

# Traditional Tang Soo Do

## Traditional Tang Soo Do

## Who Can Benefit From Tang Soo Do

Everyone Can benefit the traditional martial arts training offered at Peak Performance Martial Arts. Tang Soo Do is truly an art for all people—men, woman and children are encouraged to join us in a program of self-improvement. Men and Woman benefit greatly from our emphasis on physical fitness and stress reduction. Woman will find our personal safety instruction invaluable to building confidence and security. Children and teenagers develop the qualities and character strengths necessary to excel today's competitive and complex world.

### A Special Message to Parents

Professionals and Physicians agree — Martial Arts will help your child become the best they can be! One way to show true love toward your children is to let them possess the power of confidence, self-esteem, and self-defense at an early age. Tang Soo Do can help build the strength necessary to negate the peer pressure our young people face in today's society. This could be a priceless gift for those you love. Give your child the gift of physical and emotional strength at DragonHeart Karate, Inc. It would please us greatly and be our honor to guide your children in the art of Tang Soo Do. No one can teach you or your children better!

History of Tang Soo Do In 1945, Moo Duk Kwan was found in order to spread, prosper and create understanding of Soo Bahk Do (now called Tang Soo Do), which is the special martial art of Korea, and has a long history and tradition. The foundation of Moo Duk Kwan has remained unshakable by the cooperation and efforts of all members and persons who are interested.

The fame of Moo Duk Kwan has grown not only in Korea, but all over the world. Now, although technique is very important, theory has to be taught for the purpose of the increase of Tang Soo Do and the martial arts. First of all, therefore, all members must perfectly understand the foundation theory of rational history about the art. From time to time some members who have excellent skills deviate from the right path because they do not know and understand its true history and the foundation. So it is very important to study history and the foundation theory.

The theory of its origin.

The exact origin of Tang Soo Do, as well as karate in general, is obscure. However, there are many equally beautiful theories. An argument continues to rage about the origin of both weapon using and weaponless fighting techniques. Some Japanese karate experts insist that the art is of Japanese origin; some say it came from Okinawa; others say it began in China and spread from there. Although there are various theories and views explaining its history in Korea, we will consider the Moo Duk Kwan's assertion as described in Moo Duk Kwan's major text book *Soo Bahk Do Dae Kam*, written by Grand Master Hwang Kee, president.

It is a well-known theory, mainly of Japanese stylists, that according to popular legend the Indian Zen priest Dahlma (called Daruma in Japan) is credited with its birth in the year 517 AD in China. From China it found its way to Okinawa and subsequently was modified and developed into many styles.

In his book, *Soo Bahk Do Dae Kam*, Grand Master Hwang Kee strongly rejects the theory that the priest Dahlma is the founder of the martial arts. Citing the *Muye Dobo Tong Ji* (a martial arts history book written in the Yi dynasty in 1790). He says there was a record of Tang Soo Do-like martial art approximately two thousand years before Dahlma the monk.

Ancient People needed the arts of self defense.

The traditional name of Tang Soo Do was Soo Bahk, Taek Kyun, Hwa Soo and Kwon Bop. Keeping pace with the times, the theory and techniques have been changed and the method of use and the purpose of encouragement were different in every country and society. In fact, the history of Tang Soo Do is very long, but this martial art's founder, time and place of beginning are unknown or are not pointed out exactly in the materials of history. But no one doubts, and all agree with this ; that the self defence techniques began to develop and be used at the same time as the origin of the human race. That is, this art did not originate in any particular place with any specific intention. It developed as a primitive art of fighting with the purpose of self defence or offence with weapons, and also sometimes man had no means to defend himself except with his hands and feet. Thus through various styles and developments it has come to have merit in making it possible for excercisors to knock out their opponents without the use of weapons. There are many theories with little historical data to substantiate them, but to credit any one country or individual would be unfair. Lest we confuse fact with fiction, the best answer is that open hand fighting did not originate in any one country, but instead was a natural development which occurred in different areas as it was needed for self defence.

