



# Essential Tai Ji

Chunliang Al Huang

Photographs by Si Chi Ko



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LONDON AND PHILADELPHIA

133

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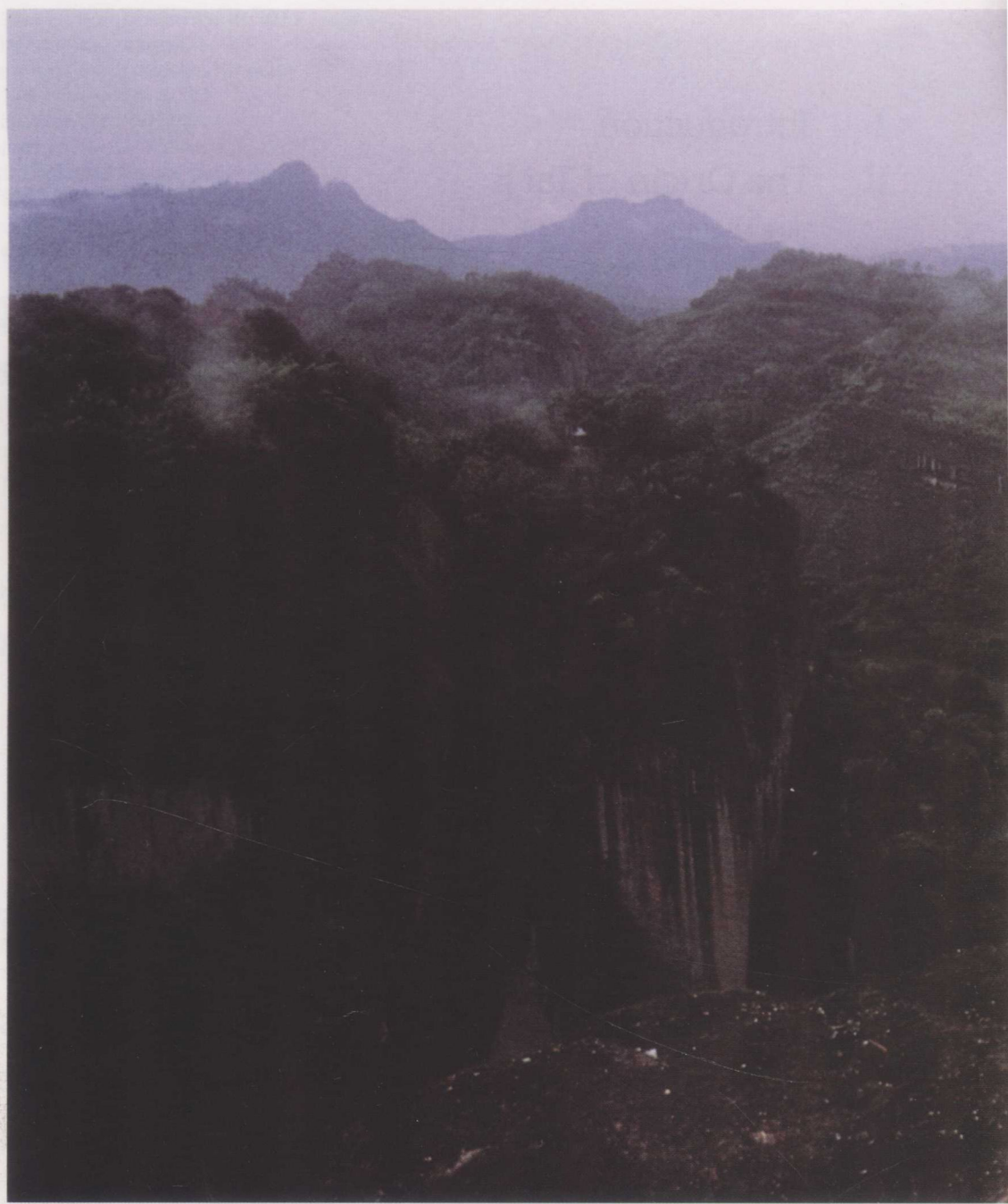
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# I Introduction





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**T**ai Ji is a universal medium for the cultivation of Body,  
Mind and Spirit.

It is natural. It is perennial. It is for everyone, of all ages.

It is easy to learn. It can be joyful and exciting to practice.

It is a dance of life to be treasured.

It is for you.



## II The Origin of Tai Ji

### Tai Ji Myths

**F**u Hsi, the mythical ruler of China's first dynasty, Hsia (2205–1766 B.C.), invented the Tai Ji practice, and his revelations about the transformation of the universe became the original diagrams of the ancient book, the *I Ching*.

A Taoist monk, probably during Tang Dynasty (618–906 A.D.), was inspired to create Tai Ji while observing a combat between a snake and a sparrow.

Another monk, in Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368 A.D.), learned to do Tai Ji in a dream.

Other stories—historically more factual—are about recluses throughout the ages who created Tai Ji as healthful meditations, and for self-defense purposes.

But my favorite story is the next one. . . .

## The Real Fairytale

Once upon a time, somewhere, anywhere in the world, there was a man (or a woman) sitting on a mountain top, quietly observing nature. He became so inspired by the movements of the world around him that he began to dance, imitating all the natural elements he could easily identify. He opened himself completely to the forces of nature. He became the forces: sky, earth, fire, water, trees, flowers, wind, cloud, birds, fishes and butterflies. His dance became ecstatic, completely transforming and transcendent. So happy with himself, he then poetically named each movement motif: Bubble of the Cosmos, Yin/Yang Harmonic Loop, White Cranes Flashing Wings, Cloud-Waving Hands, Golden Birds Balancing on One Leg, Embrace Tiger Return to Mountain.

He or she was the originator of the Tai Ji dance. His moment of creation could have happened thousands of years ago or could have happened right now, this moment, somewhere, anywhere in the world. This person could be you.

You are the potential Tai Ji creator. You are the dancer and the dance.

ENJOY!





