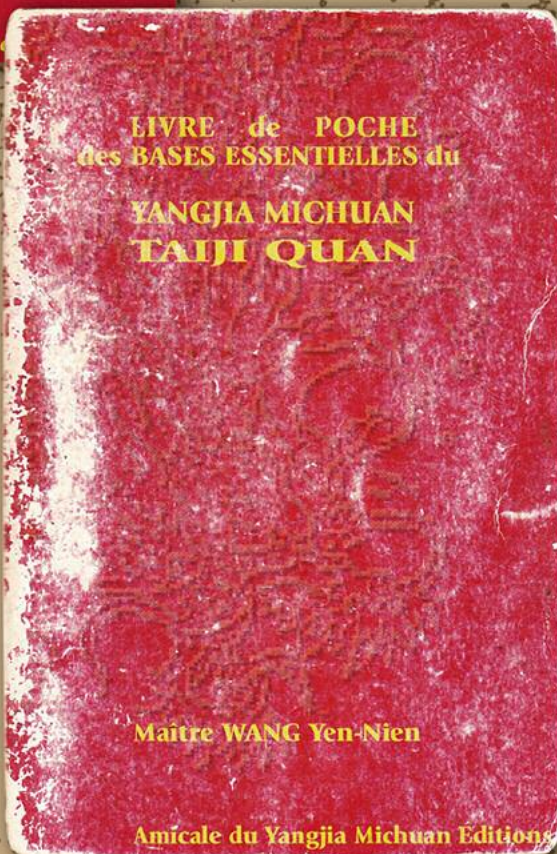
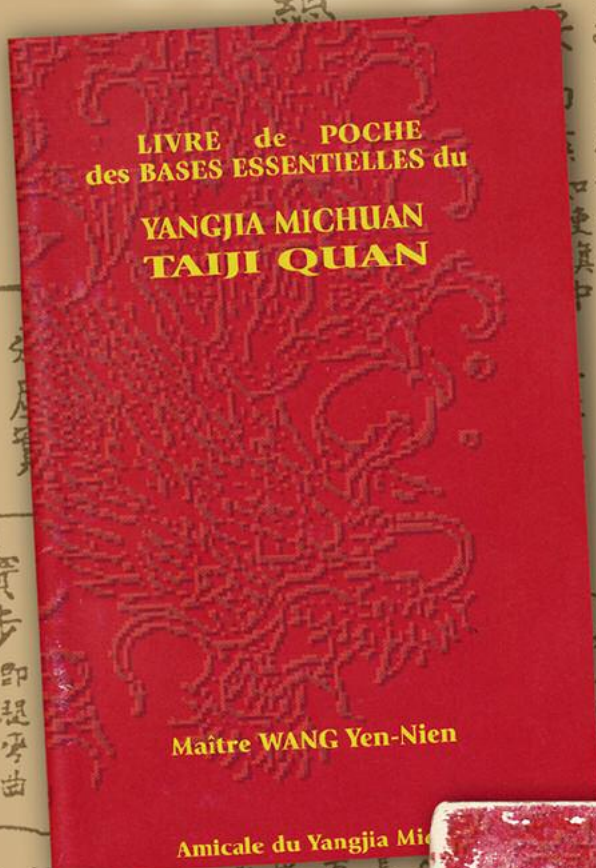


# Amicale

## Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan

September 2013 – No. 74

### Before



### After...

**Don't destroy your knees**

**The Little Red Book: new edition**

**The Snake who wanted to walk**

**Laoshi... next chapter**

楊家秘傳

氣以直養而無害  
 心為令如由主帥  
 週身宜輕靈  
 氣為旗如表示其  
 又氣如車輪  
 腰為一身樞  
 輕一切動作，因宜純以心意  
 便作一區，口無意故續示  
 靈如手由依，舉高，處處作  
 化之妙，心之真室。...

寶步 即起步曲而不伸直

長孝。若有一處不貫串則斷。斷則當舊力已盡，新力未  
 有凹凸處，無使有斷續處。一有一不動，則必至散亂，  
 散亂，蓋虛實變化皆由腰轉動，故曰「命意源頭在腰際」  
 無微不至，然皆自然，所謂「內外相合，上下相連」  
 如是，則於腰何部份，皆無偏重之虞。

如全身皆坐在右，則右腿為實，左腿為虛，坐左亦然  
 換輕靈，毫不費力，否則進步重滯，自立不穩。即當兩  
 天俱宜向前。如立時前脚夫向前，後脚夫宜向外稍



# FOREWORD

When I was still a young Taiji student, my first "Little Red Book" was, in fact, a big yellow booklet. It was published by the French Taiji Quan school in the 1990s. You could find every single name of the movements of the great form in Pinyin, Chinese and French. I still have this treasured book that allowed me quite soon to identify ideograms and key words of our form, and all the questions they suggest. I guess it was the most useful tool when I was learning and training.

Much more user-friendly, our school "Little Red Book" was enriched with classical texts and other teachings by our Master Wang Yen-nien. It is depicted on the front cover and in the middle of this new Bulletin, first of all because it has been published anew, then to enhance it, and finally just to remind us how invaluable it is for every Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan member. As if it were not enough, as often as possible, we have decided to include a section in our Bulletin whose heading would be "My Little Red Book" so that every reader of the booklet may share what they got from it or what is challenging in the content.

Well, if you have not yet tried, bury yourself in this book, not only in the classical texts, but also in the rolling out of the movements of your sequence. You may find some surprises. So, e-mail us! We are looking forward to hearing from you in the next months.

By the way, we shall have to agree: will we say "book" or "booklet"? It seems that even the authors/translators have not yet decided. To my mind, to avoid any confusion with another red booklet adorned with a squirrel<sup>(1)</sup>, I would prefer "Little Red Book" ...

Read and enjoy all the other articles: thanks to their diversity and the originality of their content, they prove once more that our practice is a source of inspiration and of infinite research for the members and that the Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan is truly a living language.

Françoise Cordaro

## S@m@m@r@y

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(1) The other red booklet is the symbol of the French savings bank.

# From the President's Desk

We are now entering the autumn equinox period, a time when yin and yang are equally balanced. Moreover we are at the dawn of our annual Meetings/Rencontres annuelles that will take place in Paris this year. The Meetings are organized by the following associations: Tai Chi Chuan de Paris and Taiji Yang Riv'Gauche.

Our new budget year starts on September 1st. Do not forget to pay your membership to the Amicale right now; otherwise, to the treasurer during the Meetings. (You'll find a form for l'Amicale and your subscription to the Bulletin in the Amicale entry of our Web site.)

I would like to thank the Board of Directors and the staff as well as the members of the different committees and commissions for all the work done this year; with a special mention to our new editor Françoise Cordaro and to our new layout artist, Michel Ségal. This is their second Bulletin. I do not forget the editorial board and the translation committee for publishing the Bulletin in French and English simultaneously.

I pay tribute to the Web site committee for the enrichment, which on a day-to-day basis adds events, special courses, the Bulletin itself, listings of the associations, etc.

The archive committee, too, has done a great job. Five associations obtained the disk with the Amicale archives. You should get in touch with our treasurer, Alain Coussedière, to get it.

As the stock had ran out, the "Little Red Book" has been newly published so that popular demand could be satisfied. The translation of a few movements of the form were corrected and bettered by Sabline Meztlé and Claudy Jeanmougin. A big thank you to both of them. Would it be the book will have the same warm welcome as the former editions. It is a great help for anyone practicing our style. Its small size allows having it near at hand at any time and thus to refer to it as often as possible.

Two new associations wish to subscribe. They will join the 85 associations that already subscribe, a sign of the vitality of Amicale.

We will tell you what is on the agenda for the general assembly in the October administrative note, which will take place during the Annual Meeting in Paris on Saturday the 9th of November at 6 p.m. You should plan to appoint the representative of your association for the votes. Should you wish to become a member of the Board of Directors in 2013–2014, send in your application.

As you are returning from the summer holiday after having enjoyed a summer course, I hope, I wish you a great regular practice.

*Jean-Michel Fraigneau*

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Siège social : c/o Jean-Michel Fraigneau, 2, allée du Roussillon, 78140 Vélizy-Villacoublay - France

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**Directeur de la publication :** Jean-Michel Fraigneau - **Rédactrice en chef :** Françoise Cordaro - **Rédaction :** Serge Dreyer, Claudy Jeanmougin, Mark A. Linett, Peter Clifford, Claude Eyrolles, Marie-Christine Moutault, Sabine Metzlé, Henri Mouthon, Françoise Cordaro, Jean-Luc Pérot, Yves Picard - **Comité de lecture :** Sonia Sladek, Jean-Luc Pérot, Christian Bernapel, Anne-Marie Guibaud, Jean-Michel Fraigneau - **Traduction :** Maud Polliet, Martine Larigauderie, Ronan Pellen, Leland Tracy, Monique Brodie, Gretchen MacLane, Simonette Verbrugge - **Corrections :** Anne-Marie Guibaud, Sonia Sladek, Françoise Cordaro, Simonette Verbrugge - **Mise en page :** Michel Ségal - **Couverture :** Michel Ségal - **Postage :** Yves Février.

# Characteristics of Yangjia Michuan Tai Chi Chuan

Jason Han

## Brief Introduction

Han Shun-cheng, while working in a foreign-trading company during the 1980s, exhaustive work had caused him abnormal tiredness and stomach illness – gastric and duodenal ulcer. Taking many stomach medicine on a daily basis was real painful for him. This motivated him to study Tai Chi in Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall in Taipei. Surprisingly, in just two months period, he has fully recovered without any further medical help. Since then he has been addicted to Tai Chi.

In June 1983, a friend had introduced him to study the Yang style Tai Chi under Mater Wang. He becomes the fifth generation of Yang I Tai Chi esoteric.

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1994, with Master Wang's approval, he studied under Jin Dan Dao of Sian Chung Jinshan Group (仙宗金山派金丹道), and named "tian xiang zi", formally became the Jinshan (金山派), sixth generation elite troops decendent.

On November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1995, the Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association was established per Master Wang's directive. On

April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008, the Association has officially named as the "Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association".

Mr. Han has been following Master Wang in Taipei since 1983 to practice perfect fist frame and pushing hands, as well as meditation.

This Association is an organization where health workshops are held regularly for coaches and referees in Tai Chi, pushing hands, Tai Chi sword/fan, inner breathing method, etc.

The Association welcomes all friends and enthusiasts to participate in discussion of delay aging, activating cells of the body and enhancing immune system function for good health and longevity. We especially welcome overseas friends to organising outreach activities to exchange learning experiences.

Mr. Han currently is a managing committee member of the Yang family Tai Chi Association of the ROC, also serves as the Secretary General of the Worldwide Alliance of "Tai Chi Association of the ROC", responsible for global Tai Chi organizations liaison work.

