

The Vital Force

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for teachers & students

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Justin's Words

20th Century Psalms: Reflections On This Life

BY JUSTIN STONE

- We believe what we want to believe and we doubt our own experience.

- Very few can speak in the abstract, or from an overall view; it must always be flavored by what is painful to me and what is pleasurable. When you find one who can observe impersonally, you have met a wise creature.

- Need for frequent diversion means we're bored with ourselves. How few sit quietly doing nothing!

- Frequently, followers of the Spiritual Path reach in a joyous feeling of Unity – and then get hung up there. Unless they can come full circle, back to ordinary life, it will be practically impossible for them to function in this world.

- "Joy" is always there; it only has to be uncovered.

- Nature is without sentiment. That must be realized.

- Our two tasks are to know Who and What we are and to understand Impermanence; without knowing the first, we can never accord with the second.

- Life is Life. There is no "more important" and "less important," least of all based on size.

- "I" and "Mine" are the heavy baggage we carry on our backs. "Yours" brings other creatures into being.

- Does anyone possess the wind blowing over the water? Does this wind have a place of origin? When the wind has passed, the waves subside.

- Can you reach Realization by effort? Can the tree of flower blossom early by trying hard? All in due season. But we cannot reach a destination by traveling in the wrong direction.

- The more truly you see along the Way, the more it will isolate you from people. If you want popularity, drink and be merry and forget the spiritual path.

- Is there an Unchanging behind the ever-changing swirl of phenomena? The Indians call it "Turiya," the fourth and underlying state of consciousness.

- If things don't go well, try giving.

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Editor's Note: As many of you know, but some many not, Justin was hospitalized after a fall on December 19th. He was then transferred to a rehab center on December 22nd where he remained until going home (with around-the-clock attendants) on January 11th. During this period, I (and others) experienced him continuing to teach in his ever-characteristically unique manner. Many have asked what they can do for him: Practice T'ai Chi Chih. Practice when you want to and practice when you don't. He's grateful for your well wishes and more.

May The Vital Force Be With You

- NEW TAG LINE -

Thanks go to Tudor Oprea – a great supporter of *The Vital Force* and its mission to spread the word about T'ai Chi Chih – who came up with this new tag line: “May The Force Be With You” – as in, *The Vital Force*. We like it and hope you do too.

- CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION IN THE VF -

Writers occasionally submit articles and stories with a postscript: “Hope this meets your criteria.” But what are the main criteria? That the writing and experience comes from the heart. Of course it has to be about TCC; it can't be too long (see below for suggested lengths); and it generally needs to pair with other articles so that the journal is cohesive. But those are minor points compared to the first.

- WRITING REVELATIONS -

From one author: “P.S. I actually enjoyed [writing] when I finally made myself do it!” And from Cathy Dalton: “I'm grateful at the realizations that came from deeper exploration and putting thoughts on paper.”

- DUPLICATION OF ARTICLES -

There has been some recent overlap with articles submitted to *The*

Vital Force and then to Antonia's website and/or newsletter (and/or the *T'ai Chi Chih New Mexico News*). But, like any worthy publication, we'd prefer not to have redundancies. We think you want to read original content. The value of what we offer is lessened when you can read the same thing elsewhere.

- EVENT ARTICLES -

We rarely publish articles promoting upcoming events. Of course, the annual conference is an exception! In addition to the VF print calendar and the taichichih.org e-calendar (the latter is updated every six weeks), we started posting downloadable PDF flyers with registration and general information for each event on the website – when it was re-launched a few years ago. If we printed articles about forthcoming events *and* articles about the events after-the-fact, *The Vital Force* will be half-filled with just event information before you know it. I'd like to leave plenty of room for more than that.

If an event host would like to include a flyer within *The Vital Force*, you are certainly welcome to (for the cost of printing the flyer).

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Table of Contents

Justin Stone	1
May The Force Be With You	2
Feature: Tributes to TCC	3
Appeasing The Hunger	4
By Teachers / For All	5
Guiding Thoughts:	
Sr. Antonia	6
Sandy Says / Pam Says	7
Pyramid Poems	6-7
Teaching Tips: Pulling Taffy	
Variation #1, Anchor	8
By Teachers / For All	9-11
Justin Stone's 93rd Birthday	12
Justin Stone: Cosmic Rhythm	13
By Students / For All	14-15
By Teachers / For All	16-17
Newly Accredited Teachers	18
To & By New Teachers	19
Events	20
Pyramid Poems	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: April 1

Publication Date: Mid-May

Musings on moving: “When the *Chi* flows freely and is balanced, the Cosmic Rhythm begins to move us.”

Pulling Taffy, Variation #2, Wrist Circles

Deadline: July 1

Publication Date: Mid-Aug

Musings on gratitude: “If you want a good life, be grateful.”

Pulling Taffy, Variation #3, Perpetual Motion

Deadline: Oct 1

Publication Date: Mid-Nov

Musings on softness:

“It is the absence of any pressure, moving slow motion in a dream, that allows softness to prevail.”

Working The Pulley

Deadline: Jan 1

Publication Date: Mid-Feb

Musings on the importance of practice: TBD

Light at the Top of the Head / Light at the Temple

What's TCC Done For Me?

By DONNA McELHOSE, WILDWOOD, IL

As I began teacher training many years ago, I knew I wanted to share something very important. I was anxiously waiting to learn all that I could possibly learn. I was enjoying the company of interesting, caring people, and struggling with all the changes I needed to make in my practice. I had no idea that one of the most important things I would learn would come by reflecting on what TCC had done for me. Sure, I knew the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical healings were incredible – that the practice helped with asthma, arthritis pain, foot pain, immobility, muscle pain, balance and more.

However, before I began preparing for teacher training, I rarely stopped to remember what life was really like right before TCC. But truly remembering life before TCC led me to be truly grateful. The increased gratitude brought new joy to my life. It makes sharing TCC with others even more of a gift.

How can I convey to anyone what TCC has meant to my life? How can I say how important my practice is? It's simply not possible. But I can reiterate what we've heard many people say: "TCC and Justin Stone have changed my life." I realized at this past November's teacher training that TCC is so much more. *TCC gave me my life back.* It's increased my faith and it gives me a better future every new day. There's no way to say thank you to TCC and Justin.

Thank you, Justin, for the choices you've made, for the light you hold and share so generously, and for your willingness (and the example) to follow where life leads.



For Justin A Luminescence

By BEVERLY WEIL, BREWSTER, NY

At winter's dawn against luminous sky
The tree stands rooted-boughs etched high
Its Essence bare for all to see
Aligned with the Light-Eternally

And here amidst the worldly din
The Vital Force – the *Chi* within
Breathes life into its every pore
A Luminescence at the Core

Oh Tree – Today I honor Thee
I dance with you in flowing *Chi*
A testament to Life – to Joy– to Love
On Earth below and Heaven above.

(Dear Justin – Thank you for your life.)

Joy – Joy – Joy

By MAY SWANSON, PHOENIX, AZ

I remember being at the T'ai Chi Chih Center in Albuquerque when I heard Justin and the group sing "the joy song." I didn't know the words or the origin. But we don't need to know words to feel joy. There is a joy that TCC brings when I practice. We share the joy that TCC brings to students dealing with neuropathy after chemotherapy. I feel my students' joy when they give me hugs and share how much TCC is helping them regain a sense of balance.

I see the joy TCC brings to a cancer survivor, and to the mother who has balance problems and a diagnosis of Alzheimer's. Learning the importance of proper posture when doing TCC has helped her improve her balance. Grace loves coming to class, and she remembers the movements. She remembers everyone who attends and she always welcomes newcomers to the group, telling them how much they are going to enjoy learning TCC. Grace brings joy to our group.

Our class is held at the Cancer Wellness Community in Phoenix, a non-profit organization dedicated to offering programs that support cancer survivors, their families and caregivers. TCC has been one of the programs they've offered for years. (I've taught the class since 2002, and prior to that, five other teachers had volunteered there.) May we all continue to share the joy of TCC.

Justin's Gratitude

By JUDY HENDRICKS, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

When I visited Justin in the hospital, I told him that we'd had a good teacher practice that Tuesday morning. Meanwhile, he'd been telling everyone at the hospital about T'ai Chi Chih. He often says that TCC attracts the nicest people, and I totally agree. He'd also invited his heart doctor to the videotaped Eastern Philosophy lectures at the New Mexico TCC Center.

When he was being transfer to the rehab center, Justin was joking with the ambulance driver that she didn't look old enough to drive. He could have complained about not being comfortable or about them waking him from a nap, but he chose to joke with them. They gently moved him.

He was so grateful that people visited. He could have complained about getting the wrong breakfast (or any number of other valid things), but instead he just thanked me for visiting. He's always teaching. And I'm always trying to learn this wonderful lesson of gratitude.

Beginner's Mind

By LISA OTERO, OXNARD, CA

One of the challenges for experienced practitioners and teachers of T'ai Chi Chih is to maintain Beginner's Mind – the sense that every time you are doing TCC, you are doing it for the first time and are approaching the practice with the sense of eagerness, wonder and respect that a beginner would have. Beginner's Mind is a Zen concept that Justin Stone speaks of often. Once you have learned TCC's 19 movements and one pose, it is easy to forget that there was ever a time when you didn't know how to do the practice. While it is a great feeling to do the practice without having to think about where to place your hands and feet, this achievement can lead to complacency and a sense of doing the movements by rote. When Justin admonishes us not to do "empty movements," I believe he is reminding us to reengage our Beginner's Mind.

Over the years as a TCC student and teacher, one way that I have found to reenter Beginner's Mind is to seek out and continue to work with my teacher and my teacher's teacher, and even my teacher's teacher's teacher (in my case, Justin Stone). Doing so reminds me that I am a life-long *student* of TCC and consciously reconnects me with the line of generous people who have passed

*approaching
the practice
with the
sense of
eagerness,
wonder and
respect*

the gift of TCC from Justin Stone to me.

