



THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'ai Chi ChihSM

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Summer Solstice

June 1998

"The bamboo ... bends with the wind, and when the storm has passed, snaps back into place, unharmed.

Softness proves more durable than hardness.

Assertiveness takes a back seat to gentle firmness.

Overtly the Sage does nothing, and, thereby, all things are accomplished."

Justin Stone. Originally published in *The Vital Force*, June, 1985



Features in This Issue

Justin Stone Features: 'Non-attachment' and 'DEEP Study'

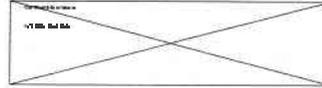
Ed Altman on: 'Collective Momentum' Folsom Prison: Jim Hecker

'Practice' by Carmen Brocklehurst Kathy Grassel Reviews *'Spiritual Odyssey'*

Students Write About: Hip Surgery, Emotional Balance, and Full Potential

Teachers' Articles: Teaching the Homeless, Seniors with Alzheimer's Disease, NASA Study

Teacher Profile: Tara Stiles



THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

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The Vital Force, Journal of T'ai Chi Chih, is an unincorporated, non-profit association, serving T'ai Chi Chih practitioners worldwide. Membership in the Association includes four quarterly issues of *The Vital Force*, the annual Teacher's Directory, quarterly mailing parties and outreach activities, such as teacher referrals. The annual membership fee is \$30 for teachers (which includes listing in/and receipt of the Directory), \$25 for interested persons. Foreign addresses require an additional \$10 a year. First class delivery is an additional \$5.

The purpose of *The Vital Force* is to provide a voice for teachers and students who wish to contribute constructive articles, poems, photographs and drawings, make inquiries of other teachers, and announce future T'ai Chi Chih events, including T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku teacher trainings.

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SUBMISSIONS

Please send submissions (writings, photographs and drawings) to: Roberta Taggart, *The Vital Force*, 10145 Parkwood Drive #3, Cupertino, CA 95014-1562. Phone: 408-252-5405 FAX: 408-255-9547. E-mail: taggart1@earthlink.net. Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced.

Submission deadlines:

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MEMBERSHIPS

Changes of address and back issue requests (\$5) should be sent to Lois Mahaney: *The Vital Force*, 1633 Via Amigos San Lorenzo, CA 95014-1562. Phone: 510-276-5718. *The Vital Force* is published quarterly and bulk mailed to association members during the second weeks of March, June, September and December. If you do not receive your issue by the 30th of these months, contact Lois Mahaney. When moving, please allow six weeks notice and provide complete old and new addresses. The Post Office now charges \$1.33 for the return of undelivered issues. Please help us avoid this expense.

TCC TEACHERS' DIRECTORY

The *T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Directory* is for referral and communication among accredited TCC teachers. It is not to be used or sold as a mailing list. Association members receive a copy of the Directory annually. Updates are published in each issue of *The Vital Force*. Send changes and additions to Lois Mahaney at the above address.



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Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih
Ed Altman is the Designated Head of T'ai Chi Chih



柳絮隨風

The
willow
fluff
follows
the
wind
without
attachment



NON-ATTACHMENT

by Justin Stone

There is a Life Force with a great urge to manifest – that we can easily discern. Whether we personalize it, give it names, or worship it or not, it is present in the humblest of creatures as in ourselves. My experience would say that it works thru PRAJNA (Inherent Wisdom) and PRANA (CHI, the Vital Force), and these we can know and use. If one lives his or her life thru PRAJNA, the answers will come out right, and quickly.

When I suddenly decided to live in Albuquerque, and to find a house during a short visit, the right house was found in a few minutes. The same thing happened in India, Japan and Chinese cities, etc., and I assure you it was not because of my efforts. We are looked after if we rest in the PRAJNA – not if we scheme and try to use ordinary methods. These are not idle words; to ‘achieve’ the Prajna we must live with TEH and compassion. With proper circulation of the PRANA (CHI) these come naturally.

To lead a Spiritual Life, we must live with AHIMSA and VAIRAGYA. The first, Ahimsa (non-violence, including hatred, envy, greed, etc.) is easy to attain. Meditation (proper deep meditation that leads to the Turiya State) and T'ai Chi Chih, will help us, if we really want it.

VAIRAGYA, however, is very difficult in this material world. To read the great Indian Saint, Ramakrishna, we would be shocked that he tells us this also means non-attachment to family, friends, wealth, et., almost everything we adhere to in this rather selfish life style. Few have the urge to

follow VAIRAGYA and give up pleasures. There is no need to feel guilty if we are attached, but attachment will hinder us on the Spiritual Path. This is not my opinion. Non-attachment is almost impossible for a householder.

Nevertheless, we can easily live with AHIMSA, and it is strongly urged that we do so without allowing exceptions. To lie or spread rumours are two forbidden courses of action, as is physical violence.

Why do people leave their ‘cushy’ lives and go to India or some other Eastern country (I don’t mean for a few weeks of a guided tour)? It is because of great need for TRUTH, and the teaching that can enable us to follow TRUTH all the time, not just once in a while. It would appear that those who have done so have made great sacrifices, but, actually, they have enhanced this life and lives to come. Pleasures and rewards do not last; the real Bliss comes when we reach the level of Reality (Turiya State), and we must have instruction in how to do so.

The self-enlightened person is extremely rare, almost non-existent. Such a one dwells in Concept, not in Holy (there’s that word!) Experience. She, or He, may convince others, but inside, this person knows. One cannot fool the Self. Karma will not allow it.

So, Homage to this Life Force.

Don’t try to define it;

just be grateful to it.



EDITOR'S NOTES

Summer approaches, enveloping us with its warmth and abundance as the earth yields crops of fruits and vegetables to strengthen and nourish our bodies. As conference time nears, we are presented with a special opportunity to come together and nurture one another: sharing T'ai Chi Chih, talking about the work that we do, and building community. Each of us, at different stages in our growth and evolution, can embrace each other in the spirit of fellowship, providing the connectivity to keep our community strong, growing and vital.

If you have not yet made your reservation for the 13th Annual TCC Teachers' Conference, it's not too late to join us. Don't miss this opportunity to celebrate and spend time with Justin, Ed and Noel, Carmen and the Conference staff – but most of all with each other – *teachers are the heartbeat of T'ai Chi Chih*. Our *VFJ* staff looks forward to seeing you, hearing your stories, sharing in your laughter and tears, reveling in your work inspired by service and commitment

and watching your hearts reunite once again in the spirit of love and compassion.

This pre-conference issue of *VFJ* was a delight to put together. I hope you find something within these pages to inspire your teaching endeavors and lift your spirits. Outreach is a special focus of this issue: Aida Wilks has introduced TCC to the Philippines; Jim Hecker, an inmate at Folsom Prison in California was accredited to teach TCC in May. Barbara Sommers has shared her teaching experiences with seniors who have Alzheimer's Disease and Wendy Helms has written about volunteer teaching to homeless people in transition. Students have written about regaining agility, the potential of practice, recovering from hip surgery, and balancing of emotions. There are several teachers' articles on practice and other topics – each with its own flavor, and there is an article or two about Justin, along with teacher news and other interesting readings. Enjoy!

In the spirit of community,

VFJ - IT'S A GOOD THING!

By Ed Altman

T'ai Chi Chih teachers continually comment on how much they look forward to receiving each issue of *The Vital Force*. It's the best way to stay informed and connected with the T'ai Chi Chih community. It is so valuable that all newly accredited instructors now receive a 1-year subscription (or extension) as part of the teacher training course fee. Why not bring a copy of *VFJ* to your classes and share it with students? Many of the articles and topics will be of interest to

them. You can take a few minutes of class time to discuss the value you get from your subscription and read an excerpt from an article they might find helpful.

Most students will want to browse through *VFJ* before or after class, and some may want to subscribe for themselves. You can make that even easier by providing copies of the *VFJ* membership form on the inside back page.



READERS COMMENTARY

IN MEMORIAM

Rev. **Helen Bungardt Pope**, who was in Justin's second Teacher's Training and was Carolyn Shaw's, Marian Sears', Virginia Shilson's, Lynn Altman's, and Carmen Brocklehurst's first T'ai Chi Chih Teacher, passed away on Thursday, May 14, in her home in **Sedona, AZ** of a heart attack.



Our sympathy goes out to her husband and family. She lived a beautiful life -- one of service.

LIFE'S LESSON . . .

Dear Readers,

A year ago the San Francisco Bay Area T'ai Chi Chih teachers gave me a wonderful gift. They had a red Japanese Maple tree planted in San Mateo's Central Park to honor the passing of y husband, Ken. Many of the instructors knew Ken and appreciated his support of Steve's, Lia's, Tamara's and my teaching of T'ai Chi Chih.

First the squirrels attacked the tree and feasted on the tender branches and roots. The leaves drooped as winter began, then the heavy rains came, and I was afraid we'd lose it, though the gardener told me it was OK. I check every week and today, to my delight, I discovered very small new buds on the branches. Now I think the tree will make it and be enjoyed by many visitors.

Thanks again. I think there is a life lesson here.

Hope Ridley, San Mateo, CA

VN SPEECH POSTPHONED

Justin Stone's scheduled appearance on May the 11th was post-phoned. When another date is set -- we'll announce it!

ABOUT THE NEW VFJ FORMAT

Congratulations on a very good issue of the *VFJ*! . . . enjoyed the new format.

Ed Altman

Enclosed please find an application for *VFJ* for one of my excellent students . . . Thanks for all your hard work in keeping *The Vital Force* alive. With loving Chi,

Ursula Bridge, Victoria, BC

Bravo! The Spring '98 *VFJ* is magnificent! . . . glad you stepped forward and created an uplifting issue. Thank You!

Guy Kent, Albuquerque, NM

Please renew my membership. It's so important to me to keep in touch through *VFJ*. It's both supporting and inspiring. My thanks to those whom manage the distribution and those who contribute their stories.

Anthea Lee, Edmonton, AB Canada

I've enjoyed many aspects of the new issue of *VFJ* . . . It looks really great!

Noel Altman, San Rafael, CA

Your *VFJ* of March '98 is just beautiful. Congratulations to the staff for bringing together an inspirational and timely TCC publication in the enlarged style. Nice going.

Gene Box, Seal Beach, CA

The new *VFJ* [format] . . . looks good. . . It seems more expansive . . . give[s] more space to artwork, etc.

Jean Katus, Fort Yates, ND

I love the new *VFJ* format. Well done!

Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM



SPIRITUAL ODYSSEY: A BOOK REVIEW

Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM

Like iron filings to a magnet, it is no surprise that Justin Stone's essays should come together in a book. This collection is called *Spiritual Odyssey* and comprises Justin's writings from 1985 to 1997, the settled years in New Mexico after a lifetime of work and travel, artistic and spiritual pursuit.

