



THE

VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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THE CUMULATIVE EFFECTS OF T'AI CHI CHIH

Justin Stone

With regularity of practice, the deeper meanings of T'ai Chi Chih become evident after some time. If one does not practice regularly, it is like a pianist who does finger exercises once every two weeks, or an athlete who eats only intermittently, there is no real nourishment.

As people learn T'ai Chi Chih, they become attracted to it because of the way they feel. Some then want to go on and become teachers, passing along the good feeling and enjoying the reactions of their classes. Early on there is great enthusiasm: so why do people drop away from practice?

In our society there is a great restlessness, a desire for diversity and titillation. Even when something is going well and satisfaction is being attained, there is a desire to look far afield and seek something else. The far-off fields may look greener, but more is not better. If a chela (disciple) is told by his guru to follow a certain discipline, he does it faithfully. This may go on for years. If a potential opera singer wants to really polish his or her talents, it is necessary to make great effort. Ballet dancers are famous for being up early the morning after a performance, even a triumphant one, working at the barre in the practice room. Such motivation is necessary to make a successful performing artist. The point is that T'ai Chi Chih results are cumulative. Regular practice leads to the CHI firming the bones, and the CHI is progressively stored in the T'an T'ien. The changes in personality then often become remarkable, as the evolving power of the circulated and balanced CHI takes hold. One can literally remake him or herself - if there is the sticking power.

All Teachers, of course, must practice regularly so that they are led by an inner wisdom (Prajna). T'ai Chi Chih skills develop with practice, and it is easy for the experienced teacher to tell who is practicing by watching the performance. (Others, more experienced, can tell just by looking at the teacher.)

If you will remember that T'ai Chi Chih benefits are cumulative, and that, in my opinion, the circulation and balancing of the CHI (Prana) is the most important of activities, perhaps you will be motivated to practice regularly, and even step up the length of time that you practice. It is well worth the effort, because, the rewards are great.

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

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

Reflections . . . Along the Way

The celebration of Tai Chi Chih continues as we shift gracefully into a new season of balance. The myriad ways we are growing in this joyful movement are clearly evident. Our group increases in number, as many sincere candidates act on their TCC commitment by successfully training to teach. An energetic application of TCC (toward healing/revealing wholeness) suggests an expanding sureness at the heart of practitioners' intent. And as the cumulative effects of this knowing are far-reaching compassion, joy and contentment manifest.

The 20th anniversary of Joy Thru Movement and a recent summer gathering were influential in the cultivation of our group energy and awareness. The individual impressions which are relayed in this Autumn-Conference issue reflect much appreciation for our origins and the collective sharing of TCC (which is continually enhanced by each practitioner's development). Thanks to Justin and Steve for living example and encouragement toward ultimate realization.

Gratitude for all! We echo great thanks to the Minnesota committee of teachers, our special conference host, Sandra Tanner, local CA helpers and the supporting participants attending summer conference '94. The presence and talents of everyone shaped a most meaningful commemoration of 20 years of TCC!

Now our Colorado conference committee is enthusiastically prepared to welcome teachers to Denver in August 1995. Please see the enclosed flyer and information presented in VFJ's Calendar Notes (page 20) for the 10th International TCC Conference and an early Seijaku response request.

VFJ Inner Workings

Please note extra copies of VFJ's "Special 20th Anniversary of TCC" issue are available to subscribers (at \$2.50 each). This anthology illustrates the origin, development and vision for the future growth of TCC by its Originator. It may prove useful to (future teacher candidates, new class sponsors and media contacts) those interested in a comprehensive view of TCC's purpose and moving chronology.

The promotional measures (PBS program, news, etc.) which are presenting TCC nationwide will no doubt promote increasing class interest in many locales. The new TCC Teacher Directory provides the means for communication and referral to over 600 accredited instructors. Please continue to utilize this important resource for connecting new students with TCC teachers. (Note the white pages of Directory Updates enclosed in this mailing are to be included in your copy. They provide updated changes and new teacher additions. Teachers who have yet to request a copy, please see page 39 for order form.)

Our next issue deadline is November 1st for the Winter Solstice VFJ. A preview of some upcoming contents are: Important Keys to TCC Movements, Art of Teaching Seated TCC and Continuing Classes, CA and nationwide CBU's info, new teachers Getting Started, and much more. Stay current so you won't miss an issue. By request we've noted lapsing subscriptions with a red "Expired" stamp on the envelope near your mailing label.

Please accept our gratitude for your continuity in contributing to *The Vital Force*. We view the journal as an ongoing celebration of TCC practitioners. Thank you for allowing us to go on presenting the Joy you express in writings shared!

With Gratitude For All,



Elizabeth Salada for *The Vital Force*



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READERS' COMMENTARY



I certainly enjoyed this new edition (June '94) of the VFJ. It was full of articles and letters by teachers, outlining their own experiences. I can't imagine any teacher not wanting to receive and read the VFJ. I thought this was the best edition yet!

Justin Stone, Albuquerque, NM

It is so incredible to feel the growth of the teachers, to realize that the understanding has no boundaries.

Connie Hyde, Cedar Crest, NM

I want to thank you for your work on *The Vital Force*, and all those who came before me who helped make up the *Special 20th Anniversary Issue*, and all they have done to make T'ai Chi Chih what it is today. Thanks for putting the special issue together.

Darlene Ross, San Jose, CA

I still haven't "come down" from the Conference. Hope I never do!!

Hope Burla, San Leandro, CA



BEING IN TOUCH

Editor's Note: Thanks to all recent hosts who have communicated with VFJ around such special event opportunities. We also appreciate your support of new teachers by your example of being in touch and of service to TCC's individual development.

I enjoy reading the articles and gain a lot from them. Thanks for notice of subscription renewal.

Linda Reicks, PBVM, Epworth, IA

Thanks so much for your assistance with the July '94 Teachers' Certification Course. It was delightful and I still am smiling--a total success!

Chris McLain, Fargo, ND



Thank you for providing *The Vital Force* to the new TCC teachers, during the courses this year.

Steve Ridley, Denver, CO

Thank you Steve so much for sharing yourself and your energy at the recent Teacher Training in Albuquerque. My TCC has been deepened as well as my energy work with my massage clients. The training was the most wonderful, healing, and empowering experience of my life. The energy and love that built over the week was almost overpowering. It was certainly a lesson of staying in one's feet.

Susan Brown, Lewistown, MT

I can't tell you what a wonderful experience hosting the Teachers' Training Course was. I kept telling the anxious students not to worry, that they were going to have more fun than they had ever had--and they did. But not more than me-I LOVED IT!

Loretta Shiver, Albuquerque, NM

CONGRATULATIONS!

to the 17 new teachers accredited in Albuquerque, NM during the June 6-11, 1994 training;
to the 14 successfully completing the July 11-16 training course in Valley City, ND and
to the 10 additional teachers newly accredited September 12-16 in Denver, Co.

To ALL new Teachers:

We celebrate great JOY as we celebrate YOU!

Please share your discoveries through *The Vital Force* as you begin introducing
Tai Chi Chih--many will benefit from your teaching-practice and new experiences relayed.
See pages 29 and 30 for more training feedback from New Mexico and New Jersey.



North Dakota Training
Valley City, ND
July 11-16, 1994

GRACIOUS PERMISSION

Steve Ridley, Denver, CO

Recently, in Albuquerque, I had lunch with
Ou Mic Shu. We enjoyed discussing a variety of
things. At one point I asked if he wanted royalty
payments from those who have used his three flying
birds painting for their T-shirts, business cards and
flyers, and he had a good long laugh! He gives his
blessings to all who would use his painting. How
gracious he was, though nobody ever asked for
permission. He is featured in Justin's *Climb the
Joyous Mountain*, Chapter 8, pp.53-62.



Ou Mic Shu and Steve Ridley



20 BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY JUSTIN STONE

Secrets of Chinese Meditation - Charles Luk
Creativity and Taoism - Chang Chung Yuan
The Book of Tea - Okakura
Krishnamurti Notebook - Krishnamurti
The First & Last Freedom - Krishnamurti
Kundalini - Gopi Krishna
Higher Consciousness - Gopi Krishna
Zen Flesh, Zen Bones - Paul Reps
Zen Telegrams - Paul Reps
The Heart of Buddhist Meditation - Nyanaponika

Poems of Kabir - Rabindranath Tagore transl.
Spirit of the Upanishads - Yogi Ramacharaka
Swampland Flowers - Ta Hui - Cleary transl.
Zen & Japanese Culture - D. T. Suzuki
The Method of Zen - Herrigel
Golden Age of Zen - John C. Wu
Tao Teh Ching - John C. Wu transl.
Buddhist Writings of Lafcadio Hearn
Works of Chuang - Tzu
Yoga Sutras - Ramurti Mishra

TO CLING OR NOT TO CLING?

Justin Stone

"You've been on the Spiritual Path for 40 years, What have you learned?"

"I've learned that there is nothing to be done."

"Ah, but if you hadn't been on the Path for 40 years, you wouldn't know there's nothing to be done!"

* * * *

It is hard to convince earnest students that it's all there, inside, and nothing has to be learned or accumulated. Being earnest, we want to make a special effort, and that effort can be self-defeating. Once the habit energies are put aside, only Wisdom shines through, but the habit energies and tendencies that develop from them cover the Inherent Wisdom.

Clinging to the habit energies (an addiction hard to break) is self-clinging. The Buddha said that suffering is caused by self-clinging, which causes greed, anger and delusion. Look at your troubles and decide if they, ultimately, aren't caused by over-concern with self. We can't see the forest if we concentrate on one tree. When people write me of their problems, I usually note that all the sentences begin with 'I.'

