



THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

Volume 15, No.3

Autumn Equinox

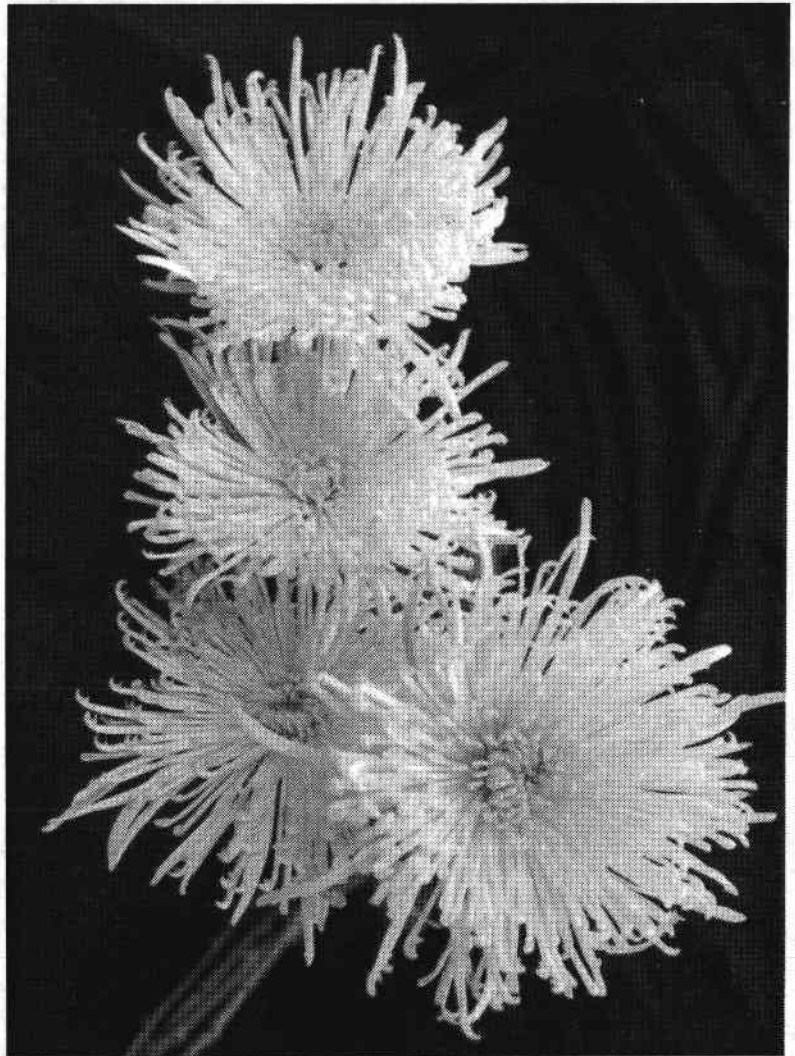
September 1998

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In This Issue

Feature by Justin Stone: 'The Meaning of Karma' Ed Altman: 'Imagery Tools'

Highlights from the 1998 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference at Albuquerque

Tips From Long Time Teachers First Time Teaching Experiences

Teaching Blind Students Justin Stone on 'Getting Started'

And An Original TCC Cartoon!



THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

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Autumn, 1998 issue:

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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 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Directory), \$25 for interested persons. Addresses outside of the United States require an additional \$10 per year. First class delivery within the United States is an additional \$5 per year.

The purpose of *The Vital Force* is to provide a forum for teachers and students for the purposes of sharing, educating/informing and inspiration. Included are contributions of constructive and uplifting articles, poems, photographs and drawings, inquiries of other teachers, and announcements of 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: *The Vital Force*, 1633 Via Amigos, San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2009. Phone 510-276-5718. Email: vjournal@aol.com. FAX: 925-676-1858. Manuscripts should be typed and double spaced. *Please indicate "submission" or "manuscript" on the outside of the envelope.*

Submission deadlines:

Winter	October 25th
Spring	January 25th
Summer	April 25th
Fall	July 31st

MEMBERSHIPS

Changes of address and back issue requests (\$5) should be sent to Lois Mahaney: *The Vital Force*, 1633 Via Amigos, San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2009. Phone 510-276-5718. *Please indicate "membership" on the outside of the envelope.*

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 T'ai Chi Chih teachers. It is not to be used or sold as a mailing list. Association members who are accredited teachers 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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1998 International TCC Teachers' Conference, Albuquerque, NM

See the Special "Pull Out" Section!

