

# AYMTA

## JOURNAL



Women and Push Hands  
European and American  
Workshop Notes  
The Twenty-Four Jieqi for 2000  
Taiji, Jujitsu and Physics

### **President's Message from John A. Cole**

As President I am able to do some fun things on behalf of AYMTA. One of the pleasures is to thank people for their outstanding efforts for AYMTA. George Healy has been a member for years. He and Theresa Thomas have stepped up on several occasions in support of YMT. This time George and his legal assistant Hanna Ferkl have prepared and filed further paperwork to complete our filing for non-profit status.

Kudos to Tom Campbell for the great and endless work on the Journal and our website.

In the past the Association has been a two-coasts organization. Now we are growing in the Heartland. I also want to recognize Don Klein in Grand Haven, Michigan, James Carlson in Sturgis, Michigan, and Don and Kathryn Coleman in Madison, Wisconsin. We have a number of new members, all due to their efforts. Also, Stephen Merrill is now teaching in Baja, California

I was hoping to announce Master Wang's arrival in Madison, WI and Benicia, CA in July 2000. Unfortunately Master Wang's health has not been good and he has just spent some time in the hospital. As a result he is not able to make any travel plans at this time. Let's send Master Wang our best wishes and lots of healing Qi.

(continued on page 19)

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### **What the enclosed card is for**

Please use the enclosed card to answer the following questions. We would like to receive your response as soon as possible, as Don and Kathryn Coleman need the answers before January first.

1) If Julia Fisher-Fairchild were to lead a five day workshop in Madison, Wisconsin (Three day T'uishou workshop which can be inclusive of beginners, and a two day Neigong workshop), and the maximum fee for this would be \$280 per workshop or \$550 for both, including lodging and meals, would you attend? If you are a teacher how many of your non AYMTA students would also attend?

2) If Juila also taught a workshop in Benecia, California after this workshop would this effect your decision to attend the Madison Workshops?

Thank you, members, in advance, for helping us with your responses. Please feel free to contact the Coleman's directly at (608) 251-4726 or [coleman1@chorus.net](mailto:coleman1@chorus.net).

## **AYMTA**

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Please visit [aymta.org](http://aymta.org)

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For information about writing or contributing to AYMTA Journal or Web Site contact Thomas W. Campbell at [tomc@aymta.org](mailto:tomc@aymta.org). The Journal is published for members of AYMTA. Electronic submissions are preferred. Printed articles can be sent to: Thomas W Campbell, AYMTA Journal, 172 West 109th Street, #1R, New York, New York, 10025.

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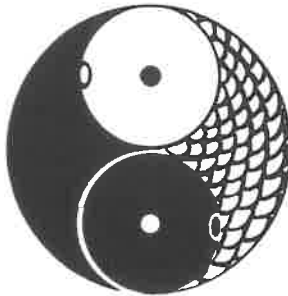
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# The Editor's Notes

Thomas Campbell



Our apologies for the lateness of this issue. With the earthquake in Taiwan (everyone involved with our organization and Master Wang's school is fine – although there were some frightening moments), the development of our web site ([aymta.org](http://aymta.org)), and the organizational logistics of putting together workshops for next year (and attempting to present the full information in this issue), we've had our hands full. Thank you, members, for your patience.

We first want to wish Master Wang a speedy recovery and let him know that our thoughts are with him. Although it is our belief that he will resume teaching again in Taiwan, his doctors have recommended that he cease traveling. We will post updates regarding his health at [aymta.org](http://aymta.org) and send further information in our next newsletter.

We were set to announce, with this issue, his visit next year for a series of workshops and discovered, on the very day that we received a detailed and complete registration package from Don and Kathryn Coleman, that he would not be able to travel. We have contacted Julia Fisher-Fairchild concerning her desire and availability to come to the states and lead a series of workshops. The Coleman's have put together a modified program that is carefully thought out and well designed. If members demonstrate a desire to travel to Madison, thus making this workshop a financial possibility, then we could have a very special event.

A workshop led by Julia Fisher-Fairchild

would offer a great opportunity for everyone. She has worked closely with Master Wang for many years. For the teachers within AYMTA her visit would be a welcome opportunity to learn from her and to demonstrate our knowledge and continued desire to investigate Yangjia Michuan. We all have much to learn and should welcome every chance to practice with our peers and teachers. For Julia it will be an opportunity to get first hand knowledge of the skills and experience that AYMTA teachers and students bring to the table.

It is extremely important to do whatever we can as an organization to expand our membership and to assist current teachers and schools to become successful. The current board of AYMTA is entering its second year in service of the organization's membership. Some very important issues have been introduced which we hope will come to fruition in the year 2000, and we are always open to ideas from members. The workshops are our first priority and we hope each of you will respond by filling out the enclosed card and returning it ASAP. Our second order of business is keeping the members we have and expanding that number in the coming year. We have put up a web site that we hope members will use to send their thoughts, articles, images, and comments to. We have put a calendar on the site to promote Yangjia Michuan events that involve our members. We are moving towards adopting some type of teacher certification as a way of providing support to those of you who are putting the time and effort into learning Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan and want to teach others. This is

also a way to offer encouragement to those who are learning the form and plan to teach in the future. If we hear enough feedback from members and the board is able to reach a consensus we might be able to have the certification program in place by the upcoming summer workshops – and to begin the certification process of member teachers at that time.

We also would like to have a National AYMTA members meeting during the summer. It would be great to be able to do it during workshops with Julia Fisher-Fairchild, a founding member and adviser, present. We would look forward to meeting as many members as possible face-to-face and to working together to make AYMTA an even better and more productive organization.

## **AYMTA Teacher Certification Proposal**

This is a working document, open to discussion and change for AYMTA board members. It is being presented within the AYMTA Journal to stimulate discussion about the possible future adoption of a Teacher Certification program within the organization.

Teacher Certification would proceed in a number of steps. Teachers who currently qualify will present themselves to the board for certification. The board of directors of the association will issue a certificate for the following: Basic Exercises and 13 postures, First Duan, Second Duan, Third Duan, Basic Push Hands, Intermediate Push Hands, Advanced Push Hands, Kungfu Sword Form, Wudang Sword Form, Wang Yen-nien Fan Form, and Internal Neigong/Meditation Practice.

To qualify as a teaching member of this association, one must have obtained certificates in the following: Basic exercises and 13 postures, Forms I, II, III and one weapon form, and be teaching in the United States. Upon completion of these requirements the board of directors will issue a teaching certificate.

Teacher certification brings with it responsibilities. Teachers must agree to teach Yangjia Michuan

Taijiquan “as taught by Wang Yen-nien” and to do their best to stay informed by using available resources and communications. They must not willfully teach an “altered” version of the form, or change the form, as this would be against the wishes and teaching of Wang Yen-nien and the spirit of AYMTA. Teachers should be encouraged to teach Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan as their first, and preferably only, Taiji instruction. This is in regards to Wang Yen-nien’s statements at the Teacher’s College workshop in Chalonnes sur Loire.

The certificate will be renewable after a period of years upon declaration to the current AYMTA Board of Directors that the Teacher’s practice is consistent with the above stated terms and the board’s satisfaction that this is so.

The following is a possible program for promotion to teacher:

Each teacher and student will form their own learning schedule.

The student who wants to teach will inform his/her teacher and embark on a training schedule.

When the teacher and student feels the student is ready, the student will assist in classes.

When the teacher and student feels the student is ready, the student will take over some of the classes while the teacher observes.

When the teacher and student feel the student is ready, the student will visit another AYMTA teacher member. The student will demonstrate and answer questions pertaining to the skill level required to teach the program learned.

Both teachers will present the student to AYMTA Board (by letter) as a qualified instructor of x form.

Let’s have further discussion among board members and feedback from AYMTA members regarding the concept and implementation of Teacher Certification.

We look forward to the year of the Dragon.

# Tuishou and Women

Written by  
Valérie Opper and Zouzou Vallotton,  
Translated by Chris Nelson

We discovered not too long ago that it was possible to enjoy Tuishou (Push Hands) and we wanted to share that discovery. We put our heads together and came up with the following article.



Valérie Opper



Zouzou Vallotton

For example: I manage to push my partner (whom I had previously considered more experienced). I am so proud of myself that I forget about the returned energy and am unbalanced because I was not focused anymore on what was happening in the moment.

## 1. Specifically for Women

What follows comes from our experience and seems to be tied to our being women. But hopefully men will recognize themselves as well in this discussion.

To do Push Hands is to enter in a relationship with someone, with everything that it implies. We are referring among other things to emotions and feelings. Instead of denying them, we believe it is better to attempt to "regulate" them: recognize them, accept them and give them their proper place instead of letting them run roughshod over us, which tends to happen too often.

A surprising paradox: in general, I feel incapable of unbalancing the other (stereotype of the weak woman), but at the same time I am afraid of hurting him (strong or mothering woman).

The typical characteristic of women: they doubt themselves. From the start, I overestimate my partner. I see in him/her only the qualities, but find only the faults in myself. If he manages to throw me off balance, it is because he is skilled. If I throw him off balance, it is because I used force, and not skill or art.

This negative estimation of oneself can be a block, with thoughts such as, "I'm the only one who stinks here."

## The Fears

Fear seems to be the crux of the matter, and we've barely touched on it! We have tried to make a list: fear of pain, fear of causing pain, of being judged, of being ridiculous, of not knowing, of

seeming aggressive and unfeminine...

Yet it seems that fear is a strong block to listening and creativity.

We are conscious that in Push Hands we are showing ourselves as we really are; we have left the reassuring world of the duans' repetitive movement. We show our qualities, no doubt, but we are thinking mostly of the weaknesses that we are revealing, and we fear being judged.

Fear of seeming aggressive means that I peacefully chat with my partner instead of being focused on what is going on between our bodies.

Fear of being judged or ridiculous is paralyzing.

Fear of hurting or being hurt makes me tense, and I therefore risk being hurt because I'm tense.

Since I believe that I know nothing, that I don't know how to do it, I cannot react normally and I am not using my full potential. And every bad day is a confirmation of that belief. I would tell myself see, I can't do it, it's the proof that this Push Hands is not for me!"

Having internal monologues during Push Hands ("come on.", "you can do it!") is a form of self-sabotage, a block to our listening skills and presence in the moment.

## II. The Stages

We thought about the road we have traveled, and that which remains to be traveled. We realized that in Push Hands we go through very distinct stages, and it is always a pleasure to reach the next one. It happens place during a "real" exchange with a partner that an epiphany is reached, which makes us move forward and stays tied in our memories to that partner. Ironic detail: we admit that, in both our cases, it was with men that we've had these moments of sudden growth.

We have tried to describe the typical journey of a woman learning Push Hands. Let's see if the (female) readers recognize themselves!



### First stage

I hate Push hands. It's violent, and I'm a pacifist - I give life, I don't wage war - I'm not aggressive enough, it's not in my nature - it's the men who like to fight, you can see that in the school yards - we are no good because we never learned to fight when we were kids - I'm not even going to try.

### Second Stage

I'm scared of hurting someone, I'm scared of being hurt. When I practice Push Hands I fidget and wonder what all these movements mean. I get winded quickly.

### Third Stage

I start listening, to absorb. I'm still not offensive, but my body learns how to react to a push. When I push the other, I don't follow through. I tend to lean back.

## Fourth Stage

I like to take the offensive. I listen less. My movements are more focused. I tend to lean forward.

