

# Tang Soo Do



While technology makes life easier, it does not make us happier, promote fulfillment, or create a model of living that we can follow to achieve our dreams and aspirations. Only those ideals that we internalize and return to the world through our skills, talents and work offer any hope for realizing personal growth, satisfaction and pride in our accomplishments. One path provides its own map to our personal Emerald City: Traditional Martial Arts!

**Grandmaster Chun Sik Kim** has dedicated the past fifty years of his life to the traditional martial art of Tang Soo Do. His success as a world champion and as the president and the founder of the International Tang Soo Do Federation qualifies him as one of the foremost authorities on the traditional martial art.

Yet, with all the awards and recognition that he has received worldwide, he continues to personally teach many classes every day and administrates the operation of not just C. S. Kim Karate and its 17 schools but also the International Tang Soo Do Federation that has locations throughout the world.

Nearly every weekend he is personally conducting clinics and seminars around the United States for his instructors. He also annually holds the All Martial Art Championship, one of the best attended events in the country. I talked to him as he was busy making plans for the 27th National All Martial Arts Championship to be held in Pittsburgh the first Saturday of May 2001.

**Richard Behr: You have dedicated fifty years to Tang Soo Do training and instruction. What made you follow this path instead of another?**

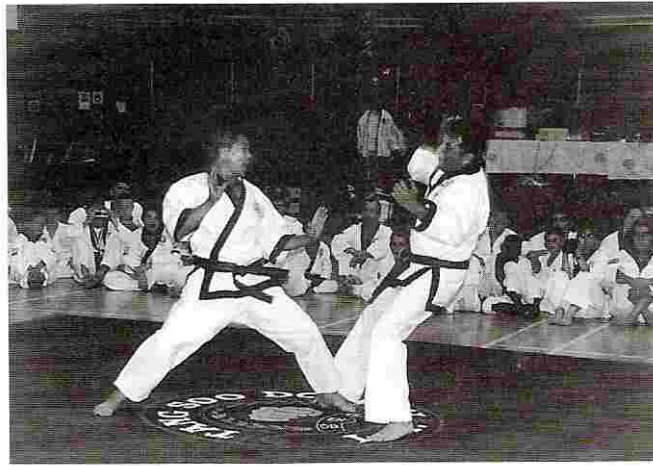
Chun Sik Kim: Tang Soo Do changed my life. Now I can share that with others. I see that as more than just an opportunity; it is a responsibility and I want to fill



Choong Jae Nim Chun Sik Kim leads a class of masters, instructors and black belts in basic drills. This specialized class, with attendance approaching 100 students, is held at the International Tang Soo Do Federation Headquarters and is taught by Grandmaster Kim every Tuesday night.

# Chun Sik Kim

## Traditional Arts For Our Technological Lives



The importance of proper stance, body position and focus of technique in developing power is displayed here by Grandmaster Kim as he demonstrates his incredible abilities for the students and spectators at the International Tang Soo Do World Championships.

that responsibility the best way I can.

### How have you done that, fulfill your personal responsibility?

I have had the opportunity to be involved in traditional Tang Soo Do nearly my whole life. I held positions of leadership with many organizations. When I had the chance to found the International Tang Soo Do Federation in 1984, I knew that was right. It allowed me to ensure that this Korean martial art of Tang Soo Do would remain pure and I would be able to continue teaching what I had learned from my master, the traditional martial art of Korea: Tang Soo Do.

### You are very adamant about the origin of Tang Soo Do. Is this really important?

It is important because I believe that we must know our roots. Our roots are where we are from and it defines much of our history. That is why Tang Soo Do is recognized as the traditional martial art of Korea.

As I was writing my book, *Authentic Tang Soo Do*, I researched the roots of Tang Soo Do extensively and referenced many sources in the United States and Korea. With the assistance of historians and resources from universities I am satisfied that Tang Soo Do as well as Soo Bahk Do and Hwarang Do are

**"...Tang Soo Do is recognized as the traditional martial art of Korea."**

indigenous to the Korean culture. However, I do believe there is a common thread that runs throughout all the different regions and cultures of that period. The longer I train in the wonderful martial art of Tang Soo Do, the more truth I hope to discover.

### International Tang Soo Do Federation schools are proliferating in Pennsylvania. To what do you attribute their success?

They teach truth, respect and discipline. They enhance the internal growth of the individual and instructors demonstrate the positive qualities of the art to their students. That is the one thing I ask of all of my instructors: Demonstrate the attributes of Tang Soo Do through their personal style of leadership and attitude.

