

# The Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

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for teachers & students

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## Justin Gave Thanks

### (More) 20th Century Psalms BY JUSTIN STONE

What is going on is contraction and expansion – from unmanifest to manifest.

~ ~ ~

What Man pretends to respect and what he really respects are two different things.

~ ~ ~

The wise man is just as susceptible to pain as the fool, but his reaction is different.

~ ~ ~

We think of ourselves as limited creatures, but the Lotus Sutra says: “Man’s voice is a voice filling the Universe, man’s life is a life without limit.”

~ ~ ~

During years in the financial arena, I seldom saw a happy or contented person among the monied ones. Yet most feel they’d be fulfilled if they had a little more money!

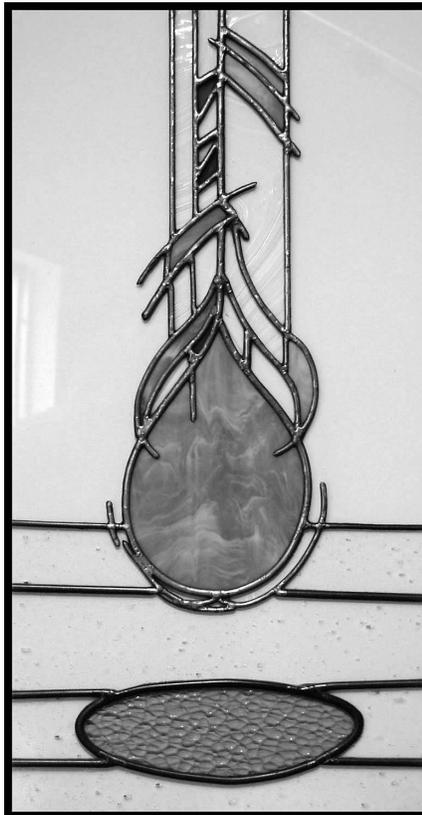
~ ~ ~

In truth, nothing in Nature seems lasting or peaceful. There is only transmutation of the One Energy.

~ ~ ~

The more truly you see along the Way, the more it will isolate you from people. If you want popularity, drink and be merry and forget the spiritual path.

~ ~ ~



To discern priorities is to mature. To follow all paths indiscriminately is to be young and eager.

~ ~ ~

Man wants to taste the fruit without planting the seed.

~ ~ ~

We assume that what we have read and heard is our own concoction.

~ ~ ~

Feel the Essence, be aware of the Essence – I don’t care what you call it.

~ ~ ~

When thinking of planes of existence, forget geography. They are all here now.

~ ~ ~

We live our lives in synthesis, bringing together opposing elements. Music resolves dissonance to arrive at a consonant feeling of rest and novels usually resolve problems to bring the book to a reasonable ending. Religion points to Unity from Disparity. When we fail to thus resolve, there is trouble; this is often called “mental illness.” Sometimes the failure is not due to lack of awareness but because the observer sees too keenly and cannot make a resolution – schizophrenia. *Yin* and *Yang* elements must be brought into some sort of balance or physical, mental, and spiritual trouble results. Harmony and Counterpoint must make some sense.

*[Reprinted with permission from Good Karma Publishing. This title is currently out-of-print.]*

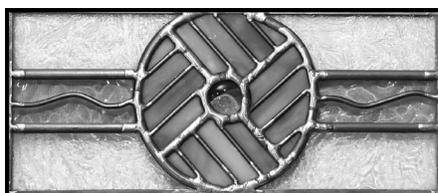
# May The Vital Force Be With You

## Grounding & Graceful Conclusions

In the November 2013 issue and now this one, I'm grateful for the continuing conversation (and tone) in relation to whether we practitioners rise after closing a movement – or remain with knees bent before starting the next movement. I'm glad everyone feels free to make his/her experiences known.

## Using Justin

"We started class tonight by listening to parts of *Spiritual Stories of the East*. There is something about hearing Justin speak. Merle (one of my students) heard the chanting for the first time when she came to Sunday meditation. It was special for her to hear Justin chant and then give an explanation. It set the tone for a very good class. Thanks for making so many excellent materials available to us." – SHERYL ADAIR, ATLANTA, GEORGIA



## Stu Goldman's Artwork In This Issue:

### "Embracing My Continuity"

"I am among the fortunate: I have made my living from doing things that most people only dream about doing. Since childhood I have been an actor, cartoonist, author, illustrator, stained glass artist and now a T'ai Chi Chih instructor [as of the November 2013 accreditation]. These are all, believe it or not, related careers. They all communicate, inform and energize intellectually.

The most accidental of these was the stained glass. While copying one of my political cartoons for syndication distribution, instead of reducing, I enlarged it so big that only a portion of the image appeared. It was a minor mishap and easily remedied, but the lines looked like the

lead lines of a stained glass window. Later that week, walking past a stained glass studio in my Philadelphia neighborhood, I noticed a sign in the window offering lessons. I signed up. The next twenty years became history, as the saying goes.

From early on, as inspiration, I combined my interests in Japanese Haiku and Sumi-e ink drawing. The melding of these two art forms is known as *Haiga*. It's noteworthy that the root of the term illustration is 'to bring light to...' I like to think that I used the light to 'come through' as well." – STU GOLDMAN, FT. LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

## Where In The World ...

TCC is practiced around the world and we have two new photos in this issue to prove it. Keep them coming.

WITH GRATITUDE. KIM GRANT, ALBUQUERQUE, NM

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## Submission Guidelines

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to [tcc@kimgrant.com](mailto: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](http://www.taichichih.org)) will be updated within a week of the following deadlines: January 15, March 1, April 15, June 1, July 15, September 1, October 15, & December 1.

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• Design: Amy K. Brown

**Deadline: April 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-May**  
To ground or not?

**Deadline: July 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Aug**  
Social Media: How do you use it in your classes?

**Deadline: Oct 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Nov**  
To Be Decided.

**Deadline: Jan 1**  
**Publication Date: Mid-Feb**  
To Be Decided.

Because of financial pressures, *The Vital Force* reserves the right to ship 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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# Hovering Or Landing?

BY CAROLINE GUILLOT, LAKE CHARLES, LOUISIANA

I just re-read *The Vital Force* and appreciated everyone's honesty and willingness to share experiences. In almost every article, there was a sentence, a word and a paragraph that sent goose bumps through my whole body. What a conference it was. Thank you to all involved, to the ones who presented and those who attended. See you next summer. In joy! So if I may, I would like to join the conversation about the "hold or not to hold" in the graceful conclusion.

*we want to see  
only what we  
care to see*

For the longest time in my practice, I would stay in the graceful conclusion and start the next movement from there. My knees and my legs eventually got used to it. After all, this was the way I learned it at my accreditation in June 1999. At some

point after I started teaching, I traveled to Albuquerque as much as possible to practice with the community of teachers there and to learn from Justin. I did this several times a year for many years. The Albuquerque teachers met every Tuesday morning to practice with Justin, and I made sure to be there. I could see differences in how those of us who were from out of town were moving. In my mind, I had an explanation for this: I "excused" Justin because he was getting older, or I decided it wasn't an important principle, and so on. I guess we want to see only what we care to see. Like Amy expressed so well in her article, **we are all at different levels of understanding and have layers of conditioning to work through.**

So, even though I would see Justin standing, at ease and in a relaxed manner, in between movements, I kept doing what I had always done. He patiently waited for each of us to release the close and then we would go on to the next movement. Then, one day, after practice, I dared ask him about holding the close and he answered, "It is all continuous, dear." This puzzled me for years to come and reinforced my belief that what I was doing was okay. I did my best to make the practice "all continuous."

When did it all change for me? At the first Minnesota conference, years ago, we were practicing T'ai Chi Chih in a circle and my gaze fell on Dora Derzon (whom I didn't know then) and thought, "I need to go and practice next to her." At the next opportunity, I asked if I could stand by her and if she would care to correct anything she thought needed improvement. At the end of Rocking Motion, she encouraged me

to *really* ground. I thought I had been grounding when I concluded each movement, but I suddenly realized that I was not. Her advice jolted me from what I now call a "Hovering Conclusion" to a "Landing Conclusion."

It was surprising, powerful and liberating all at once – sinking deeper with the knees, solid in grounding the energy, hands held parallel to the floor, **followed by a complete release of the knees and wrists and the whole body** and breathing. The subtle headache that had started left all at once. Of course, it took awhile for this correction to sink in. I had to apply myself, to try "this new way" again and again with each movement and feel the difference. I had to retrain myself to pay attention and to ground fully. I had to be mindful because habits have a tendency to come back *au gallop*.



*April Leffler staying warm with Pulling in the Energy (top), Around the Platter (bottom), and Working the Pulley (pg 4.)*



Since then, I have come to realize that I do not have to make TCC into something beautiful. It already is. Most of all, I have to be patient with myself, explore the possibilities, get the thinking out of the way, and apply the principles and surrender to the *Chi*; that is the true teacher.

So holding on to something extra, like Amy wrote, is not an issue anymore. At the end of the movement, after a powerful grounding, when I release completely and even readjust myself, I am aware now that the energy is continuous, the *Chi* is flowing. There is nothing to hold onto, no certain way to look. I can just be: Enjoy the moment, take a deep breath, relax fully and move on. It is this simple.

**I am grateful that Justin showed us over and over how to move and conclude, even when I didn't know how to pay attention.** I'm grateful for all the stories that he shared over and over and over. We have them written and recorded. I'm grateful for all the answers he gave even when they were unclear (to me). I'm grateful that I can travel to be with a community of teachers that cares about this practice, and I want to thank the ones who come forward to give me corrections and let me know when I'm off track. Thank you all for caring so much.

Here is one of my favorite memories from the conference: The last practice had just ended and we were still in circle, when **I heard a little soft voice coming out of my own mouth singing, "Joy, Joy, Healing thru Joy."** (I'm not a singer and when I told my husband, he got a real kick out of it.) Everyone joined in, and it was great. Was it *Prajna* in motion? It was joy spilling out and it was what I needed most of all: a joyful ending to a smashing conference. Justin was there right in the middle of it all.

## Yes, You!

By SHERYL ADAIR, ATLANTA, GEORGIA

References in *The Vital Force* to Justin Stone's varied teaching styles have got me thinking. As a regular attendee at Carmen Brocklehurst's Spring and Fall retreats, I was given many opportunities to learn from Justin. Year after year I returned, hoping that Justin would again spend several hours with us at the retreat. Often I had the added opportunity to visit his home, meditate or share a meal. During each gifted encounter, my entire being was on high alert. I knew so much knowledge and wisdom would be offered. **Would I be able to take it in and understand what Justin was really saying (or not saying)?** At times he seemed to wander with his responses to questions from retreat attendees, and I knew the answer (and more) was there if only I could get it.

