

Amica

YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN

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N° 95

SEPTEMBER
2020

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The dynamics of the leg
Sailing Experience
Weight on the back leg:
another perspective
The 3 modalities of
consciousness (part 2)

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If not much has happened in our classrooms this year, a lot has happened outside the classrooms and this has forced us to live sometimes new situations, to a-da-pt.

Taiji appeared on the lawns of municipal parks (what a joy!), organized itself so as not to exceed the 9+1 teacher rule, and, and, and... it even slipped on the web, found its «online audience» at the time of the «A-Pérot» and thus, slowly but surely, the Taiji fans managed to make the most of the restrictions. What do you think? Just try to deprive the practitioners of practicing! I even know some who are already in the starting-blocks for the next Meeting...

In any case, if you have not been able to go on holiday, or not where you would have liked, this Bulletin invites you to a long crossing of the Atlantic, to travel in the unsuspected depths of the leg and the foot, and even to finish the exploration of the modalities of consciousness...

If we move forward day by day, week by week, without a long-term perspective of how and when, immersed as we are and until we are sick and tired, in the decidedly very permanent impermanence of things, it turns out that the Bulletin is finally a thread that is very resistant to hazards: imperturbable, it collects your words, your experiences, your research, your enthusiasm, in short, it continues to make the link between us, against all odds.

Françoise Cordaro

A Word from the President

After an extensive discussion, the Amicale's Board of Directors decided to proceed with registration for the Meeting despite all the uncertainties of the current situation. However, by the time you read this announcement or by mid-November, it may no longer be relevant if the authorities decide to ban the gatherings. Why did the Board make this decision? Several strong arguments prevailed for the opening of registration. On the one hand, because our life and that of the Amicale must continue in spite of the difficulties we are experiencing and, on the other hand, because we wanted to give you the possibility to decide for yourselves if you wish to participate in the Meeting in spite of everything. Of course, we expect a lesser participation but the pleasure of seeing each other should be there.

Our concern is of course to allow everyone to participate in this Meeting while protecting themselves according to their needs. We have therefore added to the documents of the Meeting the measures that will be taken in this direction. You are invited to read them carefully because your registration will be considered as acceptance and respect of these measures. They should allow us to have a peaceful conviviality, whatever our degree of concern, weak or strong, for our health or that of our loved ones. I would like to thank Joël and Danièle Panhelleux for their efforts to adapt their impeccable organization to the new conditions. There will probably be other adjustments by mid-November and I invite you to regularly consult the Amicale's website to learn more about them.

About our site, it will be given a new look. Thanks to the efforts of Emeline Régent, our Vice President, we will have a rejuvenated site, with cheerful colors and, above all, more lively. The forum installed on the current site by Jean Christophe-Clavier is struggling to get started. On the new site, the forum will also be a communication tool with the members and will allow the sending of newsletters which will give us the possibility to solicit you for volunteer tasks, to get your feedback on specific questions and also to prepare the GA. The discussions during the GA should thus become less long. The default recipients of these newsletters will be the heads of associations and teachers, but all practitioners will be able to register to receive them. The Amicale will thus become more alive, more reactive and more present between the Meetings. The changeover to the new site will take place after the closing of the registration for the Meeting to avoid having to deal with teething problems in an emergency.

The average age of our groups is higher than that of the general population and our members would be more exposed and therefore more worried. Nevertheless, I remain confident that most of our members remain quite serene and that very few of them have suffered severely from this epidemic. It may be true that Taiji Quand is an art of health...

I wish us all a good start to the new school year and I look forward to seeing you again at the next Meeting.

Sincerely,
François Schosseler

BULLETIN DU YANGJIA MICHUAN TAIJI QUAN

September 2020 – N° 95

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

Publishing director: François Schosseler

Editor in chief: Françoise Cordaro

Assistant chief editor: Claudy Jeanmougin

Writers (for this issue): Claudy Jeanmougin, Serge Dreyer, Alix Helme-Guizon, Mark A. Linett.

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

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

Translations: Sylvain Maillot, Chris Nelson, Simonette Verbrugge.

Lay out and cover: Sophie Cornueil

College leaflets, graphic artist: Jean-Claude Issenmann

Postage: Claudy Jeanmougin.

Crusing the Big Blue on the *Good Bye*

Claudy Jeanmougin

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I know that many among the readers of the Bulletin de l'Amicale have had the experience of sailing on the oceans, on boats of various sizes and for variable durations, but I have never read an account of their experience in light of their practice of Taijiquan. It is those terms that I would like to share the moments I experienced while on the *Good Bye*, a small 30 foot sail boat that Gabriel, my eldest son, purchased as a means of enjoying a sabbatical year "on the water" with his girlfriend.

Quick recap of the circumstances that found me on the sail boat twice, for a total of almost four weeks, which had neither been in my calendar or in my son's plans. What had also not been planned was for Caroline, his girlfriend, to become pregnant during their trip, turning me into a grand-father to-be anxious for the health of his descendant... I therefore promised to help bring the boat to port if necessary, in order to spare the future mother too lengthy shifts. And so in early July Gabriel asked me if I was still willing to provide the promised help in order to bring the boat back to its homeport in Brittany. As promised, I agreed, and he promptly provided an available flight that left that week to join them on a Mediterranean island.. And there I was headed for Ibiza, since that was where the boat was moored while they waited for my arrival. I had a little more than three weeks to help the two sailors bring the boat back to Turballe, which would be tight. But why not and, with a bit of luck, we could have favorable winds and currents to bring back the boat to its point of departure.

What was my experience of the sea?

I had already made a few crossings on medium-sized ships in rough weather when going to England, Corsica, or when crossing the narrow strait between India and Sri Lanka, as well several days of sailing along the Brittany coast on a 20 footer, in order to get rid of sea sickness. I was never truly sick, but never well either. As far as manning a sail boat, I started in 1967 on lake Bourget, then the Loire in 1970 and 1971 on a 421 and a 470. And finally a stint along the coast of Brittany with Gabriel in order to break in the *Good Bye*. Basically, not enough experience to man a boat alone, but enough to know that I would not be sea sick, or afraid, and that I could help.

And off we went on new adventures!

On this small thirty-foot sailboat space is very limited as you can see in the pictures. The close proximity forces the sailors into a reciprocal relationship which only helps in the proper running of a ship. On a boat there is a captain, and he is the one you must listen to since he will make the final decisions. I therefore became the subordinate to my son, and I must tell you that it never bothered me. On the contrary, when there is trust, which was the case, I found that it was very relaxing to simply do as you are told and without question. Unburdened by any responsibilities, I took advantage of this comfortable position which allowed me to sit with myself. Gabriel took care of the navigation (weather, charting, etc.) and all I needed to do was to

jump in at his order during some maneuvers. Otherwise, I let time flow by in the middle of the oceanic vastness, by day or night.

With only three on a sailboat, you often end up as a solitary navigator during shifts that are long enough to provide the others with a meaningful rest. It is one of these moments of solitude that I would like to share with you.

The solitude of the sailor and meditation

When the automatic pilot is turned on and the sea is calm, whether day or night, there is nothing to do except look around in order to prevent possible collisions with other ships, and to check that the course is maintained.

During the day, the eyes are drawn to the horizon, and we have numerous visitors, whether they be dolphins or birds. They are charming sailing companions that followed us sometimes for long periods. So, we marvel at Nature and let the time float by. And we had the luck to see a whale that followed us for a few minutes as it approached the sailboat, much to the consternation of Gabriel who worried it would overturn us...

The boat glides across the waters and we can measure its small scale by the vastness that surrounds us. It is hard not to think that we are quite puny and yet here we are, at the right place since it is where we are. Far from everything, with no phone or internet connection, nothing to occupy the mind, thoughts float along the tides, the winds, the storms, to return to the self and our role in the world, at the work we have burdened ourselves with while asking if any of this made any sense. To make sense of what we do is to make sense of our lives and when given the chance to ponder such things it is a good idea to take stock of lives and make sure we are on the right path. Hence the occasion to place oneself in a meditative state and let the answer rise up.

