

# DINAMICA

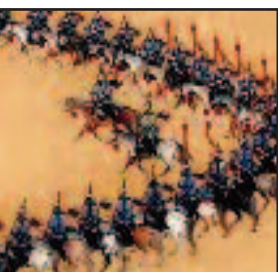
TAI CHI CHUAN E ARTI ASSOCIATE

太極拳

N.19 May 2022

PICCIONI & TOMAS 2022



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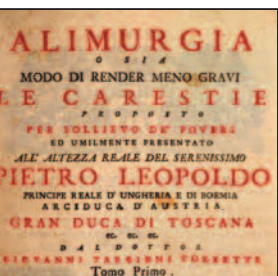
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The Association 'Dinamica Tai Chi Chuan e Arti Associate A.S.D.' was created by people who gathered in order to activate and share their potential through arts and psycho-physical disciplines, specifically Tai Chi Chuan. Alongside Tai Chi Chuan, it deals with other arts and activities, meditation techniques, breathing and Qi Gong, Taoist Yoga (Tao Yin) to name a few. The association is affiliated to the International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association (IYFTCCA©). Its aim is to promote Tai Chi Chuan and to offer the opportunity to learn and practice the traditional Tai Chi Chuan following the method and teachings of Master Yang Jun, the current 5th generation lineage holder of the creator of the Yang style Tai Chi Chuan.



**D**uring the period when the rays of the sun begin to reach us more directly, a phenomenon we call Spring, nature awakens after her winter sleep. Our body awakens too, and consequently our mind, both prompt to adapt to the new conditions, to the new balance. That is why it is even more important to practise our Tai Chi Chuan as much as possible in the open air, amidst the green of the plants renewing their leaves, with the scent of the first flowers softening the air we breathe, with birdsong in our ears: in short, intensely experiencing the change, which thus becomes a new magical moment. Because everything changes around and within us, as we unwind the cocoon of silk thread, centred on our balance, on the energy flowing within us, on our springtime of the spirit. Good practice to all, then, and enjoy your reading.

**Roberto Seghetti**

# We need to train our awareness

by **Anna Siniscalco**

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## 内外相合 – nèi wài xiāng hé

Unifying and Matching up Inner and Outer

Our Tai Chi practice depends on the spirit, hence the saying "The spirit is the general and the body his troops". If you cultivate and raise your spirit, your movements will naturally be clear, nimble and light, the form nothing more than empty and full, open and closed.

When we say "open" we do not just mean open the arms or the legs; the mental intent must open along with the limbs. When we say "close", we do not mean close the arms or the legs, the mental intent has to close along with the limbs. If you can combine inner and outer into a single impulse or a "Qi" flow, then they become a seamless whole. (8th Essential Principle)

The ability to merge the inner with the outer shows that you can raise your spirit: when the intent is clear the movements will be as well. *It is completely a matter of using intent rather than*

*force, with the entire body extended and relaxed, we can move with lightness and nimbleness, change and transform into a natural circularity. (6th Essential Principle)*

The practice of Tai Chi Chuan offers a course of study based on the spirit. In our method, the traditional Yang Family style, first we must learn to relax by opening, extending and also by connecting every part of the body, while training to pay attention to the processes of transformation. By practicing, day by day, we can develop strength, energy, calm, martial virtues and a clear awareness.

In Tai Chi Chuan, the Essence (Jin), the Energy (Qi) and the Spirit (Shen) are connected and everything is rooted into the body. For this reason, our training aims at transforming the coarse and rigid muscular strength into energy, which is to be expressed as an elastic strength, developed through the tendons and ligaments; besides we have to train to pay and maintain attention in order to feel and understand what kind of strength we are using and where it comes from.

This attention, which is the other aspect of the practice, is a training in mental presence, and it is essential to grasp the transformations activated by the practice itself: the calm, centered and present mind, truly trained to be in the "here and now", in the movement. It is not the rational, analytical mind, but rather an ability to intimately feel and understand intimately connected with the Essence, the Energy, the Spirit and, through their interdependence, with the "Xin," the deepest Essence, the quality that in our inner stillness, all unites and harmonizes.

Our method is a precise and direct path: it starts with practicing the perception of our body and the connections with our emotions and feelings in order to achieve the true essence, what we are and how we function. We need this kind of training to rediscover unity. It is a path to awaken and bring to the light of awareness the inner quality that we have and that our masters constantly indicate to us: the ability to merge and harmonize, eventually to reach a clear comprehension, a clear and free Spirit, what we are.





# The first step towards self-awareness? The breath.

by Roberto Seghetti

*Journalist and Editor-in-Chief*



**"Whenever in-breath and out-breath fuse, at this instant touch the energyless energy-filled center"<sup>1</sup>.**

**"With attention between the eyebrows, let the mind be free of thoughts. Let the form be filled with life essence to the top of the head and from there spread like a shower of light"<sup>2</sup>**

These are two of the 112 pieces of advice contained in a ten-thousand-year old Tantric text, whose purpose is to give a solution to the question that since the beginnings of humanity every generation has been asking about the meaning of life and reality.

The goddess Deva asks the god Shiva, the lord of time who presides over the endless creation-destruction-regeneration dynamic, the rhythm of which he marks with a formidable cosmic dance: 'What is this wonder-filled universe? What constitutes a seed? Who centers the universal

wheel? What is this life beyond form pervading the forms? How may we fully enter it, beyond space and time, beyond names and descriptions?"<sup>3</sup>.

