

Ho Sik Pak

Road to Grandmaster

By Ursula Escher

When many grandmasters stop teaching and relegate those duties to younger masters and instructors, Grandmaster Ho Sik Pak continues the teaching tradition. He still leads three to six classes daily at his studio in Canoga Park, California, where all his students revere their teacher, friend and mentor.



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Bruce Lee inspired him to become a martial artist and he knew as a young boy where his future lay. However, back in 1967 in Yong Mun, a small town in the Kyung Ki province of South Korea, the ten-year-old Ho Sik Pak could not afford martial art lessons. He walked daily to a facility near his home to watch instructor Lee Hon In teach the art of Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan. His parents had to deny him lessons because money just was just too precious of a commodity to spend on non-essentials like martial art instruction. Yet, he remained faithful to his dream and daily walked to the studio and watched through the window. He started practicing alone outside the dojang, trying to remember every technique and later practicing it repeatedly at home. His parents were very impressed with his commitment and later decided to pay for his lessons.

The instructor soon noticed his eagerness to learn and his natural abilities. By age 13, he earned his cho dan (black belt) and started teaching younger students. His master was very impressed by his dedication and enthusiasm, and soon took him to local tournaments where he won several several competitions. He won grand champion at his very first tournament.


A Way of Life

Daily teaching and training became a personal way of life for Grandmaster Pak. While still in Korea, he started bodybuilding and began on a road to perfection that would never stop. He trained for hours at the dojang as well as many hours at the gym each week. In 1981, he won the prestigious Korean bodybuilding contest and was nominated Mr. Kun San. He goal was never to build bulky muscle mass but to develop very lean and cut definition, achieving the physique of a martial art movie star.

From 1977 to 1979, Grandmaster Pak served in the Korean Army and taught combat and self-defense skills to his fellow servicemen. Following his discharge from the military, he was employed as an instructor of Tang Soo Do at the American Air Force Base in Kun San Province, Jun Ra Buk Do, South Korea. There he taught those same techniques to U.S. Military Personnel until 1982.

International Champion

In 1982, he became a member of the Korean Olympic Tang Soo Do Team and traveled to the International Tang Soo Do Championship in Atlantic City, New Jersey. His efforts contributed to the team's victory. At this time, he decided to make the United States his permanent residence and took the needed steps to move to Southern California.



TOP: A young black belt Pak at age 15. **LEFT:** Pak performing a snake form. **RIGHT:** A proud Pak after winning his first Grand Championship trophy.

Ho Sik Pak's ROAD TO GRANDMASTER

Coming to America

Ho Sik Pak's move to Southern California was strategically motivated. He had a dream: to become a martial art film star. He was soon noticed by Hollywood producers and landed jobs on TV commercials and in films, including *Best of the Best* and *Hunt to Kill*.

Sabumnim Pak

Even with his fledgling film career on the rise, he knew that his heart was in teaching. In 1988, he opened his first dojang in Canoga Park, California. The number of students quickly grew and he soon was teaching in two locations. In 1994, he founded the Hwa Rang World Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan Federation.

Eighth-dan promotion at Battle of LA National Martial Arts Championship in Woodland Hills, CA, July 19, 2003. (BattleofLA.com)



Over 8000 people attended the 29th Martial Arts World Championship in Columbus, Ohio, March 6, 2004.



Sr. Grandmaster Joon P. Choi awarded Grm. Pak with a certificate for 'Outstanding Leadership in Tang Soo Do', March 6, 2004

Grm. Pak and Ursula Escher (High Mountain Publishing) receiving a gift from a Korean monk from the United Nations



Grm. Pak performing a self-defense demo against three people



World Champions Matthew Mullins, Ursula Escher and Jonathan Boyd

Bestseller: Complete Tang Soo Do Manual

While nobody can be at two places at the same time, Grandmaster Pak found a way to expend his knowledge to all Tang Soo Do stylists and future generations. His beautiful hardcover book was published in 2002. It is currently a bestseller at Amazon.com and B&N.com. This book is the first in a series of three volumes. In 2003, he also published another successful book written and designed just for children, entitled *Self-Defense for Kids*.



