

The Hwa Rang Do® Legacy

World Hwa Rang Do® Association Newsletter

"Empowering the World, One Person at a Time"

花郎道

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Grandmaster Taejoon Lee's End of Year Message



"The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom"

Proverbs 9:10

When you have studied history, ancient and modern, and observed attentively to current events from a wide perspective, you will find that humans have always and still do struggle for power and influence so that they can carry out their master plan to save the world. However, at each turn the solutions they come up with only creates more problems, which in turn emboldens the ones subsequently in power to once again become the new saviors of the world. This cycle of pain, suffering, and tragedy creating the desire for relief and the promise of a better future keeps the pseudo-saviors in business.

It is impossible to create perfection from imperfection and since, human beings are imperfect creatures, it is impossible for human beings to generate a perfect solution, a perfect outcome. The best can only be the better of two evils. And, even if it were possible to rid the world of pain and suffering, it would never happen as there would be no need for people of power, conglomerates, and governments to be of value in society. It is our human nature to take credit for things done well and to blame for things gone bad. Therefore, in good times they will desire less governance, interference, and change; whereas when things are bad, they will blame externally and want the ones in power to make it better. Calamity and doom are necessary as a means to motivate, collectivize, and immobilize the people with purpose and goal, and empowers the few that are in control to take advantage and capitalize on the cries of the people.

If there's anything we have learned from the pandemic it should be that we as a human society are easily controlled with fear and the current available technologies allow for immediate global control. Just as we were cleared from the alleged life-threatening virus and the crippling repercussions of the lockdowns, we immediately are confronted with the proposed dooming effects of climate change, and through the war in Ukraine as the further scapegoat of the power crisis which then allowed the globalists to accelerate their green initiative through their power and influence of governments, now have gained control of the people's power consumption.

The gas prices are skyrocketing; governments and municipalities are proposing fines and taxes for carbon emissions by consumption of fossil fuels; we're moving towards digital passports and digital currencies which then tracks everything that we do and consume in preparation for social crediting; they have even gone as far as re-writing the sacred ten-commandments to fit climate change on top of Mount Sinai, blaspheming God, to only list a few of the current events which to a common person uninfected by the algorithms of social media is outlandish, insane, and illogical. However, to the ones in power, the pseudo saviors of the world, it is the perfect storm.



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Who benefits from these changes? Surely, it's not the people. The oil companies have enjoyed historical profits; governments and municipalities will be richer through taxation; the rich can afford it and can adapt; new money markets are created for the capitalists to enjoy; it's only the poor and the meek who will suffer as well as the draining, straining middle class who will be sucked dry from both ends. However, to the globalists who fear overpopulation to be the number one problem of the world, this is just a form of natural selection of the evolutionary process, the survival of the fittest. The rich and powerful both private and conglomerate will always profit from human suffering and hardship, both in good times and in bad times, from pleasure and pain.

Furthermore, through this proposed preposterous climate crisis, they will shut down more than 3,000 farms in the Netherlands who are the second-largest exporter of agricultural products only behind the United States as well as being Europe's biggest exporter of meat. Even after the miserable failure of the Sri Lankan government going green banning fertilizer for farming, both the Netherlands and Canada are doing the same with many other nations following suit. Meanwhile, in the United States Bill Gates have been busy buying up farmland and is now the biggest private owner of farmland in the United States owning more than 242,000 acres worth more than \$690 million as well as being the majority shareholder in companies Beyond Meat, Impossible Foods, John Deere manufacturers of farming equipment along with owning thousands of patents on genetically modified foods. It's obvious and clear that they are moving

"Who controls the food supply controls the people; who controls the energy can control whole continents; who controls money can control the world."

- Henry Kissinger

to control the global food supply. Everything is being centralized. Henry Kissinger's famous quote is not just a quote but a plan that's come to fruition. Our pride and ego derived from the advancements of technology in the 20th, 21st century through science and secularization, which have produced easier living has blurred and distorted our human perspective. After professedly ridding the world of slavery, reducing the deaths by killer diseases, liberated from religious dogma, diminished the oppression of women, blossomed the sexual revolution, in recent times, the arrogant god-defiant world attempts its final emancipation from God attacking the very nature of man and woman. However, has anything really changed?

"That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there's nothing new under the sun."

