

KATSURA SYSTEM

THEORETICAL AND TECHNICAL GUIDELINES



Project Reference

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Title: Keeping Adults Trained, Self-motivated to Undertake Reliable active aging - KATSURA

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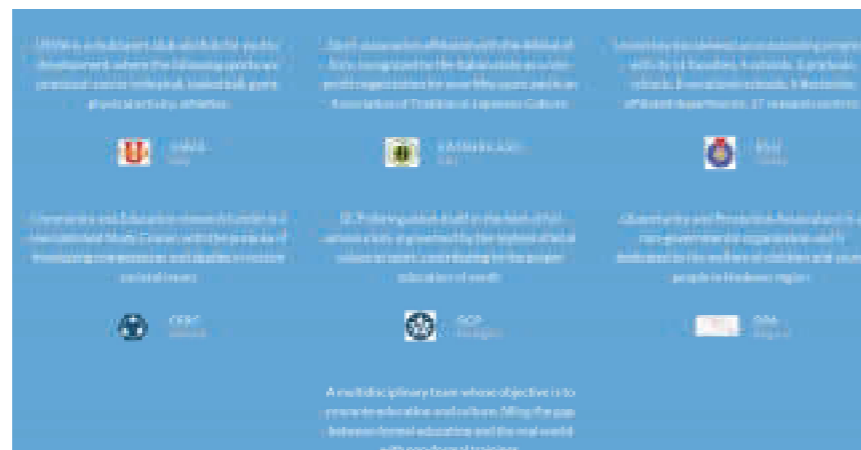
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Contributor:

With the collaboration of

Luca Mortin

Massimo Tizzano

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Considering the scope of the deliverable, which is not a scientific paper, nor a report on activities, but a collection of Sources related to Good Practices, we have to recall the fact that Good Practices have been identified on the web or directly on the field by the partners.

Texts and photos are taken from the web, photographers and designers when known are mentioned, the links to the sources are provided.

The **Katsura System** is a training program that develops the method of unifying mind and body. The aim is to make the body more agile, elastic and toned as well as to promote the ability to relax and concentrate at the highest level.

Katsura is a “wondly tree”, the Cercidiphillum japonicum, native to China and Japan, which resists well even at extreme temperatures and is able to adapt to any soil. This species, moreover, has the almost unique prerogative of tawing the color of the leaves from green to all shades of yellow, orange, red and pink depending on the seasons: symbolically, therefore, it can be taken as the possibility of accepting change and transformation declining in harmony and beauty.

'Katsura' has become, in the 'Erasmus Sports Action Programme', the acronym for “Keeping Adults Trained, Self-motivated to Undertake Reliable Active aging” (that is: “**K**eeping **A**dults **T**rained, **S**elf-motivated to **U**nder take **R**eliable **A**ctive aging”).

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Keeping

Adults

Trained

Self-motivated to

Under take

Reliable

Active aging



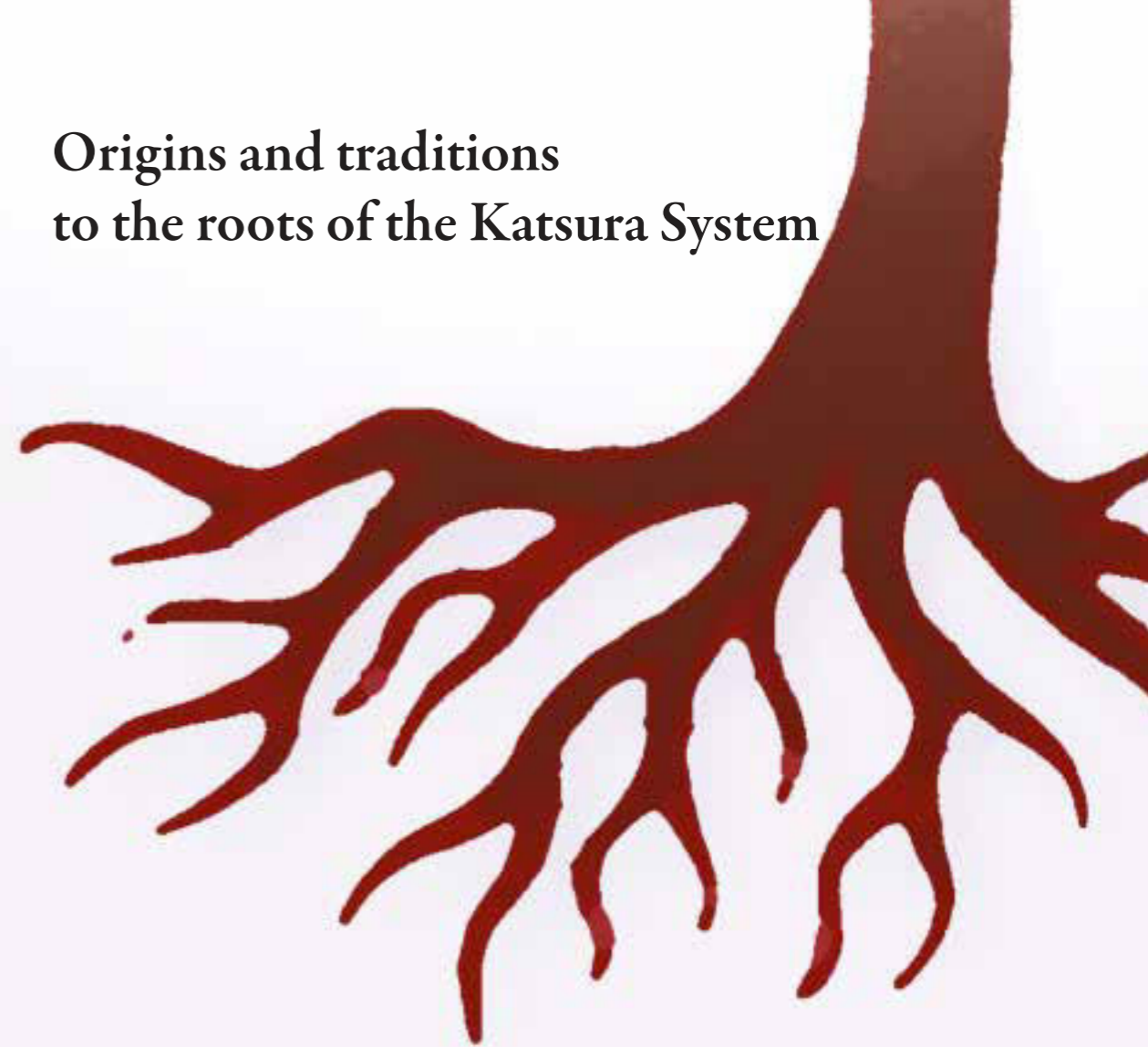
The program is particularly aimed at people who do not engage in regular physical activity and who therefore, for reasons of age, decreased muscle tone and elasticity of the joints, or even just for low self-esteem, do not feel motivated to undertake a fitness practice and, often, feel that they are not up to it.

These are preconceived ideas, which can be overcome, and the **Katsura System** aims to demonstrate practically, to every person who starts training with us, that it is not only possible, but very pleasant and rewarding to improve their physical condition and at the same time obtain considerable psychological and existential benefits.

To achieve these goals, only two qualities are needed: **perseverance** and **determination**. These are not, however, necessary prerequisites, without which it is not possible to start the practice of the Katsura System, but two mental 'postures' that are acquired, are learned precisely by following the training program. **What is necessary** to have, therefore, at the beginning, is only the motivation, that **is, the intention**, the desire to improve one's psycho-physical condition, to open up to a new experience at the same time relaxing and stimulating.



Origins and traditions to the roots of the Katsura System



The exercises we propose, simple but very effective, derive directly from the training techniques of the Traditional Chinese and Japanese Martial Arts, namely *tàijíquán* and *aikidō*.

Il tàijíquán is an “Internal Style”, that is, born from the fusion of the meditative practices of Taoism with the martial ones formerly practiced in Chinese villages: therefore, the spiritual aspect prevails over the development of strength, power and speed of external styles. The goal to be pursued is the balance of Yin and Yang, both in the external movements and in the internal organs: thus the internal energy, the Chi, flows freely and brings benefits to the health of the body and mind. This wonderful martial art, refined and effective at the same time, uses graceful and harmonious movements that combine flexibility, elasticity and naturalness.¹

¹ - See for a first approach: Jou Tsung Hwa, *Il Tao del Tai-Chi Chuan, Way to Rejuvenation*, Rutland, Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1983

Aikidō has its roots in the most refined and lethal Japanese sword, spear and free-bodied fighting styles. Evolved during the Second World War in “Art of Peace”, it develops to the highest degree the oriental principle of non-resistance, such as the katsura branch that flexing under the weight of the abundant snow makes it slide off letting it fall to the ground as a result of the same action of its weight and in this way keeps itself intact and healthy.



The Founder

Morihei Ueshiba was born in Tanabe on December 14, 1883 and was one of the greatest martial arts masters in the history of humanity, so much so that he was defined *Ō sensei* (Great master). The birthplace was always considered special in the sacred geography of Japan, frequented by solitary mystics and ascetics who dedicated themselves to austere contemplative practices. From childhood he was thus immersed in the esoteric atmosphere of Shin-

gon (True Word), he also studied the Chinese classics under the guidance of Mitsujo Fujimoto, a Zen monk. This part of his training will then be fundamental for the genesis of aikidō in its most defined and adult form.

Morihei, a slender and very fragile child, the only son of Yuki and Yoroku Ueshiba, a businessman, engaged in local politics. He was encouraged by his father to practice sumo and swimming to strengthen his body. Moving to Tokyo, he learned different styles of martial arts and in particular he practiced the jujutsu of the Tenshin Shin'yo and Yagyuryū school and perhaps the Shinkage-ryū sword school.

He participated in the war against Russia, at the front he was nicknamed "tetsujin" (iron man), a great skill in handling the bayonet. Transformed his father's barn into a training room, he began to follow the practice of judō under the guidance of master Kiyochi Takagi. But it was in Hokkaido that he met the master Takeda Sokaku and the art that will definitively mark his martial path: the *Daitō-ryū aiki jūjutsu*. Morihei followed the teachings of the master with dedication until he reached the rank of Menkyō kaiden and the certificate of master of *Daitō-ryū aiki jūjutsu* from which *aikidō* would have taken many forms, but fused to the rhythm of the spear. Another meeting that marked him deeply was the one with the charismatic Onisaburo Deguchi, at the top of the Omoto-kyō sect. Morihei stopped at the Omoto headquarters in Ayabe, where he lived for several years, he was then 36 years old. This experience profoundly marked his art, impregnating it with the ideals of world peace and the brotherhood of all humanity, and more generally with the creative and positive mission assigned to the human being. In this climate he had several experiences of spiritual awakening:

In 1927 he opened a first *dōjō* in Tokyo where he began to teach *aiki budō*. But it will be only after the drama of the war, during which he refused to have roles of power that had been offered to him (as he is considered by many exponents of the army as the greatest living martial authority) that aikidō, the art of peace, will see light. He will soon found the Aikikai Foundation association and the Kobukan *dōjō* which will become the Honbu *dōjō*.

Morihei Ueshiba died on April 26, 1969 in Iwama, at the age of 86, bequeathing us this splendid Art called *ai-ki-dō*: "Way of unification and harmonization with the Force and Wisdom of the Universe"!





Kisshomaru Ueshiba (Ayabe, June 27, 1921 - January 4, 1999), was the third son of the founder of *aikidō*.

Kisshomaru began training with his father around 1937. He later attended Waseda University majoring in economics in 1946. Before graduation, however, his father appointed him to head the Kobukan Dōjō in Shinjuku, Tokyo in 1942. Kisshomaru went several times to save the *dōjō* from fire during the bombings during the Second World War.

After the war and in early 1948, Kisshomaru supervised the development of the Aikikai Honbu organization, and in 1967 the construction of the Aikikai headquarters.

After Morihei Ueshiba died in 1969, Kisshomaru Ueshiba assumed the role of Doshu (Hereditary Head). In 1986, in recognition of

his contribution to the public good through the development and growth of *aikidō*, Kisshomaru Ueshiba was awarded the Medal of Honor with Blue Ribbon by the Japanese government. In 1990, in recognition of his distinguished services and contributions to cultural exchange between France and Japan, Ueshiba was awarded a Gold Medal of Sports Merit by the French government. It was the first time a Japanese citizen received this honor. In 1995, he received the Third Order Award of the Sacred Treasury from the Japanese government.

Ueshiba died on January 4, 1999, in a Tokyo hospital of respiratory failure. Since his father had been the first Doshu, Kisshomaru was the second Doshu, and after his death, his son Moriteru Ueshiba became the third Doshu, following the *iemoto* system.

Pubblicazioni

A Life in Aikido: The Biography of Founder Morihei Ueshiba (2008), Kodansha International;

The Art of Aikido: Principles and Essential Techniques (2004) Kodansha International;

Best Aikido: The Fundamentals (2002) Kodansha International,

The Spirit of Aikido (1987), Kodansha International.

Aikido (1985), Japan Publications Trading.

Tradition meets modern science

Benefits of taijiquán:

Many scientific studies have demonstrated the health utility of *taijiquán*: decreased cholesterol levels in the blood, healthy effects on the heart and lungs,² balancing of physiological functions between the left and right frontal lobes.³ The researchers found positive effects in promoting balance, flexibility and cardiovascular functioning and showed that it reduces the risk of falls in both older people and those suffering from chronic disorders, high blood pressure, heart attacks, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and Fibromyalgia.

Researchers have found positive effects in promoting balance, flexibility and cardiovascular functioning and have shown that it reduces the risk of falls in both older people⁴ and those suffering from chronic ailments⁵, high blood pressure, heart attacks, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and Fibromyalgia⁶.

2. Jiang Jianxin Jinjishan Sanatorium of Fujian, *Fushou, Effect of "Taijiquan" on Serum High Density Lipoprotein-Cholesterol and Other Lipid Concentration*, in Chinese Journal of Sports Medicine n° 02, 1984.

3. Wang Xuechen and Chen Shenghwei, *Chuantong Yangshi Taijiquan Dui Daxuesheng Xinfei Gongneng Zhibiao Yinxiang de Yanjiu*, in Shandong Tiyu Xueyuan Xuebao il 7.25.2009.

4. Sun Fu, Pu Qun, Huang Zhiwen, The effects of practising shadowboxing (Taijiquan) on the slow rhythmic frontal waves of EEG in middle and old-aged intellectuals, in Chinese Journal of Gerontology n° 03, 2000.

5. Wolf S. L., Sattin R. W. and Kutner M., Intense tai chi exercise training and fall occurrences in older, transitionally frail adults: a randomized, controlled trial, Journal of the American Geriatric Society, 2003; Nguyen M.H.e Kruse A., The effects of Tai Chi training on physical fitness, perceived health, and blood pressure in elderly Vietnamese, in <https://doi.org/10.2147/OAJSM.S27329>.

6. Au-Yeung P. D. et al., *Short-form Tai Chi Improves Standing Balance of People With Chronic Stroke*, in SAGE Journals Online, 20 jun. 2009 in Internet Archive.

