

The Vital Force

Journal of T'ai Chi Chih



Volume 17, No. 1

March 2000

*Kids
laughing
make music
more beautiful
than all songs
ever
sung*

– Richard Worth
(Student of Sharon
Sirkis)

*Boy
chasing
butterfly
giggles and gasps
as his own
spirit
soars*

– Sharon Sirkis

*Sun
Flower
Blooming now.
Who can say when
the petals
will fall?
Burst!*

– Noel Altman

*your
warm smile
can topple
mountains of my
self doubting
here's my
smile*

– Eric Imbody

*Blooms
kissed by
the dawn's dew
morning glories
raise their heads
to the
sun*

– Linda Tolentino
(Student of Tom
Tolentino)



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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
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The Vital Force, *Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*, is an unincorporated, non-profit association, serving T'ai Chi Chih practitioners worldwide. Membership in the Association includes four quarterly issues of *The Vital Force*, 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:

Spring emerges from Winter: The month of March is between the seasons of Winter and Spring. The paper color conveys the color of Winter, but the Pyramid poems, written by T'ai Chi Chih teachers and students, all have a springtime theme. The form, Pyramid Poetry, was originated by Justin Stone and is detailed in his book *Climb the Joyous Mountain*. Happy Springtime to you!

The three cranes on the cover and on every inside page are the artwork of Ou Mie Shu.

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Letter from the Editor

How do things happen in T'ai Chi Chih? How do T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku Teacher Training Courses get scheduled and carried out? How does the annual Teachers' Conference happen every year? How is there enough material to fill an issue of *The Vital Force* each quarter? How does it get published and distributed? How does the T'ai Chi Chih community website get maintained and improved on a steady basis? How does the only non-profit T'ai Chi Chih Center (in Albuquerque, NM) keep its doors open to teachers and students alike?

The answer is: through the largely volunteer effort of accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers, and sometimes students, and sometimes spouses or other family members of teachers. **Although we have no formal organization, we are an organized community of individuals.**

Each of the examples I listed above were the original idea of either Justin Stone, the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih, or any of a great number of accredited teachers of T'ai Chi Chih, each contributing their share towards **working for the common good of the T'ai Chi Chih community, without thought of personal gain.** It takes both people with ideas and people willing to carry them out to accomplish these feats.

T'ai Chi Chih has gone through some amazing growth in the last 25+ years, but, as Justin has been saying for at least the last 11½ years (since I first met him), "T'ai Chi Chih is still in its infancy." When I was first accredited to teach 11½ years ago, most people you'd meet didn't know what T'ai Chi Chih was. Meditation, let alone "moving meditation" was unknown to most people and pooh-pooed by the scientific types. Since that time, the medical establishment has performed and published studies concluding the health benefits of meditation, and also our moving meditation, T'ai Chi Chih.

A great strength of our community has come from Justin's original decree to never accept money or gifts from any accredited teacher. A fee is paid to become a teacher, yes, but after that, any money earned goes into the teacher's pocket, not into Justin's or to any national treasury account, either. For this reason, there is not a mandated obligation. There is free choice. Someone who is grateful to this spiritual discipline naturally wants to give something back. The money earned from this spiritual discipline is charged money and the way it is spent is also charged. Great deeds have been accomplished as teachers have willingly spent their own hard-earned dollars and donated their own valuable time to further the common good, whether by spending the money required to attend / audit distant T'ai Chi Chih events so that their practice and subsequent teaching of the form may become clearer, beginning or carrying out a community project, hosting an event in their community in order to increase community, promoting T'ai Chi Chih to scientists and the media. Sometimes there is a gentle or not-so-gentle prodding from Justin or Ed or another teacher to inspire that person to act, but, the decision to do so is entirely that person's, and the choice to decline is sometimes best, too.

The question I pose to you is: are you grateful to T'ai Chi Chih? Not to any person necessarily, but to T'ai Chi Chih? Because T'ai Chi Chih has a life of its own, and a charter. If you believe in the charter, perhaps you will decide to act in some way to aid its course...The choice is yours, entirely yours. **Noel Altman, Editor**



Readers Respond

I have a question that I didn't see answered in your ["The Vital Force Association Commonly-Asked Questions"] article [published at the back of the 2000 Teachers' Directory].

I know we can distribute quotes, etc. from the *Vital Force* to students if the name of the magazine is stated. What about using them in our fliers, and other information we use as outreach to find new students? And can we use the great info on the website for outreach? Maybe this should be addressed to Ed, but if possible, please let me know. Thank you,

Viktoria Vercelletto
Hightstown, NJ

[Editor's note: Yes, it is fine to use the articles (or excerpts from them) from *The Vital Force* for outreach purposes, as long as you are distributing them for free and the source of the published information is thoroughly cited—"The Vital Force" and the issue date should appear above or below the quoted material on the flyer, brochure, etc. as well as the name(s) of the author(s).

The same goes for previously-published material that appears on the T'ai Chi Chih website. (All sources are cited along with the articles there). If the information on the website is not attributed to a particular person or organization, then you may use it as well in your materials without citing any source. Again, all of this usage applies to materials which you are distributing for free.]

Please enroll me as a new member of the *Vital Force*, Journal of T'ai Chi Chih. . . I look forward to receiving

this publication. I enjoyed very much the workshop conducted by Ed Altman here in San Antonio Sunday. I feel it should profit me immensely as a student of T'ai Chi Chih. Thank you. A check is enclosed. Very sincerely yours,

Dorothy Perez
San Antonio, TX
(Student of Sr. Geraldine Kline)

Greetings and Peace from Schenectady, NY! For the New Year I told myself I would check out our website since I haven't checked it in some time. I am thrilled by what I see! The layout, the articles, the photographs, the professionalism!!!! Wonderful! Thank you for all of your work!

Arthur Foo
Schenectady, NY

. . . Being a teacher of TCC is one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. It is so nice to share this Gift of TCC with others and to see the positive effect it has on their lives. . .

John O'Connor
Garrison, NY

The web page looks fantastic, really, really great. I am so impressed. Keep up the good work.

David Schulberg
San Lorenzo, CA

Just received my copy of the Teach-

ers Directory, and it lists me as being inactive. I left that box blank, not listing active or inactive. I meant it to be left blank. Please next time just leave it blank if not listed. Thank you.

P.S. Also, why isn't Justin Stone the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih listed in the Directory?

Patricia Dawn
Lancaster, CA

[Editor's note: I'm sorry to hear that you did not wish to be listed as "inactive": When you leave that box blank, whoever is doing the data entry has to make their best guess as to which you should be listed as: "active" or "inactive", usually leaving it as whatever option you elected the last time you renewed. We only have the two options. Remember that the primary purpose of the Directory is to allow teachers to make referrals to one another. Knowing whether a teacher is active is critical to making a referral. When you renew, be sure to mark one or the other. And remember that "active" means basically that you are willing to teach, not necessarily that you have classes going right now. (You could always offer private lessons in that circumstance.)

Justin Stone requested that his phone number be left out of the Directory and since he doesn't have an e-mail address either (and never will!), there would have been no contact information for him. A mistake was made, however — he should have been included with his name only. We have already apologized to him for this inadvertent error and plan to correct it with the next printing (of the 2001 Directory at the end

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The State of the Community

By Ed Altman

After our first 25 years, T'ai Chi Chih continues to grow and provide a positive influence in many areas of our society. Following our celebration of this milestone at last year's conference, I want to review areas of recent progress, and outline some directions for our growth into the future.

Certification

New teacher certification has been the area of greatest improvement in the last few years, and I'm grateful to all teachers who communicate and impose the rigorous preparation standards necessary for their candidates to be successful during their accreditation course. We've seen significant improvements in the level of maturity many new teachers exhibit when they first begin teaching, and it is a pleasure to see so many demonstrate a great depth of sincerity to improve their practice and assist in efforts to help spread T'ai Chi Chih.

Last year 75 candidates attended teacher training courses to become accredited to teach T'ai Chi Chih. Of these, 90% were successful in receiving their teaching certificates during the accreditation course. The others were given a "deferred" accreditation and have been working with another qualified teacher to help them complete their training. At the time of writing this article, three of the seven deferred teachers have completed their training and received their certificates to teach T'ai Chi Chih. I would like to thank the following teachers who have been asked in the last year to assist deferred candidates in completing their training: **Marlene Brown, Sr. Antonia Cooper, Carla Grant, Judy George and Kathy (Vieth) Albers.** Their dedication and willingness to help others has been extremely necessary and greatly appreciated.

Obviously, we would like all course attendees to receive their accreditation certificate with their classmates, but this can only be accomplished if teachers who are sending candidates make sure they understand, communicate and enforce the appropriate standards for

candidate preparation. It is very difficult for everyone when someone receives a deferred accreditation, and this situation is entirely preventable! If you are planning to prepare a candidate and have any questions or concerns about the accreditation process please contact other teachers with more experience in this matter, or get in touch with recent teacher training course hosts.

Another suggestion is for local teachers to work together as a group to prepare their candidates. This has been very effective in many areas because the limitations of any individual teacher are usually overcome by working as a group. Some teachers may choose to become a subject coach in areas such as "movements," "leading a group" or "presentations." This helps ensure all candidates in the group receive consistent instruction, and makes it easier to overcome the "myopia" we sometimes have when it comes to evaluating our own students.

Expansion

T'ai Chi Chih has expanded into many new areas throughout North America and abroad in recent years. In the last year, I have given workshops in key areas of growth such as Victoria (British Columbia, Canada), San Antonio (Texas), and Portland (Oregon) to help promote T'ai Chi Chih and generate enthusiasm within the local community.

The workshop in Victoria has led to a teacher training course which will be held in Edmonton (Alberta, Canada) later this year. This will be the first teacher training offered in Canada since 1990, and I'm very excited about this event. The San Antonio workshop has also led to our scheduling a first-ever training there this Summer. In addition to these "new" cities, T'ai Chi Chih teacher training courses have been taught for the first time in Florida, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia in recent years.

One area which has shown consistent expansion over the last five years is New Jersey / New York, and we're very excited that 2000 will bring the Annual T'ai

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T'ai Chi Chih and the Future

By Justin Stone

Patanjali has been called the "Father of Yoga," not because he originated it but because he codified it. He took parts of different age-old Yogas and worked them into RAJA YOGA (the "Kingly Yoga"), a major work in India that has great importance. Anyone who claims to teach Raja Yoga must understand and have mastered (thru practice) all eight steps.

Patanjali says: "Yoga is the suppression of mental modifications." In other words, all yogas have this as their ultimate goal. These mental modifications are called "Vritti" in Sanskrit, and, when they are repeated over and over, become VASHANAS or "Habit Energies". Nothing is more important in this life and in future lives. These habit energies shape our lives. Whether by thought, intent, or action, these habit energies—most carried over from the past, it is believed in India—are responsible for our way of living. When they become overly strong they can develop into SAMSKARAS, or "tendencies". These tendencies, according to the Buddha, can last thru many lives. People who do things without knowing why—such as drinking, although they dis-

like the taste of liquor—can have their lives destroyed in this manner. And it all started with the seemingly harmless vritti, the "mental modification" that gradually turned into a habit energy.

Thus, what we think, plan, and do now will shape our lives to come. Perhaps knowing this will make us more careful. All the talk in the world with therapists, psychologists, and psychoanalysts won't change a thing.

