



THE

# VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

Volume 10, No. 1

Spring Equinox

March 1993

## ALL THINGS ARE AS THEY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN

Justin Stone

As soon as we have words we have concepts. No matter how articulate the speaker, how believable the teacher, using words forces the speaker to form concepts in order to convey ideas to others. When one Zen teacher continually counsels his followers to "rest in the unborn," we realize he is speaking from a deep experience, but trying to phrase it so his listeners will understand is a hopeless effort. To him, being "unborn"--and so, "undying"--was real, but, to his followers, it became a concept that they tried to duplicate or imagine. This writer had a deep experience when it became clear that all things are as they have always been, roughly the same as "unborn", but there seems no way to convey that experience to others. Only the drinker knows if the water is hot or cold.

There are two ways in which such misrepresentation can come about. One way is for someone to have a deep experience and then try to put it into words so he can convey it to others. This was the case when Hakuin Zenji, the great Japanese Zen teacher and mystic, after his first great enlightenment experience, said: "After this, seeing things of the world was like seeing the back of my own hand." This is very articulate, but it still doesn't make it possible for the listener to share in the experience.

The other way is for someone to hear or form a concept and then try to have an experience to match that concept. A sincere Christian will have a Christian experience, based on his conditioning, and a Buddhist will see and hear things based on his conditioning. In each case the experience will be the creation of his own mind, very subjective, and not something valid that just happened.

Those who meditate regularly will probably have experiences that in no way follow what they have been taught. They may then rationalize the experience--and so spoil it--in order to bring it into conformity with what they feel they "should" realize.

(See All Things p. 4)

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

Steve Ridley is the Spiritual Head of Tai 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

The plum tree reached its zenith in blossoming after days of rain and sunshine. Each morning the drape is pushed aside for a clear view of the garden and a new days beginning greets us. This is how we know of springtime, by the nourished flowering things apparent in nature.

T'ai Chi Chih primes and colors the lives of seniors as many retirees are responding beautifully to "moving with joy!" Within this issue, numerous teaching accounts convey how T'ai Chi Chih is being presented to the elders in our communities for their optimal reception. If the inclination hasn't already inspired you, read the experiences prompting more and more T'ai Chi Chih classes with this seasoned population.

Though not limited to it, our June issue will present several stories of T'ai Chi Chih with Children. Sharing chi spans age groups of course, yet specific tellings represent the gamut of ways teaching is a creative art!

Do you have something to contribute in the next *Vital Force Journal*? We look forward to useful articles as well as informative news. Why not write for the summer issue by our May 1st deadline! VFJ thanks the contributing writers and artists whose creativity and joy is shared in each issue.

Speaking of dates, Chicago Teachers are hosting The 8th International TCC Teachers Conference July 23-25. See the announcement flyer enclosed and basic information in the calendar section to plan for an opportunity to "get back to basics."

Thanks to teachers who preordered the 1993 TCC Teacher Directory and helped us meet initial production expenses. (Read the descriptive of the new directory below to see what a resource it has become.) Our support goes out to all teachers who are sharing T'ai Chi Chih! as does our appreciation to the benefactors who contribute (\$5 or more) to the teacher referral and special projects fund. Thank you to Sandra J. Lutz, Wanda Ruth Zimmerman, Marlene Brown, L.F. McKenzie, Carmen Brocklehurst, Jean Katus, Patrick Lenard, Sr. Antonia Cooper, O.S.F., Roxann Post, Steve Ridley and an Anonymous donor.

### NEW 1993 TEACHER DIRECTORY AVAILABLE

Copies of the new TCC Teachers' Directory are available for referral purposes and communication among accredited TCC instructors. New map section has been added to show location of teachers in each area.

Teachers may request a copy of the new directory by sending \$5.00 to: The Vital Force, 1477-155th Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94578.

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

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

Forever grateful for the many ways T'ai Chi Chih flourishes as it nourishes!

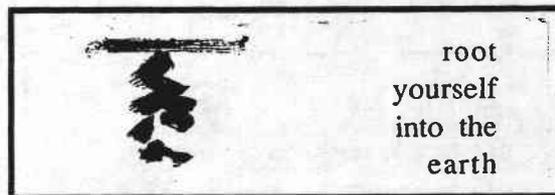
Elizabeth Salada for  
*The Vital Force*



Thanks to Virginia Shilson  
for her "Brush with Bliss"

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Thanks to Dyanna Chowka for "Shen Emerging" art.

