

# THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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Summer Solstice

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## TRUE T'AI CHI CHIH PRACTICE

Justin Stone

Zuigan was a Zen Master who was famous for the admonitions he gave himself each day, ending with "Don't be misled by others," to which he answered, "Yes sir! Yes sir!"

More interesting to me is his comment that, upon experiencing his great enlightenment, he was astonished to find that he was completely dead to himself. That is he no longer had any interest in the personality called "Zuigan." He might have added that he now saw all others as himself. This reminds one of Hakuin's statement that, "After this, seeing the things of the world is like viewing the back of my own hand."

This is a tremendous realization. In truth, no one has experienced realization; there is simply enlightenment, our original status. This also reminds us of the T'ai Chi Chih experience that "No-one is doing T'ai Chi Chih; T'ai Chi Chih

is doing T'ai Chi Chih." Do you see the resemblance, and, if so, does it point out the potential for enlightenment in true T'ai Chi Chih practice?

It is said that, when Ramakrishna was riding in a horse and buggy, the driver cruelly whipped the horse, and bleeding scars appeared on Ramakrishna's back.

To one who is taken with his or her own suffering and with a total preoccupation with self, this is hard to understand. But, John Donne said, "Do not ask for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." Here was a man far along the way in Evolution.

Think about Zuigan's statement. Had he lost something? Or had he gained something of inestimable merit? You be the judge.

Practicing, practicing...  
each day we release a bit more,  
returning to nothing: everything

- Steve Ridley

*Justin Stone is the Originator of T'ai Chi Chih! Joy Thru Movement.  
Steve Ridley is the Appointed 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 grace-filled communion  
with brightly lit beings  
formed wavelike exchanges  
carrying forward  
new meaning in loving.  
Watching struggles release, it seemed  
new fields had called for cultivation.  
Drawing back, the familiar vastness points  
to no garden soiled, in need of tilling.  
What then to do? Seeing what is done.  
Absorbing sun, imbibing rain  
Aware, the soul sustained  
Continually nourishing Now.

- - - - -

The art of teaching is loving.  
Teachings are acts of love.

- - - - -

Upon receiving the valuable impact of a recent  
teacher accreditation week, each opportunity to  
join collectively in TCC is highly encouraged!  
Class sharing with students...visiting trainings...  
companionate conference gatherings...personal/  
universal participation...shine clearly as invita-  
tions to embrace...

All flowing in the current of Life!

S

Elizabeth Salada  
for *The Vital Force*

from *Tao Te Ching*, chapter 10 and 11,  
translation by Stephen Mitchell:

Can you coax your mind from its wandering  
and keep to the original oneness?  
Can you let your body become  
supple as a newborn child's?  
Can you cleanse your inner vision  
until you see nothing but the light?  
Can you love people and lead them  
without imposing your will?  
Can you deal with the most vital matters  
by letting events take their course?  
Can you step back from your own mind  
and thus understand all things?

Giving birth and nourishing  
having without possessing,  
acting with no expectations,  
leading and not trying to control:  
this is the supreme virtue.

- - - - -

We join spokes together in a wheel,  
but it is the center hole  
that makes the wagon move.

We shape clay into a pot,  
but it is the emptiness inside  
that holds whatever we want.

We hammer wood for a house,  
but it is the inner space  
that makes it livable.

We work with being,  
but non-being is what we use.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

**The Vital Force**  
**Journal of T'ai Chi Chih**

**June 1995**  
**Summer Solstice Issue**

### Features by

#### Justin Stone

- 1 - True T'ai Chi Chih Practice
- 6 - A Great Bonus
  - A Common Problem

#### Notes to Teachers

- 2 - Reflections...Along the Way (E. Salada)
- 40 - *VFJ* Inner Workings (L. Mahaney)
- 5 - Teacher Obligations, Shouldisms, Group Practice Idea (S. Ridley)
- 8 - Something New
- 23 - Auditing Teacher Trainings (M.J. Norice)

