



THE

# VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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## THREE STEPS ON THE WAY

Justin Stone

In my view, there are three things to be done (realized): To recognize, deeply feel, and accord with Impermanence. Then, and only then, is it possible to find out Who and What we are (transcending Impermanence). Finally, after realizing the above two, to go into the Marketplace and work with people. This is 'merging Sense with Essence'.

From my standpoint, these are the three steps on the Way. Techniques will vary, but the objectives are the same. And, in these ways, we transcend 'Greed, Anger, and Delusion'.

Eternity is in this moment.

### Preparation for Spiritual Actualization

The best we can do  
is tune ourselves harmoniously  
in mind-body unity

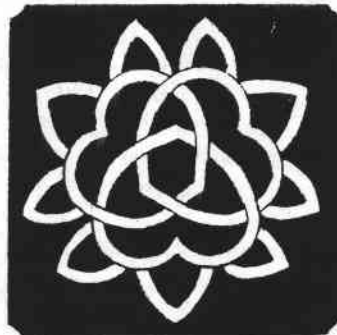
In preparation for our Concert,  
in consort with the Larger Life

Suspended, without power  
like a mute chime  
on a windless day

Poised with potential  
to sing uniquely

The Life-breath; the Spirit-wind  
in perfect timing

Gives us voice  
and our song is embossed  
on the fabric of the ages.



Steve Ridley

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

We have been fortunate to hear from readers who have shared some of their experiences from practice and presentation of T'ai Chi Chih. This issue seemed to form in answer to a call: to aim the content of our sharing in a spirit of service to each other. The resourceful accounts reflect this insight and purpose (essence and function), and the TCC community will now merit from your useful contributions.

As you read the journal, you will notice the expanded features projected in the last issue: Getting Started After Accreditation, Methods and Materials for Presenting TCC, Commentary on Articles, and Viewpoints on TCC Topics. Additionally, a surprise preview of the Teacher Survey relays what teachers feel is most significant to convey to their students about TCC. We are also thankful for the balanced diet of Justin and Steve's "food for thought" that continues to regularly enrich our menu.

Along with planning now to send your news and information by May 1st for the June issue of VFJ, please submit questions pertinent to TCC practice that you would like clarification on. VFJ welcomes questions relevant to movement mechanics, philosophical considerations, principles of practice, personal transformation, evolution, etc. Send your questions to VFJ "Q/A".

While you're looking ahead on your calendar, it's not far off for **Summer Conference and Seijaku (July 1-5)**! A wonderful opportunity for in-depth transmission of T'ai Chi Chih's essence and supportive association within the family gathering of teachers. Planning considerations have been aimed to offer options in accommodation costs, so all who wish to attend these events may. Be sure to see the enclosed events flyer with details to assist your arrangements (May 1st deposit deadline, e.g.). Plan to be present during this auspicious time!

Thanks to those subscribers who have been prompt at renewing subscriptions (by noting your expiration date on the mailing label). Many of these seemingly small conservation gestures bring economical saving to our small budget. (Much of our growing expense has been communication correspondent to teacher outreach and referral, so all your efforts help.) We are grateful to apply the donation received to these projects, and as others are bestowed, additional special issues of VFJ will form.

It has been a very rewarding year, since last spring's issue brought The Vital Force "back home." Our developing connections bring a greater sense of continued growth in the direction of worthier cause. May each solitary movement be experienced as the pervasive joy abounding!

Sincerely, in mutual accord,

Jiz S

Spirit  
of Service  
2

## READER'S COMMENTARY

*Thank you both for enriching our lives through Vital Force Journal. It is an important communications link for our teachers. I look forward to each issue, to find out what others are up to and to share in the growth of consciousness that is taking place among practitioners.*

*Thank you for doing such a fine job in representing Tai Chi Chih through your creative journal.*

*Much Love and Appreciation,*

*Steve*



**A HEARTY SALUTE  
TO LOIS & LIZ**

Justin's 75th edition was so well put together and laid out, rich in variety. The article by Bryan was good to read, his viewpoint seemed balanced and what he said rang true, especially about TCC smoothing out emotions and allowing release of unneeded baggage.

**Constance Hyde,**  
Cedar Crest, NM

I look forward to each issue of the VFJ. You are doing an innovative and creative job!

