

The

Vital Force

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for teachers & students

November 2012

Justin Gave Thanks

More 20th Century Psalms

BY JUSTIN STONE

Listen to the wind and the rain; they are not "good" or "bad." They just are.

~ ~ ~

Trying is not the way; what comes, comes by Grace. Not trying is foolhardy; who else but you must do it? So what do you do? One Zen Master said: "Veer with circumstances and do the best you can." We are here, whether we like it or not, and life is painful, whether we like it or not.

~ ~ ~

The lavender skies of Kyoto will soften the sharpest edge.

~ ~ ~

One might ask whether saints and sages became that way because of spiritual practice or whether they started out that way and naturally turned to spiritual practice.

~ ~ ~

Each death is also a birth. How do you know we are not dying into something better? So why all the grief? Are we grieving for the departed or are we feeling sorry for ourselves?

When mind becomes one-pointed (concentration) it then becomes no-pointed (meditation – the *Turiya* or 4th State of Consciousness) with no subject-object relationship. Only the subject remains – this is Reality.

~ ~ ~

Everything you see is a symbol. The unknowing look for diversity; the wise seek only unity.

He who diminishes his wants and needs gains power. He who is receptive learns. He who feels what can't be seen is guided intuitively. He who is sad when he triumphs, he understands.

~ ~ ~

When all "coincidences" in our lives are summed up, they point to a necessary pattern.

Are we all exiles from Paradise? Each body cell knows the way back.

~ ~ ~

We are sad when we do not get what we want, and unhappily cling to it when we do get it. We envy those who have what we do not have and jealously try to protect it when we do get it, living in fear of losing it. As the song says, "It's a heartache either way."

~ ~ ~

There is one Energy; there are innumerable transformations. The worm eats the buried body and the bird eats the worm. Dying, the bird nourishes the soil, in which grows the tree. Man eats the fruit from the tree, and, when he dies, in turn is eaten by worms. Which of these transformations is the Real?

~ ~ ~

You can't seek Truth when your emotions are involved.

~ ~ ~

Why seek Truth or Reality? Seen properly, it's shining in every moment's activity.



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This title is currently out-of-print.*

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"T'AI CHI CHIH IS A SERVICE TO HUMANITY. IT IS A FORM OF LOVE." JUSTIN STONE, ORIGINATOR

• • •

May The Vital Force Be With You

FEEDBACK ABOUT REMEMBERING JUSTIN

"Thanks for sharing all the recent experiences about Justin. I loved it. I can feel the conversation. Talk about really listening... I loved hearing Judy Hendricks mention something "off the cuff" about Justin. And I overheard Carmen Brocklehurst tell a "Justin story" while in the restroom at conference. Both examples were in and of themselves "no big deal," however, they were way cool since I've had such limited experiences with him. It would be so great to keep hearing about him through stories from others who lived with him and knew him so intimately." — APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PENNSYLVANIA

The Vital Force would like to run a Justin Remembrance page as long as people share stories.

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS IMAGE FROM AUGUST 2012

"I love the picture of Justin in the resting pose – the one with five of him in varying shades of whitish to blackish – in the last issue of *The Vital Force*. Is that a poster? I would love a copy. Makes me warm all over." — TERRY JENNINGS, HONOLULU, HAWAII

If "enough" subscribers are interested (please drop me an email at tcc@kimgrant.com), we can make it happen.

MATCHING FUNDS

As you consider your year-end charitable contributions, please inquire whether your employer offers matching funds. It's an easy way to double your tax-deductible gift with "the-effort-of-no-effort." *The Vital Force*, and the adjunct www.taichichih.org, is a 501(c)3.



Happy Birthday, Justin.
November 20

YOUR GENEROUS CONTRIBUTIONS PUT TO GOOD USE

There were multiple, overwhelming and spontaneous acts of generosity at the Portland conference and beyond its borders. One teacher donated funds to reprint 10,000 copies of the popular T'ai Chi Chih promotional postcard. Another teacher donated funds to add new pages to www.taichichih.org – for dedicated pages for forthcoming conferences (www.taichichih.org/conference_2013/) and for presentations given at the prior year's conference (see www.taichichih.org/conference-2012/). A request on www.facebook.com/taichichih raised funds to begin archiving (and posting) 25 years worth of back issues of *The Vital Force*. (See www.taichichih.org/vital-force-archives/)

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Please update your contact information on www.taichichih.org by sending an email to changes@taichichih.org. And please ask all active teachers you know to do so. There were hundreds of bounced emails for current subscribers when sending Justin's death notice.

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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.

Deadline: Jan 1

Publication Date: Mid-Feb

Overcoming Obstacles to Preparing Teacher Candidates

Deadline: April 1

Publication Date: Mid-May

Climb The Joyous Mountain:
What do you like about it?

How do you use it in your classes?

Deadline: July 1

Publication Date: Mid-Aug

Spiritual Odyssey:

What do you like about it?

How do you use it in your classes?

Deadline: Oct 1

Publication Date: Mid-Nov

To Be Decided

Web Site Updates

The on-line 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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Because of financial pressures, *The Vital Force* will now be shipped via Media Rate instead of First Class, which may result in a delay of one week or so, depending on where you live.

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No More Stink Bombs

By CYNTHIA WINLAND, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

I plead temporary insanity for agreeing to write this article for *The Vital Force*. I am not a writer. I can't turn a phrase, no golden words fall off my tongue onto the page. Punctuation is not my forte, nor are adverbs, adjectives and hanging whatevers.

I went to the Fall 2012 T'ai Chi Chih retreat to be with my teacher, Carmen Brocklehurst, to work on my TCC movements, to reconnect with my TCC friends who live on the other side of the country and now the other side of the world. The only time I get to see some of them is during a retreat. I was really looking forward to this retreat. So was the outside world.

I met Cynic, the writer (no need for names), who used every comment, every word as ammo for his/her cynical stink bombs, which were thrown about without thought or consideration for the feelings of others. I grew up in a family of stink bombs. I threw them myself without thought or consideration. I hurt people. Some people didn't want to be around me and, after spending the retreat with Cynic, I don't blame them.

After moving to Albuquerque several years ago, I found TCC. **Suddenly I didn't have to be cynical;** I didn't have to throw stink bombs. **I found a better way to live.** I cry at retreats because I feel safe there. I am surrounded by people who won't turn my words around and throw stink bombs in my face. **I found a peace that I never thought I was worthy of.** I know I still have along way to go. I still have lots of things to let go of. For the first time in my life, I feel like I am home.

This is why I feel so dismayed when I hear squabbles about keeping the knees bent all the way through a TCC practice. I feel like my home is being threatened. I don't want to lose my safe place. My safe place is everybody's safe place. Come on, people. A TCC practice can be over 30 minutes long. That's a big ouch on the knees. We all know that TCC is about being soft. Justin Stone told us to be soft, not wimpy, not hard, not cold. Justin recognized the *Chi* because he was soft, because he was safe. We should honor TCC by building a safe place for the *Chi*. Justin has already joined the oneness, the wholeness of the *Chi*. **It is now up to the living, to us,** or will we slice and dice and pulverize the *Chi* into nonexistence?



Finding Home

By LARRY BLOOM, SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA

I was jostled awake last night by a strong line of thunderstorms passing through town. Roused from a peaceful sleep, I watched and listened as bolts of lightning illuminated the windows, causing shadows to dance on the ceiling. Each flash was followed by a resounding string of thunderclaps. The storm quickly passed and I was left lying still in the quite dark space of my own thoughts. As my attention on the storm waned, a flood of thoughts about the events of the previous day and plans for tomorrow were served up spontaneously by my mind. There I lay motionless in bed, but internally thoughts were churning at 90 miles an hour. Trying to resist seemed useless as they continued to spring up on their own.

Some years ago, getting back to sleep right away would have been out of the question. But after three years of practicing T'ai Chi Chih, something has changed. Lying in bed **I began to redirect my attention to my breathing.** Feeling gratitude for each joyous breath as it made its way in and out, I became aware of the sensation of fresh air on the linings of my throat and lungs. Slowly inhaling and exhaling, those annoying thoughts that were keeping me awake dissipated and joyful "no thought" emerged. I was soon back asleep.

I hesitate to say exactly what has changed, but I sense a deeper effect of practicing TCC. It produces a calm, joyful stillness inside me. Getting in touch with that stillness has changed me somehow. I am more aware when my racing mind is automatically responding to the thousands of bits of stimulus it perceives every minute. I can more readily sense when my thoughts are in command and not me; when I am reacting when I should be reflecting. My ability to observe and quiet my overactive thinking has grown. While far from perfect, I better understand what it means to be active externally yet calm internally.

This situation might be likened to working in business and interacting in the community, then returning home as a place for recuperation, to interact with family and to stay in touch with

my own awareness. **Turning inwards to consolidate the vital force through TCC,** I seem to emerge with greater love and wisdom as I interact with my family, the community and the world. I have the sense my spirit, or *Shen*, has been scrubbed and revitalized. I have found home.

Student Reflections

COMPILED BY SUE BITNEY, RICHFIELD, MINNESOTA

I thought I was signing up for a T'ai Chi class when I first started. I stayed with T'ai Chi Chih because it had fewer movements to learn than T'ai Chi. I like that it's like a moving meditation. When I first started practicing, feelings sometimes came up. I would just notice I felt some sadness. Now I sometimes feel warmer. I sometimes do Rocking Motion in my head to help me focus, slow down or relax. – C.N.

I came to T'ai Chi Chih as a method to find calm after a hectic workday. I enjoy the sense of peace I experience at the end of my practice—the feeling of “calm awareness.” I’m working to remember that state, those feelings, as a way to add more TCC to my week. I hope one day to be able to say it has become a wonderful, healthy habit. – ANON.

I started T'ai Chi Chih three years ago, not knowing what it was or what to expect. The word in the class description was “gentle” and I thought, “That’s for me.” I have rheumatoid arthritis and gentle movement could only help. Little did I know this practice would improve my balance, range of motion, mental health and just make me feel like a better person. Thanks to our teacher Sue and her leadership and guidance, TCC has become a welcome part of my life. – C.S., MINNEAPOLIS

As someone who has always wanted to practice meditation, I've found T'ai Chi Chih to be a perfect way of incorporating that into my daily life. The moving meditation of TCC is a wonderful way to **be in the moment, focusing on gratitude** for what the day and the inspiration of balance has brought me. – FROM A FOUR YEAR STUDENT

A centering and calming peace ... this is T'ai Chi Chih for me. I love the group practice and the energy that flows around and through us. – BEV B.

