

# The Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

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for teachers & students

February 2021

## Justin Stone: In His Words

### Vital Force Greatest Hits: Excerpts from Justin

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

#### ~ Becoming ~

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

#### ~ Sitting Quietly ~

I like Paul Reps' idea of sitting quietly for five minutes (better make it ten) each day and just allowing yourself to receive. No thinking, no technique, no mantra repetition, no watching the breath, but just sitting quietly in a chair. In Japan this would be known as *Shikan Taza*, or just sitting. The great artisans of the past often did this before starting on some work, such as making a tea bowl or a samurai sword. In fact, today, many dress in formal style, hat on head, while doing creative work – I have seen them. It is my feeling that ten minutes of quiet and receiving, plus T'ai Chi Chih practice, may be enough. It is so easy to relax and do nothing, though sitting with the back straight, it may become difficult. We have our worries to agonize over, and besides, we get fidgety. Therefore it might be good to do it after a little TCC movement. You may receive more than you bargained for. – *March 1992*

#### ~ Tension ~

As T'ai Chi Chih teachers, we watch the wrists and the waist to see if there is tension (and the *Chi* can't flow) or softness and relaxation. – *Spring 1989*

#### ~ Rewards of T'ai Chi Chih Practice ~

When the *Chi* circulates and is in balance, we can approach Oneness (Unity). Is it possible to attain Oneness? Yes! The very nature of Reality is Joy! Hakuin, the great Zen Master said, "After this Enlightenment, observing the things of the world was like seeing the back of my own hand!"

The rewards of T'ai Chi Chih practice can be great. A TCC teacher who does not practice regularly however, is a fraud – one who can

make the outside appearance but manifests none of the inside. Each teacher who radiates, inspires his or her pupils. One with all Life, healing through Joy! – *Spring 1985*

#### ~ Change ~

The truth is, people don't want to give up their habitual way of thinking and responses, even when they know it makes them unhappy. For this reason reformers and missionaries are wasting their time. Though to give people means for evolving, such as T'ai Chi Chih and meditation, when they ask for it, is certainly not a waste. Nothing helps individuals evolve more than these two activities, and as they evolve, their thinking and habit patterns will change. – *September 1991*

#### ~ Three Steps on the Way ~

In my view, there are three things to be done (or realized): To recognize, deeply feel and accord with Impermanence. Then, and only then, is it possible to find out Who and What we are (transcending Impermanence). Finally, after realizing the above two, to go into the marketplace and work with people. This is "merging Sense with Essence." From my standpoint, these are the three steps on the Way. Techniques will vary, but the objectives are the same. And, in these ways, we transcend greed, anger and delusion. Eternity is in this moment. – *March, 1992*

#### ~ Why? Why Not? ~

One time some students from out-of-town came to visit me. After doing some T'ai Chi Chih together, the conversation became more general. As is usual, someone asked about reincarnation (a bad term).

I pointed at the trees in the courtyard. "It is autumn now, so the leaves are falling from the trees," I explained, "but they will be back in the Spring. Is that what you mean by reincarnation?"

"Oh, those will be different leaves!" they rushed to point out.

"Why identify with the leaves?" I asked. "Why not identify with the tree?" – *Spring 1986*



Archived editions of *The Vital Force* are available at [taichichih.org/free-archived-past-issues](http://taichichih.org/free-archived-past-issues).

**Classes Post Covid-19?**

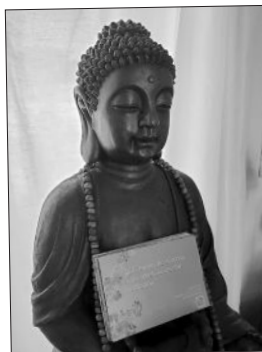
Teacher Jim Shorr poses a good question: What happens to TCC practices when the pandemic is nearly over? What are the opportunities? For the next edition, please consider writing about what classes and approaches will you be pursuing.

**Teacher Listing Pages**

**Teachers:** I'd like to draw your attention to different teacher pages, so that you may perhaps apply some different ideas to your pages. **Students:** Some of these teachers offer Zoom classes that might work for you. **Speaking of Zoom,** teachers on taichichih.org/teacher/teacher/zoom/ are supposed to include Zoom links on their pages. All teachers who have a photo and bio are listed on this featured page @ taichichih.org/teacher/teacher/featuring/.

- **Dorene Krause**, who embedded a page of student testimonials from The Vital Force @ taichichih.org/teacher/dorene-krause/
- **Northern Colorado**, an association page (available to all regional groups) @ taichichih.org/teacher/northern-colorado/
- **Amy Tyksinski**, who tells a strong story of her TCC journey @ taichichih.org/teacher/amy-tyksinski/
- **Lisa Stroyan**, who effectively uses subheads on her meaty page @ taichichih.org/teacher/lisa-stroyan/
- **Jessica Lewis**, who has multiple pages for different types of students @ taichichih.org/teacher/jessica-lewis/

- **Donna Tiroly**, who wanted to share her personal story and recommend resources to her former students, as she was stepping down from teaching @ taichichih.org/teacher/donna-tiroly/
- **TCC Association**, which is in essence a mini website @ taichichih.org/teacher/tccassociation/
- **Justin Stone**, with a creative use of embedded photos @ taichichih.org/teacher/justin-stone/



**Justin Stone Quotation Cards**  
Mary Ruiz chooses a different card each week to focus on during her TCC practice. And her Buddha holds the space (at left).

~ 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 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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## Embracing Polarity

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

**What a collective** and individual journey we have been on this year because of COVID-19. It has been a ride like no other with so many ups and downs. **This year has been full of polarities.** Here are a few that I have noticed being expressed in the collective and in myself. You may think of many more.

Life/Death  
 Sickness/Health  
 Alone/Together  
 Separate/Connected  
 Left/Right  
 Kindness/Hatred  
 Fear/Courage  
 Truth/False  
 Lockdown/Freedom  
 Joy/Sadness  
 Dark/Light

In the ancient *yin-yang* philosophy that T'ai Chi Chih is based on we learn to embrace polarities. We learn they are not opposing sides for us to either identify with or reject. If we do, the flow of energy within us gets blocked or becomes stagnant. **Life is the flow and dance of these polarities.** Instead of being opposing or contrary these energies are complementary, interconnected and interdependent. Our health and vitality (individually and collectively) depend on the balance and harmony of these energies. How do we do that?

There is a third force in *yin-yang* philosophy and in the practice of TCC that we cultivate. This force is called the reconciling or balancing force. **We can think of it as the un-**

**moving, silent, still point at the center of our Being. In TCC we know it as the *tan t'ien*.** This center is the ground of our Being and can hold the tension of the seemingly opposing forces. It is a greater, loving, holding energy that can help us birth a new energy – one that so much wants to be born in us and in the collective.

This year has pulled me away from my busy outer life and pulled me in deeper to this silent, dark center within. The journey was not always easy and in fact at times very painful, but the gifts of the journey have been many. I feel a greater trust in a loving ground and a greater capacity to meet what is arising in me with warmth, kindness and compassion. This includes feelings of hatred, deep sadness or paralyzing fear. As I embrace these energies the Life Force within them can flow and reveal the light hidden in each of them. They just want to be seen, loved and held just like an infant or child. In this way these feelings can be digested, integrated and allowed to grow, mature and unfold in new ways. This is how life continues to evolve and express more and more of the loving and creative mystery that we are.

Nature has always embraced the flow of polarities. **The Winter Solstice is the still point when the flow of dark and light change directions, just like the moment between our in and out breath.** It is a beautiful time to pause and reflect on one's life, acknowledging all that has moved through you this past year and your heart's intentions for the coming year. May the stillness of the Winter Solstice help you feel the love and peace holding it all.

### Haiku on TCC

By Rosalind L. Braga,  
 Castro Valley, California

Hands like passing clouds  
 Float effortlessly through air  
 Stirring not my thoughts

Calm center abides  
 While legs stay rooted earthward  
 Strong *yin-yang* balance

Flowing left to right  
 Back to front then Resting Pose  
 Grand circle of *Chi*

T'ai Chi Chih will bring  
 An endless joy through movement  
 Peace in heart and soul

## Let Go!! And Take It With You

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

**I have always loved** Daughter on the Mountaintop. Recently I had the very good fortune to do Seijaku with Carmen Brocklehurst. She pointed out I was stopping a bit right after my hands crossed at the top. That is my favorite part of the movement and I guess I did not want to lose the *Chi*. My perception changed when she exclaimed **“Let Go! And take it with you.”** That made all the difference.



~ ~ ~

Hurricane Zeta caused a lot of downed trees and power outages at Lake Burton. I had to put on my mountain girl survivalist persona for a few days!



*chi*  
 powers  
 body soul  
 power outage  
 not possible  
 lucky  
 us

Above: Light during Hurricane Zeta

One teacher candidate (Karen Naser, Cherry Log, Georgia) had a power outage for 67 hours and shared this:

cold  
 practice  
 t'ai chi chih  
 warming body  
 within me  
 my soul  
 warm



## TCC – A Life Program Running in the Background

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico  
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carmen-brocklehurst](http://taichichih.org/teacher/carmen-brocklehurst)

**Often I hear myself asking,** “What are you doing?” I am not talking about brushing my teeth or washing the dishes or other activities that are part of my daily routine. But like a wave on the ocean, the thought goes out and comes back in fullness: T'ai Chi Chih.

