



THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

Volume 13, No. 1

Spring Equinox

March 1996

THREE LITTLE WORDS

Justin Stone

Vairagya, Ahimsa, Prajna. There! I've put the whole of Spiritual Practice into three Sanskrit words, meaning (respectively): Non-Attachment (or Detachment), Non-Violence (in all forms, not only physical) and Inherent Wisdom. Living from natural intuitive Inherent Wisdom is the reward for successful Practice.

And the aim of all true Spiritual Practice (having nothing to do with Religious Dogma and Mythology) is to eliminate the Habit Energies (Vashanas) that have accumulated through many lifetimes, purging the compulsions that have

formed us and guide our lives, making our Karma.

Ahimsa, non-violence, is comparatively easy; Vairagya, detachment, is terribly difficult in our modern life, being in the midst of it and yet detached from it. Not one in a million realizes Vairagya.

Live a straight-forward, non-scheming life and you will be on the way.

(Used with permission from Justin Stone)



Our permanent state of being

(currently identifying as an individualized perceiver
experiencing life from within a matrix
of specialized mental-emotional-sensory faculties)

represents the highest wisdom and deepest love available anywhere.

- 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

Light and uplifted
while deeply planted
Openly centered in the
vertical expanse/horizontal planes
Finely threaded axis
suspending one-pointed aim
Flowing consciousness Pervasive
Fully here and beyond Now



VFJ INNER WORKINGS

Subscription Drive Update

Our annual outreach mailing to TCC teachers was received with ardor with least 50% prompt and congenial responses from (some new and mostly renewing) *VFJ* subscribers. Thank you! for demonstrating your continuing support!

Next *VFJ* Issue Deadline: May 1

We need more news and articles for the upcoming pre-conference issue of *VFJ* (to be mailed in June). You can make a meaningful contribution by sharing: a note about your teaching/practice, poetry, photo, etc. Write: *VFJ*, 1477 - 155th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578-1922.

1996 TCC Conference

Southern California teachers present an update on the TCC Conference scheduled to meet in San Diego this July. See details on enclosed flyer and Calendar Notes (page 20) for this TCC opportunity to energetically commune.

Gratitude to *VFJ* Staff

A number of bay area teachers have met for several years now to extend their time and energy in preparing *The Vital Force Journal* for mailing. We express ongoing appreciation to our caring and generous volunteers.

We acknowledge with special honor, Lois Mahaney, for exceptional dedication in manifesting the vital force as a Journal of Tai Chi Chih. Since its inception, over ten years ago, Lois has been central in seeing an evolving newsletter printed with loving continuity!

By her certainty in its purpose, Lois will remain the key resource correspondent and phone contact for *VFJ* and TCC teacher referral projects (managing mailings, directory database and *VFJ* related communications). If you have questions about your subscription or changes to your teacher directory listing, you may call Lois directly at 510/276-5718.

A grateful welcome to Roberta Taggart, area TCC teacher from Cupertino, CA, who has newly committed her service to producing *The Vital Force* hereon. After a long period of *VFJ* seeking additional staff support, Roberta came forward and happily joined right in: typesetting and organizing a refined Spring issue. Her new beginning is our Joy!

Sincere appreciation to all staff, subscribers and contributors who support *The Vital Force*. Your creative energy expands the content of each issue.

May spring blossom in our hearts -- deepened peace and a profusion of joy!

S

Elizabeth Salada
For *The Vital Force*

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READERS COMMENTARY

OPEN FORUM

A question for *VFJ* teachers, Justin, and Steve to respond to in an "OPEN FORUM" column:

How do you handle (what do you say to?) students in class who correct other students' movements or try to tell you (the teacher) how to teach?

Feedback, please: Open Forum c/o *VFJ*, 1477 - 155th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578

Susan Hudgens, San Jose, CA

READERS REFLECT . . .

"Life is like a precious jewel; always needing to be shined, appreciated, worn daily, and reflecting its reminder that every person in the world has a definite and irreplaceable role of our own uniqueness. At the same time, our beauty in the Total Oneness."

R. M. Arguello-Sheehan, Sun City, AZ

Center

**"At the center of
every human being
lies Bliss . . .**

**Clouds sometimes conceal
this simple fact,
as they sometimes conceal
the sun."**

"The consciousness can always find the place of the still lake . . . placid and yet pliable and ready for movement. The essence of this aspect of consciousness is that which can be found expressed in T'ai Chi . . . stillness in motion."

Mark W. Jones, Denver, CO

READERS WRITE

I thought some of the teachers of TCC might be interested in hearing about "Working With Stroke Victims" (see page 16 of this issue) ... maybe they've had similar results, maybe not. They may have also stayed away from the idea of working with stroke victims, because they thought TCC probably wouldn't work well for them. This may even surprise some.

Ray Watson, Batavia, NY

I enjoy the *Journal* and find the exchange of ideas, T'ai Chi info. and art of various mediums to be both fun and stimulating on many levels. Yours for greater chi awareness,

Mark W. Jones, Denver, CO

I always do enjoy my contact via *VFJ* with the TCC network.

Betty Comey, Provincetown, MA

I really enjoy *The Vital Force* and don't want to miss an issue.

Rita Foster, Minn., MN

Always fun to read the *VFJ* and find out what Justin and Steve are thinking and what some of the other teachers are up to. It's a tough job and you are all doing great at it!

Jean Katus, Ft. Yates, ND



THOUGHTS TO SHARE

-- from Steve Ridley, Denver, CO

I wanted to share this clearly stated reminder of Swami Chetanananda's with VFJ readers:

The World

The World is everything manifest. It is not an illusion, but it is not the substance of reality. It is like a play, and we are simply acting out parts. It has a certain magic and we should learn to play our parts very well, but we should never come under its spell.

Spiritual people use their experience in the world to learn discrimination, compassion, and freedom from judgment and fear. They are equally happy with austerity or opulence. They move through the world with great detachment, seeing it as nothing other than an opportunity for growth.

— Swami Chetanananda
Songs From the Center of the Well

-- from Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM
Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, Jan. 96

One of my students, Karen Klett, came across this gem in a book she's reading on science and the Tao. Isn't it grand?

The wind was flapping a temple flag and two monks were having an argument about it.

One said the flag was moving, the other said the wind was moving.

They could come to no agreement on the matter.

They argued back and forth.

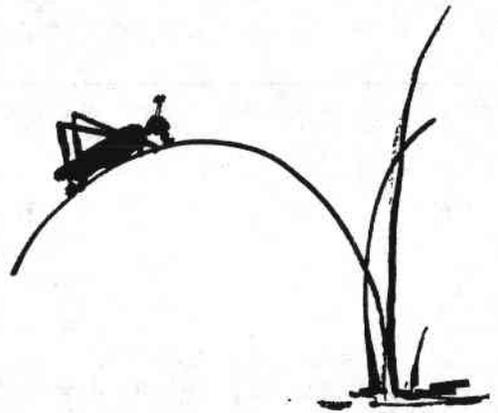
Eno the Patriarch said,

**"It is not that the flag or the wind is moving;
it is that your honorable minds
are moving."**

-- from Lee Campbell, Phoenix, AZ

The Superior Man prizes three things: the first is gentleness, the second is frugality, the third is humility. By being gentle he can be bold; by being frugal, he can be liberal; and by being humble he becomes a leader among men.

