

The Vital Force

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for teachers & students

February 2012

Justin Gives Thanks

20th Century Psalms BY JUSTIN STONE

At the moment before dawn, all things seem possible.

The distant purple hills turn silent at night-fall. The migrant fowl pass silently over the river, without reflection, after dark.

One-tenth wisdom and nine-tenths wishful thinking is the usual mix. When I asked a Chinese Sage what the Wise One wants, he replied: "He wants spring to follow winter."

Can you reach Realization by effort? Can the tree or flower blossom early by trying hard? All in due season. But we cannot reach a destination by traveling in the wrong direction.

~ ~ ~

Of what use in everyday life is "Ultimate Truth"? Seen properly, what is not true?

There are three levels of truth: the everyday variety, conditioned truth and "ultimate truth." Religious teachers attempt to convey the second (truth from man's viewpoint). Most never dream of the third.

There is no Self in the ordinary sense, but that is not what people want to hear. They do not want Salvation; they want ease and comfort. They do not want Truth but an affirmation of their status. Delusion is stimulating and satisfying; so is cocaine. The teacher cannot give away pure gold but only sell the imitation stuff.



~ ~ ~

If God made us as we are and ordained our future, how can we be held accountable for our actions? Buddhism says that we create ourselves in every moment.

Ninety-nine percent of people live in a Pleasure-Pain Continuum, judging each event as "painful" or "pleasant" from a personal point of view. The Wise just observe without labeling.

You cannot deny your individual nature. If you are born to do a certain thing, you will do it no matter how much you decide against it. It is not up to you to decide its worth or importance in the overall scheme of things.

~ ~ ~

Why do philosophers try to find "the meaning of life" or its origin? Why must there be a "beginning" and an "ending"? That only occurs in human consciousness, where time is linear – and then it's an invention. The meaning of Life is that something is manifesting, and its "origin" is Joy.

If you want something badly, be worthy of it.

To be too hard on yourself is to deny the Divinity within.

Reprinted with permission from Good Karma Publishing. *20th Century Psalms* is currently out-of-print.

May The Vital Force Be With You

ON THE VALUE OF THE VITAL FORCE TO READERS

From T'ai Chi Chih practitioner and *Vital Force* reader Linda Prosche: "My heart is full and I am sending this to say thank you. We never know who [or what] will show up in our lives and the seemingly random things that arise because of that 'chance' meeting.

These last two years have been an extraordinary time of healing and growth for me on Maui and I am, humbly, not the same person. This journey was possible because I had a mainland connection with [*The Vital Force*], as a teacher, student and friend.

In hindsight, I can see that this human link has been a necessary anchor for me to thrive on this elemental island. The relationship has been an important thread whether you were aware of it or not. And as my practice continues to deepen, I am so grateful for the people and opportunities that continue to magically show up and teach me more wondrous things. Thank you for making a difference in my life.

A hui Hou Kakou malama pono. (Take care until we meet again.)"

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

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Tai Chi Chih
 What led you to take your first Tai Chi Chih class?
 1,492 Impressions · 1.01% Feedback
 Like · Comment · Share · September 15 at 9:07am

View 1 share

Esther Matassarín-Jacobs I am a cancer survivor and had wanted to take Tai Chi Chih to improve my balance. As soon as I retired, I joined! 5 years and counting.
 September 15 at 9:10am · Unlike · \heartsuit 1 person

Rob Moore ...was feeling stressed to the point where I felt I needed to take tangible action to address it. I had thought about Tai Chi for many years and all of a sudden I found myself invited to join a group. 15 months and counting...
 September 15 at 9:18am · Unlike · \heartsuit 1 person

Conner Gorry It was all Kim Grant!
 September 15 at 9:35am · Unlike · \heartsuit 1 person

Neal Roy It was the physical benefits I was looking for. Little did I know how much deeper Tai Chi Chih would effect me.
 September 15 at 9:46am · Unlike · \heartsuit 1 person

Michelle Callaghan The PE class I had signed up for my freshman year of college was filled up and I got plopped into a tiny TCC class, having never heard of it in my life, and having never done anything similar... not even yoga! It was a blessing in disguise... not sure I would've made it this far in college without it!
 September 15 at 9:49am · Unlike · \heartsuit 1 person

Cleo Roemele The same thing that still motivates me to keep it in my life today...a need/desire to maintain inner peace which translates into harmonious balance in sooooo many other ways (at least when I "choose" to go with the flow). Great question :)
 September 15 at 10:00am · Unlike · \heartsuit 1 person

Pete Gregory Standing outside an AA meeting in Lincoln Park, Chicago, I looked up and saw a poster on a telephone pole announcing a TCC class. Oops, the instructor was still 3 months away from accreditation, oops, the other students dropped out and I felt obliged to practice, oops, the changes compelled me to get certified, and oops, 2 days ago I celebrated 15 years as an instructor. But I digress...what led me to my first class was simply an upward glance.

Please join us on Facebook where there are robust conversations about T'ai Chi Chih. This screen shot shows that 1,492 people came in contact with, and seven people commented on, and one person shared the question, "What led you to take your first TCC class?"

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Submission Guidelines

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to tcc@kimgrant.com. If possible, please tailor your submission to a particular section; the newsletter will hang together better that way. 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.

Web Site Updates

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

Editor: Kim Grant • Membership: Mary Ruiz • Submissions: Send articles, poetry and photos to Kim Grant at tcc@kimgrant.com or to The Vital Force, P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674 • Memberships: Send membership subscription requests, renewals, remittances and changes of address to The Vital Force, P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2674. Memberships are \$40/year, \$50/year for international. Members receive four issues of The Vital Force. The printed annual Teachers Directory costs an additional \$15/year. It is also available for free at www.taichichih.org. If, for some reason, you do not receive an issue, send an e-mail to: vfmembership@yahoo.com. • Design: Amy K. Brown

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- Deadline: April 1**
Publication Date: Mid-May
Climb The Joyous Mountain:
 What do you like about it?
 How do you use it in your classes?
- Deadline: July 1**
Publication Date: Mid-Aug
Spiritual Odyssey:
 What do you like about it?
 How do you use it in your classes?
- Deadline: Oct 1**
Publication Date: Mid-Nov
TCC Photo Text:
 What do you like about it?
 How do you use it in your classes?
- Deadline: Jan 1**
Publication Date: Mid-Feb
 Overcoming Obstacles to Preparing
 Teacher Candidates

Because of financial pressures, *The Vital Force* will now be shipped via Media Rate instead of First Class, which may result in a delay of one week or so, depending on where you live.

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The Vital Force / Quarterly Journal of T'ai Chi Chih / February 2012

Originate Or Create?

By CARMEN L. BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

We are fortunate to have found T'ai Chi Chih (or for it to have found us). But what's more amazing is the privilege to know Justin Stone and to live during the time of TCC's origination. Often, when people said that Justin *created* TCC, he would gently correct them by saying that he had *originated* it. This is not an idle distinction. There is a big difference between what each brings forth.

To originate is to enter a very special place within ourselves and participate in the unfolding of something never heard or seen. It is the work of wisdom (*Prajna*). To create is to connect thoughts and actions from past experience, understanding, intelligence or ability. The difference between these words is not just semantics.

When wisdom is present, ideas spoken of are often referred to as great. Many of us have used "great" when describing TCC. It implies something beyond human ability and desire. New ideas can also grow exponentially the more they are used (as originated); and the more they're used, the more new aspects unfold. These ideas affect all levels of our being (mental, emotional and physical) not because someone planned it that way, but because that which is of the highest vibration can accomplish more than anyone is capable of imagining. It calls the best from within us, so that wisdom can be experienced.

The more we experience wisdom, the more we find we can't take credit for wonders happening around and through us. Spiritual beings are often given flowers or gifts in gratitude for their work, but very quickly they put the gifts down or pass them along. This is different from people working and using their cunning to gain power or position. The latter may be smart but they are not wise, no matter how much they seem to be accomplishing. Intellect will never hold the same place as wisdom because of the grasping and clinging that accompany intellect in the form of attachments. True letting go is always the way of the wise person. It is how we learn to love and share the *Chi*.

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Tension Versus Form

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

How do we distinguish between tension and form via the forward-backward weight shift? Recently a senior T'ai Chi Chih practitioner mentioned that she was no longer lifting up the front foot completely via the backward weight shift, as this seemed to be more relaxing for the foot. Her approach provoked an exciting internal exploration. What is the difference between releasing tension and actions that express a combination of form within the formless and, hence, are more powerful?

For me, **I continually reference the *tan t'ien* to answer this question.** When the weight is shifted back fully from the *tan t'ien*, I experience the front foot as hinging at the ankle. When the foot is naturally allowed to respond completely through the weight shift, I feel a direct connection from the *tan t'ien* to the heel. The foot is literally pulled up to about a 45-degree angle by the *tan t'ien* when we are moving completely from that place. I experience an aliveness that is lacking when the top of the foot remains neutral, less upright.

Consider the opposite: we often can identify students who are pushing with the back toes when the weight has shifted

forward. The *tan t'ien* has pulled them forward somewhat, and then suddenly, at the end, the toes assert a final exclamation as independent entities. In this case, the toes add tension, not form, as they do not act as a unit with the *tan t'ien*. And yet, Justin has frequently said, "The back leg stiffens when the weight is forward." The toes are not pushing in isolation, yet there is form within the shape. There is strength, vitality, and power in the leg.

So it makes sense that when shifting the weight backwards, we can experience an equal connection. There is "stiffness" in the front leg as the foot rises up. I notice if I try to keep the front foot neutral, I am almost stopping a certain flow or strength prematurely. For me, with a neutral foot, the leg remains inert, formless. We know the

meridian channels run through the wrists. Though I am not an expert, I wonder if in hinging at the ankle through a complete weight shift, we are activating the meridian channels more deliciously here, too?



Enshrining The Graceful & Upright

By LISA M. OTERO, OXNARD, CA

Is there much to say about the Cosmic Consciousness Pose, the seemingly simple pose that ends each practice session? After all, you just stand on one foot and bend your elbows and raise your hands, right?

I never heard Justin speak very specifically about alignment and posture. Yet, every time I saw him do T'ai Chi Chih, whether in person, or in his DVD, or in his photo text, his posture and alignment were always impressive to behold. A tall and graceful man, Justin was always upright. Moreover, his effortless physical grace while doing TCC movements carried over to all of his movement. I've come to realize that whether walking, sitting or doing TCC, he naturally did all the things that give one an erect posture. His stomach was always pulled-in, his shoulders pulled back and yet soft, his chest lifted and open, his head aloft, chin lifted and ears over his shoulders.

