

# The Vital Force

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*Justin Stone: In His Words*

## A Deeper Look at T'ai Chi Chih

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

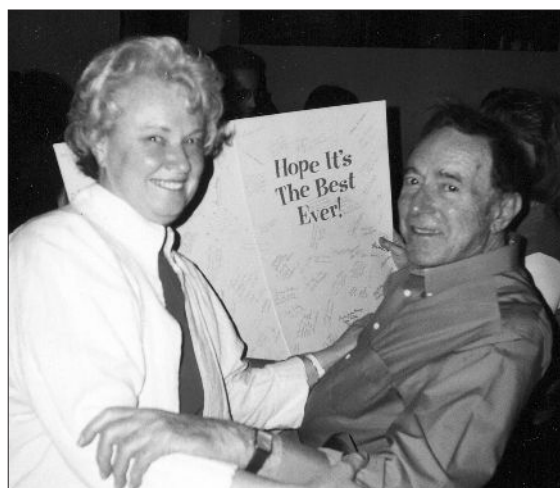
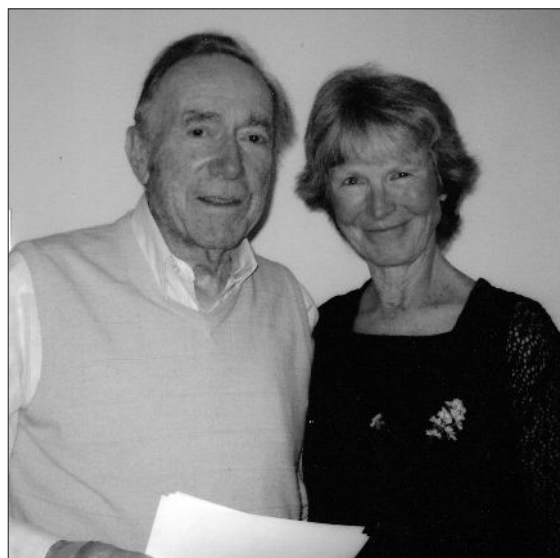
**The truth is we are swirl of shifting moving energies and nothing more.** The Chinese have shown that, in this dualistic universe, these energies are polarized as *yin* and *yang*. The latter is heat and expansion, while *yin* is cold and contraction. We are actually a product of these energies. We are acted upon by them and we, in turn, influence them. We are product of the *Chi* — the Vital Force — and we affect the *Chi* by what we think and feel. I have often spoken and written of the reciprocal nature of mind, mutually conditioning and makers of the fruits of our Karma (meaning action).

Just as Einstein has shown that what appears to be matter is actually energy, so one day it will be shown that what appears to be energy is actually thought. Some physicists are already hinting at this, and the great mathematician/philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, seems right at home with this concept. T'ai Chi Chih teachers know that the blood follows *Chi*, and that the *Chi* follows thought. Semi-ultimately, what you are and will be is the result of what you have thought (ultimately there is no "you"). What you think is conditioned by the state of *Chi*.

Knowing we are a mass of shifting energies, doesn't it seem wise to culture and affect these energies, to bring them into balance? Yet very few do this, preferring to look at "another power" to do all the work, though, in truth, you must do it for yourself. Over vast periods of time, the *Chi* creates "you," but you can create and balance the *Chi*. This puts another point of view on T'ai Chi Chih practice, doesn't it?

Ancient Chinese medicine, which evolved into acupuncture, is geared towards stimulating and balancing these energies. Here it is used for treating "illness" (or "purification" to use the more accurate word). In T'ai Chi Chih we act before the illness. This is from the physical standpoint. From the philosophical, we come to realize that what the Chinese call *Tao* is constantly moving — this is the great T'ai Chi. We can get in step with it in accord with the *Tao*. From the spiritual standpoint — that is, identification with Reality — we stop living in the stagnant, harmful, illusory ways and, effortlessly, convert to accord with Reality. All this does not take place in five minutes, but sincere practitioners of *Chi Kung* disciplines — T'ai Chi Chih being the easiest and most effective, I believe — find their physical, philosophical, and spiritual needs being taken care of. This is real fulfillment, not the attainment of temporary desires. T'ai Chi Chih students should give careful thought to these matters and then give proper weight to their practice. Nothing is more important.

*Above: Justin with teacher Kathy Grassel (pg. 18) and teacher Donna McElhose (pg. 7, 10) while celebrating different birthdays of Justin's.*



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## Celebrating & Remembering Justin

Justin packed a picnic basket for every serious student he encountered. It was stuffed with all the essential teachings and, more importantly, pathways to access Knowing.

I began hearing about Justin and T'ai Chi Chih in the latter 1980s while living in Boston with Lisa Otero, Carmen Brocklehurst's niece. You cannot know that family and not know Justin or TCC. I began flying to Albuquerque shortly thereafter. At first it was once a year, then twice, and then it increased as the years passed. I moved to Albuquerque in September 2005 to spend more time with him, often seeing him five days a week, until he moved on, on March 28, 2012.

Justin would patiently teach the movements and other Zen lessons in his living room, at dinners, while doing errands in his Infinity, at

meditation retreats, while watching Sunday Night Football with the volume turned way up, while talking about the stock market and about Good Karma Publishing (the precursor to justinstonetcc.com). Over time I understood more and more. Sometimes the lessons and koans would burst forth on the return flight to Boston. Sometimes a little smile would develop when Justin said something seemingly innocuous.

About mid-way through my years with him, he asked why I was in New Mexico, and I said, "For your help." "What makes you think you are going to get any help?" Bingo: We must do the work ourselves. Through TCC, the work is easy. We just practice. The Knowing and healing come of their own accord.

I was a reticent TCC student until Carmen said, "Practice daily for 30 days and if you don't like it, I won't mention it again." The benefits began pouring in and piling up. My awareness of Justin's teachings grew; dim light bulbs brightened. When I spent a month in Albuquerque preparing for teacher training, Justin let me come to his house daily to meditate. Deep in the Turiya state, he said, "Let's go...!!" (Jump. Fly.) After that meditation, and from then on, I chanted the Heart Sutra without reading it.

Justin was born on November 20, 1916, and I am immensely grateful that our paths crossed in this lifetime.



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

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

### What Does The Vital Force Do?

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

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# The Many Gifts of Group Practice

By Lisa Otero, Port Hueneme, California  
[taichichih.org/teacher/lisa-otero](http://taichichih.org/teacher/lisa-otero)

**It's surprising that I love** group T'ai Chi Chih practice so much. When I sought my accreditation more than twenty years ago, I never intended to teach. When I did start teaching, a few years after accreditation, it was because I wanted people to practice with. What a gift to realize that I would always be able to form a practice group wherever I went.

After years of teaching several classes a week, COVID-19 forced the suspension of in-person classes for more than a year. My year of practicing on my own was good though; I deepened my personal relationship with the practice. When I resumed teaching in the summer of 2021, I connected with fresh awareness and appreciation of old and new students. I began to experience again the many gifts of group practice.

**With TCC group practice we experience a connection and opportunity for human companionship that is rare.** The fellow-feeling is not based on personality or on mutual affinities and opinions, or shared religious or cultural beliefs. It is not based on job or marital status or whether you have children or not.

What is the basis of this special connection? TCC teachers often marvel at how close they feel to their students. And students seem form a special bond with each other, though in truth we know very little about each other's personal histories, likes and dislikes, or what we do for fun outside of class. We gather, exchange a smile or brief greeting, and settle into a groove, moving together in synchronicity, slowly, softly, silently, rhythmically. When else do we enjoy such lovely leisure with relative strangers?

We have all experienced that the soft, gentle, rhythmic movements of TCC are soothing to the mind, body, and spirit. I am convinced that engaging in tandem with others is soothing and enriching in ways that go beyond the myriad benefits of personal practice. In a world full of conflict, striving, and competition, we experience connection and dare I say love, without expectation or attachment. We give and receive impersonal love: human connection in a manner that is complete and completely fulfilling in and of itself. It leaves no obligation, no longing, no disappointment, no expectation in its wake.

“ I often compare  
 group practice sessions  
 to classical music  
 ensembles

This special connection does not happen automatically. I believe this optimal experience happens only if everyone in the session tries to truly sync up and practice at the same pace. Conversely, when everyone does their own thing and moves at their own pace, it can leave participants feeling jangled, disconnected, anxious, and sad. For this reason, I always stress the need for every participant in group practice to cultivate their inner awareness and a keen awareness of everything going on around them and the people moving with them. This is what it means to be fully grounded while engaging in group practice. **If you practice with others and don't attempt to sync up with them, you are missing an opportunity for a very special experience.**



I often compare group practice sessions to classical music ensembles. The teacher or practice leader is the conductor, and the members of the class are the musicians. Can you imagine a concert with all the musicians doing their own thing, playing the same piece but at different tempos? You'd probably leave with a headache and an agitated disposition. Anyone who has had the pleasure of attending a concert where the musicians play with full awareness of one another and the conductor, knows what I am talking about. Why should TCC practice be any different?

Synchronicity and slow rhythmic flow are a tonic for what ails us in this demanding, fast-paced, hypercompetitive world. Group TCC practice provides an easily achievable method of experiencing peaceful, deep connection regularly.

## Discussion on the Great Circle Meditation

By Judy Kistler-Robinson (Plano, Texas) and Barbara Kristoff (Corte Madera, California)  
[taichichih.org/teacher/judy-kistler-robinson](http://taichichih.org/teacher/judy-kistler-robinson)  
[taichichih.org/teacher/barbara-kristoff](http://taichichih.org/teacher/barbara-kristoff)

Since August 2021, Sandy McAlister has led a monthly Zoom practice for teachers followed by a discussion of relevant topics. After our practice on Saturday, October 9, Sandy read from the foreword in the first edition of the T'ai Chi Chih photo text (1974). This was written by Justin's T'ai Chi Ch'uan teacher, Huang Wen-Shan. He writes about Inner Schools of exercise, such as TCC, and how externally they train the sinews, bones, and skin, and internally train the *Chi*. He goes on to explain a process for training the *Chi*. He does not name it but the direction is much the same as Justin's directions for the Great Circle Meditation found at the back the photo text and at [justinstonetcc.com/joy-thru-movement-photo-text/great-circle-meditation/](http://justinstonetcc.com/joy-thru-movement-photo-text/great-circle-meditation/).

