



THE

VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH Joy Through Movement

Volume 9, No. 2

Summer Solstice

June 1992

MUTTERINGS FROM JUSTIN

Holy and Unholy: Is there anything that is not Holy? Isn't every rock and blade of grass sacred? Can't Holy and Unholy be manipulated, as Krishnamurti suggests? From one point of view, each word is the word of God; Every happening points to Reality. Seen this way, What is Unholy? Bad Karma? Bodhidharma answered the Chinese Emperor, who asked for the 'Holy Truth'--"Vast emptiness and nothing Holy about it." The term "Vast Emptiness" is hard for most to comprehend, but that is another matter.

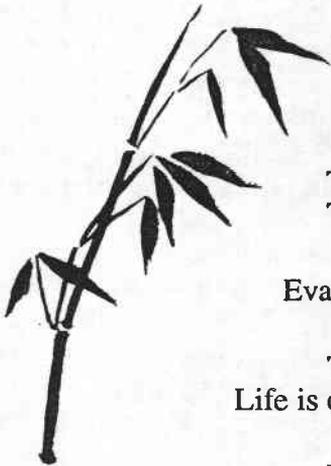
Flower on the Hillside-
The First Snow.
Life dies and is renewed again.

Striving, striving, striving--
The years are soon used up.
The brilliant rising sun will set when day is ended.

Evanescence--What is it that remains?

There is rebirth, but no-one who is re-born.
Life is constantly renewed, but, as for Justin---who knows?

Walking thru the snow in great peace,
there was no sense of destination.



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

There are so many highlights in this issue. As the expressions poured forth in a variety of themes--for conference, for teaching, for living!--we've grouped them in a Contents Page. Now you can make your way through without missing a message.

Also, please see the insert "What I Can Write About--Some VF Topics" for ideas on relaying your experiences. As they continue to enhance you why not continue to reflect them outward? After all, that's how this issue you're beginning to read came about. To the creative life pulse!

Joy in the Heart,
Joy in the Mind,
Joy in the Soul.



Liz Salada for
The Vital Force

GRATITUDE

Thanks to the assistance of a handful of northern CA teachers, the last (Spring) VFJ was prepared for mailing in quarter time! Special appreciation goes out to: Hope Ridley, Linda Meyer, Dona Marriott, Vicki Brodie, Linda Braga, Sandy McAlister and Lois Mahaney, who lent their helping hands in loving service to manifest this project. This month we'll repeat the (June VF) mailing and socialization after practicing T'ai Chi Chih together--the way we start all our group meetings.

At the beginning of this year, we announced a few operational changes to consolidate energy and economize resources. Thanks to Vital Force readers who have utilized this framework, which has proven very useful in maintaining the journal. Specifically, these operations remain:

- deadline for submitting VFJ information by August 1st for (September) issue;
- 1st class mailing option (\$5.00 additional) for those having bulk-mail difficulties; and
- increase to Canadian and out-of-U.S. subscriptions (\$5.00 for extra postage).

Again, thanks to our conscientious subscribers who help conserve our budget by promptly renewing subscriptions (by noting expiration date on mailing label). We are also grateful to acknowledge the kindness of the following contributors who have generously donated (\$5-\$100) to our special projects fund:

Justin Stone, Steve Ridley, Dyanna Chowka, Corinn Codye,
Carmen Brocklehurst, and Jean Katus.

We will continue to apply these resources to teacher outreach and referral, and as the fund grows, to additional special issues of VFJ.

MANY THANKS TO ALL!

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|--------|
| Mutterings from Justin, Synergy | 1, 5 |
| Reflections, Gratitude | 2 |
| Readers Commentary | 4, 10 |
| Rejuvenation & Longevity; Are We There Yet? | 6 |
| Making Use of the VF | 8, 9 |
| According..., Movement Notes-Justin | 11 |
| Q/A: Daughter in the Valley Notes | 12, 13 |
| Getting Started, the Right Connection | 15 |
| Methods for Presenting TCC; Art of Teaching | 16 |
| Ceremony for Clear Communication | 17 |
| Viewpoints: TCC Family Matters | 18, 19 |
| Calendar & Notes | 20, 21 |
| Teacher News | 22, 23 |
| Research: TCC Healing, Chronic Pain | 24 |
| TCC - East Coast?; Shower of Power | 25 |
| Poetry | 26, 29 |
| Events Feedback | 27 |
| Making News | 28, 29 |
| Teaching Adolescents | 30 |
| Student Experiences | 31 |
| Contemplations by Steve Ridley | 31 |
| Karmic Komentts | 32, 33 |
| Night Bloom | 33 |
| Spiritual Stories: India-V. Shilson | 34 |
| Need a Traveling Teacher? | 35 |
| Teaching & Learning Tools | 36 |
| The Man Reflected in His Writing (Paul Reps) | 37 |
| Teacher Directory & Contacts - TCC & VFJ | 38 |
| VFJ Operations; subscription form | 39 |
| Mailing & subscription expiration information (see label) | 40 |

