



A Newsletter from the Guide of T'ai Chi Chih

Justin's Insights

When is a table a table?

"If you don't know who you are, you're going to drift through life, or blow like a tumbleweed
... there is no abiding self...
This table looks very solid, but it hasn't always been a table and it won't always be a table! To illustrate this, I've often given the following example:

A man dies, and his body is eaten by worms. The birds eat the worms. The birds die and become the soil, and in the soil a tree grows which gives fruit. The fruit falls to the ground, and is eaten by man. The man dies, and the worms take over.

At what point does one become the other? In other words, when does the man become the worm, and when does the worm become the bird?" –Justin Stone, originator, Tai Chi Chih
VFJ - August 2013
Justin's quotes reprinted with permission of Good Karma Publishing.

Chi Reflections

Transformation

You seek too much information and not enough transformation.
-Sai Baba

Embrace the beauty of your transformations. ~Honshin

Around My Door...

Around my door and yard no dust or noise.
In my bare rooms, no busyness.

Transformation: A Day Inside Folsom Prison

My Dear T'ai Chi Chih Community,

It was called a Retreat and Banquet Day, and by the end of the day I understood and agreed. For those who attended it was a retreat from the norm of everyday life, not just a couple of hours, but from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. The day was a retreat to a place of safety and calm – and an opportunity to let go.

We gathered in a plain building called the chapel, 24 men and three women: Julie Heryet their T'ai Chi Chih teacher; Minh, a friend of Julie's and Qi Gong teacher; and me. We began in a circle with the men expressing their gratitude to Julie for her dedication to come inside the prison each week and share her time, her humanity of openness and acceptance, and T'ai Chi Chih with them. They also talked about what T'ai Chi Chih has meant to them. Sitting among these men in this maximum security prison and listening to them speak openly about their experiences – feeling energy, the power of T'ai Chi Chih to calm the chaos within and around them, the value of the practice to them – was beyond moving.

The lunch, while to me seemed ordinary, was anything but to the men. Can you imagine not tasting fresh berries in 15 years? The fresh fruit salad disappeared quickly. The cheeses, several kinds of hummus, fresh bread, cut up vegetables, and homemade soup – prepared by Julie in the prison kitchen with the help of two inmates from the class – was mounded on plates as if they hadn't eaten in days. Oh yes, and the ice cream and pie finished off the feast. I marveled at where it went? For these appreciative men it was a feast of great delight. And watching them eat with such gusto was beyond a delight for me. It felt like I was having a picnic lunch with my T'ai Chi Chih brothers, sharing conversation and experiences.

Then what I had been experiencing the whole day but had not been able to put my finger on became clear during our final T'ai Chi Chih

Materials

Justin Stones materials may be purchased from local T'ai Chi Chih Teachers or through Good Karma Publishing.
www.gkpub.com

★ TAI CHI CHI PHOTO TEXTBOOK APPS for both iPhone & Android phones can be downloaded and purchased online for only \$9.95.

★ The apps consists of time lapsed photography of the originator, Justin Stone, performing of all the movements. As well as links to some movements on YouTube.

★ Important points about moving correctly are called out and special essays discuss balancing yin and yang, the Tao, the great circle meditation, serenity, study with a teacher, function and essence, the power of Chi circulation, body posture, more.

Purchase the Android application: Android app

Buy the application for iPhone, iPad & iPod Touch: Apple app

Additional excellent references may be found DVD: Interviews with Justin Stone and Carmen
www.gkpub.com

And on the CD: Justin Stone speaks on T'ai Chi Chih:
www.gkpub.com

Sandy McAlister's Seated T'ai Chi Chih DVD:
Seated DVD

Pam Towne's DVD:

Serenity in the Midst of Activity DVD

After so long a prisoner in a cage
I have returned to things as they are.
~ T'ao Ch'ien 4th Century



Why do T'ai Chi Chih in prison?

... As I write this, Old Folsom Prison is on Lock-down status because the white and black inmates are at war, this accentuated by an inmate stabbed in the dining hall. It is more than real. This is not some T.V. drama. This is life always on the edge of chaos.

Yesterday in the prison, staff decided after four days to allow the inmates to take showers. This is a common experiment. If the white and black inmates are released at the same time and a riot does not ensue, tension is on the way to a degree of control. Always cautious, leaving my cell I quickly noticed the inmates segregating themselves. Blacks with blacks and whites with whites. This is not a good sign. Usually there is a mingling. In the past, I would have put my back against a wall and waited for the explosion of violence. However, someplace from deep in my spirit came a longing for peace in the midst of the chaos. I longed to do T'ai Chi Chih.

Hanging my shower bag (containing soap and towel) on the outside cell bars, I slowly began the "Rocking Motion" then "Bird Flaps its

practice as we moved in a circle.

Covering the front of one leg of their pants, filling the leg from top to bottom in big letters is the word, PRISONER. When that leg was forward and as we moved together that word more or less pulsated in and out of the circle.

What that word was saying was not my reality nor had it been the whole day.

These men were not prisoners that day. They could be the person they choose to be without being on guard, wary, tough, or with attitude. They were able to transform that day from PRISONER – and the baggage that brings with it – to being men sharing their thoughts, a special meal, T'ai Chi Chih practice and gratitude.

This I heard expressed over and over. They were respectful to those of us visiting and to each other. They were helpful. They felt open and honest in their exchanges with me. They appreciated the normalcy of the day and eating together as if we were family, like I was their sister. There were no guards there to make them behave a certain way or keep an eye on them.

