

# THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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Spring Equinox

March 1995

## SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION AND THE DIVINE INSTRUMENT

Justin Stone

There are two histories of mankind: one is cultural, which is lasting, and the other is the study of aggression and violence, which is fleeting. As an example, there are no remnants of the work of the Greek army, but the philosophers and playwrights of Greece contribute much to our everyday life.

The Spiritual development of Man is so slow that we take it for granted the egocentric way of thinking is the only one -- "how does it affect me and mine?" Both Jesus and Buddha pointed the way to Compassion, but that was merely a foretaste. The usual thought is: poor people

bring about Welfare, and that raises my taxes. No compassion for the poor; they're merely inconvenient.

As one works with the Chi, in T'ai Chi Chih -- circulating and balancing the Life Force -- the pace of the evolving is greatly stepped up. How we think and act affects this Chi, but, in turn, we are the products of the Chi. Call it the "Divine Instrument" if you want. As we practice T'ai Chi Chih this Chi will be molded (and accumulated), and our Spiritual Evolution will be greatly enhanced. We will begin to change, and so will our world.

When we are soul-centered we know completeness, wholeness, and recognize that all knowledge unfolds from within us.

--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

becoming better acquainted  
with the newness of life

forming relationships  
so constant  
in their changing

bring the freshness  
of now to fore

in these moments  
eternal existence  
no more

### Inner Workings

Welcoming the Spring, VFJ has much poetry to share! As a movement of words journals the musings and intuitions of TCC practitioners, natural instincts blossom in the outgrowth of spiritual living.

Actions drawn by benevolence  
the kindness of grace favored  
beyond opposing forces at play  
extended blessings realized  
through

Smelling the fragrance  
Tasting the nourishment  
Hearing the message  
Feeling the meaning  
applied living  
simply in being

**10th International TCC Teacher Conference** is forming design thanks to planning measures by Colorado teacher hosts. Denver spokesperson for the event, Lia Ridley, asks for your agenda suggestions in advance. See p. 20 Calendar Notes and the enclosed flyers for more on the August 4-6 Conference and the following Seijaku Course--opportune occasions to join with the greater TCC family.



photo by Steve Ridley

**Write? Right Away! May 1 Next VFJ Deadline.** We continue to seek teacher and student articles and it's only one month away to receive your news, poetry, etc. for VFJ's next issue. Please write: VF, 1477-155th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578.

If you prefer to phone questions on subscriptions, changes to directory or for referrals, contact Lois Mahaney directly, 510/276-5718.

**How do you like our new look?** We offer many thanks to Susan Hudgens for exceptional dedication in working to refine VFJ's appearance via typesetting this issue. We appreciate her assistance and look forward to future creative input to further enhance the journal.

May a profusion of joy flower ahead!  
Liz Salada, *The Vital Force*

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## READERS COMMENTARY



The Special anniversary issue of The Vital Force was superb. I loved the creativity, warmth and gratitude that flowed through the messages and pages -- those written and those pictorials! Thanks so much to Justin, Steve, and all the TCC family!

**Anita Germain, White Bear Lake, MN**

Thank you for the great new edition of The Vital Force! Teachers are beginning to express themselves freely in it, and it is acting as a great stimulus to all teachers. Keep up the good work!

**Justin Stone, Albuquerque, NM**

Wow! I'm only half way through the VFJ and am very impressed. I hate to admit this, especially to you, but the past couple of years I haven't connected with the VFJ the way I used to. I used to sit down the minute I'd receive it and read from cover to cover, but not so the past couple of years. I would sporadically pick it up, read a page or two then set it down. I truly don't believe it had to do with the content or quality of the the VFJ, but with my connection - because it has always continued to improve, I feel, with each issue. But I feel like I am reading this new issue and comparing it with VFJ's of many years ago. Or maybe I am just more open for there is something on every page which speaks to me. I don't know what's so special about this issue, but I know it got me started writing two articles simultaneously.

**Sandy McAlister, Hayward, CA**

Despite the "business" of the holiday and school seasons since last gathering for the TCC Review in Alameda, in wonder and hope I am grateful for the gifts of "connecting" through the TCC energy.

**Gail Collins SCU, Oakland, CA**

The magazine gets better and better. It now stays longer on the table by my chair. More thought is obviously going into the magazine and much more thought must go with the reading of it. Thanks for inspiration.

