

# T A N G S O O T I M E S

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P A L C H E T A N G S O O D O

229 SOUTH CHESTER PIKE

GLENOLDEN, PA 19036

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Aug 16 - Gup test at Dojang. No adult class.  
Sep 4 - Labor Day weekend. No class.  
Sep 6 - Labor Day. No classes.  
Sep 18 - Black Belt test. No class.

## MONDAY NIGHT CLASS SCHEDULE

Aug 2 - Sparring class. All ranks welcome.  
Aug 9 - Regular adult class.  
Aug 16 - Gup test at Dojang. No adult class.  
Aug 23 - Breaking class. All ranks welcome.  
Aug 30 - Regular adult class.

## MASTER'S CORNER

If you are weight lifting, it is good to do pulling movements as well as pushing movements. If you are a musician, it is good to sing the notes as well as play them on your instrument.

If you are an artist, sketching is as valuable as painting. If you are a boxer, dodging has as much tactical usefulness as striking. If you are a doctor, diagnosis is as critical as treatment. If you are introspective, it is still beneficial to spend time with others. If you are extroverted, it is still helpful to spend time alone.

Those who follow the **WAY** understand that combining methods, rather than isolating them, yields the greatest results. It is not that we will never specialize. But, whatever discipline we enter, we must make sure to survey the whole of it. Each technique we learn will then fit into the next one, until we amass a contiguous set of methods. By combining, we compound learning to extraordinary dimensions.

## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2000 World Championships will be held in Anaheim, California, at the Anaheim Convention Center. The dates are August 10 - 13, 2000. There are many theme parks in this area and it will make a good place to go for a family vacation. More details will be forthcoming as plans are made by the WTSDA.

## NEW STUDENT

We would like to welcome the following new student to our Dojang and to the worldwide family of Tang Soo Do:

TIFFANY MURRAY

Train often and train hard. You are on the steep portion of the classic learning curve and every class should reveal something new and exciting to you. If you ever have any questions, do not hesitate to ask a senior student.

## FOR YOUR INFORMATION

How did the Five Codes of Tang Soo Do originate? Two Hwa Rang warriors, Kwi San and Chu Hwang, wanted to seek Won Kwang's advice on how to purify their minds and regulate their conduct. Won Kwang was a renowned Buddhist priest in Silla. Both warriors felt that Won Kwang's advice was necessary to teach them the proper conduct and mental attitude so that they would not offend higher nobles and officials. They finally called on the venerable priest, Won Kwang, and begged him to offer them some precious words which would be their lifetime commandments. His response: first - loyalty to your emperor; second - filial piety; third - honor friendship; fourth - no retreat in battle; and fifth - in killing, choose with sense and honor. They were told to carry them out without neglect.

Thereafter, both Kwi San and Chu Hwang carefully followed the teachings of Won Kwang. When a large number of Paekche troops invaded Silla, Kwi San and Chu Hwang joined the battle under the leadership of General Muun, the father of Kwi San. In mid-battle General Muun ran into an ambush and fell from his horse. Kwi San rushed to his father's rescue killing a great number of the pursuing enemy, and crying out to his followers, "Now is the time to follow the commandment to not retreat in battle." Then Kwi San gave his horse to his father and fought courageously beside his friend, Chu Hwang. Finally, both Kwi San and Chu Hwang perished on the battlefield "...bleeding from a thousand wounds."

## FEATURE ARTICLE

In a recent class I mentioned the **TRUE** story of the 47 Faithful Ronin of Ako. I was surprised that quite a few senior members of the dojang had never heard this story. We had run this story in the March 1997 Newsletter. This story provides a classic example of how loyalty, revenge, and suicide factor into the Japanese cultural interpretation of warrior honor.

This episode involves a chain of events that began in Edo (now Tokyo) during the Tokugawa Shogunate. The year was 1701 and Tokugawa Tsunayoshi who ensured the loyalty of the warlords by requiring them to maintain residences for their families in Edo

and to spend every other year in the capital themselves ruled Japan. Basically, the warlords were held hostage.