— Lao-tse



A Zen Master living as a hermit on a mountaintop was asked by a monk, "What is the Way?"

"What a fine mountain this is!" the master replied.

"I am not asking about the mountain. I am asking you about the Way."

"So long as you cannot go beyond the mountain, my son, you cannot reach the Way."

-- Unknown

IN MEMORIAM

*"For Life and Death are one,
Even as the river and the sea are one"*

--Kahlil Gibran
The Prophet



Died
John Joseph Barbour
Husband of
Joy Barbour



The T'ai Chi Chih community wishes to express their heartfelt sympathy to Joy Barbour on the loss her husband, John.

For those who wish to write, Joy can be reached at: HC4, Box 17-W, Payson, AZ 85541

Meditation in the Bosque de la Mente Jan Arrott, Albuquerque, NM

Experiencing the morning in my soul
the grey mystical diffusing dawn subtly
creeping into my awareness
that inner awakening to the fullness
of light which filters in, between the
trees of my mind, the calls of the birds
the flapping of wings taking flight.
Dew and mist and cool air currents
brush my cheeks with a light kiss
My eyes open up and I see the sky
all around me and my heart turns
to joy.

Source: *The New Mexico TCC News*

Christening

Rhonda St. Martin,
Albuquerque, NM

Rain
Blessed tears
River of Life
Carry me gently forward.
Moon Rising
Shrouded by the clouds
Cleansed
Tender
Ready

Source: *The New Mexico TCC News*



Attention

Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY

Where's my attention?
Where am 'I' now?
Once below . . .
Then into the brow.
Upward the climb,
Never the end . . .
Floating alone,
One to transcend!

A friendship founded in love and refined through time is
one of our most precious life gifts.

This love meets the center
of love in you and beyond the two.



Art work by Loretta M. Shriver

True Love

The love which is infinite yet endeavors to express
freely through each of us is true.

NOTES TO TEACHERS

TEACHING TIPS FOR T'AI CHI CHIH TEACHERS (also useful for students)

Justin Stone

A good T'ai Chi Chih teacher must be able to detect the faults of the student -- and then be able to correct them. This means that, through his or her own practice, the teacher must have come to more than a shallow understanding of T'ai Chi Chih movements. Teaching is more than just showing where to place the hands and feet.

Once the teacher has shown the correct way to move (softly, with continuity), he or she might look for faults in balance. In a movement such as Pulling Taffy, the pupil may have shifted the weight to the left side while the hands are still on the right side. (The hands and weight must shift together to the Yang side.) This is awkward. As in all movements, the shift in body weight must be synchronized with the movement of the hands. Teachers must have an understanding of "substantial" and "insubstantial."

If the pupil does not have enough body coordination to do this, then he or she must be

allowed to do the best he or she can. However, a teacher must be able to do this gradual shift of weight correctly. The pupil will imitate what and how the movement is done by the teacher.

With most it is a lack of understanding, and the teacher must be able to spot the difficulty and correct it through example. Another common difficulty is moving forward to a stiff front knee, instead of a bent knee that takes the weight and becomes substantial. This can also happen in regard to the back knee. The back knee should bend the same amount as the front knee, not one bending and the other becoming stiff (and remaining insubstantial).

With almost every movement, there are things to look for that to be corrected, and the teacher must realize this. It is my hope to write a pamphlet that will point out these different possibilities and how to correct them.

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, Feb. 1996

TEACHING TIPS PAMPHLET

Justin Stone has written a new pamphlet called "Teaching Tips" for T'ai Chi Chih Teachers". There is no charge; it is free. Teachers who turn up at Vic Berg's "Seijaku and Meditation" Retreat, at Steve Ridley's one day "Meditation Retreat", at the April Teachers' Training Course, or at the summer Conference, will be handed the pamphlet. Other teachers may receive their free copy by mail from Connie or Carmen, who helped finance this venture, by sending \$1. to

one of them to cover the cost of envelope and mailing. We feel teachers will find the pamphlet very useful, and that's why it is being offered as a gift.

Contact:

Carmen Brocklehurst
9500 Prospect, NE
Albuquerque, NM
87112

Connie Hyde
P.O. Box 349
Cedar Crest, NM
87008-0349

SEIJAKU PRACTICE

HOLDING FAST, AND LETTING GO

Ed Altman, Fairfax, CA



Justin frequently teaches the T'ien T'ai form of meditation during his intensive workshops, and has discussed the fact that the movements of Seijaku are based on similar principles. T'ien T'ai is a meditation practice of, **"holding fast, and letting go"**. It requires the practitioner to "hold fast" to a single point of concentration. When thoughts come forward, the point of focus is "let go" as the origin of the thought is observed. Eventually, when the thought subsides, the attention returns to the single point of concentration. This practice allows one to encounter thoughts without fighting them, and often leads to profound meditation experiences.

In Seijaku, the practice of **"holding fast, and letting go"** is expressed by working through a resisting "force", and returning to softness. During the practice, one must pay specific attention to the transitions between the hard and soft aspects of the movements. It is a common mistake to anticipate the resistance and begin pushing hard too early, thereby avoiding the opportunity to reside in softness. After multiple repetitions, a residual resistance may build up and overpower the movements.

This leads to the question "What is being "held fast" and what is being "let go" during Seijaku? Most focus on resistance, and end up being controlled by it. Focus on softness instead! Make the movements "mostly soft" and just work through the resistance at the appropriate moment. This is how Seijaku is taught -- as mostly softness. This does not mean that there is not substantial resistance, but it need not become the consuming focus of the movements. When resistance is encountered, it is like a thought during T'ien T'ai meditation; it must be observed with detachment.

Remaining quiet in the still center of things, working through resistance as needed, being sensitive to the timing of it all, and returning to softness. This is the definition of Seijaku: **Serenity in the midst of activity.**

**to be impatient
is to doubt
the timing
and impeccability
of the universe**



**When the life-impulse flows through us in constructive, harmonious ways,
good T'ai Chi is enacted.**

TCC PRACTICE

Though many initially come to T'ai Chi Chih for stress management and health building, with regular practice they also undergo a quickening of the spiritual actualization process; a more rapid blossoming of capacities which represent their most complete identity. Similarly, those attracted to sitting meditation practice for the life enhancing side benefits widely reported,

eventually experience, if they will persist, the life transforming benefits of deepening spiritual remembrance.

The reason one is attracted to T'ai Chi Chih isn't important. Regular, correct practice yields the fullest results which can seldom be predicted.



Meditation

**Contentment in quiet stillness is the certain foundation
of meditation practice.**

**The awareness that remains when the body has become comfortably still,
and thoughts of I and mine no longer dominate,
is real, permanent, dependable, complete.**



TEACHER - STUDENT

I recently came across this passage from my personal journal of some years ago:

"It is good to enjoy the personal company and consciousness of my Teacher for inspiration and renewal. It is also deeply refreshing, rejuvenat-

ing and creatively inspiring to quiet down in the peacefulness of this moment, alone."

Spiritual teachers who insist their students become strong and responsibly independent (and the sooner the better!) are the finest preceptors we can hope to attract.

Spiritual teachers are quickening agents, sparking growth in receptive students.



