**Master Wu Chien Chuan's Journey**

Wu Style Tai Chi

In the early 1900's, Master Wu Chien Chuan was invited to teach the Small Frame Tai Chi in the Beijing Athletic Research Society. Master Yang Chen Fu and his brother Yang Shao Hon were invited to teach the Big Frame Tai Chi Chuan under the same roof.

In the mid 1920's, Master Wu Chien Chuan and Master Yang Chen Fu went to Shanghai, in East China to teach Tai Chi Chuan. It was about this time that Master Wu Chien Chuan completed the standardized Small Frame Tai Chi and at the same time, Master Yang Chan Fu standardized the Big Frame Tai Chi. These styles were called Wu style and Yang style respectively by the students to distinguish between them.

In the 1930's, Yang and Wu styles spread into Canton and Hong Kong. From Hong Kong, Master Wu Chien Chuan's eldest son, Wu Kung Yee, and Master Wu's student, Chan Wing Kwong, spread Wu Tai Chi to the Southeast Asia area. This made Wu style the most popular form of Tai Chi in these areas.

In the early 1950's, Wu Kung Yee answered the challenge of a young White Crane Sifu, to a charity match. Despite his advanced age, Wu Kung Yee demonstrated his prowess in fighting and proved the effectiveness of Wu style Tai Chi. Tung Ying Chije, a Yang style disciple of Master Yang Chen Fu, was presented and accepted as one of the officials at the match. This shows the mutual respect for both the Wu and Yang family styles that was passed down to the leaders of the next generation.

Later, in 1957, the Wu style fighting ability was demonstrated by Chan Ten Hung, nephew of Chan Wing Kwong, who was a disciple of Master Wu Chien Chuan. He won a unanimous decision in the official public match in Taiwan against the Taiwan champion, who was famous for his kicks. The tradition of Master Wu's skill in fighting has been passed down to the fifth and sixth generation of Wu stylists. In the late 1970's, international full contact Kung Fu matches became popular in Southeast Asia. Again and again, the fighters proved the superiority of Wu style by their victories in the ring.

The world expansion of Wu style started when Wu's family moved south from Beijing to Shanghai in the 1920's. The three main bases from which the tradition of Wu style was transmitted were Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. From Beijing, the Wu style developed two branches. One came from master Wu Chien Chuan's early students, such as Wu Tunan and Chuan Zee Yee. The other branch came down through Master Wu Chien Chuan's father, Chuan Yuo and his student, Wang Muzhai. Yang Yuting, from the Wang Muzhai lineage, and his students strongly influenced northern Wu Tai Chi in Beijing, as they developed the northern Wu, which has quite different techniques than the rest of the Wu style.

The Shanghai Chien Chuan Tai Chi Society was led by Master Wu Chien Chuan's daughter, WuYing Hua and her husband, Ma Yeh-Liang. The postures of the late Master Wu Chien Chuan's daughter, Wu Ying Hua and her late husband, Ma Yeh-Liang appear to be closer appear to be closer to Master Wu Chien Chuan's postures than are those of the other branches.

Tai Chi in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia is mostly influenced by Wu Kung-Yee, the elder son of Master Wu Chien Chuan, the leader of the Hong Kong Chien Chuan Tai Chi Society. The other branch is from Master Wu's student, Chan Wing Kwong. The Hong Kong postures are basically the same as the Shanghai postures. The difference is in the stance; the Hong Kong postures are much smaller and higher. The body leans and sways more while practicing. Ma Yeh-Liang once said in an interview that all Wu stylists should practice Tai Chi as closely as possible to the postures that were left by Master Wu Chien Chuan.