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TANYA'S NEWSLETTER

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Dear Friends

Today marks the official re-release of Tanya's Collection of Zen Stories! It has long been a goal of mine to update my very first book, and I finally did it. I've been working on the metadata for MONTHS!

As some of you know, I published this little book mainly for my students back in the fall of 2018, hoping that it might catch on with the general public and bring in a little extra income for our permaculture farm. I was still figuring out the marketing aspect when we discovered that Hans had terminal colon cancer. At that point, the book suddenly didn't matter. Hans was gone within nine months, and my life changed completely.

But the little book was up on Amazon and my students purchased it. With none of the necessary metadata input required for the book to be seen online, it continued to sell through word of mouth. Over 1300 copies were sold, increasing slowly year by year, until 2025 when sales suddenly flat-lined. Amazon had changed their algorithm and my book was swallowed by the abyss.

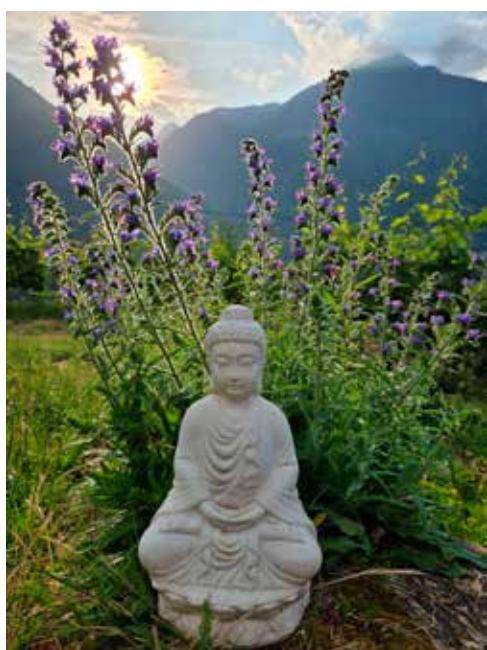
Thanks to [Women in Publishing](#), I am finally learning about marketing, and my goal is to resuscitate *Tanya's Collection of Zen Stories* so it can live the full life I think it deserves. **YOU CAN HELP!**

For three days only, I have reduced the paperback price from \$12.99 to \$5.99 and the ebook from \$9.99 to only \$2.99. Light-hearted and uplifting, this book makes a great gift. Get an early start on Christmas presents! Stock up and use these as gifts for those unexpected hospital visits and office birthdays! [Click here to read the new "blurb" on my Amazon page](#) and **make a purchase today!**

The goal is to sell a lot of books in just a couple days. That way, it will come to the attention of Amazon's A.I. and maybe other people searching for such a book will actually SEE it. Once you purchase a copy, be sure to click on the QR code and enter "Send me my FREE collection of Zen Bookmarks" in the contact form. 😊 **TOGETHER WE CAN GET MY LITTLE BOOK BACK IN AMAZON'S STOREFRONT WINDOW!** And be sure to "follow" me on Amazon as well!



ON SALE NOW
FOR A LIMITED TIME!



Would you like a FREE ZEN JOURNAL? If you buy my book, please do me an additional favor and write a review on my Amazon page. [Click here](#), then scroll a LONG TIME down to the VERY BOTTOM past all the other advertising until you find the CUSTOMER REVIEWS block with 5 gold stars and a graph beneath it. At the bottom see REVIEW THIS PRODUCT and click on "Write a Customer Review." Reviews are as important as sales. When your review is posted, I will gladly send you a PDF of *My Zen Journal*, full of illustrations and quotes from my book and plenty of space for you to write or sketch. THANK YOU!

With all this marketing, my writing practice for my debut novel, *Just Lisa* (2028) has really suffered. I have a difficult rewrite ahead of me, so I plan on returning to my normal writing practice beginning October 1st. Until then, I am focused on Zen Stories and starting my fall Qigong classes. Hope you enjoy this newsletter!