#### Teachers Write

- 4 - Readers Commentary
- 8 - Toward Growth (Sr.Francis Kay)
- 9 - Soul Food (Virginia Shilson)
- 13 - Seizing Serenity (Anne Doering)
- 15 - Discipline = Life (Carmen Brocklehurst)
  - Self-Defense (Carmen Brocklehurst)
- 16 - What Is Life (Richard Brier)
- 32 - Teacher Bio/Presentation (Eddy Perez)

#### The Art of Teaching

- 10 - A Sense of Wholeness (Loretta Shiver)
  - Dedication (shared by Sandy McAlister)

#### TCC Experiences

- 12 - New Confidence (Rich Axline)
- 19 - Open Sesame (Jamie McDonald)
  - Seijaku Works Wonders (Leona Dees)

#### T'ai Chi In Print

- 33 - *OT Week*, January 1995
- 34 - *LET'S LIVE*, February 1995

#### Getting Started

- 26 - "There I Am" (Donna Iverson)
- 27 - Releasing Joy (Betty McFarland)

#### Steve Ridley

- 1 - Practicing, practicing...
- 12 - T'ai Chi Chih Principle
- 30 - Attitude Adjustment Minute
- 40 - Integrity-Strength

#### Contemplations

- 7 - Overview..on Consciousness (Steve Ridley)
- 11 - The ONE and the MANY (Steve Ridley)
- 18 - Soundings (Ho Hu Tzu)

#### Poetry and Perceptions

- 14 - The Rhyming Side of Chi (Carol Glinski)
- 27 - ONE (Carole Jordan)

#### Learning & Inspirational Materials

- 36 - Excerpt: *Zen Meditation/A Broad View* by Justin Stone
  - Commentary: *Justin Stone Speaks on T'ai Chi Chih* (Judith Jones)
- 37 - Karmic Komments (Jean Katus)

#### Teacher News

- 28 - Desert Oasis..Retreat (Don Fiore)
- 29 - from Kansas, California & Florida
- 31 - Teaching in the Country (Barbara Sommers)

#### Events Feedback

- 22 - Seijaku in San Diego
  - Colorado Teachers Retreat
  - San Francisco Event
- 24 - Illinois Teacher Training

#### Events

- 20 - Calendar Notes
- 21 - T'ai Chi Chih Events Calendar

## READERS COMMENTARY



I am writing to express my gratitude for all the many hours of dedication and work you have shared for our T'ai Chi Chih family. We have met and shared at teach conferences. However, I have been a teacher since may of 1990 and have always appreciated your contributions to *The Vital Force* and felt it was time to let you know. So, from my heart to yours--thanks for a job "well done". I look forward to seeing you in Denver.

Meara Joy Norice, *Burlington, VT*

I continue to enjoy *The Vital Force* ..you do such a fine job on layouts and designs and inclusion of articles and clear information. Thanks!

Marian Massman, *LaCrosse, WI*

Thank you all for your efforts in producing another good issue of *VF Journal* - the best organized yet, I feel.

Steve Ridley, *Denver, CO*

So many useful ideas are given in the *VFJ*! The collections of responses on defined subjects from various teachers is a delight to read. I also enjoy the array of creativity expressing itself in many forms. There are always names of people I don't know, and hope to meet at the Denver Conference. I wish that every teacher undecided about going to the Conference had a teacher-friend to open the understanding of how important attending the Conference is (as I did when I first was accredited). It is where we learn from Justin and Steve, directly, and where we can refine and correct the T'ai Chi Chih movements,

and where we connect with teachers/friends and share our growth.

Connie Hyde, *Cedar Crest, NM*

Thank you, each one, for the wonderful contribution you share in editing, collecting, organizing and distributing this important link that bonds us together across the miles.

Each issue becomes surprisingly better than the last! How can that be true? I am re-reading articles, underlining quotes and being nurtured by the contents. The poetry of these beautiful t'ai chi teachers is always touching. It feels good to be involved with such a healthy and purposeful resource in these days of stress and turmoil.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the Denver Conference.