During his eighth-dan promotion, Grm. Pak invited everyone to the stage and taught them a Healing Form he created

Achieving Eighth-Dan

Grandmaster Pak celebrated his eighth dan promotion at the Battle of LA, a National Martial Arts Championship, in Woodland Hills, California. During the ceremony, he taught all the competitors and spectators a traditional healing form that he created. He also performed his eighth dan form, Jion Hyung. A special guest from New Zealand, Great Grandmaster Lee Pal Yong, presented him with a golden plaque, two large commemorative-plates and his certification.

Grandmasters, masters and martial arts legends



Grm. Pak and film star Michael Pasquale, Jr.



Long-time friends Bill Wallace and Fumio Demura

Grandmaster Ho Sik Pak and Joe Lewis



Shannon Lee, the daughter of Bruce Lee

Ho Sik Pak's ROAD TO GRANDMASTER

RIGHT: Scene from *Best of the Best*
BELOW: With friends from
the movie *Best of the Best*



The Future of the Martial Arts

What does Grandmaster Pak think about the new styles such as Extreme Martial Arts and others that incorporate acrobatics and aerobics? His answer is simple. "While many new styles come and go, our centuries old traditions always stay. Traditional martial arts are the foundation and will always be here."

Setting goals

Grandmaster Pak has always been a very humble person. He loves his art. He doesn't



With student
and televi-
sion star John
Ratzenberger



ABOVE: In
Korea with
founder of
Tang Soo Do
Moo Duk Kwan
Grandmaster
Hwang Kee
LEFT: With
Chuck Norris
and Grm. Hee
Il Cho



Legends of Tang Soo Do. Grandmaster Hwang
Kee sitting, and Grm. C. S. Kim (second from right)



Shihan Hidy Ochiai,
Master Pak and
Steven Seagal

have hundreds of studios or thousands of members. As a perfectionist, he says: "How can one have 100 studios and give enough deserved attention to each master?" His growing Federation is very successful with presently ten studios under him, so every master receives personal guidance. His dedication and ambition has brought him far, but he still has much more to conquer. He now plans on expanding his Federation and reaching new horizons.

A 'Great Warrior'

Ho Sik Pak is a very dedicated man with a great heart and passion for what he does. When asked what he would do if he were not teaching Tang Soo Do, he stopped to think for a second and replied: "Humm, I don't know what else can I do?"

Well, he has a great many abilities and has done much in his lifetime. He has taught hundreds of children, adults, families, and even military personnel. He has made a positive impact on the community, especially in children, who gain confidence, self-control and so much more from his traditional martial art instruction. In 2003, Grandmaster Pak was recognized nationally for his expertise, outstanding achievements and contributions in his local community as well as nationally, by becoming officially listed in the *Kingston National Register of Who's Who*.

"Even if I'm old I still want to be able to demonstrate a jump spinning hook kick! Then if I can do it, you can do it too!" Says Grandmaster Ho Sik Pak.

Ultimate Words

Grandmater Pak closes with these words of wisdom: "If you lose money in life, you lost about 25-percent of your life. If you lose a family member, you lost about 50-percent. However, if you lose your health, you have lost everything. Please stay in Pyung Ahn (peace) and have a healthy life."



Q&A

When did you know that you wanted to be a master?

My master's teaching influenced me a lot: His quality of teaching, control of technique, and the way of his life and passion. And I also dreamed of being a movie star.

Why were you such a consistent winner in so many forms competitions?

As a traditional martial artist, my forms were strong and well balanced. In America, however, the open tournament forms were a different challenge. The American audience did not understand the

accuracy and power in the technique that can knock out somebody. They only understood acrobatic and flashy moves. I had to change my style by adding speed and gymnastics, like aerial cartwheels and back flips, while maintaining great power and accuracy. I trained myself to be graceful and artistic. Tang Soo Do forms are works of art and have great beauty. I won grand championship awards continually.

What are the differences in teaching various ages?

