



# THE VITAL FORCE

Journal of T'AI CHI CHIH! Joy Through Movement

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Fall Equinox and Conference Issue

September 1997

## PUT ON YOUR THINKING CAP

Justin Stone

In forty-three years of following a spiritual path, what has always amazed me is that my own inner experience has very seldom coincided with the written and spoken teaching I had been exposed to. There have been exceptions. When I first read *The Buddhism of Totality* by Garma C. C. Chang, the teachings of esoteric Hue-Yen Buddhism, I found an exact description of What I had known – but never heard – for many, many years. Meditation will often take one to a ‘higher’ level of vibration, in which case numerous other universes may be experienced. These will not in any way resemble this universe, which scientists mistakenly, and chauvinistically, hold to be the only one. Experiencing these, it is not known if what is seen (inter-connecting shafts of light, etc.) are even creatures. Other universes described in some Buddhism, which I presume the Buddha experienced, have strange descriptions of places where there is ‘neither thought nor no thought’ or ‘neither form nor no form’, entirely beyond our ability to comprehend. Such sights, of course, tear to shreds conventional church views, and so would not be admissible even if

experienced. Little theology is based on experience; most on theory and blind faith. When asked about such experiences, my Indian teacher would answer: “Why should you doubt your own experience?”

That some energy, possibly combined with wisdom, comes ‘down from above’ hardly fits my pre-conceived notions (being an iconoclast), but, nevertheless, I have seen and felt it. T’ai Chi Chih practice, if coupled with meditation, will strengthen the possibilities of such experience, but, if you are a devout church believer, it would be unlikely that you could go beyond your own religious conditioning.

The devout Bhakti is said to go into ecstasy at the creaking of a water wheel. Read Kabir’s poetry. On the other hand, The Jnani is following the way of inquiry, to separate the ‘real’ from the ‘unreal’. In my view there is no ‘unreal’, only transformation. What is alive stays alive, only it changes. Everything is a sign-post if read properly. And my own experience has been ‘Everything is singing the the Glory of Creation’.



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

*Ed Altman is the Appointed 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".*

## **VFJ HIGHLIGHTS**

### Fall

Hue-laden leaves announce autumn  
as harvest-time dampens the air  
and earth reaps parturient crops  
bidding the summer farewell.

The golden moon rises triumphant,  
as the smell of sweet hay fills the sky  
and fall gifts the earth with its bounty  
Imparting gestational grandeur.

### **VFJ INNER WORKINGS**

#### **Deadline for Winter VFJ: October 25**

(See new submissions information on page 5.)

#### **Statement of Purpose**

**VFJ is a forum for spiritual work based in the desire to share knowledge with TCC teachers and others for their information, instruction, and enrichment. The mission of VFJ is to reflect the positive and uplifting expressions of teachers/students in keeping with the original intent under which this vehicle was established.**

#### **Highlights of this Issue**

The 1997 Teachers' Conference held at Chapman College in Orange, CA on July 25<sup>th</sup> through July 27<sup>th</sup> was hosted by Timothy Stuetz with the able assistance of Pam Towne. Our greatest appreciation for your efforts!

The Friday afternoon opening program featured the resplendent music of Harpist Joel Andrews who performed live accompaniment to TCC 'silent practice'. With deep gratitude from our TCC family we offer special thanks to him for his inspirational work! The Friday evening program ended with the now familiar Candle-

light Rededication Ceremony lead by Sr. Antonia. On Saturday and Sunday, practice sessions led by Ed Altman were interspersed with discussions of philosophy and presentation of topics by Justin who also taught the *jing*, as promised. Guy Kent and Christina Tillotson explained the new TCC Web Site (page 6); Ed Altman announced the new week-long format for teacher training (page 7). Host teachers of 1997 teacher trainings and TCC teachers teaching abroad spoke about their experiences. The Talent Show on Saturday night featured music, singing, poetry, a skit, and tributes, ending with an exquisite concert by harpist Joel Andrews. The Closing Circle was *de-light-ful!*

At conference a letter was read from Liz Salada regarding her intention to formally resign as publishing-editor of *VFJ* with the publication of this Fall issue. Her resignation letter is on page 4, and future plans for *VFJ* publication are detailed on page 5.