## Fifth Stage

I start to use/ transform the other's energy. I take pleasure in provoking and discovering my partner's response. I manage more and more to integrate movements from the form in free-form Push Hands. Each movement has a purpose.



## Sixth Stage

I find my own style, I find pleasure in winning against advanced partners.

## Seventh Stage

I free myself of my habits, I lose with pleasure because I learn; I try to forget everything in order to always learn and discover. My movements are more and more subtle and round.

## III. Push Hands Between Men and Women

Men are stronger than women. They are perhaps afraid of abusing it, and the women fear being dominated.

Men are bothered by our chest. When they touch it by accident, they feel obliged to apologize and the unease can quickly spread to both partners.

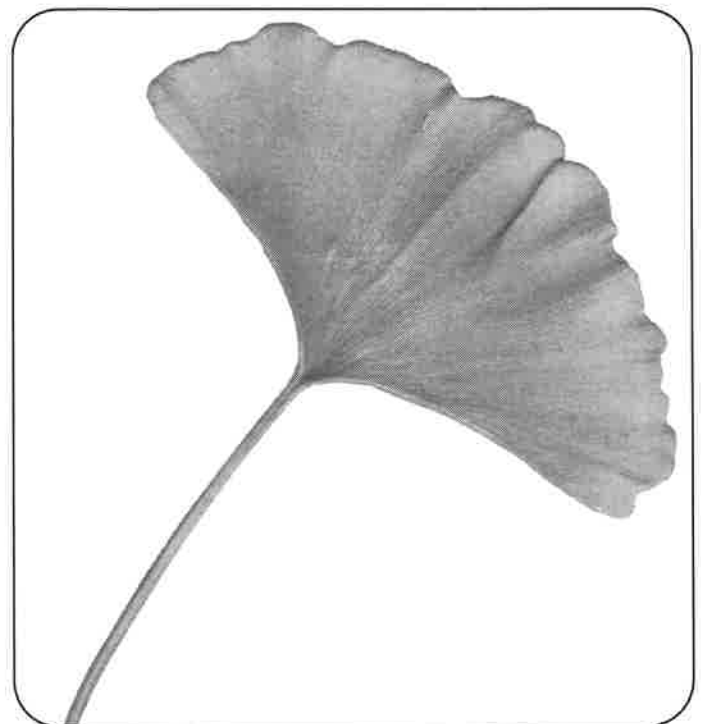
A woman who wants to seduce her partner (consciously or subconsciously) might prefer to appear weaker.

Who has never felt the complicated feelings that arise when the phrase "change partners!" is said. Exchange of glances, a step forward ... couples form, its ballroom dancing ... fear of having to play with X, fear of missing Y, fear of being left alone ...

We think that it is simpler for a woman to push with another woman. If this raises issues, all the better! To progress in Push Hands, one must practice. Once women have acquired more experience in combat, they will be less afraid of practicing against men. Or rather, it would seem less of a challenge.

This is, therefore, not about gender segregation, but about opening. Opening oneself to Push Hands and its joys, and to mixed practice later.

And to the men who might feel excluded from the Women-Only Push Hands Seminar. It's not that we don't like you that you are not invited. On the contrary! We wrote this article to explain our experience of Push Hands. Now it is your turn to write one from a man's point of view .





## Sixth Annual Midwest Push Hands Gathering by Brad Binder

Breathe in, breathe out. Focus on your breathing. These words were heard many times during the Sixth annual Midwest Push Hands Gathering held the weekend of October 23 at St. Benedict's Center in Madison, Wisconsin. This gathering was organized and facilitated by Don and Kathryn Coleman, who run the Empty Mind Full Belly School of Internal Boxing Art in Madison and it introduced the participants to a sampling of t'uishou from Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan.



The midwest pushhands gathering is billed as an opportunity for t'aijii players of all levels to participate in meditation, sticking and following exercises, and noncompetitive pushhands training. Every year it has lived up to this billing. This year there were 26 taiji players who came from Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin. There were practitioners who had only been studying for several months to players who had several decades of experience. Various forms of t'aijii were represented and there were some martial artists who studied other arts (such as baqua and jujitsu).

The gathering started at noon on Saturday with meditation, stretching, warm-ups and Qigong. For the rest of the afternoon we were led through a variety of exercises to develop relaxation, sensitivity, suppleness, centeredness and root. Throughout the weekend we were encouraged to work through fear so that we maintained this both in practice and throughout our lives.

The weekend focused on a few t'uishou exercises. We went through spiral up and spiral down exercises this first afternoon. After dinner (all meals are very good at the St. Benedict's Center) we learned and practiced single-arm horizontal circle. Practice ended early, but the evening was not over yet. A yearly tradition has developed where the exhausted, but invigorated, participants form a drumming circle. This year was no exception and a group of folks drummed and played other instruments for several hours. A small group of people did taijiquan with this as accompaniment. Sunday began at 5 with morning meditation, stretching, and individual forms practice. After breaking fast and review of the previous day's lessons, we finished up with lessons in double-arm vertical circle. We tried this stationary, then with a half step and finally with a full step. We ended the gathering with socializing and lunch.

This gathering is particularly enjoyable for several reasons. In addition to the expert facilitation by Don and Kathryn, the noncompetitive, easygoing atmosphere makes this a joyful experience. Everyone is encouraged to push themselves to their limit within a gentle and supportive atmosphere. While people are serious about learning, there is much laughing throughout the weekend. It is also interesting to meet martial artists with a variety of backgrounds in training. I have found from attending this conference that we all have things to learn from others and there is strength in diversity. Finally, St. Benedict's Center is a beautiful spot. It is situated on a large hill overlooking Lake Mendota in Madison. There are numerous walking trails, gardens, prairie restorations and orchards. It is truly a great location to practice martial arts.

My recommendation is that you join the gathering next year. Come work on various aspects of taijiquan in a way that helps you apply it to all aspects of your life. Meet interesting people. Breathe, relax, stay centered.

# Tips for Teachers

## Notes from the 1999 Teachers' College Meeting

By Thomas Campbell

1999 marked the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Teachers' College, which was founded in Cluny, France, by Wang Yen-nien. The Teachers' College, along with AMICALE, is one of the two active and historical organizations in Europe that are committed to raising the level of all things related to Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan. The objectives of the Teachers' College include bringing together teachers, helping to improve levels and consistency of teaching, and arranging workshops and meetings. Although AYMTA is not officially affiliated with either the Teachers' College or AMICALE we share common goals and look forward to working together for the good of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan as taught by Wang Yen-nien.



During the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary meeting, which was also attended by a small group of Americans, we were treated to an impressive agenda that was squeezed into an all-too-short afternoon. Master Wang answered questions which had been prepared in advance by members of the college, goals of the college were discussed including possible expansion outside of Europe. Julia Fairchild and Master Wang did an intensive investigation of the second duan from the end of "cloud hands," and there was a very entertaining discussion of "teacher's tricks."

Following are some of the teaching techniques that were described during the meeting. AYMTA is grateful to the Teachers' College and its' members for allowing us to print them here.

### Music

Use music to relax students, to help "bring them into harmony". If using music during the class does not fit your teaching style then use music in the last 15 minutes of the class to encourage relaxation. Another good use of music might be during demonstrations to create an appropriately meditative and conducive setting for taiji.

### Visualization

Ask your students to concentrate on a part of their bodies, the movements of the hips, for instance, as a theme of the class. This helps to create a general sense of physical awareness. This technique is best used for

postures or exercises that students are already familiar with. A variation would be for each student to choose what they would like to work on during a particular exercise.

### **Emotions**

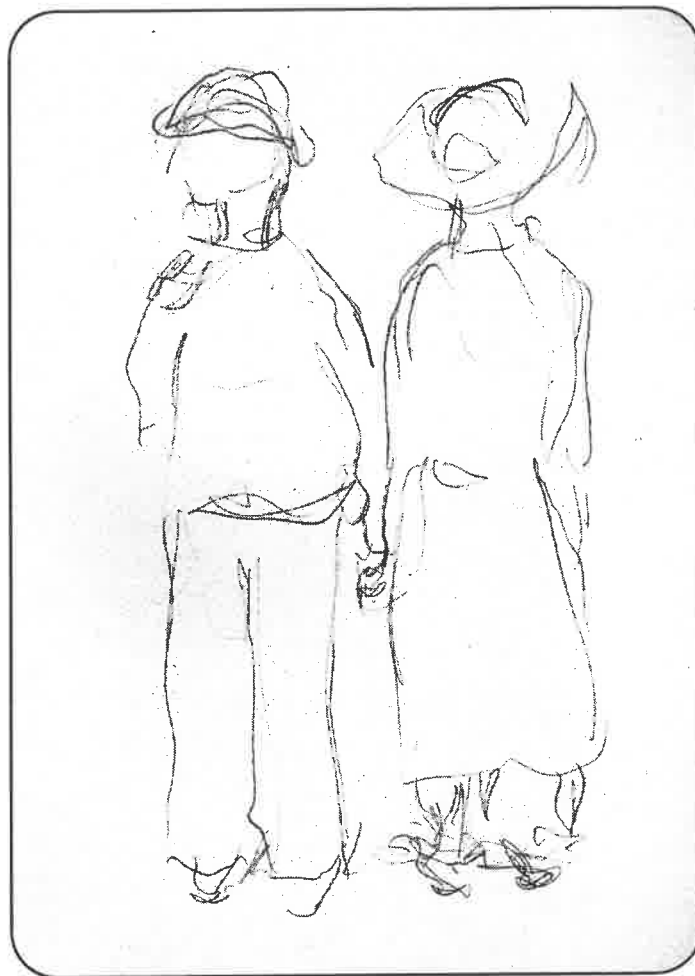
Use emotions in the class. The form is a tool in which you can put other feelings into. We can do the form when we are angry, or nice, or in any state of mind. It is a frame that you can add things to by using your imagination. Or simply try to be conscious about what your feelings are at any given time.

### **Concentration**

A number of teachers suggested exercises for helping students to increase their concentration during practice. One way would be to carry something on your head that will make it obvious when you lose your focus or balance, such as a small saucer of water. Another suggestion was to use a dowel about three feet long, use a tie to bind it to the waist and back such that it points up and reaches just above head level, then put a small soft ball on top. Keeping it in place requires a steadiness of the back and spine that is consistent with good taiji posture

### **Make Use of Your Space**

A number of teachers talked about using walls to help students attain correct postures. One example would be to perform "Grasp the Sparrow's Tail," for instance, with the hands in constant contact with the facing wall. Another technique is performing "Embrace Tiger, Return to the Mountain" with your back against the wall to prevent the tailbone and lower back from



protruding. Practicing outdoors, conversely, has it's own advantages. Besides the simple pleasure of being in nature it also can be helpful to work in a busy environment, with the distractions of lots of people milling around, cars passing by, etc. This helps you to concentrate on your work, to learn to block out the noises and disturbances. It also helps you to prepare for demonstrations, when lots of people will be watching and you will have less control over your environment.

### **Use Technology**

Take advantage of video cameras to occasionally tape your classes and offer critiques of your students. It is also a good way to document growth and advancement.

### **Use Available Resources**

Teachers discussed the use of Master Wang's books and videos in their classes and revealed a variety of opinions on this issue. Some felt that having the book in class for answers to questions was a good idea but there was also the feeling that only the teacher should bring the book. There was agreement that students should be encouraged to own both the books and the videos and be able to investigate matters in their own time, as well as in class. Another technique is to make photocopies of sections from the book that are currently being studied. If, on a rare occasion, an answer cannot be found to a question about the form then an e-mail to Julia might be the best way to go.

