

# Amica e

YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN

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«Au revoir,  
Anne »

The Lo Shu and Thirteen Postures  
Rencontres Amicale  
and their organization  
Human relations in Chinese culture  
50 years of experiences - towards  
a synthesis

楊家秘傳

# Sommaire

# EDITO

## Editorial

Françoise Cordaro

## A Word from the President ..... 1

François Schosseler

## The Lo Shu and Thirteen Postures ..... 2

Chris Nelson

## For Anne ..... 5

Eliane Vanderveken

## Anne, my sister ..... 6

Yves Picart

## Three modalities of consciousness in the Practice of Taiji Quan ..... 8

Jean-Luc Perot

## 50 years of experiences - towards a synthesis. Continuation and end ..... 9

Marc Appelmans

## The Articles from the College

## Human relations in Chinese culture and its impact on Martial arts ..... 13

Serge Dreyer

## Rencontres Amicale and their organization ..... 15

Danièle and Joël Panhelleux,

Claudy Jeanmougin

## We have read ..... 23

No, no, we cannot say that nothing is happening. "Nothing" does not exist for the good Taoist apprentices that we are. "Nothing" is only a noise, a little noise of nothing. It sounds a bit hollow but the hollow resonate. So much so that every sound we perceive is amplified. When everything shrinks – activity, meetings, speech,... –, every little nothing takes on a crazy importance. Like, for example, the meetings to practice or the open-air classes – 5 + 1 teacher – that flourish here and there, everywhere, at all costs. It doesn't make much noise, but is it not nothing. So much so that one wonders if, finally, the main thing is not these "5 + 1", a concentrated Taichi, concentrated teaching, concentrated motivation.

So much not nothing, that articles continue to arrive for our Bulletin and even for the next one, proof that even in our reflections, nothing has stopped. I even saw the eyes light up when I distributed the last Bulletin at an open-air meeting. Looks that seemed to say "Ah! But everything has not stopped" what a pleasant surprise.

No, nothing stopped. Let's look at it the Chinese way: cyclical not linear. "When things reach their extreme, they end up changing into their opposite" let's make this underlying joy ours, let's not wait to see the "end of the tunnel" but let's make use of the tunnel. It is talking to us, despite everything.

Françoise Cordaro

# A Word from the President

Lethargic, anesthetized. That's how I see us at the end of this winter. Timid exchanges on the forum. Lack of perspectives on the coming summer. Possible workshops or not? Rencontres Jasnières? The courses seem to resume here and there but not in a general way. There is, it seems, a certain chilliness which is not only due to this beginning of April exceptionally cold.

This is also reflected by 14 associations and 7 individuals who have not renewed their 2020-2021 membership, despite friendly reminders from our Treasurer. This shows how much our activities and organizations are disrupted. It is still too early to make a complete assessment, but some returns indicate a loss of two thirds of the memberships.

However, wherever the associations have tried to resume their outdoor activities, we can see that the desire is still there. The desire to practice together, to see each other, to talk, to joke or to exchange more seriously. It is therefore enough to

encourage opportunities to see the smiles come back. Try it, even if it seems a little shaky and not up to your usual standards. The magic of collective practice is just waiting for your initiative to manifest itself.

Usually at this time of year, there is always one association where the pressure starts to mount: the one that is organizing our upcoming Fall Meetings. After Joël and Danièle, it is now the turn of the Cercle Jean Moulin to step up to the plate in these very particular circumstances. We do not know yet how it will happen. But what is sure, it is that we want to go there. And that we cross our fingers that the worst of this health crisis will be behind us this fall.

In the meantime, I hope you enjoy the next few summer months to the fullest.

Best wishes,  
François Schosseler

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# The Lo Shu and the Thirteen Postures

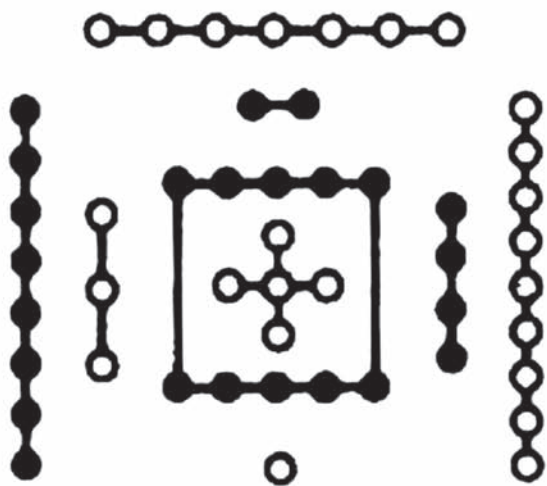
## The He Tu (Hé tú 河圖) and Lo Shu Maps (Luò shū 洛書)

Chris Nelson<sup>1</sup>

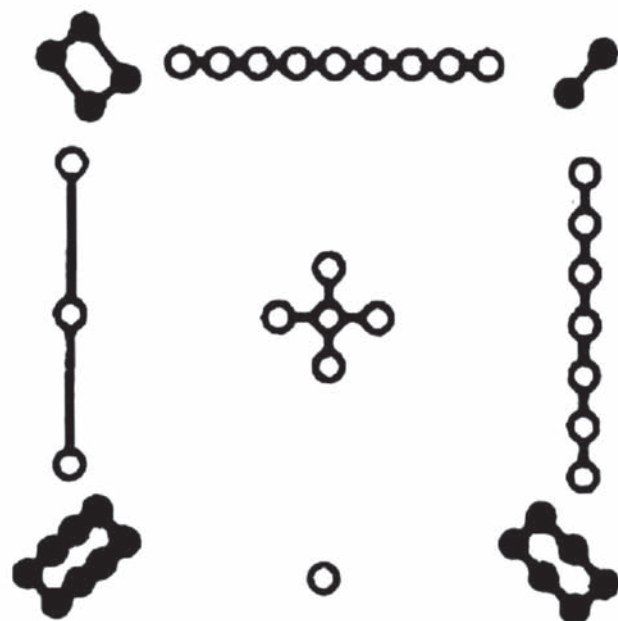
The early Taoists started mapping out the interplay of Yin and Yang. The first of such "maps" were the Hé tú 河圖 (Yellow River Pattern) and Luò shū 洛書 (Lo River Pattern) maps, a series of dots and lines which it is believed represented Heaven, Earth, and a few important constellations. The number of dots repre-

sented the Yin/Yang polarity of each element. These maps are almost 6,000 years old.

This shows that very early on the idea of calculating the "intensity" of the Yin and Yang interaction emerged. Several different symbols were created to



河圖



洛書

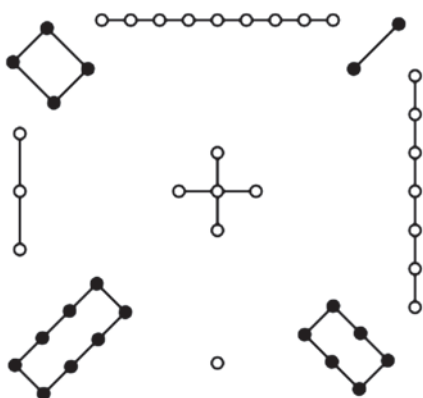
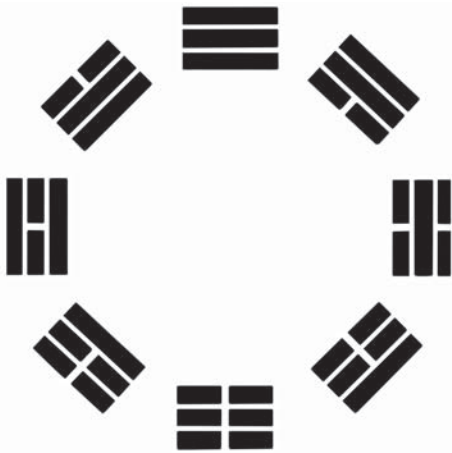
1. Chris Nelson teaches Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan in Los Angeles, USA. He is part of our team of translators for the Bulletin.

describe the nature of the Yin and Yang energies. The now common symbol of two tear-drop shapes swirling around each other is a relative new-comer. Other symbols, like the Hé tú and Luò shū maps, or the interconnected and alternating circles were in use far earlier. One of those symbols is the Bagua, also known as the Eight Gates. These are the same Eight Gates referenced in Part II when the 13 Postures were introduced.

Confucius wrote (around 400 BC) “Taiji generates two primary energies. Two primary energies generate four primary symbols. Four primary symbols generate eight primary Gates.” By this he meant that it is possible to go beyond the Yin/Yang duality, and look at energy exchanges in finer details.

For example, the four primary symbols Confucius mentions are the four permutations that are possible when you separate Yin and Yang one more time. There is therefore a Greater Yin and Greater Yang (yin + yin, yang + yang), and a Lesser Yin, and Lesser Yang (yin + yang, yang + yin).

The Eight Gates are found in the Bagua, which represent another separation of the energies. The Bagua is also at the base of our eight moves (Peng, Lu, An, Ji,...) and each Gate relates to a specific move.



But it is the Lo She map that, I believe, is more important to elucidate certain aspects of our Taijiquan, and the Thirteen Postures in particular.

The Lo Shu Map is a magic square, and a numerological representation of the Bagua. It is also a map of the world.

A magic square is a mathematical curiosity: a grid of numbers arranged so that the sum of its squares is always the same, whether adding top to bottom, side to side, or along the diagonals. There are several types of magic square with different numbers of

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6



squares and different number configurations. The Lo Shu Square is a grid of nine squares (three rows of three) that always add up to fifteen. The central square is the number five.

This Lo Shu map references the Bagua, and is used in Feng Shui (where the connection to the Bagua is made explicit).

The Eight Gates are therefore arranged around the five dots in the center of the Lo Shu, and those dots are in the shape of a cross.

We can see that both the He Tu and Lo Shu maps use this same symbol in their center, this cross made of five points. We can conclude that this cross is a symbol that points at the same concept.

And we know that the name of the Thirteen postures comes from the fact that their are eight movements and five directions ( $8 + 5 = 13$ ), these five directions are the four horizons and the center. Which is exactly what this cross in the middle of the Lo Shu is describing.

We therefore have in the Lo Shu map a symbolique representation of our Thirteen Postures, Eight movements around five directions. Or, to be more precise, it is highly likely that our Thirteen Postures are based on the Lo Shu map.

### But what lessons can we take from the Lo Shu?

The Lo Shu Square is also a magic square, where the sum total of the numbers of any row or column is always the same. The center remains the same as the values around it change. What we never find is a square with a value of zero.

The values on each side of the center square balance each other out. Similarly, when we do a move, a Push (An) for example, the pushing hand might be full and forward, but the center remains still and the rear foot remains engaged. We do not commit fully forward, and we do not let the center drift from the vertical. The numbers represent the various ways that energy can be shifted in different proportions. But the total amount of energy is the same, so all actions are balanced, whether front to back or side to side.

### There is another takeaway from the map

The *Nei Jing* 黃帝內經 (Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor") which is the 2000-year-old foundational text of traditional Chinese medicine, affirms): "Heaven is round and Earth is square". The square of the Earth is the four horizons. The central point is the center of the Earth, and the pillar that supports Heaven and our bodies. And the Bagua, the circle, represents the Heavens and therefore is above the square of the Earth.

So the Luò shū shows us a square below, a vertical in the center, and a circle above.

While the Bagua describes the variations in the qualities of energy, the square of the earth is concrete, physical.