7. Taggart H. M. et al., *Effects of Tai Chi exercise on fibromyalgia symptoms and health-related quality of life*, in <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/14595996/>; Mc Alindon et al., A Randomized Trial of Tai Chi for Fibromyalgia, in <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3023168/>



KATSURA – Principi e linee guida

8 - See a recent specialist study that intends to “measure” il Ki: S. Tsuyoshi Ohnishi and Tomoko Ohnishi, Philosophy, Psychology, Physics and Practice of Ki, Philadelphia Biomedical Research Institute, King of Prussia, PA 19406 and 2 Department of Biochemistry and Biophysics, University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, Philadelphia, PA 19104, USA, Publication 28 January 2008. In: “NLM”, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnology Information <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2686635/>

The study, accompanied by 41 References, is thus presented in the Abstract: “Ki (in Japanese) or Qi (in Chinese) is the key concept in Eastern medicine, Eastern philosophy, as well as in martial arts. We explain the philosophical and psychological background of Ki. We emphasize that the unique aspects of Eastern philosophy are ‘non-linearity’ and ‘holistic’ approach. We then present physical aspect of Ki. Our experiments demonstrated that a ‘Ki-beam’ carries ‘entropy’ (or information), which is different from ‘energy’. We introduce our experience of having taught Ki to 37 beginners in the United States through the Nishino Breathing Method. If beginners had martial arts training or a strong background in music or dance, about half of them could sense Ki within 10 weeks (1 h class per week) of practice.”

9 - See the study, accompanied by a substantial bibliography: *Physiological and psychological benefits of Aikidō training: a systematic review*, 2017. Auctors: Zsuzsanna Szabolcs, Ferenc Kőteles, Attila Szabo In: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/321302673_Physiological_and_psychological_benefits_of_Aikidō_training_a_systematic_review

Abstract Background & Study Aim: The Aikidō is a philosophy and a Japanese art of self-defence, which is proposed to have several Benefitsal effects on mind and body. It is limited, but growing research on this topic. A summary of the empirical works could shed light on the anecdotally postulated benefits of Aikidō. This systematic literature review aims to summarise the current knowledge about the physiological and psychological benefits of Aikidō training.

Results: The authors of the half of selected articles examined the physiological benefits (flexibility, wrist strength, functional efficiency, balance stability, scoliosis, and injuries) while the other half looked at psychological benefits of Aikidō training (mindfulness, self-control, self-esteem, health-related behaviour, mood profile, and goal orientation) but also on Type A behaviour, as aggressiveness and anger. In line with the analysed reports, the gist of these studies suggests that Aikidō training has positive benefits on both physiological and psychological measures, including flexibility, scoliosis, balance stability, mindfulness, anger control, and/or ego-orientation indeed. However, certain methodological concerns weaken the strength of the evidence.

Conclusions: The key message of this review is that the theoretically postulated benefits of Aikidō have started to emerge from both physiologically and psychologically oriented empirical research, which provide infrastructure, as well as the incentive, for future work in this currently underexplored field of study.

Benefits of aikidō

As for Aikidō, this Art puts into practice the principles of Traditional Oriental Medicine, according to whose knowledge the psychophysical well-being of man depends on the balance between the vital energy that permeates each individual and the cosmic energy that surrounds him. *Aikidō* goes in search of just that. His movements, his techniques, the grips, the falls, are nothing more than massages and stimulations on control points of the energy flow channels that Chinese acupuncturists for centuries have codified and identified in our bodies as "energy meridians". It follows that every organ, every bowel, every apparatus connected to these meridians receive a healthy stress during practice, an energy enrichment with positive effects also on the psychic balance.⁷

A key point concerns the mental approach. *Aikidō* develops non-contraposition in situations of conflict and this also seems to allow better reactions of the immune system.

Spirit in situations of uncertainty and illnesses

When the spirit is unable to detach itself from the object and remains in a situation of insecurity and rigidity, if this uncertainty is transferred from the spirit to the body it is easy to get sick. Although outwardly strong, rigidity masks weakness. Worries are embodied in us. The more we worry about the disease, the more we become enslaved by it. Concentration is lost. You enter a vicious circle. [...] The same goes for the techniques used in martial arts. And for the works created by craftsmen and artists. How we cure ourselves of diseases also depends on how we use our life force..

Tada Hiroshi, *Kinorenma*, p. 94

No competition, no agonism

Both of these traditional martial arts aim at the integral development of the person, do not contemplate any form of antagonism and do not propose competitions. Kisshomaru Ueshiba, son of the founder and continuator of his work of spreading Aikidō, is very clear in this regard:

Ultimately, Master Ueshiba concluded that the true spirit of *budō* is not to be found in a competitive and combative atmosphere where brute strength dominates and victory at any cost is the paramount objective. He concluded that it is to be realized in the quest for perfection as a human being, both in mind and body, through cumulative training and practice with kindred spirits in the martial arts. For him only such a true manifestation of *budo* can have a *raison d'être* in the modern world, and when that quality exists, it lies beyond any particular culture or age. His goal deeply religious in nature, is summarized in a single statement: the unification of the fundamental creative principle, *ki*, permeating the universe, and the individual *ki*, inseparable from breath-power, of each person. Through constant training of mind and body, the individual *ki* harmonizes with the universal *ki*, and this unity appears in the dynamic, flowing movement of *ki*-power which is free and fluid, indestructible and invincible. [...] While it (*Aikidō*) inherited the spiritual aspects of martial arts and placed emphasis on the training of mind and body, the other *Budōs* have exalted competitions, accentuating their athletic nature, prioritizing victory, thus securing a place in the world of sports.

Aikidō refuses to become a competitive sport and rejects all forms of contests or tournaments, including weight divisions, ranking based on the numbers of wins and the crowning of champion. Such things are seen as fueling only egotism, self-concern and disregard for others. A great temptation lures people into combative sports - everyone wants to be a winner- but there is nothing more detrimental to *budo*, whose ultimate aim is to become free of self, attain no-self and thus realize what is truly human wants to be a winner – but there is nothing more harmful to the *budō*, whose ultimate purpose is to become free from the individual, reach the non-individual, and in this way realize the true man.”⁸

The same considerations also apply to *tàijiquán*:

“There are no competitions in the Art of Peace.

A true warrior is invincible because he competes against nothing.

Winning means defeating the conflicted mind that lurks within us”

M. Ueshiba (Founder of aikidō)¹¹

10 - Kisshomaru Ueshiba, *Lo spirito dell'Aikidō*, Edizioni Mediterranee, 1987, pp. 18-19. Edizione originale: *The spirit of Aikidō*, Kodansha International, Tokyo, 1984.

Don't compare, don't criticize

With this formula, Master Hiroshi Tada, 9th dan and founder of the Aikikai of Italy, invites practitioners to avoid competition by acting primarily on their conscience, to understand the difference between absolute and relative. Abandoning the competitive spirit benefits physical health and concentration.

The Katsura System aims to indicate the way to reach mind-body unity thanks to the free and spontaneous circulation of Ki, the vital energy.

The main axis of the training we propose is the method, called 'Japanese yoga', developed by Master Nakamura Tempu, who has had great influence in the training of many historical teachers of Aikidō.

Emphasizing gentle stretching and meditation exercises, the ultimate goal of Japanese yoga (Shin-shin-toitsu-do) is better mind/body integration, calm and willpower for a healthier, fuller life. Developed by Nakamura Tempu Sensei in the early 1900s starting from Indian Raja yoga, Japanese martial arts and meditation practices, as well as Western medicine and psychotherapy, Japanese yoga offers a new approach to experienced yoga students and a natural methodology that newcomers will find easy to learn.

For many years, Master Hiroshi Tada has been transmitting the teachings of Master Tempu in Italy and Europe, in the practice sessions dedicated to Ki no renma.



Hiroshi Tada born in the 4th year Shōwa (1929). From the serenity of the beginning of the Shōwa period, it goes through the war conflict. When he came of age, as if drawn by an invisible thread, he met the teachers who would become the Masters of all life. They were Master Funakoshi Gichin of karate-dō, Master Ueshiba Morihei, founder of Aikidō, Master Ueshiba Kisshōmaru, Master Nakamura Tenpū of the method of unification of body and mind (Shinshintōit-suhō) and Master Hino Masakazu and his wife of the dōjō Ichikūkai, heirs of the teachings of Master Yamaoka Tesshū. Among the pioneers of aikidō in Europe, he founded and directed the Aikikai of Italy for almost sixty years in 1970, a non-profit institution. In Japan from 1973 he resumed teaching at the Hombu Dōjō and in 1976 he founded the Gessoji Dōjō at the Gessoji Zen temple. In 1994, he was awarded the rank of 9th dan. In 2019, after 55 years of activity in Italy, the President of the Italian Republic awarded him the title of Knight of the Order of the Star of Italy for having contributed over the years to developing friendship relations between Italy and Japan, with a attentive to the new generations. At the age of 94 he is still in full swing both on a martial artistic and intellectual level.

books by Hiroshi Tada

Aikidō ni ikiru Vivere nell'aikidō, CasadeiLibri, Padova 2023;

Kinorenma, Italian/Japanese bilingual edition, Tokyo, 2014;

L'énergie du souffle - Kī No Renma : Les principes de l'enseignement japonais du ki no renma (Santé)

The Two "Path" of the Budō: "Shingaku no michi" and "Shinpō no michi"

At the roots of the traditional Japanese culture to which we refer is the idea of (Via). The character 道 *dō/michi* has two declensions, two paths that are sometimes divergent, but more often intertwined as a single rope. In the words of master Tada, the two "Ways" are: Shingaku no michi, the Way of Mind-Heart Study and Shinpō no michi, the Way of Laws of mind-heart.

In these two expressions the term "*kokoro*" (heart-mind, soul, spirit, feeling, etc.), is associated with two distinct ethical and spiritual points of view.

Shingaku no michi - "The Way of Ethics"

It is the system of ethical and social rules of Confucian origin that has supported Japanese feudal society for centuries, being the basis of the education of the samurai. It is a path that adapts to changes in society, each time becoming the bearer of different values. It is the way that is commonly identified with *bushidō*, the way of the warrior. It is often mistakenly thought that this is the meaning of the word *dō* in the word *budō*.

Since ancient times in the East we have been studying what is the correct way of living as human beings. It is the Path of Morals. In Japan this Way was always closely linked to the way of life of the *bushi* e, in the seven hundred years of their government, it has changed according to historical periods. In the second half of the Tokugawa period *bushidō* had strong support from the ruling class and, in parallel with the technical improvement itself, importance was given to the practice as a form of culture and as an educational system to actualize the precepts of *bushidō*. For this reason, even in the martial arts the importance of loyalty, trust, fairness, simplicity and frugality, self-sacrifice and integrity was emphasized. It was therefore a Confucian-type Way that combined the practice of martial arts and *bushidō* in a single path. In modern times this Way survives as a path that emphasizes the ethical dimension characteristic of Japanese martial arts. It states the maxim: "The Way of the Sword and the Way of Man are one."

Shinpō no michi - "The Way of Spiritual Principles"

It is "the science of concentration of the spirit". A universal path that in the past has combined the martial techniques of *bujutsu* with Eastern philosophies and the practices of Shintō, Zen Buddhism and Taoism. It is an always current way that indicates the ideal condition of the vital force and the way to use it. Every human being is deeply connected to the universe and through its life force finds the union of body-mind-spirit. Aikidō belongs to this second Way.⁹

11 - *Conoscere l'Aikidō Secondo gli insegnamenti di Tada Hiroshi Sensei*, Associazione di Cultura Tradizionale Giapponese, Roma, 2018, p. 5. (our translation). A wider exposition can be found in the Master's autobiographical book: Tada Hiroshi, *Aikidō no Ikiru*, CasadeiLibri Editore, being published.



II Ki no renma.

The *aikidō* can be compared to a bird with two wings: one is the external practice of techniques and the other is the inner training of breathing and meditation. With only one wing you can't fly

M.° Hiroshi Tada

12. Hiroshi Tada, *L'énergie du Souffle. Les principes de l'enseignement japonais du Ki no renma*, Hachette Livre, 2023. 14. (our translation)..

The expression *ki no renma* is composed of two Japanese words; '*ki*' and '*renma*', joined by the particle '*no*' (used to indicate the specification complement, equivalent to the Italian '*di*'). Literally translated *Ki no renma* means: 'forge your own life energy'.

The term "*renma*" is used in Japan to refer to the art of sword forging that occurs through a slow, long and repeated work of overlapping several layers of metal.

The word "*ki*" (in Chinese; "*chī*"; pinyin "*qī*") represents the vital energy that underpins the metabolism, survival, and mental, emotional, and spiritual expression of the human being.

ki should not be understood as a simple material energy similar to electricity, but rather as a force endowed with intelligence, love and will. In the human body, Ki flows within the nervous system and particular channels conventionally called 'meridians'.

Maestro Tada succinctly indicates the different meanings of *ki*:

1. What fills the space between the earth and the sky and what can be considered as the basic element that makes up the universe.
2. What is at the origin of the creation of everything? The driving force of life. The source of vitality. The spirit.
3. In general terms, Ki has the same meaning as *prana* in yoga.¹⁰

During the practice of Ki-no-renma, we try to get in touch, absorb, assimilate and circulate in us this Force that is both personal and universal. During the Ki-no-renma workouts the following practices are proposed: Kokyū (Pranayama) practice of control and extension of energy by means of breathing exercises with sounds and vibrations; the Pratyahara or control of the senses, the abstraction of the intellect from sensory activity; Renzogyo and Shuki no Ho (Dharana), practices of control and extension

Master Tada writes: "If you were to choose an image to describe the training method of the Ki no renma you could choose that of a current of energy like the momentum of a stream that has its source in a lake and that becomes a river. The physical appearance of the training will naturally take place in harmony with this current. The goal is to make the invisible, that is, the Ki, and the spirit are naturally in agreement and become one with the visible, that is, the body. This is what is called "the union of Ki, spirit and body" (*Kishintai no icchi*).¹¹

Nakamura Tempu identified "four basic principles for unifying mind and body" (*shinshin toitsu no yondai gensoku*). They are:

- Use the mind in a positive way;
- Use the mind with full concentration;
- Use the body in harmony with the laws of nature;
- Train the body progressively, systematically, regularly.

By adhering to these four principles it is possible to achieve great results. The method proposed by the Katsura System, therefore, is structured in three phases, which characterize each training session:

- Adjusting the body
- Adjusting your breathing
- Fixing mind and heart.

13. *Ibidem*, 16.(our translation).





I shin den shin – Understand and feel

I shin den shin is a zen formula whose literal meaning is 'from heart to heart'. It indicates the essence of the teaching that is transmitted from Master to disciple. In the practice of an art, the Master can explain using words: he then provides the rational description of the technique by addressing the mind and intellectual understanding of the pupil who then learns the explanation of the technique with the mind.

In the context of *aikidō*, and also of *tai chi chuan*, it, however, the Master teaches through the body with the example of his own practice, providing visualization of the concrete and physical execution of the technique, transferring 以心伝心 “*i shin den shin*”, knowledge. The cognitive and learning tool is the body, thanks to the correct posture of the mind and soul, relaxation and concentration.

