

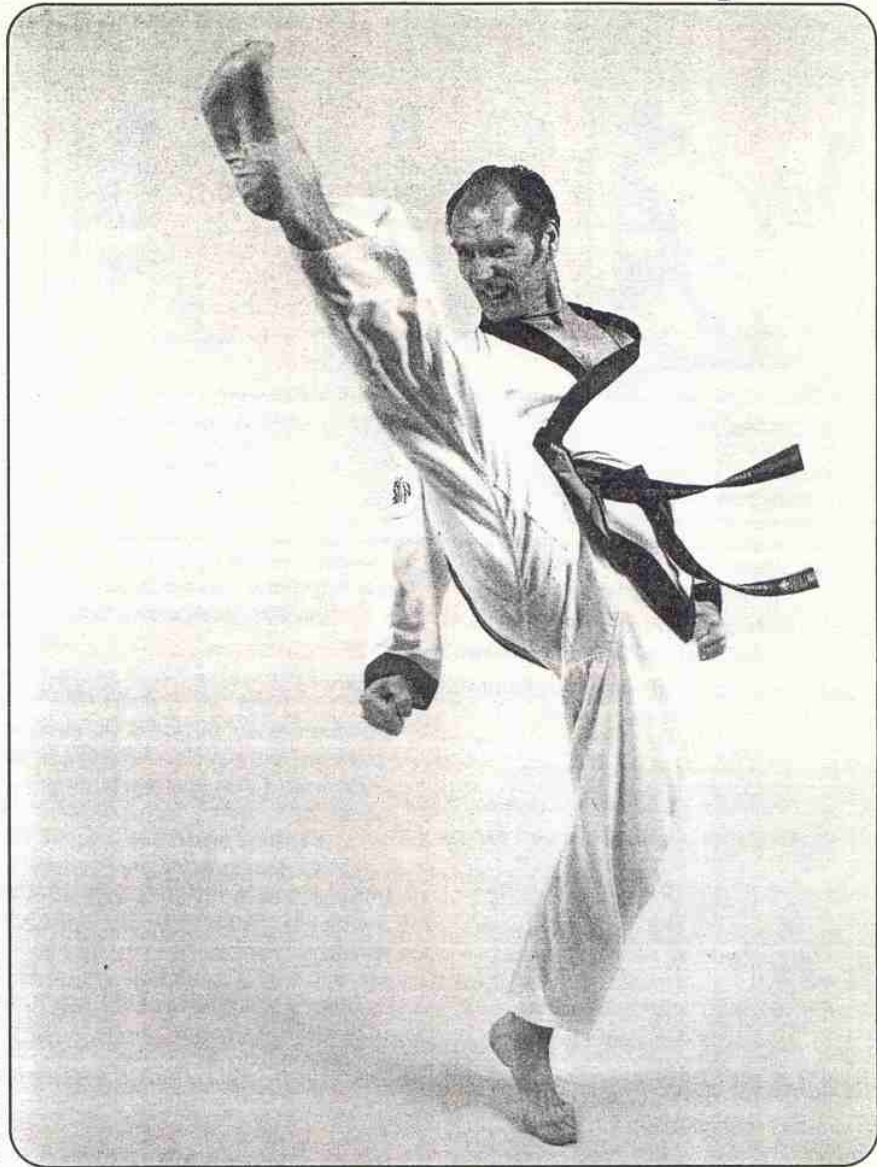
## An insight into the Korean Art of Tang Soo do and the history and experiences of Brian Edmondson, 4th dan.

T.K.C.A: Tang Soo Do is quite a popular Korean martial art, tell us something about it.

Brian Edmondson: Most of the Korean martial arts are able to be traced back to about 700 BC when they were all under the name of Hwa-Rang-Do; this was a very strict martial art and the practitioners could be likened to the Japanese Samurai warriors, very proud and willing to fight to the death for their master. They deliberately endured incredible hardships to develop their legendary endurance and iron will.