T'ai Chi Chih practice provides a respite from the week's activities. I enjoy the balance and flow and the calm re-energizing that occurs when I'm doing TCC. Sue's a marvelous instructor – non-judgmental, while providing information and adjustments for movements. It's also great to see a variety of people involved in TCC and benefiting from it. What I enjoy most is the process of feeling my brain and body relax and the peaceful awareness and acceptance I feel after practice. – ANON.

T'ai Chi Chih works as a social and meditational body warm-up. It was very difficult for me to do after I suffered a stroke but the instructor was compassionate – and here I am seven years later with nearly perfect attendance. **TCC is the rose among doctors who know nothing about it.** All they really know is that TCC seems to calm people and so it's suggested as a means to deal with depression, anxiety and stress, all helpful in the healing process. – JIM NELSON

I came to “T'ai Chi Chih 10 years and nine months ago because of overwhelming stress caused by work and home demands. I needed comfort. I've gained so much more. TCC has reformed me as a person. I am balanced at my core, which allows me the freedom to respond to life's challenges with internal reflection and calm. When I am most stressed I do Rocking Motion, either physically or in my mind. Rocking Motion connects me to the earth where my rhythm joins the universe. I immediately experience a sense of balance and calm. I know I can handle whatever comes in life. Namaste. – SUE BITNEY

Conference 2013 – Minneapolis (August 1-4)

Finding My Dad

BY CAROLYN APT FEIGAL, ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA

I was looking through the local community education and spotted a class that caught my eye: T'ai Chi Chih. The description read like so much of the information that had been around my parents' house. I was finally at a point in my life where I could take an evening a week for myself and have some “me” time. Driving to my first class, I felt excited, nervous and anxious. “Could this instructor possibly have known my Dad,” I wondered. She was an accredited teacher; he had been, too. He had lived in Minnetonka, Minnesota, however, and this class was 90 miles away.

When I found my place in class and opened the folder of information we were given, it was like looking at the information that had been in my parents' house. **It took my breath away and tears were close to the surface.** Again I wondered, “Had she known my Dad?” After Bonnie closed the door and class was starting, she looked over her shoulder and asked, “Did someone just come in?” I thought to myself, “Dad is here.” **No one physically came into the room but I believe his spirit was present.**

As Bonnie led us through the TCC movements, they were familiar to me. **I soaked up all the movements as if my Dad were leading.** I had never taken a formal class from him, but he had instructed my husband and me at home one Saturday morning, 22 years ago. I could feel myself react with a smile or head nod as Bonnie shared her knowledge with us. “Did she know my Dad,” I kept wondering, especially when she mentioned attending conferences.

When class ended, Bonnie looked straight at me and said, “Do I know you? Have we met before?” I said, “No, we've never met, but you might know my Dad. His name was Joe Apt.” She gasped and told me **he was her “grandpa” in her TCC lineage.** This news brought my tears to the surface. She not only knew of my Dad, she had a close relationship with him. This was everything I had hoped for and more. We shared a big hug and I had a connection to my Dad, who had died in July 2010. TCC had given my Dad so much joy. When my oldest daughter once interviewed him for a class paper and asked what he wanted to be remembered for in his life, he said he wanted to leave a legacy of TCC. His wish was fulfilled as I looked at Bonnie, a student of one of his students, his “granddaughter,” so to speak. Namaste, Dad.

Could TCC Do All That?

By LAURIE JACOBI, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

Before a recent business trip, my host sent frantic emails saying the place I was to stay would be under construction and it might not work out for me to stay there. As I had no other options, I could have worked myself up into a frenzy, which is exactly how I would have handled such a situation in the past. Instead, I felt a deep calm and a knowing that **all would work out just fine** when I arrived – and it did.

I spent a week with someone I've known for a long time. Her idea of humor is to put people down, laugh and think it's funny. I used to think so too but not anymore. I found myself withdrawing and finding it all very hurtful instead of humorous. When I experienced discomfort in my body, I used to call the doctor right away and assume the worst. **Now I hear a quiet inner voice that guides me**, tells me what I need to change in my diet or other habits, and the problem resolves itself.

I've been practicing T'ai Chi Chih for 14 years and teaching for 11. Could it be changing me slowly over time? Could these slow, circular, gentle movements really have the power to remake me from the inside out? **I think so.**

Like Snow Sliding Off A Bamboo Leaf

By SILVIA, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

I fell in love with T'ai Chi Chih in the first class. Its intuitive, repetitive and meditative movements felt simple yet profound. The practice of being mindful of the weight shift when the heel and toes naturally come up so slightly without one's effort reminded me of *Zen in the Art of Archery* by Eugen Herrigel, whose master told him he could learn from a bamboo leaf when and how a shot should happen. **A bamboo leaf will bend lower and lower under the weight of snow** until, at a certain point, the snow suddenly slips to the ground without the effort of the bamboo leaf.

TCC seems more like an art than an exercise. All the benefits to health and healing are by-products through the process of mastering the art through daily mindful practice. I am very grateful to Justin Stone for originating TCC, and for my TCC teachers Judy George and Marlena Vernon for their respect and loyalty to the art of TCC.

Transformation Through Movement

By RICK CHASIN, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

From the first moments of the level-one class, I knew in my heart that T'ai Chi Chih was going to make a huge, positive impact on my life. Now, one year later, each movement takes me deeper with every practice, and **the practice has also become a teacher**. The deep experience of physical and spiritual bliss has been amazing. As the body adjusts to the movements and becomes more fluid, the benefits increase exponentially. When practicing, I enter a very deep, special, nurturing space as the circulating *Chi* purifies the body and soul. **That feeling carries over into my daily world** and helps me face its challenges. I am lighter, more fluid, and feel as though my whole being is being adjusted in a beneficial way.



TCC By The River

By VANJIE BRATT & CAROL MOCKOVAK, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

We moved into the Becketwood Cooperative in south Minneapolis in 2003 and began teaching T'ai Chi Chih there that fall. In 2005, an outdoor practice began at Hidden Falls Regional Park in Saint Paul in the summer months. Members of the Becketwood classes joined people from the surrounding communities to practice the slow, meditative movements of TCC alongside the banks of the Mississippi River. This past summer marked the seventh year that the practice was held in the park. The beauty of the location—with birds flying overhead, the river flowing past, herons keeping watch, fish jumping and dogs patrolling the shores of the opposite bank—creates a feast of the senses.

It's All About The Practice, Practice, Practice

BY SR. ANTONIA COOPER, OSF, NORTH PLAINFIELD, NEW JERSEY

Conferences are always an amazing experience. Each of us leaves more enriched and energized than when we arrived. And so it was this year in Portland, Oregon. There are no words to express the Thursday morning T'ai Chi Chih practice in the Chinese Garden as the sun began to slowly illuminate the space in which many of us flowed fully in the richness of the *Chi*. From the first practice Thursday evening, to the final Cosmic Consciousness Pose on Sunday... and with everything in between, my gratitude is expressed to the Portland TCC teachers for creating, preparing and gifting us with "Bridges to Joy." I continue to be amazed at the depth of talent, skills and sharing that is brought to the conference, which truly is a "Service to Humanity." We continue to be blessed as a community when area teachers step forward and offer to present the conference for all of us to deepen our practice, and fully enjoy.

Toward the end of conference on Sunday morning, I made several announcements (the August issue of *The Vital Force* mentioned Justin's letter to me prior to the 2005 TCC conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico in which he shared his revelations). Another was the announcement of an additional teacher trainer. I was delighted to present Daniel B. Pienciak of Howell, New Jersey, as our new teacher trainer.

One of the main reasons for wanting to expand our pool of trainers comes out of Justin's prediction that TCC will enjoy an explosion of interest, and we need to be prepared for when that happens with well-qualified TCC teachers and trainers. In asking Justin several years ago about Daniel as an upcoming trainer, Justin said "That decision is yours, Sister."

The following is an outline of qualifications that I feel are important in considering teachers for this responsibility:

1. Be known and respected within the TCC community.
2. Be an active teacher within the TCC community for at least nine years.
3. Attend annual TCC conferences for the same amount of time.
4. Host several intensives and three accreditations and/or other TCC events and complete in-service training at two intensives and two trainings.
5. Work with and recommend about 10 individuals to teacher training who have become teachers.
6. Be willing to cooperate and work with TCC leadership: Guide and



current trainers, including:

- Attend monthly conference calls and bi-annual meetings; one at conference and the other at a designated place for continued discussion and TCC refinement.
- Take an active part in the annual TCC conference.

You are invited to begin to make plans for the 2013 annual conference to be held at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota from August 1 to 4, and be "Encircled in *Chi*." We will be enriched with hours of practice, examining the form through the lens of the 6 Principles of Movement outlined by Justin in his DVD. These principles can also be found in his writings: 1. Flowing

from the center, leading with the *tan t'ien*; 2. Proper Yinning and Yanging; 3. Focusing in the soles of the feet; 4. Moving with Softness and Continuity; and 6. Polarity.

Justin gives other vital instructions, such as "breathe naturally" and avoid practicing TCC after a meal, and not after the supper meal. These and other guides support the principles of movement and further enhance the circulation and balancing of the *Chi*.

Teachers at the annual conference share experiences through presentations, offering unique creations in the vendor room, and reuniting with old friends as new ones are made.

I continue to be grateful to all teachers for gifting the world with your instructions in sharing the TCC form with your students.

I tell the inmates at Folsom during my annual visits that they are contributing to the peaceful balance in the world outside the walls of their imprisonment, because that is what is taking place within, at their core. Transformation at every level of being. They experience a freedom that many individuals never achieve outside the walls, due to their practice. Oh, yes, it is not their practice, for that too moves beyond time and space and has an effect on the planet and all within it.

Recently one of the teachers shared that as she was doing her practice, she imagined Justin being there, watching her. She apologized that she may not be doing the form exactly, but she is faithful to the practice. She sensed Justin sitting there with a grateful grin on his face.

