

Chapter 3
PHILOSOPHY

PHILOSOPHY OF TANG SOO DO

*T*he TANG SOO DO philosophy is an active attitude representing a combination of a physical and a mental attitude capable of assuring maximum growth of personality through participation in both social and cultural life.

Therefore, it is the goal of the Dan Black Belt Instructor to meet these conditions by providing the broadest possible opportunities in TANG SOO DO to the greatest possible number of people, regardless of age, color, creed or economic status.

EIGHT IMPORTANT PHRASES OF TANG SOO DO

MEDITATION

by Lin Hung-Nien

1. The mind is the same with heaven and earth.
2. The circulatory rhythm of the body is similar to the sun and the moon.
3. The law includes hardness and softness.
4. Act in accordance with time and change.
5. Techniques will occur when a void is found.
6. The awareness requires advancing and retreating, separating and meeting.
7. Time does not miss even the slightest change.
8. The CHI listens in all directions.

The wisdom of Buddha is a continuous purification of mental, physical and spiritual dedication. Therefore, to appreciate TANG SOO DO training, you must practice and digest the following.

1. Think purely.
2. Train sincerely.
3. Be knowledgeable in techniques.
4. AWARENESS - Think broadly.
5. Distinguish between dynamic and flexibility.
6. Develop intuitive judgement and understanding.
7. PERCEIVE - PREDICT - Make quick decisions.
8. Pay attention to even the slightest movement.
9. Be able to freely control your own actions - Know your limitations.
10. TANG SOO DO begins and ends with Discipline, Respect and Courtesy.

“To search for the old is to understand the new.

This is a matter of time.

In all things, man must have a clear mind.

The way

Who will pass it on straight and well”?

by Grand Master Funakoshi

THE FIVE ELEMENTS WHICH MAKE UP THE COSMOS

EARTH



EARTH - The teacher is as a needle, the disciple is as a thread, you must practice constantly. Know the smallest thing and the biggest thing. As if it were a straight road mapped, earth gives purpose, meaning and direction to life.

WATER



WATER - Water adopts the shape of its receptacle; it is sometimes a trickle and sometimes a wild sea. Water has a clear actionless activity. This is achieved through a growing relaxation from digesting thought and action. Growth and understanding does not consist of intellectual, internal forces, nor does it mean living according to prescribed rules for the sake of rules. It is, rather, the opening of one's life to spontaneous living.

FIRE



FIRE - The spirit of fire is fierce. You must train daily to make quick decisions. You are shown how to master the three powers comprising the weapons of self-defense.

INNER POWER - Refers to the health of the body.

OUTER POWER - Refers to action one performs and the way one performs it. The repetition of properly executed movements produces Tempo, Timing, Balance, Grace and Control. These qualities arise from spiritual power.

SPIRITUAL POWER - One enters the realm of the conscious and subconscious, that unique psyche that refines and defines your personality. Conscious action is slow and accurate. Subconscious action is fast and unpredictable. Again, conscious and subconscious work together for perfect execution of action.

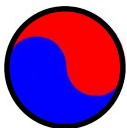
ETERNAL



ETERNAL - By eternal I mean old tradition, new tradition and family tradition. It is difficult to know others if you do not know yourself.

Eternal (space) is to have changed (time) often is to have lived much. The riddle of life has never been solved; its solution lies outside space and time.

COSMIC FORCE



COSMIC FORCE - Um (Yin) and Yang are two poles of the same cosmic force. More than any other, the philosophy of YIN and YANG puts Asian and social teaching on a cosmological basis. Its ideas affect every aspect of life from metaphysics to art, from marriage to cooking. That is why it fits so well into the Martial Arts - TANG SOO DO. Whenever harmony is sought or change takes place, the forces of YIN and YANG are at work. This embodies the concept of equilibrium, the opposing and complimentary principles regulating the motions of the universe.

TANG SOO DO PSYCHOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES

Since TANG SOO DO involves direct contact between two or more human beings, psychological factors play an important role. In many cases the psychologically stronger person will win even when they are out-matched physically. Although this psychological condition comes about naturally, until it is second nature, in the course of TANG SOO DO training, the philosophies given below, which embody ancient concepts handed down, offer valuable avenues of approach.

MIND LIKE WATER

Make the mind calm, like the surface of undisturbed water. Smooth water will reflect accurately the images of all objects within its range. With the mind being kept in this state, awareness, of the opponent's movements, both psychological and physical, will be immediate and accurate and one's responses, both defensive and offensive, will be appropriate and adequate.

If the surface of the water is disturbed, the reflected images will be distorted. The mind preoccupied with thoughts of offense or defense will not be aware of the opponent's intentions, creating an opportunity for the opponent to strike.

MIND LIKE THE MOON

Be constantly aware of the totality of the opponent and his movement, just as the moonlight shines equally on everything within its range. With the thorough understanding and development of this attitude, the conscious mind will be immediately aware of any void in the opponent's defenses. Nervousness or distractions, like clouds blocking the light of the moon, interfere with the correct apprehension of the opponent's movement and will make it impossible to find a void and the opportunity to respond can never be seized.

CONCENTRATION - QUIET THE MIND

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Martial Art of TANG SOO DO is that it can be applied well by anyone with sufficient physical strength to execute the techniques and the mental capability to master the process of concentration.

There are two basic groups of application, each of which executes a very different process.

