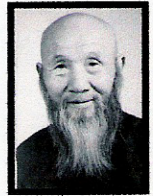


武當山

Wǔdāngshān 108 Tàijíquán

Tàijíquán (太極拳) is an ancient system of martial art from China. It is classified as an “internal” (nèigōng, 內功) system, meaning that it relies on internal awareness, whole body movement, and the development of internal energy rather than external strength and musculature as do “external” (wàigōng, 外功) systems. Although it has been popularized as an effective means of achieving total health and rejuvenation, Tàijíquán is first and foremost a martial art.

Wǔdāngshān Yībǎilíngbā Tàijíquán (武當山一百零八太極拳) is a traditional long form system of Tàijíquán, named after the region of the Wǔdāngshān (武當山) mountain range in the Héběi (河北) Province of China. It is an original style of Tàijíquán and we trace our Tàijíquán lineage directly back to Zhāng Sānfēng (張三豐). Dīng Hóngkuí (丁鴻奎) taught our teacher, Lǎo Mǎ, Wǔdāngshān 108 Style Tàijíquán on Snake Hill (Shéshān, 蛇山) in Wǔhàn, in the Húběi Province in 1985.



The 108 Style name refers to an arrangement of postures according to the Daoist mystical number 108; in actuality there are over 150 postures in our form. Chinese martial artists practice martial techniques in sets of sequential postures arranged into forms. This system of practice enables the student to practice flow and grouping of individual techniques, from one to another, and also enables the student to achieve a broader perspective of martial art through repetition and variation of techniques.



While there are hundreds of regional and family styles of Tàijíquán practiced throughout the world today, the Wǔdāngshān 108 Style differs from many in its composition. There are many more martial techniques and variations built into the form, and unlike many forms that stylize, simplify, or otherwise do not express many martial applications, the Wǔdāngshān 108 Style actively expresses an extensive variety. The arrangement of the postures provides a structure for the beginning student to progress comfortably, and to progressively build upon the skills and techniques that they have learned from the beginning. Upon reaching some of the more difficult postures later in the form, the student will be well prepared by foundational practice in the earlier sections. The form is divided into six sections, and upon learning the entire form, a student will find it typically takes about 45 minutes to perform from beginning to end. It should be understood that although we do

believe our form is a unique and effective tool for learning Tàijíquán, the form itself is not the whole of Tàijíquán. Forms are simply tools for practice.

Tàijíquán is defined by principles of movement that come from the original Tàijíquán Classics (treatises on this martial art and its philosophy), Daoist Tàijí theory (yīn (陰) and yáng (陽) theory), and principles of change as illustrated in the Yìjīng (易經, Book of Changes). In *The Theory of Tàijíquán*, the first Tàijíquán Classic, Zhāng Sānfēng describes Tàijíquán as having the “...eight gates in the hands and the five elements under the feet.” This refers to eight different types of martial energy expressed above the waist, with torso, arms, and hands, named Ward-Off (péng, 棚), Roll-Back (lú, 履), Press (jǐ, 擠), Push (àn, 按), Pull-Down (cǎi, 採), Split (liè, 列), Elbow (zhǒu, 肘), and Shoulder Strike (kào, 靠). There are five directions of movement in the legs- Advance (jìn bù, 進步), Retreat (tuì bù, 退步), Look Left (zuǒ gù, 左顧), Gaze Right (yòu pàn, 右盼), and Central Equilibrium (zhōng dìng, 中定). The eight gates above the waist and the five elements below the waist are called the Thirteen Postures of Tàijíquán. A modern Tàijíquán master, Jou Tsung Hwa (Zhōu Zōnghuá, 周宗樺), called this concept the Master Key to Tàijíquán. Any movement in Tàijíquán can be understood in terms of one of the Five Elements below the waist (in the stance), and one (or more) of the Eight Gate energies in the hands (or martial application). While there are postures throughout the form that exemplify each of the Gates and Elements in turn, a very advanced Tàijíquán practitioner will manifest all Eight Gates and Five Elements in every posture. There is no secret that will unlock this kind of mastery – it is simply accomplished through dedicated practice over time.

Black Bamboo Pavilion
2nd Month, Year of Fire Dog