I will always remember a lesson learned while sitting in Justin's living room waiting to go into his meditation room. Justin kept talking about his belt, and it seemed a little strange. Finally it was time for meditation (and Justin liked to start promptly). He stood up and said something to the effect of "I guess I will have to undo my belt. Hope my pants will stay up." Finally, I realized he wanted *me* to unhook my elastic belt. It was too tight for meditation, too restrictive. I did so and he immediately proceeded without a word into the meditation room and we began. One of Justin's teaching styles was to be indirect, to see if you were paying attention. My take away that day was "Yes, You!" He was telling me to loosen up on many levels. Justin still speaks to each of us through his books, DVDs and CDs. Are we really listening and watching with our whole beings?

words  
no words  
not always  
as it appears  
Stone's arrow  
points us  
where?

Stone  
master  
teaches us  
pay attention  
not saying  
saying  
watch

## A Lesson In Grounding

By DORENE KRAUSE, MIDLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY

It was a beautiful morning in early October in Dennisport on Cape Cod. I had waited all year to return. There before me the horizon, the dunes and the water. The sea beckoned and the sun welcomed my presence – a perfect setting for my T'ai Chi Chih practice.

The wind was strong this day and I thought to myself: What are you doing? It is so windy. But I knew I needed to *feel* the warmth of the sun, to *feel* the wind surround me and move through me, to *fill* myself with nature's raw energy. So I proceeded to ground myself in the soles of my feet. As a teacher, I have repeated those words thousands of times in a myriad of ways: focus on the soles of the feet, sink into the soles of the feet, bring your concentration into the soles of the feet, breathe into the soles of the feet. Here I was mentally repeating those words, anchoring myself against the wind. And so my practice began.

Rocking motion ... steady now – stay grounded – anchor your feet to the earth. With a focus on the *tan t'ien*, my movements synchronized with the ebb and flow of the sea. Hands and arms seemed to float as if being carried by the rippling movement of the water, effortless, light, almost buoyant. The sea and the

wind provided the rhythm of their music, and it became mine. I could feel the wind moving between the polarity of my palms, and I felt the resistance as it pushed into me, tousling my hair every which way. With each movement, I let go a little bit more. The dune grasses bowed down in the wind yet remained firmly rooted, as did I.



As my practice was coming to an end, I noticed a lone seagull in the vast blue sky gliding above the water with ease and grace, allowing the wind to steer his course. I envied his freedom of movement, wings outstretched, not flapping furiously to make headway – no resistance. **With nature's help I learned new lessons in grounding and softness.** It was a practice like no other and one that I will long remember.

## Sharing The Tea

By CARMEN BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

So many comments about conference spoke to the organizing committee's *teh*. They desired to truly make it an event that would speak to our love of T'ai Chi Chih and to working together, in integrity, to go deeper with our practice. This very high goal was kept in the hearts and minds of committee members during the entire planning and execution. A marvelous sharing of tea (events) included resting, lingering, coming together, and an invitation to learn and friendship.

# The Physics Of Grounding Circulating Chi

By ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

During a violent lightning storm, my neighbor's house received a direct hit. The electrical charge blew out her TV, dryer and washer. After that frightening experience, she invested in a lightning rod for the house. Six years ago, Justin lectured me, "Ann, don't you ever again touch an ungrounded TCC practitioner."

I had attended a T'ai Chi Chih retreat, and a teacher prep student could not ground her *Chi*. As she practiced, her entire body would violently shake. Thinking I could help her ground her *Chi*, I reached down with my hands and held her feet to the ground. Immediately a bolt of lightning shot into my body, throwing me down to the ground in incredible writhing pain, and I began to violently vomit. The loving people at the retreat tried to help me, but they could not. Antonia called for an ambulance, and I was taken to the hospital where, after four hours of waiting in pain, I was given muscle relaxants.

Grounding the *Chi* is very similar to the job of a lightning rod. It's not a theory or a pretty pose; it's a physical law. When I practice, I *need* to stay in a deep, grounded position. I practiced with Justin at the TCC Center almost every Tuesday since 1998. He often commented on my deep grounding. He understood the power of circulating *Chi*, and he could see what I needed to do.

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## To Rest From Rest Or Not To Rest

By JACKSON RAINS, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

Before this conversation began at the conference, I had never even considered not holding the rest pose between the movements in a practice. Since then, I experimented with dropping out of the rest pose between movements in my personal practice. It did not make a big difference, but the practice seemed more like a group of 20 separate events rather than a flowing connected experience. The flow is very important to me so I am firmly in the hold-the-rest-pose-between-movements camp.

That said, teaching is a different kettle of fish. Early in my teaching, I unconsciously kept the students in rest position while I talked about the movements. I didn't even think about what I was doing until a student asked if we had to hold the rest pose all the time. She went on to explain that she had arthritis in her wrists and holding the same position for a long time caused pain. I thanked her and told her that we don't have to hold the rest position all the time. It proved to be a hard habit for me to break because I am focused on communicating the basics of the movement rather than on how we are standing. I finally got smart and now tell the students they don't have to hold the rest pose and for them to remind me when I forget.

For me it is hold the rest pose during practice and don't hold the rest pose while teaching.

## Being Aware

By JUDY HENDRICKS, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

I remember going to my first teacher's conference in Banff in 2003. I was excited and looking forward to doing T'ai Chi Chih with other teachers. I met many and we did lots of TCC in group practices. It was a very broadening experience, but I was surprised that my knees hurt by the end of the conference.

I returned to Albuquerque and continued my weekly routine that included the teacher's practice on Tuesday. Justin was there as usual, and greeted me with a smile and sparkle in his eyes. After we finished Rocking Motion and came to a graceful conclusion, Justin stood up, as he always had done between movements. I was very shocked to realize that I had stopped doing this at the conference. I had unknowingly followed the group consciousness and stayed in the closed position, with knees bent, between the movements. After becoming aware of how Justin stood up between the movements, I went back to standing up between movements. My knees have never bothered me again.

Before each class I teach I put in Justin's DVD and watch him do the movements. I practice mirroring him doing the movements, and then I do the movements while watching myself in the mirror. I also look at the textbook: Around the Platter shows Justin standing up, then bending his knee and putting his foot out. For the Pulling Taffies and Working the Pulley, it also shows Justin standing up, and then beginning the movement. The other photos show him beginning the actual movements. Those of us who were fortunate enough to have practiced with Justin, know that Justin stood up between the movements and did not start from the close position.

My intention is to do the movements as closely as I can to how Justin did them. I want to be aware of how each movement feels and to pay attention to the flow of the *Chi*. I feel the flow of the *Chi* much more strongly when I'm doing them the way Justin did. TCC is not hard to do if we follow Justin's lead. I believe we all want the maximum benefits, the most complete flow of the *Chi* and the sparkle in our eyes.

# Imprint

By SANDY McALISTER, HAYWARD, CALIFORNIA

While traveling in Europe a commonly heard refrain is, “not another church!” Traveling in Myanmar is similar: “not another pagoda!” Visiting many pagodas and Buddhist temples, some shiny new (in the last 100 years) or old (made new again gilded and gold-leafed), some 1,000 years old with only their basic structure (having lost much of their ornamentation external and internal), the routine is always the same. Remove shoes, walk the paths around and inside, and climb the stairs to the many levels. In Myanmar they do something I have not seen in other countries (but that doesn’t mean it isn’t done elsewhere). Behind the head of many of the Buddha statues, old and new, they place a circle of lights, like a halo, which flash, pulsate and put on a miniature light show. It feels very incongruous with the serene pose of many of the statues.

Our guide, when asked, talked about the Buddhism practiced there. Several times he referred to what Buddha taught as the Middle Way, a path of moderation between extremes of sensual indulgence and self-mortification. He talked about practicing the Middle Path or the Noble Eightfold Path of right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. One afternoon as the Irrawaddy River flowed under our boat, images of the past week flowed into words:

Golden Tops, rooted deep  
Brown feet imprint earth  
Halos flash, “Buddha here, Buddha here”  
Feet walk, “Buddha here, Buddha here”

Many of the tops of the pagodas are painted gold or gold leafed. The buildings rooted in the earth are the foundation of the people, in history and religion. While some people had naturally brown feet and some lighter, we all became the same with brown feet on the bottom as we walked the middle path between the golden tops and foundations. The flashing halos only emphasized, to me, that it is not about worshipping an image but about the message the image conveys. And as I walked the paths and looked at the prints in the earth, of people and animals (which is where I find Buddha or his message of right thought, right speech, right action), I thought, what imprint will I leave on this earth? **With each step as I move in this life, do I live my beliefs, or religion, or principles?** What imprint or vibration am I creating with my speech, actions, thoughts? How do my actions affect other people?



I think each time I see my footprint in the earth it will remind me not only of my time in the land of the 10,000 Buddhas but of the message, “do I live my beliefs and principles?” What imprint will I leave upon this earth? Without my T’ai Chi Chih practice, which quiets the mind chatter and accesses another level of my being, my travels would have been just wonderful sightseeing. The many years of hearing and reading Justin’s stories and teachings, coupled with TCC practice, prepared me to go beyond the flashing halos, to go below the surface of gold and statues to the message – to go below my surface of ego in its various forms and briefly see.

There have been many great teachers throughout history who expressed ideas about how to live. We each take the message that resonates with us and use it as a guide to shape our principles and beliefs. The next time you walk barefoot in the earth of this planet, look at your imprint. What will it say to you? Take time to listen, consider. Feet walk, “Buddha here, Buddha here!”

## New TCC International Foundation

By PAM TOWNE, OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

There has long been a need for a non-profit entity to house our T'ai Chi Chih scholarship fund and to sign the facility contract for our annual teacher conference. Did you know that up until now, individual teachers have been signing these contracts and personally guaranteeing the up-to-\$50,000 required by the facilities where we have held conferences? Obviously, this needed to change.

Last year Antonia guided and inspired us to make the much needed non-profit a reality. In June 2013, the T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation was formed as a non-profit in the state of New Jersey. The next step was to file the voluminous Form 1023 with the IRS to apply for 501(c)3 status so that contributions to the foundation would be tax deductible to donors. Just before Christmas we received approval of our application, in what appears to be record time for the IRS to process and approve 501(c)3 status these days.

The purpose of the foundation is stated in its bylaws. It "was formed to sponsor the annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers Conference provide scholarship funds for T'ai Chi Chih teacher accreditation and continuing education; and to sponsor events that promote the knowledge of and practice of T'ai Chi Chih worldwide as a service to humanity, and not for pecuniary profit." At this time, there are three board members: the guide and the teacher trainers. We all volunteer our service without pay, as do the officers and scholarship committee.

If you have benefited from TCC and would like to help make it more available to others, please consider making a gift. Donations of any size are welcome and greatly appreciated. You can specify if you want it to go to conference scholarships, teacher accreditation scholarships or the general fund. Over the years, teachers have asked how they can include TCC in their wills. Now we have another legal way to do that by naming the T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation as a beneficiary.