During my many conversations with Justin, I would regularly make statements and he would answer, “What does that have to do with TCC?” At first I thought he was talking about the movements, and I was puzzled,



## Bird Flaps its Wings

By Jungmin Lee, Rockville, Maryland  
[taichichih.org/teacher/jungmin-lee](http://taichichih.org/teacher/jungmin-lee)

Soak into the soles of the feet  
Be ready to rise  
In your mind  
Joy  
Through  
Movement

*Above: Painting by Jungmin Lee  
inspired from an original by Hazel Soan.*

unable to make the connection between what I had said and the 19 movements and one pose. So I would stop talking because I didn't have an answer. It didn't take long (although sometimes it seemed like an eternity) before Justin would ask a question or make a statement about something that seemingly had nothing to do with the conversation we were having. He might mention how blue the sky seemed, or had I noticed the police helping a man sitting on the curb. **Awareness is a magical and important part of the art and rhythm of TCC.**

If we do things to fill the day or out of necessity, but we never make a connection with what we are doing, we are missing a beautiful part of life. What we are involved with affects us, and we might be dramatizing it or missing out on the reason it has appeared in our life. TCC movements are, by their nature, self-reflective. They are meant to slow us down so we can take a breath and become aware of what is going on in our life.

Our lives are full, but do we embrace the experience with gratitude and acceptance? Or are we anxious and continually trying to escape it through movies, planning the next vacation or some fast-paced activity? Perhaps when we first started to learn TCC we felt that the movements were too slow. Perhaps we felt irritated because it seemed that nothing was happening. What was the importance of those endless circles that seemed to go on forever and ever? **In truth, that is the important part: it goes on forever and ever.** Our life program runs in the background, teaching us to love and share the *Chi*.

## Community Sprouts

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

**Early in 2020,** Sandy Roerig moved to St. George, Utah, after visiting me – even though I'd only moved there a few months earlier from Fort Collins, Colorado. With both of us in St. George, I invited all of the ladies on my block to learn T'ai Chi Chih. But it turned out that proximity was not a good method of finding people who would truly love TCC.

Then Sandy and I joined the 55+ community's meditation group, and we slowly started to share that we were TCC teachers, wondering aloud if anyone would be interested in learning TCC. Of the 30 we taught from the meditation group, a dozen were really drawn to TCC. This all transpired just as COVID-19 restrictions were starting. This group was so dedicated that they wanted to continue by meeting outside. It wasn't long before we were practicing four times a week and discussing Justin's books. Our time together was a big blessing. **We found our tribe** and we needed a name: the Woo Woo Warriors. While it has been less than a year, we Woo Woos call each other “family.” With other activities on hold, our group getting together safely has been a gift!

*Below: The Woo Woos doing Cosmic  
Consciousness Pose.*



## Remembering Justin

By Dora Wiemann, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
 taichichih.org/teacher/dora-wiemann

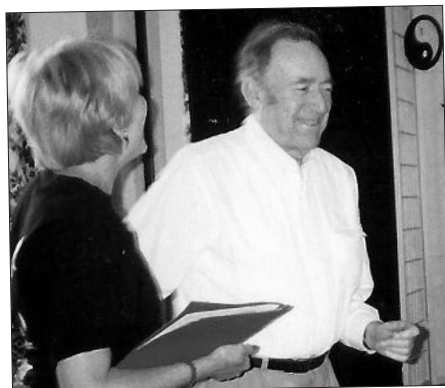
*Editor's Note: Please send remembrances of personal interactions with Justin for forthcoming issues of The Vital Force.*

**I remember going to** Justin's house for meditation and *Teisho* on Saturday evenings. Entering his house was like entering another world – one with profound clarity and groundedness. I could feel it as I approached his front door and I always took a couple minutes to collect myself and become quiet before I entered. Justin would sometimes personally answer the door. He always greeted me and others in a respectful, formal manner with the etiquette of a host.

Some people would go to his back room and do T'ai Chi Chih before meditation. Others would sit with Justin in his living room and engage in conversation, catching up on the latest goings-on. Justin usually sat quietly and would talk if somebody asked him a sincere question. **Justin was never interested in chit chat.**

I remember one Saturday evening at his house, sitting around and talking before meditating. **Justin asked me “why do we come here every Saturday night?”** I was taken by surprise, and my impulsive answer was “to meditate.” I thought to myself: wasn't that obvious? But this wasn't a good enough answer; I could see it on Justin's face. He was waiting for something else. Carmen added “and to do T'ai Chi Chih.” So I added that to my answer. This did not satisfy Justin either. Then I added “and to read...” I didn't know how to include everything we did on Saturday nights in a short answer. Justin finally answered his question for me: **“to know Truth.”** How clear Justin was! My piecemeal answers were all included in “to know Truth.” Saturday night *Teisho* was always to know Truth. How beautifully simple and clear.

I am grateful that I could spend time with Justin. Being in his presence made me feel like everything was right in the world.




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## The Twinkle in Justin's Eyes

By Judy Hendricks, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
 taichichih.org/teacher/judy-hendricks

**When I miss seeing** that twinkle in Justin's eyes, I'm grateful we have his many DVDs. I was recently watching his talk from the 2005 T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Conference held in Albuquerque. He was showing us how to move correctly, so of course he is telling us to bend our knees and turn our waist. **He was also telling us to practice every day.**

Justin mentioned a teacher who said they practiced TCC twice a week. No, Justin said, one needs to practice every day. I have decided to really commit to daily TCC practice and meditation.

Justin had so much intention behind all he did and said. **There was always a reason for his actions and words.**

He said Seijaku should be an oral tradition. That is why, I believe, there is no Seijaku textbook. We do, though, have his Seijaku DVD where he demonstrates the movements.

Justin was so clear. He told the same stories over and over, using the exact same words each time. I finally realized that when he kept telling me the same story, it was because I hadn't really gotten the meaning. **And we can still hear him; we have his two CDs,** where he tells all the stories he told us years ago in Albuquerque. **The KNME DVD interviews** (between Justin and Carmen Brocklehurst) are also inspiring. I watch them and show them to my students. We have his words and wisdom to share.

I personally continue to learn so much from Justin's stories. I remember Justin often telling me of a widow and all she planned to do on her own during retirement. I listened but had no idea why he would share this with me. My husband passed away in 2019. **He also said there are no coincidences.**

Justin shared with us tools to realize who and what we are. His words to me, **“Join me in the oneness,”** have had tremendous meaning over the years. I hear his voice and ask, “Is my intention to change? Am I doing my practices to know who and what I am?” I'm so grateful to him and Carmen for showing me the path.

## Devotion & Perseverance

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California  
[taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-mcalister](http://taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-mcalister)

**One time a great scholar** came to a small village by a lake, and hearing someone chanting this sound in a small hut, entered. “No, no, you’ve got it all wrong,” he reproved the simple man sitting there practicing. “Let me teach you the correct pronunciation,” he offered, and the practitioner was delighted.

After a few minutes of instruction, the scholar left, walked down to the lake, and hired a boat to ferry him across. When the boat had been rowed to the center of the lake, the scholar looked back at the receding shore and noticed a man running to the lake shore from the hut he had just left. It was the simple practitioner he had corrected. Then, to his amazement, he saw the man step onto the water and run across the surface of the waves until the man at last arrived at the boat holding the scholar! “Sir, I am so stupid,” panted the man as he came running up, “I’ve already forgotten your instruction! Would you tell me again the correct pronunciation?”



Justin tells that story in his book *Meditation for Healing* in the chapter on Mantras. About the story Justin writes, “This would seem to indicate that devotion and perseverance are powerful enough, even if the pronunciation is not correct.”

We can see this in T’ai Chi Chih practice, that devotion and perseverance yield results even when we do not do the movements quite correctly. Teachers often have students of very little experience that comment on noticing a change in how they feel after just a few lessons.

Over the years I have gradually seen my idea of what is “right” in TCC soften. I used to feel more rigid about how the movements had to be done. Through my own exploration I have come to feel that Justin gave us a framework or skeleton of the TCC form and working within that framework we find our own form or expression of the movements.

When Justin was once asked at what level, how high, the hands should be for the movement Pulling in the Energy, he responded, “two inches here, two inches there,” with a shrug. My translation of that answer was that there was not a specific level but a general space. In experimenting with the movement, I found that if the hands were too high the movement was contracted, if too low it felt disconnected. There is a level where a feel-connection is made but it has to be found by feeling-awareness, not by a given location. Justin gave us the general space, mid-chest, but we must find the right level for ourselves by feeling. Is the movement constricted or mushy, or loaded with a sense of fullness, richness, aliveness?

Does it matter if the hand is turned this way or that? In some movements yes, in some no. Some positions of the hands greatly influence the circulation of the *Chi*, and in some maybe it is not so important. Or is it?

**Do we bring our heart or our head to our practice?** Do we feel our way through the movements or try to do them correctly? We need to have a framework, an outline of the movements but we fill them in with substance – substance born of experimenting, playing, questioning, exploring, feeling.

Do we do our practice from the heart, meaning with good intentions, with love, with caring, with softness of spirit? Yes, there is a form, there is a standard to T’ai Chi Chih. I’m not saying it doesn’t matter if we don’t do it correctly, but correctly is subjective. What is correct to one person may not be for another. We must each find our way, explore for ourselves, listen to experience, study, and through devotion and perseverance our T’ai Chi Chih practice will blossom within us. Balance is the key – heart and head working together.



## Making Friends with the Chi

By Pam Towne, Oceanside, California  
[taichichih.org/teacher/pam-towne](http://taichichih.org/teacher/pam-towne)

**Justin Stone told us** that if we make friends with the *Chi*, we can have a long, healthy, happy life and an easy death. He didn't just talk about this; he demonstrated it. Justin lived a long healthy, happy life and died at home at the age of 95, surrounded by many people who loved him.

Do you want this? If so, the next question is: how do you make friends with the *Chi*? Think about how you make friends with anyone. You hang out and spend time with them. You get to know them and their preferences. You look for things you have in common that you can share.

