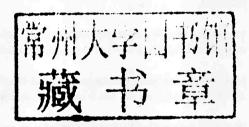
MARTIN MELLISH

A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook SPIRIT, INTENT, AND MOTION



A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook

Spirit, Intent, and Motion



Martin Mellish



LONDON AND PHILADELPHIA

First published in 2011 by Singing Dragon an imprint of Jessica Kingsley Publishers 116 Pentonville Road London N1 9JB, UK and 400 Market Street, Suite 400 Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

www.singing-dragon.com

Copyright © Martin Mellish 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the publisher.

Warning: The doing of an unauthorised act in relation to a copyright work may result in both a civil claim for damages and criminal prosecution.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing in Publication DataA CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 84819 029 0

Printed and bound in the United States by Thomson-Shore, Inc.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved teacher, Madame Gao Fu, 1916–2005

When the Movement Ends, the Intent Continues; When the Intent Ends, the Spirit Continues



Contents

	ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	15
	PHOTO CREDITS	16
	Introduction	17
	The purpose of this book	17
	Playing with imagery	18
	Imagery and your senses	19
	How to work with this book	20
	The structure of this book	21
Pa	art I: Structure	23
1.	Stepping and Standing	25
n i		
	The importance of balance	26
	Imagery for balance	26 27
	Don't micro-manage your balance—Let it ride Feet intimately connected to the ground	28
	The foot as a tripod	28
	The "Bubbling Well" point	29
	Like a monkey's feet that can hold on to branches	29
	Or like a duck's feet	30
	Or a gecko's	30
	The "empty step"	30
	Walk like a cat	32
	Stepping out onto thin ice	33
	Walking through the forest at night	33
	Avoiding slugs	34
	Feet caress the ground	34
	Wind-blown petals floating on water	34
	Stroking your pet mouse	34

	The iliopsoas muscle complex and its role in stepping	35
	The "hacky sack muscles"	36
	As if the knee is lifted up by a string	37
	Your thigh-bone has a counterweight in your back pocket	38
	Sitting in a chair	39
	Climbing harness	39
	Transferring your weight	40
	Pouring water from one jug into another	41
	Airborne vines establish their roots	41
	Like an octopus exploring the sea-bed	42
	Lines of force meet the ground at a 90-degree angle	42
	As if standing on skateboards, or slick ice	43
	Stepping on posts	44
	Gliding through space	45
	Skating	45
	Stance like a car suspension system	46
	Being carried in a sedan chair	46
	Doing your movements under a low ceiling	47
	Stance	48
	Riding a horse	48
	Stand like a mountain	48
	Feel your reflection underneath the ground	49
	Your body is just the tip of the iceberg	50
	Anchored by lines of magnetic force	50
	Your stance is an arch	51
	The arch is completed beneath the ground	52
	Sitting on an exercise ball	53
2	Ti- C	
2.	The Center	55
	The Eye of the Storm	56
	A submarine captain looking through a periscope	57
	The Center of the "X"	57
	Circuits as roundabouts	58
	The Cycle of Heaven—Fountain and waterfall	59
	Your abdominal muscles	60
	Obliques as crossed springs	61
	The trim of the pelvis	62
	Hipbones resting in one horizontal track	62
	Hipbones like headlamps	63
	Feel the pelvis as a large cup with a handle	63
	Pelvis like a bowl of fruit	64

	The pelvic floor	65
	Pelvic floor like a trampoline	65
	The pelvis opens and closes like a hinge	66
	or like a book	66
	Trapping a sheet of paper in the crease of the hip	67
	Sweeping beer bottles off a table	68
	Hydraulic jacks lift your rib-cage off your hipbones	69
3.	Your Spine and Your Line	71
	Anatomy and musculature of the spine	72
	The Golden Cord	76
	Weight hanging from the tailbone	77
	A string of pearls on an elastic thread	77
	The string's knot comes undone and the pearls run down	78
	Sitting on a window-ledge	78
	Spine like a snake	78
	The pin of a vertical hinge	79
	A downward-pointing spear	80
	A golf ball resting on a tee	80
	You have a dinosaur tail	81
	One line through back of head, tailbone, and heel of support foot	81
	Three circles in the torso	82
	The Jade Pillow—Gateway between mind and body	82
	Jade Pillow like a marshy lake fed by a stream	84
	Head like a helium balloon or a buoy	84
	Feather extends upward from back of head to paint the sky	85
	As if balancing a book on your head	85
4.	Shoulders, Arms, and Hands	87
	Effortlessness	88
	As if someone else is lifting your arm	89
	The flesh of the arms hangs off the bones	89
	Drops of water run down the arms	89
	Feel your arm resting on someone or something	89
	Arms grafted onto the body	90
	A bird perches on the hand	90
	Freedom	91
	Shoulders and arms float free of the torso	91
	Shoulders like a cape thrown over the body	92
	Moving from the collarbone	92
	Arm is a long chain starting at the collarbone	93
	Arms like an elephant's trunk	93
	Like a ferret down a rabbit hole	93

