



Written Descriptions for: Section 5, Lesson 2

Finding and Breathing with the Lower *Tan Tien*

(i) Finding the Lower *Tan Tien*

Start either in a comfortable seated position with the spine straight or standing using the Simple Stance described in Section 4, Lesson 1.

Taking a deep breath in, pull in your diaphragm, so that you can see the bottom dome of the rib cage. Place one hand, palm down, along the contour of your lower rib cage in the centre with the knuckle of your index finger next to the sternum. That represents the top curve of the sphere of your *tan tien*.

Then take your other hand, and with the palm facing up, press inwards on your belly, moving your hand down until you find your pubis bone. So then this represents the lower curve of the *tan tien*.

So if you look down, one hand will be just underneath the rib-cage facing down and the other hand will be on the pubis bone facing up. So then you can see the size of your lower *tan tien*. This is the size of your “sphere” of energy. To find the ‘centre of your centre’, drop the top hand down and the bottom hand up, and then place one thumb into the centre of the space between your hands to find the centre of your sphere.

Let’s begin now to practice some exercises with our lower *tan tien*. For each of these exercises, the lips are together but the teeth apart, so that we breathe in and out through the nose.

(ii) Lower *tan tien* breathing – exercise #1

This breathing exercise can be done either seated or standing using the Simple Stance described in Section 4, Lesson 1.

Begin with your thumb on the ‘centre of your sphere’, as described earlier. Imagine that you have a balloon there that inflates as you inhale, and deflates as you exhale. Continuing the visualisation, imagine that you are breathing small filaments of light



in through the crown of your head, into fill the balloon at your centre; and then as you exhale, these filaments escape by going out through the crown of your head. Keep drawing the breath in through the crown, into your centre, and exhaling out through the crown of the head.

Once you have familiarised yourself with that exercise, you can add the hand movements that go along with it. They are as follows:

Stand with you arms by your sides. As you inhale, bringing those filaments of light into the balloon at your centre, your hands move outwards, symbolising the expansion of the balloon. As you exhale, your hands return to your sides, sybolising the emptying of the balloon.

Repeat for at least 10 breaths.

Afterwards, return to normal standing and observe the feelings in your body. Write down in your course journal anything that you have observed.

Now we will try another exercise which also has as its focus the lower abdominal areas – but with a slightly different approach.

(iii) Lower tan tien breathing – exercise #2

This breathing exercise can be done either seated or standing using the Simple Stance described in Section 4, Lesson 1.

Imagine a “dropper” (a glass tube with a hollow rubber bulb at one end and a small opening at the other, for drawing liquids out of bottles). Imagine that dropper inverted with the rubber part at your navel and the small glass opening at the back of your throat. As you exhale, imagine you are squeezing the rubber bulb part at the navel – this causes you to breathe out through the nose. For the inhale, simply let the rubber bulb go – its resulting expansion brings breath right into the belly. Exhale again by squeezing the “rubber bulb” at the navel, inhaling by simply letting the rubber bulb go, allowing breath to rush in. Repeat for 10 breaths.

Once you are familiar with the visualisation, you are ready to add the hand movements, which are as follows:

Start with your arms by your sides, take a breath in. As you exhale, contract the abdomen in slightly, as if you are squeezing the bulb of the inverted rubber dropper – as you do so, move your arms forward and upwards, to shoulder level, hands out in front of you. Push the breath from your abdomen out through your fingers.



The breath in comes passively, with the release of the abdominal squeeze, air rushes into that centre – as that happens, lower your arms down in front of you. So, the exhale sends the hands up and out, and the inhale brings the arms down again.

Repeat for at least 10 breaths.

One of these lower *tan tien* breathing exercises (either exercise #1 or exercise #2) will feel more natural to you – more comfortable or in alignment with you. That's ok. Keep practicing both.

(iv) Lower *tan tien* breathing – Combining exercise #1 and #2

In this version we combine both of the above exercises, as follows:

Start with your arms raised at shoulder level, hands pointing away from the chest. As you inhale, imagine filaments of light entering in through the crown of the head, and coming into fill a balloon at your centre. Your arms move downwards to represent this. As you exhale, gently contract the abdomen, squeezing the belly slightly as you send the breath/ filaments of light from the abdomen up through the arms and out through the fingers into the world around you – the arms move up as you do that.

Repeat for at least 10 breaths. Then stand with your hands by your side, taking note of how you felt during the exercise. Note any interesting results in your course journal.

Did you feel tingling coming out through your fingers? Could you sense the movement of *Qi* out through your fingers?

If so, congratulations! You have just witnessed the secret behind Bruce Lee's famous "1-inch punch".

The 1-inch punch is an anomaly – the amount of force with which Bruce Lee could send an opponent flying across the room is more than what is physically possible from that distance using muscle power alone. The demonstration proved that something else was going on – another force is present, beyond the physical.

The truth is that Bruce Lee would have had to have spent countless hours filling up his *tan tien* with energy to have been able to collect enough force to move a man across the room. However, the technique is basically the same as what you have just done.



You could say that feeling tingling out through the fingers is like a snowflake's worth of energy... but many snowflakes together cause an avalanche! And an avalanche can destroy a city. So, yes, a snowflake can destroy a city, but only when packed together with trillions of other snowflakes.

In the same way, regularity of practice and cultivation of energy at the lower *tan tien* can cause enough force to send a man flying.