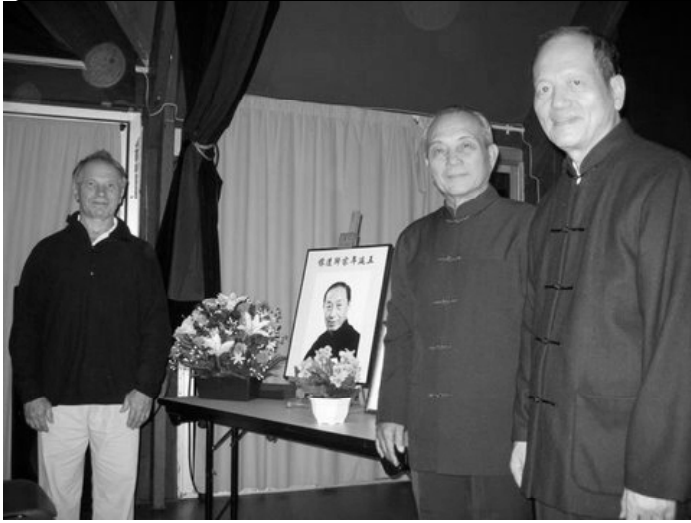


Interview with Mr. Wang Rong-shan

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Translated by Sue and George Lin

[Wang Rong-shan is the President of the Taiwan Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan Association]



*Christian Bernapel,
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1Q - Mr Wang, This is your second visit to France; thank you for coming to our Association meeting. You are now President of the YMT Association in Taiwan and we'd like to know you a little better. Can you tell us about your background?

1A - When I was young, I had great curiosity towards martial arts and had a strong desire to learn more. During World War II, my family moved to countryside of Tainan. The post-war situation was rough. People lived in poverty, crime was rampant. Learning Kung-Fu for self-defense and to protect one's property became very common. At that time, I was only 12 years old. I did the same thing as other adults starting to learn Kung-Fu, including: Taizu Chuan, Wingchun Chuan, Hand Pole, Iron Sand Palm, Light jump Kung-Fu, Flying Dart Weapon, etc. Because of my young age, I had no idea which style of Kung-Fu to specialize in. At sixteen years old, I started to learn White Crane Chuan from Master Tsai Yu-Lin. This was the starting point of my long journey in studying martial arts. After two years, I built up strong body. Later on, I discontinued studying White Crane Chuan due to family and school factors.

2Q - Had you done the YMT before?

2A - In 1973, I tried to learn Taijiquan to improve my health. Through a friend's referral, I studied Cheng Man-Ching style at Asia Airline Company's clubhouse in Tainan City. After three months I gave it up because my job did not allow the time.

3Q - When did you study from Master Wang? How long?

3A - In 1974, Master Wang came to teach in Tainan. He taught two weekends per month. In March 1st I began

to learn Yangjia Michuan Taijiquan from Master Wang at Tainan Park. Since then, I studied with him for 8 years. April 13th, 1982 was Master Wang's final class. He told us that he was about to go overseas to teach Taiji, so he may not have opportunities to come to Tainan again. With this short notice, the next day our teaching assistants arranged a video shoot to record Master Wang's forms and weapons' instructional demonstration. This is how we produced the only complete demonstration memorial DVD of Master Wang. During my 8 years of study, Master Wang adjusted my posture and taught me Neigong, then I learned Thirteen Postures, New Thirteen Postures, 1st Duan, 2nd Duan, 3rd Duan, 12 feet (Dantian Qi) Pole, Wudang Sword, Kunlun Sword, Yen-nien Fan and Tuishou.

4Q - In what year were you born?

4A - I was born in 1937.

5Q - What is your best memory of the teachings of Master Wang?

5A - My impression is that he had strong confidence in his students. I remember in September 1974, Master Wang asked me to be his teaching assistant. My first reaction was that I was not good enough yet. He insisted I was qualified to teach. It was his strong belief in me that improved my self-confidence. He asked me to always remember three things:

1. Practice with students everyday. Do not just guide them at side. It will assure your progress while maintaining physical fitness and wellness.
2. Make great effort in forms. Over time, the foot strength you develop is the foundation toward future learning of **Tuishou** and Weapons.
3. Be sure to practice Neigong everyday. 5 minutes or 10 minutes will do, even if you do not feel anything. Day after day you will get it eventually. That is Jing (bodily essence), Qi(inner energy) and Shen(spirit) all together.

6Q - So, you must learn neigong together with taiji?

6A - First I interpret the concept of Song (loose or relax). Then adjust each student's posture, mind and breathing. After they gradually understand the idea of Song, then I teach basic exercise, forms, Neigong and Tu Na.

7Q - Were there many students at this time in Tainan?

7A - When Master Wang taught at Tainan City, there were about three hundred students.

8Q - Did you continue to work with Master Wang after

82?

8A - Master Wang had not come back to Tainan since he went overseas in April 1982. 17 years later, in 1999, I remembered Master Wang's birthday was approaching. I gave him a call, and Master Wang picked up the phone. I was so surprised--He recognized me immediately and said joyfully that Tainan students were always in his mind. That December, Master Wang came to Tainan City again to meet his old students after 17 years and 7 months. We hosted a welcome reception for him. He brought us two copies of his newly published "YMT demonstration books I & II" as a gift to us. The first thing he asked us was, "What would you like to learn now?" Since then, he came to Tainan to teach us often. I also went to Taipei to review Tuishou, Thirteen Pole and Neigong with him.

9Q - What are the qualities that make a good teacher?

9A - According to many years of my teaching experience:

- 1) Let students realize what you teach is what they need.
- 2) Continue teaching step-by-step until students can absorb by themselves.
 - 1) To meet the need of students
 - 2) Teaching methods should be diversified and individualized so that students can learn their own way.
 - 3) Have confidence in students so they have the ability to learn well.

10Q - What a good student?

- 10A - From the experience of being a student myself years ago, I realized there are five elements: sincerity, confidence, concentration, perseverance and determination.
- (1) Be sincere, in order to have confidence.
 - (2) To have confidence in yourself and your teacher, because teaching and studying are mutually beneficial.
 - (3) To concentrate on study.
 - (4) To persevere in learning because it takes long time to perfect.
 - (5) To have determination; not to give up easily.

11Q - What is your greatest wish?

11A - I hope every practitioner of YMT will take the responsibility to transmit YMT worldwide and to enhance the exchange between every YMT alliance association. Also to achieve the aspiration of Master Wang: To have YMT's origin remain in Taiwan.

12Q - How did you meet Lin Chin-Tai (George)?

12A - George came back to Taiwan from America in 1990. We met at a meeting which Master Wang asked me to attend in Taipei. Since then, we interact often.

13Q - Do you think that your participation in meetings in 2009 will be important for the future?

13A - This means a lot. It is a great honor as TYMTA's president, to lead our members in celebrating the 20th anniversary of AMICALE and the College. The signing of agreement among European YMT, American YMT and Taiwan YMT associations to promote the close exchange between us is significant in YMT history.

I have gained experience and inspiration at this successful anniversary event:

- (1) After meeting with many participants in these three days, I realized many of you had been driving day and night from all over the Europe to attend this annual meeting. I am moved by your enthusiasm and passion to YMT.
- (2) Even though we come from different countries, our love and goal to YMT are the same. This strong bond will promote close relationships among us. Our universal YMT family is really unique.
- (3) I am especially fond of the way the workshop was arranged. Participants first put forward what subject they wish to learn. Teachers choose their own specialty. Then students take the courses of their choice. This practical concept of "Teach what you are good at and learn what you need" and the open arrangement is something we can learn and emulate.