A number of students come to TCC complaining of back pain. The first thing I look at is their posture. Whether hunching over a computer screen or steering wheel, or leaning into a walker, the activities of daily life can weigh you down. Through emphasizing graceful, upright posture during TCC practice, I hope to introduce body awareness that will carry over into all daily activities.

Cosmic Consciousness Pose enshrines the graceful, upright stance we assume throughout TCC practice. The focus of this concluding pose seems to be below and above: left knee bent to the left; right knee straight; left heel above right ankle; left ball of the foot solidly on the ground; elbows up to the level of soft, relaxed shoulders; hands in front of the face, right hand in front of left; softly-opened fingers in front of soft fingers; thumbs raised, eyes looking out through the thumbs in a soft, diffused gaze, taking in everything in front of you and attaching to nothing (nothing).

The roots and the branches of the tree are important, yes, but the trunk of the tree, the *tan t'ien*, is the true focus here. Before even lifting the left heel and the hands and elbows, I encourage my students to turn their attention to the *tan t'ien*. While standing straight and tall and breathing deeply, I instruct them to engage the muscles around and behind the naval and to gently pull these muscles inward and upward, gently lifting from within. Once the "trunk of your tree" is lifted and strong, one can more easily stand on the right leg without tensing the knees and ankles and lift the hands without tensing the shoulders. Starting the pose this way gives a sense of length and strength, allowing us to experience the repose within this pose.

My teacher always advised that when doing Cosmic Consciousness Pose you should think of "absolutely nothing." To that instruction I have added, "Allow your awareness to expand to everything." Thinking and awareness are two different things and this understanding is one of the gifts of TCC.



Cosmic Consciousness Pose

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Editor's Note: Amy attended a recent TCC retreat given by Carmen Brocklehurst and has written up what Carmen taught for each movement in the hope that others may benefit. (This is the last excerpt in the series.)

This movement allows the energy to come back together. The *ida* and the *pingala* have been strengthened by the separating. And the pose brings them back together.

Editor's Note: The most important resource for teaching tips is Justin Stone. Watch and listen to him on his instructional DVD. And read about and inspect his movements in the Photo Textbook. Both are available from Good Karma Publishing. His words are also available in the essential booklet, T'ai Chi Chih Teaching Tips, available through the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association for a small fee (www.taichichihassociation.org and 505-299-2095.)

Much More & No Less

By CAROLINE GUILLOTT, LAKE CHARLES, LA

Every time I arrive at the Cosmic Consciousness Pose at the end of practice, the words “heaven, earth and men in the middle” come to mind. I feel so big, so immensely tall, standing strong in a whirl of energy. Am I the link between? Are we all?

In the embrace of the raised arms and elbows, the energy is still moving through the fingers and slowly settles down. Holding still and relaxing the shoulders and the fingers without dropping the elbows, I gaze out over the index finger watching the world outside and inside and my focus goes inward ... all the way down to the *tan t'ien*.

Feeling the soles of the feet on the floor, I realize that we are all connected, rooted in our own circle of life. The legs are strong, one with the right knee relaxed and unlocked, and the other with the heel gently pressed against the side of the anklebone. Can I feel rooted? How long can I stand this way? Justin says to hold the pose for a minute and then come into the rest position. This “moment in time,” how does it feel?

It is nice to know that we have just activated, balanced and circulated the energy in our bodies and that we can feel it. In this final posture, the *ying* and *yang* flow together again and there is an inner stillness. Thank you Justin Stone for sharing the T'ai Chi Chih discipline with all of us. So that we can find who and what we really are.

*I feel so big, so
immensely tall,
standing strong in
a whirl of energy.
Am I the link
between?
Are we all?*

Resting

By JUDY CHANCEY, ATLANTA, GA

When my T'ai Chi Chih “mother” birthed me into TCC practice, one of the first things she taught was to focus on the soles of the feet. For an infant student, the best instruction is simple and elementary. “The practitioner must keep his or her concentration in the soles of the feet (easy) or on the spot two inches below the navel (more difficult),” says Justin Stone in his photo text, *T'ai Chi Chih: Joy Thru Movement*, 2009 (pg. 20). Yet, even this simple instruction can be a challenge for an infant fascinated by what the hands are doing.

Teachers persist, infants grow and fascinations subside as new TCC students continuously invite thoughts to rest in the soles of the feet. Eventually, students notice how simple focusing quiets mental chatter; a remarkable well-being settles into the body. Justin’s instruction to “focus on the soles of the feet” is only a place to begin, as there is always somewhere else “to go” in TCC.

Over seven years of explorations, I’ve also learned to direct my attention to the soles by feeling each bone connect one-by-one to the ground beneath me whenever anxiety or tension take hold. As I bring thoughts down, I feel a solid sense of calm permeate my body. Suddenly, there are solutions and plenty of time to enact them.

Whenever breath and thoughts journey together to the soles, a solid sense of being settles within me just below the navel. I suspect that is the vital force arriving solidly in my *tan t'ien*. It is as if something or someone physically arrives in my center, and then connects with the center of *Chi*. I do not know if there is any such physical place. I only know that there is no “me” in that moment – only a sense of oneness from which my practice flows and my spirit is merely a part of.

Coming into rest position with intention grounds me. Last year, I launched a new business. And during this past holiday season, I found that simply softening my knees with my hands at my sides – while imagining palms parallel to the ground as I send breath and thoughts to the soles of my feet – was enough to revitalize and restore. The original instruction to focus on the soles of the feet had grown and permeated its essence into my everyday life by encouraging me to stop, pause and sink into rest anytime. Tensions and pressures disappeared. I treasure the rest position as a life-management tool to restore balance in any moment.

TCC ever-faithfully takes us beyond what we imagined possible. I’m sure much more remains to be discovered through focusing on the soles of the feet. Thank you, Justin, for the gift of, and the infinite gifts within, TCC.



All Belongs

By SR. ANTONIA COOPER, OSF, NORTH PLAINFIELD, NJ

In studying Justin's writings on the T'ai Chi Chih form, I begin to realize that there are many places where he uses variations in speaking of the same thing. I'd like to share just two examples of this in the *T'ai Chi Chih Photo Text*. I'm grateful to Good Karma Publishing for updating this important resource; see the Third Edition, printed in 2009. Kim Grant sat with Justin with the photo text highlighted with discrepancies – within the text and with differences in the instructional DVD. And she asked for (and received) clarification for all passages and wording. Many thanks for the updates in this vital teaching tool for teachers and their students.

During various TCC retreats we examine the pause in between movements. In researching places in the photo text where it is mentioned, I discovered that Justin uses several words to describe the same thing. We collectively name it the "Rest Pose" but in the text that same pose is referred to as a graceful finishing pose (pg. 27); a rest position (pg. 28); the closing position (pg. 30); graceful close (pg. 32); closing posture/repose (pg. 38); rest pose (pg. 44); position of repose (pg. 46); position of rest (pg. 52); and graceful conclusion (pg. 62). Several references are made to knees and hands in that rest position: "lowered to the sides (not in front) in a graceful finishing pose with our knees slightly bent" (pg. 27) and with "palms down and parallel to the ground" (pg. 30).



No matter what it is called, these four to five seconds of focusing in the soles of the feet are essential in allowing the *yin Chi* and *yang Chi* to balance as it reunites.

The other place that was a delightful discovery years ago is the variety of examples as Justin describes ways in which to practice the TCC movements. You are invited to read those references on pages 5, 12, 13 and 18. It is in these pages that Justin mentions the time of day, speed of movements, etc. The important caution is to "practice regularly." It seems, from the above four examples, that there is never one way that we must practice, but that is left up to the individual. During conference, Justin would always urge teachers to tell their students to "practice the movements they enjoyed doing," knowing full well that the more integral movements would prevent practice from happening at all. An important statement on pg. 13 is: "... it is more advantageous to learn all the movements and get

the benefits from each." We don't even need to practice in a specific order, although there is a "suggested order" that most do follow in teaching and in preparation for teacher training.

Justin is very open in his description of how the TCC form evolved when he writes: "I began around 1969 to experiment with my own form..." Yes, the form is also referred to as: "Joy thru Movement, the form is to be fun; there is no need to force."

I'd like to also consider the words: "Naturally, TCC teaching methods have evolved as classes proliferated..." and "TCC, like all growing forms, evolve and not remain stagnant. To remain unchanging is to die." Justin respects the uniqueness of the individual teacher in how they convey the TCC form as well as great freedom in ways to set up classes, retreats, workshops or seminars. Perhaps in the future there

will be webinars. The webcam has already been used to prepare teacher candidates who would otherwise not have been able to obtain a second signature due to living in isolated areas.

One of the benefits of TCC practice is creativity. Our TCC community is blest with infinite gifts and talents. We have a bright future, because you are the future, and as a community, we will move into that future together.

It is my hope that we will be united in that movement into the future. One way is through the mission statement that is the product of many hours of reflection by over 20 teachers in the U.S. and England. The finalized statement is dated November 20, 2011, in respect for Justin and for his 95th Birthday. You are welcome to use it in advertisements, on t-shirts, pamphlets, etc.

The International T'ai Chi Chih Community of students and accredited teachers is dedicated to the personal practice of T'ai Chi Chih, and to sharing with the world this form of moving meditation and its benefits, affecting body, mind and spirit.

Wishing you Peace and all Good.

The Rose Of Impermanence

By SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CA

So much is written around the New Year about “new beginnings” and “letting go of the past” and the “transitory nature of all” that my reflections seem redundant. But I can’t help but enter into the feeling of starting out again, at day one of a new year; another chance; try again; unknown possibilities lay ahead. It doesn’t matter that this concept of starting fresh on January 1st is irrational. Why shouldn’t we feel every day, every minute that we can start over; that we can let go of habit patterns, conditioned responses, reflexive emotions and see ourselves more clearly?

At a recent workshop I expressed disappointment at seeing a lovely rose (which had been adding a graceful cheeriness to my bedroom) lose its petals. Since I had been reading and preparing for the *Prajna* workshop, I was in the frame of mind to recognize I had a choice to be bummed that the flower was dead, or to be grateful for the opportunity to enjoy it for a while. I realized my disappointment was due to my expectation that the rose should have thrived another several days, when, in actuality, it had run its life course sooner than I wanted it to. As I gathered the petals I thanked the rose for bringing its beauty into my life for a while. Disappointment turned to joy, and the minor experience left a deep impression.