Compatible Flow

Thoughts on Grace and Karma

Grace is evident in the passage of each breath through the body.

Karma is what we do with the gift of each breath.

Grace is our Original Face expressed in our karmic life.



Spiritual Path

Some argue that “householder dharma” is a superior spiritual path where one lives Reality affirming principles in the midst of the trials inherent to daily interaction in our world.

In any case it is important to realize, whatever our chosen path, that living a conscious life doesn't require any special environment or circumstance.



Householder dharma
dancing our karma
knowing One
in all these things

SINKING INTO THE ESSENCE

It is hard for students and even teachers, to understand that T'ai Chi Chih is not just a beneficial exercise. It is so obvious that [it] has great physical benefits, that it helps control weight, and that, without effort or perspiration, it greatly enhances the energy level that the tendency is to feel that these are the major benefits of T'ai Chi Chih practice. If the one practicing persists, however, the deeper levels -- the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih, if you will -- begin to dawn on the practitioner and it is realized that T'ai Chi Chih is unique in design and that one begins to sense, and flow with, the great Cosmic Rhythm. T'ai Chi Chih is not designed for self-defense or any form of violence; rather it is an

inner discipline ("Naikan" in Japanese and "Nei Kung" in Chinese) that brings to life the dormant Vital Force (Intrinsic Energy) and balances it as it circulates it, breaking down blockages that may have existed for a long time, in a sense offering a rebirth if the student is sincere enough.

Words play no part, nor do concepts. The Prana (Chi) knows well enough what to do without an intellectual roadmap. All the practitioner has to do is enjoy it and reap the benefits of renewed Life Force.

Source: New Mexico TCC News, Nov. '95.



Spiritual Practice

Form and format don't matter. The result is what counts.

Are we experiencing progressive growth?

- Steve Ridley



Contentment

Unraveling the mystery of your own existence
results in ultimate contentment.

This is the most difficult,
most fulfilling
work we have to do.



We Dreamers

This is a desire world and a symbolic world;
a dream universe in which we are invited
to awaken and know freedom.

Acknowledging the infinite spiritual foundation
of our transitioning universe
is a step toward freedom.



FEATURES

TASTING THE FOOD ON THE TCC MENU

Justin Stone

Two letters I received this week, typical of many that come my way, give an idea of the constructive influence that T'ai Chi Chih teachers are having in relieving suffering and bringing a sense of peace and joy to people. A young lady, a new teacher, writes, "Having had juvenile rheumatoid arthritis since the age of 4, I am grateful and have never felt so flexible and symptom-free. I feel like I've been uncorked and the joy is just fizzing out all over!"

No publicity person could write statements like these. Only personal experience brings these feelings. They should be inspirational to all TCC teachers, showing what good they are bringing to people in their own teaching.

For those who stick to their regular practice, they will plumb the depths of T'ai Chi Chih, the Essence of it, and know these feelings for themselves. For those who begin to feel the joy of TCC practice and then inexplicably, back away from it, it is a shame that they do so. Perhaps they do not like the feeling of Joy, having enjoyed sadness since childhood.

I hope the teachers who read this will push on with their own practice and become active members of the TCC family. Steve Ridley and I wish all teachers this Joy.

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, December '95

TCC Practice

Practicing T'ai Chi Chih enables us to work constructively with the "evolutionary energy", quickening the emergence of our innately limitless capacity to give life to others while usefully and significantly nourishing ourselves.

- Steve Ridley

TCC TEACHING

Steve Ridley

As T'ai Chi Chih teachers we give without reservation to those attracted, and ideally remain available as a support person. Doing this, our task is complete. This is the constructive way to serve. It would be contrary to the spirit of T'ai Chi Chih to in any way encourage a dependency relationship with students.

One of Justin's early students upon successful completion of his teacher training course exclaimed, "Well, I don't need you anymore!"

Justin then confirmed, "His is the right attitude." He was willing to be self-disciplined and conscientious in his continuing involvement with T'ai Chi Chih.

The freer we are in ourselves, the more we can help free others. Well integrated, sensitive teachers are agents assisting students in the realization and unfoldment of their fullest potentials. There is nothing of self-interest in their sharing.

FEAST, PRACTICE, AND BE MERRY

Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM

Justin has remarked more than once about all the good food our T'ai Chi Chih family can put on the table. The potluck at the New Mexico Teachers Meeting in December was no exception. I replied joking that perhaps one of the many benefits accruing to us from our TCC practice is that we become realized cooks. I've decided that, well, maybe it's not a joke. I was just browsing a wonderful little book/calendar by Deng Ming-Dao, called *365 Tao* which describes feasting as

**"..the flame in mid-winter,
that kindles the fire of friendship,
and strengthens the community."**

Whether our feasts are after-Justin's-talk, gatherings at Carrows, part of working meetings, three squares at meditation retreats, or special occasions like Justin's birthday, we succeed in coming together to reaffirm the importance of our group. Borrowing from the essay, the cheer

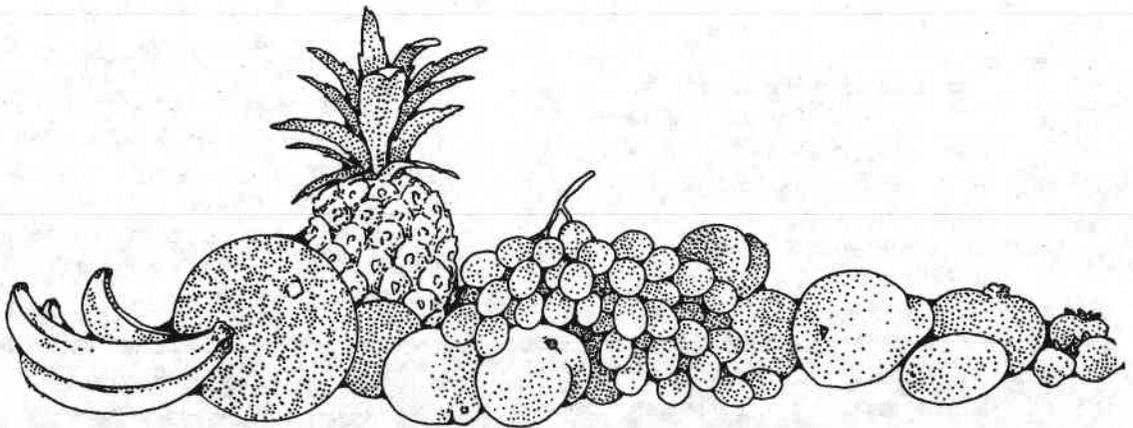
that we feel is a framework for involvement. Yes, a good gathering requires participation --- the efforts of organization, work, and attendance. Group practice, followed by good food joyfully prepared by all of us realized cooks, gives back sustenance for body and soul, a sense of belonging, and the accomplishment of something that we couldn't do as individuals alone.

It may be a stttrrrretch, or a too-literal rendering of the meaning, but these thoughts bring me around to Justin's frequent reference to a quote by Gopikrishna who said,

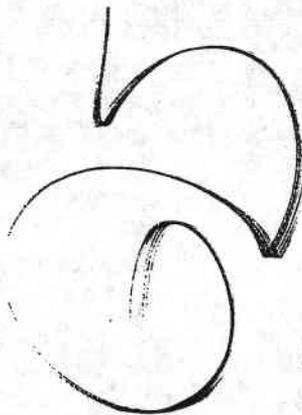
**"rest not with the taster,
nor with what is tasted;
rest with the tasting."**

We who feast (counting grams of fat), and the feasts we prepare, come and go but what our feasting represents neither begins nor ends.

