

The Vital Force

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for teachers & students

August 2021

Justin Stone: In His Words

Vital Force Greatest Hits: Excerpts from Justin

taichichih.org/teacher/justin-stone

The Mystery of MYO

These days one hears a lot about enlightenment. Generally, I believe, it is thought that enlightenment is a super-intellectual state where the brain has great knowledge and knows many answers (or concepts). Nothing could be farther from the truth; it has nothing to do with I.Q. rating or knowledge assimilated. When the individual energy (*Chi*) merges with the Universal Energy (*Chi*), something acts through one, and that something is infallible. This is *Prajna*, the Inherent Wisdom. Give it theological terms if you will. Just as my Zen teacher said, "Love is Manifestation," so is enlightenment known by this manifesting, not by words, phrases, logic or dialectics.
– June 1991

~ ~ ~

A Quotation

Justin has often quoted the following by an unknown Chinese Monk: "When the mind is transparent and pure, as if reflected on the mirror-like surface of the water, there is nothing in the world that you would dislike. When it is serene as the light breeze in the sunshine, there will be no one whom you would like to forget." – From *Spiritual Stories*,



Volume 1 and Justin Stone Speaks on T'ai Chi Chih – March 1993

~ ~ ~

Merging Sense with Essence

The high plateaus do not produce the lotus flowers; it is the mire of the low swamplands. If you consider quietude right ... it is just the time to apply effort by a million times. The sun shines on everybody – pure and unpure. You do not have to give up the ordinary life. What is given up is greed, anger and delusion. Love and do as you please. When active you are revealing the function. It is better to discipline yourself than have life do it for you. – September 1991

~ ~ ~

All Things Are As They Have Always Been

Those who do T'ai Chi Chih regularly have not been taught how they should feel or what they should experience. Whatever happens is right and does not have to be adjusted to any doctrine or dogma. It is for this reason that the writer sometimes does

not answer questions which would call for conceptual answers – they would spoil the experience. – Spring 1993

~ ~ ~

Softness and Continuity

We stress softness and continuity in T'ai Chi Chih, and the importance of the former can be seen in the following examples: The teeth are hard and the tongue is soft, but it is the tongue that outlasts the teeth. Water is soft and stones are hard, but it is the water that wears away the stones. Oak is sturdy and stands staunchly against the storm, while bamboo is pliant and bends with the wind. When the storm is over, the inflexible oak has cracked and comes crashing down, but the bamboo snaps back, unhurt. One cannot strive for softness; the very effort of trying to be soft creates tension. It is the absence of any pressure, moving slow motion in a dream, that allows softness to prevail. The best way to forget worries and ease tensions is to shunt the ego-center aside, so that no-one is doing T'ai Chi Chih, but TCC is doing itself. In this sense, TCC becomes a meditation. – Winter 1985

~ ~ ~

The Effort of No Effort

Justin shared this comment at a T'ai Chi Chih teacher conference: "You can chase your shadow all day and never catch it but stand still at noon and it will merge with the body—no effort." ... "Withdrawing into abstraction – from there comes all creativity." – August 1988

Archived editions of *The Vital Force* are available at taichichih.org/free-archived-past-issues.

A Supremely Important Reminder & Request

I was entrusted with the copyrights to Justin words and works – and the trademark to T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) – in December 2018 when Good Karma Publishing folded. A huge part of that involves making sure that the TCC we know today, the TCC that Justin left us, is the TCC that will exist decades into the future.

I understand the desire for teachers to meet students where they are, but a dangerous and slippery slope is emerging. Please do not change the names of TCC movements. Please do not present TCC as something else. Please do not mix the teaching of TCC with other modalities. Please do not embellish it; keep it simple. Please do not imply that a seated meditation at the end of practice is part of TCC. If this continues, we (and the world) will not recognize TCC in short order.

There is power in TCC as Justin originated it. We've experienced it. It's profoundly changed lives. Please let others have a chance to experience its unadulterated potency.

Conference 2021 Articles: This issue is packed with modified conference presentations – great for teachers **and** students. Enjoy! Special appreciation is reserved for Marie Dotts and Becky Shinas who liberally and effectively utilized Justin's words and *The Vital Force* excerpts. Lovely.

Students: You are an integral part of this community, and *The Vital Force* readership wants to hear from you. Thank you in advance.

Oldies... but Goodies: *A Note from Meara Joy Norice:* "I am deeply grateful for the amazing people I have met through T'ai Chi Chih: other teachers, wherever annual gatherings were held, and mostly

what I've learned about life from my students. Becoming a teacher in 1990 in Bemidji, Minnesota, I made a commitment to myself to walk my talk, daily practice, attend teacher gatherings whenever possible, and pass along the Joy of Movement to others. I celebrate the wisdom gained from others in the community. One of my dearest memories is from a teacher conference many years ago when I was invited by Antonia to co-create the circular dance of gratitude and dedication at the end of Saturday night's activities. My life service of ceremony and celebration continues until a graceful conclusion."

~ With gratitude. Kim Grant,
Albuquerque, NM
taichichih.org/teacher/kim-grant

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The Vital Force

~ **Web Site Updates** ~
The online teacher listings (for www.taichichih.org) are now maintained by teachers themselves. Teachers: please email Kim or see taichichih.org/teacher-listings for instructions.

~ **Submission Deadlines** ~
January 1st for the February issue
April 1st for the May issue
July 1st for the August issue
October 1st for the November issue

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

What Does The Vital Force Do?

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

~ **Giving** ~

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

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The Weight Shift of Unwanted Changes

By Rick Davis, Tulsa, Oklahoma
taichichih.org/teacher/rick-davis

Change brings us life transitions. And these are difficult. Moving out of pandemic isolation to opening is a transitional experience. Losing a loved one is a transitional force in life. We plant our feet firmly upon a life choice, an occupation, a relationship, and then aging, health issues, or death strike. New personal needs erupt, new challenges explode, demanding realignment of our efforts and focus. Life's footing has shifted, and we feel off-balance.

Jesus once spoke of building one's house on sand or on rock, referring to the ever-shifting nature of sand that makes for an infirm foundation. Much of what we build upon in life, that upon which we place our weight as seemingly permanent, will shift and give way over time. Living is a continual effort to find firm footing.

Building one's life on rock, finding firm footing, is an inward quality. It is the practice of finding balance amidst the myriad of changes that occur – by seeking clarity to discern, and courage to participate through the shifts in life that we encounter. Firm-footedness comes as we embrace the movement from *yang* to *yin* that continually courses through our lifetimes.

Permanence is an illusion. All aspects of life have a *yin-yang* nature that flows from sunny side to shadow side and back. Real permanence comes from a stable constancy within; a perspective of balance that recognizes and moves through the continual impermanency of life.

Transitions come; needs arise in a swelling current to move on. We experience the unsettled movement beneath our stance. With an intentional yielding towards balance, we move with and into the shift, finding again our footing over time as we move on with determined purpose, completing the weight shift into our next stance.

T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) teaches this: the firmest footing rests within. We maneuver with trained confidence these unsettled shifts of the sand-nature of change. We long to move towards rebalancing. Constancy is found as we recognize and take our stance within the push and pull as life presents itself; within the *yin* and *yang* at play all around us and within us. Firmer footing is, after all, an inward inclination of our core towards balance even in an unsettling and shifting landscape.

Back in the Day: Thoughts on Broadening the Reach of TCC

By Margery Erickson, Hanover, Pennsylvania
taichichih.org/teacher/margery-erickson

Listening to Sue and George describe their experiences during the conference, I was brought back to my roots, to the direction I wanted to go. My field of vision started to open when, once monthly, our youth group visited teens in a detention facility to play games. I was shocked at their setting and educated about their homelife and offenses. I considered becoming a probation officer.

In college I did field work, once with phone help and outreach at a crisis intervention center. Perhaps I'd be a social worker. I was also involved in Big Brothers, Big Sisters, and a program called Volunteers in Probation.

My first job was as a floor supervisor and case manager in a sheltered workshop for disabled adults. Next came a degree in special education. After post graduate studies, my next career took place in a partial hospital program/Adult Day Care facility, as a therapist and case worker for dually diagnosed adults.

What is the point of sharing this resume? All of these careers happened before I knew T'ai Chi Chih (TCC). There were so many opportunities to share TCC in these settings, but it was not yet part of my life.

Then I taught special education in the public school system – learning support, emotional support, and life skills. Half-way through that teaching career I became an accredited TCC teacher. Finally, there were opportunities to actually teach this wonderful moving meditation to support staff and to my life skills students.

Fast forward to today. I'm looking at my own community for places to volunteer and share TCC: adult day care, at free lunch programs, women's shelters, houseless shelters, support groups, childcare programs, after school programs, senior centers. Have you started to look in your own community to broaden the reach of TCC?



Where in the World

Ron Richardson does Around the Platter at Angola Lakes, South Lake Tahoe, California

Keep Practicing. Let Go.

By Sheryl Adair, Atlanta, Georgia
taichichih.org/teacher/sheryl-adair

A student came over recently to share a T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) practice, post-COVID-19. Her fingers were moving during our practice and I thought: hmmm. ... The pandemic had provided her an opportunity to practice often and to really let go. After practice she couldn't wait to ask, "Did you see my fingers moving?" I casually replied, "Yes." **She had been waiting for what Justin called a confirmatory sign that the *Chi* was freely flowing.** A very bright lady with a law degree, it was hard for her to let go of the mental.

I can personally identify with a student whose movements are precise and controlled rather than loose and natural. It took me a long time to let go enough, all the way to my fingertips. After our practice, I received a note with these pyramid poems:

thanks
again
for sharing
the gift of *Chi*
and friendship
means so
much

my
reward
believing
practicing too
fingers move
Chi flows
calm

At the teacher conference I was reminded that Justin used to say, **"Barn burned down. Now I see the moon."** Could that apply here? Let go!

The Group Symphony: A Gestalt

By Bruce Lee, Havertown, Pennsylvania
taichichih.org/teacher/bruce-lee

Sometimes when we do a group practice, I feel like we're an orchestra producing a beautiful symphony. Although each of us is performing as a uniquely different instrument actuated by a uniquely different inner vibration, we are all playing the same group chord. With teacher as conductor, the group flows as a single body and the conductor serves as the group *tan t'ien*, in a sense. When this happens, our individual *Chi* synergistically blends together into a group *Chi*.

The natural magic happens when this group *Chi* emerges in a subtle gestalt: If there are 10 of us, the group *Chi* is 11-fold. If there are 11 of us, the group *Chi* is 12-fold. And so on. When our group practice subtly blossoms into a group symphony – with such harmony, resonance, and synergy – we get *E Pluribus Unum*.

