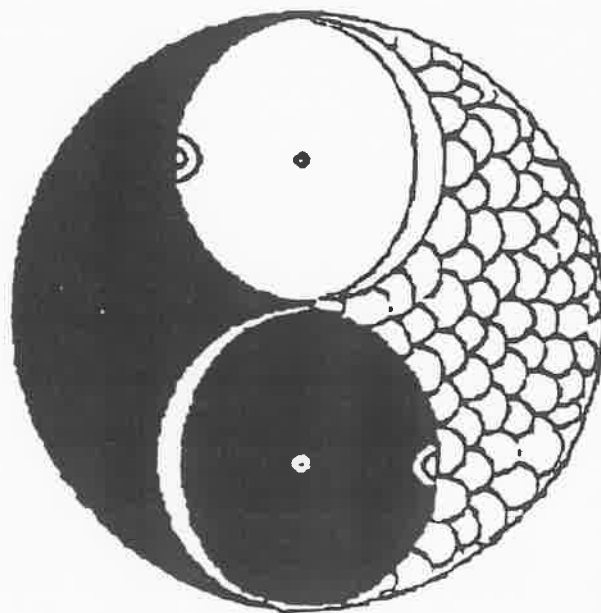


A W Y M T A
J O U R N A L

YANG FAMILY HIDDEN TRADITION TAIJIQUAN

FALL 1997 ♦ VOL. 5 ♦ NO. 2



AMERICAN WEST YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN ASSOCIATION

Editor's Desk

My apologies for our tardiness in getting this out to you. As it turns out, however, a benefit of the delay is being able to include the information/registration packet for **FESTIVAL 98** in New York. So start making your arrangements to attend.

The three weeks in Taiwan this summer were incredible. Master Wang, in excellent health, had much to teach. Forty people were absorbing as much information as they could - both instructional and cultural. The accommodations at the Grand Hotel were great. Taroko Gorge was beautiful, the mineral bath hot and the river, cool. And of course the weather hot, hot, hot and humid, with two typhoons thrown in for good measure. There were a number of interesting stories about flight arrivals into Taiwan - from cancelled flights to multiple stops en route. Many and varied memories for all.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Volume 2, the *Applications* text, is now available. See our "catalog" page for ordering information.

As the holidays approach, we would like to extend season's greetings to all with wishes for health, happiness, peace and harmony.

A Message from the President

I want to thank all of you who sent in contributions for our incorporation expenses. Our attorney is working diligently and we are close to submitting the paperwork to all the appropriate agencies.

Once the paperwork is submitted we do not anticipate any (major) difficulties and will immediately begin working on teacher certification. Responsibility for coordinating the Teacher's Conference after the Festival has been given to AWYMTA. The Board anticipates having a draft proposal ready by that time. As mentioned in our July (97) Newsletter, our design will be similar to that of the European Teacher's College and everyone is encouraged to send in their ideas and suggestions ASAP.

Also, please remember that the current Board of Directors term of office expires at the end of 1998 and elections for a new board will take place by mail in early summer. Everyone who is interested in seeing the association grow and prosper is encouraged to run for director.

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CONTENTS

FEATURES

- 4 **Four Basic Requirements to Reach Higher Level** by
 George (Ching-tai) Lin
- 6 **Brief Explanation of the Basic Principles of Taiji Quan**
 translated by Luc DeFago and Simonette
 Verbrugge
- 16 **Summer In Taiwan** *a photo essay*
- 19 **Common Ground** by *Tom Campbell*
- 23 **Is There a Message in the Michuan Form?** by *John Cole*

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 **Editor's Desk**
- 21 **Questions & Answers**

RESOURCES

- 25 **YMT Instructors**
- 26 **Worldwide Directory of YMT Organizations**
- 29 **YMT Catalog**
- 30 **Membership Application and Information**

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Subscription inquiries and changes of address: All members of AWYMTA receive the annual publication of the AWYMTA JOURNAL. For more information or address change notifications, please write: AWYMTA, 535 Liberty St. #203, El Cerrito, CA 94530.

FOUR BASIC REQUIREMENTS TO REACH HIGHER LEVEL

George (Ching-tai) Lin

On the road to learning Taiji Quan or Daoism, there are four basic requirements needed if one wishes to become a Master.

(1) Money

Without enough financial support or job security, learning the study of Taiji will be delayed. During ancient China, only rich people could afford to hire the best Taiji teachers. Poor people were always under heavy financial burden, leaving them with little time and money in order to pursue long term training. However, Taiji Quan has become popular and costs less to learn nowadays. Yet you still need time and expenses to stay with a good Master for a long period of time, thus developing the highest level of power. I have seen many of my classmates quit Taiji due to financial crisis, which is quite disheartening.

(2) Companion

Good friends enrich your life. A close classmate can share in the Taiji experience, correct your mistakes, enhance your confidence, broaden your viewpoints, and build up mutual trust. Particularly in the "pushing hands" exercise, you need a good partner to practice with. In Daoism, when you decide to retreat

to a closed room, a reliable partner is needed to provide you with daily personal needs. In addition, your partner will guard you day and night to prevent any interruptions.

(3) Teaching

Good teaching is the culmination of a good Master, good books, and good methods. The right Master can save you a lot of time. He can guide you through the correct techniques, which take years to learn. Some people make the common mistake of leaving the Master too soon, feeling over confident in their study, and "knowing it all." Yet the truth is this: The Master has a vast multitude of things to teach the student, which are taught over many years; so departing early is not a wise move. Sometimes, the master will want to test your patience and loyalty, teaching you techniques little by little. Therefore, once you find the right teacher, it is important to respect and stay with him as long as you can.

(4) Location

A favorable location will improve your Taiji and Dao. A bad location will do exactly the opposite. That is why Daoists and those who practice the martial arts are

constantly seeking a practice location with good feng shui, which means harmonizing with the earth's natural movements. In ancient times, Daoists loved to trek up a mountain and dwell in caves, revelling in the glory of fresh air,

brehtaking scenery, and peaceful solitude. Those latter elements comprise a good location. If you are lucky enough to reside in such an area, there will be more chances to meet the right Master. Be thankful, for some are not as fortunate.



BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF TAIJI QUAN

Chinese to French Translation by Luc Defago
French to English Translation by Simonette Verbrugge

Summary

The Taiji Quan basic principles statement appears in a dense table published in a book by Master Wang Yen-nien. Mr. Luc Defago and Mr. G. Goormaghtigh translated this table for the benefit of Taiji Quan students. It is shown that a correct application of these principles allows the student to master the art of Taiji Quan. Therefore, basic answers are in the following pages.

Attempt to translate the chart “Brief explanation of the basic principles of Taiji Quan”

This dense table, partially written in classical Chinese, with old maxims and technical terms, immediately appeared to me as essential to translate. In Taipei, one said: *“If you know and you are capable to apply these principles, you master the art of Taiji Quan.”*

So I started to translate this text in 1988 with the precious help of my friend George, expert in Chinese and teacher of classical Chinese at the University of Geneva. George is also a specialist in “Gu Zheng”, the

Chinese zither. We were perfectly complementary to one another for the translation: Him with his knowledge in linguistics and Chinese poetry, and me with my technical knowledge in Taiji Quan.

