

# The Vital Force



*Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*

---

Volume 17, No. 2

June 2000





# Table of Contents

## Articles by Originator and Head of TCC

- 5 ..... What Did the World Do? . . . Stone
- 6 ..... Peeling Back the Layers . . . Altman
- 10 ..... Some Random Thoughts . . . Stone

## Events Coverage

- 13 ..... TCC Workshop - Ohio
- 14 ..... TCC Teacher Training - New York
- 16 ..... TCC Teacher Training - Alberta,  
CANADA

## Upcoming Events

- 18 ..... 2000 TCC Teachers' Conference

## Photo Essays

- 27 ..... Infirm Sisters Practice . . . Campbell

## Articles by Teachers

- 8 ..... Video "Resonates" . . . Hackenberg
- 11 ..... New Life . . . . . Grant
- 11 ..... Notes: Three Practices . . . . . Roache
- 12 ..... Since Beginning TCC . . . . . Kissinger
- 12 ..... The Vital Forces . . . . . Hall
- 20 ..... Dreams Become . . . . . Brocklehurst
- 21 ..... Visualization, Practice . . . . . Mitchell
- 22 ..... STUDY on TCC . . . . . Detert
- 25 ..... Teaching in Sitka, AK . . . . . Bleier
- 26 ..... Show and Tell . . . . . Sirkis
- 28 ..... Teaching in Given Space . . . . . Altman

## Articles by Students

- 7 ..... Why T'ai Chi Chih? . . . . . Ferrari
- 24 ..... Back "On Fire" After TCC . . . . . Bourne
- 24 ..... Deep Cut Heals Rapidly . . . . . Taylor

## Letters Forwarded to *The Vital Force*

- 30 ..... Trusting in the Chi . . . . . Williamson
- 30 ..... Teaching in Arizona . . . . . Hodgson

## Creativity Expressed

- Cover ..... Drawing and Lettering . . . . . Edwards
- 5, 10 ..... Brush Painting . . . . . Shilson
- Back Page ..... Pyramid Poetry . . . . . Bleier,  
Imbody, Kissinger,  
Siedlecki, Sirkis

## In Every Issue

- 2, 34 ..... Information on *The Vital Force*
- 2 ..... Letter from the Editor
- 3 ..... Readers Respond
- 19 ..... Calendar of Events
- 32 ..... Karmic Komments
- 33 ..... Good Karma Publishing Distributors
- 35 ..... Contacts Lists / Membership Form
- 36 ..... The Lighter Side...

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



## The Vital Force

Editor: Noel Altman  
Technical Advisor: Ed Altman  
Membership Svcs: Doug Harned

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:

For the first time our cover features the artwork of a T'ai Chi Chih student—Janet Edwards—whose T'ai Chi Chih lettering and drawing of the crane



(above) were created as part of a required project in the intermediate (.5 unit) TCC college course she took from Teacher Donna McElhose. Janet, who did major in art and loves to work in pen and ink, was inspired by a t-shirt bearing cranes that Donna wore to class. The graphics surrounding her artwork were done by *The Vital Force*.

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

Copyright © 2000 by *The Vital Force*, *Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*. All rights reserved.

# Letter from the Editor

When **Justin Stone** completes a new project, it is big news. Over the years, I have seen three different productions of his teaching on videotape. Each one has been and continues to be valuable to any serious student or teacher. But the latest, completed in April, definitely stands out as **his finest overall production to date!** (See pg. 8 for Amy Hackenberg's review and pg. 32 for early reactions to the videotape at Good Karma Publishing.) Not only is his teaching wonderful and thorough ("vintage Justin"), but the quality of the production is superior and the practice session finally includes nine (instead of the former six) repetitions! Practicing with the four teachers (Vic Berg, Connie Hyde, Suni McHenry, Rhonda St. Martin) who lead the session is like joining an ongoing practice class! Boy do they flow! Just the expression on Suni's face as she performs the movements relaxes me. There is no speaking or verbal instruction in this part; the teachers are silent as they go straight through the 19 movements and one pose. However, Justin's newly-created music for the practice of T'ai Chi Chih does play softly in the background, setting the mood and adding to the relaxation. From the starting titles all the way through to Justin joining the four teachers at the end, this is one beautifully cohesive production! It's seamlessly woven. I've enjoyed putting the tape into the VCR and practicing along with them. I would say that **for beginning students, this videotape is the best choice** because of its overall higher quality of PRESENTATION and the fact that the student can practice with a mini-class of four teachers and enjoy nine repetitions.

**For the more serious student and certainly every teacher, the old videotape is a necessity AS WELL.** Nowhere else is Justin recorded on videotape offering complete instruction AND leading a practice session. Not everyone is fortunate enough to live in the same town as Justin! In Albuquerque, Justin regularly attends the Tuesday morning teachers' practice at the T'ai Chi Chih Center. Even there, in my experience, Justin declines to lead, instead allowing the local teachers to do so. Sometimes he'll offer comments or corrections at the end of the practice. On the old videotape, however, although most of the repetitions are performed in silence, Justin does offer reminders and tips throughout the practice session. Also, there is something to be gained by watching him perform a movement six times, something that cannot necessarily be seen in the fewer repetitions demonstrated in the instruction sections. Do we all realize how fortunate we are to be practicing a form in which the Originator is not only still living, but has been recorded for the future? Thankfully, Good Karma Publishing is going to continue to offer the old video.

Lastly, **Vic Berg** has decided to step away from his duties as Webmaster to focus on other priorities, including the raising of his little daughter Chelsea. We all greatly appreciate the total revamping and enhancing that he did of the T'ai Chi Chih community website last year. Many of you readers have written in to compliment his work. At this point, Ed Altman will again take over the maintenance of the site, including the updating of the teacher listing. However, all other enhancements will be put on hold for now. **If you are qualified and interested in taking on this volunteer role for The Vital Force and the community of T'ai Chi Chih, please contact me.**

Noel Altman, Editor



# Readers Respond

I thought that the March 2000 *Vital Force* was the best issue I've ever read. It was packed full of meaty articles and letters, and the poems were great. I'm really amazed at how organized the editor, Noel, is, and it shows in the order and thought that go into such an issue. I can't imagine anyone who won't get a great deal out of it. Thank you!

**Justin Stone**  
*Albuquerque, NM*

I always enjoy the Folsom prison articles you provide in the *VFJ*. They are a status report for us - and always encouraging. I know great things will come from Jim Hecker's work there with Ed [Altman] and Tara [Stiles]' support and guidance. (I have thought, perversely, that if I was in prison I would have the time to focus on TCC and meditation... boy is that weird?!?) I always return to Justin's comment about practicing at 42nd and Broadway versus the Himalayas - and realization achieved in active life being far more powerful - and Seijaku - serenity in the midst of activity... The answer is there! Fun stuff! . . .

**Guy Kent**  
*Albuquerque, NM*

When visiting New York in late March, I joined one of Carolyn Perkins' TCC groups that meets Monday and Friday. On my way to the second session I realized that I had left home without the address. But I thought "Hey I can remember the street." I knew I was in the right

area, but all those concrete canyons began to look alike. As 10 a.m. approached I said aloud, "I need Carolyn or a phone book." I was halfway across a major intersection when I saw Carolyn walking toward me. I did an abrupt about-face, saying, "Hi Carolyn, am I glad to see you!" As we chatted on the way to the session, Carolyn told me that she rarely came the direction and street where we met. Hail to the Chi.

**Neena Mitchell**  
*Syracuse, NY*

Hi Noel, Are you aware that the Cincinnati crowd have not received their [March] *Vital Force* yet [as of March 30]? I'm told that other areas have had theirs for weeks. If you know about it or it's only recently 'in the mail' it's OK. You don't need to reply unless you think there's a problem. We're all looking forward to seeing Ed in a couple of weeks [for the TCC Workshop April 15]. Thanks.

**Susan Evans**  
*Cincinnati, OH*

**[Editor's note: All issues (bulk and First Class) are shipped by the Monday following the first week-end of the issue month—in this case, March 6. If you've heard of people having it for weeks, it could only be people who got it First Class! Even in Albuquerque, where there are umpteen teachers, it takes about 2 weeks for bulk mailing.**

**I've got a more complete explana-**

**tion in the back of the Teachers' Directory in the "Commonly-Asked Questions" section, which I suggest all teachers take the time to read.**

**Unfortunately, once the issues are shipped, we don't have any control over how long it will take the U.S. Mail to get them to you, and it can vary from quarter to quarter. For the March issue, tax return mail may have clogged the system. In December, holiday mail does. In every case where someone has notified us of the issue being late, it always shows up in the next week or so. So, when it seems later than usual, hang in there! It shouldn't be too much longer!**

To the T'ai Chi Chih Community, I would like to thank Ed Altman and Dan Pienciak our host for one of the most profound weeks of my life. April 24-28th was the first T'ai Chi Chih Teachers Training of the millennium. I, along with nine ladies are now accredited TCC instructors. I would like to thank Justin (as he is affectionately called) for his gift. It has made a difference in my life. I hope to meet all the family at the Conference in July. Until then. Patience.

**Grady F. Anderson**  
*Nanuet, NY*

A T'ai Chi Chih student of mine recently had an MRI as a followup to

*continued on page 30*



*A companion went with me to the animal farm. He was a rather gruff man and one, I was to find, that the animals didn't trust or readily take to. Perhaps he had hidden violence in his makeup. As we entered the grounds we passed a fence with chicken wire over it, making an enlarged cage within. There rested a pet puma (mountain lion) that the trainer had raised almost from birth (the mother had eaten its twin, and the trainer had sneaked the day-old baby out of the cage before it had a similar fate). He had seen the man I was with before and evidently had a violent aversion to him. As we walked by, he sprang at the chicken wire, coming directly at us. The experience was exactly like that of a large wild animal pouncing on us in the wilderness, and it all seemed to happen in slow motion. I was amazed at the beauty and grace of the pouncing animal, and also noticed my own reaction in detail; my breath remained calm and natural and there was no fear (obviously we were safe), only admiration for the magnificent spectacle, though I was totally unprepared for such a happening.*

*Later the trainer brought the mountain lion inside, without any restraint, and sat him down in the kitchen with his dinner, two dead chickens. I was sitting on a couch in the living room and, before eating, the animal looked squarely at me for about half a minute. Then, having determined that I was no threat to him, he looked down and began to eat. He never paid any attention to me again.*

*After he had finished eating, the trainer, whom he loved as a mother, directed him into the bedroom. As he walked thru the living room, this 190 pound lion, who could kill a horse, brushed against my leg but never looked up. After many years of spiritual practice I watched my own reactions with interest, my breath and state of mind particularly. Physically and mentally the animal did not inspire fear in me; it was obvious he was sensitive to vibration and mine gave him no trouble. This was a mini-Satipatthana exercise.*

– Heightened Awareness / Toward a Higher Consciousness,  
by Justin F. Stone



# What Did the World Do?

By Justin Stone

What did the world do before Velcro, Kleenex, the salad bar, and the flush toilet? Convenience, next to entertainment, is the watchword now, the computer more important than the human, not to mention fax, e-mail, the telephone answering service, etc.

Yet, when people go on vacation they like to go to the public market place in Peru, where humans gather to intermingle and relate to each other. The one-person-per-car syndrome has created islands of loneliness. I wish I had a companionship pill to give to those who are empty inside.

When old people look back they find little that was satisfying or meaningful—only the fear of inevitable death and digital noise to drown it out. What has it all meant, if anything?

Those who have given service to others know some satisfaction. Others, who cling to what is 'mine', have only fear of losing it before death takes it away. Rather humorous when looked at

objectively. Is the Cosmos playing a big joke on us—or is there something behind it all besides five cents worth of pleasure?