Dwelling on the past, easy to do, is self-clinging. Living in the Present, with gratitude, is rare. When we know Who and What we are, it is not difficult.



But, of course, it hasn't ended. We are warmed, nurtured and clarified in some profound way that continues to move through us. From my notes I read Justin's words, helping us to understand how this practice manifests our development, "*When there is a spiritual change, a physical change takes place, and vice versa.*" Then later, "*Enlightenment, when it comes through, is not because it was something new or learned, but because it was something blocked.*" From Steve I especially noted his lucid description of effects on the body: that athletes excessively develop the outer body, detracting from nourishment to the internal organs, whereas tai chi practice develops the internal system, contributing to greater health and longevity. Also, "*Through practice, the body becomes restructured to allow the larger consciousness to come through.*"

In the exhibits room we had a large display board with paper and markers, inviting participants to share their observations and expressions throughout the conference, while their impressions were fresh. One said, "*It helps me feel more centered, calm, open, accepting.*" From another, "*Tai Chi Chih helps me become more of the person that I am.*"

Darlene Ross, who had lingered to help with the last shuttles of people and baggage has a "connecting" story to share which follows on page 17.

We came, we gathered, we caught the dream.....and passed it on. Here's to the next "best conference ever." Thank you, Justin. Thank you, Steve. Thank you all.



The 9th International Tai Chi Chih Conference, Summer 1994

Gratitude

*Contemplate deeply
on the Refined Intelligence
and Compassionate Force*

*That creatively designs
and breathes all living beings
into expression
through Itself.*

CONFERENCE '94 ENTERTAINMENT--A BIG HIT

Rosalind Braga, San Leandro, CA

Saturday evening at Vallombrosa was anything but quiet. The sounds emanating from this secluded retreat center were those of clapping, laughter, music and dance.

Earlier in the day Justin "tickled the ivories" with some improv-jazz. Vic Berg pounced on the keyboard with creative verve and style, pleasing his listening audience immensely. Luba Blumberg presented a passionate monologue from a play and Leslie Johnson led us in a song about Justin to the country western tune of "Boot Scootin' Boogie." Bill Nielsen recited the dramatic "Ballad of Dan McGrew" and Donna Moore taught us a Native American chant about caring for our planet earth.

Joanne Sultar also composed a song about Justin and brought along a bag full of musical instruments (tambourine, sticks, etc.) for the audience to play. Tamara Johnson (Lia Ridley's daughter) thrilled us with her beautiful, magical flute. She later played with Steve who drummed his way into our hearts.

Chris McLain and Jean Katus provided some comic relief with their theatrical-gymnastic interpretation of life and our "habit energies." You'd have to be there to believe it! Richard Brier was his poetic best, sharing part of his prose poem call "Chi Lanka", and another poem expressing the pure joy of the Tai Chi Way of Life. Sherry Brier's belly dancing was joyful and rich in color and movement.

Lia Ridley and Steve ended the evening of creative joy with Romanian gypsy dancing, story telling and drumming. It was an expression of pure joy and Love.

The impact of so much expressive Chi was felt by everyone. Laughter and the beat of country line dancing music could be heard far into the evening, that special night in August. And those sounds of joy ripple out into the universe, to touch your heart as well.

TRIBUTE FUND INSPIRATION

Barbara Riley, Orinda, CA

The first day after I returned from the inspirational conference, I noticed a wonderful new quality to my TCC practice - a much greater feeling of connectedness and inner softness. I think this is due to Justin's and Steve's helpful sessions, and also to being surrounded by so many beautiful people practicing the form together. The atmosphere of acceptance, joy and love which permeated the conference enabled learning at a deep level to take place.

I came home with a feeling of gratitude to all the participants, especially Justin, Steve and Sandra for making this possible, and also a sense of two needs that seem to exist in our group. One is a need to have a vehicle for expressing feelings of this kind in a tangible way; the other is a need to help support the growth and extension of TCC. I wonder if others share these feelings, and if perhaps when we receive our non-profit status a "tribute fund" could be created as the vehicle whereby teachers who wanted to make a donation in honor of a special occasion or transition could receive a tax deduction for a donation, and the person honored or remembered could receive an acknowledgement card. As funds built up, we could help finance projects, such as reimbursing Carmen and Justin for costs they have incurred in producing the PBS series, which will benefit TCC and all of us.

WE THANK YOU
Joanne Sultar, Berkeley, CA

The words I wrote to "Justin Stone" go to Julie Styne's song "Just In Time" from the 1956 musical **Bells Are Ringing** are below. The song was a natural, if somewhat whimsical, expression of my deep gratitude to Justin, not only for the moves and the form, but for the joyous and healing context for bringing people together. What a gift to feel I am being 'an instrument of...peace!'

Justin Stone

*Justin Stone, we thank you.
Justin Stone, we thank you.
T'ai Chi Chih has changed our lives.
Teaching now, and showing others how--
The simple joy of Tao is ours to share.
Now we're here--We're all gathered now together,
But near or far, we've found a way.
So, thank you, Justin Stone
For bringing T'ai Chi home!
We thank you, Justin Stone, today.*



MESSAGES FOR JUSTIN

Happy Birthday

*and eternal gratitude for being such an
integral part of freeing me to rest forever
in the light of God! Timothy Steutz
and many, many thanks, Justin.*

Amy Hackenberg

--Long Life! Regina Horgan

*to a man whose gift to us is timeless
and ageless. Thank you!*

Leslie Johnson Leech

Thank You

*so much for letting the Great Spirit
move thru you and inspire you to
create such a wonderful gift.*

Donna Moore

so much for giving TCC to our world!

Ellen Greyson

*for your gift to us as teachers and to
the universe. Don Fiore*

for sharing so much with the world.

Wanda Zimmerman

Justin, God bless you and many thanks. Jan Martindale

Happy T'ai Chi Chih birthday--thank you for being. Dianna Windwood

Wishing you a most blessed year!!! Vi Williams

I would like to get to know you better. Shan-Marie Stehno

*I'll be eternally grateful to you for creating TCC and I give my love and best wishes for
many more birthdays. Pat Hill*

Much love and gratitude for the gift of you. Ellen Tatge

Many happy returns of the day--hooray! Anne Doering

Birthday congratulations and thanks, Justin. Theda M. Gillespie

Stay for another 78 years. Susan Webster

I am honored to know you, and deeply grateful that our lifetimes have overlapped through

TCC. Thank you, Justin, for this great gift. I will do my utmost to honor it by keeping

TCC an integral part of my life. Happy Birthday!!! Hope Burla

A big thank you from me and all my students! Lavana Kilborn

78! 78! Justin mirrors to us it's never too late--78! Yah! Christeen McLain

GATHER THE DREAMERS...CATCH THE DREAM
T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference, 1994



All the T'ai Chi Chih Smiles

CONFERENCE IMPRESSIONS

Being and sharing with those I've met before and those I just met for the first time is such a joyful experience. I sure would like to see this conference on a 3-day (holiday type) weekend or just extended so we'd have more time together. Would also like to see less time "wasted" in throwing out to the group what they want. This seems to take place annually and it always comes down to practice time with Steve and Justin. Just schedule it! The more we can practice with them the better! It's a rare opportunity that "words" cannot take the place of. It's so easy to lose connection with the form, and the form is always evolving. In order to serve those who come to Tai Chi Chih, I believe we, as teachers, should require ourselves to attend a conference or teachers' training at least once every two years or not teach until we do! **Timothy Stuetz, Anaheim, CA**

Congratulations on a job well done! **Luba Blumberg, Oakland, CA**

Very helpful! Thank you, especially Saturday afternoon session with Steve. I also enjoyed the dancing workshop with Lia. It was a much needed change of pace. I would have preferred less discussion of the schedule. I realize it's very difficult to structure this session and that a set schedule will create criticism, but time is very precious here. I wish we could have had a week. Saturday night's entertainment was terrific. Great fun and a delightful change of pace. **Jan Martindale, Wood Village, OR**

The power of the Chi was certainly evident at the 1994 Conference. Sharing of ideas, meeting new friends, feeling the love and joy from everyone attending the gathering was a wonderful experience...looking forward to next year's conference in Denver. **Don Fiore, Phoenix, AZ**

Tai Chi Chih demonstrated and discussed by Justin was extremely helpful to many people. Polarity with Hannah and Dancing with Lia were real treats that helped keep me grounded. What a great weekend. Thanks to Sandra Tanner for doing such a good job as conference chairperson. **Vicki Brodie, Burlingame, CA**

It was great to meet everyone and hear what they're doing. It was inspiring to hear about the new center and PBS special and imagine all the ramifications of this growth and be encouraged to prepare for a wave of new students. **Vi Williams, Spring Valley, CA**

Lots of planting of new ideas and seeds--last year's conference in Chicago prompted me to start teaching a weekly class at a health club in Evanston, (see MAKING NEWS, p. 32) and this year's is prompting me to expand that to private classes--especially geared toward youth and young adults. I feel reconnected, as I always do at conference, to the power and joy of Tai Chi Chih, and almost burgeoned with ideas for sharing it with others. **Amy Hackenberg, Evanston, IL**

Before I got to the conference (this was my first) I was a little jittery--realizing that many who would be there have known one another for a long time. I wondered how I would fit into the group. Within minutes I realized that simply being a TCC practitioner, I was part of a family--a network that survives and nurtures me and that I nurture whether I know everyone for just days or years. The conference helped me confirm my commitment to TCC, motivated me to continue spreading the "word" and made me an even greater believer in the power our individual and collective energy holds. Peace and love to all Tai Chi Chih-ers! **Leslie Johnson Leech, San Diego, CA**

I thank everyone for putting together such a peaceful and relaxing retreat. I would like to see Luis Sanchez give a session on Feldenkrais. I feel inspired to teach TCC all over again. I loved meeting other TCC teachers and sharing information. I admire Carmen for her diligence in spreading the word about TCC **Diana Windwood, Santa Barbara, CA**

➤➤

Peace
Joyous Life
Healing of the heart
Life.