### **Contact Exercises**

Students often have initial apprehensions about touching one another during exercises and tuishou practice. A number of techniques were discussed in relation to this. One suggestion involved using a line that is tied between two students. One partner can gently pull the line, the other can respond by following the direction of the energy. Pull the line slightly and the partner follows. When the other partner pulls the line the energy direction must suddenly change. Practice making this a graceful transaction. This type of exercise allows students to become acquainted with receiving and transmitting energy with a partner. It was also suggested that contact with partners should be introduced gradually but done on a consistent basis to slowly familiarize students with the experience.

### **Be Innovative With Your Time**

The longer we practice taiji the harder it seems to find the time to practice. If you find that your day is too filled with other things, not allowing you time to practice the form, then look for other ways to get in some "quality taiji time." A teacher demonstrated one of her discoveries. (The translation into words loses, of course, her exceptional demonstration) When hanging the laundry out she slowly dipped to the basket, hands coming down from either side, and grasped the article of clothing in question. Carefully rising, tailbone tucked in, she brings the clothes straight up, pins them to the wire, then sinks again, arms coming down either side, to repeat the process. Thus, with a simple task of hanging the laundry to dry she gets in a full regimen of "Embrace Tiger, Return to the Mountain!"

### **Have Fun and Be Yourself**

This was implicit in all of the teachers' statements and in the pleasure that they had relating their experiences. It was also a central point made by Master Wang during the afternoon. "When you are teaching you must find a way to get your message heard," he told us. "For each of the eight immortals who wanted to get across the river there were eight different ways to do it. Each person has their own way of learning and their own way of teaching. You should bring your own ideas to your teaching. I advise you all to keep your own methods. But keep in mind that if you lose your students your method is bad. Then you have to consider change. You have to know the temperaments of your students. It is up to you, the teacher, to adapt to situations when it is necessary."

# The Twenty-Four Jieqi and their Importance in Neigong

Updated for 2000 by Wu Tian-fu  
Translated by Julia Fisher-Fairchild

During the practice of internal alchemy (neigong), which aids people to live a long life without illness, daoists seek to develop an internal drug called the elixir of life (neidan). While the internal alchemical methods used by daoists in the Gold Mountain School of Internal Alchemy remain an oral tradition handed down teacher -to-student and in private, the practice of neigong involves: an amalgamation of jing, qi and shen in the physical body; the absorption of sun, moon and star energy from the heavens; and water, fire and wind energy from the earth in order to crystallize the naturally occurring immortality drug, neidan.

To develop neidan, one must be willing and firmly resolved; have a methodology to follow; have time to practice; practice earnestly; and persevere.

The Chinese year is apportioned into twenty-four two-week periods of fifteen days each. Known as the "joints and breaths of the year," these twenty-four periods correspond to the days on which the sun enters the first and fifteenth degrees of each zodiac sign. The former are known as zhongqi or "principle terms," and the later jieqi or "divisional terms." On these days, the stars emit and absorb energy, which can be used for nourishing yin and yang qi, making these important days for daoists in their practice of neigong and the crystallization of neidan.

The "joints and breaths" serve as accurate subdivisions of the seasons. Farmers rely on them for sowing and harvesting. They also coincide with atmospheric and climatic changes and many people suffer from headaches and higher blood pressure at every jieqi.

To use the zhongqi and jieqi times to your advantage, begin sitting quietly 20 minutes before each designated time, use the methods jingzuo (Daoist sitting meditation) TuNa (Daoist Art of Breathing) and Liandan (tempering and

refining the elixir of life), and continue for 20 minutes after the designated time before ending your meditation session.

Because this article is limited in scope, I enclose the Farmer's Almanac jieqi and zhongqi dates and times for 2000 for your reference and point you in the direction of a neigong class with Master Wang for more details of this fascinating subject.

## ***A List of Zhongqi and Jieqi Dates and Times for 2000***

23. Xiao3 Han2, Small Cold // January 6, 2000 // 09:01
24. Da4 Han2, Great Cold // January 21, 2000 // 02:23
  1. Li4 Chun1, Beginning of Spring // February 4, 2000 // 20:41
  2. Yu3 Shou3, Rain Water // February 19, 2000 // 16:34
  3. Jing1 Zhe2, Awakening of Insects // March 5, 2000 // 14:43
  4. Chun1 Fen1, Division of Spring (Spring Equinox) // March 20, 2000 // 15:36
  5. Ching1 Ming2, Pure Brightness // April 4, 2000 // 19:32
  6. Gu3 Yu3, Corn Rain // April 20, 2000 // 20:40
  7. Li4 Xia4, Beginning of Summer // May 5, 2000 // 12:50
  8. Xiao3 Man3, Ripening Grain // May 21, 2000 // 01:50

9. Mang<sup>2</sup> Zhong<sup>3</sup>, Corn in Ear // June 5, 2000 // 16:59
10. Xia<sup>4</sup> Zhi<sup>4</sup>, Arrival of Summer (Summer Solstice) // June 21, 2000 // 09:48
11. Xiao<sup>3</sup> Shui<sup>3</sup>, Small Heat // July 7, 2000 // 03:14
12. Da<sup>4</sup> Shui<sup>3</sup>, Big Heat // July 22, 2000 // 20:43
13. Li<sup>4</sup> Qiu<sup>1</sup>, Beginning of Autumn // August 7, 2000 // 13:03
14. Chu<sup>4</sup> Shu<sup>3</sup>, Limit of Heat // August 23, 2000 // 03:49
15. Bai<sup>2</sup> Lu<sup>4</sup>, White Dew // September 7, 2000 // 15:59
16. Qiu<sup>1</sup> Fen<sup>1</sup>, Autumn Equinox // September 23, 2000 // 01:28
17. Han<sup>2</sup> Lu<sup>4</sup>, Cold Dew // October 8, 2000 // 07:39
18. Shuang<sup>1</sup> Jiang<sup>4</sup>, Hoar Frost // October 23, 2000 // 10:48
19. Li<sup>4</sup>Dong<sup>1</sup>, Beginning of Winter // November 7, 2000 // 10:49
20. Xiao<sup>3</sup> Xue<sup>3</sup>, Small Snow // November 22, 2000 // 08:20
21. Da<sup>4</sup> Xue<sup>3</sup>, Big Snow // December 7, 2000 // 03:38
22. Dong<sup>1</sup> Zhi<sup>4</sup>, Arrival of Winter (Winter Solstice) // December 21, 2000 // 21:38

Note: All times are Taipei times and are not adjusted for Daylight Saving Time (DST). The zhongqi and jieqi names have been romanized according to the Chinese phonetic alphabet known as "pinyin," with the tones indicated in superscript.



# Reflections and Notes on the 1999 Summer Sword Workshops

By Thomas Campbell

*"These workshops," said Wang Yen-nien, "are especially important for the teachers. I wish to devote much of my time for the next few years to raising the quality of teaching within our school."*



The Kunlun sword workshops took place over a span of eight and a half days last July in Chalonnes sur Loire, France. There was plenty of opportunity to meet people and to get reacquainted with those whom we had met before. Many things go into making a successful workshop, some more obvious than others. Claudy Jeanmougin, one of the directors of the event, was adamant concerning the necessity of tasty and nutritious food at such gatherings. "Well-prepared food is very necessary to having a fine experience," he said. "Good food brings people closer and makes everything else that happens better."

The menu for the entire workshop was available in advance and became a topic

of interest and anticipation. The meals included a delicious assortment of fruits, cheeses, salads and vegetables served in varied manner, assorted meats (a few were a bit exotic to my tastes, i.e., tongue and rabbit) and surprising and delicious desserts (crème brûlée one afternoon, fraises au vin rouge another evening). The facility where we practiced and stayed is also a wine-making school and I would be lax if I did not report that the wine was quite good as well.

The workshops were a departure from past events which have been led by Wang Yen-nien. Previously he has overseen all aspects of the teaching, from morning exercises to late afternoon practice. This time there were events, and even whole days, which were led by teachers from ATA and Kun Lun, the host organizations, and by assistants of Master Wang. Among those who taught during the first three days of the event were Claudy Jeanmougin, Marie-Christine Moutault, Luc Defago, Henri Mouthon, Philippe Brossard, Maryline Chanaud, Hervé Marest, and Frédéric Parquet.

The weather was hot and on some days the sun so direct that sunburn and sunstroke were real dangers. White caps, sunglasses, sun screen and endless bottles of water were the rule of the day. Many of us were having our first taste of the Kunlun (old) sword form and were excited at the prospect of absorbing all we could.

We knew the schedule and understood that we would have four days of study with Laoshi. The mix of events and teachers kept everyone on their toes. There were many things being offered – those who had completed the previous workshop (tuishou as a healing art) continued their studies of push-hand exercises and techniques. Besides intensive work on the Kunlun sword form, which most of the attendees participated in, there were sessions on staff, broadsword (a Chen sword form not officially on the schedule), second and third duan, and fan form. The schedule was very accelerated, leading finally to the entire group performance of the complete Kunlun sword form on the afternoon of the final day.

It was a lively mix that revealed the importance of personal style; a necessary element of every good teacher. Study of the third duan, for instance, in separate sessions with Luc Defago and Claudy Jeanmougin, was a wonderful contrast of personality and teaching technique. But the fruit of one's teaching style is always the substance of the teaching – and each proved to be careful and worthy instructors. The following notes reflect some of what we studied.

### **Third Duan Notes**

Luc Defago is Swiss but speaks very clear English. He is quiet spoken, calm and teaches in a thoughtful manner that is direct and even tempered. He worked with a group on the sequence that moves from Cloud Hands Two, Single Whip and includes Golden Rooster Stands on One Leg, The Monkey Retreats Left and Right,

Right and Left Drag Down and Separate the Palms. After Single Whip and dipping into Left Squat, we circled the left hand to the front toe and back. It is not easy to go from the low posture to the rising posture of Golden Rooster, especially as you strive to keep your balance and center. "Focus your thoughts on the dantien and the waist," Luc instructed. "Especially during this transition. Use the opening of the waist to propel you to rise up to the full height of Golden Rooster." It is a movement similar to Raise the Body, Pat High on the Horse, which is performed later in the third duan, and deserves special attention.

When we rise to full height, Luc instructed us to take care to form a "gripping hand" with first the right hand and then the left. Do not be lazy and let this rising hand be limp. This is the hand that will seize your opponent's throat as your rising leg strikes the lower abdomen. In application this hand can also be a fist. When the right (seizing) hand lowers it can pull down the opponent's left hand, drawing his/her momentum toward you as the left hand and leg rises to meet them.

We also focused on the application of Draw Downward (cai), Separate the Palms. He demonstrated the proper technique of both palm strikes and deflections. If done properly the second strike can take advantage of the phenomena that Master Wang calls "gaining a third hand." When your partner, whose front arm is already raised, grabs at your first (sinking) palm strike, the technique of raising your striking hand gives you the benefit of holding both of your partner's arms above (with



only one of your own arms). Your partner completely open to your rising (second) strike.

sons for this – it is an opportunity to calm the mind, to focus on our task, to block out distractions. It's also a way of keeping everyone on their toes. Master Wang called on many teachers to demonstrate sword technique. It is a challenge to perform to the best of your ability and a learning experience when you are critiqued in front of your peers.