If you'd like to make a tax-deductible contribution, you can send your check to:  
T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation  
PO Box 517  
Midland Park, NJ 07432



## TCC For The New Year: Full Practice Or Bust?

By DANIEL PIENCIAK, HOWELL, NEW JERSEY

Looking back at my beginnings with T'ai Chi Chih in 1995, I appreciate that an important part of maturing in my practice has been coming to know the option to do TCC in the way that I intuit will benefit me most on a given day at that particular time. This is quite different from my first years of thinking that I had to do a full daily practice in order to get the benefit or to be an authentic disciple of the practice.

Having spent many years teaching various age groups of different abilities, I now find that user-friendly options in the practice appeal to my students, and I have more students in my ongoing classes than ever before. This has been a gradual transition in my understanding of how one can best get the benefits of TCC. It has required some letting go, as I tend to be a person of discipline and routine.

Justin Stone has written about practice options in the preface and general introduction of the photo text. He suggests doing 36 times on either side of any 6 movements, or practicing 10 or 15 minutes in the morning and again in late afternoon, or a "typical program" of about 10 suggested movements, some done 18 times, and so on. He went so far as to write, "the reader will probably want to make his or her own program" and "T'ai Chi Chih movements can be performed at any speed."

I write this article just to say that I have found real value in knowing and teaching that the movements do not always have to be done in a particular order, and that every class I teach does not have to contain a formal or full practice. I now teach giving my students a simple but varied selection of movements from the start. I encourage them to take home and do whatever they can best remember comfortably. The important thing is to do movements hopefully at more than one time each day, without being concerned about a specific regimen. I always stress that it's a matter of what works best for the individual, (and that it is okay if that is a more disciplined practice done the same way every day).

I know that I did benefit greatly in those early years from regular daily full practices, and especially so when preparing to become accredited and in my first years of teaching. But the "whole banana" is not the only way. My students have taught me that user-friendly is definitely a good thing. And thank you, Justin, for helping to spell this out for us.

## It Takes A Village: *Evolution Through Chi*

By CARMEN L. BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

One day during the last month of his life, Justin leaned over to me as I was leaving his home and said, **"Be sure to tell all of them how grateful I am for all they have done."** My heart felt as if it would burst. I thought, "How will we show you how grateful we are *to you* for all you have done?"

I was delighted on another occasion when he shared an audiotape of the 1990 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference lecture with me. We talked about it after I had listened to it. Seeing that I had not understood the importance of his sharing, he looked into my eyes and said, "Do you think I have given you this tape just for you?" In that moment I became very grounded. I said, "Of course not; many should hear this tape." "How will that happen?" he asked sweetly. The booklet, *Evolution Through Chi*, was the result. Many helped make it. As it's said, "It takes a village."

There was the transcription of the tape, followed by hours of editing. We wanted to make sure we caught exactly what he was saying – not just the words, but also the essence. It was entered into the computer. A suitable cover was then created and finally taken to a printer. Every part of the process had taken at least a month. Each person who participated was wiser for having been involved. This all happened before the sophisticated publishing programs we now take for granted.

We ended up with a small booklet of 30 pages that was very large in meaning. Anyone may now read and re-read the lecture Justin gave at the 1990 conference. They may find special paragraphs like this one: "All these extraordinary manifestations of consciousness, for which science has as yet no explanation, depend mainly upon the transformation of *Prana* or bioenergy. The whole gamut of evolution has occurred mainly through changes in the spectrum of bioenergy." This is only one special paragraph of many. (*Evolution Through Chi* was copyrighted by Justin Stone 1991, and is published by Good Karma Publishing.)

It does take a village, which includes you and me. **How will we show our gratitude to Justin?** Is what he taught us only for us? Is it there for us to change, or is there something to be learned from the particular way he showed us? As we let go, we gain in his wisdom. We learn to love and share the *Chi*.

*Editor's note: Evolution Through Chi by Justin Stone may be downloaded for free at [www.gkpub.com/talks.php](http://www.gkpub.com/talks.php), and it can be ordered in booklet form (\$5, including shipping) from the T'ai Chi Chih Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico (505-299-2095).*

## Volunteering & *Abandon Hope*

By ROBERT MONTES DE OCA, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

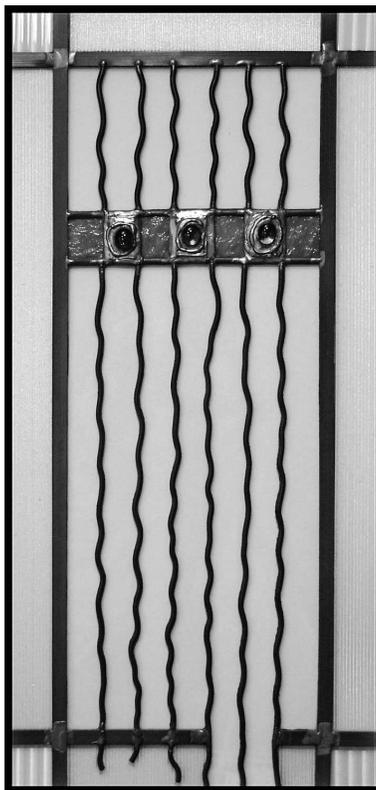
T'ai Chi Chih classes have been ongoing at the Metropolitan Detention Center (M.D.C.) for seven years. The P.A.C. (Psychiatric Acute Care) Units where the once-weekly classes are held are transitional units. The majority of inmates are kept there for a period of 30 days or less. As they progress medically and socially, they are transferred to other units within the M.D.C., to other correctional facilities in New Mexico, or are released into the general population.

It is not mandatory for inmates to participate in TCC classes; sometimes none do. I show up each week and begin practice with Rocking Motion. If no one asks me to teach the movement, I continue the practice. Some inmates watch me. Sometimes an inmate will ask me to teach him the movements. As we begin, I tell him that I volunteer my services; I want to help him understand that TCC has helped me in so many ways, that I share it so it can also help him. From the beginning of the TCC lesson to its completion, there is a noticeable change in the facial expression of the inmate and in his body language.

One inmate I had the opportunity to work with for 18 months learned all the TCC movements. He continued a regular practice and we discussed Justin Stone's *T'ai Chi Chih/Joy Thru Movement* textbook. He would ask questions for clarification and

eventually mentioned how certain he had become about previously unclear things. Justin Stone's book, *Abandon Hope*, talks about "Spiritual Maturity: The Growth of Certainty," and "The Growth of Certainty Through Devotion/The Way of Devotion." As a teacher, *Abandon Hope* was available to me, and I was able to make it available to this student so he could gain insight through Justin's words. At my suggestion, **the inmate read the two relevant chapters and came to understand what he was experiencing because of his regular TCC practice and through the reading.** After 18 months, he was transferred to another New Mexico correctional facility.

*Prajna* (Innate Wisdom): "There is within you That Which Knows and that is your teacher. That is the true teacher," says Justin Stone. As the TCC class flows, listen to *Prajna* (Innate Wisdom) and *Prajna* will be the true teacher.



# Justin's New (Or Old) DVD

By JACKSON RAINS, PLYMOUTH, MINNESOTA

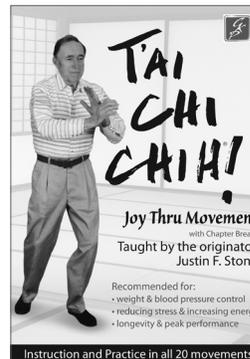
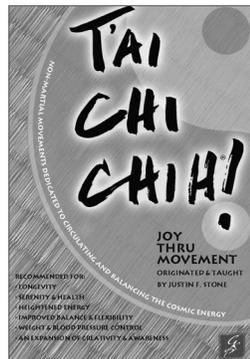
Good Karma offers two instructional DVDs featuring Justin Stone. There is the DVD with four teachers that was filmed in 2005. It has a graphic of T'ai Chi Chih on the cover and we will call it "DVD One." A filming from 1994 was re-released in 2013 and we will call it "DVD Two." To distinguish it from DVD One, there is a picture of Justin doing Daughter on the Mountain Top on the cover.

The research for this project consisted of watching both DVDs several times. Over the years I had developed a negative impression of DVD One due to the poor picture quality. Watching it several times gave me a renewed appreciation of its value as a teaching aid. Choosing between these two DVDs is not an easy task.

On a side note, **these DVDs are not just for students.** As teachers, we usually work alone with little opportunity to get feedback about how we are moving. We can fall into habits that do not represent the best of TCC movement. We can think, "I know that," and sell these DVDs to students, but **our personal practice and teaching will be improved if we watch either or both of them from start to finish a couple times a year.** After all these are the gold standards for how to move.

The most often asked question from students is which DVD do I recommend. Trying to be fair, I developed an answer that briefly mentions the differences between the various instructional DVDs and tell them which one I selected to watch daily while I was preparing for my Accreditation. Now this conversation is more complex with two DVDs of Justin. Both DVDs suffer from the same technical issues with poor picture quality. In fact of all the DVDs out there, only Sandy's DVD on seated TCC has a high definition picture.

**DVD ONE** [Editor's note: This is what Good Karma calls the Definitive DVD] is a more formal presentation with stage decorations and what seems like more scripted words. Justin is wearing a coordinated outfit. And it has a practice by four teachers at the end.



Left: What Good Karma Publishing calls the "Definitive DVD" (and what Jackson Rains calls "DVD One.") Right: What Good Karma Publishing calls the "Solo DVD" (and what Jackson Rains calls "DVD Two.")

**Technical Notes:** Today most of us have high definition (HD) TVs. If you put either of Justin's DVDs in your player and hit start the chances are that it won't look very good. The main trade off is between picture size and clarity. To get the clearest picture, start the DVD and with your TV's remote press the following options MENU> SETTINGS> PICTURE> PICTURE SIZE. You should see a list of choices like 16:9, Stretch to fit screen, Zoom, 4:3, Smart Picture 1 and, Smart Picture2. The options will vary depending on the TV's age and manufacturer. Try each option to find which gives you the best picture. "Smart Picture 2" is the best setting on my Samsung Smart TV.

Both of Justin's DVDs are recorded in standard definition and even with the best setting, the picture will be grainy. But even with picture quality issues, **both DVDs are extremely valuable because Justin is showing how he wants us to move.**

This DVD has chapter breaks so you can go directly to any of the movements if you don't want to watch the whole thing. The major negative for this DVD is that Justin does not mirror the movements, and he is filmed straight on from the front. Many students say it is confusing when they hear Justin say to start on the left, but he appears to move with the right. The other complaint I hear is about the music during the practice. I know, Justin composed it – however some students feel it is "old fashioned" and too "bouncy" for TCC practice. My first teacher played flute music with the sounds of birds and flowing water, so that has been imprinted on me as the sound of TCC.