Not all life’s situations will be that simple, but for me it is a deeply felt lesson on the acceptance of impermanence. And, if I can remember to apply that experience of letting go (in this case of expectation) when I am in the midst of grasping, how much happier I will be.

In *Heightened Awareness* and *Meditation for Healing* Justin Stone discusses the practice of Chih K’uan. It is a meditation of “holding fast and letting go.” He talks about how beneficial this concept can be to apply to life, not just used as a meditation. In explaining this practice he also writes beautifully on impermanence (see *Meditation for Healing*, pg. 88-89 and *Heightened Awareness*, pg. 53).

In our T’ai Chi Chih practice exploring boundaries like too big/too small, contraction/expansion and holding fast/letting go, can help us find the balance of the middle path and experience the effort of no effort. Doing TCC with mindfulness can be a tool flowing mindfulness into our daily lives – reminding us to explore our emotions and reactions. How often have we heard that joy is our natural heritage and that by nature we are joyous beings? What better wish for 2012 than for each of us to experience our true nature.

Letting Go

By PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CA

At the end of the year, it’s natural to explore the idea of “letting go,” as we welcome the new year. For me it is also a time to clean out closets and drawers, letting go of things I no longer use or need. This year in clearing out my office, I shredded five years of tax records that had been stashed away gathering dust. It’s also a time to consciously let go of challenges, regrets or old habit patterns. What is it that no longer serves you?

The practice of *Seijaku*, the advanced form of T’ai Chi Chih, is a useful tool in helping us let go. With each repetition of a movement, we pass through an area of resistance and then return to softness. Softness means letting go. It is necessary to completely let go of the resistance in order to be soft. This repetition of holding fast and letting go while doing *Seijaku* is an effective practice that makes it easier for us to let go in other areas of our lives.

It also applies in our TCC practice. We can let go of thoughts and let the mind rest in the soles of the feet, ensuring an even flow of *Chi* throughout the body. We can let go of any tension and muscular effort, and relax so that *Chi* flows more freely. Where there is tension, *Chi* cannot flow. So by letting go, we open to the healing flow of the Life Force.

The final letting go will be when we let go of this physical body in what we call “death.” By then we’ll have had a lot of experience with letting go, so it can be a natural process. Justin has been teaching us about letting go and non-attachment all of his life. He continues to teach us this valuable lesson in his final process of letting go. Thank you, Justin.



Doing It For Myself

By BRENDA MOUNIER, LAFAYETTE, LA

T'ai Chi Chih is not only a part of my friend Caroline's life, but it's most definitely *a way of life* for her. We can be at the airport or in line at the mall, and she will begin to gently do the movements. It's a bit embarrassing sometimes. Doesn't she notice people staring? If she does, she just smiles softly and continues, one movement flowing into the next one, not trying to show off or get attention. It's as if her body can't help it. My husband used to shadow her, exaggerating her every TCC move. And we'd all have a good laugh at her expense.

Although I respected that she embraced this art, I had no intention of learning it. It wasn't aerobic enough for my lungs. I tend to unconsciously hold my breath during sleep and, so during the day, I need something that forces me to breathe, breathe, breathe.

In September 2010, I received a call from Caroline: she'd decided that I should drive in for eight weeks of class with her now that I was retired. I laughed. Yea, right. Like I'll drive 90 minutes one-way, spend the night and go home the next day. I'm a busy retired woman; I've got a life. But I'd been caught off guard. I began thinking that life was too short, so ... why not just go ahead and do this for my friend. I signed up.

A year later, I no longer do TCC for my friend, but for myself. I don't do it everyday, but I do it every chance I get.

I don't know how it works, but it does. It's so subtle. I am more clear-headed and energetic afterward practice. For days. Even my cat is mesmerized. He watches the video as my friends (Victor, Constance, Suni, Rhonda) and I flow through the movements. And Rhonda, I noticed that your last name is St. Martin. Well, I think you have some Cajun cousins in this area. Come have gumbo with us anytime. We'll even show you a few Cajun or Zydeco movements. Thank you, Justin, for making such a difference in my friend's life and now mine.

A Cajun's Perspective

By JOSHEWA, LAKE CHARLES, LA

What this profound practice does for me, my family and this world is beyond words. Nonetheless, I'll give it an honest effort. My partner and I were gifted classes to the T'ai Chi Chih Center when we were pregnant with our second child, and we had the best pregnancy one could have hoped for. Laura and I immediately identified with joy thru movement, moving from the center, staying present and grounded to the gentle movement of (and within) the ever-present vital force of life itself. The simple pondering on, and the implementation of, these ideas is enough to jumpstart a heart. Add the experience, and you have quite a tool for stress relief and gaining emotional stability. With a little sincerity, it optimizes our gene expressions, stimulates Neurogenesis and neuro connectivity, and increases our awareness of the energy surrounding and pervading us. With a little practice, this and more becomes a way of life.

My personal aspirations are to continue to live a life of unconditional love and abundant blessings, which reinforces a divine stillness within. "Stillness amongst movement" is one T'ai Chi Chih's great wisdoms. Give yourself to the practice and live with that *joie de vivre*.

All this is made expeditious with a good teacher who is true to the practice while honoring the basic principles and technique, observing with the proper reverence the practice of Justin Stone. Thank you to our TCC family at large. All who partake enliven what we call heaven on earth. Ya'lls powerful softness is felt way down here *dans la sud de Louisiane*. We're learning to master the *je ne sais quoi* that only TCC practice brings.



Bypassing A Heart Stent With A TCC Stint

By MELINDA ANTOON CORMIER, LAKE CHARLES, LA

I love the wave-like rhythms, the gentle to-and-fro of T'ai Chi Chih. And it has given me real stamina and strength. I am a woman, 56, an artist and a completely round dumpling. And I am determined to improve my health in enjoyable ways. So I have attended classes, off and on, for many years in Lake Charles. My teacher has always suggested that the healing effect of *Chi* circulation will be self-directed unconsciously to the body's sites of need.

Recently at a routine health check-up, my doctor found some changes in my heart that required taking a resting stress test. While I lay having my heart monitored and recorded, I reflexively began reviewing Six Healing Sounds and pictured myself performing the motions and mentally saying the words with each proper breath. It was very calming and uplifting – in that I was doing myself a healing favor by the practice. Time rolled by without anxiety. The subsequent (required) angioplasty was performed perfectly and yielded interesting results. While I *had* grown a small single minor blockage to the front lower left side of my heart, it was evidently done so slowly that I had also created *my own bypass* around the blocked vessel. No stent required. "Ho-Hu-Szu" and "Hsu-Hsi-Chui."

When The Sky Fell

By MARY ANN MORAN, NEW ORLEANS, LA

Bam! Out of the blue ... My husband lost his job.
... Rocking Motion ...
 Stay focused. Stay centered. Stay positive.
 Practice. Practice. Practice.

My pay is paltry.
... Carry the Ball to the Side ...
 Stay focused. Stay centered. Stay positive.
 Practice. Practice. Practice.

We are seniors. (Yikes! When did that happen?)
... Push Pull ...
 Stay focused. Stay centered. Stay positive.
 Practice. Practice. Practice.

Retire? No!
... Pulling in the Energy ...
 Resumes roam the country.
... Pulling Taffy ...
 Seasons slip by, then ...
 Light at the Top of the Head, Light at the Temple...
 A new job! A new city!
... Passing Clouds ...

T'ai Chi Chih, keeping me calm when the sky fell.
... Six Healing Sounds ...
 T'ai Chi Chih, allowing me to ...
 Stay focused. Stay centered. Stay positive.
 Practice. Practice. Practice.

Healing Grief With TCC

By BECKY WATKINS, ALEXANDRA, LA

My goal in presenting T'ai Chi Chih at two professional conferences was three fold:

- Introduce TCC to people grieving or working in the field of dying and death;
- Show the healing power of the practice of TCC in the grief journey;
- Reflect on my own grief journey during the illness and death of our son and share how TCC was instrumental to my own healing.

The first conference was for The Association for Death Education and Counseling, an annual event attended by 800-1200 people. I led several TCC movements each morning for over 25 attendees, and I gave a presentation on The Healing Power of TCC in Grief (along with a practice component) overlooking Miami's beautiful Biscayne Bay. The energy in the room was amazing and evaluations have been very positive. The convener of the session told me it changed his life. Not bad for a four day conference.

Participants faced the bay while doing the movements and during Push Pull, dolphins started coming around. Rapture overtook the faces of the participants. I thought, "Wow, these people really get it." Even during the mid-afternoon presentation, the dolphins surfaced again, putting on a big show during Push Pull. Signs and wonders.

The second conference was for The Bereaved Parents, USA. It was as powerful for the 34 workshop participants grieving the loss of a child as it was for me. A graduate student shared that she is doing a doctoral dissertation on the "Healing Effects of TCC" on those who have lost a spouse. Comment evaluations included:

"The open and easy-going environment was an excellent retreat for my physical body and my mental/emotional one, too."

"Please make this presentation longer next year so we can enjoy the flow."

"I relaxed for the first time during the conference."

"I felt calm and serene; a gentleness settled over me."

"It would be nice to have CD's or DVD's to buy." (Why didn't I didn't think of that!)

"Excellent, beautiful; do it again."

"The practice felt like a loving embrace."

The work is spreading and the healing is happening. And I have concrete evidence that this practice is healing to someone in grief. I wish I knew how to "graph" a scientific study, but perhaps someone from academia reading this would be interested in helping. As always, I give credit to Justin, Sandy and the practice.



A New Teacher's Notes To Self

BY JACKSON RAINS, PLYMOUTH, MN

Contributor's Note: This article is not intended to be a comprehensive manual on teaching T'ai Chi Chih but rather some random notes about teaching. If other notes occur to you as you as you read, jot them down for your future reference.

The path to becoming a T'ai Chi Chih teacher is not always clearly marked. Oh, there is a set of requirements that leads to the accreditation workshop, but the completion of that workshop does not make us teachers. It simply gives us permission to present ourselves as teachers. To truly become a teacher in our own hearts, and in the eyes of our students, is a much more complicated journey.

The other night I experienced a milestone in my journey. My first beginners' class finished the complete practice for the first time, all repetitions of all 19 movements in sequence. Of course, after six sessions, the execution was neither perfect nor completely synchronized, but there was enthusiasm and depth. During Cosmic Consciousness Pose, I almost cried – this group had gone from, "TCC is..." to a full practice. I managed to compose myself and acknowledge their hard work.