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, Jan. '96



TEACHER'S ARTICLE



Water-
course
Way
Jen

THE CREATIVE NATURE

Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

While we were in Japan, we had the wonderful opportunity to have lunch at the temple with Mrs. Ogata. The surroundings, hundreds of years of contemplation and realization of our true nature, were very conducive to exploring our own true thoughts. We talked about the creative nature within all of us and how, because of deep inner experience, T'ai Chi Chih became a reality. Because T'ai Chi Chih gives us the strength to explore that creative side, my husband Brock (tongue in cheek, as usual) commented that we would all be creating new T'ai Chi Chih movements soon. It seemed like a logical conclusion. However, in that moment, it was evident that this is not the case at all. T'ai Chi Chih is like the Tao; it is unchanging. As long as it is left pure, we the faithful practitioners will bring about the "10,000 and

one expressions" because of what we gain from the strength of our T'ai Chi Chih practice.

To examine whether this is true or not, look at the creative expression in your life. Recently, I had the opportunity to see wonderful, unique and creative paintings by Steve Ridley. No one else could have created these paintings. She or he could try, and might come close, but the expression of Steve's inner being would be lost. The imitator cannot experience Steve's inner landscapes.

Painting, poetry, music, creative management, new computer program -- where do your creative talents lie? Our delight is that through T'ai Chi Chih we find true expression of our inner gift.

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, Feb. '96

TEACHER'S ARTICLE

ROW WITH THE FLOW (Cosmic Rhythm Simplified)

Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM

Whenever you're in a funk about how complex everything seems to be and how your life spins out of control all by itself, do what I do and remember that cute little round we all used to sing with such gusto.

**Row, row, row your boat,
Gently down the stream.
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,
Life is but a dream.**

First of all, it's YOUR boat. You're the one who has to do the rowing, and getting there isn't

necessarily going to be easy, but note that it does state "gently," not roughly. Add to this that it says DOWN the stream, not UP the stream. Going up the stream is against the current of the natural flow of life, not to mention it's a lot more work than going with the flow. Most important is the emphasis on the words' "Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily." Merrily gets repeated, count them, FOUR times. So there's joy on your journey down the stream. Isn't it grand? Would Lao Tsu have liked this analysis?

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, Dec. 1995



When an illumined mind accomplishes the **'chopping of wood
and carrying of water'**, nothing is left undone.



Though 10,000 things are often seductive and entrapping
they are essentially neutral in themselves.
We are empowered to choose how we relate with the changing.



Many involvements potentially cloud essential Knowing.
Attempting to organize spirituality is one.



Unresolved karma
not only of this
but of previous
space-time sojourns
imprisons us
until Awake!



Enlightenment

We tend to add on
until remembering
nothing is left out.



Freedom

Many are the attachments
which seemingly bind us
These arise from the notion:
I of myself exist apart.



Seeing Partially

My perception is this, now that - fragments,
superficial fragments of the Whole.



Integrity

Spiritual power manifests when we align with the Real.
This is Integrity.

CALENDAR NOTES

UPDATE

1996 TCC INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS' CONFERENCE

San Diego Conference Committee

The registrations are coming in daily for the 1996 conference. Thank you to all who have sent in early registrations. You have assisted us in being very organized so that we can give you the best conference ever.

We are having a lot of fun preparing for your July visit to San Diego. It will be great sharing the grand Pacific Ocean and all of the lovely San Diego surroundings that are visible from the campus of the University of San Diego. As the conference director at the University continues to meet our every need, we are joyfully convinced that we have chosen THE most perfect location in all of San Diego county.

Remember to register for Seijaku which begins immediately following the closing of the conference. It will be the most opportune time

to enrich your life with the teaching of Seijaku since your energy will be at its' highest after the conference. Justin says that comparing T'ai Chi Chih to Seijaku is like turning a 10 watt bulb into 1000 watts!! **DON'T MISS IT!!!**

A note from our travel agent T'ai Chi Chih teacher, Robin Dohrn-Simpson . . . Plane fares are at an all time low right now sooooo, take advantage of a very inexpensive trip to San Diego, coupled with the ability to work, first hand, with Justin and Steve in the company of T'ai Chi Chih teachers from all over the world!!! We are JOYFULLY awaiting your arrival.

For further information see enclosed flyer or contact Susan Patterson, 733 Lincoln Avenue, El Cajon, CA 92020; Ph. 619/441 - 1165.



Chris Endres, Kathy Edwards, Jim Lestor, and Arturo Bantia busy folding Conference Registrations

1996 T'AI CHI CHIH EVENTS CALENDAR

April 8-13	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, Albuquerque, NM Contact: Karen Scharf Morgan, 488 Pyrite Dr., NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124; Ph. 505/891-2829	\$380
April 29 - May 4	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, Chicago, IL Contact: Berta Castellanos, 9219 Crawford, Evanston, IL 60203; Ph. 708/677-0659	\$380
May 1 June 15	Deadline for VFJ Summer Solstice issue. Send your articles, poetry, seasonal news. Mailing of VFJ at Lois Mahaney's, San Lorenzo; Ph. 510/276-5718	
May 11-12	Exploring Meditative Ways with Steve Ridley, Redwood City, CA Contact: Sandy McAlister, 24835 Second St., Hayward, CA 94541; Ph. 510/582-2238	
May 27 - June 1	TCC Training with Steve Ridley, Anaheim, CA Contact: Tim Stuetz, 116 Evelyn Dr., Anaheim CA 92805-3418; Ph. 724/535-0357	\$380
June 20-21 June 21-23	TCC Teacher Renewal with Steve Ridley, Mahwah, NJ Exploring Meditative Ways with Steve Ridley, Mahwah, NJ Contact: Edie Budney, 20 Aubrey Rd., Upper Montclair, NJ 07043; Ph. 201/746-1947	\$ 65 \$165
July 26-28	1996 T'ai Chi Chih International Teachers' Conference, San Diego, CA Contact: Susan Patterson, 733 S. Lincoln Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020; Ph. 619/441-1165 or see enclosed flyer.	
July 28-30	Seijaku Training Contact: Jim Lestor, 9535 Mission Gorge Road, Suite K, Santee, CA 92071; Ph.: Day 619/596-2160; Eve. 619/445-4522; FAX 619/596-2165 or see enclosed flyer.	
August 8	Deadline for VFJ Conference issue. Send your impressions, comments, pictures, etc.	
August 23-25	Exploring Meditative Ways with Steve Ridley, San Diego, CA Contact: S. Patterson, 733 S. Lincoln Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020; Ph. 619/441-1165	
September 8-13 Sun. -Fri.	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, Elberon, NJ Contact: Sr. Antonia Cooper, Villa Maria, 641 Somerset St., N. Plainfield, NJ 07060-4909; Ph. 908/757-3050 or 769-6498	\$380
Sept. 30 - Oct. 5	TCC Teacher Training with Steve Ridley, San Diego, CA Contact: S.Patterson, 733 S. Lincoln Ave., El Cajon, CA 92020; Ph. 619/441-1165	\$380

Editor's Note: If you are planning an event in your area that you feel would interest other TCC teachers, please let us know so that it can be included in the Calendar. Be sure to include date, any deadlines and the phone number and address of the person to contact. Also, we continue to request a diversity of contributions (articles, letters, poetry, photographs, etc.) which show TCC's positive influence on our lives.

