



The Vital Force

***Journal of
the Tai Chi
Chih[®]
Community***

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“Tai Chi Chih is a Service to Humanity. It is a Form of Love.” – Justin Stone, Originator

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Justin Stone

T'ai Chi Chih

T'ai Chi Chih deals with the building blocks of life. It does not deal only with the 'inside' --- as does Meditation -- or with the 'outside' as do exercise and psychology -- but with both. As the CHI (the Vital Force or Intrinsic Energy), circulates and is balanced, there occur changes in the metabolism and habits (both habit energies, called "Vashanas" in Sanskrit, and compulsions). I don't know how many letters I have received talking about release from the smoking habit and, other, stronger addictions (alcohol and narcotics) as well as those that talk of relief from osteoporosis, arthritis, migraine headaches, etc...The stories telling of the great relief experienced have been printed in the Two T'ai Chi Chih journals. The expressions of gratitude have been very touching.

In the West, the importance of CHI, and the circulation and balancing of the CHI (called "Prana" in India and "Ki" in Japan), is virtually unknown. However, Chinese physicians are using their knowledge of CHI to perform serious pain-free operations, with anesthesia.

Most of the teachers and students who practice T'ai Chi Chih regularly report a growing sense of in explainable Joy inside, supplanting the usual feeling of dissatisfaction and world-weary tension. T'ai Chi Chih movements are gentle and soft, with what we call the 'effort of no effort'. No special clothing or free space is needed. T'ai Chi Chih is certainly not a Martial Art, nor does it have the slightest connection with Religion, though the spiritual effects are strong and lasting.

The great modern Indian sage, Nisargadatta, advised people to get into tune with this CHI (what I call "entering the Cosmic Rhythm"), but he admitted he could not tell them how. The simple movements of T'ai Chi Chih are the way.

The best advice I can give to anyone who wants to be happy is: "Just remember that this life is temporary, is transient-so don't take it too seriously, and certainly don't become attached to it."

As we practice TCC 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.

The best way to forget worries and ease tensions is to shun the ego-center, so that no one is doing T'ai Chi Chih, but T'ai Chi Chih is doing itself. In this sense, T'ai Chi Chih becomes a meditation.

Articles about T'ai Chi Chih

Attending Conference

By Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF

Why is it important to attend the annual International T'ai Chi Chih Conference? This question was posed to me and after reflecting on all the benefits of our annual gatherings, here are just a few of the reasons why teachers do come:

Opportunities for Growth Abound: The purpose of Conference is teacher centered: develop teaching skills, sharpen awareness of the TCC form, deepen and refine your own practice.

Teachings by Justin and Teacher Trainers: Since he is unable to travel, Justin always sends his annual message to teachers by way of a DVD message.

Justin covers important aspects of movement and breaks down essential parts, such as yinning and yanning, moving from the T'an T'ien, focusing in the soles of the feet, circularity and polarity, turning, pivoting and swiveling of the waist in side to side movements. It is important to return to the basics, and that is what we do.



Sharing Time: Each Conference offers scheduled time when teachers gather in small groups to discuss pertinent topics of interest for

teaching, personal reflection, future of T'ai Chi Chih, and other aspects about our practice and teaching skills. It affords an opportunity to be heard and recognized.



Camaraderie: TCC teachers are great people – they possess the power of inner sincerity, which Justin calls TEH! When teachers gather, it is always fun! Justin quoting Ray Reps: If it is not fun, better left undone! It also provides a sense of community for teachers in isolated areas, and opportunities to reconnect with friends we otherwise would not see throughout the year.



Connecting on an International Level: "Never underrate T'ai Chi Chih or feel that it exists only for our own benefit." (Spiritual Odyssey p.110) The CHI has no boundaries. It is all inclusive. It is moving out into International territory. Conference provides a forum for teachers to get to know other teachers from the international community of France, South Korea, Italy, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, West Indies, Zimbabwe - Africa, and in 40 of the 50 States. Justin says if everyone in the world practiced TCC, there would be peace.

You are missed if you don't come!: So plan to be in New Jersey for the 2007 International T'ai Chi Chih Conference. We will gather Thursday evening, August 9 to Sunday noon, August 12 in Parsippany, NJ. Contact Co-hosts: Janet Oussaty and Alba N. Cordasco, their contact information is listed on the web site or refer to the Conference article in this issue of the Vital Force. Early registration will save you money.

I am personally looking forward to seeing you there!

Such a Gift

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst, Albuquerque., NM

It seems like such a small thing – the inclusion (in a welcome packet) of a lovely bar of sweetgrass soap handmade by Sherry Corson, a member of the generous Minnesota team who hosted the 2006 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers Conference. We felt welcome from the moment we arrived. So many lovely touches indicated how much thought was given to planning our special, annual conference. This aromatic gift reminds me everyday that I use it how happy all the Minnesota teachers were to have us there. And we also felt happy and grateful to be there.

This little bar of soap also reminds me that our coming together wasn't, as we know, to have a boisterous time. Instead, our focus was sinking deeply and knowing the joy within. This was the heart of the many opportunities we had to practice T'ai Chi Chih with Sr. Antonia, Pam, Sandy, and each other. It was great to share the depth we have come to know with teachers all over the world. And because of our practice we want to share our love with all through T'ai Chi Chih.

The information we shared about the populations we teach was wonderful. We inspired each other with ideas on how to communicate better in our classes and with the public. We learned practical ways from Kim Grant at Good Karma Publishing about how to inform the public that we are here, ready to be of service. It is information we can copy and share with others from our community who were unable to attend Conference. Perhaps, as Justin Stone says, it isn't too early to begin planning to attend next year's Conference in New Jersey.

Yes, the little bar of soap strikes a cord of service within me that keeps the conference alive and moves me to love and want to share the chi.

Nurturing Heightened Awareness in Seijaku Classes

By Ann Rutheford

Recently, I taught two Seijaku classes and used Justin's Heightened Awareness book as a supplement. Wanting to make sure that I taught it correctly, I would frequently visit Justin. He asked that I write an article for the VFJ describing how I use Heightened Awareness in the Seijaku class. In this article, I also share some of Justin's insights on Seijaku.

Justin describes Seijaku as fundamentally a spiritual, not a physical, discipline. It's not the body but Awareness that is empha-

sized when pushing through the resistance. "It's the Chi that's pushing, not the body," is how he described it to me. As to my question of the role of breath in the "hard" aspect of Seijaku, Justin said, "I've never heard of an audible exhalation." Nor is there any difference in the body's speed when transitioning between the hard and soft. Watching Justin's Seijaku tape/CD (a must for any Seijaku teacher) confirms his statements: He does not use an audible breath or any body part to push through the resistance nor does he vary his speed when moving from the hard to the soft. One can observe an effortless shift in Justin's movements as he flows from softness through resistance and back to softness again.

Seijaku is called Advanced T'ai Chi Chih. The principles are the same as T'ai Chi Chih's: flowing movement, complete yin/yang shift, circularity and polarity. What makes it different from T'ai Chi Chih? The addition of Awareness of the shift from

resistance to softness and back to resistance makes it much more challenging to the practitioner. It is impossible to daydream and do Seijaku correctly! The emphasis on Awareness amplifies the flow of the Chi, resulting in Heightened Consciousness. Many of my students say they experience the sense of past and future falling away leaving a calm center of "no words". This can be quite an "Ah ha" experience leading to Joy.

*"It's the Chi that's pushing,
not the body."*

Heightened Awareness, Justin says, "always begins on the inside.... We begin to be aware of the vast ocean of Consciousness in which we swim." Because of Seijaku's emphasis on Awareness, I encourage the students to practice Justin's exercises in Heightened Awareness and apply them to their Seijaku practice. Regularly practicing the exercises strengthens their ability to stay in Bare Awareness as the Chi pushes from the soft to the hard and then back to the soft. Are they Aware of the point at which the yin leg becomes the yang leg during their practice? Are they Aware when their mind starts daydreaming? (If so, then bring it back to one-pointed Awareness.) Are they Aware of the physical contact their body makes with the floor and space as they travel through it? Justin notes, "He who is aware of the tactile stimuli and the mental reaction to a given

Continued on page 6.