I've noticed a few things as I begin this lifelong journey of being a TCC teacher. Perhaps it is a function of having "new eyes" or simply relaxing enough to see the obvious. The observations below are reminders as I gain more teaching experience.

Remember to smile. Enjoy yourself and have a good time. One of my venues has a mirrored wall so I can watch the group, but I also can see myself. We were doing Pulling in the Energy and noticed myself in the mirror. I thought, "Who is that serious old man?" I was so intent on doing it "right" and watching the group that I had forgotten to enjoy the moment. The tag line is not "Effort and Struggle Thru Movement" it is "Joy Thru Movement." So smile and enjoy yourself; if you don't, your students will take the practice far too seriously and miss one of the most important benefits of TCC.

Move confidently. Students often feel uncertain about how to move, especially when they are first learning. Make your movements as big as you can without introducing tension or stress so your students will be able to easily see how you are moving. Perform each movement as if you are putting an exclamation mark on it.

Be willing to make mistakes. I don't mean to intentionally make mistakes. But be gentle with yourself when they occur; they will. Mistakes most often occur when the mind wanders, and we get out

of the flow. There is always a teaching moment for me in a mistake: what have I done physically or mentally that allowed things to become unhinged? Your students will relax when they see you being gentle with yourself when you make mistakes.

Softness is strength. Softness cannot be forced. No effort on your part will lead to soft movements. Softness is a byproduct of practice, practice, practice. Softness flows from the *tan t'ien*, the center. All you can do is to let go when you notice tension.

Emphasis on action. TCC is so exciting; there is so much you want the students to know. But if you try to tell them everything, the class will be over before you get to the best part. And perhaps even more importantly, the students need to be able to do the movements to have a context in which to understand the philosophical underpinnings. For example, the concept of flowing from the center will not make sense until they have the physical movements as a reference. Limit the lectures and get the students on their feet and doing TCC.

The Goldilocks rule. We have access to a veritable blizzard of paper that we want to share with students. But there are only a couple of summary handouts that are important for new students to have – a list of the 19 movements and the Six Principles of Movement. The rest can wait and be given out as the student engages with TCC and wants to deepen his or her experience. We want the porridge to be just right for both talking and handouts.

Emphasize the benefits. Remind yourself and your students of the many benefits of TCC regularly and often. It may seem like you are selling something, and in a way you are, but your students will recognize the benefits from their practice more quickly if you mention them in advance. Share from your own experience. What benefits do you experience? Try to highlight one in each session. And remember that your students may experience different benefits.

Watch the students. How your students move will tell you what you need to review and reinforce. Are they fully shifting their weight? Are they leaning? Are they moving from their center? Are they moving softly? Does one movement seem more confusing? Are a few students having problems or is it the whole class? Knowing what is going on in the group will lead you to those teaching moments that deepen your students' practice.

Keep a journal. Perhaps a younger person can remember what happened in the last class, but I cannot be sure what was covered or what is planned. This is especially true when teaching several classes. Keeping notes of what is covered in a class and what is planned for the next class is simple and prevents repeating yourself or having to ask the students what you did last time.

Tell the students they are doing well – a lot. I firmly believe



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that TCC done imperfectly and sporadically is better than no TCC at all. And we say it is TCC practice, not TCC perfect. I look for opportunities to give compliments. Acknowledge hard work, and when someone is struggling, point out that they are making progress. I also use eye contact, smiles and head nodding to affirm progress during the practice.

The journey to becoming a TCC teacher includes:

- **Cognitive** – understanding and conveying the history and philosophical underpinnings of TCC to deepen the students’ practice beyond just physical activity;
- **Physical** – maintaining a regular personal practice so we always move correctly and softly;
- **Spiritual** – deepening our students’ experience of TCC as moving meditation.

Shamanic traditions speak of the journey of the Spirit as walking a path. On this path, we thank and honor those who have gone before. Thank you ancient T'ai Chi masters, Justin, and all the TCC teachers who have gone before. We acknowledge the courage and dedication to walking this path with integrity, intention and humility. And finally, we recognize that we are blazing a trail for those who will come after us; stand on our shoulders and move beyond us. Enjoy the path!



Students Blooming

By CHRIS NORKUS, WHISPERING PINES, NC

My recurring Tuesday/Thursday sessions at FirstHealth combine instruction with a closing practice, and during a recent class, I was scanning each of the 15 students. And while I suggest fasting of the mind during practice, as a teacher I watch students as they execute the movements. Each was practicing within the range of his or her understanding and ability.

How great it would be if everyone were practicing perfectly, in unison, like teachers at conference or while conducting a demonstration. That was not what was going on, though. How many subtly different expressions of Daughter in the Valley or Daughter on the Mountaintop could I count? As we moved through Carry the Ball to the Side, the adherence to form was better. My mind wandered again as I imagined other instructors and Justin peering through the window.

Outside the dandelions are blooming in a lawn untouched by the maintenance crew. Each little plant stretches its yellow bloom upward, some with straight stems, some bent, crooked, angled helter-skelter, but each one facing the sun, pulling in the energy of the sun.

Inside, the dandelions are also blooming. Richard is in the far corner out of view, but within voice range. Virginia is working through her fibromyalgia pains as she embraces the movements with a wan smile. Joanne, a long-term regular, may never get the whole staying true to form thing, but she certainly enjoys the sessions and she is a light for others always quick with a smile and support. Fresh from Zumba, Lee is strong and focused, and settling in deeper to practice as she unwinds.

Joseph is having a tough time recovering from a stroke last year. He attacks the movements with muscles that seem to fight him, his body leaning and face stressing, but less than before. We will chat once more before he leaves about upright body posture, letting go, relaxing, releasing.

Cree showed me her program assessment chart before we started class. She had scored highest in “balance” for which she credits TCC. Her current goal is 21 days in a row of TCC. At 80-something, she moves with peace and serenity despite the support wrap on her right arm and leg. Hardin, an athlete and warrior recovering from a car accident and seeking peace, moves her imposing frame with grace. Ron, the retired coach and athlete, practices with total enthusiasm and enjoyment.

Molly quietly moves through her movements and I feel her support and energy. Just to my right, Def mirrors my movements. I know Nancy is right behind me, out of view, practicing as best she can and enjoying it. I watch as young Christina, not yet 30, adapting to life after surgery to remove tumors from her brain, struggles with her balance, but moving so much better than when she began.

Before I realize it, the hour is almost over. I conclude each session with a short comment, and for some reason, I was wrestling with what to say today. I reminded myself to let go, that the right words would come. As I began to speak, Christina fell to the floor. Embarrassed slightly but not surprised, she brushed away assistance with a smile and cheery comment, “You know, I don’t have the best balance just yet.” Her fellows helped her up. I mentioned that falling down is a good way to learn.

The session was over. Upon leaving, I saw Christina doing a cross-stitch while waiting for the county transport vehicle to take her home. I stopped to say goodbye and pointed out how much better she was doing now. She smiled big and said that yesterday she was able to put her pants on without holding on to anything. I wondered what would benefit my TCC brochure. “Practice TCC and you can put your pants on without holding on to anything.” We take so much for granted. A breeze picked up as I walked toward the parking lot. To my left the dandelions were swaying.

A Response To Justin's Poem "Suffer the Leaves to Fall"

By AMY TYKSINSKI, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

It has been a particularly beautiful autumn season in Albuquerque. Over the years, Justin has often reminded us that while the leaves fall way, the tree remains the source. With which do we choose to identify?

I write on November 20, Justin's 95th birthday. A friend and I decided to go to the Bosque by the Rio Grande to celebrate this day, this teacher, this life. Feeling somewhat awkward about the unplanned ceremony about to unfold, I brought along a candle, some dried rose petals from my garden and a sage smudge stick.

It was a magnificent afternoon. As we walked along the path, the trees whispered majestically to us. The sun played hide-and-see through the cottonwoods, kissing us softly on our cheeks and the sky shone a brilliant blue. I bent over and picked up a stone to add to my collection. We travelled on for a while, looking for a place of eminence, then realized we needed to go back to find a bathroom. I was impatient and disappointed with the thought of turning back. My friend wisely noted however, **"You can't rush these things. This is perfect. There are always obstacles to overcome. It's all part of the process."**

"Obstacle" completed, we returned to our journey and discovered a different, more beautiful trail. Silently we hiked along, continuing to scan for a good place in which to settle. Finally, we discovered a niche along the river's edge. I smudged the area and lit the candle.

*a feeling of
reverence
descended*

A feeling of reverence descended. We scattered rose petals in the gently flowing water. They circled around according to the swirling pattern of the undertow, then unfurled and proceeded to float away in a single-file line.

Spontaneously, my friend began to create a boat out of large piece of bark. I soon followed suit. On the bark I placed a few bright pink petals as a bed, then the stone, which I secured onto the bark platform with pieces of tall grass. At last, it seemed prepared for its ride down the river.

Before I launched the boat I sat quietly. A few phrases came into my mind, repeating themselves over and over, "Thank you. I love you. I'll do my best to live and express these teachings." As I sat there a little longer, the phrases dropped off one by one, leaving in their wake only, "Thank you."

"It's been really fun, Justin." "It's been fun for me, too," he answered.

Readying the boat in the water for its passage, a few more phrases showed up, "May I be free, May you be free, May all sentient Beings be free." Well, okay! Giving the boat a gentle push, off it went. The moving stream swept the little vessel up into its current. Steady, it passed through a tricky spot, but then, Oh! A protruding tree caught the boat in its branches. The force of the river wanted to ferry the boat along, yet the boat didn't budge. The whirling movement of the water flipped the boat over and a single rose petal broke free, bobbing cheerfully along the river's downward flowing current. Still held upside down, the stone then dropped away from its tether. Suddenly lighter, the boat righted itself, and it too made its way effortlessly downstream. What a glorious way to say, "Yes!"

Dreaming Of Justin Stone

By APRIL LEFFLER, MEDIA, PA

I have to share this dream. I saw Justin in what looked like an occupational/physical therapy rehab room. He looked physically frail and feeble. He had no legs although he stood, and even ambulated unassisted, on a silver rod dropping down from his torso that had a rubber black tip. It was a curious but okay sight. He was surrounded by a man (who seemed like a student of T'ai Chi Chih) and a few women, although I didn't know them. I slowly approached Justin and he turned to me and held out his hands.

