

The Vital Force

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for teachers & students

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Justin's Words

When It Is Time BY JUSTIN STONE

Death is not an unusual event. It will happen to everyone alive today, so it is not really something to grieve over. Actually, grief is something for the survivors; we will miss the one who is departed.

There is a story about Chuang Tsu, the superlative Chinese philosopher, who lived after the time of Confucius (not his real name) and Lao Tsu. Chuang Tsu's wife had died and professional mourners had been hired, which is a Chinese custom. When Chuang Tsu came home from the funeral, he started to beat a drum and sing in a loud voice. When some friends stopped by to cheer him up but instead heard drumming and singing, they were horrified. Facing the great philosopher, they asked him how he could be so cheerful. He

answered, "When it was time to come, she arrived. And when it was time to go, she left. Do you want me to believe that I don't know that?"

Whether or not the friends understood, I don't know. The story can also be taken as a comment on Karma.



- REPRINTING *THE VITAL FORCE* -

To clarify: Subscribers of *The Vital Force* are welcome to make copies of articles with permission. (Authors never need permission to make copies of their *own* articles.) Only one person has been denied permission in the last two years – when he wanted to reprint the entire issue every quarter as a series of blog posts. If that had been allowed, why would any of those readers subscribe to *The Vital Force*? Why do people need permission to make copies? To maintain copyright protections. Protections from what or whom? Unfortunately, we don't know that answer until it is too late. So we need to be proactive. The only thing we ask when permission is granted is that you include *The Vital Force* footer (or cut and paste the masthead) on your reprint – to give credit to and spread the word about *The Vital Force*.

Perhaps you've noticed that *Vital Force* articles are laid out so that they don't spill over on to additional pages. Why? So they are easier to reuse if and when they are copied. Perhaps you've noticed that articles of a similar ilk are laid out together (see the New Jersey articles by Bill Moore's students or the Nebraska ones from Rita Otis's students or the teacher/student articles from Donna Aldous). Why? Again, this is done with reprint usage in mind and to help teachers build community.

Your
Artwork
Here

The Vital Force
needs artwork
produced by our
creative community.

Surely there are
readers in our midst
that would like to
supply photographs
of their work for
publication?

Thanks in advance.

- COMMENT ON SANDY'S ARTICLE:

"T'AI CHI CHIH VERSUS TCC" (SEE PAGE 7) -

I understand and respect the points Sandy is making in her article. But it's simply a matter of style and every publication develops a style sheet: *The Vital Force* spells out *the first use* of "T'ai Chi Chih" in every article and then uses the abbreviation "TCC" to save space and for convenience. (You'll also note that Justin often uses the abbreviated form, "TCC," in lieu of spelling out its entire name in every instance.) I would suggest that if you, too, are getting hung up on reading "TCC" aloud, simply substitute "T'ai Chi Chih" when you come across it. It may be second (or first) nature. As for abbreviating with initials in print (*after the first full use of the form's name*), it doesn't seem to have hurt Transcendental Meditation to be referred to as TM sometimes. Certainly, if you are writing about T'ai Chi Chih for a general trade publication, web site, or newspaper, it would be beneficial to write out the whole form each time. Don't be surprised, though, when the publication utilizes its own style guidelines.

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Table of Contents

Justin Stone	1
From the Editor	2
Clarity	3-5
Guiding Thoughts:	
Sr. Antonia	6
Sandy Says / Pam Says	7
Features	8-9
By Teachers / For All	10-11
Teaching Tips: Push Pull	11
Justin Stone	12-13
Events	14-16
For Teachers & Students	17
By Students / For All	18-20
For Teachers	21
Karmic Comments	22
Lighter Side	22
Community Calendar	23
Contacts / Subscribe	24

Submission Guidelines

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to 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 calendar and database (for 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: July 1

Publication Date: Early Aug
Awareness (i.e. how has your TCC practice informed your experience of awareness)
Pulling in the Energy

Deadline: Oct 1

Publication Date: Early Nov
"Our attitudes change and we become more like the bamboo rather than the oak."
Pulling Taffy

Deadline: Jan 1

Publication Date: Early Feb
"You cannot appease the hunger by reading the menu."
Pulling Taffy, Variation #1, Anchor

Deadline: April 1

Publication Date: Early May
"When the Chi flows freely and is balanced, the Cosmic Rhythm begins to move us."
Pulling Taffy, Variation #2, Wrist Circles

A Service To Humanity

BY DORA DERZON, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

As Justin Stone has always emphasized, T'ai Chi Chih is a service to humanity. Who can doubt this? Anyone who has practiced TCC regularly will notice the beneficial effects in his or her life. Anyone who has taught this spiritual discipline to others cannot help but be awed by how the circulation of *Chi* calms and begins to bring sincere students into harmony with themselves and their surroundings.

Justin allowed these movements to come through him and takes no credit for “coming up” with them. He did, however, prepare himself to have this happen. How many have meditated at 3 a.m. in the cold with monks on the quest for enlightenment? How many have left their jobs to board a freighter to Japan or India in search of Sages and Masters? These were not casual decisions; they were born out of a pressing urgency to know the Truth. And Justin knows the Truth.

Only one with no ego, and the ability (in mind, body, and spirit) to accommodate the flow of the Life Force, could bring TCC into this world. Justin has done this beautifully. His clarity and sense of service to all of humanity are plain to see. He takes no profit from TCC teachers and is an outstanding example of the egoless personification of an enlightened being. His sincere love and reverence for life is his underlying way of living. He tirelessly tries to teach compassion to all those around him.

Justin has always been clear about the different aspects of TCC. When approached by three newly accredited teachers, he refused to take the royalties that they gratefully insisted he take from them. He has always stood firm that once a person becomes an accredited TCC instructor that person is an accredited instructor for life. Justin has never been wishy-washy about whether it's okay to make a living teaching TCC. He has always said that the workman is worthy of his hire; but first and foremost, teachers must have the mindset that TCC is a service to humanity. These are not mere words.

Justin has always been clear that TCC should not be organized. His wisdom should be followed. Only a person who can see the ramifications of this action can understand why this should not be done. For the bulk of us teachers who cannot see the ramifications of organizing TCC, we should trust Justin and abide by his wishes. He knows more than we do. Justin brought TCC into this world and countless lives have benefited. The circulation and balancing of *Chi* brings profound changes. Joy is a sure eventual effect of Joy thru Movement. Practicing and teaching TCC with joy as an eventual outcome is a lofty goal, a goal that may bring peace. With this as the intention, organizing seems a waste of time and energy.

Surrender Dorothy

BY JOHN VALENTINE, OMAHA, NE

Surrender Dorothy, referring to the skywriting by the Wicked Witch in *The Wizard Of Oz*, is one of my favorite mantras. Although meant as an end-game curse, it became the saving grace of Dorothy's journey home. Surrender allowed Dorothy's inner strength to manifest in the seamless flow of serendipitous opportunity. We are in this state when we are sincere. A Taoist proverb states that supreme sincerity evokes resonance. Resonance is simply the feeling of free flowing *Chi*. We vibrate like a gong when we strike the heart of surrender because it's at this time that we embody the supreme state of doing-not-doing in the free flow of stainless awareness.

What's being written in the sky of your mind during T'ai Chi Chih practice? Perhaps what seems like a terrifying shadow message will be transformed into the healing medicine of surrender. By noticing and not clinging to the smoky message in the sky, we shift our weight in luminous emptiness. Then the whole world becomes medicine; we neither have to toil nor spin.

Webster defines sincerity as honesty of mind; it's derived from the Latin, *sincerus* (clear, pure, and sound). Teachers and students often expend energy talking about TCC's benefits. We pile up personal experiences and testimonials, and we perhaps sell the results as sincerity. Seriousness is not sincerity; it's the wicked step sister of sincerity. We become sherpas of seriousness, traveling the craggy pathways of our expectations, paving a path with shoulds and shouldn'ts. But as the saying goes, “When you see through the origin you may spontaneously burst out in a laugh.” That means as sincerity and clarity unfold, you see how you bind yourself and it gets funny. Sincerity is full of playful laughter.

As Justin says, “If it isn't fun, it's better left undone.” That was an almost unbearable *koan* when I first heard it.

I don't have to suffer or strive for this? I can just resonate with the all-pervasive *Chi*? Remember, Dorothy didn't plan to melt the witch with water in *The Wizard of Oz*. It was a spontaneous gift of circularity and grace in action. Isn't every moment when we're not judging a moment that's clear, pure, and sound? Through TCC we melt the veils of self-inflicted delusions and reveal radiance. Or not. The most important thing is to show up in the space of surrender. There is no place like home – right under your feet. Let that knowledge fill you with the gratitude of sincerity and a smile grace your face. Now surrender surrendering.



The Clarity Of No Effort

BY DIANA BAHN, NEW YORK, NY

I recall my 2002 teacher's training where candidates were asked to give a 15-minute mock presentation about T'ai Chi Chih. This was my first glimpse into the clarity Justin Stone often talks about with practice. Our trainer and the teacher assistants suggested we not rely solely on words during the presentations but get folks up and doing the actual movements. The evening before the big day, I was beside myself. In my monk-like room, I wrote down everything I wanted to share with the would-be massage therapists (the mock audience), so they would readily embrace TCC and sign up for classes. I had so much to say in so little time and knew it was going to be rough going. I was nervous.

Back in those days, my favorite movement was Passing Clouds: Imagine you are on a high mountaintop with heavy mist enveloping you. Flow effortlessly, continuously, left then right. Experience a low glowing light shining through the mist. During that presentation (which easily could have morphed into Edgar Allen Poe mode) of Passing Clouds, I began to feel a grounded, clear connection to the earth that carried me through. My message as we moved together was plain and simple. It was as though an experienced editor had taken up residence in my head. There is a wonderful clarity that TCC provides, and it is not cerebral at all. That's the sort of clarity I have discovered as I practice TCC. I show up, start moving, and so much more wholeness, focus, and integration comes without so much effort.



On A Clear Day You Can See Forever

BY NANCY JO BLEIER, SITKA, AK

Writing about clarity is no different than doing my T'ai Chi Chih practice. Right now my mind is chattering and I am feeling overwhelmed. So I stand up and practice. Clarity comes to my mind as I move forward and backward, shifting the weight on each leg. Light at Top of the Head and Light at the Temple brings a moment of the divine. With Passing Clouds, I sing, "On a clear day you can see forever."