Claudy Jeanmougin taught in a more expansive and vocal manner. Like the sweeping gestures of his large frame, his style can best be described as “outgoing” and “good natured.” If you are thin-skinned you might get the feeling that he is picking on you. But then you would be missing the point. As the only non-French-speaking participant in his group I could have hidden at the back or simply dropped out and joined another group. When Claudy asked if I understood I pointed to my eyes to demonstrate that I wasn't about to miss anything. And like a number of others in the group I would soon find myself to be the brunt of his good humor.

As a student and as a teacher we are sometimes called upon to demonstrate during our practice. There are many rea-

son. Claudy asked me to demonstrate Right, Squat, Raise the Body, Left Pat High on Horse. Taking a deep breath I did the demonstration, slowly, carefully, concentrating on balance and correct posture. From right single-whip position I sunk down, swept my front arm forward to the toe and back, shifted my weight forward. Suddenly that booming voice stopped me and proclaimed, in French, that “we have a problem.” Rushing over he pointed to put my back heel and told me that you must raise it as you shift your weight forward. In my concentration on every other aspect of the movement I had forgotten a very basic and necessary technique. I was wearing a light brace on my other knee (from a non-taiji-related event). He cracked us all up by saying that (I managed to discern in my fractured language translation) I would need a similar brace for the other knee if I didn't correct my technique. This is Claudy's style, and I couldn't help but to laugh and to feel included in the day's events, as I was only one in a long line of students who were chastised that afternoon.

This gets to a valuable point about teaching. Every teacher has a different style and it is important to keep your style intact. If a teacher is to be truly good, though, he/she must have a desire to help others learn and grow. Teaching is about sharing what you know in a way that demonstrates both passion and compassion.

### **Comments by Master Wang**

#### **Three benefits that we can attain through the practice of Taijiquan**

During the Teachers' Workshop Master Wang discussed the benefits we can look forward to gaining from our practice if we apply ourselves and work faithfully. They will occur in three areas of our lives.

##### **1) Physical**

This may be the most apparent, though it will take time and patience to see. You will experience a transformation of the body - your illness will disappear. Without illness you will have a stronger body, and this will lead to other positive changes in your physical condition.

##### **2) Wisdom**

The transformation of physical will lead to a change of state of mind. You will better be able to experience the dynamics of knowledge. Those who practice Taijiquan and Daoist meditation will have greater perception and experience an enlarging of wisdom.

##### **3) Character**

Faithful practice will change your character for the better. People who are hard and irritable will become softer; they will start to lose their worries. It is probable that people who smoke will stop smoking. People who drink too much might not stop, although that is also possible. You will start to transform your character. This is because we work on developing qi, which is fundamental to our lives.

He also discussed the relationship of Taiji and the events of our daily lives.

##### **Taiji and ego**

When you practice taiji you must forget yourself. It is then that you can begin to accumulate the benefits. Worries come from the ego - we have lots of them in our daily lives.

If you think of personal problems when you practice the form you will falter. It is very difficult to relax when you practice. If you can forget about yourself, this is the first step towards relaxation. People who can not forget about themselves bring their troubles into their practice. It is difficult to keep the ego back.

In Tuishou, for instance, if you work with a partner who always wants to win your burden becomes heavier. But if you do not have to win, if this is not heavy on your mind, your burden becomes lighter.

Try to reach the ability to let the ego disappear. It is very difficult. It is easy to think about but not easy to accomplish.

# Thirteen Postures, Part I: A Quiz

by Angelika Klotz

Give your students a chance to test their memories and their understanding of the Thirteen Postures (and give yourself a rest) by giving them this simple test:

Bring all the following taiji movements into the right order by numbering them 1-29.

right grasp the sparrow's tail  
turn right 90 degrees  
an (push)  
right peng  
turn left 180 degrees  
hold the ball right  
left peng  
left peng  
an (push)  
turn right 90 degrees  
left grasp the sparrow's tail  
right seal it closed  
right seal it closed  
get ready - raise the arms  
left ji  
right ji  
an (push)  
left seal it closed  
hold the ball left  
right peng  
right grasp the sparrow's tail  
turn left 180 degrees  
left ji  
right ji  
left grasp the sparrow's tail  
turn seal it closed  
hold the ball right  
hold the ball left  
an (push)

*Angelika lives with her two children and husband in Hong Kong, where she teaches Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan to teenagers and adults at the International German School. For questions or comments, please contact her at email:*

[klotzhk@asiaonline.net](mailto:klotzhk@asiaonline.net)

(continued from page 2)

We all owe Master Wang a big debt of thanks. I for one recognize the fact that Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan has profoundly affected my life. When Master Wang started Teaching in 1949, he set in motion events that created a whole school of taiji that would have otherwise faded into history. Instead, through his diligent practice and generous and benevolent teaching, we have a style with deep roots. Master Wang walks the walk; he lives what he teaches. We should all be proud to carry on the tradition.

We are preparing for summer workshops and want you to complete the enclosed questionnaire

Last of all, thanks to all the members for supporting AYMTA. It is the members who make the association work.

The board of directors is charged with the task of Teacher Certification. Please review our efforts and provide feedback. Part of our mission is to promote YMT, to encourage new teachers, and support their growth and development.

Happy 2000, John Cole

## Lao Tzu Dancing Among The Dolmen; Summer Workshops in Brittany

by Mike Basdavanos

It didn't really have the feel of the French countryside as we got deeper and deeper into the heart of Bretagne in France. It felt like the Welsh or Irish lands to the west, but the people of Brittany are of the same stock as the Celtic folk and have similar folk traditions that I have been able to observe in dance and music. Brittany reminds me of Ohio, rolling hills of farmland and factories, but generally underdeveloped and poorer than the other regions of France. It is not a great wine-grape-growing region; fermented apple cider is the drink of choice, and opening a bottle of cider is akin to that exciting and dangerous moment of uncorking a champagne bottle.

When we came upon the Stupa (Buddhist shrine) placed on a hillside above a converted farmhouse it looked even less like France, and I was even more disoriented upon entering this spirit-heavy landscape where Bodhisattvas and Druids share dimensions. As we wandered over to the hospitality table I began to recognize old friends and to meet new ones as they arrived for the "Stage" (workshop).

We began, as usual, with morning practice and (for the non-jet lagged), morning meditation in the meditation hall at the Center. Remembering the cannibal flies of Strasbourg, I came prepared with citronella and long sleeves but found that the worst hazard was the stinging nettle, which we were to be balanced karmically by eating as a delicious soup... Every day a different teacher would lead morning practice and we would follow a very nice array of styles and with their particular warm-up exercises. From the martial approach by Eugene Meyer and Christophe Lephay, to a more yogic feel from Christian Bernapel and Jean Pai, to the go-for-broke standing and stretching of Luc Defago, everyone was able to try out a few new techniques and enjoy those already mastered.

Being at a Buddhist Center we were treated to vegetarian meals of high quality and good variety (would the French stand for less?), and breakfast was always full of camaraderie and comedy, in particular, Jean Luc Pommier and Jean Michel

Fraigneau (aka Gandhi) were a rolling boil of high jinks and punning, which turned my beginner's French into a script from Saturday Night Live's Rosanne Rosannadanna. We were lectured by Master Wang every day on the meaning of the different movements of the First Duan in application and tuishou, and were given several new derivations of technique to work on. But the most emphasis was placed on softness and giving up force within the context of push hands and form applications.



Softness and Relaxation were the themes that Master Wang kept emphasizing to us over the course of the next three weeks in Bretagne and Angers. He told us that he was there to change the way we were practicing push hands and that everyone would have to change! During the explanations of technique he was constantly watching the demonstrators to make adjustments and clarify techniques that were not quite right or misunderstood.

There was a sense of seriousness in the air and everyone began to work very hard to accomplish the goals set by Laoshu. Something else was happening at the Buddhist Centre, Master Wang and

the Lama were talking one day and discussing the origins of their respective traditions in Daoism and Buddhism. The particular lineage that this Buddhist school adheres to is called the Drukpa Kargyu Tradition and it has several practices that are used to propel the initiate to enlightenment within the span of one lifetime.

Interestingly, the name of these practices is the "Big Dragon." They trace their origin to a beginning around 1161-1211 when Tsangpa Gyare and his followers traveled to establish a monastic center. When he and his followers reached Namgyi-phu, nine dragons reared up from the earth and soared overhead, roaring like thunder, while flowers miraculously rained down. Thus the sect became known as the Dragon (Druk) Sect of the Kargyu. The Lama suggested a connection to the Dragon Door Sect of Daoism which was the origin of the Gold Mountain School to which Master Wang belongs. Master Wang was prone to agree that somewhere along the line the two practices converged, saying that in those times the designation of Dragon meant that the practice of a particular school was within a certain tradition and that the naming of these schools was not arbitrary.

We practiced and basked in the dragon breath of the sun and wind, day by day, to come to some deeper understanding of relaxation and softness within each movement and particular technique. During the breaks informal teaching groups gathered to push hands or practice empty-hand and weapons forms, and we also were given some instruction on the origin of the worship tradition of this particular Buddhist lineage. One day we were all gathered under the large tree at the side of the house and the Lama gave a talk on the Buddhist precepts and symbolism of the Stupa design. But what I remember most vividly was the problem of a French novice monk who applied for admission to the Drukpa Kargyu school. He went through a process of discovery through which the lamas were able to review his previous incarnations. They were looking for a connection with the school from the distant past and were stymied. The prerequisite condition for entrance to the monastic order is that one would have had some kind of karmic connection with the lineage and they could find none. Finally they decided to consult the head Lama in Bhutan for a decision. A surprising

answer came back: the aspiring monk had at an earlier point been incarnated as a wild pig and, during that life, he had happened across a Stupa constructed by the Drukpa Kargyu School. While in search for food he unwittingly circled the Stupa three times, clockwise, and then pushed a small stone into a crack in the foundation of the structure.

This effected a needed repair and gained the pig a spiritual lease on life in his current incarnation as a monk.

More practice and push hands, more sword and finally we were at the end of the Stage and getting ready for "Fest Noz." This is the tradition of dancing and music and celebration that is foremost in Brittany. The women were dressed in long dark dresses with long aprons and Dutch-style hats kind of like the nun's hat with folded-back wings. The men wore knickers and spats and white shirts with vests. They all came on strong with an array of jumps and kicks that outclassed River Dance and kept the energy at a high pitch.

Circle dances and various pattern dances were stepped out to the rhythmic pulse of snare drums and field drums with pipers playing, all at the foot of the Stupa, with cider bottles popping and a feast prepared by Marti, our chef from Brooklyn, New York. As I have come to expect in France, the talents of taijiquan students are varied and we were treated to music and a comic skit by these impromptu thespians.

After dinner we were encouraged to dance to the musical group led by one of our hosts, Charles Stephane, who plays transverse wood flute with his

Celtic-flavored ensemble. They varied the program with ballads, jigs and reels that warded off the rain that had been trying to fall all afternoon. It had the feel of a country dance at harvest time when people are used to working long days and into the evening, so that the festivals continue this pattern and last long into the night.

In the end it was hard to tell if anyone had accomplished a great change but, for my part, the experience gave me the incentive in my own practice to become softer and to relax my technique and to try to make the underlying principles of Qi work better for me in the form and in push hands.