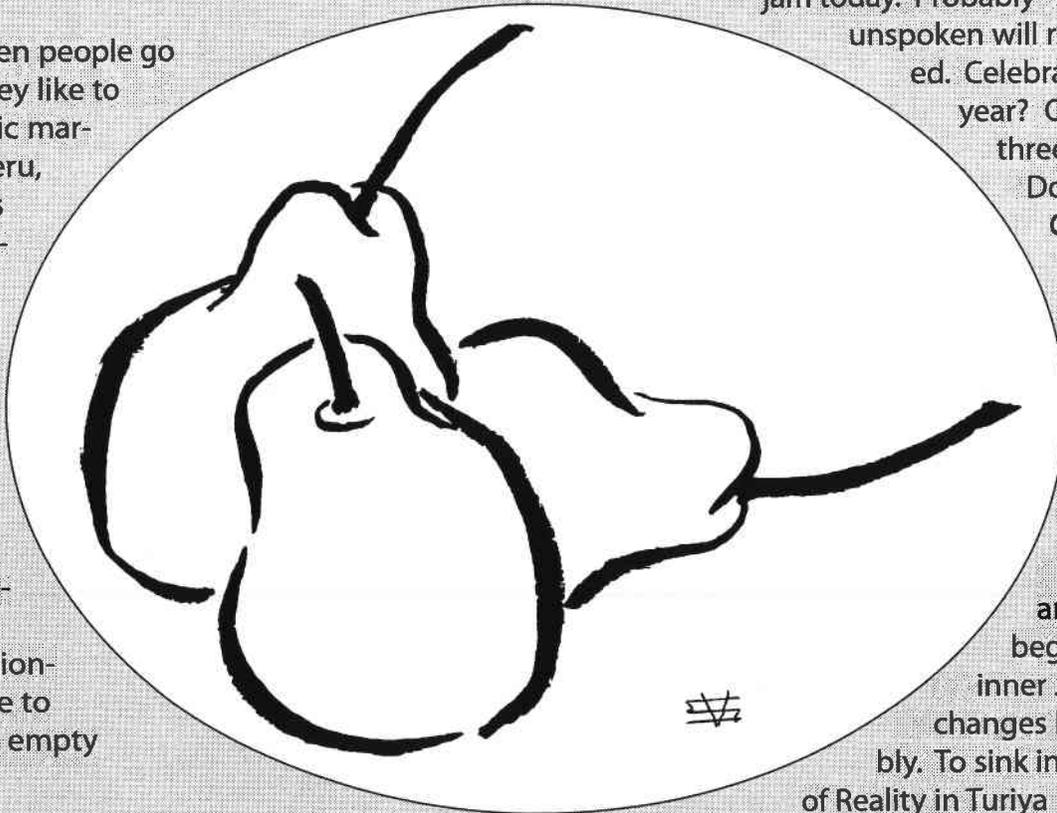
Would we be willing to change to bring some 'meaning' to it all? Probably not. The one constant value is the quest for money. A little more will insure a meaningful life! Jam tomorrow, never jam today. Probably—possibly. The unspoken will remain unspoken. Celebrate the new

year? One day in three sixty five? Donate to the Church? Increase the growth—and power—of institutions?

Those who practice TCC correctly and sincerely begin to know an inner Joy that changes life, inexplicably. To sink into the depths of Reality in Turiya meditation is a

great relief. To feel—and help express, by helping others—our gratitude is to know Joy. If you have destructive thoughts about others you have missed the boat. Love is more than mutually exchanged pleasure, but it is a word that is greatly misused. Manifestation of Life—not a life—is Joy.

Artwork by Virginia Shilson





# Peeling Back the Layers

By Ed Altman

When students first begin learning T'ai Chi Chih they are sometimes frustrated to find that the body does not always do what they want it to. Arms and legs, hands and feet, shoulders, waist and hips...each seems to have a mind of its own. Or worse, they "team up" with one another and will not follow directions at all!

At this stage of learning it is important for T'ai Chi Chih teachers to convey that every part of the body must be allowed to move independently. In other words, just because the wrist is circling in a particular move doesn't mean the entire arm must do so. Once this principle is learned, and gradually embodied, students will find that countless problems disappear from the practice. This eventually leads to an increased flow of the Chi and a feeling of gracefulness in motion.

Inevitably, the solution to one problem is often the source of another. Students begin by learning to break out of their hardened, habitual ways of moving to free up each part of the body, but after this has been accomplished problems seem to spring up everywhere! Now every part of the body requires great attention or it goes astray. If one examines the legs for too long the arms seem to lose their shape; if the attention is placed on the arms for any length of time one finds that the body has begun to lean, and so forth. How can anyone keep track of all these independent objects in motion?

Students may now find that the message has changed, and shake their heads in disbelief when the teacher states that no part of the body

may be allowed to move independently. Is this not the exact opposite of what was learned earlier?

Once each part of the body is moving freely it is flooded with Chi, the intrinsic intelligent energy of the Universe. The fluidity of this free-flowing Chi is what unites every part of the body into an integrated whole. Students now learn that the arms, legs, shoulders and waist do not move on their own; they are *moved* by the Chi. The flow of this Chi is what supports each part of the body and allows it to float. But what is it that moves this Chi, and can one direct it?

This is an advanced question, and it is discussed in great detail during T'ai Chi Chih teacher training courses. This is where serious students learn even more about their practice and become accredited to teach T'ai Chi Chih. They discover that the mind cannot remain fixed on any part of the movement. "Mind" must be unhindered and allowed to flow freely and *simultaneously* through every part of the body. If any aspect of the movement is left untouched it will inevitably go astray. It is our attention (awareness) of the whole, not the individual parts that "guides" the Chi. As the Chi responds to this subtle influence, it supports the entire body and allows it to move without effort.

When this happens one directly experiences what Justin Stone has described on so many occasions: "T'ai Chi Chih is doing T'ai Chi Chih." The one who practices is merely an observer! The feeling of joy that results from this experience does not come from any outside source; it comes directly from within. It is available to each and every T'ai Chi Chih student, and the point of entry is consistent and mindful practice.



# Why T'ai Chi Chih?

By Marianne Ferrari  
Student of Fredora Powell

---

When I mentioned to a lady at a Christmas party that I am taking T'ai Chi Chih, she dismissed it with the comment, "We did it for awhile, but it was boring."

"The more slowly you do it," I wanted to tell her, "the more interesting it becomes." Instead, I just let the words sit in my mouth and thought about them, and it occurred to me that the very quality that had made T'ai Chi Chih boring to the lady and her husband is the one that gives T'ai Chi Chih its cachet: T'ai Chi Chih requires you to change your way of perceiving balance, space, and movement, in order to let its beauty unfold.

I had come to T'ai Chi Chih as an outsider, curious as to what substance there was to this strange dance I had seen in clips on television. Clearly, there was something to it, given the obvious concentration on the faces of the participants, but I wasn't sure that the whole thing wasn't just an affectation of some kind.

In the first five or six sessions, I quickly recognized the physical benefits of T'ai Chi Chih, for it focuses effort precisely on the muscles one needs for strong posture, standing, and walking - the muscles around the knees, thighs, and calves and feet - and also on the upper back muscles in the area where the arms and shoulders meet, which, I had already learned in yoga, are so crucial to healthy posture.

But to appreciate the strength aspect of T'ai Chi Chih is to appreciate only its surface layer. When I "got" this part, I immediately responded by trying to do the movements too athletically. This made me feel awkward. My legs got overly tired. I lost my balance repeatedly. It felt "stupid" to do T'ai Chi Chih. Though one never realizes it at the time, these are the very ways that T'ai Chi Chih humbles

you, when you do not yet understand it.

Have you ever driven a car on a long trip and found that you feel more confident and in control of the car afterward than you usually feel? All you've done is to point the car in a straight line for hours, but, somehow, you are now more sensitive to small shifts in the car's direction. You can make finer corrections sooner than normal. You have a "feel" for the car's movement.

With T'ai Chi Chih, you can achieve that same kind of "feel" for your own body. Like the car, it's carrying you and all of your parts in the direction you have chosen. Like the car, it cannot steer straight on its own. It has a tendency to trend away from the straight and narrow, but not only to the left or to the right: Your body has far more complexity about it, and many more directions into which various parts can lean and diverge from balance and conformity to your will-of-the-moment. T'ai Chi Chih teaches your body convergence. It brings all the parts together around a gyroscopic center. It brings you down, into a truer contact with the ground, where your body's own gravity can gather around you into one whole.

The magic of the mechanical gyroscope is that it always brings itself back to upright, no matter how you might toss it around. It somehow "knows" what "up" and "down" are, and what "balance" is. T'ai Chi Chih teaches you to find the gyroscope within you. With slow-motion movements involving the shifting of weight from one leg to the other, you learn to get the "feel" of how the various parts of your underpinnings relate to one another in each different instance. You get to "know" where balance is now, and now, and now, as you continuously change position, so slowly that you achieve

*continued on page 31*



# Justin Stone's teaching on new video "resonates" after viewing

By Amy Hackenberg

To do justice to Justin Stone's new T'ai Chi Chih video, I would have to write this review as a perfect haiku, where nothing is extraneous and yet everything is present, where the whole world is contained but in a most spare, elegant, and "empty" manner. Alas, I am not a poet. Justin's teaching in this video is like a fine distillate, communicating the essential essence of T'ai Chi Chih.

After I viewed his instruction and practiced with the four teachers in the practice session, his teaching continued to resonate like the sound of a bell. It still echoes in and around me, days later.

The structure of the video consists of three parts: a short introduction by Justin; his thorough teaching of the movements; and a full practice session with four smooth and flowing teachers, Victor Berg, Connie Hyde, Suni McHenry, and Rhonda St. Martin. This three part structure provides a unique balance between spoken instruction and demonstration; the viewer hears Justin's wise words alone at the very beginning, when Justin is seated. Then Justin's expert oral instruction mingles with his fluid demonstration of the movements. Finally, in the practice session, there are no words, and no words necessary: The teaching comes through the wave-like flow of the teachers' movements.

The production visuals are also pleasing and professional. A gentle montage of leaves with a brief overlaid image of the practicing teachers leads into Justin's introduction. A soft lighting design graces the

back wall of the set, producing an effect similar to dappled leaves on a sunny day. The colors—mostly muted grays, light olive greens, and tans—complement the soothing mood created by the warm orange glows of the Japanese screens and lantern. Clear on-screen text signals the beginning of each section. Most helpfully, as Justin demonstrates each movement, its title appears clearly across the bottom of the screen. Similarly, during *Six Healing Sounds*, the word for each sound is displayed in large print in the lower right corner of

the screen to accompany Justin's demonstration.

In the introduction Justin comments on what T'ai Chi Chih is (and is not), how to move, how to tell if you're making progress, and how to achieve benefits

(through practice, of course!) He covers everything a beginning student needs to know, and everything a continuing student needs to be reminded about. I was particularly struck by his efficiency—in a short introduction he addresses all the points it takes me eight full classes to touch upon with beginning students. He focuses on the all-important principles of softness and weight shift, stating that we move softly, "almost as though we don't care." He explains that the fingers are spread and the wrists are loose. He cautions that learning three or four movements at a time is plenty for beginners. His only request is that students practice, both when they feel like it and when they don't.

Once he begins teaching the movements, not surprisingly, his flow and pace reflect the clarity of T'ai Chi Chih movements. He describes the movements precisely, thoroughly, and efficiently, reinforcing what his body so expertly shows. For example, his wrists on *Variation on Around the Platter* display a fluidity like gently flowing water, so smoothly is his ball integrated

---

---

*The 40-minute practice session, in repetitions of nine, proceeds with smoothness and fluidity, accompanied by lovely music Justin composed, which sounds like T'ai Chi Chih rendered in notes.*

---

---



into the movement. The softness of his knees in the yinping and yanging, the looseness of his waist in the Taffy's, the softness *and* strength of his aspirated sounds in *Six Healing Sounds*—well, if you have ever seen Justin in action, you know what strong teaching is contained in his movements, which have been expertly captured on this video.

