and I use methods that differ from Justin's. Years ago, I spoke to Justin about how I teach *Seijaku*; his response to my method, "Of course, dear, *Seijaku* is a heightened awareness practice. What you are doing makes sense."

Justin and other spiritual masters highlight the two ingredients necessary to accelerate spiritual evolution: the ability to concentrate and attainment of heightened awareness. Furthermore, they all attest that no one else can do the work for you, and it is the job of an authentic teacher to set the students on their own path, which can be a lonely one and sometimes an unsettling experience.

In teaching *Seijaku* practice, I ask the student to place the mind in the *tan t'ien* as their point of concentration. It is essential that the mind be kept one-pointed. Next comes awareness of sensory stimu-

lation. In *Heightened Awareness*, Justin highlights these awareness practices, which could be summarized as, "Become aware of sensory input, then let it go."

When I teach *Seijaku*, I encourage students to "keep it simple:" Become aware of just one habit, which interferes with the ability to rest in a state of unconditioned awareness. The obscuring habit could be an attitude of anger at self or others; it could be judgment or resentment; it could be grief or any addiction. It's easy for all of us to come up with a habit, which interferes with Pure Awareness.

Once they have chosen a habit, they place their mind in the *tan t'ien*, the point of concentration and begin the "soft/resistance/soft" *Seijaku* movement pattern. They begin in softness, and as their weight shift slowly takes them into resistance, they feel the dense quality of their chosen habit and then pass through it into the open Clear Light of Cosmic Consciousness. It is up to the practitioner to design the density of the resistance section. Sometimes they choose to add color, taste, texture, sound and mental/emotional feel to the resistance section. I invite them to "play" with these elements. There is no thinking in the resistance; there is only a "felt awareness of quality." The density of the resistance section can vary from practice to practice; this is dynamic, not static, energy work. The important point is for the students to stay relaxed but alert as they begin the weight shift in softness, enter the resistance as the front foot flattens, then slide back out into softness as the back heel rises.

Staying in the present is critical; there is no anticipation of what lies ahead, or backward looking as one passes through. The concentration must stay focused and clear; I do not teach the student to push with the breath or push with the body's muscles. With concentration in the *tan t'ien* and the mind held open, relaxed and alert, the weight shift leads the practice. There is just a felt sense of moving presence, with the presence feeling sometimes soft and light, while at other times thick and dense. The effect is to quicken and deepen the *Chi* flow.

A very curious thing often happens when I teach *Seijaku* in this manner. Those whose primary lifestyle is one of sufferer, will attempt to stay in the resistance far longer than after the back heel comes up. Those who actively practice spiritual by-passing (not wanting to acknowledge and accept the pain and difficulties that being human brings) don't want to create any resistance section at all. But for those who are willing to practice what Justin calls, "first Bare Awareness, then Heightened Awareness," they often experience a sudden power surge of freedom from the egoic consciousness. Joy Thru Movement attains a whole new meaning – one of identification with the Real.



## Memories BY ROSEANN HEINRICH, PARMA, OH

On July 26, 2011, while I practiced T'ai Chi Chih, I thought about corrections I received while attending conference. I implemented tilting my head up just a bit more than I had been. (When did I start to drop my head down?) That's what is so great about conference – keeping the form pure, correcting those little things that just seem to happen. As I continued moving through the practice, I found myself reliving the last few days. I saw the face of a special friend, one I had not seen in couple of years. I smiled. I warmed to the thought of the hugs, the joy of being with friends, comrades, people who “get it.”

Softly, I brought myself back to my practice. Moving in softness and with purpose. Then, I would meet another movement that tickled my mind with a new memory. I decided to allow the pleasant stream of memories, to go with the flow and let these memories flood in to lift my practice, my being, with joy. I am so grateful to have TCC as part of my life. I am so grateful for the friends who came to conference to serve each other in very special ways. I am grateful to have participated. I feel so much love and feel so loved.

