



**Article Title:** Sanchin & Tai Chi similarities

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**Bio:** Raymond Wylie began studying Tai Chi with the Hao styles (a mix of internal systems, notably Bagua, Hsing-I, and Tai Chi). Later he moved into the Yang style.

**Abstract:** Noticing similarities between Tai-Chi, Aikido and the Uechi-ryu Sanchin kata of Okinawa, the author discusses his views.

## INTRODUCTION

In this article I would like to look at Sanchin in a Tai-Chi manner, applying Tai-Chi principles and ideas.

It is rather difficult to say how I came to look at Sanchin in this manner, many things came together to bring me to my viewpoint, but I think the pivotal point was when my Tai-Chi teacher demonstrated the form in a manner that I had not seen before.

Seeing this method also explained to me why so many people do Tai-Chi incorrectly. For the most part they do it as an external art, basically in the same manner that one would do Japanese karate, but slowly. To do Tai-chi correctly certain principles and methods must be stringently observed, the form looks a lot less structured and more spontaneous; although in fact the form is more structured because it adheres to principles.

To do Tai-Chi correctly you must do each individual technique, and then

together they will create the form, so you can start the form at any point, mix it up do the beginning last and you will still be doing correct Tai-Chi.

Conversely you can do the form exactly as you were taught, and still do it wrong if you don't do the correct techniques. After seeing this demonstration I realized that you could apply the same thinking to the Sanchin form, I had already noticed many aspects of Tai-Chi in Sanchin, so it was then just a small step to modify Sanchin and was in fact no different to what my teacher had shown me with Tai-Chi.

To do Tai-chi certain exercises are performed before the practice to develop the principles used in Tai-Chi; these are used to open the Qwa. I will start by explaining them, then move on to how they are used in combat and then compare Tai-chi with Sanchin and show the modifications that I think can be incorporated into Sanchin, in fact you will now be able to do two forms of Sanchin the half hard soft version or as I think of it the hard version and the totally soft version. I can guarantee that you will notice a difference.

The exercises

Stand with your hands on your hips, feet shoulder width apart. Now circle your hips clockwise then anti-clockwise. Next get into a right forward stance front leg bent rear leg straight, and once again circle the waist both clockwise and anti clockwise, repeat this in a left stance. Now get into your original stance and do a vertical circle up and down moving your navel place your right hand on your navel and the back of your left hand on the small of your back, this movement may look a bit embarrassing but it will open your lower Qwa, once again move into a left and right stance and circle both ways.

For the upper Qwa stand in the same stance but this time place your right hand in the centre of your chest and your left hand on your belly button. Now move your elbows into your centre and lean forward by circling your shoulders. Repeat this in the other direction then once again do it in both a left and right stance, this is Peng (pronounced Pong). Now you have to put them all together so that it is one move, and it will look like a ripple starting

at the feet, the stomach then the chest. It will look like somebody righting themselves from a push.

If you have a punching bag you can place your hands on it and move it by using this method.

For the next exercise you must try a two handed push using this method against the air. Now try the two handed push downward while dropping into a modified horse stance, do this in an elastic manner so that you feel like you are being pulled up after the push down.

### Tai-Chi and Sanchin

I have given a very basic grounding in Tai-chi, now let us look at Sanchin from a Tai-chi perspective. The first move that occurs in Sanchin is the double downward strike to the Tan-tien, remember back to the exercises? The double strike downward, this is what I would do it should appear more elastic and relaxed.

The thrusts I would do as in "Brush knee push", which means that you turn away to your right, bend your right knee then make the strike by pushing off your leg and turning your waist also you move your hand from the centre of your body. Then steal the centre line; there are quite a few other interesting viewpoints on the thrust that I would like to discuss; firstly I am not entirely convinced that the hand positions are just for striking.

I think that they could be a reference point for some type of tactical drill such as sticking hands or pushing hands. I would say most probably pushing hands, you will see what I mean when I talk about the Wauke and it's applications.

When you draw back the hand from the thrust to make it internal do not just draw your hand back, from the extended position, bend your elbow and think of this, put your YI (intention) into just moving your elbow down then when you draw your arm back do it by turning your waist.

Stand in a right foot forward stance; your partner in the same stance has to grip your wrist and pull back so that there is a good degree of tension and try to pull your hand away. The usual way is that we just pull our hand, and in this case because of the tension it won't work; what you have to do is relax your arm and concentrate on moving your waist and butt, I actually concentrate on my right buttock where I put my Yi and I forget about everything else but moving my butt and waist around.

Now to the Wauke. When I do this on a turn I mirror the exercise that I've spoken of earlier, I do it as an elbow strike with my left hand in the crease of my right arm then I drop my arm for the block. When raising the arm I do what I've described before; I put my Yi into the elbow. I concentrate on dropping my elbow and not necessarily on raising my arm.

When you raise your arm your palm faces inward, fingers pointing up; then your hand turns around to face outward. Your other hand should be now pressed against your arm at about elbow level. When you do the draw back for the double strike tilt your pelvis up and drop your chest (Peng) the double strike should have the ripple in it which I discussed at the beginning of this article.

Obviously this is just a basic outline of a method of doing Sanchin and I am sure that you can go a lot deeper, I'll conclude this with a few Bunkai which are from Tai-Chi, which you may know already.

- 1) From a right punch to face parry with left hand then bring the right arm up underneath then roll it over and catch his right hand and pull it down, when he punches with his left block this with your left and bring your right hand up, still holding his right hand bring his right arm up under his left elbow, this will tie him up and lock him, you can then head butt him. You can do a similar exercise with one hand only blocking his two strikes, you can use the hand up position as a Kokyu-Nage by just thrusting it into his crossed arms.
- 2) From the crossed arm position he places his left hand on your right elbow,

cover this with your left palm and press to your arm then drop your right arm down and bring it up under his elbow and push it up and over in a semi circle in front of you this will force him to bend over at the waist, from there you have all the aiki variations on wrist locks, to counter this when it is done against you simply follow your right hand with your left describing a circle with it, this will push his hands away, note you can spear under his arm or grab skin.

3) When your hand is raised you can use it to strike or block, it can be both a gross motor skill or high road You can block inside or outside to right and left attacks e.g. from a right punch block inwards with your right hand grab his wrist with your left hand go over his left hand with your right and press your right palm into his stomach. This will lock him up if done against the left side when you turn over his arm grasp his left elbow with your right hand then pull him over.