The definition of clarity is to be clear, a quality or state of being clear. How does this translate in TCC classes? Are my sentences short and clear? Do I clearly demonstrate softness and continuity? Do I demonstrate how to shift my weight fully? Do I practice daily? One student recently emailed, "Thank you so much for offering these classes. I really appreciate learning TCC. It's great for both

stress relief and helping mental clarity."

In the *Journal of Mental Health and Aging* (Fall 2003), Dr. Winingham wrote that, "Cognitively stimulating activities may also postpone symptoms of dementia.... Anything [you do] to use your attention can help with cognitive stimulation. Memory improves with rehearsal, rehearsal, rehearsal." This quotation resounds like a bell. TCC movements give us clarity but we have to practice, practice, practice.

Learning To Fly

BY DAVID SAKRY, MINNEAPOLIS, MN

We all have times when we're uncertain about which direction our lives should take; potential avenues seem perplexing and confusing. Imagine getting into the car and driving without knowing where we are going. All around there are questions about relationships, careers, what to eat, whom to vote for, and so on.

When we're confused, we can also be motivated to resolve it. This motivation can be used in productive or unproductive directions. In the *Tao Te Ching*, there's a story about a monk having a recurring dream about being attacked by a spider. The advice given by the monk's teacher is to paint a symbol on the spider's abdomen. When the monk does as instructed, the dream spider instantly disappears, and the monk sleeps soundly. Upon waking, the monk finds himself holding a brush and with paint all over his belly. Imagine all the nights the monk spent battling the spider and the hours spent fearing sleep. Of course, we do not always have (or want) the solution to our problem(s).

Indecision seems to have at least four characteristics: a sense of discomfort around the current situation; a natural desire to escape the discomfort; a counterbalance to escaping discomfort (like attachment to status quo); and weighing the pros and cons of a situation. When we finally make a decision, all this chatter seems to go away ... until the next situation arises. For some, this process of decision/indecision becomes cyclical.

What happens when we practice T'ai Chi Chih? At the very least we give ourselves a period of clarity (or an attempt at clarity). The simple act of practicing TCC can yield *eureka* moments, clear solutions. TCC can feel like waves washing upon a sandy beach where we've written everything we find so important. A good understanding of where you are right now... and now... and now can build a foundation for which direction you wish to take (or not take). I've found that this process of being present (as we are with TCC) is enough. We still eat, have relationships, and pursue careers when mindful. What we hopefully eliminate is the sense of impending doom that's created by trying to solve a problem from an abstract perspective. Paying attention has many benefits. We forget that *being* is enough. Clear your mind, enjoy the moment, practice TCC, and see how you feel.

Clarifying, Clarifying

BY CARMEN L. BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Practicing T'ai Chi Chih happens in the moment. Since even the slightest movements are important, careful attention must be paid to what the practitioner is doing. Spacing out, not staying in one's feet, thinking about what's for dinner is not an option. TCC requires our complete attention. Because of this, though, the rewards are great. Our practice yields clarity within us that many teachers from other disciplines suggest is not possible. Some say it takes years of practice before such results are achieved. Once they practice TCC, they begin to see the truth of what is lovingly being credited to TCC. But TCC must be kept pure (as it was originated) and performed with focused attention and intention. Only then can clarity (through the vital force) begin to show itself.

*the Chi helps
scoop away
those
ingrained
emotions and
thinking*

To rid butter of its impurities, it has to be slowly heated to high temperatures. As that happens, impurities begin rising to the surface where they can easily be scooped away. A gourmet clarified butter remains. This process also holds true for our TCC practice. The movements cause a wonderful flow of *Chi* to heat up our entire system (of body, mind, emotions, and spirit). What is *not true* about us begins flowing to the surface. Sometimes this may seem confusing and contrary to the peaceful experience of our TCC practice. We may see anxious emotions and negative thinking (which we've carried inside us for quite a time) that have kept us from expressing our higher nature – that of freedom, kindness, beauty, caring, or love.

Some people make the mistake of thinking that these undesirable characteristics are what the *Chi* is creating. But this is not true. The *Chi* is actually helping to scoop away those ingrained emotions and thinking. And clarity remains, clarity that unveils our higher nature. We laugh more readily and sometimes at ourselves; we care more deeply but not necessarily more emotionally; we love more easily. The problems change because our attitudes and our *Chi* has changed. To paraphrase Justin, as we do our TCC practice, we not only cultivate the *Chi*, the *Chi* cultivates us. Clarifying is the way. Then we can start to truly grow into the beautiful beings we were always meant to be. We can love and share the *Chi*.



Mental Gift Of Clarity

BY DEB BERTELSEN, MAPLEWOOD, MN

According to Wikipedia, “Clarity is the property of being clear or transparent. It can refer to one’s ability to clearly visualize an object or concept (as in thought, understanding, and the ‘mind’s eye’) as well as the traditional notion of visual perception, that is, with the actual eyes. Clarity may also refer more broadly to ‘perspicacity,’ the Zen concept of ‘no mind,’ or other terms denoting general clear and unperplexed cognition.”

The practice of T'ai Chi Chih provides so many physical, emotional, and spiritual benefits. As I learned to accept these gifts unconditionally, I was surprised to find that the mental gift of clarity was also included in the benefits package. Beginning my practice I focus on letting go of the day's chaos, challenges, and unresolved problems. Thoughts keep coming at high speeds and bouncing from topic to topic; I cannot shake them. But I know it doesn't benefit me to hang on to them and that it stands to detract from my practice. And so I soften the body, try to quiet the mind, soften the gaze in my eyes, and begin with a calming breath. As I start Rocking Motion my pace slows; with each breath I tell myself to let go. Focusing on the soles of the feet, I soften further and let go a little more. Bass Drum, Daughter on the Mountaintop, and Daughter in the Valley take me deeper into the effort of no effort – TCC is now doing TCC. Before I realize it, I am Working the Pulley with a mind that's been quiet for a long time. Without knowing or effort I allowed my mind to empty, and as a result, I experience “no mind.” More gifts are to come.

After the practice is complete, I realize that answers to questions have appeared, realizations are more acute, and understandings of people, situations, and my own self are deeper and more profound. These realizations come spontaneously during practice and sit in my unconscious without struggling towards resolution. They come with unusual clarity. Some I have been trying to understand for a long time. It's now as if a fog has lifted to uncover a crisp blue sky, warm glowing sunshine, and the clear bubbling stream of life. TCC provides access to the subconscious, the inner self. It is where answers reside, where clarity makes it presence known.

Clarity Of Perception

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

To acquire clarity in the depths of our being, we must constantly be aware of what needs to be released as well as being alert and awake. The practice of T'ai Chi Chih provides a space and form that both invites and challenges us to experience the depths and heights of clarity that can enhance ourselves and all our relationships.

In the process of learning the entire TCC form, the new student is more concerned with how it looks rather than how it feels. This is only natural and forms the basis of learning each movement. With time and practice, a transition eventually evolves from an exterior trying to an interior flow. This is what we refer to as "maturity of practice." Clarity surfaces in feeling the connectedness of arms and legs, of open relaxed wrists and waist moving softly in a simultaneous flow that can result in feeling as though no one is doing TCC, but that it is doing itself.

In such "ah-ha" moments we grasp a deeper sense of clarity and a deeper sense of self. When the practice is done in this way, we continue to move into new levels of awareness in timing and rhythm that continue to deepen the TCC form.

When I first learned TCC, my teacher would invite us to maintain an "unclouded mind." This phrase meant so much to me and still does when I teach to remind students that the movements are done from the ears down. We spend all day long processing, thinking, planning, yet in the practice our minds become clear – unclouded with the concerns of life – to better focus our awareness in the body as the movements take on various circular patterns, being supported by complete weight shifts that activate *Chi* through the body. When we "fast from thinking" during the practice, we can further sink into the awareness of the present moment. This carries over to our lives when we can enter fully into what we are doing, being fully present and clear minded rather than clouded.

When we create space in our busy lives for practice, it seems to help

us accomplish much more in the day as we flow from one event to the next, rather than rushing to get everything accomplished. Clarity of thought and focus increases; it is a natural benefit of the fasting mind.

Clarity of an alert mind freely chooses to let go rather than cling, according with impermanence; recognizes resistance that can give way to acceptance; melts away hardness into softness; becomes aware of tension and chooses relaxation; experiences disconnect but chooses continuity. Distortions of mind and body melt away in light of clarity.



The byproduct of all of this is inner freedom. Freedom cannot be earned nor taken away from us. It can only reside and increase in the depths of one's awareness. What at one time shook us out of our center no longer has the power to do so. New levels of awareness dispel old ways of seeing and being, acting and understanding that give way to clarity throughout life.

Can 19 simple movements and one pose really produce all of this? Try it and see. It is the experience of an ever-increasing number of practitioners. How blest we are to be able to share this form with so many.

TCC will take you as far as you want to go – or maybe where you don't want to go as a feeling of resistance. Breaking through and staying with it can only result in total freedom, total clarity.

Pyramid Poems

the
curtain
disappears
only the *Chi*
remains so
clearly
thee

– NANCY WERNER-AZARSKI

T'ai
Chi Chih
does not take
time from our lives
it brings life
to our
time

– BILL MOORE

Chi
breathing
traveling
between spaces
emerging
toward love
now

– BARBARA KRISTOFF

bright
morning
clear blue sky
do T'ai Chi Chih
underneath
that sky
smile

– GARY SWANSON

T'ai Chi Chih Versus TCC

By SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CA

These three words, T'ai Chi Chih, are meaningful, powerful, and very specific. The three letters TCC are pieces, abbreviations, and could mean many things. T'ai Chi Chih translates to "knowledge of the supreme ultimate." Through the practice of T'ai Chi Chih we are discovering the connection we have with the ultimate life force. We are acquiring knowledge about who and what we are. Think of the power in those three words: T'ai Chi Chih. What comes to mind when you as a practitioner hear those words? Do they evoke a particular physical response? Does a past experience you had while doing the practice cross your mind? Does a name or face of a fellow practitioner flash through your thoughts?