The character 心 “*shin*” means heart, mind, spirit.

以心 “*i shin*” means from the heart, from the mind, from the spirit.

伝心 “*den shin*” means to say to the heart, to say to the mind, to say to the spirit.

The expression 以心伝心 “*i shin den shin*” therefore means transmission by direct participation of one's soul, by direct involvement in the same feeling, beyond words, between Master and pupil.

This means that knowledge of art cannot be transmitted only with words and concepts, that is, with rational explanations, just as teaching is normally understood in the West.

In the tradition of Eastern disciplines and *aikidō* in particular, the transmission of knowledge belongs to the thinnest and deepest sphere of feeling, that is, of one's own intimate way of being not only on the tatami but in the same daily life and of the way of relating to practice.

For this reason traditionally the lesson of *aikidō* begins with breathing and concentration exercises with which the Master generates around him a particular atmosphere of empathy that induces the student to learn movements with his own body by emulation of the Master. The mnemonic process does not take place in the mind and through rational understanding, but is realized in the body itself and settles in the instinctual sphere through the action performed by one's body in the systematic repetition of the same movements, until these become a completely spontaneous action whose execution no longer requires the support of mental memory and thought.



REISEISHIN

REI, the character 靈 indicates the soul, the "spirit", and is composed of the rain kanji 雨, one 一 and 亞 denoting the "lower" aspect. Hence the idea that it refers above all to the subtle modalities closest to the body of being as in expressions *shiryoo* 死靈 (ghost of a deceased) e *ikiriyoo* 生靈 (subtle projection of a living being) and more *reiki* 靈氣, con reference to the energetic aspect of subtle modalities. Finally the expression *kodama* 木霊, (the echo), which was also used for the projections of the kami into the trees.

性 SEI, nature, disposition, personality, character, but also gender, sex is formed by characters *shin* 心 (see below) and 生 life, existence, generation, birth and growth.

心 SHIN, heart/mind/spirit, the pneumatic and intellectual center of being in direct relationship with the Principle of the universe. By extension it can represent all inner activity, thoughts and feelings.

The pictogram from which it originates shows the pericardium open upwards like a flower, to the influences of Heaven.

The expression reiseishin therefore simultaneously refers to the idea of the individual soul in its considerable complexity and in its indefinite subtle modalities, to the personal, vital genius and to the universal spirit that represents its heart both in spiritual and ontological-energetic terms.

靈

性

心



Saburō Nakamura - Tenpū Nakamura (中村天風, 1876-1968), former secret service agent and martial artist exceptionally skilled with Zuihen Ryū sword techniques, was a pioneer of yoga in Japan of which he created a specifically Japanese version called Shinshin -tōitsu-dō (心身統一道, lit. the way of uniting mind and body), who taught at the school he founded, the Tenpū-Kai. According to Nakamura the mental attitude can influence reality.

His pragmatic approach is summed up in the Five Principles of the Positive Mind to which he dedicated himself for decades, addressing the greatest Japanese exponents of sport, industry and art, as well as the last Emperor Hirohito.

The principles for a positive mind.

Examine the mind.

Analyze the suggestions received from your environment. Examine your attitude towards others.

Discover the present and follow the "reiseishin".

Among the various precious teachings that he left us, we recall the famous lesson that the Master held in the late 60s, entitled Shin-jin Mei-go, or "The Invisible Connection between Humanity and the Spirit of the Universe". In his speech, he explained that he spent some years developing anjō daza hō. He clarified that the mind can succeed in entering a state of concentration - the first stage of meditation - by focusing on a sound and used the sound of a Japanese meditation bell as an object to join the "soundless sound".

After his death many attempts were made to preserve and consolidate his teachings, creating official versions of the exercises and methodology. Since Tenpū never promoted a dogma or a religion, various versions of his teachings developed including, for example, that of Master Tohei Koichi. Nakamura Tenpū was also one of Master Tada's teachers and part of his exercises can be found in the Kinorenma.

Nakamura sensei was one of the proponents of the philosophy that attitude can influence reality. His approach is summed up by the Five Principles of the Positive Mind mentioned above, which he taught for decades to top Japanese athletes, captains of industry, famous writers and artists, and even the late Emperor Hiroito. Here are some of his more famous students: Haraki Takashi, Prime Minister of Japan.

Togo Heihachiro, admiral of the Japanese navy during the Russo-Japanese conflict (called the Nelson of the East).

Sugiura Jugo, famous teacher and president of the University of Tokyo. Ishikawa Sudo, highly esteemed Buddhist monk in charge of Sojiji Temple. Yokota Sennosuke, well-known politician and minister of justice.

Prince Higashikuni Naruhiko, Prime Minister.

Ozaki Yukio of the Order of the Rising Sun and member of the House of Representatives of the Japanese Diet (aka the father of the Japanese constitution).

Count Goto Shinpei, Minister of Interior and Foreign Affairs. Asano Soichiro, famous Japanese entrepreneur and manager.

From the fifth chapter of the volume *The Teachings of Tempu: Practical Meditation for Daily Life* di H. E. Davey

Mind and Body

The mind moves and controls every part of our body, but control of internal organs is exercised unconsciously and autonomously through the nervous system. We can therefore deduce that the mind directs the body but at the same time the body reflects the mental state and the mind is influenced by the state of the body, through channels that not only are we not normally able to control but of which we often do not even have awareness.

Thanks to the activity of the autonomic nervous system, mind and body are unified, but it is necessary to develop a particular sensitivity to be able to 'feel' the work that the nervous system does thanks to its 'hidden' channels.

The primary objective of Nakamura Tempu's system is to promote a rebalancing in the mind-body system and as its ultimate goal to allow positive interventions that allow conscious adjustments and fortifications of the autonomic nervous system and through it of the mind, the body and the human being as a whole.

For the disciplines that are born within the Budō, mastery of one's own reactions in every circumstance is vital. Life or death can depend on this.

The most experienced masters warn that technique, whatever the martial art that is practiced, however necessary, is not enough in itself.

A true teacher should in fact be able to feel the danger in advance, and be able to react at the right time with the correct intensity.

This attitude, which the warriors of ancient Japan learned from an early age, can still prove to be extremely useful in all areas of contemporary man's daily life, a man who increasingly feels overwhelmed by events and who reacts deliberately or succumbs helplessly to stress and depression.

The type of study necessary for this purpose is the refinement of the senses and the control of the nervous system; a work to be done with care and attention thanks to a precise type of training and a certain determination.

The network of nerves that radiates from the brain throughout our body has here a function of "bridge", not only between our will and our body, but also between the purely physical human aspect, and the most subtle and divine one.

Master Hiroshi Tada, during his lessons, dwelt many times on the importance of keeping the nervous system healthy with specific exercises aimed at reactivating the central nervous system, relaxing the nerves and exercising control over them

Master Koichi Tohei, 1920 – 2011, who was a pupil not only of Morihei Ueshiba but also of Nakamura Tempu, also provides us with useful guidance, highlighting the need to achieve body-mind unity in daily life. He writes in one of his books dedicated to just that: "We all recognize the need to coordinate mind and body. But the fact is that few succeed. You don't achieve mind-body coordination by practicing Zazen meditation on top of a mountain for twenty or thirty years if you lose it when you return to the world to face everyday life." Mind and body, in fact, respond to different laws: the mind has no form nor color and therefore can expand freely; the body, on the other hand, can only make the movements that its nature allows. Furthermore, although both born from the Ki of the universe, and being originally all one, we think mind and body as two separate entities. This happens because mind and body obey their own laws, just as our hair and our skin, although they have the same origin, they have their own functions and obey different vital codes. It is then necessary to understand both the law of the mind and the law of the body, in order to unite them. Based on his study and experience, Master Tohei presents four principles for coordinating mind and body, which find application in his training method. To unite mind and body you must therefore: Stay focused on the point of the Ki (a punch under the navel); Relax completely; Keep the weight under (just as the Tai Chi Chuan teaches, in which the feet are rooted in the ground); Send the Ki (free and unimpeded, as it freely circulates within the body).

14..I *bidem*, pp.16-17.

The third principle of 'keeping the weight below' clearly illustrates what it is and how the unity of mind and body is realized. The expression “weight under” indicates the condition that occurs when you remain calm. Master Tohei points out:

Living calm is the natural state in which the weight of an object naturally falls on the underside of the object. The human body must also be considered an object, so its weight is placed at a specific point. If we can maintain that point, our weight is under. This is the real living calm. [...] Men, rocks and tree trunks are all natural objects. Therefore, if we do nothing and leave our body alone, the weight will come naturally underneath. But, due to bad habits acquired through the times, we often put the weight on it, and we can't keep calm. It is often said that anger rises to the head. In fact, when we are angry, that is, we lose our calm, the weight is no longer below, but above. So for the first few days we have to continually practice keeping all the weight of our body under. Over time this good habit will replace the bad ones and the weight of our body will be placed underneath even if we don't consciously think about it. It is natural that we accustom our body to keeping our mind calm, without doing anything else, when we are sitting in the Seiza or Zazen position.¹²



Koichi Tohei was born on January 20, 1920 in the Shitaya area of Tokyo. Since childhood, he had been in poor health. He began to practice zen, misogi and judo on the advice of his father, to improve his health. In 1937, at the age of 16, he entered the Keio judo school, which he had to abandon a year later when he fell ill with pleurisy. Doctors imposed drastic treatment and a ban on heavy training because it could endanger his life. Tohei Sensei then intensified his study of oriental religious and respiratory practices. After a while he went back to the doctors, who found the disease was gone.

In 1939 he began studying with Master Morihei Ueshiba.

Tohei Sensei joined the military at age 23. He was sent to China for four years. On the field he understood that if one's defenses are lowered even for an instant, this could mean death. He then decided to practice ki breathing 200 times a day. He noticed that the presence of the enemy hiding nearby affected his breathing. As a result of Koichi Tohei's vigilant awareness of his own breathing, no members of his platoon were killed or wounded during the war.

Upon his return from central China, Tohei Sensei continued his aikidō and misogi studies in Tokyo. He began spreading the principles of Ki in Europe and Hawaii and became one of the most important and influential personalities in the world of aikidō.

In 1947, Tohei Sensei was initiated into the teachings of Tempu Nakamura.

Between 1953 and 1971 he helped build Aikido schools on the North American continent, which is why he visited the United States more than 15 times.

In 1969, Tohei Sensei received the 10th Dan. He founded the Ki and Aikido Society (non-profit organization) in 1971, the Tokyo Head Office was established, followed by the Kansai Head Office in 1976 and the Chubu Head Office in 1976. 1994. In 1990, Tochigi headquarters was established in Ichikai Town, where Koichi Tohei was born and raised. On May 19, 2011 Tohei Sensei returned to the source

He has written numerous books on Aikido and Ki. Among these we mention:

Ki in Daily Life; Kātsu; Ki Breathing; The Way to Union with Ki; Ki Sayings; This Is Aikido; Aikido, the Arts of Self-Defense; Aikido in Daily Life.

Nishi's six golden rules

Katsuzō Nishi, 1884 – 1959, Aikidō's engineer and teacher at the Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, is the creator of a healing system in which he summarized the centuries-old experience of world medicine. He worked for a long time for the Tokyo Metro and therefore his method for increasing and preserving health, also aimed at practicing martial arts, was baptized by him as the *Nishi System of Health Engineering* in the book of the same name published in 1936. His study of health stemmed from the need to find a solution for himself, as he recalls in the book cited:

Weak and sickly since early childhood, still a boy I had a virtual death sentence from a doctor of clear fame who said: "This young man, I'm sorry to say, will never be twenty years old".



But now I am approaching an age that is three times twenty years and this, it should be noted, after having been actively engaged in engineering work for thirty long years and with enough stamina to have never missed a day of work during the last twenty of these years

This health, for which I am so grateful, however, does not come to me by chance. I had to fight for it. But, referring the story of this struggle to another part of this book, I simply want to say here that what I am today I owe to my original methods of building health - methods that are the precious result of years of careful study of almost every health theory and preventive medicine that is in the world, of endless experiments, of a truly critical examination, from the point of view of modern medical science.

Il Nishi shiki (Nishi Health System) has its theoretical cornerstones in four fundamental elements whose conditions determine the overall state of human health:

Nourishment; Skin; Mind; Limbs

Five methods of self-diagnosis are then developed, which require the observation and possibly the care of:

Spine and stomach;
Sexual organs and sciatic nerve;
Kidneys;
Liver;
Intestine and urinary organs.

A 2013 study, based on six-month fieldwork, illustrates Nishi's method of care used in a Japanese clinic.¹³

16. Nishi, Katsuzo [1936]: Nishi System of Health Engineering. Tokyo Maruzen Company LTD. Published later by Kessinger Publishing (10 settembre 2010).

17. Spro, Julie, The Fasting Family : Experiences of health, responsibility and healing in a Japanese medical clinic, Master thesis submitted to the department of social anthropology, University of Oslo, Spring 2013. In : <https://www.duo.uio.no/handle/10852/36750>

The system is complex but Nishi has summarized its essence in six basic principles and exercises, the Six Golden Rules:¹⁴

1. *heisho* (平床寝台)
Flat bed and as hard as possible
2. *kochin* (硬枕利用)
Hard semi-cylinder cushion, of Paulonia wood
3. *Kingyō undō* (金魚運動)
Little goldfish movement
4. *mōkan undō* (毛管運動)
Movement with vibration of the capillaries of the arms and legs
5. *gasshō gasseki undō* (合掌合蹠運動)
Rhythmic movement with the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet joined..
6. *hifuku undō* (背腹運動)
Back – abdominal movement.

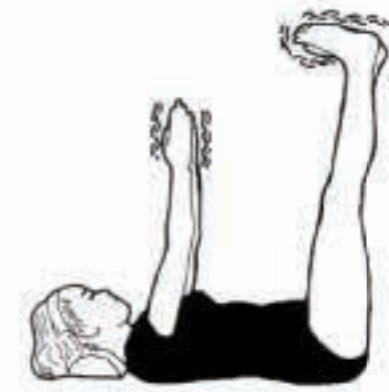
The first two rules relate to sleep hygiene. People spend a third of their life sleeping, so it is very important to organize a bed in such a way as to create optimal conditions for the relaxation of the body. It is advisable to use a bed as hard as possible and the specific semi-cylinder hard pillow on which to rest the third or fourth cervical vertebra. Cover yourself with a light blanket, but avoid getting cold, and lying down.

In this way the weight of the body is distributed evenly. This posture allows you to realign the spine, especially the cervical spine and bone structure, to revitalize the functions of the skin, vascular system and nervous system.

3. In this way the weight of the body is distributed evenly. This posture allows you to realign the spine, especially the cervical spine and bone structure, to revitalize the functions of the skin, vascular system and nervous system.

4. The fourth rule concerns capillaries. The purpose of the exercise is to stimulate capillaries in the organs, improve blood circulation throughout the body, movement and renewal of lymph. This exercise is a good substitute for running, because it allows you to relieve the load on the joints and heart, which is sometimes very important, and in addition, prevents the development of varicose veins.