## All Things (cont. from p. 1)

Those who do T'ai Chi Chih regularly have not been taught how they should feel or what they should experience. Whatever happens is right and does not have to be adjusted to any doctrine or dogma. It is for this reason that the writer sometimes does not answer questions which would call for conceptual answers--they would spoil the experience.

To look at a beautiful body of water without relating it to anything is what Krishnamurti called "Choiceless awareness", which, while very descriptive, is again a concept. It is better to just experience it.

Words have their place and are absolutely necessary for communication and the accumulation of knowledge, but they are not capable of taking the place of a valid experience. Words are, by their very nature, dualistic, and no realization of "Oneness" (wholeness) can come from subject-object thinking. In short, do not be afraid to experience without labeling, or even remembering, the experience.

## READERS COMMENTARY

**Virginia Shilson**, Albuquerque, NM  
Continued congratulations on the VFJ. It is inspiring to look upon as well as to read.

**Ralph Garn**, Syracuse, NY: I feel honored that you published more than one of my articles in the December 1992 VFJ and I'm happy that others in the same vein will share them. The articles by Justin, Steve, and all others are an inspiration not only to me but I'm sure to all TCC teachers who receive this journal.

**Guadalupe Buchwald**, Victoria, BC, Canada  
Thank you for the superb job you are doing with *The Vital Force*. It is a delight to read and I enjoyed it very much in my not so happy times. I am looking forward to being able to go to the Teachers Conference or Teachers Training again. I have certainly missed my T'ai Chi Family!

**Anita Germain**, White Bear Lake, MN:  
Thank you for your beautiful work of VFJ. I'm enjoying each issue more and more. I read it the day it arrives! Peace.

**Pritamdas** (Peter Worrall) Tucson, AZ:  
Thank you for your wonderful gift in the form of the "VFJ". I enjoy it and appreciate your efforts muchly.

**Barbara Peller**, Northfield, IL: After teaching for a year and a half, I finally sat down and wrote an article for *The Vital Force*. I think it was a comment in a letter from Justin that helped me commit internally to writing it. Thanks for all you do to keep us connected and challenged.

**Steve Ridley**, Denver, CO: The new TCC teacher directory is excellent. I hope you are receiving adequate numbers of orders. Thanks to you and Lois for your good work.

embody the  
essence that flows  
through you



**JOURNAL ENTRIES**  
**Thoughts During T'ai Chi Chih Practice**  
Vicki Brodie, Burlingame, CA

\* \* \* Morning TCC practice in backyard, September 15, 1990 \* \* \*

*I see the fence crisscrossing in front of the trees.*

*I hear an airplane crisscrossing over the sound of passing autos...  
then a piano over a wind chime.*

*I feel the wind crisscrossing through the still air  
as the Chi is flowing through me.*

\* \* \* Late night TCC practice, November 4, 1990 \* \* \*

*Light and shadows dance across my hands  
as I make circles in the air.*

*The flowing movement calms my racing thoughts  
so I can slumber in the night.*

\* \* \* Morning practice, February 14, 1991 \* \* \*

*Shadows on shadows...  
Negative and positive.*

*Yin.....Yang.*

*You touch my soul.*

*I am uplifted,  
And my spirit soars.*

\* \* \* Morning practice, October 25, 1991 \* \* \*

*The robins come and take their splashing baths,  
then they are gone.*

*The blue jays come and survey the scene,  
and scare everyone away.*

*The hummingbirds beat their tiny wings, feed and rest...  
feed and rest.*

*This I see making circles round and round.  
My eyes see them as I move.*

*What a way to start one's day!*

## JUSTIN SAID...

It has long been apparent to me that everything is vibrant with life. The 'empty' space vibrates with energy and intelligence, and, if one gazes at the silent hills and rocks, he will find that they are singing the Glory of Creation. We could call this all a 'sea of consciousness,' but that would be just a concept. We can only be sure of a 'total awareness,' and perhaps Past, Present and Future all exist in this fully aware and joyous Now. "Every day's a good day," says Zen Master Yunmen. There is great suffering, to be sure, but who cognizes this suffering? The pain-ridden animal subconsciously hums a hymn to a Creator who is no Creation.

He who is aware of Negation of Negation understands that emptiness is empty, too, but it is overflowing with a life that has an insane urge to manifest. And manifestation is Love.

### A Quote

In truth, it is difficult to find a displeasing aspect in nature, if one looks with a quiet mind, not concerned with its own problems.

"When the mind is transparent and pure, as if reflected on the mirror-like surface of the water, there is nothing in the world that you would dislike. When it is serene as the light breeze in the sunshine, there will be no one whom you would like to forget."