Nurturing Heightened Awareness in Seijaku Classes

Continued from page 5.

stimulus has taken a big step forward in understanding life." Are practitioners Aware of what they see and hear as they move? If there is a reaction to the sight or sound, make a note of it and return to Bare Awareness. (Justin notes, "If this practice carries over into every day life, you will have taken the first step toward real mindfulness.")

At first, students yo-yo between Awareness and Fogginess. To increase their success in staying with Awareness, I invite them to "custom design" the resistance through which they are passing. One student who had difficulty letting go of the "hard" made her resistance jello-like. This made for a smooth exit into the soft. As the students become more able to stay Aware of the soft/hard aspects, I invite them to make the resistance section denser. This flexible invitation seems to work: They are able to keep to the principles of T'ai Chi Chih and enjoy the fruits of Seijaku's enhanced Chi flow.

Enhancing the development of one-pointed Awareness with the help of Justin's Heightened Awareness book makes Seijaku the spiritual practice that he intended. Suddenly the practitioner may feel that Seijaku is doing Seijaku, just as Justin had the experience in the Japanese garden of "T'ai Chi Chih doing T'ai Chi Chih". But Seijaku's Heightened Awareness brings much more than increased Chi flow. In Justin's words, "With Heightened Awareness we begin to approach cognition of Reality: An unchanging reality underlying phenomenal changes. Intuit the Real and attune to it against the background of constant change. To live in the changing with an eye on the Eternal is the way of Saints and Sages."



The Pitfalls of Teaching T'ai Chi to Assisted Living Residents

By Linda Braga, Castro Valley, CA
Submitted August 30, 2006

When it comes to T'ai Chi Chih, there is one given: all T'ai Chi Chih teachers love T'ai Chi Chih! They will do anything to offer classes and promote the benefits of TCC! Yet to the unseasoned teacher, there are many pitfalls when "taking T'ai Chi Chih on the road," especially into Assisted Living Residences. This article presents the two-fold pitfall I call inertia.

Many residents in Assisted Living are coping with physical challenges, confusion, depression, limited energy, and loss of ability to function or even live independently. Many have lived active and productive lives. But now find themselves in limbo, in a place they don't call home, with other people who can be rude or disruptive at times. Most do not want to be there, really...but of necessity, they have to be.

Often they find that coping with physical, mental and emotional issues are overwhelming. Coupled with strong medications and other changes, they simply withdraw. This could mean sleeping a lot during the day, sitting and staring off into space, showing lack of interest or curiosity in others or even chatting with others. It can be summed up with one word: inertia.

Here is the real dilemma, the hard questions that TCC teachers must ask themselves when presenting T'ai Chi Chih to these residents:

- Should I keep the same standards I have with active adult TCC classes or should I look the other way if these people don't understand what I'm presenting?
- Should I sit and chat with them, telling stories and jokes, doing some "easy" warm ups (not part of TCC), or should I expect more from my seniors?

- Should I expect them to stand and move, rather than sit passively, watching me move?
- Should I expect them to participate in discussion and sharing rather than allow them to watch passively and fall asleep?
- Should I take the easy way out...just entertain them....relate to them personally and make them feel good...talking about their medical problems....and let the TCC movements slide away?
- Does it really matter? After all they will never be TCC teachers...
- Does anyone really care, if the residence is willing to pay me to relate to their residents and don't care what we as TCC teachers do?
- Shall I blur the lines between TCC movements and movement in general....and just do a couple of moves but make sure we are "having fun?"

Friends...the pitfalls of inertia are real and deadly to the residents and to the TCC teacher. These pitfalls are not easy to overcome. But THEY MUST BE!

As TCC teachers, we work hard to become accredited and agree to uphold the standards and integrity of the practice and the form. As "carriers of T'ai Chi Chih to the world," we are the role models that others look to for inspiration and guidance. If we compromise our standards, our expectations of our students and ourselves, we hurt our students, ourselves, and our fellow TCC teachers. With so many of us teaching older adults and special populations now in all kinds of settings, it is tempting to take the easy way out.

Currently, I am offering TCC in an Assisted Living Residence and have experienced these problems of inertia. I am constantly aware that I must verbally set the

standards for class participation every week. I must strongly encourage the residents to stand and move, to engage in discussion and ask questions. Some students are limited by their physical abilities, but given that, here are some further suggestions that might even be posted in the facility or activity room for all students to read:

Guidelines for Participation in T'ai Chi Chih Class

1. Residents who come to TCC class are expected to participate physically, doing either standing or seated TCC.
2. Residents who can walk independently are encouraged to do TCC standing. If they cannot stand, they can do seated TCC.
3. Residents are expected to practice on their own during the week so that they will experience the health benefits.
4. Residents are expected to participate in discussion and sharing during class.
5. The teacher will give positive comments and helpful feedback to individuals in class, so that students will know how they are progressing.
6. The teacher will encourage students to set personal goals. The goals should be realistic and attainable, perhaps learning to perform a few TCC moves that they can do independently.

We need to help them to take control of their life by resisting the dreaded disease called inertia. We need to encourage them to value T'ai Chi Chih for themselves and to be good role models for other residents. Both the teacher and students can then embody the practice of Joy Thru Movement!

To my TCC friends who are working with special groups of seniors, good teaching and good luck! To continue this dialogue, write roztaichi@hotmail.com Let's keep this discussion going.

Publicizing & Marketing TCC – From GKP

Publicizing & Marketing TCC

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing

At the conference, I gave a talk and handed out a packet of information on how to publicize and market TCC. Attendees seemed to enjoy it. But since four times as many teachers and students receive the VFJ than attend the conference, the VFJ is reprinting many of the handouts from the talk. I hope you find them useful. Please feel free to use them verbatim. There's no need to reinvent the wheel. (The Word documents will be posted on www.taichichih.org for you to download, too.)

If you have high resolution photos of Justin or others doing TCC correctly, please email them to me (kim@kimgrant.com) so that I may start building an image library of photos that could be used in press materials.

Justin and I are grateful that teachers are supporting the materials produced and distributed by GKP by upwards of 30% this year (relative to last year.)

As a reminder, the latest version of our product catalog features the new Seijaku DVD and the new book, *Gateway to Eastern Philosophy & Religion*. When placing your orders by phone, don't forget to tell me how many catalogs you'd like. They seem to be working -- thank you for passing them out to your students! Feel free to use them as marketing material, too; they're full of useful information.

Materials to Include in Your Media Kit

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

After you have talked with a reporter and know s/he is interested in hearing more about T'ai Chi Chih®, you can send additional materials in a Media Kit. Ask the reporter whether s/he would like to receive these in paper form by mail (if so, place all materials in a folder), in electronic form by e-mail, or by fax.

I will e-mail electronic versions of all of today's Media Kit documents to anyone who signs up to receive them. Some will be MS Word documents; the research and newspaper articles will be Acrobat PDFs; photographs will be high-resolution JPGs.

Materials to include in your Media Kit:

- A copy of your original press release;
- A copy of the Background piece, explaining what T'ai Chi Chih is;
- A copy of each of the three research articles (UCLA, University of Wisconsin, *Journal of Nursing Research*);
- A copy of four articles that ran in other newspapers or magazines (*the Wall Street Journal*, *Time* magazine, the *Los Angeles Daily News*, and the *Albuquerque Journal*);
- A Good Karma Publishing catalog.

FOLLOW-UP WITH GOOD KARMA PUBLISHING

It's very important that you please send original press clippings and the date and station name of any television or radio stories to Kim Grant at Good Karma Publishing so we have a record of all media coverage received. The local stories you place will help T'ai Chi Chih teachers elsewhere convince reporters the story is worth covering.

Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing
P.O. Box 92426, Albuquerque, NM 87199-2426



Sample Press Release - Class

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2006

CONTACT: Anna Lopez

Phone: 415/xxx-xxxx

T'ai Chi Chih® Classes Benefit
More than 100 San Francisco Residents

*Students Cite Less Stress
And Improved Concentration as Results*

San Francisco – A form of moving meditation is growing in popularity in the San Francisco area. More than 100 local residents have practiced T'ai Chi Chih and are crediting the slow, gentle movements with health improvements, including lower stress levels, lower blood pressure, improved concentration, and all around well-being.

"I started T'ai Chi Chih as a skeptical student more than 15 years ago," said Anna Lopez, now a teacher of the form in San Francisco. "But right from the beginning I felt a wonderful difference. Tension just seemed to melt away, I had more energy, and now I've been doing the movements faithfully every day for many years, and teaching others how to get the same great results."

A new eight-week class begins at 6pm on September 5, 2006 at the South City Recreation Center at 500 Southside Drive.

Researchers at the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles medical school have reported that doing T'ai Chi Chih improves immune system function and researchers at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse have reported that T'ai Chi Chih practitioners experience a great sense of well-being and less stress than before taking the classes.

Hundreds of accredited teachers nationwide say their thousands of students over the past 30 years have reported these and other benefits. "A lot of good can happen when we learn to work with the vital energy that circulates within us, which the Chinese call chi," said Lopez. "The stories are anecdotal but compelling – people with cancer report healings, people with high cholesterol and heart problems report improved health, and just about everyone who takes a T'ai Chi Chih class says it changes their life for the better."

Developed in 1974 by Justin Stone, now a vibrant 90-year-old teacher living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, T'ai Chi Chih is based on Stone's experience practicing T'ai chi (which looks similar but is very different, the latter being based on martial arts principles), Zen and Indian meditation practices. Since the first teacher's training in 1975, more than 2,000 senior students have been accredited as teachers of the 19 flowing, soft movements that together comprise T'ai Chi Chih.

Sample Press Release - Event

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 28, 2006

CONTACT: Anna Lopez

Phone: 415/xxx-xxxx

T'ai Chi Chih® Demonstration August 4 in San Francisco

San Francisco – Ten students will demonstrate T'ai Chi Chih, a form of moving meditation, at 10am on August 4, 2006 at the Boys & Girls Club at 100 Red Rock Road.

T'ai Chi Chih is growing in popularity in the San Francisco area, where more than 100 local residents have taken classes and are crediting the slow, gentle movements with health improvements, including lower stress levels, lower blood pressure, improved concentration, and all around well being.

"I started T'ai Chi Chih as a skeptical student more than 15 years ago," said Anna Lopez, now a teacher of the form in San Francisco. "But right from the beginning I felt a wonderful difference. Tension just seemed to melt away, I had more energy, and now I've been doing the movements faithfully every day for many years, and teaching others how to get the same great results."

A new eight-week class begins at the Boys & Girls Club at 6pm on September 5, 2006. "People of all ages love the sense of calmness mixed with increased energy," Lopez explained. "Doing T'ai Chi Chih is a good remedy for any 'couch potato.'"

Researchers at the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles medical school have reported that doing T'ai Chi Chih improves immune system function and researchers at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse have reported that T'ai Chi Chih practitioners experience a greater sense of well-being and less stress than they did before taking the classes.

Hundreds of accredited teachers nationwide say their thousands of students over the past 30 years have reported these and other benefits. "A lot of good can happen when we learn to work with the vital energy that circulates within us, which the Chinese call chi," said Lopez. "The stories are anecdotal but compelling – people with cancer report healings, people with high cholesterol and heart problems report improved health, and just about everyone who takes a T'ai Chi Chih class says it changes their life for the better."

Developed in 1974 by Justin Stone, now a vibrant 90-year-old teacher living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, T'ai Chi Chih is based on Stone's experience practicing t'ai chi chuan (which looks similar but is very different, the latter being based on martial arts principles), Zen and Indian meditation practices. Since the first teacher's training in 1975, more than 2,000 senior students have been accredited as teachers of the series of 19 flowing, soft movements that together comprise T'ai Chi Chih.



T'ai Chi Chih Background Information

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

T'ai Chi Chih® is a series of 19 movements and 1 pose that together make up a moving meditation that balances the vital energy within us, which the Chinese call chi.

Developed in 1974 by Justin Stone, a now-90-year-old teacher living in Albuquerque, New Mexico, T'ai Chi Chih has spread mostly through word-of-mouth in a grassroots fashion among students enthusiastic about its extraordinary benefits. In the past 30 years, more than 2,000 teachers have been accredited and now practice throughout the United States, Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and other countries. Tens of thousands more have been students.

Most people who practice T'ai Chi Chih regularly report that they feel both calmer, more balanced, and more energized. Many people report improvements in the symptoms of arthritis, fibromyalgia, stroke, high blood pressure and other illnesses.

Stone explains the health improvements in both physical and metaphysical terms. "With the accumulation of chi through T'ai Chi Chih, permanent changes in the metabolism and the thinking process take place," he says. "The renewed energy conditions the whole way of life and joy becomes our natural heritage."

Over the years, "nine out of ten" of the hundreds of letters Stone has received from students worldwide say "T'ai Chi Chih has changed my life," he reports.

The growing popular interest in T'ai Chi Chih has caught the attention of academics, and initial research studies show promising results:

- Researchers at the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles reported in 2003 that doing T'ai Chi Chih improved immune system functioning and helped protect elderly people from outbreaks of shingles.

Irwin, Michael R., MD *et al*: "Effects of a Behavioral Intervention, T'ai Chi Chih, on Varicella-Zoster Virus Specific Immunity and Health Functioning in Older Adults," *Psychosomatic Medicine* 2003 65: 824-830.

- Researchers at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse reported in 2006 that T'ai Chi Chih practitioners reported feeling a greater sense of well-being and less stress.

Detert, Richard A. *et al*: "Reducing Stress and Enhancing the General Well-Being of Teachers Using T'ai Chi Chih Movements: A Pilot Study," *California Journal of Health Promotion* 2006: 162-173.

- Research published in the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* in 1996 found that T'ai Chi Chih improved balance among seniors.

Schaller, Kevin J.: "T'ai Chi Chih, An Exercise Option for Older Adults," *Journal of Gerontological Nursing*, 1996: 22(10), 12-17.

T'ai Chi Chih is easy to learn. Beginners learn all 19 movements and the one pose in an eight-week series of classes and the movements can be done by people of all ages and all ability levels, including those in wheelchairs.

Many people in the United States these days are familiar with t'ai chi, which actually is the ancient martial art of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Though T'ai Chi Chih may look similar to people who aren't familiar with the differences, it actually is quite different. Rather than focusing on martial arts principles, T'ai Chi Chih focuses on circulating, developing and balancing the chi.

"The aim," Stone says, "is atT'aining joy through movement. T'ai Chi Chih can be a loving, as well as healing, experience."

T'ai Chi Chih® is a federally registered trademark of Good Karma Publishing and covers these 19 specific movements and one pose developed by Justin F. Stone.

Nothing is in a state of Being; everything is in a state of Becoming (from one point of view). T'ai Chi Chih can greatly influence that path of Becoming.

-Justin Stone



Getting Media Coverage for T'ai Chi Chih Classes – Overview

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

Media coverage can be a great way to increase local awareness of T'ai Chi Chih® so that more people enroll in your classes and then benefit from the practice.

There are a variety of ways to get reporters' attention, so decide in advance whether you want to try to attract newspaper, magazine, television, or radio reporters because each will want slightly different information. You can send the same press release to all five kinds of reporters, but your follow-up calls to each one will be different.

Newspaper reporters: Your best chance to get newspaper coverage is by contacting a lifestyle or features reporter or editor, someone who is likely to cover topics similar to T'ai Chi Chih. Though we all believe T'ai Chi Chih is important, a news reporter - someone who covers the local police, schools or courts - probably won't have the time or focus for this type of story. Instead, read your local paper and see who writes stories about health, yoga, aging, or similar topics. Send a press release about your upcoming classes and follow-up with a phone call (see "Pitching a Story to a Reporter") to try to catch that reporter's interest.

Most likely your students, especially if they're new, will not want to be on display to a reporter. Instead, you - and the background information I'm providing for your press kits - will be the focus of the reporter's attention. (See "Pitching Your Story" for more information.)