More Complete

By Susan A. Corey, Ridley Park, Pennsylvania
taichichih.org/teacher/susan-corey

Editor's Note: Complete Conference coverage begins on page 8.

Oodles of opportunities were offered at this T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) Zoom conference entitled, Continuing the Connection.

There were so many presenters sharing their knowledge and practice. As I have just begun my exploration of enhanced TCC through Seijaku, I was thoroughly captivated by all who generously offered that practice instruction.

Beginning Seijaku was like gracefully falling into a pond of cool pristine water, a surrendering. Seijaku and Fast Track match and blend with my movement style so I gently splashed home. Doing Seijaku and Fast Track – and having the occasion to practice that at conference – reminded me of how significant TCC was as an initial launch. I needed the TCC elements of light, sustained, and direct movements to learn and explore, and to complement my more personal movements. Now I am continuing a maximum *Chi* practice. How deeply insightful it was of Justin Stone to develop this moving meditation practice. Now we can all be more complete.

At left: Rachel Rillinger teaching TCC pre-COVID-19 at an Easter Seals camp for people with disabilities.



One. Perfect. Moment.

By Allan B., Student of Steve Stevens

I've recently taken a break from my blog because I've felt a need to reassess where I spend my energy. Four months ago, I began the study and practice of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC), a form of T'ai Chi based in meditation rather than martial arts. Almost daily, I spend 30 to 40 minutes working through its 19 movements and one pose. Afterwards I sit quietly, and I've come to treasure those final minutes of quiet.

For years, I've attempted meditation and it mostly eluded me. I've heard "empty your mind" which is impossible for my busy brain. It doesn't stop because I want it to. In Christian meditation, I was told to let my mind "be filled with the Holy Spirit," an instruction so vague I found it mostly unhelpful. I tried counting my breaths – a good centering discipline but not terribly enlightening. About two months ago, during my post TCC quiet time, I stumbled into something enlightening.

It is what I call the practice of One... Perfect... Moment. In this still moment, I cut off the past. There is no past. There are no regrets, no victories, no people, no guilt, no shame, no wishful thinking. There is only me, here, as I exist in this One. Perfect. Moment. I cut off the future. There are no needs, no expectations, no tasks waiting, no fear of the unknown, no one who needs me. My single desire is to be in this One. Perfect. Moment. There is only me existing in this One. Perfect. Moment.

I feel the breeze on my skin, my body sitting on a chair, my hands resting on my knees. I feel my legs beneath my hands, and my feet solid and restful on the ground or floor. Any sound – whether birdsong or passenger jet – is part of this One. Perfect. Moment. No sight, no sound, no feeling is distracting. It is all simply a part of that One. Perfect. Moment.

When I'm in this space, there is no anger, no celebration, no fear. There is an untouchable part of me: let the world do its worst and this part of me cannot be lost (even if I might lose it temporarily). I am perfectly myself, and I am perfect, not in the sense of flawless, but in the sense that I exist as I am in this One. Perfect. Moment. There is no need for change, or growth, or improvement in this space. I am me now and that's enough now. I do not fear the things beyond my control, and therefore I do not hate. I find my compassion for other people and the world expanded, my energy repleted, and my mood calmer.

I always know this is a temporary state. There are people, tasks, victories to be achieved, and problems to be addressed. But not now. Not in this One. Perfect. Moment. This is not a selfish time any more than it is selfish for an athlete to breathe deeply and focus on his breath at the end of a hundred-yard dash. It is a necessary moment of rest and restoration before the next heat of the day. I return to my day more serene, more productive.



*Where in the World
Judy Kistler-Robinson does
Bass Drum in Shanghai*

Let It Be Enjoyable

By John Marquez,
Antioch, California

Joy Thru Movement. Really? I remember when I first heard those words three years ago. I thought they meant that when we did T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) it would be enjoyable. That made sense. I gladly practiced daily. I had most movements down with the exception of the challenging "Taffies" and Working the Pulley. When it came to refining the movements, there was more work to do. Always intrigued by the mysterious *Chi* in Justin's writings and practices, I continued practicing. *Chi* increases through refinement, as do the intensified benefits. I was all in. Movements went to another level; I found new meaning in a lifetime of practice. Through regular personal practices and group practices, we evolve. The more effortless the movements become, the more enjoyable. It's difficult to get out of my own way and let go. **Habit energies resist change; it takes effort. Maybe the better term is "let it be"?**

Is it worth it? Most definitely. I have discovered amazing joy in my life, and I assume this is the joy Justin referred to. This gift can influence every aspect of our lives. The blessings (benefits) help us through many challenges. Just recently, having developed challenges with my knees, I am aware inside of the joy and absolutely feel the best ever. This joy in the heart is real, as is the *Chi* flowing throughout the body. Justin wrote, "There's only one request that I have, practice every day, practice when you feel like it, and practice when you don't feel like it. The rewards are well worth it." I'm living those words today and also looking forward. With sincere gratitude, I give thanks, especially to Justin Stone.

Changes: Moving Along

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California
taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-mcalister

If you have been involved in the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) Community, you have undoubtedly heard Justin mention that for our own spiritual growth we must learn to accord with impermanence. We have certainly had the chance during Covid-19.

Change is often hard because we get stuck in a comfort zone. Change can be uncomfortable if it doesn't fit our plans. There are many reasons we don't like change.

But change is often positive. In adjusting, we grow; we learn new things, new ways to be; we broaden our horizons. Often, it's good. Look at how many of us learned Zoom and how grateful we are (after grumbling).

Many years ago, while planning our yearly conference, I was reviewing the program with Justin. During previous conferences we had no breakout sessions. But this particular conference committee wanted to try something new. So we planned some blocks of time with presentation choices. Justin was not particularly in favor, but he said okay.

During the first breakout session I was checking in to see how things were going. Justin was sitting off to one side, so I joined him. He too had been watching the groups. He commented on the value of smaller group discussions and liked what he heard. Since then, we have always had conference breakout sessions.

Intensives by Teacher Trainers were developed as an avenue for teacher candidates to prepare for accreditation. Justin was not in favor of making intensives mandatory. But, it was always strongly recommended for accreditation preparation. Even when candidates are well-prepared by their teachers, there is something to be said for immersing oneself in the 3½ day intensive. Also, working with other candidates builds confidence, support, and a comfort level for the process. Working with a trainer clarifies expectations for accreditation.

After the intensive course had been running a few years, Justin commented that new teachers were better prepared and moving better than in the past. The results were noticeable at the conference; intensives were making a difference.

The vast majority of candidates attend an intensive before accreditation. Those who don't seem to struggle more. It had become evident to trainers, course hosts, and auditing teachers that intensives better prepare candidates for accreditation. In accordance with change, the intensive will now be a prerequisite to attending accreditation, and that it will produce better teachers, and make for a smoother and more joy-filled experience at accreditation.

Intensives and accreditation moved online during Covid-19. Even when we can plan in-person events, we will offer at least one intensive online annually. We hope this makes it easier for some to fulfill this requirement.

During this year of change April Leffler became an Assistant Teacher Trainer (a teacher trainer in training) and Steve Stevens joined the T'ai Chi Chih Foundation Board.

It has been a pleasure these past 15 months for teachers to practice and connect through Zoom on Tuesdays. It has uplifted our spirits. When my Tuesday TCC class resumed in early July, I thought I'd have to give up the teacher Zoom practices. But that felt like a black hole after all the time together. With our 2021 conference theme of "Continuing the Connection" it became obvious to continue our Tuesday connections. In keeping with change, going with the flow, and impermanence, I would like to slightly change the focus of our time together.

When we come together annually at a conference I hear, "wow, that's a great idea" ... "why don't we do that" ... "can we...?" But we return home and nothing happens; great ideas don't take hold. We don't have enough time together to make them blossom. I propose we come together on the second Saturday of each month, share a shorter practice, and make time to discuss. You bring a topic; I'll bring a topic. We'll put our heads together to make community-building ideas come to fruition. We love this community, but love needs to manifest into action. Watch the TCC Teacher Circle Facebook page for the new Zoom practice link.

May the theme of this year's conference, "Continuing the Connection," flow through our lives as we reconnect with students, visit family and friends, and open to the vastness and beauty of life through our practice of TCC.

Conference Lessons

By Daniel Pienciak, Bradley Beach, New Jersey
taichichih.org/teacher/daniel-pienciak

After giving my “Justin Stories” conference talk, I remembered another story. Justin often described a sign over a doorway at a rehab center where he was recovering from cardiac surgery. On that sign were the words, “Habit is the enemy of old age.”

This past Zoom conference offered new insights, new understandings of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC), and in itself was an excellent example of doing things differently.

I learned that other teachers, too, found it challenging to convince students to avail themselves of programs by other teachers. Humans have comfort zones and mostly stay there. Perhaps it feels secure, or we have a belief that a teacher or trainer or type of course is best for us. We cling to the familiar which limits us and can potentially be an enemy to growth (regardless of age).

My students largely become accustomed to my teaching exclusively, and have been reluctant, with few exceptions, to expand their horizons and attend offerings of other teachers. Despite my encouragement, few attended the conference student day.

Intensives are for teachers and students to delve more deeply into practice and invite expansion and enrichment. But relatively few teachers choose to attend. Yet teachers and students report and write time and again about game-changing discoveries.

Another teaching by Justin, more than a story, is about being on the spiritual path: “to accord with impermanence.” Surely part of that impermanence is the willingness to stretch, expand, and sometimes let go of former concepts or understandings by opening the path to other.

This Zoom conference certainly provided that opportunity. Many thanks to all who made it possible.



Conference Reflections on Seijaku

By Pam Towne, Oceanside, California
taichichih.org/teacher/pam-towne

One of this year’s conference highlights was seeing renewed interest in Seijaku, the advanced form of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC). Over the years, many people have been put off by calling Seijaku “advanced TCC” and have thus missed out on what it offers. We could think of Seijaku as offering advanced benefits.

The benefits of practicing TCC come from circulating and balancing *Chi*. In fact, many of the benefits we experience could be considered side effects of circulating the Vital Force and balancing its *yin* and *yang* elements as we flow from movement into stillness. Seijaku greatly increases the flow of *Chi*, so it naturally accelerates the resulting health, serenity, creativity, and longevity benefits.

Another advanced benefit of practicing Seijaku is revealing *Prajna* (pronounced “prawnya”), the inherent wisdom aspect of the *Chi*. Usually when someone speaks about *Chi*, they are referring to *Prana* (pronounced “prawna”), or the energy aspect of the *Chi*. Yet there is much more to the *Chi*, and Seijaku cultivates awareness of this wisdom that lies within all of us. Justin referred to it as “That Which Knows.”