Are there ways to erase these Vashanas? Yes, two that I know about and teach. Deep Meditation that reaches the Turiya level can do it and T'ai Chi Chih in many, many cases has done it. I believe that T'ai Chi Chih changes the metabolism and, with it, erases unwanted Vashanas (such habits as driving a car, playing the piano, etc. are obviously not harmful and even necessary). I have observed teachers and students erase harmful habits and addictions. Thus T'ai Chi Chih can change the future. What could be more valuable?

He who diminishes his wants and his needs gains power. He who is receptive learns. He who feels what can't be seen is guided intuitively. He who is sad when he triumphs, he understands.

— 20th Century Psalms / Reflections on this Life by Justin F. Stone



State of Community

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Chi Chih Teachers' Conference to the East Coast for the first time! I look forward to seeing all T'ai Chi Chih teachers at the "main event" of the year.

Our teaching community now includes active T'ai Chi Chih teachers in 7 countries outside of North America, and we're also seeing a consistent increase in the number of T'ai Chi Chih teachers in Canada! Within the U.S., the areas of noteworthy growth include the South (Florida, Louisiana), Midwest (Missouri, Illinois, Ohio, Minnesota), Northeast (New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania), West Coast (California, Oregon), and of course, the birthplace of T'ai Chi Chih, New Mexico.

Significant Programs

In California, **FOLSOM STATE PRISON** continues to offer the largest T'ai Chi Chih program within a correctional setting. According to **James Hecker**, the T'ai Chi Chih teacher/inmate who is leading the program, the number of inmates who have been taught T'ai Chi Chih is approximately 500. He also notes that nearly all of the inmates at the prison are aware of what T'ai Chi Chih is and that courses are available. James continues to receive considerable outside assistance from fellow teachers **Judy Tretheway** and **Steve Wornoff**, and is working to promote and expand the T'ai Chi Chih program in new directions at Folsom.

THE SHEPHERD'S CENTER OF AMERICA (SCA) is a non-denominational aging advocacy group that encourages local communities to develop programs where seniors can help other seniors. In 1998, SCA was provided with a list of accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers in areas near their 90 centers around the country. At that time, they also began offering Justin Stone's T'ai Chi Chih text and videotape for sale through their local centers.

SCA now reports that approximately 1/3 of these centers offer T'ai Chi Chih courses or have purchased T'ai Chi Chih materials. Last year, SCA sent one of its own staff members, **Lucy Ann Fleischman**, to become accredited to teach T'ai Chi Chih. Since that time, SCA has presented T'ai Chi Chih at two of their three regional meetings, and includes an overview of the T'ai Chi Chih program in their training seminars. In addition,

SCA publishes information to all members about T'ai Chi Chih Teacher / Student workshops taught by the Head of T'ai Chi Chih, and encourages them to improve their practice by attending these events.

Publicity

In 1999, T'ai Chi Chih was featured on a nationwide radio program ("The David Essel Show") thanks to the efforts of **Marjie Bassler** and **Carmen Brocklehurst**. An in-depth interview was also aired on National Public Radio in North Dakota in conjunction with the teacher training course hosted by **Christeen McLain** in October.

Justin Stone has received two significant acknowledgements as a result of our collective efforts to help him spread T'ai Chi Chih. The **AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (AMA)**, included T'ai Chi Chih in their 460-page "Cultural Competence Compendium". **Hannah Hedrick**, an accredited T'ai Chi Chih teacher who works at the AMA, edited the compendium and worked to get T'ai Chi Chih included within it as a "complementary practice" for the health profession.

Justin was also asked by the **UNITED NATIONS** to speak about T'ai Chi Chih! Thanks to **Carolyn Perkins** in New York for helping to make this international body aware of the significant benefits of T'ai Chi Chih practice. This type of work does a great deal to help get our message out!

The national office of the **ARTHRITIS FOUNDATION** released a statement that T'ai Chi Chih "would be beneficial for people with arthritis." T'ai Chi Chih teacher **Karen Schneider** is to be thanked for her work at local, regional, and national levels within the Foundation to persuade them to make this announcement.

In New Mexico, the **T'AI CHI CHIH CENTER** led a write-in campaign to their local Public Television Station (PBS) which resulted in the PBS T'ai Chi Chih program being shown again. This is a great example of the valuable work being performed by **Dora Derzon**, **Uly Messler**, **Robert Montes de Oca** and **Ann Rutherford** as the Center's Board of Directors. I hope other areas will lead similar efforts to get the program back on the air to help



familiarize people with the many benefits of T'ai Chi Chih practice. **Carmen Brocklehurst**, who was featured in the program and worked for many years to make it a reality, continues to expand T'ai Chi Chih in new areas within the state. In 1999, she and a group of fellow teachers presented T'ai Chi Chih at the New Mexico Governor's Conference!

The Vital Force

THE VITAL FORCE, Journal of T'ai Chi Chih, has undergone a significant transformation under the guidance of the new Editor - **Noel Altman**. Her vision and hard work, and that of her volunteer staff (**Victor Berg, Doug Harned**, and myself) have improved its ability to provide an invaluable communication link for the entire T'ai Chi Chih community. Students now represent nearly 20% of total membership, and T'ai Chi Chih teachers are encouraged to share *The Vital Force* with their students to help keep them motivated in their personal practice.

Recent efforts at *The Vital Force* have led to a vastly improved T'ai Chi Chih community website (www.taichichih.org), and the integration of the website with the teacher database. This has helped improve data consistency and reduced the amount of effort required to maintain the website. Approximately 60% of the teacher-members of The Vital Force Association now have their contact information appearing on the site for referral purposes! In addition, an extensive outreach mailing was also completed last year inviting over 500 non-subscribing accredited teachers to receive a free issue of *The Vital Force* to encourage them to become members.

What's Coming Next?

The last few years have been spent improving how teacher candidates are prepared and taught to become accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers. Thankfully, this work, started by Justin Stone, continues to grow and expand due to the efforts of teachers throughout our worldwide community. Next to our personal practice, this is our greatest responsibility, and these efforts have a great impact on the future integrity of the T'ai Chi Chih teaching community.

One exciting new direction for the community will be an annual **DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT" / CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH** on Justin's birthday (November 20th). This idea, including the date, was suggested by both **Aida Wilks** and **Sr. Antonia Cooper**,

and Justin has given his consent to it. I hope accredited teachers throughout the world will use this day to promote T'ai Chi Chih by giving presentations, demonstrations and conducting outreach efforts. It will be one day each year when we will turn our attention outward and express our gratitude for T'ai Chi Chih, and share it with our surrounding communities.

The future direction of growth for T'ai Chi Chih will be in offering teacher training courses outside of North America when those communities are large enough to support such an event. Our list of active teachers continues to grow in these areas, and they all benefit from your continued focus and communication with them. If you're planning a trip abroad, why not make the connection with another accredited teacher and practice together?

The T'ai Chi Chih community is still waiting for that great "breakthrough" article or interview to appear in the national media. An in-depth discussion of T'ai Chi Chih in a major magazine or news coverage on an interesting (and perhaps controversial) topic such as Folsom Prison will open many doors for T'ai Chi Chih. For example, even if we ignore the fact that teaching T'ai Chi Chih to inmates helps them improve their lives, there is a significant financial motivation for taxpayers to have them learn and practice T'ai Chi Chih. It costs about \$45,000 to house and feed a prisoner each year. When it is realized that inmates who practice T'ai Chi Chih are far less likely to return to prison, it will be seen as a viable way to free up millions of our tax dollars each year for use in more productive projects. It isn't hard to see how this might be of interest to the mainstream media! Perhaps you, or your students, have a personal or professional contact who would be of great assistance to T'ai Chi Chih. If so, please let me know!

In the meantime, I will continue to work with and rely on the assistance of qualified and dedicated T'ai Chi Chih teachers and students who volunteer to take on a larger role within the community. My focus will be on generating enthusiasm for T'ai Chi Chih, directing our growth, and building the minimal structures required to support the needs of our community.

In the last 25 years the world has gained a great deal by our teaching and practicing T'ai Chi Chih. Great things can be accomplished when we are willing to work together in a selfless manner. In order to prepare

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Candidate values training process despite receiving “deferred accreditation”

[Editor's note: Teacher candidate Bill Mishler wrote to Justin Stone following his Teacher Training course in Chicago, IL in October, 1999, in which he received a “deferred accreditation”]

Dear Justin Stone,

I just completed the teachers certification course in Chicago with my certification deferred until I bring my practice up to standard. I thought I would drop you a note and tell you a little bit about the experience. I was disappointed to discover the depth of my deficiencies, of course, but on the other hand I was exhilarated to receive a week of such excellent instruction from Ed Altman and the other teachers who attended the course.

From one point of view—Ed's, no doubt—I did not really belong in the course, but from *my* point of view it was exactly where I needed to be. Never could I have received that sort of a jolt, nor that quality of instruction, had I simply continued to practice on my own, or to attend the occasional class in T'ai Chi Chih from my former instructor. I simply would not have discovered my deficiencies, because I would have remained in the dark as to the real nature of Tai Chi Chih and its core principles. I suppose I always vaguely suspected that there were depths to T'ai Chi Chih of which I was unaware, but I hadn't much of a clue about their real nature or point of access.

Contact with Ed Altman changed all that in very quick order. From the first hour of the first day he let me know about my problem areas and of my need to learn as much as I could in the short space of a week. The effect of this was to inject me with massive anxiety, which never really left me in course of the week, but which also made me extremely attentive. For a day or two I thought that if

I worked very hard I might be able to progress to the point where I could still receive my certificate. And of course as soon as I formulated this project my number of stupid mistakes increased. On Wednesday morning, however, Ed and I had a conversation in which I said that I was going to try to shift my focus from the issue of the certificate and simply concentrate on learning. To the extent that I was able to maintain this state of mind, things improved. I proceeded through the rest of the week with some residual desire for the certificate, but mostly with the intention of learning as much as I could simply for the learning's sake. As a result, I had an experience of psychological and spiritual opening unlike anything in all of my previous experience.

Over the years I have tried various forms of meditation and gone on various sorts of retreats, but none of it has touched or moved me like this past week in Chicago. Though it may be premature, I feel that this week of T'ai Chi Chih has changed me for good in some as yet undefinable way. Toward the end of the week I was able to sleep only about four hours a night. I was filled with an energy that was something more than mere kinetic energy. Some deep sweetness began to flow and to make itself available to me like an unending, rich cello tone. I'm groping for words here. For example, driving back to Cleveland, a seven hour trip, I listened to none of the tapes I had brought in the car. As I left Chicago I had every intention of playing them, but as half hour by half hour went by I kept deferring the moment of actually popping them in. I found that the mere experience of looking out the window and watching the constantly changing landscape flow past was about as much stimulus as I could handle. My eye would move over the landscape and wherever it lighted the scene would

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Blanket on the Pond

By Sharon Sirkis

I arrived on Sunday afternoon August 29, 1999 at Mahwah, N.J. Auditing teacher's trainings is always a learning experience for me, and this one was no exception. This time, however, most of the learning took place before the training even began.

After dinner that evening, I walked a nearby trail at Ramapo Nature Park. Off to my left, I noticed a wide, flat area of dark green. What was a golf course doing here? I soon realized this wasn't grass or astroturf, rather I was looking at a pond covered by a blanket of green algae. It seemed odd that there were no clumps or breaks in the algae. I couldn't even see any water underneath. The only hint of water was a twisted stick emerging at an angle from the center of the algae. I stood there mesmerized by its stillness. I laughed to myself, thinking that only I could be fascinated by pond scum! I kept looking for a patch of open water, but I saw none. So I decided to make one. I grabbed a stone and lightly tossed it into the algae. I saw some ripples of water, but the algae immediately closed back on itself. Like suction. I thought about our T'ai Chi Chih moves, from stillness to motion, and back to stillness.