Magazine reporters: The approach for magazine writers and editors is the same as for

Most people instinctively divide life into two parts: first, the "reality" of everyday life, such as paying bills and wrestling with problems; then, if there is time, a brief period for spiritual practice. It would be hard for people to realize that both periods merge into one. There is no duality, no dichotomy. Right in the middle of the problems is the time to feel the Essence.

-Justin Stone

newspaper staff, but the benefits of getting magazine coverage are sometimes greater because the writer often has more time and more publication space to tell your story in more detail. Your release can still tell about upcoming classes or a demonstration, but the writer may be more interested in a general story and so less inclined to file a story exactly linked to your event and timeline. Good places to contact are any magazines that write generally about trends and lifestyle topics in your city. Be prepared to furnish a lot of background information (see "Materials to Include in Your Media Kit").

TV reporters: To get the attention of a local TV reporter, you'll need to provide a strong visual aspect. The best time to send a press release to TV reporters is when you've scheduled a demonstration or other public event where a TV crew would be able to freely film something that would be interesting to TV viewers. Local cable TV stations are often interested and may devote on-air time to your story, but their audiences are much smaller than the local ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, and Univision broadcasts, so your time is best spent trying to get major media

attention first.

Radio reporters: The best way to get coverage on the radio is by listening to local shows and finding out who reports on topics like T'ai Chi Chih. Is there a local show on health, seniors, recreation, or New Age topics? Choose a reporter carefully, once you know he or she has an interest in this kind of story; then send your press release and make your follow-up call.

Newsletters: Don't overlook newsletters issued by churches, senior centers, recreation centers and other locations where you hold classes. A well-placed article in one of these publications might reach the very people you'd like to recruit into your next class. Check inside the newsletter for the editor's name and contact information, send a press release, and let him/her know you've been teaching a class on-site. If your students included a member of that particular church or senior center who would be willing to be interviewed for the article, your chances of getting an article placed are greatly increased.

Talking Points

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

Important Points to Tell Reporters about T'ai Chi Chih®

1. T'ai Chi Chih is a series of 19 movements and 1 pose that together make up a moving meditation that balances the vital energy within us, which the Chinese call *chi*.
2. Many people in the United States these days are familiar with t'ai chi, which actually is the ancient martial art of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Though T'ai Chi Chih may look similar to people who aren't familiar with the differences, it actually is quite different. Rather than focusing on martial arts principles, T'ai Chi Chih focuses on circulating, developing and balancing the *chi*.
3. T'ai Chi Chih was developed in 1974 by Justin Stone, a now-90-year-old teacher who lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.
4. T'ai Chi Chih is easy to learn - beginners learn it in an eight-week series of classes. It can be done by people of all ages and all ability levels, including people in wheelchairs.
5. Most people who practice T'ai Chi Chih regularly report that they feel both calmer and more energized. Many people report improvements in the symptoms of arthritis, fibromyalgia, stroke, high blood pressure and other illnesses.
6. Academic research on T'ai Chi Chih has just begun in recent years, but shows promising results:
 - Researchers at the Neuropsychiatric Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles medical school reported in 2003 that doing T'ai Chi Chih improved immune system functioning and helped protect elderly people from outbreaks of shingles;
 - Researchers at the University of Wisconsin, LaCrosse said in 2006 that T'ai Chi Chih practitioners reported feeling a greater sense of well-being and less stress than before;
 - Research published in the *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* in 1996 found that T'ai Chi Chih improved balance among seniors.
7. More than 2,000 teachers have been accredited over the past 30 years and now practice throughout the United States, Canada, France, Italy, New Zealand, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and other countries. Tens of thousands more have been students.
8. I [you, the teacher] have been practicing T'ai Chi Chih for [x] number of years, have been a teacher for [x] number of years, and have taught approximately [x] number of students in [x] number of classes.
9. [Insert your own personal examples of the benefits of T'ai Chi Chih here. Be ready to tell one or two brief (30-second) stories about how T'ai Chi Chih has helped you or some of your students.]



"Pitching" a Story to a Reporter

By Kim Grant, Good Karma Publishing, July 28, 2006

Rarely will sending a press release result in a reporter covering your story. Instead, you also must follow up by "pitching" your story through phone calls to selected editors and reporters. Reporters receive scores of press releases and story ideas each week, so it's important that you call and tell them - in 30 seconds - why you believe T'ai Chi Chih® would be an interesting story for their readers/viewers/listeners.

Try to reach the reporter in person so you can briefly outline the highlights of T'ai Chi Chih, and try to get the reporter's interest. Given his or her extremely high volume of mail, e-mail and phone calls, this may be the first time the reporter has heard about your ideas.

Set aside time the day after the reporter should have received your press release (by mail or e-mail) to make the phone call. Making "cold" calls to people you don't know can be intimidating, but most reporters and editors don't mind getting these calls - they depend on them for new story ideas. Here are some tips to make this task easier.

1. **Call at the right time.** Call a full week before a scheduled T'ai Chi Chih demonstration to give a reporter time to prepare for it and inform his or her editor. Call when the reporter is not likely to be "on deadline" - it's usually best to call early in the day. Even then, always ask journalists if they have time to hear about your story. Don't ask if they got your release; even if they did they may have forgotten or misplaced it. Assume they know nothing about your story and say something like this:

"Hello, I'm Anna Lopez, a local T'ai Chi Chih teacher, and I have a great story for you about how people in our city are improving their health through a moving meditation. Is this a good time to talk?"
2. **Be prepared.** Be familiar with the work of the reporter you're calling, and know what you want to say.

Call the reporter's direct line or call the newsroom and ask for the reporter by name. When s/he answers, be able to present your story idea in 30 seconds. If necessary, write a script in advance and read it (but try to sound natural) when you make the call. (See "Talking Points" for more information.)

Emphasize the newsworthy elements - an upcoming public T'ai Chi Chih demonstration; the fact that more than 100 people in your city have already taken at least one class; the fact that no other reporter in your city has yet reported on T'ai Chi Chih, even though the *Los Angeles Daily News*, the University of California and the University of Wisconsin have all have reported on T'ai Chi Chih's health benefits.

You might say:

"I teach a form of moving meditation called T'ai Chi Chih, which is very popular in [the name of your city]. More than 100 people have taken my classes and are reporting great health benefits. More than 2,000 people teach T'ai Chi Chih nationwide, and studies at the University of California at Los Angeles medical school, the University of Wisconsin, and other places have reported the great health benefits. I'd like to invite you to a public demonstration [on date] so you can see what it's like. Would you be interested?"

...or...if no demonstration is scheduled, you can finish with: "I can provide you with copies of academic studies, news reports, and would be happy to talk with you further about this very interesting form of meditation. Would you like to talk further, or can I e-mail or send you some background information?"

Then be prepared (see "Talking Points") in case the reporter has questions right away. Mention that you sent a press release recently, so s/he can pull it up if interested.

The reporter will take it from there. S/he will ask you more questions if interested, or will politely tell you it's just not the right story at this time.

If s/he isn't interested, don't be discouraged - try the next reporter you think might be interested. And you never know - the same reporter might call you back in a few months and report the story then.

3. **Be prepared to re-send your press release and additional background information.** Even though you already mailed or e-mailed a press release, the reporter may ask you to re-send it right away, along with additional background information. Be prepared to fax or email

the information. Journalists often misplace your releases in the piles of incoming mail and e-mails they receive every day, and it's easier to send a fresh copy when the story is on their minds.

4. **Be ready with specifics.** Keep a copy of your press release and your Talking Points or script with you when you make the call. Know which examples, reports, or first-hand stories you want to tell if the reporter wants to talk with you right then. Be prepared to give out the names and phone numbers of a few other people (preferably senior teachers) who have agreed in advance they would be willing to be interviewed about their T'ai Chi Chih experiences. Know your points so well that you can answer most of the reporter's questions then and there.

If, however, s/he asks you a question for which you don't know the answer, it's fine to say that you don't know but will find out. Then do, and call the reporter back within 24 hours - or sooner, if they need the information to make their deadline.