*Justin's Spiritual Stories*  
Audio cassette - Volume I



I thought the photo (above) would be of interest to readers of the VFJ. This is the best picture of a Yogi that I know. It is a shot of a naked Yogi taken near Gangotri in India. Gangotri is cold, up at the source of the Ganges in the Himalayas. He has just bathed in the freezing water.

Those who wonder how he can take the cold might find the answer in the chapter on "Fixation: the Dumo Heat" in my *Meditations for Healing*.

## THE FUNCTION OF CHI IN TCC Steve Ridley

Often times students are curious about the specific purpose of individual TCC movements regarding their influence on the "function" of chi. For example, one might ask, "Which movement is good for the heart?" Another may want 'the movement' that will help cure asthma or arthritis. There is no certain answer for such inquiries.

I have never heard Justin suggest that by performing a certain TCC movement pattern, the chi will function in a specific manner to accomplish a certain, desired result. He does not prescribe or claim that a particular movement will bring an anticipated outcome. It would be irresponsible to predetermine the functioning of chi and what it will accomplish for an individual, because (relatively speaking) we are each completely different from one another. Rocking Motion might stimulate the chi flow in the heart area for one person while activating the bowels of another. All TCC movements seem to contribute life-enhancing, harmonizing influences to each practitioner, but in varied ways. The chi functions beneficially for individual needs. **It is good to know that chi always endeavors to function optimally through us., because this is its nature, its natural impulse-inclination. TCC practice can only assist this function by working with it, allowing its optimal function through the mind-body.**

We can view certain TCC movements in general terms. regarding their possible influences: Bird Flaps Its Wings obviously helps activate the lower tan t'ien and the downward flow of chi which contributes to the process of eliminating waste ("apana" in Sanskrit), yet also activates the organ meridians running through the wrists as we 'flap and circle." Pulling In The Energy seems to stimulate the physical heart as well as the anahata (heart) chakra. sometimes activating emotional surges in the chest (and subsequent releases). Light At The Top Of The Head/Temples helps energize the ajna (upper tan t'ien or brow point) and soma (crown) chakras, relieving headache symptoms for some. Daughter On The Mountain Top contributes to the natural function of chi descending through the "conception vessel" (inside the lower lip through the midline of the torso to the perineum), which assists proper operation and balance of the triple heater system. Again, these are only general characteristics of a few TCC movement patterns that assist the innate function of chi as it endeavors to maintain harmony throughout the individual.

Justin's idea of not specifying the effects of particular TCC movements is , I believe, the wisest policy for teaching. If the teacher states that chi will function in a certain way while doing " \_\_\_\_\_ " movement, she/he has only provided the student with a conceptual limitation. By simply doing the TCC movements with "unclouded mind," the life-enhancing benefits will manifest as they should for the individual practitioner. Why clutter the student's mind with pet concepts (including personally meaningful imagery - new age or gender based!)



## **THE ART OF TEACHING SENIORS**

### **IN GRATITUDE FOR THE UNEXPECTED**

Barbara Peller, Northfield, IL

I'm delighted to write that I've just completed my first semester teaching TCC to seniors at three locations. Previously, I'd been teaching for one year at two holistic health centers. Then last Spring, I was recommended as a T'ai Chi teacher by a friend who teaches yoga to seniors at our local community college. When I got the first call for an interview, I had no idea what would evolve. In a matter of weeks, I had committed to three free demonstrations and three fall classes for seniors.

Never having worked with seniors, I chose to simply pray and meditate, asking for help and guidance; and from the start, the seniors fell in love with T'ai Chi Chih. Having no idea what to expect from these students, I simply taught session-by-session, while feeling the students' needs and their level of openness, and responding to their questions and interests. One class was scheduled for 10 weeks, another for 12 weeks and the third for 13 weeks; yet all three classes mastered the first ten movements, and one class learned all the taffies, while the other two are just learning basic taffy. They all love the relaxation and the stimulating exercise.

All three classes requested a break after the first half hour of movements; so we have chairs in the back of the room, and relax for ten minutes while sharing stories of TCC practice, as well as questions on refinements and corrections of moves. Sometimes we listen to Justin's tape on TCC, and sometimes the classes enjoy being guided through a progressive relaxation or guided imagery exercise.

