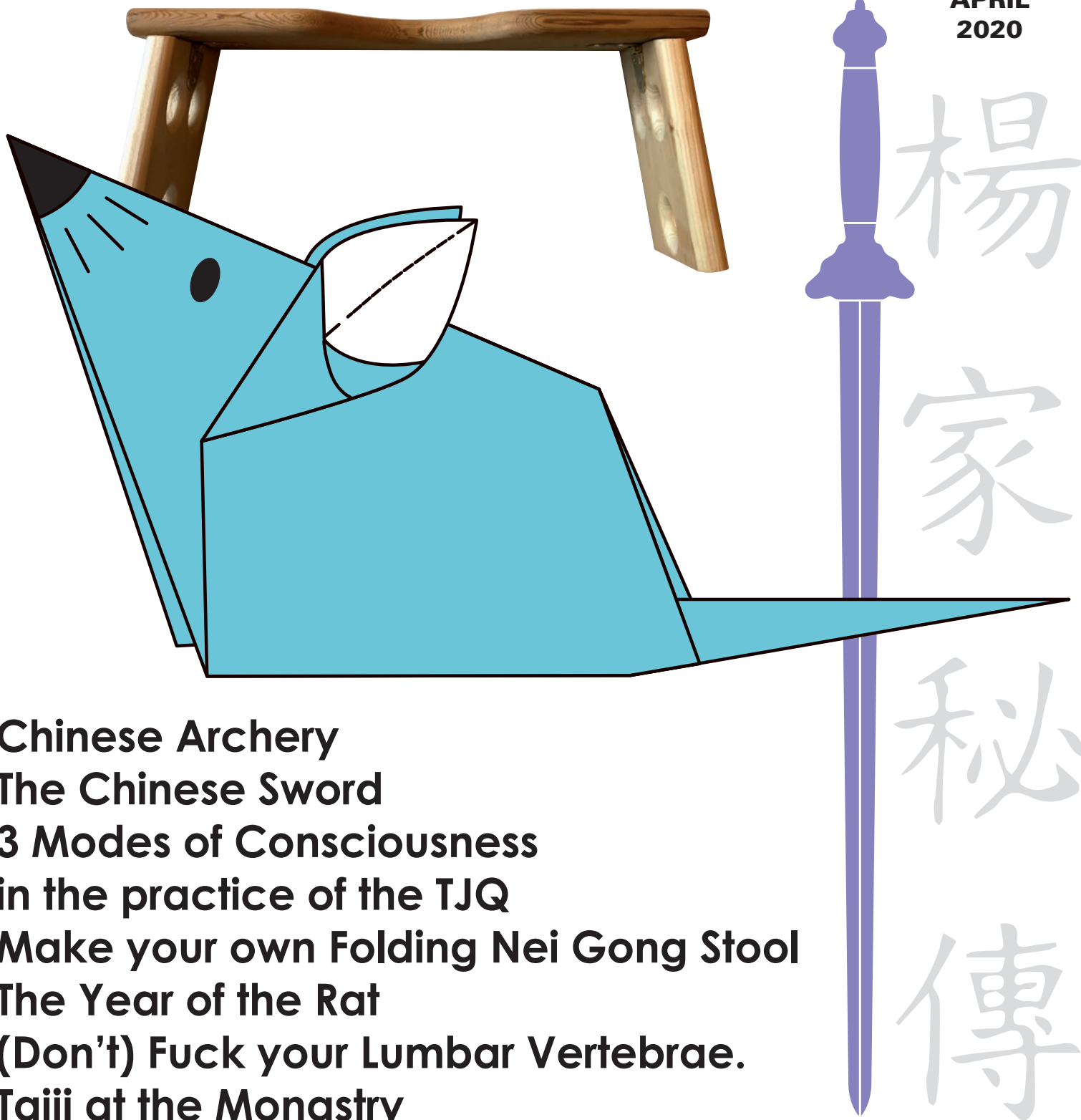


# Amicale

**YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN**

**N°94**

**APRIL  
2020**



**Chinese Archery**

**The Chinese Sword**

**3 Modes of Consciousness**

**in the practice of the TJQ**

**Make your own Folding Nei Gong Stool**

**The Year of the Rat**

**(Don't) Fuck your Lumbar Vertebrae.**

**Taiji at the Monastery**

# Sommaire

# EDITO

## Editorial

Françoise Cordaro

**A Word from the President** ..... 1  
François Schosseler

**Three Modes of Consciousness in the practice of Taiji Quan** ..... 2  
Serge Dreyer

**Make your own Foldable Nei Gong Stool** ..... 6  
Henri Mouthon

**The Chinese Course for 2020** ..... 8  
Paule-Annick Ben Kemoun

**Tai Chi in the Monastery of La Baumette** .... 10  
Jean-Guy Clénet

**Chinese Archery: rise, fall, and renaissance** ..... 13  
Jean-Luc Saby & Gérard Depreux

## Les Feuilles du Collège

**The Chinese Sword** ..... 15  
Frédéric Plewniak

**"to bust your Lumbar"** ..... 22  
Jean-Luc Pérot - Claudy Jeanmougin

**Les Rencontres de l'Amicale 2020** ..... 25

**The Bulletin of the Amicale** ..... 28

Here we are (bis)!

Remember, in the editorial of the last bulletin I spoke to you about a "revolution" to come in the future organization of the Amicale. I had no idea that a few weeks later we would all be in the midst of a revolution on a world scale. It is true, not in the sense we had planned, and as you will see in this issue, if we have announced the next Meetings of the Amicale, don't look for the registration form thinking that we have forgotten it, because at the time when these pages are closing, there is still no certainty for the "post-confinement".

But the revolution is indeed here. It is taking place for the moment in an immense planetary silence to which contributes our... solitary practice! Many of us must have, as a result, much more time, among other things, to read the Bulletin. Perhaps this Bulletin No. 94 will be the one that will make the greatest impression on the minds of the readers, precisely because it is the only one that we have really taken the time to read! And if François invites us, in this strange parenthesis, to put into practice the principles of Tuishou, there is no doubt also that Taiji solo will make us rediscover a regular individual practice, which we had neglected, or even totally put aside. Some (many?) also take the opportunity to set up a meditation discipline. What about a future "special" bulletin dedicated to all that confinement has brought - beyond the time to read these pages - to Taiji Quan practitioners?

In the meantime, here are a few articles that will help to nourish this period of latency: from the history of Chinese weapons to the refinement of our listening to the work of the waist, we have something to learn, something to work with, something to meditate on.

Speaking of meditation, if this confinement is an opportunity for you (at last!) to put your bottom somewhere and take the time to breathe, like the future Zen monk who has to sew by hand, stitch by stitch (very small stitches!), the large kesa that will accompany all his future meditations, you will find in this newsletter something to occupy your free time with the making of a wooden bench.

Good handywork, good practice and above all, take care of yourself...

Françoise Cordaro

# A Word from the President

From one Bulletin to another, we have experienced a radical change of context in a few months. The pandemic has changed our daily rhythm, our habits, our occupations, our concerns and probably also our ways of thinking. The changes are such that many of us are still trying to stabilize their new way of life.

I am thinking of those of us who may be affected in terms of their health, the health of their loved ones, or their jobs. Our associations can be a place of expression of a solidarity that is necessary in these harsh times when everything pushes us to withdraw into ourselves in search of protection. At a time when all our classes have stopped, all our training courses have been cancelled, it is urgent to maintain contacts, to inquire about each other in order to provide support to those who need it.

According to a few feedback I have received, some associations have created virtual practice appointments, based on the same principle as virtual aperitifs. You can even consider combining the two! It's a way of maintaining the link, of exchanging and reacting. To survive in difficult times, it is recognized that we need to understand what is happening to us, to make sense of it in relation to our fundamental values and to use the powers to act that we have, even if they seem weak.

Our practice and the principles on which it is based give us this capacity to respond. We are fortunate to have an exercise toolkit that is known to maintain our body and mind, strengthen our immune defenses and develop our serenity. Confinement gives us time

to practice more regularly. Let us know how to use it and not be sorry.

Another way to maintain links is the forum wished by the General Assembly in Strasbourg and which is now in place (<http://www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org/forum/>). It is public, you can consult it without being registered. To contribute to it or to subscribe to the discussion feeds, you have to create your account, which will be proposed to you if you try to connect.

I hope that each one of us can use the slowdown imposed by circumstances to progress. After all, we are used to a slower pace in regular practice slots and we appreciate the benefits. Perhaps this day-long slowdown will be the cause of unforeseen progress? Letting go and adapting to circumstances... We also practice this in tui shou. What a formidable opponent we're up against here! It's up to us to make the most of this encounter and come out of it stronger.

I would like to end with the words of Diana Katakou whom some of you were able to meet in November in Strasbourg. Our Burkinabe friends are anxiously awaiting the arrival of this pandemic in their country, which is already very disorganised by internal conflicts, without the European hospital infrastructure. However, she writes to us: "I hope that we will come out of this crisis by showing the best of ourselves".

Thank you Diana.

Sincerely  
François Schosseler

---

## BULLETIN DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN

May 2020 – N° 94

Publication of the Amicale of Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan

**Registered office:** AYMTQ c/o CGA - La Serre, 21 rue du Vernay, Cran-Gevrier, 74960 ANNECY- France

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

**Publishing director:** François Schosseler

**Editor in chief:** Françoise Cordaro

**Assistant chief editor:** Claudy Jeanmougin

**Writers (for this issue):** Serge Dreyer, Paule-Annick Ben Kemoun, Henri Mouthon, Jean-Guy Clenet, Jean-Luc Pérot, Claudy Jeanmougin, Frédéric Plewniak, Jean-Luc Saby, Gérard Depreux.

**Correction (for this issue):** Colette Macintos, Françoise Cordaro, Anne-Marie Guibaud.

**Reading panel:** Jean-Luc Perot, Christian Bernapel, Sonia Sladek, Jean-Michel Fraigneau, Claudy Jeanmougin, François Schosseler, André Musso, Anne-Marie Guibaud.

**Translations:** Chris Nelson, Leland Tracy, Sylvain Maillot, Simonette Verbrugge.

**Lay out:** Sophie Cornueil, **Cover:** Emmanuel Leblanc

**College leaflets, graphic artist:** Jean-Claude Issenmann

**Postage:** Claudy Jeanmougin.

# Three modes of consciousness in the practice of taiji quan, and how they contribute to variations within a style

Serge Dreyer

## 1. Introduction

As a way to begin thinking about this question, let me clarify my point of view on the role of the slow movements of the form in the taiji quan (TJQ). In our style there are opposing points of view about this. My thoughts are not intended to refute any of them but to open the door to another way of looking at the issue. One basic principle of my approach will be to rely on facts and not theoretical arguments (no matter how qualified their authors). My position is that these slow movements are synthetic simplifications (no negative connotations to be associated with these two terms) of multiple combat situations. In a way, they are musical scores that represent only a part of the world of music.

First of all, there are three basic well-established approaches to bare-handed techniques in TJQ (at least in the Yang styles). We have the slow movement<sup>1</sup> sequences, *tuishou* (TS) or hand thrusting subdivided into fixed TS and moving TS as well as the *sanshou* (in some schools it is more commonly referred to as *duida*) a form of free combat where (in theory) anything is possible (hitting, pushing, pulling, sweeping, choke holds, arm and leg locks, throws, etc.).

1. We often use the term "form" in French, but this word isn't used in Chinese.

This article is primarily concerned with the modes of consciousness that manifest themselves in the practice of these fields and which also allow a better understanding of the interactions between them. In my opinion it is possible to have differing interpretations of these modes without calling into question the coherence of a style.

## 2. A thoughtful practice of the slow movements of the sequences

### 2.1. Some thoughts on the relationship of slow movements to the reality of combat

First of all, none of the classical texts of TJQ provide an explanation for these slow movements. There is just the suggestion that practicing slowly will allow you to somehow also acquire great speed. But how? Figure it out yourself! In a previous article, I tried to solve this apparent contradiction by comparing the practice of sports and manual labor. The slow repetition of a movement makes it possible to increase the precision of the gesture, but it also helps foster relaxation<sup>2</sup> which reduces the tensions that can interfere with the proper execution of the action. In TJQ this relaxation is often referred to as "*fangsong*".

2. For more on the semantics of this term see my article "Dimensions spirituelles du taiji quan à travers la pratique du pousser des mains" (Staps N°. 117, French/English, "Les pratiques de conscience", sept. 2017).



The adequacy of slow movements of the sequences with respect to realistic confrontational situations, must be left to the teachers' appreciation. However, the majority of TJQ teachers, whether in China or elsewhere, have no experience of martial training in either TS or Sanshou. The most common discourse on martial applications is therefore essentially a "he says - he says" which sometimes leads to disastrous results (On YouTube, you can see what happened to a so-called Chinese master of TJQ, who challenged a practitioner of mixed martial arts (MMA) to a free fight). On the other hand, there are external practitioners who are used to realistic combat, who convert to TJQ, but too often they actually continue to rely on their original techniques, practicing TJQ only in appearance. In both cases, the discourse is unrealistic, which does not mean that it is uninteresting. Between these two extremes we can find all kinds of more or less useful configurations, because after all, it is the individual who gives value to a martial art and not the other way around...

