The Vital Force
Journal of the T'ai Chi Chih® Community
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Justin Stone: Teaching Tips

Teaching Tips For Teachers

(Also Valuable For Students)

By Justin Stone

Pulling in the Energy is simply "Around the Platter" upside down, with one important exception. The student visualizes great energy coming in to the finger tips (not the hands or full fingers) from the most distant star. This will greatly enhance the flow of energy. It is not necessary to explain about the different colored *Pranas*, etc. that the teacher has read about in the Teachers' Training Manual. This move has great power. One time the writer and a top student performed this movement for a considerable time, and both felt a great stimulus in the heart, almost like a shock.

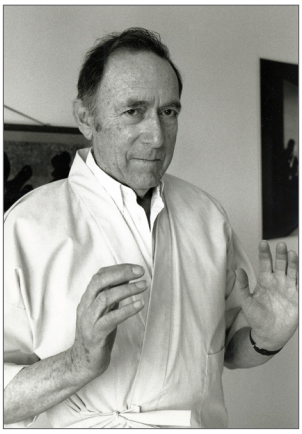
~ ~ ~

Pulling Taffy, all four variations, may be the most difficult movement to teach, but that is often the teacher's fault. It must first be stressed that the movement of the upturned hand is horizontal. Some students want to make a graceful dance movement out of the pull, gradually raising the upturned under–hand while bending both knees and turning sideways. This may be a graceful dance movement, but it certainly is not T'ai Chi Chih.

The upturned hand moves to the side, still upturned, after the two hands have crossed in the taffy pull. That move started with the upturned hand going to the opposite elbow past the top hand; from there the pull begins. Many start the movement with the two hands together, and this does not allow for the pull that ensues as the two hands cross each other.

As the hand pulls to the side, *both* feet remain flat on the ground. Many have the tendency to raise the back leg's heel in a graceful gesture, but the back foot actually remains as flat as does the front foot. Teachers must check on this. Also, be sure the student does not shift the weight too quickly; the weight should shift in direct coordination with the pulling hand, and no faster.

The hand that has the palm turned down pulls to the side and slightly down so that it finishes alongside the back leg, palm turned down. Actually, this is the substantial hand in order to balance the *Yang* leg, the one that supports the weight at the end of the movement.



From the booklet "Teaching Tips For Teachers", excerpted and available for free download from Good Karma Publishing (www.gkpub.com) and in print form for a small fee from the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Center (taichichihassociation.org).

Once the student understands how the basic "Pulling Taffy" movement is performed, the three variations should be easy to learn.

~ ~ ~

In the first variation, **"Pulling Taffy, Variation #1, Anchor,"** we turn the body to the right and step forward, but the back leg does not turn, so we are pigeon-toed. Then, when we come back to the starting position, the back leg is already in place for the basic pull to the side.

~ ~ ~

Pulling Taffy, Variation #2, Wrist Circles finds us circling the wrists, two full turns and then a half turn, starting our sideways pull from the top of the circle. It is easy for students to rise on their toes for the first two circles, then to remain flat on the feet for the third half-twirl and the pull on the side, but the teacher must watch carefully to see that the students do remain flat on their feet the third time. As with all "Pulling Taffy" movements, look to see that the student does not make an exaggerated turn to the side with the head. Some students want to do a stiff-legged "Pulling Taffy," compensating with the head and the hands, and this is incorrect.

~ ~ ~

Pulling Taffy, Variation #3, Perpetual Motion may be a little difficult for the teacher to explain in words, and it will be much easier to teach it by demonstration. After the first pull to the side by the upturned hand, the opposing hand sweeps over to the other side, moving past the upturned hand, and then the two reverse roles. The key here lies in the turn of the waist, which sweeps the down-turned hand across, setting up the pull to the other side. Do not let the student rush any of the movements, and remind him or her to swim through heavy air. Keeping the knees bent all through the "Pulling Taffies" will make the movement look much better; a low "Pulling Taffy" gives a much better appearance.

May The Vital Force Be With You

Database Update: Find A Teacher
Per your request, we are trying to make our website's "find a teacher in your area" function a more effective tool to link prospective students to active T'ai Chi Chih teachers (www.taichichih.org/tai-chi-chih-teachers).

Teacher contact information on the website is currently self-reported. As such, much of this information is out-of-date. Bounce-back emails, disconnected phone numbers, and unreturned telephone messages are all-too-commonplace for students looking for a teacher. The feedback we have received is that this results in considerable, frustrating downside for our community. To that end, Mary Ruiz has been painstakingly updating the database. The paired-down but more accurate and relevant teacher listing will appear in early January. Please help us keep our community's teacher contact list current and "vital": please check your listing for accuracy and promptly report any errors or changes. And, if you know that an accredited teacher has passed on, please notify us asap.

Website Teacher Listings
Teachers, your membership to *The Vital Force* includes a free listing on www.taichichih.org! It's a 100% value-add, since your subscription covers the production of the journal, with no resources left over for the website. (Yes, the website is completely funded by tax-deductible contributions.)

Going forward, non-subscribers of *The Vital Force* will be charged $25 for a 3-year listing on the website: www.taichichih.org/tai-chi-chih-teachers.

That's one more reason to maintain your subscription! Please help spread the word to accredited teachers who are non-subscribers that there is even more reason to subscribe to The *Vital Force* journal and to keep your subscription current.

Year-End Giving & Matching Funds
The Vital Force maintains www.taichichih.org, which exists solely through the generosity of our subscribers.

Please consider a contribution to support the essential (and vast) outreach of the website. Donations can be made by credit card (via the green button on the homepage of) http://www.taichichih.org or by sending a check to The Vital Force, PO Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199

Gifts to *The Vital Force* are fully tax deductible, always appreciated and used effectively to reach tens of thousands of practitioners around the globe.

Calendar
The online and print calendar is open to ALL teachers offering daylong, weekend, and other special TCC events. (At this juncture, keeping a current listing of on-going classes is simply too time consuming for our volunteers to maintain.)

A Prajna Request
April Leffler has requested that *The Vital Force* offer a regular space for T'ai Chi Chih teachers to express how Prajna has shown itself in their lives. If you write it, I'll print it.

Happy Ending
On page 5 of the August issue, the last (punch) line of Doug Harned's piece "Cucumber" was inadvertently left off. It should have read: "I'll close with my favorite poem by Paul Reps: 'Cucumber unaccountably cucumbering.'"

With gratitude. Kim Grant, Albuquerque, NM

Table of Contents

Justin: Teaching Tips	1
May The Vital Force Be With You	2
An Accreditation Journey	3
Pennsylvania Voices	4-5
Guiding Thoughts: Sandy	6
Trainer Tips	7
Pyramid Poems	7
Five Vehicles For Sharing	8
Experiences	9
Being Through Motion	10
Each Taking Responsibility	11
Justin Stone Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion	12-13
Conference 2014	14-19
Events	20-21
Cosmic Consciousness	22
Karmic Comments	23
Lighter Side	23
Community Calendar	24
Contacts / Subscribe	24

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

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

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

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Passing The Test

By Susan Quinn, Poinciana, Florida

What in the world should we do to prepare to attend a T'ai Chi Chih teacher accreditation course? In my case I live in Florida, and my first teacher, Anita Vestal, had moved to Costa Rica, so I had no teacher nearby. Yet I wanted to do my utmost to be well prepared to go through the rigorous accreditation process.

I'm one of those people who didn't plan on becoming a teacher for a while. But after Anita moved and my connection to Zen Buddhism changed, I realized at the end of 2013 that our community would benefit greatly from having a teacher. So I told Anita, who was very pleased, and I figured out my next best steps.

I had practiced for seven years (and daily for the last two) and also had a small group with whom I practiced weekly. That approach gave me grounding from which to work. Looking ahead, I decided to attend Antonia's Santa Barbara retreat in March 2014. When I first inquired, though, the retreat was already booked. Two weeks later Pam Towne let me know that there was a cancellation; I could attend and was very excited. I had also talked to an accredited teacher-friend, Karen Goran, in southern California about being my second-signature. I didn't appreciate (initially) that she actually needed to see how well I knew the movements. She decided to attend the same March retreat (bless her).

At the retreat I told Antonia and Pam that I would take all the feedback I could get because I wanted to register for the accreditation course in May. (Retreats aren't designed for this purpose.) I received lots of feedback not only from Pam and Antonia, but from all the teachers attending. That was the upside. The downside was that I realized I had a long way to go, and that I would not be ready for accreditation in May. I also realized that there was really no need to hurry.

Meanwhile, I convinced Karen that she was my best choice as a second teacher. She hadn't previously taught long-distance (via Skype), so she was hesitant but finally consented. We had a wonderful time working together. Beginning in March, we worked together every second week: she gave me specific and insightful feedback. In between lessons I practiced twice a day, in the morning and evening, and studied my reflection in a sliding glass door. Her skill at giving just the right kind and amount of feedback suited me beautifully. I also continued meeting with my weekly group. My practice deepened and became more refined; I was enjoying it more than ever. Instead of attending the May accreditation, I went to a May intensive and received even more feedback. By the end, I believed I would be ready to attend the next accreditation in California in October.