The lonely sailor is often in a meditative state without noticing. This self-centered state of the navigator is probably the source of a personality type common to sailors, which is often qualified as "savage". What difference there is between the posture of the meditator in his room and the sailor on his boat battling the elements. Very quickly, the mind is fixed on the present and nothing else matters apart from time as it stretches to fill the shift... meditation took a meaning I had not understood during my sitting meditations, whether taoist or yogic.

For three weeks we followed the coast with a few nights of navigation to arrive to my dismay in Portugal, still very far from Brittany. I was impatiently waiting for the crossing of the Gulf of Gascony that

had caused some worry to Gabriel on their way down, and some serious damage to the contestants of the Rhum Road race last winter. Forced to return to France in order to run a summer seminar, I left Gabriel and Caroline who had to wait for a window of opportunity in order to sail up the Western coast of Portugal towards Spain.

Near the end of August, my son calls and asks if I can come to Spain to help him cross the Gulf of Gascony. Without my help he would have to leave the Good Bye in Spain. I was in my music seminar, and had two more days to go. But oh well, the chance to cross the Gulf of Gascony is not offered every day. This was on a Wednesday and I told my son that there was a favorable window that Saturday and that I would be able to finish my seminar and take a plane that Saturday. In fact, that window was that Friday night, since it was imperative that I arrive that Saturday morning. I therefore asked my son to book me a flight to La Corogne. And there I was on the Good Bye that Saturday by 1:30pm, enough time to eat a bit and to prepare the boat before launching off at 4:30pm. Caroline had returned to France by an overland route the day before, and I found myself alone with my son for this new adventure that would take five days and four nights.

The crossing went very well and we did not have any bad weather, just a few hours of gymnastic during a stretch of sailing against the wind, with the sides dipping under and the waves frothy. It is of these hours that I will speak of since I am convinced that my Taijiquan practice allowed me to spend them without fear or fatigue.

When you sail against the wind the boat tips, and when a side dips in the water you are practically standing despite being seated on the captain's bench. At night we decided that we would do 4-hour shifts in order to provide a longer rest to each other. I spent an entire night shift practically standing, my ass wedged against the bench and my feet braced against the opposite side. That night the boat was deep in fog, with nothing visible past the halo of the signal lights. And I spent almost four hours with my gaze entranced by the swirls of water as the sides of the boat dipped into the waves pushed by the winds. White foam tipped the waves, and sometimes the boat listed sharply but the boat righted itself without me having to do any maneuvering. It was in these moments that I could appreciate the quality of the Good Bye and the art of tending to the sails that Gabriel had mastered. Did he not tell me that if the sails were well set the boat would always find its course no matter what? It was the case, and I was fully confident despite the precarious situation we sometimes found ourselves in. We were moving at a bit more than seven knots, which is nothing compared to experienced



sailors but was perfect for the Good Bye, which showed no sign of fatigue at that speed. Faster than that and it becomes more complicated and you have to be an experienced captain in order to not damage the boat.

Wedged in by my legs, tied to the boat by a security harness, what would happen if I fell in the water? Could Gabriel hear me from his bunk? Nothing is certain so the best bet is to set yourself in a safe position to not fall in the water. Reassured as to my fate, I found myself in a serene calm. A sort of intense peace flooded in and I could calmly return to this meditative state that allowed me to not find the time long. I did not feel any anxiety during any of the shifts that I did, whether day or night. Nor any fatigue either, I felt good, great even, and maybe in the end life is just that, to find that calm that brings with it peace which allows us to measure the wonder of the world that surrounds us.

The swells and troughs created by the rough seas give the boat a rhythm to which we start to sync with, little by little, to avoid the repeated bumps that would eventually tire a sailor. It is this same rhythm that we find in our practice of Taijiquan. Often the movements of Taijiquan are compared to the movement of the waves that come and go. Except you cannot mix those movements with the tide, also present in sequence of Taijiquan but deeper than the waves. If we do not respect these movements we end up agitated, shaken, and bumped in all directions with the risk of losing our equilibrium. Which brings me to the second topic I wanted to develop with these accounts of sailing which deal with our balance on a boat.

Keeping the center in order to avoid fatigue: equilibrium

When sailing, we have the choice as to whether or not sit with our backs against the captain's bench. If we do, as shown in the photos below, our body will follow the movements of the boat.

If that is the case, you have to make sure you are solidly attached to the boat to avoid shocks and, despite precautions, it is not guaranteed if the sea becomes rough. In any case this requires a lot of muscular effort which ends up exhausting the sailor.

So the better solution that I found is to support the upper body with the hips and to solidly brace the feet solidly, as shown in the picture above.

All the work of balance will be done at the level of the pelvis. It is the pelvis that will deal with the movements of the boat in order to adjust the upper body. This way, there are no more shocks, the body balances itself naturally from the pelvis which absorbs all

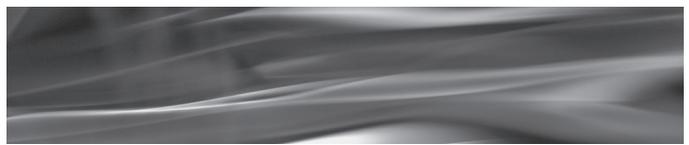




the movements before transforming them. Here, the practitioner of Taijiquan can measure the incidences of the work. As a state of equilibrium is approached, the movements of the pelvis will “densify” the Dantian until it becomes a sort of sphere on which the upper body balances. The denser the sphere, the more the oscillations are absorbed, just like that sphere weighting several tons which sits on top of the tower of Taipei, sitting suspended and fixed to the walls by cables. The more the tower moves and the more the central sphere absorbs the motion due to its inertia. Our Dantian is similar. The continuous movements densify it and the rest of the body will find its balance relative to this mass. The movements of the boat stimulate this energetic center and the more it is stimulated the denser it becomes and therefore becomes a source of balance.

What about our practice of Taijiquan? The slowness of the movements added to the “folding” in the form, folding and unfolding with tilting of the pelvis will make sure that all the forces that are in play will be localized in that center which is the true gravitational center. Having put this to the test perhaps explains why after fifteen hours of sailing in rough seas I did not feel tired at all.

After hours spent on this small sailboat I came to a better understanding of the meaning of the Dantian, and maybe something more. These days in my practice I like to bring back these feelings and sometimes, I admit, I become slightly nostalgic of that solitary sailor. Well, when I say solitary, it is only during that shift since, during the trip, I had my son and his partner who were always very attentive to my comfort.



The Dynamics of the leg during rooting

Alix Helme-Guizon

The purpose of this article is to explain what happens anatomically in the leg during rooting and expression, without evoking what happens in the pelvis, sacrum and pelvic floor. In my opinion, martial arts practitioners could avoid pain and improve their practice with more practical knowledge of anatomy. Unfortunately, many anatomy books are rather off-putting and rarely give practical indications. But that was before... Today there are books, articles and DVDs with many direct applications of biomechanical and anatomical knowledge. These are some of the findings that I want to share with you.

So that the subject is not too intellectual, or if you don't like to read long articles 😞, and so that everyone can use this anatomical data, there are links to videos. These videos explain elements of this article and provide exercises not detailed here. On the Amicale website, you will find this article in color in the PDF newsletter (within 15 days).

Half a foot for weight, half a foot for balance

Mechanically, the foot consists of two parts.

The 3 internal toes are connected to the tibia via the talus (ex astragalus) and 3 other bones (in homogeneous grey). They carry most of the body weight, i.e. 5/6ths.