First of all, it is clear that some movements exist in some schools of Yang style, but not in others. And many movements that have the same name are interpreted differently. The parry movement (peng) for example, which in our school is practiced with the weight on the back leg, is executed on the front leg in all the others; we can also compare the simple whip (dan bian) of Zhen Man Qing and Wang Yen Nien or the jade girl in Yang Chen Fu and Wang Yen Nien... Unless everyone really believes that only his school does it properly, a position that I have often criticized in the past, it seems reasonable and healthy to think that the creators of these variations all have good reasons for doing so. If we accept this presupposition, which seems to me essential, we can then postulate that each school is in some way "incomplete" in relation to the possible and imaginable set of confrontational situations<sup>3</sup>. Two proposals to drive home this point:

- If each confrontational situation were to generate one slow movement, we would end up in the absurd position of having to practice thousands of movements in our sequences.
- A glaring example of the "incompleteness" of TJQ is that it does not include any ground fighting techniques.

Some of you may find it shocking to hear that TJQ, and therefore our own Yangjia Michuan TJQ, is necessarily "incomplete". This is an emotional reac-

tion that I have often encountered in Europe and Taiwan. And yet I do not think it is a deficiency of any kind, but rather a reasonable and reasoned acknowledgement of the limits of the creative genius of our predecessors. It is also a posture of humility which fortunately compels us to respect other styles/schools of practice.

A second reason why I am deeply skeptical about a simple copy-and-paste approach between slow movements and real situations of confrontation concerns the choreography of the sequences. Indeed, lateral movements in relation to a supposed axis of attack-defense are most often absent. If we take for example the first sequence of our style:

- Draw the hand downwards to the left: here the attack and the defense are both executed along the axis of the opponents' spine (what I call the column-column (CC) axis). Most experienced fighters generally avoid this axis, because it is the most dangerous situation for both opponents.
- The left push: there is a lateral movement to the left for the hit/push (odd considering the origin of the attack) but not for the dodge.
- The jab: idem.
- Grasping the sparrow's tail: idem.
- Step forward, draw downward: idem.
- Simple whip: ditto.
- Draw, elbow followed by a shoulder: ditto.
- Etc.

Simply practicing moving TS makes it clear that all of these movements would be more effective if accompanied by a lateral or a circumventing movement, preferably a spiral one. Why is this? One of the classic texts of TJQ reminds us that the power of the qi sticks to the back, so this lateral move allows us to avoid the full power of a blow from the opponent. This is why the CC axis must be avoided, particularly considering that all the texts insist on the minimal use of muscular force.

So why, if the slow movements of the sequences are intended to reproduce confrontational situations, do we find so few lateral movements with respect to the CC axis? The answer is contained in the choreography of the sequences: The end of a sequence is supposed to bring us to the place where it started. It follows, therefore, that the postures in the sequences are constrained not so much by martial applications as by choreography. This can be seen in at least two situations in our TJQ style:

- The gaps in the choreography in the three sequences are filled, in my opinion, by the frequency of ward off/grasping the sparrow's tail/seal it closed. One could argue that this is because of the presence of the three very

3. Here I am referring only to the simplest configuration of a one-on-one combat.

important doors “peng, an, ji”. But then why the relative absence of the *lū*?

- In the movement “Push left” of the first sequence the right leg is supposed to bend. But this is in complete contradiction with the basic movement of TS. When this dodge/push is used between two partners, the back leg (here the right leg) must extend in order to dodge the push of his opponent-partner (easy to prove with a real push). But why this contradiction? Quite simply because the previous move “Draw the hand down to the left” already requires an extension of the right rear leg for the push.

It is pointless to curse the inventor of this sequence, whoever he is (and we are not the only ones who have to negotiate such contradictions). Just try to create a small sequence of movements which respect the martial principles of TJQ, and you will understand the great complexity of this undertaking. In the 1970s, I witnessed the efforts, led by Mr. Wang, to develop a national standardized form in Taiwan, and I can guarantee you that it was quite a headache.

## 2.2. Conscious experience during the practice of slow movements

It is clear that time plays an important role in the mode of consciousness<sup>4</sup> which arises from practicing slow movements. Indeed, slowing down makes it possible to widen the field of consciousness, so as to develop an organic conception of movement, in accordance with the first sentence of the Treatise on *T'ai-ki k'üan* attributed to Tchang San-fong<sup>5</sup>: “From the slightest movement, the whole body must be light and agile, and all its parts connected”. Practicing the sequences slowly allows the body to integrate the movement without other parasitic constraints such as the presence of one or more opponents, bad weather, poor lighting, tight spaces, rough terrain, etc. The obstacles to be overcome are mainly the newness of this body language, reprogramming the mind-body coordination, and the physical limits of a body which is more or less adapted to the effort required (flexibility, rooting, balance, physical resistance) and of course, one's ability to concentrate. To this must we add a temporary parasitic phenomenon, namely the need to imitate a model entirely through two channels:

sight and sound<sup>6</sup>. This process is then followed by an attempt at memorization. The conscious experience remains an extremely complex phenomenon despite the slowness of the movements.

- **Hearing sound:** assuming there is no ambient noise, we can move directly to the difference between hearing and listening. The teacher's speech will not be perceived in the same way depending on whether the students is listening to, or just hearing the words. Listening implies a conscious concentration on the source of the sound, an analysis of its components and using this input to reproduce a movement. This is the case, for example, when a teacher explains a new movement. A discourse which is simply heard reaches the ears of the listener without the latter necessarily paying attention to, or analyzing, the words. This is the case when the teacher, for example, gives the rhythm for an exercise that is already known. We know in the sociology of education, and in particular in the sociology of discourse, that sustained attention lasts on average only about twenty minutes. It is easy to imagine that after a hard day's work, most participants in a practice session of TJQ will not be able to retain all of the information transmitted. To make up for this requires some repetitive process orchestrated by the teacher or requested by the learner. Under ideal conditions, one might hope that after some practice, the teacher's discourse would be directed more or less equally among his or her audience. But this doesn't take into account the idiosyncrasies of learning and teaching. Some of us tend to have a more holistic perception of discourse (the general direction of a movement, for example) while others feel an irrepressible need to dissect everything (to know the exact angle formed by the two feet in this or that posture). But there are other criteria that can also come into play: an expansive movement will be not be spatially interpreted in the same way depending on whether one has an extroverted or introverted personality. Such cultural variations are present in all forms of learning, and it is well known that such idiosyncratic characteristics are more likely to be expressed in a non-captive audience<sup>7</sup>. Such variations should also be considered within the intercultural context of learning. Contrary to the more explanatory approach to oral transmission in Europe, Chinese culture seems to favor imitation and repetition. So, we can imagine how extraordinary it would be if any style of TJQ had remained

4. In this article I will adapt a partial definition proposed by Michel Bitbol in “La conscience a-t-elle une origine?”, Bibliothèque des savoirs, Flammarion, 2014. “conscious experience is not something which exists separately but the complete realization of “no distance”. It is not a characteristic which we possess but it is a part of who we are. It is not something which is apparent but it is the central reality of what appears”.

5. In C. Despeux, *T'ai-ki k'üan, technique de longue vie, technique de combat*, Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études chinoises, Presses universitaires de France, 1976, p. 152.

6. Physical contact is of course possible in guiding a students' movements, but it is not so common.

7. In the didactics of language and culture, a captive audience is one that depends on an evaluation in order to obtain a diploma or a certificate (grades given at school, or written evaluations delivered by jury of a martial arts federation).

faithful to its supposedly original form, when we think of the millions of people who have transmitted it over the centuries.

It is even less likely once we consider the discourse produced by the teachers<sup>8</sup>. It is perhaps obvious to point to the variety of teaching styles to explain the variations in the execution of a given movement of TJQ. Far from insisting on the temperament of the teacher, I will focus here on the oral production which I observe every year among my colleagues at the Rencontres Jasnières. I will first discuss the technical aspects of oral production.

- **Vocal range:** lower registers originating from the dantian are more effective than higher registers emanating from the thorax. Opera singers evoke a column of air that starts from the belly and resonates at the back of the throat. From the ideal upright posture there is excellent speech reception in a 90-degree angle that forms a triangle with the speaker's spine. Beyond this triangle, the quality of the sound decreases as you approach 180 degrees. A common mistake made by TJQ teachers (as well as some teachers in the public education system) is to give directions while partially or completely turning their backs on their audience (the school teacher explaining something while writing on the blackboard). Another particularly disturbing phenomenon in the teaching-learning of TJQ is the how the discourse is adapted to the execution of a given movement. When using ten words to explain a transfer of weight when only one would suffice, the disruptive nature of the explanation becomes obvious. The rhythm of the discourse is important, especially since a TJQ sequence is carried out on several axis, so that the teacher is moving in space while speaking, but not face to face with the audience.

- **The content of the discourse:** here again, styles vary greatly and each has an on the learner's ability to reproduce a movement. Some teachers rely on a "choreographic model", i.e. a chest that rotates, left or right arms that move up or down, legs that move forward or backward, etc. There are many difficulties in this style of teaching because managing right and left, and modifying directions with angles and speed of movement is very complex. We have all experienced this. When, in the same breath, the teacher warns about a possible error and the essential aspect of the movement,

it makes things even more complicated. Parasitic movements can also come from the terms chosen: sprinkling one's speech with precise anatomical terms, martial recommendations and Chinese references can become problematic. I will not mention here supportive speech (encouragement, empathy, correction, etc.) nor how teachers manage students' efforts to maintain a level of attention (length of pauses, slowing down speech) which I do not consider as a factor directly involved in the variations of interpretation of a TJQ style.

*I will stop here for today; this article will be followed by two others which will pursue my thoughts on this question.*

8. This article was inspired by questions raised at a newly created debate during the Rencontres Jasnières 2019.



# Make your own foldable Nei Gong stool

Henri Mouthon

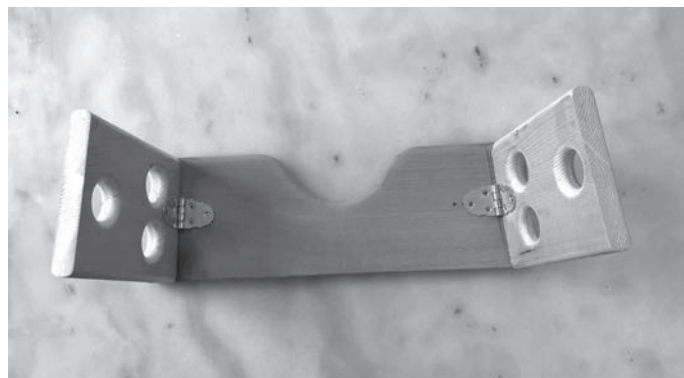
6 The lotus or half-lotus posture, even if it is essential for zazen practitioners, is not as essential for us Nei Gong practitioners. During the longest sessions, I have observed people struggling with their posture, to the point of wedging themselves with cushions under their knees and buttocks to hold the posture without too much pain and to find their axis. Without axis, no real centering is possible.

The Seiza posture also recommended for zazen seems to me just as adapted, if not better, to our practice.

The particularity of our energetic practice is that in addition to verticality and centering, the liberation of the pelvic diaphragm is essential to the energetic circulation, at least in the learning phase. Releasing the pressure on Huiyin allows a better perception of the regular back and forth movement along the Yin-mai meridian. Of course, there are many commercially available half-moon zafus that allow this release, but they are relatively cumbersome when you have to move around.

With all these considerations in mind, I have imagined a stool with a 60 mm notch in the centre, which allows this pelvic release. In addition, its feet are foldable, which is very practical for transport.

This stool is easy to make and can of course be modified in terms of the height and width of the seat and the depth of the central notch. Real DIY enthusiasts can even take an imprint of their buttocks and make





two depressions for pins, or cover the seat with a small layer of foam.

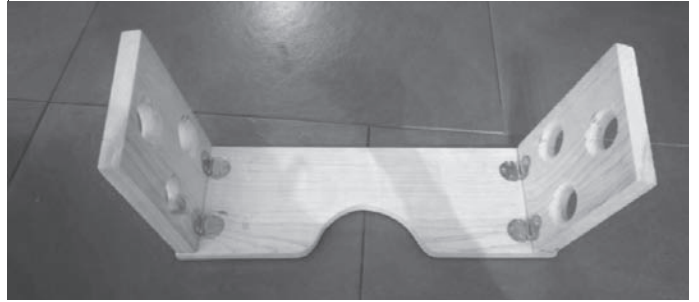
The plan below is suitable for a person measuring 1.70/1.80 m. The wood used can be spruce or red cedar for lighter weight.