To avoid prejudice and misunderstanding, perhaps the best answer is that countless methods of development have differed according to place and time from the age of instinctive action approximately one million years ago, to the age of the flowering art, about two thousand years ago. This is, the place where this art originated is all areas of human evolution especially the plateau in the midst of the Asian continent. We know the time this art started was the same time the human race started.

It is best to look at it in a sincere and scientific manner. To analyze it, it would be best to study it's development. Generally, open hand fighting can be divided into four distinct phases.

#### 1. Age of instinctive action

From the dawn of man, approximately one million years ago when no conscious action was involved in defence. Our ancestors fought with animals or same human race for food and survival. They fought like animals without any weapons.

#### 2. Age of conscious action

From the stone age, about 500,000 years ago, to the end of the primitive era. During this time man acted consciously to develop methods of protecting his body and gathering daily needs. This plateau was in Asia and Europe. In this era, humans consciously used stone, sticks and any materials as weapons.

#### 3. The early age of systemization

This was the iron age which covered the period from 10,000 to 2,000 years ago, at which time the self defence arts were consciously developed and systemised by civilized men.

#### 4. The age of the flowering arts

This period begins about 2,600 years ago and is the period in which the art reached its fullest development in various systems in different parts of the world. This is the period of most interest to us.

About 2000 years ago.

Two thousand years ago, we know that the martial arts had been all over the world through archaeological remains, vestiges of an ancient civilization, an evening story, and oral tradition. For example, about 2300 years ago, in the time of the Velugese regime in Greece, there was a fight which was called Bangulighon. This fighting game was, with a bare hand, to attack in opposition an opponent with all resorts, except attacking, biting and pulling out the other's eyes. In the orient 1,970 years ago, there are some reports in materials of history that fighting called Soo Bahk (Kwon Bop) was in being in the Aeje dynasty of the Han empire in China. In Korea 1,700 years ago, the early part of the Kokuryo dynasty, there was a grapple which was called Soo Bahk, Tack Kyun, Kwon Bop, and the facts still remain in many written sources, mural paintings, and the archaeological remains. Therefore, this manual art (simply self defence or instinctive reaction) was systemised as a contest 2,000 years ago.

In this period of time, the martial arts had spread over most oriental countries; China, India, Korea, Okinawa, Thailand and Japan. Also well known practitioners were priest Dahlma, Jang Sam Bong, Jang Sang Kye in China and Lee Yui Moon in Korea.

The Development in Korea.

Korean martial arts is one of the oldest in the world, and has had a colourful and rich history. The ancestry of Korean

Martial arts can be traced back to the period of the three kingdoms founded more than two thousand years ago. Not long after its development in China, the early version of the art showed up in the Korean peninsula. This process of change started early in ancient times in what is now Korea. At that time Korea was divided into three separate kingdoms, and each of them developed Soo Bahk or Kwon Bop on their own. The kingdom of Koguryo ruled in the north, Silla in the southeast and Paikche in the southwest. After a long series of wars, Silla emerged victorious over its neighbours in 668 AD.