Love and Blessings.

**Jean Stone, Bullhead City, AZ**

I thought the illustration of the old Chinese proverb -- "Fallen Leaves Return To Roots" by Mie Shu 12/94 (see back cover) -- might be of interest to VF Journal readers as it points to nature's circularity, which is based on "softness (surrender) and continuity (flow)" -- perhaps the deepest principle of T'ai Chi Chih practice.

**Steve Ridley, Denver, CO**

Thanks to the New Mexico TCC Newsletter, Connie Hyde, Doug Shilson and Kathy Grassel for sharing the Albuquerque area involvements and inspirations of teachers

**The VFJ, San Leandro, CA**

Thank you to Bruce Hudgens for setting up the VFJ computer format as well as the hours spent entering text. Thank you to Jack and Sharon Morash for the generous use of their laser printer during the production phase of this March '95 issue.

**The VFJ, San Leandro, CA**

## HONORABLE MENTIONS

### Thank You, Lois!

As indicated in the August 1994 Anniversary Issue, Lois Mahaney has been Editor of the VFJ since early 1985 when she helped Corinn Codye publish it. When Liz Salada took over as Publisher, Lois agreed to continue. After ten years, she now feels it is time to let others share in the production of this great connecting link for all teachers of T'ai Chi Chih. Susan Hudgens comments, "Joining in on the production team for this issue, I am amazed at the amount of time and energy required to compile, input and edit the VFJ. Lois has done an outstanding job handling the multiple tasks and many production phases involved in assembling each issue!" Lois will continue to assist in the VFJ production, serving also as the TCC-VFJ resource person by handling the correspondence for database updates to the mailing list and Teacher Directory and by connecting teachers and students through teacher referrals. Lois comments, "It is time to get back into Chinese Brush Painting, calligraphy and other enriching pursuits. Perhaps I can travel a bit and do a little more reading. Joy to all."



### TCC Wedding

On a beautiful early Fall day in September, outdoors on the grounds of a picturesque winery in Northern California's wine country, Maggie Hall and Victor Berg exchanged wedding vows with Carmen Brocklehurst officiating. The male attendants were Doug Harned and Ed Altman. Sandy McAlister and Lois Mahaney along with Noel Altman made up the rest of the T'ai Chi Chih teachers in attendance. The fifty or more guests were treated to a bounteous buffet dinner followed by visiting and dancing. The couple are now residing in San Rafael, CA. Happiness and Joy to both.

### Outstanding Honor

Congratulations to Lia Ridley for winning the "Gladys Doty Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Profession" by the Colorado Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. This award is presented annually to a member who has made a significant contribution through research, publication, professional presentations, leadership and public service. Lia was voted this honor by her peers.

## LETTERS TO JUSTIN STONE

### Thank God for you and T'ai Chi Chih!

Barbara Joy, *New York, NY*

So here I am in New York - across the small treelined park is the World Financial Center. I live in the heart of the Wall Street area - in Battery Park City, on the Hudson River.

I often think of you and your leaving this area and changing your life. Now here I am teaching T'ai Chi Chih to Wall Street lawyers, financial 'whizzes', computer executives, etc. And I love sharing this gift with my new friends.

I've also taught TCC workshops to New York City school teachers - those who work in the roughest neighborhoods. And they love it, too.

As much as I loved my high school students (I've been teaching "at-risk, high school students with addiction problems" in the city school), I've stopped teaching (academic subjects).

Now I am developing my own practice - teaching T'ai Chi Chih. I began in December and have twelve students so far.

I feel the chi will lead me in my next steps.

Mostly I just want to extend to you my love and gratefulness for your gifts to me and the planet.

### Mind Makings

Victor Berg, *Mill Valley, CA*

I had a wonderful dream. I was in a sea of people and I was rushing to see you. Some of my friends were delaying me and I kept dropping these boxes I was carrying. I eventually made it to a door. I knew you were on the other side but the door was barred. There was a revolving

door with a tiny slot to squeeze through. I tried to squeeze through but couldn't make it.

