

# The Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

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for teachers & students

August 2020

## Justin Stone: In His Words

### Heightened Awareness

[taichichih.org/teacher/justin-stone](http://taichichih.org/teacher/justin-stone)

#### SATIPATTHANA

There are many types of meditation resulting in trance states, complete relaxation, intense concentration or wide-awake focusing on the now. None of these, in the writer's opinion, has the majesty of the *Satipatthana* meditation, the Way of Mindfulness. This meditation is all encompassing, and soon we find we are doing it all day long rather than at certain short periods where we are sitting quietly...

Here we are going to work with the whole *Satipatthana*, so that those who detect its beauty and efficacy can go on to practice it in their own lives. With the *Vipassana*, the meditator must come slowly back to normal life as his functioning has been slowed to a walk. However, no such adjustment will be necessary as we practice the Way of Mindfulness.

~ ~ ~

...Sitting quietly (ten to fifteen minutes), we watch our breath, noting if we are taking long breaths or short breaths, and whether the breathing is coarse or smooth.

We now try to recognize our state of mind, the current fleeting phase rather than long-term chronic conditions. We might note our posture (sitting or standing) at the same time since we have determined that this affects our state of mind (and vice versa).

After doing this, we turn to feeling-sensation and try to note the various feelings of touch on our bodies, as well as our reactions to

them. We do not have to be moving or in action to have these tactile sensations. Emotions, such as love or hate, hope or any others do not enter into our observations. Our reactions are to the sensations and the feelings that they inspire.

Finally, we get into objects of mind. We want to know what impinges on our sight and hearing, no matter how faint, and our reactions to them. This is a passive state, waiting for the sounds and sights to come to us. We do not go searching for them.

Having finished with these four observations, we now attempt to put them together. Our basic practice is watching sounds, sensations and feelings, and changes in our mercurial states of mind. We might attempt to do this for half an hour. At first it will not be easy, but we persevere and soon we make progress. Practicing like this every day, we will begin to see the observations carry over into our active everyday lives.

If one says he cannot give the time or effort to this practice, I will answer by saying, "You want to play the piano without doing your finger exercises." The effort is large, but the rewards can be great.

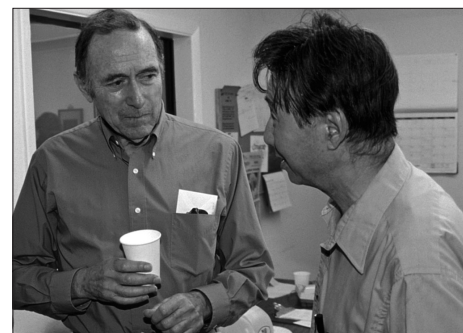
Practice of the full *Satipatthana* meditation is much to be desired; in this writer's opinion, it is the king of meditations, leading to total mindfulness... a half hour of *Satipatthana* practice every day – or even every other day – should gradually impregnate the everyday life with some of its attributes...

Should this happen, we could soon expect to see changes in ourselves, changes in outlook, perhaps cessation of temper and impatience, and greatly increased

range of awareness. We will be more aware of music, painting and other sources of beauty. More importantly, we will begin to approach cognition of Reality. Knowing dimly that there must be unchanging Reality underlying phenomenal changes, we may now begin to intuit the Real and attune to it against the background of constant change.

This is the path of highest spiritual significance, and it is a way we will have to follow alone. No matter how many people we know or live with, the way to the top becomes more and more rarified...

... I do believe that one should engage in such extreme practice only if psychologically fit for it and in good health. On the other hand, the *Satipatthana* as we practice it here should continue with us, perhaps permanently. Rather than a short period of deep immersion, we practice continuously in moderate amounts. And we can take it as far as we want to go.



Justin with Ou Mie Shu  
(who created the TCC birds), Sept., 1994

Excerpt from **Heightened Awareness**, available in print and in an e-book from [justinstonetcc.com](http://justinstonetcc.com).

## TEACHER LISTING PAGES – WHO ARE WE?

- Please visit the [taichichih.org](http://taichichih.org) homepage and scroll down to find the link for featured teachers and teachers teaching on Zoom or Facetime.
- The site currently profiles 85+ teachers, including Justin (the original teacher) and one association (see Northern Colorado).
- Starting with this August issue, when a teacher authors a *Vital Force* article and they have a teacher listing, that URL will be listed under their byline so readers can learn more about that teacher.

We understand that teacher listing pages are not top of mind during COVID-19. A safe vaccine, vital medical interventions for those sick and properly enforced health regulations are. However, let me take a crack at **why it matters now**:

- **Students want what we have to offer**; these pages are promoted on Saturdays on Facebook and about 300 students click through every weekend! Help them find you. Within a week of creating a listing, one teacher said, “Websites work. I just got two new students for a class on Boulder Creek.” After uploading his photo one formerly-reticent teacher said, “This makes me want to write a bio and start teaching again.
- *Even if you aren't teaching*, let's **showcase** the breath, depth and uniqueness of **our teaching community**. Why?
  - Because when about 250 profiles (of the 750 teachers who indicated they wanted to be on the site) are complete, I will **promote** TCC to my journalist colleagues who write for major publications. We need to look “real” and like a substantial movement worth covering.
- **These pages help us stay connected** through COVID-19 isolation. They are akin to

“TheFacebook,” when it launched way back in 2004.

- Consider **supporting the website** so others may learn about TCC. (I do not get compensated for helping here; the funds go to pay off the developer.)
- **Students need current contact information**. If you've done a profile, look for a friend who has not claimed their page and please contact them. This site belongs to everyone.
- Sandy and Pam reminded me that we used to charge teachers \$5 or \$10/year to have contact information on the website. *Hopefully \$10 or \$40 for your own promotional page seems like a great value.*
- See also page 14.

**Teachers: Please visit [taichichih.org/teacher-listings](http://taichichih.org/teacher-listings) for instructions.**

~ With gratitude. Kim Grant,  
Albuquerque, NM

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## The Vital Force

### ~ Web Site Updates ~

The on-line teacher listings (for [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)) are now maintained by teachers themselves. Teachers: please email Kim or see [taichichih.org/teacher-listings](http://taichichih.org/teacher-listings) for instructions.

### ~ Submission Deadlines ~

January 1 for the February issue  
April 1 for the May issue  
July 1 for the August issue  
October 1 for the November issue

### ~ Submission Guidelines ~

Please send articles as text, Word or Pages documents, electronically, to [kim@kimgrant.com](mailto:kim@kimgrant.com). 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.

### What Does The Vital Force Do?

- Produces a quarterly journal by and for its members
- Creates and maintains [taichichih.org](http://taichichih.org) for everyone
- Innovates with ways to connect teachers and students
- Extends its reach through a blog and e-newsletter
- Outreach for teachers and students about TCC through social media
- Provide free subscriptions when we have resources.

### ~ Giving ~

Please consider a tax-deductible contribution to support The Vital Force's essential and vast outreach. Membership fees cover the journal; our other activities continue through the discretion and through the generous support of our giving base. They allow us to effectively reach hundreds of thousands of practitioners around the globe. Thanks to our supporters who:

- Bequeath assets to The Vital Force in their estate planning
- Gift stocks to maximize their tax-efficient, year-end contributions
- Contribute monthly (aka our “sustaining members”) via [taichichih.org/donate](http://taichichih.org/donate)
- Give through their employer's matching programs, thereby doubling their contributions
- Donate by credit card via [taichichih.org/donate](http://taichichih.org/donate)
- Donate by check to: The Vital Force, PO Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199

Editor: Kim Grant • Membership: Mary Ruiz • Submissions: Send articles, poetry and photos to Kim Grant at [kim@kimgrant.com](mailto:kim@kimgrant.com) or to The Vital Force, P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674 • Memberships: Send membership subscription requests, renewals, remittances and changes of address to The Vital Force, P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674. Memberships are \$50/year for US and international. Members receive four issues of The Vital Force. Multi-year discounts are available. Teachers who subscribe receive a free listing on [taichichih.org](http://taichichih.org). The annual Teacher Directory is available for free at [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org). If, for some reason, you do not receive an issue, send an e-mail to: [kim.grant@taichichih.org](mailto:kim.grant@taichichih.org). • Design: Amy K. Brown.

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# The Gift of Paradox

By Amy Tyksinski, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
 taichichih.org/teacher/amy-tyksinski

**I recently attended** an enriching Tuesday morning teacher’s practice led by Sandy McAlister via Zoom. One teacher raised a question about Bird Flaps its Wings. Having moved to a new state, he had noticed differences in how some people were doing the movement compared to the context he had for it.

Whenever movement discernment questions arise, I know that an awareness of paradox is being asked to expand in me. This paradox simultaneously includes yet is not limited to the following (in no particular order):

1. Gratitude to our community. An awareness of how, knowingly or unknowingly, we urge one another on, we ask and share and offer and thus grow.
2. Diversity of experience. Each person’s individual expression of Justin’s teachings and TCC and how the teachings articulate through each of us.
3. An invitation of Being. Unity in connecting with the essence of TCC and not picking the wings off the butterfly. An openness to “Let T’ai Chi Chih teach me T’ai Chi Chih” **and it does so in myriad ways.**
4. A return to source materials. Moving with Justin. Hearing/reading Justin’s actual words which often mystified me many years ago and still do. Noticing with each passing year his words become more alive. Justin chose his words very carefully. I feel they are gifts offered in service to our awakening, filled with vitality.

Most recently (perhaps thanks to COVID-19), I have been struck by a startling recognition and subsequent dissolution of personal ideas and constructs. Loneliness. Belonging. Love. The TCC principles have been a part of this inner revolution as they, too, broaden to encompass a wider swath of embodiment. Softness? Not what I first thought it was (as applied to TCC and to life). Continuity? Completely different than how I experienced it even a year ago.

I don’t want to miss the potential in TCC because I have a concept that doesn’t fit Justin’s modeling and description of a movement. I delight in delving deeper into the materials he left us, not as an abdication of my own authority or longevity with the practice but because the ultimate relationship with TCC is reciprocal. Justin left us pointers and content that will bring TCC alive in us **for our own empowerment**, and to take us as far as we want to go. It is up to us to find it!








To use the example of Bird Flaps its Wings from “Notes On Movements Just Learned” (*TCC Joy Thru Movement Photo Text*), Justin says, “We **flip the wrists to the side quickly**, but bring the arms and hands back together slowly. As the hands come together, the polarity of the palms facing each other is important, so do not rush bringing the hands together.” In the Zoom gathering, Linda Braga also recalled that Justin used to say, “Do a little bird, not a big bird!”

