



# THE **VITAL FORCE**

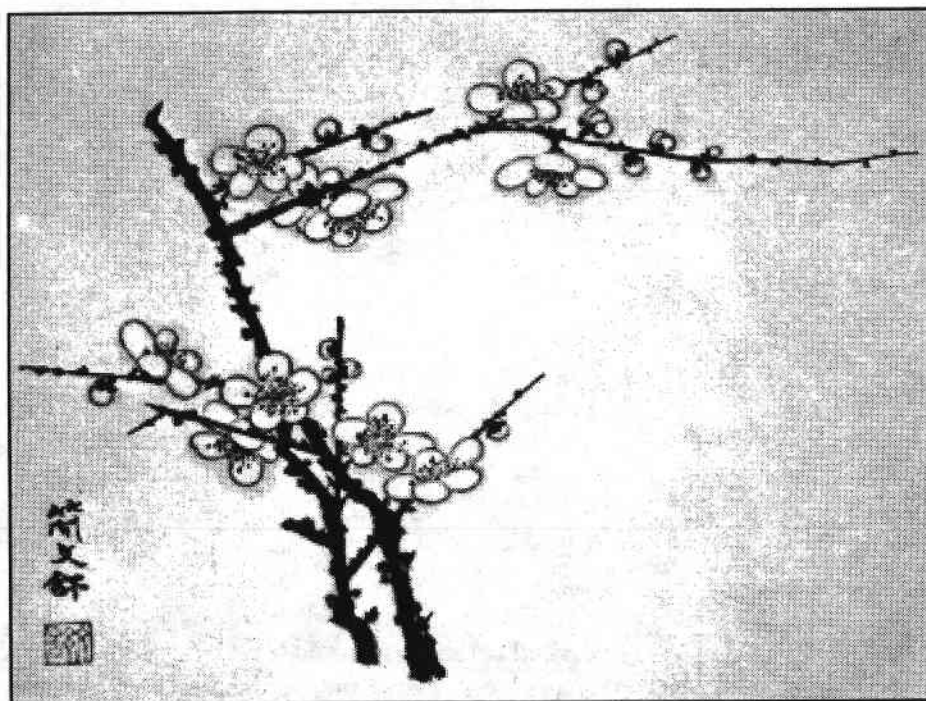
Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

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:**

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**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 <sup>th</sup>
Summer	April 25 <sup>th</sup>
Fall	July 25 <sup>th</sup>
Winter	October 25 <sup>th</sup>

### 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*.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Feature Articles

Chi and Meditation . . . Justin Stone..... 4  
 Resting in the Essence . . . Ed Altman..... 7

## Notes to Teachers

Submissions Information..... 2  
 Teachers' Directory Information..... 2,29  
 Vital Force Transition . . . Altman..... 8  
 Letters from Teachers..... 9  
 Folsom Prison Updates..... 10  
 Shepherd's Centers of America..... 11  
 Top Ten..... 31

## Good Karma Publishing

Karmic Komments..... 33  
 GKP Distributors..... 34

## Calendar Notes

Year 2000 Conference Announcement..... 18  
 1999-2000 TCC Events Calendar..... 19  
 1999 Conference Information..... 20,21

## Teacher News

News from all over..... 17

## Teachers' Articles

See What's Cooking . . . Brocklehurst..... 5  
 A Teacher's Experience . . . Moloney..... 11  
 A View From Inside the Bell . . . Braga..... 12  
 Summer Vacation . . . Altman..... 13  
 A Healing Experience . . . Detert..... 13  
 A Teacher's Story . . . Sirkis..... 14  
 My Favorite Things . . . S.Evans..... 31  
 Practice is the Best Instructor . . . Brier..... 32  
 Gifts, Treasures, Blessings . . . Kinsey..... 34

## Students Write

Celebrating Their Teachers..... 15

## Events Feedback

Evanston, IL Teacher Renewal..... 22,23  
 NJ Teacher Renewal and Seijaku..... 24,25  
 Virginia Teachers' Training..... 26,27  
 Albuquerque Teachers' Training..... 28

## Inspirations

### (Poetry, Perceptions)

During TCC Practice . . . Brodie..... 11  
 Writing from the Earth . . . E. Evans..... 16  
 Original TCC Cartoons . . . Vierek..... 30  
 Pyramid Poetry . . . Moloney, Harned..... 36

