

The Vital Force

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for teachers & students

May 2018

Justin Stone: In His Words

There Is Within You That Which Knows ...That Is Your Teacher

By Justin F. Stone, September 1992, *The Vital Force*

So why do we act as though we are ignorant? Because that inner innate wisdom – called *Prajna* – is covered up. The *Vashanas* (habit energies) so cover the *Prajna* that it becomes impossible to shine through to the conscious mind, but it is there.

All through religious and spiritual literature we read “Know Thyself,” “The Kingdom of Heaven is within,” “The inner Guru,” etc. But we don’t believe this teaching and look outside ourselves, in the outer world we have created for ourselves, to find someone to worship, someone to follow and so forth. There are many teachers who use this fact to their own benefit, frequently financial in character. This is why Krishnamurti said the Guru system is “an exploitation.”

I have frequently told you the story of the Sufi teacher who was approached by a seeker, who said: “Teach me, Master!” “Are you ready to learn?” was the reply. “Teach me how to learn” earnestly implored the seeker. “Are you ready to let me teach you how to learn?” was the cold water thrown on the seeker’s aspirations.

When Paul Rebs met someone, he said, “Thank you for your Life!” When people asked questions as to proper diet, whether to have sex or not, etc., Paul called these “verbal delusionary.” This has deep meaning, and relates closely to the reply of the Sufi master “Are you ready to learn?” Unless the delusionary way of thinking is changed, no teaching is possible and changing it can be painful. Giving up delusions, often recognized as neuroses, is not as easy as wallowing in them. I have known people who had legs amputated because it was easier than stopping the tobacco habit. With such deep-seated habit energies, where is the possibility of shaking the delusionary way of thinking, the maker of suffering?

Prajna, your great treasure, the innate wisdom that you are never without, is often personalized as *Prajna Paramita*, the perfection of wisdom, and is thought of as a female. In spiritual experiences I have been told, “She will take you where you are meant to be.” In other words, you are being led.



“every word spoken to you will be a signpost to guide you, if you let it

One time I told a young yogi, who was actively seeking to be free from bondage, “The thing that binds you is the feeling that there is a goal to reach and you have not yet reached it. Actually, you are complete. If you have faith in *Prajna*, this inner wisdom, you will do and feel the right thing. It will almost do the right thing for you. Every word spoken to you will be a signpost to guide you, if you let it. But, can you have faith in this guidance instead of always trying to manipulate it?”

It means you must “Let go!” Every spiritual path simply asks you to “Let go!” But this means to ignore your habitual thought patterns, your ingrained energy patterns and that is difficult to consciously do. The circulation and balancing of these energy patterns in T’ai Chi Chih practice can do it for you effortlessly.

Editor’s Note: Stay tuned for the August issue for the continuation of Justin’s message.



THOUGHTS

I recently attended Lisa Otero’s workshop in Fort Collins, Colorado, where Lisa shared a handout with 10 philosophical keys to understanding the writings of Justin Stone. Not only did they spur lively commentary, they infused the practice with another layer of richness and depth. Caroline Guillot (also in attendance) and I cherished the opportunity to chime in with a few first-hand stories about our years with Justin.

IN JUSTIN’S WORDS FROM SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY:

“ It is necessary to remember that T’ai Chi Chih is a *spiritual* discipline and must be taught with this in mind... we wish to urge the teaching always be kept on a high level and that the teacher practice his own self-cultivation so that he will exude this spiritual quality.

A SKETCHING CHALLENGE & TCC MOVEMENTS

Judy Kistler-Robinson recently joined a challenge issued by the international Urban Sketchers group to sketch 100 people in one week. She decided to sketch the T’ai Chi Chih movements from short videos of Lisa Otero’s class and last October’s Teacher Training (shared on the T’ai Chi Chih Facebook page). Some sketches were first done with ink and then filled in with watercolor; others began as watercolors and then ink outlines were added. As Judy says, “Some might recognize themselves here.”

~ With gratitude. Kim Grant, Albuquerque, NM

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The Vital Force

~ Web Site Updates ~

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

~ 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 Word documents, electronically, to 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.

~ Giving ~

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- Produces a quarterly journal by and for its members
- Creates and maintains taichichih.org for everyone
- Keeps up the extensive teacher database
- 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.

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Following *Teh* Into The Cosmic Rhythm

By Eliza Fulton, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

As teachers of T'ai Chi Chih we have a tremendous responsibility to complete and carry on Justin Stone's vision. He believed and taught that a daily practice of TCC – when practiced with integrity and sincerity – could and would raise our individual vibration and increase the speed of our personal evolution. Perhaps, it could even speed the evolution for all humanity. This is a pretty tall order.

When I became a TCC teacher, I was very surprised by the idea that no continuing education was required for teachers. This seemed inappropriate to me. How could an organization aspire to the highest standards without some guidelines and rules? What was Justin thinking?

As I have grown as a teacher, I have come to learn that instead of rules, Justin gave us his teachings and his example. And, I have found, if we follow these guidelines we will not lose our way. Are the guidelines hard to follow? No, however, like TCC **they are simple but not easy**. The only way to become and to remain an inspired and competent teacher (or serious student) is by staying in touch with our own inner sincerity – our *teh* – in whatever way it calls to us. This means practicing TCC with integrity, with focused attention and to never practice carelessly. As Justin always reminds us, if we want to receive the desired results, we must practice daily. This daily practice allows us to come into rhythm with the cosmic rhythm – not only when we are doing TCC but also in every precious moment of our lives.

TCC keeps us grounded and present. It keeps us in the moment and it brings clarity. Each time I go to a weekend workshop, retreat, conference or community TCC practice with others I am amazed by the quiet attunement that is created as we practice together. I believe we step into the cosmic rhythm (as Justin called it). From here we truly feel and experience the present moment and we are one with the flow of life. Just like the seasons and the movements of the sun and the moon, we too flow with circularity, *yinning* and *yanging*. There is an effortlessness to life. There is such joy – joy through movement.

In gratitude I express my “thank you” to Justin and to all the teachers who are carrying forward the teachings with such integrity and who are keeping the inner *teh* shining brightly. Rules really are not necessary in this community and seeing this gives me hope for all humanity.



Pyramid Poems On Silence

our
silence
awakens
thoughts ideas
we cannot
ignore
growth
– SANDY R.

night
is quiet
morning still
daytime awake
afternoon
merges to
dusk
– ELIZA FULTON

now
listen
one can hear
everything, so
listen to
inner
voice
– JUDY

ah
silence
peace and calm
depth of Being
peacefulness
within
all
– LEYA

still
silence
cavernous
beauty vibrant
truth seeking
itself
found
– AMY TYSINSKI

Playing With, Exploring, Knowledge of TCC

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, New Mexico

T'ai Chi Chih: I love the name of our discipline. T'ai Chi ("Supreme Ultimate") immediately puts me in the frame of mind of dealing with something so much larger than myself. The Chih ("Knowledge of") says that there is something to be learned about this Supreme Ultimate. For some of us, this seems too much. How in the world are we to learn what is necessary for us to know about TCC?
First: Don't worry, relax. This is a user-friendly discipline.

Second: This is good for us. This discipline saves lives. My first TCC teacher, Helen Brungardt Pope, learned it from Justin Stone, the originator. It saved her life. She learned it because she was dying. She offered it to us, her students, so that we could stay healthy as we learned about our spiritual life. We moved beyond our apprehensions and signed up for her class. Every week I watched other students who moved smoothly. I seemed to be the only one with two left feet. No one said, hey you with the two left feet, but I was sure they were thinking it. I wondered, how could this discipline achieve all that the book said it could: heighten energy; promote serenity, health and longevity; improve balance and flexibility; help with weight and blood-pressure control; and expand creativity and awareness?

Third: The discipline is best learned in a class, from a accredited teacher. Trevor Leggett writes in *A Second Zen Reader* that, "He or She who would have a lion's cub must walk into the lion's den."

Later as I was learning the movements, I came under the watchful eye of Mr. Stone, my second teacher. Justin said I had a good teacher, but I sure hadn't done a very good job of learning TCC. Even at that stage, though, I was getting benefits. My mind was quiet, even though my body had a mind of its own. **Fourth:** All is not as it seems. This discipline has a level that goes beyond thinking. It has a feeling component.

Feeling what? The *Chi*, of course! Wow, even though I attended all my classes, I had somehow missed the lesson about feeling the *Chi*. Now I was ready to really learn the movements from a deeper perspective—a new beginning to learn how to love and share the *Chi*.

It Takes One To Know One

By Donovan Rundle, Oxnard, California

There is wisdom in common sayings such as: "It takes One to know One." The whole of a knower's individual mind/heart/body, United with the Universal *Chi* – actually One. This *Chi* Alone knows All *Yin* and *Yang* in balance as the One Absolute – "I am That."

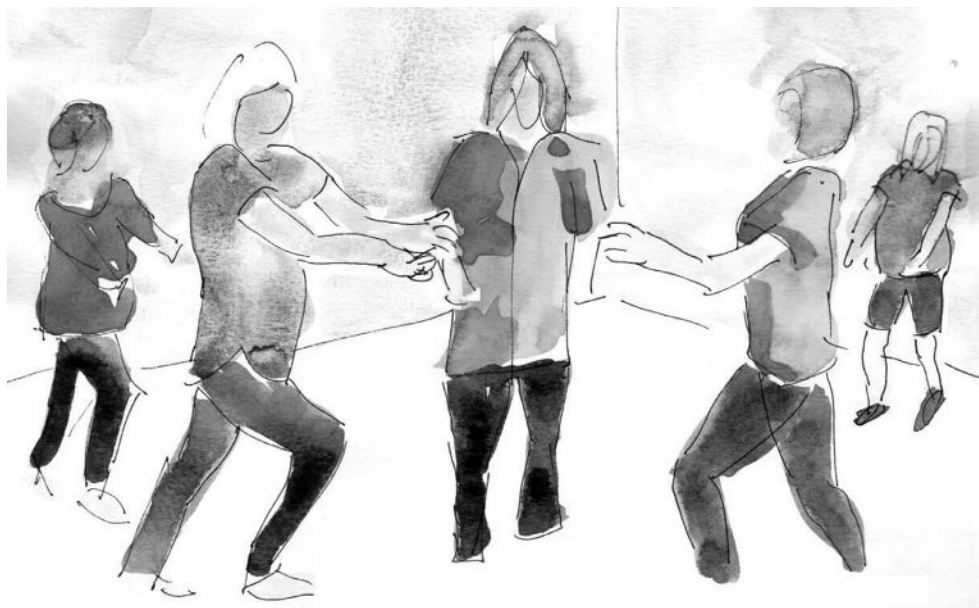
All else falls short, remains fragmentary, inadequate, or merely intellectual. Be that which you wish to know. Be that totally, eternally and infinitely. "It takes One to know One."
How can the part know the whole otherwise?