At the conference, four teachers presented four ways to practice Seijaku. Justin taught each and customized his teaching for each individual. Carmen Brocklehurst does three TCC and three Seijaku and three Fast Track on most movements.

Ann Rutherford teaches Seijaku as a kinesthetic mindfulness practice using the eight chapters of Justin’s book **Heightened Awareness**. Ann embeds disturbing feelings like fear, anger, or grief in the resistance section.

Dan Pienciak sandwiches three Seijaku movements between TCC movements, i.e. three TCC then three Seijaku then three TCC.

I did my preferred format of six Seijaku followed by 3 TCC on most movements.

Different approaches work for different people, and for each at different times. If you would like to advance your practice of TCC, I invite you to explore Seijaku. It can improve your TCC practice, show you what softness really means, and a whole lot more.

Teaching Seijaku as a Kinesthetic Mindfulness Practice

By Anne Rutherford, Albuquerque, New Mexico
taichichih.org/teacher/ann-rutherford

Practicing and teaching Seijaku as a kinesthetic mindfulness practice creates tremendous opportunity for spiritual evolution, something Justin wished for all his T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) teachers. (Kinesthesia is the movement of the body's muscles and engagement with the sensory system.) When using the muscles, we learn a new discipline more efficiently. (For example, this is how we learn to play tennis or ski.) Mindfulness practice, developed by the Buddha 2,500 years ago, is a spiritual discipline whereby we become aware of our arising thoughts, emotions and body sensations and our reaction to them. Justin's book, **Heightened Awareness**, describes exercises we can follow to develop a mindfulness practice.

Justin often compared Seijaku's *Chi* circulation to a 1,000-watt light bulb (with TCC as a 60-watt light bulb). In the Seijaku booklet, created as a fundraiser for the International T'ai Chi Chih Foundation, there are many stories written by Seijaku practitioners, which tell of deep healings. What is it about Seijaku that brings such astonishing stories? It is due to Seijaku's heightened *Chi* circulation, caused by the addition of the resistance section. However, it is critical to remember, Justin admonished his teachers to only offer Seijaku classes to advanced students since they must be able to ground the enhanced *Chi*.

Justin wrote about his fervent wish that his teachers attain heightened awareness, not just for their own benefit, but also for the benefit of their students. Just like in TCC, Seijaku is fundamentally a spiritual practice, which Justin defined as knowledge of the Real, of the Absolute. He stressed that we could attain heightened awareness states through mindfulness practices.

Justin invited his Albuquerque TCC teachers to his house three times a week to practice *Turiya* meditation. *Turiya* (the state of Reality underlying waking, sleeping, and dreaming) is a very deep meditation, like diving under a big ocean wave. In *Turiya*, the practitioners have no awareness of their turbulent, suffering, ego-generated thoughts.

I became aware that even though entering deep *Turiya* states, I still became agitated by everyday life events. I wrote Justin a letter, asking him, "Will *Turiya* meditation, by itself, maintain Universal awareness, or do I need a regular mindfulness practice where I consciously release self-clinging thoughts?" He called me to his house to answer my questions, saying, "You cannot succeed in realizing Universal Awareness, the Absolute, unless you become aware of that which hinders you. When you experience an emotion or agitated thought, ask, 'Is this of the Absolute?' The ego, self-clinging, is a big hindrance. There's only one thing going on: can you attune to the Absolute while waking, sleeping, dreaming? If you can, Universal

Awareness is overtaking the individual viewpoint."

After Justin imparted these words of encouragement, I attended a TCC Teacher Conference, where I conducted an informal survey, asking Seijaku accredited teachers if they practiced Seijaku, and if they taught it. Most teachers told me they didn't practice it or teach it because they disliked it, saying it made them angry, or they didn't understand it. One teacher said, "Why should I push through a wall; I have enough stress in my life?" Seijaku seemed to be in danger of extinction, so I decided to play with integrating Seijaku's resistance section with Justin's **Heightened Awareness** exercises. The exercises are methods to develop bare awareness of rising ego-clinging thoughts, emotions, and body sensations, yet not engage with them.

One method he discussed, which reminded me of Seijaku, is *Tien Tai* meditation: a meditation whereby the practitioner holds concentration in a focused point (third eye, tip of nose, or *tan t'ien*) then releases concentration when thoughts become too numerous. He said that this holding fast/letting go, when practiced regularly, can bring the practitioner to a state of Universal Awareness.

Justin, and other spiritual teachers, state that immersion in the Absolute, Universal Awareness, can only happen when we are in a state of Presence: when the mind is quiet, but alert. Knowing that when the body is moving, the mind is quiet, I experimented with putting the feel of one of the aspects of "awareness of hindrances" into the resistance section of Seijaku. For example, in Chapter 7, Justin asks us to become aware of our state of mind at a point in time; not to analyze it, just be aware of it: Peaceful, hostile, sad? I placed a "state of mind" in the resistance section as a felt *sense*: tactile, color, smell, taste, sound. Beginning the movement in softness, I entered the *felt* resistance when my leading foot flattened and exited the resistance when my back heel released.

Practicing Seijaku this way brought a tremendous release of "self," a liberation from an egoic fixation. I decided to share with Justin the experiment and its effects. He watched me demonstrate, and then said, "Of course, dear, that makes sense: Seijaku *is* a heightened awareness practice." So, this is how I've been teaching Seijaku: I require the students to watch Justin's Seijaku DVD as well as read his **Heightened Awareness** book to develop a regular mindfulness practice. The student decides what ego fixation to implant in the resistance section. Practicing Seijaku as a kinesthetic mindfulness practice brings joy and spiritual evolution to both students and my fellow teachers. Some tell me they now practice only Seijaku because of the phenomenal results achieved.

The following are self-inquiry questions I ask the Seijaku students, which help to fine-tune their practice:

- Does it help to delineate the resistance by embedding it with color, taste, texture, smell, sound?
- How do I experience the resistance density: very dense/ not very dense?

CONTINUED ON P. 9

Put a Spring in Your Hop: Fast Track with Seijaku

By Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, New Mexico
taichichih.org/teacher/carmen-brocklehurst

This is an introduction to Fast Track as taught by Justin Stone. T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) is done at regular speed, like slow motion in a dream. Seijaku/Heightened Awareness is slower and involves very careful awareness of each movement's form. Fast Track is done faster than TCC. Can you maintain the form and principles of the movements when the speed is increased? **Fast Track teaches us to stay in our feet.** The Buddha says, "The man, woman, and child who can keep their attention in the bottoms of their feet whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down can heal a thousand ills."

Justin asked that both Seijaku and Fast Track be kept an oral tradition. Justin's video of Seijaku explains Seijaku and maintains the oral tradition.

The complete practice as taught by Justin is: three TCC, three Seijaku, and three Fast Track. Doing a practice that includes all three approaches (TCC, Seijaku and FT) produces an amazing flow of energy and brings us into a keen awareness of the principles, flow, and benefits of each movement. Justin was well aware, as he explained when teaching T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku/Fast Track Teacher Trainings, that not everyone would be ready (or capable) to integrate all three practices. Justin often used the example of an airline pilot and said, "Just because you would like to be a pilot doesn't mean you are capable of it." He was asked by some with university degrees, "Don't you think I am smart enough?" He replied, "It has nothing to do with how intelligent you are." Justin also said, "Teach Seijaku and Fast Track only to your best students." It is highly recommended that everyone who is ready, should make their best effort to learn Seijaku and Fast Track. The benefits go far beyond words and explaining, and they are worth the effort.

These four representative movements show how Fast Track is integrated into most movements, with and without the hop: **Rocking Motion** has no hop, but it is done at a faster speed. It is an excellent example of the three speeds we will be using as we move. **Push Pull** still has a 60-40 emphasis. **Perpetual Motion** has a longer pull, as we begin to move hands and fingertips from elbow to elbow. **Passing Clouds** has the hip swivel which is so very important to all the side-to-side movements.

Movements without Fast Track: Bird Flaps Its Wings; Light at the Top of the Head/Light at the Temple; Joyous Breath (which is already Seijaku style in TCC and uses the strong breath used throughout Seijaku. In fact, it could be considered the parent of Seijaku); Six Healing Sounds; Cosmic Consciousness Pose (both TCC and Seijaku style are done for one minute each).

What is accomplished by doing Fast Track? Many things, including:

- the practitioner reaching a new level of understanding of each movement;
- the practitioner developing a greater awareness of their gaps in applying TCC principles to the movements;
- softness and continuity;
- feeling strong and soft;
- greater awareness of the connection between the *tan t'ien* and the bottoms of the feet;
- *yin* and *yang*, balancing hands and feet, upper and lower body, with the waist being your distribution point, including the left and right side;
- use of the hip swivel in all side-to-side movements.
- it is not fastness for fastness sake, but rather can you maintain the principles while working at a different level of speed? What happens to your awareness?

I wish you good luck with your practice.



CONTINUED FROM P. 8

- Does the resistance density change with (or within) each practice?
- Am I *really* seeking Heightened Awareness, Universal Consciousness?
- Am I *really* willing to let go of my subjective perspective (thoughts, emotions, my suffering back-story) and be guided by Cosmic Consciousness, the Ineffable?

The following are quotes from Justin, which I often share with Seijaku students:

- "You cannot realize Universal Awareness unless you become aware of that which hinders you."
- "What we see, feel, think is empty of enduring self-nature."
- "Heightened awareness gradually becomes Universal Consciousness, and we begin to get away from the self-centered concentration we had formerly known."
- "Heightened Awareness always begins on the inside, not being merely a matter of tactile or sensory occurrence. We begin to be aware of the vast ocean of Consciousness in which we swim."
- "Wisdom and Energy come from the same Source. We live in a vast continuum of surging vibration, encompassing both Wisdom and Energy. We do not have to look outside ourselves to find both. Enlightenment is merely uncovering our own treasure."

The Transformational Stages of the TCC Journey

By Marie Dotts, Loveland, Colorado
taichichih.org/teacher/marie-dotts

T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) is fairly simple to learn but do not let the simplicity fool you. It has the potential to take us all the way Home into the ground of Love that we are if we are willing to go deeper and surrender to its transformative power. I know you all have felt and experienced this in your practice and your life. I am just sharing a little bit about this journey now to bring more consciousness to it.

I think collectively we are in powerful, transformative times. Life is asking us to wake up in greater and greater ways to the Truth of Who and What we are. TCC can help us align more with the transformation that wants to be birthed in us individually and as a whole.

I would like to share a couple of writings from Justin Stone's **Spiritual Odyssey**.

