

Tai Chi CURRENTS

Early Spring 2010

March 1–April 17

• Brookline Tai Chi is a program of Water Way Arts for Health & Energy, Inc., a nonprofit learning community •

COMMUNITY 2



FROM THE DIRECTOR
TEACHER PROFILE

COMING UP 3



PROGRAM NOTES
EVENTS (see Insert)

GETTING STARTED

• Try any class for free March 1–13 • Schedule a private orientation with our director to help decide what courses will work for you.

For easy access to all course descriptions and schedules, see BTC's online course catalog at www.BrooklineTaiChi.org or look for our new print course catalog



Pulling Together: BTC Community Meeting Student Volunteerism Drives New Outreach



BTC is in the middle of a big, and ongoing, conversation about how to fulfill our core mission amidst major changes, especially enrollment drops. A January 9 community meeting—with 40 students attending and many who couldn't, contributing—set in motion a new wave of volunteerism much like the one that launched BTC as a nonprofit five years ago.

The aim is to build cash reserves, increase enrollment, and make our presence better known. General discussion at the meeting overwhelmingly supported leveraging untapped resources to achieve those ends rather than considering moving to a less expensive space. BTC's 4,000 square feet account for a third of the operating budget. However, renting a smaller space would not produce a net gain since a move would sacrifice income from our current rental partners.

Newly formed volunteer committees, open to anyone with creative ideas and interest, are headed by individual WWA Board members. They address marketing

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Immersion Week Chi Gung

Heaven & Earth Pulsing Puts More Chi in Your Chi Gung



"The most popular chi gung program I teach," Eric Peters (senior Energy Arts instructor) calls Marriage of Heaven & Earth, the focus of this spring's immersion week, April 17–21. Craig Barnes co-teaches.

Practitioners of both Western and Eastern traditions agree that all internal systems of the body pulsate—open and close—in a natural rhythm. The core techniques of H&E—joint pulsing, spinal bowing, and tissue lengthening—strengthen natural circulation. In China, they are used to heal joint and spine problems.

"One simple way to measure health," says BTC director Dan Kleiman, "is to see if the internal rhythms of your body are smooth, even, and strong, or erratic and weak."

Immersion week classes will offer levels for newcomers and those with prior experience. Weekend workshops will teach beginners the basic movements as well

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3, SEE ALSO EVENTS INSERT ►

SESSION DATES — Immersion Week April 17–21. Late Spring April 26–June 12. Bruce Frantzis Workshop June 19–23. Summer June 28–August 28.

from BTC's Director



You'll notice that immersion week this year focuses on a core chi gung practice—Marriage of Heaven & Earth (*see p. 1*)—rather than on tai chi. H&E's opening & closing techniques are a direct step to working with the spine, organs, and more subtle energy in the body.

In 2004, at Bruce Frantzis' California instructor training, I didn't yet fully appreciate how these simple, pulsing rhythms underpinned all the other techniques that I would subsequently study.

I remember being startled while taking a movie break after we had been priming a basic rhythm of the body for ten days straight, eight to ten hours a day. I found my wrists and hands pulsing rhythmically on their own,

even when I wasn't practicing chi gung.

What has been especially striking to me—even beyond finding that this core training really does have such a dramatic effect on your body—is that I have had parallel experiences since then while learning practices that I wouldn't ordinarily have considered "core."

This issue highlights two of them—Jess O'Brien's hsing-i class (*see pp. 2, 3, and insert*) and Robert Tangora's central channel/zhong ding exercises (*see insert*). I think you will find it useful to explore these crosscurrents. Branching out to new practices, taught from different perspectives or by teachers in other systems, can actually heighten your appreciation of commonalities with your regular practice.

Dan Kleiman, managing director

Teacher PROFILE:

Jess O'Brien

Guest Instructor



"Anyone with a desk job needs a daily physical practice to keep your nerves and body functioning," says Jess O'Brien, and "keep the stress out."

Jess is an editor at New Harbinger Publications in California, which specializes in integrative health topics. His own book, *Nei Jia Quan* (published by North Atlantic Books), offers in-depth conversations with masters of

Chinese internal martial arts, Bruce Frantzis among them. The title is the umbrella name for the three main internal martial arts—tai ji, ba gua, and hsing-i. Jess led a BTC ba gua workshop last spring and will teach hsing-i here April 8.

The two have been trained together as brother and sister arts since the late 1800s. Though hsing-i in particular may seem off the beaten trail, it was actually the first martial art that many of Bruce's senior students learned from him. Jess has trained with Bruce since 1999 and with various martial arts masters since he was a teenager.

"These are different flavors that some will find useful," he says, ways to become more at home in your body and also to see the process Bruce went through when he created the Energy Arts program that BTC practices.