The chart which we translated in 1988 had been published in the book of Wang Yen-nien in Chinese, published in Taiwan. Someone had added comments to the original text, made it heavier, even deviating from the original text, making certain points hard, even impossible to understand. That is why I asked Master Wang for the original version published in Chinese in a small booklet.

In 1995, I re-worked the translation from the original text, which appeared crystal clear. This is why I didn't want to add any comments. I tried to stay as close as possible to the original meaning and often asked Master Wang for explanations. I hope that you will have as much pleasure as I had when reading and studying this dense but luminous text.

A treasure that discretely shines
1000 lights...

Here is for you the flask of elixir!

PLAN

I – The Principles

A. The important points

1. Use the mind to help the Qi circulate
2. The mind must be contemplative and concentrated.
3. The moving Qi must be abundant and active
4. The Qi must nourish directly and not harm
5. The entire body must be agile and light
6. The mind commands, just like a general gives his orders
7. The Qi is like a flag that expresses the order
The Qi is like the wheel of a chariot
8. The kidneys are like the flag of the marshal.

B. The positions

1. That which is common to all positions
 - ◇ The roots are in the feet
 - ◇ The development is in the legs
 - ◇ The command is in the pelvis
 - ◇ The form is in the hands
2. That which is particular to each position
 - a. The steps

- ◇ Distinguish the empty from the full
- ◇ Conceal the unfolding
- b. The trunk
 - ◇ Han Xiong
 - ◇ Babei
- c. The central pivot
 - ◇ To vivify and animate the energy (Jin) of the top of the head
 - ◇ The coccyx must be centered
- d. The standing posture
 - ◇ Centered and correct
 - ◇ Peaceful and comfortable

3. Relaxing

- a. The two arms must be relaxed
 - ◇ Relax the shoulders
 - ◇ Let the elbows fall
- b. Relax the kidneys
- c. Relax the entire body
- d. Comments on relaxing and tranquility

II – HOW TO PUT THESE PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

- A. To adhere (Nian Jin)
- B. To keep the mobility (Zou Jin)

I – THE PRINCIPLES

A – The important principles

1) Utilise the mind to help the Qi to circulate.

It is where the intention (Yi) goes, that the Qi will arrive (the thought precedes the energy). One works at lowering the center of

gravity and with the time, the inner energy develops itself.

But this is not sufficient: The Qi must circulate and, with the help of Qi make the body move. When the Qi moves, the body moves too. The Qi must circulate without difficulty: that way the body feels totally comfortable.

Explanations: When you make the Qi circulate with the help of the intention and you make the body move with the help of the Qi, you can act freely without any obstacle. When the acquired force (Houtian Qi) is entirely transformed, the innate energy (Xiantian Qi) increases naturally.

With the help of practice, the habit becomes a second nature. Then, all the forces of the thought (Yi Xiang Li) can from themselves have authority on the physiological functions of the body. *"If in all situations you examine your intentions (Yi), then everything becomes easy."* One also says, *"If there is a perfect integration and deepening, then one reaches the perfect freedom."*

2) The mind must be contemplative and concentrated.

3) The Qi in movement must be abundant and active.

Avoid pressing on the Dantian by all means, the Qi must come down deeply and freely in it.

4) The Qi must nourish directly and not harm.

When the innate Qi (Xiantian Qi) is nourished, this way of

nourishing is in accordance with nature. This is why there is no exhaustion. One should not use the Qi of the acquired force (Houtian Qi) since it is harmful and causes total exhaustion.

5) The body must be entirely agile and light.

Light: All movements must be exclusively directed by the intention (Yi). And this is true for the smallest gesture. For example, raising the hand, even for a millimeter. If there is no intention to continue the movement, it must stop. Only then can one speak of true lightness.

Agile: When the hand is raised, one must always keep in mind the idea of raising while keeping the mysterious freedom of being capable, at any time, of modifying the movements to one's liking. One can then speak of true agility.

Beginners must perform the sequence slowly. Only then, at any moment, can the thought direct the movements so that the beginner can make progress.

It is with slowness that the breathing can become deep and long and that the Qi comes down in the Dantian. This is the way to avoid disturbances in the progress of the Qi.

6) The mind commands like the general gives orders.

The mind is like the general and the body is like the army which executes the orders.

If the mind moves the body, the movements are light, brisk, agile. When the hands and the feet are

apart, the intention is to open them too. When they are together, the intention joins them too. So the inside and the outside are only one. They are intimately mingled and each movement is quiet.¹ This is what one calls residing in tranquility (or also residing in the void).²

7) The Qi is like a flag which expresses the order.

The Qi is like the wheel of a chariot.

8) The kidneys are like the flag of the marshal.

The body must be correct, centered and not tilted. The kidneys are like the wheel of the chariot. The kidneys are the pivot of the body when it moves: The innate Qi (Xiantian Qi) is like the circular movement of the wheel. So the Qi is in all the body and it does not stagnate.

One can say that there is no place that is not set into motion by the kidneys.

B -- The positions

1) That which is common to all positions

- ◇ The roots are in the feet

¹ Harmony of the order and its execution in accordance.

² Tranquility comes when the mind thinks only of what the body is doing: so, without parasite thoughts, you are "empty", available, concentrated. You are fully what you are doing and you do exactly what you think. That is what Buddhists call "to leave no traces".

- ◇ The development is in the legs
- ◇ The command is in the waist
- ◇ The form is in the hands

Explanation : From feet to hands, passing through the thighs and hips, the top and the bottom must answer to one another and must be covered in one single breath.

" Qi must circulate without interruption, like the silk thread when the cocoon is spun or when the cat stalks it's prey. "

Advancing or retreating must be performed naturally, in the appropriate position and at the appropriate moment. But it is the thought (intention, the Yi) and not the force (Li) that one must use. From the beginning until the end, everything must be linked, uninterrupted.

Once the cycle is accomplished, it starts again because the circulation is unlimited, like the big rivers that flow endlessly.

This is why Taiji Quan (boxing of the supreme pinnacle) is also named long boxing (Chang Quan). If, in any given place, the Qi does not circulate, there is interruption and the old force³ is exhausted when the new one has not yet been produced, which happens easily.

³ Old force : before the undesirable interruption occurred

New force : after the undesirable interruption occurred

This is why it is said : "*Make sure that there are no peaks and troughs, no interruption and resumption*".

If one part of the body is not moving, dispersion and confusion will inevitably follow. If the hands move without the kidneys and the legs, the more the hands try to have force and the more the body will be confused and dispersed⁴. Alternating between empty and full⁵ comes from the movement of the kidneys. This is why it is said that "*What determines us has it's origin in the kidneys*"⁶.

Beginners must first concentrate on the opening and the amplitude, so that the kidneys and the legs will be entirely mobilised in the smallest of movements.

So everything is only intention (Yi). This is what we call "*the fusion of the inside with the outside and the communication between the top and the bottom*". Or also "*when there is movement, everything moves; when there is tranquillity, everything is tranquil*". There will be no heaviness, no tilting, no perplexity, no hesitation in any part of the body.