No, there is no external standpoint, no outside or inside. No, it must be One with the Whole, seeing and being All/One without measures of time/locality. Only the perfect and the eternal and infinite knows the essence of itself through itself Alone.

It is All One, and as such encompasses more than the merely general and individual. Your suffering may make your wish for freedom strong – Strong enough to empty consciousness of its content. What then? What is there?

Complete identification... with...

The immobile silence, empty of all but Itself, full of Love and Truth.



Birds Get Stuck, Flap & Fly

By Diana Bahn,
New York, New York

It may sound ridiculous to attribute a pigeon rescue in the Columbus Circle subway escalator to my T'ai Chi Chih practice and to "Bird Flaps Its Wings." Yet, I am convinced it led to the bird's escape and safety.

I had been practicing Seijaku regularly since attending the Boulder conference and the TCC and Seijaku versions of "Bird" were becoming vexing. I couldn't get my students to shift from their *t'an tien*. I couldn't convey that they were holding themselves back or that they needed to trust more. I was developing a hang up about "Bird."

When I started practicing it on my own, birds began coming into my life. My oldest cat was having a hard time with his kidneys and needing daily hydration. He was like a bird, a light, ethereal creature that could leap to high places and take a bird's eye view of the household. As he lost weight, he sat with the plants, looking to the sky, as though he would soon become one with it. Pigeons started visiting him, and it was a nice gift for Cyrus during his last month of life.

The slow part of coming back to polarity in "Bird," where we again allow the *t'an tien* to straighten the legs (so no muscular effort from the legs), also felt like a losing battle to teach. Over Labor Day weekend I took a floor barre class to get out of the apartment. A substitute teacher reminded me that I had gotten too complacent with the class. Taking a different path home led to my bird encounter.

As I ascended the escalator (like the part in "Bird" where we let go quickly), I heard an awful banging sound and saw a pigeon mesmerized by panoramic windows. He was hitting his head, repeatedly, trying to get out. He



didn't have the sense to turn around to fly up and out.

I didn't even think about not helping. I felt the stillness inside me and asked some young people working nearby to help. Although they said no to my pleas, I left my bags with them and climbed over a bar to the window ledge where the bird was stuck.

I felt perfectly balanced and safe as I walked the ledge towards the still-banging bird. It's a busy subway station and people were riding up the escalator. One guy called me a crazy lady and I replied that I was no birdbrain and was perfectly safe. Although a lot of people witnessed this, I let go of them and focused on the task at hand. I asked people on the down escalator to wave their hands upwards (so the bird would fly away). Yet much like teaching TCC, the one lady who did it motioned the bird to go down. I almost laughed. That's when I had to find my center and take on the task fully despite everyone milling around. It took moving further along the ledge, following the bird and swinging my pocketbook (using just my wrists and hands of course) to get the pigeon to go with the flow. It worked.

A guy from my Buddhist organization, the only happy face I saw out there, rode up the escalator to meet me and shared that people

were scared seeing my pigeon rescue. I appreciated it yet told him I was perfectly balanced, that it wasn't a big deal for someone who practices TCC.

This to say that perspective makes a big difference. The adventure with the bird freed me up a lot and now my students are doing "Bird Flaps Its Wings" a lot better. I have a feeling that Justin made "Bird" a preliminary movement because he felt how freeing and topsy-turvy it was to take that bold leap forward so soon after Rocking Motion. I noticed a Midtown pigeon walking up some steps recently and couldn't believe how spindly its legs were compared to its body. Yet it was graceful; it accomplished the climb elegantly.

Sometimes our legs get in the way of us moving. Justin, ever Zen-like, took this *koan* on immediately, before we ever get to *yinning* and *yanging*. I wonder if it has to do with joy. I was all joy on my perch helping that bird. Peter noticed it when I returned home.

Since joy is such an integral part of TCC, I am certain that despite the hustle and bustle of Columbus Circle, I was doing my best. Two weeks after the pigeon caper, Cyrus succumbed to his advanced kidney disease. It wasn't easy saying goodbye, yet I understood he was ready to spread his wings and fly. May he rest in peace.

Synchronicity, Harmony, Beauty

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California

These are the titles of a workshop and three retreats I have attended in the past month and it is amazing how they fit together.

For the Harmony and Beauty retreats I led, I chose the titles months ago and months apart without a connection in mind. Topics and themes are determined by thoughts when asked to lead a retreat. The Synchronicity workshop came about in the planning of a local workshop organized by Bay Area teachers. I did not see the connection until months later when all the events happened within the same month.

So how do these three words connect relative to our T'ai Chi Chih practice? Linda Braga has produced an informative and lovely booklet titled: *Seven Qualities of Movement*. One quality is Synchronicity. She writes, **“Synchronicity in movement occurs when all parts of the body are moving as one unit.”** This is something we strive for in TCC. “In any TCC movement, synchronicity is present if the body is moving with soft, slow, even movements and no part of the movement stands out.” Think of how many principles of our practice are embodied in Synchronicity. “Synchronicity allows you to experience the feeling of oneness, everything moving together, with no disruptions.”

If we have Synchronicity we have Harmony. **Synchronicity is the action; Harmony is the result.** Consider listening to a choir. If a singer comes in a little late or off key, not only do you notice it audibly, but likely your body reacts with a slight flinch, even if it is only with a few facial muscles. If you watched Olympics pair's ice skaters there was a feeling of harmony and smoothness when the two skaters moved in synch. Harmony has the feeling of lightness, no concerns, no tension, smoothness, joy, a blending and acceptance of differences, a feeling of emotional wellbeing.



For the Minnesota teacher retreat, I suggested the theme of “The All-Encompassing Beauty of T'ai Chi Chih.” I picked that title many months ago and as the time drew near to prepare notes, I looked at the title and wondered what I was thinking. It sounded a bit overwhelming: All Encompassing... What was I thinking?

Here are a few quotations from teachers attending the retreat when asked, in what way did they see beauty in TCC practice: “the movements are beautiful ... how we are all doing it the same way as we move in a group” ... “I can take it with me wherever I go” ... “the inner peace it gives me” ... “you appreciate what’s around you” ... “simplicity – no frills” ... “every time it is different and I feel a connection with people” ... “healing emotionally” ... “dissolves barriers” ... “don’t have to do it well to get benefits.”

One of the beauties of the TCC form is its adaptability. Folks with almost any limitations can do the practice: sitting, standing using a chair for support, mentally, leaving out movements that may be challenging, modifying physical movement that cannot be done, supporting the movement with a mental focus (such as some people may not be able to get their hands over the crown of their head to do Light at the Top of the Head, so they may do the movement with the hands lower at a comfortable level but imagine their hands to be over the head).

There is so much beautiful in how TCC benefits us, and those around us. When we are in a good space emotionally and physically we are better able to interact with other people in a helpful and supportive way. We are better able to see the bigger picture of situations and the world around us. Maybe that is the all-encompassing aspect of the practice. When we are clearer in our outlook on life and can stand more centered and grounded in who we are, then we are better able to reach out and connect with others and our environment in a meaningful way. We move outward from the self-centered I to a broader perspective.

The practice keeps reminding us to let go. At the end of every set of repetitions we come into stillness and we have the opportunity to let go of tension, judgment. Thoughts of the previous movement dissolve as we stay in the moment without considering what comes next until it is time to move again. That refreshing stillness is filled with beauty that we each experience in our own way.