Asano Takumi no Kami was one warlord of the rural province of Ako. He was a warrior in the truest sense. Unfortunately, he was young and impetuous, and his crude, martial manner didn't set well with the genteel sycophants who cluttered the Shogun's court. When one of them insulted him, Asano drew his sword and attacked.

Asano only managed to wound his enemy, Kira Kotzuke no Suke, but it was enough to cost him his life, for drawing a sword at court was a capital offense. For his lack of restraint, the shogun ordered Lord Asano to commit seppuku. Asano was an obedient vassal, and he ended his life later that day.

This suddenly left Asano's retainers, his samurai, with two problems. First, they were without their master and unemployed. This was a bad situation, for under Tokugawa rule there had been peace for one hundred years, and ronin had little chance of finding work. But more seriously, since their master had been condemned for breaking the Shogun's law, all his retainers were honor-bound to follow him in seppuku. Most of them were ready to do this, for they were men of honor. But when they learned of how their lord had been duped by Lord Kira, they knew they couldn't end their lives before taking care of business.

All samurai were trained in the principle that a man should not live under the same heaven with the murderer of his leader-lord-father. Of course, seppuku would have removed them, but the ronin of Ako saw their obligation in this situation as something more than merely to join their master in death. They concluded they had a solemn duty to avenge the death of their lord.

This would be no easy mission. All of Edo suspected the ronin would attempt some sort of attack, and Kira was under the shogun's protection. In addition, Kira had a large security force as well. So, meeting in secret, the men of Ako decided to play out a ruse until they convinced the eyes and ears of Edo they weren't a threat.

For the next two years, the 47 ronin of Ako went their separate ways. To the loathing amazement of Edo society, the men didn't attempt any revenge or even honor their fallen master in seppuku. They walked in disgrace, many taking up various non-warrior occupations. Some even left their families and became womanizers and drunks. In the eyes of the shogun and all others, these men had no honor and no face.

It was all an act!

By 1703 attention had shifted away from the degenerate ronin from Ako. So late one December night, the 47 faithful ronin gathered one last time, then departed in a snowstorm for Kira's

mansion. They caught the compound completely unprepared. In a surprise assault followed by a short skirmish, they killed Lord Kira and everyone in the household. Then, they took Lord Kira's head, washed it in a well, and placed it as an offering on Lord Asano's grave.

That morning the 47 faithful ronin of Ako surrendered to the authorities. Following fretful discussions with his councilors, the shogun sentenced them to death but ruled that they would be permitted to perform seppuku and die as warriors rather than face execution as common criminals. Within days all 47 joined their lord and entered the annals of history as Japanese national heroes.

The story of the 47 ronin is a classic account of warrior revenge. It provides a sterling example of warrior honor in its truest form. These men saw through the fog of law and recognized justice. They courageously fulfilled their obligations, knowing full well their actions would lead to their own destruction. They bore no illusions about the difference between honor and face. They publicly humiliated themselves for two years hoping to get that one chance to fulfill their obligation. These were truly men of honor.

#### THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

**WE, THE RONIN SERVING ASANO TAKUMI NO KAMI, THIS NIGHT WILL BREAK INTO THE MANSION OF KIRA KOTZUKE NO SUKE TO AVENGE OUR MASTER. PLEASE BE ASSURED THAT WE ARE NEITHER ROBBERS NOR RUFFIANS AND NO HARM WILL BEFALL THE NEIGHBORING PROPERTY.**

(Placard the 47 ronin posted the night they avenged the death of their lord)

## **1999 UPCOMING EVENTS**

Oct 4 - Gup test at Dojang. No adult class.  
Oct 22-23 - Region 8 Championships. No class.  
Oct 25 - Gup test at Dojang. No adult class.

Nov 22 - Gup test at Dojang. No adult class.  
Nov 25 - Thanksgiving. No classes.  
Nov 27 - Thanksgiving weekend. No class.

Dec 25 - Christmas. No class.