



# THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

Volume 13, No. 2

Summer Solstice

June 1996

## OUR VERY NATURE

Justin Stone

Most students come to T'ai Chi Chih feeling "I am going to do a beneficial exercise." Eventually they find it is beneficial -- and joyous -- but they still think of it as exercise, and still put the "I" in there. As they proceed farther, they begin to slowly realize the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih and one day they have the experience that "no-one is doing T'ai Chi Chih; T'ai Chi Chih is doing T'ai Chi Chih." Now they have the "I" out of the way. Their practice is done without thought, concentrating on the soles of the feet. This "non-ego" state is greatly beneficial; it is what makes T'ai Chi Chih more than "exercise" and has a deeply spiritual benefit. One does not have to outguess T'ai Chi Chih, nor to understand it intellectually (having to do with the circulation and balancing of the Vital Force, and the benefits thereby realized).

At this point the practice has become meditation, and the practiser is gaining the considerable benefits while evolving spiritually. It is so easy to learn and easy to do, yet look at the extent of the rewards!

To get to the point where one realizes the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih is wonderful. As I have pointed out many times, Bliss is our very nature, and here is a simple way to realize that Bliss. The habit energies do not at all intrude on the practice of the movements, and there is no effort made (though some do make the mistake of trying hard). If one needs a goal, why not aim at realizing the Essence of T'ai Chi Chih? It is worth the no-effort effort.

Source: *New Mexico TCC News*, June 1996

When we are able to lose ourselves in T'ai Chi practice,  
devoting full attention,  
Meditation is naturally born.  
The form gives way to the formless.

- Steve Ridley

*Perspectives ... In Motion and Stillness*

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

*Steve Ridley is the Appointed Head of T'ai Chi Chih.*

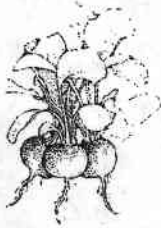
*This journal is dedicated to T'ai Chi Chih teachers and practitioners worldwide.*

*May it serve you in "Knowing the Real".*

## REFLECTIONS . . . ALONG THE WAY

The man pulling radishes  
pointed the way  
with a radish.

Issa (1763 - 1827)



### VFJ INNER WORKINGS

**Next VFJ Submission Deadline: August 8**

Justin (Stone) makes a good point about the importance of sharing your TCC experiences and those of your students in his letter to teachers on page 6 of this issue. We encourage your news and articles for the upcoming conference issue of *VFJ* to be mailed in late-September. You can make a meaningful contribution by sharing: a note about your teaching/practice, poetry, photo, etc. *VFJ* is your medium for written expression.

### TCC Conference and Seijaku

Southern California teachers present an update on the rapidly approaching International TCC Teachers' Conference scheduled to meet in San Diego this July. Also, the Seijaku Course which follows still has openings for new teachers' accreditation in this advanced form of TCC. See details on enclosed flyer and Calendar Notes (page 20) for this TCC opportunity for renewal and inspiration.



Roberta Taggart, Lois Mahaney, Liz Salada

### VFJ Contacts

*VFJ* continues to utilize one address for all written inquiries and journal submittals, subscriptions, etc., that is: **Liz Salada**, Publisher-Editor, *VFJ*, 1477 - 155th Avenue, San Leandro, CA 94578.

Our main phone contact continues to be **Lois Mahaney** (510/276-5718). As Resource Correspondent for *VFJ*, **Lois** responds to changes of address/phone and active/traveling teacher status for the TCC Teachers' Directory, as well as inquiries re: *VFJ* subscriptions and expiration dates, TCC teacher referrals, and oversees distribution of TCC accreditation information.

*VFJ* production is provided by **Roberta Taggart** (408/252-5406) who is the phone contact for TCC calendar items solely.

For additional TCC contacts see page 38. We look forward to providing continued service in these ways to the TCC community of practitioners.

Sincerely in mutual accord,

Elizabeth Salada  
for *The Vital Force*

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## READERS COMMENTARY

### OPEN FORUM

In our last issue Susan Hudgens from San Jose, CA posed a question for TCC teachers, Justin, or Steve to respond to in an "OPEN FORUM" column. The question was:

**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?**

We received the following feedback:

"I tell my students from the beginning that the person teaching that day is in charge, in other words, the boss, even if I'm there but someone else is teaching. ... If they are really troubled by something, see the head Teacher at the beginning or end of class. Let them know we are all individuals, not clones and when we bow to each other we do so in friendship and peace."