We then silently practiced the meditation for three to four breaths. Since everyone's capacity and breathing rhythms are different, Sandy suggested explaining the process first and then allowing each person to do the meditation in their own timing. Further en-

hancements can be added such as moving the energy with the breath and the eyes, letting them act as levers to move the energy.

Sandy said that the Great Circle Meditation is not TCC and that generally we don't do meditation in conjunction with teaching TCC. It is an enhancement to our practice, working with and training the *Chi*. Other teachers had learned this practice under other names, such as the "Microcosmic Orbit," and emphasized the importance of placing the tip of the tongue at the roof of the mouth behind the teeth to connect the front and back channels of energy movement.

Although the initial description of the practice in the photo text begins and ends the movement of the energy current at the *tan t'ien*, starting the movement at the soles of the feet creates a larger circle of energy movement. Ev Florin-Hanson teaches it starting and ending at the soles of the feet. She noted that this is the way the Great Circle Meditation is described in Justin's *Heightened Awareness* (Chapter 8). Her students said it was grounding and calming to end at the soles of the feet.

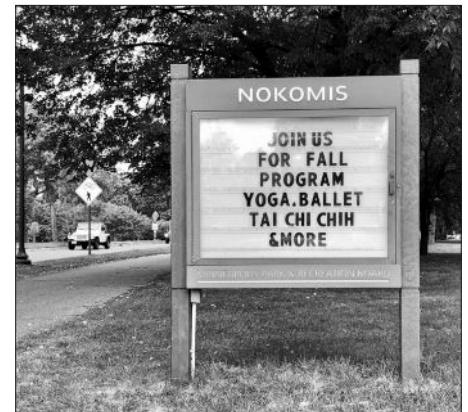
Justin also describes the practice in *Meditation for Healing* (Chapter 5). In all three versions — whether in the *TCC Joy Thru Movement* photo text, *Heightened Awareness*, or *Meditation for Healing* — there are slight variations, and each are worth exploring.

One teacher asked if this meditation could be taught standing if chairs weren't readily available. Sandy pointed out that standing with the eyes closed could be challenging for some to maintain their balance. Justin's descriptions suggest sitting down.

Sandy indicated that Justin said to move the energy "just under the skin when coming down the front" when a teacher reported having difficulty while bringing the energy ball down her face (as it seemed the energy ball bounced on her nose).

**The Great Circle Meditation is a practice to help us explore, feel, and become more aware of the *Chi*.** What are your experiences practicing or teaching this method of training the *Chi*?

*Below: Finally, Sue Bitney's classes in MN feel legit.*



air  
 enough  
 to be me  
 imperfectly  
 softening  
 hurt spots  
 breathe

— LYNN HINKLE ROBERTS  
 WEATHERBY LAKE, MISSOURI

*Author's Note: "In writing poetry, I sometimes get too involved in the structure and lose the essence. With the pyramid format, the structure is already there for me to pour into it the spirit or essence of the poem."*



# The Miracle of Life, Courtesy of TCC

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**Justin often spoke of** some of the “greats” that he had met. Not bragging, but rather with deep respect for the work that they had done, and the incredible knowing that they shared, both in thought and action. One such person was Paul Repts, author, friend, and Zen Master.

Often at the end of my T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku practices I include Paul's name in gratitude for the wonderful gift he gave all of us who are practitioners of both. It is because of Paul's promptings that Justin left the lucrative field of the stock market and actively pursued his spiritual life. When he

was ready, he was rewarded by being gifted with the intuitive knowing of our remarkable discipline, TCC. This is why we say that Justin originated TCC rather than created it.

Some people think that Justin took the movements of T'ai Chi Ch'uan and reworked them into TCC. Nothing could be further from the truth. As we well know, T'ai Chi Ch'uan is a martial art and TCC is not. Their purposes in the world are completely different. T'ai Chi Ch'uan is for outer prowess and TCC is for inner unfoldment. Knowing this is just the beginning of an incredible adventure.

There are so many levels that are worked and reworked as we do our TCC practice that it is hard to say what the most important thing is that we learn from doing it. But most of us know that we are changed from the very first

lesson. Could it be that we learn to breathe, or to slow down, or to realize that our whole life is about change?

Stated in the simplest way, **the miracle of life is happening all the time.** Don't miss any part of it. We do have a bad habit of doing that. We tend to live from our vasanas (habit energies), rather than knowing how important each moment is, as Justin reminded us often. This is our life, and our attention is required. It isn't just good to pay attention, it is required. The more we remember that and do something about it, the more of our life we get to live. We came to do that, to live our life, but somehow, we forget. TCC reminds us very faithfully about this. Life doesn't want us to miss anything. As we do pay attention, we learn to love and share the *Chi*.

## Pyramid Poems

by Clare Bradley

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21

### Rocking Motion

peace  
movement  
back and forth  
rocking motion  
feel the joy  
movement  
peace

### Around the Platter Variation

and  
the globe  
energy  
I capture close  
circles out  
to sail  
free

### Daughter in the Valley

both  
will feel  
energy  
as they circle  
to compete  
the twin  
moves

### Pulling in the Energy

the  
power  
that travels  
from the farthest  
star lights my  
inner  
self

### Bird Flaps its Wing

a  
single  
bird flaps wings  
and floating starts  
with every  
lofting  
breeze

### Bass Drum

there  
is no  
sound from my  
bass drum, it rests  
to let my  
hands float  
free

### Carry the Ball to the Side

in  
shifting  
side to side  
the ball revolves  
to follow  
the chi's  
path

### Pulling Taffy

sweet  
sticky  
confection  
pulling taffy  
with your friends  
makes it  
smooth

### Around the Platter

I  
feel my  
hands around  
the platter's rim  
to serve up  
wondrous  
things

### Daughter on the Mountaintop

two  
siblings  
raised apart  
one high on a  
mountain top  
and one  
low

### Push Pull

fore  
and back  
push and pull  
your hands flowing  
in rhythm  
with the  
tide

### Pulling Taffy, Variation #1,

**Anchor**  
feel  
your foot  
in touch with  
solid ground, your  
earth hand rests  
sky hand  
sweeps

## Anchored In Awareness

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California  
 taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-mcalister  
 Reprinted from November 2008, at Sandy's request

**In our T'ai Chi Chih practice** it's important to balance the softness of the practice with focused attention. If the mind is allowed to wander, the *Chi* may rise, giving way to ungrounded movements. I've experienced this when doing a lot of TCC at workshops or annual conferences, where I have been distracted and not kept my attention fully present and inwardly focused. It results in headaches, lightheadedness, giddiness, and unwise decision-making. When our attention is focused below the waist, it draws the energy downward and promotes grounding.

Softness is not completely limp and without form. A certain amount of effort is used to shape the movements. And if the legs were completely soft, we could not stand. So it is with our mental attention. We do not rigidly fix our attention on one spot, working to have no thoughts or trying to empty our minds. We work with our concentration to keep the mind inwardly focused, attentive but not grasping. The mind is alert, fully present, but it is not a calculating, judging, or questioning mind. It is a feeling, aware, and observant mind.

It takes effort and dedication to delve deep into the heart of TCC. When first learning the practice, we are mostly concerned about how to physically do the moves: Are we soft; do we flow; are we doing the movements correctly; are we completing the weight shift? After learning the outer form, so to speak, our attention is free to move inward. We begin to work with concentration and the mind.

At this point we need to do very little. The body remains soft and undemanding, responsive to the mind. Through awareness, our body is reminded to stay soft and open. Through awareness, we maintain our grounding connection, feeling rooted in the soles of our feet. The body has already been taught these lessons. Our focused attention gives reminders to the body to respond. We do not have to do anything. Just allow.

Training the mind to keep it focused and not let it wander in a hundred directions is part of the practice of TCC. Sometimes we might want to drift off into nothingness, leaving behind our worries, but we always have to come back to here-and-now. Nothing will be changed; we will have only escaped from our problems for a short time. But if we do TCC with full awareness, staying grounded, then the *Chi* has a chance to flow, balance, and begin to bring change into our lives. Justin Stone has often mentioned about the many letters he has received from TCC practitioners stating that TCC has changed their lives.

TCC is a soft and yielding practice. Yielding the mind to stillness rather than chatter. Yielding to inwardly listening. Allowing the body to be moved by the flow of the *Chi* rather than trying to do it right. But the practice is anchored through grounding and awareness. Delve deeper. There is always more to learn. There is always less to do.

## Honor The Stillness

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California  
 taichichih.org/teacher/sandy-mcalister  
 Reprinted from August 2008, at Sandy's request

**T'ai Chi Chih's uniqueness and power** comes from its combination of movement and stillness. Repetitions of a movement followed by stillness set TCC apart from other forms.

The ultimate goal of TCC practice is to balance our life force or *Chi*. The concept of balance is played out in several ways in our practice. One's physical balance may improve through regular practice. Most movements are balanced by performing them on the left and then on the right. A most important concept to embrace is that the moving part of TCC is balanced with stillness. Movement and stillness are intertwined and dependent on one another in TCC; without the stillness TCC is diminished.

When teaching TCC it is important to impress upon the student the value of stillness—resting between movements. As we move, the *Chi* is stimulated and circulates through the body. As it circulates the two aspects of *Chi*, the *yin Chi* and *yang Chi*, separate. In concluding a set of repetitions of a movement, we come into the rest position. While in this stillness the two aspects of *Chi* blend back together.

It is like the process of making bread. Kneading and working the dough is equivalent to circulating the *Chi* in our practice during our movements. With each repetition we knead and work and move the *Chi*. When the dough sits to rise, that is akin to us resting in stillness during our graceful conclusion at the end of each movement. As the dough sits, a chemical interaction takes place in that stillness, and the dough rises. As we come into stillness, the flow of *Chi* settles down, and the *yin Chi* and *yang Chi* reintegrate. Without the rest or stillness between movements our TCC practice would fall flat.