If you can perform it naked, in addition to the above effects, you will also get an increase in skin breathing and this will lead to the purification of the body from toxins through the skin.



5. The fifth rule is a rhythmic movement with the palms of the hands and soles of the feet together.

This exercise involves the back, abdomen and diaphragm, connecting the feet and hands: it promotes a condition of balance between mind and body, and coordinates the functions of muscles, nerves and blood vessels. In this way, we help the work of the diaphragm, which naturally improves blood circulation and reduces stress on the heart. The special usefulness of this exercise also lies in the interaction of the muscles of the right and left sides of our body, which, by coordinating, help the work of all internal organs. In particular it is useful for muscle function, for nerves and for blood circulation around the pelvis, abdomen and thighs. This exercise consists of two phases, a preparatory part and a main part.



6. The sixth rule affects the spine and abdomen. It is useful for restoring the acid-base balance of the organism, contributes to the Beneficial effect of mental energy and on the nervous system. One of the main components of life's success, according to Nishi, is faith in oneself. As they say, we are what we think about. If you prepare for an important commitment you have to firmly believe in a positive outcome. Exercise for the back and abdomen is intended specifically for those areas of our body where the main vital energies and also important organs are concentrated. The exercise is divided into two parts: the first part, preparatory, consists of very gentle movements that contract the entire cervical area and is repeated twice; the second part, more dynamic, involves the oscillation of the back from one side to the other.



Katsuzo Nishi (勝造 西 1884-1959) he was an engineer and worked for a long time for the Tokyo Metro and was an aikidō teacher at the Hombu Dojo in Tokyo, taking an active part - even if not yet sufficiently explored - in the elaboration of the modern aikitaiso system. Consequently, his interest in the methods of increasing and preserving body potential, also aimed at the practice of martial arts, were defined by him as the Nishi System of Health Engineering in the homonymous book published in 1936 His theories and the methods he elaborated met with immediate success. He enjoyed a solid professional reputation and in addition to being Chief Engineer of the Tokyo Metro he had introduced in Japan the concepts illustrated by Norbert Wiener in *Cybernetics: Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*, which inspired many automation processes and then led to the first example in the world of an automatic ticket issuing machine, installed in Tokyo by the Omron company founded by Kazuma Tateisi.

Katsuzo Nishi narrates that he began to develop his theory around 1927, when he was already 44 years old. He decided to resign to devote himself entirely to his health research, during which he returned to the United States, where he had studied at Columbia University. He published the Nishi System in English in 1936, in which he collected the text of the lectures he had given during this trip.

He had begun to study medicine to find a remedy for the serious ailments suffered from early childhood. Doctors had diagnosed him with several dangerous diseases at once and warned his parents that the child had little chance of surviving beyond the age of 20. Nishi was treated with traditional medicine methods and trying to follow all kinds of recommendations to improve his health, but the pathologies persisted.

Despite his poor condition, he decided to follow a sword school and attended the Kamakura temple to practice meditation. His health tended to improve, but his digestive system gave out due to too many medicines he had been prescribed. A few years of relative tranquility followed, which allowed him to resume his studies but not to live peacefully.

Then he began to delve into the literature containing information on ancient and modern health practices. He selected the best techniques and started using them to improve his own health. As a result, Nishi not only recovered and extended his life for a long time (he lived to be 75), but also became the author of a popular health care system.

In addition to the mentioned book he published in 1950 *Live longer, the Nishi Health System Way*, where he illustrates five examples of self-diagnosing gymnastics.



Visualization

One of the peculiar aspects of the *Katsura System* is to use, cultivate and refine the techniques of representation and visualization that, together with proper breathing, make it possible to realize the unity of mind and body by resonating with “the inexhaustible energy of the univers”.

Doctor Nobuo Shioya, who has developed a breathing method to promote self-healing, illustrates with a practical example the reason why mental representation and visualization are necessary to concentrate the inexhaustible energy of the universe:

... to ignite a sheet of paper using sunlight it is not enough to put the sheet to the Sun, but you also need a convex lens. The lens conveys the light and when its focus is directed exactly to the paper, it begins to burn.

Now let's replace the lens with our mental representation and visualization, or if we want with the creative force of thoughts and proper breathing. Sunlight is present in abundance, but if you don't focus it on one point the paper doesn't catch fire. Even the inexhaustible energy of the universe is everywhere but, until it focuses on a point in the body with the lens of the mental and symbolic representation and directs it on a goal, it is not used in a targeted way to realize thoughts. To activate it, it is important to focus it on the right point, and precisely in the center of the body.

What happens if we color a blank sheet with black ink? Paper burns much faster because black absorbs light much better than white. 'Coloring with black ink' corresponds to 'asking insistently'. [...] Mental representation and visualization act like a lens: they concentrate the inexhaustible energy of the universe and then direct it to the lens.

The process by which a desire comes true is comparable to the production process of a machine, so the inexhaustible energy of the universe is equivalent to the driving force, while the representations and visualizations correspond to the control devices. “The blackening of the mind” sets in motion the inexhaustible energy of the universe and is therefore the starting lever.¹⁵

19. Nobuo Shioya, *La Fonte dell'Eterna Giovinezza*, Macro Edizioni, 2009, pp. 56-57. (our translation).
German edition: *Der Jungbrunnen des Dr. Shioya*, 2006



Nobuo Shioya Nobuo Shioya was born in Japan in 1902 and died in 2008 at the age of 106.

Having been a poor child, he searched hard for ways to regain his health. This research led him to choose the medical profession, so that he could help himself and others. After earning his doctorate, he combined the methods of Western medicine with the Eastern tradition.

He later realized that the method of visualization could speed up the healing process of his patients. From that kind of visualization and from his particular respiratory technique he drew a very particular and very effective healing method.

This 'method of the creative force of thoughts and correct breathing' allowed him to have a long and always healthy life, so much so that he claimed to have become younger and younger since his sixtieth birthday. For example, at the age of a hundred he won a golf tournament.

It's not just about 'imagining' something. The process of visualization is more subtle.

We find interesting clarifications on this point in Itsuo Tsuda:

Even though the brain is the seat of imagination, the pelvis, whose functioning is reflected on the fourth lumbar, can give rise to a particular mental activity: visualization.

As imagination creates increasingly varied possibilities, visualization engages with a complete realization. [...] If the imagination is based in the brain, visualization takes place starting from the *koshi* (the lower back). As long as this is not ductile, mobile and alive, the display evaporates.

If imagination can form very quickly, visualization is done or not done, depending on the conditions of the soil (i.e. the body-mind), to penetrate the bottom and bear fruit. While the imagination changes depending on the moment, the visualization, once acquired, remains.

Abstraction kills the visualization that lives only through the total commitment of being. Visualization transcends the principle of contradiction, which is not to say that you can visualize anything in any way. It faithfully reflects the personality of the one who visualizes.¹⁶

20. Itsuo Tsuda, *La scienza del particolare. La scuola della respirazione* (Volume secondo), SugarCo Edizioni, 1980, pp. 44-45 e 75.

Thanks to the exercises proposed by the Katsura System in the third part of the training sessions, "Fixing mind and heart", you can learn the correct way to visualize.



Itsuo Tsuda was born in 1914 into a family of samurai who became business leaders. At sixteen he revolted against the will of his father who destined him to become heir to his property. He starts wandering, in search of freedom of thought. In 1934, he decided to go to France to continue his studies. Here he followed the teaching of Marcel Granet, sinologist, and Marcel Mauss, sociologist, until the war. He will recall the importance of this training for the work he will do in Europe years later in these terms: "They taught me to enucleate a fact from inextricable contexts, to question established values."

In 1940 he was mobilized and had to return to Japan. After the war, while working in Tokyo for the Air France company as an interpreter, his interest turned to the cultural aspects of Japan: in particular he studied *nô* acting with Maestro Hosada of the Kanze Kasetsu School.

Also after the war, around the age of thirty, Itsuo Tsuda begins learning *Seitai* and the *Katsugen undō* (活元運動?),

translated by him "Movement regenerator", with Maestro Noguchi, training that will last more than twenty years.

He is forty-five when he meets Master Ueshiba, founder of Aikido, of whom he is a student until 1969, when Master Ueshiba dies.

In the preface of *Il Non-Doing* Itsuo Tsuda recounts: « From the day I had the revelation of « ki », of breathing (I was then more than forty years old), the desire to express the inexpressible, to communicate the incommunicable. In 1970, at the age of fifty-six, I quit my job as an employee and embarked on an adventure without guarantees or promises».

After traveling the United States, he arrives in Paris. Here he begins to write, becomes passionate about this work, and spreads his manuscripts with makeshift means; then, a group of people, who in 1969 had already organized a demonstration in his favor, invited him to use the association founded by them: this allowed him to learn more about the European mentality and to take it into account. In 1973 the *Courier du Livre* publishing house published his first book *Le Non faire*. Reading his 1983 workshop calendars, ten years later, gives an idea of the activity he carried out all over Europe to initiate people into the Regenerative Movement and the Breathing Practice of M° Ueshiba.

However, during all these years, M° Tsuda, who died in 1984, has always considered writing as the essential part of his work.

He has published nine books in French, later translated into Italian as well: *The Not Doing*; *The Way of Spoliation*; *The Science of the Particular*; *One*; *The Dialogue of Silence*; *The Unstable Triangle*; *Even if I don't think, I am*; *The Way of the Gods*; *Facing Science*.

The *Seitai* (整体?) is a health practice formalized by Haruchika Noguchi (1911-1976) in Japan around the mid-twentieth century: it literally means "body positioned correctly"; *Katsugen undō* (活元運動?) is described by Noguchi as an exercise of the extrapyramidal motor system (that is, the neural circuits responsible for involuntary motor skills, such as reflexes and posture control).

The books of Itsuo Tsuda

1. *The Not Doing*

Temporarily suspending the voluntary system, freeing ourselves from knowledge and techniques to allow the natural evolution of our being are the basic principles for the regenerative movement to manifest itself, in response to the body's needs. A practice that allows man to rediscover his own inner freedom.

First edition "Yume Editions".

2-. *The Path of Dispossession*

"Abandon the path of acquisition from which the whole world has benefited but which today has reached a disturbing development: Tsuda teaches us in these pages to strip ourselves of all that is useless in order to be able to see things with a new, greater awareness. "

First edition "Yume Editions".

3. *The science of the particular*

Tsuda, choosing the title of his writing, launched a challenge to Aristotle's formulation: there is no science that is not universal. Concentrating attention on the particular, getting out of drowning in classifications, learning to harmonize the episode with the whole is what Master Tsuda teaches the reader who wants to reacquire the unity of his own being.

4. *One*

The difficult definition of *One*, which has involved many schools of thought over the centuries, is formulated by Tsuda in the concrete perspective of the individual universe. His teaching aims to free man from social gears and to lead him to understand that there are no other masters than ourselves.

5. *The dialogue of silence*

Life as a constant evolution, whose point of arrival is death, the disappearance of the form. Western man is frightened by the idea of this definitive dispossession with no possibility of return. No objective criterion can determine the difference between life and death, and only the inner

awakening makes us perceive it: not an intellectual speculation, but a sudden dialogue of silence.

6. The unstable triangle

Civilization cannot do without the cerebral dimension, the analysis of experience, certain space-time coordinates. Yet civilized people often dream of being able to return to the state of nature: Tsuda teaches us how simple it actually is to achieve it.

7. Even if I don't think, I am

The unconscious dimension is an aspect of our ego that often frightens Western man, unaccustomed to moving away from the rational cerebral dimension. The overturning of the Cartesian cogito, the overcoming of the body-mind dialectic is what Seitai teaches us, trying to direct the reader's attention towards the unsuspected richness of our unconscious being.

8. The Way of the Gods

Western man, engaging his energies to achieve goals such as career, wealth, knowledge and security, does not realize that he loses sight of the essential reason for living: life itself. Through this work, Tsuda shows how Western society is increasingly becoming a "victim" of its own rationalism.

9. Facing science

The path towards the absolute sovereignty of scientific knowledge, the inexorable advance of rationalism that imprisons contemporary man: through sensation, Tsuda teaches how to live without being slaves, victims or prisoners of science, on the contrary, trying to grasp the maximum advantages.



Exercise of the pendulum

During the Kinorenma seminars, Master Tada highlighted how visualization can change the body condition through the nervous system, and consequently how critical the mind is to increase the benefits of a workout. The pendulum exercise can be practiced either while sitting or standing. Shoulders and arms relaxed, wrist bent down, fingers softly holding a thread to the end of which is tied a plumb bob (those for fishing are fine).

Looking at the pendulum and breathing quietly we try to imagine that it moves in a precise direction (circular to the right or left, forward, to the side, etc.).

If the exercise is performed carefully you will notice that the pendulum will begin to move without there being a voluntary impulse imprinted by the hand. The movement is generated by the micro vibrations that, through the relaxed body, reach from the brain to the fingertips thanks to the strength of visualization.

It is advisable to perform this exercise twice, at the beginning and end of the training session. This will allow you to verify the result and appreciate the improvement achieved in the ability to use and direct the visualization.



Man and the Universe

About the origin of the Universe, the *Tao Te Ching* says :

*The Way gave birth to one. One gave birth to two. Two gave birth to three. Three gave birth to all things. All things carry yin and embrace yang. They reach harmony by blending with the vital breath.*¹

The One generated by Tao is Chaos.

The Two generated by the One, in which qi is mysteriously present, is yin and yang.

Three generated from Chaos by means of yin-yang is Heaven-Earth.

Three gave birth to the "ten thousand creatures", including man.

The One generated by Tao is Chaos. The Two generated by the One, in which qi is mysteriously present, is yin and yang. Three generated from Chaos by means of *yin-yang* is Heaven-Earth. Three gave birth to the "ten thousand creatures", including man. The "vital breath" is the *qi*, the energy that supports the yin-yang causing the "ten thousand creatures" to be in harmony. *Qi* is within the yin-yang bipolarity. All creatures have the original qi inside, which they obtain by being harmonious and soft, just as there are entrails in the chest, marrow in the bones, cavities in the plants. They can live a long time because they are filled with emptiness and *qi*.

Liezi, in the second chapter of "The Symbol of Heaven", describes the origin of the Manifestation with a poetic paraphrase of this passage and of chapter 14 of the Tao Te Ching where Laozi speaks of the "form without form"..²

"The ancient sages used yin and yang to talk about the nature of things. They described changes in heaven and earth as the interaction of yin and yang. They said that the Nameless gives birth to the Named and that the origin of heaven and earth lies in that nebulous and unfathomable realm where all things are undifferentiated from each other. [...] How do things emerge from this unfathomable and undifferentiated realm? They go through four stages: the Primal Oneness, the Primal Emerging, the Primal Beginning, and the Primal Substance. [...] The Primal Oneness is the state in which all things are undivided and undifferentiated. There is no subject and object, no shape and form. In the Primal Emerging, the Primordial Vapor (ch'i) covers heaven and earth. Yin and yang have not divided, and everything lies within the embrace of the Vapor. In the Primal Beginning, yin and yang divide, and their interaction produces limited but identifiable shapes and forms. In the stage of the Primal Substance, things have not only assumed definite shapes and forms but have taken on qualities. They are hard or soft, light or heavy, moving or still. [...] Although each thing is said to have its own essence of life, shape, and quality, these three entities are inseparable. They are all connected to the undifferentiated origin. Despite all apparent differences, all things are connected with each other and with their origin, the Tao.