**DVD Two** [Editor's note: This is what Good Karma calls the Solo DVD] is much less formal. Justin is wearing a sweatshirt and talks more extemporaneously. The only stage dressings are a couple of small pictures. It is more like an actual teaching session rather than a presentation. There are two versions of this DVD. One version has chapter breaks and the other does not. The cover of the DVD with chapter breaks has that listed. Be sure to only sell the

DVDs with the chapter breaks – I don't know

why anyone would want the one without chapter breaks. [Editor's Note: Good Karma Publishing no longer sells the DVD without chapter breaks.] The most important difference between DVD One and DVD Two has to do with mirroring. In DVD Two, Justin still does not mirror most of the time, but he mentions it and actually mirrors occasionally, especially in the practice section. Also, the camera is frequently filming from a three quarter angle, which seems to be less confusing to the students. During the practice, Justin gives pointers and directions that are valuable, which again makes it more like an actual teaching session. There is no music during the practice.

**A case can be made for either DVD, but I am recommending DVD Two to my students.** I like the informality and feel it contains more direction from Justin. I want make it easy for my students to buy a DVD, so I offer to exchange the DVDs if they want to try different ones. I also allow them to return a DVD if they don't think it is helpful and refund all but \$5 as a rental fee.

As a final note I want to summarize six points from Justin that are in both DVDs – soft, soft, soft and practice, practice, practice.

# Social Media Papers

By APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PENNSYLVANIA

The talk on social media and T'ai Chi Chih at this year's conference really lit a fire under me, and starting me thinking. What can I do to familiarize myself more with social media sites and how can I help propel ideas and images of TCC out to the masses that routinely utilize social media sites?

I decided to start with my university students. Because of hosting a recent TCC intensive, I needed to cancel a couple of TCC classes at the university where I teach. In lieu of attending a class, I told students that they needed to write a one-pager on anything they learned about TCC through any of the social media sites. They were invited to check out Twitter, Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube and the TCC website. (Editor's note: TCC is also on Instagram.)

The responses from the students were energizing – so much so, that I plan on assigning this idea each semester. Additionally, I was inspired to ask the students for permission to post photos of them practicing TCC on the TCC-related sites. With some trepidation, everyone agreed and pictures were taken during our class. Before any were sent off, though, we met as a group to edit down the images. I used this “teachable moment” to point out where students (and their instructor) were doing the movements incorrectly.

The following are excerpts from their journal entries and social media papers.

## facebook.com/taichichih

By ALESANDRA LORENZO, NURSING MAJOR

The first big thing I noticed on Facebook was a picture of a very tranquil forest, and it stated that the concentration is in the soles of the feet during TCC, which I already knew. What I didn't know was that it's called *hseuh* in Chinese, which means the bubbling spring. Nature is definitely something that goes hand in hand with TCC because of how calming it is. I also learned that Justin Stone talked of three confirming signs of TCC; the first one is trembling fingers. That means the Chi is flowing properly and you are getting the most benefit out of doing TCC. I have experienced the trembling, not as much as Justin seems to, but in my own way; it's an amazing feeling. I feel so peaceful and happy that I can experience this feeling through TCC.

I also learned that Justin Stone said all the movements were very soft and relaxed but that you feel as though you are swimming through heavy air. He also wants us to remember that the easiest way to forget worries is to shun the ego-center – the way TCC is doing itself and one is not considered doing it. **My favorite thing he said is** that, “We have a duty to find meaning in this very life ... this requires a disciplined mind.” This site has really beautiful pictures with a lot of Justin's words about the practice and benefits of TCC.

It is amazing how the whole page is dedicated to TCC and how many people love it, care for it and are very dedicated to it. Before this class I had no idea what it was or what to expect from it. I liked looking at people's comments to see how the practice affects them.

*Good Karma Publishing maintains the T'ai Chi Chih Twitter account => [twitter.com/taichichih](https://twitter.com/taichichih) (below right) and the YouTube account => [youtube.com/tccabq](https://youtube.com/tccabq) (below left).*

## twitter.com/taichichih BY ANDREW FORESE, CHEMICAL ENGINEER MAJOR

I chose to research TCC on Twitter because Twitter is the network I use most often. Most of the information here is from articles that Twitter users have posted as tweets, but there is a lot of good information in those articles. For example, one talked about the physical and mental benefits of doing TCC while seated. I vaguely remembered you telling us in class about someone who did their TCC movements while hospitalized, but **I had no idea it was something actually being taught**. Seated TCC seems similar to regular TCC with some adjustments.

I also saw someone tweet about a book on the benefits of TCC, a section of which talks about TCC practitioners being less susceptible to shingles. I am not sure if this is anecdotal or scientific evidence because I did not purchase the book, but it is still interesting. Another post was about the health benefits of doing TCC. This one discussed how TCC can help with arthritis, back pain and migraines – the latter which I sometimes get. While reading this article, another caught my attention because it was a Time.com article about how TCC has been shown to help fight depression in the elderly. **Upon further research, I found numerous articles discussing this and scientific studies showing** the correlation rather than anecdotal evidence. I find this fascinating because if TCC can be used in lieu of prescribed depression medications, which carry serious side effects, this could be very beneficial.

## facebook.com/taichichih BY BRIDGET JENNINGS, PHYSICS MAJOR

I researched TCC on Facebook, where I found peaceful pictures of nature, which I expected. **The moderator of the page would post questions like**, “How does TCC affect your everyday life?” and “What are your favorite poses?” I learned from these posts that real TCC enthusiasts try to practice TCC daily, all throughout the day. Some people do it while they cook, while they wash dishes, even in line at the store. They do it discreetly to themselves.

One woman, who works a long night shift, uses TCC to calm down when work gets too hard – but also to boost her *Chi* and reenergize when she gets tired. Almost everyone who commented on that particular post agreed that rocking side to side was his or her favorite (most helpful) move to do. That didn’t necessarily mean it was better (more helpful) though. I found it interesting that everyone was in agreement on this particular post. Next, I’ll be checking out the TCC Pinterest page.

## www.taichichih.org/health\_benefits/ BY AMY SCHIED, BIOLOGY PRE-PT MAJOR

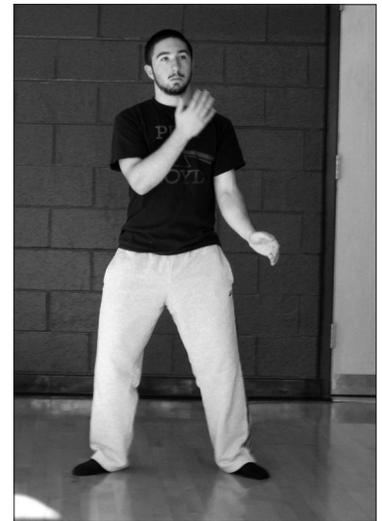
There are spiritual, mental and physical health benefits to doing TCC. It has been known to lessen migraine headaches and even make them disappear. Doing TCC can also cause joint pain and blood pressure to decrease. It is said that TCC allows the essential energy, also known as *Chi*, to flow throughout the body. Because of this flowing, health and wellbeing improves in people, although some people experience TCC differently. I find it very interesting that simple relaxing exercises such as TCC can cause significant health improvements. I wonder why it’s not more well known and used as a form of therapy for different health problems.

## twitter.com/taichichih BY LAUREN ROBSON, SOCIAL WORK MAJOR

The Twitter account lists articles and quotes regarding TCC. The first interesting tidbit was a tweet about how TCC can be practiced while sitting. I thought, “How?” The main force of TCC is the weight shift, so how can this be done sitting down? After a quick Google search, I discovered that there is a seated TCC where the student moves his or her upper body instead of the feet. This could be a great thing for people in wheelchairs – and a good thing to get TCC to a wider audience.

Another tweet reflected on how TCC can help lift depression. It is fascinating to know that something so little can do so much naturally and with no effort. If more research gets done, and this statement proves to be true, doctors should start prescribing TCC over medications.

All in all, this Twitter account has many interesting facts about TCC and is very worthwhile to look at. It provides insight and knowledge into this way of life and will hopefully let more people know the wonders of TCC.



April Leffler's students in action.

## The Mountaintop

BY LARRY BLOOM, SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA

**T**'ai Chi Chih practice seems to kindle my creative energy and the sprouting of spiritual seeds that have long been asleep. This invigorating wind of well-being is accompanied by a subconscious sense of improved balance between my own *yin* and *yang* elements – negative and positive, analytical and creative, weak and strong. The pleasant sensation inspired me to conceive imagery for some of the TCC movements and muse about their meaning – most recently Daughter on the Mountaintop.

At the top of this TCC movement I imagine our naturally firm forearms outline a mountain while our supple crossed wrists represent the daughter on top. That's the *yang* and *yin* I am attempting to portray in my modest sketch while keeping the imagery simple and flowing. I find that practicing TCC prior to creative activity encourages the effort of no effort while reinforcing my intellectual courage to share the art of no artist.

Mountaintops are one of the most triumphant symbols of overcoming obstacles, spiritual rising and progress in any endeavor. Is it coincidence that Justin selected a mountain when he named this movement as well as his book titled *Climb the Joyous Mountain*? And why did he add a seemingly contradictory quality with the daughter on the top? I looked to Justin to shed some sunlight on this. Here are some quotations from *Climb the Joyous Mountain* that resonated with me as I pondered the questions.

*“The Zen Priest Ogata gave me a Zen lecture by saying, “Anybody can be the Small Hermit. Be the Big Hermit.” Much later, meditating in the foothills of the Himalayas, I thought of this and said to myself, “What am I doing up here being the Small Hermit? I should be able to do this at the corner of Broadway and 42nd Street.*

*There is only one mountain, but to the surveyor, it appears in different sections. So, too, the one existence appears in innumerable ways to us, depending on where each of us stands. The world truly is a subjective experience, not an object to be perceived the same by all.*

*If we place ourselves above others, we cannot see the absolute value of all. If we do not realize that we exist in total relationship, we are separated from others. And so*

*we grasp only what appears favorable, hoping everything else will disappear. In so doing, we divide the Joyous Mountain into plots and subdivide it into yours and mine, good and bad.*

*If we want an apple tree, we must plant the apple seed. We cannot expect effect without suitable cause. If we want the serenity of untroubled mind, we do not do away with death or trouble. That is impossible. To live is to have worries, and eventually, to die. We change our attitude toward things, empty ourselves of our previous habitual responses, and, **cultivating a new soil ground, find it empty and ready for the new seed.** This spiritual seed then makes it possible for us to climb the joyous mountain.*

*Pleasure is a reaction. You have just fulfilled some desire, experienced a sensory or psychological gratification, or had some suffering lifted from your shoulders. **In each case the pleasure is temporary,** and must be renewed again and again if we are to pursue the familiar pleasure-pain syndrome throughout our lives.*

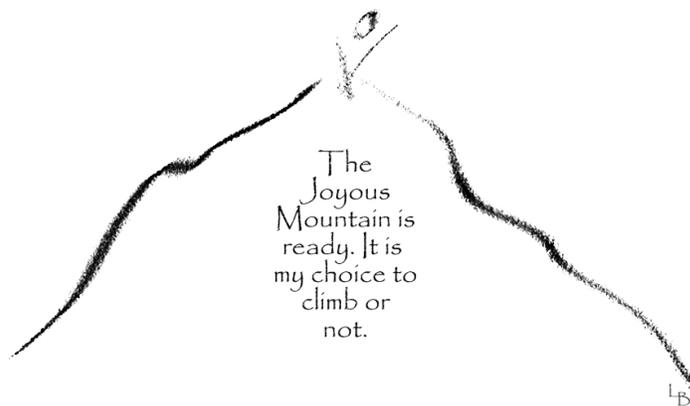
*Joy is your natural state, although it is usually clouded over. When the Mind returns to its natural condition, you are joyful. Such Bliss is not the result of anything. “To the Mind that is still the Universe surrenders.” **The Life Force itself is joyous.** All we have to do is get ourselves out of the way and enjoy it.*

*Does writing about the Joyous Mountain make one joyous? I don't know. What do I know?*

***All one can do is bring the palms together in a salute to all beings.** May they lose the attachment that makes for suffering. Life can be good – if we plant the proper seeds. The way of joy is best. Climb the Joyous Mountain.”*

All metaphors aside, when it comes to serious mountaintops any professional mountaineer will tell you they are wonderful places to visit but you really don't want to stay there. I'm not referring to

the oversized hills some call mountains, rather those peaks that jut up and slice high into the sky like Mount Everest or Kilimanjaro. Those mountaintops are cold, the air is thin and the wind blows. The weather changes on a dime and there is no shelter. Getting there is an exhilarating experience, but you need to get started downward almost as soon as you finish going upward – or you could run into trouble. Maybe the daughter on the mountaintop is perfectly placed after all.