As we are fully present with our movements, so we are fully present with the stillness. "Holding fast and letting go" are words from a meditation Justin Stone teaches, and they can be applied to the stillness in TCC practice. The stillness is solid, spacious, palpable, empty, and freeing. Freeing from thought of past and future. And when the fully present, empty feeling of stillness is grasped, and held fast long enough to feel to the core of one's being, then it is time to let go. Release the stillness and move again.

Only by honoring the stillness, by giving it our full attention, being patient to linger in its fullness, can we plumb the depths of TCC.

## The Ever-Present Moment

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

**We're probably all familiar with** the adage, "It is not the destination, but the journey." I remember the question, "Daddy, are we there yet?" on summertime Sunday car rides as a small kid headed to the New Jersey shore boardwalk.

While I can cite a few T'ai Chi Chih movements as my personal favorites, I've not recently focused on movements that way, but rather on the experience of being *in the process of shifting* the weight (or *that of experiencing* the transitions) that I most appreciate and enjoy. This ever-increasing awareness has become my favorite part of TCC and Seijaku.

The mind tends to focus on beginnings and endings (of weight shifts for instance, when the weight has fully arrived on the right or left leg). But what happens in between? Do we feel the weight travel through the soles of the feet during the middle of the weight shift?

We do well to turn our attention to the moments while one leg is bending and the other is straightening, or the time when one shift has completed but before the next one begins.

Even in grounding (stillness) after each set of movement completes, it's good to empty the mind of what has come before and not anticipate what it is to come. This awareness invites us into the now.

**The now is all that there ever is.** Perhaps that is why it has been called "the precious present." Such a gift. TCC is this gift.

## Dream Poems

By B. Ryan, Student of Donna McElhose

*Author's Note: I have had trouble keeping a journal, but these pyramid poems have been coming to me with my practice. They are written in chronological order and thematic. Although each may stand alone, they are intended together to express a deepening in my spirituality as a result of my T'ai Chi Chih practice. Number 1, 2, and 3 represent my desire to transcend empirical reality; number 4 is a prayer; 5 is a dream I had; 6 is an attempt to recall how it felt. Perhaps number 7 will discuss the second half of the dream, in which hear my friends return, and the sea becomes a pool, and so I leave it once again attached*

<p><b>#1</b> talk to me my heart and listen to what I don't say back to you</p>	<p><b>#3</b> speak for me my soul for your wisdom has no words that my lips know</p>	<p><b>#5</b> I dreamt that everyone left me so I went swimming in the sea</p>
<p><b>#2</b> my silence is all that you must know to understand what I say</p>	<p><b>#4</b> flow through me universe release me from here and take me back home</p>	<p><b>#6</b> in the sea of self there exists no time possession want or mind</p>



## Don't Pull the Wings Off My Butterfly

By Ann Rutherford, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
[taichichih.org/teacher/ann-rutherford](http://taichichih.org/teacher/ann-rutherford)

**Many years ago**, I was visiting my parents in another state, and I noticed a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, whom I did not know, taught a nearby weekly class. Thinking it would be fun to participate in a community practice, I called to ask if I could join. I was cordially invited; and after a pause was told, "I should tell you that my class is a little different: I combine soul travel with TCC."

I was stunned on so many levels: First, when we went through teaching training, **Justin requested that we not combine his *Chi* form with any other practice, and we took that pledge.** Second, by adding anything else, the teacher (no matter how well-intentioned) interrupts the intended *Chi* flow. (Is a teacher willing to take on that responsibility to the student's energetic body?) Third, calling something TCC but adding other movements/activities, violates TCC's copyright. This includes renaming movements.

Years ago, I remember visiting Justin at his home. He was visibly upset when I walked in. He asked, "Have you seen this? They've pulled the wings off the butterfly." He handed me a manual that a very well-intentioned teacher had created to assist teachers preparing their students for TCC accreditation. It consisted of a mechanical checklist: one page per movement, stating how far the step-out should be, how far the hands should be held from the body, etc. It reminded me of a Jiffy-Lube check-up form. The teacher had forgotten that TCC is fundamentally a spiritual, not a mechanical, practice. Needless to say, Justin asked us not to use it when preparing our students for accreditation.

Two of my students graduated in the November 2020 TCC teacher accreditation course. The students they will be teaching will vary drastically, both culturally and religiously. One

will be teaching very conservative, Southern, wealthy folks; the other will be teaching mostly Hispanic, not so well off, students. The students' reasons for joining their classes will be different, but if they learn how to flow with the *Chi* – the Vital Energy of the body – they will stand on solid ground. The students will experience transformation in whatever dimension they need healing.

Nothing needs to be changed or modified. **Just as the oxygen we breathe does not need to be modified from patient to patient**, or called by a different name than oxygen, the name of TCC, Justin's "butterfly," which circulates and balances the Vital Energy in the body, does not need to be renamed or changed to suit different populations. It's just that simple... and powerful.



## Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

By Linda Braga, Castro Valley, California

Mirror, mirror on the wall, is my TCC the best of all?  
 Are my feet in just the right stance? Or is my movement more like a dance?  
 You say my weight shift is incomplete? And ask, is my attention still in my feet?  
 Is my form so soft and flowing, or is my ego really showing?

Mirror, mirror, standing there, please be kind, but be sincere.  
 Help me see what I can't see. Light up the unknowing part of me.  
 Do I move just like a clown? Or do I have my heels down?  
 Is my posture out of line? Now is not the time to whine.

Do I move with style and grace? Are both my hands in just the right place?  
 With wrists relaxed and waist open, my form should be good, at least, I'm hopin'.  
 Am I flowing from the *tan t'ien*? Am I making the same mistakes all over again?  
 Mirror, mirror, please, take over. Perhaps I need an extreme makeover.

Sink down here, straighten there, I'll continue to compare, compare.  
 I'm working so hard. I want improvement, so I can enjoy my Joy Thru Movement.  
 Spiral down to the left, flow to the right. I'm working hard 'til I get it right.  
 Let tension melt, let ego go. Ah, now I'm beginning to feel the flow.

Mirror, mirror, tell me please, am I soft enough in the knees?  
 Hold fast here, let go there. Now I'm beginning to move with flare.



## We Have This Room in Our House

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

**Do you have a room in your house**, where the *Chi* seems to flow differently than elsewhere in your house? We have one. Sometimes the *Chi* is so strong it's palpable... even for me.

This is the room where my wife and I received TCC instruction from our primary teacher, Marie Dotts, when we were teacher candidates. We still feel Marie's presence there. If you've ever been around her, you know what I mean. Things now happen in that room.

Like when Terry and I were leading a small class of friends, and one of them (Mindy) had to sit down because of physical difficulties. I've done seated TCC, so I sat across from her and mirrored her movements. It was pretty standard until we got to Working the Pulley. During the third repetition, I caught a "wave" in my right hand that shot up my arm. **I looked up and Mindy's eyes were as big as saucers.** "Did you feel that, too?" I asked. She felt it enter her left hand (remember, I was mirroring her) and go all the way up into her shoulder. That was the mother of all polarities.

There have been other incidents, too many to mention here. But one just happened which inspired me to write this. Last Friday was our monthly teacher practice. Because of COVID-19, we practiced outside during the summer and via Zoom during the winter. Since I prefer not to Zoom, Terry and I practiced together at the same time as their Zoom practice. Last Friday, teacher Holly Trenary joined us in our *Chi* room. Holly trained as a nurse and came up through the ranks at a local healthcare organization, but she's been back in the trenches administering COVID vaccinations. After a day of this, she knew she wouldn't be able to make it home in time for Zooming, so she stopped by our home to practice. She was tired but pumped: Karma or *Chi* or something. Our practice was unbelievably strong. We had to move slowly because the *Chi* around us was so thick. It circled us and moved between us. Again, there was that heavy, but not really heavy, polarity bouncing back and forth among us. Yes, interesting things happen in that room. **Do you have a room like this?**

## A Room is Just a Room

By Mary Cerullo, Morton, Pennsylvania  
[taichichih.org/teacher/mary-cerullo](http://taichichih.org/teacher/mary-cerullo)

**Memories last forever in our hearts**, consciousness, and the *tan t'ien*. Recently, I substituted for Sr. Christa's seated T'ai Chi Chih Zoom class at the Franciscan Spiritual Center in Aston, Pennsylvania (although that is an oxymoron since no one can substitute for her).

Over 20 years I attended many of Sr. Christa's TCC classes with Sr. Mary Griffin, Eileen Butler, April Leffler, and others. There was a *Prajna* class with Sandy, and there were intensives and accreditations with Daniel, Pam, and Sandy. We gathered in the main room for classes, practices, drum circles, and evening reflections. It was safe and serene, with a welcoming sense of beauty and joy for all fortunate enough to attend. The weekend mini-retreats with Sr. Antonia were the best; lasting friendships were formed.

Offering class via Zoom — within that same, now-empty room — seemed devoid of spirit. Of course, **it was the TCC community made that physical room so special.**

Luis Barragan and Ellsworth Kelly have both designed unique chapels and convents with beautiful stained-glass windows. They are breathtaking to behold. But the Franciscan Spiritual Center's main conference room, although also architecturally unique, was without joy (for me) without the TCC Community.

The Franciscan Spiritual Center in Aston closed on June 2021, but great memories of TCC people and their unique *Chi* will live in my heart and undoubtedly the hearts of others who partook of the sacred space.

*Above: Hibiscus thrive in JJ's TCC room. Below: The empty room where Mary taught on Zoom.*



# Letters From Current TCC Students to Future Students

By Donna McElhose, Wildwood, Illinois  
taichichih.org/teacher/donna-mcelhose

*Editor's Note: Longtime T'ai Chi Chih teacher Donna McElhose asked her current students to write a note to future students of TCC. Below are a few of many, which began with a salutation like Dear Future Student or Dear Newbie. Unless otherwise noted, they were presented anonymously.*

**“Get ready to move your body in new and different ways.** The *Chi* will begin to flow through you and start to awaken your senses. Soon, you'll begin looking at the world in a more open, less judgmental way. **Forgiveness toward others w and most importantly towards yourself — will slowly start.** You'll find out that you are aligned with the Universe, and you have everything you need. Most importunately you will find that '100% of me is enough.' Enjoy.”