**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.



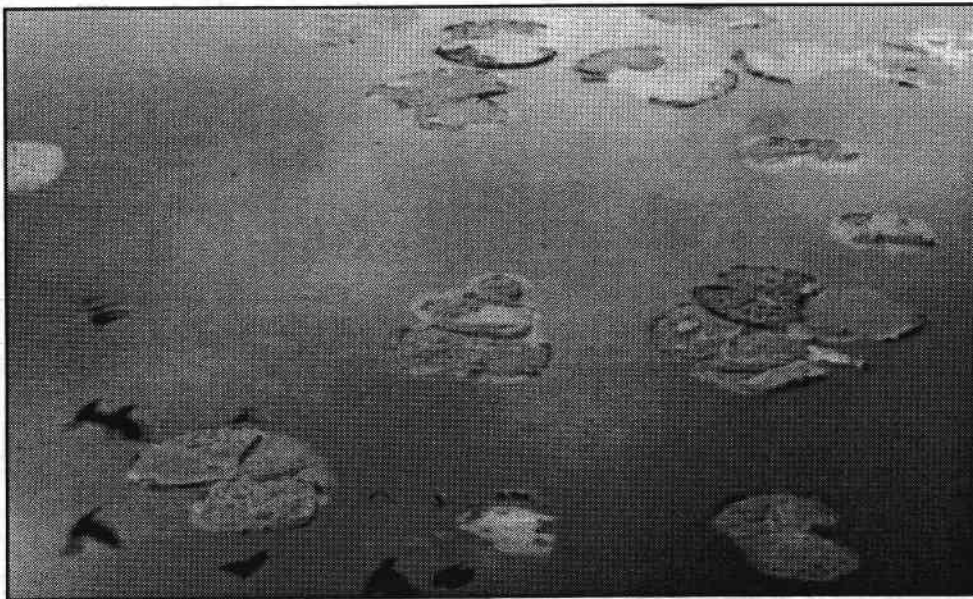
## **RESTING IN THE ESSENCE**

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.

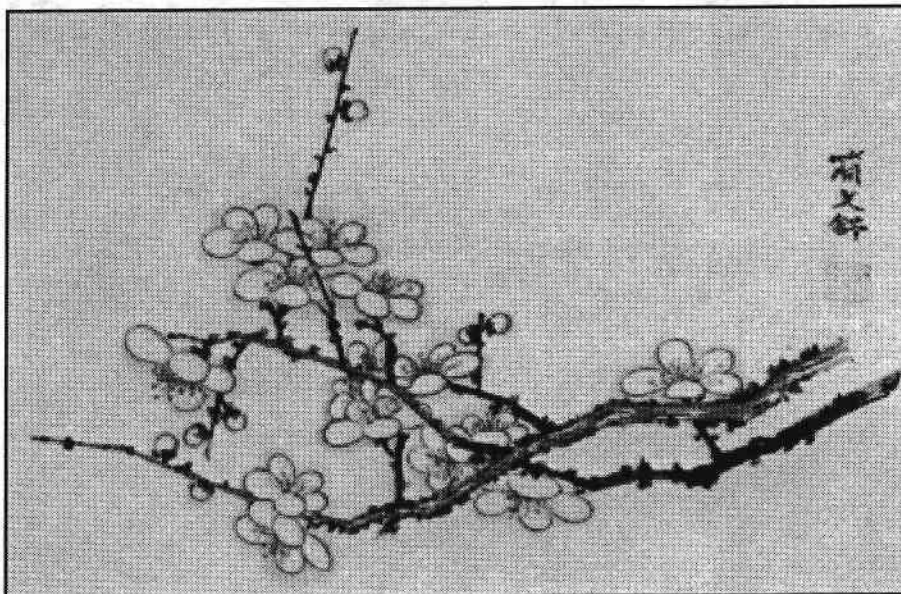
With regard to the future, Noël Altman has agreed to become the new Interim Editor of *The Vital Force*. With her prior experience as both a journalist and editor for her high school and college newspapers, she will bring considerable expertise to the job. Please join me in thanking the outgoing staff,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