5. **Offer to do whatever you can to make a reporter's job easier.** Journalists often have too much to do in too little time, and they are more likely to do stories that are easy for them to research and report. So send any background information they request right away, in whatever way they say is best - by e-mail, fax, or other method. If you've invited them to a demonstration, be sure they have the address, driving directions, and a convenient parking space when they arrive.
6. **Be pleasant and upbeat, but don't preach.** You might believe T'ai Chi Chih has saved your life, but tell that to a reporter gently, and stick with the larger story. Reporters like enthusiasm and conviction, but they want to report a story that has "facts" and will be interesting to a larger audience, even skeptics.

A good rule of thumb is to keep any story, including details of your own positive experiences, to just 30

seconds each. Always pause at the end of each (30-second) point to let the reporter respond and ask questions.

7. **Keep the interview on track.** Keep your list of Talking Points with you when talking to a reporter, on the phone or in person, so you can keep the interview on track. If the reporter gets into topics or perspectives that are not central to what you're trying to communicate, gently steer the interview back to your main points.

For example: Let's say a reporter, by coincidence, used to take T'ai chi classes. He might ask you a question like "Are there any studies that show that T'ai Chi Chih is better than T'ai chi?" Don't get lost in this comparison, which is really not important to your story and is not something about which you have any knowledge. Instead, just say, "I've only studied T'ai Chi Chih and can tell you it has great benefits." Then give him an example from your own life or from a student's to underscore that point.

8. **Remember: It's T'ai Chih CHIH!** Once a reporter has agreed to tell your story, remind him or her a few times that this is not T'ai chi - it's T'ai Chi Chih (see "Talking Points"), because people hearing about T'ai Chi Chih for the first time may have trouble remembering this.
9. **Practice can help you be more effective.** If you're new at working with reporters, practice with a friend in advance to see what a "pitching" phone call or interview might feel like. Have your friend play the role of a busy but friendly reporter asking you questions. Practice until you feel reasonably confident, and then send out your press release and make follow-up calls.



2006 Conference

What A Conference!

The 2006 conference has been so well planned and executed that it felt effortless to the participants. The Minnesota Teachers made all the hard work, creativity, and careful planning look easy which is a sign of very dedicated and skillful work.



The conference has left me feeling honored, beautiful, filled with love and Joy. Thank you so much to the organizers and all who came to share their gifts with the TCC Community. Thank you Justin for bringing this gift to the world.





Elegance, beauty and love filled the time at this year's conference.



I am in awe of what the TCC community has accomplished during my 2 decades of being a part of our amazing family. I am even more awed by what we are poised to offer in the names of 'service' and 'love'.



Thank you Thank you Thank you



The love, dedication, preparation, hard work and thought put into the conference by the Minnesota Committee and it's leaders was truly awesome.



Shared Experiences

Results of the 2005 TCC Teacher Survey Posted on the TCC Community Web Site

By Lorraine Lepine

The results of the 2005 TCC Teacher Survey are being posted on the TCC Community web site. The purpose of making these results available to teachers online is threefold:

1. To encourage networking among each other
2. To share your experiences in teaching specialized populations and settings
3. To develop guidelines for teaching specialized populations

Teachers will be emailed the web address to access this information on the worldwide web. If you don't have access to the internet, ask another TCC teacher who does.

How can teachers use this information? If you are going to be teaching people with a physical challenge such as cancer, COPD, arthritis, Parkinson's, etc. you can connect with other teachers who have experience teaching that specialized population. If you will be teaching in a specialized setting such as a hospital, jail, college or church, etc. you can find out what works best for teaching TCC in that setting. It is a way of sharing teaching information and techniques with each other.

I apologize for any errors made while transferring all the information received onto the Excel program. If for any reason, you would prefer not to be listed as a TCC Resource Teacher for whatever categories you were placed under, please contact Lorraine Lepine, TCC Outreach Coordinator, ASAP

to correct the file.

You may have been listed as a resource Teacher from the 2002 Survey and may no longer be teaching that particular population or setting. If you would like to continue to be a TCC Resource Teacher, that is great; if not, let me know and I will remove your name from the list.

Also you may not be listed but want to be listed under a present listing or under a new listing category as a TCC Resource Teacher; please contact the TCC Outreach Coordinator.

I would like to thank my TCC Student, Van E. Wheeler, from Kansas City, KS who graciously accepted the job of transferring all those files to PDF Format. I would like to thank Dorene Krause, NJ for accepting to edit my writings.

New Project Ideas

If you have an idea for a project that would support the TCC Community or TCC Teachers, please contact the TCC Community Outreach Coordinator for guidance in the process toward approval by Sister Antonia, Sandy & Pam.

Guidelines Write-up about Specialized Populations

It seems a natural follow-up to the TCC Teacher Survey that I am informed when a teacher requests some information about a Specialized Category or Setting. I will be guiding a process to write up guidelines among the Resource Teachers of that particular category as it comes up.

For example, if a request is made about teaching TCC to the Parkinson's disease Population, I envision placing the guide-

lines on the web accompanying the Parkinson's Category as well as writing this up for the Vital Force. Please e-mail me if you contact anyone for information.

Be all filled with Joy!

Lorraine Lepine

TCC Community Outreach Coordinator
(thevitalforce2@yahoo.com)

Edited by Dorene Krause

TCC Student Questionnaire

Anita Vestal, a newly accredited teacher from Austin, TX has initiated the idea to create a student questionnaire for the TCC Community.

The purpose of the questionnaire is to note any physical, mental or emotional changes our TCC students might experience during the time they are learning T'ai Chi Chih.

Another outcome of benefit to the TCC community is the collection of uniform data that can be accumulated to examine a large, diverse sample. This could become a pilot for a larger study and help attract research funds and interest.

Teachers could also use the results for marketing.

The survey allows a teacher to speak of changes with more authority. A researcher or writer can describe changes in terms of percentages of students who experience certain changes after 8 week of practice.

Any teacher interested in using the survey for new TCC classes can email or call Anita to request a copy at: av@anitavestal.net, Tel:512-914-6418

To be part of the larger study, please return the completed surveys to Anita for inclusion.



T'ai Chi Chih and Fibromyalgia

By Dorene Krause, Midland Park, NJ

I was recently invited by two of my students to be a guest speaker and to do a T'ai Chi Chih presentation at the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome and Fibromyalgia Support Group of Bergen County. I asked students and teachers alike to share any experiences they have had with regard to CFS and Fibromyalgia. I received this response from one of my students who has been learning and practicing TCC for a couple of years. I thought it was worth sharing with all of you. Maryann Gottdenker of Ramsey, NJ writes:

"Fibromyalgia – pain in the connective tissue has been an ongoing body experience for me for many years. Since the condition resides in the connective tissue, no part of the body is exempt from the continual gnawing, aching or tenderness. My interest in T'ai Chi Chih was initially just that – a curiosity that I pursued. The impact on my fibromyalgia has been astounding.

Given the mind body connection, the T'ai Chi Chih uses or guides the body with a particular focus that enables me to reach a place inside of myself not touched by any other discipline. That place, accessed very slowly at first, has afforded me a distance from the pain – a refuge as it were – a place of holding for me that is separate from my constant pain. The more diligent I became with my practice, and the more focused on relaxing into the T'ai Chi Chih movements, this pain free place inside of me became more accessible and greatly expanded.

T'ai Chi Chih cannot cure my condition, but its precepts of centeredness, mindfulness, and softness have taught my body and my mind to relax into a better state of being. I can attest to the unseen, yet ever-present benefits of T'ai Chi Chih."

Gratitude from a Newlywed

By Pam Towne Duncan



What a wonderful Conference! The highest intentions and selfless service of the Minnesota TCC Community manifested beautifully. Thank you to every person who contributed to its success, and especially to Sr. Antonia for leading us so graciously through the four days together.

It was extra special for me to introduce my fiancée Ted Duncan to our TCC family at this Conference. Ted & I were deeply moved by being Encircled in Chi by the teachers after the last TCC practice and wrapped in blessing ribbons. This was an extraordinary experience that felt like a sacred ceremony!