In mid-summer Karen suggested we Skype weekly; I concurred. She also recommended that I schedule a Skype session with Pam to receive further input on my progress; that was very helpful. I also realized I could ask my husband, Jerry, for some coaching. He practices T'ai Chi Ch'uan and could see the relationship between our practices; he also understands what the *tan t'ien* is. I would share the feedback Karen gave, and Jerry did a wonderful job helping me integrate the changes during the rest of the week. Imagine my surprise when he told me I wasn't moving from the tan t'ien and that my head should not be turning. We actually had a fun time working together; every evening at 7 p.m., he would ask, "Ready?" and I would change into my practice shoes.

Three weeks before accreditation, I had a minor meltdown wondering if I would be ready. My Zen training reminded me that these were just thoughts, and I allowed myself to feel my fear and just kept working. With encouraging words from Karen, Anita, and Jerry, I moved forward.

This past week, I became accredited. I'm very excited about being a part of the TCC community and being able to offer my services to my own community here in Florida. My thanks to everyone, including Pam (our teacher trainer) for all the love and support, and for this wonderful opportunity.

Where in the World?
Carolyn Perkins in Moscow

Editor's Note: You'll notice that we have published a generous selection of T'ai Chi Chih being performed around the world. Keep 'em comin'.

Across The Universe

By April Leffler, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

While sitting outside enjoying the sights, sounds, and smells of another beautiful summer day, I began thinking about what to write for a "Pennsylvania Voices" section in *The Vital Force*. I wanted to focus on the idea that ***energy follows thought*** so I paged through several of Justin's books in the hopes of using that as a springboard to dive further into the topic.

I read in *Spiritual Odyssey* about the "reciprocal character of Mind and *Prana*"(p. 86) and "the reciprocal relationship of Mind and *Chi*, a little-known fact of great importance" (p. 106) and felt the significance and truth of this. Yet there was nothing more to add.

I was then drawn to re-read letters that I had received from Justin during the years following my accreditation. I read each typed and hand written letter like a child opening gifts on Christmas morning. As I read each one, I began feeling expansive, loved, and deeply touched. My being quieted and I was moved to tears in an energy of reverence.

The words and messages were, of course, important and truly heartfelt. However, even more important than Justin's words to me in his letters was the loving *Chi* I felt as I read them – and the absolute love and stillness I feel now as I write this. **Energy does follow thought and travels through time and space.**

With humility, respect and great appreciation… **I am speechless**.

Snap

By Margery Erickson, Hanover, Pennsylvania

Two weeks away from home. It was a great vacation. We had plenty of yard and garden work to do. Whoa – "oh, snap."

Crutches, stairs, ramps, automatic doors, people offering to help, calculating the time and distance from point A to B, navigating challenging terrain. By the end of each day I was exhausted. It started with a fall and a minor ankle fracture (snap). I was given an Aircast boot to wear for six weeks. Slept with it. Removing only to shower. This "accident" interrupted my daily life more than I wanted to admit. A friend told me she had heard T'ai Chi was good for balance. LOL, well, thank you.

I drove to the New Jersey conference and participated by doing seated T'ai Chi Chih. For the morning practice we were offered a choice of Seijaku or TCC. I tried seated Seijaku.

I continued daily, seated Seijaku combined with seated TCC when I returned home. Of course I was seeking a speedy recovery and was hoping this would help. I made some modifications: Instead of using a chair it was more comfortable to sit on a stool and place a one-inch board under my non-injured foot. This allowed me to shift my weight and even place my feet in position with more ease.

What I discovered was the ability to focus and feel the energy move quickly – as if it did not have as far to travel. Instead of focusing on the soles of my feet I was working more directly by focusing on the *tan t'ien*, which is emphasized more in Seijaku. Yes, I had experienced this in the past. This time the energy stayed with me and near me for longer periods of time.

Although I was looking for quick fix (bones heal with time), according to the doctor the healing was right on schedule. Healing did happen in many ways – with patience, stillness, resignation, centeredness, surrender, and truly letting go. Snap!

TCC Is Like A Box Of Chocolates

By Fran Kaib, Norwood, Pennsylvania

I used to be nice, really nice, although I did get really angry or sad every now and then. I remember saying that if you measured my feelings on a scale of 1-10, I was almost always a 4-6 (with few highs or lows). I was never aware of being jealous.

T'ai Chi Chih retreats used to bring on tears, although I wasn't a big crier. At TCC events, I always hear people talk about how calm and mellow they are now. I can't say that. I feel all feelings a lot more now. And I do feel jealous sometimes, but it doesn't last long.

I'm still getting used to the roller coaster ride of my emotions. The funny thing is that I can be firing mad or sad one minute and a little while later, I'm quite happy and enjoying myself. Although I didn't used to get mad or sad often, I hung onto it like a dog with a bone when I did. (In fairness, it felt like it hung on to me.) I would get sad, really sad, over something that was actually silly. I can now feel happy and excited, whereas I used to be reserved and shy. Sometimes I see myself with others and I think, "Who is this person having fun?"

I believe that TCC is making conscious what was unconscious; in the process a lot is being healed. I think tears were healing wounds I didn't always know I had. At age 63, I am finding my voice. I feel more alive and blessed to have TCC in my life.

Beginner's Mind

By Jim Kaib, Norwood, Pennsylvania

Years ago, one of my teachers suggested that I come to each T'ai Chi Chih class with a beginner's mind. As a teacher, I have repeated this to students attending retreats, workshops, and other events. I believe we, too, are better teachers when we adopt the same beginner's mind. One of my first teachers extolled the value of continuing to learn through ongoing classes because "things may creep into our practice." This is valuable advice, and I am fortunate to live in a region with many other teachers and where multiple events are held annually. In the early years after my accreditation, I audited accreditations, hoping to deepen and refine my own practice. However, I felt a responsibility to help candidates by looking for things that may have needed correcting. It was a great relief to see the invitation letter from Pam and Sandy to auditors this past year. It encouraged auditing teachers to use accreditation to explore their own practice, even as they are called on to assist candidates. These opportunities keep my own practice fresh; when I teach, I've made the effort to ensure my own practice is a good example for my students. This also offers a chance to see and hear things differently than perhaps I was capable of as a student or teacher candidate. Whether attending a *Prajna* retreat, a retreat with Antonia, or an accreditation, TCC brings my attention to the value of maintaining a beginner's mind.

Editor's Note: Pennsylvania Teachers took the initiative without being asked and sent in material for the double-page spread featured in this issue. All communities are welcome to do the same without being asked! A grouping of articles highlighting your local TCC community will make a nice tool to promote TCC in your area.

Pennsylvania teaching contingent: Back row: Jim Kaib, Jessica Lewis, April Leffler, Alana Coppola. Front row: Eileen Butler, Fran Kaib, Lynne Jones-Dietze, Deborah Massey.

Potlatch: A Lesson In Sharing & Caring

By Cleo Royal, York, Pennsylvania

The act of giving and/or receiving may sound like a simple concept, but for many it can be a challenge. There's a lot of effort involved in determining whether to buy or make a gift and how much to spend, especially after some of the commercial trappings associated with the holiday season.

Yet in reality, it's the *Chi* that shows us the way. The best example is Pulling In The Energy, where there is a give and take of the universal *Chi* that connects each of us.

This communal process with other T'ai Chi Chih practitioners, our fellow man and the world at large is both awe-inspiring and rejuvenating. But anyone reading these pages is already aware of such principles. How then, can we relay this message of generosity in a broader format?

Many early cultures have practiced, out of necessity, a form of community service where everyone looks out for one other. One of the best examples might be that of the American Indian tradition known as Potlatch where the host of a ceremony would give away material wealth (food, clothing, weaponry) to guests, knowing by the end of the event their home could be bare. But this same person could regain important necessities or prized possessions the next time he was the guest at a similar event.

Potlatch is about more than karma or religious dogma like "do onto others as you'd like done to yourself." At its core is the belief that **each of us is responsible for creating a generous, caring connection with those around us.** This in turn allows an entire community to have a collective sense of wellbeing and support where we are more focused on the whole rather than the one.

So the question might be how best can we within the TCC community carry out this concept? The obvious answer is discussing it in our individual classes. Another alternative is hosting our own Potlatch-type events where we give gifts to guests or even money. But creativity and gratitude could lead to infinite possibilities even for those not actively involved with our pursuits. Let's make generous acts of giving and receiving our collective goal. Here's to paying it forward this year and beyond.

Looking To The Future Of TCC

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California

Justin often talked of the importance to "recognize, deeply feel, and accord with Impermanence." In his book, *Spiritual Odyssey,* he writes, "Once we accept the idea of impermanence, it is not too difficult to experience Who and What we are."

With regards to impermanence and our T'ai Chi Chih community a segment at conference this year was, "Looking to the Future of T'ai Chi Chih." Here is what was presented.

• At the 2013 conference there was discussion about deleting the one-year *Vital Force* subscription for new teachers which is included in their teacher training course fee. This was suggested in lieu of raising the course fee. There were strong feelings in the community not to do this, so ***The Vital Force*** **subscription will remain**. While costs continue to rise, the teacher training course fee has been $450 since January 1998 (a span of 14 years). **Therefore the decision has been made to raise the cost of the course beginning January 2015 to $525.**

• The **intensive course fee will become $250** in January 2015.