From *Spiritual Evolution & Divine Instrument*: "...As one works with the *Chi*, in T'ai Chi Chih – circulating and balancing the Life Force – the pace of the evolving is greatly stepped up. How we think and act affects this *Chi*, but, in turn, we are the products of the *Chi*. Call it the divine instrument if you want. As we practice T'ai Chi Chih this *Chi* will be molded (and accumulated), and our spiritual evolution will be greatly enhanced. We will begin to change, and so will our world."

And from *A Spiritual Discipline*: "It is necessary to remember that T'ai Chi Chih is a spiritual discipline and must be taught with this in mind. The physical, mental, and psychic benefits can be great, but essentially there is a spiritual power behind T'ai Chi, and the world is becoming acutely aware of the need for such."

I feel the key behind the spiritual and transformative power of TCC lies with its Principles of Movement. Justin has said many times that it is *how* you move, not *what* you move that is important. It is in the embodying of the principles that the *Chi* is circulated and balanced. And as Justin stated it is the circulated and balanced *Chi* that is behind our transformation. Our spiritual and transformative journey with TCC is our journey with the principles of TCC.

These principles are Grounding, Yinning and Yanging (the weight shift), Softness and Continuity, Flowing from the Center, Circularity, and Polarity. They are the boat that will take us Home. The principles have no judgements of right or wrong. They unfold in us just like a flower blooms. Wherever we are in our personal journey with the principles is absolutely perfect. But just like a flower that has stages of unfoldment so does our TCC practice. Ultimately, there is no end to the journey, only infinite unfoldment.

I want to note here that as I discuss the Transformative Stages of TCC, I am just sharing with you from my own personal experience and the experience I have witnessed in my students as a teacher. Someone may have a completely different experience and that is so very perfect. It is important to always honor your own experience.

The first stage of unfoldment that I have noticed is all about learning the movements and allowing the principles to begin to take root. The first introduction to the principles can be very life transforming. A recent new student asked me how something that is about softness, ease and effortlessness be really beneficial. For this student efforting and pushing was the only way she knew to get through life.

For many it is also the first time they are learning about grounding in the feet and their *tan t'ien* after so many years of living in their heads. In the November 2008 Vital Force (page 8) a student shares, "...After teaching English for years, I came to live almost entirely in my head. Somehow, I recognized at my first introduction to T'ai Chi Chih that TCC could open a door to a new way of being alive... During a training my instructors told me again and again to 'Stop thinking and start feeling.' It took many months of practice before this advice seeped into my soul. Slowly, the essence of the movements became part of my muscle memory. I did not have to think about moving. I simply surrendered to the flow of the *Chi*. While I am in the flow, my mind shuts off. Problems and concerns fall away. I am free to simply be. I don't concentrate on the *tan t'ien*; I feel it sway back and forth as I yin and yang. I feel one with the universe. From the inside out I am free." (by S.R.)

The spiritual journey is often described in three stages: Journey to Center, Journey with Center, and Journey as Center. This student found her Center. (You could also use Love, Stillness, Home, Oneness, the Now, Presence, Source.) Finding your Center is the gift of this first stage of the TCC Journey with the principles. It can happen especially after one gets the muscle memory of the movements and is then free to sink into the principles in a deeper way. I love to witness a new student finding their center for the first time. It is often accompanied by tears. It is very touching, loving, and joyous. Maybe some of you remember that moment. It is a powerful moment, reconnecting to an unconditional **internal** source of Love within.

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Here is another student's experience finding her Center. It was at an intensive. Often students have breakthroughs at intensives and accreditations. I highly recommend if you are a student and have not attended an intensive to attend one. This is from the November 2019 *Vital Force* (page 23):

...A special short teaching session, during which we were breaking down Pulling Taffy, introduced me to my new BFFs. Ahh 'the Taffies,' not exactly the easiest of the movements. The instructor demonstrated the arms pulling past the waist turn and the setting of the hands, the placing of one above the other. She suggested we might connect with the *tan t'ien*, as we set up the hands, in the form of a hug. I had heard a lot about the *tan t'ien* in the few years I had been practicing TCC. Justin called it the 'Seat of Heaven.' We are instructed to move from it, feel it, sink into it – but never had I heard hug it.

The mere suggestion of a gentle embrace was a surprise. As the concept sunk in, the tears flowed, and I was filled with a knowing. I was meeting myself in the *tan t'ien*. I was being introduced to a part of me I'd never really known. My new friend, my treasure of gold. Although I was not prepared for this meeting, we will assuredly be friends to the end, and we are so grateful to be on this journey together." (by C.P.)

One of my favorite teaching moments was when an 80-year-old student who had been with me a couple of years came bursting into the class. She was lit up like a lightbulb and said, "I get it, I get it." I asked her what and she said, "It is all about moving from the Center. If I knew that earlier my whole life would have been different." I said **all that matters is you know it now.**

Experiencing our True Center is a beautiful gift from this first stage of our journey with TCC. In many ways though it is only the beginning. **The next stage, Journey with Center awaits.** This stage I feel is so important to understand to continue our unfoldment. The evolution-

ary Force wants to continue to unfold in us. And even though we have contacted our Center we still do not permanently live there as our True Self. Our attention gets pulled away many times. I love the saying from the Buddha, "The person who can keep their attention in the bottoms of their feet whether walking, sitting, or lying down can heal a thousand ills."

How many of us can say we live in the aliveness of our feet and *tan t'ien* 24 hours a day? I know I am still on that journey. In many ways we are internally divided. There are parts of ourselves that are not completely united with our true center. They are mostly unconscious. These parts Justin Stone called our habit energies. They are the conditioned or false self and are the source of much suffering in our lives. They live as tensions in our bodies that block the flow of *Chi*.

Editor's Note: Please continue reading online at taichichih.org/conference-2021.



Pulling Taffy seems to be one of the more difficult movements to learn, but it does not have to be; just remember that one hand, palm turned up, makes a horizontal pull below the top palm, turned down. The feet remain firmly on the ground as the weight shifts; the heel is not raised. When the pull is finished, both hands are outside the hips, turned up to the sun, and the other is turned down near the straight (*yin*) leg. The “T'ai Chi sideways step” is used, the leg snaking out to the side with the knee first slightly bent and the foot pointing slightly to the side, not the front. This assumes you begin with feet in a slightly “V” position. Do not start with the two palms facing each other (a common mistake). The arms have crossed and then the hands pull past each other on a level glide to the side. (It is not up and down like a dance movement.) And keep the heels on the ground!

Pulling Taffy – 1st Variation – Anchor finds us turning our hips and stepping forward as we pull the palms past each other (and we are slightly pigeon-toed), then we bring the legs back in line and do basic “Pulling Taffy” to the side.

Pulling Taffy – 2nd Variation – Wrist Circles is sometimes called just “Wrist Circles,” for obvious reasons. As we make two complete circles plus one half-circle with our wrists (not the arms), we go up on the balls of the feet with each circle and then come down before starting the next circle. However, on the third – the half circle ending at the top of the loop – we stay flat on the feet, with bent knees, and remain there, well- anchored, as we start the basic “Pulling Taffy” motion.

Pulling Taffy – 3rd Variation – Perpetual Motion is often called just “Perpetual Motion” as it is continuous. After we have pulled taffy to the left (see photos on pgs. 70-71), both wrists and palms turn and sweep across the body to begin the pull again. All this is done continuously with no resting point. After nine (or more) repetitions, we come to a graceful conclusion. If one were in a blizzard and wanted to develop warmth quickly, this movement would be a handy way to do it.

Working the Pulley is surprisingly easy, though it may look difficult. The hand that is pulled back, about waist level, moves slightly behind the body, then comes up just above the shoulder in a swimming motion before pushing forward (see photos on pgs. 72-75). When the left foot is forward be sure to turn, with the torso only, definitely to the left (not straight ahead), and when the right foot is forward turn the torso sharply to the right.

Light at the Top of the Head (and Light at the Temple) finds the feet held in one place. As the hands (really the wrists) swing out from above the head (or from the sides) three times, we rise on the balls of the feet and come back down as the hands come together above the head (or at

the temples). Then we make a few circles, with the palms facing each other, fingers pointing up. When we eventually come down, in a wide circular fashion, the hands cross with the right-hand underneath, and then circle up to bring them down to the sides in the rest position.

Joyous Breath requires some pressure from the arm muscles, the only movement that does. We push vigorously down to the ground, breathing out *deeply* as we do so, and then pull up vigorously to the top of the chest as we breathe in deeply. Here we hold the breath for a few seconds, then start down again. This movement is so invigorating that some like to do it at the beginning of practice.

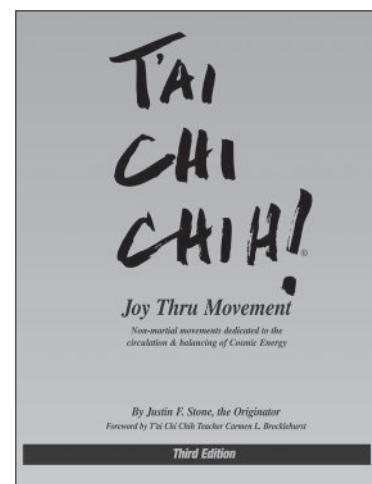
Passing Clouds is a very graceful movement. The hands move in circles, going in opposing directions, and each hand passes by the opposite elbow (it does not swing wildly) as it moves to the opposing side. We start with the left hand moving to the right, and we finish with the right hand moving to the left as we bring the right foot over to meet the left foot. In other words, we close on the left side.

The **Six Healing Sounds** are movements put to ancient Chinese Healing Sounds that sages used when they lived in the forests. The sounds are not spoken aloud but are aspirated, that is, breathed, with barely audibly sound pushed out vigorously. In sweeping to one side or the other, both hands have wrists cocked and fingertips up, the palms facing the direction to which the hands move.

The **Cosmic Consciousness Pose** is stationary, with the left heel off the ground, resting and just above the right ankle bone. We gaze through slightly spread fingers and try not to have extraneous thoughts. This might be held 30 seconds or more, then the arms are lowered slowly to the sides.



Justin during his bandleader days in the 1940s.



Excerpt from the
“T'ai Chi Chih Photo Text”
available in print
and in an e-book
from justinstonetcc.com.

The Physical and the Spiritual in T'ai Chi Chih

Most people who come for T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) lessons do it for physical reasons, either because of ailments or because they feel it will help them in the areas of energy, hypertension, etc. Thus, they think of TCC practice as a form of therapy, which it undoubtedly is. However, they may later find that they have derived much deeper – Spiritual – benefits, which they did not expect.

How do these come about? How does TCC affect our karma?