Love and blessings,

Meara Joy Norice, *Burlington, VT*

The new format for *The Vital Force* is outstanding--kudos' to all of you who had a hand in it. Here's a little ditty you may want to put into the Journal.

I hope this brings forth a few smiles.

Love and peace,

Carol Glinkski, *Jacksonville, FL*

Thank you so much for the complimentary Spring Equinox issue of *The Vital Force*. It's a beautiful journal and I really enjoyed it during my stay in North Dakota. I look forward to future issues and hope to contribute as well!

Mary Anna Paul, *Houston, TX*

## ***NOTES TO TEACHERS***

### **TEACHER OBLIGATIONS**

**Steve Ridley**

It seems to me that as T'ai Chi Chih teachers we have two primary responsibilities:

- 1) to continually cultivate our own practice,  
and
- 2) to impart instruction to those attracted, as clearly as we are able.

Though we encourage students to practice regularly, we teach in the spirit of unconditional service, allowing them to choose how they might utilize what is freely given.

### ***Shouldisms***

must persist

until re-Awakening  
as the complete spiritual Heart.

-Steve Ridley

### **GROUP PRACTICE IDEA**

**Steve Ridley**

To help facilitate unity among class members,  
begin and conclude each session  
by forming an inward facing group circle,  
and enjoy 18-36 rounds (or more) of Rocking Motion.

## **FEATURES**

### **A GREAT BONUS**

**Justin Stone**

Zen practice, no matter what you hear, is aimed at having you realize your own true nature. When you suddenly find out Who and What you are, it is a big surprise. On having this experience, the Zen master Hakuin said, "After this, seeing things of the world is like seeing the back of my own hand." Zen proposed to do this through controlling and purifying the mind--cleaning out the Eighth Consciousness, the Alaya Vijnana. (Alaya means "receptacle," as in Himalaya, receptacle of snow. Vijnana is "consciousness.") This usually takes long and arduous work, often to the exclusion of other things, as the mind becomes one-pointed through such discipline as the Koan practice. T'ai Chi Chih works from the other end, not from Mind

but from the Chi, which affects the Mind, just as the Mind affects the Chi. But T'ai Chi Chih also affects the health, through circulation and balancing of the Chi--this is the great bonus. It does not require giving up anything. I wish I could get Zen monks and Masters to do T'ai Chi Chih; most of those I know suffer stomach ailments from poor, soft food and from long periods of sitting without compensating periods of stimulating the Chi ("Ki" in Japanese, "Prana" in Sanskrit). So you can reach the same result through difficult mind control in Zen or through easy T'ai Chi Chih practice working with the Chi. This is possible because of the reciprocal relationship of Mind and Chi, a little known fact of great importance.

### **A COMMON PROBLEM**

**Justin Stone**

Zen books are popular reading, and bookstores are full of new ones constantly coming out. These are usually written by scholars, psychologists, etc., who have not practised or have not realized anything. They take standard works of Zen, such as the "Mumonkan" or "Hekiganyoku," that have well-known "cases"--dialogues or commentaries on historical incidents--and rewrite them or state them and then give commentaries. Sometimes the writers are merely translators, without the Buddhist knowledge or experience to know what the words mean, and words change meaning according to context. For instance, how can you define the

word "spring" without knowing the context in which it is used?

Readers of these books, nibbling the delicious candy, fail to realize that the "cases" being cited, and the talks being quoted, were all formed for the benefit of monks--renunciates who are devoting their entire lives to Zen practice. Then the readers, who may be professional men and women with children and loving spouses, try to apply the lessons to themselves. Are they supposed to strip their lives of love and joy to fulfill an ideal stated in a book for monks? It would be impossible and not at all advisable.

## **CONTEMPLATIONS**

### **OVERVIEW**

Every human being is a creation of the cosmos - pure consciousness -  
in the form of male energy and female energy.

