

Ko Dan Ja

Eight-Days to Master

World

Soo

Bahk

Do

Moo

Duk

Kwan

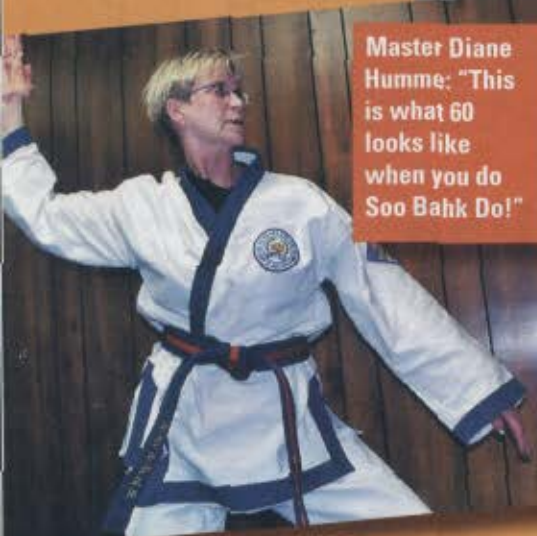
Federation

In some organizations, martial artists receive the status of master as a reward for their years of service, loyalty and lifetime contribution to their art. In other organizations, candidates must pass a test for the promotion. In the World Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan Federation, potential masters must successfully complete an eight-day examination that tests not only the physical aspects of the art but also the character of each candidate.

The last night that I was in Korea following the Korea Open, I had a chance encounter at the Korea House Restaurant, in Seoul, with Grandmaster H. C. Hwang. Grandmaster Hwang is the son of Hwang Kee who was the founder of one of the five original schools of Moo Do in Korea, the Moo Duk Kwon. In fact, it wasn't until after we had been introduced, spoken and moved on to conversations with other people that I learned with whom I had just spoken. At a chance meeting later at my hotel, I spoke with some of his students who had just completed a testing/character building experience that is unique to the World Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan Federation. After hearing a little about what they had just been through, I told them that next year I would be interested in witnessing and writing the story of their experience.



Grandmaster H.C. Hwang performs a perfect axe kick



Master Diane Humme: "This is what 60 looks like when you do Soo Bahk Do!"



Members of the American Soo Bahk Do Federation participates in Jung Bong class

Shim Sa

By Greg Ryman

I should start with a brief explanation of the origin of Soo Bahk Do. After all, soobahk in Korean means watermelon. Wait...The way of the watermelon? No, not really. Grandmaster Hwang explained to me that his father, Hwang Kee, founded the Moo Duk Kwon in 1945 and began calling the art he was teaching Hwa Soo Do in honor of the Hwarang youth. But during this period in history, following the Japanese occupation of Korea, the people of Korea were more familiar with Japanese Karate than even their own history. So Hwang Kee adopted the name Tang Soo Do that had been already in use by Won Kuk Lee of the Chung Do Kwan.

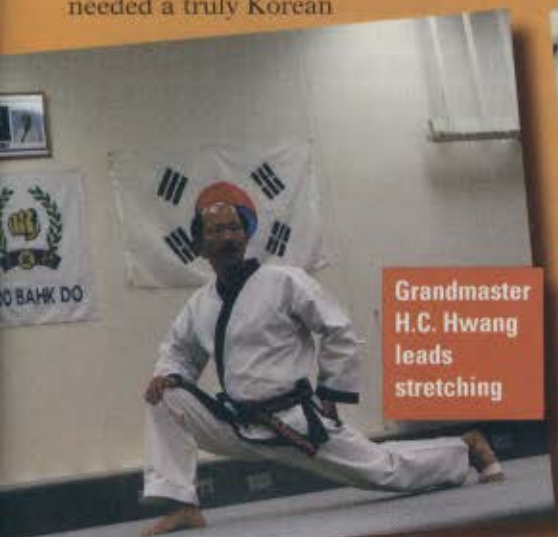
In 1957, a Seoul University professor showed Hwang Kee an historical book, *Moo Yei Do Bo Tong Ji*, that was lost during Japanese rule. This book tells of a forgotten martial art that was uniquely Korean.

Even though the success of Hwang Kee's Moo Duk Kwon and Tang Soo Do was tremendous, he felt that the art, to which he had dedicated his life, needed a truly Korean

name. This name, referred to in the *Moo Yei Do Bo Tong Ji*, was Soo Bahk, and so in 1960, Grandmaster Hwang Kee incorporated the Korean Soo Bahk Do Association. Today Soo Bahk Do is a worldwide reality, and I am at the University of Southern Alabama in Mobile to witness the "Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa."

The Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa is an eight day exam for those wishing to test for master level. This has been a tradition in Soo Bahk Do for more than two decades. It is designed to bring out what Grandmaster Hwang refers to as the Shim Gong or "Spiritual Energy" that, according to the grandmaster, can only be felt through hard training.

This year's Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa marks the beginning of a new tradition for the organization. The test has now been scheduled to begin in January, and coincides with an annual "Meeting with the Masters" and Kyo Sa (instructor) class. By holding the test in



Grandmaster H.C. Hwang leads stretching



Students of all ranks learn stick defense together



Second-degree black belt Adam Diaz performs Jung Bong hyung

Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa

Eight-Days to Master

Morning on Mobile Bay

January, Grandmaster Hwang is able to describe his vision and goals for the organization's new year. This change in schedule resulted in hundreds of students becoming ineligible to test until next year. But the general attitude seems to be that after four to six years of training since the last exam, six more months is inconsequential. Eligible students wishing to endure the experience submit an essay on Soo Bahk Do and why they should be accepted. This year only 12 members were accepted for the comprehensive evaluation.

