

Amica e

YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN

N° 90

JANVIER 2019

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EDITO

I did say that I would come back to take care of the Bulletin in a few years' time. If we consider that "a few years" is at least two years, well, my leave will not have lasted very long since I am back on this page. Claudy will still be there to support me if necessary (thank you, thank you), and so the position of "assistant editor" has just been created!

It is with pleasure that I take up the task again, rest assured, even if I cannot, like our President on the opposite page, prevent myself from raising again and again the perennial question of volunteerism and dedication within the Amicale. Why is it that it is always the same people who find themselves "forced" to take back the job, for lack of good will? Where are the new energies of our Amicale? Yet they are there, enthusiastic and motivated, during the Meetings, why then is there no renewal in the basic functions of the association?

So, the stone being thrown in the pool of your thoughts, I come back to my editorial....

Two new volunteer graphic designers, Emmanuel Leblanc and Sophie Cornueil, (taiji practitioners in Angers), whose technique should satisfy all readers of the Bulletin (and save the Amicale money). And our proximity of all three of us will allow us to work faster and probably more efficiently. We are therefore inaugurating 2019 with a new version of the Bulletin, a new cover and a slightly modified layout (thanks Emmanuel for the new design of the cover and the interior layout and thanks to Sophie who is in charge of "filling" the layout with all the fingering it requires).

I wish you all a very happy New Year, and whatever the events, good and bad, that they continue to take us forward.

Françoise Cordaro

A word from the President

The spirit blew in Sète and protected us from the two stormy episodes that framed the time of the Meetings. Is it our energy or the mischievous pink flamingo that accompanied the morning exercises on the beach? In any case, we were able to admire the Pyrenees and the Canigou, revealed by the rising sun and no rain interrupted our activities. Congratulations and thanks to all the volunteers of the "Cent Pas" for offering us these very successful Meetings.

As those who have read the Administrative Note already know, the Bureau of the Amicale has been modified since the last Board meeting and behind the address of the secretary is now Jean Claude Trap, who has taken over from Maryline Bozon. Once again I thank both of them very warmly for the time and energy devoted to this task.

As is customary in this winter issue, I would also like to thank the other members of the Bureau, the Board and the commissions for their continued involvement in the machinery that make the Amicale work. Two new translators, Céline Bertin and Sophie Melloul, have joined the team that works in the background to ensure a connection with the English-speaking world and give the Amicale a presence beyond the French-speaking world.

This would be a good time to sing the well-known refrain to encourage you to participate in all these bodies. Well, no! This year I won't do it.

But I ask you instead to answer the questionnaire that may be sent to you soon. Erica Martin practices in the Lausanne group and is preparing a master's degree for which she must produce a thesis. Motivated by our repeated and unsuccessful calls, she decided to focus this thesis on the sustainability of volunteer-based associations. This questionnaire prepared by her should help her to identify the reasons that make you hesitate to participate in the adventure. The results are of great interest to us. The recipients of this survey will be the participants in the Meetings of the last three years. Indeed, among all the practitioners grouped in the member associations, it is these people who know and use the Amicale best. Please, you who are part of it, take a few minutes to answer this questionnaire!

The Amicale will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2019 and on this occasion the Meetings will take place over four days, from 7 to 11 November. It will be in Strasbourg. Get ready!

Looking at the Amicale website, after wandering between the stands of the Amicale market, I realized that many of our eminent authors of monographs, DVDs and others, were neglecting the possibility of publishing the availability of their productions on the site, which nevertheless has a specific tab for this purpose. That's a pity!

Finally, I wish you all good opportunities to practice in 2019.

With kind regards,

François Schosseler

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Piera Costantini Scala

7th september 1971 – 7th september 2018

Peter Clifford

Piera joined our tai chi class at The Tai Chi Centre in London almost 10 years ago. She was a unique member of our group – outgoing, effervescent, energetic and charming.

She was originally from Italy and had decided to move to London to live and work. Piera spent her childhood growing up in Udine, which is North of Venice, situated between the Adriatic Sea and the Alps, in Italy. Piera used to speak of her home town and community with much warmth and affection, encouraging people to visit her there.

Her mother being from Austria, and her father from Italy, enabled her to be tri-lingual in Italian, German, and English. She also spoke French and Spanish; her ability with languages, and love of travel, gave her an extraordinarily wide-ranging network of friends.

Piera had a great passion for tai chi and loved to practice whenever it was possible. She had a special interest in push hands (tuishou) and was developing a strong interest in weapons training. With her work taking her abroad, and her family in Italy, Piera was travelling a lot, and so it was difficult for her to practice regularly.

She loved the annual Amicale meetings, and where she was always a ball of energy, attending as many classes as possible, studying with many different teachers. One afternoon she told us with bright eyes and huge enthusiasm how she had been practising push hands, delighting in pushing so many people around, and in turn being pushed around by them.

She would have been a star in the mornings in the parks of Taiwan with her tuishou practice, her energy, and her contagious "joie de vivre".

Piera was also an intrepid swimmer, swimming with the famous "Serpentine Swimming Club". These hardy souls swim daily in The Serpentine Lake, in the middle



of Hyde Park, in Central London. They swim in the open, in all seasons, in all weathers, starting early and finishing before 9.30 am every morning. Whenever she could, in all weathers, Piera was there, and in the water irrespective of the conditions.

For work, Piera was a renowned portrait photographer, with her base in London. She established her own studio at The Old Gasworks in Fulham. From there she developed many joint photo-journalism projects and mentored young photographers. She exhibited in London and abroad and had published work in Life Magazine, the Saatchi Gallery and many other publications.

For schooling she studied political science at University Cattolica Milan, specialising in international relations, before going on to a Masters in Contemporary arts at Sotheby's Institute in London. She also trained at the Black and White School of Photography and at Magnum Photos workshops in Tuscany, inspired by the great photography masters Henry Cartier-Bresson and Robert Capa.

She had a great love of travel reporting, which suited her adventurous spirit and sporting genes. It was said that "from the desert of Atacama to the Kenyan Savana, from the populated centre of New Delhi and Bombay to the peaceful Peruvian Andes, she always travelled with her faithful Nikon D700 by her side".

Those who knew her said: "Her selective eye and exploring approach (to photography) allow her to capture the most incredible moments. She is an expert in preparing her subjects for a photo and for capturing the most vivid parts of life; her outgoing and elegant way of dealing with things makes her the perfect companion".

And in her own words: "I am a freelance photographer specialized in portraiture and travel photography. I have been trained as a classic photographer using black and white film and the darkroom. (I know that) to be a good photographer, first you need the (spirit) of an intrepid explorer".

Her tai chi friend Michel Timochenkov said: "Piera was such a great sunshine, in the emails we



Piera in the frozen waters of Serpentine Lake

exchanged I called her 'my Imperial Queen' and her smiles in return were glowing in the blue sky... my heart is crying... rest in peace dear Piera". Fiona Gately, her good friend from both tai chi and The Serpentine Swimming Club says of Piera "she loved and cherished people and always wanted to know their stories. She was an adventurer and always in life she saw no problems".



We had not seen Piera for many months; she was staying in Italy and was in touch and was trying to get organised to re-start her tai chi classes with us in London. Sadly, she was on a roller coaster, and whilst in Italy Piera decided to end her life on her 47th birthday.

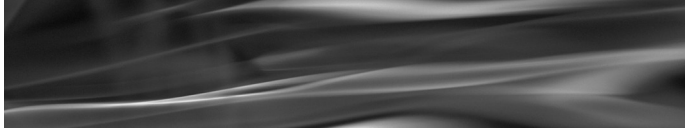
A funeral service was held for her in Udine, at the church where she was baptised, and then in London at The London Oratory. Both services were attended by large numbers of people from many walks of life, who had come to know and love Piera. On the following day, Sunday 4th November, there was a memorial swim for Piera in The Serpentine, held for by her club friends and family. At this memorial swim some of her ashes were scattered in the waters of The Serpentine.

Piera's family and friends are now planning a memorial exhibition of her life and works in London on her anniversary in 2019.

Piera has left us deeply saddened by her departure; she will be missed by all of us at the Tai Chi Centre in London, and also by her many good friends in the wider tai chi community.

Gone but not forgotten; rest in eternal peace dear Piera.

Peter Clifford (Xu Bin)
London, 26th November 2018



Thrust the palm to the heart

撲心掌
Pu xin zhang

Claudy Jeanmougin

The form of our style of Taiji quan, the Yangjia michuan, includes many families of gestures, having the same essence, which differ from each other only in a small nuance, sometimes causing confusion between these gestures of the same family. Moreover, perceiving that gestures belong to the same family prevents us from relearning a new gesture, it is just enough to take the basic gestural form and to bring it to the nuance.

That being said, the nuance, even the smallest, is the source of many confusions as soon as we start the *Yong fa* 用法 the technical applications. To shed light on my subject, I chose the *Pu xin zhang* 撲心掌 gesture, "Thrust the palm to the heart" (gesture 11), which I will compare to two other gestures of the form: *Gao tan ma* 高探馬, "Pat high on the horse" (gesture 43), and *Tiao lian shi* 挑簾式, "Raise the bamboo curtain" (gesture 34) 挑簾式.

About yongfa 用法, technical applications. The *yong* character 用 (apply, implement, use) followed by *fa* 法 (technique, method) gives the name *yongfa* 用法 clumsily often translated by "Martial Application". In the current language, *yongfa* is the instructions texts found on packaging or booklets that come with various utensils or other products. Under no circumstances does this allude to a martial practice, which is why I have chosen to always translate *yongfa* by "Technical Application" because very often the martial aspect is erased in favour of respect for the form. Master Wang Yen-nien has always explained to us that the *yongfa* must respect the form and that the form must not be transformed to adapt it to a *yongfa*...

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui

What these gestures have in common is the position of the arms in a cross with gestural expression by taking a step forward, all this being associated with a spiral movement of the hand, more or less pronounced, generated by a double rotation of the pelvis.

I will not start with the study of "Thrust the palm to the heart" because it is the examination of the other two gestures that will shed light on the error of its gestural interpretation. In learning a gesture, what seems to me to be the most important thing is to perceive its purpose well in order to focus all your attention on its "attack", its beginning, instead of absolutely wanting to finalize it. Nothing is more unpleasant than to see martial arts demonstrations where the attacker is manoeuvred like a potato bag and to see him overcome with violence and finished with great punches... All this to say that it is the beginning of the gesture that counts and not what is after because if the gesture is well charged with intention in relation to its essence, everything else will take place without any physical or mental effort.

I start with the study of *Gao tan ma* "Pat high on the horse". In the study of these gestures I will always proceed in the same way: explanation of the translation because it can help to understand the essence of the gesture, description of the gesture, technical application of the gesture, comments and comparative study with the other gestures.

For the study of characters we use several dictionaries including 2 Ricci, the Ricci in 1 volume that we will call Ricci 1 and in 3 volumes that will be indicated by Ricci 3.

高探馬 GAO TAN MA (gesture 43) – Pat high on the horse

Study of graphics and translation/interpretation

高 GAO: high, tall.

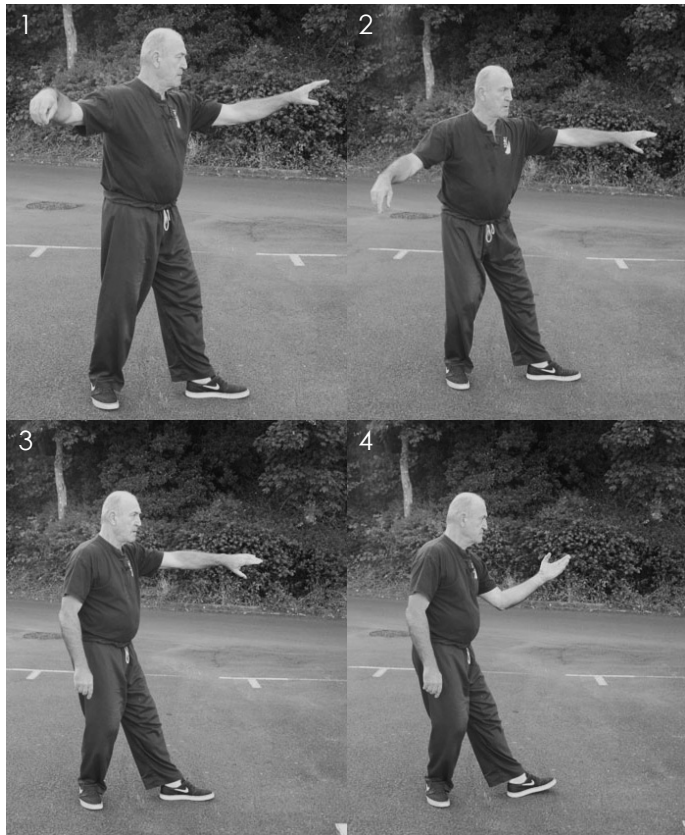
探 TAN: probe, explore. It could also be the gesture made to feel an animal in order to appreciate the quality of its meat.