Donna Bundock, Tijeras, NM

Opening impressions – all embracing,
connecting, comfortable, love is

practicing..
standing behind the Master
Steve
moving together
breathing, flowing
joy always.



Anonymous

LAST AFTERNOON PRACTICE

This was a very peaceful and purposeful weekend at a beautiful place. It was well worth the long trip here from Iowa. I know my year will benefit from all the "chi". See you all next year.

Esther Kieffer, Cedar Falls, IA

Never enough time to meet everyone--always enough time to meet the people you were meant to connect with. Where else will you find this many authentic people? Very conscious of all the work it took to put this together. Thank you all.

Need more vegetarian, non-dairy meals--plain yogurt would have been an easy substitute for all meals (alas the desserts were great!) It would have been nice to group people by region at the initial meeting and introduction. For the benefit of students/teachers, I would like to see a more cohesive relationship with Steve & Justin. How are we supposed to experience connectedness with each other and ourselves when the two leaders have little interaction--seems a little inconsistent.

For next time: Need a new agenda. I think it was great to get feedback but went on too long and disorganized. I would like to see some practical discussion groups and people can sign up: i.e. The business of TCC; warm-up and tips; connected form and SciJaku. Maybe set up areas with a group leader to discuss for 1/2 hour each and then rotate so everyone can participate.

Intro. letter to include hints on getting the most out of the conference: i.e. bring a pen, sweater, water, wear your name tag no matter how strange. Entertainment suggestions. Add morning yoga or walk to get cardio chi moving (ask for volunteers in advance)

Great Job! Graphic and theme a nice touch and very effective. Elevated state and circle seating area--very effective--let's get for next year. Sleeping accommodations very nice. Great idea to show video--would have liked to hear more music throughout sessions to see what works with what. i.e. last year Steve's drumming inspired me to buy the tape.

Idea board was effective--need more organizing however. I was able to locate people in charge, however I felt you needed more help to answer questions. Thank you!! **Linda Prosche, Chicago, IL**

It was a joy to celebrate 20 years of TCC, and for me, 10 years of Chi cultivation! I feel nourished by being with my T'ai Chi family, renewed in body, mind and soul by our deep TCC practice and heart connections. Thank you, Justin, Steve, Sandra and every teacher present! **Pam Towne, Camarillo, CA**

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As always, I absolutely loved every moment of the Conference! I'm sitting against the Ginko tree here at Vallombrosa, just enjoying being! After all the "no words" experiences here, I feel free and born again! All my life, I had this idea that everything was the same, and that has been difficult to express to others. However, after doing TCC for 10 years, I'm beginning to feel that I've been "nibbling around the edges" of the "Great Truth," or "Eternal Void." And I know Joy thru Movement! So all the loving Chi to everyone, especially Justin, Steve, Lia, and all the members of my Tai Chi Chih family! I knew the Cosmic Consciousness would be smiling (with that original face) on us all! See you in Denver, Yee-Haw! (Remember to bring Cowboy Boots, hats, spurs (maybe not spurs)! I'm going to take home some seeds from this Ginko tree and hope to grow a continuous reminder of Vallombrosa and our wonderful times here! Thank you, Sandra, Sandy, Liz and Lois, and...Tai Chi Chih! Ellen Greyson, Santa Barbara, CA

The most valuable thing that comes first to my mind is Justin Stone's talk on Saturday morning. I needed it to be reminded of the powerful stuff that we are dealing with and that TCC has nothing to do with "aerobics." "Don't take it carelessly," is his advice and I'm determined to put that in practice. Thank you, Justin! Rosa Fallon, Pittsburg, CA

Wonderful, wonderful conference! I especially appreciate all the diversity of the students and special gifts we bring. Rhonda St. Martin, Albuquerque, NM

I'm forever grateful for connecting with Justin and Steve and for the gifts they continue to give. At times I have felt like a butterfly (during conference). Being present, quietly fluttering around, listening, observing, drinking in the Chi. Most importantly, allowing "me" to be "me"--speaking when I feel called to and not speaking if I don't feel called to. Those of you who know me, may not know that my quietness has not always been something I've been at peace with. It's a wonderful feeling and brings me sincere inner joy to relax into myself and say yes, this is who I AM. Many thanks Justin. Lynne Blackford, Missoula, MT

I thought it was wonderful--my first time at Conference. I think having a set schedule is the best way to go. The center was perfect. Thanks. Shan-Marie Stehno, Aloha, OR

This conference has been the instrument of a new direction in my life that will be unfolding in the next year. I also feel renewed and very much alive from my experiences at the conference. Pat Hill, Golden, CO

Wonderful conference! Lots of new faces and great connections. Loved the entertainment--we are a talented group. Would like to see more hugs on Friday night, (*"We need 4 hugs a day to maintain and 8 hugs a day to grow."* Virginia Satir), because the weekend is short and the level of connection can be enhanced sooner. I invite everyone to set an intention to hug one stranger at next year's conference on Friday night! Regina Horgan, Ridgecrest, CA

I love this place--so happy the conference was here this year. Peaceful yet stimulating. A way to revitalize, refresh, review and expand in every way. So many people who enrich my life. Would like to spend many hours with each. Everyone shares so graciously and lovingly. Such a special theme--"Gather the Dreamers--Catch the Dream." Thanks for the Dream Web, the little note cards and the lovely poem "Gather the Dreamers" by Sr. Anita Germain and presented in such an elegant form. I appreciate all the talent and giving Saturday night. Fun too. Have no complaints, no negatives. Adele Wenig, Oakland, CA

Entertainment was the best ever--really balanced and all encompassing. Would have liked a less jam-packed Saturday--maybe some empty space after each meal--to shower, visit with individuals, walk, meditate, have quiet time. Good conference, lots of wonderful Chi. Ellen Tatge, Albuquerque, NM

➔

Tai Chi Chih folks are so joyous and playful, besides being a unified, spiritual family during practice. Thanks for bringing all of us together. The sharing has been delightful. **Anne Doering, Albuquerque, NM**

More and more one realizes
"There is only one religion: That of Love.
There is only one language: that is the Language of the Heart.
There is only one caste and that is the Caste of Humanity.
There is only one God, and He is Omnipresent."



Appreciated Justin and Steve sharing and all the extra work the committee did to make the conference a huge success!! **Theda Gillespie, Medford, OK**

Everything moved so smoothly. I loved having more special instruction from Justin and Steve. It is like starting all over again and opening up for all of the inner peace and joy, balance and serenity to surface at a new level. I feel like a new-born baby with an entire life of TCC ahead of me. The Seijaku practice was an excellent idea! Refreshing renewal. **Susan Webster, El Cajon, CA**

Coming back for the second time to Vallombrosa has been like coming home! I feel a part of this wonderful TCC family--and awed and honored to be a member. That first night, I hung my beautiful Dreamcatcher above the bed in my room. It has caught all my good dreams for me so that I can visualize who I really am. The clouds cleared for a brief moment of time this weekend in 1994 so that I could glimpse my true nature/self. Suddenly I understood how all the struggle, pain and, yes, brief moments of clarity, are guiding me back to Myself. The work we do both inside ourselves and our teaching is truly sacred. The tears flow freely as I bow to each of you in deep gratitude and respect.
Hope Burla, San Leandro, CA

I'm not a poet, so many things in *The Vital Force* are poems; in any case words are inadequate to describe the healing that occurred for me this weekend. As Steve talked about many habit patterns changing to more life enhancing patterns. I met a teacher for my friend in Boston, I met a teacher/healer for my sister in Fargo. I met myself for me, my practice is for me, my practice is for sharing as a teacher. Thank you.
Wanda Zimmerman, Albuquerque, NM

I found it to be most helpful to listen to Justin, to watch Steve and practice meditation with him, the Seijaku (please, more time devoted to this next time because I cannot make an extra trip to a refresher. I am sure long distance travellers have the same problem.). I loved the wonderful group practices! Enjoyed getting to know some of the people behind the names I see in print in *The Vital Force*. Thank you all for the Saturday night performance: a special thanks to Tamara, to Richard--his poetry and his wonderful gift with humor and to Lia--your story and your dance moved me deeply! I feel a renewed desire to share the blessing of TCC and who I am with others on returning home. As I expressed verbally to the persons involved, for organizing this conference you have once more my appreciation!!! **Lavana Kilborn, Port Alberni, BC, Canada**

Integrative - Visionary - Reflective - Bonding
The family awarenesses grow, evolve, support and assist us on this life journey.
-Joyful!--Celebrating Justin's Sharing of Energy with us--honoring that creative force in each person. **Christeen McLain, Fargo, ND**

CONNECTING
Darlene Ross, San Jose, CA

On Sunday after everyone had left (I had been waiting to see that all who needed transportation had been taken care of), one of the men who worked at Vallombrosa approached me and said, "You were with the Tai Chi group." I said, "Yes." He said, "Today I had a chance to watch all of you moving on the lawn. I stood and watched all of you, it was beautiful to watch and it really had an effect on me. Everyone was moving so slowly and together. I'm a hyper person and it was very calming." He added, "You know what else amazed me? You guys started early in the morning and were up late at night and everyone had so much energy all weekend!"

I talked to him a little about Tai Chi Chih and from what he observed by watching those at the conference, he is interested in taking a class. I got his name and address and I've contacted a teacher who will send him her schedule of classes.