The Tao is formless and cannot be seen or heard. What we see or hear are only the manifestations of the Tao. That is why the ancients said, [...] Try to see it and it is not there; try to hear it, and there is nothing." Because the Tao cannot be grasped by our mundane senses, it is futile for us to use ordinary perception to discover the Tao. The Primal Origin has no essence, no form, and no substance. From its undifferentiated oneness, it divides into unaccountable myriad things, and yet in an instant, all things can return to the original oneness. [...] In the Primal Beginning, the pure and light vapor rises to become heaven, and the muddy and heavy vapor sinks to become earth. It is from the harmonious interaction between the pure and the muddy, the light and the heavy, that humanity came into being. Thus, we are products of the vapor born from the copulation of heaven and earth. We are interconnected with all things, plants and animals, heaven and earth because all things trace their origins to and owe their existence to the Primal Oneness.³

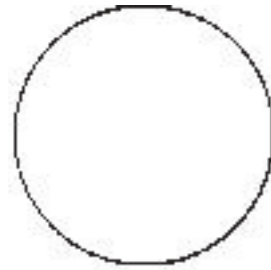
1. Tao Te Ching: The Taoism of Lao Tzu Explained, by Stefan Stenudd, Printed by CreateSpace, 2015, Chapter 42.

2. The treatise entitled Liezi or Lieh Tzu, by metonymy of the name of the author to whom it is attributed, completes the famous Taoist trilogy together with the texts of Laozi and Zhuāngzǐ. It was included in the catalog of the imperial library under the name of *Treatise on Perfect Emptiness*.

3. Eva Wong, LIEH-TZU. A Taoist Guide to Practical Living, Shambhala / Boston & London / 1995, pp. 28-29.



CELESTIAL ROOTS OF
THE UNIVERSE



According to Taoist cosmogony, in the first instance there is *Wu Ch'i*, the first state of the Tao, the state of "Emptiness" of "Non-polarity" ..



A first Yin Yang polarization is determined within this undifferentiated whole, opposing and complementary forces or vibrations: Yin, concentration, Yang, expansion. Wang Ch'i is the state of polarization.



Then, as a result of the Ch'i, the Yin and the Yang come into resonance: it is the Taiji (or Tai Ch'i), the state of manifestation of the Tao as movement, expansion-concentration, Heaven-Earth. From their harmonious relationship, the Manifestation comes to life, the Ten Thousand Beings, a symbolic representation of all the phenomena of the universe.

The balance between the polarities is Taijitu (or T'ai-chi-t'u), the state of harmony, the symbol of Taoism.

This famous symbol represents the dynamic development of Yin-Yang, depicted in a double spiral: Yang has a seed of Yin within it and Yin has a seed of Yang, so Yin tends towards Yang, and from Yang we return to Yin. The complementarity of the two apparently opposite tendencies is indicated by the two dots residing in the center of the largest part of the colors that represent them: a white dot in black, a black dot in white.

Every being in the universe, including man, exists as space-time, "expansion", "prolongation", "unraveling" of the Tao, and carries within itself the "original form" yin-yang.

In the traditional Chinese conception, Man is the son of Heaven and Earth: arising from the union of the energies of Heaven and Earth, he is also one of the manifestations of the blowings of the universe. Microcosm that reflects the macrocosm is formed by the meeting of Yin and Yang. From Heaven he receives the qi, the cosmic energies, and the Shen, the Spirits, which make up his mental, psychic and spiritual aspect. From the Earth he receives the energies that nourish him, the essences, jing, which constitute him materially

The Jing is the essence at the base of life: it presides over the rhythms of growth, development and reproduction that punctuate the life of the individual, cycles of 7 and 8 years respectively for men and women. It is preserved in the kidneys and spreads throughout the body through the eight Extraordinary Meridians (also called Curious or Wonderful). The MTC distinguishes two forms of Jing: congenital Jing or Jing of the Front Sky; acquired Jing or Jing of the Back Sky. The congenital Jing is a treasure that is given to the unborn child at the time of conception, by the union of the maternal egg and the paternal sperm vehicles of the sexual Jing of the mother and father respectively: it can not be reformed but only supported by the Jing acquired through a correct life. The congenital Jing is inevitably consumed by living: the correct lifestyle avoids or slows down the impoverishment of the vital essence. The acquired Jing is formed from everything that the body and mind feeds on: food, air that we breathe, sleep, thoughts and the emotions that originate from them. Its function is to support the congenital Jing by preventing its depleting.

The ancient form of Taijiquan taught by Master Xu Xin begins with the symbolic evocation of the Great Triad⁵ The arms and hands draw three circles in succession: one at the height of the forehead, Heaven, one at the height of the abdomen, the Earth, one at the height of the heart, the Man. The concentration of the practitioner is then addressed to the three *Dāntián* ("Tanden" in Japanese), which in the physiology of Traditional Chinese Medicine (conventionally "TCM") are the points in the body where qi is stored, accumulated and from which it then radiates into the different meridians of the body. *Dāntián*, which literally means "Cinnabar Field" consists of two ideograms:

dan (丹) being translated as Red, Cinnabar
tian (田) which is translated as Field.

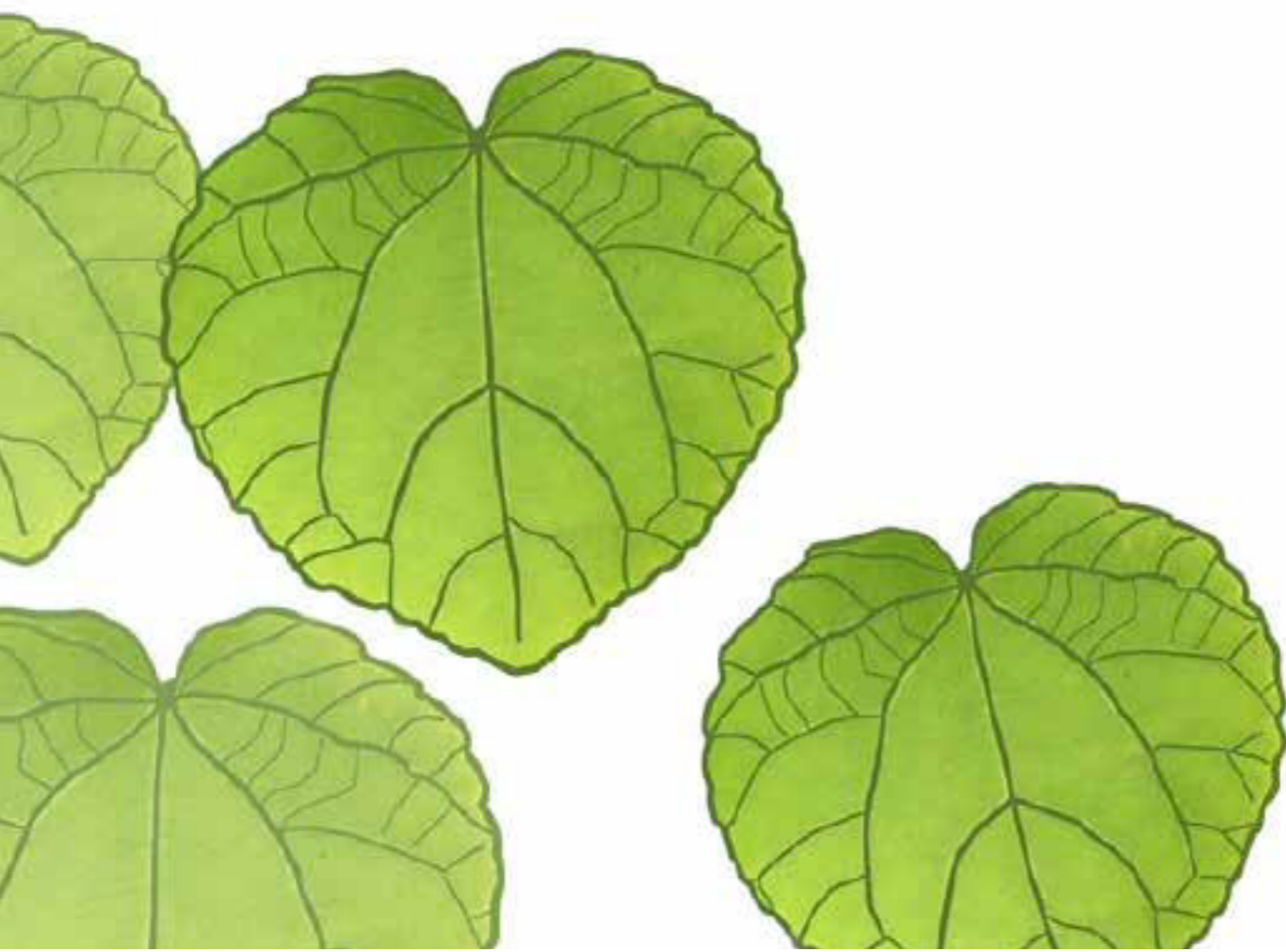
The three points are in correlation with the three "treasures" of the TCM:
- The upper *Dāntián* (上丹田, *Shang Dāntián*), in Japanese *Jodan tanden*, is located between the eyebrows in the center of the head, and is the seat of spiritual energy or "Shen".

- The median *Dāntián* (中丹田, *Zhong Dāntián*), in Japanese *Chudan tanden*, is placed at the sternum, and is the seat of the vital blowing or "Qi" (qi *Dāntián*). This central field in the Taoist inner vision, is located in the Dark Red Palace or Purpureum, that is, the heart.

- The lower *Dāntián* (下丹田, *Xia Dāntián*), in Japanese *Seika tanden*, placed in the abdomen, approximately three or four fingers below the navel, is equivalent to the center of gravity of the human body. It is the seat of the vital essence or "Jing" (Jing *Dāntián*).

5. René Guénon, La Grande Triade, Adelphi, 1980. Original edition: The Great Triad, Revue De La Table Ronde, 1946. "Heaven covers, the Earth sustains": it is the traditional formula that determines, with extreme conciseness, the roles of these two complementary principles, and that symbolically defines their positions, superior and inferior respectively, with respect to the 'ten thousand beings', that is, to the whole of the universal manifestation. They are thus indicated, on the one hand, the 'non-agent' character of the activity of Heaven or Purusha, and, on the other, the passivity of the Earth or Prakriti, which is properly a 'ground' or a 'support' of manifestation and, consequently, also a plan of resistance and arrest for celestial forces or influences operating in a descending direction [p. 32] "Now, as far as our state is concerned, the center is the normal 'place' of man, and this means that the 'true man' identifies himself with this center itself; therefore only in him and through him is carried out, in this state, the union of Heaven and Earth ..." [p. 119]

When practicing the form of the Taijiquan each movement must originate from the lower Dāntián: from there the energy moves in a spiral and therefore the three types of movement, vibratory, wave and sulk, are perfectly coordinated.



Master Xu Xin comes from Wuhan, the capital of Hubei Province, in central China. There is the massif of the Taoist Sacred Mountains called Wudangshan, where much of the internal martial arts including Tai Chi Chuan (taijiquan) were born.

Trained at Master Wan's school, Master Xu Xin continues and conveys the valuable work of the ancestors who inhabited the mountains in the Quin Shan style (Mountain Style).

Graduated in Naval Engineering in 1982 in China, he studied Chinese Philosophy PHD in China from 1994 to 1996.

He received an International Master's Degree in Cultural Policy organized by UNESCO concluded in July 2002.

He graduated in Philosophy in February 2001 from the Faculty of Humanities and Philosophy in Padua. He later obtained his PhD in Philosophy from the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy of the University of Padua in 2005.

He studied Opera Singing at the "Cesare Pollini" Conservatory in Padua.

He currently resides and teaches in Padua.

In addition to the Taijiquan Master Xu Xin teaches:

Taijijian (sword)

Tui Shou (application of taiji)

Xin Yi Quan (various styles)

Ba Gua Zhang (various styles)

Wu Dang Xiao Yao Zhang (Month Wudang Style)

Tai Yi Jing Gang Zhi (Month Wudang Style)

Wu Dang Jian (Sword of Wudang)

Nan Quan

Nan Gun (stick)

Qi Gong (various types)

San Da (free combat)

Shuai Jiao (Chinese slw)

Qin Na (Chinese leva)

Shu Fa (Chinese calligraphy)

Tui Na (healing Chinese massage)

Ancient Wisdom and Chinese Philosophy



The Seasons. Seasonal cyclicity and vital rhythms.

Now, the Yin and Yang [qi] of the four seasons, they constitute the root and basis of the myriad beings. Hence, the sages in spring and summer nourish the Yang and in autumn and winter nourish the Yin 53 , and this way they follow their roots. Hence, they are in the depth or at the surface with the myriad beings at the gate to life and growth. To oppose one's root, is to attack one's basis and to spoil one's true [qi] Hence, Yin [qi], Yang [qi], and the four seasons, they constitute ending and beginning of the myriad beings, they are the basis of death and life. Opposing them results in catastrophe and harms life. If one follows them, severe diseases will not emerge. This is called "to achieve the Way." As for the Way, the sages practice it; the stupid wear it [for decoration only]. If one follows yin and yang, then life results; if one opposes them, then death results. If one follows them, then order results; if one opposes them, then disorder results.⁶

6. Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: *An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic – Basic Questions: 2 volumes*, Paul U. Unschuld, Hermann Tessenow, University of California Press, 2011, Vol I, pp. p. 55-56.

These indications appear in the Great Treatise on the Harmony of the Atmosphere of the Four Seasons with the Spirit (human), second Chapter II of the *Huangdi Neijing Su Wen* (The Canon of Internal Medicine of the Yellow Emperor).

Huangdi Neijing, the founding treatise of TCM, is divided into two volumes, the *Huangdi Neijing Suwen* (the "Simple Questions"), abbreviated as Suwen, and the *Huangdi Neijing Lingshu* (The "Spiritual Pivot"), abbreviated as Lingshu. Each tome is, in turn, divided into eighty-one chapters.

The work is composed in the form of a dialogue between the legendary ruler Huangdi, who lived between 2697 and 2567 BC. C. (or between 2674 and 2575 BC), and six of his legendary imperial ministers. The text can be dated to the 2nd-1st century BC. C. Lingshu deals with man's fundamental relationship with Heaven, through the Spirits, that is, it illustrates the conception that earthly activities are always based on celestial influences. Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Valle, who commented on the eighth chapter of the work, specifically dedicated to the psyche, which in the traditional view is never separated from the "soma", thus explain the passage of "Knowing how":

Man, microcosm, must accept the rules and share the harmonies of nature. The 'suns' and rhythms of the seasons must be understood and accepted. Adapting to the "blowings of the season" means defending yourself from the weather, adapting the intensity of activity and rest, deeply welcoming the *Yin* and *Yang* expressed by nature.⁷

In *Yi Jing*, the "Book of Changes", a fundamental reference point for masters of disciplines who study the principles that govern the universe and the health of the human body, the twelve hexagrams corresponding to the months of the year illustrate the progressive variation of qi with the changing seasons.