### The age of Koguryo Dynasty.

Buddhism was introduced into the northern kingdom of Koguryo in the fourth century as part of a general Chinese cultural invasion of the Korean peninsula. The Buddhist monks were quick to adopt Kwon Bop fighting styles. As in China, the art flourished on temple grounds. The monks saw in Koguryo at the time a turbulent area, infested with bandits and wild beasts. The monks did a great deal of travelling, and to protect themselves they practised Kwon Bop. They had time to train in the art and did refine many techniques. Living by themselves in the mountains, they could train quietly and with the intense concentration demanded by Buddhism. We know and recognise that Soo Bahk, Tae Kyun and Kwon Bop were the most popular martial arts in the Koguryo regime. There is documentary evidence of the existence of specialised hand and foot fighting even this far back. Ruins of royal tombs built during this period contain murals depicting scenes of unarmed combat practice. In 1934 a group of Japanese archaeologists discovered Muyong Chong and Kakchu Chong, two royal tombs dating back to the Koguryo dynasty. The tombs were located in Tungku, China, in the Tung-hun province of Manchuria where Koguryo had its capital. The ceiling of the Muyong Chong carried a painting portraying two unarmed men confronting each other. The mural painting of the Kakchu Chong shows two men wrestling. Since the construction of the two tombs mentioned took place between the years 300 and 427 AD, one may be surprised how old the art of Tang Soo Do is. The art was taught not only to the most powerful army at the time, but also to all civilians, like our manners and folk customs, becoming part of public games and fairs. Therefore Moo Duk Kwan decided to wear the same coloured training clothes (Toe Bohk) as ancient warriors. Especially, the black belt coat of Toe Bahk was derived from ancient warriors clothing.

### The age of Silla Dynasty.

Approximately 2,000 years ago in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, there was a small kingdom constantly under invasion and harassment from its two more powerful northern neighbours. To preserve themselves, the young aristocrat of the country formed a young officers' warriors corp, called Hwa Rang Dan. This was in the reign of Chin Heung, 24th king of the Silla Dynasty. The warriors corps trained themselves by practising mental and physical discipline throughout the years in the wild mountains and along the rugged seashore. They trained and drove themselves unmercifully to prepare themselves for their task; to guide themselves and give purpose to their knighthood. They incorporated a five point code of conduct set forth by their country's greatest monk, Won Kwang, and the code became our Tang Soo Do's basic principles even today.

1. Loyalty to Country. 2. Obedience to parents and elders. 3. Honour friendship. 4. No retreat in battle. 5. In fighting, choose with sense and honour.

The Hwa Rang Dan became known for their courage and skill in battle, gaining respect from even their bitterest foes. They derived strength from their respect for the code enabling them to attain feats of valour that became legendary. Through their feats, however, they inspired the people of Silla to rise and unite and eventually conquer the other two kingdoms. From the victory of Silla, the Korean peninsula became united for the first time in its history. During the time of the Hwa Rang Dan, the original primitive art of self defence called Soo Bahk Ki (foot and body fighting) was popular among the people as well as the military. The people had a high regard for Soo Bahk and through the inspiration of the Hwa Rang Dan, warriors began to train themselves and develop their art. Soo Bahk was combined with the Hwa Rang Dan principles to become Soo Bahk Do and formed the traditional martial art of Korea. During this Silla dynasty, Soo Bahk Do became combined with different self defence techniques and fused and developed into Tae Dyon in the next kingdom. After World War II, these were the techniques that the art of Tang Soo Do could borrow.

The vestiges of that age.

Two sculptures assuming postures of early Tang Soo Do stand guard outside a temple, named Sok Kul Am, at Toham mountain in Kyungju, this was the capital of Silla dynasty. The two sculptures are called Kum Kang Ryuk Sa, and the forms they are demonstrating could be considered the same as those of the Plasek and Sipsu form of today. The Suk

Kul Am temple is a small Buddhist cavern temple going back to 751 AD. From this we know that the present method of Korean Fighting, known as Tang Soo Do, traces its lineage back to those early and troubled times. Also we see, the most important part of this training was to develop a fighting spirit to supplement the rigorous technical training.

### The times of Koryo Dynasty

The greatest period of Soo Bahk came after the establishment of the Koryo kingdom. In 935 AD the Silla kingdom was overthrown and the kingdom of Koryo founded. From Koryo comes the western name Korea. Founded by a warlord, the soldiers of the Koryo dynasty were among the finest the country has ever produced and their martial spirit and bravery has been an inspiration ever since. The kingdom was strictly militaristic in spirit, a fact necessitated by the need to defend the country against foreign enemies on many occasions. According to an old authoritative history book Koryosa, every may, the king of Koryo held a match for unarmed government posts. King Uijong, 16th of the Koryo dynasty, admired the excellence of Yi Ui Moon in Soo Bahk and he was promoted to Dae Jung (General). Also, Jang Jung Boo, Sa Kang Sung were recorded as excellent Soo Bahk Ki winners. Thus the art, having its inception in religious discipline, received royal patronage, and became a permanent segment of national life.

