楊家秘傳

AMICALE

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan

N° 86 - September 2017



Taiwan march 2017

- Tui shou
- Questioning
 - Tensegrity
- Around Jasnières





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to all of you who were sorry not to find more testimonials in our newsletter: this time you will be well provided for.

Whether it be here in France (Yves, Evelyne, Nicole, Alex) or in Taiwan (Michel D., Manuel, Sabine, Simonette, Fabrice, Claudio, Lili, Michel A., Anna, Agnès), our kind friends have things to tell us and make us too want to go on adventures.

The China aficionados, of theory and calligraphy will not be forgotten for all that. Everyone can find his niche....

Amazingly, in the testimonials as well as the articles, one sees that the reflection on practice is never ending, but also that nothing beats practice (a well-known refrain).

An incongruous statement for someone who, sitting comfortably in his armchair, is having difficulties choosing from the hundreds of magnificent photos that he has received, instead of launching himself into a redemptive 1st Duan. This profusion of goodies does no harm; it was unhoped for.

From all these I have pulled out for the front cover one of the Grand Hotel in Taipei which is close to the place Master Wang chose as practice ground.

Before handing over to a kind friend (move on the horizon), I would like to share with you the almost completion of the Great Work: thanks to Jean-Claude Trap who has just sent me the missing ten scans, we will be able to put all the newsletters from no.1 to 86 on the YMTJQ website. Just a few more days and the three indexes (summaries, authors, subjects) will be usable and I hope on-line.

These will be beta versions, but I will upgrade them as you make your comments.

Happy reading, see you in Île de Ré! 'Till soon,

> André Musso, translated by Erica Martin



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From the President's Desk

new season starts after a summer full of opportunities to discover other ways of practising or other points of view. We are at that delicate stage when we weigh up the new before deciding what to do with it: store away for later, try in the classes of the coming year, forget in a corner or discard without the slightest regret. Afterwards the customary rhythm will drag us into its current, often too swift to allow time for thought, and the regular procession of weekly classes, reassuring with their predictable progress, will perhaps dim our summer discoveries.

Luckily there are booster jabs. Now is also the time when very many courses, organised by your associations, are set up. These courses no longer appear in the Bulletin but are always up-dated on the Amicale website... so long as, of course, you take the time to send the information to Jean-Luc Pommier, who in spite of his many talents does not have the gift of mindreading.

We hope that you will very soon be able to pay your subscriptions on-line, on this same website. Meanwhile, if you are in a hurry, you can use the usual method. We would like to remind you that subscriptions can be paid from the 1st September and that those taking part in the Rencontres must be up to date with their dues.

The Rencontre on l'île de Ré could be an opportunity for your club to take part more actively in the running of the Amicale by putting forward a representative for the Board of Directors. It is of benefit that the latter's composition develops so as to maintain its momentum.

I will again talk about this in the next administrative note, but you should already take note that we need to plan for two changes in important roles. Our secretary, Maryline Bozon, would like to hand over from this autumn and it is urgent to find someone willing to follow on. On behalf of the whole Amicale, I already thank her very warmly for all her precious work, always carried out with calm and kindness.

Our Editor in Chief, André Musso, is also looking to pass on the torch. Although this is less urgent, this handover requires a longer transmission period and so we are looking from now for someone who feels a definite or growing vocation to drive the publication of our Bulletin.

On the 2nd December 2017 the next Yen-nien World Cup will take place, organised around the workshops lead by teachers from Taiwan and elsewhere. Our Taiwanese friends hope that a large European delegation will be present at these festivities. Such a long journey is hard to justify for just one day of workshops. So, Simonette Verbrugge and Claudy Jeanmougin together with our Taiwanese partners, have put together a week of tourism and practice making it possible to discover, or revisit the places and people who have contributed to the development of Yangjia Michuan TJQ. I envy you if you can free yourself up to take this opportunity.

On that note, I wish you a very good start to the season and I look forwards to seeing all those of you who signed up early enough on the île de Ré. We will be numerous. Sincerely,

François Schosseler, translated by Erica Martin

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Calligraphy and Taiji quan

Claudy Jeanmougin translated by Simonette Verbrugge

n the memory of the practitioners of taiji quan, Zheng Manqing remains «the Master of the five excellencies», by his great mastery of painting, poetry, medicine, taiji quan and calligraphy. Every morning, Zheng Manqing practiced calligraphy.

During my stay in Taiwan, for convenience, I took a calligraphy class with a Master who had his studio not far from our apartment. He did not have a great reputation but he had the merit of transmitting the bases of this art with kindness. Every morning I applied myself to making my writing lines like a child. Back in France I did not practice much and little by little I lost my hand.

Fortunately, in 2011, we met Frédéric Kuhnapfel who agreed to conduct a calligraphy class within our association. It was Madeleine who discovered him in his first studio in La Rochelle, as big as a handkerchief, during a workshop organised by the drawing school of Royan. Since then, one to two times a year we follow the teaching of his Tsukiyo school.

From now on, Calligraphy is an integral part of the teaching of the GRDT in the context of the spread of taiji quan and of Chinese culture in general.

Why introduce Calligraphy in the teaching of Taiji quan? Calligraphy that I write with a capital «C» is a true active meditation and respects all the principles of our discipline.

- Posture. The work of posture is essential. Without a correct posture, identical to that adopted in neigong, the traced character will be totally inconsistent.
- **Unity.** All parts of the body are united so that the hand can express the trait without any hesitation.
- Non rupture and fluidity. As soon as the bristles come
 into contact with the paper, the gesture is continuous
 and without the slightest interruption or rupture.

Class un Ecurat in January 2012



- **Disconnection of «corticality».** As soon as the character to be traced is imagined, it is necessary to let de subcortical brain act. It is in this way that it is possible to disconnect the conscient brain from the subcortical spheres and reach states of consciousness that bring calm and serenity. If we control each of the traits, the character will not be balanced; it will only be «bad geometry».
- Follow, bond, stick, adhere. Is Calligraphy also a technique of tuishou? In the relationship between the brush, the extension of the body and the paper, the partner's equivalent in the tuishou, we find all the principles of non-resistance and adherence. Some strokes are performed playing on this pressure/release ratio without leaving the paper. If there is an instant during which the distance is broken, there is the gestual continuity which connects all that gives to the figure, the movement with different rhythms.
- **Empty and full.** It is emptiness that gives strength to the picture. The artist plays without ceasing with the absence of ink to create a vacuum which will give all the power to the full, expressed in shades ranging from grey to black.

It is in this spirit that Frédéric Kuhnapfel teaches in his Tsukiyo school. In this regard, what does Tsukiyo mean? Let's listen to Frederic: «Tsukiyo is a Japanese word composed of two kanji which signify individually moon (tsuki) and night (yo), and together full moon night (tsukiyo). Traditionally, in Japanese calligraphy, one traces black on white. The moon is white in the dark night, but refers to the notion of ma or space of white paper, free between lines, black.»

It was during his studies of the Japanese language at INALCO (National Institute of Eastern Languages) that Frédéric discovered Calligraphy. From a rudimentary

Class in Ecurat in February 2017



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Calligraphy of 永: Y ŏ ng in Mandarin, ei in Japanese = eternity



Calligraphy of 風:Fē ng in Mandarin, kaze in Japanese = wind

Painting of a Geisha

teaching, he was inspired by spiritual masters such as Hokusai, Hiroshige, Kanno, Sengai and many others. In 2001, he opened his school in La Rochelle where he imparted an original teaching based not only on Japanese calligraphy but also on painting with ink (sumi-e).

Be aware, ink painting in calligraphy has nothing to do with classical figurative painting. Instead, one approaches more the impressionist techniques. A few nuances from grey to black suggest to the brain to construct its own image. The art of this painting consists in finding a balance between the emptiness and the full, between the white of the paper and the black of the ink as I have mentioned earlier.

A graphic theme is set for each course. Let us assume that the theme is bamboo, at first there is the learning of all the features composing the character for bamboo. In the second phase, the teaching concerns de composition of the bamboo. Finally, on the same sheet, it will be necessary to deal with the character of the bamboo, the painting and the red seal. The result should show a balanced work.

Frédéric will honour us with his presence at the Rencontres de l'Amicale in Ré. The kanji mainly studied during his two workshops will be *ei*, eternity (*Yong*, in Mandarin).

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Caractères chinois

- 永 : Yǒng in mandarin ; «ei» in Japanese = eternity
- 風 : Fēng in mandarin ; «kaze» in Japanese = wind
- 間: Jiān in mandarin; «ma» in Japanese = interval, empty space between two elements





National Meeting of Interstyle Tui Shou, Laille, 11 and 12 March 2017

Yves Jouffe translated by Cynthia Hay
This meeting, under the aegis of FAEMC,
was organised by Christophe Lephay and his team at Laillé, quite close to Rennes.

arrived on Sunday. First workshop with Alain Monfournoy. The great kindness that emanates from his advice and jokes contrasts with the impressive power of the movements of his body and arms, steps chasing towards a partner who appears to be an adversary to chase. The shadow of occasional warriors is on the floor. Several partners take turns with me. A woman shows me how she can push me back with her arms alone, without her body, because I am not anchored, whereas I cannot do that with her because she is anchored. Then she shows me how she anchors herself by overbalancing her sacrum forwards and I am stunned to discover that I resist her pushes effectively; moreover I am stunned by my capacity to throw her off balance completely with my body moved by changing my feet because my arms are so helpless.