THE ART OF TEACHING

THE TCC HABIT

Eugene L. Box, Deming, NM

After the third class, I realized some of the students just were not doing the daily practice.

SOLUTION:

After review practice at the fourth class, I explained that in addition to learning the movements and the “how” of doing them, there remained something else of great importance. What good is TCC if we do not practice? In order for me to do the very best for each student, it is necessary to help each student establish the TCC daily habit (practice).

I asked them if they wanted to play the “homework” game.

THE GAME:

“Your homework is to practice each day through the next class. That will be six practice sessions on your own. There is no time requirement for your practice.”

“You will be asked if you did your homework either here in class or in private as you choose. You will answer yes or you will give one reason why you failed to do your homework. No one in class is interested in your reason. They could care less, but this gives you an opportunity to be with your response. This way you hear your excuse, whatever it is, and face yourself with the answer. You will get to examine where you are coming from on this daily practice discipline of TCC. Any questions? Who wants to play?”

Each student committed to play the game with reports to be made in class. I then gave each student a calendar page (copy) for the next four classes (November). They were instructed to place the calendar in a place where they could not miss seeing it each morning. This served as a reminder. They were to mark the practice for each day on the calendar as completed.

RESULTS:

It was never necessary to take class time for individual reports. Each student owned a commitment made in class. They kept their commitments as best they could. Eye contact with each student and reference to the calendar was sufficient to nudge each one gently into the habit of TCC.

At the conclusion of the eighth class, I told the students their commitment in class was now complete. I told them they each now owned the three elements of TCC: the movements, the “how” of the movements, and the habit of daily practice. With that, I tore up the November calendar and thanked them for completion for themselves, and for allowing me to do the very best for each of them.

The certificates of completion were given to the students with the reminder that entitlement to many hours of regular personal practice is their commitment to themselves and to the daily TCC practice.



TEACHERS' TIPS

STRUCTURING CLASSES AND PRACTICE SCHEDULES

Tara Stiles, Sacramento, CA

After years of teaching TCC, I've settled into a structure that seems to work well for me and students. I teach a Level 1: six week class; then a Level 2: six weeks class. Then students are invited to attend a once a month Saturday morning practice session. These are usually held in a local park unless weather conditions are not favorable. I like to vary the location but I have found continuity actually works best.

Sometimes when my schedule allows, I offer a four or six week Level 3 class that gives students greater depth in their practice. I don't really like calling the classes Level 1, 2, 3 but I do so because after years [of teaching] it has become apparent [that] students like the sense of achievement they feel when they progress to a new level.

TEACHING THE OLDER POPULATION

Ruth Marie Arguello-Sheehan, Sun City, AZ

In our classes at Arizona State University, Sun City, AZ this new year, we have both Beginning, and Intermediate & Advanced TCC classes. In both these classes, as well as large practice groups at the area recreation centers, etc. we are more and more aware of the interest and value of TCC to our over 55 year-old populations.

Unfortunately, some other T'ai Chi version teachers have suddenly seen the marketability of this area and are teaching classes inappropriate to this age population. We are getting reports of injuries, especially to knees, and hips, and backs. This is sad, not only because of the pain involved, but because many people as a result of these other classes, mistakenly "lump" all T'ai Chi classes as dangerous.

As a retired RN, and being an "older adult" myself, I'm very aware of the bodies' beauty and possibilities. Even in T'ai Chi Chih we quickly

and carefully watch for possible problems or inappropriate ways of moving their bodies so we can anticipate mistakes in movements that might cause physical problems. We take time at the beginning of classes to find out if students have special needs. We make no medical promises, but are sensitive to each-one's specialness. We even teach to many folks in wheel chairs or who must sit for part of the classes. Many "limited folks" are standing at the end of the beginning series. Our youngest student last year was 9 years old, our oldest 96 years.

We have always included special attention and practice to breathing techniques. We frequently use music with our classes. We do request all Beginning students, or couples, buy the blue Justin Stone's basic textbook for TCC. We offer Justin's video and audio tapes, also. We hold quarterly TCC Club meetings with appropriate speakers. Our bi-yearly Retreats or trips are both enriching and fun.

GETTING STARTED

LOIS MAHANEY IS GUEST TEACHER AT CLASSES FOR SENIORS

Pat Huseby, Danville, CA

Lois Mahaney was my honored guest teacher at the Senior Centers in San Ramon and Dublin on Thursday, November 30. Many of you know Lois as Resource Correspondent for and Editor of *The Vital Force*, but her contributions to TCC include more than just that role. Lois gives unselfishly of her time to help other teachers, especially new ones like me (accredited June 1995).

An example of this is the time she spent with my classes last fall as I was getting started as a teacher. Lois enjoys assisting new teachers, sharing with them handouts she has passed out to her students over the years. I am most grateful to her for her willingness to help TCC teachers as they get started.

She taught both of my classes. We learned new ways of working the form -- like looking out another window. It was such a privilege to have her meet and teach my students. As you can see by the photos with this article, they were so pleased to have her there. They all enjoyed chatting with her after class and asking questions. Many students have purchased her TCC shirts and wear them to class.

She is a wonderful example to all of us, especially seniors who are inspired by what she does. I am grateful for her friendship and her willingness to unreservedly share her knowledge and time with new teachers in service to the TCC community.



San Ramon Senior Center
Lois Mahaney and Pat Huseby (both at far right in both photos) with senior students



TEACHER'S ARTICLE

SENIOR SIT-DOWN TCC

Pat Huseby, Danville, CA

After attending the summer International Teachers' Conference in San Diego, CA which featured a workshop on teaching seated TCC, I was presented with an opportunity to teach a group of seniors, aged 83 to 96. Thus, I recently embarked on my first seated TCC class.

When I first saw these students, they were dozing and snoring in the living room of their beautiful retirement home. Now through TCC they are bright, alert and laughing! They are excellent students. What a privilege to give the gift of TCC, Joy Through Movement, and to share in the laughter that accompanies that joy.

Students reported the number one benefit of TCC has been peace of mind (serenity),

followed by stress reduction, better sleep, and improved balance. These seniors also especially like the opportunity to socialize. No class fee is charged.

One student commented. "I can look at things from another point of view now. I don't get as "down" as I used to." "We have to let go, and we have to know that we have the strength to let go." she emphasized.

Among my students are a man with Parkinson's Disease and a woman who was Miss Colorado in 1926 when she attended the Miss America Pageant. TCC has given these seniors a focus. One of the seniors reported practicing one hour and 15 minutes. Incredible!!!



TCC EXPERIENCES

WORKING WITH STROKE VICTIMS

Ray Watson, Batavia, NY

In June ('95) I went on "talk radio" WBTA, in Batavia, to introduce TCC to the area public. One of my listeners turned out to be Mary . . . a stroke victim in her 70's. In mentioning some of the benefits reported by participants in TCC, Mary's attention was caught and she told her husband, "Get a hold of that man and tell him I want to take 'High C' from him!" (She apparently misheard T'ai Chi as 'High C') and soooo -- it became known between her and I in the ensuing months.