**“To be honest I didn't know what to expect.** What I thought was going to happen or change wasn't what happened. I wasn't aware of the health benefits that I would receive. My left hip went from cracking every step to completely stopping. My knees stopped aching as much. Another odd thing happened: when I walk normally, I pay more attention to my feet and how I'm moving.”

“I took this class to help with balance and have gotten so much more out of it. **I have found deeper meaning in things I had taken for granted** and have become more focused in all daily aspects. I'm also a bit more accepting and less conscious or reserved and more open to others' ideas.”

“I hope you will enjoy this class as much as I have. The benefits you will get are so worth it. Practice daily for at least 15 minutes to feel calm yet energized. **Hopefully at the end of the course your life will have improved as mine has.**”

“I joined this class for the credit and out of interest. It was worth every minute of my time. I learned not only about TCC, but also about myself and who I am. **Listen well and you will learn and grow.**” — B. O.

**“I was skeptical at the start.** I don't put much stock in spiritual things that aren't my Christian faith. But I found something different in TCC: it helps me find and incorporate peace in the middle of just about all daily activities. That alone reminds me of my faith. If it doesn't (or you don't allow it to) affect your daily life — the good and bad — then it won't be a true part of you. This brings me to actually practicing TCC daily, if even for 15 minutes at a time. This is what finally caused me to start experiencing the connectedness or grounding of the body's movements to my present. Being able to control how I move through the TCC movements is a relaxing way to stay grounded and calm no matter how stressful the circumstances. Everyone has stress; this is a great way to deal with that.” — D. B.

“One great thing is watching yourself improve during the semester in doing all of the movements. **Different things will change as you continue practicing.** I noticed a calming effect during and after class. My ability to be aware of my thoughts and stay present in the moment also increased. The more consistently you practice, the more benefits you will feel. I encourage you to stick with the practice; the benefits are great.”

**“Like everything, you get out of this what you put into it.** At first it seems overwhelming, but the movements, the peace, the joy will be felt as time passes. You will get there. And not only will you learn the practice of TCC, but you will also make new friends and get comfortable doing these movements with your

classmates. Even though you may think you aren't *doing the movements correctly, it is still important to practice. Enjoy your class.*” — S.

## Impressions from TCC Experiences

OUTLOOK  
life  
before  
t'ai chi chih  
tense and awkward  
now balanced  
peaceful  
smooth

SENSATIONS  
hands  
vibrate  
each set as  
energy flows  
from sky to  
earth and  
back

THOUGHTS  
a  
time of  
calm awaits  
me as movements  
bring focus  
and clear  
mind

AFTERMATH  
feet  
solid  
on each step  
intense sense of  
excitement  
throughout  
me

— GREGG BRADLEY,  
STUDENT OF DONNA MCELHOSE



# Continuity

By Richard Karasik, Saratoga, California  
 taichichih.org/teacher/richard-karasik

**Prompted by Justin's DVD** and 2007 notes to teachers, I looked again at softness and continuity, the essence of T'ai Chi Chih. Please take the following to heart as you read: Don't believe anything I say. If some resonates, incorporate it, play with it. If not, ignore it. (And if you are tempted to stop reading now, jump to the last paragraph.)

When I say continuity what comes to mind is "it just keeps going," but it's hard to put into words. Words are like maps; they are not reality. If we are lucky, they help us understand what reality may be. If not, we wander.

For the time being please accept that continuity involves a recognized rhythm, a steady flow, and that perception of continuity lies in your level of observation and understanding. If I ask, "What is continuity?" you will likely use words to describe how you perceive continuity. Your perception is your reality, and it may only slightly overlap mine. Yet somehow, we communicate.

There are many layers to perception. If you are trying to describe one layer and I am looking at another, it's easy to get confused. The meaning of continuity is like an onion with many layers.

For some, continuity means to smoothly run your finger around a circle without stopping. For me a symphony is continuity, going from beginning to end with four movements, each with notes and rests — and layers of continuity. Each note has a beginning and an end and leads to the next. If all I perceive is a note, then my sense of continuity is broken at the end of the first note.

**If continuous means without stopping, that is how I perceive the flow of *Chi*. It is the never-ending river of existence that supports everything else.**

Our neurons can only fire every so often before they have to rest to recharge. The brain then interprets all of these firings to allow us to perceive our universe as continuous from one moment to the next. In one understanding of reality, the universe is a disconnected set of activities our brain stitches together into a meaningful whole like a pointillist painting. From a distance we see what the artist wanted us to see, complete and whole.

The same can be said about the perception of smoothness. To bring it back to TCC, **if Justin says TCC's essence is continuity and smoothness, ask yourself** what kind of continuity you are focusing on. Is it on the movement of a wrist? Is it on the individual movement from beginning

to end? How does the continuity (or smoothness) of a wrist movement feed into the next layer of the whole movement? Or relate to the continuity of the arm or leg?

Is my focus perceiving the connectedness of one movement to the next like a pointillist Seurat creation? Where the whole TCC image doesn't become clear until all of the dots are perceived as connected? Can I hold multiple levels of perception at the same time?

Am I perceiving the connectedness of all of my movements to my fellow students practicing next to me? And how that is connected to a larger flow of TCC with other practitioners worldwide? And so on.

As you practice, look at one layer, then another, and another. **Then put it all down and let it flow.** Yes, I indulged my love of mind and word play here; TCC is none of this. TCC is perceived in the doing, not in talking about it. And yet the talk is goes on at the same time.



*Editor's Note: Abandon Hope is out-of-print; it also does not appear on JustinStoneTCC.com.*

**INTRODUCTION**

**The mystery of Being** is the matter that concerns us all. Next to the activity of Being, politics is child's play, business is a superficial game and war is the squawking of alley cats. Perhaps the scientist and the artist, each in his own way, is attempting to plumb the mystery. **When a person is in tune with their own Being, they are content and joyous.** When out of tune in the whole physio-mental organism, they are consumed by insatiable desires.

And so, we have religions, priestcraft, Gurus, Saints and Aints (as Paul Reps would say), and others about whom I am writing in this book. Since the book is one-third reminiscence and two-thirds spiritual commentary (and sometimes criticism), perhaps it will not be everybody's cup of tea. I enjoyed writing it, and felt many of the things should be said, but that doesn't mean everybody will enjoy reading it.

Two different sides of Japan are presented in the book, and the author has lived in both

parts. Obviously, he prefers the traditional as opposed to the helter-skelter modern. In writing about the Gurus and the two missionary religions from Japan, the author is dealing with some people he respects and who mean a great deal to him; yet truth, as he sees it, must be spoken.

The chapters *The Growth of Certainty and Poems of Inner Meaning* (poems of spiritual experience) obviously are personal in nature. It is hoped that they are not too intense or personal, and that those with different tastes will realize there are many flavors.

I have included Srimata Gayatri Devi's inspiring Christmas talk in a foreword as I believe it touches on some of the subject matter here and because I want to make it more widely available. Those who have seen Mataji's serene and beautiful face do not have to ask if she knows an inner contentment.

The greatest moments of my life have been spent with religious or spiritual figures. A Saint is by definition joyous. A gloomy Saint or spiritual teacher would be a contradiction. If one is out of tune with Being, they have nothing to pass along to others. **Where there**

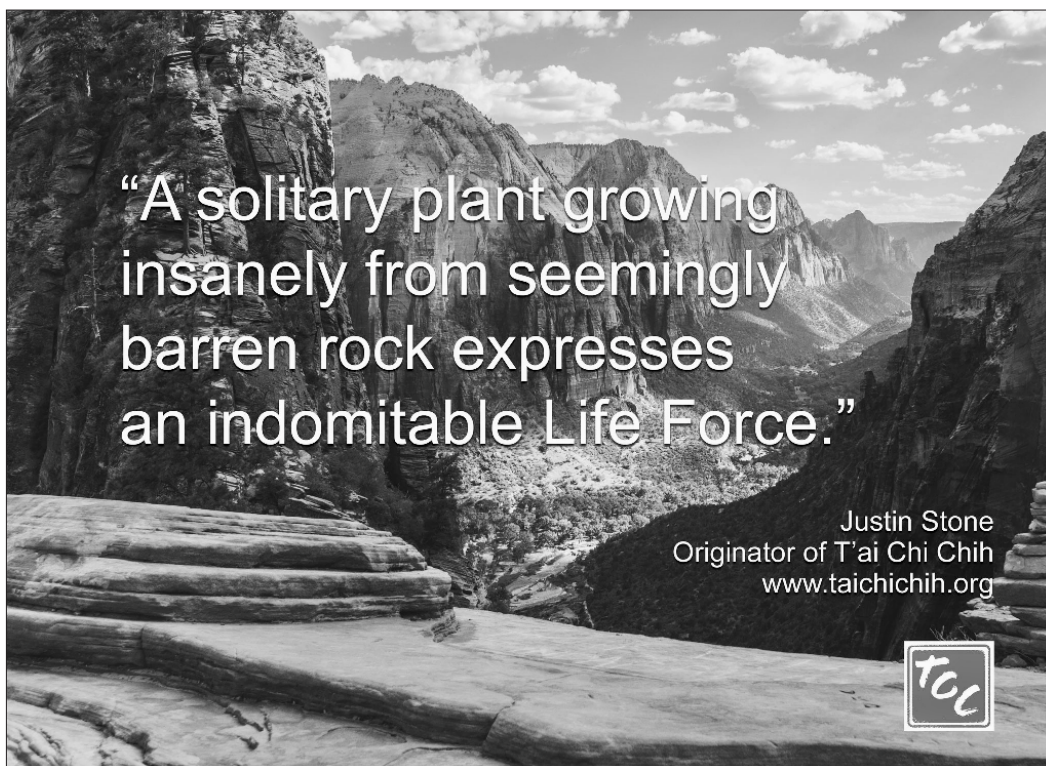
**is the Religious Heart is where I want to be. To me there is no separate religion; there is only Religion with a capital R.** Whether we speak of "Seeing your own True Nature" or of "Realizing God," the meaning is the same.

Metaphysical questions and doubts expressed as to whether God exists or not are just amusements, ways to titillate the mind. They have nothing to do with Truth, and **it is only through Truth — being it, not talking about it — that we can manifest the Joy of Being.** It is true that many churches and some teachers attempt only to pacify and offer spiritual tranquilizers. In the long run this is damaging and does nothing to heighten Spirituality, which I define as "Identification with the Real." So-called "Spiritual Life" can become abject bondage; it is all up to the aspirant. Seeking the True, living the True, takes courage.