Shiva is a divinity who during the centuries has become one of the most important in Hinduism along with Brahma and Vishnu. In the above mentioned Tantric text we are examining, he responds with 112 'paths', or 112 short suggestions. The first four deal with breathing; the fifth and sixth with the vital essence; the seventh teaches how to get rid of all distractions and the eighth how to get rid of thoughts and how to bring the vital essence to the top of the head, in order to be affected by a 'shower of light'.

In a very simple way, according to these texts, we achieve the knowledge, the refining of the spirit and the enlightenment by experiencing the awareness of body life and by learning how to recognize and cultivate the vital energy, starting with the breath, which allows us to get rid of the enchaining prison of thoughts. Body and spirit are inseparable, they are two sides of the same coin: if you corrupt one, you ruin the other; if you recognize and refine one, you elevate the other.

No doubt that the cultivation and the refinement of the spiritual part can also be achieved through the asceticism and some methods of corporal renunciations. The East as well is full of such theories, but with the idea that there is no separation between the material on one hand and the spirit, the mind, the consciousness on the other. As a matter of fact Asians are open-minded to practice the other way, which involves profoundly material body exercises, like those for the breath, leading to the spiritual refinement by training self-awareness.

On the other side, in the West, the marked separation between body and soul, especially after the advent of Christianity, has produced other outcomes: here the corporal sins lead to the soul perdition and consequently the connection is very close; only the 'mortification' of the body can explicitly produce spiritual results. The practice of prayer itself has considerable material aspects from the point of view of psychic well-being (the breath, the sound, the concentration, the emptiness of thoughts, the energy of a collective practice), but they are not recognized as such: well-being is culturally linked to the relationship with God.

Maybe this is the reason why the martial arts in the West are considered a purely physical and crude activity, without any relationship with the exercise of the arts, poetry, philosophy, politics. On the contrary, in the East, a valiant fighter follows all the practices that can refine both the body and the spirit, with the result that he is also qualified as an aesthete, a calligrapher, a painter, a poet, a philosopher, shortly, an intellectual. Perhaps it is also for this reason that there are the "internal martial arts", aimed at using the physical practice, the care of the breath, the recognition and cultivation of the vital energy, the mental awareness and the same martial techniques as a privileged path for the refinement of the spirit, as well as for the care of the





body.

A remarkable example, in this context, is the first of the ten essentials dictated by Yang Chen Fu, the third leader of the Yang family style of Tai Chi Chuan, transcribed by Chen Weiming (the whole text can be read at [www.dinamicataichi.it](http://www.dinamicataichi.it)):



### ***Empty, Lively, Pushing up and Energetic***

*Pushing up and Energetic means that the posture of the head is upright and straight and the spirit is infused into its apex. You should not use strength. Using strength makes the back of the neck stiff, therefore the chi and the blood cannot circulate freely. You must have an intention, which is empty, lively (or free) and natural. Without an intention that is empty, lively, pushing up and energetic you will not be able to raise your spirit.*

1 This is the third of the 112 ways given by Shiva to Devi. Text from the Vigyan Bhairava Tantra in The Door Without a Door. Edited by Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps, p. 100. Editions Il punto di incontro, Vicenza 2002.

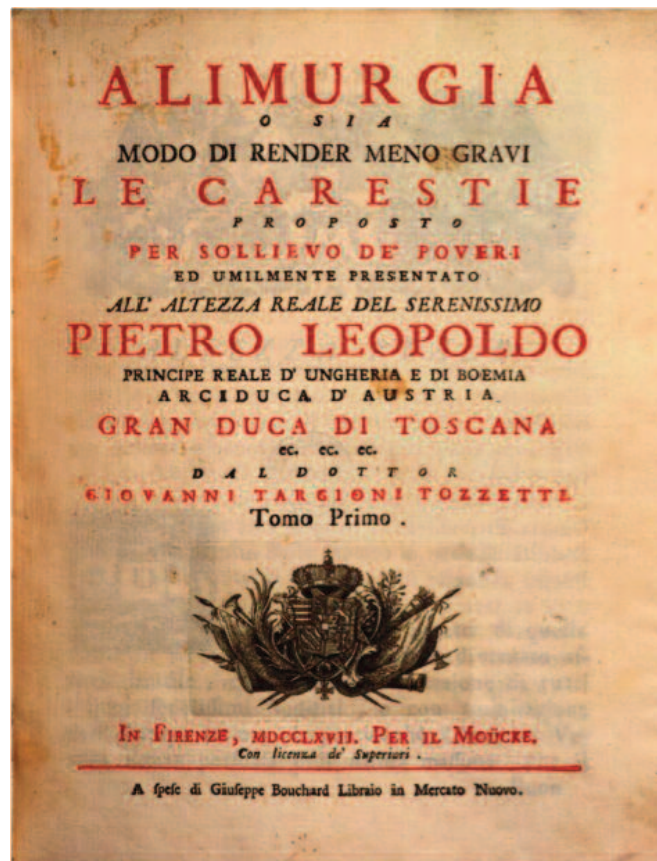
2 This is the eighth of the 112 ways as above

3 As above



# Alimurgy or surviving off wild plants

by Elisa Brasili and Alberta Tomassini<sup>1</sup>



In 1767 a book was published, with a title worthy of the most modern acronyms of our century: 'Alimurgy', from the Greek álimos (food) = that calms hunger, and urgía (urgency).