I propose therefore that the Luò shū shows us how our steps are planted and linear (the four horizons and the four diagonals) while the body is soft and round, the whole being connected by the vertical axis (the spine).

To be clear, this does not mean that the steps are literally along straight lines; this is physically impossible since the legs naturally rotate from the hip joint, creating arcs and not straight lines. But the intent is linear. The stepping requires linear intent along one of the eight axes of our square.

This linear intent is then carried throughout the central vertical line to the rest of the body, and transformed by the circular energies created by the waist. So this

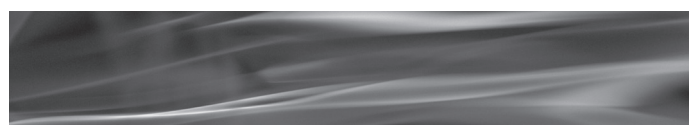
does not create a "square" Tai Chi. Circles and spirals are naturally formed when the straight lines of stepping are transformed by the rotation of the waist.

But it does mean that the Intent of each move in the Form needs to be clear, and linear. Again, this does not mean a straight step. The move "Play the Pipa" is the best example of this. To perform the step, the front foot is placed along the back diagonal, crossing the other foot, before the weight is shifted to what was the front foot. This creates a rotation of the body, which is followed by the rotation of the arms.

The move seems completely circular. But if you look at the stepping, and the intent, the move is linear. The feet move so that the body is turned from facing front to facing the front diagonal (Lu). Then a Cai on the vertical axis, followed by another step is then taken to bring the body back to facing front (An). So the stepping takes us from front, to front diagonal, and back to front. Linear angles. But the arms transform this linear stepping into a spiraling move.

This is in contrast to other Chinese martial arts that are based solely on the Bagua, like Bagua Zhang, that are circular in everything, in eluding the stepping. Taijiquan finds itself in the center, where straight lines and spirals are in equilibrium.

The Luò shū map becomes therefore a mental chart that can easily be followed during the practice of the Thirteen Postures and of Taijiquan. The feet are on the square of the Earth, the body is the vertical axis that supports the hips and shoulders that follow the circle of the Heavens.



# For Anne

Eliane Vanderveken



Having started Taichi in September 2008, I hardly knew the 13 postures in June 2009. I had heard from other practitioners that a group was meeting in the Sobieski park in Brussels on Tuesday evenings during the summer months. This is how I joined the group Pratiqvan and met Anne in July 2009. This meeting motivated me, until today, to continue my research in the practice.

In 2010, with a small group of taichi friends, we decided to organize a trip to China. It was obvious to ask Anne to be our guide, since she regularly spoke to us with enthusiasm about her previous trips.

Since then she and I had found each other and traveled many times together, Wudang (China), Taiwan, Japan, and many Taichi workshops in France, The Rencontres de l'Amicale which she often spoken to me about: the atmosphere, the meeting with practitioners from different countries, the friendships that develop, the reunions... In short: we became friends. We ended up understanding each other without saying a word, just with a look, a knowing smile.

So many memories were built day after day over those years.

But Anne, where did you leave for without warning?

Your daughter tells me that, to her opinion, you have left for China. I am tempted to believe this.

I wish you a beautiful journey. Good bye, my beautiful friend with an unforgettable smile.

© Evelyne Oudart

# Anne, my sister

Yves Picart

As Michel, my big Tiger brother, wrote to tell me the sad news: you have chosen to go and find the love of your life.

This news was like the cry that Edouard Munch painted on the canvas, deafening like the terrible silence that still vibrates on the canvas long after. Time sometimes takes its time to ease our sorrows. The emptiness is there, gaping, and will remain well beyond your departure.

We had met at my first Meeting in Berder. The evening of the party, by chance at the table of the Brussels team where I had heard the best Belgian stories I know. Our friendship was sealed that evening.

It was you who gave me my first two lessons on the virtues of the Amicale that evening.

First, you pointed out to me that the Rencontres de l'Amicale were well named. It is a place where relationships are often strong and lasting, whether they are spontaneous or take time to build. This was the case for us and how many times did we not grumble when we realized at the time of the "goodbyes" that, in the joyful rush at the end of the morning workshops, we had not found the opportunity to have lunch together!

Then you explained to me how much your little group had suffered from having lost too soon the teacher who had trained you. The Meetings of the Amicale were one of the ways you had found to keep a community of practice and through our common language, to be able to work with a network that could allow you to continue to progress. When

I sometimes see our differences, which make us seem to be drifting apart from one another, I always think back to that lesson you gave me. I owe you that too.

Those who had the chance to come and visit you know that you were a great connoisseur of Brussels. You loved to show your city as a talented, relevant and mischievous guide. I felt quite ridiculous during the return match in Paris. Belgium: 1, France: 0!

During your second visit to Paris, the atmosphere was less cheerful but still as warm. You were coming back from a trip to the Mediterranean where you had gone to pour the ashes of your previous companion. When you said goodbye to me on the gateway, I had in mind a haunting sentence: "Everything will end up in the sea." It took me years to get you to listen to the song I had written from it and you liked it. I will continue to sing it with you in mind.

Today you have chosen to sail on the stars to find others, the ones you love.

Many of us will be watching, in spite of ourselves, for your laughter, your humor, this Belgian madness that no one can imitate and that will remain for many your signature and your charm.

I hope that you have found Peace, my sister.







# A text as an echo to Serge Dreyer's article: Three modes of consciousness in the practice of Taiji-Quan: slow movements tuīshǒu 推手, sānshǒu

Jean-Luc Perot

Whatever the style people practice, slowness, the basis of Taichi Chuan, is generally shared by everyone. This is about this first topic I want to focus on.

1. The contribution of the practice of slow choreographies

- Integration of motor patterns specific to movement (the way we feel our own body and the synchronization of motor sequences), usually called body awareness.
- Abandonment of parasitic synkinesias (tensions, contractions, interplays of agonist/antagonist muscles), usually called relaxation. Relaxation and motor integrations are essential characteristics of the training and transmission of Taiji Quan. And with this in mind, I want to underline the intimate activation of self-awareness that I would indifferently call Qìgōng 氣功 or Nèigōng 內功. It is indeed a consciousness turned inward to feel the flows of energy, the strengths and the fragilities, the resources of vitality which coordinate the intention, the sensation and the body activity.

It seems to me that it gives this particular relish combining action and meditation that makes TJQ so successful among the greatest number of practitioners who, besides, don't ask for more.

2. For the other practitioners who ask for more, meeting a partner, facing difference, adapting to the unexpected, add an unprepared dimension useful to self-discovery which unveils itself with a sense of urgency.

This "martial" culture which integrates the behaviour in front of the other offers the possibility of practising the form with the slow gestures respecting the spirit of the huóbù tuīshǒu 活步推手, that is to say by allowing steps adjustments to stick to the imaginary experience.

Then we see the value of these little highlighted side steps in the classical course; these salutary differences which surreptitiously leave the Column/Column line as

Serge calls it. I'm sure our style is made for the movement transfer, and whenever one foot is free, it's free to adjust the next movement.

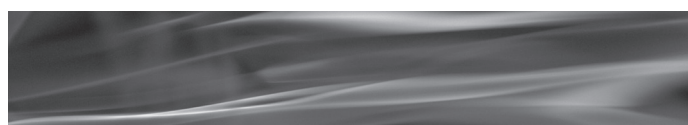
Why not daring a 4th duàn 段, expression of the practitioner? That's not an easy task! To make it easier, I propose a framework, that of Luòshū 洛書<sup>1</sup>, therefore the one of center 5 and 8 orientations. Since the marks are numbered, we can vary the sequence of numbers and express ourselves in all directions. A good start would be to take up the sequences already visited in the three duàn's by developing one sequence per direction.

The choice of Luòshū 洛書 as a numerical model is based on the fact that it is linked to Chinese tradition and therefore echoes with the models which inspire Taiji Quan. We can be satisfied with a numerical diagram by assigning a number to the 8 directions and to the center.

3. When the desire for confrontation seeks an even more convincing rooting in rawness, in the sense of raw facts such as we find them in little codified fighting, we can then execute the form in the spirit of sānshǒu 散手 with liberation of forces fājīn 發勁, in strikes or sweeps etc.

This way of executing slow movements increases mobility and responsiveness. It leads to new movements interpretations, for example, by feeling the opposing attack coming from angles not explicitly proposed in the form. As a whole, the form seems to be a gestural repertoire, a reservoir of vocabulary and modes of expression from which we can endlessly compose sentences, unprecedented sequences of attention and various intentions. It is in this spirit that I see the form as the foundation of practice, learning and transmission.

1. I referred to the Luoshu 洛書, Luo River Scripture, handed down, according to the legend, to Emperor Yu the Great on the shell of a turtle by the Luo River.



# 50 years of experiences – towards a synthesis. Continuation and end

Marc Appelmans

## **The importance of thought in understanding correct movement: realizing unity in movement**

Far from limiting ourselves to a purely mechanical approach, we can add a mental process of visualization to the principles of body-mechanics, combining thought and intention, allowing a finer comprehension and application of these principles, as well as a better perception of the body, and its place in setting the form in motion. Paradoxically, achieving unity in movement, can require breaking down the gestures mentally, to be whole in our movements and to improve their effectiveness.

## **Internal qualities, external spaces**

### **Relaxation**

Relaxation is something we feel as a part of our being, and improved relaxation allows us to refine our sensations. It involves allowing the muscles to stretch, in releasing any contraction not necessary to the movement itself; but as with foot-work, and this may seem obvious, such an awareness often does not resist a careful examination of the gesture that we have just made.

Relaxation is also a mental state, free of any load, any tension and other negative, parasitic and weighty emotions, to reach a kind of inner freedom and availability. For me, dynamic relaxation is one of the keys to discovering different sensations in our form as well as in our lives, and in this way, it allows us to further awaken our bodies.

Moreover, if the principle of initiating movement through the extremities is correctly implemented, relaxation will come more easily when it follows the principle of progressively structuring the body through movement. This consecutive engagement does necessarily compromise the coherence of the gesture in movement, since letting go allows for a more accurate perception of what it is to be whole, to move as one, since we can feel the whole body, relaxed behind the tips of our fingers and feet.

### **Breathing**

The form taught by Wang Yen Nien includes specific breathing patterns.

There are a few clues for what seems to be optimal breathing in movement: inhale during upward movements or gestures, and exhale during downward movements or gestures; similarly, we inhale as our arms and legs move closer to our axis, and exhale when they move away from it.

In an uncomfortable position, breathe in so that the inflation of the diaphragm protects the lower back and the lumbar region, without breathing all the way in. From a mechanical perspective our breath also protects our body in movement. To this, we might add the principle of “comfortable breathing”: to inhale only as much as necessary, without contracting the torso and the upper body, which makes movement difficult.

Finally, when we breathe in, we should allow the air to go as deep as possible, so that it settles lightly between the hips, as much in front as in the back, and

to each side, until it reaches down a little into the legs: breathing in this way improves relaxation and unblocks the waist and pelvis.

One way to stretch and prepare our respiration, is to start by taking a deep breath, allowing the air to reach the lowest possible point until it fills the upper body up to the collarbones, and hold for a few seconds. After a few deep breaths, the lungs and torso should be more relaxed, and feel heavy and dense, in the best sense of these words. At the end of an inspiration or expiration, we can also try to hold the breath as long as possible, and to notice the effects of such a prolonged breathing in our body, and our state of our mind. Afterwards it is important to "clean" ourselves with more active breathing, to release toxins and stress. Of course, there are many breathing exercises, and just as many variations, here we are only scratching the surface.