I feel the TCC movement is gathering momentum. It should be an exciting and profitable decade for all active teachers.

Love and joyous "CHI" in '92--

**Jeanne Jacobs,**  
Stanwood, WA

**Vickie Brodie,** Burlingame, CA wrote she had found many key articles in the recent VFJ applicable to everyday living and expressed appreciation to the contributors for their helpful and inspirational writings. She says, "Every adjustment I have made regarding "Important Movement Principles" that Steve suggested, has improved my practice. It was stimulating to feel the chi flowing up and down my spine and across my back during a recent practice. I am still studying the article to help continued improvement."

## THOUGHTS ON PRACTICE

Steve Ridley

Only by moving slowly, with principles enacted correctly, do we gain profound and deeper comprehension of the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih.

To move slowly without capably enacting the principles, practice is likely to be sluggish, dense and devoid of nourishment.

One must be light and agile like a cloud, expansively aware like the sky, and substantially connected to the earth like a great tree. Movement must be unified through all directions, within and without, which occurs with sensitive, comprehensive attunement.

## CHI FLOW

Steve Ridley

In T'ai Chi Chih practice, chi flows in conformity to each repetitive pattern, much like water poured into variously shaped vessels conforms to them. The specific postures of Hatha Yoga work in a similar way, to pattern and to direct chi. The movement patterns of T'ai Chi Chih are designed to shape and direct chi in life-enhancing ways.

## CHI

*A river runs through my soul  
Its source breathes life  
which ebbs and flows  
continuously  
through heart and body.  
Its springs bubble forth a  
storm of energy, moving  
upwards as if released under  
pressure.*

*Its vitality is captured and held  
within its shoals  
until once again it rises.  
Its channels diverge infinitely, then  
converge, as one.  
Its mouth gives voice and wisdom  
to the ocean of life.*

Sharon Slater

## ATTENTIVENESS IN T'AI CHI CHIH

Steve Ridley

The greater the attentiveness, the more empowered the movements of T'ai Chi Chih become. This is an important principle of TCC practice. Being fully focused and sensitively aware within the performance of each movement contributes to the enlivening of each pattern. Ideally, we enter into each movement with what might be termed "relaxed intensity," directing each pattern with total conscious attention. This helps bring the optimum chi flow to our current stage of proficiency in TCC, which of course evolves through time.

Even by practicing in a somewhat absentminded fashion we are able to generate and attract a measure of benefits, because the act of moving through the TCC patterns, even in a purely physical way, helps stimulate and balance chi to a degree. How much more effective it is to meet each movement with complete awareness, unifying thought and form - a true meditation in motion - which results in a more potent and comprehensive processing of chi through the mind-body.

The following two translations of a passage from The Song of the Thirteen Postures (unknown author), highlights the importance of bringing full attentiveness to our practice: A) "Speaking of the body and its function, what is the standard? The mind and chi are king, and the bones and muscles are the court." and B) "What is the correct application to the body? The mind commands, and the bones and muscles obey." The reference given here, of commanding the body to act, isn't meant to infer that there is a distinct division of subject-object relationship between the thought process and physical functioning. This principle is enacted in a more subtle, all inclusive context than for instance, a man ordering his dog to fetch the morning paper or a puppeteer manipulating the limbs of her marionette. Because of our sensitive application of attentiveness and feeling awareness in TCC practice, there is no clear distinction between thought and function, command and response. One simultaneously incorporates into the other. They are blended as one, through the agency of chi.

The "mind-body continuum" is not a theoretical concept. Mind-body unity is recognized and understood through the correct application of the above described principle. Again, TCC may be practiced as a "muscle memory" exercise, while disconnected thoughts randomly form and entrap our attention, and some good results will be experienced anyway. However, the potential potency and life transforming benefits are more likely to occur through intentional thought-function synchronicity, which is fostered when we practice T'ai Chi Chih as a unified process. From this foundation, true integration and harmony unfold progressively.

A Useful Theme for Contemplation:

**NATURE, MIND, SPIRIT**

Steve Ridley

This continually manifesting sensory world of Nature is the unconscious shadow-projection of the inner world of the Creative Mind continuum.