Many warm memories are provided through the pictures, poems, writings, and comments submitted by participants. Conference Impressions (pages 11-15) reflect remembrance of the past while sharing the present and looking toward the future. **Calendar Notes** on page 20 details information about the Seijaku Accreditation to be held in Albuquerque, NM on Nov. 14 -16. Of special interest is Dr. Tahir Bhatti's article about his research of alternative therapies at UCSD in San Diego, CA entitled, *TCC and Chronic Low Back Pain* (page 34).

May the changing of seasons provide a fresh new foundation for your endeavors.

For *The Vital Force* staff,

Roberta Taggart  
*Interim Editor*

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Fall Equinox Issue

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## **PUBLISHER'S RESIGNATION LETTER**

Dear T'ai Chi Chih Teachers,

I have come to a decision of resignation to the role requested of me six years ago, that of publisher-editor for *The Vital Force - Journal of T'ai Chi Chih*. Thinking not to be a person with much interest in titles, wielding it now before relinquishing it allows me to share this communication with you.

Personally, my interpretation of the responsibilities of this position led me to consider what might be accomplished within the potential of such a communication. Connecting us, TCC teachers with each other, by encouraging the written sharing of our experiences has seemed to be a worthwhile goal with the positive result of expanding our awareness within the continually growing community of teachers. For the level of commitment to the project, nurturing the expansion and progress of this communication link has mostly been a highly creative and rewarding cause. More recently though, my involvement as *VFJ* publisher has been substantially challenged by many changes during the past year, now between two conferences. Due to the strong divergence of personal opinions expressed during this period, an increased level of discernment was called for in editing *VFJ*. At the same time, the special needs of another role I fill (as a mother) also escalated. However, I feel confident (and graced) with the way, the quality and direction of life energy expressed during this great growth period!

It has been a dutiful privilege to attempt to support the developmental stages of *VFJ*, especially with the philosophical aim of

fostering the experience of teaching as a joyful art shared in the spirit of service. In this view, *VFJ* has much potential as an inspiring vehicle to do even more than inform teachers and record the continuing development of TCC. Through reflecting the beauty of each teacher's individual energy, at its spiritual essence, perhaps a broadened scope of understanding may be revealed within the whole collective body.

*VFJ* will continue to grow in new directions by reflecting the consciousness (unity and diversity) of its contributors. Through the essential intent of each message conveyed, you as teachers are The Vital Force, as are the leaders in T'ai Chi Chih key influence of its future. With attendance and acceptance of the community's fullest voice, perhaps renewed wholeness and strength will prevail from our known spiritual perception.

It has been enriching to meet many interesting and caring people during my time with *VFJ*. With gratitude I acknowledge you all and wish the same nourishment to you that I have received. Individually, kind thanks to each of you whose character continues to contribute to the great body of Love we all are!

Sincerely, in mutual accord,



Elizabeth Salada for *The Vital Force*

## VFJ RESTRUCTURING ...

Dear Teachers and Readers,

It is with great sadness that *VFJ* acknowledges the resignation of Liz Salada as the Publishing-editor of *The Vital Force*. She has served the T'ai Chi Chih community faithfully and well, providing guidance, as well as wisdom, knowledge, commitment and integrity to each issue of *VFJ*. I have en-joy-ed working at Liz' side and under her tutelage.

As I assume the role of *interim editor*, it is with the knowledge that Liz has, along with Lois Mahaney, for many years provided the vision and impetus for this journal, and as I (with the help of the *VFJ* volunteer staff) endeavor to sustain and guide the restructuring of *VFJ* in the months ahead, I am thankful for the modeling that they have both provided for me.

### The Role of Interim Editor

As *interim editor* I will, with the help of Lois Mahaney, oversee the many aspects of transition which will occur over the next *VFJ* publishing quarter.