7. Berera: "One cannot speak of health and disease, of prevention, without having clear these notions. In fact, man responds to Heaven and Earth, in the sense that there are laws that define the modalities of existence and functioning of the universe, which also determine the functionality of the organism, because man is an integral part of the universe and participates in its movements and energy changes" Fabrizia Berera, *Ideogrammi della salute*, Red Edizioni, 2007, p. 21. Our translation.

Yi Jing – The Months

In the twelve hexagrams related to the months of the year (jie gua), the proportion and complementarity between the two Yin/Yang movements, which exists in a variable way within each figure, is associated with the change in the polar relationship between light and shadow, as it changes over the course of the year. In these hexagrams all Yin lines and all Yang lines, instead of mixing with each other, are always contiguous so as to form two easily identifiable groups and joined together by the upright progression of the Yang, which grows from the bottom in the spring - summer phase, while the Yin, grows from the bottom in the remaining part of the year, autumn – winter.

The hexagrams 51, 30, 58, 29 represent the 4 seasons:



SPRING: 51 The Exciting
(The Shaking, The Thunder) 震 *Zhen*



SUMMER: 30 The Adherent
(The Fire) 離 *Li*



AUTUMN: 58 The Serene
(The Lake) 兌 *Dui*



WINTER : 29 The Abyssal
(The Water) 坎 *Kan*

January	24 <i>Fu</i> , The Return	
February –	19 <i>Lin</i> , The Rapprochement	
March	11 <i>Tài</i> , Peace, Prosperity	
April	34 <i>Dà Zhuàng</i> , The Great Force	
May	43 <i>Guài</i> , The Decision, Show yourself resolute	
June	1 <i>Qian</i> , The Creative Momentum	
July	44 <i>Gou</i> , The Farsi Meeting	
August	33 <i>Dun</i> , The Retreat, To Retreat	
September	12 <i>Pì</i> , Obstruction	
October	20 <i>Guān</i> , The Seeing, The Observing, The Contemplation	
November	23 <i>Bō</i> , The Crumbling, The Shattering, The Stripping	
December	2 <i>Kun</i> , Receptive Momentum	

SUMMER SOLSTICE

SPRING EQUINOX



AUTUMN EQUINOX

WINTER SOLSTICE

One can read the seasonal cycle well by observing the “taijitu” the Taoist symbol that depicts, on two dimensions, the dynamic sphere in which the polarity of Yin-Yang is manifested, the two opposite and complementary cosmogonic principles, represented by white (Yang, Heaven, light) and black (Yin, Earth, darkness). Black and white are not separated by a straight line that indicates contrast: the sine wave line that demarcates and unites the two colors expresses the complementarity and harmonious balance that is realized at every moment of the dynamics of the Changes. In the maximum of Yang, a black dot indicates the presence, at least virtual, of Yin, and vice versa. The unfolding of the “current of forms” can be visualized using the diagram to read the cyclic path: thus, throughout the day, as soon as it reaches the peak, at noon, the sun begins to decline, as seen at the highest point of the circumference, and, on the contrary, when the night reaches its peak, at midnight, the Yang makes its way. So for the seasons: therefore solstices and equinoxes do not represent, as in the Western calendar, the beginning of the seasons: they are the point of passage from the ascending to the descending phase, just as in the course of the day the hours that determine the dial of the clock

It must also be considered that, according to the Chinese lunisolar calendar, the seasons are placed differently than the Western distribution. The actual path of the Earth's revolution is taken into account, so that the solstices and equinoxes coincide with the center of the season. These days when the earth's positions are farther or closer to the sun, the Yin (cold, dark, density) and Yang (heat, light, rarefaction) energies are at their peak

In the traditional Chinese calendar, months begin at midnight on each new moon. The start date of the new year coincides with the second new moon after the winter solstice.

Schematically:

Early Spring: first days of February

Early Summer: first days of May

Beginning of Autumn: the first days of August

Early Winter: first days of November

So, for example, the days between December 20 and 23, coinciding with the winter solstice, mark the maximum of Yin energy. During the spring equinox, between March 20 and 23, we have the Yang in the Yin, with the Yang gradually increasing until the summer solstice, where the energy is at the maximum of the Yang. From that moment the Yang decreases again in favor of the Yin, which during the Equinox, between 20 and 23 September, will mark the center of Autumn.

8. See Da Liu, *Tai chi chuan e meditazione*, Ubaldini Editore, 1986, Roma.

In order for the work with one's body to be truly effective it is necessary to act in harmony with this variation, which manifests itself so clearly in the mutations of nature.⁸

Spring

The energy of spring is full of explosive vitality; in spring, Man, in accordance with the invigoration of *Yang*, should be open and at ease, offering himself to the rebirth of life and nature. The *Suwen* invites you to wake up early, walk with great strides, loose hair and free body.

Spring is associated with the element Wood, and with the Liver as a *Zang* organ. Not following the boost of spring can damage the liver, as well as create health problems in the following season.

Summer

In the summer, Man, in accordance with the maximum development of Yang Chi, should be vital and full of strength; moreover, he should feel calm and not get angry or agitated, to avoid excessively increasing the internal heat and damaging the general balance.

In the TCM, summer is associated with the element Fire and the Heart as the *Zang* Organ.

Excessive arousal could damage this organ.

It would be equally harmful, however, to block the movement of the season, to prevent energy from moving to the surface and outside the body due to heat (for example with improper use of air conditioners)

The organs zang

For TCM there are five organs, called *zang*, and six viscera, called *fu*. *Zang* means to keep in a safe and hidden place. In fact, the organs receive the refined and purest breaths and accumulate them. They are full organs: lung, heart, spleen, liver, kidneys. They are yin, because they are located more internally than the *fu*. The ideogram represents a transit warehouse for precious goods. The *fu*, the viscera, are responsible for the transformation and transport of the breaths. They are hollow organs, where the *jing* energy derived from food is processed and refined: stomach, small intestine, large intestine, bladder, triple heater, gall bladder. They are yang because they are more external than the *zang* organs.

Autumn

In autumn Man, in accordance with the invigoration of *Yin Chi*, should cultivate serenity, so as to fight the desolation and sadness typical of autumn. Autumn marks the halt of the expansion that began with spring and expressed at its peak during the summer. With autumn, the energy begins to wane. From the *Yang* of summer we move on to the *Yin* of winter. Autumn is associated with the Metal element and the Lungs as a *Zang* organ. For this reason, in the autumn one should work particularly on the Lungs, even with meditation, favoring proper breathing and correctly storing the *Shen* blowings, coming from the sky

Winter

Winter represents the maximum of Yin energy and contrasts, in this, with summer, which represents the maximum of Yang energy. Winter is closure, protection, depth.

In winter, a person, in accordance with the maximum development of Yin, should keep his emotions and spirit within himself, maintaining a calm state of mind.

One is asked to protect himself from the cold and not to let the sweat escape from his body. Its release is not necessary to regulate the temperature (as in summer) and would deprive it, on the contrary, of essential liquids, leaving the pores open as openings to winter pathogens. Get away from the cold, look for the heat.

Winter is an expression of the element Water, associated with the kidneys as a *Zang* organ. Again, as in other seasons, not complying with the energy of the season, for man, means compromising the balance of the kidneys..



The fifth season

The *qi* of the universe expresses itself in different ways. Ancient Chinese philosophy elaborated the theory of the Five Movements, conventionally called 'elements' which indicate five phases of the continuous transformation of *yin-yang*, the incessant changes that take place in the universe.

They are: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, Water. The expression 'elements' is not appropriate because it refers to an idea of static nature, while it is a question of understanding movement, the 'current of forms' that flows without stopping.

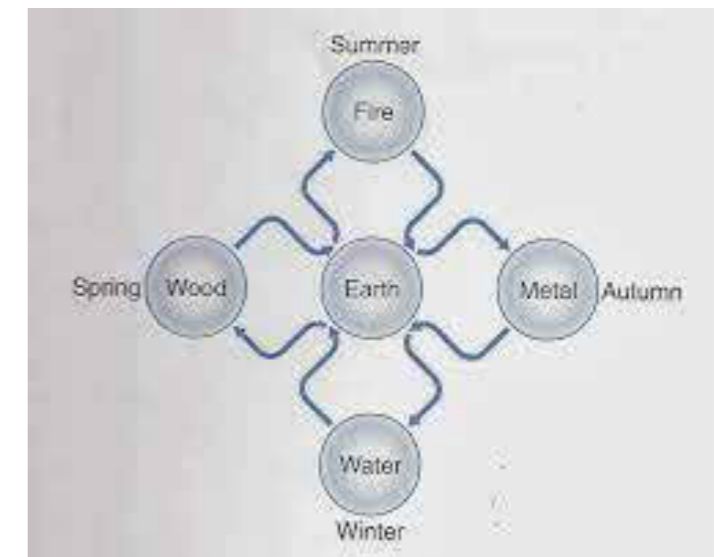
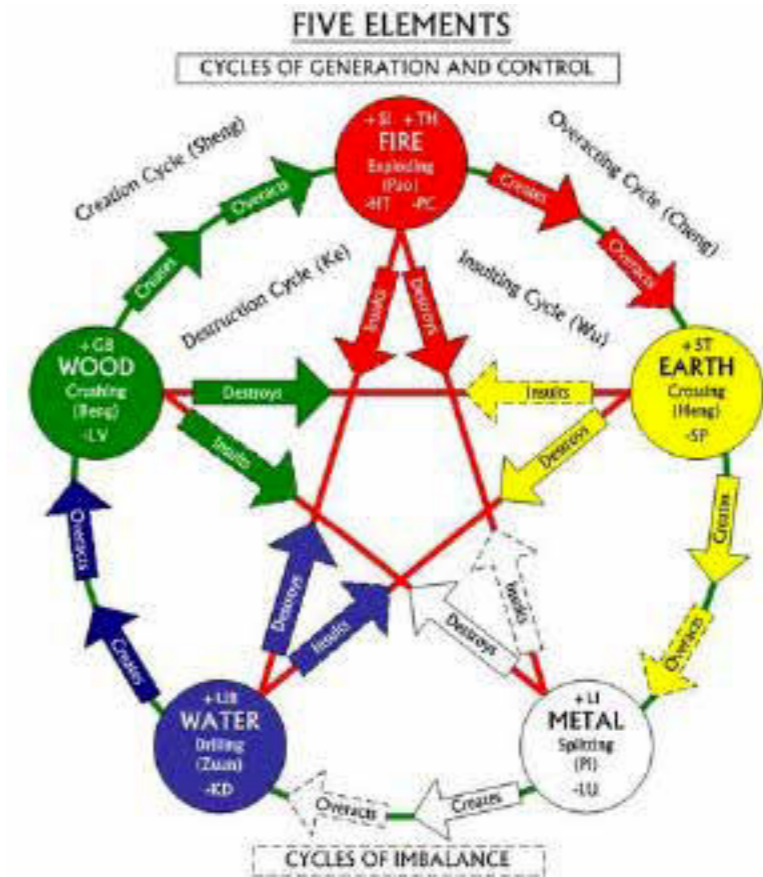
The theory of the Five Movements is characterized by punctual analogical correspondences with all aspects of reality: for this reason, in addition to the four well-known seasons, the Fifth Season also appears, linked to the element 'Earth'.

The Earth indicates the yin-yang balance in space and time and therefore represents the center. In relation to time it therefore corresponds to the center of the year, the Fifth Season, and to the center of the day, 3 in the afternoon.

There are two theories on the Fifth Season: the first identifies the Fifth Season in the period between the end of August and the end of September, the time between the yang phase of the year (spring-summer) and the yin phase (autumn-winter) ; the second theory places the Fifth Season in the last 18 days of each season, in the transition phase from one season to another. Therefore if we consider the first interpretation, the diagram that indicates the position of the Fifth Season is the one that illustrates the sequence of the five movements and their relationships: mutual creation, mutual closeness, mutual destruction, mutual fear. (Fig.1 1B 2)

If we consider the second interpretation, the earth is placed in the center of the diagram and is therefore in relationship with all four seasons. (Fig.2).

The *Huangdi Neijing* suggests the second interpretation. In Book VIII of Sowaen, chapter 29, the Emperor asks Qi Bo, "Why doesn't the spleen control a season?" Qi Bo replies: "The spleen corresponds to the earth, It regulates the center, which is constant. This is to extend the four seasons. Each of the four viscera is entrusted with eighteen days of regulation, but they do not control the seasons by themselves. One of the viscera, the spleen, constantly manifests itself in the essence (secretions) of the stomach and soil. Everything in creation is produced from the soil. And therefore, it is governed by Heaven and Earth. So the above and below, the head and the feet, cannot be directly affected by the temperature of the four seasons." (Classical text of Internal Medicine of the Yellow Emperor, Huan Ti NeYi Jing Su Wen, cit. p. 266.)



Day

The cycle indicated by the taijitu is also valid, as already mentioned, for the day-night alternation. The Neijin, in the chapter entitled “Treatise on the Communication of the Life Force with Heaven,” clearly explains the pace that should be followed:

The fact is, the Yang qi, during daytime, rules the exterior. At dawn, the qi of man emerges. At noon, the Yang qi abounds. When the sun is in the West, the Yang qi is already depleted. The qi gates close. Hence, in the evening there is collection and resistance. One must not disturb sinews and bones; one must not encounter fog and dew. [If one's behavior] contradicts [the requirements of] these three periods [of a day], [one's] physical appearance will experience distress and weakening.⁹

Therefore, indicatively, the strength or particularly energetic exercises should be done in the morning and in any case no later than noon. In the afternoon and evening, stretching and relaxation practices are preferable.

9. Huang Di Nei Jing Su Wen: An Annotated Translation of Huang Di's Inner Classic – Basic Questions, cit. p. 73. .



Yang Chengfu or Yang Ch'eng-fu, (1883–1936) is historically considered the best known teacher of the soft style martial art of yang-style t'ai chi ch'üan (Yang-style Taijiquan).

Yang Chengfu was born into the famous yang Taijiquan family, the son of Yang Chien-hou and grandson of Yang Luchan (China 1799-1872), the one who created yang style Tai Chi Chuan (which bears his surname).

With his older brother Yang Shao-hou and colleagues Wu Jianquan and Sun Lutang, he was among the first teachers to offer Taijiquan instruction to the general public at the Beijing Physical Culture Research Institute from 1914 until 1928. He moved to Shanghai in 1928. Chengfu is known for having "smoothed" out the somewhat more vigorous training routine he learned from his family as well as emphasizing a "large frame" (□ □; dà jià) with expansive movements in stepping and using large circular motions with the arms. His smooth, evenly paced large frame form and its hundreds of offshoots has been the standard for yang-style t'ai chi ch'üan (and overwhelmingly in the public imagination for Taijiquan in general) ever since. Chengfu is the official author of two books on the style, *Application methods of Taijiquan*, published in 1931, and *Essence and Applications of Taijiquan*, published in 1934. His second book was translated into English in 2005.