⁴ See above, **The Principles, B.1**: That which is common to all positions

⁵ Alternating between empty and full makes reference to the weight unevenly distributed : $\frac{3}{4}$ on one leg, $\frac{1}{4}$ on the other or one hand acting passively, the other acting actively : see below II, B. : Keep the mobility.

⁶ The kidneys are the centre of the ancestral energy, the energy-bank received from the parents at conception.

2) That which is particular to each position

a) The steps

◇ Distinguish empty from full :

Empty: the fundamental law is to be able to rise and lower the leg on demand (Translator's note : from the ground).

Full: the legs must always be bent, never straight (Translator's note: in full extension).

When all the weight of the body is on the right leg, this one is called "full" and the other "empty" and vice versa. This is the only way of making the rotations of the body agile and brisk and the movements easy. Otherwise, the steps become heavy and painful, without base and unstable. In the standing posture of the cavalier or with feet together parallel, the tip of the feet must be facing front. In the asymmetrical arch posture, the tip of the feet must be facing front and the back foot must be slightly turned outwards (Translator's note : at an angle of 45°).

◇ To conceal the unfolding

Apart from the change between empty and full, you must be able to conceal the unfolding. Even if one does not see any movement from the outside, inside you have already started to unfold. (Translator's note : the intention precedes the movement)

◇ Rotation and change :

When moving forward or backward, you must alternate the patterns of

steps. This is why when you move backward, it implies always a move forward (and vice versa).

b) The trunk

- ◇ *Hang Xiong:*
Slightly bring the chest in (Translator's note : the opposite to puffing out the chest) and let the Qi sink down deep in the Dantian. Otherwise the breath will press against the chest and the top will become heavy and the bottom light ; then the feet become easily floating (Translator's note: rootless).
- ◇ *Babei:*
Make sure that the back is always capable of springing (Translator's note : avoiding peaks and troughs), that the breath sticks to the back and that it can face any situation at any time.

c) The central pivot

- ◇ *Vivify and animate the energy (Jin) at the top of the head.*
The energy at the top of the head develops when the head and face are straight upright, and that the mind is concentrated at the top of the head. One must keep the freedom and natural availability without using strength. To express the idea that the head must be like in a state of weightlessness, one speaks about "the top of the head is suspended".

At the same time, the mouth must be closed and the lower part of the

tongue must be in contact with the palate. Moreover, one must absolutely avoid gritting the teeth and glaring.

- ◇ *The coccyx must be centred* otherwise it is the spine⁷ which will suffer the consequences and the mind will have difficulty in raising without hindrance.

d) The standing posture

- ◇ *Centred and correct*, which is the case if the position of the central pivot is correct.
- ◇ *Peaceful and comfortable*, which is the case if the entire body is perfectly relaxed.

In every posture one must be as stable as Mt. Tai (Tai Shan).⁸

3) Relaxation

a) The two arms must be relaxed

- ◇ *Relax the shoulders:* which means loosening them and letting them drop to help the Qi sink because, if they are raised and contracted, the Qi will follow their movement upwards and the body will be without force.
- ◇ *Let the elbows fall:* making sure that the elbows are lowering by letting them drop in a relaxed manner, otherwise the shoulders will not lower and, as in external

⁷ For the spine see above **b) The Trunk**

⁸ The sacred mountain in East China

martial arts, the energy will be interrupted.

Whether one straightens the fingers or tightens the fist, one must make sure that it is always performed in a relaxed manner. Be sure that the body is totally natural in its postures.

At the moment when the palms suggest a push forward, the depression on the centre of the palm must express itself suddenly (it flattens) in order to bring the inner energy and stretch it (Nei Jin). But one must not use force in any case.

b) Relax the kidneys

When the kidneys are relaxed, the Qi sinks spontaneously. It gives strength to the legs and stabilizes the lower part of the body. If there are weaknesses in the transformations between empty and full in the lower and upper limbs, it must be resolved by associating the movement of the kidneys to the one of the rest of the body. Moreover, one must have a feeling of agility and ease in the movements. When one crouches, the kidneys must be like suspended (Translator's note : bottom in, pelvis tucked in to avoid arching, lumbar region relaxed to avoid any protuberances).

c) Relax the entire body

Only when the body is completely relaxed can the center of gravity be lowered.

This is the way to avoid any blockage. The movements are alert, brisk, round and natural.

d) Comments on relaxation and tranquillity

It is the intention (Yi) that helps reach total relaxation of the body, and not force. The intention leads the Qi, and it is the Qi which produces the movement of the body. So the flow of Qi and blood irrigates the whole body without interference. This is why it is said: *"the exchanges between Yi and Qi must be brisk to give roundness and vivacity to the movements"*.

To lower the center of gravity, one must relax, becoming *"heavy, deep, calm like the mountains; fluid, ceaseless, flowing like the rivers"*.

II - HOW TO PUT THESE PRINCIPLES INTO PRACTICE

Taiji Quan always tries to utilise a lithe energy. It is elastic. Empty and full must always be clearly distinguished but, above all, you must act according to the situation: when the other is "full", I am "empty" and vice versa.

One time empty, one time full : these two attitudes alternate without interruption.

The other doesn't know me, but I can get to know him and become unfathomable, that way the other will be naturally defeated. At that moment I can project (Fa Jin) and become invincible. To understand this mystery, you must know the art of evading (Hua Jin). It can be

summed up in these two words : to adhere (Nian) and keep mobile (Zou). To move (Zou), in order to avoid the attacks of the enemy. To adhere (Nian) in order to control him. Both are used simultaneously.

A - To Adhere (NIAN JIN)

That is what we call not to lose, or not to be separated. At the moment when the hands are in contact, you must adhere to the energy of the other person, to his Qi. In these continuous movements when you adhere, the whole body must adhere to the energy of the other person and not only the hands.

My speed will totally depend upon the speed of the opponent. I adhere naturally, without interruption, to the energy of the opponent, which I get to feel. So I benefit from my capacity to go in the direction of the opposition.

One says: *"when the movement is fast one must answer to it fast, when it is slow one must follow slowly"*.

Both arms must absolutely be totally relaxed and clear, without the slightest ounce of badly appropriated force. That way only will it be possible to follow the other in a perfectly harmonious way. Otherwise, at the first contact, all hope for "survival" will vanish. Moreover, if you like to use force without taking the other into consideration, it is difficult to forget yourself in order to follow the other. Beginners should beware of tensions and eagerness. In the long

run they will develop an energy which will be spontaneously relaxed in appearance, when it won't be in reality, always giving the impression of wanting to unfold without having to do it.

So they will be able to face every contingency, without failing.

B - KEEPING THE MOBILITY (ZOU JIN)

Do not oppose, meaning do not resist. When you adhere to the other whether with the left hand or the right hand, no sooner do you feel an intention of heaviness that you have to empty the point of contact. No sooner do you feel an intention of relaxation that you must consciously become heavier there. If you feel the slightest double heaviness⁹, you must immediately take advantage of it by making one side heavier. Since the other's movement has by definition a direction, personally, I simply limit myself to going into the same direction without opposing any resistance.