These are works previously published in *The Vital Force* and the *New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News*, taken from among Justin's many talks, or even retrieved as snippets from the backs of envelopes or paper napkins. The writings are not in chronological order for those who might be tempted to look for any kind of traceable linear spiritual evolution in the author. That you might know Justin as a band leader, artist, Wall Street trader, jazz pianist, tennis player, author will not help you here. This compilation transcends all of these labels and tells us ultimately that it is the realm of the spiritual that is Justin's legacy, that the purpose of life is spiritual development and that its unfolding will not be linear, logical or orderly.

For those who know Justin as the originator of T'ai Chi Chih, the book contains many essays about its practice and purity. These are 19 movements and a pose that Justin conceived and perfected, that people since 1974 have been practicing with results ranging from relief of migraine headaches to overall greater clarity and peace, to better performance in sports and music, to better balance and stronger bones to remission of tumors. Still, we know from Justin and from our practice that T'ai Chi Chih is above all a spiritual discipline, circulating and balancing

the chi within us, connecting us with cosmic rhythm. "Like Zen, T'ai Chi Chih points out the way to serenity and fulfillment while living in the midst of busy worldly conditions."

Justin's writings contain no trace of the trendiness now so prevalent in this New Age of the pseudo-spiritual in which seekers pick and choose--as from the shelves of supermarkets---channelers, crystal healers, faux-shamans and razzle-dazzle blissful riders of the Cosmic Wave, all promising enlightenment in a weekend workshop. Readers will be keenly aware, whether they devour the book whole or savor it in morsels, that the items in this compendium are as solid as they are inspired, quiet, almost austere in their simplicity and clarity. While never repetitious, certain themes run through the essays: the importance of practice over theory, the necessity of practice to achieve results, the triumvirate of greed, anger and delusion as the obstacles to spiritual progress, the sincere heart as tantamount to technical or intellectual prowess; acceptance of impermanence, the growth of certainty that comes with spiritual practice, and what has been most enlightening and meaningful for me, Vairagya, or non-attachment. "The Chinese say, 'Make peace with heaven and not with men,'" Justin writes. "This requires an understanding that there is more than what we see, and that all things and beings are interrelated.... Most people are really interested only in the welfare of themselves and their families, the opposite of compassion -- not realizing that the welfare of all others is closely integrated with your

(continued next page)



BOOK REVIEW (continued)

own welfare. To realize this is the beginning of spirituality. Until all have some idea of this interrelatedness, there will be wars, suffering, and injustice."

Each essay, poem, and snippet is soft-spoken, spare and consummate, born of the truth of experience and a lifetime of testing, study, observation; a lifetime of being the student absorbing the greater knowledge and experience of his teachers until he himself is the teacher.

It's so simple--performing 19 movements and a pose, attention in the soles of the feet; meditation watching the breath, catching the space between thoughts. One might think it's too simple, that there must be more to it than

that. Well, yes, there is, but as the great Heart Sutra condenses into 264 words the immense Great Prajna Paramita Sutra with its 600 sections, Justin distills the pantheon of spiritual possibilities into these two disciplines. Justin's essays supply the underpinning to these two seemingly simple practices.

So then, ultimately, how should we act? "To live in a straightforward manner, to speak in a truthful manner (not as easy as it sounds), is enough," Justin writes. "The Prajna, the inherent wisdom that is in all of us, will take care of the rest."

Ed. Note: The Vital Force gratefully acknowledges Kathy Grassel for writing a review of Justin's latest publication.

OUTREACH AT FOLSOM PRISON

by Ed Altman

Justin flew out to Sacramento, CA in May to give a T'ai Chi Chih Lecture/ Demonstration to a group of inmates at Folsom State Prison. This talk (which was videotaped) was also attended by Tara Stiles, Doug Harned and Noel and Ed Altman. The inmates were excited to hear Justin's message of hope, strength, acceptance and renewal through the practice of T'ai Chi Chih. They eagerly clustered around Justin and the other teachers to ask questions, share stories, and find out how to learn T'ai Chi Chih. Doug [Harned] stayed on to help with a teacher training course for our newest instructor, James Hecker, who is currently an inmate at Folsom. He will be establishing T'ai Chi Chih courses there from now on. I'd like to thank Tara Stiles for teaching T'ai Chi Chih

at Folsom Prison, and for assisting James with his preparation.

The visit had a profound affect on the inmates, instructors, and even the Folsom staff who heard Justin talk. Most of the attendees were inmates who will soon be released on parole and are looking for ways to turn their lives around. They immediately recognized T'ai Chi Chih as a valuable tool to help them break the cycles of violence and addiction they struggle with on a daily basis. Those were their words! The inmates at Folsom Prison appreciate the gift of T'ai Chi Chih and know the value of community. (See related article on pages 30-31.)

Ed. Note: More on this topic in upcoming issues



The bamboo tree ... holds within itself the reality of both polarities - strength and surrender.

Being aware of these "pulls" within my life, as I had experienced them, a sense of peacefulness and groundedness has somewhat calmed the tugs between the two.

The lesson the bamboo tree has been teaching me is to embrace both within.



Photo courtesy of Carrie Kinsey

The yang of strength compliments the yin of surrender . . . and in the surrendering, we experience our center of strength.

They are not opposites at all, they coexist, harmonize, balance and give life to one another ...

and to the person who welcomes them with an embrace.

Sr. Antonia Cooper,
No. Plainfield, NJ



DEEP STUDY

by Justin Stone

If you will go and live with a great yogic teacher, you will find that Being is equivalent to Consciousness. Since Consciousness implies Duality, this means there is something besides Consciousness (Awareness). Man is Being (he thinks of himself as "a Being") and Being is defined as Sat Chit Ananda -- "Being Consciousness Bliss." This implies that the very nature of Being -- and therefore, of Man -- is Bliss (Ananda in Sanskrit). Through "Becoming" Man attains to this Bliss, which is his true nature. However, at a lower level, the Indian Sages have said that man is predominantly one of three States (Gunas): the Pure Sattvic State, the active Rajastic State, or the clouded-over, dull Tamasic State. If we are born with the third, the lethargic, fearful state of Tamas, there is little we can do to attain Bliss. We can work to better our make-up so we can attain Bliss in another lifetime, but the problem is our lethargic, fearful nature will prevent us from doing so. To move up the ladder is rare. How many have the Will to do so? How many will realize his or her own dullness?

An ancient saying is "As above so below." All that exists in the Macrocosm exists potentially within Man, the Microcosm. In Truth, we are Divinity, but that blessed state is covered by clouds of ignorance. Avidya (Ignorance--literally "not seeing") is the cause of our troubles. Buddhism has said that there are over sixty states of mind, but we tend to stick to the three that bring us suffering: Greed (the desire to possess, covetousness), Anger (envy, etc.) and Delusion (brought about by the tendencies that have developed by our habit-energies, or Vashanas). The conceit that sometimes comes from a little spiritual study makes any progress

impossible. When we live at a good Ashram in India, faithful practice gives us an opportunity to first experience this Bliss, which is not satisfaction of Desire. Then there is the danger that it makes everything else look insipid and we get stuck in the "Vertical," the sense of one-ness that keeps us from the world and from fulfilling our Karma. This is why Zen speaks of "climbing a hundred-foot pole" and then going on from there, which, strangely enough, means descending from the exclusive state of one-ness to live in the everyday world once again (and to help others).

Teilhard de Chardin says that Religion is "the search for ultimates." This has nothing to do with dogma, doctrine, or institutional religion. How many people are interested in a search for ultimates, or even ask the usual question, "Why are we here?" Shallow character, complete concentration on daily problems of life, and desire for sense gratification--including the need for entertainment and diversion--keep the average person from even coming to grips with the certainty that he or she will die--this being the one certainty. The search for security is hopeless: there is none. All philosophic search is meant just to bring us face to face with uncertainty and to accord with impermanence, not easy to do. To go deep within, far beyond thought, is the one way we have of getting answers or annulling questions. Usually, a true spiritual guide is necessary, but he or she cannot remake the gunas with which we are born or drastically change our karma (more accurately, the fruits of our Karma). We will find our way, however if we are sincere and really want to. It is helpful to remember that man's real nature is Bliss.

Source: NM T'ai Chi Chih News, March 1998



NASA STUDIES COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

Linda Braga, Castro Valley, CA

Recently, I was surfing the cable channels on TV and stopped short when I saw a most incredible program, a space-age scientific study worth sharing. The National Aeronautic Space Administration (NASA) has been doing some unusual studies lately. Their goal in one study was to discover what happens at the moment in which pilots black out due to the G-forces they experience when their bodies are hurled into space at supersonic speeds. Many pilots report that just before unconsciousness, they have what they describe as an "out of body" experience so vivid that they claim it's just like real life.

To explore this phenomenon, NASA has asked experienced pilots to submit to being studied under controlled circumstances in the lab that houses the "human centrifuge." Pilots are strapped into a capsule with cameras, electrodes, etc. to monitor various body functions. This capsule whirls around at super fast speeds to simulate flight conditions. The whole experience is monitored and filmed.

As a result of these studies, NASA scientists have come to some astonishing conclusions and a few hypotheses. Their data has brought up some unexpected possibilities. Since all pilots reported out of body experiences before loss of consciousness, the question now being asked is: Where IS the location of consciousness? (They state that no one has proved that the brain is the location of consciousness!) Could consciousness exist outside the body? If so, how? A hundred more questions arise.

I felt quite excited about this NASA study and it's connection to T'ai Chi Chih. We know that the chi circulates within the body. We also know that this *Vital Force* pervades everything in the Universe. This pranic sea is mentioned by Justin and many other T'ai Chi Masters and philosophers. Is NASA now going to "prove" that we are all part of a larger cosmic consciousness? Will they substantiate the fact that we are "conscious wavelets" manifesting in a Sea of Consciousness? What if the ancient sages were right, that the Universe is saturated with intelligent *Life Force*, and we have daily opportunities to "tap into it." What if we could heal ourselves by becoming so quiet within that we could hear-sense-intuit what harmonic vibration to accommodate to, and be made whole?

If NASA does substantiate the existence of cosmic consciousness, then this concept could eventually become accepted reality worldwide. The implications for practice of T'ai Chi Chih would be most impressive. Something to think about . . . I mean contemplate while doing cosmic consciousness pose!