You hang out with the *Chi* every time you do your T'ai Chi Chih practice since the movements are designed to stimulate, circulate and balance the Life Force. **The *Chi* responds to softness, continuity, openness and receptivity.**

It's no wonder that teachers emphasize the importance of moving with softness and continuity in TCC practice. When you are uptight, your muscles contract and restrict the flow of *Chi* as it moves through the meridian channels of the body. When you relax, soften and let go of tension, the flow of *Chi* is enhanced.

**Smooth, continuous, flowing movements facilitate** smooth, continuous, flowing *Chi*. Feeling the slow, gradual shifting of your weight filling your front foot then the back foot over and over again promotes evenness and continuity. Focusing in the soles of the feet ensures an even flow of *Chi* throughout the entire body.

**Relaxing the wrists** can increase the flow of *Chi* through them. You might experiment with flexing your wrists a little more, starting with Rocking Motion.

**Allow your waist** to turn more freely as you shift your weight from side-to-side. After TCC practice you could sit quietly for five to ten minutes, being open to receive.

What other ways can you think of to make friends with the *Chi*? Have you ever felt tingles go up your spine listening to powerful music? The Battle Hymn of the Republic always does that for me. Or while watching a beautiful sunset or other scene in Nature? Hearing children's laughter? Petting a dog or purring kitty? Whatever brings you joy, love or peace, do more of that, knowing that you are making friends with the *Chi*.



## The Razor's Edge & the Effort of No Effort

By Daniel Pienciak, Bradley Beach, New Jersey  
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**“Softness means letting go”** is a well-known and oft-repeated statement in T'ai Chi Chih practice. True softness can be elusive, and true letting go can seem difficult. My first experience of feeling true softness in TCC came after several years of persistent practice. But so it was in obtaining a smooth shave with an electric razor!

When I first began wearing a beard, I gave up cuts, scrapes, bleeding and irritation. I had no idea that there is an art to using an electric razor successfully. The key is in letting go of any effort. If one pushes with pressure and rushes to get it done, it takes twice as long and the results are poor. If the machine is allowed to glide effortlessly without any pressure, very slowly over the skin, the machine does its job easily and effectively. The results are softness and smoothness. It is an effort of no effort that requires only practice and patience, and a well-charged battery.

**This seems a good analogy for TCC practice:**

Be sure that the battery (*tan t'ien*) is well-charged by doing a long set of Rocking Motion. I often do 27 or 36, moving slowly and being aware of letting go more and more with each repetition, while sinking into the soles of the feet.

I use the massages and preliminaries of the maximum *Chi* program from Seijaku often, as well as the *Jing*. It behooves serious T'ai Chi Chih students and all teachers to study and practice Seijaku to keep the battery charged as much as possible.

If there is a time limitation, ten minutes of less is more, going slowly and really letting go. It's worth far more than 25 minutes of rushing to get it all in, or get it done. (However, there is no replacing the benefit of a complete practice of all the movements done carefully and without rushing.)

Always be aware of no effort in the upper body. Surrender the body weight to the feet, so that the upper body can relax and let go. Discover the effort of no effort.

# The Intelligence of the Chi

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

I believe that *Chi*, the vital force, has a kind of intelligence. That it draws together people of like spirits and open hearts. Like in our small group of T'ai Chi Chih practitioners in and around Sacramento, California, at St Francis of Assisi Parish, known for its vibrant liturgies, its embrace of the unconventional and its welcoming nature.

Sometime in the late 1990s, a group began practicing TCC every Saturday morning in the chapel. I happened upon the group in December 2001. Nancy Reed, a Buddhist and the cello player in the Saturday evening choir, was the TCC teacher. I had just returned to California after years away. After my first Mass, not knowing anyone and filled with curiosity, I approached Nancy. The following Saturday, when I saw that she was the TCC teacher, I knew that I was where I was supposed to be.

When Nancy moved to Florida, I assumed her role with the TCC class. We started doing the practice outside in good weather. Some participants drifted off and new people continued to join.

Wendy was a new student who had longed to do TCC with Tara Stiles and finally, after moving to Sacramento, joined the St Francis group in 2003. Wendy was ever faithful, finding TCC invaluable during several bouts with cancer.

Elizabeth Ebrahimzadeh saw the St Francis TCC group practicing outdoors, and she knew immediately that she was meant to learn TCC. Not one to delay, Elizabeth made it her business to become an accredited teacher and an active group member.

Some members attended a weekly

chanting and meditation (Taize) service at St Francis. Then they found that TCC and the Taize reinforced one another. Eventually, there was a small group of TCC practitioners in the back of the church every Wednesday during Taize.

Karen joined our TCC group when she joined the parish. Like others, she began TCC for physical reasons but over time embraced the meditative nature of the form. As a nurse, she found that our TCC/Taize practice helped reduce the stress and pressures of her job. She is always willing to assist in leading the group and offers an invaluable steadiness.

Darlene taught many healing movement

practices to patients at Kaiser Medical Center. Since she knew some area TCC teachers, she joined us about 10 or 11 years ago. Darlene was often present on Wednesdays and Saturdays and has remained connected via Zoom, now that she is in Hawaii. Her appreciation of TCC is enriched by her background in many healing techniques.

Mary discovered TCC at Sunlight of the Spirit where Elizabeth taught a weekly drop-in class. Mary, who has assisted me and Elizabeth, has a keen sense of energy, offering Feng Shui and dousing services. She is also a regular.

Rosalee discovered TCC at Divine Savior Parish in Orangevale, and when her teacher Norma became ill, I jumped at the chance to help.

I met George when working for a mental health group in Sacramento. He took to TCC as if it were made for him and became an accredited teacher in 2018. As a young African American male, he's brought some welcome diversity to the group. He and I made a special effort to bring TCC to those who would not have discovered the practice otherwise, through a weekly practice at a drop-in center for mental health clients. We hope to resume this class when indoor gatherings are once again allowed.

COVID-19 prompted us to use Zoom but one challenge has been to honor the silence. Since we don't see one another often, we are tempted to catch up on our news. But that robbed the practice of much of its power. Now we gather a few minutes early for conversation and then enter the practice in silence. This balance has allowed us to serve our friendships and the practice.

We enter 2021 knowing that the practice will be with us and we will be with one another. **Our longevity as a group confirms that the Chi has a certain and abiding intelligence.** What do you think?

## ~ Finding TCC ~

**ELIZABETH:** I met TCC in a park 18 years ago. It called out: "Hey you with the brisk stride and tense shoulders, come over here, you need me." We strive to hold ourselves together. For a worrier like me, it would have been impossible during COVID-19 without a powerful grounding discipline.

**WENDY:** The practice met me in 1982 when I noticed someone doing T'ai Chi in a beautiful park. I watched, mesmerized, from a distance. It took 20 years, several job changes and a move to Sacramento until I found a TCC class.

**DARLENE:** TCC in conjunction with the Taize service offered a palpable cessation of stress and increased relaxation. Lasting friendships developed through the camaraderie of the core group.

**SUE:** It was a dark evening in a dark church. I sat quietly, taking in the comforting music of the weekly Taize service. Then I found a spot behind a pillar where no one could see me and did a TCC practice. I felt a flood of sacred *Chi* so calming and healing. Before long, I was joined by others and we became part of the service.

**ROSALEE:** TCC has helped me get through some tough times: my brother's death, a nephew's tragic solo motorcycle death, and my son's six surgeries and eventual amputation of his left leg. Through all these times, I never missed a TCC practice and it has kept me grounded.

**MARY:** I had done other kinds of movement from ballet to yoga, but TCC resonated with my being. It helped me be more in the moment, which is a good thing for my very busy mind.



## Practice to Feel & Be TCC

By John Marquez, Antioch, California

**Zoom has made it possible** to have practices all over the country. What a blessing this is. Having been encouraged to experience other teachers, I find that each has a style of their own. And yet, even as their descriptive words change, they are all saying basically the same thing. Taking notes of lessons with multiple teachers time and time again, it can sometimes seem repetitive and monotonous. I admit, it has crossed my mind a time or two, “Yada, yada, yada, let’s get on with it.” Was I ever more wrong!

Benjamin, Nelia and I have recently completed a Seijaku teaching class on Zoom with Dan Pienciak, hosted by Lisa Stroyan. On Saturdays, we now have a practice, so as not to lose what we have learned from those sessions.

As we start, the first words in this morning’s practice are, “Feel your feet on the floor!” How many times have I heard that? I think, of course, that my feet are on the floor and my mind wanders. I draw my attention back to my feet and ground myself.

As it is a Seijaku practice, the heel of the back foot releases from the floor as the movement shifts from strong to soft, *yinning* and *yanging*. Bingo, timing is the key. Timing the feet flat on the floor. As the weight shift completes, the toe comes up briefly, as does the heel on the back foot. This also helps the movement of the legs: as the weight shifts, the knee bends and then straightens. (I often realize my back leg forgets to bend.) I feel the glide. It finally makes sense. **I needed the combination of hearing and feeling it**, with the help of the Seijaku principle. Hearing those few words one more time mattered. It was obviously the right time. So, it’s back to basics: fine tuning the timing of the weight shift and the eye-opener “feel your feet on the floor.”

This article was inspired by a teacher who recently shared something she had heard from Bill Moore regarding feeling and being T’ai Chi Chih. **No matter how many times you have heard something, just continue the practice.** Be patient and when the time is right, your ah-ha! moment will come, and you will be filled with gratitude.



## Grounded

By Mary H. Schultz, Roseville, Minnesota

**For ten years** I have been practicing T’ai Chi Chih, seeing it as a profoundly healing experience. This past Fall, I began to study Seijaku under Jungmin Lee. The assurance and clarity of her instruction has allowed me to learn with confidence. Most profoundly, I have come to see that Seijaku lets softness be softer.