馬 MA: the horse.

高探馬 GAO TAN TAN MA. Translated as "Pat high on the horse" is not only an interpretation, it is also to differentiate this gesture from another one that bears the name of Tan ma, translated by "Caressing the horse's back". The Chinese term *gao* is used to differentiate our two gestures. We could also have understood that one of the gestures was small while the other is larger, which is the case. Or that one is higher than the other, which is not really the case in the gesture but is for the neck, higher than the back. "Pat high on the horse" and "Caressing the back of the horse" are more poetic expressions than "The great caress of the horse" and "The caress of the horse"...

Description of the action

The gesture is described in Master Wang Yen-nien's Volume 1 "The Yang Family Hidden Tradition of Taiji Quan - Illustrated and Explained" under photos 368 to 370. I prefer to repeat the description with more photos because the spiral movement is absolutely not visible or indicated even though it is fundamental and specific to this gesture.



1. Starting position (Photo 1). It is the end of the gesture that precedes it in the 1st sequence, the end of "Single whip to the left".

2. Absorption (photos 2 to 4). It has two phases that can be summarized in a single step, that of absorption.

- Phase 1. During the transfer of body weight to the back leg, there is a slight rotation of the pelvis to the right, which generates an internal rotation of the left hand, or pronation. The right arm starts to relax.

- Phase 2. In the continuity of the weight transfer to the back leg, there is a rotation of the pelvis on the other side, to the left, which generates an external rotation of the left hand, or supination. The right arm is relaxed at the end.

During this entire absorption phase, a spiral movement is generated in the left hand generated by a double rotation of the pelvis. This is a permanent feature that is found in all the gestures of our form and it cannot be otherwise since it is inherent to the articular structures of our body.

3. Expression. It also includes several steps that can be summarized in a single step, that of expression.



- **1** (photos 4 to 5). During the transfer of body weight to the back leg, while the left hand does not move in space, the right hand swings to move up to the left elbow.

- **2** (photo 6). Step forward, the right foot lands in front of the left.

- **3** (photo 7). The right hand follows the top of the left forearm by making the gesture of hitting with the edge on the annular side (classic cuff with edge or *ate mi* in Japanese). The mistake often made is to move forward at the same time as the arm. The hand movement is only made when the front foot is on the ground.

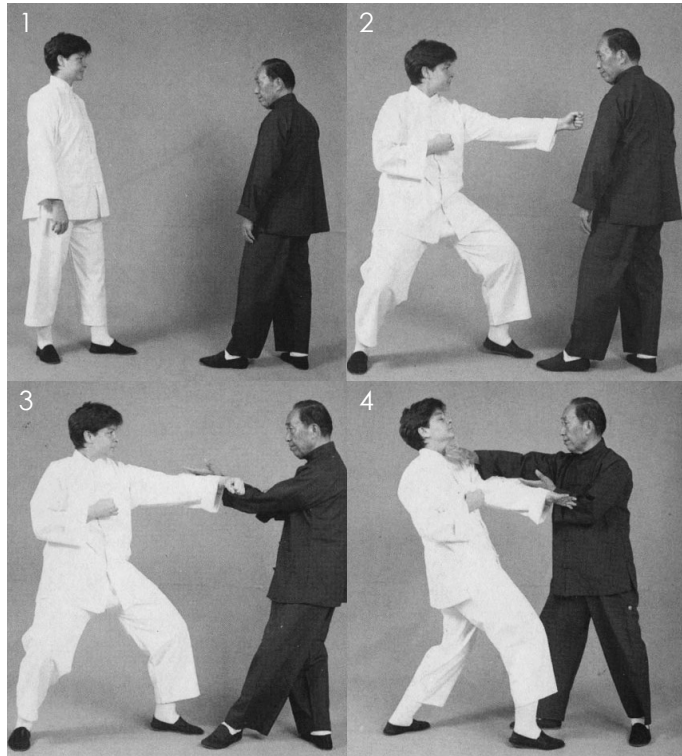


Technical application of the gesture

The technical application is described in Master Wang's Volume 2 "Yangjia Michuan Taiji quan Volume 2 Martial Application, illustrated and explained" under photos 594 to 597, p. 293.

I would like to point out that most of the technical applications of this book are not those I learned with Master Wang during my stay in Taiwan from 1984 to 1986, nor those worked on in Yushi in 1992.

a - What is proposed in Master Wang's Volume 2



1. Starting position.

2. Julia moves forward to give a left punch to Laoshi's plexus.

3. Laoshi absorbs from the outside with the back of his left hand while transferring the weight of the body to the back foot.

4. Laoshi takes a step forward to hit with the edge of the hand on the annular side to Julia's neck.

In the description of the technical application, no mention is made of the double movement of the basin or the spiral movement of the left hand of Laoshi.

b - What I propose



1 (photo 1). Starting position. Madeleine puts herself in a guard position with her left foot back and her left hand closed in a fist. Claudy stands on both legs with his feet together in an attitude of great receptivity.

2a (photo 2). Claudy, while stepping back and turning his waist to the right, picks up the underside of Madeleine's left forearm as soon as possible.

2b (photo 3). Claudy transfers the body weight to the back foot.

2c (photo 4). When the weight of his body is transferred to the back foot, Claudy turns the pelvis to the left in order to generate an external rotation of his hand, supination. This time, the back of his left hand, still in contact with Madeleine's left forearm, is above. During the rotation of the pelvis to the left, Claudy released his right arm.

3 (photo 5). Claudy transfers the weight of the body to the front foot by bringing the back of his right hand down over the fold of his left elbow.

4 (photos 6 and 7). Claudy continues with a step forward by turning his palm down, internal rotation or pronation. Then he makes the gesture of hitting with the outer edge of his right hand towards his partner's neck.

Comments

What seems fundamental to me in this gesture is the absorption phase, which involves a spiral movement of the welcoming hand, generated by the double rotation of the pelvis. But for our subject I focus on the phase of expression of the gesture.

The choice of the final expression of the gesture is an atemi to the neck. Of course, this gesture can be totally different, but it will no longer be Gao tan ma! The part of the neck targeted is a vital point and the shock can cause unconsciousness. We will therefore be careful not to strike the blow but just to make the gesture of aiming at the neck.

Note that voluntarily we do not grab the wrist to attract the partner: it is just a control with absorption and neutralization.

式挑簾 TIAO LIAN SHI (Gesture 34) – Raise the Bamboo curtain

Study of graphics and translation/interpretation

挑 TIAO: Hold up, lift. (RICCI 3, 10795)

簾 LIAN: Curtain; lattice; shutter (originally bamboo, for doors and windows).

(RICCI 3, 7077)

式 SHI: Rule, standard, model. Take as a model. Form. (RICCI 1, 4368)

挑簾式: TIAO LIAN SHI: the translation "Raise the bamboo curtain" is very suitable. It is not necessary to translate shi 式 because it would make the expression heavier.

Description of the action

The gesture is described in Master Wang's Volume 1 under photos 285 to 288. In the description of the gesture under these photos does not appear what I think is the most important and significant part of the gesture. It is true that illustrating this gesture with only four photos makes it difficult to describe it completely and accurately. Once again, I propose to repeat the description completely by showing what I think is most important.

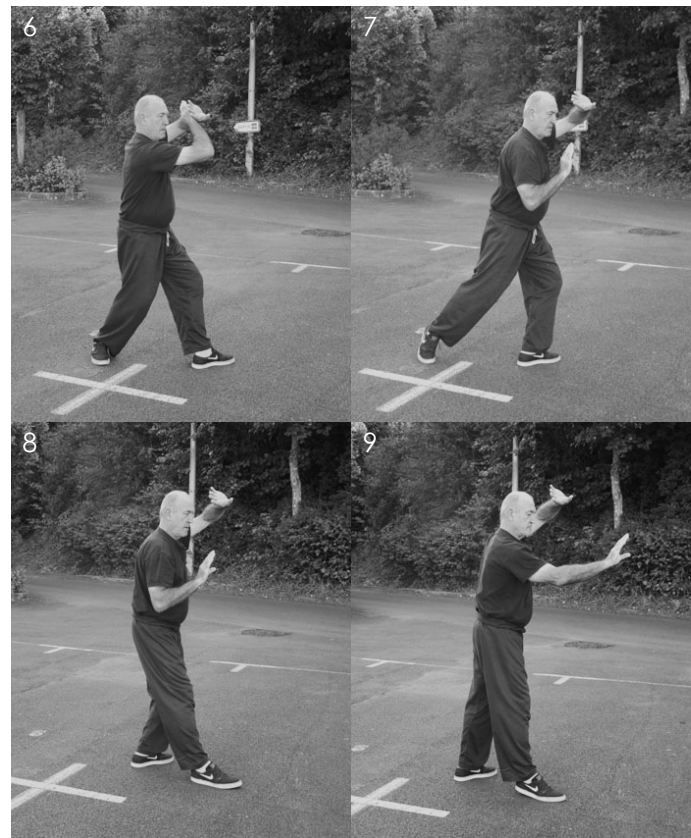


1. Starting position (photo 1). This is the end of the gesture that precedes it in the 2nd sequence, i.e. the end of "Brushing the knee to the left". The position is erected with support on the left foot, the right hand is stretched forward.

2. Absorption. It has two phases that can be summarized in a single moment, that of absorption.

- Phase 1 (photos 2 and 3). Lowering the centre of gravity by resting on the left foot, placing the right foot in the back. The pelvis turned slightly to the right.

- Phase 2 (photos 4 and 5). Transfer of body weight to the back foot with retroversion of the pelvis then rotation of the pelvis to the left and tilting of the trunk backwards without bending. At the same time, the rotation of the pelvis associated with the tilting of the trunk brought the left forearm below the right. The two forearms form a cross. The double rotation of the pelvis generated a spiral movement in the left hand.



3. Expression. It also includes several steps that can be summarized in a single step, that of the expression.

- Phase 1 (photo 6). Rotation of the pelvis to the left to bring the left heel inwards and also the right elbow. Placing the heel inwards with a pivot on the forefoot causes a forward movement of the entire body.

- Phase 2 (photos 6 and 7). Transfer of body weight to the left foot with forward engagement of the right elbow.

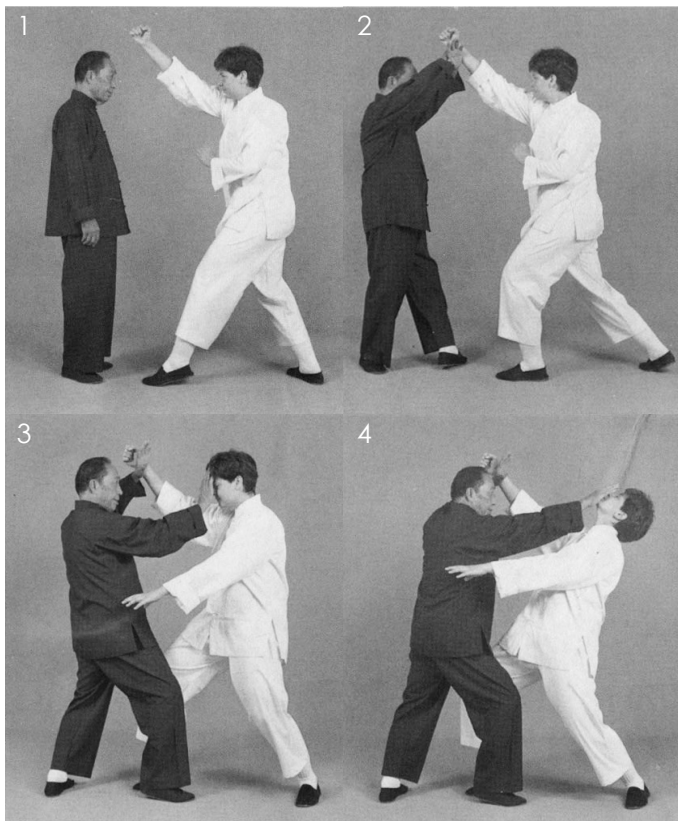
- Phase 3 (photos 8 and 9). Step forward with the right foot and push with the right hand to face level. The similarity with *Gao tan ma* is the fact of crossing arms with a spiral movement of the left hand. The right hand can make the gesture of pushing as well as hitting. In the execution of the form, this does not matter and it is better to keep the gestural neutrality that will allow all possible gestures.

Technical application of the gesture

The technical application is described in Master Wang's Volume 2 "Yangjia Michuan Taiji quan Volume 2 Martial Application, illustrated and explained" under photos 455 to 464, p. 247.

What is shown in Volume 2 is not what I learned with Master Wang during my stay in Taiwan nor what we worked on during the internship in Yushi in 1992.

a - What is proposed in Master Wang's Volume 2



Starting position without photo. Laoshi and Julia face to face.

