

The Vital Force

*Journal of the
Tai Chi Chih®
Community*

**Volume 24, No. 1
February 2007**

“Tai Chi Chih is a Service to Humanity. It is a Form of Love.” – Justin Stone, Originator

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Justin Stone

A Request

A few Tai Chi Chih teachers, when giving interviews, carelessly refer to TCC as "Tai Chi". This confuses readers, who think it might be referring to the ancient form, Tai Chi Ch'uan. I have great respect for the Martial Arts form of Tai Chi Ch'uan, but its purpose and performance are completely different from the other, which I originated in 1974. Those who call our form "Tai Chi" are harming the image, and, in a few instances, do it deliberately.

As teachers know, I do not derive any income from TCC, which I consider a "service to Humanity". Back in my younger days, whenever I taught a Beginners' Class or a Teachers' Training Course, I was paid for my efforts, just like any other teachers. I have never taken a dime

from any teacher, who keeps 100% of any fee he or she may earn. There is no institution to whom a teacher must contribute.

To those who refer to TCC as "Tai Chi", I request you refer to it by its full name unless your aim is to damage this worthwhile service.

Tai Chi Ch'uan has 108 movements, traditionally. When a teacher advertises, he or she is teaching a "short form" (with perhaps 32 movements), he is fooling the public because he or she thinks a little money can be made in this way. 32 movement Tai Chi Ch'uan resembles a baseball game of 4 innings.

Those who practice TCC regularly, receive spiritual benefits as well as physical and only begin to recognize these benefits after sinking into the "Essence" of TCC. I wish those reading this article could read the great many letters I have received, outlining the changes that have been brought about by constant practice. Changes in mental attitudes are common.

So, if you talk about TCC, please be honest and call it by its real name.

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To those who refer to TCC as "Tai Chi", I request you refer to it by its full name unless your aim is to damage this worthwhile service.

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Articles about T'ai Chi Chih

Planning & Organizing A Workshop/Retreat

By Ron Richardson & Stephen Thompson

Folks, you don't get much further from a metropolitan area than living in the state of Mississippi. That being said, if Mississippi has been able to hold successful TCC workshops in the rural Deep South (one being on a Super Bowl Sunday weekend), then it should be a pretty easy thing to host one in your neck of the woods, corner of the block, or wherever in the world it is that you happen to live. So don't tell us it can't be done; we're here to tell you it can. To help, we want to share with you the do's and don'ts of how to hold a successful event in hopes you will give it a try.

Many of you have asked, "How did you ever get Pam Towne or Sr. Antonia to come to Mississippi?" The answer is in four simple parts:

- Ask them. (Yes, it is really that easy!)
- Pay their fee. (We were charged \$500 each.)
- Pay their travel expenses (About \$400)
- Take care of their lodging and food. (Have you got a spare room?)

Looking on the TCC website Calendar of Events, it surprises us that with as many teachers as we have across the country there are not more workshops/retreats provided on a local level. We have just completed our second workshop along with one retreat in a three year period of time. We have found that this is one of the best marketing tools available to us. We begin planning a half a year to a year in advance with publicity beginning two months before the event. Fliers and posters are distributed in every store, healthcare clinics, yoga centers, fitness centers, libraries, bookstores, health food stores, and area churches that will accept them. We have discovered that regard-

less of how much we publicize people tend to wait until the last couple of weeks to register. We have a population of 100,000 in our general area we can expect to reach with our publicity. We sent TCC teachers two emails about our events and we always have some of them and/or some of their students to attend. We sent two emails to our own students too! With this rather broad area of possibilities, we usually expect around 35 to 40 people (beginners, advanced students, and teachers) in attendance. Most attendees come from within an hours drive, with advanced students and teachers coming from about half a day away.

We are fortunate to have a very supportive hospital facility known here as the Wellness Center to provide us with free space to have the workshop in exchange for a reduced fee of \$30 for hospital employees. The room provided could hold 50. It has a suspended hardwood floor with mirrors on three walls. We also have a local newspaper (The Daily Journal) that is willing to give us publicity which was provided in a featured article the weekend before our last workshop and listed us in upcoming events the month before the workshop. We've yet to run a newspaper ad, but will probably do so next time.

