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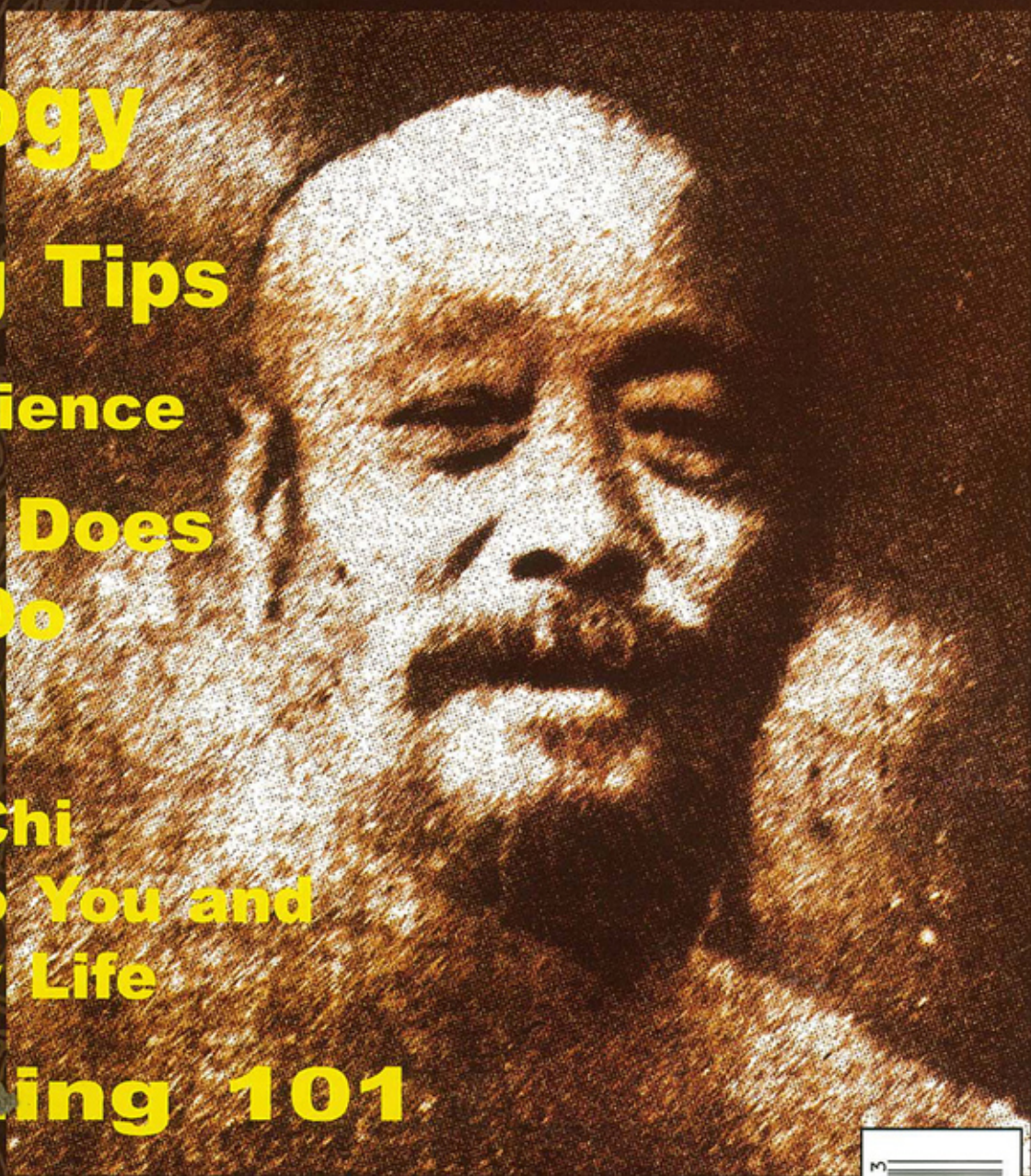
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SPECIAL FEATURE : WU STYLE TAI CHI



Wu Style Taijiquan

by Alan Ding

Renowned for being the most popular form of Taijiquan after Yang style, Wu style Taijiquan has gained countless followers across the world. Wu style owes its roots to Quan You (1834-1902), a Manchurian official and a follower of Yang Lu Chan - the founder of Yang Style. Yang was an Imperial Court teacher, and thus many believe that Quan You's Wu style drew many similarities from the ***Yang Style Small frame**, a form developed by Yang Lu Chan, and taught to his students in the Imperial Court. Only three Manchurians were able to internalise and master the essence of Yang's teachings. Wan Chun was able to attain high levels in the use of hard

internal energy. Ling Shan, on the other hand was noted for his use of soft energy while Quan You was highly skilled in using neutralising or transformational energy.