Was it me? Was it everyone else? Maybe it is a sign of the times, hidden from the media. Love will overcome and we will move through the darkness that “appears” to cover the earth. The love we share, the practices we utilize will dissipate the illusion of darkness. For us, the members of the TCC community, we will do this through our practice. Others will assist in the many ways they find joy in their lives with their own meditative practices. We are all doing what is best for each of us.

To all who attended the conference, I say, thank you and bravo. We need each and every one to support the light we bring to Mother Earth. We continue to grow when we come together and the light becomes brighter. To those who could not join us at conference this year, we send our light and our practice to support you through this time. To those teachers who have not been to conference (ever or for many years), come join us. Bring your light. Let us lift you up too. Plan now to join us in Portland, Oregon, where we will move together once again in a practice given to us as a gift through Justin Stone. You, too, can be lifted in more joy than you can express when you do your practice. Hope to see you there.



## Reflections From A First-Timer

BY EV HANSON-FLORIN, SIDLESHAM, UK

T'ai Chi Chih practices started with Antonia Cooper, our Guide, and ended with our Guide and the teacher trainers, Sandy McAlister and Pam Towne; there were various leaders in between. They were truly Joy Thru Movement. Our speakers enlightened us with topics such as “Joy Through Movement and Beyond” (Alice Holden), “Embracing Seijaku” (Ann Ruthertford and Pam Towne), and “Teaching TCC to Children” (Judy Hendricks). Three breakout sessions included movements that highlighted new ideas and reinforced that which needed further exploration. Organization and schedule were well paced and planned with thought to roommate matches and allowing time for reflection. The raffle was filled with generosity for future conference scholarships.

One cannot imagine what it's like to practice TCC and *Seijaku* with about 80 teachers – you have to be there for the experience. It's truly a joy to be part of the generous spirit of the TCC community. With gratitude to those who made this event a reality.

## Love Beginning To End

BY CARMEN L. BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

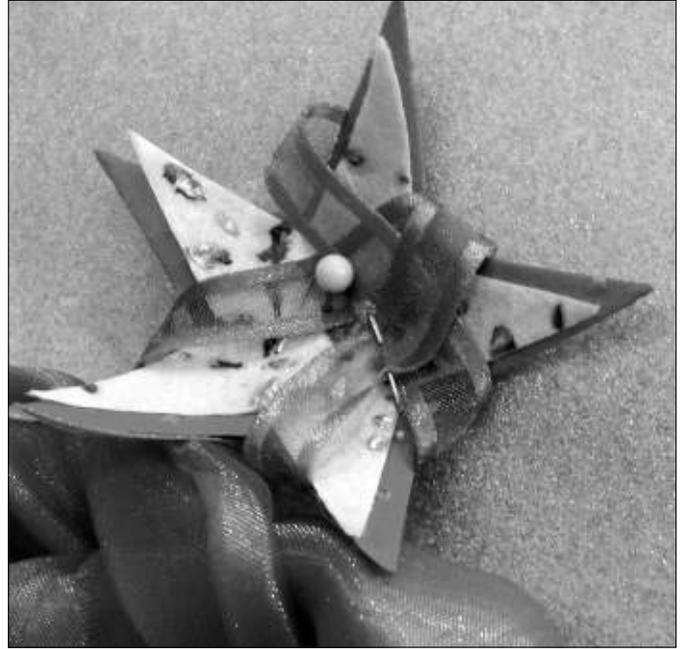
As we drove to the annual conference in Ohio we went past a rather small hotel named Sawmill Creek Hotel. My husband, Brock, asked if that was where we would be holding our conference. A definite “no.” This hotel did not have the welcome of peace and beauty that usually awaits us. In about five minutes came upon the inviting entry to Sawmill Creek Resort. From the moment we arrived we knew that this would be the perfect place for us.

