

Chapter 1: History of Tang Soo Do

The modern martial art of Tang Soo Do is nearly 60 years old. It began when Grandmaster Hwang Kee began teaching it in Seoul, Korea in the fall of 1945 having mastered Soo Bahk Do and Tae Kyun. In 1936, Hwang Kee traveled to northern China where he encountered a Chinese variation of martial artistry called the Tang Method. He studied the Tang Method of Kung Fu from 1936-1945 and combined it with Soo Bahk Do to develop what became known as Tang Soo Do. Grandmaster Hwang Kee has been the driving force behind the spread of Tang Soo Do throughout the world as head the Moo Duk Kwan (Virtuous Warrior School) from his headquarters in Seoul, Korea. Grandmaster Hwang Kee died on Sunday, July 14, 2002 at 7:05 pm Korea time, at the age of 88.

Tang Soo Do literally translated means "The way of the Chinese Hand", and is the name Hwang Kee used for his form of weaponless fighting. The Grandmaster wrote, "The history of Tang Soo Do is perpetual. It is difficult to indicate where it was started or who was the first person who originally practiced it." Hwang Kee was trying to make a strong statement by defining his Korean Art as the "Way of Chinese hand" to solidify Tang Soo Do as one of the first blended Martial Arts. This heritage of taking what is good from other martial arts and integrating into Tang Soo Do will ensure that Tang Soo Do will always be on the forefront of the historical/traditional Arts but at the same time allows for integrating new and effective defense techniques.

Here is what Grandmaster Hwang Kee said about Tang Soo Do: "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."

Thus Tang Soo Do is a blended Martial Art taking what was good from the both the hard and soft styles. It is therefore our heritage to continue to advance Tang Soo Do through scientific investigation of kinetics, physics, and then testing the practical application to ensure that Martial Art of Tang Soo Do always remain in the forefront teaching the most effective techniques to ensure the practitioner is well equipped to defend themselves, the weak, their friends and family, and their country.

The origins of our Martial Art was practiced during the Kokuryo Dynasty (37-668 A.D.), the Silla Dynasty (668-935 A.D.), the Koryo Dynasty (935-1392 A.D.) and Yi Dynasty (1392-1907 A.D.) The Japanese occupied Korea from 1907-1945 and did not allow the open practice of Korean martial arts.

The Martial Arts were practiced in private during the Japanese occupation. Hwang Kee introduced his modern version of ancient Tang Soo Do in 1945. Modern Tang Soo Do derives its hardness from Soo Bahk Do and its softness from Chinese Kung Fu. Hwang Kee said his art is 60% Soo Bahk Do, 30% northern Chinese Kung Fu and 10% southern Chinese Kung Fu. Hwang Kee also incorporated some of the foot techniques of Tae Kyun in modern Tang Soo Do, which was an undisciplined style of fighting that developed toward the end of the Yi Dynasty that employed only foot techniques.

The Christian Karate Academy practice Tang Soo Do as documented from several Tang Soo Do organizations and uses the reference guides in Chapter 10 as the basis of determining proper technique. The Christian Karate Academy does not officially affiliate with any Martial Arts organizations. The school's head instructor, Mr. Doty, is a student of Master Anthony Romano (5th Degree in Tang Soo Do) and our Black Belts will test and are certified under the internationally recognized authority of Master Romano.