### Volunteer Staff to Participate

A small group of volunteers from the S. F. Bay Area has agreed to help in this effort. I am grateful to all of them, especially Carrie Kinsey (a newly accredited teacher from Concord, CA) who has offered editorial assistance in the form of layout, design, and in the inputting of submissions materials into the computer. Thanks Carrie!

### Lois Mahaney, Interim *VFJ* Coordinator

Lois will continue to serve as *Resource Correspondent*, and has agreed to function as my advisor, as needed, with regard to *The Vital Force*. As such, she will now receive *VFJ*

submittals and subscriptions at her address, and forward materials to me on a regular basis.

The new mailing address for subscriptions and submittals is:

Lois Mahaney  
*The Vital Force*  
1633 Via Amigos  
San Lorenzo, CA 94580-2009

During this period of transition, we solicit your comments, ideas and participation as we reorganize, and we appreciate your patience and cooperation as we endeavor to serve you in the time-honored tradition of *The Vital Force*. We gratefully acknowledge and thank you for your support of this journal.

From the Spirit-Heart,

Roberta Taggart  
*Interim Editor*

### VFJ SUBMISSIONS POLICY

*We endeavor to put in all contributions submitted. Some minor editing may occur for clarity and will be designated by brackets [ ]. Omissions will be designated by small dots ... . If heavy editing is deemed necessary the author will be contacted. If your submission has been printed in another TCC publication, first choice will be given to an unpublished submittal for the same quarter. Reprints of articles from NM TCC News will always be sourced as will articles from other publications. In an effort to remain balanced and neutral, we prefer not to print articles with defamatory statements, hateful comments, or remarks that otherwise detract from the overall intent of VFJ.*

## NOTES TO TEACHERS

### WE'RE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

Guy Kent, Albuquerque, NM

The World Wide Web (WWW) is one of the most popular information gathering resources available. Think of it as a 24 hour per day by 7 day per week answer center providing continuous availability around the world to information. Under Ed Altman's direction and using Christina Tillotson's initiative and creative talents, people around the world now can gather information about T'ai Chi Chih (TCC) by going to [WWW.TAICHICHIH.ORG](http://WWW.TAICHICHIH.ORG). The primary purpose of the T'ai Chi Chih web site is to encourage people to get consistent information, seek out an accredited instructor, and attend courses in T'ai Chi Chih. The Internet is a "self-serve" resource and an ideal way for interested people to find the teacher nearest them.

The initial content of the web site will be: an introduction to T'ai Chi Chih, a listing of the T'ai Chi Chih movements, a sample movement from the textbook (each movement will be shown for 2-3 weeks), a partial reference of accredited instructors, a brief biography of Justin Stone, quotes from Justin from the VFJ and the T'ai Chi Chih News (each shown for 2-3 weeks), significant articles from majors news sources (LA Times, Nursing Review, etc.), information about the Vital Force, and a subscription form, information about Good Karma, publishing and descriptions of some materials, photographs from T'ai Chi Chih courses being taught around the world.

At the Teacher's Conference we discussed the issues associated with being on the Web. Since there are one-time setup fees and ongoing maintenance costs we are requiring a \$5.00 per year listing fee from teachers interested in being included in the online directory. We feel this fee is extremely reasonable, and will use any surplus funds to cover other expenses of running the web site.

Referral information will be made available on the web site only at the request of each teacher. If you are interested in having your information available, you

will need to subscribe. The referral listing will include the teacher's name, phone number, city, and e-mail address (if desired). Over 60 people at the conference asked to be included in the web referral directory. For those of you concerned about your privacy, if you do not subscribe, your information will not be made available.

We also encourage all teachers to include our web site address on your business cards, brochures, and in your presentations. This will provide a valuable service to everyone as we get the T'ai Chi Chih message out. Imagine going to the local newspaper or radio station and asking them to do a feature on T'ai Chi Chih. When they ask for more information they can be referred to our web site where they will have access to consistent information about what T'ai Chi Chih is, where it has been taught, and other items of interest.

Since this is a bold new venture for T'ai Chi Chih we want your feedback. We are starting small, keeping it simple. As we learn and grow, the site content will change. We do not expect to include any links to other sites from the TCC web site but we encourage you, if you have a web site, to link to the TCC site. We'll provide on-going status information here in *VFJ* so stay tuned!