Then I felt a strong need to throw more stones. Harder and faster. I chuckled at the ripple effect and thought of Working the Pulley. My desire to throw more stones harder and faster intensified, and I soon realized

... I was drawn to the pond because it reminded me of myself. Thick, gunked up algae clogging the pond was exactly how I felt inside. Stuck, totally stuck. (Like sticky taffy!)

that something deeper was happening within me, although I didn't figure it out at the time.

Later, it occurred to me that I was drawn to the pond because it reminded me of myself. Thick, gunked up algae clogging the pond was exactly how I felt inside. Stuck, totally stuck. (Like sticky taffy!)

After I threw the first stone into the algae, there was a breakthrough. Looking at the water, I had a sudden glimpse of clarity. Just like the glimpses of clarity within myself. But then, just like the algae folds in upon itself, I fold too. I withdraw, I fall into fear and doubt, I want to hibernate and disappear, I want to remain anonymous. But then, after I pitched a few more stones, I

saw ripples, symbolizing movement. Yes, I can move forward, I can put myself out there, I can shine. But will I? I need to do it. I'm supposed to do it. But I don't. Not yet, anyway. I know I need to trust more, to wait and be patient. I admit I want things cozy and comfortable before I take the leap of faith. But that's not the way it works, and this leaves me conflicted and frustrated.

Flinging the stones harder and faster into the algae symbolize my desperate need to break up the muck and congestion, to get my life unstuck. This holds true for my body as well; the junk food I eat clogs me and traps me in layers of insulation. Then I want to hibernate.

Recently, however, I haven't been in the hibernating mode. I have moved forward in certain areas of my life, and I have even had some breakthroughs in clarity, such as my fear of success. But because success often requires radical change, self-sabotage continues to rear its ugly head. And so I end up taking two steps forward and one step back.

I'm reminded of something Ed

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Evolving with the Chi

By Christeen McLain

The evolution of chi through me has been an incredible journey. Justin Stone has consistently addressed impermanence and the importance of knowing the self. As the issues within my tissues have been gently and timely released, I have been blessed to have the experience of acquainting my self with self (a precursor for beginning to know self)—through movement. Movement of body which stills the mind and allows spirit integration and direction.

When I was first introduced to TCC through my teacher Jean Katus in 1978, I FELT and KNEW it was powerful. I immediately had the sense of clicking into the alpha brain wave pattern. In the bio-feedback training I'd experienced in nursing school, it had taken 10 minutes in sitting meditation to hear the beeps that indicated transfer to alpha. In TCC it took a few moments of Around the Platter—and it clicked! At that time in my own life, this was amazing yet hard to grasp as my life orientation was busy-doing-ness. Health maintenance required a strenuous work-out, and EFFORT to achieve the goal. Thus, it was difficult to accept that there could be EASE with a movement that could achieve physical benefits that NOW (22 years later) practitioners can affirm and speak to personally.

Throughout the decades of TCC practice, I have found my own personality expressing THROUGH the movement. Going back to Conferences, Retreats with Justin, and moving with my teacher, Jean Katus, has assisted with getting back “on line” and “in alignment”!

The journey is humbling with releasing the layers of personality and ego that manifest THROUGH our movements. When we are lucky,

Justin may speak to us directly and CUT THROUGH (like a sword) swiftly with a comment. It is a gift as it can sever and change one's movement—and habit-energy tendencies—on the spot. (Chi-therapy with a karmic spin). The release of CHI and flow is instantly felt—IF the wounded ego and “I” spot is manifesting impermanence. I've found our conditioning with pride and self-justification with excuses—that specialty of ‘self-defense’ through a litany of excus-ology and reason-ology—can be softened through T'ai Chi Chih enough to ‘hear and take action to shift’.

The easiest way I've found to evolve with the CHI is to stay connected to the SOURCE. Then the FORCE IS with you and misery and drama can be dropped. It is all a choice. Daily opportunities arise to test one's commitment. As Justin has said more than once, “No matter how many times you have made the mistake, you can make it again.” Mindfulness is required. As Rumi the Persian poet born in 1207 said, “The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you. Don't go back to sleep.” Each of us has the KEY to our own conscious awakening and staying present—not going back to sleep, i.e. auto-pilot, or spinning. T'ai Chi Chih is a KEY that is powerful as YOU are daily in charge of attaining a state of alert mindfulness by being PRESENT to yourself and cells with each shift of the weight—forward, backward, side-to-side. With the thought, I feel the energy flow inside.

Control loses its power over you as internal guidance gently carries you. Trust the sense of internal chi—it is a friend no one can take from you or me! It welcomes one back with no pain or guilt, moving in sync, weaving life's tapestry quilt.



T'ai Chi Chih Sharing

By Carmen Brocklehurst

Recently I wrote an article for the *New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News* about a TCC presentation for the NM Governor's Conference. In fact, there were three presentations: my workshop and two demonstrations by the NM T'ai Chi Chih Association where several TCC teachers participated. It was a dream that took many years to unfold, but by holding the vision (that people in New Mexico know about T'ai Chi Chih and its benefits), we were finally invited. It was very exciting to have over 150 state employees (from all corridors of responsibility) come to the presentation. T'ai Chi Chih received rave evaluations. From this presentation I was invited to share T'ai Chi Chih at a large NM District Attorney's Conference. I am looking forward to the joy that we will all receive from that one, too.

Shortly after the Governor's Conference presentation my 14 year old granddaughter, Kelly, asked if I would like to make a presentation to 20 students in her Junior High Literature Honors class. What a treat. Of course, I would be delighted. They were studying about the diversity of careers available.

First we talked about what T'ai Chi Chih is. And then we moved on to it being televised nationwide on PBS; that there are books and videos (I had one of each) available worldwide; that Justin Stone, the originator, is 83 and active in Albuquerque; that he is a great example of how T'ai Chi Chih helps people to stay healthy. Of course, I also mentioned the Governor's Conference.

But I also talked about the basis of T'ai Chi Chih (yin/yang chi) and that the most important thing that we can do is balance and circulate this

chi. As I talked I wrote key words on the whiteboard: balance, yin/yang, chi, T'ai Chi Chih, non-martial arts, 19 movements and one pose, gentle, soft, slow motion in a dream. Since students were taking notes for a later discussion, I engaged them in the presentation, showing them that T'ai Chi Chih is something very natural to their understanding. We had a great discussion. But the best part was their eagerness to participate in the movements (even a student with a broken leg was willing to do it sitting down). The most wonderful part is something that I always look forward to with children: they FEEL everything so quickly. "Chi" was more than a word on the whiteboard. They could really feel it residing within themselves.

After the presentation the teacher was very excited. In her younger years she'd been a dancer, but a broken ankle forced her to stop. She'd wanted to try T'ai Chi Chih but didn't know if she'd be able. She smiled and said, "While doing the movements I felt the same grace I felt when I was young." (She plans to take a class.) The whole experience was great.

We all love to hear about large presentations, but the second smaller presentation is no less significant or joyful. The most important part of any presentation is when someone, maybe just ONE someone, feels the power of the CHI and decides to balance and circulate it within themselves.

All presentations are worth mentioning. I look forward to reading about your experiences in the *Vital Force*. I know Justin does also. Always remember to Love and Share the Chi.



New teacher has questions for Justin Stone about "Master," TCC vs. Chi Kung

Dear Justin,

Thanks for your note. I had been considering writing to you. Ed had encouraged it. But then, I thought perhaps my questions were better addressed to other teachers. Your note provided the encouragement I needed!

My background: I'm 47 years old. I'm a CPA, a CFP, and most recently in my past life, spent 11 years with Dean Witter as a VP of Investments (AKA broker). You know better than most how lopsided my life was! WAS. In 1992, my husband and I remarried, bought a 41' sailboat, and now spend nine months of the year cruising AND maintaining a 41' sailboat! In May, 1997 Joanna Foltz joined us for 10 days in the Bahamas, and I asked her what she was doing on the bow of the boat. She told me she was an accredited Tai Chi Chih instructor, and what it offered. I wanted it. She taught me in the remainder of her visit. Eighteen months later, at the encouragement of my husband who witnessed the change those 18 months made in me, I contacted her about becoming a teacher. I became accredited in Chicago in early October.

Most of my practice has been isolated. Chattanooga, Tennessee and Melbourne, Florida were not added to the "Teacher Location" list until I arrived on the scene. My friend Joanna lives in California. Since October, I have completed private instructions for three students. I now have a Tai Chi Chih group with which to practice!

Question 1: What is the best way to get a student to take a full stance, both in the forward movements and in the side-to-side movements. Does a short stance violate a principle? I personally feel the further the energy moves the more conscious I am of it. Is that valid for most people?

Question 2: Exactly what does the term "Master" convey? I was aware during the teacher's instruction classes that the term was not used in connection with "accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor". I am also aware the term is used for teachers of T'ai Chi Ch'uan. Is this a term you prefer we not use? (I don't consider myself a "Master" at this time, anyway!)

Question 3: How does T'ai Chi Chih compare to Chi Kung?

Question 4: Has anyone to date had success in teaching T'ai Chi Chih to Attention Deficit Disorder children? Could you give me their name(s)?

Lastly, thank you for T'ai Chi Chih. It has given me a center from which to live.

Fondly,

Trish [Winger]

[Editor's Note: As this letter was forwarded to both *The Vital Force* and *The New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News* at the same time, a similar version appears in the February, 2000 issue of the latter.]

Justin responds candidly to new teacher's questions

Dear Trish,

Thanks for your letter. I am glad you are progressing with your teaching; it is the best way to really learn TCC and sink into the Essence. Too many words spoil it. Intellectual people don't allow themselves to do

silent TCC and benefit from the Essence; they are too busy analyzing it.

By "full stance" I gather you mean to have the feet far enough apart. If they are too close together, the student will probably do a stiff-legged

TCC. On the other hand, too wide a spread may penalize balance. You are the teacher and will have to arrive at a happy compromise.

The term "Master" is tossed around so much it is meaningless in the West. Some disciplines entice stu-



dents to spend their money by promising they will be called "Master" when they graduate, a commercial ploy. In Zen, a monk or student who has made a real breakthrough into Satori (enlightenment) may be given "INKA" or approval of his enlightenment and told he can go on to training "after enlightenment," following which he may be told to begin teaching. In Japan it is now the custom to demand approval of the Inka by another Master. All this is very rare. Bodhidharma, the founder of Zen, had only one student, to whom he gave INKA, and he went on to become the second patriarch of Zen. I could write a book on this; don't pay any attention to groups such as Reiki who promise you will be a "Master." If I explained what a Guru, a true Yogic Master, was, you would be spellbound. Don't fall for the hoke.

I certainly am not going to com-

pare TCC, which is unique, with anything, least of all a Martial Art. Do it, don't talk it. When I heard the term Chi Kung from T'ai Chi Ch'uan and other martial art teachers, they meant it as a generic term for anything that worked with CHI. Now it is apparently used for a full range of movements, of which I know nothing.

Yes, Lylian Dardin (quite old) wrote her Master's thesis on her work with third and fourth grade children (I believe). She is in the Directory.

