



THE

VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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Autumn Equinox

September 1991

A DEEPER LOOK AT T'AI CHI CHIH by Justin Stone

Most people think of the body as something solid and unchangeable, while knowing full well that new cells grow every day, fingernails expand rapidly, and organs regenerate themselves. Doctors, too, believe that if we have a pain, it is a permanent pain and will last until fixed - whereas the Japanese Healing Church speaks of "Purification", which is much closer to the point. All organisms strive to purify themselves of impurities, and to put chemical impurities into the body to relieve discomfort is only to perpetuate it.

The truth is, we are a swirl of shifting, moving energies and nothing more. The Chinese have shown that, in this dualistic universe, these energies are polarized as yin and yang. The latter is heat and expansion, while yin is cold and contraction. We are actually a product of these energies. We are acted upon by them and we, in turn, influence them. We are a product of the Chi - the Vital Force - and we affect the Chi by what we think and feel. I have often spoken and written of the reciprocal character of Mind and Chi, mutually conditioning and makers of the fruits of our Karma.

Just as Einstein has shown that what appears to be matter is actually energy, so one day it will be shown that what appears to be energy is actually thought. Some physicists are already hinting at this, and the great mathematician/philosopher, Whitehead, seems right at home with this follows thought. Semi-ultimately, what you are and will be is the result of what you have thought (ultimately there is no "you"). What you think is conditioned by the state of Chi.

Knowing that we are a mass of shifting energies, doesn't it seem wise to culture and affect these energies, to bring them into balance? Yet very few do this, preferring to look to "Another Power" to do all the work, though, in truth, you must do it yourself. Over vast periods of time, the Chi creates "you", but you can create and balance the Chi. This puts another point of view on T'ai Chi Chih practice, doesn't it?

(Please see DEEPER LOOK, p. 3)

Justin Stone is the originator of T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement.

Steve Ridley is the Spiritual Heal of T'ai Chi Chih.

This journal is dedicated to T'ai Chi Chih teachers and practitioners worldwide.

May it serve you in "Knowing the Real."

REFLECTIONS.....Along the Way

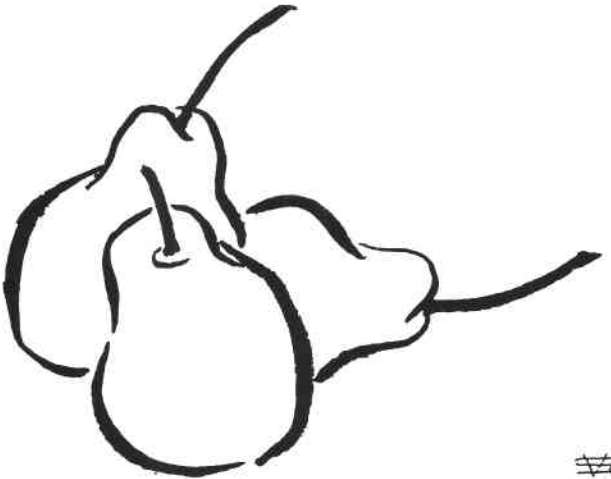
It was nourishing to relate as kindred spirits during our gathering time this summer. Many new meetings, as we began freshly...fragrant as deepening relationships that continue to flower! It is clear, the strengthening bonds of fellowsip do much for unification in this movement.

Many have been awaiting the special conference highlights included in this issue. In addition, detailed information for prospective teachers and recommending coaches may be found in Justin's "Key Points to Incorporate in Practice and Teaching" and "Preparing Teacher Candidates," newly written by Steve. These articles serve to address a commonly asked question: How do I go about preparing/referring someone for Teacher's Training?

As we continue to integrate suggestions and contributed material into the content of The Vital Force, may the journal serve your multiplicities without forgetting the core. Sometimes we are faced with difficult decisions regarding what is excerpted for print. Our intent remains to assist/serve others by what appears in the journal and to give each willing person a "voice" in our TCC community. (See VFJ Operations on back page for details about our publishing schedule and notes on submitting information for publication.)

Thank you for your ongoing support via subscriptions and the conscious effort to share through your writing! We again extend "another invitation to write" (please see insert). This time some "specific themes" are posed which were taken in from recent reader requests. Can't miss this opportunity when participation is key - to experience!

Full and Empty,
Liz Salada for The Vital Force



How exacting is this unnameable
which proceeds in us
Reversing current expression
opportunely turning around
changing to a point
called completion?