CATCHING THE DREAM
Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

How do you catch a dream? You begin by finding that special place in your heart that bubbles and bubbles with love until it all comes spilling out and then when someone says, "...we need a conference coordinator for the Tai Chi Chih Conference" you say, "YES" with a beautiful smile - like Sandra did. And yes, we were very, very blessed by the beautiful bubbles of love that we experienced at Vallombrosa for the 9th annual Conference. What a joy it was to be in the presence of so much love, not only from Sandra and all the other Minnesota teachers that helped with the conference but from the wonderful California teachers who gave on-site support and, of course, all the other attendees.

The theme of the conference was "Catching the Dream" and included in our packets which carried the beautiful dream catcher logo was a "dream catcher." Between this, the poem, and special note paper, we began to see that this was a dream that would weave itself through many levels of our being. We shared with each other, our special gifts - this years special night was one of the best - so many innovative and original creations, some even gave us a glimpse of true marriage. Yes, it is true Yin and Yang are definitely alive and well in Tai Chi Chih. It seems that the great Yes was everywhere.

Returning home I looked for the best place to put my dream catcher, it seems that where I put Tai Chi Chih into words is perfect - so here it sits with me as I unfold the dream and helps me move forward grateful for another opportunity of living and loving and being with the Tai Chi Chih family.

Many, many thanks to Sandra and all the rest of you who helped to make this a most wonderful conference.

*What dreams we dream
 alive with music*

*We see
 that we can
 be*

*Poised we stand
 and the movement
 begins*

*Simple
 graceful
 beautiful*



Removing Those Clouds

Justin Stone

"Enlightenment" is a strange word. It can mean the "Satori" Experience of Zen, where extreme concentration can force a powerful experience, perhaps before the student is ready for it. It can mean the "Moksha" state of India, where the "Jivan Mukta" (enlightened or freed in this lifetime) has escaped the wheel of birth and death.

In truth, is there such a thing as an 'un-enlightened' man? All the factors of enlightenment are present. The "Vashanas" (habit energies) and "Samskaras" (tendencies) cover them up, that is all. The sun does not cease to shine because clouds obscure it. Think about that. No-one lacks anything, though it is not perceived that way. All beings are possessed of the same life force.

Those who study T'ai Chi Chih, practice it, and then let it fall by the wayside will not allow the wind to blow the clouds away.

*With the "growth of certainty" the Self
becomes increasingly evident.*

Steve Ridley

Thoughts on Spirituality

Steve Ridley

It isn't that we must 'transcend' mind-and-body in order to know Reality or become enlightened, because our authentic nature is Reality, is Enlightenment itself, whether relating to mind-and-body or not.

We learn that our identification relationship with our body form and thought processes does not define us; is not who we actually, authentically are.

Until we reawaken to the free condition of our actual, authentic, enduring identify, we are more or less bound and defined by our transitory relationship with mind-and-body.

We become capable of moving creatively, dynamically and freely in life, when we learn to relate properly, soberly to the ever transitioning field of our mind-and-body.

As free-consciousness, we are superior to and independent of our individualized mind-body perspective. Our mind-body need only be recognized for what it is: a specialized vehicle or transitioning field of thought and form which we as free-consciousness express through.

We don't have to transcend mind-and-body to be who and what we already are.

After the long, long search, there is only the Self.

- Steve Ridley

NOTES TO TEACHERS

A Look at T'ai Chi Chih and Illness Justin Stone

When a prospective student of T'ai Chi Chih asks, "Will it help my arthritis?" the answer should be something like this, "Why don't you try it and see? You may find benefits you didn't expect." Under no circumstance should the teacher answer "Yes!" It would be possible to describe how a certain specific person had been helped, which promises nothing. For instance, John B. once wrote in *The Vital Force* (or somewhere else) how he went from 255 pounds to 180 pounds. That's not my opinion; it's a case history. But we would never want to infer that T'ai Chi Chih is a specific for ANY disease or ailment. It is possible to say that the circulation and balancing of the Chi have helped many people. To the right person (only), it could be said that T'ai Chi Chih practice has wide spiritual effects, but not everybody would understand that. From my personal standpoint, all so-called illness is a spiritual purification, and there is a purpose to it in both our physical and spiritual evolution. However, it is not necessary to hold out a carrot to a potential student: the practice of T'ai Chi Chih is joyous, it's fun. Being easy, and easily learned, it's not hard to persuade others to want to do it. I believe everybody is a potential candidate for T'ai Chi Chih. Am I prejudiced? Yes!



Recommending TCC Teacher Candidates

Teachers, please send your letter of recommendation for candidates **well before** the dates of the training session. The hosting teacher(s) and I are put in an awkward position when we receive a letter of sponsorship in the midst of or following the course, which has happened a few times recently.

Also, be sure that the candidate(s) can perform all TCC movements effortlessly and well, and that they are of the right temperament to work with others as a teacher of TCC, before sponsoring them.

Thank you,  Steve Ridley

GIFT TO TEACHERS

Available, at long last, is PRAJNA: a transcription of Justin's wonderful talk at Vallombrosa given two years ago.

It is available to T'ai Chi Chih Teachers by sending 52c in stamps to:
Connie Hyde, P.O. Box 349, Cedar Crest, NM 87008-0349.

CALENDAR NOTES
1995 TCC CONFERENCE AND SEIJAKU

The Colorado Teachers invite you to join us at the foot of the Rockies where the majestic mountains merge into the abundant plains. The Denver Conference will be August 4, 5, & 6, 1995. See enclosed flyer for more information on registration. If you have need for more information, please call Pat Hill 303/231-9951 or Bryan James 303/989-4695.

Also we are hoping to have a Seijaku Training Course immediately following the Conference. It would begin Sunday afternoon, Aug. 6, and end Tuesday afternoon, Aug. 8. In order to do this we need to have at least 30 teachers sign up who have NOT taken Seijaku training as yet. If you haven't taken Seijaku and would like to take it in conjunction with the Conference next summer, please drop Pat Hill a card at 1420 Kingsbury Ct., Golden, CO 80401. The cost of the Seijaku training will include room and meals and should be about \$400 or less. Reviewers will also be welcome for the cost of room and meals. Exact costs and other details will be included in December's *Vital Force Journal*.



Are there enough people interested to warrant two Seijaku trainings next year?

Justin has told me that he is cutting down on his traveling. Before he does this, I would like him to do a Seijaku training in San Diego next February or March. There is also a plan to do Seijaku training in Denver after the Annual T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference in August. Justin wonders if we will have enough students to do both of the training sessions in one year, so I will put it out to you.

If you have never been certified to teach Seijaku, would you be interested in going to San Diego in February or March. We need to have 25-30 people who are committed to Seijaku Accreditation. The Denver course will fill with teachers attending the Conference; what I need to know is, do we have enough interest to have an additional training in San Diego earlier in the year. **It is very important that I hear from you a.s.a.p.** You may call my voice mail at 1-800-473-8857.



Susan Webster
El Cajon, CA 92020

1994 - 1995 TAI CHI CHIH EVENTS CALENDAR

October 10-15	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, San Diego, CA Contact: Susan Webster Voice mail 1-800-473-8857	\$380
October 14	Deposit due for NM's November Training (see below)	\$380
October 29 Saturday	TCC Review-Teacher Renewal with Steve Ridley, Alameda, CA Contact: Liz Salada 510/278-3263 Preregister--space is limited	\$45
October 30 Sunday	9:30 am Practice in the Park with Steve Ridley, San Mateo, CA Contact: Susan Hudgens 408/926-5664 for directions	
Nov. 1	VFJ Deadline for Winter Solstice Issue--Send your seasonal news	
November 4, 5, 6	Meditation Retreat with Justin Stone Room and Board Dominican Retreat Center; Plus Tax Deductible Donation - Arrive Albuq. on Nov. 3; Reply yes or no to Carmen Phone 505/299/0562	\$97.50 \$45.00
November 14-19	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, Albuquerque, NM Contact: Loretta Shiver 505/345-0976 (deposit due Oct. 14) 300 Placitas Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107	\$380
December 10 1995	VFJ Mailing & Teacher Celebration after 1 pm TCC Practice. Host Lois Mahaney, San Lorenzo, CA RSVP/Directions 510/276-5718	
Feb/Mar	Seijaku Accreditation Course with Justin Stone, San Diego, CA Confirm your interest ASAP! Call Susan Webster 1-800-473-8857	
March 20	Half of cost due for CA's June Meditation Weekend (see below)	
April 1	Deposit due for CA's June Teacher Training (see below)	\$190
April 8	Deposit due for NJ Teacher Training (see below)	\$190
May 8-13	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, Mahwah, NJ Contact: Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF 908/757-3050 wk/908/769-6498 hm Villa Maria, P.O. Box 708, No. Plainfield, NJ 07061-0708	\$380
June 2-4 Fri-Sun	Exploring Meditative Ways with Steve Ridley, Los Gatos, CA Contact: Susan Hudgens 408/928-5664 (Overnight - \$198; Commuter- \$138 or \$166 (one or all meals) Remainder of cost due May 1. 787 Sweetwater Way, San Jose, CA 95133	
June 5-10	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, Alameda, CA Contact: Liz Salada 510/278-3263, 1477-155th Ave. San Leandro, CA 94578	\$380
before July 1	Registration reservations for TCC Teachers Conference (see enclosed flyer) Single Room: \$150, Double Room: \$135.00 (rates increase after 7/1)	
August 4-6	10th International TCC Teachers' Conference, Denver, CO Contact: Pat Hill 303/231-9951 or Bryan James 303/989-4695 Post-Conference Seijaku with Justin Stone. Confirm your interest ASAP! Contact Pat Hill at above address or phone.	