The two outer toes are connected to the calcaneum (heel bone) and the fibula (brighter area). Their role is to balance by connecting to the fibula and forming



Figure 1. Structure of the foot seen from the side

an arch between the calcaneum and the front of the foot. They carry only 1/6th of the body weight.

For a good rooting, it is therefore necessary to balance the three points of support that are the heel, the roots of the big and small toe (the white points of the figure). Do not place the point of your body on the heel very far back, but on the talus, i.e. above the ankle (rather towards the front of this bone).

Videos of the foot structure:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=daZTvL6nKZk>,

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



Figure 2. Structure of a foot lifting from the ground, made of two parts

The foot includes 3 arches

As the foot is divided in two in the longitudinal direction, there are two arches running from the heel to the toes.

In the longitudinal arch, the talus is the key bone that distributes forces between the heel and the front of the foot. The navicular bone does the same in the lateral arch, but as we have seen, it only serves to balance.

But there is also a transverse arch, which, if you don't want it to reach the ground, becomes a diagonal arch.

The transverse arch (I prefer this term, which is actually more common than "diagonal arch"), has

Longitudinal Arch

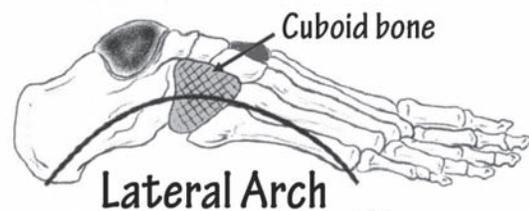
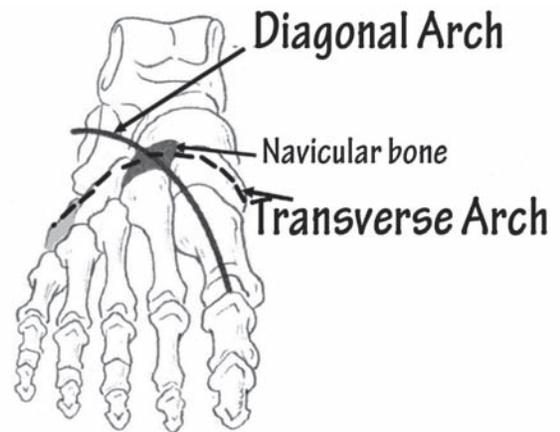
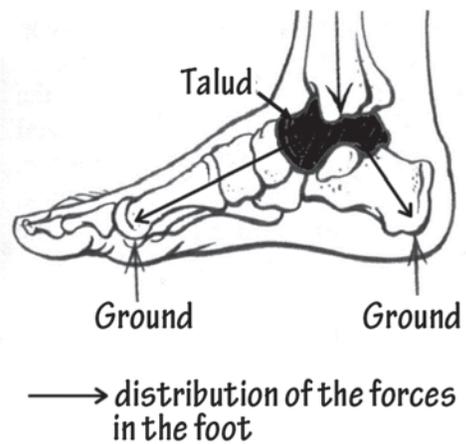


Figure 3. The three arches of the foot (modified from Dynamic Alignment... by Éric Franklin Human, Kinetics editions)

a particular role in support, since its functioning causes the foot to rotate inwards while squeezing a little.

The fact that the arches are extended because they are slightly crushed allows them, because of the fascias and deep muscles of the foot, to store energy in the form of elastic deformation. We can take the image of this toy, where the sticks are the bones and the elastics are the muscles and fascias.

Video of foot dynamics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjJGLP1CrNY>





Figure 4. The foot is squeezed a little inwardly when getting a foothold

This movement of the foot tends to make the knee fall inward, which quickly causes pain. But fortunately, we have buttocks!



Figure 5. Tensioning of the arches when leaning on and relaxing when expressing

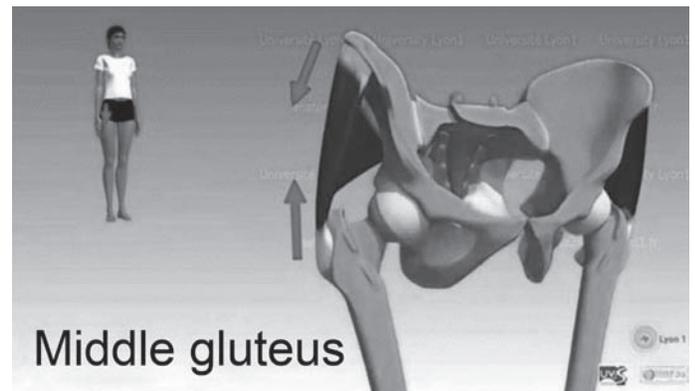
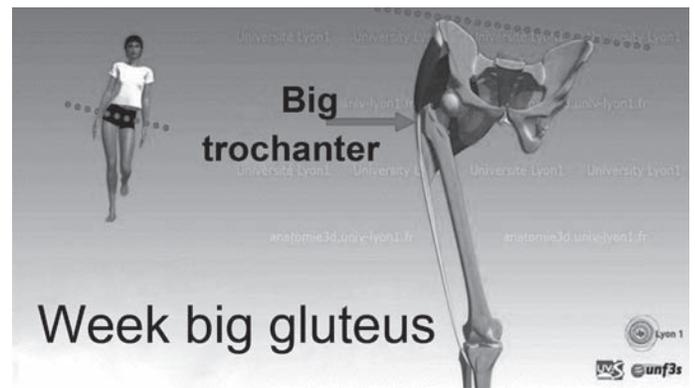


Figure 6. Buttocks stabilize the pelvis (modified from <http://anatomie3d.univ-lyon1.fr/>)

The buttocks keep the knee in line with the foot

The buttocks keep the pelvis horizontal and without wobbling. This already prevents many knee problems.

But because of their insertion points, the buttocks rotate the femur outwards, and can thus keep the knee perfectly in line with the foot.

The problem is that often the buttocks are not active enough, or not in the right timing. This may be due to long hours sitting in front of a computer, or the habit of stretching the legs out completely by locking the knees, or standing on a favorite leg. Luckily, the work of taking foothold following the rules of Taijiquan can activate (or reactivate) them.

Video on the role of the buttocks:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9pWMv1VKLI>

A spiral is formed in the leg when the foothold is taken, which stores energy

As the foot takes hold, it spreads out on the ground and the arches lengthen both in the antero-posterior