There is something to be said for the power of words. In words we see the essence of their meaning. Consider how words make you feel, what images come to mind: pine forest... chocolate... Vietnam... smiling... eagle... swimming. When we teach we say the same thing three or four different ways to allow for students to connect with the phrase that has clarity for them. Consider how much more is expressed when we say "soften the knees" rather than "bend the knees." There is a "feel" component to the phrase. "Allow the heel to rise" has more meaning than "the heel comes up" or "lift the heel." There is effortlessness implied. The correctness of words is important when teaching in order to convey to the student exactly what we mean.

And so it is with the name of our form. We do not do T'ai Chi; we do T'ai Chi Chih. T'ai Chi can mean many things. When we write and say T'ai Chi Chih we know exactly what is meant. During the spring intensive in New Jersey, Sr. Antonia complimented the group on how everyone consistently used the full name of the form. But during the reading of an article, I was completely taken aback when the written three letters "TCC" were actually spoken as three letters TCC. Since it was written that way I understand that someone might read it that way but it did not feel right. This shortcut felt like T'ai Chi Chih was not worth writing out or speaking it completely. It became clear how strongly I felt about this. Why take the power away from what T'ai Chi Chih represents with a short cut. There is a time to abbreviate, such as note taking, or in emails, but not in writing articles or materials for teaching or advertising, and especially not in speaking the name of the form. If an article is printed and disbursed to the general public, into a non T'ai Chi Chih environment, and it is continually referred to as TCC, we are undermining efforts to get "T'ai Chi Chih" known in the world. Will it more commonly be known as TCC rather than T'ai Chi Chih in 20 or 30 years from now? Let us not diminish what has been created. Honor the form, honor the originator, and let the power of the words be felt.

Attending An Intensive

By PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CA

Springtime is a time of renewal, a great time to look more deeply at why we practice T'ai Chi Chih, and as teachers, why we teach it. Looking into my own experience, I do TCC for the peace, joy, balance, freedom, and unity it brings my body, mind, and spirit. It literally keeps me moving; I might be crippled from knee, back, and neck injuries if not for TCC. Mentally, it provides access to internal calm. TCC has become a spiritual practice that consciously connects me with the flow of life.

Teaching TCC is a way of sharing the benefits received, yet it goes far beyond that. It contributes to peace on our planet. Look at why you practice or teach, and let clarity motivate you to share TCC more fully. As for practicing, it's wonderful to do alone and more fulfilling to do with others. Have you experienced that exquisite sense of Oneness when everyone in a group is moving together? Give yourself the gift of immersion for several days; attending an event can be empowering.

Intensives are designed for an in-depth exploration of your TCC practice. If you are a TCC teacher, there are many reasons to attend: to deepen your own practice and appreciation; to refine how you move for a greater flow of *Chi*; to learn how to better prepare candidates for teacher training; to learn new teaching techniques; and to connect with the larger TCC community. If you want to become a teacher, consider attending to better understand the depths of TCC practice and the principles of how to move; to discover what needs to be changed before you attend teacher training so you'll have several months to integrate those changes; and to experience doing several hours of TCC daily.



Awareness, Circularity, Softness & Continuity

By PAULINE QUIMSON-TONG, CHAMA, NM



“...awareness is the root of T'ai Chi Chih...” *

Just like a tree or plant which will not and cannot flourish without developing its roots (to let water and nutrients in), my T'ai Chi Chih and *Seijaku* practices cannot progress unless I allow nourishment through awareness. Living in accord with reality. Living in truth and with integrity. Being truly present in each moment. Listening, seeing, feeling, hearing, touching, tasting, sensing with every fiber of my being, with every cell, with all that I am. This brings about real awareness of who and what I am truly made of – that I am not separate from the other (person, place, thing, time, situation), that there is no “other,” that there is only One. We are all one.

“...circularity is fundamental...” *

I freely receive... I freely give. One of the hardest lessons I've had to learn is that it is okay (in fact, it's necessary) and very good to receive. For if I were empty, I would have nothing to share... T'ai Chi Chih has taught me to allow myself the privilege to accept the gift of daily practice. As Justin Stone says repeatedly, “Practice everyday. Practice when you feel like it but most especially when you don't feel like it.” It is specifically during those difficult and challenging times (when so many other things want to encroach on my personal practice time) when I need to be doubly faithful and persevere in my practice. It's when I need to circulate and balance the *Chi* the most.

Just like our body-mind-emotions-spirit need to let go of toxins (anything that blocks our evolution – physical, mental, emotional, spiritual), we also need to give our body-mind-emotions-spirit the best nourishment possible. And what better way than through the daily act of circulating and balancing the very core and essence of our being, our vital force.

“...softness and continuity are the essence...”

Without softness, there is no flexibility. When we practice T'ai Chi Chih with stiffness, tension blocks and doesn't allow the meridians to open. Our energy is unable to flow freely. However, softness does not mean limpness. On the contrary, it is the most stable, grounded strength that one can have. (Remember what Justin says: the soft water wears away the hard rock and the flexible bamboo outlasts the sturdy oak.) Without softness, there is no movement; and without movement, there can be no joy!

Continuity is essential between yin and yang, teachers and students, families and communities, individual countries and the whole world. We are, after all, a part of each other's lives. As the song goes: “No man is an island. No man stands alone. Each man's joy is joy to me. Each man's grief is my own.” Have you ever felt that when you are

present, and witness another person's healing, that a part of yourself is healed as well? That's precisely what we do when we practice and teach TCC. We become the vessels of this continuous flow – this fountain of holy, sacred, pure love, gratitude, peace, light and joy. It is limitless. We truly can reach our maximum potential, the best self that we can be.

I know that there are many good forms of therapy and healing. But what sets TCC apart is that we truly become facilitators of change and evolution. We are not trying to do it for other people. On the contrary, our mere presence and gentle yet grounded guidance (how we live as TCC teachers and students) help lead others into their own path of enlightenment to holistic healing: self-awareness, self-knowledge, self-realization. This practice allows us the freedom to choose every single day, at our own pace, in our own readiness, to transform and manifest the true beauty and goodness that we truly are deep inside.

* AS QUOTED FROM JUSTIN STONE

From Patience To Grace

By PETE GREGORY, CROWN POINT, IN

When I opened November's *Vital Force*, I sped through “Justin's Words: Impatience” so I could get to the next page and the page after that. I finally reread it today, and it prompted a search that yielded *I AM: the Impatient Anonymous Mindset*. Thank you, Justin, for prompting my search into the “mysteries of the time barrier.” Excerpts include:

...We admitted we were powerless over the passage of time, and that any effort to bend, borrow, or steal it made our lives unmanageable.

...We came to believe that a mustard seed of patience could grow to penetrating depths and relieve our delusions.

...We followed these thoughts, suggested as a program for recovery:

Patience breeds Grounding.
Grounding breeds Efficiency.
Efficiency breeds Regimen.
Regimen breeds Development.
Development breeds Skill.
Skill breeds Talent.
Talent breeds Creation.
Creation breeds New Kinds of Truth.
New Kinds of Truth breed Clarity.
Clarity breeds Peace and Happiness.
Peace and Happiness breeds Peace and Happiness.
Peace and Happiness breed Inertia and Bliss (touched and elevated).
Patience breeds Grace.

In Search Of Impatience

By LARRY BLOOM, SANDY SPRINGS, GA

I recently read Justin's article, "Impatience," from the November 2008 *Vital Force*. When I was younger, I thought impatience was something that happened to me by outside forces. Slow traffic, standing in lines, and other delays "made me" impatient. I thought of myself as a victim of circumstances out of my control. Depending on the situation I felt annoyed, irritated, anxious, stressed, and intolerant. My blood pressure rose and my stomach tied itself into a knot. There was no need to search for impatience; it found me.

As I become more aware of my own thinking I realize that I may not be able to control delays, but I always have a choice in how I respond. Why would I respond by thinking, "There is a wreck on the freeway and I will be late to my appointment. I choose to abuse myself by being impatient so that I will be annoyed and irritated. I also choose to invite anger in others by displaying my middle finger." Making a destructive choice like this, I become an accomplice in creating my own misery. How absurd.

There was no conscious decision to feel impatient; it just happened. I am now aware that my ego was reacting to the invitation to be impatient. And the ego came out to feed. Justin says, "Awareness is the root of TCC," and I now know it's also the solution to my impatience. Practicing TCC quiets my subconscious egoistic mind and brings clarity to the choices I have in any situation. Instead of feeling helpless, I feel empowered and a sense of inner peace. TCC is a journey not a destination, and consistency of practice is vital or the ego resumes control.

With TCC practice I sense there is also a positive aspect of impatience, the yin and yang of impatience. With balance, impatience can provide the motivation to seek a better way, a way that fosters creativity and innovation. Indeed, impatience that fuels a passion to make the world a better place is worth the search. And for those who want to know the cure for impatience, perhaps Justin will tell us in the next *Vital Force*.



Awareness: Waiting As A Practice

By LINDA BRAGA, CASTRO VALLEY, CA

In Spring 2009, I attended a four-day retreat on the Northern California coast where T'ai Chi Chih was offered as the morning meditative practice. The theme of the retreat was *waiting* – slowing down movements, letting go of daily routines and cell phones, softening the breath, unwinding, pausing, and settling in together. Waiting is an integral component of any meditation practice. It underlies the disciplines of tranquility, peacefulness, and compassion. Waiting is a cornerstone of TCC practice; it's the sense of allowing the body/mind to come into harmonious accord, of moving from doing into being, of suspending judgment and thought.

In our hyper-kinetic culture today, waiting is usually seen as a problem to be endured: we wait in line, for a green light, for the repairman, for a diagnosis. Waiting is viewed as wasting time, as a negative experience to be avoided. Many people admit frustration, irritability, and anger when forced to wait. They begin to blame the other person or circumstances rather than look inward.

If we carefully examine waiting, we find that awareness plays a big role. We are aware that time is passing, that we are somehow being left behind, or that others are getting ahead. This can be frustrating, annoying, unpleasant, and even boring in a goal-oriented culture. Alternately, we might experience waiting as feeling suspended in time, with no time passing, bringing comfort and peace, even surprise and wonder.

TCC practice can have a fantastic impact on our perception and awareness of time. We come to experience *no time / no space* on a regular basis with the daily TCC practice of circulating and balancing *Chi*. From that, we begin to cultivate a neutral awareness, a sense of being fully present in the moment yet not attached to it. At its best, we could describe this awareness as meditative bliss.

