



THE

VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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THE BEST REASON TO PRACTICE

Justin Stone

KARMA is an important and frequently-used word, so it is important to understand what it means. In the Sanskrit language, KARMA means "action", that and no more. So, when we glibly speak of "our Karma", we really mean the fruit of our action, not the action itself. Even this is not totally correct. The motivation behind our action is what establishes our Karma which is a result and not blind destiny. Usually the motivation that causes us to act is the result of our established Habit Patterns ("Vashanas" in Sanskrit). This is Cause and Effect. We establish patterns of thought and reaction, and these, formed by ourselves, coerce us into acting in certain ways. So we have created the very force which molds us. Should we not be careful in our thoughts and the habits we create?

There is always a result, neither "good" nor "bad" (which can be seen as "favorable" or "unfavorable" from a personal viewpoint) that is appropriate to the action. When a gun is fired, there is a recoil commensurate with the force of the shot. This adequately explains KARMA for us.

People usually believe, not what is logical, but what they want to believe. Thus their actions are rationalized. This has no effect on the inexorable KARMA, which is not concerned with sentiment or rationalization.

As one practices TCC, the quality of the CHI definitely changes. So many say "I really can't remember what I was like before TCC." As the CHI is circulated and balanced, habit energies tend to fade and one no longer feels compelled to follow dubious paths of action. One now feels more in control of (and responsible for) his or her actions. This is "burning the Karmic seeds." It is the best reason I know to practice TCC, aside from the joyful feeling such practice brings. The serenity and better health are the results of this balancing and circulation. And it is so easy to accomplish!

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

The completion of autumn brings in winter's seasonal rest and with it a natural time of contemplation. While receptive to the gentle effect of our practice, T'ai Chi Chih's true meaning may become more evident. Perhaps it is best known by the innate direction and development at influence in our lives. As we are enhanced, the progression of good cause flows into our society as well, for we wield a positive impact in return.

As you will read, the unity displayed in local teacher groups continues to become more apparent. Supportive friendships and service goes on developing in areas around the country to the benefit of the T'ai Chi Chih community at large. The strengthening bond we share as instructors is encouraged in this way and through individual tellings--with the same TCC aim at heart--our mutual experience is realized. This is an attestation to our collective consciousness and generally, an inspiration to those beginning or rejoining the TCC community.

The focus of the Journal of T'ai Chi Chih (and here in this issue in particular) is our **connectedness**--amidst even the most diverse opportunities to teach, to grow, to be well and whole--none of us are separate. Perhaps this broadened viewpoint may contribute to an expanding group outlook: on the real meaning of our lifework in this avocation, and the potential of our furthered cooperation. Something else to contemplate!

Through our maturing associations may our purpose be fortified and inspired with clearer vision and deepened joy!

Sincerely, in mutual accord, *Liz S*

Liz Salada for The Vital Force

Are you aware?

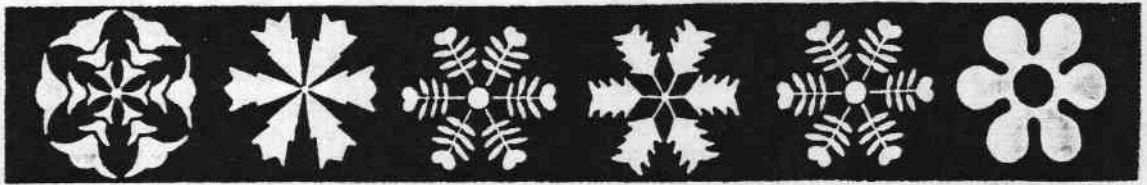
Extra copies of VFJ back-issues are available to subscribers for \$2.50 each (\$3.00) outside of U.S.) Teachers who wish to share extra copies with their students or new subscribers who want to round out their collection may utilize the vital information in 1991 and 1992 issues (just send ten dollars for year(s) ordered--inside U.S.--or indicate individual issue(s).

Order Directories Today

To date we have received very few orders for the New TCC Teacher Directory. We are therefore temporarily postponing the printing until late January to allow time to collect more funding. Please respond to our efforts to provide you with an updated directory by supporting the project with your pre-order. This will assist us in determining actual printing numbers to conserve paper and printing costs.

Why didn't I get my VFJ?

Please remember to check the expiration date on your address label. In an attempt to save postage, we continue to alert you to expired or expiring subscriptions by showing the last "paid-to" date on your mailing label. Also, if the box is checked, please send us your check so you won't miss an issue. (Note: Sometimes it's the bulk mail that has caused late or lost issues. Let us know if this is the case and we'll send another.)



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READERS' COMMENTARY

Give Voice

Thank you for another good issue of VFJ. I enjoyed hearing from new voices. If more would realize that by contributing even one meaningful sentence that others could be usefully impacted, I believe you'd receive writing from many who normally remain silent. We should all give voice to this collective experiment we're involved with, and what better format for contributing to each other than the VFJ.

Steve Ridley, Denver, CO

I enjoyed the conference issue of *The Vital Force* as never before. Thank you for your excellent work.