Hugs, Tanya

AGING GRACEFULLY: Qi deficiency Part 3

Most people want to look younger as well as feel younger, but part of stepping into my own life phase as “Crone” is enjoying the power I have come to feel with age. I find I worry less about what other people think of me. I care about their feelings, but I am less concerned with their opinions.



I don't wear make-up unless I feel like it. I dress comfortably rather than worrying if I look fashionable. I don't take a shower just so my hair looks good. What I DO care about is my health.

In last month's issue, we looked at how to support our liver and gallbladder in order to increase our overall energy. In Traditional Chinese Medicine these organs are often associated with stress. I'm curious:

Do you have a favorite method for reducing stress (besides eating chocolate), such as meditation, Qigong, or walking in the woods?

Did you considered changing something in your diet following last month's article?

Drop me a line [here](#). I'd also be happy to send you past issues of my newsletter if needed.

Stress eats away at your energy, so whatever you do, try to regularly renew your peace of mind during these trying political times.

Next, let's take another look at **how the small intestine affects our energy**, particularly, the duodenum and how it absorbs nutrients with the help of the pancreas.

As we discussed in the previous issue, the gallbladder releases bile to the duodenum (the first section of the small intestine), to break down fats. But the duodenum also needs help from the pancreas. Most people

associate the pancreas with blood sugar levels and insulin, but that is only 1% of its job. As a gland, the pancreas secretes pancreatic acid to the duodenum (the first section of the small intestine). This acid contains digestive enzymes that break down carbohydrates, proteins, and fats.

So, how do you know if your pancreas is functioning well? A doctor of oriental medicine will typically look at your tongue, check your pulse, and observe other body features. The ears represent the kidney, the eyes the liver function, and your hair and nails reveal the quality of your blood. Your *lips* indicate your spleen and pancreas function. If you have red, moist lips, then the spleen and pancreas are usually strong. If you have pale, dry lips (like mine), they are weak. As a writer and teacher, I think too much. I tend to drain my spleen Qi. That's why I have to do so much Qigong to compensate! 😊

Emotions: The spleen (which also represents the pancreas in TCM) is associated with emotional stability and intelligence. Too much thinking drains spleen Qi. Worry burdens the spleen. If you are moody, you have bad spleen energy.

Try to take time off from your thoughts. A stroll around the neighborhood (this is where my border collie is a huge asset!) or a gentle hike through the woods (careful about your knees when going downhill!) can do the trick. Exercise relaxes the liver which is said to “attack” the spleen with its stress. Check out my blog about [The Five Element Cycle](#) under *Aging Gracefully* for more info.



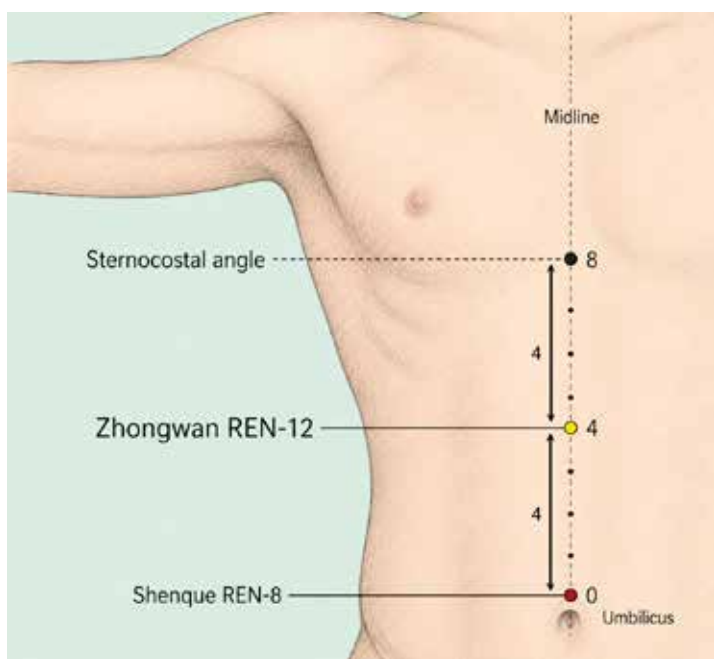
And if you tend to be a worrier, set one or two times a day on your calendar when you take 5 minutes to write down all you are thankful for. Even if it means just being thankful for your arms and hands and fingers to write the list! Shoot for a positive mindset to reset your connection to the universal life force.