• **Scholarships** for the teacher training (TT) course will be $275. For the intensive, it will be $125 for anyone attending, both students and teachers alike. Scholarships are given on a financial need basis.

• The T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation, which provides the scholarships, is implementing a new scholarship for teachers who fully audit a TT course. Since auditing a course is free to teachers, the scholarship amount of $275 is to be used toward room and board. This only applies to teachers who attend a full five days of the course. (In Dan Pienciak's last TT course three teachers said they received so much from it that they felt they should be paying to attend.)

• **A new view of auditing a TT course was presented.** In the past teachers attended with the idea that they were there to assist and be of help to the candidates. Since implementing the two-signature referral process, and providing intensive courses, which were specifically designed for preparing candidates for the TT course, candidates are attending better prepared than in the past. Teachers auditing can now turn their focus from helping the candidates to working on their own form. It is an opportunity for teachers to work together with each other using the material presented at the course. This is a powerful example for the candidates of what a good and sincere teacher does – continuing to explore and refine their practice no matter how long ago they were accredited. Teachers are still encouraged to audit a TT course and participate, as their experiences and knowledge can enrich the process and be of great benefit to the candidates.

• The scholarship money given by the International T'ai Chi Chih Foundation comes from the generous donations of teachers. Those who have benefited from a scholarship to further their journey with TCC are asked to consider reciprocating in some way. Maybe you have a talent or skill that may be useful to the community. Maybe at some point in time you may be able to contribute to the scholarship fund. Maybe you can prepare and host an event. Maybe you can lend a hand at the next year's teacher's conference. The TCC community runs and flourishes through volunteers. Please support the community that supported you.

While the majority of the above information is dealing with money issues, there were several other matters dealing with the future of TCC that were talked about at conference.

We discussed how we could bring more **diversity** into the community. There was discussion on considering the language we use to advertise classes and what impact particular words might have **attracting men** to our classes. These were valuable conversations that will continue at next year's conference. There were also discussions among teachers wanting to **attract younger people** to the practice and exchanging ideas on how that might be done.

Looking to the future, next year's conference had a good start this year and many of the discussions started this year will continue as we gather in **North Carolina on August 6-9, 2015.** Come be part of the conversation. Help our community to grow and flourish by being involved in whatever way your time, talents, or experience can express themselves. As the community grows, fresh ideas and new eyes will keep TCC vibrant.

Flowing With The Knees, Not Fearing With The Knees

By Daniel Pienciak, Howell, New Jersey

Knees can be a cause of pain for many, especially as we grow older. Some have even used knee discomfort as a reason for not practicing T'ai Chi Chih. I began experiencing knee pain in normal life activities some twenty years ago. I was told it was probably do to the figure skating that did in my late twenties and early thirties. It came to a point where I took a painkiller many nights upon retiring in order to sleep.

I am convinced that TCC has proved to be therapeutic for my knees, at times almost miraculously so. The lessening of pain was noticed after a few months of practicing TCC following my first beginner class. Since then, my knees very rarely act up. (Usually it's my own fault for not being more careful.)

The idea of placing almost all of one's bodyweight on one leg can be intimidating for a person who has knee pain. I have found that the simplest solution for a beginner who struggles with this is to encourage a smaller step with less knee bend in the weight shift, until the student becomes more comfortable.

While some older people may need to stay with that in their practice, it may not be a permanent solution for one who really wants to get more out of TCC.

A primary principle of how to move in TCC is softness, which Justin Stone taught means lack of tension. If we anticipate discomfort or fear placing the weight on the leg, the joints and muscles will tense up and make things worse.

So I try to get across the idea of letting go in the knees and letting all the weight settle downward into the sole of the foot (while relaxing the foot) when shifting the weight. In other words, do not hold on with the leg, but let it soften. I find that the knee will almost release a sigh of relief.

The idea of leading the weight shift forward or to the side with the knee can also help. We are taught to do TCC mostly from the waist down. Being aware that the foot is placed is a position so that the knee can glide out over the toes, with the whole body being led in that direction, can really help bring the feeling of flowing from the center, and not moving with the upper body. As the weight arrives on the foot and the knee lets go, feel if the weight is evenly distributed in the whole sole of foot (in those movements where the weight shifts forward or to the side onto one foot), not more into the front of the foot near the toes or more back on the heels. (Rocking Motion is an exception.)

If we make friends with our knees, we can really flow in our practice instead of stirring up fear. Soften and feel the joy in TCC.

Pyramid Poems

rain
it is
so special
watch it falling
down along
copper
streams
– Judy

on
mountain
in the rain
learning to find
in silence
inner
truth
– John W.

rain
hides the
mountain tall
the sky is gray
peaceful view
from in
side
– Debra W.

rain
falling
gently and
creating new
life inside
flowing
now
– M.W.

rain
bless the
land and lives
help cleanse our world
of worries
bring new
life
– P.B.

Five Vehicles For Sharing

The Vital Force Journal, Inc.

www.taichichih.org
Email contact: kim.grant@taichichih.org
Information compiled by: Dora Wiemann, Board Member

The Vital Force (VFJ) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
History: Began in 1984 as humble, quarterly newsletter to help bring the T'ai Chi Chih community closer together at the behest of Justin. Complete archives are available free on the website.
Services:
• Create and maintain www.taichichih.org;
• Publish a 24-page quarterly journal for members;
• Generate social media on all major platforms to bring the community together and spread the benefits of TCC practice, particularly among a younger and more diverse population;
• Maintain a robust presence on Instagtam, Twitter, Flickr, and Pinterest;
• Maintain a dynamic Facebook page (www.facebook.com/taichichih) (currently nurtured by Lisa Otero);
• Help fund the taping and production of YouTube teacher videos;
• Maintain the teacher database for the community.
Revenue: The journal breaks even with membership fees. The website and all other outreach initiatives and products are entirely sustained by donations.
Volunteer Board members: Kim Grant, Guy Kent, Lisa Otero, Dora Wiemann.
Daily Operations: Kim Grant has been in charge of daily operations since early 2007. Mary Ruiz assists.

T'ai Chi Chih Association

www.taichichihassociation.org
Email contact: taichichihnm@yahoo.com
Information compiled by: Guy Kent, Board Member

The T'ai Chi Chih Association is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.
History: Formed in 1995 after Justin Stone moved to New Mexico. When Justin wanted to create a common venue for TCC activities, the association began leasing and operating the T'ai Chi Chih Center.
Focus: Educational, for sharing the TCC practice and the principles upon which TCC movements are based.
Services:
• Rent low-cost space to teachers for teaching TCC;
• Host workshops, intensives, and accreditations;
• Offer free open practices;
• Offer a physical presence for T'ai Chi Chih-only activities;
• Produce the T'ai Chi Chih News, our monthly publication. Edited by Connie Hyde (with the help of numerous creative design assistants through the years), the News was created as a tool to share information within the TCC community.
• Sell books from Justin's recommended reading list and other TCC-related materials.
Revenue: Based on memberships, donations, class fees, and events held at the center. The Association has been able to operate the center and produce the News for more than 19 years thanks to the continued support and generosity of the broad TCC community.
Current volunteer Board of Directors: Judy Hendricks, Guy Kent, Mary Ruiz, Joyce Veerkamp, Mary White. The Center operates through the efforts of numerous volunteers who step forward to fill a need they identify.

Editor's Note: Since there is often confusion about the various entities involved with spreading T'ai Chi Chih, originated in 1974 by Justin Stone, we thought a basic primer might be helpful. Each entity listed below operates completely independently.

Good Karma Publishing

www.gkpub.com
Email contact: sales@gkpub.com
Information compiled by: Carmen Brocklehurst, Board Member

Good Karma Publishing (aka GKP) is the for-profit publishing arm of T'ai Chi Chih.
History: Conceived of and named by Justin in 1988.
Focus: Publish (digitally and in print) and distribute (online and to bookstores, libraries and other channels) Justin's teaching materials (DVDs, books, and CDs).
Services:
• Aid and enhance the practice and understanding of TCC by students and teachers;
  • Co-create and build the social media platforms with the VFJ;
  • Co-fund and produce YouTube videos with the VFJ;
  • Conduct national and international media outreach;
• Secure and legally protect the registered trademark of T'ai Chi Chih.
Volunteer Board of Directors (named by Justin): Victor Berg, Carmen Brocklehurst, Kim Grant, Constance Hyde.
Daily Operations: Kim Grant has been the CEO since early 2004, in charge of day-to-day operations. Mary Ruiz assists.

T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation

Email contact: mcalister19@comcast.net, pamtowne@gmail.com, or wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Information compiled by: Sandy McAlister, Guide

The T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.
History: Established July 2013 and formed due to needs in the TCC community.
Services:
• Sponsor the annual TCC teacher conference;
• Provide scholarship funds for TCC teacher accreditation and continuing education;
• Sponsor events and projects that promote the knowledge of and practice of TCC worldwide as a service to humanity.
Officers: Sandy McAlister (President, Guide); Pam Towne (Vice-President); Dorene Krause (Treasurer); Siobhan Hutchinson (Secretary).
Board Members: Sandy McAlister, Daniel Pienciak, Pam Towne. More Board Members will be added, to a maximum of nine.