	Openness	94
	Arms as hoses	94
	Arms like streamers	95
	Hands like reflector dishes	96
	Emitting and receiving energy from the centers of the palms	96
	Armpits hold a small orange	97
	Yawning armpits	97
	Connection	97
	Playing with an energy ball	97
	The two arms together form a segment of a circle	98
	The two hands talk to each other	99
	Identical motion and opposite motion	99
	Pulling taffy	100
	Playing the accordion	100
	Spiraling or "silk reeling"	101
D	TT C ::	100
Pa	art II: Spirit	103
5.	Letting Go	105
		108
	A key to relaxation—Commitment	108
	Letting go of muscular tension Feel a heavy fluid draining out of the body	110
	As if moving underwater	111
	Separating the light and the heavy	112
	All the muscles hang off the bones	112
	All the joints of the body become more spacious	112
	Power through letting go	113
	Muscles work in harmony with their "antagonists"	113
	Moving into length	114
	Letting go of "doing"	115
	You can't "do" letting go, you can only allow it	115
	Imagine that you are a puppet	116
	Being moved from the small of the back (Gate of Life)	117
	Letting go of thought	117
	The breakers and the deep ocean of the mind	121
	Animal imagery	121
	Returning home	124

6.	The Breath	127
	Breath and emotion	127
	Breath and evolutionary biology	128
	Abdominal breathing	130
	Feel your center as hollow	130
	Breathe into every cell of your body	131
	Breathing into the small of your back	131
	Reverse breathing	132
	Wave breathing	133
	Letting go of the chest on the outbreath	133
7.	Feeling and Expression	135
	Vitality	136
	The inner smile	136
	Breathing into every cell in your body	136
	Bursting with energy like the Michelin Man	136
	Like a balloon animal	137
	An aura surrounds your body	137
	Like watering a flower	138
	Integration	138
	Every cell of your body is doing the same movement	138
	Follow the Master within	139
	Connecting Heaven and Earth	140
	Like a tree	140
	Awareness	140
	Undoing the narrowness of consciousness	141
	Eyes see the six roads, ears listen to the eight directions	142
	A symphony of the senses	144
	Expanding your horizons	145
	A sailor scanning the distant horizon	146
	Seeing with the Third Eye	146
	Radiance	146
	Light shining out from all your energy centers	146
	Radiating ripples in a pond	147
	Take the stage like an actor	148
	You are already a Master	149
8.	Rhythm	151
	Sending and taking	151
	Solidity and fluidity	152
	Setting out and returning home	153

Fast and slow	154
Your pauses are like musical rests	154
Listen for the counterpoint	154
Combating evil spirits	155
Dancing with the spirits	155
Driving a car through curves	156
Every moment is a photo opportunity	157
9. The Five Elements	159
Earth	159
Water	160
Fire	160
Air	161
Space	162
Part III: Application	163
10. Power	165
"Humor" the laws of physics	165
Mechanical disadvantage and how we get around it	166
The Five Bows	166
The spine as a bow	167
Bracing off the small of the back	168
Opening the nape of the neck	168
Spiral movement	169
Wringing out a cloth	170
Static power	170
The balance of forces	171
Spinning the world beneath your feet	173
Expanding spring rod between foot and hand	173
As if push starting a car	173
Dynamic power	174
Potential and kinetic energy	174
Store energy in the "springs" in your body	175
Newton's Cradle and the Nine Links	175
Wave energy	176
Wave propagation and resonance	177
Jello	177
Ocean waves breaking on the shore	177

