

TC Meetup Guidelines and Conditions

I'm something of a vagrant and chances are someday I'll be in your area or you in mine. If so, I'm generally happy to meet up for physical work to demonstrate our esoteric brand of radically minimal Tai Chi. Below are my guidelines for meetups.

1. WHO: I'm generally open for a one-time *meetup* with anybody. But experienced martial artists or teachers are most appropriate for this. If you are a raw beginner with little or no martial arts background, you'd probably be better off requesting an introductory pilot *lesson* instead. I reserve the right to refuse to meet up with anybody for any reason or no reason (basically if I think you're likely to be a nut or a bore).

2. WHAT: My interactive work is based on a pretty traditional version of non-patterned Yang/Zheng fixed-step two-hand push hands (推手). You might think that's uncontroversial enough, but due to some misunderstandings over the years, I now refer to the meetup work using the Japanese term 崩し (くずし or 'kuzushi'). This is a generic term meaning 'unbalancing work'. In Japan there are so many traditional and new flavors of jujitsu, judo, aikido, etc. that when people get together they sometimes use this term to describe the general process of playing with each other's balance, yielding, rooting, energy, etc. The goal is similar to the more conservative forms of traditional Tai Chi push hands: make the partner lose his balance so that he has to take at least one involuntary step to maintain himself. This provides a simple, safe, straightforward, no-sweat, method that obviates any need for mats, headgear, mouthguard, gloves, suitable ground surface or any other special setup for minimal Tai Chi testing. The use of term 'kuzushi' rather than 'tuishou' may seem like mere cosmetic terminology but it's important because of what it excludes. It excludes post-facto controversies based on claims such as the following:

I could've punched you in the nose!
I could've touched your throat!
I could've stomped your instep!
I could've kicked you in the balls!
I could've spit in your mouth (and I'm HIV positive) !
I could've been holding a knife!

When you enter into a traditional push hands configuration with anybody, the above actions are all theoretically possible. They are not really useful as a check of combative ability though because basically they are saying "anything goes" and that is a very different situation. For example, just as you touch my throat I might snap your elbow joint, etc. So to introduce the above types of considerations is inappropriately mixing apples and oranges and basically amounts to upturning the gameboard when you're losing.

If people want serious full combat testing, well, there will still be a ruleset (its just unavoidable), and I would suggest Western boxing for that. Join a good hardcore club. I have practiced boxing for many years, and have been considered a very skillful sparring partner, but I do *not*

offer meetups based on that format due to the necessity for various kinds of equipment, setup, and supervision - also its generally a less safe practice than traditional *kuzushi*.

3. WHY: Purpose of meetups is to have fun, swap stories, and for you to experience internally based Tai Chi (as opposed to performance-based systems). I will give you the experience of all response modes A, B, C, and D (fire, water, earth, air) as described in the 'Tai Chi Tenets' document on my site www.zmq37.comwritings. This is non-compliant work (within the kuzushi context). You can do what you like, within the general kuzushi framework to resist: root, wriggle, counter-push etc.

4. HOW: In most cases I will not publicly blog or comment about our meetup or if I do, I won't use your name or your website's name but will just make some general comments. I would ask that you extend the same courtesy. If you do intend to blog about it, then we'll have to arrange for a 3rd person to be present at the meetup to cell cam the session.