1. Julia moves her left foot forward making the gesture of hitting the top of Laoshi's head with her right fist.
2. Laoshi steps back with his right foot, putting his arms on a cross to avoid Julia's punch.
3. Laoshi takes a step forward to force Julia to step back one step and he puts his right palm on Julia's face.
4. Laoshi finalizes his gesture by raising Julia's chin.

The very brief description of the technical application does not mention the threat with the elbow, or even an elbow strike. As for the movements of the pelvis, it is total silence. It certainly comes from the fact that the attack is a strike from above and not from the front like a direct punch to the face as I learned both in Taipei and Yushi.

b - What I propose



1. (photo 1). Starting position. Claudy stands on his two feet close together. Madeleine is at a punch distance with her right foot back and her right fist at her right hip.
2. (photos 2 and 3). Madeleine takes a step forward to punch Claudy in the face with her right fist. Claudy puts his right foot backwards with a slight rotation of the pelvis to the right, picks up Madeleine's wrist by transferring the weight of the body to the back foot by starting a tilt of the pelvis backwards.
3. (photo 4). Claudy rotates the pelvis to the left while tilting the trunk backwards, without bending, which has the effect of engaging the left heel and the right elbow forward.
4. (photo 5). The threat of Claudy's right elbow forces Madeleine to back down. Claudy takes the opportunity to move forward and make the gesture of pushing, or hitting, Madeleine on the face.

Comments

"The welcome" of the punch with the double rotation of the pelvis allows the engagement of the threatening elbow. Compared to *Gao tan ma*, the hands are in the same situation: one controls (the left) and the other expresses the application. We can see that there can be no confusion between the two gestures despite a great similarity. The variant comes from the fact that the blow is not directed at the same height.

撲心掌 PU XIN ZHANG

Study of graphics and translation/interpretation

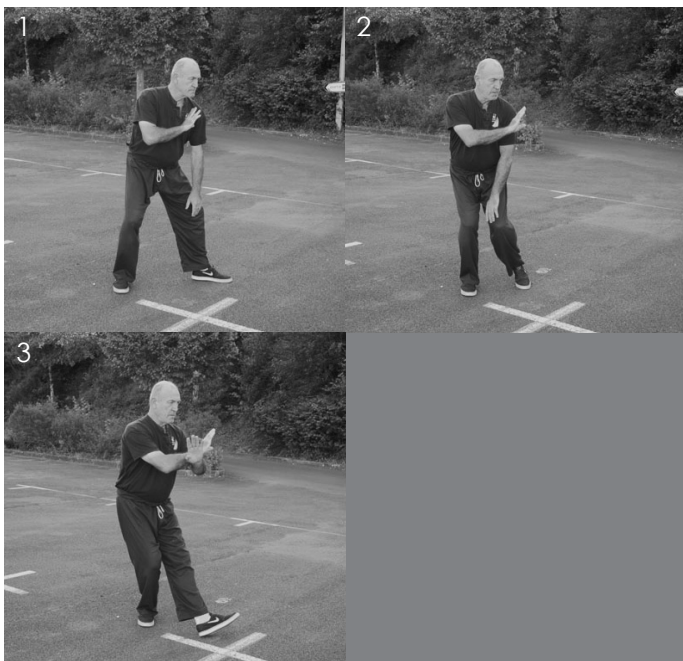
撲 PU: 1. strike; beat (Ricci 3, 9360). The idea is indeed that of a strike and not a push.

心 XIN: the heart. The strike is therefore made at the level of the heart.

掌 ZHANG: The palm, but it is also hitting with the palm.
撲心掌 PU XIN ZHANG. Thrust the palm to the heart. Why did I come to translate as "Push to the heart"? External influences at a time when my Chinese was precarious? Certainly, but not only because the final translation was adopted after Master Wang demonstrated the technical application of this gesture.

Description of the gesture

The gesture is described in Master Wang Yen-nien's Volume 1 "The Yang Family Hidden Tradition of Taiji Quan - Commented and explained" under photos 78 to 80. Once again, the description of the gesture in Volume 1 is not entirely in line with Laoshi's teaching. For example, don't you find it strange that the description in photo 80 indicates that the thrust is at the shoulder level when the name of the gesture is "Push, or strike at the heart level"?



gesture that precedes it in the first sequence, the end of "Strike with left elbow". The body weight is almost equally distributed over both feet with a slight supplement on the back foot.

2. Absorption. It has several phases that can be summarized in a single step, that of absorption.

- **Phase 1** (photo 2). Transferring the weight of the body to the back foot, the right here, with a rotation movement of the pelvis to the right that goes in the direction of a global closure, the left hand followed the movement with a circular trajectory towards the right thigh while performing an internal rotation. The left foot approaches the right with an internal rotation. The right hand has not moved in space and this is well specified in the description in photo 78: "Without changing the position of the right hand, bend the right leg to a semi-seated position and move the left foot closer to the inside of the right foot".

- **Phase 2** (photo 3). Rotation to the left of the pelvis with descent on the back leg, which results in the continuity of the circular movement of the left hand, bringing the left forearm into contact with the right forearm, which has still not moved in space. At the same time, external rotation of the left foot that goes forward to plant the heel, the toe is oriented outward.



3. Expression. It also includes several steps that can be summarized in a single step, that of expression.

- **Phase 1** (photos 4 and 5). Transfer of body weight to the front foot followed by a step forward with the right foot.

- **Phase 2** (photo 6). With the right foot on the ground, push forward with the right hand at heart level.

Once again, we find ourselves with the arms in a cross and a double rotation of the pelvis. And we have the same situation with one hand controlling while the other hand expresses the push.

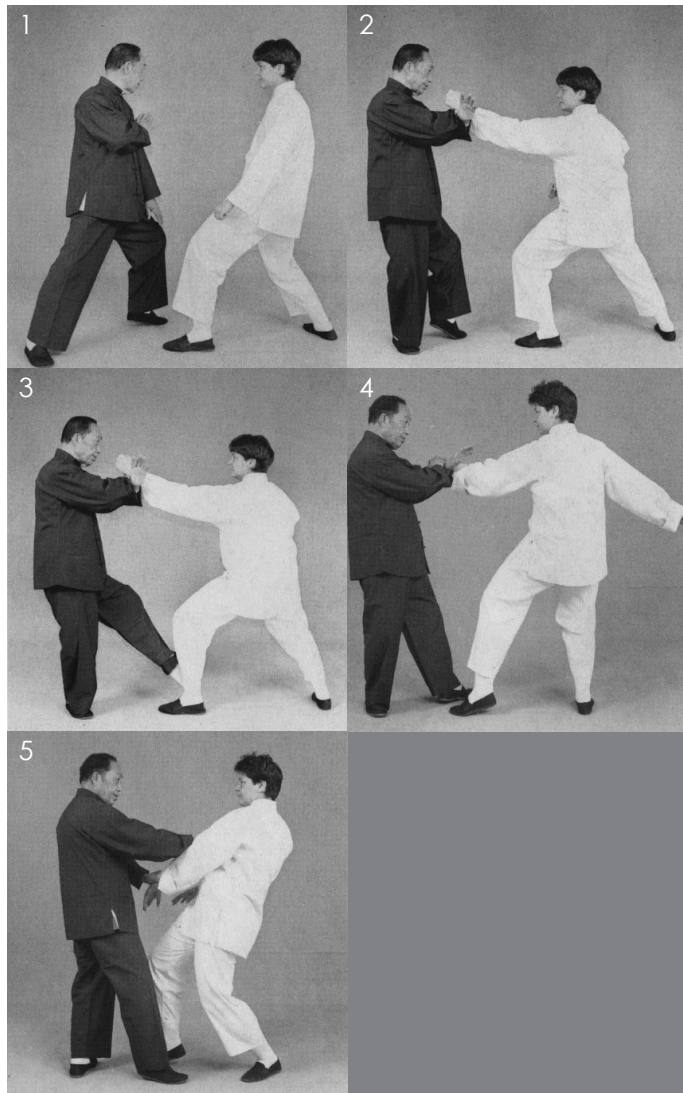


Technical application of the gesture

The technical application is described in Master Wang's Volume 2 "Yangjia Michuan Taiji quan Volume 2 Martial Application, illustrated and explained" under photos 212 to 216, p. 164.

What is shown in Volume 2 is not quite what I learned with Master Wang during my stay in Taiwan.

a - What is proposed by Master Wang's Volume 2



1. Starting position. Laoshi has just finished the "Shoulder Strike" and Julia is at a punch distance with her right foot back.

2. Julia throws a left punch at the Laoshi's plexus. Without moving his right hand, Laoshi transfers the weight of the body to the back foot, brings the front foot closer, and brings his left wrist into contact with Julia's. Laoshi's two wrists are crossed.

3. Laoshi kicks Julia's left tibia with the inside of his foot.

4. Julia, to avoid the kick, starts to step back one step with her left foot. Laoshi accompanies the retreat movement by grabbing Julia's left wrist.

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui

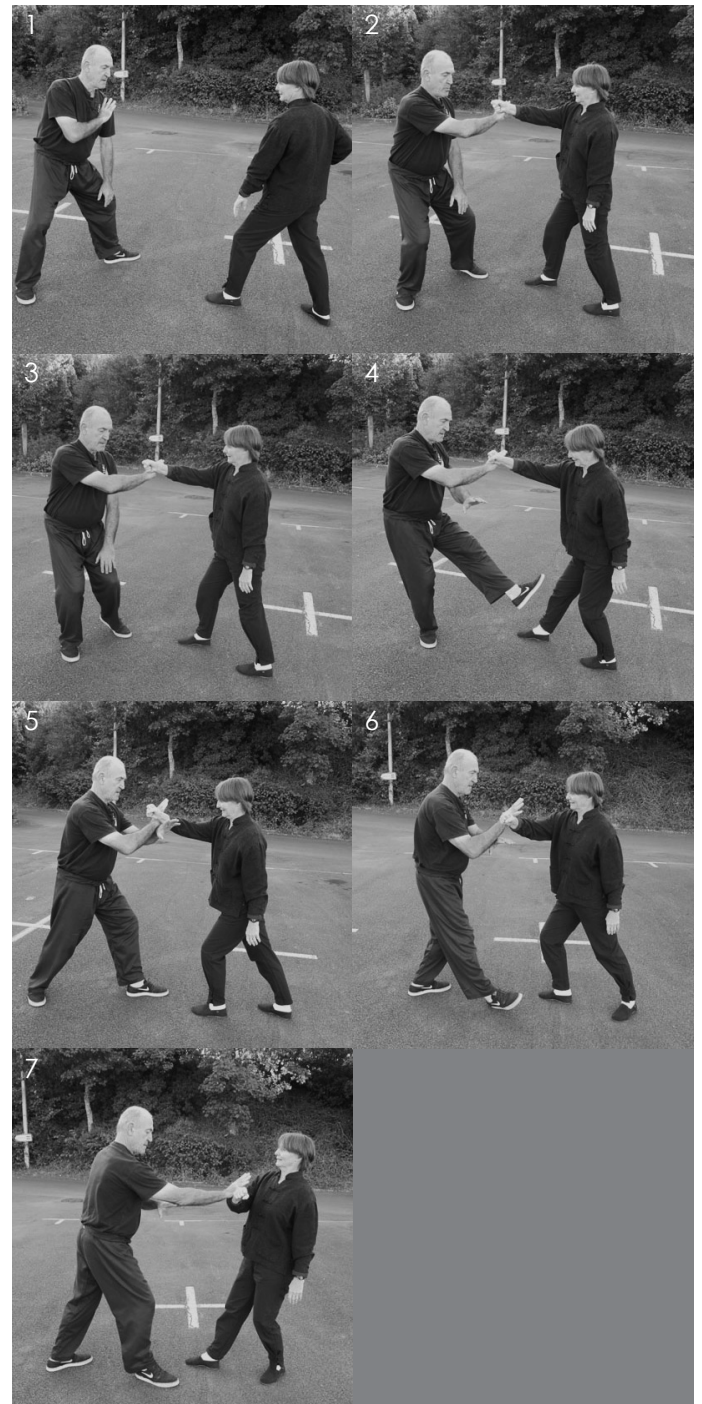
5. Laoshi steps forward by pressing down Julia's left arm and hitting Julia's plexus.

Contrary to what is written in Volume 1, it is well specified in Volume 2 that the strike was made at the chest level: "With his left hand, he presses down White's left forearm, while his right hand follows White's left forearm to hit his plexus". This is in line with Laoshi's teaching I received in the years 1984 to 1986 about pushing. For the rest of the application, it's different as we'll see.

We can see from this technical application that this is indeed a push and that there can be no confusion with either *Gao tan ma* or *Tiao lian shi*.

b - What I propose

While I fully agree with what is proposed in Volume 2 of Laoshi, I present a variant which is the version I learned during the winter of 1985.





1. Starting position (photo 1). Claudy has just finished the “Left shoulder strike”. Madeleine stands one step apart with her right foot back and guards with her right fist at the waist, palm up.