We are the products of our Habit Energies (*vasana* in Sanskrit), and we in turn have built these Habit Energies. Thus, it can be a vicious circle. When these Energies grow too strong, they become Tendencies

(*samskara* in Sanskrit), and these may last through many lifetimes. These Tendencies are some of the reasons people have uncontrollable drinking problems – which they don't understand – explosive temper outbursts, fits of despondency, etcetera. It is hard to fight against such things when you don't know what you're fighting.

How does all this begin? When there is a release of energy, accompanied by the mental stimulus associated with it, a *vritti* (Sanskrit) or shallow groove is formed on the brain. Repeated release of the same energy – as when one finds solace in drink and therefore imbibes each time a disappointment is encountered – develops the shallow groove into a deeper Habit Energy. This in turn takes over our lives. If you introspect, you will find that most of our actions are habitual. We practice piano to develop these Habit Energies so our playing becomes “muscle memory”. We learn languages this way. Some actions become so habitual, such as shaving in the morning, that we often don't remember whether we performed them or not.

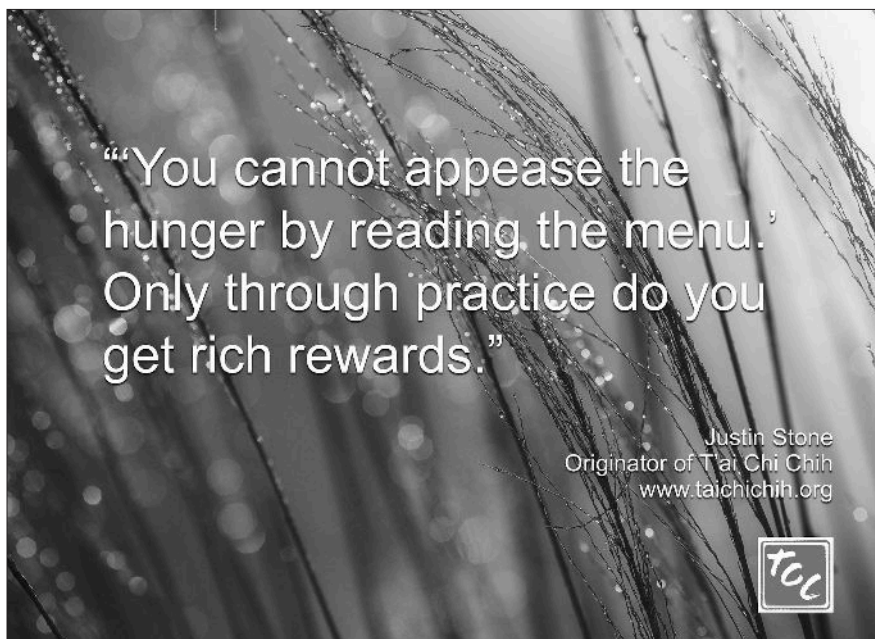
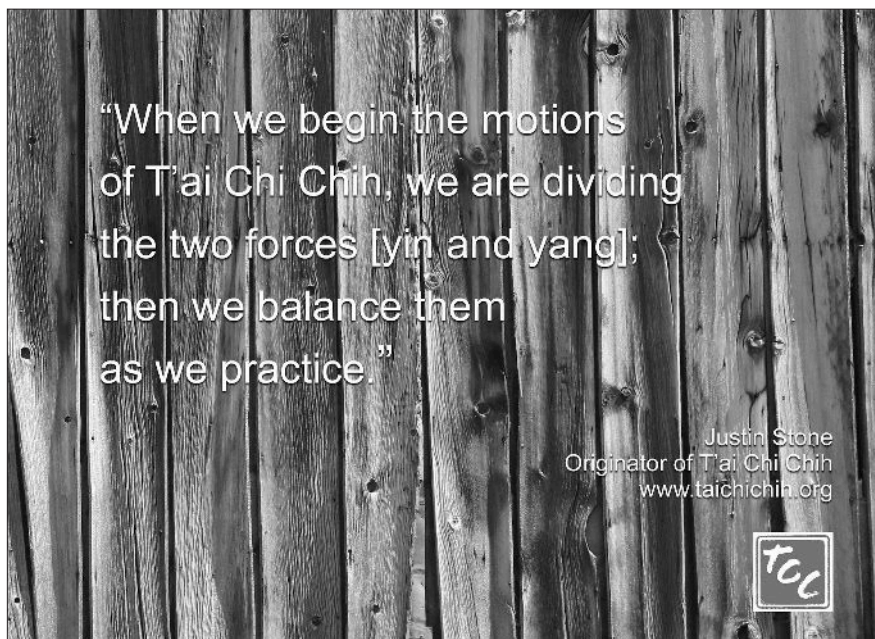
So we are a product of these *vasanas*, which we ourselves built! We are, in a sense, our own creators! We build our own Karma.

I have often spoken of the “Reciprocal Character of Mind and *Chi*” (Prana in Sanskrit). **The character of the *Chi* greatly influences our State of Mind, and our State of Mind greatly influences “our” *Chi*.** How can we break into that circle to change influences for a more desirable effect? We do T'ai Chi Chih, circulating and balancing the *Chi*. As the *yin-yang* elements are brought into better balance, this not only balances the *Chi* but it also influences how we think. Ultimately, we are what we think; this creates our Karma.

The state of someone's *Chi* creates “vibes,” as we all know. Sometimes we meet someone and get “bad vibes” when that person's *Chi* is out of balance. We can't explain it – and we often ignore it – but we are reacting to that individual's energy field. Such reactions are usually reliable.

By changing the quality of the *Chi* (thru TCC practice) we are actually performing the deepest Yoga, going back to the cause, and erasing it so the affect will be improved or will disappear. This is, in a sense, “de-hypnotization”.

In this respect TCC has the same deep purpose as Yoga and Zen, but it is a much easier practice. Few are capable of following either Zen or Yogic life to its deepest levels, particularly in our busy society. But we can practice TCC and have the deepest spiritual effect on ourselves.



A New 20/20

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

We wanted to incorporate a deep sense of belonging and connection into the 2021 conference. For the 20/20 activity, we gathered 20 experienced teachers to lead small groups in a 20-minute dispersed “whole community” discussion: What does it mean to connect with the *tan t'ien*? How do we explain “flowing from the center” to students?

Using seated T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) to feel the *tan t'ien* was a common theme. Jean Katus and Guy Kent found that when seated, they discovered their *tan t'ien* easily. Sandy McAlister uses some sitting TCC in the second, third or fourth beginning class so students can feel it rather than focusing on the movements of feet and hands. By having students place one hand over the *tan t'ien*, we can introduce them to the principle of flowing from this center.

We want to be open to and trusting in the *Prajna* that can guide us in doing and saying the right things at the right times. But how do we access that wisdom? Carmen Brocklehurst shared that it was 10 years before she realized the *Chi* flowing down into the *tan t'ien*. **“I started to breathe. I went backwards into myself. It flowed! It went down into this amazing place!”** Babies are very connected. When we have a trauma to the body (a spanking, falling out of a tree, learning how to walk), an anxiety builds and creates what she calls a spiritual film which will stop us from getting to our place of wisdom. Don't try to go into *tan t'ien*, she suggests. Justin said you are *already* in the *tan t'ien* ... so just let yourself go deeper.

Amy Tyksinski uses the *Nei Kung* to teach students about the *tan t'ien* and guided the group in a short meditation. Lucinda Kutsko shares with students that we make our best decisions when we make it from the center, your *tan t'ien*. Ken Gray and Sokie Lee explained that *tan t'ien* means Elixir Field, which confers immortality and spiritual powers. “Location, location, location.” They suggested having students slap or press the *tan t'ien* area to create a muscle memory. Explain that we flow from the center like the ocean moving forward and receding.

As I gathered the comments, I was struck by the number, variety, and creativity of the suggestions. I felt the synchronicity of each thought contributing to a whole. There were way too many gems to include here. See the full writeup at: taichichih.org/conference-2021.



Justin Stories, a Conference Presentation Excerpt

By Dan Pienciak, Bradley Beach, New Jersey
taichichih.org/teacher/daniel-pienciak

It was a 2001 Meditation Retreat, right after 9/11. I was bound for an Albuquerque meditation retreat, on one of the first flights out of Newark, New Jersey following 9/11. It was a surreal experience.

When I arrived, I learned someone had asked at the previous Tuesday's teacher practice, “May we dedicate the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) practice to the 9/11 victims and their families?” Justin's reply: *“Absolutely not! That has nothing to do with our practice together here today.”* I was surprised.

On Saturday night Justin asked me the same question he'd asked a year prior, *“Dan, please tell the group why you left the priesthood.”*

It took me several years to figure out that Justin valued a person being faithful to who they are, not bending to norms or beliefs which do not resonate with their own nature. He had often taught: *“The purpose of being on the Spiritual path is coming to know who and what you are, and according with Reality, with Impermanence.”*

Feeling the Love Through TCC

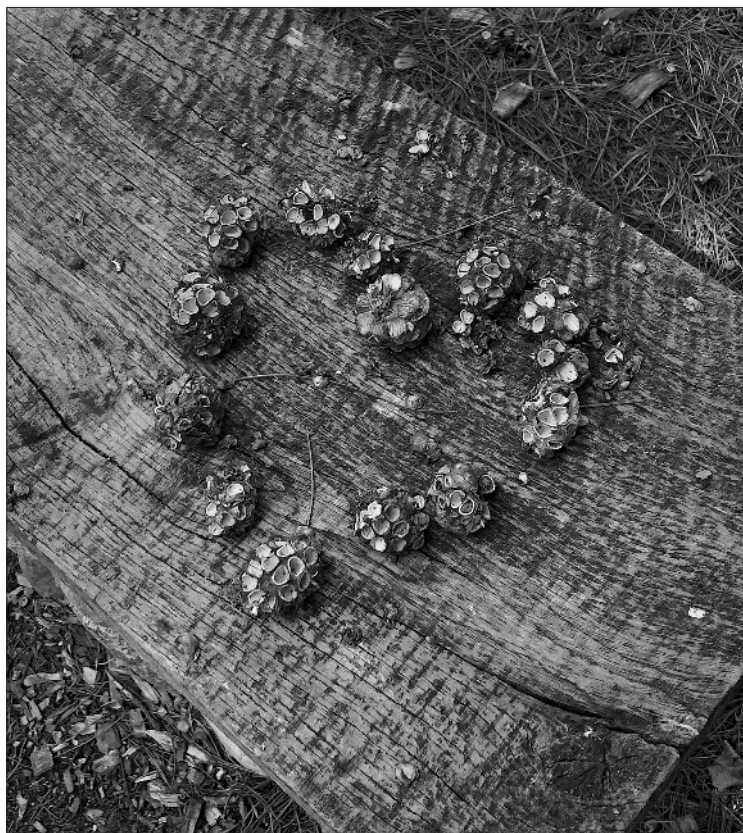
By Terry Gay Puckett, Olmos Park, Texas
taichichih.org/teacher/Terry-Gay-Puckett

A sense of together yet apart permeated the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) conference, an epic event, produced over many months, with so many hours and talents. In deciding which insights from presentations to share with my students, I noticed that the word “feelings” was plastered over every page of my notes.