*Good Day, my dear friends,  
I am so glad to know all of you, my dear  
brothers, through Miss Noella Kasai  
and hope that we can communicate  
with each other at any time. I do wish  
that we can exchange what we have  
learned from Tai Chi Chuan in near future.*

## 1. Extended open and close postures:

The postures consist of high, low, and lowest. The rotations consist of 45 degree, 90 degree, 180 degree, and up to 360 degree rotations. It is aimed to strengthen the muscle, bones and tendons, also to firm the stability in a variety of situations, and coordination of limbs of the body for the beginners. After practice to a certain level, it turns into smaller postures, eventually became an invisible internal changes, and reaching the highest level of Yang Tai Chi.

## 2. Solid stance:

The entire movements are physically centered at the back leg. When under attack, you must focus your move to the front leg, and take follow up action to move the back leg to the inside of the front leg. In case of sudden change, it provides a more flexible posture and therefore cannot be easily stunned by the attacker.

## 3. Distinctive contrasts in Firm vs Slack stance:

Always maintain one firm leg, and one slack leg. The firm leg must hold solid footing, to bear a minimum of 70% total body weight; while the slack leg with heel slightly raised, holds the remaining 30% body weighing. Thus, always maintain solid hand - foot coordination. For example, with firm right leg, the right hand must be relaxed to enhance the mind-body coordination.

## 4. Lower back and leg flexibility:

For each movement, the focus is on the waist and legs coordination for consistent rotations. Whether it is forward, backward, flash, avoidance, rise, fall, grab, lift, mitigate, and expand actions, is always initiated through the lumbar and leg.

## 5. Unpredictable movements:

Every moves and formulas always be offensive with changeability, with one or more hidden follow up options to keep opponent off guard.

## 6. Ready mode:

Before the attack, always in slightly sit position to make waist, chest to bear and store potentials, then to make fast kick with full body stretch.

## 7. Outbursts power from pubic region:

Utilizing breathing exercise in practicing martial art, one is poised to inhale during preparation, and exhale when start to attack. Thus, total outburst power could be released.



### Sabine Metzlé

#### 1. In which circumstances did you meet Laoshi for the first time?

**Sabine.** I met him in France during the summer 1981. He was invited by Serge Dreyer, my teacher at that time. Two month after, I was off to live in Taiwan.

#### 2. Did you go to Taiwan for taiji or something else?

**Sabine.** In 1979, I was studying Chinese at the Langues Ô University, this is how I started Taiji Quan. After two years of language study and Taichi Quan practice, I decided to go to Taiwan to dedicate more time practicing Taiji Quan, which also allowed me to keep studying chinese.

#### 3. How long did you study with Laoshi?

**Sabine.** I stayed in Taiwan for ten years, from 1981 to 1991, to study Taiji Quan with Laoshi. Then, since I came back to live in France, I have been going there nearly every year.

#### 4. Can you give us the name of other Westerners you met during any of your stays?

**Sabine.** The list is too long, I am not sure I can remember all the names. Between those who stayed briefly in Taiwan and those who stayed for several years, I saw so many people! In a word, I would say I met nearly all the

people whose pictures are at the end of Laoshi's book. But I would add to this list the names of people I often met during my stay and, some of which are now good friends –Caroline Althaus, Joël Franc, Gérald Moulin, Gina Landa, Patrick Louzon, Sharya, Hélène...

#### 5. Which is the best moment you remember in the exchanges with Laoshi?

**Sabine.** Those moments were numerous over ten years. All the moments of practice together such as Tuishou, moments of complicity, exchanges and laughter when drinking a good tea or meal at his home or a restaurant, moments of relaxation between lessons or workshops abroad. There are also more solemn moments like the Baishi or Tianming ceremony for example...

I remember a scene that really moved me – there are others of course, but this one comes back to mind:

We are at the seaside with Laoshi, somewhere in England with Vioune and Luc Defago, Julia Fairchild, Peter Clifford and myself, and we are walking along. Suddenly Laoshi stops and observes, looking quite interested, as an English family sitting on the grass is trying to fix a broken kite. Laoshi approaches, says a few words in Chinese that Julia translates, takes the kite handed over by one of the children, has a good look at it then moves it around. After a while, under the people's astonished look, he unrolls the rope to make it fly and, by magic, the kite takes off, Laoshi smiles and everybody claps.

While Laoshi was fixing the kite, I was fascinated to see him so self-absorbed. It was as though he was reuniting with childhood gestures. As the children were playing with the kite back again, we set off again peacefully on our stroll...

#### 6. Where and when did you start teaching Taiji Quan?

**Sabine.** My first experience was as an assistant of Laoshi in Taiwan, France and abroad. Back for good in France and getting to know people, I was fortunate to give taiji lessons to the Ta Kwon do association of Versailles which I left several years later in order to create, with Anne-Marie Guibaud, the "club de taichi chuan de Versailles". I started in Versailles and in Paris too in a grammar school where I was a secretary in the management and where I could use the gym room to teach taiji to my colleagues. Several month later, solicited by Jean Isnard, funder and chairman of the association of taiji chuan of Paris at that time, I started teaching in this association.



## 7. Did you practice with another master?

**Sabine.** Yes, tuishou only. When laoshi fell ill and couldn't teach anymore, I started meeting with a group of tuishou in a park near the Taipei's station.

Manuel Solnon introduced me to this group. I was immediately seduced by their open-mindedness, their warmth, and how they share and research. Their tuishou is supple and relaxed but tonic, with no brutality but efficient and powerful. Some have a very good level, they are called "shixiong" (older disciples in the practice). They are the "referents" of the group, the people you turn to when you need advice or explanations. I learned with them how to practice concretely for the internal force to emerge in my push, I found there a continuity with Laoshi's teaching who kept repeating in the tuishou lessons: "fangsong": "let go"; "yong yi, yong qi, bu yong li": "practice with your intention and your qi, not with force". But I tend to think that his method did not allow us to succeed because it is obvious that among Laoshi's students, especially in Taiwan, many of them still practice a very tough tuishou.

I finally felt what the letting go meant in tuishou and I understood why this was essential and fundamental to absorb and transform the effortless pushes and free the energy (fajin) with power.

This group has Zhang Xianqi for master, a very old man now, who was Huang Xinxian's student, a master known for his impressive fajin, a Zheng Manqing's disciple himself.

Today, practising tuishou motivates my trips to Taiwan.

## 8. In Laoshi teaching, tell us what seems the most important to you?

**Sabine.** This is what I've retained from Laoshi's teaching and it seems essential to me:

Being peaceful and relaxed and use the yi (intention) in the practice are the fundamental conditions to truly get into internal work.

Rigour in the practice and importance of precision in the movement –no parts of the body, even the tiniest one, is left out– it is not going into excessive detail but committing all your attention and awareness into your action while always staying in connection with the founding principles of taiji quan. The posture and gestures are fluid and powerful because they have been thought and worked through, and that everything is well in its place like an orchestra of which each instrument are in tune with the others in order to make music spring up.

Further more at a time where practitioners tend to disperse themselves in various technics rather than deepen what they believe to know, it's important to say that you shouldn't hesitate to tirelessly repeat some exercises, even systematically. Having been through that with Laoshi, I showed an interest in it: physical exercise, when practiced thousands of times, apart from its educative aspect, becomes a support for a work on yourself and allows to get inside yourself more easily in relation to the environment, to focus on yourself, take roots, to relax and reach more subtle level of perceptions.

Through taiji quan, Laoshi passed down a way of life, a way to perceive myself in relation to the others, the environment and to lead my life. ☺

## QUESTIONS/ANSWERS



### Hervé Marest

#### 1. Under which circumstances did you meet Laoshi for the first time?

**Hervé.** I met Laoshi for the first time in Spring 1987 in Strasbourg. Before the workshop, Claudy and I went to visit him in the apartment where he was staying. Seeing him first, I remember that I smiled as I rarely did in my whole life. He smiled too and we shook hands. And then? could we say cynically. But right, this was an important moment for me. I had been practicing Taiji Quan for only a few months and had no preconceived idea about him. I had no expectations about "the grand master". My smile was coming from within. It was like a big opening.

The next day, I saw him again for the workshop and that was quite different. Before the class, in front of the other students, Laoshi came to me smiling, obviously to exchange a few words. My whole body started to shrink and I turned my eyes away for a moment. Then Mr Wang went another way. Was it the context of the workshop? I have can't explain why I felt so shy. It was like a big closing.

I also remember that during the workshop, the point between my eyes started to beat like a heart. It was not something induced or autosuggestion. At that time I was practicing Taiji Quan in an external way and I was not particularly interesten in esotericism or energetical techniques.

## 2. Did you go to Taiwan for Taiji or for another reason?

**Hervé.** I went to Taiwan only for Taiji Quan but I visited Taipei (and also Hong Kong on a stop over).

## 3. How long did you study with Laoshi?

**Hervé.** I went to Taiwan in Spring 1988 for one month and in Summer 1991 for three weeks. On these occasions I was able to work with Laoshi at least 4 hours a day. I also participated in roughly 10 workshop in Europe until 1999. I figured out that this was equal to four years of practice twice a week in a French Association.

Just to be precise.

## 4. Can you give the name of other Western students you met while you were there?

**Hervé.** During my first stay in 1988, I came to take the regular classes of Laoshi in Taipei. From the airport I took a taxi to the Daoguan. I greeted Mr Wang and, since I don't speak Chinese, it was Pia Lau who did the translation for me. Pia is German and was living in Taipei at that time. She helped me to find a cheap place to stay and guided my first steps in this environment that was completely strange to me. We became friends and I remember that we laughed a lot together. Pia now lives in Spain.

Then I met Sabine Metzlé with whom I also became friendly. Sabine showed me around the city and the surroundings. I am also very grateful to her.

I remember a magical place: hot baths in the open air in the mountains close to Taipei. They were in the middle of the jungle, above the mist and we could hear the calls of the black eagles...

Otherwise there were very few Westerners at that time and I don't remember much of the other persons (I apologize for the ones I forgot) apart from Julia Fairchild who also followed the classes. I thought that she was very nice but we didn't have the opportunity to get to know each other.

When I came for the second time in 1991, it was for an international workshop for teachers, on the applications of the form (yongfa). It was taking place in a college in Yushi, in the mountains in the center of Taiwan. It was more airy than in Taipei where we were suffocating. I remember the geckos on the walls of the room and a cobra killed by the gardener. We ate vegetarian meals and practiced for 8 hours a day. At the end we were quite fit.

It was a good opportunity to know more about the European teachers and to meet American and Australian teachers too. I remember Scott Rodell, Joe Morris (who recently died), David Mac Lean, George Lin I think that he was living in the States at the time), Robert Politzer, Mark Linnett, Ronald and Mireille Wenzel, etc. We were about 40 people. It is difficult to name everyone.

## 5. In your contacts with Laoshi, which is the best moment that you remember?

**Hervé.** With Laoshi there have been good moments and important moments.

The happiest moment has been shared with others. It was in Cluny in 1989. Mr Wang had gathered his oldest students in Europe in order to create the College of Teachers. I replaced Claudy who's father had just passed away. Meetings followed meetings in order to set up the idea of the College and Laoshi made us work on the second Duan and the pole.