CHI, KI, PRANA, SHAKTI

Intrinsic Energy

Vital Force



READER'S COMMENTARY

Especially for Lois--

I met you in my first T'ai Chi Chih class and meet you again many times anew. How is it we have come together-blessed to play, as service called us?

My dear friend, we share ourselves openly and this is love! Happy 75th Birthday, to a (for sure) special spirit (that's you, honey!)

Liz

Mother's Day past and still approaching
Awaiting the birth of a child***

I dare to call mine, first
While celebrating your life-
Just 75 years now, and still so new!
Embraced by such friendly spirits--
How does this ultimate opening begin
How will it really end

Liz Salada

***Editor's Note: For those of you who are wondering about the the second line in the above poem, **Liz and Brian Salada** welcomed the arrival of **Trever Arlen** at 4:36 am on Friday, May 15, 1992. He weighed in at 8# 15 oz. 6 gms. Liz is doing fine 'tho the labor was a difficult 9 hours. Brian will be able to help out for a few days, then Liz's parents will be arriving from Florida..Liz and I had the VJF pretty well along toward completion before the joyous event, so tying up loose ends won't be much of a problem (we'll probably do it between feedings and diapering.)

-Lois

Connie Hyde, Cedar Crest, NM comments:

Having a Teachers' Review Class at our Summer Conference, during which we can accept input on refining our movements, I heartily support. Thank you, Linda Braga!

Chris McLain, Fargo, ND writes: It is refreshing to hear of the progress that the Vital Force staff is making as it evolves. Who knows what other creativity will spring forth. It is a joy to be able to share and work together to further the communication/distribution of this link we all appreciate. The way that it is put together is just very easy to follow. Thank you all who are contributing.

Roxanne Post, Riviera, AZ writes: What a beautiful issue of *The Vital Force* I've just received! As usual, I read it cover to cover and loved every bit of it.

Vicki Brodie, Burlingame, CA shares this: Once when another teacher and I were discussing the importance of regular T'ai Chi Chih practice, the suggestion that when we don't think we need to practice T'ai Chi Chih, (when we're too tired to practice, or when we don't feel like practicing)...is probably when we need to practice it the most. For example, I was very worried about my son moving to Sweden with a friend who exhibited bizarre behavior. One morning while it was so quiet outside, I practiced T'ai Chi Chih on our patio while focusing on some of my favorite plants. I was physically and emotionally exhausted, but the T'ai Chi Chih practice helped me perk up so I could face an extremely difficult situation. It really helped me have some serenity in the midst of activity, or to phrase it another way: my T'ai Chi practice helped me remain calm in the midst of a crisis situation.

MORE MUTTERINGS FROM JUSTIN

If TCC is hitched to other activities, no matter how worthy, it will, in time, fade. To use TCC as the key to open the door to pushing other matters is wrong. Keep them separate. Best to examine motives--at rock bottom level--for this type of activity.

* * * * *

Some TCC teachers are doing well financially--unfortunately I am not one of them--and I am all for it. The workman is always worthy of his hire. But do not be an opportunist. Hypocrisy is one way to be popular, but it is better to bring your words and your actions together, so that they say the same thing.

* * * * *

It is easier, of course, to sell Illusion rather than Truth. The truthful man is thought either to be humorous or cantankerous.

* * * * *

When acknowledging an introduction, Reps would say: "Thank you for your life."

SYNERGY: Co-Sponsoring T'ai Chi Chih Events

Liz Salada, San Leandro, CA

Sharing in the planning and preparation for T'ai Chi Chih community events may be quite a rewarding experience. Often in teaching, we are alone in leading our group of students, and solely making decisions about our classes and schedules, etc.