We heard about feeling grounded and sinking like tree roots into the dirt. My students would love that because we often meet in the park with lots of trees. The *tan t'ien* was mentioned in new ways (to me), feeling it as the center of wisdom and intuition, as a GPS. Judy Chancey's idea of using a gold seal over the exact spot of the *tan t'ien* as a guide is a great teaching tool I will try.

I feel excitement about sharing new information about the weight shift, and feeling the texture of our breathing, even though a particular way to breathe is not taught. When I meet with my students, I will emphasize feeling relaxed by softening the hands and knees to alleviate stress. I've said that before, but this time I hope they will feel the words in their *tan t'iens*. Coordinating the whole body takes practice and patience. It is a commitment of time and dedication to learn TCC. As a teacher I need to be willing to repeat myself, but in many interesting ways, as Sandy did at the conference.

Although it was not my original intent to teach TCC, here I am many years later, teaching, feeling like a beginner, sometimes discouraged but often encouraged, learning new tricks, making new friends. Apparently, none of this is an accident. A favorite Justin Stone quotation was shared by Lesley Nell in the UK: “We cannot reach a destination traveling in the wrong direction.” It is an honor to be a part of this dedicated group, expanding out into the world, feeling the bond of the *Chi*, and going places we have never been before.



Insights on Grounding and Neurological Stimulus

By Paul E. Ciske, Oakland, California
taichichih.org/teacher/paul-ciske

I had some insights about grounding after giving my conference presentation, “Is Grounding Weighing You Down? How to Lighten up Your T'ai Chi Chih.”

First: The body pressing into the floor and the support of the floor pressing into the body are both “grounding” if we use the definition of grounding I gave during my presentation as “relating to the ground.”

Second: The soles of the feet offer a tangible experience of the equal and opposite forces as stated in Newton's third law of motion. What determines which is felt depends on how the attention is directed. Daniel Pieniak wrote to me and called it the yin and yang of grounding which I like. Then the “advanced” level is experiencing the equal and opposite at the *tan t'ien*. Pam Towne shared with me that Justin would say “rooted” from the waist down and light from the waist up. I also experienced it as where the support of the earth meets the inspiration from the sky/heavens (i.e., where heaven and earth meet). This was especially true for the “Taffies” when I would feel the support of the earth come up and the heavens come down to create the gathering motion of the arms in front of the *tan t'ien*. I kept finding as I practiced over the weekend that the upward support from the earth allowed more softening into gravity.

Seijaku: This may have been the first time I experienced a full Seijaku practice. I participated in sessions with Pam and Daniel. With Daniel where he included Fast Track, it reminded me of my studies in the neurocentric body of work called Z-Health. Part of the work involves getting better mapping of the body in the brain which allows for increased strength, coordination, mobility, and flexibility – because the brain can better predict what is going to happen as one moves. In the mobility drill work of Z-Health, they recommend moving at a full variety of speeds and with different loading of the movement. A Seijaku practice that incorporates TCC and Fast Track provides those same variables: moving with resistance and with softness and moving slowly and then quickly with Fast Track. It was definitely a neurologic stimulus.

Continuing the Connection: 2021 TCC Conference

By Lynne Roberts, Missoula, Montana
taichichih.org/teacher/lynne-roberts

I volunteered to be an MC (master of ceremonies) during the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) conference. I so often hear people say that in the "COVID-19-year of 2020, this happened, that happened, I discovered this, I found out how to do that, I didn't know I could do that?" and on and on.

I discovered my voice, which sounds odd since I've been using my voice to teach TCC for 32 years. But that's how it feels to me. I'm speaking up and out more. I share my opinions at times (softly). I feel more confident, more joy, and I laugh more too. Hence my willingness to say yes to being an MC.

Participating in the 2020-21 Tuesday teacher practices led by Sandy (and then Seijaku practices led by Pam) helped keep me sane and grounded. Perhaps I have discovered my voice through TCC and Seijaku?

In mid-September 2020, Lisa Stroyan emailed a handful of us who had been on some Zoom TCC practices together: Subject: An Idea... What do you think? "What if our informally created online community group morphed into the conference committee?" The 2021 conference was born.

Amazing, fabulous, joyful, unbelievable Zoom conference. There was a sense of family as we moved, shared, listened, laughed, and shed tears of emotions throughout the four days. I was filled each moment with wonder as the conference flowed on Zoom. Each presentation was a gift filled with talent, knowledge, and professionalism.

Thanks to the entire conference planning team: Jim and Lorel Maple, Judy Kistler-Robinson, Sky Young-Wick, Barbara Thurber, Stephen Thompson, Karin Hampton, Laurie Thomas and Charlise Latour. Special thank you to Lisa Stroyan and Margery Erickson.



Making the Connection: Integrating Life and TCC

By Gail Nieto, Wrightwood, California
taichichih.org/teacher/gail-nieto

This last year has given many of us time for contemplation and reflection. After a couple of months of staying home and being in isolation, I started to feel frustration and anxiety. Luckily, I have a large yard and garden where I can wander and enjoy nature. On one of my daily forays, I got the strong message of "Let it go!" That afternoon, while practicing with my students on Zoom, I recognized the strong connection between this message as it applies to life and to T'ai Chi Chih (TCC). I mentioned this to my students, and we enjoyed an uplifting discussion of all the things in life where "let it go" applies. How the same message can be applied to TCC by letting go of tension, finding softness, and going with the flow.

CONTINUED ON P. 17

The Chi Made Me Bold

By Sue Kenney, Sacramento, California
taichichih.org/teacher/Sue-Kenney

We have come a long way together, George Manning and I. When I learned that the 2021 conference would be virtual, I asked, “Why not?” I had messages and learnings to share: all I had learned from George about softness, loss and resilience, reaching out and sharing the gifts of the practice.

The core message was inclusiveness. The deep desire was discovery: discovering the beauty of the overlooked, forgotten, dismissed. Allowing the practice to reveal this beauty to those who had forgotten their own beauty, their own power of self-transformation.

George embraced this passion because it was his as well. Neither of us had attended a conference, much less presented. But we submitted two proposals without hesitation.

During a Tuesday teacher practice during COVID-19, Linda Robinson shared her efforts to integrate seated students into her classes. I immediately felt her openness and sincerity. After a few phone conversations and Zoom meetings, we became a team. George and I visited Linda’s class on Zoom and we clicked.

As the conference approached, I was beset with two hip surgeries, two traumatic weeks in a nursing home, and the prospects of a lengthy recovery. But thanks to the support and encouragement from the conference hosts, we pulled it off.

As I sat in my wheelchair in the nursing home during the Q&A portion of the presentation, I felt all of the *Chi*. And I marveled at the global community that embraced me as I am and gave more than I could have expected.

I am grateful for the *Chi* that made me bold, for teacher George who gave so willingly, and for Linda, a perfect partner in this good work. And I am grateful for a community who heard the message of inclusiveness. Who embraced it, echoed it, expanded it. May the *Chi* continue to embolden us, take us to new places and new people, and make Justin smile.

CONTINUED FROM P. 16

After that message, I started to get other inspirational insights, such as “stay grounded,” “accept transitions,” “find connections,” and others. It was fun to talk to my students before and after practice about these ideas – to hear them find relationships in our lives and how they could enhance our TCC practice.

Over the year practicing with my students twice weekly on Zoom, we found a strong connection by delving into ideas connecting TCC to our life experiences. We not only deepened our TCC

Connections: Attentiveness. Experiencing. Knowing.

By Sr. Karen Kaelin, Brentwood, New York
taichichih.org/teacher/karen-kaelin

The conference was an incredible experience of oneness with all, the reality that the *Chi* leads us into. In each presentation, discussion, and practice, I experienced a deepening connection and knowing further deepening awaits.

Connecting with the *Tan T'ien* (presentation by Carmen Brocklehurst)

Through the traumas in life, we disconnect. T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) gives us the pathway to restoring our original oneness/Oneness; being connected within our own being, with all that is, with the Source. Carmen shared her experience of using the breath to slip behind/under the separating veil. How do I slip past the separation? How do I experience the moment? How do I enter joy?

Making Space for the Other (presentation by Jungmin Lee, Tea Ceremony)

Attentiveness. Preparation of the teapot, of the teacups. Being in the moment. The spaciousness of time. Setting a cup for the one whom the *Chi* might send. Welcoming and being with the one sent – no expectations. Entering into the receiving. Experiencing. Knowing the joy. In what way am I making space?

Reaching Out to the Under-Served (presentation by Sue Kenney, George Manning, Anita Vestal)

TCC provides a healing pathway, moments of peace and joy along the journey. It is so beneficial for those of us who have experienced trauma, persons with mental health issues, veterans, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, trafficked people, asylum seekers, people of color, marginalized people. How do I open my eyes, explore, reach out?

practices, but we shared inspirational and uplifting discussions that made our personal connections stronger.

When the call went out for presenters for this conference with the theme of connections, I wanted to share this experience. With my 30 minutes I chose five movements and concepts to demonstrate how life and TCC overlap and connect. I am thrilled to have worked closely with amazing and talented people during the planning and implementation of the presentations.

Awaken to the Hidden Path

By Anita Vestal, Tampa, Florida

This T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) conference was most inspiring in many ways. There were sessions on making our experience of *Chi* more and better, such as Paul Ciske's suggestion to bring the *Chi* up rather than move it down. In addition to the *inner* benefits presentations, we moved outward with awareness of the greater worldwide potential of TCC as a *service to humanity*. What I most appreciate is the sense of freshness, old ways giving into the now, allowing a shift of consciousness to welcome the impermanence. These are some fancy words to say that a path is opening for TCC to be a world practice and a practice that is offered to the neediest.

We witnessed a heartfelt conversation with Sue Kenny and George Manning, teachers in Sacramento. They shared contributions with the *Chi* lifting folks who have lost some freedom and joy, who may suffer from depression, from other illnesses of the mind and body, who are disenfranchised. Those groups would likely never find the healing power of *Chi* were it not for teachers willing to volunteer in community mental health programs.