When we move with synchronicity we have harmony, and harmony allows uncluttered vision and awareness to blossom with beauty. Through TCC practice, feel the harmony and experience the beauty, each according to our own needs and nature.

~~~~~

Be as the roots  
of a living plant...  
remain grounded  
and sink deeper in  
your understanding.

And as the leaves  
receive from the sun  
and the soil...  
be nourished  
by the *Chi*.

Then be as the flowers...  
allow self-awareness  
and inner beauty  
to blossom.

BY DORENE KRAUSE,  
MIDLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY

## Softness Means Letting Go

By Pam Towne, Oceanside, California

**Many people practicing T'ai Chi Chih** are aware that softness is the essence of this moving meditation. Do you know that the essence of Seijaku practice is letting go? Softness and letting go are intimately related. Justin Stone, the originator of both forms, wrote much about the importance of softness in our practice. You may read many such short writings in *Spiritual Odyssey*.

Wherever there is bodily tension, the *Chi* cannot flow freely, so it is more important to relax and move with softness than do the movements perfectly. We do that by letting go. Tune into your favorite places for holding tension in the body. Taking a deep breath and allowing the body to relax are great ways to let go of muscular tension.

Relaxing and moving with softness also means letting go of thoughts, especially self-critical ones about how well we are moving. It doesn't matter the thought – from planning your next meal to thinking “I'm not doing ‘the Taffies’ very well.” As soon as you notice the mind has wandered, let go of the thought and return your focus to the soles of the feet or *t'an tien*.

Doing Seijaku helps to learn how to let go. Don't let the common reference to it as “the advanced form of T'ai Chi Chih” deter you from learning this very beneficial practice. It is recommended that you have at least one year of regular TCC practice before doing Seijaku. Yet there's no need to wait until you perfect “the Taffies.”

Experiencing the contrast between using some muscular effort to push through resistance, and the feeling of release that comes with breaking thru that resistance, helps us let go. Softness becomes more attainable following the experience of hardness.

There is great strength in softness. Look at the Grand Canyon to see how soft water wears away hard rock. Softness is also resilience. Justin often used the image of a bamboo tree that bends easily in the storm and snaps back unharmed when the storm passes.

TCC and especially Seijaku help us cultivate softness in our lives and empower us to let go of what we cannot change and that which no longer serves us.

## Are You Getting All Of The Essence Of TCC In Your Practice?

By Daniel Pienciak, Howell, New Jersey

**When I first encountered** the advanced form of T'ai Chi Chih (directly with its originator in 1997), I was not ready for what I would be learning. At that time, any accredited TCC teacher learning Seijaku from its Originator was accredited to teach it at the same time. Now, any TCC student or teacher can learn it from any accredited Seijaku teacher.

I am left to wonder why more folks do not learn it; why more TCC teachers do not study it (repeatedly to keep it fresh); and why more accredited Seijaku teachers do not teach it.

It took me 10 years to understand this advanced form fully enough to experience its benefits and feel it. Today there are many more experienced Seijaku teachers who can impart Seijaku more efficiently, so that a student will get it more quickly (provided they are practicing it regularly on their own). As Justin Stone so often quoted, “You cannot appease the hunger by reading the menu.” (If you want nutrition, you have to eat the food.)

With another opportunity in July (following teacher conference) to study, review and become accredited in Seijaku, it behooves me to make some points:

- Advanced does not mean for experts. It refers to advanced levels of benefits through exponentially increased activation, balancing and circulation of *Chi* through Seijaku. Why would any serious TCC practitioner not want to access these advanced benefits? Maybe, if we've been eating the sandwich without the protein, we don't miss it until we've eaten it and felt the difference?
- Seijaku has been presented at teacher conferences to emphasize that Seijaku is part of the fullness of the essence of TCC. It is not meant to be a mysterious fringe option for the few.
- Accredited Seijaku teachers don't have to offer a specific course exclusively in Seijaku in order to teach it.

Many teachers offer continuing classes for experienced TCC students. These are excellent opportunities to introduce the Seijaku principle of how to move.

There is perhaps no better way for students to feel flowing from the *t'an tien*.

**Where in the World:**  
New UK teachers, Laurin McDonald and Lesley Nell, on the deck of the *Moshulu* in Philadelphia.



## Inspire, Motivate One Another

By Hannah Hedrick, Fern Forest, Hawaii

**I am inspired and motivated** by every issue of *The Vital Force* to acknowledge the power of the experiences and ideas shared by my fellow T'ai Chi Chih teachers. But it took Julie Heryet's "Update from Folsom" (*VF*, November 2017) to get me to write. I especially value Julie's affirming practice of awarding a certificate to participants who memorize the names of their classmates. Connecting with self, others and the universe is the most beneficial aspect of my TCC practice.

Justin repeatedly emphasized that TCC is a "service to mankind." Teachers like Julie, who emphasize service above detailed technique, receive immeasurable personal benefits, as well as immense appreciation from their fellow teachers. I teach a weekly class to recently released offenders required to attend, so commitment to TCC movements is rarely achieved. However, after even a couple of classes, participants benefit from the **sense of community that moving together, however imperfectly, seems to impart.**

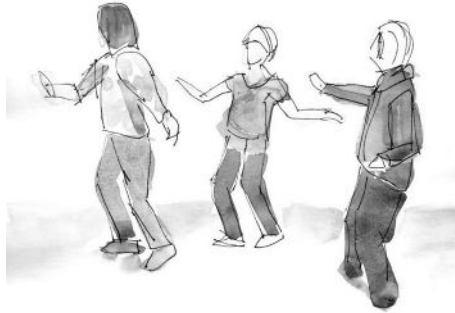
A recent example still resonates, as it re-enforced my intention to be grateful that I have the strength and wisdom to ask for help in remaining perfectly unaffected by lack of love and/or attack thoughts. We had been moving together for about 15 minutes when a late arrival stood belligerently outside the group. One of the participants noticed that the late arrival had an item that had been stolen from him. He lost his temper and attacked the "outsider." Immediately, participants in the TCC movements moved as a single unit to wrap their arms around both combatants and neutralize them, eventually removing the perpetrator from the premises. Class members returned to their positions and we continued with the movements.

The following week, the "outsider" was on time and participated in the class! The other residents welcomed him back into the community, and that had a profound effect on his attitude.

As I reach out to "fallen away" teachers to attend the 2018 conference and to stay, many respond that while they would love to see me and other teachers, they have the impression that they do not do the movements correctly enough to teach them. Unfortunately, some of the articles with detailed suggestions in *The Vital Force*, including the November 2017 issue, contain absolute statements and abstract concepts that could be perceived as being preachy, directive and/or judgmental.

While I appreciate the suggestions offered via *The Vital Force*, events and TCC electronic resources, I urge us to allow TCC to help us let go of "have-to's, rules, intimidation and nit-picky adjustments." (Sandy McAlister, "Good Teachers Guide Us in Discovery") TCC teachers with extensive interactions with Justin sometimes advise me to change principles I learned directly from Justin's personal corrections over the years.

I agree with Sandy that Justin provided us with an outline that emphasizes universal principles, not precise, rigid, movements. Fortunately for me, the TCC teachers that I resonate with do inspire and motivate me to incorporate TCC principles and joyous movements as an integral part of my life.



## A Response To Hannah

By Julie Heryet,  
El Dorado, California

**I am grateful Sandy McAlister** demonstrated over the years an attitude of playfulness about our TCC practice. While she is clear about what is and is not TCC, she has always encouraged me

to keep it fun, to toss in something new about the moves from time to time. One practice that the men love to do changes the form into a beautiful dance, keeping them very involved as they watch me for transitions. They know that's not how we do the form, but they love the freshness and playfulness, and the implied permission that they too can experiment and play.

As an early teacher teaching on the "outside," I emphasized accuracy until I taught at a Senior Center. Many elders could not perform the movements and became frustrated. I realized that relaxation, which encourages the *Chi* to flow, was more important than form. If it wasn't enjoyable and relaxing, there wasn't much point in doing it. I needed to be flexible and adapt the movements depending on my population.

This is especially true in the prison class, where the relaxing aspect enables them to feel safe. Only then can they let go enough to trust the flow of *Chi*, allow themselves to be seen, share from their hearts and heal.

I make corrections/suggestions about grounding, softening the knees, breathing, shifting the weight and about posture – about things that keep them from harm. But I never give the impression that they *have* to move a precise way to benefit from the practice. Many of my students are looking forward to sharing the practice with their families and friends after being released, and I encourage them to do so as long as they can do it in a way that won't cause harm (i.e. to the knees). For inmates who are serious, I offer technical adjustments so that when they attend a class on the outside they will be prepared.

While I understand the importance of keeping the form pure, insuring the ability to drop into a TCC class anywhere and find the form the same, I've learned the *yang* form of T'ai Chi Ch'uan from three different instructors. They all did it a little differently. This taught me patience, flexibility and respect for each teacher's expression. I concur that the gift of TCC is not in doing a technically accurate Passing Clouds, but in experiencing a unification of body/mind/spirit that fosters connection and healing.



# 10th Graders Reflect On TCC

From students in Amy Tyksinski's high school T'ai Chi Chih P.E. Class, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
(Printed with permission.)

"TCC has been my form of stress relief, anxiety relief and a safe haven for about a year. Coming into it, I thought it would be ridiculous, but it proved me wrong. In a competitive school, I'm always thinking about what's ahead. But TCC helped me be in the moment, slow down, make sure I'm okay. TCC really is a way of healing. I'm much less stressed and I feel like I have control over my emotions. I can feel them and I let them come out, but I don't have to be scared of them. I'm glad I took TCC this year; it really has helped me."

– AUDREY NG, 10TH GRADE, ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY

"TCC is calming for me and helps create a moment of peace. It has helped me in situations of stress or anger to become more cool-headed and handle these emotions better in the moment. I feel the ground beneath me and the air touching my skin while I practice. The sounds of people and buildings fade away and the white noise of the area comes forward. TCC is helping me become a better version of myself in this world."

– BELLA MORETTI, 10TH GRADE, ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY

"During the practice of TCC, I am transported to a state where I am not required to think, worry, or plan. I am simply me, in my purest, calmest state. I don't have to think about how slow or fast I am going, because my body knows what's right for me. My spirit, rather than my mind, guides me. It brings me one step closer every day, to living life completely in the present and keep myself as true and connected as I can be."

– JAYCE R., 10TH GRADE, ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY

"I'm not gonna lie. I thought this class was gonna be a joke. I did not anticipate what these past two semesters have given me. When I have this hour to ground myself in my "now," I immediately become calmer and more productive. I led a walkout against gun violence and got very emotional. Then I remembered Ms. Tyksinski's advice to ground myself. And I was transformed. What once was anger towards authority and the government, turned into empathy and understanding. We are all here, trying to live out the best versions of ourselves. I've learned that it is up to us to spread love and positivity."

– MOIRA TANEDO, 10TH GRADE, ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY

"TCC has changed a lot for me. I feel more grounded daily and more relaxed. Overall, I feel that I connect with people better and read their *Chi* (and their emotions). Even on days when I feel too upset, stressed, or overall emotional, I find myself practicing and reminding myself of things Ms. Tyksinski has taught me. Lessons for movements have become new phrases and I remind myself to "stay inside yourself" to "slow down." TCC means "learning myself" rather than learning school subjects and lessons. It has made me take into consideration that I'm not who I want to be right now, but with TCC, I can start to become that person."

– TATIANA G., 10TH GRADE, ALBUQUERQUE ACADEMY



## Pyramid Poems On Silence

warmth  
strength love  
in wholeness  
we now become  
the silence  
inside  
out

– CARMELA BECK

the  
silence  
is the is  
we tap into  
the silence  
when we're  
still

– DORA WEIMANN

peace  
silence  
quietly  
soothing, calming  
energy  
come join  
me

– PAULINE QUIMSON-MILLER

the  
sounds have  
stopped but our  
monkey minds still  
whisper in  
searching  
ears

– JERRY G.

the  
quiet  
speaks loudly  
to those who are  
ready to  
listen  
shhh

– UNKNOWN

be  
silent  
a gift 'oft  
misunderstood  
oh surprise  
it's a  
gift

– ANON

# Teacher Training

## Aston, Pennsylvania; March 2018

By April Leffler, Host, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

**It is always a pleasure to behold** the transformations that occur during a six-day teacher training course. There is often a certain degree of tentativeness, nervousness and even awkwardness in the beginning among the group and in the T'ai Chi Chih movements. As the week unfolds, and understandings deepen, it is a privilege to watch and experience our moves soften and to witness newly accredited teachers begin their teaching journey with TCC. Below are some of their thoughts.

When I came to T'ai Chi Chih accreditation, I didn't know I could...  
listen with such attentiveness that words reformed into pure clear thoughts;  
observe with precise intention to notice the finest of changes in movements;  
feel with grounded balance and stand strong upon this earth;  
sense to the core of my *t'an tien* and find a center of gratitude.  
But I could do all of this because I surrendered to the challenge.

– SUSAN COREY

This was my first visit to the USA, so I was excited and a mite apprehensive about whether or not my TCC practice would pass muster. It has been a moving experience being enveloped by the TCC community. I have learned so much from everyone, not only about TCC but about the USA. I aim to return regularly to keep my personal practice pure, to renew friendships and to forge new ones.

– LESLEY NELL, UK



*Front: John Miller, John Hunter, Richard Reppleyea, Andy George. Back: Dan Pienciak, Karen Hornberger, Laurin McDonald, Lesley Nell, Susan Corey, April Leffler.*

The accreditation was an eye opener – not only a refresher and refinement when it comes to the movements – but also the difficulties one will face when teaching. It was a large help in the process of helping others learn TCC. – RICHARD RAPPLEYEA

I deepened my softness, awareness and overall movements, and I really felt “the effort of no effort.” It was an amazing experience. I would recommend this course to anyone who is passionate about TCC and would like to teach. – ANDY GEORGE

The training was a wonderful experience. I especially enjoyed and am thankful for the auditing teachers. Getting tips and hearing about their experiences in teaching is very valuable. I am nervous about being in front of students and the teachers gave me a better feeling on how to handle situations. – KAREN HORNBERGER

The week was one of deepening... deepening my relationships, commitment, awareness and *Chi*. – JOHN MILLER

I found the accreditation course to be very intense. I wanted to improve my movements and be able to teach other students properly. Our instructors were very knowledgeable and patient. The entire group was helpful, friendly and shared a common goal. I look forward to sharing TCC with my future students. – JOHN HUNTER

Feedback and observation from auditors and teachers helped me refine the movements and was invaluable. I have deepened my understanding of the *Chi* on all levels. – LAURIN McDONALD, UK

## We Found Each Other

By John Miller, West Chester, Pennsylvania

**I am so grateful that TCC** and I found each other. I had been searching for something to help me de-stress and find serenity. After years of working in a high stress position and having been through various maladies, we instantly connected with each other about two years ago. I was told that teaching would deepen my practice and that I would be rewarded through sharing this gift with others. My teacher training experience was more than I imagined. Challenging, yes. Fulfilling yes. My classmates, teacher auditors and especially Dan and April will be lasting influences. I am finding that teaching others deepens my practice. I look forward to seeing classmates at the teacher conference.

# Across The Pond

By Laurin McDonald, Culworth, Banbury UK

**When I first met** Tina Wells in April 2016, I had no idea that her introduction to T'ai Chi Chih and her intention to find new teachers would lead me to Philadelphia in 2018. I started attending Tina's classes in her lovely garden studio near Oxford, England, and got hooked. TCC was the missing link in my spiritual development. It energised me and helped me maintain focus.

So it was with excitement that Lesley Nell and I, despite a major blizzard, slipped out of Heathrow and arrived in Philadelphia on March 1. The next day Philadelphia experienced its own snowy weather and 400 flights were cancelled. I'm sure our visualisation and positive energy projections worked; we were meant to get to our accreditation.

The course began on Sunday evening when we met Daniel and our fellow students. It was a mixed and diverse group. We shared our histories, began to practise together and were supported with feedback from teachers who joined us. Key refinements were about bending the rear knee when coming back and a softer, slower, smoother flow. Daniel's direction regarding the weight shift in the feet was helpful and I continue to work on this every time I practice. Rocking Motion has always proved challenging, and I must continually work to refine this so that it feels right. The feedback and work led to a determination to continue to surrender and allow the *Chi* to flow and my practice to develop.

The overwhelming surprise? We are now connected to this amazing TCC community. Wherever I go I can probably pick up the phone to find a like-minded individual. My favourite kind of travel is getting to know people in the areas I'm visiting.

That Lesley and I can join Tina, Tracy and Jerry Jonnson to spread TCC in the UK is so fantastic. Three classes start in April to get into the swing straight away.

## When the Going Gets Tough...

# The Secret Of Remembering

By Judy Hendricks, Albuquerque, New Mexico

**It's 3 am. I am awakened by fear.** It's actually more like terror. Sheer terror. I am contemplating a career change and my mind is going to the worst possible conclusions. I'm engulfed by fear, which is spreading to all aspects of my life. I am not connected or grounded. I am in a dark and lonely place.

Besides not sleeping well, I am also distrusting of people and I can't make even simple decisions. I'm unhappy and stressed out. I'm disconnected from everyone. I'm practicing my TCC but it seems not to be working. I'm full of anxiety. I also lost faith in what people were telling me, which is very uncharacteristic.

Justin wrote about remembering (not learning new things) what is within us. And he wrote about not doubting our own experiences.

I needed to talk to someone who could understand what I was facing, another TCC practitioner. I knew if we talked, it would help me to ground. I also needed to remember the time when I was very strongly connected, when I knew the truth about a situation and had no fear. I thought of when I was facing a major health challenge and had no

fear, when I knew things would be okay. I started remembering that time of certainty and fearlessness.

It helped me to reconnect; it was a time of a strong connection. T'ai Chi Chih and meditation are wonderful tools for both. I remembered it, felt it, re-lived it. I was conscious of my heart-mind connection.

Then everything changed; I was connected again. I felt peace and love. For a few weeks, I still had periods of feeling disconnected and fearful, but they left as I remembered that time of total connection. I learned the truth by doing my TCC practice and remembering. I often say when you realize you are not grounded, you are half way to being grounded. Likewise, when you realize you are not connected, you are in a position to reconnect.

When Albert Einstein was having trouble dealing with the theory of relativity, he would play his violin to feel connected and in harmony with the world.

The ways we can reconnect are really important. I'm guessing others have additional ways. I felt very lost for a few weeks, but I am back. My connection is solid now. I feel positive; I'm staying in the present. The heart is more powerful than fear. When the heart is focused on the truth, there is no fear. Fear can disconnect us for a time but knowing the truth within us strongly connects us to the heart. I'm grateful that Justin shared TCC with us and taught us to remember what is within all of us.

# Heightened Awareness: Evolution & Awareness

By Justin F. Stone

**It should be obvious** that not all people will get the same results from [the practices in this book]. The reason is simple: we are not all at the same level of evolution. Some of us are more highly evolved than others. All people, all species, are evolving and, while this involves physical changes, it is largely a spiritual matter. Actually, **the spiritual can't be separated from the physical vehicle through which we experience.** For every spiritual change there is a change in the physical. Some of us are at a stage where we can be more receptive than others. Yet in Essence we are the same, so we all follow the same road. All life is evolving. Some feel that this evolution is toward a pre-determined goal.

Many do not like it when we speak of species evolving. The truth is that **nature is completely impersonal**, not worrying about the individual but anxious to preserve the species and allow it to evolve. We do not say, "save Minnie the whale;" we say, "save the whales." Deep inside we understand this impersonal outlook, but it affronts the ego: after all, doesn't each one feel he is the center of the universe?

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A wonderful man from Kashmir, Gopi Krishna, has written that **Kundalini is the means by which we evolve.** Kundalini is a form of universal energy, certainly part of our sex energy, and the name is derived from the Sanskrit Kundali, which means serpent.

Gopi Krishna does not write from empty theory but from the remarkable evolutionary experience he underwent for forty or fifty years after the Kundalini (stimulated by years of intense concentration as he practiced a form of meditation) exploded into activity, filling him with liquid light that he felt knew exactly the task it was to perform – as it accelerated his snail's pace personal evolution until he felt he was progressing a thousand years in each day. Many individuals rush on ahead of mankind, reaching a high level of evolution that points the way to where the entire race will be one day. Gautama Buddha was a good example, reaching levels 2500 years ago that possibly have not been matched since then.

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**This same evolution is going on within all of us, but at a pace we can't recognize**, much like the slow, inexorable toll that age takes on us, impossible to tell on a day-to-day basis, but plainly apparent to one who hasn't seen us for a long period of time.

Actually, as we grow older, we preserve a fictitious identity. Our hair grows and is cut off – the same with our nails. Even the cells die and are replaced. The makeup of our bodies has

a complete renewal and our appearance constantly changes; yet we feel we have maintained the same identity. This is probably because of our accumulating memory, which records these events from one viewpoint. Also, we build habits and gradually bind ourselves to them, even as we change. In truth, **our habit energies (vashanas in Sanskrit) are what shape us as we grow older.** If we are to have a new body in the future, these habit energies will bring it into being.

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In a higher state of consciousness, this feeling of narrow, isolated individuality expands and develops into a closer identification with the Universal. At times such a one may feel his awareness going far beyond the walls of his room or the shell of his body and covering vast areas of consciousness. One Chinese Zen master of recent times describes how, standing in the enclosed latrine, he could plainly see boats on a neighboring river. He says that while voiding, he had the feeling that nothing was moving. To see all things "as they have always been," seemingly motionless in movement, is common to much mystic experience. **There is no limit to which consciousness can expand, understandable when you realize that it is not "our" consciousness.** Sentience is everywhere.