There has been a magical moment during a meal in a restaurant where I just felt part of a happy family. And this despite the different personalities or the tensions that occurred. I experienced many other pleasant meals with Mr Wang but this one was really nice, a small happy event to mark with a white stone. There were: Julia Fairchild, Sabine Metzlé, Christian Bernapel, Annick Blard, Maryline Chanaud, Henri Mouthon and his daughter, Luc Defago, Jean Pai and Peter Clifford.

I want to tell them that I keep precious in my heart this moment shared with them.

And then, there has been an important moment.

During my first stay in 1988, Sabine took me to the home of Laoshi.



Diner with Master Wang at Cluny in 1989, at the founding of the Collège Européen des Enseignants du YMT.

I remember that we had first been to visit a Chinese pupil who had offered us quite a few glasses of rice wine. I was slightly drunk and Sabine was fearing that I wouldn't behave properly with Laoshi. I was boasting a little and it worried her.

Laoshi greeted us. I paid for my classes and we discussed trivial things. The apartment was quite small from what I could see. I remember a beautiful rack of weapons with a spear, a halberd, etc. which made me envious. Birds from a cage were flying freely and one came to sit on Mr Wang's hand. A moment of poetry.

But I left the apartment quite disappointed by the lack of interest of our conversations. Maybe I was expecting too much. I don't know. I shook hands with Laoshi and went down the stairs heavy hearted. When I was down I turned around and Laoshi was on the landing. And there, something inexplicable happened, something extraordinary which I will not describe, I'm sorry, because I have a visceral ban on doing so.

Until then I was indeed a passionate practitioner but I could have stopped practicing Taiji Quan any time. After that, my destiny was sealed.

## 6. Where and when did you start teaching taijiquan?

**Hervé.** I started teaching Taiji Quan in Montreuil-Juigné next to Angers at the end of 1988. It could probably be at my teacher's Claudy's demand. I say "probably" because I remember that my companion of the time was also insisting. My memories are not clear on this subject. In any case I went there backwards as I didn't feel ready for it nor motivated. Even though I knew most of the movements, I had very little experience of the practice (barely two years) and even less teaching methods.

I did what I could but quickly liked the challenge. I made a lot of mistakes but I was honest with my pupils and told them what I was missing. I continued to take classes for myself, passed my official exam of sports teacher, went studying in the *Ecole Française de Taiji Quan* and followed Mr Wang's workshops.

In the first years I also went around my region, Maine-et-Loire, to teach and introduce Taiji Quan. This period has been a great experience where I had to surpass myself many times. First in contacting people to organize classes and demonstrations (I was very timid). Then, because I quit my "coppersmith" to try to live only from Taiji Quan. That was very difficult, especially at that time, roaming around the countryside.

Now I teach in Saumur, Chemillé and Vihiers.

## 7. Have you practiced with another master?

**Hervé.** I learned the bases and the ability to question myself and deepen my practice with "Mr" Claudy Jeanmougin. I learned the third duan with "Mr" Serge Dreyer.

I am conscious that the question is more geared towards an Asian person representing a school and more or less capable of throwing his opponents to a distance. I am also conscious that the two persons mentioned are going to tell me "What are you doing to us, there?"

I think that one has to get away from this vision of a master, almost a guru, who is only the reflection of our thrive for power. You can answer to me that I was inclined to mythicize Mr Wang with what I mentioned earlier. I agree, but it is not my intent. I want to say that I also had very important moments with Claudy and Serge. But whether Mr Wang, Mr Jeanmougin or Mr Dreyer, I could also see them in their fragility and their weaknesses: wonderful idiots who pace the Way just like all of us. I understand that it can seem obscure to some but I can

For me a master is worth of respect but not devotion. A master has a certain expertise in his discipline, but this is not the most important. What matters most is the deep understanding of what he does and the conviction of being on the Path, to feel the Path, essential qualities to be able to transmit, even before teaching methods.

After that, it is a question of recognition. It is the others who recognize that someone is capable and worthy. Even with their well known defaults, I admit today that Mr Dreyer and Mr Jeanmougin are capable and worthy. Others will do the same –or not. It is not very important anyhow. I am not flattering them or offering them a present. I recognize, that's all.

There are other teachers that I am willing to recognize too. I will do so in other circumstances.

## 8. In Laoshi's teaching, what seems for you the most important?

**Hervé.** What impressed me most in Laoshi's teaching was his ability to address everyone without missing anyone, no matter his/her level. I understand how difficult this is when I teach. He was exceptional.

Mr Wang attempted to show things with great precision but without showing too much how to get there. If you watched and listened carefully, he gave a lot of indications that were accessible to all levels and were real keys to get further.

I understand this even more now when I watch the videos of the archives of the Amicale, for exemple. I cannot understand how these archives are not attracting more people. For the price of a hard disk, you can have an invaluable treasure that any practitioner should like to possess. I can only advise to study them if you want to discover the secrets of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan. ☐



## QUESTIONS/ANSWERS



### Christian Bernapel

The questions submitted to me by the editorial team of the *Bulletin de l'Amicale* led me to think about the influence a meeting with such a singular character as Master Wang Yen-nien can have. Through my experience, I thought it might be interesting to try to tell practitioners of our style who couldn't meet him, what a bond with such a man represents.

As I had a settled familial and professional life and experience practicing and teaching Japanese martial arts, I wondered why and how he was able to take this place in my life's path and personal research. Master Wang is not physically here anymore, what is left of a quarter of a century of exchanges, and how does it show in our own personality and way of teaching?

Master Wang possessed a true tradition from the ancient China as well as a way of being tinged with force and natural. He was a man who chose an ordinary life on the whole, without retiring from it, thus showing that, thanks to the everyday routine, the events, the emotions, a personality which stands out can forge itself. Shaped by the meeting with his master(s) as well as a lifetime pervaded with the exceptionally intense cultural and historical context of that time (questioning of traditional values, Sino-Japanese war, premises of the cultural revolution...). In this context of deep transformation, he had the subtle intelligence to set a bridge between the Orient he came from and the Occident he encountered, while integrating both cultures in a common language. This could be done thanks to the rare qualities developed during the events of his life. In my teaching and everyday acts I often consider the great chance of having been able to benefit from this relationship, because deep down, it allowed me to understand what represents, in a lifetime, the ability to adapt oneself without losing one's identity, so the change remains acceptable and can integrate itself deep down.

Within one's own story, pervaded with one's education and the events that affected one's life, there is "something" intangible that doesn't vanish with time nor with changes, however important, even if some aspects remain untranslatable.

From all that and within the framework we are interested in, two representative aspects came up:

The first one has to do with the relationship each of us may have established with Master Wang. It is characterized especially in the way one called him which summed up what he represented and what one was.

The second one has to do with the very nature of his teachings, in the "public" part of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan and in the more confidential one of the Gold Mountain School of Neigong, which itself has a public part and a "private" "initiation".

Both aspects concern the tryptic needed for successful teaching: the pertinence of the transmitted material, the mastery of who transmits it and the abilities and dispositions of who learns and becomes familiar with it. Master Wang relied on both a demanding and respectful framework woven between him and the students and, the matter specific to Taiji and Neigong for those who were sensitive to it. This allowed an adaptation to each one's abilities of perception, from the mere technical learning to the possibility of a tool for one's personal evolution. This may be the deep meaning of the notion of "Song" that what so dear to him and to which he often referred. What distinguished him from the mere expert certainly lied in that. That may be that which sometimes enables us to "open the door"!

Mr Wang, Lao Shi, Maître Wang, Master Wang Yen-nien, Master Wang, Wang Lao shi, Wang Yen-nien, Professor..., so many names heavy with meaning and sometimes without it! Before 1981, I had already met many masters who were called or asked to be called this way. *This one* was different: the ability to transmit in such a way that was likely to influence the course of your life while letting you free with your choices!

When I met Master Wang, I used to call him "Mr Wang" because it was agreed with the elders and close relations of that time to call him that way! This suited me, for the denomination "Mr" brought some humanity to the character that rather impressed us, and the word "Master" seemed outrageous, even pompous, even though it flattered the privilege to mix with a master and say so! It was also agreed to call him "Lao Shi" (Wang Lao Shi for the Anglo-Saxons) which means "professor", "old professor" or rather "respected professor".

## Eight questions, eight answers...

We sometimes called him differently when talking to him directly or talking about him to someone else. As western people, we did not know much to what this descriptive referred to in the context of the Chinese culture, even though, in some aspects, we may get close to it. The descriptive “Laoshi” in its literal translation show a certain form of respect toward one’s professor. What did we relate to it: a deep respect, the respect to the professor, a more deferent connotation to the master or a hidden validation of ourselves? The border between these different states is fine... This subtle ambiguity can be found in our occidental culture. The artistic areas such as music, dance or painting, in which the word “master” is widely used, as the descriptive professor is rather to be found in scientific or teaching field. This thought brings us back to the time of the beginnings and, since then, time has shaped the minds. The master has gone to the Pantheon of the Immortals and maybe it is time to deepen a reflection about the deep meaning of this aspect?

As far as I am concerned, I have been gradually able to notice, through the meeting of people, events and time, that the term “master” gradually imposed itself, nearly against my will. Maybe a profound recognition for the man was taking place, discreetly, deep down, like a firm conviction.

“Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan” is the brand, the soul of our practice, of our school, like a trans-generational “silk thread” which links us to its origin, its creator. Even if there are uncertainties about it! Master Wang often referred to it as to his own master: Zhang Qin Lin. To practice our school in its whole, reveals in the depth of our body and mind, the awareness of its pertinence. It is called Michuan! What can “secret” mean: hidden, dissimulated or unrevealed, when nothing apparently isn’t, except for a conscientious practice? A secret teaching remains as such, for those who practice it without the right spirit cannot understand it. Can’t we make our own what mind and heart can only grasp? This aspect deserves to be deepened because it is closely linked to the aspects brought by Neigong, the other discipline transmitted by Master Wang in counterpoint of Taiji. I have great respect for the name of our school, like a mysterious and precious pearl!

This being said, here are several answers to the questions asked!

Strasbourg, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2013

Christian Bernapel - Jiang Cheng-Zhen



## 1. In which circumstances did you meet Laoshi for the first time?

**Christian.** I discovered Taiji quan of Yangjia Michuan the year before meeting Master Wang, thanks to a demonstration by Charles Li (Zheng-Yi Li) at the first festival of martial arts organized in 1980 in Strasbourg (France) by Roland Habersetzer with whom I studied and taught karate within his school, the *Centre de Recherche Budo*, for some fifteen years.