Now remember, I don't know Justin like some of you do, and I've only had a few direct interactions with him. Nonetheless, I reached out to him and clasped my hands in a prayer form around his. I felt intense love and great humility. He began speaking to me in a foreign language. His eyes/face changed as he spoke. His eyes were narrow like thin raisins but were glowing white. He seemed to speak for a while and I felt like he was transferring a blessing? Gifting me amazing energy? I just don't have the words to describe this! I bowed my head as I received this ineffable experience.

Then we returned to normal and he began telling me that he couldn't find his way home. Neither of us felt concerned by this, though. I said to him, "Just keep going East and you'll find Home." I was aware in the dream of the layers of meaning, and although his facial expression didn't change much, **I noticed a knowing smile in his eyes.**



Gateway To Eastern Philosophy [as it relates to T'ai Chi Chih]

BY JUSTIN STONE

~ BEING-CONSCIOUSNESS-BLISS ~

What is life composed of? According to the Indian philosophers, life is composed of *Sat-Chit-Ananda*, "Being-Consciousness-Bliss." What are you really? There are many ways you can answer that question. Paul Reps would say, "You are light." Somebody else would say, "You are sound cognized as light." In India they are saying, "You are Being-Consciousness-Bliss," which is very hopeful, isn't it. It gives a wonderful feeling.

The Indians are essentially devotional. This is why I believe there is almost no Buddhism anymore in India where, ironically, the Buddha is considered the greatest of its sons. India is devotional, and devotion does not play a part at all in Buddhism – what would you be devoted to? Karma, however, is accepted by everybody in India. Action brings reaction, cause brings effect, and therefore, you can make your future anything that you want. Just plan it the way you want, act that way and set the causes in motion. If you plant a rose seed, you're not going to get a banana tree. "Plant" sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? Just plant that which you want to grow. In Karma yoga, you do the deed so you get the reward in the future. But the Indian feels that at the end of your life, your last thought is what will bring about your reincarnation or transmigration. Your next life depends on your last thought in this life. So you can say, "Well, I'm going to make my last thought a pretty good one." But of course, your last thought is going to be based on what you stood for in your lifetime.

~ ANOTHER STORY: TEA CEREMONY STINKS! ~

Paul Reps was the greatest one I've ever known for challenging people's habit energies.

He'd do anything, the worst nonsense, in order to cause people to get out of that little habit.

When he arrived in Japan the first time (and they knew him through his poems and his pictures), he got off the ship. The newspaperman came up to him immediately and said, "Well, now you're in Japan. What do you think?"

He said, "Tea Ceremony stinks!"

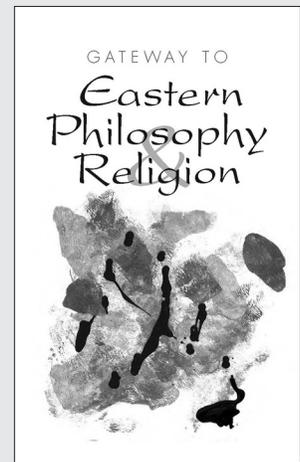
I don't know how you translate that into Japanese. Paul lived there for eight years and knew only three words in Japanese. "Tea Ceremony stinks!" I'll tell you what the three were: *itai* (pain), *subarashii* (wonderful), *sanpo* (to stroll).

But he shook up the Japanese with his first steps on dry land!

I've seen him shake up other people, too. I would ask in surprise, "Paul, am I hearing right?" Of course he was having fun in doing it, but in addition to that, he teaches as he goes. The more set somebody is in a belief, then the more that person needs shaking up. It's very good if you can do it.

This is what happens. As soon as you get habit energies, it means there are things you like and things you dislike. You have aversion and attraction. That's how we lead our lives, isn't it? Only to an exceptionally spiritual person does it really not matter. My friend Ch'ang Chung-yuan, who wrote a wonderful book called *Creativity and Taoism*, told me that he lived with D.T. Suzuki in Japan for two years, and they once went to Hawaii together for an international religious conference. They were put up at the Royal Hawaiian, a very fancy hotel. I said to Professor Ch'ang, "What did Suzuki-san think of the Royal Hawaiian?" He answered, "I don't think he even saw it. It wouldn't have made any difference if he'd slept on the floor in a little hut or in this luxury at the Royal Hawaiian. I just don't think he noticed it one way or another."

That sort of indifference is very hard to come by. When I first got ready to go to India from Japan, I visited the Indian consul, whom I knew in Kobe before I got on the ship. He and two Japanese men took me down to the ship and he said, "Oh, you will be just immersed in India when you get there." He continued, "You'll love this and that ..." And I said, "Well, well, I really don't care what I see there." He said, "I know you don't have any desires." I looked at him in astonishment. I said, "You'd be surprised how many desires I have." Percival, who wrote a wonderful book, said there is a desire body, a subtle body. You can't be without desire because the desire to be without desire is a desire. This is why, at the end of the 179 negotiations, you have to have negation of negation.



From the book **Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion**, excerpted and reprinted with permission from Good Karma Publishing, and available on www.gkpub.com.

Healing

By STEPHEN M. STEFFAN, FLORISSANT, MO

I have been walking labyrinths for many years now. I sometimes use them to get centered and find answers to life's simple issues or problems. They are my favorite place for healing prayers and meditation. I walk to the center with a need in my heart for a friend or friend of a friend. Once in the center I pray and meditate on whatever healing needs I am trying to fulfill. I sometimes pray for five or ten concerns at a time. I usually lie on my back, melding my body to Mother Earth. I do this until I am satisfied and weak; then I walk back out hoping I have at least eased someone's suffering.

Add T'ai Chi Chih and it gets interesting. I am new to TCC, having studied only six to eight months under the tutelage of Gale Rublee Portman, an insightful and inspiring TCC teacher. I thought when using a labyrinth to do a few TCC movements once I reached the center. I thought this might boost my energy and awareness and perhaps my prayers and meditation as well.

TCC, not ceasing to amaze me, had different ideas. As I started walking the inward path my arms automatically and instinctively began Rocking Motion. I felt I was walking in a hip-deep bubbling spring; my hands were moving in a temperate bath.

Upon reaching the center, my plans were once again interrupted. Instead of doing just a few movements, I launched into the whole routine – knowing that TCC would allow me to stop. After beginning Rocking Motion, my arms broke out in a major case of goose bumps. Then the lower arms and fingertips tingled with the intensity of a substantial electrical charge. This was way beyond the good bit of energy and some tingling I usually feel. Although it stopped by the ninth repetition, I finished Rocking Motion and did the rest of the routine, feeling a great deal of *Chi* throughout.



My prayer and meditation session was surreal, much deeper and more profound than usual. I walked out from the center feeling completely calm and carefree, almost giddy. I again moved my arms to Rocking Motion, playfully splashing in the hip-deep bubbling spring.

I continue to practice TCC and walk labyrinths separately and just as frequently unite the two. Both intensify the effect of the other. TCC can be supplement to many other activities such as music, art, etc. The intense charge felt the first time has not returned, but I can only assume that it was the two entities welcoming each other?

Relaxing, Not Taxing

By LARRY KOWALSKI, ENID, OK

I'm a 74-year-old retired Catholic priest who's taken T'ai Chi Chih sessions three times, and I'm looking forward to the next one. It is difficult to express my fears when beginning. I'm just not athletic, and I'm very self-conscious, and I tend to feel I'm going to screw everything up.

Fortunately, everything was demonstrated slowly and carefully before I was asked to try it. Corrections were offered positively, so as not to embarrass anyone. Each week began with a review of the previous week, and excellent help was offered by one of the Sisters when needed. Only then was new material presented.

Instead of being taxing, classes were relaxing. I experienced a lot of mental and emotional relief through the sessions, and I pray I can do so again.

Pyramid Poems *in Gratitude to Justin*

heart
of Stone
Justin melts
softly gently
transforming
into
joy

– PAULINE QUIMSON

Chi
came for
me just when
I needed it
so thank you
Justin
Stone

– SHERYL ADAIR

you
Justin
have left for
us an art form
for our health
joy and
life

– BROCK

you
opened
heart and soul
and t'ai chi chih
came through to
heal the
world

– DIANNE MOODY

old
student
should know now
certain doubt to
hear him say
"that's fine,
dear"

– JAN MAPLES

Following The *Chi*

By PIA KNIGHTON, HOUSTON, TX

As soon as I returned home from my T'ai Chi Chih accreditation, my teacher (Carletta LaCour) called to ask if I could take over her classes at the Cenacle Retreat Center due to a loss in her family. Wow, I thought, am I ready? I said yes and have recently finished teaching a beginning class. Where would *Chi* go to take me next, I wondered.

I started looking for other places in Houston to teach TCC. I gave presentations with great results. I arranged classes at the West Houston Community Center and at the Holy Name Retreat Center. The Cenacle Retreat Director signed me up for a Day Retreat of TCC for Health Care Professionals and to start an intermediate class in late May. I made flyers, brochures and even painted a picture to place in the room where I would teach. I ordered calling cards, magnets for my car doors and made a website (taichichih-houston.com).

I gave a presentation to **Menninger Clinic**, a leading psychiatric clinic where I have worked for the last four years as a psychiatric registered nurse in the Adolescent Unit. After my TCC presentation to the Director of Nursing and the Director of the Wellness Program, I was asked to start a beginning class for the adults in the Hope Unit and a weekly class in the Adolescent Unit.

So far, this is where the *Chi* has taken me, and I look forward to seeing more great opportunities unfold. I dream of having my own small studio one day. I do my full TCC practice every day so I will always be ready to teach TCC where *Chi* takes me.



TCC Road Warriors

By JIM SHORR, WILSONVILLE, OR

It was an energy adventure, travelling through Anatolya (a.k.a. Turkey) during a major earthquake and a tragic military venture in October 2011. Fifteen of us gathered in Ankara to begin our Road Scholar journey through Turkish history, to hear expert lectures and walk the ruins of Troy. We were asked by our guide, "What do you do in life? What's your favorite avocation?"

I replied that my life's journey and energy source was T'ai Chi Chih. A few folks from Vancouver had practiced T'ai Chi Ch'uan years ago and urged me to start an early morning TCC practice. And for the next 14 of 16 days, beginning in Cappadocia, all but one person participated in a 7 a.m. class. Curious students were set on their practice path, and at breakfast I was bombarded with questions about the history of TCC, the nature of *Chi* and how we TCC practitioners move.