### Materials required:

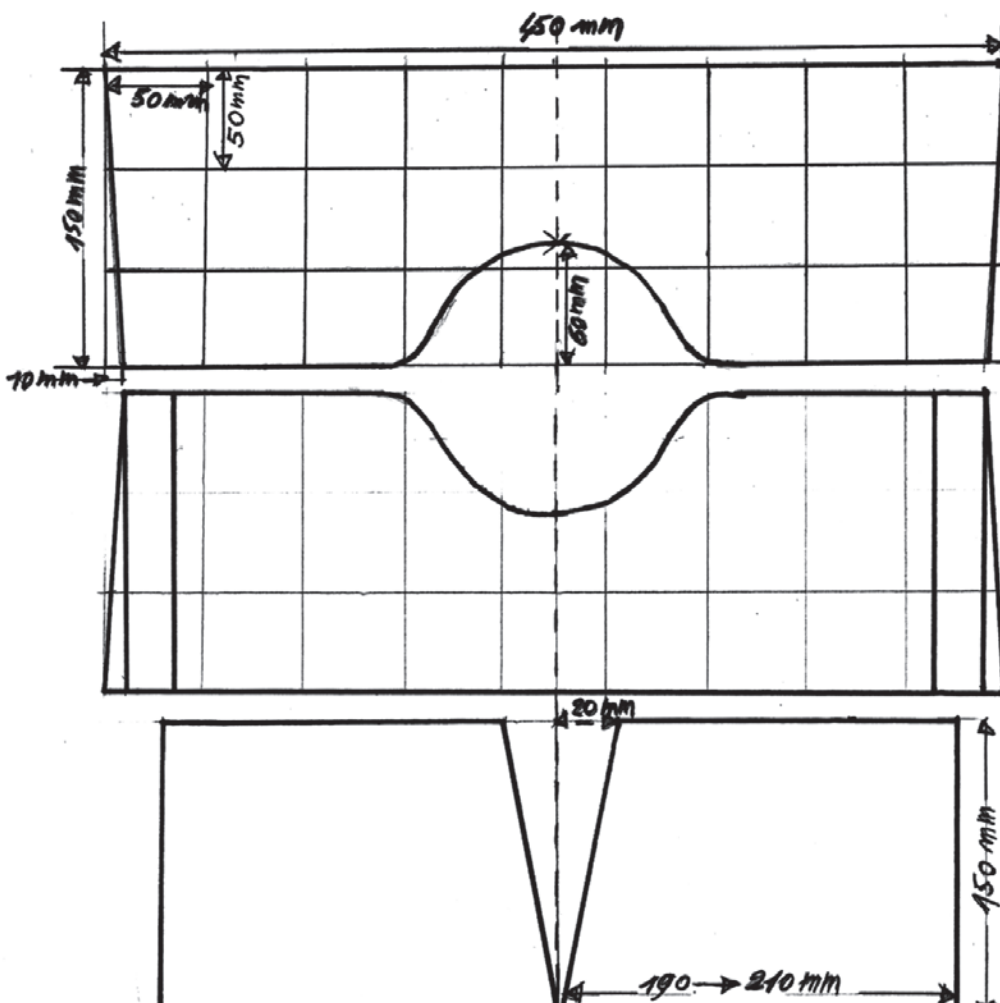
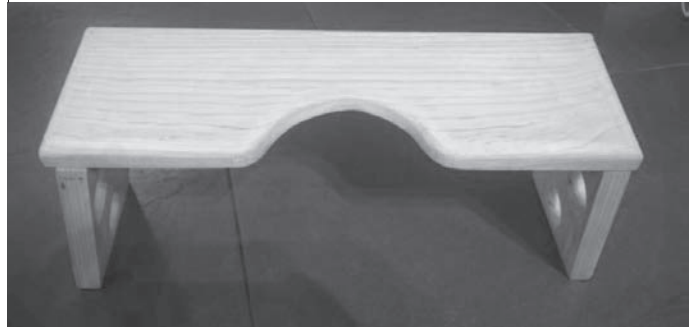
- 1 piece of 20 mm thick spruce 450 x 150 mm (seat).
- 2 pieces of 190 x 150 mm (legs).
- 4 small hinges and screws 3 x 16.

### Go ahead!

View from below



View from above



# The Chinese Course for 2020



Paule-Annick Ben Kemoun

On January 25, 2020 the Year of the Rat (of Metal) has started, a pretext for this annual Chinese course which celebrates its eighteenth edition. To the rhythm of a few characters studied each year, there is no doubt that it is towards immortality that we tend towards.

In spite of the envy, I will not give in to temptation to deliver a remake of the 2008 course or to make a written interrogation.

However...

Remember: in 2008 I wrote that the Rat years were supposed to be good for business and stock market speculation. Remember: in 2008, the world stock markets had just taken a plunge... So for the Rat as a symbol of wealth and prosperity, I have my doubts.



Rightly considered as a vector of disease (plague, leptospirosis), the rat is not especially appreciated in the West. It has nevertheless had a fashion as a pet.



The Rat is very close to the human presence; it settles where man stores food. Many rats have been (and still are) sacrificed on the altar of science, as this touching monument erected in Novosibirsk in their honor testifies.

It depicts a mouse knitting a DNA molecule.

The intelligence and social life of the rat rehabilitates it somewhat in our eyes. The myth of the little mouse that comes at night to exchange children's milk teeth for a coin or a treat is also a good way to redeem the species.

We know some rats and mice made famous in cartoons: Mickey Mouse, Jerry the inseparable enemy of Tom, Bernard and Bianca, Fievel and Remy the "Ratatouille" chef rat.

Less light: Algernon in "Flowers for Algernon", Mister Jingle in the white mouse of "The green line" and the terrible Maus of Art Spiegelman.



In China, the rat and the mouse, confused in the same ideogram, have a rather good press: symbols of wealth and good luck.



No need to look for a rat or a mouse in our taichi form, this animal is frankly nothing martial.

We saw in 2008 the ideogram of the rat or the mouse a little long to trace.



It represents a mouse with a long tail, muzzle and teeth pointing upwards (as shown in the older character opposite)

It is pronounced Shǔ in the third tone: you start from the top, you go down and then raise the tone of voice a little while singing like "shoe" because if you stupidly pronounce "shou" (shū in a flat tone without moving your voice) it means book among other things (within the same tone, then with the 4 tones of the Chinese language, we are faced with a lot of different meanings and therefore a lot of possible Pune... that we will be pleased to spot after a certain number of annual Chinese courses).

鼠疫 = Shǔ yì is the bubonic plague.

We will now offer some colors to our mouse.

金属 Jīn Shǔ = silver metal (if it was the same Shǔ it would be too simple ☺)

With 白色 Bái Sè, your mouse will be white, it will be grey with 灰色 Huī Sè and... green with 绿色 = Lǜ Sè.

Can you see me coming?

That's exactly it: this famous rhyme dates from the end of the XVIIth century for which there is an alchemical explanation; I prefer the interpretation of Gad Elmaleh: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=97rj-AbuKntk>

At the end of this eighteenth Chinese lesson, I wish you and us to enjoy good health, to discover new music more elaborate than this rhyme (which will be easy!). The Chinese insist primarily on the wish of wealth, because if money does not make happiness, it contributes very seriously to it. Since years of the rat would be beneficial for business, I wish you to get rich, but especially in contact with others (without stealing his money, others take care of it), to learn, to discover, and to be able to transmit to your loved ones what is precious and important to you.

Sincerely yours,

## Bibliography

- Catherine Meuwese Tang hulu, *Sweets to taste the flavor of Chinese words.*, Level 1, Ellipses.
- Daniel Keyes, *Flowers for Algernon*.
- *La Ligne verte*, film by Franck Darabont, 1999.
- *Maus*, Art Spiegelman
- Wang HongYuan, - *To the Sources of Chinese Writing*.
- *Une souris verte*, - Lyrics and music on Wikipedia ([https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Une\\_souris\\_verte\\_\(chanson\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Une_souris_verte_(chanson)))





# Tai Chi in the Monastery of La Baumette

Jean-Guy Clénet

For several years, Françoise has invited us to take a studious pause in what is called the Monastery of La Baumette, outside of Angers on the left bank of the Maine river.

La Baumette "is the old promontory of Chanzé, which gave its name to one of the gates of Angers, and which, at the point of the deep curve of the Maine river, forms in the river such a picturesque site. On it was established, in the 15th Century, a hermitage

that King René of Anjou, usual host of the small manor nearby, had had rebuilt based on the St. Baume de Provence (hence the name Baumette) and gave to the Cordelier Order. The first stone was placed in 1451, the construction finished on the 30th of August 1454, and the church dedicated in 1464" (*Dictionnaire historique du M&L /Celestin Port ; tome 1, p.230*).

The choice of this venerable site as a practice location was judicious in many regards, but particularly on a geo-philosophical one.

Whoever strolls along the banks of the Maine, and particularly on the hauling paths of the right bank, can only be impressed by the the rocky mass of the this spur of land.

At the base, the foundation of shale piled under the verticality of the rock walls. The highly packed houses, the crenelated lines of the terraces like Italian pottery, the steep roofs that crown the town. And finally, above the abbey, the great big open sky, changing in its luminous profundity, unending movement of its cloudy folds... These cosmic undulations find their echoes in the shimmering river, surrounding this place with an other-worldly vibration...

The analogy to the Tao is striking.

[...the life of the Universe itself is an exchange of influx between Heaven and Earth. All life is simply an aspect of it, a moment. Mankind is "covered by Heaven, carried by Earth"]

At the abbey, the morning practice takes place on the terrace. Within the landscape, the terrace is ....

"in between"







*Morning exercises on the terrace above the river*

Supported by the rocky hilltop, but already touching the sky, it is situated in a ....middle emptiness.

[Human existence is situated in a middle emptiness, in that space create by the Six Breaths, meaning the four cardinal direction, in addition to the two directions of Up and Down.] *Aperçus de médecine chinoise traditionnelle / Jean Shats & autres, Guy Trédaniel Editeur.*

Where else could we be closer to this suspended space-time than on the terrace of the abbey?

This graveled rectangle, barely separated from the void by a low wall, throws the practitioner into the Heavens. The vertical axis imposes itself as fact. The four directions are omnipresent, and the hint of breeze (Qi in the old calligraphy?) brushes against this small hilltop

Simultaneously exposed and protected, centered on our present while space vanishes, firmly planted with the horizon as backdrop, in the silence ruffled by the shriek of seagulls, the practitioner evolves..or meditates..

## The form remains the base

There is a collusion between a place and a practice. This building, dedicated to a spiritual practice, has undeniably influenced the lived experience of the students in regard to Tai Chi.

*The cloister*



The cloister, heart of the compound, has preserved its covered walkways surrounding the central courtyard. Enclosed like a patio, it remains shady and cool in the heat of the late morning.

Or, dans ces couloirs, on ne peut travailler qu'en file, But, in these covered hallways, we can only walk single-file, or two abreast at most. Each turn becomes a marker and, little by little, the work on basic and repetitive moves became set. One length... a half cloister... a full lap around the cloister...These moments became named, naturally...perambulations. They took on a hypnotic quality, rendering automatic the motion of the postures.

To be in a perambulation is to place oneself in a constraint, and then to free oneself from it. The beginning of the walk is uneasy, the space is tight, the practitioners crowded. The confinement between the columns nevertheless has the effect of rapidly unifying the rhythms. Some fall back to reform at the back of the group. Françoise and Chloé look over us like shepherdesses and guide us patiently.

The turn is interesting. At the bend in the hallway, the visual cues are shifted since those in the front are now doing the same movements, but sideways to us! Like a hall of mirrors. We must remain firmly conscious of the movements. And then, a 90 degree turn is required... but at a good spot in the form! Too soon, and you run into a pillar...too late and you scrape your arm against the rough wall....What a relief to regain the comfort of the marching column!

Françoise and Chloé have not yet had the idea of calling out in class: "turn left...NOW!"

Many moments are pleasant in this suspended time...

Waking up with the Form in the early morning, when everyone looks like a ruffled chick pulled from the warm comfort of the bed! The first breaths...this big sky that swallows us in its vastness, the inner and outer calm, the clumsy unfolding of the body as it resists then bends, the welcome of the first Thirteen Postures...

Then follows breakfast time...

The group gathers in the great hall, where the cooks busy themselves in the old kitchen; the high old walls, the massive tables, the cutlery and antique hutch, everything throws us out of the present. Electricity feels out of place.

It is the time for chatting, for reunion. It is the first greeting of the others. [In French breakfast is called "small lunch"] and here the expression is not out of place! In the Great hall, on a table that seats fifteen, are piled fresh baguettes, brioches, white and whole wheat breads, farmer's butter, croissants, and impressively



*Bernard training on the terrace*

jams in a multitude of flavors: strawberries, preserved oranges, cherries, rhubarb....And even sometimes ham, hard sausages and meat spreads!

Conversations overlap and mix, recipes are exchanged, laughter flying over the table.

The return to the courtyard, especially at the beginning of class, finds the participants in a state of intoxicating well-being...and yet the heart must return to the work at hand!

The sequences follow one another, the repetitions succeed one another, the movements are refined, sometimes with some resistance. They will all be the subject of specific work in the other half of the morning, during the perambulations!

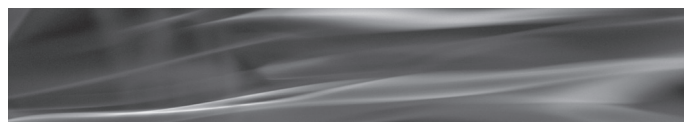
This morning work brings a focus on key moments of the Form. Finding the center is important, keeping one's attention is difficult. We are often shaken from our physical habits and our understanding of the underlying meaning of the postures. Even done with good cheer, the work is sometimes difficult...

Around 11am, often, the sun makes its presence felt too harshly. We take refuge in the cloister. Small groups break out in the secondary rooms in order to focus on different themes (weapons, more individualized revisions, first studies). Françoise and Chloé share the difficult cases.

The day continues like so until the mid-day pause...

The time spent during the summer workshop is like a deep breath for the year. The practice is laid out in a setting, an ambiance, a mind set which is unique and particular. This time completes and restores the knowledge acquired during the rest of the year.

It makes a break (a suspension) and an irreplaceable reinforcing for the practitioners (to be present and solidly planted).



# Chinese archery: rise, fall, and renaissance

Jean-Luc Saby & Gérard Depreux

Since ancient times, culture and archery had been closely connected in China. Until the middle of the 19th century, mastering the bow was a mandatory requirement for reaching the upper classes of society. Many bow makers and archery schools bore witness to a flourishing art. Although firearms supplanted the bow on battlefields, the vitality of this practice was still strong in China because it was favored by the emperor.

The reality of “modern” conflicts lead quite belatedly to the removal of archery tests from exams. This brought a quick end to the influence of archery. The 1911 reforms and the fall of the Qing dealt a fatal blow to archery: neglected by institutions, it lost its main source of support.

Archery survived here and there among particular ethnic groups such as Mongolians. However, in spite of sporadic renewed interest at various times, especially through nationalistic organizations advocating for martial practice, it could never find its splendour again.