We have found a workshop or retreat needs to be at least two full days (i.e. beginning at 1pm Friday and ending on Sunday noon.) The workshop fee has been \$65. This includes a box meal on Saturday. We have also invited workshop participants to the home of one of the teachers planning the event on Friday and Saturday night for an informal meal. We usually have about 20 from the group to accept our invitation to these evening meals. This has provided an excellent social and bonding time for participants. The expense from these meals is

also included in the \$65 fee.

The fee for our retreat depended on the facility and food cost. (Ours was \$235 per person or \$400 per couple) It is helpful to have a place where people can stay overnight and where food can be brought, catered, or prepared on site. We had our last retreat an hours drive from Tupelo. Cabins and food services were available.

Kim Grant at Good Karma Publishing has been very helpful with books, tapes, and DVD's. We contacted her at least two weeks before the event and she helped determine how much was needed. She agreed to make us temporary distributors (50% discount) and take back what we do not sell. So far, it has not been necessary to make any returns. People are more than willing to purchase whatever is on the table and teachers will keep the rest.

We have provided bottled water, notebooks, pencils/pens, and other information helpful to participants. Except for the bottled water, the others items have been given to us by our local visitor center.

We decided in the beginning that we are not doing this for a profit. We do want to at least come out even, but this is strictly for marketing purposes only. Actually, we have always made money, but our goal is to spread the good news about TCC. Much credit has been given to these workshops/retreat providing us with four accredited teachers with more on the way. In addition, 10 classes are provided each week in our general area because of the recruitment primarily from these workshops/retreat.

We hope to see more workshops/retreats listed on future Calendar of Events. It is hard work, but well worth it.

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Anywhere, Everywhere

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst

T'ai Chi Chih practice can be done anywhere. Since no special clothes or equipment are needed, I can take T'ai Chi Chih with me wherever I go.

Recently, I was waiting for an appointment and instead of sitting in the waiting room reading a magazine meant to distract me from the fact that I was wasting time, I stood up and started to do T'ai Chi Chih. Of course, people came in and looked at me.

Standing up in a public place and doing my practice.



But I just continued to do my practice. More often than not someone would comment about what I was doing. One lady said that her son does what I do, and that she really liked it because it looked so relaxing. I often hear that comment. It turned out that her husband was an ambassador for the United States.

Another benefit to doing it in these situations is that it gives me the opportunity to talk to people about T'ai Chi Chih and invite them to a class or tell them about the instructional DVD and video. One time, while on my way to teach at an annual fall retreat, a woman was watching me practice before we boarded the plane. As luck would have it she had the seat right next to me and we talked for two hours as if we were long lost friends. She made me promise to sign her up for the next retreat, and she even ordered a book and a video. (I am still in contact with her and she loves her practice.) She would never have known about Tai Chi Chih if I had not shared the chi, by standing up in a public place and doing my practice.

You might ask, "What if I've already done my practice for the day?" Well, it never hurts to do a little more or do another full practice. Remember that the benefits are cumulative. And besides, you never know who is watching and waiting for the opportunity to learn about T'ai Chi Chih. I have always felt very fortunate that my first teacher, Helen Brungardt Pope, was convinced that T'ai Chi Chih had so much to offer (being as it saved her life.) I also feel as if it has saved mine. It has also allowed me to love and share the chi.

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Shared Experiences

A Magical Practice

By Terry Gay Puckett, San Antonio, Texas

Saturday Morning, December 30, 2006 - Renza Baker and I met at the usual TCC practice spot, by the creek near the headwaters of the San Antonio River, on the campus of the University of Incarnate Word in San Antonio, Texas. A bleak, damp morning of 53 degrees held a special surprise in store for us. Renza pointed toward the river, which had water in it for the first time in six months! Hopefully, our drought was over.