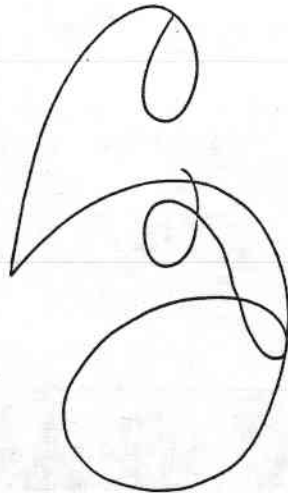
Dr. Vasant Lad  
*Yoga International Magazine*  
March/April 1995

Each living being is essentially Free Consciousness,  
temporarily visiting an identity or specialized viewpoint oriented in form.

-Steve Ridley

Free-Consciousness assumes an individualized point of view,  
which becomes all consuming. This is the crux of our dilemma.

-Yogi Pranananda



Tied to the lower world  
reaching for a higher way  
while the sane Self observes  
the play.

-Steve Ridley

## TEACHERS WRITE

### TOWARD GROWTH

S. Francis A. Kay  
Little Falls, MN

Nothing is, except - the NOW. To be present to the moment is really living qualitatively, and T'ai Chi Chih is my force in striving toward this value. The more I practice, the more I am finding it possible. My past experiences are - me. The future unfolds itself more quietly for my spontaneous, intense personality can bring disharmony. I am becoming more in tune with Reality. My God is. I am.

To concentrate on the energy generated between the palms of my hands as they face each other, is powerful. The hands pass continually by the t'an tien, and all is magnified, breathing the energy through my chakras, radiating throughout my body - and beyond. This does not distract from my feet, which connects all with the Earth. Somehow energy is unified in the t'an tien where it resides, and flows out. Quite awesome.

Today is Earth Day, and doing T'ai Chi Chih in the open is oneness with the All, who is all. Today is also my seventh anniversary in being a part of the T'ai Chi Chih family, for in 1988 Justin certified me. It was a blessed day, and with my dear group, Steve, and the teachers present, we gratefully joyed together.

I was able to bring T'ai Chi Chih to our Residential Wholistic Growth Resources Program, where a number of our participants have been certified over the years. From W.G.R. we have not only teachers in over nine states, but also in Guam, Canada and Ireland...and our family grows.

Thank you dear Justin, for your wisdom in stimulating us by your insightful creativity. You continue to share your depths through your books, lectures, articles and tapes, and now, in that special print. It is meaningful, so lovely, and I bless you.

Congratulations to *The Vital Force* staff; they bring us information and encouragement, and the publication, where Justin, Steve and the "family" share, is excellent... I look forward to centering with you all in T'ai Chi Chih (and Seijaku) in Denver, CO in August.

May the God of all Goodness bring us safely together in the peace of open hospitality.

### SOMETHING NEW!

KNME, the PBS station in Albuquerque, which produced the T'ai Chi Chih video show with Carmen and Justin that is now airing around the country, has decided to produce a new video using the interviews with Carmen and Justin as done in

the original video. The compilation of the interviews should be ready by late July or by the time of the August Conference. The number at KNME is 1-800-328-5663 where you can place an order for the video. The cost will be about \$29.95



## **TEACHERS WRITE**

### **SOUL FOOD** Virginia Shilson, Albuquerque, NM

Deciding the Saturday Morning Guided Practice Session would be an excellent time for me to get together with some of my student/friends, I made the necessary phone calls, and was delighted when all seven persons responded, "Yes, I would love to attend the practice session, then go to your home for a potluck lunch." How perfect!

There were times Friday evening and early Saturday morning, while I was hustling to get everything in order, when I asked myself, "Why do I do these things? Why do I make extra work for myself?" The answer was to be made clear to me.

Saturday afternoon, after the practice, sitting around the dining room table with my student/friends, I listened as they talked, joked and laughed together in a relaxed manner. It was obvious their appetite was for companionship and conversation. Food for the soul was more important to them than food for the body. As I watched and listened, I silently reflected, "This is why I do it, and it is so beautiful. Thank you, T'ai Chi Chih. You, too work in wondrous ways."