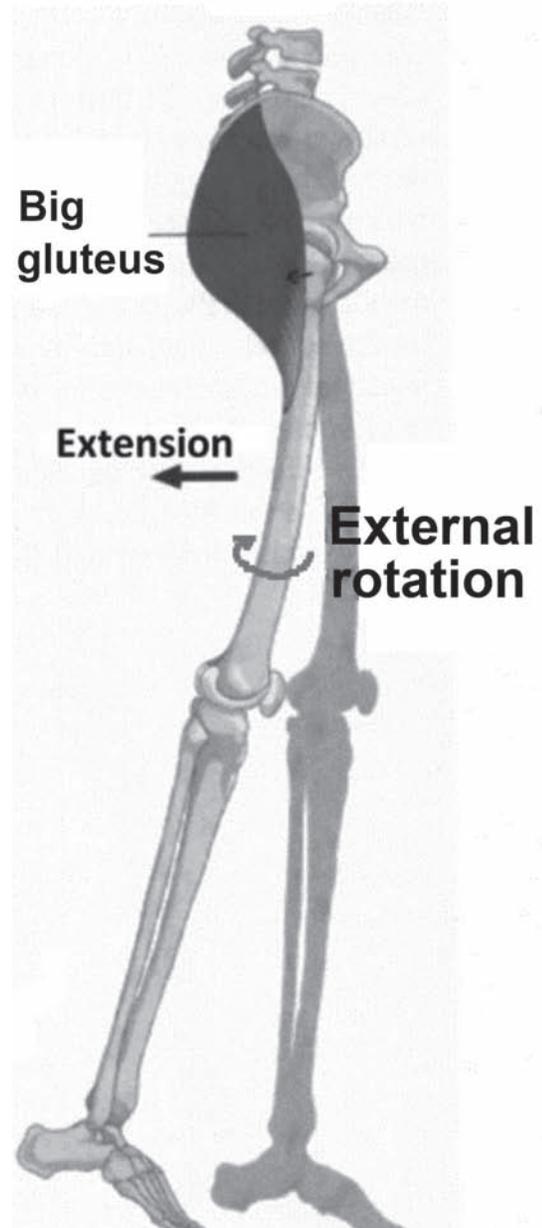
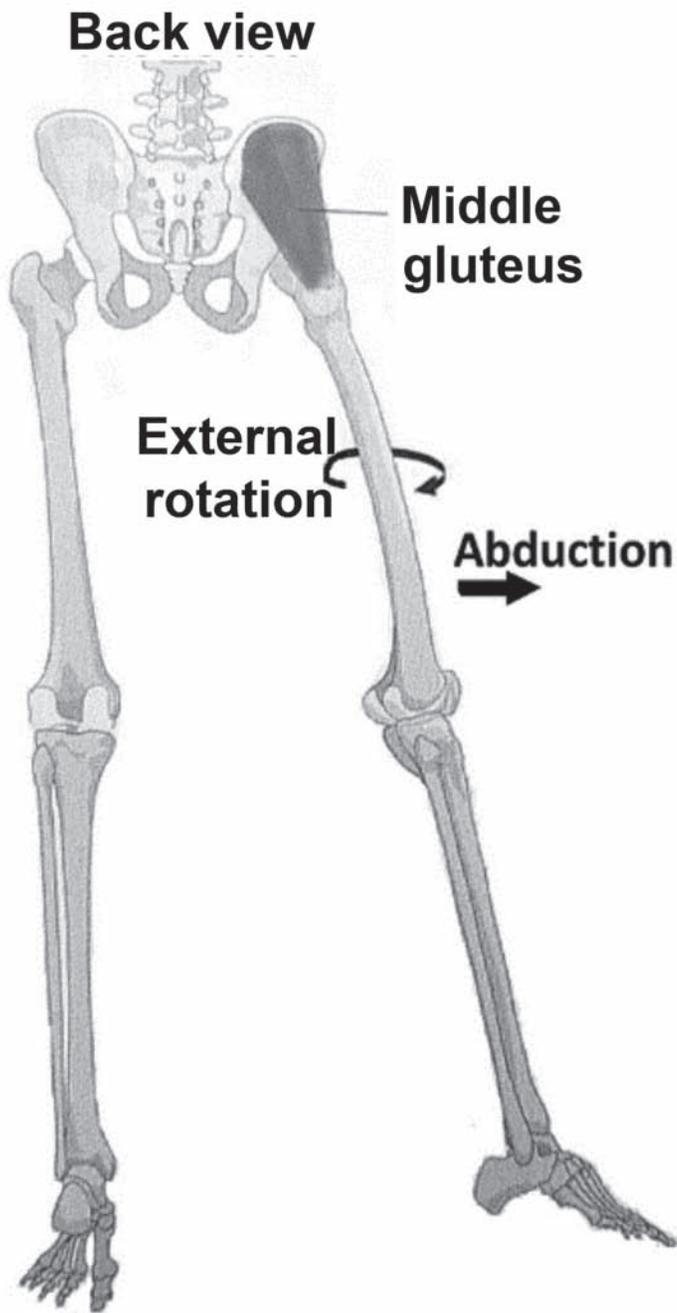


Figure 7. The buttocks are external rotators (Modified from "Fixing you: Hip and knee pain" by Rick Olderman Boone Publishing)

and transverse axes (orange arrows). This results in a global rotation towards the inside (blue arrow).

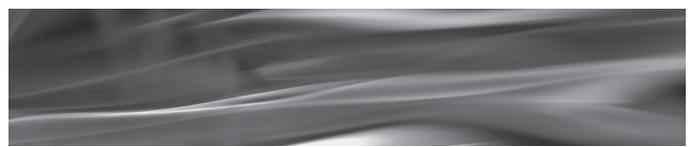
The femur makes an external rotation through the action of the buttocks, if they activate correctly. This allows the knee to remain in the axis of the second toe.

This series of counter-rotations naturally creates a spiral in the entire leg that gathers energy in the form of an elastic deformation. The classic texts talk about

"Bending the bow". This energy is released during extension, as well as the energy gathered during the spreading of the arches of the foot. The texts say "shoot the arrow".

Of course all this has a repercussion on the pelvic floor, the pelvis and the rest of the body, but this is another story.

The Website contains the videos and many more informations: <http://anatomievivante.weebly.com>



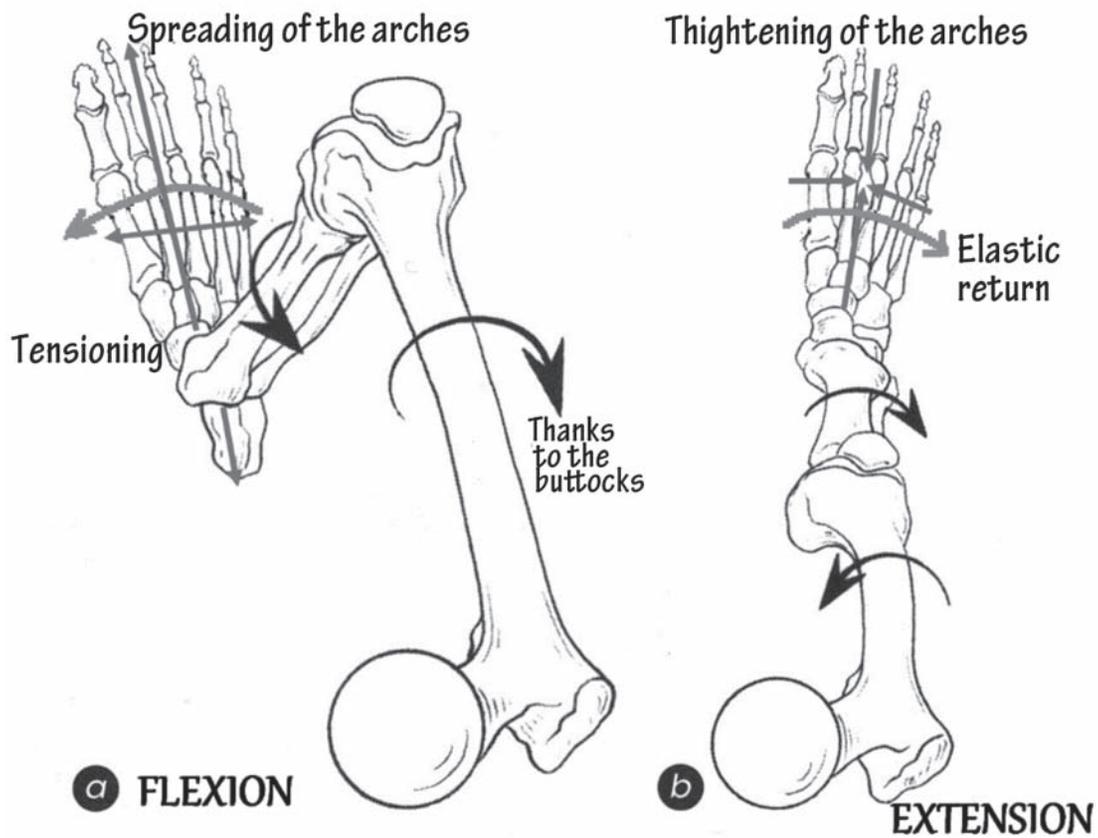


Figure 8. The counter-rotations in the leg (modified from "Dynamic Alignment..." by Eric Franklin Human Kinetics editions)

You will find all the videos of Anatomie Vivante on YouTube.