Wishing you peace and all good as we enter into this autumnal time of year.

Barn's Burned Down. Now I Can See The Moon.

BY DAN PIENCIAK, HOWELL, NEW JERSEY

Editor's Note: This title references the 17th century Japanese poet and samurai Mizuta Masahide.

We've all heard the phrase, "T'ai Chi Chih has changed my life." I had the thought during this last conference in Portland that people often give a certain impression *on the outside*, while the reality might be quite different *on the inside*.

It isn't so long ago that being a school teacher, a priest, and a counselor all seemed to ask of me that I give off an air of confidence and authority, while inside I neither felt nor believed such things about myself. I was often held back by fear, or lack of confidence or self-esteem, and struggled with a feeling that I did not and could not live up to what was expected of me. It's a wonder that I didn't end up in an isolated cave.

At this last conference, Antonia announced my appointment as a new TCC teacher trainer. There were loud cheers and whistles and applause – an old part of me wanted to crawl away quietly. When called up to the podium, I felt the room spin and my vision blur in the din of approval. "Is this really me? What do I do? Am I going to have to give an acceptance speech?"

Then the inner chaos suddenly subsided. Antonia said, "But Dan isn't up here now to talk to you about that – he has something else he wants to speak about." That something else was the post-conference *Seijaku* course that I would be hosting in a few days. I was saved. I was grounded in the task that lay ahead. This is what is real – not a new title, not notes and words of congratulations, not cheers and whistles (although the support was very much appreciated and felt).

Practicing and teaching TCC and Seijaku is all that matters. If I can do that well, I need little more. I stand in awe and gratitude to my students, to Justin, and to the other dedicated teachers time and time again. This is what saves me. This is what subdues the gnawing feeling that the other shoe is about to drop – this is what dispels the ever-looming dark cloud of fear – this is what overwhelms the subversive message that says, "You're not good enough."

I felt a bit overwhelmed a second time during this conference. This time it was when I realized I had the winning auction ticket for a framed Chinese brush painting of *Chi*. It hangs on the wall in front of me as I write this. It defines *Chi* as "the energy that keeps one vibrant and whole." I sit here now, and each day walk out my door, and every night go to bed secure in the confidence of this truth.

I recall hearing the words of Kevin Costner speaking at the funeral of Whitney Houston last February, "As the angels come to greet you, Whitney, hear their words to you: **You were good enough.**"

Being a teacher of TCC is a big responsibility for any of us. Thinking about my new position as a teacher trainer is quite daunting if I allow it to be. But the vibrance of the *Chi* shouts out other words, reminding me that I needn't doubt myself. This is the "growth of certainty."

Seijaku: Advanced TCC

BY PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

When Justin Stone first taught *Seijaku* to a group of T'ai Chi Chih teachers in November of 1986, he told us that the most important event in his life was discovering *Seijaku*. That is a powerful statement. Justin also said that when he started doing *Seijaku*, it was a "key turning point" in both his health and jazz piano playing. He had previously had triple bypass surgery, after which his surgeon told him that his heart was good for another five, maybe 10 years. After less than three years of practicing *Seijaku*, Justin told us at a 1989 *Seijaku* course in Monterey, California, "It is *Seijaku* that has given me the confidence to look forward to many years of continued health and strength." That confidence was obviously well placed, since his heart lasted over 20 years longer than the surgeon predicted. This is a form of "health insurance" we cannot only afford, but would be wise to utilize.

We know that the benefits of practicing TCC come from circulating and balancing the *Chi*. *Seijaku* greatly steps up the flow of *Chi*, so it naturally accelerates the resulting health, creativity and spiritual benefits. It cultivates increased intuition, heightened awareness, and release from unwanted habit energies.

Seijaku practice makes it easier to adapt to change and the increasing pace of life today. It develops the ability to let go rather than holding on to that which no longer serves us. It focuses the mind, developing one-pointed concentration so we can be in the present moment rather than worrying about the future or regretting the past. Most of all, *Seijaku* helps us make progress in learning who and what we really are, and according with Reality.

If you want to go deeper in your TCC practice, the next step is *Seijaku*. It's best to have practiced TCC at least a year and be experiencing a strong flow of *Chi* before advancing to *Seijaku*. To learn this form, get Justin's *Seijaku* DVD. If you already have it, get it out and practice with it. It is very helpful to also work with an accredited *Seijaku* teacher. You can find them in the online teacher directory

with a "yes" in the *Seijaku* column. If you have respect and gratitude for Justin as the originator of TCC, and he has given you another gift, wouldn't you be wise to accept it?



Firethroat Learns TCC

BY TARA, ILLINOIS

Editor's Note: An 11-year-old neighbor of a T'ai Chi Chih teacher wrote this fantasy short story after watching her practice TCC.

Once upon a time in a small, beautiful valley lived an unhappy and lonely dragon named Firethroat. When a group of animals settled in his valley, the dragon underwent some remarkable changes. One day, four animal friends happened upon the valley. They were learning T'ai Chi Chih and thought the valley would be a relaxing place to practice. They said, "Hey, why don't we stay here forever and never leave?"

They set up camp and later built a house, unaware that Firethroat was watching from his cave. Finally, the animal friends went into the field to do TCC. The leader of the group, Hopper, was leading the others in Passing Clouds when Chuckie, one of the group, saw Firethroat coming out of his cave. Afraid, Chuckie started to run, and the others followed him. They ran until they came to a canyon. Firethroat was gaining on them.

Just as Firethroat was about to run into them, they all ducked. The dragon was going so fast he couldn't stop in time. He hit the other side of the canyon so hard he was knocked out cold. The animals dragged him to their relaxing spot and took care of him.

The next day, Firethroat woke up to find himself in the animals' house. His head hurt so badly he could not lift it. He heard sooth-



ing music coming from somewhere outside. He forced himself up to check it out. He saw the four animal friends, Hopper, Junior, Chuckie, and Earl, doing some kind of strange dance. Suddenly, the music coming from a CD player stopped. Hopper turned to Firethroat and said, "Ah. You finally woke up." Firethroat asked, "What are you guys doing?" "We are doing TCC. We have an idea we could teach you to do TCC as a rehabilitation class." "What for?" Firethroat demanded. "Well," began Hopper, "I don't know if you know this or not, but you fractured your tail and wing when you hit the canyon wall." Firethroat was speechless and in no mood to argue or to fly away because of a sharp pain in his left wing.

They started with Six Healing Sounds and Push Pull. Firethroat was clumsy and kept tripping over Chuckie the tiger's tail. **The only move Firethroat could relate to was Bird Flaps Its Wings because now he could flap both wings without pain.** After a week, Firethroat had not made much other progress. One morning, Hopper went to the field to meditate. Firethroat followed, hid in a bush and watched as he meditated and did TCC. The dragon asked him how the heck he did it so well because he, Firethroat, didn't get it. **Hopper answered, "All you have to do is relax and breathe deeply. Here, like this."** Hopper began to demonstrate

Passing Clouds. Firethroat joined in, following Hopper's instructions. After doing all of the moves without any flaws, they returned to camp.

A week later, Firethroat was no longer a stressed out, mean or hateful dragon. Oh no. He was so friendly and later became a TCC teacher. He taught others, made many friends, and lived happily ever after with the four animals in the valley.

Reflections On TCC's Long-Term Benefits

BY BOBBIE WEICHMAN, GRAYSLAKE, ILLINOIS

My teacher, Donna McElhose, recently showed me an article I wrote for *The Vital Force* in 2001, after three months of T'ai Chi Chih classes. I wrote it as a letter to Donna, Justin Stone and Carmen Brocklehurst. Reflecting on excerpts from that letter, I see how much I've benefitted from these years of practice. "... I have so much to learn and to look forward to. I am trying very hard to make TCC a way of life for the rest of my life. I feel that **TCC is something I have been searching for a very long time** ... My hope is ... to experience the energy (*Chi*) of TCC (to) become ... stronger ... in mind, body and spirit. I have fibromyalgia ... which causes pain and mental sluggishness ... To Justin Stone, a very big thank you for developing TCC so that the average person can develop their body, mind and spirit. Donna, I feel that I have been truly blessed to find such an excellent instructor..."

In the past 12 years, I've improved my understanding of the TCC form, struggled to perfect movements, felt joy when a movement felt just right, gained wonderful friends, learned to quiet the mind, focus in my feet, experience an attitude of gratitude, work on flowing from the center and getting softer. Some of my best experiences have been doing TCC in a group and sharing the awesome energy. I also became an accredited TCC teacher in 2003. Still taking Donna's intermediate class, I still feel blessed to have such a great and challenging instructor. **A core group of nine keeps learning and refining our movements and studying Justin Stone's books;** we're currently reading *Climb the Joyous Mountain*. Last week we also viewed Sandy's helpful new DVD on seated TCC. If we ever lack inspiration for continuing TCC, it's provided by a delightful woman in her 80s in our class who does seated TCC now. Her face still glows as we practice.

At age 73, I deal with fibromyalgia and cranky joints daily. Practices are shorter and sometimes require seated or mental TCC. The journey that started a dozen years ago will continue for the rest of my life. There is still so much to learn, refine and experience to expand the mind, body and spirit.

A Great Way To Start The Day

BY DEB EDMUNDS, ILLINOIS

This morning, returning from my walk, I found a very quiet place to do morning T'ai Chi Chih. As a new student, I sometimes do the movements facing the sun, a very enlightening feeling. As I do Rocking Motion and Bird Flaps its Wings, I start to relax. Doing the movements cleanses the soul. They seem to bring in energy, light and love from the top of my head to the bottom of my toes. As I do Bass Drum and Push Pull, I start to hear the birds chirping and **the trees rustling in the wind**. After doing Cosmic Consciousness Pose, I can start my day with a calm and positive attitude.

Gratitude As A State Of Being

BY DOTTY HOEPNER, ILLINOIS

Every week before we begin T'ai Chi Chih class our teacher, Donna, reminds us to think of something we're grateful for and let that feeling infuse our practice. I inevitably feel thankful for the present moment, my classmates and teacher, and the love and *Chi* we share together.