**Marlene Brown, Cincinnati, OH**

*If you have a TCC question for OPEN FORUM please submit it to: Open Forum c/o VFJ, 1477 - 155th Ave., San Leandro, CA 94578*

### READERS WRITE

Thank you for all you do to make the *VFJ* the great publication that it is. It just keeps getting better and better. I always appreciate Justin's and Steve's articles and enjoy reading those [written] by other instructors. I like the artwork too ... all of it! Fondest Regards,

**Vickie Brodie, Burlingame, CA**

Thanks for the latest issue of *The Vital Force* ... As always, it is informative and inspiring.

**Geraldine Kline, O.P., San Antonio, TX**

I got out all of my *Vital Force* Journals to search for something in particular. I ended up re-reading so much, because I kept finding things that mean more to me now. *VFJ* is quite a rich resource. ... Thanks ... to everyone who contributes to this exceptional publication.

**Chris Endres, Alpine, CA**

To all who are involved in the Grand Production of *The Vital Force*: What a great job you do. I am so pleased with the direction that *The Vital Force* has taken through the years ... please know that it is appreciated.

**Susan Patterson, San Diego, CA**

Thank you for the Memoriam for John in the March issue ... I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at the July Conf. Love, Chi and Joy,

**Joy Barbour, Payson, AZ**

Since I moved to the north woods of Wisconsin, I haven't made it to any TCC gatherings, so *VFJ* is my only physical link with the TCC global community. My sincere thanks to you and all who contribute to its publication. It helps me feel in touch with the latest thoughts, developments, teaching experiences, and publications. Blessings,

**Barbara Seraphina Sommers, Cumberland, WI**

I've really been enjoying the connections I make and the stories I can share with my classes. This issue is great -- clear, inspiring and beautiful. ...

Sending a small contribution to help keep the presses rolling. Fondly and gratefully,

**Edie Budney, Upper Montclair, NJ**

## **NOTES TO TEACHERS**

### **HONORING TCC: TEACHING WITH CERTIFICATION**

**Timothy Stuetz, Anaheim, CA**

It is my experience that the full power and blessings of T'ai Chi Chih really can't be transmitted from teacher to student until the teacher has taken the Teacher's Training Course. This Course is far more than refining movements and becoming Certified. There's a profound transfer of energy that takes place!

In the past year I've come across several people who have been teaching T'ai Chi Chih without being certified. Not only is their form "way off", but they don't carry or communicate the essence of T'ai Chi Chih. Some of these people have subsequently completed the Training Course and their practice and entire being have been transformed.

Recently, I was informed of another person who, after taking lessons from a NON-Certified Teacher, was now teaching a class themselves.

T'ai Chi Chih is very powerful when honored. Teaching without Certification is not honoring the Chi.

As Certified Teachers I feel we should constantly remind our students that there is a "process" to follow if they want to teach. This includes "not teaching under any circumstance" until one is Certified. It's kind of like the resting pose. Resting in "not teaching" until the Chi, the life force, moves us into "teaching with Certification". We can even share with them that Chi, if not stimulated properly, can cause pain and injury. Most people who have the desire to teach don't want to cause injury to others! Also, if you know of people teaching T'ai Chi Chih without being Certified, talk to them about the nature of Chi and encourage them to take the Training. If they refuse, it may be very appropriate to talk to the establishment where they are teaching.

### **REPRESENTING T'AI CHI CHIH**

**Ralph Garn, Syracuse, NY**

Many Teachers, including myself, have been approached by students or others, and asked if they'd do a T'ai Chi Chih video. Needless to say, the 'ego' gets the best of some and the market becomes flooded with ... videos passing on movements that are not done as Justin and Steve have taught them. Are these teachers aware that they're passing on mistakes, cheating any/all students of the way T'ai Chi Chih IS?

Those who attended the teacher's conference in Denver in 1995 had a chance to be with Justin as he went over and described each and every movement, doing his best to pass on rightly what he has intended. Those who monitor Steve's

teacher's training programs [or attend teacher renewals] have a chance to 'correct' or 'modify' their movements without criticism. Some of the movements being done by teachers are not Justin's or Steve's movement, but movements that can't, from this writer's viewpoint, be developed for the fullest feeling capacity. When I went to teacher's training, my teacher went with me ... took correction hungrily, and incorporated the 'rightly' done movement(s) into classes upon arriving home. Over time ... errors in movement may come about ... Returning to the source by using Justin's and Steve's video tapes is [another] good reference when one is in doubt.