When first learning Seijaku, I tried to concentrate on everything I was learning and then felt tension in my back. Jungmin emphasized it would help to have my feet firmly grounded, be mindful and flow from the *tan t’ien* rather than forcing muscles. You might think this would be second nature for someone practicing TCC for years, but I needed to hear it one more time.

Having my feet firmly grounded allowed the *tan t’ien* to lead, letting each new movement have a softer beginning, letting the conclusion of each movement freely flow, all without any muscle tension. Because my feet are now grounded, I feel an evenness and stillness throughout the Seijaku practice.

My attempt to focus on being present no longer holds me back. Instead, I am becoming aware of resistance and letting go, of simultaneous softness and resistance. **I no longer need to force the notion of being present.**

At the end of each of class, Jungmin’s voice remains and I keep my feet firmly grounded. I feel that evenness and stillness of the practice in my everyday life.

## 'Dear Justin' Letters from Students

*Editor's Note: Donna McElhose (taichichih.org/teacher/donna-mcelhose), Wildwood, Illinois, was accredited in 1998 and actively taught hundreds of robust classes for more than 20 years. Donna assigned homework like these 'letters to Justin' below to her students over the years.*

**Dear Justin,**

I am taking classes in T'ai Chi Chih to relieve stress and lower blood pressure. So far that has not happened. I'm not giving up. Wish me luck! ~ J.

**Dear Justin Stone,**

Thank you for sharing your wellbeing with others. I never would have tried to master 108 movements. The 20 movement you have developed are easy enough to learn and fit into our day. It is beautiful to watch the entire class doing the movements, something you can't say about other workouts. I have been very lucky to have a patient and caring instructor in Donna. The video from Carmen L. Brocklehurst has also helped me during practice at home when I can't quite remember how a movement goes. This moving meditation has done much to improve my life. ~ J. J. P.

**Dear Justin,**

I have enjoyed my class at the College of Lake County on TCC and have personally benefited from it. While your videotape clearly explains the movements, participating in a class provides feedback from the instructor, plus the companionship of others. I'm 61 years old. I helped my son move to a new home this weekend and made many trips up and down stairs carrying all sorts of things. While tired at the end of each day, I had no back or leg problems – which I attribute to my eight weeks of TCC. ~ P. B.

**Justin,**

I am grateful you have developed this form of TCC for impatient Americans so that we can gain the benefits. I have attempted various T'ai Chi classes. I have been to health clubs, private teachers, and business organizations that promised the benefits of TCC, but none were of any help. I have also obtained many videotapes. None of these were of any help. TCC is something I can do. I have already seen some benefits in the past five weeks, and I am certain there will be more. The two approved videotapes have been exceptionally beneficial. I also appreciate the way your website is laid out; it makes it easy to find further information on TCC. ~ D. B.

**Dear Justin,**

Thank you for this opportunity to do TCC. I came across this course quite serendipitously, from a presentation by Donna at my wife's high school. She brought a brochure home and it has fit my schedule perfectly. I have been searching for this for more than two years. I developed allergy-related asthma recently and have been on medication for it. TCC has helped tremendously. I also suffer

from sleep apnea and have been treated with a C-PAP mask. TCC has helped me find restful sleep. But the greatest benefit has been stress relief. My work as a parish minister demands that I give a lot of energy to others. TCC has helped me to reclaim my energy – to focus my energy. ~ D. K.

**Dear Mr. Stone,**

I am new to TCC, but it seems appropriate to be sending you a letter of thanks. In our world of hectic activity, we don't stop often enough to smell the roses. It gives me a feeling of calm peacefulness and helps to put my problems and issues into perspective. For these things I thank you. ~ J. E. S.

**Dear Justin,**

My husband and I have been going to TCC class for seven weeks, and it has been beneficial in ways I did not expect. First, it seems to be improving my power of concentration. Secondly, I have had a problem with the balls of my feet becoming sore if I was on them for a long time, but now they seem to be less tender than they were (probably the shifting of weight from toe to heel). I also seem to sprain my ankles rather easily. They are stronger now and I do not think I will sprain one this summer. We have completed 48 days of practicing TCC and will continue to do so in the future. ~ N. N.

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***Where in the World***

*Annette McNeil, Bird Flaps its Wing,  
Hardwick Winery, MA.*



## Body in Motion Stays in Motion at Oregon Retirement Center

By Jim Shorr, Beaverton, Oregon  
taichichih.org/teacher/jim-shorr

**Creekside Village residents** have faithfully practiced Joy through Movement for more than two years and have continued to reap benefits during the COVID-19 shut-down. How do they see their practice in health and spiritual terms as of November and December 2020? These seniors are the believers to whom the future belongs, seniors who prepare for it.

The residents' responses are varied but the issue of "balance" is omni-present:

**MARIE S:** These T'ai Chi Chih sessions help with balance issues, which lifts my spirits and anchors me. I rarely miss a session; the Chi gathering is locked into my week's schedule.

**GLEND A MCD:** With TCC practices I'm able to enjoy life to the fullest. My balance gets a lift.

**TOM O:** Your class has helped release my *Chi* and enabled me to integrate my thoughts, feelings and movement. The *Jing* symbolizes our emergent community spirit. The benefits I have reaped are many, including self-discipline (systematically perishing all random thoughts and focusing solely on the movements). Mental things occur to me as I move. As I move counter-clockwise in Bird Flaps its Wings, I rid myself of old habits; in moving clockwise, newer things that I can now do flush out older one I no longer need. Working the Pulley reminded me of being buoyant and warm while swimming in Hawaii. Joyous Breath helps me let go of bad energy and not-so-useful habits.

**ROBERTA S:** A certain calm settles over me after practicing the early movements. In the beginning, I was stiff and awkward but now I'm in the flow, especially with Passing Clouds; every little bit of soft movement helps.

## Practice at the Park

By Kathleen McAlister, Broomall, Pennsylvania  
taichichih.org/teacher/kathleen-mcallister

**The Philadelphia area T'ai Chi Chih** community came together in 2020 for an in-person practice on Sunday mornings. We started in the Spring as soon as we were allowed to gather safely in groups. Connecting with live humans was exciting, and then realizing how much we'd missed and loved our TCC family brought joy.

On sunny and warm days, we practiced under a gigantic, waving flag and heard its whipping and the clank of its cord. I loved getting my feet on the earth and truly grounding. When it was really warm the bees buzzed around the clover. When it was chilly, we practiced in the sun between majestic pines. We were surrounded and held in a giant circle of energy and love.

Over the summer, we also experienced hundreds of motorcycles gatherings. Hearing the rumble is one thing, feeling it vibrate through you is another. Today we were in the middle of a political road rally. The action quieted down as we did Rocking Motion to God Bless America; having hundreds of people saying the Pledge of Allegiance at once was incredible.

Then came 25 minutes of honking horns as they took their show on the road, during which time I was laughing out loud. What a test. I practice in public often and but had never encountered anything like this. The energy was amazing, big, loud, fun, exhilarating. I lost my focus and kept coming back to the practice. Once the parade was gone, I noticed bounce houses and a track meet behind us. As they started every race with a siren, this was the craziest practice ever. It left me smiling all day.

I realized recently that I'd lost my place during Pulling in the Energy and had to ask someone where I was. I also noticed I was more grounded and focused during the second half of the practice. I will explore that. Maybe I'll need to arrive early and ground



first. It's an interesting internal thing to notice when there is so much in-your-face external stuff to notice.

We have many teachers in this area but never gather outside of a planned event to practice as a group. I'm so happy that so many have been coming to these impromptu Sunday morning gatherings. It's special to be with TCC family and raise our vibrations. **Start gathering and they will come.**



## Excerpt from “Wabi-Sabi”

**To understand Japanese culture**, one must know something of the *wabi-sabi* concept. The Japanese sense of beauty, unlike some of the elaborately embellished Chinese manifestations, usually relies on delicate understatement. **What is left out is just as important as what is put in.** ... How subtle the pathway, in the traditional Japanese garden, that leads nowhere. It is a sure commentary on living.

~ ~ ~

One morning after a stormy night, Kaga no Chiyo, a famous haiku poetess, went to her well to draw water. She found a vine of morning glory bearing a beautiful flower that had blown down and entwined itself around the handle of the water-bucket. Such fragile beauty should not be disturbed, she said to herself, to accommodate such a practical need as drawing water. As she went to a neighbor to borrow some water, her nature-loving impulse asserted itself and her poetic genius woke up. She wrote:

*Being captured, my well bucket,  
I beg for water from my neighbor.*

The fuller, more complete approach to life and feeling is suggested in Kaga no Chiyo’s actions. **It is the willingness to accept and affirm life more purely, with naturalness and directness and in each movement as it is found, without conditioned intellect and response.** This represents the *wabi* or *sabi* life – and Zen.

One time in Los Angeles, an old painter friend and I went to see a Japanese exhibit at the art museum. Afterwards, we idly wandered into the Italian section of the museum. My sensitive friend took one look and shuddered. Viewing them immediately after the delicate statement of the Japanese scrolls, the lush and opulent colors of the great Italian work were too much of a jolt to the system. **Both have their place but not together.**

There is much aesthetic and philosophic value derived from the understated, austere, pseudo-natural approach of the Japanese. Many times, when we admire a teahouse or the rock formations of a garden, we are startled to realized that the work is not natural at all. It had used nature as a starting point and gone on to develop a *wabi-sabi* aesthetic from there. So nature becomes a point of departure. As my friend, Masao Abe, the eminent Buddhist scholar, declared, “*Fukinsei* – certainly a *wabi-sabi* characteristic – does not mean asymmetrical at all. Rather, **it implies going beyond symmetry.**” This reminds me of the jazz instrumentalist who must learn technique so he can forget technique in freeing himself to express what cannot really be expressed.