Students and Descendants

His direct descendants, the many students he taught, and their students, have spread the art around the world. Among yang Chengfu's students were famous masters such as Tung ying-chieh, Chen Weiming, Fu Zhongwen, Li Yaxuan (1894–1976) and Cheng Man-ch'ing. Each of them taught extensively, founding groups teaching Tai chi to this day. Cheng Man-ch'ing, perhaps the most famous outside of China, significantly shortened and simplified the traditional forms Yan



Chen Wei-Ming (1881–1958) was a scholar, taijiquan teacher, and author. He was also known by his name Chen Zengze (陳曾則), Wei-Ming being his hao, a pen-name.

Chen came from an educated family with roots in Qishui, Hubei, China. His great-grandfather was a famous scholar; and his mother was skilled at calligraphy. As a boy, Chen prepared for the civil service exams by studying the Chinese classics, Chinese calligraphy, poetry, and essay-writing. He passed the mid-level exam of juren in 1902, and received a post in the Qing History Office. His two brothers also became scholars and authors.

Chen began to study the Chinese martial arts in Beijing under Sun Lutang (1859–1933), with whom he studied xingyi (hsing-i) and bagua (pa-kua). He then began to study taijiquan (t'ai chi ch'uan) with Yang Chengfu (1883–1936), grandson of Yang Luchan, founder of the Yang family lineage.

In 1925, Chen moved to Shanghai and established the Zhi Ruo (Achieving Softness) Taijiquan Association.

Chen recorded yang's teachings in three books under his own name: Taijiquan shu (The Art of Taijiquan, 1925), Taiji jian (Taiji Sword, 1928), and Taijiquan da wen (Questions and Answers on Taijiquan, 1929). These books are important not only for their content, but because they were among the first taijiquan books published for a mass audience. Chen also wrote several scholarly books under the name Chen Zengze. He wrote prefaces to Sun Lutang and Zheng Manqing's taijiquan books.

Though Chen did not create a large following through his teaching as did his classmates Dong yingjie (Tung ying-chieh) and Zheng Manqing (Cheng Man-ch'ing), his books have remained influential and are important references about taijiquan in the early 1900s.



Taijiquan

The Ten Principles of Yang Chengfu

The ten principles are part of teachings transmitted orally by Yang Chengfu and transcribed by Chen Weiming.

These are fundamental indications about the nature of the movement, read on how to lead the body and mind in order to get the most out of the potential of the human being. They are handed down for generations providing the basis on which to found the practice with rules that, carefully applied, lead to the wonderful expression of grace, power and balance present in the traditional Taijiquan yang style.

The ideograms that describe the 10 principles mostly have different meanings, and therefore cannot be translated literally. Interpretations may therefore from time to time have had slightly different nuances, however in most cases they basically agree on the deepest meaning of each

1 - *xū líng dǐng jìn*

Empty, ready, bringing the energy to the top of your head.

Stay empty, worry-free, but with your mind ready. The idea is to keep the focus on the top of the head by thinking of gently guiding it to press upwards but without exerting tension on the neck. It is important that the head and face remain straight.

Leading the energy upwards also means fostering a condition of meditation to succeed in transforming the Jing, the outermost and crudest energy, into Shen, the energy of the Spirit, according to the methods of Taoist internal Alchemy.

This principle therefore concerns both the body and the mind.

2 - *hán xiōng bá bèi*

Pull in your chest and extend your back.

This 'arched' posture, where the chest retreats from the shoulder line is very stable and strong, because in this way the spaces between one vertebra and the other are lengthened and facilitates the descent and concentration of the qi towards the Dāntián (in Japanese tanden), located about two fingers below the navel and is considered the physical and psychic center of man. If you strengthen the lower body and concentrate physical strength under your navel, it will automatically ease the tension on your shoulders and neck. At the same time, by adhering the qi to your back, it will be easier to stretch and elongate it

3 – *sōng yāo***Relax (relax, loosen) the hips.**

The central part of our body, which we also call “lifeturn” plays an essential role. It functions as a flywheel for internal energy and as a control center for every movement. It is therefore necessary to keep the 'life' loose and elastic to allow the energy we can draw from the ground at every step and to convey it to all other parts of the body.

This principle is about the body

4 – *fēn xū shí***Divide, distinguish the void from the full.**

It is by passing from one polarity to another that the movement is generated. If you consider that the weight is in itself a force, then where there is the weight you have the full, the Yang; where the body does not support instead you have the emptiness, the Yin. Knowing where the emptiness is and where the fullness is, increases awareness at every step and promotes stability and coordination. In Taijiquan the “double weight” generates confusion, one should have clarity about the whole process of transformation from one phase to another so that the movement is not fractionated and does not suffer setbacks; there are different types of double weight, even the mind if it is not transparent can have stalls, indecisions preventing it from being rightly reactive.

This principle is as much about the body as it is about energy.

5 – *chén jiān zhuì zhǒu***Lower your shoulders and let your elbows fall.**

If you keep your elbows raised you will hardly be able to relax your shoulders; with your shoulders raised even the qi will rise together with your breath, taking away strength from your body. Above all, there will be no free movement of qi.

This principle is as much about the body as it is about energy.¹⁰

6 – *yòng yì bù yòng lì***Use intention, not force.**

Where the eye is directed comes the mind, and where the thought is directed, the intention, there comes the true strength (Nei Jin), which is the internal force. So the thought must move with care and concentration, directing attention where it is necessary. For this purpose, the visualization of the movement to be performed is used; once the lines of movement have been clarified, the body will only have to follow them, as happens when tracing an already drawn drawing. For this reason normally the movement is anticipated by the gaze.

This principle is as much about energy as it is about the mind.

7 – *hàng xià xiāng suí***Coordinate the upper and lower body.**

The force has roots in the feet, develops in the legs, is controlled by the hips, manifests itself in the fingers. But there are cross-linking relationships between one end of the body: the right foot corresponds to the left hand and to the left foot the right hand; the right knee corresponds to the left elbow and to the left knee the right elbow; the shoulders and hips are also connected in this way. So the positions that are also taken in the movement will respond to this law so that this is never excessive, uncoordinated, harmful.

This principle is about energy.

8 – *nèi wài xiāng hé***Merge inside and outside.**

Make the intention to action match, gradually and accurately. If from the physical point of view it is a question of tending more and more to the perfect movement that we can visualize, from a more subtle point of view the willpower that makes the action correspond to the 'correct intention', that is, the right ideal of realization.

This principle is as much about energy as it is about the mind

9 – *xiāng lián bù duàn***Continuity without interruption.**

Practicing with continuity is another fundamental rule that can refer to constancy in practicing but also to the movement to be made. In the execution of the techniques there must be no setbacks: the flow of energy must unravel from the body as the silk thread unravels from the cocoon, so that there are no setbacks and tears that would interrupt the natural flow of qi. The transition from one movement to another occurs by softly bending the line to be followed and harmoniously transforms Yin into Yang and vice versa. The circularity of every movement is essential. This increases the energy that develops in the individual action as of behavior in general and avoids points of 'opening', or moments of potential danger from the outside.

This principle is about energy.

10 – *dòng zhōng qiú jìng***Seek quiet in the movement.**

Every movement has a fixed point, a center. If you are able to control that point you will be able to coordinate everything else excellently. Even the heart-mind has a fixed point, a quiet place from which to contemplate the unfolding of becoming without fixation or attachment.

10. We point out the perfect match with the posture that must be taken for the pendulo exercise we talked about in the visualization paragraph.

11. “If a person finds his Center, he hits the target of his life, because he has an exact perception of reality; his action will become a know-to-know-be. Man thus fulfills his destiny and achieves the Long Life guaranteed only to those who, among all knowledge, retain what, unique, makes the expression and fullness of being. But to find his Center, man must start from his heart, which is also a symbol of the Center.

The heart of man is torn apart by opposing forces; a centripetal, the desire to descend into ourselves, into our heart uninhabited by the Other, whatever his name, and to open up to the Mystery, and all the centrifugal forces, which take us to the outside, in the run-up to satisfy all the other desires that are limited.

Knowing how to find your center and guard it is for Chinese philosophy to hold one's life and access 'possession'.” Fabrizio Berera, cit., pp. 61-62. Our translation.

So Chapter V of the *Tao Te Ching* :

Is not the space between Heaven and Earth like a bellows?
It is empty, but lacks nothing.
The more it moves, the more comes out of it.
A multitude of words is tiresome,
Unlike remaining centered.¹¹

This principle relates specifically to the mind. Specifically it represents a great workout to reach the state of Wuxin (無心), (*mushin* in Japanese).

The term is composed of two characters: 無, which represents the negation, and 心. which means heart-mind. In summary, empty mind, mindless mind, that is, mind devoid of attachment, not occupied by thoughts or emotions, free and clear as a mirror that reflects reality as it is.

The 10 Principles of Yang Chengfu relate to Body, Energy and Mind at the same time. This is the same tripartition that we indicate in the Katsura System. For practical reasons in the Katsura program we dedicate special exercises to each of these aspects. But in reality they constitute a whole and in the practice of taijiquan they act in concert at all times, without interruption. The same happens in *Aikido* techniques, in which mind and body are united.

Body, Energy and Mind can also be understood as one of the forms in which the Great Triad that we mentioned in the paragraph dedicated to Man and the Universe manifests itself in the context of the microcosm.

The breathing of the Taijitu - Chan si gong

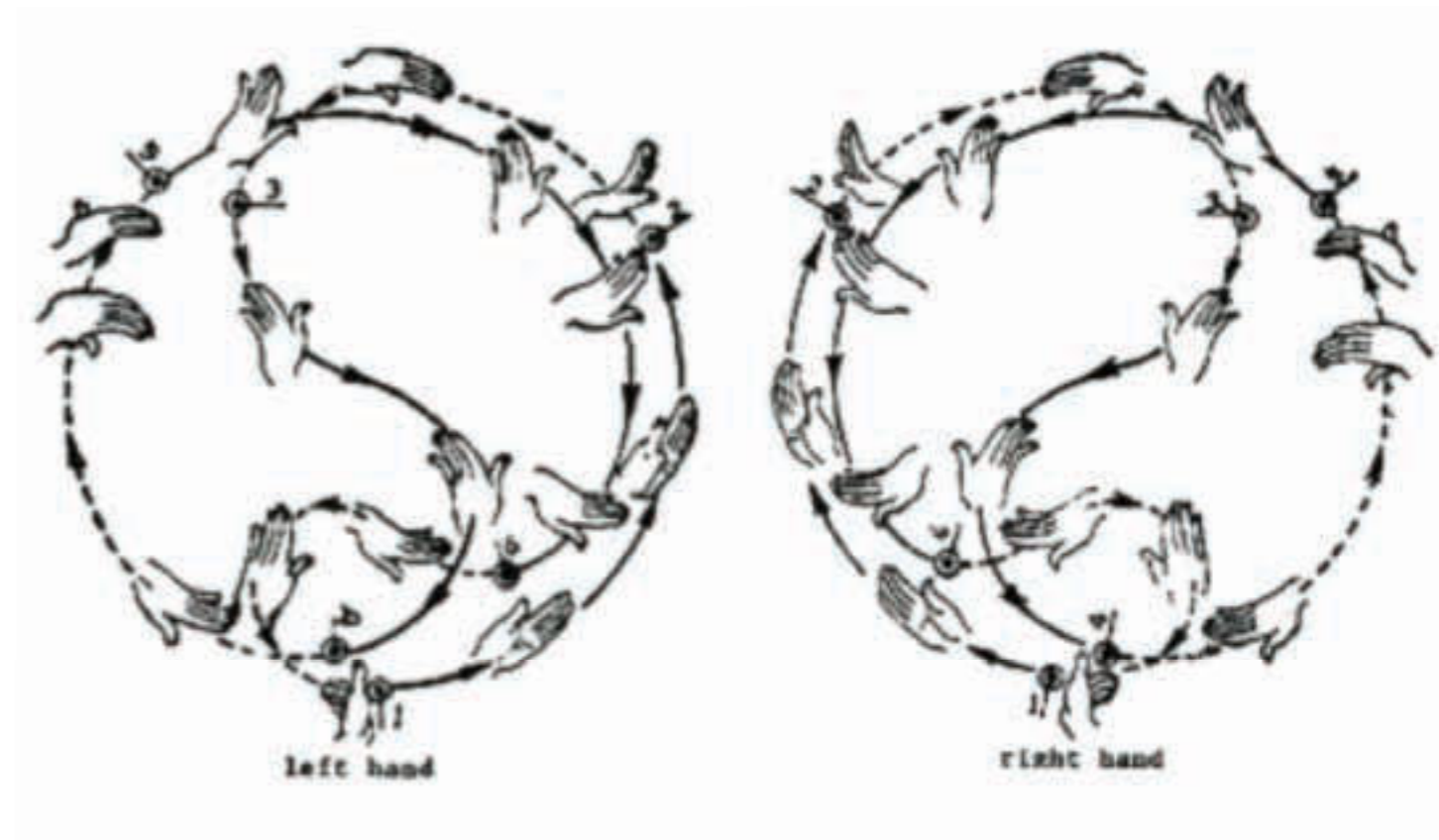
Chan si gong, literally “Wrap the Silk Cocoon” are exercises that stimulate blood circulation and joints. They consist of spiral movements that recall the movement of the silkworm building its cocoon. The movements originate from the *Dāntián*. And follow the pattern of the yin-yang symbol.

By practicing them, you learn the basic movements of the Taiji that have the characteristic of originating from the inside of the body to pass to the extremities and vice versa. Mastering these exercises is essential to progress rapidly in the discipline.

The basic exercise is carried out with a series of eight movements in sequence: first the right side, then the left side.

Arm and right hand circulate clockwise, arm and left hand counterclockwise. Finally, the third sequence is carried out, moving both arms at the same time.

Visualizing the Taijitu and listening to the yin-yang alternation calm the mind, relax the body, and become one with the free movement of qi.



Pa tuan chin – Eight pieces of precious cloth

The Pa Tuan Chin, or Baduanjin, which can be translated as “eight pieces of brocade”, is a series of eight exercises that combine muscle training, breathing and internal organ massage. The combination of these three health practices facilitates the flow of life energy into the channels called Jing Luo, (conventionally referred to as 'Meridians'). These exercises work mainly on the eight 'extraordinary Meridians', as well as the twelve 'main Meridians' and the three 'heaters'. These eight techniques also make the joints flexible, stretch and stretch tendons, and muscles, thereby eliminating the tensions accumulated during an entire day. They are usually practiced at the beginning of each training session, in order to avoid stretching or other accidents due to lack of heating.

Normally 8 repetitions are made for a total of 64 movements, the same number as the hexagrams of *Yi Jing, The Book of Changes*. All the possibilities of transformations are thus symbolically represented..

Pa Tuan Chin is part of Qi Gong practices but, unlike other more complex exercises that require special precautions, it can be learned and performed with relative ease, and has no drawbacks. Of course it is appropriate that it be taught by an experienced instructor.

The term Qi Gong refers to a series of practices and exercises related to TCM and in part to martial arts that involve meditation, the control of breathing combined with particular movements

Qi Gong's ideogram are 氣功 literally means “work with energy.”