I have noticed that Justin Stone mentioned gratitude quite a bit in his writings. This thankfulness he had for his life and for the gift of the Chi elevates TCC to a "path with heart." As I contemplated gratitude this morning, I realized it can be a state of Being, **a stance that opens me to every moment**. From gratitude comes more gratitude. Thank you Donna and Justin for your examples of gratitude.



TCC Helps On Even The Busiest Days

BY MARK MORZY, ILLINOIS

With my hectic schedule, it's sometimes difficult to find time to relax. By practicing T'ai Chi Chih regularly, however, I get the feeling of having done something worthwhile, even if the rest of the day was sub-par. I love that it can be done anywhere without fancy equipment or any specific type of clothing. Having just started TCC, I have not noticed any extraordinary benefits other than a heightened state of wellbeing. That in itself is very encouraging. In a world filled with ways to escape our days, TCC gives us an opportunity to work toward making them better.

It Really Is 'Joy Thru Movement'

BY GERRI SLAPPY, ILLINOIS

Although I have been a student of T'ai Chi Chih for just two semesters, I enjoy many benefits of TCC. As Justin Stone said, it truly is "Joy Thru Movement." I am overjoyed to be in a seated TCC class as well as a standing class. **Seated, I can concentrate on movements without the pain I experience while standing.** Because I can do seated TCC without medication and knee braces, I practice at home more easily and frequently. I still enjoy standing TCC and get the benefits of doing a full practice. I can imagine learning and practicing TCC for the rest of my life.

Death & Ongoing Blessings

BY SUE GUARNA, ILLINOIS

Death, loss and kindness are themes of Carmen Brocklehurst's recent article, "Ongoing Blessings," in *The Vital Force*. They also are themes of my current journey. The T'ai Chi Chih community has been altered by the loss of someone dear and integral: Justin Stone. I have been altered by the loss of my mom. The expression of kindness to the TCC community/to me opens up the eternal. The practice of TCC helps us to more clearly see and be aware of **our connection to the universe**. We can more openly respond to others' thoughtfulness in a time of loss and use our response to go both further inward and outward. Amidst our loss, sadness and pain, TCC gives us a vehicle to transform those emotions and ourselves into more aware, compassionate and connected human beings.

Just as Carmen's article points to practice – engaging in an activity that Justin originated, as a means to honor and hold him within – I too am finding activities which my mom encouraged, like coming to TCC as a way to honor her and hold her within.

Filling An Empty Spot Deep Within

BY JERI, ILLINOIS

TCC has made a difference in my life for several reasons. I am so impressed by the teachers I have met; they make me feel so welcome in the TCC family and are very willing to offer help and encouragement. They don't compete with each other; they just all try to help. It's amazing and feels genuine. The feeling I get from doing TCC is hard to describe. I guess oneness comes to mind. It just makes me feel complete and it feels right. This is something I can do for myself that is very positive, is good physically and fills an empty spot deep within me.

The Knowing

BY STEPHANIE BASS, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

"If you have faith in *Prajna*, this inner wisdom, you will do and feel the right thing. It will almost do the right thing for you. Every word spoken to you will be a signpost to guide you, if you let it. But, can you have faith in this guidance instead of always trying to manipulate it?" (Justin Stone, September 1992, *The Vital Force*)

When Justin wrote these words I had not yet been led to T'ai Chi Chih. Yet five years later when a friend of mine ended a telephone call quickly with, "I've got to go, it's the first night of my T'ai Chi (sic) class at the Y," I knew I had to be in that class. **I was not wrong. Or perhaps something else was right.** I joined at the second session, taught by Maggie Peltier, and after I persisted through intermediate and advanced lessons, she seemed absolutely certain I was supposed to be a teacher. I questioned her judgment and her sanity, but went ahead. I am absolutely certain I also over-thought it all, but her knowing was enough to make me keep going.

Being a teacher was a position for which I thought I wasn't qualified. I didn't realize that what teaching really qualified me for was a lifetime of being a student and that being a student forever, under the guidance of other teachers, was the real goal. But the knowing knew, because **before I knew TCC, I did have experience with knowing, but I didn't always trust it.** I can give you chapter and verse of the times I discounted the knowing and reaped regret.

TCC has helped strengthen and confirm that inner wisdom that Justin spoke about. I can't honestly say I do TCC every day. But when I do it, **insights flow into the permeable consciousness that I call mine**, but that is really just a little corner of the greater consciousness that I inhabit. I'm pursuing studies now that call for stillness as a precursor to higher-level spiritual contact and information. My knowing tells me that a moving practice called TCC is probably my best path, for now, to the stillness that invites more knowing.



Teh In Action

BY CHRIS NORKUS, WHISPERING PINES, NORTH CAROLINA

When people contact me looking for a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, I encourage them. Recently I received an email from someone unable to find a teacher nearby and she said, "Maybe I need to seek accreditation myself."

I replied, "Joyce, That is a terrific goal to pursue!" I then told her my story and provided contact information for teachers in neighboring states. Here are excerpts from that email: "When I first started T'ai Chi Chih I lived in Charlotte, NC but took my first lessons in Washington. I had an ad from a paper I picked up while on vacation. I called the teacher, reserved a weekend, and a few weeks later flew to Seattle, drove to Stanwood, and spent a few days studying TCC. I returned home, practiced on my own with a VHS tape, and returned to Washington six months later for more lessons. During that visit, my teacher said I didn't need any more lessons for now, that all I needed was practice.

"That's what I did for 11 years. When I decided to prepare for teacher accreditation, I lived in Fort Lauderdale and worked with a teacher in Del Ray Beach (a 45-minute drive) and a teacher in Orlando (3.5 hours away). After working on my form and receiving support and signed approval from those teachers, I attended the teacher accreditation in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2001. I've been teaching ever since and improving my practice through attending teachers conferences (three in the last five years).

"Don't be deterred just because no one teaches locally. Here are some options: (1) Consider traveling to meet with a TCC teacher. Perhaps you could combine this with a vacation you're already planning. (2) YouTube videos at www.taichichih.org will also help. If you'd like a full instructional video, you can order from me or directly from www.gkpub.com/dvds.php. (3) (I provided contact information for teachers in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey and cc'd them on the email.) (4) If you're unable to train with one of them, we can work something out. (I explained she could travel to work with me or I could travel to work with her, and she could invite friends to help defray costs. I suggested one day could get her started and two days would allow us to review the full practice.) I hope this e-mail is helpful. Let me know how you decide to proceed."

Inspired To Find A New Purpose

BY STU GOLDMAN, FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

I came to T'ai Chi Chih from the opposite side of the lifestyle spectrum. I consumed effort, tension and stress as if they comprised an energy drink. My career was rewarding creatively but a constant series of unmovable deadline pressures. It required me to be clever, witty and entertaining on command. The need to be consistently "on" is a vocation in itself. **There was no downtime. I reveled in it.**

Several years ago this all came to a crashing halt. Medical interventions saved my life but my frenetic occupation would be no more. Neurological "rewiring," resulting from surgery, cost me my skills and, by association, my purpose. That resulted in the expected depression. As a male of the Boomer generation, my persona was defined by my profession, and now I had none. I had tried several things to distract myself and find a new discipline when the November 2010 AARP article on TCC caught my attention. I sought out a TCC instructor and began a weekly class that not only brought me a sense of calmness and a physical discipline, but a realignment of energy that has soothed aches and pains, both old and new. It has also inspired me to a new sense of purpose.

I am not certain I am actually "drawing in the energy from the most distant star," but there is a contented conspiracy of mind, body, movement and the moment when I am practicing TCC. I believe that. I can feel it. I still cope with residual fallout from minor physical failings, but it no longer defines me. At present I am attempting to pursue a course that will lead me to certification so that I, too, can rejoin the world of fruitful purpose and pay this forward.



The Call

BY JACKIE KINGSBURY, THONOTOSASSA, FLORIDA

Although I have not been teaching regularly recently, the ripple effect continues. A snowbird visiting my area for six weeks called and wanted a refresher lesson. So we had some private lessons in my living room. It was wonderful and a call to me to resurrect my T'ai Chi Chih practice.

What Is It We Do As Teachers?

BY DIANA DAFFNER, SIESTA KEY, FLORIDA

(REPRINTED FROM *THE VITAL FORCE*, JULY 1992)

Reading articles I've written for *The Vital Force* in past years, and realizing Richard and I have been leading a TCC practice on Siesta Key Beach weekly since 1991, fills me with deep appreciation for Justin's gift to the world and for *The Vital Force* that keeps us all connected. Following is an excerpt from the July 1992 issue:

"We reintroduce people to the realm of their own presence. We invite them to become again as little children and to take delight in the movement and aliveness of their own bodies, as we, too, experience the delight and aliveness of our own presence ... We affirm for them that who they are is precious, that there is **nowhere to go and nothing to do in order to recognize their own value**, as we, too, realize our own precious value ... We gather them together in an atmosphere of shared unity, we create an environment that enhances an experience of oneness, as we, too, embrace the oneness ... We introduce them to these easy movements that carry them **deep into the mystery of their being**, as we, too, allow ourselves to enter ever more deeply into our own mystery ... We hold open a space of love, quietly, with our own center ... We remind them to breathe, in and out, as we, too, become present in our breathing and in our body ... We speak of and demonstrate continuous

circles, encouraging them to allow the movement to flow, as we, too, surrender to the circular movement that has no beginning and no end ... We offer them softness, and stillness within motion, as we, too, **soften into the still-point of our own lives** ... We show them how they stand between heaven and earth, as we, too, take our place with fullness and joy."

At our weekly beach practice, student appreciate the setting as well. "I've been experiencing TCC on the beach with Richard and Diana for 20 years," said Maia Shafer. Watching the sun set while meditating with gentle movements rejuvenates my mind, body and spirit."

"If I had to choose a word to describe performing TCC on Siesta Key Beach at sunset, I would say 'enchanted,'" said Philippe Blanc. "The harmonious gestures lead gradually to a let-go while you admire the glorious colors of the sunset and listen to the gentle murmur of the surf."

Justin At Green Gulch Farm Zen Center

BY LINDA BRAGA, CASTRO VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Nineteen years ago, Justin Stone held a five-day meditation retreat at Green Gulch Farm, part of the San Francisco Zen Center, just north of the city. About 25 T'ai Chi Chih teachers attended, many of us leaving jobs and family to participate. We came from several states to experience meditation with Justin, a rare opportunity.