~~~~~

**My Indian teacher once said that he could see the approach of thought.** This would mean, in effect, that thoughts have lives of their own. In some of the practices suggested in this book one will be able to just observe the thoughts without becoming involved in them or perpetrating them through a stream-of-consciousness pattern of thinking. We remember by connecting, and our thought patterns tend to wander out of control, as we are swept along by



association, seemingly powerless to break the chain because we are unaware of it. Mindfulness, the key link in heightened awareness, means observing and knowing each action we take and each thought we have. This is entirely out of question for the undisciplined mind.

~ ~ ~

Reading while eating, even carrying on a conversation, dulls our awareness of the act and of the taste of the food. Often, some time after shaving, a man will have to look in the mirror to determine whether he has taken care of his beard that day. Have I fed the cat? Did I close the garage door? Such common questions we ask of ourselves are indicative of weak, wandering minds. Men have played entire football games with broken legs, unaware of the pain because of intense concentration on the play. In a sense this is **Pratyahara, withdrawing the senses from the field of the senses**. The pain simply does not register on the one-pointed mind. It is there, but it is not recognized.

~ ~ ~

Awareness, of course, does not include only sensory awareness, but that is part of it. As general awareness (and mindfulness) grows and steadies, many things are experienced in a sensory way – things that would not have formerly been evident at all. This writer remembers driving back from a six-day T'ai Chi Chih teachers' training course with a student and having both utter exclamations of astonishment at the blue of the sky, the beauty of the clouds, the green of the trees and the feeling of the vibrant life in the hills. Since we had both been circulating the *Chi* (Vital Force) extensively through the six days of movement, there was a feeling of being high' – and this is a high that is not followed by a low. **The surging of this life energy through one enhances the sensory awareness.**

~ ~ ~

One very advanced woman I know sometimes telephones me when she experiences a period of what she calls unusual clarity. She is a highly evolved, joyous, creative person who is not handicapped by the thought that she is doing anything. She long ago negated self-clinging and tunes in very well to the universal. It is not surprising that she has periods of unusual clarity, almost like small *Satori* experiences (from the Japanese verb *satoru*, meaning to realize). *Satori* is the aim of the intense Zen Buddhist practice, and it is often translated by the word enlightenment. There are varying degrees of intensity to *Satori* experience, sometimes referred to as a great *Satori* or a minor *Satori*. When a veteran monk has such experience, it is usually preceded by profuse sweating, and then accompanied by tears of joy. There isn't much he can describe, however. **This is not experience in the ordinary sense.** Much overwhelming mystic experience is like that.

Invariably, a good Zen master knows when a disciple or student has experienced *Satori* (without being told); it doesn't happen that often. In fact, there are sincere monks with twenty years of practice who have never had such an experience. On the other hand, Hakuin Zenji, the great Japanese Zen master, reports numerous great joys and **almost innumerable little joys** – all after he made his real breakthrough. At the time of the latter, which happened suddenly after an irate woman broke a broom over his head (he had been begging food at the woman's door and did not hear her admonition to "go away" because of his intense concentration on his *koan*), he ran back to the old temple where he stayed and saw his master come running out to greet him at the same time, shouting, "You have broken through" – all before Hakuin could stammer a word.

~ ~ ~

One time the author was with his friend Paul Reps, the Zen writer, in a foreign land. While eating a simple dinner, Reps looked over at a Chinese man playing an instrument something like a marimba. "**That man has an inner life,**" he suddenly exclaimed and quickly got up to walk over and talk to him. How could he know this by looking at him from a table? Reps was an extraordinary, highly evolved man. How did the Zen master know (without words) that Hakuin had broken through? Actually, a highly aware person knows a good deal about another when first seeing him.

~ ~ ~

So, in doing the exercises in [*Heightened Awareness*], the reader is not in competition with anybody else and should not be compared to anyone else. He is developing his own potential. **As awareness grows, so does joy.**



From *Heightened Awareness*, excerpted  
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Good Karma Publishing

## Embrace & Release

### Retreat with Lisa Otero, April 2018

By Rebecca Paulson,  
Loveland, Colorado

#### The workshop in Colorado

given by Lisa Otero was a rich two days for all who attended, from all backgrounds and levels of experience. The sessions and discussion ranged from the extremely practical to the sublime – and sometimes both simultaneously.

I encountered both Lisa and other participants speaking truths that my heart and spirit were ready and yearning to hear. T'ai Chi Chih invites us to sink deeply and totally within ourselves while at the same time opening to an inner awareness that reaches out in sharing.

And isn't the flow of the *Chi* delicious? The week before the workshop I had been reading up, as I often do, on the motivational approach to letting go and clearing away the clutter and warehouse of memories in my house. I realized that I am continually striving and never quite arriving, so when Lisa led a discussion on the various themes in Justin Stone's philosophy, I wasn't completely surprised when she paraphrased "It's not about becoming; just *shed* what is preventing you from being." We often hear that TCC opens us to seeing who and what we were meant to be.

Are you striving, leaning in, pushing forward, trying, trying, trying? What are you struggling to become, reaching, reaching,

reaching into the future? The "be" is already here. We simply need to relax, let go and settle in to what is already.

Taken from that perspective, I looked back on every mention I noted from the weekend that supported the notion of *shedding* and sinking deeply into what is.

- Relaxing is everything. If you want to go deeper, get there by relaxing into the movements.
- Knowing comes from practicing TCC and it provides inner healing and growth. Your practice changes as you change; this is truly a transformational discipline. Allow the knowing.
- Developing awareness/attentiveness requires being open, with a beginner's mind. Let your life become a walking meditation, connected to what is all around you.

Be honest with yourself. What roadblocks can you find in your body, mind and soul that need to be released? Practically, we were encouraged during the workshop to really close each movement; let each movement be complete unto itself. Is this precept also true in life? If a season in your life's story is finished, let it go.

"Your body is an expression of your inner world. With TCC, we are invited to explore this truth, engage and embrace the real, and release what is done." Thank you, Lisa O. Thank you, Justin.



## The Marvel Of Moving Together

By Stephanie Copeland, Fort Collins, Colorado

**My first weekend workshop** (April 2018) came six months into my T'ai Chi Chih practice. It reawakened and gave personal meaning for the first time to an explanation of awareness (attention plus *prana*/movement) that I had heard two decades before during my study of Ayurveda.

In this TCC workshop, presenter Lisa Otero invited us to experience the beauty of a circle moving together. "Group practice is a special kind of meditation," she said, encouraging each of us to be aware of the movements of the practice-partners on either side and in front of us, with the intent of harmonizing the group's pace. Though "none of us is going our personal favorite speed," she said, synchronization is possible because "TCC teaches us to go within with our eyes wide open."

That was all I needed to soften my over-insistence on inner concerns, and allow receptivity beyond my own skin. At that moment I had a flashback to a process called double-arrowed attention, learned from my Ayurvedic teacher Dr. Vasant Lad. His *Complete Book of Ayurvedic Home Remedies* explains: "This is a process of looking outward and inward simultaneously... When you look at the object outside (and) at the same time... watch the watcher (within)... what happens... is that the watcher disappears... and you develop intimacy, relationship, with the object of perception."

This was mysterious and beautiful to hear, and it rang true as a possibility. While sitting cross-legged listening to his lectures I tried to imagine it happening. Now and then over the years I would recall it all as a tidy and foreign concept. But I didn't experience its meaning until I felt the melting of barriers that day doing TCC. What a joyful collaboration between my essential nature as one who learns through doing, and the dynamic way in which TCC delivers its lessons.

The Fort Collins community is rich with opportunities to do group practice, so the fun had only begun. Two days later in a morning class someone shared she felt that "those are my hands," referring I thought to her sense of being undifferentiated from three others moving within her view. Then after another two days, as our practice group flowed seemingly in unison, I saw so many faces filling with new light, and it gave me chills.

For me this reciprocal group awareness is a further way of letting go in order to realize something bigger. And as our community moves together deliberately and consciously as one, the ease is beyond thrilling.

# From The State of Emptiness ...

By April Leffler, Co-Host, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

“... **Man’s body is a body** pervading the Universe; Man’s voice is a voice filling the Universe; Man’s life is a life without limit.” This excerpt from the Lotus Sutra is quite profound and has powerful ramifications when we really sit with and consider it.

Shortly after announcing the Philadelphia location of the 2018 T’ai Chi Chih teacher conference, I asked people about their perspective on the theme, “Flowing From Emptiness.” People shared that “life empties us out and TCC fills us back up” and “life kicks the crap out of us and TCC cleans us out.”

These viewpoints caused me to consider the difference between feeling emptied out by life (as if exhausted or depleted) versus be-ing or flowing from the state of emptiness. Who knows? Perhaps we need to be depleted before we can be filled up from the State of Emptiness. You know, only the empty cup can be filled...

Suppose when we are flowing from the state of emptiness, we are aligned with the Cosmic Rhythm and things unfold joyfully and effortlessly. When we become agitated or dig in our heels we are, in effect, resisting the flow that supports and guides us rather than flowing with it.

No matter your perspective, the Intention behind the 2018 conference is to delve into the theme through presentations, movement refinement sessions and mindful, concrete activities. All will be interspersed throughout the weekend and remind us to empty out so that we can push the re-set button. We look forward to seeing you and to practice Flowing From Emptiness.



## Artsy Phartsy Philly

By Lorry Marcketta, Lakewood, New Jersey

**Excitement is building** as we near the tremendous conference date, so it seemed like a good idea to compile suggestions for those interested in Philadelphia art offerings on either end of the conference. There are so many wonderful places from which to choose, you just might have to move here.