As is to be expected, Justin intersperses his teaching of the movements with comments and brief

One of my favorite parts of the video comes near the end of the instruction session. "What am I thinking about?" Justin asks, after teaching *Passing Clouds*. "Nothing, because my concentration is in the soles of my feet. That is my thought." He notes that it is better not to have any thoughts, just to concentrate on what you are doing. Could any words of advice be simpler? And yet, they contain so much wisdom. At the end of the instruction session, again he urges viewers to practice in order to receive the benefits T'ai

---

---

## . . . *It is like having a mini-conference in my own living room to enhance my understanding.*

---

---

stories, all essential to convey the utter simplicity of T'ai Chi Chih—a simplicity that is as complex to master as the effort of no effort. He reminds his audience that there is no need to rush. "The more slowly you do it, the more you may get out of it," he says. Justin comments on the joyous nature of doing T'ai Chi Chih, explaining that it is not work; his relaxed manner reflects the joy that comes from doing the movements. Some students, he says, tell him they don't have time to practice in the morning. He gives the simplest, the only real reply: "Get up earlier, that's all." His brief stories, familiar to many teachers, illustrate the power of T'ai Chi Chih, allowing the beginning student to gain a glimpse of the possibilities, the advanced student to nod as he understands some of the implications. With a twinkle in his eye, Justin gives out a koan (or perhaps several.) I'll leave those for viewers to discover!

Justin also anticipates difficulties students will have. He points out two common mistakes in yinping and yanging. He addresses subtle details of *Daughter in the Valley* and *Perpetual Motion Taffy* in order to direct students carefully. "Let's take it apart again," he says while teaching *Working the Pulley*, to augment students' understanding of the movement. His teaching of *Passing Clouds* was very enlightening for me. Despite several years of experience teaching T'ai Chi Chih, I had not found a satisfactory way to communicate this movement. A few words from Justin about circularity, and the teaching is so simple! Not surprisingly, there is always more to uncover, no matter the level of experience.

Chi Chih has to give.

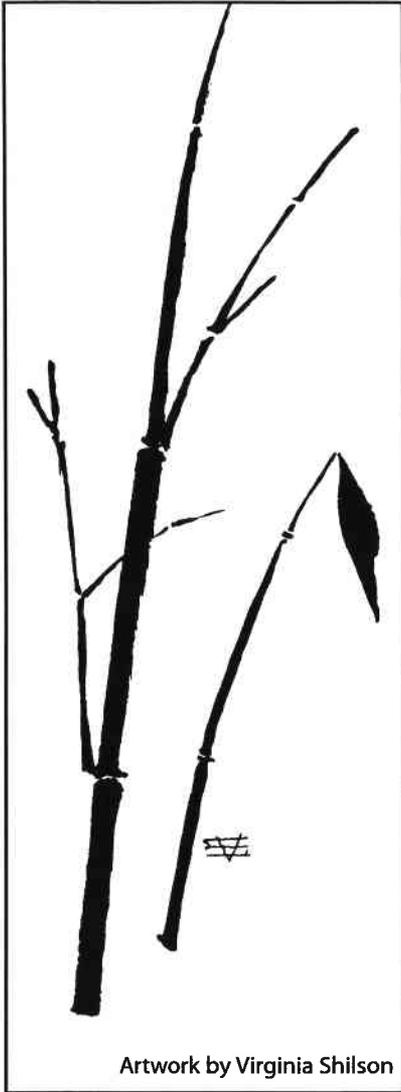
The 40-minute practice session, in repetitions of nine, proceeds with smoothness and fluidity, accompanied by lovely music Justin composed, which sounds like T'ai Chi Chih rendered in notes. How can I describe the serene flow of the four teachers? Words cannot adequately describe their softness, rootedness, and fluid shifting of weight. As I practiced with them, I felt a lightness in my legs I don't always experience on my own. Water sliding up the beach and receding back down, delicate plants swaying in the ocean, and moving slow motion in a dream are images that come to mind but even these metaphors do not adequately capture what must be experienced. Different camera angles allow for close-ups on wrists, hands, legs, and feet without breaking the rhythm of the movements. The session is valuable as a teaching tool for students, but also as a learning tool for every teacher of T'ai Chi Chih. I plan to practice with the tape periodically, between conferences or teacher renewal sessions; it is like having a mini-conference in my own living room to enhance my understanding.

The video ends with Justin thanking the four demonstrating teachers and the viewers. Of course what this viewer felt is thanks to Justin, for this complete and beautifully done video. We are all Justin's students, and what more could a student want than to learn from him, the originator? The best way to "say" thank you is to follow his request, to practice. A way to make that a deeper experience is to practice with this video.



# Some Random Thoughts of J.S.

By Justin Stone



Artwork by Virginia Shilson

**B**ad or cruel people are almost never aesthetic.

**J**apanese Court Music skips the brain and goes right to the heart. "Write the Music of the Formless Self" said the Zen Master to me. How did he know I wrote music?

**"What goes round comes round!"** Circularity is the basis of Energy. Yet people think of time as being linear, having a beginning and an end. Some philosophers in India think of Shiva, Brahma, Sakya (King of the Gods) as being positions to which one can rise, not being permanent identities, and, therefore cyclical. "We learn from History that we do not learn from History!"

**I**ndian writers often speak of "the Good" and "the Pleasant," once again reducing religious matters to a moral level. However, there are several sects in India that believe sex is a Divine Act and live accordingly. This creates a problem for those who think: which is correct, or can you separate them? Many know the story of the monk who was traveling with another monk and came to a river swollen by rain. A young lady standing on the bank of the river was bemoaning her fate: she had to cross, but how? At that the first monk, a sturdy man, picked her up and placed her on his shoulder, then waded thru the water carrying her to the other side. After that the two monks continued for a few miles before the second, pietistic monk remarked: "You know, we are not supposed to touch women!"

To which the first monk replied: "Are you still carrying that woman? I put her down several miles back." Generally Zen adepts approve of his act, forbidden by restrictions in the Buddhist Order.

**D**esire and non-attachment are two sides of the same coin. Desire leads to attachment thru developing the Vashana for satisfying that desire, and the growth of that habit brings attachment. Partial attachment seems a misnomer, an apparent impossibility like being half-pregnant. Either have the growing necessity to smoke or give it up entirely—T'ai Chi Chih practice being an excellent way to do away with the habit-energy and thus reach non-attachment. Vairagya (non-attachment) is the single best means to realize enlightenment, and is not for the weak. Sad to say, attachment to family (which does not persist in animals) is a great hindrance to non-attachment, though mention of such—except in works such as the "Bhagavad Gita"—is usually resented.

**W**hen the Buddha was asked about fasting, he replied: "True fasting is doing without Greed, Anger, and Delusion."



# New Life

By Carla Grant

Lately I find myself in unfamiliar territory. I am several months pregnant. While the pregnancy was no surprise, its effect upon my T'ai Chi Chih practice has been. I often say that my personal TCC practice never ceases to amaze me, the chi reveals itself in new and exciting ways so often, yet it still takes me by surprise.

My practice of late is no exception. I find myself practicing every day, yet doing the movements less and less. The surrender I could never quite give to myself, the baby has gently put upon me. My balance, my knees, my spine, my entire being has a softness I never thought I could achieve.

I am teaching five classes a week at present and plan to keep up this pace through my seventh month (only two more to go). So far, so good. My students also enjoy the evolution of my movements, especially over the last month or two.

The baby seems to enjoy "Daughter on the Mountaintop" and "Push Pull" the most. Aside from the slight distraction of he/she kicking, my classes are in a softer and more rhythmic flow.

I think of the Zen saying about "the face you have before you are born" each time this new life, this new chi, moves within me. The new life that gives my T'ai Chi Chih NEW LIFE. Thank you Justin , and thank you to the rest of the TCC family.

P.S. My due date is July 19. We'll be at the conference in spirit!

## Notes from Three Practices

*This is a reminder to go beyond the instruction. To expand. To honor and respect the guidance and technique.*

- I found the soles of my feet and have cultivated a lasting focus wherein I'm able to stay there, flowing, shifting the weight for almost a whole, long practice. Progress.

- They came together; the soles of the feet, the T'an T'ien and the energy from the most distant star. They were as one.

- I allowed myself to feel the positive within the negative (and vice-versa). That was huge. The next moment I realized the constant exchange between the two throughout the "shifting of the weight." It's the exchange that is the active relationship. The silence=the balance. Allow. A reminder. In a moment I had recognized when I wasn't moving from the T'an T'ien but had gotten too involved in the relationship.

More reflection on these practices: stillness, silence  
More to come less to know. What?

Let the relationship be. I have forced nothing on you; your actions. I asked. I received. Where is the block? Recognize the flow. It's all coming thru. We're free.

You are not as weak as you make it be

Love **Amelia [Roache]**

**I  
let go  
of the wheel  
and became the  
wheel of  
life**  
- Amelia Roache



# Teacher reflects on changes occurring since beginning practice of TCC

By Susan Kissinger

As I began to prepare for teacher training, I struggled with how to incorporate a complete practice in my routine every day without exception. I like to practice T'ai Chi Chih in the quiet of the early morning. However, I felt as if I needed to get up earlier and earlier and I became intent on "accomplishing the practice" before anyone else got up. A fellow student in a teacher training preparation class mentioned that she practices T'ai Chi Chih while her daughter practices violin. I was intrigued by the potential of a practice grounded in serenity while surrounded by that kind of activity.

I abandoned the hope of practicing undisturbed in a quiet

house. I changed my intent from "I want to accomplish my T'ai Chi Chih practice before anyone else gets up." to "My intent is to savor each moment of each movement for however long I have." Time came to a standstill while I practiced. I began waking up regularly around 5:30 to 6:00 a.m. ready to practice. Miraculously?, I now have enough time to fully engage in a complete T'ai Chi Chih practice almost every morning—before anyone else gets up.

= = = = = = = = = =

In 1995, I left 20 years of accounting and finance administration and embarked on an unknown journey of significant life style and work changes. Early in the journey I discovered T'ai Chi Chih. As my T'ai Chi Chih prac-

tice deepens, I am experiencing a gradual wearing away of old habit patterns. I am more fully present with my family and friends. The critical inner chatter has diminished. I sleep more soundly. The last time I couldn't sleep, I was able to spend the sleepless hours in a quiet almost meditative state and arose feeling fully rested the next morning. Food tastes more delicious and I naturally eat more slowly and feel more satisfied. The sphincter muscle between my esophagus and my stomach (which for an extended period in my life would spasm fairly consistently) spasms only occasionally as a gentle physical reminder to savor the moment.

## The Vital Forces Behind Becoming an Instructor

By Cheryl Hall

At a recent intensive training with Ed Altman in Portland, OR, many students expressed an interest or desire in becoming T'ai Chi Chih instructors. I was successful in becoming an instructor, because of the vital forces behind me. Without the instruction and motivation of my teacher Elizabeth Tyler and my

mother, Shirley Hall, I would have never been able to complete the process. Teacher preparation and training are very intense and challenging. They require constant dedication and practice. I am very happy that I am a successful T'ai Chi Chih instructor, but without the vital forces of Elizabeth, my mother and Hal and Annelle Henson at teacher training, I would not have had

the motivation to accomplish this goal.

I have taught seven terms of T'ai Chi Chih. My morning class increased from six senior students to 26 students, and an evening session was added because of the popularity of the course. Many of my students take the class every term.

