

Chapter 2
HISTORY

HISTORY OF TANG SOO DO

The various forms of self-defense are as old as mankind itself. Being as such, it is almost impossible to trace the different forms we know today back to their true beginnings. As all animals have some means of self-defense, whether it be tooth, claw, or poison gland, so too did man have to learn to utilize his bare hands for self-defense.

A myriad of vague generalizations and legends regarding the origins of empty-hand fighting have been circulated to the extent that legend has often been accepted as the truth. Of all the forms of hand and foot fighting, the Asian forms are known to be the most effective. In tracing its formation we have to be careful, lest we make the common mistake of confusing fact with fiction.



There are some authorities who believe that a renowned Buddhist monk, **Daruma Daesa**, journeyed from India to China via the Himalayas to instruct the Liang Dynasty monarch on the tenants of Buddhism. Upon his arrival in China, Daruma was to have gone to a monastery called Shaolin Szu to begin his teachings of Buddhism to the Chinese monks. The monks soon became physically exhausted from the severe discipline and intense pace that was set by Daruma. To train the monks to accept the harshness of the discipline, Daruma introduced a method of physical and mental discipline, as outlined in the I-Ching Sutra, to free the monks from all conscious control in order to attain enlightenment. The monks worked hard at this discipline and from it they evolved into the most formidable fighters in China.

Although this theory is quite beautiful, there is little historical fact to substantiate it. Instead, writings have shown that Daruma traveled to China during the Yang Dynasty in the sixth century while the country was under the reign of King Myong Je. It was also shown that Daruma arrived by sea and not by land. Daruma initially attempted to teach Buddhism to King Moo Je at Kwang Joo, but was refused by the King. Daruma then traveled to a small country in the north of China called Ui, where he was invited to teach Buddhism by King Myong Je. Daruma, for some unexplained reason, refused the offer and remained at Ko San So Rim Temple in meditation and devotion until his death nine years later.

There are many other equally beautiful theories, some more highly glossed than others. But the argument still continues to rage about the origin of Asian empty-hand fighting. Some experts insist the art is of Japanese origin, some say that it came from Okinawa and others say that it began in China and spread from there. The Chinese theory is usually the most readily accepted theory, because China is thought of as the Cradle of Asian Culture, but this does not necessarily mean that the martial arts had their beginnings there as well.

THE KOREAN THEORY

*M*any Koreans claim that the martial arts were developed by **Kim Yoo Sin**, Commander of the knights of the Silla Dynasty of Korea. Wall drawings from this period show the arts being practiced by the knights, their poses and forms bearing a resemblance to modern day Tang Soo Do.

As we can see, there are many diverse theories of the beginning of empty-hand fighting. Perhaps the best answer is that empty-hand fighting did not originate in any one country, but rather was a natural development which occurred in different places as it became necessary for defense. To credit any one country or individual would be unfair.

The countless methods of development have differed according to place and time. To avoid misunderstanding and prejudice, it is best to look at it in a sincere, unbiased and scientific manner. To analyze it, it would be best to study its complete development. Generally, empty-hand fighting can be divided into four distinct chronological stages.



THE INSTINCTIVE ACTION AGE

From the dawn of man to the Stone Age, approximately 1,000,000 years ago, when no conscious action was involved in defense.

CONSCIOUS ACTION AGE

From the Stone Age, about 500,000 years ago to the end of the primitive era. During this age, man acted consciously to develop methods of protecting his body and gathering his daily needs. This was the period in which mankind began to spread from the Central Asian Plateau into Asia and Europe.

EARLY AGE OF SYSTEMIZATION

This was the Iron Age which covered the period from 10,000 to 2,600 years ago. At this time the self-defense arts were consciously developed and systematized by civilized man.

AGE OF THE FLOWERING OF THE ARTS

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

A WAY OF LIFE A WAY OF DEATH

HWA RANG DAN

Approximately 2,000 years ago in the southern part of the Korean peninsula, there was a small kingdom called **Silla** that was constantly under invasion and harassment by its two more powerful northern neighbors. During the reign of King Chin Heung, the 24th King of Silla, the young aristocrats of the country, in order to defend themselves, formed a young officers warrior corps called the **HWA RANG DAN**.