- Ecclesiastes 1:9

The World Economic Forum has announced their solution to better the world in the aftermath of the recent so-called Pandemic, "The Great Reset." In its proposal it reintroduces global slavery with a new twisted yet attractive slogan, "You'll own nothing, but you'll be much happier for it." However, this time slavery is not by force but through voluntary choice all in the name of reducing the human carbon footprint to save the world from the impending doom of manmade climate catastrophe with the doomsday being ever so fluid and transitory to state it mildly. For the last 50 years all 41 of the ecological predictions by experts have the perfect record of being wrong 41 times.

To put things into perspective, the common middle-class families and young single people are all in on the new fad of downsizing to reduce the carbon footprint by living in small containers or vans, much like self-imposed prison cells deluding them-

selves to think that they possess more freedom to travel and proud of their proactive social activism to partake in the saving of the world. Meanwhile, private jet sales are increasing with predictions of \$162.1 billion from 2021 to 2025 with the compound annual growth of 7.4 percent; the private luxury yachts sales have increased from \$6.5 billion in 2019 to estimated \$14,58 billion in 2030; all luxury items have increased in sales and the mega mansions are only increasing in size. Recently, Jeff Bezos purchased a super yacht from the largest yacht manufacturer in the Netherlands costing \$500 million which is so large it cannot even get out of the harbor in Rotterdam due to a bridge blocking its way, so he proposed to pay for dismantling the historical bridge which was protested by the local community. It is now being dismantled to be reassembled somewhere else. Really?! What is the yacht for? I promise you nothing good and all that for one man. We must put things into proper perspective and see the truth amidst all this insanity.

In our pursuit of absolute freedom, we have become slaves of our own folly and pride. We have abandoned God so that we can achieve apotheosis, surrendering not to an omnipotent, omniscient, perfect God but to an impotent, ignorant, imperfect human power.

To use the analogy of sheep and wolves by Nietzsche, he says that sheep wants the wolves to be more sheepish, but wolves don't want sheep to be wolfish. The sheep wants everyone to be more like them, less aggressive and threatening and be more harmless and weaker, desiring to remain in large numbers and not be a loner. Whereas the wolf doesn't want more wolves as that creates more competition for food and survival. So, for the wolves they never interfere in sheep turning wolves into sheep and in fact, they will kill and eat the weakest or sickest member of the pack if given the opportunity. Therefore, for the wolf it is an ideal situation when the sheep creates and wants more sheep and there are less wolves to compete with. This is what our society has turned into as we attempt to rid the world of warriors, abolish so-called patriarchy, shun masculinity as toxic, ridding of binary gender, turning hunter

carnivores to prey herbivores, opposing any opposition by flocking together in numbers, cancelling and de-platforming as the most powerful wolves sit back and watch the lesser wolves perish and the numbers of sheep enhance, creating more food, more wealth, and more power for the few, the fittest.

Any human power unrestrained is a danger and a threat to humankind and can only lead to self-proclaimed godhood, which can only result in evil as "absolute power corrupts absolutely." It is the fear in God that restrains us all from the deep darkness that lies in all human beings.

My end of year message is a simple one, no one man or countless many can ever save the world! The Way, the Truth and the Life rests in only One who is beyond human and is perfect in every way.

Secondly, to use an old Eastern proverb as the basis of my message:

"It is better to be a Warrior in a garden than be a gardener in War." But, "With faith and the fear of God, you can continue to garden in war."

I pray that you will be strong in mind, body, and spirit; be vigilant, awake, and aware at all times; exercise wisdom and constantly seek for truth; practice humility, but never follow the flock ignorant and fearful; and avoid being prideful and haughty. This is the way of the Hwarang, "The Flowering Knights."

With Love, Hwarang Forever and God Bless,

See you all in 2023 Luxembourg!

Hwa Rang Do® Online Global
(HOGU)
The Ancient Korean Warrior Art of Nobility
"The Way of the Flowering Knights"
School of Leadership

Hwa Rang Do® Online Global University (HOGU) was created to facilitate those who are seriously interested in learning the art, but do not have access to a nearby Dojang (School) as well as for existing Hwa Rang Do® / Tae Soo Do® Students and Instructors to gain additional knowledge and experience directly from the apparent Heir, Grandmaster Taejoon Lee (Kuksanim).

You will be taught directly by Grandmaster Taejoon Lee in live group classes which are archived in an extensive video library as well as having the opportunity to have one-to-one private sessions.

www.hwarangdoglobal.com



How To Achieve!

