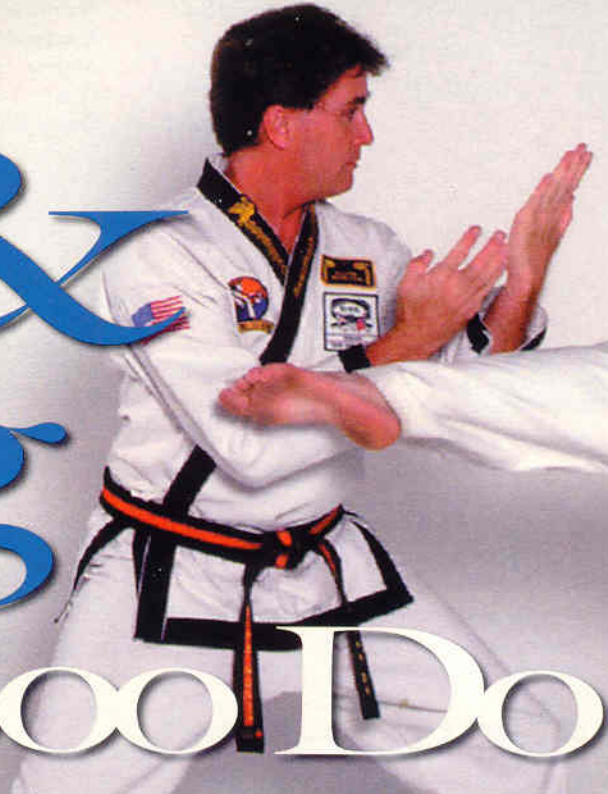


# The Yin & Yang of Tang Soo Do



Yin and Yang: ahhh...the mysterious principle that we all try to understand not only in our martial art but also in day-to-day living...

It is said that everything in the universe can be explained and divided into the Yin-Yang theory. Yin-Yang theory consists of two forces that oppose one another in their actions. Yang contains the principles of male: the sun, the day, heat, light, domination, birth, summer, life, assertiveness, etc. Yin contains the principles of female: the moon, the night, cold, dark, submission, death, shyness, etc. The Yin and Yang are equal and opposing forces that create harmony and balance within the universe. These forces are opposite and yet complimentary, and share an intertwined relationship. Without Yin, there would be no Yang, and without Yang there would be no Yin. When there is balance and harmony neither force dominates the other. Since one force produces and compliments the other, it is important to also understand that each force of Yin and Yang has within it a small amount of the other.

You might be familiar with the popular symbol Tai Chi. This symbol portrays this theory. In the light (Yang) side there is a small amount of Yin designated by a small black dot, likewise in the dark (Yin) side there is a small amount of Yang designated by a small white dot. Even if you listen to the tales of some of the most successful people in the world, you find that in their journeys to success they sometimes experienced the opposite: failure. And, likewise, in failure there is also a small seed of success just waiting to be directed. The lesson here is to not give up in hard times, because the seed of success is there and is capable of growing.

Nothing is ever all Yin or all Yang. All the opposing forces (i.e. sickness, health, day, night, etc.) can be explained as a temporary dominance of one force over the other. Years ago I remember reading from one of Bruce Lee's works that moving forward and progressing in life were like riding a bike as the relationship of the crank resembled the rotational effect of Yin and Yang. He wrote that you couldn't press both pedals at the same time, you must press one of the pedals as well as yield one of the pedals in order to be propelled forward.

In traditional Chinese medicine, sickness is defined as blockage or an over abundance of Yin or Yang within the meridians of the body. Needles and massage are used to unblock and stimulate energy to bring the body back into balance. This balanced harmony is what we want to achieve as martial artists. Applying this harmony and balance is the objective of this article.



### Philosophical Application

As martial artists, we have a responsibility to be leaders in the community. The ability to use the theory of Yin and Yang can help us. Korean art practitioners are probably familiar with the Moo Duk Kwan that was started by the late Grandmaster Hwang Kee. If we analyze the character Moo, the translation is "Military." A more detailed translation actually means to stop the sword or to stop conflict. If we use the theory of Yin-Yang we can be better prepared to stop conflict. A layman's term of understanding this concept is "not to use force against force." This theory applies philosophically and in physical technique. In fact, many martial arts use this theory in developing techniques.

