

5. What is the difference between internal and external arts?

In the Chinese martial arts the distinction between the internal (sometimes called "soft") arts and external (sometimes called "hard") arts is that the internal arts are based on Daoist principles whereas the external arts (such as Shaolin, Hung Gar, etc.) are based on Buddhist, and sometimes, Confucian systems. The "hard school" and "soft school" labels also describe the training focus of each, with the internal schools focused primarily on internal development and the external schools focused on external development. Using these labels allows the internal schools to distinguish themselves, not just from other Chinese schools, but also from nearly all other styles in the martial arts world, most of which fall into the "external arts" category.