Justin emphasized a “break in the wrists” (his phrase) in Light at the Top of the Head/Temple along with Bird Flaps its Wings. The “break” in these movements is critical as it encourages stronger *Chi* flow as the resulting sudden tug in the wrists awakens the meridian channels in the wrists with alacrity. The paradox? One can **flip** out quite quickly, **break** in the wrists, **return** more slowly and still be moving with **softness and continuity** on the inside throughout the whole movement.

It takes great awareness and inner release to be able to do all that at the same time. It flies in the face of an external-only demonstration of evenness; to reinforce Sandy’s point, all is integrated and is it integrated from the inside out. In Bird Flaps Its Wings, we achieve greater inner continuity paradoxically by flipping, breaking, fast, then slow!

I am still working on consciously embodying an all-at-once-ness, so when necessary I apply a strategy of slowing down a given movement but include to the best of my understanding the different parts of that movement. In the case of Bird Flaps its Wings, I still go out faster than on the return, and still allow a noted break in the wrists as they flip out as opposed to an even-paced glide or a float, so the power of the movement and *Chi* generation can be fully experienced.

The “both/and” paradox found in so much of TCC and its principles seems to take time to develop. Justin never talked about how soft he was on the inside. He embodied it. He moved quickly and effortlessly yet exquisitely could “commune with the *Chi*” through it all. Little by little, and gently so because TCC is so gentle, we are stretched through paradox to expand and include a new experience of ourselves, our connection to Source and sources, freely sharing with one another and coming to Know Who and What we are.

 <p><b>Sandy Roerig</b></p> <p>Verified Listing: Yes</p> <p>Teaching: Featuring, Seijaku, and Tai Chi Chih</p> <p>Teaching specialties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Classes</li> <li>Beginner Classes</li> <li>Teacher-Driven Practices</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Becky Shinas, OP</b></p> <p>Verified Listing: Yes</p> <p>Teaching: Featuring, Virtual Learning, and Tai Chi Chih</p> <p>Teaching specialties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Classes</li> <li>Beginner Classes</li> <li>Teacher-Driven Practices</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Rachel Rilinger</b></p> <p>Verified Listing: Yes</p> <p>Teaching: Featuring, Virtual Learning, and Tai Chi Chih</p> <p>Teaching specialties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Classes</li> <li>Beginner Classes</li> <li>Teacher-Driven Practices</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Janet Starr</b></p> <p>Verified Listing: Yes</p> <p>Teaching: Featuring, Seijaku, and Tai Chi Chih</p> <p>Teaching specialties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Classes</li> <li>Beginner Classes</li> <li>Teacher-Driven Practices</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Amy Tyksinski</b></p> <p>Verified Listing: Yes</p> <p>Teaching: Featuring, Virtual Learning, Seijaku, and Tai Chi Chih</p> <p>Teaching specialties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ongoing Classes</li> <li>Beginner Classes</li> <li>Teacher-Driven Practices</li> </ul>
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## Why TCC, Now?

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Every teacher of T'ai Chi Chih** has a most wonderful gift to offer, 19 movements and one pose. It is the gift that caused people to write to Justin Stone and say, "T'ai Chi Chih has changed my life!" Even people who already seem to have a very nice life have been drawn to it. After practicing for a while, they hear other people say: "There is something different about you." Their friends may wonder, was it weight loss, a new haircut or different clothing? The TCC practitioner realizes that something else accounts for the change. The practitioner themselves will often say, "I have faith in myself again." ... "I feel more connected to myself, more grounded." ... "I feel I have the ability to make a difference in this world."

There hasn't been a big hype to spread the word. People have been invited to try TCC by a longtime friend, relative, co-worker or someone they would never have guessed was a TCC practitioner. And it always comes with the same results: "I feel better about myself than I have in years. I look forward to my practice."

Someone said, "It is not an exercise and yet it is the best exercise I can do." During this time of uncertainty, our minds can wander into unhappy situations. Will deaths from COVID-19 continue to climb? How will it affect my family? We can get out of balance and overthink these situations. By doing TCC, we are not as likely to overthink situations; instead we are the ones to think positively and help others do the same. We feel more connected to each other; we have a belief in humanity. We see that the more we hold on to the highest, safest and most life-affirming ideas, others will begin to do the same. Belief in each other, in humanity, feels good. It matches how we feel after our daily TCC practice.

Now is a very special time. We are in the midst of many situations at once, some of which are incredibly difficult. Peace and equanimity are needed more than ever in this world. We can lead the way. You and I can make a difference. Now is when we can learn to love and share the *Chi*.

## Time & Patience... "The only thing permanent is change."

By Dorene Krause, Midland Park, New Jersey

**The world as we knew it** has changed drastically. Life for each of us is different in many ways. Social distancing is our new normal, and it does take some getting used to. We don't seem to have the freedom to go and do what we want when we want or celebrate holidays and special occasions as we would like. Travel is on hold. Calendars are empty, not overflowing with appointments and places we "have" to be. The world is changing, and we must change along with it. Time and patience are necessary.

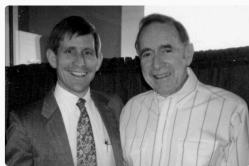
When you entered my class for the first time, I spoke with you about being patient with your learning. **T'ai Chi Chih cannot be learned overnight.** It will take time and much practice. The way you move your body will change, and the movements will become softer and done with more ease. (Not necessarily easier.) And remember: It is TCC practice, not TCC perfect.

With time and patience,  
we begin to connect with our entire body,  
feel it moving as one integral whole,  
and notice nothing moves independently of the other  
(the arms not separate from the legs or the torso).  
We also begin to understand and feel the energy moving through us  
and possibly gain a better understanding of ourselves as well.

As we grow in our understanding of the practice and begin to feel the energy, our mind and thoughts begin to change. **As our movements soften, perhaps we soften.** The stresses and challenges life presents to us can sometimes make us uneasy and anxious, but the practice of TCC can help us find an inner stillness, learn to act but not react.

A universal energy connects us all. Each of us has felt that in class when we practice together. It seems as if we are all moving as one; the arms become weightless, the movements become effortless and are done with less thought. Visually, this free flow of energy is pure poetry in motion.

It is with gratitude that I send these thoughts . . . grateful I am for the gift of TCC in my life and grateful to my many dedicated students who bring a fullness to my life. Balance the body, balance the mind with TCC.



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Verified Listing: Yes

Teaching: Featuring, Virtual Learning, and Tai Chi Chih  
Teaching specialties:  
o Ongoing Classes  
o Beginner Classes

## Where in the World: My 2020 Travels

By Denise Emanuel Clemen, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**March:** I did not go to San Antonio for the giant writer's conference. I didn't go to Boulder for the intimate writer's workshop with authors I revere. Instead I stayed home, thinking I was nowhere.

**April:** I did not go to Oaxaca, Mexico to a painting workshop with a dear friend that we had looked forward to for months. Instead I stayed home, practicing T'ai Chi Chih in my condo.

**May:** I did not go to Arizona for my granddaughter's high school graduation. Instead I stayed home in my condo, practicing TCC on this land on which I reside.

**June:** I did not take my granddaughter on a river cruise through the great cities of Europe. Instead I stayed home, practicing TCC in my condo on this land where I reside which was stolen.

**August:** I will not go to Madeline Island for a writing and meditation workshop. Instead I will stay home, practicing TCC in my condo on this land where I reside, which was stolen through a false treaty with the Dakota people.

**September:** I will not go to Greece and spend time on my own in Athens, a city I adore. Instead, I will stay home, practicing TCC in my condo on this land where I reside which was stolen through a false treaty with the Dakota people who never received the three million dollars that was promised to them in the so-called "Treaty of Travers des Sioux."

After Athens, I will not go to a writer's retreat on a Greek island whose name I have forgotten. Instead, I will stay home, practicing TCC in my condo on this land where I reside which was stolen through a false treaty with the Dakota people who never received the three million dollars that was promised to them in the so-called "Treaty of Travers des Sioux," and despite the fact that many Dakota were driven from their land in the aftermath of that "treaty," this land where I practice is still indigenous land.

After the island retreat, I will not go to an artist's house in an Athens suburb and learn from her the art of photomontage. Instead, I will stay home, practicing TCC in my condo on this land where I reside which was stolen through a false treaty with the Dakota people who never received the three million dollars that was promised to them in the so-called "Treaty of Travers des Sioux," and despite the fact that many Dakota were driven from their land in the aftermath of that "treaty," this land where I practice is still indigenous land and will always be indigenous land, and it holds great historical, spiritual and personal significance that the Dakota people continue to celebrate with their presence here. I am somewhere important and amazing. I honor this place and the Dakota people with gratitude.

## Going On Vacation

By Lisa Stroyan, Fort Collins, Colorado  
taichichih.org/teacher/lisa-stroyan

**I've been dreaming about vacations.** I sometimes long for the freedom, joy and magic of getting away from it all. We used to vacation regularly. Our lives shifted, obligations got in the way, money was diverted, travel often involved extended family or attending events, and then COVID-19 hit.

Planning a vacation can be its own hobby and preparing can feel energizing and purposeful. Traveling also takes logistical energy and is more complicated with health issues. Sometimes I return from a trip feeling as if I need another vacation to relax from that one.

Vacations used to be one of the few times I allowed myself to be fully present and cared for, and as a result, experience a greater level of gratitude. I remember a yoga class many years ago at some beach vacation. With my gym membership and videotapes far, far away, I could fully immerse myself in the experience. I was nowhere else but inside my body. That practice stuck with me.

How to get the experience of a vacation without travel? I told my husband that this year, for my birthday, I wanted a "staycation." We spent the morning lazing in bed, went for a nature walk and then my T'ai Chi Chih co-teacher treated me to a socially distanced picnic. I took an afternoon nap, and my husband and I bought flowers to plant in the yard. It was the first time we'd shopped together in weeks and it was a treat. We cooked, cleaned the house and did laundry, but otherwise I maintained the vacation mentality.

TCC helps us fully let go. Novelty, playfulness, nature and gratitude all are ways "in" – we can get them at home with TCC. For class that Monday I told folks that we were going on vacation together. I invited them to wear comfy vacation clothing to our Zoom gathering, and if they liked, to find a chair and practice seated. Through TCC we travel inward. What are a few ways you can vacation at home? I invite you to consider TCC.



# Nourishing Chi-Pollen

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California

**Change, whether we like it or not!** Letting go, whether we like it or not! Change and letting go often go hand-in-hand, and we frequently have little control over these processes.

At T'ai Chi Chih accreditation courses, candidates often hit a wall, thoroughly frustrated with their seeming inability to overcome a hurdle. It is at that time they often throw their hands in the air, actually or figuratively, and declare to themselves that they give up. Then, low-and-behold the problem that was nagging them seems to melt away. Unintentionally they let go, and in letting go they are able to move on.