My teacher is still an active teacher and has issued an open invitation for me to attend her classes whenever I am able. She also leads weekend TCC retreats a few times a year. When I am able to attend, I get the opportunity to enter Beginner's Mind, both as a TCC student and as an instructor. Although I have been a committed student of TCC for almost two decades and an active teacher for a number of years, I am not ashamed to admit that every time I work with my teacher (honestly and openly seeking instruction and feedback), I return to my students with the gift of corrections to share. The last time I worked with my teacher, she was able to give me instruction that allowed me to loosen and flow as never before. The change (deepening) of my practice was astonishing to me, and was inspiring to my students.

And, best of all, we can all study directly with Justin Stone! Even though Justin is not actively teaching TCC anymore (per se), his instruction is available to all. No matter where we live, we can continue to refresh our practice directly from the source, thanks to Justin's textbook and DVD (available through Good Karma) and video instructional clips (published for free on YouTube). I try to make it a point, at least once a year, to re-read the textbook and to watch Justin's DVD. Doing so reinvigorates both my personal practice and my teaching methods. I also encourage all of my students to consider themselves students of my teacher (and of her teacher, and so on) and of the teacher of us all: Justin Stone. Let's honor our TCC practice by finding ways to return to Beginner's Mind as often as possible.



Musings on the importance of practice: "You cannot appease the hunger by reading the menu." – Justin Stone

Life In The Slow Lane

By CARMEN BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

After several weeks of whirlwind activity, with no end in sight, I arrived at the T'ai Chi Chih Center in Albuquerque, NM, and immediately felt a tremendous abundance of peace. It had built up through repeated TCC classes and practice sessions. For my part, I was very grateful. It's one thing to practice alone but, as great as it is, it doesn't compare to what one feels as one enters the New Mexico center. What I felt was the genuine heart of many hearts beating as one. TCC reaches across time and space – and no time and no space. It brings together that which is refreshing, reviving and life giving. The amount of activity in my life hadn't changed the moment I entered the center. But I had changed; life changed in that moment. The moment had slowed down.

The awesome thing is that we get so involved in the *daily* that we can forget that a space has been created for TCC. That space is

always with us because of our TCC practice. Even if we haven't forgotten (even if we remember with each breath and step), we still might not touch the depth of that knowing. What knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate do we have? What can we hold on to – even though it can't be held on to?

Later, entering a busy nursing home, I could feel the importance of knowing that life slowed down. What one had done in life was gone. How one had looked in life was gone. Sleeping, resignation and lack of interest: none of these touched the life slowed down. Activities abounded, food was plenty, people came together. None of these slowed life down and yet, life kept calling to all: Come live life in the slow lane. Come and experience yourself fresh in each moment. All that is worth knowing lives here. When visitors came to Justin's room in rehab, he often said, "We don't have to talk. Let's just sit quietly." What a special gift Justin gave to each of us – life in the slow lane. It is a gift of learning to love and share the *Chi*.

Moving Through Cancer

BY LAUREN ELAINE MARBLE, LOS RANCHOS, NM

After my remission from cancer last month, I thanked everyone who had helped me through the difficult months, sixteen in all, in which I had focused on healing myself. I felt so much gratitude for my support system – my team of doctors and the small group of family and friends in whom I had confided. Then I realized that my thanks would not be complete without acknowledging the value of T'ai Chi Chih and the dedicated community of teachers with whom I practiced.



When I was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in May of 2008, my doctor recommended immediate surgery to remove my thyroid, followed by a dose of radioactive iodine and thyroid medication for the rest of my life. Since my cancer was fully contained and very slow growing, I decided that I had time to try some alternative therapies before resorting to surgery. This decision put me at odds with my doctor. She told me that I was her first patient in over thirty years of practice to refuse surgery for thyroid cancer, and she asked me with some repulsion, "How can you stand to live with it?"

One reason I could stand to live with cancer was TCC. Especially in those first weeks of almost overwhelming fear, my practice calmed and smoothed and balanced my energy. I was alone on an unknown path, but TCC was like an old, familiar friend. I had been practicing since 1989, teaching since 1991, and I knew the benefits. I took no medication for anxiety, nothing to help me sleep. I did TCC every day.

From time to time I would join Justin Stone and the group of teachers who practiced on Tuesday mornings at the TCC center in Albuquerque. I always benefited from the group practice. The sense of community was comforting, and the dedication and discipline of the other teachers was inspiring. In the spring of 2009, Antonia came to Albuquerque to give a retreat at the Spiritual Renewal Center. After three days of practicing TCC in a spacious room overlooking massive cottonwood trees, the river, mountains and miles of blue sky, I felt a new sense of peace. Especially on that last day, when we practiced the six healing sounds, I experienced the *Chi* so strongly that I knew I was going to heal.

In September tests confirmed what my doctors had already suspected: The cancer was gone. I was in shock at first, then elated, then profoundly grateful. I am not the person I was before being diagnosed with cancer, and my life feels new and a little unfamiliar. While I get my bearings, I practice TCC. More than ever, my practice is a constant in my life. I cannot say that TCC alone cured my thyroid cancer; I was doing other things as well as taking supplements. But I can say with absolute certainty that I could not have done it without TCC. My everlasting gratitude goes to Justin Stone for this gift.

Folsom Prison Inspired Poetry

BY JUDY TRETHERWAY, SACRAMENTO, CA

Who's Going Anywhere?

Traveling partners, you and I
No common route
No easy directions
Finding our way between
Prisons and freedoms.

Spiraling inward independently
Expanding out into communion together.

My one, solitary, free, female story
weaving its way among
Your many, congested, imprisoned, male stories.

Touching in
Intertwining
ever so lightly, respectfully.

Never suspecting we are going nowhere
only being "real" together,

Allowing our ripples to do the traveling for us.

Carry Me Away From Here

Carry me away off into the depths
Take me away from here
If only for an hour, make my day.

When you come it's safe
To escape
It's wonderful to be here
Alive, free

Unlocking the door with movement
Offering a key in prayer
Inviting it all to be forgotten
Somehow it sees you care.

Together we merge into the safety.
Together we move in the stillness.

I thought this place inside me was a secret.
Now I find it everywhere
You know it, I know it, he knows it too.
Can it be you God?
Can it be me?

How can it be so simple?
Standing like a tree?
Moving on a breeze?
How can I feel so alive?
How can I feel so free?

What Will Be Your Possibilities & Opportunities In 2010?

By Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF, North Plainfield, NJ

January 1 is the date we assign as the New Year 2010. It is the threshold upon which we stand with 365 days of unlimited possibilities and opportunities before us.

It was two years ago about this time, on the first Sunday of January, that I was invited to present the "sermon," as I'll call it, to the members of a small country church in the western part of New Jersey. It was planned for the service of the Unitarian Universalist Church community. The invitation to me was to present an opportunity for "change" in the New Year that went beyond any of the usual resolutions that are made with good intentions only to fall by the wayside a few weeks later. So there I was among 60 or so members for the first service of the New Year. The members were looking forward to hearing about T'ai Chi Chih as their Minister had taken the beginner's class and was very excited about the form and the benefits he received from it.

When it was time for the homily, I had the sense that I was giving my presentation for Teacher Training all over again, and it was a wonderful feeling. So I began with a movement – nine to the left and nine to the right, which always feels like a mini eternity. Next, the introduction about TCC, what it is and what it does.

I talked about Justin, the originator. I shared what TCC had (and is) doing for me and various ways it has helped others.

Another movement was demonstrated, followed by an invitation to join me if any one wished to do so. Suddenly everyone rose spontaneously as though directed by some invisible inner desire that needed to try one of the movements. People were moving in pews, in aisles, even joining me around the sanctuary. Everyone settled into his or her space and into the rest pose. Felt the soles of their feet. Realized the present moment while they quieted their minds and softened their bodies. Those seated moved

rhythmically along with all those on their feet. Moving softly through very heavy air... letting go of any tension... flowing softly with no effort.

And so we went Around the Platter and its variation, then traced an imaginary Bass Drum... returning to the rest pose in between each set, returning to the soles of the feet in inner and outer silence and tranquility. Push Pull, Pulling in the Energy... forward and backward again and again as arms traced appropriate circular directions through the air. Cosmic Consciousness Pose was the favorite – just the name is so universal and all encompassing. Our time concluded with being aware of the inner feeling left by the form as all sat in silence for several moments.

Retelling brings me back to this experience that began as a possibility then evolved into an opportunity for myself and for those attending the service that morning. My memory is flooded with many opportunities over the years, such as a Spirituality Convocation at a Catholic college that invited me several years in a row to present TCC during the mid-morning and afternoon breakout sessions. Participants pre-registered for each session that only lasted 45 minutes and had as many as 90 participants. Over the years I've met individuals who tell me that they still practice those five or six movements learned at that time on a regular basis.

These are not only amazing opportunities for us as teachers to spread the word about TCC, but we have a unique gift to share with the world that which provides inner peace and outer change. Give yourselves the possibility of offering free presentations when and wherever you can. The unique gift goes both ways.



Pyramid Poems

a
relaxed
energized
balanced, content
even-keeled flow
pleasant
life
– PAT FLYNN

don't
believe
all you think
sobriety
depends on
more than
drink
– PETE GREGORY

from
within
to without
and back within
a sea of
change no
doubt
– PAT FLYNN

from
Hubble's
telescope
universal
energy
fireworks
life
– PETE GREGORY

as
we move
thru life from
the center we
constantly
yin and
yang
– PAT FLYNN

Something New For The New Year

By SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CA

Starting a new year, let alone a new decade, sparks hope. There is a sense of new beginnings. We feel things are going to be different. We have a chance to start anew. Things can only get better. This is the time to change or move our lives in a new direction. But past experience shows us that the vast majority of “new plans” or “best intentions for the New Year” never get past the thinking stage. And yet, when we look back through our lives, have not many of the good things to come into our lives come about through a seemingly natural progression of events, not through planning.

