

Tanya Elizabeth Egeness was born in a small town in northern Wisconsin in 1963. She grew up in Delafield (population just over 5000) in southern Wisconsin, where kids walked half a mile to their school bus stop. She graduated from Kettle Moraine High School in 1981 with straight A's and an AP class in Literature, then spent a year in Switzerland with the AFS student exchange program. She returned to attend Ripon College, Wisconsin, from 1982 to 1983, which included a semester at the University of Bonn, Germany. In 1984, she moved to Switzerland to marry Adrian Epp, with whom she had attended school during her student exchange year. Tanya completed a degree in Anthropology at the University of Boulder, Colorado in 1987. Sadly, Adrian died in 1995. Tanya then studied Traditional Chinese Medicine from 1996 to 1999, graduating with a Doctor of Oriental Medicine. She moved back to Switzerland in 2000 and remarried in 2005. She practiced Traditional Chinese Medicine from 2000-2014 until she and her second husband, Hansjakob Schmid, started a small permaculture farm in the Bernese Alps, which they ran successfully until his unexpected death at age fifty-seven in 2019. Forced to sell the farm, Tanya moved to southern Switzerland and began to write fulltime.

When Tanya was nine, she practiced yoga with her parents who were taking classes. She got her transcendental meditation mantra at age thirteen, which is when she began meditating on a regular basis. At age seventeen, she discovered Qigong (healing, meditative movements similar to Tai Chi), and began practicing 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 together with a boy in her school, Adrian Epp. When she returned home to Wisconsin, she took classes in Shorin-Ryu karate, but with time realized that karate was too confrontational for her persona. Tanya's parents began Tai Chi in the early 1980's while Tanya was attending Ripon College, and she took a few Tai Chi classes then but didn't have the time to pursue it diligently. Her Swiss boyfriend, Adrian, had a motorcycle accident on the Furka Pass in 1983 and was paralyzed from the chest down, bound to a wheelchair for life. Tanya suspended her studies to care for him and they were married at age 21. She continued practicing Qigong and studied aspects of Chinese medicine on her own in the hopes of helping her husband.

While finishing her bachelor's degree in Anthropology in Boulder, Colorado, in 1987, Tanya began studying Yang Style Short Form Tai Chi Chuan with Jane and Bataan Faigao. In 1991, she also learned Kyudo, better known as Zen archery, at Kanjuro Shibata XX, Sendai's main dojo in Boulder. After completing her bachelor's degree, she was accepted into Boulder's graduate program, but she dropped out and worked odd jobs to pay the bills while Adrian was finishing his Master's degree in Aerospace Engineering.

In 1992, Tanya and Adrian moved back to Switzerland because of several lucrative job offers for Adrian. Tanya had been writing fiction for several years and hoped to then write fulltime, but when a recession hit Switzerland and Adrian's job offers evaporated, she had to go back to work. Meanwhile, she pursued Kyudo with an affiliated dojo in Switzerland. In 1993, she began teaching Tai Chi to a local women's group, while still attending workshops both in the USA and other countries in Europe, to improve her knowledge of Tai Chi Ch'uan. 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 that time.

When Tanya and Adrian moved back to the USA in 1995 so that Tanya could study Chinese Medicine in graduate school, Kanjuro Shibata, XX, Sendai, asked Tanya to open her own dojo in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Tanya began White Crane Studios, where she taught Tai Chi Chuan, five styles of Qigong, Kyudo, Feng Shui, and after receiving her Master of Reiki degree, also Reiki, all while attending TCM classes. Unfortunately, Adrian's health and depression cycles worsened after returning to the USA, and he took his own life at age thirty-two, after twelve difficult years in a wheelchair.

Tanya completed her degree at the International Institute for Chinese Medicine in Santa Fe in 1999. She passed her state and national exams, received her title as Doctor of Oriental Medicine, and moved back to Switzerland in 2000 to open a practice because TCM was expanding in Switzerland at that time.

After leaving Santa Fe, Jinko Kyudojo (the Zen Archery portion of White Crane Studios) was continued by Tanya's students, some of whom received instructor recognition from Shibata, Sendai. In Switzerland, Tanya began Kyudojos in St. Gallen (2003), Mastrils (2008), and Interlaken (2015), leaving trained instructors to continue the Kyudo practice whenever she moved. Tanya also taught Tai Chi Chuan Short Form and various Qigong styles during this time. She married Hansjakob Schmid in 2005.