### **Connection with the outside world, between our internal space and our environment**

This can be thought of as perceptual training which can increase awareness of our senses and our consciousness. First it requires being conscious that we are with ourself, then that we are with others, then that there are different spaces within the room, and what those spaces contain, and, finally, to increase the perception of all the concentric circles of space radiating out from ourself to the universe, from the interior to the exterior, and from the exterior to the infinite. In this way we can harmonize within our own being, ourself, our form, and the whole universe. Such is the potential meaning of realizing unity in movement. But this will require further study of the body.

### **Vital points or energy centers and their inter-connections**

We can observe several important points which correspond to the discipline of Chinese internal energy:

- the feet: the forefoot corresponds to the Yong quan point (connected to the ankles and knees);
- the hands: the palm corresponds to the Lao Gong point (connected to the wrists and elbows);
- the anterior superior iliac is linked to the middle and interior of the foot. An extension of the iliac spine to the ground designates a spot between the two feet (the distance between the ischiums is between 8 and 12 cm for women and between 6 and 8 cm for men);
- pelvis, Qi Hai point (below the navel);
- thorax, Shan Zhong point (the sternum);
- the navel;
- the nose;
- the Hui Yin point is in the middle of the perineum is, and the Bai Hui point is at the top of the head.

All these energy centers move together and at the same time, and participate in this mobile unit that is our body performing the form.

### **Connecting the energy points by thought**

For those who have some knowledge of Chinese internal energy, it is possible to see the coordination of these different points:

- Yong Quan: Gushing Spring (1R),
- Lao Gong: Palace of Labor/Fatigue (8MC),
- Hui Yin: Meeting of the Yin meridians (1VC),
- Ba Hui: Meeting of the Yang meridians (20VG),
- Qi Hai: Ocean of energy (6VC),
- Ming Men: Gate of life/destiny (4VG).

## **Singularities and properties of movement**

### **Rhythms**

There is more than one rhythm. Each part of the body moves according to its own rhythm, and exists and acts according to their frequency. In our practice of Taiji, we can align the rhythms of the feet, legs, pelvis, trunk and arms into one harmonious and unified rhythm, which is why we have presented the connections described above. Rhythm can also be understood as the ability of each joint to move and be moved.

As we have already said, this process does not necessarily happen without any thought: we can direct our consciousness to each part, by listening attentively and with sensitivity, in a perpetual renewal of our attention.

Because each part moves at its own pace, the correct arrangement of the articular puzzle requires constant listening, so that the segments are placed correctly, at the right time, and in the right direction, so that everything starts and ends together, in a single moment.

The amplitude and mobility of each zone of the body being different, it is important to develop a fine and sensitive perception, in order to follow the principles exposed above. So here are some suggestions taking into account what has already been said:

- the feet initiate and lead the moving body;
- the pelvis listens to the feet;
- the shoulders listen to the pelvis;
- the hands listen to the feet;
- the feet listen to the pelvis and the shoulders;
- and the 3 parts (feet-shoulders-pelvis) continuously listen to each other.

### **The spiral, lemniscate, and Moebius strip**

The human body moves in spirals, like the infinite movement traced by the horizontal 8 "∞" or lemniscate; this pattern is reversible, and is found in all of



our gestures. We can thus use it to bring the body into harmony. Following these configurations, while respecting the physiognomy of our body, makes it possible to achieve relaxation. The practice of Bagua Zhang can help to better understand these circular movements and to integrate them into the body. This merits further discussion, but it is not our main objective here.

### Unity in movement

We have reached the end of the first part of this text. In a multiplicity of possible movements, all is contained in one. No complete separation: everything is linked and interconnected. Each gesture reveals a potential for action, whatever its goal. Each sequence of the form, each gesture is contained within another, everything interpenetrates, such that everything is present as a whole, and able to act as a unit in harmony with the Whole.

In this noble perspective, using thought to accompany a passage from imagination to sensation (along with a solid study and understanding of body-mechanics) is crucial.

\*

## The Yangjia Michuan form and its meaning: thinking it, realizing it, valuing it

### The form as a puzzle

Bringing the form to life is the essential activity of the practitioner. The regular practice of the form serves to improve motor coordination, it is an excellent way to develop our psychomotricity. Through careful work, we can more correctly and naturally place our joints, and find their optimal range of motion. Generally speaking, practicing our form means structuring the body, organizing it to create functional gestures, all of which also confers meaning and legitimacy to the study of body-mechanics.

What about the form in question? A succession of gestures and postures, which can be seen as network, of which each node, each intermediate station, participates in a set of flexible units in connection with each other, bringing us back to the idea of maintaining, through the harmony of thought and the deep understanding of the fundamental principles of movement, a unity of multiplicity. Have you ever thought that performing a series of martial movements, since that is what we are talking about, is like deciphering a puzzle? First of all, a deciphering of articulations and then of movement, but also of its martial aspects? We will come to that. Each part, each gesture is contained in and emanates from a similar body, which we all have, with four limbs and a certain number of muscles and joints, of similar shape. Under these conditions, the form, and all it

contains and helps develop, is accessible to everyone. The form is tailor made for humans.

We may wonder if practicing a sequence isn't a way of tying ourselves to it unconditionally? Freezing ourselves in a form of inertia, itself already frozen, hostile to creativity? Creativity is not necessarily just the addition of new content, but can be understood in terms of a sensitivity to our body, of our body's means of expression and its adaptability. A body which senses and thinks is also creative.

Perhaps it is possible to bypass this fossilization by seeking to find what is martial in the form, the martial aspects which are the *raison d'être* of the gestures and movements integrated in a flowing, continuous and fluid form. Perhaps a study of each individual movement can be interesting and useful, as long as we don't lose sight of the fact that ultimately its goal is the application of dynamic, free and mobile exercises, which link the movements. Obviously, it is up to each person to decide what he or she wants to accomplish in this type of practice.

### For a dynamic re-creative practice of Yang Jia Michuan Taiji Quan

At present, the form has not been practiced as such, but rather has moved from its martial dimension to a technique for developing health. This, in itself, is of course a good thing. But if we want to address the martial dimension, the form must be implemented in the educational setting of mobility, closer to the conditions of free-work. Only then can we get an idea of the martial aspect of the form.

Most Taiji Quan practitioners only see the form as a series of individual movements, but once we get past this vision, the form gives us an infinite repertoire of actions, admittedly limited to the upright position, so not totally complete, but absolutely good enough.

As a reminder, the form is a tool for memorizing existing techniques that proved useful during clashes between clans, their internecine wars and other human conflicts. It was not designed to be practiced as it is today. Let's take the "cloud" technique, which I don't think needs to be reinvested as such, but it is a starting point, which can provide an orientation, coordination and sensitivity. There are multiple possibilities, the form serving above all as a mnemonic device. It is a dictionary, containing potential re-actualizations, whose words can be used to build sentences, always adapted to the immediate context.

To repeat and complete what was said before, there is no static posture in our form. In practicing it, we are always in a state of transition from one movement to another. I think that one shouldn't isolate a movement without insisting on the idea that all demonstrations, whatever they are, should always be done

in movement. If we limit ourself to a fixed position, when studying a movement, it cannot do justice to the gestural truth of that movement. Personally, for each demonstration, I always point out that all gestures are part of a movement. However, I admit that in order to learn it is sometimes necessary to use a more static approach, but this is only one step: afterwards, it is important to be able to practice this gesture in movement. Otherwise, it is impossible to use it properly afterwards in free work. This study must first go through a decoding of the body, which we have tried to demonstrate in a practical and accessible way, with the help of a certain number of key ideas: how our body moves, the rhythms that animate it, the notion of space, etc. This will not happen by itself!

From my experience and from a long practice of various martial arts, I can tell you that the form is indeed a repertoire, a martial puzzle, and that with it almost everything is possible: we can find Shui jiao, Qina, projections, sweeps, strikes using the palm, fist, elbow, knee, with the heel, or leg. Simply put, almost all possibilities, at least in the upright position, are found in the form. Moreover, in its design, the Yangjia Michuan form assumes the presence of eight attackers, and that eight directions are possible, which is why the widening of perception that we recommended before is so important in the process of becoming whole, as anything can come from any side. The form is based on the natural movement of the human body, so it should be possible to practice it in any situation as simply as the most elementary of movements, like walking, waiting for the bus or talking to someone. It is possible to create exercises that involve these different aspects of the form, in order to consider the different levels of practice and understanding. So, the form is conducive to endless variations, which, admittedly, is difficult to demonstrate on paper. Moreover, encouraging the development of the martial aspects of our style may be a solution to the difficulty of bringing young people into our practice.

One objective would be to develop an updated, lively and creative form which, to put it more trivially, though not less truthfully, "looks good", and which demonstrates the imagination required to make visible the latent martial aspect of the form. The aim would be to achieve this through a study that would allow us to reconnect with the original vision of Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan, to rediscover its original meaning. I think that the purpose of our art is mainly martial and can be expressed in the practice of dynamic exercises, in free and creative work. In this case, being creative also means going beyond the constraints of the past, and updating them. A simple copy of the form does not reveal the reality of the gestures: tradition is not reason. Through a few principles extracted from my practice and discussed in this article, through the different possibilities of reading the body and its movements that have been

described, through the practices sketched and suggested, we hope to be able to give more meaning to our art, and the means to experience and actualize this meaning.

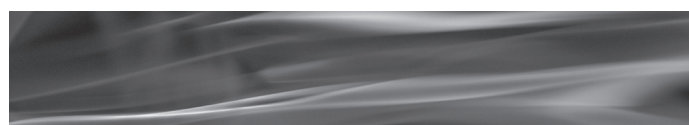
\*

This document, a synthesis of my practice, is as far from being finished as my practice is. I have been practicing the Yangjia Michuan form for thirty-four years. My teacher is Serge Dreyer. I am very happy to have met him and to have practiced the form with him. He helped me discover many different practices, especially to the art of tasting good wines. He always pushed us forward, firmly but gently, and maintained a free space in which to experience Taiji Quan. I thank him for all this.

There is no end to our practice.

Practice well!

I am infinitely grateful to Lucas Limasset for reading and re-reading my ideas and helping me put them onto this page.



# OPENING-CLOSING

During the seminar of the College of the teachers of Yangjia michuan Taiji quan of 27/28 March 2015 and of 10/13 March 2016 at Rocheton (at La Rochette close to Melun), three workshops on the subject of 'opening-closing' were led by three different participants.

## **1. Workshop led by Jean-Luc Pérot March 2015, reported by Laurence Bovay in April 2015. The article was reviewed by Laurence in December 2020.**

From the stand point of 2020, completely shattered, like a giant Ji come from the Middle Kingdom, 2015 seems light years away to us. Yet it was really us, in the flesh, happy to meet together for real, to discuss and to practise together.

Through a progression of exercises, Jean-Luc encouraged us to discover the dynamics arising from the contrast-connection between:

- visible body / invisible body,
- apparent side / hidden side,
- explicit / implicit,
- exterior / interior.

## **POSTURE**

### **The wave**

#### 1. The **vertical** axis

Work on the posture, experience the vertical axis, descend and come back up again or dive and resurface, feel the elasticity of the two polarities, nourish the abandonment in a fall to earth, accompanied by a solar suspension that stretches upwards.