It must be recalled that in Chinese minds, archery has always been the prerogative of an institutional elite. In some critical times of invasions, local companies of archers were allowed. In contrast to bare hand fighting and popular weapons, this practice had a different spirit. In short, archery, first judged too elitist, was then considered a feudal practice that should be banned, for it did not survive the advent of communism.

Despite its prestige as a centuries-old craft, Chinese archery could not be preserved in the same way as more popular arts. A “virtuous archery club” was founded in 1920 in Chengdu, enabling the opening of a traditional bow making workshop in 1925. Today there remains only one in Beijing.

In all cultures, modernity has created confusion with respect to cultural traditions. Globalized sport and its ephemeral performances has taken an important place in many Far Eastern and Western societies.

Thanks to the work of a few people and their willingness to revive a high quality ancient heritage, traditional Chinese archery enjoys a comeback in cultural folklore.

Admittedly, the spirit of the Art, which has always followed the “Path”, sometimes lost its way, while among men with a “noble heart” the course remained set. The risk is high nowadays to confuse everything in the exotic folklore and the perennial philosophy of an Art. This is why Gong Dao is rooted in the synergy of three “affluents” as set out by master Zhou Tong, who taught Yue Fei under the Southern Song. These “levels” or degrees of the Imperial Academy remain the same: mastery of the martial Art; knowledge of the Confucian rituals; and finally the philosophy of the three Teachings (daoism, confucianism, buddhism.)

Much of the above considerations will be discussed in more detail in forthcoming articles. It is our duty to

pass on these noble traditions and try to explain one of the "Six gifts of Heaven" according to the *Book of Rites* as faithfully as possible in the spirit and the letter.

Gérard Depreux  
mgdxdepreux@orange.fr  
&  
Jean-Luc Saby  
ventpropice@gmail.com

## The culture of archery is Zheng!

Gong Dao is a path toward elevation of the human being. Chinese history, with its government exams, puts it on a pedestal to describe excellence.

To reach the center of a target with an arrow would have no value without the proper preparation. Indeed, the sequence of events which precedes shooting monopolizes the attention of the Gong Dao practitioner.

The sequence begins with the foundations of posture. Structural placement and formal constitution are the key preliminaries to the construction of the shoot. Structure and form work together to outline the strong lines of straightness: **Zheng**. Rooting, a strong axis between heaven and earth, and a horizontal line corresponding to the line of fire.

Zheng is to be taken in the literal sense. If you are unable to assume a correct posture, incarnating the virtue of rectitude will be impossible. Posture is in direct contact with moral attitude.

"Stand up straight, keep your head up, look ahead..." Everyone is challenged by the dictates of education. Why if not to bear witness to the tangible link between posture and moral conduct. The culture of archery pushes the physical ability to stand straight to the extreme. It is not the bow that bends you, but you who bend the bow. The opposite if the beginner's lot.

It is really difficult to go beyond the constraint of the bow's strength. This is where education to rectitude begins. One starts with a stripped down version of the shooting sequence without bow, arrow, nor target, then with a moderate constraint using a rubber band, then using a weak bow (25 to 30 pounds) until the body is powerful enough to be confronted to the tension of a stronger bow. From then, the moral qualities of righteousness will have a foundation in a robust body, until reaching the ultimate posture where human beings cannot be corrupted into accepting too easily to lose their dignity.





# Summary of the College workshops on the theme of 'Teaching tuishou to beginners'

Over the last few years, the European Teachers' College has arranged workshops during the annual Rencontres of the Yangjia michuan Amicale. These workshops take up a theme which has already been explored during the College seminars and its staggered (décalé) workshops, so-called since they take place between the seminars. Note, the workshops run at the Rencontres de l'Amicale are aimed at a wide range of practitioners, whereas the workshops at the seminars and staggered workshops are done amongst College members and those who teach.

Feedback is gathered from these workshops and this serves as a report which can be used to better treat the subject in the form of an overview. This is the aim of this article, the intention of which is to provide a first overview of the workshops on the theme of 'teaching tuishou to beginners'.

## Workshop theme and audience

The theme of the College workshops for which we are going to provide this first overview was express thus: 'Teaching tuishou to beginners'. It was not specified whether this referred to Taiji quan beginners or simply Taiji quan practitioners who were starting tuishou. This being the case we are faced with two situations:

- the Taiji quan beginner who is starting tuishou,
- the Taiji quan practitioner who is already experienced in the discipline but who is approaching tuishou for the first time. These aspects were envisaged in the workshops.

Another detail was not specified for running these workshops, namely the audience concerned. To which age group are we speaking: children, teenagers, adults, seniors? Next, we can ask ourselves the question whether these people practise another physical activity, whether it be martial or not.

Finally, are we going to concern ourselves with an audience of people with handicaps?

Of course, these various groups are not left out by College members but, regarding the workshop audience, it was limited for the moment to the College members themselves and to members of the Amicale who constitute a group already conversant with the practice of tuishou or who have at least heard of it already.

## What is tuishou?

Was this question asked during the workshops? Apart from the workshop run by Sabine and Duyu and the staggered workshop run at Baugé, it was assumed that everyone should know what it is about. However, it turns out that many practitioners do not really know what tuishou entails and in particular what it is for.

A definition for tuishou was suggested at the staggered workshop at Baugé, February 2019:

*It has become apparent that to initiate our reflexion it is necessary to define tuishou. The literal translation of this Chinese word is 'push hands'. Concretely this means working in pairs.*

*The tuishou exercises which are carried out alone or apply to pairs consist of:*

- carrying out a series of pushes and absorptions with a partner;
- practising in pairs the principles acquired through carrying out the form (retain the axis, return to a solid footing, relaxation...);
- seeking one's own bodily unity and sensing this unity in the partner;
- developing one's proprioception particularly through one's supports (feet);
- experimenting and working on 'attentiveness'.

To elaborate on their definition, the workshop participants indicated:

*The general and founding principles of tuishou.*

*The practice of tuishou is built through the acquisition of the following general principles:*

- relaxation and it is in the relaxation that stretching is generated;
- store up and compress energy in the lower dantien;
- lower one's centre of gravity for a better rooting (relation perineum/ground);
- knowing how to separate the three levels constituted by the head, trunk and pelvis, if necessary;
- carrying out a series of uninterrupted gestures by means of changing directions whilst fluidly rising or descending;
- being attentive, which does not mean anticipating, not seeking to dominate but preferring the relationship with the other by means of a benevolent contact; understanding the difference between tension, tone, stiffness and hardness;

*- practising the principles; join, stick, bind and follow;*

*- the intention generates the posture.'*

In the tuishou workshop during the Rencontres de l'Amicale 2018 at Sète, Sabine and Duyu posed themselves the following question: 'How does one approach working in pairs with beginners?' And answered like this: 'First work on the Yin attentiveness. The emphasis will be put on the importance of practising tuishou to advance in the practise of Taiji quan and learning to transpose the Yin/Yang dynamic with a partner.'

Without really defining what tuishou is, the idea emerges from this that it is an indispensable extension of the practice of Taiji quan from which it should not be separated. In this overview I will allow myself to add some clarification.

When one is dealing with beginners in any discipline it is appropriate to introduce it, which was done in part in both the workshop in Baugé and that of Sabine and Duyu.

Giving the translation of tuishou 推手 is important and why not indicate the Chinese characters if one knows them, particularly since it is the name of a gesture in the

form of our style: tuī 推, is to push and shǒu 手, is the hand (I have chosen the Latinized pinyin and why not discuss that since we are dealing with Chinese culture?).

So, it concerns pushing with the hands. Should one conclude with 'concretely, this means working in pairs'? I would say that it implies that there is contact with partner(s) with a possible 's' since why not imagine pushing with several partners? I make this comment so as to explain that tuishou has rules and conventions and that it is a discipline in its own right which complements Taiji quan in a general way.

**Tuishou :  
the literal translation  
of this Chinese word is  
'push hands'.**

**推手**



Should it not be indicated that tuishou can be the object of competitions with precise rules which sometimes adulterate it? Also to say that tuishou is the opportunity for practising in pairs the principles stated in the Taiji quan classics? The Baugé group followed on by making a list to define the discipline of tuishou which will be the subject of a future publication in the bulletin of the Amicale. It is sufficiently extensive for a beginner to realise that it is not simply shoving each other around with a series of hand pushes...

So we come to the practice! As a forward, several workshops noted that this practice presents difficulties in its acquisition and that Taiji quan pupils show a certain reluctance in approaching it.

### Difficulties in approaching tuishou

The first of the difficulties was stated by the duo Laurence Bovay and Yves Picart at the Rencontres de l'Amicale 2018 in Sète:

*'Touching someone else does not necessarily go without saying. It means approaching a certain degree of intimacy. That can awaken fears. So it is appropriate in the beginning to recognise, to feel, to respect an awkwardness or mistrust if they appear, rather than to exert the pressure to have to overcome them immediately.*

*Since any fear or resistance creates tension in the body and prevents relaxation and emptiness which are necessary for the transformation of one movement into another, the dance of Yin/Yang. Free tuishou inevitably impinges on our self-esteem, the ego, our fear of losing, and invites us to reveal ourselves, to contact our vulnerability and discover little by little trust and play.'*

And then the comments from the Baugé workshop:

*'Apart from the fears, reluctances, aversions and reserves which some people may have regarding physical contact, observing beginners practising*

*tuishou generally reveals errors which should be corrected:*

- *the lack of mobility of the pelvis;*
- *knees which collapse inwards or outwards, or even go beyond the toes when performing a gesture;*
- *the lack of relaxation (waist, shoulders, arms), whence the difficulty to absorb (accept) the push at the waist;*
- *overly hasty execution;*
- *instinctive retreat when pushed;*
- *the risk of arching the back (lumbar lordosis) particularly when pushed at the height of the plexus;*
- *the loss of the axis or roots;*
- *the lack of intention which results in not looking in the direction of the action;*
- *a more gymnastic than energetic execution of the tuishou exercise;*
- *the push to the belly which can be uncomfortable for certain female practitioners.'*

Based on this observation, we will present the various difficulties with the exercises which will allow them to be surpassed.

### Overcoming the apprehension and fears associated with being touched

Curiously, the fear of a fall did not come up in any of the workshops and yet it is absolutely ubiquitous in beginners who have as a result stiff bodies which is diametrically opposed to the looseness favoured by the discipline of tuishou. Personally, with beginners, without starting with falls when the audience are other than children or teenagers, my teaching consists in starting with learning how to get up when one is on the floor.

So let's start with these fears associated with contact.

Here is what Laurence Bovay and Yves Picart suggest:

To be attentive to our own tensions

- Exercise 1

Place oneself behind the other, place one's hands on the other's shoulders, immobile to start with, then massage before accompanying the other as he bends forwards by drumming on both sides of the spine. Allow the person to unroll to vertical alone.

- Exercise 2

Place oneself next to the person, lift his arm, one hand under the elbow, the other under the wrist. Without moving allow the arm to entrust its weight gradually. Accompany the arm back down again. Make the difference between the two shoulders felt before changing arms.

- Exercise 3

To help with the successive relaxation of each articulation: hold the wrist and free each finger by shaking them one by one, hold the elbow and by working with the wrist release the shoulder by making small movements forwards and back and side to side.

L'atelier décalé de Baugé

De gauche à droite :

Hervé Marest, Jean Boucault, François Besson,  
Alix Helme-Guizon, Céline Davière, Lionel Descamps,  
Patrick Laboulle, Jean-Paul Bonhuil, Yannick Michel.

To be attentive to the other, mutually

- Exercise 4

Face to face, position the arms as for the horse riding posture, one places the hands on those of the other.

a- The one whose hands are underneath leads. If the follower tries to take the initiative, the leader stops moving and only restarts once the follower has returned to a relaxed state.

b- The roles are exchanged by changing the position of the hands, the hands underneath guide.

c- Both play the role of leader on one side and follower on the other; to learn to dissociate passive and active, right and left. Exchange roles and sides.

- Exercise 5

Push with one hand and receive following a horizontal circular motion. Exercise 6 of the tuishou basic exercises of the Yangjia michuan style.

It is a shame that there are no exercises offering the possibility to push with reciprocal attentiveness dependent on the depth of the push. There are only 'touches', which is only a first step. Neither is the way in which the hand is placed on the other specified such as to avoid it being perceived as aggressive.

It was the only workshop which suggested exercises to overcome the fears of contact. However, there were many workshops which developed an awareness of tuishou using playful exercises to 'relax the atmosphere', another way of framing a familiarisation with tuishou.





# The Chinese sword



Frédéric Plewniak

Broadly, a sword can be defined as a cutting and thrusting edged weapon with a blade at least as long as the arm and a short handle.

There is archaeological evidence of the use of swords dating back as far as the Bronze Age, both in the Occidental world and in China.

From these early times to the beginning of the XXth century when they ceased to be used for combat, swords have evolved in parallel with fighting techniques and strategies. The swordsmanship of any particular historical period was adapted to the currently available types of swords while being at the same time deeply rooted in its social and cultural context.

Thus, *Tàijǐjiàn* adopted the kind of straight double-edge swords, or *Jiàn*, that were being commonly used at the time by every Chinese martial art. Although there had never been in historical times any sword specifically tailored for the practice of *Tàijǐjiàn*, this Chinese double-edged sword is nowadays often abusively denoted by the term *Tàijǐ* sword.

## From the battlefield to the public park

I will not get deep into historical considerations about Chinese swordsmanship. Others, more knowledgeable on the subject than I am, have already published works more accurate and extensive than anything I could write here. For a more detailed account, I can only refer the interested reader to Peter Lorge's book *Chinese Martial Arts: from Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century* and Scott Rodell's *Chinese Swordsmanship*.

