



THE

VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

Volume 11, No. 5

Winter Solstice

December 1994

A Personal Opinion from Justin Albuquerque, NM

When I was at the Yasodhra Ashram on Kootenay Bay in Canada, everywhere I turned there were signs saying "Above All Try to Find God." When it was my turn to head the nightly Satsang, I said: "You're wasting your time; God is not an object." Similarly, when I have seen signs--and heard a teacher--exhorting students to "try harder! work harder!" it has seemed like a contradiction to me. "I must try harder, I must work harder" is an egotistical statement, rooted in the "I", the 'small self'. To try to be humble is egotistical and reeks of 'self-clinging.'

Then, how to act? To live in a straight-forward manner, to speak in a truthful manner (not as easy as it sounds), is enough. The Prajna, the inherent wisdom that is in all of us, will take care of the rest. To be 'straight-forward' does not mean to be shrewd, to look for advantages. And it certainly doesn't mean to say "I want to share" when what is meant is "I want to profit." There is nothing wrong with wanting to make money, but face the truth that that is the motive. Hui Neng said: "The straight-forward mind is an enlightened mind."

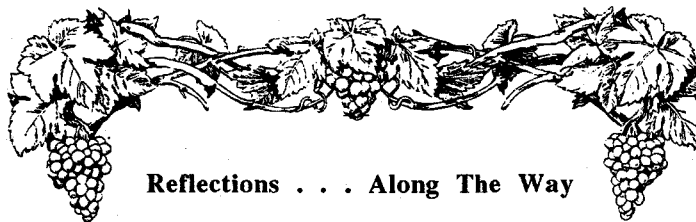
Spiritual Nourishment for our growth can come in many different forms. It is important to adjust and adapt so it can be received in whatever ways it makes itself available.

To expect this nourishment to come to us in the way we find most convenient or that matches some preconception we maintain, guarantees nothing.

- Steve Ridley

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

This journal is dedicated to T'ai Chi Chih teachers and practitioners worldwide.
May it serve you in "Knowing the Real."



Reflections . . . Along The Way

*A fullness of form and being
growing stronger
as a ripened moon
momentarily reflecting
a stillness in time...*

*no longer awaiting
what's next to arrive
expectancy diminishing
as sure as it is
again to arise.*

Honorable Benefactors

Honoring with consideration all *Vital Force Journal* benefactors has been a growing point of focus in the passing year's progression. Interpreting the choice representation of quality in content continues to be a distinguishing component within the tasks of this publishing involvement. While doing the work, many decisions hold this intent foremost so the journal's merit may extend more comprehensively in its range and reach over time.

Thank you for the diversity of contributions (articles, letters, poetry, photographs, etc.) which continue to influence an expansive scope in expression of creative force! And also the good faith (or non-attachment) to discernment in how the services related to our Tai Chi Chih publication are carried out.

TCC Community Growing Strong!

The news of groups of teachers and students gathering for TCC grows, clearly illustrating the strength in serving our greater community. And as predicted, the Albuquerque produced PBS program has begun to reach many viewers in a televised introduction to "Joy Thru Movement !" (Please drop VFJ a note indicating your area's program details and any resulting response. Sending your news of local events and classes is a reflection of the breadth of interest TCC is evoking.)

Inner Workings

-----A reminder: February 1 is the March VFJ deadline. Plan ahead!-----
Please note we prefer you send your written submittals and subscription renewals to the following address-
which remains the most direct:

The Vital Force Journal of Tai Chi Chih
1477-155th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578

To confirm or seek information by phone, call Lois Mahaney directly: 510/276-5718.

Other "TCC Contacts" and "VFJ Operations" (e.g. FAX information) are located on pp. 38, 39.

New Content Sections Highlight Important Information

As a teacher resource, VFJ attempts to provide you with important TCC information to keep you up-to-date. Please see new section in the Table of Contents under "Teachers: Notes to Notice!" and "Learning & Inspirational Materials" to assist your review and reference of such items.

Give Thanks to the Circle

Thank you All for a generous and joyous year of fellowship, continual inspiration and assistance in support of your TCC journal. To the furthering of PEACE - deeply within...pervasively around...
As our grateful hearts open...To the Circle with Love,



Elizabeth Salada for *The Vital Force*

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READERS COMMENTARY



Just a note of appreciation for all the thoughtful effort you put into *The Vital Force* all these years and the 20th anniversary issue is the best yet--nice job of chronicling.