When we reached Konya and its Whirling Dervishes, one fellow traveler compared the stance of the dancers and the looseness of their wrists with what our group had learned. (Carmen Brocklehurst has long been my inspiration for learning looseness of shoulders, arms, wrists and hands.) The next day, at the Dervish Brothers Center, the host asked for and received a group demonstration of the first nine movements and Cosmic Consciousness.

At the farewell dinner in Istanbul, a group member lit a table candle indicating how TCC had helped her weight shift, to focus on the *tan t'ien* and to begin to learn the deeper meanings of TCC. Another cited his increased ability to relax and achieve balance where he had experienced walking issues. What greater joy than sharing our practice with new friends.

Feel The Flow Of *Chi*

By ROBERT MONTES DE OCA, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

In *Justin Stone Speaks on T'ai Chi Chih*, he says, "The depth of T'ai Chi Chih will never be completely plumbed." It leads one along an ongoing spiritual journey. As TCC teachers on a spiritual path remember that "the means is the end" (*Abandon Hope*). We continue to be students in the process of deepening our TCC, and Tuesday morning teacher practices in Albuquerque are opportunities for this.

At a practice a few weeks ago, while we were doing Pulling In The Energy, Carmen mentioned feeling the flow of the *Chi* as it moves through the body. As I shifted my weight forward, I could feel the flow of the *Chi* coming through my fingertips, through my hands and up through my arms. As I shifted my weight back, I could feel the *Chi* passing through my chest, into my heart center, and as I settled onto my back foot, I could feel the flow of the *Chi* settle into the *tan t'ien* down to the soles of the feet. What an insight into the flow of the *Chi*. I am grateful. I give thanks.

Watch Your TCC Practice

By STEPHEN THOMPSON, TUPELO, MS

Have you ever felt you were rushing around – so caught up in getting from point A to point B, C ... and Z – that you lost sight of experiencing life? What can you do to change this feeling? The answer is simple: Watch yourself.

Traveling across town (or across the world) usually involves stresses. Sure, we get to our destination, but did we see the scenery along the way, talk to anyone, enjoy the ride? Probably not. We get so caught up in getting there that we fail to notice the world, its people or the journey. Such is life lived in the fast lane.

We notice others rushing, worried, irritated; in them we see a reflection of ourselves. We notice children laughing, playing, being joyous; through them remember what we're missing. As others zoom by, ground yourself within your T'ai Chi Chih movements. Throughout your movements, watch with as much awareness as you can.

Watch from the soles of your feet. Feel the grass between your toes. Observe the daughters traveling from the mountain-top and into the valley. Breathe your joyous breath in and out and in again. Watch your stress melt away with each passing cloud, as clouds lazily watch you back. Settle into rest, and experience Cosmic Consciousness in the ever-changing moment of now.

We do TCC because it improves our lives. Cloudy minds are best cleared when tuned-in to the present moment. Move quietly in meditation. Think of no-thing. Be here. Be now. Thoughts will come bubbling up from our stillness. In watching them settle, we can learn more about ourselves than when we rush to take action.

Watch what happens when you step outside yourself and observe your practice. Act as an observer. When self-doubts, self-criticisms, rationalizations and fears arise, realize that they are all illusions; learn to let them go. You see desires and realize the hold they have over you. And in doing so, you realize that you can make them powerless – by quietly moving in stillness, watching them and not acting on those desires.

By watching as we move in meditation, we come to know our true selves. And as we know from the observer effect in physics, the act of watching changes what we watch. Taking a few minutes everyday, to move with awareness in meditation, will change your life.

Hearing & Knowing

By TERRY SLANEY, SUGAR GROVE, IL

Today I was driving through the countryside to class. Five cranes were foraging in the stubble of a wheat field – silently, gracefully, calmly. Every movement was flowing, perfectly balanced in nature. Even pauses had energy. The surrounding landscape is lush green from rain. A great teacher once suggested looking at all the nuances of the trees and bushes to get an idea of theme and variation.

So it is with T'ai Chi Chih. We practice and begin to see and feel differences in movements, nuances that bring us to greater softness, circularity, polarity, flow and continuity. We come to a quieter and greater understanding of *Chi* flow, of the oneness and continuity of life. And the quieter we become, the more we hear and know.



TCC For Alzheimer's/ Dementia Patients

By JERRY BUMBALOUGH, GREENFIELD, CA

The following is based on my personal T'ai Chi Chih experience with teaching a group of about ten people (which grew to about 40) – all seniors, most having Alzheimer's or dementia, in an adult day health care facility. I quickly learned many bits of information during the one-hour, once-weekly classes.

On the first day, the healthcare givers had some difficulty in getting the seniors to the area where I would do the teaching. Some were cooperative which indicated to me that there are different levels of Alzheimer's and dementia. So I had to pick a level that most would try and understand. I quickly became frustrated in that no one paid attention, would stay seated, etc. I quickly learned that no matter what was being said or done, some would not participate. The majority could not stand by themselves for more than a minute or so. Some could not stand at all. Some did not speak English.

I sought Antonia's council, and she advised me that the best teachers only had to say, "Copy me," and that was the beginning of a fantastic, ongoing experience that I will share at the upcoming teacher conference in Oregon. I now have two classes, each with 30 to 50 students. The rewards involved with this type of class are greater than any I've ever had before.

Reflections On My First Year

By JANET MAYERS, VENTURA, CA

I started T'ai Chi Chih in January 2011 because I needed something to help keep my bones strong, and finding a class less than five minutes from my house was the best luck ever. Not being very confident, I didn't want to attend my first practice until I was pretty sure there would be lots of instruction.

Lisa must have cajoled me into a good squat position immediately, as I remembered her for several days every time I stood up or sat down. Slowly I mastered the forward and back moves. Rocking Motion was my least favorite since my knees kept asking me to "go on to the next movement please," way before we were done. With practice and by changing the width of my stance, I now enjoy the move. Lisa must have been itching to get me to an instruction day to correct my "taffy movements" as I was turning way round – to almost see behind me for a while. I am a little better now. For a while, I confused Carry the Ball to the Side with Pulling Taffy – wanting to take three steps sideways in Pulling Taffy and wondering why other people were not moving as far as I.

Summertime classes helped cement good movements into my body. I could also attend wonderful outdoor practices. Acquiring Carmen Brocklehurst's DVD also helped and watching Internet videos of Justin Stone has been inspiring and uplifting. I can now do all 19 moves and the pose without my teacher cringing too much. Naming all the movements in order has been a relaxing technique to get to sleep recently. My bones are not disintegrating as rapidly as they used to be. This year I will try to move lower, slower and more slowly.



In a few years I will retire and we may move, so to make sure I have TCC wherever I go and to inspire others, I look forward to preparing for accreditation.

Pulling In the Energy – My True Home

By JENETH RUNDLE, OXNARD, CA

I take the form in my hands,
in my wrists I feel the receptivity in my
fingertips the tenderness in my
open palms preparing to receive
Blessings
beyond softness beyond the intelligence in the muscle
fibers & molecules of the bones, the skin, the brain beyond
the senses...beyond the making and receiving of
directions, instructions beyond the quaking & trembling as I
enter through humility's door It moves me... quietly...
silently ... Born from the alchemy of circularity Emerges the
Elixir guaranteed to induce Love. I dissolve into an Essence
bath of Peace

A Tradition

By MARCY BURNS, OXNARD, CA

For the second year in a row, in early December, a T'ai Chi Chih candlelight practice was held at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Ventura, where a dynamic TTC community has developed. The peaceful setting was an ideal place for a silent practice, and it was a time of shared joy. A Southern California TCC tradition has been born.

Luminarias lined the narthex, and soft flute melodies filled the air as TCC practitioners began to stream in, a few at first, until a total of 40 men and women stood in circles in the candle-lit sanctuary. One by one, we lit each other's handheld candles. We collectively offered a heartfelt tribute to Justin Stone, to Phyllis Luyken on her 90th birthday and to other notables from the TCC community. (Phyllis was the first TCC teacher in Ventura and Oxnard.) We moved and flowed together in a kind of mesmerizing oneness.

Pyramid Poems in Gratitude to Justin

thanks
and love
overwhelm
gratitude fills
permeates
my soul
now
– GLORIA SMITH

heart
of Stone
Justin melts
softly gently
transforming
into
joy
– PAULINE QUIMSON

is
Justin
Stone aware
my gratitude
overflows
for him
be
– KATHY BECKWITH

thanks
for the
lessons that
you've given us
up mountains
valleys
lights
– ANN HAMPTON

we
hope to
build better
enlightenment
with Justin's
guidance
now
– JUDE GALLAGHER

TCC Movements

By MARK TUCKER, SOUTHERN CA

As the day begins and I stand alone in the gentle breeze, my body moves to a slow, rhythmic *Rocking Motion* and on the wind a *Bird Flaps its Wings*. I watch it quietly fly away. The sun rises in the East, a brilliant disc in the sky. I trace its outline in a horizontal plane like *Around the Platter*. As I meditate on its true physical dimension as an orb in the morning sky, I imagine going *Around the Platter, Variation*.

In the distance I hear a far away sound like a *Bass Drum*, and I wonder if it is heard by the *Daughter on the Mountaintop*, having been sent by the *Daughter in the Valley*? I would love to travel and see them some day, perhaps bringing a gift like this red ball so they may delight in play, but for now I *Carry the Ball to the Side* and think about my day to come. I realize that today there is much work to do; there are so many heavy things to *Push Pull*. I ponder how I may go about *Pulling in the Energy* necessary to accomplish my chores.

As the wind subsides, I think about the summer circus fair in town with the many vendors *Pulling Taffy* and watch how they make the sweet candy. There is the one man who makes a creamy colored candy by *Pulling Taffy, Variation 1*, in which he pulls it in the shape of *The Anchor* and another who makes a mint flavor by *Pulling Taffy, Variation 2, Wrist Circles*. But the most wondrous candy maker does his *Pulling Taffy, Variation 3, Perpetual Motion* all the while creating a variety of flavors. After they complete their taffy making, everyone gathers for *Working the Pulley*, which erects the big top tent.

By now it is noon, the sun is high in the sky. There is a *Light at the Top of the Head*, and I feel there is also a *Light at the Temple*, the one that is my own body. In the distance now there is a gathering thunderstorm. I breathe in a *Joyous Breath* as I watch the *Passing Clouds*. I exhale the *Six Healing Sounds*, and I feel I am now aware of my own mindfulness and meditate again in a *Cosmic Consciousness Pose* sending my gratitude out to the rest of the world.