After having dominated Chinese battlefields until the late XIXth and early XXth century, edged weapons were eventually superseded by modern firearms and artillery. Practical sword fencing rapidly declined during the early XXth century. Chén Wēimíng, in his book *Taiji sword*, first published in 1928, mentions fencing only to say that Yáng Chéngfǔ never taught any sword fencing set, and that he would himself write another sword book when he becomes proficient in it. As far as I can tell, this book was never written. During the 1930s and 1940s, Chinese sword manuals lament that this ancient art was almost completely lost.

At the same period, as China was falling under the influence of Western Empires, invaded by Japanese troops, then ravaged by the Civil War, Chinese martial arts were becoming symbols of national pride while gradually turning into disciplines for physical education, health and self cultivation.

Boxing and wrestling soon overtook weapon training, which was reduced to a mere form practice and a complement to unarmed martial arts. The primary goal of Chinese martial arts instructors was not to train combatants any more, but to strengthen their nation by invigorating their fellow compatriots while expressing the superiority of Chinese tradition. Practical fencing was not sought, but swift and athletic demonstrative movements started to be favoured over effectiveness in combat. Light swords with extremely flexible blades were more and more commonly used and somewhat became the norm.

Though there is to my knowledge no written mention of a martial art called *Tàijǐquán* before the

XIXth century, the Tàijí principles had certainly been around for quite a long time when they were gathered into a whole coherent martial system, supposedly by the Chén family of Chénjiāgōu, and later formalised by scholars in the texts we know today as the Tàijí Classics.

The general Qī Jiguāng (1527 – 1587), as early as the XVIth century, cites in his New Manual on Military Efficiency technique names that should sound familiar to every Tàijíquán practitioner. It is unclear, however, whether Qī Jiguāng was actually writing about Tàijíquán, or its ancestor, or whether it was a mere coincidence or a later reuse of technique names.

In any case, it is generally admitted that Tàijíquán emerged and developed between late XVIIth and the XIXth century, during the Míng and Qīng dynasties.

The Yángjiā Mìchuán style, root of the present work, was created by Yáng Lùchán, presumably during the first half of the XIXth century. I have no clear evidence that the Yángjiā Mìchuán Kūnlún sword form originates from this period, but the rhymes that describe the movements seem to point to a rather ancient origin. Qī Jiguāng's treatise contains indeed a collection of such rhymes that were used as mnemonics for routine practice.

Originally, forms had been used for training troops of soldiers to manoeuvre and fight in unison. However, as early as during the Táng dynasty, training

sessions shifted towards a sort of martial spectacle, not only for military power display, but also as a mere entertainment. In order to please spectators who often were not martial artists themselves, forms increasingly incorporated demonstrative techniques that would be much more spectacular or aesthetic than truly effective. This interest for martial spectacles has persisted to this day in literature, Chinese Opera, cinema, and, of course, in the unavoidable demonstrations performed during Martial Arts gatherings.

Nowadays, like any other Chinese martial art, Tàijijàn has definitely left the battlefield for the public park and sword training is fortunately anything but a preparation to combat.

Despite their undeniable aesthetic dimension, however, traditional Tàijijàn forms were originally designed to develop martial skills based on the Tàijí principles, effectively using swords whose weight, dimensions and balance achieved a compromise between cutting power, thrusting precision, and swift movements.

## Anatomy of the Jiàn

The figure 1 shows the disassembled parts of a Jiàn, or Chinese double-edged sword, typical of the Míng and Qīng dynasties.

The main particularity of the Jiàn's blade is its very gradual taper with nearly parallel cutting edges.

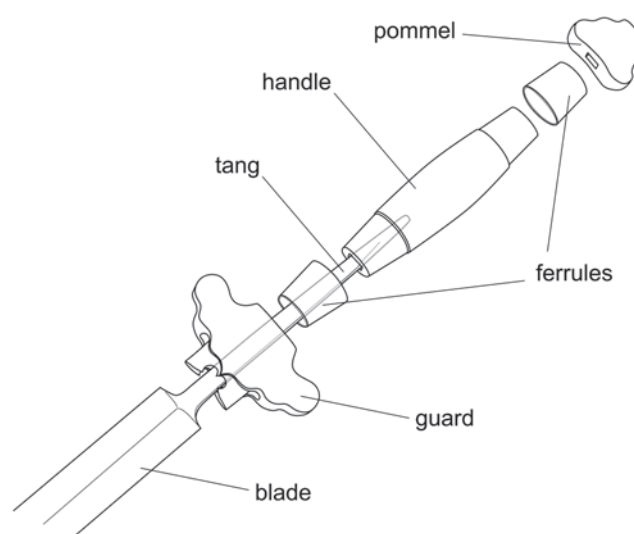


Fig. 1. Sword parts: The double-edged straight blade is extended by the tang, traversing the guard, handle and pommel where it is secured by peening. The two ferrules are metallic rings preventing the extremities of the handle from splitting open. The guard protects the hand holding the sword. Usually made of bronze or a similar metal, it is hollow and open towards the front. The handle, generally made of wood, is spindle-shaped and sometimes covered with a string, leather or ray skin in order to prevent the grip from slipping. The pommel, made of the same metal as the guard plays a crucial role in the sword's balance and behaviour by counterbalancing the weight of the blade.

From approximately 3 or 4 cm at the base, the blade width decreases only to 2 or 3 cm near the tip, where the edges curve rapidly into a sharp point. With a blade length of 70 to 80 cm, the angle between both edges is hardly noticeable, in sharp contrast to the more triangular shape of many European mediaeval swords.

Traditionally, the section of the blade could be either lenticular or diamond-shaped with a clearly marked central ridge.

Some blades could also have a fuller, which is often wrongly called blood groove because of the legend pretending that its role was to let the blood flow out of the wound. Another delusion about the fuller is that it would prevent the blade from being stuck in the wound because of a supposed phenomenon of suction or a hypothetical contraction of the severed muscles. I must say that I do have serious doubts about the capacity of a wounded muscle to contract significantly around a sharp blade without suffering any further damage. And assuming it could, there is certainly no reason why a sharp blade could not cut its way out quite easily.

The truth is far less enthralling: a fuller simply makes a lighter blade without compromising its solidity. Of course, the easiest way to reduce blade weight is to make it thinner. This, however, is limited by the resulting increase in flexibility, which might not be desirable beyond some degree. It also flattens the edge geometry, which might in turn affect edge durability. The fuller permits a lighter blade without at the same time affecting flexibility and edge geometry. For example, a fuller 1 cm wide and 2 mm deep, running along two thirds of a 75 cm blade with a lenticular section, would have a volume of approximately 10 cm<sup>3</sup>. As steel density ranges from 7.3 kg/dm<sup>3</sup> to 7.8 kg/dm<sup>3</sup> depending on its composition and heat treatment, such a fuller on each side of the blade would reduce its weight by about

150 g without affecting the profile of its edges. (see figure 2) This could certainly make a difference considering that a lighter blade would also mean lighter fittings. Thus, this fuller would allow a swordsmith to make a 900 g sword, the typical weight of a historical Jiàn, with the same edge profile and blade length as a non-fullered sword weighing over 1 kg.

If the blade profile may have an effect on edge durability, the kind of steel the blade is made of will also affect edge strength. If the steel is too soft, edges may bend and become dull after only a few cuts. Hardened steel is necessary for keeping the edges sharp, but it is also brittle and a blade cannot be made exclusively of hard steel. A compromise had thus to be found between blade hardness, softness and elasticity.

Note that elasticity is not a synonym for flexibility: it is the capacity of the blade to bend and return to its original shape. If the limit of elasticity is exceeded, the blade is permanently deformed or breaks. The blade must be hard enough for keeping its edges and at the same time sufficiently resilient and elastic so as to sustain strong blows and shocks without breaking nor taking an unwanted bend.

Steel is basically a mixture of iron and a very small proportion of carbon, between 0.1% to 2%. It can also be alloyed with a small amount of other metals such as chromium, nickel, manganese, etc. Even in such small quantities, these elements may, in conjunction with heat treatment, dramatically change steel mechanical properties.

Quenching is a process consisting in heating the blade at a high temperature and then cooling it down rapidly by immersion into water. Following this treatment, steel assumes a particular crystal structure which makes it harder, but also more fragile. Furthermore, since it is impossible to cool

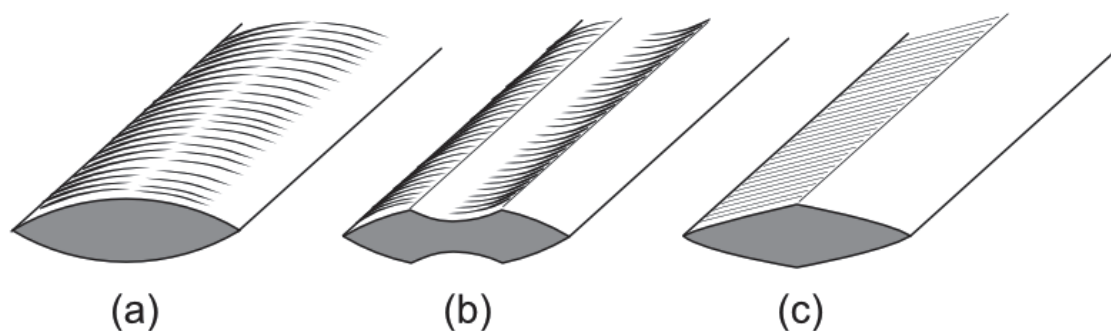


Fig. 2. Blade sections: (a) Lenticular, or apple-seed. (b) This fullered lenticular blade has the same edge profile as the blade shown in (a), but it is significantly lighter thanks to the fuller. (c) Diamond-shaped.  
NB: for a clearer picture, the blade thickness has been exaggerated on this figure.

instantly and homogeneously the whole blade at once, quenching also creates persistent tensions in the metal that may greatly weaken the blade. To release these constraints without reverting the hardening effect of quenching, it is possible to apply a second heat treatment, called tempering. It consists in reheating the blade at a lower temperature before leaving it to cool down naturally, so as to recover sufficient resilience.

An alternative to these two successive treatments is the technique called differential tempering. Well-known for being the traditional way of Japanese swords making, this technique was originally used also in China. In differential tempering only the edges are exposed to the quenching treatment thanks to the application of clay onto the core of the blade, which is thus protected from the heat shock and remains elastic while the edges are hardened.

In mediaeval Europe, hardened edges were sometimes welded on a soft core. As far as I know, this technique was used in China only for broad swords. Chinese straight swords traditionally had a three-layer pattern called *Sān Méi*. The blade was made of three layers of steel welded together: a thin central one of hardened steel forming the edges, and two layers of softer steel or iron protecting the former from being shattered by strong blows and providing the blade with an elastic structure.

## Balance and dynamic properties

A sword's balance is traditionally expressed by the location of its centre of gravity (COG) also known as the centre of inertia. For a *Jiàn*, the COG is usually located about 10 to 20 cm in front of the guard, as measured from the forward end of the handle.

But I think that there is usually too much emphasis on the COG location. Although COG does play an important role in sword handling it is far from being the main feature affecting sword's tractability. While the COG of an object describes its static balance and how it responds to the global application of a physical force independently of its actual shape, dynamic rotational properties also depend on mass distribution and shape. This is why a rod and a ball do not handle the same at all although both have their COG located at their geometric centre.

Dynamic rotational properties are thus even more essential and determine how the sword feels when wielded, how it moves, rotates and responds to the actions exerted on the handle. As a matter of fact, it is not uncommon to find swords with a COG located at the same distance from the handle but feeling completely different when wielded.

But measuring the physical property relating to sword rotational dynamics, the momentum of inertia, is not that easy, and even when it has been measured, interpreting this scientific value in terms of practical sword handling is far from being straightforward.

One way of accurately measuring the momentum of inertia of a sword is the pendulum test which consists in measuring its natural oscillation period around an axis located at a given distance of the COG. After a bit of maths, you end up with a figure that will not tell you much without any reference, to be honest. More research is definitely needed here.

A much easier way to examine the dynamic properties of a sword is the waggle test. Although it is much less accurate, it has the advantage of providing some indication on how these properties actually relate to how the sword will react to your actions on the handle.

To perform this test, hold the sword lightly by the handle between your thumb and forefinger, and then wave it smoothly sideways. You will notice a point somewhere in the blade that does not move: this is the pivot point relative to the place of the handle where you were holding the sword (see figure 3).

Changing the position of the fingers on the handle will move the pivot point to another location. When wielding a sword, it is thus possible to control the location of the sword's centre of rotation by adjusting the place and direction of the action applied by the grip on the handle.

The pivot points relative to the hilt, are usually located within the first half of the sword's length starting from the tip.

Their location is determined by the mass distribution along the sword and in particular by the relative masses on each side of the grip. Factors affecting this distribution in an unmounted blade are the form and dimensions of its cross section, how it tapers and becomes thinner towards the point, and its proportion to the tang. Adding a pommel to an unmounted blade, even a relatively light one, will dramatically modify the sword's dynamic properties, not only bringing the COG towards the hilt, but also displacing the pivot points towards the tip. However, too heavy a pommel would result in pivot points located too far forward, possibly even beyond the tip. On the contrary, too light a pommel would make it difficult or even impossible to obtain a pivot point at the tip of the blade. Achieving an appropriate range of pivot points enabling a proper control of the sword thus results from a precise blade shape design and an accurate adjustment of the blade and pommel respective weights.