## NOTES TO TEACHERS

### LETTER TO TEACHERS FROM JUSTIN STONE

I was very much interested to read the interesting letter Ray Watson shared with us in the last *Vital Force* (March Issue). His account of the benefits received by a partially-paralyzed woman, from T'ai Chi Chih (or "High C" , as she called it!), recalled to me a similar experience I had in 1975, shortly before the first Teachers' Training Course in Los Angeles. My good friend, Dick Bock (now deceased) arranged for me to give a talk at Kushi West in Los Angeles (Macrobiotics), and he and I had dinner at their headquarters beforehand. From this talk came several group Courses at their place, and I was surprised to find myself working with several partially-paralyzed people, among others. I told them to imagine the leg movements, while they did the arm movements from a wheelchair. Well, do I remember the complete surprise of several of them when they began to have sensation in the legs!

#### ABOUT JUSTIN'S GIFT Timothy Stuetz, Anaheim, CA

I'd like to share a letter I just received from Dr. Donna M. Cone who took three morning sessions of T'ai Chi Chih in connection with a Conference On Aging recently held at the Disneyland Hotel. It illustrates the power and blessings of this amazing gift Justin [Stone] has given the world. (See the following article on page seven.)

A man also came up to me after the first morning session and said he was able to move his ankle for the first time in 10 years and the pain that was constantly "locked in" the ankle was gone!

As Ray describes, this began with a feeling of pain where they had had no feeling before, and this greatly excited them. When I had finished the Courses there (they were charged a group fee, including as many students as they wanted), I unfortunately, had no further contact, and I left Los Angeles shortly thereafter, to return only for the first Teacher's Course in August. As a result I do not know (1) if they continued to practice TCC, and (2) whether they continued to receive benefits from their practice.

This type of letter, from Ray, illustrates what I feel is the greatest benefit of *Vital Force*, the sharing of teaching experiences. It's to be hoped that any other teacher who has interesting happenings to report will take the trouble to write similar letters to the *VFJ*.

*Editor's Note: Several letters follow, thanks to those who have shared their TCC Experiences.*



#### A LITTLE TCC ANECDOTE Geraldine Kline, San Antonio, TX

After only his third class in TCC, a student commented to me that after his first class, he went to his office, sat down at his desk, and completely organized all his papers. After the second session of TCC, he did the same at home. He couldn't wait to see what happened after the third class! The practice of TCC has unforeseen results!

## TCC EXPERIENCES

### BLESSINGS OF TCC

**Donna M. Cone, M.D.**, Providence, RI  
(Student of Timothy Stuetz, Anaheim, CA)

Today was the 35th consecutive day in which I have done T'ai Chi Chih. I get up early in the morning -- quite a feat for me since I always thought of myself as a "night person". For the first time in my life I actually look forward to getting up because I can begin my day with the 33 minutes of T'ai Chi Chih.

I have lost 10 lb. since taking the three classes with you [Timothy Stuetz] in Anaheim. More importantly, I am much calmer and better able to work during a really stressful time in my career. I also notice that my balance is much better, an important plus for me as I will be 58 in August.

In addition to continuing T'ai Chi Chih for my own benefit, I am very interested in learning more about its use with elderly people and others who have physical limitations. (You mentioned a class of people with Parkinson's disease.)

I also would appreciate learning how I can become a certified teacher. ... The New England Gerontology Academy, of which I am the Executive Director, would be an appropriate vehicle for bringing T'ai Chi Chih to our state. Best personal regards, and my eternal thanks for showing me a new way.

### THERE ARE NO COINCIDENCES

**Lee Campbell**, Phoenix, AZ

I stopped to talk to a woman walking with her dog past my house a few weeks ago, and just to prove that Justin is correct when he talks about the cosmic flow -- Barbara had just moved to Phoenix from Calgary, [where] she took TCC from Sharon [Melvin]. I invited her to come to my Wednesday night "Share the Form" and get back into practicing and experiencing TCC. She has come for the past three weeks, is grateful to be in the Joy of the Movement again, and is making new friends and contacts through the others who come to my studio on Wednesdays.

*Lee Campbell wishes to acknowledge fellow T'ai Chi Chih teacher, Sharon Melvin, Calgary, Canada.*

### A JOYFUL DOG

**Judy Jones**, Redmond, WA

I lead a weekly lunchtime practice in Evergreen Hospital's courtyard with two-to-nine people gathering for T'ai Chi Chih. Our courtyard is cobblestoned and circular with a central pond and an expanse of grass connecting the courtyard with the rest of the hospital's grounds. We practice on the grass. At yesterday's sunny, breezy practice, five of us were just beginning our second Joyous Breath when a large black dog came galloping through our group headed straight for the courtyard pond. He wriggled joyously in the water, then raced out through us again, ... then joyously raced back out between us and out of sight.