The HWA RANG DAN trained themselves by practicing mental and physical discipline throughout the year in the wild mountains and along the rugged seashore. They trained and drove themselves unmercifully to prepare themselves for their heroic task. To guide and give purpose to their knighthood, the HWA RANG DAN incorporated a five point code of conduct that was set forth by their country's greatest Buddhist monk and scholar, Won Kang.



FIVE POINT CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Be loyal to your king.
2. Be obedient to your parents.
3. Be honorable to your friends.
4. Never retreat in battle.
5. Make a sensible kill.

The **HWA RANG DAN** became known in the peninsula for their courage and skill in battle, gaining respect from even their most bitter foes. The strength they derived from their respect to their code enabled them to attain feats of valor that became legendary. Many of the young warriors died on the fields of battle in the threshold of their youth, most as young as 14 or 15 years of age. Through their feats, however, they inspired the people of Silla to rise and unite and eventually conquer the two northern kingdoms. From the victory of Silla, the Korean peninsula became united for the first time in its history.

SOO BAHK

During the time of the HWA RANG DAN, the original primitive art of self-defense called **SOO BAHK**, meaning foot fighting, was popular among the common people, much in the same way wrestling was to the Greeks or boxing to the Europeans and Americans.

SOO BAHK was a Korean method of self-defense as old as Korea itself. The people had 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**, forming the traditional Martial Art of Korea.

During the Silla Dynasty, **SOO BAHK DO** flourished and developed with each new generation passing on its new techniques. The ancient art of **SOO BAHK DO**, with its high, powerful kicks and speed, was then fused and developed into a new martial art, **TAE KYUN**.

During the Korean Dynasty, which emerged as a new nation after the fall of the Silla Dynasty, this new style of self-defense, TAE KYUN, became widely practiced among the common people of Korea. Since they could not afford armaments they had to rely on their hands and feet for self-defense.

This combination of the old and the new resulted in the development of a form of mental conditioning and self-defense unrivaled in the modern world. Throughout the Korean War, this art was tested in actual combat across valleys of the Korean peninsula. Through its often bloody experiences, the art became a tested, practical form of self-defense. These experiences gained new respect for the art, not only from the Korean people, but from the allies fighting there as well.

TANG SOO DO

In Korea, the people usually use the familiar and more common name for this art, **TANG SOO DO**. Literally translated TANG SOO DO means "*The Way of the China Hand*" and is equivalent to "Karate" as written by the Okinawan masters. The word "**TANG**", refers to the T'ang Dynasty of China which reflects the shared cultural background between China and Korea (617 - 907 AD). "**SOO**", means hand, but it implies fist, punch, strike, defense, etc., and "**DO**" means the way or art.

The man who developed TANG SOO DO, **Grand Master Hwang Kee**, is himself a martial arts prodigy who at the age of 22 mastered the arts of **SOO BAHK DO** and **TAE KYUN**. At that time (1936), Grand Master Hwang Kee traveled to Northern China where he studied Chinese martial arts. From 1936 to 1945 Grand Master Hwang Kee combined the Chinese methods with the Korean martial art of SOO BAHK DO to develop what is now known as TANG SOO DO.



TANG SOO DO is the scientific use of the body in methods of self-defense; "*A body that has gained the ultimate use of its faculties through intensive physical and mental training*". For just good exercise, TANG SOO DO also ranks among the best, because it utilizes all parts of the body to keep them in tone. TANG SOO DO is a challenging, stimulating and especially purposeful exercise program. One of its greatest benefits is that anyone, regardless of size, age or sex, can practice the art to their own capabilities regardless of handicaps.

TANG SOO DO is one of the oldest and most effective means of fighting known to man. It is the ultimate art of unarmed self-defense that has no equal in power or technique.

TANG SOO DO, however, is more than just a mere form of fighting, it is a Martial Art and, hand-in-hand with a mastery of self-defense, its discipline, technique and mental training are character builders. To shape and condition the mind and soul are its basic tenants. Physical superiority will naturally follow. Without mental conditioning, the student will become a mere animal, a "street fighter". The student, in his ignorance, may believe he has superior fighting technique, but when matched with another student who has taken the time to master the deeper, more reflective aspects of the art, he will be defeated.