If T'ai Chi Chih has given you a "center from which to live"—which it has to many people—why analyze it? **DO IT.**

Future questions (and I hope there are none) should be sent to Ed Altman, the acting head of TCC. If you do send any, you might send this letter, too.

Very best luck to you in your teaching. Be sure to come to the summer Conference.

Have a Happy 2000 and a JOYOUS KALPA.

Justin Stone

[Editor's Note: Justin often writes Ed's name as: "Ed Altman" in his personal correspondence.

Lylian Dardin is listed in the back of the 2000 Directory by name only, as she is not a current member of The Vital Force Association. Our records indicate that as of 1991, her phone number was: (831) 442-0407.

As this letter was submitted to both The Vital Force and The New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih News at the same time, a similar version appears in the February, 2000 issue of the latter.]

1999 Teachers' Conference fondly remembered by new teacher; 2000 Conference anticipated

Dear Noel,

I just finished reading my most recent issue of the *Vital Force* and wish to tell you how helpful the information has been, and how interesting the reading, especially about the teaching at Kaiser Permanente. Just last week someone suffering from Parkinsons Disease asked me about how safe T'ai Chi Chih would be in his condition and I was happy to be able to pass on

some of the information from your article.

With the date of the next conference approaching, I would like to say a few words about my experience of last year's conference, my first one. I arrived somewhat apprehensive, not quite knowing what to expect, but my fears quickly disappeared after meeting the first few staff people of the T'ai Chi Chih community, and it continued

uphill until departure time.

Heartfelt thanks go to the many teachers I spoke to and who were so generously sharing information answering many questions especially in the area of setting up their teaching practices.

Special thanks go to Carmen, who gave me a correction that changed the way I practice TCC by allowing me to under-

stand how to do "yinping and yangping" without causing pain in my knees and what to change in my stance when pain appears. Painfree practice really moves the Chi!

Other important highlights were the T'ai Chi Chih practices.

I am looking forward to the 2000 conference in New Jersey.

Viktoria Vercelletto



Nineteen TCC teachers earn their Seijaku accreditation in November

By Ann Rutherford



And the newly-accredited Seijaku teachers are... **Back row, (L-R):** Richard Tye, Laura Anderson, Donna McElhose, Lynn Kobewka, Lorraine Lepine, Margo Carpenter, Ellen Trujillo, Dennis Zallen, Kathy Hollister, Originator of Seijaku Justin Stone, Diana Wright; **Middle row, (L-R):** Senora Avery, Ann Rutherford, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Marjie Bassler, Suzy Hazard; **(Front row, (L-R):** Amella Roache, Karen Schneider, Jan Linthorst, Lisa Leahigh, Joanne Hoover.

Photo: Pam Towne

When do you meet resistance and where does the softness begin? Nineteen Seijaku candidates and 24 auditors were blessed by both Justin's and Ed's instructions on these questions. We learned that there are no pat answers, none set in stone. The principles of T'ai Chi Chih are tantamount: awareness of circularity, weight shift and focus on the soles of the feet. With Justin's and Ed's encouragement, each participant turned ever more inward to discover the answer to the

Auditors and newly-accredited Seijaku teachers from Southern California pose with Justin Stone after the course. **(L-R):** Auditor Don Walker, Karen Schneider, Auditor Pam Towne, Originator of Seijaku Justin Stone, Diana Wright, Jan Linthorst, Suzy Hazard.

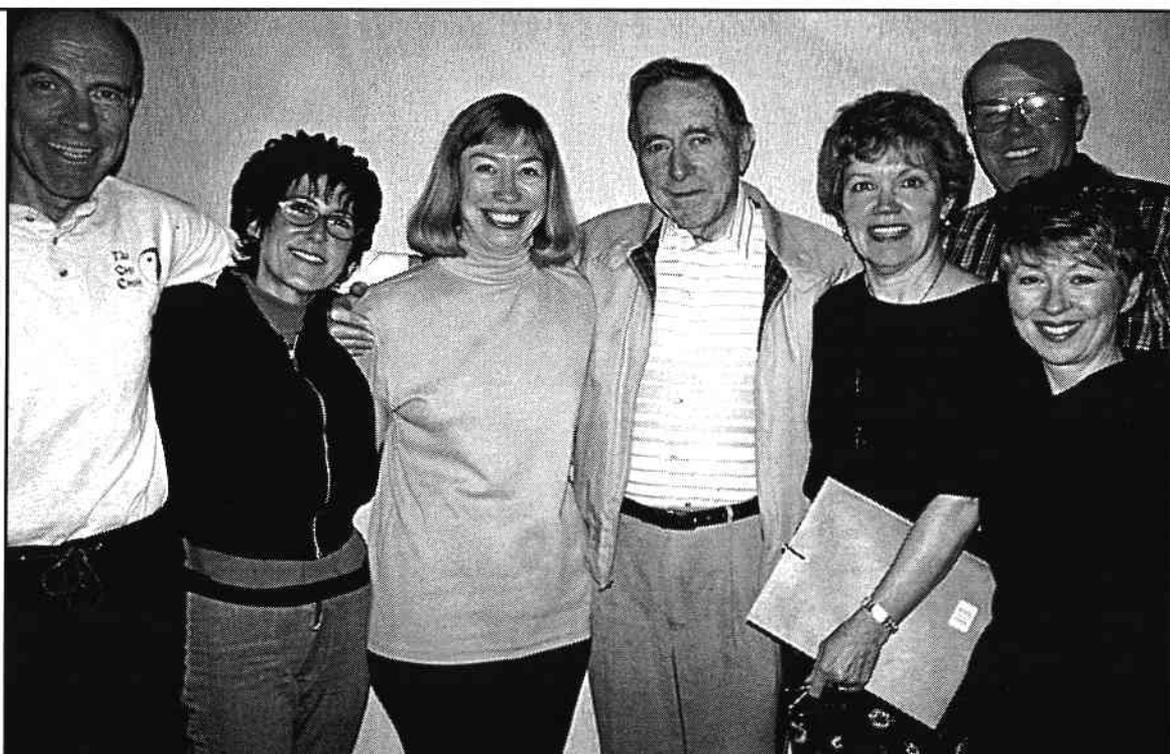


Photo provided by Pam Towne



intriguing question. It was like watching internalized lighthouse beams sweeping through the night: soft, hard, soft, hard, soft. By the end of the weekend, we all came to realize that the practice of Seijaku is the plumbing of fathomless depths. Its power is incalculable, and it must only be taught to those who are already deeply grounded in T'ai Chi Chih.

As an added bonus to the weekend, 50 people celebrated Justin's [83rd] birthday. We ate sumptuous Indian food and snowed Justin with cards expressing our gratitude. Where would we be now if T'ai Chi Chih had not entered our life? Happy Birthday Justin, Live Long and Prosper!

静 (SEI)

寂 (JAKU)

"Sei" translates as "quiet, silent, peaceful" and "jaku" translates as "lonesome, lonely, solitary" according to TCC Teacher Suni McHenry, who grew up in Japan. According to Justin Stone, when combined into one word, "Seijaku" translates as "serenity in the midst of activity" and is one of the seven principles of a Japanese Zen garden.

At the request of *The Vital Force*, Suni has written out the characters which comprise the word "Seijaku". Teachers are welcome to use them in their promotional teaching materials.

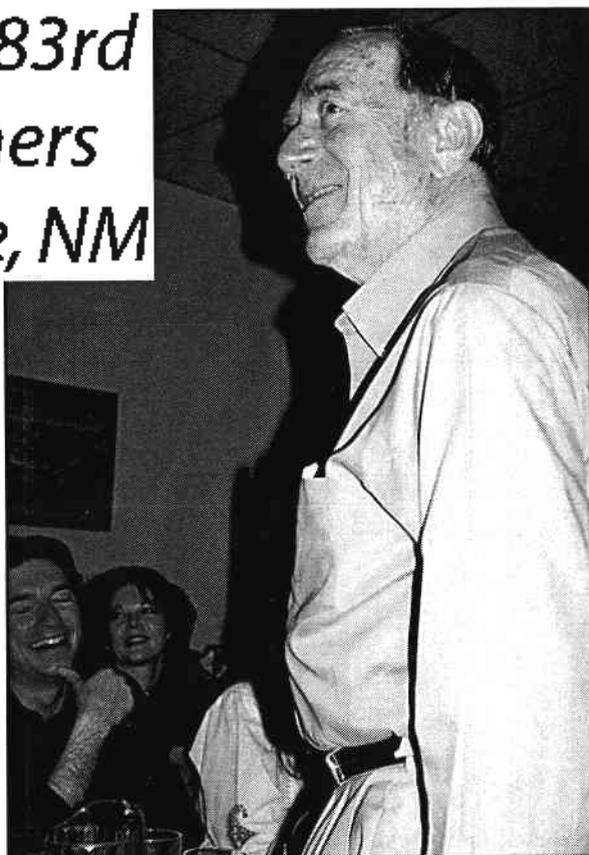
Calligraphy by Suni McHenry

Justin Stone celebrates his 83rd birthday with 50 TCC Teachers and friends in Albuquerque, NM



Newly-accredited Seijaku teacher Donna McElhose embraces Justin Stone at his celebratory dinner party after giving him a birthday card signed by over 100 of her T'ai Chi Chih students.

Photo provided by Donna McElhose



Justin Stone enjoys a joke at his celebratory birthday dinner as Ed Altman (left) and Rhonda St. Martin join in.

Photo: Pam Towne



Pacific Northwest teachers host TCC workshop with Ed Altman

By Elizabeth Tyler
Course Co-host

TCC teachers Elizabeth Tyler and Jerry Jonsson hosted Ed Altman for a day of movement, discussion, detailed instruction and fellowship on December 4, 1999. A group of 20 teachers and students from the greater Portland, OR area took time out from holiday activities to slow down and refine their TCC practice. The one day intensive allowed participants to enhance their understanding of specific movements, their benefits and the greater significance of our joyous moving meditation.

Some philosophical highlights from Ed's thorough instructions were:

- Flow softly from your center; always allowing centered awareness to carry the load and determine your external experience. Like Ramana Maharshi says [paraphrased]: "We know that the train carries all loads, so after getting on it why should we carry our small luggage on our head to our discomfort, instead of putting it down on the train and feeling at ease." A good thing to remember for all moments of our lives.

- Be patient and wait for the Chi to express itself, like dropping a pebble in a pond, let the ripple move out effortlessly AND don't let any other

ripple be there other than the one coming from the T'an T'ien.

- Let your silence be so complete that those around you are drawn into the silence also. The philosophy of TCC is discovered from within. Words can never communicate the teaching and can get in the way. Go beyond words to the Source of experience itself.

- As soon as we are ready and willing to "let go" the movements will unfold. Let go of relying on "tension or strength" to make things happen.

- Let every part of the body express substantial to insubstantial.

- TCC posture is like an iceberg with 15% emphasis on top and 85% emphasis on the bottom.

- We are going beyond the busy mind.
"When the water is still, the moon appears. When the water is still, the moon disappears."

Ed's skilled and generous sharing reminded all of us about how TCC is much more than just a practice, it is a way of BEING in the world and indeed, a great gift to give ourselves and to share with willing souls...



FLOWING INTO THE NEW MILLENIUM

with Softness and Continuity

15th INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHER'S CONFERENCE
JULY 20 - 23, 2000

Xavier Retreat and Conference Center
Convent Station, New Jersey

We are very excited to be hosting Conference 2000 and look forward to warmly welcoming each of you to take part in this first-ever T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference on the East Coast!