2. (photos 2 and 3). Madeleine takes a step forward to hit Claudy in the face with her right fist. Claudy dodges the blow by transferring the body weight to the back foot. The right hand adheres to the outside of Madeleine's right wrist. During the body weight transfer, Claudy rotated the pelvis to the right, resulting in a closure of the entire left hemi-body.

3. (picture 4). Claudy, while continuing to control Madeleine's right wrist with his right hand, rotates the pelvis to the left, which generates an opening of the left hemi-body with circular movements of the arm and foot, which has the following effects: strike with the inner face of the left foot on Madeleine's tibia to force her to move back, control of Madeleine's right wrist with the left wrist. The wrists are in a cross to control Madeleine's wrist.

4. (photos 5 to 7). Claudy takes advantage of Madeleine's retreat to accelerate his progress and push her towards her plexus.

Comments

We find the same phases as in what is proposed in Volume 2 with some nuances. I could also have suggested grabbing Madeleine's right wrist with my left hand, but is that really useful?

Both in the proposition in Volume 2 and mine, under no circumstances do we have a rotation of the trunk to the left with a simulated strike identical to *Gao tan ma*. There is therefore no possible confusion.

Interest of the study of gestural families

Why did I choose *Pu xin zhang* as the first example of a study of gestural families? Quite simply because the gesture of the form has undergone serious transformations in its execution and can be confused with others in the same family. How many practitioners do not perform a *Pu xin zhang* almost identical to *Gao tan ma*?

What is similar in these three gestures:

- reception of a punch with a double rotation of the pelvis which generates a spiral movement at the level of the upper limbs;
- threat with a kick or an elbow to force the attacker to step back and finalize the gesture in this step back; crossing of the forearms in the control of the striking limb

It is the technical applications that, in the end and without distorting the form, quite the contrary, make it possible to clearly differentiate these gestures starting from their purpose. *Pu xi zhang* is a push, or strike, at the heart, *Gao tan ma* is an atemi at the neck, *Tiao lian shi* is a threat of an elbow hit followed by a push, or strike, at the face and chest.

Once these gestures are well distinguished on the basis of their similarity and in their gestural purpose, we are able to better perceive them in their essence,

which is the basis of the constitution of the family. The gestural essence of these three gestures is identical: closing with crossing of the forearms following a double rotational movement of the pelvis (absorption), opening with expression of one hand and control of the other. The control can be extended by a grab. In practice, both in form and in technical applications, the focus will be on the initialization of the gesture and not on its purpose. What determines the gesture is not its purpose but what initiates it. As the gesture is perfectly “engrammed” in our cells, it will be born by itself if the initial stage is clear. If it is not totally clear, then another gesture can arise but it is not very serious, it will be another experience that will enrich our gestural capital.



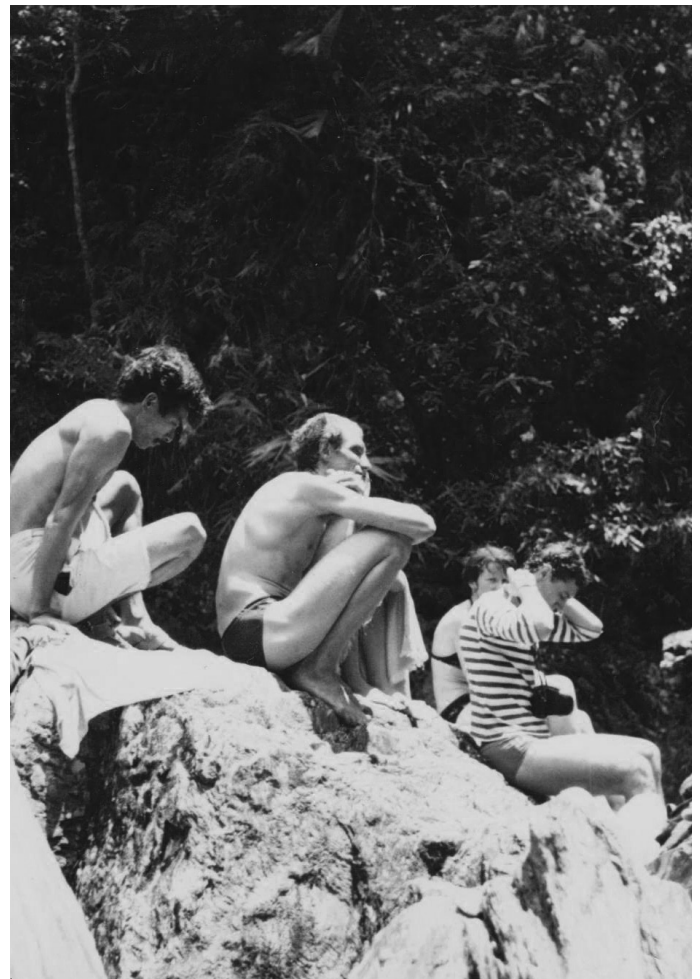
Feeling Nostalgic

Serge Dreyer

It so happens that this summer, thanks to Peter Clifford, I was able to get in touch with a good friend, Jacky Kieffer, who had come to Master Wang's wuguan in October 1977, but who I had lost sight of for 40 some years. He recently sent me a few pictures taken during that time. I would like to take this opportunity to present the first generation of Master Wang's foreign students (between 1976 and 1978). It contained some strong personalities, driven by a pioneering spirit and at the same time happy to be working together despite their differences. Allow me to introduce them by briefly telling you their story.

The first photo was taken in 1977 behind the temple where Master Wang held his morning classes. Barry, an Englishman who appears in the second picture, is missing in the first photo.

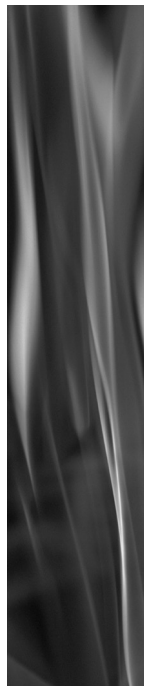
From left to right: Serge Dreyer, Toshiro ? (Japon), John Hoag (USA), Peter Clifford (Angleterre), Jacky Kieffer (France).



Gorges of Taroko, august 1977

Toshiro practiced almost 8 hours a day, working on every aspect of *Yangjia Michuan* TJQ. He spoke no English and very little Chinese, so we communicated mostly through body language. He was a martial arts enthusiast with a background in karate and perhaps judo (?). He excelled in tuishou and thanks to him I learned a lot. He was always ready and willing to push hands with me. He was quite reserved but when he talked about technique, his passion showed. If I remember correctly, he left in 1978 and we never heard from him again.

John was a rather mysterious character at first sight. I met him in February 1976 in an apartment we shared at the time. I initially came to Taiwan to study Taoism and Shamanism and he came from





Gorges of Taroko

Japan for Taiji Quan. We shared our respective knowledge at the time and he ultimately became a lama in Nepal and I went on to teach taiji quan (he was the one who introduced me to taiji quan). I later learned that he came from a wealthy family, which never really showed. He traveled the world in search of exciting experiences. Six months or more of zazen in Japan, climbing the K7 in the Himalayas, with plans to study cooking in France... He had a strange, somewhat cold, sense of humour which put off a lot of people, but he was a charming companion once you got to know him. He practiced everything but Tuishou. I saw him only once again in 1982 (?) when he returned to Taipei to visit Master Wang. He asked me to come teach Taiji Quan in his temple in Nepal, a proposition which I found quite attractive. But my wife didn't share my enthusiasm. I have tried since then to track him down, without any luck.

Peter, who arrived in 1976, was the opposite of John in many ways, he was a bit of a dandy and quite proud of the 90 countries he had visited, not to mention his success with the ladies. He was affable and quite polite in the English style, he did not practice Tuishou at that time although he started later (1981 or 1982?). In 1982, we asked Li Tong Yang for private eyebrow-height staff lessons to help refresh our memory. Peter set up a taiji school in London where he still teaches. From time to time he participates in the yearly *Rencontres de l'Amicale*, so if you are interested, you might be able to ask him to tell you more about his journey.

As for Jacky, this extraordinary character is straight out of a novel. I immediately connected with this

beanpole of a man, a Zen monk from Japan. Here is his story as he told it to me at the time.

His grandfather ran one of the best delicatessens in Paris and wanted Jacky to follow in his footsteps. But that was in the days of hippies and Larzac. When Jacky turned down his father's offer, he was sent to the *École nationale de bergerie*. But after realizing that people there were more interested in calculating the per kilo price of mutton than in contemplating the sheep on the mountain and chewing primrose, he returned to Paris. He headed to the nearest travel agency and bought a ticket on the first available flight. Once in Japan, he became a Zen monk, where he practiced for many years. I listened with delight while he explained the mysteries of Japanese carpentry, a skill which he had mastered. I was less interested in practicing zazen for hours on end.

For 6 months, he came and learned everything he could from Master Wang. He seemed always to be in a good mood, and I enjoyed the time I spent with him. About ten years older than me, he made me feel more mature. The way he looked at the pretty Taiwanese women gave me a positive impression of Zen...

So 30 years later Peter got back in touch with him. He had become the abbot of his temple, the first Westerner (?) to achieve this position. NHK national television did a report about him and pilgrims flocked to his temple. Among them, he noticed a charming Japanese woman, who he married. They opened a restaurant, which led to a second NHK report on the personal and professional life of the defrocked monk. Finally, about ten years ago, he returned to France



with his wife and their children to open a Bed and Breakfast near Rocamadour where I found him, still a *bon vivant*, even if his butt still hurt from hundreds of hours of zazen...

Barry was an Englishman from Birmingham who appears in the second picture. I don't remember how he came to know Master Wang but he was with us for about two years. We spent a lot of time together because we both loved rock and blues music. We often went to a vacant lot in Taipei to eat in a Sichuan restaurant (actually the patched up shack of a former Guomindang soldier). When our feast was over, we headed over to a private club where we could see documentaries about our favorite groups, an activity that was prohibited by martial law at the time. He had been a waiter in a club in Birmingham and I was thrilled to hear him tell stories about seeing the Rolling Stones, Rory Gallagher and Fleetwood Mac (during the Peter Green period). He was a cheerful, funny man who

took life as it came. Sadly, he died in England three years ago.

Michael Ranta is missing from this story. He was German I think, but we didn't see much of him because (if I'm not mistaken), he was very busy with his career as a musician. He was a kind person, but I don't know much more about him.

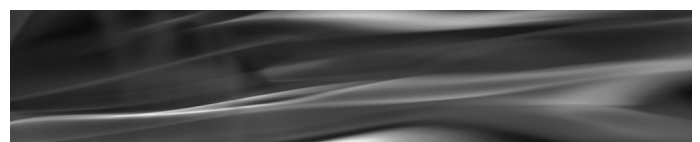
At that time, Mr. Wang taught basic exercise classes and slow form at the temple every morning, except on Sundays. We practiced Tuishou at his home in Shilin on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 7 pm and 9 pm.

Of all these people, apparently (?) only Peter and I went on to create taiji quan schools in our respective countries. It was not until the second generation of foreigners (1981-1982) that Master Wang's teaching really took off. It's up to them to tell the second chapter of this story!

So much for this little history of our style.



Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui



Tàijǐjiàn practice

Tàijǐjiàn is the pinyin transcription for the Chinese word denoting the art of the sword (jiàn) based on the Tàijǐ principles, it is sometimes translated as Tàijǐ sword.