Grateful For TCC

By MARY GRIFFITH, OCEANSIDE, CA

Every evening as a teenager in the 1970's, a couple practiced T'ai Chi on the bluff in Encinitas, California, where the golden sun melted into the azure ocean. Their silhouetted movements were soothing to watch. I thought, "one day I'd like to learn how to do that." Thirty years later, when I received an email that a T'ai Chi Chih class was beginning at Yoga Vista, a local studio owned by Sherry Zak Morris in North San Diego County, I jumped at the chance.

My sister, Anne, and I both began a journey with Joanne Thomas, to whom we will be grateful for the rest of our lives. Joanne taught us with patience, understanding, compassion and humor. TCC came to

us exactly when we needed it most. Our mother, age 84, was experiencing health challenges that ended with colon surgery, from which she has thankfully recovered. At the time, though, with our mother in and out of hospitals and health care facilities, TCC practice got us through.

After I practice TCC, I feel a sense of calm and serenity – like everything is going to be okay, no matter what. I am more accepting of what is and feel grateful. If I'm ever having trouble sleeping, practicing *Rocking Motion* and *Cosmic Consciousness Pose* works every time.

I presently attend Pam Towne's classes at the Encinitas Community Center and feel so fortunate to learn from "one of the best TCC teachers in the world." Was it destiny? Was it a blessing from the universe or divine intervention? Whatever brought me to TCC one and a half years ago, I am grateful for it. As I say after practice, bowing with palms at the heart, thank you Justin, thank you Pam, thank you Joanne.

Teacher Accreditation

With Sandy McAlister in Albuquerque, NM; November 2011

BY MOLLY GRADY, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Ten excited, anxious and well-prepared T'ai Chi Chih candidates (from a teenager to a 70-something) presented themselves to undergo the process of becoming teachers. As those who have been through this know, it's transformative. Twenty-one teachers audited the training to renew their own practices. Some came for a few hours; others stayed the entire time. (You know who you are, Alba). Antonia and Pam also came to support the training and to visit Justin and honor his birthday.

Unfortunately, our wonderful registrar, Ann Rutherford, was ill for the first part of the training and wasn't able to join us until the last few days. I had the privilege of hosting and took Ann's instruction to heart that I act as mama duck to my ducklings. I had no idea how profound the experience would be. We became a community, supporting one another, immersed in gratitude.

There was plenty of time for dialogue and individual attention. Discussions between candidates and auditors ranged from the very practical (how do you figure out what to charge for a class) to the metaphysical (what is life). Everyone enjoyed these small conversations, what Sandy affectionately called speed dating.

As always, presentations were worrisome for those who dislike public speaking, which apparently was about everyone. And as always, everyone was astonished by his or her power. From every training, the bonds formed will undoubtedly last forever.

I found myself reflecting on the teacher training process. The week is hard work – physically tiring and emotionally exhausting. We take apart something we enjoy (our practice) and find it hard to put back together again. There are left over pieces. Or we take a hammer to that back leg to make the weight shift complete. And there are challenging lessons like “the effort of no effort,” “flowing from the center” and the importance of stillness in movement. And then, slowly or suddenly, it all fits together. We feel it, Sandy recognizes it and we become T'ai Chi Chih teachers. We will be learning all of our lives, deepening our practice. But now it's not just something we enjoy: It's something we love that loves us back. And we're ready to share the gift. Thank you, Justin.

Teacher Accreditation Q&A

BY ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

In what way has your training [this past November 2011] caused you deeper insight into the T'ai Chi Chih movements?

“Simply enough, with patient coaching and correction, it's the small or little changes which continue to deepen my insights into the TCC movements.” – BRUCE CHILDS

“All aspects of the training allowed me to respect the depth of stillness more fully. So in learning more about the movements, I understood more of the vital importance of the stillness between movements.” – DIANNA RISTENPART

“By being corrected in the physical realm, I believe the spiritual realm now can make corrections more easily.” – MAUREEN ENGLISH

“It is the cumulative effect of all of the (prior) training, breaking moves apart, critique and practice (with observation). It is a wonderful laboratory for growth.” – BONNIE CUNDIFF

“It's all in the weight shift. On some level, I always knew this, and I'm sure my teachers told me it a thousand times. But sometimes you need someone to tell you something 1,001 times to get it right. I think that the teacher training has really reinforced all of those principles upon which TCC is based and has helped me to focus on the things that really matter in each movement. (Or so I hope.)” – KESHA HIETALA

“A focus on the *tan tien*; lots of technique input; feeling a deep sense of grounding by letting the *Chi* sink into the soles of my feet.” – MICHAEL O'CONNOR

“I came here feeling I was being dismantled on several fronts. The insight I got during this week from the movements was that they are gentle and supportive on many levels. During this week, I felt trust in the movements and what they will teach me. I also felt raw, sensitive, humbled by the process and love and grateful for the gift.” – LESLIE COFFARO

Describe a meaningful event during your training.

“I was concerned about how well prepared I might be for the presentation. What I couldn't anticipate was the connection between the letting go and trusting of the flow of positive energy in my practice. The presentation went on without fear.” – BRUCE C.

“I learned a wonderful approach to teaching from Julie Heryet in which she allowed the student to find the answer herself. Instead of telling the student how to correct the movement, Julie said something like, “How does your arm feel? How does it feel when you make the movement large? How does it feel when you make the movement small? Where does your arm feel relaxed?” This approach allows a student to experience herself what might be incorrect and be able to correct it.” – DIANA R.

“When I gave my presentation the *Chi* showed up in a big way. This was affirming, as it said, ‘Hold the Path.’” – MAUREEN E.

“I felt less prepared for the presentation than I would have liked, but Robert stopped by at lunch to remind me, “The *Chi* will take care of everything,” and he was right.” – BONNIE C.

“I was so happy when I walked up to get my diploma, as was everyone. There was such a nice feeling in the room. I have never in my life met such a kind and gentle group of people, and I hope that we all become excellent teachers who can pass along softness to our students.” – KESHA H.

TCC Retreat

With Carmen Brocklehurst in Albuquerque, New Mexico; October 2011

COMPILED BY SHERYL ADAIR (ATLANTA, GA) AND CAROLINE GUILLOTT (LAKE CHARLES, LA)

Here are some insights that attendees shared during evening get-togethers – in response to Carmen Brocklehurst’s two questions, “What did you get from the T’ai Chi Chih retreat? What has changed inside?”

Lemoyne complained that she didn’t feel anything but received encouragement to be mindful. She said “Why can’t I make space for the *Chi* inside myself?”

Jerry said “I came to the retreat with complacency. After 18 years, I’d thought I heard it all, but I go home and don’t practice. I realize that I have to commit to myself, then I will do my practice.”

For JoAnn, the language has been helpful and she feels like she has learned a thousand things.

Cecilia and Robert appreciated the corrections and decided to change their ways, to find the waist turn especially with the taffies.

Dianne felt inspired by the other people in the room, by their seeking spirit. It reminds her to feel gratitude for the Albuquerque community. She is sticking with the practice when usually she doesn’t stick with things. She appreciates the corrections and is open to the journey.

For Mary, release, let go, opening, grounding are the words that came to her on the first night. She adds that, “Grounding is a challenge. I have a hard time settling down, and TCC is a miracle worker for that, and I can still have fun with it. The ‘taffies’ have not felt right, especially the wrists, but I decided not to worry. And when I didn’t worry, it all came together; all the words came true and everything felt right all together.”

“What did I get?” asks Pauline. “Everything. I always look forward here to my TCC time with myself and with my students. I signed up for this retreat on the last day of the last retreat. I have been preparing for this. I have clarity with who I am. I have purpose. What has changed? It is not only in the hands and feet; I feel it through my whole being, and I know there is more. That is so exciting. The transformation goes on, and I accept it with all of us.”

Judy reflects that, “I feel very grounded. I have such clarity, and it is so easy when you are grounded. Things work. You feel a connection with people. When you are grounded, it all flows.”

Lisa told a story about something that had happened a week earlier. It was not only a story of car keys locked



in the trunk in the middle of nowhere or of another woman being upset with the situation. She said, “The ‘old me’ would have been bitching. Instead, I did my TCC practice. Even the other woman went through a transition because of this practice. Our lives may have been extended. In that moment, I felt peace. I was able to hold the center. This stuff works. I actually experienced what Justin and Carmen have told me.”

Pyramid Poems

FROM OUR NEWEST TEACHERS

one
touch of
whispered joy
in silent hues
soft and still
presence
speaks
– DIANA R.

eyes
of time
eyes that blink
at the edge of
the abyss
kneel in
awe
– DIANA R.

meet
meeting
the people
and what people
you will find
always
here
– ANON

calm
can come
when one is
patient and still
and then the
fullness
bursts
– BONNIE C.

want
again
try to stay
grounded (down) but
it comes when
I don’t
try
– KESHA H.

the
teachers
teach, students
learn how to
move the
Chi
– MICHAEL O.

Seijaku: The Fourth Time's A Charm

BY HANNAH HEDRICK, FERN FOREST, BIG ISLAND, HI

They say that the “third time’s a charm,” but it took me four *Seijaku* accreditation courses before I felt hungry for it. Major turning points included an emphasis on moving through resistance (rather than on resistance itself) and on reducing the resistance effort by about a third. And I’m thrilled that, with Justin’s approval, *Seijaku* teachers may now teach the advanced practice to accredited T’ai Chi Chih teachers.

At last summer’s accreditation, I found the sharing of personal challenges and resistances from my fellow attendees to be very enlightening vis-a-vis my own challenges and resistances. I now make *Seijaku* a regular part of my practice – for the first time since my first *Seijaku* accreditation with Justin almost a quarter of a century ago. Over the years, I have benefited from auditing courses offered by Steve Ridley and Ed Altman, but until now, *Seijaku* never called me the way TCC did from the first time I did it.

I encourage all teachers to include a little *Seijaku* in their routines. Practice *Seijaku* with others; expose yourself to *Seijaku* through trainings and Justin’s DVD; integrate parts of *Seijaku* into your personal TCC practice in a variety of formats. Since my fourth *Seijaku* training, I’ve experienced this truism: the best way to learn something is to teach it. Many thanks to Justin Stone for this exceptional energy balancing system.



TCC Intensive

with Pam Towne in Aston, Pennsylvania; November 2011

COMPILED BY AMI SARASVATI, HOPKINTON, NH

It was readily apparent that there was an extraordinary level of support, dedication and eagerness to explore the depths of our treasured practice – regardless of how long each person had been practicing T’ai Chi Chih.