Alimurgy is now defined as the science that recognises the usefulness of eating certain wild plants that are edible.

The author of the book, Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti (Florence, 1712- 1783) graduated in 1734 in 'medicine and natural philosophy' with a thesis entitled 'The presence and use of plants in medicine' (De praestantia et usu plantarum in Medicina). As it was common at the time, he was also a botanist, agronomist, geologist, zoologist and so on.

The most intriguing (and modern) aspect, however, is linked to the subtitle of his book: 'Alimurgy Ossia Modo di Render Meno Gravi le Carestie Proposto per Sollievo dei Poveri' ('Alimurgy, or Way of Making Famines Less Severe Proposed for the Relief of the Poor').

And how to make 'famines less severe' and improve poor harvests that had been raging for years? Simple, by using wild and spontaneous plants!

Already in 1765 and 1766, two Tuscan authors, Saverio Manetti and our own Tozzetti, had tackled the problem of food shortages by searching for 'unusual' plants that could be used in bread

production. In particular, Tozzetti studied, in addition to different cereal species, 'wild' plants capable of increasing the mass of flour. The titles of the two books are explicit: 'Of the different species of wheat and bread as well as of bread-making and of all those plants and parts that can be breaded in times of famine, or used for food in other ways that can make up for bread' (Manetti) and 'Brief Instruction on the ways of increasing bread with the mixing of certain vegetable substances to which are added certain new and safer rules, for the proper selection of wheat seeds to be sown in the current autumn of 1766'.



Both authors wrote explicitly about the famine events that occurred in Tuscany in 1764 and 1765 and devoted their efforts to the two works dealing with unusual plant products used in breadmaking. There are, however, substantial differences in the approach they chose to deal with this topic. Manetti mainly focused his attention on the different species of cereals or exotic plants successfully used by local populations, relegating reference to wild species to a small section of his extensive book. On the contrary, Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti in his text published a year before the more famous treatise *Alimurgy*, in addition to various cereal species, shifted his attention to the use of specific wild plants to 'increase the mass of bread', i.e., to increase the quantity of flour for bread-making with wild plants, defined as *alimurgic*.

Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti's work identifies the 'vegetable substances' that could be added to common flours (wheat, rye, barley, etc.) to make bread or polenta, *necci* or *castagnacci*. These 'vegetable substances' were divided into four categories: 1) 'piths or seed cores', 2) 'cortical pulps, or juicy and morbid peels of fruits', 3) roots, 4) leaves, tops, barks, tender branches of plants defined as the lowest rank of Vegetable Food.

Interestingly, the author addresses all those who could read (parish priests, pharmacists, doctors, landowners, etc.) so that they would work to spread these precepts to the poor people. Considering the target audience, it is interesting that the author chose to report in a lexically rich vernacular (342 different plant names) species with only one name or with synonyms and collective names that, however, created difficulties in taxonomic attribution and whose names sometimes remained unresolved.

In the introductory part of the book on bread-making, the author describes in detail the state in which certain social classes lived and the consequences of the food shortage to which they were subjected. Targioni Tozzetti, in a very direct and explicit manner, writes: "... stimulated by angry hunger, they graze on substances that are harmful either by their nature, or because they have not been able to soften them, and strip them of their hostile quality; and so little by little the wretches suck a poison at time, which with the changing of the Seasons, produce Diseases that exterminate the entire population". The risk of improper use of toxic food species was therefore well known and in fact, in a separate paragraph, eight plants that are 'harmful' or toxic to human health are then described. These species were considered by Giovanni Targioni Tozzetti to be suitable for food only after certain procedures had been carried out to not only detoxify them, but also to make them more palatable (BOX 1).

The practice of consuming wild plants is as old as mankind itself. Prehistoric man fed himself by



## PROCEDURES FOR THE ELIMINATION OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

### Procedure 1

Plants:

Male Fern

Female Fern

Asphodel, Astula regia, Porreca, Porraccio,

Cyclamen, Panterreno, Panporcino, Peonia

*"Well washed, cleaned and cut into pieces, they must be boiled for an hour in a cauldron with water and a good dose of Gruma di Botte or ashes in a small bag; Then, once the bag has been removed and all the water drained, pure water is put back in, and the boiling is stopped, and if this second water still retains the unpleasant taste of the roots, it is thrown away, and pure water is put back in for the third time, and boiled until the pieces of root are well cooked and undone. Then they can be thinned out to knead leavened wheat flour, or rye flour, or barley flour, or barley flour for bread..."*

### Procedure 2

Plants:

Pseudacorus, Yellow-flowered Marsh Iris,

Mountain Iris, Jade, Aro, Gichero

*"These roots can be sweetened in the manner just mentioned above, or cut into small pieces, dried and ground, and their powder or flour boiled for an hour in a cauldron with a lot of water, stirring it with a wood, so that it is reduced to the consistency of porridge or fluid pulp; then remove the cauldron from the fire, set it aside with its contents for two or three days, and finally decant or transfer the damp that will rise to the Flour deposited in the bottom, which is then dried and scraped, to mix with other flours and make bread".*

hunting, fishing and gathering plants or parts of them, stems, roots, flowers, leaves, shoots or seeds. Then, around 10,000 years B.C., the 'domestication' of plants began, predominantly the more nutritious and carbohydrate-rich ones, but it must be emphasised that all the plants we now call 'crops' derive from wild plants selected and 'domesticated' for more advantageous characteristics.