In my case this is true. I came to T'ai Chi Chih (or it came to me through an advertisement) needing to fill up the space that an ending relationship left. Two years later I took the teacher training course, *absolutely never* intending to become a teacher. (I took the training because it was the only way to learn from Justin at that time.) Six months later I lost my job, and about this same time, my teacher moved. Having time on my hands and being comfortable in my teacher's classes, as I had continued to attend them, I took them over when she left. I never intended to make TCC my life's focus but it seems that is what has happened. I just liked attending events where other TCC teachers were gathered. The thought of being a teacher trainer never entered my mind until I was asked, and then I thought “the gods must be crazy.”

So today being January 1st, I start the New Year with a TCC practice. I invited the connection with the life force to fill me. I know from my past history that there will be changes in my life this year but not of *my* making. My job is to do my TCC practice and be carried along by the Cosmic Rhythm and trust that the universe knows better than I which direction I will move in. Already from my practice this morning I have learned something new about Pulling Taffy. That means one-fifth of my TCC will change. It wasn't exactly the change I had in mind, but then that was the *me* thinking.

What changes will being in the flow with TCC bring you this year?

Distance Learning

By PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CA

Distance learning, or online education for students who are not physically on-site, has become more and more prevalent with today's technology. This is now available to help prepare teacher candidates in remote areas for attending Teacher Training. Since October 2009, I've been working with such a woman who was determined to find a way to become accredited to teach T'ai Chi Chih. Although people wanting to become accredited will still have to travel to a teacher's training week, this technology can be used to prepare them beforehand.

Liz Vickerstaff lives on the North Island of New Zealand, where there are no active TCC teachers. We have found that by using the free Skype service online, along with a camera on each of our computers, we can see and talk with each other – while over 6,000 miles and 21 hours apart. Watching her do the TCC movements, I can give her real-time feedback as though we were doing TCC together in the same room. There are, as may be expected, some technical challenges, but we learn to deal with them with good humor.



Pyramid Poems

joy
solid
to the core
just tin and stone
yet ever
so much
more
– DIANNE MOODY

bare
soles move
towards balance
with light of Chi
centered in
you and
me
– STEPHANIE DUFOUR

as
peaceful
movements flow
concentration
lifts upwards
strong yet
still
– STEPHANIE DUFOUR

life
smiles wide
children laugh
joy blooms always
blessed are you
through God's
love
– B.J. DAY

life
hidden
beauty thrives
flower growing
gracefully
living
life
– ROSE ALVAREZ-DIOSDADO

Pulling Taffy Variation # 1, Anchor

By EV HANSON-FLORIN, SIDLESHAM, WEST SUSSEX, UNITED KINGDOM

Practicing this movement develops softness and a flow that originates from the waist and below. It's a four-part movement as follows:

- 1. Start by bending the knees softly, turning the waist (carrying the upper body with it) to the right and bringing the right forearm across (palm facing the ground) while the left forearm (palm up) rests below the right elbow. Put all the weight on the right foot, extend the left foot forward from the knee heel down, turn the waist to the left. Allow the arms to separate as the left hand seems as if it's sowing seeds while the weight shifts from the back foot to the front foot while anchoring the back heel to the ground. Bring the left foot back, turn the left hand over and end in graceful conclusion.
- 2. Turn the waist to the right, bringing the forearm across (palm facing the ground); the left arm (palm up) rests below the right elbow. Put all the weight on the right foot, extend the left foot sideways (heel first), turn the waist to the left, allowing the hands and arms to flow over each other, while the weight shifts gradually from the right foot to the left foot. Bring the right weightless foot in to meet the left foot, turn the left hand over and end in graceful conclusion.
- 3. Turn the waist to the left, and move the left forearm across (palm facing the ground); the right forearm (palm up) rests below the left elbow. Put all the weight on the left foot, extend the right foot forward from the knee (heel down), turn the waist to the right, allowing the arms and hands to flow over each other, while the weight shifts from the back foot to the front foot while anchoring the back heel to the ground. Bring the right foot back, turn the right hand over and end in graceful conclusion.

- 4. Turn the waist to the left, and move the left forearm across the body (palm facing the ground); the right forearm (palm up) rests below the left elbow. Put all the weight on the left foot, extend the right foot sideways, turn the waist to the right, allowing the arms to separate while the weight shifts from the left foot to the right foot. Bring the left foot to the right foot, turn the right hand over and end in graceful conclusion.

Repeat the above 4 steps three times and end in graceful conclusion. The waist and weight shift allow the hands and forearms to flow gracefully with practice. This is a movement that seems difficult at first and is not easy to teach to beginners *in a circle*.

There are several different options to use. First, demonstrate the movement. (This usually shows how gracefully it flows so the students will want to learn it.) Second, teach the footwork and waist turns (without arms) to get the flow of directions and the idea that the movement comes from the waist *and below* and combines the backwards and forwards movement (without lifting the back heel off the ground) with the sideways movement. This can be done either by mirroring and facing the students or by turning around so the students can see the movement from the back – and they can mimic the foot and waist movements unobtrusively. Next, face the students and mirror with hand movements, then with your back to the class. By this time the students will often have the flow and be able to relax in the movement. Then, with practice, the next lesson may even flow *in a circle*.

Extra tips: The top hand is the balance/grounding hand since it balances the foot that becomes weightless. The back foot is anchored to the ground, making it stable for those who have balance problems. The waist movement allows the hands to separate, giving weightlessness to the arms and hands.

Editor's Note: The most important resource for T'ai Chi Chih teaching tips comes straight from Justin Stone. Period. Watch and listen to him on his instructional DVD. And read about and inspect his movements in the Photo Textbook. Both are available from Good Karma Publishing.



His words are also available in the essential booklet, T'ai Chi Chih Teaching Tips, available through the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association for a small fee (www.taichichihassociation.org and 505-299-2095.)

Pulling Taffy, Variation #1, Anchor

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

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

Forward step, hand comes back in a little curve. Make sure to be aware of the heels before starting. Justin says, "If you go forward and the back heel isn't anchored, you can hurt yourself." Some people think by holding the resting pose for a long time, it grounds more. *This is not true.* Put conscious attention to what you're doing *now*. This is how you stay grounded. You make it so.

As Amy adds: In the Tuesday morning teachers' practice with Justin, in between each movement and in between each side, the resting pose is held for roughly a count of five. Then practitioners stand up momentarily, then sink back down for the other side or next movement. Try it; it's liberating.

Teaching Tips - Footprints In The Sand

By LINDA BRAGA, CASTRO VALLEY, CA

A favorite CD used in T'ai Chi Chih class, "Seaside –Solo Piano," by Solitudes has deepened our experience of TCC.

As we begin Rocking Motion, we hear the soft ebb and flow of surf breaking on the beach, encouraging us to slow down, breathe, and relax. As we begin the soft, circular movements of TCC, the sounds of the surf soothe us and we begin to enter a deeper state of relaxation. The birdcalls of seagulls compliment our next move, Bird Flaps Its Wings, and our attention is drawn more fully into the soles of our feet.

Finding our center, we relax more deeply and settle into a gentle flow. As we move forward, letting the full weight flow smoothly into the front leg and foot, a focused awareness begins to build. Then the transition point arises, reversing the direction of weight shift and movement, with weight filling up the back leg and foot. We enter the Cosmic Rhythm together, letting go of individual preferences, becoming one.

One day in class, I experienced a kinesthetic awareness of what was happening in the soles of my feet. Perhaps you have also had this experience. Though I had on shoes and socks, I felt that I was barefoot, standing in warm sand at the beach. As I moved forward, my bare foot made an impression in the wet sand of a perfect footprint. By the time the movement had reversed, the surf had magically washed away the imprint, and only the smooth sand remained.

*Each movement forward began the process again,
creating a distinct footprint in the sand,
with each toe outlined,
only to disappear as I moved the weight back
and the surf washed away the footprint.*

Now I use this visualization in TCC class to encourage students to make a complete weight shift forward and back. Many students find it helpful to imagine a *footprint in the sand* that disappears, only to be made again, each time they move forward.

This is a beautiful metaphor for life as well as TCC practice. We are here a short time. We have an opportunity to make an impression, a mark. Then it disappears. We can always make another mark; each time it becomes deeper, clearer, more ingrained in the here and now. Going with the flow, we experience the Life Force in a dynamic, supportive way that allows us to make our unique footprint in the sand during our lifetime. It is a reminder to us that we are human, that we are here now, and that we have an effect on what is going on and it is unique and beautiful.

During your TCC practice today, you are invited to enjoy the sensation of making a *footprint in the sand*. Listen to the inner ebb and flow of the Chi and merge with the deeper Rhythm of life. Notice the footprint in the sand; then, let it go.

Results of TCC Class Survey

By ANNA VAITH, RACINE, MN

To gain a better understanding of what my continuing students would like to cover in class, I created a short survey. The survey questions consisted of:

- Which T'ai Chi Chih or *Seijaku* movements would you like to review?
- Are there any TCC principles you would like to discuss?
- Are there any topics you would like to cover in class?
- Any suggestions for improvement in the continuing TCC class?

The last question of the survey was "What do you enjoy the most about your TCC practice?" My intuition encouraged me to include this question in the survey. I understood why, after reading the returned surveys. The responses are simple yet beautiful. Thought you would enjoy reading them as well.

"Fellowship and energy of the practice"

"Enjoyable teaching and enjoyable group"

"Feeling so good afterwards"

"I like the quiet dignity of the time and the total acceptance of each person."

"Relaxing and time to myself"

"Quiet time, reflection time, just for me time"

"The quietness, peacefulness and gained spiritual strength from others"

A big thank you to all of my TCC students. Thank you for helping me grow as a person. Thank you for being you and teaching me the gift of gratitude.



Creating A Space To Share TCC

By ROSE ALVAREZ-DIOSDADO, LAS CRUCES, NM

First, about this article: It feels awkward writing in the first person. How does one write about T'ai Chi Chih without personalizing it? In other words, how does one get the "I" out of the way, and yet not come across as only cerebral? And there's an Indian saying, "Too much smoke for such a little fire." Another challenging part about writing about TCC is that most themes have already been addressed. How many ways are there to talk about the same things? Nonetheless, I had fun writing the article.