---



# Spending a Day With Ed

By Marlene Brown  
Course Host

First of all I would like to say a special thank you to all the teachers and students who supported the one day TCC workshop here in Cincinnati. Sixty-three people from seven different states represented Ohio, Missouri, Indiana, Kentucky, Illinois, Michigan and Louisiana. We thank them all for attending, and a special thanks goes to the 12 people from the St. Louis area who made a concerted effort to support this event.

The weather cooperated beautifully, and the grounds of the tree-covered former monastery were rich and beautiful, as we were so very fortunate to have Ed here again to share his ever-growing knowledge about T'ai Chi Chih with us. It never ceases to amaze me how much I still can learn after all these years. He took time to answer all our questions and teach us how to move effortlessly, no tension anyplace. What a big difference that makes in the quality of all our TCC movements.

Everyone was flowing and moving as Ed shared new insights for every move. What a way to do TCC. Wow!

Several people had told me at the beginning that they had to leave early, but as 5 o'clock came around they were still there enjoying every minute of it. We had one lady doing all the moves sitting in a chair, she shared how much she enjoyed doing the movements along with us. I'm glad she



Sixty-three T'ai Chi Chih teachers and students perform Rocking Motion in a circle facing Course Instructor Ed Altman in the center during the one-day workshop held in Cincinnati. Photo: Marlene Brown

was not discouraged from coming. Two of my students, who normally have to sit down after a while, came up to me at the end all excited, and said, "Look, we stood up the whole time, and we're not even tired." Their faces were beaming with excitement. Ed really has a gift of sharing and making things seem so much easier and keeping everyone's interest the whole time.

I would like to encourage everyone to think about participating in the next upcoming workshop if you weren't able to make this one. All of you will have another chance to share this wonderful experience in October, with Anne Perkins [who is hosting a TCC Workshop] in St. Louis. She can be reached at (314) 771-9728. Give her a call and she will be happy to hear from you.

Thanks once again to all those who helped out, to Ed for coming and making this a very special day, and most of all; the students and teachers. Without you I would not have been able to offer this special experience.



## Seventh Annual TCC Training in NJ/NY

# Course challenges 10 candidates

By Dan Pienciak  
Course Host

Arriving at Mt. Manresa in the late afternoon of Easter Sunday, how powerfully I was reminded of Sei-jaku, or "serenity in the midst of activity". I had just come off the crowded expressways from another workshop, and the skies had just cleared from three days of wind and driving rain. As peaceful as the contrast of our retreat setting was against the busy outside world, both Ed Altman and I requested to move our rooms after our first night. Facing the nearby Staten Island Expressway with its loud trucks frequently rumbling by into the small

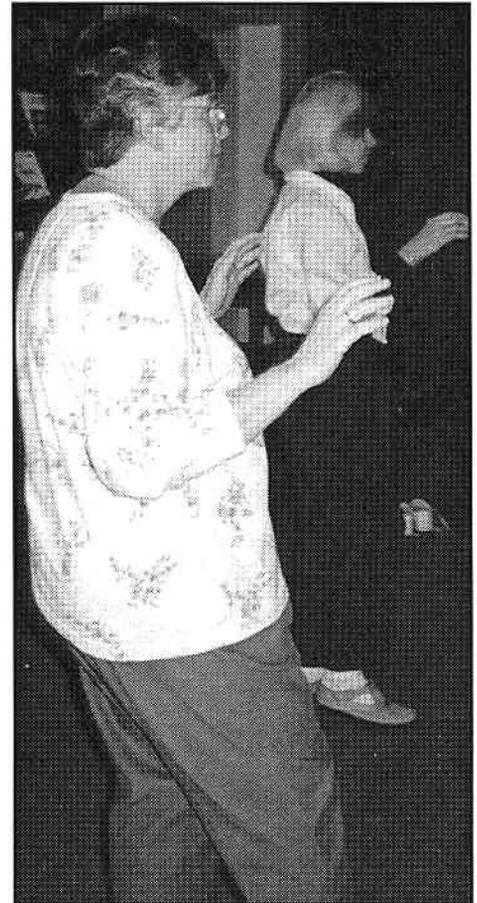
hours of the morning was not exactly serene.

It was clear from its start, that the week would not be without many challenges. Ed's luggage never arrived at the baggage claim, and it was not delivered until the following morning. I had received the news earlier that my aunt had passed away, and I would need to absent myself on Wednesday morning to attend her funeral. One of our very gracious retreat hosts, Sister Maureen Skelly (accredited TCC teacher), would only be able to join us once during the course, so that she could be near her sister who was gravely ill. We were all deeply disappointed to learn that Sr.

Antonia Cooper would not be able to join us due to illness. And only a few local teachers had committed to auditing the course that week.

Not an encouraging way to start a week!

And as we were meeting these challenges, the 10 teacher



(L-R): Sr. Margaret McGirl, Beverly Weil begin Push Pull during practice. Photo: Dan Pienciak

candidates were meeting theirs. How well I could remember arriving at my own accreditation course three years ago, thinking how well I moved, and how quickly I found out differently. Ed began the week by letting this intent group know that they could expect the movements to fall apart before they would come together.

And so it was.

The weather had quieted, but inside each of the candidates, it was evident that storms were churning. Doubts and confusion rose amongst encouragement and refreshing humor. It's got to be "an inside job!", a



(L-R): Nancy Bordley Hall, Lovena Warren and Joanne Lovejoy share a moment in the lovely garden designed by TCC Teacher Sr. Maureen Skelly who works at Mt. Manresa Center, Staten Island, NY where the training was held.

Photo: Dan Pienciak



candidate gleefully exclaimed. Everyone giggled at this and other similar comments, allowing the joy to rise in midst of the tension and perplexity.

But everyone heard well, as Ed quoted Justin Stone saying, "The interior landscape is far more vast than anything in the external world". Our selfless and very dedicated teacher for the week further explained, "You can fight it from the outside, or let it go from the inside".

Pay attention to a problem without trying to fix it! Just being aware of it will often be enough. Trying is only likely to bring about side effects. Just words? Wise advice that meant going within for us all.

Move from the center. Shift the weight. Soften the knees. "The breeze blows and the clouds move". Was everyone trying too hard? As the week progressed and everyone got to know each other more and more, trust and confidence mingled with fear and doubt. Each candidate experienced highs and lows. One candidate confessed coming near to packing up and leaving during the night. But in the end, no one gave up.

Moments of laughter. Moments of tears. Moments of quiet introspection. Moments of wondering, "What now?" From Ed's dedication and sincere words, to the encouragement and support of the auditing teachers who gave of themselves so willingly, to the way the candidates were earnestly helping one another, it

was a truly inspiring week to witness and host.

It was full of joy and love. It was full of hard work. It was full of letting go. It was not for the weak of heart or shallow of spirit. It was for those who wanted to know Truth. As for this teacher, I know that I at least had a glimpse. And I expect that each of the candidates did too.

These glimpses of truth come only with sincere and persistent practice, and for a teacher, a firm commitment and willingness to take every opportunity for renewal and deepening of understanding and experience.

I felt truly honored and privileged to be hosting that week. I was so

filled with gratitude to Justin (whom each candidate had the opportunity to "meet" in viewing the Folsom Prison videotape), to Ed, to everyone who came, and to T'ai Chi Chih for what it has allowed me to learn and discover. Or would it be more accurate to say that it finds me, if I don't get in the way?



A happy group indeed after a hard but enjoyable week! **Back row, (L-R):** Donnis Minx, Carol Zaccagnini, Sue Nugent Reed, Course Host Dan Piencki, Sr. Margaret McGill; **Middle row, (L-R):** Course Instructor Ed Altman, Beverly Weil, Lovena Warren; **Front row, (L-R):** Grady Anderson, Lucia Veteran, Joanne Lovejoy, Nancy Bordley Hall.  
Text and photo provided by Dan Piencki



**(L-R):** Candidates Grady Anderson, Donnis Minx, Lucia Veteran share a laugh during a break. Photo: Dan Piencki



# TCC Alive and Well in Canada!

By Margo Carpenter  
Course Host

Fourteen teacher candidates from across Canada and the U.S. recently came together in Edmonton, Alberta for the first TCC teacher training ever held here. The candidates arrived for an intense week of practice, practice and more practice. New friendships were formed and deeper commitments to TCC were no doubt made. It was a week of hard work and great satisfaction. We laughed, we cried ..... we shared the Chi.

As the course host I was most delighted in meeting and working with the students, some coming from as far away as Montreal, Quebec, Lake St. Louis, MO, Orange, CA, Salt Spring Island, BC, and Victoria, BC. Joining them as well were five local candidates from Edmonton. I couldn't help but admire the effort and sincerity they each



Graduates of the first T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training course held in Canada in about a decade! **Back row, (L-R):** Aurelie Stirling, Lynn Shaw-Ringham, Marty Henry, Lia Fraser, Tamara Zujewskij, Garret Tayler; **Middle row, (L-R):** Course Host Margo Carpenter, Denise Cirino, Louise Bureau, Yvette Bowman, Micheline Marin; **Front row, (L-R):** Grace Mattson, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Terri Manuck, Marilyn Wilson, Bernice Piotrowski.

Photo provided by Margo Carpenter

brought to the training. Nowhere was this more evident than in their very well done, and often moving presentations. It was a pleasure to get to know each and every candidate.

My appreciation for the auditors also is immense. They came from across Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. We were all enriched by the sharing of their TCC experiences, both personal and teaching. Being together as a group of fellow Canadian TCC teachers, working with the students and sharing TCC with each other was a great joy and thrill for me personally.

Of course we have Ed to thank for being willing to come to us when we called, and for being so available to us at all times during his stay. With his example of leadership and steadfastness, have we got any good reason to doubt where we are heading?



Course Host Margo Carpenter (center) hugs two candidates from Quebec (L-R): Micheline Marin and Denise Cirino.

Photo provided by Margo Carpenter



## Feedback from candidates and auditors:

*What was the most important thing you learned at this training?*

Trust T'ai Chi Chih—let T'ai Chi Chih do T'ai Chi Chih. I am a student.

- **Guadalupe Buchwald**

1) Continuing awareness of the opening of my hips/waist, 2) Awareness that "lifting" is not part of moves . . .

- **Garret Tayler**

That I can be in better tune with the inner workings of myself. Progress is possible.

- **Tamara Zujewskyj**

That with all the movements I could truly enter the Cosmic rhythm.

- **Marilyn Wilson**

That the candidate must be well prepared.

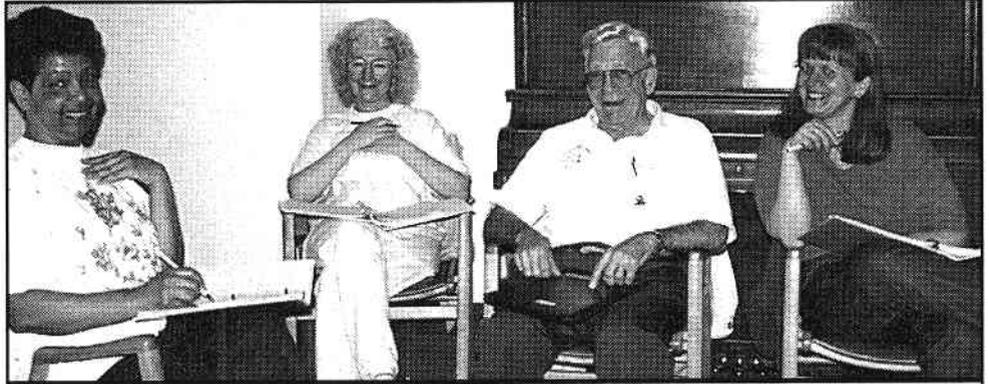
- **Denise Cirino**

How to maintain alignment — stack of coins.