Several T'ai Chi Chih teachers were registering at the same time as I; it was wonderful to see old friends and meet new friends. Registration was

well organized, as was everything else that Lucinda Kutsko had coordinated. We were greeted by teachers and some of their students who had come to be of service. These students would attend our community practice, but were being encouraged to begin their TCC journey in the spirit of service – an excellent beginning.

Although it was not time to start our first TCC practice, the meeting room was open and would house us very well for the next few days. Lucinda had created a beautiful rendering of our conference logo “Love” in many shades of blue satiny material. Our intention was set. Lucinda showed that, “If you build it, they will come.” The core group of three Ohio teachers spearheaded all the arrangements and unfolding, but the outpouring of support by teachers from all over the U.S. was amazing and loving to experience. Together, they all made it work and we were glad we came.

The program included many group practices and some special presentations focused on TCC. If you have ever wondered about the Joy, in Joy Thru Movement, attending Alice Holden’s lecture was a delight and very informative. None of the presentations were preachy; rather each one encouraged us to know that our TCC discipline has a good deal to share between ourselves but with the many students who are wanting and waiting to find us. It was a special time in which we learned to Love and Share the *Chi*.



## 2012 Conference In Portland: Come Early, Stay Late

BY STEVE MARSH, HILLSBORO, OR

Plan now to inhale Oregon’s unspoiled beauty at next year’s conference, being held July 5-8, 2012. Portland’s location invites numerous, easy day trips to extend your visit – and at conference hotel rates for three days pre- and post-conference. Visit the wild sandy beaches of the Pacific, the verdant forests of the snow-capped Mount Hood region or witness the unfolding majesty of the Columbia Gorge just east. Check out Mount St. Helen’s recovery just north of us or wander the vineyards and orchards that surround us. You get the picture: we’re a great vacation destination.

With that thought in mind, we’re including a pre-conference event. Thanks to the generosity of the Lan Su Chinese Garden, we’ve added a group practice there around the lake on July 5 at 9 a.m. (one hour before it is open to the public). Stay for a guided tour, tea, koi-watching or just reflective strolling on the mosaic stone pathways that weave through this Taoist retreat. It’s just one of the reasons to come early and stay late.

## Love's A Round

By SUANNE LEWIS, ALLEGANY COUNTY, MD

I've fallen in love again. The stiff, serious expressions of my new students have been replaced with occasional shy smiles. Their awkward self-conscious movements are changing to smoother more circular motions. We have arrived at Carry The Ball To The Side and actually move in the correct direction most of the time. Eyebrows raise and faces brighten as I mention that we now have a short practice to enjoy during the week. An earnest student, retired physician who has insightful questions and a continued thirst for knowledge, stops to clarify a comment about circularity after class. I love my new students, just as I love every new class. Justin describes *teh* and I wonder if T'ai Chi Chih actually attracts personalities with commitment and sincerity.

I'm in love again. At the small western Maryland psychiatric hospital where I offer weekly TCC stretches, I lead some patients in their quest for calm while others simply watch and enjoy being in a quiet space with kind companions. The movements are not well-coordinated but the facial expressions become more placid and the movements softer. Patients with schizophrenia, PTSD, developmental disabilities and bipolar disorder find a venue for self-soothing, self-expression and release. Theirs expression of gratitude is similar to my continuing education students, despite the lack of studied and steady improvement.

Falling in love yet again, I practice with a small community gathering of former and current TCC students, sensing the wind blowing through the Allegany Mountains, while geese fly overhead. Smiling faces are pink from the cool air, while the group *yins* and *yangs*, moving softly and slowly, coming to a graceful conclusion before sharing a light breakfast and hot tea together. I love the community of sincere individuals who bring and share the energy of joy through movement to one another in this rural setting.

I fall in love with the practice as I move, blissfully noting the charge of energy between my palms in Daughter In The Valley, seeing my beautiful dog gazes at me lovingly, gradually forgetting her canine rivals next door. My love spreads from my palms as Push Pull entices the mourning doves and chickadees to share their birdbaths with me on the patio. TCC is doing TCC, and I am in love with the universe.