This all-pervasive feeling-awareness allows us to live from our center and to stay in our center, even after practice. That sense of tranquility carries over into all aspects of daily life. Then we really live, fully aware, basking in this sense of waiting, opening, without expectation. TCC teaches us to be fully present in this very moment, how to wait with awareness. And in this waiting, we receive exactly what we need.

Reconnecting: A Story About Life Changes & Facebook

By DALE BUCHANAN, BOCA RATON, FL

I became a certified T'ai Chi Chih teacher in April 1997, and in the late 1990's I owned the TCC Studio in Great Falls, Virginia. Until Fall 2003 I taught hundreds of TCC courses (often 20-25 classes a week); many teachers in the Washington, DC region were once my students. TCC was my only source of income for five years; it was my career until classes suddenly diminished, for reasons I am still uncertain. Since my background is personal training, sales, and marketing, I then went into health club management full time and stopped teaching TCC for various reasons. I still practiced but not as regularly as when I taught. TCC never left me though; everything I learned remained and the people I learned from were still in my mind.

I knew I would get back to TCC; I just didn't know how and when. In Fall 2008, shortly after I moved to Boca Raton, Florida, I lost my job and was under a lot of stress. When I began a full and consistent TCC practice, lot of things began happening. I remember telling my mother that I hadn't felt this good in a long time, and that I must start teaching TCC again. Without a place to teach I built a website and start promoting myself again. There is definitely uncertainty in the air right now with the economy, with people losing jobs and homes. The message I got while doing TCC practice was clear: we need to re-connect with ourselves and others, re-invent ourselves; we must adapt as the world changes and re-establish ourselves because what might have worked to get TCC students in the past may not work now. It's like starting over.

Recently I was invited by an old friend to join Facebook, a social networking website. I resisted joining for a year but decided it was time. I instantly re-connected with friends from the past five to 30 years. It was a joy to speak with people and see how their lives have changed. Shortly after joining Facebook I came across the TCC group page, and in speaking with many TCC teachers, confirmed that I needed to get back into teaching. By then I'd found a few places to teach; I just needed students. Connecting with people on Facebook and displaying advertisements about my free presentations drove people to my personal TCC website. I have a few small classes now, which is a good start.

I believe that Facebook and other social networking tools can be very helpful in the future growth of TCC. I invite friends, students, and family members to join. I post links, write on "walls," and create discussions similar to a forum. It will only work if you are proactive, though. Starting a discussion without maintaining it won't do much to help build TCC, your classes, or connect with people. It can seem time consuming at first, but I believe the benefits are worth the effort. I'm certain to see more of you on Facebook soon, and I'll be glad to discuss how I use the internet to promote TCC.

Observations

By DAVID SCHULBERG, SAN LORENZO, CA

After teaching for 15 years, I thought I was beyond being surprised by my students. Last quarter, one of my repeat students said she'd started to sleep better, to feel more relaxed and less on edge. I asked her if she was taking any new medications, and she responded, "Just T'ai Chi Chih." Other students also chimed in that they were sleeping better.

A few years ago, when I was visiting old friends in New Jersey, I started doing my TCC practice on their backyard porch that faced five adjoining houses. As I let myself sink into the practice and feel the fluidity of the movements, I saw animals and people walk by – as if I was invisible. A squirrel on a nearby fence appeared to watch and seemed to feel the *Chi*. Some birds flew to nearby branches, adding their own joy through my movements.

I'm reminded of many times over many years when Lois Mahaney and I did our TCC practice in a park near our houses. We met on Sunday mornings and practiced with our students in the cold, amidst the trees, while squirrels, birds, dogs, and cats would scamper by. Once, right in the middle of Basic Pulling Taffy, a hawk landed in an adjacent tree to share our space. I'm not sure what the hawk felt, but it gave *us* an unforgettable sense of joy.



To All TCC Friends & With Gratitude For *The Vital Force*

By SISTER FRANCIS A KAY, TARRYTOWN, NY

For the last eleven years in Zimbabwe, *The Vital Force* has been a happy and informative companion. I've relied heavily on this link with you. I've also used Justin's books, and this has been a source of growth and certainty. Rereading his messages and stories is always stimulating; they contain wisdom born from the depths of his meditation. And yes, we pass them to our students.

While teaching T'ai Chi Chih to so many cultures, I often wonder how our togetherness has changed their perspective on life. It's really a wonder: the energies of God that pervade the movements, the moments of quiet after each set, the security in the evident *Chi* resonating through the body. So many of our students have been transient because of the chaotic situation in Zimbabwe. I taught TCC at our Harare Hospice Bereavement Center, where I volunteer to massage the bereaved. It's been a source of energy, relaxation, and quiet in the midst of upheaval. Because of AIDS, murder, the violence of forced evacuation from farms, and disease, the HHBC is a beehive of activity. TCC was always on the menu of helping programs.

The Shona have not been as attracted to TCC as to their traditional movement forms. But I'm sure if some younger members of our TCC family became certified, it would spread. Unless one has lived in a chaotic situation where city hospitals are closed, medications are very limited, electricity is sporadic, and little water available (contributing to a cholera epidemic), you cannot know the stresses. Oh, disaster. Justin has so often spoken of our energy for peace. Blessings on the great effects of TCC in our lives.

P.S. Because of my heart disease and a lack of adequate treatment facilities in Harare, I have returned to the U.S. for treatment and surgery. TCC has been a tremendous source of energy in my healing.

Chi Relates To 21st Century Personal Development

By CHRIS NORKUS, WHISPERING PINES, NC

In my 20s, I took basic instruction in martial arts to harness the power of *Chi* for self-defense and offense. In attempting to breaking boards, I developed cracked skin, bruised joints, and little appreciation for *Chi* where the knuckles met the board. In T'ai Chi Chih we seek to circulate and balance this energy, this *Chi*. We break habits and patterns of behavior that can be stronger than boards or blocks. We strengthen our energy system through habitual practice. *Chi* is a word TCC teachers may use almost casually, for we feel a personal relationship with it. Our students may not have shared the same tangible experience with *Chi*. So how do we relate the message to them?

Growing up in the 1950s, I was told that the human body was essentially pocket change. In the 70s, Earl Nightingale presented the body as a fabulous energy and logic system and asked us to view it as being worth millions of dollars. This is a great perspective from which to view the concept of *Chi*. The body's physical components, the mind, and the spirit combine to form a wondrous energized entity. We describe *Chi* as the "intrinsic energy" within each of us (the energy that stimulates thought, creativity, and growth) that maintains and nurtures us. Without *Chi*, there is no life. *Chi* is the essence of Nightingale's wondrous energy system.

While the concept of *Chi* may be foreign to many Westerners, balance and habit are spoken of often. *Chi* is often represented through the yin-yang symbol of opposing energies, constantly in motion, seeking to balance one another. Through adopting the positive habit of regular practice of TCC, we aid ourselves by circulating and increasing *Chi*. The tangible benefits we can convey to students are expressed as calm, energy, control, balance (and more) that help us negotiate and enjoy our lives and contact with others.



Push Pull

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Editor's Note: Amy attended a recent T'ai Chi Chih retreat given by Carmen Brocklehurst and has written up what Carmen taught for each movement in the hope that others may benefit.

Feel the 60-40 split on the inside; it isn't easily seen in the hands; there is a mental emphasis. Try it. After bringing the palms back towards the shoulders, the hands fall into the breastbone at the bottom (or return point of the ellipse). Feel the strength from the back heel moving up the body. Try it.

The Importance Of Chi

By JUSTIN STONE [REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM *THE VITAL FORCE*, JULY 2002]

Because I am anxious for Tai Chi Chih teachers and students to understand the importance of *Chi* and of the TCC practice that enables us to know the *Chi* and use it to our advantage – nothing is more important – I am going to devote most of this article to quoting Swami Rama of India, who once held the prestigious position of Shankaracharya of Southern India. Swami says:

Prana (Chi) means 'first unit of energy in man.' *Prana (Chi)*, which sustains life in the human body, is the cause of the expansion of the universe. Anything you find in the phenomenal world is the manifestation of *Chi*. Breath is the vehicle for *Chi*. The breath of the individual is a practical manifestation of *Chi*, the Cosmic Breath. The body and the functioning of its organs are dependent on *Chi*. It is *Chi* that maintains the life-link between the physical and the mental.

Chi is not only the life principal in the individual but it is also the cosmic principle. *Chi* is the vital force in a living being which is incessantly active, whether one is awake or asleep.

When the *Chi* departs the body, all other organs follow. The breathing system is the vehicle of *Chi*.

All animate and inanimate objects of this universe are results of the vibration of *Chi*. This vibration of *Chi* is the prime cause of all events happening in the universe. *Chi* is the Cosmic life principle.

this vibration of Chi is the prime cause of all events happening in the universe



It is that which makes us living beings and produces vibrations. Without vibrations and movements this would not exist. We are able to live because every part of the immeasurable realm of *Chi* is constantly vibrating. We are, in fact, nothing but a mass of vibrations – a unit of the energy of the infinite Cosmic *Chi*. This Cosmic *Chi*, the Cosmic energy that is sometimes called 'Intrinsic Energy' in the [East], exists from eternity to eternity. Everything is caused by the *Chi*, which has its own laws. *Chi* is the Universal Life. All of us have come into existence by the power of *Chi*. Every object in this universe obeys the order of the same Mother Energy, the *Chi*.

~ ~ ~

This is pretty powerful stuff, I admit. I will soon be 86 years of age* and have not noticed much deterioration mentally or physically, although I cannot speak for the future. Undoubtedly this is due to TCC practice, and I am certainly grateful for the TCC discipline making it possible to somewhat merge with this all-powerful force. If the TCC movements are practiced consistently and correctly, one can get the eternal benefits.

Is superficial activity a better way to expend your efforts? Think about it.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: AT PRESENT, JUSTIN IS 92 1/2 YEARS OLD AND DOESN'T LOOK A DAY OVER 86.