The most obvious is the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Check their website for special exhibits and events. While you’re in the area, the Rodin Museum features the largest collection of Auguste Rodin’s work outside of Paris. Or tour Philly’s mural art. The muralarts.org program was developed to provide an outlet for young artists who were drawing graffiti everywhere.

For something a bit different, Studio Incamminati is a fine art school founded by Nelson and Leona Shanks. Galleries offer works by faculty and students. For more contemporary art work, check out Crane Arts, Philadelphia Art Alliance and The Center for Emerging Visual Artists.

My absolute favorite place is The Brandywine River Museum, an hour from Philly. It houses magnificent works from N. C. Wyeth, Andrew Wyeth and Jamie Wyeth, as well Howard Pyle and others. The divine cafeteria offers meandering views. But wait, there’s more. They also offer tours of Wyeth’s home and studio. An afternoon here renews my soul. Right up the street are the amazing Longwood Gardens. For more information see [visitphilly.com/tag/arts-galleries](http://visitphilly.com/tag/arts-galleries).

### Feel the Vital Force

V ision  
I ntegrated  
T eachers together  
A ccepting, allowing  
L ife’s journey

F avorite readings  
O pen mind, Open heart  
R etreat, receive  
C ommunity, cumulative effects  
E xperiences

### this summer, in Philadelphia

P rajna, principles, presence  
H eightened Awareness  
I nspiration  
L ove  
A ssorted teachers and topics  
D elight  
E nlightenment  
L earning  
P racticing  
H elping, hints  
I mpermanence  
A ttachment

### at the 2018 Teacher Conference

T ’an tien  
E nergy  
A llowing  
C onsciousness  
H ealing, habit energies, harmony,  
holding fast and letting go  
E ffortless  
R espect

C hi, circular, continuous  
O riginator  
N ow, non-attachment  
F low  
E ffects  
R enew commitment  
E ssence  
N ew ideas  
C oming together  
E nJOY

- KATHLEEN McALLISTER,  
BROOMALL, PENNSYLVANIA

## Simple Movements, Profound Effects

By Dora Wiemann, Albuquerque, New Mexico

**In a recent T'ai Chi Chih** beginner class I was teaching, practically all the students were so sincere that the class embraced the movements and were truly in moving meditation. In fact, they didn't want to leave that precious state and stayed immersed in the quiet for much longer than I expected, or even fathomed, that a group of beginners could possibly remain.

On the third week of class we began Daughter on the Mountaintop. As the hands crossed the class went right into moving meditation. I continued to give instructions and I thought, surely, they'd come out quickly. This was not the case. We finished the left side, took a little breathing break and went to the right side. Again, I was giving instructions and we were interacting as though nothing special was going on, but the room's quiet feeling was palpable.

I asked a couple of students what they felt, and we chatted. Everyone was still in the meditative state. I continued with Daughter in the Valley. The class was with me as we did the left side and then the right. Still, the entire class was feeling the peace and goodness of Life in that quiet, meditative space.

Finally, as we began Carry the Ball to the Side, the students were pulled out of the meditative state by the myriad instructions for the side-to-side movement. We had all changed in a beautiful and harmonious way. Feeling the weight shift, feeling the soles of our feet, we stayed grounded as we began experiencing life anew with this beautiful new knowing. Thank you, TCC.

Usually it's challenging to get the students to allow themselves to become quiet. This amazing group *loved* the inner quiet and readily and happily allowed themselves to experience that inner peace with TCC. Now the challenge is to get the students to allow themselves to see the quiet, the peaceful, the goodness in their everyday lives, and to help them know that the "inner" expresses itself in the "outer," too.

Thank you, Justin, for giving us the discipline of TCC that involves us in the world in such a special way. Such simple movements, such profound effects.

## A Tribute

By Susan Kenney, Carmichael, California

**Clifford, a man of sweet energy with a lightness of being,** a genuine humbleness. He embraced T'ai Chi Chih practice as if he had already known it. He often called out the movements, stooping low to read them off the page. He approached the practice with reverence and humility, gracefully accepting (even welcoming) small corrections suggested. Whenever there was a handout about the spiritual benefits of the practice, he listened with attentiveness and often nodded in agreement or thanked the reader for a new awareness.

None of us knew much about Clifford. He talked about living in Chicago. He didn't say much about his family or education. But it didn't seem to matter; he was complete as he was. Those who visited his tiny studio apartment remarked about its simplicity, its lack of a television, its spiritual feel. One observed that it felt like a monastery.

He usually travelled on foot by skateboard. When entering a room, he usually bounded in, exhibiting an innocent enthusiasm and anticipation. He appeared and acted much younger than his 44 years, but he had the depth and maturity of a much older person. The room brightened upon his entrance, just as our lives

were brightened by his presence. He left us too soon, left us longing for his presence, sweetness, energy. Each time we share the practice, Clifford is with us, squinting at the printed movements and sharing his joy.



## An Update

By Maya Campana Caudill, Campbell, California

**We are still teaching T'ai Chi Chih** and Qigong in the park with about 16 people. Our friends are happy and healthy doing the free practice twice weekly. All have learned through visual instruction and from being with us for almost 20 years. Some have gone on to become teachers with Darlene Karasik.

We are in our late 70s and early 80s without health problems, which we attribute to having an Indian Master for 35 years and doing 16 Pranayamas and 16 Asanas daily during that time. When we reached our late 50s and 60s, we were introduced to and switched to T'ai Chi Chi and Qigong by Joan who taught at Campbell Community Center.

I am so grateful for all that our Masters have given us, the blessings to continue our path and encouraging us to go forth and teach – including our last mentor, Justin Stone. The Vital Force has served a good purpose through the years, and we are grateful for the service. Thank you for your stance of faithfulness. Yours in Cosmic Consciousness, health, happiness, wisdom and realization.



# Joy Through Movement

By Sandra Babka, Lynden, Washington

**Why do I appreciate T'ai Chi Chih** “Joy Through Movement?” As a child, adolescent and adult I was not blessed with the physical strength or flexibility of an athlete. But I was active, perhaps hyper. I sat only to eat and to read.

In my early twenties, sugary foods made me tired and fuzzy-brained, so I eliminated sugar from my diet. I committed to a lifelong goal of living a healthy life. Then I came across a booklet “Why Grow Old,” with exercises to be done at home. I liked that idea. During my busy days as mother, teacher and wife, I always found time to walk run, bike, swim, dance, do aerobics and exercise at home.

At about the age of sixty I had the opportunity to take a TCC Joy Through Movement class. It was wonderful. I enjoyed the relaxing, rhythmic and gentle movements. Besides being good for my body, they created a meditative state, good for my mental health. Since then I have practiced T'ai Chi Chih in many places – on a hike, in an airport, a doctor's office, even standing in line. I can rock heel to toe rather unobtrusively. Once I finished the entire set of movements twice while waiting at airport for someone. The movements get my blood flowing, quiet my mind and encourage healthy breathing. The movements energize me.

Over the years I have recommended TCC to many friends and acquaintances. I am now 76 years old. My health is good. All my yearly blood panels are very positive. But I do have nerve damage affecting my lower extremities, causing pain and diminishing mobility and ability to exercise. Though it's a bummer, I can still practice Joy Through Movement to keep me as flexible and as strong as possible. Carmen's voice on her videos soothes me.

I appreciate that she reminds me to smile. TCC Joy Through Movement is a no-nonsense program for all ages and genders. It works. And it deserves all the accolades bestowed upon it.




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## Letting Go

By a Student in the West

**Of all the wonderful lessons** T'ai Chi Chih has taught me, let go is the one that has really changed my life. We know the mind alters *Chi*, and *Chi* alters the mind. As we learn to let go physically during our TCC and Seijaku practices, our minds are learning to let go too.

During my second year of practicing TCC, I was introduced to Justin Stone's *Abandon Hope*, that book with the grim-sounding title. I believe the let-go moments in TCC allowed my mind to open to the book's lesson – a lesson anything but grim.

While reading it I saw clearly for the first time, the futility of trying to change someone else's life. A friend had been making me party to her problems for many years, yet she never took steps that could have helped. I spent many sleepless nights worrying about how to help her, until *Abandon Hope* told me to let go of the hope that I could change her situation. Only she could do that, and she would have to change herself first. Suddenly I was free of more than ten years of worry. What joy I felt.

Shortly after finishing *Abandon Hope*, I attended a Learn Seijaku retreat. In Seijaku I learned to let go even more, and my fingers began moving with *Chi* for the first time. My teacher must have intuited that I would need Seijaku because a few months later, I was diagnosed with a dire cancer prognosis. But after the initial reaction of “I'm going to die” I thought about *Abandon Hope* and let go of fear and dread.

Justin talks about this in *Spiritual Odyssey*: “Grateful for being alive, enjoying the beauty of each new day, we can be ready to let go when our time has come.” I am grateful to Justin Stone, TCC and to my wonderful, caring teacher for this lesson. Thanks to them I do find joy and beauty in every day.

# The Rewards of Teaching

By Becky B Watkins, Alexandria, Louisiana

**I have been teaching** at our main library downtown here in central Louisiana, and often people come to the library on the bus when they have no other transportation. We are encouraged to offer free community classes through our nonprofit hospital.

Sixteen people from all walks of life come to class, and we soon stirred up the Chi together. One student in the enthusiastic class made a poster board with Six Healing Sounds showing corresponding hand movements and a broom for “sweeping water out the door.”

Another student also stood out. She was quiet, shy and stayed in the back. I realized during the second week that her front teeth were missing and maybe that was why she didn't say much. But then I realized something more important and humbling while doing Rocking Motion: she had two thumbs but no fingers. I talked about allowing daylight between the fingers and turning them up on the way forward and turning them down on the way back. Here I was, a white middle class woman talking about soft fingers and soft jaw and this beautiful African American woman had no teeth and no fingers. And her practice was soft and beautiful. Irma really got it early on.