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



In the softness of
the garden,

In the stillness of
the shade,

Serenity
surrounds
solitude

Jo Trautmann,
Georgetown, TX



THE MEANING OF KARMA

Justin Stone

These days it is considered smart to be “spiritual.” Words such as “Karma” are bandied about, and people loosely say “Yes, I’m into Zen, I’m into Yoga,” meaning they have read a book or two or attended some lectures when they had nothing better to do. People say they “teach” Raja Yoga, but do not insist their students obey the edicts of Yama and Niyama, the first two (of eight) parts of Raja Yoga. Nor do they have any idea what is meant by “Pratyahara,” the fifth of the five preliminary steps of Raja Yoga. One teacher told me it meant “interiorization,” or some such generality. So, if we leave out Yama, Niyama, and Pratyahara, we have eliminated three of the eight steps of Patanjali’s great Raja Yoga (I do not know anybody teaching true “Pratyahara” in America, and I do not believe real Raja Yoga could be practised in our culture; it would require complete renunciation).

To go back to “Karma,” most people believe that this is some sort of Blind Destiny. In one mid-Eastern religion it is believed that “it is written,” and this is a perfectly viable belief in a great religion, but it is not Karma. Conversely, I have heard people, in India, say that “there is only Karma.”

We build Karma thru our actions, the intent of those actions, and the Vashanas we build (Vashanas being “habit energies” that lead to “Samskaras,” tendencies that may last thru many lifetimes).

In the Bible it states that “as we make our bed, so shall we lie in it,” a perfect description of Karma (really, the fruits of Karma--Karma, itself, is a word meaning “action”). To feel that we can fool Karma of our action and intent is the height of childishness. Karma is inexorable. When one of his disciples came to the Buddha and asked if he knew that his father’s kingdom would shortly be involved in a devastating war, the Buddha replied: “Yes, I know it, and Fixed Karma cannot be changed.”

Meditation and T’ai Chi Chih (real meditation and correct TCC) are two ways that Vashanas can be weakened, and even eliminated, and these Vashanas are what make our future. Next time you are tempted to lie to gain an advantage, or because you believe it will help a friend, be kind to yourself and consider what the effect of such action will be on your future. “Hell is paved with good intentions” is one way to put it. Once we lie about something, or bear false witness, it becomes easier to do it a second time, and then we have to add to the untruths in order to cover up the first. We lower our own self-esteem (inwardly we know), and we build bad Karma for the future. I once wrote one teacher: “In this life it is better to do what is right than to try to get away with what is not.” This is not moral preaching; it is simply saying “you make your own Karma.”





GREETINGS!

As we move out of Summer and toward Autumn, a few phrases come to mind: abundance/fullness, turning of the seasons, moving toward stillness/introspection. These are all good descriptions of the types of submissions that came to us for the Autumn issue of *The Vital Force*. We are happily overwhelmed with the volume of submissions we received this time, submissions specifically about the conference and also many others. They serve as a reminder that it is the contributors who make up the rich *Vital Force* issues we are able to send you each quarter. Keep those contributions coming!

For those of you who were able to attend the conference this year, and also for those of you who were not, we have compiled a special "pull-out" section in the center of this issue filled with photographs and comments about this year's conference in Albuquerque. What a lovely time it was!

We also have a page of pyramid poetry submitted by the Seijaku accreditation class in Kentucky this past May; and pages of comments from the teacher's accreditation classes in Minnesota in June and in New Jersey in July. Accompanying these we have new teacher experiences, tips from some long-time teachers, and tips from Justin on how to get started.

Noël Altman has shared her experience and impressions from the visit to Folsom prison this past May. Richard Brier sent in a page full of

Our Apologies

In the June issue page 28 had two articles, both titled "Who is Justin?" and both attributed to Guy Kent. The second article was correctly titled and credited. The first article was written by Shirley Ownes, a student of Sharon Sirkis in Columbia, MD, describing her experiences in Sharon's class. We apologize for the error.

"Snippets" that can serve as teaching phrases, and Vic Viereck sent in an original T'ai Chi Chih cartoon. All this activity has been balanced with some poetry about stillness, and by Justin Stone's feature article "The Meaning of Karma" which inspires us to look deeply within and ask ourselves some of the hard questions about truth and our own intentions.