Guide Newsletter

www.tcccommunity.net
Email contact: mcalister19@comcast.net
Editor's Note: Full information not provided by press time.

Services: Monthly free e-newsletter by Sandy McAlister.
Website: Maintained by Stephen Thompson.

TCC & The Universe Story

By Mary Frances Reis, BVM, Pacific, Missouri

A few years ago I had the privilege of spending three months at Springbank, South Carolina, a center for eco-spirituality and the arts. Much of the focus was on integrating the concepts and experiencing the reality of the universe story. The writings of Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, and workshops based on their exploration of science and the humanities, led to an exciting and profound study from the "primordial flaring forth to the Ecozoic Era."

With the marvelous leisure time for practicing T'ai Chi Chih in a beautiful setting of woods, water, and greenery, I became aware of the deep connection between the movements and the universe story. **The movements became a celebration of the unfolding evolutionary periods of the cosmos.** This initial insight came with the first movement, Rocking Motion, which so simply but profoundly embodied the "flaring forth" of the universe some 13.7 billion years ago. It was a dynamic flaring forth of love that set the rest of the universe in its vast deep movement and continues as its vital force.

From that initial connection the next eighteen movements delightfully began to relate to various periods of the universe story. Each discovery brought a burst of energy, from Bird Flaps Its Wings, symbolizing the formation of the molecules and web, to Six Healing Sounds directed to the earth's heart and organs, its rivers, air, and ecological systems.

The "platters" became the galaxies, with the super nova exploding in the variation. The "daughters" birthed simple life, and Pulling in the Energy was the human, standing upright, becoming conscious and embracing the spiritual awareness of the divine. Each movement soon depicted the slow changes of billions of earth years to the more rapid changes of modern times passing through the "taffy movements" of civilization changes. Working the Pulley led the way through inventions and technology until those critical movements of Joyous Breath and Passing Clouds so threatened in our day. The "lights" continue to lead the way to better earth care.

Eventually, I put into writing the movements and corresponding universe story, but I had no fear of forgetting it because both the story and the movements had connected within me. I do not teach this in my classes, but occasionally at the end of a semester I will chart out the universe story on the floor with a spiraling rope (a cosmic walk) and pictures along the time frames while we honor each period with the movement. It becomes a teaching moment as well as some sort of a cosmic dance. The cosmic consciousness pose becomes a stance of oneness, kinship with the universe, and a commitment to nurture, revere, and sustain that oneness.

I am sure others may have seen this same connection and perhaps have developed it more precisely than I have. If that is true it could be enlightening to connect with them.

Teaching & Healing

By Fran Alexander, Barnegat, New Jersey

From Dan Pienciak: *Recently I received a letter from a teacher with whom I had lost touch. Fran is a fairly new teacher who was in one of my classes for many years. She reported that being a caretaker for family members had been consuming more and more of her time. She gave permission to share excerpts.*

"I continue to give private lessons and practice daily… I tripped on the cellar stairs and went airborne… I broke my ankle in three places and dislocated my lower leg bone. The healing time was estimated at six months, but after the third week the x-rays showed amazingly fast healing. Tests indicated I had actually added bone density. I will be 70 this month – how miraculous is that? T'ai Chi Chih had been my only form of therapy. (I had stopped taking bone density medication many years ago.)

Where in the World?
Deborah Massey doing Push Pull at Armageddon.

I was afraid that after all your efforts with me, you'd think I was a failure. But I was in Florida for a long time this summer… I taught elderly relatives TCC and will send them a video and book as follow-up. They are already feeling better and stronger. I realize now that it is not important to have so many jobs teaching, but rather that I am still practicing TCC and doing the best I can to give this miraculous gift to others."

Thoughts from a Newbie

By Maja Sofie Kristiansen, Seal Beach, California

To be Present

One of my close girlfriends asked me why I liked this T'ai Chi Chih so much and what it was all about and it got me thinking. I have never tried any traditional T'ai Chi practices so I wouldn't know the difference. But I know what I like about T'ai Chi Chih and what got me to going to it in the first place.

the sudden awareness that Chi is spreading like rings in water to other aspects of my life

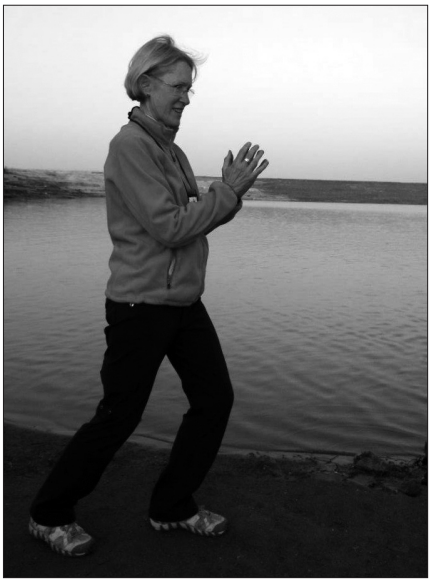
In a world where **time can feel like riding a tiger through water and hours just slip through one's fingers**, it's so important to find *something* that helps you live in the moment and be 100 percent present. I searched and tried many things. I tried a circle group meditation where we stared into a circle of candles, and for 35 minutes I did nothing but think about my back hurting, the itching behind my left knee, and buying milk on my way home. I've tried mindfulness CDs where I sat still and got increasingly stressed about spending 14 minutes listening to the ocean … when I had e-mails to answer. And I practiced a morning meditation where I lay on my back listening to one quiet song all the way to the end (never longer than 5 minutes), and during that time, I managed to make multiple shopping lists, a list of calls to make that day, and to plan Christmas gifts for years to come. I tried several relaxation techniques where I often just fell asleep. I tried a few types of yoga where I either mentally beat myself up for not doing a daily practice, or I focused too much on doing the poses properly, until realized it would take years (if not decades) before I could relax into it. So when I saw an advertisement in a local magazine in Seal Beach for TCC I thought, *you have nothing to lose my friend.* **I must say I was very skeptical.**

My first time

I arrived a little early to peek at the intermediate class. Students stood in a circle and pulled taffy. Wow, I thought, I will never learn that; it looks so easy that it must be extremely difficult. **But I have never tried any martial art, meditation practice, or anything that is so easy to catch and get into the flow.** Suzanne Roady-Ross, our patient and smiling instructor, got us started in no time. Luckily, Suzanne explained that we should not be surprised if we felt energy in our hands while doing the exercises. Otherwise I might have run away and never returned because the feeling of *something* was there almost immediately – the feeling of polarity between the palms and a tingling in the palms that flowed up through the arms. I was speechless.

To be or not to be

I did not flee and returned again and again to Suzanne's classes. After five weeks, I joined the more experienced class and followed as best I could through all 19 movements. It was an absolutely amazing experience. **My brain simply logged off. For the first time in my life my mind quieted.** I followed the others from one movement into the next. No shopping lists, phone calls, or anything else emerged in my mind. I experienced for a short while just being. Then we reached "Daughter on the Mountain Top" and my body needed my brain to coordinate my arms.



The Future

I'm still a beginner, but I'm now able to do all 19 movements, and I keep being impressed by how easy it is to get in the flow and just be. As Suzanne made me focus more on my legs, I realized I had never really *felt* my legs. I am often unsure if they are bent or straight when they are supposed to be, but that will slowly come.

I can feel little glimpses of being and the sudden awareness that *Chi* is spreading like rings in water to other aspects of my life. I now find that in other meditation forms, being in the moment and feeling joy comes more easily. I believe that TCC will continue giving in body awareness and inner peace and joy. I will definitely be practicing TCC for years to come, and I will continue recommending it to people like me, those who often feel more stressed than relaxed when lying down rather than **being through motion.**

Where in the World?

Page 10, Deborah Massey doing Daughter in the Valley at the Dead Sea.
Page 11, Deborah Massey doing Daughter on the Mountaintop on the heights of Masada.

We Are Caretakers Of TCC

By Lisa M. Otero, Oxnard, California

We are the first generation to practice T'ai Chi Chih. That is our amazing good fortune. Originated in 1974, TCC is a complete and fully-formed practice and also an infant requiring our tender nurturance and care to ensure its preservation for future generations. Justin called TCC a "Service to Humanity" and entrusted it to each of us.

What does it mean that the practice has been entrusted to us? It means, literally, that each of us holds TCC in **trust**. It is ours to cherish and preserve and to pass to others in its original form.

How do we ensure that we bequeath to future generations the same healing practice that Justin gave us? **No other generation will be as close to the origination of the practice as we are.** Time, however, marches on. There are many new teachers who did not have the privilege of meeting Justin, and, perhaps, neither did their teachers. And even those who practiced with Justin over the years do not necessarily agree on every point of the practice. A few "regional variations" have developed in the practice. In 100 years will people be doing a TCC practice we would recognize?

We wish Justin was still here to guide us in resolving our differences, but he is not. The fact is, he was far from definitive in some of his instructions even when he was teaching and making corrections – and he was always making corrections. He wanted all of us to take equal responsibility for the health and wellbeing of TCC.

