



THE **VITAL FORCE**

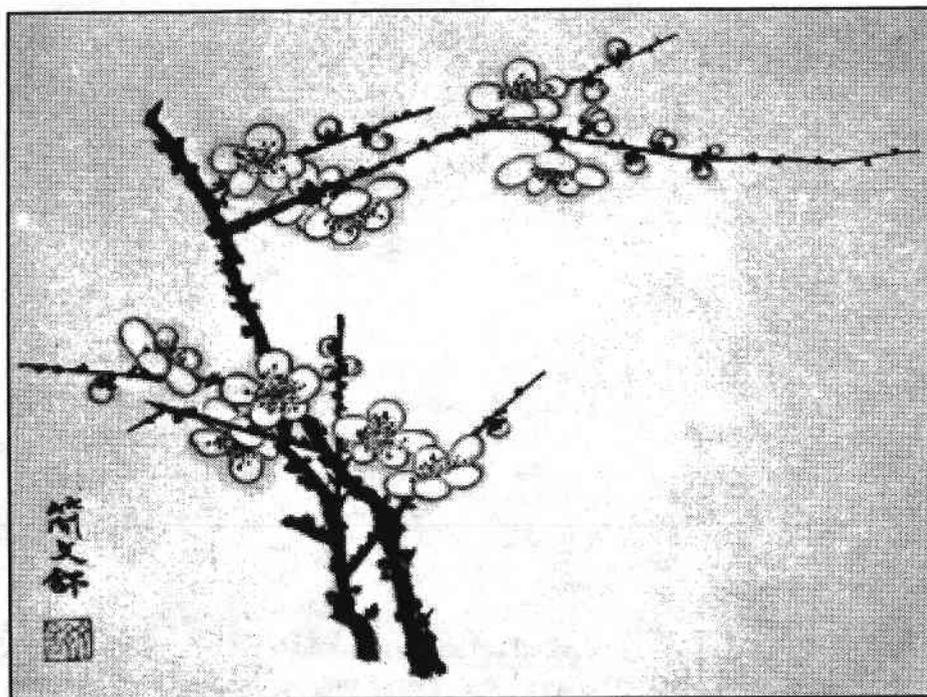
Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

Volume 15, No. 4

Winter Solstice

December 1998

"Winter has come, bringing a quiet of endless fascination"



Plum Blossoms, "mo-ku" style

Diana Kan

冬來幽興長

In This Issue:

Justin Stone: Chi and Meditation = Good Life Ed Altman: Resting in the Essence
T'ai Chi Chih Annual Teachers' Conference Updates -- 1999 & 2000
Folsom Prison Updates Pyramid Poetry
More Original T'ai Chi Chih Cartoons!
Students and Teachers Write



THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

Published Quarterly by THE VITAL FORCE Association

THE VITAL FORCE STAFF

Winter, 1998 issue:

Carrie Kinsey
Lois Mahaney
Linda Meyer
Barbara Riley

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 Teachers' 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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Plum Blossom art (on pages 1 & 8) is from Diana Kan's *The How and Why of Chinese Painting*, Van Nostrand Reinhold Co, New York, 1974
Plum Blossoms are the symbol of winter

SUBMISSIONS

Please send submissions (writings, photographs and drawings) to: *The Vital Force*, P.O. Box 6460 San Rafael, CA 94903-0460. Manuscripts should be typed and double spaced, and may be edited for style, size or content.

Submission Deadlines:

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

MEMBERSHIPS:

For the 1999 Directory, changes of address should be sent to Lois Mahaney: *The Vital Force*, 1633 Via Amigos, San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2009. Phone 510-276-5718. Send other membership information and inquiries to the San Rafael address.

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 *The Vital Force*. When moving please allow six weeks notice and provide complete old and new addresses. The Post Office now charges \$1.47 for the return of undelivered issues. Please help us avoid this expense. A limited number of back issues are available (\$5).

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*.



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



CHI AND MEDITATION = GOOD LIFE

Justin Stone

The Chinese believe that the age of seventy is the time of rejuvenation, the period at which we get a second breath, so to speak. This is only possible, however, if we have cultivated ourselves. What do I mean by cultivation? We must develop the "Chi Posteriori" (not that which we have brought to our birth but Chi we have accumulated through practice). Then, if we meet one who can teach us, we must learn to "rest in the Turiya state", which is done by certain meditative practices.

T'ai Chi Chih is an easy way to accumulate Chi, and it also balances the Chi. The Chinese sages cautioned that regular practice such as this tends to intensify the sexual urge, and this should not result in excessive sex practice. Actually, this new Chi can be transmuted into spiritual energy and taken to the top of the head. At an Ashram in which I once stayed, there was a young Yogi who was having nightly emissions, which gave him great feelings of guilt. The Yogi is not supposed to let the semen, or Ojas, escape from the body, but being twenty-one years of age, he could not prevent it. I taught him to set his mental alarm for 1:00 a.m., at which time he would awaken and do a special practice I had given him. The emissions ceased, but he then awakened with so much energy every morning that he took to riding a bicycle from one town to another before anyone else had awakened! He also experimented with going on a 48-hour life cycle, rather than the 24-hour one to which we are used. So Chi practice that leads to excessive sexual indulgence can be harmful.

I only teach a few [students] the meditation that will take them to the Turiya State, which Indians also call "Samadhi", though not the ultimate Samadhi without "perfume" (vashana). When we have had Meditation retreats with large turnouts, all seemed to get benefits, but they failed to follow up with continued practice after the retreats, pleading that they were "too busy". I have given up these retreats, just teaching a very few privately, and I am not sure all of them are sincere enough ("earnest" is the word Nisargadatta Maharaj uses) to justify sporadic cultivation. If you want to live "Truth", then you must put aside other less important activities and entertainments.

T'ai Chi Chih is so complete (as hospitals and prisons are slowly learning) that regular and correct practice can accomplish wonders, and many feel it will greatly lengthen lives. There are other things that can be added to it. I have rejected the request to develop a mail-order course in "Turiya-type" meditation, which should be taught personally.

In writing as serious a piece as this I am assuming that the reader is a serious type who takes such things seriously. I believe that T'ai Chi Chih teachers are usually very superior people.



SEE WHAT'S COOKING!!!

Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

Have you noticed how much is going on in T'ai Chi Chih? Sometimes we are so secluded in our towns, swept under by commitments, work, family life and friends that we don't always see the beautiful picture emerging both with and (sometimes sadly) without our help.

Justin created T'ai Chi Chih in 1974. It is marvelous that during 24 short years, TCC has spread throughout the world. Our directory lists teachers in South Africa, France, Ontario, British Columbia, other Canadian provinces, Switzerland and in 42 U.S. states, including Alaska and Hawaii. And that doesn't include teachers not included in our directory.

The medical community is so enthusiastic about T'ai Chi (not always specifically saying T'ai Chi Chih) that some medical publications advise it before Yoga which has been around for hundreds of years. This past year in February the Mayo Clinic Health Newsletter said that Justin's T'ai Chi Chih video was helpful in improving balance.

A University of Cincinnati professor has received four government grants to study T'ai Chi Chih's benefits. It is no coincidence that the project's director, who studied with Marlene Brown, has found TCC helpful in her own life. Practicing psychologist Russ Brown gives countless demonstrations for the Idaho medical community, as does Pat Oltman in Kentucky, Rhonda St. Martin in New Mexico, and Susan Patterson in San Diego. T'ai Chi Chih is both for the patient and the health professional.

Two large HMOs—Kaiser Permanente on the West Coast and Allina Health Systems on the East Coast—are very supportive of T'ai Chi Chih. Both have set up classes and made T'ai Chi Chih materials available through prescription. Consider how many prescriptions are usually filled from a bottle.

The business community is also embracing TCC. Several teachers have taught classes in corporations, e.g., Allstate Insurance, IBM, Sandia Government Labs, TRW, Apple Computer, Digital, Intel, British Petroleum, the cities of San Diego and Albuquerque, Johnson and Johnson, Public Service Company of NM, Ethicon and General Electric. If your corporation connection isn't among these, write about it in the next *Vital Force*.

Universities are not just funding research grants for TCC, but they are also creating special professional programs. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are being allowed for Nurses and Physical Therapists in New Mexico, California, and South Dakota. The basic proposal was begun by the New Mexico teachers and is easily adaptable to your area. Rhonda St. Martin in NM has been very helpful in providing information to teachers interested in getting CEUs started in their areas.

The spiritual aspects of T'ai Chi Chih are quickly and easily recognized by the conventional spiritual community. Classes and workshops have been held in Lutheran, Unitarian, Unity, Divine Science, Religious Science Churches, Zen Centers, Catholic Retreat Centers, Jewish Synagogues, and International New Thought Conferences.

TCC had its first teachers' training in a prison (the maximum security Folsom Prison in California) this past year. The physical environment wasn't the best, but we admire the heart of teacher James Hecker. James now carries on the work started by Tara Stiles.

Three U.S. centers, one of which is nonprofit, are dedicated to T'ai Chi Chih. As Dale Buchanan from Virginia said at the TCC Conference, "You can do it, too, if you are willing to do the work." And what beautiful work it is.

The 13-part T'ai Chi Chih PBS television series is still airing in many parts of the country. This is remarkable for the same program to be repeated for four years. If you call your television station, tell them how grateful you are for showing the series in the first place, they may play it again and reach a new set of people. (If they never aired it the first time around, encourage them to do so.) Tell the program director about the difference T'ai Chi Chih has made in your life, perhaps about how peaceful you feel, how TCC promotes hope you had lost, that TCC heals minds and bodies, that TCC's originator Justin Stone created something so easy to learn.