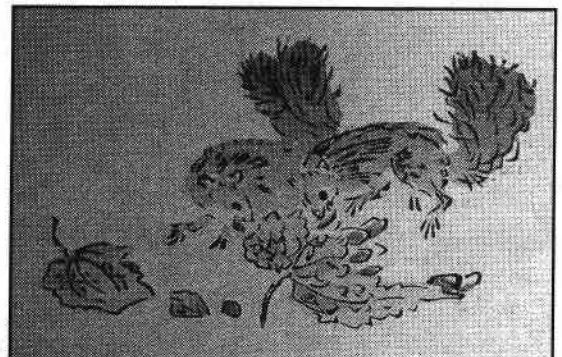
Throughout the issue you will find calligraphy and brush paintings from *A Haiku Menagerie* by Stephen Addiss, *Chinese Painting Techniques* by Alison Stilwell Cameron, and *The How and Why of Chinese Painting* by Diana Kan. Photographs from the conference were supplied by *Vital Force* events photographer Pat Huseby.

One thing that you may have noticed is missing from the second page is the name of long-time *Vital Force* editor, mentor, and friend, Roberta Taggart. Roberta has decided to step away from her work at *The Vital Force* (see her letter on page 7). We will miss her groundedness, clarity and solid commitment to putting together each issue with her trademark ability to find just the right stuff for just the right spaces. Thanks, dear friend, may your way be filled with joy and peace.

May we all enjoy this season of both fullness and turning toward stillness. We look forward to the materials you have yet to share with us!

Wishing you the abundance of the season,

The *Vital Force* staff



"Squirrels" by Kano Tan'yu, *Shuchin Gafu*



Dear *VFJ* Readers,

It has been nearly three years since I first joined the staff of *The Vital Force*. I have enjoyed working on a shared vision by *VFJ* staff for improving the format and the breadth of each quarterly issue -- first with Liz Salada and later with Lois Mahaney, Carrie Kinsey, Barbara Riley and Linda Meyer. Each one of these women has brought their constancy and dedication to T'ai Chi Chih and to *The Vital Force* as a vehicle to serve TCC practitioners.

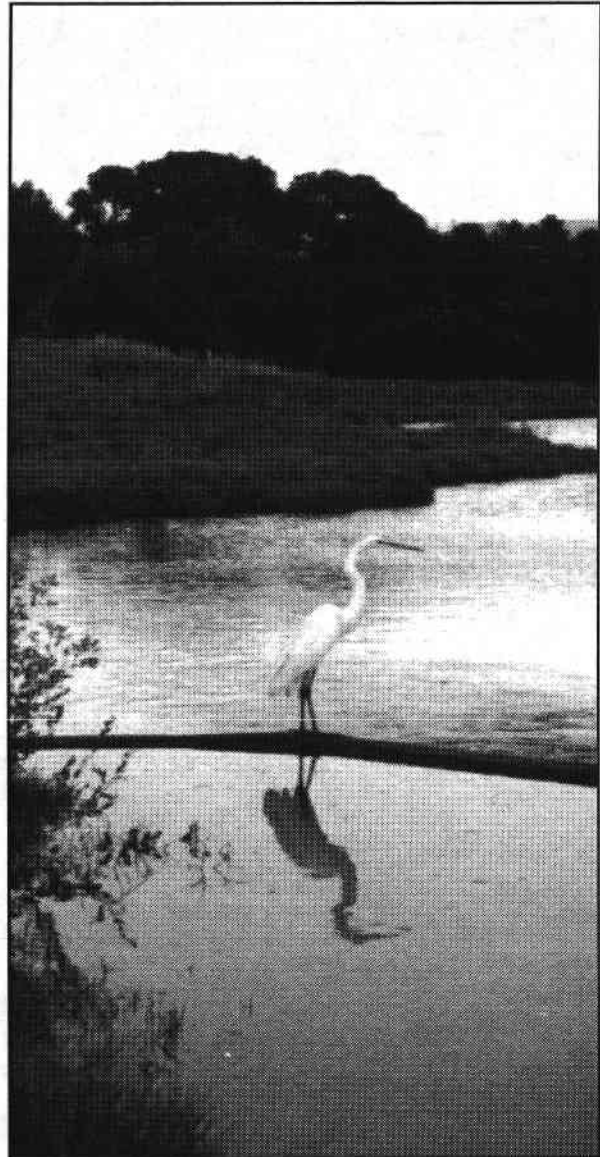
It is with the sense that the timing is right that I tender my resignation as editor. No one reason is solely responsible for my resignation -- very simply, the following have collectively contributed to the current redirection of my energies: my desire to step away from the demands required of my role as editor of *The Vital Force*, the need to spend time caring for a terminally ill parent, the desire to spend more time focusing on my own spiritual growth, and financial considerations.