Collaborating with others allows for yet another dimension of synchronicity in practice. Drawing on a reciprocal guidance expands or amplifies the possibilities of what may be accomplished. During this process, recognition of each person's natural progression or creative input may foster a flexibility in supportive relationship, as well.

Perhaps it is merely joining for a common aim (which underlies the external play of events) that makes this conceivable. Now, however, it seems to reflect a wonderfully natural interaction known as synergy; where (according to the *I Ching**): "the scope of what can be achieved together far surpasses the total of what can be achieved separately."

(**I Ching* or Book of Change, maybe the oldest book on the planet, was a co-operative effort spanning many centuries. From observing the natural cycles and patterns, a fluid guide to the way things change developed--relaying our interconnected system of relations with all things.)

FROM JUSTIN

Three great inventions of Modern Man:

1. Kleenex
2. Scotch tape
3. The Salad Bar

What did we do without 'em?



REJUVENATION AND LONGEVITY

John J. Barbour, Bullhead City, AZ

In a recent note from Master Steve Ridley, the sentence, "you are teaching physical prayer", stimulated these thoughts which I will share with you.

The original intent of the creators of T'ai Chi Chih and other similar forms of physical movement, was to give to us, a process that could stimulate both rejuvenation and longevity. Often we feel the need to commune with nature and do so by going out on the porch, into the hills or mountains, or simply into our garden among the trees, the birds and the flowers. This communing is actually a form of prayer. At the word, "prayer," if you are an agnostic, you might sneer and that's fine--go ahead and sneer. Prayer in the West is defined as "a communication in which we hopefully plead with a Supreme Being for our needs." In the East, it can be defined as "communication with THAT or the process of becoming one with THAT", the eastern concept of our Supreme Being.

Imitation is the best form of compliment, sincere compliment is the best form of communication. In the movements of T'ai Chi Chih we are communicating with Nature, the function of Chi, by imitating It's movements. We fly with the birds, our feet like the roots of the tree are grounded in the earth and we sway gracefully back and forth in the breeze; carrying the ball and pulling taffy we are children at play and through the other movements, we unite ourselves within the eternal dance of Cosmic Energy. Cosmic Energy, the Chi is timeless and so is our communication with this Timelessness, we can gradually embody it, and so attain longevity. This Cosmic Energy, the Chi, is also perfect health and function, therefore in our daily commune with it on this level, we can again, embody it's perfect nature and function and therefore achieve rejuvenation.

In effect then, T'ai Chi Chih is a beautiful physical prayer, a continuous bodily harmony and joining with Life and it's laws and since our body, mind and emotional functions are actually one, this harmonizing of our body affects our minds and emotions and can eventually result in serenity, peace and an in-depth perception of the essential perfection of life, and therefore, ultimately, a grateful, enduring love for all things great and small.

ARE WE THERE YET?

Jeanne Jacobs, Stanwood, WA

Last June, I attended the Teacher Review in Victoria B.C., before the Teacher Training, and found it most beneficial and worthwhile to my understanding and growth as a teacher. While working on Push Pull, it was suggested that in order to keep the continuity, connectedness, and flow in the hands, we use the concept of returning before we arrive. As I practiced it this way I realized the feeling of the flow of the movement, preventing the extensions of Yin and Yang from becoming "sticky."

Recently while teaching Push Pull it occurred to me that this concept of continuous Yinning and Yanning of the hands helps to keep me non-attached. For how is it possible for me to be invested and attached to my destination when I am continually in the process of arriving?

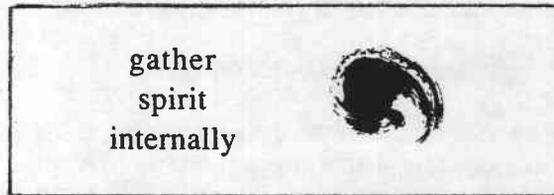
"Being Peace...Making Peace"
Jennifer Biehn, Oakland, CA

"Learning to live and work with integrity and inner peace is becoming difficult for me in this complex and confusing world. Participating in the Educator's Sangha* has brought much depth to my understanding of being and making peace at the college where I work. Meditating with educators strengthens my inner resolve; sharing ideas broadens and opens my thinking. I have learned that "being peace" is as important as "teaching peace".

*A sangha is a community which supports each other, here in building peace within ourselves, our homes, and our workplaces.

