



Tang Soo Times

Pal Che Tang Soo Do

610-522-9120
229 South Chester Pike
Glenolden, PA 19036

April 2007

Issue No. 188

Calendar of Events

Monday April 16	Black Belt Class - No Gup Classes
Saturday April 21	Black Belt Test (School Closed)
Sunday April 22	Community Service Event – Earth Day Clean up Glenolden Park Time TBD
Friday April 27	Gup Test
Saturday May 12 th	Central Pa Championship (School Closed)
Saturday May 19 th	Family Picnic
Fri. – Sun. June 1-3	Adult Black Belt Clinic
Fri. – Sun. June 8-10	Youth Black Belt Clinic

Birthdays

John Alesi	9 th
Ellie Francis	10 th
Nick D'Amato	26 th
Chris Imbrogno	30 th



Master's Corner

Master Raver
April 2007

What Condition are You In?

Whenever someone finds out I have a Master Instructor ranking in karate, I usually get hit with several inane questions such as, "How long does it take to make Black Belt?" "Do I break boards?" "What would happen if we got into a fight?" No one ever asks, "What is it like to follow the Martial Way?" "What kind of qualities does one have to possess to follow the Path?" If someone were to ask you this type of question, how would you respond? One such answer could be Moral Stamina.

The type of martial art created by Jigaro Kano (judo), Morihei Uyeshiba (aikido), and Hwang Kee (Tang Soo Do) – these founders of each system made it clear that development of character is a fundamental reason for the pursuit of the Way.

So, how do you obtain this Moral Stamina? Think about the ranking Black Belt who gripes about the organization because he's been passed over for promotion, has seen others go past him in rank. He resigns and then claims the rank. Perhaps you want to slack off in your training or show-off a bit in class. That big eyed, cute brown belt who idolizes you, it would be very easy to take advantage of her. It is this erosion of our search for the Way when you give in to lust, greed, or laziness. It is these moments when your Moral Stamina is tested.

The Martial Way is a Path of self realization. It can be steep, dimly lit, treacherous, and sometimes it even cycles back on itself. Black Belts must set the example for lower ranking students. We should be the shining example, not someone who has stopped along the journey and are now a hindrance or roadblock for others.

Submitted Article
By John Alesi

The Wild Thing

"Ego," The number one (#1) killer of Black Belts. Now that our school is flourishing with black belts and with April testing cycle coming up, our school Pal Che will most likely have an additional even more black belts. You know the old saying "**Too many Chiefs, not enough Indians.**" I have read many martial art books and I would have to say that almost half of the books I read have dedicated at least one or two chapters on Ego. It can make or break a black belt; whether it is in a fight in the ring, on the street or just training in the dojang. It's time for us all to check and balance.

I recently saw an interview with Mitch Williams, the former relief

and closing pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies from 1991-1993 who actually led the Phils into the 1993 World Series. Although I would like to forget about that World Series, I found what he said extremely interesting and in fact true from my experience in life. He said "The number one reason why he was a successful closing pitcher was because in the late innings of the game (8th & 9th in particular) hitters **ego** would interfere and they would try to win the game with one swing of the bat, rather than work the pitching count and wait for their pitch." Mitch Williams also stated that he could never be a successful mid-relief pitcher (4-7inning) because hitters in that part of the game usually work the pitcher's count and are more particular on what pitch to swing at; but when the game was on the line, he knew what batter was going to swing for the fence and try to win the game. In fact he even stated that he won/saved most his games by throwing balls and not strikes because the batter's ego got in the way.

As black belts, let's not forget the lineage that has been passed on to us and its origin. Two thousand plus years ago the structure and checks and balances of the martial arts began and still exist today. Please keep in mind as black belts and soon to be black belts that as we all strive to better ourselves, please do not let our **egos** be the beginning

Submitted Article
By Bill Aldridge

This martial journey upon which we've all embarked is special, and of that there can be no question. But how and why it is so special is a matter that can be (and often is) debated. When I first considered this debate, it occurred to me that my place in it changed far too frequently for me to come to any lasting conclusions about why the martial arts are so special, so different. Of course the physicality of Tang Soo Do, the kicks and punches, etc. are very different from the movements of sports. But physicality aside, I have always sensed an underlying philosophical principle that seemed to be embodied in the work Pal Che students do every night.

I first noticed this around the time I was promoted to orange belt. It became very important to me to figure out what it was that I sensed was so present, but more so it was important to me to figure out exactly what to do with the knowledge once I had it. It seemed a fundamental thing, and the logical 'next step,' but still it eluded me for quite some time. It took years to simply figure out what it was that was present. But when I did finally make my discovery, the years of Master Centrone's stern lectures about the importance of coming to class and admonishments for my sporadic and infrequent attendance became very clear.

As I said earlier, it was an evasive yet simple truth. I discovered it while asking myself why I was at class. And I found it when I asked myself why I would come back again. At first the answer was simple,

and shallow. I came to class to learn to fight. I would come back to learn self defense and stay in shape. Quite simply, I was at class and would come back again because I enjoyed my time there.

There was no wrong in those responses, and there is no shame in feeling those things at any rank. I still come to class for those reasons, as I'm sure many of our teachers do. But while those things bring people through the doors at Pal Che, as they did for me, those are not the things for which a person stays. Those are not the things for which a person sacrifices his or her time to become a master.