Filled with gratitude, we began our practice. A few birds flew across the creek, and trees fluttered in the soft winter breeze. A Carillon began to chime out joyful Christmas carols. The special concert lasted throughout our TCC practice, and ended when we concluded with the Cosmic Consciousness Pose. It was a spiritual moment for the both of us, and we were touched by the magic of the morning. What a unique and hopeful way to begin the New Year!

*Drought
Fizzles,
Creek trickles,
Chi and hope renew.
Bells of joy!
New Year's
Here.*

Teacher Survey Results Now Available

Dear Tai Chi Chih Teacher,

The results of the Tai Chi Chih Teacher Survey 2005 are now available on the TCC community website!

You can access a list of TCC Resource Teachers who have experience in teaching various specialized populations and working in different settings.

This valuable list will enable you to network and exchange information about teaching TCC in different settings and to different specialized populations with whom you work or wish to work in the future.

You are now able to find the Survey results on the TCC Community website by using this confidential link for TCC Teachers only:

<http://www.taichichih.org/survey.htm>

Lighter Side

Love It, Love It

By Jerry Dumbalough

Since I began teaching, I've learned that teaching seniors may be less profitable, but the knowledge you pick up is very rewarding.

In one of my current classes of seniors, I noticed them all grabbing their water bottles upon sitting down on a break. So I commented on that by reminding them to always bring a bottle of water to every class.

I then commented that when doing Tai Chi Chih and they have finally made the Chi start to move and grow, they would be thirsty. I indicated that no one was sweating, and no one had been to the restrooms,

*Teaching seniors
may be less
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the knowledge you
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very rewarding.*

so where did they think the water in their bodies was going.

From one senior gentleman came this comment. (Are you ready for this?)

"In my pants."

Love it, love it, love it.

Events

A Heightened Moving Meditation

There is not enough focused attention being placed on Seijaku practice. From the remarks made by teachers on the first day of the Seijaku Review, given by Pam Towne at the Tai Chi Chih Center, it was apparent to me that most teachers don't understand it, or are intimidated by it. Most TCC teachers entirely avoid it. Why? Since the majority of TCC teachers have never taken a class in Seijaku before they show up at a Seijaku accreditation class, the

chances of them gaining deep insight into the movements are very slim. We ask that TCC teacher candidates practice TCC at least two years before they take the teacher accreditation. We have no such requirement for Seijaku, which, according to Justin, is one thousand times stronger than Tai Chi Chih.

The Seijaku Renewal, given by Pam Towne from November 17-19, 2006, gave us a sample of what it would be like to seriously study Seijaku. Both teachers and stu-

dents were already familiar with the moves which allowed us the freedom to plunge into the depths of the practice: The depths which can bring you to a state of one pointed, then no pointed concentration. Seijaku deserves such intense study: Without it, it becomes like a diamond left in a dusty closet. Justin created it so that we could attain Heightened Awareness. The TCC Center plans to ask Pam to make the Seijaku Renewal an annual event.

Coming Together

Fall Issue 2006



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Teacher Training January 2007

By Host Athene Mantle

Sunday morning fifteen teacher candidates eagerly, perhaps a little anxiously, awaited the beginning of their teacher training at the Mercy Center in Burlingame, California. They were greeted by the shrill cries of a resident red-tailed hawk who beckoned to them to be open to the activation of their vital life force and open to the new.

For the next few days, teacher trainer Sandy McAlister began a skillful in depth review of the movements and principles of Tai Chi Chih all the while accompanied by the piercing calls of the red-tailed hawk telling us to "Pay Attention", "Pay Attention" to the message.

Sandy's format was very interactive and very informal. Candidate NNAT (Now Newly Accredited Teacher) Friedbert Weimann, a local from the Bay Area in Northern California, said that as inspired by the candidates and teachers "a climate of openness, honesty, and caring helpfulness pervaded, in which all present thrived in their own way. Central to this was Tai Chi Chih as an art to be practiced, learned and taught. I was personally well immersed in this "art and people amalgam" to the point of better "interaction, inter-thinking, and inter-feeling" not only with others but even with myself".

