

Grandmaster Jae Chul Shin (9th Dan)

The Tang Soo Do Interview part 2

Welcome to the second instalment of my interview with GrandMaster Jae Chul Shin (9th Dan). This time around I want to get to grips with early training and development of the art for more advanced students.

Sir, what was early training like with Grandmaster Hwang Kee? What emphasis did he place on personal protection? For example were there takedowns, throws or chokeholds employed?

GM Shin - He was a traditional Korean martial artist and though he combined some of the Chinese art, he was very much Soo Bak Ki. He taught a traditional Korean martial art combined with Chinese, lots of basics and how to become a true Martial artist. Of course, there were takedowns, throws and chokeholds but there were no fancy self defence techniques like we see now. It was quite a different teaching strategy back in those days. Very few people trained and those that did only wanted to be a good strong Tang Soo Do black belt. There were no other ambitions. That was the only dream and purpose of training, so we worked very hard. All instructors trained individuals first in attitude and then in developing their spirit. This was accomplished through rigorous training. Therefore, training hours were much longer and there was a great deal of humility taught. Students were often made to clean the floor, bathroom, whatever. Now we cannot do that. In those days

people were very stubborn and tough because they were much more grounded. They were not as fancy as the modern practitioner, but very solid in their basics and principles in class.

What are your recollections of the difficult times experienced by the Moo Duk Kwan when General Choi promoted Taekwondo at the expense of Tang Soo Do?

GM Shin - I was not in Korea during the official initiation of Tae Kwon Do but I heard many episodes and stories. It involved the influence of political powers and many Moo Duk Kwan leaders were very disturbed by some seniors moving to the Tae Kwon do organization.

What Chinese influences did you experience during your time in the Moo Duk Kwan? Were forms ever interpreted in accordance with the principles of the Sip Sam Seh? Did you learn Tae Kuk Kwon (Tai Chi). So Rim Janq Kwon or Dam Toi technique and application?

GM Shin - From the beginning until the time I left Korea under Master Hwang Kee, only Tae Kuk Kwon is what our Master taught and showed

us. I did not know of Tai Chi, or what it was. I did not have any knowledge of it then as a student, it was just work. But now I believe some forms have influence on other systems and cultures. I do not have any knowledge about these other mentioned forms. I have never trained in them

Sir, the assertion that your teacher, GM Hwang Kee taught Tae Kuk Kwon to seniors throughout the 1950's and 1960's is very interesting to me. We now know from the "History of the Moo Duk Kwan", written by GM Hwang Kee that he learned Yang style Tai Chi directly from Master Yang in 1936. He therefore continued his practise and incorporated this form into his Moo Duk Kwan school. May I respectfully ask if you considered teaching Tae Kuk when you relocated to the USA? Do you still practise the form now? Of course, there is a direct link between Tae Kuk Kwon and Ki Gong (or Moo Pal Dan Khum as GrandMaster Hwang Kee refers to it). Do you now feel that Tae Kuk Kwon is perhaps the final

goal of a Tang Soo Do elder who has completed the hard style and now requires a slower but deeper understanding of the art and it's philosophy?

GM Shin – this supplementary question has been submitted to GM Shin and when he responds I shall include his answer in a future column.

Sir, How do you personally teach Ki Gong?

GM Shin - Ki means life energy, so we are using it and applying it to the whole body. Ki, is not only for training but constantly used in our daily life. If we practice Ki effectively it has many other benefits. That is why many people refer to it as an alternative, preventive or home medicine. Our organization started a special Ki Gong program twenty years ago and about 19 major clinics were held in the USA, Europe and Latin America. I believe all instructors should know Ki Gong and teach it to their students and elders for health and first aid purposes. Our organization created the World Ki Gong Club and produced over 100 high achievers who are capable to teach an instructor's course. Traditionally we do Ki Meditation at the beginning and end of class. We meditate to accumulate Ki. These days' classes are shorter, very brief, physical and very technical and unfortunately there is not much time for serious meditation sessions in class. Therefore, I introduced a Ki Gong program separate from our formal Tang Soo Do training. In older days, when you first joined a Tang Soo Do class, the Ki Hap was the number one test for developing Ki. When we Ki Hap loud and intense, we feel all the Ki circulating over our entire body. World Tang Soo Do is interested in continuing to advocate and develop teaching Tang Soo Do as well as the self healing and strengthening of the immune system by combining it with Ki Gong classes.

It is said that in Moo Pal Dan Khum (Ki Gong) the middle phase of the breath is the most important for energy development. What should the student be visualising mentally during this stage? What physical manifestations from Ki Gong training have you personally experienced?

GM Shin - I do not know Moo Pal Dan Khum but I know Ki Gong breathing. We especially focus on Dan Jun breathing which requires some instruction but it is one of the highest levels for healing and improving power. Another method we do is "Ji Shik," stoppage of breathing between inhalation and exhalation. It regulates our body rhythm and adjusts our body's balance. I have experienced practising Ki healing and adjusting a person's physical condition and this is a great benefit, especially with older students. Usually training without a proper warm-up and proper breathing procedures creates injury. When we do Ki Gong students not only build Ki energy but also understand how the Ki energy is working in their bodies so that they can work together

Sir, could you please enlarge on this point. During "abdominal breathing" energy can be felt particularly, between the palms of the hand. How do you feel this relaxed yet focused energy can be used in Tang Soo Do?

GM Shin – this supplementary question has been submitted to GM Shin and when he responds I shall include his answer in a future column.

How important is meditation to Tang Soo Do practitioners? How earnestly should they strive to fit this practice into their already busy lives? How often and for how long would you advise them to meditate?

GM Shin - Traditionally we start and finish class with meditation, Muk Yum . At the beginning of class we are reviewing our self and attempting to clean our mind and body as we prepare to train. We seek perfect readiness. At the end of the class we again meditate to review the days training and reset our mind and body for real life. I recommend at least 20 minutes of daily meditation to help us prepare for the challenges of the day. It is especially important for older students to meditate and adjust their body and mind, to prevent injury.

Do you feel you have now completed the circle or is there anything further you wish to achieve?

GM Shin - I will keep going, I don't know what is around the corner for me. I have high expectations for the future of the World Tang Soo Do Association, so I will continue to follow my journey. Tang Soo Do has no end; there is no destination, so I have to keep going.

GrandMaster Shin, it has indeed been an honour to discuss these matters with you and I look forward to your further thoughts in the near future.