Going from abandonment to construction, between the two - the breath.

In this double movement of rise-fall, feel in the rise the beginnings of elements which already descend and conversely, until one feels a wave-like movement

The dynamic starts from the bottom, pushing upwards with expansion-dilation right to the top



of a hill, then return descending with a quality of condensation.

Follow or produce the wave.

Play with the alternating transfer of weight, load one foot and relieve the other, open one flank and close the other.

## 2. The **horizontal** plane

Swinging the arms front to back (An), push with two hands towards the front.

The components of the push are not yet completed when already underneath the retreat has been initiated. The impression of two concurrent layers developing in opposite directions is very noticeable. One sees that it advances whilst the retreat is invisible, hidden.

Having explored the centre, we go on to discover the world.

## THE CONQUEST OF SPACE

displacement and teaching the directions

### The walk

Identifying the directions, displacements within a quadrilateral grid of eight squares.

Functioning of the open-close concerning the coxofemoral joint.

Awareness of one's front and rear sides. Anything I can do in one direction I can do in the other. Self-awareness in volume.

Turn on the generosity. Open, widen the arms, welcome / narrow them and aim at a focal point.

The elbows disappear in favour of the focus. Another aspect of open-close, welcome or take aim, Lu / Ji.

In the walk and the standing posture, it is the second toe which aims along the axis and delineates the furrow.

Awareness of the cardinal directions:

- walk in a 'natural' way, the arms swinging up and down alongside the body,
- walk such that one raises the arms up to the horizontal to form a right angle pointing straight forwards and to balance straight out to the side,
- walk idem where one adds a movement of the head, in the opposite direction to the right angle (are you following?) so as to occupy the four cardinal directions.

Anyway, Jean-Luc made us turn in all directions, like pawns on a chess board, forwards, reverse, cardinal directions and across the diagonals like bishops, such that we sometimes lost track of which foot was free, the only one able to manage the changes of direction.

### DYNAMIC BREATH and rhythm

Variations on the game of inspire and expire, of coil and uncoil to avoid the division into two of a continuous circular movement, the respiratory cycle, like in a musical score, up to a rapid rhythm. Respiration: activating the different levels, chest, diaphragm, abdomen, kidneys.

The waltz: exiting our constraining quadrilateral, pursuit of the conquest of space, we could stride across the whole room with a more open and free





waltz step, and alternating resonant inspires and expires.

In the style of a whirling dervish: experiment with; turns, pivoting and spinning.

The pivot is the foot at the centre, actuate the wheel with the external foot, the weight transfer drives back force to the centre each time and helps the support, tautens the vertical axis whilst the core radiates horizontally. Arms out horizontally, it turns strongly and I can assure you it's exhilarating

This work is inspired by Michel Raji:

Michel Raji & Yumma Mudra

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sey8YXCdpcI>

*'A sleeping soul serves no purpose. It must be awoken with a breath as one breathes on an ember. That breath, called Nafas in literary Arab, is described by the artist as the breath of all breaths: of the breath is born the respiration. A circular respiration, self-harmonising, -transmuting, -connecting then spiralling. This spiral rooted profoundly at its centre becomes sometimes song or silence in a breath, internal, within the tissue, cellular, barely perceptible, but the presence of which ritualises the essence of the sacred.'*

## **BY WAY OF CONCLUSION**

Jean-Luc gave us two workshops in his free-thinking, free-moving style, sharing with us his quest:

- transmission does not consist of taking a packet from the right and passing it on to the left, but of integrating and experiencing personally, by taking on-board its imprint;
- he sees no difference between Taiji quan and Qi gong; 'As long as there is a relationship (human) and a difference in potential, it is energy.';
- the form is visible but the motor is invisible;
- the poetry of the word sweeps along the energy; he chooses not to use Chinese words since we need our mother tongue to understand the poetry; so, go down to Cuba ('cul bas' (French for 'bottom down')) and the spoon of the sacrum will take you up to the 7th heaven!

And Laurence concludes:

*'Thank you Jean-Luc for the pleasure brought by your workshops, always revitalizing and playful. In the face of this pandemic, and in all the behaviours it induces, how do Opening and Closing present themselves? The circulation of energy, the Qi, in this retreat and distance between bodies, the filter of screens? Spiritual opening? And in the face of this shock, does a deeper understanding of Taoism help you? How do you practise these days? What closes and what opens? Where is your invisible motor? Do take up your pens and write to us about it!'*

Laurence Bovay, December 2020

**2. Workshop led by Sabine Metzlé with a contribution from Claudy Jeanmougin in March 2016, reported by Jean-Claude Trap, and having the theme: opening-closing in 'the hands move like the clouds'.**

**Preface:**

Originally the gesture was performed three times. Master Wang added two more (Was this for educational reasons?). .




Reference is made to the article by Shen Shixiong, 'Taiji quan or how to maintain and nourish one's life force', translated by Sabine Metzlé and published in number 77 of the Bulletin de l'Amicale:

'In the practice of Taiji quan, as a technique for maintaining life, the accent is placed on developing the internal energy and not on the gestures, on the internal and not the external. This is why particular attention is paid to the respiration; but respiration in the context of Taiji quan corresponds to different phases in the practice: opening (kāi 開), closing (hé 合), the action of gathering [energy] (xù 蓄) and the action of liberating [energy] (fā 發); by no means is it a question of pulmonary respiration. The terms 'opening', 'closing', 'gathering' and 'liberating' are to be grouped in pairs. The first two refer to the external aspects of Taiji quan and the latter two have an internal signification. Regarding the external aspects: opening (kāi 開) and closing (hé 合) (also to be understood as reunite); when one practises slowly, in reality the movement can be decomposed in the following way: opening (kāi 開), turn (zhuǎn 轉), closing (hé 合) turn (zhuǎn 轉).

Regarding the internal significance: gather together (xù 蓄) and liberate (fā 發); when one practises slowly, in reality the movement passes through four phases: gather together (xù 蓄), release (sōng 鬆), liberate (fā 發), release (sōng 鬆). These two aspects, internal and external, should combine harmoniously during practice.'

**Opening:** phase of expansion, of increase in volume (dilatation), which allows for mobility. The movement is rather circular.

**Closing:** phase of retraction, of decrease in volume (depression). It is the phase when the gesture is expressed. The movement is rather linear.

## THE RESPIRATION IN QUESTION

The scansion of the respiration (hūxī 呼吸) is more related to the notion of opening-closing, that is to say the gestural respiration, rather than the respiration in the sense of ventilation. One should leave the autonomic centres regulate the ventilation according to their needs

An aside was made regarding the various rhythms; cardiac, ventilatory, bodily and energetic, from two perspectives:

- In Osteopathy (following the western osteopath's terminology):
  - o Primary Respiratory Motion: 6 to 12 cycles / min.
  - o the Mid-tide: 2 to 3 cycles / min.
  - o the Long Tide: 90 to 100 sec. / cycle
- in Traditional Chinese Medicine:
  - o circulation of the energy in 24 hours with waves every two hours
 and the recognition of the primary respiration, the breath of life.

Exercise alone: in the so called 'tree' posture (zhànzhūāng 站樁), allow the inherent (spiral) movement appear.

Exercise in pairs: push against one hand, the other under the elbow of the partner > push progressively > pause-maintain > the bodily expression comes automatically.

蓄

## ANALYSIS OF THE GESTURE

'the hands move like the clouds'

The shoulders follow the pelvis.

Relax the arms and do not lead with the elbows. Do not overdo the twisting of the spine; the lumbar vertebrae allow a rotation of 5° > do not compensate with the dorsal vertebrae > balance the tensile load, that is to say, spread the rotation over the entire vertical axis.

Opening (gain in volume) - suspension - closing (expression) - relaxation.

The suspension (release) corresponds to the rotation of the forearms.

Displacement to the left side (yang) - the right side (yin) on the spot.

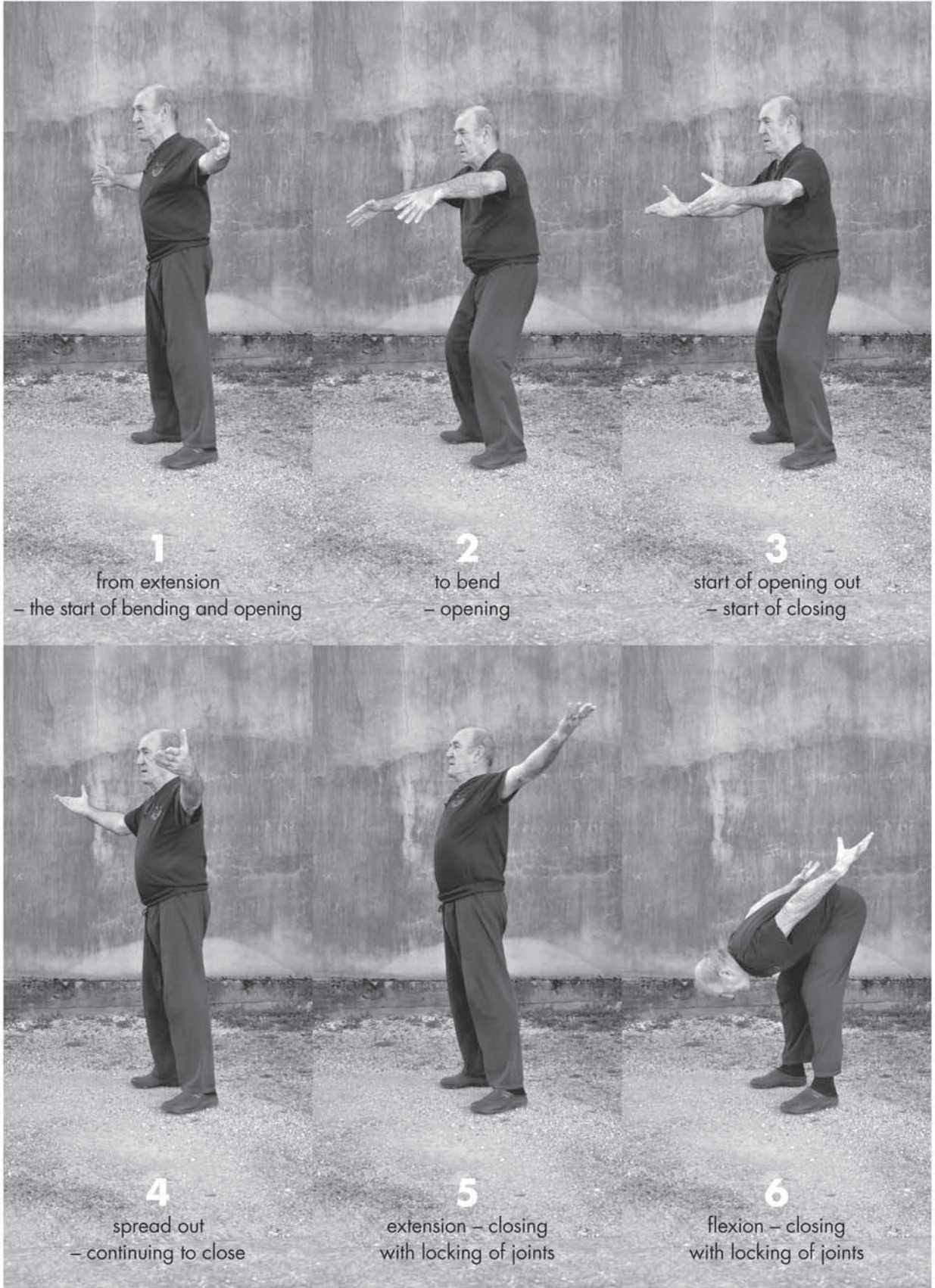
## REGARDING THE SUSPENSION

The transition between opening and closing happens at the moment of suspension (sōng 鬆).