According to those who have been through the Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa in years prior, over the next eight days the participants will undergo a metamorphosis. The students are brought to and beyond their self imposed limits to discover the beauty of the Shim Gong beyond.

Every day of the Shim Sa begins at sunrise with Moo Pahl Dan Keum, a set of eight breathing exercises developed to benefit the lymphatic system of the body and promote health. The rest of the day is filled with classes conducted by master instructors from around North America. These classes encompass the entire range of the art, including basic techniques, self-defense, one-step and three-step sparring, original Tang Soo Do forms, and the Chil Sung forms unique to

Hwang Kee's system.

At the beginning of the week, the participants are given a written assignment to work on in groups. The physical training is typically completed after 11:00 P.M. This is when the groups meet to prepare their outline, draft, project ready for edit, and finally a finished project to become part of the World Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwon Federation's library. The intensity is built through close quarters, a lack of sleep, no communication with home or the outside world, and constant evaluation and correction from the master instructors. I had a chance to speak with all of the candidates, and each one had made sacrifices just to be able to attend the eight-day exam. Cards and care packages from adoring students buoyed the spirits of many of the instructors taking the comprehensive test.

Apart from the schedule endured by all participants, some of the participants were seeking an additional certification, that of instructor or master instructor. The Kyo Sa and Sa Bum (instructor and master instructor) candidates were given classroom and practical training during the first three days. This



Grandmaster H.C. Hwang leads master level forms class



Two-person hyung with moves unique to Soo Bahk Do



Participants at this year's meeting of the masters

training consisted of study from a standardized teaching manual, classroom lectures, a written exam, and a practical examination.

During the practical exam, the candidates were required to teach a class of masters, black belts and colored belts while being evaluated by a board of examiners. Following the practical exam the board members met to discuss what feedback would be delivered and how it would be presented to both correct mistakes and leave the candidate with a positive attitude. Although the nature of this feedback was positive, it was not to be taken lightly.

After a short recess, all of the participants reassembled and the instructor candidates were called to the front of a packed courtroom. Here a foreman from a jury made up of all of the students in the class the candidate had led, pointed out all of the good points and all of the deficiencies as noticed from a student's point of view.



Grandmaster H.C. Hwang
and Tae Kwon Do Times
Editor In Chief, Greg Ryman

One by one the instructor candidates received the sometimes personal and difficult criticism in the spirit with which it was offered. Following the evaluation from the students, each candidate received additional correction from a delegate on the board of examiners. All instructor candidates took notes and when they left the court, they were even

more determined than when they entered. Master Arthur Pryor left the new instructors with these words. "Each day as an instructor will either take your students one step closer to their dan or one step closer to quitting. You must prepare yourself to advance them toward their goals."

The following day, the regional examiners set an example by teaching back-to-back classes on Soo Bahk sparring techniques. These men and women are the teachers of teachers. Mrs. Dianna Hume, age 60, from Washington State, is a retired special education teacher, and a master in Soo Bahk Do. During a coveted break, she told me that she has learned more about teaching from Soo Bahk Do than from her college classes and more than 28 years in education.

The overall outcome from this instructor certification is that teachers throughout the world all conduct consistent training. Mrs. Hume told me that while visiting her daughter in Pennsylvania for the summer, she was able to continue her training as if she were in her home dojang training under her own instructor, Curt McCauley in Channeltown, Washington. This was also evident in what I witnessed. Participants of all ranks, from all over North America, were able to function as if they had trained with each other in the same hall and under the same instructor.

It is evident that Grandmaster Hwang is proud of what his father created and is committed to maintaining it at its purest form. He stressed to his students that the future of Moo Do of all stripes, but especially Soo Bahk Do, rests on five pillars: Tradition, History, Philosophy, Discipline, and Technique. The World Moo Duk Kwan Soo Bahk Do Federation is putting their vision for the future in action by maintaining the standards upon which their Art was founded. ●

Participants at this year's
Ko Dan Ja Shim Sa (L to R)

1. Christian Naggier, CA
2. Gabriela Brown, NJ
3. Jim Losasso, NJ
4. Allen Ruqus, NY
5. Danny Lockhart, CA
6. Gustavo Polletti, CA
7. James Harwood, MA
8. Kathleen Krol, NJ
9. Annie Marie Addison, TX
10. John Perusse, NY
11. Leonie Broman, Australia
12. Mark Balaban, NY



Martial Arts, Fitness & Health

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SPECIAL ISSUE

Focusing On
the Master...

KO DAN JA

Eight-Days
To Master

HO SIK PAK

Road to
Grandmaster

SHATTERED DOLL

Grandmaster
Saves Student
from Suicide

RICHARD NA

Overcoming
the Master
Conspiracy

**SKY-HIGH
SELF-DEFENSE**

Training
for Al-Quida

Plus:

R.E.S.P.E.C.T

Training With Korea's Finest
Principles of Creation & Harmony
How NOT to Train for Endurance

Just Do It
And More!