Inner causes and effects result in outer causes and effects, which prompt inner causes and effects, etc. The interconnected world of Mind and Nature reflects an ongoing symbiosis that is selflessly sanctioned by the eternal, universal power of life: SPIRIT.

**OBSERVATION**

Beings doing, within all manner of assumption

Striving to connect, to align, to resonate with nourishment

Journeying amidst hopes and fulfillment yearnings  
that arise from tomorrows and yesterdays

To attract or manifest "love" is laborious!  
like forcing light through heavy laden clouds  
or crawling through corridors of accumulated sludge,  
desperately desiring to exit by chance

The mind factory, designing formidable phantoms of self-absorption,  
producing love-diluting attachment-expectations,  
fueled impartially by a dispassionate Force that fosters either  
contentment-clarity or the seduction of delusive dramas

We may seek conceptual confirmations  
or arrive at trust

We can co-project the Is or the Ain't, without distinction

What effort we exert to protect and assert our murky mind phantoms,  
to manufacture superimposed restraints of conformity

Unceasing fresh observation, dissolves transitory entrapments,  
banishing fraudulent discontent

We are Love,  
and joyously Complete, now!

Steve  
10-22-91

## RANDOM NOTES

Justin Stone

I like Paul Reps' idea of sitting quietly for five minutes (better make it ten) each day and just allowing yourself to "receive". No thinking no technique, no mantra repetition, no watching the breath, but just sitting quietly in a chair. In Japan this would be known as "Shikan Taza", or just sitting. The great artisans of the past often did this before starting on some work, such as making a teabowl or a samurai sword. In fact, today, many dress in formal style, hat on head, while doing creative work--I have seen them. It is my feeling that ten minutes of quiet and 'receiving', plus T'ai Chi Chih practice, may be enough. It is so easy to relax and do nothing, though sitting with the back straight, it may become difficult. We have our worries to agonize over, and, besides, we get fidgety. Therefore it might be good to do it after a little TCC movement. You may receive more than you bargained for.



(from *Let Good Fortune Jump on You* , Good Karma Publishing)

I advise the more serious-minded of you readers to scan Steve Ridley's poetry carefully. These poems are obviously the result of inner realization and offer something new to the written field of Spirituality. Your experience is not mine, and Steve's is definitely his own. I hope his poems will come out in some published form. As for me, my realization is different. After sitting meditation, one time, I was walking down the street and suddenly knew that everything from the trees to the people on the pavement, including the man taking his suits to the cleaner, the little girl bouncing a ball, and the person washing his car were all Singing the Glory of Creation. Realize that and you will feel a real happiness.

## POETRY TO SHARE

### As We Fill the Days with Meaning

The teaching without words  
is the learning within things.  
It is not something to be gained  
but rather lost  
to the world.

Just as clouds make rain,  
rain makes clouds  
nets are forgotten  
once fish are caught.

If what we are  
is what we can teach,  
and such is the nature of our knowing,  
then yes,  
as you could guess,  
I am fond of the pine  
on days of gentle snowing.

**Derek Hirsch, Santa Cruz, CA**

### Snowflakes

Pure - Immaculate  
Blowing - Swirling - Blustering  
Transitory Designs  
Higher - Higher - Higher  
Then Down  
Resting  
Nurturing - Quenching  
New Growth  
Underground.

Inspired by TCC practice

**Sr. Dorothy Ferrell, Portsmouth, OH**





## THE RIGHT TOOLS

Wm. Nielsen, New Lenox, IL

Only one student shared the chapel space with me as we moved together in the changing light of morning. Five weeks before there had been six. Not too long ago I would have wondered what I was doing wrong that so many lost interest so quickly. Not anymore.

As we moved together through the daughters, I watched how gracefully, how purposefully, he moved. A giant of a man, built like a linebacker and slow of speech. I would have never guessed that he would be the one to embrace so completely all I had to share. He had the heart of a craftsman. And as we passed the time waiting for others to arrive, he spoke of his beloved harps. He is a harpmaker by trade, and he aspired to become in the world of harps, what Stradivarius became in the world of the violin. He spoke of how he came to know and follow that still small voice within. He spoke of how TCC quieted the din of the world. The noise that kept so many from hearing their own small voice. And he told me he realized there was no one thing that would make it all right but, by God there were tools, and it was up to us to recognize and use them. And finally, we found ourselves silent in the stillness that followed, I knew with certainty the class had been for him.