### The age of Yi dynasty.

After 475 years of rule, Koryo dynasty was defeated by Yi Sung Kye, who was the founder of the Yi dynasty. The Yi dynasty was started by him in 1392 AD. During the first part of the Yi dynasty the feudal lords put more emphasis on literature and this fighting art remained merely among the younger people. A small group of people continued to practice this technique and even to improve upon it. In earlier dynasties of the Korean peninsula, this fighting art was called Soo Bahk Ki and Taek Kyun. However, the people used both words without discrimination. A period of civil enlightenment set in during which time anything related to military training was frowned upon. In spite of its unpopularity in the Yi dynasty a most important record was made in this period. It is a fully illustrated martial arts record book called Muye Dobo Tong Ji written in 1790 which contains illustrations that substantiate the theory that Soo Bahk Ki quickly developed into a sophisticated form of combat techniques art. Even the pictures and statues mentioned earlier reveal expressions and postures quite advanced relative to similar arts at that time. There is no exact record but there are many legendary stories flowing from generation to generation among the people. Soo Bahk Ki or Tack Kyun, Sippal Ki or Sansin Yuk Ki were well spread to the common people as very frightening arts. Still the people of Korea say Sansin Yuk Kyo Jul Hang Rang, which means run away as soon as possible.

### The age of Japanese occupation.

Due to the non military politics in the reign of Yi dynasty, the government was corrupted and conflicted by leading politicians, so when the strong Japanese military government invaded the Korean peninsula, the wael Yi dynasty could not rid itself of their invasion. In 1909 Japan occupied the Korean peninsula. Hence the martial arts met a final blow when the Korean people were forbidden to practice any martial art. In this time, known as Tack Kyun, martial arts secretly survived among a remnant of a handful of students. Meanwhile, many Koreans oppressed at home, emigrated from their country to study and work in other parts of the world, including China and Japan. No restrictions on unarmed martial arts training existed in these countries, and for the first time in over a thousand years, Tack Kyun was exposed to other forms of unarmed self defence. This indeed proved to be an exciting development. Tack Kyun, not only survived, but ultimately prevailed over its rivals. Grand Master Hwang Kee, who founded Moo Duk Kwan Tang Soo Do techniques as well as the organisation, was one of the exiles under the pressure of the Japanese government. He went to China in 1936. Previously he trained under an unknown Soo Bahk Ki master, starting his training at an early age, and at the time of his exile he was well known as a Soo Bahk Ki master, so naturally the Japanese government put him under their surveillance. In 36 years of Japanese occupancy, the Japanese introduced their so called Karate to Korea, however their restriction of Korean people to teaching their karate or training did not influence at all the Korean martial field. But some people may still think Korean karate was introduced by Japan. From the above history, it is a very wrong theory and concept.