Then there begins the first Tuishou session of the day. I settle down with other volunteers at the observation posts from the tables for freeze-dried coffee without their clients. From on high I discover the variety of practices. One couple attracts attention for the aggressiveness of their passes, seeking to place the slaps included while jumping on the other, and only the shared smiles distinguish them from two scufflers at the end of a ball: impressive but frightening, pushing back. My neighbour in the café then recognises his friends and companions in the course who put together as well grips, locks, falling and getting up without respite. Among them I recognise my ephemeral professor from the previous workshop: she had nonetheless told me that, like me, she had begun last September with the same professor! Ah, there are some who are strong ... At least that these should not be the same courses as I did? I see other couples whose hands sweep the breezes in a less lively fashion and this man who plays the game of being thrown off balance by his slender partner. At least this is not actually happening?

I see him again after lunch. His name is James Brulet and he is leading my second workshop, said to be "proprioception" (1) although I really do not know what that means: (Is it the internal perception of one's own body? The perception of the other through one's own

My attention is drawn to the sensations of my own body, under the chaste caress of a female partner, I concentrate on attending to the intensity put in the hand of a partner, static but moving, a hand which it is then a matter of avoiding with the eyes nonetheless shut. I am stunned to see that my sudden and confident push being diverted as if I had announced it, but equally to avoid several times an unexpected push. This exercise is revealing to me about what Tuishou can be: a reflex adaptation to the intention of the other which is allowed by a bodily attention made possible by a substantial effort of relaxation. Not so much a battle (sometimes smiling) confronting two powers, two speeds, two agilities, two sets of expertise in postures and counter postures. At the end of the workshop we were tasked with seeking holds and pushes on joints, in other words, practising Tui Shou, with the eyes still shut. But the absence of practice makes itself felt and I have no idea what to do with my arms, there is nothing to grasp, twisting the fingers or pushing the nose, excuse me. A laughing partner who I met at lunch teased me gently but did not

(1) Proprioception is the perception (at once both conscious and unconscious) of each part of the body, of its position and its movement in space, at every moment and without visual verification. (Editor's note.)

The second session of free Tuishou is slow and takes place when a number of people are leaving for their regions and those that remain say they are tired. I attend the start of the session while chatting with a neighbour before beginning hand circles and attempted pushes, with his friendly advice. Three other partners follow with a ten-minute gong, all just as amiable and understanding of my frustrating and anxious lack of experience. This threatens to expose both my incompetence and my imposture and to make me feel ashamed because I prevent my partner from genuinely practising that which he or she may have come from the other side of France to pursue. But no, it all goes well. Everyone seeks to allow me to play Tuishou with him or her. Yes, then Tuishou seems to me like a game. Or rather like a playful dance. The waiting and the changing of partner but above all this infectious good humour, welcoming and

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reassuring, reminds me of the fest-noz (2) at home and the folk balls discovered last summer at Gennetines. About a hundred participants, several internal and external martial arts, each art with its varied styles, and each practitioner with his or her singular approach. In this playful setting where the rules of the game are adjusted to each couple, in the end greater or less mastery counts for nothing more than the possibility of a more subtle and intense game. It is enough here to wish for a practice, a practice that becomes more refined, and a wish that is exacerbated in the discovery of a familiar strangeness. I will indeed

have learned much more than a beautiful parade or a deadlock. I will have discovered a game which transforms into art attention to oneself and to another, a game which establishes the most sincere mutual respect as the genuine foundation for an energy which is both protective and transformative.

⁽²⁾ Fest-noz is a festive gathering, with intense camaraderie, based on the collective practice of traditional dances of Brittany and France. (Translator's note.)









TAIWAN, avril 2017

Meeting in Taiwan with George Lin and his students

Michel Douiller, Manuel Solnon, Sabine Metzlé, translated by Cynthia Hay

since 2010, four visits to Taipei have provided French practitioners with the occasion to discover the Chinese practice of push hands, Sabine, Manuel and Michel, strengthened by their Taiwanese experience and their local contacts, allowed more than fifty people to pit themselves against Chinese practitioners to whom this discipline is well known.

Having been introduced by Manuel to the group of Master Zheng Xian-Qi, we had the opportunity to benefit from his teachings and from the advice of his assistants. Until 2015, the sessions took place in the morning from seven o'clock until twelve o'clock in the Peace Park in Taipei and were supervised by high level assistants (Shixiong) whose personal and original approach made the relevance and richness of these mornings especially appreciated by the students. Since Zheng Xian-Qi was away in a retirement home and unable to join us each morning in the park, the organisation of the group and the practice had been taken up by Shen Shixiong, The other assistants are now devoted to their own teaching,

We thank the participants who have agreed to testify about their experience of these adventures.

Michel, Manuel, Sabine

You should not despair of fireflies.*

Simonette Verbrugge

am sharing with you a few impressions of my fifth stay in Taiwan, dedicated, this time, to tuishou with our friends of the Peace Park, to tourism, and to renewing with this captivating city. It was fun to fly on a plane with a total Hello Kitty look, a pleasure to meet again the people of Taipei who are so hospitable, quite long to find the restaurant that had moved and was so delicious, impressive to discover the trendy neighbourhoods of Taipei and a good surprise to find a few bars serving the best Belgian beers! The sulphur

baths are still there but I had forgotten that sulphur has such hilarious properties. It has been a pleasure to share these days with part or all of a friendly tribe whose guides were so efficiently up to it!

But then, what about the fireflies? They were there, at the turn of the road, at the foot of our hotel in Lugu, offering us their ballet of delicate lights. The fireflies do not illuminate the path, they mark it subtly. For me Taipei remains the place where Master Wang has illuminated my path but this time it was enriched by working with those young teachers whom I had never met, who spoke very little English, but who, with much patience and pedagogy taught me above all to relax, to relax so deeply that it allowed my joints to open, lengthen, breathe, enriched by the energy of heaven and earth.

Aimé CESAIRE (1913-2008)

French writer, poet and political figure of Martinique.

Simonette
* Aimé Césaire



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My experience of push hands during the trip to Taipei in April 2017

Fabrice Willmann, translated by Cynthia Hay

should like to recount the beautiful experience which I was able to enjoy on my visit to Taiwan, thanks to the organisational work of Michel, Sabine and Manuel, who have my warm thanks.

Such a trip inevitably provides its share of beautiful discoveries; a fortiori when it is our first major trip.

I will not linger on the splendours of the Tarok gorges, even though the site deserves uninterrupted praise (for example during the thirteen hour flight, this was a pleasant way of passing the time). The site is quite simply spectacular, nature reigns supreme here and everything is permeated with a boundless energy. Staying at Taroko quite simply recharges one's batteries with *qi* for a return to Taipei serene once again. Taipei is as well a captivating city, even if at the start there are only a few attractions to be found.

Moreover, it was at Taipei, and more precisely at the peace park that our daily sessions of push hands took place with our Taiwanese colleagues. First of all our Taiwanese assistants were extremely kind and to differing degrees and sensitivities they all possessed the art "pushing without pushing".

Thus our principal instructor – the person who led the morning warm up – showed me the difference between a push coming from the shoulders and a push coming from the tan then: the first can be anticipated and perceived immediately; the second is invisible and indeed much more powerful.

This is somewhat like what a fair number of books on taiji quan describe: "a good practitioner of push hands appears to have the consistency of air when he is pushed and that of a river when pushing." That is how Wolfe Loventhal, pupil of Zhen Man Qing, expresses it in his book, *Professor Chen Man Ching, A Grand Master of Tai Chi Speaks*, published by Courrier du Livre. One has the impression of pushing from emptiness and when one is pushed, the impression of water rising rapidly, without violence but in an irresistible manner. Moreover that is for the most part what happens when one is pushed: one does not hold the push. (Of course I am speaking about my level of push hands, which is that of a beginner.)

My main interest in push hands has been varied and moreover begins by a prodigious putting into form by our assistants, who show themselves sometimes to be doctors in a more or less official capacity, but that being said, always efficacious.





Thus it is that I was able to rediscover the virtues of the posture known as "kissing the tree" or zhan zhuang, which is also a preparation for push hands because it cultivates two important aspects: relaxation and taking root, without which push hands is empty. In discussing this subject with Sabine, asking her if is really in my interest to practice zhan zhuang (which I specified requires placing one's hands and opposite one another, as if wishing to embrace a tree.), she gave me the answer that the zhan zhuang of our school consisting of remaining with the arms raised, hands at the level of the shoulders and the palms towards the ground brings the same benefits but differs slightly from zhan zhuang of this school. Because of the fact that the hands are directed towards the partner, consequently in an attitude of exchange and of martial expression whereas the zhan zhuang practised in qigong is closed on itself and favours the circulation of gi internally.

Confident from this teaching, I have already understood that to have control of my legs, I must first of all settle myself in a suitable way in cultivating qi and thereby relieving tensions.