NOW

Effortless and plain to realize...

Our cultivation of chi is the simple denominator to successful progression is all areas.

DEEPER LOOK (cont. from p. 1)

Ancient Chinese medicine, which evolved into Acupuncture, is geared toward stimulating and balancing these energies. Here it is used for treating "illness", or "purification", to use the more accurate word. In T'ai Chi Chih we take action before illness. This is from the physical standpoint. From the philosophical, we come to realize that what the Chinese call Tao is constantly moving - this is the great T'ai Chi. We can get in step with it and accord with the Tao. From the Spiritual standpoint - that is, identification with Reality - we stop living in stagnant, harmful, illusionary ways and, effortlessly convert to accord with Reality. All this does not take place in five minutes, but sincere practisers of Chi Kung disciplines - T'ai Chi Chih being the easiest and most effective, I believe - find their physical, philosophical, and spiritual needs being taken care of. This is real fulfillment, not the attainment of temporary desire. T'ai Chi Chih students should give careful thought to these matters and then give proper weight to their practice. Nothing is more important.

Reprinted from T'AI CHI CHIH FORUM
Steve Ridley, Publisher, Denver, CO

T'AI CHI CHIH PRACTICE - a creative exercise:

Select one movement and practice it for a period of 15-20 minutes, slowly and thoroughly (mindfully) with deep sensitivity.

Follow through by sitting quietly, focusing steadily within the space below your navel, with "feeling awareness." Rest alertly within this vital center until peace and contentment dominate your awareness.

Inhale and exhale deeply, drawing energy and strength into yourself with gratitude and joy. Embrace your surrounding in love and respect. - Steve Ridley

TENSION BAGGAGE Steve Ridley

The tensions we create and maintain, often unconsciously, not only inhibit the free flowing circulation of chi, but also absorb chi continually, dissipating the potential of this evolutionary force to contribute to our spiritual development. The ongoing application of the principle, "softness and continuity" will enable us to consciously release unnecessary tension baggage that drains our vitality and limits the nourishment of the mind-body.



Morning Practice, Inver Hills

KEY POINTS TO INCORPORATE IN PRACTICE & TEACHING

Presented by Justin at Conference

Justin commented on "the power of inner sincerity" upon which TCC is based. As he has often supported, the future of TCC lies with its teachers and he basically encouraged teachers to

Stand for what you're teaching and continue to improve your TCC and how to teach it. Teachers must think out the method of doing/presenting these things in a way that they and their students are getting the same (intended) result. These principle movement notes were also presented:

1. Keep TCC standardized. Emphasize the pathways described are mostly done with the wrists.
2. TCC is not an upper body movement, though we remember to swivel the waist (such as in the "swimming motion" in Working the Pully).
3. Move in a low TCC stance and yin-and-yang (y/y) of the legs must be done correctly.

Generally the legs are not far enough apart in the y/y. This short stance causes incorrect rocking back and forth, trying to save the knees. It is very important to perform this action properly. **DO AND TEACH A LOW MOVEMENT.**

4. Develop muscle memory by repetition. You can do it too few times and cannot do it too many.
5. It is not the exercise which is helpful - it's the flow of the chi. This way the whole organism is effected vs. treating a symptom.



SOME QUOTES Justin Shared during his talk, "Merging Sense With Essence"

The high plateaus do not produce the lotus flowers;
it is the mire of the low swamplands.

If you consider quietude right...it is just the time to apply effort by a million times.

The sun shines on everybody-pure and unpure.

You do not have to give up the ordinary life.

What is given up is greed, anger and delusion.

Love and do as you please.

When active you are revealing the function.

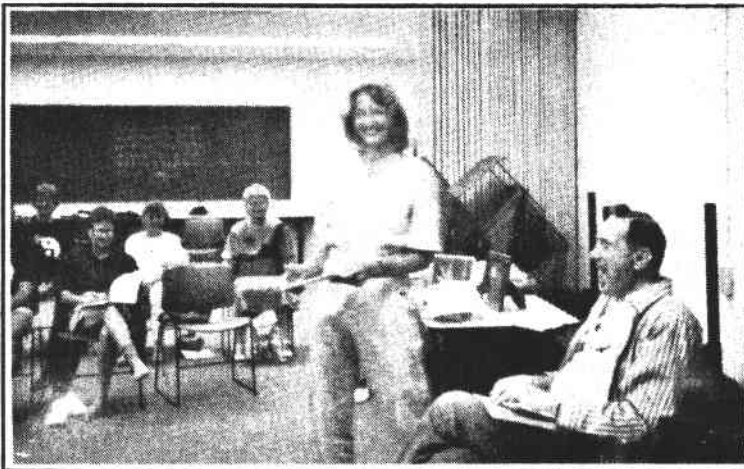
It is better to discipline yourself than have life do it for you.