The following year, on November 16 and 17, 1981, Master Wang came to Strasbourg for his first trip to Europe, invited by Roland Habersetzer in conjunction with Serge Dreyer, Charles Li and Georges Charles. In the company of Charles Li, Serge Dreyer and late Jean Paï, he gave a workshop in which we discovered the first two sequences of the thirteen postures (Shi San Shi) and the basic exercises of Yangjia Michuan Taiji quan. He presented the Yangjia Michuan Taiji quan with a memorable demonstration in the prestigious salons of the Aubette in Strasbourg.

Mr Habersetzer was already well known for his eclecticism and his numerous publications on Japanese martial arts. Thanks to him, we could mix with famous masters from the ancient and new Japanese tradition

such as Masters Ogura, Otsuka, Matayoshi, Togushi, Kasé, Mochizuki, Chinen..., who enabled us to widen our view and apprehend the distance between an accomplished master and a mere technical expert.

A different dimension, compared to those personalities from Japan we had met so far, issued from Master Wang. I wrote about this meeting in a small article in the Martial Arts magazine *Le Ronin*, published by Mr. Habersetzer, in these terms: “we will do our best to remember these exercises to relax the waist, to take roots, to work the breathing [...]. That air of wise bonhomie, that round belly and that limpid gaze, that ease in the movements looking so simple, will remain the image of taiji quan he embodied so well [...]. A truth one keeps deep down because it was not given but awoken, [...] will be left from this immutable meeting.” Many articles Serge Dreyer and practitioners of that time wrote, as well as a synoptic of the thirteen postures, put in images by Mr Habersetzer with the skill is known for, left a mark in *Le Ronin* <sup>(1)</sup>.

(1) These articles, photos, drawings are available to anyone curious of History in my archives. I wrote about that period in a commemorative document for the twentieth anniversary of the Amicale.

At that time, I did not suspect the influence that meeting would have on my progression, in martial arts as well as in the way of Tao, but on my life too and its decisions.

## 2. Have you been to Taiwan for Taiji or something else?

**Christian.** I went to Taiwan for the first time in December 1986, when Master Wang, then chairman of the Taiwanese Federation informed us about taking part in an international competition of Tui Shou. I had also decided to take this trip to discover the practice and teaching of master Wang's Taijiquan in its true context and learn about the Taiwan

Chinese and pluricultural culture I only knew through my readings. Some months before, one of my first students of Taijiquan at INPACT, Maria de Oliveira, had settled in Taiwan to directly study with Master Wang. Her welcoming helped me quickly get in touch with the small occidental world of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan and benefit from overtures towards the Chinese universe more difficult to apprehend.

I will always keep in mind my arrival, in the evening, in the hot and wet atmosphere of Taipei following an over 20-hour-trip, suddenly thrown from my occidental professional and familial world smoothly, into the Taiwanese universe, unusual, colorful, odorous, rustling, like on a different planet... After my local Chinese meal, we quickly went to the *Daogan* to the evening practice. That was a strange pad made of sheet metal on the top of a 10 store-building accessible by a narrow lift. We arrived early, the room was empty and silent, covered with green mats both on floor and walls, with a little bluish-green lighting. A poster of Master Wang surrounded by Chinese ideograms, mysterious to me, hung prominently, indicated the precedence of the place. Little by little, the students arrived with warm words of welcoming each time. I was able to meet for the first time my colleagues from the USA: Scott Rodell, Mike Basdavanos, Robert Politzer, David Mac Call..., and from France: Sabine Metzlé, Jean Pai, Pia Lau... I discovered the first line of Chinese from Taiwan and at last Master Wang arrived with his great smile and welcomed me. The trip plus disorientation gave me jelly knees, and following an intense and passionate briefing in Chinese by one of the senior students about the



competitive rules, my first partner designated by Laoshi was ... Sabine Metzlé who taught me a memorable tuishou session under Master Wang's attentive but mocking look. Thanks to Serge Dreyer who lived in Taichung with his wife Sun ti, this first trip gave me the opportunity to discover rare moments in parks early morning or encounter after encounter, local Shaman rites taking place in typical villages and temples. Ancient winds were still blowing there.

Thanks to Maria, I was able to discover Taipei's life by night and day in the quietness of the parks, the night markets, the streets and the frantic life of the town. At dawn, at 5 in the morning (there always was

nearly an hour bus and no underground then), we were off to join the morning practice at Yuan Shan near the Grand Hotel and in the evening the Tuishou lesson would often go on until 1 o'clock in the morning in greasy spoons smelling of odorant soups. Tiredness would never affect us!

I went back to Taiwan several times to practice with Master Wang, within time-limited stays. There was the teachers College workshop in Yushi in 1991 when I met Georges Li (Lin Jin tai) during this unique trip through the mountains of tea trees to pay tribute to a charitable Buddhist monk.

I was then the College's secretary with the mission to entertain the group of "veterans" from Cluny to elaborate the terms of the chart. This was approved the last evening of the workshop on the occasion of a memorable party in the open air, around a bonfire under the moon and the silhouettes of the misty Chinese mountains...

## 3. How long did you study with Laoshi?

**Christian.** Shortly after meeting Master Wang in Strasbourg in 1981, I started studying Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan with Charles Li (Zheng-yi Li) who taught me the basics, and then some. At the time he was teaching at the *Nikolaïté de Chaillot* near the Guimet Museum not far from the *Arc de Triomphe* in Paris. In 1983, I created INPACT (l'Institut de Pratique des Arts Chinois Traditionnels) to teach Taijiquan and the internal boxing styles I had learned from Georges Charles and those Chinese experts I met in Paris.

In 1986, starting with a workshop organized in Annecy by Henri Mouton and then one in Cluny organized by Annick Blard; I found what I needed to begin perfecting these skills. Master Wang taught the martial applications of the form and the basics of Tui shou, which enabled me to combine my experience as a karateka and the internal techniques, which Charles Li had taught me. I also was able to have access to the videos we had made because Henri's camera stopped working.

I can't say that I was a very close student of Master Wang's. For professional and personal reasons, I was never able to spend more than a few weeks at a time in Taiwan. I did attend a number of workshops in France, Europe and in the US, where Master Wang taught Taijiquan and Neigong. I invited him to Alsace for three workshops, the first meeting of the College and the first Yangjia Michuan festival. These workshops were an incredibly condensed presentation of technique, offering the equivalent of a much longer period of study in Taiwan. Master Wang shared the quintessence of his knowledge in a short period of time, with the generosity and pertinence for which he is known. He did not water down his teaching as other Taiwanese teachers in Europe often did. He offered up everything he knew so that students could develop their *Gong Fu* at their own speed and level. His goal seemed to be to create the best environment in which the seeds he had so generously planted could grow, so that each person could improve the level of his or her practice.

Each time, Master Wang allowed us to film and record him. When I asked him how I could use these documents, he always answered. "Do what you want, it's up to you, but you can share them with the people who participated in the workshop." I carefully followed his advice.

This material was a precious resource for understanding the movements and their applications. It was

a precious tool that allowed the publication of my book on the 13 postures, authorized by Master Wang during the 1986 workshop in Annecy. These audiovisual documents provided a precise record of his teaching, making it possible by referring back to them in the months and years that followed, to more fully understand and integrate the considerable quantity of information he had passed on to us. These documents, along with those available through the *Amicale* are an inexhaustible source of clarification and inspiration.

#### 4. Could you tell us about the other westerners you encountered during your visits to Taiwan?

**Christian.** I met a lot of teachers and students during workshops and competitions held in Taiwan. I think I met most western practitioners still active after 1986, from every continent. Of course, the relationship was different with each person, but on these occasions there was a warmth shared by all, happy to be together to benefit from Master Wang's teaching and his presence. I appreciated the authenticity and the richness of these meetings.

In Taiwan, I met Peter Clifford, Pia Lau, Sabine Metzlé, Scott Rodell, Michael Basdavanos, Robert Politzer, Cathy Wu, Kennet Leonard, Joe Morris, David Mac Cale, Don Cole, Maureen Poole, George Lin, Caroline Althaus... I had already met most of the French people living in Taiwan during the first French workshops in Annecy et Cluny and then in Strasbourg, Paris, Angers and in the US: Henri Mouthon, Luc and Vioune Defago, Annick Blard, Bernard Réot, Maryline Chanaud, Maryse Fourgeaud, Julia Fairchild, Mark Linnet, Jean Pai, Frank Bealet, Philippe Danel, Michel Douiller, Jean-Luc Ladurée.



This was a period of great enthusiasm, rich in meetings and exchanges. We were always happy to be gathered together around the smiling Master Wang. He knew how to bring us together and move us all in the same direction; our minds focused on learning and appreciating the happiness that being with him brought us. It was truly an exceptional time in which our hearts found joy in learning, in respect and tranquility. Master Wang's benevolent presence made this shared state of grace possible. Today we can see how important his presence and his unique way of doing things really was.

## 5. What was the best moment you can remember during the time you spent with *Laoshi*?

**Christian.** I couldn't choose one moment. There were so many great moments of both technical and personal discovery. The most intense moments were not always the easiest, but they often came along with important realizations on both a technical and human level. The workshops we hosted were particularly intense; here are a few of the most touching moments:

The first meeting in Strasbourg when Master Wang gave me my Chinese name, and my last visits to see him towards the end of his life, when he wished I had brought him some Alsatian pizza (*flamenkuche*), and gently scolded me for not coming to see him more often and for not learning how to speak Chinese so we could communicate more easily and understand each other better.

And there was that dinner at my house where we tasted Alsatian schnapps and other spirits. A good number of French people were amazed that he was able to distinguish between spirits distilled from stone fruits and spirits made from others fruits. There were other powerful moments, in Cluny in 1989 when the college was founded, a lesson in collective humility which you don't see every day. Each of us had to demonstrate a passage from our form in front of our peers, with Master Wang providing corrections. Whew!

The end of the Yushi workshop in 1991, around the fire, dancing to rock and roll under the stars with Marilyne Chanaud, sharing our songs. Or, in the sticky fog of the early morning, Master Wang inspecting, face to face, each of the 50 participants in the horse stance. Finally proclaiming with authority "Someone is missing and I know who it is!" We knew who it was too, but I won't spill the beans.

And that meal in Mulhouse during which Master Wang told me that back in the days it was considered polite to wait until one's master had passed away before publishing a book.

The Neigong initiation workshops with Master Wang so impressive, wrapped in Taoist robes from another epoch.

## 6. Where and when did you start teaching Taijiquan?

**Christian.** I started teaching the basics of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan in 1982 at Roland Habersetzer's Budo research center. In 1983, I stopped practicing

Karate, to concentrate on teaching Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan. In the fall of that year in Strasbourg, I created INPACT (l'Institut de Pratique des Arts Chinois Traditionnels) and completely stopped practicing Karate. This was a personal choice, in part to avoid offending my teacher at the time, Mr. Habersetzer. Patrick Gstyr, and Jean-Thierry Tchoumou were among the founding members.