And a big THANK YOU to Jan Arrott, leader of the group practice. She handled the situation of a room filled to capacity with T'ai Chi Chih persons in a calm, competent manner.



the bird's song is heard in my heart  
silently I respond from my heart

- Virginia Shilson

## **THE ART OF TEACHING**

### **A SENSE OF WHOLENESS Loretta Shiver, Albuquerque NM**

I taught my last class of the 8-session course the other day. It occurred to me that the last class is like the first class: joyous and motivating. Each time I begin a new class I am thrilled to go back and know again: what is this practice that we do? Why do we continue? What is rocking motion? How do you begin? I love to go back to the very basis of our practice and learn it again. The very best learning is done through teaching. Each week it builds up, piece by piece, movement by movement. Until, at last, you've taught them all. And now it's the last class. You answer questions and clarify moves, then you

begin and lead the students all the way through from beginning to end, for the first and last time. For me, the sense of completion and wholeness is overwhelming. Everyone is beaming. Then we sit and follow up with Steve's meditation tape to introduce the students to the method and to help them to integrate easily all the Chi they just generated. Finally I send them home glowing and filled with love. And of course, it's the same for me: I'm smiling from the inside out.

Greetings to all! I guess I'll be starting a new class soon!

## **DEDICATION**

"By the power and the truth of this practice, may all beings have happiness, and the causes of happiness,

May all be free from sorrow, and the causes of sorrow,

May all never be separated from the sacred happiness which is sorrowless,

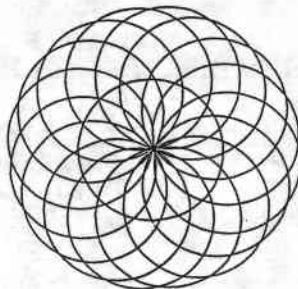
And may all live in equanimity, without too much attachment and without too much aversion,

And live believing in the equality of all that lives."

*The above closing, read after practice in a Buddhist Meditation Group, was shared by Sandy McAlister, Hayward, CA.*



## **CONTEMPLATIONS**



### **The ONE and the MANY** Steve Ridley

Student: Teacher, what is this life?

Teacher: Change is constant. There is no essential change.

All is Energy  
resonating *responsively*  
in perpetual transition

Flowing within change  
is the essence  
of T'ai Chi Chih

-Steve Ridley

The secret which brings fulfillment and freedom:

Whatever arises  
love and bless it.

-Steve Ridley

The basis of chi is cosmic love.

-Steve Ridley

## **MORE TCC EXPERIENCES**

### **NEW CONFIDENCE Rich Axline, Lompoc, CA**

I was accredited in San Diego, CA in October 1994. I am now teaching my second class. I do feel confident about how I teach the TCC movements. But it has been a challenge for me to do presentations.

I have grown and feel more confident about getting up in front of people now, but I feel that I don't know enough to be a dynamic speaker. To really turn people on to TCC. To let them know their good comes from within themselves not from outside of them.

TCC for me is wonderful. I don't have to think much. I can tune the world out and let go and let the CHI be so I can be the real me. The true me. I consider myself to be just a simple man. Maybe that's why I like TCC so well - because it is so simple to do and so peaceful.

In my very first class we had a fantastic demonstration on how the Chi is working. A student came to class with a problem with her

back. I noticed when she came in that she was having difficulty in walking. I asked her if she was all right. She said she was fine and that she was not going to miss any of this class for any reason. She said she had hurt her back earlier and she was in a great deal of pain. So I told her not to push herself or overdo. If she got tired, just stop and sit down. (Besides the Chi won't flow properly.)

We continued and I didn't think anymore about her pain. After class was over she came up to me and said, "Rich, my back is better. All of the pain went away." She felt so much better I had her share her experience with the class.