Is there anyplace where T'ai Chi Chih is not needed or wanted? Apparently not. As each of us opens our minds and hearts, we will be led to call the one place that is calling us.

Let your Spirit Soar and Share the Chi.



GREETINGS!

The stillness of the winter season begins to surround us. It is a fine time to go inward and reflect, rest, regenerate and renew for the busy times ahead. This season we have received a number of submissions that reflect upon how T'ai Chi Chih affects us in subtle ways. This "quiet" season gives us the chance to more deeply understand ourselves as practitioners and teachers of this endlessly fascinating form.

The winter issue starts off with Justin's feature article which emphasizes the importance of sincere practice and how that practice can "accomplish wonders." Ed's feature article compliments Justin's words, reminding us of the need for focus, paired with "absolute softness."

We have more news from the ongoing and lively developments at Folsom Prison and also the announcement of the nation-wide implementation of T'ai Chi Chih classes at Shepherd's Centers of America.

While we celebrate that T'ai Chi Chih continues to grow, we also are reminded that T'ai Chi Chih continues to affect each of us in profound ways. We received several articles and poetry submissions on that theme, from first time students, teachers and long time practitioners. You'll find them throughout the issue.



*Kuan Yin, Bodhisattva of
Compassion and Mercy.
Photograph taken at Green
Gulch Zen Center.*

We received two newspaper clippings from France about Florence Germain-Robin's "Vitality Center" where she teaches T'ai Chi Chih. While we didn't have the space to reproduce them entirely, we were able to put a portion of them in the "Teacher News" section -- get out your magnifying glass and your old French dictionary and enjoy!

You'll find lots of information about the upcoming T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference, including the poem that inspired this year's theme "Standing Like a Tree." Ralph Garn tells us that plans for the year 2000 conference are already in the works as well. And as a reminder that going inward and reflecting can also include some humor, Vic Vierek has come up with some more original T'ai Chi Chih cartoons.

We want to extend a special thanks to T'ai Chi Chih instructor Wendy Helms, who helped in production of this issue of *The Vital Force* by typing many of the articles. Thanks, Wendy, you made a huge difference!

The *Vital Force Journal*, along with most every aspect of our lives, grows, shifts and changes, and with this issue we announce the turning over of the production of the journal to a new staff (see Ed's article, page 8). We are delighted to see the interest and enthusiasm for this vehicle of our sharing and community and we give the new *Vital Force* staff our full support. We encourage all readers to continue to submit the writings, art and ideas that have so enriched our community over the years.

May the blessings of the season be with you!
The *Vital Force* staff.



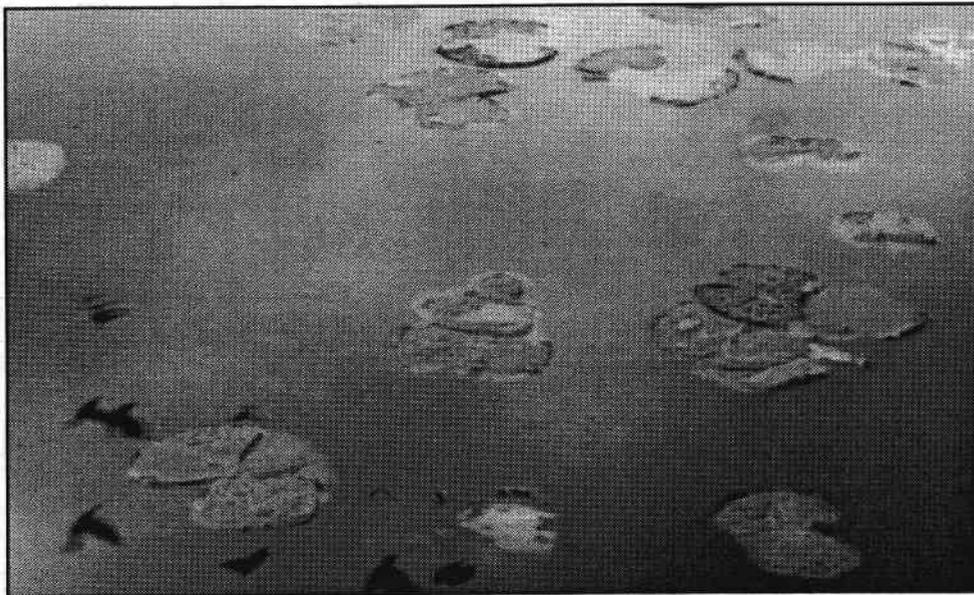
RESTING IN THE ESSENCE

Ed Altman, San Rafael, CA

When the mind is focused fully on our T'ai Chi Chih movements, and we apply unwavering attention to them, the deeper benefits of our practice become accessible. Focus, when paired with absolute softness, causes the chi to flow unhindered, and allows the body to move without effort as the spine, knees, waist and wrists make the necessary adjustments at the appropriate moment. This cannot be accomplished by thinking or trying; only by letting go.

Every aspect of T'ai Chi Chih practice is an outer reflection of the state of mind. The converse is also true: the mind is affected (impacted or refined) by the T'ai Chi Chih practice. This is why it is so important never to do T'ai Chi Chih carelessly.

To convey the appropriate attitude during T'ai Chi Chih practice, I like to use the example of a large bird soaring on a breeze. The bird does not flap its wings, but it is not "asleep at the wheel" either. It pays very close attention to the minute changes in the wind. It has an attitude of listening while being supported in flight. This is resting in the essence.



Birds Over a Waterlily Pond

Photo by Carrie Kinsey



VITAL FORCE JOURNAL TRANSITION

Ed Altman, San Rafael, CA

It was a great surprise to hear of the resignation of the staff of *The Vital Force*. I would like to thank Roberta, Lois, Carrie, Barbara and Linda for all their contributions to the T'ai Chi Chih community through their efforts on the staff. *The Vital Force* has continued to improve in format and focus during their stewardship, and we are grateful to them as they conclude their responsibilities at the helm. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to Lois Mahaney for her 13+ years of working on *The Vital Force* staff.

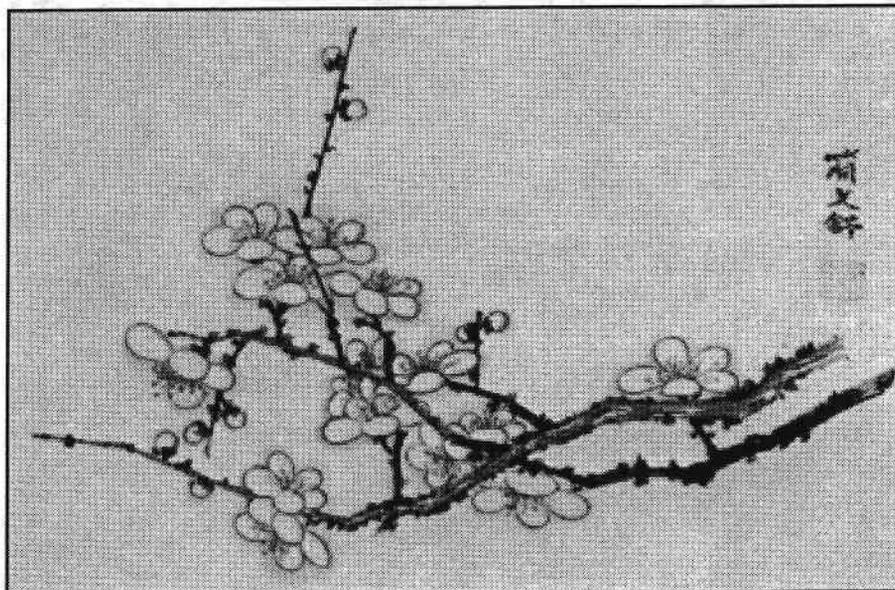
With regard to the future, Noël Altman has agreed to become the new Interim Editor of *The Vital Force*. With her prior experience as both a journalist and editor for her high school and college newspapers, she will bring considerable expertise to the job. Please join me in thanking the outgoing staff, and in welcoming Noël in her new challenge.

The new address for *The Vital Force* is:

The Vital Force
P.O. Box 6460
San Rafael, CA 94903-0460

The Vital Force is the most valuable link we have to keep informed about the people, breakthroughs, and events taking place in the T'ai Chi Chih community. It is the submissions from T'ai Chi Chih teachers and their students that are critical to the success of this quarterly journal. Please take time to send your submissions to *The Vital Force* and keep everyone informed about your personal and professional growth through the practice of T'ai Chi Chih.

Editors Note: Membership information and changes of address should be sent to Lois Mahaney until the middle of January for the 1999 Teachers' Directory.



Plum Blossoms, contour style

Diana Kan



LETTERS FROM TEACHERS

Dear Friends,
Enclosed is a cheque for \$40 for subscription to V.F.J. for 1998-99. I like the new format and size. The tips on teaching are very helpful. Justin's articles always make one think and then follow.

Regret I couldn't make the last conference. Canadian money situation makes it a little rough. Hope to come to St. Paul if I could get some assistance financially. I only teach small classes of seniors who get special rates. Any help would be appreciated.

Hope you are all fine at the office. Thanks to Roberta for filling in and doing a great job.