It might interest teachers to know that this was a woman who had been paralyzed on her left side (hand, arm, hip, leg and foot) a year before with very little progress and had stopped going to therapy sessions. Within one session she was getting feeling (i.e., pain) in her left foot! Within three sessions she was getting lurching reactions each time she brought the energy down to her tan t'ien . . . (I had her doing each exercise she learned with her right arm and leg, and

visually seeing herself doing the same with the left side as if she really were).

As time went on (and I taught her self-hypnosis), she began to replace the pain with "discomfort" and then to keep telling her body that it was now feeling, i.e., giving her body/mind permission to manifest it as a "feeling" rather than discomfort. Five months later, Mary [has returned] to therapy, [is using] self-hypnosis, practice[s] TCC regularly, and is standing. She also lies on the bed and pushes her husband away from her 15 or more times with HER LEFT FOOT! She does her version of all 20 movements (but has her favorites) . . . her husband also has taken up TCC as well, so they practice together. Hopefully, she will be walking soon!

Although I've taught visualization, self-hypnosis and PATIENCE as well, I really feel that the T'ai Chi Chih, in combination with these techniques, has helped her progress much faster than she would have otherwise!

TEACHING T'AI CHI CHIH IN A CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON

Mariane Merritt, Galt, CA

After completing the teachers training in Alameda, CA in June '95, I conducted a small class for a few friends over the Summer. Then, in December, I began teaching T'ai Chi Chih to inmates at the State Prison where I work. I have taught many different types of classes to many different types of people over the past 15 years, but I find that teaching T'ai Chi Chih to inmates is among the most enjoyable experiences I have ever had. We had an introductory course of eight sessions. The inmates took it very

seriously, with many of them exhibiting much poise and skill. Two of the men were oriental and had practiced T'ai Chi Chuan. They both enjoyed the class, sharing some of their wisdom and insights with us. One of our Associate Wardens has a black belt in one of the martial arts. He attended a T'ai Chi Chih class and has given us full support. Fourteen inmates completed the class. Next year I will be teaching four or five groups of inmates a year at the prison.

TEACHER NEWS/FROM ABROAD

SOUTH AFRICA UPDATE

Sister Francis Kay, Little Falls, MN writes: Almost six months has passed since our memorable Denver TCC Teachers' Conference. Here was initiated the incredible idea of having an "African fund" to bring Sister Marie-Ann (Main) to the USA for Teacher Accreditation. We have received your gifts and energy for this project to continue, and at this point we are just over the half-way mark into our flight ticket. We are hoping to have Sister Marie-Ann come this Spring if possible. To begin advancing our valued "Joy through Movement" into Africa, depends on everyone's support in this endeavor. Please remember this need .

An interesting note: Jean Katus gave me the name of her friend in South Africa who had undergone a crash course (in the USA) in TCC.

NEW ZEALAND via YORK, ENGLAND

Craig Duncan, Napier, NZ writes:

A big "Hello" to you all. That is not only those of you who I met at Liz Salada's June 1995 Teachers Training in Alameda, CA. It's about time I filled you in on my progress and plans. Firstly, I have to say sorry for taking so long to reply to your letters, but I have only recently stopped sleeping on other peoples lounge floor, [or] "dossing", as it is called here in England.

I would like to thank Sandy McAlister for the use of her "such huge" apartment that we somehow managed to sleep three. A big thank you to Steve Ridley and Justin Stone for making it all possible and to Theda Gillespie for getting Glenn and I started. To everyone else for the

I spoke to Sister Marie-Ann about her, and when she went to Johannesburg during the Christmas holidays, made contact with her. Sister Marie-Ann was able to help her in some of the movements during their time together. Can this possibly be the seed for bringing our TCC to Africa?

Donations to "The African Fund" may be sent by making checks payable to: The African Fund, c/o Sister Francis A. Kay, 510 Second St., NE, Little Falls, MN 56345. Donations will be used to bring Sister Marie-Ann to the USA for teacher training. Sister Marie-Ann studied TCC with Sister Francis Kay during her nine month Residential Program at Wholistic Growth Resources. Unfortunately, she was unable to remain longer to be accredited.

help and support and, of course, those who made lunch.

After a week in London, Glenn and I went our own way. Glenn went on a tour to Egypt and then on home to NZ. After a few weeks of work in London, I have somehow ended up on a farm in Yorkshire. The main crop is potatoes and, yes, I have heard just about all the jokes on spuds a man can take. When the season has finished I, too, will go on a short trip.

In Glenn's latest letter he tells me he has started teaching (and out numbers six to one so far). I wish him luck and hope to join him at home some time in the new year.

TEACHER NEWS

CANADA

Gordon Wade, Oliver BC writes:

At present I have a class of grades 6 and 7 students -- 14 of them at noon hour at an elementary school. They wanted a "senior" to pass on some of their expertise and I agreed. In turn, the children will pass on their computer knowledge to me.

On Thursday evenings I have a class of eighteen (18) people, ladies and men. The youngest is 17 and the oldest is 77 -- and all enthusiastic!

Kassandra Jor, Vancouver, BC writes:

I have returned to the Vancouver, BC area and am teaching TCC classes here. My health and other issues made for a slow start. Classes were so small in the fall, I wondered if I could stay. I borrowed money for rent, food and other basics. I kept practicing and I kept teaching. I kept the vision that Vancouver was ready for T'ai Chi Chih and classes began to materialize for me in January. I am delighted!



NEW MEXICO

Ann Dowering, Sun City, NM writes:

In conjunction with tribal health care workers, my department within the School of Medicine at UNM conducted a one day physical activity conference for seniors recently at Jemez Pueblo. Our project, called "Healthy Jemez," is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and prevention in Atlanta, GA. Jemez Pueblo is one of the demonstration sites of the Center for Health Promotion in American Indian Communities (CHPAIC) where I work as a research assistant. . . .

After reading about the effects of exercise on falls in elderly patients in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA, May 3, 1995)*, our staff decided to offer a demonstration of T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) . . . our event provided an introduction to TCC.

Kathy Grassel, Albuquerque, NM writes:

Just when I think there's nothing left to learn! Students in my continuing class are like George Washington's revolutionary army -- ragtag, but earnest. The other day we were so overcome by Chi that we all had to sit down, me included. This just confirms what we've known all along: It doesn't matter one scintilla if your Ball is too high or your Platter too low if you practice with a sincere heart. I am constantly grateful to my students for teaching me.

Source: Both of the above were excerpted from recent issues of *The New Mexico TCC News*.

TEACHER NEWS

EAST COAST

Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY writes:

Sr. Antonia "Houston" Cooper hosted a weekend sharing/refining and TCC practice get-together at Lavalette, NJ on November 11. Attending were: Sr. Antonia, Edie Budney, Paula Favorito, Ann Marie Czyzewski, Sr. Jean Rosaire, Maureen Taylor, Mary Ruprecht, Sr. Dorothea Hudert and Ralph Garn. Time shared included open discussion about TCC and interaction with students, full TCC practice in the pavilion by the bay, refining each other's form (for those who missed TCC conference), great snacks and much welcomed camaraderie . . .