However, my most decisive experience I owe to one of the assistants, and unfortunately I do not know his name. During a practice session with him, I asked him "how to push without using muscular force" and I qualified for a course on relaxation which will remain engraved in me like a beautiful gift for the beginning practitioner that I am. It allowed me to experience a genuine relaxation; this mixture between toughness and softness. This is not a small matter: it is very difficult to know what this really is and without his help I would never have known what it is. He explained to me that his push, when he does push hands, comes from the tan tien, which I declare that until this time had appeared relatively abstract to me. Now it is not the muscles which move the arms, but the energy. It is a bit as though the gi contained in the stomach overflows and carries the arms which behave as if they were floating in the water; to the extent that the water rises (the ai), the arms follow. The secret for preparing the body for this new dimension of displacement resides in two things (from my limited experience and knowledge, if there are errors or approximations, please give me the necessary corrections to what I believe as true)

* It is necessary to ask one's joints (the term *joint* in English is eloquent in this context) so to ask one's joints to open themselves, "open" they say as one recites a mantra with their indefatigable smile, "open" and thus the first element. Energy cannot circulate where there are blockages so that qi can travel from the tan tien to the hands it is necessary to open the whole body to energy, and this work is long and progressive. I am convinced that it is accompanied by much more subtlety than I am capable of assessing, but I do not yet possess the necessary experience to judge.

* The second condition appears to me to be "absence of will". Here is why, and this for me constitutes my most intense experience of this trip. Sometimes when we practice push hands, there are empty moments and I took advantage of these moments to work on suppleness and rootedness. I decided therefore to practice *zhan zhuang*. On that day my body must have been quite relaxed and rooted because I experienced then a sentiment of genuine well being. It is then that progressively my hands were spread as if moved by an external force and my arms went upwards by themselves. This marvel I am now convinced is the expression of energy. What I have also understood with hindsight is that I cannot for the moment force this state or make it come. This is the second condition: the mind should be as relaxed as the body for "this" to work.

Finally, in a more general manner as well I found a large disparity between our practice of push hands and theirs. They seem to stake everything on softness and relaxation whereas we learn in our school that these are above all techniques for receiving pushes. Of course I suppose that this observation comes from my inexperience in this sphere and perhaps also it is quite difficult to be soft and effective, myself I am quite stiff when I push or I am pushed, but I dream myself as well of realising this principle "do not allow more than four grams to be exerted on you and do not use more than four grams to push, otherwise this is not pushing with the hands, so said Zhen Man Qing to his students.

Fabrice

Second trip to Taipei

Claudio Fanelli translated by Simonette Verbrugge

his is the second trip to Taipei to practice tui shou. If I had to describe the first trip with a single word, the word would be «disorientation». I was disoriented in every aspect of the experience: I had barely idea what tui shou was because I had practiced it only a few times, I couldn't speak nor understand French (notes of the translator: Claudio was the only Italian in a group of French people), and the streets of Taipei looked all the same to me, like a giant labyrinth.

This time I regained my sense of orientation. I could understand more about tui shou than the first time, even if I am still in a phase in which I prefer learning the basic principles than the most advanced techniques. I could also move by myself in the streets of Taipei. The only thing I haven't improved much is my French. I thought I could understand it better, but this was not the case. I promise that the next time I'll take care also of this aspect!

Claudio

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Long Life and Prosperity

Lili Ramstein, translated by Cynthia Hay

do not know if you remember me.

You saw little of me on the battlefield or on the Taiwanese tour.

Indeed, from the first day of our arrival I was grabbed by a three dimensional door right at the entrance to our hotel, and my brief appearances were due to the release of my iailers.

I remember all of you and I express some reservations about certain people.

Someone with the first name of Simonette indeed tried anaesthetising with whiskey of the Taroko group.

A Sabine, a Michel and a Manuel tried to dissolve us and our resistances in sulphur baths.

And that's not all.

Fatima tried quite hard to resist, but it was the wrong move. We can draw the following conclusions, there are some infiltrators among us and some ET's who are supporters... (you know who)

Some beautiful images remain...see your photos and the memory beneath my feet of mad trembling (will the whole island of Taiwan be a spatial vessel ready to take off?)

I will provide you with some images of the other dimension soon.

Awaiting "long life and prosperity"

Lili





Encounters in Taiwan

Michel Amar, translated by Cynthia Hay

hat I will retain from this visit is the kindness with which our Taiwanese friends practice push hands.

At no time did I feel myself to be insecure despite my attacks which were quite often muddled that is to say inappropriate. Supporting me when I risked finding myself on the ground, they had me reproduce the movement until I achieved a favourable result or at least less unfavourable. The gentleness of their practice will for me remain the key point of these meetings and an example to follow.

Michel

Taiwan 2017

Anna Trap, translated by Cynthia Hay

y first objective in coming to Taiwan was finally to understand and to learn push hands. But my dream rapidly dissipated.

The morning exercises of relaxation in the park making it possible to warm up after several hours of sleep were much needed after several hours of sleep, apart from the fourth a bit rude (wink to Simonette). After these movements I felt ready to confront the art of push hands. But before these geniuses of suppleness and power I remained open mouthed. I did not dare to go towards them, and I admired all those courageous ones in our group who threw themselves in their arms quite Song.

Nonetheless I tried to do this because the Taiwanese came towards me, which did not leave me any choice.

With Rex, this was because we did repetitive exercises, but with the Chief, this lasted two minutes, and I understood that he would prefer to practice with someone more experienced. With a smile, I thanked him, and ran away. And yes, just while I was holding the thumb of Luis, as some others among us, I found myself off balance without being able to do anything about it.

On the other hand, I appreciated being manipulated in all directions by two of the assistants. A positive point, I realised that I have none the less a bit of flexibility in the joints.

Fortunately our dear organisers perceived the distress of some of us and proposed some directed exercises, and that I liked a lot. With my three colleagues, we have scrupulously repeated all that Sabine and Manuel showed us; thus a bit of progress none the less. Michel also came to our aid in proposing to go over the Duans. Thank you. At the end of the morning, a short break for coffee and mochi was very pleasant.

There are many moments which will remain in my memory:



discovering the place where Wang Laoshi taught and to go to Yen-nien Daoguan; to meet George Lin and his army of students and to practice with them.

I was delighted to see Serge Dreyer again and to visit the old quarter of Lugang with him.

I adored strolling in Taipei and I agree with Claudio about the labyrinth, but with the kindness and helpfulness of the Taiwanese, one always found one's way.

The spice quarter, the Chinese opera, the visit to the tea plantations, the bamboo forest, the temples and all the rest provide memories full of colours and scents.

As well, our kidnapping by Li Shixiong to take us to his preferred restaurant where we ate delicious specialities accompanied by sorghum alcohol under his benevolent eye.

There was also Sabine's excellent restaurant at the end of the world where we discovered that Marc spoke Chinese. I could write and write about this beautiful trip, and despite my pains, I am ready to return as soon as tomorrow.

I enjoyed our whole group and I will be delighted to see you again at the Jasnieres meeting of the Amicale or elsewhere.

Anna

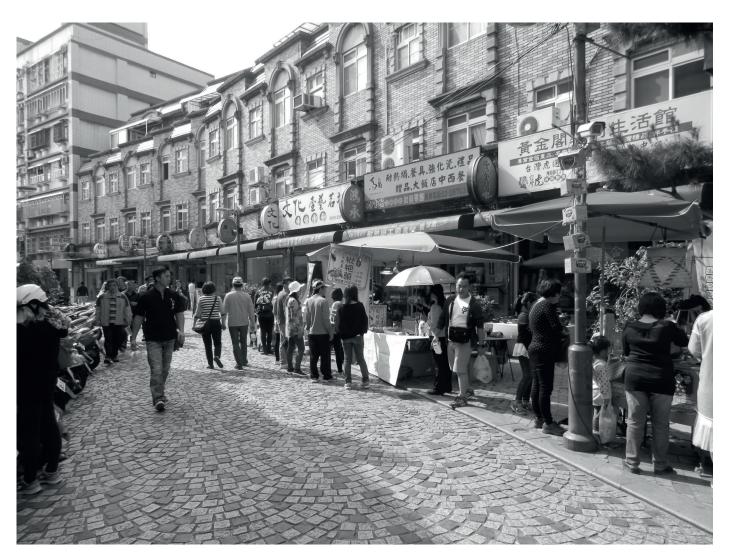
Versailles-Taipei: three round trips

Agnès Le Roux, translated by Cynthia Hay

his is the third time that I have had the opportunity to be able to follow Sabine to Taipei to the meeting of the group of Zhang Xian Qi, who practices the form of Chen Man Ching and a push hands enriched by the white crane. These trips were organised by Sabine, with Michel and Manuel, and I thank them sincerely for having taken me to these places and these people. This has been a rich experience, renewed on each occasion.

Here I try to share the common or different impressions which I have retained from these successive visits in 2014, 2015 and 2017.

The key person for me continues to be Zheng Xian Qi Laoshi who I only saw in 2014. I will always remember the day when he made me practice an exercise of rootedness; despite his 93 years, there emanated from him an incredible force and density. I am thinking that this smile, this force and this presence should be characteristic of the major experts in tai chi. I thought then of Master Wang who I did







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In 2014 Huamg Jeng Bin Shixiong. In the background Sheng Xian Qi Laoshi can be seen, who watches the group attentively from his bench.

not know, but of whom these qualities were reported to me. A figure who for me is the link between these three visits is Chen Mingho 'Shixiong" (Shixiong means 'assistant" or "older brother in practice"). It is always he who welcomes us at the beginning of the day for the warm up and explains to us the "Song Shen qi fa" (the seven exercises to relax the body). Ready at 7:30 every morning, impeccable black trousers and white shirt, he is there as though on a mission from the old master. His modesty, his kindness and his patience struck me. He sincerely wishes to make us understand the importance of daily training. He shows us over and over again what a push without force is. "This is Tai Chi" are the rare words of English which he uses.