During those eight weeks at the library Irma never missed a class and she came on the bus each time, sometimes in pouring rain. On the last week I invited the group to join me across town at the hospital where I work, where I'd be offering the course again and they could attend for free.

On the first day of class at the hospital, there was Irma walking across the parking lot from the bus stop. We exchanged big hugs. It's our third lesson and Irma still stays in the back, but her smile is radiant and I know she is benefiting from our time together. I've never felt so rewarded as a teacher or humbled. May you have an Irma in your class one day.

6 Healing Sounds  
3 times each,  
end with 5 Schwee's



## Soft & Flexible

By Victor Viereck,  
Cedar Grove, New Jersey

**Take spaghetti out of the box.** It is hard and brittle. It is lifeless and full of tension. Try to shape it and it breaks. Now take this spaghetti and add it to boiling water. Stir it so it does not stick. The spaghetti absorbs the moisture from the water. Slowly over time the stiff spaghetti becomes soft and flexible. It can now be easily shaped without breaking. This is what is happening when you practice T'ai Chi Chih. Tension causes us to become hard and brittle. Add some *Chi* to release this tension and become soft and flexible. Practice T'ai Chi Chih.

## Spiritual Reflection On TCC

By Becky Shinas

Awakened Heart  
Birthing New Beginnings,  
Dancing with the Universe in Wonder and Awe,  
Singing with Joy and Play,  
Sound the drum and Shake the tambourine,  
For Daughter and Son of the True Self is rising in Perfect Harmony,  
Ascending as the brilliant luminous form of One Huvinity,  
Ready, now, to carry our Heart Light out unto the trillionth star,  
Knowing just how Unconditionally Loved we are.  
Opening Up the Great I Am, in full and complete sweet surround sound,  
Finding plenty of Intergalactic Loving to merry-go-round.  
Anchored in the One Life Source,  
Delighting in the pure flowing Light of Graced Freeing Creativity,  
Simply to be the Chi I see in Thee,  
Yes, in Truth, all Love is given to You on its way to Me.  
We are all One Love embodied Divine to Shine. Shine. Shine.  
Breath in Abundant Life – Breathing forth Boundless Love,  
Radiating our shared Mystical Union,  
Allowing each their own Unique Healing, All is Alive, All is Home.  
Eternal is the Celebration Of Cosmic Chi.

# The Moment Of Weightlessness

By Celia Ortenberg, Oxnard, California

**When I was a young child** we lived near the ocean. On warm summer days we would go to the beach where the sky and sand would stretch out forever, and gulls would fly freely. There were swings there, huge gray metal structures with long heavy chains and black seats that would allow me to fly like gulls, to soar through the sky with a child's giddiness.

In the beginning my father would stand behind me and push ever so gently, and the rocking motion would begin. I would fly first down, then out and up, until gravity took hold of my toes and after a timeless pause, would allow me to fall back and up to where my father's ever protective hands would push me down and out again:

Push, Fly, Pause, Back, Push, Fly, Pause, Back.

And so it would go until my father stepped back and his strong hands would be replaced by that exquisite moment of weightlessness where once again gravity would hold me. It was an instant of knowledge that I had arrived at the top of my arc and would return down and up again. But there was that moment, the pause between up and down, between forward and backward, that held its own sense of being. Neither down, up, forward, back... simply weightlessness.

As I got older, and my legs grew longer I could run to the beach alone, find the swing, hop on and independently begin my rocking motion, always pumping to go higher and further, yet always with that pause of weightlessness on either side of the arc, until I would gently let my swing come to rest.

When practicing T'ai Chi Chih, muscle memory brings me back to those days with my father. Beginning with Rocking Motion, forward and back, with that same almost imperceptible pause of weightlessness that separates the two – ending one movement and beginning the next, back and forth, side to side.

I am older now and live by the sea once again. The gulls still soar and sand stretches to the sea. The giddiness of the swing has been replaced by the forward and back, side to side motion of life, reminders to slow down, stay alert, feel the motion accompany my practice. And I am grateful for all that is my life, my youth, my family, for the farthest star in the universe and for my TCC practice, teacher and community that holds the energy so gently.




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## An Ode To Gratitude

By Carmela Beck, Albuquerque, New Mexico

**I am very grateful** for having learned T'ai Chi Chih. And I am still learning, as I find that my practice has developed a spiritual component in addition to the physical and emotional benefits I receive. What keeps me practicing even when I don't feel like it is my strong sense of connectedness and reverence for all of life that I've experienced. A feeling of wellbeing bubbles softly in my body and mind, both during practice and afterward. It is one of the most important things I do for myself each day and I have learned to prioritize my practice. I make room for TCC by replacing other activities that are not as beneficial.

Like others, I was initially attracted to TCC to ease stress, painful sciatica and frequent low back pain from an injury. TCC has helped me heal in many ways, and has made me stronger, but sometimes challenges persist. During such times, I realize I cannot control everything that happens in life, but I can control and influence whether I stay present and grounded, and whether I choose to focus on the positive or the negative things in life. TCC brings me back to the importance of this awareness. It helps me make better decisions, find more joy in life, slow down and experience more patience, and help those around me. I really can't imagine my life without my TCC practice. I have learned so much and look forward to learning more and sharing the *Chi*. Thank you, Justin Stone and my TCC Teachers.

**HARMONISITIES**

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

Harmony intended, imagined  
 Harmony expected  
 Harmony anticipated  
 An energetic co-existing –  
 A combining of parts  
 creating the whole  
 assisting an attraction  
 of synchronicities  
 Diverse dreams  
 visions and hopes  
 Connect in surprising supporting ways  
 raising an inner consciousness.  
 The form and formless intertwine  
 Awareness influences moments,  
 movements and patterns  
 Filling in the puzzle pieces  
 of existence.

**SANDBOX FRIENDS**By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California  
(A brief biography of a friendship)

Crossing paths and becoming best friends  
 when our years were young.

Sharing paths, raising families  
 on our way from then to now at this retreat.

Traveling to distant shores  
 and faraway places,  
 enriching our cosmic view.

Adventuring on everyday excursions -  
 lunches, birthdays, happy times and sad,  
 balancing hearts and minds.

Teaching each other,  
 Ruth and Nina.  
 Healing moments.  
 Wisdom and friendship,  
 which all began on the edge of the sandbox.

**PEACE IN  
THE HEARTLAND**

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

The heart.  
 It starts there.  
 There must be some connection of personal  
 truths.  
 An innocence, an acceptance,  
 a welcomeness of stillness.  
 Authenticity unclouds and undisturbs.

Your own heart reaches out and  
 holds you joyfully.  
 You are full -  
 able to watch and let go.

All the while reaching toward another heart,  
 aware and alert, deeply calm and peaceful.

While resting,  
 the heartland grows in truth.

**SILENT BRIDGE**

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

The silence is a state of being.  
 Ever present.  
 Ever aware,  
 yet hidden by the noise.  
 We are used to the noise.  
 We become the noise,  
 all the while  
 we miss the void and the stillness  
 which create the bridge  
 from doing to being.

Sensitivity and curiosity exist  
 in our *Chi*, our life force, our breath.  
 Traveling that bridge of energy  
 brings internal peace.  
 Be the calmness in the center of the daily  
 storms

**CHI RETREAT**

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

Monastery in the dark dawn  
 welcoming the light.  
 The shapes emerge -  
 outlines of trees, plants, buildings.  
 Hills and houses in the distance.

My home for the weekend, Mt. Calvary.  
 Teachers have arrived and rested,  
 Ready to begin again.  
 Beauty in movement.  
 Movement in beauty.  
 Awakening forms, yin and yang.  
 Joyful balance.  
 Moving harmony.  
 Welcoming the light.

**LABYRINTH**

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

A lotus in the center,  
 The labyrinth unwinds.  
 It draws me in.  
 It knows my name.

I think of Thich Nhat Hanh:  
 Step harmoniously  
 Wear a Buddha smile  
 Soft breezes blow beneath my feet  
 Mystic flowers appear  
 Every step is peace

The hills witness the motion and emotion.  
 The trees hold sacred space.  
 The fountains play water songs.  
 The birds join in.  
 The sky is a soft grey blanket.  
 This early morning moment is divine relax-  
 ation.



# Annual TCC Retreats March 2018, Santa Barbara, California

By Pam Towne, Oceanside, California

**The annual Santa Barbara** teacher and student retreats both had the same theme: Flowing with Harmony. Sandy McAlister led us in exploring what that means. Harmony results from synchronicity. So, in the T'ai Chi Chih movements, when the upper and lower body move together in sync, we experience harmony. When we move together in sync with each other in a group TCC practice, we experience harmony. When we flow with the universal life force, we discover that we are in harmony with the universe.

We practiced slowing down, becoming more aware of how we were moving, flowing more from the *t'an tien* while grounded in the soles of our feet. Here are some observations:

### FROM THE TEACHER RETREAT

Ruth Slavin felt better equipped to give her students a deeper experience of TCC.

Judy Hubbell had gratitude for coming together with other teachers to talk about our practice and teaching.

Karen Goran appreciated focusing on her own practice instead of leading a class and experienced everyone's generosity of spirit.

Inspiration drove Nancy Johnson to coin a new word to reflect harmony in synchronicity, and wrote *Harmonisities* (see page 20).

~~~~~

FROM THE STUDENT RETREAT

Shirley Cross experienced connecting her hands with her *t'an tien* and learned that there's a lot more to TCC than she had thought.

Dorothy Tomilson found that consciously shifting her weight in preparation for a movement gave her greater stability.

Patty Waddington discovered a new degree of slowness in TCC that she can apply to the rest of her life.

~~~~~

It was brought home to me that the practice of TCC is indeed a journey. Sharing experiences with fellow practitioners, realizing we are all traveling on the same road (although by differing paths) was reassuring. Incorporating the nuances we were learning deepened my understanding of the flow of *Chi*. The kindness and encouragement from our teachers convinced me that I can continue my journey with optimism. I will always be learning, but the benefits and joy I receive along the way will be my reward for having taken that first step.

