

# The Vital Force

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Justin Stone: In His Words

## Justin Stone Speaks

By Justin F. Stone

**We can consciously build ourselves in desired ways by making use of the knowledge** [discovered through the practice of T'ai Chi Chih]. The Chinese perfected *Chi Kung* disciplines. That is the circulation of balancing of the *Chi*, the Vital Force, to make possible this type of practice [i.e. TCC].

T'ai Chi Ch'uan, whose 108 movements are difficult to learn and sometimes to practice, is an ancient way of bringing about the desired results. And it is effective if mastered. I taught T'ai Chi Ch'uan for many years at various places including two universities, and still practice it myself regularly. However, few are motivated enough to learn all the movements and do them regularly. And my experience has been that T'ai Chi Ch'uan does not offer benefits until mastered.

On the contrary T'ai Chi Chih or Joy Thru Movement seems to bring results almost instantly. The very first time it was taught in New Mexico in [1974] a Catholic priest regained his sense of smell in the first session. I admit I was surprised as I have been so many times since then, because I first originated T'ai Chi Chih in the early 1970's and did not teach it until that first class in 1974. And I had no way of knowing what to expect from this discipline whose name literally means "knowledge of the supreme ultimate." – *From Justin Stone Speaks on T'ai Chi Chih, excerpted and reprinted with permission.*

Right: Justin Stone with Laurie Jacobi, Co-Coordinator of the 2019 Minnesota Teacher Conference; undated.



### As Justin wrote on his 75th birthday:

*"The best advice I can give to anyone who wants to be happy is, 'Just remember that this life is temporary, transient. So don't take it too seriously, and certainly don't become attached to it.'"*

Flowers on the Hillside –  
The First Snow.  
Life dies and is renewed again.

Striving, striving, striving –  
The years are soon used up.  
The brilliant rising sun will set when day is ended.

Evanescence – What is it that remains?

There is rebirth, but no one who is reborn.  
Life is constantly renewed, but as for Justin – who knows?

Walking thru the snow in great peace,  
there was no sense of destination.

Trying is not the Way  
Not trying is not the Way  
You say it must be one or the other,  
But I say  
Neither Nor

The Soul in (or as) the Breath.  
The breath as fire.

Seeing is not seeing,  
lonely the road home!  
Off the treadmill,  
brilliant the spring flowers.

Innumerable worlds, strung like  
pearls along a path of daisies.  
Listen inwardly;  
Hear the wordless song.

– From *Spiritual Odyssey*,  
available on [www.JustinStoneTCC.com](http://www.JustinStoneTCC.com).

**WWW.JUSTINSTONETCC.COM**

Justin’s T’ai Chi Chih teaching materials are alive and well! His published writings, instructional DVDs, and recorded music and spoken word are now available to all in perpetuity. The website for free downloads and for purchasing physical copies of Justin Stone’s teaching materials is in process. Its completion is expected by mid-June (and hopefully earlier). Please visit the new website to sign up for notification of its progress and special deals as items are made available. Students and teachers wishing physical products may order through the site; teachers will continue to receive the former discount.

**WWW.TAICHICHIH.ORG**

The principle public face of Justin Stone’s T’ai Chi Chih moving meditation needs to inspire and inform current and potential practitioners. It also needs to be supremely useful to connect students with teachers. This new website is coming along; it’s been exciting to approach a major refresh. Please email me by mid-March with your “pain points” – what do you need the site to do, in what order of preference, what are your priorities for the site? Thank you!

**CORRECTION**

The August 2018 article, “Help For PTSD“ has been retracted as it details a process improvement project that was misrepresented by the author as valid scientific research. The project did not receive Institutional Review Board approval, required to conduct a study with human subjects. The measurement tool used in the project for data collection was neither reliable nor valid to measure subjects’ responses, and so the data generated has no clinical significance. The project manager, who also authored the article, did not have permission from the Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center or the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to present the process improvement project as valid scientific research, or to publish the article. The Editor was informed of these facts after the article’s publication.

~ AS JUSTIN SAYS ~

**When the *Chi* flows freely and is balanced,  
the Cosmic Rhythm begins to move us.**

~ With gratitude. Kim Grant, Albuquerque, NM

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*The Vital Force*

~ Web Site Updates ~

The on-line database (for [www.taichichih.org](http://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

**What Does The Vital Force Do?**

- Produces a quarterly journal by and for its members
- Creates and maintains [taichichih.org](http://taichichih.org) for everyone
- 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.

~ Submission Guidelines ~

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to [kim@kimgrant.com](mailto:kim@kimgrant.com). A 1/4 page in this newsletter runs about 200 words; a 1/2 page is 400 words. We are always in need of photos and artwork. Please send high resolution jpgs, which the Editor will crop and edit. If you have 10-12 pieces of related artwork – calligraphy, drawings, photographs, or something that will reproduce well in B/W – please submit them for consideration in an entire issue. The Vital Force reserves the right to edit submission for length and clarity.

~ Giving ~

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

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- Donate by credit card via [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)
- Donate by check to: The Vital Force, PO Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199

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# Thoughts On TCC Movement

By Guy Kent, Albuquerque, New Mexico



**We all bring our “instruments”** to the music we know as T'ai Chi Chih practice. The symphony came through Justin Stone as composer and conductor emeritus. While the sheet music is defined, how we play our individual instrument is under our control. While violinists play differently, they do produce similar sounds that result in a pleasing rendition of the composition. As TCC

teachers and practitioners we, too, “play” differently. My concern is, when do we feel the need to “solo” and change the music?

**In my time with Justin Stone I came away with a few foundational principles.** He was concerned about the integrity of the movements – that they be taught and practiced in the manner he shared them. He didn't want TCC movements done carelessly. When leading, simply state the (proper) name of the movement, the number of repetitions and then call out the last one so everyone can finish at the same time. He felt that TCC practice, in itself, by itself, was a complete package. He placed his faith in the integrity of accredited teachers to follow these principles.

**Justin was flexible.** When he felt Circles within Circles was too difficult to teach/learn, he dropped it from the practice. When his experimentation with toning, the *jing* and fast-track yielded benefits, he enthusiastically shared these “additions” with students through Seijaku, leaving TCC practice intact. At the Tuesday teacher practice at the Albuquerque TCC Center, he included the *jing* as part of the practice but that was the only modification to the “19 movements and one pose” that I witnessed.

Sure, Justin may have agreed when asked about describing a “hip swivel” on the side-to-side movements or said it was okay to count to six on the mixing portion of “the lights,” but he never really deviated from letting TCC do (his) TCC. He didn't want one to get bound by words and descriptions.

This brings me back to my orchestra analogy. **Do you know how to perform TCC better than Justin Stone?** Are you entitled to change how the movements are performed? Yes, play your best rendition of the movement, but don't change the song. Let TCC do (your) TCC. Let us hold Justin's ideals such that when teachers gather three generations from now, there is one TCC symphony being played.

“ play your best rendition of the movement, but don't change the song

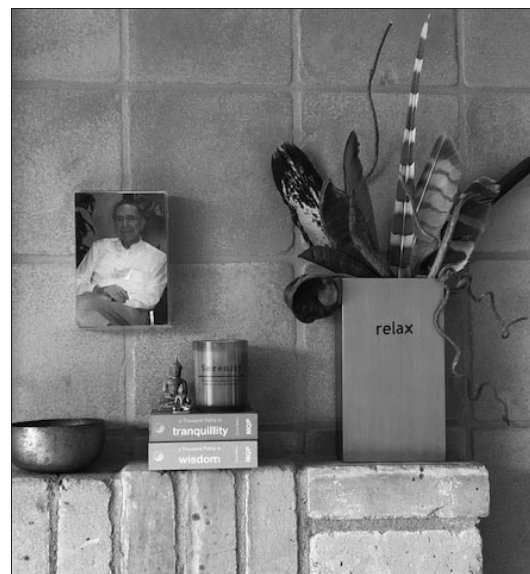
# Keeping Justin's Memory Alive

By Sheryl Adair, Atlanta, Georgia

**Seven years ago** on March 28, 2012, Justin Stone physically left us and left so behind much – books, CDs, DVDs, poetry, poetry form (pyramid poetry), art, music, meditation techniques, T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku. That is a lot. He speaks to us through so many mediums and, most dramatically, through his gift of daily spiritual practices (TCC and Seijaku).

**And yet there is more.** He left his words (sometimes “no words”), personal conversations, kindness (and scary corrections) and mostly his example. He never charged a teacher money. He regularly checked on a homeless man in Albuquerque. (How are you? Do you need anything?) He spoke to Folsom Prison inmates not down to them. He considered and treated TCC as a service to humanity – not a road to personal profit. He thought of teachers as treasures and jewels. I had limited personal exposure to Justin compared to many, and yet could go on and on. I was deeply impacted by each encounter.

**So how can we keep the uniqueness and selflessness of this special human being alive?** How do we inform our students of the *teh* (inner sincerity) behind our practice? I imagine my students get tired of hearing me talk about Justin, and my constant expression of gratitude to him. Still, I will do my best to keep his memory alive. Too much will be lost if we do not.



## Whoooo?

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

Whoooo I question?  
Whoooo are they?  
Those strange birds down below?  
They wear white robes like long feathers  
and walk slow, to and fro.

If they tried hard could they fly,  
like me?  
I haven't seen them leave the ground.  
They look like they have wings  
in those long gowns.

I've heard they are a flock of Brothers.  
Taking care of many others.  
Those Brother birds, whoooo are they?

## The Owl & The Satellite

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

Silhouettes in stillness  
against the fading light.  
The owl, naturally majestic.  
Alive even in rest.  
The satellite, modern and metal.  
Waiting for commands.

The owl flies solo with independence and grace.  
The satellite demands a village and still screws up.

The owl connects to the ancient and alchemical.  
The satellite requires technology and devices.

The owl relates to mother nature.  
The satellite relates to programs,

The great horned owl can meditate.  
The satellite can't.

Is there room for both?

## Putting Fingers To The Keyboard

By Donovan Rundle, Oxnard, California

**My wife, Jeneth**, forwarded the invitation to provide something for *The Vital Force*. "It's that time again: please put fingers to the keyboard to contribute your strong, clear voice to the next issue of *The Vital Force*."

I couldn't help noticing the phrase, "please put fingers to the keyboard to contribute" because this describes my endeavor of late for the T'ai Chi Chih group that meets with Lisa Otero at the UU Church in Ventura once or twice a month for Silent Circle Practice. The church has a decent grand piano, and whenever I am able, I "put fingers to the keyboard" to provide accompaniment to each of the 19 movements and Cosmic Consciousness pose.

It began as an experiment and allowing that the response from Lisa and many of the practitioners are veridical, it has been successful as an adjunct that conduces to a deepening of practice. This is only what I gather from my fellow students, and I enjoy the sense of mutuality. My own "inexperience" of the *Chi* guiding a vehicle (my body, as pre-instrumental to the music that emanates) produces an intuition that verifies this accompanied practice not only in my own being, but in the *Chi* consciousness enveloping the environment.