*It's time to get back to the CHI,
away from the thoughts of ME.
When sharing the beauty of life,
there are no thoughts of strife.
Return to the purpose of We,
igniting all hearts with CHI.*

Tori Fiore, Phoenix, AZ



COMMUNITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Roberta Taggart, Cupertino, CA

What a marvelous gift T'ai Chi Chih is! Practiced daily with the proper motivation, it brings rapid transformation into our lives. It allows us to connect powerfully and meaningfully to ourselves (our inner breath – our vital force – chi). An intimacy develops as we turn inward to bathe in the sweetness lying inside -- just waiting to be discovered (or is that re-discovered?). We begin to realize what love really is. Not sappy love-- but the deep love realized by quietly turning inward. The more we sink into our practice and experience the boundless joy awaiting us, the better we are able to understand the value of this special gift of T'ai Chi Chih. Often imperceptible yet real changes occur, both emotionally and spiritually, as we move from loving self to merely loving. *Teh* allows us to move with intention to nourish a spiritually hungry world. But what of our own nourishment, and the nourishment of each other.

In between the self and the world-at-large lies our community -- a gathering together of individuals who form a supportive network. The survival of the community is dependent upon the ability to be intimate (inner knowing) and loving -- not only with ourselves, but others. While so easily said, opening the heart to move toward connectivity and communion takes trust. When you feel loved, nurtured, cared for and supported, then trust engenders the capacity to be loving and intimate in return. Through our T'ai Chi Chih community we can nourish each other, replenish ourselves, and connect at an aggregated level -- gathering momentum exponentially that we

cannot acquire alone. Through community, then, there is the means to gather the impetus required to move out into a more global service to humanity. Fueled by the desire to love globally and connect intimately with our fellow man, we can provide a mechanism (T'ai Chi Chih) to ameliorate the profound sense of loneliness, isolation, alienation and depression present in our modern world.

But our strength comes both from within (individually) and between (collectively). What if we don't connect with each other? We then miss the opportunity to build relationship. The process of building communally is a powerful part of our T'ai Chi Chih experience. Together -- through commitment to serve, we foster the ability to enhance intimacy in relationships that are the most important to us -- family, friends, colleagues -- within our community.

Written communications are meaningful links; staying connected in other ways is also important to invigorate and sustain our community. Helping each other develop as teachers, auditing a teacher training, attending or leading group practices, engaging in meaningful dialogue, working together on projects, attending annual conferences, workshops, retreats, and seminars --these activities provide the opportunity to build and strengthen our community by fortifying the bond between teachers. How fortunate we are to have each other, our community, and T'ai Chi Chih as a uniting force. Justin has provided the gift, it's up to each of us to build community.



ON LITTLE COMMITMENTS AND SMALL MIRACLES

Carrie Kinsey, Concord, CA

The day after my mother died my father and I stood near her fabulous bed of geraniums (half as tall as the house and wildly colorful) acknowledging each other helplessly. She was too young to go and we were all too young to lose her. I looked into his eyes and I couldn't find anything. He said, "I can't be a father to you right now." The tides were shifting. I was 32 years old and it was time to grow up. I had to be a daughter to him right now.

My father and I have always gotten along famously, and in the 12 years since my mother's death we have maintained a companionable relationship, introducing each other to concepts, adventures and new friends along the way. We have been to lectures together, we've gone on road trips and adventures, and we talk endlessly. He's a pretty good friend to me as well as being my dad.

A few years after my mother died, around the time that I was learning about T'ai Chi Chih, my father was beginning to realize the physical part of his legacy, the part that included debilitating arthritis in his ankles and a mild form of Parkinson's that caused a slight tremor in his hand. He was losing his mobility, his ability to come to the edge with me--to find out what was around that next corner.

It didn't take much convincing to get him to join an informal T'ai Chi Chih class that my brother and his wife put together in their backyard not long after my accreditation. Classes were in the warm autumn evenings. My brother put up a spotlight so the students and I could see each other. My dad usually hung back a little bit in the shadows, but I could see him moving, finding out how his body was going to respond to this new challenge. He followed along--standing when he could, sitting

when he needed to. After the first class session he was energized and talkative, swearing that he didn't feel any effect from the movements. I grinned. Since that evening, my dad has completed three courses of T'ai Chi Chih with me. I'd love to say that he's moving miraculously--doing the Lindy on Friday evenings. He's not. But he has made the commitment to himself. He moves when and how he can. It helps, he says. He can go to museums and walk around for hours now--a limitation overcome. He can work in his wood shop and focus on the tasks involved in making furniture for a full afternoon. It helps. He also helps me. Quiet and accepting, trying, I watch him as the classes go on. He hates *Pulling Taffy*, but he tries. I have the benefit of seeing someone with his physical conditions work with the movements. Also I get to see my dad doing something that makes his life a little easier.

Not all commitments are strenuous. Not all miracles are accompanied by an angel choir. It was a small commitment for me, taking the time to help my father explore T'ai Chi Chih, but the benefits have been great. I get to spend time with him, I'm learning a lot about teaching. It's little miracles that happen because of it--he has the energy and ability to spend time doing the things he loves to do, like wood working and enjoying his grandchildren. A family who has already suffered the devastating loss of one parent gets to enjoy the other parent more fully--perhaps not solely because of T'ai Chi Chih, but it helps. I'm glad for a lot of reasons that I've made this little commitment to T'ai Chi Chih and to my dad. He's also made the commitment to the form, to himself and to me. To be sure, because of those commitments, T'ai Chi Chih is giving a great deal to us both.



TCC FOR HOMELESS PEOPLE IN TRANSITION

Wendy Helms, Orinda, CA

Since becoming an accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor a year ago I've taught in a variety of settings, including an aikido dojo, two private universities and a suburban dance studio. Although culturally mixed, all my students have been "privileged" people--not only educated enough to seek out T'ai Chi Chih but able to afford both the \$8 class fee and the cost of transportation to the class site. I began to worry that T'ai Chi Chih was "elitist" as I thought about the more than forty million people in the US who live below the poverty line, many of them homeless, often living in conditions of great physical and emotional stress, people who could benefit greatly from T'ai Chi Chih but who simply do not have access to this valuable, life-enhancing tool.

When a friend of mine got a job as a counselor in a county program providing temporary housing for homeless families in transition, I volunteered to teach a weekly TCC class for his clients. My friend was

surprised to find that there was a good deal of interest, though he warned me that, having been homeless, his clients were not used to structure and schedules and many of them were in the process of withdrawal from drug habits. However, after teaching for two months, the response has been wonderful, the general consensus being "this feels so good!" Yes, there have been problems in getting classes started on time, but the general discipline of T'ai Chi Chih is particularly helpful in teaching these students to be more grounded and focused, more in touch with their bodies and more "at home" within themselves.

For my part, I find that there is something very freeing about volunteering my time. I receive more than I give and feel oddly privileged to be able to offer the gift of T'ai Chi Chih to people who are badly in need of its healing benefits.

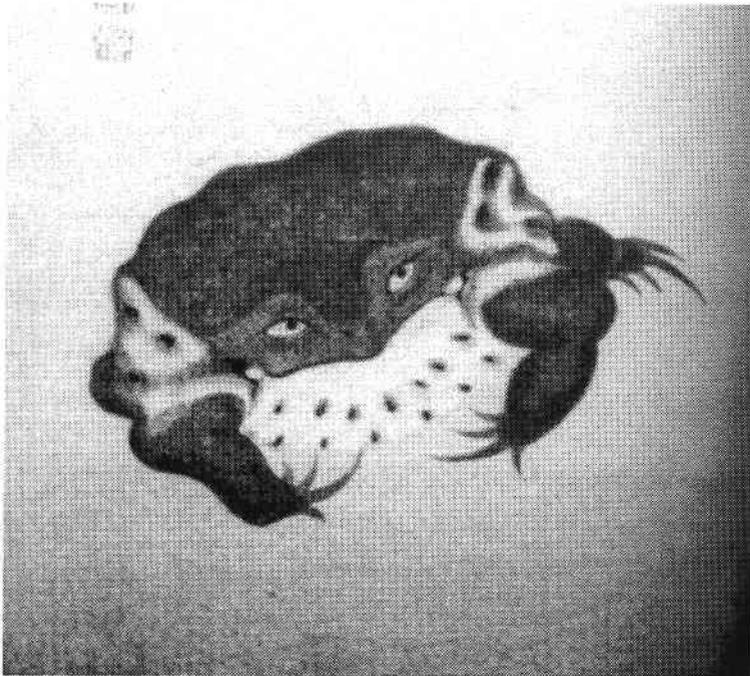
Wendy Helms was accredited in March, 1997. Her referring teacher was Paul Ciske.

A STUDENT THANKS HER TEACHER

Nancy Connell, Severna Park, MD

"At age 57 I entered the T'ai Chi Chih program because I noticed a loss of agility. After only three weeks I was putting on walking shoes balanced on one leg. In addition, there has been a significant improvement in my bursitis, allowing me to hold the 'Cosmic Consciousness Pose' at shoulder height parallel to the ground rather than 45 degrees. "These accomplishments are in addition to the sense of well-being and energy I experience with just a half hour of movement several times a week. My environment can be very stressful and T'ai Chi Chih has enabled me to minimize the

effect this stress has on me. I continue to be amazed at the power these gentle, graceful movements generate. "Sharon . . . bring(s) an extra joy to her class. She encourages each of her students to excel at their own pace, allowing all to experience achievement and benefit, rather than frustration, when progress is slow," says Nancy, who is a student of Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, MD. Nancy adds that she is looking forward to returning to Sharon's class next year for "refreshing, refining" and getting a chance to spend time with Sharon as a student of T'ai Chi Chih.



Woodblock: Mori Shunkei, *Chuka Senju* (1820) Toad.
Spencer Collection, New York Public Library.

By
the
power
of
complete
non-
attachment
the
frog
floats

-- Joso

COLLECTIVE MOMENTUM; IMPACT OF PRACTICE

by Ed Altman

"May I please have some change?" These simple words had a double meaning that avoided the notice of the cash register attendant I was speaking to. As I pondered the deeper aspects of my request I watched her grab a stack of quarters without hesitation. A slight smile crossed her face when she realized she had picked up the exact number of coins she needed. "It's nice when things work that way, isn't it?" She sighed, and nodded her head in silent agreement.

What is so amazing about T'ai Chi Chih practice is how it brings subtle shifts in our lives which make things go smoother. Life seems to require less effort. Whether we instinctively know how many coins to grab, which page of the phone book has the number we're looking for, or which way to turn to find the parking spot in a crowded lot,

there is a feeling of flow and harmony which cannot be denied. These "minor" events are like the single drops of water that merge into a stunning waterfall. Their momentum is powerful, and inspiring. From a Zen perspective there are no "minor" events. Every action is filled with the same degree of depth and meaning. Hence, the phrase "every moment Zen".

Our daily practice brings so many unexpected benefits, even to those around us who might not be aware of them. As we go deeper in our personal study these events seem to become more and more common. Are they really happening more now, or are we simply more aware of what has always been happening? In either case, it is happening in the current moment, and our practice continues to have a significant impact upon a world seeking balance.