太極劍

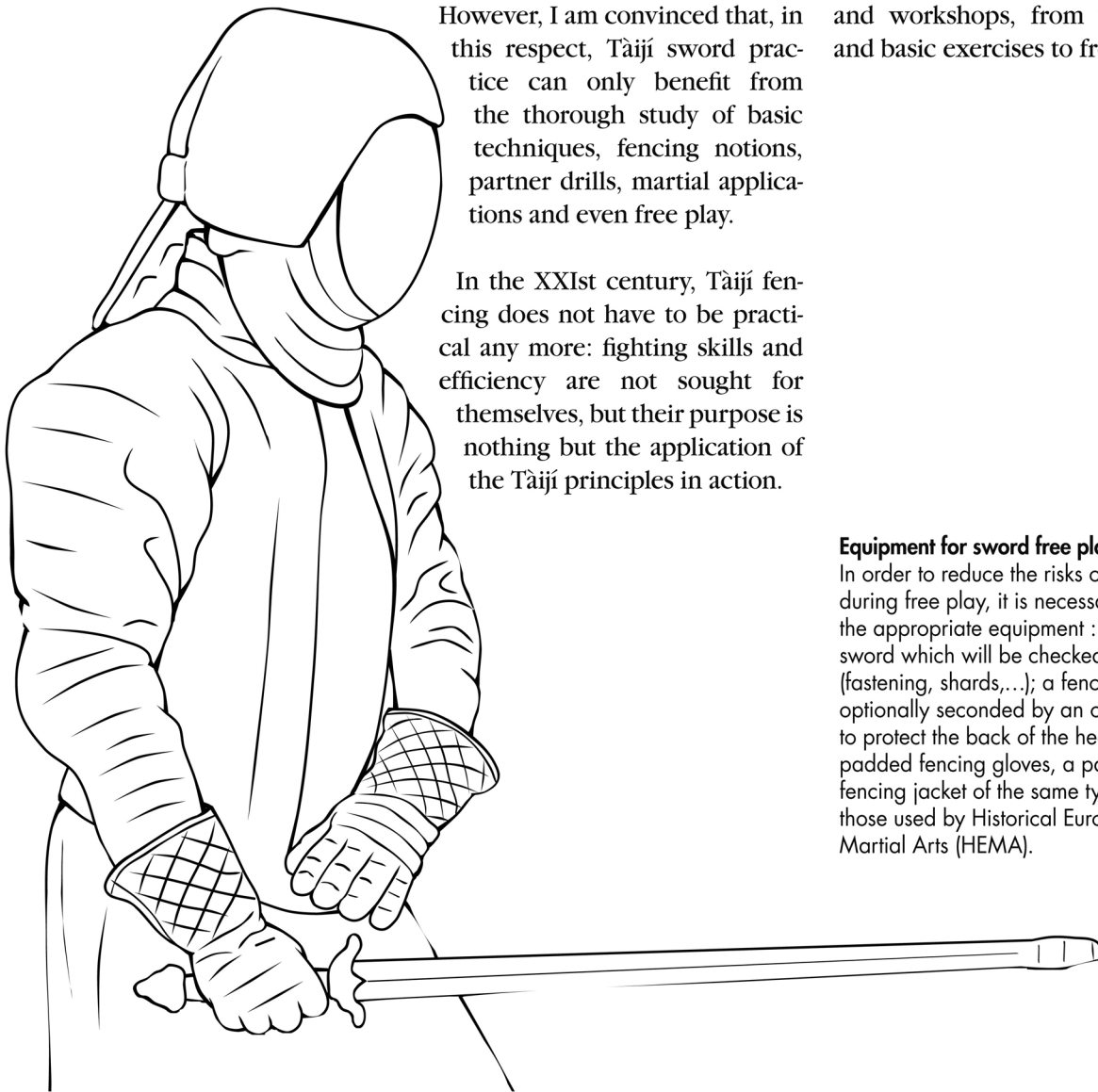
In most styles, Tàijǐjiàn practice consists essentially, if not exclusively, in learning and performing a sword form. As such, it complements bare hand practice and provides the practitioners with an invaluable tool to improve their skills. The sword is indeed a devoted partner, always ready to guide us on the way towards a better understanding and embodiment of the Tàijǐ principles.

However, I am convinced that, in this respect, Tàijǐ sword practice can only benefit from the thorough study of basic techniques, fencing notions, partner drills, martial applications and even free play.

In the XXIst century, Tàijǐ fencing does not have to be practical any more: fighting skills and efficiency are not sought for themselves, but their purpose is nothing but the application of the Tàijǐ principles in action.

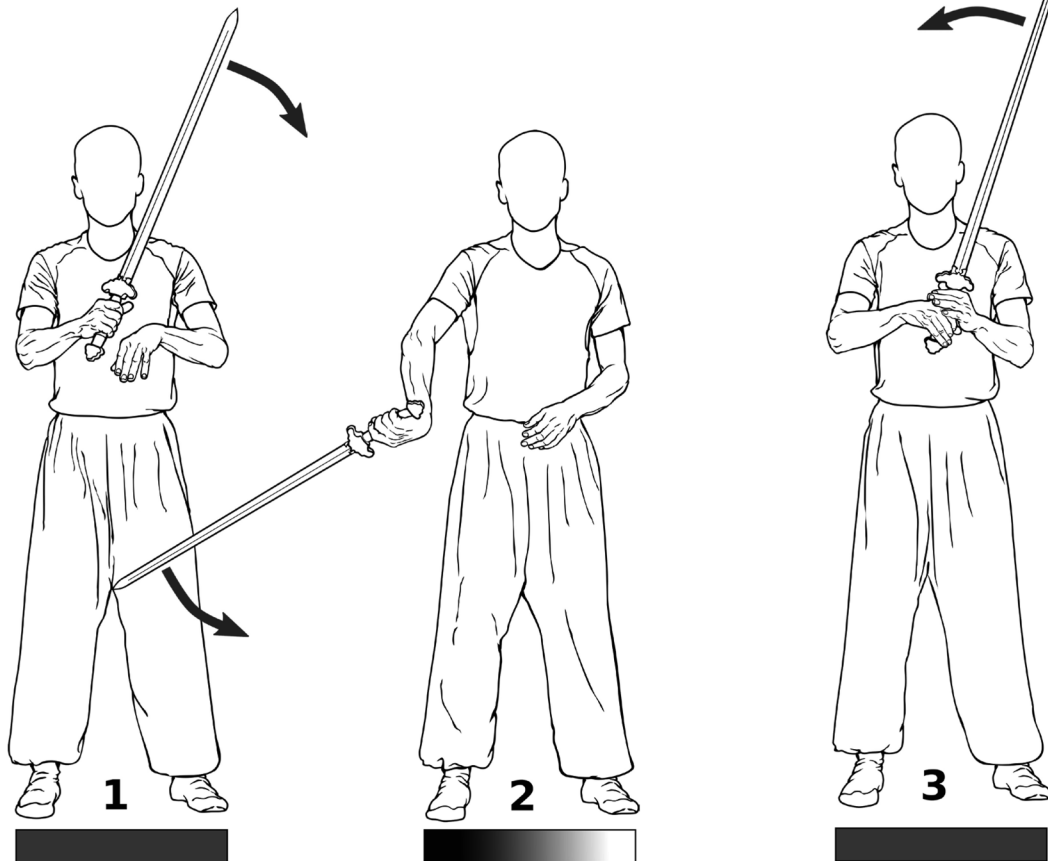
From basic techniques to free fencing, the practitioners will strive to achieve unity with their sword, improve their nimbleness and sensitivity, relax their body and mind, develop their Yi, etc. Last but not least, this life-long endeavour should also bring its share of fun.

The following text presents my personal view of Tàijǐjiàn practice as I present it in regular classes and workshops, from warm-up and basic exercises to free play.



Equipment for sword free play

In order to reduce the risks of accident during free play, it is necessary to use the appropriate equipment : a blunted sword which will be checked regularly (fastening, shards,...); a fencing mask, optionally seconded by an over-mask to protect the back of the head, padded fencing gloves, a padded fencing jacket of the same type as those used by Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA).



Lateral pendulum

In this drill we let the sword oscillate laterally in order to stretch the wrists (or shoulders with a larger movement), to exercise swapping hands and the relationship with the sword.

Starting from a median position (1), we let the sword fall downwards to the right until the wrist is stretched (2). In the meantime, we let the sword's impetus drag us into the right foot without any translation of the body.

The resulting compression is then relaxed to raise the sword (3).

Exercices de base et échauffement

The goal of warm-up and basic exercises is the preparation of the body and the mind to the safe performance of efficient techniques conforming to the Tàijí principles.

Warm-up should gently mobilise the joints and muscles to bring them to their optimal functioning level for smoother movements and lower risks of strains. An emphasis on the upper body is necessary, in particular the shoulders, arms, wrists and fin

gers, which do most of the job of sustaining the sword. But the lower body should not be overlooked in preparation to the footwork which is of crucial importance in fencing.

I usually tend to start the warm-up by mobilising the pelvis and the spine, which are at the core of every movement in Tàijí, and then continue with the shoulders, elbows, fingers and wrists. For the lower body, I start with the ankles, carry on with the knees and then the hips, exercising balance at the same time. Eventually, the session ends with codified and free footwork.

Before proceeding to basic techniques, it might be a good idea to finish the warm-up session using the sword as an accessory. This will not only serve to further stretch the wrists and shoulders, it will also help the practitioners to exercise their relationship with the sword.

The repetition of a simple non-technical movement helps indeed to install the relationship between the sword and the body: the sword's energy, absorbed and concentrated in the body, is returned to the sword for the next movement; we may also let the sword's impetus lead us into controlled footwork.



After having swapped hands, we find ourselves in a position symmetrical to the starting one (4)



and we let the sword fall downwards to the left with a leftward foothold transfer (5).



The relaxation of the compression brings the sword back into a high position (6) and a new cycle can start after a new hand swapping.

Repetition is of crucial importance as well for practising basic techniques, the emblematic basic cuts and thrusts. Repeating them in series is essential to technical precision and body control, requisite conditions for the proper realisation of techniques in less controlled situations.

It is interesting as well to practise the basic techniques with targets, not only to exercise precision, but also to develop the mindset and relaxation of the body appropriate for an effortless efficiency of techniques. For thrusts, *Ci* or *Zhā*, cloth-pegs hung on a string at throat level make pretty conve-

nient targets. Targets for cutting techniques are more difficult to set up: cuts are supposed to pass through the target, hence hard resisting targets are out of question.

Non ligneous plant stalks or a slab of clay can make appropriate cheap targets for test cutting without requiring a dangerously sharp blade. Clay works quite nicely with a regular blunt sword, but do not use your favourite one or be prepared for intensive cleaning of your sword after the session. Make sure as well that clay does not get soiled with pebbles or sand to avoid damaging the blade.

Those exercises build up the basics which in combination constitute the source of all the techniques that can be practised in the more diverse context of the form.

Form practice

The form is a set of movements arranged in a continuous succession of techniques which some practitioners present as a mock fight with an imaginary opponent. However, I personally think that this is not the complete story: although the movements of the form are martial techniques indeed, the whole set does not constitute a single combat from start to end. Techniques are rather arranged in short series, which the European tradition calls 'pieces', describing a variety of situations where these techniques may be applied. Variations are given throughout the form and as most movements may have several applications, series may overlap or describe varying situations.

The form is much more than a catalogue of techniques, it is the source from which all applications proceed according to the infinity of possible situations. As an actualisation of the Yin/Yáng principle issuing from the Tàijí, the Tàijíjiàn form contains all the potentialities for the generation of countless applications. Performing the form is thus generating a potential for infinite creativity, reserving the practical expression of techniques for their application in real situations.

In my opinion, the form is therefore essentially a tool for achieving a better understanding and embodiment of the Tàijí principles. Memorisation is only a beginning: what is truly trained when practising the form is Yin/Yáng transformation and directing the Yì as a continuous yet ever-changing flow.

Gradually, with practice, unity with the sword can be achieved, the form becomes more and more internal, gains in fluidity, feels easy and natural. Until ultimately, I like to think that the body and the mind are delivered from all their tensions, and nothing remains but pure Yì effortlessly generating the form.

The form, however, is not only a mental exercise but it also physically trains the body. Some movements have indeed an exaggerated amplitude to develop strength, balance and flexibility. Others are clearly intended to be spectacular and demonstrative. Every Tàijíjiàn form is thus made of a mixture of internal martial training, gymnastic exercise, and spectacle. Discerning how these characteristics are actually expressed in the different movements allows the practitioner to favour at will one aspect or the other.

To those interested in improving their fencing skills, the form provides an invaluable tool for building a strong repertoire and knowledge of martial techniques while practising the body mechanics appropriate for their effective application.

The form, however, is not strictly representative of the occurrence of techniques in free fencing, where the most frequent and effective ones are rather simple. The form contains surprisingly complex movements that may contribute to its demonstrative character, but probably also prepare the practitioner to master extreme techniques appropriate to exceptional circumstances. Most swordsmen of the time might well have never needed to put these techniques to practice, those who actually had to might have owed their life to this preparation instead of having been overwhelmed by a stunning situation.



In modern times, martial efficacy of Tàijí fencing is not a matter of survival any more, but, within the context of friendly controlled practice, aims more readily at freeing the mind and the body from their tensions. The martial interpretation of the form thus provides a whole range of situations where the practitioners may put their body and mind to the test in partner drills and martial applications.

Two-person drills and martial applications

Two-person drills are simplified and codified situations whose goal is to introduce and exercise important principles and notions of Tàijí fencing such as distance and time, the lines, sensing through the blade, footwork in response to the opponent's moves, nimbleness, etc.

Entirely dedicated to this pedagogic goal, those drills are essentially continuous exercises or games, most of the time without much concern for the realism of the situations.

Martial applications will then develop the same principles and notions within a codified or semi-codified simulated piece of fight, simultaneously giving examples of the potential practical use of techniques from the form. As such, they open the way to a better understanding of the form, highlighting the martial essence of movements and the distinction between practical and demonstrative moves.

Although martial applications may be much more realistic than two-person drills, it must be acknowledged that they none the less are simulations far from reproducing exactly all aspects of a true sword fight to death.

Depending on their experience and protection level, practitioners may perform the applications at different speeds or may be more or less well-disposed towards their partner, thus achieving different levels of realism. Some applications may work

well at low speed, with caring partners but not any more when performed faster, with partners who do not hold their attack. Performing applications with full protective gear which allows full blows may thus be more demanding and what used to be working with less protections and more precautions might not work as nicely. On the contrary, performing an application at low speed may allow a non-cooperative partner to counter-attack whereas such a riposte would have required light-fast reactions against a technique performed at full-speed.

