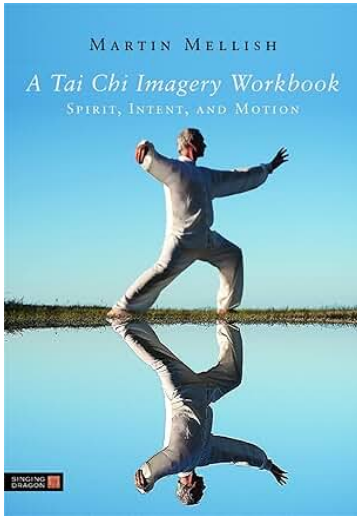




A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook By Martin Mellish



Available at: [Amazon Link](#)

Part 1: Structure

Chapter's 1-4

Chapter 1: Stepping & Standing

What did Mellish mean by "The feet are the hands that touch the earth." (page 28)

How would you describe an empty step? (page 30)

Which of Mellish's images for empty stepping resonated most with you and why? Have you used any of them in your classes, how were they received?"

- "Walk like a cat
 - Stepping onto thin ice
 - Walking through the forest at night
 - Avoiding Slugs
 - Feet Caress the ground
 - Wind-blown petals floating on water
 - Stroking your pet mouse"
- (pages 32-34)

Chapter 2: The Center

How does Mellish describe "The Center?" (pages 55-56)

What are some of your thoughts on how the author described the "Cycle of Heaven?" (page 58)

I thought of Wave Hands when I read how Mellish described the "Obliques as crossed springs". What tai chi movements came to your mind? (page 61)

On pages 62-69 Mellish presents several pelvis images:

- Hipbones resting in one horizontal track
- Hipbones like headlamps
- Feel the pelvis as a large cup with a handle
- Pelvis like a bowl of fruit

Which one(s) do you like, and why?
(page 62-69)

Chapter 3: Your Spine and Your Line

Did anyone try Mellish's test to see if their "psoas might be affecting the carriage of you back"? What did you discover?



Mellish's provides several spine alignment images on pages 76 – 85. Take a minute to review them. Which of these resonated for you and what other images can you think of to encourage proper spine alignment?

Mellish's images-

- "The Golden Cord
- Weight hanging from the tailbone
- A string of pearls on an elastic thread
- Sitting on a window-ledge
- Spine like a snake
- The pin of a vertical hinge
- A downward-pointing spear
- A golf ball resting on a tee
- You have a dinosaur tail
- One line through the back of the head, tailbone, and heel of support foot
- Three circles in the torso
- The Jade Pillow- Gateway between mind and body
- As if balancing a book on your head" (pages 76-85)

Chapter 4: Shoulders, Arms, and Hands

What did you think about when you read, "Efficient energy transmission requires the shoulders, arms and hands to be....

1. Effortless
2. Free
3. Open
4. Connected"

Which of Mellish's imagery for the shoulders, arms and hands resonated most with you, and why? (pages 89 -97)

- As if someone else is lifting your arms
- The flesh of the arms hangs off the bones
- Drops of water run down the arms
- Feel your arm resting on someone or something
- Arms grafted onto the body
- A bird perches on the hand
- Shoulders and arms float free from the torso
- Shoulders like a cape thrown over the body
- Moving from the collar bone
- Arms like an elephant's trunk
- Like a ferret down a rabbit hole
- Arms as hoses
- Hands like reflector dishes



- Emitting and receiving energy from the centers of the palms
- Armpits hold a small orange
- Yawning armpits”

Did Mellish’s description of the Lao Gong (aka Palace of Work) points in the palms alter the way you think about how you direct energy from this point? (page 96)

Can you think of examples in Tai Chi movements where your feel energy is transmitted or drawn inward?

Have you experimented with any of the author’s suggestions to enhance your feeling of connection and if so, what was the outcome?

- Playing with an energy ball
- The two arms form a segment of a circle
- The two hands talk to each other
- Identical motion and opposite motion
- Pulling taffy
- Playing the accordion
- Spiraling or “silk reeling”
(pages 97- 101)

A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook - Section 2 Questions

Chapter 5 - Letting Go

In Chapter 5, Mellish gives many examples of “Letting Go.”

Do you use any of the imagery presented or have a technique of your own you use when practicing or teaching this concept?

The author suggests to, “Choose an animal whose qualities appeal to you or has something to teach or offer you.” (reference on page 121)

What animal would you choose and why?

Chapter 6 - The Breath

1. How does the imagery used in Chapter 6 help you understand the connection between breath and movements in Tai Chi?

2. What are some practical ways you can apply the concepts from this chapter to your daily Tai Chi practice or other aspects of your life?



Chapter 7 - Feeling and Expression

1. How do the concepts of feeling and expression discussed in this chapter enhance your understanding of Tai Chi?
2. Can you identify any personal experiences or emotions that resonate with the imagery presented in this chapter? How do they impact your practice of Tai Chi?

Chapter 8 - Rhythm

Questions: refer to pages 152 & 153

Read the below starting with #1 then practice Dan Tian breathing.
Then read #2 and once again practice Dan Tian breathing.
Which did you prefer? Why?

1. Sending and Taking

“Feel the whole universe around you as pure radiant energy from the Big Band”

- a) As you breath in that energy fill every cell in your body, washing away an tension or toxins
- b) On the out breathe, anything you no longer need is released down through the feet into the ground

2. Setting out and returning home

- a) As you breath in, your consciousness and life energy withdraw to your Center, where they are nourished and renewed
- b) On the out breath your energy extends throughout your body to the tips of your fingers and toes and even beyond your body to anywhere else you want to send it

Page 154

Your pauses are like musicals rests:

Your movement flow the way music flows. Each movement is a line of a song, complete in itself and yet also introducing what is to come next. Even the pause (rests) from an important part of the melody, and do not interrupt the flow but create an expectation that brings the next note into existence.

What movement comes to mind?

Chapter 9 - The Five Elements

Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space

“The aim of the images in this chapter is that each area of the body does it particular job and also supports the other areas of the body in doing theirs”



Which warm-up or movement would you choose to practice imaging one of the element and why?

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Part 3 Questions

Chapter 9 - The Five Elements

Earth, Water, Fire, Air and Space

“The aim of the images in this chapter is that each area of the body does its particular job and also supports the other areas of the body in doing theirs.”

Which warm-up or movement would you choose to practice imaging one of the elements and why?

Part 3 - Application

Chapter 10 - Power

In this chapter, Mellish gives many images of delivering power such as:

- Spiral Movements (p. 169)
- Spinning the world beneath your feet (p. 173)
- Wave energy (p. 176)
- Cracking of the whip (p. 178)
- The snake in your spine (p. 179)

To reference a few....

Did any in particular stand out and how so?

“Movements have a relaxation phase in which potential energy is stored, and an expression phase in which it is transformed into kinetic energy and released.” (page 174)

Can you feel this concept and how do you apply this to your Tai Chi practice?

Chapter 11 - Self and other

In what ways do we already work on balance, rootedness, and yielding in our daily tai chi practice?

Afterward: Imagery in Daily Life (begins on p. 223)

How can we apply such concepts as relaxation, alignment, grounding, openness and awareness that are the core of this book to everyday circumstances?

Scientific Research on Tai Chi (begins on p. 233)

Did anyone have a chance to explore any of the studies referenced?

Are there any other resources that people use they would like to share?