Sources:

1. Eric FRANKLIN, *Dynamic Alignment Through Imagery*, 2nd edition, Human Kinetics editions (very clear diagrams and evocative images).
2. Joanne ELPHINSTON, *Stability, Sport and Performance Movement: Practical Biomechanics and Sys-*

- tematic Training for Movement Efficacy and Injury Prevention*, Lotus publishing. A Must read!
3. Tom MYERS, DVD *Understanding Feet and Legs*.
4. Rick OLDERMAN, *Fixing you: Hip and Knee Pain*, Boone Publishing. A very good series of small books to fix yourself many small problems.
5. The website Anatomie 3D Lyon 1 for its videos on muscles and their roles.

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

Part two

Awareness and familiarisation with tuishou

We should distinguish between two types of approach: one with displacement, the other with fixed feet. I first present the exercises for fixed feet without the slightest pedagogical reason, knowing that it is quite possible to start with displacements.

This is the College's second overview originating from group work. We hope that with these leaflets the College can share its reflections on different aspects of our practice with a broad audience. This time it was about teaching tuishou to beginners.

Claudy Jeanmougin



Exercises without displacement

1- Sabine and Duyu suggest these exercises to work on the Yin attentiveness

1- Sabine and Duyu suggest these exercises to work on the Yin attentiveness **A** with palms facing upwards, person **B** places his hands with palms downwards, in those of person **A**. To feel, move together, **B** who gives his arms puts all their weight, the heaviness helps feeling.

- Same principle but the two partners turn one palm upwards and the other downwards.

Who guides? The hand on top or underneath?

- The two partners in peng, wrist against wrist and the other hand on the partner's elbow. **A** pushes with the peng, **B** whilst 'listening' retreats. It is important to sense one's territory and that of the partner. Il est important de sentir son territoire et celui du partenaire. Preserve the space for peng.

- To start with each for themselves: feet parallel and well rooted, draw large circles with the arms in front of themselves, the pelvis turns but the knees as little as possible. One can shift weight from one leg to the other, keep the axis.

Then in pairs: **A** uses this circular movement to lift the arms of **B** whilst seeking his elbow, turn the pelvis sufficiently and open kuà 胯. When turning the right arm put more weight on the left foot. Keep connected, the arm first takes the elbow from behind then keep the hand in the crux of the elbow until the other elbow is caught. Take care to maintain the axis. Take careful note of the Yin and Yang phases and the rooting.

*Fabienne and Hervé Marest,
see page 4.*

- **A** takes the rooted position with parallel feet not too far apart, the arms along the sides of the body in peng (the tiger's mouth on the thighs). **B** places himself to one side and pushes laterally on the arm of **A**. Transfer of the rooting: feel how to absorb this push on the right arm and how to conduct it into the left foot. Keep this position for a moment to feel carefully what is happening. The push is made horizontally. If the transfer is done well, the pusher feels the rooting in the other leg of the partner. The person pushed should maintain his axis, the head suspended, pelvis and lower back relaxed.

- Face to face with parallel feet. To learn to follow the push from the other, to 'listen'. Receive the push to the left shoulder, to take it, absorb, turn the waist and then with the left hand receive the right wrist of the pusher. The person absorbing 'disappears', like a vacuum cleaner draws the partner into the void. 'Be more active in the passivity', in the Yin there is Yang. All this with great gentleness.

- Face to face, the front feet anti-parallel, rooted in the rear foot. **A** pushes **B** with both hands on the top of the chest. **B** absorbs in the rear leg and places his hands under the elbows of the pusher to go with his movement.

2- The Baugé group comprising; Jean Boucault, Hervé Marest, Jean-Paul Bonhuil, Yannik Michel, Duyu, Lionel Descamps, François Besson and Alix Helme-Guizon, suggest first working with the horse rider's stance before going on to studying the gesture peng

- Working on the horse rider's stance, mǎbù 馬步
 'Adopting the rider's position allows the groin folds to be opened, the centre of gravity to be lowered and the slight retroversion which diminishes the lumbar lordosis to be practised. In this position, one should take care over the bending of the knees which should not be too great such that they go beyond the toes. In addition, through the readjustments of the posture (relaxation, filling the lower back, lower the shoulders, hollowing the chest...) and the development of proprioception, the practitioner should endeavour to spread his weight over the whole of the soles of his feet.'

The peng allows the partner to learn how to place his hand as much as in the quality of the contact as the position

- Peng, the key gesture to introduce several tuishou techniques
 « The peng provides the advantage of entering directly into one's bodily structure (flying buttress, opening of the back, relation perineum/earth). The position opens up all the connections

possible with the other; left/right, up/down, front/back.

Peng offers the advantage of a contact which seems less physically intrusive as it is applied to the forearm of the partner. The contact in peng allows the partner to learn how to place his hand as much as in the quality of the contact as the position (wrist, elbow).

Nevertheless, it appears that the gesture peng is not very easy to implement since it necessitates searching for one's axis (position of the head, opening the groin and lowering the centre of gravity), strengthening the back, hollowing the chest and lifting the arms whilst retaining a certain tonicity (soft and strong at the same time, like the boat lifted by the waves...).

With the peng one can tackle the concepts of tonicity/density/roundness of the gesture/opening under the arms (take a sleeping cat in the crook of one's arms and shoulder).

As a result, in spite of the difficulty, working with peng can prove to be an excellent preliminary to the tuishou exercises and to illustrate a number of the general and fundamental principles implemented in tuishou.'

**Face à face
with parallel feet.
To learn to follow
the push from the other,
to 'listen'.**

Exercises with displacements

1- Tuishou with mobile feet with Cathy Drouet and Marc Appelmans

- The two partners face each other on an imaginary line. One pushes the other's right shoulder who takes a step sideways displacing the left foot and finds himself to the left of the imaginary line. Repeat the push on each side to allow the partner to go from one side to the other of the imaginary line and to do a series of evasions.

- The two partners face each other. One wants to get around the partner on the right by advancing the left foot sideways and passing it in front of the right foot. The right foot follows the movement by positioning itself perpendicularly to the left foot (like in the 100 steps). Then he turns the pelvis to reposition the left foot in the axis and to establish his rooting. He is now facing the side and left shoulder of his partner on which he executes a push on the arm and shoulder. The aim of the exercise is to get far enough round the partner so as to find oneself to his side and to execute a push.

- The two partners are side by side. One (**A**) places the arm on the shoulders of his partner (**B**). **B** should try to extricate himself from the **A**'s moving arm. The two move continuously, **A** trying to catch the partner by the shoulders, **B** trying to escape him. The predator is the one who is trying to escape from the arm of the other even though he is supposed to be controlling the balance of power to a certain extent.

2- Tuishou with moving feet with Manuel Solnon and Hervé Marest

- two persons face to face; they both move;
- put the right foot forwards (1), bring the left foot next to it (2), then move this left foot back again (3) and bring the right foot to its side (4). It's like a dance, 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, ...
- raise an arm to shoulder level, the other lower at waist height; right hand low, left foot forwards; left hand low, right foot behind and inverse;
- when the two people can touch each other, the one who is advancing expresses a push on contact.

Another exercise:

- starting position: face to face, feet parallel;
- bring the external side of the right wrists into contact at face height, with a movement of the pelvis towards the left the weight passes to the left foot; then bring the external side of the left hands into contact, with a movement of the pelvis towards the right the weight passes to the right foot;
- do the same thing with a strike downwards of the back of the right wrists, then the left wrists;
- then alternate high right (1), high left (2), low right (3), low left (4), ..., whilst increasing the speed;
- the same thing with eyes closed so as to 'hear/feel' better the movement of the partner's pelvis and to come up with the appropriate riposte; keep the alternating high-low-right-left.