Evaluating the true effectiveness of martial applications needs therefore to account for all those factors. For what is worth, as far as they allow us to develop and practise the Tàijí principles and fencing notions, the approximate realism of martial applications should give entire satisfaction for our purpose.

The efficiency of an application should be only a consequence of our conformance to the principles, and definitely not a matter of speed or strength. Thus, martial application practice may help develop the proper mindset and body disposition for the effective application of techniques and principles in free play.





Free play

Free play refers to the wholly non-codified simulation of a sword fight. Depending on the protective gear worn by the practitioners and their experience, rules may be defined to guarantee their safety. In any case, violence is definitely ruled out and free play should always remain a friendly game, without any overly competitive mind.

I understand that some practitioners may feel concerned that free play might possibly not be considered as internal. Actually, expressing martial techniques should not be confused with external practice. My personal view is that we may speak of internal practice as long as every movement is born from the Yi which shapes the technique and, originating from the centre, is eventually expressed towards the periphery.

Efficient techniques proceed naturally from the appropriate intention and a relaxed body, well mastered principles that have become natural and can thus be applied spontaneously. Students of internal arts should not cling too much to trifling technical details, which are only the finger of the wise man. They should reach for the moon: develop their capacity to apply the principles in challenging and unpredictable situations. The technique will follow¹.

Nimbleness of the Yi and of the body results from an open and free, tensionless mind allowing us to remain relaxed when facing the threats of an opponent. After all, this may be the true practical application of martial arts in our modern times: not to let ourselves overwhelmed by stress in all matters of urgency.

Of course, as already mentioned above, technique efficacy is entirely relative to the context: free play is and must stay no more than a simulation that cannot reproduce all aspects of a true sword fight, and in particular the psychological aspects.

In any case, nowadays, arguments are not settled any more in duels or sword fights and the purpose of Tàiji fencing is more a matter of personal development than of actual fighting capacities.

Our main concern is not to hit the opponent by all means but to do it with the appropriate manner while not being hit. How the goal is reached is more important than the goal itself: scoring a hit against an opponent should be

the result of the proper application of the Tàiji principles to the current situation, and not a purpose in itself.

Thus, in order to avoid excessive competition, I prefer not to count hits and only appreciate subjectively the quality of the actions. Taking videos of free play sessions may also help reviewing actions afterwards to highlight the positive and the negative. With really nothing at stake, this less competitive approach allows to focus more on the principles and internal practice and limits the risks of accidents.

¹ *To be honest, I do not even think there are that many differences between internal and external arts when it comes to high level practice. The main difference would rather lie in the way these arts are taught. External arts first focus on techniques and let the student figure out the principles whereas internal students are taught the principles and must figure out how to perform the techniques in conformance.*

Safety considerations

The practice of Tàijǐ has been associated with health and personal development for perhaps over a century now. We could thus expect that preserving a good health should go along with the preservation of our physical integrity, and that Tàijǐjiàn practice could be taken rather safely, from solo form to free play. Actually, even hard training of warriors in the past may have presented some degree of safety: what would have been the point of decimating the troops before actually sending them to battle.

Of course, accidents sometimes happen, but there is no reason why they should be the norm. We should in all circumstances bear in mind that even a blunt sword can be a deadly weapon and we should behave accordingly. Safe practice actually results from the combination of a responsible attitude with the appropriate equipment. The mind-set we adopt during any kind of practice is most important indeed. It is essential to me that we feel responsible not only for the physical integrity of other people around us when we hold or wield a sword, but also for our own safety.

The first consequence of this state of mind is that, if it is adopted by all practitioners, everyone constantly maintains a good degree of watchfulness instead of solely relying on others for their safety. Furthermore, if we ever get hurt despite all precautions, this attitude also prevents us from systematically blame others for it.

It is also important to remember that solo practice is not exempt from danger. Our concern for safety must not be limited to the practice ground but starts in the changing-room. As soon as we start holding or wielding a sword, we must do so most carefully.

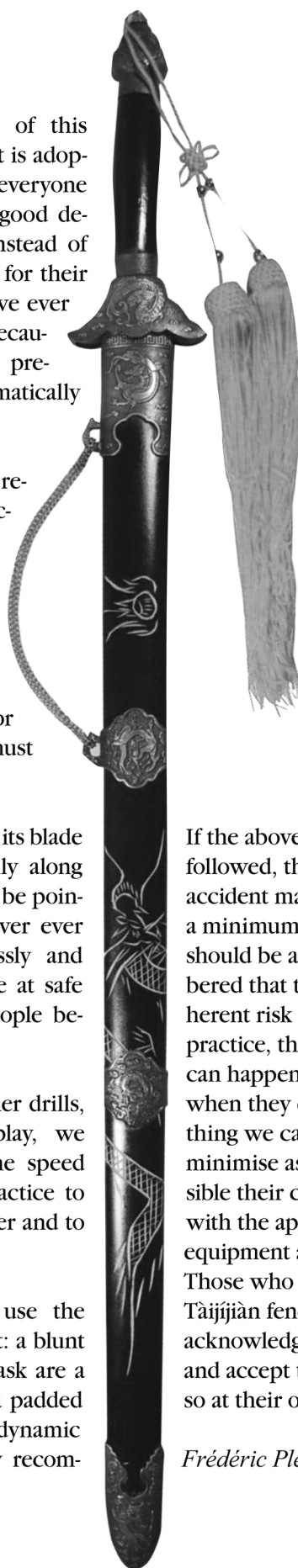
When carrying a sword, its blade should be held vertically along the arm or its tip should be pointing to the ground. Never ever wave a sword heedlessly and always make sure to be at safe distance from other people before starting to practise.

When it comes to partner drills, applications or free play, we should always adapt the speed and intensity of the practice to the less advanced partner and to the protective gear.

Both partners should use the same kind of equipment: a blunt sword and a fencing mask are a minimum. Gloves and a padded jacket allow more dynamic practice and are highly recommended for free play.

If the above advices are followed, the risks of accident may be kept at a minimum. However, it should be always remembered that there is an inherent risk to any martial practice, that accidents can happen, and that when they do, the only thing we can do is to minimise as much as possible their consequences with the appropriate equipment and attitude. Those who partake in Tàijǐjiàn fencing should acknowledge this idea and accept that they do so at their own risk.

Frédéric Plewniak



“Tuishou and calligraphy”

Serge Dreyer

On George Lin's article “Taiji Quan and Calligraphy” (bulletin 89, september 2018)

The link between calligraphy and taiji quan is common sense in the Chinese world. It is often used (consciously or unconsciously) to enhance the prestige of the practice of taiji quan by associating it to the favorite artistic discipline of the Chinese, all social classes combined. The common points between the two disciplines are indeed very marked and the late Jean Dobel-Obel demonstrated this to us with European calligraphy during the 10 years of the Rencontres Jasnières. If you want to go into this subject you will need to read two fabulous books that will introduce you to the world of calligraphy and painting. Inevitably you will make the link with your practice of taiji quan providing that you have practiced it for a few years.

Jean François Billeter, *Essai sur l'art chinois de l'écriture et de ses fondements*. Ed. Allia, 2010⁽¹⁾. While reading this book I had the feeling I was reading a manual on taiji quan. Essential for body work research. To be read and reread.

Les Propos sur la peinture du moine Citrouille-Amère, traduit par P. Ryckmans, Ed. Plon, 2007 P. Ryckmans, a very famous Belgian sinologist who translated this essential book on the history of Chinese painting written by one of the greatest painters, Shi Tao, which some of you may have discovered through François Cheng. I had already mentioned it in a previous newsletter but it is also a book to read and reread for a lifetime.

(1) This book has not been translated in English but you can find *The Chinese art of Writing* by F. Billeter, 1990, Ed. Rizzoli.

A suggestion: take a page from a great calligrapher in the different styles and have fun reproducing the characters in space like a movement of taiji. There is nothing more like it to live by and not just understand the relationship between these two domains.

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Where does yangjia michuan lead us to?

Christine Vincent

Let's talk about how I came across YANGJIA MICHUAN. Some years ago, I looked for Taiji classes in my area, but I didn't find them attractive. However, I had really set my heart on Taiji. Then, in 2010, I was invited to a Taiji course led by Claudy to discover the "YANGJIA MICHUAN" form. I gave it a try with two friends and there I encountered a completely different activity from what I could imagine.

It wasn't so easy at the start, but the discipline was astonishing as it implied more than "beautiful moves performed in a slow motion", (gestures that had previously seduced me). The course proposed basic exercises, the form practice, related activities with weapons such as, the fan (for me), the sword, the stick and the sabre for all the other practitioners, pair works like tuishou and other much talked about application techniques. We all enjoyed practising in a joyful and hard-working environment. There I could feel Taiji was going to be part of my life for quite a while and that it would also bring many things to me.

Once back home and for several years, the three of us have been practising very regularly sharing our sensations and what we had acquired. We followed all the courses we could. We came repeatedly with enthusiasm to the friendly meetings. Today the "YMTJQ" takes a great part of our lives.

As years went by this way, applying fundamental or steady discovered principles, I kept on feeling the pleasure to practise Taiji. Nevertheless, I constantly felt like sharing YMTJQ with other people. So, the idea of creating a group with my two friends came to my mind.

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui



When in 2015, Claudy suggested us to follow a training course, "skills for teaching Taiji Quan, Qi Gong and the biomechanics of the back and joints" (French school of Taiji Quan), it didn't take long for us to decide to sign up for it. The aim was to make progress in all the different aspects of Taiji and to take up, study and discover the Chinese physiology, biomechanics, Neigong (sitting work and meditation), anatomy, classic texts and of course pedagogy. We couldn't be disappointed, as during these three years among our classmates, it was a real self-enrichment each time we met. All the training courses and workshops were obviously interesting. Claudy not only brought us a lot of care and rigour, but also simplicity and humour, a lot of knowledge and some good food for thoughts.

Through the numerous moments of application techniques linked to all the fields such as pedagogy, physiology or biomechanics, we could seize all the concrete and pragmatic aspect of the training. Our group of trainees could exchange as many times as they wished, share their ideas and their understanding, and all that, in a joyful mood.

Our diversified careers, our personal approaches and livings allowed us to benefit from our original and individual experiences such as the pedagogy session (the grid of pedagogical process), the martial arts (Dan-tien notion, Hara or Ki), Qi Gong or medicine, cooking and even gastronomy! Accepting our differences through our skills, personalities, personal knowledge, physical endurance, technical abilities enabled us to make real progress, particularly the pair works (tuishou and application techniques). Once we trusted each other, we could evolve, listen, acquire both fluidity



and rhythm, feel new body sensations even if there was still a long way to follow.

Then each of us had to work on a topic chosen freely for the thesis about Taiji Quan. I think we really got involved into it. As far as time went by, we became a “peculiar” team. We were united and dynamic, sometimes allowing ourselves some good laughs.

It was then a strong and great experience thanks to Claudy's teaching and personal qualities. He knew how to take care of us, adapt himself to our difficulties and ways of learning as well as the way we were making progress. He let us some time to think over our levels of attainment. He encouraged us to practice and remain open to other practices and styles. He finally gave us the desire to learn more, search, read, practise, practise, practise the Yangjia Michuan.

To finish, this training course gave birth to little initiatives and moments of happiness:

- Twelve trainees from the 1st and 2nd year groups passed the 1st and 2nd Duan of the FAEMC. This great success of passing these Duans was due to the hard training, investment and weekends of preparation. It also enabled us to live cheerful moments. Some students could engage themselves on the way to the qualifying training course by the FAEMC, as they already had a deep, rich and complete knowledge thanks to Claudy.

- Several students created an association and now teach Taiji, as they have the required diploma to do so or they handle a group.

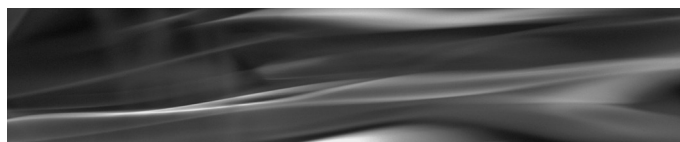
In my area, some changes took place. One of my friends, a sports teacher has been teaching YMTJQ in an association for two years.

In my district community centre, I belong to a network which consists in exchanging our knowledge. Last year, some people wanted to discover the Taiji Quan, as they heard me talking about it. I have been leading this group with great pleasure for one year. This group has developed a great taste for YMTJQ, the style, the fan and I'm very glad of it.

Some of us have also discovered and taken part into the sword games for three years. These games offer diversified and recreational workshops, pair works, other martial disciplines related to Taiji Quan (Aikido stick, Kendo introduction, Cannes de combat, Knife fighting techniques and also the related Taiji techniques such as, sword and eyebrow-level stick pair works. This year 2018, we had to look for ourselves different application techniques, solutions to given situations, for instance, through ancient texts, we had to find out a technique of the long Chinese sword or a technique with two hands, etc.