## My College Students Get Results

By SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

"At the beginning of TCC classes, I assumed that I was grounded; I was aware that my feet were touching the ground. However, as my mind wander during one class, I realized what grounding meant, which for me was keeping my mind in reality, as opposed to letting it drift off. At the end of that class, as I was putting my shoes back on, I suddenly felt how tightly I had tied them, and I realized that this was what feeling one's feet meant. Then, while I was eating lunch the same day, I realized that I had not been grounded at all during a previous class, and that the feeling of almost euphoria after each class was a sign of me not being grounded. While I still felt exhilarated, it was more relaxed than anything else." – GILA OLSON

"The other day I was having trouble concentrating on a reading for class because I was so tired. So I did Pulling In The Energy and was surprised at how well it worked. I was still tired but became mentally alert and able to focus. I was never a big T'ai Chi Chih skeptic, but either did I expect such immediate results from a single move. Very cool." – HEATHER NYGAARD

"I was practicing T'ai Chi Chih in my room and our oldest cat was sleeping on my bed. About fifteen minutes into it, she woke up, jumped down and started winding herself around my legs and purring. She is normally a rather reserved cat but wouldn't leave me alone. As you've said, animals like the energy." – ALLISON ISBERG

"Being ungrounded is like viewing the world behind a sheet of glass. You can see everything around you, but you can't feel anything. When I'm grounded I experience the world around me once more." – RACHEL DUKET

"I have been suffering from asthma for over three years. Daily I am completely reliant upon my inhaler, but one morning my trusty inhaler was not by my side. I walked out to my car, but it wasn't there. I sat in the driver's seat, considering the five-minute drive to the hospital, when I noticed my Six Healing Sounds worksheet. In a desperate attempt I started doing them and centered on the one directed for the lungs. Within minutes, my wheezing subsided and my breathing became regular. This was the first time in months that I did not use my inhaler first thing in the morning. I soon began to notice that my breathing seemed much better on the mornings following my TCC class. I started working a few of the movements into my nightly routine. I hope that others who participate in this class are able to share similar experiences. I had been quite the skeptic." – GINGER WEBER

## Seijaku Teacher Accreditation

with Pam Towne in Huron, OH; July 24-26, 2011

By Ev Hanson-Florin, Sidlesham, UK

Prior to *Seijaku* accreditation, Justin's DVD was my primary teacher and there was no question that I would eventually head for accreditation. This year beckoned; I registered early, bought my airline ticket and what an event it was. Inspired by all attendees, I'm now compelled to continue regular practice and see where it leads. For those looking for the next T'ai Chi Chih step, register early for next year's conference and *Seijaku* accreditation, buy your *Seijaku* DVD and start practising. It's worth the ride.

By Bill Moore, Clifton, NJ

It was great fun to audit the recent *Seijaku* accreditation. There was a wonderful and gratifying feeling of accessibility among the candidates, teachers, auditors, trainer and host. As more T'ai Chi Chih teachers and students come to appreciate the practicability of the *Seijaku* principle and its applications, we are seeing a more comfortable approach to this advanced form of *Chi* circulation and balance. As this continues, more people will share in the heightened benefits that *Seijaku* practice provides at (perhaps) a pace and process more leisurely than anticipated. Congratulations to the newly accredited instructors, and many thanks to Pam and Dan for their compassionate regard and sharing. Special thanks, of course, to Justin Stone.

