

The **Vital Force**

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Deanna



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



The Vital Force

Editor: Noel Altman
Technical Advisor: Ed Altman
Webmaster: Victor Berg

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*, listing in and receipt of the annual Teachers' Directory (to teachers only), and outreach activities, such as teacher referrals. The annual membership fee is \$30 for teachers, \$25 for interested persons / students. Addresses outside the U.S. require an additional \$10 per year. First Class delivery within the U.S. is an additional \$5 per year.

The purpose of *The Vital Force* is to provide a medium by which teachers and students of T'ai Chi Chih may share, educate, inform and inspire one another.

Cover:

"Behold the beauty around you" is



the theme of TCC teacher Deanne Hodgson's photography,

while "Beholding the beauty within you" is her approach to teaching T'ai Chi Chih. The water lilies on the cover fit with the meditative theme of many of the articles in this quarter's issue and was reproduced in black and white from one of Hodgson's notecards of her color photography.

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Letter from the Editor

I am pleased to announce that Victor Berg has joined The Vital Force staff as Webmaster. Victor, with more than 10 years of computer programming experience, has agreed to take on the maintenance and development of the T'ai Chi Chih community website (at www.taichichih.org). Victor is teaching himself the requisite programming languages involved and has already changed the look and organization of the website. We are grateful to Victor for taking on this important task — presenting T'ai Chi Chih to the outside world.

The website was originally designed, set up and paid for by Christina Tillotson in the summer of 1997. Thereafter, Guy Kent took over the management of the site — including the updating of the list of accredited instructors, collection of yearly fees of \$5 per teacher listed and payment of applicable web-related expenses. Ed and I are both grateful to the two of them for bringing it forward.

Ed Altman took over the website around December and has been responsible for updating the teacher list. He also made some improvements to the site. He added thumbnail pictures of the items described on the Good Karma Publishing page. He enabled The Vital Force link and designed the two pages for it with my input, so now interested people and students can learn about it and sign up for a membership by printing off the membership page and mailing it in. (Within a week of activating the page, The Vital Force did receive its first sign-up from the site.) Ed also has worked out an exchange with a colleague of his in the software industry: private TCC lessons in exchange for a programming "script" that will read The Vital Force database monthly and automatically update the teacher list. Of course, this is only possible because The Vital Force database now has the pertinent web information for every teacher, which Ed has entered and formatted.

VFJ Volunteer John Steinmetz has been working to secure permission from various sources to display some of the more outstanding or significant published articles on T'ai Chi Chih. Due to John's efforts, the website now displays the 1990 article which Corinn Codye helped to get published in the Los Angeles Times. (That's the one that generated over 800 phone calls to the toll-free number of then-Satori Resources, resulting in scores of classes for area teachers). John has also secured permission to display the article from the October, 1996 issue of the Journal of Gerontological Nursing which was a write-up of a study conducted on elderly T'ai Chi Chih students as well as IDEA's October, 1998 article on T'ai Chi Chih teacher Dr. Tahir Bhatti's medical study on the effects of T'ai Chi Chih on lower back pain.

At The Vital Force mailing in March, VFJ Volunteer Wendy Helms generously offered to begin typing up hand-written letters and articles for The Vital Force. She did so for this issue and also for the website.

Accredited teachers who are interested in being included on the website teacher list now need to renew or sign up through The Vital Force. There is now a place on the membership form to fill in. The fee is \$5 per year.

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

. . . I just received the March '99 copy of the *Vital Force* and I must say that it is the best one I have ever seen. You and Ed did a wonderful job with the layout, editing, articles, etc. Thanks so much for including my articles also. Maybe they will inspire a few teachers to open a center in there area. . .

Dale Buchanan,
Great Falls, VA

Noel—
Your first issue of *VFJ* is terrific! I am enjoying the layout and use of grey space to highlight areas. I wish you much joy, satisfaction and success as Interim Editor. Warmly,

Roberta Taggart,
Cupertino, CA

Noel: I just received my latest issue of the *Vital Force*. The changes in layout were fantastic! Your creativity and commitment made the paper a pleasure to read. I hope my fellow readers will join me in hoping that the "interim" is dropped from your title. Thanks again for giving.