I have enjoyed my contact with Maharishi, George Ohsawa, and Rammurti Mishra; the fine people of Sekai Kyusei Kyo; Roshi Sasaki and Ogata-Fujin of the Zen world; and with Reverend Hayashi and family, and my "brother," Reverend Takahashi, of the Tenrikyo Joyous Life Church. There are so many others, not named, in whom I have discerned the seed of Spirituality, and in whose presence I have been happy.

One day I would like to write a book about the great present-day Karma Yogi, Swami Krishnanand, of Baroda, India. Perhaps at a different time I could speak of the Island Hermitage in Ceylon, one of several communities in which the Buddha's original practice is being perpetuated. And, certainly, T'ai Chi Ch'uan Master and great Scholar Professor Wen-Shan Huang is a friend from whom I have learned many spiritual lessons.

I have enjoyed writing this book but have no idea whether the reader will enjoy it. I ask that they see it through eyes attempting to focus on the True. Beyond that, I can only ask for Peace to All Beings.



**ABANDON HOPE**

“Abandon Hope, all ye who enter here.”

This would appear to be the opposite of everything we believe in, the deathblow to our expectation of living a full and fulfilled life. But it isn't. Quite the contrary, it is the way to wake up and come to life, to live the beauty of the present and to know, with gratitude, the Joy of Being. **Only by abandoning hope for the future can we know life in the present.**

This is a desire world. We are here in our present form because of our desires and the habit energies they have created. These habit energies are the cause, and we are the result, and our reactions every minute of our lives are building new causes, which must (sometime) have effect. We are here vainly trying to fulfill our desires, gasping, and struggling as we pursue the impossible task — trying desperately to avoid pain, to experience pleasure and to hang on to and repeat what has been pleasurable.

Most of us are caught up in this pleasure-pain syndrome, and so we make plans, always hoping tomorrow will bring fulfillment and release from endless pressures. We hope against hope that tomorrow or next year things will be better. Yet, “not-seeking” is the Way.

This is our world, and to most people the very possibility that there might be other worlds, other levels of consciousness, does not exist. Yet, Sages tell us the number of worlds and planes of Being are infinite. Still, in all our anxiety, we insist on remaining here, on clinging to our misery, creating attachments that go on life after life.

Does this mean “reincarnation” (a much-misused term)? What is it that comes back, an entity named John Jones or Minora Watanabe? Hardly. But it is inevitable that causes have effects, so there will be a future life. Zen calls this “handing your seat to another,” and it is a grave responsibility. Some personality will feel the consequences of what we

have sown, and in truth that stranger will be us. **The seed of an apple can only produce an apple tree.**


We pile desire upon desire and plan upon plan. Not content to let the inevitable happen, we try to manipulate what cannot be manipulated. We build on hope and daydream, and in the wise words of Alice in Wonderland always have **“jam yesterday, jam tomorrow, but never jam today.”** This today never comes as we plan for a better tomorrow for ourselves, our children and our grandchildren.

Our stock will rise, our ability will suddenly be recognized, we will find the part we've always dreamed of, somebody who appreciates us will finally appear, our boss will begin to sympathize with us, ad infinitum. Does it ever happen? And if we do receive what we had hoped for, does it satisfy us for long and does it change our lives?

**We are not unhappy because of our circumstances; we have these circumstances because we are unhappy** and are determined to prolong that unhappiness. How we cling to the very

things that cause our suffering. They are what is closest to us, and we are afraid that if we let go, we will have nothing. Does the compulsive gambler let go of the habit that causes endless torment? Not for anything — not for family, friends, or reputation. Rather, they feel things will be better tomorrow. They live in the hope of the future, alive in their suffering and afraid of the void, the emptiness, if it were turned off and they had to face themselves. The suffering is a narcotic keeping them from ever looking within. In Zen terms, they face their problem by “whipping the cart and not the horse.” Without changing themselves, they cannot change their circumstances.

We each live in a private world created by our own desires and seen through a veil of self-interest. It is pure illusion, but who will believe it? Who will look *within* to see that world, knowing the outer is merely a reflection? This requires courage and the abandonment of hope. **Only by seeing things as they are, without a shred of hope that they will be different, can we get a glimpse of Reality.** Otherwise, we are always blowing the smoke-dream of illusion, hoping for one result while we experience another.



“Abandon the past  
and the future,  
live fully in the ‘Now.’”

Justin Stone  
Abandon Hope  
[www.justinstonetcc.com](http://www.justinstonetcc.com)



## NJ Students Keep Speaking

By Dorene Krause, Midland Park, New Jersey  
[taichichih.org/teacher/dorene-krause](http://taichichih.org/teacher/dorene-krause)

**Carolyn Pogwist** (*Editor's Note: Carolyn became accredited in November 2020*): There was no rhyme or reason for me to take that first T'ai Chi Chih class. I simply signed up for it and found myself in a crowded (to me) room and flustered my way through the movements the teacher was so sincerely and intensely explaining how to do. I felt overwhelmed and confused. I left the class relieved it was over and decided I could never do "this." I was challenged mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. In other words, I was a mess. But something happened when I got home.



I started researching TCC online and reading Justin Stone's writings. I found videos of teachers and students practicing and tried to follow along as best I could. I did this every day. I couldn't not do it. **I felt almost compelled to continue practicing.** About three months into daily practice, class, and readings I began to feel the *Chi*. Well, it was more like the *Chi* began to rock me. My hands would shake and flip about, and a rushing hot/cold sensation would slide up my spine and flush my face. I was overwhelmed again; but this time it was a wondrous, joyous feeling. I started questioning my teachers (at this point I was taking three classes a week): Why am I feeling this *Chi* so strongly?

What am I doing that is causing this physical manifestation that makes me feel like I'm going to take off and fly? "Ground. Stay in the soles of your feet. Feel the Bubbling Springs."

And so, **I learned the importance of grounding and the concept of the yin and yang reconciling after being separated in the movements.** The "shake, rattle, and roll" in my practice has calmed down quite a bit since I have rooted my feet and allowed the *tan t'ien* take over.

Once you feel, I mean really feel the *tan t'ien* navigating your movements, **you can never go back to going through the motions.** What a lightness, what a freedom to have my body move without my making it move. The pilot — the *tan t'ien* — is in control and my body can glide without effort. On rare occasions when practicing, I am blessed with that magical moment of "T'ai Chi Chih doing T'ai Chi Chih." There is no effort on my part; it's a gift from the Universe I cherish.

So, you see, **I did not choose TCC**, I did not even want to pursue it after my first class. But it obviously chose me. And so, I say I was captured by the *Chi*. I was embraced by the *Chi*. It is my lifeline, my lifesaver, but most of all my joy! Most important are those teachers that nurtured me and continue to do so while I embrace back this gift that Justin Stone gave us.

**Jeanne Mancision:** I have discovered the role of the wrist in our movements. Another freedom. Softness is so much more effective than propulsion. The TCC practice has given me an increased awareness of my body in motion along with meditative and spiritual development. As the onion is peeled, the joy increases.



**Kathy S.:** Passing Clouds was my nemesis during my initial TCC course, but over the years it has evolved into a favorite. Whenever I come to it now, it feels like I am consolidating the energy that has been generated from the previous movements. Often, I then feel like I am floating and very peaceful while settling into the finale of a practice with Six Healing Sounds and Cosmic Consciousness Pose.



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



## Not From, But To & Through

By Larry Tolbert, Greenbrae, California

Monday morning  
T'ai Chi Chih

In the park.

*Rocking Motion* movement  
starts the energy flow in  
our dedicated circle of  
teacher and students  
in the shadow of great trees  
in a small public grove.

We in silence *Around the Platter*  
move as toddlers and preschoolers  
in the playground nearby  
chatter and laugh and cry  
joining in with  
the raucous  
*Bass Drum*  
caws of crows  
in the wind  
on the limbs  
above our heads  
*Passing Clouds*  
float by.

I hold middle distance  
gaze and move to  
*Daughter in the Valley*  
as a young girl comes  
close to chase the  
geese feeding on the grass and cries  
with *Daughter on the Mountain Top*  
delight  
when she gets close enough  
to force, one by one, each  
goose to jump-fly just the  
distance to escape her  
spirited grasp.

I *Push Pull* the *Chi*  
and contemplate the  
words of the founder  
of this T'ai Chi form  
in humbly asserting,  
"I am not the creator,  
rather the originator,  
for it came not from  
but through me."

And so it is for me  
in offerings of the  
poetry I practice  
as I gradually grasp  
*Pulling in the Energy*  
aware and grateful  
in this grove that I'm  
no longer doing  
T'ai Chi Chih,  
rather it  
is doing me.

So, too, in like  
moments, pen to  
paper, heart full  
in *Perpetual Motion*  
I'm gratefully aware,  
surprising words  
pour forth, tumbling  
full formed onto the  
page of my poem  
in *Bird Flaps Its*  
*Wings* symmetry  
and boldness.

And I am as I am  
in this grove as the  
I Am That I Am  
(in the words of  
ancient Hebrew)  
flows unfettered and  
free in downward  
doggerel rhyme  
for all  
to see  
this verse  
that comes  
not from  
but  
merely  
to and  
through  
me.

## T'ai Chi Chih

By Roseann Heinrich,  
Parma, Ohio

I learned this grace, I was in need  
To help my mind and heart to BE  
To calm and know my inner quest  
To live my life and do my best  
It worked, you know, this practice time  
Created peace within my mind  
I loved it so I trained to be  
a teacher to those seeking *Chi*  
For 20 years I taught this class  
To share this peace with those who ask  
But then a new idea began to spark  
It was the *Chi* built in my heart  
It guided and it led me so  
It took me to new heights, you know  
I now sit quiet in the morn  
To write and share a verse or poem  
I thank the *Chi* for guidance great  
It made me who I am this date



# What Resonates With You in Your TCC Practice?

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

**Becky F:** These are my most poignant awareness's in T'ai Chi Chih:

- Working The Pulley: It's like I'm climbing through clouds, and I make it. Softness is the key. I've learned to lighten my hand movements while still shifting my weight.
- Rocking Motion: Happiness feels like a teeter totter. This is the ideal preliminary movement for loosening me up and feeling the energy move with me.
- Passing Clouds: This motion makes me feel like I'm riding on a cloud. My sweep passes beyond the elbow and I'm lithe and light, releasing any sadness from my mind. It creates a clean slate.