I started teaching the 13 postures, the basic exercises along with Chinese boxing techniques such as *Hung Gar*, *Hosing I Quan*, *Tang Lang* and so called Taoist gymnastics (*Dao Yin Fa*), which I had studied with Georges Charles and other Chinese experts at the end of the 1970's. From 1982 to 1986, Charles Li gave regular workshops in Strasbourg, passing along the basics of the style with his usual generosity and enthusiasm. Teaching Taijiquan quickly became a priority for me.

The most remarkable people who I initiated into Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan during the 1980's were: Patrick Gstyr, José Rodriguez, Christian Delhomme, Jean-Thierry and Pascal Tchoumou, Jean-Claude Trap, François Schosseler, Maria de Oliveira, Lili Bloch-Ramstein, Sabine Hambarek, Chantal Bousquet, Cathy Brombacher, Myriam Vassal, Pierre Haegy, Jean Dobel Ober, Olivier Hebting, Christophe Lephay, Bertrand Becker, Guy Koenig, Jean-Marc and Myriam Wendling, Richard Lacroix and more recently Frédéric Plewniak, Yves Martin, Alphonse Medina, Jean-Paul Lutz, Elisabeth-Marie Mertz, Svetlana Nedelkina...

## 7. Have you studied with any other Masters?

**Christian.** Before meeting Master Wang, I studied and taught *Wado Ryu* karate for over 15 years. Thanks to my teacher Roland Habersetzer, I was able to practice with a number of Japanese masters, most notably

Hiroo Mochizuki who taught *Wado Ryu*, a karate style which distinguished itself from other forms of karate by the lightness of the forward foot and a posture seated on the rear leg (*neiko ashi*). This style is based on certain principles which are similar to Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan, particularly in the mobility made possible by the lightness of the forward foot. I had the good fortune to study with this young master during workshops in Strasbourg and during my professional visits to Paris. This experience with an external martial art allowed me to better understand the principles of our style and to avoid the more caricatural aspects that have appeared over the years.

There is no point in having too many irons in the fire. If I have correctly understood, Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan offers all of the elements necessary for developing a complete practice of body and mind. Even if I have experimented with other types of internal martial arts, with Tui shou and with combat, I have never studied with a master of Taijiquan other than Master Wang Yen-nien. There is so much to learn in Yangjia Michuan and Neigong that one lifetime is not enough to master all of their dimensions.

It is nevertheless useful to have a look at other styles and masters, whether famous or unknown, and even at other arts such as dance, song, music, painting, poetry, and classical or contemporary literature. In this way, a curious observer will better understand the roots of his or her own style, its spirit, principles and basic exercises, which will in turn open up other possibilities of working on the mind and body in a way that is compatible with his or her original style.

I have noticed that the farther I advance in my understanding of Yangjia Michuan, the more I am convinced of its relevance, not only from a martial perspective but also in terms of energy and spirituality.

## 8. What do you think is the most important part of Laoshi's teaching?

**Christian.** Master Wang was able to awaken those who were willing to their own potential, without external constraints. He had a peaceful strength and a spirit that was both joyful and serious.

Beyond the incomparable understanding he had of his art, it was his personality, his intelligence, and his human qualities that enabled him to bring together people from different backgrounds and to go beyond their individual differences. At the beginning of each lesson he showed an impressive intensity in the level of his concentration. His whole being was committed



to his interior preparation so that he could give the best of himself in his teaching. The magic started when he walked into the room. The lesson was calm but the concentration was intense, rigorously structured and perfectly adapted to the needs and the expectations of the participants. His teaching was pertinent, firm but gentle, conducted with a natural authority accepted by all, and alternating between humor and seriousness. In this way he shared his knowledge with a peaceful smile, allowing each of us to learn, to become students. He did not hold our hands, or force our hands, did not demand allegiance, but each of us could lean on him.

This is why we can say that his teaching was informed by a deep spirituality, not because of any particular religious or philosophical approach, but in the way he helped each person find the best in themselves. Without himself getting in the way, he knew how to find the path within each of us, to uncover the buried seed and help it sprout,

For this, he would say, one must find the state of Song jing “soft, relaxed listening”.

That was the living essence of his teaching. ☐

# LITTLE RED BOOK

## *A brief history of its translation and publication in French*

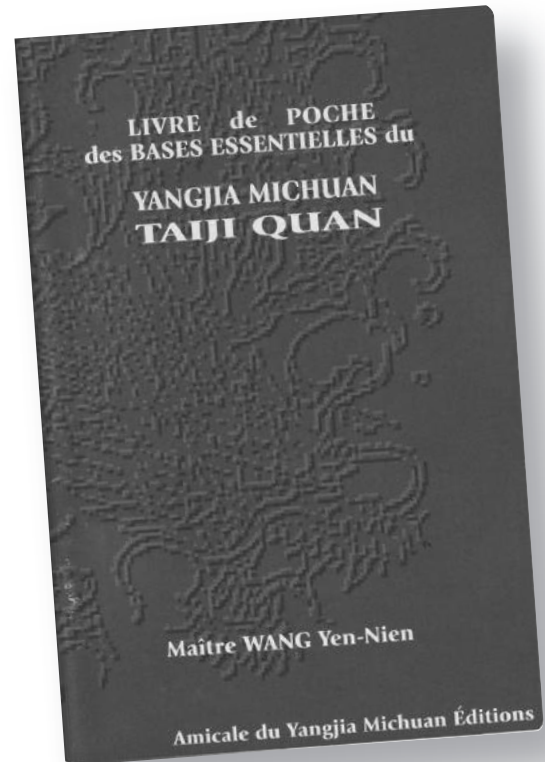
Claudy Jeanmougin

IT seems to me the first time I had this document in hand was at the workshop organized by Laoshi at Yuchi in July/August 1991. The cover was blue and in addition to the three duans it contained the names of the sword and the stick forms. That would have been the version published in 1976.

After that version there were two others, one in 1992 and one in 2003 that were translated into French. That last version had lost the names of the sword and stick gestures but it was enriched with the names of the pole gestures. The Tuishou basic exercises were enriched with Bafa, the eight techniques. That last version became established so that it is considered today as the full course of Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan. Aside from some short classic texts and the biography of Master Wang, most of the contents had already been translated in Volume 1 of the Master Wang's book. For my students I have set up a document containing all the names of the gestures of the different techniques. For the classics, they would have to refer to Laoshi's book, which was not easy because the book, relatively costly, could not be in everybody's hands even if our association put one at their disposition. It is for this reason that I began to shape this book that was so easy to name the "Little Red Book" as competition with that of Mao Zedong...

I was ready to finish the work about 1995 and I asked Laoshi for authorization to publish the red book under the name of *l'École Française de Taiji quan*. Laoshi agreed to see the book published in French but under the name of *l'Amicale*. He made a gift of the rights to all the associations of Amicale.

I admit to have taken my time to finish this book that would see publication in 2005, that is, ten years later.



Let us get back to the work of translation. Having gathered the different translations already done, I contacted Sabine who had already helped me in the translation of Laoshi's first two books. Moreover, for the second volume on applications techniques published in 1997, Sabine had come for a few days to my home in Angers to refine the translation.

Initially, Sabine was not ready to translate the classic texts because it was not possible to do otherwise than to interpret them. This interpretation could vary as a function of the practice and of the evolution of understanding of the practice. I insisted that the practitioners who did not read Chinese would be badly served. For these reasons, we chose that the translations should be as close as possible to the Chinese knowing that the French would suffer some sacrifices

Here is the e-mail I wrote to put Sabine back to work:

**Claudy JEANMOUGIN - 15 bis, route de Bellivet - 17810 ECURAT**  
**Tél 06 81 538 462 - E.mail <jeanmougin.claudy@wanadoo.fr>**

**À Sabine Metzlé,** Ecurat, le 24 septembre 2003

Dear Sabine,

I think I had trouble expressing myself in my April e-mail! In fact, it was good that you took back certain texts to retranslate the doubtful passages. To be more precise in my demands, I enclose the relevant texts and their translations (those that have been translated). It is up to you take them back and make the corrections. For the untranslated texts I put them in your hands for you will be faster than me. As a reference we took the last version from Taiwan, that with the Popomofu, and the second version that was given to us during the teacher training in Taiwan. We kept the texts that seemed most interesting for the Western reader.

Regarding the format of the French version of the book, I think we need to slightly increase the height and width since the French language needs more space. I suggest a size of 17 by 11 centimeters. Tell me what you think.

For the presentation I propose a somewhat different order:

1. Presentation of the Yang style, plus about Yangjia, Zhang Qinlin and Master Wang.
2. The Classics.
3. Laoshi's text on Fajin.
4. Gesture names of the different forms.
5. Biographical references and video of Master Wang.
6. Addresses and e-mail of the different organizations of our style.

So we must get to work now. We need to wrap this up in late October because I would like to have the new estimate to present to the Recontres Amicales.

Kisses! Claudy

NB. The file I sent took me four hours of work. Do not lose it and sent me back the entire file with all your work. For security you could make a copy that you keep.

**What is your job?**

- A simple proofreading is not enough, we must correct ...
  - You have some texts to be translated: • That one about Laoshi if you were to find it useful for our readers, otherwise we could create a more personalized text. For you to see! We can also talk on the phone or by e-mail.
  - The end of the text on the 13 Postures (page 47 of the Red Book 2003) if you assess it to be useful.
  - You should look at again my translations of the Classics that have not been published in Laoshi's books. For the translation of the Wudang sword sequences and the second fan form, I can handle them.
- Take a little rest after this work...

Here is Sabine's response from some time after and you will be able to evaluate my patience.

**De:** sabine.metzle@freesurf.fr  
**À:** "jeanmougin.claudy" <jeanmougin.claudy@wanadoo.fr>  
**Date:** vendredi 16 avril 2004 15:22  
**Objet:** Re:TRADUCORRECTION

Salut CLAUDY,

I have sent you an unfinished e-mail, I did something wrong, and at this moment my computer is capricious with me; happily Jean-Luc Pommier, an expert, is here (with a broken leg) to give me good advice. So, I said:

I am going to send you all the work that I did during MY VACATION, I took that week to do nothing but that, but tomorrow I'm going to Corsica. It remains for me to finish:

- The two autobiographies of Master Wang, which could be reassembled elsewhere, and to do:
- The corrections to the new sword,
- Proofreading "Origins and Ramifications of the Yang School"...
- Translation of the Meihua fan form, which, until now, has never been done. I don't see the point of translating the names of the movements since no one in France or elsewhere in Europe, practice this form. Except for me: I learned it a long time ago, but I've forgotten it; of course I still have vague memories. I think you will have difficulty translating the names of the movements, for there are subtleties that may escape you; I'm better able to reproduce this form, but once again is it well worth it?



You will see that the biographies have undergone some modifications, particularly those that concern Master Wang, the second part presented in the pocket collection.

Concerning the format: the format you propose is not really pocket size, it seems to be to be a little large, if we want people to be able to have the book on them (as Master Wang suggested in the presentation that he made for the collection, see above); anyway, the collection in French will necessarily be larger than in Chinese, but why not build up the thickness.