PRACTICE CREATES A SENSIBLE, SENSITIVE T'AI CHI CHIH

Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

In talking to T'ai Chi Chih Teachers, I often get asked the question, "What do you do with students after they have learned the movements and have spent quite a bit of time practicing?" Many students feel at this point that they are ready for Teachers Training. However, you are the teacher; it is not for your students to tell you when it is time to take Teachers Training. Nor is it the time to introduce them to another discipline. Many of you have probably heard the saying, "Student of many, Master of none." Unless we strive to know the ultimate that T'ai Chi Chih can teach us, we miss out on the true gift that T'ai Chi Chih has to offer.

This is the point when students are ready for their first baby steps into the deeper realms. If you are asking, "What deeper realms?" It is again time to listen to the "Justin Stone Speaks on T'ai Chi Chih" audio tape every time you ride in your car, or to play it at night as you are going to sleep. The results will be amazing. The tape contains the perfect substance you will need to lead your students into intermediate T'ai Chi Chih.

Justin has often said that the best way for students to learn T'ai Chi Chih is to practice, practice, practice. The time is now ripe to help the students become aware that movements are not just the repetition of the physical movements. If this were true, TCC would be just another glorified exercise program.

It is important to help our students (and ourselves) become aware that the effects of the movements are on all levels - physical, emotional and mental. Some students are very

sensitive; their fingers may move easily or their feet may become hot. Some may even begin to have heightened awareness. It now becomes easy for teachers to see if students did practice, and in the face of this new level that has been reached (and there will be many more levels to come), if the student is still able to retain the correct discipline of the movement. Does the yinling and yangling stay level? Are they still leading with the tan t'ien? Are there curly cues creeping into the movements? Is there tension in the shoulders and back from the elbows rising too far from the body?

As teachers, we may take these points for granted as a normal part of our practice. But that is only because we have a discipline of daily practice which has given us a strong working relationship with the chi. Students, on the other hand, still need to build this relationship. Repetition is not just a dull drill but a wonderful way to build substance.

Happy Practice and Share the Chi!

鏡 Zen

清 Mind



TEACHING SENIORS WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

Barbara Sommers, Cumberland, WI

I am responding to the request in *The Vital Force* for some thoughts from TCC teachers who have some experience teaching people with Alzheimer's Disease. First, let me say it's been four or five years since I've taught this population . . . This class was held at a Senior Day Care Center, and although the students' diagnoses were not disclosed to me, I believe several of the 15 or so students had symptoms of Alzheimer's . . .

My creative innovations for this class came from inner guidance gained in quiet moments of prayer and meditation . . . I highly recommend that you trust your own inspirations for connecting with your students, and making the most of the environment and helpful staff members.

The room we met in had a tape player, and I would softly play an audio tape that was designed to help balance and synchronize the brain hemispheres. To minimize the chance of students wandering out of the room or pacing during class, I conducted this class with the students and myself seated in folding chairs in a circle. Sometimes staff members would attend, and once they helped translate for an Hispanic woman.

The very first day I received inner guidance that was as unconventional as it was helpful and effective. To help these students develop an awareness of the soles of their feet, at the beginning of class and from time to time during the class, while seated, we would stamp our feet loudly on the floor and then quiet our feet and feel the very physical vibrations in the soles of our feet. We would repeat the stamping and then observing the vibrations with our feet still two or three

times in a row. As strange and "un-T'ai Chi [Chih] like" as this cacophonous activity may sound, it served as a fun way to bring the attention of everyone to the soles of the feet. It also seemed to allow the expression of a lot of pent up energy, as our class met in the late afternoon as a part of a very long and structured day . . .

We did the movements seated and in the usual order . . . we simply would first place the left foot forward as we did the movements for the left side and then place the right foot forward for the second half of the movement. Between the left and right halves of the movements and to simulate [the] resting pose at the end of each movement, we would slowly bring the hands down to rest quietly on our thighs and focus on the soles of the feet . . . we did all the first ten movements seated, and skipped the *Taffies* and *Working the Pulleys*. As best I can recall we did *Light at the Top of the Head*; *Light at the Temples* and *Joyous Breath*. I don't believe we did either *Passing Clouds* or the *Healing Sounds*; we did the closing *Cosmic Consciousness Pose* seated.

If students had difficulty with a movement, I'd go around the whole circle giving everyone a little extra help, and sometimes would model the movements while standing directly in front of the students. Occasionally one or two students had trouble being quiet or cooperative, and I learned to simply move my chair between the students who were feeding this energy. The students learned the movements far better than I would have guessed and continuing for the full year helped deepen the habit of peacefulness as well as familiarity with the movements.



THE POWER OF CHI: A WITNESS AND HEALING TIME

Vivian Hoff, Eagan, MN

Today: April 1, and everyone knows the social take on this day. But there was no fooling in my T'ai Chi Chih class at the Linwood Community Center in St. Paul, Minnesota. The class is one offered to senior persons in that community. During the past six days I had been desperately combating a dreadful head and respiratory infection. Source unknown. When I arrived for the class (the last in the series) Patti, a very good friend and colleague from our days as coordinators and home economics teachers in the St. Paul Schools asked me if I felt all right - she could tell by "the way I walked in". She spread the word and tried to get consensus that I go back home to rest. Another class member commented that in a class she had taken the teacher finished with a broken foot. Oh well!

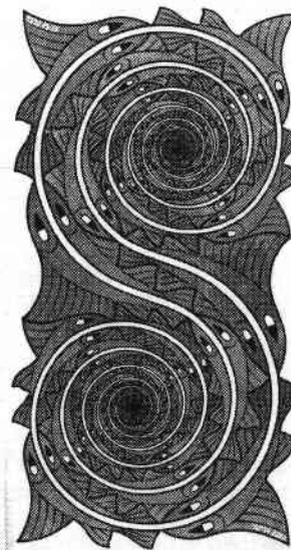
Class began with a time for breath and preparation for practicing T'ai Chi Chih. Soon my balance corrected, my mind and all within my cranium cleared with no need to cough. Another student observed my aura -- green/blue. As the group meditatively worked through the moves, the CHI cultivated by all 20 of us took over. Now, we all know that a class of senior beginners in T'ai Chi Chih does not arrive at the last session accomplished in all of the moves, but believe me there was an undisputed cultivation of CHI. There was a rhythm in the lifting of feet and placing them onto the wooden floor of the dance studio we use.

I was practicing T'ai Chi Chih in the "chaos", i.e., the state of right and left, yin and yang -- all around me. The students are

precious. They always do their best. We laugh. We practice, practice, practice! Today we all clapped hands for each other.

Patti [the friend I spoke about above] is in the class because she had a stroke several months ago. This was her second class, and her husband says she has healed remarkably. Though Patti had to leave class early -- (she lost her balance), when I called her in the evening to inquire about her situation she remarked, "I saw how you changed during class, your face brightened and you kept on going." She was a witness [to the change that the CHI brings about]. She is committed to T'ai Chi Chih as a segment in her recovery and way of life.

The T'ai Chi Chih word for the day on the board was "To know CHI is to know one of the greatest secrets in life." It is that indeed.



Escher Print

Kernels of corn,
Fish scales.
Vary with the
Creator's hand.

Designs of pottery,
Patterns on a Blanket.
Vary with the
Creator's hand.

The swimmer's stroke,
The bird's wing,
More in rhythm
With the moment.

T'ai Chi Chih
Seeks it level
With total freedom.

E. Box, Seal Beach, CA



13th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE "ENTERING COSMIC RHYTHM"

Hello teachers,

Conference will soon be upon us and there is a lot of enthusiasm about what this year's gathering of teachers will offer. Here are a few reminders to help make your arrival and check-in at the hotel go smoothly. Please make sure you have secured your room reservation at the Crowne Plaza Pyramid Hotel (505) 821-3333. Tell the reservation clerk you are with the TCC Conference in order to receive our discounted rate.

If you are rooming with another teacher, make sure you both are listed together on the same reservation. (If you are in need of a roommate, please call Maggie Berg for assistance at (505) 237-0243.) The hotel will only hold our room block till June 15, 1998, and we don't want you to be without a place to stay.

Please send your return postcard with your flight arrival information (airline and arrival time). We will have greeters at the airport to assist you to ground transportation to take you to the hotel.

Finally, it is traditional that some teachers choose to dress up a bit for the Saturday night Talent Show. This is certainly not mandatory -- we just wanted to give you that information. The hotel does have an indoor/outdoor pool and Jacuzzis. Summer weather in the high desert can be a little cool at night so a light jacket is suggested.

We are looking forward to seeing you in July. There is still room for any last minute reservations. Please call us with any questions or concerns you may have. Bien Viaje!

Rhonda St. Martin
Conference Coordinator
(505) 299-7038

TOP TEN REASONS TO ATTEND THE 1998 TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

10. You don't have to make your bed or clean up or cook for anyone.
9. To learn the JING
8. Commune with other teachers and make new friends.
7. Watch the moon come up over the Sandia Mountains.
6. It's the only way to get your Conference T-shirt (they're super this year!)
5. Eat green chile.
4. Spend time with Justin and see his new *Spiritual Odyssey* book (maybe he'll sign one for you!)
3. Feast your ears and eyes on live music and entertainment at the Talent Show.
2. Deepen your relationship with T'ai Chi Chih.
1. Enter Cosmic Rhythm and experience true 'Joy thru Movement!'