**I'm trying to say that "I feel *this* body and no other,"** but not by way of solipsism, but by way of a remarkable sense of the gestalt of *Chi* balancing and amplifying itself through the remarkable beings in the room with me. "I" am alone with All of them, and the *Chi* gently moves the music through my body, into all bodies vibrating along with the glad musical tidings. I am only extending what I heard so many times while practicing to the sounds of Justin's keyboard ruminations, which I understand and love.

All that I've done with music is brought to bear in this ultimate opportunity to serve the community – for my unique approach to playing to pour forth into the peace of a *Chi* that both moves in the cosmic dance and remains empty in the stillness and purity of consciousness only.

I am grateful to Lisa for this opportunity. I came to the piano as a college student. I am a victim of violent atrocity, including a severe bullet wound to my dominant hand. A doctor suggested I try playing the piano as a form of physical therapy. That was decades ago. Yet, while much of the damage was "permanent," the healing force works both on the level of impermanence with respect to the hand as a form, but also, the *Chi* vibrates beyond any consideration of time/space...and to dance with the music in that reveals a perfection that dissolves residues of evil which may continue to haunt the circuits and circus of my brain to an extent, even as I open to allowing the healing *Chi* to wash me clean of those violent influences.

Brain-washing of a sort can be bliss itself. For those of you who have expressed your gratitude to me at the event, you may be certain that it is my honor to serve that which is highest and best in all of us. Namaste.

*Where in the World Pulling in the Energy with Denise Clemen and Pete Gregory. Deathly silent except for the crackling salt beneath their feet in a "Thin Place" (aka Death Valley, California.)*





# When Is Soft Truly Soft?

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst., Albuquerque, NM

**Most of us have heard** the saying about not “seeing the forest for the trees.” Either we didn’t know what we were looking for or our perception did not match what we encountered. **The more we do T’ai Chi Chih and begin to see the elegant simplicity of the movements, the lighter we become.** We might even find that the way we have approached TCC is hilarious. We have tried to do what our teacher asked with no real sensitivity for what we needed to do. In the beginning it seemed like our movements were like monkeys fooling around rather than elegant swans gliding through the water.

Have you ever been confident that the book you were searching for was blue, only to find that it had a pink cover? That is similar to trying to perform our movements based on what our teacher has asked of us.

A perceptive teacher listens carefully to his or her students. Usually the student is very capable of describing how they feel – like a bag of bolts rather than the inside of a feather pillow. By hearing what the student is saying, a teacher can turn what the student is saying from *yang* to *yin*, helping a student feel the softness and curves of feathers rather than straight, hard edges of bolts.

Caroline Guilott taught us an important lesson during her talk at the 2017 Teacher Conference in Colorado, by **inviting us to feel the softness of a baby’s face by touching our own face gently with both hands curved around our cheeks.** In that moment many teachers felt softness for the first time in their practice. It was so important and helpful that Pam Towne used it as a teaching technique at our teacher accreditation in Albuquerque in November. I later heard one candidate (whom I sent to the training) use it in one of her classes. The power of the lesson carries the *yang* strength of the *Chi* as it teaches softness.

This is the beginning of exploring with students the softness of which we continually speak. The experience takes us out of the mechanical and into the feeling nature. This softness spills over into our lives and begins to lead us toward learning to love and share the *Chi*.

## 2019 International TCC Conference

June 27-30, 2019

Minneapolis Marriott Southwest,  
Minnetonka, Minnesota

By Linda Zelig and Laurie Jacobi, Co-Coordinator,  
Roseville and Minneapolis, Minnesota (respectively)

### Greetings fellow T’ai Chi Chih revelers.

When the Minnesota team elected to host the 2019 International T’ai Chi Chih Teacher Conference, we faced a mountain of decisions, not the least of which was the theme. We decided a variation of the previous theme – Encircled in

Chi – would work best and came up with **Return to the Circle.** As we play with the image of a circle and ponder, “What does it mean to return to the circle?,” we discover a treasure trove upon which to build the feel, look and programming for this conference.

Consider how we use the image of a circle in everyday phrases such as, “I’ll circle back to you on that.” The carols many of us sang this past holiday season have a dancing origin and were intended to be sung and danced in a circle. Think about sitting around a campfire. Have you ever sat around a rectangular fire pit? Rows and columns might work for a marching band or a spreadsheet, but we tend to practice TCC in circles. You can see everyone; it’s friendlier.

But a circle can also be a hole into which things are dropped and lost. Some circles are drawstrings that if drawn too tightly choke off life and light. As our committee considers what it means to return to the circle, we’ll look for ways to ensure our TCC community is an ever-expanding circle that welcomes everyone within and radiates outward with laughter, peace and joy.

Minnesota will fling open its arms to embrace the possible and attempt the impossible as we invite you to **Return to the Circle** for a warm and enriching embrace of friends, new ideas and invigorating TCC.



The 2019 conference materials, registration forms and hotel information are posted at [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) under the “Teachers” drop-down menu. You may register online or by U.S. postal service. Peek out from your winter hibernation and take a moment to register; it’s quick and easy. We are keeping the path shoveled.



# A Solid Foundation Allows Us To Shine & Grow

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California

**This is the 45th year** of the existence of T'ai Chi Chih. In that time a solid foundation has developed. TCC has proven itself to be a practice of multi-level benefits with far-reaching impact on those who practice regularly.

At a recent TCC retreat I facilitated, those present were asked why they practice TCC. Some comments include: "the inner peace I feel ... I can take it with me wherever I go ... simplicity and no frills ... opens me to connection with others ... enhances my presence and own self-worth ... it is invitational ... it is healing emotionally ... I become more aware and appreciative of what's around me ... I find it centering and grounding ... it has improved my health and made my life more comfortable."

Several people mentioned that they noticed an increase of awareness of the world around them and experienced a more open approach to others. What one person liked was the experience of practicing in a group and wherever the group was geographically, "we all do it the same," while another person said, "every time it is different." These two statements point out the beauty of the practice. No matter where you travel and find a TCC class or someone practicing TCC, the movements will always be the same. And while we each do the same weight shifts and hand pattern movements, moving in accordance with the principles, we will experience the practice differently, internally and emotionally. We each receive a gift from the practice that is tailored to our essence.

TCC has weathered some big changes over the years: the death of the originator Justin Stone; changes in leadership; the transformation of Good Karma Publishing (the company that brought us Justin's works of music, DVDs and books) into a new entity, [www.JustinStoneTCC.com](http://www.JustinStoneTCC.com), which offers tangible products and free downloads of Justin's writings and instruction. And yet the practice continues. We continue our yearly teacher conference, educational events of workshops, retreats and teacher accreditations. The Albuquerque Center, *The Vital Force* quarterly journal of TCC and the International TCC Foundation continue to support the TCC community.

When a storm blows and thunders around us we come back to our center and ground. The practice anchors us with an inner stillness and clarity, allowing the storm to pass by, and we remain flexible to the changes. It is all about the practice.

I think sometimes we don't take ourselves seriously enough. It is time for TCC to come out of the shadows and let its light shine. I've heard our practice referred to, with some derision as "created by a

Westerner" or "not the real Tai Chi" or "easy Tai Chi." Over time Tai Chi in China adapted and changed as different families and teachers gained a following. It is not unusual for Tai Chi teachers who come to this country to change the form to make it more adaptable to Western learning. Justin did the same thing, adapting from his experience of learning and teaching Tai Chi, to create a way of moving to circulate and balance energy that is accessible for almost anyone to learn – T'ai Chi Chih.

Many of our teachers teach to particular groups dealing with health issues, such as cancer support groups or people with Parkinson's. Last October a newly formed organization, the International Medical Tai Chi and Qigong Association held their first conference. Three of our teachers attended to ascertain if, in what way, this group may be of benefit to TCC teachers and the promotion of TCC. It sounds very promising. See the article on page 7.

The last Saturday in April each year is World Tai Chi & Qigong Day. We are missing the boat if we do not take advantage of this opportunity to showcase TCC publicly. Gather a group and spread the *Chi*.

Teachers, be confident in yourself, knowing that you have done the work to pass on this practice. It is a continuous journey of learning, experiencing and sharing. Be humble knowing you will never have all the answers or move perfectly; yet be vocal and active in your search for deeper understanding.

Always a student, be open to trying and exploring various ways to move and feel the practice. We do not all feel the same sensations or have the same experiences. Over time our bodies have accumulated experiences, injuries and health issues which demand of us to be aware and adapt. A way of moving that works for one person may not work for another.

At some point we may have had an injury and our body adjusted to protect the vulnerable area. Yet when we healed, we continued (sometimes unconsciously) to protect the past injured area when there is no longer any need to do so. This can limit the full use of our ability that we may now have. We may still move with fear when there is no longer any need to protect. Don't let unwarranted fear hold you back from your potential.

The same goes for TCC. Are we holding back in some way, afraid that if we mix with other organizations TCC will become polluted or diluted? This may have been a fear in the early years of TCC before a firm foundation developed, but now that fear is unwarranted. It is important to keep the form clean and clear, not mixing other practices into our teaching of TCC, but we have established a firm foundation and it is time to let TCC shine and grow.

Please visit the new [www.JustinStoneTCC.com](http://www.JustinStoneTCC.com)  
for Justin's materials.

## Dance Into The New Year With TCC & Seijaku

By Dan Pienciak, Howell, New Jersey

**This New Year began** on a sad note for me, with three family deaths, one of which was a sibling whose end seems a true tragedy. While the end of a life is a necessary eventuality that must be accepted, our human feelings still come strongly into play and can knock us off center (sometimes more than what might be a “normal” part of grieving).

I’m grateful my classes have resumed. I gratefully continue to share our wonderful and healing TCC practice following a holiday break. I have especially noted how the practice re-awakens the inner life of my soul and helps make the brokenness feel whole again.

While watching a feature about the actor, singer and dancer Gene Kelly, a few phrases caught my attention and reminded me of the importance of the practice and why it is so beneficial.

The commentator of this short “bio-pic” noted that Kelly “was grounded to the earth.” Sound familiar? I began my continuing classes in this new year by focusing on the importance of grounding after every movement, mentally and physically, being sure that students are *not just standing there with their palms facing the earth*, but that they *bend their knees*, at least a little, to bring the energy downward and *feel* the soles of the feet.

Gene Kelly said that he “always danced from the waist down.” **Moving from the waist down keeps us out of our heads and negates any effects of over-sentimentality.** It allows the upper body to relax and be soft, letting go of held-in emotional pain in the upper body, avoiding the possible ill-effects that holding on or holding in might have on the inner organs. It even frees up our breathing, releasing us from any inner bondage and/or physical tension.

It was also reported that Gene Kelly often advised his audiences, “You have to dance when you can no longer walk.”

TCC and Seijaku invite us into the dance of life, embracing its experiences as neither good nor bad, desirable nor undesirable. Life simply is as it is. I might not understand what has happened, but I don’t need to. What I do need is to surrender fully to the dance, and for us, to allow our practice to bring us closer into accord with Reality.