To find the greatest beauty in a weathered old door (or person) implies respect for that which has lived and endured. Haven’t we all admired the features of an old woman who has had children and grandchildren and known triumphs and times of despair? Can

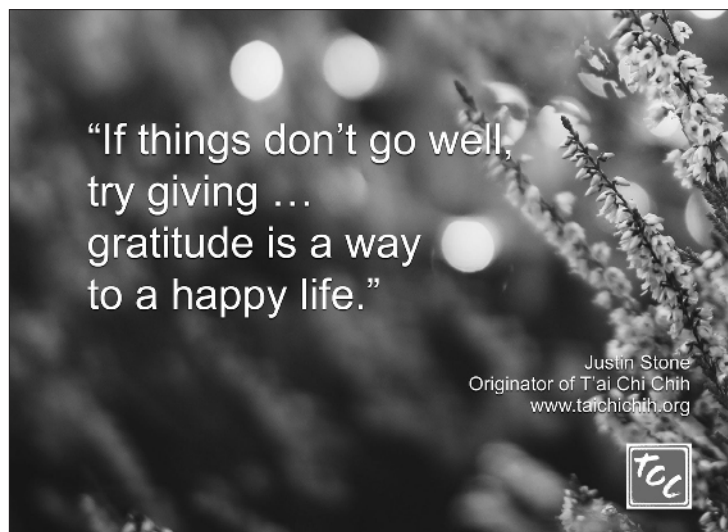
any paint do to wood what the harsh hands of time will do? One of my favorite buildings is a small art gallery near Big Sur, California, built from the discarded timbers of an old bridge. This wood has never been painted; it is indelibly stained by time.

A new car has little character, but when we see an ancient classic, we involuntarily gasp with admiration. Old manuscripts and examples of calligraphy that have been burned in fires are greatly prized in Japan. I find that moss-covered stones replacing pavement is highly evocative of the past and pleasing to the spirit. The rapidly changing old capital of Kyoto has always afforded me an aesthetic bath. I feel the *wabi-sabi* even more in the mountains, where one spies a heavy iron kettle hanging by bamboo from the ceiling over an open hole in the floor holding charcoal. What a wonderful way to boil water for tea and cook the vegetables – so important in the country way of eating.

*“Beyond Symmetry”  
by Justin Stone.*



*Climb the Joyous Mountain* is available in print and in an e-book from [justinstonetcc.com](http://justinstonetcc.com).



*“If things don’t go well,  
try giving ...  
gratitude is a way  
to a happy life.”*

Justin Stone  
Originator of T'ai Chi Chih  
[www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)



## Excerpt from “Silent Sadhu”

*Editor’s Note: Justin recounts a story of being outside Baroda, India and being taken by a trio of university students to meet a famous sadhu, a traditional holy man.*

**We were told** the *sadhu* had been in *Samadhi* (the super-conscious state) since the day before, and there was no telling when he might emerge from his exalted condition. We decided to wait.

Most of the conversation was in Gujarati, the language of the local province, but a few of those present spoke English (the university language in India) as well. It was hard to tell what the others were doing there [in the house where they met the *sadhu*]. Did some live in that huge house? Were they disciples of the *sadhu*? It was impossible to know.

After about an hour, there was a sudden silence. Looking up, we saw a strange, almost drunken-looking man entering through a doorway, leaning lightly against the wall. He had on a simple white dhoti instead of the ochre-colored *sannyasin* robe we half-expected.

This imposing man of indeterminate age – of 40 years old? 50? 60? his white beard made it hard to tell – was now the focus of all eyes. He quietly sat down in the cross-legged lotus posture, not saying a word. There was silence for quite a while. Then, one-by-one, overcome by the august presence of the man, the [trio of men Justin was with] came forward, prostrated themselves on the floor, and kissed his bare feet in the traditional Indian gesture of respect. So much for their cynicism.

Finally, it was my turn, and I carefully seated myself in meditation pose about two feet from the *sadhu* and faced him. We looked at each other, but no word was spoken. (I had no way of even knowing if he understood English.)

After a while, one of the [trio of men Justin was with] came forward and whispered in my ear, “Ask him something.”



I paid no attention. Sitting so close to the man, who had just emerged from the deepest of immersions, I was fascinated by the tremendous vibration of livingness about him. Outwardly, he did not move at all, but **inwardly he must have been seething with a tremendous force flowing through him. The tight clasp of the hands, with only the fingers moving, gave some clue to the dynamic surge inside.** He had come out of *Samadhi*, evidently sensing visitors were there to see him, and yet he was still in it. Those who have successfully practiced really deep meditation will have some inkling of what was surging inside him. But there is no way to name it.

How long we sat, I cannot recall. I had been drawn into his radius of one-pointed dynamism, and words would have been superfluous. Again and again one of the [trio of men Justin was with] would come up to me and whisper, “Ask him something.” Evidently they felt I would pose a significant question or two, he would give the answers, and the secret of the universe would be clearly revealed. **How naïve can we be to believe such things are contained in words.**

Except for the writhing of the fingers, clasped tightly as though to keep him from exploding, the *sadhu* didn’t move. He never said a word during the hours of our visit. After his first sharp glance at me, he never again looked up, his half-closed eyes remaining unseeingly focused on the floor between us. The electricity in our little circle never wavered, actually seeming to grow in intensity all the time we sat there.

Finally, I felt it was time to go; we had intruded enough. Standing, I made the hand gesture known as *pranam* to the holy man, who did not return it. Instead, he gave me another sharp but not unfriendly look. Turning quickly, I led the way from the room, past the fire (where several men were now cooking some greens), past the over-milked goat, and out into the deep darkness lighted by a million stars above. We each took several deep breaths of the warm evening air and got into the car parked by the side of the house.

The drive back was swift and quiet. I was still under the spell of the *sadhu*, and the others were rather taken back by and ashamed of their impulsive act of honor and respect to the holy man.

On the long drive, one of the young men (the son of a Baroda doctor) asked me why I hadn’t questioned the *sadhu* to get some answers.

I smiled for a moment. “Do you mean to tell me you missed the whole thing?” I demanded.

He was surprised. What whole thing had he missed? What had happened? But I was not of a mind to speak anymore, and we rode the rest of the way in silence. I was filled with the vibrancy of the *sadhu*, so deep in his God-intoxicated state. I do not know what thoughts or feelings occupied the others.



## Online TCC Classes Reach Distant Students

By Judy Kistler-Robinson, Plano, Texas  
taichichih.org/teacher/judy-kistler-robinson

**When I found Tai Chi Chih**, there were no certified teachers actively teaching where I lived in the Dallas area, and we didn't have Zoom. I relied upon Justin's Photo Textbook and DVD as well as YouTube videos to learn the basics before attending retreats or workshops in New Mexico for several years. After I met teachers Cindy Dunn and Winston Deane who lived six hours away in Lubbock, I joined their Saturday morning silent practice and individually worked with them via FaceTime until I could attend an intensive and a teacher accreditation course. Learning through a two-dimensional video meant I'd missed out on some subtleties from the 3-dimensional, in-person, interactive instruction.

Earlier in this year during COVID-19, when teachers started offering Zoom class, I was hesitant because I knew how much could be missed with a two-dimensional delivery. However, Sandy's weekly practices on Zoom have revealed aspects of the movements that can best shown by a teacher turning 45 degrees and 90 degrees to give students more than a front-on view. Another advantage of these weekly practices has been acquiring Sandy's words to describe subtle aspects of the movements: "notice the curve of the arm"... "sinking, rising"... "sink into stillness." Since I never experienced being taught in a weekly class, I hadn't acquired the language that teachers absorb from their teachers and pass on to students.

I tried teaching via Zoom over the summer and then I offered an 8-week online class through the local recreation center in the fall. Friends in Texas, Wyoming and California who had previously said "I wish I could take a class from you" signed up. I hope to entice other friends who don't have a TCC teacher near them to join my winter 2021 online class.

One silver lining of this pandemic? We've learned that online Zoom classes can reach people who don't live near an accredited teacher, thus expanding the opportunity for TCC to benefit many more students than local in-person classes may reach.



## Pondering Diversity & TCC

By Rebecca Paulson, Evans, Colorado  
taichichih.org/teacher/rebecca-paulson

**I recently went through** the application process to teach T'ai Chi Chih in the local community college's Continuing Education program. One step required submission of a "Diversity Statement." What? What could I say that hasn't been said? Here is what I came up with, which may provide the opportunity for you to ponder as well.

"Respect. Honor. Support. Seek to understand. Listen with empathy. Recognize different backgrounds, lifestyles and learning styles."

The year of 2020 was difficult – when not only Black Lives Matter, but also LGBTQ, nursing home residents, health care workers, registered Democrats and Republicans, firefighters and mask or non-mask wearers "matter."

It is all too easy to categorize every encounter by first labeling who one is interacting with. One of the principles of the TCC practice I have learned and now teach is that through our movement and meditation we can discover Who and What we are. The process involves taking a breath, centering ourselves and "letting the dust settle." This is also a good approach to interactions with others. Centering myself has led to me also accepting myself, which opens my heart and makes it easier to let go and be receptive to others.

This applies to students, teachers, staff, employees and presenters whom one encounters on a college campus. Each individual comes from different circumstances, facing different challenges. And it's not always apparent – those language differences; physical, mental or emotional struggles; economic, racial or social backgrounds....

We just can't assume that we know or understand.

Better to take a learner's approach. Treat each person with dignity and courtesy. With openness and humility. It's 2021 and difficult to say anything that doesn't ring of oft-heard platitudes. But it's good to pause and reflect.



# Chi Transcends Time & Space: Its Force is Far More Powerful than a Pandemic

By Kristin Clark Taylor, Reston, Virginia  
taichichih.org/teacher/kristin-clark-taylor



**I am a new T'ai Chi Chih instructor**, and my heart is filled to the brim with joy and gratitude. This group – our group – of teacher candidates was one of the first to have taken this powerful and profound journey towards accreditation virtually, using Zoom. And what a journey it was.