Justin, purposely, intentionally, did not set up infrastructure to stand in his place after death. **There is no one to look up to, no higher authority to answer all our questions and issue edicts.** We must take responsibility for ourselves and for the integrity of our practice. Justin taught us an ancient Chinese word for this: *Teh* (the power of inner sincerity). We must encourage each other to seek and to share, even if acknowledging and discussing our differences is sometimes uncomfortable.

Justin seemed to have no problem with voluntary group and individual efforts to spread and support the sharing of TCC

Wouldn't it have been easier for all of us if Justin had put in place an authoritative, hierarchical structure to administer, support, safeguard and promote TCC? Perhaps; perhaps not.

Many years ago, when I was a young lawyer with great respect for guidelines, regulations, and organizational structures, I asked Justin about this. He sadly shook his head and said **he had never heard of an attempt to officially organize a spiritual practice or movement that hadn't lead to the corruption and eventual demise of the practice or movement.** The result of human efforts to implement and enforce structure is that the structure becomes the focal point and all energy gets channeled into "feeding the corporate beast." "But what about a non-profit structure?," I persisted. He just looked at me sadly and changed the subject. This was so puzzling to me.

Over the years, I puzzled and puzzled and puzzled some more… Justin seemed to have no problem with voluntary group and individual efforts to spread and support the sharing of TCC: He allowed his students to open the T'ai Chi Chih Center in Albuquerque and to create a quarterly print journal, *The Vital Force*; he formed a publishing company, Good Karma, to print and distribute his writings and TCC instructional materials. He encouraged us to charge a fair rate for our teaching services, although he never profited by our teaching fees.

Now, 20 years later, I think I get it. I don't think it was money that concerned him. I think **it was about each of us, individually, taking responsibility.** So, with courage and humility, I resolve to dive deeply into my practice, to seek all the historical guidance I can find, but to keep in mind that it is just that: guidance. I will share what I have been given with those who are interested, and I will be open to what others have to share. I will always keep Justin's generosity in my heart, and with gratitude, I commit to pay it forward.

Gateway To Eastern Philosophy & Religion

By Justin F. Stone

~ Hua-Yen ~

I'm just going to quote and skip around because there's so much material from China. *Hua-Yen* (*Kegon* in Japanese) is a Buddhist philosophy, and I think it's the deepest philosophy I've ever come across. The following illustrates the essence of *Hua-Yen* philosophy. **"When one is absorbed by all, one penetrates into all. When all is absorbed by one, one penetrates into one. When one is absorbed by one, one penetrates into one. When all is absorbed by all, all penetrates into all."** *Hua-Yen* is the Buddhist philosophy of totality.

One time the daughter of the Empress asked one the great teachers of *Hua-Yen* to enlighten her. So he placed a candle in the center of the table, he placed mirrors under the candle, on top of the candle, and around the candle. It took him several days to set this up on all sides. There were ten directions. Here was the candle in the center, and the candle was reflected in every mirror. But also reflected in every mirror was every other mirror reflecting every other mirror with a candle to eternity. It's mind boggling, isn't it? You couldn't say, "This mirror has the reflection of the candle, but this mirror has the reflection of this mirror, and so forth." It is said that the Empress's daughter was enlightened by that demonstration. I told that story to a graduate philosophy class at the University of Southern California, and the man in charge didn't understand it at all. He said to the class after hearing the example, questioning the concept of enlightenment, "Well, is anybody enlightened?"

The absolute can only exist if it manifests in the relative, the relative can only exist if it is, in essence, the absolute

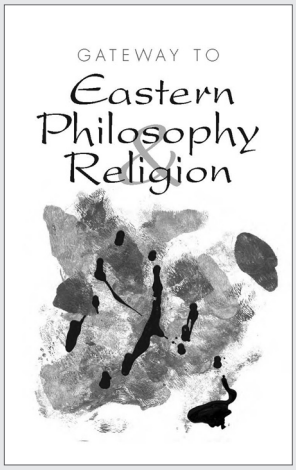
There is another story that illustrates *Hua-Yen* philosophy. If you take away a statue of a gilded lion, there is no lion. But if you take away the lion, the gold doesn't have any form, and it can't appear. The gold has to appear in some form. And that form (of the gilded lion) is only possible if it is made up of gold. This is a good example of creation, with essence and function.

Do you get the point? He's actually talking about the absolute and the relative. The absolute can only exist if it manifests in the relative, the relative can only exist if it is, in essence, the absolute. I hate to spell it out like that because it spoils it. That's a very famous example, and I think it's wonderful. A clay statue basically is clay. It is a statue. But if you take away the statue, how can you see the clay? But if you take away the clay, how can you see the statue? This is totality. *Hua-Yen.*

~ ~ ~

~ Confucius ~

Confucius also spoke of *Jen*, human heartedness. Confucius said the most important thing is human heartedness. **He believed in the power of inner sincerity.** Here is a quotation from Confucius, "The life of the moral man is plain and yet it is not unattractive. It is simple and yet full of grace. It is easy and yet methodical. He knows that the accomplishment of great things consists in doing small things well, and that great effects are produced by small causes. He knows the evidence and reality of what cannot be perceived by the senses."



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

Is there anything in Confucius' statement you could quarrel with? Do you know anybody who has spoken more truth than Confucius? The life of the moral man is plain and yet it is not unattractive. He's saying that great things are produced by doing small things. If you do small things well, great things are done. He also knows the evidence and reality of what cannot be perceived by the senses. This is understandable. I hear sound waves from the radio but I can't see them. To a primitive person, the sounds coming from the radio would be magic, wouldn't they?

There are many stories of how Confucius went to Lao-tzu to talk to him. Lao-tzu lived at the same time as Confucius. In fact, we don't even know if there was a Lao-tzu because Lao-tzu has to do with a Master, almost a cumulative Master. Lao-tzu said, "He who wants to spring, first must crouch. **Push down to break attachment and lift. If something is heavy, don't try to lift it, push down on it.** He who stands on tip toe weakens himself."

Chuang-tzu is to Lao-tzu what Plato is to Socrates. Chuang-tzu said, "The wise man considers both sides of the question without partiality, sees them both in the light of Tao. This is called following two courses at once. Can a man cling only to heaven and not to earth? They are correlative. To know one is to know the other. To refuse one, is to refuse both." **Can you only live in oneness? You have to live in this world, too.** Chuang-tzu went on, "Can a man cling to the positive without any negative? If he claims to do so, he is either a rogue or a mad man." Chuang-tzu also said, "Where the fountains of passion lie deep, the heavenly springs are soon dry." One of Chuang-

Justin at Tenrikyo Temple in Kyoto in the early 1960s.

tzu's most famous statements is the following, "Only the true man can have true knowledge." **My Indian teacher once was asked, "Can you reach enlightenment through devotion?" He said, "You've got it backwards. Only the enlightened man is capable of devotion."** Lao-tzu said, "To realize that knowledge is ignorance; this is a noble insight. To regard our ignorance as knowledge, this is mental disease." So some of us are diseased. There are so many stories along this line.

The essence of Chinese life is *Ching Chi Shen*. In the **I Ching**, *Ching* is essence. *Ching* is also male semen. There is something very deep in that connection. Essence is the same thing that creates life, the semen. *Chi*, as you know, compares to Universal Energy or Divine Energy. Shen is spirit. In *Ching Chi Shen* we have Essence, Energy, Spirit. Both T'ai Chi Chih and T'ai Chi Chuan unite the individual Chi with Universal energy.

~ ~ ~

~ Zen ~

A Zen Master was asked, "Is the enlightened man subject to the law of causality?" There've been many, many answers to that. [Paul] Reps, in good Zen fashion, answered it, not by saying "He is or isn't," but by saying: "The enlightened man is One with the law of causality."