1998 T'AI CHI CHIH EVENTS CALENDAR

T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER TRAININGS*

June 1 thru 6, 1998 TCC Teacher Training
Location: St. Paul, MN
Contact: Rita Foster
 2005 - 2nd Avenue, S.
 Minneapolis, MN 55404-1602
 Ph. 612-872-8624

Waiting List Only

Teacher Training Fee: \$450.00

June 22 thru 27, 1998 TCC Teacher Training
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Contact: Beverly McFarland
 P. O. Box 104,
 Cedar Crest, NM 87008-0104
 Ph: 505-281-3515 (h)

Space Still Available

Teacher Training Fee: \$450.00

July 27 thru 31, 1998 TCC Teacher Training
Location: Mahwah, NJ
Contact: Sr. Antonia Cooper
 Villa Maria, 641 Somerset St.,
 No. Plainfield, NJ 07060-4909
 Ph. 908-757-3050 (w)

Space Still Available

Teacher Training Fee: \$450.00

October 19 thru 24, 1998 TCC Teacher Training
Location: Great Falls, VA
Contact: Dale Buchanan
 TCC Studio
 776 Walker Rd., Box 40
 Great Falls, VA 22066-0040
 Ph: 703-759-1644
Teacher Training Fee: \$450.00
Deadline: September 1, 1998

SEIJAKU ACCREDITATIONS* AND OTHER EVENTS

May 29 thru 31, 1998 Seijaku Accreditation Course
Location: Moye Spiritual Life
 Center, Melbourne, KY
Contact: Marlene Brown
 653 Cranford Drive
 Cincinnati, OH 94540-3915
 Ph: 513-742-1866

Accreditation Fee: \$ 300.00

Auditing Teachers: \$ 20.00

Oct. 16, 1998 TCC Teacher Renewal
Location: Ocean Palace Hilton
 Long Branch, NJ
Coordinator: Sr. Antonia Cooper
Contact: Dan Pienckiak
 P. O. Box 122
 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756
 Ph. 732-988-5865

Renewal Fee: \$ 25.00

Oct. 16 thru 18, 1998 Seijaku Accreditation Course
Location: Ocean Palace Hilton
 Long Branch, NJ
Coordinator: Sr. Antonia Cooper
Contact: Dan Pienckiak
 P. O. Box 122
 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756
 Ph. 732-988-5865

Accreditation Fee: \$ 300.00

Auditing Teachers: \$ 20.00

July 17 thru 19, 1998 TCC Teachers' Conference
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Coordinator: Rhonda St. Martin
 Ph. 505-299-7038
 and
Registrations: Maggie Berg
 13224 Agnes Ct. NE
 Albuquerque, NM 87112-0243
 Ph. 505-237-0243

SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR FALL ISSUE: July 31st

EVENT HOSTS: If you are hosting a TCC/Seijaku accreditation, retreat, or other TCC event with Ed Altman and/or Justin Stone, please let us know so that it can be included in this Events Calendar. Please include dates, deadlines, deposit, fees, phone, FAX or E-mail, contact person(s) and mailing address.



INTRODUCING T'AI CHI CHIH IN THE PHILIPPINES

Aida Wilks, Fairfax, VA



T'ai Chi Chih class, San Pablo City, Philippines (Instructor, Aida Wilks, far left)

The last time I was in Manila, to visit family and friends, was 1979. It was a long trip from Hawaii to the Philippines and my son was just eight years young. Now, in January 1998, I was again en route to Manila, this time from Virginia. My husband is now retired, and many changes have occurred in my life and my outlook on religion and spirituality. The flight was a long 16 hours.

[The trip] was a homecoming, a reunion with family and friends. I was looking forward, also, to meeting nieces and nephews that had not been born when I last visited the Philippines. The trip was a surprise visit with only my brother Nicky and my uncle Tony knowing of my visit. They had been busy spreading flyers advertising "T'ai Chi Chih" classes without listing the name of the instructor, so as not to give away the surprise. After a few days of visiting with family and friends, and adjusting to the heat, the humidity and the time change, I was ready to introduce

T'ai Chi Chih; no one had heard of Justin Stone and T'ai Chi Chih here, even though the Philippines is an Asian country and totally immersed in the different martial arts and yoga.

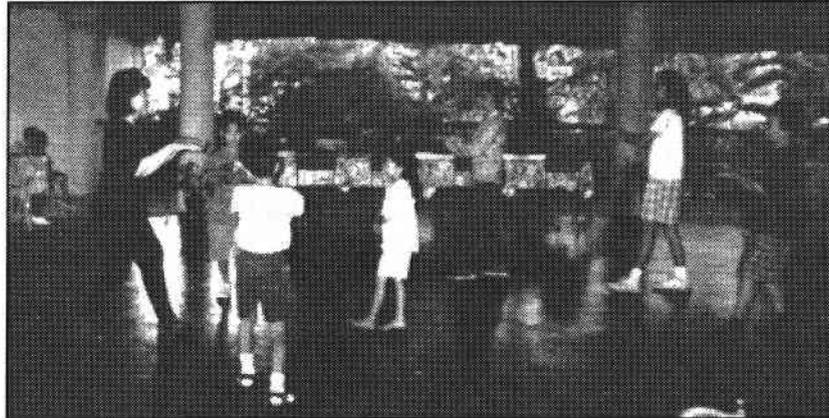
The first sample class surprisingly garnered more interest from kids age 4 to 13 than the adults! They were all so curious and eager to try the movements. Most of the adults were unsure, except for my uncle and aunt, Dr. and Mrs. Anthony Azores; they had established a Learning Center where I was invited to hold my classes and they eagerly joined in.

My mother, having learned the first four movements early last year while visiting in the States, was happy to continue learning more. Most of the general public were slow in responding, and for a while I thought I would just be teaching members of my family. Another week passed. All of a sudden there was more interest and curiosity!



TCC IN THE PHILIPPINES (Continued)

With differences in culture and customs, I had to rely on an awful lot of patience and some very creative public relations. The first class was offered free of charge! This stimulated interest because with the Asian Financial Market in trouble, the Philippine economy was not doing so very well. So, I had to charge accordingly. Considering the status of the finances in the region, I accepted the handicap. Although progress was evident in



Philippino students learn 'Around the Platter'

Manila with tall buildings, foreign-made cars, shopping malls and so many banks, there was also a lot of poverty. What I charged for the class was a token fee. I was compensated from the spiritual bliss I felt! Most of those who took the class were either related to me or were acquaintances. I was delighted that my mother (80 years young) learned most of the movements, except for the *Taffies*, *Working the Pulley*, and *Passing Clouds*.

I only attempted to teach enough movements without overwhelming the students in three weeks' time. We had classes 2 to 3 times a week, since I had only three weeks to teach before my departure. I taught one private class . . . Another class (for a group) was also taught privately.

I was most impressed by how my two nephews [Elmjon and Jemo], as well as the other children, picked up the movements with ease and interest. [The boys] were like sponges.

They practiced with my mother every day. Being young (7 and 8 years), and from a Catholic background, it was difficult to explain the Zen thought and philosophy behind the T'ai Chi Chih discipline. They loved Justin's pictorial book and video. Many questions were asked, and I used

stories and symbolism to make it easier to understand. These two kids . . . are very active . . . and also suffer from asthma -- more like an allergic reaction due to the environmental pollution. But

after only one week doing TCC, there was a discernible change. Quiet time and relaxation was introduced as well as meditation. Abdominal breathing was something new and challenging to learn but slowly became part of the class as well as focusing on the 'soles of the feet.'

Through meditation, the principle of "an empty and quiet mind" was explained. Every lesson was a challenge that they looked forward to and, to my delight, these boys experienced the Alpha State in one week by practicing alone every day, plus five to ten minutes of guided meditation from me whenever possible.

For Elmjon and Jemo to feel and say that it was very peaceful and quiet is significant because outside their home is a typical NOISY Asian city. This was a real challenge to practice and try to achieve "serenity in the midst of activity." I noticed that the more they did TCC, the more quiet times they experienced, which brought more balance to their lives. (continued next page)



TCC IN THE PHILIPPINES (Continued)

There were no asthma attacks and they both deliberately gave up drinking Coke. For young boys this is a real accomplishment. I am so proud of them and I feel they have the potential to become the youngest Seijaku practitioners if they continue to study under Ms. Sher Dano. Sher is a qualified instructor who just moved to the Philippines a month after I returned, luckily in the same area where I visited. What a coincidence and a blessing for those who would love to continue TCC!



Front: Maia and Jemo, Back: Monique and Elmjon practice 'Rocking Motion'

A young girl Maia, age 6 and very active, became interested in TCC. She joined the class and was a natural . . . She practiced every day but was too young to comprehend the TCC philosophy. Thirty minutes of TCC seemed to be enough for her.

This was my first opportunity teaching T'ai Chi Chih to children. I am very encouraged and humbled by what I learned and experienced. I believe that T'ai Chi Chih is a discipline that is

worth looking into to help kids through their teens to handle the challenges of their every day life. They learn self-control, confidence and respect for life and nature--all of the finer attributes of a good education and character development.

Introducing T'ai Chi Chih in the Philippines was [challenging] because of the customs as well as the timing, the demographics and the economy. One blessing was that they all learned the movements easily.

I feel that my students are ready for Ms. Sher Dano to continue their instruction. I look forward to a future visit, and I hope that those who started will be ready for advanced TCC and/or Seijaku.

It was a most fulfilling and exhilarating experience to share T'ai Chi Chih, and the joy manifested itself in many ways. The money was not a factor at all. I allowed myself to honor the differences and enjoy the spirituality and passion of this country. The personal changes in me, in my transformation from a Catholic background to metaphysical studies, Buddhist philosophy and Zen teachings only made me realize how T'ai Chi Chih had really created balance, joy and serenity in my life. I am truly humbled and in awe! I now realize that my journey to the Philippines was a stepping stone to understanding the teachings of Tao and "Wu Wei." The beauty, though, lies in what is yet unfolding! The path to learning is a slow process. (Sometimes you become vulnerable to forces that are counter-productive.) However, it is all a part of the ultimate lesson.

What amazes me is how I continue to learn from my teacher and friend, Christina Tillotson, who seems to be one of my guardians. Thank you, Christina!



ZEN PUZZLES: A MODERN ADAPTATION

Noel Altman, San Rafael, CA

Justin Stone performs an (often) thankless and, what I would imagine to be, draining and exhausting task: truly helping people. He'll get right to the core of a person, and point out where he/she is stuck – attached, desirous, vashanic (can this be an adjective?). He doesn't do this by actually *telling* you, usually. Instead, he gets right into the matter and triggers an emotional response in you. Why do you have the emotional response? Because he's pointed out a truth of where your ego is leading you into delusion, and your ego doesn't like it. Its existence is threatened. All true spiritual (which rarely includes religious) practice leads to the dissolution of the individual ego, or self, which results in true freedom.

It may take a while to figure out for yourself what Justin is really doing. I know it did for me. And it's probably not possible to figure it out by just thinking about it without continuing your practice of T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku. I know that I continued those practices faithfully, even though I didn't understand Justin. T'ai Chi Chih practice, over time, changes the character of "your" chi. I know at some point the emotions were no longer triggered when Justin would point out some of the original issues. Some realization or breakthrough had occurred. I could just look at Justin doing or saying the same thing he had before, and it didn't cause the same reaction in me. I could objectively take in the information he was providing. Because that really is all that Justin is doing – providing information. How is he providing information? When I really looked at it, I realized he's giving out koans, or Zen puzzles. They're not the old school koans (e.g., "What is the sound of one hand clapping?"). No, they're living-right-in-the-marketplace koans because the vast majority of T'ai chi Chih practitioners do not live removed from society, meditating on mountain tops all day and night, or in monasteries. They're koans which apply to you, living the life that you do. Well, what is the point of a koan anyway?

Often the books I have read on Zen describe actual Zen masters delivering koans to actual students. The koans are usually questions asked verbally, but can also be physical actions delivered without words (often hard blows to the body of the student). Then, the way the student responds is also described. A "wrong" answer may elicit a blow, while a "right" answer may cause complete enlightenment. It's not even what is said that is important – it is the state of mind of the student that the Zen master is looking at, so when one student says some words, they could be the "wrong" answer for him/her, while, when another student says the exact same thing, it is the "right" answer.