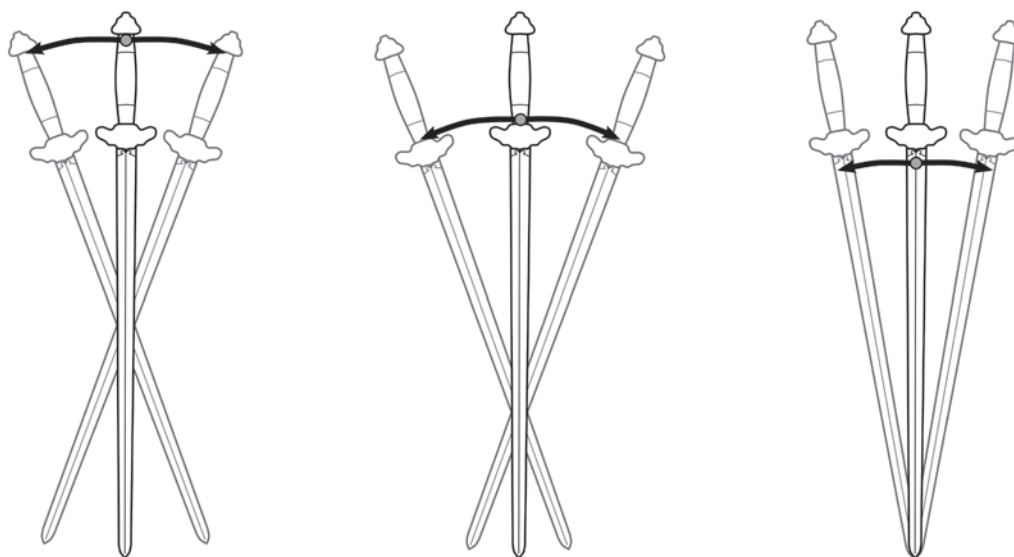


Fig. 3. A pivot point is the natural centre of rotation of the sword relative to the place and direction of an action applied to the handle. If the sword is held near the pommel and waved sideways, the pivot point is close to the centre of the blade (left). Holding the sword close to the guard will move the pivot point further down the blade towards the tip (middle). To place the pivot point at the tip of the blade for this sword, a lateral action must be applied a little in front of the guard (right). Although this may seem an inconvenience, a proper adjustment of the grip and a slanted action on the handle nonetheless allows the control of this point. Furthermore, this may also help to keep the blade tip in line when thrusting while controlling the opponent's blade with the guard.

The interested reader will find more information on the subject in the book *Das Schwert – Gestalt und Gedanke/The Sword – Form and Thought* published by the Deutsches Klingen Museum in Solingen. Although it presents exclusively western swords from different periods, this book provides a wealth of information about sword balance and dynamics equally applicable to Chinese swords.

## Choosing a Tàijǐjiàn sword

There is a large variety of practice swords available on the market for Tàijǐjiàn and choosing one is usually much a matter of personal preference and budget. Most of these swords, however, are only distantly related to the real weapons that were still in practical use when traditional Tàijǐjiàn forms were created. Many of them have a very poor balance and are either too light or too heavy. Whereas the actual weight of a practice sword is not that important and should be adapted to the practitioner's fitness and experience, the sword's balance and dynamic behaviour is crucial and should never be overlooked. Security in two-person drills and free play are also an absolute priority.

Practitioners with a strong interest in all dimensions of Tàijǐjiàn will most certainly end up possessing at least two swords, one for form practice and the other one for partner drills and free play.

## Form practice

As traditional form movements were adapted to the balance of historical swords, wielding such a weapon, even a quite heavy one, should have been

effortless when performing the form if the Tàijǐ principles were respected.

Nowadays, practising the form with a sword having dimensions, weight and balance similar to those of historical ones can only bring us closer to the essence of traditional sets. Handling such a sword may well be much more demanding than using a lightweight blade, it is nonetheless an incomparable and challenging opportunity to make progress on our way towards a deeper understanding of our art and a better embodiment of the Tàijǐ principles.

However, while it is true that a heavier sword may be a better guide for form practice than a lighter one, it is also much less forgiving of technical mistakes and excess of muscular tension. The weight of the sword should thus be adapted to the practitioner's experience and fitness. There is no point for a beginner to practise with a heavy sword that would do nothing but strain his joints and muscles at every clumsy move he would make. Thus, practising with a wooden or cheap light steel sword will be acceptable for an absolute beginner to memorize the form, but will soon become limiting when it comes to more in-depth practice. Once they have gained sufficient experience, it is advisable for practitioners to change for a well-balanced sword weighing approximately a historically accurate 700 to 900 g.

Similarly, beginners learning the form and basics may be unnecessarily hampered by a long blade and should favour shorter ones. More experienced practitioners though, if their grip is truly relaxed, should be able to easily accommodate a longer blade provided it is not extremely long. A popular rule of thumb

to determine the right length for the blade consists in holding the sword vertically along your left arm, like at the overture of the form. The tip of the blade should reach the height of your ear. Basically, this is equivalent to making sure that the blade is longer on average than the length of the arm of most opponents. They would thus not be able to protect themselves from a thrust by blocking it at the guard. In any case, a blade from 70 to 75 cm long should be convenient for most people.

Whether the sword should have a tassel or not depends on the style. Some use a tassel, others, like the Yángjiā Michuán, do not.

Much has been said about the role of the tassel. It is widely accepted that, during form performance, the way the tassel is moving provides an indication of the practitioner's quality of movement. I am willing to accept the argument, as the tassel may be a pedagogical tool to balance the intention between the sword tip and the hilt. But if too much attention is paid to the tassel, the practitioner may well end up performing a tassel form.

I am much less convinced by some other explanations such as the use of the tassel to distract the opponent. I personally prefer to threaten the opponent with the blade, which is much more distracting and, contrary to the tassel, is sharp and cannot be grabbed.

Actually, if we refer to historical representations of swords and swordsmen, it seems that the tassel is a rather late invention. My guess is that it was a decorative evolution of the lanyards that can be seen on earlier pictures and were used to secure the sword in the hand when fighting. In any case, as I do not use a tassel, my only advice about it is to do whatever is recommended by the style you practise.

## Two-person drills and martial applications

Simple safely structured partner drills such as sticky swords, guiding and following, etc. might be practised with the sword you practise the form with, as long as no attack is aimed at the face or the upper body.

I nonetheless recommend to restrict unprotected drills to well-trained experienced practitioners who are used to practise together. In all other occasions, the use of specially designed swords and appropriate protective gear – a fencing mask and gloves at the very least – is a necessity to limit as much as possible the risks of accident.

Steel rigid blunt swords with a leather-covered tip are a good and relatively cheap compromise if you are on a budget. However, it should be remembered that those swords were not designed for this purpose, and they may be dangerous without the appropriate pro-

tections and precautions. Accidents may happen, and whoever uses such swords for partner work does it at their own risks. Note that I do not recommend to blunt a so-called flexible blade as they are not only unsuitable for partner work, they are also usually so thin that they are nearly sharp.

Contrary to what is often thought, wooden swords are not really safer since, due to their stiffness, they cannot curve to absorb effectively the shock of a thrust. Furthermore, the thickness of wooden blades hinders the feeling of blade contact which might be a problem for some kind of exercises.

The best option is definitely to use swords specifically designed for sparring. Their thick rounded edges and rolled tip will make them pretty safe provided you are wearing at least a fencing mask and padded gloves. A padded jacket may provide extra protection for more drill intensity. In addition, since they weigh over 800 g, they are less forgiving of mistakes than lighter swords when it comes to performing techniques in compliance with principles, which is an asset for technical applications and drills.

## Free play

Though gentle soft games can be played with unprotected blade or blunt steel swords with a leather-covered tip, I strongly recommend to always use specifically designed swords associated to appropriate protective gear (fencing mask, padded gloves and padded fencing jacket). Even if attacks are voluntarily restricted to the lower body, instinctive reactions may cause accidents with dramatic consequences without the appropriate equipment and precautions.

Wooden swords are not more suitable for free play than they are for partner drills. Uncontrolled vigorous cuts hitting fingers or bones are not less painful or dangerous than with a steel sword. Contrary to steel blades, wooden swords will not bend on thrusts and all the energy of the shock will be transmitted to the target instead of being partly dissipated by the blade.

A good sword for free play should have a rounded or rolled tip and thick rounded edges for safer thrusts and cuts. It should be heavy enough to enforce correct techniques and prevent unrealistic quick wrist movements similar to those seen in western modern fencing with the foil. However, its balance should allow all the techniques found in your Tàijíjiàn forms to feel natural with swift and easy transformation.

There are now Chinese steel swords designed for sparring and partner drills available on the market. My favourite model, and the one we use in our group, is produced by Péter Regenyeyi Armory. This sparring Jiàn is the result of a collaboration between Mattias Nyrell, the main Jiànfǎ instructor of Historisk Fäktning

i Linköping, the renowned swordsmith Péter Regenyei and Peter Dekker, an antiquarian founder of Mandarin Mansion specialized in antique arms and armours from China and other regions of Asia.

This sword's design was based on a historical Tuánliàn jiàn belonging to Peter Dekker's personal collection. Those modest practical swords are also known as militia swords since they were most certainly made for use by rural militia to defend their goods and homes. The Regenyei sparring Jiàn design thus contrasts dramatically with the usual gilded and affected style of most Chinese swords on the market. However, in its simplicity, this sword does reflect the artisanal beauty and quality of its fabrication.

The 73 cm long gently tapering blade has a rolled tip, flattened diamond-shaped cross section and thick rounded edges of approximately 1 to 2 mm. Those thick edges and rolled tip ensure a good dissipation of the energy when landing cuts or thrusts on protective gear. This should not be regarded though as an incentive to cut or thrust with full strength. While this blade has some degree of flexibility indeed, it nonetheless is pretty stiff and it might be a good idea to wear a chest protector, especially for women, and a throat protector in addition to the regular padded jacket.

Despite an actual weight between 800 and 900 g, this sword feels pretty light in the hand, with a very homogeneous sensation from tip to pommel. The only thing that may require to get used to is the somewhat squarish handle, but this might be an asset after all for free play as it makes it easier to feel the blade alignment when wearing padded gloves.

Its excellent balance makes a swift and nimble sword that is very easy to control provided you are properly connected and you are moving it with your body and not from your wrist or your arm only. Then, all moves and transformations feel natural and lively, either while performing the Yángjiǎ Michuán Kūnlún sword or when sparring.

I can only recommend the Tàijǐjiàn enthusiast to invest in this sword. As a matter of fact, should you own only one sword, this is the one: it is indeed perfect not only for sparring and partner work but also for form practice.

## Further reading

Peter A. Lorge, *Chinese Martial Arts: from Antiquity to the Twenty-First Century*, Cambridge University Press.

Scott M. Rodell, *Chinese Swordsmanship*, Seven Stars Books and Video.

Barbara Grotkamp-Schepers, Isabell Immel, Lutz Hofmeister, Peter Johnsson & Sixt Wetwiler, *Das Schwert – Gestalt und Gedanke/The Sword – Form and Thought*, Deutsches Klingens Museum, Solingen.

Qi Jiguang (Paul Brennan transl.), *Boxing Classic*, <https://brennantranslation.wordpress.com/2019/08/31/qi-jiguangs-boxing-classic/>

Chen Weiming (Paul Brennan transl.), *Taiji Sword*, <https://brennantranslation.wordpress.com/2012/12/22/yang-style-taiji-sword/>

Vincent Le Chevalier, *Documenting the dynamics of swords*, <http://blog.subcaelo.net/ensis/documenting-dynamics-of-swords/>

Vincent Le Chevalier, *Weapon Dynamics Computer*, <https://subcaelo.net/ensis/dynamics-computer/>

Vincent Le Chevalier, *Measuring swords as pendulums*, <http://blog.subcaelo.net/ensis/measuring-swords-pendulums/>

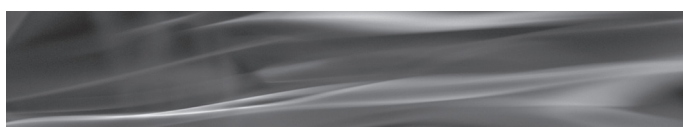
Péter Regenyei, *Regenyei's Swords Blog*, <https://www.regenyei.com/blog/index.php>

Frédéric Plewniak, *Taijijian: Taiji sword fencing*, <http://taijijian.free.fr/>

Mandarin Mansion: <https://www.mandarinmansion.com/>

Regenyei Armory : [https://www.regenyei.com/en\\_index.php](https://www.regenyei.com/en_index.php)

Regenyei Armory Jian sword : [https://www.regenyei.com/en\\_sp\\_otherweapon1.php](https://www.regenyei.com/en_sp_otherweapon1.php)





# “to bust your lumbar”

Jean-Luc Pérot – Claudy Jeanmougin

## Jean-Luc Perot, 15th April 2015

During the seminar in March, a question was raised regarding the official martial application of the movement “Wave Hands Like Clouds”. I put forth my version, which prompted Claudy to comment: “That’s a good way to bust your lumbar [vertebrae].”

This is what I had proposed. When I had learned our form with Mr. Kuo Chi, (after Chen Manching’s and the popular form taught at the Tim bey James Kou), we did not open the hips nor the foot for the rightward movement, but you did so when moving to the left to step in and counter the attack.

Then with Serge Dreyer and later at the Amicale, came the habit of freeing up the right foot, which leads to a more fluid movement.

In my practice of Jiseido Karate-Taichi, one of the “forms,” the kata Tekki or Naifanchi, insists on maintaining the front-facing Horse Stance when responding to an attack from the side. It clearly highlights the tension between a straight waist and a side movement. According to Kenji Tokitsu, this form was specifically designed to develop the mobility of the thoracic region.

I therefore brought back into question the initial proposition and am now suggesting that the movements of “Wave Hands Like Clouds” be performed with the initial constraint on the waist.