Hwa-Rang-Do was a highly evolved and complex mainly military martial art consisting of four "powers", internal, external, weapon and mental. The mental power included the development of telepathy and ESP and in addition students were taught advanced medical practices, using all the ancient herbal and acupuncture/pressure point methods in order to have as much skill at saving life as in taking it.

In about 1000 AD some Hwa-Rang-Do exponents developed a new martial art known as Soo Bahk Do which became popular with the general public, or non military people, and Soo Bahk Do was the basis for Tang Soo Do. In 1909 the Japanese annexed Korea and



# TIGER GYM

## A Tang Soo Do Stronghold

banned the practice of any martial arts, some resistance fighters continued to practice but the majority left Korea and learned or adapted Japanese Karate and Chinese Kung Fu systems. When the occupation ended in 1945 the restoration of Korean traditions began, including the setting up of several martial art "Kwans" or academies, and it was then that Grandmaster Hwang Kee established the Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan style. In 1955 a lot of the other Kwans or styles amalgamated to become Tae

Kwon Do but Grandmaster Hwang Kee elected, along with a few others, to keep their original identity.

Tang Soo Do - Moo Duk Kwan was founded by Grandmaster Hwang Kee, and for many years it existed free of politics and with an agreed hierarchy. However, about ten years ago things started going wrong, some internal disagreements, and splinter groups emerged. A couple of years later there was a big split when Grandmaster Hwang Kee appointed his son as his

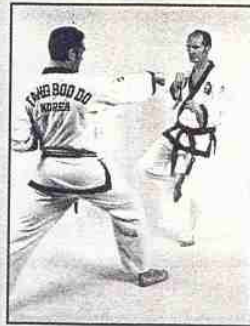
successor, although there were other Korean exponents of Tang Soo Do who were senior in dan grade to him. Some of these accepted the position but others felt they had to leave the organisation and therefore went on their own but tried to take other senior grades with them, forming many small groups.

Our Grandmaster, Han Eung Kyo, 9th dan, remained aloof from all this political infighting. He had always had his own Tiger Gym in Korea and was

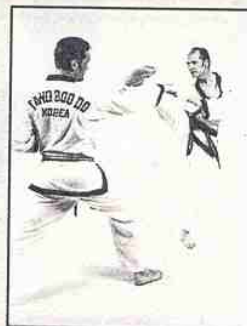
## Step Self-Defence Combinations:



1. From ready position attacker steps with a right lunge punch.



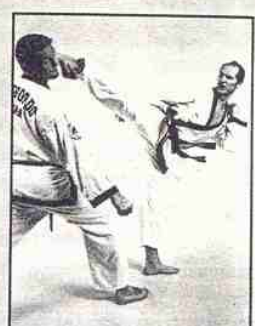
2. Defender chambers right leg in preparation of defence.



3. The defender's kicking leg begins an inside motion crescent kick.



4. The leg block is successful.



5. Defender quickly counters with a back leg side kick to attacker's face area (both techniques are done in quick sequence).

well known as a fighter and loyal to Grandmaster Hwang Kee, but when faced with ultimatums from the different groups - and the majority of these groups began changing the basics and formations of Tang Soo Do to stamp on their own identity, no doubt causing a lot of confusion to students - Master Han decided that he could not go against his principles and beliefs of traditional Tang Soo Do and decided to concentrate all his clubs and students to maintaining the Traditional Tang Soo Do techniques and practices.

Grandmaster Han is based in Malaysia and Brunei, and it was in Brunei that I began training with him in 1975, at first three times weekly but then, due to Master Han's overwhelming enthusiasm and devotion to the art, I became a devout student and trained every day, sometimes twice a day. My son Leslie, then aged seven, began training there also two or three times a week.

graded to 1st dan in 1977 and being a military instructor at the time was able to pass an instructors' course with

Master Han and teach Brunei soldiers on a twice weekly basis, when this was part of their compulsory military training.