Gong 功 is the work, which has the characteristic of dexterity and power. The character on the left, in fact, is a carpenter's team, while the one on the right is the symbol of a plow. To be effective with the plow, external power (that of the ox) and internal ability are important. Those who have maneuvered this instrument know, in effect, that it does not take much force to direct it but it is necessary to be expert, to 'know how to do', and to know how to follow the lines of the Earth.

Qi 氣 energy, is formed by an element at the bottom (the rice) and one at the top (the steam).

The analysis of the Qi character, however, is much more complex. We limit ourselves here to a simple semantic indication.



**The sequence of *pa tuan chin*,
according to the teachings of Master Xu Xin**

1) *Liang shen qin tian li san jiao*

(With two hands I support the sky to rebalance the triple heater)



You have to feel your whole body ironing.

Removes fatigue and increases respiratory capacity; relaxes the muscles and stretches the arms, legs and trunk and corrects the posture by straightening the back and shoulders, prepares the body and internal organs for the next exercises.

2) *Zuo you wan gong si she diao*

(Pull the bow left and right to hit the birds)



It serves to stretch the upper body, chest line

It promotes good blood circulation and stimulates the lung and heart, affects primarily the chest area and secondarily shoulders and arms; the position of the legs is as strong and still as the mountain improving blood circulation and correcting posture.

3) *Tiao li pi wei bi dan jü*

(With one hand I push up to rebalance stomach and spleen)



Exercise Beneficial to the digestive system, stimulates the liver, gallbladder, spleen and stomach; increases intestinal peristalsis and promotes digestion.

4) *Wu liao qi shang xiang hou qiao*

((Looking back to cure 5 and 7 problems))



The 5 problems concern muscles, tendons, qi, bones and blood; but also the 5 internal organs

The 7 problems are about the 7 emotions

It invigorates the muscles of the neck and Beneficially stimulates the nervous system, also prevents and cures the five labors (energy interruptions in the heart, liver, spleen, kidneys and lungs) and diseases of the respiratory system.

5) *Yao tou bai tuen qi xin hou*

(Turn your head and pelvis to take too much fire off your heart))



It facilitates body relaxation and energy recovery, helping to eliminate stressors, also stimulates the lymphatic system, digestion and blood circulation, and removes nerve tension.

6) *Shaun shen pan zu gu shen yao*

(With two hands I take my feet to strengthen the kidneys and lower back)



It increases the elasticity of the body, stretches and invigorates the back and hips and is indicated for the health of the kidneys and pelvis

7) *Zuan quan nu mu zen qi li*

(Squints your fists holding your bad eyes to reinforce the qi)



It promotes concentration, develops strength and vital energy, stimulates the liver system, tones the entire musculature and normalizes metabolism

8) *Bei huo qi dian bai bin xiao*

Vibrations of the body to cure many diseases



It stimulates the kidney and bladder system by stretching the back and back of the legs, keeps all organs healthy thanks to the slight vibration when resting your feet on the ground, massages all internal organs, makes the veins and arteries elastic and improves circulation.

Knowing-How

Thus, Knowing-How is the maintenance of life.
Do not fail to observe the Four seasons
And to adapt to heat and cold,
To harmonize elation and anger
and to be calm in activity as in rest,
To regulate the yin/yang
and to balance the hard and the soft,
In this way, having deflected the perverse influences,
there will be a long life and everlasting vision.¹²

These verses illustrate the “Prescriptions for the Maintenance of Life” in Paragraph 3 of Chapter 8 of *Lingshu* (靈樞.), the second tome of *Huangdi Neijing*, the Inner Canon of the Yellow Emperor, founding text of the TCM. The *Lingshu* deals with the fundamental relationship of man with Heaven, through the Spirits, that is, he illustrates the conception that earthly activities are always based on celestial influences. Claude Larre and Elisabeth Rochat de la Valle, who commented on the inner eighth chapter of the work, specifically dedicated to the psyche, which in the traditional vision is never separated from the “soma”, so explain the step of the “Saper fare”:

The first proposition presents, first of all, a situation of celestial origin: it is the Four Seasons. Man has no choice but to conform to the Order they represent. Seasons are perceived through the variations of the blowings of Heaven that men and all beings recognize. They project themselves in hot and cold. It is our job to adapt and adapt the heat and cold in us.

The second proposition evokes a situation of terrestrial origin. When the Great clod of clay or each of the particular masses, which are the living, are disturbed by a passing current, feelings of excitement are unleashed in them: if they release and make the blowings descend, it is about living joy, if they make the blowings rise, sometimes with abrupt countercurrents, it is about anger.¹³ In the trees it is the quivering of the spring wind or the violence of the blizzard twisting the branches and leaves.

The human being is the only one who feels feelings and the only one forced to react consciously. It transforms internal meteorological data into harmonized blowings, an absolute condition for his tranquility that manifests itself both in a state of rest, when the man is standing, lying down, sitting, and when he is standing to walk, ready to act.

The third proposition is a life situation, expressed by the Yin/Yang. A living person maintains his life through exchanges; he always prolongs it or gives it through Yin/Yang exchanges. A man takes care of his vitality or that of a patient. The articulation and balancing of the Yin/Yang is evaluated. It explores all the levels in which personal consciousness such as the diagnostic technique can grasp them. Balance is achieved with meditation, with life behaviors - dietetics, gymnastics, rules of life - with the intervention of an acupuncturist who 'rebalances'.¹⁴

These prescriptions are also strongly recommended in the *Huangdi Neijing* Su Wen:

When wind settles [in the body] and encroaches upon the [proper] qi, then the essence vanishes, and the evil harms the liver. Subsequent overeating [causes] sinews and vessels to relax. The intestines are flushed, and this leads to piles. Subsequent excessive drinking [causes] the qi to move contrary [to its regular course]. Subsequent exertion causes harm to the qi of the kidneys, and lets the high bones be spoiled. The essential principle in all [interactions] of yin and yang is to have the yang [qi] sealed [in the body] and, thereby, to ensure its firmness. When the two do not harmonize, this is as if there was spring but no fall; as if there was winter but no summer. If they are harmonized subsequently, this is called [to follow the] standards of the sages.¹⁵

Ultimately body care travels together with mind care. The 'right medium', of Taoist inspiration, applies also, and above all, to body posture, nutrition, emotions, feelings and in general to the entire mental activity.

It is singular to note that, in a completely different context, with completely different history, cultural heritage and epistemological references, the same attention to these themes is found in the famous 'Schola Medica Salernitana'.

12. “*Huangdi Neijing Lingshu*” *La psiche nella tradizione cinese*, a cura di Claude Larre e Elisabeth Rochat de la Vallé, Jaca Book 1994, p. 91. See Elation And Joy, (Xi Le), Translation from the French by Laurence Mourey In : http://www.elisabeth-rochat.com/docs/26_xi_le.pdf

13. We note here the concordance with what was indicated by Master Tohei regarding 'Keeping the weight under', chapter 'Mind and Body'.

14. *Huangdi Neijing Lingshu*” *La psiche nella tradizione cinese*, cit., pp. 98-99. Our translation

15. *Testo classico di Medicina interna dell'Imperatore Giallo*, Huan Ti NeYi Jing Su Wen, cit., p. 133.

The Medical School of Salerno

“If doctors fail you, let these three be doctors for you; A joyful mind, rest, and a moderate diet”.

15. Amber Stelmachuk, *The School at Salerno: Origin of the European Medical University*;

The Proceedings of the 10th Annual History of Medicine Days, edited by W. A. Whitelaw (Calgary, 2001)

Enrico, Paolo Cappabianca, Oreste De Divitiis. *De Divitiis, The “schola medica salernitana”: the forerunner of the modern university medical schools* Neurosurgery 55.4 (2004): 722-745.

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16. Michael McVaugh, *Arnald of Villanova (Pseudo)*; in *Complete Dictionary of Scientific Biography*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 25 May 2023 <https://www.encyclopedia.com>.

17. GD, LU. “China and the origin of examinations in medicine.”; *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine* 56 (1963): 63-70. - Ha S. A review on medicine in medieval times and the multicultural origin and development of the Salerno Medical School. *Med Histor* [Internet]. 2022 Aug 26 [cited 2023 Jun.

*Si tibi deficient medici, medici tibi fiant
Haec tria: mens laeta, requies, moderata diaeta*

The School of Salerno in Italy was the first medical school in Europe. It had large input from Arab writers, the influence of its teachings and writings having a great impact on European medicine.¹⁵

Around the twelfth century the *Regimen Sanitatis* (Regime di Salute), was composed, written in verse, as a guide to the maintenance of health for ordinary people. The *Regimen Sanitatis Salernitanum*, also known by the title *De conservanda bona valetudine* or *Flos medicine* is a collective, anonymous work, the result of popular custom. A famous commentary by the *Regimen Sanitatis*, , compiled in the twelfth century, which had considerable luck, was attributed to the Catalan physician and alchemist Arnaldo da Villanova.¹⁶ The work summarizes the hygienic precepts dictated by the Salernitana Medical School and offers the right remedies for every suffering, dictating the good rules for healthy living, demolishing the fanatical medieval mysticism and teaching to use all the earthly goods that nature has bestowed.

At the base of the *Regime* is all the Greek and Arab tradition and each aphorism reiterates the tension towards a physical and mental balance, because man is nothing more than a microcosm in the cosmos, in which all parts are connected to each other.

The care of the body goes together with the care of the soul and therefore harmony and balance are the source of health. Harmony between the four elements that make up the Created, namely air, water, earth and fire, which are the same elements at the base of our human body, and whose imbalances generate diseases.

Balance between mind and food, to find the best care in the joy and diet. Balance between disease and its cure, due especially to the “workshop” herbs that, grown in the gardens of the convents, take care of everything. We note that many councils and prescriptions of the Salernitana School agree with the Ayurvedic theory and with the conception of the TCM on the maintenance of health.¹⁷

The *Regimen Sanitatis*, dedicated to King Richard of England, who was healed in Salerno, opens with hexams in which the precepts of the School are synthetically exposed. These verses were sent by heart by every doctor:

*Anglorum Regi scribit tota Schola Salerni:
Si vis incolumem, si vis te reddere sanum,
Curas tolle graves: irasci crede profanum:
Parce mero, coenato parum: non sit tibi vanum
Surgere post epulas: somnum fuge meridianum:
Non mictum retine, nec comprime fortiter anum.
Haec bene si serves, tu longo tempore vives.
Si tibi deficient Medici, medici tibi fiant
Haec tria: mens laeta, requies, moderata diaeta.*

To the King of the English, the School of Salerno unanimously writes: If you want to look at yourself from evils, if you want to stay healthy, drive away serious worries, do not abandon yourself to anger. Be sober in drinking, moderate in eating, don't be burdensome Walking after lunch, avoid afternoon sleep, Don't hold your urine, don't compress your anus with effort. If you observe these rules carefully, you will live healthy for a very long time. If you miss the Doctors, be doctors These three principles: happy mind, quiet, moderate diet.



La Scuola Medica Salernitana in una miniatura del Canone di Avicenna

Whipping the last sheep of the flock

Thus Zhuangzi replied¹⁸ to Duke Wei of the Zhou who asked him what he had learned from his master regarding the problem of preserving life:

“Tian Kaizhi went to see Duke Wei of Zhou. Duke Wei said, ‘I hear that Zhu Xian is studying how to live. You are a friend of his—what have you heard from him on the subject?’” Tian Kaizhi said, ‘I merely wield a broom and tend his gate and garden—how should I have heard anything from the Master?’” Duke Wei said, ‘Don’t be modest, Master Tian. I am anxious to hear about it.’” Tian Kaizhi said, ‘I have heard the Master say, ‘He who is good at nourishing life is like a herder of sheep—he watches for stragglers and whips them up.’” “What does that mean?” asked Duke Wei. Tian Kaizhi said, ‘In Lu there was Shan Bao—he lived among the cliffs, drank only water, and didn’t go after gain like other people. He went along like that for seventy years and still had the complexion of a little child. Unfortunately, he met a hungry tiger who killed him and ate him up. Then there was Zhang Yi—there wasn’t one of the great families and fancy mansions that he didn’t rush off to visit. He went along like that for forty years, and then he developed an internal fever, fell ill, and died. Shan Bao looked after what was on the inside and the tiger ate up his outside. Zhang Yi looked after what was on the outside and the sickness attacked him from the inside. Both these men failed to give a lash to the stragglers’” “Confucius has said, ‘Don’t go in and hide; don’t come out and shine; stand stock-still in the middle.’ He who can follow these three rules is sure to be called the finest. When people are worried about the safety of the roads, if they hear that one traveler in a party of ten has been murdered, then fathers and sons, elder and younger brothers, will warn one another to be careful and will not venture out until they have a large escort of armed men. That’s wise of them, isn’t it? But when it comes to what people really ought to be worried about—the time when they are lying in bed or sitting around eating and drinking—then they don’t have enough sense to take warning. That’s a mistake!’”¹⁹

18. Zhuangzi, one of the three ‘Fathers’ of Taoism, along with Laozi and Liezi, is a pivotal figure of classical philosophical Taoism.

Of the author who gave his name to the Zhuang-zi we only know that he lived in the North of China: Granet writes that ‘he was a perfect Taoist, if only because the only trace of his life is a glittering book of genius and fantasy’.

The work that is attributed to him and that bears his name is a collection of symbolic stories, apologues, discussions, aphorisms, which aim to question the truths considered irrefutable, to overturn clichés, to put certainties in crisis.

The wise act according to the flow of things, without ever hindering them with his own will: in this sense, it is the Tao itself, since freed from any distinction, it follows the spontaneity of its own nature.

The heart of the sage reflects things as they really are; the sage uses his heart just as a clear mirror that faithfully reflects the image of what is, of what manifests itself, beyond discriminating thinking, the apparent stability of reason, overcoming distinctions. He lives constantly in the state of Wuxin

19. *The Complete Works of Zhuangzi*, Translated by Burton Watson, 2013 Columbia University Press, Mastering Life, pp. 293-294.

The passage on moderation can also be translated differently: “To live withdrawn without exaggerating with the interior, to live in the world without exaggerating with the exterior, to keep oneself in the happy medium: this is the Tao of man. When, out of a thousand travelers, one is killed on a journey, all warn one another and move only with strong escort. This demonstrates the man’s prudence. But nobody thinks to be on guard about eating and drinking and the irresponsible leakage of sperm. And it is there that death operates its decimation.”

Some caveats

Before approaching the practical exercises it is advisable to follow some preliminary indications. For example, yoga teaches us things to avoid, bad habits to get rid of (yama in Japanese kin kai).

The precepts of the traditional disciplines must be adapted to the different conditions of time and space, according to the different cultural contexts. The Katsura system obviously has no normative character, everyone is master of their own life! However, it would be useful to follow some basic guidelines, for example not to practice while intoxicated; do not smoke at least in the twenty minutes before and in the twenty minutes after the practice; for some exercises do not have a stomach too full.

As far as diet is concerned, there are many possibilities to find the one that best suits you. In the appendix, an example is offered by the indications of Dr. Jessica Inserra, nutritionist biologist.