Old Korean Maxim:

*"Some are impatient and fall under the burden of its own weight.
Others take time to absorb the good earth.
Then turn within, blossoming forth in beauty and strength"*

The essence of **TANG SOO DO**, speed and effective application of technique, depends on one's ability to properly strike the vulnerable areas of an opponent. A well trained TANG SOO DO student can control his movements to do the amount of damage desired or can frustrate most attacks without doing grievous harm to his opponent.

The layman is often misled about TANG SOO DO. With few exceptions, erroneous information about the art has stressed the bizarre; board and brick breaking and tile crushing as the norm and not as the exception. To add to the confusion, many instructors have capitalized on such feats of strength to elevate themselves as mystical members of some secret Oriental Cult. While it is true that a TANG SOO DO student can smash stacks of tiles with his fists, chop through bricks and split boards with high flying kicks, such exhibitions are only used to demonstrate the power of a TANG SOO DO strike.

TANG SOO DO movements may seem very odd to the layman, but each movement has been analyzed and calculated so that whatever the action; block, punch, strike or kick, it is the maximum that the human body can achieve. One quickly learns that it is not size and strength alone that win, but rather, speed and knowledge are the deciding factors in determining who will emerge victorious in physical combat.

There are those who believe that TANG SOO DO consists of a few special techniques that, once mastered, will instantly turn the student into an "expert". Some schools of martial arts will guarantee the student a black belt in one year. Magazine advertisements tell the reader to buy and read a certain book and they will learn all the "deep, dark secrets" of the Orient and they will become a qualified "Martial Arts Expert".

The truth is, there are no special techniques or quick roads to martial arts mastery, especially in TANG SOO DO. The mastery of its "secrets" cannot be bought at any price other than that of serious and rigorous training. It is an art that has been tested and tempered on the time-worn fields of mortal combat. Its history is a long and honorable one.

MOO DUK KWAN

In Korea, the largest and strongest association within TANG SOO DO is the **MOO DUK KWAN**, "*The Institute of Martial Virtue*". TANG SOO DO MOO DUK KWAN, a brotherhood and school of stopping inner and outer conflict and developing virtue according to the way of TANG SOO, is not a sport, but rather has great applications for combat. It is a classical martial art whose purpose is to create a personality who can deal with the outside world in a mature, intelligent, forthright and virtuous manner.

Grand Master Hwang Kee, as president of the MOO DUK KWAN and chairman of the Board of Trustees of the KOREAN SOO BAHK DO ASSOCIATION, has attracted universal interest and is seeing rapid international growth and development of his martial art. This is not only due to the fact that the art of TANG SOO DO possesses excellent technique, but also because of its objective and ideal in its teaching; "*The Development and Perfection of the Human Character*". TANG SOO DO has gained great respect throughout Korea and students of TANG SOO DO have been accorded a high regard by the Korean people because of the humility and modesty associated with them.



HISTORY OF THE WESTERN PACIFIC TANG SOO DO ASSOCIATION

*I*n 1957, **Grand Master Mariano Estioko** began his training in Tang Soo Do in Korea while stationed there while in the U.S. Air Force. While stationed at Osan Air base, Grand Master Estioko became interested in Tang Soo Do after he saw a group of young men practicing. Grand Master Estioko asked about what they were doing and asked if he could join in. He was told, "No" and to go away. But what Grand Master Estioko saw that day intrigued him and he returned day after day and was rebuffed day after day. His effort didn't go unnoticed as one of the Black Belts noticed that he always came back.



Grand Master Estioko #759

Grand Master Estioko was accepted as a student by **Master Kim, Song Ki**. Training was hard and rigorous. Mistakes were rewarded with a stinging whack from his teacher's bamboo stick. Mistakes soon became few and far between. Master Kim, Song Ki sent Grand Master Estioko, while still only a Green Belt to Seoul to begin his advanced training under **Master Oh, Sae Joon** at the Seoul YMCA. Grand Master Estioko completed his training there and in October, 1958 he was awarded his Black Belt. Grand Master Estioko, (Dan Bon #759 was the second American to ever be awarded a Black Belt in Tang Soo Do.

Grand Master Estioko was also discharged in 1958 and returned to the United States, back to Sacramento, California. In December 1959, Grand Master Estioko began teaching Tang Soo Do to a select few. Grand Master Estioko has been teaching his art ever since. Because of the growth of his organization, in 1985 he founded the Western Pacific Tang Soo Do Association. At that same time his senior Black Belt students honored him by bestowing Grand Master Estioko with the recognition and title of Grand Master of the Western Pacific Tang Soo Do Association.