Though the training was virtual, the Chi was – and is – real. Daniel Pienciak's gentle wisdom and miraculous, meticulous training was real. April Leffler's loving attention to detail and detailed attention to loving was real. I could feel the power of their pulse. They stood with me, beside me, within me as I stood alone in my living room, yet I was not alone. **My teacher training experience was not "virtual" at all, because the Chi itself is not virtual.** I feel like saying it again; like shouting it from the rooftops: The *Chi* is real.

Together, Dan, April and the superb auditors who participated in the five-day session *taught us how to teach*. Yes, the technical, Zoom-related hiccups we occasionally confronted were certainly real – but life offers us occasional hiccups, and we must embrace them with grace. We must embrace them with the joy that TCC generates. The *Chi* is not virtual. It is real.

What a blessing, then, that the power, the principles and the practice of TCC are not bound by circumstance. The glorious purity of the *Chi* – that vital energy that exists within us all – transcends time, space and technology. Its power certainly and easily transcends this pandemic.

## Writing Pyramid Poems

By Melissa Eichman, Mission, Kansas

**I am about to complete** my first year of T'ai Chi Chih practice, and thanks to the generous spirit of my teacher, Lorraine Lepine, I have had a lovely group with whom to practice five days a week during COVID-19. I love the joy that comes from this movement and feel its transformative power. I've practiced with Lorraine and also with Amy Tyksinski, and they both encourage the writing of pyramid poems. I have never written poetry, and I don't think Emily Dickinson has anything to be concerned about, but the practice is fun and peaceful. It is cold and snowy in Kansas and ideas of softness and stillness and being home are intersecting nicely with my TCC practice.

snow  
glistens  
magical  
softly soothing  
yearning souls  
seeking  
peace

the  
stillness  
patiently  
waits lovingly  
beckoning  
woke souls  
home

speak  
to us  
gentle breeze  
circulating  
yin and yang  
converge  
ground

birds  
flapping  
and resting  
delicate wings  
balancing  
oneness  
free

tai  
chi chih  
envelopes  
exhilarates  
entices  
heart and  
soul

we  
softly  
walk across  
the snow kissed earth  
quietly  
coming  
home

That I have been so lovingly and meticulously taught to teach others how to activate, balance and circulate this divine energy is a blessing of untold magnitude. I have been taught to teach others. This is not virtual. This miracle is real. **The flow of the Chi is now. It is everywhere. Flow is flow.**

My instructor, Carmen Brocklehurst, who helped prepare me for the teacher training course and is my beloved sister-spirit-guide, often reminds me that when we practice TCC, **we are not looking to float ... but to flow.** There is a difference.

In our movements, we want to remain anchored, centered, rooted firmly in our feet and to the ground beneath us – no whirling Magic Carpet rides or swooping, soaring dips and dives – but we also want to *flow* from our center with softness, continuity and circularity. Flow – not float – “slow motion in a dream,” as Justin Stone says. Moving meditation.

During the teacher accreditation course, I had breakthroughs. I developed fine, fresh friendships with the other candidates and the instructors. My inner vision became more acute. I have stepped into the joyous and noble role of teacher, a blessing of untold magnitude.

There is a line I love from “Healing Thru Joy!” Justin's powerful poem and lyric: “*Joy in the Heart! Joy in the Mind! Joy in the Soul!*”

Shhh. Listen. Can you hear it? It is the sound of my laughter. It is the movement of joy in my soul. I have been taught to teach. This wasn't a virtual experience at all. The *Chi* is real, as is my boundless joy.

## More New Jersey Students Speak

By Dorene Krause, Midland Park, New Jersey  
 taichichih.org/teacher/dorene-krause

**Peter Swist:** My comments may be somewhat individualistic. They reflect my perspective of searching to cure my balance issues, sensory neuropathy, improve my walking and eliminate my falling issues. I've always been a very good athlete with great balance and a tireless walker. After being diagnosed with Spinal Stenosis 10 years ago, undergoing lumbar and cervical spine surgeries, my balance and walking severely deteriorated. I was a constant fall hazard. It was life-altering. I was in constant physical therapy programs. They had some strength benefits, but my balance, walking and falling issues persisted. I searched for a better program and decided to try T'ai Chi Chih after various recommendations. I joined a class in Fall 2016 and began an incredible journey.



The journey to discover and practice TCC is a totally rewarding experience. The guidance and motivation from our teacher, Dorene, is outstanding and inspirational. After all my physical therapy experiences, I believe TCC is perhaps the best therapy program to address my total balance improvement program. My words can't do justice to the subject, but the journey continues to be informative, motivating and rewarding.

### COMMENTS & OBSERVATIONS:

- Your inspirational/informative teaching programs focus on a comprehensive guide to learning and practicing the TCC movements.
- Most important to me, TCC provides a unified platform to address the multi-dimensional and interrelated fluidity, stability, balance, postural, spatial awareness, continuity, control and mental components of the total stabilized walking/motion process.
- A major challenge is to maintain my focus on proper execution, form, balance and posture while struggling to maintain my balance.
- I don't feel the polarity and energy transfers, but I do get a feeling of calm and satisfaction with the program and never get discouraged by slow recovery process.
- I enjoy every movement. Some are a bit more challenging if they involve standing on my toes, which I can't do yet, but I'll keep practicing.
- I also enjoy the Zoom meetings and recorded sessions you distribute. I can get a close-up view of the movements and repeat as required. I do miss the class interaction.

While I face occasional setbacks and frustrations in developing my skills, I believe I will continue to improve my balance and walking skills and plan to continue this life-enhancing program. Thank you, Dorene, for guiding me on this journey.

~ ~ ~



**Victor DePauw:** I seriously committed to a daily practice more than a year ago and now feel cheated if I miss a practice. I have more energy during the days I practice and less when I miss a practice. I've seen an improvement in my posture: I carry weight and tension in my shoulders. Prior to practicing TCC I'd try to relax my shoulders, but since starting TCC I now know to relax into my *tan t'ien*. I walk with a straighter posture, which in turn helps my muscles feel more relaxed.

**Janet Blum:** TCC is a gift. It truly is joy through movement. I have learned the benefits of moving slowly, softly and consistently, thereby reducing tension and allowing the energy to flow freely. From continued practice, I have improved my posture and balance. TCC brings me to a place of calm and peacefulness yet I'm energized with a sense of well-being.



**M. Feiler:** TCC classes have brought self-awareness about my posture and how I walk, stand and sit. While doing TCC, an inner calmness transcends the mind and body. Practicing as a group shares energy with those around you; while practicing on my own I experience self-power and in control of who I am.

**Linda H:** TCC speaks to me of peace, softness, quiet and grace. Practice time is time set aside just for me. I am thankful TCC found me.



## Seijaku Meditation Retreat on Zoom: November 2020 with Dan Pienciak

**Dixie** ~ In a beginner's way I am becoming friends with this practice and seated meditation through the help of our gifted teacher.

**Judy** ~ Longer periods of meditation offer a deeper level of self-nurturing stillness that supports both courage and strength in my ever-evolving processes of releasing and allowing.

**Ellen** ~  
Hold fast and let go  
World problems  
Local issues  
COVID  
Personal  
Let go of the results, rest in stillness.

**Bruce** ~ Against great obstacles, we came together in virtual space and in community to practice Seijaku and to practice doing nothing, from which blossomed healing light and joyful *Chi*.

**Lisa S.** ~ I'm taking away a profound experience of the feeling, power and importance of fully letting go and of meditating in my life.

**Christa** ~ Trust your own experience and revert to yourself and your practice. Continue to be open to the experience.

**Jessica** ~ The immeasurable value of holding fast to softness, especially while encountering resistance: this is the way to let go.

**John S.** ~ Only through hardness can softness be attained. Only through softness can our best selves be realized.

**Kent Jarratt** ~ I've come to value more than ever the practice of holding on and letting go, while moving through hard and soft. Once again, I am reminded that this practice is the Dharma, teaching me how to live.

**Deb Wein** ~ The essence of my experience of this retreat has been the value of deeply grounding and the importance of really feeling or experiencing my emotions.

**Daniel Pienciak** ~ Seijaku never fails to uncover the temporary nature of life's trials and the reality of freedom available when we truly let go.



## TCC Retreat: Deepening Our TCC Practice September 2020 with Pam Towne

*In homes spread out from coast-to-coast, 19 people gathered on Zoom for four days to go deeper in the practice of TCC. Participants were asked, "What did you receive from this retreat?" and*

*some responses are as follows:*

**Lynne Roberts** ~ Flowing from center; focusing on the soles of the feet; benefiting from the group *Chi*; letting go of anxiousness and fear around moving forward with back surgery.

**Steve Geer** ~ Gaining more softness and continuity through the movements; gaining awareness of where to soften, asking to make it softer, then feeling it; sensing slow motion, everything in a dream state; everything flowing together in a smooth, circular pattern.

**Marv Treiger** ~ Following my doctor's orders not to do physical movements, so doing TCC mentally; connecting with softness and continuity as fraternal twins; letting go of TCC as exercise; gaining relaxation.

**Colleen Knight** ~ Making TCC simpler; feeling the full weight shift and how the heel releases

naturally instead of trying to make it happen; letting go of personal expectations; getting softer.

**Karen Goran** ~ Seeing old friends and making new ones; coming to play in the present moment; attending to the movement and grounding in the soles of the feet made breathing better; paying attention to all the principles.

**Barbara Jenkins** ~ Finally understanding the true meaning of softness in movements; using the *tan t'ien* to move from the waist (not the shoulders); keeping the head facing forward with Passing Clouds and Perpetual Motion.