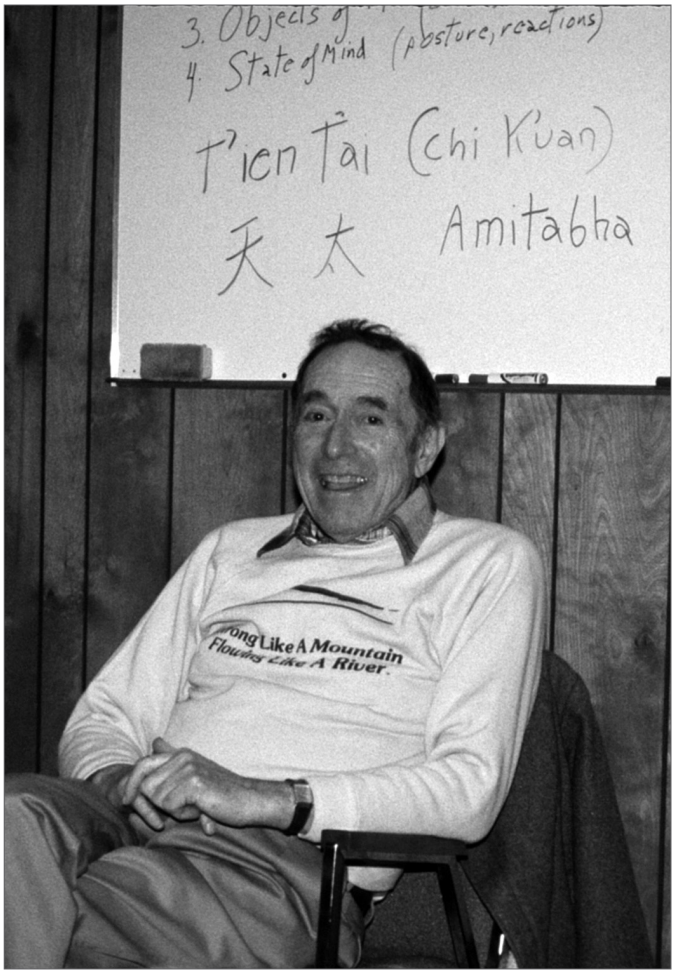
One great Zen teacher had a monastery and gave talks on weekends. More and more people came for the talks. He grew disgusted with this. **Zen isn't done through talk.** So he closed up the monastery and went to live under a bridge in Kyoto, which he shared with the other beggars there. Finally, someone showed him how to collect rice, which had been thrown away, and make it into rice vinegar. That way he'd eat each day because of the small amount of money he made. He deliberately lived this life under the bridge. It gets cold in Kyoto. There, instead of talking to people, he spent his time working on the spirit body. This is a Zen teacher, not a Taoist teacher.

One of his disciples found him under the bridge and said, "Master, let me come and live with you." The Master replied, "You couldn't live this life." "Let me try," asked the disciple. "O.K.," said the Master, "If you can get through one day, I'll take you back as a disciple." That night one of the beggars died. The next morning the Master said, "Well, we won't have to go begging today. We can eat his food, the food he had collected." The disciple couldn't take this, and the Master said, "Get out of here."

~ ~ ~

~ Maha-Bharata ~

The name of India was *Bharata*. **Mahabharata**, "Great India" is a collection of poems. **The Bhagavad Gita** is one small part in the **Mahabharata**. What is common to all the writings in **Mahabharata**? The essence of Indian spirituality and philosophy is *Tat Tvam Asi*, "That thou art." This philosophy is the reason that the Indians greet you with their palms together in front of their heart. This greeting is called the *pronam* and means, "I greet the all-seeing One in you," *"Namaste."* Theoretically, "I see the divinity in you, which is the same as in me; after all, we're both Brahman." *Tat Tvam Asi* is the essence of Indian spirituality. The *"Neti-neti"* I spoke of, "Not this, not that" is the search for the Real. This is the viveka, discrimination, eliminating that which is not Real.



Justin leading a meditation retreat in Albuquerque, New Mexico, in November 1994.

40th Year Anniversary Conference: "Grounded In Growth"

By Alice Holden, San Antonio, Texas

This year's T'ai Chi Chih conference in New Jersey was the best ever. I arrived a day early to prepare myself for the conference. Since it was held at Kean University, it was affordable. Also, I had received a tuition-donation from a generous friend and TCC teacher. (God bless her heart.)

The dorm was equipped with elevators and the long distance between buildings was diminished by the availability of shuttles. Siobhan Hutchinson and Daniel Pienciak co-hosted the event and did a wonderful job of connecting with the university staff. It is always a challenge to operate a conference within an educational structure.

Of course, the best part was the attendance. Friends from around the country and beyond were there, adding up to 102 participants.

The Thursday opening practice (as well as early morning TCC sessions) took place in front of the dorm building and was led by local teachers.

On Friday, in the comfort of a professional auditorium, Guide Sandy McAlister welcomed all. Her inspired sharing was followed by Lisa Otero's enthusiastic plea to use Justin Stone's materials for teaching and for our own development. She likened such materials to goodies carefully placed in a picnic basket by Justin Stone for each of us to unpack as we wish.

In a large upper room, vendors sold beautiful *Chi*-related items. It was also there that Sandy, through word and example, during two separate sessions, refined all of the TCC movements. Kim Grant provided information on *The Vital Force* journal, Good Karma Publishing, and the near miraculous expansion of TCC through various social media channels. Mary White gave a presentation on the TCC Center in Albuquerque. Colleen Flanagan talked to us about how finding and teaching TCC enables one to find and put cosmic flow into our lives.

Friday evening ended with a celebration of the 40th anniversary of TCC, as Carmen Brocklehurst shared a video clip of Justin Stone playing the piano and speaking at an earlier conference. Carmen then gave her assessment of the growth of TCC over the years. Who has a clearer vision of this than she?

Saturday morning, in the comfort of the auditorium, two presentations captured our attention. First, an open discussion was held on "Men and TCC" which called us to look closely at how we market TCC, so that our emphasis on softness does not sell short a practice which provides us with tremendous energy. The second presentation was on caretaking and how her own TCC practice empowered Diana Bahn to see her way through one personal challenge after another. We would do well to take to heart the messages of both presentations.

In the afternoon, Pam Towne presented the practice of *Seijaku* as Justin Stone's intended extension or development of TCC. Within this brief presentation, participants were able to experience the power of holding fast and letting go, or of meeting resistance and then resting in calm. Hopefully, this inspired many teachers to seek out teachers of *Seijaku* upon returning home.

Later in the afternoon, over 60 local TCC students joined the teachers in the upper room for a group practice. It was great to see so many students arrive and do TCC so very well.

This was followed in the auditorium by a teacher rededication, led by Antonia and the leadership group. After the ceremony, local students joined conference participants in the annual scholarship fund raffle. Once again, Neal Roy's humor and leadership helped the TCC foundation raise over $2000 for scholarships. The raffle was interspersed with a talent show, directed by Dan Pienciak. That night we retired exhausted, but impressed, by our many talented colleagues.

Sunday morning practice was divided into a TCC group and a *Seijaku* group, both moving in front of the dorm building. It was a first.

After breakfast, all assembled in the auditorium for a look at the future of TCC. It looks exciting. Many possible retreats and intensives could become part of our continued education. Dates are on the calendar for accreditation. Then the big announcement: the 2015 conference will be in Black Mountain, North Carolina, August 6-9. Hope to see you there.

Words about T'ai Chi Chih written by teachers and then pinned to the "Grounded in Growth" tree at the conference.

Balance	*Certainty*	*Clarity*
Strength	*Trust*	*Joy*
Freedom	*Presence*	*Peacefulness*
Rootedness	*Focus*	*Wholeness*
Awareness	*Flexibility*	*TEH*
Openness	*Being*	*Softness*
Acceptance	*Liberation*	*Compassion*
Courage	*Mindfulness*	*Vision*
Flow	*Unity*	*Love*
Service	*Gratitude*	*Confidence*
Knowing	*Healing*	*Centeredness*
Oneness	*Connection*	*Surrender*
Stillness	*Expansion*	

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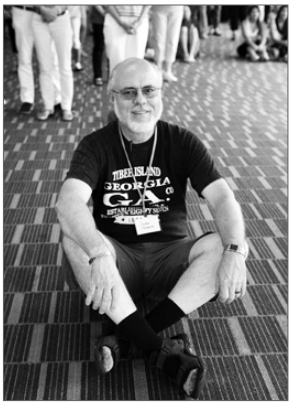
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In Justin's Words, At The Conference

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Before we showed a DVD of Justin's talk at the 2005 teacher conference, I offered an introduction.

As the DVD starts Justin sits at the piano and plays two songs: *Loverman*, by Rogers and Hammerstein, and *Can't Help Loving That Man of Mine*. These two songs are about earthly love, but our love and gratitude to Justin has to do with how he has helped us to go deep within, through T'ai Chi Chih. We are just beginning this journey.

Justin was a very good musician; he did everything well. When Brock and I went to the Kawloon side of Hong Kong with Justin, he was invited to jam with a group that was playing at the Peninsula Hotel. Justin was a very good composer and pianist, but his destiny was to create TCC to help humankind. Not a bad trade off, wouldn't you say? The *Chi* knows what it is doing. For this, I think we are all grateful.

On the DVD, Justin talks about ideas later put into the booklet, *Play Within The Play*, available from the T'ai Chi Chih Center [or for free download at www.gkpub.com]. It is worth reading. He offers us some good advice about gratitude. Justin was always grateful to Sandy for knowing the importance of TCC and wanting to share it. Sandy singlehandedly hosted conferences; she later helped others host them. It is selfless work.

Pam has also hosted a couple of conferences. Justin would have appreciated all the work done this year by Dan, Siobhan, and their team. He always took time to thank people. It set a good example for us. **About two weeks before he died he told me to say to all of you: "Tell them how grateful I am for all they are doing."** Justin was grateful to us for growing our TCC and sharing it, which is what we are doing by being here at this conference.

One of Justin's favorite words was *teh* (inner sincerity), and he used this to point out the importance of something. *teh*, in all of us, was of utmost important to him.

TCC in scientific experiments didn't really interest Justin. He only cared if the participants were doing the movements correctly – and doing them daily. He wasn't interested in the show, but rather how we benefited by our TCC practice.

There is a life force. Most people don't know this, but we teachers fortunately do because of TCC. It is something that affects all aspects of our lives and the length of our lives. Remember, Justin lived until he was 95.