Pyramid Poems

God
in me
salutes you
our spirits wink
namaste
back at
me
– JAN MAPLES

the
morning
came slowly
like the gentle
Chi came in
to my
life
– MARY WHITE

choose
new ways
of being
open pathways
flow softly
into
change
– SHERYL ADAIR

seek
silence
from stillness
as quiet as
the freshly
fallen
snow
– PETER GREGORY

T'ai Chi Chih And The Future

By JUSTIN STONE

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM *THE VITAL FORCE*, MARCH 2000

Patanjali has been called the “Father of Yoga” not because he originated it but because he codified it. He took parts of different age-old Yogas and worked them into Raja Yoga (the “Kingly Yoga”), a major work in India that has great importance. Anyone who claims to teach Raja Yoga must understand and have mastered (through practice) all eight steps.

Patanjali says: “Yoga is the suppression of mental modifications.” In other words, all yogas have this as their ultimate goal. These mental modifications are called *vritti* in Sanskrit, and when they are repeated over and over become *vashanas* or “habit energies.” Nothing is more important in this life and in future lives. These habit energies shape our lives. Whether by thought, intent, or action, these habit energies – most carried over from the past, it is believed in India – are responsible for our way of living. When they become overly strong they can develop into *samskaras* or “tendencies.” These tendencies,

according to the Buddha, can last through many lives. People who do things without knowing why – such as drinking although they dislike the taste of liquor – can have their lives destroyed in this manner. And it all started with the seemingly harmless *vritti*, the “mental modification” that gradually turned into a habit energy.

*I have observed
teachers
and students
erase
harmful
habits
and
addictions*

Thus, what we think, plan, and

do now will shape our lives to come. Perhaps knowing this will make us more careful. All the talk in the world with therapists, psychologists, and psychoanalysts won't change a thing.

Are there ways to erase these *vashanas*? Yes; two I know about and teach. Deep Meditation that reaches the *turiya* level can do it and T'ai Chi Chih in many, many cases has done it. I believe that TCC changes the metabolism and, with it, erases unwanted *vashanas* (habits like driving a car and playing the piano are obviously not harmful and even necessary). I have observed teachers and students erase harmful habits and addictions. Thus TCC can change the future. What could be more valuable?



Pyramid Poems

here
flowing
practicing
moving the *Chi*
we all are
beams of
light
– DD

the
end is
nearer than
you think; don't wait
it is a
gift to
you
– CB

joy
Justin
joining all
in service to
all to grow
a new
earth
– MR

we
gather
together
to learn and feel
what is in
each of
us
– JH

Wedding Practice To Life

Workshop with Carmen Brocklehurst
in Albuquerque, NM; March 19-22, 2009

By DIANE MOODY, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Twenty-seven participants (including new and senior students and teachers) converged for this T'ai Chi Chih retreat. This was my second; last September I limped into Carmen's retreat, stressed and suffering from a severely sprained ankle. I questioned my sanity about attending, but much to my surprise, I was able to do all practice sessions and left feeling great. I immediately felt supported by everyone and further jump-started my practice. I'm amazed by what there is to learn about each movement – layers upon layers. This time, too, we were blessed that Justin was with us for four hours on Saturday. He commented that "people must have been sneaking in some practice" because he saw so much improvement since the last retreat.

The profound Saturday evening session, where we reflected on what we'd gotten from the retreat or what had changed inside of us, centered around three themes. One was community. Many people, especially those practicing in more isolated areas, expressed appreciation for the connection. Others commented on the integrity of everyone present and how there was no posturing, no agenda, and no need to be anything except good company on the spiritual path. A first-timer now understood why people find TCC so "unique and compelling."

The second theme had to do with feeling the *Chi*. One participant commented, "I removed blocks in my body that I didn't even know I had." Others commented on feeling more spaciousness, feeling their fingers tremble with *Chi* for the first time, feeling heat during a movement, opening their hearts, or just letting go and feeling calm, creative, more relaxed and more comfortable with themselves. Many expressed appreciation for the gentle corrections given and what a difference those simple adjustments made. On the last day a hot air balloon drifted by, perfectly reflecting "the effort of no effort."

The third theme centered on service, especially with regards to the property's labyrinth, badly neglected and overrun with weeds. Cynthia and Deborah put out a plea for gardeners, and many participants joyfully used their free time to restore its *Chi*. The labyrinth became somewhat of a metaphor when Cynthia wisely shared, "We have to weed our lives, to let go by weeding things that are taking away our energy, so that we can leave a clear path for others to follow." We, our TCC practice, and the labyrinth left in good fit condition.



Intensive Generosity

Intensive with Sandy McAlister
in Ringwood, NJ; March 19-22, 2009

COMPILED BY DANIEL PIENCIAK, HOWELL, NJ



The sprawling Franciscan Spirituality Center in the heart of Ringwood State Park was the site of a wonderful learning event, with the added bonus of Sister Antonia attending. Participants were generous in sharing their experiences:

"I want to express my gratitude to everyone for sharing this T'ai Chi Chih weekend. I will practice with my heart and my soul, not with my head. I will allow the *tan t'ien* to do the job." (Lucia Corria) ... "This intensive confirmed the centrality of TCC in my life. I am so grateful to have found a place in this community." (Roselee Blooston) ... "These days have been a revelation. For years, I have looked for a physical process to give concreteness to a philosophy of the nothingness before thought – learned from Krishnamurti. Thank you Justin. (Raymond Rei) ... "TCC is not something you learn but something you explore day after day, week after week, year after year. As we grow, it grows; as it grows, we grow. TCC teaches me to 'accord with impermanence.'" (Dennis McCann) ...

"*Chi* is love in its purest form. It has no agenda other than for my highest good." (Anon) ... "The sense of connection and community is as important as the learning received. I feel refreshed, revitalized, and grounded." (Celia Hills) ...

"This wonderful learning experience has allowed me to look at and feel my practice in a new way. Focusing on different details brings a deeper awareness." (Anon) ... "The end results are always the same: a stronger, more powerful practice and extreme gratitude." (Stacey Moore) ... "A Hopi Indian prayer reminds me of feeling the expanse of my aloneness, so I lay down in a quiet place and felt the earth and sky, and I was not alone. This weekend has woven a blanket of comfort around me." (Fran Alexander) ... "Peer partnering was actually quite profound. I was observing and giving feedback, learning and receiving, yinping and yangping. Soon there was no giver and no receiver, just *Chi*." (Marilyn Powell) ... "I originally came to refine my movements to prepare for teacher training. But I was also opened to the essence and spirit of the movements and to TCC itself. It has brought my practice and my very being to new depths. I am grateful to Sandy, Dan, Antonia, and all the participants." (Aimee Becker)

Valentine's Day Focus

Workshop with Antonia Cooper
in Portland, OR; February 14, 2009

By ROBERTA TAGGART, CO-HOST, EUGENE, OR

This short but sweet workshop focused on one of Justin's passages from *Spiritual Odyssey*: "If we examine it closely, we find that awareness is the root of T'ai Chi Chih, which is essentially inner-oriented. Circularity is fundamental. And we already know that 'softness and continuity' are the Essence. When we practice TCC faithfully, we will find that Love Energy is the fruit" (page 31). Hungry for community activities, Pacific Northwest participants were encouraged to experience awareness, circularity, softness, and continuity with each movement. All were inspired to breathe in the teachings presented softly and gently.

One third of the 30 participants traveled for hours from Washington State and returned with a strong desire to build community. Portlanders gained a larger sense of community, strengthening the bond between themselves and their Washington counterparts. We began with a traditional welcome circle, followed by instruction in preliminary, forward-and-backward, side-to-side, and up-and-down movements. After general instruction, we broke into smaller groups, where participants focused on individual movements and one or more principles – awareness (the root of TCC), circularity (the fundamental), and softness and continuity (the essence).

Emily Roberts, who had no previous experience with TCC, remarked that she "learned it easily and was able to comfortably follow the final practice at the end of the day." Teacher candidate, Marcella Box, found the day "perfectly balanced and well-planned so that everyone received what they needed." Feedback revealed an inclusive format beneficial for everyone. Teachers added: "Being with students is always humbling" ... "I enjoyed having different levels of participants and observing the varied styles of teachers" ... "It was great for me as a teacher to remember what I've learned over the years."

Linda Robinson and Roberta served tea in small cups prior to the final practice, which was singled out as "powerful" and "bringing the spiritual energy of the group together." Teachers formed an inner circle, while students and newcomers formed a second ring around them. Students and newcomers followed the teachers directly in front of them, making for an effective and deeply felt TCC practice. The workshop ended with a few minutes of sitting followed by "Joy, Joy, Healing Thru Joy" lead by Jim Shorr (co-host), Steve Marsh (instructor), and Banks Upshaw (student).



Magic Happens

Retreat with Antonia Cooper in
Santa Barbara, CA; February 3-6, 2009

From A Teacher ...

By BARBARA KRISTOFF, CORTE MADERA, CA

At La Casa de Maria, the essence of T'ai Chi Chih emerged from gardens, walkways, and pathways. An old grove of oak trees provided surrender into shade, and a hidden labyrinth reminded us of circularity and continuity. A stream murmured just outside

the meeting room, all the better to feel the bubbling spring. Antonia welcomed us with a soft presence and joyful playfulness. She broke down movements into three directions: up/down, side/side, and forward/backward. (Personally, I experienced Perpetual Motion in a whole new way – feeling that silence, like the space between breaths, just before the heel touches and the next weight shift begins.)

The group camaraderie continues to make me smile: We had sibling pairs, married couples, best friends, and buddies. We enjoyed mostly organic meals and lots of talking and laughter. One of my most cherished memories was our last practice: A small inner circle formed within a larger outer circle, and we moved as one, a kaleidoscope of energy, falling into deep silence. A week after the retreat, I am still in that soft flowing place.

... From A Student

By TOM ROTHENBERGER, SAN ANSELMO CA

As a three-year student of T'ai Chi Chih, I'd enjoyed the refinements taught in our weekly class with Barbara Kristoff. I'd looked forward to Barbara returning from TCC events because I knew she would have new gems to share. Now I looked forward to a retreat myself, and the sessions more than satisfied my expectations. Thanks to Antonia and Pam, sessions were informative, inspiring, and fun. But what surprised me the most was what I could feel happening during the sessions. As they progressed I felt the cumulative effects of moving *Chi*. The *Chi* would begin flowing sooner, as though the energy had been left in the room from an earlier session. Were we sharing this energy between people in the group or was it just there? About half way through the retreat we ventured into a garden to practice, where soon I began to feel the energy flow. Was this my energy, the person in front of me, behind me? Were we sharing energy or was the *Chi* moving us? I began to feel that there were no leaders, no instructors, no students. Just TCC. I let go of a questioning mind and let the *Chi* flow. We were one.