I woke up and did T'ai Chi and had a long meditation. My meditation was broken by thoughts of myself and others and a thought came:



*Binds  
Holding  
Tight  
Mind  
without  
Humility*

## T'ai Chi Chih on TV

Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

Who would have thought, a year and a half ago, that this was possible? Not just on a local station or a public access station, but on mainstream, national PBS? At the time, it seemed that no one did, because, with scripts and music written, clothes bought and contacts made, the funding was nowhere to be found. We were what is called an 'unknown quantity'. Even standard funders who automatically say yes to putting their names to programs said, "No way, find me another program." It was like waiting for the first rose of summer to open its petals and show forth its glory; it would happen in its own good time. One well-meaning friend said to me, "Well, you didn't really think it would happen, did you?" Thank goodness for the faith that KNME in Albuquerque, NM has in us, because when everything seemed to fall through, we all took a deep breath and began looking for funding again, and did more refining of everything.

Now, after the first, very successful season, with repeats happening by public demand, people from coast to coast are talking about T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement. The Albuquerque station is receiving about 75 calls a day from all over the United States and is working very hard to keep up with the book and tape orders - people want what we have. One of the biggest comments they are hearing at KNME-TV is, "I tried the other T'ai Chi's that are out there and just couldn't do it; this one makes so much

sense. Why didn't someone think of it before?" We have, and have been preparing for this time, and this is only the beginning. We are hearing so many wonderful comments from people of all ages. Even young (age 5) children, have come to take classes because of that T'ai Chi on TV, which "made them feel all tingly and good inside."

Thank you all for the long years of dedication, of practice, practice, practice and of preparing ways to share T'ai Chi Chih, including your diligent work in calling and writing to the PBS stations across the country so that they would be aware of the desire on the part of the public to learn about T'ai Chi Chih. Thank you also for making yourselves available to let people know that you do T'ai Chi Chih and for being willing to grow. Your love and good wishes on behalf of the program have been a real treasure.

The Albuquerque station is interested in the possibility of a second season. They said that our ratings were better than the sports programs. Over 178 stations have picked up the program so far, and others that did not pick it up the first go round are asking for another satellite feed. Not bad for an 'unknown quantity'. This should give us some idea of how much T'ai Chi Chih and we, as teachers of T'ai Chi Chih, are needed. Keep growing and glowing and ...

Share the Chi!

*When the chi  
calls  
answer*

## **LIFE FORCE AND GROWTH**

**Steve Ridley**

As life force increases its expression through an individual, former psychological and physiological conditionings and structures are broken up and transmuted. This re-structuring process may give rise to unanticipated experiences of various kinds.

If we are dedicated to personal growth we undergo this process of integration as graciously as possible, in trust, with gratitude for the opportunity. We attempt to deepen our conscious relationship with the life force through regular involvement with our chosen spiritual practices and our particular ways of sharing in life.

We can accelerate growth by intensifying our intentional work with life force - increasing T'ai Chi Chih and seated meditation practice, for instance - but must be sincerely committed to embracing and working with whatever may arise in us, toward an emerging capacity to live fully.

## **TRANSFORMATION THRU CHI**

**Steve Ridley**

Daily practice of T'ai Chi Chih at whatever level of involvement,  
reforms or re-structures us, mind and body,  
toward living wholly.

When we consciously pattern chi on a consistent basis, mind and body  
are continually reconstituted to lessen any tendencies  
which appear to obstruct enlightened living.



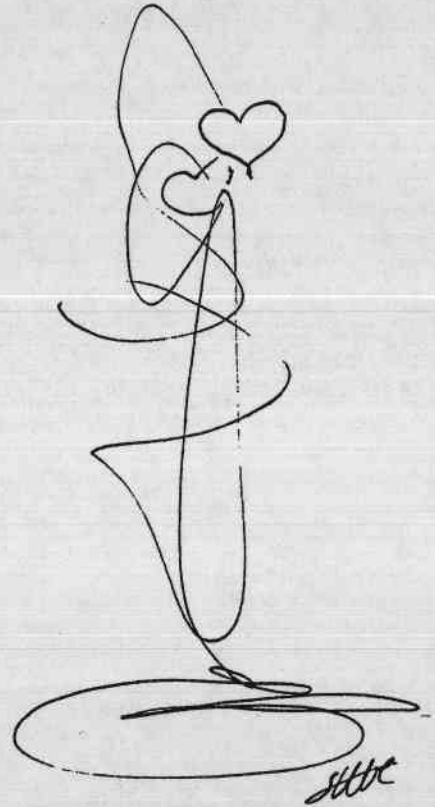
## HUMAN-HEARTEDNESS

Justin Stone

Buddhism stresses that "things causally produced are void." that is, temporary and not enduring. Lao Tzu's TAOISM speaks of "not attempting to play the TAO, letting the TAO play you." Hinduism, and there are numerous kinds of Hinduism, counsels faith in numerous gods, all emanations of the one Deity (or Reality).