As the Theme of the Conference suggests, we will focus on "Flowing into the New Millenium with softness and continuity" and will be dedicating most of our time together to movement - refining our personal form so that we may bring the best to our students, as we continue to realize the depth of change which T'ai Chi Chih can effect in our lives - Justin's great gift to our time.

As of early February, nearly 100 teachers had registered! We want to remind you that time is running out to take advantage of the reduced rate offered to those who still have not registered, but plan to do so before the end of April.

FEES: **Registration and payment by April 30th, 2000: \$300.00**
 May 1 to July 20th: \$350.00

We have discovered a number that offers reduced fares on major airlines and want to pass it on to you: 1-888-88-C-H-E-A-P (1-888-882-4327).

Supper will be served at 5:30 p.m. and arrival is anytime up to 8:00 p.m. Thursday, 7/20.

Since many of you will be flying into Newark International Airport, Newark, NJ, we ask that you complete the form below and send it to Carolyn Perkins with your flight information.

If you need a Registration form, or have any additional questions, please contact:

Carolyn Perkins
221 East 50th St. Suite 8B
New York, NY 10022

Phone: 212-371-0133
e-mail: islapooh@yahoo.com

Name _____ Airline _____ Phone _____
Arrival date _____ Time _____ Flight # _____ From _____
Departure date _____ Time _____ Flight # _____ From _____



News Shorts

Production in final stages

Justin Stone films new TCC video!

Justin Stone has recently completed a new edition of the T'ai Chi Chih videotape, one we believe is the definitive release because it contains so much more than has previously been put on videotape. Justin surpassed expectations for this important event.

After his introduction, emphasizing the essential principles of T'ai Chi Chih, he taught the movements in a thorough, leisurely fashion. An extended practice session follows, with four excellent teachers doing nine repetitions of the movements to special music for T'ai Chi Chih practice composed and performed by Justin. (See announcement in "Karmic Komments" column. Note that the music is also available for sale on cassette tape.) The three parts together comprise a full course that will be helpful to student and teacher alike.

Justin's living is dependent upon the royalties he receives from his books and tapes. As teachers who are grateful to Justin and who know that he has never accepted money from any of us, we can demonstrate this gratitude by using the video widely with our students.

The video features a beautiful indoor set with the same highly-skilled, award-winning director of the PBS show on T'ai Chi Chih. (That show continues playing on PBS stations around the U.S., now in its sixth year.) Three cameras, top operators, and an accomplished crew complete the show. All in all, it's a package Good Karma Publishing is very proud of.

Even though the new video is in final production stages and Good Karma is taking advance orders for it, the present video will continue to be available. Contact Good Karma for details on ordering.

– Jean Katus

Day of "Joy Thru Movement" Celebrating T'ai Chi Chih

As an international community of T'ai Chi Chih practitioners, we can now celebrate and practice T'ai Chi Chih *together* on one special day each year! On November 20, 2000, the first **Day of "Joy Thru Movement" / Celebrating T'ai Chi Chih** event will be celebrated in communities worldwide.

Teachers in each community are encouraged to organize group practices and demonstrations, inviting anyone to experience some of the movements and learn about the power of the Chi and its many benefits. Students could participate in group practices and demonstrations in parks, community centers, shopping malls and holistic centers. An informative article may be placed in the local papers. A free spot may be secured on TV as a public interest story. Posters could be placed in bookstores, learning centers, etc. Everyone can be as creative as they wish to make this day fun and informative for the TCC community as well as the public.

I chose November 20th for this special day to honor Justin Stone, this day being his birthday. This will be a tribute to Justin, as the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih and also a day to make the world aware of this wonderful discipline. What could be a better way to advertise and educate the public at the same time?

This past year, November 20, 1999, many of my students were aware that it was Justin's birthday. They did group practice with me to honor Justin. Some, who were not able to participate, practiced TCC on their own, remembering the significance of the day.

– Aida Wilks

[Editor's Note: Please be sure to refer to the event by the title given at the top of this article so that we can all be consistent in our outreach efforts. Don't forget the Chih!]



Calendar of Events

April 15, 2000	TCC WORKSHOP (9:00am - 5:00pm) Location: Cincinnati, OH Contact: Marlene Brown 653 Cranford Drive Cincinnati, OH 45240-3915 Phone: (513) 742-1866 Teacher Fee: \$30 Student Fee: \$45	July 20-23, 2000	15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE Location: Newark, NJ area (See Pg. 17 for info)
April 24 thru 28, 2000	TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Staten Island, NY Contact: Dan Pienciak P.O. Box 122 Ocean Grove, NJ 07756 Phone: (732) 988-5865 TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450	Sept. 21 thru 24, 2000	MEDITATION RETREAT W/ JUSTIN STONE Location: Albuquerque, NM Contact: For the NM TCC Center: Marjie Bassler P.O. Box 53034 Albuquerque, NM 87153 Marjie's Phone: (505) 823-1817 <i>(limited space available)</i> Attendance Fee: \$170
May 15 thru 20, 2000	TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Edmonton, AB CANADA Contact: Margo Carpenter 12311 Aspen Dr. W. Edmonton, AB T6J 2B6 CANADA Phone: (780) 434-9433 TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$590 CAD (Canadian)	October 7, 2000	TCC WORKSHOP (9:30am - 4:30pm) Location: St. Louis, MO Contact: Anne Perkins 2342 Albion Pl. St. Louis, MO 63104-2524 Phone: (314) 771-9728 Teacher Fee: \$25 Student Fee: \$40
May 28, 2000	TCC WORKSHOP (10:00am - 4:00pm) Location: Danville, CA (SF Bay Area) Contact: Pat Huseby 1129 San Ramon Valley Blvd. Danville, CA 94526-4852 Phone: (925) 838-9912 Attendance Fee: \$45	October 23 thru 28, 2000	TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Albuquerque, NM Contact: For the NM TCC Center: Dora Derzon 1554 Rosalba NE Albuquerque, NM 87112 Phone: (505) 299-0523 TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450
June 12 thru 17, 2000	TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: San Antonio, TX Contact: Sr. Alice Holden 4707 Broadway San Antonio, TX 78209-6200 Phone: (210) 829-5980 TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450	November 20, 2000	DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT" CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH Location: Worldwide (See Pg. 18 for details)
July 10 thru 15, 2000	TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Berkeley, CA (SF Bay Area) Contact: Sandy McAlister 24835 Second Street Hayward, CA 94541-6807 Phone: (510) 582-2238 TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450	POSSIBLE FUTURE EVENTS: If interested in an event described below, contact the host. These events will only happen if there are enough people interested. Fall, 2000	
		TCC TEACHER TRAINING Location: Baltimore, MD Area Contact: Jean Markey Phone: (717) 244-1607	

Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih.

Ed Altman is the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.

All events led by Ed Altman unless otherwise indicated.



Teaching T'ai Chi Chih to Special Needs Students

By Margery Erickson

After receiving my TCC accreditation in 1997 I asked my supervisor if I could offer a class where I work. I work in education in the area of special education. Our intermediate unit provides services to local school districts. Some of the services include psychologists, teachers for learning support, blind, neurologically impaired and more, teacher assistants, and of course administrative staff which includes supervisors and secretaries. I work in the life skills support program. The students I teach have severe learning problems. I help them develop basic academic, social, and employment skills.

Getting back to my supervisor. He was not sure what TCC was but when I mentioned stress reduction he said sounds great. I filled out the necessary papers and submitted them. A week before I was to teach I called to see if anyone actually signed up. The class was being offered to support staff - secretaries and teacher assistants. The registrar starting laughing and said we have 60 people signed up could you do two classes. I was shocked. I suggested three classes. By the time the year was over I had 70 plus students. Unfortunately this class, which was enthusiastically attended met a brick wall before it even began.

The powers that be - the top administrative staff - did not see how this class was going to help people in the classroom. They were afraid that others would offer speed walking, etc. It did not fit into the "mold" of what the typical course should include. Sign language is acceptable, so is word processing, using the internet, discussing ways to relax, etc. I decided to back off for a while.



TCC Teacher Margery Erickson, (in light-colored pants), leads her public high school students in practice of Around the Platter in the school's auditorium.

Photo provided by: Margery Erickson

After attending my second teacher's conference in Minnesota [in 1999] I decided to try a different approach. I asked and received permission to teach my students as part of my health curriculum. We practice two times a week. I found the front of the auditorium the perfect space - quiet, carpeted, etc. As of this writing we are learning Pulling Taffy. I must admit I was a bit apprehensive about teaching TCC to my students and am very proud of how far we have come. Even Pulling Taffy is looking better and better. I am learning a whole new approach to teaching.

I am now going to approach the administrative staff and request that I teach an in-service next year on what I am doing in the classroom with TCC. I think I will ask some of my students to assist me. (I even have one set of parents taking an evening course at a local health club.) Maybe someone will see how TCC can help people in the classroom.

The picture shows us doing Around the Platter. The TCC class is made up of seven of the 16 students I have.



Teacher inspires student with MS

The attached [see sidebar] is an article that a student, Ann Vidmar, wanted to submit to the Vital Force for the March edition. The article was very much appreciated but I believe Ann is the one that should be praised and would like to submit the following:

When a new T'ai Chi Chih class at Pleasanton Gardens formed, a student, Connie, asked if it was alright if her daughter Ann could attend our sessions. She explained that Ann had Multiple Sclerosis. Since TCC had helped her she felt that it just might help Ann. She was encouraged to invite her daughter to join us.

When Ann came into the room she had a very difficult time with her balance even though she used a walker. You could tell by the look on her face that she was having a problem but as you looked closer you could see a look of determination that said "I will make it, I will not give up".

Right from the beginning it was evident that Ann believed in T'ai Chi Chih. She asked questions, practiced every day and attended class each week. Slowly she showed improvement. First the walker was left at home than the cane and then she walked in with no aid!

I cannot express how much we admire and love this young lady.

We know how MS affects the body and what strength of character and spirit a person has to have to survive this boulder in the road Ann is this very SPECIAL person.

Both Connie and her daughter have had a few setbacks lately but will be back with us soon.

We would like to thank-you Justin for giving us T'ai Chi Chih such a simple and easy path to good health and long life. You encourage us daily by your example.

VirginiaLee Cepeda



Ann Vidmar and her mother Connie (L-R, standing) pose with their T'ai Chi Chih Teacher, VirginiaLee Cepeda (seated). Ann, who has multiple sclerosis, began the classes with a walker, then progressed to a cane, then to using no aid at all as her regular practice began to improve her sense of balance. She states, "I feel better about myself because of a wonderful teacher and T'ai Chi Chih."

Photo provided by Ann Vidmar

Virginia Cepeda is an inspiration She has wonderful handouts each week that truly teaches one about what is important in life She teaches T'ai Chi Chih and makes my balance problem so much better and I feel the MS that gives me so many problems is more in control ...I really look forward to Virginias class and to talk with her for a bit after class.

**A Grateful Student,
Ann Vidmar**



T'ai Chi Chih is taught for physical education credit at Kean University

By Janet M. Oussaty

Academic Credit

T'ai Chi Chih is being offered for academic credit at Kean University beginning with the Spring 2000 semester. The Department of Physical Education, Recreation and Health is making the one-credit course available to Health and Physical Education undergraduate majors and postbaccalaureate teaching certification students as an option within their list of major requirements. The course is also available to all undergraduate students at the university as a fulfillment of their health and physical education general education requirements or as a free elective. Kean University is a comprehensive public, state-supported university located in Union, New Jersey with a culturally diverse population of 12,000 undergraduate and graduate students.

