

A Brief History of Tai Chi Chuan

The exact history of Tai Chi is sometimes vague and varies depending on which school of thought that you may follow. This is mainly due to the lack of historical data from this period.

In general most people recognize that the roots of modern day Tai Chi Chuan date back to the time period of 1300-1400 A.D. Chang San-feng, a monk of the Wu Tong monastery, whether historical or fictionalized, is credited with the development of the original thirteen postures, which are based on the theories of yin and yang, the five elements, and the I-Ching.

The focus of these particular movements was designed to develop and strengthen the internal aspects of the body, thereby promoting better health and wellness.

The concept of promoting the free flow of the body's natural energy, which is referred to as chi, is the pathway for achieving this balance and harmony resulting in better health and wellness for the individual.

This is significant because this represents an approach to health and wellness that is preventative in nature, which is one of the pillars of Traditional Chinese Medicine and modern day western science is beginning to realize that prevention is the key to better health and wellness.

Form these roots a man named Wang Chung-yeuh is credited with developing the thirteen original postures into a continuous sequence of movements resembling the Tai Chi Chuan forms of today.

Chiang Fa his student went on further to refine and develop these movements leading up to the time period of the modern day forms of Tai Chi Chuan.

The late 1700's to early 1800's are the time frame of the formation of the different styles of modern day Tai Chi Chuan. The Chen and Yang styles became the dominate lineages that developed and began to flourish during this time period, with the Zhao Bao, Sun, and Wu styles following respectfully becoming the five dominate lineages of Tai Chi Chuan.

Again here is another area of much discussion and disagreement in regards to the exact transmission of the movements due to the debate about historical data.

Regardless of the ambiguities all these forms of Tai Chi Chuan are designed to promote the free flow of chi within the body leading to balance and harmony resulting in better health and wellness for the individual.

This is accomplished through gentle flowing movements coupled with breathing and mental focus.

From a health perspective the desired results are improved circulation, flexibility, coordination, internal strength, mental acuity, stress reduction and a general sense of well-being and balance.