Ellen Tatge, Albuquerque, NM.

The Conference Edition of *The Vital Force Journal* extends the good memories! Many thanks for compiling and presenting our words in an inviting manner. So much comes through.

Connie Hyde, Cedar Crest, NM

Happy UnBirthday Justin

Names I forget
Faces I forever remember
Birthdays I never forget but
once I missed one!

Happy Belated Birthday
wishes to you, dear Justin.

There is not a day that goes by when I don't think of you as I end my T'ai Chi Chih practice. The thought is brief. The thought says: Thank You for being, sharing and giving T'ai Chi Chih. As every day is a celebration of life, Winnie the Pooh speaks of celebrating a very happy "unbirthday". There is one birthday a year for each of us but 364 unbirthdays. So a very happy unbirthday to you Justin since this comes to you in one of the other 364 days of 1992. Joy and Peace,

Lisette Tingesdahl, Janesville, WI

You are doing a marvelously, wonderful service with *The Vital Force*. I and the 21 certified Colorado TCC instructors have an appreciation for your efforts and everyone involved. **Michael Merriman, Highlands Ranch, CO**

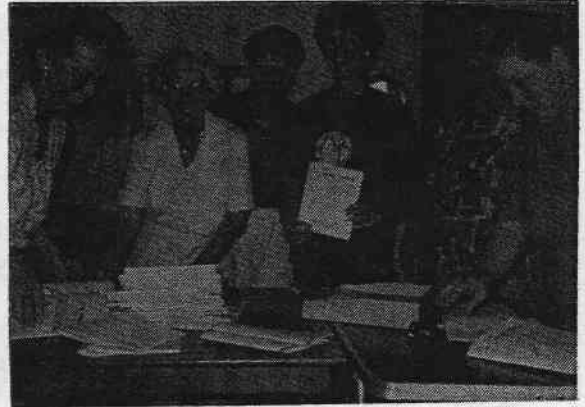
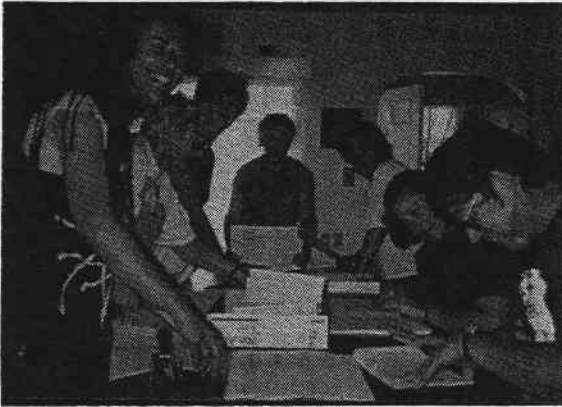
VIEWPOINT

Jamie McDonald, Chicago, IL: I agree with Steve Ridley's comments about "symbology" in TCC (VFJ, Summer, 1992). In fact, I know that personally I would not have learned TCC if it were layered with countless words and symbols to do it. As a learner, I find too many words are a deterrent to me learning. Instinctively, I find myself becoming resistant and tuning out the drone of words as a protective measure. This approach has enabled me to "cut to the chase," get the concept, and then do it. Once I've gotten the idea how the concept works, I'm more open to listening to other information. Frankly, I love to explore an idea and discover what I can see first.

THANK YOU

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*** for all who encourage and assist us in documenting the growth of T'ai Chi Chih and it's practitioners through

The Vital Force
Journal of T'ai Chi Chih

WE ARE GRATEFUL!

THE VITAL PRINCIPLE OF "HOW TO MOVE"

Justin Stone

When a student is having difficulty learning the simple TCC movements, it is often because he or she is not moving correctly and has no clear concept of "how" to move. It is necessary for the teacher to then focus on "how" the student moves, bringing him or her to the point where he or she is flowing in the TCC manner, not just moving hands and legs.

I was rather disappointed, as were others, at the Summer Conference to note that very few teachers do not flow at all, not yinning and yanging much with legs, hips, and waist in a soft and easy flowing manner--but standing rigidly with feet anchored to the ground. Naturally, students would take their cue from this.

Rather, it is necessary to instruct students that it is "how" you move, not "what" you move that is important. Effortless flow from the Substantial to the Insubstantial and back, is what causes the arms to move softly.

The example the teacher sets for the student is all-important, and, naturally, all teachers are sincere in their efforts to do the best job possible. There are a few excellent teachers, such as Suni in Albuquerque, who do not immediately begin to teach movements to their students but spend the initial time in inculcating the students with the "feel" of TCC and the vital principle of "how to move".

So, if you as teacher, find difficulty with a particular student, you might want to first concentrate on "how" that student moves--always being tolerant and allowing for physical handicaps and advanced age.

Reggie Kenyon of Salinas, CA leads movements
at the October Denver teacher accreditation course



Chi is the intelligently directed agent of the Supreme Ultimate. It is the living force that under girds and perpetually sustains all processes of Life. Every being depends on this living force for its sustenance.