Is this physiologically sound? I believe so. As seen in the 2nd basic exercise, Bend Forward and to the Side. As seen in the Yoga posture where, seated, the hips are fixed while the upper body rotates, or, inversely, the upper body remains fixed while lying down while the legs, straight or bent, are brought from side to side. As seen in the Circle Walking of Ba Gua Zhan. As seen

in our own form, such as “Pat High the Horse”, “The Great Snake Wraps around the Shoulders,” or the Lotus Kick which implies different amplitudes of rotation between the hips and the chest.

It is useful to restore the mobility and elasticity of the chest, especially when the rib cage feels more like a prison than a locket. Of course, the amplitude of the motion is limited by the multiple connections between ribs, spinal column and sternum. This implies that these multiple connections must be exercised through flexion, extension and rotation.

Especially since, in a common stooped posture, the length of the tracheal axis (trachea, bronchi, oesophagus which extends from the base of the skull to the center of the diaphragm) has the tendency to shorten and lose its suppleness.

It requires lengthening and stretching in order to retain the free flow of air and blood to the lungs and heart. The upright posture of Tai Chi helps in this lengthening, and the dropping of the diaphragm during the inhale stretches it even more. Thus the active breathing proposed during the seminar.

Torsion is the result of the different degrees of freedom in the rotation. When the pivot of the lumbar vertebrae ends, the thoracic region can continue the rotation until it too reaches the limits of comfort, leaving the cervical vertebrae to continue expressing the amplitude of their rotation.

It is easy to learn of the different degrees of freedom when, seated in a chair with the hips fixed, we slowly turn to look behind us, achieving a 180° turn along the horizon.

Self-respect means respecting the comfort of the gesture itself, which guarantees respect for the physiology, hence the usefulness of self-listening training.

## Claudy's reply - 23 November 2019

During the seminar of the College des Enseignants (Teacher's College) on Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan, it is customary to set discussion topics on which we debate in order to enrich everyone's knowledge, without giving weight to one side or the other.

It was in this context that we put under scrutiny "Wave Hands Like Clouds", both in the execution of the form as well as in the martial applications. During this discussion, Jean-Luc proposed an application in which the feet were fixed and the upper body turned while responding to an attack from the side. Seeing this torsion of the back, I reacted by saying: "Doing it that way will bust your lumbar [vertebrae]". But on that day I did not have the time to explain, nor did Jean-Luc though he did take the time to write the above essay four years ago. How time flies...

I promised myself to answer Jean-Luc by proposing an exchange that we could share with the readers of the Amicale magazine. So here we are now, hoping to answer questions that readers might have had.

First, I never learned with Master Wang Yen-nien the move "Wave Hands Like Clouds" in which the feet were fixed during the turn to the right. It is likely that Mr. Kuo chi had made a personal adaptation of the move<sup>1</sup>, as he had done to several others that I saw on videos of his demonstrations. But this is not the subject of the debate, so permit me to restate the question clearly: "Is the rotation of the upper body to the side with fixed feet harmful or not?"

The immediate response is simple: "It all depends on the work being done and the intention behind it." During the seminar at the College, we were working on the technical applications, before moving on to the martial applications, which is different than the work on the form and the warm-up exercises that Jean-Luc mentioned.

As far as I am concerned, the practice of the form is first and foremost a practice on yourself and the nourishment of the vitality according to the principles of Yangsheng (literally feeding your life, or feeding the vital principle) while preparing ourselves for the multiple facets of a Taijiquan practice, such as the martial applications, Tuishou, sparring, etc.<sup>2</sup>. During these various workouts, it is standard to stretch to render the joints more mobile, to gain a greater free-

dom of movement. And in those cases, it is judicious to engage the entirety of the spinal column in torsions in order to grant it suppleness - which will counteract the stiffness that is the root cause of many ills in the long or short term. These stretches will not be done haphazardly and once again we must know what the end goal is.

Here are some of the options I propose in my classes regarding the spinal column:

- Bending and rotating of various vertebral sections to develop awareness of any reduction in mobility. A reduction in mobility of one area can lead to a hyper-mobility in an area above or below it. Hyper mobility can lead to inflammation and pain.
- Rotation of the vertebrae in order to balance tensions in the tissues. We find these motions in various movements in the form, such as "High Pat on the Horse" or "Snake creeps down", as well as many others.
- Tensioning in the rotation while holding of the posture in order to proceed to a regulation of the gamma discharges, parasitic of the gestural fluidity. Once again, it is possible to use the movements in the form, such as the twisting found before "Palm Three Times to the Heart".
- Balanced rotation of the vertebral sections in order to stretch the tissues that bind the vertebrae, and relieve the pressure on the inter-vertebral disks. Personally I use yoga postures. It must be said that, contrary to common wisdom, rotation of the vertebrae does not crush the inter-vertebral disks but relieve the pressure by separating the vertebrae.

I am therefore not against a rotation of the upper body with fixed feet, or fixed hips. Only that it must be done with a mind to the final position of the movement.

The next question is then: "If the movement has a technical or even martial application, is the rotation of the vertebral column welcomed?" For it was indeed a technical application leading to a martial one that was being discussed in the seminar, and not a preparation of the body. And in that case, without a doubt, it is better to avoid torsions of the spine when there is the slightest effort and when the movement is fast. Let me explain<sup>3</sup>.

The office of a chiropractor is filled with car drivers with back pain caused by reaching for an object on the back seat of their cars. The hips held by the

1. Le respect de soi passe par le respect du confort du geste lui-même, garant du respect de la physiologie d'où l'utilité de l'entraînement à l'écoute de soi. Also, the form with which I started my studies was the simplified Chen Manching version, which did not have an opening of the foot. See 鄭子太極拳37式/鄭曼青/楊澄甫/Tai chi Form 37/Cheng Man Ching Taiji & Yang Chengfu.

2. Jean-Luc: I agree but from another point of view the form is a glossary or list to understand the possible variations on the expansion of martial effectiveness

3. Jean-Luc: Great mastery would be that hips and shoulders move in unison without different amplitudes of motion and therefore without torsion. My experience in Judo, Aikido, Karatedo and Taijiquan leads me to think that this iconic situation does not present itself very often in combat, or even friendly sparring.

seat cannot follow the movement of the shoulders, which creates an exaggerated rotation of the upper spine made worse by an arm acting as a lever on the spinal structure. What to say as well of these jobs where employees have to rotate from side to side to move a load. Ignorant of the problem, and if they have not been informed of the dangers, they put in danger the health of their vertebrae, dorsal or lumbar. Work safety doctors in France are perfectly aware of this, and have labelled these lesions to the spine as work injuries. And I could continue infinitely with these examples. And it must be said that the employees are not motivated to ameliorate their condition. Being a workshop facilitator on "posture and movement in the workplace", I faced much reticence on the part of employees when tasked with using the correct movements that would prevent future lesions and loss of work<sup>4</sup>. But enough.

Our discussion is not about lesions due to bad posture in the workplace, but those due to our practice in the martial disciplines. What of Taijiquan? Is it not said that "the waist is the commander"? And, therefore, don't the shoulders have to follow the movement of the hips? And in this case, is there torsion of the spinal column? My answer is without doubt: "No!"

Though I must make a small, very small, qualification to my affirmation. Indeed, all the preparation which has been made with torsion under tension allow for a slight over-extension during the torsions which might appear in some applications like "Wave Hands like Clouds". The slight over-extension remains very small and does not place the overall structure in danger.

I will leave the floor to Jean-Luc so that he may voice his answer to my statement.

### follow up with Jean-Luc Perot - 25 November 2019

And yet the "Taiji Body" implies specifically attention, responsibility and information.

Let me take up again the point of my proposal: in the practice of "Wave Hands Like Clouds", it is possible to perform the move with or without an opening of the corresponding foot when turning to the right or left.

The choice to not open the foot to the side triggers a rising rotation of the spine, first in the lumbar region followed by the thoracic one in order to manifest the movement to the side. This is in order to develop a suppleness in the thoracic region while staying within Taiji precepts.

Therefore, when facing South, the movement starting from low and to the East (to stick to the convention of the Duans) spirals up gradually to finish to the west, 180° to the side, followed by a descending then ascending curve, to finish the lateral movement, due West.

This does not prevent the hips from launching the movement that then propagate along the spine to the shoulders, the hands staying in line with the sternum. It is therefore a question of thoracic suppleness. The energy created by the spiraling torsion is expressed by the right hand in this case.

From the point of view of the spine, it seems to me that we stay in normal and easy amplitude of motion by controlling the curve of the lumbar region of the spine when dropping the sacrum and by lengthening the neck, in accordance to the norms of our style.

The crucial point is to solicit the attention of the Taiji player to the posture and the responsibility to listen to the body, each individual being unique in their relationship to the movement.

To conclude, all in moderation, as suggested by Claudy.

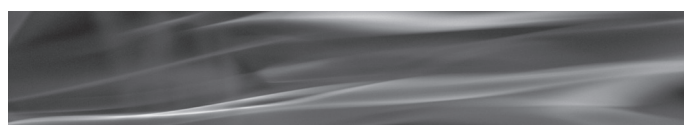
### follow up with Claudy - 28 November 2019

In the end we are mostly in agreement concerning micro-moves along the spinal column. In my martial art traditions, Aikido and Judo, I was always taught to face your partner, and absolutely avoid extreme torsion, even during hip throws. Famous judo practitioners have had to stop their training due to back pain. These practices can be dangerous for the spinal column.

But, and here we are in agreement, as long as we stay within certain limits, torsion is possible. Even more so if the work of stretching and warm up has been done while respecting the various chains of tissues placed under tension.

We should take care of our spine by maintaining a daily practice of reasonable and intelligent stretching.

4. Jean-Luc: These examples of malfunctions highlight a lack of attention, cause of the proprioceptive disorder and sideration of the gamma loop and/or the lack of information, responsibility and attention of the employees-workers.





# Amicale du Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan

## XXXe Rencontres du VII au XI novembre MMXX

Organisées par Danièle & Joël PANHELLEUX (Membres individuels)

A l'occasion des 30<sup>èmes</sup> Rencontres de l'Amicale

du YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN,

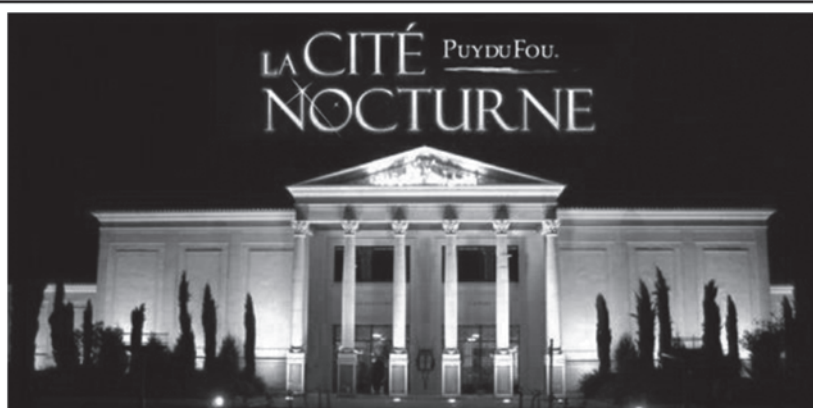
Danièle & Joël PANHELLEUX sont heureux

de vous accueillir

le jeudi 7 novembre 2020 à partir de 15h00

dans la « Cité Nocturne »

( le complexe hôtelier du Puy du Fou )



De novembre à avril, alors que le « Grand Parc du Puy du Fou » est fermé, « La Cité Nocturne », le complexe hôtelier du Puy du Fou qui compte cinq hôtels à thèmes, continue à accueillir les groupes, les entreprises et les associations pour l'organisation de séminaires ou de rencontres.

La « Villa Gallo-Romaine », le premier hôtel construit au Puy du Fou, en 2007 a été retenu pour les rencontres 2020.

Sa cour intérieure de 3 300 m<sup>2</sup> est typique de la Rome Antique. Bordée de 62 colonnes monumentales, elle abrite un jardin méditerranéen où se côtoient oliviers, cyprès, romarin et lavande sur lequel donne un ensemble de 100 chambres familiales (jusqu'à 4 personnes par chambre), d'une superficie de 21m<sup>2</sup> qui disposent d'une connexion Wi-Fi gratuite, d'un téléviseur avec accès aux chaînes françaises et aux chaînes internationales.

\_ 1 grand lit (160x200)

\_ 2 lits superposés (80x190)

A l'étage se trouve la salle des Auriges où aura lieu l'Assemblée Générale.

Les repas se tiendront dans le restaurant « Les Deux Couronnes » de l'hôtel du « Camp du Drap d'Or » mitoyen de la « Villa Gallo-Romaine ».

**SÉJOUR :** La capacité des Rencontres du « Puy du Fou 2020 » a été limitée à un maximum de 350 participants.

**RESTAURATION :** Les quatre petits déjeuners (8, 9, 10 et 11 nov.), les trois déjeuners (8, 9, 10 nov.) et les quatre dîners (7, 8, 9 et 10 nov.) sont inclus dans toutes les formules.

**Les Rencontres se terminent le mercredi 11 novembre en fin de matinée.**

Les repas végétariens sont pris en considération.

**ACCUEIL :** L'accès au Puy du Fou est bien indiqué (<https://www.puydufou.com/fr/acces>).

Coordonnées GPS de l'hôtel « La Villa Gallo-Romaine » (Latitude / Longitude) :

Système D.M.S. 46 ° 53 ' 12.46 " N 0 ° 55 ' 28.21 " O

**COVOITURAGE :** Pour les rencontres 2020, un site de covoiturage est mis en place.  
Le lien d'accès est envoyé par E-mail aux inscrits aux rencontres qui le demandent.