# Questions and Answers

## Wang Yen-nien

Translations by Julia Fisher-Fairchild

*From the concluding question and answer session of the summer sword workshop;*

**Are the eight sword cuts (pi, ci, liao, zha, muo, duo, hua, tiao) paired? For example, if you attack with a pi, is there a fixed corresponding move?**

No, the eight sword cuts are not paired. However, it would certainly be possible to create a two-person sword form where each movement was "paired" to the partner's sword cut. But this is a forced pairing and not necessarily true in real sword technique. It is also possible to "pair" a sword with a sabre, or any other weapon, and create other two-person sets. And this has been done. The problem is the movements become fixed and dead because the mind has become fixed. In reality, if this was really happening, you would not have time to consciously decide which technique to apply. We prefer to practice in a way that encourages flexibility of mind. This becomes a question of training the mind (yi). The eight sword cuts are not paired like the eight hand moves in tuishou.



*From the Teachers' College Meeting during the summer 1999 workshops;*

**Why do we raise the heel of our empty leg when we spiral up and push?**

The foot which has the heel raised is the empty leg. When you move the most important thing is to respect empty and full and Yin and Yang. If you don't raise the heel this leg will become heavy. By raising the heel of the empty foot this foot becomes lighter. It is very important not to be double weighted - in touishou and in practice of the form. The empty leg must be very free. You are not as agile if the foot is flat on the ground.

Many who have practiced for a long time are still not capable of separating empty and full. Thus they achieve no results. We want to obtain results.



## **Are there neutralizing techniques against kicks in the applications?**

In taiji we very rarely use our feet. How do you deflect such kicks? How do you neutralize them? If you understand transformation then you should be able to deflect these kicks. A foot will never be as fast as a hand. It is very dangerous to use a kick. If you strike with a kick there are many things that might happen. But if you miss you are in real trouble. In tae-kwo-doe, for instance, they use many kicks. But in competition you can not grab the foot and this is the best way to neutralize. If you can not grab the foot it is not a martial art, in my point of view.

Of course, if somebody kicks, you should be capable of turning away, grabbing, or deflecting. If you are familiar with the kicks then you will be capable of deflecting them. Your technique must be adaptable. As soon as the yi moves, the rest of the body follows. If you have the gongfu – and the technique – you are capable of deflecting any attack.



## **Is it important that we breath differently as men and women?**

It is very important that men and women respect the circle of breathing. Sometimes as beginners women are taught to use the same breathing technique as men. It is not that women can not use man's direction of breathing in the body. But if women use the men's direction of breathing the results obtained will be slower in coming. Yin and yang are reversed in men and women. Yin is in the front for men. Yang is in the front for women.

Women carry babies – when women are pregnant they can become very sensitive. They will feel that the chi goes down the back when it is inhaled. This has not always been taught. Breathing is actually adapted to the yin/yang system. When you practice neigong you must really separate men and women's breathing.

It is amazing to see that some women are so strong, they have many children. Their chi circulates naturally. They use natural breathing – even if they have not been told about this.

In our school we use the nose to breath in and the mouth to breath out. Most Yang schools use only the nose for both breaths.

We do it this way to harmonize the neigong and gongfu skill. When you inhale with the nose you make your inhale longer. Using just the nose to inhale and exhale is not a bad method. But using the nose and the mouth for the breathing cycle will increase the vital force. This is known as Tu-na.

Our goal is the harmonization of neigong and taijiquan.

This tu-na method is used to make one's

health better. People who practice this method of breathing have fewer problems with their liver and gall bladder. The liver is very important. It improves health and existence, skills and gongfu.

If people who have heart problems use the breathing technique of drawing the air through the nose their heart conditions will improve.

In neigong our goal is to harmonize with the five organs. But why do meditators sometimes have health problems? When you use only your nose for inhaling and exhaling your body temperature lowers. When you only use the mouth the skin, and body temperature, gets warmer. People who meditate for years using only the nose get health problems. With tu-na neigong you can transform your health problems.

Climate is also a factor. Taoists use their breathing to make life more bearable. There is a graph in my first book which shows the adaption of breathing in relation to the seasons and the five organs.

### **Regarding the Taiji Classics:**

AYMTA sent Master Wang a question regarding a line in the Taiji Classics. In "Expositions of Insights into the practice of the thirteen postures." by Wu Yu-hsiang from The Essence of T'ai Chi Ch'uan, as translated by Lo/Inn/Amacker/Foe, we find;

*The ch'i (breath) is always nurtured without harm.*

*Let the ch'i move*

*as in a pearl with nine passages so that there is no part (of the body) it cannot reach.*

*In moving*

*the ch'i sticks to the back and permeates the spine.*

A similar passage can be found in Master Wang's first book, (Vol. I, C-12) in "A Clarification of the Thirteen Postures" attributed to Wang Zongyue, lines 20-24;

*Circulate qi through your body*

*As if threading a pearl with nine curves.*

*Wherever it goes,*

*It goes unobstructed.*

*(This is what is meant by*

*"In the body, qi is everywhere.")*

The line in question is "Let the ch'i move, as in a pearl with nine passages," / "Circulate qi through your body, As if threading a pearl with nine curves."

Julia Fisher-Fairchild replied:

I have asked Master Wang for more clarification and he said that the "nine curves" is a reference to a famous bridge (the Nine-Curves Bridge") over a lake in China. The idea is that since the body is not straight, neither is the flow of qi, it zig-zags around the body just like the famous Nine-Curves Bridge which zig-zags over the top of the lake and reaches all parts.

# Taiji and Jujitsu: Different Paths, Same Mountain

By Brad Binder, Ph.D.

I've been studying Waboku Jujitsu for approximately 16 years. Unlike some of the currently more-popular styles, it is a fairly equal blend of percussive, grappling, joint locking and ground fighting techniques with absolutely no competitive component; its main goals are self-defense and to train people to be self-reliant leaders in the community. I was drawn to this style by its "no nonsense" attitude and the fact that practice was constantly geared toward application. About nine or 10 years ago I was introduced to Don and Kathryn Coleman who teach taiji. They had recently moved to Madison, Wisconsin, from California and I had heard about them from several of my students. After meeting them, and having Don in my jujitsu class for a while, I decided, this taiji stuff was something to check out. I've never made a better choice in my life.

On the surface of it, these two arts seem very incongruous with many differences in technique and practice. In the beginning, taiji is usually practiced at a slow, relaxed pace while jujitsu starts at a pretty hectic and fast pace. Taiji practice often focuses on form or technique while Waboku jujitsu training focuses on outcome (that is, the successful application of the technique). This is not to say that these attributes are not found in each art. However, what seems to be commonly emphasized in each art is very different. So why study both? Or more important, is the study of both even compatible?

I have learned a great deal in my study of taiji that has profoundly changed my practice and teaching of jujitsu. One area where taiji has been especially helpful is in neigong. While my style of jujitsu has internal work, it is by no means as developed and sophisticated as that taught in taiji. In addition, Don Coleman and I have been meeting for several years exploring how the concepts and techniques of each art are complimentary with the other. Our collaboration has yielded interesting interpretations about the movements of taiji and has given me new insights into the possibilities of the techniques in jujitsu. The more that we have delved into it, the more we have found that these two arts

have deeper things in common. I suspect that most martial arts share these insights. Sometimes the application of the concepts varies, but the roots remain the same.

Some of the more important concepts that seem essentially identical are:

- Relax the entire body; maintain one center for good balance.
- Cultivate energy at the crown of the head.
- Coordinate your body as a whole.
- Develop strength on the inside and softness on the outside.
- Use the mind to command breath and action.
- Develop sticking energy.
- Use even and continuous movement.

One of the advantages of practicing taiji is that I now have new ways to work on, teach and think about these core concepts.

While the practice and application of jujitsu and taiji can often be quite different, my belief is that each has a lot to teach. Some argue that studying more than one martial art is contrary to tradition and dilutes each art. I think that we are never studying just one art. Many interactions have gone into whatever "style" we are pursuing. In the most basic sense, these arts developed out of conflict and war. The survivors of such conflict went home with new knowledge from defeating opponents who had different knowledge. In a more collaborative sense, there are many stories of old masters with long-time friends who studied a different art or style. I suspect that they at least talked about their martial arts and probably even practiced together. It is my belief that by collaborating with martial artists of many styles we are following a long, fruitful tradition. Certainly my collaboration with Don has yielded things that benefit both of us. By having exposure to taiji and jujitsu, my understanding of the martial arts has both deepened and expanded. In the final analysis, both arts teach one to live fully in the world and to follow the way of the warrior for a deeper understanding of the dao.

# Jacques Craighero

## Teaching Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan in the Caribbean

By Thomas Campbell

Jacques Craighero is lean and wears a large smile on his richly tanned face. He looks like a man who has spent the better part of his life outdoors, under the sun, searching for the answers to the martial-arts questions that he has pursued for 27 years. He teaches Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan in St. Barthelme, French West Indies, in the Caribbean. We spoke on one of the typically hot afternoons in Chalonnes sur Loire between workshop events. Pascale Minarro, a student of his for over four years, provided the translation.

It was in 1980 that Jacques first became involved with Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan. He went to La Rochelle, France and saw a demonstration with Jean Pai, an assistant of Master Wang's (and currently a senior teacher of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan). Unfortunately Jean Pai was ill at the time. "The demonstration was not the best. The form was not clear. But then Master Wang began to demonstrate and, when I saw this, I was very impressed. I stayed and began to practice with Serge Dreyer."

"When I was first exposed to Wang

Yen-nien I had already studied external forms, both Bagua and Wu Shu. My first master was named Nguen Danphu, who taught me the external forms. To practice both external and internal forms you must practice very hard.

The external practice is like you have a gun, you just shoot. But the internal practice is like you have a big bomb."

His first master recently passed away and now Jacques only teaches Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan, as taught by Wang Yen-nien.

"All off my students have come to my school without prior knowledge of the martial arts. This allows my teaching methods to be very pure. My reasons for teaching are very simple. I love to teach and share what I know. I have every kind of student. Out of, for example, every 10 students, two are very serious. We have a small school (it's a small island) and have approximately 20 students at any given time."

Craighero asks that his students wear similar clothes, either black and white or all black. After bowing to commence the class he begins with basic exercises before moving to taiji form practice. Before teaching the long form he



starts his students with the thirteen postures. After four years of study his students have begun study of the third duan.

“First, students should learn the form, and learn it well.” He explained “Then the tuishou can follow. It is the final part of the practice for me. The students must be ready for tuishou before I will introduce it.”

Craighero is very much a traditionalist when it comes to taiji. He feels that taiji, in France, can be a very “in” thing; more fashionable and less in-depth. This does not make him happy. When I explain to him that in the United States there is also this attitude he frowns.

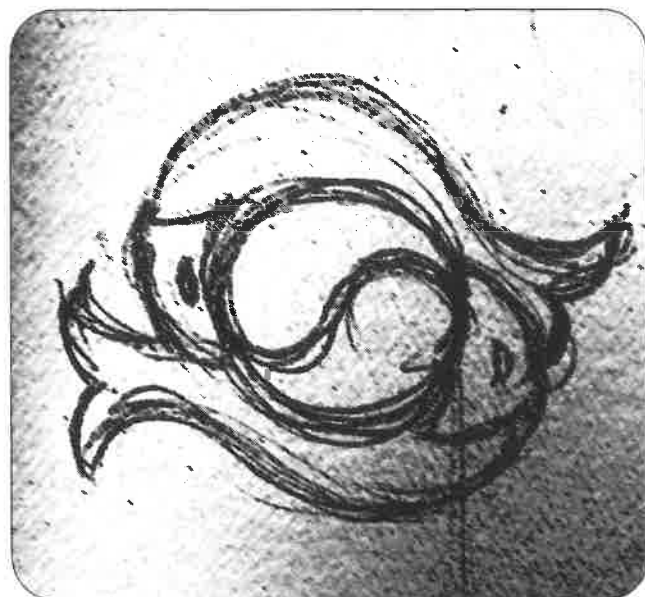
“I wonder sometimes what will happen. The tendency to change things, to simplify and make them ‘better’ is such a disappointment. I have great respect, for instance, for what Julia Fairchild is doing; working close to Master Wang to ensure that this form will be preserved.”