**Bonnie O:** I'm feeling the energy move through my fingertips in Around the Platter and Platter Variation and Bass Drum. For Around the Platter, my arm coordination becomes vastly improved. Working The Pulley allows me to exercise muscles I don't ordinarily use as it emphasizes the back-and-forth movements.

**Lois S., palliative care patient:** I'm now able to move muscles in ways I wouldn't usually do. When I'm done with my practice, I feel more stable and flexible.

**Tom O:** Here's what I've discovered with individual TCC movements:

- Light at the Top of the Head: Learning what I need to let go and then releasing it.
- Light at the Temple: Finding a space in my head for forgiving and being able to bring in new positive thoughts.
- Working the Pulley: Imagining swimming through thick air without getting tired. It's reminiscent of waves carrying me in the waters off the Hawaiian and American Samoan beaches. This is my slow-motion relaxation mode.
- Joyous Breath: Practicing breathing to accept new things in life.
- Passing Clouds Letting go of worries, anxieties, and fears, and focusing on the weight shift and hand movements. The rhythm and flow have a spirit of their own.

**A retired senior at Beaverton's Creekside Village:** With TCC I'm able to be more flexible in moving and can bend my knees and ankles more easily. Our practice instills a calmness in me, like my worries have disappeared. There's a lightness in my body as I complete Cosmic Consciousness pose.

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## Being Uncommon

By John Marquez, Antioch, California

**Consider being the uncommon.** As a young boy my father told me that as the first born of the next generation, it was my responsibility to set a good example for those to follow. Those words have stayed with me throughout my lifetime. Although falling short at times, I learned that we cannot control others. All we can do is be an example. As we mature, the importance of self-care becomes more evident. Falling into a sedentary lifestyle is an enemy to well-being. Sadly, this has become commonplace today, and we decline in health rapidly.

T'ai Chi Chih has influenced me to be the uncommon. Health is a sustainable lifestyle balance of mindfulness, real food, regular exercise, and rest. Make educated choices to improve your life, just a little each day. **You need not question TCC practice. Action — practice — is the answer.** TCC can be a step toward a healthier body and mind. The fact that it's a moving meditation is rewarding enough. We read of people in wheelchairs and hospital beds that have achieved benefits from practicing.

Having practiced for nearly three years myself, I have faced skeptics. My answer is to continue practice and be the example. My life has greatly improved. Some around me have taken notice. This loving community is a choice and a blessing that inspires us to grow, be positive and stay grounded. Relationships grow as we share openly our innermost experiences, struggles and breakthroughs, with teachers and students. Dare to be uncommon, the example. Act and discover the benefits of this TCC journey. Enjoy! It's never too late to start.

seek	sit	choose	stress	sun
awkward	alone	living	confirms	rising
insecure	inclusive	purposeful	benefits	giving life
growing within	meditation	finding your you	experience	exuberance
revealing	adventure	manifests	the calming	relinquish
selfless	within	goodness	effects	cycling
soul	glow	love	ease	moon



## TCC as a Conduit for Doing Good to Self & Others

By Hannah Hedrick, Mountain View, Hawaii  
[taichichih.org/teacher/hannah-hedrick](http://taichichih.org/teacher/hannah-hedrick)

**I have been incredibly blessed** by the spiritual practices that have come into my life, especially T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku nearly 40 years ago. I was particularly attracted by the idea of TCC as a service to mankind, and I practice and teach it with this intention.

But my professional and personal lives have included encounters with people who perceive that my intentions and actions are not beneficial to them. As a result, they can actually intend to do me harm!

For more than two decades, I have cleared the boundaries on both sides of my property of invasive species. When a new couple moved in and objected, I let the boundary run wild until Himalayan raspberries and other destructive invasives had encroached far onto my property.

I finally spent many hours removing the raspberries, only to be taken to court twice. The judge found in my favor both times, but during the process, they came onto my property several times, shouted at the woman and child who lived upstairs, interrupted my TCC class, posted accusatory signs throughout the neighborhood, and got our neighbor arrested.

When the woman came onto my property and interrupted our TCC class, we continued our practice and she eventually stopped shouting and left. But the awareness of the intention to do harm to me lingered, in spite of efforts to manifest compassion and loving kindness specifically directed toward my neighbor.

**In September 2021, I got a strong “action” feeling in my TCC practice. I felt that I was receiving and manifesting beneficence, that is, actually doing good for others by receiving only good for myself.**

Some of my students who have been dealing with self-sabotage or self-destructive impulses have really resonated to the reality that they have the wisdom, clarity, and strength to manifest beneficence in their practice and hence in their everyday life.

I now try to hold that intention in all that I do. When I become even slightly aware of negative intentions, I immediately focus on receiving and manifesting only beneficence.

*At right: Hannah and Charles practicing in Mountain View, HI.*



## TCC Pervades Teachers' Lives, Affects Others

By Hannah Hedrick, Mountain View, Hawaii  
[taichichih.org/teacher/hannah-hedrick](http://taichichih.org/teacher/hannah-hedrick)

**For several years, I have been trying** to verbalize how pervasive T'ai Chi Chih is in our teachers' lives. More important to me than daily practice or any concept of “discipline” is how our teachers, like Paula Weiner, share with and inspire non-TCC practitioners, even when they are not teaching and are no longer really capable of doing the movements well.

For decades Paula and I have done TCC whenever we have been together. She, Daryl Isenberg, and others came to Weiss Memorial Hospital when I had my second hip replacement, and we did a full practice five days after my surgery.

When Paula's health deteriorated and she could no longer do regular classes, she would invite some of her students to her home for a shared practice. I taught several sessions at Wesley Place, where she has lived for several years, and was warmly received by staff and residents.

For the past three years, since Paula has had health issues, a group of amazing friends have supported her in numerous ways, from gifts to visits. When we were able to gather for lunch in the nursing home, they always joined us for about 20 minutes of TCC.

Since COVID-19, I have been amazed by them encouraging Paula to do TCC, even mentally, to deal with various physical and emotional challenges, including her recent hospitalization. Of course, I encourage Paula to do TCC lying on her back when using supplemental oxygen, describing the benefits of just moving one's arms in those familiar energy circles.

Paula's chief cheerleader, Howie Mogil, encourages the members of Paula's healing team to remind Paula of the gifts and treasures (thanks, Sandy McAlister) that TCC has given her and empowered her to share with others. Howie describes the following July 28th exchange:

“Today Paula we got Paula speaking about TCC and who she knew from it. Paula then showed the nurse how she does some in her bed. I think she gets more than physical improvement from it. She seems to be in touch spiritually with Hannah and all her prior TCC friends when she does it.”

## How Do TCC Teachers Impact the Vibration of Indra's Net?

Compiled by Ann Rutherford, Albuquerque, New Mexico  
<https://taichichih.org/teacher/ann-rutherford>

*Ann's Note: 'ai Chi Chih teachers affect so many lives. I like Molly's remark on Justin's Folsom Prison talk and how we are all worthy of respect, no matter our shadow side. Michael left the TCC community after he deemed himself "unworthy."*

**In Mahayana Buddhism, Reality is seen as a vast web** wherein each jewel on the net reflects all the others; a change in one jewel elicits a change, however slight, in every other jewel.

Recently, Michael O'Connor, a well-loved Albuquerque TCC teacher, died. No one had heard from him for a long time, but we knew he struggled with addiction. He was a loving jewel in our ABQ TCC community.

Bruce Childs recalls: "I shared the thrill of learning TCC with Michael. Michael and I had the special connection of addiction recovery, and we shared the love of calming *Chi*. We discovered the healing qualities of the practice, occasionally combining 12-step lessons with our learning experiences with TCC. I recall our early retreats in Albuquerque and at the Pecos Monastery. Michael was always present, soft in his mannerisms, in stark contrast to the South Boston tough kid image that he sometimes joked about."

Sr. Antonia contemplates: "How blessed I am to have met Michael. Each of you reading this have been a gift to me and to one another. Thank you for your life."

Molly Grady remembers: "Michael was a welcome, gentle presence. Eventually we would talk about his demons and the impact they had on his professional and personal life. All of us were concerned when we lost contact with him. I heard he was struggling, ashamed to come back to our community. This makes me so sad. The most powerful message for me from Justin was in his talk to inmates at Folsom Prison: *Chi* is there for everyone; it doesn't judge. After being in the community for several years, I met an experienced teacher, and I told her I wasn't coming regularly to practices anymore because I wasn't comfortable with myself. She said that's when it can be most helpful. Even so, we all know how hard

that can be."

Beth Cameron reflects: "I remember Michael's willingness to get down on the floor after a practice to show me stretches to help with my limited movement. (It was the physical therapist side of him.) I consider that an act of true caring."

Kathy Grassel shares: "Michael became a TCC teacher in the course of his drug and alcohol recovery and during that time helped many others stay strong in their recoveries. He was sober for quite some years until he relapsed. He would lead our walks during the Pecos Monastery retreats and we would talk and talk with every step. He was sincere, kind, and inspirational."

Ann Rutherford sums up: "Michael's kind, gentle manner and his understanding, as a physical therapist, of alignment, made him a natural for a future as a TCC teacher. Michael contributed this to the Seijaku publication: 'I am finding myself doing Seijaku more softly now. At first, I imagined the resistance as rather hard, thinking I could break through quicker. **My intuition tells me that my anger has diminished from a couple of years ago and that has allowed me to be gentler with myself, including with my Seijaku practice. This also tells me that whatever is going on in my life can be a part of my practice, part of a personal evolution and a part of the solution to many of life's problems, i.e. suffering.**'"



# Seijaku

via Zoom with Pam Towne; August 28-30

Compiled by Dixie Adeniran, Arroyo Grande, California

**Dixie Adeniran** ([taichichih.org/teacher/dixie-adeniran](http://taichichih.org/teacher/dixie-adeniran)): The Seijaku Accreditation was deeply appreciated. With Pam's expert leadership it was 'serenity in the midst of activity.' The *Chi* manifested itself so strongly in our *Chi* circle though we were far apart in miles.