## The birth of Moo Duk Kwan Tang Soo Do.

After World War II, in 1945, Korean peninsula recovered their independence, its post-occupational emigres returned, bringing with them the newly improved form of martial arts. They brought two, various names indicative of particular emphasis in Tang Soo Do, such as Kwon Bop, Hwa Soo Do, Kong Soo Do and Soo Bahk Do. Grand Master Hwang Kee, expert of traditional Soo Bahk Ki had accomplished his technical maturity while in China from 1936 to 1945. He encountered the Chinese variation of this art form which was called the Tang method, by combining some of the Chinese Tang methods with those he was already well versed in - Soo Bahk Ki. (Tang method - While Grand Master Hwang Kee stayed in China, his Soo Bahk Ki was influenced by Chinese style which was called Tang dynasty fighting techniques in China at that time). Grand Master Hwang Kee devised a system of fighting which he brought back to his homeland at the end of World War II and he named it Tang Soo Do, in honour of the Chinese art. This is the first time the word Tang Soo Do was used officially. Tang Soo Do which is one of the best martial arts in the world was sometimes misinterpreted as a part of Japanese karate by some theorists. The above background will prove that this concept is in error. Someone may say Korean Tang Soo Do or Tae Kwon Do came from Japan because the same type of hyungs or katas are trained in these arts. So some masters try to make new hyungs such as Chun Ju, Tan Kunts. As we all know the traditional forms - Hyung are universal, Japan, Korea, China - all these countries have the same hyungs. The mood of movements, rhythms, principals, emphasis, etc may vary in each style, but it is never owned by one style or country. Pyung Ahn Cho Dan, Bassai, Naihanchi Cho Dan, Jindo, Unsyoo, Kongsang Koon, for example, all were taught by Japanese, Chinese and Korean respectively.

The hyungs' names may be called differently by each country or system, for example hyung Naihanchi is called in Japan Tekki, in Korea Chulki or Naihanchi, in China Naihanchi.

Grand master Hwang Kee organised Moo Duk Kwan at first in Korea on November 9th 1945. This day is Moo Duk Kwan's birthday. The officially registered organisations' name is Dae Han Soo Bahk Do Assn. Literally Dae Han means Korea. Soo Bahk Do means historical Korean fighting art, which Grand Master Hwang Kee mastered and it is his most favourite word among all the historical names. This Soo Bahk Do Assn was known as Tang Soo Do Assn even today. At that time, most people knew this martial art's name to be Tang Soo Do. Even crying children would stop their crying when their parents would say - the Tang Soo Do man will get you. This was used as a last resort to make them stop crying. Tang Soo Do is not only our proud Associations' name, but it was a legendary, secret, and frightening word to most Korean people.

In time, Soo Bahk Do absorbed the more effective and finer aspects of the other existing martial arts, such as Tack Kyun Bop, Yu Sul, Kung Fu, Japanese Karate, and emerged as Tang Soo Do. Today's Tang Soo Do is recognised as the most effective of the martial arts and when used correctly for defensive purposes is unrivalled by any other forms. From 1945 to this day, Tang Soo Do has spread all over the world.

According to the associations records, 32 countries are teaching Tang Soo Do. Also, the Association has produced 18,000 black belt members ranking to the eighth dan. The major countries where Tang Soo Do is being taught are Korea, United States, England, Greece, Thailand, Malaysia, Formosa, even Japan. (Tae Kwon Do branches were not counted in this statistic). The Association estimates over 200,000 Tang Soo Do students are under the Tang Soo Do Association.

The creation of Tae Kwon Do as the new name of the Korean Martial Arts.

Throughout the Korean war (1950-1953), the martial art was tested in actual combat across the valleys of the Korean peninsula. During the war, Korean military leaders, politicians and martial arts promoters were very surprised to learn that from battle to battle, overall victories were won by Tang Soo Do trained soldiers. Due to the nature of the Communist guerrilla tactics as well as the lack of armoury supplies, the soldiers were forced in hand to hand combat, with one man against ten. This being a usual circumstance, not a rarity. This so pleased the military leaders and the President of the Republic of Korea, Syngman Rhee, that he realised how valuable Tang Soo Do skill was in battle and ordered that all soldiers must train in Tang Soo Do as well as drill.

Not only was combat skill emphasised but mental conditioning as well. The code of Tang Soo Do - loyalty to the country,

never retreat in battle, in killing choose with sense and honour; these traditional mental principals were commendable and valuable at that time.

In 1955, a research group was formed to study the martial art and give it a new name. The group was comprised of archaeologists, historians, masters of the martial arts and scholars. They suggested the name Tae Kwon Do which derived from Tack Kyun and means;Tae, to kick or strike with the feet, Kwon refers to punching with the hand or fist or knuckles, Do means way or method of life and philosophy. However, the new name did not appeal to the conservative Tang Soo Do practitioners at that time. Because of the flourishing popularity there were many sectors of the martial arts in Korea and all sectors called their own names, that is a leading name Tang Soo Do and Kong Soo Do, Hwa Soo Do, Tack Kyun, Kwon Bop and so on.