*we recognize
that our work
is a work
in process*

To create awareness of TCC's presence, I decided to have a booth at a local Women's Health Fair. In addition to the positive energy that went into creating the booth, it was wonderful to have guidelines on how to promote TCC. From choosing colors (black and turquoise) to dress up the table and making a huge banner (basically a replica of my TCC business card), to the last punctuating detail of having fresh flowers, I learned how to really make the space come alive. In fact, the floral bouquet caught the attention of the local newspaper photographer who included a photo of the booth in the *Las Cruces Bulletin*. (Folks also came back to the booth for candy.)



In my own personal journey as a TCC teacher, listening to Spirit has become essential – not only in teaching but in giving TCC a place in our city. Recognizing a shift in reality, and wanting to create awareness for TCC, I reached beyond my comfort zone to *marketing and media*. For this I enlisted assistance from the Good Karma Publishing Media Kit available to teachers on taichichih.org. It includes a step-by-step directive on how to approach the media (reporters, radio announcers and more), how to write press releases, make follow-up calls, and how to prepare for interviews.

Much like the work of an artist, we start with bold strokes and move to fine brush lines. So when I was invited to participate in the Women's Health Fair, I turned to the recipe for creating a booth,

which was like painting a picture. Following the steps meant having access to the creative energy of the Universe – thus allowing something that was not there before to be born. More importantly, it was introducing TCC to the public.

The Media Kit allows for a professional, well-put together presentation. If followed mindfully, it extracts from us sincerity and it fine-tunes us into a deeper recognition of what we are really doing. It gives flesh to the concept of creating awareness on behalf of TCC.

Exciting as it is, it takes some courage and fortitude to try something different. And when things don't turn out as planned (a blotched YouTube video, a bad photo in the paper, a misquote, etc), we recognize that our work is a work in process. It changes as more rough drafts and re-writes evolve. What counts is that TCC has a chance to be known and recognized. The objective, of course, is to present TCC as a gift to the community. Holding to this dream is possible when we are surrounded by smart, savvy, wise and generous people who guide, suggest and sometimes even direct. The French have a proverb: Gratitude is memory of the heart. And so it is with deep gratitude that I share this experience. And of course, most deserving of all – thanks to Justin Stone, the Originator of TCC.

Impressions Of An Auditor

By MARK MOLONEY, CLAYTON, MO

At the November 2009 Albuquerque Teacher Training, it was easy to be impressed by the earnestness of those becoming certified. Each in her or his own way gave testimony to the profound level to which their T'ai Chi Chih practice had reached within them. Sandy McAlister's thoughtful responses invited precise improvements in our form. My compliments go to those whose efforts have banished all doubts about how to move correctly.

I was most moved by Sandy's near wordless illustration of seated TCC. Why was this so touching? As teachers, we sought to discern the adjusted movements; we experienced solidarity with a population, dissolving a boundary between the ambulatory and those with limited movement (or challenges to their balance). And I felt an intuition of a future time when I might be doing TCC this way out of necessity rather than teacher-empathy. Both moments of awareness created a deepening, a grounding and another opportunity of gratitude for how much TCC has to offer those who can receive it.

TCC To Live In Health

By CHRIS NORKUS, WHISPERING PINES, NC

In the U.S., we have explored if the mind can make us physically ill. The obverse was popularized by Norman Cousins in *Anatomy of an Illness* – that is, if the mind can make a healthy person sick, can the mind make a sick person healthy? My understanding of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is that this is not questioned, that there is no separation of the mind and body when it comes to healing or health management.

I was discussing T'ai Chi Chih with someone who had seen T'ai Chi practiced but had never participated in it herself. She didn't see what the benefits could be since it didn't seem like much exercise was going on. I explained, once again, that perhaps the physical exercise seems very light, but I added, "Try it for a half hour and then let me know what you think." We know the key to TCC is not physical exercise, but the movement and balancing of the body's energy. The benefits keep people coming back for more, day after day, over a lifetime of practice.

Bill Moyers, in *Healing and the Mind*, relays an old saying relating to TCM: "Treating someone who is already ill is like digging a well after you are thirsty." Living in health is not a matter of seeing the doctor when you are ill or broken, but the result of living correctly in the first place. (This includes proper temperament, thoughts, diet and exercise.) For those of us who regularly practice TCC, we can assert that the underpinning all of these actions is the healthy practice of circulating and balancing our personal energy.

For us, "flowing from the center" and "moving effortlessly, with the effort of no effort" have meaning because we have the tacit knowledge that comes from regular practice. We understand that this experience may not protect us from all illnesses and injury. We all know TCC instructors and students who suffer from

disease. But most of us would readily support the idea that TCC bolsters our personal health system and helps us to avoid or minimize the impact of health issues. Trying to prove this to someone else may remind us of the villager who initiates some practice to keep the tigers away. ("There aren't any tigers around here ... See, it must be working.") Little faith is required to practice TCC. Practicing with a positive, expectant and open-minded attitude will deliver positive results. If you want to see the opposite, stop practicing TCC; you will deliver the opposite results to yourself. The impact may not be overnight, but you will see it.

Jim Rohn, a businessman and public speaker, uses the analogy of an apple a day. You can't eat one apple and say, "Hey, I don't feel any better" any more than you can substitute a candy bar for an apple a day, and one day later say, "Hey, I ate the candy bar and I'm not sick." You've got to be smarter than that and recognize the impact of cumulative activity, positive or negative. The cumulative effect of practicing TCC on our health is substantial. It may not protect us from everything, every time, but it is a foundational activity that will differentiate our experience from the average experience. Not to think so is overly modest and underselling the importance of TCC.

We can set the example in our practice and our living, and paint the picture of achievable results. Students will grasp the concepts and experience the benefits once we get them started. Then, as they practice, practice, practice, they will feel what words only attempt to describe.



Taking The Bull By Its Horns

By PAT FLYNN, GLENVILLE, PA

In our ever-changing world, we are taught to grasp and take hold. We are taught to take the bull by its horns. However, we are not taught how to let go. We hold on to the bull's horns for dear life and wonder why life only gets harder and we become more exhausted. In essence, T'ai Chi Chih teaches us how to gracefully let go. In the process, many concrete things happen.

In doing a daily TCC practice, you may find your high blood pressure returns to normal or you may find your cholesterol drops. You may find you no longer suffer from sleeplessness. Current research at UCLA has proven T'ai Chi Chih is beneficial to insomnia sufferers.

Heart problems may run in your family and you are concerned that you may be next. Preliminary research at the University of Cincinnati College of Nursing suggests T'ai Chi Chih may be a cost-effective, non-invasive approach. It went on to suggest T'ai Chi Chih as an intervention for chronic illness.

A recently completed research project at Cousins Center for Psychoneuroimmunology sponsored by NAIMS showed significant improvement in Rheumatoid Arthritis patients that practiced T'ai Chi Chih.

The 19 movements and one posture of the T'ai Chi Chih form can easily be learned by virtually anyone. As little as 20 minutes a day of practice can lead to astounding and often subtle results. If you seek better health and well being, T'ai Chi Chih may be for you.

Justin Stone's 93rd Birthday

Yes, We Are Very Lucky

By JUDY CHANCEY, ATLANTA, GA

Good morning. Happy Justin's Birthday. I'll be thinking of today's festivities as the day progresses. It is so cool to see how the *Chi* wants to expand the great work that began in Justin. I am constantly amazed at how it leads one towards opportunities; and how his gift keeps on giving. We're so fortunate to still have Justin with us. The gift that he's given each of us is eternal, as is his connection to us – individually and collectively. We are timelessly blessed in infinite ways and degrees. And, the most beautiful part of it all is his sincere humility about the impact of his life. I find great peace in the fact that this man lived his life in a way that led me back to a genuine connection with the God-energy. *That* will never leave me, and as a result, neither will Justin. Because of Tai Chi Chih, a seed of Justin's soul will forever carry forward in my heart. There are just no words that can describe the depths of my/our gratitude, other than to enjoy this day in Joy.

Justin answered the call to his soul and touched so many as a result. There's so much to celebrate and honor. This is a very good day.

Editor's Note: Justin never stops teaching. At his birthday potluck he demonstrated another simple method for getting *Chi* flowing – if you are seated or otherwise unable to do a regular practice.



Coming Together

By GUY KENT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

This year's International T'ai Chi Chih Day proved to be a busy one in Albuquerque. The day began with the accreditation of 15 new teachers followed by the traditional TCC practice at the New Mexico TCC Center.

At noon, it was standing-room-only-attendance at a local favorite East Indian restaurant. The day concluded with a birthday celebration potluck dinner for Justin at the Center. The beauty of all of this activity was how each event was separately coordinated, and yet they all flowed together. Ann Rutherford and Connie Hyde co-hosted this year's teacher accreditation course. Carmen Brocklehurst handled the reservation and space arrangements with the India Palace restaurant. And Rhonda St. Martin and I hosted the evening's potluck. Each piece, while it could have stood alone, seemed to build on an already-freely-flowing *Chi*-day.

The potluck served as an example of how "*Chi* elves" seem to assemble to accomplish the task at hand. Rhonda provided attractive and uniquely assembled centerpieces on the tables and a Fall-themed "pumpkin stillness" doorway display. Ann Rutherford provided the perfectly color-coordinated tablecloths. Amy Tyksinski arranged for a jazz duo, Tim and Bob, to provide background music. Carmen and Brock, Mary Ruiz and Joyce Veerkamp provided extra tables and chairs. Alba Cordasco, Mary Wichmann, Caroline Guilott, Rich Ashman and Robert Montes de Oca arrived early to assist with setup and decorations. Carol Roeske cleaned the Center and its bathroom. Alba provided the glittery "Justin" name table decorations. And don't forget the huge variety of food brought by the TCC community. A party for 75 just came together seamlessly – with the service of volunteers who just magically appeared and did what they saw needed doing. Thank you all for bringing an exciting day to a graceful conclusion.