# Gateway To Eastern Philosophy & Religion

BY JUSTIN F. STONE

## ~ EIGHT FOLD PATH ~

[This is] the way, the path to realize that there is no self. Remember Dogen said, "The way to realize the Self is by forgetting the self." I'll give you a personal instance of something like this. I went to see Paul Reps, the Zen writer, in Seattle. He said, "Well, Justin, you've been on a spiritual path for thirty-five years, what have you realized?" I said, "Paul, I realize there's nothing to be done." He said, "Ah, but **if you hadn't been on a spiritual path for thirty-five years, you wouldn't know there's nothing to be done!**" What you are doing is like seeing the point of a joke. Someone tells a joke, and you don't get it at all. But the next day, you're walking along the street, and all of a sudden you start laughing. Nothing has changed, but suddenly you see the point of the joke. The spiritual teacher is giving you the tools so that you can see the point. Dogen tells you to follow the Buddha Dharma, do what you're supposed to do, be faithful, and yet nobody is doing anything. Pai Ch'ang said, "The Buddha is helping you to enlightenment;

*the spiritual teacher  
is giving you the tools  
so that you can see  
the point*

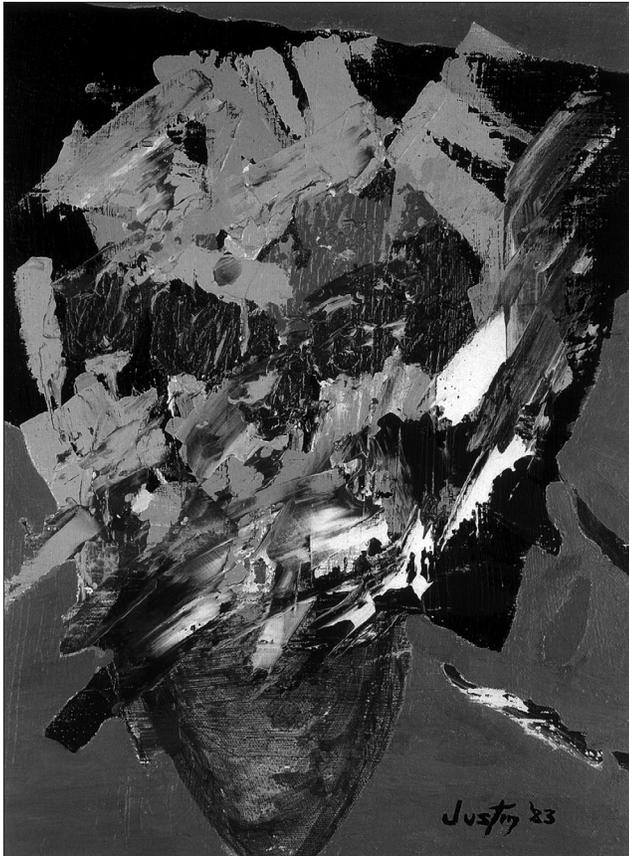
where there is enlightenment, there is a Buddha. This is not the highest form. Where there is no Buddha, where there is no enlightenment, this is the higher form." It is very paradoxical, very difficult to understand. It can only be realized through practice. It is not an intellectual matter. It isn't 'yes'; it isn't 'no'; it isn't a combination of 'yes' and 'no'; and it isn't an absence of 'yes' and 'no.' What is it? It can only be experienced.

## ~ DO YOU WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH? ~

It is very difficult to follow Indian teaching. I would not advise anybody living in the world to try and follow the way of the Buddha. But you can meditate; **you can think properly; you can see that your way of livelihood, your speech, your thought, does not hurt others;** and you can study the Buddhist precepts. He gave the unalloyed truth. Most people will exclaim, "But I don't want the truth! I want to live in my illusion, my suffering." That's O.K., but Buddha gave the truth to those who want it.

Most religions come from an entirely different standpoint. They try to present it at a social, agreeable level. For example, the big argument in the Catholic Church now is about abortion and about women and celibacy. Those are very important questions, but are they dealing with ultimate truth? Are they dealing with the six philosophies that you originally learned about here? No, churches are becoming more socially oriented and oriented toward solving everyday problems. I'm not sure if that is a bad thing at all. But there are some who have to have ultimate answers, and who have to know truth. Some have given their lives for truth!

My Zen Roshi said to a group of people, (he really surprised me when he said this), "A little wine, a little women, a little song, and a little religion, all in proper amounts is all right." In other words, it's all right to drink a little, and it's all right to have some fun, and participate in your religion but **don't get too serious about it.** Of course, that isn't the way he talks to the monks! He says to the monks, "*Out there*, you must be a social human being, you have to deal with others in a considerate way. *Here* you must see with religious eyes." If you don't see with religious eyes, which in the sense of Buddhism means non-duality (not two), he's going to bang you around a little bit! Very few people seem to know it, but Zen Buddhism was never in the ascendancy in Japan as far as numbers go. It was always for a few. Yet the influence of Zen Buddhism has been so strong on Japanese culture.



"Sound of Flowers," a painting by Justin Stone and courtesy here of a private collection, appears in his lush monograph, "Tentatively Forever," available from Good Karma Publishing

From the book *Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion*, excerpted and reprinted with permission from Good Karma Publishing, and available on [www.gkpub.com](http://www.gkpub.com).

# TCC Unfolding: My Story

By TIFFANY ANNE MANGALINDAN, ELLICOTT CITY, MARYLAND

When signing up for a T'ai Chi Chih summertime class, I thought it would be somewhat like yoga. For a year I practiced hot yoga, taught in a *vinyasa* yoga tradition. In practicing this type of yoga, I was able to relieve stress, lose weight and focus better.

At the beginning of my TCC class, I was stressed, full of anger, and a million things were going through my mind on a daily basis; I didn't know what I should focus on more and what was more important. When I started getting the movements and doing the practice outside of class, I started paying attention to my breathing and my thoughts. **One by one, I started to prioritize what needed my immediate attention** and what, especially, I was able to control. I learned to let go of the things I could not control.

I'm an open-minded individual; ask me anything, anything at all and I am willing to answer. Doing TCC allowed me to be even more open-minded, to really think outside the box and not to limit myself to what I'm used to doing. It is definitely a stress reliever. I worked two jobs, took two summer courses, interned at the IT department at a well-known corporation *and* planned my dream wedding. Talk about overload. But again, doing the practice outside of class helped a lot. My anger subsided and when I'm stuck in traffic, I listen to music and really pay attention to what's happening around me.

## Pyramid Poems

sun  
I love  
the fire  
very peaceful  
wakes us up  
and then  
sleeps  
— SHARON SIRKIS

our  
restless  
bodies wait  
for the moment  
to be one  
with our  
minds  
— NICHOLAS JOHNSON

air  
breathe it  
wind whistles  
by and over  
the body  
giving  
hugs  
— MERCEDES RANDALL

ground  
feel it  
live in this  
very moment  
to fulfill  
your own  
life  
— MERCEDES RANDALL

One class assignment required that we turn off the music in our car and notice what was happening around us, especially the little things. Not only was I able to hear my own breathing on the way home, **I can now hear my thoughts.** And I learned to appreciate the beauty of a gorgeous day; even when it rains, I enjoy watching and listening to the raindrops falling. I've begun to appreciate how far I've gotten in my college career. You are how you treat others; I've learned to not hold grudges against people. I've learned to let go of the past so I can move into my future.

With TCC, I have more energy to get things done, and I feel a lot better about myself. I had gained weight when I started college and I always doubted myself in anything that I did. Putting on that weight has left me feeling lazy and unmotivated. But doing TCC practices outside of class has helped me stay motivated to work out every day. Although most people do not know, I have had asthma for as long as I can remember. It used to be so severe that I used an inhaler two or three times daily. However, my condition isn't as severe as it was before; I now use my inhaler once every day or two (which is amazing and such a stress reliever).



*Student Dave Balog, of northwestern Indiana, doing Light at the Top of the Head, off the coast of Croatia.*

From start to end, I have grown mentally, physically and, especially, emotionally. I am so very thankful that I can maintain my positive attitude and keep myself motivated. I am also more focused than ever. I definitely look at things with a whole new perspective and I take my days one day at a time. There's no need to rush through traffic or curse at the driver next to me, or even try to multi task. Time is the one thing that I cannot control, but with the patience that I have been cultivating, I can work with time.

Thank you, Professor Sirkis, from the bottom of my heart. You've helped me look at the world with a new set of eyes and experience a rush of energy I never knew I had. This was a one-of-a-kind experience; if I could, I would take your class again. I even dream more than before; the dreams were so realistic that I didn't want to wake up from them. And the crazy part? Hoping my dreams become reality. Some days they revealed bits and pieces of themselves. Again, thank you for this experience.

## A TCC Way Through The Day

### A device to remember the sequence of movements

By MICHELE R. DAPELO, BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

**F**rom my *resting pose*, I step out into my day with a *rocking motion* as I awaken like a bird slowly rustling its feathers. Then suddenly the *bird flaps its wings*; it is in flight. I too am aware and alert; the day has begun.

My day takes me up and down then round and round in a flurry of activities that move me in circles *around the platter* of my tasks – only to go some more *around the platter* in a *variation*. It has been so hectic my heart is beating like a *bass drum* and I decide to pause in my day.

I peer up at the beauty of the *daughter on the mountaintop* and then gaze over the tranquil *daughter in the valley*. I am grateful for their gifts of inspiration and solitude in my day.