I found myself in the position of sitting back and waiting for the COVID-19 situation to resolve itself so I could get back to my classes and routine. I needed a swift kick in the rump (thank you Pam Towne) to let go of my minimal adjustment to the situation and to move forward with being in the present, going forward rather than waiting in the past for things to resume. Now I am getting excited about the future rather than moping around settling for the past. I had been so resistant to making any change in my life. Even when I did, I went screaming and kicking all the way and made it very hard on myself and on others around me. If I had just accepted the reality of what is now, not clinging to the past and not willing to let go, my transition would have been so much smoother and less painful. But, in hindsight, I didn't even realize I was clinging to the past.

**I am delighted hearing from teachers about how they are finding ways to continue teaching.** Some are going to parks or outdoor spaces, others are developing at-home lesson plans they send to their students, others are teaching online. Justin said TCC opens up our creative side and I think many teachers are finding

this to be so with developing new ways to continue connecting with their students and even gathering new students.

At a TCC teacher's Zoom retreat this past weekend, teachers discussed how we might use Zoom for some of our special courses, such as intensives and accreditation, during and possibly after the pandemic is over. Much of what was expressed was that it is a matter of letting go of the known and allowing that what will follow will

serve the needs, if we plan with good intentions and an open heart, with the wish for the best possible outcome; if we prepare the best we know how and then we turn it over to the flow of the *Tao* and have confidence that its unfolding will serve the needs of those attending.

During this time some of us are experiencing more change than others. Some may find themselves in a holding pattern, which is what I felt. I encourage us to explore new horizons. More than ever, we need to reach out. A teacher called me the other day just to connect and it brightened my day. Each day she has a list of a couple people who she calls and I was on the list that day – lucky me. Many are trying TCC Zoom classes for the first time and finding it easier and more rewarding than they thought.

In light of my experience, I would encourage us to explore where we might be holding on or resisting change. **It is one thing to have change thrust upon us as with this pandemic, but another how we respond to it.** I like Justin's suggestion, which he got from Paul Reps, of sitting quietly for 10 minutes "each day and just allowing yourself to 'receive'. No thinking, no technique, no mantra repetitions, no watching the breath, but just sitting quietly in a chair." I would also add, no expectations. Who knows what *Chi-pollen* might filter through us and nourish an idea-seed just waiting to sprout.

Change is hard at first, messy in the middle, gorgeous in the end.



## Thank YOU

The May issue of *The Vital Force* received more email accolades than any issue in a decade. Thank you to all who contributed and subscribe. Without both, the VF would simply not exist! Full stop. As Julie wrote: "The newsletter is a lifeline for many of us who yearn to hear from others about their profound experience(s) with the Chi." And as Richard echoed: "Keep it up for all of us. It really does matter."

## TCC Teacher Circle

By Janet Knapp Starr, Stratford, Texas  
[taichichih.org/teacher/janet-starr](http://taichichih.org/teacher/janet-starr)

**We have a Facebook Group** resource for accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers and it is a nice place to visit year-round for those hallway discussions we share at teacher conferences. Are you accredited? Would you like to be connected with other accredited TCC teachers? It has been invaluable for many teacher-related inquiries like teaching TCC via Zoom or what to include in a pandemic class agreement. Find us and be sure to answer the three questions at [facebook.com/groups/TaiChiChihTeacherCircle](https://www.facebook.com/groups/TaiChiChihTeacherCircle).

## Don't Be Knocked Off Your Feet

By Daniel Pienciak, Howell, New Jersey

The unexpected, like the COVID-19 pandemic, can knock us off our feet. One year ago on July 4, I had this experience while leading a TCC Intensive in Santa Barbara. A small bell on a table stand began to swing, all eyes on it. The floor began shifting in an earthquake. Some of us were a bit shaken for the remainder of that day, but we felt even less secure when it happened again to an even greater degree the following evening. In my room, I noticed that the window blinds were swaying so I quickly stood up to exit the building. But the rolling motion had me grabbing onto the door jamb for security.

Like me, have you had moments in your practice when your balance was suddenly not secure? After we have practiced regularly for some time, we come to appreciate the importance of correct stance, or foot placement. Think of the Eiffel Tower: if not for its broad base, it would likely be unstable. It is wide and massive at the bottom, and tall and upright on top.



We've been encouraged (by Justin Stone, and hopefully by our teachers) to do TCC movements in a low stance, and with the feet an appropriate width apart. While older people might have limited knee bend, if they do TCC too tall and with too narrow a stance, they will feel wobbly. For that reason when teaching seniors, I practice with them holding onto the back of a chair (alongside of them) with one hand, placing all the weight on one leg, and then noticing that if they can bend that knee just a little more, then the foot/heel will touch down just a bit further away. (Then we turn around, and reverse with the other foot, holding on with the opposite hand). Once the correct stance is discovered, the lesson is in staying low to remain secure and grounded.

**It's wise to never take your stance for granted.** Experiment with different heights and lengths/widths of stance in a movement and *feel* the difference. Then you'll always be ready for anything, and not likely to be knocked off your feet.

## According with Impermanence (aka Adapting to Change)

By Pam Towne, Oceanside, California

**Justin Stone spoke often of the importance** of "according with impermanence." To me this has come to mean making peace with the fact that in the external world, the only constant is change, and learning how to adapt to it. My T'ai Chi Chih practice and especially Seijaku have served me well in dealing with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Two weeks into the shutdown, it became apparent that it was not going to end anytime soon, and that if I wanted to be part of the solution instead of the problem, I needed to teach TCC online.

That was easier said than done. It required setting up a new computer and router, getting a Zoom account, and persistently calling my internet service provider until they corrected the problem causing my internet to drop while teaching on Zoom.

Most of all it required my willingness to adapt, to step outside my comfort zone into technology and learn how to teach on Zoom. I started with a weekly practice for my ongoing students, then added a class for beginners.

These gave me the confidence to adapt the annual TCC springtime retreat in Prescott, Arizona, to an online Zoom retreat. I called it a TCC Virtual Retreat, but now know that is a misnomer. It was an actual retreat, in the safety and comfort of our own homes, with technology to connect us.

The *Chi* operates outside of time and space, so is not limited by them. This proved to be true as we practiced TCC together over four days and felt very connected. We felt a stronger flow of *Chi* than when practicing alone.

By connecting my computer to a big TV with an HDMI cable and having attendees turn sideways to the camera at times, I saw everyone well enough to offer individual feedback while we were moving. That was important since there were six teacher candidates who especially wanted feedback.

The toughest was getting used to the mirror image on the screen. That and all the moving images was mind boggling at first. I felt more tired than usual and slept 10 hours a night on the retreat, also unusual. Yet for several days afterward, I felt full of energy and exhilarated at what we had accomplished with our first online TCC retreat. It will not be the last.

## Zoom from a Teacher's Perspective

By Lorraine Lepine, Prairie Village, Kansas  
taichichih.org/teacher/lorraine-lepine

**I have been doing a daily Zoom T'ai Chi Chih Practice and Guided Meditation** since March 2020. The experience has no words. It only has the experience from deep within of flowing from the center easily, naturally, in connection with everyone over the wave of the Internet.

The *Chi* is the true teacher. No one is doing the teaching, no one is correcting, no one is doing the practice. TCC is the master of all the grace that is happening within, through and around us.

We are blessed to live in this electronic time, connecting at an energetic level, a wave of the life force energy flowing from us toward the whole universe and back to us, especially through the heart.

The words of Justin Stone at the beginning of each TCC practice bring both dimensions (how to and what to) into TCC. The physical and spiritual are emmeshed without separation. You can see in the eyes of everyone the gentle daily transformation that the circulation and balancing of the *Chi* brings.

By March 29th, I realized that I am learning to let go of resistance in my body, at a deeper level by expanding my bones, muscles and mind, giving space for the *Chi* to flow and fill me up, transform me. On that day I wrote: "When there is chaos, we need to go deeper inside to find the softness, the peace, the joy that lie dormant within us."

As the host, I am aware of the higher-self to higher-self communicating words as if whispering into their ears: softness, less arms, gentle, waist turning, looking ahead, going within, sinking deeper within, letting go, releasing resistance and tension, continuity, doing a full weight shift, connecting with the earth, bringing your awareness here and now, merging with the *Chi*, allowing, listening deeply. Was this communicated through the *Chi* without words? Or did the words, as intention, fly from me to them as a wave? Was the *Chi* moving us or were we moving the *Chi* and the words with it?

**This TCC experience without words must be communicated somehow.** I come out of my silence as if sharing an incredible secret about how to increase our energy, how to feel whole and so good, how to connect with our inner wisdom and listen within our stillness, our silence. This is a transformative experience in the depth of our being.

I am feeling so rich, so filled with love energy, with Joy and with gratitude for TCC and the possibility to share the *Chi* with others even when confined within the intimacy of my own home. Through this new way of communicating, teaching and of being, are we reaching new heights of consciousness?

## Zoom from a Student's Perspective

By Mary Kay Chavez,  
Wichita, Kansas

**I had the delightful opportunity** to experience T'ai Chi Chih via Zoom by my instructor, Lorraine Lepine. I am so appreciative because I live three hours from her. Last fall, I began my relationship with Lorraine in order to become an accredited teacher. We met a couple of times and tried some Facetime sessions. Zoom has been transformational. Largely this is due to control, versatility and frequency.

My personal experience of the *Chi* has grown exponentially because of a daily practice. I have found it too easy to skip practice when I am on my own, but when I am practicing with a group (even a remote group), my practice is more frequent and consistent. I can also control the experience by choosing who I want to see and hear by using the camera and microphone options. It's nice to see other participants. When we do Working the Pulley, it feels as if we are energetically connecting in a way not achieved by standing side by side. Lastly, the versatility: I have practiced in my bedroom, office, outdoors, at my daughter's house, in another city. All I need is my mobile device. I can count on Lorraine and my fellow participants to be there virtually and in spirit. I am very thankful for how the *Chi* has deepened via technology and Lorraine's generosity.

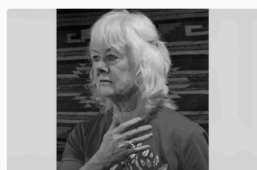


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## COVID-19 & TCC-Induced Change

By Sue Bitney, Bloomington, Minnesota  
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**In my 18 years of practicing** T'ai Chi Chih and 15 of teaching, I have become more flexible physically and in my thinking. I have needed to adapt and change because of situations beyond my control. TCC helped me change and respond to new realities. I was not aware of the changes until I reflected on how I responded to a current situation and compared that to how I'd responded to similar things in the past.

