

Basic History of..... Tang Soo Do

Translation of Tang Soo Do:

Korean's Alphabet did not match our Alphabet during translations of the martial arts. So there are actually several different translations to one part of the name of the art, (Tang).

- Martial means Military (Martial Arts / Military Arts)
- Soo means Hand
- Do means Way of
- Tang is translated from the Tang dynasty of China, Tang is translated as Worthy, Tang is translated as Knife.

Tang Soo Do - Art of the Knife hand or China hand way, is the most common translations in Kentucky. Our Studio Translation is Art of the Knife Hand.

Tang Soo Do Triangle Represents: Mind, Body, & Spirit. Mind & Body are the base as the Spirit is the Top.

Basic History:

Tang Soo Do is one of the oldest martial arts in Korea. The art of Tang Soo Do dates back to three different dates in Korea. The reason behind the three dates is that at that time Korea was divided into three kingdoms: Silla - 57 BC, Koguryo - 37 BC, Paekche - 18 BC. The most well known was the Silla Dynasty. How do we know it dates back that far? Artifacts, Drawings of the art, body's uncovered (warriors).

Before the art was called Tang Soo Do it was known as Soo Bahk Do or Su Bak Ki. During the World Wars (1 and 2) it was forbidden to teach the arts (martial arts were for military use only). After the wars were over in 1945 the restrictions lifted and instructors were dispatched around the world to teach the martial arts. In Korea two arts were born from the ancient arts Tae Kwon Do and Tang Soo Do. Tae Kwon Do (Way of Hand and Foot) became Korea's national sport, games and tournaments were held. Tang Soo Do (Art of the Knife Hand) still remained for military use in Korea, later emerging into the games and tournaments as well.

Founder / History of Tang Soo Do: (more in-depth)

Hwang Kee was born on November 9th, 1914. When Hwang Kee was seven years old, it was a time of a traditional holiday called "Dan O", which is the national May festival. During that time he happened to visit his neighboring village, where a variety of folk plays and festive activities were held. As he enjoyed seeing a variety of folk plays such as Ssirum (traditional wrestling), archery, and road races around the village, he happened to see a group of people in a tavern making noise that caused him to believe that some trouble was developing. He saw a group of seven or eight young men arguing with one man, and this argument soon progressed to physical fighting. The group of young men began to attempt to beat the man. The man was avoiding their attacks and countering with various kicks to the group of young men. Soon the group of men fell one by one as a result of the man's strange moves. After the attack ended, some onlookers said, "That is Tae Kyun", and some said, "That is Sip Pal Ki", as they were departing. Hwang Kee was so impressed by this man's performance that he decided to find out what his art was about. He followed the man at a distance and discovered where he lived.

Several days later, he approached the man's home and sat on a hill nearby and looked down at his house. He saw the man practicing some hand and foot movements with a partner. He watched their practice closely with great interest and he realized that these were the same techniques that the man had used facing the group of men at the May festival. Hwang Kee often went near the man's home to watch him practice, and he imitated and practiced what he saw from the man's techniques.

One day he decided to learn these techniques and he asked the man to teach him. His request was refused because Hwang Kee was too young. Although disappointed, he would go to the man's home and watched him perform whenever he could and then practiced by himself what he had seen. This experience was a major influence leading Hwang Kee to become a Kwan Jang Nim (Director of a martial art school, style, organization), who would devote his entire life to Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan (style Hwang Kee founded before named as Tang Soo Do).

In the country of Korea some 70 years ago, the educational system differed significantly from the present. Few students became high school graduates. The Kwan Jang Nim entered elementary school at the age of 11 and graduated high school in March 1935. Following his graduation, he went to Manchuria to work for the railroad company (May 1935). While there he and a friend Park Hyo Pil, had the opportunity to meet a Chinese Master, Master Yang, and to visit Master Yang's house. During the visit, he learned that Master Yang was teaching a handful of private students practicing a Chinese martial art in his home. Having never lost his

dream of learning the depth of the martial arts for over 20 years practicing, however he never had any organized or structured lessons.

Founder / History of Tang Soo Do (Cont.)

