

Interview with Annemie van den Gucht and Peter van den Velde, Wetteren, Belgien

Forum: Hello Annemie, hello Peter, we have known each other for some years now and right from the start we talked a lot about bodywork. One of the main topics was the word „alienation“. Can you explain this for us.

Peter: The word „alienation“ comes from the works of Marx, Hegel and Marcuse. Mainly it was used in the area of economics. Here alienation is between man and his environment. Today you can also see alienation towards the body. The contact to one's own body is lost. You can see this in such simple things as cooking, eating and other basic activities in daily life.

Annemie: It begins during childhood. Children are not allowed to make themselves dirty. They are not allowed to walk barefoot and anything that is a little bit dangerous is forbidden. At school they have to sit on chairs and physical expression is repressed.

Peter: No matter whether adult or child, alienation is the loss of contact to natural things.

Martin: How is this experience connected to your Taijiquan-practice?

Peter: Taijiquan can be a way to rediscover your body.

Annemie: For that you need an exercise. Taijiquan could be this. But Taijiquan is not a result, it is a way. For some people it is a shock when they feel for the first time how much they lost the contact to their body. They see how difficult it is to do small things, like align the hand to the nose. But this is the beginning of awareness and so the start of the healing process.

Peter: I think, the use of the body always involves the use of the senses. An important cause for alienation is that we are often too rational and have lost contact to our body. It is all too much about knowledge and much too less about feeling. The movements of Taijiquan are a medium to discover your body. But this involves much hard work.