— MURIEL COLLIE

# Teacher Retreat March 2018, Santa Barbara, California

By Ruth Slavin, Ontario, Canada

**The photo taken at the end** of the retreat says it all: smiling relaxed women looking comfortable together, like a family.

Host Pam and leader Sandy did an amazing job of keeping us engaged. Our sessions were full of laughter, learning and sharing. The teachers gathered had years of experience with every type of class: disabled, drop-in, very large classes, small classes. And they shared excellent tips.

Some T'ai Chi Chih teachers isolated from other practitioners can get off track. I'm one of them, the only teacher in the Guelph, Ontario area. It has also been five years since my accreditation. I was doing some movements like Working the Pulley with my arms too far from my body. Everyone was gentle and kind about the corrections. I easily fixed this error and back at my classes in Guelph, I corrected my students who happily adjusted.

Apart from learning a lot and gaining inspiration, we were fed well, slept well and enjoyed the foothills of Santa Barbara. The retreat house is a calm, verdant venue. The monks who live there are kind and seemed happy to have us there. The cooks prepared wholesome meals, simple but well seasoned and delicious. We were invited to their regimen of silence from 10pm until after breakfast, and I really enjoyed that quiet time. It allowed for personal reflection and gave clarity around a decision I'd been struggling with, which led to action when I returned home.



This is the second time I've attended this retreat. It is a treat to be looked after for a few days amidst such beautiful surroundings, and to gain inspiration while learning how to better my classes and deepen my own practice. See you there next year?



# The Beauty of TCC

## March 2018, St. Paul, Minnesota

By Nancy Werner-Azarski, Co-Host with Ev Florin-Hanson (Minneapolis and St Paul, respectively)

**This teacher-only retreat focused** on the beauty of T'ai Chi Chih through discussion and moving. The time together allowed Sandy to meet our newly accredited teachers and for them to practice with her. Sandy invited us with the following: "Coming together as teachers for a weekend – sharing meals, working together to deepen our connection to our own TCC practice, sharing teaching skills, laughing together, sitting in silence together to appreciate the beauty of stillness – is a gift we can give ourselves for the enrichment of the journey we are each on." It is rare and special to gather together in a serene environment, with friends who are seekers and share a love of TCC.

The first evening was for introductions, discussing the theme and for Sandy asking questions/issues with our practice. Speaking about the beauty of TCC, some said: it is the same set of movements everywhere; it is relaxing-healing-grounding-peaceful-joyful; it provides connections to others and you can do the practice anywhere. As for questions about the weekend: we asked about specific moves, hands, elbow, pauses, seated TCC and inner sincerity. We also talked about the meditative effect of doing TCC.

Sandy answered questions, gave us feedback on our practice and discussed how to teach movements. During our lecture/discussion time after meals, we talked a lot about teaching and how to arrange our classes. We also discussed how to rebuild our local community as many people have recently retired, moved or withdrawn as active members. This discussion included how to be inclusive, welcoming and inviting as a community. During a break, some of us started planning our next student event.

Two new teachers were excited about meeting and moving with Sandy, having gone to events with Pam and Dan. It was fun to feel their enthusiasm, but it was also a good reminder to be grateful for our leadership team. We are all connected. Two of our teachers had to leave early, and it was a loss for those who stayed, an interruption for those who had to leave, but we remained connected. One teacher with a tough cough was worried that she did not get much out of the weekend until she did her Monday morning practice, when she really felt the difference. We received the gift of beauty; we received the gift of TCC.




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## The Way

By Eric Schoenfield, Colts Neck, New Jersey

**I have many thoughts** about T'ai Chi Chih. While these ideas may result from exposure to the teachings of Justin Stone and others, they are realizations that have developed over the past few years. These are the result of my total TCC experience.

The definition of TCC should be "The Way." TCC is not a study, exercise, program, religion or science. It is a way to arrive at a special place, time or state. I hesitate to define it more than that because we all may experience it differently. When TCC takes me to that place where the world ceases to exist, I become one with the beauty of nature that surrounds me.

TCC is most gratifying when it is experienced. Each movement, and each segment of each movement, produces a heightened sense of fulfillment when the movement and our mind and body become one. I often think of the jet pilot or racecar driver who merges with his or her machine. However, while the pilot takes his plane where he wants to go, TCC guides me along its chosen path. On these occasions the energy created remains with me long after I am finished with the practice.

When I began my TCC journey I did not allow it to become a chore. I decided to receive its teachings rather than study it like a schoolhouse discipline. I am glad I did. Hopefully it has made me a better person. It has certainly taken me to a better place. This is my experience. I would not be so bold to claim that each has an identical experience. Enjoy every moment of your journey and the people you meet along "The Way."

I received an email from the college letting me know that online evaluations from my winter T'ai Chi Chih class were now ready to view. One question asked what changes would you recommend in the course and why? A student responded, "No changes to recommend. There was nothing about this course that got on my nerves." Cracked me up.

~ ~ ~ ~

**After a discussion on grounding**, avoiding distractions and focusing on one thing at a time, one of my college students shared this experience:

The other day I was sitting on the couch talking to my sister-in-law on the phone. While she was telling me a story, I realized that I hadn't fed the dog yet, so I put the phone on speaker and went to put his food out. After I finished, I realized I completely missed the story my sister-in-law was telling me, and asked her to repeat it. We then continued our conversation for another hour while I sat on the couch without any distractions. But then, as soon as I hung up with her, I thought to myself, "Did I feed the dog?"

— SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

## It's Not About The Pants

By Donna Deffenbaugh, Prescott, Arizona

*One hundred thoughts swirl through my mind as I decide whether to once again take up a T'ai Chi Chih course. A formal class with instruction, correction, and probable solo demonstration of skills with critique? My schedule is loaded ... it's been too long since the last formal class... I won't be able to keep up... I'll likely be the oldest kid in class... and what about the pants? She settles on a class and the clothes, brushing past a well worn, now too-large pair of olive green cotton drawstring pants on her way out the door.*

**Earlier this century**, in preparation for my introductory TCC class, I examined my wardrobe for some "loose, comfortable clothing and supportive, flexible-soled shoes." Finding nothing wholly appropriate in my collection of flip-flops and boot cut jeans, I searched various shops. Many hours later, armed with one pair olive green cotton drawstring pants and two black velveteen T'ai Chi shoes, I felt ready.

Over many months of classes, I dutifully washed and pressed those cotton pants because when I put them on I was in the zone. They brought me down to earth; they set the stage for the centering, healing experience that TCC would become. On occasion, when returning from travel or otherwise detoured, the pants would not be ready. So, there were substitutes: stretchy yoga-styled pants, and even jeans one day, when making class on time was questionable. Then there was the black pair.

I branched out, realizing those beloved olive green cotton drawstring pants would not live forever. The new ones, too, were cotton, equipped with drawstring and loose enough to move in. They were too large, really, but with my long-legged profile it was a necessary compromise.



After class, my teacher (who was my dearest friend by then) noted my new look. She was so accustomed to seeing me in my TCC "uniform." She said with her big, always-from-the-heart smile, "Your pants, they're black, and really, really ... well, big."

It was true. Then we talked about pants: her dozens of funky, colorful, wild and crazy pants and my olive green pants and substitute big black pants. We agreed that sometimes donning a suit of clothes to get in the zone, in the spirit of things, makes a difference. In the end, though, it's not about the pants.

It's about awareness, slowness, softness, economy, circularity, continuity, synchronicity. It's about the desire to head to a calmer place, to heal and to help the circle in which we practice remain whole. It's never about the pants.

## Contacts

**Originator:** Justin Stone

**Guide & Teacher Trainer:**  
Sandy McAlister  
24835 Second St, Hayward, CA 94541  
510-582-2238 / mcalister19@comcast.net

**Teacher Trainer:**  
Pam Towne Duncan  
234 Hoover St, Oceanside, CA 92054  
442-222-8332 / pamtowne@gmail.com

**Teacher Trainer:**  
Daniel Pienciak  
PO Box 231, Bradley Beach, NJ 07720  
732-988-5573 / wakeupdaniel@aol.com

**The Vital Force:**  
P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199  
kim@kimgrant.com / 617-901-9628

**Good Karma Publishing, Inc.:**  
sales@gkpub.com

**T'ai Chi Chih Foundation:**  
PO Box 517  
Midland, NJ 07432

**Web Site Changes:**  
changes@taichichih.org

-  facebook.com/taichichih
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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)

### DATE / WHAT & WHERE / CONTACT

- May 10-13 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Prescott, AZ | Dana Diller | 928-848-0824
- May 11-14 | TCC Teacher Symposium w/ Sandy | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523
- Jun 1-3 | TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Dan | New Jersey Shore, NJ | Daniel Pienciak | 732-988-5573
- Jul 4-8 | TCC Intensive w/Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332
- Jul 26-29 | TCC Teacher Conference | Philadelphia, PA | <http://www.taichichih.org/conference-2018/>
- Jul 29-31 | Post-Conference Seijaku Basics w/ Daniel | Philadelphia, PA | Janet Oussaty | 908-635-1822
- Jul 29-31 | Post-Conference Seijaku Accreditation w/ Pam | Philadelphia, PA | Janet Oussaty | 908-635-1822
- Sep 25-28 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332
- Oct 4-8 | TCC Intensive w/ Dan | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523
- Oct 24-28 | TCC Intensive w/ Sandy | Colorado Springs, CO | Marie Dotts | 970-412-9955
- Nov 12-17 | TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam | Albuquerque, NM | Molly Grady | 505-280-4701

~ 2019 ~

Mar 30-Apr 5 | TCC Accreditation w/ TBD | Colorado Springs, CO | Marie Dotts | 970-412-9955

### ~ MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

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

Sep 20-23 | TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst | Albuquerque, NM  
Judy Hendricks | 505-573-0820

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Teacher  Student

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Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher

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

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