

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TANG SOO DO AND THE BIRTH OF THE WORLD TANG SOO DO ASSOCIATION

Tang Soo Do is a traditional Korean martial art - its roots go back more than 2000 years. The goal of Tang Soo Do training is not only to develop excellent physical techniques, but more importantly, to develop and perfect one's character as well.

The literal meanings of the Tang Soo Do characters are:

- Tang – refers to the T'ang Dynasty of China (618-907 AD) and reflects the shared cultural background between China and Korea
- Soo - means hand, but implies fist, punch, strike or defense
- Do – translates as “The Way” and implies the Korean classical martial art which was influenced by the T'ang method of martial art.

The exact origin of martial arts in general, including Tang Soo Do, is lost in the mists of history. Historians, however, trace the ancestral Art of Korean Tang Soo Do to Korea's Three Kingdoms era (57 BC-935 AD). During this time, the Hwarang Dan was the major group instrumental in uniting the Korean peninsula and furnishing many of the early leaders of that time. Most Korean martial arts trace their spiritual and technical heritage to this group.

Over the centuries, martial arts flourished during some eras and other times it diminished, according to the political, economic or cultural environment of the times. After the Korea's independence from Japan in 1945, many martial arts organizations were founded - it was from one of these organizations, the Moo Duk Kwan (Martial Virtue Institute) that the future founder of the World Tang Soo Do Association, Jae Chul Shin, would come.

On October 3, 1968, Jae Chul Shin arrived in the United States. Over the next 14 years, Tang Soo Do experienced great expansion, and on November 13-14, 1982, the World Tang Soo Do Association was formed. At the Charter Convention, three important mottoes were declared as principles of the new organization - Traditionalism, Professionalism and Brotherhood. These mottos remain as the guiding principles of the WTSDA.

The World Tang Soo Do Association has grown tremendously over the years, from an initial 164 Charter Members representing 12 countries, to thousands of members in about 30 countries worldwide.

For more information about the history and philosophy of Tang Soo Do and The World Tang Soo Do Association, see the "About WTSDA" section of the WTSDA website (<https://worldtangsoodo.com/about/>). And read, *Traditional Tang Soo Do: Volume I: The Essence*, by Grandmaster Jae Chul Shin (1992) and *Grandmaster Jae Chul Shin: One More Time, A Biography*, by Grandmaster William R. Strong (2018).