Mr. Hwang Kee was overwhelmed with happiness as if he were dreaming, knowing that he was at the home of Master Yang, who was highly renowned as a martial arts Master. Master Yang was a man with very gentle and healthy appearance with good energy, who looked to be about 50 years old. That same day, Mr. Kee humbly requested to be Master Yang's student. Master Yang refused his request gently, saying that "I am not good enough to teach you" Mr. Kee and his friend Mr. Park, could not speak Chinese well enough to present their sincere wishes to study at that time. That evening they had a good dinner at Master Yang's house, thanked the couple, (Yang and wife), and returned home.

That night Mr. Kee could not get to sleep because of the excitement that he had experienced being with Master Yang. He considered this to be once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to learn the martial art from the Master, if he were accepted. The next morning, Mr. Kee discussed things with his friend, Mr. Park, and they decided to visit Master Yang again and again until they were accepted. On their third visit, Master Yang finally accepted them as his students. Mr. Kee and four other students were training under Master Yang during this time. The training consisted of method of postures, method of steps, method of conditioning as their basic training.

In August of 1937, Mr. Kee had to leave Master Yang to return to Seoul Korea for personal reasons. During 1941, he went back to Manchuria for a short time to visit Master Yang for instruction. This was the last time he was able to enjoy Master Yang's instruction. He could not communicate with or visit his Master again once China became a Communist country in 1946.

Upon his return to Seoul after leaving his instructor Master Yang, in 1937, Mr. Kee searched for an opportunity to continue his personal martial arts training and, possibly, teach. It was impossible at that time, for him to pursue his wishes in martial arts activity due to the strict Japanese influence on the Korean culture. (The country of Korea was occupied by the Japanese from 1910 to August 1945).

Mr. Kee started work at the Survey department in 1939. Although he earned a low salary at his employment, he was very comfortable with his working conditions. The building consisted of a lecture room, library, and various exercise rooms. He spent most of his time reading books from the library, on Karate, even though all the books were from Japan. (No other books were available from any other country at that time and this was the first modern form of martial arts books he had seen). Mr. Kee learned forms, "Kata's", from the books. The kata's practiced were Passai Hyungs. Later a series a kata's were formed from the Passai Hyungs by Master Hwang Kee the series were known as the Pyong Hyungs, still practiced in Tang Soo Do. Master Kee began to teach what he had learned in his experience of the martial arts (starting at age seven).

Since Japan annexed and occupied Korea as their territory, they placed a ban on all Korean martial arts (No training/teaching were allowed). In 1936, Hwang Kee was arrested, imprisoned and sentenced to death by the Japanese for violating Japanese Martial Law, by continuing to teach Soo Bahk Do. Later that year he escaped and traveled North, meeting and training with Chinese Master's. Several years later, the United States became involved in World War II following the bombing of Pearl Harbor, with Japan's surrender came the liberation of Korea. On November 9th, 1945 a new martial art arose from the ashes of the beaten and battered nation of Korea. The style was called Tang Soo Do. Master Kee returned from China and opened a martial arts school called 'Moo Duk Kwan' (Institute of Martial Virtue) where the refined martial art of Soo Bahk Do, called Tang Soo Do, was taught.

The origin of Tang Soo Do is still unknown but the style can be traced back well over 2000 years to the period of the Three Kingdoms: Koguryo (37 B.C.), the Paekche (18 B.C.), and the Silla (57 B.C.). The founder of our style.

The founder of our style, Hwang Kee (November 9th, 1914 - July 14, 2002), was a legend among the martial arts. Tang Soo Do is well balanced martial art using both hand and foot techniques equally. The art is not only physical training but spiritual as well. Here is what Grandmaster Hwang Kee said about his art: "It is not a sport. Though it is not essentially competitive, it has great combat applications. It is a classical martial art, and its purpose is to develop every aspect of the self, in order to create a mature personality who totally integrates his intellect, body, emotions, and spirit. This total integration helps to create a person who is free from inner conflict and who can deal with the outside world in a mature, intelligent, forthright, and virtuous manner."