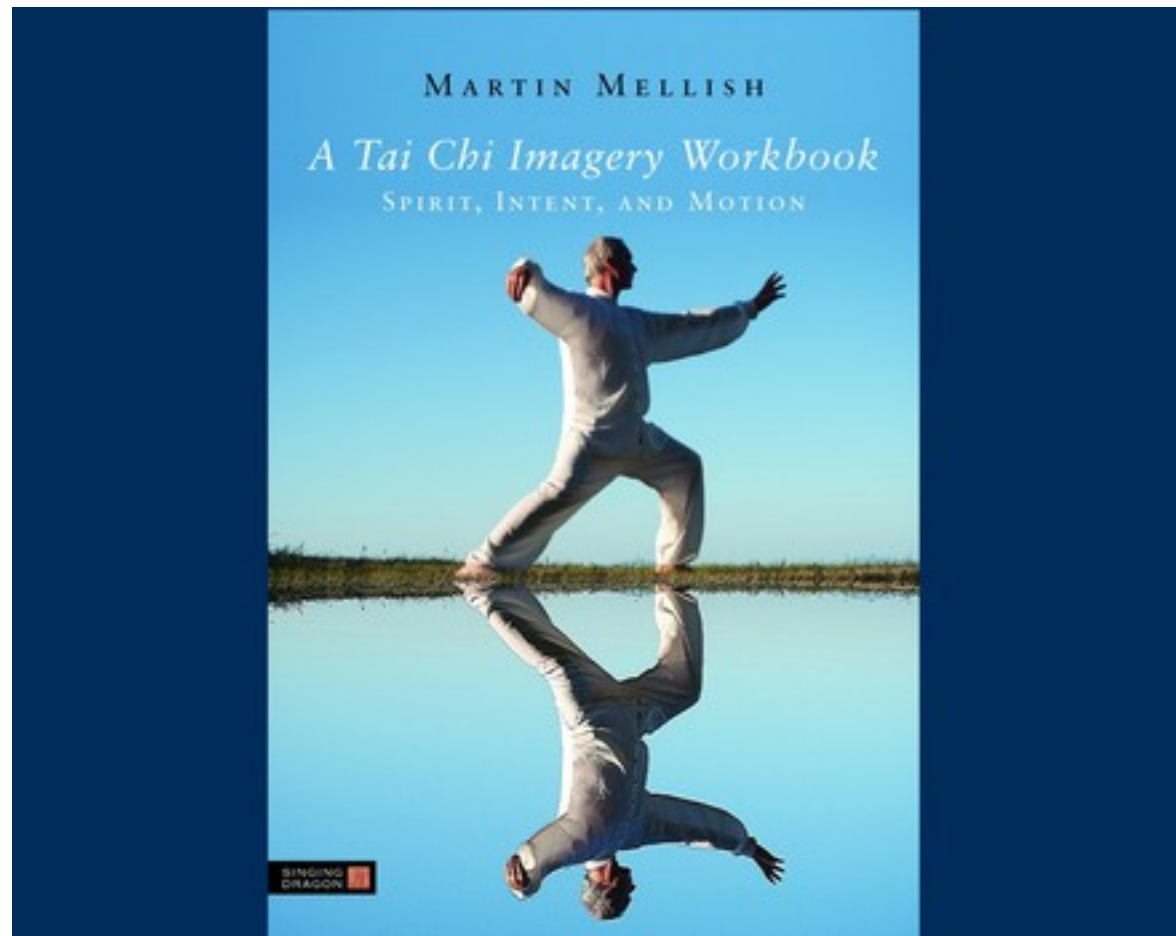


A Brilliant Idea: A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook

December 5, 2010

4:10 PM MST



Book Cover of A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook

Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Martin Mellish does not follow the general path as most people do. He grew up in England and was trained as a research mathematician, but left for India in 1977 to study [meditation](#). He learned [Tai Chi](#) at an Indian [ashram](#). He practiced Tai Chi a few hours each day along with meditation. He also earned his black belt in [Wadokai Karate](#) during this period. He started to teach Karate and Tai Chi in the ashram later.