The pancreas is associated with self-esteem (in the more yin or introverted person) and self-control (if you are more yang/extroverted). So, if you support your pancreas/spleen, you can improve both of those!

In general, according to TCM, the spleen and pancreas produce and regulate the body's Qi, its energy, as well as its blood. But, while we are talking about getting energy from our digestion, we must also consider the small and large intestine. A healthy colon is essential to our vital energy.

First let's look at the small intestine. Wait a minute! So many organs are involved in digestion! How do you know if your digestive problem is related more to the stomach or if the problem lies in the small intestine and its assistant, the pancreas?

If you have pain or hardness in the middle of the solar plexus (Ren 12), then it is primarily a stomach disorder. If you have pain or hardness just above the umbilicus (Ren 9) or around the umbilicus (the bellybutton), then it is probably more related to the small intestine and pancreas.



You can purchase vegan digestive enzymes for the stomach or the pancreas (to help the small intestine). These enzymes act like an assistant to these organs, relieving them of their heavy work load so they can recuperate.

Tips: Purchase digestive aids that contain either stomach enzymes or pancreatic enzymes. Don't overwork your mind with too much studying or worrying. Less "thinking" will also increase the amount of blood in your body and balance your blood sugar levels. If you have a weak spleen, you often crave sweets. Eat regular meals with complex carbohydrates to maintain an even blood sugar level. Avoid sugars, white breads, processed foods, or white rice (wholegrain rice, on the other hand, is very healthy).

Finally comes the large intestine which mainly absorbs water and salts, and excretes waste. If the large intestine is blocked by old food so that it doesn't move well, this can also cause Qi deficiency.

According to the Chinese meridian clock, the colon receives energy from 5.00 to 7.00 in the morning. That means, by 7am you should be able to pass a full bowel movement. If you can't, there are two main causes for delays:

1. Dryness: If there is not enough water in the river, the boat can't sail down it.
2. Qi deficiency: If your colon is sluggish, then it won't move. Which is why you sometimes need to eat first, to get enough Qi for it to move.

In our modern world, there is a third reason for problems with the large intestine. Hundreds of years ago in China they didn't have junk food! They didn't have white rice and white bread. They also didn't eat meat every day. With a modern diet, food can accumulate in your large intestine. Have you heard of S.A.D.? It refers to the Standard American Diet! If your stool isn't expelled first thing in the morning, many toxins from the remaining garbage will be absorbed the next day. This also contributes to high cholesterol.

Tip: To help the large intestine, we must eat complex carbohydrates such as whole grain rice, whole grain breads, and vegetables to provide the fiber needed to

cleanse the colon. Also, get enough rest, and first thing in the morning drink a large glass of room temperature water. It is best to drink enough water throughout the day as well. See all the other tips in previous issues for how to conserve your Qi so your colon has enough energy to rid your body of toxins.

That concludes our three-part series on Qi deficiency, the first of the six factors that cause aging. Next up on Aging Gracefully: How to Prevent Blood Deficiency. Don't miss it!



Kay's Corner

A Dog's Life

Pigging Out: One thing about the fall is those darn pigs. Mom is going to post a reel of the “wild boar” on Instagram and Facebook so you can see them in action. They are called boar because they are boring. I don't mind them sharing our hiking paths, just don't like them getting too close. One time a mother was protecting her babies and the hairs on her back stood up. That was not boring—but I wasn't worried, or anything. I was too fast for her. Mom said I shouldn't desert her like that.



WRITING TIPS: Take an Online Writing Class

A writer's life can be a very lonely life. It almost HAS to be. There are millions of would-be writers out there who never quite get around to putting the words on paper because of life's myriad of distractions. For decades, I was one of them.

