

A BRIEF INTERVIEW WITH

T.K.D. : How do you like England?

H.E.K : Very nice, but a little cold! I have taken the English students for the first time today and I am very impressed. When the Tiger Gym is strong in Great Britain, it is my hope to come over here and teach full time.

T.K.D. : Why and when did you begin training in Tang Soo Do?

H.E.K : I was 13 at the time and I began to learn because people were very violent. It was just after

the Korean civil war and I was the son of a rich family, so I was bullied a lot. My parents sent me to learn Tang Soo Do for self defence.

T.K.D. : What was training like then?

H.E.K : It was much harder then than it is now. All over the world Tang Soo Do is easier now than back then. The punishment which I received in Korea was very bad indeed but it made us better martial artists. I don't think people would put up with the training we did back then, but it was compulsory and we didn't have to pay.

There were a lot of challenges in those days. All the instructors were paid by the government and they competed between themselves for financial benefits, prestige and honour. So I'd go to a club and challenge their instructor and they would come and challenge me! Sometimes I won, other times I lost but I always learned a great many new techniques during these fights!

It was difficult for a new tang soo do instructor to set up in a town. He needed to do something to impress the locals, and get the permission of the town's officials.

Interview and photographs by P Andrews



Grandmaster Han Eung Kyo
The Tiger

My instructor, Park Young Chin, would go to the market and people would place bets on whether he could kill a cow with one punch. Money would be pledged to the owner so he could buy a new cow. I saw him punch the cow on the head and it died. So he was OK to open up in the town!

T.K.D. : Did you practise martial art in the Korean military?

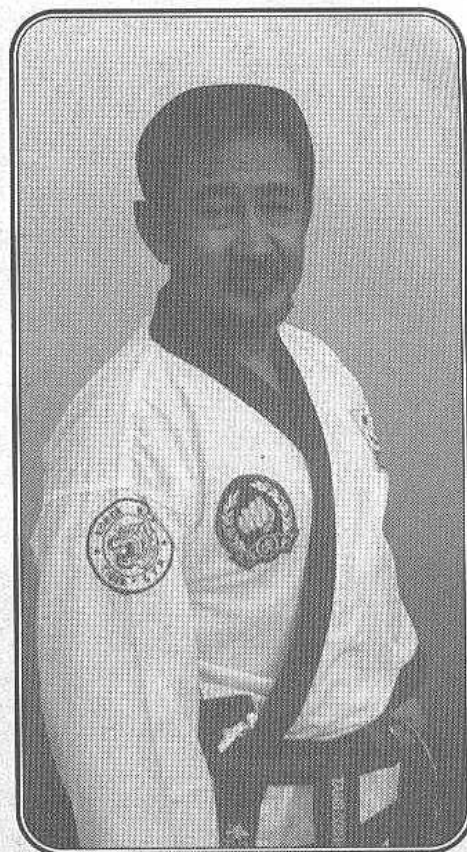
H.E.K : In 1964 I taught the Korean Army's White Horse Division which later fought in the Vietnam war. They had to learn the art as part of their training, including the forms.

T.K.D. : What is the significance of the Tiger within your association?

H.E.K : When I was about to start a gym in 1969, I went to Grandmaster Hwang Kee to ask him for a name for the gym. He told me to call it Tiger Gym because of the way I fought and taught. Now I teach full time and have a large number of clubs and around 6,000 members, all under the Tiger Gym. We are growing all the time!

T.K.D. : What is your view of taekwondo as an Olympic sport?

H.E.K : It uses very simple techniques and they are only allowed to kick and punch in a certain way. There are no throwing or locks which is a disadvantage if you are practising a martial art such as ours. I encourage my students to enter taekwondo competitions



because it's good to test your art against others. But personally I prefer a reduced contact type of fighting.

T.K.D. : Have you noticed any changes to the way Tang Soo Do forms and techniques are taught since the day you began?

H.E.K : No, it is exactly the same. The forms and every technique are taught as I was taught.

T.K.D. : What are your hopes for Tiger Gym Tang Soo Do?

H.E.K : I want to do everything I can to develop Tiger Gym Tang Soo Do over here and in Europe. We have made a good start and will move forward from here!

If you wish to train with a group which does not become involved in politics of any nature, then phone Brian Edmondson on 0181 771 8329.

Tiger Gym Tang Soo Do clubs train at the following venues and times:

Stanley Technical High School,
South Norwood Hill,
SE London:

Mon/Wed/Fri from 7.15-8.45pm

Arncott near Oxford:

Thur 6.30pm

Bicester near Oxford,

Southwolds Community Hall:

Sun 6.30-8.00pm