The work of a Zen master, as Justin has said, is to bring a student to the point of crisis (e.g. an emotional response) because in that state, a breakthrough (of some level – not necessarily complete enlightenment) can be achieved. The way a Zen master brings a student to the point of crisis is by giving him/her a koan to mull over. All of which is well worth it when a breakthrough is achieved!

It is having gone through the whole process and achieved some realization (even if only partial, and even though I am at varying places of progress on countless more) that lead me to knowing what Justin is really doing all the time, to all of us. And how he is doing it subtly, almost informally. He doesn't call himself a Zen master. I have heard him tell one who asked that no, her is not one. It's not the point with him to make this known. But it doesn't mean he isn't one.

Justin Stone performs the work of a Zen master. As I said at the beginning of this article, it is an (often) thankless, and what I would imagine to be draining and exhausting task. Yet, is he drained and exhausted? Or, does he have the energy, vigor and creativity of no one else you know?

Find out for yourself!



FAITHFUL PRACTICE, FULL POTENTIAL

Bill Moore, Clifton, NJ

Dear VFJ,

As a teacher of TCC I asked for comments at the end of the spring session and received [the following remarks from my student, Bill Moore, addressed to Mr. Justin Stone.] I thought it to be rather unique, and valuable enough to be shared. Therefore, I am passing it on to you [VFJ] in the form of a letter to Justin Stone.

Geraldine McGuire, Clifton, NJ

Mr. Justin Stone,

As a horn player, I am always looking for techniques to improve control of the breath. Nothing, not even Hatha Yoga and Pranayama practice has been as effective (and efficient) as T'ai Chi Chih in influencing the breath to flow more slowly and deeply, on a *consistent* basis. This has not only increased my breathing capacity, but has helped in the control of inhalation and exhalation, while allowing a more relaxed upper body musculature, which is very helpful in maintaining better tone and intonation in my playing.

At the same time, T'ai Chi Chih has helped lower my center of gravity, strengthening muscles, and dissolving tension (and free radicals?) in knee and ankle joints, while decreasing tension in neck and shoulder areas. This increases stability in posture and motion, so there is less chance of injury from loss of balance or improper lifting and carrying. This also helps to relax and deepen the inhalations and exhalations (which, I suspect, may be the more important function, at least in removing toxins from the system), having a calming effect on the mind, and perhaps improving efficiency in oxygenating the blood.

I was sold on T'ai Chi Chih from my first class. It may be that, having been acquainted with Hatha Yoga (I taught hundreds of classes for the Integral Yoga Institute in the 70's and 80's), and having developed some degree of body consciousness, the potential of T'ai Chi Chih for healing, energizing and relief of tension (which really is the same thing, no?) was immediately apparent to me. I have been thrilled to be fortunate enough to be among a relative few who are practicing this wonderful [discipline], and I am hopeful of sharing it with others in the future.

It would be easy for me to speak at great length about the many wonderful benefits I have realized during two years now of faithful (and joyous) practice, but the effects I am most thrilled with are very personal and very profound. Spiritually, emotionally, psychologically, mentally and physically, I feel that T'ai Chi Chih is steadily and progressively helping me toward fulfilling my potential to be of real value to others. I can see T'ai Chi [Chih] benefiting others THRU me.

I thank you, Sir, even as I am confident that you are grateful to be able to share ... [T'ai Chi Chih].

Best regards,

Bill Moore

Bill Moore is a teacher-candidate studying TCC with Geraldine McGuire, who is a TCC teacher residing in Clifton, NJ. She has been teaching approximately five years. Her referring teacher was Sr. Antonia Cooper.



The gift of tai chi
Allows me to rise
 in the morning in
Unity with earth and sky
And all that lies between
I am I, a creature
 Subject to all laws
 between earth and sky,
Guilty of small vices,
Prey to giant fears
 Yet in my vulnerability
 I rise and sing.

Praising earth and sky
And all that lies between -
Sun, rain, sleet, snow,
 green leaves and
Barren branches
 trembling in the wind
 outside my door.
Confined yet not alone
 between earth and sky.
I am the world,
 the world is in me.

*R. M. Zurkan,
Fairhope, AL*



Photo by Carrie Kinsey



WHO IS JUSTIN?

Guy Kent, Albuquerque, NM

When I signed up for T'ai Chi at the UMBC (University of Maryland, Baltimore) I had no idea what I was getting into. When I discovered it was T'ai Chi Chih I was delighted. I had watched Carmen [Brocklehurst] on WHMM TV faithfully for months in the past, but was out of practice and glad to have her teaching reinforced.

I am a young 80 years of age and had a hip replacement in May of 1997. T'ai Chi Chih was a real help to me in recovering from this major surgery.

My surgeon said I could do T'ai Chi Chih both before and after the operation.

All this was before I came to Sharon Sirkis' class, and I'm glad I did. Sharon, you really gave me great encouragement, Carmen [Brocklehurst in the PBS videotaped series] is wonderful, but a real live excellent teacher like you is more motivating. Thank you, Sharon, for your teaching and help.

Shirley Ownes is a student of TCC teacher Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, MD

WHO IS JUSTIN?

Guy Kent, Albuquerque, NM

I overheard a fellow teacher describe Justin Stone as "this fella." "Yeah," I thought, "he *is* just a fella -- just an ordinary man -- who understands things!" When I first met him 10 years ago I remember being intimidated as I practiced TCC in his presence (still am!). I remember being in awe over his approachability (still am). Justin Stone is the most remarkable individual I have ever met.

It is my belief that Justin will be recognized as one of the great teachers in history. Acclaim is certainly not something he seeks, yet he continues to make himself available to *each and every one of us*. His talents are boundless. His love endless. His interests are pure and simple. All I've ever know him to ask is that we (*especially* accredited instructors) not practice T'ai Chi Chih carelessly. This is not because of an ego, not to dictate conformity, not to suppress individuality--simply because the maximum benefit of TCC practice is only achieved with

mindfulness. Anything short dilutes the essence of what T'ai Chi Chih offers.

Being in Justin's presence is something that is precious and priceless. The Annual Teacher's Conference is one of the limited times teachers from around the globe have the opportunity to be with Justin. This is why it is so important to attend the conference. Believe me, when Justin is gone we will all regret the times that might have been, the times we didn't take advantage of. I encourage you, not out of fear but out of love, to allow yourself to be with Justin and the rest of the grand TCC family, for three days this July. T'ai Chi Chih is an infinite resource; we will never adequately describe or fully understand how it works. Because of Justin Stone this earth is, and will continue to be, a better place. Thank you Justin Stone, for your life and offering to share your wisdom with so many, so freely.



CHANGE OF LIFE -- and -- T'AI CHI CHIH

Carolyn L. Errie, Columbia, MD

As far back as I can remember, I have been an extremely controlling person. I since have become aware of the stress this caused others, but overlooked the stress it caused me.

T'ai Chi Chih brings balance to my life. Subtly, it makes me aware of the balance of the universe. Interfering in other's lives, worry about the thousands of tiny incidentals of life, or fretting over the hundred things each day that I cannot control are no longer of importance to me.

There is a peace deep within which is tapped by the T'ai Chi Chih [movements]. These, done early each morning, bring spiritual nourishment and balance to my entire day.

I recently had the experience of taking my mother to the hospital emergency room. Being a diabetic, she was to be given only saline drip. A nurse came in and started to hang a glucose drip. Realizing that this was not the right solution, she did not connect it, but left the bag hanging on the pole. I was very tense and nervous about the bag on this pole. I began to mentally do T'ai Chi Chih with my mind to relax.

Half an hour later another nurse came in and started to connect the glucose. "You do not want to connect that glucose." I said. When she argued with me that my mother's fluids were gone, I said, "My mother is a diabetic and should not receive that glucose." Her face flushed and she smiled. As she started to leave the room, I asked that she also

remove the bag so that a mistake would not be made. She did so. Had this been a year ago, before I became a student of T'ai Chi Chih, I would have been screaming and yelling and upsetting my mother very much.

Balance is the key to emotional, spiritual and physical health. T'ai Chi Chih gives me this balance and it carries over into all aspects of my life.

Carolyn L. Errie is a student of Sharon Sirkis.

HARMONY

HV



HARMONY

HV

According to the *Chung Yung*, "once *chung* and *ho* are established, heaven and earth maintain their proper positions, and all creatures are nourished."

Chung is the "just rightness" of things, while *ho* is everything in proper proportion. The person with moderate emotions and desires can be satisfied, and so achieves a state of inner and interpersonal harmony. Since all parts of the universe mirror one another, harmony among people is mirrored in heaven and in nature. Therefore, the character for *ho* shows a "mouth" next to "grain" ripe and heavy enough to make it bend at the top.

The Spirit of the Chinese Character: Gifts From the Heart, Barbara Aria with Russell Eng Gon, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 1992.



"HE LOVED THEM AND THEY LOVED HIM BACK"

Jim Hecker, Old Folsom State Prison, Folsom, CA

It is eight o'clock on Monday morning, May 4, 1998. Students of the California State Prison at Folsom's Pre-Release (Pre-Parole) class had been in their seats since seven thirty. They looked curiously at a single sheet circular with two Tao symbols at the top entitled, "Justin Stone." Restless, they were as always, less than impressed. Most were talking about how to sneak a smoke or get a free cup of coffee.

This is the big day for Jim, the Teacher Candidate. He was more than a little excited, but trying not to show it. Pre-Release Teacher Ms. Carter, M.A., says "Jim, you are taking the course. Get up and prepare the class for Mr. Stone." Smiling, this was expected, preparations had already been made. Walking up to the podium, the thought came to mind, "These guys have no idea who Justin Stone is." Setting aside prepared notes, the students heard, "Guys, have any of you ever met a Master?" As the cameras and lights were set up for the videotaping of Justin's presentation, it was not difficult to touch on the many accomplishments of Justin Stone.

During this presentation, twin televisions played a video of a T'ai Chi Chih teacher gracefully demonstrating the movements. The students called out, "Can we see Mr. Stone doing the

doing the movements?" They watched with interest as he taught them silently by video about "Motion and Stillness."

The sunny day did not change the heavy "Clang" as the huge steel gate closed behind the small visiting party. Seeing the inside of Old Folsom Prison for the first time were Justin Stone, Ed Altman, his wife Noël Altman, and Doug Harned. Tara Stiles, who was with them also, had visited the prison before to teach

T'ai Chi Chih and prepare Jim for the accreditation course.



Stone addresses Folsom inmates

This group was quite different from the normal first time visitors. Centered, calm, quietly smiling, they passed through gate after gate, finally reaching the classroom area, temporary fabricated modules outside "the belly of the beast", as it is called.