Budo International December 2022

By

Grandmaster Taejoon Lee

In the previous article, I have explained some of the problems and barriers which limits us in our ability to progress and excel, acquiring our optimal self, reaping the full benefits of our study and of what life can offer. Now, I will try to offer some ways you can achieve greater results and get the most out of life as well as your martial arts training.

Don't be late, but if you're late don't rush!

"Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

Luke 12:25

Avoiding tardiness requires just a bit more planning. If you plan out your day properly without trying to jam everything into one day, allowing yourself ample time to prepare and travel to the next appointment, then most likely you can avoid being tardy. However, as you are aware this is not so easy to do, and this is because most of us have never learned about time management. One of the first things during the first grade, on the first day of class, during my elementary years in Korea, we were assigned to make a pie chart of 24 hours in the day and schedule all our days down to the minute; when to wake up, when to wash and brush our teeth, when to have breakfast, when to go to school, when to come home, when to eat, when to study, when to play, when to sleep etc. as detailed as we can get. Understanding the value and importance of time by knowing how to track and manage it is also a part of practicing mindfulness. This should be

learned early on, but if you have not yet acquired the skill, then yes, you should create a daily calendar to know what you are doing every minute of your day. Like all things learned, it must start from the rudimentary foundation, then after a while you should gain a better sense of your perception of time compared to the reality of time; whether you perceive to always have more time or that you always have little time. In the beginning you must adhere strictly to the timetable, but as you gain a better sense of real time, then you can probably let go of such strict planning of the day. Whether you will succeed or fail in this endeavor will depend on how self-disciplined you are, which in either case you will have gained a better insight into your character, personality.

Regardless of whether you choose to take up such exercise in time management, if you do not know how to control it, it will control you. Most people act as though they have no control over their time and are powerless over it, which leads them to always use "not having enough time" as an excuse for all of their failures, mishaps, shortcomings, and unfulfilled promises. Every person in existence is given the same 24 hours in a day; what we do with it is entirely up to the individual. No person received more or less hours, no one gets credits or rebates of time. Even if we were given more hours in a day and had 26 hours or more, we would all still

be in the same predicament. If we ever want to achieve or do anything, we must make the time for the things we want to do. Knowing whether something is better, more valuable than another in order to prioritize properly, that is entirely another matter.

However, you must know and understand that you will never be able to do everything and do them all well; that there is a price for everything and in order to do one thing, you must give up another. You must understand your capabilities and your limits. If the only source of water was rain and you went out to collect rainwater on a rainy day with a cup, that's all you will carry back home no matter how much more water you desire. In order to collect more water, you must bring a bigger container to catch more water, but if

you brought something which is too large, desiring to get as much as you can, it will be too heavy for you to pick up and carry back home. You must bring the right size container which you know you can carry when it is filled. This is the wisdom of experience and being prudent rather than being haughty and greedy.

Even when you have planned well, sometimes we are confronted with unforeseen events, acts of God, which we actually do not have any control over. Then, for exactly that reason we should not worry as God knows best! So, take it as it comes and don't stress, but just deal with whatever takes place as that is beyond your scope and the benefit of such situation is unbeknownst to you. Whether you believe that it was an act of God or not; or it was really your fault, the fact still remains that you are late and there's nothing you can do in that moment to change that. Therefore, the only option is to move forward. However, most people will exasperate and make worse the problem by getting upset, anxious, nervous, excited, angry, fearful, and self-destruct. And surely, with that frame of mind, you will have the worst class, the worst day of your life. This is how a self-perpetuating, self-fulfilling prophecy takes place and it is all your own doing.

Clear Your Mind Before Class

It is best to plan to arrive at the Dojang (House of the Way) a little earlier. Starting in the locker room, focus on dressing the uniform by doing it with reverence, thinking of all the past students, warriors (in our case 59 generations) who have worn the Dobok (Clothing of the Way) and by you wearing the same cloth that you are connected and part of something far greater than the self, letting go of all your daily troubles and concerns and transforming yourself into the warrior, the Hwarang. Finally, tying your belt, check to see that all aspects of your uniform is worn properly with every knot, folding of the sleeves, placement of the jacket is impeccable. Then collect your armor as though a warrior preparing for battle and enter the Mat Room (Dojang), the Battlefield. Take a deep bow paying respect to your art and kingdom (country), all the past warriors who

have gone before you, humbling yourself to the knowledge which will be bestowed upon you, letting go completely of who you were, an accountant, a cook, a mother, a lawyer, now fully a warrior. Set your gear down quietly in the corner, then sit in a quiet moment of meditation and prayer.