Craighero does not take his taiji lightly. “The teachers must be very serious. I am very bothered by fashionable teaching. Maybe the teachers have to be more martial, as they were many years ago. They should not be afraid to talk about spiritual matters when it is necessary and appropriate. Teachers who are just looking for the form, the physical, the exercise, this will not allow the taiji to grow. Master Wang’s form cannot be practiced or taught without at least a little bit of spirituality. This is more important than knowing everything there is to know. A good teacher must know at least the first and second duan and have many years of practice behind them.”

As for teacher certification,

Craighero is generally favorable to the idea. “It’s a good idea but after the certificate is given the teacher should also sign spiritual papers. You have to do this with your heart. Those who certify others must be sure of them spiritually, be sure that they will continue the form as taught. Don’t forget that Master Wang is a Daoist teacher. This is a religion. Other teachers have to know that there is a spiritual element behind this practice. They should take that into their bodies, to make it meaningful to them. A teacher doesn’t have to be Daoist. If he is Roman Catholic, for instance, that is fine. But he or she has to be open to what the study of taiji means, and not just Catholic in all ways of thinking.”

Craighero feels positive about the way the sword workshop was planned. “It’s good to have time with a lot of different teachers. We have to support the other organizations and show them our appreciation. Without this kind of support among those who practice nothing will happen. It’s in all of our interests that we support the teachers who support Master Wang.”



# Workshop Notes; Kunlun Sword Form, First and Second Duan

By Michael Stone

## Introduction with Explanation of Terms

I would like to welcome the Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan Family to this little work. I hope that these notes will help all of you trying to learn the sword form to remember the movements. There is no way to accurately put into text the graceful movements of this form in enough detail. In an effort to minimize unnecessary repetition, verbosity and confusion I've had to create a sort of vocabulary. The following is a list of terms I use in the notes.

Left/Right terms always refer to the parts of the body. (e.g. left foot, right hand, left talisman) I often use degrees to refer to amount that you turn (e.g., turn right 45) I use compass directions to indicate which direction to face, turn, step and advance.

**Advance:** Step with the indicated foot in a forward arc, but do not shift the weight. This is used to indicate movement straight forward or to one of the forward diagonals, the compass direction will be indicated.

**Close feet:** The feet close, toes together, weight evenly distributed.

**Circle step:** Straight out of the form, with the addition of a circle step forward not usually seen in the unarmed forms.

**Crouch:** Low postures with the legs or feet close together.

**Descend:** Low postures with one leg extended, weight on the back leg.

**Join:** Bring the foot indicated in to the supporting foot. This is the normal position with the weight on one leg and other foot just to the side and behind on the toes.

**Retreat:** Same as Advance, moving the foot to the rear, but not shifting the weight.

**Step:** The normal move foot and shift weight movement.

### Sword positions

**Li-Yin:** Blade vertical, "tiger's mouth" edge up.

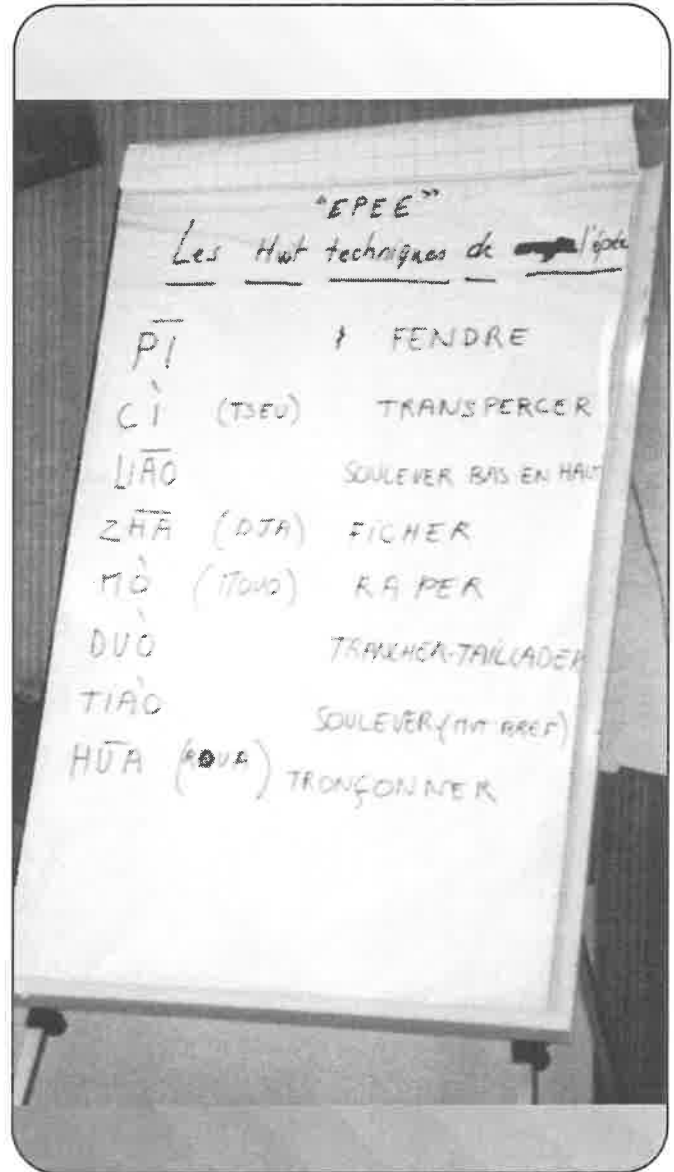
**Li-Yang:** Blade vertical, knuckle edge up.

**Pi-Yin:** Blade flat, palm down.

**Pi-Yang:** Blade flat, palm up.

### Sword Circles

I quickly got tired of writing a description of the direction a sword was circling. So, I came up



with this less verbose system. Almost all of these circles are vertical, by the side of the body. Horizontal circles and arcs I describe in terms of Hua, and there are really only Hua left and Hua Right. Most sword circles start with the sword in front of the body, pointing forward usually at waist height. The names of the circles are in two elements: the side of the body they are on, and, either they start by sweeping up or down. Those circles that start by going up I termed Yang, and those sweeping down I termed Yin. Thus we have Left/Right Yang, and Left/Right Yin.

## Kunlun Sword Form First Duan, Pi (Chop)

*Raise the sword,  
Then crouch like a dragon.  
The huge roc spreads its wings  
And shows no mercy.*

*Twist step, turn back;  
Leg like a drill.  
Turn over, step forward;  
Give distinguished service.*

### Raise the Sword

Standard opening from basic posture facing south.

Both hands move to the sternum, arms horizontal, right talisman on guard of sword, look left (east).

Shift left, turn in right toes, arms extend up (east) at shoulder height, pommel out, talisman slides under arm to support left wrist.

Shift right, face east, drop both arms to sides, join left.

Stand right, lift left knee, right talisman rises above forehead, left arm cruciform, sword behind arm and shoulder.

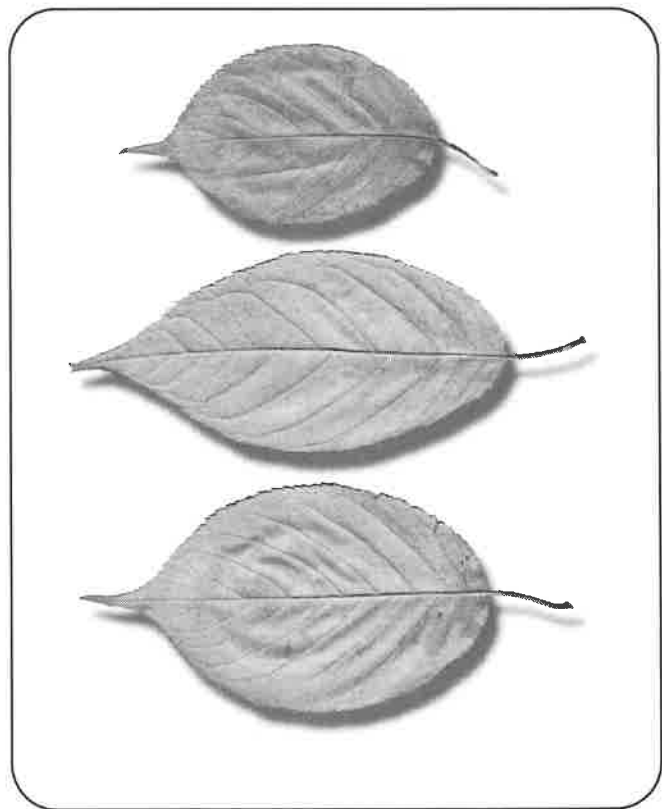
Talisman drops down front of body, left hand returns to sternum elbow up, sword horizontal along forearm, talisman right Yin circles all the way to forehead, left foot hooks behind right knee, face south east (sword points east), crouch on right leg.

Both arms circle right Yang, Stand on right leg facing east, lift left knee, left arm returns to cruciform, right talisman returns to forehead.

Left leg retreats (west, with authority), use momentum to turn body 180 left (west), pivoting on both toes, drop left arm to side, shift left, join right, Zha (jab) with talisman at shoulder-height west.

Right step back east, let sword swing back and down, pommel between thumb and forefinger, as momentum swings sword up grasp in right hand, left Yang circle into Liao west, (keep weight on back leg) turn left toes in (northwest), shift left, advance right foot to northeast, sword continues to circle up from the left and circles down into Pi to the northeast, talisman follows sword to forehead.

Stand on left leg, drop tip of sword to ankle height, protecting leg, and Tiao, talisman



drops to wrist.

Turn right toes right 90 (southeast), shift right and half sit, sword circle right horizontally across shoulders, arms close to body.

Left kick to southeast, push sword out horizontally at shoulder, left leg retreats to north west (toes out), arms left Yin circle, shift left and "Roc Spreads its Wings," talisman at forehead, sword to the southeast

Right leg retreats to west, sword circles right Yin to Dantien, talisman Yin circles to dantian, shift right, left leg large retreat west, talisman extends east over length of sword, sword retreats, sit on right leg, sword and left leg match angles.

Rise to half sit on right leg, lift left knee, talisman drops to level with waist extended in front of body, sword does a Tiao-like move (flick) at wrist to become horizontal at thigh, sword hand behind body, left step east, join right and Ci, right wrist meets left talisman.

Pivot on toes 45 left to north east, left Yin circle both hands, advance right to east and Pi to east, talisman at forehead.

Again left Yin circle both hands, turn right toes in (north), as arms circle up shift right, left cross step behind right leg to east, and crouch, Pi to just off of ground, talisman slides up arm to shoulder, sword east.



(big circle move)

Left hand leads in a vertical Hua to the left, sword arm follows, shift weight and pivot to turn body 180, untwisting legs as you stand (facing south), shift right, turn left toes out (north east), shift left, advance right, descend left and Pi to east to just off ground, talisman at shoulder.