## Teacher Workshop

with Sandy McAlister in Grayslake, IL;  
September 16, 2011

By BOBBIE WEICHMAN, GRAYSLAKE, IL &  
NANCY LECRAW, LIBERTYVILLE, IL

With Sandy's shared insights and experiences, we obtained a deeper understanding of how to refine our movements. We became aware of how our hands turn in Push Pull, and we explored keeping the palms of the hands together longer in Around the Platter Variation. We also looked at where our hands cross in Daughter On The Mountaintop. By gaining insights into our own practice and movements, we are better able to help our students. As teachers we discussed how to begin a class and set a tone to help students relax and feel comfortable; how to teach a movement without over-explaining it; how to encourage and reassure students that they will "get it." We also looked at different methods of teaching new students before several teachers expressed an interest in how to teach seated T'ai Chi Chih. Sandy demonstrated it, but we were also given insights from a student who's been doing seated TCC for 10 years.



## Student Workshop with

Sandy McAlister in Grayslake, IL; September 17, 2011

By NANCY LECRAW, LIBERTYVILLE, IL & BOBBIE WEICHMAN, GRAYSLAKE, IL

Sandy explored the movements using the idea of expansion and contraction, and by reviewing the principles of *yiming* and *yanging*, a full forward and backward weight shift. Up-and-down and side-to-side in the movements, we found ourselves moving softer. Attendees reflected on various aspects:

- I liked having an event close to home.
- I liked having a one-day event, as busy schedules do not permit longer events.
- I will take home what Sandy taught about integration – especially the way each joint unfolds, the movement in succession from shoulder, elbow and wrist.
- I was glad to know T'ai Chi Chih will continue deepening my awareness of the inner essence and energy.
- I was happy to receive critiques and suggestions on improving the intricacies of the movements.
- I like hearing the same message in a different voice, in different words with different visual examples.
- I appreciated information on softened wrists and the focus on completing each movement.
- Reviewing the close on Working the Pulley and Passing Clouds was very helpful.
- Visualizing the pressure coming from my palm in Joyous Breath was better for me than aiming for overall tension.

- Hearing that some students practice daily, over 100 days, made it an eventual goal for me. I am inspired.
- The third circle on Pulling Taffy Wrist Circles now makes more sense since it is connected to the waist movement.
- I learned that I still have much to learn before attending a teacher training.

## T'ai Chi Chih/Seijaku Workshops

with Dan Pieniac in St. John's, NL; July and September, 2011

By SHEILA LEONARD, PVBM, NL CANADA

Justin often speaks of living in a "latitude of gratitude" as T'ai Chi Chih opens us to inner contentment. For Justin, too, the root of TCC is awareness. Our experience at this retreat was indeed a profound experience in both. We were invited to enter in with a beginner's mind. With new learning, and old learning often experienced in a new light, doing the

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moves became more about relaxing and feeling them from the inside out, and with that confidence and joy soared. A deepening sense of the effort of no effort emerged. "Trust the feet" became our mantra. Movements became smaller, transitions more patient. Inviting softness, asking the body to be soft, to relax into the soles of the feet (rather than telling it) became key. *Yinning* and *yanging* yielded fuller knee bends forward and back, softer foot placement and more solid weight shifts. Waists and wrists were learning to adjust more naturally. Feet were remaining flat longer; more stillness or "hang time" between moves started to happen.

T'ai Chi Chih/*Seijaku* was also changing us. Participants used phrases like "on a road to a better me ... a new tool for letting go of ego (which is a lot of work) ... on the edge of something new and willing to let it unfold ... so grateful for every aspect of my life." One participant remarked, "I came though busy, even though I'm not pursuing a teacher training track. This is just for me, already calming and grounding." Justin's phrase "Love is the fruit energy" was experienced as feeling more compassion, patience, sensitivity in relationships, shifts in thinking, a new type of energy, strength, hope, calmness, less reacting, easier to embrace what is, having more joy."

While not always feeling the full flow of *Chi*, everyone was liking the effects. Realizing the need to go gently with introducing *Seijaku*, we were more able to ground, focus and not be overwhelmed by the heightened energy. With more readiness for *Seijaku*, students were no longer afraid of it. One student wanted to call it Sei-joy-ku rather than Sei-ja-ku. Latitude of gratitude indeed. Whether helped with health issues or simply day-to-day living, all left enjoying the practices all the more and hoping to enjoy it more often. Thank you, Justin. Thank you, Dan.

