

Fighting Back

by *Sah Bom Nim Wynford Williams*

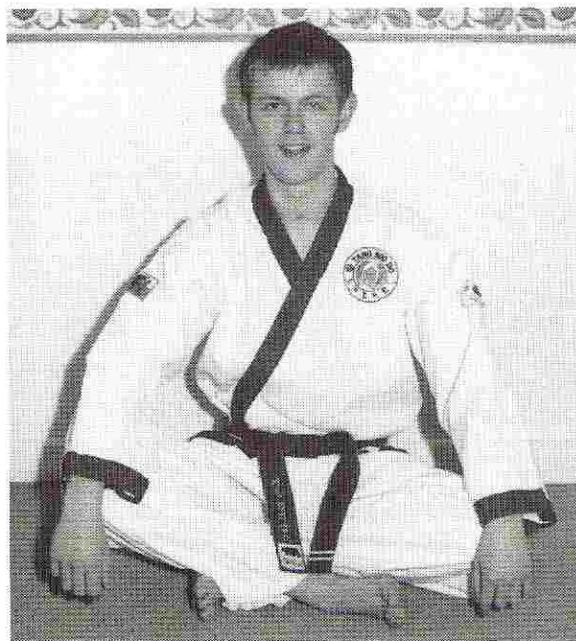
Looking at the title, you could be forgiven for assuming that this article would be about somebody defending themselves. It is not. I have written this article because for those of you just beginning to learn the Martial Art of Tang Soo Do, you may feel as I did that this was just about kicking, punching, defending and a good way of keeping fit. It's more than that.

I have tried in the past to communicate to my students the spiritual impact Tang Soo Do can have on their life, in the way my instructor taught me. They claim to understand but I always have doubts because I have been in their position, sitting listening to my instructor but not really understanding, concentrating rather on the physical aspects of Tang Soo Do.

At the time I did not realize what my instructor was trying to do. He used examples from his own experiences how he had overcome or seen others overcome difficulties which at the time seemed impossible. These were very interesting stories but I could never really understand why he would tell us, why didn't he just get on and practice and I guess at times some of you have felt the same way.

Well, I would like to share with you something that has happened to one of my students which I feel anyone can relate to and which I hope will give you a better insight into the Spirit of Tang Soo Do.

On November 14th 1995, one of my Dan Grades (Black Belt), Gareth Williams 16 years of age, was involved in a car accident. He was not driving, and through no fault of his own incurred the following injuries: fractured skull, fractured cheekbone, fractured collar bone, fractured right elbow, fractured right hip, 1 punctured lung, ruptured diaphragm, shattered kidney, damaged eye and possibly worst of all, severe trauma to the brain resulting in clots on the brain.



Gareth Williams

On March 11, 1996 Gareth returned to training, four months after doctors had only given him a 50/50 chance of survival and only two months after doctors had said he would be in a wheelchair for six months, possibly walking unaided by the end of 1996.

This recovery is attributed by the nurses and Doctors to the fact that he had a fantastic fighting spirit and that he was fortunate to be very fit. Gareth's parents attribute it to his practice of Tang Soo Do. They have said that at some points during his recovery he was given twice the normal amount of sedatives just to keep him unconscious so that the brain could have time to recover - he just would not quit.

When Gareth first entered the Do Jang (studio) here, he was a boy who was very shy, not at all aggressive and with not a lot of confidence. That boy is now a young man who has traveled with me to the States to take part in competition, is respected by his fellow Dan grades and is well on the way to becoming an excellent instructor.

Gareth has overcome what I hope will be the hardest hurdle he ever has to cross. I believe as do his parents that the combination of Physical and Mental Training that is unique to our organization under the guidance of Grand Master C.S. Kim has made the difference. It is these benefits that as we begin our martial art journey we do not always see but if you have a little faith and patience you will find them. So whenever your instructor starts talking and seems to go off on a tangent, appearing to be making little or no sense, as they sometimes do, realize that it is your inner spirit that he is trying to reach.

A lot of books are written these days about PMA (Positive Mental Attitude). **Practice Tang Soo Do and save your money.**

About the author: Sah Bom Nim Wynford Williams is a master instructor in Wales,

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