Justin's first response to Jim's handshake was a warm smile and a big hug, something rarely seen in places like this. He said, "Jim, these are all T'ai Chi Chih teachers." Feeling the power and confidence that radiated from this group, there was nothing Jim could say but, "I am in good company."

The students, more than a little bored and agitated after sitting for another half hour, turned as Justin entered. Fitted with a microphone, he smiled and walked through the class of convicts as though he had done it a thousand times before.



HE LOVED THEM . . . (continued)

a thousand times before. Introduced as "Master of T'ai Chi Ch'uan and Originator of T'ai Chi Chih," he started with, "The first thing we can do is drop the 'Master.' There is one life we are all living, and nobody is better than anybody else." He proceeded to talk about the no profit motive, principles of habitual behavior, being brave and individual, Yin and Yang, T'ai Chi Chih and stories of his life.

Watching, it was not easy for me to understand the strange dynamic going on between Justin and the seventy convicts, most repeat offenders, who were present. Yet they sat, attentive, stretching their necks to hear and see this quiet eighty-two-year-old man. Then it suddenly came to me what it was. "Justin Loved Them, and They Loved Him Back." Like a mirror, he became one with them and passed on understanding that would likely change their lives.

After the presentation, the men asked questions, then more questions. There was the feeling that they simply did not want him to leave. Smiling, Justin left the podium saying, "I want to spend some time meeting the fellas." The next thirty

minutes were filled with handshakes, hugs and lots of autograph signing.



Noel Altman, Doug Harned, Ed Altman, Tara Stiles demonstrate 'Pulling Taffy' for inmates

The T'ai Chi Chih teachers began in unison a demonstration for the class. Then Justin was moving toward the gate with Noël, late heading for a plane home. Passing through the gate, with a glimmer of tears in his eyes, he said to the Prison Guard escorting him, "I met some wonderful men." Describing the men, Justin's voice fading to the ears, but not the hearts of those men, the huge steel gate "Clanged" closed behind him.



OLD FOLSOM PRISON

Group Photo, Left to Right:
Noel and Ed Altman, Jim Hecker,
Justin Stone and Doug Harned

Jim Hecker is the first inmate to become an accredited TCC teacher within the California Penal System. His referring teacher was Tara Stiles, Sacramento, CA.



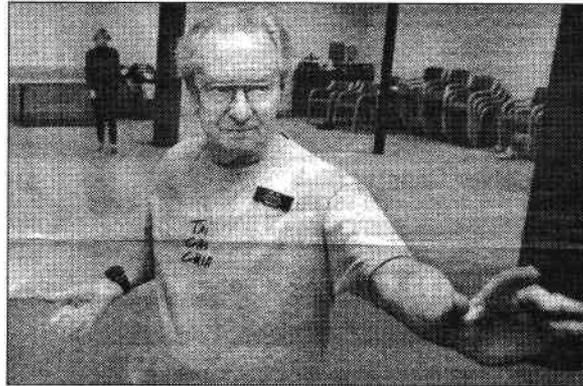
T'AI CHI CHIH OFFERS "JOY THROUGH MOVEMENT"

Susan Larson-Waugh, Minnesota Sun Publications

"Joy through movement" is how 71-year-old Minnetonka resident Joe Apt describes T'ai Chi Chih, a class he's taught for the past eight years, currently at the Senior Center in the Minnetonka Community Center.

Dedicated participants credit T'ai Chi Chih with improving their psychological and physical health. Some of the reported benefits include improved breathing, circulation, flexibility and vision; reduced blood pressure and strengthened bones. Apt is a text book example of the benefits. With a permanent back problem, multiple sclerosis and after triple bypass in 1988, he teaches between six and 15 classes a week.

"I'd be in tough shape without doing this," he said. "It helps your ability to heal, helps you cope with the problems which is half of the healing process." T'ai Chi Chih, which translates to "Knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate," consists of 20 simple, repetitive non-strenuous movements. The Practice emphasizes a soft, flowing continuity of motion, said Apt, who uses soothing music, often with birds or running streams in the background, during the sessions. Apt said that although the goal is relaxation, stress relief and body balance; after performing all 20 moves, every muscle in the body is used. Apt said that leg muscles especially get very strong. Another positive aspect of T'ai Chi Chih is that it is something anyone can do, regardless of age or physical condition, said Apt. "You can do it anywhere at your own speed."



Student Lenore Listiak, 70, has taken lessons from Apt for six years. She said that she began T'ai Chi Chih to strengthen her leg muscles after having her second knee replacement in 1992. "Of course by that time, I couldn't exercise and my leg and thigh muscles were weak," said Listiak.

Although she can only bend her knees a little bit past a 90-degree angle, Listiak said that isn't a problem with T'ai Chi Chih. "Joe emphasizes that everybody does this to their degree of comfort," she said. "Some people even do T'ai Chi Chih sitting down." Listiak emphasizes that any movement is beneficial. She said the area in which T'ai Chi Chih has benefited her most, other than leg

strengthening, is in improved balance. "I have found that just walking any place if I'm losing my balance, my mind seems to react much quicker to that," she said.

One of Listiak's visits to Arizona to visit her grandchildren revealed yet another benefit: "My three grandchildren ages 5 to 22 and I went hiking in the mountains. Even though I became winded because of my asthma, I was the only one not complaining about sore muscles the next day," she said.

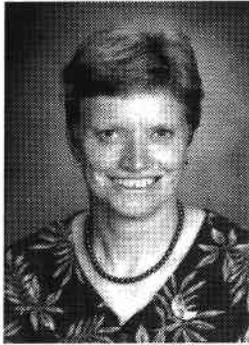
Listiak plans to become certified to teach T'ai Chi Chih in June. "I do quite a bit of volunteer work and I'd like to have my certification so I can help other people [enjoy the benefits]," she said.

Originally published in the Minnetonka Sun Sailor.



TARA STILES -- A LIFE OF COMMITMENT

Carrie Kinsey, VFJ Staff



What goes on during a telephone conversation with Tara Stiles can reveal as much about her as a T'ai Chi Chih teacher as the conversation itself. Second lines ring, people come to the door, she shuffles through the papers in front of her, all

this while she is explaining her enthusiasm about a particular student or teaching situation. She is open and excited about her classes, her students and her work.

Tara has been involved with T'ai Chi Chih since about 1976 when she took her first course in Canada. In that course she learned half the form and then continued to practice on her own for a year and a half before moving to California and resuming her study.

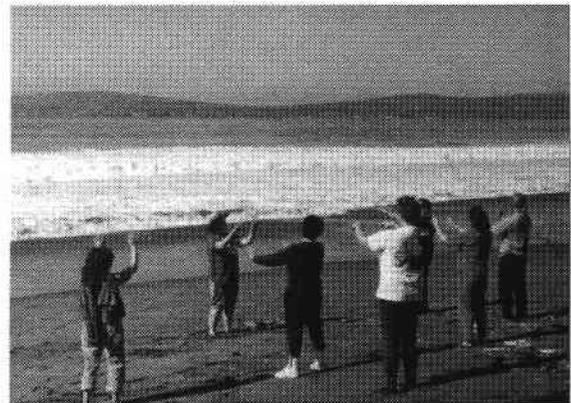
She was accredited as a teacher in 1979 at Green Gulch Zen Center in Marin County, CA and has been actively teaching ever since. Teaching is Tara's full time occupation. She also teaches Yoga and Chi Kung. She finds that the disciplines compliment each other as well as enhancing her overall teaching ability.

You may recognize Tara's name from an article in the Spring 1998 issue of *The Vital Force* where she was mentioned by a teacher candidate currently residing in Old Folsom Prison. Tara has been working with the men in the Old Folsom Prison meditation group for a number of months now and says she has been impressed with their sincerity and the depth of their commitment. The original student [Jim Hecker--who wrote the letter to Justin Stone--see Spring 1998 issue] will go on to become a teacher, working with Ed Altman. Tara stays in communication with him and is following his progress. She says the prison population can well be well served by T'ai Chi Chih. (See related article on pages 30-31).

When asked what advice she would give to new teachers, Tara says, "What is helpful is to teach. Don't be shy. Even if you're teaching a small class, you learn by doing it," and, "the way to be a good teacher is to be a student. Work with a variety of teachers, learning different skills and approaches." Some of the phrases that Tara likes to use when teaching include "Sink not think," and "I'm not the T'ai Chi Chih teacher, T'ai Chi Chih is the teacher of T'ai Chi Chih."

She loves to practice outdoors and has places throughout the Sacramento area that she has adopted for practice, including city parks and spots along the American river. She says that once she has practiced in an outdoor location, just driving by that location reminds her of the feeling of a practice. Tara also loves to teach outdoors and periodically hosts weekend retreats, often at ocean-side locations. Since 1982 she has hosted about 40 such events. Last November she took a group to Jamaica.

While Tara will not be able to go to the conference this July (she will be visiting her parents in Australia) she loves to have dialogue with other teachers and encourages anyone who wants to talk about T'ai Chi Chih and teaching to give her a call. Even after nearly twenty years of teaching the form, Tara's enthusiasm is infectious. It is obvious that this work comes from her heart.



Tara Stiles with students TCC at the beach



TEACHER NEWS

California -- **Donna Shaffer, San Jose, CA** teaches T'ai Chi Chih at the Marianist Center in Cupertino, CA, a retreat and conference center dedicated to a spirituality of wholeness. In addition to teaching Elderhostel groups, she presents TCC at contemplative retreats held at the center as well as conducting TCC as a moving meditation during Holy Week every year. Additionally, she teaches classes at her home studio and elsewhere in the community. **Pat Huseby, Danville, CA** continues to prepare for her upcoming class of Alzheimer patients. Part of her preparation includes teaching once-a-month T'ai Chi Chih workshops to the Alzheimer's staff of the facility. Pat suggests that teachers who work in 'memory impaired' centers or similar facilities may want to offer brown bag or noontime seminars to staff at the facility. While these workshops are beneficial to the staff, they also facilitate teaching the form to populations with memory impairment.

New Jersey -- Sr. Antonia Cooper held a teacher's gathering to prepare teachers for accreditation in July. Six teachers and six students attended. There will be another gathering in June. **Geraldine McGuire, Clifton, NJ** is preparing three students for teachers' training. One of her students, **Bill Moore**, who is preparing to become a TCC teacher, has written an article for this issue (see page 26).

Ohio -- Congratulations to **Christina Minelli, West Chester, OH**, on the birth of a baby girl last December. (See the next column on this page for an update on her work teaching TCC in Italy.)