I love to teach: it's like planting a seed that grows. I see changes physically, emotionally and mentally in all my students. Children have to have fun while learning. I teach martial arts through games and exaggerated performances of what is right and wrong. Everything must be explained and make sense for them. Teenagers need to gain concentration and focus. I teach them about life, making the right choices, and to always fight for justice. When training adults, I explain technique more scientifically and focus on power and speed. Many are lost at the start, but later gain focus and guide themselves to healthier lives. Elders always seek physical health and I have a morning class focused on breathing, stretching and healing forms.

What does it take to become a grandmaster?

Grandmaster Hwang Kee and my master were

Ho Sik Pak's Road to Grandmaster

role models. You can have guidelines but you must do it yourself. As I always say: nobody will do it for you. The will must come from your heart. You have to fight against yourself, against laziness, the give-up point. You must take the right road and take only one road; mine is Tang Soo Do. One road is the key to get there. I trained in boxing, kickboxing, Korean wrestling, Yudo, and others. That way I see what I'm against. You must know the opponent so you can defeat them. At the end is my technique; there is Tang Soo Do all the way!

Quick Q&A

Years of training/teaching:

37 years, from 1967 through 2004

Most proud of:

Seeing people change their way of living.

Biggest challenge:

Overcoming the language barrier at the beginning of my career in the U. S.

Happiest Time:

Every time someone says: Kamsahanmida (thank you) after class with a big smile, and Tang Soo!

Biggest Injury:

Broken and ripped toes during class

Biggest responsibility:

Staying physically young and healthy so I can perform the techniques

How many classes a week do you teach?

I average four classes a day, 24 a week. The most classes I ever taught was 13 in one day.

Greatest names:

Hwang Kee, Jhoon Rhee, Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Jet Li,

Your Tang Soo Do lineage:

Grandmaster Pak Ho Sik
Grandmaster Lee Pal Young
Grandmaster Hong Jong Soo
Grandmaster Hwang Kee
Grand Master Yang Ku Chin

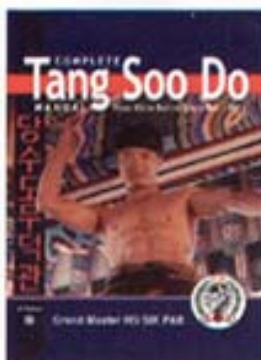
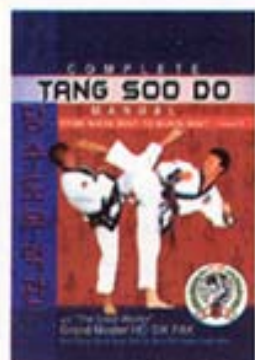
You can learn more about Grandmaster Pak and see hundreds of pictures at his award winning website at www.greatwarriorpak.com



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ursula Escher is a second-degree black belt in Tang Soo Do and Tae Kwon Do. She is a professional character animator for 3-D games and TV and has designed and choreographed martial arts for several characters. Additionally, she is the president of High Mountain Publishing (books: 'Self-Defense for Kids' and 'Complete Tang Soo Do Manual'). She is also an instructor at Grandmaster Pak's headquarter school. Her website is www.uescher.com

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Tape 1: 9 th Gup	Tape 5: 5 th Gup	Tape 9: 1 st Dan	Tape 13: 4 th Dan
Tape 2: 8 th Gup	Tape 6: 4 th Gup	Tape 10: 1 st Dan	Tape 14: 5 th Dan
Tape 3: 7 th Gup	Tape 7: 3 rd Gup	Tape 11: 2 nd Dan	Tape 15: 6 th Dan
Tape 4: 6 th Gup	Tape 8: 2 nd Gup	Tape 12: 3 rd Dan	

Tape 16: Self Defense Techniques, 9th Gup to 1st Dan
Tape 17: One Step Sparring, 1-18, 9th Gup to 1st Dan
Tape 18: Weapon Techniques (Nunchu Ki, Long Stick)
Tape 19: Hwa Rang Competition Forms 1, 2, 3. For Gups
Tape 20: High Mountain Competition Forms 1, 2, 3. For Dans



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