FAVORITE READING -Justin Stone

Students have asked me what books are my favorite reading. My answer is:

1. My deceased friend, Dr. John Wu's "The Golden Age of Zen" (published by The National War College of Taiwan, sometimes distributed by the Paragon Book Gallery in New York City). I have earned so much from the delightful tales and quotations that Dr. Wu so faithfully assembled. I don't know of any other book as broad, for students of ZEN.
2. Paul Rep's "ZEN Flesh, ZEN Bones," really four books in one written in Paul's inimitable way.
3. The "Krishnamurti's Notebook", which I carry with me when I travel. Difficult to understand for those who do not have some inner experience. Very redolent of the 'Womb of Holiness' (a Taoist expression).
4. Thomas Cleary's "Timeless Spring", while limited to Soto ZEN, has many stimulating accounts in it.
5. "The Tiger's Cave" (almost impossible to find), originally published in England by Rider & Co. Some of my teaching is based on similar sources.
6. "Creativity and Taoism (originally published in hardcover by Julian Press, NYC) by my friend, Chang Chung Yuan. The essence of the deepest, not the popular, Taoism.
7. "The Practice of Zen" by Garma C.C.Chang, who also wrote, from experience, a book on Jua-yen, the deepest Buddhist philosophy of totality, and, from experience, a very valid book on Tibetan Buddhist practice, which is often misrepresented and sometimes confused with Indian Tantra. The tales in the latter part of "The Practice of Zen" are very inspiring to me.

There are, of course, others. I usually carry a book of Kabir's poems or "The letters of Swami (the real) Ramdas", now deceased, when I travel. In an earlier edition of the Vital Force (Spring Equinox 1989) I recommended 20 books but you are most apt to find me reading these seven.



Joyous Justin

CONTINUAL LEARNING

Steve Ridley

Each time we practice T'ai Chi Chih there is an opportunity for a new revelation; to realize more completely the nature of Reality.

The key to deeper understanding lies in our ability to release and transcend our tensions. This means that we must let go of analytical functioning ("unclouded mind"), deeply relax the body ("light and agile"), and perform the movements of T'ai Chi Chih within a feeling, intuitive mode.

Being free of tensions, authentic insights and inspirations are able to dawn. Creative energy (chi) functions as the unifying director, when the mind-body becomes a fitting host.

* * * * *

The principles referred to here apply to T'ai Chi Chih and are from The T'ai Chi Ch'uan Classics by Chang Sen-Feng (13th Century). (Excerpted from the Teacher's Manual TCC.)

"1. Beginning to act, all parts of the body must be light, agile and connected together.

11.. Let the spirit reach the headtop (with unclouded mind)."

TEACHING

A good teacher alertly shares his/her life, as consciousness and spiritual force, while imparting useful instruction that can enable students to continue their growth process effectively.

A good student alertly receives what the teacher imparts, by digesting and assimilating the information and experiences as deeply as possible.

We can be both, teachers and students to each other. -Steve Ridley

T'AI CHI CHIH THOUGHTS

Steve Ridley

In T'ai Chi Chih practice we can continually cultivate ultimate refinement in our performance of the movements, within and without. It is an honorable goal to attempt to surpass your teacher(s) in performance and knowing.

* * *

In teaching, we can continually qualify ourselves so that we are not likely to represent a limitation for our students. During the learning process they will encounter their own limitations, which we can help them clear. The teacher should never be a source of additional baggage for the student to have to carry.

* * *

Before we can truly teach a thing we must know it. Otherwise our efforts toward sharing will be largely superficial and meaningless. When we know a thing, teaching is naturally effortless and potent.

EVENTS COMMENTS
Excerpts....Letters to Steve

Susan Hudgens, new teacher from Sunnyvale, CA writes: I have been practicing T'ai Chi Chih every day and every evening do the Tan T'ien meditation you suggest in Perspectives.... I believe I am sleeping more soundly because of it. I've wanted to make quiet meditation part of my daily priorities and have met my own conscious or subconscious resistance up 'til this point. Again, you have helped blow the top off some of my own limitations and I thank you. It was reassuring to read that this resistance is common and is easily removed with consistent practice. I am deeply honored and feel very personally touched by your presence in my life.