Candidate NNAT Harriet Marquit of North Carolina said, "Having been in many group situations where bonding was emphasized, I felt our group of candidates was an unusually cohesive and interactive one - completely guileless- sensitive to each others needs and immediately willing to help when we each in our own way came up against a (mental) brick wall."

Much was learned in the first few days. Candidate NNAT Elaine Peterson, a uni-

versity teacher in Mississippi, said, "I was impressed by the depth, and precision by which we worked on each principle and each movement. The detailed, thoughtful way Sandy taught will be a model in my own teaching, and set a new standard for my own technique."

Many changes were made. Candidate NNAT Faith Isaacs of the Bay Area said, "I realized that the better I became at doing the movements and following the principles, the easier it seemed to do the movement. It felt more natural once I understood how to do it more correctly."

Candidate NNAT Carol Sawyer of Southern California said, "I was astounded at the improvement that I made as a result of this intensive experience. I sink lower into my knees, I go farther forward without leaning, my waist twists way more than it did, and my rest periods are twice as long. What a change, and it feels wonderful."

Candidate NNAT Suzanne Roady-Ross of Southern California said, "I need to focus on "feeling, not thinking." Candidate NNAT Ev Hanson-Florin from England with her very long legs, ecstatically explored a much fuller and more complete weight shift. Her description of the resulting sensation is more than the author's shyness will permit her to print in this article.

There was a lot of letting go. Candidate NNAT Barbara Kristoff of the Bay Area said, "Letting go of old "posture patterns" was at first confusing, then dauntingly frustrating, followed by more self awareness, then tears flowing into joy. Until this week of teacher training, I had no idea of the amount of flow, softness, and presence I could experi-

ence in doing TCC as I became more grounded and centered."

Candidate NNAT Tony Johansen of Southern California had an amazing moment in letting go of intense fear. He shared that it was "an incredible experience to know that all that power I had ascribed to others and outside of me was mine."

About mid way through the training, the constant screeching of the red-tailed



hawk gave way to the soft rustling of the Oak and Eucalyptus trees outside our windows. There was a noticeable change in the tone of the training just then. There had been a major shift in us all.

Candidate NNAT Maya Caudill of the Bay Area said, "An understanding of how much we are all alike in so many ways, helped me to push myself to a higher level of self-awareness."

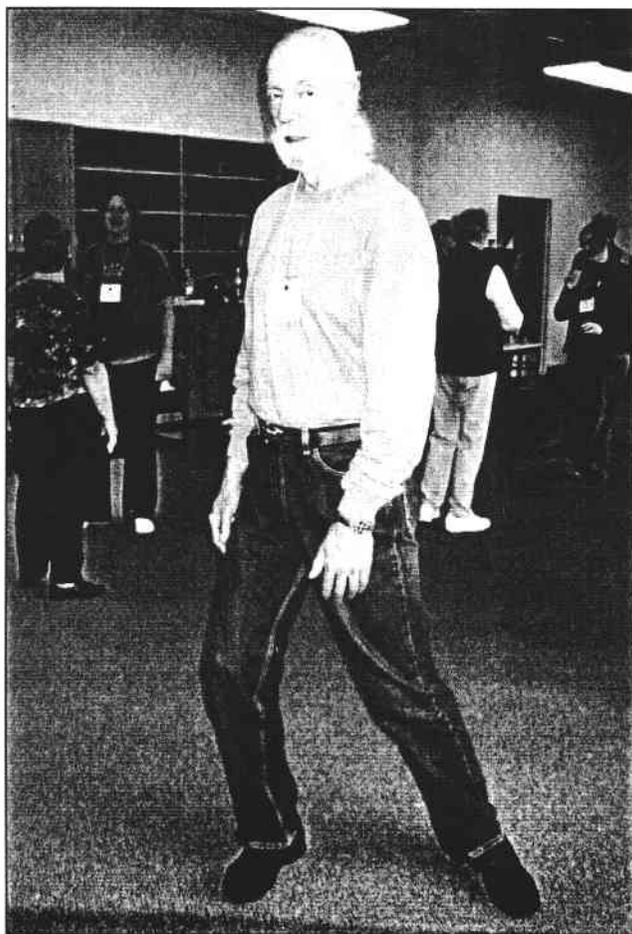
NNAT Harriet Marquit said, "I learned a lot about the calming effects of staying in the moment, getting grounded and concentrating on each movement as it comes up. I learned about not concerning myself with what I just did, or worrying about what's next but just staying in the moment."

