

# *Tang Soo Do* *interview with* **GrandMaster** **M.K. Loke**

*Part Two*

Tang Soo Do practitioners appreciate that hyungs represent the tradition, technical content and student progression within the school syllabus. In this months column GrandMaster Loke sets out his reasoning for the selection of hyungs he teaches as well as those he left out. GM Loke was Secretary General and Technical Director of the UKTSDF for very many years. This interview therefore provided the perfect opportunity to discuss many historical and technical matters.

*KJN Hwang Kee states that the application of hyungs, for example Seishan, are based on the Sip Sam Seh. However, the 13 influences were never mentioned in all my years training with the UKTSDF. What is your opinion of this concept? Do you incorporate it into your own teaching?*

**GM LOKE:** Sip Sam Seh or 13 influences refers to an ancient Chinese Daoist religious geomancy called Wu Hing 5 elements and Pa Gua 8 cardinal points, widely adopted by Korea and Japan when they absorbed Chinese culture...the Koreans even displayed these 13 influences on their national flag. This concept is still widely used in Oriental culture and daily life i.e. fortune telling, Fung Hsui, naming of new born child, etc. I do not think it is relevant in martial art forms or techniques, one would only be shrouding the art in some form of oriental mystique, rather than addressing the fundamental points or progression that is needed to enhance the knowledge and practicality a senior student or instructor requires. Readers should take a closer look at all their forms including the recent Chil Sung and ask "what technical value they can glean from each form?" In my opinion, the Karate derived Moo Duk Kwan forms and the Chil Sung forms (which show much similarity to Chinese long hands Chang Chuan) have the same basic technical value i.e. consecutive block/counter actions. Apart from this I can only say that these forms are also a set of exercises that can improve your posture, aerobic capacity, flexibility, speed and power in the general sense. I can carry on much more on this but will ask readers to question, analyse, explore, create, re invent, if necessary, given their many years of hard training and dedication. No martial system or modern military tech-

nique can afford to stagnate if it hopes to survive as a valid and effective form of self defence.

*You mention the Chil Sung (7 Star) forms which were first introduced in the mid 1980's by KJN Hwang Kee and his son GrandMaster H.C. Hwang. It is clear they contain many Tai Chi movements and as such may be interpreted using the 8 energies and 5 elements. According to my understanding this incorporates many of the strategies you have introduced into your own school such as yielding, redirecting, destabilising and countering from a position of strength. There has evidently been a loss of transmission of these*





*important principles within the Moo Duk Kwan in the UK. Why do you think this is ?*

**GM LOKE:** The Chil Sung forms contain some moves that appear to be similar to Tai Chi. From the mid eighties the UK Moo Duk Kwan fell out of step with development in the Moo Duk Kwan HQ in the US. From 1985 KJN Hwang Kee and his son Grandmaster Hwang Hyun Chul ( alias Jin Mun) made a conscious decision to assert the usage of Soo Bahk Do over Tang Soo Do with the introduction of the new Chil Sung forms. As proud Korean martial artists, it is perfectly understandable that they are attempting a complete break from their past Japanese Karate linage. This is solely a father and son joint development and personal style, without the involvement of other senior Korean instructors. They then personally introduced the new forms to the UK and their overseas affiliates. Technically, Hwang Hyun Chul is sharper, smoother and generally more impressive in comparison to the senior Korean Instructors that I have come across. He has been very successful in establishing a strong base in the US.

*I wonder why you did not persevere with these forms ? The technical content of the Chil Sung and Yuk Ro hyungs incorporate elements of several Chinese martial styles such as Tan Tui, So Ho Yun and Tai Chi Chuan which I would have thought may appeal to you. Also, the Yuk Ro contain sequences interpreted from the oldest surviving military manual in Korea which GrandMaster Hwang Kee discovered in 1957.*

**GM LOKE:** I have absolutely no need to retain the Chil Sung or Yuk Ro forms. They are largely the creation of KJN Hwang Kee and successor H.C Hwang, not mine, so I cannot teach them with any sincerity or meaning. Regarding the Moo Yei DoBo Tong Ji text I want readers to be clear that this is not a Korean text, but a 16th Century Chinese Ming Military Manual. It is 100 per cent Chinese. In this manual there is a relatively small section of empty hand named CHUEN FA 'Fist method' (Kwon

Bop in Korean) which you see copied in several Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan books of today including those of KJN Hwang Kee. This Chuen Fa section is a set of exercises for Chinese troops to exercise or increase fitness and cannot be relied upon to contain core techniques of any one of the hundreds of Shao Lin styles that existed in the past or today. I would agree, however, that this 16th Century Ming Chinese Military Manual has contributed to the creation of today's Soo Bahk Do Moo Duk Kwan. We must credit this interpretation and wider creation of modern Soo Bahk Do to the vast effort of the late KJN Hwang Kee and his son (and rightful successor) Grandmaster Hwang Hyun Chul.