This COVID-19 pandemic has caused major changes in all of our lives. What I noticed most? The quiet. Planes were grounded, car traffic was reduced and construction where I live diminished. Birds filled the air with inspiring songs. The quiet and isolation has given me time to deepen my practice and to reflect on how TCC has changed me, how I relate to the world around me. I've challenged myself to stretch and let go of fears, trusting that I can expand my experiences. Because of my students' desire to stay together, I learned how to use Zoom and now teach class on Wednesday night and lead practice on Monday afternoons. I love joining Sandy and all of the teachers on Zoom, being inspired and growing in my teaching skills.

My students have encouraged me to offer a physically distanced TCC practice at Lake Harriet. Large pinwheels mark the 6-foot distance between us so we can practice together while remaining safe. We wear masks and come together every Saturday morning. TCC practice is consistent, comforting and gives us the strength to get through these challenging times.



## “Have you Done TCC Today? Once or Twice?”

By Jim Hecker, Corrales, New Mexico

**It's been ten years** since I've written for *The Vital Force*, but that does not mean T'ai Chi Chih has not been an integral part of my daily life. I am a cradle-to-grave Catholic, but my path includes TCC in a major way. **Often when I talked at length with Justin, he would first ask: “Have you done T'ai Chi Chih today?”** Always the answer was yes. His next question would be: “Once or twice?” He smiled when I responded “twice,” but if I said “once,” he would give me that look from under his eyebrows as if to simply say okay. That disappointed look stuck with me. Often in the evening instead of sitting in my backyard lounge chair and meditating on the mountain and the city before me, I would hear that little voice: “Have you done TCC today? Once or twice?”

I am now in my seventies and twice a day is not always an option. Sometimes I get up and start, sometimes not so much. Yet Justin's voice is still there, as are my thoughts as I look over the mountain: the movements, the movement of energy, then no thought, just energy, just the universe. Justin taught me to think that way. **He taught me to see the Universe in the movements.** Pulling in the Energy, not from some far-off home planet, but from all that is, has been or will be.

Now for the lighter side. I sometimes asked Justin questions because I became frustrated and just needed an answer. He never once refused. The answers often stupefied me, or they would cause a soulful laugh. Having practiced combat martial arts and T'ai Chi Ch'uan, I had never experienced a form that required movement repetition until TCC. So, I asked Justin, Why the repetitions and why nine? He answered, “If you do nine of any of the movements, you may get one right.” I laughed so hard he ended the session and told me to go home.

Thank you all for keeping TCC alive and well since Justin's passing. I miss him dearly and needed him at times. However, the practice and hearing Justin's voice have never ended for this teacher. Do the form sisters and brothers. Do it twice and make Justin smile.

## Finding Our Footing in a Time of Turmoil

By Rick Davis, Tulsa, Oklahoma

**A pandemic has altered** our ability to act and interact, and we have witnessed civil unrest, which will hopefully lead to cultural awareness and societal change and growth. Add whatever troubling news may hit your day, and we are left unsettled, uncertain and off-balance. During times like this it is essential to find our emotional footing.

There is no better way than through T'ai Chi Chih. From the opening, gentle rhythms of Rocking Motion, our focused attentiveness to the movement of the *Chi* at the soles of the feet, the "Bubbling Spring," grounds us into the firm bedrock of all life: the essence. As practitioners, we experience the extension of our rhythm echoed in the practitioners around us – even using correct social distancing – and experience a kind of release into a larger shared movement and grounding, a balancing of the universal energy. Our self-focus melts away as we surrender into a larger, gentle rhythm. It is here we experience that one no longer is doing TCC, but TCC is doing TCC.

**Justin wrote that you can chase your shadow all day long and never catch it. But if you stand still under the noon day sun your shadow will merge with the body with no effort.** This is the effort of no effort, and it strikes me that much of our practice of TCC is to find that place of effortless stillness that essentially engages all things. To find a firm footing is to stand effortlessly in that place of the "noonday sun" in movement and stillness.

Finding our footing is not about chasing after pat answers, much like grasping for dollar bills in a carnival cage. These quick fix answers are so often this world's moving shadows. Rather, it is about finding that place of authentic stillness; that place that moves without moving with a consistent permanence.

"Properly seen, every incident in life points to the unseen Essence." Justin wrote in *Spiritual Odyssey*. This is what it is like to look above the churned-up dust of the moment toward the solid horizon. The mystic Mechthild of Magdeburg wrote in the 13th Century about growth in her spiritual life: "*The day of my spiritual awakening was the day I saw and knew I saw all things in God and God in all things...*" It was for her a window-lens through which she gazed upon a troubled and difficult world, and stood her ground with a firm and balanced stance, held in the stillness of an unshakable confidence.



## Serendipitous Discovery of TCC

By Rick Davis, Tulsa, Oklahoma

**I awoke suddenly** in the darkness of early morning with a pain in my chest. As I turned to get more comfortable, I was touched with a whisper of fear: *What if this is it? Would I see the next day?* I remembered that moment the next night while walking the neighborhood under a bluing sky. And I realized I was still here. Now. Walking.

Remembering the question, I chose to claim the gentle voice of trust. I offered a little word of gratitude: for the sun, the blue of sky and the paint-brush wisp of white clouds, for cool air upon my cheek and in my breath, for my wife and family.

I stepped forward and felt the smooth shift of my weight as my front heel touched, rolling down upon the whole sole; noticing as if everything had slowed down; noticing the weight drain from my back leg into the sole of my forward foot and leg until the process was repeated on the right side, then again on the left.

I felt the smooth, organic balance of my body in constant, gentle movement; my arms swinging gently at my side as I released my shoulders' tension and let them fall, relaxed. I found that bubbling feeling of the soles of my feet in rolling engagement with the earth, each step grounded, connected, released, regained; **realizing my walk had become a TCC moment of moving devotion caught up in the "now."** I felt peace and gratitude.

A harrowing voice of fear hungers to yank us from the gift being given in each touch of presence. Trusting yourself in each moment's

embrace is where we begin to show up. In the present we find our own voice of gratitude, our own *Chi*, to sing into that moment. In finding that gratitude we embrace an essential part of our TCC practice: awareness – that flow of energy within, waiting to be encountered in the now, a serendipitous discovery of the value of the practice.

**Where in the World** —  
*Rasta Savta, Bird Flaps its Wings, Bali, Indonesia*

# Shadow Practice Revisited

By Dorene Krause, Midland Park, New Jersey

**It is quiet here** in the open area behind our local high school. The numerous ball fields, tennis courts and grassy areas are deserted. The playground and track are closed, picnic tables abandoned. It is spring, baseball season. Sadly there is no activity ... no baseball games or track meets or tennis matches, no spectators, no children squealing with delight on the jungle gym or the slide. Even the birds chirp quietly, and squirrels scamper on the ground with a hush.

## What Would My Life Be Like If ...

By Linda Minor, Forest Grove, Oregon

**What would my life be like if T'ai Chi Chih hadn't found me?** I try to imagine. More stress? More illness? Ungrateful for the good things in my life? Unable to cope with change? Holding onto resentments? What exactly is the opposite of a I-filled, joyous life? Maybe I would have found something else that would have calmed me and energized me at the same time. Maybe a different practice would have made me slow down and appreciate the miracle of life. Maybe on my own, I would have discovered how to live a life filled with gratitude and positive energy.

But I don't think so. **The fact is, T'ai Chi Chih did find me; and when I entered into this relationship, my life began to change little by little.** And so it continues, as I become who I was meant to be all along. I have a deep contentment, along with an unshakable faith that all will be well. Now that I am a teacher, I have been entrusted with passing along this incredible gift from Justin Stone. I am sobered by the responsibility and I realize how lucky I am to share the most important thing in my life. I watch the faces of my students as they repeat the movements, gaining confidence and beginning to relax. I wish for each of them a meaningful TCC journey, filled with a lifetime of discovery about themselves and the beauty in and around them.

I come here every day now and find it a refuge, a change of scenery from my home where I spend most of my time these days. I walk the pathways. I sit and reflect and write and practice T'ai Chi Chih. There is a peaceful feel here. I am a solitary being in a place of solitude.

Just the other day my practice became a profound experience; it was a shadow practice with myself. With my back to the sun, the sunlight cast my shadow on the concrete in front of me. It must have been the perfect time of day. I have experienced this before, but this day was different, maybe because the world is different right now.

**Senses and awareness heightened,** I was able to see and feel deeply every nuance, every gentle wrist turn and smooth weight shift, the ease with which my arms moved, the flow from the *t'an tien*. All of this was visible before me in my shadow. I especially noticed my hands, how the light shone between the shadow of my fingers while moving or in rest. I could feel and see softness in my slightly curved hands. I noticed the ease of my waist turning, the slightest movement of my shoulders moving with the waist and my slow gliding weight shift.

**And then I saw the most amazing picture silhouetted right in front of me.** For a brief moment I saw an upside-down heart appear when my hands formed and carried the ball. I saw this silhouette again when my hands came together at the height of Daughter in the Valley and once more in Light at the Top of the Head when my hands were above the crown of my head. It was a euphoric moment, and I felt it carried a message to me.

My shadow, now my partner, seemed to dance with me. I smiled, felt lighter, more grounded and not so isolated. I am especially grateful the sun came out that day, and it was perfectly positioned in the sky. I look forward to another shadow practice, another sunny day.



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## Notes on Movements Just Learned

Now you have learned the movements of T'ai Chi Chih. It is necessary to practice them regularly, not hard to do when you begin to realize how joyous such practice can be. Here are a few tips on what to remember as you do each movement:

**Rocking Motion** is a good way to loosen up and get the *Chi* to start flowing. Be sure the arms (fingers, wrists, elbows and shoulders) are loose. Keep the knees soft as you rock forward, and up and down, and back. Coming down, don't forget to land flat on the feet before lifting the toes; it is easier than rocking back on the heels. Do not raise the balls of the feet.

In **Bird Flaps its Wings**, when the arms are out to the side the third time, do the wrist circles with the wrists, not the arms, and be sure a complete circle is made each time. We flip the wrists to the side quickly but bring the arms and hands back together slowly. As the hands come together, the polarity of the palms facing each other is important, so do not rush bringing the hands together.

**Around the Platter** is done mostly with the wrists, starting at the chest. The hands are kept close together all through the movement. Be sure to settle down on a bent back leg as the weight shifts back and straighten the back leg (not stiff and tense, however) as the weight moves forward to a bent front leg. Do not do stiff-legged TCC! Observe the *yinning* and the *yanging*, the shifting of weight. Exaggerate it if necessary.

In **Around the Platter Variation**, be sure you carry a ball halfway around, then let it drop as the hands flatten out. Do not rush the back-swing; slowly and evenly is the right way.

In **Bass Drum** we imagine a big drum at the chest, and we circle under the bottom and around over the top. Hands are about a foot apart and the movement is done mostly with the wrists.