Many thanks to Yves, Elie, Hervé, Joël, Christian et Christian, and of course a great thank to Claudy.

I wish you all the best and greatest encounters and experiences to live!



The bulletin

Christine Vincent

"This splendid orangy point that only arises in the south-eastern sunset and catches the eyes until dawn, is Mars, the planet no one has ever seen so bright for 15 years".

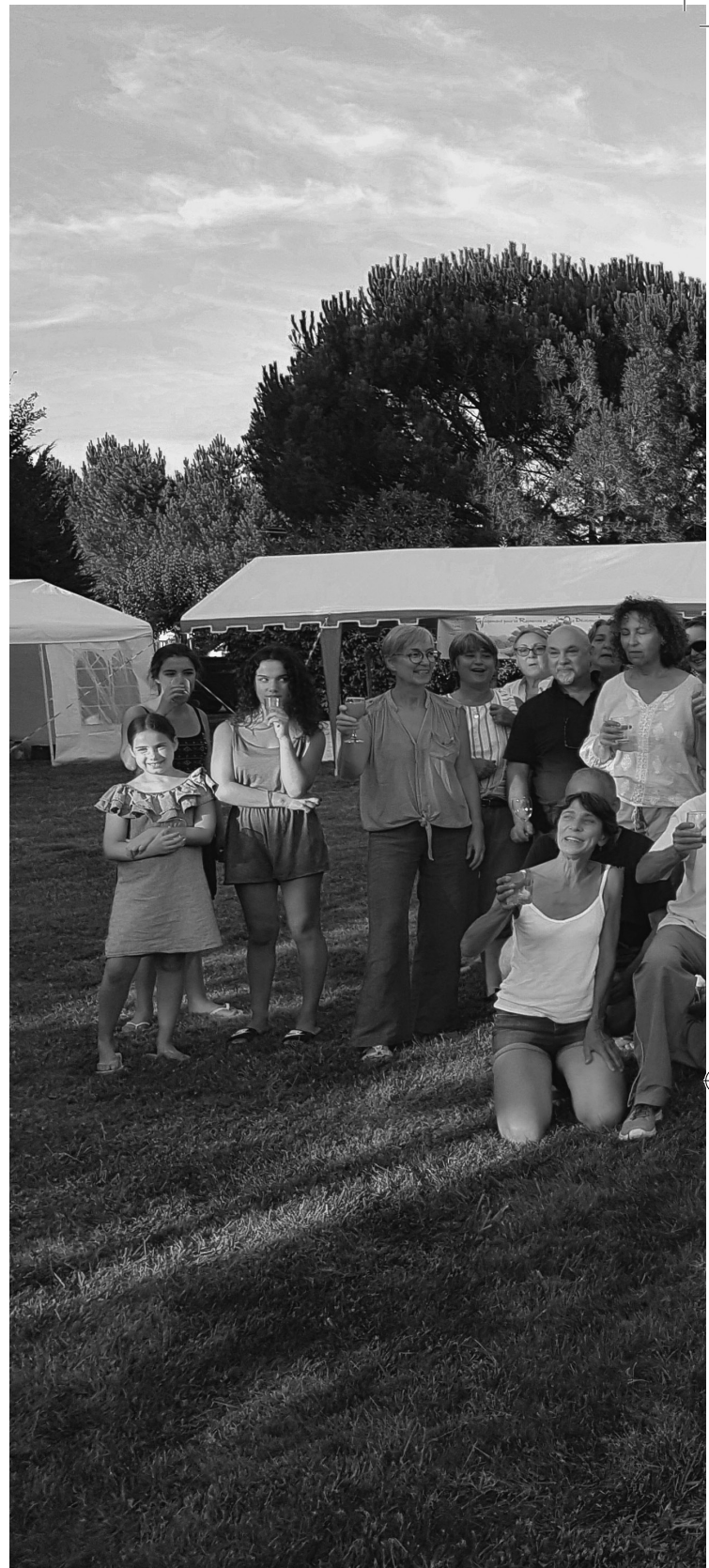
Summer is slowly beginning to fade; Mars has enlightened the sky with its lovely orangy colour all summer training courses and sword games.

I really enjoyed "summer training courses and sword games", like each year, and I am still coming home with a lot of new feelings and knowledge to put into practice and/or on which to meditate.

However, something makes me sad and comes to my mind: in the Bulletin, André Muso (chief editor) wrote his last editorial and François Schosseler worried and mentioned the "uncertain" publication of the next issue. I know I cannot possibly do this editor job, but I can bring a warm account for the Bulletin. "Gourmet" reader of the Bulletin for several years, I still greatly enjoy finding each of these 3 annual issues in my letterbox.

Information, learned or philosophical articles, technical contribution, books, events, training courses, as well as testimonies (schooling, trip, training...) makes a whole living thing that nourishes me, invites me to read, to experiment, and above all allows me to stay in touch with all the instructors and learners of our style in every part of the world, with all of you, the Yangjia Michuan. Indeed, in my region, the "Centre-Val de Loire", there is no Yangjia michuan taiji course supporting the association. Thus, for me, the Bulletin represents a dynamic

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui



and pleasant review that brings different and new ideas, thoughts, views, reflections. And which nicely adds to the knowledge acquired by my instructor, in training courses, in the *Rencontres de l'Amicale* or in books, even in "suitable" videos.

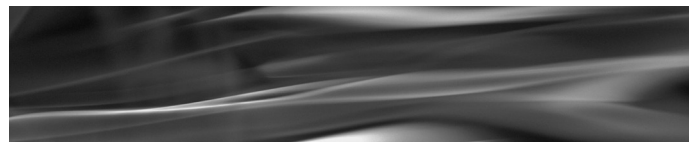
Like a book by Wang Yen-Nien, Hervé, Sabine, Claudy and others, I can leisurely take it up again, read it again and find explanations different from my first reading (having myself improved): centering, breathing, 8 gates, emptiness/fullness, Fang Song, etc. Testimonies invite me to go to Janière or to Taiwan, to carry on practicing Tuishou or calligraphy.



Master Wang's interviews (or of those who have known him) remind us and clarify once again what is important (essential).

And each year, the Bulletin gives me the pleasure of reading the articles by Bénou "on the year of the monkey, the dog..." and any other animal from the Chinese horoscope.

**"Thank you to all
of you who participate
and support it"**



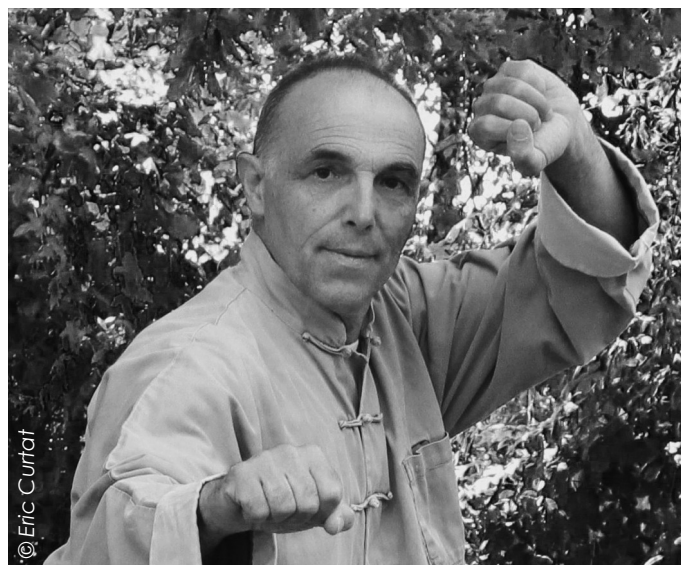
Half of my life and even more, devoted to Taichi Chuan

Richard Porteil (1)

I discovered martial arts quite lately, though my childhood and adolescence were immersed in the practice of rugby, a discipline that was undeniably martial, but that did not pass on any principles in the field. For twelve years, I tried to use my body in a way that should have helped me to preserve a lucid and peaceful mind, but that was quite difficult particularly when a strong guy running onto you at full speed, knocked you down head on...

In 1979, I was then 24 years old, I was interested in the oriental culture, and more precisely in Japan. I found its philosophy and culture really fascinating. So, I naturally developed the desire to practice a martial art, combining these two aspects. I chose Aïkido for its graceful and aesthetic form. There I was rapidly confronted to my lack of suppleness and falling down wasn't an easy task to perform, but I clung to it. Thus, the tatami had replaced the lawn! During a trip, at the end of 1981, I was fascinated by two persons executing an extremely graceful choreography performed on a slow rhythm. It was Taichi Chuan. Once back in France and after several researches, I finally found a taichi work session, proposed by a practitioner from the school of James Kou, at Abbaye de Gennes (West of France). Then my personal journey led me to a taichi training course in Chamarande (near Paris) organised by Yves Blanc in December 1982. It was a wonderful encounter with the man at first and then with the discipline he was passing on. I started learning the Yang style of Chen Man Ching. Each move could be demonstrated and tested. The progression was slow but full of richness thanks to the great generosity of Yves. I definitely multiplied my return trips from Poitou-Charentes to Paris. I was then practising every weekend and during training courses. We quickly began to perform the form of Master Chu

(1) Richard Porteil was the guest of Meetings 2016 in Houlgate.



King Hung, as Yves Blanc, trained by Master Chu, was then in charge of the school of Paris for the transmission of the Original Yang style. Master Chu's pedagogy suited me perfectly even if the notions of energy and Qi were mentioned, Master Chu, gave us many explanations, performed and made us perform. As I had a Cartesian way of thinking, the manner he approached Taichi Chuan with a lot of subtlety, completely fulfilled my expectations.

In 1986, with Yves Blanc's agreement, I started to teach taichi in Angers. I had the pleasure to meet Claudy Jeanmougin who was also opening a taichi class in this very town. From the year 1987, I started a curriculum of a more personalised teaching with Master Chu with whom I was still following the classes as well as the ones of Yves Blanc. They were private tuitions that took place one or two weekends a year. Giving lessons in Angers and also in Poitiers, Taichi quickly took a great deal of my time. In 1991, I was part of the board of directors of the Federation of Traditional Tai Chi Chuan (FTCCT). Thus, I could live from the inside the evolution of the federation and to a larger extent, the Chinese arts. There I met some absolutely remarkable people such as Anya Méot, Hugues Deriaz (the President), Thérèse Fleurent, Christian Bernapel... The FTCCT became "The Federation of Tai Chi Chuan Chi Gong" (FTCCG), then The French Federation of Wushu Arts of Energetics and Chinese martial arts (FFWaemc) and

Meetings 2016 in Houlgate

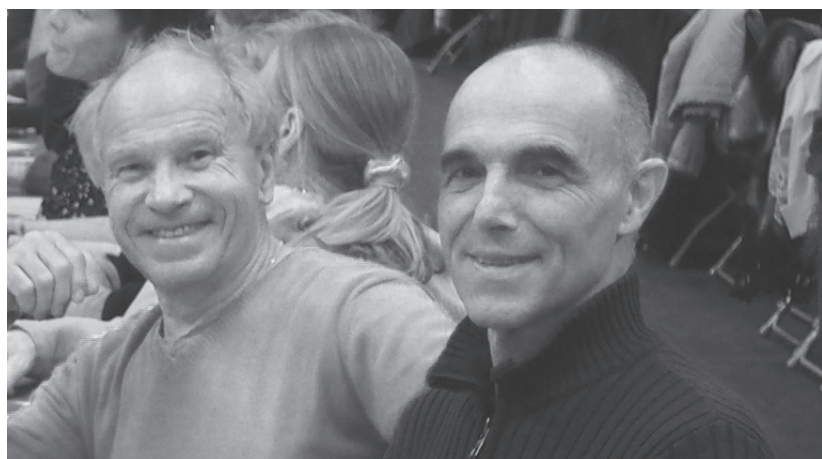




finally, in 2014, the Federation of Chinese Martial Arts and Arts of Energetics, today FAEMC, led by a new president, Christian Bernapel. In the beginning of 2015, I had to resign from the management committee for personal reasons. In the meantime, (in 2010), I entered the committee of training as a federal referee at the instigation of Anya Méot and Liliane Lapomme who is in charge of the training. I quite hesitated reckoning that "judging" another person seemed pretty conceited. However, if there are some exams to sit for, there are examiners, and so, some pleasure started to emerge seeing such many ways to practice these arts with all their inner richness.

In 2001, I stopped the Original Yang style and went on practising with Yves Blanc, but less frequently, and I, step by step, freed myself from this school, but still keeping on working on it with sincerity and respect. It was with a deep sense of integrity that I carried on my quest, but I took more accurate directions, depending on the people I met, my desires to satisfy, my students and every feedback I had. After getting the agreement from the ministerial delegation in 2009, the FFWushu set up the Duan related to the three branches of our arts, internal arts, external arts and arts of energetics. The regions could then organise the exams for the first and second Duan. Thus I was in charge of the technical part of internal arts in Poitou-Charentes. In 2015, the FAEMC, anticipating the reorganisation of the French regions, asked for a constitution of a single committee for the Aquitaine region. I have been holding one of the three posts of vice-president and I am in charge of the Committee of the regional organisation of Duan. I really appreciate holding this responsibility and I have been working on it the best as I could for three years to organise the sessional exams of the Duan in our very large region. There are many requests because the Duan are the prerequisites to get into the possible trainings offered by the Committee of the regional training. Since 2017, I have begun to study Yi Jin Jing with Philippe Julien from Pau in order to open my practising space.