I had never done sitting meditation before and wondered if I would be successful in just sitting for five whole days. Many who attended felt the same: we didn't want to disappoint Justin and we wanted to be successful in meditating for long periods of time with him. That first day, though, Justin's leadership and guidance soon dispelled any fears or doubts in us. He told us, "We will take baby steps together ... and we will discover how deep this group is willing to go." It was an amazing invitation to each of us, to let go and trust.

Later that first morning, we all quietly gathered at the zendo (meditation hall) to do sitting meditation. We removed our shoes, bowed and entered. No one else but our group was there. The coastal winds and heavy fog created freezer conditions in the dark temple interior. We had been advised to wear jackets and bring blankets. We got settled, each on a raised platform with a cushion to sit on. It was very quiet. **We could hear the wind howling outside.** We sat, wrapped in blankets like seated stone mummies.

After a while, we heard Justin remark that we were done. He told us to get up, get our things and leave. We gathered in another room at the farm and began to thaw out. With great relief, I was secretly glad that Justin had taken things into his own hands. He had decided for all of us that the temple was just too cold to tolerate. From that moment on, **I appreciated his humanity** and that encouraged me to "go deep."

It was a beautiful example of Justin's leadership: his deep knowledge of meditation and how to guide and encourage others. **He had a masterful ability to lead a diverse group of people and be human at the same time.** It was a special time together that I still savor today. On the third day of the retreat, he said he would travel to any place in the world to meditate with this group. Thank you, Justin.



Meditating With Justin At Green Gulch

BY JERRY GRANOK, PAGOSA SPRINGS, COLORADO

Of course, every time with Justin Stone was special. One time, for me, was just magical. In April 1993, before I was accredited as a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, I heard that Justin was about to lead a five-day meditation retreat at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center, part of the San Francisco Zen Center, just north of the city on the Pacific Ocean. I had been meditating, though not intensely and, with some trepidation, signed up for the retreat. Friends picked me up at the airport and, as we drove along the winding road typical of California coastal highways, I wondered what I had gotten myself into. **I needn't have worried.** It was wonderful.

Green Gulch includes gardens and several small buildings, located in a verdant gulch, just a 20-minute walk from the ocean. A number of buildings are built in traditional Japanese style, including the zendo (meditation hall) and a two-story, octagonal guesthouse where retreatants stay. The guesthouse was fascinating: the Zen Center brought carpenters from Japan who built it in a traditional style without any nails. It was like a fine piece of furniture.

Our routine consisted of meditation sessions, with Justin instructing us in meditation techniques, followed by silent sitting meditations of about 45 minutes, TCC practices, lectures by Justin on a variety of subjects, vegetarian meals shared with other residents of the farm in the communal dining room, and lots of free time to explore the farm and the area. Some of our meditation sessions were held in the zendo, which had a magnificent feel to it that enhanced our meditations, while other sessions were held in a large yurt. Paths originating at the edge of the farm led to many fascinating sights. One path led into the hills where, at the top, we had magnificent views of the entire farm and the ocean. Another path led through the farm's dazzling beds of flowers and bountiful vegetable crops before winding through the woods where Calla lilies grew wild on the way to the beach and on the cliffs above the ocean. Although I was fortunate to experience many other retreats, conferences, classes and practices with Justin after that, **nothing could compare to what we shared** at Green Gulch Farm.

A Dream

BY JUDY HENDRICKS, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

I recently had a wonderful, joyful dream about Justin Stone. He was sitting down and motioned for me to sit next to him. I did. I gave him a hug and knew he was leaving. He said, "Come join me in the oneness." It's hard to explain the pure joyfulness I felt when he said that. The joyfulness was so strong, and this dream was so vivid and wonderful. Now whenever I practice TCC or meditate, I hear, "Come join me in the oneness."

I believe it's an invitation to everyone.

Gateway To Eastern Philosophy

BY JUSTIN STONE

~ A STORY: YOUR LAST THOUGHT ~

There was a very greedy Indian businessman who had three sons. He knew that throughout his life he was only interested in making money while alive, but he was also interested in having a good life in his next life and in salvation. Thus, he figured out a clever scheme so he could have his cake and eat it too. He reflected, "My last thought as I die is going to determine my next birth, so I'm going to make my last thought of God. Now how do I do that? I know! I'll name each of my three sons after God. I'll give each one a name of God. Here is Krishna and here is Rama and ahh, Ganesh." He then said, "I know when the end comes, that my last thoughts will be of my sons and I will be saying to them, 'Farewell, Ganesh, farewell, Rama, farewell, Krishna,' and I will die with the name of God on my lips!" Pretty clever scheme. The businessman went along through life. Krishna, Rama, and Ganesh worked in the business and helped him. Finally he grew old and ill and was put to bed. The doctor told the businessman's sons he didn't have long to live. Then finally the doctor suggested he'd better say goodbye to his sons, the time has come. The man sent for each of his sons to come to his bedside. The three of them arrived and as they approached his bedside, he said, "Ahhh, Ganesh, ah, Rama, ah, Krishna – *who's minding the store?*" [laughter] And with that he died! His last thought was "Who's minding the store?" It was a good scheme; it just didn't work. He gets an "A" for effort, though.

~ A STORY: FIVE FINGERS ~

I'll give you an example from my own Zen Master. This interaction occurred when I brought two people to meet him. The woman asked him a very nice, very logical question: "Roshi, why must there be English and French and German and Russian? Why must there be wars?" He held up his hand and said, "I have five fingers, why do I have five fingers?" I went over to him. I counted, "One, two, three, four, five. Yes, he has five fingers!" Afterwards when we'd left, this woman, who was from Latvia, said, "Why didn't he answer my question?" I replied, "He gave you the only possible answer!" If you're going to get into a discussion of why you have five fingers, you can see how ridiculous it is.

~ THOSE ARE NOT YOUR MISTAKES! ~

One time I was talking to Ramamurti Mishra, the Indian teacher, and he told me some positive things that were going to happen to me in the future: "Well, you're going to do this and that ... " I responded with surprise, "Gee, for a man such as myself who has made so many mistakes ... " He answered, "Those are not your mistakes!" That's pretty provocative, isn't it? "Those were not your mistakes!"

Don't ask me in a question, "What did he mean by 'Those are not your mistakes,'" because there are many possibilities. They could be God's mistakes. They could be mistakes of the past incarnation, which are unloaded upon me. We have that in Western teaching: the sins of the fathers. That is the meaning of Ramamurti Mishra's statement.

~ INTRODUCTION TO CHAPTER THREE: ZEN AND SNOWBALLS AND DARTS ~

Now we're going to address Zen Buddhism, both Chinese and Japanese. You cannot have a logical exposition of Zen because Zen is not logical! What I'm going to try to do (and which I think will be sort of fun) is throw out a lot of snowballs and hope that they hit here and there. There's a lot of humor in Zen and a lot of insight. It is my hope that it registers to the degree where it will help you in your own spiritual practice.

Zen is down-to-earth and matter-of-fact. You're going to have to change your whole orientation of thinking from the material on the Indian philosophies. I'm going to give you some examples of Zen's earthiness to start. First of all, Zen is very definitely life-affirming. Yunmen, a great Chinese Zen Master, said, "Every day is a good day." Even if you've got a bill since your car was banged up. "Every day is a good day." Zen affirms life. When we get to Indian Buddhism, you'll find that Indian Buddhism is life-negating. Indian Buddhism is really only fit for monks and those willing to give up the world. But Zen, which is part of Buddhism, is a sect of Buddhism (such as Protestants, Catholics, and Baptists in Christianity), and definitely believes life should be affirmed. My Zen Master used to get that across quite a bit. There's no metaphysical speculation. It must come with your own insight and your own realization. I'm going to illustrate that with several stories.

Pyramid Poems

sky
vast blue
infinite
holding sunlit
clouds and birds
soaring
free

– DOTTY HOEPNER

first
the seed
then the tree
blossoms like snow
next the pears
we make
sauce

– BETTY SIEDLECKI

how
can i
live alone?
you were always
at my side
loving
me

– BETTY SIEDLECKI

frost
is not
welcome when
flowers are in bloom
get the sheets
cover
them

– BETTY SIEDLECKI

leaves
acorns
old branches
they all fall down
even trees
topple
boom

– JEFF HOEPNER

Mirror, Mirror On The ...

BY JACKSON RAINS, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

To mirror or not to mirror, ah, that is a question that stirs up more controversy than almost any other aspect of teaching T'ai Chi Chih. Mirroring is the relatively simple idea that when a teacher is facing the students, he or she reverses the direction of the movements to appear to move in the same direction as the students. An unscientific poll suggests that most teachers use mirroring when facing the students. But there are a few who do not mirror because they don't think it's necessary or they believe it's confusing to themselves or the students. Also, a few teachers don't mirror because they believe that reversing the TCC movements reduces their effectiveness.

The main reason to mirror is that students are far more influenced by what they see than what they hear. Students get confused when a teacher faces them and tells them to begin to the left but then, as he or she steps to the left, it appears to the students that the teacher is moving to the right. Some teachers try to avoid this problem by turning their backs to students. This can work with advanced students who know the movements well, but beginning students need to see how the teacher's arms move. This solution also robs the teacher of being able to observe how students are moving in order to provide corrections.

Mirroring is not easy; it adds a layer of complexity to the teaching process. When the teacher is watching the students, counting repetitions, mirroring, managing time, and all the other things that go into teaching, he or she has a different experience of TCC than when doing a personal practice. This is offset, however, by the main thing the teacher receives—the ability to give the students the gift of TCC. I would teach standing on my head, spitting nickels, if it would help deepen my students' practice. Of course, the best situation of all is to teach in a space with a mirrored wall. Then the teacher and students move in the same direction, yet students can see the teacher in the mirror.

If you are persuaded to mirror, these are some things to consider:

Perhaps the single most important thing is to practice mirroring before you are in front of the group, with a special emphasis on the beginning and end of each movement. The most difficult movements to mirror are Carry the Ball to the Side (CTBTTs), Pulling Taffy, Passing Clouds, and Six Healing Sounds as these feel the most different when you mirror them.