From **Linda Braga**, San Leandro, CA: I'm still basking in the glow of energy from the teacher Renewal and Accreditation in Alameda (CA) this June. I want to express my sincerest thanks for all your wisdom shared that week.

Valorie "Viti" Taylor, Sunnyvale, CA reflects on the Teacher Renewal, June 1991 in Alameda: Teacher Renewal Dynamic/Gentle TCC
Getting reacquainted with new old good friends
True Joy in Movement
Thanks to Steve & Liz & Justin & renewed teachers everywhere!!

Lavana Kilborn shares this: Having returned from the Victoria, B.C. Teachers Accreditation which I attended on the last day as an accredited instructor, things started to move in my heart, nudging my mind to express. Upon reflecting on my life since practicing T'ai Chi Chih, I realized that I owe you a Huge Thank You and Here it is **THANK YOU!** Experiencing more Joy in Life due to a better balanced me, what more can one ask for. Plenty of opportunities to pass on the gift emerged, more than 200 students have taken the class and it keeps on growing now with Elderhostel. The seniors returning to their homes tell their friends and on it goes. What precious energies being released through those people to bless a hurting yet healing World. In gratitude and Love.

"Who feels it knows it." (N. Livingston)

A BIT OF SOME - THING
Jeanne Jacobs, Arlington, WA



SUM	The accumulation of Chi
DIM SUM	Chi, barely perceived
SOME - TIMES	Intermittent T'ai Chi Chih practice
SUM - MATION	A gathering up of Chi
SUM - MIT	Trancendent Chi

TCC: SYMBOLIC GESTURES OF PERSONAL MEANING

In my many years of learning, teaching and refining T'ai Chi Chih it has become obvious to me that the form is a bridge between the visible and invisible worlds, matter and spirit, words and silence, and most certainly a direct way to experience Reality. I would like to share insights from my own experience relative to the personal meaning I find in some of the TCC forms.

In the rest position, integration of active and still chi is allowed. *We flow between form and emptiness in all the movements.*

Around the Platter begins the circular dance of T'ai Chi Chih. We all may know intellectually that circularity creates more chi flow. An outstanding experiment to deepen your experience of that truth is to change the size of your circles - from quite small to large - and feel the difference in energy. Remember always to relax and move softly, slowly and smoothly without ambition. In Variation of Around the Platter, the ball represents my conscious intention which I then offer to the world, or I hold a loving thought of someone and send it to them as I release the ball. I like to be consciously creative and enhance the form with my own ideas.

Bass Drum is so simple and powerful, I visualize chi dancing between the palms. I allow life to be Itself in the movements, it is the art of arts - for me, letting go of wanting to control life. *All of the movements are states of mind.*

Daughter on the Mountain Top has always been one of my favorites. The daughter - the receptive feminine within us all; the mountain top - moments of grace which occur spontaneously during practice (and LIFE!). I like to be relaxed and alert, like a cat.

Daughter in the Valley helps me to trust the intuitive and be compassionate to the doubts. To be an artist of life itself...making the ordinary extraordinary...when we practice daily.

Carry the Ball is the first movement going sideways and that always changes my experience of the chi rather dramatically. I feel I am drawing the T'ai Chi circle continually in this form.

In Light at the Top of the Head, the flame expands, symbolic of rising above conceptual living to enlarge limited views, then that vision is brought back into life, for wholeness. The Light at the Temples is the place of worship. In this movement we can *move beyond thought and enter the true stream of spiritual life.*

Passing Clouds is another favorite of mine. Several years ago a student named Barbara was healed of 35 years of insomnia by doing Passing Clouds for 10 minutes prior to sleep.

Relaxation and circularity are primary here (move from the waist) and the awareness that clouds symbolize the law of form: endless change.

Six Healing Sounds are vital and tension-releasing, done with gusto and fluidity. As both the Healing Sounds and Joyous Breath strongly stimulate chi, I rest longer than usual to allow balance to re-occur. Ending with Cosmic Consciousness Pose integrates the stimulated chi and allows chi-wisdom to nourish the body deep in the marrow of the bones. I think stillness is the highest state of vibration and the quickest way to access wisdom. Checkpoints: Are my shoulders relaxed? Is my breathing natural? Am I gazing inwardly?