Most people cannot and will not be able to clear their mind completely in meditation and achieve a state of "no mind" in only a few minutes. So, take the time to repeat a mantra, a prayer, whatever that suits you; something like "Give me strength to be at my best; courage to overcome my fears; wisdom to accept my faults; calmness and clarity of mind to learn to change for the better." Then, with this mantra, this prayer, always be conscious of it and work to your best to practice it. If you do this, your martial art training experience will completely change!

Don't Take It Lightly!

"The longest distance between two points is a short cut."

You will only get back what you put into it. So, if you take it lightly and don't put in much effort, then it is unreasonable and absurd to think that you will gain any benefit at all. You might be saying to yourself, "Yeah, but this is just a hobby." Even a hobby requires time, energy, money, and effort, and if you don't work at it, taking it more seriously, you will not improve. It doesn't mean you need to eat, drink, sleep martial arts and have it consume all of your thoughts every moment of your waking hours, but it does mean that you need to pay attention, and take it like any other form of study by taking notes, reviewing your material before class, and practicing regularly at home (do homework!). Martial Art especially Hwa Rang Do is one of the most complex and physically demanding activities you can undertake and to think of it in the same category as aerobics, yoga, or some typical sport activity is a big mistake.

Therefore, like all things, the more you put in the more you will get back. There are no short cuts in life; don't even think it!

Don't forget that you're learning how to fight!

Martial Arts is very different than any other common physical or sport activities for this one main reason, "IT'S ABOUT FIGHTING!" In reality, most of the sports we see today originate from fighting, from battle. Even the Olympics has its origins rooted in mythology as Zeus creating it, in memory of his battle with Kronos; the origin of the marathon is based on a messenger running from Athens to Sparta to seek help battling the Persians; even soccer has its origins from the Roman Empire as a military exercise known as Harpastum. In one way or another it is all connected to battle, fighting, competition in order to strengthen the soldiers to improve the odds of victory. It has only become hobby, exercise, and entertainment in the modern age. Thus, you can say that all the other sports are only a small partial aspect of martial arts.

The reality is that in martial arts training, the real goal is not physical fitness, confidence, weight loss, or even getting a black belt, it is how well you can fight. All the other benefits gained are fringe benefits, which are secondary. Therefore, the real question you need to be asking yourself when learning a martial art is "Can I defend myself properly against an attacker." Unfortunately, this is too often forgotten and set aside with its practitioners mainly focusing on the fringe benefits. If we were attacked by aggressors on a daily basis, then this would be different. In today's society it is rare that we are attacked and thank God that this is the case.

Some martial arts today focus primary on self-defense and fighting, but this for the common civilian is not practical nor sustainable as one cannot train daily for a fight that might never come and unless the skills are honed and practiced regularly it will render useless. For most people, they don't want to get into a full-contact fighting match every time that they are in class, coming home with bumps, bruises, and cuts on a daily basis. Then what is the best way to perceive our training in the martial arts?

Even though a person is well trained physically, it does not guarantee their success in a real-life situation as they cannot ever know exactly how they will respond under such a stressful, life-threatening violent attack. Therefore, along with the proper defensive techniques one must learn how to remain calm, clear headed, by learning how to control their emotional reaction to fear and stress. The only way to achieve this is to take your training very seriously and use it as a means to overcome your personal weaknesses and fears by exposing your vulnerable self and learning to respond properly under extreme pressure, stress, and threat of harm. Of course, all this done in a safe environment with properly trained instructors. However, this is very difficult to achieve and not many martial arts teachers can successfully imple-

ment it. It is also the case that by taking it seriously and training properly, the fringe benefits you so desire can only be heightened and enhanced.

Then, the real question is how you as an individual can make your martial art experience the most rewarding and beneficial to you as much as possible? If it is then about fighting, or fighting to survive a violent attack, how much do you think that you need to practice; is passing a belt test with moderate scores acceptable; can you afford not remembering your techniques; can you afford to miss classes when even daily practice is not enough to ensure survival; should you avoid critique from your teacher due to fear and embarrassment when it is paramount that you know the right technique which can mean life or death; can you afford to do your movements without any power or focus that can't even be used to break through a plastic bag; can you be in class aimlessly, completely lost but never seek for help? Of course, the answer is obvious, but it is your choice! Choose wisely...

Study it!