## DAILY TCC PRACTICE?

*JUST DO IT!*

Steve Ridley



The main purpose for engaging in "spiritual practices" is to foster the unfoldment of our Authentic Identity, which is ever Pure, Complete and radiantly Alive. In T'ai Chi Chih we have a potent means through which this process can be accelerated.

Through the ongoing, daily practice of T'ai Chi Chih, we are able to quicken and alter our individual growth pattern considerably. Most people are content to move through life without really desiring any significant measure of self-transformation. They would like circumstances to improve to suit them, at their current level of development. Most are unaware that as we change ourselves, our world changes. And most aren't aware that it is possible to initiate self-transformation by participating in evolutionary exercises like T'ai Chi Chih.

If we intend to grow beyond our present capacity of Consciousness unfolded, regular practice of T'ai Chi Chih is necessary. Some only practice when they feel like it. A great yogi termed this "whim guided will", or going along with ego-centered mental conditionings, which keeps us from transcending our present limitations. He advised that people develop "wisdom guided will", which assures that progress of spiritual growth will continue, in spite of ourselves!

Each of us should be able to look back 1 year from today and recognize that tremendous self-transformation has occurred. The opportunity is awaiting our response, our action. T'ai Chi Chih at its best represents a means for dynamic spiritual growth. It is up to us to make the most of it.

## TEACHERS WRITE

### EVERY ASPECT OF LIFE

Just a note between my sessions with children at school to tell you about my joy in T'ai Chi Chih! I am a school counselor, and a counselor at the Rape & House Crisis Center in Fargo and I teach T'ai Chi Chih through an adult education program. I use T'ai Chi Chih in every aspect of my life! I use it in my groups with children, my groups with teens and my clients at Rape & Abuse. I have found all ages and all walks of life enjoy the movements and softness of T'ai Chi. What a delight to experience the unbelievable enthusiasm and energy. T'ai Chi Chih has definitely brought new meaning and experiences in my life and I so enjoy sharing it with others!

Just a big "thank you." Justin! I also very much enjoyed meeting and working with you last summer in Minneapolis. Your stories were great and the energy you send, dynamic! Back to work! Thanks so much,

Melodye Gustafson , Fargo, ND



### GENTLER IN TIME

I've been teaching TCC at our Senior Citizen Center (Missoula, MT) for one year now. I started doing it as a volunteer as that was the only way I was allowed to teach there. I felt a strong pull to teach there so I agreed. About six months ago the board came forth and said I could charge if I wanted . I discussed it with my class and they decided they wanted to pay, so I charged \$1.00 per person. That felt good to me. I receive far more than a monetary value. My class is a highlight in my week. Many of the students are anxious to share their results with me and of course, their doctors want to know what they're doing (that's lowering blood pressure, e.g.). Word is spreading here in Missoula about TCC, that pleases me--chifully!

I have two other classes weekly and enjoy traveling to present weekend workshops. My husband is a minister so it allows me to share TCC whenever we visit other Unity churches. Though workshops take more energy in preparation and teaching, I feel a tremendous growth and overall feeling of well-being when it's over. I'm sure that it will be gentler in time; as I do more, the anticipation will lessen so my prep time will be more fulfilling. Allowing me to grow at my own pace, is my gift to myself.

Blessing you in love **Lynne Blackford**, Missoula, MT

## YIN YANG

The flood tide bulges out of the  
sea and creeps upon the lands.

Lagoons fill until boats can float  
and sail, and wide beaches become narrow bands.

The ebb tide runs the flood waters  
back to sea.

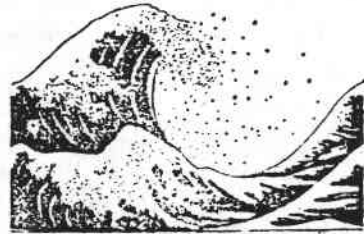
Anchored boats settle down on tide flats,  
and sandy beaches once again open up to me.

Push-pull, Push-pull.  
The tidal ebb and flow never ends.

Sharon Slater

To be in, go out.  
To be out, go in.