PRACTICE

THE BEAUTY OF JOY THRU MOVEMENT

Richard Brier, Mill Valley, CA

Based on ancient Chinese wisdom, first taught in 1974, the gentle movements balance and circulate the vital force. The exercises are ingeniously devised to improve the relationship of the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of our one Self. Daily practice is the key to everything. We practice to know, bodily, the unity of life. We practice to awaken our intuition. We practice to open ourselves consciously to the influx of the cosmic chi, to become one with it, to radiate it, to un-limit ourselves and drop the thousand and one worldly concerns. We practice to remember the beauty and grace of life and also to inquire into life's meaning trans-verbally. We practice to breathe without bother, to let go and flow, and to embrace the whole world vibrationally.

Practice is prayer, not asking for a reward, but simple dwelling in the present moment, where God (Tao-all the same essentially!) is. Where else could heaven be? Joy thru Movement was created with all these and many other insights in mind. It was also created with no-thought in mind. Called 'mind-fasting', its basis is that only the empty cup can be filled. This empty cup allows spontaneous wisdom to come forth and radiate through the human vehicle. Quite lovely to be astounded at what flows through one's being!

This beautiful practice awakens this spark of wisdom and thereby contributes to awakening both within and in the world. In this way we contribute to our own evolution and the evolution of the planet. Practice will aid us more and more in trusting our inner knowing. Then we can right readily distinguish between the voice of intuition and the voice of ego within. Such discernment is very important; we are no longer at the mercy of our conditioning. We do not wish to add to the Karma of the world; we wish to help to redeem it. We are children of the Tao, our potential is basically unlimited. Joy thru Movement is one simple way to begin to realize this potential and empower others to do the same.

TAI CHI POEM

Within Tai Chi
slowing, into self-nurturing

Ease-full rhythmic blending ...
power unification

Aligned through heaven and earth,
greeting all directions

The Heart of motion (wu chi)
resolves every impression ...



Steve Ridley

MAKING NEWS

Joy Thru Movement

Excerpt from the "Healthier Living" section of the November 1993 *Merced Sun-Star* (Story by Debra Salonen, Photo by Roger J. Wyan covered the entire front page plus carry-over to page two.)

George Balliet moves with the fluid grace of kelp swaying in a tidal pool. With his knees slightly bent, his body pivots and turns like a dancer anchored by a spider's thread of gravity spun from the core of the Earth. The morning sun glints off the rings on his fingers as his hands paint artful pictures on an imaginary canvas.

A slender crystal, suspended on a silver chain about his neck, sparkled in the morning light as George Balliet focused on the movement, giving himself over to the meditative world of inner quiet. He seemed impervious to the outside distractions of traffic and a nearby generator chugging away. He appeared to move into a centered, cloistered place. A world of his own.

"When I first started this I was in so much pain I couldn't even lift my arms over my head. I had a 2-by-12 hit me on the top of the head and compress my fifth, sixth and seventh vertebrae. I was totally depressed. I'm talking about stress on a level I never knew before." He said the stress from his former construction business was minor compared to the stress of believing he would never work again. Just the word 'handicapped' alone was enough to be depressing. He said for one year he was caught up in the medical world's attempt to bring relief in the form of therapy and medication, but nothing helped.

"I couldn't get any relief from doctors. All they wanted to give me was drugs and things like that, then I heard about a T'ai Chi Chih class at a (Bay Area) senior citizen center," he said. "So, the first day I went to the class, I almost turned around and walked away, but I did that first movement, and the relief felt was immediate. I found myself totally doing this every day and I felt good about it," Balliet said.

As he became more involved, he learned that in order to go further in the practice he would have to become a teacher. "So, I became a teacher," he said.

He reached out and produced a bright orange Slinky toy. "I use this very simple prop to teach about 'chi,' or one's internal breath. When you're sitting here, you're balanced," he said, cupping the toy in the palm of his hand. He tilted his hand and the ringed wire cascaded like a flashy waterfall into the palm of his other hand. "When you move, the chi separates. This transference of energy is the key to obtaining the healthful benefits of T'ai Chi Chih," Balliet said. "T'ai Chi Chih gives people a chance to get quiet with themselves...allowing one to find serenity in the midst of activity, joy through movement."

George Balliet teaches T'ai Chi Chih at Bob Hart Square in Merced, CA.



While keeping "centered" from all angles, Balliet's movements bring an inner harmony.

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

The Power Within Sr. Alice Holden, El Paso, TX

While teaching T'ai Chi Chih to homeless women in El Paso, I was amazed at how quickly the women got in touch with their inner power. The gentle, yet controlled movements which are very repetitive, allowed the women to hear their bodies speak of balance and of inner strength. They began to speak openly about their life experiences and to imagine new ways of acting. One woman, while observing an infant crying loudly on the city bus, despite its mother's efforts to pacify it, thought of T'ai Chi Chih classes - and the sending of energy. She breathed deeply, looked at the child lovingly and thought peace energy going towards it. Within seconds, the screaming infant became settled and went to sleep. Such is the power we have within us.

Exploring the Natural Way Carolyn P. Shaw, Albuquerque, NM

I would like to tell about my first experience teaching T'ai Chi Chih since I broke my leg in December.

In the summer of 1993, I became aware of a program for seniors somewhat like the Elderhostel Program that is taught out of Durango, Colorado at Fort Lewis College. The name of the program is The Getaway Program and, as I thought I would like to go there and spend some time, I asked if there was a possibility of teaching T'ai Chi Chih. They sent me a request for a proposal and after breaking my leg in December, I signed my contract to teach TCC in June, I figured I would be OK by then.

Sure enough, I was OK and the first program in June 1994 featured T'ai Chi Chih, art, music, a course on Dickens, and a MacIntosh course. I taught TCC to a group of 19 of the most wonderful people you can imagine. One woman had to do the movements while seated in a chair. A man in the class had a lung problem and at first could only do the movements a few minutes at a time. Everyone had the option of sitting down if they felt they needed to.

Since we were in such a wonderful environment, our focus for discussion was nature and following the nature of our own bodies. Our goal, of course, was to put our own nature in tune with the greater expression. I had taken three translations of the *Tao Te Ching* and sometimes I read from those, asking the question, "Is there a 'natural way' for people to be together in society? Of course, we never answered the question, but we did enjoy our togetherness both in the silence of TCC and in our discussions.

At the end of the two week class, we performed several movements for the entire Getaway group. It was a great hit at the final banquet. Remember the man with the lung infection? He performed with us and was laughing and enjoying himself along with everyone else. How wonderful it is to have the gift of T'ai Chi Chih to practice and to share. Thanks again, Justin.

STUDENT EXPERIENCE

What Tai Chi Chih Means to Me

Joan Alvord (student of Jean Katus)

Tai Chi Chih has been a gift, a healing tool for peace, health and relaxation. The movements, for me, encourage softness, continuity and centeredness.

Softness reflects in me feelings like "go with the flow," flexibility, "gently feels good." Softness stirs up a natural, unrushed rhythm.

Continuity causes me to focus on the full range of life - one foot, one hip, one arm, then the other side. The resting position feels the opposite of being in neutral. Although the body seems at rest, the intermingling, joining and meeting of all the energy feels powerful. I realize all the aspects of life - me as a person, me as a part of the universe.

I understand centeredness by focusing on the soles of my feet. I feel quiet and connected, part of, yet separate from the earth. In my busy life, it's nice to let my feet remind me how basic my needs really are as I walk upon the earth.

Tai Chi Chih has especially helped me to remember my connection with nature. Doing the movements in my porch, enjoying whatever is in my view - the snow, birds, flowers, wind, rain - has added beauty and joy on a daily basis. Tai Chi Chih has helped me to wake up again to the gift of life.

CLASS EXPERIENCES

Progress After Two Classes

Florence Okie, White Bear Lake, MN

Here is a check as a gift to *The Vital Force*. I just thought it would be nice to give part of my first class as a teacher. I had six students. It has been wonderful to see their progress after two classes even: better balance, coordination, softness in their movements. I ask them to empty their mind, leave their problems in a basket at the door before entering their practice space (it will be easier to deal with them after and they will be waiting???)

(Ed. Note: Florence is taking TCC to France for a year!!!)

Follow the Leader

Hope Ridley, San Mateo, CA

When I teach Cosmic Consciousness Pose most students grasp the idea well--all except the equal weight distribution. It always makes me smile when I remind the class of it as they, then, in unison, veer to the left as they adjust the weight.

Recently I had a "first." While leading a move with my back to the class, I switched to a sideways stance to see how they were doing. As I turned, the entire class turned with me. It made my day!

I bet other teachers have had experiences like these. Sort of inside jokes. How about sharing?

TEACHER NEWS/WEST COAST

Chris Worcester, of Truckee, CA teaches TCC in eight sessions, limiting the class to eight students. A sampling from his flyer reads:

"T'ai Chi Chih is a form of moving meditation based on the Chinese philosophy of promoting vitality, inner peace, serenity, joy, balance and health, performed in a series of twenty simple non-strenuous movements that relax the body and refresh the mind.

The form is easy to learn and the benefits are experienced soon after beginning the practice. The movements can be performed by anyone, regardless of age, or physical condition, wherever there is enough space to stand and take one step in any direction.



George Balliet, Merced, CA presented TCC in the "Self Care" segment during the 1st Annual Home Based Business Conference and Trade Show at Merced College this September. Literature indicated that the use of T'ai Chi Chih and Seijaku, non-impact health disciplines, led to stress reduction, was an aid to health and healing--releasing tension safely and naturally with a unique combination of physical movements and postures.



Jeanne Beatty-Jacobs, Lynnwood, WA: Picture is of a T'ai Chi Chih demonstration presented at Washington Karate Association State Tournament for 350 people. Most of the students were black belts in Karate. The presentation was enthusiastically received and comments from the audience were how relaxed they felt just watching us go through the movements!