Do not try to explain mirroring to the group or ask students for their opinions or to vote on whether to mirror. These decisions require a depth of understanding on their part that is just not possible. Simply tell them you will be mirroring for them. When beginning a movement, say the direction in which the movement begins and point in the direction the students will move. Say, "Begin to your left" and point to your right—the students' left. You can use physical references in the space if they are clearly in the direction of the movement. For example if the room has a wall on the students' right side and windows on the left, you can say, "We will begin moving toward the windows."

Remember that while CTBTTs and Pulling Taffy move to the left, they begin with the waist twisting to the right. This means that you are saying, move to the left for students while you're getting ready to move to the right, but you twist to the left as you start right. This requires a lot of concentration when you first mirror. Several moves—e.g., Rocking Motion and Joyous Breath—start with a small step to the left to widen the stance. It's easy to forget to mirror this minor part of the movement. If you don't, most students will step to their right as you step to your left. When doing TCC in a circle, rather than mirroring, it's better to tell students to look at the person next to them, not at the person across from them.



Mirroring also requires extra attention when counting repetitions. When doing our own practice, we do the left first then end on the right. We're used to doing movements this way and if we lose our concentration, it may feel as if we are finished when we are mirroring and complete the reps on the right, but still have the left to do. When done correctly, mirroring is invisible to the group. Inevitably, however, I make a lot of mistakes when mirroring and you will too. Students understand, and making mistakes humanizes us. After all, it's not TCC perfect, it's TCC practice.

Ringers Pile Up, Thanks To TCC

By DALE KOISTINEN, BAY AREA, CALIFORNIA

I competed in the World Champion Horseshoe Pitching Tournament in Knoxville, Tennessee in August. I've been pitching horseshoes for over 40 years in Northern California and never have done quite as well as in the Knoxville tournament. Pitching five games a day for three days in the Men's Open group, I compiled a record of 15 wins and 0 losses, and pitched 11 percentage points over my entering average of 30.65%. Why did this happen?

In May, my wife suggested that I try T'ai Chi Chih. We had taken a class a number of years ago, but I had not continued to practice what I had learned. She reviewed the lessons with me and we began doing TCC three times a week. We even did one TCC practice in a Knoxville park on the morning of the second day of the tournament. After the tournament she asked me if I thought TCC was a contributing factor in my success. Because horseshoe pitching involves a great deal of coordination, balance and concentration, I really believe that TCC was very beneficial to me. I am still doing TCC and am still having great success in local tournaments in Northern California.



Life-Saving Benefits Of TCC

By KENDELYN BECK, BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

T'ai Chi Chih has been an integral part of my life and spiritual path since my first class in early 2002. My initial teachers were Barbara Riley and John Steinmetz, along with April Leffler in Pennsylvania when I was able to travel there. They embody the practice and are personally inspiring to me. Little did I know how important the daily practice and weekly classes would be until late 2003 when my path turned abruptly into a medical sidetrack.

Throughout the next nine years, during diagnosis, **chemo, breast surgery and brain radiation for Stage IV** metastatic breast cancer, which traveled to bone and brain, I continued routine practice of TCC. It is such a gentle, energy balancing, Chi circulating and engaging practice that it supported and enhanced my healing even when other forms of exercise were not an option. I could even do many of the movements seated if my energy level was too low for me to stand. I attended weekly class/practice when medical treatment permitted and the additional infusion of Chi while practicing with others was an added benefit.

I am grateful to share that my most recent scans show no active cancer in the bones or elsewhere (my initial prognosis was two to three years). TCC also helped with the emotional discomfort of treatment and change in my lifestyle by keeping me focused on self-care and energy/emotional balance. It was and is important for me to feel a deep connection with my body and the energy that sustains it. TCC is a lifesaver and promoter. Thank you, Justin Stone, and all my teachers and fellow students.

Pyramid Poems On Silence

hear
silence
listen for
revelations
from wisdom
of the
Chi
— MAGGIE

deep
silence
gentle rest
Chi finds its way
deep in my
being
now
— SHERYL ADAIR

i
cannot
remember
experience
only the
essence
self
— JENETH RUNDLE

the
silent
yet in full
feel the beauty
deep within
coming
now
— PAULINE QUIMSON

voice
calling
be silent
go deeper and
discover
your true
self
— CAROLINE GUILLOT

A Beautiful Form Of Expression

BY CARMEN L. BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Pyramid Poetry is a simple poetry form Justin Stone originated. In its very simplicity, so much is revealed. (Justin describes it well in Chapter 7 of *Climb The Joyous Mountain*.) At the invitation of the T'ai Chi Chih conference committee, I introduced it to the group. Some teachers have written this form of poetry for many years; others had heard about it not yet tried their hand at composing; and still others were brand new to the idea.

The form includes seven lines with words of specific length:

1st line – 1 syllable
 2nd line – 2 syllables
 3rd line – 3 syllables
 4th line – 4 syllables
 And then reverse:
 5th line – 3 syllables
 6th line – 2 syllables
 7th line – 1 syllable

The last syllable, often a full word, may express a powerful climax. Sometimes, when we look at the first and last syllables, we see an even shorter, and very sweet, message.

It's important not to think too much about what we're writing but instead let the words flow from us. It helps to be quiet for a few minutes and then just start writing. Often, then, we see what our inner being may be contemplating; it can be very revealing. Our deepest being is always encouraging us to learn more about ourselves, and what's really going on inside. We often manage to be just busy enough in our lives to not have time to turn inward and listen. At the end of a day, instead of contemplating the highest within us, many times we spend time reviewing our hurts and anxieties. It could be much healthier to contemplate what our highest self is trying to reveal.

Fellowship was a mainstay of the conference; our connections also supported our efforts to turn inward and write. The lush, green hotel grounds and large river running nearby provided the beauty and space to be nourished not only by our practice and TCC community, but also by nature. This was an inspiration for some teachers' wonderful poems and we posted them on a bulletin board for others to enjoy. It's amazing what can happen when we open our hearts to the beauty of the Chi. Writing Pyramid Poems can be yet another way to do so. Justin often encouraged us to spend a meaningful evening just writing Pyramid Poetry, perhaps inviting others to join us. It could lead to learning new ways to share both love and the *Chi*.

Conference Joy: Pyramid Poetry

COMPILED BY ROBERTA TAGGART, EUGENE, OREGON

joy is love manifest jubilantly seeing now letting go – ROBERT	all others assist me through the woods to my home – ALICE H.	joy is high tell me why spirit flies home singing all the way back – LAURIE THOMAS
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joy is peace well being serenity contemplate the now <i>Chi</i> – ROBERT	joy is a pressure less bubbling spring springing forth from in side – ANON.	joy is happy love fulfilled adventurous emotions upon us – JC TAGGART
---	--	--

joy is the gift we share when we do our T'ai Chi Chih with our spouse – CAROLYN P.	joy is now new old high low underneath up above every where – JAN ARROT	joy is give 'til it loves chasing away the blue lights comfort all – STEVE MARSH
---	--	---

joy is round circulate make it all so wonderful resting smiles – STEVE MARSH	joy is now in the now before you know all is joy and one now – DALE CARRIER	joy is yours now justin and we share it being one with you love – EILEEN BUTLER
---	--	--

<i>i</i> focus on what is moving slowly relishing all that is – ALICE H.	joy is fun for the heart because of each day we have to be whole – NANCY JO B.	joy is here flowing by giving life to every one sharing <i>Chi</i> – JUDY H.
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Grateful & Giving Thanks

BY MARGERY ERICKSON, HANOVER, PENNSYLVANIA

Since returning from the conference, I cannot stop reading Justin's written material. I started by re-reading booklets of Justin's talks published by the T'ai Chi Chih Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am so glad I had the opportunity to hear him speak in person at several conferences. While reading I can picture him and hear his voice. Some of what I read I heard him say in person. It's all worth hearing again. As many of you know he says so much in just a few sentences. I find I need to read a little, put it aside and digest what I read.

As I continue to read, my heart is empty, knowing I will not see and hear him again in this lifetime, yet open and filled with his essence as I read his guiding words. I am grateful; I give thanks.



Conference Joy: Pyramid Poetry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

joy
is with
in all here
which flows out like
water with
movement
peace
— ANTONIA

joy
is all
together
comfortable
energy
to be
us
— JUDY GEORGE

joy
is a
pyramid
poem that flows
back and forth
yin yang
joy
— STEPHEN T.

joy
is thoughts
of justin
blessing us with
his gift of
T'ai Chi
Chih
— SHERYL ADAIR

joy
is one
yin and yang
expand contract
yin and yang
one is
joy
— LINDA RISKA W.

joy
is fun
all the time
you do not think
about it
but let
go
— CARLETTA LACOUR

joy
is mine
who i am
it's in my genes
gift from god
i am
joy
— CAROL ROESKE

joy
allows
gratitude
no more wanting
already
all i
need
— DAN P.

joy
is slow
respecting
gentle graceful
radiant
glowing
fun
— MARCELLA

joy
is there
inside when
all becomes quiet
abandon hope
let it
be
E.D.H

How Lucky I Am

BY DONNA ALDOUS, MEADOW LAKE, SASKATCHEWAN

It wasn't until I started telling my friends back home about our teacher conference that I realized how really great it was. How lucky I am to have a community of like-minded people who get together every year to renew friendships, learn new things and come away joyful and rejuvenated! Three people want to start doing what I'm doing so they, too, can add a whole new dimension to their lives. I'm so grateful for all the things T'ai Chi Chih has done for me and all it continues to provide. It's possible to feel joy all day long if I can just stay in the moment.

I became accredited at the recent *Seijaku* course. The only way I can describe it is, "It puts a tiger in your tank." Thanks to Pam and Daniel for everything. *Seijaku* is the advanced form of TCC, and I encourage anyone not familiar with it to take a class and start incorporating it into your daily practice. I plan to attend again next year so I can grasp all the things I didn't quite get this year. It is so deep, as are the *Jing*, the preliminary moves and the tonings. It's here at our fingertips – we just need to do it. How easy is that? See you in August 2013 in Minnesota. Be there or be square.