In 2014 there were many *Shixiong* who came to the Peace Park. Each has his own approach to push hands and his own images.

- Huang Jeng Bin (called Abin) and several other Shixiong evoke the image of the "Fu", the thin layer or the mask on the face which the push should not broach. To do this, during swallowing, it is necessary to follow without adding any resistance. To explain to us the notion of opening and closing (kai-he), Huang Jeng Bin also uses the image of the Toyota acronym (the triple ellipse) which can represent the multidimensional and simultaneous expansion of the body.
- A young student whose first name is also Huang draws upon the image of a burn on the arm, which cannot take the additional pain of a push. With this image he encourages us to follow the push of a partner in such a way that the pressure is not modified. Full of smiles, he tells us that he teaches children with recourse to recreational exercises and speaking pictures.

- Le très sympathique Rex utilise (sans mauvais jeu de mot avec la marque de produit vaisselle) l'image du savon qu'on doit faire glisser sur le corps pour se laver par des mouvements fluides et circulaires des bras et des mains. Pour m'aider à relâcher les coudes et placer les bras détendus plus près du buste, il me propose aussi d'imaginer que je suis un dinosaure, ce que je fais sans sourciller.
- The very likeable Rex uses (without a bad play on words with the brand of detergent) the image of a soap which one should have sliding over the body with fluid and circular movements of the arms and the hands. To help me relax my elbows and to place my slack arms closer to the bust, he suggested as well imagining that I am a dinosaur, which I did without batting an eyelid.
- In the sphere of textiles this time, the image of wringing out clothing which illustrates the twisting of the forearm, generated by the opposing movements of the wrist and the elbow, is the preferred image of Shen Shixiong. He explains to us that when this twisting is well under control

In 2017, Shen Shixiong explaining wringing out to me.





at the level of the wrist and the elbow, it then naturally extends to all the joints. My level was not such that I could understand the subtleties of all his explanations, but the expertise and mastery of Shen Shixiong impress me greatly each year.

• I also have in mind the "Yiqi!" (Together!) relentlessly proclaimed by this very likeable woman who I see each visit ,whose first name is difficult to pronounce (close to Heje phonetically) and who does not speak English. By gestures and by this word Yiqi: she explains to me that the pelvis and the bust should turn together. My difficulty in reproducing her movement does not annoy her.

It is a phenomenal opportunity to work with all these Shixiong, who are at a very advanced level, and ready to teach us with patience. In 2014 I set off with the desire to progress technically, and not to lose a morsel of the push hands sessions. This is also, it seems to me, the state of mind of my travelling companions: the emulation and understanding are there. This firm objective led me to wish absolutely to relax the "Kwas" (the hips), to try to push without any force, to absorb without resistance, while struggling to imitate as well as possible all these experienced practitioners. The result was not conclusive but the aches and the fatigue are there. The stairs of the Taipei metro became a test. The atmosphere, the discovery of Taipei and of the Taiwanese, were ample compensation for these sufferings, and I experienced a great freedom and an enormous sense of well being there.

In 2015, the old master, too weak, did not come to the park to supervise the group, there were fewer *Shixiong*. But I rediscover this same investigation of pushing without

force and of the unified body. "Bu yao song li, yong yi" (One must not use force, but intention) the Shixuong repeated to us. During a discussion on this subject, I noted this phrase which Sabine translated "Do not even dream of using force" which further excludes the effort or the wish to do well. This year I once again did my best to benefit from this advice. I am struck with the development of some Taiwanese beginners in 2014, who had become excellent practitioners in a single year of daily push hands and repetition of seven basic exercises... It makes you think.

In 2017 I left less in form, with a larger group more interested for the most part in the tourist component of the trip. Nonetheless I always hope to penetrate some mystery of push hands in contact with the *Shixiong* or Taiwanese students. I still and always note their peacefulness and their smiles.

The second week, we did little practice of push hands. One morning Georges Lin and his students invited us to join them at their place of practice on the edge of a river, as in previous years. After a shared practice, they offered us an excellent breakfast in a very convivial atmosphere. I experienced then our link to Master Wang.

Then we left for the discovery of the island. I felt torn between push hands and tourism. I felt that I would lose precious opportunities to work with the *Shixiong* in the morning. But I was quickly captured by the beauty of the island. I was quite delighted by the trip, in particular the towering landscapes of the Tarok gorges or the mountains in the centre, the village where we had a stopover near a bamboo forest, and the day at Lukang where Serge Dreyer introduced us to the traditional habitats and enlightened us about popular Taiwanese worship. I also retain a funny



The smile of Tom, a Taiwanese student, here with Fatima



what happened to Sun Moon Lake??



mountain landscape. In the background a buddha meditates...

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memory of this excursion whose ultimate objective was to discover the impressive panorama of Sun Moon Lake which ended under a driving rain and in a fog thick enough to cut with a knife. I see there the sign that impatience is not of this country. One does not find what one expects, one finds what one does not expect.

In the course of the 2017 visit, I let go a bit and I become aware that my progress in push hands could only begin when my mind was calm. In retrospect I note my body is rarely relaxed, nor my breathing peaceful, even before beginning the exchange of push hands. What good is it to

focus on relaxing the "kwas" or the structure of the body, to try desperately to be anchored in oneself and to make unwanted circular movements if the breath is not in the "dan tien" and if the heart is not calm. It is mainly to this idea that henceforth I will be drawn by the Taiwan landscapes and the smiling, generous, and peaceful character of its inhabitants.

Agnès

PS. I invite you to reread in Bulletin 77 the articles by Sonia, Corinne, Christophe, and Shen Shixiong (translated by Sabine), after the 2014 trip.



























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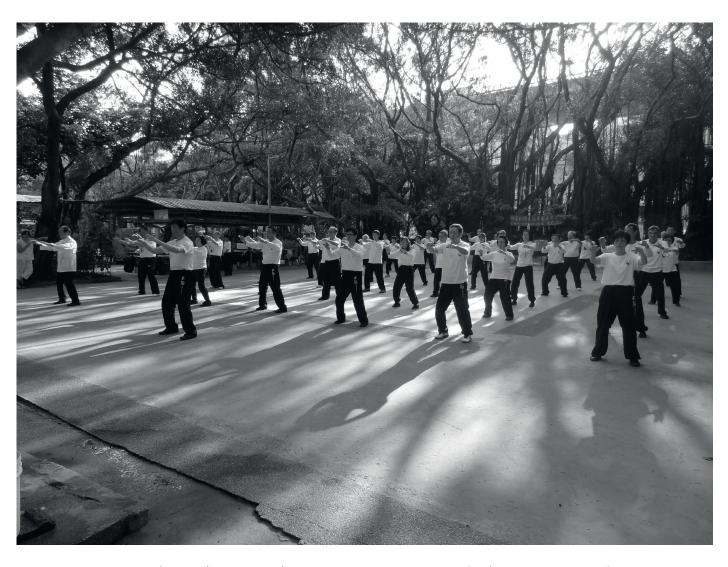












YEN-NIEN CUP YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN INTERNATIONAL FORUM

Saturday December 2, 2017

Practice and Sightseeing Trip
from Tuesday November 28 to Sunday December 3, 2017

The Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Association of Taipei is organizing a 6 days event to celebrate the Yen-Nien Cup that will take place on December 2, 2017. The program will be as follows:

- 3 days in Taipei: from 6.30 to 9.30 am at the Dadaocheng wharf, practice at George Lin's place; sighseeing in the afternoon.
- 3 days in Lugang, hometown of President Wang Rongshan :
- December 1 and 3 : Visit of the city of Lugang and excursions nearby
- December 2 : Yen-Nien Cup Festival The Yen-Nien Cup day will consist of workshops/

conferences open to all members of the Amicale and the College.

The cost of the trip amounts roughly to 1300 € maximum.

For all additional information, please refer regularly to the website of the Amicale. You can also contact Simonette Verbrugge and Claudy Jeanmougin who are in charge for organizing the stay and the travel.

Simonette VerbruggeClaudy Jeanmouginjeanmougin.claudy@orange.fr

(translated by Simonette Verbrugge)

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TENSEGRITY

By Lionel DESCAMPS with contributions from Alix HELME-GUIZON and François BESSON Les Compagnons du Taiji Quan, translated by Erica Martin

mongst the principles relating to the way in which the body is constructed, I use the word "tensegrity". It remains a little known concept and it seems to me useful to explain what lies behind this word.

I am not trying here to present a scientific definition, but rather to provide an intuitive, or physical, feel with the aim of being useful for learning TJQ.

This concept was initially used in architecture and art. Subsequently it has been used to describe the body's structure, notably in osteopathy.

For this article I have used large excerpts from the book by Graham Scarr, "Biotensegrity, the structural basis of life", published by Handspring.

In architecture there is an alternative to just stacking blocks: tensegrity.

In traditional constructions, to achieve the required stability and to construct the building from the ground upwards the principle of 'stacking blocks on top of one another' is used and their weight is always transmitted to the ground by means of accumulated compression. It is the enormous weight of these types of construction which holds them together.

Thanks to the principle of tensegrity there is another way to build such a structure. In fact, by linking struts by cables without connecting the struts directly together, one can put together a rigid structure.