Not only do you have to turn down lunch invitations, you have to turn off your phone, lock the dog in the bedroom, leave a "Shhh!" sign for the delivery guy... because one interruption can cost you another half hour just to get back into the frame of mind from which you were pulled! Not to mention the "perfect sentence" that is now lost to the void. Chiselling out even an hour a day for pen in hand can be challenging!



Yet we write to be heard, to share our thoughts and feelings. If you are not writing for an audience, then you are in effect journaling, not writing. Don't confuse fear of criticism with not wanting to be read. A writer wants to be read.

But it does get lonely, those hours and hours of silence, alone with your thoughts. Sure, your characters keep you company, but they aren't very good listeners. And if you submit your work to literary journals, it can be a long, dry road before you hit the oasis of that ever-rare acceptance. This is where writing classes come in.

Of course, you don't take a writing course just because you are lonely. You want to hone your craft and receive feedback on a piece you are working on. But a good course not only teaches technique, it inspires and motivates you while connecting you with other people

who are suffering from the writing bug as much as you are! Misery loves company.

Yes, there are plenty of free webinars out there with TONS of writing tips (some good, some questionable). But I am talking about a structured, interactive online class where people actually read your words and give feedback. Online classes usually take place on ZOOM or something similar, have a limited number of attendees (15 to 20 is standard), and last anywhere from four to ten weeks. In my experience, they range in price from a couple hundred dollars to over a thousand.

I made a couple mistakes when I first attended a writing course, so I hope to save you some trouble. Here is what I recommend:

1. Have a polished story finished **BEFORE** you apply for the course.

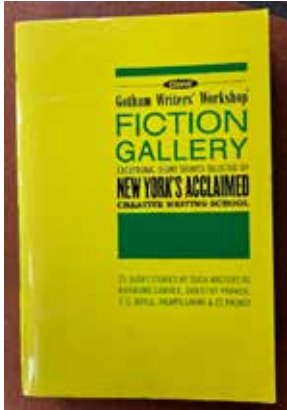
Now, don't let this put you off from registering for a class! But I first thought that I would write a story **DURING** the class. **WRONG**. Usually, you are so busy with the suggested reading assignments, reading other people's work to provide comments, and taking in the lectures, that there is very little time left for actual writing.

That is why it should be rewriting. A story about 3000 words in length is ideal. Most courses won't even allow anything over 5000! (Think of all the classic stories well over that length!) But, honestly, most literary journals these days aren't accepting anything over 3000 words either. Flash fiction (1000 words, sometimes 1500) is warmly welcomed by most courses and journals. In any case, my first online class was a disaster because people were looking at the grubby notes I'd thrown together from week to week. My peers were insulted.

2. Pick a course that is aligned with where **YOU** are in your writing journey.

Don't start off with something that is going to make you feel like you are in over your head! If I had it to do over, here is how I would approach it. If you are a beginning writer (unpublished, no MFA in Creative Writing), I suggest you start with a poetry or flash fiction class (see my article

about Flash Fiction in the April 26th issue of this newsletter). Short pieces are a great way to hone your craft with less worry about throwing away the time you've invested. Baby steps. My experience is limited, but I would recommend taking a class with Ella Peary at Author's Publish.



Once you understand the components of a good critique and how to give constructive comments kindly, take a step up and try a Gotham course. The Gotham Writer's Workshop offers Fiction 1 and Fiction 2 classes which I found very helpful. (Don't bother with the Zoetrope

versions unless you have that MFA or are a bit of a genius.) Be sure to purchase both of their excellent books (you can do this even without the class, and you get a discount on the class if you HAVE purchased those books). Make sure you READ those books. You get ten weeks of lectures, exercises, and critiquing each other's work. They are at a basic level and the participants are average, aspiring writers from all walks of life. No need to feel intimidated. The classes cost around \$400, have a set timeline, and the lectures are good. They take anywhere from two to six hours of your time weekly, depending on how much you want to put into them. The more, the better, obviously. The instructors vary in quality, as do the class participants. Sometimes only a handful actually participate in the discussions. Be sure you are one of them.