After fifteen years of practicing TCM in St. Gallen (Weisser Kranich Akupunktur, Gossau), and then Schiers (Salgina Akupunktur), she gave up her practice to become a farmer in order to demonstrate a different kind of lifestyle in harmony with nature to combat climate change. Until then, Hans was an electrician, who had worked twenty-one years for the same company. Around 2009, Tanya and Hans heard about climate change and decided to make a lifestyle change. After years of planning, at the age of fifty, they quit their jobs to buy seven acres on a southern slope just above the small town of Gündlischwand (750m altitude), between Interlaken and Grindelwald in Berner Oberland, Switzerland.

Schmid's Permaculture Farm (started in March, 2014) was owned and operated by Tanya and Hans Schmid (also born 1963) for six years. Their goal was to create an exemplary, single family, subsistence farm according to permaculture ideals within fifteen years (2014 to 2029). They wanted to preserve traditional animals, plants and ways of living that protect and support the environment while providing for their own needs. This is when Tanya began jotting down the Zen stories she had collected over the years, so she wouldn't forget them.

The Schmid's produced all their own electricity with photovoltaic and heated and cooked with wood. They lived a simple life without a vacuum cleaner, iron, or hair dryer. They had a fridge, laptops and a television, but could only use the washing machine when the sun was shining! The farm had a tiny shower, a compost toilet outdoors, and a natural spring 200m above their home to provide their water. The house was small, but it had a guest room upstairs in the attic where, from March through October, one Workawayer stayed. Workawayers (online platform) or W.O.O.F.ers are Workers On Organic Farms who help with farm work in exchange for room and board. The Schmid's also had a small trailer where a second Workawayer stayed, and room for a tent in their little woods, for visitors.

They became vegetarians when they started the little farm because they didn't want to slaughter animals. In 2017, after learning about the negative effect of animal agriculture on climate change, they began working towards a totally vegan diet. They still ate eggs from

their own chickens, and learned how to feed the chickens on site to reduce the purchase of fodder.

Tanya and Hans had an herb garden, various extensive vegetable gardens, and many fruit and nut trees. In the summer and fall Hans mowed the fields by hand with a scythe. In the winter, he chopped and stockpiled wood for the stoves. Tanya made lots of jams and jellies and stored the vegetable harvest in their root cellar. There was always lots of work to do, from weeding to picking fruit or nuts and collecting berries. Each year they took on new projects to improve the farm, such as building the root cellar or a second compost toilet. In order to finance these projects and pay other bills, Hans provided tandem paragliding flights to tourists on the weekends and Tanya wrote her collection of Zen stories in the winter.

In addition to Pete, their cat, and Kay, their border-collie, the Schmids had three pot-bellied pigs (Zoe, Heidi, and Urs), nine chickens and a rooster. Each animal was treated as a beloved and respected family-member and each had a job to perform. The Schmids hoped in 2030 to pass the farm on to a young couple dedicated to furthering their permaculture dreams. Ideally, Tanya and Hans would live nearby and continue to help work the farm and provide their knowledge as needed.

But in 2018 Hans had problems with his colon and a ten-inch rectal tumor was discovered. It was so large and the chances of surviving so slim, that Hans turned down chemo and radiation treatment. For about six months, Tanya and Hans switched to a vegetarian keytone diet and tried everything possible with herbs and natural medicine, but the cancer was too advanced. In April of 2019, Hans called it, and set a date with the EXIT program. He made a bucket list, went back to eating normally, and invited all his friends over individually to spend some quality time and say good-bye. By the end of June he was very thin, taking lots of morphine, and couldn't leave his bed. On July 4th, 2019, with the assistance of the very professional EXIT program in Switzerland, Hans swallowed a small cup of liquid poison, fell asleep within thirty seconds and died a few minutes later.

Tanya sold the farm to a woman her same age in April of 2020. Barbara had grown children with degrees in biology, geology, and forestry, so this was the ideal extended family to take over the permaculture project. Since then, Family Grütter has done a phenomenal job of continuing the farm. They now have goats as well as chickens. Cat Pete stayed with the farm and passed away in 2025.

Shortly after the sale in 2020, Tanya moved to Ascona in southern Switzerland for a change of scene. She took her border collie, Kay, with her and currently writes fulltime while learning Italian, the local language. Her work has appeared in Cleaver Magazine, The Fourth River, Valparaiso Fiction Review, Ponder Review, ENO, Sky Island Journal, Flash Fiction Magazine, and others. Tanya was a finalist in Ruminant's *The Waking Flash Contest* and has recently finished writing her first novel *Just Lisa*. If you'd like to read about Tanya's philosophy, check out *Tanya's Collection of Zen Stories* (2018 Amazon).