## Prajna Retreat

with Sandy McAlister in Aston, PA; September 8-11, 2011

BY APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PA

The 2nd Annual (?) *prajna*-focused weekend offered an opportunity for participants to explore heightened awareness through extended periods of silence, meditative experiences, mindfulness and plenty of T'ai Chi Chih. The group camaraderie and an intent to uncover our innate wisdom led to a deep sharing of vulnerabilities, profound insights and moments of joy. If this appeals to you, please join us in 2012.

As one participant shared: "Focusing upon the 'great treasure' brought an experience of interior awakening. Walking with a defined purpose was powerful and revealing, sometimes tedious, sometimes simple joy. One hallmark was drinking tea together in silence as the day was winding down and a few paragraphs from *Heightened Awareness* were shared. The calming nectar of chamomile tea was poured as softly as the intention from any TCC move. Eating mindfully is something I want to incorporate once weekly upon my return home. Humbled and exalted that all is holy, all is good, all is charged."

As Stacey shared: "Exploring *prajna* greatly helped release an emotional blockage that needed an escape. Focused walking, along with other forms of meditation, allowed a heightened awareness to be reinforced, redefined and integrated into life. *Prajna* is innate in all of us, waiting to become more pronounced as trust and allowance grow. Some of us need only to be reassured we are on a path that is our own and meant to be. The truth is you; mindful awareness allows us to just be."

## Autumn Retreat with Pam Towne in Prescott, AZ;

September 18-20, 2011 BY HOPE SPANGLER, PRESCOTT VALLEY, AZ

Since Webster defines autumn as a period of maturing, the theme of this retreat was "Maturing In Your T'ai Chi Chih Practice." I think everyone left more relaxed, focused and committed to maturing as TCC students. Personally, hosting was rewarding and a great way to form new friendships; I was also honored that my teacher, Jean Markey, came from Pennsylvania. The retreat allowed the attitude and practice of one student, Stu Goldman, to take flight in ways that were new and inspirational. (See his sketch on page 22.) Two students also wanted to share:



"What a beautiful setting; the food was plentiful and healthy; the gathering room was a perfect size; and wall-length windows allowed us to see the Central Highlands pine forest as we practiced. Gentle corrections made me conscious of internalized issues that were blocking *Chi*. Prior to this, I knew I was doing some things incorrectly but I couldn't see them. I softened my body so much more and, now after nine months of practice, I am able to truly focus on the soles of my feet. I found an expanded TCC community of wonderful people and a fuller understanding of the entire TCC community. I couldn't do the various "Taffy" movements in a circle, though..." – KAREN CARLISLE

"Among hills, rocks and pine trees we practiced TCC and were reminded about softness, polarity, circularity and many other things. We learned to refine and improve our practice as we made new friends and deepened our understandings of T'ai Chi Chih. Thanks again to Hope, Pam and all the participants for a meaningful retreat." – JEANMARIE TADE

## Justin's Teachings Continue Big Time – With Picnic Baskets & Breadcrumbs

I'm driving Justin home from having Saturday lunch out (for the first time in I don't know how many months), and he says "beautiful trees" as we pass a stand of brilliant yellow aspens and a giant cottonwood tree also bursting with yellow leaves. He wasn't merely referring to the "trees" and he didn't mention the flashy yellow leaves at all. After all these years with him, I know better than that. My spirit perked up. A smile grabbed my heart. Justin's twinkle met my glance in his direction... Why? What? One weekend prior, when I was editing *The Vital Force* by his bedside, with him supposedly snoozing, I was pulling excerpts from the 150-plus pages of *Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion*. I could have pulled anything and I certainly didn't read it to him. But please do (re)read the anecdote in the fourth paragraph on page 12 of this issue. The one about leaves, trees, identifying with individuality and reincarnation. With each breath, and whenever we are paying attention, Justin continues to pack picnic baskets brimming with big time lessons. If you have not been lucky enough to meet him in person, he's left us plenty of breadcrumbs lying in plain sight – in every one of his books.