I make sure that the other will fall everywhere in the void and so will not obtain any resistance where to use his force. His left gets heavier, mine gets emptier ; his right becomes heavier, mine becomes unfathomable. If the beginners don't move unless they receive a great amount of energy, it is because they

⁹ Double heaviness : contravening the principles of alternating empty and full by making both hands heavier at the same time or by having an equal distribution of the weight between both legs.

are still tempted to resist. In this case, they are opposing themselves without giving up : that way the one who has the most force will win. This is why one says "*if one side is heavier, one can follow ; if both sides are heavier, one blocks, one stagnates*".

Those who excel have an extraordinarily brisk sensitivity. As soon as they make contact, they know. They have reached a wonderful stage where "*one cannot neither add a feather, nor take away a fly*". When you practice the method of non-resistance, the essential is to use the kidneys. It is only when they don't suffice that you can compensate with a step.

One calls Escape, the fact of using simultaneously mobility and adherence.

Mobility is mainly a question of receding and adherence when advancing. When moving forward and backward are combining perfectly, then one starts to understand. By staying mobile, you can destabilize the center of gravity of the other. By adhering, you can keep the other from finding his stability back. Since there is no loss of adherence or resistance, the stability of the center of gravity of the other totally depends on me. I am able to know all the weak points of the other. You must always face the movements of the other with calm and only move if he moves: "*the other doesn't move, I don't move : the other moves slightly, I move forward*".

The art of neutralising the movement of the opponent by going in the same direction (Ni Lai Shun Shou) : this is the method to attract the opponent in the void to master him (Yin Jin Ru Kong).

The other retires, I unfold. The other unfolds, I retire in order for the empty and the void to answer one another without any error. Suddenly hidden, suddenly obvious, my changes are unpredictable and unending.

All the movements must be circular. Even inside the same circle, an enormous quantity of mobility and adherence perfectly match all the modifications I am doing, while trusting entirely what I feel.

The essential can be resumed in these words : "follow the flow of the current". I am the current, the other one is opposed. Even if the other had a force of 10.000 pounds, it wouldn't serve him. This explains the saying: "*four ounces can overcome 10 000 pounds*".

If you use a stiff and hard force, it will not be going in the same direction as the movement. If it is not in the direction of the movement, it cannot be mobile. Without mobility, it is not possible to escape. Without escape, there is no adherence. If that is the case, how can one feel the other's movement?

Tui Shou does precisely try to apply these principles. In Tui Shou one finds 8 techniques : Peng-Lu-Ji-An-Cai-Lie-Zhou-Kao (ward off, pull, press, push, draw downward, twist, elbow stroke, shoulder stroke), of

which the practice develops the plenitude of life in the body. If there is unfolding of the opponent, I retreat and vice versa. When something happens, you must answer to it with common sense.

The transformations are inexhaustible.

The ultimate principle is unity and if it can be obtained, then the 10,000 things will be realised.

GLOSSARY

Babei: Keep the back always capable of moving upwards

Dantian: The field of elixir, 3,6 inches below the navel (energy center)

Chang Quan: Long boxing

Fa Jin: To eject, to expel with energy, to discharge, to release

Hanxiong: Hollow the chest

Houtian Qi: The acquired energy

Hua Jin: To evade

Jing: Essence, energy in relation with the sperm (men) and the blood (women)

Li: Force (muscular)

Na Jin: To grab

Neigong: Inner breathing work

Nei Jin: Inner energy

Nian Jin: To adhere

Ni Lai Shun Shou: The art of neutralizing the movement of the opponent by moving in the same direction.

Pian Chen: Deliberately increasing weight on one side (the side which the opponent relaxes)

Qi: Energy, breath

Qigong: Work of the breath

Sanshou: Dispersed, separated hands; application of the movements of the sequence to free fighting

Shen: Spiritual force, mind

Tuishou: Pushing hands, sticky hands, putting into practice the movements of the sequence against an opponent, keeping in contact with him.

Xiantian Qi: Innate energy

Xin: Heart (place of the mind)

Yi: Thought, intention, project, idea (place of the spleen)

Yi Xiang Li: The forces of the thought

Yin Jin: To attract, to induce

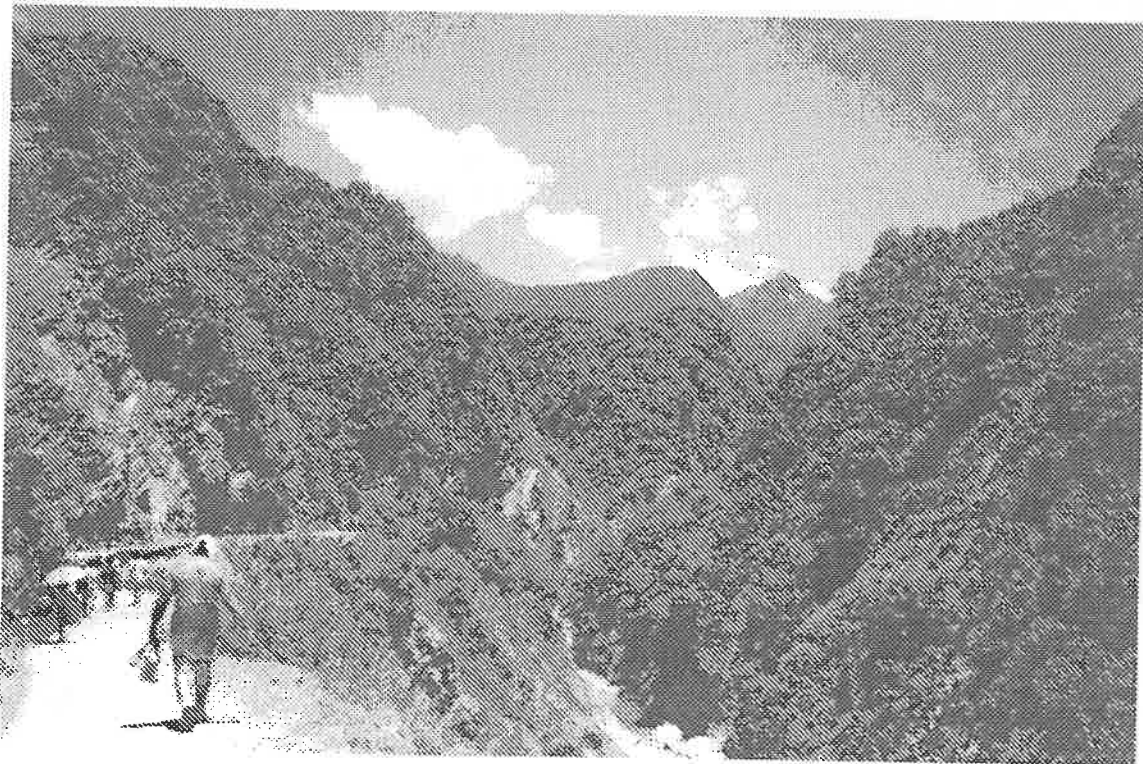
Zou Jin: To remain immobile

The Dao that is the Eternal Dao cannot be told in words.