Corinn Codye, LaHabra, CA

Thanks to everyone for doing such an outstanding job with *The Vital Force*. I look forward to each issue and relish the contact it gives me with the TCC Community.

Nan Moss, New Fairfield, CT

Just got the September '94 *Vital Force* and feel it's the best issue yet! So much feedback from teachers! It makes me feel proud to be part of the family.

Justin Stone, Albuquerque, NM

The August issue was most interesting. I enjoyed every bit of this anniversary issue. God's blessing be yours in the wonderful work you are doing for all of us and our planet.

Sr. Phyllis Ann Ries, Little Falls, MN

If someone who was unable to attend the Conference read the comments by teachers, they would certainly get a tangible sense of what it was like to be there. Great job!

Steve Ridley, Denver, CO

For the past three years, I have enjoyed reading *The Vital Force* Journal. I was especially delighted with the anniversary issue. To hear again about the beginnings and growth of T'ai Chi Chih gave me a wonderful, warm feeling. And to be reminded of the vital part T'ai Chi Chih teachers have played and continue to play in the unfolding of T'ai Chi Chih/Joy thru Movement, gave me a renewed purpose in my TCC teaching and practice. Thank you Justin, Steve and all the family of T'ai Chi Chih teachers. Lovingly,

Phyllis Hatch, Victoria BC, Canada

Thank you for all your work on *The Vital Force*. There are no other teachers in my immediate area so I really appreciate staying in touch through *The Vital Force*. I was unable to attend the annual Conference this year, and I enjoyed reading about the experiences of others who were able to be there. Keep up the good work!

The teachers' directory has been very useful to me for referrals. I meet a lot of nurses from other areas and I am glad when I can find a teacher in their home town.

Sandy Lutz, Pekin, IL

Am grateful to have received the Teachers Directory prior to my Autumn trip. I'll be headed for Winona, Minnesota where T'ai Chi Chih will be used as body-prayer during an "Icon Retreat" three times a day, 10-15 minutes each time. The Directory will come in handy for anyone who may want to continue TCC practice or classes. At present I am in Pittsburgh on vacation with family, looking forward to celebrating my 25th Anniversary of Religious Profession of vows. So many wonderful things and people are happening in my life, including TCC.

Sr. Antonia Cooper No. Plainfield, NJ

Right after I became accredited in Fargo, ND, I moved from Portland, OR to take a teaching position in Philadelphia. The transition is still ongoing. Hopefully we will find a house soon so I can really settle down. Thank you for all you do for T'ai Chi Chih.

Sr. Mary Griffin, Aston, PA



MORE TEACHERS' NEWS

Sr. Claire Whalen, Oldenburg, IN writes: Thanks for your kind words of encouragement following my certification as a TCC instructor. I am teaching my first class this fall at our Motherhouse conference center--20 persons from the area, pulling from several small towns up to 30 miles away and from the city of Cincinnati which is an hour's drive from Oldenburg. They are so enthusiastic and learning fast.

Joan Torrence, Beaverton, OR writes: I taught a small class down in Salem last summer and now we meet monthly as an intermediate group to play, connect and refine. We share readings from *The Vital Force* journal, before and after class and we love it. I've given them information to order their own issues as well. I have a new series starting in January in a quick format --five sessions from 6:30-8:45 pm. Since I have to drive an hour each way, I'm not interested in one hour sessions. This new approach fits my style and students also like it. I've found I also bake/bring treats to class so we always celebrate and pamper ourselves.

Bryan James, Lakewood, CO writes: The Denver area teachers are beginning a city-wide practice that will meet once a month. It is our hope to draw together many teachers and students from all over the city for large practices that eventually could include more than two hundred people. We will meet the third Sunday of every month, starting November 20 at 2 pm in Washington Park (SE corner). We believe this is an important piece of support we can offer students as well as a good mechanism to draw some attention to T'ai Chi Chih in Denver. We will let you know how it goes.

Joy Barbour, Payson, AZ writes: I recently started TCC classes at the Eastern Arizona College (branch) in Payson. 30 students registered and I was amazed with only 5 days to get the word out. You are all doing a great job with *VFJ*--a wonderful way to keep in touch.

Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY writes: Through the efforts and coordination of Sr. Antonia Cooper, OSF, October 8 and 9 were shared in LaVallette, NJ by a number of TCC teachers and individuals considering teacher training. (See picture below.) Saturday the 8th was a day well spent including introductions, questions and answers, TCC movements and refinement in a beautiful pavilion overlooking the bay.

Sunday was a 'teachers only' day spent exchanging stories of TCC involvement, planning and organizing future get-togethers, ending with full practice in the pavilion. Noted the intent of teachers to come together twice a year and April 7, 8 and 9, 1995 has been reserved by Sr. Antonia at the St. Francis Retreat Center in Rensselaer, NY to accommodate 30 persons. Interested TCC teachers and teacher aspirants note the dates! Enough time is allowed between the April dates and the TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, May 8-13 in Mahwah, NJ to work on moves and be well prepared for accreditation. Rensselaer, NY was chosen as a central location for those traveling by car in the northeastern states.

Sr. Antonia's hosting and structure of the two days spent was quite commendable! Teachers attending were: Jean Rosaire Bedotto, OP, Edie Budney, Sr. Antonio, Patricia Gilman, Ralph Garn, Mary Ruprecht, Geraldine McGuire.....and a good time was had by all!!!



TCC Teachers
and Trainees
practice in
LaVallette, NJ

KEY POINTS TO TCC MOVEMENTS

- - - - - by Justin Stone - - - - -

Attitude: Never do T'ai Chi Chih carelessly at anytime. It's worth doing fully.

Accuracy: Most important in teaching is to see that students move correctly. Show the optimum way to do it (allowing for individual ability level). To become an accredited teacher, attitude AND physical capabilities are necessary.

How to Move: Flowing effortlessly (with the effort of no effort) as though swimming through heavy air. Flowing from tan t'ien...without muscular effort...elbows close to sides...more with wrists. TCC is not a series of arm and leg movements. Be sure the concept of "How to Move" is clear.

Leg Action: After awhile, a lower TCC is preferred. Emphasize (in the side step) that the heel (touches) first and feet remain on the ground, (legs) almost spreading apart. Also emphasize the importance of bending the knees particularly at the end of movement (in resting pose).

Yinning and Yanging: The most common fault is coming to stiff forward or backward knee - the result: bouncing up and down occurs.

Emphasis: Remember all movements where the 60-40% (mental) emphasis/force of no force is applied (e.g. Carry the Ball, Push-Pull, Pulling in the Energy, Taffies).

- - - - - by Steve Ridley - - - - -

Stance: Sink down an inch or three and extend your foot - that's your length of stride. The legs are the leaders. In general, let everything build from the ground up.

Range of Motion: Avoid overcontracting - allow breathing room, and avoid overextending - be mindful of the roundness as yin and yang support each other.

Alignment: Feel suspended from above, how would it be to rely on such support as if seated upright and gliding. Without a break in posture there is continuity in chi flow and circulation.

Present and Counting: Reside here and now in the movements vs. spacing out in repetition. Maintain a fresh minded-conscious approach.

Demonstrate the Way: Show the fullest form possible; students will modify as needed. Advancing is simply a matter of opening more properly. Getting past where we are (security oriented) to find a new depth--whatever that takes.

Graceful Conclusion: Don't rush the closure, assimilate to build your reserves, resting one-pointed. There is only so much we can do to direct the chi--then it refines us--accelerating self-evolution.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT MAKING T'AI CHI CHIH VIDEOTAPES

Jean Katus and Justin Stone

Good Karma Publishing and Justin Stone have decided on a new policy regarding teachers making their own videos, in violation of copyright law. We have decided, somewhat apprehensively, to grant permission where requested, on a royalty basis. Those who do not ask to receive such permission, are breaking the law, and, since the very basis of TCC is "Teh", Inner Sincerity, we do not expect that to happen.

As most of you know, Justin Stone does not teach beginners classes in TCC because he does not want to compete with teachers and take potential students from them. Moreover, the funds that are coming to him from his lecture on "Enlightenment", the November Meditation Retreat, and the Seijaku review, all go the Albuquerque Center. Thus he is left almost without income from TCC, though he originated it and holds the copyrights on TCC, TCC Videos, and books and pamphlets teaching TCC. It has been a source of dismay that teachers wanted to supplant his authoritative version of TCC on Videotape with work of their own, without asking or receiving permission, in violation of copyright law. Some who were nice enough to ask first have held off when they realized it was illegal. It is out of consideration for these teachers that we have changed the policy.

