

## **Japanese Four Eyes Technique**

By Susan Ellis

Dialogue at one of our summer camps:

Skater: I GOT IT!

Sue: What did you get?

Skater: Japanese Four Eyes Technique!

Sue: HUH?

Skater: Well, if my four eyes are always pointing in the same direction, it stops my upper body rotation.

Sue: HUH?

Skater: I have four eyes, two right here (pointing to his eyes), and two right here (pointing to his nipples), and if they are all looking in the same place on the straights I don't rotate my shoulders!

What a unique way of looking at what he needed to do to solve a problem! The skater went on to explain that he learned this from watching a martial arts film, thus the name – Japanese Four Eyes Technique.

We then expanded on his theory and gave him two additional eyes on the front of his hip bones, and then two more on the front of his knee caps. So he now skates with EIGHT EYES, all pointing in the same direction at all times. Not only did it solve his upper body rotation, but also helped with his load, being able to fully load at the ankle, thus keeping the pressure on the ball of the foot all the way through the push, and also helped him to finish his push better before landing his other skate.

### **Headlights on Low Beam**

One common problem for many skaters is finding the ideal position for their chest. Too high, and they won't be able to get their weight moving forward to load the push. Too low, and they won't be able to bend their ankle as their butts will stick out (remember your butt is connected to your thigh bone, and if your butt is out it draws your knee back, and with your knee stuck back, your ankle won't bend).

The trick is to find a position that will allow your weight to move easily to the ball of the foot and not restrict your ankle bend. For each person this position is different depending on body type. For many Masters or beginning skaters it is usually a case of the chest being too high. Imagine having a set of headlights on your chest (kinda like the Japanese eyes above). Being conscious of turning the headlights on low beam (i.e.: chest pointing down) is a unique way of remembering to keep your chest lower. The opposite of this is having your chest too low, so you would want to raise your high beams by bringing your chest up.