SUMMER '97 IN

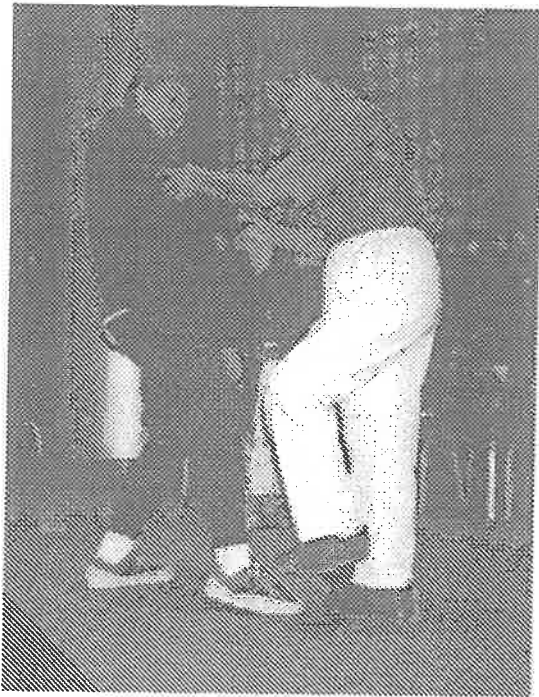
Wang Laoshi's Intensive Summer Course this year included Form, Wudang Sword, Neigong, Section 2 applications and *lots* of Tuishou. There were opening ceremonies, sightseeing, a fabulous weekend retreat at Taroko Gorge, 6+ hours of exercise each day, and a superb closing banquet hosted by the Taiwan teachers. All in all, an unparalleled opportunity for friendship and camaraderie with our taiji sisters and brothers!

These pictures will give you a hint of the fun we had!



Taroko Gorge

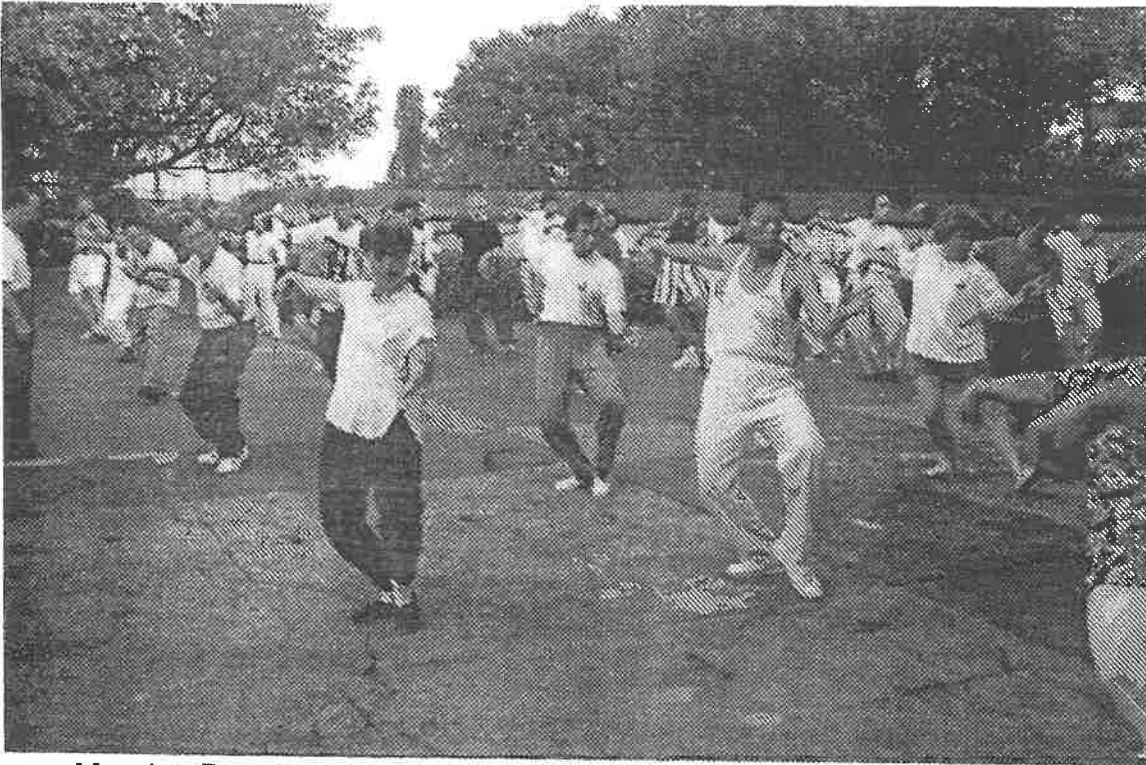
TAIWAN



Applications



More Applications



Morning Practice



Closing Banquet

COMMON GROUND

Thomas Campbell

“Taiji is like the sun ... and like the sun, it is a benefit to everything it shines upon.” - Wang Yen-nien (Summer 1996)

I woke up with an aching muscle in my lower back and wondered whether I would have to miss Taiji practice. I spend my weekends in a small town in upstate New York, and look forward to practice on a relatively secluded billfold “in the country”. Often the only company I have are tiny yellow swallows who circle in precise patterns, snatching unseen bugs from the air.

Despite the stiffness I walked the short distance then went through my leg massages. When I was well into basic exercises I saw that a man my age had come to practice as well. I wasn't surprised to see that he studied the Zheng Manqing style. Removing his sneakers, he went right into his form.

Concluding my warm up with a full set of leg squats, I began the second section of the Michuan form. From “Straddle the Tiger, Climb the Mountain” I moved into “Palm Three Times”, watching him from the corner of my eye. I have never formally studied the “new style” but, at the insistence of my teacher, have

visited other schools, including one taught by Master Da Liu, who is 93 years old and lives in my neighborhood. But these visits made me realize that I had already found what I needed for a life long study.

Slipping into the meditative element of taiji, I focused on the execution of each movement. After “Raise the Bamboo Curtain” and “Search for Needle at the Bottom of the Sea” I looked over and realized that he had finished and begun once again. The odds being that he had never seen Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan I wondered if he saw the relationship of the two Yang family forms. I felt good about the physical nature of the form; “Hands Billowing Like Clouds” seemed more graceful than ever, the challenging low squats felt extra satisfying, and the movements of “Separate the Feet” communicated a stable sense of balance.

Finishing his short form for the second time, the other fellow left the field. What had he accomplished in his short workout?

Certainly he hadn't stretched his sinews or opened up his leg or arm joints. I was annoyed that my thoughts had turned away from the practice I had come to do.

As I moved through "Double Blow Pierces the Ears" and "Tame the Tiger" I heard a faint gentle sound, a series of low musical notes that drifted slowly and effortlessly through the calm summer air. Joining the gentle singing of the birds overhead, the sounds provided a sublime background to the meditative movement of the Taiji form.

Instinctively, I knew where the music was coming from. As I turned and finished with "Cross Hands" and "Embrace Tiger, Return to the Mountain" I could see the same man now playing a long wooden instrument, using his breath to create the pleasing music. Sitting under a tree, looking away from the field, his mind was solely on his music.