Cliff Tabor



Riding cycles  
toward balance

Surfing life's waves of promise  
again and again

The perfect wave never comes!

Steve Ridley

The pain of sophistication

The joy of simplicity

The Contentment of passionate neutrality

Steve Ridley

## TCC EXPERIENCES

### Excerpt of Letter to Justin

All is going quite well here in Southwest Florida and T'ai Chi Chih is alive and well in my life. Again, I thank you for channeling TCC into world consciousness at this time.

The TCC classes I'm doing are all "One on one". I have no group classes at this time.

I'd like to share an experience with you that happened with one of my students. This person is a professional massage therapist and she came to me asking if TCC could possibly help her with her patients. (My stock approach to questions like this is to: first, make no promises!!! Then I share some of my own personal experiences with the practice of T'ai Chi Chih. This approach works quite well and it keeps me away from the position of being vulnerable to "Egg on my face" if the promises aren't realized.)

After I talked with her several times, she decided to proceed with lessons and now plans on utilizing her TCC experience to be better able to help her patients. After class the other day we talked about this and did a little experiment with each other--because she was feeling quite a bit of pain in her shoulder and my back was bothering me a bit. *What we quickly discovered was that, after a TCC practice session, both of us could "Scan" the body with our hands and very clearly feel a distinct sense of heat radiating from those places where the Chi flow was clogged by tension, strain, injury or spinal misalignment.* Also, I deliberately cut off my own Chi flow at the wrists and she could feel heat radiating from both wrists.

Her plan is to subtly and discreetly work with her patients to see if she can consistently sense the heat radiating from areas of Chi Flow blockage. Then she can apply massage therapy right at the spot and relieve the pain.

I can see no moral, legal, or ethical problem with this because she doesn't have to even touch her patients! We both could feel the heat with our hands several inches away from the other person's body. I think this fits in well with the healing philosophy of "First of all, do no harm!" Sort of like Jewish Penicillin (Chicken soup), it can't hurt. It could very well wind up doing a world of good if it increases her effectiveness as a hands on healer.

Sort of sounds like something right out of the Outer Limits doesn't it? Believe me, it's true! It happened! I stand again in total awe of what can happen with T'ai Chi Chih!

I plan on keeping in close touch with her as she proceeds into this adventure in healing. I am also going to suggest that she keep a diary of her experiences, good and bad, as documentation. Perhaps she'll write a book someday.

Again, thank you for T'ai Chi Chih.

Sincerely,

**David J. Belz, Fort Meyers, FL**

## A SUGGESTION

Virginia Shilson

Share the quote below with your students. Through daily practice of TCC, one not only provides himself with maximum health and happiness, but the resulting healing vibrations extend through-out the universe, benefiting all creation.

"Each person is his or her own best healing source. The ultimate responsibility for feeling good and being well cannot depend on another person."  
Justin Stone, *Meditation for Healing*

## NO COASTING!

Steve Ridley

T'ai Chi Chih is practiced periodically by some, to assist occasional health challenges. This is a "responsive application" of TCC practice. One feels flu symptoms coming on and begins to practice in order to balance the internal chi flow, which in turn remedies the symptoms and wards off the flu. This type of application is fine, yet wouldn't it be better to balance the chi flow regularly by practicing each new day? Perhaps then the flu, common cold, and other symptoms of imbalance would not be experienced in the first place.

By practicing TCC each day, regardless of the way we feel, we help build a considerable level of health and well-being which is more substantive than the average person experiences. Being consistent in our application of chi balancing, we achieve a deep harmonization and are less likely to fall 'victim' to health problems. We continue to accumulate reserve forces that contribute strength and resilience. As Justin has often stated, "T'ai Chi Chih practice is cumulative!"

## It's Eeeeeaaaassssy!

"When the cloud is dispersed the moon reveals itself without any effort."

Effortless progress is a benefit of regular practice of T'ai Chi Chih, yet the above quote is from YOGA VASISTHA, which is thousands of years old. The principles behind T'ai Chi Chih are universal principles, principles we may find in many practices of value and merit. There are many pathways to the one, universal TRUTH. T'ai Chi Chih is a simple but powerful pathway.

Virginia Shilson, Albuquerque, NM