Gordon Wade
Edson, Alberta, Canada

Greetings fellow T'ai Chi Chih Teachers. I thank all of you who gave to the scholarship fund. Because of your kind donations I was able to attend this year's conference. I learned many things and enjoyed spending time with the T'ai Chi Chih community. I am enjoying teaching and sharing my new knowledge from the conference with my students. I express my great appreciation and gratitude to all of you.

Namaste.
Phoenix Meridith Wilson
Covington, KY

HAIKU

Hummingbird alights
tiny feet grasp
the feeder
stillness blesses us

Cass Redmon, Watsonville, CA

Dear Lois and TCC Loved Ones,
This is to have you omit all my addresses from the Teachers' Directory except for [the New Zealand address].

I am not teaching organized classes any more. However, I practice TCC every day! I moved from Medford, OK October 24, and became a resident of New Zealand -- that is now HOME.

Thank you for all the pleasant and cherished memories. You will be most welcome to visit us in Napier. May your Chi, Joy, Contentment and Wisdom increase with each New Day.

Theda W. Gillespie
Napier, New Zealand

The new VFJ looks great! I enjoy reading all these wonderful T'ai Chi Chih stories, poetry, experiences of healing you compile in a pleasing way. Lois, we use your directory at the [T'ai Chi Chih] Center regularly and so often use it in class to locate teachers for relatives, friends, etc. Thank you for your hard work as well as the effortless effort.

Connie Hyde
Albuquerque, NM

... I would like to declare myself as an "active" teacher, please. Lately, I've been feeling so much "chi" flowing that I'm sure "you-all" must have had a conference recently!

Ellen Greyson
Santa Barbara, CA

I have begun a waiting list for individuals who are interested in Teachers' Accreditation here in NJ, scheduled for August 1999. So far 23 have expressed their interest and are currently working with a mentor.

Sr. Antonia Cooper
N. Plainfield, NJ



FOLSOM PRISON UPDATE

In October I was fortunate enough to get to visit James Hecker at Folsom prison. He is doing very well, and so are his attempts to spread TCC in the prison itself. He has two classes each weekday morning and each class has approximately 20 students. So all told he has over 200 students being exposed to TCC each week! The composition of the classes is variable and they are taught under some difficult circumstances. Not all of the students appeared interested in continuing their own practice, but in each class there appeared several who were sincere. James says these students would approach him after or during class to receive more specific instruction. James also has several independent afternoon classes with serious minded students including all of the advanced students he uses to "model" during his morning classes.

The effects of TCC are already being noticed. The Athletic Department office area was a very unsafe area of the prison prior to James getting involved with them. Now the room is quite peaceful and resembles a chess club. One of the advanced students had problems with his spine which caused him to walk with a bent back and a stooped head. Today he walks completely erect and one cannot see any evidence of his previous condition. Another of the advanced students that I met was quite sincere and has a very gentle demeanor. James later told me this person had tendencies towards violence prior to practicing TCC. I could go on. Words really cannot describe the interest and effect TCC is having at Folsom. I can only relate that it reminded me of the story Justin tells of seeing the flower growing on the harsh rock face of the mountains above Albuquerque. Thanks to Justin, Ed, Tara and other teachers for helping with the introduction of TCC into Folsom.

Doug Harned, Campbell, CA



I have received many letters from teachers who have seen the Folsom Prison tape. Apparently they were touched as much as I was by the unfortunate plight of those who are in there.

Actually, it is Ed Altman who should receive the praise. He took off from his work and, at his own expense, went and stayed in the town of Folsom while he worked to turn James Hecker -- who had practised TCC for several years (having been originally taught by long-time teacher Tara Stiles) -- into an accredited teacher. James writes that one-sixth of the large Folsom prison now does TCC! They also do meditation from my book *Meditation for Healing*. Hope other prisons follow suit.

Ed plans to return to Folsom in the future to fan the flames of what has been started. Doug Harned and Tara Stiles will be helping him in this task. One of the officials at the prison wrote me about the splendid results they are getting with TCC.

Justin Stone

Editor's Note: Ed Altman adds that James Hecker continues to receive numerous cards and letters from other T'ai Chi Chih instructors.



SHEPHERD'S CENTERS OF AMERICA

Ed Altman, San Rafael, CA

Ed Altman gave a T'ai Chi Chih presentation at the national headquarters for the Shepherd's Centers of America (SCA) in Kansas City, MO. SCA is a cross-denominational resource group focused on the special skills and needs of the "aging" members of our population. They provide numerous services and courses to their members through nearly 100 centers in over 40 states. SCA is now planning to offer T'ai Chi Chih through all locations!

Ed worked closely with Elbert Cole, the founder and Executive Director of SCA, to identify key T'ai Chi Chih instructors in the

areas where SCA offices are located. Initially, SCA will be encouraging centers to use Justin Stone's videotape and text to get programs started (especially in areas where teachers are scarce). SCA plans to prepare and sponsor some of its members to become accredited teachers, to encourage "seniors helping seniors" to grow throughout their aging years.

The first instructor sponsored by SCA was Jean Smith from Kansas City, who was accredited in June 1998. She presented T'ai Chi Chih at the SCA national conference in the fall. For more information about SCA contact Mr. Cole at 800-547-7073.



A TEACHER'S EXPERIENCE

Mark Moloney, St. Louis, MO

Three of my students from the classes in the St. Louis Public School System Adult Education Programs have already experienced remarkable benefits in their first weeks of class. One man, whose knees had been operated on and which were painfully puffed up, discovered after doing TCC that all the swelling disappeared. Another student, living with Lupus, who had had continuous pain to her left knee realized that when she returned home after her first class she was free of pain. Yet another told me of a chronic arthritic condition in her neck and shoulders that had not returned since her first lesson. The inspiring effects of TCC continue to amaze us.

DURING TCC PRACTICE

Patterns on patterns
Shadows and light
Reflections aglow
As the new day begins.

Sounds on sounds
Cars whizzing by
A bird calling
As the new day begins.

Feet on the ground
Chi flowing freely
Circles on circles
As the new day begins.

Senses alert to
What's around and about
What a joy to behold
As the new day begins.

Vickie Brodie, Burlingame, CA

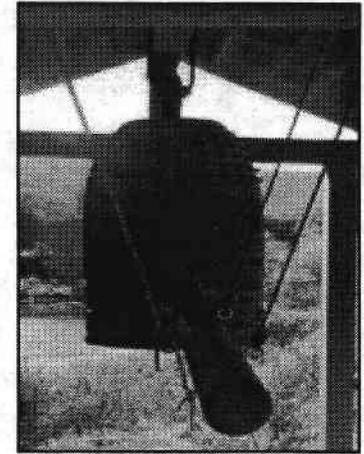


A VIEW FROM INSIDE THE BELL

Linda Braga, Castro Valley, CA

A huge bronze Japanese bell hangs near the Zendo on the grounds of the Green Gulch Zen Center in Marin County, CA. About five feet tall and three feet wide, it hangs suspended from a wooden beam under a sheltered canopy of wood. A long, thick log striker hangs beside it, parallel to the ground, ready to be swung against the bell to sound the call to meditation. This massive blue-green masterpiece is a touchstone of beauty, clarity and function.

During a recent visit to the Zen Center on a gorgeous Sunday morning, several T'ai Chi Chih teachers found themselves standing near this huge relic. They sipped hot herbal tea and savored warm, homemade muffins served with generous simplicity to a hundred meditators in the warm sun.

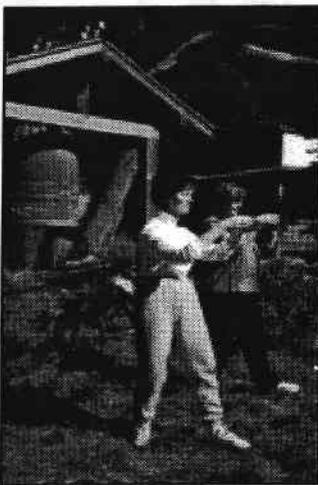


The bell at Green Gulch

A question arose in their minds. When is this bell most dynamic? Before it is sounded, when full of potentiality but hollow, empty? Or after it is sounded, when resonating deeply so that the sound carries for miles over the valley, out to the sea? Or is it only at the moment it is hit, responding according to its own nature?

In order to pursue this thought, these usually self-controlled teachers found themselves responding to innocent but curious impulses. Each person thus did what any curious child would do. Each teacher crept under the great bell (one at a time), standing up inside. With no clapper hanging down to limit the space, it was a uniquely spiritual experience to be "inside the bell."

It was truly a sacred space.



Linda Braga and Pat Huseby doing TCC by the bell

Then the striker was bumped against the bell (oh so quietly). And lo . . . the melodious sound made them go into spontaneous chanting! The vibration lasted far beyond the audible hearing range. It went on and on, like ripples in a pond, spreading out to infinity.

The question about the bell faded as the beauty of this experience took on substance and personal meaning. The bell after all was like Tao: a balance of polarities, both full and empty, quiet and resonant, behaving according to its nature.

A view from inside the bell revealed a deeper truth to each of us that day. We are all held, suspended from Above. We are all a balance of polarities, both empty and full. We are all resonating with vibrations, according to our own unique nature.



SUMMER VACATION

Ed Altman, San Rafael, CA

My wife, Noël, and I went horseback riding this past summer, and I was given a very willful stallion named "Michael" to ride. I had only ridden horses a couple of times in the past, and I was having some difficulty with the restlessness of my horse.