The Many R's

A Teacher Symposium Lead by Sandy McAlister
near Chicago; October 17-19, 2008

COMPILED BY DIANA WELSH DURKIN, GLEN ELLYN, IL

Editor's Note: Part One of this article appeared in the February 2009 issue.

My mind keeps going to the word *renew*. This *Chi* is trying to tell me something: I feel renewed in body, mind, and spirit. There is a renewal of softness to my movements, a renewal of letting go more, and a renewed vow to help students gain a better understanding of TCC. Sharing also comes to mind – of energy, knowledge, materials, ideas, and time. I gained so much from the different approaches to teaching a movement at this symposium. Changing one simple word can make a big difference in understanding one part of a movement. The visuals and handouts were also quite helpful. – BOBBIE WEICHMAN, GRAYSLAKE, IL

The symposium brought a new focus to my TCC. I'm a teacher seeking tips, techniques, new way to teach, to inspire students. The exchange of ideas about how to teach movements and getting refinements by Sandy was rich. If you seek new words or ways to refresh your teaching, consider attending a symposium. – LORRAINE LEPINE, PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS

I benefited not only from Sandy's wise teaching but also from her expertise as a facilitator. Since the 2004 conference, where I first heard teachers talk about the hip swivel, I'd observed students and teachers struggling with this concept and creating effort and extraneous movement. Sandy helped clarify the issue with her discussion of intention versus reality. She kept bringing us back to the principles – to answer and work through the questions. With that in mind, here's my take on the hip swivel: Our intention is to maintain an upright, straight spine (with gentle natural curves) and a neutral pelvic bowl as we rest and move. In reality, balance and alignment are not rigid. Rather, as we move with the principle of the effort of no effort, the front, back, and side postural muscles are engaged with give and softness. They sustain postural integrity while expanding

Conference: Scholarships & Volunteers

BY SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CA

Would you like to attend the teacher's conference (Nourishing – Rooting – Blooming) this year but can't quite afford it? Well, now you can: **Scholarship money is available.** Many teachers have contributed to the fund because they want you to attend. We have received enough registrations to meet two-thirds of our commitment to the facility. If you are considering attending, don't wait. Help us meet our commitment soon – so that we can put energy into other areas of the conference. As you know, this conference is being prepared by the whole T'ai Chi Chih community. Coordinators for vendors, raffles, and registration (and more) could use your assistance. If you would like to help, please email me.

and contracting with breath; they allow the body to continuously initiate micro-adjustments. Hence, the waist is free to subtly adjust as we sink to prepare to move, shift the weight, and release into rest (between the movements). We are not "efforting" a swivel, a figure eight, a tucked tailbone. The pelvic bowl is simply allowed to respond freely and naturally, as needed, to sustain balance and the integrity of an upright spine. – SUSAN KISSINGER, ST. LOUIS, MO

Back-To-Back Success

Workshop with Antonia Cooper in the San Francisco Bay Area, CA; February 7-8, 2009

BY ATHENE MANTLE, SAN JOSE, CA

The Bay Area shone more brightly when 45 students and teachers (on Saturday) and 17 teachers (on Sunday) gathered to explore T'ai Chi Chih with Antonia. All were very appreciative of achieving a deeper awareness as she shared her understanding



of flowing from the center and moving with softness. Students particularly liked the breakout groups with a ratio of three students to one teacher. Students reached a level of softness and continuity that was very impressive in the final practice, and they left asking for more. Teachers also benefited from one-to-one partner

practice. Individual feedback for teachers was highly valued and, in many cases, transformative. It felt like Sr. Antonia floated into the Bay Area and out again, leaving us moving with greater softness.

On The Move

Workshop with Antonia Cooper in Minneapolis, MN; January 2009

BY ANDREA COLE, MINNEAPOLIS, MN

T'ai Chi Chih is a meditative practice that balances and circulates *Chi*, the life energy that exists in all of us. It consists of 19 simple movements and one pose and can be done by people of all ages and physical ability. The benefits of this moving meditation are wide-ranging: stress reduction, increased energy, and greater creativity and awareness. For one weekend in January, Antonia Cooper, the Guide of TCC, traveled to Minneapolis to lead a healing retreat for teachers and students. The retreat offered those attending a chance to renew and deepen their practice, find relief from stressful jobs, or heal from losses. For more information about T'ai Chi Chih, including articles, photos, and a list of teachers worldwide, visit www.taichichih.org.



A Snowbird Teacher

By DONNA ALDOUS, MEADOW LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN, CANADA

This winter my husband and I officially became “snowbirds,” spending the winter in Mesa, Arizona, where the temperature hovers around 70 degrees Fahrenheit rather than minus 30 degrees Celsius (like it does in Saskatchewan). Why am I telling you this?

*TCC
has
caught
on like
wildfire*

I brought T'ai Chi Chih supplies with me to Arizona with the idea of starting classes. When we visited our RV resort last year, I noticed how much TCC could help the seniors. Within two weeks of the first session on January 6th, we had to move to a bigger space because we had over 30 participants. TCC has caught on like wildfire. It's a challenge to teach first-timers along with those who started the first week. But so far, so good. Everyone realizes that I'm an accredited teacher, and they know the class has value. (I charge \$2 per class.) People are free to come and go; missing a week is not a problem for them or me.

Since people like to come early, I have chairs ready in a circle and we begin sitting with our feet flat on the floor – getting grounded and rooted while we listen to the CD, *Justin Stone Speaks on TCC*. I want participants to become familiar with Justin, and the question and answer part of this CD is invaluable. Then I read a section from the *TCC photo textbook* and make sure the students know that Justin demonstrates every movement in it. When I read from *Spiritual Odyssey* last week, it generated some good feedback. I've just ordered 20 DVDs so that students will have something to practice with when they return home. Hopefully they'll contact teachers in their local areas so they can continue practicing during the summer months. One student even comes from Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan, if you can believe it!

My personal practice has also really gained momentum. There is so much enthusiasm and energy at our sessions that I can hardly wait for Tuesdays. What is the saying? “When the student is ready, the teacher will appear.” Well teachers, there are a lot of students out there. What are you waiting for? As Justin says, “TCC is too great a gift not to share it with whoever shows an interest.” Let's contribute something worthwhile. It has certainly worked for me and for my neighbors at Mesa Spirit RV Resort.



... And Her Snowbird Students

COMPILED BY DONNA ALDOUS

When I asked our class what they felt about T'ai Chi Chih, it turned out to be a very worthwhile exercise, and students began building on what others were saying. I intend on doing this exercise at each of my classes from now on.

Marty Piper from Michigan related that the arthritis in her hands is very bad, but since learning TCC, she is taking less pain medication. ... Terry Mamer of Saskatchewan, who has a fear of flying, has flown since taking TCC, and the stress was lessened because she visualized TCC movements during the flight. ... Susan Baron of Alberta has visualized doing TCC in order to fall asleep. She has yet to get past Around the Platter. Susan was also astonished to learn about the active TCC community in Edmonton. ... Marilyn Pence of Ohio feels her balance has improved immensely. The idea of not falling into the movements or falling out of them has helped in other areas of her life – like doing things purposefully.

Stevie Duval d'Adrian is much more sure footed when she gets on her bike. She now plants her foot, grounding it into the earth, and can mount her bike with grace. ... Penny Smith of Oregon liked the idea of pushing away the negative and pulling in the positive in Push Pull. It brought meaning to the movement for her. ... Peni Campbell of British Columbia has learned to let go more. Family situations that would have brought tears are now more manageable. ... Moving through heavy air allowed Phyllis Anderson to slow down and brought her back into the moment.

We had a great discussion about the effects of Pulling in the Energy. By consciously visualizing pulling in the energy from the most distant star through our fingertips, one lady's fingertips tingled and another had a real feeling of energy around her body. One woman woke up in the morning to her right hand tingling. And because we are practicing outside by the pool, participants felt closer to nature. A hummingbird joined us this morning and it brought true delight and a new dimension into play. We all seem to be more in the moment. A couple of ladies said, “Before we know it, we're on Perpetual Motion and time just seems to flow.”

The women who purchased a DVD said they were glad not to have an excuse not to practice at home. This prompted two more ladies to purchase a DVD. There was general agreement about a greater appreciation of life and a renewed sense of our selves. I said I'd have them in my thoughts during the summer when I practice TCC on my deck in Saskatchewan, and I expected to feel their energy when they practice. They seemed quite excited about that prospect.

Parkinson's: Full Of Grace & Graceful

BY COLLEEN WUEBBEN, OMAHA, NE

Until recently, I took movement for granted – the smooth, automatic capability to move or to be completely still. But since the shock of my diagnosis with Parkinson's Disease (PD) at the age of 52, movement often looks and feels like a completely new sensation. Although I didn't read it for months, literature on the benefits of exercise (and T'ai Chi Chih specifically) was included in the packet of information that I picked up in the neurologist's office. Confused, I wondered how someone with a noticeable tremor of the

while I have experienced many of the positive [changes] documented, there is one glaring omission ... spirit

right hand and an awkward feeling of stiffness could fit into the mental picture I had of graceful, serene people practicing incredibly slow, flowing movements in perfect synchronicity.

So I began at the gym with weights and cardio, learning by trial and error and becoming accustomed to the occasional distraction of my unintentionally jiggling right hand and shortened right steps. Not yet on any medication, my awareness and acceptance of my body grew as I turned to meditation, exercise, and a healthier lifestyle. Yet TCC continued to intrigue me. So when I saw a flier about a class starting in a local church, my curiosity won. The symptoms of PD are sometimes exaggerated by stress, so it seemed amusingly ironic to be shaking more than usual when waiting with strangers for a first class that dealt with smooth, calming movements.

Any anxiety was quickly replaced with our teacher's engaging personality; a comfortable camaraderie developed while we explored new stances and movements called by folksy names. In that too-short six weeks, the personal benefits were already clear: I had a more deliberate awareness of a centered stance and shifting balance; a steady focus on moving parts of my body in a coordinated repetitive way while relaxing other muscles; and increased flexibility. Sharing ourselves in the simple joy of moving also led me to forget PD at times and the tremors to decrease or even disappear. As my knowledge of the poses grew, I put the mechanics further from my consciousness and just let myself be in the moment, feeling refresh-

ingly unencumbered by self-consciousness or worry. A gift indeed.