Virginia -- **Dale Buchanan, Great Falls, VA**, is now a distributor of Good Karma products. Located just outside Washington, DC, Dale will cover the entire east coast, making sure everyone from Florida to Maine gets products safely, quickly, and easily with the same teacher discount and shipping rates as offered by Good Karma. His contact information is listed on page 36 under GKP Distributors.

ABROAD: Italy

While this is a "keeping still" time for Christina Minelli following the birth of her baby girl, Christina has been chosen to teach at the Contemporary Culture Center in her home town of Mantova, Italy next year. She was chosen for the position in this prestigious school after an extensive hiring process and is excited to teach her first "official" T'ai Chi Chih class there. Previously, Christina taught two "informal" classes with about 14 students each in Mantova. She will be teaching ten 2 hour sessions for this course, which was filled within two days of being listed.

VFJ NEWS

A Gift for Liz Salada



Pictured above: Liz Salada (seated); standing left to right: Carrie Kinsey, Barbara Riley, Linda Meyer, Lois Mahaney, and Roberta Taggart.

S. F. Bay area teachers gifted **Liz Salada** (out-going Publishing-Editor of *VFJ*) with a Raku Flute and a potted plant at a staff gathering in March.

As many of you know, **Pat Huseby (Danville, CA)** has been taking photographs at various TCC events and submitting them to *VFJ* for about three years. Recently, to honor her generosity and service, we asked her to become our official events photographer. When you see her at an event – tell her your news and pose for a picture or two.



T'AI CHI IN THE MEDIA

Synopsis: This article appeared in the *San Jose Mercury News* (CA) recently. It contains interesting documentation on research comparing the effects of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise with t'ai chi ("moving meditation") with regard to lowering of blood pressure and reduction of stress. Since T'ai Chi Chih is a "moving meditation", we thought the article would be of interest to our readers. (Staff)

Article Title: Practicing Tai Chi Lowers Blood Pressure and Stress, Carol Krucoff, Personal Fitness (Carol Krucoff's column on fitness runs every other Wednesday), *San Jose Mercury News*, SV Life Health & Fitness section, April 29, 1998.

Often called "moving meditation" or "the art of creating energy", t'ai chi began as a martial art in China about 2,000 years ago. Over the past century, it has become extremely popular as an exercise for older adults and is practiced by millions of Chinese each morning in parks throughout the country.

But t'ai chi's graceful movements are so slow and deliberate that researchers from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore assumed it wouldn't have much impact on blood pressure. So in a study of the effect of moderate exercise on hypertension, they assigned the control group to learn t'ai chi.

To their surprise, t'ai chi appeared to lower blood pressure in older adults nearly as much as moderate-intensity aerobic exercise.

"We were expecting to see significant changes in the aerobic exercise group and minimal changes in the tai chi group." Assistant professor of medicine Deborah R. Young reported at a recent American Heart Association conference. After 12 weeks, however, the t'ai chi group's average systolic blood pressure had

fallen by 9 millimeters of mercury, compared with an average of 8.4 millimeters of mercury in the aerobic exercise group.

The researchers studied 62 sedentary men and women, ages 60 and older, whose systolic blood pressure was in the "high normal" to "mild hypertension" range. Half the group was

randomly assigned to a 12-week program of brisk walking and low-impact aerobics. The other half, which was the "control" group, learned t'ai chi. Both groups exercised four times a week for 30 minutes per session. And in both groups, blood pressure began to drop after just six weeks of exercise.

Extensive evidence indicates that regular aerobic exercise can decrease resting blood pressure by approximately 10 millimeters of mercury, and that mild exercise may reduce blood pressure just as much or even more than strenuous activities, such as jogging.

Mind-body exercises such as t'ai chi may provide an added boost to both physical and mental health, which is why the Eastern healing art is increasingly being studied by Western medical practitioners.

A growing body of research suggests that practicing t'ai chi has many benefits for seniors, including a reduced risk of falling and a significant improvement in quality of life.

(continued on next page)



T'ai chi is now being used in some cardiac rehabilitation programs and by people with diseases such as fibromyalgia, arthritis and multiple sclerosis, notes Harvey Kurland, an exercise physiologist from San Bernardino, who has been studying and teaching t'ai chi for nearly 30 years. His research, published in the journal *Sports Medicine Training and Rehabilitation*, found tai chi is used as a way to relax the body and let the chi (vital energy) flow throughout the body," says Kurland, who credits the 1993 [Bill Moyer's] PBS-TV series, "Healing and the Mind" with sparking an explosion of American interest in t'ai chi.

Physical activity is considered an essential component to health by the Chinese, who believe that without daily movement the body's "chi" can become stagnant and lead to illness.

T'ai chi can strengthen the legs and arms, improve balance and flexibility, Kurland says. "But the stress reduction benefit is probably the best thing tai chi does for health," he notes. "Stress is the number one health problem in America, with an estimated 60 to 70 percent of all visits to physicians due to stress-related illness. A daily practice that can relieve stress will improve health.

WHO ARE YOU?

Dale Buchanan, Great Falls, VA

One of the greatest gifts of being a T'ai Chi Chih instructor is the constant contact with other instructors as we share ideas, stories, and life changes. After opening the T'ai Chi Chih Studio and committing myself to being a full time instructor, I often receive phone calls and e-mails from others (most of whom I've never met) asking for advice on teaching T'ai Chi Chih. I quickly realized that all of the conversations came down to one thing – what is that person's main focus in life.

In my opinion, many people try to do too much. they become a T'ai Chi Chih instructor, learn Reiki, study massage, teach martial arts, etc., but never really commit to doing **ONE** thing. Not that these modalities are bad, because I know they help people. However, I used to be the same way . . . having my energy disbursed among many different things at once.

The most powerful decision I've ever made in my life came last summer after a phone conversation with Carmen Brocklehurst. As I was about to open the studio, she told me to ask myself, "What is my intention?" Was it to get people in my studio for personal training, physical therapy, etc. or was it to teach only T'ai Chi Chih? I quickly made my choice and the rest is history. I gave up everything else and focused all of my energy on being the best T'ai Chi Chih instructor that I could. My students recognize and appreciate that I don't bring anything else into my classes except what Justin has created. What more do they need?

If you want to be a master at something focus all of your energy on one thing, become good at it, following these words from John Heider's poem inspired by the *Tao Te Ching*:

*"When I let go of what I am,
I become what I might be."
Then you'll know who you are!*



Spiritual Odyssey

Our thanks to everyone who participated in the pre-publication ordering of *Spiritual Odyssey*. We appreciate the response, and we know you're enjoying Justin Stone's new book immensely. For those who don't yet have it, we'd like to send it to you. Order your copy(ies) today. Only \$10.95 retail, with usual teacher discounts and shipping fees applying. See further comments on the book on page 8.

New Teacher Distributor

Dale Buchanan is a new teacher distributor who will cover the Eastern seaboard area. It may be more convenient and timely for teachers in that part of the country to order through him than through Good Karma Publishing. His phone number is in the teacher distributor list.

Did You Know?

- That **Good Karma Publishing, Inc.** was officially incorporated on June 15, 1988? Our first two books, *Heightened Awareness* and *20th Century Psalms*, made their debut at the conference that year. Just think: we celebrate our 10th year of serving T'ai Chi Chih teachers and their students with supportive materials! Thanks to all of you and to Justin's continuous creativity, we're going strong!
- That **Good Karma Publishing, Inc.** began as **Good Karma Books, Inc.**? We later changed the name because we felt it embodied more of what we do. Still later, we added a second trade name to include some of Justin's music we had been producing: **GKP Records**.
- That we are a corporation with a Board of Directors which meets every year? Two of the original Board members, Justin Stone and Jean Katus, remain, while the

- following members were added at later times: Christeen McLain, Jeanne Engen-Duranske, Ed and Noel Altman, Victor Berg, Carmen Brocklehurst.
- That **Good Karma** bought out **Satori Resources'** inventory in 1992? **Satori** formerly published the photo-textbook, videotape, and a few other items.
- That the volume of mailing at the Fort Yates, ND post office has risen considerably since 1988? Aside from several government agencies that operate in the little town of 1500 people, **Good Karma** is likely the largest private company.
- That we attempt filling orders the day we receive them or the day after?
- That we use as little waste as possible in producing our materials and in packaging them, that we use recycled paper in printing most of our books and recycled packing materials to send them? Our paper shredder comes in handy for the latter purpose.
- That a **Good Karma** representative is on hand at every teacher training course, whether as a regular teacher distributor or **Good Karma** representative or a one-time teacher designated as a distributor for a particular course?
- That, along with the *Vital Force Journal*, **Good Karma Publishing** provides lists of certified T'ai Chi Chih teachers in various areas so we can send the information to interested students?
- That we are always open to suggestions, comments, and questions from teachers and students?

Come see us at the **Good Karma** table at the conference!



BAMBOO BRUSHSTROKES

The eight classically named strokes of the character *yung* are:



1. *Tse*, the dot
2. *Le*, the horizontal stroke
3. *Nu*, the vertical stroke
4. *Yo*, the hook
5. *Ts'e*, the uptilted stroke
6. *Liao*, the declining stroke
7. *Cho*, the pecking stroke
8. *Chieh*, the trailing stroke

If people are playing the word game of association and the suggestion is Chinese painting, the response is invariably bamboo. That is the speedy association for most people because bamboo is a most familiar

symbol of Chinese culture and art. To the Chinese, the bamboo expresses the will to survive, the spirit to endure under adverse circumstances. Great trees in their strength resist the winds and are broken, but the pliant, yielding bamboo, twirled and tossed about madly in the storm, bends and bows unresisting, and survives. Great paintings and poems have celebrated the bamboo throughout Chinese art and history. Su Tung-Po (1030 - 1101), famous poet-painter, said he would rather live without meat than live without bamboo. Another poet wrote, "The wind in the bamboo is the music of God."

Taken from *The HOW and WHY of Chinese Painting*, Diana Kan, 1974. Van Horstrand Reinhold



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Jean Katus: Publisher, Good Karma Publishing, Inc. P.O. Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND 58538; (701/854-7459 or 888/540-7459); FAX (701/854-2004.) Distributor of TCC instructional materials and others related to spiritual practice.

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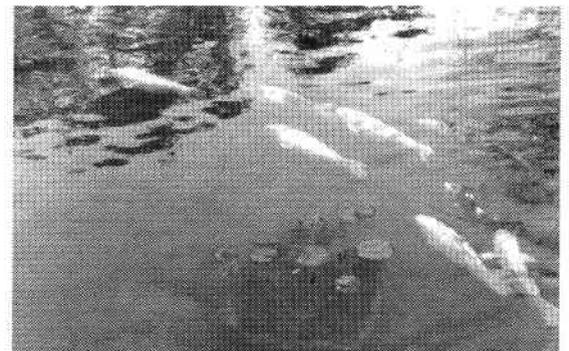
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