My inner guidance was to reiterate to each class that each student is to be a self-advocate for their own particular body's needs. I let them know that the goal is to create a positive experience for their bodies and minds, so they'll want to keep coming back to class and enjoy learning and practicing at home. I'm happy to help students adjust any movement to their bodies' special needs and sensitivities; and all students are welcome to keep a chair nearby, if needed. They learn to be more aware of their own comfort zone, and if they need to rest awhile, or do the movements while seated, they are always encouraged to take good care of themselves.

When we resume our TCC movements after the break, they are quickly back into the flow. After concluding with the Cosmic Consciousness pose, I ask them to stand for a moment, while placing their attention on the soles of their feet, and in that quiet moment I offer them a suggestion for a self-nurturing gift they can give to themselves that day, or perhaps simply ask them to think of something they feel thankful for.

(See Seniors next page.)

## **THE ART OF TEACHING**

### **T'AI CHI CHIH FLOWERS**

Greetings to our TCC Family:

I am currently teaching TCC in two retirement communities, and one class for the general public. I enjoy teaching senior citizens because TCC is so adaptable to their needs. I encourage them to move within the range of comfort and to rest when they feel the need.

To all my classes I constantly emphasize the single most important quality of TCC, softness and continuity of motion. This is not an easy concept to grasp in a fast-paced culture that is prone to exert lots of effort and willpower. When students ask, "Do you mean relaxed?", I respond, "are flowers relaxed?" There is usually a giggle or two.

In my own personal practice of TCC, I have seen that there remains much, much more to gain from cultivating softness and continuity of motion! Best wishes to all!

Love, Luis Sanchez. Goleta, CA

### **BEAUTIFUL RESULTS**

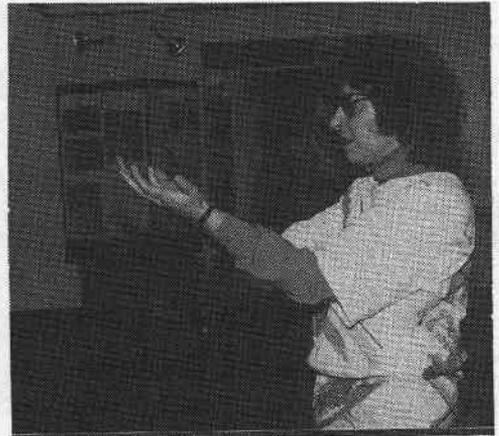
Presently I am teaching a noon-time TCC class for the staff at UC Santa Barbara where I work. It's very rewarding for me as a TCC teacher to hear their comments of how relaxed and focused they feel as a result of practicing the movements. One student told me yesterday that she feels TCC is "absolutely beautiful" and she notices an overall feeling of less stress in her life after just a few weeks of practice.

In my personal practice of TCC, I continue to reach new levels of awareness in my body. I notice that tense areas are softening more and more, and I'm excited to wonder how I'll feel a few years from now. Thank you again, Justin!

Linda Sanchez, Goleta, CA

### **Seniors (Cont.from previous page)**

The seniors often mention having difficulties remembering the movements, so I talk them through each movement throughout the class. I know they appreciate the help in guiding them along, as the program directors tell me how grateful the students are for my verbal instructions throughout the class hour. Some of the seniors have questions they want to express personally, or information they want to share; so, I've made a practice of arriving early and being available after class. I love teaching seniors; their gratitude for learning TCC and their openness to new ways of self-healing has won my heart. I feel a special dedication to these students, and am most grateful to be able to offer them the enrichment TCC can bring to their lives.



Barbara Peller, Northfield, IL

## CLASSIC CONTEMPLATIONS

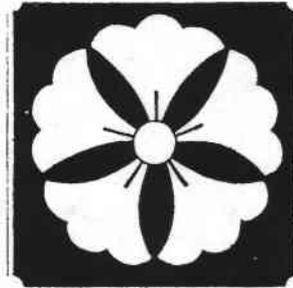
The more you look up  
The loftier it rises  
The lower you stoop down to reach it,  
The deeper it sinks.  
The more you PRESS forward  
The longer it stretches before you;  
The more you RETREAT,  
The shorter the span to do it in.

Wang Tsung-yue on T'ai Chi

\* \* \* \* \*

### THIRTEEN

Thirty spokes share the wheel's hub;  
It is the center hole that makes it useful.  
Shape clay into a vessel;  
It is the space within that makes it useful.  
Cut doors and windows for a room;  
It is the holes which make it useful.  
Therefore profit comes from what is there;  
Usefulness from what is not there.



*Tao Te Ching*, - Lao Tsu

\* \* \* \* \*

"The world is ruled by letting things take their course." - Lao Tsu