## The International Medical Tai Chi and Qigong Inaugural Conference

By Dr. Janet Oussaty (Hillsborough, New Jersey), Stephen Thompson (Tupelo, Mississippi) and Parker Reynolds (Strongsville, Ohio)



**On October 5 and 6, 2018**, the International Medical Tai Chi and Qigong Association Inaugural Conference was held at the Simches Research Center of Massachusetts General Hospital (Harvard University’s

Teaching Hospital) in Boston, Massachusetts. The purpose of the conference was to provide a venue to address the proposed Accreditation Standard Guideline initiative for Tai Chi and Qigong instructors and training institutions. The conference also served as a forum to exchange scientific knowledge of these ancient arts. Medical doctors, researchers, academics and practitioners (including three T’ai Chi Chih instructors) attended. The United States, Italy, China, Hong Kong and Australia were represented. Many attendees had practiced these ancient arts beginning as children and pursued medical science as fields of study, bringing great depths of knowledge to the conference.

An overwhelming number of research publications on the positive effects of Tai Chi and Qigong, particularly within the last decade, prompted the formation of the International Medical Tai Chi and Qigong Association (iMTQA) in 2018. A Medical Advisory Committee, Science and Education Board Members and Tai Chi Qigong Advisory Committee Members developed and published the standards as well as organized the inaugural conference also in 2018. It was a very busy year.

The Standards were designed to help practitioners better prepare to teach particular populations safely in medical facilities and also to help physicians refer their patients to qualified instructors. Online courses would be available for safety and for health interests such as health promotion, arthritis, cancer care, diabetes, hypertension and healthy heart, obesity and weight loss, pain management, wellbeing for seniors and stress and mental health. A number of online courses currently exist as a 12-credit Medical certificate in New York State from Dr. Penelope Klein, Professor Emeritus at D’Youville College.

The association would like to augment the fine teaching and training that is currently being practiced around the world. Its role is not to evaluate whether one form is better than another or duplicate what is already being done in training schools.

The gathering was warm, welcoming and collaborative. Our TCC practice seemed to be well received. Dr. Byeongsang Oh, CEO of the association,

CONTINUED ON P. 17

# Around The Platter Variation: Metaphor For Letting Go

By Judy Kistler-Robinson, Plano, Texas

**Last November**, I started teaching T'ai Chi Chih at a 55-year-old-plus retirement apartment complex. Thirteen students showed up to the first class; some left; new students came to subsequent classes; and now there is a reliable group of ten students every Saturday.

Because there were two new students at our first class in January, I offered instruction on each movement. After we did Around the Platter Variation, something new came into my head that I haven't heard any TCC teacher say (although perhaps I heard it, it entered my unconscious brain and then rose up to my conscious brain).

For Around the Platter Variation I've always instructed to "Pick up a ball, carry it and let it go." This time I said "You know how we carry our burdens on our shoulders, things we worry about or that frustrate or anger us? This time, let's pick up a burden at the shoulder, carry it forward and let it go." There were several surprised faces, but they all seemed ready to mentally pick up a burden from their shoulders and let it go. We replaced those burdens with Joy.

# My Connection With Push Pull

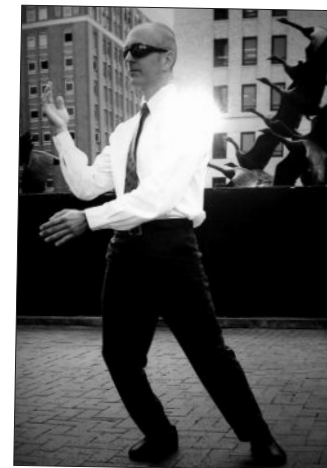
By Dorene Krause, Midland Park, New Jersey

**When I was a new student** of T'ai Chi Chih, Push Pull really spoke to me and it still does. At the time it represented letting go of what I didn't need as I shifted my weight forward, releasing my arms, and then drawing in positive energy on the return weight shift. The *tan t'ien*: my gentle navigator.

The visual I associate with this movement? This movement still takes me to the edge of the ocean where I practice whenever possible. I have my own very personal connection with the consistent movement of the ocean; the tide goes in and out. The waves roll in and out with their own unique rhythm and I find myself breathing the same rhythm.



This is one thing I see and feel that remains constant in the universe – each day and night, each season. **Oftentimes I connect with the cleansing the ocean offers (the letting go).** I allow myself to toss into the ocean what is negative and not needed, and I feel the renewal of the water as it crashes with positive energy and spills onto the sand. The Push Pull in nature, the Push Pull in my TCC practice.



## Where in the World

Above left: *Basic Pulling Taffy* with Dorene Krause, Dennisport, Cape Cod, MA; above center: *Push Pull* with Stephanie Copeland, Provincetown, Cape Cod, MA; above right: *Passing Clouds* by Wuji Wayfarer, Asheville, NC.  
Send submissions to [kim@kimgrant.com](mailto:kim@kimgrant.com).



# TCC Style Flash Mob, Just Because

By April Leffler, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

Over the years, I've often said to my classes, "Wouldn't it be cool to gather a group and break out into a T'ai Chi Chih practice in the middle of a mall during the hustle and bustle of a holiday shopping season?!" What would happen? Would people stop and watch, or pause and *feel*, or trample us down on the way to their next purchase?

After sharing this fantasy recently, Kathleen McAllister suggested a mall and two possible dates. We both knew the actual space within the mall would "feel right" – you know, *Prajna*. We set a date and emailed 20-plus teachers, asking them to share the invitation with their students (no matter their level of experience).

The first flash mob experience occurred on a Saturday morning in the King of Prussia Mall. We practiced in a circle surrounding a two-story reindeer glowing with white lights. Some shoppers thought we were worshipping the reindeer; others stopped and watched the practice; a few kids screamed with delight as they skipped past. Available flyers described TCC, referring potential practitioners to [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org). Although the mall wasn't nearly as busy as we envisioned, it was fun to infuse it with calm and grounded *Chi*.

We held an encore performance at a different mall during lunchtime on a weekday. People were once again invited to spread the word and join us. We all faced the same direction and again did the entire (six repetition) practice.

We don't need holidays to spur a TCC flash mob. Gather your local TCC community and have a flash mob "just because." Let's infuse the *Chi* throughout our locales "just because" ... and see what happens.

## Below are some comments from folks who attended:

The first flash mob brought pure joy, practicing to Christmas music with kids running by excited for Santa, shoppers watching over the upper floor railing, people taking pictures. The second was very powerful, as if we created a quiet bubble and were inside, in the middle of holiday hustle and bustle. – KATHLEEN

I loved that people could see us from back and front, and from overhead and from the stairs. Since I was on the edge of the group I answered questions and handed out information. – SARAH

I was shocked by how calm I became when we began to move. I heard voices of passersby and watched people who stopped to watch us, but I continued to feel the soles of my feet and to feel my *t'an tien* calling the shots. Thank you, Justin, for this amazing practice. It was one of the greatest examples I've ever encountered of serenity in the midst of activity. – JESSICA



When I first saw April's Facebook post about the flash mob, my heart felt a spark of joy. I jumped at the chance to practice in a different kind of space. But as we began, the place no longer felt so different; the *Chi* seemed to form a loving and familiar aura around the group. I was only barely aware of shoppers who'd stopped to quietly observe us and appeared drawn in. – Lorry

What struck me was how quiet our end of the mall was and how foot traffic around us slowed and even stopped in some cases. Pauses are significant. – JIM

I thought it would be difficult to focus with music playing and people walking around. But when we started following April, I was gradually not as aware of the music or the mall. – MARION

These mall flash mobs are a fun marketing tool to share TCC with the public. One mall store clerk said that it was a great idea because of the anxiety associated with this time of year. – MARCIA



I do not practice TCC but attended to take photos and videos. I felt very much in the moment, attending to my task and taking in the sights and sounds. I watched from various vantage points, capturing different poses and participants; the practice appeared effortless. The energy around me grew larger, fuller, deeper. It felt as if a gentle snowfall had started. At one point, facing the participants, the practice felt too sacred and private to capture on film. I honored that, pausing before capturing any more photos. It was really very remarkable.

– MARTHA TIRIRIS



# Unexpected Consequences

By Linda Worlton, Gold Canyon, Arizona

**The T'ai Chi Chih accreditation experience** this past November in Albuquerque was transformative. The joy of doing TCC – with 16 or more dedicated people twice a day over the period of one week – changed my mood and my outlook about myself. I also believe it changed my view of myself as a teacher.

I had been “performing” as a substitute TCC leader to an established group for several weeks prior to accreditation, but I had not experienced the joy in the movements that others had described. Why? What was I doing wrong? It affected my mood; I frequently became tense.

At accreditation, I thought this mood was due to the inherent pressure in being a teacher candidate and ignored it. It got worse as the week progressed. I kept hearing the words, “let go” in corrections from auditors. I felt my body was loose, so I was letting go. Then, an auditor said to me, “This is strange. I see you smiling and happy when talking to people, then you start a TCC movement and I can’t see you anymore. Where are you?” Wow. When I “performed” the movements, I became somber, expectant (will I perform well enough?), fearful (would they accept me?), self-critical (I’m not good enough to do this). The auditor’s statement opened my eyes to self-criticisms I thought I’d abandoned.

With this awareness, and the love and support of those around me, my mood began to elevate. I could feel the openness to help from everyone. I found myself cheering inside when someone who was having trouble with a movement broke through and got it. This was pure joy.

This deepening of the TCC experience is helping me to discard layers of “survivor armor” I feel I’ve had to wear for most of my life. With the help of this deepening *Chi*, I feel I am pulling back emotional layers (habit patterns) that I no longer need, and I am finally able to see pathways that can lead to my more authentic self. I feel this will make me a better, more sensitive, confident and aware teacher and person. This is the time to let go. I now have the awareness to do it.

I am so grateful to Justin Stone and his gift of TCC for teaching me a way to live my life more fully and with so much more meaning. In gratitude:

awareness  
in the  
soles leave fear  
no room  
now

# It’s All Contagious

By Amy Moody, Durango, Colorado

**Teacher accreditation was all I hoped for – and more.**

Tips on moving, teaching and marketing gave me greater confidence to go out and teach T'ai Chi Chih. I also enjoyed many other benefits.

The softness in my movements increased significantly just by being in the same room and practicing with Pam and the teacher-auditors for a week. It’s contagious.

I learned to really ground through observations, discussions and practice. This makes a huge difference in balancing the *Chi*.

I’m a private person and not one who enjoys a lot of group activities. However, the bonding between aspiring TCC teachers, auditors and the instructor was one of the best things to come out of the course.

I came away with an even greater appreciation for Justin Stone and I am even more honored to help bring TCC to others. Justin believed TCC (as a spiritual discipline) could help change the world. It is my intention to provide this gift, this tool, to as many people as I can.

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# Amazing, Inspiring & Invaluable

By Eileen Magnuson, Bainbridge Island, Washington

**As I look back on** my teacher accreditation week with Pam, I am amazed at the variety of candidates and teacher auditors who attended. We came from all over the U.S., some young, some old and many in-betweens. We came from all walks of life and beliefs. We all had our stories of how we “found” T'ai Chi Chih. It felt like particles of the universe came together to form a special world of TCC in Albuquerque that week.