In such a system, the elements under compressions (the

struts) 'float' in a continuous tensile web (the cables). An increase in tension in one of these elements is transmitted to all the others, including those furthest away. Thus, the forces which 'push' (compressive) and the others which 'pull' (tensile) ingeniously balance each other at all times, making the totality of such a structure extremely dynamic, flexible, insensitive to the direction of gravity and resistant.

Tensegrity structures are not rendered stable by the strength of each of their constituent parts but by the distribution and balance of the mechanical forces across the whole of the structure.

Tensegrity structures are light weight, resistant and can change shape with minimum effort. As each element influences all the others, any potentially damaging force is automatically distributed throughout the whole system such that it reacts to external forces from all possible directions without collapsing.

The human body: a tensegrity structure

Whilst skyscrapers and bridges are relatively rigid and must be especially reinforced due to the effects of forces generated by stacking block, living organisms are light and flexible and can function equally well in virtually any position which indicates that they use an entirely different mechanical system. It is precisely at this point that tensegrity steps into the living world.

Classical biomechanics is based on the concept of







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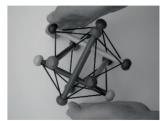












stacking, of beams and cantilevers (like the skyscrapers and bridges), in which the bones are considered as being stacked one upon one another as bricks might be stacked; the muscles and connective tissues control them as would the rigging of a sailing boat. The spine and its curves carry the weight and the soft tissues provide for mobility in a piecemeal way, layer by layer. Within this model, movement is analysed by means of a system of hinges and levers where the bones compress each other and where each joint is considered independently from the others and in isolation from the connective tissues which surround and connect them.

For example, traditionally the spine is represented by a stack of solid blocks and spongy discs which transfer the compressive load downwards section by section to the pelvis. But this explains neither the complexity of its structure nor of its mobility.

Tensegrity provides an alternative and more powerful model. One of the characteristics of the tensegrity model is that the compression is discontinuous, that is to say that it is not transferred directly between the struts as in architecture or the bones as in biomechanics. And, in fact, then examination of a knee or any another joint shows that there is little, if any, compression between the bones of that joint but that to the contrary, the bones seem to 'float' within the soft tissues.

Returning to the architectural constructions from the beginning. By replacing the struts with bones and the cables with fascia (particularly tendons and ligaments) and muscles, we obtain a more realistic structure in terms of function for the whole body as well as for each part.

Biotensegrity explains how the bones on opposite sides of a joint can remain stable and move with minimum effort, and how the soft tissues are able to guide them. It describes how each tissue can be integrated within a complex tensile network in space, and form an 'auto-adjustable complex' which joins together the many joints and the whole body in a functional unit.

Tensegrity is a new concept which deserves to be expanded upon in sports and notably in Taijiquan. The scientific models which underpin it still need to be improved.

But even with the current level of scientific knowledge we can already experience it in our bodies.

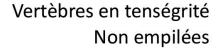
Taijiquan: the contribution of tensegrity.

The following is an exercice I use to help myself perceive tensegrity:

- In the standing position, feet parallel, on the same line, pelvis width apart and weight shared between the two legs.
- Without moving the feet I try to approach the heels.
- If I am attentive to my body I can feel a tension which starts in the heels, goes up into the knees, generates a spiral in the legs, then at the buttock



Vertèbres Simplement empilées





level, then in the back, the shoulder girdle, to then go into the head (which erects itself) and the arms (which feel as though they are rising). One must be attentive and gentle with one's body, this tension which goes up must be light, otherwise pains will appear, particularly in the knees.

- Then, one must let all the superficial muscles relax whilst keeping the spine erect without effort. You will especially feel the pelvis and shoulders relax.
- If you relax too much you will lose the togetherness, if you do not relax enough, some of the muscles used for movement will still be call for and you will lose in freedom of movement.
- If you manage this balancing act between too much and too little, you will feel your body solid and together and above all you pelvis will be as if suspended and very mobile, and it will be the same for your shoulder girdle and head.

One can carry out a variant of this exercise by trying to push the heels apart; the sensation is a bit different but very interesting to try, particularly when combining them with the respiration.

Once one has become familiar with these exercises one can achieve the same effect by tightening the back or front of the ischium, or even more subtly, the pelvic floor.

Of course ones perceptions do not carry the weight of proof and one must listen to them with care and prudence. But currently tensegrity is allowing me not only to perceive new sensations, but above all to experiment its relevance in the form and whilst working in pairs particularly in tuishou and in martial applications. And so I am finding another point of view in my practice and another interpretation of the classic texts. I will give a few examples of this.

When we succeed in putting into practise a body structure in which tensegrity can flourish, we can feel our body as a whole, quite simply and without effort. This corresponds in particular to the following classic texts:

- All must be unified.
- From the slightest movement, all the parts of the body must be light, agile and linked.
- The energy is rooted in the feet, develops in the legs, is directed by the waist and appears in the fingers.
- All the parts of the body are linked together, joint by joint, without the slightest break.
- The joints, like pearls on a necklace, are threaded without interruption.
- From the feet to the legs, the legs to the waist, in one piece and unified by Qi.

And so the body is not seen as something massive, monolithic and rigid, but as something mobile and dynamic, which we will also find in the following example.

Tensegrity, due to its properties of auto-adjustment, makes it possible to change shape with minimum effort starting from a stable base position so as to respond automatically to external forces without collapsing. We find this spirit notably in the classic text:

• Balanced like the two trays of a scales.

Tensegrity allows the body, when necessary, to store energy in all its structure by deforming itself, such as to be able to liberate it again on returning to its equilibrium position:

- Gathering energy is like drawing a bow. Liberating it is like firing the arrow.
- The power shows itself in the astonishing force of a spiral spring (Yang Ban-Hou, Eight secret words of the technique).

Tensegrity allows one to feel light, with 'air' in the joints, we find this in:

- Free and light, the head is suspended.
- Stretching the back means that Qi sticks to the back.
 If you manage to contain the chest, your back will extend automatically (Yang Chen-Fu).

Tensegrity provides a different point of view on the way our body is laid out and how it works. Movement seems to originate from the core of the limbs, as close as possible to the bones and joints. They are the core of our body as we might speak of the core of a beam or of an electric wire.

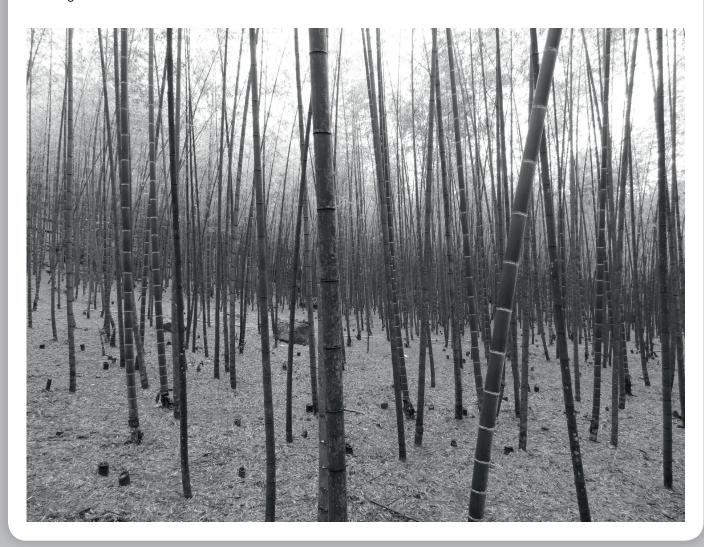
I think this is due to the relaxation of the movement muscles (which are essentially to move us around) and to keeping the structural muscles (mostly dedicated to maintaining and controlling posture) tonic:

- Allow the internal energy to sink in and stick to the body. The internal energy will condense in the bone marrow (Wu Yu Hsiang).
- Try to feel and locate the bony structure ignoring the existence of the surrounding muscles (Waysun Liao).
- Imagine that the breath condenses inside the bone

- marrow (Waysun Liao).
- If one wants the body to be free from problems, one must first highlight Qi. If one wants to highlight Qi, one must first concentrate the spirit without dispersing it. If one does not want the spirit to be dispersed, one must make it penetrate into the bones (Li Yishe).

I am only just starting to integrate tensegrity into my practice. In fact, a certain number of tensions I have accumulated over the years prevent me from using my body to its maximum potential and they limit the expression of tensegrity in my postures and movements. I have noticed, for example, that I use certain muscles normally dedicated to movement to maintain my structure; this does not allow the structural muscles play their roles to the full in the structure which should be in tensegrity. And which, by the way, does not leave the movement muscles free for movement alone.

The first experiments on tensegrity with weapons also promise some interesting discoveries.





The martial applications of the 1st Duan with for themes: sharing, reflection and open-mindedness!

By Nicole Chastanier, Evelyne Oudard and Alex Del Ben. Translated by Erica Martin

rom the 23rd to 26th July 2017 at Marçon in Sarthe, at the Camping des Varennes (where the Rencontres Jasnières is held), three teachers; Michel Léclaircie from Saumur, Marc Appelmans from Trans-en-Provence and Serge Dreyer from Taichung, with their different backgrounds, presented their versions of the martial applications of the 1st Duan.

It all started with a mail from Serge, short as usual. A few lines for a course which promised to be intense.

Four days wedged in between his traditional course in Baume-les-Messieurs and the «Rencontres Jasnières».