It was soul-satisfying to experience the *Chi* opening to a deeper level. Moving from doing Seijaku to being in Seijaku was joyful. It brought previously unknown softness and grounding. Experiencing the greatly stepped-up flow of *Chi* has brought more energy to (formerly) low energy me. I loved when Lesley called this **supercharging the *Chi***. Pam told us to watch doors open to teach Seijaku. The day after accreditation, I received an email requesting a Seijaku teacher. My body tingled. Thank you, Justin, Pam, and my supportive class colleagues.

**Christina Tillotson** ([taichichih.org/teacher/christina-tillotson](http://taichichih.org/teacher/christina-tillotson)): This was a small, powerful group and quite meaningful. I was accredited to teach Seijaku in 1996, and was very enthusiastic, taught as many classes as I could, and then life got in the way. I moved back home to California, became a widow, created a program of online spiritual growth classes, became a Minister for Centers for Spiritual Living, and became the Distance Education Dean for the Holmes Institute, an accredited master's degree program in Consciousness Studies (a position that was created for me because of my expertise in online education). Through it all, I practiced T'ai Chi Chih daily, which kept me centered. For several years, I also practiced Seijaku regularly.

As life continued to get busy, I was only able to teach one TCC class a week and had no students ready for Seijaku. Now that I have retired from being the Dean, I am grateful to reconnect with the profound practice of Seijaku. I have been practicing regularly since last weekend and will continue to make it a part of my regular practice. We were encouraged to create our own description of Seijaku, and I have shared mine with my TCC students and will add it to my website. I am grateful to Pam for making it possible to reconnect with this profound practice and be in community with such conscious people.

**Lesley Nell** ([taichichih.org/teacher/lesley-nell](http://taichichih.org/teacher/lesley-nell)): When I decided to learn Seijaku, I began by watching Justin's DVD and trying the practice. However, despite being a kinesthetic learner, I just couldn't feel and make sense of pushing through the resistance.

In the first session of Pam's class, following her step-by-step instruction, during the Seijaku part of Bird Flaps Its Wings, **I was suddenly aware of the backs of my hands pushing through a wall of energy**. I was thrilled, hooked, and keen to experience more. From then on, I incorporated Seijaku into my daily practice, and in a separate session, refined the trickier movements and referred to my notes and the DVD. As I became more confident and my practice improved, I really did feel the increase in the power of the *Chi*, as the fingers on my left hand fluttered uncontrollably. It travelled down my body to the soles of my feet when I grounded the energy.



At the teacher conference, I was inspired further by Ann Rutherford's presentation, so the next step was teacher accreditation. Our small group had the chance to delve deeper with our own experiences and to share our learnings. We finished each session with a full practice to enjoy the flow. We helped each other grow in confidence by imparting our knowledge as if we were teaching our future students. It was also a joy to meet new members of my growing TCC family.

*At left: An amazing and thoroughly modern set up with Daniel Pienciak, April Leffler, and Lisa Stroyan: multi-room, multi-computer, texting on phones, in a breakout room, in meetings on other computers, listening to Daniel over Zoom.*

# Teacher Training

via Zoom with Daniel Pienciak;  
July 30 - August 8

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

*Host's Note: There seemed to be a greater flow in the implementation of this T'ai Chi Chih Zoom course than previous ones. Perhaps more people are deepening their Zoom experiences. In preparing for the graduation ceremony, new teachers were asked to share a personal Mission Statement with regard to teaching after Dan had displayed their certificate on the screen. Listen to and feel their teh.*

### Personal Mission Statements from New Teachers

**Barbara McNamy:** As an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher I will continue developing my own regular practice, and I will reach out to the many TCC resources available, experienced teacher classes, and mentoring opportunities to hone my abilities. My deepest passion is to share my love of this simple yet profound practice — helping others find this deepening awareness of inner joy, serene calm, and gratitude. Justin's words in his Folsom Prison video deeply affected me in that I want to re-visit going to our local women's prison to offer classes. The benefit to society is far reaching.

**Cindy Nelson:** My mission as a teacher is to promote the personal practice of T'ai Chi Chih following the principles set out by Justin Stone. I will support students by providing engaging and fun classes and recognizing each person's unique life journey.

**Debbie Keatley:** My mission is to work very hard to find my words so that I may move forward in teaching T'ai Chi Chih more fluently. I look forward to meeting and working with new people so that I may share with them the many benefits TCC has to offer – be it health, self-awareness, or enlightenment – and to live in harmony with everyone, including themselves.

**Eileen Skinner:** My mission in sharing T'ai Chi Chih is to bring awareness to this valuable wellness practice. People will become aware that we have the ability to help ourselves to manage stress and relax as well as balance and circulate our energy.

**Kay Rydeen:** My mission is to continue to nurture the practice of T'ai Chi Chih within myself, with students, and with the TCC community, and to honor the integrity of TCC and preserve it.

**Mary Kay Chavez:** My mission is to bring the joy of moving meditation, known as T'ai Chi Chih, to my community with openness to the possibility of healing in mind, body, and spirit.

**Nel Beaman:** My mission is to spread the practice of T'ai Chi Chih in the Bay Area of California, and especially to seniors. I hope our seniors will learn to balance the *Chi* (Vital Force) and as a result, enjoy good health. This practice improves flexibility and balance thus allowing our seniors to live independently and gracefully age in place. I would like to introduce TCC to musicians, especially violinists, and allow them to discover the enhanced creativity derived from the balanced *Chi*. The softness of the practice should allow musicians to relax while playing their instrument. For violinists, soft hands translate to allowing the bow to glide from one string to another without effort, playing that beautiful music that soothes the soul.

**nialle rose:** My mission is to share T'ai Chi Chih and its benefits with those who would not otherwise encounter it.

**Patty Stupca:** My mission is to teach T'ai Chi Chih and share how to find and experience balance in one's energy and life.

**Veronica Joseph:** As a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, my mission is to keep evolving and learning so that I may share TCC the best I can. And to empower others by teaching them how to maximize the benefits of TCC, so they can optimize their wellbeing and live their best lives.

**Victor Dougherty:** As a T'ai Chi Chih teacher, it is my mission to maintain involvement in the TCC community, stay fresh through evolving educational opportunities, and to share the practice with anyone interested.

*Top row: Victor Dougherty, Kay Rydeen, Mary Kay Chavez, Cindy Nelson; Middle row: Nel Beaman, Barbara McNamy, Daniel Pienciak, Eileen Skinner; Bottom row: Debbie Keatley, nialle rose, Veronica Joseph, Patty Stupca.*



**Accreditation Week Experiences (July 30 - August 8)**

**Barbara McAnamy, Wilmington, Delaware**

The two months before T'ai Chi Chih accreditation were really intense: I did everything I could to work with teachers to get details for all the movements. Going into accreditation, I still felt a bit unsure of my front weight shift. Daniel caught my uncertainty and asked me to work with Marie Dotts, who is known to have a keen eye for spotting issues. During my second session with her, she asked me to practice very slowly, meditatively walking to notice the full front weight shift.

Now, alone in my kitchen I began practicing the new slow walk awareness. I suddenly had a new understanding of the shift and of the *tan t'ien*. As I began practicing Bass Drum using this new knowing, I felt an incredible overall sensation throughout my body, as if orgasmic. The sensation continued in each movement. The same thing happened in my practice the following day. Much to my delight, I enjoyed the Zoom training with a whole new awareness and inner joy. Once I had this experience, everything in the accreditation had deeper and more profound meaning. Much gratitude to Miracle Worker Marie for helping my TCC movements soften and my marriage bed to experience more Joy Thru Movement.

**Eileen Skinner, Allentown, New Jersey**

It was very rewarding to complete the TCC accreditation program. The activities were challenging but I felt supported. I gained a new awareness for the subtleties of the TCC movements. It was interesting to spend time with readings, videos, and hearing interactions that Daniel had with Justin Stone. I felt like I got to know the originator of TCC. Much gratitude goes to Daniel Pienciak, April Leffler, and

the auditing teachers. They provided strong leadership while being very caring. The morning after completing the program, I observed geese paralleling the week of accreditation: gathering, refining, finding harmony. Nature is a wonderful storyteller.

**Kay Rydeen, Rochester, Minnesota**

Besides expanding my awareness to nuances and subtleties during movement, accreditation week further expanded my appreciation of the exceptional TCC community.

**Patty Stupca, Rochester, Minnesota**

Breathe in and breathe out joy. Build joy through movement. Feel joy in life. I found joy in the week of accreditation. I became aware of the joy that was always there waiting for me.

**Let Go & Let Be**

Let go of the ego mind.  
Surrender to the *tan t'ien*, the Teacher.  
Feeling the soles of the feet and the *tan t'ien*.  
Allowing them to guide me how to move as one,  
with softness and continuity.  
Flowing with the Cosmic Rhythm... Hahhhh...  
The Universal Life Force — Source of all Energy  
Is filling my body, mind, and spirit  
with love, serenity, and harmony.  
Our True Divine nature — Unlimited Potential.  
Transcending from an ugly duckling  
to a Beautiful Peacock. My "Eureka" moment.

— **Veronica A. Joseph, Albuquerque, New Mexico**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

**Pulling Taffy, Variation #2, Wrist Circles**

wrists  
twirling  
making three  
circles as I  
pull taffy  
back to  
rest

**Working the Pulley**

a  
pulley  
has great force  
for energy  
flowing free  
within  
me

**Joyous Breath**

air  
within  
energize  
merge sky and earth  
in deep full  
joyous  
breath

**Six Healing Sounds**

hearts  
caring  
reaching out  
sounds of healing  
and chi flows  
with our  
love

**Pulling Taffy, Variation #3, Perpetual Motion**

step  
and sweep  
as I find  
perpetual  
energy  
powers  
me

**Light at the Top of the Head / Light at the Temple**

reach  
for light  
circle your  
energy your  
inner chi  
temple  
high

**Passing Clouds**

mist  
glides by  
showing life  
in changing form  
images  
formed in  
cloud

**Cosmic Consciousness**

gain  
balance  
to restore  
the ebb and flow  
of chi that  
soars free  
be

# Intensive Training: The Teh Is There

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

## Remembering 2003

- The two-signature system for teacher candidates to attend accreditation was put in place.
- August: the first East Coast intensive was held in Ringwood, New Jersey, and led by Pam Towne. I was a student at that intensive.
- October: Sandy McAlister leads her first teacher accreditation course as Teacher Trainer. I was a teacher candidate in that class.