A newly accredited (September 1999) instructor of T'ai Chi Chih and full-time resident faculty member in Physical Education, I am scheduled to teach two sections of TCC as part of my 12-credit teaching load. One section meets during the first eight weeks of the semester followed by the second section for the remaining eight weeks. They meet one evening per week for approximately 2 to 2½ hours. While the full period may not necessarily be utilized because of fatigue, students can be active in a variety of ways. A format for the first part of an evening's class session may include (1) Introduction to the class, (2) Review of Previous Movements from the prior week(s), and (3) Introduction of New Movements. Following a break, the second part of the evening may include (4) Talk/Discussion/Sharing given by the instructor

and/or students, and (5) Full Practice(s) of all Movements Learned. The Talk/Discussion/Sharing may be facilitated by the instructor on a particular topic about the history and philosophy of T'ai Chi Chih, or viewing segments of videotapes such as Justin Stone's "T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement," "Interviews with Justin Stone and Carmen" or students' movements. At a particular point during the semester, students can facilitate the Talk/Discussion/Sharing by giving presentations on a selected term or concept such as "chi," "yin and yang," or "t'an t'ien"; its relationship to TCC and any relationships of TCC to their personal lives. Students will

Students will receive a letter grade for the course based on evaluations of their movements, their presentations and their journals.

receive a letter grade for the course based on evaluations of their movements, their presentations and their journals. A copy of Justin Stone's textbook is available on reserve in the university library and his video is on reserve in the media center for student use.

Also, copies of the text and video are available from the instructor for purchase. (The textbook and videotape are not requirements for the course, as they would have to be sold through the university bookstore at approximately a 50% mark-up).

Approval for the T'ai Chi Chih course involved a number of steps. I received the "go-ahead" for my proposal by my departmental colleagues toward the end of the Spring 1998 semester. I formulated the course outline during the Fall 1998 semester with the help of Sr. Antonia Cooper's critique of the document and her loaning of back issues of the *Vital Force Journal* for inclusion in the bibliography. Jean Katus also helped me by providing all dates for all the non-print media that I wanted to include in the bibliography. (Note: Sr. Antonia and Jean responded to my requests the next day). The course outline followed a university-required



format with categories such as: Description, Objectives, Content, Methods of Instruction, Methods of Evaluation, Required Textbooks, and Bibliography (Print, Non-Print, Website). The completed course outline was approved by our department's Curriculum Committee during Spring 1999 and then by the School of Education Curriculum Committee Fall 1999, the final step. The course was publicized by forwarding flyers to various department chairs and program coordinators with personal notes; TCC flyers were also posted around campus. And finally, the flyer was published in the "Administrative Report" that is mailed to all administrators, faculty and staff on campus.

Non-Credit

T'ai Chi Chih is also being offered as a non-credit adult education course through the Office of Continuing Education at Kean this spring. The Holistic Center for the Integration of Body, Mind and Spirit that I am just starting, is sponsoring the eight-week course. I am teaching the TCC course on the same evening as the credit-bearing course. A full-page description of the center's offerings along with brief instructor biographies is published in the "Continuing Education Bulletin." Approximately 90,000 copies have been printed and 85,000+ mailed

to residents of surrounding communities. University administrators, faculty and staff may take continuing education courses for free once the minimum (paying) enrollment is met.

At the conclusion of the spring semester, I hope to submit another article on the ways in which T'ai Chi Chih has been given birth at Kean University.

KEAN UNIVERSITY

NEW COURSE!
For Spring 2000



PED 1022

T'AI CHI CHIH

WEDNESDAYS 5—7:40 pm

DR. JANET M. OUSSATY, ACCREDITED INSTRUCTOR

One Credit

Experience joy through movement as you practice 20 simple, fluid movements in the non-martial art of T'ai Chi Chih, a moving meditation. These movements can be performed by anyone, no special ability or fitness level is required. Some reported benefits include lower blood pressure, reduced weight, stress reduction, greater energy.

Wear loose fitting clothing and soft soled shoes.

Section F1 January 12—March 1

Section H2 March 8—April 26

Register Now!



Organization

KEAN UNIVERSITY

Department of
Physical Education

Phone: 908-527-2101
Fax 908-353-7199
joussaty@turbo.kean.edu

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Teacher shares his promotional letter to potential TCC students

This letter has been an excellent way to introduce TCC to those in the healing professions. (That's all of us!) . . . P.S. It might help folks get an idea of how to intro TCC.

*Peace,
Richard*

Allow me to introduce myself and my work. My name is Richard Brier and I am a certified instructor of T'ai Chi Chih. I was certified by Justin Stone, a renowned author and Zen master, who originated this form of movement and gave me permission to teach in 1980.

Since then I've taught over 2,000 students of all ages, from 7 to 93 years young. They've all experienced benefits including: weight and blood pressure control, heightened vitality, serenity and longevity. Also called Joy Thru Movement, the essential and primary purpose of T'ai Chi Chih is the balancing and rejuvenation of body, mind and spirit on a daily basis. This aspect is very beneficial for all people in the healing professions who give of their energy constantly and need to renew themselves.

I am extremely enthusiastic about T'ai Chi Chih for several reasons. First, it's been a continual joy in my life. In classes I've seen frowns change quickly to smiles and people seem to wake up on the other side of the enormous stress and speed of modern life in just a few minutes. The face and body soften and students seem to flower right in front of my amazed eyes.

The beauty of it is that this T'ai Chi is the easiest T'ai Chi to learn. The patterns were consciously created to cultivate the chi in a simple way. Benefits such as calmness and joy often occur in just a few minutes. The mind becomes very still while practicing and the wisdom within comes forth. It creates a wonderful group energy. An inner harmony is created which then becomes a shared harmony with the world. Easy to learn, profound in essence, it is an excellent and very accessible tool for transformation. Is there anything more important than cultivating such health and harmony in our lives?

I would be delighted to introduce T'ai Chi Chih to you. Feel free to contact me at my studio in Mill Valley, California:

Inner Rhythm Movement Arts Institute
Attention: Richard Brier
70 Lomita Drive, Room 9
Mill Valley, CA 94941
(415) 388-6683



A Joyful Experience

By Catherine Grace Dalton

This fall I had the wonderful opportunity to be a part of the Meditation Retreat in Albuquerque, New Mexico led by Justin Stone. It was a wonderful experience to be able to sit and listen to Justin share his thoughts on life through stories and experiences. I enjoyed getting to know Justin better and to see his kind and gentle spirit as he guided us through meditation three times daily. It was my first experience with meditation and I was a little nervous. I re-read Justin's book on Zen meditation before I left home. I had several questions which I asked of Carmen, Ed and Noel before the first session. These questions were kindly answered and I was more at ease. I worried however that sitting for 35 - 45 minutes might be nearly impossible for me as I could not ever remember sitting quietly for that long and not being asleep.

My fears were quickly relieved after the first session. Sitting still seemed to come easily and the time passed very quickly. In fact, I was saddened when Justin clapped his hands to signal an end to meditation. On the second day, I had a wonderful experience. While we

were meditating, I felt a warmth growing inside my body that continued to radiate around me filling an imaginary sphere. At the same time, my body seemed to fill this growing sphere of energy and warmth. It was as if my body was less defined, with no skin or shell to indicate where it ended. I no longer had the sense of where my arms or legs were. It was a truly *joyous* experience and I was sad to see it come to an end.

I wanted to share this experience with Justin, and I was able to do just that later that evening. He was very positive about the experience and asked how long I had been meditating. I told him I had only just begun. He asked that I share my experience with Carmen and also in the *Vital Force*. So here it is. Since the retreat I have felt that experience seem to call me to meditate. And I listen. I know that the more often meditation is a part of my day, acting upon the call to meditate will not be an option. Thank you Justin. I highly recommend the Meditation Retreat to anyone who has an interest in it. It has changed me.

Teacher notes growth of intuitive wisdom

By Susan Kissinger

Last night my sixth grade daughter, Jessica, was completing her homework—or I should say ranting and raving that she needed help and couldn't figure out the answer to a math problem. Her teacher had given her the numbers 6 and 28 which are *perfect* numbers and asked the students to find the next *perfect* number.

I suggested that she leave the *perfect* number problem and complete her other homework. If she did not find the answer, at least she could feel good that she had accom-

plished everything else. Well, within minutes she had found the answer, the next *perfect* number after 28 is 496. The answer was buried as a "math fact" in her math book.

I sat with her as she worked on her homework. I looked at the *perfect* numbers. I identified the factors and understood for myself why these numbers are *perfect*. I asked "Is there an obvious relationship or pattern to the factors of these numbers, 6, 28 and 496. AND amazingly there it was—I saw the relationship.

How does this math problem, that many people have solved before

me, relate to T'ai Chi Chih and how is it relevant to anything? **I asked a question. I had no expectations. The answer just appeared without effort.** I experienced a dramatic sense of clarity within me. I felt surprise and joy at the discovery. This clarity or openness to the possibilities is beginning to manifest itself in my life in little and big ways. My marketing brochure just came together in the last month. Clear explanations of T'ai Chi Chih movements come out of my mouth when I am teaching.

Thank you Justin for T'ai Chi Chih. Thank you T'ai Chi Chih for clarity.



Letter to Justin Stone

Diet changes, healing result from T'ai Chi Chih practice of teacher

Dear Justin,

I am very thankful to be where I am right now. I had the wonderful opportunity to spend four days at the Chicago Teacher Certification for T'ai Chi Chih. It brought back many memories of my own certification in 1996. The experience has enhanced my practice and teaching of T'ai Chi Chih. The improvements Ed Altman made to my practice has helped me to become more grounded; something I need right now.

During this time, Hannah Hedrick, my teacher gave me a little pamphlet called The Evolution of Chi. In it, you answered a question someone had about diet. They had noticed that certain foods in their diet were no longer tolerated. You said that when one practices moving the chi as in T'ai Chi Chih, the body reaches a purer and purer state and some foods may need to be eliminated from the diet. This simple sentence helped me tremendously as I have recently discovered allergies to certain foods I have eaten all my life.

I've also had a health challenge, which forced me to look at all aspects of my life closely and to pay close attention to my instincts. The first doctor I went to recommended a minor surgery; however, his treatment of me was far from compassionate. I waited until I received information about a second doctor who would treat patients more holistically. I met Dr. Hall the week after the T'ai Chi Chih Chicago certification and told him that I felt much better because I had attended the certification. I knew I was in good hands when he asked for my card about T'ai Chi Chih. He was thrilled to be able to tell his patients of a T'ai Chi Chih teacher. I would say I am on my way to recovery and T'ai Chi Chih plays a large role in my healing process.

And, for the first time, I will be able to attend the T'ai Chi Chih conference in the year 2000. I have already sent my check. I look forward to meeting you and thanking you in person for T'ai Chi Chih.

Yours truly,

Elaine Unzicker

Letter to Ed Altman

New teacher appreciates rigorous training

To Ed,

Thanks for being so "relentless." Your dedication to the purity of T'ai Chi Chih will make us all better teachers and students of the practice. I enjoyed meeting you, and hope to get to know you better in the years to come.