- **Louise Bureau**

Everything was important, valuable, significant.

- **Chery Ann Hoffmeyer**



Relaxing during a break...(L-R): Yvette Bowman, Louise Bureau, Auditor Gordon Wade, Tamara Zujewskyj. Photo: Margo Carpenter

*What part of the training did you enjoy most?*

Visiting at lunches.

- **Garret Tayler**

The corrections. The connections with every participant. Everything I learned, I cannot put into words but hope someday I will maybe put it in a painting or drawing.

- **Denise Cirino**

I enjoyed the practice, listening to Ed's stories and the positive reinforcement!

- **Tamara Zujewskyj**



Look at all the auditors! Most of these teachers audited the entire week or nearly the entire week. (L-R): Course Host Margo Carpenter, Gordon Wade, Chery Ann Hoffmeyer, Sr. Viola Bens, Course Instructor Ed Altman, Anthea Lee, Guadalupe Buchwald, Jackie Williamson. Photo provided by Margo Carpenter



# 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

Our plans continue to move along with mounting excitement as we enter into the final stages of our planning for the Conference. So far, 137 have registered and we hope that those of you who have waited to decide, will choose to attend the Conference. The registration fee is now \$350.00. There are a few single rooms available, but they are going fast!

This year, as in past years, much of our time together will be spent on focusing on refining the form of T'ai Chi Chih. Both Justin and Ed will be giving detailed explanation so as to maximize the flow of Chi "with softness and continuity." The better we are performing our private practices, the more effective we will be as teachers.

A general mailing will go out in early June with schedules, directions to the Xavier Center and arrangements to and from Newark International Airport, Newark, NJ. We ask that those flying into Newark complete the attached form 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 \_\_\_\_\_



# Calendar of Events

|   |  |   |  |
|---|--|---|--|
| <b>June<br/>12<br/>thru<br/>17,<br/>2000</b>  | <b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b><br><b>Location:</b> San Antonio, TX<br><b>Contact:</b> Sr. Alice Holden<br>4707 Broadway<br>San Antonio, TX 78209-6200<br>Phone: (210) 829-5980  | <b>October<br/>7,<br/>2000</b>                  | <b>TCC WORKSHOP (9:30am - 4:30pm)</b><br><b>Location:</b> St. Louis, MO<br><b>Contact:</b> Anne Perkins<br>2342 Albion Pl.<br>St. Louis, MO 63104-2524<br>Phone: (314) 771-9728                |
|   | TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450  |   | Teacher Fee: \$25<br>Student Fee: \$40   |
| <b>July<br/>10<br/>thru<br/>15,<br/>2000</b>  | <b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b><br><b>Location:</b> Berkeley, CA (SF Bay Area)<br><b>Contact:</b> Sandy McAlister<br>24835 Second Street<br>Hayward, CA 94541-6807<br>Phone: (510) 582-2238  | <b>October<br/>9<br/>thru<br/>14,<br/>2000</b>  | <b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b><br><b>Location:</b> Columbia, PA (York, PA area)<br><b>Contact:</b> Jean Markey<br>351 East Maple St. Apt. A<br>Dallastown, PA 17313-1831<br>Phone: (717) 244-1607 |
|   | TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450  |   | TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450  |
| <b>July<br/>20-23,<br/>2000</b>               | <b>15TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL<br/>T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS' CONFERENCE</b><br><b>Location:</b> Newark, NJ area <i>(See opposite page)</i>   | <b>October<br/>23<br/>thru<br/>28,<br/>2000</b> | <b>TCC TEACHER TRAINING</b><br><b>Location:</b> Albuquerque, NM<br><b>Contact:</b> For the NM TCC Center:<br>Dora Derzon<br>1554 Rosalba NE<br>Albuquerque, NM 87112<br>Phone: (505) 299-0523  |
| <b>Sept.<br/>21<br/>thru<br/>24,<br/>2000</b> | <b>MEDITATION RETREAT W/ JUSTIN STONE</b><br><b>Location:</b> Albuquerque, NM<br><b>Contact:</b> For the NM TCC Center:<br>Marjie Bassler<br>P.O. Box 53034<br>Albuquerque, NM 87153<br>Marjie's Phone: (505) 823-1817<br><br><i>(limited space available)</i> |   | TCC Teacher Training Fee: \$450  |
|   | Attendance Fee: \$170  | <b>November<br/>20,<br/>2000</b>                | <b>DAY OF "JOY THRU MOVEMENT"<br/>CELEBRATING T'AI CHI CHIH</b><br><b>Location:</b> Worldwide  |

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

*All Workshops and Teacher Trainings led by Ed Altman unless otherwise indicated.*



# Dreams Become Reality

By Carmen Brocklehurst

T'ai Chi Chih was a dream until it was born 26 years ago. The dream was of a way for each of us to go from being asleep to being AWAKE. When the Buddha was asked, "Are you a sage?" He said, "No." "Are you a great saint?" He replied again, "No." "Well what are you?" He responded simply: "I am AWAKE!"

Those who go deeply within T'ai Chi Chih have begun to find what it means to be AWAKE. With this comes the realization of how asleep we have been (and most likely still are)

to the most simple things in our lives. Are we getting enough rest? Are we exercising our body and our mind? The list goes on and on. Deeper aspects are experienced by more and more T'ai Chi Chih teachers as they become more and more serious about their practice.

Everything we learn in T'ai Chi Chih is about roundness or the Law of Circularity. The circle is inclusive, and that includes us. Our T'ai Chi Chih practice also teaches us that it isn't just for ourselves (even though that may be a first step). To really participate in the life of WHOLENESS, that participation must include others, and I'm not just talking about our students.

Many people, who have a consistent daily practice and teach classes, question the importance of attending the annual T'ai Chi Chih Conference. But as Justin says, "What are we giving back to the T'ai Chi Chih community?"

During the Conference, subtle (deep) changes begin to happen. The very act of leaving the comfort and security of our home and community opens us to the expansiveness of life, the depth

---

---

*T'ai Chi Chih was never intended to hide its light under a bush. Each of us can participate in this sharing by attending the T'ai Chi Chih Conference in New Jersey.*

---

---

of T'ai Chi Chih. It is like opening a window in a house that has been closed. Before long the mind begins to clear and we are able to have new thoughts, new feelings and probably a new perspective. We begin to WAKE UP.

T'ai Chi Chih was never intended to hide its light under a bush. Each of us can participate in this sharing by attending the T'ai Chi Chih Conference in New Jersey. The space and consciousness for change have been beautifully prepared for us by Sr. Antonia and Carolyn Perkins and all the other generous T'ai Chi Chih Teachers. They have started the circle. It needs all of us to fill it.

We are invited to join Justin and Ed in making this tremendous dream of T'ai Chi Chih real. It is our opportunity to be AWAKE. Sign up NOW! We look forward to being with you at the Conference.



# Visualization and Practice

By Neena Mitchell

One of my YMCA students, Debbie, came to class very excited. I asked her to share with the class what she told me. In essence she explained how lymphatic fluid does not move in the same manner as blood circulates in the body. But that the lymphatic fluid, which collects waste from the tissues, is pulled along by contractions of body muscles.

We examined a diagram of the lymphatic system in class the following week, and students noticed and commented on TCC moves and the

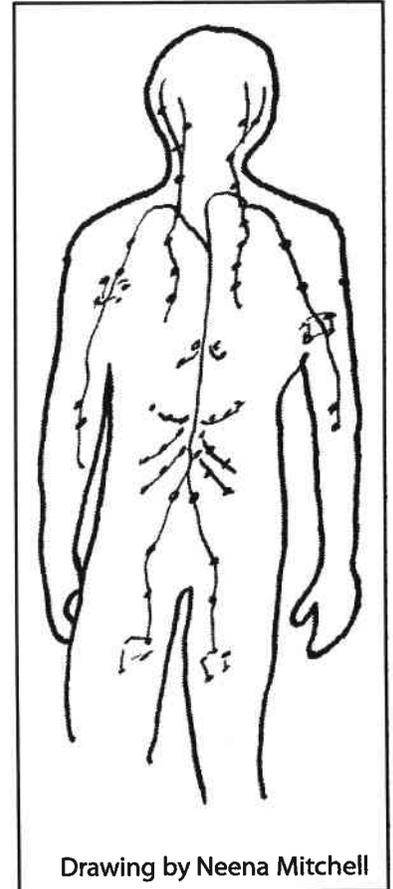
points where these moves would help the lymphatic system do its job.

If you examine the abbreviated diagram [right], I think you too will see how the TCC movements impact the lymphatic system.

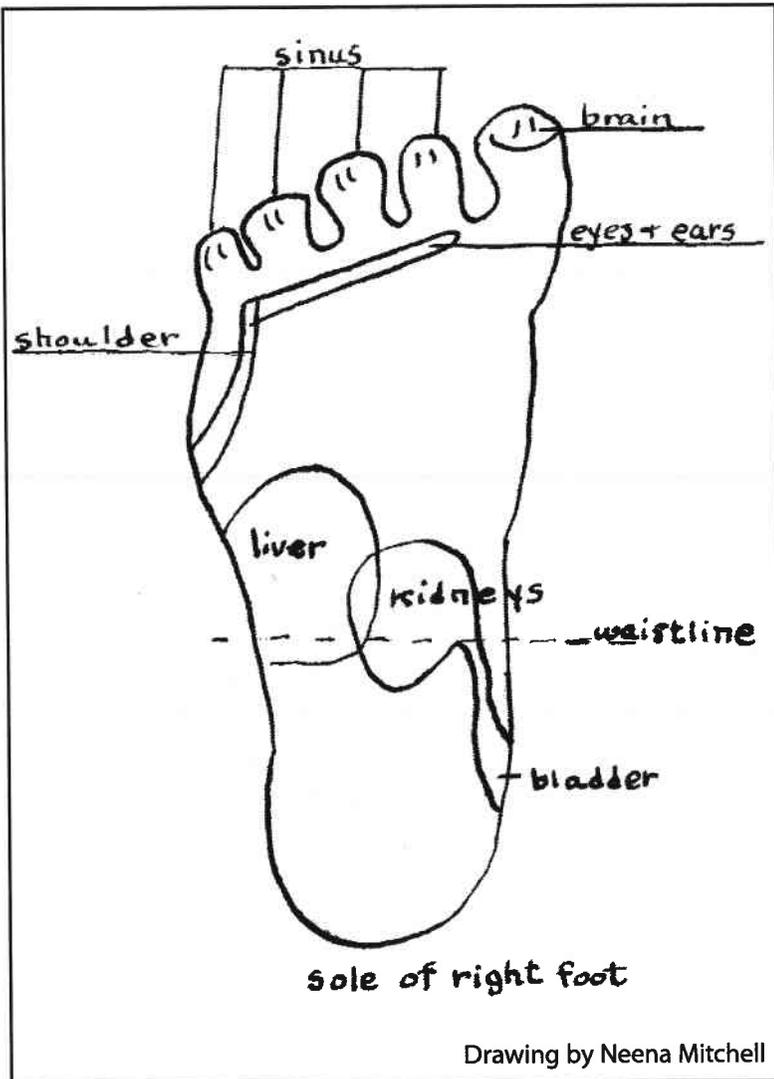
Now another visualization technique that motivated students to more practice: Remember how Justin has said that even just the Rocking Motion or yin-yin and yanging benefits the body?

Another diagram students look at is a foot reflexes chart, as every organ, structure, gland has a reflex on the feet. Visualizing the soles of the feet helps students focus their attention on the "bubbling springs" when rocking and yinny and yanging. Again refer to an abbreviated diagram [left].

These two diagrams have promoted a lot more practice than my asking or reminding.