Now feeling both serene and energized, I, and my day, enthusiastically move along. Sometimes I *carry the ball to the side*, at other times I feel the *push pull* of the day's flow, yet always, I am *pulling in the energy*, and thankfully so.

Sometimes a day can place you in a sticky situation, sort of like *pulling taffy*. The day's events can stretch you mighty thin, feeling like you are weighted *pulling taffy* with an *anchor variation*, encompassed *pulling taffy* with a *wrist circle variation* and ultimately *pulling taffy* in *perpetual motion*. These taffy situations are challenging and stimulating work ... much like *working the pulley*.

So much doing, maybe too much effort; then suddenly a *light at the top of the head*, I have a bright idea. I can reenergize at the day's end by going to the *light at the temple* ... or taking a *joyous breath* ... or simply watching the *passing clouds*. If I remain still, I can even hear the mystifying *six healing sounds* all around me: *ho (ho) >>> hu (who) >>> szu (tsue) >>> hsu (shuh) >>> his (shi) >>> chui (chwee)*.

As my day settles down, heaven and earth come together in a *cosmic consciousness pose*. I am bathed in quiet. And in stillness and peace I appreciate balanced and circulated energy. What a deep joy within me. And, like a bubbling spring, this joy, peace and love can gently flow out to others.



A student of Jackson Rains doing Bass Drum on a river cruise in France.

## Sooner Rather Than Later

By BAYLEIGH OBERLANDER, GRAYSLAKE, ILLINOIS

**I** have learned a great deal through taking my T'ai Chi Chih class. I have changed and have a feeling that **I will continue to change as I continue to practice**. I have learned the movements of TCC, a new vocabulary, and about the physical and mental aspects of my body. I have more and balanced energy after I practice, which also motivates me to get things done.

I have begun to feel physical and mental changes within myself. I find myself more at peace, more accepting and more physically stable. I'm also not getting cold as easily; I am better able to regulate my body temperature.

Finding TCC during college was one of the best things about my college experience. I'm glad to have begun this journey sooner rather than later. I recommend you start now.

## TCC For Grief

By ROSEANN HEINRICH, PARMA, OHIO

Without a doubt, the last 18 months have been the most difficult in my life. My son was diagnosed with a brain tumor in May 2012. From that day until his death in October 2013, and through this grieving process, life has been a very different process. The world seems to move in a strange way, as if my life is separate from the whole.

I did my best to focus on the positive through each of the three brain surgeries. Watching the process of radiation and chemotherapy was difficult – being aware of all that these protocols destroy. My son had been so physically fit and healthy. He was an avid athlete (he qualified for the SWAT team of the FBI when he was 40), so the worst part was watching the gradual physical deterioration.

Through this incredibly difficult journey, I had one constant: my regular T'ai Chi Chih practice. I did my practice to find peace. I did my practice to find courage. I did it at the hospital when I needed to calm myself. I did my practice looking for hope. Each time I did my practice I felt a new beginning, and I could face it all again.

TCC brought me to the groundedness I needed to remain in the moment and with it came peace and knowing that in the end, we would all be okay. This too was part of the process of life experience.

I talk to my son, Joe every day, as I know he is near and I will see him again. I miss him in the physical. I do my TCC practice each day to find peace, hope and joy in this moment.

## TCC's Gentle Power

By SUE BITNEY, RICHFIELD, MINNESOTA

In October 2012, my beloved husband of 40 years was diagnosed with lung cancer. It was a terrifying and devastating diagnosis. My T'ai Chi Chih practice helped me to stay grounded through all of the tests, scans, biopsies, surgeries and visits to the various doctors. We were told in the beginning that Jim's cancer was curable because it was contained in his left lung and that once removed, the cancer would be gone. That was not what the cancer had in mind.

Jim recovered well from the lung removal surgery in December but then something went terribly wrong in January. He could no longer tolerate the smell or taste of food and, in the end, lost over 100 pounds from October to mid-March. TCC kept me calm and helped me focus. Jim was in terrible pain that was helped by watching Sandy's seated TCC DVD. He could not physically follow the movements but watching her and listening to her voice helped him relax, decreased his pain and allowed him to sleep. We were also blessed by a healing visit from Antonia when she came to Minnesota for her annual retreat.

Jim died on March 16, 2013 surrounded by family. TCC helped both of us stay grounded through this difficult experience. It provided comfort and helped us accept what was happening and to transition from one life to a new one for us both. TCC helped me carry on, offering quiet strength and comfort in the gentle rhythmic movements that transcend the present realities of life.

## I Began to Wake Up

By MARY WICHMANN, ROCHERT, MINNESOTA

I began to wake up  
I began to remember my past  
I began to think beyond today  
I began to consider my needs  
I began to believe that I was important  
I began to appreciate my life and my relationships  
I began to question the direction and purpose of my life

I took the cover off the Mary Sullivan box  
I examined the contents  
I remembered  
I felt the sadness  
I experienced the fear  
I questioned  
I talked with family members  
I learned the real from the perceived  
I forgave, first myself and then others

I felt the weight lifting  
I felt the Joy returning  
I began to sing again



## Following The Chi At Menninger Clinic

By Pia Knighton, Houston, Texas

I started T'ai Chi Chih practice in 2001 in Houston, Texas, after going to the Cenacle Retreat Center looking for increased spirituality, where one wall was covered with information about different activities. I was drawn to the TCC brochure by Carletta LaCour, and I loved the classes from the very beginning. For the next 10 years I took every class she offered. After eight years she asked me why I was not becoming a teacher. From that moment, I practiced full sessions daily for two years and became certified in March 2011.

I started teaching immediately, happily filling in for Carletta. I am also a Psychiatric Registered Nurse and work at the Menninger Clinic in Houston on the Adolescent Unit and have worked with teens for 30 years. Since offering a TCC presentation at the clinic in the summer of 2011, I have been teaching adolescents TCC weekly.

During the 30-minute class, we learn three to five movements and we practice. I give a brief evaluation before they are discharged to see how TCC has helped them; I have collected evaluations since 2011 and am processing the conclusions. (Adolescents always state that they feel calmer and more focused when they finish their practice.) Some continue taking TCC classes when they leave the clinic. I also give the adolescents written handouts about TCC and include [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) for more information.

## Vertigo

By Terry Jennings, Honolulu, Hawaii

One of my students has MS and is currently having vertigo. I encouraged her to do seated TCC and visualize the movements if she couldn't move at all. If you have issues with vertigo please share your insights in *The Vital Force* and continue the conversation. Knowing others have this experience feels comforting to her. Below is an exchange between the student, Sandy McAlister and April Leffler.

Student: I am loving the movements but cannot do all of them. I choose a few depending on how I am feeling. I do some lying down or leaning back on the couch. I move my hands and then often move my right/left leg for each movement. I just cannot do any rocking.

SM: She does not need to do all or even most of the movements. Find the ones where she doesn't have to work at it, movements where she can let go into the feel without physical or mental effort. Her intention will go a long way.

Student: I added some of her ideas of using my heel. I was definitely only using one foot and forgetting to incorporate the second foot for the second half; it made some positions so much more meaningful.

AL: I wrote an article for *The Vital Force* called "How White Are Your Knuckles?" (August 2011, pg. 18) about my challenging journey of having daily vertigo for three months.

## Beneficial Healing Of Hands

By Diana Daffner, Sarasota, Florida

For almost 20 years, my husband Richard and I have led a free, weekly T'ai Chi Chih practice session at sunset on Siesta Beach here in Sarasota. Tourists and other visitors often stop by; sometimes they realize that they have encountered the movements before. One such visitor was **Dr. Alan Dattner, a physician of Integrative Medicine and Dermatology in New York City.**

**He shared with us this important story about the benefits of Around the Platter Variation:**

"On a particularly cold morning on Stratton Mountain in Vermont, my fingers practically froze trying to deal with my skis outside of the lodge. On that day, when I was in my 20's in medical school, we decided it was too cold to ski. Unfortunately, my hands never seemed to be the same after that. When it was cold, my hands would get cold and the vessels seemed to tighten up so that the blood couldn't flow to let them up.



Years later, in the early 1980's at a T'ai Chi Chih class in Northeast Connecticut, I experienced an exercise of making a ball and pushing it away at shoulder height, and I found that my hands got warm. I realize that something about this movement relaxed the constriction of the blood vessels in my fingers and caused the blood to flow into my hands. I presumed it broke a localized sympathetic nervous system controlled vasoconstriction in my fingers that cut down blood flow and made my fingers cold. I was

extremely impressed by the ability of this technique to change the response of my fingers to cold, then, and any time that I repeated the exercise.

As a result, I have showed this movement to patients with cold hands caused by Renaud's disease and other similar conditions with cold hands. I believe that this maneuver is very important for regulating the autonomic response in the hands and upper extremities, and hope that formal research studies are done to demonstrate this. I have done different forms of T'ai Chi on an infrequent basis over the past 36 years, and have found that doing this particular exercise to be one of my most vivid experiences of immediate benefit."

## The Week In Review

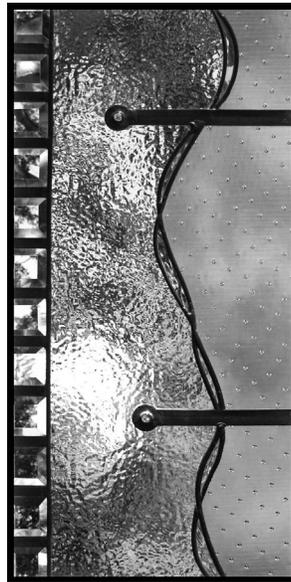
By BARB SHAMBACH, BATTLE CREEK, MICHIGAN

Accreditation has been enjoyable, fatiguing, inspirational, eye-opening, humiliating, frustrating, challenging, and encouraging. My heart is especially grateful to Pam Towne (a steady, graceful and gentle lead teacher in charge of accreditation), Judy Hendricks and Mary Ruiz (for their organization and hospitality), and to all of the auditors for their passion and commitment to share their vast knowledge to assist new candidates to carry the gift of T'ai Chi Chih forward with love and integrity.

My upcoming TCC plans include:

- Reviewing all of my teacher accreditation notes and organizing them.
- Listening to and writing clear, concise instructions regarding each movement from Justin Stone's DVD's, and studying the pictures and words in the Joy Through Movement photo text, drawing heavily on the same terminology Justin uses when teaching.
- Building confidence in my learned skills as a TCC instructor – by practice-teaching to those close to me.
- Integrating the tips and hints modeled by Pam, the auditors, and my fellow candidates.
- Striving to impart to my students an unfolding clarity of instruction in teaching the movements, and a respect and depth in understanding the wisdom and benefit of TCC.

I plan to teach my first registered classes at the Y Center when I return to Michigan in Spring 2014. I am in contact with the director there, who is very interested in getting TCC on the schedule.