Then another lady in the class said that she had come to class with a hurt leg and her pain went away also. She said that she had forgotten about the pain in her leg until Marilyn mentioned her back pain going away. She was happy and surprised that TCC works.



### **TCC Principle**

Economize, yet be plentiful in your efficiency.

-Steve Ridley

**SEIZING SERENITY**  
**Anne Doering, Albuquerque, NM**

If I do anything strange, like stop or move in an unpredictable way during practice, don't be alarmed." This student's comment brought on an aura of impending danger, disrupting the small class of two other students and two teachers.

When I experienced a mild seizure during the second session of our class, my spoken instructions and movements stopped, my eyes closed, and I rested my head to one side momentarily. Upon returning from this "absence," my thoughts were scattered and out of focus. Where did we leave off? What movement were we on? Fortunately, it took less than a minute to clear my thinking. I appreciated that Barbara was teaching with me--to be present in case of just such an interruption.

During teacher training, my presentation dealt with how I manage seizures during practice. It became my resolve to bring the serenity of T'ai Chi Chih to others with similar experiences. So after a sales pitch to my epilepsy support group, who should sign up for class but the leader herself! Louise, being a very speedy personality, finds that she loves T'ai Chi Chih and enjoys how its practice calms her down. We both ride home from class with Barbara, since it is unsafe for those of us who have seizures to drive.

Week eight of class rolls around all too soon. Team teaching has worked out well, allowing for a front and side or back view of each movement to be demonstrated concurrently. Now it turns out to be Louise's turn to show us her type of

seizure. Her comment was, "We never get to see our own seizures. Just those of others. And each person's are different." I was leading the early movements when Louise offered her warning. She could feel a seizure coming on. Standing face to face with her, I saw her whole body tense and begin to collapse. She was about to hit her head on objects behind her, but I caught her just in time and guided her safely down to the floor. After a short struggle, she relaxed, rested her head in my lap, turned to the side, and kicked the wall.

Where is the chi during a seizure? I was frightened and yet curious to see someone else through this "storm." Louise was unharmed, but dazed. It took some ten minutes of darting around the bookstore (our host for the class) for her to calm down and to recognize her surroundings again. We rejoined the others to finish the final practice and say our good-byes.

Thanks to the Serenity Shop for providing our classroom space and for being understanding about those of us who suddenly "seize up" and lose our bearings. T'ai Chi Chih helps us to ground again, to calm down, and to find our center.

Thanks to Justin for this joyous way to guide our healing. My student, Barbara, and I have experienced "serenity in the midst of activity."

Thanks to Barbara for sharing this teaching/learning experience of "joy in the heart, joy in the mind, joy in the soul."

## **POETRY**

**The Rhyming Side of Chi**  
Carol Glinski, *Jacksonville, FL*

As I practice Tai Chi every day  
seems like everything's going my way.  
My students love classes and show up in masses  
the mutual love we convey.

One student found relief from her joint pain  
another found deeper religion  
Still another felt fine  
when he straightened his spine  
says it cured him from being a curmudgeon.

While reading my Journal I've found  
inspiring proses abound.  
Thought I'd send my submission  
of grand composition  
but my pen simply circles around.

Think I, "Be like Justin and Steve  
Inspirational thoughts they conceive.  
Listen with prudence  
what you say to your students  
and surrender to Chi and believe."

So to Tai Chi Chih practice I go  
for creative juices to flow.  
Thoughts turn on a dime,  
but they all seem to rhyme.  
It won't fit in the Journal I know.

Then I thought do I have to be elegant?  
Do I have to be solemn and kind?  
Who says there's a law that humor's a flaw  
when channeling Chi through your mind?

So I guess I just have to be me.  
And using a different parameter,  
here's a rhyme for your journal  
from the CHI that's eternal  
in a phrase of iambic pentameter.



Sasha Glinski---sharing Hakuin's experience?  
" Seeing things of the world is like  
seeing the back of my own hands!"