Walking home it occurred to me, not for the first time but for the first time clearly, that Taiji is many things. It trains us, it prepares us, it benefits one's health and mind, it's a martial art, it's a relaxing meditative art. Taiji can be one element in an afternoon's experience, as for the musician who used it to warm up, or it can be the center of your afternoon, as it was for me. It is better to look for what we have in common than to stress our differences.

And for the first time that day, I suddenly realized, the muscle in my back no longer ached.

This story is dedicated, in part, to Erwin Schachner, a New York Michuan student who passed away this summer.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

It is said that taiji free-fighting is derived mostly from practicing the form. Is this true? (France, 1995)

WYN In free-fighting, or San Shou, of course you need to be able to practice the form. But this comes from practicing the form well and being able to separate the form into small pieces and applying them. However, technology today has leaped forward in the area of weapons, such as bombs, missiles, automatic weapons, etc., so it is meaningless to use martial arts/taiji or the idea of fighting somebody like this in the modern world.

But why do we still want to practice taijiquan and its martial applications? First of all, there is the idea of maintaining your health, because in modern society there are many things that are harmful to the body. This includes the food we eat, the things we drink and even the roads we walk on. If you depend only on medicine to keep yourself in good health, that is not the answer. You need to have a way to keep yourself healthy using your own body and mind.

The most mysterious aspect [to our study] is the idea of getting yin and yang to be one. The human body is yin and yang and is made up of positive and negative ions. Because we are made up of these positive and negative ions, it makes sense to

use the theory of yin and yang to improve health and replenish the positive and negative aspects of the physical body.

Will you talk about the breathing, specifically how you do it? Is there a specific image or cycle that works? (California, 1996)

WYN This is a whole course in itself. Generally, the overall picture is this: First of all, relax, because it is not possible [for the qi] to reach the dantian if you are tense. In the breathing the key is the *first* breath. On the first breath be sure to start with an exhale. That is why we start the form with “ha” – an exhale. That is the key. To exhale first gets you started. On the exhale you contract the lower abdomen and exhale the qi from the dantian. You squeeze the dantian, but be sure you do not squeeze the dantian air into the chest. Simply stay quiet and it comes out the mouth.

On the inhale use the nose and very slowly and gently the contracted abdomen now expands and causes a vacuum which draws the air inward. The air is coming in and the abdomen is expanding, but the chest is quiet. You really need to use [some] strength in the dantian, but you are not using the chest. The chest is totally quiet [relaxed] and stays still. Use the lower abdominal muscles to expand and contract the

abdomen. This is using the abdomen to breathe. Once you have the idea of the abdomen contracting and expanding, you [must remember to] inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth. Notice that there should not be any noise on the exhale. The exhale should be very light, soundless/noiseless and soft. This is also true for inhaling through the nose – light and no noise.

And then it is important to note that on the exhale, you have to lift up on the Huiyin point (in the perineum, just in front of the anus and behind the genitals). When you are lifting up it is an inward and upward lift. It might feel as if you are squeezing your anus closed, but it is not actually that. It is the lifting upward of Huiyin that lifts the anus too. This is what you feel. It means you have to use strength to squeeze this point closed. Lifting up on the Huiyin point helps the abdominal muscles to contract. Then notice that as soon as you drop the Huiyin point, it creates a vacuum which draws the air in and helps to expand the abdomen. So it is this lifting and dropping which is the crucial point to be able to get the abdomen moving so well. This really helps the force/power behind the dantian expanding and contracting. This lifting up on the exhale, dropping on the inhale – this is the general picture.

When you are practicing this type of gongfu, be sure to drink water. This lifting and dropping [of Huiyin] creates fire in the body, so be sure

to drink water to lessen the amount of fire in the body.

Master Wang, I have been teaching (Chen style) taijiquan to a beginning student who has also been practicing meditation with concentration on the heart for several years. Her instructor in this type of yoga told her that practicing this type of (heart) meditation and practicing taijiquan at the same time is not possible and can be dangerous for her nervous system and dangerous because the nature of the awakened forces are different. I do not teach her meditation, but her body is very sensitive to the energy flows awakened by taijiquan movements. Is it dangerous for this girl to continue studying taijiquan and practice her kind of meditation? (Europe, 1996)

WYN Oftentimes teachers have their own way of speaking about a system's techniques. In this case the yoga meditation teacher has his own way of speaking and thinking about meditation. This may reflect a fear that students will mix too many things together. And so he might insist that to do taijiquan and yoga (heart) meditation together would be dangerous for the nervous system.

According to Daoist principles, however, one needs to work on BOTH the "external" (represented by taijiquan) and the "internal" (represented by meditation techniques, either neigong, yoga
(continued on p. 24)

IS THERE A MESSAGE IN THE MICHUAN FORM?

John Cole



Every Daoist knows that in the past anything worth preserving was passed down in secret, usually near the time of a teacher's passing, to one who would best continue to propitiate the knowledge and wisdom of lineage. Seldom was anything written down as it could fall into the wrong hands and weaken or denigrate the knowledge. Frequently in order to propagate knowledge in the written form it was recorded in symbolic code, only to be understood by those accepted and initiated.

What if the Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Form, the names of techniques, the list of movements, the sequence of names is an encoded message? Now, I'm not saying that there is a message here, but let us examine some of the names and see where this could lead.

Search for the Needle at the Bottom of the Sea. Search for the point within the Sea of Qi. Within the dantian lies guanyuan, which is the source of (original) yang qi.

The next move is the Green Dragon Emerges from the Water, or Rises from the Sea. The Dragon is a yang symbol. Green is the color of the liver which is in charge of the

smooth flowing of qi through the body. The Green Dragon is in charge of the controlled flow of rising yang qi. All Daoists know the importance of controlling the rising of yang qi. For once the yang qi escapes you might as well Turn, Cast the Body Aside and Punch (if there is anything left to punch with).

Hands Billowing Like The Clouds describes the tangible cohesiveness of clouds, if they are not violently disturbed. Just as clouds have more images than you are able to imagine, within this form, there are hidden endless techniques. One should spend countless hours, gazing at clouds, while unraveling the mysteries of these techniques.

Let's look at Return the Tiger to the Mountain. The Tiger is symbolic of yin energy and returning yin to the mountain is to raise the earth's energy up into the heart area, a place where some Daoist schools recommend women should focus when meditating. This should have a calming effect, thus creating harmony.

If the Tiger is truly yin, why must you Hit the Tiger, and Tame the Tiger, before you Carry the Tiger Back to the Mountain. It certainly makes sense to tame a tiger before

you bring her home. Just remember tigers are not tamable, and you can trust them to attack you at any given moment of inattention. So be forever vigilant.

I have had fun playing with these ideas, and leave the rest of the form names for you to unravel. This short essay may represent the fact that I have too much free time. With this in mind, I will go to Squaw Valley and practice standing meditation on skis. (Mother Nature dumped 12 feet of snow this week.) Skiing meditation requires constant vigilance for the Tiger will destroy my yang at any given moment of inattention.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS (cont'd.)

heart meditation, etc.). Just a meditation practice alone is not enough. **IT IS NO PROBLEM** for your student to practice her meditation together with taijiquan (any style).