"Behold, I give you every plant that bears seed, on all the surface of the earth, and every fruit-bearing tree that bears seed: these shall serve you for food. And to all the animals of the earth, and to all the birds of the air, and to everything on the earth that moves, and has a living soul in it, I give green grass for food." And so it was. (Genesis 1: 29-30)

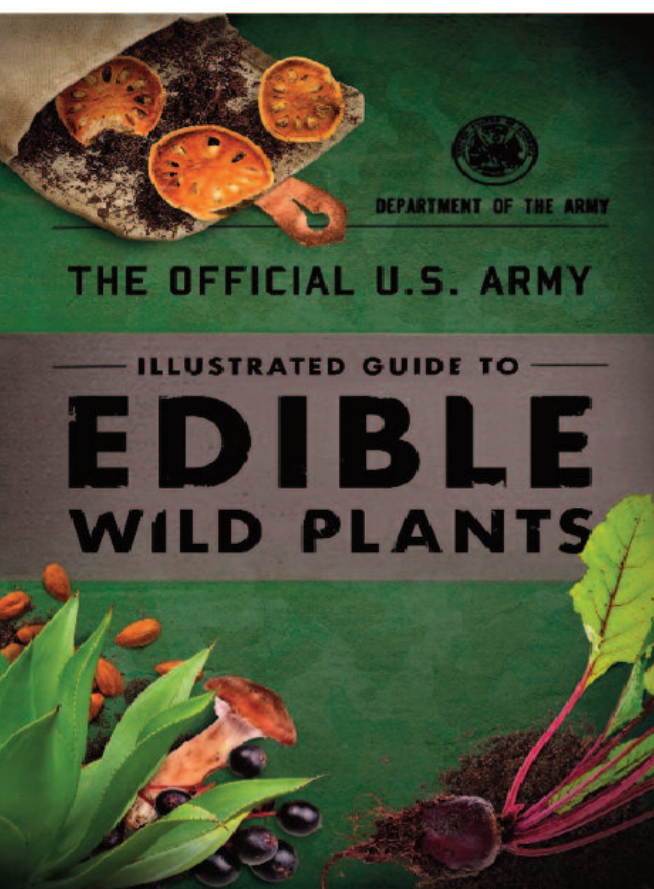
The fact is that out of the estimated 300/500,000 plant species on earth, of which about 30,000 are edible, only 7,000 would be cultivated and harvested as food. Even more astonishing is that only 20 species are used to cover food needs with wheat, maize and rice accounting for 60% of the human diet ([www.pfaf.org](http://www.pfaf.org)). Over the past 50 years, wheat, maize and rice have monopolised the world diet at the expense of alternative crops such as sorghum, millet, rye, cassava and sweet potato.

In spite of this, wild plants continue to play an important role in the subsistence of many populations, particularly when crop availability is poor, when household finances are insufficient, or when access to markets is difficult.

However, 'wild', 'under-utilised', 'neglected', 'minor', 'local', 'niche' foods have not only an undoubted nutritional value, but also a cultural value for many indigenous peoples, who are strongly tied to their land and guardians of a rich knowledge of both the traditional uses of wild plants and the biodiversity of the ecosystems where they live.

In general, wild plants are considered richer in micronutrients and bioactive secondary metabolites than intensively cultivated plants, making them excellent candidates as 'nutraceuticals' or 'functional foods' with high health potential.

And then there are the spin-offs to problems that increasingly plague us: pollution and climate. Intensive production systems use huge amounts of fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, causing a loss of biodiversity on the one hand and pollinating insect die-offs on the other. Most of the



forgotten plants are then adapted to marginal soils and naturally selected for coping with stressful conditions including those related to climate change and the vulnerability of focusing on a few selected species to be intensively cultivated. Wild plants grow everywhere, in meadows, on roadsides, along paths and rivers, among rocks, in gardens, by the sea or in the mountains.

The term 'alimurgy' reappeared in 1918 with the prefix 'phyto' to specify the derivation from plants. Oreste Mattiolo's book gave precise indications of edible plants for eating in times of famine, calamity, epidemics (!! ) or war (!! ) (Topical or not? How about that?). Curiously enough, it was the work base for a botanist from the University of Belgrade, who prepared a proper phytogeographical map to research useful plant species. But even more curiously, information on such plants is included in the continuously updated survival manuals of American ground troops and special forces! (Department of the Army - The Official U.S. Army Illustrated Guide to Edible Wild Plants).

Fortunately, the use of wild species is increasingly recognised as a valuable aid to improve nutrition in various international agreements, strategies and action plans (e.g. in the Agenda for Sustainable Development 2030 (SDG2, Target 2. 5), in the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

(International Treaty), in the Second Global Plan of Action for Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (Second GPA), and in the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and, according to the FAO, more than 100 million people in Europe (20 % of the total population) use wild plants as food.

Several chefs have started using wild plants to experiment with different tastes and textures in their recipes, reinventing culinary traditions by proposing new local gastronomies. Local fairs and specialised markets have been following the wave of 'wild herb cooking' for a number of years, while thematic courses for field identification and training in the culinary uses of wild vegetables have been multiplying recently (BOX 2).














