

Teacher Profile: Lin Wen-xiong

By Serge Dreyer
Translated by Don Klein

This column introduces various Taiwanese YMT practitioners, active or deceased, who have contributed significantly to the development of Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan. The choice of whom is entirely my responsibility. If, however, other followers wish to collaborate actively in this endeavor, they can send me their text to the following address



Lin Wen-xiong and the author

serge.dreyer@gmail.com. However, any text presenting one's own teacher(s) should state explicitly in the subtitle the relation between the author and the person described. This obligation concerns obviously only articles published within the framework of this column, not similar papers in the *Journal*.

The purpose of this column aims at tightening links between the followers of the Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan (YJMTJQ), at encouraging dialogue among persons within our style and at avoiding all attempts of imposing dictums on behalf of persons or of different institutions.

I would receive with much interest a portrait of the Chinese pupil of Wang Yen-nien (WYN) who was, to my knowledge, the first one to teach YJMTJQ in Europe. This request is just as important for the pioneers of the education of this style in all other countries.

I met Lin Wen-xiong in 1976 in WYN's *wuguan* during my initiation to YJMTJQ in Taipei. In addition to WYN, he was one of the rare persons who agreed to regularly help me to progress in tuishou. His technical skill was an important source of inspiration for me, notably his tuishou in which every movement stands out, a rare quality that I had observed at this level in our style, only with WYN. His early experi-

ence with aikido may have some bearing.

Born in Taipei in 1937, he began to practice TJQ supervised by WYN at the age of 17. He has taught our style for 32 years. It began by him regularly taking his seriously ill father to Wang Yen-Nien's exercises on Yuanshan. When his father had to rest, Lin Wen-xiong took advantage to practice TJQ with WYN. He practiced the basic exercises, the sequences and the different sword sequences. At that time, the practice site of Yuanshan was a hard-packed surface that proved itself unfit for tuishou practice because of the frequent rains in the region of Taipei. And so LWX suggested his father's home for WYN's first classes of tuishou where they remained from 1956 until 1966.

At this time, according to Lin Wen-xiong, the level of the pupils of WYN was more proficient because a number of them had already studied other schools of TJQ or other martial arts; such was the case of the famous T.T. Liang and also of Hou Hai-quan of Tainan. They were more supple than the following generations.

Following are a set of reflections of Lin Wen-xiong (excepting the "NB of the author") that answer some of my questions. The order of these answers is unpredictable:



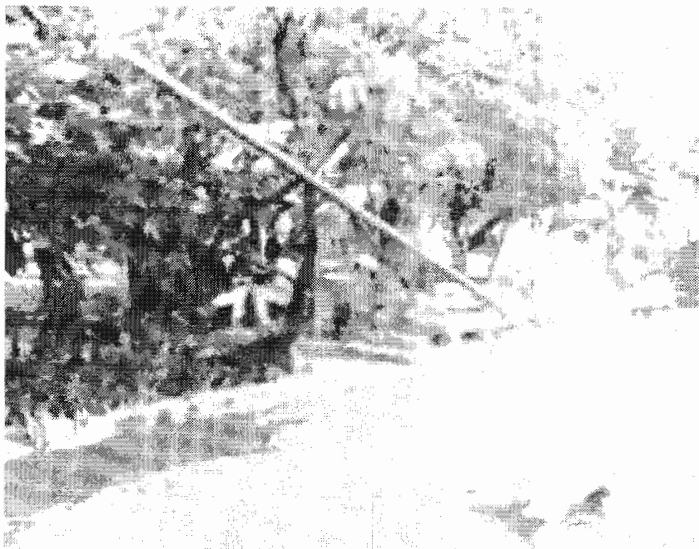
WYN and early students

1. WYN has never taught them actual *sanshou* (fight with strikes).
2. The syllabus of WYN varied little in the time during his learning.
3. Robert Smith, the American author of a work on the various Taiwanese teachers of wushu, was very punctual going only to have a practice with WYN.
4. At the time of the learning, there were no official competitions but only challenges between fol-

lowers of various styles/schools. WYN had to find some of these challenges.

5. WYN did not create an elite within his school.

6. WYN did not teach foot techniques (reaping, sweepings, etc.); but he enjoyed himself with such during the tuishou sessions in the *wuguan* [NB: I often knew the taste of the straw of the tatami in training with Lin].



