

2009 Seijaku Accreditation Course Following The 2009 Teachers Conference Inspires A Heightened Experience of the Chi

By Daniel Pienciak



Last year Pam Towne asked if I would be willing to host a Seijaku Accreditation Course following the 2009 Conference at Leid Lodge. As a teacher who has audited/hosted many Seijaku accreditations, and taught quite a few courses to my students, this came as a welcome opportunity.

I was initially discouraged by the slow and small response to this Seijaku course. Even though we were blessed in the end with ten auditing teachers (not including myself as host) and two accreditees (John Valentine and Pauline Quimson-Tong), this still would not have been enough to financially support this course at Leid Lodge. We were very fortunate to have a generous monetary contribution by two teachers which allowed this course to be guaranteed with this small number. I am very grateful to them, and wish to acknowledge our gratitude on behalf of all who attended. Their offering made possible the happening of wonderful learnings and experiences. We all felt very inspired and motivated by the end of this course, which might have otherwise have had to be cancelled.

But why this small response to such a wonderful opportunity? Pam Towne and I have been pondering on this question since then.

Well, to start off, we certainly acknowledge that even with advanced planning, attending one of these courses after conference does mean the extra commitment of time and finances, and this might not be possible for some people. But it probably still is not impossible for many. So the “mystery” remains.....

Justin Stone has given us this great extension of the wonderful experience and benefit of the “great secret of life” of T’ai Chi Chih through the practice of Seijaku,

which he calls “the advanced form of T’ai Chi Chih”. Like T’ai Chi Chih, it is undoubtedly a great gift and opportunity. So why does it seem like few teachers study or practice Seijaku more often?

To answer that question, let me tell my own story of my experience of Seijaku.

When I first learned, immediately after my own TCC Teacher Accreditation (July 1997), that Justin Stone would be offering his final formal instruction in a Seijaku accreditation course that November, I immediately planned to attend. It wasn’t only that I wanted to meet Justin personally. I didn’t even know anything about Seijaku (having just found out that this practice existed), but I knew that if Justin was offering instruction in such a practice, it would be well worth my while, and I wanted to learn it.

I admit that after this course, although I did practice it and receive some results, I did not really understand it and was not confident in practicing it. After hosting several Seijaku courses, I began to deepen my understanding, and then to teach it to my advanced students. It was gratifying to be able to share this practice with them and to hear of their own experiences with it.

But even at that point I noted that I would tend to “forget” about Seijaku and not practice it very often. Even then, I intuitively felt that something was “missing” from my Seijaku practices, and that it just seemed like too much work and physical effort!

We have heard certain words and phrases over and over again in learning T’ai Chi Chih (and Seijaku, too). Justin often has referred to using the “effort of no effort” in doing T’ai Chi Chih. He has reminded us that teachers will often refer to the importance of softness and continuity repeatedly in their teaching, and then one day a student will exclaim, “Oh, you want softness and continuity! Why didn’t you say so?”. I smile when I read or hear this, and remember how true it has been for me in my own learning.

I recall the above because I had a similar experience (I think we all did) in this last Seijaku accreditation with Pam in Nebraska. We heard over and over again about “hard” and “soft”, and “holding fast” and “letting go”, but do we really do it? I had a great awakening during this course: I had been trying too hard! I had been too focused on “holding fast” and not enough on “letting go”.

I discovered the great power and softness in the absolute “relief” of letting go completely. I had learned to bring the “effort of no effort” into Seijaku practice. Pam had used the very helpful phrases, “*Leave no trace*” and “*Let there be no residual*”, and those finally “*sunk in*” for me. The result was profound.

Yes, we sometimes have to make some physical effort in our learning process...a kind of “acting as if”, until we really “get it”. When we finally learn to let go in T'ai Chi Chih, it is wonderful. It is even more wonderful, I found, in Seijaku. Its power is deeply moving and offers great strength.

At the end of the course, I wrote the following in my notebook:

“Something important had shifted inside of me. I was awakened to the true potential of Seijaku and that I had not been giving it the opportunity to give me its full benefit”.

I had been missing out for no good reason!

One of our auditing teachers shared this thought: “Seijaku gives me the strength to see the world as it really is, *not as I am*”.

Pam Towne offered us this: “The greater the island of mystery, the greater the shoreline of wonder”.

Through this Seijaku accreditation course, we were all able to break through some of the mystery of Seijaku, to have revealed before us an endless shoreline of wonder – *an opportunity not to be missed!*

Once again, I have been asked to host a Seijaku Accreditation course offered by Pam Towne following the 2010 conference next summer. Do yourself a great favor and *prepare to attend now!*

If you already know Seijaku, practice! And if you do not know Seijaku, ask an accredited Seijaku teacher to help you to learn. Encourage them to offer a course! Or purchase Justin Stone’s excellent instructional DVD in Seijaku and start to learn it now so that you can attend next summer!

There is no reason to deprive ourselves of this gift and legacy of Justin Stone any longer.