A 'Springtime' meeting was discussed with possibly a more central location for those who would like to attend from more 'remote' areas. . .

Sister Francis Kay, Little Falls, MN writes about Karen Carrier's Tea Ceremony:

Just before Christmas ... We gathered - four TCC teachers (Karen Carrier, Janet Arends, Carol Mochovak, and myself) and four devoted

students, around her oval table, with an empty chair for the unseen guest. ... Then the procedure for giving and receiving the tea and biscuits (cookies) began, in mindfulness -- respectful, thoughtful . . . After a period of energy filled silence, beginning with Karen, each was invited to share some aspect of her T'ai Chi Chih connection. The crowning gift was T'ai Chi Chih itself . . . [done] to 'Emblissening Movement' music (tape), we shared this time of harmonious "Joy Through Movement," bringing the boundless energy of our universal selves to peace for the world . . .

Betty Comey, Provincetown, MA writes:

. . . Life in Provincetown is delightful and I do believe I could be out almost daily for classes all over the cape -- if I chose to do so. I've enjoyed very much working with seniors in the Councils on Aging here in P-town, and [in] the neighboring town of Truro . . .



WEST COAST

Luba Blumburg, Oakland, Ca writes:

I [gave] a lecture demonstration on TCC at the San Francisco Athletic Club on February 29, 1996, to be followed by 10 teaching sessions, free to members.

Susan Hudgens, San Jose, CA writes:

I actually did start back at Milpitas Senior Center this month, honoring my commitment to return

[sometime after the birth of my daughter in September] and taking it on a month-by-month basis. The Director offered her staff to watch Natalie during the hour and the girls (students) in the class said they wouldn't mind holding her and taking turns. So with that kind of open support and willingness, I'd say the universe supports my attempt to return to teaching!

TCC IN PRINT

Excerpts from an article in the Community News, Milpitas, CA written by Monica Yadegar. Titled "Milpitas postman by day, t'ai chi chih teacher by night" the article features TCC instructor, Fred Muckel.

Seeing what the art did to a woman who spent a year in a body cast after back surgery turned Fred Muckel toward tai chi nearly 20 years ago. Since then, the longtime Milpitas Post Office letter carrier has been practicing the Chinese art in its various forms. In recent years, he has become a teacher himself.

Originally Muckel studied "t'ai chi chuan," which is considered a martial art. But after 15 years Muckel decided he could not perfect it to his satisfaction. While at a bookstore, however, he can across a book on the meditative art of "tai chi chih," a form of Chinese yoga.

"I read it and tried some of the movements, found a teacher, Susan Hudgens, and started studying with her," he said. "I went from student to teacher in 10 months with her, primarily because of my t'ai chi chuan background. It came pretty easily to me."

T'ai chi chih, which has only been taught world wide since 1975 and has about 700 teachers, is a 20-movement meditative set designed strictly for relaxation and stress reduction. Although it is open to any age, according to Muckel, typically people in their 30's to 60's practice.

"A lot of senior people also really like the movements, (because) they're nice and soft and gentle. There's no physical strain to it," he said. "It's been known to do a number of things for the body -- lower your blood pressure and it can aid in weight reduction. It's been known for people who have had cancer to go into remission. Of course everybody has their own experience with it, but the people that I've taught

really seem to enjoy it. It just takes a little dedication and a little effort to do the practice."

Muckel, who became accredited as a teacher in 1993, instructs at various places in the area, including the Milpitas Community Center. Hudgens, who usually teaches the one-hour Wednesday night class, has taken some time off to care for a new baby. Muckel has been substituting for her at the center.

He also teaches regularly at the Church of Religious Sciences and [periodically assists at] the Warm Springs Community Center in Fremont.

Classes are usually an hour long and range in sign-up fees from \$30 to \$46 for six- to eight-week sessions.

"It's really a wonderful thing and it's helped me a lot, (because) I have a back problem," Muckel said. "I enjoy teaching and don't care if only one student is there."



Fred Muckel resides in Fremont, CA

EVENTS FEEDBACK

SAN DIEGO REMINISCENCE: A GRATEFUL HEART

Penny Navis-Schmidt, Payson, AZ

I've been home from my T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training (Oct. 23-28, 1995) for over a week now, and remain so deeply touched by my experience. I cannot put into words the impact those six days have had on my life. As Steve said, "Your students will find you". ... mine already have. And I have found a deep sense of connectedness with a spiritual family that extends across our country and beyond. I am still floating on a cloud of Chi, yet I am grounded in myself and my practice as never before.

Thank you, Justin Stone, for creating the practice and the subsequent network of family and friends. Thank you, Steve Ridley, for your gentle suggestions and fine tuning of my TCC

movements; for your invitation to touch the God that dwells within me. Thank you, Susan Patterson, for the joyful organization you brought to the training. I am rarely so pleased with both the logistics and content of any training. Your presence, both before and during the training, was so appreciated. Thank you, Joy Barbour, for recognizing in me the potential to teach: for your love, direction and patience with my process.

And last, but not least, thank you my new T'ai Chi family. The 14 of you whom I shared the week with have touched me deeply. Fee the Chi flow from my heart to yours. I am looking forward to our reunion at the international Conference to be held at the end of July 1995.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN FALL PRACTICE

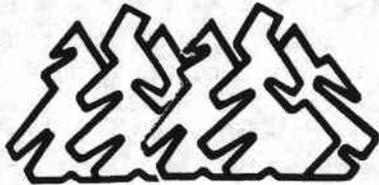


Steve Tang leads TCC practice at San Domiano Retreat House located in the hills above Danville, CA

EVENTS FEEDBACK

T'AI CHI CHIH IN THE CALIFORNIA REDWOODS

Jennifer Biehn, Berkeley, CA



This past summer I taught T'ai Chi Chih at "Art and the Spirit" week at Quaker Center in California's Santa Cruz Mountains. Each morning we gathered in Casa de Luz, House of Light, where 20 foot high windows allowed us to look deep into rolling mountains and valleys covered with redwoods. The forest grounded us, the light lifted our spirits. In this setting, teaching and learning the movements of T'ai Chi Chih was truly a job.

After an hour of instruction, I shared words of inspiration focusing on the beauty of bringing balance to one's life. I shared my own poetry and selections from my favorite authors. The poem "Being" was one.

Participants then took time to reflect, writing journal entries, mindfulness verses, and poetry. They shared their reflections in small groups. The poem "T'ai Chi Chih" by Selfa Robin Boyd was one of a number of beautiful poems written by students. The morning ended with an uninterrupted practice of T'ai Chi Chih.

I found myself waking in the morning delighted to greet another day. I witnessed changes in each student and received daily feedback on the beauty of T'ai Chi Chih and its impact on their physical and spiritual well being. After a week of teaching, I felt more calm and centered than I often feel on a week's vacation. The deep connection made with myself and with my students allowed the difference.

"T'ai Chi Chih" was one of 4 offerings at "Art and the Spirit". Other workshops included "Touching the Earth, Listening to Clay", "Celebrating Creativity, Exploring Diversity: A Journey in Sound", "Music and Movement", and Painting and "Writing as Meditation: Embracing the Sacred Connection". At the end of the week each class shared its gifts: raku vessels, paintings of life stories, songs of the heart, and joy through movement. As the 12 of us from class did T'ai Chi Chih together by firelight, candlelight, and moonlight, those who watched were deeply moved. The entire group then learned a few of the easier movements so that everyone was *pulling in the night's magical energy*.