John Armitage,
Albuquerque, NM

Noel, *The Vital Force Journal* is alive and well in your nurturing hands. Congratulations on your open-hearted willingness to publish this journal. The format and content are excellent and reflect the highest qualities of our practice: mindfulness and simplicity and truth. Thank you for all your work. Blessings,

Linda Braga,
Castro Valley, CA

I would never ever want to miss an issue of *VF*.

Sr. M. Pauletta Kane,
Henderson, KY

Thanks for sending me the *Vital Force Journal*. It came at a good time. I needed inspiration after a long winter without contact with a teacher or other T'ai Chi [Chih] students. You did a great job with this edition, Noel. I found it all interesting material pleasantly presented. I particularly liked hearing how T'ai Chi Chih had helped others especially the men in Folsom Prison. . .

Susan Francis,
Stoddard, NH
(Student of Eddy
Martinez-Hazembank)

Thanks for your good work & service which continues to connect all of us whether near or far. My classes are flourishing. Am working w/ seniors, as well as general public, brain-injury recoveries & possibly prison personnel. So — *The Vital Force* continues to be a source of inspiration & information necessary to keep me informed & nourished. . .

Meara Joy Norice,
Burlington, VT

Noel, I am taking this opportunity, as I renew my *Vital Force* subscription, to let you know how much I enjoyed the March issue of *The Vital Force*. It truly does look like a journal: the format, the larger & easily readable typeface, the graphics & wise use of screening provides a beautiful & clear container to hold the words & images that serve to enliven & unite the growing network of TCC teachers & students. . .

Barbara Sommers,
Cumberland, WI

[Editor's Note: The font size of the bulk of the text is 12 pt., the same as the previous staff used. It just appears larger!]

continued on page 35



After Meditation...

By Justin Stone

Occasionally, after Meditation, I jot down a few notes of thoughts that have come to me. Here they are:

BLISS DOESN'T COME FROM ACTION: IT COMES WITH STILLNESS.

MANY THINGS ARE FELT TO BE TRUE WHEN THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY PARTIAL REVELATIONS OR REALIZATIONS. OTHER PARTIAL KNOWLEDGE MAY SEEM TO CONTRADICT THE FIRST, YET BOTH CAN BE RIGHT IN THEIR WAY.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO EXPERIENCE REAL EMPTINESS, WATCH YOUR STATE OF MIND AFTER YOU COME OUT OF THE TURIYA STATE IN MEDITATION.

RECOGNIZE THE ESSENCE, BUT FUNCTION FREELY. WHAT YOU REALIZE IS BEYOND THOUGHT.



Artwork by Virginia Shilson



Consciousness

By Justin Stone

At the Tuesday TCC practice for teachers, in the Albuquerque Center, one of the very good teachers, Debbie, remarked that she would be giving a presentation at a CONSCIOUSNESS FAIR, to be held in Albuquerque. This piqued my interest as this is one of the deepest topics I can imagine. I wondered whether the speakers know what they would talk about, or was this another case of simply choosing a box-office title without anything to back it up, as is often done.

I pointed out that there is no such thing as "higher consciousness," that there is only consciousness, just as the frequently used terms "good karma" and "bad karma" are incorrect— there is only karma, where each cause must have an equal effect (the words "good" and "bad" reflect subjective judgments).

I suggested she ask a speaker what the relationship is between karma and consciousness; also, the relationship between CHI (Prana) and consciousness. In truth, there is no consciousness without CHI (Prana) and the relationship between mind and CHI is a very intimate one. This should be understood by teachers of TCC.

In truth, there is nothing but consciousness (how could there be a world or an observer without it?), and consciousness is brought about by the CHI. Consciousness and CHI arise simultaneously, and departure of the CHI (Prana) from the body means death. Kundalini is a form of CHI (Prana), but this would be an esoteric subject to discuss, and not necessary.

A very well-known Zen writer once asked me (as we shared a hot bath at Big Sur on the California coast) to give him some ideas for the lecture he was about to give. I asked him for the title of the talk, and he replied that it was "Mysticism Inside Out." Obviously, it was a box-office title, but it was also obvious that he knew nothing of mysticism except what he had read; he knew a great deal more about alcohol and drugs.

It is not hard to fool a gullible public, and doing so may make money, but it is definitely wrong to do, and dangerous. My advice is, if you don't know the subject 'inside out,' don't pretend and talk and write about it (it then becomes an ego trip).