Cosmic Rhythm

BY JUSTIN STONE [TRANSCRIBED FROM THE
1995 T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER CONFERENCE IN DENVER, CO]

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I'll call this informal talk "Cosmic Rhythm," a term I had never heard of or thought of until some weeks back. It is interesting how the term Cosmic Rhythm came about. Carmen [Brocklehurst] and I were called to KNME, the PBS television station in Albuquerque, to talk about doing a new T'ai Chi Chih show. (The show had great success the first time around.) We met with the program director and the head of the station. The program director, who I think had studied with Carmen and was very compatible with Carmen's ideas, was very easy to talk to, but the head of the station didn't seem to have any understanding of T'ai Chi Chih, which made it difficult to discuss ramifications. We were not starting with a new idea; they had already aired the first T'ai Chi Chih show and bankrolled the show, and distributed it all over the country. Despite getting surprisingly good ratings, it was all new to him. During our talks and much to my own surprise, I suddenly heard myself talking about Cosmic Rhythm and thought, "I'd better listen." [Laughter.] We've heard "Cosmic Principle" and "Cosmic Order" but Cosmic Rhythm was a different thing.

If you'll think about it, take a quiz show on television where somebody wins. What does he or she start doing right away – dancing and moving in rhythm. This seems to be very natural, and those of you who have pets know that when you're doing T'ai Chi Chih, the pets are very much attracted by the rhythm. I had a squirrel that wanted to jump on my shoulder all the time. This should not be surprising because everything in the universe has a rhythm, and that rhythm has to do with cycles. It's circular as is T'ai Chi Chih. But it is interesting that people unconsciously express their joy (not their unhappiness) in dance, in rhythmic movement. All you have to do is look around the universe. We can predict what time the sun comes up in the morning, how the tides will flow, when we will see the full moon and so forth. This is all part of Cosmic Rhythm. The seasons are among the most marvelous in this respect. In Japan in February, when there is snow on the ground, the plum blossoms begin to push through the snow and show themselves. This is an insane thing. There is nothing to tell them that Spring is coming. Because February is very often the coldest month, snow is on the ground and then suddenly people see



this. It's a sign of renewed life. The arrival of plum blossoms is a very great symbol to Japanese people. Am I right, Suni [McHenry]?

Wherever we look, circularity and the cyclical are representative of what is real. Those of you who are sinking deeply into T'ai Chi Chih (not on the surface but those who, over a period of time, sink deeply into it) begin to get the feeling of the circularity and of the cyclical. This is very encouraging because if you don't grab the brass ring the first time around, you will come around again; you'll get a second chance. With almost everything... I could go on with this particular idea in great detail. In a sense what we're seeing is expansion and contraction, destruction and construction. There is no construction without destruction, and there is no destruction unless there's been construction.

We could say there is always a transformation from the expanding to the contracting. We expand in Summer with long days and the kind of weather. And then in Winter, things quiet down. There is a feeling of meditation beneath the snow. But then Spring will come again. In Indian cosmology, we have vast periods of time called *kalpas* that are divided into four *yugas*. And it's hard to predict the cycle because the time is so long. Nobody knows how long a kalpa is – maybe billions of years. But the teaching is that at the end of the kalpa everything retreats into latency. Everything retreats. There are no things.

We constantly see and take for granted that night follows day, that Spring follows Winter, that tides go out and come in. And yet this is expressive of something far beyond our ordinary comprehension. It is expressive of the reality that we don't often take the time to think about or to see. If we do T'ai Chi Chih regularly, not only once or twice a week, but if we do it regularly, we will begin to fit into that rhythm. And what I'm talking about will become easily comprehensible. The great mystics and sages have, after awhile, looked at everything and then suddenly a bud appears on a tree, and they look at this with wonder. We take it for granted, but is it something to be taken for granted? Everybody has had the feeling, at one time or another, that there is Cosmic Rhythm. You can call it the Tao; you can call it whatever you want. And if we could just push the right button, we would be one with Cosmic Rhythm and everything would flow smoothly. That only happens to a few, but people who do T'ai Chi Chih regularly (and particularly those who teach it) are in a position where they can live it, not think it, but they can live it. ...

*wherever
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of what is real
... if we do
T'ai Chi Chih
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Wednesday

By BARBARA FLYNN, MIDLAND PARK, NJ

Teacher and students commune at 7:00 pm.
Lessons to be learned, modifications to be made.
Each doing her best to improve this week's movement.
Next the long awaited full practice.
Hungry for the experience, all come to rest.
Each with a personal purpose.
All in need for one reason or another,
Some shared, some silent.
Together yet apart – united yet separate –
Connected yet solitary.
Slow precise movements –
The flickering of a candle patterning the wood floor –
Stillness encompasses.
Chi flows – building with subsequent moves.
By the end the room is bubbling with the flow of *Chi*.
Yin and *yang* have been balanced.
Thank yous have been expressed.
Time to collect oneself in meditation,
Finally, Shared Silence – breathing starts to calm –
 Shaking begins to ebb – too short – fleeting moment –
 But the effect long-lasting.
Another wonder-filled Wednesday reaches its
Peaceful conclusion.

Dancing

By A STUDENT OF JANE WEINER, CHICAGO, IL

This student is a young 79-year-old who emailed after her first TCC lesson in a swimming pool.

You are completely correct when you said that T'ai Chi Chih gives us energy. After participating in the pool, I went to the bank and then to Whole Foods where I spent almost two hours (love that store). In the evening my girlfriend wanted to check out a place to dance in the 'burbs called Wellington's – good music and good fun. Believe it or not, I danced four long sets with four different guys and my energy never wavered. I love to dance and all this nonsense with my hip and back had stopped me from going to dance places. Furthermore, I was not stiff or in pain the next day. See you in the pool on Friday.

Student Journal Excerpts

By APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PA

Last fall was my first time teaching T'ai Chi Chih at a local university. I asked students to keep a journal in which they wrote something weekly throughout the semester. Since classes were only 50 minutes, there was little time for talking. So I thought having the students keep journals would be a good way for me to be aware of their thoughts and experiences. I also had them discuss a TCC "meta-phor" which was a lot of fun. (P.S. This semester I was invited back to teach three classes for P.E. credit.)

"I told my advisor to recommend TCC to more freshman because it's so relaxing and gets rid of a lot of stress (especially for engineering majors). I also asked why there wasn't a second class; he almost signed me up for the class again."

"TCC helps me forget the outside environment and all the craziness that we have to deal with. Being in class and performing these movements puts me in a place where I can focus on the present and feel the energy flow."

"During Thanksgiving I had the opportunity to share what I'd learned with my whole family. My sister loved doing the movements because she's always running around with work and her son. So it was good for her to just relax. It felt good to help someone else feel what I get to feel every week."

"I've loved doing TCC. I came into college very stressed out and this course gave me a place to be calm."

"Things have been really crazy but I've been able to handle my stress better because of TCC."

"I wasn't able to come to class because I didn't feel well, but I still practiced on my own."

"My asthma has felt better from the one exercise. Thank you."

"I've been noticing some of the effects of TCC: My overall stress level has definitely decreased and my body feels rejuvenated even more than last week."

"There was a lot more Chi flow. My fingers tingled and my feet felt glued to the floor."

"As soon as we began the first stance, I really put my mind in "focus mode" and I definitely felt the Chi. Wow. When I left class I felt extremely relaxed and completely stress free. It was as if someone completely wiped my slate clean."

"I think TCC is one of the most important classes I have ever taken."

Story Time

BY A STUDENT OF BARBARA DINEHART AND MARY CAMERIS, TULSA, OK

I had been practicing T'ai Chi Chih for a few months when I decided to go on vacation. I didn't want to take the large poster I'd made to remind me of the movements, and a small one would have required me to stop and put on my reading glasses. So I made up the following story to remind me of the movement order. Now I rarely need any kind of visual aid.

A loving mother arises early to prepare for her day. She bathes in the stream, feeling the water wash through her fingers as she rocks back and forth. She watches the sky as three great blue herons fly overhead and she feels joy and freedom. She prepares a platter of breakfast for each of her two daughters. She blesses the food by gathering the divine energy from each side and placing it gently on the plates. She uses a drum to call the daughters to breakfast. The daughters descend the stairs one at a time. They eat the breakfast and are surprised and grateful for the tasty food. After breakfast the daughters begin to play. They have fun with a ball. They take turns pushing each other in a swing. They ride on a merry-go-round. After playing, the daughters are hungry again. Mother shows them how to make a delicious treat of taffy. They make four different kinds and enjoy eating it. The taffy makes them thirsty. They draw water from the well to drink. After they are no longer hungry or thirsty, Mother reminds the daughters to meditate each day. She leads them to open to divine light. She reminds them to laugh and to spend time in reverie – just watching clouds passing by. She teaches them to heal themselves through sound. At the end of the day the daughters give thanks and draw in the universal energy to their heart spaces.

The Hard Truth About Softness V1.2

BY LARRY BLOOM, SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA

After some personal musings on softness in conjunction with T'ai Chi Chih practice, I found myself thinking and writing about a softer world. My curious mind was compelled to play with juxtaposing Justin's teachings and the non-TCC enriched world: "Softness proves more durable than hardness. Assertiveness takes a back seat to gentle firmness. Overtly the sage does nothing, and, thereby all things are accomplished."

Over time I developed a growing sense – that with corporations and government having clearly demonstrated their susceptibility to faulty thinking and the generation of hardness, superficiality and discontent – that there is an underlying build-up of pressure, of potential energy in the form of softness waiting to be released. Maybe the recent economic crises are part of this tectonic change and will serve to increase awareness and motivation for change. And I thought: will the natural evolution of TCC become the pressure relief valve, the inflection point of positive change?