Each day we focused on different aspects of our practice and on being mindful, connecting to the earth, weight-shifting and flowing from the center. That was invaluable. Our teachers helped us to find words and descriptions so that we could pass along what we learned to our students. I treasure each moment spent learning with my fellow candidates and the superb teachers who patiently helped us to become teachers ourselves.

The sharing of wisdom by those who knew Justin and practiced with him for many years was inspiring. Being able to see his artwork and to hear stories about him and about TCC plans for the future at our graduation dinner was awesome. I am so grateful to be part of the TCC community, and I will remember that week forever.

## What... Me... Teach?!

By Shari Holmes, Albuquerque, New Mexico

**I've never been a teacher.** I've never wanted to be a teacher. Several years ago, when my T'ai Chi Chih teacher suggested in passing, "You'd be a good teacher," I thanked her and dismissed the idea pretty quickly. But she had planted the seed.

As I became more aware of the tremendous benefits that TCC provides, I began wanting to spread this knowledge. With the help and support of Carmen, my wonderful teacher, I set out on the long path to becoming an accredited TCC instructor.

After accreditation in November, I wanted to use what I had learned while the lessons were still fresh in my mind. I signed up to offer my first class right after the New Year. I sent a flyer to friends who had expressed interest in learning TCC and got twelve students including several new people.

Would I be nervous? No. Teaching is fun and I love it. Would I know what to teach, and how to teach? Yes. I was well prepared thanks to years with Carmen and Dora, and because of what we learned during accreditation from teacher trainer Pam and the other experienced auditing teachers.

There are challenges, of course. Sometimes I can't put my hands on a quotation I want to share because it's buried somewhere in Justin's books, DVDs and my hand-written class notes. I printout handouts and forget to hand them out. I get home from class and suddenly remember a really important tip I forgot to share about a new move. When I do my own practice, I find myself analyzing every movement from a teaching standpoint, even making notes, rather than grounding myself in the practice.

These will iron out in time, as I gain experience. I attend as many classes, reviews and practices as I can, to keep my own movements correct and to continue learning how to teach. Every practice is a learning experience.

But the important question is: are my students learning? Yes. They are beginning to relax, to feel the movements, to move with softness and continuity. A whole room full of students moving in harmony is a beautiful sight.

## I Can Now Teach!

By Rachel Rilinger, Kansas City, Missouri

**It's official** – and it is with great spirit and *Chi* that I submit this article. I feel abundant *Chi* helping me every moment (especially writing this right now). I was introduced to T'ai Chi Chih many years ago by my aunt, Terry Jennings, and I began practicing regularly about six-and-a-half years ago (including with my son in utero). Since starting my practice, I have wanted to grow in my practice, but above all I wanted to share this tremendous gift. Countless people have asked me what I am doing and could I teach them, and I was always disappointed when I couldn't teach them. I would refer them to the website and other teachers. But now I can teach. I am so excited to share the joy and health benefits that Justin and this practice helped bring into my life. And I look forward to sharing my stories of sharing the *Chi*. I have a few projects in mind: sharing at a camp for people with disabilities where I have been volunteering for 16 years, at a women's shelter, in a prison, at a substance abuse treatment facility, at the psychiatric hospital, with people at my climbing gym and more. Thank you to all my teachers who helped me to get here.

## Thrill & Agony

By Lynn Porzig,  
Wilsonville, Oregon

**Teacher accreditation allowed me to** experience both the thrill of victory, in the "aha" moments when the *Chi* flowed without effort, and the agony of defeat when my movements fell apart (especially when attempting to mirror Six Healing Sounds).

### An Experience

an opening of my heart,  
making friends with the *Chi*,  
and finding my voice.



Front Row: Shari Holmes (Albuquerque, NM), Ruth Smith (Carmel, CA), Amy Moody (Durango, CO), Eileen Magnuson (Bainbridge Island, WA), Edna Hunter (Willis, TX). Middle Row: Connie Lapp (Albuquerque, NM), Linda Worlton (Gold Canyon, AZ), Lynn Porzig (Wilsonville, OR), Lauren Paitson (Sault Ste Marie, MI), George Manning (Sacramento, CA), Rachel Rilinger (Kansas City, MO). Back Row: Guy Kent, co-host (Albuquerque, NM), Molly Grady, co-host (Albuquerque, NM), Monica Cejudo (Montgomery, TX), Pam Towne, trainer (Oceanside, CA), Silvia Yueh (Plymouth, MN), Patty Waddington (Concord, CA), Carmela Beck (Albuquerque, NM), Benjamin Brisjar (Pittsburg, CA).

# Climb The Joyous Mountain

By Justin F. Stone

## Pyramid Poetry

Haiku, the Japanese 17-syllable poems, have become exceedingly popular in the West. Many translations (some in rhyme and some not) of Basho, Buson, Issa and other poets have appeared. Frequently, Westerners have attempted to write in the familiar three-line (five syllable, seven syllable, five syllable) manner, but they have discovered that haiku does not lend itself readily to original works in English.

The Japanese language has a different construction from English; traditionally, Japanese syllables (*hiragana*) rather than Chinese writing (*kanji*) are used in haiku. Seventeen syllable poems in English usually appear stilted and without impact.

To meet this difficulty, I have invented a form I call Pyramid Poetry. (Actually, the shape of the poem is more like a diamond.) The first line has one syllable, the second two syllables, the third three and the fourth four. Then the fifth line has three again, the sixth only two, and the seventh and last line has only one syllable. Ideally, the last line should be explosive, or at least put a powerful climax to the poem.

The construction looks like this:

```

  —
  — —
  — — —
  — — — —
  — — — —
  — —
  —

```

An example:

```

  the
  stif_ ling
  heat is gone
  how wel_ come is
  the sud_ den
  sum_ mer
  [rain]

```

This, perhaps stronger, poem has a more powerful last syllable:

```

  try
  to pray
  keep_ ing naught
  but thoughts of God
  and no more
  thought of
  you

```

These are fun to make and seem to be relatively easy in English or Japanese. At times students and I have spent an entire evening composing, and reading aloud, these Pyramid Poems. I recommend this activity very highly. Turn off the television and come to life, offering a little creativity. We have gotten so used to spectator sports and television dramas that actual participation may require a particular effort. No matter. Let some experience come to the surface and try to express it in this one, two, three, four, three, two, one syllable form. You may surprise yourself.

```

  oh
  restless
  saffron monk;
  just what do you
  hope to gain?
  you must
  die!

```

```

  how
  can we
  hope to build
  a better world
  unless we
  change our
  selves?

```

## Pyramid Poems On Silence

From a TCC Retreat with  
Carmen Brocklehurst,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

```

  calm
  still grace
  feel your heart
  alive awake
  move with ease
  mindful
  bliss

```

— CHRIS ROTELLA

```

  with
  silence
  comes quiet
  no chatter here
  only sound
  nature
  now

```

— BROCK

```

  shhhh
  listen
  silence calls
  only heart beats
  overflow
  my cup
  peace

```

— CR

```

  clear
  blue sky
  my footsteps
  and the bird's song
  in such sync
  alive

```

— CARMELLA

```

  sigh
  silence
  all quiet
  eyes meeting eyes
  speaking love
  running
  deep

```

— DENISE CLEMEN

```

  the
  silence
  coming from
  deep inside us
  deafening
  roaring
  sound

```

— ROBERT

```

  I
  welcome
  silence time
  to reflect and
  stop listen
  feel and
  be

```

— GAIL HORLICK

```

  let
  silence
  wash over
  your whole being
  deep freeing
  inside
  you

```

— CAROLINE GUILLOTT

```

  oh
  justin
  how you bless
  universal
  love showers
  freeing
  us

```

— AMY TYKSINSKI

```

  new
  silent
  energy
  clearing the way
  making peace
  inside
  me

```

— SANDRA LAWSON



## Joy is Man's Heritage

Pleasure is a reaction. You have just fulfilled some desire, experienced a sensory or psychological gratification, or had some suffering lifted from your shoulders. In each case the pleasure is temporary, and must be renewed again and again if we are to pursue the familiar pleasure-pain syndrome throughout our lives. Where the pleasure has been achieved in an illicit manner, it is an invitation to future pain. Pleasure and pain are the two sides of the same coin, and we cannot eliminate one while we endlessly experience the other.

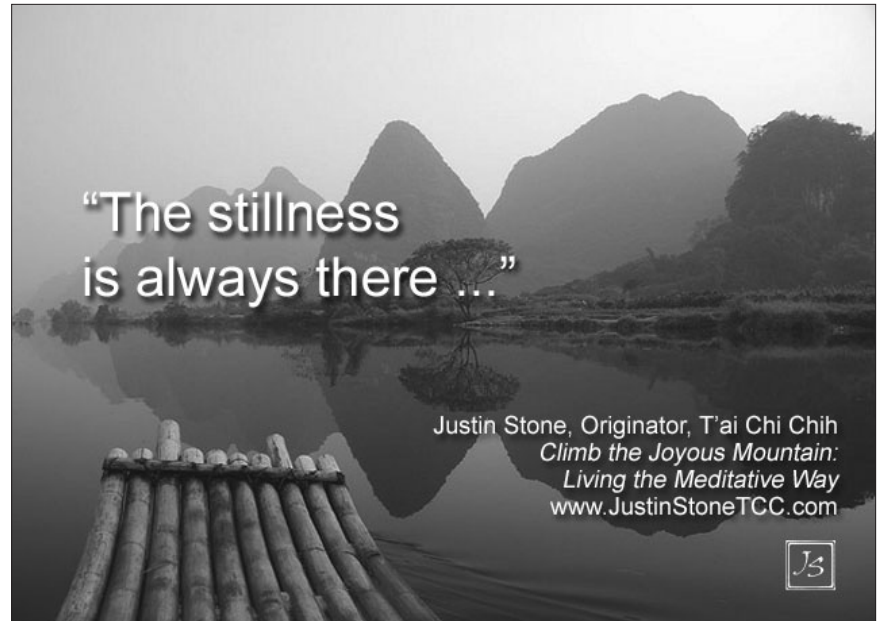
Besides, just as the Chinese *yang* eventually turns to *yin*, pleasure indefinitely extended becomes pain. To want something and not get it is painful; to acquire it and then worry about losing it, as in jealousy, is even more painful. There is no up without down, and there is no pleasure without pain.

Joy is your natural state, although it is usually clouded over. When the Mind returns to its natural condition, you are joyful. Such Bliss is not the result of anything. "To the Mind that is still the Universe surrenders." The Life Force itself is joyous. All we have to do is get ourselves out of the way and enjoy it. This is not difficult for animals and plants, but few humans achieve the natural and the spontaneous.

As our lives become more and more artificial, we depart from our natural state of mind and become devious, seeking to manipulate what really cannot be manipulated. The search is for ease, and endless inventions lead us in the mistaken search for such ease. We cease to make effort and become totally undisciplined. Granted untold leisure, we make the search for diversion our total goal, hoping thereby to affect a state of continuous gratification where we do not have the pain of facing ourselves.

