

The Vital Force

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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

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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:



The brush painting on the cover is the work of TCC Teacher Virginia Shilson, a resident of St. Louis, MO. This is the third time that

Virginia's beautiful artwork has appeared on a cover of *The Vital Force*. At our request more than two years ago, she agreed to allow a large selection of her brushwork to appear in the pages of *The Vital Force*, over time. She was the first artist to contribute her work to the current VFJ staff and we are grateful that she did! She does offer her work for sale on a smaller scale (as notecards).

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

As of this writing, *The Vital Force* has successfully moved from California (its birthplace) to New Mexico, the birthplace of T'ai Chi Chih. A new issue is nearing completion in a new office, a new printing house has been chosen, and new VFJ volunteers have signed up to continue the quarterly tradition of spending an afternoon inspecting issues, collating flyers, stuffing issues and stuffing and stamping envelopes for bulk and first class postage.

The future looks bright for *The Vital Force*. A little over two years ago, the membership base was at about 380 subscribers. Now we range from 500-575 per quarter (as the membership base fluctuates). The biggest increase, percentage-wise, has been in student memberships. It is now quite common for Ed (or myself) to talk about *The Vital Force* to candidates at the end of a Teacher Training week, and 50% or more of the candidates are already subscribers. This is wonderful to see because I believe these candidates have a definite "heads up" in their preparation and expectations for the course after reading so many fine articles from experienced teachers, new teachers who have just gone through their trainings, students at different levels and of course, the viewpoints and advice from Justin Stone, the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih, and Ed Altman, the Head of T'ai Chi Chih.

Teacher candidates are obviously very serious students, but how many other students could benefit from reading these same articles? Xerox them and use them in classes! (Just attribute the source — *The Vital Force* and issue month and year). If students are interested, give them xeroxed copies of the membership form (at the back of every issue) and encourage them to sign up for themselves so they can read issues in their entirety, every quarter.

The Vital Force is a different kind of publication — its content is reliant upon its subscribers! Those teachers and students who take the time to write up what is happening in their practices, their personal growth, their teaching are the ones who ensure that there is an issue to print each quarter! **THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE DONE THIS**, even if only once. You are why this publication is thriving! For those of you who have enjoyed reading what others have written, why not try your hand at it? Whether you are an absolute beginning student or a seasoned teacher, what you are experiencing in your practice (and teaching) is of interest to the rest of us.

If you are teaching T'ai Chi Chih to a specialized population (like a group with a specific disability, or in a certain age bracket, or to prisoners or corporate executives or schoolteachers, or in a hospital or university setting), why not share with the rest of us how you got started teaching that group and how it's going now so others of us can get ideas of how to pursue that sort of group in our area?

The T'ai Chi Chih Community is a different sort of group. Sharing is encouraged, and even expected! And support is there from others when you need it. Why not jump in with your contribution to this focused effort? Write an article!

Noel Altman, Editor



Readers Respond

Haven't been receiving the news letter for years. I studied under Christeen McLain in Fargo, ND before I got married and moved to Chicago three years ago. I have been moving since 1989. Would like to re-subscribe...Can I send you my credit card number? Thanks so much. Blessings,

Pamela Magnuson
Des Plaines, IL

[Editor's note: I will send you out a membership form and you can send it back completed with a personal check or money order and we'll get your membership restarted. We don't have the capability to accept credit card numbers at this point. Thanks for the inquiry — look for my letter in the mail.]

Dear Ed and Noel, Greetings for this very special season of the year. . . .I hope to be able to arrange for a few more groups of adults. I must say that I have enjoyed teaching them, although I was a bit apprehensive in the beginning. I thought that my line was only with children. Thank you for this.....The [Teachers'] Directory.....It is amazing how many people have contacted me during the past year. So much so that one even lived in the same town as I did for many years and is now in California. . . . My December *Vital Force* has just arrived and now I can relax and spend many hours going through it. . . .

Sr. Marie-Ann Main
Brighton Beach Bluff
Durban, Kwa Zulu Natal
SOUTH AFRICA

Thanks for keeping the *Vital Force* moving forward in such a wonderful way!

Linda Meyer
Oakland, CA

I tried to write a note to go with these poems and got four more.

Please use these as you wish, together or apart. It's up to you.

I cannot seem to stop writing this form. Pyramids in my sleep.

The Vital Force always manages to inspire me in some way.

Eddie Roberts
Concord, CA

Dear Noel . . . I have a new website for TCC. Is it OK to have that listed instead of my e-mail address in the

teacher web listings? . . . Thanks,

Sally McLaughlin
Barrington, IL

[Editor's note: No, we don't list website addresses, just e-mail addresses. We don't have any way of knowing what the content would be on other websites. This is the same reason we don't have links out to other websites, although we encourage teachers to have links from their websites into the community website, www.taichichih.org.

The point of having your e-mail address listed is so that potential students can contact you about your T'ai Chi Chih classes. Once they do, you can certainly tell them about your website, if you choose. Thanks for the inquiry.]

October 9-14 Teacher Training at Columbia, Pennsylvania was a beautiful week. Not only for the gorgeous fall weather but for the profound experience we shared together during our week of accreditation. Thank you to Ed and the many auditing teachers who took time out of their busy schedules to be there to help us. Before, I thought of T'ai Chi Chih as something I did, but now feel that it is more about WHO I AM.

Hope Spangler
York, PA

Dear Noel, Thanks for an outstanding job. Sincerely,

Denise Clark
Danville, CA



What You Read

By Justin Stone

On Saturday nights a small group of dedicated meditators gathers at my house. Afterward we go to dinner and come back to the house for philosophic discussion and reading from one of the books in my metaphysical library.

The meditators are very interested, but I warn them not to try to apply what they hear to their own lives. The Indian work makes much mention of Vairagya (non-attachment) as a necessity for achievement of enlightenment, Moksha, salvation, etc. Can you expect a mother or father, living in this everyday world, to be non-attached to their children? If they live good, honest lives, useful to the world, that is enough, unless they are the few who want to 'know God', learn 'Truth', etc. In that case they are driven and will try to 'accord with Reality', the real purpose of Spirituality.

When we get into doctrine and dogma, this in no way leads us on the path to Truth, though it may forward the growth of the Religion we follow. There is a difference between trying to follow teachings as opposed to experiencing Truth for ourselves.



"Hug Tree", photo by Deanne Hodgson

I point out that these books and teachings are for Yogis, Monks, and inherently spiritual people. To try to work at a job, raise a family, and enjoy some entertainment (if that is necessary to you), means you have little time—or true desire—for spiritual practice, while knowing your whole future somewhat depends on it. I have known quite a few who are compassionate, ethical, and moral who are not in the least interested in future lives or salvation. They may be very helpful in this world.

One reason many people do T'ai Chi Chih is because it is not philosophical, has no hint of religion

about it, and leaves one open to personal experience without any words. When a man is hungry, don't preach to him, give him something to eat.

Please remember this when you read deep, highly interesting metaphysical books. They do not, necessarily, speak to you. If you are spiritually inclined (perhaps the real purpose in life), you will know it.