Drawing by Neena Mitchell



Drawing by Neena Mitchell



Study competed

# Education Professionals' Perceived Benefits of T'ai Chi Chih

By Richard Detert

Every candidate for teacher accreditation has heard about some of the benefits of T'ai Chi Chih. Most have personally experienced one or more benefits, often far greater benefits than their original motivation for joining a T'ai Chi Chih class. At teacher accreditation, candidates continue to hear about the general benefits from Ed Altman during the week intensive. Candidates also hear personal stories of what T'ai Chi Chih has done for them as they give their 15 minute presentations. As a teacher candidate I was impressed with the sincerity, authenticity, and variety of these self-reported benefits. It occurred to me during my teacher accreditation that as powerful as these stories were, had there been any published scientific studies on the benefits of T'ai Chi Chih? It seemed to me that for T'ai Chi Chih to be more accepted as an "integrated" health practice instead of an "alternative" one, that studies of this nature would be important. There are also many "thinking" types who have a need to know what the research says about a practice like T'ai Chi Chih before fully engaging in what it has to offer. Thus, I was inspired to test some of my questions in a more scientific manner with a couple of my colleagues.

Our first step was to thoroughly explore data bases for any previously published works on T'ai Chi Chih. The *Journal of Gerontological Nursing* published an article by Kevin Schaller (1996) on the effects of T'ai Chi Chih on balance, flexibility, mood, health status, and blood pressure with a sample of community-dwelling elders. A quasi-experimental design was used with 24 elders self-selected to the experimental group who learned and practiced T'ai Chi Chih over a 10 week period, and 22 elders in a control group who continued with their regular activity level. The only variable found to be statistically significant between the T'ai Chi Chih group and a control group was on the balance dimension. This study concluded that T'ai Chi Chih is a safe and enjoyable form of exercise that might improve balance in community-dwelling elders. An article in the *Journal of Holistic Nursing* (1999) reviewed studies on the efficacy

of T'ai Chi as a movement therapy for nursing intervention. Although T'ai Chi Chih was noted as the most common westernized form of T'ai Chi, none of the more than 20 research articles reviewed included T'ai Chi Chih as the form used in the intervention. It is safe to say that even if a few more research articles exist on the effects of T'ai Chi Chih, research espousing benefits is in its infancy.

My colleagues and I used a pre-experimental, single sample study design to examine whether participants who learned and practiced T'ai Chi Chih would report changes in self-reported general well-being and physical symptoms of stress. Time as a contributing factor toward benefits was also examined. In this study, 35 education professionals completed a weekend professional development workshop. Of these 35 participants, 23 completed all phases of the experience that included (a) self-reported pretest of their perceptions of general well-being and physical symptoms of stress, (b) 12 hours of instruction by an accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor (myself) with supervised practice (15 movements and the closing posture), (c) four weeks of practice where they kept a journal of any benefits they noticed, (d) self-reported posttest at the end of the four weeks and returning it to us, and (e) a written evaluation of their personal journals where they noted any of the personal benefits during the four weeks. The following is an executive-type summary of our results.\*

## **Quantitative Results**

After four weeks of TCC practice, participants, as a group:

- \* perceived themselves to be experiencing significantly less distress, worry and concern for their health.
- \* perceived a significant increase in their energy levels.
- \* perceived a significant increase in having a satisfying and interesting life.
- \* perceived a significant increase in cheerfulness versus



depressed feelings.

- \* perceived themselves significantly more relaxed with less tenseness and anxiety.
- \* perceived themselves to have significantly greater emotional-behavioral control.
- \* perceived a significantly improved overall general well-being moving from the mild problem-indicative stress category to the moderately high mood of positive well-being (this comes from summing the individual raw scores and matching them to the normative values).
- \* significantly reduced their subjective interpretation of how many stress manifestations they perceived (moved in a positive direction from a mean score of 15.89 manifestations to 9.67 manifestations).
- \* The average number of minutes from the 20 participants who completed the "minutes practiced" portion of their journals was 293.38 minutes (as an average this translates to 15-20 minutes of practice every day).

## **Qualitative Results**

We coded the summary evaluations using a system developed by other researchers to reduce written information into meaningful themes. Four themes emerged from this data. The themes are presented along with sample comments (direct statements) from participants that reflect the theme.

### **Theme 1: General Physical Benefits**

Responses for this theme included:

- increased circulation
- increased energy
- increased relaxation
- increased balance, leg strength, body endurance, posture, coordination, and flexibility
- increased exercise
- decreased tension and stress levels
- feelings of being refreshed, rejuvenated, and feeling good

- feelings of increased gracefulness

Sample Statements for this theme included:

*"When I practice T'ai Chi (Chih) I experience periods of relief from this tension."*

*"I have ... a sense of grace, energy, and calmness."*

*"I have noticed my balance and coordination have much improved."*

*"I have experienced an increase in my daily energy levels and endurance, which I contribute to my improved circulation."*

### **Theme 2: Physical Ailments Benefits**

Responses for this theme included:

- decreased pain in the body, physical ailments, achiness, leg cramping, and bowel problems
- decreased number of headaches
- quicker healing time

Sample statements for this theme included:

*"I noted ... having increased energy, less achiness in joints and the beginnings of more flexibility."*

*"Steps three, ten, and eleven seemed to melt the frozen stiffness of my neck and shoulders .... I have less cracking sensations and much more mobility in the rotation of my head. My ankle, heel problem is virtually gone."*

*"Previous to doing T'ai Chi (Chih), I have often had digestive troubles and one very good benefit I've noticed is that I have not been bothered by constipation."*

### **Theme 3: Psychological/Mental Benefits**

Responses for this theme included:

- decreased stress levels
- increased peacefulness, serenity, happiness, joy, satisfaction
- increased focus, concentration, and mental clarity

*continued on page 31*



## Students share healing experiences

# Back was “on fire” after practice; relief from pain follows

By Dene Bourne  
Student of Wendy Helms

Perhaps you have felt your life spinning out of control as I recently found mine. After purchasing a restaurant and finding that 26 hours a day (that’s not a typo) was necessary to keep it running I had so much pain in my shoulders and neck that it was consuming. Picture if you will an octopus ride at the carnival, arms going in all directions and wide-eyed and wild. That was me! Now picture yourself pulling the plug and watching the arms gradually subsiding to a peaceful rest. That was T’ai Chi Chih. Sure I still have the same amount of work to do but my reactions to the urgent needs of others and the huge amount of responsibility has changed. My shoulders and neck? Well there obviously is a nerve pinch but it is not aggravated constantly by the semiconscious reaction to fight or flight. The way it happened was not very scientific, more airy-fairy to me. After about three classes and nightly practice (my neck was still really bothering me at this point) my whole back seemed to be on fire. For about two days I thought I had really done something to damage my back. (I have not felt such heat since I foolishly applied tiger balm and DMSO to an injured thigh). This persisted for two days then was gone. So was my persistent neck and shoulder pain. Go figure. By continuing to practice my T’ai Chi Chih daily and, by being aware of the creeping tension in my neck, I can relieve the pain completely. During the fourth or fifth week of class I began adding a Swedish body massage to my T’ai Chi Chih morning. About two hours after class I would have a massage. It was wonderful. I virtually floated afterward and was in a state of unconsciousness during most of the massage. If it gets any better I could melt into a puddle.

## Deep cut heals rapidly with regular practice

By Sherri Taylor  
Student of Joyce DeGidio

On August 14, 1999, I incurred an injury to my left hand. A pairing knife punctured my palm between the ring and little finger and about halfway down the palm. There was instant numbness in both fingers and the wound required two stitches.

On August 18 I saw a hand specialist to talk about possible surgery to the nerve that I seemed to have damaged. At that point there was a slight numbness in the right side of the finger, more pronounced numbness in the left side of the ring finger and the pad at the base of the two fingers. The specialist decided to delay surgery for a week to see if any sensation returned to those parts of my hand. We made another appointment for the next week.

During the week between visits I did three T’ai Chi Chih movements every day: Bass Drum, Push Pull and Pulling in the Energy. I did each movement once through a repetition of nine times. Pulling in the Energy felt the most beneficial at the time. I really seemed to feel the energy move through my hands. Also, during this week I massaged the injured area. The specialist suggested this to see if I could stimulate that nerve.

On August 25 I once again met with the hand specialist. By this time the numbness had subsided to a slight deadening in the pad at the base of my ring and little fingers but the left side of the tip of my little finger still could not tell the difference between dull and sharp. We decided that surgery would not be necessary. The affected locations were not critical to my every day use of the hand.

The numbness level of my hand seemed to remain about the same for the next month and a half. On October 20 our regular T’ai Chi Chih classes resumed, and today I notice very little numbness in any part of my left hand.



# Teaching Expanding in Sitka, AK

By Nancy Jo Bleier

Recently I was phone ordering videos from Carmen Brocklehurst. (I really wanted to hear her voice and receive her TCC love). We were chatting about what events were coming up and how the Chi was being shared in our communities. Carmen said, "You must write an article" - right - like I have anything different to share. Then the March *Vital Force* came and there was an article about teaching TCC for credit by Janet M. Oussaty. Well, I am now writing about how TCC is being shared in Sitka, Alaska.

Since September 1997, each semester I have been teaching a one credit PE course for Beginning TCC and another one credit course for Intermediate TCC. Each course lasts one hour and goes for 12 weeks. My Beginning Course usually has 15 students signing up; the intermediate needs 10 to go. But this last year the Director of University of Alaska Southeast decided that the course could go with less as two of his employees were explaining how it was benefitting them in being less stressed and better staff. This Spring I had my first participant in a wheelchair take a class. (I have worked with the residents of the two nursing homes and the Senior Center in Sitka but none had signed up for a class). My students are awesome! They concentrate and work hard to be soft and effortless during classes; they have wonderful senses of humor.

The first Saturday of every month we have T'ai Chi Chih by the Sea. We meet behind the library to practice outdoors. We can view Sitka's beautiful scenery - Mt Edgecumbe (which looks like Mt.

Fuji); the jagged peaks surrounding Sitka Sound are perfect for doing Daughter on the Mountaintop and Daughter in the Valley, plus as we face the water, eagles dive and ravens caw adding to the oneness. Sometimes we even have a cat that loves to be with us as we practice.

---

*The first Saturday of every month we have T'ai Chi Chih by the Sea. We meet behind the library to practice outdoors. We can view Sitka's beautiful scenery - Mt Edgecumbe (which looks like Mt. Fuji); . . . Plus as we face the water, eagles dive and ravens caw adding to the oneness.*

---

I try to share TCC at any time I can - I usually always do a 90 minute presentation at the Alaska Chapter NASW Conference in Anchorage, a 50 minute presentation at the Care of the

Elderly Conference in Sitka, another 50 minute presentation at the Wellness Conference and a demonstration at the Health Fair. My goal is to have all of Sitka learn and practice TCC (population, 8500). I am excited about having two of my students go out (what we call leaving Alaska) this summer for teacher's training. None of this would have been possible if Justin had not originated TCC and if Russ Brown had not come to teach classes in Sitka. Thank you.

If you are ever in Sitka (the cruise ships and Alaska Airlines come here) please let me know so we get some folks together and practice TCC.