Also, it is not important which style of taijiquan you practice as long as you have a meditation practice to go with it – if you want to progress. This is called “the inner and the outer worked on, or cultivated, simultaneously” (nei wai shuang xiu).

SUBMISSIONS

Articles
Poems

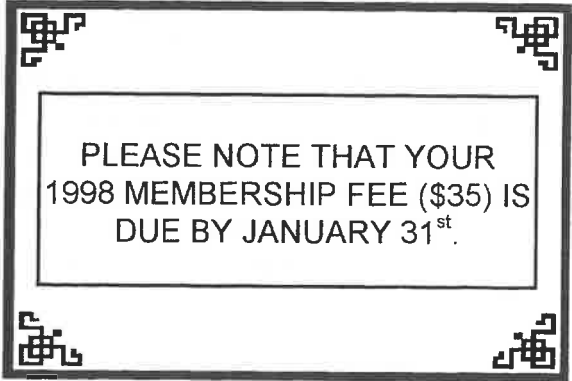
Artwork
Photos

SUGGESTIONS

If you have ideas or suggestions about anything that you think can help improve the Journal, let us know.

The Journal is written by and for its members. Become involved and send us your submissions and suggestions.

Mail to:
AWYMTA
535 Liberty Street, #203
El Cerrito, CA 94530



PLEASE NOTE THAT YOUR
1998 MEMBERSHIP FEE (\$35) IS
DUE BY JANUARY 31st.

DIRECTORY OF AWYMTA INSTRUCTORS

The following AWYMTA members are Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan instructors in the United States. The addresses listed are for mailing purposes only. Please contact instructors by mail or phone for specific information about class times and locations.

CALIFORNIA/NORTH

John Cole
535 Whitecliff Dr.
Vallejo, CA 94589
(707) 552-4738

James Douglas
5494 College Ave.
Oakland, CA 94618
(510) 654-6043

Juliet Heizman
6742 Bonnydoon Rd.
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
(408) 429-5428

Akai Jong
P.O. Box 623
Big Sur, CA 93920
(408) 667-0363

Janet Phillips
523 Ashbury Ave.
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 524-5023

Theresa L. Thomas
1825 Marin Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94707
(510) 527-7155

Sam Tomarchio
535 Liberty St. #203
El Cerrito, CA 94530
(510) 527-2058

CALIFORNIA/SOUTH

Wilma Wong
2348 Wilson Ave.
Venice, CA 90291
(310) 306-1668

Harry Wu
1223 Huntington Dr. #A
So. Pasadena, CA
91030
(213) 258-7224

FLORIDA

Jeff Pentz
11888 93rd Ave. N
Seminole, FL 33772
(813) 399-1596

ILLINOIS

Joseph Morris
7524 S. Union Ave.
Chicago, IL 60620
(773) 487-8007

MARYLAND

Mike Basdavanos
P.O. Box 383
Garrett Park, MD 20896
(301) 565-3320

MICHIGAN

James Carlson
61655 Raintree Blvd.
Sturgis, MI 49091
(616) 467-1831

NEW YORK

Robert Politzer
25 Indian Rd. #6F
New York, NY 10034
(212) 567-3694

WASHINGTON

Royal Linden
327 NW 183rd St.
Shoreline, WA 98177
(206) 546-3018

NOTE:

If you are unable to contact an instructor or need information, please call or write to Sam Tomarchio (see above).

If you are looking for an instructor outside the United States, please consult the Worldwide Directory on the following pages.

WORLDWIDE DIRECTORY OF YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN ORGANIZATIONS

BELGIUM

ASSOCIATION DES ENSEIGNANTS DU
YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
Av. de la NIVEOLE, 25
1020 Bruxelles, Belgium
Tel.: (32) 2-262-1051
Contact: Jacqueline Frenay, President
Cara Van Wersch, Senior Advisor

Formed in 1993, this fledgling group consists at its core of students of Kuo Che, who studied Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan with Wang Yen-nien in the 1950's. Following the death of their teacher, these students have since adopted Wang Yen-nien as their surrogate teacher and have pledged themselves to the support of all teachers and students interested in learning more about the Yangjia Michuan style of Taijiquan in Belgium and surrounding areas. *For more information about the group's activities, please write to the above address.*

CANADA

WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
FEDERATION (CANADA)
RR #1 Moser's River
Nova Scotia, BOJ 2KO, Canada
Tel./Fax: (902)347-2250
Contact: Ronald & Mireille Wensel

ENGLAND

THE TAI CHI CENTRE
ASTWOOD STUDIO
19 Astwood Mews
London SW7 4DE, ENGLAND
Tel.: (44) 171-373-2331
Fax: (44) 171-243-8929
Contact: Peter Clifford

FRANCE

AMICALE DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
8 Grand Rue Jean Moulin
30100 Ales, FRANCE
Tel.: (33) 66-56-79-61
Contact: Françoise Pongy, President

This organization is a confederation of associations in Europe that teach the Yangjia Michuan Style of Taijiquan. Concentrating on public affairs, the AMICALE is responsible for the development of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan in Europe. It promotes friendship among all associations offering Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan by sponsoring inter-Association events, such as public demonstrations and workshops.

As of September 1991, the AMICALE was comprised of 15 member associations and 20 individual members, for a total of 466 participating persons.

The AMICALE also publishes a quarterly Bulletin. To become a member of the AMICALE or to obtain a copy of the Bulletin (in French only), write to the above address.

COLLEGE EUROPEAN DES ENSEIGNANTS
DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
56, rue du Dr. Mangeney
68100 Mulhouse, FRANCE
Tel.: (33) 89-65-51-12
Contact: Jean-Claude Trap, Secrétaire

The COLLEGE, founded in 1989, concentrates on the quality of the teacher and is directly responsible for raising the level of teaching standard in Europe. Its duties include: maintaining communication among teachers interested in teaching Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan; providing teachers with opportunities to improve their skills through teacher training workshops and supporting teaching materials. *For more information on how to become a member of the college and receive a copy of the COLLEGE Directory, write to the above address.*

ECOLE FRANCAISE DE TAIJI QUAN
BP 3002
49017 Angers Cedex
France
Tel.: (33) 41-43-67-40
Fax: (33) 41-37-05-92

JAPAN

TOKYO TAI KYOKKEN AOI KAI
Address: Koengi Kita 2-33-5
Suginamiku, Tokyo
Japan
Phone: (81) 3-3339-6875
Contact: Sai Kunitada, president

TAI KYOKKEN SHINKI KAI
2-1-6 Shironouchi St., Nada-ku
Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan
Tel.: (81) 78-861-8973
Contact: Shozo Matsuyama

THE NETHERLANDS

CYPRESS (Center for the Cultivation of Yangjia
Michuan Taijiquan)
Madeliefstraat 14
5643 HS Endhoven
The Netherlands
Tel./Fax: (31) 40-11-71-01

RUSSIA

THE RUSSIAN GREAT RIVER TAOIST
CENTER
86 Vavilova St., Apt. 40
Moscow 117261
Russia
Tel.: (7) 095-938-5124
Fax: (7) 095-938-5000
Contact: Albert Efimov