On returning to UK in late 1978, about three weeks before the first international Tang Soo Do competition held at Watford with Master Lee Kang Uk, I opened my first club at Bicester Sports Centre, near Oxford. This was a huge success and I was teaching between 50 and 70 students three nights weekly, but, unfortunately, after three years the Army moved me on so I got another of Master Han's students, Ho Tiong Ho, 2nd dan, to take over the club. I was then overseas for a good number of years, training as often as I could and returning to see and train with Master Han in Brunei and in Malaysia on a number of occasions.

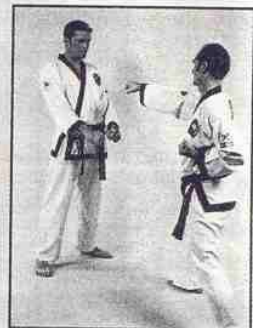
After brief training in Malvern, Worcester and Scunthorpe, South Humberside, I then moved to live in South East London on a permanent basis, my Army service being completed. It was about this time that I sent my son Leslie, 2nd dan, to Malaysia for six months to train with

Grandmaster Han, to encourage him to follow the Tang Soo Do way.

T.K.C.A: Tell us something about your Tiger Gym Tang Soo Do Club.

Brian Edmondson: The Tiger Gym Tang Soo Do club, South Norwood, was opened in September of 1993, and our

### Combination Three



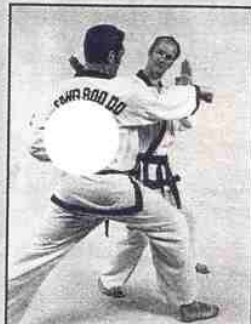
1. Attacker steps forwards lunging with right punching strike.

students have the opportunity to train four times a week at two different venues. As a club we do not get involved with any martial art politics,

### Combination Two



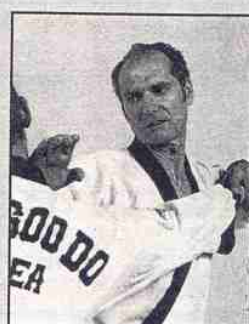
From a ready position attacker steps with right lunge punch.



2. Defender steps inside opponent's strike and outer knife and blocks punch, at the same time knife hand is inward striking the carotid artery of the neck.



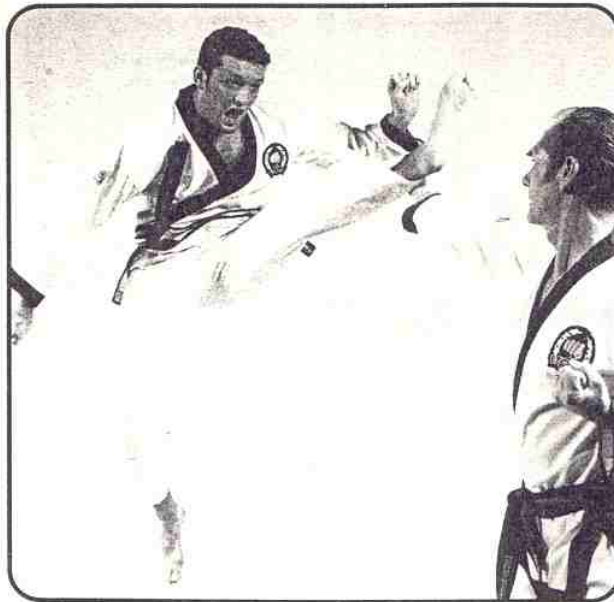
3. With the right hand, defender grabs attacker's right punch towards him, in preparation for knife hand side strike at the opposite side of the attacker's neck.