Today, I am 4th Dan of Taichi Chuan, referee at the FAEMC, in charge of the region, a practitioner, a student and teacher. In September 2018, Christian Bernapel, in the name of the FAEMC, awarded me a Phénix. This special prize, as a vote of recognition, undeniably, not only surprised and touched me, but also encouraged me to pursue. Taichi Chuan is my way in life to evolve. This path is made of a lot of practice, share and the numerous encounters I am dearly attached to.



Richard during the Meetings 2016 in Houlgate

La cérémonie des Phénix⁽¹⁾

Une institution ne peut être pérenne sans la reconnaissance de ses membres éminents.

Distinguer les personnes émérites de notre fédération qui ont contribué au développement et au rayonnement de nos disciplines en France et à l'étranger, dans une cérémonie solennelle et partagée, est essentiel. Ainsi que de trouver le symbole de cette distinction pour l'inscrire dans la mémoire collective.

Le choix s'est porté sur le Phénix qui est un symbole mythique majeur commun aux traditions d'Orient et d'Occident. En Occident, issu de l'Égypte ancienne, le Phénix est un symbole de longévité. Il renaît de ses cendres après avoir vécu 500 ans ! Il est ainsi en rapport avec la régénération de la vie. En Orient, le Phénix est l'oiseau mythique qui règne tous les autres oiseaux. Il est aussi la monture des Immortels.

Le Phénix incarne les cinq vertus que sont la bienveillance, la droiture, la bienséance, la sagesse et la sincérité. Les taoïstes désignent le Phénix sous le nom d'« oiseau de cinabre », tan niao, en rapport avec le soleil, la vie et l'immortalité.

Le nom chinois qui désigne le Phénix est Feng Huang. Deux idéogrammes qui s'assemblent et se complètent. Feng est l'aspect masculin du Phénix, Huang en est le féminin. Réunis, ils sont symboles d'union heureuse. Tous deux annoncent une période glorieuse de paix et de prospérité pour le peuple et le pays. Cela se reflète dans le proverbe chinois :

« Quand s'envole le dragon et que danse le phénix, les gens connaîtront le bonheur pour des années, apportant paix et tranquillité à tous sous le ciel. »

(1). Texte fondateur des premiers phénix décernés en 2016. Richard fait partie de la 3^e remise.



Nous avons lu...

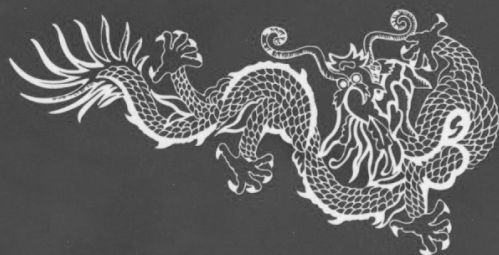
Claudy Jeanmougin

Comment devenir aussi sage qu'un Chinois
Sébastien Roussillat
L'iconoclaste, Acte Sud, Paris 2018

Sébastien Roussillat, après avoir étudié le chinois dans un lycée de Rennes, hésite entre aller en Chine pour étudier une culture qui l'a séduit et continuer

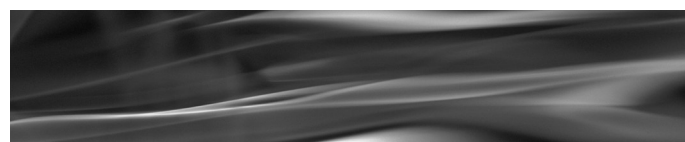
des études musicales en sa qualité de pianiste. Il choisira la Chine, il a alors tout juste 18 ans et intègre l'École normale de Shandong pour suivre des études en compagnie des élèves chinois. À l'âge de 22 ans, il accomplit l'exploit de remporter le prestigieux concours télévisé « Pont vers le chinois » réservé aux étudiants étrangers. Ce sera le premier Européen à gagner ce concours. C'est en regardant une émission télévisée que j'ai fait la connaissance de Sébastien Roussillat et que j'ai pu mesurer sa grande capacité en culture chinoise. En furetant dans une librairie, je suis tombé sur ce livre qui a attiré ma curiosité. Je ne suis pas déçu de retrouver ce jeune homme qui présente la culture chinoise à partir de douze auteurs chinois réputés auxquels il adresse un courrier. Ainsi, on va de Laozi à Zhuangzi en passant par dix auteurs dont Sunzi, Libai et autres célébrités comme Kongzi. Sébastien Roussillat expose son parcours et ses expériences en s'adressant à tous ces auteurs qui l'ont aidé à vivre certains moments difficiles de sa vie estudiantine en expatrié plongé dans une culture qu'il n'est pas toujours évident à cerner et à vivre. L'écriture est légère et agréable, ce livre se lit d'une traite et avec plaisir.

Sébastien Roussillat
**Comment
devenir aussi sage
qu'un Chinois**



L'ICONOCLASTE

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui





RENOUVELLEMENT de l'ADHESION à L'AMICALE du Yangjia Michuan TJQ
Attention : pour toute nouvelle adhésion contacter : *secrtaire.amicale.ymtjq@gmail.com*

1^{er} Septembre 2018 au 31 Août 2019

ABONNEMENT AU BULLETIN tirage PAPIER

Nous rappelons que le bulletin est accessible à tout public sur le site de l'Amicale.
 L'abonnement tirage papier (3 numéros/an) n'est accessible qu'aux membres de l'Amicale.

Renouvellement d'Adhésion Collective

Vous êtes responsable d'un groupe (associatif ou non) et vous renouvelez l'affiliation à l'Amicale, deux cas de figures :

1. Votre groupe est inférieur ou égal à 15 personnes, vous réglez la somme de 30,00 €.
2. Votre groupe est supérieur à 15 personnes, vous multipliez le nombre de personnes par 2,00 € pour obtenir le montant de votre règlement.

Je soussigné(e) Nom et Prénom du Responsable Associatif

.....
 Votre adresse ①

.....
 désire renouveler l'adhésion de notre Association à l'AMICALE du Yangjia Michuan TJQ.

Téléphone	Portable	Adresse Mail

Nom de l'Association :

Adresse du siège social de l'Association ②:

Téléphone :	Adresse Mail :
Fax :	Site Internet :

Règlement pour l'Adhésion collective

- Je règle 30,00 € car le groupe est inférieur ou égal à 15 personnes.
 Je règle 2,00 € x adhérents soit € car le nombre d'adhérents est supérieur à 15.

Renouvellement d'Adhésion Individuelle

Vous n'êtes pas membre d'une Association adhérente à l'Amicale et souhaitez vous ré-adhérer à titre individuel, le tarif est de 20,00 €.

Je soussigné(e) Nom et Prénom

Adresse

.....
 désire renouveler mon adhésion individuelle à l'AMICALE du Yangjia Michuan TJQ.

Téléphone	Adresse Mail :
Portable	

Règlement pour l'Adhésion individuelle

- Je règle 20,00 € pour mon adhésion individuelle.

Abonnement au Bulletin de l'Amicale tirage papier (3 numéros par an)

Pour votre association

- Je règle 27,00 € x ____ (nombre d'abonnements), soit ____ €
 à expédier à l'adresse ① ou à l'adresse ②

Pour un membre d'une association qui désire recevoir le bulletin chez lui

- Il (Elle) règle 30,00 € directement au trésorier en lui communiquant son adresse personnelle et le nom de son association d'appartenance.

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La nouvelle équipe du Bulletin



Françoise Cordaro,
rédac' chef



Emmanuel Leblanc,
maquette
et mise en page



Sophie Cornueil,
mise en page

Agenda des Agendas

Tous les stages organisés par les différentes associations sont mis à jour, quasi quotidiennement, sur notre site:

www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org/?q=fr/taxonomy/term/Stages

La programmation peut couvrir les dix mois à venir.

Pour toute exhaustivité, vous reporter donc en ligne sur le site de l'Amicale, vous pourrez ainsi faire vos choix en pleine connaissance de cause.

Bien amicalement à tous,
Rédac'Chef et le CA de l'Amicale du Yangjia Michuan.

Le Bulletin

Est lui aussi le signe de la vitalité de l'Amicale et un outil très important d'information et d'échanges entre nous tous, membres de la famille du Yangjia Michuan. Vos articles, vos courriers des lecteurs et autres informations à faire paraître dans le bulletin sont à transmettre à : Françoise Cordaro, notre Rédactrice en chef - cordaro49@hotmail.fr Le Coquereau 49320 Blaison-Saint-Sulpice.

Pour vos articles et vos courriers, le mieux est de les rédiger sous Word et de les adresser en pièces jointes à Françoise Cordaro. Si vous faites une présentation avec montage photos, n'oubliez pas de joindre le fichier photos séparément. Nous sommes obligés de traiter chacune des photos et nous ôterons celles que vous avez incluses. Nous suivrons au mieux vos consignes de présentation.

Pour obtenir une bonne qualité d'impression, les photos doivent avoir au minimum une résolution de 150 dpi (150 dot per inch) et une taille la plus large possible : 10 cm de large au moins (rappelons qu'une colonne du Bulletin fait 9 cm).

Les articles doivent parvenir à Françoise fin novembre pour celui de janvier, fin mars pour celui de mai et fin juillet pour le numéro de septembre.

Sollicitations...

Il est possible que vous soyez contactés par Françoise pour pondre un article. Ne soyez pas surpris... Quelques associations n'ont pas encore communiqué le nom d'un(e) correspondant(e) de manière à établir une communication plus aisée entre le Bulletin de l'Amicale et les associations, merci de le faire.



Le Site Web et le Bulletin de l'Amicale

LE SITE WEB est un outil important de communication entre nous ; il est également la vitrine de l'Amicale vers l'extérieur. Il est régulièrement mis à jour par l'équipe rédactionnelle. Nous espérons qu'il vous donne satisfaction et que vous y trouverez les informations utiles qui vous intéressent. N'hésitez pas à nous faire part de vos remarques et suggestions.

www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org

Le référencement de vos associations

Veillez à faire référencer votre association avec ses coordonnées et son site Web si elle en possède un. Ceci constitue votre vitrine vers l'extérieur, vous fera connaître et vous amènera de nouveaux adhérents. Si votre association possède un site, merci d'y faire figurer vos statuts et de les mettre en lien.

Pour les associations déjà référencées

Nous vous conseillons d'aller vérifier vos informations. Si elles ne sont pas complètes, nous communiquer, via la boîte aux lettres de l'Amicale, ce que vous voulez voir figurer en termes de responsables, enseignants, téléphone, email, site Web, etc. Nous vous rappelons que le contenu de votre site est la responsabilité de votre association en conformité avec ses statuts.

Le Bulletin sur le site Web

Les bulletins sont mis en ligne, en accès libre, 10 jours après qu'ils ont été envoyés par envoi postal aux membres abonnés. Les bulletins sont publiés presque simultanément en français et en anglais. Quasiment toutes les pages du Bulletin sont traduites en anglais, pour permettre à nos amis anglophones et chinois d'avoir accès à nos informations.

Les autres chapitres du site Web

N'oubliez pas les chapitres mis à jour régulièrement : stages, événements, etc.

Les autres chapitres font également l'objet d'évolutions périodiques : allez les consulter régulièrement si vous n'avez pas opté pour l'abonnement à son flux RSS. Enfin, il est à noter que de plus en plus de pages sont traduites en anglais afin que nos amis et partenaire américains, anglais et chinois puissent avoir facilement accès aux informations.

Pour publier vos informations de stages sur le site Web :

adressez un e-mail avec éventuellement un fichier attaché au format .rtf ou .doc, ou, si ne pouvez pas faire autrement, envoyez un document papier qui puisse être scanné à Jean-Luc Pommier pommier_jl1@yahoo.fr

63, rue de Seine – 94400 Vitry – France

Conseils pratiques : soyez clairs et précis en vous conformant au schéma suivant :

- Thème du stage
- Date et lieu du stage
- Nom de l'animateur(trice) avec numéro de téléphone
- Association organisatrice
- Le contact pour le stage (nom, mail, tél., etc.)
- Adresse du site Web
- Informations complémentaires éventuellement, sous format pdf ou Word (2 pages maximum)

Procédure

Jean-Luc met le stage en ligne et en envoie la confirmation à celui ou celle qui en a fait la demande, ainsi qu'aux autres destinataires, mis en copie, de la demande. C'est la seule manière d'éviter les contre-temps. Cela permet au demandeur de vérifier si tout est OK.