Although we have doubts that every teacher wanting to make a video will make an outstanding one, permission will be granted by writing Justin Stone. The royalty basis will be 12% of sales price (retail price), to be made out to Good Karma and mailed to Good Karma quarterly; it will be split between Good Karma and Justin Stone.

We hope for two things: first, that the Videos will be thorough, not leaving out essentials, such as instruction in and explanation of such things as the emphasis on the substantial (Yang) hand as opposed to the substantial leg, the necessity of concentrating on the "bubbling spring" (soles of the feet), bringing the opposing hand by the opposite elbow in "Passing Clouds", and a host of other subtleties that some teachers leave out in teaching classes. It is for this reason that Justin Stone has a long session at each Conference, calling attention to these important points.

Secondly, we hope that teachers will not stop using Justin's Video, an hour-and-a-half of instruction by the founder, with full practice session at the end. We would like to see teachers use these more with their students, even where they have their own practice sessions on Video.



SEASONAL LIGHTS

Chi Thanksgiving

When gratitude is, there is no rhyme or reason behind it, simply a sense that all is right, that only that which belongs in the universe is there.

We can try to be grateful, or look for reasons to be grateful, and we will find many. And very likely we may feel good about what happened or what we see, but this is not the same.

As we approach the holidays, we can add to their meaning by allowing our hearts to hear and experience life from a new perspective, so that we can say with Paul Rebs and Justin, "How grateful I am, with no thing to be grateful for."

May your holidays be filled with true gratitude.

Share the Chi,

Carmen Brocklehurst

*He spoke
of Gratitude,
with a sparkle in his eye
and the Heart
sang.*

*Reality
shines
warms
fills
as movement
reaches down
and fountains out
Life is*



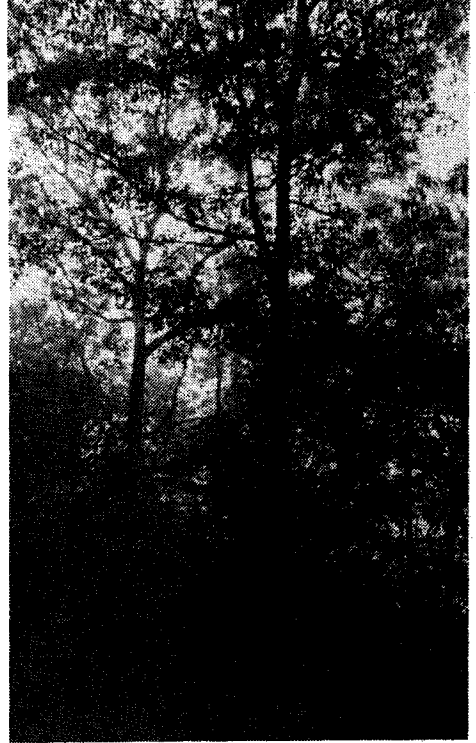
Carmen

Winter's Gift: The Song of the Trees
Virginia Shilson, Albuquerque, NM

I love looking at winter's leafless trees. They shamelessly stand before us in their natural beauty, unburdened by the finery they displayed in seasons just past. Proudly, they reveal their true shape and color. Yes, color in winter's trees. Look at them. I mean REALLY look. See the beauty.

There are trees still clinging to attire they wore all summer. Seed pods adorn some trees and the sun glistening on the pods gives them the glory and sparkle of Christmas Tree ornaments. Have you noticed the dried leaves on some trees? In the sun's light they reflect golden, or silver, or bronze. The leaves reflect dancing light an artist cannot duplicate, no matter how extensive his paint box. Such natural, delicate hues causes me to stop and stare and want to kneel down before them.

The branches are the trees' loving arms. I long to be gathered in by them, right into the essence of the tree. There I will be rocked and cradled as I listen to the song of the trees, hearing the song with my heart, with my whole being. I will listen to their story, and tell them mine, and we will know we are One.



