

Malcolm Manning - Something about the stand

The days when I feel most human are the days that I meet the world with a sense of wonder. And I'm always amazed watching my fellow humans. Why don't we fall over?

As a contactor, I study and teach the stand - the small dance - so it's not such a big surprise.

One reason I like contact is the state of being aware of myself as an animal, of being present with myself as a physical entity, of being "in my body" (a well-worn phrase) that I generate in preparation for dancing contact and which is fed by dancing.

There are many ways in to this state, but one of my favourites is the stand. Here's some stuff I've been playing with while teaching/practising it.

To think of:

- o The characters for the Chinese word for "human" literally mean "between heaven and earth". For me it encapsulates the stand, feeling weight flowing down through the body towards the earth and feeling support travelling back up through the body towards heaven. So in the practising the stand, we are in a sense practising being human!
- o Whatever stable position you are in relative to the earth - lying, sitting, whatever - you're always "standing" on the earth, in the same sense as you'd "stand" a glass on a table. In practising the stand, you're practising everything else.

To do:

- o My Qi Gong teacher says "forget your body", think of it as just light. Reminds me of David Zambrano saying "dissolve your body into the space". With this in mind I came up with this.

In the stand, track the sensations of "downness" and "upness", towards earth and heaven. Imagine the downness and upness as fluids flowing in both directions at the same time through a pipe about that passes through your axis - it's juicy

Imagine the downness and upness as electricity, like alternating current - it's a buzz.

Now imagine the downness and upness as light, let the pipe dissolve and sense the light - it shines.

Now forget your body and just ride the light beam, up and down as you stand.

What I've noticed is that at this point, people visibly relax, bodies drop into better alignment, become more upright.

It's interesting that in seeking better alignment sometimes "forgetting your body" can help.

- o After standing for a while, let your arms reach up for the sky. Don't over-reach, imagine the shoulder-blades relaxing and sliding down the back. Reach from your feet.

Experiment with the positions of the arms with the idea of finding a place where the bones seem to stack up effortlessly, like a child stacking up building blocks Stand a while longer like this. Next, let your arms move out to the sides and downwards, little by little, still imagining the shoulder-blades relaxing and sliding downwards, pausing anywhere that feels good. This can take a while.