Finally, if you choose to continue through several classes (let's say you now have at least three to five classes bursting your notebooks) you may wish to try a Stanford class. Trust me, it's a step up. Not only does it cost three times as much (\$1200 for ten weeks, last time I checked), it is worth it. The instructors are more knowledgeable and engaged and the peer participation is at a higher level. But Stanford also EXPECTS that much more of you. If you haven't finished the assigned reading BEFORE the class begins, you are already behind.

Think Ivy league. They want you to actively participate in the written discussions between the ZOOM meetings. I am an over-achiever, but I easily spent more than ten hours a week on ONE CLASS...for ten weeks.

3. Don't fall behind.

Take a class when you actually have TIME to participate. Carve out the time however possible, then stick to it. Don't get side-tracked a couple weeks in and think "I can catch up next week." Never works. Work the program. Make it worth your time and money.

4. Keep your eye out for potential writing partners!

If you already belong to a writer's group, you may wish to start a second group. Or add to the group you have. Who in your class gives positive but also helpful feedback? Who writes in your genre or has a bit more talent than you do? Get their email address and ask if they'd like to stay in contact after the class. Best way to start your first writer's group! (See my blog about the [Taste Life Twice Writers](#) under *Writing Tips*.)

If you've ever dreamed of being a writer, do it now. Don't wait. Try your hand at that first short story or flash fiction piece or poem. Doesn't matter if it sucks. Taking an online class will make it better. And let you know that you are not alone.



GOING VEGAN: Apples & Walnuts on Noodles

I know my recipes are simple. That's because I am not a great cook. My mother was an amazing cook, always experimen-ting with sauces or testing baking temperatures to get her chocolate chip cookies equally brown top and bottom. For me, it's the quality of the food that matters—and that the cooking is fast. Because in today's world, there are other pressing issues.

One way to help maintain our climate is to eat seasonal, local food. We all know it, but do we do it? I remember walking into a Swiss village grocery in 2008 and asking for apples...in March. You should have seen the way they looked at me!

Sure, you can get apples year-round in the big stores, but they taste bland. During the off-season, commercial apple companies rely on *Controlled Atmosphere* storage where apples are kept in giant airtight rooms with all the oxygen sucked out and carbon dioxide pumped in to “put the apples to sleep.” The facilities are kept just above freezing with high humidity. Imagine the amount of energy consumed!



In Switzerland, I learned the joy of seasonal eating. Now, I only eat fresh apples from late-August, when early kinds like Gravensteins are ripe, to late October's Boskopps and Pippins which are great for storage. Unwashed

apples can be stored in a decent cellar for several weeks in wooden crates or cardboard boxes. Place the unblemished fruit in single layers so they don't touch each other. Ideal is high humidity with 31–38°F (just above freezing) and good air flow. The later sorts will last through the end of the year!

I make applesauce and store it in glass jars that last me until mid-summer. And that is when I start longing for a crisp, fresh apple once again! Food just doesn't taste as good if you've had it all year round. Looking forward to fresh strawberries in July, for example, is so much better than ordering them for dessert in January. **Seasonal eating not only makes sense, it makes eating more enjoyable!**

For this simple dish, I use wholegrain noodles and organic walnuts. To make the applesauce, I put a quarter-inch of water in the bottom of a pot, slice and core the apples as shown in the picture. I don't peel them because I use organic, and the peel contains fiber, vitamins, and powerful antioxidants. I use two small apples per meal, or four to fill a good-sized glass for storage. I like to add a handful of raisins, a tablespoon of sugar (because I use green, sour apples for their fantastic flavor that withstands cooking), and cinnamon to taste (maybe a quarter teaspoon). Don't leave out the sugar (maybe add a bit more) if you are planning on storing the applesauce for over a week. Cover the pot and steam for 5 minutes or until soft. Then I use an immersion blender (one of those hand-held stick thingies) to puree the mix.