“It was only six months ago that I was first introduced to TCC. Now I’m completely hooked. I can’t wait to integrate all that I learned into my practice, which I now know will be life-long.”
– BARB KOLARZ

“I came to improve myself; it is one more patch in my quilt. When I meet with teachers and classmates, my *Chi* becomes stronger.” – ALMA ZERBONI

“I experienced a collective bliss and tremendous sense of community as we practiced TCC in a circle, feeling a loving sense of oneness as we danced in unison as if in a beautiful dream. With over 20 years in various movements and spirituality modalities, I’m home.” – AMI SARASVATI

“It was inspiring to watch Pam move so effortlessly. She is an excellent role model. I have new goals to

achieve: ‘Allow and give permission’ to your body to move; enjoy each move. I will go to the springtime teacher training with more confidence.” – LEE BERGMAN

“How could so many people with such a depth of inner understanding be at one place at the same time.” – BARBARA FLYNN

“I was both humbled and challenged by the openness and dedication of the students preparing for TCC accreditation. What a gift.” – SR. MARY GRIFFIN



“The instructional tips will bring more joy to my practice and life. It was heartwarming getting to know such sincerely loving people. I’m more optimistic simply by knowing each of them.” – CAROL SPICER

“Lifted out of our daily lives, I return home with renewed devotion, a more flowing practice, new friendships and inspiration.” – JOAN WEAVER

Media Outreach Training

In November, GKP identified the 40 top selling teachers of GPK materials and invited them to participate in a media training conference call hosted by a professional media consultant who practices T'ai Chi Chih and knows Justin. The intention was to provide these top-selling teachers with specific tools they could leverage to gain media attention for their TCC classes. The conference call expanded on GKP's Media Kit which was updated recently.

At this juncture, all members of the TCC community may freely access the recorded call until April 6th. Simply dial 218-237-0339, and when prompted, enter the access code 506238#, and then enter reference number 1#.

The recording is 76 minutes long and includes: two minutes at the beginning waiting for the call to begin; a 45-minute presentation; a 15-minute Q&A period; and a 15-minute period at the end while teachers were visiting. Listeners have access to three play-back features:

- Press 1 to rewind 30 seconds;

- Press 2 to fast forward 30 seconds;
- Press 3 to pause/resume playback.

Deb Bertelsen, one of the teacher participants, followed up with this note:

"Thank you for an outstanding job. I'm still working on my media coverage approaches, but I haven't given up. It just takes a different way of thinking and the time line is not quick turnaround.

Kim, the written materials were excellent, as always. Catherine, your conference call presentation was on point, and extremely thorough and encouraging.

A local company contacted me in August 2010 about teaching T'ai Chi Chih for their 2011 Wellness Initiative. It took many phone conversations, face-to-face meetings with demonstrations, a written proposal and more than three months to get a signed contract, but it has so been worth it. I taught employees during three different lunch hours on Fridays and over twelve weeks. And I was invited back for refresher/practice sessions. I've learned to get testimonials, but

this media coverage has me thinking differently. I'm going to ask my contacts in their human resources department if they know of another company that would benefit from TCC; if they would they be interested in sharing their TCC experiences in a media story; if they have an internal employee newsletter and if so, would they write about the classes and employee experiences.

The GKP printed material and conference call has given me renewed confidence and energy – and maybe some momentum, too, to carry this into 2012 in a different way. Thank you both for your talents, guidance and dedication to TCC and the teachers in the community."

KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Thank you, Sue Bitney, for your generosity of time and service as the GKP distributor in Minnesota. You are a delight. And welcome, Connie Joyce, as the new regional distributor.

The Lighter Side

Every so often I bring Richard Carlson's book, Don't Sweat the Small Stuff ... and it's all small stuff, to my TCC class. In honor of Around the Platter Variation, I read passage #89: "If Someone Throws You the Ball, You Don't Have to Catch It." It made me think of applying this principle to everyday life, just like we pick up the ball in our TCC movement and then let it go. Carlson states, "Often our inner struggles come from our tendency to jump on board someone else's problems; someone throws you a concern and you assume you must catch it, and respond. Remembering that you don't have to catch the ball is a very effective way to reduce the stress in your life."

One day when I teaching TCC in the retirement community, I tried something new with the same book. When I asked for a volunteer, Ruth eagerly raised her hand. I gave her the book, and suggested that she open it at random to any page. Out of 100 passages totaling 246 pages, Ruth opened up to passage #43: Become an Anthropologist. Her eyes were wide with surprise, and she started laughing: her son was an anthropologist.

– SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MD

We encourage you to renew or **subscribe on-line** with a credit card by visiting www.taichichih.org/vital_force.php, where single back issues are also available.

T'ai Chi Chih

By JOE MICHAUD, IOWA CITY, IOWA

It is the silence
Her body moves in,
That moves us.

With liquid smoothness,
Precise control,
She glides in and away.

The power of grace,
The strength of strength unspent,
Draw us into the flow.

It is not the woman
Who dances the dance,
But the dance

That dances the woman.

Metaphors & Analogies

COMPILED BY APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PA

“Life’s stresses collect as a snowball grows while rolling down the mountain. T’ai Chi Chih is the sun that melts the snowball away.” – MAURISA L.

“TCC is water in a lake, controlled by the steady currents. The soft wind creates ripples along the water’s surface, stirring gently in effortless motion. And when the wind stops, the water quivers until it gradually eases down.” – VERONICA V.

“Back home I sit on my porch and watch as the trains pass on the tracks. Everyday of every year the trains pass. There are no signs on them, no directions, just the trains. I love to watch the trains because I never know where they’re going; I just have peaceful daydreams and thoughts of the million possible destinations. TCC is the train. I never know where the art will take me; I only know peaceful thoughts that pull me away from the outside world, away from the chaos, the clutter and the madness. TCC allows my body to sit on the porch as my mind catches the trains.” – LAUREN M.

If we are to be balanced, we are to be in touch with our *Chi*, the vital force flowing through us. *Chi* is energy and allows for health and balance. Repetitious and various movements of TCC allows for us to be inspired with life energy. The balance of life’s energies is omnipresent:

- The solar cycle / day and night
 - Knowledge accumulation / learn and teach
 - Loving others / give and take
 - Life’s essence / exhale and inhale
 - Musical improves / call and response
 - Family unions / growth and nurture
 - Earth’s elements / fire and ice
 - Ocean’s currents / crash and recoil
 - Ultimate balance / ‘Yin’ and ‘Yang’
- DESIREE A.

Where In The World



Helena Fox-Beaudoin practices T’ai Chi Chih at the 15th century Incan site of Machu Picchu, Peru.

Conference? Conference! July 2012

BY NANCY WERNER-AZARSKI, MINNEAPOLIS, MN

I was accredited in 1996 and attended my first T’ai Chi Chih conference that year in Albuquerque – and I have every year since then. Thankfully, I have been blessed with the ability to get there and pay for it; I don’t usually have conflicts that can’t be resolved. My mantra has always been that I would continue going as long as I learned something. I meet teachers who teach in a wide variety of environments – one of only two teachers in a state, teachers who come from a large TCC community and teachers who live outside the U.S. All have different challenges, and as they share information, it helps us all. Since I only see some teachers at conference, I can depend on them to give me helpful feedback on my form.

During last year’s conference I experienced all of the following (take a deep breath): I heard Carmen Brocklehurst speak about Justin; in small groups we discussed moving, teaching strategies, transformation and empowerment; I heard a lecture on how to market your TCC classes, a lecture on how to use Justin’s writings, a lecture on *Seijaku*, a lecture by Ann Rutherford on resistance in *Seijaku* that drew ah’s and oh’s from the attendees, a lecture on spirituality in TCC; I heard about articles and research done on TCC; I heard updates from the TCC Center, *The Vital Force* and Good Karma Publishing.

Plus all the leaders are available. Plus the meal discussion amongst teachers is invaluable. Plus I got ideas for books to read, how to use a TCC app and how to get students to remain in your classes. Plus I got all the moving and at least two complete practices a day. I went to the last conference with an injured knee so I spent the entire weekend doing seated TCC. And I learned that I had a bias against seated TCC and that I was ever so wrong about seated TCC. I always learn something. You might say that I am a slow learner if it took me 14 years to appreciate seated TCC. I would simply say thank goodness for a yearly TCC conference.

Conference is like TCC itself. I started TCC to help a physical injury but continued TCC because of the mental and emotional benefits. Conference has always taught me something new, but I make the effort every year because of the benefits I feel. After conference, I feel cleansed and refreshed, and I feel the negative hold on my body, mind and spirit has been released. I feel comforted personally and comforted about others in the world. Maybe that has not been your experience at the last conference you attended? Maybe you ought to reconsider coming to conference again? Come, come and teach me something, please. I am waiting for you.



Mark Your Calendars!
TCC Teacher Conference
July 5-8, 2012
in Portland, Oregon

Registration information at
www.taichichih.org/events/17/tcc-teacher-conference-2012

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TEACHER RESOURCES:
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the hidden url with information specific to
teachers.

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Community Calendar

DATE	WHAT & WHO	WHERE	CONTACT
February 29- March 4	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	Black Mountain, NC	Vicki Schroeder / 864-494-4364 vickitcc@bellsouth.net
March 6-9	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA	Pam Towne / 760-722-9544 pamtowne@gmail.com
April 20 &/or 21	TCC Workshop w/ Sandy	Grayslake, IL	Donna McElhose / 847-223-6065 dmcelhosechi@aol.com
May 3-6	TCC Retreat w/ Antonia	Pecos, NM	Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114 ruthergary@aol.com
May 8-13	TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Aston, PA	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
July 5-8	TCC Teacher Conference	Portland, OR	Neal Roy / 503-970-4740 goodhairdaze@comcast.net
July 8-10	Seijaku Teacher Accreditation w/ Pam	Portland, OR	Daniel Pienciak / 732-988-5573 wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Date TBD <i>Pending Interest</i>	TCC Teacher Accreditation	Big Island, HI	Hannah Hedrick / 808-968-7013 hedrickhneca@aol.com
October 4-7	TCC Retreat w/ Pam	Prescott, AZ	Hope Spangler / 928-775-2010 tcc4hope@Q.com

MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

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

April 26-29	TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810 judyhendricks@me.com
September 27-30	TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst	Albuquerque, NM	Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810 judyhendricks@me.com

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone / Email _____

TEACHER ACCREDITATION INFORMATION

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

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher _____

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

Name of "second signature" _____

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Thank you!