

From: TCCcommunity <guide@tcccommunity.net>
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To: stephen2816@mac.com
Reply-To: noReply@tcccommunity.net

A Newsletter from the Guide of T'ai Chi Chih



Holding on to Serenity ~ continued from April 2010 newsletter

Dear T'ai Chi Chih Community,

Can we be completely dead to 'self' in our practice of T'ai Chi Chih? I believe we can, and when this happens we sink into the Essence of the form. And so no one is doing T'ai Chi Chih. T'ai Chi Chih is doing itself.

No self, no ego, nothing, nada.

T'ai Chi Chih in this experience becomes moving meditation. We can practice T'ai Chi Chih and have the deepest spiritual effect on ourselves. This one statement says it all:

"You can chase your shadow all day and never catch it, but stand still at noon and it will merge with the body -- no effort."

~ Justin Stone -- [Spiritual Odyssey P.87](#)

No matter how many years you have been teaching, we all have experienced the three confirming signs that Chi is circulated through the body. Justin lists them in the TCC Photo Text:

To notice that fingers begin to flutter

To realize during a practice eventually that no body is doing anything, that T'ai Chi Chih is doing T'ai Chi Chih. (This happened to Justin in a Japanese garden, and he says it was a joyous experience!)

After some years of practice, one may do the form mentally, with eyes closed to visualize the movements and will feel the flow of the Chi.

~ Justin Stone ~ [T'ai Chi Chih! Joythru Movement Photo Text P.21](#)

The longest journey we make is the journey inward and it is a life-long process. Our T'ai Chi Chih form is always in process as well. We often see in how we move that the T'ai Chi Chih form *can be a metaphor for life!* During a group practice last year my step forward was longer than usual, and on the return weight shift I needed to drag my heel back to a more comfortable length. This happened over and over. After someone pointed out this strange occurrence to me, I realized that there was a lot on my calendar those upcoming weeks, and my stance was already 'out there.' T'ai Chi Chih proves to be a metaphor for life - our form reflects what is going on within.

Serenity helps us to be at peace in the present moment,

To be right where we are ... and nowhere else,

To not zone out,

To dwell in the present moment,

To be mindful of being present ... in the present.

Do you understand now why Justin cautions us to "*Do not do T'ai Chi Chih carelessly.*" We must truly "be present" in our practice... again, it is not about zoning out, but being in the moment.

"As one works with the Chi in T'ai Chi Chih -- circulating and balancing the Life Force -- the pace of the evolving is greatly stepped up. How we think and act affects this Chi, but, in turn, we are products of the Chi. Call it the "Divine Instrument" if you want. As we practice T'ai Chi Chih this Chi will be molded (and accumulated), and our spiritual evolution will be greatly enhanced. We will begin to change and so will our world."

~ Justin Stone -- [*Spiritual Odyssey P.17*](#)



When I think of *Serenity*, I also think of *caring, loving, and nurturing*. These and other qualities begin to deepen and grow within right along with our practice. "*We begin to change*" as we care for ourselves, love and nurture ourselves, and be present to self. "*Our world*" begins to change as well.

T'ai Chi Chih practice is not for ourselves alone. Some years ago I let my practice slack for about two weeks. One day Sr. Dominic, my Regional Minister asked: "Are you still practicing your T'ai Chi Chih?" I admitted to her that I had slacked off. She quickly said -- go back to your practice. I never asked her why she said that...actually I really didn't want to know!

No, T'ai Chi Chih practice is not for ourselves alone -- the Chi moves beyond ourselves and our small circles to permeate the world and universe. Don't forget, the final pose of the practice is called "*The Cosmic Consciousness Pose*." Shifts happen and our world begins to change. We continue to evolve -- our practice evolves -- *our caring, loving, and nurturing* also evolve.

So we have much for which to be grateful to Justin. As you have noticed, I do quote him quite a lot. His teachings are always new and fresh, even though they were written over the years, they can always be applied. I give you these quotes, so that you can reference them for your students in class by reading from *Spiritual Odyssey* and from the *Photo Text*. When a teacher is excited about these teachings, the students will also, and will want to learn more. You are encouraged to deepen your understanding of the form through such writings, besides allowing the form to deepen you. As we continue to deepen our practice -- to evolve the balanced Chi and to evolve who we are as individuals -- through the T'ai Chi Chih form we experience our own essence. May each of us be fully present, in the moment, deepening who we are, as well as deepening our T'ai Chi Chih practice. Allow yourself to be *centered, peaceful, calm, tranquil -- to be serene and enjoy the serenity of the form*.

"The great benefits in health, increased energy and serenity come from bringing the Heart Fire down as the Chi circulates"

~ Justin Stone ~ [T'ai Chi Chih! Joythru Movement Photo Text P.21](#)

Focus in the soles of the feet. Bring the Heart Fire down as the Chi Circulates. I'm not going to have the final word, Justin is!

"To sum up: softness at all times, slow and even movements and no effort; these comprise the 'musts' of T'ai Chi Chih movements. Try to observe them at all times."

~ Justin Stone ~ [T'ai Chi Chih! Joythru Movement Photo Text P.21](#)

Wishing you Peace and All Good ... with blessings in abundance,

Sr. Antonia

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