A martial enthusiast, Jess tells students who are fearful of trying fighting applications, "There are things you have that you don't know you have." These training processes can uncover unrealized strengths and aspects of the self.

His teaching approach is to train hard but have fun, keeping a lighthearted mentality even when doing something strenuous. He enjoys "seeing myself grow."

water way arts
for health and energy

WATER WAY ARTS, Inc. is the nonprofit organization of students and teachers, incorporated in 2005, that manages Brookline Tai Chi as its main educational program. Here's our all-volunteer Board: Nira Voss, president • Nelson Wong, clerk • Nina Avergun • Allen Bourque • Eli Gerstenlauer • Marie-Hélène Jouvin • Katie Keane • Ronnie Littenberg • Eric Peters.

NOTES: Hsing-i, the Missing Family Member



Hsing-i is said to make weak people strong and strong people very strong, says guest instructor Jess O'Brien, quoting Bruce Frantzis to emphasize the potential for power development in this third and least known of the internal martial arts for health. It is a way to strengthen both body and mind, particularly the "i" or "intention" needed to help develop inner skills. Regular practice is particularly useful for people who have trouble actualizing their goals in life.

The San Ti workshop that Jess will lead Thursday, April 8 focuses on the standing practice that is hsing-i's most basic training method "You've basically got to stand there in one posture until everything inside you softens, releases, and

spontaneously opens up so chi floods your system," he says. "It's not something you can find your way to intellectually."

The workshop will emphasize methods to help the body get release from the stress of standing and open up from the inside—pulsing joints, lengthening tissues from the center to the five points, and dropping the chi. Specific breathing and gazing patterns are also important; training your intention by focusing breath and gaze at the same time develops strong concentration. San Ti also opens a door to begin understanding the five elements of Traditional Chinese Medicine theory. It represents the metal element, which works with spine, lungs/breath, and mental focus.

Though standing for long periods may sound formidable, "you can make it as strenuous or as easy as you want," Jess says. "San Ti is very scalable to fit everybody."

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Community

outreach, student relations, event planning, fundraising, and finance. Information on how to get involved is available on BTC's website. Another meeting is planned for March to update the community on progress.

A sampling of ideas on the drawing board: • outreach to new students through greeters in the lobby, calls midway through courses, and other contact points • ride shares, to facilitate class attendance • drop-in intro practice sessions facilitated by senior students • collecting success stories and testimonials • demos in the community • outreach to acupuncture and other alternative health providers • seeking more grants like the recent Tufts Healthy Aging one • creating an endowment and recurring donations • and more.

The WWA Board extends a hearty thanks to all for their support.

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Immersion Week Chi Gung

as the Circling Hands exercise. More experienced students will refine the movements and explore more difficult pulsings.

On week nights, the entire group will learn techniques that dramatically increase the ability to move energy through your body, including wrapping, yin and yang meridian lengthening, and cavity pulsing.

The rhythmic, continuous pumping of H&E helps you develop the relaxed, springy quality of movement that makes tai chi and ba gua look effortless and alive. It improves circulation of fluids in your joints, releases physical, mental, and emotional blockages in your body, and deeply relaxes tension.

Instructors will also be available on weekday afternoons for free individual feedback or for private lessons, including Energy Arts instructor

• Schedule •

APRIL 17–21 Heaven & Earth Chi Gung

Eric Peters and Craig Barnes,
Senior Energy Arts Instructors

Sat. 2–6pm

Sun. 10am–1pm and 3–5pm

Mon.–Wed. 6:30–9:30pm

Optional: Mon.–Wed., 1–4pm
Additional pulsing practice sessions, private lessons with senior instructors, and recertification for Energy Arts instructors

Cost: Whole event, \$340.

Weekend only, \$180.

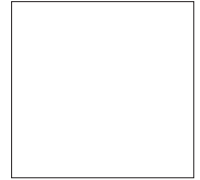
recertification. To sign up for a time, please contact BTC director Dan Kleiman.



Brookline Tai Chi

1615 Beacon Street, Brookline, MA 02446

www.brooklinetaichi.org



Brookline Tai Chi



WHAT'S NEW

- **ROBERT TANGORA RETURNS**
Learn central channel (or zhong ding) exercises February 20–24 to complete the Cloud Hands set that Robert taught last year. See insert.
- **IMMERSION WEEK HEAVEN & EARTH**
Mark your calendars for April 17–21, chi gung intensive with senior Energy Arts instructors Eric Peters and Craig Barnes. See p.1 and Events insert.
- **XSING-I WORKSHOP APRIL 8**
Guest instructor Jess O'Brien teaches San Ti, a lesser known standing practice that builds focus and calm. See pp.1, 2, and insert.
- **TRY A FREE CLASS!**
Drop in on any class March 1–13. Find out what tai chi and chi gung feel like and what they can do for you. See schedule on insert and course catalog online.