The discovery that many of these plants can play an important role in a healthy diet as an alternative source of minerals and vitamins, as well as secondary antioxidant compounds and essential oils, is the turning point. Their use was initially promoted by health-oriented people as part of a healthy lifestyle, but is now being suggested as part of a new dietary strategy to manage malnutrition problems, to diversify the human diet. According to the Global Nutrition Report 2021 (<https://globalnutritionreport.org/report/2021-global-nutrition-report/>), about 2 billion people are deficient in important micronutrients and malnutrition is widespread in 88% of countries. COVID-19 has worsened the general outlook, particularly in the low- and middle-income classes, due to food shortages and deteriorating food quality. In this context, provitamin A, vitamin C and other antioxidants contained in high amounts in some wild plants are particularly useful for strengthening the immune system.

It is now up to us to act on several fronts. It is a priority to scientifically investigate the nutritional potential and health properties of edible wild plants in order to draw up dietary guidelines and avoid possible toxic or undesirable effects that cannot be ruled out.

Even more important is the documentation and protection of traditional knowledge on the consumption and preparation of such herbs by listening carefully to elders, indigenous peoples,



**Examples of alimurgic plants**

Species	Family	Common name	Use	Image
<i>Foeniculum vulgare</i> Mill	Apiaceae	Fennel	Food, seasoning	
<i>Taraxacum</i> FH.Wigg	Asteraceae	Dandelion	Food	
<i>Borago officinalis</i>	Boraginaceae	Borage	Food	
<i>Cichorium intybus</i> L.	Asteraceae	Chicory	Food	
<i>Sonchus olearaceus</i> L.	Asteraceae	Common barberry	Food	
<i>Papaver rhoeas</i> L. subsp. <i>rhoeas</i>	Papaveraceae	Common Poppy	Food, seasoning	
<i>Poterium sanguisorba</i> L.	Rosaceae	Sanguisorba	Food, seasoning	
<i>Reichardia picroides</i> L. Roth	Asteraceae	Common tongue-scratcher	Food	
<i>Laurus nobilis</i> L.	Lauraceae	Laurel	Food, liqueur, seasoning	
<i>Urtica dioica</i> subsp. <i>dioica</i>	Urticaceae	Nettle	Food	
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i> L.	Plantaginaceae	Ribwort Plantain	Food	
<i>Asparagus acutifolius</i> L.	Asparagaceae	Wild asparagus	Food	
<i>Sambucus nigra</i> L.	Viburnaceae	Common elderberry	Food, liqueur, seasoning	

small local farmers and migrants from all over the world, before this memory is lost. International agreements, strategies and action plans are all very well, but the reintroduction of traditional crops and the preservation of ancient knowledge must be supported by adequate information and cultural education campaigns. Just two examples among many, on two different levels, particularly struck us. Back in 1980: Flora Nwapa, the first modern Nigerian writer, wrote the 'Cassava Song', a protest against the importation of rice and a plea for the preservation of the traditional cassava crop. Turkey: The Halim Foçalı Vocational School organised a series of lessons and field activities for 16 student chefs who were trained to recognise, harvest and use local edible species in the kitchen, including a school garden to grow these herbs for use in gastronomy courses and the inclusion of these activities in the school curriculum.

This is what Elisa and I are working on, studying forgotten grains, particularly nutritious legumes and enhancing weeds, but (bear with us) we will talk about the latter in the next issue.

"When, together with the plants, we have also preserved the knowledge, memory, words, and affection linked to them, and are able to communicate this to future generations, then we will be able to say that we have truly saved all biodiversity" (Breda 2001)

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***You will see a royal town, leaning against an alpine hill,  
superb in men and walls, whose aspect alone indicates  
that it is the lady of the sea' (Francesco Petrarca)***



It is really significant that the exhibition entitled **"Superbaroque. Art in Genoa from Rubens to Magnasco"**, which can be visited in Rome until 3 July at the Scuderie del Quirinale, opens with this quotation. Significant and important for understanding the origin of the event and being able to truly enjoy its beauty.

Although Rome is one of the capitals of the Baroque style, this exhibition does not display any work of the Roman Baroque. The reason is that this exhibition is about the wealth, culture and power of Genoa in its golden centuries: hence the quotation from Petrarca. From various points of view, the Baroque is 'only' the evidence of the extraordinary development of this beautiful Italian city, as it represents the precious artistic current triumphing in Genoa's golden centuries and also the wealthy Genoese families of that period who enriched the city with majestic masterpieces.



It is not a coincidence that the exhibition was planned and co-produced by the Municipality and the Genoa Museums in a joint work with the National Gallery in Washington, the only American public museum. The exhibition was curated by Jonathan Bober, Andrew W. Mellon Senior Curator of Prints and Drawings at the National Gallery in Washington, by Piero Boccardo, former director of the Genoese Palazzo Rosso and one of the world's leading experts on the subject, and by Franco Boggero, art historian and expert on 16th and 17th century Ligurian painting.

This exhibition includes around 120 works from Italian and American institutions and important private collections, following the historical and artistic events of the city from the top of its glory to the slow but inexorable decline of its political power.

Most of the paintings, which are truly interesting, should also and above all be appreciated as a deliberate evidence of power and opulence that the commissioning families wanted to show. They are not only beautiful paintings but also messages and signs. You only have to observe the robes in Rubens' portraits (the gallery opens with a room dedicated to this painter who anticipates the true season of the Baroque in his Genoese

works) and the clothes portrayed by Van Dyck or the furnishings that crowd the canvases of Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione, not to mention the Baroque compositions by Domenico Piola and Gregorio De Ferrari, Magnasco's landscapes or the precious materials portrayed in the paintings, from the Carrara marbles to the silver or the amethyst objects

This is the right point of view to enjoy the paintings at the "Scuderie del Quirinale", accompanied by various historical contextualisation panels that enlighten the visitor on the double level of the exhibition: on one hand some personalities and the historical, political and economic moment; on the other side the evolution of the art committed in such a large and refined quantity by the most important Genoese families.