To Justin -- I wish to express my gratitude for the gift of T'ai Chi Chih. I will bring it to others through my teaching and studies. A special and enduring thanks to the man responsible for my teacher training, Steven Ridley. To the many others who have woven themselves into the T'ai Chi Chih tapestry and the fabric of my life -- especially through the written expressions submitted to *The Vital Force* -- thank you for the reflections you have mirrored to me and all that I have learned from those reflections.

May the efforts of *The Vital Force* staff continue to be blessed as they serve the TCC community at large through this written medium.

From the Spirit-heart,

Roberta





READERS COMMENTARY

Received *The Vital Force* today, Thursday, and found the appearance very aesthetically pleasing. The contents should be inspiring to any TCC teacher, and the idea of a listing of the contents on the front cover seemed to me to be a good one. So I congratulate you on a fine issue. . . . Congratulations and loving thoughts,

Justin (Stone), Albuquerque, NM

I have read and re-read the June issue of *The Vital Force*. It is forceful and flows smoothly. It must be an inspiration to teachers around the globe. The art and photos are particularly well placed and for me convey warmth and restful hesitations.

Eugene Box, Seal Beach, CA

I just love reading *The Vital Force*. I have saved them all since becoming a teacher 3 years ago.

Recently I was looking for information on teaching TCC to fibromyalgia sufferers. I found two articles in back issues of *The Vital Force*. One by Ray Watson in the December 1996 issue and the other by Pat Huseby in the June 1997 issue. While looking for these articles I kept re-reading other pieces that struck my fancy. Before I knew it, it was 2 hours later. What a wonderful way to spend a rainy afternoon!

Thanks,

Ann Federspeil, Cincinnati, OH

LETTERS FROM STUDENTS

While I was working out the other day, [I] decided to walk on the treadmill. The treadmill has a pulse monitor. It will monitor your pulse while you walk or run and [you] try to keep your heart rate at what is the target. I was able to keep speed consistent so the machine would make the incline more or less so that my pulse would stay at 117 (my target heart rate).

So as I was walking my heart rate went up to 117 quickly at 1-2 degrees of incline. I got bored and began to think about what I was going to do next and that was T'ai Chi [Chih]. As I thought about deep breathing and the movements my pulse fell and the incline rose. When I stopped thinking about T'ai Chi [Chih] the incline fell and the pulse went up. I thought it was neat so I purposely went through the whole T'ai Chi [Chih] session in my mind as I walked. When I opened my eyes my pulse was 106 at the highest inclination--20.

I never knew that just thinking about the movements could be so relaxing, but this was really strong evidence.

Kevin T. Seufert, El Cajon, CA

Reading the last issue of *The Vital Force*, I thought perhaps *Vital Force* readers might be interested in how T'ai Chi Chih helped me.

I fell down two flights of stairs--22 cement steps! By some miracle, probably because I fell on the hardest part of my body, my head, I didn't break anything. For the first time, however, I understood what it meant to have your life force out of balance. I felt as if every nerve in my body jangled, as if I were shaking inside.

Although I had no broken bones, I did have some major aches and pains, so much that I couldn't exercise, do yoga, even swim. But I could do T'ai Chi Chih, and it stood in for everything else. I felt myself regain internal balance as I performed the movements morning and evening, and in three weeks I was back to normal. And I'm not young (60)!

I never realized the power of T'ai Chi Chih before. As an aside, I'd add that, curious about T'ai Chi Chuan, I took a class in the first 10 movements of the abbreviated form. It made me comprehend what a genius Justin Stone is to have captured its essence in T'ai Chi Chih.

I'm very grateful,

R.M. Zurkan, Fairhope, AL