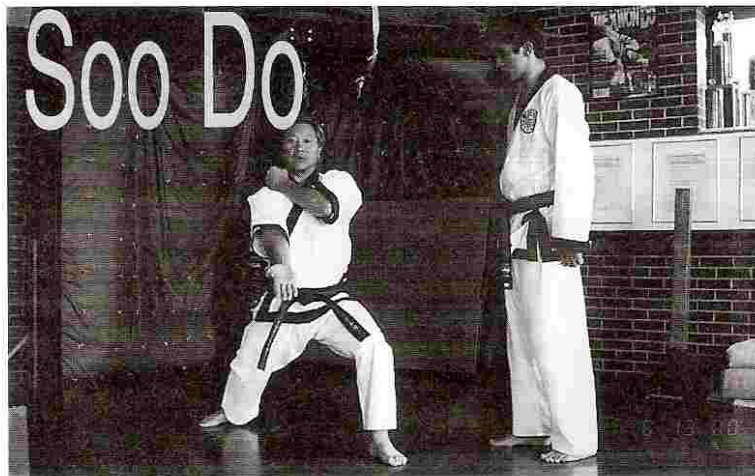
### Why do your students stay with you? You have dozens of instructors and students who have been with you for nearly 25 years; some even more. What are you doing differently from other martial art organizations?

I teach them the truth; nothing more and nothing less. I share with them the lessons my master taught me. When students first come to me, they primarily want to learn the physical aspects of the art. They want to learn self-defense and physical fitness. And, yes, I give them what they come for but, I believe,

LEFT: At the First International Tang Soo Do Instructors Conference held in February 2001, Choong Jae Kim taught specialized classes in the traditional art of Tang Soo Do. CENTER: Assisting students in the refinement of Ho Sin Sool self-defense practice. RIGHT: Cautiously attacking the Grandmaster from behind is Master Joe Goss, Sr., of Johnstown, PA. Master Goss is vice president of the International Tang Soo Do Federation.



# Tang Soo Do



Grandmaster Kim demonstrates Ha Dan Kwan Soo Kong Kyuck as student, Master Patricio Saveddra of Chili, watches carefully to gain insight as to the Grandmaster's execution of the technique.

they found so much more that was quite unexpected. That was *not* unexpected to me, however. I knew that once students learn the truth about the traditional art of Tang Soo Do they will want to continue learning—just as I did, and still do. You see, rational Tang Soo Do trains the students for a lifetime of victories. This is the way of life for a true martial artist.

**The phrase “The Way of Life” has been used a great deal throughout the recent history of martial arts, what does it mean to you?**

Do means “the way of life.” I tell my students to take the lessons from the dojang home with them each night. Sleep with these lessons. Take them to work or to school the next day and practice the lessons at every opportunity. By practicing that philosophy they will become better people. That is the truth about traditional Tang Soo Do. Incidentally, that is another reason our students often stay with this art throughout their lives. In one's heart, everyone wants to be a better person. Tang Soo Do can be a pathway to that goal.

**The martial arts seem to have divergent paths in today's society—art and sport. How do you see this advancing as society changes?**

Both will continue. I do believe that traditional

Tang Soo Do will grow forever and maintain the fundamental traditions inherent in our art. Society has changed, however, becoming more dependent on technology. I was just discussing this with my wife.

Years ago people did not have today's time and energy saving devices. They were more independent as far as managing their lives. Today we have computers and cell phones that do

everything needed to communication with others. Yet, people are not satisfied. In many ways we have become spoiled and unsatisfied. Tang Soo Do can help with this problem.

**How?**

Traditional martial arts are a place for people to get help to learn how to become personally satisfied with their lives.

**Why choose to learn a traditional martial art rather than a martial sport?**

Traditional martial arts are for everyone! Adults may initially have the wrong impression that martial arts are for children. I believe that mom, dad and even grandparents need to become involved in this type of training because they are the very roots of the family. Children are like the branches of a tree; without strong and healthy roots the branches suffer. Children must first develop a healthy mind and

**“The longer I train in the wonderful martial art of Tang Soo Do, the more truth I hope to discover.”**



Grandmaster Kim demonstrates a black belt technique: an Open-Hand Strike from a kneeling position.

# Chun Sik Kim

## Traditional Arts For Our Technological Lives



At the First Annual International Tang Soo Do Federation Master and Instructor Seminar participants practice a weapon bong hyung E-Dan at the Pittsburgh Palace Inn Hotel.

strong personality and parents can help to develop many of these qualities long before their children attend school. Academics are vitally important but we must start to lay the foundations for success when children are very young.

### What about the sporting aspect of martial arts?

Traditional martial arts are not sport. Yes, some of the physical training methods may be the same but the purpose and philosophy in the training are quite different. Those practicing traditional martial arts are training for a lifetime of victories. As I have said before, their training becomes part of a program of self-improvement that effects all facets of their lives.