Volunteers offer service without expectation of payment. My sense is that most TCC teachers are generous. How many unpaid hours did our conference team gift us, particularly Margery and Lisa who also had online drop-in classes on Zoom for a year or more. How about Sandy and Jessica offering a group practice weekly (and now bi-monthly). And many more examples. At the same time, I do not devalue teachers earning a living or major source of income from teaching. Their marketing expertise and exposure of TCC is a huge resource for all.

I never write an article for publication without asking for something in return. Here it is: **consider how you can expand your practice of TCC in needy situations.** Sandy's July newsletter gives us some inspiration from the Dalai Lama to awaken to the hidden path: "I am open to the guidance of synchronicity, and do not let expectations hinder my path."

Two active conversation groups sprung from conference, and we invite your participation to either or both. One group shares ideas via email about how to reach underserved populations; how to bill Medicaid for TCC; how to get sponsoring organizations to write a grant to support TCC for staff wellness; for disenfranchised persons served by mental health programs, women returning from incarceration, disabled veterans, LGBTQ communities, and non-English speakers. This group is designing a protocol for the TCC International Foundation, seeking a subsidy to teach students who can pay little or nothing.

The second group is a Spanish TCC Interest Group. We are looking to translate some of the most useful teaching materials into Spanish and to offer Zoom classes in Spanish. If you have students who speak Spanish, please refer them to our October class. (We may also have a seated class in Spanish.)

Please contact me if you have any interest in how to begin a class with disenfranchised groups unable to pay going rate (and receive payment); support for Spanish TCC; being part of future *T'ai Chi Chih Around the World* practices if you speak a language other than English.

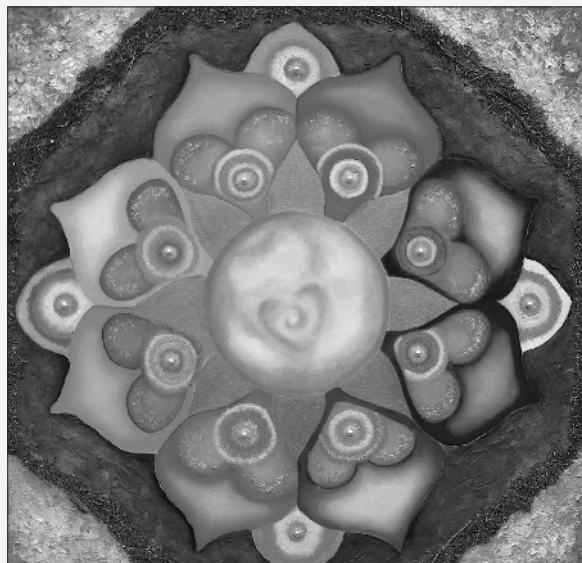
The Simple Grace of Union: The Form and the Formless of TCC

By Becky Shinas,
Fremont, California
taichichih.org/teacher/Becky-Shinas

The conference was wonderful, with so many ways to see the grace of *Chi* among us. As Justin Stone says in **Spiritual Odyssey** (page 22): "...within us lies Divinity." Elsewhere he says, "When we practice T'ai Chi Chih faithfully, we will find that Love Energy is the fruit." And in **Climb the Joyous Mountain** (page 8): "The current of constant meditation will gradually pervade the whole life, and each action will, in itself, be pure. We are all saints in embryo, and we are all Divine."

And in **Spiritual Odyssey** (page 92): "Is there anything that is not holy? Isn't every rock and blade of grass sacred? ... From one point of view, each word is the Word of God; every happening points to the Reality, seen this way, what is unholy?"

After contemplating these powerful reflections by Justin, I wonder: is the one thing humankind faces right now its own divinity? For me, that Divinity is the formless that finds unity in my human form, where both pour out as one into my daily living with joy, ease, and grace, ready to meet life as it comes, as I am – whole. Let grace lead you to the union of your humanity and divinity as one through the blessed, joyous gift of Justin to us: T'ai Chi Chih.



TCC Conference 2021: Student Day

By Marcella Levie, Netherlands

I have been doing T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) on and off for the last 30 years with my Florida friends, Diana and Richard Daffner. Because of Zoom and COVID-19, I have fulfilled a longtime wish to start TCC teacher training here in Amsterdam. No one is teaching TCC here, so when looking for a teacher, I emailed every European teacher on the website. That's how I so fortunately found Lesley Nell in Great Britain. The main reason to have attended the conference was to get to know the TCC community a bit better. Lesley has been preparing us for accreditation for a year and she regularly mentions the teacher trainers, what they require, or how they approach certain movements. Pam does it this way... Sandy says so and so... Daniel wants you to do it this way.

To see them and so many other wonderful teachers on Zoom has enriched my practice. The different teachings, stories about Justin, and the worldwide network contribute to my TCC experience. My friend Orly and I are taking the teacher training and hope to be the first TCC teachers in the Netherlands.

~ ~ ~

By Vanessa Petterson, United Kingdom

Discovering T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) has been a profound joy and helped me meditate with less chattering distraction. Lesley Nell started teaching TCC in a village close to where I live in the UK. Feeling immediately in tune from the first lesson, I had discovered Joy Through Movement. As a reflexologist, I understood its healing benefits, its oneness. I was delighted later to join Lesley's student teaching group with the aim of becoming a teacher. Attending a small part of the student TCC conference 2021 was fascinating. Sister Becky was so enthusiastic with inspiring exuberant energy: "To be Divine is simply to be kind – Human Kind." Hearing advice about transitions from Sandy McAlister and Carmen Brocklehurst on Rocking Motion and Push Pull was extremely helpful. In the chat rooms I felt the warmth and gratitude of the TCC community towards Justin Stone for his "Knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate."

~ ~ ~

By Adam Lacey, Romania

Hello fellow practitioners. I am fortunate to be training under the guidance of Lesley Nell, whom I was introduced to by my first T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) teacher Tina Wells.

I have previous experience with T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Qi Gong and Wing Chun Kung Fu, but upon meeting Tina (at a TCC workshop she was leading in Oxford a few years ago), I knew that this gentle and peaceful practice was my next step.

I was grateful to attend the conference student day with so many practitioners. It was lovely to meet, practice with, and learn from the teachers whom Lesley and Tina have introduced me to in our teacher training classes.

I was inspired by the content, the presenters' offerings, and how principles were embodied in the content and process. There were many personal learning points and there was such a strong sense of international community. In spite of it being online, I felt strongly connected with fellow attendees. There have been several impacts. The seated practices were of personal benefit as I have been recovering from a back injury. My practice has been reinvigorated and my mind opened to new aspects of TCC. I hope to attend more TCC online events to build bridges with fellow practitioners.

A particular interest is compassion in TCC practice, and I am keen to discuss this with like-minded practitioners. I look forward to the next steps in my TCC path and to meeting fellow practitioners. Thank you to Justin, his teachers, and all who are taking the practice forward in the 21st century.



Experiencing TCC Serenity at the Sea through TCC Principles

By Judy Chancey, Canton, Georgia
taichichih.org/teacher/judy-chancey

Editor's Note: As Judy credits and acknowledges, "T'ai Chi by the Sea is an introduction to the principles of T'ai Chi Chih®, a meditation in motion practice originated by Justin Stone."

"T'ai Chi at the Sea," the name of the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC)-inspired class I offer to veterans living with PTSD, was born of necessity as a therapeutic modality within a national program that contractually prohibits instruction-based teaching. For veterans living with PTSD, a simple instruction such as "left/right" can be interpreted as an order, launching a PTSD episode. Guidance is restricted to imagery and music, too, creating a much-needed, non-thinking experience.

I live with PTSD and credit TCC/Pulling in the Energy for gifting me with a solid sense of internal safety. Nothing in my life had ever provided this peace. The invitation from the *Chi* to adapt and share the gifts I've experienced in TCC was an offer my soul and *tan t'ien* could not silence or refuse. The *Chi*'s urge to dare overrode my fear. Prayerfully immersed in TCC teachings and practice, I crawled onto a limb to offer something outside the box.

Why T'ai Chi and not T'ai Chi Chih? Economy of words. "Chih" is offered to those who seek to go deeper into a beginner series. It

appears that most people who come to me through this program want to feel better rather than dive deep. Gratefully, I've learned that *Chi* meets us in miraculous ways right where we are.

"T'ai Chi at the Sea" is an effective pathway for offering a meditative, centering, grounded experience, based on TCC principles. Science indicates that present moment mindfulness halts the relentless inner critic in its tracks. "At the Sea" there is nothing to learn and nothing to get right. The invitation is simply to be present and feel.

The Energy Sea within the Nei Kung practice Justin Stone taught us through his book **Meditation for Healing** inspired the sea theme.

Wading waist-deep into the calm sea and allowing feet to sink into the wet sea bottom as the earth rises into the arches of the feet, establishes softness, grounding, and connection to the *tan t'ien*. Grounding is re-emphasized by hugging in the sea air, then submerging palms just beneath the surface of the sea.

Feeling the swell of an oncoming wave from behind encourages knees and body to relax into the natural rhythm and circularity of calm gentle waves in preparation for Rocking Motion. Releasing the torso and arms to be lifted by the sea promotes the effort of no effort.

Stepping forward to meet a wave with the belly (pulling back as the wave returns to its source) encourages moving from the *tan t'ien* with an upright torso for *yinning* and *yanging*. Feeling waves splash delightfully across the belly invites relaxation while luxuriating in the natural ebb and flow of a calm sea, while aligning breath with Cosmic Rhythm.

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Polarity becomes palpable as hands push and scoop through waves or capture surf foam.

Everyone loves Passing Clouds, feeling the water with the bottom hand and sunlight on the top hand. Suggesting the belly button as a lighthouse light sweeping over the sea is another opportunity for the novice to experience moving from the center or TCC doing TCC.

After activating and circulating the *Chi* (in the sea), we bring ourselves to shore and create a V-shaped footprint in the wet sand for Cosmic Consciousness Pose. Participants bring awareness into the feet/footprints, following breath (like a candle flame) up the body on the inhale and down the body on the exhale, three times for focused grounding. Silent sitting for about one minute permits processing what one feels.

Six Healing Sounds are never a part of T'ai Chi at the Sea mini sessions. To me, the specificity of left/right emphasis with accompanying sounds demands traditional teaching which 20-minute, mini-sessions don't support.

Since the inception of T'ai Chi at the Sea in April 2019, every participant has been awed by the calm, relaxed state of serenity they experience post-practice, especially veterans who live with internal chaos and appreciate TCC the most. Witnessing how the *Chi* touches lives when we dare to get ourselves out of the way brings utter amazement, blessings, and humility.