Rise, shift right, square body to east, sword is Pi-yang at waist, talisman at wrist, extend directly into Plank on right leg.

Turn the sword left (north) Pi-Yang parallel to left arm, lift tip to vertical Pi-Yang, release bottom three fingers, grip sword with left "preparation" grip.

Drop left leg, raise body, use momentum to turn right 135 (southwest), turn sword over and drop to side, keep left knee up, bring right talisman up: front of body and left kick, tapping toes with right talisman, keep left knee and talisman up.



## Kunlun Sword Form Second Duan, Ci (Stab)

*Push the boat along with the current;  
Move inside .  
White snake darts out its tongue,  
A little bit red.*

*Explore the sea.  
The sword: perfect.  
Lift the robe,  
and run the sword through;  
Turn back.*

Drop the sword behind the back, between thumb and forefinger. Take the sword in the right hand, left cross-step west. Advance the right foot west, talisman at forehead. Ci at solar plexus, sword Pi-Yang.

Join right, vertical Yin Hua with both arms. Face southwest, talisman joins the right wrist overhead. Pi southwest, sit on left leg.

Circle left Yin, right step northwest, join left Pi northwest, talisman on right wrist throughout. Sit on right leg.

Pivot on both toes right 90° (northeast) , drop and separate hands both hands come to shoulder height, sword vertical Li-Yin, left step northwest, toes in, sit on left leg, sword arcs over and in front of body to Zha northwest, stopping when the sword wrist contacts the talisman.

Drop the left hand and circle to overhead, turn right 90°  
Advance right foot south east and Pi.

Drop talisman to right wrist, left circle left Yin and Pi, circle right Yin and Pi, drop tip and Tiaô.

Raise the sword to chest height, turn sword over to Pi-Yin. Hua right 135° to west, left foot circles clockwise to east. Toes in (south), sword extends (points) west, shift left, pull sword into dantian rolling over to Pi-Yang, join right foot.

Right step west, close left foot, sword at shoulder height, crouch on both feet.

Stand, left back step east, close right foot, bring the sword to the dantian.

Right step west, left joins and crouch into chair.

# John Cole's Taijiquan Applications with Qi Workshop at Dancing Mountain

by Mike Basdavanos

How does the Taijiquan form express itself as a field of energy and what does this mean in the application of the form in real life? These questions are at the core of how we practice and extend our personal energy during the practice of Taijiquan.

And so we began exploring the processes of using Qi in our understanding of taijiquan practice. John Cole has contemplated and explored these aspects of the Yangjia Michuan form for many years.

Sometimes when two people are practicing push hands, bafa, or dalu a kind of feeling is exchanged where one "knows or is known by the partner". We began with Peng and found many places in the form where this occurs, either as a movement in itself or as a part of another movement in passing. For example, in the Grasp the Sparrow's Tail movements, Ward-off turns into Splitting with the circular arm motions reflecting each other and finally coming together in Press. But within the circling arms we find Peng energy which is moving closer and closer to the body until the last Ward-off turns upward into a Press.

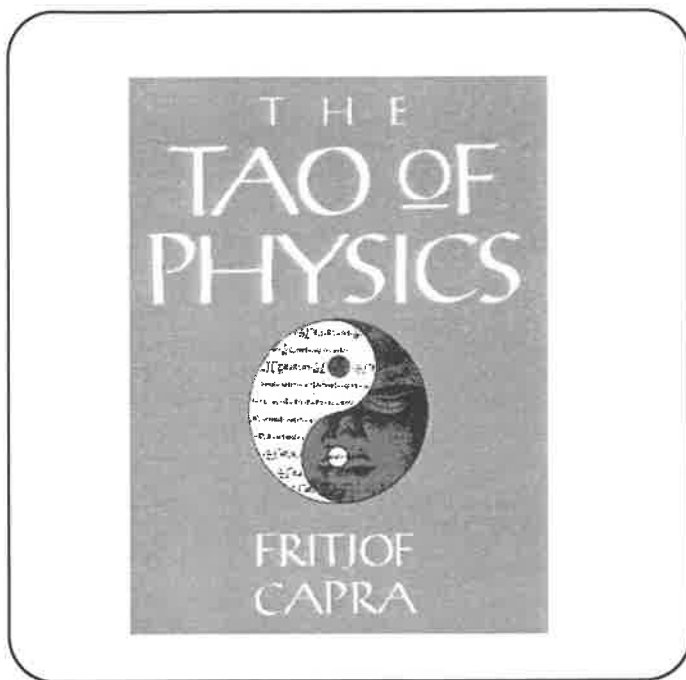
Next we looked at the White Crane Spreads Its Wings movement to see where Ward-off rises and descends on the Vertical line of the body. We see this transformation in the Thirteen Postures and in the First Duan of the long form; moving forward from Shoulder Strike and moving backward from High Pat on the Horse's Mane.

Thinking of Qi moving through these moments in the form you can get a better sense of the transforming quality of the movement from a deflection to a strike. The side to side axial movement of the lower back and the freely rotating quality of the lower Dantian are mechanical devices that point the way for extending Qi into the movements. Thinking about the connection between the movement and the field of Qi seems to make it more substantial, especially if you have been practicing

Neigong or Qigong to circulate and gather Qi. At other places in the forms a sweeping motion of the arms across the front of the body and to the sides occurs. Blocking and Punching in the first Duan, in the Single Arm Sweep and again in Cloud Hands. Within all of these movements can be found the Peng energy lifting, sweeping, turning, wrapping etc. When we were using the idea of Qi within the movement, the turning of the joints seems to happen in a more fluid way with connection and transformation clearly felt as you change direction and intention.

Later, we investigated several kicking techniques and did a few practical exercises with the legs to loosen up and direct power at various levels of kicking. One exercise was similar to the changes in footwork that occur in the third Duan movement 100 practices with the Legs in combination with the advancing shin "kicks" at the end of the second duan. In changing directions with the feet, the hips and legs begin to work with the dantian in a more unified way from the top down instead of the usual bottom up direction. Another technique we played with was the arching kick that occurs in the second Duan and later at the end of the third Duan in forward and backward modes. We began by just swinging the foot and leg together straight up and then took a walk with this high-stepping cake walk to open the hips and get the swing going from Dantian.

It is possible to transmit the experience and technique of cultivating Qi in a very short period of time but difficult to understand how a stronger flow of Qi can be created and used. This requires practice with others and daily cultivation. When two people develop the sensitivity to feel the other's Qi and it's intention outside the body, interesting things begin to happen. In general, if you can be receptive to Qi and feel it in another's intention you can develop your own ability to redirect that energy and eventually extend your own field.



## BOOK REVIEW

by Christopher Nelson

The Tao Of Physics by Fritjof Capra, 3rd edition (1975, 1983, 1991) , Shambala Press

One comes out of the experience of reading this book with more than just a better understanding of quantum fields, S-matrix theory and time-space projections. Throughout the thickets of particle physics, the author reveals again and again the striking similarities between the world-view of Eastern mysticism and the latest scientific theories.

The basic thrust of the book is that the experience of Eastern mystics (Hindu, Taoist or Buddhist) in their meditative state is closely related to the description of the fundamental structure of reality as described by modern science. The author gives a brief description of the various religious and philosophical traditions which have shaped the Eastern mindset before launching into the details of modern parti-

cle physics. Readers with little or no background in physics might find some of the issues confusing, but the author has gone to great lengths to make the material as accessible as possible to lay audiences.

The evolution of Western scientific thought is a fascinating subject in and of itself, and it becomes the underlying dramatic impetus of the book. And drama it is. Starting with the Classical Greek thinkers, Western science is the great debate between Man and God, and each new discovery brings about a radical shift in the Western conception of the relationship between the two. As physics becomes more and more esoteric, it drifts further and further away from the accepted view of how the world works. The Celestial mechanics turn into astronomy and shatters our geo-centric view of ourselves in the process. Similarly, Newtonian mechanics, in all their commonsensical glory, are slowly replaced with a new breed of physics that make notions of cause-and-effect obsolete. The further our understanding of the essential nature of the universe (and of our perceived reality) is pushed, the more its "interconnectedness" is revealed. Phrases like "flow", and "dance of energy" appear, and concepts like the quantum field seem to grow straight out of the Tao Te Ching.

This book is a classic, and rightly so. It provides a clear summary of the latest theories of particle physics, as well as an overview of Eastern thought. The revelations of quantum mechanics in relation to the nature of the universe are staggering, and provide an added incentive to anyone seriously interested in meditation, Taiji, or any other means of transcending our perception of what we call reality.

*The following is an excerpt (from page 39) from The Tao of Physics, third edition, by Fritjof Capra.*

“...In my experience, for example, skiing has been a highly rewarding form of meditation.

Eastern art forms, too, are forms of meditation. They are not so much means for expressing the artist’s ideas as ways of self-realization through the development of the intuitive mode of consciousness. Indian music is not learned by reading notes, but by listening to the play of the teacher and thus developing a feeling for the music, just as the T’ai Chi movements are not learned by verbal instructions but by doing them over and over again in unison with the teacher. Japanese tea ceremonies are full of slow, ritualistic movements. Chinese calligraphy requires the uninhibited, spontaneous movement of the hand. All these skills are used in the East to develop the meditative mode of consciousness.

For most people, and especially for intellectuals, this mode of consciousness is a completely new experience. Scientists are familiar with direct intuitive insights from their research, because every new discovery originates in such a sudden non-verbal flash. But these are extremely short moments which arise when the mind is filled with information, with concepts and thought patterns. In meditation, on the other hand, the mind is emptied of all thoughts and concepts and thus prepared to function for long periods through its intuitive mode. Lao Tzu speaks about this contrast between research and meditation when he says:

He who pursues learning will increase every day;  
He who pursues Tao will decrease every day.”

(Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching, trans. Ch’u Ta-Kao, Ch 48)

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Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this journal by sending articles, photos, artwork, by contributing time to proof-read (Gretchen MacLane), translate (Chris Nelson) and by providing feedback and inspiration.