Three teachers, three strong personalities and one question: what were they looking for?













Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui







First, and indisputably, the pleasure of being together, to meet again after each had travelled his journey, so many roads, looking elsewhere for other forms, other battles. To realise that these routes, far from separating them, strengthened their practice and their friendship.

There was rain, fine and cold which didn't bother them. Those three are absolutely unshakeable: Michel with his gentleness and his unique smile; Marc his strong, warm will and Serge our favourite bear always dressed in a way that can suit only him.

They each took the helm for a day and the other two were there, listening!

Each one was unique in their approach, their words and preferences.

They showed us their differences and these various interpretations went in the same direction: to deepen and rediscover our style of tai ji quan.

To study the different possibilities of each movement, to open oneself to new realms of understanding so as to be able to draw conclusions regarding how to practise.

To guide the participants, with great care, in the reflection and discovery of 'Why and How?' with minimal force, very simply, all in a spiral, all rounded, all fluid.

Once again, we rediscovered the form with them.













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This form of which they say loud and clear that it must continually enrich itself, question itself, so that it lives for risk of withering away.

One of the key points of this course was to accept to move so as not to fossilize!

In letting us benefit from the sharing of their knowledge, their research; they also transmitted something of their passion which has driven them for so long, with as leitmotif – open-mindedness – since, as Desproges said 'Open-mindedness is not a fracture of the skull!'.

This is only a short report on four days of work; rich, intense and joyous. A meeting of three experiences, three views and one expectation, that the experience will happen again and that its authors will tell us their points of view, of what this meeting meant for them.

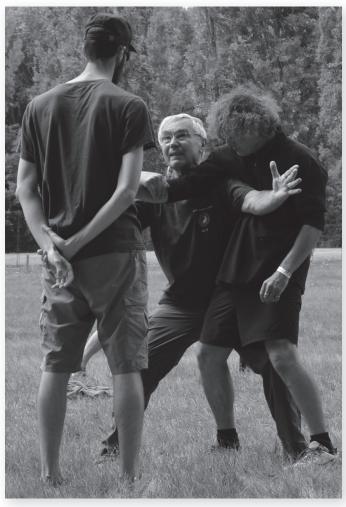
Nicole, Evelyne et Alex















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Comments by Claudy Jeanmoujin on Julia Fairchild's Answers to Various Questions

Claudy Jeanmougin, translated by Leland Tracy

hether or not one accepts Julia Fairchild as Master Wang's official successor is of no importance here. Each of us is free to make that decision for ourselves. What is important is what Julia transmits through her teaching of Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan.

In May 2011, during her investiture ceremony in Italy, Julia presented a text titled "Wang Yen-nien's Four Greatest Answers". You can read the complete copyrighted text in French or English on the Yen-Nien Daoguan website (http://www.ymti.org), although the French text is not always faithful to the English version.

For various reasons, the full version of "Wang Yen-nien's Four Greatest Answers" has never been published in this journal. This is unfortunate because I believe that this text would certainly generate many comments and questions which could be useful to a better understanding of our style. So I will open a discussion here by proposing a few comments on "Answer 1. Spiral up, spiral down."²

Before commenting on "Answer 1." I think it's important to offer an overview of the general content of this text. After providing a brief history of Master Wang's teachings, Julia mentions "two decades of "new understandings»" which she places in the 1990's and 2000's. Examining these twenty years of Laoshi's teaching has allowed her to identify what she considers to be Master Wang's most important contributions. She summarizes them into four basic answers.

"Answer 1. Spiral up, spiral down.

Answer 2. Compare empty and full, but do not compare apples and oranges.

Answer 3. Distinguish between advantageous and disadvantageous *Ji* positions.

Answer 4. Concentrate on the primary purpose of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan: better health."³

Keep in mind that these are not answers given by Master Wang, but those of Julia, who lived alongside Master Wang for almost 25 years, and who accompanied him to all workshops outside of Taiwan since 1984. Following someone's teaching for that many years becomes an important part of one's life. She was present to hear the many questions asked by Master Wang's students as well as the answers that he provided. The "Four Greatest

Answers" are a synthesis of her understanding of Master Wang Yen-nien's teaching of Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan.

In this article we will only address the first answer. "Spiral up, spiral down". According to Julia, "Questions about whether one should be springing up or down, in either the practice of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan or in the practice of Yangjia Michuan Tuishou, are now answered by a single answer: the Spiral Principle". She adds "The Spiral Principle unites Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan with Yangjia Michuan Taiji Tui shou".4

This answer is primarily a response to questions asked after the publication of Master Wang's book on the martial applications of the Yangjia Michuan form. Apparently, some students had difficulties matching the movements of the form with those movements demonstrated in the application techniques provided by Master Wang's teaching.

With all due respect to Julia, I think that she is mistaken in believing that she has made a unique discovery which would revolutionize the way we practice Taiji Quan.

There are a few passages in Julia's text which create some confusion about the idea of the spiral. What is an upward spiral or a downward spiral? What does she mean "When turning the waist in the direction of the back leg, spiral up; when turning the waist in the direction of the front leg, spiral down"?

A spiraling movement involves a helical rotation around a given point. Of course if we move upwards when turning, that creates an upward spiral. Similarly, if we move downwards while rotating the pelvis, we create a downward spiral. But is there a transition in this continuous upward or downward movement? Or is it just a continuous movement without a particular significance? Julia is completely justified in speaking about the spiral, but not exactly in the way she does in her text.

To demonstrate her spiral theory, Julia asks a number of questions which can be answered by using the Spiral Principle; "When turning the waist in the direction of the back leg, spiral up; when turning the waist in the direction of the front leg, spiral down".

Yangjia Michuan Taiji Quan Lian Hui

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Here is her first question: 'In the movement "Step Forward, Pull Up (Ban), Block (Lan) and Punch (Chui)" during the "Block" are we sinking down on the back leg, or springing up on the back leg?"

With respect to *Ban*, which is actually a *Liu* with a rotation of the pelvis and not a *Ban* as in Section One, we turn towards the forward leg and are therefor spiralling down. So far, the principle holds.

With Lan, the rotation is toward the front leg, while the weight remains mostly on the back leg, so there should be a spiral down, but instead we see a spiral up. Julia seems to ignore this movement because it contradicts her Spiral Principle.

Finally, she asks the question again for the last movement of this sequence, "...for the "Punch," are we sinking down on the back leg, or springing up on the back leg?"

During this "punch" the weight is shifted to the front foot while turning toward the front leg with a downward spiral. The princliple is respected, but then there is the front foot...

The third question is about the movement "Brush the Knee" (I prefer "Hook the Knee"), 'In the movement "Brush the Knee," are we supposed to end up "up" or "down?'⁶

In this question, the expression "end up" is problematic. If we are talking about the end of the whole movement, then "end up" must refer to the end of the push. "Hook the Knee" contains two parts; the first in which we "Hook the Knee" with the hand corresponding to the front foot, and the second which ends with a push by other hand. In both cases, the rotation is towards the front leg, so the spiral movement should be downward. Is it really?

For the first part of this movement we do spiral down, keeping the weight on the back leg. Then the weight is shifted to the front foot, and once again we spiral down with the rotation toward the front leg, but the weight is shifted to the front foot. The principle still holds, but we notice that here it is less important.

In fact, in this movement the question is irrelevant. What is important here is the application of the fundamental principle of "crossing strength", not whether the movement finishes up or down.

For example, in the first part of "Hook the Left Knee", the left-hand is active, and so the weight is on the left foot. For the second part of the movement, the right hand is active and thus the weight must be on the left foot. This principle of 'crossing strength' is fundamental and must be applied before spiralling up or down.

In the fourth question, there appears to be some confusion: 'In the movement, "Right, Grasp the Sparrow's Tail," there are four turns of the waist, are we supposed to be springing up and sinking down at each turn, or staying level?'

If we are talking about the principle of spiralling up or

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spiralling down, then why even ask about the waist staying level?

First of all, does the waste really turn four times? Personally, I can only see three turns. Let's take the example of "Right, Grasp the Sparrow's Tail" and leave aside for the moment whether the spiral is up or down. From the position Peng, with the right foot forward, we turn right transforming Peng into $L\ddot{u}$, then we turn left, transforming $L\ddot{u}$ into Cai, and finally we turn the waste right again for the Ji. I don't see any other turns in this movement!

Now let's consider the movements of springing up and sinking down. In the first turn to the right, toward the front leg, there is a downward movement. We spiral down in accordance with Julia's Spiral Principle. What happens when we turn left towards the back leg? According to Julia's Spiral Principle we should spiral up. Is that possible? I don't think so because this change of direction would cause a break in the continuity of the movement. So what can we do? Simply continue to spiral down, in which case the downward movement is toward the back leg which would be contrary to the Spiral Principle proposed by Julia.

This observation brings me to the following "Constant Principle".

"A change in the direction in which the hips turn can only occur while preserving the continuity of an upward or downward movement"

For that third turn to the right (back to center), we simply continue the upward spiral which began while the hips were turning left, thus respecting the "Constant principle" stated above.