**Ryan Holly** ~ Becoming more comfortable being on Zoom and doing TCC online.

**Jan Walker** ~ Letting go of judgment of myself.

**Regina Otero-Sabogal** ~ Enjoying getting together for fellowship and focusing on TCC; gaining confidence; opening fingers to increase *Chi* flow.

**Michelle** ~ Gaining confidence; working on stance, foot placement, breathing through the practice; trying not to make the flow perfect; trying not to be perfect.

**Jan Walker** ~ Doing a full weight shift and waist turn; learning more about the practice and broadening views and knowledge.

**Mary Kaye** ~ Realizing it's okay to do fewer repetitions and really slow down; make it more simple; letting go of expectations.



## November Teacher Accreditation: What a Long, Zoom Trip it's Been

By April Leffler, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania  
[taichichih.org/teacher/april-leffler](http://taichichih.org/teacher/april-leffler)

**It's the day after** the "first ever" Zoom Teacher Accreditation, led by Pam Towne and hosted by Yours Truly. As always, it is such a privilege and honor to witness the deep and transformative outcomes that occur during this week. However, adding Zoom to the equation required a whole new skill set.

We learned to stay grounded during unstable WiFi connections, wonky sound feedback, clothing that blended into the onscreen backgrounds, and muting and unmuting protocols.

We all remember the deep connections, ongoing support and group hugs from our accreditation. How would that warm feeling transfer without the in-person head nods in response to sharing? Or when one simply stared at a screen with Brady Bunch heads mostly 'muted'? We adapted by sending chat messages to support and acknowledge. We worked together to refine movement and offer feedback in small breakout rooms. We even enjoyed a virtual tour of the new T'ai Chi Chih Center in Albuquerque and celebration of Justin's birthday.

The *Chi* invariably and thankfully had its way with us, and more than 45 people joined the graduation and final practice. There was laughter, smiles and tears as loved ones, teachers and auditors came together to congratulate the new teachers.

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## Auditor Experience

By Deb Wein, Pike Creek Delaware  
[taichichih.org/teacher/deb-wein](http://taichichih.org/teacher/deb-wein)

This was the first time I have served as an auditor at an accreditation. At first, I felt a little intimidated by other auditors and the enormity of the task. It seemed a heavy responsibility. What if I tell a candidate the wrong thing or forget to tell them something? After two days, I began to feel a little more comfortable suggesting refinements to the candidates' movements. I probably took more notes as an auditor than I did as a candidate at my own accreditation. I got answers to questions that I didn't know to ask at my accreditation. **You don't know what you don't know.** It was very rewarding to usher the next generation of TCC teachers into our community. I feel proud and awed by the experience and can't wait to do it again.

## The Hostess With the Mostest

By Linda Jones, Bennettsville, South Carolina  
[taichichih.org/teacher/linda-jones](http://taichichih.org/teacher/linda-jones)

I had the honor of auditing this event. Pam certainly deserves kudos for pressing to have accreditations online, and she provided excellent and essential Zoom guidelines. And while the *Chi* was the star of the show, April Leffler also deserves top billing. She dove in with her usual calm persona and a big smile. No matter what we threw her way it was always accepted with a kind word. The word "no" never crossed her lips nor did a complaint. She was totally present with each and every member. It was as if she had cloned herself to be in several places at the same time. The candidates absolutely adored April, and my respect for her is off the charts.

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## Accreditation Like No Other

By Sheila Leonard,  
 St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada  
[taichichih.org/teacher/sheila-leonard](http://taichichih.org/teacher/sheila-leonard)

As a May accreditation became a November happening, there were shared joys and insights like every other accreditation. But it also came with Zoom challenges – met gracefully. As the week unfolded, we were grounded, relaxed, aware, centered and energized. Any illusions of "having arrived" were short-lived as candidates deepened their commitment to TCC as a way of life, as Justin always said.

I audited as a way to refine my own practice and to support the candidates and other participants. It was an added gift to see a home student shine as Zoom allowed. Mission accomplished, though Zoom can leave one feeling shortchanged compared to in-person experiences. Together we can keep improving the experience so that it becomes ever richer. We could be Zooming for awhile.



## New Teachers – In Their Words

**By Debbie Reed, Wilmington, North Carolina**

[taichichih.org/teacher/debbie-reed](http://taichichih.org/teacher/debbie-reed)

**If you are considering**

becoming a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, I encourage you to press ahead. This will transform you in ways you do not expect. I was honored to be one of the first Zoom teacher candidates, and the experience was beyond measure. If you want to connect, you connect whether in person or online. After the fourth day, I started to feel the break down that I needed to feel, and I sent this email to April:



*New Teacher Debbie Reed*

I am doing okay. I called Ann (my teacher) last night and talked with her. I told her that I had a breakdown. She said good! I said, “No, you don’t understand, I don’t remember anything you told me, anything that Pam said to me. My mind is empty.” She said good, that that is what we call Beginner’s Mind. It is like my mind is a computer and I have had a factory reset; all of the data I learned is gone. I understand what Uncarved Block means. I will sit before you today with nothing, no concept, no preconceived thoughts. The *Chi* needed all of the junk in my mind removed so I could go further without “my” built up, unnecessary ideas. Right now the only words are: “Please move with me.” It has been painful, but glorious and beautiful all at once. You are doing what you came to do.

~ ~ ~

**By Michelle Sarubbi, La Mesa, California**

[taichichih.org/teacher/michelle-sarubbi](http://taichichih.org/teacher/michelle-sarubbi)

**April was the Hostess** with the Mostest. Zoom is a learning curve, and April’s ability to maneuver through it – on top of her insights, comments and teachings – were just what we needed. Pam, whose instruction came across so well, seems like she is made for Zoom. We did not need to be in the same room physically to get what she wanted us to do or understand. And to my new fellow teachers, I could not have come through this without you. I wish for you all that you dream of and intend – in your practice, your growth of *Chi* and life.

~ ~ ~

**By Anonymous**

**Pam mentioned this** would be a transformational week but I did not think much about it at the time. I knew we would bond and feel the *Chi* but I was not expecting the swell of emotion that came up. The feeling of coming apart and starting anew. The raw feelings. Everyone on the surface looked fine, but when we opened up and shared our feelings, I found I was not alone – which helped me move through it with more ease and grace.

Maybe because it was on Zoom it seemed that everyone was focused. There was a palpable and solid intention to do well, grow in the practice and support each other. There was always someone to ask questions of or share how we were feeling.

The auditors had tough jobs: long days, Internet issues, learning hints to make Zoom work better. The support they offered to each of us was phenomenal, and I’m so appreciative and grateful for the advice, corrections, tips.

~ ~ ~

**By Regina Otero-Sabogal, Daly City, California**

[taichichih.org/teacher/regina-otero-sabogal](http://taichichih.org/teacher/regina-otero-sabogal)

**This accreditation week** was one of my most awaited experiences as a TCC teacher candidate. I was not sure if I would survive seven hours for six days in front of a computer screen. My preparation: 1) Buying a large screen TV, hardwiring my Internet, upgrading my WiFi, reorganizing my living room; 2) Working long hours with my dedicated teachers, repeating my movements to perfection; 3) Packing my fridge with ready-to-eat food so I didn’t take precious time in food preparation; and 4) Coordinating with my husband to care for our home, dog and Thanksgiving dinner.

There was also was my spiritual preparation to feel the *Chi*. In one of my last preparation sessions, after Working the Pully to perfection, I asked my teacher to explain the body-mind connection, the *Chi*, the vital force energy, described by Justin in many of his writings. I shared: “I haven’t felt it in spite of trying hard to perfect my movements.” She explained something very simple: by circulating the energy with softness and continuity, I would feel the *Chi*. Since then, instead of focusing on perfect movements, I have focused on how to move to circulate my *Chi*. It was like turning on a switch, electricity in action. Discovering my *Chi* was the best preparation for my accreditation. As Justin wrote: “You can chase your shadow all day and never catch it but stand still and it will merge with the body – with no effort.”

# December Accreditation: Encore Performance

By April Leffler, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania  
[taichichih.org/teacher/april-leffler](http://taichichih.org/teacher/april-leffler)

**This T'ai Chi Chih** accreditation, facilitated by Dan Pienciak, wrapped up a few hours ago with another opportunity to witness the deep, transformative, *Chi*-filled experiences that these trainings provide. **Auditors Zoomed in and out** as time allowed, some staying a few hours, some for several days and two for the whole week. Folks were moved to tears as they experienced **Justin during the Folsom Prison DVD**. As certificates were shown during graduation, **new teachers read a personal mission statement** with regard to them becoming accredited. And new teachers caught up with loved ones in breakout rooms which added to the celebration.

## New Teacher Mission Statements

To continually deepen my personal practice of TCC and to teach and inspire others by sharing the power and principles of the practice with seriousness of intent and a glad, joyful heart.

~ KRISTIN CLARK TAYLOR

To teach TCC as a practice promoting physical, emotional and spiritual health and growth and connection to a healing community.

~ JEANNIE A SPERRY

To make people aware of the endless possibilities that life has to offer through the practice of TCC Joy through movement.

~ SHARON HAYDEN

To help guide others to find joy through this moving meditation and ultimately guide healing body, mind and soul. ~ KARIN HAMPTON

To feel and share connections; feel and share *Chi*; feel and share joy; feel and share love and happiness. ~ BUNNY MAYBERRY

To continue to deepen and soften my practice to support the flow and balance of *Chi*, inviting joy, grounding and serenity into my life. To support balance, inner strength, healing and joy in my students by sharing knowledge of these gentle meditative movements. To become an active, loving member of the TCC community. ~ ROBERTA COOKS

~ ~ ~

## New Teacher Experiences During Accreditation

**By Bunny Mayberry, Garnet Valley, Pennsylvania**  
[taichichih.org/teacher/bunny-mayberry](http://taichichih.org/teacher/bunny-mayberry)

Accreditation was like being on a roller coaster all week. I came into it with anticipation, apprehension, and with a strong desire and commitment to complete this beginning phase of my relationship with TCC as a teacher. I felt excited and eager to absorb all there was to learn and refine, and I tried to assimilate everything I needed to know to begin to spread the joy. Just like a roller coaster has its upward and



downward movements, and the unknown, the emotional floodgates opened when I was coming down. I wanted to share the *Chi* I felt in my body with others. I wasn't ready to experience the overwhelming emotional fullness that comes with living in the *Chi*. I encourage everyone to feel what it really is like to live with and in the *Chi*. I will hopefully inspire others to feel this beautiful, life-changing event and the joy that TCC offers.