A l'image d'un « Doodle », chacun s'inscrit en tant que Conducteur, Conducteur/Passager ou Passager.  
 Les contacts se font directement entre les inscrits sur le site MoveWiz.

Aucun service de navette ne sera assuré. Les personnes qui arrivent à la gare d'Angers (ou de Nantes) ou à l'aéroport de Nantes pourront donc utiliser ce site pour se rendre au Puy du Fou.

**Voir la plaquette « Covoiturage » sur le site de l'Amicale (Onglet : Rencontres/Prochaines Rencontres)**



**Note : Pour tout problème particulier merci de nous contacter préalablement**

**FORMULES :** Six formules sont proposées pour un séjour insécable.

\_ Quatre Formules (A, B, C et D) hôtel « la villa Gallo-Romaine » : Le linge de lit est fourni, les serviettes de toilette non changées durant le séjour. Pas de ménage quotidien.

\_ Une Formule (E) camping-car ou fourgon aménagé sur le parking de « la villa Gallo-Romaine » :

Attention : Pas de branchement électrique ni d'eau.

\_ Une Formule (F) « Externe » avec tous les repas inclus.

Dans l'hôtel "La Villa Gallo-Romaine"			
<b>Formule A : 594,00 €</b> <i>en chambre individuelle</i>	<b>Formule B : 392,00 €</b> <i>en chambre de deux</i>	<b>Formule C : 325,00 €</b> <i>en chambre de trois</i>	<b>Formule D : 291,00 €</b> <i>en chambre de quatre</i>
<b>Formule E : 190,00 €</b> Camping-car sur le parking "La Villa Gallo-Romaine"		<b>Formule F : 190,00 €</b> "Externe" avec tous les repas inclus	

**Option : Visite/Découverte des coulisses du Puy du Fou à 18,00 €**

**Contact avant et pendant les Rencontres :**

**Danièle PANHELLEUX : 06 75 77 77 54**

**Email : cercletangence@gmail.com**

**Courrier : Danièle et Joël PANHELLEUX**

**2 Bis chemin de la Closerie de l'Aubrais - La Meignanne, 49770 LONGUENEE en ANJOU**

## DÉSISTEMENT

La participation aux Rencontres est réservée aux pratiquants à jour de leur cotisation, à titre individuel ou par l'intermédiaire de leur Association d'origine, ainsi qu'aux pratiquants d'autres styles, invités par le CA (dans la limite de cinq places) dans le cadre de l'ouverture approuvée par l'AG du 8 novembre 1997 à Houlgate.

**Par mon inscription, j'accepte explicitement les points suivants :**

- \_ L'inscription est effective après réception du règlement complet à effectuer dans les 15 jours suivant l'inscription.
- \_ Je ne revendique aucun droit sur les images ou films enregistrés pendant les Rencontres.
- \_ Si je fais des photos et/ou des films pendant les Rencontres, je m'engage à en remettre une copie à l'Amicale pour ses archives.
- \_ J'accepte les conditions de désistement suivantes :
  - Tout désistement devra être formulé par écrit au bureau de l'Amicale et aux organisateurs.
  - Aucune retenue ne sera effectuée si le désistement intervient avant la date limite d'inscription.
  - Après cette date, des retenues pourront être effectuées en fonction de la date de désistement avant le jour J de début des rencontres.

<b>Un montant forfaitaire sera retenu en cas de force majeure justifié :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_ Zéro euro avant J-30</li> <li>_ Quinze euros (15€) entre J-29 et J-10</li> <li>_ Trente euros (30€) entre J-9 et J-5</li> <li>_ Cinquante euros (50€) entre J-4 et J.</li> </ul>	<b>Une retenue proportionnelle au montant total du séjour sera effectuée en cas de désistement non justifié par un cas de force majeure :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>30 % du lendemain de la date de clôture des inscriptions à J-20</li> <li>50% entre J-19 et J-10</li> <li>100% entre J-9 et J.</li> </ul>
--	---

**Toutefois aucune retenue ne sera effectuée si le désistement est la suite d'un problème de santé avec arrêt d'activité (certificat médical obligatoire).**

Le délai incompressible de 10 jours est le délai minimum pour prévenir les personnes en liste d'attente qu'elles peuvent bénéficier de places devenues disponibles.

**Nota bene :**

Le Bureau de l'Amicale étudiera chaque demande de désistement, au cas par cas, avant de prendre la décision de retenue, après consultation des organisateurs. Le Bureau de l'Amicale reste seul juge pour apprécier la réalité des cas de force majeure.





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

**1er Septembre 2019 au 31 Août 2020**

## **ABONNEMENT AU BULLETIN tirage PAPIER**

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

### **Renouvellement d'Adhésion Collective**

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

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

Je soussigné(e) Nom et Prénom du Responsable Associatif

Votre adresse ①

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

Téléphone	Portable	Adresse Mail

Nom de l'Association : .....

Adresse du siège social de l'Association ② :

Téléphone :	Adresse Mail :
Fax :	Site Internet :

### **Règlement pour l'Adhésion collective**

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

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

#### **Pour votre association**

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

### **Modalités de règlement**

Total adhésions ..... + Total abonnements ..... = Total à payer .....

- ☐ Par virement bancaire (frais à la charge du donneur d'ordre) ☐ Par chèque ☐ Autre mode de paiement

Les règlements doivent être effectués à l'ordre de «Amicale du Yangjia Michuan TJQ»,  
 A adresser à AMICALE DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN / Alain Coussedière,  
 1 rue du Troquant, Port à Clou, 17350 PORT D'ENVAUX (France)  
 Email : [tresor.ymtjq@gmail.com](mailto:tresor.ymtjq@gmail.com) Site Web : [www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org](http://www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org)

IBAN – International Bank Account Number	BIC – Bank Identifier Code	Account Owner
FR76 1551 9390 9300 0219 3780 189	CMCIFR2A	AMICALE YANGJIA MICHUAN

### **Données personnelles**

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

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

Fait à :

Le :

Signature :



# Agenda des Agendas

Tous les stages organisés par les différentes associations sont mis à jour, quasi quotidiennement, sur notre site:  
[www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org/?q=fr/taxonomy/term/Stages](http://www.amicale-yangjia-michuan-tjq.org/?q=fr/taxonomy/term/Stages)

La programmation peut couvrir les dix mois à venir.

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

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

## Le Bulletin

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

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

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

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

### Sollicitations...

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



# Le Site Web et le Bulletin de l'Amicale

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

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

## Le référencement de vos associations

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

## Pour les associations déjà référencées

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

## Le Bulletin sur le site Web

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

## Les autres chapitres du site Web

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

Les autres chapitres font également l'objet d'évolutions périodiques : allez les consulter régulièrement si vous n'avez pas opté pour l'abonnement à son flux RSS.

Enfin, il est à noter que de plus en plus de pages sont traduites en anglais afin que nos amis et partenaire américains, anglais et chinois puissent avoir facilement accès aux informations.

## Pour publier vos informations de stages sur le site Web :

adrez un e-mail avec éventuellement un fichier attaché au format .rtf ou .doc, ou, si ne pouvez pas faire autrement, envoyez un document papier qui puisse être scanné à Jean-Luc Pommier [pommier\\_jl1@yahoo.fr](mailto:pommier_jl1@yahoo.fr)

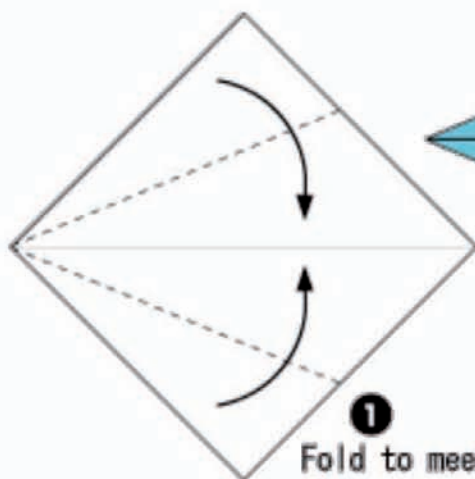
63, rue de Seine – 94400 Vitry – France

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

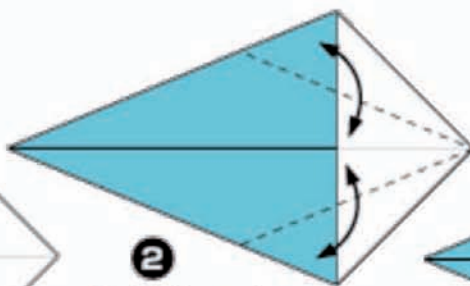
- Thème du stage
- Date et lieu du stage
- Nom de l'animateur(trice) avec numéro de téléphone
- Association organisatrice
- Le contact pour le stage (nom, mail, tél., etc.)
- Adresse du site Web
- Informations complémentaires éventuellement, sous format pdf ou Word (2 pages maximum)

## Procédure

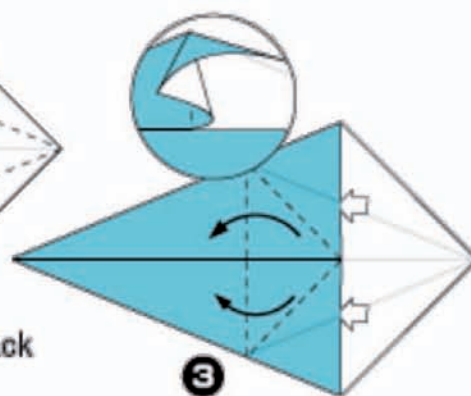
Jean-Luc met le stage en ligne et envoie la confirmation à celui ou celle qui en a fait la demande, ainsi qu'aux autres destinataires, mis en copie, de la demande. C'est la seule manière d'éviter les contre-temps. Cela permet au demandeur de vérifier si tout est OK.



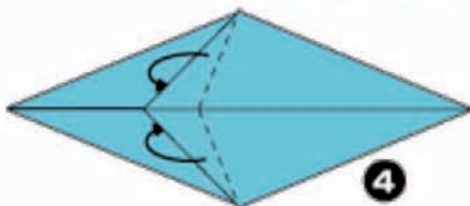
**1**  
Fold to meet  
the center line



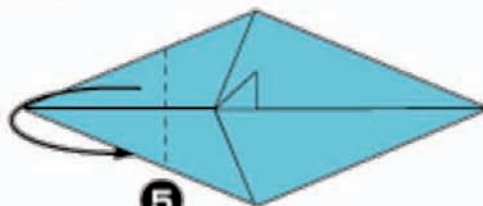
**2**  
Fold to make  
a crease and fold back



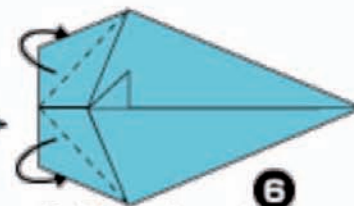
**3**  
Open the  part  
and flatten



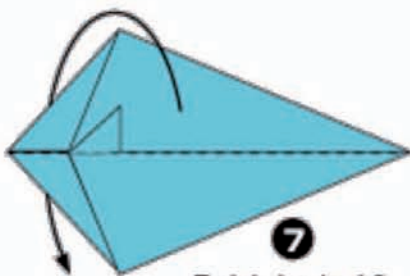
**4**  
Fold inside in the dotted line



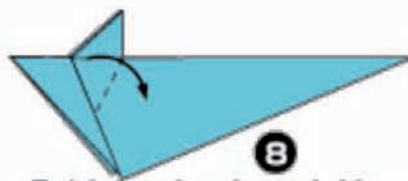
**5**  
Fold backward  
in the dotted line



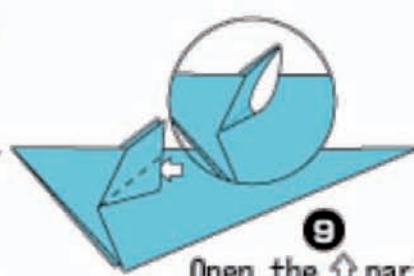
**6**  
Fold backward  
in the dotted line




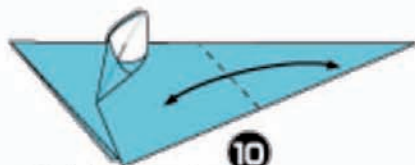
**7**  
Fold in half



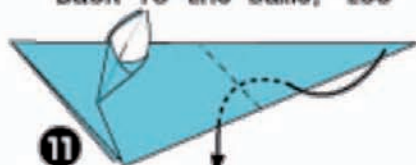
**8**  
Fold in the dotted line  
Back is the same, too



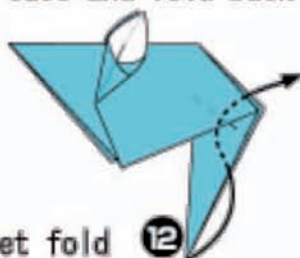
**9**  
Open the  part  
and flatten



**10**  
Fold to make  
a crease and fold back



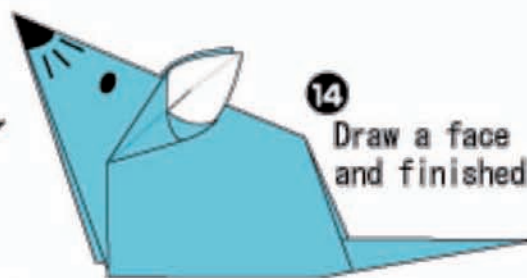
**11**  
Pocket fold  
in the dotted line



**12**  
Pocket fold



**13**  
Fold inside  
Back is the same, too



**14**  
Draw a face  
and finished

\*Copyright:Fumiaki Shingu