(Please see SYMBOLIC, p.9)

SYMBOLIC (cont. from p. 8)

My essential reminder is: practice, enjoy, relax, ground. We are perfect in essence, but it takes time, infinite time, to bring this perfection into form. Our T'ai Chi Chih practice is our supreme opportunity to connect to the Source daily. My whole approach to TCC is to still the surface mind so that natural, spontaneous wisdom can shine forth in its simplicity and guide us. This journey of life and TCC always begins NOW...and I wish you only success in your efforts to cultivate chi.

Blessings,

Richard Brier, Mill Valley, CA

EVER THE STUDENT...

"Thanks for turning it on again for me Steve," I thought as I pulled into the late night Chicago traffic heading home. I'd just spent the evening with Steve Ridley and eight teacher candidates and I felt grand. Just a few hours ago I was rolling into town musing over the last accreditation I had attended. It was the Albuquerque course in 1988, with Justin Stone. I could hardly contain myself when the forces that be conspired to get me there.

T'ai Chi Chih has seen me through some hard times. Back then my business had gone belly up, my marriage was coming apart, hard training. So many concepts of what I was, who I was, falling away fast and hard. The one good thing in the midst of it all--I was a T'ai Chi Chih teacher.

I was late that first day. Justin was addressing the class as I entered the room. He stopped mid-sentence to welcome me. "Very gracious fellow," I remember thinking. After quickly outlining his goals for the course we got down to business.

I was performing one of the "daughters" when I caught Justin out of the corner of my eye. He was coming my way.

"Bill, the rear leg straightens as the weight shifts forward," was his gentle admonishment. "You're bending your knee...so," he demonstrated. "Thank you Justin" was my casual reply. Inwardly I had a vision of ritually disembowling myself on some lonely mountaintop. Work on it," he said and moved on. I flushed and looked about desperately for something to crawl under. It passed. "Okay, so big deal, it's a little thing, just stop doing it. Piece of cake."

A little while later Justin was back. "Bill, you're still breaking at the knee." Oh, God...my aspirations of helping Justin and Steve train new teachers vanished in a heartbeat. I was a student again with work to do. Every weight shift, mentally watching that leg. It was a long week. And I spent the greater part of it doing battle with the habit from hell.

On the final day the certificates were presented, cameras flashed and as usual, the class became one giant hug fest. Then it began. "Thanks for moving at the back of the room this week. I couldn't always see the person leading so I watched you," one of the candidates offered. "Yeah, I'm kind of shy around strangers. It was nice having you there," said another. Other "Thank yous" followed for things I wasn't aware of in the midst of my own trials. To this day I'm still amazed. The Chi had had its own agenda.

(Please see STUDENT p.10)

STUDENT (cont. from p.9)

I resolved back then that I would be ever the student. Chi the teacher.

I was late getting to Steve's class too. Almost an hour. Great excuse though. The AMA building in which the class was to be held was - well - gone! I'd parked the car a block away and as I rounded the corner found an empty lot where the building should have been! This did not bode well. For the better part of an hour, as Dorothy said to Toto, I wasn't in Kansas anymore. Becoming discouraged by the apathetic responses to my inquiries on the street, I wandered into a spacious lobby and asked for what seemed like the hundredth time, "What happened to the AMA building?" "You're in it," was the reply. Fate had smiled on me.

The warm greeting from Steve soothed my jangled nerves somewhat and soon it was time to move. Lord knows I was ready.

Through Rocking Motion I found myself just relaxing into it instead of using the time to assess the abilities of the candidates as I had planned. Then Steve moved on to Bird Flaps Its Wings and he moved differently than I remembered, more refined, more compact. I copied him. "Yes...Yes, definitely more potent that way..." an inner smile dawned.

As we progressed through the form I was amazed how even more refined his T'ai Chi had become since we last moved together. How effortlessly he danced with the Chi. "Containment" he said. Yes...Don't give it up, make it yours"...Yes! Before I knew it I was joyously, gloriously a student once again.

What effect my being there had on others this time I cannot know. But this I do know. Through experiencing Steve Ridley's open and loving manner, his refined and effortless T'ai Chi Chih, I can't help but feel a deep and abiding gratitude in just being a part of it all. Thank you Steve for so ably serving T'ai Chi Chih as the ideal to emulate to assure our own accelerated evolution. And thank you Justin for making so wonderfully clear the path to the Teacher's door.