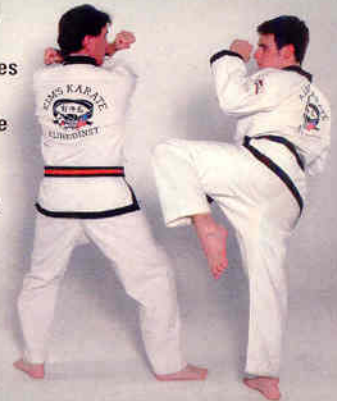
How often do you hear of road rage incidents? Applying Yin-Yang philosophy can help neutralize the situation in many instances. For example: You are driving through town and forget to use turn signals as you make a turn. Suddenly, the driver waiting at the intersection gives you the old salute, probably because he is in a hurry or had a bad day. Who knows, maybe he is just a creep. What do you do? Return the old salute? If you do, you have just created an imbalance. You countered his Yang aggressive nature with the same. This is the first step toward conflict and how confrontations escalate to a serious nature. If you have an inner peace and balance, you will drive on and not let the driver bother you. This type of response would be passive or Yin in nature. There would then be more balance within the situation. Thus, many times the best way to teach someone a lesson is to show that you are not bothered by his or her demeaning behavior.

I also feel that this philosophy can be applied when teaching others. Most teachers and motivators are familiar with the acronym PCP (Praise, Correct, Praise). This theory of motivation incorporates the hard (Yang) and soft (Yin) principles. Let's say a student is struggling with a certain technique. What happens when the teacher stresses the correction and negative aspect without praising the positive aspect of the student's performance? The student becomes more confused and irritated. As a result, their confidence declines and the learning process is much more difficult. When you start with a positive response, the psychological mindset of the student changes and the student is more receptive to the correction phase of learning. And remember it is always important to end on a positive aspect such as "Wow, that's a lot better." This sets the tempo for more improvement. This same theory works in any learning environment, not just martial arts.

Everything we do needs balance. One of the most genius concepts of the Constitution of the United States of America is its checks and balances. This small part of the Constitution has restrained generals, monopolists and politicians from grabbing and keeping power that is not freely given to them. Thus, our United States government systems are a sort of Yin and Yang. Take



The attacker is kicking (Yang) the defender with a rear leg low roundhouse kick. The defender displaces the attack (Yin) by using a double-forearm block while simultaneously turning to deliver a turning back-fist strike to a weak target, the attacker's temporal region of the head. It is important to note that the blending of energy happens as the double-forearm block is being used. This blending of energy also leaves the attacker vulnerable on the right side of his body. If the defender were to just block the roundhouse kick there would be a clash.



By George Klinedinst  
Photography by  
Todd Boyer

# The Yin & Yang & Tang Soo Do

a look at the two major parties, Democrats and Republicans. Even though there is conflict between the parties, they have a way of balancing each other. Imagine how one-sided (out of balance) things would be if one party made every decision. America would seem more like it was run as a dictatorship. With two different sides involved, there is more of a chance for a balanced compromise.

Many successful companies even use tests such as the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to balance out work and task forces to get a more productivity from their employees. Did you ever watch a group of extroverted individuals try to get something accomplished? They have a hard time getting out of each other's way. Likewise, if a team of introverted individuals gathers to get something accomplished, they generally will not move at an efficient pace because the leadership qualities rarely come to the forefront. Take a good look and notice how opposing forces are all around us creating

balance and harmony, and imbalance or conflict. If we apply the theory of Yin-Yang in everything we do harmonious results will follow.

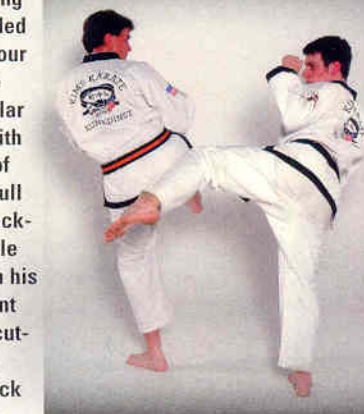
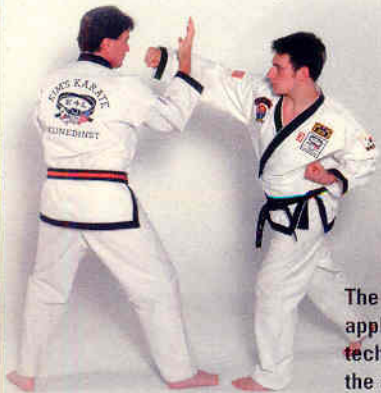
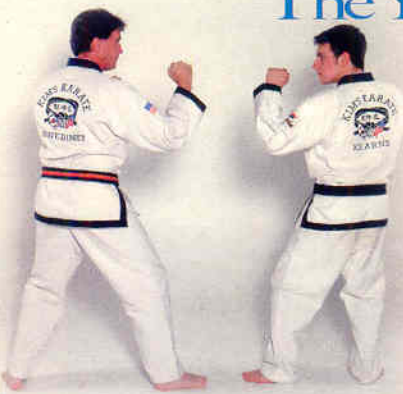
## Physical Application