TEACHER NEWS/EAST COAST

Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY writes: Still 'planting seeds' with T'ai Chi Chih literature and demonstrations and the form seems to be 'alive and well' in the Syracuse area. Mary Ruprecht has started her first class and a couple of 'teacher training' get-togethers are in the works with Meara Joy Norice in Vermont and Sister Antonia in N.J.

'Tai Chi Chih in the Park' was started in June at a location where the Seneca River enters Onondaga Lake and is attracting more students every week (from Sunday morning at 10:30 am). Being at the end of a trail that follows the lake, the spot is a turnaround 'pit stop' for bikers, walkers, runners and a free tram that stops every 15 minutes.

Have good feedback from Lemoyne College and it seems that one contact leads to another.

Articles in *The Vital Force* are great and encouraging. The publication is a blessing to those not having access to Justin, Steve, and other teachers with inspirational ideas to share.

Pat Lenard Eagle, Kent, CT added TCC to his annual summer job at a sports camp by leading a practice during pre-camp orientation. Almost 30 staff people were out in a full moon doing twilight T'ai Chi Chih. As a camp martial arts instructor I have all my classes do several TCC moves as a beginning sequence...a way to get the chi flowing.

The staff, especially the Director, is very interested in T'ai Chi Chih's calming and restorative properties. After a hot day, shepherding a lot of wild youthful energy through various sports activities, it's a great way to relax and unwind with a group of friends. Camp is invariably a sort of family atmosphere with the staff acting as surrogate parents. Having to eat, sleep, shower and snore in close proximity tends to bring people together.

Through the influence of T'ai Chi Chih, I find that the closeness enters the areas of the psychic and a greater harmony and communication develops between those who practice with me.

ALWAYS THERE

Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY

In perfect peace ...
Gazing up from the heart-base ...
Trembling, the mountain begins to respond.
The current from the center starts to rise ...
Gently through the pathway opened ...
Seeking release into being ...
Cleansing along the way.
The eruption comes ... spreading up and over what is ...
Leaving the passing cloud of peace ...
Gently dissipating, the umbrella closes ...
Until the next 'reign'!

1ST T'AI CHI CHIH CENTER OPENS Albuquerque, New Mexico Carmen Brocklehurst

The sun was shining, it was a beautiful day. Just the kind of day for new beginnings. So much planning had gone on before, (as Justin says, "These things don't just happen by accident.") incorporation papers had been filed with the State of New Mexico, a board had been elected by the New Mexico TCC Teachers to begin creating an organization, rental space was found and contracts were signed. TCC teachers offered and gave of their time, money, paintings and furniture, work on non-profit status was started, a new sign was created that has the same lettering as the front of the T'ai Chi Chih textbook, and an Open House was planned and invitations sent out. All this so that we could have a home that we could call OUR own.

With cookies, cakes, finger food, and punch we all waited eagerly for our guests to arrive. The day started with the 1st TCC Review class held at the center. I felt very honored to be with so many students, both from other teachers and my own classes; about 30 people came. (We were very intimate, but no one seemed to mind; we were doing T'ai Chi Chih.) After the 2 hour review everything was set out with both teachers and students lending a hand. Then came the most wonderful surprise of all, friends came to call, to wish us well in our new home, and they kept coming from 2 to 5. For most of the time the room was so full that we almost couldn't get another person in. But as with all T'ai Chi Chih happenings, there was a FLOW, some people left, some people stayed and more and more came; about 300 plus. Friends saw friends who didn't know that they too were interested in T'ai Chi Chih, and people met for the first time. We even had out of town teachers visiting. Maggie Hall, Vic Berg, and Hope Burla joined us and everyone ate and laughed and talked.

Justin gave a short talk about how the Center had come into being, about how special all the T'ai Chi Chih teachers are, the good wishes that had come from the teachers from all over the U.S. and how we are looking forward to the many classes that we will now be able to have. There were several TCC demonstrations, books were sold, people found out about Justin's upcoming Lecture on September 30 (Enlightenment) and about the Meditation Retreat Nov. 4-6 and about the TV series. Pictures were taken and a great time was had by all.

We all left with the feeling that Albuquerque and the T'ai Chi Chih family everywhere were happy that we now have an outer home to reflect the beautiful home that lives inside all of us. Thank you all for the warm wishes and gifts. Remember to come visit your home often.



EVENTS FEEDBACK

Welcome New T'ai Chi Chih Teachers!

Loretta Shiver, Albuquerque, NM

In welcoming you to our T'ai Chi Chih family, I want to remind you of Steve's words to you and ask you to remember them every day. He told you to go out and SHINE.

So many of us have spent our lives standing behind the wall, keeping our heads down and practicing being invisible. You are not invisible! You are strong and beautiful and powerful. The Chi belongs to you. Follow your own heart and you will never be lost. Trust your own certainty and do the work that comes to you; seek out what you need and be happy.

This newsletter serves to help keep us connected, and it also belongs to you. Increased Chi often produces increased creativity. Please share your experiences and expressions with us. You may think that something you have accomplished might not have to do specifically with T'ai Chi Chih; but of course every step we take and every breath is deeply involved with the Chi. Nothing is separate; it is all one. So don't hesitate. Let everyone know you as I am so lucky to have gotten to know you. I am very grateful for the opportunity to assist. Thank you is such a small word - but thank you all and thank you especially to Justin and Steve for making all of this known to us.



Albuquerque, NM T'ai Chi Chih Training week:
filled with love and strong and powerful Chi.

EVENTS FEEDBACK

NEW JERSEY TEACHER ACCREDITATION

Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF North Plainfield, NJ

The Teacher Training week far exceeded any expectation I could have had, as the participants were a blessing to be with. We went our ways on May 28, but will always maintain a certain 'bondedness' that happened during that week. My private practice has deepened as a result, bringing me to new depths/heights all at the same time. (Plans are currently being made for next year's May training, see VFJ Central Calendar.)



Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF and Steve Ridley

PRACTICE IN THE PARK

Lois Mahancy, San Lorenzo, CA

On Sunday morning, June 19 at 8:30 am, about fifty people gathered in Del Rey Park in San Lorenzo to do Tai Chi Chih under the guidance of Steve Ridley. Steve was in the area for the Meditation Retreat in Alameda and graciously agreed to join us in practice. Teachers around the area were asked to tell their students about the practice and invite them to join us. (Each Sunday morning at 8:30 for at least five years, Lois has had practice for students who have completed the TCC course and wish to continue practice in a group situation.)

After the session with Steve, participants were invited to have refreshments, to meet and chat with Steve, and to exchange Tai Chi Chih experiences and benefits.



Steve Ridley leading Practice in the Park, San Lorenzo, CA

NEW TEACHERS WRITE IN MAHWAH, N.J.

Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF

All who attended the May 1994 Teachers' Accreditation were invited to write a few lines about their experiences during the week...their first VFJ contributions follow:

A wonderful experience of wisdom and grace. **Mary Reynolds, OP**

This experience has been one of joy and strength.

Jean Rosaire Bedotto, OP

What a joy filled and enriching week! I feel blessed to have been a part of it. All good wishes.

Ann Marie Czyzewski

Practice leads to Practice!

Anonymous

It was so enriching- the new depth of understanding I learned and the wonderful folks that gathered.

It was great. **Maureen Mastine, CSJ**

The training led me deeper into what I know - who I am. I'm grateful!

Beverly McFarland

One light joins many more. **Mary Ruprecht**

These hours together have been delightful moments of movement and stillness - gentle, flowing sands of time - and space. Namasté **Eddie Budney**

This was a wonderful, warm, valuable experience--now I want to share. **Patricia Oltman**

T'ai Chi Chih is for me the "music of the Spheres." **Geraldine McGuire**

Meditation While Stretching--During TCC Training Week

"Watching dogwood petals rolling
over and over in the gentle breeze.

Like little drums

Forward, backward and sideways

Like a parade." **Pat Gilman**

It is going to be wonderful, while spending next year in France to introduce T'ai Chi Chih.

Florence Okie

Flowing with Chi...Inward bathing, sharing Beauty with other Tai Chi Chih lovers and seeped in the beauty of Nature. Grateful for Tai Chi Chih on the East Coast. Waves of Chi! **Anita Germain**

May the movements of CHI continue to deepen and create us! **Sr. Antonia Cooper**



MAKING THE NEWS

New Mexico Therapeutic Program includes TCC

The August/Fall Schedule edition of *The Heartlink*, newsletter of Southwestern College in Albuquerque, NM featured Janet Yannacone (with picture) on the front page. Janet has been appointed as new Program Chair for Art Therapy for 1994-95. The article goes on to recount all the activities Janet has been involved in including mental health work at the Children's Psychiatric Hospital where she developed a practical foundation for her emphasis on clinical issues in art therapy with children.

Janet is a certified drug counselor and registered art therapist. She has developed a number of programs in area hospitals and facilities and is Program Director for Namaste in Las Lunas, a facility for youth ages 6-12. Janet's therapeutic model is a unique blend of art therapy, T'ai Chi Chih and spiritual principles which blend spirituality and the creative process.

Local Study of Elderly Taking TCC

Excerpts from *The Daily Northwestern* newspaper, Evanston, IL, April 1994

Some Evanston residents are balancing their vital energy force instead of pumping iron. The new workout trend is called T'ai Chi, a meditative exercise that is both a mental and physical fitness program. For Evanston residents of all ages various forms of T'ai Chi are offered at the Evanston Athletic Club and at the Levy Senior Citizen Center.

"T'ai Chi Chih is a moving meditation to circulate and balance the Chi, or what we call energy or vital force," instructor Amy Hackenberg said. Bill Payne, a Medill graduate student, learned the first five positions at his first class. "This is different than what I'm used to," he said. "It is much more holistic."