NNAT Tony Johansen said, "Whatever we do, we must be grounded in the soles of our feet. That initial grounding is at the



near-by oak tree. During the last half of the training one early morning, the author was standing at her fourth story bedroom window when the hawk flew straight at her until within a few feet of the window when he sharply banked away. It was as if he was saying he was still with us, awakening us to a higher vision and inspiring us to a creative life purpose through Tai Chi Chih.

This group of candidates was extremely dedicated and enthusiastic and all fifteen candidates were accredited. Most were to go home and begin teaching immediately. Look out world. Here they come!



core of our Tai Chi Chih practice."

The tone of the training was influenced by the high level of contributions made by the ten auditing teachers. The candidates had high praise and much gratitude for the generosity, the kindness, and the effectiveness of the auditors. NNAT Elaine Peterson said, "The knowledge, enthusiasm and guidance of everyone auditing and teaching were empowering and heartwarming."

The hawk remained quiet for the most part during the last half of the week long training. To the keen observer he could be seen silently flying by our windows or perched in a

NNAT Suzanne Roady-Ross said, "I was impressed by the caliber of individuals who are drawn to the Tai Chi Chih. A livelier, smarter, more genuine bunch I've never met. I'm proud I've achieved a meaningful goal, and even happier to be part of this community."

Candidate NNAT Rama Seltzer of Southern California said, "It was a wonderful training and so complete. I am very grateful to have been accepted as a candidate. My practice has been totally transformed. Many seeds have been planted. May they all bear fruit."

Candidate NNAT Shelly Parker from the Bay Area said, "Teacher training Accreditation was a gathering of the energies in the flow of a process that started five years ago.... To be a certified teacher now will allow that flow to pass through me and touch others. In this way we are all connected."

Congratulations to all.



Justin's Birthday Celebration in Edmonton

By Gail Terriff

The Edmonton group of teachers and some students had a lovely practice and gathering to celebrate Justin's birthday on Saturday, November 18th. Not only was the celebration special as it was Justin's 90th birthday...but it was the first monthly practice for Edmonton teachers in some time. The Holy Spirit Lutheran Church has opened their doors for us to hold our practices on a regular basis.

There were 11 of us doing a soft, gentle practice amid a busy church atmosphere of children and music. It was very joyous and it was wonderful to reconnect once again to each other.

Afterwards, we had a pot luck lunch and a carrot cake birthday cake that "looked" like it had 90 carrot decorations on it! We sang a pretty good rendition of Happy Birthday to You! A short meeting followed.

We send our love and joy to Justin on this special day and wish him good health and much happiness! Happy Birthday Justin!

A Life Celebration

By Sister Antonia Cooper

On November 17th, from 7AM-4PM, the TCC Association will sponsor "Justin's Life Celebration" at the Asbury Methodist Church in Albuquerque, one block from the TCC Center. The cost will be \$50 for the all day event. This cost only includes the event itself but not meals or lodging. It will be a Joy filled day featuring movement and insights from Justin on TCC. The Celebration will end with our tradition-

*It will be a Joy filled day
featuring movement and
insights from Justin*

al Birthday Pot Luck Dinner at the Center. To register, contact Ann at ruthergary@aol.com. Both teachers and students are welcome.

TCC Intensive and Teacher Training in Albuquerque in 2007

By the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association

The TCC Association will be sponsoring a TCC Intensive May 31, June 1,2, 3 lead by Sandy McAlister. The Intensives are strongly recommended for any students who are considering Teacher Training. On November 11-16th (Sunday-Friday) the TCC Association is sponsoring a Teacher Training lead by Pam Towne. The Originator of TCC, Justin Stone, always attends these events and it is a rare opportunity for the student to receive his personal attention. To register for either or both of these events, contact Ann: ruthergary@aol.com. The cost of the intensive is \$200.