# The great void



The exhibition 'The Great Void. From sound to image' was recently opened at MAO, the Museum of Oriental Art in Turin, and will be on until September 4th. It deals with the concept of emptiness, as the title states, which is central to the Buddhist doctrine: 'Emptiness,' it is written in the presentation, 'is not only the instant that precedes the birth of all things, but is also the final emptiness, the liberation of all sentient beings on a cosmic level. In contrast to European cultural and philosophical traditions, where the term 'emptiness' carries with it a negative connotation that brings it close to nihilistic ideas and lack or deprivation, for Buddhism emptiness has a positive connotation ultimately linked to the attainment of awareness, that is, the understanding that life, with its constant changes, is impermanence and interdependence, since everything exists only in relation to the other. Understanding this, and thus freeing oneself from the suffering of life, results in a dimension of absolute peace (nirvana): it is here that the essence of the Buddha is revealed, who is not divinity, but precisely Emptiness'.

The exhibition offers a multi-sensory experience. In fact it opens with a large empty space that gradually becomes saturated with the notes of the "Il Grande Vuoto" (The Great Void), a piece composed for the occasion by young Roman composer Vittorio Montalti, in which silences, rhythms, sounds and the echo of the space itself become the matrix and metaphor of the divine construction of the ritual space: a work suspended between composition and sound installation that inhabits the different spaces of the Museum.



Visitors are invited by the music to take a path of sensory experience and meditation, to reach the fulcrum of the exhibition, in the Hall of Columns, where an extremely rare 15th-century Tibetan thangka is on display, the most precious of the MAO's collections, depicting Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future in splendid robes and seated on the lion's throne. With his hands poised in dharmacakramudra (the gesture of setting the Wheel of Law in motion), revealing his future mission as promulgator of the Doctrine, the Buddha holds the stems of plants and flowers, germinal symbols of a future liberation.

But what is a thangka? As a religious and ritual object, with its innumerable symbolologies, it is a medium that should allow the observer to navigate through the difficult waters of meditation and visualise the various attributes of the deity (in this case Maitreya, the Buddha of the future) and to enter into a deep meditative state, in which the images, colours, gestures and sounds shown in the painting are revealed in a ritual cosmogony.

In modern times, the Tibetan tradition of reproducing Buddhist deities and saints on canvas (the thangkas) gave rise to the photographic portrait of the tulku, to which the final part of the exhibition is dedicated. The tulkus are salvific figures whose 'wisdom mind' is reborn in new bodies to lead humanity towards salvation and the Great Void... towards Buddhahood. In the last two rooms one can therefore see hundreds of photographs of tulkus, part of a collection of images made from the late 19th century to the present day, living Buddhas belonging to Buddhist and Bonpo schools all over the world, where Tibetan Buddhism is practised. These are not just photographic portraits, but authentic objects of veneration, containing the sacredness of presence, because it is believed that the image and the tulku are inseparable.

This collection, started over a decade ago by artist Paola Pivi, has reached thousands of images and constitutes what is now the largest archive of tulku images in the world (<http://tulkus1880to2018.net/>).



# Our working together ...

*Our working together - together discovering and contrasting and correcting ourselves through frequent and sometimes lively arguments - is the matrix of my continuous enrichment and perfection. An opportunity to be an eternal disciple and maybe a conditioning within the humility that is the indispensable science support.*

(Ferrari A.B.)<sup>1</sup>

by Fausta Romano<sup>2</sup>



The "A.B. Ferrari" Psychoanalytic Institute for Training and Research (I.P.F.R. "A.B. FERRARI") printed a two-volume book to celebrate the centenary of the Italo-Brazilian psychoanalyst Armando B. Ferrari's birth. The book contains his writings published between the 1970s and the early 2000s.



The collection also includes an important production of unpublished clinical seminars that show psychoanalyst Ferrari at work.

The book was presented during two training days, organized on 8 and 9 April 2022 by the IPFR "A.B. Ferrari" in cooperation with the School of Specialization in Clinical Psychology of La Sapienza University, with the I.P.F.R. "A.B. Ferrari"- Brazil Branch, and with the Psychoanalytic Nucleus of Aracaju and sponsored by the online magazine "Funzione Gamma". During this event both Italian and Brazilian psychoanalysts testified how their meeting Ferrari had changed their way of understanding the work of analysis, and others introduced some innovative proposals arising from the development of his hypotheses.

Anna Siniscalco<sup>3</sup> was invited to attend the event, and together we submitted new proposals. Stefania Martinelli<sup>4</sup> and Riccardo Williams<sup>5</sup> presented the book.

### **The book <sup>6</sup>**

The publication of these two volumes is the result of a work which has involved many of us. This is how we operated with Ferrari. Everyone was due to contribute, with generosity and humility, to the construction of a common thought, with the pleasure of learning from the experience of everyone in the group. Working with him was like going to a craftsman's workshop to learn in a direct and practical way: we worked together, under his guidance, and next to him, while he was supervising, we discovered new horizons of thought, often starting from a fragment, a word, an image.