The presentation that you propose concerning the text order seems good to me, it would be necessary to condense the two biographies of Master Wang.

Thus the work is advancing; I will take the rest to Corsica. I hope you can decipher my scribbles, they are everywhere, I just photocopied.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate ...

Good proofreading... Kisses,

SABINE

P.S.: In fact, do you have permission to translate the collection?

Shortly after I had received Sabine's work I got down to work on the page layout in Word. As I preferred Quark Xpress, I had picked up the new (to me) software that I did not know well. Thus the year 2004 rolled by without seeing the document completed. It was not until early 2005 that I was finally shaken up to finish the work and the first edition of 2,000 was printed in January. In 2008, 1,000 new copies were printed so stocks would not be exhausted until January 2013.

Note that on the first run we gave Master Wang Yen-nien one euro per book, which was €2,000. It was the Amicale board at that time that responded favorably to my request to offer this present to Laoshi. Thereafter, the profits generated from sales of this book were used for propagating our style. So that money generated gave considerable assistance for the development of our style in Burkina Faso.

With 3,000 copies sold in eight years, the success of the Little Red Book is evidence of its usefulness. However, the translation of certain gesture names in the forms, for instance those of the Classics, should be reviewed. Indeed, by putting into practice the Classics and our evolution in the comprehension of the Chinese language has given us another vision of these texts. With the depletion of stocks, was this not an opportunity to take up the work?

For some years a translation group meets once a year to continue fully translating the Classics. Work is progressing, but it is still far from being finished. Therefore the question arises whether it is necessary to wait until the translation group would be finished or if we should respond to requests to reissue the booklet in its present state.

Because we don't wish to put pressure on the translation group it was decided only to review gesture names in the form. Sabine and Hervé Marest have accomplished this work. The third edition was launched in April 2013 with only these changes and some other small corrections.

For my part, I have already made corrections to the names of some of the gestures of the form. And I have never ceased to continue reworking all the Classics. The work is in gestation and evolves little by little. I have not joined the translation group for I don't want to be influenced in my research where my results would have no place in the Red Booklet, which ought to remain a useful and easy-to-read document.

I hope the booklet will continue to be enriched over the years while remaining agreeable to read. The attraction is that it provides a measure of the richness of our style and of our many practitioners. Knowing that all practitioners do not have the book and that there were more than 3,000 sold, it is possible to measure the size of the Yangjia Michuan population that goes well beyond the 2,000 adherents of Amicale.

I would have liked that the document "Twenty Years of Amicale" had been as successful. I find it curious that our practitioners were disinterested since the French are particularly fond of stories. ■

# Reflections of Chen Wei-Ming



## on Taiji Quan (\*)

*The Taiji Boxing solo set, from CATCH THE SPARROW BY THE TAIL to CLOSING TAIJI amounts to more than seventy postures. When it was passed down from Zhang Sanfeng, was it like this or have there been changes?*



I have heard that the earlier Taiji Boxing was a method of practicing postures singly rather than linked together. It is not known when it started to be a solo practice of each of the postures being connected into a continuous flow. In my humble opinion, I suspect it probably began with Wang Zongyue. When he wrote his Taiji Boxing essays, each of the postures that were named were connected into a continuous flow. [The postures are not named in the essays themselves, but in the earliest document that contains them, and Chen was apparently of the opinion that authorship of the earliest list of postures for the solo set is therefore also to be attributed to Wang.]

Therefore in regards to Taiji Boxing, Wang Zongyue's contribution was huge. If it had not been connected into a continuous flow, I fear it would have been lost a long time ago.

*That being the case, then when Taiji Boxing postures are being done correctly or incorrectly, on what do we base such conclusions?*



On words from Wang Zongyue [from *Understanding How to Practice*]: "When standing, your body must be centered and upright, leisurely and comfortable". Those four terms set the standard. "Centered and upright" means the same as: "Neither lean nor slant". "Leisurely and comfortable" means that you are to be natural and at ease, not keyed up and using effort.

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(\*) <http://brennantranslation.wordpress.com>

[For the integrality of the responses in Chinese and English, see:

<http://brennantranslation.wordpress.com/2012/10/27/answering-questions-about-taiji-taiji-da-wen/>]

Also, I wrote down the “Ten Essentials of the Taiji Boxing Art”, another set of criteria for the postures. If your head is without the principle of forcefully rousing strength at the headtop, the sides of your face will be tilted and swayed. If you stick out your chest to stand straight, your upper body will be heavy and your lower body will be light. If your weight is evenly distributed onto both legs, emptiness and fullness will not be clearly distinguished. If you move too fast, your hand techniques will be vague. If you suddenly go up or down, your shoulders will move randomly. If your step is too small, your waist will not turn. These are all violations of the rules. Always you are to be “centered and upright, leisurely and comfortable” in every part. The ideas in the Ten Essentials contain all and leave nothing out.

By these means, even if you are unable to reach your goal, you will not be far from it.

*Some people say the foot's step must not be too big, that if it is too big, there will be no nimbleness in changing steps. Is this so?*



Yes, but when you begin training in the solo set, your step must be stretched out. This is because the standard for the legs is that one be straight while the other is bent, for instance if your left leg is straight, your right leg is bent. For the bent leg, the standard is that the knee makes a vertical line with the toes, and then your waist can loosen downward and turn forward and back. If your step is too small, the turning of your waist will also be small, and if the opponent's attack is fierce, you will not have any extra room to neutralize and have no choice but to retreat. If you find yourself on a narrowing path with nowhere you can retreat, what alternative do you have? [These words are surely garbled and the meaning ought to be: If you find yourself on a narrowing path, you can go nowhere else except backwards.] Whereas if your step is large enough for you to turn your waist, then you can neutralize the opponent's power and counterattack.

*Some people say the solo set must not be done too low. Is this right?*



If the set is done low, then your steps will be big and your waist can turn. If the set is done high, then your steps will be small and the turning of your waist will also be small. The height depends on the legs being one leg straight and one leg bent, for it is to be appropriate to the step. If the height is too low, then your center will be bogged down and unable to go forward, and you will no longer be able to distinguish empty and full. A Taiji Boxing essay [*Understanding How to Practice*] says: “First strive to open up, then strive to close up.” Once you are very skillful, then your stepping and hand techniques can all be shrunken in, for they are now fully understood by your mind and are a part of your body.

Therefore, when it is done small it has developed from doing it big, when it is done high it has developed from doing it low, when it is done tight it has developed from doing it loose, and when it is staccato it has developed from doing it flowingly. If so, then whether small or high or tight or staccato, you will be confident. If not, then I fear that when you encounter an emergency, you will still be unable to respond according to the situation, your steps will be in disarray, and you will be in dire straits.

*There are people who say that the solo set does not need to be practiced that much, that as long you are practicing pushing hands you can develop skill. Is that so?*



All those who belittle the solo set have not yet grasped the essence of its principles. The solo set is the most fundamental part of your foundation. By practicing it over a long period, your body will then be able to be “heavy as a mountain” or “light as a feather” [See questions 42 and 43.]. If you do not practice the solo set, then even if you practice pushing hands a lot, your body will still have moments of instability and will be easily affected by opponents.

*Some people say that when you practice Taiji Boxing you still have to use effort. Is this right?*



A Taiji Boxing essay [*Understanding How to Practice*] says: “Extreme softness begets extreme hardness.” Taiji Boxing’s hard internal power is generated from softness and loosening. When you practice the solo set, the more you soften and loosen, the more rapidly you will develop internal power, but if there is the smallest area that will stubbornly not loosen, then the growth of internal power will be obstructed. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that if you loosen, your arms will heavily sink, and if you do not loosen, your arms will lighten and float. I already discussed it in detail in *The Art of Taiji Boxing*. Typically those who hold to this view have been born with a degree of strength and so prefer to rely on it, and those who train in hard boxing styles are not willing to give it up. Therefore if you are unable to believe the theory that extreme softness begets extreme hardness, then even though you practice Taiji, you will be forever unable to achieve its most exquisite concept.

*When teachers are using the same teaching method, why are the postures of some students pretty while those of others are ugly?*



For the ugly ones, it must be that they are stiff and using effort. For the pretty ones, it must be that they are soft and not using effort. Taking the shaping of metal as an analogy, we must heat it to make it pliable, and then we can shape it as we wish, making it square, making it round, whatever we feel like. If on the other hand we take some hard metal and we want to pound into something square or round, then I fear it will take too much effort and we will see results much more slowly.

Therefore a boxing instructor who causes students to use way too much effort makes their whole bodies stiff and their movement difficult, and if he then also wants their postures to be pretty, he is wanting them to move forward

but has removed the path. A person’s innate strength is like pig iron, which must be made soft and go through a long process of smelting for it to become refined steel. Taiji Boxing’s internal power appears to be soft and yet is peerlessly hard.

*When practicing Taiji Boxing, how should your eyes be?*



Your eyes house your spirit. Your eyes will sometimes go along with the movements of your hands, and when your eyes go along with your hands, your waist naturally turns, but sometimes you must look forward. This is why there are the terms “looking left”, “looking right”, and “centering”. When looking left or right, your waist is turning to be able to neutralize the opponent’s power. When looking forward, you are centered and about to send the opponent away. After practicing Taiji Boxing for a long time, your eyes will be radiant with spirit. When your spirit is abundantly shining, your skill will assuredly be deep.

*When practicing Taiji Boxing, should your mouth be open or closed?*



It says in *Three in Agreement* [chapter 22 –“Barring Shut the Three Treasures”]: “Eyes, ears, and mouth are the three treasures [These could be considered the three external treasures, the corresponding three internal treasures being essence, energy, and spirit.]. They are to be sealed off and not emitted through.” Taiji Boxing is based on seeking stillness within movement, a method for facilitating meditative practice. If your mouth is open, breathing will be done with your mouth, and your tongue and throat will dry out. If your mouth is closed, your tongue will press to your upper palate and thus generate saliva. Swallow it as necessary, for it is the water from the “splendorous pool”, the sweet dew for nourishing health. Those who say the mouth should be open will completely miss the benefits of Taiji Boxing.

*When you use your palm in practicing Taiji Boxing, how should the fingers be?*



The fingers also should be extended naturally. They must not curl in and become fist-like, but also must not be overly extended and thereby cause them to be stiffly straight, for in either case energy will not reach to the fingertips. When your palms push out, they must not go too far beyond your knee, for if they do, you will lose your balance. I have seen practitioners of Taiji Boxing pushing their palms out too far, consequently leaning until their butts are sticking out and rising up. This kind of posture comes from your step being too small, causing your waist to be unable to sink. When your foot does not reach then your hands will reach out forward, and then not only will you not send the opponent away when you attack him, but your own body will lean forward and probably destabilize. When you attack an opponent, you must advance your foot to get close to him with your body, then your hands will slightly advance along with your waist and he will already be stumbling away. This then is whole-bodied power.