Three-Part Harmony

LYNNE ROBERTS MISSOULA, MONTANA

Justin's Caretaking

I would like to personally acknowledge and express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all the caregivers, especially the T'ai Chi Chih teachers and students, for their kind and compassionate care for Justin.

the
black cat
moves at night
calms my stress and
refreshes
busy, still
soul

Conference

The conference is always a very special time for me to refresh and renew friendships and of course my T'ai

Chi Chih practice. As the only active teacher in Missoula, I crave time to move with my fellow teachers, who otherwise seem so far away. I am so grateful that, despite some inner turmoil, I decided to arrive a day early. I had the privilege of joining a TCC practice with Antonia, Pam and Sandy overlooking the Columbia River. The next morning, 69 of us came together for a TCC practice in the Lan Su Chinese Garden. This was a fabulous experience and wonderful beginning to our conference. Thank you to all who took part in putting "Bridges to Joy" together. Well done.



Seijaku

One of the first things Pam said at the *Seijaku* training that I audited was, "Listen to your body, sit down, do fewer reps, take care of yourself." With that said, the second day I wrote, "What's causing me to be so sleepy, especially during sit-down teaching sessions? My eyes get so heavy and want to close? I want to discover the deeper meaning here and in my self-process I know I won't know until I know, which is usually revealed hours or days later. More to be said."

Day 1: I felt good moving, I felt more energy moving through my right hand. "This is good," I thought, surprised since it had been months since I last practiced *Seijaku*. It came back to me; I was delighted.

Day 2: I lost that good feeling. What am I doing? I'm not sure. I'm too thought-filled: soles of feet, resist, let go, oh yes, and remember Ann's *Seijaku* talk at the conference ... let go of something that doesn't serve me anymore ... hmmmm, fear, judgment ... give it color, texture – oh my, where am I? Move soft/hard/soft. Breathe. Relax, your breath will follow in accordance. Push through resistance with both feet on the floor, more with intention than muscular, okay, got that. But where's my effort of no effort? Practice, practice, practice.

Back to my sleepiness and heaviness ... what I know is I'm in the process of letting go of having to have things a certain way, and yet knowing that taking care of myself also means setting boundaries in my life. I will remember Justin's comment that *Seijaku* helps us make progress in our growth of learning who and what we are and according with reality. In closing, the sweet words "I love you, Justin" are enough.

Conference Joy: Pyramid Poetry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

joy
is to
be moving
in harmony
together
as one
om
– LORRAINE LEPINE

joy
is here
between the
spaces of lives
near bridges
we sing
free
– BARBARA KRISTOFF

joy
is not
a slam dunk
look and listen
see and hear
feel and
be
– TONY JOHANSEN

why
worry
god is here
pushing your pen
inspiring
ev'ry
thought
– ALICE H.

joy
is me
at this time
now knowing my
true self is
soft and
calm
– DEB BERTLESEN

joy
is su
percali
fragilistic
expia
ledo
cious
– ELIZABETH E.

joy
is breath
in and out
joyous right now
yes I am
perfect
here
– BARBARA KRISTOFF

joy
is an
elephant
spraying water
to refresh
weary
souls
– ALICE H.

joy
is all
of the life
experience
one can find
to play
in
– STACEY

joy
is love
free for all
centered inside
here for all
always
real
– M.E.

TCC & People With Alzheimer's

By SANDRA FREDA, EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

How do we teach T'ai Chi Chih to people who speak languages we don't and who have multiple physical disabilities and/or Alzheimer's disease? Jerry Bumbalough presented this topic at the conference and my husband and I visited one of his classes two weeks later.

Twice a week, Jerry teaches 40-50 students at The Wisdom Adult Day Health Care Center in Salinas, California. When we arrived, we wondered how a TCC class could be taught in such a huge room and busy environment with hundreds of people moving around. Jerry had created a calm, secure place for practice by placing chairs in a corner and bringing serene music to play.

When he volunteered to teach TCC here two years ago, he expected students to be English-speaking senior citizens. The Center also provides day care for Spanish-speaking patients with Alzheimer's, however, and when many attended his first class, he wondered how it would be possible for him to teach, given that he speaks only English. Antonia provided part of a solution, he said, suggesting he start class by saying, "Copy me." From here, he began an ongoing process of trial and error.

Jerry teaches the group seated TCC, with students' feet flat on the ground and no rocking of the torso. He omits sideways movements and makes each movement very definite. He said, "I complete a movement, go to the rest position (hands on thighs) and then look around to see how everyone is doing." The benefits are clear: a Center psychologist's report noted that people who had attended class were "less agitated and more relaxed after practice" and "were eager to practice."

We saw how Jerry's compassion enables him to connect with participants who are anxious or have difficulty communicating. It was heart opening to see people with such profound disabilities trying TCC movements, participating in most, as their expressions became more peaceful. Perhaps the most moving moment for me was when a young man with little control over his limbs joined the class and did Pulling Taffy the best he could. Jerry projected a strong quality of unconditional acceptance and nonverbally gave encouragement to each student. As the session ended, students gave themselves a hug, clapped, cheered and praised their efforts, calling out two words in English: "Good job!"

Seijaku As A 'Heightened Awareness' Practice

By ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

Justin created T'ai Chi Chih for his teachers. He wants us to align with heightened awareness and cosmic consciousness. He wants us to be free. I teach *Seijaku* using Justin's *Heightened Awareness* book. About eight years before he died, I met with him and reviewed how I was implanting the mindfulness practices found in his book onto Seijaku practice. He responded, "Of course, dear, Seijaku is a heightened awareness practice."

When Justin informed me that "a non-yogi has to work to get over hindrances," I began to experiment with Seijaku as a tool for this purpose. I placed an aspect of egoic consciousness (for example, fear) in the resistance section of Seijaku, and the weight shift through the resistance deepened the letting-go-of-hindrance experience. The amazing thing is that the body possesses consciousness, so using it in this mindfulness practice accelerates spiritual evolution. In *Heightened Awareness*, Justin named the six senses, which can lead to hindrances: our perception of and reaction to sight, sound, texture, smell, taste, and thoughts and emotions. Of the six senses, Justin said thoughts/emotions are the most likely to create clinging to egoic consciousness. This is why he often said, "You say it must be one way or the other, but I say neither/nor." An attitude of neither/nor leads to non-attachment and connection to the Absolute. Developing the habit of surrendering to the *Chi* leads to the dissolution of egoic consciousness, a discipline that can be painful and often takes great courage.

How important did Justin find the practices of heightened awareness?

"Awareness is the mark by which we can judge the degree of progress one has made. Heightened awareness gradually becomes Universal Consciousness, and we begin to get away from the self-centered concentration we had formerly known. Hatred is the result of self-clinging. When one can say he no longer hates, resents, or even dislikes anyone, he can be said to be on his way to sagehood. That is why the writer feels that the teaching of heightened awareness is so important." (*Heightened Awareness*, p. 58)

Conference 2013

Minneapolis (August 1-4)

The Minnesota community is actively working on the 2013 conference. We have some great suggestions from Portland conference (for which we are grateful) that we hope to incorporate. Our journey thus far has been fun.



Please consider bringing someone you know who didn't attend the 2012 conference or has never attended at all. We hope all can participate in this wonderful gift of movement.

Follow the schedule on the website (www.taichichih.org/conference_2013/) and on Facebook (www.facebook.com/taichichih) as we assemble the program. We hope to see you at the conference in 2013. Encircled in *Chi*. – JUDY & DEB

Personal Growth

BY PAT MOSELEY, SPOKANE, WASHINGTON

Responses to "How has T'ai Chi Chih affected your personal growth?"

Session 1

It keeps me loving my job. Being in the moment. Huge. Spiritual community. Kept me grounded. Enriches my personal life. Spiritual – physical – emotional. Alcohol numbed the energy; with TCC I felt energy. Helped with grief work. A miracle. Patience and joy. Being in the moment. Being my true self. Follow my gut. Abandon my head. Be present. Constant growth. Made me a softer person – who I really am. Peace, joy, gratitude. Balance. Return to inner child. TCC found me. Letting go to letting be. Joy, felt the *Chi*. Connected to the cosmos.

Session 2

TCC kept me together during crisis. My desire to drink went away with TCC. It's an inside job, a spiritual practice. TCC grounds me. It feels good to breathe and let go. TCC gives me comfort, an emotional support. TCC is my friend and companion. An inner ear issue – with TCC I've had only two incidents in the past three years. Releases from chronic pain, PTSD. Grounded. Serenity, sharing serenity with others. TCC brought me joy, an inner smile. Calmed my soul. Moves the *Chi*. TCC grounds me; I don't have to be perfect.

TCC gave me a family. In grief, TCC opened my heart, again. A deep spiritual practice. TCC helped me to bloom. TCC deepened my experience – an awareness. TCC has so many levels, always learning TCC, a healing journey. TCC helped me physically after my leg cancer surgery.



In The Chinese Garden

BY PATTY CLEMENT, PORTLAND, OREGON

Koi wrapped in their monk robes
float calm as Buddha
Chi passes above, rustling wind
released by a school of humans
swimming in air
undulating their long languorous fins
in T'ai Chi Chih fluidity.
Soft white lotus blossoms drift
baby swan kites on green threads
light slants into water in planes of glass
clouds of water lily pads ripple above
such sweet bliss to be unaware
where stiff scales end
and cool pond begins
to trust the water
will hold you forever.



Conference Joy: Pyramid Poetry

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joy
is birth
and rebirth
shedding old self
finding new
strength in
change
– DEB BERTLESEN

joy
is a
state of grace
we cannot know
when or where
joy will
come
– TONY JOHANSEN

joy
is my
true nature
relived as i
am present
in the
now
– PAM TOWNE

joy
is *Chi*
Chi is joy
a heritage
already
ours for
life
– SHEILA LEONARD

you
capture
justin's love
of poetry
in each line
special
gifts
– ALICE H.

joy
is now
all the time
feel it feel it
you'll be fine
be here
now
– APRIL LEFFLER

joy
is food
chocolate
chewy crunchie
gooey good
inside
mouth
– M.E.

joy
is free
a given
let it fill you
by living
in the
now
– SHEILA LEONARD

joy
captures
the essence
of who i am
divine love
moving
now
– ALICE H.

joy
is a
body of
happiness that
comes to us
in a
flash
– T.J.