For more information visit [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org) or contact Christine Tillotson, Guy Kent, or Ed Altman. Christina has volunteered to maintain the web site for the first year on a donation basis. Ed is providing the vision for the content, and Guy will initially coordinate the teacher referral listing and billing. If you would like to subscribe to the web referral directory, please contact Guy Kent at 2225 Dietz Place N.W., Albuquerque, NM 87107 or [gkent@usa.net](mailto:gkent@usa.net).

**Note:** Those of you who subscribed at the conference, please send your \$5.00 check to Guy Kent if you have not already done so.

## NOTES TO TEACHERS

### NEW COURSE FORMAT FOR TCC TEACHER TRAINING

Ed Altman, San Rafael, CA

The primary purpose of a T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training course is to prepare prospective teacher candidates to teach T'ai Chi Chih with sincerity and integrity. The level of each candidate's preparation plays a large role in determining the success of the course, but the course format is also very important. In my experience, courses which are held in retreat settings seem to produce the most well-equipped new teachers.

I often see candidates spend hours together outside of class each day reviewing the movements and preparing their presentations. Unfortunately, teacher candidates who only come at night do not spend this additional time, and their movements often reflect the lack of additional practice.

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**"In my experience, courses which are held in retreat settings seem to produce the most well-equipped new teachers."**

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It has been particularly discouraging to see some students spend all day at work, grab a bite to each on the way over to class, do T'ai Chi Chih until 10pm and then have trouble getting to sleep. Of course, they wake up feeling tired the next day, and this affects their ability to focus during the course itself.

As a result, *beginning in January 1998, there will be a new format for all T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training courses.* The new intensive format will be as follows:

### New Teacher Training Format

Monday - Friday	9:30am - 5:00pm (Includes 90 minutes for Lunch)
Saturday	9:30am - 12:30pm
Cost:	\$450.00

*The new format will increase the total number of course hours from 22 to 33.* This will allow course participants to spend more time reviewing the correct way to do the movements, talking about how to set up classes, and learning how to teach T'ai Chi Chih to new students. *The intensive, all-day format will require candidates to take the week off from their daily activities, and will allow them to be fully present during the accreditation process.* This format will also encourage candidates and auditing teachers to spend meals together, which helps to build a sense of community.

The increase in the accreditation fee will now pay for a one-year subscription to *The Vital Force* for every new teacher. The remaining additional proceeds will be split between Justin, the host teacher, and myself to pay for the added expense and effort of the week-long course format.

With properly prepared candidates, and the new course format, the emphasis of the accreditation process will shift from learning how to do the T'ai Chi Chih movements, to focusing on how to teach them effectively. I look forward to working with you and your teacher candidates during an upcoming T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Training Course.

## NOTES TO TEACHERS

### ALLOW THE CHI TO “DO THE WORK”

Ed Altman, San Rafael, CA

Ramana Maharshi was traveling across India when he observed another passenger carrying his bag on the train. He said to the man, “You can carry your bag yourself, or you can put it down, and let the train carry it for you.” It is the same in our T'ai Chi Chih practice. There are many opportunities to let go and allow the Chi to “do the work”.

At the annual conference this summer, I noticed some teachers using a lot of upper arms and shoulders in the T'ai Chi Chih practice. This is extra effort which is not only unnecessary, but creates tension, wastes energy, and causes the Chi to rise, which can lead to ill effects. These people are thinking of T'ai Chi Chih as exercise.

When the T'ai Chi Chih movements are done properly, the practice is effortless. The upper body is very light and understated. We

emphasize shifting the weight completely onto a bent knee while remaining at one level. It is not the motion of the arms, but the shifting of the weight which causes the Chi to separate and circulate independently through the body. Just as a wind chime blows freely in the breeze, we simply let go, and allow the upper body to respond to the flow of the Chi during the T'ai Chi Chih movements. The waist twist and adjustments of the spine, shoulders and arms follow the lead of the weight shift.