President Rhee, in profound respect for the art after witnessing a demonstration while inspecting the front line troops agreed to a new name Tae Kwon Do. Thereafter, people started to use the name Tae Kwon Do. The new movement to unite all Korean martial arts sectors created a new organisation, The Tae Kwon Do Association. This art is still recognised by the people as Tang Soo Do and Tae Kwon Do, but a more dignified and classic name of this art is Tang Soo Do. While Tang Soo Do remains the pure style of the original art that is currently the most popular in the Korean peninsula, there are different styles of open hand fighting, each style influenced by the master instructor of the school. Techniques and training procedures differ slightly from school to school. Consequently each sector has developed and improved their techniques over the years. Some schools have even deteriorated through improper adherence, discipline and training. Therefore, there was a necessity of unification to eliminate the above un-recommendable by-products and to set standards. In 1964 the first organisation called Dae Han Tae Soo Do Assn, (not Tae Kwon Do Assn), was formed by a very few sector leaders. In 1965 the above Dae Han Tae Soo Do Assn was joined with the Korean amateur athletic union, with a new name, Dae Han Tae Kwon Do Assn.

The separation of Moo Duk Kwan Tang Soo Do Association.

The Tae Kwon Do association is a newly formed organisation sponsored by the Korean government and it's military leaders. Major objectives of the new organisation was the unification of the various styles under the single governing body and to set uniform standards for training procedures, systems, terminology and especially control of black belt promotion, as well as joint improvement programs. All sectors such as Han Moo Kwan, Yun Moo Kwan, Kang Duk Won, Chung Moo Kwan, Kang Moo Kwan, Kuk Moo Kwan, Chung Do Kwan, Song Moo Kwan, Oh Do Kwan, and a part of Chi Do Kwan, except two major sectors joined the organisation. The two major sectors were the entire Moo Duk Kwan and a part of Chi Do Kwan led by Master Yun. Moo Duk Kwan's students were estimated at more than half of the entire sectors population at that time due to a longer history and a well known reputation. The founder of Moo Duk Kwan, Grand Master Hwang Kee, dissented the idea due to his conservative and philosophical version of this martial arts field. In spite of his wishes, a number of his pupils joined the Tae Kwon Do organisation and were called Tae Kwon Do Moo Kuk Kwan. Grand Master Hwang Kee insists Moo Duk Kwan will remain pure as it was and will be protected from any political influence. He believes Kwan means martial arts family which share their blood and maintains a family-like relationship, TANG SOO !!.

A note from the writer of this history.

It is not unusual that once in a while someone will betray his master and that one is betrayed by his pupils in the martial arts field. This happens most often to people who do not have the exact philosophy and historical knowledge of Tang Soo Do. This knowledge can lead you to the philosophical understanding and also influence your way of life. Lacking the correct knowledge of its' history can effect you relationship with your master, pupils and the public. Misinformation and misinterpretation can lead only to a physical relationship between master and pupil rather than create spiritual ties. These two aspects of the martial arts, the physical and spiritual must be one and balance in order to attain a mutual satisfaction in the martial arts field.

I have been questioned many times about the history of Tang Soo Do, Grand Master Hwang Kee's background and what the Soo Bahk Do means, and also the meaning of Tang Soo Do. I am aware of the importance and need of all this as a teaching aid. The preceding history took many hours to compile and write, but I hope it will help your progress and final goal in the martial arts. I personally recommend that the history of Tang Soo Do as presented here be re-read several times in order that you may fully understand the materials I have presented. Re-print of this article is available and permissible to your students only.

The history does not and never will include my personal opinions nor interpretations. All materials were derived from Grand Master Hwang Kee's theory and other authentic sources