Jennifer has presented T'ai Chi Chih to her co-workers at San Francisco State and to educators who've attended the monthly Sangha.

For more information, please call or write: Jennifer Biehn, 510/261-8714
5233 Fleming Ave., Oakland, CA 94619



Everyday Gathas* for Teaching
Jennifer
Spring 1991

Breathing in
I calm mind and body
Breathing out
I smile

Breathing in
I see what needs doing
Breathing out
I let go of all else

Breathing in
I feel compassion
Breathing out
I practice nonattachment

Breathing in
I experience as is
Breathing out
I feel peace

Breathing in
I bring joy to my work
Breathing ;out
I smile

*Gathas' are small prayers
or "remembrances."

MAKING USE OF VITAL FORCE

Steve Ridley

The atmosphere in which we live is saturated with Vital Force. Each molecule of air is pregnant with Chi! This radiant Energy is ever available to us. It surrounds us with dynamic potential always, and directly contributes to our health and spirituality to whatever degree we allow.

T'ai Chi Chih is a wonderful, efficient means for us to more consciously connect our mind-body with the radiant Energy that pervades the atmosphere. Through regular practice, we become greater receptors, generators and transmitters of Vital Force, and we come to understand how best to utilize this Energy.

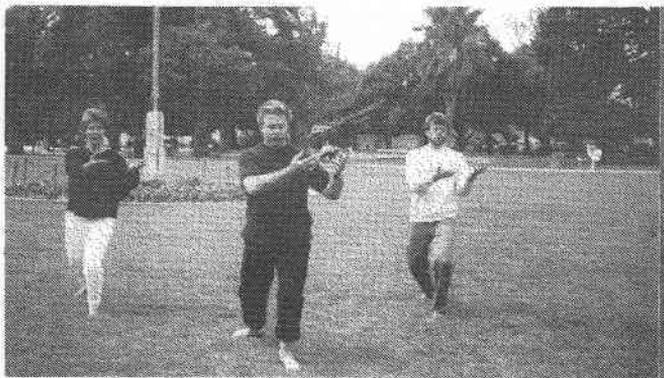
Each time we practice T'ai Chi Chih can be a new beginning, representing an improved effort and capacity for drawing increasing quantities of Vital Force into ourselves.

T'ai Chi Chih practice is an opportunity for continuing growth and expansion. It is a living, evolving involvement that demands a perpetual internal activity of release and renewal. We let go of accumulated waste energies (stale, stagnant, crystallized tension energy), while surrendering and opening to fresh, vibrant Creative Energy. This useful process requires a conscious willingness and renewed effort to motivate it. Otherwise we tend to stagnate, while living within our tensions and undigested creative energy, making little evolutionary progress.

There are many complex systems that aim to develop spirituality, and they tend to be less efficient than T'ai Chi Chih, because of their complexities. Spiritual evolution is directly fostered by our ability to receive, process and utilize Chi. The more complicated a system of spirituality is, the more difficult it is for the individual to open to and make progressive use of the Vital Force. Complex systems of spirituality often appeal to the intellect, and prompt analysis, with little if any authentic spiritual transformation being accomplished.

Some have been motivated to analyze T'ai Chi Chih, to attribute "meaningful" symbology to its movements and to draw correlations between T'ai Chi Chih and religious belief. Frankly, these conceptual overlays only add restrictions in the form of ego-tensions, that inhibit the full functioning of pure T'ai Chi Chih. Justin Stone recommends that we "fast from thoughts" while practicing T'ai Chi Chih. T'ai Chi Chih is most potent when approached through a feeling, intuitive mode of being.

(cont. on p. 9)



Practice
in the Park
San Mateo, CA

(cont. from p. 8)

A creative Prelude to T'ai Chi Chih practice

Seat yourself comfortably on the floor or in a chair. Be still and relaxed.

Breathe slowly, deeply and rhythmically, and feel that you are inhaling and exhaling through the soles of your feet, for several breath cycles.

Then place your feeling awareness within your tan t'ien (2" below your navel), and continue to breathe slowly, deeply and rhythmically within this space for several more breath cycles.

Transfer your focus of feeling to your head top, and breathe in and out through this space.

Finally, return feeling attention to the soles of your feet, continuing to breathe slowly, deeply and rhythmically for a minute or so.