In **Daughter on the Mountaintop** we start low because we are going high. (Actually, the two hands cross at about chin level.) The right-hand crosses outside the left hand no matter which foot is stretched forward. After the two wrists cross, do not point the fingers down but bring the cocked wrists downward with the fingers still pointing up until the very last moment, and then relax the wrists completely, and allow the fingers to point down as the wrists separate.

In **Daughter in the Valley** we start high as we are going to go low. The hands swing in a half-circle, then start up with the palms facing each other, only a few inches apart. This slow rise of the hands as they come up is all-important because of the polarity caused by the palms facing each other. We are still shifting the weight forward until the hands begin to pull apart at the top of the arc. Do not begin to shift the weight backward before the top of the arc is reached.

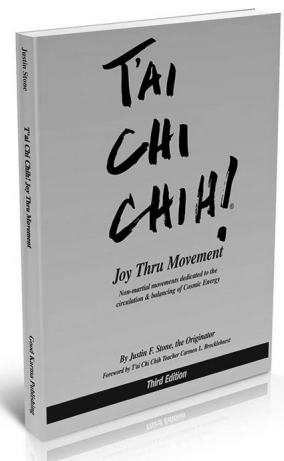
**Carry the Ball to the Side** has several important points to remember. First of all, we have our hands cupped on the sides of the ball, and the ball is curved (so the knuckles are soft). As we move to the left and do an under-swing just below waist level, we slightly emphasize the right hand, but there is no emphasis as we swing up and over back to the right. Similarly, when we later step to the right, the left hand is slightly emphasized to balance the positive leg (bent with the weight on it). As we come up and over, moving the hands back to the left, there is no emphasis.

**Push Pull** is done with slight emphasis on the right hand as the left leg is forward. The emphasis is on the left hand when the right leg is forward. Remember that we push out and just slightly downward going forward, then turn our hands up and come up and over slightly as the weight shifts to the back leg. Do not push hard. Keep your fingers pointing upward as you push forward.

**Pulling in the Energy** is done with the palms facing upward, and, as we move the hands in a circle (as we did in "Around the Platter"), we visualize the energy coming into the fingertips from the most distant star. This is a simplification of imagining the five colored Pranas (*Chi*) coming in through the fingertips. In India it is felt that there are five major functions of the Intrinsic Energy, called *Prana*, and each one has a representative color. It is not necessary to know this; just use the energy from the stars.



Excerpt from the "T'ai Chi Chih Photo Text"  
available in print and in an e-book  
from [justinstonetcc.com](http://justinstonetcc.com).



Dear Jerry,

I was greatly surprised to receive your book and thank you for sending it. Except for scanning it briefly I have not begun to read the contents (it arrived today), but I look forward to doing so.

Long before I lived with the Yogis in the Himalayas and Zen monks in Japan, I realized that neither the psychological nor the intellectual can be of help. The metabolism must change, and I have found nothing but working with the Chi that will make such a change. Recently I have received a letter from the staff psychologist at Folsom prison to the effect that Recidivism (return to prison), which is normally 80% at that prison has proved to be about 0% for those prisoners who have practised T'ai Chi Chih (we have trained a very good teacher who is a prisoner there) and then been released from prison. In other words, circulation and balancing of the Chi has done away with the criminal behaviour, something that has never been accomplished thru talk by psychologists, etc.. All the words in the world from Jungian practitioners won't change anything. The intellect plays no part in all this, and all the theorizing has offered nothing. So often I have seen teachers who had abused drugs or become chain smokers where these habits left them voluntarily. All the talk by analysts, who tell their patients what drink is doing to their lives (they are aware of this) has meant nothing in the long run. Chi (called "the life force" or "the vital force") is the building block of all life. When it is out of balance or not circulating, the life goes haywire.

Because of the importance of all this, I have never taken a cent from a teacher (though much has been offered). I do not want TCC to be thought of as a business, nor an organisation.

I am glad you are a teacher and would be pleased to hear of your teaching experiences.

Hope we get a chance to meet. Again, thanks.

Justin F. Stone

*Justin*

Please send JPGs of typed postcards from Justin to share.

(Thanks to Hannah Hedrick, who shared this idea at the Minneapolis conference 2019.)

*At Left: Justin was well-known for his typed personal notes to teachers and students. This is to Jerry Jonnson (taichih.org/teacher/jerry-jonnson/), sent in December 2001.*



*Justin with Lois Binford, circa 1960s.*



*Above left: Justin with Sri Dadubhai Patel at the TCC Center in Albuquerque, circa 1990s.*



*Above right: Justin with his artist friend Hilda Pertha, Mendicino, California, circa 1970s.*

# We're Not Sitting Around

By Jeannette Stotts, Pittsburg, California



**I want to share with teachers my gratitude.** I organized T'ai Chi Chih classes several years ago to give area seniors a way of getting exercise, companionship and peace in their life – without costing much. With this COVID-19 shelter-in-place, I thought it would be impossible to reach out to our students. But with Zoom, about twenty students tune in every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We're missing half the class that we had at the center due to the lack of technology.

Our teacher, Benjamin Brisjar, asks a student to read aloud from Spiritual Odyssey to start each class. He then puts on a video of Carmen and Justin to share their movements. Before and after class, Benjamin also gives us an opportunity to chat with each other. We phone the others to encourage practicing. I'm very grateful to Justin, Carmen and all who have given their time to us. During COVID-19 we're not sitting around watching TV, feeling lonely, with our bodies breaking down.

# New Teacher Directory Is Like a Reunion

By Lisa Otero, Port Hueneme, California

**I was happy to help** in early March when Kim Grant asked me to be the first TCC teacher to post a listing on the new online teacher directory on taichichih.org and to help test it before launch. After we did, Kim spread the word to encourage other teachers, and I promised to return soon to polish and expand my listing. I am an active teacher and was looking forward to promoting my classes with this fabulous new outreach tool. Then COVID-19 hit and I kinda forgot about it.

When Kim alerted me recently that almost 90 teachers had claimed their listings and posted fun photos and interesting bios, I logged onto taichichih.org/teacher/teacher/featuring/. **It was like arriving at our teacher conference.** My thoughts went like this: "Oh, look! There's Nancy Jo from Alaska! And Sue Kenney! I met her and her student, soon to be teacher, George, at a Santa Barbara Intensive! And Marc, what a nice man! And my friends in Northern Colorado! Wow! That's fun photo of Barbara Kristoff! I'd like to take classes with her! Oh, and look, our lovely teachers in England!..." **What a much-welcomed, heart-warming reunion with you all!** Thanks to everyone who has joined (\$10 or \$40) and to those of you who haven't yet, please join us! I invite you all to our reunion.



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**Sherry Corson**

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 Beginner Classes  
 Elderly  
 Veterans  
 Cancer Patients  
 Phone: (218) 760-5154



**Lorraine Lepine**

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 Teaching specialties:  
 Ongoing Classes  
 Beginner Classes  
 Elderly  
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 Teaches remotely: Yes

## Savoring the Transitions

By Dixie Adeniran, Arroyo Grande, California,  
taichichih.org/teacher/dixie-adeniran

*Editor's Note: During the COVID-19 lockdown the desire to explore the TCC transitions came to Dixie. The submission is about her joyous journey.*

### THE TRANSITIONS

Do you remember being a kid and pumping your legs on the swing until you were going high, high, high? Do you remember that delicious, weightless moment after the ascent and before the descent when, **as the momentum turned, time seemed to be suspended?** That was the transition. It is also the transition in T'ai Chi Chih: those moments of suspension where momentum gathers and turns, after the weight has moved fully in one direction, and before it begins moving in the other direction.

...**CONTINUITY** [is] the Essence

As a new student, I didn't understand the transitions. I wanted to speed up to get it done, and move on to the weight shift, which seemed more important. My teacher kept talking about continuity and quoting Justin, "...continuity...[is] the Essence," and like "moving slow motion in a dream." Her patient demonstration of **equal speed** through all portions of a movement helped me do it right, but I still wasn't getting it. Over time, as my practice matured, I realized that *the weight shifts and the transitions take equal amounts of time and are equally important.* Greater flow of *Chi* is the gift.

**AWARENESS** is the root

COVID-19 brought solitude and desire to further explore the transitions. Awareness opened to every nuance that revealed itself.

**CIRCULARITY** is the fundamental

**Forward and back weight shifts** with the arms/hands moving in circles parallel to the ground got my first attention: Around the Platter, Around the Platter Variation, Pulling in the Energy. Early on, my teacher said that she sometimes thought of the circles made by the hands/arms *as squares with rounded corners.* This helped me feel the movement as completely integrated, but still with four parts: forward, across the body, back and again across the body. **Those across the body parts were the transitions.**

Then **side to side weight shifts** with the *arms/hands moving in circles vertical to the ground* caught me: Carry the Ball to the Side and Passing Clouds. The *tan t'ien* shifts the weight fully to one side, including moving the forearms/hands across the body. When fully on that side, **the momentum consolidates and turns while the forearms/hands move up or down the side. That is the transition.**

What about the other movements? More insight. More savoring.

### COSMIC RHYTHM

Finding the essence of the transitions is unlocking the flow, the Cosmic Rhythm. **The transitions feel savory, juicy and full of potential.** Gratitude to Justin and to all my teachers.

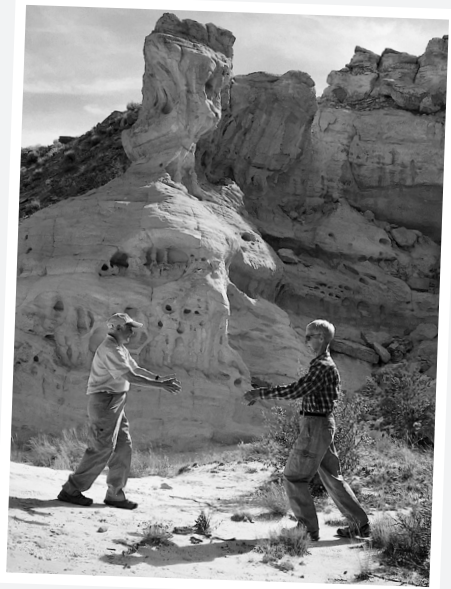
## Seijaku — Because It Is Freeing

By Shari Holmes, Albuquerque, New Mexico

**In Carmen's Seijaku class** earlier this year (remember when we could leave our homes and go to classes?), she asked us each to give a word that describes Seijaku. I said, "Freeing." Carmen then asked me to clarify what I meant. (No free rides here.) Here's what I mean:

Most of the Seijaku movements include a strong phase, followed by a soft phase. When the tension of the strong phase is released, and the hands and arms become soft, like the effortless softness of T'ai Chi Chih, there is a wonderful release, or let-go. This release is very freeing.