*Left to right,
top to bottom:
the 4 phases of
the first exercise
with Fabienne
and Hervé Marest*

*We hope that this joint work
will enrich practitioners and
encourage those who hesitate to
practise tuishou to start with a
playful and exploratory attitude.*

Nous avons lu...

Taiji quan – Carnet de notes, Origine du mouvement spiralé,

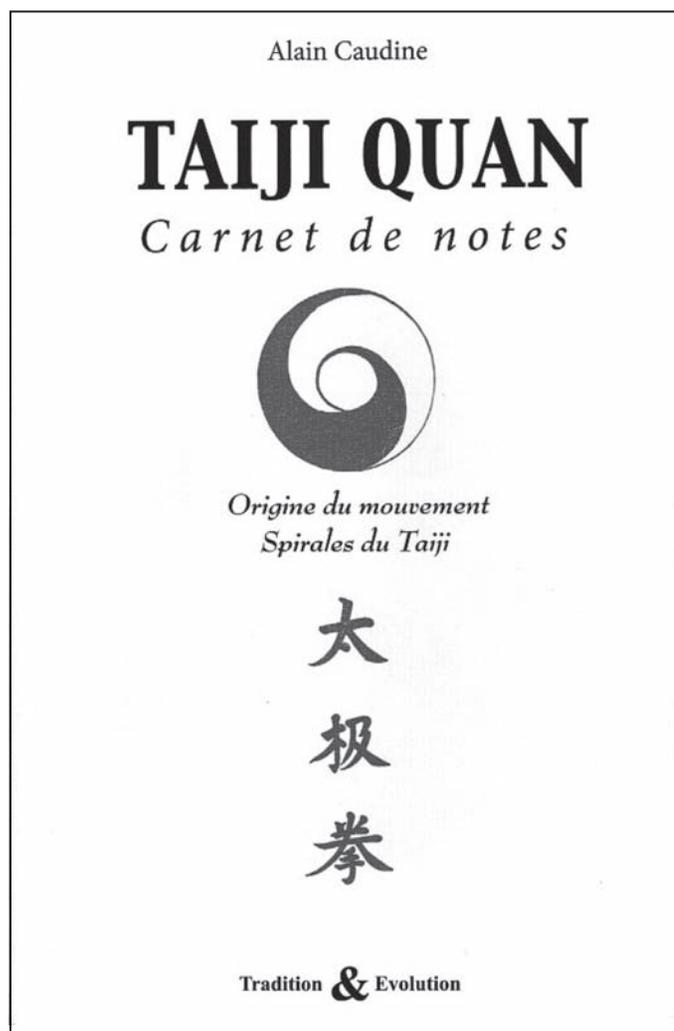
Alain Caudine,
Tradition & Évolution, Moncayolle, 2019

Voici le 4^e ouvrage d'Alain Caudine consacré à la pratique du Taiji quan en général et du style Chen en particulier. Malgré l'annonce du titre, il ne faut pas s'attendre à de grandes découvertes sur l'origine du mouvement spiralé. Par contre, oui, c'est un véritable carnet de notes prises tout au long de ses 50 années de pratique et d'enseignement des techniques énergétiques chinoises. Et, parfois, il y a quelques redites mais elles ne surchargent pas le texte car elles apportent ce petit plus qui traduit la générosité d'Alain.

Alain Caudine se confie le cœur largement ouvert avec une sincérité émouvante. Je n'ai rien à rajouter à cet extrait du texte de 4^e de couverture :

« Voilà un témoignage : celui d'une passion puis d'une expérience de plus d'un demi-siècle de pratique dans la mouvance des arts énergétiques et martiaux chinois. Toujours en référence à la nature, mais enrichi de réflexions issues de l'observation empirique, ce recueil de notes exprime avec simplicité et profondeur les liens difficiles mais bien réels de l'engagement du corps avec l'intelligence humaine. »

Claudy Jeanmougin



Nous avons lu...

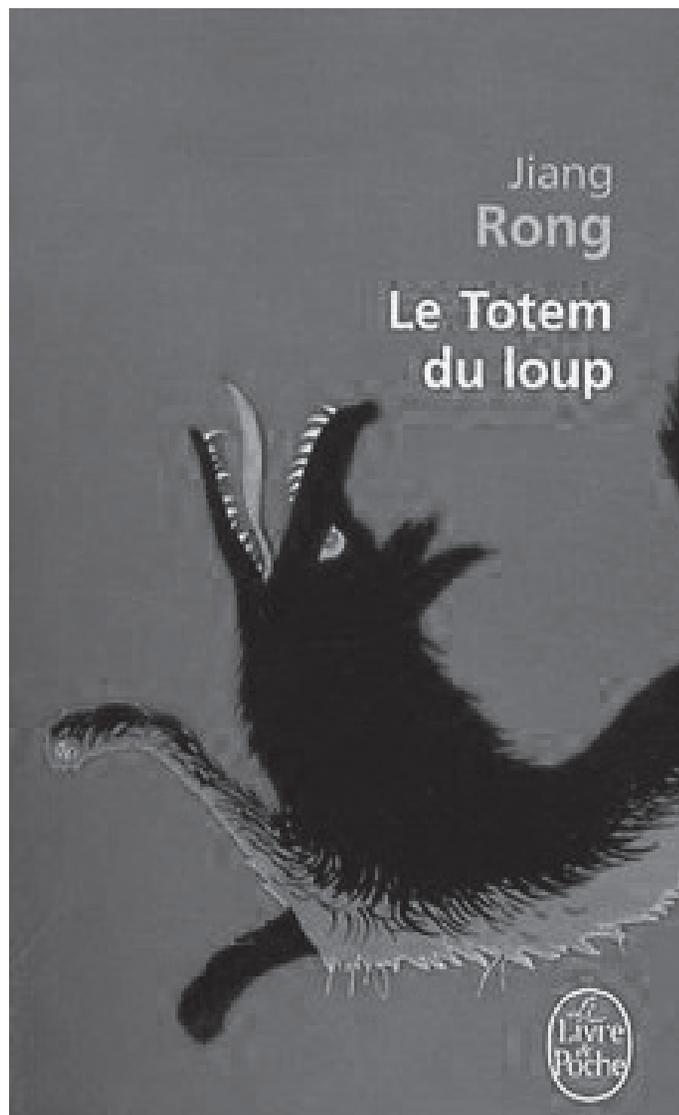
Le Totem du loup,

Jiang Rong,
Bourin, 2007, 25 €, 566 p.

16

C'est le genre de roman qu'on a envie de terminer en une nuit. L'histoire romancée d'un étudiant chinois qui, au début de la Révolution culturelle, décide d'aller vivre en Mongolie intérieure avec les pasteurs mongols, embrassant de multiples aspects de la Chine contemporaine. Tout le roman tourne autour du loup et de sa relation à la fois faite de coopération et de conflit avec les pasteurs mongols. Fascinant récit qui est parfois teinté d'humour sarcastique à propos du régime politique de l'époque, ce qui rend surprenant sa publication à gros succès en Chine.

Serge Dreyer



Three modalities of consciousness in the practice of Taijiquan Their impact on the variability within a style

Serge Dreyer

(continued from the article published in Bulletin n. 94)

- **Sight:** I only briefly mentioned it in the previous article. It will serve me here as a link between the conscious practice of the slow movements and the same conscious experience of Tuishou.

Each of us knows of the frustration of watching the movement of our teacher and the inability to reproduce it "correctly". The first obstacle is obviously found in the spread of the reference points through space: feet, knees, torso, arms, hands, etc. This is made more complex since these reference points move, even if the teacher regularly "freezes". Yet, when Mr. Bitbol tells us that the conscious experience "is not something separated, but the deployment of the entire no-distance", we understand the specific difficulty of learning slow movements. It requires the student to "fill in the distance between the model and the student", listening being a tool only facilitating this enterprise. I imagine it is not necessary to dwell on all the other disrupting factors, such as the moving of the teacher across the field of vision, or finding oneself in the middle of a group of practitioners. The readers of this Bulletin know quite well these difficulties.