Justin asks, "Does T'ai Chi Chih have a purpose?" What do you think? Let's see what Justin has to say. [DVD of Justin speaking then begins.]

Strength Through Softness

By Carol Spicer, Fair Lawn, New Jersey

Freedom – letting the body be,
each part of the body knows,
there's strength thru softness,
when guided by *Chi*.

What do I do with my knees?
Simply let them be knees.
What do I do with the hips, and the ankles?
The answer will always be,
let them be!

Grounded from the core,
in the soles of the feet,
each body part,
and the whole body knows,
how to be supported and supportive with ease.

Opening to softness,
clears the way,
for steady strength,
and lightness,
and deeper depths of letting be.

Open Practice Draws A Crowd

By Carol Spicer, Fair Lawn, New Jersey

I registered over 60 T'ai Chi Chih enthusiasts who joined us for our community practice on Saturday – half were students welcomed by their teachers, and half had learned about the event from a newspaper article, online publications and general outreach. The latter group was experiencing TCC for the very first time. (Additional non-registered attendees also showed up from our public relations and outreach efforts, and we happily welcomed them all.)

It was amazing to see new faces blend in so well with the flow, following Sandy's lead with little verbalization, supported by the energy of teachers surrounding them, and gentle harp music. Watching these new community members enjoy themselves, and move so easily, encourages me to "Talk less and move more," as Justin advised. We seem to teach best by example, enjoying the flow.

SAVE THE DATE:
Conference 2015
August 6-9, 2015
Black Mountain,
North Carolina.

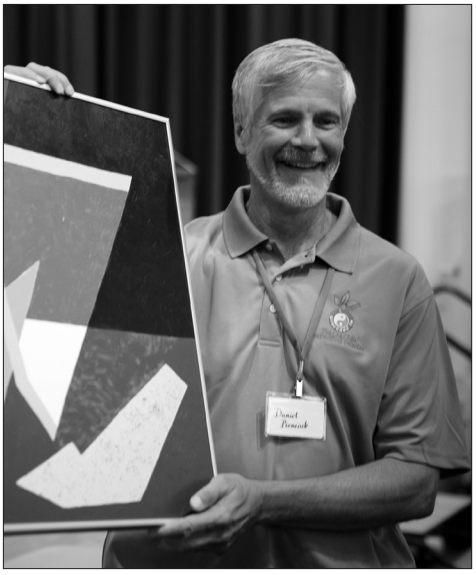
In the Southern Appalachian Mountains, near Ashville, NC

Details:
www.taichichih.org/conference-2015/

At left and below: Only a group of T'ai Chi Chih teachers could turn getting stuck in an elevator into a party.

Above: The fear of being stuck in the elevator before practicing TCC.

At right: The calm after practicing TCC.



Photos on pages 18 and 19: Boisterous silent auction and entertaining talent show on Saturday night of the conference.

Prajna Retreat in Aston, Pennsylvania, September 2014

By April Leffler, Host

This is the fourth year that a group gathered to share silence, practice T'ai Chi Chih, and experience a variety of mindful exercises to enhance awareness by deliberately and repeatedly ***going within***. (After all, where else would one find *Prajna* if not within?) Below are comments from some participants:

During some of the discussions, several people commented that they are not aware of that "small voice within" guiding them. Others suggested that they don't do that "intuitive" stuff. My response to this is, "I beg to differ." It seems the issue some people have with *Prajna* is not that they aren't aware of or connected to it, but perhaps often *don't trust it*. Generally *Prajna* isn't logical or rational and often operates on a moment-to-moment basis. (And the ego doesn't like this.) If thought about, however, most people can recall moments in which something told them to do such and such. **I would love to create space in *The Vital Force* dedicated to stories from readers who did or did not follow Prajna.** Perhaps it would generate excitement and jog the memory that we are all very connected. – April Leffler

The Prajna-TCC Retreat with Sandy McAlister (as facilitator) and April Leffler provided the inspiration and encouragement for me to fully embrace and incorporate the practice in my daily life. The meditative movement has enhanced my spiritual journey. – Mary LeFever

Well-spent time to learn and open and go within. A must to begin a daily practice of these exercises as an ongoing routine. I hope everyone would give it a go. Thank you for continuing this retreat and practice. – Jack Weaver

Beautiful, restful silence allowed us to be with ourselves, possibly even our true selves. Breaking down individual TCC movements allowed us to improve our individual practices. I think each gives his/her soul (sole?) to meld with the greater universe soul, to develop this connection to the greater universe. – Mary Karpin

I came to the retreat to clean out the nonsense that had accumulated in my head. Kind of like "Pulling Taffy," I had to shed that sticky taffy from my mind. Sandy helped prepare me for a journey toward achieving direct insight into the truth within us: *Prajna*. To Sandy, April, and everyone who attended: you listened to me and taught me, we laughed and cried, and best of all we practiced T'ai Chi Chih. – Judy Leach

I believe the retreat is the most unique offering in the TCC calendar of events. To experience a day of silence and reflection surrounded by other TCC teachers is a gift of awareness and joy. – Sky Young-Wick

Prajna: *Front L to R: April Leffler, Joan Farrell, Sandy McAlister. Back L to R: Mary Karpin, Alba Cordasco, Judy Leach, Mary LeFever, Sky, Jack Weaver.*

Seijaku: *Bottom L to R: Marilyn Powell, Phyllis Segal, Adabelle P. Rychtarik, Alice M. Holden, Charlotte Livingston. Top L to R: Jean Markey, Neena Mitchell, Donna McElhose, Carol Spicer, Jack Weaver, Pam Towne, Stephan Koblick, Barbara Flynn, Vicki Schroeder, Trisha Jewellen Hargaden.*

Journey From Martial Arts To Seijaku (via TCC)

By Stephan Koblick, North Haledon, New Jersey

With my *Seijaku* accreditation that took place after conference, I reached another leg of a journey that started 46 years ago when I began my study of Mu Do Kwan Karate in Osan, Korea. Ten years ago I renewed my search for a pathway toward inner enlightenment – a journey that had been dormant. Despite a number of attempts, meditation did not work, and I was searching for a path that included physical movement without martial arts demands.

T'ai Chi Chih found me in the person of Dorene Krause, my first teacher. I did not have any thoughts of becoming a teacher until I attended an intensive weekend in Ringwood, New Jersey. The enthusiasm of some teachers who had come to further refine their practices was very infectious. Margery Erickson, in particular, spoke about how teaching and sharing TCC with others was such a wonderful experience. I met Margery at the conference and thanked her for her inspiration and the effect that it and she had. Once I decided to become a teacher, Dorene helped me through accreditation and later encouraged me to undertake the challenge of *Seijaku*. The classes with Daniel Pienciak and Bill Moore prepared me very well for the *Seijaku* accreditation process.

Accreditation with Pam has significantly helped me to better understand and experience the power and wisdom of the *Chi* that I first discovered in a Dojo on the other side of the world so many years ago.

Retreat in Albuquerque, New Mexico, September 2014

Nei Kung-inspired Pyramid Poems from Carmen Brocklehurst's students

what
secrets
lie within
nei kung ourselves
no secrets
there just
look
– Jerry

filled
with good
vibrations
being alive
feet tingling
eyes wide
op'n
– Dora

be
in the
flowing sea
healing sleeping
feeling the
nei kung
rest
– M. W.

calm
peaceful
grounded joy
overflowing
into me
to you
all
– Pauline

still
quiet
peacefully
meditation
quells the soul
settles
mind
– Robert

the
children
of chi, we
together, all
come see
healing
joy
– E. H.

short
nei kung
life is good
energy flow
coaxed me to
solid
sleep
– Sheryl

sleep
gentle
inside real
meditating
all night long
wake with
joy
– M. R.

try
back then
side too stiff
cannot relax stop
instant sleep
wake up
dawn
– Nancy

I
wanted
to say it
several times
I couldn't
fell a-
sleep
– Caroline

one
nei kung
filled with light
never filtered
always bright
no end
sight
– Jeneth

sleep
nei kung
on my mind
like a drop of
water in the
desert
gold
– Corine

flow
of *chi*
energy
vital gentle
healing waves
deep rest
flow
– L. O.

rest
while the
healing *chi*
moves like a wave
within you
my true
home
– Camela

it's
nei kung
doing its
magical thing
and I was
soon to
sleep
– Brock

joy
looking
forward to
harmonious
rest and sleep
nei kung
peace
– Robert

I
practised
the *nei kung*
last night and I
slept very well
I felt
joy
– Pia

sea
tanden
energy
all life's goodness
in the feet
grounding
this
– Denise

sleep
come now
elusive
nei kung nei kung
so simple
yet so
good
– Joyce

one
becomes
two and three
and many more
becomes one
life joy
one
– Leya

Retreat in Pecos, New Mexico, September 2014

By Ann Rutherford, Albuquerque, New Mexico

T'ai Chi Chih retreats are rare opportunities for practitioners to advance their understanding of TCC and, in addition, to spend leisure time forging new relationships with their inner selves and with others. The retreat with Sandy McAlister was in the ideal location, **surrounded by a forest wilderness that reflects the fundamental aspects of TCC**: The trees surrounding us are deeply rooted while the branches move with the weight shifting wind. Several of our practices were held beside the Pecos River under huge cottonwood trees. The rain drenched earth beneath our feet, the rustling leaves overhead, and the soft but continuous flowing river all enhanced our practice. At night the sky dazzled us with its starry brilliance and the profound silence of the monastery spoke to us of spiritual presence. For those craving time alone, there were miles of trails to travel in the Pecos Wilderness. We left feeling deeply connected with TCC, the earth, and with each other.