We perform "three, three and three" during Seijaku: three soft TCC-style repetitions followed by three Seijaku-style strong/soft reps, and we end with three Fast Track repetitions. We feel an extremely strong let-go as we hop briskly from Seijaku to Fast Track. Doing Fast Track is like experiencing childhood again. We can't help smiling or even laughing. We are free! We feel lightness, brightness, joy. What is more freeing than childlike joy?



*Where in the World ~ Partner practice, Therese Bonin with Shari Holmes, Bass Drum, Ojito Wilderness, NM*

## Creativity, Creativity, Creativity

By Paula Weiner, Chicago, Illinois

*Editor's Note: Huge thanks to Hannah Hedrick and Howard Mogil who gracefully enticed this from Paula. As Howard wrote: "When I asked Paula about doing T'ai Chi Chih in her mind as she rode her stationary cycle, she said she does sometimes, and that she also does when she hears of Hannah and the famous dancer Maria Tallchief. Apparently remembering them stimulates her memories in this healthy and very satisfying way."*

Dear Kim, I so appreciate everything you have done for T'ai Chi Chih. Although I cannot access the many new services you provide electronically, I treasure my memories of my interactions with fellow TCC students and teachers.

I am grateful to have worked with both Steve Ridley and Ed Altman at conferences and teacher accreditation courses. My beloved teacher, Hannah Hedrick, and I met at The New York in Chicago, where Hannah was teaching a class that I attended.

As I have said in *The Vital Force*, at annual conferences and directly in conversations with Justin, TCC saved my life. I was amazed at the many opportunities I had to teach, including at the Field Museum, for arthritis organizations, at nursing homes, you name it. Along with my artwork, TCC was my primary avenue to serve others. There continues to be a direct connection between the energy I learned to circulate through TCC and my continued creativity.

When I think about Hannah, Maria Tallchief (a committed TCC student) and my interactions with everyone from Steve and Ed to you and the women who became TCC guides and teacher accreditors, I feel a flow of energy that motivates me to engage in some kind of artistic activity.

I am wondering if other TCC students and teachers experience this connection?

**I felt it more strongly when I could do standing TCC, but all I have to do is think about TCC and our amazing community, and I feel the flow.** It then manifests in everything I do.

As Hannah has said in several of her articles in *The Vital Force*, TCC is really a part of everything I do. In the beginning I did not understand this, but I eventually began to feel that energetic connection, as Charles Sasan described it in his article in the May *Vital Force*.

Again, thanks for all you do in maintaining and expanding our amazing TCC community.



## An Open Letter to TCC Teachers

By Diana Daffner, Siesta Key, Florida

### So, what is it that we do as T'ai Chi Chih teachers?

We re-introduce 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, holding the space for them to enter, *as we, too, enter into this space we hold, and become nourished and healed by the Love.*

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.*

Is it any wonder that teaching TCC is such a joyous practice? Whether we have one student or many, our sharing of these movements and this spirit is work of the highest order. We always teach what we must learn, and as it is said in the Course in Miracles, *"Teach only Love, for that is what you are."*



## TCC Comes to Rockland, New York

By Oreann Kempadoo, Rockland, New York

**It was the summer of 2012** when I discovered the beauty and power of T'ai Chi Chih. As a beginner, I was intrigued by the fluid movements and natural rhythm. I dedicated the next four years to immersing myself in the study of TCC. Given the unavailability of teachers in Rockland County, New York, I traveled to New Jersey and beyond to learn and practice. After studying and practicing TCC, I proudly became an accredited instructor in 2015.

I was eager to introduce TCC in Rockland County, with a population of more than 350,000 residents. However, it was readily apparent that this would be a lofty task, introducing and sustaining the community's interest in TCC. Just when I thought I had exhausted all avenues, I received a call from the director of an adult learning center, requesting a meeting. A student who'd attended one of my free demonstrations was impressed with the movements and the feeling of peace and renewal. The student advocated for the program with the director. I am proud to share and teach TCC in the Rockland community.

Through my teaching I have met many wonderful students. Here are some of their stories:

### ~ Student Testimonial by Molly Black:

I decided to take TCC because I'm 59 years old and was once in great physical shape. I owned/show jumped my horse, fenced, took Taekwondo. I loved to ice skate, roller skate and go on mild amusement park rides.

Several years ago, I fell off of a porch and landed on the left side of my head, on a driveway. I was unconscious for an uncertain amount of time, and upon awakening was temporarily paralyzed. After six months at Kessler, two C-spine surgeries, physical therapy, occupational therapy and other modalities, my life drastically changed.

**I am now held together with metal plates and screws** in the front and back of my neck. I look great on the outside but many functions we take for granted internally no longer work for me. My brain is damaged and without medication I overflow with depression, rage and frustration.

I needed an activity to help my mind focus on calm. I needed an activity to regain physical balance and find inner balance. An activity to work my entire body in a constant and fluid motion.

I joined TCC with trepidation as I do now with most things. At first, I was stiff. I constantly felt my ankles and knees. Oreann is soft-spoken, knowledgeable and welcoming; her presence helped me feel more comfortable with each passing week. Her mantra of positive affirmations remained with me well beyond the class.

After eight weeks you will know how to do the movements but with practice and dedication you will begin to experience the "why" of the movements. If you can let yourself go slowly and fully, the energy we have within is released and moves freely within your body without opposition. I recommend taking TCC to everyone.

### ~ Student Testimonial by Susan & Alan:

My wife and I truly enjoyed the TCC class with Oreann, an excellent teacher who knows her subject well and makes it a fun experience at the same time. The TCC movements helped us a lot with relaxation, balance and mindfulness. Classes also helped my wife better manage a medical condition.

### ~ Student Testimonial by Laina Leckie:

From the first moment that I saw the TCC movements in my first class with Oreann, I knew I had found the perfect form of meditation. Having been told by my family that I rocked and often sang in my crib as a child to self-soothe, the flowing and

repetitive movements of TCC resonated deep within me. I immediately felt I was home. The motions help me feel connected to my body and the energy around me very quickly, contrary to the slow process of calming my mind during sitting meditation. Our intermediate class has presented another level of powerful connection – with others, as we move in a beautiful circle, side-to-side, in and out. We are wonderfully led by Oreann, our perfect spiritual guide. I am so grateful. I move in the world in a calmer, more deliberate way because of TCC.



### *Where in the World*

*Lanni Lantery, Around the Platter,  
Burning Man Exhibit,  
Cincinnati Art Museum, OH*

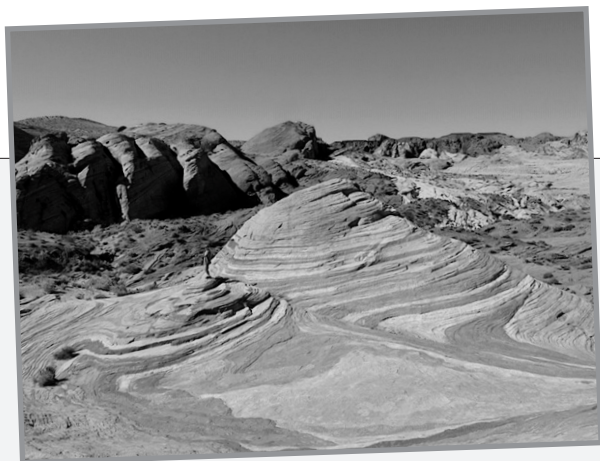
## Talking in the Forest

By Doriane Tippet, Fort Collins, Colorado  
[taichichih.org/teacher/doriane-tippet/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/doriane-tippet/)

**Did you know that trees talk to each other?** This happens in a forest, not at the treetops, but through the roots. They converse to help each other sustain and grow. The mycelium colonizes the roots of all the trees and plants in the forest to connect them, just like the Internet connects all of us.

**T'ai Chi Chih is like a forest of trees.** We help each other sustain and grow. In a forest the hub or mother trees are the wisest. In our TCC community we have lots of hub trees: in Northern Colorado, we have a number of TCC teachers who take leadership responsibilities and nurture and teach us. When one of us has a weakness or is struggling, they, like the trees, give us more help and strength, so we will grow to be stronger learners.

As a single tree, a student is vulnerable to everything, but as a forest of trees, students have the protection and guidance of all the hub trees. As a seedling, I was withdrawn and weak, but I had potential. TCC has been my little forest: it has made me stronger, brought joy to my life, and given me a practice that relaxes my monkey-mind and a movement I can do even when in physical pain. I stick to my roots, but I have branched-out too. Thank you to the TCC community of Northern Colorado that continues to nurture me.



## Moving & Flowing with COVID-19

By Terry Johnson, Windsor, Colorado  
[taichichih.org/teacher/terry-johnson/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/terry-johnson/)

**April Fool's Day 2020** was when this newly accredited teacher set out to teach her first T'ai Chi Chih class. Was I excited? Yes. Was I prepared? You bet. Did everything get cancelled because of COVID-19? Without a doubt.

I had taken couple of weeks off from my volunteer work to prepare for the class. On St. Patrick's Day, I stopped by the food bank to drop off some treats for the staff and fellow volunteers. They were extremely busy, so I donned my green apron and got to work helping them. I later learned that in March because of COVID-19, there was a 53% increase in individuals and 63% increase in children seeking help from our local food bank. The community stepped up to help. People bagged food, loaded carts and cars, made deliveries and cleaned. At first it seemed like rules changed hourly; the air was heavy with tension. I've learned you need to go with the flow. I know how to move through heavy air and flow (from my center). It's what we TCC folks do. Mr. Rogers said, "When I was a boy and would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'" It's very true.

I'm not teaching right now, but I practice in the park with others. Recently, one of the food bank staff members joined us. She was going to be in my first class. The *Chi* guides you to where you need to be, without a doubt.

### *Where in the World*

*Sandy Roerig, Rocking Motion, Valley of Fire State Park, NV*

## Committing to Daily Practice

By Sandy Roerig, St George, Utah  
[taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-roerig/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-roerig/)

**In mid-November 2019** I visited my dear friend and fellow TCC teacher Lisa, who had recently moved to St George, Utah. That visit changed my life in two major ways. First, my husband and I decided that St George was where we wanted to live. We immediately put that decision into action. Two months later we had sold our house, bought another one and were living in our new hometown.

The second way that visit changed my life was that shortly after our decision to move I committed myself to a daily practice. I learned T'ai Chi Chih six years ago, became a teacher four years ago and now I am finally doing a daily TCC practice. Because of this, I have truly fallen in love with TCC. I literally feel something is missing if I haven't practiced by noon. Although I have subbed for other teachers and had the pleasure of helping prepare teacher candidates for accreditation, I had not felt a calling to teach new students. Even that has changed. **We now have beginning/ongoing classes twice a week (outdoors) with nice committed students.** I find that so rewarding.