We therefore often have the feeling, at the beginning of our studies, that the image of a movement has solidly imprinted in us, only for it to disappear as soon as we try to reproduce it. Nothing new under the sun, it is the lot of any apprenticeship in which sight plays a major role

(manual labor, sports, theater arts...) Repetition is therefore justified and recommended. But there are still some reference points that are more or less difficult to perceive. For example, the coordination along the vertical axis: how to synchronize the action of the arms and legs (the legs are already extended in a push while the hands have not finished moving)? There is a similar coordination along the horizontal axis when a posture requires a movement forward with one arm and backwards with the other., etc. Other reference points are essentially "invisible", such as the fluidity of movement which is easy to see but whose mechanism is hard to explain. The state of fangsong is even more obscure: how often have I been asked how Master Wang managed to go through the Form as if lacking any joints, or how my Bagua Zhang teacher, mister Lai, seemed to walk on air!

These models are obviously a source of our inspiration and therefore can be stimulating. But they also cannot sit fully within us since the unique personal characteristics that we each bring to the training, whether physical, mental or emotional, will reshape the models. These characteristics keep the models at a distance and, to cite Mr. Bitbol again: "'conscious experience' filters into who we are" but does not duplicate the models.

1. The conscious experience during the practice of Tuishou

A new phase of the training in Taijiquan amplifies the slow movements by relegating sight to a

secondary level and replacing it to a large degree with touch. It is not space which prevents the full consciousness of the movement, but time. Once time accelerates, space becomes too fragmented and changing at such a rhythm that it becomes impossible to describe, let alone copy precisely, any movement. When my partner/adversary gives me a double-handed push, he might do it along the horizontal or while rising, with the hands spread apart or together. In each push, the space that separates us will be divided in unequal surfaces, making it impossible to predict with sight alone. The model has changed radically: it is not sight but touch which becomes dominant.

It is the first and most complex challenge awaiting the practitioner. To try to learn the constantly evolving movements of Tuishou with the eyes alone is as if one were to observe a cloud to understand a hurricane. The changing character of the movements is a shift in time, here mostly a shift in the speed at which the movements are executed. But this is only one element of the triptych which constitutes the conscious experience of Tuishou. The presence of the Other will necessitate the projection of the self in him. If I said that you should be one with your adversary in order to better control him, as is stated by Wang Tsong-yue¹: "the adversary does not know me, but I know him." To arrive at this state of consciousness it is absolutely necessary to accept the Other fully, no matter how threatening he might seem to our equilibrium. Here again Wang Tsong-yue is very precise: "Be empty and nimble"². The emptiness is not only physical (not resisting a push, for example) but also profoundly mental. It requires that our emotions (fear, anger, anticipation, etc.) do not rise up to block our attempt to receive the Other in our conscious experience: "the fundamental idea is to forget oneself and follow the adversary."³ As for agility, it is understood in its physical aspect, but also as a mental perspective. Instead of "programming" combinations of attacks and defenses, a very "fixed" view of fighting, it is instead recommended to flow into the situation and wait for, or even provoke, a favorable situation⁴. It is actually one of the

great characteristics of the normal socialization in China, while in France we try to find a clear and easily identifiable position, each attitude having its own strengths and weaknesses.

The third aspect, in which some find great pleasure and other hate, is touch. It is a delicate subject, and not just because of the opposition of gentleness/violence, pleasure/displeasure, or even clear intention/ambiguity. It is potentially disturbing because it is experienced internally, without a clear sense as to why the touch of an Other can be perceived as an intrusion in our intimate space, or like a welcomed contact. I am always perplexed when practitioners of Taijiquan announce proudly that they are solely in the "internal"⁵ and do not practice Tuishou. Of course the first thought which comes to mind is to put forward the binary of win/loss, so present in our daily lives (which also applies to the modern Chinese culture) which imbue it with feelings and emotions that are not always pleasant. But isn't the "internal" aspect supposed to elevate one's spirituality? Which spirituality is it if it refuses the Other, especially when Tuishou is so often presented as a game?

Touch creates a rupture in the Other in our conscious experience of the self. This rupture is physical, going from the isolated perception of one's body to a body tied to another. It is also mental since an intention⁶ is hiding behind the touch. We need to decode and progressively tame this intention since due to the changing situation it will change in intensity and location, and even expression (press, lift, deflect, etc.). The intention itself generates multiple techniques and therefore a great variety of situations. Yet all these aspects of touch generate in us uncertainty which make our step hesitant, our mind confused and, most importantly, the urge to return to a place which is comfortable, with reassuring discoveries, such like those old ads from travel agencies that promised travel to exotic lands, yet with all the comfort of home. And yet Wang Tsong-yue⁷, yet again, is very clear on the topic: "though there are thousands of different situations, there is



1. *Traite sur le T'ai-ki k'iuian* by Wang Tsong-yue, in Catherine Despeux, *Mémoires de l'Institut des Hautes Études chinoises*, Collège de France, 1976, p. 153.

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, p. 154.

4. Written between the 4th and the end of the 2nd century, the *Writings of Master Guan* (trad. Romain Graziani, *Les Belles Lettres*, 2019, p.29) echoes this recommendation:

Do not precede the movements of others
You may observe what principles rule them
By moving, you lose you position
By remaining unmoved, you win yourself

Also, p26, R. Graziani writes regarding the Sage: "He adapts to the variety of situations he encounters without rigidity or hesitation, a distinct trait of the "non-action" preached in the text." Is this not the same agility?

5. to those who insist on the "internal", I must first say that it is disrespectful of the "external" practices, at least in the Chinese context. How many superb demonstrations of external martial arts have I seen! I especially remember Dominique Valera, the Karateka who, during the Bercy festival, seriously made me question the opposition between the two. Also, the lack of Fansong and fluidity that I see so often in the videos of our style makes me think that we should seriously rethink the distinction between internal and external. However I do not deny that the practice of slow movements requires some internal work, but it can be very shallow work.

6. I use here the term intention not in the narrow sense of using a technique but is the larger sense, of provoking an "event", meaning a push or a pull which is only the beginning of a situation that will develop along unknowable parameters.

7. *Op. cit.*, p. 153.

but one principle." Here we are taken back to the Chinese mode of thought: "The named (the Dao) is the mother of the ten thousand things⁸"; our lives are a constant back and forth between the unified and the multiple.

We should also take note of the tight association between touch and balance. Based on the intensity of a push/pull from a partner will rise an emotionally charged feeling of a balance maintained or an unbalance that threatens us. Paradoxically, the conscious experience in this case is less charged than the unconscious one. This is probably tied to the core reason that transformed an ape into a hominid when it started to stand on two legs: the need to see a prey, but also to not become one. When animals fight, they never take lightly to being unbalanced or thrown to the ground since this often leads to severe wounds or even death. Only humans accepts this outcome during certain culturally designated situations (roughhousing, wrestling, judo, games, etc.). Nevertheless, the negative connotation of disequilibrium is profoundly inscribed in our genes. We only have to listen to the cries of children thrown off balance to be convinced of this. We might need to explore this connection between touching and potential disequilibrium to understand parts of the conscious and unconscious experience of Tuishou.

In a third section I will explore the domain of combat including striking. This section will be shorter since the connection with Tuishou is rather narrow as far as the conscious experience is concerned. It would also be beneficial if a specialist in weapons (guess to whom I am now giving meaningful glances..) would give us an account of his experience in this domain.

2. Combat

The ideas which I developed for Tuishou apply equally for combat, but with a larger dimension and different intensity.

