

ROOTING

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One of my students emailed me that he had experienced an ah-hah practicing his form last week. He has been studying a few years and has heard me speak many times about the importance of making certain that the bottom of the foot remains evenly weighted from heel to toe and from side to side. We've worked with the bubbling well, the three nails and other imagery designed to focus the attention on the bottom of the feet and so refine awareness of what it really takes to keep the feet in contact with the earth.

His ah-hah was in noticing that the feet are correct when the weight of the body is carried on the muscles and is not braced upon the bones and joints. Poise and grace are the western concepts of this kind of self-carriage. In T'ai Chi we call this rooting.

Rooting is realized when the weight of the body drops down through the bones into the earth without getting stuck in any joints. Knees must be unlocked. Hips must be in neutral. The spine must be upright and the top of the head pressed against heaven. Aligned this way the body no longer resists gravity. Instead gravity becomes a source of power and energy for the body.

This is a true transmutation of energy; passage through a shock point. Like the difference between ice and water with no intermediate state and completely different realities on each side of the change. The best part is that since thoughts, emotions and sensations give rise to one another, this profound change in sensations is accompanied by equally sweeping changes in consciousness.