When we shift the weight completely, and ground the Chi during our practice, it is easy to forget the self. It naturally falls away, and we readily sink into the essence of T'ai Chi Chih. Nothing more needs to be done, so who is needed? T'ai Chi Chih is doing T'ai Chi Chih, and the practice is observed from the soles of the feet.

#### *The Sea of T'ai Chi Chih*

*T'ai Chi Chih ... Serenity in the midst of activity*

*T'ai Chi Chih ... Well being, peace and harmony*

*T'ai Chi Chih ... A connection with the Spiritual,*

*The Supreme Ultimate*

*The Sea of T'ai Chi Chih ... Flowing and ebbing,*

*Ebbing and flowing,*

*Flowing and ebbing ... The Sea of T'ai Chi Chih*

*A beautiful drop of water you came to be*

*Two drops of water you and me*

*Through infinite Wisdom we came to be*

*Two drops of water flowing to the sea*

*Flowing and ebbing, Ebbing and flowing*

*The Sea of T'ai Chi Chih*

*Robert Montes de Oca, Albuquerque, NM*

## MEDITATION AND CONCENTRATION

“Concentration” and “Meditation” are two, but they are often linked together under the heading “Meditation”. Concentration is intense focus on an object, often until one becomes the object and the mind is one-pointed, “Zazen” in Zen is like this, as is the practice of the T’ien T’ai (“Tendai” in Japan). Koan practice, in Zen, brings about a one-pointed mind, which sometimes leads to an enlightenment experience.

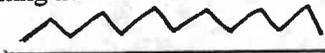
“Meditation”, in its deepest sense – on which I concentrate, with most students – brings about a focused mind that becomes “no-pointed”. Using a Zen term, this is “Mu Shin” in its true sense. When one comes out of the deep immersion that true meditation brings, one has to consciously rebuild the world. It has a deep and lasting effect.

We have the ocean, and the waves that arise from it, looking like this:



The waves arise and fall, creating quite a commotion, though the waves that arise are merely a manifestation of the ocean itself; there is no difference between them. If we can sink, between the waves, to the ocean’s unruffled surface, we have peace with no change.

Similarly, there is the mind, from which thoughts arise, looking like this”



If we can detect the space before thought, the space between thoughts, we can sink between the whirling thoughts to the absolute quiet of mind without thought, called in India, the

“Turiya” level, or fourth state of consciousness. The first three – the waking, sleeping, and dreaming states – are like the ‘unreal’ movie that is projected on the permanent, unchanging screen. All emotions and upheavals occur in the first three states, but the reality is the fourth, unchanging one. This is represented by the incessant droning sound, beneath the lightning changes that occur in the solo instruments, representing the ever-present reality. My teaching of Meditation is primarily aimed at realizing, and resting in, this underlying state.

To rest in this Turiya State is to realize, and manifest, Samadhi. In Yoga this is the ultimate goal, though Zen, and Buddhism in general, want to go on to “Prajna”, the inherent wisdom. It is thru the practice of this Samadhi that the Prajna, latent in all, is uncovered.

I have been with Yogis as they practise and realize the Bliss of this Samadhi (Turiya State). Many have developed strong powers, that they could use profitably in the world, but why would they want to? To be able to enter this Fourth State at will brings the greatest Bliss, and, probably satisfaction that can be known in this world – not to mention the effect it has on future lives. Can we live the usual everyday life in the world and still realize this Blissful awakening? This is a difficult question to answer.. Those that I have known, who have realized it (not the fulfillment of some transitional goal), have always been those who have given up everything else. Sad, but true, Vairagya (non-attachment) is the absolute necessity. However, we can practice meditation as a portion of our busy lives.

## TO LIZ WITH GRATITUDE

On behalf of our TCC family this poetic writing is dedicated to Liz Salada for her devoted service as Publishing-editor of *The Vital Force*. She has been a friend to us all, and served T'ai Chi Chih teachers everywhere with strength, clarity and vision.