These all have deep roots, too difficult to understand intellectually. However, Confucius' teaching of human-heartedness as being most important, is easy to understand and quick to ring a bell. He felt that human-heartedness, along with "TEH" (the power of inner sincerity) was most important. As my late friend, Swami Krishnanand, stressed: "If you don't find God in the hearts of men, where do you expect to find him?"

Cheating your fellow man, cutting corners to get a slight monetary advantage, is the opposite of human-heartedness. The fact that you can get away with it has nothing to do with it. It's good to examine your financial actions in light of TEH and Human-Heartedness. And, above all, it's necessary to be honest with yourself and not rationalize.



*Each being is innately free  
When our personal experience validates this  
We become capable of acknowledging and honoring this in others.*

*--Steve Ridley*

# THE ART OF TEACHING

## ACCEPTANCE

Sandy McAlister, Hayward, CA

As we teach TCC we can not help but express our abilities and qualities - some teach with love and warmth, some with gratefulness and a zest for life, some with technical exactness, some with deep internal focus, some with flamboyance/drama.

*Movement is as individual as we are - not rigid/exacting, yet following principles with limits. There is room within the limits. Play, explore, feel that space within.*

We do our best, always striving to improve, acknowledging that aspect of teaching which we do well and recognizing our areas of weakness

with acceptance. More importantly, recognizing others with acceptance of both their strong and weak aspects.

I am becoming more aware of my strengths and weaknesses, and along with that awareness, becoming more accepting. As I see myself more clearly I see others and find I am less critical - realizing we are human.

*Acceptance of ourselves  
- our weaknesses and strengths.  
Acceptance of others,  
for they are no different.*



We hold this tenuous life in our arms  
At times so mutually nurturing  
Other times, the struggle, the resistance  
threatens to tear both apart  
Yet it is just this  
that allows us to feel  
the heartbeat of the universe

Jim Houle, Cedar Crest, NM

Views of Nature  
Virginia Shilson, Albuquerque, NM

Mother Earth,  
who placed me upon your surface.  
let me feel your pulse  
of light-energy;  
let me hear your song  
of life's glory;  
let my bare feet tread upon  
your bare flesh;  
let my breath and your breath  
be one breath.

Beautiful wildflower  
I know not your name  
yet you fill my heart  
with colorful joy.

Reflections on the water  
presenting themselves  
as circles within circles.

Two graceful birds gliding  
low to the ground:  
A raven and his shadow --  
A perfect example of formation flying.

Oh, to have a tree in my yard  
where birds can nest  
and sing their morning's songs

Limbs  
old, gnarled,  
twisted,  
beautiful

Slender fingers of dry twigs  
pointing heavenward  
and beyond.

Leaning against a tree  
gazing across the lake,  
seeing nothing  
and seeing everything.

from *Poetic Views* by Virginia Shilson



## **CONTEMPLATIONS**

### **THOUGHTS ON TEACHING**

**Steve Ridley**

The subtlest, most effective (balanced and spiritually restorative) kind of intentional teaching occurs when the teacher is able to **blend** with the student, to impart useful instruction and vital force. This level of teaching requires the continual surrender of the teacher to the student - in service - while centered in Reality consciousness.

### **TEACHER-STUDENT**

**Steve Ridley**

The spiritual teacher is an energy center, a power plant which supplies life with a transmission of spiritual force, shakti. Through attunement, the sincere student may receive the useful influence of this evolutionary energy freely shared through the teacher.

### **PERCEPTIONS**

**Steve Ridley**

All identities are perishable, transitory, and have no lasting influence on us.

The fullest enjoyment of 'visiting an identity' occurs when we reawaken as free-consciousness playing through and as our specialized perspective.

Everything we experience while moving in and through life can assist our freedom, our Remembrance.