Paula [Ahles - accredited in October, 1999]



Teacher finds “‘seeds’ for renewal” in articles that appear in *The Vital Force*

Dear Noel,

Every time I read through the newest edition of *The Vital Force* I just want to write you to tell you what a wonderful job you do in putting the magazine together. It's not really only a wonderful job but a wonderful gift. I'm happy with the editorial decisions you've made re. what goes into the paper and how it goes in - as you say, “editing and not editing”!

The comments of teachers and candidates after an accreditation and/or conference are most helpful - maybe because it brings back memories of the tremendous learning I received at my accreditation and last summer's conference and gives me points of renewed observation for my own practice. This past issue [December, 1999] is simply packed full of “seeds” for renewal.

Of course Justin's and Ed's articles are priceless - I always look for these first and come back to them several times in the intervening months. Justin's article “Flow Softly” reminded me of a class last winter where one person was having great difficulty coordinating hands and feet and shifting. At one point I realised that not only was the student trying hard but I was trying even harder! I was momentarily embarrassed and then grateful for the awareness. I learned that “the effort of no effort” applies to my teaching as well as to T'ai Chi Chih practise. . .

Sincerely

[Sr.] Viola Bens, ose

Teacher stumps doctor

TCC done mentally produces unexpected result on EEG

. . . Classes here are getting better and better. Teaching at the hospital has been slow to get started, but with the new year, things are picking up. My contacts with the breast cancer survivors group, the Parkinsons group and the MS society seem to be gathering students. I have seven presentations scheduled, so that ought to yield students, too. The more I teach the better I like it. In a year I ought to have two candidates for teacher's training, too.

A couple of months ago, I had to have an EEG done. Since I had to sit still for an hour, I did my whole TCC practice in my head. I got a very curious

call from the doctor, wanting to know what I did during the test! It seems my brain waves were far too even and regular for “normal”. He knew I wasn't asleep, but couldn't figure out what I was doing. What a hoot!

Hope to see you in July [at the annual Teachers' Conference in NJ]. I have a lot more to learn, so I will be there.

Sincerely,

Lyn Welch



Student uses his TCC practice to prepare himself for waiting tables

By Jeremy Williams
Student of Sharon Sirkis

T'ai Chi Chih is definitely joy through movement for me. I have seen many changes in my behavior in the six weeks since class started. I am a very anxious person and T'ai Chi Chih is a great stress reliever and helps reduce my anxiety. I have found that it helps me out in most areas of my life, but one specific aspect that I have found is especially useful is my job.

I wait tables at Phillips Seafood in the Inner Harbor [Baltimore, MD]. To do this job I need great

Doing my T'ai Chi Chih beforehand helps out a great deal with this job. "Rocking Motion" always relaxes me and get me focused for the long day ahead. On those long double shifts "Pulling in the Energy" keeps me on my feet all day.

stamina and an ability to remember many details at one time. Doing my T'ai Chi Chih beforehand helps out a great deal with this job. Rocking Motion always relaxes me and get me focused for the long day ahead. On those long double shifts Pulling in the Energy keeps me on my feet all day. Perpetual Motion works physically and metaphorically. It keeps me focused and is also a quick move, which leaves little time to think about what you are doing. In a sense this is what you have to do while waiting tables. You must be quick in remembering orders and getting what you need.

The whole theory behind T'ai Chi Chih helps me out a great deal in my job and life as well. Soft-

"Perpetual Motion" works physically and metaphorically. It keeps me focused and is also a quick move, which leaves little time to think about what you are doing. In a sense this is what you have to do while waiting tables.

ness and continuity are great skills to have when waiting tables. You must have really quick results, but at the same time take your time so that everything is right. The softness is important because you must treat each task as if it was the most important one. The continuity is important because you must keep everything moving, and more importantly, keep it moving smoothly. Balance is probably the most important aspect of T'ai Chi

The whole theory behind T'ai Chi Chih helps me out a great deal in my job and life as well. Softness and continuity are great skills to have when waiting tables. You must have really quick results, but at the same time take your time so that everything is right.

Chih. When working I need to balance my attention between many different people and make sure everyone gets equal service.



T'ai Chi Chih is helpful when I'm faced with a situation I'm not quite sure how to handle. It brings me out of the situation while I'm doing the

T'ai Chi Chih . . . brings me out of the situation while I'm doing the exercises and doesn't help me think of solutions, but does clear my head and help rationalize my thoughts.

exercises and doesn't help me think of solutions, but does clear my head and help rationalize my thoughts. The move Push Pull helps when I am in that mood, to visualize the problems that I want to push away and the goals that I want to pull towards me. Physically and mentally the moves bring me down to earth and help me deal with the situation at hand.

T'ai Chi Chih is definitely a skill that I am happy to have learned. The moves are easy to do and tension free and I will be able to continue practicing them long after the class is over. The Chi is a wonderful thing to feel and I am grateful that I have the opportunity to learn T'ai Chi Chih and all that it has to offer.

Menopause problems relieved by student's T'ai Chi Chih practice

By Anna Esparza
Student of Kristina Newcomer

I am fifty years old and have been having menopause problems for at least five years. For approximately 4 - 6 months I was bleeding so heavily that I was unable to go out of the house for any length of time. Let alone, exercise.

Incredible as it may sound, the day after I tried T'ai Chi Chih, I stopped bleeding and started feeling energized. I have slimmed down considerably and my skin has been clearing. Rejuvenated would best describe what T'ai Chi Chih has done for me. I actually believe that T'ai Chi Chih works as a mental, physical and spiritual tune-up.

I am grateful to my teacher, Kristina, who always shares her knowledge with her pupils. I just wish that we could meet more often.

Student has intense experience following practice

By Robert Maddox
Student of Sharon Sirkis

After we had finished practice I was sitting on the hardwood floor. I could feel tendrils of vibration coursing against my skin. My eyes were closed and a gentle kaleidoscope played for my eyes. What shocked me was that when my eyes opened the

kaleidoscope didn't disappear. Instead it moved to rest like a gentle wave around the bodies of my classmates. Some shimmered lightly like the halo of the moon. Others seemed to stretch and return like stars in the darkest night. The strongest were

like heat waves rising off the street. They seemed to bend the light that passed around them like a prism imbuing their human counterparts with an angelic aura of peace and beauty. "I wish" I thought to myself "everyone could see this way."



Poetry Page

"Almost" Pyramid Poems

**EXIT
THE SUN
FULL MOON INSPIRES
RISING OVER THE TREES
DEEP WITHIN BEING
ANSWERS COME
PEACE**

– Pat Huseby

**TREES,
BRANCHES
SILHOUETTED
AGAINST THE SKY
BRINGING TO
MY HEART
PEACE**

– Ellen Greyson

T'AI CHI CHIH

T' isn't hard to
A cknowledge the gratitude
I feel.

C oming from a Catholic background, my
H eart was not always open to
I nfluences from the East...

C hild of the universe, mirroring joy,
H astened to dispel my fears
I nspiring confidence, centering, focus...
H elping me to attain balance and peace,
I bless and thank you.

– Lillian Menard - July, 1999
(Student of Meara Joy Norice)
Elderhostel, Londonberry, Vermont

A Koan

Butterfly gathering for T'ai Chi Chih,
Graceful, free & flowing
Teaching you and me.

– Marjorie Dutchik - August, 1999
(Student of Meara Joy Norice)
Elderhostel, Londonberry, Vermont

Ode to T'ai Chi Chih

Words - Paula Ahles
Tune - "Somewhere over the Rainbow"

Somewhere inside my body Chi does flow
Chi flows yinning and yahning
Bringing me peace I know.

Somewhere Ed will be watching when we go
We must work on our practice
If we don't he will know.

Relax the knees and check your stance
Don't lean the stack of coins will fall around you,
Now shift your weight and feel the wave
Flow from the t'an t'ien and then
Let Prajna guide you.

Somewhere hidden with us is the key
We must learn to let go of
Effort and let the Chi.

Right now our heads are spinning we agree
But we all will continue
Because we love T'ai Chi...Chih!

*Dedicated to my fellow classmates at Teacher
Accreditation, Maryvale, [ND], 1999.*

OCTOBER DAY

Azure skies above me,
Green grass underfoot.
Pumpkins on the tree stump,
Mums like sun-kissed jewels.
Kokopelli plays his flute
For the marigolds.
"Daughter on the Mountaintop,"
"Daughter in the Valley,"
My shadow doing T'ai Chi -
Daughter in the garden.

– Rose Champlin
(Student of John O'Connor)



Readers Respond

continued from page 3

of this year). To contact Justin, write to him at his P.O. Box address listed at the back of each issue of *The Vital Force* in the "T'ai Chi Chih Contacts" section (on the same page as the membership renewal form.)

. . . I just want you to know that the new design for the T'ai Chi Chih web pages is fantastic. I love the soft colors and gentle texture, and it is GREAT to have so many articles by Justin and Ed available for perusal! Thanks so much for your hard work...

Amy Hackenberg
Athens, GA

Ed & Noel, Not only is the *Vital Force* great, (Ed) the New Directory Is a Great Piece of work. Love it! I also can appreciate the work that went into making this wonderful Directory. As I use mine a lot - carry it to all Demos (Hospital, Schools, Malls, etc.), I will appreciate it each time I open it! Thank you very much for considering the user friendly end of it.

Donna McElhose
Wildwood, IL

State

continued from page 7

for the extensive challenges ahead, I encourage every accredited teacher to join me in renewing our commitment to learning and teaching T'ai Chi Chih with humility and the utmost integrity. I hope to be with you to practice together soon!

Candidate

continued from page 8

frame itself into a composition of unspeakable harmony and loveliness. Not in a penetrating way but somehow in the manner of an embrace my eyes would move over the fall fields, farms, and trees, and it would all be like

music. Wordless and yet full of intelligence. I am sure you understand what I am trying to communicate here, so I'll cease trying to put it into words.

How can I thank you for the gift you have given? It is so huge, the access you have made available in this set of deceptively simple movements. And in Ed Altman, as you obviously understand, you have a teacher of unique quality. Over the years I have gone to quite a few yogis, priests, roshis, etc., but I've never been as knocked on the head and in the heart as I was by Ed.

I wanted to write this letter to you out of the fullness of this experience. No doubt the cello tone will abate as my daily life closes in around me again, but I will keep it in my mind and it will guide me in my daily practice. I hope to meet you soon—perhaps at the annual meeting. In the meantime, I will work to embody the teaching I was so fortunate to receive from you through Ed this past week.

In gratitude,

Bill Mishler

Blanket

continued from page 9

said that seems to help with this struggle: "If you breakthrough and don't think it will affect other parts of your life, you're in for a rude awakening. If you want to pursue the depth of T'ai Chi Chih, then do so. Nothing will hold you back, if you choose to. Anything is within your grasp. You can lead a life without limits. Do you have the guts?"

