

Subscribe to *Tanya's Newsletter* at [tanyaswriting dot com](http://tanyaswriting.com) and receive a FREE set of *Zen Bookmarks*. There is also a FREE one-hour Qigong video with Tanya posted at this site.

Tanya Elizabeth Egeness was born in northern Wisconsin in 1963. She grew up in Delafield in southern Wisconsin and was a straight-A student at Kettle Moraine High School. In 1984, she married Adrian Epp, whom she met during her student exchange year to Switzerland in 1981. Tanya first attended Ripon College in northern Wisconsin, then graduated from the University of Boulder, Colorado with an Anthropology Degree in 1987. Adrian, who had been wheelchair bound since a motorcycle accident in 1982, died in 1995. Tanya received her Doctor of Oriental Medicine degree from the International Institute of Chinese Medicine in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1999, then moved to Switzerland to open a practice. She met her second husband, Hansjakob Schmid, in 2003 and they married in 2005. Tanya ran a successful Traditional Chinese Medicine practice (acupuncture, herbs, Tai Chi, etc.) until 2014 when she and Hans quit their jobs to start a permaculture farm in the Bernese Alps. When Hans died of colon cancer at age fifty-six, Tanya sold the farm in 2020 to an extended family who would continue to farm sustainably. She then moved to southern Switzerland to write fulltime.

Tanya first published *Tanya's Collection of Zen Stories* with KDP in 2018 while she was still on the farm. Although originally intended for her students, it sold well through word of mouth. Since then, her writing has appeared in dozens of top literary journals including *Cleaver Magazine*, *The Fourth River*, *Valparaiso Fiction Review*, *Ponder Review*, *ENO*, *Sky Island Journal*, *Flash Fiction Magazine*, and others. She was a finalist in *Ruminate's The Waking Flash Contest* and has recently finished her first novel, for which she is currently seeking representation.

When Tanya was nine, she practiced yoga with her parents who were taking classes at the time. She got her transcendental meditation mantra at thirteen, which is when she began meditating on a regular basis. At seventeen, she discovered Qigong (healing, meditative movements similar to Tai Chi, but not a martial art), and practiced the Eight Brocade Exercises daily. Her mother was learning massage at this time, so Tanya was surrounded by alternative medicine practices and Indian and Asian philosophy. During her exchange year to Switzerland after high school, she studied Goshin-Ryu karate. When she returned home to Wisconsin, she took classes in Shorin-Ryu karate, but soon realized that karate was too confrontational for her persona. Tanya's parents began learning Tai Chi in the mid 1980's while Tanya was attending Ripon College and she took a few classes with them, but didn't have the time to pursue it diligently. In 1991, Tanya began studying Yang Style Short Form Tai Chi Chuan with Jane and Bataan Faigao at the Naropa Institute. She also began Kyudo, better known as Zen archery, at Kanjuro Shibata XX, Sendai's main dojo in Boulder. She travelled to Malaysia in 1994, where she learned a Malaysian Tai Chi sword form and Malaysian fan form. She also received her first, second and third-degree Reiki training in Switzerland at this time. In 1995, Kanjuro Shibata, XX, Sendai, asked Tanya to open her own dojo in Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she was studying Chinese Medicine. Tanya began White Crane Studios, where she also taught Tai Chi Chuan, five Qigong styles, Feng Shui, and, after receiving her Master of Reiki degree, also Reiki.

After the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, when a nun requested music instruments to help keep kids in school and off the streets, Tanya founded The Nick Contorno Music School, named after her high school band teacher. Over four years, with the help of many friends, she collected more than 1200 donated music instruments and had them sent to Haitian schools.

In 2009, Tanya started a local movement called Future Instead of Coal to stop the building of two new coal-fuelled electrical plants. After years of fighting, they won a statewide vote in 2013 that forbade public funds from supporting any fossil fuel projects. This was a milestone in the most conservative state (kanton) in Switzerland, and a signal to the Swiss federal government that, not only do the people want to move away from nuclear energy, they also want to stop the use of fossil fuels.

From 2014 to 2020, Tanya spent almost six years off the grid building a seven-acre permaculture farm near Interlaken, Switzerland. Today, you can find her walking the cobblestone roads of Ticino with her Border Collie, or riding her electric bike to go grocery shopping at the local market in Valle Blenio, or perhaps she's out behind her small apartment, tending to her organic garden if she's not practicing her Tai Chi on a hilltop somewhere.