Since the class ended, I have researched the benefits of TCC more extensively, particularly for those with PD. And while I have experienced many of the positives documented, there is one glaring omission. The written focus is usually technical: the changes in balance, coordination, flexibility, concentration, or calmness – all of which are true. But the enduring change for me was of the spirit: it was accomplished in the mystery of open-hearted interpersonal exchange. Now movement is sacred, conscious. Today the dance of life welcomes me as much as ever, and the sharing of this practice out of love has the power of creative transformation: being more graceful, I am also more full of grace.



TCC Or Tequila Sunrise?

BY BETTE-B BAUER, OMAHA, NE

One of the things I love about T'ai Chi Chih is that it's portable. Wherever I travel, I have a way to welcome a new day in a new place, preferably outdoors. Periodically, I vacation in Key West, where, every early morning, I ride my rented bike over to the pier. If the tide is out, there are often a few great blue herons standing like sentinels, or moving sedately in the shallows. They remind me of TCC practitioners. Further down the beach great white herons rise into the air and resetttle. As the light increases, shrimp boats pass by on their way into the harbor, their wing nets extended.

Before enjoying my Cuban *cafe con leche* and *pan con queso*, I practice the "joy through movement" of TCC. The first light comes much sooner in the Keys than in the north, and it spreads subtly outwards, long before the sun appears. Pastels soften a fading dark sky. As I proceed through the joyful movements, gulls hover on the wind next to me. A large brown pelican lands on the concrete barrier in front of me. I begin to wonder if these birds are drawn by TCC's energy. (When I do TCC regularly, I feel a steady energy and a consistent sense of wellbeing.) Later, in Nebraska's wintery cold, my teacher, Rita, agrees that yes, the birds were attracted by the energy. Other people are gathered on the pier – one woman lifts her arms as the sun comes up, and a group is gathered around a woman in a motorized wheelchair and opening champagne. The air is charged with the beginning of a new day.

The Roar Of Celery & Carrots

By JERRY JUZDAN, WEEHAWKEN, NJ

If only I had a bumper sticker business: I could be a millionaire selling bumper stickers to my fellow T'ai Chi Chih students.

Who wouldn't want their vehicles adorned with phrases like "Flowing With Softness & Continuity" ... "The Effort Of No Effort" ... "Let Your Shoulders Relax." Is it poetry? Dance? Therapy? It's in my

nature to question, wonder, and doubt.

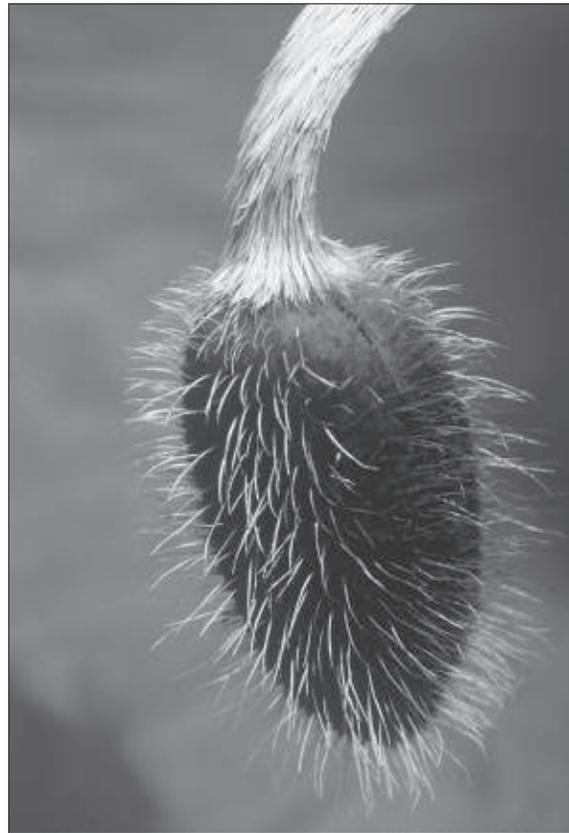
*let it go
and
let it flow*

But I'm learning the joy of letting my body's movements find the answers. In fact, it's not about learning at all; it's about

unlearning. Forget your head and concentrate on your center. Toss away your ideas of getting it perfect and rely on your body to remember. Let it go and let it flow. My initial fears have turned to fearlessness. I am a student again and I can do it.

It's really all about the *practice*. I have actually done some movements on vacation in the pool, while waiting for a bus, and while walking through a park. I have seen references to it in movies, on the Internet, and in the news. I'm a little possessive: I call it *my* TCC – as when I mention to my wife, "Look, honey, there's another wild and crazy person practicing *my* TCC." Suddenly, I'm part of a private club with a language all its own and I feel just a little sorry for those who haven't joined *yet*. Some of us are convinced the world is on the brink of discovering TCC. Soon it will be as big as eBay, iTunes, and the Home Shopping Network.

As a 57-year old retired teacher, I was convinced I had learned everything. And then I was introduced to the magic of TCC practice and the inspiring Bill Moore, who is part instructor and part friend. I have learned to stop asking how it all works. I now allow TCC to come inside and become a part of me – and not just for an hour a week but for days at a time. I now see things with a new vision, approach things in a new way, and welcome things with a new attitude. On my way home from our weekly class, I speed past Burger King and head home for celery and carrots. I am warrior, hear me roar.



Wu Wei

By ROMAN OBARA, WALLINGTON, NJ

In practicing my T'ai Chi Chih one day, I started to think about the Taoist concept of *wu-wei*. *Wu* is something akin to "without" and *wei* translates into something like "action" or in this case "struggle." It means to act without acting or without struggling,

which is much easier said than done. I remember when I first started studying TCC. It seemed so much easier than T'ai Chi Chu'an, which I'd learned some 20 years earlier. The TCC brochure said that there were only 19 movements and 1 posture, substantially less than the 108 moves contained in the ancient form I'd learned so long ago. "I can do this in no time," I thought. I was right at one level. In six weeks, with the help of instructor Bill Moore, I'd gotten all of the moves down. Or so I thought. "That wasn't too bad," I remember thinking. And then the fun began. Since then I've spent countless hours trying to perfect what I've learned. And the key word here is trying. I was *trying* so hard and was so attached to the results that I was missing an important part of TCC: the practice.

This brings me back to *wu-wei*. I don't remember when I first realized I should practice the TCC movements without worrying about results (or worrying

about them *too* much). "Just Do It" as Nike, the Winged Goddess of Victory, so eloquently commands. Just do the moves without any attachment to the results. Just do them without any thought of whether it's a "good" practice or a "bad" practice. Just do them without thinking about how much *Chi* is circulating in the bubbling springs of your feet. Just do them with softness and continuity, with effort-less effort. Be natural, like a river, and flow. There's no "doing" when it comes to a river flowing. It just does what it does, without judgment of any kind.

*there's no
'doing'
when it
comes to
a river
flowing*

The less we contend, the more we achieve. And the more we align ourselves with the Eternal Tao, the better off we'll be since, as the *Tao Te Ching* (verse 37) says, "The Tao never strives, yet nothing is left undone."

A Miraculous Recovery

By RAYMOND SHARP, UPPER MONTCLAIR, NJ

About 15 years ago, I began to practice T'ai Chi Chih on my own after buying Justin Stone's VHS tape. At that time, I was an international consulting actuary leading a very stressful and demanding business life, complete with extensive international and U.S. travel. But I found that practicing the moves had a noticeably calming effect. Unfortunately, I only practiced TCC for a few months.

By the time retirement rolled around, I was burned out. All those years of incessant travel and tight deadlines had taken their toll. Eighteen months ago, things took a turn for the worse. I needed emergency surgery to remove my gall bladder, and then I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, which required more surgery. I felt very low, I had little energy, and my general physical condition had become very poor.

Late last year, in hope of recovering my health, I tried TCC again through a class at the local adult learning center. This has turned out to be one of the best decisions of my life. I picked up the movements fairly quickly, thanks in small part to my self-practice all those years ago but largely owing to our wonderful teacher, Kate Van Frank. Almost from the start, I began to do the full routine daily (and sometimes twice a day). This rapid re-introduction to TCC has been much aided by the thoughtful advice and encouragement of Kate, and also by studying Justin Stone and the group of fine teachers on the *Joy Thru Movement* DVD.

The beneficial effects of this concentrated re-immersion were immediately obvious. With the very first session I experienced many sensations associated with a blockage (and subsequent flow) of *Chi*. It has now been several months and I've noticed, among other things, that my skin tone has improved, my hair is getting thicker, and my sense of smell has increased. But above all, my energy, flexibility, and balance have returned – along with a sense of serenity and joy. I feel better and healthier than I have felt in years. My recovery feels miraculous. This time I will not be giving up my daily practice of TCC. As Justin Stone says, "If you practice every day, you will get real rewards from TCC." My experience is ample proof of this wisdom.

No Life Without It

By FRAN GREEN, WAYNE, NJ

I had always been sick, tired, and weak. There were times I couldn't even walk from the bedroom to the kitchen. In 1986 I was diagnosed with Epstein Barr Virus. Several years later I saw a top neurologist who sent me to the Kessler Institute (where the actor Christopher Reeves was treated) where I was an outpatient for six years. The head doctor diagnosed me with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) and Fibromyalgia. She told me that the best thing I could do for my health was T'ai Chi. She said it had as many benefits as sleep.

When I met Margaret O'Conner, my T'ai Chi Chih teacher, I had just recovered from having a nonmalignant tumor removed from my spine and a double neck fusion. I was weak and fragile but knew I had to get back to living a normal life. That is when I began doing TCC. I began with seated TCC and built my way up.

Doing TCC has become part of my life. I do it daily for ten minutes and sometimes twice a day. It gives me increased energy, and I now have normal balance (my coordination had been poor). With my health issues and surgeries it's easy to get depressed, but TCC has

helped with stress reduction. TCC helps me keep things in perspective and gives me strength. With my Fibromyalgia and surgeries (including recent neck surgery for a compressed spinal cord), strength is a major problem. By doing TCC I have less pain. It also gives me flexibility and has lowered my blood pressure. I have recently come down with Multiple Chemical Sensitivity and have developed sensitivity to cleaning products, toothpaste, perfume, food preservatives, and other daily products. Although this affects my

breathing and I wear an air purifier around my neck, I know TCC helps me breathe more easily.