Chi energy rising
tree root to crown
Arching serenely
entering my crown
Spine-tingling downflow
earth roots adjoin
Life-force dynamic
oneness with all!

Energy rising
from well grounded roots
Permeates auras
with peace-loving moods!

Rotating circles
spheres intersect
Vibrant Life energy
generates strength!

Outreach so gentle
open to gift
Life-force for sharing
each moment enriched!

Adria Newman
Dubuque, IA

MONKEY MIND MELT DOWN AND THE TRIUMPH OF THE EAGLE EYE

Patrick Lenard Eagle

Are you a man, or are you a mouse?
Buy a car! Sell that house!
Social pressures all around me.
Cultural imperatives, LET ME BE!

So don't hurry,
don't worry,
don't fret.

Clarity in a dream.
Shone forth thru brilliant light.
Lady Wisdom's voice saying,
"Everything's all right.

The earth will all ways be your mother,
The sky still holds your secret lover.

ZEN BY DEFAULT AT BREAKFAST

Patrick Lenard Eagle

It was in San Francisco, the ides of March, Summer Solstice, this my second encounter with Master Stone. The first had been almost three years earlier at a workshop given in Santa Barbara. At that time I was just an enthusiastic student, having completed my first series of classes in basic T'ai Chi Chih.

I wanted more! So when my USCB instructor, Jane, told the class that the originator of the form would be doing a workshop in our town, I made it a point to attend. Justin told the assembled audience "...you will all make good teachers...". Of course he was talking to ME, and so I pressed onward with my practice, became a teacher and went on to the SEIJAKU training in San Francisco.

Master Stone was in rare form, and dispensed his own unique brand of JOY. One of the things I noticed about him was his childlike enthusiasm about mealtimes. Indeed, he even mentioned he had picked this spot for the training because of the ...whole slew of fine restaurants in the area.

Deep thoughts crossed my mind as I ate. The WAY, TAO, ZEN, that is, there is a way to do everything in life, the correct way, as the Zen masters have shown by perfecting the many crafts and even aspects of tea and food serving.....Many of my fellow teachers and masters sat in large groups and had some wonderful home style cooking. One morning I noticed a customer sitting near me had ordered the same huge breakfast. As I slowly and deliberately finished all the Yang food before moving on to my Yin pancakes, I noticed his manner as he quickly consumed his meal. He had poured syrup over his cakes but it ran all over his other food. My careful approach eliminated this sort of culinary "faux pas".

This man was not as meticulous as I was, but did that somehow make him less of a person than me? It is a blessing that I have had the training and exposure to remarkable teachers like Towne, Ridley, and Stone. How clumsy my T'ai Chi must look compared to theirs. I was humbled by this realization. Reminded of my human frailty I have a moment of clarity and bliss as I see, all are equal. It is then I recall in scriptures Christ said, "...come and eat breakfast."



STUDENT EXPERIENCES:

Senior Students Enjoying TCC Lois Mahaney, San Lorenzo, CA

Several times each school year, I go to Bishop O'Dowd High School in Oakland to present T'ai Chi Chih to the students in a *Seniors Concerns* Class. Basically, the class was intended to show that older people don't need to be relegated to rocking chairs when they retire--that there are many activities that they can become involved in. I was one of the 'seniors' who made varied presentations to the class. The young people seemed to enjoy my being there, particularly when they had a chance to do something besides listening to someone talk, so I've been invited each semester for the past five years. The students write papers about each presentation--I've received many positive comments relative to the feelings generated by the T'ai Chi Chih movements. This poem, I believe, says it beautifully.

*I feel the movement
It opens up the deepest
part of my soul.
Repetitive, circular motions
remind me of swaying
trees in the breeze.
Bending the knees
brings you closer
And you feel oneness
with the earth.
Forget about your fears
Calm you anxiousness and
Listen.
Listen to the sound of
your body talking to you
Feel what it says.
It is there, give it a chance.*

Alinya Charron

* * * * *

Transitional Note: Patrick Lenard, Martial Arts Teacher and T'ai Chi Chih instructor is formally changing his name to Patrick Lenard Eagle. The suffix is an affirmation of evolution toward the visionary and spiritual true self. The eagle is the symbol of prayer and soul travel in many cultures. T'ai Chi has been a powerful agent of acceleration in both my esoteric and physical endeavors he says.