I left the Quaker Center knowing I had shared deeply from within and had received deeply from the redwoods and lives I had touched.

(See poetry from this article on next page)

POETRY

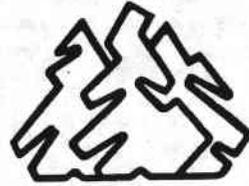
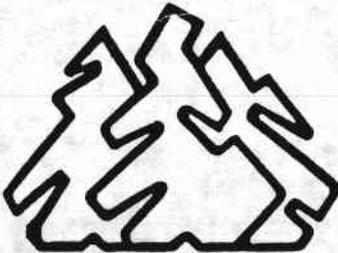
Being

**Being
The essence, the core
The thread which
Entwines, unwinds,
and knots
The fabric of our lives.**

**Being
the end, the means,
the ends reflected in the means**

**When will we see that
Being may be
More momentous
Than doing
Yet not abandon the doing?**

-- Jennifer Biehn



T'ai Chi Chih

**Rocking into my being
I found a soft place
To breathe
As the soles of my feet grew roots
Feeling their way down
Toward the center
Of the earth
Allowing
My spirit to fly
And
A bird flaps its wings
A pause
A breath
Coming home
To my Self
Feeling the roundness of my being
Round the platter
Feeling the roundness of my being
A pause
A breath
Rocking into my being
I remember**

-- Selfa Robin Boyd

EVENTS FEEDBACK

SOLITUDE AND JOYOUS ACCORD AT FALL MEDITATION RETREAT Jim Lestor, San Diego, CA

This was to be a new experience for me; I had resisted this experience for almost three years because I wasn't "ready." Justin stripped the last of my excuses and Carmen found me a spare bunk for the Fall (1995) Albuquerque Meditation Retreat.

On our way to the Dominican Retreat House, Justin explained that our home for the next two days would be an old hacienda and companion building recently acquired by the Order. We later learned that this was a very old land grant, originally belonging to the Balboa family.

The first "lesson" of the retreat came immediately. A spartan group of buildings changed to a warm country setting with the addition of 25 eager meditators. The spirit of our group was magical.

Our daily routine allowed three quality sessions of meditation instruction and practice with Justin. From the single focus of T'ien T'ai to the slow, rhythmic counting of our breaths, we all benefited from our master's extensive wisdom and experience.

Day two was a personal high point. All of us observed a day of silence. My mind was finally still. I enjoyed my food as never before. When I was reading, I stayed focused. The chapters flew by and I fully comprehended the message. I felt totally alive!

Evening programs were very special. During our first evening, we watched a video about Japanese gardens and relaxed as Justin fielded questions. Evening number two brought our group closer than many families. Justin asked us to share what we were looking for from the retreat and what our experience had been so far. What an outpouring! I'm not sure even Justin was prepared for how moving the past two days had been for so many people. What an experience this all has been!

As I write this article one week after our retreat, I'm increasingly grateful for the lasting gifts I received. My T'ai Chi Chih and meditation have been particularly focused and healing. I am really experiencing "joy!" through movement. By not being attached to results, I've relaxed and have just completed the most productive week I can remember. By being in the world but not of the world, this week sailed by somewhat like Bill Murray's perfect day in the movie Groundhog Day.

Thank you, Justin, for the many gifts but particularly for this insight: to change the world without, I must first repair and strengthen the world within.

Albuquerque



EVENTS FEEDBACK

CIRCLES WITHIN CIRCLES, CHANGE IS EVERYWHERE

Carmen Brocklehurst, Albuquerque, NM

Everything had been washed clean by a sweet rain on the night that everyone arrived for the Fall 1995 Meditation Retreat with Justin. The signature was Fall (a new time, one of change). It was to be a very special beginning because the Dominican Sisters had just moved into their new Retreat House just a couple of months before. It was our first retreat in their new home. Everyone seemed to fit right in to their new place as they arrived. The joy on the faces was wonderful to see. It was amazing how, over the next few days, this joy was to become a deep glow that comes from giving our undivided attention to the Chi within. This time we were to experience quiet not only with the eyes closed, but also with eyes wide open. A day of silence was a special addition to our retreat.

From the beginning there was a washing away of the old, a change in the air. The cool of fall was definitely here after a hot summer. The trees were wearing brilliant golden leaves. In our new quarters, and now even in our relationship to each other there was change; silence instead of talking. The time we shared was special as we moved into new depths. The most amazing thing about all this new[ness] is that it fit us, comfortably, as if it were an old friend; as if it were that which knows us very well. And so again, we were able to experience - "From the state of emptiness, man's voice is a voice filling the universe, man's body is the body pervading the universe, man's life is a life without limit."

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, Dec. '95



Retreat participants pose with
Carmen Brocklehurst (second from right, bottom row)



**The possibilities of
Awakening to the Universe
Are innumerable.
Our existence is proof positive.
Softly giving, we receive.**

-- Robert Montes de Oca



KARMIC KOMMENTS

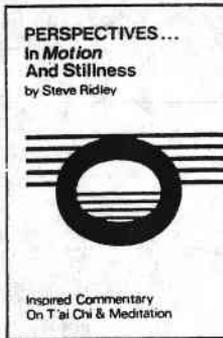
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Slowness . . .
Internalized . . .

Methodical rhythmic softening
Coaxes vibrant joy

Integrated motion reveals
STILLNESS!

-- Steve Ridley
Perspectives in Motion and Stillness

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BOOK REVIEW:



Justin F. Stone, originator of T'ai Chi Chih, teacher, musician, stockbroker, exhibiting painter and writer on Oriental disciplines, has written *Zen Meditation: A Broad View* in a manner unlike that of the many other books on the same subject. *Zen Meditation: A Broad View* provides actual instruction on how to meditate the Zen way, along with a wealth of philosophical background on Zen and other Buddhist sects.

Stone comments on what he himself has experienced through his many years of study and practice with masters in the Far East. Justin warns that Zen practice is not glamorous and may be difficult and painful, but that "the rewards will be there." This book is a succinct guide for any meditator.

(Excerpted from *Leading Edge Review*, Winter 1995-96.)

Zen Meditation



CONTACTS FOR TCC

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Publishing, Inc.** P.O. Box 511, Ft. Yates, ND
58538; (701/854-7459); FAX 701/854-2004.
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others related to spiritual practice.

**Liz Salada: Publishing-Editor for *The Vital
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A copy of the current Teachers' Directory is available. The Directory is to be used for referral purposes and communications among accredited TCC instructors. It is not to be used or sold as a mailing list. Teachers may request a copy of the directory by sending \$5.00 to: *The Vital Force*, 1477 - 155th Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94578. Consult *VFJ* for updates to 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 T'ai Chi Chih, "Joy Through Movement!"

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**Acknowledging the infinite spiritual foundation of our transitioning
universe is a step toward freedom in consciousness.**

- Steve Ridley



"Light at the Top"

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Journal of T'ai Chi Chih
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T'ai Chi Chih!
Joy Thru Movement