First the sense of touch is potentially spread to the entire body while in Tuishou the convention is to only push on the upper body, with the exception of the head. This of course means a consciousness taking into account all possibilities. The challenge is not just the possibility that the entire body can be touched but also that the type of touch can take many forms: striking with a punch/palm/finger/ knee/shoulder or head, twist, joint lock, slap, sweep, pinching, scratching, chocking, etc. The first consequence of this (and I have not included the

possibility of throwing an object or natural element like sand, nor the use of a weapon, whether man-made or natural like a stick or a stone) is to create distance from the adversary. This distance is mostly to create a sense of safety among the combatants. We find without surprise the importance of distance but this time only in the initial phase of the fight. It seems easier to analyze the space formed between the combatants but this is only partially true, due to the sensation of acceleration of time combined with the sense of danger which makes the task harder.

We should also note that the experience of the consciousness in combat encapsulates both the necessary interiorization of Tuishou (in wrestling or ground fighting situation for example) and the projection of this consciousness on the distance which is being modified by the adversary. The information that rises up to the consciousness is even more complex since a single movement can generate several sensations: for example, a strangulation combined with a kick to the back of the knee.

It is also necessary to mention the possibility of the loss of attention at any moment, an issue which exists to only a minor degree during slow movements. The pain which follows a violent touch immediately brings the attention - consciousness-towards the point of contact. It is an effect well known to fighters, who then try to use the diversion and attack another point. This also exists in Tuishou but to a lesser degree. This type of situation brings up the question of the "flow" of consciousness. How can this experience of consciousness manifest simultaneously (or almost) at the point of impact and the points of the body which are further threatened? Training seems like the logical answer since it is said in martial arts that consciousness should be here, there, and everywhere. But this remains partially a mystery which I cannot resolve but which is fascinating. I leave it to the neurologists to find a more precise answer than mine.⁹

It is easy to think about all this, though there is another dimension which touches the deepest part of ourselves: fear and aggression. These two emotions (are they not one in fact?) are over-developed because of the danger which weighs on the bodies of the antagonists, as well as on their mental equilibrium. We could spend much time on the ritualized, or spontaneous, or staged, or even moralized aspects of these emotions but it is not the subject of this article. I was just seeking to show the different forms of consciousness that rise up or remain hidden during our practice of Taijiquan. As a conclusion I reaffirm that none of us is definitely internal or external in our practice of a martial art but we are all

8. LaoTzu, Tao Te Ching, A new translation based on the recently discovered Ma-wang-tui texts, Robert G. Henricks, Ballantine Books, 1989, p. 53.

9. I obviously did not mention the loss of consciousness from KO in this discussion.

engaged in a search that enriches our existence: the deepening of our experience of consciousness. The only reference which is valid in my eyes is not a categorization defined by a text or a specialist, but the path followed by each individual between the starting point in technique and the path followed since. The experience of consciousness is a long process of refining which parallels the effort of resilience which leads to growth. This begs the eternal question for the specialists on consciousness as to the role of will and resilience.

Addendum: reflexions after writing

The transformation of the experience of consciousness of space between two individuals during free-form Tuishou should also be explored. The space between two experienced Push Hands practitioners is already quasi-impossible to control, and is made even more complex by the resonance between touch and equilibrium/disequilibrium. When my adversary places his hands on my body to push, for example, the intensity of the push will diminish (if I manage to deflect) and the sensation of disequilibrium will become more acute. The combination of both sensations will then replace the effort to control the space to redefine a space-time that tends towards the stabilizing of the situation. It is a bit like the approach of a source heat that we cannot see; the intensity gives us a precise idea of the danger.



Weight on the Back leg/ Another Perspective

Mark A. Linett

First of all, congratulations to AMICALE on its 30th Anniversary.

Laoshi often said that he wished that Yang Jia Michuan would grow and develop in the future and AMICALE has certainly done its part in fulfilling his dream.

I must admit that I was very surprised by some of the comments I read in the article about the positioning of the front foot and the weight on the back leg. I have practiced other forms in the more than forty years that I have practiced T'ai Chi Chuan. There is no question in my mind that the feature of our form that distinguishes it from other styles is the weight on the back leg.

Watching Laoshi over the years it was clear that sometimes he had more or less weight on his front foot but when he was asked about it, he demonstrated that his front foot was free and weightless. For example, He was asked about the distribution of his weight in the Shoulder stroke (Kao) in the form and he clearly lifted his front foot to show that most of his weight was on his back leg. The power of the shoulder stroke came from both the bending of the waist and yielding to the two hand push (An) which is a response to an elbow stroke (Kao).

His position and posture never really changed and he was always balanced and settled. His position, when both sitting and standing, was governed by his

Neigong practice in which he taught that the chest was relaxed and the back was slightly rounded. He taught that the chest should be relaxed so that the chi would naturally settle and sink into the Dantien. There was no visible tension in either his back or his chest. For him, Inward Movement of the chest, (Han Xiong Ba Bei) was a living principle.

Looking at photos 1010 and 1011 in his book, Yang Family Hidden Tradition, An Explanation through Photos, there is a clear difference in his position from when he is punching and when he is receiving a push. In 1011 his back is slightly rounded and his chest is relaxed to receive the incoming energy, while in 1010 he is straight and balanced.

Also, the Wei Lu point in his lower back was sunk and relaxed so that his back was straight and his shoulders are slightly rounded.

Looking carefully at the basic exercises, whether it is Pull To Leg or the Basic Tui Shou exercises it is clear that the weight is on the back leg; otherwise it would be difficult to practice them correctly as taught by Laoshi. For example, the very first basic Push Hands exercise requires that we turn on the ball of the foot. Having most of the weight on the back leg frees the waist to turn, but at the same time the ball of the front foot is solidly in contact with the ground by concentrating the Yi on the ball of the front foot; it is rooted through the use of the intention (Yi). If the weight was on the front foot it would be very difficult to fully and freely turn the

waist. Also, after the push, the front foot is naturally slightly turned inward to protect the groin area from attack.

When Laoshi taught Guai Hua (Kneeling down on one leg), he pointed out that we should relax and tuck the lower back as we descend on one leg as we turn the waist. This is a very important point since this position has to also be maintained as well when we are in a standing position on one leg. The lower back relaxes so that there is a straight line from the lower back to the heel of the back foot so as to maintain the correct alignment.

This posture, at first, requires constant correction and attention but when it is practiced correctly it lends stability and equilibrium to the posture. Again, the chest is relaxed and the back is slightly rounded. Students have to be reminded not to overemphasize the rounding of the back.

With regard to Expressing Energy (Fa Jing), the power comes from the rising up on the back leg and using the power of the lower back to express the Chi through the hands.

When the power is expressed on the front foot with the alternate hand, then there is a slight tucking of

the Wei Lu point. But the movement from the back leg to the front leg with the slight turning of the waist gives power to the push.

Another point that often comes up is the raising of the heel. It is true that as one moves along in the practice, one tends to raise the heel less. Raising of the heel should be a natural result of raising up on the back or front leg. There should ideally be no tension in the back of the calf. Laoshi showed in one class that the reason for the raised heel was to avoid double weighting. He showed a movement where he pushed from the back leg, raising the front heel and then a pushing from the front leg, raising the heel of the back foot. It was a very clear demonstration of the reason for raising the heel.

We often hear that the reason for the most of the weight being on the back leg is to avoid a sweep from an opponent. It is correct to say that Laoshi stressed this point but also by looking carefully at the form, the basic exercises and the Tui shou basic exercises, the weight on the back leg is a central feature of our style of T'ai Chi Chuan.





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Attention : pour toute nouvelle adhésion contacter : secrtaire.amicale.ymtjq@gmail.com

1^{er} Septembre 2020 au 31 Août 2021

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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:

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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, 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.

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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 :

adressez 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

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.

楊家秘拳太極拳會



*Amicale du Yangjia
Michuan taiji quan*