I have a 78 year old student, a black belt, who looks and acts like a much younger man. Yes, his kicks and punches are good but it is the experience and knowledge along with his improved health that have impressed me the most. Last week after class he commented that he would be away for a short period as he was driving to Las Vegas from Pittsburgh. I said, "Mr. Katz, wow, that is wonderful!" He commented that he wished more seniors could share in what he has discovered in his practice. He is an inspiration to all of us, young and old.

### What about the involvement of traditional Tang Soo Do practitioners in sporting events such as tournaments or competitions?

Great, so long as they approach these events with the proper attitude. They must understand that it is

## "Traditional Tang Soo Do trains the students for a lifetime of victories."

the knowledge and experience gained through competition that holds the greatest value. Win or lose, they must look at the experience with an open mind to learn from all that occurred. Yes, a first place trophy seems very attractive to any competitor but I

believe that the path traveled to gaining that victory is filled with lessons that will last a lifetime. Being a champion in the ring is usually

quite short lived. Personally, I believe the practice of traditional martial arts is a path that extends for a lifetime. I wish to stay healthy and as injury free as possible. I wish that for my students as well.

### You have been involved in tournaments nearly all your life and have been a world heavyweight champion. You have seen many of the world's best martial fighters. What do you think about the future of competition and those who live for the thrill of the ring?

Yes, I have seen many of the best competitors in the world. I have refereed and judged some of the most exciting matches with competitors demonstrating fantastic, almost unbelievable technique! A better question would be: Where are these students today? That is the unfortunate part; I do not see them teaching their style of fighting or training. Often, if they love martial arts and want to continue to learn, they will seek a more traditional training method that allows them to grow as a student as well as share the knowledge from their experience.

I am quite proud that many of my students who



Grandmaster Kim presents a Certificate of Promotion to Master Patricio Saveddra of Chili at a ceremony held at the International Tang Soo Do Federation Headquarters in Monroeville, Pennsylvania. Master Saveddra is the Chief Instructor in Chili.

# Tang Soo Do



Grandmaster Kim, second from right, and Grandmaster S. Henry Cho, third from right, present Grand Champion trophies to the winners of the National All Martial Art Championship that was held at the Fitzgerald Field House, Pittsburgh, PA. Also pictured are tournament guests and dignitaries.

have had championship recognition have maintained a traditional Tang Soo Do perspective. Many have demonstrated true loyalty to the International Tang Soo Do Federation and have become very successful instructors. They are still my students and I have a great deal of respect for the commitment and loyalty they have shown to the traditional martial art of Tang Soo Do as well as to me.

**“Tang Soo Do basics emphasize powerful hand techniques for both blocking and attacking as well kicking techniques that are incomparable.”**

**You have discussed the philosophy of traditional martial arts, in particular Tang Soo Do. How would you characterize the self-defense capabilities of the art?**

Since you asked: Dynamic! The International Tang Soo Do Federation has very high standards of performance required for advancement. The physical training will challenge any practitioner as well as improve physical conditioning. Tang Soo Do basics emphasize powerful hand techniques for both blocking and attacking as well kicking techniques that are incomparable. Simply put, Tang Soo Do practiced in the traditional way maximizes the potential of the human body as a weapon for self-defense. This is accomplished through knowledge of the biomechanics of motion. And the key to technical skill is proficient basics. I still practice those daily. They are the very foundation for physical development.

**Master Kim, any final thoughts about your feelings for this martial art that you so greatly love?**

That is very hard. For over fifty years I have found so much peace and happiness through my teaching and practicing Tang Soo Do. I thank my Sabunim, Grandmaster Song Ki Kim, for giving me an opportunity to come to the United States and for supporting me spiritually

throughout my life.

I have had so many exciting times during my career. Yet, every day when I put on my dobok to teach class nothing is better than that. There have been so many wonderful people to share my experiences with and watch grow through the practice of this beautiful art of Tang Soo Do. To see people become stronger, healthier and happier individuals, to have some small part in that, is fantastic.

I have particular joy in seeing my senior students, many with whom I share decades of history, become enriched and enlightened by the teachings of traditional Tang Soo Do. Whether it has been seeing them achieve their goals of becoming a grand champion, opening their own dojang, or running out of gas while returning home together from a seminar, they are my Tang Soo Do family and I am very proud and honored to call them my students. From my heart, they are my happiness. ○

Grandmaster Chun Sik Kim and Master Joe Goss proudly display the Grandmaster's book, *Authentic Tang Soo Do*, released two years ago. This photo was taken at a book signing attended by hundreds of martial artists and dignitaries from around the world.



Richard M. Behr interviewed Grandmaster Kim exclusively for *Tae Kwon Do Times*. Master Behr has studied Tang Soo Do with the Grandmaster for over 20 years and holds a fifth degree black belt. Master Behr teaches Tang Soo Do in Indiana, Pennsylvania, and is a member of the Technical Advisory Committee for the International Tang Soo Do Federation.