Having spent a career as a corporate executive, my experience is that "softness" is not a term yet at the top of any business or government list of desirable descriptions. And yet business commonly refers to the "hard" skills and "soft" skills of people. In the world of work, hard skills are the functional abilities related to doing a specific job like developing spreadsheets and operating machinery. By contrast, soft skills (also called people skills) are typically hard to observe, quantify and measure. Soft skills are needed for everyday life as much as they're needed for work. They have to do with how people relate to each other: communicating, listening, engaging in dialogue, giving feedback, cooperating as a team member, solving problems, contributing in meetings and resolving conflict. My sense is that the practice of TCC would likely enhance these skills as Justin writes: "our attitudes change and we become soft like the bamboo rather than hard like the oak."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21



Be Still

BY KELLY, NEAR HANOVER, PA

My body felt the benefits of T'ai Chi Chih practically immediately after beginning to practice. The most notable change was that I started sleeping much more soundly. TCC has also a wonderful way of augmenting my quiet time of prayer and reading God's word in the morning, helping my spirit more fully to "Be still, and know that I am God." Thank you for your time and effort in passing on TCC. It truly blessed me and I hope to practice with you again in the future.

Rooted In Earth, Suspended From Sky

By STEPH WINTER, BAYFIELD, WI

I set a goal for myself on Thanksgiving 2009: Engage in a daily T'ai Chi Chih practice and blog about it. Move, then write. Record what happened, how I felt and what I learned. It's record I've kept every day since and a journey of discovery. Why did I begin this project? I recognized that my TCC practice brings me many benefits. I also knew how easy it was for one day, and then another, to slip by without a practice session. It was time to get back on the main *Chi* highway after following a long off-road track. And since I wasn't adhering to my own private practice obligation, I needed to up the ante, to commit myself publicly.

December 8, 2009: "I relish these early morning TCC moving meditation practices and writing sessions. If I accomplish nothing else during the day, I've begun with two disciplines that ask much of me but give me a tremendous return. I feel lighter, more energetic, calmer, more centered."

It's important for me to write honestly about the struggles and successes of my practice. I confess: Some days my TCC practice is smooth, flowing, energizing, and easy to write about. Other days it is not. That's typical, I suspect. Since I live in the middle of a forest in northwestern Wisconsin, my blog includes descriptions of nature because it's an integral part of my life and practice. I see the workings of the *Chi* all around me.

January 9, 2010: "My TCC practice feels better – the energy stronger – when I envision myself as an integral player in the living energy force that flows from Heaven to Earth, Earth to Heaven. My body and pores soak in – and are nurtured by – the energy that surrounds me."

Reconnecting With A Friend

By TERRY SLANEY, SUGAR GROVE, IL



After exercise class at the fitness center, a group of women (whom I didn't know well) lingered to talk about the new T'ai Chi Ch'uan class held on another day. They liked the teacher but weren't enamored with the form. One woman said, "I miss my T'ai Chi Chih." The others asked what that was, while I smiled, delighted a fellow enthusiast was nearby. We exchanged a few words of acknowledgement and information about it. Then she said, "I wish I could do TCC right now." I said, "I have time if you do." Having 30 to 40 minutes to spare, Eileen and I found a sunlit corner in a quiet spot and did a practice letting TCC's cellular massage reconnect us as if we had known each other forever.

A Presentation

By JOHANNA RUNFALO, HOUSTON, TX

"Hello, can you tell me about this T'ai Chi Chih thing I've been hearing about from my friends?"

T'ai Chi Chih is a slow gentle series of movements. It was created by Justin Stone when he noticed that his students weren't particularly interested in continuing with T'ai Chi Ch'uan instruction. One difference between the two is that T'ai Chi Ch'uan has 108 movements, while T'ai Chi Chih has 19 movements and one posture. More importantly, T'ai Chi Chih is not a martial art. We have repetitive foot movements and similar arm movements, which makes them easy to learn and practice. When you practice daily, you might find that balance improves and energy levels remain consistent throughout the day.

The basics to remember: keep your spine upright, knees soft and eyes open with a soft gaze. Concentration is kept in the soles of your feet. The *tan t'ien* (the center of your "energy bank" located slightly below your naval) leads the movement forward and back.

The two "warm-up" moves are called Rocking Motion and Bird Flaps Its Wings. Most of the next eight moves have the same foot position and forward-and-back movement. Carry the Ball to the Side introduces you to the side step, which in turn, prepares you for the next four movements. Then come the four "Taffies," as they are affectionately called, followed by Working the Pulley (which has the same foot movement of the earlier seven).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

So Many Ways To Learn

By JUDY HUBBELL, SAN FRANCISCO, CA

When I think back on a year filled with intensive learning of T'ai Chi Chih, I am now reflecting on the reasoning behind our studying with more than one teacher and its implications for all of us as teachers. It is a good thing.

The *Albuquerque Intensive* with Pam Towne in November 2008 was filled with the impression of Justin sitting behind me and discussing our *yinning* and *yanging*. He was not always pleased with us. We watched him discuss the fullness of the turning of the waist for perpetual motion, and even Pam was corrected! That was an important moment for me, as the master's eye was on all of us, and no one could escape the scrutiny, his intensity. It was a call to keep learning more, as a friend and I rose early each day to practice on a high ridge and watch the dawn coming up over Albuquerque.

In May 2009 I took the *Teacher Training in San Antonio*, which was a warm and exciting time – meeting people, laughing, focusing, reading, learning more and being corrected. I was just beginning to ponder how I might begin to be able to teach this myself, when I realized how much I still had to learn. I was reminded that although I have almost 40 years of teaching musicians behind me, my first TCC presentation was far from perfect. I looked in the mirror and saw that the weight shift was still not level on the right side. I was accused of being too intellectual when I asked lots of questions. Asking too many questions?

The year's journey was filled with the absolute passion of learning something new. I started reading everything I could find on Justin Stone, haunting the used bookstores in Berkeley, reading back issues of *The Vital Force*. I started picking up books from the 60's and 70's, written by the Asian writers in New York who were writing on the origins of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, which started with a moving meditation in 2700 BC. My voice students this summer caught the drift and excitement of what I was doing, as I had started to begin many of my classes with *Rocking Motion* or *Around the Platter* to get them grounded. We practiced the side-to-side weight shift in silence, so I could get them to feel what it would be like to move through heavy air. The length of a phrase, the rhythm of moving slowly; sinking into the ground; feeling a breath that was centered at the *tan t'ien*, the energy sea. I wanted that same sense of deepening their connection to the earth to be in their singing.

In the middle of all this intensive TCC summer and an intensive one of teaching music, I went to the *Intensive at Casa de Maria in Santa Barbara*, taking a friend I thought wanted to become a teacher. The intensive caught me in the middle of my thoughts, my questions and my friendships. Sandy McAllister's technical ap-

proach was right for that moment in time, and being asked to correct Athene Mantle, who had been one of my three generous teachers, was a profound moment for me. Here we were at this beautiful and secluded setting in the mountains, and we were now both teachers correcting each others' practice. I walked at dawn every day among the old oaks and orchards, solitary, reflecting, and noticing the circles within the circles of my life.

a call
to keep
learning
more

The *Teacher Conference in Omaha* in July 2009 almost seemed like an afterthought, a grand celebration, a party, a meeting of the minds, a sharing of the form that was bigger than any event I had experienced over my TCC year. Athene told me to be quiet and not ask too many questions. She was still a guide, but now one of many.

On the last morning of the conference, Antonia, Sandy and Pam stood in a circle, and we teachers were in a huge circle of 96 around them. The new teachers who were there, some of whom I had first met at the Albuquerque intensive, laid out small bottles of earth we had brought from all over the U.S. and Canada. It was in a wheel, a circle of spokes that told everything. The energy and interconnectedness at Omaha was strong. There was no longer a right or wrong way of doing the practice, although Justin's example stayed with us. This new moment had no words and no questions, only that feeling of sinking and grounding, or as we say when the music is happening for the artist – just being in the zone. I knew I was now ready to teach TCC.

Note: Judy's first T'ai Chi Chih project at City College of San Francisco (CCSF) is to develop an outreach project with her music students through the Department of Mentoring and Service Learning. She hopes it will lead to students to partner-practice with seniors. She also team teaches a TCC class for CCSF Staff and Faculty with her first teacher, Jennifer Biehn; encourages her students to study with her second teacher Judith Schwartz, and plans to ask lots of questions of Athene Mantle at the next Norcal meeting.



Why I Became A Teacher

By MARYANN MORAN, LUBBOCK, TX

We live in a fast pace society and it seems as though it's getting faster and faster. "There is more to life than increasing its speed,"

joy is meant to be shared

said Mahatma Ghandi. I, like many others, have had too many things to do in too short a day. I have been under pressure and have put pressure on myself. And I worry (just as my mother worried ... my mother, myself). While faith, family and friends have helped me throughout my life, I now have another avenue: T'ai Chi Chih, which helps me every day get in the right frame of mind. TCC has given me a sense of peace, and I want to share that with others.

In addition, our population is aging (as am I). Various medical conditions are on the rise. The need to keep active both physically and mentally is great. What better way than TCC. I do feel as

though life has brought me to where I am today for this reason. Life led me to my teacher who encouraged me. Life led me to learn of Justin Stone and TCC. I shall be forever grateful. Joy is meant to be shared, and the desire to share the joy of TCC is why I became a teacher.



Cosmic Rhythm – Part 1

By MOIRA ANN HOLLAND, LUBBOCK, TX

T'ai Chi Chih has been an integral part of my spiritual journey for over five years, as well as a key player in my spiritual development from the beginning. Additionally, this past year, I began a three-year Spirituality Program with Sr. Celine Thames in Wolfforth, Texas. We meet once a month with a day full of activities, teachings and exchanges.