Embrace your environment with the fullness of your being. Be grounded, centered and open to the abundantly rich supply of Chi that surrounds you. Stand and begin T'ai Chi Chih practice, alertly and expansively, consciously drinking the Vital Force into every bodily cell.

Participants in
Meditation Retreat
San Jose, CA



OPEN COMMENTARY

Here is a letter from Virginia Shilson of Albuquerque, NM with a statement I made and her attempted explanation.
Justin

"There is re-birth, but there is no-one who is reborn.."

My first inner response was a remembrance: When I returned from India I remarked to at least a couple of people, "I am not the same person who went to India." Rebirth? Certainly not of the physical body. What then? Reborn into a different level of consciousness? I honestly do not know, but long to learn.

My second response was a reaction to something I read, (paraphrased here): 'We are all separate cells in the body of humanity.' Our body cells are short lived. They are quickly sloughed off and replaced by new, healthy tissue. Is our evolutionary pathway like that? We slough off one level of consciousness and easily and naturally slide into another? A newer, fresher state (or level) of awareness? Is that death and rebirth?

That leads to the subject of reincarnation. I have no insights into this process, but many people I truly respect KNOW that reincarnation is a fact of LIFE. Certainly, the physical body does not reincarnate. As you ask, what then? Some say that if we had lived previously we should remember another life. Mind and brain are separate. Do we not remember past lives because memory is stored in the cells of the deceased being?

If thoughts are energy, aren't all thoughts always available to everyone, old and young alike? If I pick a thought "out of the blue" and utilize it as part of my own thinking, the thought I selected is not "used up." It goes out into the universe again as a rearranged thought, like atoms reorganizing themselves to make a new molecule out of a previous, different molecule. Memory is thought. When I reincarnate, the chances of my filtering through all the memory stored in the "big computer in the sky" and coming up with remembrances from MY past life is pretty remote.

Consciousness is energy. A dead body is energy. From a mass of organized energy we came; to a mass of energy we return. No one. Every one. One.

Who indeed, is reborn?

* * * * *

REINSTATE WHAT IS INNATE

Steve Ridley

As we succeed in accelerating the unfoldment of our innate Knowing, to realize increasingly broader states of perception-awareness, our recognition is that we have been living in a world of conceptual constraints; a world of our own making that does not match or do justice to our innate Knowing. The countless transitory veils of limitation are lifted one by one, allowing our innate Knowing progressive revelation in this world of forms.

ACCORDING IN A RELATIVE OR AUTHENTIC WAY?

Steve Ridley

T'ai Chi Master Justin Stone advises that there are two things to accomplish: "Know who and what you are. Accord with impermanence. You cannot accomplish the second until you have accomplished the first."

When these two things are accomplished, we are liberated or Wholly Human. This accomplishment is the true aim of T'ai Chi practice. It can be called the "Great Circle of Completion." Knowing our Actual Identity is half of the circle. Living in the world while established in our Actual Identity is the completion of the circle. In this state of awareness we know our Authentic Nature, beyond the operations of yin and yang (the play of opposites), and we are able to live harmoniously within the framework of yin and yang or "impermanence" because our outlook is Comprehensive--unified in, through and as the complex diversity of change."

First we achieve the 'Vertical' then we complete ourselves in the 'Horizontal'; first one must awaken to recognize his/her Actual Nature above and before the ego-orientation, then one is able to truly accord in impermanence. Otherwise, true accordance is impossible, because one is bound to whatever degree, by ego-orientation, and cannot possibly recognize the real nature of Impermanence from this vantage point. The best one can do from the ego-orientation perspective, is to live in relative "accord" with Impermanence, by applying coping strategies and living according to conceptual rules. When one awakens and sees the true, behind the scenes functioning of Duality or Impermanence, one is able to authentically accord, because one then understands the Non-Dual, the Permanent and the inseparable, unified Reality ever present, in and through the Impermanent. Most only see the surface, changing conditions and the seeming separateness of all "things," and in this relational standpoint, one can only cope as best one can, responding to the changing scenes, according in a relative way.

embody the
essence that flows
through you



Movement Notes:

JUSTIN SHARES MOVEMENT REMINDERS

In response to a question posed him regarding a particular student's problem area, Justin replied with the following suggestion:

"How students move is more important than memorization of movements. Teachers do not pay enough attention to showing students how to move softly (and where they can, it's better if they crouch a little to do a lower TCC.)"

Those are good reminders, and may carry more clout if teachers know they come from "the source".