MIND WITHOUT CONCENTRATION

The student who has not yet learned how to quiet the mind and concentrate on the immediate situation at hand, is doomed to defeat and/or will perform with endless frustration, which results in an erratic martial artist with little hope of ever improving their current skill level.

MIND WITH CONCENTRATION

The martial artist who has learned how to quiet the mind and concentrate on the immediate situation at hand, can look forward to a future of continual enjoyment and accomplishment which they will discover every moment they apply and execute TANG SOO DO.

TANG SOO DO MARTIAL ARTISTS DO NOT:

1. Practice with a mind full of chatter.
2. Allow their emotions (anger, fear, etc.) to effect their technique.
3. Waste away techniques without planning where the application is to be focused.
4. Attempt to force the laws of physics to produce impossible techniques.

Every minute correctly spent improving your mental concentration will be repaid tenfold from practicing and performing TANG SOO DO.

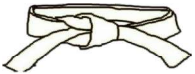
REMEMBER

***"PRACTICE DOES NOT MAKE PERFECT
PERFECT PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT"***

PHILOSOPHY OF THE BELT SYSTEM

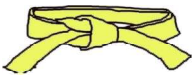
The TANG SOO DO belt system, emphasizing the character building aspects of progressing from white to black belt, represents the valences/cycles of the seasons, with each color representing a specific level of achievement. Therefore, it is important to realize an essential concept of Asian philosophy, "...that which is born must grow, reach maturity, die and leave behind the seeds (quality) of a new birth".

WHITE - 10th Gup



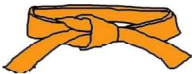
White represents a primitive stage of achievement, of purity and innocence. Thus, like the snow of winter and seed which lies dormant beneath.

YELLOW - 9th Gup



Yellow represents the first hint of growth. Like new growth as it first emerges from the snow of winter. The small sprout gives evidence to the coming of spring, the rejuvenator of life.

ORANGE - 8th Gup



Orange represents the first stage of development. Thus, like the new growth which begins to take on a new shape and color, it's potential becomes more evident.

PURPLE - 7th Gup



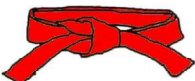
Purple represents the maturing growth which appears in the spring. Thus, the character building aspects of TANG SOO DO knowledge begins to reveal itself.

GREEN - 6th, 5th, and 4th Gup



Green represents the speedy development of youth as summer arrives; a sensitizing... of youth, still green in their mind - a forging - the opening of self... gives us access to the hidden power, the power to believe in ourselves. Power, stability, agility, weight and character, this is the stabilizing stage, both mentally and physically, analogous to the plants which curtail their growth and prepare to flower in the late of summer.

RED - 3rd, 2nd, and 1st Gup



Red represents blood, life, energy, sincerity and self-control. Listening, watching and obeying are key points of advancements. *"Good character cannot be purchased, borrowed or given away. It must be built slowly and carefully, not in a hour or a day, but during the course of a lifetime... TANG SOO DO training."* In this stage, the student's power and technique begin to bloom and ripen.

MIDNIGHT BLUE - Cho Dan Bo



Midnight blue represents maturity, respect, honor, loyalty and dedication. Training is on a continuous basis and one learns a little at a time. Midnight blue is given to the Cho Dan Bo or Black Belt candidate. They must now prepare for the final step necessary to obtain the Black Belt.

BLACK - Instructor, Master, and Grand Master



Black represents character, sincerity, effort, etiquette, and self-control. As with the splitting of the atom, the CHI, the force, the opening of self... gives us access to the hidden power. Authenticity is a sensitizing and spiritual power. It comes with the feeling of being at home with oneself and therefore, at home with the universe. It is the greatest spiritual power in the world, the power to believe in ourselves. Black Belt is the final stage of one life cycle and the beginning of the next. Thus, we see that this is not the end, but more importantly, it is the beginning of a path which leads up through the ranks of Black Belt to true mastery.

PHILOSOPHY OF THE UNIFORM

The black and white TANG SOO DO Dan uniform, while distinctive, reflects the philosophy of the Um (Yin)-Yang. The Um (Yin) and Yang are the symbols of two opposing and complementary principles whose indissoluble play and constant metamorphosis represent the roots, indeed the very tissues of the universe in action. As the philosophy of the belt system equates itself to nature and growth, the philosophy of the uniform is an expansion of that philosophy, the philosophy of Universe.

White denotes purity, innocence and is devoid of all color. White is the color of the Tang Soo Do student's uniform. The student, like the color white, is also pure, innocent and devoid of any knowledge of Tang Soo Do. The student's growth of knowledge and understanding is reflected through the color of their belt. The Black Belt contrasting on the student's white uniform signifies that they have reached a point of balance.



The Black and White uniform of the Tang Soo Do Black Belt also is a reflection of that balance, for the wearer of the uniform is now a living example of the Um (Yin) - Yang philosophy. The attainment of Black Belt is the final stage of one life cycle and the beginning of the next. Thus, we see that this is not the end, but more importantly, a new beginning. The Black Belt is now both student and teacher. Once only a taker of knowledge, now a giver of that same knowledge. While remaining on the path to perfection, they are now looked upon as being an example of perfection. The Black Belt student must now realize the principles of the Um (Yin) and Yang and their interplay to fully understand their new role.

The Um (Yin) and the Yang have no moral character, neither is superior nor inferior to the other. Their antithesis is as necessary and as little in conflict as that of the left hand and the right hand striking together to applaud. So too is the way of the Tang Soo Do Black Belt.