At the time, numerous students of Yang Lu Chan were high-ranking officials or members of the royal family. Even though Quan You was one of Yang Lu Chan's elite, his low ranking official position in the Imperial Court, resulted in the omission of his name being inscribed on Yang Lu Chan's tombstone as one of the Yang's students. Instead Quan You's name was recorded as Yang Ban Hou's student. This was typical of the social class dynamics of the period. The royal and the common

person could not both together be seen as students of the same teacher. Hence non-royalty students were made to be at least one generation below the royal family in terms of lineage even though the reality was quite different.

After leaving the Imperial Court, Quan You stayed in Beijing and taught his art to many students. Over time, he attained a great reputation as a competent martial artist and also trained numerous top students. After the fall of the Qing Dynasty, he adopted a 'Han' surname of WU for his family so that he and his family could integrate into the Chinese

'Han' population. From his teachings, there are now three main streams of Wu Style through three primary disciples: Wang Mao Zhai

**Wu Jian Quan
(1870 -1942),
Son of Quan You**

***Yang Style Small Frame**

The Traditional Yang Style Taijiquan had to be modified due to the Imperial Dress code. The Imperial Court dress were long robes that had long sleeves, which made certain movements clumsy to perform. The new form has smaller movements and its postures allowed fighting in the confining Imperial clothing. Hence it was known as the **Yang Style Small Frame**.



(1862 - 1940), a Beijing lineage forming the Northern School, Chang Yun Ting (1860 - 1918) and Wu Jian Quan (1870 - 1942), the son of Quan You forming the Southern School

Wang Mao Zhai was a highly skilled martial artist in Beijing when he started to learn Taijiquan from Quan You. Wang was tested for three years to prove his sincerity and patience before Quan You finally decided to teach him Wu style Taijiquan. After many years of dedicated practice, he achieved a high level in his new found art. Yan Yu Ting (1887 - 1982) the main disciple of Wang was the person who is said to have standardised the postures and spread the popularity of Wu style in the North. Some

of his students include Wang Pei Sheng, Li Jing Wu and Li Bing Ci.

Little is known of Quan You's other disciple, Chang Yun Ting (1860 - 1918). However, what is known is that Chang's art was passed down to Dong I Chen, who then handed it down to Liu Chang Jiang.

Born into a martial arts family, Quan You's son, Wu Jian Quan, achieved a very high level of expertise in not just Taijiquan. Wu Jian Quan was also an accomplished archer and equestrian. He maintained a close relationship with the Yang family and trained frequently with Yang Cheng Fu. It was because of his close association with the Yang Family that Wu Jian Quan later

The Phases Of Changes In The Wu Style Taijiquan

Earlier Wu Form

The earlier Wu style was actually the Yang Small Frame as taught by his father Quan You. The form handed down by Wang Mao Zhai is identical to this form.

Standard Wu Form

Wu Jian Quan made numerous refinements and modifications to his father's earlier Wu form. He removed some of the more vigorous movements and made the form slow and even tempoed, which facilitated easy learning and popularising the art form. As more people learnt this form, the practitioners soon accept Wu Jian Quan's form as the standard form of Wu Style Taijiquan.

Wu Fast Form

This form became public in 1982 by the Jian Quan Taijiquan Association headed by Ma Yu Liang and Wu Ying Hua. The form is performed faster than the normal form. Postures are modified to include more martial applications. The advanced fast form can also be found in the Yang Style Taijiquan.

Modern Wu Form

Modern versions of Wu style have been created to aid easier learning. Such forms included, the form taught by Wu Kong Yi is slightly different from that of his father, the 37 postures developed by Wang Pei Sheng and also Ma Tue Liang and Wu Ying Hua 30 postures shortened version of the long set.