In the 'explanation for the practice Taiji quan', attributed to Wang Zong, it says: *'To gather together the energy is to draw the bow. To liberate it is to shoot the arrow.'* The suspension corresponds to the instant just before shooting the arrow.

There is an aside regarding learning to absorb (xù 蓄) - empty (sōng 鬆) - give back (fā 發) for which the teaching approaches differ between clearly separating the three phases, and considering them as only one movement.

The suspension can also be considered as a 'pause' (of latency) at the end of the release. The release allows for refocussing. The suspension is the return to unity which allows all the forces to be reorganised. It corresponds to the moment when the gaze precedes the movement, the moment when all is possible and without which there is no Taiji.



**3. Workshop led by Claudy Jeanmougin in March 2015, reported by Valérie Opiel, completed by Claudy Jeanmougin, and having as theme an extract from the classic text** Shí sān shì gē 十三勢歌 (the song of the 13 potentials) attributed to Sòng Shūmíng 宋書銘.

### Valérie

In the Classic, the song of the 13 postures, one phrase is translated by: *'Whether you bend or you straighten up, closing and opening, let your body listen to nature.'*

Claudy is not happy with this translation (which is his own). It concerns a concept which cannot be grasped by the intellect. To listen with the ear and the heart, oneself, one's innermost nature, that which is latent in oneself, that which is already present, that which is inherent to one's nature. To become aware of what is already there.

We have several rhythms in us, structural rhythms (for example the bones) and fluidic (blood, lymph), and the respiration which is an energetics rhythm. When practising we work on the elasticity of tissues, the alternations, becoming aware of them and listening to them:

OPENING ↔ CLOSING  
 STRETCH ↔ ALLOW TO RETURN, RELEASE  
 EXPANSION ↔ DENSIFICATION,  
 CONDENSATION, RETRACTION

One can already observe these alternations in a paramecium, this respiration.

### Claudy

In fact, it is simply a question of taking a verse from the Classic mentioned above: Qū shēn kāi hé tīng zì yóu 屈伸開合聽自由, and of linking certain terms to be able to have a broader grasp of what can be understood by opening and closing.

### FIRST LINK

Qū 屈 (to bend) is associated with shēn 伸 (to straighten up) and kāi 開 (to open) is associated with hé 合 (to close).

This allows us to superimpose qū on kāi (bend and open) and shēn on hé (straighten up and close) and so to deduce that: To bend is to open, and to open out is to close, as we show you is the example exercise. It is not because one bends (apparent closure) that one closes, and it is not because one straightens out (apparent opening) that one opens. We therefore have two concepts which complement one another without there being redundancy of terminology. The so-called apparent closure is in fact an opening since one affords a greater degree of movement to the joints. The apparent opening, like an over-extension, is in fact a closure since one blocks the joints in one direction, for example that of extension.

### SECOND LINK

Qū shēn 屈伸, to be flexible, to submit, to arise and shēn kāi 伸開, to stretch or to spread out, complement each other such that we can feel the alternation which binds opening and closing so intimately.

As to tīng zì yóu 聽自由, it is simply a matter of listening to what is happening inside oneself, its nature and to let it happen, as recommended by the Taoists with the principal of wúwéi 無為 of non-intervention, to let it be.





jean-claude issemann

### One image, two captions

**A** (for those who have followed Jean-Luc's workshop)

– I feel that I am in a more opening posture, but some signs at the coxofemoral level lead me to believe that my body diagram has not fully integrated the underlying poetry of the exercise. I'll read the article once again.

**B** (for those who have followed both Sabine's and Claudy's workshop)

– Master, forgive my rough pinyin but when I apply: Dāng kāikǒu guānbì shí, shì shíhòu jiāng zhǎnkāi de zhé biān fàng huí yuán wèile. I always find myself at a dead end.

– 放松, 听听宁静的大自然 \*

\*Let nature take its course and try to stay upright.

# Human relations within the worlds of Chinese culture and their impact on the world of martial arts

Serge Dreyer

In this section I will explore a wide range of factors that shape the world of Chinese martial arts, including taiji quan (henceforth TJQ), at varying levels. When I am invited by associations, I notice during the time devoted to questions and answers that the image of TJQ and that of Mr. Wang in particular is largely the result of coffee shop talk or even fantasies. Most of the time, they are peddled by the anonymous “they say”. Too often, the transmitters of information do not have the necessary critical distance from Chinese culture to understand the multiple interactions between a Chinese teacher and his students.

I will take an example that happened during Mr. Wang's training course in Chalonnes in the Loire (date?). It turns out that a great man of taiji quan had come to participate in the Jasnières Meetings in Marçon which is about 1 hour drive from Chalonnes. He is famous in our milieu and knew Mr. Wang in Taiwan where he is originally from although he has lived for many years in New York. He is a student of Cheng Man-Ching, the great rival of Mr. Wang. I don't remember who organized the meeting but the witnesses of their meeting told me that he mentioned in the conversation with Mr. Wang that they were “brothers<sup>1</sup> in practice”. The whole assembly present was ecstatic when

they heard these words which gave the impression that two masters met and sailed in the happiest harmony... When I saw Mr. Wang in Taiwan again, I told him about this meeting. He knew that I knew the implications of this kind of talk, so he didn't hesitate to express his grumbling. What kind of bad mood could this expression, brothers of practice, generate in such an affable person as Mr. Wang? This expression can be understood in two ways:

1. We have both been practicing the same martial art for a long time, which creates a bond of brotherhood between us.
2. We have the same teacher and therefore we are “natural brothers of practice”.

However, many elders of the Cheng Man Ching school in Taiwan were spreading the rumor that Mr. Wang was in fact his student... Obviously, he did not show his displeasure in Chalonnes. We will see why when I explain the notion of face in China.

So I will approach socialization in the Chinese world in different stages which will be roughly:

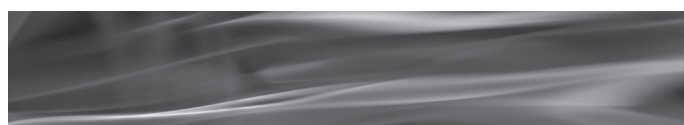
- The notion of face (mianzi and lian)
- The networks (guanxi and renqing wang)
- The educational culture in China and Taiwan and its impact on the teaching of martial arts
- The place of martial arts in Chinese society: the opposition between the scholar (wen) / martial (wu)
- The particular and ambiguous place (nei (internal) and wai (external) of TJQ in the recent history of China

1. The term used was “elder brother”, respectful of the hierarchy as mandatory in Chinese culture since Master Wang was older than him.

- The representations of the French in China and more broadly the representation of Westerners
- The representations of the Chinese in France
- The role of history
- The TJQ invites itself to Europe: the intercultural dimension of this encounter and its functioning / dysfunctioning

My objective is to promote a contextualized understanding of Mr. Wang's teaching (and that of other wushu teachers) beyond personal trajectories. In this way, I wish to encourage a more open discourse on realities that are often obscured because of the hyper-emotional / hyper-affective dimension of the relationship between European learners and Chinese teachers. I remember the emotion of Nathan Menaged, an American teacher living in Germany and a regular at the Jasnières Meetings, who discovered the dysfunctional nature of his relationship with the teacher he reveres, simply because no one had ever spoken to him about the notion of face and network.

This presentation will obviously be open to debate, which I hope will be done in a calm atmosphere.





# The “Rencontres Amicales” and their organization

A dialogue between Danièle and Joël Panhelleux,  
and Claudy Jeanmougin

## Claudy

Because of the confinement imposed by the government, the Rencontres Amicales that were scheduled for November 2020 in the “Cité Nocturne” (a Hotel complex in the Puy Du Fou) had to be canceled, and I can only imagine the despair of Daniele and Joel Panhelleux, the organizers.

Having organized many Rencontres Amicales, I studied with great attention the organization put in place for the Puy du Fou and I have to say that there were many innovations that brought this organization to a very high level of competence and will be a challenge to future applicants.

I thought that all this work should not go to waste hence the idea for this article based on a series of exchanges in order that a system of organization might be set up which might help as well as create the desire to host more Rencontres.

With time, the Rencontres have become a real institution with an attendance that has enormously increased, since while the first session had 90 participants, they now have hosted over 300 on many occasions. Maybe we should go over the history of the Rencontres? Without going too far off topic, they were born from the second General Assembly of the Amicale. It so happens that the first GA had only a dozen members who thought that there was a need for an event that would draw more people. It

was Franck Bealet who had the idea of organizing these Rencontres in order for the Taiji practitioners to meet up and exchange. The first Rencontre, like the second actually, were organized by the bureau of the Amicale. Subsequently, after having its submission endorsed by the GA, an association would put in place all the organization of the Rencontres. The first session put in place under this new formula was organized by the ATCHA association in Annecy. And this has been the case until these last ones that were organized not by an association, but by individual members, in this case Danièle and Joël.

So the first question for Danièle and Joël is: do you think that the current system of organization of the Rencontres Amicales are still up-to-date? Based on what you have done, what are your thoughts? And what innovations have you made compared to the preceding Rencontres?

## Danièle and Joël

First of all, we have to say that as organizers of the Rencontres we considered ourselves as being in the service of the Amicale. Which brings up the question of what is expected from the organizers in terms of, on the one hand, the setting up of the Rencontres (enrolment, lodging, food..) and on the other, the running of the Rencontres (General Assembly, workshops,...).

As far as the set up is concerned, we appreciated that the Amicale brought an undeniable plus thanks to the

treasurer who frees the organizers of the banking responsibilities. Beyond the time savings, it is reassuring.

As for the rest of it, meaning (in chronological order) finding lodging, catering, a meeting room for the GA, location (if possible covered) for the workshops, budgets and presenting the project, then managing the enrollment and preparing the registration, it all requires rigor and most importantly a method.

Using the usual computerized tools we were able to deal with all that with no problem, just the two of us. We should note that up to this point, no matter the number of participants, whether a hundred or three hundred, the work is the same it just takes a little longer.

If we want to talk of innovations in the context of set up, we added a "RV / Car camping" option, clearly differentiated from the "external" option in order to support this new type of public. Also, and more importantly, we facilitated car-pooling by providing a link and access code to the site "MoveWiz" for those who needed it (both passengers and drivers) (with a guide "how to use MoveWiz for the Rencontres 2020" online on the Amicale website).

As for running the Rencontres, we can only describe what we planned, the canceling of the 2020 Rencontres preventing us from validating our ideas.

In order to reassure any potential future postulants to organize a Rencontre, we would say that the organizers have only two essential functions to prepare:

- The breaks.
- The evening entertainment.