4. & 5. In both these illustrations the attacker is pulled forwards off balance towards the defender to substantiate a more effective bona fide defence.



preferring to concentrate on our love of the art, and train in the traditional Tang Soo Do style, with lots of kicking, combination kicking, one step sparring, formation training, free fighting and breaking. Our one diversion from the traditional is that the teaching is all carried out in English, obviously we do use Korean terminology but this is not a mandatory requirement for the students. Our fees are kept as low as possible because we are not into Tang Soo Do to make money, more to pass on our knowledge and belief in the art and we also only charge half price for the unemployed or students. On top of this all newcomers are given their first lesson free of charge and we do not insist on any joining fee. Uniforms are only necessary if the student wishes to grade but we do encourage uniforms wherever possible as this does give a good impression of the club to visitors.



Brian Edmondson: We cater for students of 8 years old and upwards, and classes are mixed, with only one adults only class late on a Monday evening. We have quite a lot of juniors

that any one of them is lacking in control or misusing any aspect then they would firstly be told about it and if they persisted then they would not be taught anything further until their attitude had changed.

**T.K.C.A:** Do you have a grading/coloured belt system and who does your grading examinations?

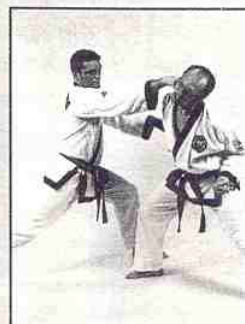
Brian Edmondson: We have a coloured belt grading system: white; yellow; orange; green; blue; brown and black. This was originally the colour progression as a student bought a suit complete with white belt and dyed it each time they successfully completed an upgrading, thus each colour is a natural progression from the last. The gradings are carried out by myself as a 4th dan master, but I would always insist on black belt gradings where possible being



2. Defender side steps to perform arm-bar lock-strike.



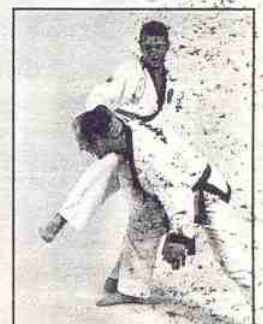
3. Defender then forces attacker's right arm backwards locking it with his left arm ...



4. ... which is met with a reverse punch strike to attacker's jaw region.



5. With the punching hand the defender now cups the rear of the attacker's head pulling him downwards.



6. This is met with defender knee kicking attacker in throat.

The club is currently looking forward to a visit by Grandmaster Han Eung Kyo later this year, hopefully he will be coming over for a couple of months minimum and we hope to coincide his visit with our first black belt upgrading examinations.

The aim of the Tiger Gym Tang Soo Do is to spread, initially around the South East London area then to take in other areas in and around London. We would of course be happy to hear from any other students or instructors who wished to contact us for cross club competitions, cross club training or who feel that we may offer something which they can contribute to or relate to. We do not want to "poach" other club members or instructors but would welcome anyone who was dissatisfied with their current club/style/training methods etc. to come along and join us.

**T.K.C.A:**What ages do you cater for?

and we have a number of female students, and I believe this number will increase with the current escalation of violence and unprovoked attacks on females. In our classes, after female students reach a certain standard they are given additional self defence/street related defence training.

**T.K.C.A:** Do you give juniors/children any special training?

Brian Edmondson: All juniors are taught alongside adults and learn the same principles but the juniors are perhaps more concentrated on when it comes to explaining the methodology of Tang Soo Do, and during our meditation period at the end of each lesson special emphasis is placed on letting them know that any misuse of the arts will not be tolerated and that they must show respect for their parents, teachers, elders, but most of all for themselves. If however, I think

conducted by Grandmaster Han and if this was not possible then they would be graded by myself in conjunction with my son Leslie, now a 2nd dan but hopefully soon to be a 3rd dan, and other black belts.

**T.K.C.A:** Is breaking part of your training?

Brian Edmondson: Yes, we teach all the students how to break, starting from one roof tile and progressing up to bricks and breeze blocks. It is necessary to break something as part of the upgrading examination, but obviously age and stature are taken into consideration. The main point being that the student is committed to breaking something, has no fear of failure and with the proper training will not harm themselves. It gives a great deal of pleasure to witness the beaming smile on the face of a 9 or 10 year old who has just broken through 1, 2 or 3 roof tiles in front of their

# Tang Soo Do

parents and friends. We encourage the students to invite their parents, relations and friends to come along and observe, or take part in, any lesson, but certainly to come along to all the upgrading examinations.

