



Tang Soo Times

Pal Che Tang Soo Do

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229 South Chester Pike
Glenolden, PA 19036

February 2006

Issue No. 175

Calendar of Events

February	24 th	Friday	Gup Test
February	17 th	Friday	Black Belt Class
February	18 th	Saturday	Western Region 8 Tourn.
March	18 th	Saturday	Western PA Judges Clinic
March	24 th	Friday	Gup Test / Pre Test II
April	21 st	Friday	Gup Test
April	22 nd	Saturday	Black Belt Test (No Class)
June	9 th - 10 th - 11 th		Youth Black Belt Clinic
June	16 th - 17 th - 18 th		Adult Clinic (Tentative)
July	7 th - 8 th - 9 th		World Championships Anaheim, California

Birthdays

Sonia Massodpartha	2
Ned Satchfield	10
Kim D'Angelo	40 (Oops the 15 th)
Danielle Radcliff	24

New Students: Liv Patton Bernie Ladem Tyler Wagner

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



Bulletin Board



With classes growing (Mostly Adult Students) The little space we do have in the Locker Rooms can no longer be used up with bags and equipment stored. Other items that must be removed are uniforms and belts. As of today, I would like all personal items removed from the locker rooms. If, by the close of class Saturday February 11th, there are items left behind, they will spend two weeks in lost and found before being tossed.

Master's Corner

July 1996

Chuck Norris has a new book out called, "The Secret Power Within," and I recommend you read it. In the book he speaks about his training at Osan Air Force Base in Korea under Grandmaster Shin. Specifically, the following is excerpted from the chapter entitled, "Stay With The Moment."

"After I earned my black belt in Korea, finally reaching a goal I had worked for, I began to slacken up a bit in practice sessions, sometimes going through the motions mechanically as my mind wandered between thoughts of the future and of my wife back home alone in the states, waiting for my return.

"I thought Master Jae Chul Shin, my teacher, would not notice. After all, I was making the right movements, performing each exercise in the prescribed manner. And I was but one student of many on the mat working out. But Master Shin saw immediately. He let me get away with this for a while perhaps it was his way of giving me a rest after my effort for the black belt but then after one session he took me aside.

"Your mind is not here," he said. I made no effort to deny that he was right; students of martial arts soon learn that their teachers can see right through them. Standing there on the hard ground of the work-out area in Korea, I just bowed my head slightly and waited for Master Shin to continue.

"What you are doing at the moment must be exactly what you are doing at the moment and nothing else," he said. "There is no control when the mind is absent. You must be one with yourself and with what you are doing. While doing something, you are doing it at the fullest. That is true Zen."

"What is Zen?" I asked. It was the first time I had heard the word, and, because Master Shin's English was so difficult to understand, I did not know what he meant until years later.

"It is the basic thing," he said.

"But I don't remember your teaching it to me."

"I didn't, but you will learn it," he said somewhat enigmatically.

"Although puzzled, I resolved to concentrate totally on what I was doing during the next workout, and I did. I had no thoughts of anything else, and when the session ended, Master Shin bowed, smiled, and said, "Ah, you are learning Zen.""

Submitted Article

By: **John Alesi**

The Black Belt level is a new mountain to climb and overcome, as we all know as martial artists. When a practitioner reaches the black belt rank or above; it is important to realize that at this level, the execution of kicks, punches and blocks becomes secondary to heart, endurance, indomitable spirit, and the willingness to override pain and discomfort, and the will to continue and overcome the opposition. Ninety-Nine percent of the time the opposition is yourself. We as black belts must learn to keep our emotions in check and be able to improvise and overcome any obstacles that get in our way both inside the dojang and out. Keep in mind that while you as black belts just had a maintenance / pre-test; the karate techniques were not as scrutinized as much as your heart, effort and spirit. At this level you are expected to execute good, crisp and strong techniques. Now the real challenge lies ahead of you. Are you ready?

Submitted Article

The Black Belt Maintenance Test

By: **Nick D'Amato**

(I decided that I wanted to write an article for this month's newsletter on the benefits of teaching the martial arts to others, however, after I thought about it, I feel that this is more appropriate for this month.)