Through the conscientious practice of T'ai Chi Chih one can improve her/his degree of receptivity to chi, and thus empower the mind-body more completely.

CHI DIRECTS MOVEMENT REFINEMENTS

Steve Ridley

We can accomplish a certain level of proficiency in our practice of T'ai Chi Chih through the correct adherence-application of time validated movement principles. At some point, after we have successfully incorporated these important principles into our performance of TCC and our circulation of chi is relatively free, we can naturally begin to rely directly on the innate guiding impulse of chi to further shape and refine our movement patterns.

At this stage of proficiency we are simply *allowing* chi to accommodate its circulation-expression through the mind-body more efficiently and abundantly, by sensitively responding to its direction. Our responses will include various internal and external adjustments that spontaneously occur in order to improve our capacity to process and utilize this living force.

It is sometimes a wondrous revelation when chi prompts a modification in the way we execute a certain TCC movement. It might require a change in emphasis, focus, attitude, timing, alignment or shaping. Even a slight adjustment can bring dynamic improvements. The key is to honor the mind-body adjustment that chi is presently suggesting to you, by acting on it.

In our relationship with T'ai Chi Chih, first we endeavor to master the movement principles so that they are effortlessly performed through each movement pattern. Following this accomplishment we allow chi to be the director of TCC, which leads to true self-integration and joy.

* * * * *

Life tends to express its Good - that which assists
evolution - through well integrated individuals.

Often it is those who feel no compulsion to be the "teacher" who teach best.

Steve Ridley



TEACHING METHODS:

Flowing Form and Format Justin Stone and Lois Mahaney write

Dear Lois: Thanks for the interesting letter. It sounds as though your initial approach to giving lessons is very well thought out. I'm sure your lessons go very well. You might write about your approach in the Vital Force (you've heard of it?) and so help other teachers.

The hips and waist (which students usually turn too quickly) are very important in "Carry the Ball to the Side", the "taffy" movements, and "Passing Clouds". To be anchored rigidly to the ground is, as you know, destructive. The 'Flow' is so important--from substantial to insubstantial and back. Justin

Dear Justin: As I typed your article for the VFJ on "how" to move, I was stopped short by the phrase "not yinning and yanging much with legs, hips, and waist in a soft and easy flowing manner." Now I hesitate in my classes, to mention "hips", although I do stress the legs (with bent knee) and the soft, fluidity of the waist. In the past, when I've mentioned "loose" hips, I've had students that projected the hip so much that it threw the body out of alignment. So now, when I have a student that does have too "loose" hips, I get behind and hold the hips so that, though the yinning and yanging are taking place in a soft flowing manner, the hips don't destroy the vertical stance. I realize that the hips do move in a sideways turning manner in the Taffys and *Passing Clouds*, but I hesitate to mention "hips", instead I suggest a soft turning to each side.

I probably don't follow the same format as Suni when I begin a class, but I do start with your audio tape explaining the principles behind T'ai Chi (while I'm doing the enrollment slips). This is followed by demonstrating and having the students practice the correct posture (alignment) needed to do the movements correctly, as well as the necessity to keep the knees bent to enhance the flow of the chi. Then to get them moving, I teach *Joyous Breath*, followed by the *Rocking Motion* to show the necessity of correct posture (otherwise they lose balance or stick out their rears). After these two movements, we go into very serious practice on the basic T'ai Chi Chih forward and backward leg movement and then to the so-called T'ai Chi step to the side. Each session begins with *Joyous Breath*, *Rocking Motion*, and *Bird Flaps its Wings* followed by a review of the leg movements then on to the hand movements that are to be taught that session.

*Happy
Chanukah*



*MERRY
CHRISTMAS*

T'AI CHI THE SUN UP

Jo Rigg, Helena, MT

Just west of Helena, as you cross the Continental Divide, there is a little "scenic overlook" area that commands a breathtaking view of part of the Helena valley and the Rockies. I had long thought that it would be a wonderful place to "T'ai Chi the sun up" sometime. I had hoped to organize it during the summer, but soon found that summer had, once again, gotten away from me. I decided that a sunrise practice would be an appropriate way to welcome fall, rest and "re-group" and say good-bye to summer with its activity and fun. So I scheduled the "sunup" for the Sunday morning closest to the fall equinox.

It was frosty and cold the morning we drove up the mountain road. In the predawn "twilight" we passed a moose and her calf contentedly grazing in a pasture near the road. A bit further on, three elk stood in the middle of the road curiously watching us go by. With two other students, the T'ai Chi was glorious in the quiet frosty air. Just as the sun cleared the eastern mountains, a coyote burst into his own sunup song somewhere below us (It felt like everything was below us up there!) It was an exhilarating experience, one I hope to repeat several times a year.

T'ai Chi is a means of uniting with the energy of nature and the universe - a powerful experience indeed.

I'M READY

"I'm ready!" ... I say aloud to the Great Chi that calls ...
The night gives way to a slight glow of day ...
The dance begins ...
My heart smiles in anticipation ...
I tingle with excitement
Love ... Love me ...
I AM!!!

Ralph Gam, Denver, CO