Nancy Jo Bleier  
702 Biorka St  
Sitka, AK 99835



# Show and Tell

By Sharon Sirkis

I have often felt something nag at me when I finish teaching my last class. Somehow it just seems too abrupt launching into Porky Pig mode - "Well that's all folks!" Then it occurred to me that I could bring the group together in a fun and creative way, and at the same time get a feel for their experience in the class. I ask each student to think about what they've gained from T'ai Chi Chih, and to bring in an item that best symbolizes this. We then sit in a circle, and each student takes a turn to show and tell about their chosen item. It's always fascinating! Here are some examples:

1. **Hammer & nails** *"for the foundation T'ai Chi Chih has given me"*
2. **Camera lens** *"I gained a new perspective looking out & looking back in"*
3. **Origami crane** *"because T'ai Chi Chih has helped me relax and gain a sense of balance and tranquility, just like a crane"*
4. **Teddy bear** *"at night I get to sleep much faster, and I don't have as many nightmares as I used to"*
5. **Small barbell & Angel pin** *"I feel physically stronger and also a little stronger emotionally"*
6. **Dictionary** *"I'm open to learning new stuff"*
7. **Bubble wrap** *"soft as air, and fun too!"*
8. **Mirror** *"T'ai Chi Chih has made me take a look at myself"*
9. **Book** *"I am more focused and can concentrate on my reading more"*
10. **Turtle** *"I move much slower now"*
11. **Buddha head** *"T'ai Chi Chih has given me peace of mind, and my zazen practice which had been suffering, has been given the lift it needed."*
12. **Butterfly** *"I went through metamorphosis. I feel like I can control my mood swings and temper better, and I feel less stressed. I also appreciate the little things now."*
13. **Sunglasses** *"things have been so dark lately, and now I can see the light at the end of the tunnel"*
14. **Velvet pants** *"the fluidity - it helps me smoothe and detangle my everyday life"*
15. **Car keys** *"It's opened the door to my patience. I drive slower."*
16. **Coffee** *"it gives me clarity of thought, and the moves energize me when I feel sluggish"*
17. **Clown figurine** *"I was more giddy than normal"*
18. **TV remote** *"this changes channels, and after class my mood changes from high-strung to calm"*



**19. Toy soap bubbles** *"I tend to fragment, and the bubbles are like the moves - flowing and soft, but all contained within a space"*

**20. Water spritzer bottle** *"it's refreshing, and T'ai Chi Chih refreshes me"*

**21. Tiger balm** *"it's helped me to release my anger"*

**22. Cat picture** *"The movements make me feel soft and graceful, something I couldn't accomplish very well otherwise"*

**23. Fabric hot air balloon** *"When I do my T'ai Chi Chih, I feel like I'm soaring"*

**24. Lock & key** *T'ai Chi Chih has unlocked a different world for me"*

**25. Plant** *"I feel rooted with T'ai Chi Chih"*

## Infirm sisters practice seated T'ai Chi Chih

**Top:** Light at the Top of the Head: Each Friday afternoon I gather a group of our retired sisters who are living in St. Clare Hall, the infirmary of the Sisters of St. Francis in Oldenburg, Indiana. We do a half-hour of seated TCC. It always stimulates them and no matter what their individual infirmity is, they appreciate doing the movements as best they can. On Mondays, I am able to do T'ai Chi Chih over the closed circuit TV, and many more of the Sisters follow the movements from their rooms.



**Bottom:** Bird Flaps its Wings: The two sisters on the right were my very first students of TCC...Sister Angela Benedict and Sister Angeline Hageman. They no longer can do the form standing.



Text written and photos provided by Sr. Patty Campbell (seated at far left, bottom photo)



# Teaching Where You're Given Space

By Noel Altman

Because I teach T'ai Chi Chih in a hospital setting, I have to make do with the space the HMO has available. There are no beautiful, large, mirror-lined, dance floor/exercise rooms in a hospital! Instead, I teach in a smallish conference room in an older, out-of-the-way building.

The room is the smallest I have ever taught in. This has led to some innovations in my teaching which have been for the better in ways I didn't foresee. Because I am only 5'3", many people couldn't see me very well when I taught the students in staggered rows

(with me at the front). There wasn't enough distance between them and me for those in the middle and back rows to get a good view of me. I

thought that teaching in a circle might alleviate this problem, although I also felt that it can be difficult for some beginners to learn this way, particularly those who have trouble with left and right, or balance issues. Previously, I had only taught in a circle to more advanced students. Nevertheless, I did decide to begin teaching the courses in a circle. With the very first series of courses in which I did this, I noticed a marked change in the cohesion of the group—it happened much sooner and the groups tended to bond more tightly! I now enjoy teaching in a circle more than in staggered rows—the classes seem to flow more smoothly.

Everyone can see everyone else this way, and when one person gets corrected, everyone else can see what the problem was and how it is corrected and then check to see if they are doing the same thing. The students tend to interact more—talking to each other, helping each other, joking, enjoying themselves. Everyone can see me, the in-

structor, clearly, too. Sometimes I'll even walk into the center of the circle (if I want them to be able to see my leg straightening in the back and the heel staying low when I glide forward on the forward-and-back yin and yanging, for instance). When I demonstrate/explain something in the center of the circle, I usually turn in at least two different directions (or all four directions) so everyone can see from all angles.

I am able to fit more people into the room by using the circle formation. Sometimes, depending on the movement and the size of the class, I'll have every other person take a step or two forward to provide a little more arm room for everyone.

---

*... I did decide to begin teaching the courses in a circle. With the very first series of courses in which I did this, I noticed a marked change in the cohesion of the group—it happened much sooner and the groups tended to bond more tightly!*

---

The downsides of teaching in a circle are:

- 1) *It's very apparent and can be disruptive when one or more students do not move at the pace of the rest of the group (either slower or faster)—it affects everyone. I'll say to the group, "Let's all try to move together at the same pace..." to bring it back together.*
- 2) *People who mix up their left and right tend to get very confused on the side-to-side movements, even though I repeatedly caution that they shouldn't look at the people across the circle, because they will be moving in the opposite direction; rather, they should look to the person on their left or right and follow their lead. On certain movements, if enough people are having trouble with this, I'll turn the whole group around (into a U-shape or staggered rows) to face one wall so we can all move in the same direction.*
- 3) *The group will tend to close in on each other, making the circle smaller than is ideal. In this case, when*



*we come to a graceful conclusion, I'll ask people to take a step or two back to open it up again.*

I was offered other rooms in which to teach my classes when I first contracted with the hospital. Some of them were good-sized spaces, but had no natural light at all (and buzzing fluorescent lights),

pens, the room I am in is not one that others wanted, so my coordinator actually did someone else a favor by scheduling me to use it!

Once classes began, I discovered another plus. Because it is located in one of the HMO's older buildings, there are actually wooden floors under-

---

## *The room you teach in has a profound effect on the mood in the class. . .*

---

no ability to open a window and/or door to get fresh air from outside, no wooden floors or well-cushioned carpeting, and/or were noisy/busy locations. Plus, the largest room was the most popular one and there would be a great likelihood of getting bumped to make room for other groups.

After seeing these rooms, I explained to the coordinator whom I work with what I was looking for—some of these rooms had some features I liked, but none had all the features I like. She looked into more possibilities and brought me back out to look at more rooms. The first one she took me to was the small room I am in now. It has four big windows (*plenty* of natural light) and three of them open (for *plenty* of fresh air). The building is set back from the street, backing to some residences, so is a quiet location on Saturday mornings. I also felt that this room didn't feel like it was in a hospital—it didn't have that sterile ambience. Instead, it was a little quirky, had some charm. This suited me more, personally.

I told her this room seemed the best choice, even though it was the smallest. She understood my reasons once I explained them to her and supported my decision, even though it would mean limiting the enrollment (less income for the HMO). I have found over and over that coordinators make their best effort to find a room, but they usually don't know what is important in teaching this movement art. Once I explain it to them, they are then willing to find something that fits my criteria (which will, in turn, benefit the students). As it hap-

neath the carpeting—we know because we can sometimes hear floorboards creak during class! The newer buildings all have concrete floors with a ¼ inch of industrial carpet, which is hard on the legs, particularly the knees. Since I teach classes from 9:30am - 1:00pm every Saturday, I (and my knees) are grateful for the wooden floors! I know my students, some of whom are disabled in some way, would also be feeling tension if they were practicing on hard floors. Another plus that has proven true over time is that I have never been bumped from the room I teach in, so the cumulative effect of groups of people practicing T'ai Chi Chih week after week in the same space has increased. Plus, a student can take a quarter off and when he/she is ready to come back to classes, they're still located in the same place. This kind of consistency has a far-reaching effect on the success of any program, I have found.

The room you teach in has a profound effect on the mood in the class. I encourage you to put a lot of effort up front (before any classes begin) into the decision of which room you will teach in, whether you are teaching in an institutional setting (and have little choice) or contracting to rent space on your own. If you decide well originally, you will not have to try to find some other space later on (which will be disruptive to the program you've already begun). Fresh air, natural light, wooden or well-carpeted floors with a little give all assist YOU in teaching well. Lots of space is certainly nice, too, but teaching can be successfully modified for smaller spaces.



Letters forwarded to VFJ

# Canadian teacher learns to “trust in the Chi”

Hi Noel!

Thank you for your e-mail. It was great to hear from you again! I think about you and Ed often—especially during my T'ai Chi Chih teaching and practice!

My practice and teaching of T'ai Chi Chih is going well. I am currently teaching my third 8 week class and things are moving along nicely. I have often thought of e-mailing Ed with comments/questions/concerns, but until very recently I have not had my own e-mail address. . . Anyway, the answers to my queries always come when I put my trust in the Chi!

I know you wanted me to reflect on how things are going with my TCC practice. Where do I begin? One of the greatest lessons for me has been to let go of self doubt and to trust in the Chi. This has allowed me to reach out further with my TCC, but more importantly it has deepened my own personal practice. I don't know what I'd do without TCC—I don't know what I did with-

out it! It is my anchor. It allows me to function in my life, to experience joy regardless of the situation. The more I practice and teach and learn about TCC, the greater my life becomes.

Currently I am involved in a media blitz, advertising for T'ai Chi Chih and Therapeutic Touch. I was photographed for the *Moose Jaw Times Herald* demonstrating a movement for a group of local [public school] teachers at our Teacher's Convention in February. (It was not a great picture of me, but many people noticed it and have asked me about TCC.) I also wrote an editorial for a page in the paper called *Health Quest* describing TCC, along with information on how to reach me. Tomorrow, I am going to be filmed for a program on our local cable channel. As you can see, I have really been “putting myself out there”! It has been a bit scary, but mostly it has been exciting and fun! . . .

– Jackie Williamson

## Arizona teacher offers TCC at 12 different locations!

Dear Ed:

I have someone who is interested in preparing for teacher training; however, I do not have updated information regarding qualifications. Could you please e-mail them to me — or send it.

I'm looking forward to coming to the NJ conference....didn't think I could make it as my son is getting married four weeks prior to that and two trips east was a bit costly. I

was just asked to officiate at a wedding in NJ five days prior to the conference. Isn't it wonderful how things work out!

With gratitude for all you and Noel are doing to make T'ai Chi Chih a highly professional yet compassionate endeavor. Next month I will be teaching at 12 different locations, so my practice is growing. Last month I resigned from my part time nursing position so I could focus more

on teaching....doors have opened and I'm now associated with Arizona Integrated Medicine teaching T'ai Chi Chih and doing spiritual direction. I've also been asked to join the team at Healing Oasis in Scottsdale as T'ai Chi Chih Consultant. Helping people to participate in their own well being is such a joy, especially when it effects them physically, mentally and spiritually. . . .

– Deanne Hodgson

## Readers Respond

*continued from page 3*

brain surgery. After getting an excellent report, my student asked her radiologist/oncologist if there was anything she could do to improve her balance and coordination, which she had had a problem with since the surgery. Her doctor told her that she could help herself by taking yoga or T'ai Chi. She told him she was taking T'ai

Chi Chih, and he said, “That's perfect!” He said that the slow, graceful movements were just what she needed to help improve her overall balance and coordination.

**Donna McElhose**  
Wildwood, IL



# Why TCC?

*continued from page 7*

the same fine corrections with shifting your body weight that you did when driving the car down the highway.