My grandchildren enjoy doing the *Seijaku* warm-ups with the sounds. One of my favorite movements is Six Healing Sounds because when I do them, I feel like I'm giving energy to my inner organs. I have read many articles saying how important it is to do TCC, and I could not picture my life without it. I am thankful for Margaret's kindness, wisdom, understanding, and help. I thank Chilton Hospital for making TCC available to seniors like me. I have made many friends.



Teaching In A Drop-In Setting

By CAROL NELSON-SELBY, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

At the 2008 conference I learned there are very few teachers who teach a “drop-in” or “continuous” class, yet I suspect that many would consider making this choice if they knew its advantages. The most practical of these is that the teacher is usually salaried by a health club or the health care entity – one that also takes care of promotion, facilities, and fees. Also, ongoing classes often build over the years, letting the teacher enjoy the experience of leading a core group into a deeper T'ai Chi Chih practice. The challenge of a drop-in format, however, is figuring out how to integrate each new student into the existing class. In fact, this can be a very enjoyable and creative process. Each situation is unique and the methods depend upon the new student's ability (or disabilities) and the group dynamic, but the following scenario is fairly typical in my classes.

Because I usually work in a health club that offers a variety of classes, I arrive early to modify the lighting and put on background music. New students usually arrive early, too, and I take some time explaining and demonstrating yinling and yangling and the T'ai Chi move. I then help them identify the *tan t'ien* and explain its relationship to balance and shifting of weight. We discuss any physical limitations they might have – such as arthritic hips, neuropathies in their feet, or dizziness. If appropriate, I suggest techniques such as using a chair or a large exercise ball for support, or moving along the wall, all of which have helped me or other students. We talk a little about the benefits they expect and those that I (or my students) have experienced.

Most importantly, I recommend that they not try to copy the hand or wrist movements of TCC, but instead concentrate on the weight shift, as this is the source of all other movement. I explain that as the weight shift becomes natural, the arms will want to follow. Through demonstration and direction, I then guide the students to stand with feet below the hips, knees soft, and the pelvis relaxed and neutral (as opposed to tucked under or arched). I have them begin shifting their weight forward and backward onto their feet, letting their shoulders stay comfortably over their hips. Once moving, I suggest they focus their attention on the soles of their feet and tell me what they feel.

Then I guide new students through basic yinling and yangling, cueing them as they slowly move next to me to “release the front knee and gently glide forward until the back leg straightens and there is no weight left on your back foot” and to “release the back knee and slide your hips back until the front leg is completely empty.” In this way I can correct any tendency to “push off” or lean before it becomes a habit.

By this time, the rest of the class has arrived. Often a newcomer is already known by an ongoing student (who recommended TCC to them). A group member usually spontaneously offers that he or she was recently the “newbie” and offers encouragement. Someone always mentions that TCC is a “practice, not a performance” and that we are lifetime learners.

From that point on I let the *Chi* draw the new member into the fold. He or she hears the same gentle reminders about form and the same imagery about circularity and softness; they all suffer my metaphors and analogies with grace. By the end of the second class almost all students are able to follow the complete practice. The longer I teach, the more I'm convinced that the *Chi* inherent in the practice is really the best teacher. Our job is to give people the tools to feel it and then get out of the way.

Outreach Activities Update

By LORRAINE LEPINE, PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KS

- The Outreach Coordinator position, open as of July 2009, is shifting its priorities toward marketing and communication. Anyone interested is invited to contact Antonia or Pam. After the July conference, I will continue to coordinate the development of guidelines and the teacher reference material project.
- Resource teachers have been working on guidelines for teaching TCC to seniors. The final version will be posted on the web in July 2009. Other teachers are working on guidelines for teaching seated TCC, teaching to children, the blind, those with Parkinson's, arthritis, Lyme disease, and in spiritual or retreat settings. Thanks to Stephen Thompson for setting up a guideline's forum on Antonia's website where interested teachers can share their input.
- The purpose of a teacher reference materials project is to compile, edit, and develop teaching materials and make them available online for teachers. It will include class formats, teaching methods, handouts, registration forms, waivers of liability, etc. Chery Ann Hoffmeyer has volunteered to be the spokesperson for this project; contact her if you are interested in contributing.
- Anita Vestal continues to request pilot teachers to utilize the student questionnaire and return the answers to her for the validation process.

From Justin Response to the “Outreach” article:

This letter, just shown to me, was not mailed to me. When Sr. Antonia was in Albuquerque recently I asked her about these activities. She replied that she had no knowledge of them. I have been pushed into the background by those who want to make T'ai Chi Chih a commercial activity, a change that will kill it, if this is not halted. I will sever connections with T'ai Chi Chih after so many years of fighting to keep it honest. Who are these people apparently taking over T'ai Chi Chih, with Sister's cooperation? This letter speaks for itself, and I won't be a part of this Divinely guided form in its changed look.” – JUSTIN STONE

Karmic Comments

- LINKING T'AI CHI CHIH WITH OTHER DISCIPLINES -

As Justin Stone says in *Spiritual Odyssey*, published by Good Karma Publishing, "If T'ai Chi Chih is hitched to other activities, no matter how worthy, it will, in time, fade. To use TCC as the key to opening the door to pushing other matter is wrong. Keep them separate. It's best to examine motives – at rock bottom level – for this type of activity."

- TRADEMARK LICENSING AGREEMENT -

This agreement, which Good Karma's copyright and trademark attorney has long suggested that teachers sign in order to protect against trademark infringement, will no longer be required. Justin believes it sets the wrong tone – to ask newly minted teachers to sign these kinds of legal documents.

GKP does respectfully request, though, that you continue using the registered trademark symbol ® – after the first use only of T'ai Chi Chih in any article that you write for print or web publication.

It is also still important, as much as possible, to use T'ai Chi Chih as an adjective – as in the "T'ai Chi Chi practice." Why? Because when a trademarked name stands alone it becomes generic, and its value eventually becomes watered down. For example, it used to be

Kleenex tissues and Xerox copies and Coca-Cola soft drinks. Now it's "Please xerox this for me" even if it's being copied on a Canon copier. Or it's "May I have a kleenex, please?" when it's actually a Charmin tissue.

- LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR TEACHERS – SET UP BY MARIE MYSZKIER, ALBUQUERQUE, NM -

Teachers in need of liability insurance may contact the Fitness and Wellness Insurance Agency (not Marie), where applicable policies are underwritten by the Philadelphia Insurance Company (tel 800-395-8075). Visit the website (fitnessandwellness.com) and search for Liability Only > Select Your Association > T'ai Chi Chih – Joy Thru Movement > Select Your State and continue. If you are leasing a business space or have employees, see the "Business Application" section. As of this writing, the cost for \$2 million worth of coverage is \$145 annually (if you teach part time or less than six hours per week.) If you are teaching full time (i.e. over six hours per week), the cost for \$4 million worth of coverage is \$205 annually. Thanks, Marie for sharing. This information will be posted on the hidden teacher URL under taichichih.org. (Contact Lorraine Lepine if you don't know it.)

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

The Lighter Side

At the end of a seated T'ai Chi Chih class, it was time to be still and relax. I started the checklist of body parts: relax your face, relax your tongue, relax your jaw, etc. One of the ladies started laughing. When I asked her afterwards what was so funny, she said, "I was imagining relaxing my teeth and my false teeth dropping out."
– SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

One Saturday morning, after chauffeuring my younger daughter to horseback riding, I headed to the nearest Starbucks drive-thru for a much needed grande chai tea latte. While waiting in the slow-moving line, I contemplated the power of T'ai Chi Chih and how the sincerity of the practitioner grows into a state of glowing gratitude. As I finally pulled up to pay for my drink, the young fellow at the window greeted me enthusiastically: "What's going on, Sunshine?" I replied with a startled, "It's a beautiful day." (But I certainly wasn't feeling like sunshine.) The young man double-checked my order. "You ordered a T'ai Chi, right?" I laughed, agreed, and handed him the money. He returned with my chai tea. As I pulled away, he remarked, "Enjoy your T'ai Chi!" I said, "I will!" – DORA DERZON, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

I often host local T'ai Chi Chih events at the Franciscan Spirituality Center in Ringwood, New Jersey, a beautifully situated place. Because the dorm rooms, dining facilities, and conference space

in different buildings, we walk outside from place to place several times each day. But we are not alone. Here's a pyramid poem to explain: here / the grass / is messy / geese everywhere / look and watch / or else / oops – DAN PIENCIAK, HOWELL, NJ



T'ai Chi Chih Community Calendar

DATE	WHAT & WHO	WHERE	CONTACT
May 4-9	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	San Antonio, TX	Sr. Alice Holden sparks-1@sbcglobal.net 210-525-1232
June 21-25	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	Santa Barbara, CA	Tony Johansen trjohansen@msn.com 805-680-6731 / 805-687-1045
July 16-19	TCC Teacher Conference	Nebraska City, NE	John & Roberta Taggart taggartjl@earthlink.net 541-654-0566
July 19-21	Sejjaku Accreditation w/ Pam	Nebraska City, NE	Dan Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com 732-988-5573
July 27 - Aug. 1	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy	Grand Falls-Windsor NL, Canada	Sheila Leonard sheilaleonard@nf.sympatico.ca 709-579-7863 / 709-727-7863
August 20-23	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com 732 988 5573
October 25	TCC Teacher Renewal w/ Pam	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com 732-988-5573
October 26-31	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com 732-988-5573
November 15-20	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy	Albuquerque, NM	Christa Keller 505-899-3873 christa_keller@comcast.net

MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

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

May 16	Sejjaku Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks judyhendricks@comcast.net 505-897-3810 (after 5pm)
June 4-7	TCC Workshop w/ Dan Pienciak	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com 732 988 5573
August 20-23	Sejjaku Retreat w/ Dan Pienciak	Ringwood, NJ	Dan Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com 732 988 5573
September 17-20	TCC Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks judyhendricks@comcast.net 505-897-3810 (after 5pm)

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If you have questions, please contact Mary Ruiz at vfjmembership@yahoo.com or P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674.

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Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

TEACHER ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

Date you were accredited as a T'ai Chi Chih teacher _____

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher _____

Name of the teacher who taught you T'ai Chi Chih _____

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