It reminded me of the Native American tradition of the tribe gathering around a couple and tying them together in a blanket to signify their union. We felt as though we had been married by our TCC "tribe"! At our wedding in Encinitas, CA on August 13th we draped those ribbons, on which teachers had written their wishes for us, across the front of the church and felt their loving presence once again.

Thank you to all who have welcomed Ted into our TCC community. He has been doing TCC since February. What a joy to do our practice together! He is totally supportive of my work as a Teacher Trainer, which will continue. Together we intend to be of service to T'ai Chi Chih.

Love & Blessings, Pam Towne Duncan

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Encircled in Chi

By Nancy Werner-Azaraki.

Minnesota hosted the 21st annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference on July 27-30th, 2006. We were excited to host and welcome 145 teachers to the conference. Our intention was to honor each individual teacher while celebrating the circle of connection to each other and the universal energy. We hoped to nurture each attendee and their practice of TCC during the weekend. Our theme, Encircled in Chi, expressed those intentions.

During the conference, we included practice sessions, teaching sessions, discussion, community updates and some ceremony. The Minnesota group wanted to honor our past, examine our present and envision the future of our T'ai Chi Chih community. We started with an Honor ceremony to honor all who had contributed to TCC. And then the break out sessions were designed for the teachers to discuss how to nurture their practice and how to nurture the future of TCC. The teaching sessions were led by Sr. Antonia Cooper, Pam Towne and Sandy McAlister. Each session explored one area of movement such as correct yin-ning and yanging--from the evaluations, this proved to be a helpful way for the teachers to enhance their learning about TCC. The community updates covered a lot of information. Kim Grant handed out press release information and explained how to use it. Victor Berg discussed the Vital Force and our need to examine how to continue to produce it. Current research efforts, upcoming events, and the outreach and web information were presented.

During the conference and in the evaluations, many people requested that the discussion notes from the breakout session in which we envisioned about how to increase the

number of people practicing TCC, be written up for the Vital Force. The small group discussions centered around two focal points, how to teach classes and support local teachers and then how to support the national/international groups that help teachers teach. The following lists have come from the twenty-two pages of notes that were turned in. Please note that not all groups turned in notes and that I have not edited the notes--all notes we received were included.

Hints to Support Teaching Classes for T'ai Chi Chih:

- do demonstrations for national organizations, especially ones you are involved with. go to a high end hotel-at a resort to give a one hour class for a few days and hand out information and sell videos. go to health care sites or health fairs to demonstrate and disseminate materials. go to police or fire departments or other high stress job sites to give classes. check with physical education teachers if you can teach TCC as part of their program. charter or alternative schools can be open to TCC. at a corporate setting-some companies are offering fitness/well being classes.
- find one person in an organization to create and spread interest--many opportunities in the local communities are being overlooked.
- some chiropractors may be open to offering a presentation for their patients. doctors are beginning to recognize the benefits of TCC-find one and work with that person and in turn recognize their work.
- physical therapy centers or medical students are a possible direction to go. students get inspired and may write about TCC in local outlets.
- meet the need of the targeted student.
- people have had problems starting classes because they are not known to their audience--offer open house, first class of a session could be offered as free, offer a reduced price to members of an organization. volunteer with an organization such as a grief center and then offer classes. offer free demonstration in a park setting and advertise it.
- have Kim Grant present more information about press releases--educate us about how to do them and make it easier for us to do it: press releases, how to scope out a reporter or print material.
- each area is unique-use your connections. one teacher asked his students to get a committee together to help launch work on a workshop. ask organizations to put out publicity for you.
- when you have an information or presentation be ready to explain about TCC--have flyers available. let them know what, when and where and how much. try to keep rates reasonable. educate about TCC and let them know about future series of TCC classes--have dates/prices known ahead of time.
- host a "how-to" one day seminar or workshop or weekend retreat.
- network with other teachers who have space and then do a workshop together for students. get together with other teachers in the area for support and practice, with students included.
- ask teachers who are teaching world religions if you can give a presentation.
- have practice sessions on a weekly or bi-weekly time frame for students you have taught.
- have a conferences for students-this would include both information and movement--maybe more regional.
- in our yearly conference, have a dual track with one for students and one for teachers--gives students an opportunity



- to meet the TCC community. this could be done as a 1/2 day right after our conference and 10 or 20 teachers could do activities with students.
- allow local students to attend the teacher conference.
 - teach at retirement centers, especially if you live at one.
 - teach ADH students before they do their learning.
 - ask your students to bring a friend--could be adult or child to the class, could be the beginnings of your next class attendees.
 - work on health insurance companies to get them to cover costs of taking a class.
 - more studies showing benefits can be done. this may lead to more media opportunities. research, critical to continue studies of TCC.
 - will we need an infrastructure in the future where there will be paid positions? perhaps area teachers can come together as a community? if there is huge jump in numbers should we have an infrastructure in place? more trainers may be needed. most teachers could handle more students right now.
 - for our future, more younger people need to become involved both as students and as teachers. bring practice into schools, church youth groups, convention presentations, college credit courses in TCC, approach athletic groups and high school clubs.
 - retreats open to students and teachers have been successful, even for beginners. it is a good introduction and can inspire them to want to continue.
 - approach teaching TCC in different way--parent/child classes with such as girl scouts or boy scouts. TCC for couples at senior centers--or have senior and a relative attend classes.
 - ongoing intermediate class that spreads the word to community and generates more beginning students. students are best advertisements.
 - free silent practices at local hospitals.
 - nominal fee for continuing advanced classes. teach at home to reduce fee.
 - follow up calls and offer own phone number or email. keep notes to personalize contacts. offer flexible class hours.
 - do practice during information sessions and allow TCC to wash over them.
 - advertise at local business. check into free advertisement on community channel. put flyers up or demonstrate at colleges, wellness center, malls, libraries, art galleries, stores, chamber of commerce, grocery stores, realtors' packets and churches.
 - get on as speaker at programs for organizations or business conference. offer continuing education units for those professionals that need them.
 - maintain a presence. write articles for newspapers, journals or on-line. just do it--practice out in public spaces. wear TCC clothing. go to county fairs and have a booth. be patient.
 - encourage students and teachers to meet once a month for like two hours and exchange ideas, practice and share about TCC classes.
 - paid professionals to bring TCC forward.
 - take Vital Force to class to show students our official publication.
 - cost of Vital Force included with cost of the class. have students write a letter to the VF.
 - rededicate yourself to the community by doing something for the TCC community. organize the international membership into a community. if we remain with the philosophy of the Chi then we will not fall into power struggles. keeping all people in the circle.
 - teach one-on-one classes. or encourage students to be buddies with each other to encourage practice. make connections--present TCC as a tool for reduction of stress. in rural areas, use the internet--send daily commique about a quote(maybe weekly) such as "A still pond reflects the stars." it could encourage your daily practice--sends out good thoughts--chi mail.
 - each teacher needs to act on one item in Kim Grant's press release packet.
 - each new teacher has to figure out how to teach--if there was some way of having a designed look to TCC--develop business cards, pamphlets, TCC rubber stamp, a banner of the movements. we would like to see different materials already developed (by individuals) put out to everyone and a brochure template produced.
 - have fixed schedule for meetings that will continue to foster community at intervals agreeable to the community.

How to Support International and National Groups that Help Teachers Teach

- we need to know when TCC teachers are going to offer intensives and trainings--not this fall but next year or in 2008. possibly regular scheduled teachers trainings.

VITAL FORCE

- could we put it on the internet and then print it out in each region and then mail it out to teachers in region? could each area contribute and collect information or articles and send them in?
 - could a regional person get the online version and prints it up for others in their community and then do a regional mailing or hand out at quarterly meetings?
 - if regions have to participate then it becomes more of an ownership issue.
 - costs could be covered from fees.
 - print the journal in one place then drop slip to a region that does the mailing.
 - publish more information about research so the articles could be used by teachers to seek out TCC.
 - continue interviews but could be shorter. like the humor. have regional -state news but cut back on people's response to events. have a guideline for writing about an event and keep it focused. publish what other teachers
- Continued on page 20.*



Encircled in Chi

Continued from page 17.

are learning from teaching-how to improve service to public. publish articles on how to host a workshop or retreat--what is a typical agenda for such an event.