Together with him, new hypotheses were built: a living work.

After his death, the colleagues belonging to the IPFR 'A.B. Ferrari', for about two years, have selected, collected and unwound his clinical supervisions, making a pre-screening and a transformation.

Later, the four curators further refined this material and integrated it with other Ferrari's writings, some of which were unpublished as part of his personal archive made available by his wife.

This careful and meticulous work, in which everyone played a fundamental part, has lasted for years.

### **Who is the psychoanalyst A.B. Ferrari? <sup>7</sup>**

During the Second World War he was a militant anarchist. At the end of the war he was sent, still very young, to Latin America as a correspondent for the newspaper Italia Viva, directed at the time by Leo Valiani: he arrived in Brazil in the early 1950s, where he completed his studies as an anthropologist, sociologist and psychoanalyst.

### **His psychoanalytic hypothesis**

This two-volume book contains his writings, testimonials of the evolution of his psychoanalytic thought that, starting from Sigmund Freud and Melanie Klein and through the experience of collaboration with psychoanalyst W.R. Bion, comes to reformulate and revolutionise the psychoanalytic theory and technique.

First in the history of psychoanalysis, Ferrari places the body dimension as a key element of the relationship, which is by its nature generally conflicting and dynamic, between corporeity and psychicity.

The body is analyzed as the origin of the mind and its main object.

"It is not the mother the first object for the new born baby nor is it even her breast, but actually the infant's hunger itself" (Ferrari A.B., 1992)<sup>8</sup>.

"Ferrari's psychoanalytic hypothesis moves from the idea that the psyche acquires from the body the impulse for its own evolution. From this approach also derives the idea that disharmonic balances can be created between the components of the individual system, especially between the body dimension and the psychic dimension in a reciprocal relationship, and sometimes even a rediscovered balance of the body can help recover from states of psychic suffering. (Seghetti R., 2020).<sup>9</sup>

Psychic functioning starts, therefore, from a presence: a presence inside the system, and not placed externally as psychoanalysis has declared for years, considering the mother the leading figure.

The presence of the sensation and the perceived sensation. We could say 'I feel and I perceive, therefore I am, therefore I think'.

Ferrari takes this hypothesis, with its implications and developments, from his wide training as a human being, anthropologist and psychoanalyst and from his clinical observations. This new theory revolutionizes the psychoanalytic thought on the functioning of the mind and the psychoanalytic technique.

### **The analytical relationship**

In his hypothesis, it is not the mother who knows a priori the infant's needs, but it is the infant who knows and takes care of them, pointing them out to the mother, or to the caregiver.

It is not the analyst who with his or her theories knows a priori what is happening within the analysand: it is the analysand who knows about himself or herself, but does not know that he or she knows.

Analyst and analysand are thus placed in an equal position, as far as responsibility and power are concerned: it is not the analyst who has the power of knowledge 'over the analysand'. His responsibility is to create a context in which it is possible for the analysand to move towards self-knowledge through the experience of the relationship with the analyst and with himself. The analysand's responsibility is to accept, reject, transform the analyst's proposal.

The analytic relationship is built over time in a unique, specific and unrepeatable way with each analysand as a context of experience: the analyst's saying is not aimed at explaining, at meta-communicating, at "unveiling the unconscious truth", but at soliciting the activation of resources already present in the analysand and blocked in him or her by antalgic postures assumed in the course of life in the presence of emotional, bodily, psychic difficulties.

Everything takes place in the 'here and now' of each encounter.

Memories of the past, predefined theories and prior knowledge are placed in the background of an encounter that takes place in the 'here and now', starting from what the analyst perceives and feels in relation to the analysand and what the analysand manages to bring into play of himself in each session.

A dynamic and processual relationship, the analytical relationship, which takes place in every moment of its making and also from its beginning to its end, as it is placed in the arrow of time (Hawking S., 2002).

### **Method**

"Professor, I still don't quite understand some aspects of your theory". At this question of mine during a supervision Ferrari became very uneasy, telling me that he had no interest in me understanding his theory: 'I want you here with all your being Fausta, with all your capacity for perception and intuition, with your sensitivity.'

"Why do you want to understand? By understanding you drop a slab of black marble on any clinical problem. Because understanding buries perception, intuition, curiosity. If we understand we are no longer there, we are done: we have understood, precisely. Do you follow

me in this? Understanding is the great danger of the analytic relationship: whether it is the analyst who understands or the analysand. To understand does not mean to perceive, because understanding belongs to the mind, it is a strictly mental process, it does not pass through the body, it does not pass through sensation, it does not become perception and therefore cannot be transformed into experience (...) it does not have enough emotional colouring to become experience, something lived, something metabolised, something felt. It remains a simple understanding'. (Ferrari, 1987, 1993, 1994).<sup>10</sup>

Where, then, do the analyst's formulations emerge from? How much in his saying reflects his feeling and perceiving himself in the encounter with the other? How much attention is he able to pay to his own corporeity? How many hours does he spend sitting? And how is his posture? Does he remember to breathe from time to time? What impact does the presence of another person entering the analysis room have on him? And how does the position vis à vis affect the analyst's feeling? And how does it change if the analysand uses the couch? Or if, as today, in Covid's time, he uses the online?

Ferrari called Aura that ineffable and non-objectifiable quid that constitutes the sensorial, and emotional substratum (I could say the amniotic fluid) of every analytical encounter with every patient.