As we can see, the Spiral Principle proposed by Julia doesn't always hold true. She admits this herself, as we will later see. We agree with her about the importance of the spiral, but the principle needs to be formulated differently. In articles previously published in this journal, I have pointed out that the spirals which ultimately extend to the extremities of the upper members of our body result from the structure of our joints. The human body is not capable of a straight flexion or extension. These movements are always accompanied by some rotation. When the hips turn, the movement is made possible by a series of articulations extending all the way to the foot. These articulations are like ball joints which allow for some rotation in all directions. This rotation, combined with an extension (or flexion), creates a spiral movement. The same thing happens in the upper part of the body, through a series of articulations beginning from the pelvis, passing through the spine, the shoulder, the arm, before finally reaching the hand. All of these articulations generate spirals inherent in the body's structure. So it isn't a question of learning the spiral movement, but rather of allowing it to express itself through an awareness of our body mechanics, and just letting it happen.

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Spirals and transitions

As I mentioned above, these spirals are the source of all transitions. To be precise, the spiral creates a brief opening, the most important moment in the practice of all forms of Taiji Quan, which make a transition possible.

Let's go back to the rotation of the hips which generates a spiral traveling like a wave through the upper members of the body. In "Grasp the Swallows Tail", the hips turn three times: left-right-left or right-left-right. These changes in direction must be made without any break in the continuity of the movement. In other words we have to go from turning right, to turning left, without stopping to change direction. Doing this will involve a 3 dimensional figure 8, a lemniscate surrounded by a circle. And the only way it is possible is by shifting weight, either from one foot to the other, or from one part of the foot to another part of the same foot.

Shifting weight while turning the hips with a clockwise rotation on the back foot and a counter clockwise rotation on the front foot.

It is possible to turn in one direction, and then turn in another by shifting the weight on each foot. But how do we change the direction of this rotation without a break in continuity? In other words how do we change the direction of the arrow without stopping the movement?

During workshops I often ask participants this question, leaving them time to test the different variations of this exercise. You can try to find the answer before you continue reading; it's a good exercise in preparation for Tui shou.

How to change the direction of rotation without breaking the continuity of the movement?

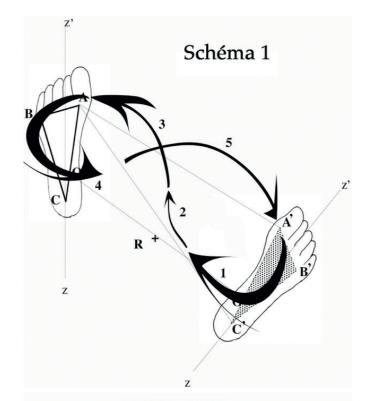
This is only possible if the transition takes place on one of the feet. Let's have a look at figure 2 which shows this trajectory on a lemniscate surrounded by circle.

To change direction we follow the trajectory of the lemniscate. Having begun a counter clockwise rotation we bifurcate to follow the curve of the lemniscate to the opposite side of the circle where we find ourselves with a counterclockwise rotation.

By projecting the image in figure 2 onto the bottom of a foot, we can see a number of transitions which are possible by shifting the weight to different parts of the foot.

It is possible to shift the weight from the ball to the heel of the foot by following the lemniscate in a figure 8. The change in direction involves both the figure 8 and the circle. We note that the movement of the hips always generates a spiral during a transition. And we can say that the spiral is inherent to the structure of our articulations. We must not force it, but simply wait for it to appear, be attentive to it, so as not to influence or disturb it.

Without the spiral generated by the hips, no transition is possible.









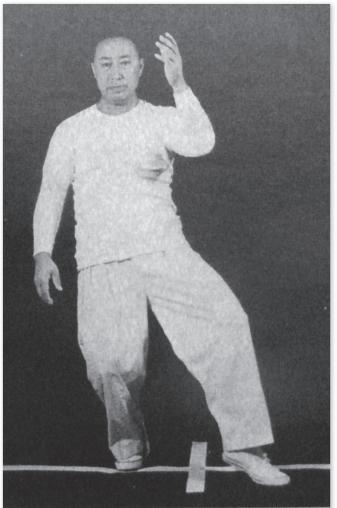
The upward and downward movement describe by the "Constant principle" which I presented above do not appear in figures 1-3. Let me point out that it is possible to teach, "Grasp the Swallow's Tail" by allowing the movement of the hips to naturally produce the spiral. This is a great listening exercise which leads to a deeper understanding of Taiji Quan.

Later in her text Julia ads: "However, with this new answer, some photos of Master Wang taken for his book in the late 1960's are now not in accordance with this principle." Referring here to her "Spiral Principle", she continues, "Some specific examples from Section 1 include, Photos 18, 28, 83, 86, 105, 120, 121, 133, and 134."

I propose taking a closer look at these photos because I believe that there is a certain disregard on Julia's part as she suggests a fundamental transformation of Laoshi's teaching over the last 20 years. Let's take a look at Master Wang's Volume 1.

• Photo 18: "Tui shou, left"

We can see Laoshi spiral down as he turns towards his rear leg, which is contrary to Julia's Spiral Principle, but respects the "Constant Principle" which I proposed above. Indeed, Laoshi turns right towards his back leg and then continues to spiral down as he turns left. The direction of rotation changes during the downward movement.



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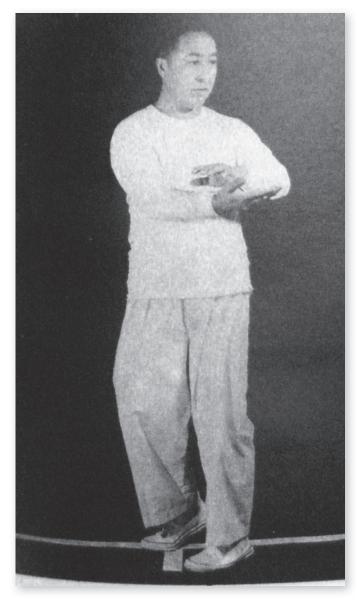


Photo 28: "Jab"

It's quite interesting that Julia mentions this photo because it has been a source of much debate. In this picture we can see Laoshi in the up position, turning toward the front leg, which is contrary to Julia's Spiral Principle. But is he really spiralling up? This picture only shows his final position, but what happened just before this? Photo 26 and photo 27 show Laoshi turning towards his back leg shifting his weight to the back foot as he yields. Immediately afterwards, although no photo actually shows this, Laoshi continues to spiral down on his back leg to turn in the other direction, to his left. The constant principle I suggested above is respected. So why does photo 28 show Laoshi in the up position? At the end of his movement Laoshi creates some tension in preparation for the following movement. This is one option which is certainly possible, but not necessary.

Actually the question we really should be asking is whether it is possible:

"to turn toward the back leg while spiralling down and turn toward the front leg while spiralling up".

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If the answer were yes, that would completely refute Julia's Spiral Principle. Of course it is possible, and this is quite fortunate, otherwise neither Taiji Quan nor Tui shou would exist. And it is possible because of the way the weight is shifted either from one foot to the other or from one part of the foot to another part of the same foot. With this in mind, it becomes pointless to speak of advantageous or disadvantageous sides. The advantage comes from the ability to take the initiative through a transition. The disadvantage comes from an inability create such a transition.

If you consider the photos in question you will see that Julia's Spiral Principle is not always valid and is not representative of our style of Taiji Quan. On the other hand, you might try to refute the Constant Principle which I have proposed, but it perfectly conforms to Laoshi's teachings. Which is why we should respect that which we find in the book, before changing our way of practicing Taiji Quan.

Finally

Julia's conclusion to "Answer 1." is that "The Spiral Principle unites Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan with Yangjia Michuan Taiji Tui shou."

As an inherent part of our body structure, the spiral is undeniably important. That which unites the practice of Taiji Quan and Tui shou however, are the principles presented in the Taiji Quan classical texts. And practising Tui shou is the only be sure whether we have understood these principles or not.

We agree with Julia that the spiral is central to our practice of Taiji Quan. And drawing attention to this question is indeed important.





















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Summer 2017

Marie-Christine Moutault translated by Leland Tracy

A blue grey curtain spreads clement light

The sky is soft this morning Rain falls on our Earth

> Fine Setting itself down Lightly

The Earth
Amazed
Allows this delight to open its pores one by one

From stone It returns to Earth

Thus the hand of beings bound to fondle life
The universe is recognized
Infinitude recreated

Having forgotten themselves Bodies dance space

Well!
From whom this being?
From whom the universe?

Unique
Is the symphony of movement





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Tibetan singing bowls and Jean-Claude Baïsse

Claudy Jeanmougin translated by Simonette Verbrugge

uring my strolls on the Nepalese trails and the plateaus of Ladakh I had the opportunity of hearing the multiple sounds of big gongs, bells, cymbals and other instruments made of different metals but I do not remember Tibetan singing bowls.

I also had the experience of a singing basin that a couple of my Chinese students had. It is a basin having the size of a common sink basin but with the shape of a singing bowl, a bit like our old breakfast bowls with slightly curved edges inwards. It was a matter of filling the «basin» with a little water, wetting the fingers and sliding the fingers, or even the entire hand moistened, on the edge. The result was a deep sound with, and above all, a reaction of the crackling water contained in the basin. It is not easy to realize but the technique ends up coming fairly quickly.

It is only when my students of the French School of Taiji quan gave me a bowl of my choice that I became interested in these beautiful and wonderful instruments. And it is from the adventure of Jean Claude Baïsse, supplier of Tibetan products, including these famous bowls in particular, that I learned more about their history at the same time as his own, since for me the two are associated. It was by phone that I ordered my first bowl because Jean Claude Baïsse was going on a trip to Nepal two days later for a few months and I was longing to get «my» bowl. He offered me to listen on my computer to the sound of the bowl he proposed, a bowl of seven metals, unfortunately the sound on my Mac did not work...