- include two pages directed towards students which could be used as handouts for classes.

CONFERENCE

- ideas for sessions at conference--how to research or how to get a proposal approved. how to teach continuing education credits. how to set up a google group for communication like a teachers bulletin board: it could be regional or all teachers, a way to combine smaller communities and/or a way to help students access for student information. how to set up a website so we can link to each other or even how to google when doing search for TCC.

INTENTION

- these notes are based upon notes taken in Athene Mantle's discussion group-Athene presented this material at conference.
- it was suggested that before and beneath all these tangible steps lies the power of intention and focus. decide what you want and stay focused on it. you may be only one teacher but you will become a powerful magnet by means of your intention. form the image and things will happen to support that image. the energy and focus will draw others--the Universal Energy will bring it about. set no limits on what may happen. the doing is not up to us. one idea will lead to another. people will be attracted to help: to promote that TCC idea. simply take the path one step at a time and the goal will be achieved. the example of Michael Monroe, who entertained the group, was given as an example.



Michael came to play and discovered that the TCC

community might be an outlet and a source for his music. he discussed writing and producing a cd of music suitable for TCC practice--he had already written some great music he liked but felt it was not commercially viable and so had not made a cd of it yet--how does that Universal Energy work! one teacher since 1990, in this discussion group said she has seen how far the community has come by allowing the unfolding, by being open vessels to the chi, that growth will continue.

This group closed their discussion with a thought from Athene---imagine if everyone in the group at this conference went home and put out an intention regarding the growth of our international community and then focused on it, what could come about. There is no telling what could develop!

During the conference we handed out a bookmark, with words on it that described to the Minnesota committee how it felt to be Encircled In Chi: free, supported, boundless, joyful, awed, peaceful, protected, honored, connected, comforted and loved. The Minnesota community hopes that the conference attendees felt Encircled In Chi and that they were able to feel that universal energy at work in their practice. And may that enriched practice, unfold in them an intention and focus to continue teaching and practicing in joy, beauty, love and in honor.

Lighter Side

Vital Force - Lighter Side

By Sharon Sirkis

1. When getting into starting position for Working the Pulley, one of my students proclaimed as he raised his hand high, "I solemnly swear."
2. During my UMBC (college) TCC class, I give out mini assignments for awareness and fun. One is to find a student who is "married" to their watch. I ask the student not to wear their watch for a day, and just be aware. It's not about having the students change, although many of them do. So I asked my student how it was for her, not wearing her watch. I usually get similar responses having to do with how many times they look at their wrist, even knowing they weren't even wearing their watch. And a realization of how obsessed with time they are and how hard it is to let go. But this student's story was different. She told me she worked at a bank, just happened to be the teller that was held up that day, and when the FBI came in and asked about the time of the robbery, she said, "I don't know, I wasn't wearing my watch!"

PS. For those of you who know me, yes, only I could cause such mischief! :)

Pyramid Poetry

By Derek Simms, Derek Nesar & Sharon Sirkis

You	Sky	Rain	Box
should be	Monkey	Droplets	outside
noticing	Flying by	In my face	expand your
the miracle	So very high	No umbrella	limitations
The beauty	Bananas	Feel the chi	Take a risk
that is	Are his	On me	Good for
life.	Dreams	Ahhhh!	you!
Derek Simms, student of Sharon Sirkis	Derek Nesar, student of Sharon Sirkis	Sharon Sirkis	Sharon Sirkis

Events

Encircled in Chi - Mn TCC Community Offers Seijaku

By Holly Sanders

During July 31st- Aug 2, 2006, sixteen Students and nine Auditors gathered in Minneapolis for the Seijaku Teacher's Training Course. The Chi gathered the students from MN, SK, CA, PA, AB, NM, and FL. The auditors came in from MN, PA, IN, NL Canada, KS, ND, OH, and FL. Pam Towne, the teacher trainer, led the students through their T'ai Chi Chih movements deepening their understanding of each movement as the principles of Seijaku were explained and demonstrated. Here are a few of their remarks after all sixteen students were accredited.

Seijaku was a wonderful experience. Pam is a great Teacher. Soft, Resistance and Softness. —**Diana Grandlund**

Each event I attend produces new friends and re-kindles old friendships. Since we all have T'ai Chi Chih in common we are one large family which to me is a comfortable and secure feeling. Seijaku was the icing on everyone's cake. —**Jerry Bumbalough**

I only knew that Seijaku helps you deepen your T'ai Chi Chih practice, but I had no idea that it was so much more. I learned that I need to learn to breathe instead of holding my breath. —**Sue B**

I very much enjoyed Pam's terrific class, particularly the meditation. 2 major thoughts

- 1) Pam said that Seijaku would point out the errors in our own practice, and it did. I have a tendency to lift my back heel too soon in the front-back leg movements. This became very apparent as I had to keep the back heel down while pushing through the resistance. A terrific self-check.
- 2) Also I became very aware of how soft T'ai Chi Chih really is, now that I contrasted it with the hardening of Seijaku.

So in taking Seijaku, I learned much more about T'ai Chi Chih as well!

—**Rodney Anderson**

I was looking for a way to go deeper with my TCC practice-& my teaching- I found it in Seijaku. —**Ahura**

When I found out that Seijaku training was being offered after this year's conference- I was ready to go although I had just been thro' TCC Teacher Accreditation last September after practicing TCC for 16 years, and felt ready to further deepen my practice with Seijaku.

As always, Pam was generous with her words and instructions. I especially enjoyed the expansion of my mind as I realized that I had to not only yin and yang properly but let go, and hold fast and still breathe! Wow! Absolutely awesome! Uffda! Thank you Pam! Thank you Joanne and MN Teachers. I had a fabulous time!

—**Gail Terriff**

Seijaku

*Softness appreciated after resistance
Energy increased
Internally focused
Justin's gift
Advanced T'ai Chi Chih
Kindness, loving kindness
Understanding* —**Rita Beth**

This was my second Seijaku auditing. Well worth my time and effort. It was the opportunity to relearn and connect every part of the Seijaku panoply. I renewed my commitment to introduce Seijaku on a regular basis with my TCC practice. —**Lorraine Lepine**

Again a big thank you to the MN TCC Community, to our incredible financial manager and to the 3 different hosts that allowed this event to unfold with the chi.

Come to "Justin's Life Celebration 2007"!

Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF

Three years ago Justin asked that as Guide of the T'ai Chi Chih community, I "unite the teachers." What better way to do this than to send a nation-wide invitation to join me in celebrating his Birthday. T'ai Chi Chih teachers are welcome to plan ahead to November 2007 when we will honor Justin's Life and his contribution to the world.

This all day event will be held November 17, 2007 at the Marriott Hotel in Albuquerque where the 2005 Conference was held. This full day will include three meals, an opportunity to be with Justin, enjoy TCC movement and celebrate together as a community. Room reservations at the Marriott will be made on your own. Further information will be forthcoming.

An Accreditation will be held in Albuquerque November 11 - 16. Teachers planning to audit can stay an extra day to attend the Life Celebration. Justin and I hope to see you there!

Wishing you peace and all good!



First Teacher Training in Europe

By Host Cristina Minelli

At the beginning of September it finally happened: after years of practicing, discussing, reviewing, and four intensives (with Sandy, Pam and two with Antonia), Sandy McAlister and Dan Pienciak come from The U.S. to transfer us so much balanced energy! Both Sandy and Dan worked hard with enthusiasm and abnegation to offer all of us new opportunities of welcoming the TCC practice in our everyday lives. There were 11 students from Italy and two people from France: Catherine Buillot as teacher sponsor of Jean Michel Victoire, her student from France.

I watched my students one by one, everyone in her/his unique way, unfold their presentations without flaws, everyone with a different style to show enthusiasm and commitment. It has been a joy. I didn't know they could overcome so well performance anxiety and be so convincing.