I began to ground the Chi through the soles of my feet. I also concentrated on moving with the horse from the T'an T'ien. Then I began to practice the "Violet Light" technique which is taught as part of the Maximum Chi Program in Seijaku. After 3 - 5 repetitions of the "Violet Light" the horse became considerably calmer.

At one point during this time the horse turned his head and seemed to look at me with curiosity. It was obvious that he was feeling something as I continued to practice the technique. When I had finished I had no trouble with him for the rest of the day. He responded to my directions and was a joy to ride.



A HEALING EXPERIENCE

Richard Detert, La Crosse, WI

Forwarded to The Vital Force by Ed Altman

The Wednesday following the accreditation process [St. Paul, June, 1998], I had a most unique experience to which I would appreciate some feedback. I had just completed a 45 minute practice session and decided to perform a relaxation technique. A few minutes into the relaxation I had this incredible experience that is almost impossible to put into words. At some point I left the relaxation experience to encounter what I think was pure energy. This energy was everywhere in my body at the same time, yet moving in a systematic manner (if it was the chi, I assume it was flowing through the meridians). This energy was like flowing electricity, yet it wasn't. It seemed to be contained within the confines of my body, yet my body was formless. All I seemed to be was this energy. It was frightening, yet it wasn't, as I seemed to watch it (experience it) in a detached way. I don't know how long this lasted. It seemed like a long time, but then again just a short time. When it was over I lay on the bed in amazement. Most noticeable is more feeling in the left side of my chest that has been rather "numb" since my heart surgery. I don't know if other aspects of me have undergone "healing." I am content to just accept this experience as a gift.



A TEACHER'S STORY

Sharon Sirkis, Columbia, MD

On my second visit at Break Away Adult Day Care Center I had a very powerful experience. As I was teaching seated TCC, I encouraged one of the members, Mr. P., to do the moves. Since this was my first time teaching him, I was unfamiliar with his physical or mental capabilities. He sat there like a statue and just stared into my eyes. He lifted his hands once, but only for a few seconds. I assumed he didn't understand, and that some part of his mind had unfortunately slipped away. My assumption was wrong.

After my class, my mind drifted to other things. In a few hours, I would be sitting in an IMAX theatre. I had been looking forward to seeing Everest and today was the day. On my way out, I noticed Mr. P. still sitting in his chair. I was now close enough to see the tears in his eyes. "I don't belong here," he said. "After thirty-eight years of marriage I can't even trust my wife." I suddenly realized that this man was not as "out of it" as I thought. Everest could wait. I felt compelled to stay.

It disturbed Mr. P. to see the members of the center who were mentally unaware. He then proceeded to tell me about a relative who ended up in a psychiatric institution. After a few gentle questions, he admitted his deepest fear. He felt being in the day care center was one step closer to the psychiatric institution. He apologized for crying, admitting his anger and bitterness. "There's no need to apologize" I told him. "It's good to get it out. If you keep your anger stuffed inside, it can lead to physical problems on the outside." Mr. P. seemed relieved to hear this, understanding that in showing his emotions he didn't have to feel ashamed.

... we continued our conversation over lunch. Mr. P. spoke of the sadness and pain in his life. "How do you keep smiling?" he asked, when I admitted to my own experiences of struggle and pain. "I try to reframe things, to look at them in a different way," I

said. "For example, you didn't want to come here today, but if you hadn't, you wouldn't have met me!" He had a good laugh which was a joy to see. "Also," I said, "one of my favorite sayings is: that which does not kill me makes me stronger." As soon as I said that, Mr. P. sat back in his chair, his body relaxed, and he finally "let go". Something was triggered for him, I'm not sure exactly what, but it was significant. He started fiddling with his name tag. "I know it's not much, but I want you to have this. Thank you for your time," he said. I accepted with thanks and a hug.

A feeling of sadness overwhelmed me. I was humbled. I thought about how quickly I had judged Mr. P. as having reduced mental capabilities. Little did I realize that he had chosen not to participate. Mr. P. had not seen the concept of adult day care as a break for his wife. This concept to him manifested as betrayal, loss of control and abandonment. It hadn't occurred to me that maybe he just didn't want to participate. It hadn't occurred to me that he was retreating into his own safe inner world. It hadn't occurred to me that Mr. P. was a very proud man trying to hold onto any shred of independence and dignity he had left.

I couldn't shake Mr. P. from my thoughts the rest of the day. The fact is, I didn't want to. I left with a sense of gratitude - grateful for my sight, my youth, my hearing, my memory - the things I often take for granted. Grateful for knowing even if our paths never cross again (I teach once a month), that I believe he will remember me, and I will remember him. I touched his heart and he touched mine.

I came home to face the piles of papers and work that had been stressing me out. It all seemed so trivial now. I still managed to catch Everest later that afternoon. As I watched the mountain climbers reach the summit, I couldn't help thinking how, today, Mr. P. and I reached a summit of our own.



STUDENTS WRITE In Celebration of Their Teachers

We were asked by our T'ai Chi Chih instructor to do something nice for ourselves this week — to be kind to ourselves. It is sad that we have to be reminded to treat ourselves kindly, but as women, in particular, this is all too true. We are always placing others before ourselves in our roles as care givers and feel guilty if we allot any time just for ourselves. However, it is impossible to love and care for others if we don't love and care for ourselves as well.

I found that it is much easier to write about this subject than it is to practice it. However, I set out this week to follow the wise teacher's instruction. Looking back, it has been both easy and difficult.

It was surprisingly easy for a simple act of kindness to lift the spirits. At least twice this week, I was able to hug myself and say, "it's okay," in response to mistakes I made. I also stopped in the middle of working to sit for a few minutes to watch two young squirrels play with a pine cone. Just those few minutes for myself made me feel special and lifted my spirits.

The difficult part was the ingrained habit of not being kind to myself. That was hard to break! It was especially hard to deal with other people when caring for myself interfered with their plans, but I was able to persevere, we compromised, and things worked out. I gained a new respect in their eyes, as well as my own.

Anne Alley Smith, Columbia, MD
Student of Sharon Sirkis

Feel Great with T'ai Chi Chih

A few days after I started T'ai Chi Chih, my family became ill with severe stomach flu, but I was unaffected. I nursed my family and remained well. I never became ill with the flu and I believe that the reason was my first class of TCC. TCC has strengthened my immune system! I have also noted that when I come to class with discomfort I leave feeling good. Also, when I have had only a few hours of sleep, I am amazed that practicing TCC on awaking provides me with the much-needed energy. I joined a second class before my first session of classes finished and now practice daily.

Donnamarie Biddle, Dublin, CA
Grateful student of Virginia Cepeda

Many times as I walked in the park I would see groups of people doing T'ai Chi. At the time I was not aware that there were many types of T'ai Chi. These people looked so completely relaxed. A number of years passed before I decided to try it. Many physical problems I learned to live with. It was when I discovered I had Fibromyalgia, a form of arthritis that affects the muscles, that I tried T'ai Chi Chih. I needed to relax the muscles to alleviate the pains. T'ai Chi Chih has made it possible to continue with many activities.

Virginia Cepeda is a caring and dedicated instructor who helps and encourages her students.

Frances Miller
Student of Virginia Cepeda

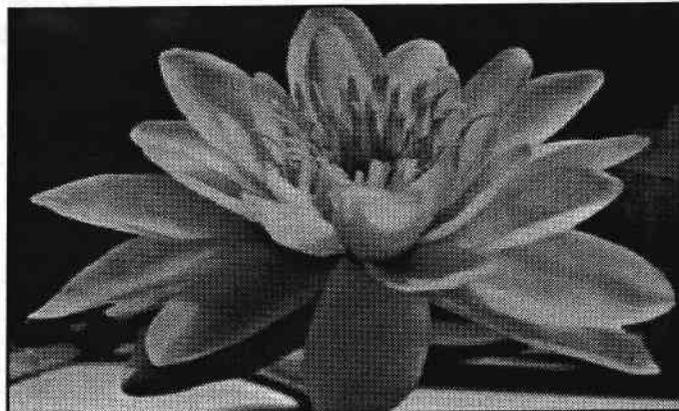


Writing from the Earth

T'ai Chi opens me
To new dimension within me
Around my circle
Spreads yin and yang energy
Pushing out my negative
Pulling in my positive
Circle around the body
Breathing softly, breathing deeply
Balance forward, balance backward
Back to center, bubbling spring below
Cloud circle in front in gentle sweeping motion
Gold thread above my heavy head of thoughts
Gently lifts it to weightlessness
Ancient wisdom comes with these slow, precise movements
Wisdom of the masters before
No effort is required to awake your circle of love within
Flowing like a bubbling spring beneath your feet.

Eileen Evans, Oakland, CA

This poem was written after her first T'ai Chi Chih lesson



North American Lotus

Postcard Image



TEACHER NEWS

"Le Ying et Le Yang" in France

Sud Ouest, 14 Avril 1998
LE YING ET LE YANG

Découvrir le t'ai chi chih

Le centre d'animation organise une journée portes ouvertes avec une professeur de t'ai chi chih, Florence Germain-Robin. Objectif : que l'énergie circule



Une discipline de méditation née aux USA. EMILIE GERMAIN-ROBIN
(Photo Hervé Jean Berthelémy, « Sud-Ouest »)

Du T'ai Chi Chih au centre d'animation

Florence Germain-Robin importe la pratique du T'ai Chi Chih. Des mouvements de décontraction qu'elle présente aujourd'hui



Florence Germain-Robin a été la première à proposer de T'ai Chi Chih en France, à Clermont-Ferrand.