We search for such gratification in objects and status, just as we search for knowledge by always looking outward. The scientist, with the aid of modern telescopes, pushes the frontiers of the universe back, totally neglecting to ascertain who it is that is looking through the telescope. So in the search for outer knowledge, the mind is clouded over and we lose our natural heritage of joy. The worship of words and facts goes on to the point where we have the radio, television and computers talking to us twenty-four hours a day, stunting our sensibilities with an outpouring of inane language about so-called news. (Any act of the human condition becomes "news.")

Education is envisaged as a storing up of great masses of words, as though life experience only exists in terminology. If we cannot define it, if we cannot isolate it in words, it does not exist. Most scholars have reached the point where they seriously believe anything can



be achieved with words. Philosophers play intramural games with each other, and theologians seek to pinpoint that which has not become part of their own existence. God is drowned in a sea of words, often by clergymen speaking of the poverty of the son of man while being careful to keep their expensive custom-made suits immaculate. A Sufi teacher wears a rough, mended cotton costume over his Parisian clothes, elegant buckled shoes sticking out incongruously from under the hybrid costume.

All are full of words, although they cannot teach their listeners to have the electric experience of entering the crucible. We take away words from sermons and classes and are lost as to how to implement the experiences we have heard about. Rare is the teacher who leads his pupils to their own experience, giving them the tools whereby they can achieve the disciplined state necessary to allow the mind to return to its natural condition.

We repeat the mantra of knowing, as we read it in a weekly magazine, but we do not become the mantra. Today we are drowning in words. It would be a blessing to destroy all televisions and computers and do away with freeways, and to once more turn back to the heart of the universe for our guidance.

How many allow themselves the pleasure of hearing rustling leaves and honking wild fowl? We pay homage to Thoreau, but we follow the example of Babel.

We usually employ the excuse that we have no time. But we have made our lives. We can be joyous if we are worthy of it. We must always remember the lesson: without changing the causes, we cannot expect a different result.

From *Climb The Joyous Mountain*,  
excerpted and reprinted with  
permission. Now available on  
[www.JustinStoneTCC.com](http://www.JustinStoneTCC.com).

# Physical & Emotional Awareness After TCC Intensive

By Rose Brown, Livingston, Montana

**It is now been three weeks** since attending a T'ai Chi Chih Intensive, and I still remind myself to balance my weight on the “dimes” of my feet and direct my attention to the soles of my feet regularly throughout my day, as teacher Marie Dotts taught me. Buddha taught that if one could keep their attention in the soles of their feet – whether standing, sitting or lying down – they could heal a thousand illnesses.

Grounding and body awareness has never come naturally for me. At 35 years old, I have spent most of my years letting my dreamer consciousness travel beside, above or beyond my physical body. Who knows where. “There is nothing to think about,” a Tantric Buddhist teacher once taught me, and I interpreted his wisdom as encouragement to continue on my ungrounded path. *Gate Gate Paragate Parasamgate Bodhi Svaha* – Beyond, beyond, more beyond, even more beyond, Amen.

But my TCC teachers at the Intensive in Colorado made it clear immediately that my tendency to ignore my body and feelings is not compatible with progressing in TCC. Gently and firmly, Marie and Sandy McAlister encouraged me back into my body awareness. Practicing the movements in this way often led to emotional release, accompanied by excitement and gratitude for the ability to feel something, followed by feeling overwhelmed and discouraged by how much effort it took. I thought TCC was supposed to be effortless.

As I puzzled over what I was learning, I realized that in my personal spiritual journey I had lumped non-thinking with non-feeling. My pursuit of non-thinking awareness had brought me to no awareness. I naively considered myself quite the expert at emptiness... whereas the TCC practice I am now learning leads to emptiness and non-thinking awareness through deeply feeling one's physical and emotional presence. “Feel with your mind,” Sandy told us. Wow. That's far out. (And still grounded.) What a difference.

On my way home to Montana from Colorado Springs I called my original TCC teacher and dear friend, Christeen McLain. Before I knew it I was crying tears of discouragement (in a crowded airport) as I explained all the ways I had been doing it wrong, and how disappointing it was to realize how much transformation I still needed before becoming a teacher. Christeen listened so supportively and it felt good to release this sadness and allow it to shift into a celebration of gratitude. I now have tools to support the transformation I have been yearning for.

Another time while verbalizing my experience to a dear friend, I broke out in tears explaining it had been a very long time since I felt such respect for a teacher or method, and really opened myself up to learning something new, like I did at the Intensive.

As I continue to process and reflect on my experience, I understand that my personal addiction to escaping my body is rooted in my impulse to avoid emotional discomfort. But now I can use practical grounding techniques to stay present in my body and feelings, notice the uncomfortable emotions as they come up, and deal with them in other ways (like honest expression, emotion code or *reiki*). This takes discipline and courage, but I've discovered that the emotional presence so scary all my life is actually exhilarating and satisfying. Being physically and emotionally present is not just a worthy aim, it is actually one of the deepest desires of my being. I don't want to be emotionally insulated and protected. I want to be understood. What an immense gift this realization has been.

With this newfound commitment and satisfaction in staying present comes great hope that I can joyously move through some personal, recurring obstacles. Thank you Sandy, Marie, Holly and everyone at the Colorado Springs Intensive. I *am* enjoying the journey.

*Left: Justin Stone's November birthday celebration in North Plainfield, New Jersey*



# Holistic Nurses' Experiences TCC at National Conference

By Andrea Skillman, Gurnee, Illinois

As an accredited T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) instructor, I feel compelled to teach this magnificent form to students wherever I find them. I was introduced to TCC at the local community college by Donna McElhose, a teacher with the vision to create a strong TCC presence in our community. Once I became accredited, I began teaching TCC at my long-term care facility. Though some residents would fall asleep during class, they became upset if I was too busy to teach that day because they had looked forward to it all morning. I learned that *Chi* does its beneficial thing, no matter what your functional level at the beginning.

Working in my next position in home care, I taught veterans who were "fall risks" to do TCC. After learning TCC, their "fall rates" were well below peer averages. With some modified safety measures (like holding onto a couch behind them or a chair in front of them) some vets could stand for short periods. They had huge functional improvements from using a chair.

In 2005 the American Holistic Nurse Association (AHNA) was looking for a T'ai Chi teacher for their national conference, and I offered to teach TCC. Amazingly, they knew all about TCC since their previous teacher had been teaching it. TCC was exactly what they wanted. Thus began over a decade of teaching this fascinating form to holistic nurses annually. I bring articles, books and DVDs to spread the joy.

A few years ago, I discovered I had many regulars attending my early morning classes, some who practiced on their own during the year. Since they were already energy workers, they loved Pulling Taffy to feel and play with energy they are well trained in. I have never found a group of inexperienced people who are so present and aware of their bodies. They moved effortlessly from the get-go. I'm also astounded that they generally stayed with me – not speeding up without self-correcting. **I don't teach TCC. The TCC does the teaching. I am only the conduit.**

At one point I wanted to take an early morning class offered

at conference. When the AHNA office said I had one of the most popular classes and asked if I would reconsider and teach every morning during the conference, I did. And I continue to do so.

TCC has been a benefit I have been able to offer in multiple sectors of my nursing career. My yearlong TCC class for the post-traumatic stress group at Veterans Affairs showed strong improvements. And starting in February 2019, our facility will begin offering TCC facility-wide.

I look back to that happenstance day when my boss invited me to attend an evening TCC introduction at the community college, when I discovered one of the best teachers in the land. It has been such a joy to have various niches for TCC and to find the welcoming holistic nurse community to share my passion. Below you can see some student feedback I get back annually.

## 2017 & 2016 AHNA Evaluation Ratings (1-5 scale) & Comments

Importance of self-care practices to wellbeing of self and other: 4.87 | 4.40  
Effective speaking: 4.95 | 4.72

- Really enjoyed the session, as I have only been exposed to video Tai Chi sessions, and this was so much better. The energy in the room was so strong and peaceful. As I have gotten older, I notice that I don't have the strength and balance that was so easy in the past. This gave me back that feeling.
- Thoroughly enjoyed the experience and intend to use it more often.
- I was very motivated to incorporate this practice into my everyday routine. I felt energized after this class.
- First experience with TCC.
- Greatly enjoyed. Have done Tai Chi in the past but it's been a while. Reminder that this modality is a self-care tool I should utilize regularly.
- Very helpful way to relax and reenergize.
- Great experience and great way to start the day. I had never done this before, and it was interesting to get some movement and history of the TCC practice.
- This session showed me that I need to slow down. This is a great way to manage stress. I wish I could have had this class on Friday morning.
- Always a great experience; very relaxing techniques.
- Instructor was easy to follow.
- Will research more to learn how to apply in practice
- Enjoyed this session so much yesterday that I attended it again today. I bought a book at the bookstore with a DVD so that I could incorporate this practice in my everyday life. I felt balanced after these sessions and centered for the day.
- Enjoyed the session so much Monday that I decided to go again on Tuesday.





# Renewed

By Nancy Jo Bleier, Sitka, Alaska

**Renewed is my word of the day and year.** I'm finishing a Seijaku session and this word "renewed" keeps coming to me, especially when I'm doing my favorite movement of Push Pull. It speaks volumes to my soul and body: bring in the new, vital energy and send out the old, used up energy. Amy Tyksinski's talk at the teacher conference in Boulder on Push Pull spoke volumes to me, bringing the hands toward the heart. Her *Vital Force* article this past year also gave more clarity. For me: "let's get the gunk out and restore/renew with love and gratitude."

A breast cancer diagnosis shocked me in August. This was a wakeup time to evaluate where I am spiritually and nutritionally, and to consider purpose, exercise and relationships. Since August, I've had surgery in Seattle, a supportive husband and many family and friends to walk beside me. But I realized I'd let go of my T'ai Chi Chih practice. I maybe did it two times a month in the last year; I have not taught a regular class in five years. Getting back to TCC was a wellspring of joy, movement and love. How about that! I'm doing my TCC daily now, whether a few movements or a full practice. I plan to teach a beginners class in April at a local church fellowship hall. I've sent in registration for the June 2019 teacher conference.

As daily events push and pull me, I have the gift of being renewed through a TCC practice. Knowing that fills my spirit with joy, love and gratitude.

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# Worship & TCC

By Ron Richardson, Tupelo, Mississippi

**I invited students to send their thoughts** about what T'ai Chi Chih means to them following a class I teach at a local church. For my church's monthly newsletter, I wanted to include their responses in an article as part of an invitation to other church members to join the class. One response was impressive because it tied the experience of worship with the practice of TCC. I had never thought of this and considered it worth sharing, especially for those teaching in a faith group setting. Park Dodge, the writer and my student from Tupelo, graciously gave permission to use his words however it would be helpful for TCC classes:

"I come to TCC classes to enjoy the experience of moving my body through space and time, in rhythmic sync with other people around me. I like the thought and enjoy the feeling of coordinated, communal behaviors. TCC, very much like the call and response of our liturgical rhythms during worship, has this characteristic. We move and issue utterances in unison. Practices like this do not disadvantage us of our own individual personalities, styles and strengths, but rather they serve as an expression of the extraordinary, compounded and additional benefits that TCC offers – of balance, coordination, flexibility and focus. These are icing on the cake.