The Black Belt Maintenance Test on Saturday, 28th, January, 2006 was definitely an experience. (You can just ask any Black Belt!) There is no doubt that it was hot, hard, long, stressful, and tiring, but despite all of that, it was something that we needed, something that we deserved, and something that we successfully struggled through. I think that it definitely showed us, the Black Belts, where we stand in regards to our training. I, for one, can really tell that I am not in the same physical shape that I was this time last year when I was running and training more often, after having just tested for my Cho Dan. Although I feel that I am at the Studio quite frequently each week, I never got the feeling that my training was lacking or slacking until now. This was suddenly obvious to me, however, I also believe that my recognition of terminology has improved with time and study. I think that I speak for all of those who test, when I say that this evaluation really put things in perspective, both positively and negatively.

One general comment that was made at the end of the test was

to “never give up”. This is best described in the Tang Soo Do Tenet: Perseverance; to persevere means “to persist in a state, enterprise, or undertaking in spite of counterinfluences, opposition, or discouragement.” That tenet has meant a lot to me over my nine years of training, especially in the more recent years. I would like to reiterate that we cannot find a comfortable level and stay there. Mr. Centrone has said that “staying the same” is not an improvement but rather a decline. We must always strive to better ourselves. We must leave our “comfort zones” and go beyond our limits.

We are privileged to be such a close family that can depend on each other. This was expressed in many ways at the test, when some people didn’t feel well, needed to step out, or take a break to catch our breath. The camaraderie is so obvious, and it was surely present at the test. We helped each other, we encouraged each other, we patted each other on the back, and we motivated each other through our oneness in training. This is what we do here at Pal Che. A major point that Master Robinson made was that this test **WAS** hard, and that we, the Black Belts of Pal Che Tang Soo Do, all stayed on the floor without giving up. That is Perseverance!

There is something that we all know, but we would probably rather not admit. We need to train and practice constantly and with our whole heart. Coming to class once or twice a week will never satisfy our goal of perfection, as Mr. Melchiorre had stated. We need to get there as much as we can, and if we can’t get to the Studio to train we need to still train our mind, body, and spirit at home and elsewhere. Cramming for written tests is not the answer! Getting more physically active just prior to physical tests is also not the answer! Meditating and resting for evaluations is not the answer either! We should constantly be reviewing everything: our mental training, our physical training, and our spiritual training. I can honestly say that I look at my Black Belt Manual for something at least once a week, which increases knowledge of terminology and of the structure of our organization; I am at class a few times per week, training and bettering my techniques; and I am consistently thinking and talking about the martial arts, when I am at home or talking to friends. All of this combined — training of Mind, Body, and Spirit — makes us better!

I would like to suggest some guidelines to improve our understanding of Tang Soo Do and to help us grow as martial artists. First, we need to review terminology while in class, perhaps by repeating the names of techniques and forms instead of just saying “Yes, Sir!” as our response, and for those of us who teach, we can study by going over terminology with the students in our classes, which reinforces our own familiarity with it, keeping it fresh in our minds. Second, it is also good to do some type of physical cross-training in addition to training a few times per week by doing other forms of exercise such as walking, running, aerobics, playing sports, weightlifting, or using a treadmill, and if this is done on a regular basis, it will help improve the endurance of our bodies, which seemed to be the most lacking part of the physical portion at Maintenance Test for most people including myself. Third, we need to be thinking about Tang Soo Do in our lives outside of the Studio, invigorating our spirits and the passion that we have for our Art, while applying what we know to the real-life situations and decisions that we encounter. Just as Master Robinson had said that Tang Soo Do was in his blood, so too must we feel this way about our philosophical art in order to be a true Black Belt.

Submitted Article

Tang Soo Do it yourself

By: **Bertrand Deramaut**

There is a French song (but I guess it is a quote from someone else) that says “The destination is not important, it’s the journey that matters.” Everybody, or at least the usual readers of this letter, knows that “Tang Soo Do” means The way (Do) of the Chinese (Tang) hand (Soo). It is the same “Do” that you find in Bushi Do (the way of the warrior), Hap Ki Do (the way of the united energies), Karate Do (The way of the open/empty hand), Judo (the way of the flexibility), Kendo (the way of the blade), Ai Ki Do (the way of the harmonic energy) etc.