Florence Germain-Robin, who lives in the Cognac region of France, sent cuttings from two local newspapers reporting on the opening, in April 1998, of her "Vitality Center" in Clermont-Ferrant. At the Center, Florence is teaching three T'ai Chi Chih classes with "about twenty students, but no men." She expected small numbers at first because "French people are slow for everything which is new" and so she finds the initial response encouraging. She is hoping that both men and women of the Cognac region will become enthusiastic about "this practice which allows people to eliminate stress from daily life."

Florence became an accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor four years ago and she was the first to teach the form in France. Florence's seventeen-year-old daughter, Emilie, who lives in Minnesota, is also a T'ai Chi Chih devotee and is hoping to become an accredited teacher.

Little Falls, MN

Greetings from Little Falls, MN, where the still new and young Mississippi River gently flows near our place! . . . I moved from California in August, 1996 to work at *The Spiritual Center* (formerly *Wholistic Growth Resources*) with the Franciscan Sisters. It is the place where I "met" T'ai Chi Chih in 1993, and from where I hailed before CA. I return to CA (Berkeley, El Cerrito) each summer for continued study at GTU/ Jesuit School of Theology, but only for a brief 6 - 8 weeks. I am a Massage Therapist/Somatologist and teacher. In addition I assist Sr. Phyllis Ann Reis in teaching T'ai Chi Chih to our Spiritual Center participants.

I am grateful to you [Lois], and to each one who so gently and firmly assisted my early learning

and teaching TCC. Happy luncheons and mailing sessions at your dear home are among the best of my memories.

Our schedule here is quite full . . . Our program director believes strongly in TCC as an integral part of mind-body-spirit growth, and so Phyllis Ann and I are really lucky to have the blessing of a staff supporting our own TCC experiences.

Sister Francis A. Kay has returned for a short time from Zimbabwe, Africa for emergency eye surgery in New York. She was my TCC mentor, and an advocate, always of TCC.

Blessings upon you
Gail Collins, SCN



TCC CONFERENCE, YEAR 2.000, PLANS UNDERWAY!

Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY

The seed is planted!

'Moving into the Millenium' with the TCC conference in the East is "in the ground."

Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF hosted a 'get-together' of TCC teachers on Saturday, October 24. The gathering was held at Villa Maria in North Plainfield, NJ from 10am until 4pm. The meeting was begun, and ended 'outdoors' with full and silent TCC practice enhancing the unusually warm and sunny Fall day.

The morning practice was followed by enthusiastic talk about the annual conference being held in the NY/NJ area. Search is underway for a site we hope will be secured by February, 1999. A delicious pot-luck was enjoyed by all as we got to know one another better throughout the table-talk. During the day insights were shared about teaching classes, personal practice, etc. A video was shown that was aired on local TV. It included practice involving the commentator, and questions addressed to Sr. Antonia and Victor Viereck, who led the group.

Those attending the Saturday meeting:

Sr. Antonia, OSF
Carolyn Allenby
Victor Viereck
Jerry McGuire
Beverly McEntarfer

Bobbie Ruocco
John O'Connor
Carolyn Hales-Perkins
Ralph Garn and his wife Judy
Rosemarie Hallenback



And ... 'a good time was had by all'!!!



T'AI CHI CHIH EVENTS CALENDAR

Events led by Ed Altman

Teacher Training/Seijaku

February 22 thru 27 1999
 TCC Teacher Training
 Location: Orlando, FL
 Contact: Elissa Maguire
 P.O. Box 3695
 Winter Park, FL 32790-3095
 Ph: 407-699-5444
 Teacher Training Fee: \$450
 Deadline: Jan 5, 1999

April 9 thru 11 1999
 Teacher Renewal (4/9 9am -- noon)
 Seijaku Accreditation
 (4/9 4pm - 4/11 at noon)
 Location: Bloomington, MN
 Contact: Joyce or Louis DeGidio
 Ph: 612-448-4847
 Teacher Renewal Fee: \$20
 Accreditation Fee: \$300
 Auditing Teachers: \$20
 Lodging--Holiday Inn International
 Ph: 612-854-9000
 Before 3-1-99, ask for special
 T'ai Chi Chih (Seijaku) Rate

June 21 thru 26 1999
 TCC Teacher Training
 Location: Albuquerque, NM
 Contact: NM TCC Center
 Ph: (505) 299-2095
 Teacher Training Fee: \$450

May 24 thru 29 1999
 TCC Teacher Training
 Location: Mercy Center
 St. Louis, MO
 Contact: Kathy Vieth
 6014 A Kingsbury
 St. Louis, MO 63112-1304
 Ph: 314-727-1983
 Teacher Training Fee: \$450

August 30 thru Sept. 4 1999
 TCC Teacher Training
 Location: New Jersey
 Contact: Sr. Antonia Cooper
 Ph: 908-757-3050
 Teacher Training Fee: \$450
Waiting List in Place
(see p. 9)

T'ai Chi Chih Events

February 6 1999
 Day Long TCC Workshop
 Location: S.F. Bay Area, CA
 Contact: Pat Huseby
 1129 San Ramon Valley Blvd.
 Danville, CA 94526-4852
 Ph: 925-838-9912
 Teacher Fee: \$20
 Student Fee: \$40

August 6 thru 9 1999
 14th Annual International
 T'ai Chi Chih Teachers'
 Conference
 St. Paul, MN
(See p.20)

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 it can be included in the Events Calendar. Please indicate dates, deadlines, deposit, fees, phone, FAX or email, contact person(s) and mailing address. THANKS!

S.F. Bay Area Teachers' Training

Please call me if you have students interested in or preparing for Teachers' Training. I would like to host one in the Fall of 1999.
 Sandy McAlister (510) 582-2238

**SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR
 THE SPRING ISSUE:
 JANUARY 25TH!**



**14th ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS' CONFERENCE and
25th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
AUGUST 5 - 8, 1999
CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA**

The Minnesota T'AI CHI CHIH teachers invite you to experience our land of tall trees, blue sky and waters for the 14th Annual International Teachers' Conference to be held at Concordia University in St. Paul, Minnesota, August 5 - 8, 1999. This conference will have an even greater meaning and purpose, as we will be celebrating the 25th Anniversary of T'AI CHI CHIH, with great respect for Justin Stone, the originator of T'AI CHI CHIH.

This conference will be a time and place for enrichment of kinship, the enhancement of the T'AI CHI CHIH, discipline and enlightenment through the essence of T'AI CHI CHIH. The focus will be on grounding and centering our MISSION toward a world community of T'AI CHI CHIH teachers deep in the experience of T'AI CHI CHIH, both in our own personal journeys and those of our students.

T'AI CHI CHIH, though a moving meditation with its energy, grace and awareness, will leave us STANDING LIKE A TREE, rooted in TAO. [see poem, p. 21]

There is a consensus that the Conference will be extended in time. We are planning for just that. Thursday, August 5th will be the day for arrival, with the evening meal served in the dining hall. August 6th and 7th will begin early in the morning and run through the evening events. August 8th, Sunday, will begin early, go through lunch; departure follows. Although we are anticipating increased attendance, the campus will accommodate that quite comfortably. The rooms are air conditioned and all linens are provided.

Concordia University is located in the center of St. Paul, the State Capitol. It is just one of the 13 four-year colleges in the Twin Cities (St. Paul/Minneapolis) area. The college is located at the corner of Hamline and Marshall Avenues, and I -94. You will be quite comfortable at the old/new campus. It is 8 miles (20 minutes) from the MSP airport. Upon arrival, you will be directed to Ground Transportation for the Airport Express van service, or taxis. However, we hope to have some kind of transportation assistance working for you.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION will be sent to you by February 1999.

We will welcome you to Minnesota and encourage early registration. There is a strength and integrity in this land; it is a place to fully experience T'AI CHI CHIH – STANDING LIKE A TREE! Your attendance will please you.

Vivian Hoff -- Conference Coordinator
P.O. Box 2226, Eagen, Minnesota, 55122-0266





STANDING LIKE A TREE

from: *THE WAY OF ENERGY*

Master Lam Kam Chuen

You
are standing
like a tree, You are like
an elm growing. You feel everything
happening within your entire body, from your roots
deep in the soil, to the tiniest leaf reaching out into the air.
You can hear yourself moving inside. You are growing, listening
silently to your entire body inhaling and exhaling.
A living tree breathes
with its entire body. Every cell
of every leaf is breathing. Deep in the earth, the roots are
breathing too. As you stand, you do the same. Open every pore of your body -
along your arms, down your back and legs, from the soles of your feet to the top of your head. Feel the lovely breeze
entering inside you at every conceivable point of your being.
And as you exhale, let the warm current ride out again from every extremity.
You stand surrounded,
like a tree, by sound. All noise within is stilled.
Sounds come to you as if from miles around. Birds call from distant tree tops.
An engine starts up somewhere far away. Here and there you hear a footfall and a man and woman with a child.
Nearby you hear the early morning drone of an insect. The air
around you is alive. Can you hear the dewdrops falling in the grass?
You stand seeing
a tree in the distance. There is nothing but empty space
between the tree and you. You are both silent. Your eyes are completely
at peace and a faint smile is all you sense. Your body is asleep. Your mind is alert.
A distant wind is stirring
in the air. It starts to play across your body
like a flag unfurling in a breeze. The driving air is irresistible;
the flag is flying with it. All seems to be in motion, but neither sky nor flag has moved.
A fish is turning in the stream.
Its weight is in the water; the fish itself is still. Like you, it rests inside the current.
Its body curves a little and it sways. It does not matter that the wind has made the surface rough.
Your boat is on the waves. The tide is strong; it pulls and twists the boat
from side to side. You stand within it, riding in the surge. You tremble for a moment, but you do not leave the
boat. You know the water knows its way.
The wind is rising
and the storm clouds
threaten rain. You
stand among the trees,
like them, unmoved.
They all have stood
in sun and shade. Their
roots have been both dry
and wet. Now rain and wind
will fill the sky. The trees, like you,
have no wish to escape. Like you, they stand
prepared to feel the deepest movements of the earth.