Wu Jian Quan demonstrating "Brush Knee & Push" posture

Characteristics Of Wu Style Taijiquan from Northern China

- Virtually 100% of the body weight is on one leg while the other leg is empty. For example in bow stance, full weighting is on the front leg while the back leg is insubstantial
- Primary emphasis is on turning the waist while keeping the hips stationary
- The importance of the sacrum and ming men point rather than the dan tian in storing of Chi and discharging of jing
- Extensive use of *Hu kou* for blocking, hooking and grasping. *Hu Kuo* is the space between the thumb and index finger
- More upright and a little more expansive stances than the Southern Wu styles.
- Greater emphasis on internally balancing of solidity and emptiness
- The application of a great deal of the Traditional Chinese medical theory into the development and understanding of the form.

International Listings Of Wu Style Taijiquan

Toronto ON, Canada	(416) 597 8426
London, United Kingdom	(171) 916 6064
Hong Kong	2890 2510
Honolulu HI USA	(808) 941 3782
Detroit MI USA	(248) 435 5643
Malaysia	60 -3-703 2189
Singapore	5325 625
Fredericton NB Canada	(506) 450 -8889
Mill Bay BC, Canada	(250) 743 -9882
North York, ON Canada	(416) 661- 7818

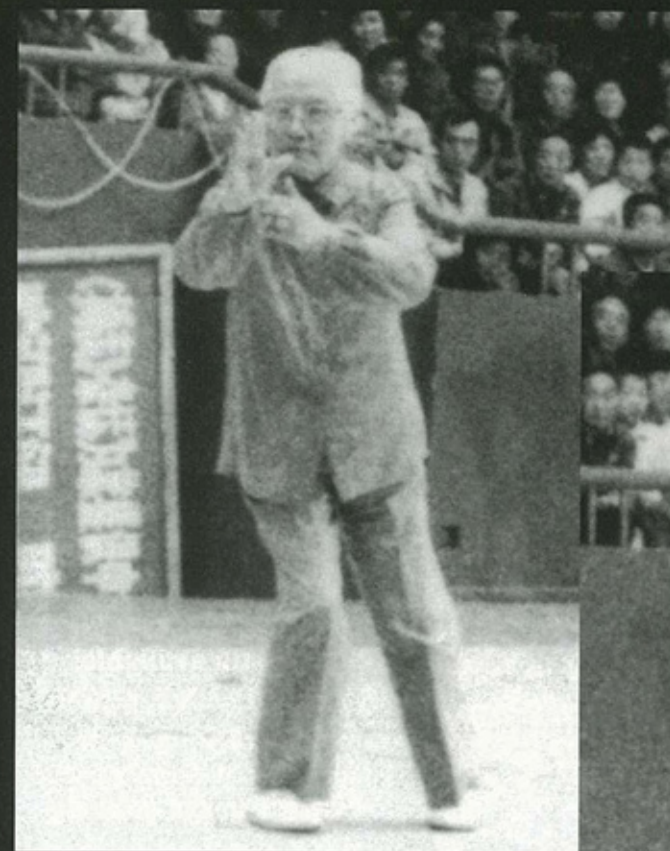
Website : www.wustyle.com

revised and modified the Wu style his father taught. In 1928, Wu Jian Quan moved to Shanghai and within four years, he established the Shanghai Jian Quan Taijiquan Association to popularise and spread the art of Wu style. Shanghai being an open seaport, was conducive for the Wu style Taijiquan to spread to other areas such as Hong Kong, Hawaii and Canada.

Wu Jian Quan's daughter Wu Ying Hua and his son-in-law Ma Yu Liang continued to teach Wu Jian Quan's traditional teachings in Shanghai until they passed away not so long ago. The Wu's tradition is still being continued by Ma's son.

Wu Jian Quan also had two sons who relocated to Hong Kong, Wu Gong I and Wu Gong Zao who established another of the Wu style Taijiquan. Through their efforts, the Wu style Taijiquan spread throughout Asia to include Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, and Indonesia, and other parts of the world such as Canada and Hawaii.

From the three lineages, modern masters such as Eddie Wu, Wang Pei Sheng, Ma You Qing, Chang Yun Jia and many other practitioners of Wu Style Taijiquan continue to promote the art further in the next centuries.



Master Wu Ying Hwa demonstrating the Wu Style Form at the Yang Style 10th Anniversary Celebration in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province, 1992



Some of the Chinese Tai Chi masters who attended the Taiyuan celebration, 1992.
Left To Right :
Ma Yu Liang, Wu Ying Hwa,
Yang Zhen Ji, Yang Zhen Kwok
and Fu Zhong Wen