## Albuquerque, New Mexico, November 2013

By ADABELLE RYCHTARIK, SIMPSONVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA

I began studying T'ai Chi Chih in 2008 and knew in a short time that I wanted to teach and share this discipline. I was fortunate, in our move to South Carolina, to find a wonderful teacher waiting. Three years studying with Vicki Schroeder has shown me what I experienced again in Albuquerque during teacher training: *teh*, the power of inner sincerity. It showed through each attending student, Pam Towne (our trainer for the week), the auditing teachers, and everyone at the TCC center. All helped guide us through our daily practice and the accreditation process – allowing us to fulfill our dreams of becoming teachers.

Several teachers arrived for our early morning practice, sharing their time, knowledge, and love of TCC and Justin. It allowed us to grow, deepen our practice, feel each movement, flow from the *tan t'ien* and, as Dora said, “come home.” We learned how to stay grounded for ourselves and for our students. We learned how to teach, what to look for in our students, and how to mirror each movement. We became more aware and present as we deepened our practice and moved forward, both as students and in our new roles as teachers.

**My teacher said this would be a special week.** No words can adequately express the gratitude I felt in seeing the film of Justin at Folsom Prison (at age 82), his compassion, sharing this gift he left for each of us. TCC is now our gift as new teachers to share with our students. Thank you Justin.

## Great & Trying

By DANA DILLER, PRESCOTT VALLEY, ARIZONA

Accreditation week was one of the greatest experiences of my life and one of the most trying. I am very grateful that I attended an intensive before going through the process; it helped tremendously. The help and insights from all of the teachers will prove invaluable as I start to teach. I am grateful to all for their parts in making this a wonderful experience – for all of the candidates who attended.

## New TCC Community Project

By ANN RUTHERFORD, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

At the New Mexico Pecos Monastery T'ai Chi Chih Retreat in September, Antonia announced the creation of the T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation, a non-profit fund, which will grant scholarships to those who cannot otherwise afford to attend TCC teacher conferences or trainings. With the announcement, Kathy Grassel and I were inspired to declare the birth of a new writing project: the creation of a *Seijaku* publication chronicling *Seijaku* practitioners' experiences with this advanced TCC form, which Justin Stone called a “heightened awareness practice.” The format will be similar to that of the previous three *Blooming the Flower* publications, and the sales will be donated to the foundation.

This is a community project. To make the publication a reality, we need *Seijaku* practitioners to write a concise paragraph or poem, illuminating what *Seijaku* has done for them. Our artist in residence, Christa Keller, a longtime TCC teacher, has graciously volunteered to create the publication's artwork. Please email your writings to Ann.

# First Ever New York City TCC Workshop

By DIANA BAHN, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

I took a trip to Utah not too long ago and my friend, who I was visiting, said the Monarch butterflies migrate through there to Mexico. Well, we New Yorkers uncharacteristically opened our windows here and had the rare opportunity to have Sandy MacAlister, T'ai Chi Chih trainer, fly in on her magical wings. Thanks to the vision and true grit of Alba Cordasco, the first ever New York City TCC workshop became a reality on Saturday, October 26, 2013.

Twenty-six teachers and serious students met from 10 AM until about 5 PM at The Church of the Village in Manhattan. Using Sandy's own metaphor, we spent the day joyfully "picking the wings off the butterfly," a.k.a. our TCC practice. Though this deductive approach is so not Justin Stone's way, every time Sandy stood up and moved we were witnessing a fine representation of what he meant by "quality" of movement. Sandy makes TCC look so easy.

Her ability to simplify and get away from too many words (and metaphors) was contagious. I was so grateful to be there doing TCC in my own state and city that, at one point, I felt like all of us were actually in Times Square, moving and feeling serenity. It was a rare high for me lately.

One student shared that since she had become a T'ai Chi Chih teacher she was able to go back to the long form of Tai Chi and finally learn it. Yet, she humbly admitted that she is still learning TCC.

Another lady told about how she would be driving her car in a literal 'drive state' and not see anything, but now, since practicing TCC, she looks out and sees leaves and trees and hears the melody of the birdsong. Even in New York City, if you can believe it.

Sister Frances Kay who spent years living in Africa, reminded the class to heed nature when we practice. She has a stunning view of the Hudson River up where she now lives in Tarrytown. My own teacher, Carolyn Perkins, quipped that the classrooms in New York City usually do not have those sorts of views. I can vouch for

that myself as I have had to literally move heavy tables, chairs, and even dispel cockroaches, angry politicians and dogmatic voice teachers who wouldn't quit teaching, from the working spaces where I have taught TCC in Manhattan.

Carolyn, a dedicated TCC teacher for over fifteen years, brought at least four serious students for the day plus her own husband, Michael Perkins. It was Michael who asked Sandy some amazing questions, as did many other participants, and kept us all steadily plucking at those butterfly wings.

My own sister, Cindy, happened to be in town from Syracuse and took the class. Cindy has recently gotten back to a daily practice of TCC and wanted to come and learn more. I overheard her and another student comparing notes on what DVDs they preferred to watch when they practiced on their own. It kind of made me nostalgic for my early days of TCC and I was so happy my sister wanted to further her understanding of this wonderful moving meditation.

Needless to say, the first ever NYC TCC Day was a huge success. There were so many TCC enthusiasts sharing so much.

Thanks to Sandy and Alba and all the participants, we had a day of genuine discovery. At the end of the day, Sandy very aptly put the butterfly, wings and all, back together to its wholeness. Then, she blew on it and it began to fly; effortless, easy. That is the way I felt for several days after the workshop. We lucky New Yorkers are eagerly awaiting the next migratory butterfly landing.



## TCC Intensive With Sandy McAlister, October 2013, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

BY APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK,  
PENNSYLVANIA

Sandy refined, reviewed, and helped people delve deeper into their practice while reminding the group that their experience could be as “intense” as they wanted it to be. Quite a few attendees were serious students who hope to become accredited next year. The integration within the group was apparent as they became softer and cohesive in the movements. Below are some reflections:

Quietly and patiently taking the time to welcome T'ai Chi Chih into my life wholeheartedly. – ANONYMOUS

Beginning to see TCC principles more clearly around me externally. Know, with the deepening of my practice, they will become part of my internal self. With consistent effort and enthusiasm for the change, that will probably take the rest of my life. – ANONYMOUS

Greatly helped break open many aspects of my own practice that needed attention. The time we spent sharing stories, our practices and the parts of our lives that brought us together give me courage to continue this journey towards accreditation. Sandy is to be



Front: Roberta Mueller, April Leffler, Sandy McAlister, Barbara Flynn, Nancy Daniel, Linda Jones Back: Lynne Jones Dietze, Bonnie Ward Strauss, Fran Kaib, Alba Cordasco, Carolyn O'Donnell, Jack Weaver, Julie Barrier, Sarah Riley, Angelina Calogero

commended for her obvious desire to share the practice with others, and April's work in preparing and facilitating all the arrangements made for a very peaceful time together. Thank you.” – ANGELA COLONNA CALOGERO

Great chance to work on shifting my focus from the outside to within, to let the weight shift move my arms through the moves. – SARAH RILEY

An opening experience to realize and feel another level, to find more refinements, to experience the greater flow of the Chi, to see this as a lifelong path, to bathe in the pool of oneness with the people of this community. My deepest gratitude to all who communed this week, bearing witness to tears pouring forth. I am whole-heartedly looking forward to accreditation and how that experience will form all that encounters its waiting arms. – JACK WEAVER

Returned home with a greater clarity, acceptance and calmness. I feel grateful and humbled to be a part of what Justin created. – ANONYMOUS

After refinements, a greater increase of energy flow. With patience (and sometimes gentle humor), we focused on increasing the flow of the life force. I more fully connected with the idea of being grounded in the Earth by feeling the Earth's energy bubbling up through the soles of my feet and flowing upward. Joy. – BONNIE WARD-STRAUSS

**An opportunity to cross a bridge to a more full and deeper practice.** Once over the bridge we can see and feel many things that eluded us before going deeper into the moves and all their parts, then putting it together into a flowing practice. I would definitely do it again to stay fresh and in touch with the community.” – LYNNE JONES-DIETZE

## 2013 Conference

BY BOBBIE & ANDY ANDERSON, HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS

The Minneapolis T'ai Chi Chih conference team presented an outstanding conference program: from the tea ceremony that included the gift of a charming handmade teacup to walking the labyrinth, which was a welcomed stress reliever. Antonia's talk on impermanence struck home since Bobbie's mother passed in February and Andy's younger brother passed in July. Andy also was informed of serious health issues in May. Change is always with us and dealing with it can be challenging. Doing TCC really helps.



Teaching tips for seated TCC were very helpful. It seems like more and more students are looking for movement that

can be done seated as well as standing. Sessions on taking care of our feet, using props in teaching TCC, and practical trade tools were helpful and something we are seriously considering. Doing *Seijaku* reminded us to practice, and we also discussed teaching a *Seijaku* class in 2014 in our community. The evening Dances of Universal Peace were very moving, but also energizing. Dancing seemed to make us all feel joyful.

On Saturday, the Tedx talk and *Prajna* information were fascinating. The social media session opened our eyes to how TCC is expanding in the world and something we need to consider. We also took advantage of the opportunity to be videotaped for YouTube. That was an experience all of its own.

Congratulations Minneapolis conference team, you were great and did a fantastic job!

### CONFERENCE 2014

July 24-27

at Kean University, Union, New Jersey  
with transportation from Newark Liberty  
Int'l Airport & NYC

Info @ [www.taichichih.org/calendar-of-events/](http://www.taichichih.org/calendar-of-events/)

# Prajna Retreat

With Sandy McAlister, October 2013,  
Aston, Pennsylvania

By APRIL LEFFLER, PROSPECT PARK, PENNSYLVANIA

This weekend we experienced 24 hours of silence, lots of T'ai Chi Chih, readings from Justin, and a variety of experiences that naturally seem to heighten one's awareness. The voice of *Prajna* becomes much clearer when we quiet ourselves within and attune to it. Below are more comments from attendees:

The retreat's rhythm of quietness, stillness and group movement created a space within me for **greater openness and willingness to trust what is revealed every day**. It was a startlingly powerful experience of individual and group awareness. – MICHELE DAPELO

Great venue to clear the mind and also focus on what is really important.  
– LINDA JONES

I signed up for this retreat not knowing what to expect (not even knowing how to pronounce the word) so I can't say it exceeded my expectations but I can say that if you are a teacher or student, come to one of these retreats. It is an individual awakening (as part of a group) to share, refine, re-examine, reinvigorate your senses while experiencing the collective energy that is TCC.  
– MARY CERULLO

Imagine what you may discover in your silence, being mindful of your breath and the sounds around you. Imagine quieting your mind so you can hear the gentle whisper of *that which knows* within you. Then you'll have an inkling of what a *Prajna* retreat can be like. Listen. – JIM KAIB

At this retreat, the disparity between *Prajna* and programming became more apparent. This made the retreat tough at times, and it also brought enlightenment that **lightened the burden**. – CAROL SPICER



Thinking of each of us as we have re-entered the "real" world outside... By Sunday morning we had just become One only to peel off shortly thereafter to navigate the streets and airways to our respective lives. The autumn colors speak of silence and peace as Earth settles down for a long winter's nap, and awareness is muted until Spring.