Many people practice T'ai Chi Chih for its mental benefits of stress reduction, greater sense of calm and renewed spirit," said Hackenberg. "It is a tool to help you live better," she said.

Judy Yackers, a Chicago resident, has been taking the class since the fall to help her handle her hectic lifestyle. "When I am overwhelmed, I take a break to go through the 20 movements and then I am better focused," she said.

Many people also claim physical benefits, including improved balance, flexibility, coordination and increased strength, said Hannah Hedrick, spokeswoman for the American Medical Association. "You can go in with low energy or be agitated or nervous or tired, and when you finish even 20 minutes of T'ai Chi you feel a decrease in these symptoms," she said.

Two years ago, a study confirmed that nine elderly people taking a T'ai Chi Chih class showed clinically significant improvements in balance and coordination. The study, conducted by physical therapists at St. Joseph's Hospital, was one of the first that offered clinical proof of such benefits.

"There are not nice, neat statistical tests you can do," said Nancy Meyer, a clinical specialist in geriatric medicine at St. Joseph hospital. "But if we can do something as simple as improve flexibility, for an elderly (person), that may be a significant improvement in the quality of life."

These factors may account for the popularity of the T'ai Chi Chih classes offered at the Levy Senior Citizens Center too. The center offers eight week sessions throughout the year, primarily for seniors.

Hedrick, who said T'ai Chi Chih has grown in popularity in the Chicago area in the past three years, said one advantage of such exercise is that it can be done anywhere. "People used to look at me funny when I did Yoga waiting in line at the bank, but they never do when I am doing T'ai Chi," Hedrick said.

The Bird Flaps Its Wings

T'ai Chi Chih relaxes this QualMed member

Published in *Being Well.*: a Medical coverage magazine

Ask Suni McHenry what she's doing as she glides her arms and torso through the air, and she might just tell you she's pulling taffy. Or carrying the ball.

Suni McHenry, a QualMed member, is an accredited instructor of T'ai Chi Chih. That makes her an expert on the 19 movements that define this gentle, unique art—movements with poetic names like joyous breath, daughter on the mountaintop, and bird flaps its wings.

This soft-spoken friendly woman has no trouble demonstrating the flowing steps that make up the non-contact art of T'ai Chi Chih. But explaining the benefits of the art isn't nearly so simple.

"Everyone gets something different out of it," McHenry says. "For some, practicing the movements is a joyful experience. For others, it's a path to relaxation."

And since paths to relaxation are becoming hot-ticket items in the fast-paced '90's, T'ai Chi Chih is finding new fans all the time, she says.

"It's hard to unwind after a hectic day at the computer," McHenry explains. "But T'ai Chi Chih helps by slowing down the mind and body. The way it works is that the mind begins to unwind as the body goes into motion. As you concentrate on the movements, you leave the stresses of work behind."

Stress management was already becoming important in 1974 when T'ai Chi Chih was born. Its originator is Justin Stone, an American who sought to create a unique art similar to, but easier than, the ancient Chinese art of t'ai chi chuan.

"Mr. Stone understood that t'ai chi chuan wouldn't catch on in this country because there were over 100 movements to learn," McHenry says.

"Americans were just too busy."

So Stone invented the simpler T'ai Chi Chih, abbreviating the age-old Oriental art to include just 19 movements*. Today T'ai Chi Chih is practiced throughout the United States and in five other countries.

"It seems Americans aren't the only ones trying to cope with stress these days," McHenry notes. "T'ai Chi Chih's time has come."



NATURAL STRESS MANAGEMENT:

Suni McHenry leads her class through a series of t'ai chi chih movements.

**Although some of the information in the article is not entirely accurate, nevertheless it is, I think, a positive step for medical institutions like QualMed, to acknowledge the benefit of the T'ai Chi Chih and include an article in their publication. Suni*

TRANSCENDING PERSONALITY FOR THE SAKE OF UNITY

Jean Katus, Ft. Yates, ND

Justin has often reminded us that Tai Chi Chih is not about personality or ego. It is about harmonizing our internal energy so we can help manifest our true natures to the outside world - whether that be to our families, friends, acquaintances, other Tai Chi Chih teachers or our students.

As I looked around at the conference (this summer), I realized how many different kinds of people were represented there. We have a richness in our Tai Chi Chih family with a wide variety of personalities - from the shy and withdrawn to the exuberant and outgoing, along with everything else in between. I thought about how some of the teachers have become true heart friends over the years (as well as new teachers I instantly felt a kinship with). I also considered that some, just like in my own core and extended family, were people I would not necessarily choose as friends; by the same token, they would not necessarily choose me as a friend. Yet, here we all were together for one purpose - that of refining our Tai Chi Chih practice, taking in the teachings from Justin and Steve, communicating with one another about our common interest and process: Tai Chi Chih.



Conflicting ways of being and expressing are bound to arise when any group of people comes together. We can, however, minimize the negative effects of such disagreements by making honest efforts to set aside our personalities and egos for the sake of unity within Tai Chi Chih. It is important for all of us to remember that we are a family and, just like what occurs in our core families, we do not all have to respond the same way to any given situation, we can choose to like some members better than others, we can honor our uniqueness within our individual personalities. In order to truly get along, though, it is vital for us to always come back to the center that binds us together: Tai Chi Chih, the one source that allows us to transcend personality and ego differences.

Service

We are spiritual agents of wisdom-love, temporarily identifying with thought processes and manifest creation, to ultimately serve the greater evolutionary thrust of Life.

A Spiritually Conscious being
is a blessing to all.

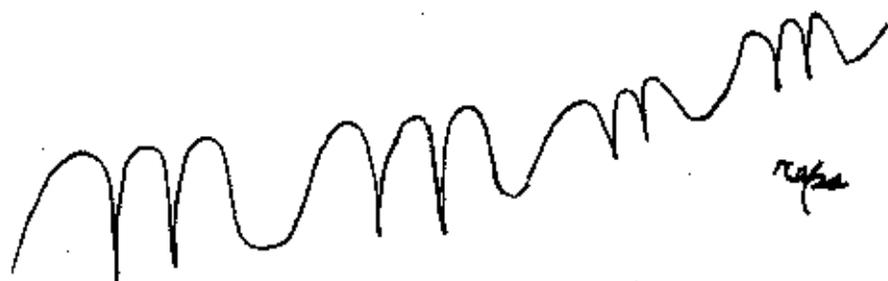
- Steve Ridley

SILENT TONING

HUMMMMMMM

MMMMMMMM

FEEL GOOD



ZEN MEDITATION

Justin Stone

There seems to be a renaissance of interest in Zen in this country, which makes me happy that Good Karma has decided to publish my *Zen Meditation*, out of print for many years. More and more people are beginning to realize that hearing sermons, observing memorized rituals, and believing what has been read have no connection with Enlightenment. They are beginning to realize that one must go within and find out who and what he or she is. This is the aim of Zen practice.

All Zen Patriarchs of the past have stated that the object of Zen practice is to realize one's own nature, "Kensho" in Japanese, and this nature is also called "Buddha Nature," "Mind," etc. Having seen one's own nature, there are no doubts. This makes somewhat dubious the belief of Soto Zen that sitting cross-legged for long periods of time is enlightenment. If it were, then most people of India would be enlightened, as they certainly sit cross-legged for long periods of time.

The most famous of Zen teachers, really the seminal teacher of modern Zen, was Hui Neng, the sixth patriarch, from whom all schools of Zen have descended. In his famous "Platform Sutra" Hui Neng points out that he never sat cross-legged meditation (Zazen), and felt that long sitting had no benefit for Mind while making the body extremely uncomfortable.

In the fifties and sixties so-called "Beat Zen" was popular and very misleading. People began to feel that acting callously was "Zen," ignoring the fact that the Buddha's whole mission was based on Compassion. "Compassion" is a word that does not appear on television or in the impersonal media in general. Young people grow up with the idea that the brutal conduct they observe on television is natural to man. This does not hold out much hope for the growth of a "compassionate society." Our economic life is based on selfishness in the form of heartless competition and this is the opposite of an enlightened point of view. After his great Enlightenment Experience, Hakuin Zenji declared that: "After this, seeing the things of the world was like looking at the back of my own hand." Such a non-dualistic view means that all things are seen as the Self, not as hurdles to be ruthlessly surmounted. Jesus' teachings were based on love and compassion; how come they aren't taught any more? Because different people call God by different names, does this mean there are many Creators? Zen's view is that we create ourselves in every moment.

D.T. Suzuki said that at the time of enlightenment there is a complete revulsion of the CHI. Turned backward, this would mean that with a total revulsion of the Chi there is Enlightenment. Doesn't Tai Chi Chih bring about a startling change in the character of the CHI. So TCC is a means, maybe the best means, to Enlightenment.



KARMIC KOMMENTS

from Good Karma Publishing
Jean Katus, Publisher

Zen Meditation Next Title for Release

It seems there has been a recent resurgence of interest in Zen meditation, not just among Tai Chi Chih folks but also among other groups of people. Justin Stone's book *Zen Meditation/A Broad View* is the next book Good Karma will be publishing. A reprint of the 1975 book which has been out of print for many years, this edition will include a new introduction by Justin. Paul Repts has said, "It's the best book for Zen Zenning." What better recommendation could we have than that? Look for follow-up information in the next issue of *The Vital Force* on when the book will be available.

Holiday Gift Ideas

With the winter holidays just a couple of months away, you may want to consider special Good Karma gifts for friends, relatives, students:

★ For those with a meditative bent, *Meditation for Healing*, *Heightened Awareness*, *Perspectives in Motion and Stillness*, *20th Century Psalms*, and the spirituality-on-the-lighter-side *Let Good Fortune Jump on You* are always good selections.