## A Call to Diversify

By Sue Kenney, Carmichael, California  
[taichichih.org/teacher/sue-kenney/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/sue-kenney/)

**During COVID-19** when much of what we took for granted has been altered or questioned, T'ai Chi Chih has been a practice of stability. Justin's emphasis on being grounded has given us a way to settle ourselves amidst great uncertainty. Most of us were motivated to become teachers so that we could share TCC's benefits.

Many TCC teachers are white women of middle and older ages, which makes me wonder about its future. Will the next generation of teachers understand and appreciate the gift that Justin has given us? Will we continue to be a practice of white, middle-aged and older women? What would it take to offer this practice to young people, males, people of color? What are the consequences if we don't?

Each issue of *The Vital Force* has included articles by teachers who have created ways to overcome barriers of distance, disability and now COVID-19. I am confident that the collective creativity of the TCC community will meet this challenge.

### Some ideas for discussion:

- Schedule practice demonstrations at locations frequented by the groups we wish to reach, including community centers, churches, women's groups. Whenever possible, the TCC representatives should be similar to the group we want to reach.
- Create DVDs and YouTube instructional materials, using teachers of diverse backgrounds. Ask our members who are male, young or people of color to make themselves available.
- Create a group of mentors, available through Zoom or FaceTime to work with and encourage individuals who are learning and refining the practice.
- Assemble financial resources to underwrite diversification efforts.

I am sure there are other strategies, and I hope there are teachers who want to engage in this effort. We are living in a most unusual and challenging time. Such times are often times of great creativity. Let us take this moment and share the treasure that is TCC. Comments? Suggestions? Offers of support?

## Growing the UK TCC Community

By Lesley Nell, Oxfordshire, England  
[taichichih.org/teacher/lesley-nell/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/lesley-nell/)

**There are just seven** accredited teachers in the United Kingdom, and five of us were teaching live classes before the COVID-19 lockdown.

Laurin McDonald and I were taught by Tina Wells, who had set the intention of increasing the number of accredited teachers in the U.K. In March 2018, she achieved her goal, when Laurin and I were accredited in Aston, Pennsylvania. Tina has continued to inspire other students to prepare for accreditation; a few more candidates are working hard in the wings.

Lauren and I set about with beginning classes; Laurin has been teaching diverse groups in addition to the classes in Banbury, Oxfordshire, and nearby villages. Due to other commitments, I taught just three classes in villages outside Banbury. However, we were both determined to follow Tina's example to grow the U.K. community (and in Europe generally), so plans were incubating in late 2019, culminating in our Discovery Workshop. We held this in mid-March, just before our COVID-19 lockdown.



Laurin and I carefully considered our "ideal student," someone willing to stay the course and teach at the end of their journey. We concluded that a wellbeing coach or complementary therapist was most likely to recognise the value of T'ai Chi Chih and be interested in adding classes to their core business. We marketed our workshop to a health-based networking group of which we are members. Seven people attended our first workshop – two acupuncturists, a yoga teacher, a Pilates teacher, a reflexologist, a clinical psychologist in the National Health Service and a secondary school teacher. We intended to add more dates after Easter for the people who couldn't make the mid-March date, but ... COVID-19.

We worked on a take-away booklet for workshop attendees. It included information about the history of TCC, mission statements, benefits to health, how to add it to their core business and how to establish a daily home practice. We also included testimonials from accredited teachers – grateful thanks to April Leffler, Jessica Lewis, Tracy Gibbons and Tina Wells. At the end of the course attendees completed a feedback form, as this was a pilot course, and offered an opportunity for us to improve future workshops. The feedback was very positive and constructive, and we now have two interested in becoming teachers and three maybes.

Although we intended to continue with live, post-pandemic workshops, we have become so proficient at teaching on Zoom that maybe we just need to adapt the workshop for Zoom and continue our quest.

## To Charge or Not to Charge?

An exchange between Terry Jennings (Oahu) and Hannah Hedrick (Hawaii's Big Island)

**Terry Jennings:** I used to charge for classes and did a paid presentation for the Easter Seal staff last year. Before COVID-19, I was volunteer teaching at the Kaneohe Senior Center on Oahu. I feel T'ai Chi Chih is priceless and I have mixed feelings about just giving it away. Do you charge for your classes at the park or other places? Can you share your thoughts with me on this subject of whether to charge or not to charge?

**Hannah Hedrick:** I have never charged for any of my yoga or TCC classes for people with cancer, HIV AIDS, polio survivors or diabetics. I did get paid when I taught at health clubs, YMCA or other facilities that charged fees. When I have been part of larger events for community organizations like the arthritis foundation, I've gifted the donation back to the organization. When an event was supported by corporate sponsors, I kept the fee myself.

But I have always had a steady income because I worked a regular job and I now have social security. Otherwise, I would have made a sincere effort to derive adequate income from my classes. For some reason, except when I was teaching in the East Bank Club and other fancy facilities in Chicago, my classes attracted very low-income people or people with health problems or caretakers for others.

Just because TCC feels like a blessing to us does not mean we should not be charging for it. **Justin repeatedly said the servant is worthy of his hire.**

Please trust your own inner guidance. I encourage you to reach out and participate in events where they pay teachers and leaders a reasonable amount. I wish I had time to explore funding for a program that would pay for you, like the veteran's program. You appear to be in an exploratory, intuitive state and I believe you will receive guidance on how to manifest cosmic consciousness through TCC so that it has the greatest possible impact.

*Editor's Note: What are your thoughts and experiences with this?*

## Update from Hawaii's Big Island

By Hannah Hedrick, Mountain View, Hawaii

**My handful of students** continue to practice here in my yoga shed three times a week. We are mostly very reclusive and pretty much keep social distance, so we are not concerned about transmitting COVID-19. There is no hugging or touching, and in town all businesses require masks and people social distance. I am doing more T'ai Chi Chih than ever while waiting outside to enter businesses that are keeping indoor customers to a minimum. Hawaii has one of the lowest infection rates and no deaths.

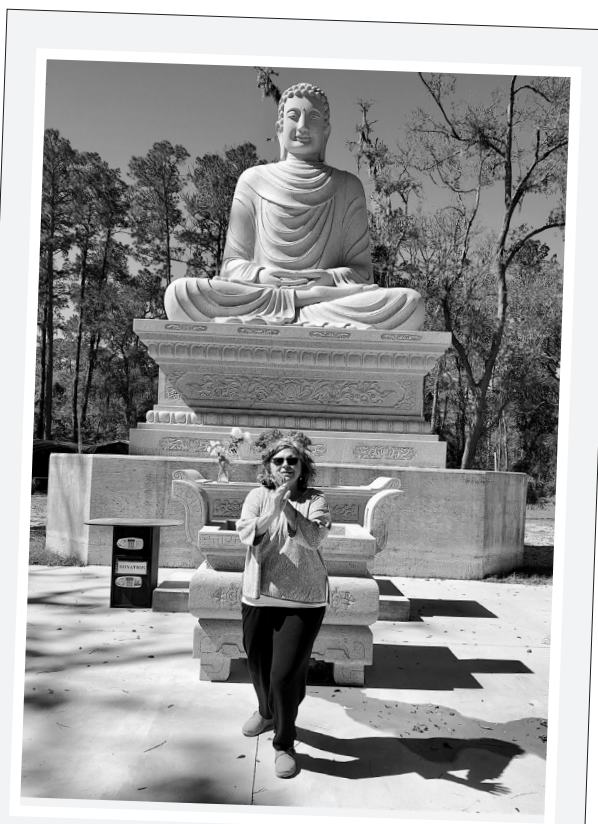
I no longer teach my downtown classes, but I am doing some private sessions for people with cancer, double mastectomies, deep vein thrombosis, etc. One is the woman who hooked me up eight years ago with recently released offenders who were so enthusiastic about TCC.

I am also spending time with a fellow community organizer with whom I worked for two decades. I saw her a few months ago and

was very surprised to learn that she had end-stage cancer. She was in resident hospice but has now moved back to her little town of Pahoa, a 40-minute drive from here. I do a little body and energy work on her.

COVID-19 has interrupted the new class I was conducting with Easter Seal staff and Down Syndrome program participants. About seven of them were coming to my Monday class at the park and I was scheduled to offer a class at their facility just as we went into lockdown here. Social distancing and wearing masks are very compatible with TCC, especially since we can do classes outside year-round here.

**I am so grateful for TCC because** it has added so much to the quality of my life, not just because of the benefits of the practice, but because of the wonderful people I have met at every stage during the past 35 years.



*Where in the World*  
Annette McNeil,  
Daughter on the Mountaintop,  
Gainesville, FL

## Justin Proud!

By Lynne Roberts, Missoula, Montana  
[taichichih.org/teacher/lynne-roberts](http://taichichih.org/teacher/lynne-roberts)

**I am not enthusiastic** about writing. As I think over and over again about what to say, I hear you thinking: “Lynne, get up and do some T’ai Chi Chih.” At least, that’s the first thing Justin would have told me. After a Seijaku practice and Sandy’s Zoom practice this morning, don’t you think that would bring forth a great article? We shall see.

Over the past three decades I have taught several classes weekly. My last week of six regularly scheduled TCC classes came to a close on March 13th here in Missoula, Montana due to COVID-19. The abrupt halt felt like a great loss of a way of life. Then the awareness of online Zoom teacher practices gave me a huge boost, a new way forward for a COVID-19 life. As of this writing, I have returned to teaching two of six weekly classes.

Thank you to Monica Cejudo, Jessica Lewis, Lisa Stroyan, Janet Starr, Margery Erickson, Anita Vestal, Becky Shinas and Albuquerque teachers. Over the last four months I have experienced a practice or several with each of you (and those who have led during teacher’s circle and rotating practices). **I continue to be grateful for COVID-19 Zoom practices.** I have donated to all of our much-needed and appreciated TCC fund on behalf of each of you.

I so appreciate Sandy’s Tuesday morning practices and guidance, a perfect fill-in for our missing annual conference. Wow, and on a weekly basis! And I appreciate Pam’s ongoing TCC support. Justin proud! In sincere gratitude and blessings all around.



## Ode to Strong Women

By Margery Erickson, Hanover, Pennsylvania  
[taichichih.org/teacher/margery-erickson](http://taichichih.org/teacher/margery-erickson)

Where have all the STRONG women gone?  
 Imprisoned in their homes  
 Paralyzed by fear alone  
 When will they ever return?  
 When will they ever return?  
 Exposing themselves  
 To unknown predators  
 Not even family or friends are close  
 When will they once again return  
 Marching forward, no enemies in sight  
 Fearless, proud, united and free  
 From those invisible attackers  
 Once again, STRONG again  
 When will they ever return?  
 When will they ever return?  
 And some will never return....