We laughed as we caught the message -- a mysterious JOYful dog during JOYous Breath doing JOY through Movement.



## A STUDENT'S PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

*Light Dance Amidst Chaos*  
Mary Stebbins, Baldswinville, NY

*Lunch: I step from the confusion of the morning, from the too much to do, and not enough time, from the rushing, and the worries, out into a light snow, stand protected, and begin my lunch dance, my dance with T'ai Chi Chih.*

*It is a slow dance, a deliberate dance, at first a little awkward, unbalanced even. I feel uncertain. And then, the flow begins, first with a little tingling, then more tingling, then slowing, smoothing movement, and then the joy, the splash of light.*

### THE RUSHING STREAM AND THE FALLING TEARS

Mary Stebbins, Baldswinville, NY

I had a deeply powerful experience while camping alone on Morgan Hill on April 2nd. I had just completed my third T'ai Chi Chih class from instructor Ralph Garn. I spent the night alone in a tiny tent in a snowstorm and got up in the morning and walked out into the snowy forest. Heading toward the rising sun, approximately east, I followed old grown-over logging trails, walking quietly through the soft snow, taking whatever trails appealed to me. I discovered fresh wild turkey tracks and looked up to see the turkeys hunched and hustling into the cover of spruces heavily laden with snow. Deer stood alert and watched me pass. The storm dwindled and the sun came out warm and bright, and very quickly, the new snow on the southern slopes began to melt.

On a steep hillside, I came to a deep fast-moving stream that crashed and plummeted down over shale in small flumes and miniature waterfalls. The old trail I followed along the north bank of the stream's sharp ravine took a sudden turn to the north, flattening out into a perfect little platform in the center of the forest, right beside the rushing stream. The, sun, flowing through an opening in the trees, had not only melted all

the snow on this little spot, but had dried and warmed the spot.

I decided it was a perfect place to do T'ai Chi Chih. I took off my backpack, coat and fleece, stood facing the sun, and began doing the movements I had been learning in class. I decided to do 18 sets of each movement, and I felt the need to bow after each set on each side. As I did my T'ai Chi Chih movements, I became very aware of the sun gifting me with its warmth and energy and the stream gifting me with its music and its source of water and the earth gifting me with its stability and strength and all of nature and the life around me gifting me with sustenance: air to breathe, food to eat. I continued doing the movements as my heart became fuller and fuller with a feeling of joy and connectedness until my eyes overflowed and tears streamed down my face. Energy flowed through the forest and into my being. During the entire course of T'ai Chi Chih, I continued to cry and cry, tears of pure and utter joy.

*Ralph Garn, teacher from Syracuse, NY, shared his student's story with Justin, who in turn shares it with us.*



## TEACHING EXPERIENCES



### WORKING WITH SCHIZOPHRENIC PEOPLE

Marlene Brown, Cincinnati, OH

Last September I got a call from a stranger asking me if I would be willing to lead a T'ai Chi Chih class as a volunteer three times a week for two weeks, for their program working with Schizophrenic people. The times the Clinic was open I was already busy, but I figured that I could try it for a few weeks. Little did I know how successful TCC would be for this group.

I was offered a paid three month contract after the fourth day there. This has since been extended to another six months.

My first day was a total surprise: people sitting around in a small space looking sleepy, depressed, and talking to themselves. In other words, mostly out of it.

With much encouragement, I got a few to try Rocking Motion and Bird Flaps Its Wings, then we sat down again. The circles around the platter were huge up, down, out all over the place, but they participated and were very tolerant of each other when a circle would cross their face from someone else. Soon some left to smoke, get a shot or blood test. In other words, my first day was not boring, but also not discouraging. Each day I went, there were new people; some were from the previous day. So it was not TCC as we know it, but we had a start.

On the second week they offered me a [paid position] for three months [duration]. They were impressed with the results in such a short time. They have extended my contract six more months and have opened the clinic on [another day to accomodate my schedule].

The circles have gotten smaller. We still do some sitting down when the medicine gets [to be] too much. Best of all, they stay now most of an hour. We laugh, have fun with TCC and I was even told by one of my students that I was one of his most favorite people. Some days we have good days where we do all 20 moves standing up; some days we mostly sit and still do TCC. We never expect perfection but we sure do get lots of miracles, laughs and hugs.