~ ~ ~

**By Jeannie Sperry, Philippi, West Virginia**  
[taichichih.org/teacher/jeannie-sperry](http://taichichih.org/teacher/jeannie-sperry)

It was an intense week made possible by Zoom and also more complicated. We spent about 70 hours on Zoom over seven days, with few glitches. Daniel's devotion to high standards were conveyed despite the technology demands of the week. April's organizational skills, attention to detail and concern for our wellbeing were evident each day. And with seven teachers auditing the course and giving us feedback, we had more individual attention than anticipated. The graduation ceremony was a profound experience culminating in a TCC practice led by Daniel and joined virtually by many of our teachers including Pam Towne and Carmen Brocklehurst.

~ ~ ~

**By Candy Moraczewski, Sewell, New Jersey**  
[taichichih.org/teacher/candy-moraczewski](http://taichichih.org/teacher/candy-moraczewski)

How can I speak about accreditation week sanely? I experienced every emotion known to humans. I almost cancelled my attendance before the class even started. The nerves were unbearable. Early on I was overwhelmed with yin energy to the point that I was worried about getting sick. But with continued practice (and giving my presentation which wasn't nearly as bad as I imagined) I was able to



bring the *yang* heart fire down to balance the *Chi*. This is such a wonderful gift, this balancing of the *Chi*. Once relaxed, I became aware of the support around me. I also found joy in my awareness of my movements within my practice. I have read many quotes from Justin Stone. But after watching the Folsom Prison video I now hear him actually speaking in my mind. I was pleasantly surprised when this happened. I was exhausted, energized, filled with joy, worried about the Real world versus the real world. But I am now an accredited TCC teacher!

~ ~ ~

**By Carolyn Pogwist,**  
*Bloomington, New Jersey*  
[taichichih.org/teacher/carolyn-pogwist](http://taichichih.org/teacher/carolyn-pogwist)

It was hard and it was soft. There were tears and there was joy. The process was part of an ongoing *yinning* and *yanging* experience. What struck me most was the role that language, words play in teaching students the movements. We can tell a student how to move and what to move and when to move, but can words help a student feel the movements? Can I feel softer? I have come to the awareness that it is best if I allow my movements to speak to my body before I attempt to explain the movements to my students. Words manifest. Let us choose them carefully in guiding students on this wonder-filled journey.

~ ~ ~

**By Ryan L. Holley,**  
*Wilmington, Delaware*  
[taichichih.org/teacher/ryan-holley](http://taichichih.org/teacher/ryan-holley)

What a week of growth and focus means? Discipline.

We learn to move into being a disciple and teacher of TCC:

D is for disciple  
 I is for intent  
 S is for student  
 C is for consciousness  
 I is for internal growth  
 P is peacefulness  
 L is for love  
 I is for illumination  
 N is for nothingness  
 E is for enlightenment

~ ~ ~

**By Roberta Cooks,**  
*Wallingford, Pennsylvania*  
[taichichih.org/teacher/roberta-cooks](http://taichichih.org/teacher/roberta-cooks)

As we studied so intensely for so many hours each day to deepen our understanding of what it means to practice and become a TCC teacher, a big piece of our journey was to deepen our body knowledge of grounding, the effort of no effort, and flow. It is a struggle to simultaneously learn so much and relax into grounding. This is a lifelong journey. But as I have been letting go since teacher training, my body soaks up what we learned, something about the bubbling

springs bubbled up in me, and I felt a lovely shift in my relationship to grounding. I tried to capture that feeling in this poem:

**Grounding**  
 Feeling the weight  
 Of the earth  
 In my feet  
 Cool springs bubbling  
 Under my soles  
 Dark wet earth  
 Cradling the weight of me  
 My whole upright body  
 Settling  
 Like a child  
 In its strong, giving arms

~ ~ ~

**By Sharon Hayden,**  
*Witless Bay, Newfoundland*  
[taichichih.org/teacher/sharon-hayden](http://taichichih.org/teacher/sharon-hayden)

It was the worst of times and it was the best of times: accreditation in the year 2020 through Zoom. I was amazed at the power of the *Chi* field and to experience its energy across the miles; to meet 10 people using TCC for their personal benefits and how it is shared around the world. I feel privileged to be a part of such a positive experi-

ence. Let us keep the *Chi* field flowing around the world.

~ ~ ~

**By Karin Hampton,**  
*Wilmington, Delaware*  
[taichichih.org/teacher/karin-hampton](http://taichichih.org/teacher/karin-hampton)

This experience was intense, interesting and wonderful. I came to learn; I came in as an open vessel; I didn't realize how much I would learn. All of the accreditation was transformative, but the best part? The breakout rooms, which allowed for a more personal exchange which I believe is something we all cling to this day.

~ ~ ~

**By Kristin Taylor Clark,**  
*Reston, Virginia*  
[taichichih.org/teacher/kristin-taylor-clark](http://taichichih.org/teacher/kristin-taylor-clark)

ahhhhh,  
 right here.  
 now is now.  
*t'an tien*, speak.  
 i hear you.  
 i hear.  
 ahhhhhh.





## The Lighter Side: Reprinted from its March 1999 Debut

By Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, Maryland  
taichichih.org/teacher/sharon-sirkis



**1. Sometimes I'll equate** the movements with everyday life. I taught Push Pull at a Senior Center and said, "What do you want to push away or get rid of?" Without missing a beat, one gentleman said loudly, "My wife!" (The most common answer is aches and pains, but this got a good laugh.)

2. At the end of class, I encourage students to sit still and ground the *Chi*. "Be aware of what's happening in your body," I said. After a few seconds one guy said, "The only thing I'm aware of right now is my bladder."

3. Guest speaker Sharm Sinkis was listed in a newsletter where I was to present T'ai Chi Chih. Yes, that's me they're talking about.

4. After playing telephone tag, I finally spoke to a student who was interested in taking my class. He was frustrated that we couldn't touch base sooner and said, "I decided to bag it." So I said, "Well, can you unbag it or re-bag it?" He paused and said, "Well, I guess I could." He took the class and it helped him a great deal.

5. During my accreditation at Carmel Retreat in Mahwah, New Jersey (July 1997), I tried to strike up a conversation with someone, unaware that he was on the last five days of a silent retreat. (He was very nice when he told me this.)

### We Meet Consistently & Often in the Circle of TCC

By Mary Ann Johnson, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida  
taichichih.org/teacher/mary-ann-johnson

I pray that  
Whether the tide is high or low  
Whether the sun is shining bright or hidden...  
You will have 365 days of deep joy  
525,600 minutes of true peace  
May you discover everything you are looking for right inside yourself  
Realizing that you are always surrounded (sometimes virtually!) by loved ones  
And knowing that every second you are held in the tender palm of our Creator.

### The Remembrance

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

**I see reconnecting** with the divinity within as one of T'ai Chi Chih's most valuable treasures. To remember God is to know God. But only God (within) can know God.

By fostering and nurturing stillness and spaciousness, TCC helps us to remember who and what we truly are – it helps us reconnect with the light and divinity within. The reconnection begins when we relax and move softly and slowly as though we are flowing in a dream. Our attention is in the body and therefore not in the head. No longer in the head, we then enter mindfulness by being the objective observer of our minds, an observing presence. Any thoughts or mental scenarios that arise just float by like passing clouds. We realize that, like the sun, the light of our consciousness, our observing presence, the witness, is ever present. And we then realize that this presence is like a ray of light, emanating from that source that we call God. Light upon light. We remember who and what we are, and thus we remember God. Our remembrance leads us back home – back to the blessed garden of serenity.

### Pulley Pie

By Trish Winger, Melbourne, Florida  
taichichih.org/teacher/patricia-winger

**My students were** having a tough time with Working the Pulley. I had repeated all the instructions I could remember as to how to get the hands to go around the wheels and return as the lines: working the pulley. But their movements were still wide of the mark. I watched myself in the mirror. "You are a pie throwing machine. You throw a pie, immediately a new pie is put on your hand which must be brought back, swung up to the shoulder for the next pie toss. Keep the hand level so the pie doesn't slip off as you bring it back and swing it up to throw." It seems to have helped, and I told them to practice at home with real pies if necessary.



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youtube.com/tccabq

## Community Calendar

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

Mar 11-14 | Seijaku Meditation Retreat w/ Daniel | Zoom | wakeupdaniel@aol.com  
Mar 18-21 | TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Sandy | Zoom | pamtowne@gmail.com  
Mar 25-28 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Zoom | pamtowne@gmail.com  
Apr 22-25 | TCC Intensive w/ Sandy | Zoom | lirpaleff@rcn.com  
May 6-9 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Prescott, AZ or Zoom | pamtowne@gmail.com  
June 19-21 | Online Seijaku Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam | Zoom | pamtowne@gmail.com  
June 24-27 | TCC Teacher Conference | Zoom | <https://taichichih.org/event/2021conference/>  
Aug 1-7 | TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Daniel | Zoom | lirpaleff@rcn.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

~ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ~

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

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### Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone / Email \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_ Student \_\_\_

### Teacher Accreditation Information

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

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of "second signature"

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