I met Jean Claude a few days ago, which allowed us to exchange about our stays in Nepal and other places like Zanskar, at the foot of the Ladakh plateaus. I offered him to write a small article about the bowls and himself, which he kindly accepted.

Small history of the Tibetain singing bowls

Sources are rare or nonexistent about the origin of these bowls. It does not matter; we will content ourselves with the sources of Jean Claude Baïsse who is a true specialist in the matter. We will therefore take parts of the content of his website with his authorization.

It is said that it is a traditional instrument of the Buddhist schools, insisting that their conception goes back to the Bronze Age, implying that it participated in shamanic practices, but nothing more is visible as to its true origin. So let us trust the specialist, here is what Jean Claude Baïsse writes:

«More than 5000 years ago, on the plateaus of Mongolia, the nomads hammered copper bowls to cook. A few

thousand years later, by working alloys of different metals, brass supplanted copper for the same culinary use. The nomadic blacksmiths subsequently worked much more sophisticated alloys and the shamans became interested in the vibrations caused by the percussion of these bowls. From generation to generation, alloys were refined and hammering techniques also.

Little by little the shamans began to pass on their knowledge to the priests of the Bôn religion which was that of the Himalayas before Buddhism. Quite naturally, a few centuries later, when Tantric Buddhism supplanted the Bôn religion, the tradition of the bowls passed on to the Tibetan Buddhists.

But the greatest advances in the alloys of the singing bowls were made thanks to the encounter between Nepalese blacksmiths and those who came from Tibet.

The Tibetans were above all miners who brought the various metals that make up this alloy so subtle and vibratory. Tibetans had gold and Nepalese the skills.

So it was that later, one reached the equilibrium of the seven metals which corresponded to the 7 known planets: silver for the Moon, copper for Venus, tin for Jupiter, iron for Mars, mercury for the planet of the same name, gold for the Sun and lead for Saturn.

Gradually, the singing bowl became increasingly important in the Himalayan culture and also became a currency of exchange. (The same was true for the ceremonial shells made from shells exchanged with low-lying populations in India and in Nepal against the salt that the Tibetans were bringing down from the plateau).

Later still, the Tibetan singing bowls became meditation supports for the Buddhist practice. For this reason, this culture has spread in the West where the singing bowls allow, besides meditation, massage therapy with sound, help in the practice of yoga, Reiki, shiatsu, but also in music and other alternative experiences. »

(ref. www.artisans-du-nepal.com/histoire-des-bols-chantants.html)

Use of singing bowls

Why talk about these singing bowls if they did not have a particular interest in our practices within the framework of those of Taiji quan and Neigong in particular?

The Tibetan singing bowls have several virtues: energy rebalancing of the different chakras, or energy harmonization at the level of all the energy centers, whatever the approach: Chinese energy, Tibetan,

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Ayurvedic, to name only the most known. Indeed, the notes of the various singing bowls correspond to each of the chakras. As a result, the use of the bowls can be therapeutic or prophylactic.

For us, the most important in the use of these bowls is the rhytmic in the practice of Neigong, even meditation in general. For our school that privileges the practice of Neigong, an energy practice of Taoist meditation, the singing bowl will enable us to chant the different stages of meditation and especially a return to awakening, the recovery of consciousness of the environment that brings us back to our current life, very different from the experiences lived in meditation.

As far as I am concerned, since I am a musician, I look for the singing bowl that will be most suited to my body resonance. Sound is a vibration and any vibration is subject to a rhythm as is our body. What sound rhythm suits us the best in the moment? It is up to us to find it according to our energy profile.

As part as a solo meditation, the sound of a singing bowl is the one that will best match our intrinsic vibration. It is not the same according to the individuals. This is why the sound in a collective practice is more a signal than a resonance.

Making of the singing bowls

Those proposed by Jean Claude Baïsse are all made in a Nepalese factory.

They are first cast then hammered. It seems that it is the hammering that gives them their sound quality. As for their making, this remains a secret especially with regard to the casting. However, it is certain that an alchemy takes place, without displeasing the inveterate Cartesians who only swear by what they see, if only...

Jean Claude Baïsse

Musician above all, photographer and globe-trotter. Musician (guitarist) and singer from 1980 to 2016, Jean Claude Baïsse went for the first time to Nepal in 1993 just to explore the Annapurnas by himself. But, when you fall in love with Nepal it is for eternity. He therefore travels to Nepal twice a year for 2 to 3 months to re-energize and maintain a close contact with this country, especially as he cooperates closely with the Nepalese artisans who make the Tibetan singing bowls.

For the choice of the bowls, it is the musician's ear that predominates. Thus, it is possible to have bowls with sounds of the entire chromatic range. Of course I do not hide from you that I felt completely at ease with Jean Claude Baïsse, and we have still so many things to tell each other that it would be a pleasure to meet him again.

And we won't stop here!

If you are lucky enough to have a place at the Rencontres de l'Amicale Ré 17, you will have the opportunity to meet Jean Claude Baïsse who will give us a small conference on the singing bowls.

And if you would like to acquire one of his bowls, you can already make contact now (see reference below). And if you do not come to the Rencontres Ré 17, nothing prevents you from contacting Jean Claude Baïsse and to choose one of his bowls for your meditative practice.

Contacts de Jean-Claude Baïsse :

- Website: www.artisans-du-nepal.com/utilisation-desbols-chantants.html
- Mail: jean-claude.baisse@wanadoo.fr
- Tel.: + 33 6 80 11 40 25











Jasnières 2017 : thirty years...



From left to right:

They were already here in 1988, from left to right:
Marie-Lyne Savadego,
Cathy Drouet, Jean-Luc
Pérot, Epi Van de Pol,
Marc Appelmans, François
Schosseler, Claudy
Jeanmougin, Serge Dreyer,
Linda Lehraupt, JeanClaude Trap. Daan Hengst
(with didgeridoo) came
much later!













Come and see the 360° photographs by Fabrice Monchâtre and have a walk in Jasnières as if you were there: https://roundme.com/tour/183209/view/474360/

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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

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, <u>Le Rédac'Che</u>f et le CA de l'Amicale du Yangjia Michuan.

Un article de Serge Dreyer dans la revue STAPS

eptembre 2017: parution d'un article de Serge Dreyer sur les aspects spirituels de la pratique du taiji quan. Y sont développés notamment comment des concepts tels que le yin et le yang, le wuwei, le lâcher prise, le rapport entre unicité et multiplicité sont actualisés dans notre pratique du taiji quan, en particulier à travers le tuishou. Résumé simplement, chacun se construit sa spiritualité à travers la pratique, loin des discours alambiqués des discours de type New Age.

Revue STAPS, no. 117, numéro spécial 2017/3 bilingue français-anglais, Les pratiques de la conscience.

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 : André Musso, notre Rédacteur en chef - andremu@wandadoo.fr 3, chemin des Muletiers 49730 Turquant.

Pour vos articles et vos courriers, le mieux est de les rédiger sous Word et de les adresser en pièces jointes à André Musso. 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 : 10cm de large au moins (rappelons qu'une colonne du Bulletin fait 9 cm).

Les articles doivent parvenir à André fin novembre pour celui de janvier, fin mars pour celui de mai et fin juillet pour le numéro de septembre, André Musso, récupère au dernier moment pour le Bulletin, avant envoi à l'imprimeur, les stages et évènements en ligne sur le Site de l'Amicale.

Sollicitations...

Il est possible que vous soyez contactés par André 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.

易 楊家秘傳太極拳聯會



Amicale du Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan





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 trouvez les informations utiles qui vous intéressent. N'hésitez pas à nous faire part de vos remarques et suggestions.

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 ou 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. Nous vous rappelons que le contenu de votre site est de 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 aient été envoyés par envoi postal aux membres abonnés. Il est à noter que, dorénavant, les bulletins paraissent quasi simultanément en français et en anglais.

Les autres chapitres du site-web :

Ne pas oublier les chapitres mis à jour très régulièrement : les stages, les évènements.

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 partenaires américains, anglais et chinois puissent avoir facilement accès aux informations.

Pour voir vos informations concernant les stages figurer sur le site-web : Adresser un e-mail avec éventuellement un fichier attaché au format « .RTF » ou «.DOC», ou, si vous ne pouvez pas faire autrement, envoyer un document papier qui puisse être scanné à : Jean-Luc Pommier pommier_j|11@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(s) et lieu du stage
- Animatrice/Animateur avec numéro de téléphone
- Association organisatrice
- Le contact pour le stage : nom, téléphone, email, etc.
- Référence du site de l'association
- Éventuellement une information complémentaire sous format pdf ou word (2 pages maximum).

Procédure:

Jean-Luc met le stage en ligne et quand c'est fait envoie un mail à celui ou celle qui a fait la demande et à tout ceux qui étaient destinataires ou en copie de la demande. C'est la seule façon d'éviter les contretemps. De plus cela permet au demandeur de vérifier tout de suite

De plus cela permet au demandeur de vérifier tout de suite si tout est OK.



RENOUVELLEMENT de l'ADHESION à L'AMICALE du YangJia Michuan TJQ

 $1^{\rm er}$ Septembre 2017 au 31 Août 2018

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.

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