William A. Nielsen, Jr. New Lenox, IL

THIS WORLD

George Balliet, San Mateo, CA

IN THIS WORLD OF TODAY
WITH ALL THE PEOPLE WE DO PLAY
IN THIS WORLD WHERE THERE IS "THE WAY"
I HOPE YOUR MINDS WILL NOT DECAY
IN THIS WORLD WHERE CRIME DOES PAY
I LOOK FOR HOPE IN MANY WAYS
IN THIS WORLD OF FEW WHO PRAY
I LOOK FOR SOMETHING THAT WILL STAY
IN THIS WORLD OF STRONG AND FRAY
I AM LUCKY I HAVE FOUND THE WAY

POETRY

An early T'ai Chi poem
Amy Hackenberg, Chicago IL

I feel the hands
creaseless and strong,
set lightly on my shoulders.

Light drains down leaves
loosen in the breeze
rustles to release sharp glints.

Palms reach beneath
skin to fissures,
smoothing seams azure.

I feel the dark liquid collect
deep down thick;
a smooth black vase holding my blood.



Alameda Teacher Training

STUDENTS WRITE

One of Carmen's students, **Sharon de Keyser Davidson** writes: I want you to know how very helpful and enjoyable the sessions have been. They are calming, beautiful, and meaningful. And your comments are so positive and encouraging.

My sister in Laguna Leisure World in California took a class with Tais Hoffman, and practically **INSISTED** that I look into the program for myself. Needless to say, she did me a great favor. (I will be out of Albuquerque but) I shall continue the T'ai Chi Chih with the help of the book and music, and perhaps it will be possible to continue the work with you at a later date.

COMMENTS ON VITAL FORCE JOURNAL

RESOUNDING..Thanks For What Is Voiced...

We hear how much various portions of the material shared in the VFJ (Vital Force Journal) are appreciated by our readers. Thanks to all who utter a spark of what "woos" them.

Carmen Brocklehurst shares this information: For people teaching for a Community College--if the teacher has a business number with the State, the College will usually pay more-60/40 (teacher 60, the college 40), than if you don't. Usually then they pay by the hour.

(Justin sent this postcard to Richard Brier after reading the June **Vital Force** and suggested he send it on for publication.)

Richard--Thank you for your wonderful articles in the new **Vital Force**. They're all RIGHT ON, particularly the part that "if you don't practice, you have no right to teach!" That can't be emphasized too much. Your phrase (TCC) "is an opening to higher energies and higher information from within" is great. Thanks much. Justin

"**Sharon A. Edwards**, Bullhead City, AZ reports: "The **Vital Force** is read each time for two reasons: 1. remain close to T'ai Chi Chih 2. Share with clients. Each one of my clients is asked to expand their recovery to include meditation. I have noticed that those who are willing to explore the practice benefit from the effort.

'You do an especially good (in fact, remarkable) job of turning the materials we send into "news" items' is the nice comment from **Hannah Hedrick** of Chicago, IL

Ellen Greyson writes: I've been reading the Spring issue of the Vital Force and as always I'm receiving the flow of the "Chi." For the last few months I've been experiencing a "Life Change" in which my T'ai Chi Chih training and practice has been the basis, of course.....Wishing you all good 'chi' in your new publishing venture.

Marian Massman, LaCrosse, WI writes: Thanks for all your generous efforts to make The **Vital Force** "vital"! You do a wonderful job! I enjoyed the creative, interesting, and informative articles and poems. Joy and Peace.

Sher Jaksha shares these thoughts: We have been traveling quite a bit this past year with our new business, and I find it so easy to carry the new *Vital Force* in my carry-on bag. Both my husband, Jerry, and I enjoy the articles on our long flights. Thanks for all your effort and work.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The accolades given to Liz and myself are greatly appreciated, but the note from Justin which follows, expresses our feelings relative to the conception of *The Vital Force* Having worked with Corinn since the fourth issue, I appreciate the effort she put into it. I often wondered how she could do her textbook writing (to make a living), spend quality time with her two boys, teach T'ai Chi classes, be a distributor, and act as publisher of the VFJ. Lois Mahaney, Editor

"In commending the wonderful work now being done by Lois and Liz in putting out the beautiful new "Vital Force", we must not forget the work done by Corinn Codye in conceiving and developing *The Vital Force* to its present level." Justin