Thank you, Justin, for sharing T'ai Chi Chih. I know these people could never do T'ai Chi Ch'uan.



**In addition to her work with schizophrenic people, Marlene Brown teaches at a Senior Center, Church and G.E. She has also done a 1 1/2 hour TCC class at an all day work shop and introduced TCC to children at a private school.**

### ADMONITION

T'ai Chi Chih teachers must do TCC well as well as teach it effectively. No matter how sincere the teacher is, if the movements are performed badly the student will suffer. Students will naturally follow the teacher's form in doing the movements. Moreover, for the teacher to give an effective presentation, he or she must perform well enough to impress the audience and influence it to want to learn and do TCC as well as the teacher does. One cannot say, "Do as I say, not as I do."

One cannot go to the Air Force Academy and say, "I wear glasses and have poor depth perception but I'm sincere and want to become a pilot." There are certain necessary qualifications for undertaking a flying career and these must be met. Everybody can get benefits from TCC practice, but to teach students one must lead by example.

Originally, the idea was proposed to have accreditation last for a limited length of time, after which the teacher would be re-examined to make sure he or she was performing and teaching correctly. This plan was obviously not practical.

When we consider that more than 1000 teachers have been accredited worldwide, it becomes obvious that it would cost a fortune to send someone on continuous trips to check teachers. So it becomes necessary for teachers to police themselves and frankly evaluate their own performance. One way to do this is to attend the annual Teachers' Conference. There must be a sincere desire to do TCC well, which requires more than just moving the arms and the legs. There must be a flow of the body from the center, complete yinning and yanging, and the ability to excite admiration from audiences by performing TCC movements in a pleasing manner.

This may seem somewhat harsh, but the teacher does not only perform TCC for his or her own benefit. Taking the Teachers' Training Course and being accredited means dedication to helping others, and the first step consists of doing the form well. Teachers, be sure you do TCC in an outstanding manner! Be tough and frank in evaluating yourself. Help is always available.

### 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 will receive the pamphlet at the summer Conference. Other teachers may receive their free copy by mail from Connie or Carmen, (who helped finance this venture). As teachers [and students] will find the pamphlet very useful, it is being

offered as a gift. Send \$1. [to cover the cost of envelope and postage] with your request for the teaching tips pamphlet to:

Carmen Brocklehurst	or	Connie Hyde
9500 Prospect, NE		P.O. Box 349
Albuquerque, NM		Cedar Crest, NM
87112		87008-0349

### EFFECTIVE TCC TEACHING

As we endeavor to assist students in their ability to improve the circulation of chi within each TCC movement, it is important to determine when to give general corrections and when more subtle suggestions can effectively be received. The more seasoned we are in our practice, the easier this is to sense.

### SOFTNESS & CONTINUITY

Last night, in class, students were so intent on learning the basic Pulling Taffy movement that the tension was noticeably building. To point out an important TCC principle and help them relax, I joked, "Your taffy movement is becoming more perfect but the chi is fleeing the room."

### TEACHING TCC

Students should be instructed that it is best to approach learning of TCC movements in a relaxed, meditative state of mind because 1) the patterns will be easier to learn 2) they will be easier to retain. When the mind is busy making tensions, learning TCC can be difficult.

While leading practice our T'ai Chi Ch'uan master used to ask that we let go and give our full attention to him, thereby enabling him to move us through the forms. (And, he had the development and energy to do this when we submitted properly.) He was asking us to surrender all thoughts about 'doing', in order to avoid inhibiting the learning process. So, instead of focusing on how difficult the movement sequence was or feeling self-conscious or worried about making a mistake, we endeavored to "let go and let it flow." The more relaxed we were, the easier it was to feel and assimilate the practice.

As teachers, we set the tone for each class. Putting students at ease should be a priority.

Then learning and practicing is not only more effective but also joyous and freeing.

Here are a few ideas you might try if you haven't:

- Play soothing music to greet students as they arrive.
- Talk informally with students until everyone has settled in.
- Do gentle breathing and stretching exercises to help release tensions and open the body, prior to practice.
- Form an inward facing group circle and enjoy Rocking Motion for a few minutes, taking time to ground, center, soften, and open to the collective energy exchange.
- If students become overly frustrated while attempting to learn a particular movement, pause for awhile and change the focus of the class, then the movement can be re-visited later, calmly.