If we want to talk about innovations in the context of the program over the 3.5 days (or 2.5 usually):

- For the breaks, we decided to call on the participants for help. To our great pleasure we saw that volunteers were plentiful (and we would like to take this chance to thank them once more).
- For the evening, we delegated the musical entertainment to a trio of "talented" Amicale members who in turn reached out to other Amicale members who were similarly "talented". The cancelation of the Rencontre has left us frustrated that we will not be able to discover with all the other participants what they had in store for us. Isn't it nice that the organizers have also their share of surprises?!
- We were unable to test our idea of "multi mini-shows" which would have invited whichever participant would have liked to prepare a short show, five to ten minutes, on a proposed theme. This idea came to us rather naturally since there is only two of us and the managing of the Rencontre would have required us to be accessible. Because of Covid and

the uncertainty it brought we had few proposals, but it still seems like the idea could free up whichever organization is in charge since there is already much to do in order for everything to run smoothly.

### **To go back to the question: do you think the current system of organizing the Rencontres de l'Amicale is still up to date?**

- In light of the above notes, we would tend to answer yes. Yes, if we limit ourselves to the aspects that are strictly organizational and supported by the Amicale (in order of involvement) and the treasurer, vice-president and president (in regard to the administrative tasks of the annual Rencontres).

To introduce what will follow, we propose this portion of an email from Joël to François Schosseler :

"... is Tai Chi not the art of listening in constant movement to adapt to change. Just look at the documents available on the teaching of Yangjia Michuan: paper, photographs, film (super 8), magnetic tape (VHS) digital (DVD).

The Amicale will be able to experiment with what today's technology offers with video-conferencing (for a large group), and even if this is not perfect, it is an investment for the future.

As to car-pooling: even if only one person signs up on the car-pooling website MoveWiz, I know that it is not a waste of time since I am convinced that the idea is catching on and that the next time everyone will think about it.

I don't forget that technology needs to be there to facilitate and amplify the human values that exist in this fantastic group that the practitioners of Yangjia Michuan constitute.

With the General Assembly on Saturday the 21st of November 2020 by video-conference, we will turn towards 2021, 2022... and beyond.

Many fascinating challenges await the tandem of Amicale / College for the good of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan...

- if we pay careful attention to the running of the Rencontres, we would probably suggest the creation of a reflection group whose role would be to supervise the rolling out of the Rencontres while keeping an eye on the goal that was set from the beginning:

"... it so happens that the first GA only brought only a dozen members who thought that they should create an event to attract more people..."

**Having the most people at the General Assembly  
Having the biggest number of participants  
at the event (the Rencontres)  
Having an Amicale that is long lasting**

This is what motivated us to add a questionnaire to the online registration form.

This questionnaire is based on the choice of three themes:

- Choice of a theme for the WORKSHOP ON ONE OF THE FORMS OF YANGJIA MICHUAN
- Choice of a theme for the WORKSHOP ON A THEME CROSS-CUTTING TO THE TAICHI PRACTICE
- Choice of theme on "A MEETING OF IDEAS"

The answers we received, keeping in mind the low numbers of enrollees due to Covid, are still very informative.

This initiative, we acknowledge, is beyond the scope of our role as organizers of the Rencontres on behalf of the Amicale (as we mentioned before). This might become a job for the think tank mentioned above.

Before handing it over back to you, we can move the discussion along with these points:

- Annual updating of the file on standard operating procedures of the Rencontres for the following year, integrating the notes from the last association that led the Rencontres (this would allow this vital document to evolve, a vade-mecum for the organizers). Why not ask the organizers to answer a questionnaire after each Rencontres?
- Our proposal (not retained) for a day-pass for the local participants.

(Note: in order to not overwhelm the management, we proposed that for two day passes the choice becomes the "external" package).

We have others, the ideas are not lacking!

**Claudy**

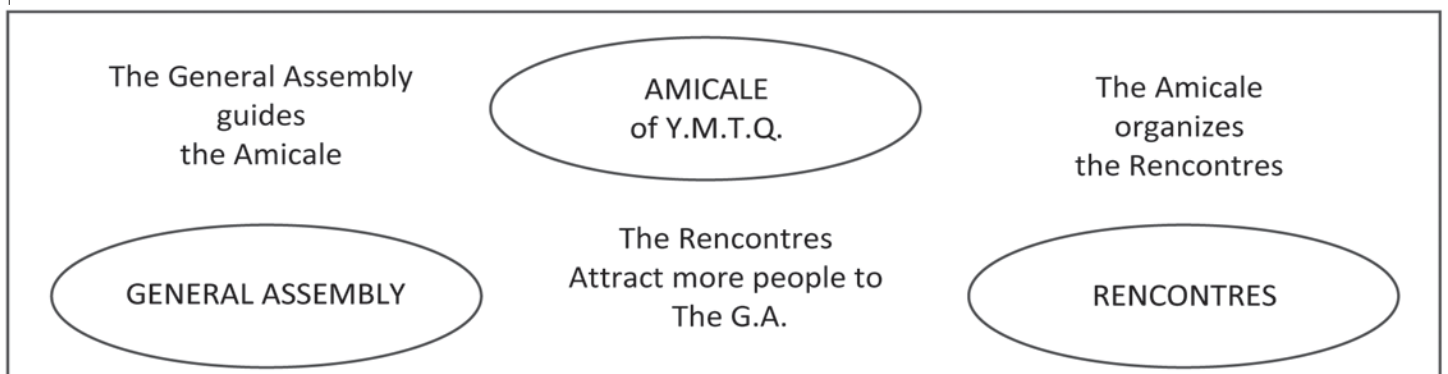
The Standard Operating Procedures of the Rencontres is a precious tool but it should not become so large that no one reads it. It should, indeed, be updated with the input of the latest organizers of the Rencontres but not only them.

When I created that document, a long time ago, the idea was to answer the first questions of the future organizers in a way that they would not be forced to start everything from scratch. Today, it has become a tool that leads you through all the steps along a precise program. I think its updating should include the last two teams which organized the Rencontres.

All this is good, but if on one side there is a lessening of the burden on the organizers, on the other hand it seems like this is an increase of the workload. And this brings me back to the initial question: do you think that the current system to organize the Rencontres of the Amicale is still up to date? And the answer you gave at the beginning: "Which brings up the question of what is expected from the organizers in terms of, on the one hand, the setting up of the Rencontres (enrollment, lodging, food...) and on the other, the running of the Rencontres (General Assembly, workshops,...) seems to me to go in



Visualization of the interactions of the Amicale of Y.M.T.Q / Rencontres / General assembly



the direction of constant updating. Personally, taking into account these constant changes, I would go further and say that we need to rethink the modes of operation of the Rencontres while maintaining the spirit. And I agree with you that the need to create a group or reflection commission becomes inescapable.

What is the spirit of the Rencontres Amicales? First of all the Amicale since I must give a reminder that the Rencontres Amicales are not the Amicale but simply a part of its activities. When the Amicale filed its legal papers, the authors wished to bring together the practitioners of our style. It seemed important to them that these practitioner could know each other to meet up and exchange in order for the style to grow from everyone's inputs. Don't you think the Amicale has done a good job so far? "Exchanges with mutual respect" has always been the basis for the functioning of the Amicale and the Rencontres must continue this spirit.

Mutual respect also means to be as open as possible, meaning that the Amicale should never say no to a member who wishes to host a Rencontres. Some organizers have limited the number of participants and have therefore refused access to some of the members to the Rencontres! I find this unacceptable and the opposite of the spirit of the Amicale. Already, the simple act of planning a Rencontre around the 11th of November prevents certain categories of workers from participating. This limiting factor needs to be reassessed if we want to allow European teachers to sign up, or "our youngsters" that we so wish would come but who could not since they would not be able to take a vacation on that date. Or we have to be open to the possibility of participating only during the weekend, or even just a day, which would lead to the need to revise our system...

But anyway, what of the attendance of the Rencontres since its creation? The record of 300 participants has been broken only twice: in Carcans for the 20 years of the Amicale and foreign students came in great numbers, and at L'Ile de Ré simply because the site was very attractive. We can say that for the the past fifteen to twenty years the number of participants has oscillated between 200 and 300. This means that the organizers need to find facilities that can welcome 300 people. Joël and Danièle, you said it, whether there are 100 or 300 people, it does not affect much the workload of the organizers, "just a little more time" you added.

Some well-meaning people wishing to develop the human, relational side would like to restrict

the attendance at these Rencontres. Saying this is not proof of humanity since it would be exclusionary, and, furthermore, the spirit of the Amicale, which should be the top priority of all the members, would be sacrificed. You two have made sure that no one was excluded and I commend you for that. Did having to welcome a greater number of people cause much anxiety, notwithstanding the events that lead to the cancellation of the Rencontre?

### Danièle and Joël

The readers should not be misled:

- It is as organizers that we proposed ideas so that the setting up of the Rencontres is as easy as possible, to free up energy and respond to the challenge of the constant evolution of the population which constitute the Amicale.
- It is as practicing members (individual members) usually participating that we give ourselves the right to engage in the discussion regarding the running (and content of) of the Rencontres, which involves the Amicale but must engage to a greater degree all the members of the Amicale.

"... the need to create a reflection group becomes inescapable."

Frankly, last April we brought up to the bureau the idea of a "Commission Rencontres". We remember that Jean-Christophe Clavier had correctly stressed the point that this should not lead to the members of the CA becoming the organizers of the Rencontres.

All this brings us to the proposition illustrated by the schema above with the players and their roles.

We invite the readers to tackle the rest of our thoughts we this schema in mind in order to better appreciate what we believe makes a coherent whole.

### **Let's go back to the question: Did having to welcome a greater number of people cause much anxiety, notwithstanding the events that lead to the cancellation of the Rencontre?**

- As to the setting up before the Rencontres, we already answered (no problem, just a bit more responsibility).
- As to the setting up of the Rencontres, taking into account the enthusiasm of the participants when

asked to help manage the breaks and the evening entertainment, we were also optimistic.

- As to the running of the Rencontres, no matter how many participants need to be processed, we consider that our role as organizers needs to be limited to facilitate it (not manage it).