TCC at the Sea

By Suzanne Roady-Ross, Seal Beach, California
taichichih.org/teacher/suzanne-roady-ross

The variety of teacher presentations at the conference made it hard to select just one in each time slot. They were all excellent, but one took my breath away: T'ai Chi at the Sea with Judy Chancey. I love the ocean and practice on a grassy knoll overlooking it when possible, so I imagined what Judy would include. Instead, she explained that she works with veterans through the national "T'ai Chi Fundamentals" program.

Judy's idea of inviting participants to wade into the sea up to waist or chest level begins the practice. Veterans are asked to feel the wave action moving them gently. She uses none of the familiar descriptions that we use in our teaching; everything here is "of the sea." She extends the metaphor with the feeling of sinking into the sand at their feet and expands that with bringing a heel forward. Some images were of hands going into the water and out of the water (Bass Drum), splashing water in their faces (Daughter in the Valley), and a porpoise tossing them a ball (Carry the Ball to the Side). The "taffies" turn into throwing a frisbee.

I initially wanted to work with veterans, but was overwhelmed by the program's requirements, and at a loss about how to present the material in a new way. Judy figured it out and will help so many veterans.



Transitions: Online TCC Teacher Retreat, March 2021

Compiled by Mary Strom, Oakdale, Minnesota
taichichih.org/teacher/mary-strom

“As it says in the T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) Teacher Training Manual: ‘Let the postures be without hollows, projections, or discontinuities.’ We were invited to consider this principle as it applies to our practice of TCC. Pausing, reflecting, moving, perspective shifting, letting go, refreshing...” – *Mary Strom*

“The collegiate definition of transition is ‘A passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another: change.’ We were asked to think mindfully about transitions. How might there be transitions in our lives? How might there be unrecognized transitions in each movement? After slowing down I noticed so many beautiful transitions. Our wrists and hands and our feet transition from one point to another. How can I possibly take any part of a movement for granted? Each movement or new passage into a new movement is sacred and precious.”

– *Debbie Reed*

“New for me? The transition of the palms turning around in Rocking Motion and Push Pull. The turning of the palms is not separate from the arm movement; it starts just before the weight shift and arm movement are fully forward and fully back.” – *Judy Kistler-Robinson*

“Focusing on transitions brought more awareness of each movement. Every nuance is a transition. Really feeling and letting go is how we grow in the TCC practice but also throughout life.” – *Karin*

“I cherish the balance between senior and new teachers, Sandy’s guidance, and Pam’s support. I also so admire and am inspired by the newer teachers, those accredited over the past 10 years or so. You offer delicate nuances of style through your expressions of teaching, moving, and feeling TCC. The freedom from which you ask questions and share your instructions of movements is refreshing.” – *Lynne Roberts*



Zoom Intensive, April 2021, with Sandy McAlister

Compiled by Host
April Leffler, Prospect Park,
Pennsylvania
taichichih.org/teacher/
april-leffler

While I certainly miss in person T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) events, I appreciate the new eyes that develop from online events and the increased comfort people seem to have with Zoom. The best part? The *Chi* is real and transcends time zones and technology. Below are writings from some participants:

“I love the ‘aha’ moments, those moments when I get it, when I realize what I thought was correct or felt correct, especially the weight shift, could be so much better with a small change. A change that ended up being huge. Before the Intensive I could not pick up my back foot while in a front weight shift. Now, I can.”

– *Patty Stupca*

“It’s Day 4 and we begin with Rocking Motion. After a few repetitions, I get an image of the Divine Mother holding me in her arms as we rock. I become overwhelmed and wobbly on my feet. I sit down and listen to Sandy guide us through the motions, tears flowing down my face. It had been a rough week. Sandy talks and I close my eyes. I continue the movements in my seat and allow *Chi* to flow through me and nourish me physically, emotionally, and mentally. I notice during Around the Platter that my circles are very small. The need to hug myself feels real. At the Cosmic Consciousness Pose, I need to allow the community to heal and nourish me. Our move-

ments are complete and yet, still, I feel the Divine Mother continue to rock me.” – *Mary Kay*

“The Intensive reinforced basic principles of TCC from different angles. Each level of teaching increases my awareness, expands my consciousness, helps me overcome life’s challenges with ease and grace.”

– *Veronica Joseph*

“I never tire of hearing Sandy’s explanations, which all seem logical and doable. The front and back weight shift has been a problem for me, but ideas came flowing regarding this problem. I still needed to shorten my stance; completion of the weight shift by moving the *tan t’ien* was a novel idea.” – *Nelia Beaman*

“At first it felt like a lot of details to absorb, but then we moved into breakout groups, offered feedback, and asked questions. Over four days, questions started to have answers. We reviewed how we should be moving as well as common mistakes.”

– *Eileen Skinner*

Sun rises – flower blossoms
Heel rises – hands open
Leg fills – leg empties
Body grounds – heart soars
Sun sets – flower softens
Chi flows – *Chi* flows

– *Victor James Dougherty*

“Every Sunday night, I send a motivational quotation to my students, and this past Sunday, after the event, this was the first quotation that popped up in my search: “With community comes friendship. A community that is engaged and working together can be a powerful force.” I am happy to be a part of this extraordinary TCC community and grateful.”

– *Marisa Colson*

The Lighter Side

By Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, Maryland

taichichih.org/teacher/sharon-sirkis

taichichih.org/articles-by-teachers-and-students/lighter-side-sharon-sirkis/

7:00 am: I'm lying in bed fretting over a business situation, allowing myself to be yanked off center.

7:15 am: I'm getting more irritated, and it bothers me that it still bothers me.

7:30 am: Got up and made tea. Sat back, put my feet up.

7:45 am: Read Justin's article on the reciprocal character of mind and Prana (*Chi*).

7:50 am: Had an intuition to check the cable guide for movies. I resist. I don't want to get up. I rarely watch movies in the morning. The thought was still there: check the TV guide. The more insistent the thought, the more resistant I became.

7:55 am: I succumbed. I got up and looked at 8:00 a.m. movies. It was "Excess Baggage" and I laughed out loud. Then I let it go. Message received.

P.S. I did not watch the movie.

TCC Intensive, an "R" Experience

By Lorraine Lepine, Prairie Village, Kansas

taichichih.org/teacher/lorraine-lepine

Revisiting/Reviewing T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) movement basics with a beginner's mind

Reinforcing the integration of the TCC principles

Renewing the intricacies of the form

Refreshing my habitual form with new perception of the *Chi* experience

Reconnecting with our own movements, ourselves, and the essence of TCC

Rejoicing in the improvement seen in everyone's movements

Realigning body, mind, heart, and spirit

Receptivity to and from each other and the *Chi*

Reestablishing connection with TCC practitioners

Relaxing into a full TCC practice

Regaling in a full TCC immersion

Rededicating to being an ongoing TCC learner

Remembering that I am not alone in this journey

Seijaku Weekend, June 2021, with Daniel Pienciak

Student Experiences

Judy Hubbell – "Resistance to change, or acceptance through letting go? San Francisco is going through enormous changes. As the city changes, I know that as a teacher I have tools to trust myself and move ahead to help others during a time when poverty, isolation, and one-room SROs are the reality for many seniors here.

I have taught (weekdays for a year on Zoom) T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) to a large community of practitioners at senior centers and at City College of San Francisco. My husband and I are exhausted but believe in the power of nature to recover, and we move ahead with our work. Flowers open and bees remind us that life is returning; Spring is here.

Daniel's parting words at the end of the weekend were a reminder to stay awake. I left Daniel's weekend with a new appreciation for how to remain awake, alive, and of service to others through TCC and Seijaku. He has an enormous memory for Justin Stone's personal stories and writings, which I found compelling. Dan is clear, honest, direct, and a masterful and helpful teacher."

Kelly Laudien – "Daniel explained that repetitive movements can remove the deep grooves within us. Looking back, the Six Healing Sounds not only helped me heal but continue to be part of my healing."

Christina Serban – "As a practitioner of TCC for several years I'd had no exposure to Seijaku; this opened a whole world of possibilities and endless options to experiment in my practice."

Lauren Lormel – "As life would have it, I came to this weekend with a heavy heart. But I was again reminded of the healing that this beautiful practice provides. Gone without a trace."

Benjamin – "Over time, the cumulative practice of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) erases unwanted habit grooves. We practice and TCC knows how to heal us."

I
gain strength
by letting
go when I go
through tough times
in my
life

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Community Calendar

For the most up-to-date info and event PDFs, see www.taichichih.org/events.
Find at teacher at www.taichichih.org.

Aug 28-30 | Seijaku Teacher Training w/ Pam | Zoom | pamtowne@gmail.com
Sept 23-26 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Zoom | pamtowne@gmail.com
Oct 8-10 & 16-17 | TCC Student Intensive w/ Daniel | Zoom | lesleynell@yahoo.co.uk
Nov 6-13 | TCC Teacher Training w/ Pam | Zoom | lirpaleff@rcn.com
Nov 11-14 | Seijaku Meditation Retreat w/ Daniel | Zoom | wakeupdaniel@aol.com

2022

Apr 7-10 | TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Sandy | Oceanside, CA | pamtowne@gmail.com
Apr 22-24 | TCC & Seijaku Earth Day Retreat w/ with Daniel | Zoom | wakeupdaniel@aol.com
May 5-8 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Prescott, AZ | pamtowne@gmail.com

~ MORE ZOOM WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

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

All Times Eastern

Monday @ 11:30am | TCC (ongoing) | Lisa Stroyan | lstroyan@gmail.com
Monday @ 11am | TCC for Veterans (ongoing) | Jessica Lewis | jhtl0521@gmail.com
Monday @ 11am | TCC (beginner or review; 6 classes) | Daniel Pienciak | wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Tuesday @ 11:30am | Guided Seijaku Practice (ongoing) | Carmen Brocklehurst | 505-450-8944
Tuesday @ 3:30pm | Guided TCC Practice (9 weeks) | Jessica Lewis | jhtl0521@gmail.com
June 8-July 20 (six Tuesdays) @ 3pm | TCC Teacher Prep | April Leffler | lirpaleff@rcn.com
Wednesday @ 7:30pm | Guided TCC Practice (ongoing) | Carmen Brocklehurst | 505-450-8944
Wednesday @ 3:15pm | TCC for Veterans (ongoing) | Jessica Lewis | jhtl0521@gmail.com
Thursday @ 11:30am | Seijaku (ongoing) | Margery Erickson | maverickson0@gmail.com
Thursday @ 3pm | Guided TCC Practice (ongoing) | Lisa Stroyan | lstroyan@gmail.com
Friday @ 11am | TCC (ongoing) | Margery Erickson | maverickson0@gmail.com
Friday @ 11am | TCC (six classes) | Daniel Pienciak | wakeupdaniel@aol.com

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