I have found that the intrinsic value of our art lies in the development of character through the intense physical suffering we endure during training, and it is for this above all else that a person stays once they have learned how to kick and punch effectively. Put more simply, in a way that will stir a rueful yet happy memory for most, the value of our training is found on those 100 degree nights when thirty people come to class and train to the point of dehydration, those appropriately titled, '8 pound nights.'

Our art, its perfection, is found in the rare and beautiful moment during a kick drill, when you feel you simply have nothing more inside to give, and everyone else has finished their kicks but you still have five more to do. And the class turns to look at you while you finish, they see the pain written on your face as plainly as if it were bold text scrawled across your forehead. You look at the target holder, a black belt, and you see them sweating, suffering, silently aching for you to find just a little more, to give that last little bit. You are unsure if you can continue. You can't recall a time when you have been more tired, when the pain has been greater...and you consider quitting, bowing out. You know that everybody would understand and realize that you just weren't there yet. You come to that point, the quitting point, and you see it as clearly as you would a chalk line drawn on the floor. You're about to cross it and then something incredible happens...people begin to yell for you. They shout your name, yell encouragement, and look as if they are actually trying to force the energy from their bodies to yours. You hear it and you feel it...you really feel it. It stirs something within you that unlocks that last bit of energy that had been hiding the entire time, and you explode toward the target for those final five assaults.

It is in those moments, in the decisions we make in those moments that we learn who we are, and it took me a very long time to realize that. But I also learned, more importantly, that the acting of changing, improving our discipline and character, is not a function of that special moment. The act of changing ourselves for the better lies in our courage and willingness to bring ourselves to that point of indescribable agony consistently and consciously. As Masters Centrone and Melchiorre so often say, "You should train as if your life depended on it."

I realize that this path to suffering is a difficult and frightening pursuit, but if you've ever walked through those doors with the feeling that something in your life was just a bit off and a difficult training session made that feeling go away, however temporarily, then you already know that the suffering is the only reason you come to class. So remember this on the nights when you don't feel like showing up, and remember this on the nights that you do. Take Mr. Holst's advice and 'push yourself beyond your comfort zone.' Suffer as beautifully as you possibly can. I assure you, verily, that for it you will be a better person.

Submitted Article
By John Krupinski

If you think you are really good at Sae Kye Hyung Il Bu, and that you no longer need to practice it, then try this...

Make an X in the ground at your feet where you start and then blind fold yourself. Do the form and the look and see where you end up. You should be at the EXACT spot on that X. If you are not, you are not doing the form correctly. It means that your stances are incorrect and you have a lot to work on. You should be able to this on every form you are learned. Once you have done that it is time to work on your timing. Each one has a time span that it should be done in. This assures the flow and speed of the form. It should not be how fast you can do your forms but rather how graceful they are done.

The next thing to work on is your power of each technique. Every movement should flow soft and freely until the movement of impact at which time the block, kick, or punch should land with power. Then, as soon as the technique is done, you go back to soft and flowing again.

Forms are part of your foundation of martial arts. In the beginning you are doing the most basic single block and kick techniques. As you rise in rank, the forms become more complex with multiple blocks, kicks, and stances. They become more complex because your power and ability should be blooming and growing with each class. You should

be able to do the basics without think and through using the art of mu shim (empty mind). If you have worked hard, practiced diligently, and built a foundation, it becomes like breathing. It just happens. You don't need to think, "I need to breath." It just happens. This is what you are striving for not only in your forms but in all your movements whether they are offensive or defensive.

Thought for the Month

"I fear not the man who has practiced 10,000 kicks once, but I fear the man who has practiced one kick 10,000 times."

- Bruce Lee

KIDS SECTION

What is a Black Belt?

By Cody Kunze

Contribution: "A black belt volunteers their help. He should aid in all Tang Soo Do activities, and devote his knowledge to the improvements of human welfare." This quote was taken directly from the Black Belt Manual. This means that as a black belt, one should help the instructors and the studio whenever needed. You can accomplish this by teaching younger students or lower ranks. You can also help in keeping the dojang clean. Another way to contribute to your dojang is by helping to set up and clean up for GUP tests and performing any tasks requested by your instructors or fellow black belts. Being a black belt is much more than just attending class.

It's also important for black belts to give back to their community. There are many ways to do this. Last fall, my school Student Council group made sandwiches that were distributed to the homeless. I've also started to volunteer for the Special Olympics at their Ridley High School weekly swim event. This will help me train for the Special Olympics at Villanova University in the fall.

If you don't have the time to get involved with a volunteer group, contribution can be as simple as helping a neighbor with yard work or shoveling snow; or picking something up at the store for them. It can be collecting toys for underprivileged kids, or participating in a canned food drive. There are many ways to give back to society – large and small – and ALL make a difference.

From my experience, volunteering with the Special Olympics makes me feel energized and happy. I feel fulfilled when I help an athlete achieve something. If you think you don't have the time to volunteer, try making the time...you'll be rewarded more than you can imagine.

Next months Kids Section will feature an article written by:
Nick D'Amato

If you have any difficulty thinking of a topic, there is an envelope in the office with writing subjects. Thank you.