In equally slow motion, you synchronize choreographed movements of your hands and arms to the shifting of your weight. The positioning of arms versus legs has a certain clockwork precision. But there the similarity to clocks begins and ends, for, in T'ai Chi Chih, the movements of all of your parts are organically continuous, all connected to the gyroscopic center: As with the planets in relationship to the sun, your hands and arms neither lead nor follow, but are cosmically connected to your center by an invisible bond. In achieving this bond, an extraordinary softness, or relaxation, of hands and arms is required, in order to allow them to meld with the whole.

When you start getting all of this right, a good silence envelops you, altering the quality of the surrounding space. The silence is such that, as you move your arms and legs, it can feel as though your very bones are wrapped in cotton batting. The progress of your movements is so slow that you become aware of, sometimes fascinated by, the more finite nuances in the movements of your hands ... so slow that each action, no matter how smoothly and evenly performed, seems to have multiple parts. Your sense of your body's weight changes, or goes away entirely.

These are the gifts of T'ai Chi Chih - inner balance, inner quiet.

## Study

*continued from page 23*

### Sample Statements for this theme included:

*"It refreshes me and makes it easier to focus on my next task."*

*"There is always a sense of calmness and joy that increases as the practice time continues."*

*"I am more open and connected in my personal relation-*

*ships and feel much less stress in my daily life."*

*"The quality of my mornings, my attitude for the day beginning, my eating habits, my sleeping ease and much more are all positively changed...and in such a short time."*

### **Theme 4: Spiritual Awareness**

#### Responses for this theme included:

- a deepening of spirituality and fulfillment
- increased feeling of connectedness

#### Sample Statements for this theme included:

*"On an internal level, I have begun to experience new and different levels of inner calmness, control, focus, purpose of mind, enhanced concentration, intent alertness, and spiritual depth."*

*"This seems to center me and increases my inner peace."*

*"T'ai Chi Chih has benefited my spirituality and inner peace."*

## **Conclusions**

Within the limits of the study design, we concluded that T'ai Chi Chih is effective in reducing stress manifestations and enhancing the various dimensions of general well-being of individuals after four weeks of practice. These conclusions are further substantiated with research findings using other forms of T'ai Chi as well as participant's personal comments on benefits. We are greatly encouraged by these results and they warrant health professionals to become more aware of T'ai Chi Chih's health enhancement capabilities. We also recommend more sophisticated studies on the efficacy of T'ai Chi Chih such as was reported in the December, 1999 issue of the *Vital Force*. In that issue Susan Patterson reported on the work of Dr. Michael Irwin at the University of California-San Diego and Ann Rutherford [submitted a] brief on the research of Dr. John Moth.

Co-researchers of this study: Richard Detert, Ph.D, Professor, Health Education and Health Promotion, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, Dan Duquette, Ed.D, Professor, Health Education and Health Promotion, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, and Courtney Wheeler, M.S. Athletic Training.

\* Because the present study will be published in its entirety elsewhere, only the executive-type summary is provided here for *Vital Force* readers. If you are interested in the entire study, please contact Dr. Richard Detert, 213 Mitchell Hall, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI 54601.



## Karmic Kommentts

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

### New Video Impresses Early Buyers

Readers, have you seen the new T'ai Chi Chih video yet? If not, you'll certainly want to order your copy(ies) right away! Here are some initial comments we've had about this new production:

***"The new videos are just wonderful! I think Justin looks so good and...there seems to be a sweetness about him. The teachers are terrific and aren't they good. I just loved everything about them from the form to the expression on their faces. This is a real winner."***

***"The video is beautifully produced and it is great to have an hour and a half of Justin. I really enjoyed the almost 'casual' way that he talked and moved, a sort of 'no big thing' approach. It really embodies the integrity of the form. I also like the fact that it is about T'ai Chi Chih only, no matter how interesting other matters may be. ...I really respect Justin's commitment not to complicate T'ai Chi Chih."***

***"I'm anxious to get Justin's new tape. My classes use his tape exclusively and are familiar with the names Justin Stone and Ed Altman!"***

A student remarked how much he learned from the presentation, a lot of details he just wasn't getting that this video cleared up. One of the teachers photocopied the flyer that was included in last quarter's *Vital Force Journal* and handed it out to his students. They were all so enthusiastic that they wanted the videos immediately, and the teacher put in an order to Good Karma for 12 videos, sight unseen! Another teacher ordered 16 for her students. A student who had recently purchased the 1994 version phoned when she learned, from her teacher, that there was a new video out. After inquiring about details, she decided to order it, feeling that both videos would be useful to her and that each would provide her with slightly different pieces of information. Another student preparing for teacher training wanted both videos as well.

Some teachers want to show their gratitude and respect to T'ai Chi Chih and to Justin. A direct and specific way to do that is to promote the new video with students and to make it available, either by having sufficient copies at classes or by providing students with order forms. As we know, Justin accepts no money from teachers when we receive class fees. We can emulate his generosity toward us by making sure all our students are familiar with the teachings from the original source via the video. Over the years, many teachers asked for a video that would include not only clear instruction but a standard **nine-repetition** practice. Now it's here with this "definitive" video, so-called because Justin was given enough time to explain and demonstrate the movements more thoroughly than in previous videos, and also because he emphasized, both in the introduction and in the instruction, important points that we, as teachers, sometimes neglect stressing to our students.

**Our thanks to Justin** for, first of all, originating T'ai Chi Chih, for doing such a fine job in this video presentation, and for composing some wonderful music for practice! We also want to acknowledge Carmen Brocklehurst for arranging for the studio; Dale Kruzic, award-winning filmmaker whose skills, insights and advice were invaluable; the accomplished crew at the University of New Mexico Media Technology Services; Noel Altman for her assistance with the set; she and her husband Ed, Maggie and Victor Berg, Rhonda St. Martin, and the Albuquerque T'ai Chi Chih Center for providing some of the set pieces; the four teachers who gave us an outstanding illustra-



tion of how flowing a T'ai Chi Chih practice can look when it's done well: Victor Berg, Connie Hyde, Suni McHenry, Rhonda St. Martin; and all others who gave their moral support to this project. It was a collaborative effort that came to fruition in a finished product that we are proud to offer as an inestimable tool to enhance teaching and learning T'ai Chi Chih.

With the conference coming up soon, teachers will want to plan to stock up while there, as **all shipping charges can be avoided** this way. Along with other materials, but particularly with the new video, please let Good Karma know as soon as possible after you get this issue of the *Vital Force Journal* what materials you'd like to reserve for purchase at the conference. We want to have enough there for everyone who wants them!

### New Teacher Distributor

Welcome to Kathy Vieth Albers, new teacher distributor for Missouri and other states in the region.

### New Catalog

A new Good Karma catalog is part of this mailing. Please save it after ordering so you have it for future reference. Item prices are the same, though the shipping fees have increased slightly. Remember, teachers, if you do not wish to sell materials in your classes, you can still provide students with catalogs and/or price list/order forms.

### Ordering Information

If you get the answering machine or our answering service when ordering, it is important that you specify priority mail if you want the order to arrive quicker than the two-week time frame for book rate, our usual mode of shipping. Priority is more expensive than book rate, and we also add a \$.50 handling fee.

## **Regional Distributors of Good Karma Publishing Materials**

### **Canada**

|              |                    |                |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|
| BC, Victoria | Guadalupe Buchwald | (250) 385-6748 |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------|

### **United States**

|                 |                       |                |
|-----------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| CA, Hayward     | Sandra McAlister      | (510) 582-2238 |
| CA, El Cahan    | Susan Patterson       | (858) 571-3705 |
| CA, Camarillo   | Pamela Towne          | (805) 987-3607 |
| CO, Denver      | Margaret Manzanares   | (303) 494-5800 |
| MN, Minneapolis | Paula Arnold          | (612) 915-1880 |
| MN, Bemidji     | Jeanne Engen-Duranske | (218) 751-3173 |
| MO, St. Louis   | Kathy Vieth Albers    | (314) 727-1983 |
| ND, Fargo       | Christeen McLain      | (701) 232-5579 |
| NM, Albuquerque | Carmen Brocklehurst   | (505) 299-0562 |

**DIRECT ORDERS:** To order books and tapes from Good Karma Publishing, please type or print your name and address *legibly* on an order form. Phone toll-free (1-888-540-7459), FAX (701-854-2004), or write if you need a catalog or order form. Please allow at least two weeks from order date for delivery.



**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.

| <b>Issue Submission deadlines:</b>   |                     |         |                     |
|--|---------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Spring:  | <b>January 10th</b> | Fall:   | <b>July 10th</b>    |
| Summer:  | <b>April 10th</b>   | Winter: | <b>October 10th</b> |
| <b>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.</b> |                     |         |                     |

**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

**VITAL FORCE JOURNAL CONTACTS:**

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

**The Vital Force**

P.O. Box 6460  
San Rafael, CA  
94903-2330

**Noel Altman**

Editor  
(415) 472-1207  
(415) 507-9535 (Fax)  
*(Call first)*

thevitalforce@yahoo.com

**T'AI CHI CHIH WEBSITE:**

www.taichichih.org

**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. At the start of Around the Platter (or polish the plate, as one student calls it), an elderly lady and gentleman sitting side by side interlocked fingers, and then continued to move around the circle. (It was so cute!)

– Sharon Sirkis

2. When teaching Push Pull, one senior said, "I'd like to push away all my worries."

I asked, "What are you worried about?"

Another senior piped in, "I'm worried about how much longer we're going to be doing this, I'm tired!"

– Sharon Sirkis

3. During his last dental visit, one student found himself doing wrist circles when he realized his arms were too long for the dentist's chair! (He said this relaxed him, and also gave him something to do).

– Sharon Sirkis

4. I'm often amused at some of the places my students choose to practice TCC (i.e. bathroom stall at work). One student told me he likes to do Pulling Taffy in the car. When he noticed my puzzled look, he explained that when he's stopped at a red light he'll pull taffy with his right hand towards the passenger seat, and his left hand sails out the window!

– Sharon Sirkis

5. After emphasizing the importance of moving softly and slowly, one student, Nell, tells me she's an "AOL."

"I don't get it," I say, "You mean America On Line?"

"No," she laughs, "I mean Antsy Old Lady!"

– Sharon Sirkis

## 6. FLOWING WITH FRANK

Twice a month I teach T'ai Chi Chih to about 20 people at the Pine Villa Retirement Residence in Toronto [Canada]. We do sitting T'ai Chi Chih, because the room is very small and because many of the residents would not be able to do standing TCC. I bring my own taped music, usually something classical that is soothing and familiar, like Pachelbel's *Canon in D*.

One morning when I arrived, there were several people sitting around in the activities room listening to a Frank Sinatra tape. When I went to change tapes, one of the women asked me not turn off the music that was playing. So we had a half hour of T'ai Chi Chih with Frank Sinatra. It worked and was a most enjoyable session. T'ai Chi Chih teaches us how to flow.

– Nancy Vermond

**[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.

*Dreams  
felt, build  
up fragile  
sails that push me  
through keyholes  
showing  
life*

– Eric Imbody

*Star  
Treking  
Thru the sky  
Viewing planets  
But living  
Close to  
None*

– Nancy Jo Bleier

*Still  
Patient  
Beautiful  
Praying Mantis  
Visits me  
in my  
dreams*

– Sharon Sirkis

*fresh  
warm peach  
T'ai Chi Chih  
savor each taste  
savor each  
movement  
joy!*

– Susan Kissinger

*Duck  
and Drake  
waddle from  
pond to meadow  
hatching eggs  
in their  
dreams.*

– Elizabeth Siedlecki  
(Student of Donna  
McElhose)

*Let  
your wings  
enfold you  
on frosty nights  
when you nest  
in the  
weeds.*

– Elizabeth Siedlecki  
(Student of Donna  
McElhose)