*In the Taiji Boxing solo set there are more than seventy postures in sequence. Must it be like this or can we change them around?*



This is the traditional sequence and the way they are linked together is very natural, therefore students should follow it faithfully.

Take for example a work of excellent literature. You may not add to it or subtract from it a single word. That being the case, there were no limitations to the manipulation of words during the original writing, and the same is true for Taiji Boxing. If the postures get flipped around, as long as they are still linking up naturally, that would be okay. The Taiji Boxing solo set is the everyday essential training, but when applying it, do not “expect to find your sword that fell in the river by carving a mark on the boat at the spot it fell and then looking for it according to that mark after the boat has

moved on down the river”, for to insist on doing it according to the sequence would be just as monumentally stupid.

*If we want to become noteworthy practitioners, standing out from the rest, in what way are we to practice?*



You must first possess five mentalities:

1. Faith – In studying any boxing art, you must have complete faith in it, and cannot harbor the slightest thoughts of doubt.

2. Esteem – Having chosen a teacher to learn from, you must esteem and respect him, and cannot harbor even the slightest notions of regarding him lightly.

3. Perseverance – “A man who is without perseverance will not become a shaman.” [Lun Yu, 13.22] For students of boxing arts, it is even more the case that without perseverance you cannot succeed.

4. Patience – Not accomplishing it in five years, set your hopes on ten. Not accomplishing it in ten years, set your hopes on twenty. Even if your intelligence is low, though it will be hard to see any results after working at it only a short while, there has never yet been one who did not achieve if in possession of extraordinary patience. [When coupled with 3, there is this message: you have to work at it and wait for it at the same time.]

5. Humility – Although you may have attained some small degree of skill, you must not put yourself on a pedestal and imagine you are matchless. Every kind of boxing art is guaranteed to have its area of specialty. You must always be open-minded toward studying them and thus be able to know both yourself and your opponent, and then you will not end up losing because of arrogance.

# The Snake who wanted to walk...

Arnold Christian, T.O.C. Association

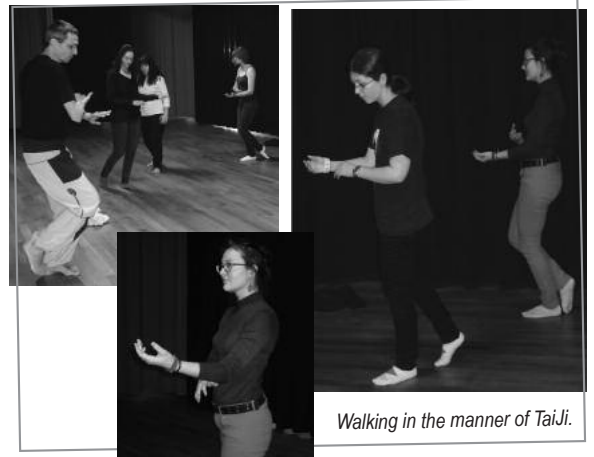
*As we entered February in the year of the water snake and my taiji club organizes a festival every year for the Chinese New Year, I had the idea of presenting to our group of students a story about this animal. It is a small group of ten students from Geneva College between sixteen and nineteen years old. We normally perform thirteen postures and the first Duan but for this occasion, we set out to learn a number of postures.*

*At the party, the small group that was with me was well received and it was suggested that we publish our story in the journal of the Association. However, in order to not only have a text, I suggested that my students take pictures of postures during our upcoming courses to illustrate the narrative. Being unable to take beautiful photos, I asked one of my students, Laurette Sauvin, do it for me. She is thanked here!*

*The second difficulty was using static pictures of dynamic postures. This is why I chose to put a few that are a little blurry but which illustrate the movements that we did.*

**BY** dint of observing his many friends, people in the woods who lived in his neighborhood, the Water Snake began to envy their ability to walk. He then decided to learn to walk.

First approaching a **Bear**, he asked him how he was did it. "It's not rocket science, the bear replied, you advance first turning right and then left like this."



Walking in the manner of Tai Ji.

Realizing he could not do that, the Water Snake then found an **Elephant**. As it trumpeted with ease, it told him: "Everything is in the balance provided by the trunk. You see, it is only necessary to balance the trunk."



Walking with trunk ("part wild Horse's mane", 3rd duan).

Failing to imitate this balance, the Snake turned to the elegant **Green Woodpecker**, light like him. After much explanation, this inveterate talker showed him how to deal with its sharp beak and wings.



Walk of Woodpecker ("straddle Tiger", beginning of second duan).

Unable to copy his walk! Fortunately his vain **Ostrich** friend approached him at that time and, choking with laughter on seeing him trying to mimic the Woodpecker, she said: "Look at the way I do, I am more powerful than the Woodpecker who spends all his time clinging to tree trunks rather than flying!"



Walk of Ostrich ("climb the mountain" of the beginning of second duan).

Again without success, the Water Snake was beginning to despair when he saw the **Heron** with whom he had shared many memorable fishing parties. The latter, learnedly professing his mastery of walking, perched high on his stilts, gave him a demonstration:

Walk of the Heron ("brush knee").

Stilts, knee, balance... What words that the Water Snake was struggling to assimilate! Annoyed, he turned to the **Golden Pheasant**, so proud of his plumage. They were not the best of friends, but the pheasant graciously lent an explanation.

Walk of the Golden Pheasant ("the Golden Pheasant stands on one leg", 3rd duan).

Our poor Water Snake did not succeed.



Fortunately he was persistent, even stubborn. “Maybe my friend the **Crab**, who enjoys the water like me, will be more successful in his explanations”, he said. Happening on his friend, he begged him to show him how he moved. Gaily shaking his two enormous claws, Crab began a series of moves to one side, then the other as the Water Snake would probably reproduce with no trouble.

Crab walking  
("part Wild Horse's  
main").



Certainly, the Water Snake had no chance because he soon lost himself in the postures he had to do. Giving up walking like a crab, he suddenly thought of his friend the **White Ape** and all the pranks they had done together. Ape, good rascal that he was, layed it on thick, throwing sand in front of him, as do his peers when they are worried.



Walk of the White Ape  
("White Ape offers fruit",  
3rd duan).

Abandoning his comedy, the Water Snake wondered if the young and nice **Jade Lady**, who lived not far away, would show him how she moved with so much elegance. She accepted gladly and without a word gave him this lovely demonstration.



Walk of the Jade Lady ("The Jade Lady works the shuttle", 3rd duan).



And again a failure! Annoyed, he thought that perhaps he could learn to fly and asked his two friends, the **Whooping Crane** and **Eagle**. They both exclaimed: “Look how easy it is!” And with the same spirit, they showed him the things he had to do.



*Flight of the White Crane and flight of the Eagle.*

The poor Water Snake was incapable and his sadness increased.

Then, suddenly, he detected agitation. First far. Tiny vibrations reaching his sensitive the body alerted him. The excitement grew and he felt the danger approaching.

When *the fire* reached the horizon, the birds flew and his friends began to run with all their might.



But it was too late for many of them. The Water Snake slid into the water and escaped easily. He was by far the best swimmer and rippling over the water, he moved away from danger at high speed, while pleased with his expertise.



*Moral:*

There is no need to envy the capabilities of others that we lack when we have our own means!

## DECEMBER

### Stage Epée Kun Lun et Wudang, Eventail, sur Angers, lieu précisé ultérieurement

Dates : **8 décembre 2013** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Marie-Christine Moutault • Détail : Apprentissage et approfondissement

### Stage de Noël en Afrique

Dates : **Du 22 décembre 2013 au 4 janvier 2014**  
Les intéressés s'adressent directement à Claudy Jeanmougin :  
– par téléphone au 06 81 53 84 62 – par mail : [jeanmougin.claudy@orange.fr](mailto:jeanmougin.claudy@orange.fr)

## JANUARY 2014

### Stage “Révision et correction du 2<sup>e</sup> duan”, à Annecy

Dates : **Samedi 18 janvier 2014** • Email : [henri.mouthon@orange.fr](mailto:henri.mouthon@orange.fr)  
Animé par : Henri Mouthon • Organisé par : ATCHA

### Stage de pratique de la forme, tuishou et bâton, au Mans

Dates : **18 et 19 janvier 2014** • Email : [aramis72.taichi@free.fr](mailto:aramis72.taichi@free.fr)  
Contact : 06 19 82 28 10 ou 02 43 76 88 08 • Animé par : Serge Dreyer  
Organisé par : ARAMIS Le Mans

### Stage “Approche de l'énergétique chinoise” (théorie et pratique), à Angers

Dates : **Dimanche 19 janvier 2014** • Email : [cordaro49@hotmail.fr](mailto:cordaro49@hotmail.fr)  
Animé par : Claudy Jeanmougin • Organisé par : ATA

### Stage Epée Kun Lun et Wudang, Eventail, sur Angers, lieu précisé ultérieurement

Dates : **19 janvier 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Marie-Christine Moutault • Détail : Apprentissage et approfondissement

## FEBRUARY

### Stage Epée Kun Lun et Wudang, Eventail, sur Angers, lieu précisé ultérieurement

Dates : **9 février 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Marie-Christine Moutault • Détail : Apprentissage et approfondissement

### Stage Nettoyage Energétique saisonnier, sur Thorigné d'Anjou

Dates : **du 15 au 16 février 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Marie-Christine Moutault • Détail : Pratiques de nettoyage énergétique en période de mutation saisonnière. Passage de l'hiver au printemps, affaiblissement de l'énergie des Reins et montée de l'énergie du Foie et de la Vésicule Biliaire. Pratique : Kapalabhati, Dao Yin Qigong, Diète et Méditation.  
Lieu : **Au Centre Xian** <http://www.centre-xian.fr> - Tél 02.41.60.24.01

### Stage “Applications martiales 2<sup>e</sup> duan”, à Annecy

Dates : **15 et 16 février 2014** • Email : [henri.mouthon@orange.fr](mailto:henri.mouthon@orange.fr)  
Animé par : Serge Dreyer • Organisé par : ATCHA

## MARCH

### Stage Energétique, approche théorique et pratique, sur Thorigné d'Anjou

Dates : **22 mars 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Claudy Jeanmougin • Détail : Comprendre l'Energétique pour amé-

liorer sa pratique. Les SAN BAO (les Trois Trésors) ; le YIN/YANG (l'équilibre et l'harmonie dans la pratique) ; les WUXING (Les Cinq Éléments ou cinq Mouvements) ; les SAN JIAO (Les Trois Réchauffeurs et leur action sur la transformation des énergies).