I'm also reminded of a few lyrics from Enya's song "Only If":

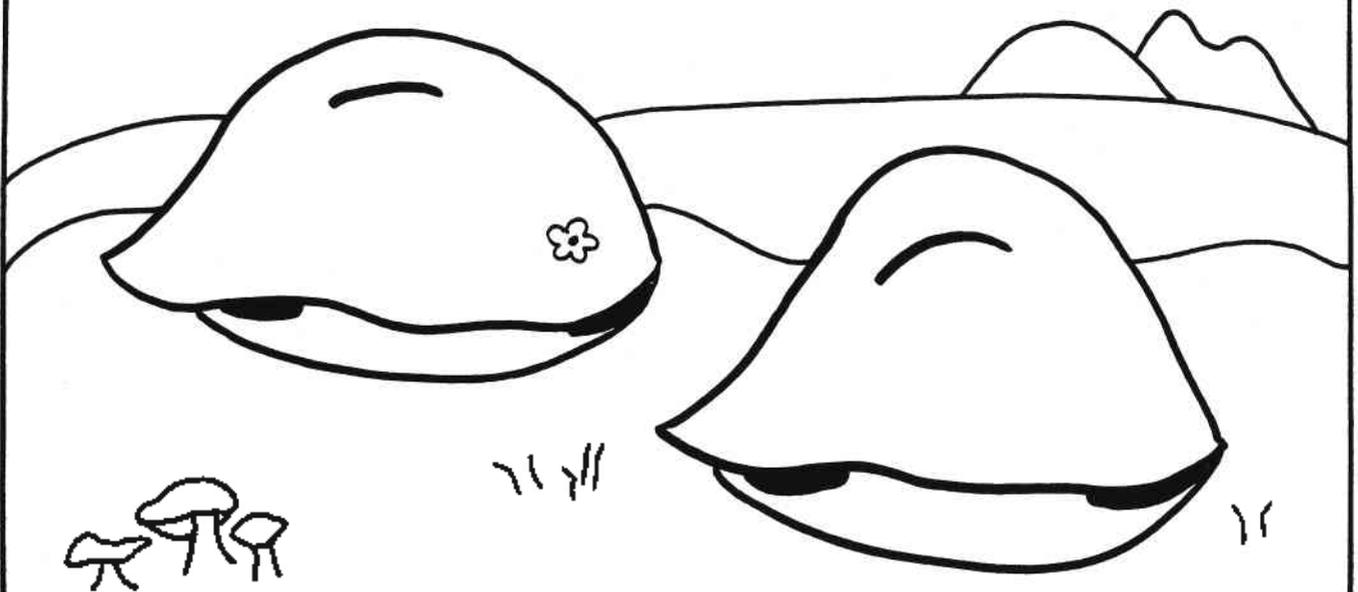
*"Only if you want to, will you find a way
If you really want to, you can seize the day
Only if you want to, will you fly away"*

I want to breakthrough and I want to fly.

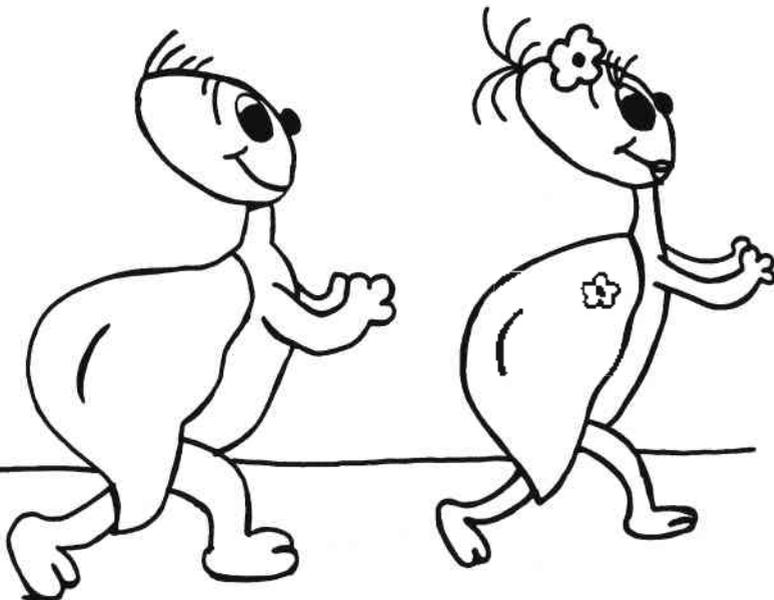
P.S. On the way home from Mahwah, I saw a license plate on the car in front of me that said, "STEP UP"



GET OUT OF YOUR SHELL...



AND ATTEND THE
TEACHERS CONFERENCE...



TAI CHI CHIH
TEACHERS CONFERENCE
JULY 20-23, 2000
MORRISTOWN, NJ

SEE YOU THERE

VIERECK

**SUBMISSIONS:**

The Vital Force invites letters, articles, news briefs, poetry, original artwork and photography. Written submissions should be typed. All submissions must indicate the full name and complete address of the person submitting them to be considered for publication.

The Vital Force now has a text scanner which allows us to process typed submissions much more efficiently. Unfortunately, hand-written submissions must still be typed in manually and are prone to human error. Mail, fax, or e-mail your submissions. (See "Contact Information" on opposite page.) **Students**, please indicate who your T'ai Chi Chih teacher is with your submission.

2000 Submission deadlines:

Spring:	January 10th	Fall:	July 10th
Summer:	April 10th	Winter:	October 10th

Note: It may be possible to submit timely news for publication later than the deadline, and it is usually possible to submit items for listing in the "Calendar of Events" up until press time — contact **The Vital Force**.

EDITING POLICY:

**"But if you turn your eyes within yourselves
And testify to the truth of Self-nature—
The Self-nature that is no-nature,
You will have gone beyond the ken of
sophistry."**

— "ZAZEN WASAN / The Song of Zazen" by Hakuin,
A Flower Does Not Talk by Abbot Zenkei Shibayama

The editing policy of **The Vital Force** is to leave written submissions as intact as possible in order to preserve the original voice of the writer. Therefore, **editing will be minimal, unless explicitly requested otherwise by the writer, or unless the meaning is unclear.** The editing term "sic" will NOT be used to point out errors. Due to space limitations, submissions may have to be shortened, although it is hoped this will be rare.

When an addition or substitution for a word or words in the original text has been made, these brackets: [] will be used to enclose the change, rather than parentheses, which some writers like using. If an omission is made of more than a word or two due to unrelated content (in a letter, for instance) or space limitations, it will be shown by the following version of ellipsis: . . . This is so as not to be confused when the following: is used by a writer to show a lapse in time, a long pause or change in topic.

MEMBERSHIPS:

The Vital Force is published quarterly and bulk-mailed to Association members in the U.S. during the second weeks of March, June, September and December. Generally, the mailing time is 2 - 4 weeks. U.S. First Class and international delivery can be ordered for an extra fee and posts on the same schedule noted above. (See Page 4 for details).

**TCC TEACHERS'
DIRECTORY:**

The T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Directory is for referral and communication purposes among accredited T'ai Chi Chih teachers. **It is not to be used or sold as a mailing list.** Updates are published in each issue of **The Vital Force**. Send your changes to the San Rafael address (on opposite page).

WHEN MOVING:

Please allow 8 weeks notice and provide complete old and new addresses. Because **The Vital Force** has "return service requested" with the U.S. Post Office, an undeliverable issue or Teachers' Directory is returned to us with a charge for the First Class cost to return it (approximately \$1.25 - \$2.50, depending on the weight). Then, if we mail out a new one, it goes First Class (because a bulk mailing requires 200 pieces), resulting in further expense of \$1.25 - \$2.50. Please help us avoid this unnecessary and wasteful expense—send in your change of address information early!



T'AI CHI CHIH CONTACTS:

Justin Stone

Originator of T'ai Chi Chih
P.O. Box 23212
Albuquerque, NM 87192-1212

Ed Altman

Head of T'ai Chi Chih
P.O. Box 6857
San Rafael, CA 94903-0857
(415) 472-1207

T'AI CHI CHIH WEBSITE:

www.taichichih.org

VITAL FORCE JOURNAL CONTACTS:

Vital Force Association Memberships, updates for Teacher's Directory, updates / sign-ups for Website Teacher Referral List, submissions for publication:

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Albuquerque, NM 87112

THE VITAL FORCE *Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*

Please print clearly.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

1. () Renewal () New

2. Name _____ Phone (_____) _____ - _____

Address _____

_____ E-mail _____

_____ Zip _____ - _____

3. () Accredited TCC Teacher - Are you: () Active () Inactive () Willing to travel

Membership Includes Teachers' Directory _____ year(s) @ \$30.00 / yr = \$ _____

Do you want your name, phone number and e-mail address (if applicable) included on the T'ai Chi Chih community website (www.taichichih.org) _____ year(s) @ \$5 / yr = \$ _____

() Student / Interested person _____ year(s) @ \$25.00 / yr = \$ _____

4. () First Class Delivery in U.S. additional \$5.00 / yr = \$ _____

() Out of U.S. Delivery additional \$10.00 / yr = \$ _____

5. () Donation for funding VFJ projects: outreach and referral activities = \$ _____

Make check or money order in U.S. dollars payable to:

TOTAL = \$ _____

The Vital Force

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



The Lighter Side...

1. After practising the "Six Healing Sounds" one student asked: "Is this where we get to 'Chew' the Taffy?"

– [Sr.] Viola Bens, ose

2. I usually ask students about their practise before beginning a class. One evening I got these two comments from two different students:

"I'm still just reading the menu!"

"I'm having problems with the 'two girls on the mountain'!"

– [Sr.] Viola Bens, ose

3. Ruth, a former nurse who now has Parkinson's, wore an elastic key ring around her wrist during class. I asked, "You want to take your bracelet off so you don't shake, rattle & roll?"

She smiled and said, "Sure, but I'll still shake anyway whether I wear it or not!"

– Sharon Sirkis

4. When asked about my fingers trembling during a TCC move, I said, "No, I didn't just have a drink before class. Would anyone like to take a guess why my fingers tremble?"

One senior promptly responded, "Nerves?"

– Sharon Sirkis

5. I have so many over 90 students now — they are just delightful & full of fun — "If I knew I was going

to live this long I would have taken better care of myself!" Then I ask — OK — why do you keep coming to T'ai Chi Chih class? They all said — "It's the joy of the movement — now where have we heard that??"

– Pat Huseby

6. Sometimes I'll teach with toys to clarify the moves. Once, while teaching "Pulling Taffy," I pulled out my silly putty. One student was convinced that I brought my wadded up chewing gum!

– Sharon Sirkis

7. During a presentation at a retirement home, I stressed the importance of staying loose, "like meat hanging off your bones." I immediately realized this was the wrong thing to say, but it was too late. One lady scrunched up her face and said "ewwww...." (Oops - I guess that's what Ed meant about baptism by fire!)

– Sharon Sirkis

8. One of my favorite pieces of music to play is Anugama's "Shamanic Dream." This CD is popular with most of my students. Well, not all of my students. One woman said, "What is that music? It sounds like a funeral march!" (Lesson here - you can't please everyone!)

– Sharon Sirkis

[Editor's Note: If you have a funny story to tell regarding your T'ai Chi Chih practice or teaching, write it up and send it in for "The Lighter Side..."]

Pyramid Poetry

This form of poetry was originated by Justin Stone and is described in detail in his book, [Climb the Joyous Mountain](#).

*Stretch
your minds
to the depths
hidden within
a gentle
spirit
wakes*

– Linda Tolentino
(Student of Tom Tolentino)

*Tug
of war
creating
havoc within
Yearning for
release
now*

– Sharon Sirkis

*Group
moving
together
electrifies.
I moving
alone
glow.*

– Trish Winger

*T'ai
Chi Chih
is moving
through heavy air
Seijaku
pushes
rock*

– Jan Linthorst

*my
practice
leads to hugs
of life force which
send forward
Justin's
love*

– Eric Imbody

*light
came to
visit us
and now we are
without doubt
truly
changed*

– Ann Daly