Martial arts use the same Yin-Yang theory for its physical applications. Many martial arts such as Judo, Hapkido and Aikido are well known for using the opponent's energy against himself. Tang Soo Do is no different. This blending of the opponent's

energy is a basic foundation for many self-defense techniques. The attacker would be initiating the Yang energy while the defender would blend Yin and then redirect Yang energy back to the attacker. Even when a basic punch is analyzed, you will notice that to develop power, the hand has to come back before you propel it forward. The recoiling of the arm would be Yin energy while the actual punch is Yang. A theory of practical self-defense is to use the weakness of the opponent that is available or that you make available. Basically, the idea is to re-route your opponent's energy and take advantage of the situation before your opponent has time to recover.

The same principle applies as in the first technique. This time the attacker is striking with a right cross punch (Yang). The defender blocks the wrist while simultaneously turning, (Yin) to deliver a strike to the attacker's carotid artery region of the neck. With this technique, it is important to note that the block to the wrist region of the attacker is striking the radial nerve to increase effectiveness.

The attacker is again delivering a low round-house kick (Yang). This time the defender chooses to respond with a turning-back kick. Using the same principle of blending energy the defender turns (Yin) as soon as commitment is noticed in the attacker. By turning while the attacker is kicking, you are taking power out of the intended kick while you move your vital targets to the safe side of the attack, similar to how a boxer rolls with a punch to take some of the impact away. The full commitment of the attacker leaves him vulnerable to the counterattack on his right side. It is important to note that while executing this technique, the sooner the counterattack is launched, the better. I suggest that you work on your timing and try to launch your back kick as soon as the attacker kicks.





The blending of energy turns to a linear approach because Yin and Yang do not always need to complement each other in a circular fashion. With this technique, the attacker fires a straight front kick (Yang). As the kick is approaching, the defender uses a low crossed X-block to slow progression of the kick. When contact is made, the defender wraps the hands around the lower leg while taking a step backwards (Yin). (Notice the change of footwork in the second photo). While the defender is stepping back, the wrapped hands should pull the attacker forward. This increase in the attacker's velocity forward is then met with a reverse-straight punch to the nerve center behind the attacker's ear. Please note that the increased momentum of the attacker will multiply the impact greatly, thus using the attacker's energy against him. This would be equivalent to the effect of a head-on collision in an automobile as opposed to a rear end collision.



### Conclusion

Please note that since these theories are based on the principles of Yin and Yang, you can alter techniques to suit your body structure and ability. For example, the straight back kick in the third technique could be changed to a turning back hook kick or a spinning back fist. There are many targets and techniques available. Use your imagination and practice until the techniques become second nature, then the application of Yin and Yang will become apparent in your execution of the techniques. Also, remember that the theory of Yin and Yang can be applied in our daily lives to create more harmony; it's not just the physical application that is important.



The attacker aggressively grabs the defender and starts to pull the defender forward (Yang). Instead of fighting force with force, the defender chooses to step forward blending with the attacker's energy (Yin). As the defender steps forward, the bottom side of the attacker's hand is grasped. When control is made, the defender rotates counterclockwise applying a standing center lock on the attacker. Once the lock is applied and the attacker is off balance, the defender reaches over to the attacker's opposite shoulder and rotates him clockwise into a choke. At this point, the defender can lower the attacker backwards to the ground and really set the choke. It is important to note that as the standing center-lock is applied, the bottom edge of the attacker's hand must be rotated toward the attacker's center of his body. There should also be an upward motion applied at the same time, sort of like a corkscrew motion. ALSO: Note how the lock is still applied as the choke is started. This small point increases the attacker's pain.

### About the author:

Since 1981, Master Klinedinst has been training with Grandmaster Chong Su Kim, President of the Pan-Am TSD Federation (TKDT cover personal-ity November 1991). Master Klinedinst owns and operates Kim's Karate in Manchester, Pennsylvania, and can be reached at [kick92@suscom.net](mailto:kick92@suscom.net)