Which is why:

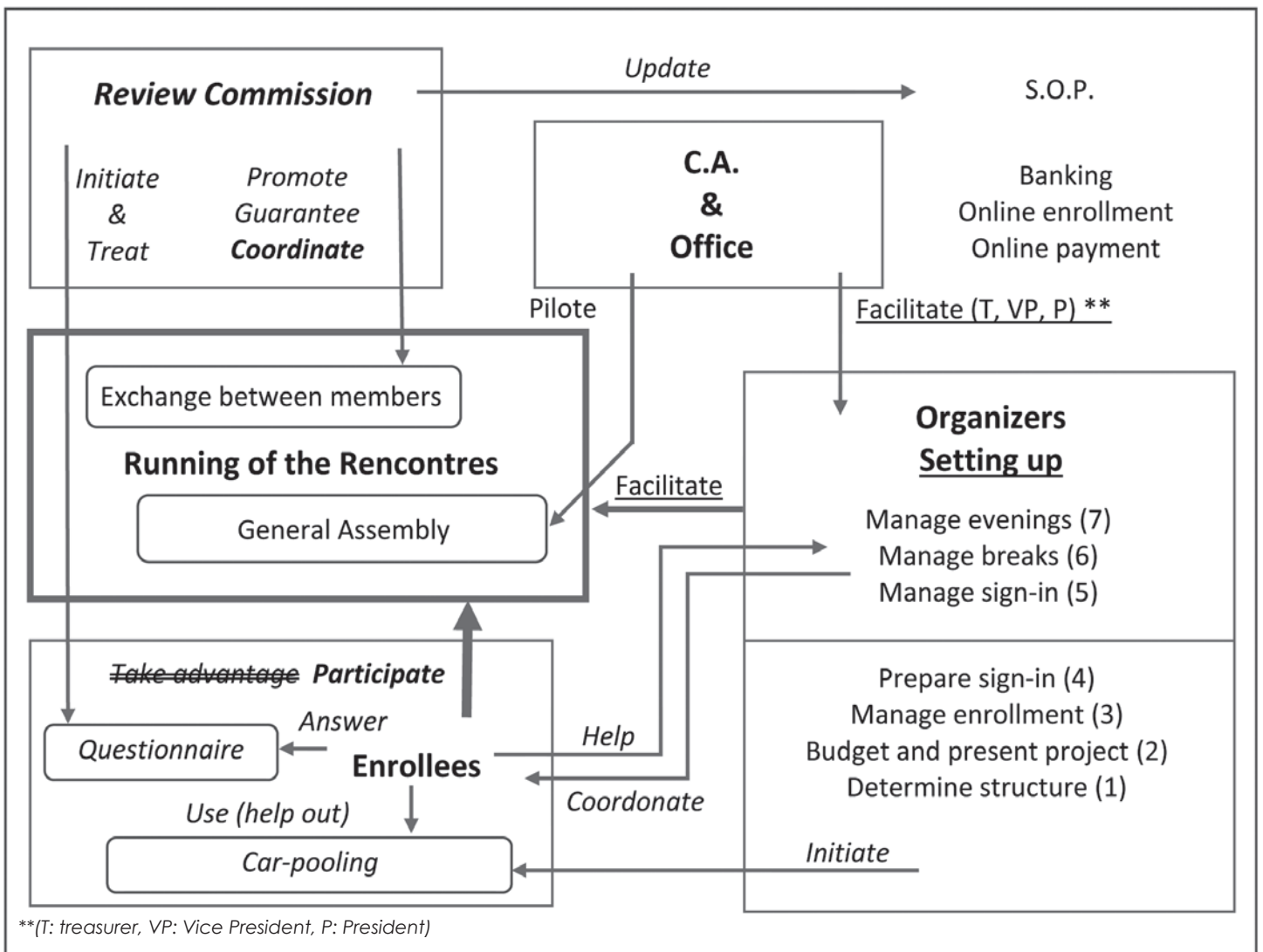
We took the initiative of the questionnaire as a source of information to anticipate the needs (not always expressed at the auction times) for the "classic" workshops and appreciate the responses of the participants to the "meeting of ideas"

workshops that do not require the same constraints in terms of infrastructure.

Reminder: later on, the creation of the questionnaire and the analysis of the responses to craft workshops should be the work of the Think tank (and not of the organizers).

To create an environment most adapted to the expectations is well within the realm of "facilitating" and therefore remains a responsibility of the organizers (see schema above).

To recap: welcoming a greater number of people did not worry us.



**As to the other question: Do you think the Amicale has done a good job so far? "Exchanges with mutual respect" has always been the basis for the functioning of the Amicale and the Rencontres must continue this spirit.**

This is a point which, frankly, is not really the responsibility of the organizers of the Rencontres, but rather of the "Think tank" with the support of the all the practicing members of the Amicale.

The mission of this group goes beyond the Rencontres.

As you say, the Amicale is not restricted to the Rencontres. This "reflection commission of exchanges with mutual respect" as we imagine it, has to be the driving force of proposals (and help) for the promotion of exchanges between all practicing members during the Rencontres and also during the year. To fulfill its mission, this commission has to gather various viewpoints of the practicing members of the Amicale.

Unlike at its beginning (about thirty years ago), the group of practicing members of the Amicale has become less homogenous in its experience of Yangjia Michuan and in what it expects of the practice of Taijiquan.

For example, for just the three authors of this article: the expectations of exchange (theme of workshops, ideas...) for Claudy (30 years in the Amicale and active member of the College), Danièle (20 years in the Amicale and active member of the College), Joël (10 years in the Amicale) will not necessarily be the same, and that is normal / natural. It is good, in order for the Amicale to continue to fulfill its role, that a commission listens to the different needs in order to update the activities of the Amicale.

Before giving you the floor, we would like to raise the following questions:

- Impact of the "reflection commission of the exchanges with mutual respect" on the tandem Amicale / College (the Yang and the Yin of the evolution of Yangjia Michuan according to Master Wang). We take this opportunity to thank the secretary of the College who offered his support for the logistics of the workshops.
- Another question based on an observation. The evolution of the transmission of Yangjia Michuan has been such that, for example, we can see that the "old timers" have little or no interest in studying the new sword form (Wudang / Yen-Nien Sword?).

We know this since, during the (traditional) group requests at the Rencontres de Strasbourg, for 3 days with 4 slots of 10 workshop on average, giving us 120 workshops and none on the new sword!

But the results from the online questionnaire set in place for the 2020 Rencontres shows a need. To the question: "give one theme for a workshop on one of the forms of Yangjia Michuan" of the 41 answers, 11 "technical application of the form (1st and 2nd Duan)", 10 "third Duan", and 6 "New Sword" (and 3 "fan form").

We notice here as always the immutable interest and enthusiasm which characterize the members on the Amicale of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan.

To imagine a response to this demand for the new sword would be a job for the reflection commission. As mentioned before, the solution might not be necessarily to act during the Rencontres (annual) but maybe can take place during the rest of the year.

### **Claudy**

I always thought that the Amicale and the College should not be mixed since their roles are very different. But it so happens that most of the members of the College go to the Rencontres Amicale and it is the only event where they are in such numbers. Because of this, I change my mind and I completely agree with the idea of associating the College with the organization of the workshops. For the last several years, a slot in the schedule has been reserved for a College workshop. This workshop is run exclusively by a member of the College with a common theme throughout the Rencontre. This is the only investment by the College in the Rencontres.

To associate the College with the organizing of the workshops of the Rencontres is surely a good thing but the workshops should not be taught only by members of the College. Opening up the running of the workshops to any volunteer who feels capable of it has allowed younger would-be teachers to have their first experience. If the College is associated with the organizing it would certainly allow to pinpoint the weak points in the teaching provided to the members. But I don't think the College should dictate the content of the workshops. It could make recommendations that would be well received.

As for my initial question: "do you think that the current system of organization of the Rencontres Amicale are still up-to-date?", it seems to me that we are in agreement that the system needs



to be revised and you pointed at potential directions which we will return to later in this article.

Today, it is no longer possible to not have a minimum of organization planned in advance and to just hope it will all be done later. There is a real professionalism in the organizing that requires competencies that are more and more specialized. In addition, we now have computerized tools that were not available before. The use of these tools requires qualifications that did not used to be necessary. Conscious of all of this, we also cannot scare potential organizers. Hence the necessity to provide tools that are easy to use to future organizers.

Also, if we want the Amicale to live outside of the Rencontres, without harming either one, a dynamic needs to be nurtured in the entirety of the Yangjia Michuan community. What I would like to be understood is that, during this period when the Amicale is pondering its durability, there should be a reciprocity between the Rencontres of the Amicale and its members and that this reciprocity should leave room for the younger students that need to be encouraged at all levels of the practice of the discipline of its transmission, by creating a large space for communication, the first pillar of the Amicale, the purpose of its creation. That the Amicale ponders the greying of its membership should be a wake up call to the members of the College who are at the origin of the propagation of the style and whose classes are not attracting younger students.

As you can see, questioning the organization the Rencontres Amicale goes beyond just the Rencontres. Maybe we are at a turning point in our style which might need a "polishing" by not settling for an unproductive self-satisfaction. As soon as it is allowed, I encourage our public to meet up as often as possible and to ask an epistemological reflexion on our style in order to blossom amongst a growing younger population.

## Danièle and Joël

When you asked us to participate in this article, we did not imagine that we would be involved in such a deep reflection. We concur with you on the necessity of reassessing the structure of the Amicale. This article is an opportunity for us to share our vision as individual members, which we would not have had otherwise. The following is our attempt at a synthesis in order to bring some conclusion to this exchange.

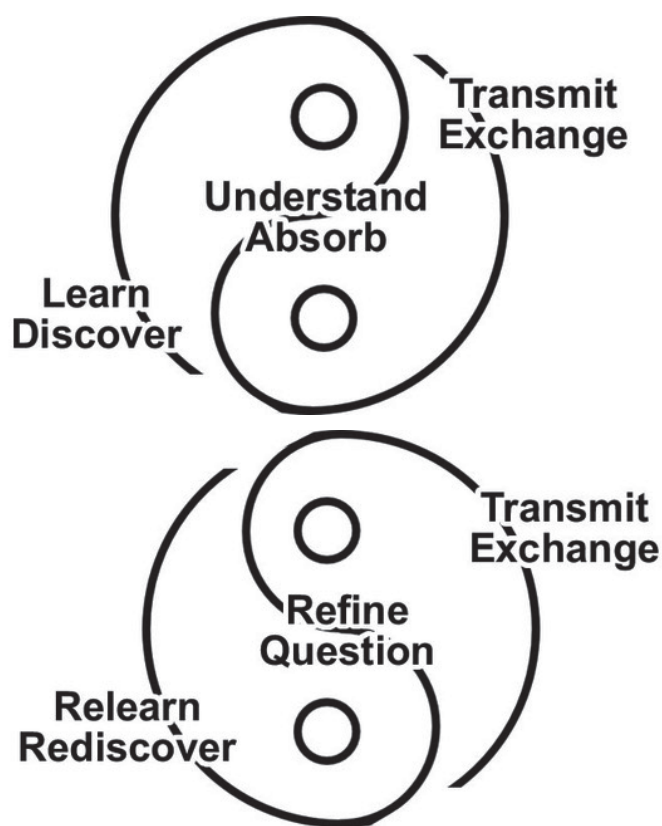
To revisit your terminology: "the entirety of the Yangjia Michuan community", all the members of the the Amicale constitute for us the foundations of the Amicale.

We suggest not "arranging" the members according to categories:

- The "old-timers" and the "kids".
- Teachers and the practitioners.
- The 5th, 6th and 7th generations (see the new website of the Amicale).

But instead put in place a common approach of all the members in their progress in the Yangjia Michuan style.

Cycle of Learning



Here we can see the necessity of gathering together to exchange (collective work) and exchange to progress (individual work).

"Exchange with mutual respect": to gather for a mutual progression.

At the beginning, the membership was such that organizing the annual Rencontres allowed the quasi-totality of the members to meet. Today, getting the 2500 members of the Amicale to meet during an event is impossible. But the need to meet in order to

exchange is still there, hence the necessity for the Amicale to not sleep on its laurels.

The richness of the Yangjia Michuan style in Europe is this welcoming ensemble of practitioners who show a dynamism, a thirst for knowledge (and even more, to understand), and a delight in sharing in order to progress.

All the members of the Amicale represent its energy, the fuel, that guarantees its longevity.

The volunteers that invest themselves in the life of the Amicale are most probably one of the factor that gives the Amicale its strength. The good will of the other members makes offering help an easy decision.

We are, undoubtedly, at a turning point in the evolution of the group, but all the practitioners seem to have in common the respect of the Yangjia Michuan style.