As usual, Sr. Celine began the session with calming and grounding music, and then I began a meditative prayer session. Quite to my surprise, the chapel became totally still and quiet. I wondered why I couldn't hear anyone coughing, sneezing or fidgeting. Could they have left and not told me? After a brief time, the silence was broken by the sound of my heart beating very loudly. It was so loud that I could feel and hear it in my chest. The intense beating seemed to go on for several minutes. After this interlude, the sound diminished slightly and I began to hear the single sound of an insect. It was clicking in perfect rhythm with my heartbeat. This was very cool, I thought. I didn't know that bug noises had the same rhythm as a human heart. I sat still for several minutes and enjoyed the harmony. With my eyes still shut, the insect song faded and I was once again left with my heartbeat.

if you do a lot of TCC and a little meditation, at some time you're going to reach a different plane, a different vibration

Trying to re-focus, I questioned the purpose of today's chapel session. As quickly as my mind tried to recall the assignment, my heart started beating very loudly again. Just as before, the sound of my heartbeat intensified then diminished, as it was joined by the sound of a single bird chirping. Once again, I listened: the chirping was in perfect rhythm with my heartbeat for what seemed like several minutes. Eventually, the bird half of my duo faded, and I was left with the sound of my own heartbeat, then my breathing and finally the ding of a small bell signifying the end of the session. I had been prepared for my chapel assignment – but not for what actually happened.

When I returned home later that day, I remembered a lecture from 1995 that Justin had written entitled *Cosmic Rhythm*. I re-read the lecture and felt it take on a deeper meaning following my chapel experience. In *Cosmic Rhythm*, Justin says, "If you do a lot of TCC and a little meditation, at some time you're going to reach a different plane, a different vibration. At this vibration you will realize that there are uncountable forms of life... as you raise your vibration, suddenly you're aware of other things..." I wondered if that's what had happened between my self, my heartbeat, the insect and the bird. I had recently increased my TCC practice time significantly because I was planning on attending teacher training in November. Was my new vibratory status due to my recent increased practice time, increased *Chi* flow from five years of practice and the peaceful surroundings? All I know is that as I experience new material on my spiritual walk, many unique things have begun to happen.

Thoughts From New Teachers

The outer world went away, and the inner world came forward. I experienced a profound opening up with a deep awareness of the way I am in this world. Rather than practice through limitations, I learned to accept them and ask for gentle release. Time expanded here to make room for change.
– ROSELEE BLOOSTON, NJ

Deepening my understanding and experience of the TCC movements (i.e. the release in the waist and pelvis) has also deepened my spiritual practice. – DENNIS McCANN, CT

TCC has become part of my life path as a whole.
– AIMEE BECKER, MD

TCC is truly an inner practice and a gift. – PAT SPIECH, NJ

TCC has changed my life profoundly. I've come home to myself. I have a stronger foundation from which to begin. – MARILYN POWELL, NJ

I've had the realization that my TCC practice is in its infancy. – LOIS SERVON, NJ

I've had the sense of heightened evolution. The week offered exceptional camaraderie and companionship. – STACEY MOORE, PA

The week brought me to the point of knowing what TCC is. – SUANNE LEWIS, MD

The week was transformative. There was a real sense of harmony and love. – RAYMOND REID, NJ

This was a real process of letting go of being in my head. I feel I now have the confidence to pass TCC on to others. – PAULINE EMERY, NL, CANADA

There was so much joy in the midst of the intensity. I received many valuable ideas for presenting TCC. – PHYLLIS SEGAL, NJ

I learned that I can let go and that the inner me can prevail. – JOYCE MANNING, NJ

I felt the layers peel away (like layers of an onion) while letting go and letting my true self emerge. I realized that letting go allows me to let love in.
– KATHLEEN BENTE, NJ

It has been a time of renewal, re-growth, release, friendship, love and support. – CLEO ROEMELE, PA

TCC is a part of life, learning and growing. I'd do it all again. – BETTY ROBERSON, PA

From There To Here

BY FURMAN RILEY, RESTON, VA

My first exposure to T'ai Chi Chih was a workshop in 1990, led by Janet Yan-nacone of Albuquerque. I still remember that day and experience with clarity. Building on the immediate and major increase in the flow of Chi during that workshop, I immediately acquired Justin's manual and video.

The ease of the TCC practice and the relatively quick experience of flowing *Chi* inspired me to pursue teacher accreditation in order to pass this gift on as I shift into retirement. In addition to many years of practice, the accreditation week was preceded by more than a year of private study and two intensives. There have been major breakthroughs throughout the year and no less so during accreditation week. In addition to Sandy and Pam's wonderful instruction, I've received expert guidance from Athena Mantle and Lorraine Lepine; both provided intuitive paths towards solving some major impediments. The general spirit of support and assistance offered by teachers at each of the events is a blessing and an incentive to reciprocate.

A highlight from accreditation week was bearing witness to each candidate's sharing during the presentations. Delighting in Justin's presence, as well as the music and celebrations of his 93rd birthday, was also a highlight, of course. I am grateful to be a member of this vital and caring community of practitioners – grateful not only for the personal healings and spiritual unfolding, but grateful to help spread the practice to others.

I Breathe & I Feel

BY DORENE KRAUSE, MIDLAND PARK, NJ

I travel down that windy road from home and find myself here in this place once again.
But a different me arrives each time.

And I breathe it all in – the *yang* in the early morning sunlight,
the *yin* in the darkness of night.

I breathe in the scent of the rain-drenched air
and the color, the artistry of the master's hand.

I walk – and I breathe – and I let out a sigh.

Then pause for reflection and rest upon my sitting rock.
My mind slips away and into this space I now claim as my own, and
I feel each of you beside me.

I breathe in and *see* you all around me – in the sunshine, your *aha* moments,
in the heavy rain, your weariness and those *oh no* moments.

I see *and* feel your mind's confusion in the blurry mist on the mountains,
and your *letting go* in the autumn leaves falling gently to the ground.

Suddenly, my senses are awakened. I breathe rapidly and feel the energy of the wind
upon my face.

I listen to the leaves dance with joy and witness the change I knew was imminent.
Your clouds --- once filled with self-doubt, frustration and anxiety ---

are blown away by the wind, your cups emptied.

And out of the chaos, these gifts are revealed in the vastness of the blue sky:
clarity, openness, peace and stillness.

The *Chi* has spoken *to* you... *and through* you, and you have listened well.
Your cups are full.

Breathe in this moment with me. Feel the energy and love surround you.
"Welcome!" I say to you. How grateful I am for this journey together.

Fifteen New Teachers

Accreditation with Pam Towne in Ringwood, NJ;
October 26-31, 2009

By DANIEL PIENCIAK, HOWELL, NJ

The beautiful hills of the Franciscan Spiritual Center were once again the setting for a very successful and joy-filled accreditation. Our surroundings were even more beautiful as the foliage continued to brighten in color and slowly drop off to the ground. I begin this article noting the happenings of nature because it seemed to be a very profound analogy for the process of the training.



All the many months (or even years) of commitment and preparation of the candidates, providing blossoming and growth in their understanding and movement, slowly began to peak during this week. At the end of the course, Pam Towne had noted that it was to date the “most effortless and flowing training that she had ever experienced.” Pam further noted that “This allowed me to shift out of the trainer role.” Like the leaves that lose their summer green (the process of photosynthesis stops) to give way to their true nature underneath, and then let go and surrender, we (Pam, myself and the auditing teachers) were privileged to witness this great falling away of all the trying and thinking and analyzing, and really experience the flow of the movements of T'ai Chi Chih.

Just as the leaves spend months being nourished by water and sunlight and soil before reaching this peak that finally allows them to let go, so was each one of these candidates very well prepared. Their time spent at an earlier intensive, at our regional “prep days” and working with their individual teachers was evident. Referring teachers also remarked that the preparation process was more flowing because of their own increased confidence and understanding of the TCC movements.

I have heard many teachers note that *nothing* can take the place of the amount of time that an individual spends with their own practice regularly, and in attending events that continue to nurture their growth. This was one accreditation that really exhibited the fruits of that commitment to continued learning and surrender. We congratulate each of these new teachers for that commitment and accomplishment and welcome them heartily to the TCC teaching community. Our gratitude goes to Justin, Pam and Antonia (who was also present the entire week with us), and all the very helpful auditing teachers.

Slipping Through The Cosmic Crack

Accreditation with Sandy McAlister in Albuquerque, NM; November 15-20, 2009

By ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

What is T'ai Chi Chih training, really? What is it meant to do and be? What is the trainer's job and what is the candidate's responsibility? Connie Hyde and I hosted this event and witnessed fifteen candidates interact with the heightened *Chi* flow. Some came with an open receptive spirit; others came with anticipation and fear. Still others came with overlays of mental constructs which directly interfered with their ability to make the body movement changes necessary to access all the treasures brought about by enhanced *Chi* flow.

One student came with an open heart, but a restricted *tan t'ien*. The most frequent feedback given to this student was, “Open and turn the *tan t'ien*.” Like Liza Doolittle in *My Fair Lady*, she kept working on her task: concentrating on her *tan t'ien* asking it to shake off its lethargy and come alive. It came alive, and with it, the gale force energy of a fully awakened *Chi*. The gale rattled her mental constructs of “staying in control,” and they came crashing down to be replaced by...nothing. Nothing can be a very disturbing emotion. But, as Justin says, “Within this emptiness is a circle, and within the circle are



the mountains and lakes. There is nothing empty about emptiness.” In one week, this student, now a TCC teacher, gave up the need to mentally understand and control, and replaced it with a deep trust in the *Chi*. She is already teaching and getting good results because she is aware that it is not she who is doing the teaching.

Others will make this evolution at a slower pace; each TCC practitioner will be changed at a rate that will accommodate his/her ability

to process *Chi*. The only caveat to evolution through *Chi* practice is this: As soon as we build mental constructs and philosophies around the Vital Force, we lose access to Cosmic Consciousness. This is the reason Justin has always admonished us to teach TCC as pure movement without adding mental interpretations.

Connie and I wish to thank Sandy for providing an open, supportive and receptive environment from which the TCC candidates could choose to practice *Chi* inquiry. We also wish to congratulate the fifteen graduates. May you stay open to and empty in your practice. May you rest in Cosmic Rhythm.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

I have come to appreciate that we all likely have both a hard and soft nature within us that could be described as *yin* and *yang*. These can become part of our personality, emotional make-up and way of being. And they're affected when our *Chi* is out of balance. So what's the hard truth about softness in business? In my experience, problems rarely stem from a shortfall in technical or professional expertise, rather from a shortcoming in the soft skills with social, communication and self-management behaviors. It is as Justin has said: "the soft water wears away the hard rock." It's softness that can make or break a career, positively impact the world and have a dramatic effect on our joy as humans. Imagine a world where all its leaders practiced TCC.