★ Music enthusiasts have quite a number of choices - from Justin's innovative pieces, many originals and some jazz standards presented in a new way, as well as the tranquil "The Serene Nature" to Native American flute music and Joseph and Nathan Segal favorites, to music especially recommended for Tai Chi Chih practice. See our catalog for a complete description.

★ The "armchair sojourner" will find in *Abandon Hope* and *Climb the Joyous Mountain* a way of seeing the Far East in its spiritual richness through Justin's eyes, along with the two cassette tape volumes of "Spiritual Stories of the East."

Ordering Information

It's always a good idea to plan your ordering needs enough ahead of time so no difficulties arise if your materials arrive two weeks after we've received your order - the amount of time the post office recommends allowing. It doesn't usually take that long to most places and, typically, we fill orders the day we receive them or the day after. The two-week guideline is simply a general one. We can, of course, ship priority if you wish to pay the extra charges.

On-Going Video Feedback

We continue receiving positive comments on the revised version of the Justin Stone video. One person said, "It really brought the message home by clarifying how to do the movements. While following the videotape, something clicked for me and I feel I have a better understanding of T'ai Chi Chih now." Similarly, another has remarked that the video has given her a whole new concept of some of the movements.

A personal note: Whenever I have the opportunity to practice T'ai Chi Chih with our masters Justin Stone or Steve Ridley at conferences or teachers' training courses, I watch them very closely to check my own form. I am always surprised at some of the bad habits I've gotten into with my movements and have found it very difficult to break those habits. It's so easy to slip back into the habitual and sometimes not-quite-correct expression of T'ai Chi Chih. That's why I've particularly appreciated the new video when I don't have Justin and Steve physically at hand to watch and mirror. It offers us, every day we want to use it, a method of checking in with the "definitive" way of doing the practice with the originator: to make sure that our form is as close to what he intended as possible; to help repattern those bad habits that may have cropped up when we add our own style and personality to our movements.

New Practice Session Added to Video

When Justin Stone was in Fargo, ND in July, he filmed a new practice segment for T'ai Chi Chih at a television studio. It substitutes the previous practice session on the video and, we feel, improved the quality of the new version of the video even more. Not only do teachers and students have the benefit of Justin's instructions in the first 50-60 minutes, the new improved 30-minute practice sequence after the instruction part offers an opportunity to do the movements with the originator and check one's form against his explicit example. After some thought, we have decided not to offer the practice session as a separate video at this time. We find the full-length video to be more useful and complete.



Conference Thanks

Much gratitude to all who peeked, perused, and purchased Good Karma books and tapes at the conference! A great joy to me in this role I fill as "chief go-fer" at GKP is the opportunity to visit with long-time teachers and to meet new ones at the conference, to hear feedback about our materials and answer questions when I can. As Susan Webster so aptly put it in her phone message: "Remember --YOU make a difference."

Good Karma Publishing, PO Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND 58538 FAX #701/854-2004

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Conductor of Seijaku (Advanced TCC) Courses

Lectures on Tai Chi Chih and Spiritual Life

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Denver, CO 80220 Spiritual Head of

T'ai Chi Chih and conductor of

- Teacher Accreditation Courses
- Teacher Renewal Workshops
- Exploring Meditative Ways Workshops
- Lectures & group practices in Tai Chi Chih
- his creative works and supportive materials

Liz Salada: (510/278-3263)

- Publisher, The Vital Force
- journal subscriptions and submittals
- Publisher of Tai Chi Chih Teacher Directory

Jean Katus: (701/854-7459); FAX 701/854-2004

- Publisher, Good Karma Publishing, Inc.
- Distributor of Tai Chi Chih instructional materials and others related to spiritual practice
- contact for teacher referrals

Lois Mahoney: (510/276-5718)

- Editor, The Vital Force
- contact for teacher referrals
- contact for traveling teachers
- update to mailing list and Teacher Directory

MAIN DISTRIBUTORS OF T'AI CHI CHIH MATERIALS

Published by Good Karma Publishing, Inc., Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND 58538

ND, Ft. Yates	Jean Katus	701/854-7459
ND, Fargo	Christeen McLain	701/232-5579
NM, Albuquerque,	Carmen Brocklehurst	505/299-0562
BC Canada, Victoria	Guadalupe Buchwald	604/385-6748
MN, Bemidji	Jeanne Engen	218/751-3173
CA, San Leandro	Liz Salada	510/278-3263
CA, Camarillo	Pamela Towne	805/987-3607
CA, El Cajon	Susan Webster	619/441-1165

NEW 1994 TEACHER DIRECTORY REFERRALS

Copies of the new TCC Teachers' Directory are available for referral purposes and communication among accredited TCC instructors. New map section has been updated to show location of teachers in each area. Teachers may request a copy of the new directory by sending \$5.00 to: The Vital Force, 1477-155th Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94578.

Consult VFI for updates to information contained in the directory. Each quarterly issue will include new listings of recently accredited teachers, changes of names, addresses, and phone numbers. Please keep us up to date on any changes to your listing by sending all new information to our address above.

This is a wonderful referral tool to support the wide-spread teaching of "Joy Through Movement!"

AREA TCC TEACHER GROUPS

The following people, at the present time, are contacts one can make to get information about TCC teacher groups that meet in various areas of the country. If there are any that we have missed, please let us know so they can be added to the list. The area meetings are great ways to generate and maintain enthusiasm for TCC, renew friendships, share ideas about classes, plan workshops, get publicity for TCC, plan practice sessions for the public etc.:

- Roxanne Post, Riviera, AZ 602/758-6617
- Pam Towne, Camarillo, CA 805/987-3607
- Liz Salada, CA (SF Bay Area) 510/278-3263
- Susan Webster, San Diego, CA 619/441-1165
- Merry Lynn Noble, CO (Denver Area) 303/980-6861
- Connie Hyde, New Mexico (Albuquerque area) 505/281-1040
- Joan Torrance, Beaverton, OR 503/579-8451

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If teachers would like extra copies of THE VITAL FORCE for their students, please send \$2.50 for each copy desired. Back issues are available for 1991, 1992 and 1993 at \$10 per year.

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We are offering a **first class mailing option** to those who regularly have difficulty receiving bulk-mail. If you choose it, your subscription rate will cost an additional \$5.00/year to cover the extra expense for special handling (and you'll have 'guaranteed delivery').

SUBMITTING INFORMATION: Deadlines are now by the 1st of the preceding month of issue (i.e. February, May, August, and November), unless indicated otherwise. Lengthy articles should be typed and double spaced to be considered for print. FAX service is available, if you are in need of fast delivery of your VFJ submittal. Our FAX is 510/276-5541. You will also be responsible for covering our expense for receiving your FAX. Cost: \$2.50 for first page, \$1. each additional, plus 25 cents for cover letter which should be addressed to VFJ/Liz Salada and include our phone number 510/278-3263. This way we will be informed when your communication arrives. Thank you.



Fall

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 My subscription is current but please note changes in address, etc. on your mailing list.
 I would like a copy of the 1994 Teacher Directory.
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*The spiders weave their delicate lace on the rocks in the garden,
reminding us, "Catch the Dream!"*



The Vital Force
Journal of Tai Chi Chih
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Recycled paper.

September 1994
Fall Equinox Issue
Tai Chi Chih!
Joy Thru Movement

PERCEPTIONS

TCC Question:

Student:

"What should I be thinking about while doing TCC?"

Teacher:

"Think only about the movement at hand and fully be that movement."

Master:

"Disciple! Do you agree that everything is one thing?"

Disciple:

"Oh yes Master, but what is that one thing?"

Master:

"Oh, I wouldn't want to name it."

The 'rationally minded' disciple keeps himself anchored in the center of relative, externalized bits and pieces of life, seeking intellectual solutions to 'answers' that may only be realized directly, superconsciously, spontaneously.

Steve Ridley

*Abide by your form
yet remain free of form*

*Don't confuse your path
with the Way.*

Steve Ridley

A Spiritual Teacher's Deepest Hope for the Disciple:

May you achieve what I have achieved, and more. And if possible, what I ultimately realize, may you realize more.

- Steve Ridley



Chris McLain and Sandra Tanner

WE CAME, WE GATHERED, WE CAUGHT THE DREAM

Sandra Tanner, Coordinator-Host

A record eighty-nine teachers of Tai Chi Chih met at the Vallombrosa Conference Center August 12-14. An additional six other teachers had originally registered but were unable to attend.

We listened to the guidance and inspiration of Justin and Steve, talked and laughed with old acquaintances and new, ate wonderful food, and several times shared the powerful deepening of practicing Tai Chi Chih together.

(I am always struck by the dynamic specialness of doing the Tai Chi movements with a large number of other teachers. There is something so potent, being within that mass of experienced, refined energy flow.)

After a lovely silent practice at our first gathering on Friday, we came together again after dinner to meet with words, weaving a web of who we are and how we are with Tai chi. Saturday afternoon allowed some unscheduled time for special interests: some worked with Justin on Seijaku review, others shared information on such topics as working with persons of limited physical ability and developing CEU's for nurses, and many chose to blow out any residual tensions at Lia Ridley's workshop on Romanian gypsy dancing. This was followed by an enthusiastically welcomed three-hour Tai chi corrections and practice session. Later that evening we were treated to an amazing unfolding of talent and delight.

On Sunday, after a morning of more practice and Justin's closing thoughts, Jean Katus and Christine McLain led us in a ceremonial walking meditation in celebration of the twenty years of Tai Chi Chih teacher training and classes throughout the country and beyond, and to honor Justin for this gift. Standing in a circle we spoke out in brief words what we have received. As it had begun, the conference ended with the silent practice of Tai Chi Chih, this time outside in the sunshine, standing in a large circle, experiencing that special connection with the earth and all beings.