Cracking a whip	178
The snake in your spine	179
Explosive power	179
Irrepressible laughter	180
Feel a magnet pulling you toward your target	181
As if the muscles receive a sudden electric shock	181
An exploding bomb in your center	181
Bursting out of chains	181
Snatching a tablecloth	182
Let the technique drive your feet deeper into the ground	182
11. Self and Other: Push Hands	183
Note on gender pronouns	184
Partner or opponent?	184
Push Hands is for everyone	185
Intention, relationship, and Push Hands	186
Letting go of what you are bringing	186
Letting go of your history (and future) with your partner	187
Letting go of your audience (if you have one)	187
Push Hands "light"	188
Single hand circling	188
Light and easy free-form Push Hands	190
Push Hands as a formal practice	190
Effectiveness of imagery for Push Hands	191
The basics	192
Your partner should feel as if trying to stand on a ball	192
Imagine your partner is directly pushing your hip	192
Shoulders and elbows heavy	195
Your partner is just a bug on your windshield	195
This is a perfect position	196
Stretch time and space	197
Stick, connect, absorb, and displace	198
Imagery for Level 1: Sticking	198
Stuck together by invisible glue	199
Trapping a fly	199
Making contact as if docking spaceships	199
Imagery for Level 2: Connecting	200
Lover's touch	201
The two-person saw	202
Pushing a swing	203
Connect and disconnect your body parts at will	203

	Imagery for Level 3: Absorbing	204
	Imagine a stiff breeze blowing that only you can feel	204
	Hands like falling autumn leaves	204
	Flow and penetrate like water	205
	Steal your partner's weight	205
	What goes around, comes around—Energy circuits for two	206
	The Great Circuit of Heaven and Earth	207
	The Belt Channel	208
	Overwhelm your partner like a breaking wave	208
	Imagery for Level 4: Displacing	209
	Musical chairs	210
	Newton's Cradle	210
	Jack in the box	211
	Pulling the carpet from underneath your partner's feet	211
12.	Weapons	213
	Threading through a tiny hole	215
	Tip of the weapon is "sucked" out into space	216
	The weapon is an extension of your own body	216
	Dissecting the air as if it were solid	216
	Slicing a pillow	217
	Imagine your empty hand as another weapon	218
	The overhead chop—Like unrolling a stair carpet	220
	or like an ice skater going into a spin	221
	AFTERWORD: IMAGERY IN DAILY LIFE	223
	APPENDIX A: MATHEMATICAL NOTES	225
	Open curves and mechanical advantage	225
	Elastic and inelastic collisions	227
	Conservation of momentum	227
	Conservation of energy	228
	The Second Law of Thermodynamics	228
	Kinetic energy	229
	Examples of elastic and inelastic interactions	229
	Concentrating momentum means adding energy	231
	APPENDIX B: SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON TAI CHI	233
	Some caveats regarding Tai Chi research	234
	Research reviews by subject	237
	General health and well-being	237
	The relaxation response	238
	Breathing	239

Heart disease	239
Type 2 diabetes	240
Balance and mobility	240
Osteoarthritis	241
Sensory acuity	242
The immune system	242
Parkinson's Disease	243
Miscellaneous benefits	243
Review articles, methodology, and meta-analysis	243
How to research the research	244
BIBLIOGRAPHY	245
The Tai Chi Classics	245
Tai Chi principles	246
Chi Kung	246
Other movement arts	247
Anatomy and movement	248
Imagery and movement	248
Practical recipes for healing through imagery	249
Imagery, healing, and the mind	249
The Five Elements	251
INDEX	253

A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook

Spirit, Intent, and Motion

Martin Mellish



LONDON AND PHILADELPHIA

First published in 2011 by Singing Dragon an imprint of Jessica Kingsley Publishers 116 Pentonville Road London N1 9JB, UK and 400 Market Street, Suite 400 Philadelphia, PA 19106, USA

www.singing-dragon.com

Copyright © Martin Mellish 2011

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any material form (including photocopying or storing it in any medium by electronic means and whether or not transiently or incidentally to some other use of this publication) without the written permission of the copyright owner except in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of a licence issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS. Applications for the copyright owner's written permission to reproduce any part of this publication should be addressed to the publisher.

Warning: The doing of an unauthorised act in relation to a copyright work may result in both a civil claim for damages and criminal prosecution.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

A CIP catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

British Library Cataloguing in Publication DataA CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978 1 84819 029 0

Printed and bound in the United States by Thomson-Shore, Inc.

This book is dedicated to the memory of my beloved teacher, Madame Gao Fu, 1916–2005

When the Movement Ends, the Intent Continues; When the Intent Ends, the Spirit Continues