THE T'AI CHI CHIH INTENSIVE IN EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Saturday, September 26th, 1998

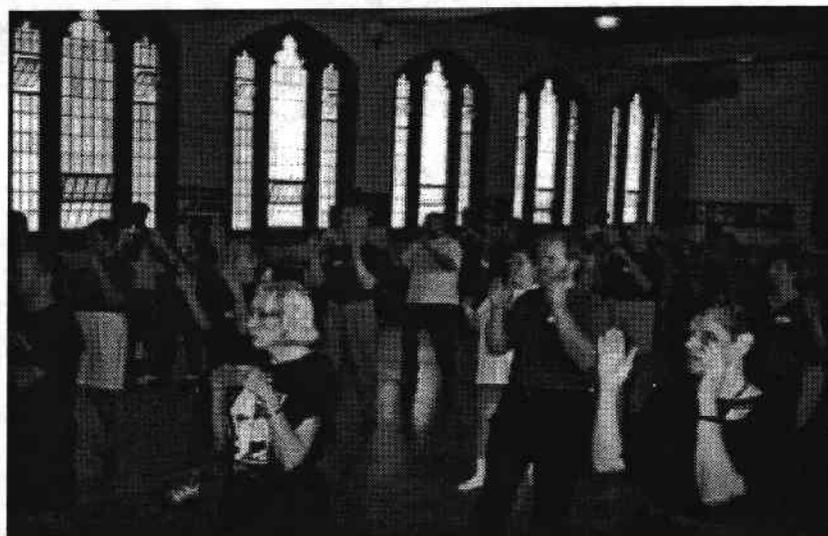
Amy Hackenberg Evanston, IL

Forty-three eager teachers and students gathered in Evanston, Illinois on September 26th to delve deeper into their T'ai Chi Chih practice. Ed Altman took the group through the movements, stressing the principles of shifting the weight and softness, and demonstrating how they manifest throughout T'ai Chi Chih. Ed continually stressed the simplicity of T'ai Chi Chih, how actually there are very few things to remember, but doing these few things allows all other parts of the movements to "fall into place."

After a three-hour morning session, everyone took a nice lunch break in sunny (and rather unseasonably warm!) downtown Evanston, and then returned for a three-hour afternoon session. Many of the students and teachers attending came up to say how much they were gaining from Ed's clear and thorough instruction on the movements. We want to thank all those who attended!

Some of the points I remember the most:

- **STICK WITH THE PRINCIPLES:** Shifting weight, softness.
- Rocking Motion is not an up/down movement but a forward/back movement.
- Be aware of the back heel during yinning & yanging; make sure that it stays very close to the ground even when the weight is shifted forward. (Incidentally, I have found that greater awareness of "low heels" increases the feeling of groundedness.)
- Observe tension and ask yourself "can it be released?"
- What if you were carrying a silvery dandelion in Carry the Ball?
- Allow the knees to soften and shift the weight forward slightly for the beginning of Wrist Circles Taffy (rather than try to "go up on the toes").
- Let your stillness (or your focus on the soles of the feet) be so strong that other people are drawn into stillness (or into clear focus on the soles of the feet).





We were happily surprised that the event went smoothly and required (strangely? or maybe not so strangely) little effort to put together. Both Amy Tyksinski and I (Amy Hackenberg) would be happy to discuss necessary preparations for organizing such an event with anyone who is interested, and we both encourage T'ai Chi Chih teachers in other areas to do so. There is another intensive scheduled in California in February.

Amy and I are especially grateful to Ed and Noël for coming to Chicago for this event. As I said when I introduced Ed and Noël, they are my original teachers, and so I am eternally grateful to them because I can't imagine living my life without doing T'ai Chi Chih.

I was grateful for another breakthrough in my understanding of TCC. It regards the slight rise on the balls of the feet (for *Bird Flaps its Wings*, *Pulling Taffy - Wrist Circles Variation*, *Light at the Top of the Head/Light at the Temples*, and *Joyous Breath*) as a forward weight shift instead of lifting. These movements are now much less strenuous, and my calves and ankles do not get so tired.

A smaller enlightenment occurred very privately as we practiced *Pulling Taffy - Anchor Variation* and *Pulling Taffy - Wrist Circles Variation*, seeing for the first time the subtlety of their forward/back weight shifts and realizing that these two movements combine both forward/back and side to side displacement of weight. I love these movements even more and am grateful to their inventor. I teach them with real delight.

I was also very grateful for the learning on *Pulling Taffy - Anchor Variation* to fan the pigeon-toed foot back into position so as not to put unnecessary pressure on the knee. This movement really flows now. It was a very full day and I so enjoyed being so close to the beach.

Mark Moloney, St. Louis, MO





SEIJAKU ACCREDITATION COURSE AND TCC TEACHER RENEWAL

Long Branch, New Jersey, October 16-18, 1998

Hosts: Sr. Antonia Cooper and Daniel Pienciak

It was an honor and privilege for me to help arrange and host this event. Everyone who came was committed to sharing and learning with their full attention and dedication. The TEH (Power of Inner Sincerity) was evident on the part of all who participated, but most of all, (quoting Justin Stone's own words in a recent letter to me), in the "selfless and thorough" teaching of Ed Altman.

We learned to find the resistance in a small part of the motion, while the soles of both feet are flat on the ground. We learned to linger in the softness when the heel is allowed to rise, and not anticipate the resistance. Thank you, Ed, for all you gave us. Thank you Ed, Antonia, and Dale for helping me know the value of an opportunity to learn from sometimes challenging situations. Thank you, Justin, for sharing this "great secret of life" with us. Perhaps again in New Jersey in 1999? . . .

Dan Pienciak

I can't really find the words that would do justice to this deep experience. I know that I have touched on a very deep note of the spiritual importance and life-giving nature of this aspect of TCC and Seijaku. Doors are opening to my deepest self, to spaces to be explored for many years . . . a whole new world of awareness and possibility.

Ed, the honesty and willingness to share that you bring to your teaching allows us to be in the moment. What was most helpful was your bringing to us and reminding us about grounding the Chi. Thanks to Sr. Antonia Cooper and Dan Pienciak for organizing the event in a way that allowed us to focus on the practice without distraction.

Victoria Vercelletto

I thoroughly enjoyed the Teacher Renewal on October 16th. Ed Altman was extremely helpful in refining moves. Sometimes I feel like a musical instrument that needs a good tuning periodically - and feels better afterward, also sounds better.

Paula Favorito

Thank you, Ed, for being so precise with your wording and descriptions - in a few hours [at the Teacher Renewal] we looked at all the movements and had the opportunity to make corrections and find answers to questions.

Victoria Vercelletto

I am amazed at how Seijaku has enhanced my TCC practice already. I am so glad I had the opportunity to do this. Thank you to everyone who helped make it possible.

Carolyn Allenby

I am looking forward to practicing Seijaku and integrating it with T'ai Chi Chih. Already the toning and Nei Kung have had a tremendously calming effect. The potential of this discipline is enormous.

Judy Feltman

The tension begins when both feet are flat. The release when the back heel lifts. Such a powerful brief moment and then the softness. How sweet, and not wanting the softness to end. Then here comes the cycle again. Round and round.

John Buffington



PYRAMID POETRY
from the October Seijaku Accreditation

Who
 is it
 that knocks on
 the door while
 desperately
 holding it
 shut?

Ed Altman

It
 is when
 you know who
 you are that it
 all seems just
 as it
 is

John Buffington

Some
 would have
 you believe
 more is better
 but really
 less is
 more

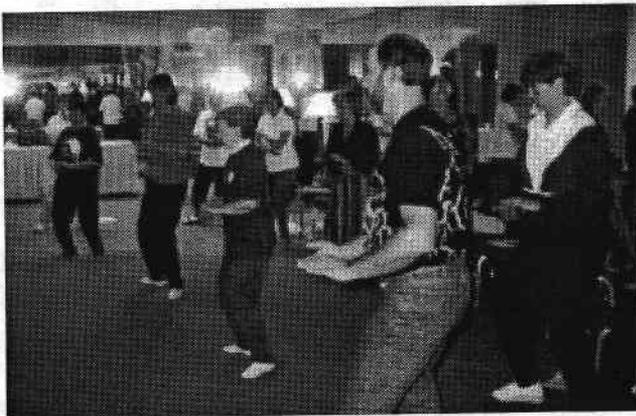
Maureen Skelly

T'ai
 Chi Chih
 Seijaku
 Transformation
 within me
 heartfelt
 Thanks

Mary Griffin, OSF

Can
 I know
 Who I am
 Possibly so
 Only if
 I let
 Go

Dan Pienciak



*Pulling Taffy
 at the October
 Teacher Renewal, New Jersey*



Back Row: Opie Reed, Carolyn Allenby, Fran Warren, Ed Altman, Lou DeGidio, Judith Feltman, Sr. Maureen Skelly
 Front Row: Victoria Vercelletto, Rosemarie Hallenback, Joyce DeGidio, Marie Griffin, Geraldine McGuire



T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' TRAINING

October 19 - 24, 1998

Host: Dale Buchanan, Great Falls, VA

WOW, what a wonderful week it was in Great Falls, VA. The weather was perfect, the candidates were sincere and Ed's teaching was impeccable. Although the Teachers' Training was almost cancelled, I decided to have it with only six candidates (the minimum is usually eight) and now I know I made the right decision.