On his return to Europe, he studied with Master Chu King Hung, Yang Style lineage holder and disciple of Grandmaster [Yang Shau Chung](#). Martin immigrated to the U.S. in 1987 studied Tai Chi with [Harrison Moretz](#).

In 1988, he won a medal in the U.S. Tai Chi championships. In 1989, he met Master [Gao Fu](#) and studied with her. Between 1990 and 1993, he won a total of nine medals in U.S. and Canadian national Tai Chi

competitions, including six first place finishes.

In 1995, he was invited to visit Master Gao Fu in China, studied both with her and her teachers. Martin also learned Chinese daily then.

He has taught Tai Chi and [Qigong](#) for over 30 years. He is a certified hypnotherapist, Yoga instructor, accomplished technical rock climber, and dancer. He also holds a master's degree in Mathematics from Cambridge University. He does web design, hosting and consulting. In a way, he is a modern Renaissance Man. Recently Martin published [A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook: Spirit, Intent and Motion](#) which is absolutely brilliant. It makes a great textbook not only for Tai Chi practitioners but also for Tai Chi instructors.

As a Chinese and proficient in classic Chinese literature, I sometimes find it is difficult to explain the thoughts of some Tai Chi theory or movements written in classic Chinese into plain everyday Chinese, even to my Chinese students simply because each character in classic Chinese has extended meanings: some are more direct and concise while others are indirect and nebulous. There is a common saying that classic Chinese is comprehensible but hard to relate to another person. Mr. Mellish, with his profound knowledge in Tai Chi, Qigong, Chinese meridian, and human body anatomy, and incredible imagination and creativity, uses hundreds of photos and drawings to explain Tai Chi principles and the biomechanical aspect of the Tai Chi movements. The images in the book help practitioners to grasp the Tai Chi concept easily. The images can also help people to memorize the complex movements better. [Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei](#) once shared his learning experience with [Grandmaster Chen Zhao Pei](#). He recalled in 1960's there was no DVDs for Tai Chi in China to study with. So when he practiced the form, he visualized how Grandmaster Chen Zhaopei was doing the form.

Xu Ling Ding Jin (head suspended) is an example. "Imagine a golden cord attached to the crown of your head. The cord is held from above by [Kuan Yin](#), Goddess of Universal Compassion, whom you visualize as sitting serenely among the clouds and taking care of all of us....Relax into the support of the Golden Cord and allow your body to hang off it," written by Martin. Right away you will feel your head is erect and supported (see the illustration in the slide show). You can relax and feel spiritual. Your neck will not feel stiff simply because you try to keep your head upright.

Oftentimes, Mr. Mellish uses multiple images to convey a concept so readers can have a thorough understanding of it. Sitting or relaxing on the Kao (groin muscle or hipbones) is not an easy concept. Readers will appreciate that the image of "Hipbones Resting in one horizontal track" or "Hipbones like headlamps". In the slide show on the left hand side, you can see a few images from the book. You get a sample of the various approaches he uses. You will understand what they are for once you read the book, and appreciate his brilliance.

A Tai Chi Imagery Workbook is divided into three parts: (Body) Structure, Spirit, and (Tai Chi) Application. The body structure includes Stepping and Standing, the Center, Spine and Line, and Shoulders, Arms, and Hands. The Spirit includes Letting Go, the Breath, Feeling and Expression, Rhythm, and the Five Elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Space). The Application includes Power, Push Hands, and Weapons. The content is extremely rich and applicable to any style of Tai Chi Chuan. Even experienced Tai Chi practitioners can find some of Martin's perspective is intriguing.

SUGGESTED LINKS

- **Taichi Ba Fa by Master Chen Huixian**
- **Are you practicing Taichi Chuan or Taichi Cao?**



Violet Li

Tai Chi Examiner