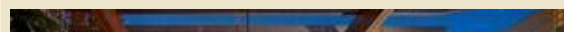
"To transform" means to change outward appearance or inner nature. I saw the outward transformation. I heard about the inner nature transformation. Some of the outward could not have happened without the inner. Several of the men expressed how T'ai Chi Chih has been a tool to help with this transformation and I could see and feel that.

Words often associated with T'ai Chi Chih practice are "letting go". We are to let go of tension, let go of effort, let go of extraneous thoughts, let go of expectations. Another phrase expressed in the teaching is to "be present", to experience only the present moment free from past or future.

This was my lesson of that day. I had to "let go" of preconceived concepts and ideas of prison and prisoners, and accept what was presented to me that day, in that moment, without judgment or assumption. Surprisingly it wasn't that hard to do. The men made it easy by being who they were, that day, in that space.

Sandy McAlister - in Hayward, California

2014 T'AI CHI CHIH INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS CONFERENCE JULY 24 - 27 Union, New Jersey. Conference this year will focus on MOVEMENT.



Lessons with Pam via Skype

Prepare for teacher accreditation, or fine-tune your practice

Teacher Resources:

Justin Stone's:
DVDs/Videos
Books
CDs/Audios

T'ai Chi Chih on the web:
taichichih.org

And ...

TCCcommunity.net

T'ai Chi Chih on Facebook
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The Vital Force newsletter
Vital Force Newsletter

The Vital Force Archives:
<http://www.taichichih.org/force-archives/>

T'ai Chi Chih Guides'
Archived newsletters:
Guides' Newsletters

[Editor's note: Teachers, Students and Friends of T'ai Chi Chih may have a free subscription to the Guide's monthly newsletter. It's easy to subscribe online using Newsletter Sign-Up Form found at:
TCCcommunity.net]

Wings” I could feel the tension begin to release, not only in myself, but in the air. By the time I was doing “Daughter on the Mountaintop” I heard one of the inmates yelling down three tiers (floors) to another inmate: “Oh, that’s just my friend doing some meditation.” There was some soft laughter, and the tension in the air was completely broken. As I started the “Pulling Taffy” movement, it was time for my shower. Men were mingling, blacks and whites, the tension in our little part of the prison relieved, at least for now.

Did T’ai Chi Chih cast this little bit of serenity in the midst of chaos? I know it did in this teacher. In this corner of often violent Folsom Prison which houses 60 of the total 4,000 inmates, there was peace. This is just one example of the real power of T’ai Chi Chih.

But what about real life? Not everyone lives in an episode from a “Cops” T.V. show. To paraphrase Justin Stone, “If everyone in the world did T’ai Chi Chih, there would be peace in the world.” This is true. However, just suppose that T’ai Chi Chih is a prayer for peace in ourselves, and in the universe. It is said, “We all contain the universe within ourselves.” Certainly, we feel the peace in ourselves after doing T’ai Chi Chih.

Why meditate? Why do T’ai Chi Chih in prison? Could it be that a prison is a place where peace can start? For this released prisoner still incarcerated it has been.



CONFERENCE INFO & REGISTRATION FORMS ARE ATTACHED TO THIS NEWSLETTER.

T'ai Chi Chih Events

Jul 15, 2014 - Jul 19, 2014 : T'ai Chi Chih Intensive, Portland, OR - with Sandy McAlister.
Contact Steve Marsh: taichimarsh@hotmail.com 503-268-1865

Jul 24, 2014 - Jul 27, 2014 : **T'ai Chi Chih Teacher's Conference** - Union, New Jersey 07083
<http://www.taichichih.org/events/79/tcc-teacher-conference-2014>
Contact: Dan Pienciak: wakeupdaniel@aol.com

Oct 6, 2014 - Oct 11, 2014 : **T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Accreditation** - Old Mission Renewal Center in Santa Barbara, CA Trainer: Pam Towne
Contact: Lisa Otero:
lisa.otero@post.harvard.edu, 805-766-1342 (cell)

Oct 11, 2014 - Oct 17, 2014 : **T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Accreditation** - Buffalo, MN Trainer: Sandy McAlister
Contact: Deb Bertelsen:
debbertelsen3@hotmail.com, 612-805-6366
or Susan Bitney:
smbitney@gmail.com, 612-353-4968

October 17, 2014-October 19, 2014: **T'ai Chi Chih Retreat**
Estes Park, CO with Pam Towne
Contact: Marie Dotts: mcdotts@hotmail.com, 970-412-9955

Your attending T'ai Chi Chih events is an excellent way for you to receive helpful feedback, improve your practice, and to be with other T'ai Chi Chih practitioners.

Other T'ai Chi Chih Events:

<http://www.taichichih.org/calendar-of-events>

Mission Statement

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

Finalized Nov. 20, 2012 Justin Stone's 95th birthday

Thank you Justin Stone
for your life. Thank you to
the T'ai Chi Chih
Community for your life.
~James K. Hecke
Complete article can be
found on page 12 and 13
of the Vital Force Journal
of June 1999.
Read it here:
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force-archives/](http://www.taichichih.org/vital-force-archives/) Reprinted
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Attachments:

[2014 Conference Registration Form.pdf \(81K\)](#)

[2014 Conference T-Shirt & Jacket order form.pdf \(310K\)](#)

[2014 Conference Information.pdf \(1156K\)](#)

[2014 Post-Conference Seijaku Classes - Info and registration form.pdf \(95K\)](#)

[2014 Vendor Application.pdf \(1113K\)](#)

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