Watching four of my own students become teachers was a wonderful experience -- almost like giving birth to quadruplets. Ed was very gentle with everyone and that was a great lesson for me to observe. All of the teachers, including myself, left with a wonderful feeling of gratitude toward Ed Altman, Justin Stone and Sharon Sirkis.

Not only did everyone get thorough instruction, but we had fun at the same time. Practicing on the overlook at Great Falls Park was the highlight of the week -- it was absolutely breathtaking. Everyone stuck together and helped each other through the rough spots, showing much love and sincerity. The week was filled with open hearts, tears of joy, and a ton of inner strength. Congratulations to all six new teachers. I look forward to hosting another Teachers' Training or T'ai Chi Chih event in the future.

Dale Buchanan

Once again I had the opportunity to audit a teachers' training. Things I remember:

- A**bsolutely an incredible week!
- C**aring
- C**oncern
- R**eady to go deeper into my practice
- E**xcellent teaching by Ed -- Thanks!
- D**ale, who made it all happen -- Thanks!
- I**n and out of the bathroom
- T**eacher candidates were a joy!
- A**ttention to the soles of our feet
- T**'ai Chi Chih practice at Great Falls
- I**nsights galore
- O**ne with the Crystal bowl
- N**ancy and Mark's house!

Sharon Sirkis, Auditor, Colombia, MD



Back Row: Ed Altman, Michelle Murray (Great Falls, VA), Mark McMahon (Great Falls, VA), Ann Daly (Indianapolis, IN), Dale Buchanan
Middle Row: Virginia Mitchell (Yuma, AZ), Linda Skuta (Fairfield, OH)
Front Row: Nancy McMahon (Great Falls, VA)



COMMENTS FROM THE GREAT FALLS TEACHERS' TRAINING



I first experienced a glimpse of the healing powers of movement ten years ago during a personal growth seminar. For months afterwards I tried to recreate that feeling by secluding myself in a room to dance or move freely but I was never able to get to that level again. Learning T'ai Chi Chih has taken me there and beyond. I will always be grateful to Dale Buchanan, my teacher, and to Ed Altman, who took me to the next level during my Teacher's Training. To move freely through very heavy air is the greatest joy.

P.S. Thank you Sharon Sirkis for showing us the meaning of sincerity.

Michelle Murray

I've heard it said many times:

I came . . .

I came to . . .

I came to believe . . .

Now I understand.

Linda R. Skuta

One day *Rocking Motion* finally came together for me and I experienced the ineffable joy of floating.

I learned the only chi I get to keep from my practice is the chi I ground. If I do not ground the chi it dissipates through rising. Once the chi is grounded, I can choose how to use my chi, including allowing some to rise and bubble up.

On the fourth day as I was driving, I realized I have a "good heart," and with that I began crying. By a "good heart" I meant one that is trustworthy. When I am in touch with my heart I can trust myself. I don't have to look outside myself. Then I realized it's like floating in T'ai Chi Chih -- not something that happens often but something that can happen more often as I practice my T'ai Chi Chih. I cried a lot, some were tears of grief, some were tears of joy, and some were tears of gratitude . . .

Virginia D. Mitchell





T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' TRAINING ALBUQUERQUE, JUNE 1998

Host: Beverly McFarland

Fourteen new T'ai Chi Chih teachers were accredited in Albuquerque, N.M. in June 1998. Reflecting on this training after a three month interval I see a roomful of smiles. The day-time format created a more relaxed atmosphere - this training seemed more like a retreat. As usual, auditing teachers and trainees alike experienced the shift that takes place in every training, a deepening of our practice.



I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all these new teachers:

Lisa Leahigh - Albuquerque, NM
Dennis Zallen - Albuquerque, NM
Ann Rutherford - Albuquerque, NM
John Hull - Carmichael, CA
Carla Grant - McKinney, TX
Barbara Hall - Tuscon, AZ
Cindy Rondeau - Albuquerque, NM
Margie Wayner - Albuquerque, NM

Min Kantrowitz - Albuquerque, NM
Jeanne Marlowe - Sedona, AZ
Mary Jane Scurlock - Sedona, AZ
Jean Smith - Kansas City, MO
Margo Carpenter - Edmonton, Alberta
Kelly Nichols-Webb - Tijeras, NM
Sr. Marie-Ann Main - Bluff Durban, South
Africa

The teachers training week was like a Greek Odyssey. I began the journey thinking I knew how to move and what it was all about. Ed led me down T'ai Chi Chih roads I hadn't realized existed. At the end of the week I realized my journey had just begun. T'ai Chi Chih's spiritual foundations are unfathomably deep. Justin saw us move on the second day and on the fourth. In that short period of time, he said we'd improved 1000%. Thank you Ed for your teaching gift.

Ann Rutherford

This week of Teacher Training has shown me that T'ai Chi Chih is more than I could have known. My teachers taught me the movements and prepared me for this course, but the intense training, the teaching skills and the supportive leaders have been inspiring. I'll go home with lots of things to work on and to process, with the knowledge that T'ai Chi Chih is so much more.

Jeanne Marlowe



TEACHERS' DIRECTORY UPDATE

Lois Mahaney, San Lorenzo, CA

The 1999 T'ai Chi Chih teachers' directory will be published and distributed in January. In order to have up-to-date information, it is imperative that you send the following:

- preferred spelling of your name
- correct address with zip code plus four digits
- one phone number and your choice of ONE of the following:
 - Second phone number
 - E-mail address
 - FAX number

for a total of five (5) lines maximum

Telephone area codes are being changed all over the country. If you have had notice of a contemplated change, please send it with the proposed date of change so we can keep the data base current.

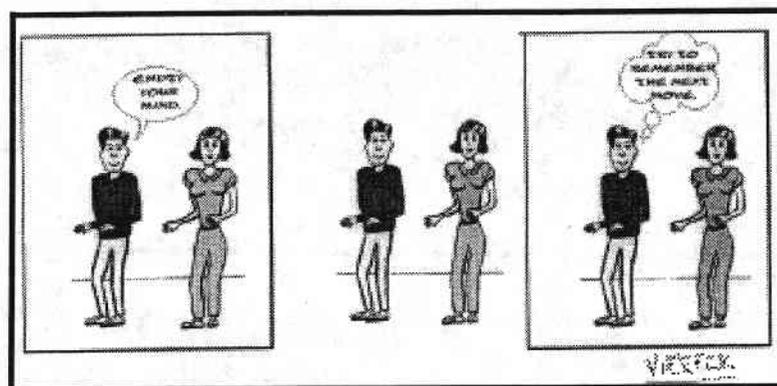
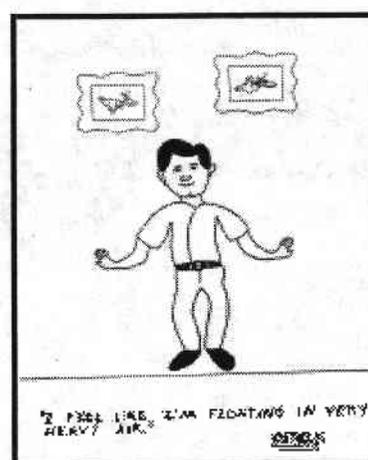
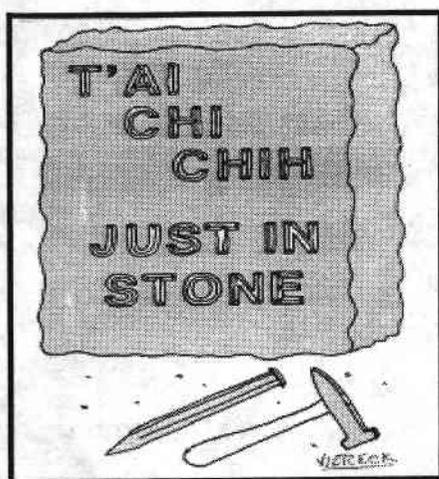
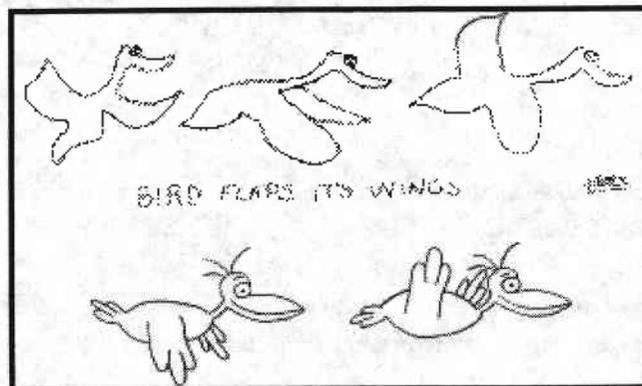
Also please be sure to indicate if you are: Active, Inactive, Willing to Travel

Deadline for submissions for the Teachers' Directory is December 30, 1998
For your convenience, use the form on page 35 (form can be photocopied) to send this information.