Front: Neal Roy,  
Jim Kaib, Stacey  
Moore, Deanna Rasch  
Back: Carol Spicer,  
April Leffler, Sandy  
McAlister, Ray Sharp,  
Dorene Krause, Tony  
Riso, Michele Dapelo,  
Neena Mitchel, Linda  
Jones, Mary Cerullo,  
Jean Markey

## Clearing Meditation

By CAROL SPICER, FAIR LAWN, NEW JERSEY

There's a clearing thru the high brush.  
I see it. I sense it.  
The work has been done.  
Sensing the stillness of the clear path, it's as if in a picture.  
The clear path draws me in.  
Yes, more clearing will need to be done.  
Thankfully, I am here now.  
How fortunate am I to have this open space?  
How fortunate are we to have this open space?  
There are no steps to be taken now.  
We are at the destination.  
The mind is the clear path.  
Thoughts are gently carried away by clouds,  
And evaporate like mist in the sunlight.  
Open to being here now; we are the clear path.

## Prajna Of The Wind

By DORENE KRAUSE, MIDLAND PARK, NEW JERSEY

The seagull with outstretched wings trusts the *Prajna* of the wind. The seaworthy bird allows and feels the freedom of flight, glides effortlessly with ease and grace. Not resisting, but following where it is led. The ride smooth and unlabored.

But the brittle autumn leaf does not succumb so easily. It tries to hold on to what is known and must learn to let go of fear and doubt. "Trust the *Prajna* of the wind," a gentle voice whispers. The leaf surrenders and begins to dance, swirling then floating. The descent surprisingly soft and joyous. It returns to the comfort of the earth among friends who have gone before.

*Spiritual Odyssey* fell open to page 16 and the eyes immediately saw: "The Chinese say, 'Make peace with heaven and not with men.' This required an understanding that there is more than what we see, and that all things and beings are interrelated."

The Lakota Sioux say, "*Mitakuye Oyesin*. All are my relations." And so we remain connected with and individually expressing the same vibrating energy, the Chi, the intelligence, the seed, the feather, the stone, the hawk, the snake, the fireworks, you, me, and so on and so on." – NEENA MITCHELL

# To Speak Or Not To Speak

BY DR. PAULINE BACANI QUIMSON, PITTSBURG, CALIFORNIA

One my physical challenges has been repeatedly losing my voice. And it's not just a figurative thing of not expressing myself. I literally start saying something and nothing comes out, except for a whisper of a sound. It used to happen once a month or so while growing up, and although it gradually lessened, it still regularly happened throughout my life.

Looking back, I realize that it was my body's cry for help. I used to do everything for everyone and kept forgetting about myself. My body wanted a means to voice what I needed but could not hear (or even have a slight awareness of).

As an adult and teacher, now spending more time getting quiet, getting to know myself better, I am becoming more aware. I noticed that when I was super-busy with nonstop medical outreach projects, trauma relief services and integrative healing workshops (especially for those left orphaned and homeless by the aftereffects of the super typhoon that hit Leyte in my home country of the Philippine Islands), I forgot to do my T'ai Chi Chih and *Seijaku* practices, when that was what I needed to practice the most. (As Justin Stone would say, "Practice when you feel like it ... and even more so, practice when you don't feel like it ... One cannot appease the hunger by reading the menu.")

So here I am with one week of cancelled trips and patients, finally paying attention to what my body is telling me. Pause. Stop. Reflect. Rest. Relax. Rejuvenate. Reintegrate. Breathe. Had it not been for losing my voice, I may have pushed myself to total exhaustion as I had done so often before.

I have found this to be true with thousands of attendees at my workshops and seminars, especially those caring for so many – patriarchs and matriarchs of families, presidents of banks and corporations, heads of non-government organizations, cooperatives, volunteer



groups, church groups, charismatic groups, business owners and more. It is often evident that the leader expected to carry the group forward has no one to care for him or her (or does not realize the need to care for him- or herself).

How can one inspire and lead when one's own spirit, mind, body and emotions are weakened by stress and overburdened with work, with insufficient time to be quiet, to be your highest? That is the pure love, light and joy that we truly are.

Even more so now, I appreciate the wisdom and beauty of what we share – the *Chi* – as both continuing students and teachers of TCC, as we help individuals transform their own lives, help themselves, to better their situations in life. To empower. Starting with just five minutes a day, building up slowly to a 45-minute practice. No blaming, no one at fault. Nothing to think about. Just being and luxuriating in the pure energy that is the *Chi* as we harmonize, release and let go of anger, sadness, fear, hurt, guilt, pretending or trying to be something or someone we are not, limiting beliefs, unforgiving. Being magically transformed into love, gratitude, joy and courage. Revealing our true nature.

To answer my own query: to speak or not to speak? It's so simple. Speak when there is something to be said for the highest good. When we practice TCC regularly, we cannot help but harmonize, circulate and balance the energy, this Vital Force, this precious gift of the *Chi* as we rediscover and get to know each day, the Supreme Ultimate that we carry deep inside. Let it shine forth. Then can we truly speak, not just through words, but also with our bodies and minds as beings of light and bearers of pure and overflowing joy.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

BY BROCK BROCKLEHURST, ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

I heard this "practice, practice, practice" so often over the years from my friend, Justin Stone, that it reminded me of an old saying: practice makes perfect. Closer examination reveals that only perfect practice makes perfect, which actually means that if one wants to get the most benefit from his or her effort, the practice must be as flawless as possible.

Think about music, sports, cooking or any other skill. Professionals in music (vocalists for pop, opera and country) have teachers who coach them toward a perfect practice. Baseball players have many coaches (batting, fielding and pitching) who help them daily to realize their potential. Tennis players travel with coaches who help them in their daily practice sessions to achieve their desired goals.

If it makes sense for these activities, why there is some resistance to T'ai Chi Chih practice with coaching? I want the most benefit from my time and effort and welcome coaching during practice regardless of the activity. Why waste my time on anything less? Perhaps if I want to attend practice more for socializing, I might be better served at Starbucks, sitting comfortably and enjoying coffee with friends.

# Pyramid Poems

the  
Nei Kung  
new to me  
lasted only  
to the soles  
of my  
feet  
– KAY SMITH

heart  
healing  
spreading thru  
body and soul  
re-making  
myself  
new  
– CAROLINE GUILLOTT

I  
find some  
resistance  
where is it from?  
do not think,  
let it  
go!  
– JUDY HENDRICKS

each  
night say  
Nei Kung – sleep  
in chi's blissful  
embrace – know  
truth – feel  
joy  
– MARY RUIZ

rest  
peace – full  
awareness  
being connected to  
tanden power  
in the  
feet  
– BO WADDELL

the  
gentle  
flow of the  
Nei Kung brings peace  
awareness  
healing  
love  
– MARY WHITE

I  
said it  
over – over – again  
will I ever sleep  
I believe  
still  
– MYRNA

bed  
buddy  
sleep time friend  
deep place within  
no thinking  
Nei Kung  
rest  
– SHERYL ADAIR

the  
blessings  
are done now  
time for Nei Kung  
before I  
go to  
sleep  
– CAROLINE GUILLOTT

but  
sleep comes  
often before I  
finish it  
Nei Kung  
bye  
– CAROLINE GUILLOTT

# The Lighter Side

I walked into the arts and crafts room to teach T'ai Chi Chih. Ruth, one of the seniors, took a seat apart from the others because she had a bit of a cold. At the start of Rocking Motion, I noticed another senior, Nancy, hold back a sneeze. Teasingly, I said, "Don't you know it's not good for your health to hold back a sneeze?" Without missing a beat, Ruth said, "Don't you know it's not good for ours if she doesn't?" – SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

I have heard T'ai Chi Chih referred to as T'ai Chi Chee, T'ai Chi Chew and T'ai Chi Cho. Before conducting my T'ai Chi Chih workshop last week, I was handed a contract to sign, which listed the program as T'ai Chi Chic. – SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

Sometimes I'll break down a movement when I teach. I usually introduce the concept of eight dimes to talk about weight distribution. I mention how we have two dimes on the balls of the feet, two dimes on the heels (so four on each foot), totaling eight. One day while teaching Rocking Motion, I emphasized shifting the weight from the *tan t'ien* to the balls of the feet on the forward part of the movement, or the front two dimes, two on each foot, for a total of four dimes. I also said that when we shift the weight back to our heels, the weight would be on the back two heel dimes, two on each foot, for a total of four dimes.

I then talked about the transition in the middle where we sink down and are equal weighted, and asked the class how many dimes that would be. One of the students quickly said 10. I must have had a puzzled look on my face because when I said it would be eight, she quickly pointed to the student behind her and said, "I added her two!" – SHARON SIRKIS, COLUMBIA, MARYLAND

I have only one man on the fourth week of this particular class. At this juncture, they certainly know how to come to rest. I'm teaching in a room with a huge mirror, and although my back is to them, I can see everyone and make corrections. After one movement, I say, "Come to rest." I look in the mirror and there's Frank,

with his arms just hanging at his side. He had never done that before. So I say, "Frank, what happened to your balls?" You can imagine the uproar; there was no getting out of it. Luckily, he had a wonderful sense of humor and was laughing just as hard as the rest of the class.  
– DEE BURTON, ORLAND PARK, IL



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**TEACHER RESOURCES:**

See [www.taichichih.org/teacher-resources/](http://www.taichichih.org/teacher-resources/)

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## Community Calendar

For the most up-to-date info and event PDFs, visit [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)

**DATE / WHAT & WHO / WHERE / CONTACT**

Feb 25-28 / TCC Retreat w/ Antonia / Santa Barbara, CA / Pam Towne / 442-222-8332

Mar 4-7 / TCC Retreat w/ Antonia / Santa Barbara, CA / Pam Towne / 442-222-8332

May 7-11 / TCC Intensive w/ Dan Rochester, MN / Bonnie Sokolov / 507-529-9515

May 8-11 / TCC Retreat w/ Pam / Prescott, AZ / Dana Diller / 928-848-0824

May 18-24 / Teacher Accred w/ Dan / Philadelphia, PA / April Leffler / 610-565-4947

Jun 6-8 / TCC Retreat w/ Pam / Eureka, MO / Gale Portman / 314-805-2021

Jul 24-27 / TCC Teacher Conference / near Newark, NJ / [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)

Sep 25-28 / TCC Retreat w/ Sandy / Pecos, NM / Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114

**- MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS -**

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

April 3-6 / TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst / Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

Mar 15 / Seijaku Workshop w/ Ann Rutherford / Albuquerque, NM / Ann Rutherford / 505-292-5114

May 17 / Seijaku Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst / Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

Sept 11-14 / TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst / Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

Nov 16 / TCC Workshop w/ Sharon Sirkis / Marriottsville, MD / Sharon Sirkis / 410-730-1986



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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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