The funny thing is that “the way” (Do) can be taken as “the style” as well as “the path” both in Japanese and in English (not in French where it is only translated as “the path”). This allows a deeper meaning to the name. Some would see in this ambiguity that the teaching of the techniques is intimately associate with a spiritual journey, an inside trip where the student gains new color belt when he/she reaches new milestones on the road. But where do we go?

Well, like in any trip in unknown places, we follow the guide. And that is when the choice of the studio is important because we will land where the guide can bring us. There is a Japanese proverb that says “There is no bad students, only bad teachers”.

Before signing for Pal Che Tang Soo Do, I browsed around to see what was the different studios, what were the styles, the schedules, the rates and how they were teaching. After studying dozens of places, I ended up visiting two of them. One was Tae Kwon Do and another was Pal Che. I choose tradition to sport because it was how I imagine karate should be.

Like a lot of us, in my youth there was the weekly episode of Kung Fu with David Caradin as Kwai Chang Caine with blind Master Po having dialogs like:

Caine: You cannot see.

Master Po: You think I cannot see?

Caine: Of all things, to live in darkness must be worst.

Master Po: Fear is the only darkness.

Same with the Karate Kid series where you can see Master Miyagi saying things like the following:

Daniel: You could have killed him, couldn’t you?

Mr. Miyagi: Aiy.

Daniel: Well, Why didn’t you?

Mr. Miyagi: Because Daniel-san, for man with no forgiveness in heart, life worse punishment than death.

or

Daniel: You think you could break a log like that?

Miyagi: Don’t know. Never been attacked by a tree.

So in my imagination, before I entered the studio as a white belt, I was seeing a karate instructor as someone teaching skills and some sort of philosophy in the same time; an instructor for the way and a spiritual guide for the way. But are my instructors up to the level of the picture I had of a Karate master? That is a tough challenge.

Unlike Daniel LaRusso, who had only Mr. Kesuke Miyagi as guide and instructor, Kwai Chang Caine was being instructed in a Shaolin monastery where Master Po, Master Kan and plenty other were there to shape the body and spirit of this young student. Well so do I. Not that I am young (*sigh*), but I am a student none the less and I have plenty of instructors in my studio. Mr. Centrone told us that we should be like a sponge and absorb the teaching of each of the instructors because each one of them see Tang Soo Do through a different prism. The idea being that by merging the different pictures we will have a complete one.

Indeed, each instructor get to TSD from different angles and can give me different reflections of the idea they have of it. A typical session would start with a warm-up when you learn how to prepare your body in order to prevent injuries and recover faster from one. Then comes the training. The same move is perceived differently by different instructors and when you don’t grasp what one instructs, you can complete it with what another says. By listening and watching the instructors you learn how to punch, block, kick, use weapons and move. That is for the skills. What about the philosophy? The mental part? We had the Yin, what about the Yang? That where the two masters come. Master Mercury likes to quote Master Miyagi or less fictional Master during the training. He also illustrates his lessons with personal experiences. That would be Caine’s Master Kan if I dare to give an analogy. But Master Po would definitely be Mr. Centrone. At the end of the sessions, he would give us his view on such aspect of the art, or he would comment on some quotes from his own mentor, Master Raver or says things like :

“When you do your forms, it’s like fighting not against enemies but against yourself and you are your most formidable opponent”.

Plus there is this monthly letter where practical things are discussed but also where Mr. Centrone never misses the occasion to enlighten us with his vision of the Art. So I would say that yes, I found instructors and guides that can lead the way to higher levels, physically and mentally. But is the destination the one I want? What about this whole picture made of multiple facets? Do we end-up with the accurate one? That is assuming a lot of us. Like the instructors, we have only one mind but by merging all the pictures or different philosophies, we can form a complete picture. It is this picture that we have drawn with the best of each instructor making our own individual martial arts philosophy.

So, “are we there, yet?”

I have no answer to that, first because it is the beginning of my trip, second because I still don’t know where I want to go. I have a general idea, though. But wherever this will leads me, by having access to so many different instructors, I can jump from one path to another and in the end, my destination, if there is one, will depend a lot of my own choices. Meanwhile, I plan to enjoy the journey.

Thought of the Month

The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.

-George Eliot