The creation of a Reflection Commission in charge of the promotion of the exchanges between members of the Amicale during the entire year becomes invaluable. Since what brings us together is Yangjia Michuan, we could name it:

### **Reflection Committee for the prosperity of Yangjia Michuan**

**This committee will oversee (among other things)  
the running of the annual Rencontres**

Some avenues of work:

- Updating the standard operating procedures;
- Developing the questionnaire on the themes of workshops in the Rencontres;
- Developing the questionnaire on themes to be developed during the rest of the year;
- The managing of the workshops during the Rencontres;
- Assisting in the use and spread of computerized solutions for tasks;
- The setting up of a video-conference during the General Assembly for the members that cannot be physically present;
- The setting up of video-conference on various subjects available during the rest of the year to alleviate the fears of the members who are geographically isolated;

This Reflection Committee would be in support of what already exists. It would act in order to reduce the pressures on the members already engaged the life of the Amicale.

Do we want that after 30 years, there would be only 50 practicing members? Of course not!

As we had the chance to discover Yangjia Michuan, it becomes our responsibility to promote it whether or not one is a teacher. Therefore:

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui

Whatever the level of knowledge, mutual support needs to remain the central value of the members of the Amicale.

The annual Rencontres must welcome the greatest number of participants possible.

Flanked by the Reflection Committee for the prosperity of the Yangjia Michuan, the organizers of the Rencontres will view their commitment with serenity. To volunteer to organize a Rencontre will not be a frightening prospect.

The organizers will only be responsible for the setting up of the Rencontres.

The Amicale provides an "SOP of the organizing of the Rencontres" that is up to date and will answer the basic questions.

Any further questions can be answered by the members in charge of the Treasury, Vice-presidency and Presidency of the Amicale.

To help them, they can count on the support of the volunteers amongst the members. Though they are still responsible for the coordination of the event.

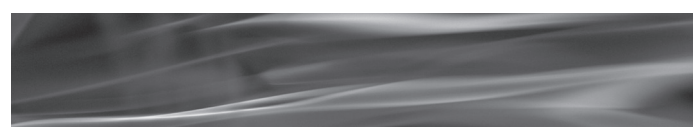
Some pointers:

- Establishing a car-pooling website;
- Options for RV / caravan camping;
- Options for a "day-pass";
- Asking for help from volunteers during breaks;
- Asking for help from volunteers for evening entertainment (music, small shows...)

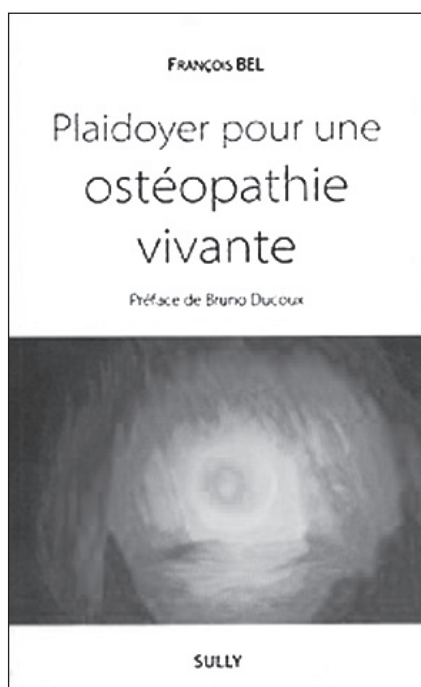
In this new vision of the organizing, "applying to host a Rencontre" means taking on a section of the Rencontres de l'Amicale as a team, instead of alone (with all its anxiety), which is far more encouraging and exciting.

As a conclusion, let's go crazy!

Based, on the one hand, on our experience organizing the "Day of Practice of Yangjia Michuan in Anjou" (since 2014, the 7th edition took place in September of 2020) in line with the suggestion of "Local Rencontres" proposed by the "commission on longevity" and, on the other hand, based on this experience of the Rencontres 2020, we propose to organize two simultaneous Rencontres in two carefully chosen locations!







# Nous avons lu...

## Plaidoyer pour une ostéopathie vivante,

François Bel,  
Sully, 2020

Que vient donc faire un ouvrage écrit par un ostéopathe, pour les ostéopathes d'abord, mais pas seulement eux à mon avis, dans la bibliothèque d'un pratiquant des disciplines corporelles comme le Taiji quan, le Qigong ou autres pratiques s'y rapprochant ?

J'ai été profondément touché par le fait que l'ostéopathie rencontre les mêmes travers que le Taiji quan, à savoir que tout est technique et encore technique, en oubliant les fondements des disciplines tels qu'ils ont été énoncés par les fondateurs. Still, le fondateur de l'ostéopathie, exhortait ses élèves à retrouver chez leurs patients la vitalité qui leur permettrait de recouvrer la santé. Le rôle des ostéopathes doit donc consister à redonner la pleine vie à la fonction, fussent-ils œuvrer avec la structure.

William Gardner Sutherland, qui a mis au point les techniques dites crâniennes, allait plus loin en disant que le thérapeute devait rentrer en contact avec cette force vitale qui était la seule capable de redonner au corps les moyens de se soigner. Ces deux pères de l'ostéopathie étaient convaincus que tout organisme possède en son sein les moyens de se guérir dans le cas d'une atteinte par la maladie. Encore faut-il aller à la rencontre de cette puissance vitale d'autoguérison.

Quels rapports avec nos disciplines ? En première instance, l'entretien de notre santé va consister à faire

en sorte que cette vitalité puisse s'exprimer. Et le mieux que l'on puisse faire pour la découvrir est d'aller à sa rencontre. Pour cela, il va falloir développer un grand degré d'écoute qui peut faire sentir cette grande marée énergétique dont parlent les ostéopathes et qu'il ne faut pas confondre avec ce que les Européens ont nommé Mouvement Respiratoire Primaire ou MRP. Cette Grande Marée des ostéopathes est l'expression de la force vitale en chacun. Si l'on considère le Taiji quan comme une simple technique martiale pour laquelle il faut s'exercer à la pratique des applications techniques par exemple, on la réduit à de la technique, en passant à côté de cette dimension énergétique qui apprendrait ce qu'est le Qi en le vivant et ce qu'est le mieux-être au monde par exemple

Il est un autre point décrit par les fondateurs de l'ostéopathie qui est le fulcrum, ou point d'appui, qui permet d'orienter le praticien dans son action. Cette notion peut être utilisée dans la pratique du Tuishou et cela éviterait de faire des combats de taureaux comme c'est trop souvent le cas.

Enfin, il est aussi question de still-point, ou point d'arrêt. Ce fameux point d'arrêt que nous ressentons au juste instant de la transformation aussi bien dans la pratique de la forme que dans le Tuishou. C'est le fameux vide qui permet tous les possibles.

Je suis persuadé que la lecture de cet ouvrage aura une grande influence sur nos pratiques de Taiji quan.

Claudy Jeanmougin



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

**1<sup>er</sup> Septembre 2020 au 31 Août 2021**

**ABONNEMENT AU BULLETIN tirage PAPIER**

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

**Renouvellement d'Adhésion Collective**

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

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

Je soussigné(e) Nom et Prénom du Responsable Associatif

.....

Votre adresse ①

.....

.....

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

Téléphone	Portable	Adresse Mail

Nom de l'Association : .....

Adresse du siège social de l'Association ② :

Téléphone :	Adresse Mail :
Fax :	Site Internet :

**Règlement pour l'Adhésion collective**

- Je règle 30,00 € car le groupe est inférieur ou égal à 15 personnes.
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**Abonnement au Bulletin de l'Amicale tirage papier (3 numéros par an)**

**Pour votre association**

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

**Modalités de règlement**

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Les règlements doivent être effectués à l'ordre de «Amicale du Yangjia Michuan TJQ»,  
A adresser à AMICALE DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN / Alain Coussedière,  
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Email : [tresor.ymtjq@gmail.com](mailto:tresor.ymtjq@gmail.com) Site Web : [www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org](http://www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org)

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**Données personnelles**

En adhérant à l'Amicale du Yangjia Michuan TJQ j'accepte, au titre de Responsable Associatif, que mes données personnelles recueillies fassent l'objet d'un traitement informatique en vue de tenir à jour le fichier des adhérents de l'Amicale. Elles sont destinées aux membres du bureau de l'Amicale.

Conformément au Règlement Général de Protection des Données entré en vigueur depuis le 25 Mai 2018, je bénéficie d'un droit d'accès et de rectification des informations me concernant en m'adressant au Secrétariat de l'Amicale.

Fait à :

Le :

Signature :



# Le Site Web fait peau neuve



## Le site fait peau neuve

nouveau design, nouvelles fonctionnalités

[www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org](http://www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org)

Nous espérons qu'il vous donnera satisfaction et que vous y trouverez les informations utiles qui vous intéressent. N'hésitez pas à nous faire part de vos remarques et suggestions afin de l'améliorer et nous vous remercions de votre compréhension pour les éventuels bugs qui pourraient persister pendant les premiers temps de fonctionnement.

### De nouvelles fonctionnalités sont disponibles :

Une carte interactive pour localiser les associations facilement ;

## Où pratiquer ?



Un forum plus fonctionnel ;

La mise en avant des commissions de l'amicale pour mieux comprendre son fonctionnement ;

Un formulaire simplifié pour informer de vos prochains stages ;

Des vidéos pour approfondir votre pratique ;

L'indexation de la rubrique « Nous avons lu ».

### Inscrivez-vous pour recevoir les informations :

Afin de faciliter le lien entre l'Amicale et les membres des associations adhérentes, vous pouvez dès à présent vous inscrire sur le site à titre personnel pour recevoir toutes les informations importantes de l'Amicale mises en ligne sur le site. Ainsi, vous pourrez être informé directement, par exemple, de l'ouverture des inscriptions aux Rencontres, de la mise en ligne du Bulletin et d'autres informations à ne pas manquer.

La volonté de ce nouveau site est aussi de le rendre plus convivial et dynamique et de mieux communiquer entre tous les membres.

Vous pouvez vous inscrire via le formulaire en bas de page du site.

**POUR RECEVOIR  
LES ACTUALITÉS DE L'AMICALE,  
INSCRIVEZ-VOUS À LA NEWSLETTER !**

Prénom

Nom

Nom de votre association

E-mail

Vous êtes : \*

Responsable d'association

Enseignant

Pratiquant

non adhérent à l'amicale

### Le forum

Un outil pour échanger facilement avec les autres membres sur des sujets qui peuvent être proposés par l'Amicale ou par vous-même.

Soyez acteur de ce forum, ouvrez la discussion sur la forme, sur des techniques, sur des sujets plus généraux concernant le fonctionnement de l'Amicale ou un sujet à débattre en AG.

Afin de préserver le bon fonctionnement du forum, vous serez obligé de vous identifier pour y accéder, avec les identifiants de votre choix.

### Donnez-nous votre avis :

Si vous souhaitez apporter une pierre à l'édifice dans la construction de ce nouveau site, vous pouvez prendre contact avec le comité Web : [amicale.yangjia.web@gmail.com](mailto:amicale.yangjia.web@gmail.com)

## Agenda des Agendas

Tous les stages organisés par les différentes associations sont disponibles sur notre site à la rubrique « Stages ».

[www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org](http://www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org)

Si vous souhaitez annoncer un stage, vous pouvez désormais le faire grâce à un formulaire directement sur la page dédiée.

Bien amicalement à tous,

Rédac' Chef et le CA de l'Amicale du Yangjia Michuan.

楊家秘拳太極拳會



*Amicale du Yangjia  
Michuan taiji quai*