Resistance For Spiritual Evolution

Seijaku Workshop with Ann Rutherford, September 22, Albuquerque, New Mexico

At this one-day workshop at the T'ai Chi Chih Center, we explored the question, "Does Resistance Accelerate the Spiritual Evolutionary Process?" We may instinctively recoil at this question. How can negative thoughts and reactions such as grief, anger, anxiety and revulsion accelerate the spiritual evolutionary process?

The first step is to become aware of these contractive reactions and move toward them with a welcoming heart. *Seijaku* assists us in this process by requiring us to move toward, not away from, resistance. Our intention at the workshop was to practice "Heightened Awareness Seijaku" using Justin's book, *Heightened Awareness*, as a guide. We chose just one "hindrance," an element in our lives that doesn't accord with peace of heart-mind, and noted our mind's reaction to this hindrance. Next, we noted whether our reaction was pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.

The main practice is to not attach to (i.e., not act on) the reaction and instead pass through it with the weight shift. This practice is similar to the Buddhist practice called *Satipatthana*, literally, "the Way of Mindfulness." Justin says this is the highest and most inclusive of all meditations, and the path Buddha took to Enlightenment, which Justin calls "knowledge of Reality." Rather than a "sitting" *Satipatthana* practice, we can use *Seijaku* as a kinesthetic *Satipatthana* practice. As Justin said, "A non-yogi has to work to get over hindrances. When something comes into your awareness, such as an emotion, ask yourself, 'Is this of the Absolute?'"

Rocking Motion For All Humanity

BY TERRY JENNINGS, HONOLULU, HAWAII

This is a song to sing to the tune of "The 12 Days of Christmas."

On the 1st TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 2nd TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 3rd TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 4th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 5th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 6th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 7th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
7 moves like swimming, 6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity

On the 8th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
8 visualizations, 7 moves like swimming, 6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity.

On the 9th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
9 pounds of joy, 8 visualizations, 7 moves like swimming, 6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity.

On the 10th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
10 pulling taffies, 9 pounds of joy, 8 visualizations, 7 moves like swimming, 6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity.

On the 11th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
11 lights lighten, 10 pulling taffies, 9 pounds of joy, 8 visualizations, 7 moves like swimming, 6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity.

On the 12th TCC class Justin Stone gave to me:
12 base drummers drumming, 11 lights lighten, 10 pulling taffies, 9 pounds of joy, 8 visualizations, 7 moves like swimming, 6 Healing Sounds, 5 counts of *Jing*, 4 passing clouds, 3 round platters, 2 birds flapping wings and Rocking Motion for all humanity (sung twice)

Seijaku Accreditation

With Pam Towne, July 8–10, Portland, Oregon

COMPILED BY DANIEL PIENCIAK, HOWELL, NEW JERSEY

The greatest joy and reward of hosting an accreditation is the privilege of learning first hand the new insights gained by those attending. The most beneficial insight into my own *Seijaku* practice was this: being aware in the “resistance” part of the movement of the abdominal muscles contracting, and then letting go as we come out of the resistance.

This engagement of the “abs” is felt in regular T’ai Chi Chih practice (without *Seijaku*), but not as markedly. The value of this insight has been understanding this tension (or contraction) in relationship to the movement being done. In my regular TCC practice, this slight contraction in the abdominal area is felt: (1) when sinking in the up-down movements, (2) with the weight on the back leg in forward-back movements, and (3) in the middle of the weight shift on side-to-side movements. When applying the *Seijaku* principle, these felt nuances remain subtly present, but the stronger contraction or tension is felt in the middle of the resistance portion of the movement. The subsequent letting go results in a wonderful release of tension and enjoyment of expansion in relaxation.

The key factor is not making any of this happen: there is no deliberate tensing or contracting, but allowing it to happen in the flow of the movement (as a natural consequence of moving correctly). I continue to understand more and more why Justin Stone so often emphasized bending one leg and straightening the other, as this provides the foundation for the very powerful and satisfying contraction and expansion principle.

Justin taught that awareness is the root of TCC. The awareness of this tension/relaxation (or contraction/expansion) has opened a whole new and more fully satisfying experience in my practice. It has also unleashed access to the real power of the practice (TCC with or without *Seijaku*).

One more valuable understanding has been insight into how tension/relaxation differs from contraction/expansion. I experience that the contraction/expansion in the abdominal area happens as a physical response of moving correctly (and adds to the softness and flow of TCC). When applying the *Seijaku* principle to the movements, the tension/contraction happens as a response to a mind experience, or “imagination,” whether we feel the heavy air suddenly become much heavier and thicker, or we are meeting up and facing our demons and life resistances to break through them. This has been a profound realization for me.

Opening To The Flow Of The *Chi*

Retreat with Carmen Brocklehurst, September 27-30, Albuquerque, New Mexico

BY CAROLINE GUILLOT, LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

It seemed as if everyone came to Carmen’s retreat ready to learn, attentive to the flow of the *Chi*. Even newcomers to the T’ai Chi Chih movements seemed to understand and feel the power of the practice. I remember when TCC was just a notion to me of where to place my hands and feet. This retreat added to that – it is so much more than that and it all comes from within.

It’s a delight to see someone find his or her *tan t’ien* for the first time, realize it and feel it.



Top L to R: Dan Pienciak, Stacey Moore, Allan MacNeil, Donna Aldous, Pam Towne. Bottom L to R: Stephen Ryter, Joan Weaver, Banks Upshaw

Someone felt a release in a movement just by adjusting the wrist. Someone else discovered softness in the hands when coming to a graceful conclusion. Strong in the soles of our feet, **we experienced movements from the inside out, from the *tan t’ien* outward, revealing the rippling effect of a complete let-go.** It was so amazing. This is really what TCC practice is all about.

From a state of being and constantly becoming, we find the truth about ourselves and it radiates outward. We are nicer to ourselves and others, not because we have to be but because that’s what happens when our true nature reveals itself. Can we acknowledge it? Can we let ourselves fully receive the gift of TCC? Thank you, Justin Stone, for your life and the gift of TCC. Thank you, Carmen, for continuing to share the *Chi* with all of us. This retreat was an exceptional feast for the body, mind and soul.

New Video Clips Embedded Into The App

By popular request, Good Karma Publishing is in the process of adding long-lost footage of Justin Stone performing each movement of T'ai Chi Chih to our app. It's available on the iOS platform (http://sutromedia.com/apps/Tai_Chi_Chih) and Android (http://sutromedia.com/android/Tai_Chi_Chih) for \$9.95. Now that it contains both the photo text and video clips (two-for-the-price-of-one) download it before the price goes up.

A Testimonial

As teacher April Leffler of Prospect Park, Pennsylvania, reports:

"One of my students, who is probably older than we are, recently said she didn't remember how to do the moves when she got home. But guess what!?! I told her about the spankin' new TCC app! (I knew she was tech savvy because just the week before, she had shown me a YouTube video on her iPhone.) Her whole face lit up! I felt so 21st century. It was amazing. Because of that interaction, I'm now going to email all my college students about our TCC app."

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM



The Lighter Side

I met some T'ai Chi Chih students at a practice in the Japanese gardens this summer. One nice woman commented that her husband was very frustrated with some of the movements. I asked her which ones, and she said, "Oh you know, the one Uh.... the one called "tofu." I said, "Pardon, what move?" She said, "Tofu!" I smiled and said, "Oh yes, the Taffies!" Then she smiled and said, "Yes, Those!"

— LINDA BRAGA, CASTRO VALLEY, CALIFORNIA

Puzzle

CREATED BY JEAN MARKEY,
DALLASTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

- Anchor Taffy
- Around the Platter
- Around The Platter Variation
- Balance
- Brass Drum
- Bird Flaps Its Wings
- Bubbling Spring
- Carry The Ball To the Side
- Chi
- Continuity
- Cosmic Consciousness Pose
- Daughter In The Valley
- Daughter On The Mountaintop
- Intrinsic Energy
- Joy Through Movement
- Joyous Breath
- Justin Stone
- Light At The Temple
- Light At The Top Of The Head
- Passing Clouds
- Perpetual Motion Taffy
- Pulling In The Energy
- Pulling Taffy
- Push Pull
- Rocking Motion
- Serenity
- Six Healing Sounds
- Softness
- Tai Chi Chih
- Tan Tien
- Vital Force
- Wrist Circles Taffy
- Working the Pulley
- Yang
- Yin

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TEACHER RESOURCES:
See www.taichichih.org/teacher-resources/

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Pienciak.

Community Calendar

(For the most up-to-date info and event PDFs, visit www.taichichih.org)

DATE	WHAT & WHO	WHERE	CONTACT
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Nov 2-5 / **Intensive with Pam** / South Mantoloking, NJ / Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573

~ 2013 ~

Feb 26-Mar 1 / **Retreat with Antonia** / Santa Barbara, CA / Pam Towne / 760-722-9544

March 5-8 / **Retreat with Antonia** / Santa Barbara, CA / Pam Towne / 760-722-9544

May 7-12 / **Teacher Accreditation with Sandy** / Aston, PA / Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573

May 8-12 / **TCC Intensive with Pam** / Prescott, AZ / Hope Spangler / 928-775-2010

Aug 1-4 / **TCC Teacher Conference** / near Minneapolis, MN / www.taichichih.org

Aug 4-6 / **Seijaku Teacher Accreditation** / near Minneapolis, MN / www.taichichih.org

Aug 5-6 / **Seijaku Heightened Awareness Class** / near Minneapolis, MN / www.taichichih.org

Sep 25-29 / **TCC Retreat with Antonia** / Pecos, NM / Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114

~ MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

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

Nov 10 / **TCC Workshop with Sharon Sirkis** / Marriottsville, MD / 410-730-1986

Nov 17 / **TCC Workshop with Carmen Brocklehurst** /
Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

~ 2013 ~

Apr 11-14 / **TCC Retreat with Carmen Brocklehurst** /
Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

Sept 19-22 / **TCC Retreat with Carmen Brocklehurst** /
Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810



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Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone / Email _____

TEACHER ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

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

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher _____

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

Name of "second signature" _____

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Thank you!