LWX with long pole

7. The pole was taught after the sessions of tuishou to work the power and the energy of transformation (*hui jing*). [NB: after reflection, it would seem that this custom corresponds to practical considerations. Indeed, the length and the weight of the poles made them difficult to the transport to Yuan-shan during the morning practices of sequences. In the beginning of the session of tuishou, their practice would have blocked all the space of training, as there were only three available poles. It is not thus surprising that only the most motivated pupils practiced the pole at the end of the sessions of tuishou. The situation changed a little when our group of foreign followers in 1977 (including according to my recollections Toshiro, a Japanese karateka, John Hoag USA, Joe Morris USA, Peter Clifford UK, Jacky Kieffer FR, John Barry UK) asked WYN for two supplementary morning sessions of practice. However the practice of the pole remained much neglected in spite of its extreme importance for all the aspects of our style.]

8. WYN insisted at the time of Lin Wen-xiong on very precise explanations of *jing*. [NB: I confirm these comments from my own experience, that these explanations became especially precise for the practice of tuishou. I often was blamed by WYN during

the tuishou training of my weakness in "*sui jing*," the energy to follow, which obviously could be experienced very concretely only in the practice of tuishou or sanshou, partially also in the *daliu* (the big chain). According to WYN (and Lin Yun-long who made a similar remark to me during our meeting in Inner Mongolia), this weakness came from my too limited understanding of the role of the rear leg.]

9. Furthering one of my remarks on the distance of legs in the practice of sequences, Lin Wen-xiong underlines the importance of the support on the back leg for buoying, *jing*, "the energy of transformation." In sequences, his step is a little bigger to insist on the *shen yang*, "to take care of health, to feed itself the personal vital principle" according to the dictionary Ricci. In tuishou, the step must be smaller to facilitate the movements, the quality of liveliness and watchful state of consciousness that embraces the *linghuo* (term quoted by all the schools of Chinese martial arts). Note that this state becomes enlightened from the practice of sequences on the condition of understanding not only the military applications (*yongfa*) movements but also their potentialities of chains.

10. According to Lin Wen-xiong, tuishou and sanshou are contained within the form provided that "the intention" (*yi*) is invested there.

11. Health is the most important for the practice of TJQ, although this aspect plays a less important role in tuishou.

12. One of the peculiarities of the YJMTJQ is the *shen yang*, which associates qigong with the neigong.

13. In his time, the ceremony of the *baishi* (the inauguration of a follower who becomes officially the pupil of a teacher with a whole system of mutual obligations) was bound to neigong, which practice, according to him, has a sexual orientation.

14. In tuishou, the training included introduction to *qinna shou* (military art specializing in the blocking of joints) but which were not carried to their extremes.

15. WYN insisted on the fact that the practice of the other martial arts was useless for the TJQ.

16. In his time, there were very few women in WYN's school.

17. He finds that WYN's attitude to the foreigners as particularly favorable.



Tuishou: WYN and LWX

18. Distancing himself from one of his brothers of practice present during the interview, who insisted the future of the YJMTJQ lies in strict correspondence to the education of WYN, Lin Wen-xiong asserts the superiority of the pupils and the possible improvements that they can bring to the style.

Lin Wen-xiong was the one who taught us eyebrow pole in the 70's. This is the pole form (length at eyebrow level) that I spread upon my return to Europe and which survives and is still taught in Taiwan among some of LWX's students. On this matter, the following anecdote is revealing of WYN's humor. Lin Wen-xiong began in 1977 (if my memory is good) to teach us this stick form secretly after the morning sessions on Yuanshan. But one day, after a common morning session, WYN returned by surprise



1970's Tuishou Competition in WYN's school: LWX and Mr. Zhang nicknamed Dage (Big Brother). Both helped me in my tuishou in the school..

to the practice area as everybody had taken out from the bushes his stick to practice. General bewilderment! WYN then took a stick that he made spin everywhere, probably a shape learnt in his youth, then he left quite silently, a smile in the corner of his lips ...

For those who visit Taipei and would like to meet—or even to practice—with Lin Wen-xiong, he teaches every weekday morning at 7:30 along the Danshui River in Yanping Riverside Park entered by the floodgates on Nanjing West Road or Minsheng West Road by the Dadaocheng Wharf (floodgate 5). He

also has sessions Saturday and Sunday mornings at a teaching pavillion on Yuanshan behind the Grand Hotel which include an open tuishou meet that attracts followers and teachers from various taijiquan styles.

His phone number is (886) 02 (outside Taipei) 26242556; mobile 0917054055. Although he does not speak English, there are almost always students present at the practices who will be glad to translate.



1970's: LWX witnesses Baishi ceremony for WYN



1950's. From L to R: Lin Jin-cai, Li Jin-chuan, a shaolin and qinna teacher, WYN, LWX. The others are students of WYN.



1982: Peter Clifford (UK), Mr. Li, LWX, Serge Dreyer