*Do you teach Personal Protection by interpreting the hyungs or do you have a separate unrelated catalogue of self defence scenarios ? Which hyungs did you retain in your syllabus and what innovations have you made ?*

**GM LOKE:** The answer to the first part is both. Forms 'THAU in Chinese' must have self defence applications apart from other benefits. In my opinion the Moo Duk Kwan forms and its Japanese predecessor are too simple with limited self defence applications and value. I have retained the general pattern of the "Pin an" forms and two of the black belt forms but injected a wider variety of techniques and applications, increased flow and compactness in line with my original Chinese influence and my personal style. This stage will suffice up to 1st degree Black Belt. I would have liked to be able to change the pattern completely but I felt this would be too daunting for much of the 700 students in 1993 when I went independent. In 1997 I changed Tang Soo Do back to its rightful origin name in Chinese Tang Sou Dao and named the school Ren Yi Wu Kwan (meaning explained in website development history). Further duan forms are completely new including a challenging Kicking Thau/form. My development is still ongoing and I hope future generations will be able to develop further!

*Sir, it is interesting that you have continued with the Pyung Ahn hyungs albeit with certain advancements. Can you give us some indication of what additional elements you have introduced ? Which Chinese aspects of Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan have you found most useful, for example; Tai Chi Chuan, Spring Leg, Shaolin Long Fist, etc and I would like to know which 2 "black belt" forms you retained and why ? Also, I am not familiar with the Luohan forms, would you kindly divulge the source and explain what additional benefits they bring to Tang Sou Dao ?*

**GM LOKE:** As mentioned I kept the 'basic pattern' of the five "Pin an" forms and two black belt forms (Passai and Chinto). Elements of Southern White Crane and Praying Mantis are injected to create more flow and meaning. Originally the Okinawans modified these forms learnt from the Fujian Chinese. Passai and Chinto were renamed Luohan One and Three. A further newly created three Luohan forms are added to the Duan Syllabus. Personally I favour the Southern Chinese emphasis of short range power delivery in blocks /attacks particularly in a thrusting and circular movement as opposed to wide angular movements. Techniques may be delivered from a 'hands down' natural position in tandem with tactical





stances that can be shorter and more mobile. The centre line principle is all important in both attack and defence, by blocking towards the centre line you can close off your opponent so that his follow up is momentarily jammed. Core and advanced techniques have to be looked at closely especially kicking techniques analysed for power and penetration, not just for show or point scoring. I also introduced an advanced kicking form ' Yi Cheang Ti Thau' which includes slow kicking to improve balance/muscle tone, full hip power ' held out ' thrust kicks and retrieval for advanced skill, ground sweeping kicks, combinations, etc. I feel very comfortable in teaching these forms, with renewed enthusiasm simply because I largely created them. Technical union is crucial in preserving a strong martial art family. The 'Wu Dao' martial art Way is a continuous unending learning curve ! I do not claim to teach any ancient art or manual, but I give great respect to my late Chinese Instructor Master Lim Cheng Hock from Penang, Malaysia who taught me his own style and encouraged me to think and analyse. Master Lim is my martial art lineage. On the other hand, the Moo Duk Kwan provided me ( and my childhood friend Grandmaster Hock Lye Ooi ) the avenue to establish our martial career in our youth. Many in the UK will remember Grandmaster Ooi ( now teaching in Toronto ) who trained many superb fighters from his London clubs in the seventies and eighties. Congratulations to all those who have managed to put organisation politics/market pressures aside and found their own Way forward.

*Do you feel you have completed the circle ? How much further do you feel your Ryu Pa has to go ? What are your aspirations for the future ?*

**GM LOKE:** Yes, completed the circle in bringing my development back to its Chinese origins in name and in its core techniques. The Ren Yi Wu Kwan is also very much Sino-Malaysian-British development. At 57, I have lived and taught in Britain for 36 years, I have also learned much from teaching my students and admired the British tradition of tolerance, sense of fair play, sincere long lasting friendships and great sense of humour ! I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all my students for their dedication, patience and hard work in travelling along this long road with me. Our way forward is unending and I hope that I will personally be able to maintain the spirit and passion to further progress our Ren Yi Wu Kwan in the many years to come, building an even stronger foundation. Last but not least of all, my best wishes to everyone that I have worked or practiced with in the past and perhaps we will be able to meet again to share happy memories. Politics aside, I hope that many of you share the same vision and objectives as I do.

*GrandMaster Loke thank you for the benefit of your experience and a most thought provoking interview. Combat readers and I am sure many potential students will now have a clearer picture of the progressions you have made.*

Yours in Tang Soo !

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