**T.K.C.A:** Do you have any involvement with the community?

**Brian Edmondson:** Yes, we have given exhibitions/demonstrations at school fetes etc. and of course this encourages the juniors to excel, and hopefully attract new members. At the last exhibition we did last year my son Leslie broke 4 breeze blocks (at the same time), other students broke one or two breeze blocks; the senior girl student, a slim seven and a half stone 5 foot 1 inch lady, broke a breeze block and children of 10 and 11 years were breaking 4 and 5 roof tiles at a time. We have also done interviews on the local FM radio and been in local press articles.

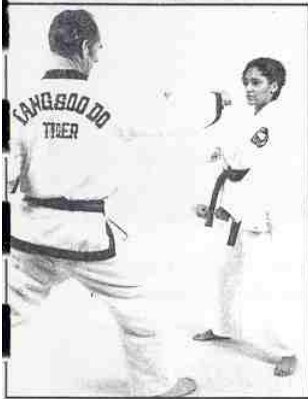
**T.K.C.A:** Is Tang Soo Do only a self defence or is it a sport?

Tang Soo Do is not a sport, it is most definitely a martial art, although it is very difficult to differentiate between the two. But Tang Soo Do does help

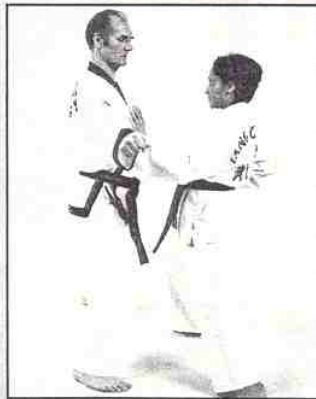
students in other ways, it is exceptionally good for self confidence and self control, and if any student gets a lot of self confidence from training then it will show in most other aspects of their life style, they would be more confident at work or school, their general health would benefit. But please don't get me wrong, we are not health freaks, we don't go overboard or have massive ego trips at the expense of our students and we don't believe that you need to be superhuman. All we ask of our students is that they try their hardest, show commitment and respect, but most of all enjoy what they are doing. ♦



## Ladies one step Tang Soo Do defence



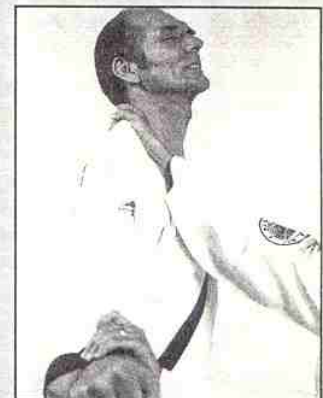
1. Attacks with right lunge punch.



2. Defender blocks attacker's punch with a left open handed block.



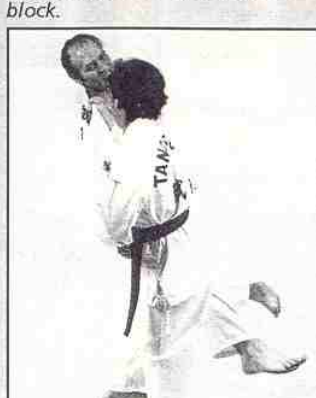
3. Then defender strikes with a punch to the base of the jaw.



4. Defender then clasps attacker's punching hand at the wrist with her left hand and tightly grasps attacker's uniform at the collar.



5. Then defender begins to swing hook attacker's left leg with her right leg, whilst still clasping and holding wrist and collar areas for stability.



6. Defender now knocks attacker's balance, attacker falls backwards to the ground. The hook sweep is complete.



7. The attacker is now on the floor, the wrist is still clasped by defender.



8. Defender finishes off with a punch to the face region.