*Watch Grand Master Estioko's interview for the
Moo Duk Kwan 75th Anniversary celebration - November 2020*

[GRAND MASTER ESTIOKO](#)

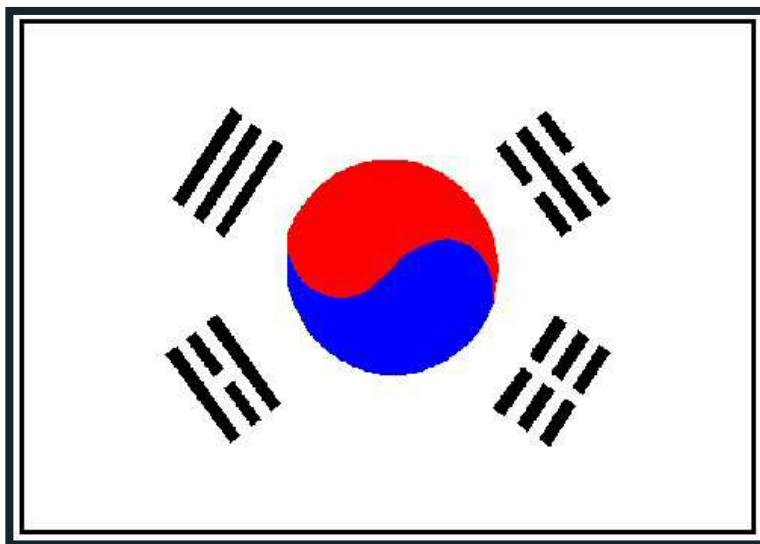
THE MEANING OF THE KOREAN FLAG "TAE KEUK KI"

*T*he Korean flag symbolizes much of the thought, philosophy and mysticism of the orient. The symbol is called "**TAE KEUK**" and the flag itself is called "**TAE KEUK KI**". In the center of the flag is a circle divided equally and in perfect balance. The circle itself represents the absolute or the essential unity of all being.

The upper red section is called "**YANG**" and the lower blue section is called "**UM**" (YIN) and is the ancient symbol of the creation of the universe, day and night, light and dark, hot and cold, and so on. The central thought in the TAE KEUK indicates that while there is a constant movement within the sphere of infinity, there is also balance and harmony.

This thought of **TAE KEUK**, called "**UM (YIN) - YANG**" philosophy, has influenced all the fields of Asian cultures such as philosophy, science and military strategy along with the martial arts. The ancient Asian philosophers viewed the universe as a place in which harmony could be attained by the reconciliation of opposing forces. One such force, YANG, is associated with expansion and separation, while the other, UM (YIN), is associated with contraction and assimilation. These opposites continually balance and complement each other. This thought teaches the martial arts the wisdom of using non-violence against violence, soft against hard, circle against straight line and so on.

The three bars at each corner also carry the ideas of opposition and balance. The three unbroken bars stand for eternal; the opposite three broken bars represent the earth. At the lower left corner of the flag, the bars symbolize fire; the opposite bars symbolize water.



Tae Keuk Ki

TANG SOO DO MOO DUK KWAN EMBLEM

Moo Duk Kwan - The "Institute of Martial Virtue".



1. **LAUREL LEAVES** - The fourteen laurel leaves on each side represent the fourteen states of KOREA and the advancement of peace.
2. **THREE SEEDS** - The three seeds joined to the laurel leaves on each side of the emblem represent the "Three Thousand Li" (the distance running north to south) of the "Land of Morning Calm" and its success.
3. **SIX SEEDS** - The six seeds in total indicate the world and represent the six continents.
4. **FIST** - The fist represents TANG SOO DO and Justice.
5. **MOO** - The character in the center of the circle is "**MOO**" and denotes "MOO DUK KWAN".
6. **TANG SOO** - The character on the left side of the circle is "**TANG**" and the character of the right side of the circle is "**SOO**"

As a whole, the emblem symbolizes the spreading of MOO DUK KWAN throughout the fourteen states, IE all of Korea, and then across the oceans to the six continents of the world. The purpose of MOO DUK KWAN, as an international institution, is to achieve the objectives of peace and human advancement as the emblem symbolizes.