Other New Mexico Association Events

Registrar	Host	COST
TCC Retreat w/Antonia, April 26-9	ruthergary@aol.com , Connie Hyde	\$295-\$245
Intensive w/Sandy, May 31, June 1-3	ruthergary@aol.com	\$200
TCC Teacher Training, Nov. 11-16	ruthergary@aol.com , Amy T.	\$450
All day Celebration of Justin's Life Nov 17	Ginny & Ann	\$50
Justin Birthday Potluck Dinner: Nov		



Calendar**2007**

Mar. 17	TCC Workshop w/ Pam	Encinitas, CA Seaside Center	contact Pam Towne pamtowne@sbcglobal.net (877) 982-4244
April 26-29	TCC Retreat w/ Sr. Antonia	Albuquerque, NM Madonna Center	contact Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com
May 31- June 3	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	Albuquerque, NM TCC Center	contact Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com
June 1-3	TCC Workshop w/ Sr. Antonia	Warrenville, IL Cenacle Center	contact Diana Durkin (630) 858-2836
July 13 July 14	Teachers Workshop Serious Student Workshop w/ Sr. Antonia	St. Paul Carondelet Center	Sue Bitney smbitney@comcast.net (612) 866-0040
Mid July	Teacher Training w/ Pam	Chicago area	contact Donna McElhose dmcelhosechi@aol.com (847) 223-6065
Aug. 9-12	Teachers Conference	Parsippany, NJ Hilton Hotel	contact Dorene Krause dorenekr@optonline.net
Aug. 13-15	Seijaku Teacher Training w/ Pam	Convent Station, NJ Xavier Center	contact Judy Mirczak jmirczak@adelphia.net (518) 696-7022
Sep. 7-9	TCC Retreat w/ Pam	Manitou Beach, SK Canada	contact Lidia Paice harmonyhouse@sasktel.net
Early Oct.	TCC Intensive w/ Pam	Ringwood, NJ	contact Dan Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com (732) 988-5865
Nov. 1-4	TCC Intensive w/ Sandy	St. Paul, MN Benedictine Center	contact Sue Bitney smbitney@comcast.net (612) 866-0040
Nov. 11-16	Teacher Training w/ Pam	Albuquerque, NM TCC Center	contact Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com
Nov. 17 All day	Celebration of Justin Stone's Life	Albuquerque, NM TCC Center	contact Ann Rutherford ruthergary@aol.com

2008

Feb.	Teachers Retreat w/ Sr. Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA Mt. Calvary Retreat	contact Pam Towne pamtowne@sbcglobal.net
Feb.	Student Retreat w/ Sr. Antonia	Santa Barbara, CA Mt. Calvary Retreat	contact Pam Towne (877) 982-4244
Mar.	Teacher Training w/ Sandy	Ringwood, NJ	contact Dan Pienciak wakeupdaniel@aol.com
Apr. 14-19	Teacher Training w/ Pam	St. Paul, MN Carondelet Center	contact Sue Bitney smbitney@comcast.net

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Support



Words from the VF Editor

News and Notes

As you can see, the Vital Force is much smaller this issue. In the past, we waited for enough content before delivering the issue. This created some problems because the VF was quite late at times. Our focus now is delivering the issue on time. So, if the issue is 12 pages or 24 pages, we will mail it. So I encourage you all to write, write, write! Share your experiences with TCC or write an article about teaching, or give us a lighter side. Submit your articles to vicberg@comcast.net or send your article to: The Vital Force Journal, PO Box 247, Greenfield, CA

Subscription

Subscribe to the Vital Force

Thank you for your interest in the Vital Force Journal. By subscribing, you will receive four issues of the Vital Force every year.

If you are a teacher, you will be included in the Teachers Directory. Please let us know if you do NOT want to be in the Directory.

If you have questions, please email Victor Berg at vfjmembership@yahoo.com

Contact Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Teacher Accreditation Information

Date you were accredited as a Tai Chi Chih Teacher: _____

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku Teacher: _____

Name of the teacher who taught you Tai Chi Chih: _____

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