### **My integrated experience**

I wondered what could support and help the analyst if in his function of listening to what happens in him in the encounter with the analysand, we include everything, even his bodily area, made up of sensations, perceptions and emotions.

In this framework lies my experience that I have been developing for some time in the search for practices that can accompany the path of the analysand-analyst relationship. After several attempts, I came across the practice of Tai Chi Chuan.

In my way of feeling, the calmness required by this discipline, the slowness of the movements, the attention required at each step, at each gesture, as the experience progresses, contribute to expanding my capacity for listening, perception, intuition. My vision widens and focuses with greater precision, and all of this together, amalgamating with my knowledge, leads me to fish deep within me for languages, words, silences, unique to each moment of encounter with each of the patients I meet daily.

I train myself, through my Tai Chi Chuan practice and through my clinical practice. The perception of my limits becomes concrete experience, experience that guides me, even when I do not immediately see a solution, and trains in me patience and the knowledge and power to wait, even in the darkness of the encounter with a universe unknown to me: the patient's? Mine? Of both perhaps.

The concrete experience of my limitation and the confidence that I can tolerate it and perhaps even transform it, helps me and teaches me humility: at every moment, because at every moment the anxiety of not knowing pushes me to accelerate, to want to know, to want to understand... and I meet again and again and again that simple question: "Why do you want to understand?"

### **The Integrated Group Experience**

Starting from my personal experience, of how the study and practice of this discipline are modifying my way of presenting myself also in my clinical practice, I had the idea to propose a training experience that has lasted four years, to a group of psychotherapists.

The group is led by Anna Siniscalco, with monthly meetings, during which part practice and



part study and reflection come together in search of comparison and possible integration. The objective of this group is to be able to learn through Tai Chi Chuan a practical way to knowledge and encounter with oneself and with the other, in order to deepen and broaden one's training in the analytical relationship.

The group progresses in this training over the years.

During the second of the two study days that took place in Rome on 8th and 9th April, which I mentioned earlier, we presented a video with some sequences of this group's practice accompanied by synthetic and essential reflections from the group participants.

Anna Siniscalco intervened to present some fundamental elements of Tai Chi Chuan to an audience of psychoanalysts, with a contribution entitled: 'Relationship, experience and transformation in Yin Yang theory and in the practice of Tai Chi Chuan.'

All of this aroused the interest of the participants in the event, who asked questions prompted by the experience presented through the video and their curiosity to also learn about the possible applications of this practice in various areas, such as in the field of serious neurological disorders.

A selection of sequences from the video presented will soon be posted on Dinamica's social networks.

The video was made by Michaela Pani, through the footage she shot during the lesson and her careful and professional editing of the sequences.

And all this also stems from our working together over time.



<sup>1</sup> Ferrari A.B. *Intervista in Le (nuove) confessioni di un italiano*. Armando Ferrari si racconta a Luigi Santucci, Chimera Editore, Milano, 2010

<sup>2</sup> Psychologist, Psychotherapist, President of the Psychoanalytic Institute for Training and Research 'A.B. Ferrari'.

<sup>3</sup> Instructor, International Yang Family Tai Chi Chuan Association (IYFTCCA), qualified in Teaching and Instructor Training since 2017, National Federal Instructor Grade 4 FIWuK, Italian Wushu-Kung Fu Federation, since 2015. Founder, President and Technical Director of the Dynamic Tai Chi Chuan and Associated Arts Association A.S.D. since 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology - Sapienza Roma, Group Psychoanalyst (IIPG). He directs with Prof. Riccardo Williams the series "Psychopathology in the age of development tradition and research" for Edizioni FrancoAngeli

<sup>5</sup> Professor of Dynamic Psychology at the Department of Dynamic, Clinical and Health Psychology and Lecturer at the School of Specialisation in Clinical Psychology of the Department of Dynamic Clinical and Health Psychology - La Sapienza University, Rome

<sup>6</sup> Armando B. Ferrari – *Il pensiero e le opere. Saggi psicoanalitici - Volume 1 La teoria. Volume 2 La clinica*. A cura di Carignani P., Bucci P., Ghigi I., Romano F., 2022, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>7</sup> Montreal 1922-Roma 2006.

<sup>8</sup> Ferrari A.B. (1992), *L'Eclissi del corpo*, in Carignani P., Bucci P., Ghigi I., Romano F. (A cura di) (2022), Armando B. Ferrari. *Il pensiero e le opere. Saggi psicoanalitici- Vol.1*, pag. 132), FrancoAngeli, Milano.

<sup>9</sup> Seghetti R. (2020) *Introduzione a Siniscalco A., Romano F., Seghetti R., Da Soma a Psiche. Il viaggio dei sapiens*, Funzione Gamma, N° 47 - *La polifonia del corpo in psicoanalisi*.

<sup>10</sup> Ferrari A.B., (1987, 1993, 1994), *Problemi di tecnica psicoanalitica*, in Carignani P., Bucci P., Ghigi I., Romano F. (2022), (A cura di), Armando B. Ferrari. *Il pensiero e le opere*, FrancoAngeli, Milano.

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**Images and drawings:** Donata Piccioli, Lamberto Tomassini

**Translations:** Diana Alliata, Daniela Famulari, Patrizia Ponti

**Web support:** Stefano Longo, Maria Michela Pani



TOMAS-22

If it's true that  
food is the  
enemy,

Tai Chi Chuan can teach you  
not to oppose but to yield to  
the enemy's attacks