Apples, walnuts, and whole grain noodles don't add up to a complete protein. While whole grains and nuts contain protein, they're both low in the essential amino acid lysine. To make a complete protein simply eat a legume source, such as beans, lentils, or peas, earlier in the day.



Since it's apple season, I want to share with you a fiction piece I wrote back in the fall of 2020, when Covid was raging and I was learning how to write during some of the classes I mentioned earlier. [An Invitation to the Apple Harvest](#) pulls up nostalgic tears every time I read it. I sure do miss my permaculture farm.

FROM TANYA'S COLLECTION OF ZEN STORIES: The Farmer's Horse



On the outskirts of town lived a poor farmer. He was fortunate, however, to own a very good horse. The horse plowed his fields, towed his firewood, and pulled the cart that carried his vegetables to the town market. The farmer treasured his horse, and he treated it very well.

One day, the horse broke out of its stall and ran away. When the news reached town, the people shook their heads and pitied the poor farmer. A passing neighbor said to him, "I'm so sorry to

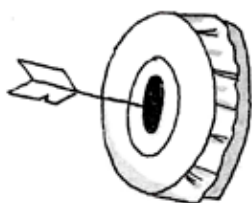
hear you lost your horse. What terrible luck!" But the farmer answered, "Good luck, bad luck, who knows. Life goes on." He then plowed his own fields, towed his own firewood, and pulled his vegetable cart by hand.

A week later, his horse returned, bringing a small group of wild horses with him. The farmer put all the new horses in his coral and posted a sign in town saying he had several horses for sale. The news spread quickly. Again, a neighbor passed by and said, "What terrific luck! You will soon be a wealthy man!" But the farmer simply replied, "Good luck, bad luck, who knows. Life goes on."



After a few days, his eldest son had a terrible accident. The young man was helping to break in the new horses and fell, badly damaging his leg. The local doctor said he would have to walk with a cane for the rest of his life. A neighbor who met the farmer in town said, "I guess it was bad luck after all that your horse ran away, because if it hadn't returned with all those new horses, your son wouldn't have broken his leg." To which the farmer answered, "Good luck, bad luck, who knows. Life goes on."

Within a month, a powerful army from the capitol passed through the small town. The soldiers were on their way to fight in a brutal war from which most would never return. The general ordered that the eldest son from each household must join the army—except, of course, the farmer's son, because he was injured. And the farmer said...



If we can maintain our inner balance, whether confronted with a challenge or a rewarding situation, we can usually respond better. My Zen archery instructor, [Kanjuro Shibata XX, Sendai](#), once said, "Do not expect to hit the target. Do not try. Do not even hope to hit it. Just continue in your movements with attention, awareness, and peaceful concentration. The target will then find you."

GREAT news! Thanks to all of YOU, my first podcast had over 900 views in the few weeks it has been up!

If you haven't seen it yet, maybe you'll find a minute to take a quick look:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=itk7UPIo3sg&t=531s>

And for those of you who watched it, I am open to constructive feedback. I learned from my mistakes in this one—such as changing the subject too quickly—and went on to do a second podcast aimed at aspiring writers. More about that in my November newsletter when that podcast with Sharissa Bradley is scheduled to appear. See also my blog Preparing for a Podcast under Writing Tips. <https://www.tanyaswriting.com/news/>



SPECIAL SHOUT-OUT

I have joined “Crones Unleashed!” I met Lydia through Women in Publishing, then saw her amazing posts on Instagram: Today’s Crone Eye-roller, Crone Forecast, Crone Truth, etc. She is all about empowering women 60+ (which trickles down into ALL women), and she has a fantastic website and several series of books! I just received her first, pictured here, and can’t wait to get inspired! Be sure to check out [BECOMING CRONE](#) and her other “stories for women who own their power.” She has a free newsletter and fabulous Crone merchandise like T-shirts, mugs, and totes. She also has a new book coming out soon, but first I’ll have to catch up on the whole series!



UP NEXT:

Coming October 8th:



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