## We Are All Connected

By Julie Anongos, Monterey, California

At times I’ve heard myself say I wish I had met Justin Stone, as my discovery of T’ai Chi Chih did not occur until 2013. When I first heard stories about Justin from other teachers who were his direct students, I experienced feelings of loss. I don’t know exactly when these feelings changed, but I do know they changed, in large part, because of the influence of four of **my students – Ellen, Bob, Ann and Fred – all of whom knew Justin when he lived on the Monterey Peninsula in California in the early 1970s.**

When Justin needed a place to teach, Ellen’s husband, Donald, cleared out his Carmel gallery for Justin’s classes. Ellen became one of Justin’s first students and continues to practice to this day, more than 50 years later.

Bob attempted TCC at that time and decided it wasn’t for him. Instead, he and Justin became friends, sharing their mutual interest in the stock market. Now in his 80’s, Bob has taken up TCC. When I see him in our circle, my heart literally melts. He is a gentle soul flowing peacefully.

Ann and Fred were also Justin’s students at the Carmel gallery. I was so excited when Ann shared her TCC Photo Text with me from that period. It was interesting to see how the practice has evolved. Her husband, Fred, has also taken up TCC again and is so enthusiastic. It’s delightful to watch him and to hear his questions and comments. About Justin, he remembers “how comfortable he made it to do something so radically new and different – his commitment to teaching, his grace – and how every element of a move was so beautifully integrated into a coordinated flow.”

I am very fond of each of these individuals who inspire me to continue to teach TCC. They remind me that we are one, that we are all connected. Through them I have come to know Justin Stone.

*Above: Julie Anongos, with Ellen and Bob.*

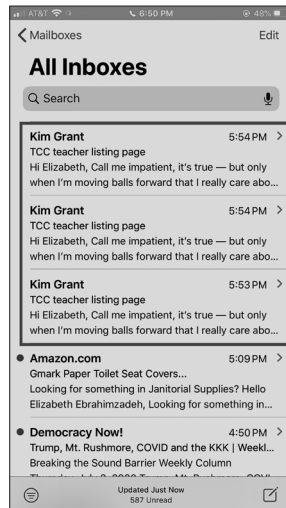
## Two More to Tickle Sharon

By Kim Grant, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
[taichichih.org/teacher/kim-grant/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/kim-grant/)

1.) Kim Grant: “Did I respond to this older email of yours?” Carolyn Pogwist: “You did and I responded back that all is well with my subscription. I find it another lifeline in the times we are going through in keeping the T’ai Chi Chih community connected.” Kim: “Oh good; I emailed from a plane and couldn’t access cloud archives.” Carolyn: “On a plane way up high among the clouds...but couldn’t access the “cloud” archives? LOL.”



2.) I emailed a number of teachers to remind them to sign up for their teacher listing pages on taichichih.org. And Elizabeth Ebranhimzadeh called me immediately upon receipt and said, “Thought I’d be impatient and call you back.” Huh? She then proceeded to text me a screen shot showing the “impatient” email had somehow been sent three times. She thought it was intentional, as if to demonstrate the point. Apparently the Internet put an exclamation point on it.



## Tie Dye Teaching

By Deb Sitron, Chicago, Illinois

I was teaching in Naples, Florida, at a place where residents live on their own and graduate as their health shifts. A wonderful 89-year-old gentleman in great shape and his female friend in her early 90s came to class weekly and loved T’ai Chi Chih.

One day, at a nearby fruit stand featuring the best freshly squeezed orange juice anywhere, I heard my name called. It was my student with a young man he introduced as his grandson. He then introduces me: “This is Deb, my Tie Dye teacher.” I tried not to burst out laughing as he was very serious. The grandson looked quizzical and could see that his grandfather thought that was pretty cool, so there was no way to correct him. I shared that I loved having his grandfather in class, and we went on our separate ways. With that level of enthusiasm my student could have called it anything, as TCC supported him in all ways.

## The Lighter Side

By Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, Maryland  
[taichichih.org/teacher/sharon-sirkis/](http://taichichih.org/teacher/sharon-sirkis/)

**It was my first time** teaching seated T’ai Chi Chih via Zoom. I was completely comfortable with the group since I’ve been teaching at their center for six years and completely comfortable with teaching seated TCC, but not comfortable at all with my recently acquired webcam purchased for my desktop computer.

In order for the class to see me from head to toe, I had to sit on a chair placed in the very back of my room, away from the desk. From that distance I could see myself practically taking up the entire screen. There were smaller pictures of the students in a row lined up above me. Although I could see their faces, I couldn’t see their hands very well. It was a combination of my camera angle and theirs.

I recognized everyone in the class, except one gal, Melissa. Since she was new to TCC, I offered some basic tips and then we got started.

About halfway through the class, another person “popped” in. Although their picture was small, she had a beautiful smile. Since I didn’t recognize her and realized she was new, I offered tips such as, “If you get tired, stop and rest, and pick up when you can.”

After continuing the practice and teaching about four or five movements, I noticed she still had that same smile on her face. I thought, “Wow, for her first practice, she really is getting the joy in TCC, Joy thru Movement.”

After Cosmic Consciousness Pose and remaining quiet for one minute, I moved my chair back to my desk, where I was much closer to the computer screen. To my surprise, I saw that same beautiful smile, and to my embarrassment, I realized it was a still photo of Melissa which she had posted when she left.



**Mario diGesù**

Verified Listing: Yes  
 Teaching: Featuring, Virtual Learning, Seljaku, and Tai Chi Chih  
 Teaching specialties:  
 Ongoing Classes  
 Beginner Classes  
 Seated TCC



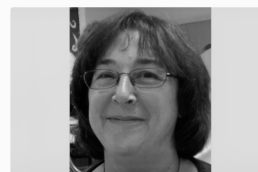
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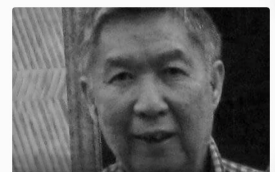
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 Teaching specialties:  
 Ongoing Classes  
 Beginner Classes  
 Seated TCC



**Max Wan**

Verified Listing: Yes  
 Teaching: Featuring, Seljaku, and Tai Chi Chih  
 Teaching specialties:  
 Ongoing Classes  
 Beginner Classes  
 Teacher Born / Trained

## Seven Stanzas on Stillness at the Time of the Pandemic

By Deanna Shapiro, Ferrisburgh, Vermont

They say people sheltering in place are experiencing enforced stillness. Stillness – reflection – cannot be forced. Still it's a good time to give stillness its due

because stillness is like a giving tree offering gifts of serenity, insights, safety.

Stillness is like a summer breeze offering an opening to follow our breath –inhaling – exhaling, time to *be* our breath.

Stillness is like clear water offering a channel to our creativity, our intuition, our essence.

Stillness is like a loving friend offering a way to acknowledge feelings, accept what is, nourish our spirit.

Stillness is like a walk down a path offering time to enter into mystery and meaning, the eternal.

Stillness is like an orchestra's harmony offering an attitude that softens our hearts, eradicates judgment, eliminates separateness,

It's a good time to give stillness its due.

## TCC Online Retreat with Pam Towne, via Zoom, May 2020



**When COVID-19 closed** the springtime retreat center in Prescott, Arizona, Pam Towne turned to technology. Thanks to Zoom a dozen people still gathered to deepen their TCC practice and connect while safely sheltering at home. Participants had a few things to say about this new take on a long-standing event.

**~ LINDA FRANKEL, STUDENT:** There was plenty of time for sharing and feedback; it never felt crowded or rushed. Pam did a great job providing individual and group corrections and suggestions. There was a good balance of instruction, review, TCC background/history, personal anecdotes and stories about Justin.

**~ MARV TREIGER, TEACHER CANDIDATE:** I am a digital skeptic but walked away filled with corrections and an overall deepening of understanding of the whole path. COVID-19 will not delay my progress.

**~ CATHY TREIGER, STUDENT:** Residential retreats allow us to leave our regular life at home. When it is over, there is often

a sense that it was a separate experience from daily life, making insights more difficult to integrate. An at-home retreat offers a chance to gather insight in the midst of our regular life, making the experience more immediate. Pam even had us turn to the side to do some movements to see us from a different angle.

**~ MARCELLA BOX, TEACHER:** I could grow my practice from the comfort of our home with my family. I could take naps in my own bed, maintain my current eating plan and skip the hassle and expense of travel. I loved having Pam in our home on retreat.

**~ LINDSEY ABRAHAMS, TEACHER CANDIDATE:** I was pleasantly surprised that this virtual practice worked: I refined my TCC practice and prepared for teacher accreditation, and I look forward to meeting retreatants in person.

**~ MICHELLE SARUBBI, TEACHER CANDIDATE, LA MESA, CALIFORNIA:** I gained from being at home because I was living it in my environment, using training that goes deeper than the movements. I felt a bit tired working with the computer and electrical energy by the end of the day, but during the practices and meetings it was easy to connect. I did not feel unnoticed or that I was not getting what I needed. Being at home allowed me to work with TCC where I live... physical-ly, emotionally and spiritually.



**Jerry Jonsson**

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Teaching: Featurig and Tai Chi Chih

Teaching specialties:

- Ongoing Classes
- Beginner Classes
- Seated TCC



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**Lisa Stroyan**

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- Women

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**Robert Poland**

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## Community Calendar

For the most up-to-date info and event PDFs, see [www.taichichih.org/events](http://www.taichichih.org/events).  
Find at teacher at [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org).

**Social Distancing Because of COVID-19? No Problem.**  
T'ai Chi Chih practice and originator Justin Stone's writings and movements are online.



Visit [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) to find accredited teachers offering classes and practices on Zoom, Facebook Live and other platforms.

Visit [www.justinnetcc.com](http://www.justinnetcc.com) to learn more and deepen your practice with Justin Stone's T'ai Chi Chih Video Instruction Subscription.



### DATE / WHAT & WHERE / CONTACT

- Sep 8-11 | TCC Retreat w/ Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 760-421-7589
- Sep 22-25 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 760-421-7589
- Sep 26 | TCC Retreat w/ Becky & Sandy | Fremont, CA | Becky Shinas | 510-299-8635
- Nov 15-21 | TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam | Albuquerque, NM | Molly Grady | 505-280-4701

### ~ CONFERENCE 2020 ~

Update: There will be no teacher conference in 2020

**MAILING ADDRESS CHANGE?**  
Please email  
[kim.grant@taichichih.org](mailto:kim.grant@taichichih.org)

**NOTICE TO ALL TEACHERS**  
The on-line teacher listings for [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) are now maintained by teachers themselves.  
Teachers: For instructions on how to create a user account and update your contact information please see [Taichichih.org/teacher-listings](http://Taichichih.org/teacher-listings).

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**Contact Information**

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone / Email \_\_\_\_\_  
 Teacher \_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_

**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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