Send all information to:

The Vital Force
c/o Lois Mahaney
1633 Via Amigos
San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2009

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*.



ORIGINAL T'AI CHI CHIH CARTOONS

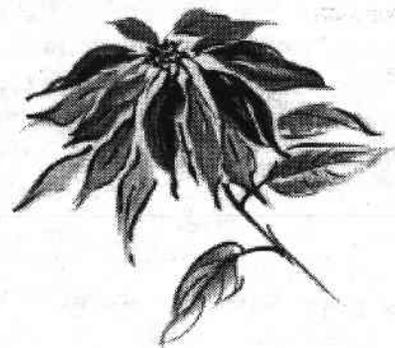
Victor Viereck, Cedar Grove, NJ



Top 10

Times to Practice T'ai Chi Chih During the Holiday Season

10. Before going shopping
9. While the kids are watching "Frosty the Snowman" (for the 14th time).
8. While standing in line (a little discreet rocking motion can't hurt).
7. Before, during or after making lists (shopping, menu, holiday card, etc.).
6. While you are stuck in traffic (a little "mental T'ai Chi Chih," or, if the traffic jam is really bad, get out of the car).
5. Before going to celebrate with the extended family.
4. Before the extended family arrives at your house.
3. Before the holiday party with co-workers.
2. When you least feel like it—it'll pick you up!
1. The morning after.



THESE ARE A FEW OF MY FAVORITE THINGS

Susan Evans, West Chester/Cincinnati, OH

I was just about to teach my class the *Six Healing Sounds* and I told them that I really hoped they would like it, as it was my favorite. The whole class started to laugh. I didn't understand. When I asked, they told me that I'd said the same thing about almost every move. (But I really do like the *Six Healing Sounds*)

I told them that when I do my personal practice I find myself sort of mentally sighing and thinking, "This is great, this is my favorite." A few minutes later I'm doing the same thing with the next move. This continues throughout the whole form. Although I know it's silly, I can't help myself and the same thing happens every single time.

One day I was talking to a former student and he told me he was still practicing every day. He asked if I remembered telling his class about my favorite moves and he said he was doing exactly the same thing. He said he keeps telling himself that it's silly to think it, as they all can't be his favorites. But telling himself this doesn't make any difference.

I guess we are both truly "in the moment."



T'AI CHI CHIH -- PRACTICE IS THE BEST OF ALL INSTRUCTORS

by Richard Brier, Tiburon, CA

I have found, practiced and taught T'ai Chi Chih for over four years. It is, by far, the simplest moving meditation I've found anywhere. The key is to relax and practice. One can only taste food by eating it. This form is based on the principle of letting go while learning and performing. Therein lies the secret. We find in T'ai Chi Chih that learning is experiencing, not intellectualizing. We learn by doing the form. We use the mind to attend to the movements, releasing all other concerns, thoughts, worries, moment by moment. We are in a state of relaxed yet alert attention, ready for the next gift.

The joy of T'ai Chi Chih is the realization of total balance of body-mind-spirit in the stillness of our inexhaustible Being. In this freedom and sense of inner and outer space lies our joy. Suddenly the noise of the mind and the world matter not at all for we are free. To me the main purposes of T'ai Chi Chih are the sense of incredible space, and the joy and love which radiate spontaneously from our central core as we evolve more deeply in the mysteriously simple movements.

First, find a good teacher, someone you respect. Then practice sincerely, daily, good times and bad. After a few months the movements themselves become your living teacher, the practice itself the mirror in which to see yourself. There is no end to the depth of realization possible, as life itself is endless.

Generally the first month is the most difficult. Be vigilant—you are creating a new pattern in your life and the old self will resist. Stay alert to your intention and after the first month onward it will become a valued friend. May you never stop doing it. It will become as significant as your daily meals and daily sleep. It will refresh you, rejuvenate your cells, and remind you of simplicity in our complex and confused world.

You are balancing your life-energy, the Chi, and this is the key to wholistic health. By practicing with determination and spirit you create a conscious connection to your High Self becoming one with the Universal. Notice the beauty, notice your still center.

Learn T'ai Chi Chih and it will teach you gently and eloquently many things, different for each person. Your life is a hidden treasure. So few of us remember as we hurry and worry through our lives. T'ai Chi Chih is the pause that refreshes. I've taught many people who simply wanted to slow down and just be. They have not been disappointed.

I've done the form a few thousand times and it is always different, as I am always in a different place inwardly. No two practices have ever been the same. And that is why I love it. It has soul. It gives me the moment newly born. If we miss the moment we miss everything, don't you think?

T'ai Chi Chih is a precious jewel unadorned by esoteric mumbo-jumbo. The only secret is to practice and the treasure is yours.

Originally published in *The Vital Force*, Fall 1984



Karmic Comments
from Good Karma Publishing, Inc.
P.O. Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND 58538
Jean Katus, Publisher

Price Changes

As of January 1, the following retail price changes will take effect:

- T'ai Chi Chih/Joy thru Movement*
phototext-\$15.95
Meditation for Healing - \$14.95
Abandon Hope - \$10.95
Climb the Joyous Mountain - \$10.95
20th Century Psalms - \$7.95
Heightened Awareness - \$8.95
all audio cassette tapes - \$10.95

As you can see, most items carrying a price change have been raised by only \$1.00. The video price, as well as those of most of our recent publications, remains the same. In addition, we are keeping the shipping chart as is. The same 40% certified teacher discount remains in effect when one purchases 3 or more items in any combination of titles. Teachers, if you still have pre-1999-priced items in stock, please sell them at the lower prices; you should pass on the new prices only when you purchase materials yourselves at the higher retail price (after January 1). Most of you will have your copy of the *Vital Force* by the end of December. If we receive your orders by December 31, you will still pay the lower retail prices.

You will notice that some items are no longer listed in the catalog but are still available as supplies last. They include Justin's jazz music tapes and many of the items we distribute. (Some asked at the conference for Margy Emerson's *A Potter's Notes on T'ai Chi Chuan*. It is now available again, though it is not listed in the new catalog.) Anyone who wants a list of these materials can request it from Good Karma Publishing.

Folsom Video Available

We are happy to let teachers know that the video of Justin's talk at Folsom Prison, the one shown at the summer conference in Albuquerque, is available on loan from Good Karma. The prison has given permission for us to use it. Here's how it works: Good Karma will make the video available to any certified teacher at no cost. All we expect is for you to pay the shipping both ways. If you want it sent book rate, please send \$1.24 in stamps; if you want it sent priority, please send \$3.00 in stamps. We will lend the video out in much the same way libraries do. It will be available for a two-week period, with the potential of renewal if another teacher hasn't requested it during that time.

Several teachers inquired about this video during and after the conference. Some of you already work in prisons and would like to show it to administrators in those institutions. Others of you have the desire to teach in prisons. Still others may want to show it to their T'ai Chi Chih classes or to interested community groups. We certainly encourage those who have not seen it to do so. Justin's talk was very inspiring, not just for prisoners, but for anyone interested in T'ai Chi Chih and related matters. (See Noël Altman's article "Justin Stone Speaks to Inmates at Folsom Prison" in the September 1998 *Vital Force* for more information about the content of the talk.) Please contact Good Karma to reserve the video in your area. Remember to allow at least two weeks for us to process your order (with the appropriate postage included) so we can get the video to you during the time you need it.



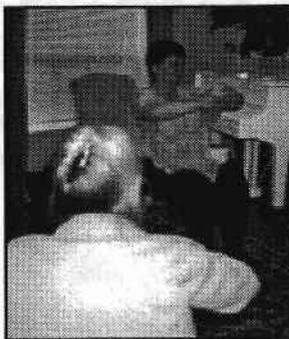
GIFTS, TREASURES, BLESSINGS

Carrie Kinsey, Concord, CA

What a blessing it is to live near to so many T'ai Chi Chih teachers! I can't imagine how I would have made it through my first year and a half of teaching without the support of this wonderful community. Teaching provides many challenges and many opportunities for growth. I realize just how valuable it has been for me to be able to draw upon the experience of those wise teachers around me who have seen so much of it before.

A nice way to "share the wealth" is to invite another teacher to your class, or go visit! The rewards can be amazing.

Not all of us are so fortunate to live in such a "teacher-rich" community. In that case, communications such as *The Vital Force* can be an asset. Be sure to send your stories, you may be providing "just the thing" for someone who needs it.



Carrie Kinsey joins Pat Huseby's seated class in the Cosmic Consciousness Pose



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Published by Good Karma Publishing, Inc., Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND, 58538

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(for the 1999 Teachers' Directory)
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San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2009
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Winter

The VITAL FORCE Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

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O
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in the dark
of darkest night
you are there
with me,
safe

All
motion
my ten toes
through the cosmos
ever seek
to be
one

Not
starving
not in jail
not quick-dying
I forget
to go
fast

Calm
of night
all around
gently humming
what joy is
heartfelt
now

Leaf
from oak
falls to earth
most gracefully
so life force
flows to
soul

Gold
it glows
below me
buzzing motor
full of fuel
rabbit's
down

Above by Mark Moloney, St. Louis, MO

Spring
Summer
Winter Fall
Seasons of all
Spring Summer
Winter
Fall

Doug Harned

Why
do we
desire what
is no longer?
Why not live
for this
day?

Karin Harned