VFJ Staff

### I SALUTE YOU.

*I am your friend and my love for you goes deep. There is nothing I can give you which you have not got, but there is much, very much, that while I cannot give it, you can take. No heaven can come to us unless our hearts find rest in it today. Take heaven. No peace lies in the future which is not hidden in this present little instant. Take peace. The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it yet within our reach is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness could we but see and we have only to look. Life is so generous a giver, but we, judging its gifts by their covering, cast them away as ugly or heavy or hard. Remove the covering, and you will find beneath it a living splendor, woven of love, by wisdom, with power. Welcome it, grasp it, and you touch the angel's*

*hand that brings it to you. Everything we call a truth, a duty or a sorrow, believe me, that angel's hand is there, the gift is there, and the wonder of an overshadowing presence. Our joys, too: be not content with them as joys. They, too, conceal divine gifts. Life is full of meaning and purpose. So full of Beauty beneath its covering that you will find earth but cloaks your heaven. Courage then to claim it that is all. But courage you have; and the knowledge we are pilgrims together, wending through unknown country home.*

*And so I greet you. Not quite as the world sends greetings, but with profound esteem, and with the hope that for you, now and forever, the day breaks and the shadows flee away.*

FRA GIOVANNI, letter to a friend, 1513

### CONFERENCE

I noticed there were no comments after the reading of Liz Salada's resignation letter [at conference] and, to fill that void, I offer my deep gratitude for her years of hard work in shaping *The Vital Force* into a quality communication -- a forum where the TCC community can share musings, art, and experience.

Liz is rich in spirit and integrity and I will miss her input.

Submitted with love,

Linda Meyer, Oakland, CA

### REFLECTIONS

To hear of Liz Salada's resignation as Editor of *The Vital Force* [at the conference] and the silence that followed that announcement was saddest of all. Liz has done a magnificent job for many years creating a very readable, sensitive, balanced journal from the bits and pieces that are submitted.

I hope in the future to see this major change in our TCC family addressed with thanks and appreciation. I want to thank Liz deeply for the wonderful, caring, creative job she has performed.

Barbara Riley, Orinda, CA

## READERS COMMENTARY, IN MEMORIAM

### READERS COMMENTARY

Dear *Vital Force*:

I want to express my thanks and admiration to Liz Salada, Lois Mahaney, and Roberta Taggart for the great amount of work they do in putting out *The Vital Force*. We tend to take it for granted, but it means so much to the TCC family. It has been done wisely and tastefully, even during the difficult times that have just ended.

It can be greatly helped if teachers will consider to send letters wit their experiences to *The Vital Force*, which passes them on to other teachers. This is the heart of TCC ! Thank You.

Justin

At conference it was announced that Phyllis Hoyt (breast cancer) and Bud Kilmon (Lou Gerig's disease) had recently died. We honor the memory of these friends on behalf of the T'ai Chi Chih community.



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#### *In Memory of*

*Phyllis Hoyt  
of  
Tuscon, AZ*

*and*

*Bud Kilmon  
of  
Owings, MD*

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### CONFERENCE IMPRESSIONS

Looking back I recall timeless moments ... flowing together in TCC practice with only the heavenly sound of Joel's harp.

Moving together as One in the candlelit circle, rededicating ourselves to our practice and teaching of TCC ... being with Justin, honoring the privilege of learning from him ... reconnecting with old friends, making new ones.

Looking in each other's eyes and singing "Do you know how much your love means? ... deepening my understanding of TCC.

Visioning the bright future of TCC ... gracefully concluding with silent TCC practice before heading home with a full heart! With love,

Pam Towne, Camarillo, CA



**ENERGY**  
*Healing, Serene*  
*Power? Subtle Energy*  
*Allowing, Moving*  
*Being*



Lisbeth Carlisle,  
Albuquerque, NM

Some comments on the conference... The TCC conference this year was so informative... Staying focused on TCC gave me a chance to refine moves. *Jing* is a powerful addition to the practice, and seems so natural after completing a TCC practice when the Chi is really flowing. Of course, it is always so very special to see other teachers, exchange ideas, and have a joyous time together.

Rhonda St. Martin, Albuquerque, NM