SOUTH AFRICA

YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN CLUB OF
SOUTH AFRICA
48, Kidbrooke Place
P.O. Box 801
7200 Hermanus
Republic of South Africa
Tel.: (27) 283-61842
Fax: (27) 283-61307
Contact: Maureen Poole, president

A small but strongly motivated group, this organization provides instruction in the Yangjia Michuan Style of Taijiquan on a weekly basis. Club fees are nominal. Occasional outings and workshops are arranged as are trips to Taiwan for the curious and/or serious student. *For more information, write to Maureen Poole at the above address.*

SWITZERLAND

ECOLE DE YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
87 Bd. Carl-Vogt
1205 Geneva, SWITZERLAND
Tel.: (41) 22-800-22-50
Fax: (41) 22-800-22-54
Contact: Luc Defago



TAIWAN

WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
FRIENDSHIP ORGANIZATION (TAIWAN)
32-2F Fuguo Rd.
Shih-lin, Taipei, Taiwan 111
Republic of China
Tel.: (886) 2-837-1779
Fax: (886) 2-837-2258

WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN
TEACHER'S UNION
32-2F Fuguo Rd.
Shih-lin, Taipei, Taiwan 111
Republic of China
Tel.: (886) 2-837-1779
Fax: (886) 2-837-2258

Both the WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN FRIENDSHIP ORGANIZATION (TAIWAN) and the WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN TEACHERS' UNION (TAIWAN) were established by Wang Yen-nien "...to preserve the integrity of the Yangjia Michuan style of Taijiquan; to prevent the loss of this traditional art; to care for our ancestor

Yang Luchan the Undefeated's great fame; and to insure that the Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan method of cultivating one's physical and mental capabilities is perpetuated and extended throughout the world forever."

The work of these two associations continues under the direction of Wang Yen-nien. Wang Yen-nien, fourth generation student of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan, is the most senior representative of this style in the world. He studied Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan under Zhang Qinlin, who learned this style from Yang Jianhou, son of Yang Luchan, founder of the Yangjia Michuan style of Taijiquan.

These associations hold regular meetings and publish a monthly magazine (in Chinese only). *For more information, write to the address listed above.*

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN WEST YANGJIA MICHUAN
TAIJIQUAN ASSOCIATION
535 Liberty Street #203
El Cerrito, CA 94530
USA
Tel./Fax: (510) 527-2058
Contact: Sam Tomarchio, President

The AMERICAN WEST YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN ASSOCIATION (AWYMTA), established March 21, 1992, is dedicated to perpetuating, promoting and furthering the growth of the Yangjia Michuan style of Taijiquan in the United States.

By offering classes, sponsoring workshops, promoting friendly contact among students and teachers of the Yangjia Michuan Style of Taijiquan and publishing newsletters and a semiannual journal, the AWYMTA hopes to create a positive and supportive environment for both new and old students. *For more information, write to the above address.*



YMT CATALOG



Books

Yang Family Hidden Tradition of Taijiquan, Illustrated and Explained by Wang Yen-nien,

Vol. I: (2nd ed.) The basic exercises plus all three sections of the form.

Cost: US\$65.00 - English/French
US\$75.00 - Chinese/Japanese

Vol. II: Applications

Cost: US\$80.00 (English & Chinese)

FANS

Bamboo Fans

These lightweight fans are highlighted by the Chinese characters *Yan Nian* (literally, extended years).

Cost: US \$15.00

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These fans are made of heavier construction and recommended for the more advanced student.

Cost: US \$32.00

AUDIOTAPES

Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan by Wang Yen-nien.

A ninety minute audiotape of Wang Laoshi calling out the breathing and postures (in Chinese) for all three duans of the YMT form.

Cost: US\$12.00

Thirteen Postures (Maryland, 1993)

Two volumes, approx. 2 hours each

Cost: Call for price.

For more information call Mike Basdavanos at (301) 565-3320

ORDERING

All prices for books, fans and audiotapes include shipping.

Books and Fans: AWYMTA must have a total minimum request for ten books or fans (each) before ordering. Books and fans are sent by seamount from Taiwan, which takes 8-10 weeks for delivery. In general, all orders will be mailed to AWYMTA. *To receive direct delivery, you must have a minimum order of five books or fans.*

Nonmembers: For orders of less than five books **and** which must be mailed to you by AWYMTA, please add \$5.00 per book, and \$2.00 per fan.

Audiotapes: AWYMTA must have a total minimum request of 20 tapes before ordering from Taiwan. Audiotapes are shipped by airmail directly to you.

Please make your check payable to AWYMTA and mail to:

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535 Liberty St. #203
El Cerrito, CA 94530-3639

If you have any questions, or need additional information, please telephone or fax Sam Tomarchio at (tel/fax)510-527-2058, or write to the above address.

VIDEOS

Push Hands Basic Exercises (NY, 1996)

Five volumes, approx. 90 minutes each.

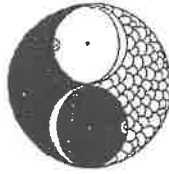
Cost: US\$175.00 (members)

US\$250.00 (nonmembers)

US\$ 4.00 shipping & handling

Make check payable to: New York Michuan Tai Chi and mail to: 25 Indian Rd., Suite 6F
New York, NY 10034

For more information call 212-567-3694.



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Occupation	Date of Birth	Gender M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>	
Referred by			

Are you an instructor of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan (as taught by Wang Yen-nien) Yes _____ No _____			
If your instructor is not Mr. Wang Yen-nien, Please describe their relationship:		If you have not studied Yang Family Hidden Tradition Taijiquan. Please specify what style of Taijiquan or Gong Fu you have studied.	
Your instructor's Name		School	
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*** Make Check Payable to: AWYMTA			
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Check Number: _____	Member Number _____	Life _____	
Cash: _____	Approved YMT instructor: _____		

WHAT IS AWYMTA?

WHAT IS YMT?

YMT, Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan, translated as Yang Family Hidden Tradition Taijiquan, is the original Taijiquan created by Yang Luchan in the early 19th century.

THE PURPOSE OF YMT

- To promote health, prolong the life span, calm the mind, and harmonize the spirit.
- To develop the art of self-defense.
- To provide the entry-level of the Great Dao.

THE PURPOSE OF AWYMTA

To transmit, perpetuate, promote, and further the growth of YMT in the United States; and to protect and respect the quality and integrity of YMT as taught and transmitted by Master Wang Yen-nien. All members may enjoy the benefits of practicing YMT in a friendly, positive and supportive environment created by AWYMTA, the first and only YMT association in the United States.

THE OBJECTIVES OF AWYMTA

- To provide YMT instructors for the public.
- To sponsor YMT seminars, gatherings, & demonstrations
- To publish a regular newsletter and the semi-annual *AWYMTA Journal* for our members.

MEMBER ELIGIBILITY

- Members are welcome from all over the world.
- Members need not be YMT practitioners.
- Members must support the purpose of AWYMTA.
- Members must pay the annual or lifetime membership fee.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

Regular Membership: \$35.00 per year
(January - December)
Life Membership: \$500.00

AMERICAN WEST YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJQUAN ASSOCIATION
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TEL/FAX (510) 527-2058