I was intrigued by the recent re-print of Justin Stone's 1985 *Vital Force* article, "The Essence of T'ai Chi Chih." He states, "With the accumulation of *Chi* through TCC practice, permanent changes in the metabolism take place, and the renewed energy conditions the whole way of life. Just as thought conditions the Vital Force, so does the flow of chi condition the way of thinking. As these changes occur, we get in touch with ourselves and the world we see begins to change. Joy becomes our natural heritage."

For me, the world today requires that we reevaluate, rethink and relearn the way we work and live. The power of the mind to regularly engage in self-analysis will increasingly determine the quality of the outcomes of our work and the joy in our life. There is a degree of humility required to take an honest self-assessment of areas that need improvement, especially since these are generally not the aspects towards which we naturally gravitate. Reading Justin's writings and based on my own experience after regular practice for the last year,

it seems that TCC, with its emphasis on softness, continuity and ability to influence "habit patterns" could be called a soft skill that can make quite a meaningful difference in balancing the hardness of our lives.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

Light at the top of the Head / Light at the Temples and Joyous Breath come next and have very little foot movement. Passing Clouds is similar to Carry the Ball to the Side in that the hands follow the *tan t'ien* but you step to the right side and don't move your feet until you conclude. Healing Sounds has a combination of the foot movement of the earlier eight movements and the side step of the "Taffies." We end our practice with Cosmic Consciousness Pose: Our left heel rests on our right ankle, and our hands are in front of our face, shoulder level, with our left hand inside the right and arms parallel to the floor.

Most of these movements are done nine times on the left and nine times on the right. We conclude each segment of each movement by letting our hands rest softly on each side of the *tan t'ien*. This allows the energy to settle down and the *yin* and *yang* elements come back together. I hope this gives you insight to what your friends are talking and stirs your interest in wanting to try this soft, gentle movement. It's so calming and energizing.

Join Us In
The Heartland

By Sky Young-Wick, Parkville, MO

Worldwide TCC teachers are invited to gather at the beautiful Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City, Nebraska, on August 12-15, 2010.

Jean Katus will handle registration; checks should be made out to her. In the check memo line, please write: "TCC Conf 2010."

Jean's contact info is jean44ka@gmail.com, 821 Upper Pines Dr., Rapid City SD 57701; tel (605) 718-0543.

Chi
is now
my constant
life companion
together
we share
paths
- JUDY CHANCEY

Chi
is now
moving with
my core centered
with softness
I move
Chi
- CHARLOTTE LIVINGSTON

an
apple
or orange
whatever please
just to eat
enjoy
please
- TIM BACON

flow
softly
flow gentle
see rivers flow
see the hands
flow soft
flow
- JOYCE

in
circle
energy
flowing freely
unified
heartfelt
love
- SHERYL ADAIR

jail
is closed
very tight
the power of
the *Chi* can
open its
locks
- BO WADDELL

pure
love flows
without thought
judgment or stuff
Chi flows within
love light
me
- MARY W.

change
through joy
effortless
move into new
space feel love
expand
life
- MARY R.

~ AMAZON.COM ~

This e-commerce behemoth is a double-edged sword for GKP. On one hand, it has a huge audience reach and we want our products featured on it – in order for as many people around the world to discover T'ai Chi Chih as possible. But on the other hand, amazon.com demands a 55% discount and free shipping from GKP, so in the final analysis, GKP basically provides books via this channel as a service and with no profit to GKP. The bigger issue is that whatever GKP offers on amazon.com is available to students at a lower cost than teachers offer in class – except when considering the shipping component, which brings teachers back to being competitive with amazon.com.

***We offer books (and the instructional video) through amazon.com that we cannot get most teachers to promote or carry on a regular basis. GKP does not, however, sell our most popular product – the instructional dvd – through amazon.com because we want to preserve the re-sale market for our teachers, to support them in their teaching.*

Unfortunately, multiple sources (including those going under the names of “TCC of Central California,” “InnerSelfMarket” in Florida, “Livamed” in Texas, and “Emerald Market” in Pennsylvania) are reselling Justin Stone’s instructional dvd and photo text on amazon.com as third-party retailers. And this directly undercuts every other teacher out there. So on behalf of GKP, I am sorry that some people ordering from GKP are hurting the incomes of other teachers by reselling those discounted dvds via amazon.com. *All I can say is this: when shipping through the re-seller is factored into the final price, the dvd ends up costing students the same – whether they bought it from a teacher in class or from amazon.com. The only way for students to get a dvd through class, though, is for teachers to keep it in stock and sell it at class. GKP is trying to help teachers by not selling the dvd through amazon.com. We hope you’ll help by promoting Justin’s dvd and offering it to your students directly in class.*

~ SPEAKING OF AMAZON.COM ~

A number of Justin’s fans have reviewed his books on Amazon recently and it’s really helped get the word out. Feel free to add your voice on amazon.com. Here’s a random sampling:

“The single most striking aspect of this little book [*Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion*] is the depth of its overview of Indian, Chinese and Zen Buddhism as well as the elaboration on Taoism and Yogic practices. It is a delightful blend of both the author’s scholastic knowledge, embellished with a brilliant glossary, defining Sanskrit and other terms, and his personal insights and stories stemming from his time pursuing Self-knowledge in the Orient. Of special interest is the wide-ranging bibliography culled from Stone’s library, which could be used by Eastern Philosophy Departments to structure their degree program. – ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

“Just read *Spiritual Odyssey* by Justin Stone again. ...There is so much to learn and I learn a little bit more each time I am ready to listen to what the author has to say. Each writing is short, making it perfect for bedtime. I turn off the light feeling like I have just taken a sip from a bottomless cup of wisdom. As the author says, “Only the one drinking the water knows if it is hot or cold.” I strongly recommend that you read *Spiritual Odyssey* and see for yourself.”

– SHERYL ADAIR, ATLANTA, GA

“[*Abandon Hope*] is a must-read for anyone who desires to explore the meaning of life. No matter what your religion or spiritual practice might be, the book offers countless treasures of eternal truths. My attention was captured on the very first page and subsequently drawn deeper into Mr. Stone’s perspective as he compares and synthesizes how and why we look for and find meaning in our individual lives. It’s quite likely that the reader will refer back to the book’s pages often, gleaning Wisdom for everyday living.” – JUDY CHANCEY, ATLANTA, GA

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

The Lighter Side

1. Everyone took his or her seat for T'ai Chi Chih class at the retirement home. “Sit up tall,” I said. “Your vertebrae are like a stack of coins.” I then meant to say something about keeping the head upright as well, but it came out as, “Keep your head on straight.” Margaret laughed and boldly stated, “That’s a challenge.”

2. It was Ruth’s first time for seated TCC at the retirement home. Before class, I gave her a few tips. I mentioned that she should, “Feel free to follow me. If you get tired, stop and rest, and pick up when you can.” I then added, “Don’t worry about doing it right or wrong. It’s more important that...” and she interjected, “Yea, you keep breathing!”

– SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

Celine came to class one day after we had learned the Six Healing Sounds and said she had figured out a way to help remember the sounds. It goes like this: She knows a girl named Sue. Sue has a jaw problem and is not supposed to be chewing hard things or gum. She sees someone off in the distance coming her way, chewing on something for all she’s worth, chewing like it’s going out of style. She shields her eyes from the sun with one hand over her brow and squints to see who’s coming toward her. It looks like Sue but she’s not sure. Her thoughts go like this: Ho! Who? Sue! Should She (be) Chewing!?

– SHEILA LEONARD, NEWFOUNDLAND, CANADA

T'ai Chi Chih Community Calendar

DATE	WHAT & WHO	WHERE	CONTACT
February 16-19	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne / 760-722-9544 pamtowne@gmail.com
February 20	TCC Workshop w/ Antonia	Walnut Creek, CA	Athene Mantle / 510-828-8896 chigoddess@hotmail.com
February 21	TCC Teacher Workshop w/ Antonia	Oakland, CA	Athene Mantle / 510-828-8896 chigoddess@hotmail.com
March 6	TCC Workshop w/ Antonia	Atlanta, GA	Judy Chancey / 404-255-4998 jchancey@aol.com
March 20-21	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	near Asheville, NC	Vicki Schroeder / 864-494-4364 vickitcc@bellsouth.net
March 21-27	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Danville, CA	Athene Mantle / 510-828-8896 chigoddess@hotmail.com
April 8-11	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	St. Louis, MO	Susan Kissinger / 314-647-7832 joythrumovement@sbcglobal.net
April 15-18	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Albuquerque, NM	Ginny Morgan / 505-292-6869 goldchase@aol.com
April 15-18	TCC Intensive w/ Pam	New Jersey	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
April 22-25	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Houston, TX	Carletta LaCour / 713-440-3713 carlettaop@yahoo.com
May 13-16	TCC Teacher Symposium	Aston, PA	Alba Cordasco / 201-424-4385 alba4444@aol.com
August 12-15	TCC Teacher Conference	Nebraska City, NE	Jean Katus / 605-718-0543 jean44ka@gmail.com
August 15-17	Seijaku Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Nebraska City, NE	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
August 26-29	TCC Weekend w/ Antonia	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
September 6-11	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy	Lincolnshire, IL	Donna McElhose / 847-223-6065 dmcelhosechi@aol.com
October 1-3	TCC-Pranja Teacher Weekend w/ Sandy	Aston, PA	April Leffler / 610-532-6753 lirpaleff@rcn.com
October 4-9	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy	Ringwood, NJ	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com

MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS (Postings here are open to all teachers offering events wholly devoted to TCC.)

March 11-14	TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810 judyhendricks@me.com
March 27	TCC Workshop w/ Dan Pienciak	Metro DC Area	John Smallwood / 301-633-8261 johnsmallwood@aol.com
April 16-18	TCC Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Tupelo, MS	Ron Richardson / 662-844-6473 ron_richardson@comcast.net

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