It felt like an open channel of sincere communication was established between Europe and the Country of origin of TCC.

Spirituality through matter... I always felt that something like TCC must be possible, but our culture could only offer structured religions, and ever since my teenage years I strongly felt that there already were too many dogmas in my tradition.

Spirituality through matter... how do you clearly distinguish one from the other?

Sometimes it is not easy: matter seduces us in many ways, disguising itself, especially when it is not in a tangible form.



Upper row: Sandy McAlister, Catherine Buillot, Maria Luisa Boselli, Jean Michel Victoire, Nicola Lupi, Francesco Mondini, Elena Terenzoni, Agnese Catalani, Elisabetta Zambelli, Daniel Pienciak, Annalisa Biasin. Lower row: Cristina Minelli, Francesca Malagutti, Manuela Moreschi, Iliaria Sighele, Antonella Arioli.

Culture, as a gathering of notions, is a form of matter. This is not to say that we should cultivate our ignorance. It is our duty to study, research and deepen our knowledge in the field we choose to be our contribution to society, our work. It is part of our responsibility. But I think that it is healthy to establish a sound interspace between us and our deeds: the involved detachment loosens us from energy dispersion and from the different possible forms of performance anxiety.

Matter always comes from outside sources. Wisdom springs from different origins. Absorbing notions, no matter how deep, abstract or refined, I never experienced anything close to the peaceful sense of blissful satiety I experience when I undertake actions that in some form are involved with spirituality. When the aftertaste of an event, no matter how happy I feel, is: << I didn't have enough, I feel hungrier of knowledge than before>>, then I know I am

dealing with matter.

We may not always notice it, but we continuously face the choice between "being" and "having". When my daughter, in elementary school, come home frustrated because she flunked the surprise religion test at school, I saw clearly how her teacher was missing a rare opportunity to enter the realm of "being" with her students. There is no such thing as a surprise test in the realm of "being". In the society of "having", she felt safer remaining in the "having" environment. Is it easier to ask about religion history that to offer spiritual engagement opportuni-

ties? I guess it depends on how conscious you are about the best things in life.

Spirituality is different: even though here too we may feel that when the event is over we didn't have enough, the spiritual experience projects us toward a higher plane where the trivial everyday life matters appear truly trivial, because deep underneath we are delightfully gratified. It is there that the more we share, the more we evolve.

TCC offered me the opportunity to reap this kind of consciousness.

This is the greatest gift of TCC, and in top of it I was blessed to experience it in a shared form, with other fifteen people, all together, all in a spiritual synchronism, conscious of the steps we were undertaking in a common path, with no boundaries, hand in hand.

I am deeply grateful to Dan and Sandy, to my students, to our TCC cousins beyond the Alps, and ultimately to Justin for being part of our great extended TCC family.



Carmen Brocklehurst Comes to the South Plains

By Nancy Beck

On September 23 and 24, 2006, members of the Fourth Annual T'ai Chi Chih Workshop sponsored by the SAS Wellness Center opened their hearts and minds to Carmen Brocklehurst' wonderful teaching.

On Saturday, Carmen's Return to Basics brought new information to those who were completely new to TCC and to those who had been taking classes in the Wellness Center for as long as 5 years. As a teacher I want to say that her ability to teach to each individual in the class is phenomenal as was noted by many in the statements at the end of the class.

On Sunday afternoon, we went deeper into TCC as Carmen discussed the massages and sounds of Seijaku and brought TCC practice to a new level. On both days she brought meditation to those experienced in meditation and those new to the practice.

Debbie summed up the feelings of many when she said, "I'm very grateful for the opportunity to meet with Carmen and she makes me feel very special to her though she has never met me."

"A Blessing," was Michael's to the point comment. Bill, "felt a sense of completeness and wholeness at the conclusion."

Sophia, who found she really needed a copy of Meditation for Healing, made a special trip back to get the book and said about Carmen, "was very knowledgeable and was a wonderful teacher.

"Her teachings and insights into TCC and Meditation have been life-changing," were Cindy's comments.

"Finding new life and discovering yourself," are Margaret's feelings.

For Darla the workshop was, "A Wow!

What a spiritual journey to self discovery with a guide who exudes unconditional love."

Poppy not only thought she was an excellent teacher but that she is, "charming, entertaining and seemed to explain the benefits of the movements."

Important to Charlotte was the fact that the workshop, "improved my breathing and introduced new ideas and thoughts that will improve my well-being and thinking processes."

Out TCC veteran, Bobbie, said, "Her gentleness and explanations were super. Analogies and stories were exceptional. Slowness and reasons for making moves gentle were unusual and lasting."

Our Wellness Director, Larry Sava, added, "Our Members were very ecstatic with Carmen. She was able to bring our members to a new level of TCC. However, more importantly she was able to help us reach a higher level of consciousness.

Carmen is closing an era for us. Her Workshop was the last weekend at HealthPoint. However, since her workshop opened us up to reaching deeper into TCC, we feel that our new location and the backing of University Medical Center is opening our program up to new horizons to spread our program of Wellness, mind and body and that TCC will touch the South Plains as it never has.

Thank you Carmen, for being with us.

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Words from the VF Editor

To everyone who has stuck with the Vital Force during this time of change, the Vital Force thanks you! There's a lot of ground to cover, so let's get right to the announcements.

- Kathy Grassel has resigned as the Editor. She did an absolutely wonderful job for us, so we wish to thank her.
- Victor Berg has taken over as the current Editor.
- Jerry Bumbalough has taken over as our subscription coordinator and database administrator. Please forward any questions you may have to him at vfjmembership@yahoo.com.
- The Vital Force is now incorporated as a non-profit company and has achieved tax exempt status with the Federal Government. This means that your

donations are now tax-deductible. You will receive a thank you note that also serves as a legal receipt for any donations made in the year 2006. Normal subscriptions to the Vital Force are not tax deductible.

- In an effort to reduce the amount of work surrounding the Vital Force, we are now using a professional graphic designer. We hope you like the new look of the Vital Force. Also, the Vital Force is being reduced in size to 24 pages (to save costs).
- The Good Karma Publishing Catalog and any flyers for upcoming events, such as the conference, will now be included as inserts into the VF. They won't be published within the Vital Force.
- The Vital Force is now being published in November, February, May and August.

This means that the directory will be published in February.

- Because of the changeover within the Vital Force, there will only be 3 issues published in 2006. Your subscriptions have been increased by 1 issue to reflect this. So you will receive 4 issues of the Vital Force (but only 3 of those in 2006).
- There is now a board of directors for the Vital Force. The members are Victor Berg, Sister Antonia Cooper and Doug Harned.

Please accept our deepest apologies for the difficulties we've had in delivering the Vital Force. There has been growing pains, and difficulties with the changeover. We believe we have them behind us and are plan on delivering the Vital Force on time in the future.

Calendar

January 21-26, 2007

San Francisco Bay Area
T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training
Trainer: Sandy McAlister
Host: Athene Mantle

February 20-23, 2007

TCC Student/Teacher Retreat
w/ Sr. Antonia Cooper
Mt. Calvary Santa Barbara
Pam Towne, (760) 722-9544
pamtowne@sbcglobal.net

February 20-27, 2007

TCC Teacher/Student Retreat
Mt. Calvary, Santa Barbara
Pam Towne, (760) 944-9544

February 27-March 2, 2007

TCC Teacher/Student Retreat
Mt. Calvary, Santa Barbara
Pam Towne, (760) 944-9544

June, 2007

TCC Teacher/Student Retreat
w/ Pam Towne
Watrous, SK, Canada
Lidia Paice,
harmonyhouse@sasktel.net

August 9-12, 2007

TCC Conference
New Jersey
w/ Dorene Krause
201-444-9712
dorenekr@optonline.net

August 13-15, 2007

Seijaku Accreditation Training
Xavier Retreat Center
(home of the 2000 T'ai Chi
Chih@Teachers' Conference)
Convent Station, NJ 07961
w/ Pam Towne, Teacher Trainer