As those who have witnessed my participation in TCC can attest, I could use much additional practice in balance and coordination; I have a tendency to trip over my own shadow. Thankfully, Ron and the group are helping me to address this opportunity. Little do they realize the number of years required to bring me along."

When I thanked Park for such an insightful response he added, "Thank you, not only for allowing me to participate with you and others in the class, but also for the request to put some thought into why. The practice of clarifying purposes is not something I do often enough. Your request, and the resultant clarity of purpose at which I arrived, further deepens my appreciation. Thank you for facilitating the practice for those of us who are able to attend. And thank you for being a dear friend."





## Chi Activates A Team – Chi Initiative

By Neena Mitchell, Syracuse, New York

*[Editor's Note: The following was submitted by the Camillus Senior Center Group: Maryanne, Rachel, Sherrie, Lorraine, Margaret, Dottie, Mary, and Bob. Nina writes: "I was the last to learn of this class. When I did, I responded via email: A big New Year greeting to an amazing group! Imagine my pleasure upon reading in the Senior Center news about your TCC Practice Class. I salute you. I've always known that you all had arrived at a TCC level where you had trust in the Chi and creativity would abound. Maybe you would like to write up your story to be shared. I'll drop in when I can."]*

**From the first time we attended T'ai Chi Chih** led by Neena at our Camillus Senior Center (in New York), we realized that TCC filled a void in our lives with energy, balance and meditation. We looked forward to our weekly sessions. And whenever classes were offered at the center a group of us would all sign up. We had developed a love for TCC.

Classes were going great. We were becoming more and more proficient with TCC. Then Neena had an unfortunate event and needed some time off. We were lost without her guidance. Jim Campbell, a colleague of Neena's, fitted our class into his busy class schedule for a time, and we were glad for his help.

We then realized we were becoming less diligent about practice, but that doing class less than once a week was not an option. We decided that getting together weekly at our usual place would be a positive venture. We received free time and the room where Neena first introduced TCC to us. We're happy to announce that the TCC Practice Class for 2019 began on January 23.

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and others appreciated our standardized accreditation process, worldwide representation and the research that has been published on T'ai Chi Chih's effectiveness. In fact, Dr. Michael Irwin, the principal author of these studies, is a member of the association's Medical Advisory Board and co-author of the Accreditation Standard Guideline publication. The possibility of having accredited TCC instructors receive the accreditation by being "grandfathered" in was proposed by Drs. Oh and Klein. Further discussion is encouraged.

The conference was a rich collection of research presentations, "from ancient art to modern Mind-Body Medicine" as stated in the conference theme. Presentations on vast improvements of Musculoskeletal Pain and Well Being, Mental Health, Psychological Well Being, Oncology, Fibromyalgia and Balance and Fall Prevention were given by top researchers from noted institutions. The presentations and accreditation standards publication can be found on the association's website.

We were told that there is an average of one study being published daily on the effects of Tai Chi and Qigong on health and wellbeing. It looks like the time is now. The scientific community is listening and supporting our growth. Many thanks to Dr. Anita Vestal, for informing us about the conference, and to the TCC Foundation for supporting our attendance. The next iMTQA conference will be held at San Jose State University on April 27 - 29, 2019. All T'ai Chi Chih teachers are welcome to attend, particularly those in the San Jose area. How many of us will be there? (Register at the organization's website.)

## TCC Play Day: Feel The Chi, Feel The Joy

By Lucinda Kutsko (North Jackson, Ohio)  
and Teresa Lisum (Newton Falls, Ohio)

**It was a beautiful summer-like day** in October in northeast Ohio – unseasonably warm, sunny and breezy – a perfect day for our first T'ai Chi Chih Play Day. Conversations at the 2018 TCC Teacher Conference in Philadelphia inspired us to bring our local TCC community together for a day-long retreat.

One goal was to have a fun interactive experience, so we called it "Play Day" rather than "Workshop." Another goal was to help TCC students be more sensitive to feeling the subtle energy around and through their bodies during TCC practice. We believe they are more satisfied and confident about their practice when aware of the subtle energy flow. We also hoped to inspire experienced students to consider teacher accreditation.

Some of the 18 attendees had been practicing for as many as eight years, while others had only taken two classes.

Our first TCC practice was under the shade of tall, smiling oak trees, with a quick breeze, falling leaves, geese flying overhead and singing birds. It was perfect. For some in the group, doing TCC outside was a new and wonderful experience.

To feel the subtle energy within the TCC movements, we focused on the principles of softness (particularly of the wrists) and also polarity (that point in our movements when we are most likely to feel energy flow). We included activities and discussion on how energy might feel so we can recognize it. We offered a brief explanation of the "Toroidal Energy Field" that offered a new perspective and appreciation of how TCC works within and is part of universal principles of energy construction and flow.

Our second outdoor TCC practice was followed by feeling the energy flow as we held hands and "floated" hands above each other's hands to feel our connected subtle energies. Many were amazed at how much their sensitivity to feeling the energy had increased.

We asked the group to brainstorm in what way TCC made them feel joyful – in body, mind, emotion and/or spirit. Each person took notes so that they might write their personal testimony at home to share during regular TCC classes. It was a delightful experience and we can't wait to do it again. We trust some seeds were planted to grow future TCC teachers.

## Seated TCC

By Linda Minor, Forest Grove, Oregon

**When I announced that I wanted to teach Seated T'ai Chi Chih**, one of my friends thought I said Seeded T'ai Chi Chih. Well, that's not totally inappropriate, I thought, since as teachers we plant the seeds and it's up to our students to nurture and grow their own practice. But of course, I meant teaching TCC to students who are sitting down.

I'd been volunteering with a local nonprofit that helps seniors to age in place, and after teaching four beginning sets of classes, I realized that there were more members that could benefit from learning TCC, but were unable to depend on their bodies to remain standing while learning all the movements. The five students who immediately signed up were able to walk to some degree, but had different reasons why they wanted to learn the seated practice: bad knees, bad backs and neurological issues leading to extreme balance problems. One student had taken my beginning class, but her balance was causing her to stumble, and she had trouble standing up straight. When seated, however, she sat tall and could learn the movements without worrying about falling.

To prepare for teaching this class, I did my own practice seated for several weeks. I also watched Sandy McAlister's DVD, which I had seen before, and checked my notes from my teacher accreditation class where we had a presentation by Lisa Otero, with a chance to practice sitting down. A knee injury also provided me other opportunities to explore.

The most valuable experience came from Albuquerque, where I attended Carmen Brocklehurst's annual fall TCC retreat. I did the whole weekend seated and received many good tips from Carmen and some of

the other teachers at the retreat. For example, at least three teachers advised me to demonstrate each movement as it was meant to be done standing, before teaching the seated version. I wouldn't have thought to do this, but it was good advice. I also made sure that the facility we would be using was completely accessible, and had chairs without arms.



I held class twice a week for four weeks, so that we had eight, one-hour sessions. By the end of the second class, when students began to grasp some of the principles and started moving together, I was feeling more comfortable about teaching TCC in this special way. We worked together to find solutions for uncooperative body parts, sharing common experiences with good humor and grace. My students were highly motivated, and a joy to teach. I was humbled by their persistence in the face of adversity, and I wouldn't hesitate to teach this class again if the opportunity arises.

### Student Comments:

As classes went on, I became more confident and relaxed in my ability to make the movements. I left each session more peaceful, the same with practice at home. I got so much out of it. – GG

I've learned so much about how to relax. The sitting was wonderful since I have a back problem. – TC

I had done T'ai Chi [Ch'uan] before and had to stop, but the sit-down returned the great feeling of energy that I missed. – SS

This and the previous standing TCC class helped me not to be overly anxious about things I can't help or control. The standing class helped my balance physically and mentally. The seated class has been a great option since I've had some dizziness recently. – AD

## The Strangers

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

I'm grateful for the strangers.  
Grateful for the workers I will never meet,  
but they have so much to do with my happiness.  
Receiving all the creative energy which flows and enables me  
to receive the gifts of many.

I'd like to thank the person  
in some distant land who planted  
the tea plant that gives me a peaceful meditation  
anytime I pour a cup.

Thankful to those who made my sweater  
that keeps me warm even though  
it doesn't match anything.  
A treasure found hanging in the thrift store.  
It gives me so much pleasure.

The entertainers that have filled my senses and  
have led me around a lot of America.  
Singing the songs of my life.  
How lucky to follow those Pied Pipers.

The farmers who bend their backs to put bread, grapes, and strawberries  
on my table to fill me up and  
spark my well being.

Thank you to the caretakers who take their turns  
assisting in compassion,  
making things a little easier, kinder.  
We all need that care.  
It raises the consciousness of the planet.  
As strangers we are responsible for the happiness of all.

# Folsom Prison Class Check-In

Compiled by Julie Heryet, El Dorado, California

**BY DAVID H.**

In this class I feel an internal cleansing, like a shower. I feel grounded and refreshed. **I do it every day in my cell.** I grew up doing movements like these with my Grandma and Mom, but I didn't know what it was. This class has given a face to it, to what I grew up with in a small village in Fiji. My village was loving and hospitable but other villages were violent and would attack us. I've come to Folsom from Level 4 [the highest level in prison system] and have over 100 stab wounds on my body. I'm sensitive to people's energy – and **this class is healing the wounds I have on the inside, that no MRI is going to show.** Like having a broken heart, like when my wife passed away, no one can see it, but it can heal.

This class centers and balances me and contributes to my 24 years of sobriety from heroin. It heals the pain from my childhood, and the pain from my addiction. I haven't felt this peaceful in a long time. I wake up and choose to be peaceful. The flow of these gentle movements are the opposite of prison, of how my Dad was always, "Get in there and fight." But now I have softness and continuity. **And this is not weak, it is strong.** I can't see myself not doing it every day. **It's my medicine. It's how I get high now.**

**BY JONATHON R.**

You ladies [teachers] are like a little string that connects us to out there. I believe things happen for a reason. Sure no one wants to be in prison, but **being in this class, I feel things happen on time.** When I saw this practice on the prison TV, I knew it was a sign. I started coming, and I experience it as a chance to share a moment of life with others. When I'm doing the practice, I'm not like a sponge, but it creates a filter, a filter for the bad thoughts that are all around this place. Wisdom is a moment to cherish, a mountain to climb, and notice.

We keep the practice simple and easy, and everything gets better. I needed to get broken down so that I could get better. **This practice is like healing a broken bone. Once healed, it's stronger than it was**

**before.** We develop an inner muscle here that balances you – not too strong, not too weak. **When I see these guys from class out on the yard, there is this connection we share.** We just nod, and we know. Today we are connected, all over the world at the same time. My dad was a Kung Fu addict, the Asian way of living. I'm learning to listen beyond the prison chaos, to the Universal energy that connects and completes us. Prisons in Mexico are much worse; we could all have it much worse. We are the filter for this energy; we have healing power to share with others. We just need to stay connected. This is what I want to do on the streets: to share this.