# Poetry and Reflection

## **Creativity** by Ann Lee

Born to be sensitive  
Curse and blessing  
This moment - sunshine  
Next second - storm  
Let fly imagination  
Inspiration overflows  
Creativity abounds

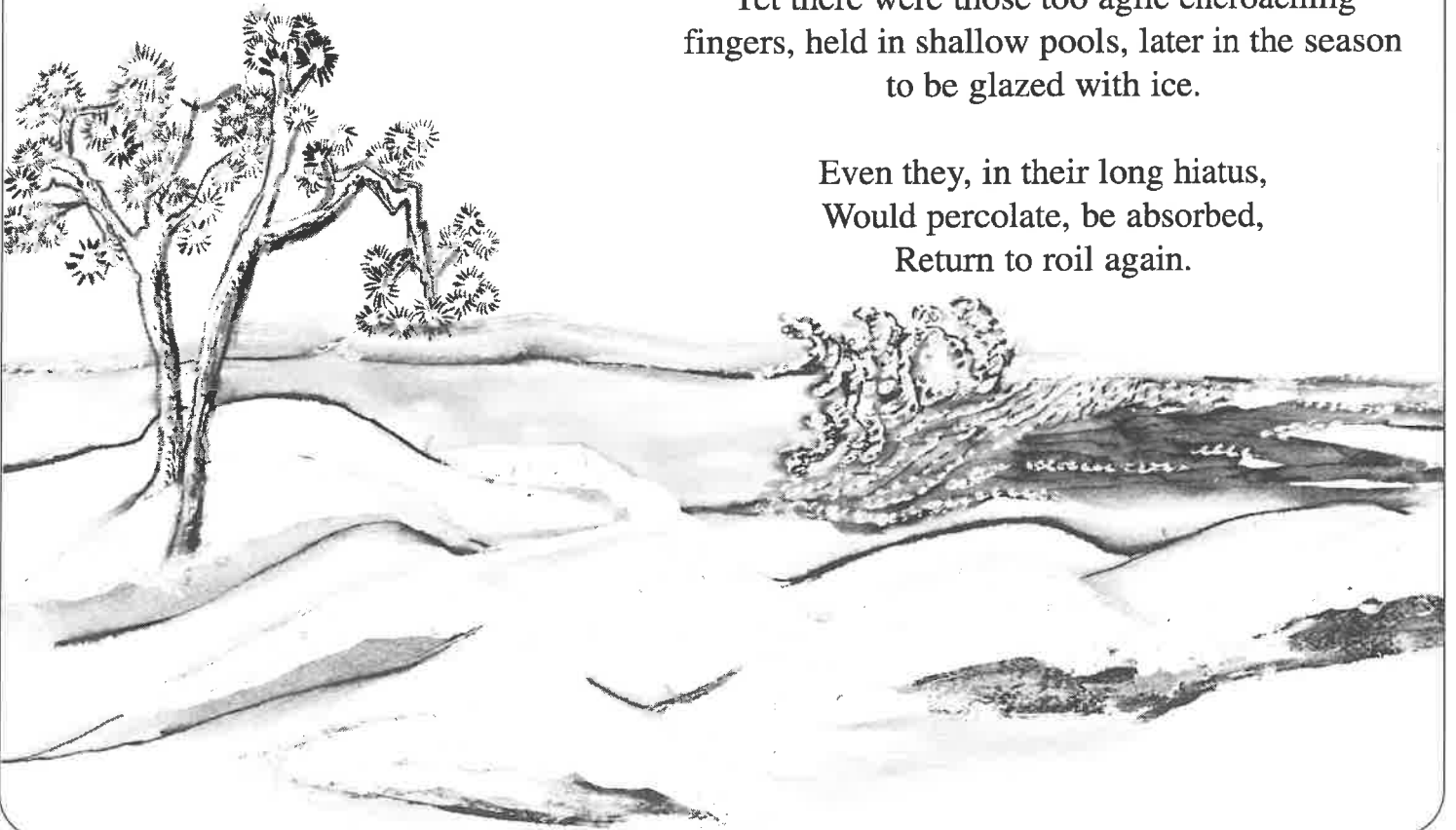
## **Taiji on the Beach** by Don Klein

What trapped my eye  
Were not the sharp static contrasts, the repeated  
snowy groves of pine tall upon the dunes;  
Not the whitened fields of beach mirrored  
in the rolling caps;  
But the gentle washing of the waves on the  
narrowed spit of sand,  
advancing then retreating,  
the brief shimmering moistness  
on the matte of sand.

## **Bào Hǔ Guī Shān**

Yet there were those too agile encroaching  
fingers, held in shallow pools, later in the season  
to be glazed with ice.

Even they, in their long hiatus,  
Would percolate, be absorbed,  
Return to roil again.



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James Douglas  
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Oakland, CA 94618  
(510) 654-6043

Juliet Heizman  
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Santa Cruz, CA 95060  
(408) 429-5428

Akai Jong  
517 Laurent St.  
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### ILLINOIS

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### MARYLAND

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PO Box 383  
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### MICHIGAN

James Carlson  
61655 Raintree Blvd.  
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Don Klein  
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(616) 842-5096

### NEW YORK

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REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
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48, Kidbrooke Place  
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Republic of South Africa  
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Contact: Maureen Poole, President

## BELGIUM

AMICALE DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN  
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Tel: (32) 81-74-24-94  
Contact: Jean-Luc Perot, President

## CANADA

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FEDERATION (CANADA)  
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Contact: Ronald & Mireille Wenser

## ENGLAND

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

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## FRANCE

AMICALE BULLETIN  
63 rue de Seine  
94400 Vitry, France  
Tel/Fax: (33) 1-4680-3928  
E-mail: pommier@msh-paris.fr  
Contact: Jean-Luc Pommier

AMICALE TREASURER  
BP1425  
49014 Angers Cedex-01, France  
Tel/fax: (33) 2-41-788465  
Contact: Françoise Angrand

ECOLE FRANCAISE DE TAIJI QUAN  
BP 3002  
49017 Angers Cedex, France  
Tel: (33) 241-43-67-40  
Fax: (33) 241-37-05-92  
Contact Claudy Jeanmougin

ITALY  
ASSOCIATION TRILOGOS  
via M.G. Capocci 9  
00199, Rome, Italy  
Contact: Ardito Gianvittorio

## JAPAN

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

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

## RUSSIA

THE RUSSIAN ASSOCIATION OF YANGJIA  
MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN  
86 Vavilova At., Apt. 40  
Moscow 117261  
RUSSIA  
Tel: (7) 095-938-5124  
Fax: (7) 095-938-5000  
Contact: Albert Efimov

## SWITZERLAND

ASSOCIATION SUISSE DU YANGJIA MICHUAN  
TAIJIQUAN (ASYMT)  
87 Bd. Carl-Vogt  
1205 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: (41) 22-800-22-50  
Fax: (41) 22-800-22-54  
Contact: Luc Defago

COLLEGE EUROPEAN DES ENSEIGNANTS  
DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN  
39, rue de la Servette  
1202 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel: (41)-22-7330836  
Fax: (41)-22-7343273  
Contact: Valérie Oppel, Secretary

ECOLE DE LA MONTAGNE DOREE  
Av. de France 21  
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(Home) (41) 79-210-9329  
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WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN  
FRIENDSHIP ORGANIZATION (TAIWAN)  
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Republic of China  
Tel: (886) 2-2837-1779  
Fax: (886) 2-2837-2258  
E-mail: ymtitaipei@yahoo.com  
ymti@ficnet.net

WORLD YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN  
TEACHER'S UNION  
32-2F Fuguo Rd.  
Shihlin, Taipei, Taiwan 111  
Republic of China††  
Tel: (886) 2-2837-1779  
Fax: (886) 2-2837-2258  
E-mail: ymtitaipei@yahoo.com  
ymti@ficnet.net

## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

AMERICAN YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN  
ASSOCIATION (AYMTA)  
535 Whitecliff Dr.  
Vallejo, CA 94589, U.S.A.  
Tel: (707) 552-4738  
Fax: (707) 644-3950  
E-mail: johnacole@scronline.com  
Contact: John Cole

## AYMTA JOURNAL

172 West 109th Street, #1R  
New York, NY 10025, U.S.A.  
Tel: (212) 222-7456  
E-mail: tomc@aymta.org  
Contact: Thomas W. Campbell, Editor

GOLD MOUNTAIN DAOIST SCHOOL OF  
INTERNAL ALCHEMY  
(& Journal of the North American Daoist)  
719 Monroer Street,  
Evanston, IL 60202-2612, U.S.A.  
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Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan by Wang Yen-nien. A  
90-minute tape of the breathing and names of the  
form movements called out in Chinese.

Cost: US \$12.00

## VIDEOS

Third Duan

This step-by-step instructional video taught by  
Wang Yen-nien (1996) is for students new to the  
third duan, who want a review aid, or for instruc-  
tors who wish to explore all the rich details of the  
form. It is a set of three tapes approximately two  
hours each.

Cost: US \$ 85.00 (members)  
US \$170.00 (non-members)  
US \$ 4.00 (S/H airmail/U.S.A.)

At this time there are only a few video sets in  
stock (NTSC format)

## Wang Yen-nien Video

Videotaped in the early 1980s in Japan and in  
Taiwan, this tape shows Master Wang demon-  
strating the following: YMT basic exercises, YMT  
Sections 1,2,3, Tuishou basic exercises, Fajin  
exercises, Thirteen Postures and Kunlun (Old)  
Sword Form. The names of the postures are  
called out in Japanese. NTSC, also available in  
Pal And Secam; 99 minutes.

We will order these tapes in groups of 20 to  
defray the cost of the bank transaction charge  
between United States and Taiwan.

Cost: US \$25.00 (includes shipping)

All prices for books, fans and audiotapes include  
shipping.

Books and Fans: AYMTA must have a minimum  
of 10 book orders or 10 fan orders before an  
order can be placed in Taiwan. Books and fans  
are sent by sea mail from Taiwan and take 8-10  
weeks for delivery. In general, orders are mailed  
to AYMTA. To receive direct delivery you must  
have a minimum order of five books and fans.  
Audiotapes: Audiotapes are shipped by airmail  
directly to you. Allow 7-10 days for delivery from  
Taiwan.

## ORDERING

Please make your check payable to AYMTA and  
mail to:

AYMTA  
535 Whitecliff Drive  
Vallejo, CA 94589

## Membership Application

Name		Home Phone	Office Phone
Street Address		Fax	E-mail
City	State	Zip Code	Country
Occupation		Date of Birth	Gender M <input type="checkbox"/> F <input type="checkbox"/>
Referred by			

Your instructor's name		School Name	
Street Address of Instructor			School Phone
City	State	Zip Code	Country

If you have not studied Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan please specify what style(s) of taiji or gongfu you have studied.

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Do you have e-mail? If so, what is your e-mail address?

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Are you an instructor of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan as taught by Wang Yen-nien?                      Yes  No

<input type="checkbox"/> Annual Fee (January - December)	U.S. \$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Donation	U.S. _____
(Make Check payable to AYMTA) Total U.S. _____	
Applicant's Signature _____	Date _____

FOR AYMTA USE ONLY	
Date Received _____	Member # _____
Check # _____	Effective Date of Membership _____
Cash _____	

# AYMTA

## What is AYMTA?

The American Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan Association (AYMTA) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation. The specific purposes for which this corporation is organized is to transmit, perpetuate, promote and further the growth of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan (YMT) in the United States.

## What is Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan?

YMT (Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan), translated as Yang Family Hidden Tradition, was created by Yang Luchan. Yang Luchan passed it on to his son Yang Jianhou. Yang Jianhou passed it on to Zhang Qinlin. Zhang Qinlin passed it on to Wang Yen-nien. Master Wang, in order to prevent the loss of this art, has passed it on to all who are interested in carrying on the Yangjia Michuan style.

## Member Eligibility

Submit a completed and signed application form.

Pay the annual fee.

Support the purpose and objectives of AYMTA.

Members need not be YMT practitioners.

Members are welcome from all over the world.

## The Objectives of AYMTA

To conduct workshops and public demonstrations in YMT.

To educate the public that the purpose of YMT is to promote health, prolong the life span, calm the mind and harmonize the spirit: to develop the art of self-defense, and to provide the entry level to the Great Dao.

To provide certified YMT instructors for the public.

To provide qualified members with instructor certification.

To help instructors improve their teaching and build consistency in teaching YMT.

To publish a journal and newsletter (for members).

## Annual fee

\$35.00 per year

(January through December).





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AMERICAN YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJIQUAN ASSOCIATION  
535 WHITECLIFF DRIVE, VALLEJO, CA 94589. U.S.A.  
Tel (707)552-4738, Fax (707)644-3950