## More Community Building

Users are leaving comments on movements (and more) within the new T'ai Chi Chih "photo text" app. Check out this screen shot to the right. Teachers and students: join the dialog. Scroll to the bottom of any entry within the app and click "comments" and submit. It's that easy. And for all you Android users, there will be an app for you in early January.



KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

# The Lighter Side

I like to receive feedback from my college students about their experiences learning T'ai Chi Chih. One of the questions listed on the evaluation sheet I give out is "What is your favorite movement is and why?" One student answered, "Cosmic Consciousness Pose because it doesn't require movement. I am far too uncoordinated." Another student responded to the same question with, "Pulling Taffy because it makes me feel like a Ninja." – SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

One of my students told me that her acupuncturist likes to remind her that when her mind is overcrowded with too many thoughts, she should treat them as "passing clouds." – SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

On the last day of class for "show and tell" (see *The Vital Force* article from June 2000), I brought in a crooked deck of cards. The unusual and different deck reminded me of this particular group. After the class was done, one student excitedly asked if he could see the cards. He had just learned a card trick and was eager to show it to me. The trick was pretty clever, and I asked him to show me how it was done. "Do you really want to know?" he asked. I responded, "Do you really want to pass this class?" We both had a good laugh. – SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

Helen came to our session telling of a new sleep aid she had discovered the night before. Unable to fall asleep, she tried all kinds of tricks and prayers, but sleep still eluded her. Then she said, "Suddenly I had a vision of you doing your morning T'ai Chi Chih demonstration. Just picturing you doing it relaxed me so much I went to sleep immediately and woke up feeling great." – SHEILA LEONARD, NL CANADA

During an annual meeting of staff and program instructors at a local senior center, the subject of distracting noise outside classrooms was discussed. When it was my turn to share students' reactions to the distractions, I stated that there had been no complaints, to which another teacher replied, "Yeah, Bill, of course not... You have the "enlightened" students. They never complain about anything." – BILL MOORE, CLIFTON NJ



# T'ai Chi Chih Community Calendar

DATE	WHAT & WHO	WHERE	CONTACT
November 14-19	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114 rutherfordg@aol.com
~ 2012 ~			
February 3-5	Seijaku Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Albuquerque, NM	Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114 rutherfordg@aol.com
February 28- March 2	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne / 760-722-9544 pamtowne@gmail.com
February 29- March 4	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	Black Mountain, NC	Vicki Schroeder / 864-494-4364 vickitcc@bellsouth.net
March 6-9	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne / 760-722-9544 pamtowne@gmail.com
Spring	TCC Intensive w/ Pam	New Jersey/ Pennsylvania Area	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
May 3-6	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Pecos, NM	Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114 rutherfordg@aol.com
July 5-8	TCC Teacher Conference	Portland, OR	Neal Roy / 503-970-4740 goodhairdaze@comcast.net
Date TBD <i>Pending Sufficient Interest</i>	TCC Teacher Accreditation	Big Island, HI	Hannah Hedrick / 808-968-7013 hedrickhneca@aol.com

## MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

(Postings here are open to all teachers offering events wholly devoted to TCC.)

January 14	TCC Workshop w/ Sharon Sirkis	Marriottsville, MD	Sharon Sirkis / 410-730-1986 sirkisprice@verizon.net
April 26-29	TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810 judyhendricks@me.com



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Mark Your Calendars!  
TCC Teacher Conference  
July 5-8, 2012 in Portland, Oregon

SEE P. 18 FOR DETAILS

Registration information at  
[www.taichichih.org/events/17/tcc-teacher-conference-2012](http://www.taichichih.org/events/17/tcc-teacher-conference-2012)



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### CONTACT INFORMATION

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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