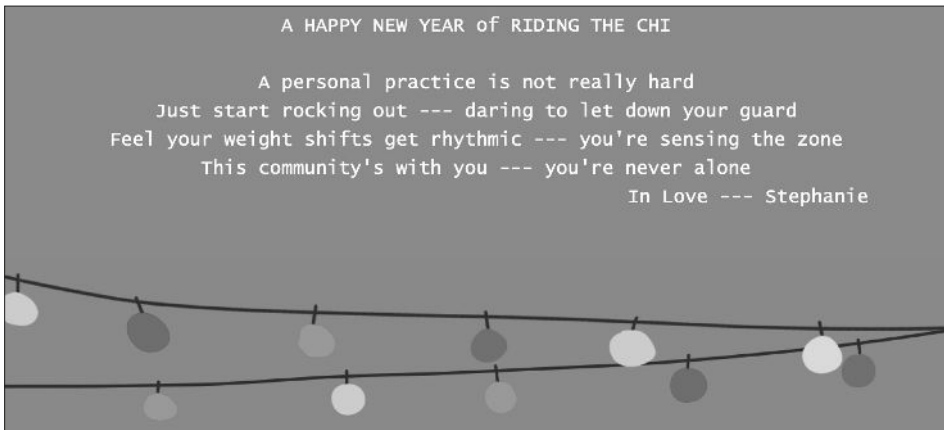
**BY STEVEN F**

I've been in this class for four years. I came in after the Law Library closed and started doing these movements. Now I have a center point in my life, and it's T'ai Chi Chih. On the tier I will mirror Lawrence doing the movements from across the cellblock. Other guys will yell, "Hey, what are you doing? You look funny." But I don't care. **The pain in my body is gone and I feel good. I used to be filled with anger and hate; I was very aggressive. But now I'm able to quiet down,** pray, do my movements, and I don't have those feelings any more.

I come *every* week; I never miss a class. It's my life. When Julie started testing us for the certificates, and when I got all three, I felt like this paper said, "I am T'ai Chi Chih." Not just here in class – on the inside. When I'm here I feel connected with the Universe. I feel this community with the guys here. We see each other on the yard, and even though we move in different circles, we know who we are. No words are needed. When I get out I want to be a teacher, to pass this along to others, to share this calm. **Once you have it, it stays with you. Like your spirit senses you are a part of something.**

**BY BRIAN R.**

I'm kinda quiet. [The men smile, a few laugh quietly and nod encouragingly.] But I really enjoy this class and the people in it. Yes you may use my comment. I enjoy the class and the beautiful energy all around me while I'm there. It gives me peace of mind and brings calm and serenity to my life. It helps me deal with being in prison and being away from my family. It's hard to describe in words but I do my best. I am fairly new to the class and still have a lot to learn, but **I'm looking forward to it and to carry what I've learned to my family and community back home.** Thank you for this wonderful teaching and practice.



the	here
prajna	we met
brought me here	inside of
to t'ai chi chih	folsom prison
to all of	t'ai chi chih
you to	holds us
life	now
– JULIE HERYET	– JULIE HERYET

## Chi & Me

By Jan Wilkowski

**Two years of T'ai Chi Chih practice** has proven to be a tremendous healing power in my life. Extreme foot pain and insomnia have vanished, my balance improved and my creativity expanded and deepened.

Two months ago, my left knee was replaced and the first three weeks of recovery were wicked. Both hips had already been replaced, along with my right knee. Those surgeries had gone well and I sailed quickly into recovery. This time? No smooth sailing. It was extremely difficult and painful.

Week three, post-surgery I woke up in tears and cried out, "I can't endure this pain one more day." I also had food poisoning and was extremely tired as I woke every 10 minutes from the pain. I wondered to whom I could give my pup because I couldn't care for him. Pain led to negative thinking and drove me into a big pessimistic hole.

I was a mess, lying on the couch, hitting ground zero. Then my inner voice said, "TCC will help." Sure, I thought, I can barely stand up. Still the voice persisted, "TCC will help." I finally put on Justin Stone's DVD. Over and over I played the DVD, in and out of sleep, groggy, awake, asleep, trying to do some arm movements. The DVD continued to play. After a while I was doing the movements in my mind. I saw myself teaching a class in the future. I fell gently asleep.

The next morning after my first good sleep in three weeks, I awoke ravenous as I had not been eating. That afternoon, sitting in the sun, my inner voice said, "Go to the office supply store and get some pens and writing notebooks." That afternoon I wrote some poems and did some artwork. I am so grateful for this practice, a healing power in my life.

## Balancing

By Susan K. G. McGrath,  
Bainbridge Island, Washington

**After the first year of practicing TCC**, during which time I focused on balancing my own energy, I found surprisingly and without any conscious effort, the strong feeling of balancing *Chi* for others and myself. First it was for my family and friends, and then I realized I was including everyone and then everything. Amazing. It's a feeling for which I am profoundly grateful, and it comes with what Justin describes as "TCC doing itself."



## Without A Hurt

By Nancy Johnson, Long Beach, California

Without a hurt, the heart is hollow.

Don't be afraid of a broken heart.  
Life and love is constant change, ebbing, flowing.  
Things will break and heal.

Unconditional love is just that -  
loving, changing, loving, changing, letting go.  
It would be kinder to ourselves to drop resistance.  
Erase resistance, love more.

A broken heart holds more.  
The boundaries are open, like a wide open hug.  
So many choices are yours.  
Choose the freedom to open up and keep loving.

Many things we've been taught in relationships are not true:  
jealousy, ownership, bargaining.  
Let's build some new habits, like  
calmness, fortitude, compassion, patience, tenderness, true  
love.  
This gives us a broader view of our abilities and awarenesses.

We spend too much time sticking to bad habits.  
True love lives in wonder, joy, discernment, creativity and a  
boundless drumbeat embracing all beings and this takes  
practice, practice, practice.

Let's all practice having a religion of the Open Heart.

## Do You Do Seijaku?

By Bonnie Sokolov,  
Rochester, Minnesota

**As a teacher I know** that if one student asks a question, at least one more has the same question. And as a student I know that if there is something I do not understand, there are probably others in the same position. So as host for the 2019 post-conference Seijaku courses, I am probably not the only one who did not fully understand these courses and their benefits.

The course is a great opportunity to become accredited in Seijaku without having to travel to another location. But if you are already accredited to teach Seijaku, it's an opportunity to audit and deepen your practice.

The Seijaku Basics Course is for accredited TCC teachers who wish to prepare for Seijaku teacher accreditation. It is also for accredited Seijaku teachers who have not attended a Seijaku course in the last three years. But it is also open to TCC *students* who have been practicing TCC for one year or longer. Also, accredited Seijaku teachers might wish to observe how Daniel teaches Seijaku to beginners. His teaching methods could be used to assist in the development of their own Seijaku courses. I have been hesitant to start my own classes because I was not sure how to explain it to a beginner; this could be my chance.

Seijaku, "Serenity in the midst of activity," is a gift Justin Stone designed especially for TCC teachers to enhance our own practice and to share with our serious students. Have you accepted Justin's gift? If not, why not? I invite you to attend; registration forms are on the website and I hope to see you there.



# TCC & The Aramaic Lord's Prayer

By Eliza Fulton, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

**While this may seem an unlikely combination** at first glance, the Lord's Prayer in Aramaic was designed to be embodied and intoned. It was a way to come into the vibration, sound and light of One Being and Sacred Unity, the Breathing Life of all. Sound familiar? As we practice T'ai Chi Chih we "come into rhythm with the cosmos." TCC is a way to have "knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate," as Justin put it, and to learn "who and what we are."

I first studied the prayer in 2010 and found it inspiring but certainly not a quick read. As I practiced it the first time with the TCC movements it opened my heart to a deeper level.

Here are some thoughts of how the prayer brought a deeper meaning of T'ai Chi Chih for me.

**Rocking Motion:** The words of this old hymn seem to resonate with the purpose of TCC: *"Lord, lift me up and let me stand, by faith, on heaven's tableland. A higher plane than I have found, Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."*

**Bird Flaps Its Wings:** In Christianity wings are Truth and Love, in Buddhism they are Wisdom and Compassion. For me it is Gratitude and Grace, or maybe Self-Effort and Grace.

**Around the Platter:** I feel that my small "I Am" is circling the platter – coming into rhythm with the cosmos and all of the ever-changing creative forces of life.

**Around the Platter Variation:** As we pick up the little ball of energy (our individual "I am") it starts around the circle and then releases and unites with all of life (family, friends, community, nature, planet, universe, galaxy). At last, for me, the variation movements made sense. I feel myself coming into rhythm with the divine rhythm, merging.

**Bass Drum:** As we circle down and around we are like a steam shovel digging the earth to make space and room for a precious new plant and the new growth it will bring. We are making space in our busy, often superficial lives, for the divine to enter in.

**Daughter on the Mountain Top – Daughter in the Valley:** We have made a holy space within and affirmed our I-am-ness – now. We are asking the Lord to come quickly and to enter us. Give us di-



vine inspiration and purpose. Daughter on the Mountaintop gathers the Chi, the essence of the divine from the heavens and brings it down the front of the body. Daughter in the Valley pulls the Chi, the essence of the divine, up from the earth and releases it outward to the world. We are gathering and circulating love and imploring the One Being to work through us.

**Carry the Ball to the Side:** We circulate and gather the Chi in circles and then we press it down, grounding it. This line re-affirms our "I can-ness." Let heaven and earth connect through me. May my inspiration, life's purpose and actions be in sync and in rhythm with the divine, with the creative forces of the cosmos. When we are in rhythm we live in delight and great joy... Feel it.

**Push Pull:** We need to let go and remove the clutter before we can receive. We ask for what we need, our nourishment and understanding, so that we can hear within us for just this one illuminated moment in time. We do not need to hoard the wisdom – we receive and let go and receive and release – and trust. Grounded in being here now.

**Pulling in the Energy:** Here we ask the divine to soften the rigid places within us so with each breath, each heartbeat we can return to the source – to the beginning of the beginning – starting fresh with each new moment – loosening the ties that bind us. This means welcoming all the varied voices within and inviting them to dine around the table – with love – not judgment. Making peace with all the voices within ourselves, bringing them into harmony, brings peace to our world.

We repeat the first feelings and intuitions of the prayer as we continue through the TCC movements and move to the last two lines of the prayer.

**Joyous Breath:** When we do things that are out of rhythm, not at the right time, let us come back into right action, right timing, being present and grounded in our lives and with our actions. May we be in tune with the divine.

**Passing Clouds:** This line affirms that we will nurture this holy place within and take the vision that has been given to us to accomplish what we came here to do and to return to the divine light, sound and harmonious song of the universe – from gathering to gathering. This is what I stand for and this is where my new growth will come. It is a promise, an affirmation.

This is a very brief summary of the expansive meanings of the prayer as I personally feel them with the movements. I hope you find your own connection with the divine as you ground yourself in the movements as an embodied being. As Justin says, the purpose of our practice is to learn a little more each day about "who and what we are."