## Fast Forward to 2021

- Attending an intensive becomes a mandatory prerequisite to attend a teacher accreditation course. Thank you for this decision.

Being a Type A analytical over-achiever, the intensive (or IN-TEHnsive) was quite intense. But I knew I had *teh*, the inner sincerity Justin wrote about. I remember my journey and often reflect on the experience: my strong desire for perfection, my trepidation and self-doubt. Over that weekend, my understanding of energy and the T'ai Chi Chih principles continued to deepen, and my movements softened. I gained more insight into the practice of TCC and into myself, too. And I learned there is much more to learn.

Most important though? How well the intensive prepared me for accreditation. I am still grateful for the opportunity to work with a teacher trainer and the auditing teachers before my accreditation and to be surrounded by the energy and caring of the TCC community. And at my own accreditation, I was still working hard (and was much softer) as my journey continued.

I have attended many intensives (as a teacher) and accreditation courses (as an auditor) since 2003. Each training I attend heightens my awareness and improves my personal practice. **What I learn helps me become a better teacher.** It reminds me of my own journey, the student I once was and the teacher I have become. I have felt the anguish of some candidates who arrive unaware of being unprepared for the accreditation and then realize:

“What am I doing here?” I have witnessed anxiety and stress, tears and emotional falling apart. Most often these feelings erupt for students who had not attended a prior intensive training. They felt lost. Accreditation should be a joyful, positive experience, not one filled with angst and doubt.






Over the years, 11 of my students have become teachers. My belief, and theirs, is how necessary the intensive training was (and is). We have discussed their experiences at length. None imagined that they would have been prepared enough without having had the intensive training experience. If the *teh* is there, a student will want to learn about refinement, softness, grounding, and gaining a deeper understanding of the TCC principles – before accreditation.

When a student shares with me a desire to become a teacher, they ask: “What do I need to do?” My response has always been the same: “We will work together one-on-one, and you will attend an intensive, the best preparation for accreditation.” I feel so strongly about the benefits of attending an intensive that, although it was not mandated until this year (finally), I would not sign for any student who had not attended an intensive. I understand the cost involved, but if the *teh* is there and it is important enough, there is always a way. The scholarship program is there to assist those in need. The end result is a much more positive accreditation experience where teachers are better prepared to teach and share the gift of TCC.

## No Longer a Skeptic

By Glenn and Mary Laudenslager, Surprise, Arizona

My wife Mary and I took our first lessons in TCC in Spring 2000. Mary had seen TCC demonstrated PBS and wanted us to try it. I was skeptical. We took lessons at a local grade school with two accredited teachers, Lou and Joyce DeGidio. Lou demonstrated the movements while Joyce walked around observing and offering helpful movement suggestions. The class lasted eight weeks and Mary and I have practiced daily for the last twenty-one years except for the occasional minor illness. My skepticism is long gone.

 <p><b>Hope Spangler</b></p> <p>Teaching Practitioner and TCC Auditor</p> <p>Teaching Practitioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original Classes</li> <li>• Regional Classes</li> <li>• Teacher Practitioner</li> <li>• Statewide TCC</li> <li>• Career and Study Coordinator</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Stephen Thompson</b></p> <p>Teaching Practitioner, Auditor, and TCC Auditor</p> <p>Teaching Practitioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original Classes</li> <li>• Regional Classes</li> <li>• Statewide TCC</li> <li>• Overseas Class by Google+</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Dorene Krause</b></p> <p>Teaching Practitioner, Auditor, and TCC Auditor</p> <p>Teaching Practitioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original Classes</li> <li>• Regional Classes</li> <li>• Statewide TCC</li> <li>• Overseas Class by Google+</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Linda Minor</b></p> <p>Teaching Practitioner, Auditor, and TCC Auditor</p> <p>Teaching Practitioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original Classes</li> <li>• Regional Classes</li> <li>• Statewide TCC</li> <li>• Overseas Class by Google+</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Eileen Sabatelli</b></p> <p>Teaching Practitioner, Auditor, and TCC Auditor</p> <p>Teaching Practitioner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Original Classes</li> <li>• Regional Classes</li> <li>• Statewide TCC</li> <li>• Overseas Class by Google+</li> </ul>
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## A very WooWoo Christmas

By Diana Hudson, St. George, Utah

*NOTE: Our local T'ai Chi Chih and book study community, the WooWoos, practice outside at Veteran's Park, and geese honk overhead multiple times during practice.*

T'was the week before Christmas 2020, and out at Vet's Park  
 The WooWoos had gathered, though the weather was stark.  
 They all were so cozy, their hats bright and silly  
 The question that day was "Will Santa come. Will he?"  
 When up in the passing clouds came loud goosey chatter.  
 The WooWoos sprang up and yelled "What the heck is the matter?"  
 Then what to their wondering eyes should appear,  
 But a sleigh flying low, coming down very near  
 No reindeer pulled Santa aloft on that day,  
 Wild geese flapped their wings and kept honking away  
 Santa whistled, and shouted to his feathery team,  
 Took one joyous breath and then let out a scream  
 Now Glider!, Now Gloria!, Now Greg! Now Bernice!  
 Get down to the park, you wild bunch of geese.  
 So down to the lawn came the jolly old boy  
 With a push and pull— and for each WooWoo a toy  
 But the WooWoos cried Stop! Santa get out of here.  
 You've been traveling far and the COVID we fear.  
 It's okay, Santa said, I just passed the test,  
 The one up the nose, 'cause I heard it's the best.  
 And today before I let these wild geese fly  
 I checked on my temperature – it wasn't too high  
 See I've got my mask on and I'm six feet away  
 Please let me come in, oh please let me stay.  
 The WooWoos all huddled and made a quick choice  
 Yes, please Santa stay! They said in one voice.  
 And wow! Did they party with their special guest.

They pulled taffy (three times), worked the pulley, beat the drum  
 Carried the ball and you know the rest.  
 They pulled in the energy and shouted, "What a fest!"  
 Let's all (socially distanced) gather around the platter of treats  
 And enjoy all our favorite WooWoo party eats.  
 Santa gave out the presents for each WooWoo there,  
 And then sadly said, I must get back in the air.  
 Thank you, my friends, for a wonderful time,  
 You TCC WooWoos are special and kind.  
 I plan to return Christmas 2021  
 And we will have even more holiday fun.  
 (With no masks: What a blast!)  
 And then giving a nod and a wave of his hand  
 He sprang to his sleigh, to his geese gave command.  
 And away they all flew with a honk for goodbye  
 And the WooWoos watched Santa lift up to the sky  
 But they heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight.  
 I promise next year I'll get taffies just right!  
*Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!*



## The Lighter Side

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

1. Ruth, a former nurse who now has Parkinson's, wore an elastic key ring around her wrist during class. I asked, "You want to take your bracelet off, so you don't shake, rattle, and roll?" She smiled and said, "Sure, but I'll still shake whether I wear it or not."
2. When asked about my fingers trembling during a T'ai Chi Chih move, I said, "No, I didn't just have a drink before class. Would anyone like to take a guess why my fingers tremble?" One senior promptly responded, "Nerves."
3. Sometimes I'll teach with toys to clarify the movements. Once, while teaching Pulling Taffy, I pulled out silly putty. One student was convinced that I brought my wadded-up chewing gum.
4. One of my favorite pieces of music to play during practice is Anugama's "Shamanic Dream." It's popular with most of my students but not all. One woman said, "What is that music? It sounds like a funeral march." (Lesson: you can't please everyone.)

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## Community Calendar

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

Nov 6-13 | TCC Teacher Training w/ Pam | Zoom | lirpaleff@rcn.com  
Nov 11-14 | Seijaku Meditation Retreat w/ Daniel | Zoom | wakeupdaniel@aol.com

### 2022

Mar 31-Apr 3 | TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Sandy | Oceanside, CA | pamtowne@gmail.com  
Apr 7-10 | TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Sandy | Oceanside, CA | pamtowne@gmail.com  
Apr 22-24 | TCC & Seijaku Retreat w/ with Daniel | Zoom | wakeupdaniel@aol.com  
May 5-8 | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Prescott, AZ | pamtowne@gmail.com

### ~ MORE ZOOM WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

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

Dec 3-5 | Cultivating Cosmic Consciousness Workshop | April Leffler | Zoom | lirpaleff@rcn.com

### All Times Eastern

Monday @ 11am | TCC for Veterans (ongoing) | Jessica Lewis | jhtl0521@gmail.com  
Monday @ 11:30am | TCC (ongoing) | Lisa Stroyan | lstroyan@gmail.com  
Monday @ 5pm | TCC for Everyone (ongoing) | Anita Vestal | Register @ bit.ly/abrahamsfitness  
Tuesday (alternating) @ 11am | Seijaku with meditation | Daniel Pienciak | wakeupdaniel@aol.com  
Tuesday (alternating) @ 11am | TCC | Daniel Pienciak | wakeupdaniel@aol.com  
Tuesday @ 11:30am | Guided Seijaku Practice (ongoing) | Carmen Brocklehurst | 505-450-8944  
Wednesday @ 8:30 am | Seijaku (ongoing) | Pam Towne | pamtowne@gmail.com  
Wednesday @ 10 am | TCC for Everyone (ongoing) | Anita Vestal | Register @ bit.ly/abrahamsfitness  
Wednesday @ 3:15pm | TCC for Veterans (ongoing) | Jessica Lewis | jhtl0521@gmail.com  
Wednesday @ 7:30pm | Guided TCC Practice (ongoing) | Carmen Brocklehurst | 505-450-8944  
Friday @ 7:30 am | TCC Intermediate (ongoing) | Pam Towne | pamtowne@gmail.com

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
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