What Is Cosmic Consciousness?

By Linda Braga, Castro Valley, California

Some background information on Cosmic Consciousness comes from two experts in their time: Dr. Richard Maurice Bucke (1894) and Dr. Stanley R. Dean (1973).

In 1894, Dr. Bucke, former president of the American Medico-Psychological Association presented a paper called "Cosmic Consciousness". Four years later, he published a book under the same title. His theory of cosmic consciousness was that:

a seemingly miraculous higher consciousness, appearing sporadically throughout the ages, was a natural rather than an occult phenomenon, that it was latent in all of us, and was, in fact, an evolutionary process that would eventually raise all mankind to a higher level of existence.

Cosmic consciousness refers to a supra-sensory, supra-rational level of mentation that transcends all other human experiences and creates a sense of Oneness with the universe. Its existence has been known since antiquity under a variety of regional and ritual terms – Nirvana, Samadhi, Kairos, Unio Mystica, to name but a few.

Seventy-nine years later, in 1973, Dr. Stanley R. Dean stated that the ultra-conscious manifests in the following ways:

1.) The onset is ushered in by an awareness of light that floods the brain and fills the mind…

2.) The individual is bathed in emotions of super-charged joy, rapture, triumph, grandeur, reverential awe and wonder…

3.) A noetic illumination occurs that is quite impossible to describe. In an intuitive flash one has an awareness of the meaning and drift of the universe, an identification and merging with Creation, infinity and immortality, a depth beyond depth of revealed meaning – in short, a conception of the Over-Self, so omnipotent that religion has interpreted it as God.

4.) There is feeling of transcendental love and compassion for all living things.

5.) Fear of death falls off like a mantle; physical and mental suffering vanish…

6.) There is a reappraisal of the material things in light, an enhanced appreciation of beauty.

7.) There is an extraordinary quickening of the intellect, an uncovering of latent genius and leadership.

8.) There is a sense of mission. The revelation is so moving and profound that the individual is moved to share it with all fellow men.

9.) A charismatic change occurs in personality – an inner and outer radiance, as though charged with some divinely inspired power, a magnetic force that attracts and inspires others.

10.) There is a sudden or gradual development of extraordinary psychic gifts such as clairvoyance, extrasensory perception, telepathy, precognition, healing, etc. Though generally regarded as occult, such phenomena may have a more rational explanation. They may be due to an awakening of trans-human powers of perception latent in all of us.

– This information was published in the U.S. Congressional Record in Washington DC on September 25, 1973.

~ ~ ~

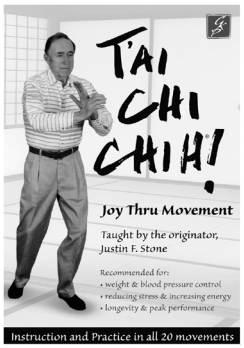
This background information on Cosmic Consciousness was painstakingly gathered by Ruth-Inge Heinze, a professor and lecturer, and became the first chapter of her book: *The Light In the Dark: The Search for Visions*. This book was published in 2014, several years after her death.

I am privileged to have known Ruth-Inge for ten years before her passing, and seen how she brought the light to so many other people and cultures around the world. She had a Samadhi experience very early in her life, which is vividly described in her book.

Justin Stone came to the same conclusions about cosmic consciousness, and he did it through the vehicle of intense meditation, study and inner work, and T'ai Chi Chih. As teachers of this form of meditation, we can take advantage of this gift through our dedication to the practice… and we too may gain access to this higher state of being.

Where in the World: *Pauline Quimson doing Rocking Motion in Bandelier National Monument, New Mexico.*

Flash Sale: It Pays To Pay Attention

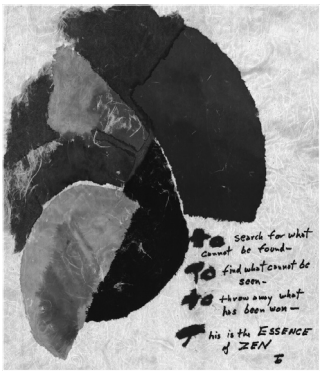


Did you see, share, and take advantage of the 48-hour flash sale offered by GKP in mid-September of Justin's 1994 Solo DVD – for the incredible low price of $15.95 (versus the regular $32.95)… We promoted it on Facebook, where it reached over 4,000 people, and sent it to teachers via email. It turned out to be an effective way to introduce prospective students to Justin Stone's teaching. Teachers placed large orders, and students purchased multiple copies as gifts.

GKP won't run flash sales very often, since it would undermine regular teacher orders. B*ut when we do, it pays to pay attention!*

Holiday Art Sale

Have you been waiting to splurge on yourself? Wanting to introduce Justin's creativity to others? Can't afford an original Justin Stone painting? You can still give and receive the gift of Justin's art.



Until December 15th, with shipment available by Christmas within the U.S., you may order the unsigned Zen Poster + Tentatively Forever Art Book (retail $100 with shipping) for $50 plus shipping.

Serious Student Package: One Each Of All Of Justin's Works (except Seijaku)

In an effort to make sure Justin's whole catalog of work is introduced to all serious students, GKP is offering this special package to those attending an intensive, teacher accreditation course, or conference (for first-timers) => **$135** for pick up at the event (or $148 with shipping to your home). This represents a discount of **50%**. Please encourage students to take advantage of this great offer.

Conference Presentation Wrap-Up

For those who missed the conference (or those who don't recall what was said), here's a 12-month wrap-up of GKP activities:

• The new website was launched in May 2014, offering much easier ordering.
• The new teacher discount rate (because of GKP's fiscal health and in a nod to changing nature of retail sales) is now 30% off when you order $70 or more. Please call 505-797-7300 (or email sales@gkpub.com) for the discount code if you do not remember it.
• Teachers who do not sell materials directly are incented to send students to www.gkpub.com: Teachers receive a 10% commission when students order directly from the website and reference their teacher.
• At this time, a new "Definitive DVD" is *not* in the works. (The possibility was floated during the 2013 conference.)
• *Heightened Awareness* ($17.95) and *Meditation for Healing* ($21.95) came back into print with 2nd editions.
• Teachers: If you personally do not make instructional materials available to students, please direct them to the three excellent packages offered at **www.gkpub.com/packages**.
• Special thanks to Lisa Otero, who gave an impassioned and practical talk about why and how to use Justin's materials in class. A robust question-and-answer session followed, with teachers chiming in to join the productive conversation.

Lighter Side

During one of my workshops, I mentioned how lots of people take T'ai Chi Chih classes to deal with stresses in their lives. I asked the group, "How does stress manifest in your body?" One student said she feels pain in her body. I asked, "How many people feel pain in their backs?" A few students raised their hands. I then said, "How many people feel pain in their necks?" A few more nodded and raised their hands.

I followed with, "How many people tell you that you are a pain in the neck?" The class laughed, especially when I, too, raised my hand. At that point, one student spoke out and said, "Or the other end." – Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, Maryland

"I got it," exclaimed my student, Dr. Scott Ahrens (DC). "Working the Pulley generates energy for Light at the Top of the Head and Light at the Temple." – Neena Mitchell, Syracuse New York

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See www.taichichih.org/teacher-resources/

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Community Calendar

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

DATE / WHAT & WHO / WHERE / CONTACT

Nov 13-16 / TCC Intensive w / Sandy / Albuquerque, NM / Bruce Childs / 505-797-2060
Nov 19-23 / TCC Intensive w / Dan / Aston, PA / Stacy Moore / 717-465-6890

2015

April 19-25, 2015 / Accrediation / Aston, PA / Stacy Moore / 717-465-6890
May 7-10 / TCC Retreat w/ Pam / Prescott, AZ / Dana Diller / 928-848-0824
Aug 6-9 / Teacher Conference / Black Mountain, NC / Vicki Schroeder / vickitcc@gmail.com
Aug 9-11 / Seijaku Accreditation / Black Mountain, NC
Nov 16-21 / Accreditation w/ Dan / Albuquerque, NM / Mary White / 505-980-7329

~ MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

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

Nov 22 / TCC Workshop w/ Sharon Sirkis / Marriottsville, MD / Sharon Sirkis / sirkisprice@verizon.net

2015

Jan 24 / TCC Workshop w/ Sharon Sirkis / Marriottsville, MD / Sharon Sirkis / 410-730-1986

Apr 9-12 / TCC Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst / Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

Apr 11 / TCC Workshop w/ Sharon Sirkis / Marriottsville, MD / Sharon Sirkis / 410-730-1986

May 16 / Seijaku Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst / Albuquerque, NM / Judy Hendricks / 505-897-3810

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