# TCC Intensive

## Colorado Springs, Colorado, October 2018

By Marie Dotts, Loveland, Colorado

**I gave space to let my heart** feel into what was important to share before sitting down to write this. **The words “powerful field of Presence” kept arising.** Something very beautiful and miraculous happens when we gather together, especially over the course of a T'ai Chi Chih retreat or Intensive. A powerful field of Presence is activated by the grounding in our practice. There is nothing we need to “do.” TCC itself carries with it the intention of opening up Presence. This field we create together through TCC is so holding and supportive. It opens us up to the gifts of Presence. These gifts are love, courage, strength, wisdom, inspiration, joy and lots of laughter.

Presence also creates a safe space that welcomes everything – including tears and pain. This compassionate space has the power to deeply heal and transform our soul. Presence is what unites and connects us. Often there are people we are meeting for the first time. Presence calls us to be authentic and because of this, it does not take long before a warm connection is felt. We are so blessed by this practice Justin gave us. We are doubly blessed by the many opportunities to gather and create a powerful field of Presence. Comments from participants include:

joy  
in all  
that we are  
moving one love  
open free  
we find  
peace

– BECKY SHINAS, FREMONT, CALIFORNIA

Nothing is in a state of Being; everything is in a state of Becoming (from one point of view). T'ai Chi Chih can greatly influence that path of Becoming. – JUSTIN STONE, WINTER 1988

Simple and suffused with softness, the TCC movements Sandy McAlister modeled for us were an inspiration. Emphasizing the basic components of each move, Sandy gently drew us away from striving for perfection and towards feeling the move while flowing from the *tan t'ien*. The experience of softening was a big lesson. I was reminded to soften before each weight shift. Everyone relates to the word relaxation differently. To me, it's a state to be achieved, whereas softening is a dynamic that infuses my whole TCC practice. Continually remembering

to soften during my practice is training me to remember to be aware and to be present in life. – IRMA CRUMP, FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

The Intensive was lovely, held where the natural world flowed around retreatants. You could hear during mealtimes how participants live a T'ai Chi Chih way of life, meaning they carry into their everyday experiences the principles of TCC. Time together was steeped in loving conversation and joyful laughter, even song and dance. I am most grateful for the wisdom of our guide, Sandy; she modeled the “effort of no effort” as she taught the movements with clarity and ease. My mind, body and spirit fell into a sweet rhythm together. I felt my mind calm yet taking in ways to teach each movement; my body relaxed and soaking up the movements and atmosphere; my spirit dancing happily between and around all of it. I am so grateful for my TCC community. Thank you to Marie Dotts for making this event possible, and to each and every one of you. – MARY BUIRGY, LOVELAND, COLORADO

I learned to glide; to let my heels gently rise, rather than lifting them; to let my knees and elbows let go and move; to settle my shoulders, and to begin to feel the energy in my hands. Personal one-on-one guidance helped me discover new ways of making room for spirit in my body, offering cathartic emotional releases and glimpses of ecstasy.

– ROSE GERTRUDE BROWN,  
LIVINGSTON, MONTANA



*First row: Marie Dotts, Irma Crump, Charlotte Garrett, Carol Condit, Connie Krumrai. Second Row (more like two rows): Terry Johnson, JJ Davis, Adrienne Welch, Sandy McAlister, Stephanie Cope-land, Jan Wilkowski, Jeanette Miller, Becky Shinas, Gloria Thrall, Meg Gilbert, Holly Trenary. Third Row: Linda Kathka, Rose Brown, Rick Davis, Mary Buirgy, Mary Alice Winegarner Bob Poland.*

There was absolute equality at the Intensive. Students and teacher candidates received the same guidance. As we broke into small groups to work on our movements, we were encouraged to offer input to each other.

– TERRY JOHNSON,  
WINDSOR, COLORADO

I now feel more connected to my *tan t'ien*. I feel a new softness, like an old friend rediscovered. I told a friend I was at a TCC workshop and that I was all “Chi'd” up. She asked if it was better than coffee and I truly felt I could give up caffeine (at least for now).

– JEANETTE MILLER,  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

My favorite part was when Sandy corrected during Working the Pulley. I now keep in mind to open my hips an equal distance moving forward and backward; to allow the wrists to turn simultaneously in the front and back; to have the elbows pass the body at the same time; to keep each arm moving smoothly as if it were following a close line going out and around a pulley and sliding back in. – MEG GILBERT

I am grateful for the weekly classes that prepared me to be completely receptive to all that was presented here. The “aha” moment was more a sustained feeling of it all coming together. – ANON

# TCC Intensive

## Aston, Pennsylvania,

### October 2018

By April Leffler, Host, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

**Having the privilege of hosting** a T'ai Chi Chih Intensive never ceases to amaze me. Although participants often arrive as strangers, we commonly leave as a bonded and cohesive group. It's wonderful to behold the softening of the practice (and the group) as restrictions are lessened, as control is released and letting go is experienced. We had a full house of 23, facilitated by Dan Pienciak. **Below are some of their experiences in their own words.**

Beyond all the invaluable instruction, the greatest benefit was an improved understanding of what it means to allow the *t'an tien* to lead.  
– JEFF MCFARLAND

Pairing exercises helped me be a better observer and give feedback in a gentle fashion. At times I felt my *Chi* being off balance, and I was discouraged. But support and encouragement were there. – CAROLYN

Being here has allowed my mindset to shift from being simply a practitioner to being a teacher able to help others improve their practice.  
– DEBBIE WEIN

Not only did we have Dan's compassionate examples of Justin Stone, but all teachers were willing to assist and answer questions. – ANON

It was moving to listen to personal comments on Saturday evening. Each had great significance and resonance. It was great to get away from the shouting and anger surrounding our politics. But more importantly, are the people. TCC, together with community, gives each of us a strength to find our way through interesting times. – ERIC SCHOENFELD

The pace of work and rest was easy and soft. Dan's approach to organizing a teaching strategy was helpful. I learned a different approach to structuring the TCC movements in a move-by-move order that emphasizes the principles of movement. – BRUCE C.

What a privilege to delve deeply in movements and strengthen friendships that grow as we learn together. – LAUREL HERMAN

I never fully understood putting one hundred percent of my weight on one leg. Consequently, my steps forward and sideways were fraught with peril. Dan and April showed me how to do this important part of TCC. Thanks for giving me a leg to stand on. – ANON



Front Row: Monika Motyka, Candy Moraczewski, Suann Lewis, Laurel Herman & Sammy, Jeff McFarland. Middle Row: Steve Long, David Parrish, Dan, Bruce Childs, Me, Eric Schoefeld. Back Row: Debbie Wein, Marianne Kelly, Debby Mc Lister, Denise Alire, James Christenson, Karen Hornberger, Judy Maguire, Bonnie LeBlanc, Peggy Long, Carolyn Pogwirst, Carolyn Andrews, Mary Karpon.

Rocking Motion always threw me off balance. Four things mentioned made a world of difference: Lift forward with the *t'an tien* not the ankles; be sure to bend the knees when going backward; commit your weight to your heels when going backward; toes and heels needn't be far off the floor. – MARIANNE KELLY

What did I get from the Intensive? The amount of patience and dedication it will take with and to oneself... the amount of commitment to the practice of TCC itself... movement after movement, day after day and then a willingness to tweak the move... Those leading us don't do it from rote memory; they're constantly looking to see where each move can be explained in another way, making sure they themselves understand... Never ending always evolving... I got that it's easy to fall into habits, that a move can suddenly become effortless, a move can become joyful... It is only in our willingness to listen that we can hear. – D. ALIRE

This showed me the importance of moving from the center, feeling the movements of the *t'an tien*, focusing on the soles of the feet, of feeling the power of polarity." – JIM C.

I identified several major areas I need to work on and was given the tools to do so. Many things I had questions about were clarified. – ANON

Being here has allowed me to begin to really feel the *Chi*. Before, it was a notion in my head. Now the *Chi* is starting to mess with my being. I'm not sure I like it; it doesn't feel like who I thought I was. But I feel like it's the beginning of something that will be really important, to I find out who I am. – ANON

Review provided a concentration of basics. Revelation was a surprising, powerful thought written by Justin Stone: The energy appears to be flowing; we are just shaping it. – SAC

We found our Bubbling Spring, grounding in the soles of our feet, our weight-shift followed our *t'an tien*. We moved our *Chi*, shaping it, directing it, feeling it in group or partners work. We did Rocking Motion. We heard about Justin Stone, learning what he passed on to us. It was a tiring but a *Chi*-ful experience" – MARY KARPIN

The Intensive focused on expansion and contraction, and movement directed by the *t'an tien* within each of the TCC movements. It was enlightening and challenging, and offered within the context of humility, compassion, warmth and community. – SUANNE LEWIS



## 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  
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

**Justin Stone Materials**  
www.JustinStoneTCC.com  
kim@kimgrant.com

**T'ai Chi Chih Foundation:**  
P.O. Box 11  
Norwood, PA 19074

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

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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

- Mar 21-24 | TCC Teachers Retreat w/Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332
- Mar 26-29 | TCC Retreat w/Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332
- Mar 30-Apr 5 | TCC Accreditation w/ Daniel | Colorado Springs, CO | Marie Dotts | 970-412-9955
- May 9-12 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Prescott, AZ | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332
- May 31-Jun 6 | TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Sandy | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523
- Jun 14-16 | TCC Retreat w/ Daniel | New Jersey Shore, NJ | Daniel Pienciak | 732-988-5573
- Jun 27-30 | TCC Teachers' Conference | Minnetonka, MN | www.taichichih.org/conference-2019
- Jun 30-Jul 2 | Seijaku Accreditation w/Pam | Minnetonka, MN | Bonnie Sololov | 507-250-3360
- Jun 30-Jul 2 | Seijaku Basics Course w/Daniel | Minnetonka, MN | Bonnie Sololov | 507-250-3360
- Jul 3-7 | TCC Intensive w/ Daniel | Santa Barbara, CA | Marie Dotts | 970-412-9955
- Jul 29-Aug 1 | Seijaku Retreat w/Daniel | Aston, PA | Daniel Pienciak | 732-988-5573
- Aug 20-23 | TCC Teachers Symposium w/ Sandy | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523
- Sep 24-27 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332
- Oct 4-6 | TCC Retreat w/Daniel | New Jersey Shore, NJ | Daniel Pienciak | 732-988-5573
- Nov 19-24 | TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam | Santa Barbara, CA | Marie Dotts | 970-412-9955
- Aug 20-23 | TCC Teachers Symposium w/ Sandy | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523
- Sep 24-27 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 442-222-8332

### ~ MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

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

- Mar 27-29 | Heightened Awareness Retreat w/ April Leffler | Tupelo, MS | Ron Richardson | 662-844-6473
- Mar 28-31 | Learn Seijaku Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst | Albuquerque, NM | Judy Hendricks | 505-573-0820
- Mar 29-31 | TCC Workshop w/ April Leffler | Tupelo, MS | Ron Richardson | 662-844-6473

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