Lieu : **Centre Xian** <http://www.centre-xian.fr>  
Contact : Marie-Christine Moutault - 02 41 60 24 01

### Stage La Pratique du Taiji Quan et les Principes Constants, sur Thorigné d'Anjou

Dates : **23 mars 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Claudy Jeanmougin • Détail : Observation de la pratique de chaque stagiaire. Une analyse individuelle et collective sera faite à partir des Principes Constants issus des Principes Essentiels qui régissent le Taiji Quan. Ainsi, chaque participant repartira avec la capacité de lire et d'analyser sa propre pratique et ainsi de prolonger seul ce travail.  
Lieu : **Centre Xian** <http://www.centre-xian.fr>  
Contact : Marie-Christine Moutault - 02.41.60.24.01

## APRIL

### Stage Epée Kun Lun et Wudang, Eventail, sur Angers, lieu précisé ultérieurement

Dates : **6 avril 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Marie-Christine Moutault • Détail : Apprentissage et approfondissement

### Stage d'épée à deux, au Mans

Dates : **12 et 13 avril 2014** • Email : [aramis72.taichi@free.fr](mailto:aramis72.taichi@free.fr)  
Contact : 06 19 82 28 10 ou 02 43 76 88 08 • Animé par : Frédéric Plewniak  
Organisé par : ARAMIS Le Mans

## MAY

### Stage “La balle de taiji”, à Genève

Dates : **Samedi 3 mai 2014** • Email : [info@taiji-toc.ch](mailto:info@taiji-toc.ch)  
Animé par : Alix Helme-Guizon • Organisé par : Taiji Open Club

### Stage “ZI RAN MEN QIGONG”, sur Thorigné d'Anjou

Dates : **du 7 mai au 8 mai 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Maître LIU DE MING • Détail : Apprentissage et approfondissement du niveau I du Qigong ZI RAN MEN.

La Forme proposée est particulièrement respectueuse de la notion ZI RAN qui exprime la spontanéité. Cette forme est simple et cosmique...

Maître LIU DE MING est depuis quelques années résident en Australie. Il est le 5<sup>e</sup> successeur de la lignée Liu He Zi Ran Men.

**Le 6 mai 2014, en soirée**, avant le stage, sera proposé une pratique méditative sous la direction de Maître Liu De Ming.

Lieu : **Centre Xian** <http://www.centre-xian.fr>  
Contact : Marie-Christine Moutault - 02 41 60 24 01

### Stage Epée Kun Lun et Wudang, Eventail, sur Angers, lieu précisé ultérieurement

Dates : **18 mai 2014** • Association : Les Nuages du Wudang  
Site : <http://www.taiji-qigong-anjou.fr> • Email : [wudang49@orange.fr](mailto:wudang49@orange.fr)  
Animateur : Marie-Christine Moutault • Détail : Apprentissage et approfondissement

## JULY

### Stage “Séquences + tuishou + qigong + marche du baguazhang”, à Taiwan

Dates : **du 2 juillet au 17 juillet 2014**  
Email : [serge.dreyer@gmail.com](mailto:serge.dreyer@gmail.com) • Animé par : Serge Dreyer

# USEFUL ADDRESSES

## **COLLÈGE EUROPÉEN DES ENSEIGNANTS DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN**

Frédéric Plewniak  
7, rue des Cigognes - 67120 Molsheim - France  
[33] 3 88 38 41 27 - Email : secretaire.ceeymt@free .fr

## **TAIWAN YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN ASSOCIATION**

email: tymta.org@gmail.com  
<http://tymta.blogspot.fr/>  
Président : Jason Han  
TYMTA c/o Jason Han Fl.14, No.3, Lane 36, Wang Ning St.,  
Wen Shan Dist., TAIPEI / TAIWAN

## **WORLDWIDE DIRECTORY OF YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN ORGANIZATIONS BRAZIL**

Thomas H. H. Cheng, Av. Aclimação, 68,  
Cj. 82 CEP: 01531-000, Aclimação, São Paulo - S.P. Brasil  
Tel: (0-11)32078565 - Fax: (0-11)32096539  
email : tch@brastone.com

## **AMERICAN YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN ASSOCIATION**

Janett Philips, President  
3555 Parkview Lane - Rocklin, CA 95677  
Tel: 916-625-9290  
president@aymta.org ou psychocpa@sbcglobal.net

## **AYMTA JOURNAL**

PO Box 173, Grand Haven, MI 49417, USA

## **WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN FEDERATION (CANADA)**

RR#1 Moser's River, Nova Scotia, BOJ  
2KO, Canada - Tél./Fax: (902) 347 2250

## **ESTONIE**

Tarfu : Urmas Lest, Mobile: 372-56-68-93-77  
Renata Soukand, email : renata@ut.ee

## **YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA**

48, Kidbrooke Place, P.O. Box 801  
7200 Hermanus, Republic of South Africa

## **GERMANY**

Petra Schmalenbach-Maerker  
Von-Kahr-Str. 82, 80999 Muenchen, Germany  
Tel: (49 89)8103-9682 - Fax: (49 89)8103-9684  
email : petra\_schmalenbach@hotmail.com

## **THE RUSSIAN ASSOCIATION OF YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN**

86 Vavilova St., Apt. 40, Moscow 117261, Russia  
Contact : Albert Efimov, albert@efimoff.net  
Tél: (7) 095 938 5124 - Fax : (7) 095 938 5000

## **YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN INT'L, & YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN TEACHER'S ASSOCIATION INT'L, TAIWAN**

32-2F Fuguo Road  
Shih-lin, Taipei, 111 Taiwan, ROC  
Tél: 886-2-2837-1779 - Fax : 886-2-2837-2258  
Email : ymtitaipei@yahoo.com

## **THE TAI CHI CENTRE**

70 Abingdon Road, London W8 6AP, England - UK  
Tél: (44) 20 7937 9362 - Fax : (44) 20 7937 9367  
Email : peterclifford@thetaichicentre.com

## **TOKYO TAI KYOKKEN AOI KAI**

Koengi Kita 2 33 5, Suginamiku, Tokyo - Japan  
Tél: (81) 3 3339 6875

## **TAI KYOKKEN SHINKI KAI**

2-1-6 Shironouchi St. Nada-ku  
Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture - Japan  
Tél: (81) 78 861 8973

## **YANGJIA MICHUAN ORGANIZATION JAPAN**

<http://www.geocities.jp/izk341/youkahidenhome.htm>  
Adresse mail : amrita48@nifty.com  
tonkou@bab.co.jp

## **YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN**

### **FEIZHOU XIEHUI (AFRIQUE)**

Denis Banhero, 03 BP881 Abidjan 03 - Côte d'Ivoire

## **FÉDÉRATION FRANÇAISE DE WUSHU ET DES ARTS ÉNERGÉTIQUES ET MARTIAUX CHINOIS**

27, rue Claude Decaen - 75001 Paris  
Tél: 01.40.26.95.50

## **WORLD TAI CHI CHUAN FEDERATION**

Contact : Ms lin Hsiao-Wei, E-mail : tccass@ms35.hinet.net  
Ou Noëlle Kasai, E-mail : noelleka.fedetaichi@yahoo.fr

## **MEXICO**

Stephen Merrill  
A.P. 77, Todos Santos, BCS, 23305 Mexico  
Message Ph : 52-114-50109  
email : aleana97@yahoo.com

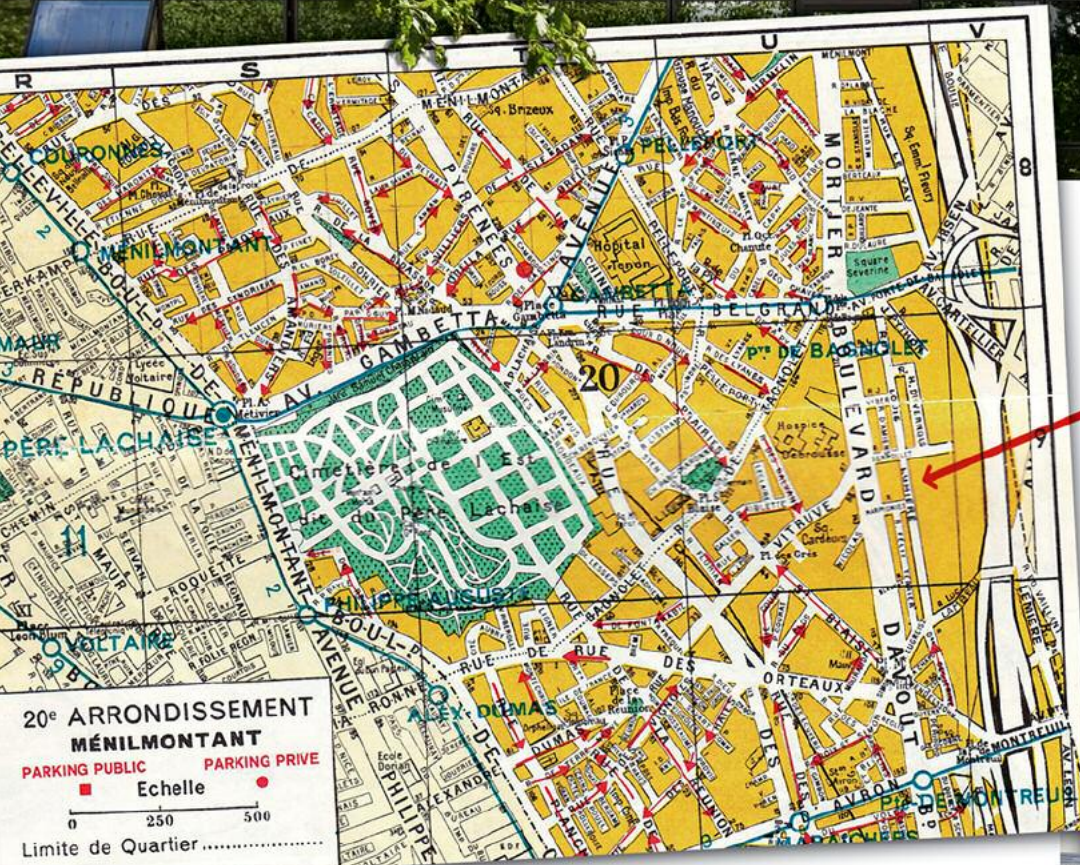
## **ITALY**

DOMAINE YEN-NIEN  
La Maison des Cimes - Loc. Fromorsora  
18037 Castel Vittorio (IM) - Italia  
Tél: (39) 0184 241211

## **BURKINA FASO**

ATCAE-BF (Association de Taichi Chuan  
et Arts Energétiques / Burkina Faso)  
09 BP 1149 Ouagadougou 09 - Burkina Faso  
Mail : y\_ouattara@yahoo.fr

# 楊家秘傳太極拳聯會



Résidence  
Internationale de Paris (RIP)

It is  
here

23<sup>rd</sup>  
**Rencontres  
YMTJQ  
Amicale**

**From 8 to 11 November**

An event organised by:  
**Rencontres 2013 du Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan**  
in association with  
**Tai Chi Chuan de Paris, Taiji Yang Riv'Gauche,**  
and the support of other Yangjia Michuan groups  
in the Ile de France region.

**Contact** In French: [R2013.Amicale.Fr@gmail.com](mailto:R2013.Amicale.Fr@gmail.com)  
In English: [R2013.amicale.En@gmail.com](mailto:R2013.amicale.En@gmail.com)