Study is defined as: a state of contemplation; application of mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge; careful and extended consideration. Yes! Absolutely! All the above must be applied well when learning anything properly, but more often than not, most students come to class mindlessly like they are coming to participate in an aerobics, dance, or yoga class to just sweat and enjoy an endorphin high. Martial arts, especially Hwa Rang Do requires the person to learn, memorize, and apply what they have learned with extreme control and accuracy. Hwa Rang Do has over 4,000 individual techniques as it is a true study, a school of thought, combat, and leadership and not just a means of fitness or practical self-defense. Like all things the more you study, practice, the better you become and the better you are at it the more you will enjoy it.

Thus, like all good students bring a notebook and take notes, then go home and review and practice daily. Of course, you don't want to disrupt the class, so take a few minutes to write down what you have learned right after class when it is fresh in your mind, then take at least 30 minutes each day to practice and review your movements and techniques. The success of your application of the techniques you have learned depends on how well you have trained yourself to gain muscle memory, which allows you to remember the movements and perform them without conscious effort. However, you must first consciously command your body to incrementally perform the movements accurately, repeating the same correct movements in as many repetitions as it requires for you to perform them accurately with speed and power.

The way you will know that you have learned the move, the technique by muscle memory is if you can perform

them without having to consciously command your body to perform each step, but rather execute the technique in one swift, fluid movement without hesitation. If you're unable to do this, then you go back to one, doing them step by step correcting the mistakes and increasing repetition. It is critical that you increase how many times you do something right than how long you have trained. This is the same in life; it is not how long we live life, but how well we lived life by doing what is right.

Attention to the Details

"God is in the details"

Doing something right, even more so doing it beautifully requires that you know it thoroughly and that means you had to have paid attention to the details. There are many reasons why a person is not able to see the details, but only one which must be above all things in order to see things clearly, the desire to know the truth, to do right.

These are some of the reasons for not being able to see the details which I am sure many or all of you can identify with: not being mindful and being mindless; not being confident in your abilities; fear of criticism and rebuke; not desiring to stick or stand out; not having any expectations and just in it for the ride; being nervous and anxious; having performance anxiety; thinking that you know it already; thinking you don't know anything; lacking self-esteem and belief in yourself; having a large ego; being overly macho; being overly timid and shy; desiring approval; trying too hard to please; wanting to be liked; afraid of being disliked; fixated on past negative experiences; delusions of grandeur; unrealistic expectations; over-estimation of one's ability; overly critical of oneself; overly critical of others; and I can go on and on...

Anything else other than the desire to know and learn the truth is a hindrance and a distraction from the truth; and nothing matters more than the truth. In the process of arriving at this state of being, one must identify, address, confront and resolve all the reasons for not being able to see things clearly. This in fact is the true study, goal, and purpose of Hwa Rang Do.

Calmness

"There are fundamentally these fears: The fear of failure, the fear of the unknown, the fear of rejection, and the fear of loss, but having only One fear can rid of all fears – the fear of God."

One must always practice being calm...

This is truly easier said than done and that is why it is a practice we must pursue. It does not just relate with being anxious or nervous, but it also has to do

with excitement. It is about not overly reacting to anything, even moments of elation, victory, or accomplishments. However, for us as martial artists it is the practice of being calm under immense pressure and stress, to be able to think clearly out of a dire, critical situation with the potential threat of physical harm, or even death.

When we train, the reality is that we are learning how to effectively hurt, injure, maim, and even kill another person and in order to have the discipline, self-restraint, and proper control to not injure our training partner as well as to properly receive the offensive attacks to avoid getting injured requires extreme clarity of mind and calmness at heart. I am not talking about being calm through tricking the mind by dismissing and diminishing the extent of the threat and harm. One example comes to mind – an advice often given to people who are afraid of public speaking is to imagine the crowd of people in their underwear, which is aimed at reducing the anxiety by making the situation comical. This might work a few times, but it has done nothing to improve the self and did nothing to help overcome the fear, not to mention the demeaning of the people who are in the audience. You cannot imagine away your opponent or reduce the threat by thinking they are a cute teddy bear.

The only way to fight your way to victory is to be able to think clearly; and the only way to think clearly is to be calm; and the only way to be calm is to rid of fear. The only way to rid of the fear is to face and confront it, then overcome it by accepting the possible manifestation of the worst outcome of that fear, which typically is injury, pain, or death. This is a mindset which you must create in order to best deal with any form of stress or challenges that may come. However, when in the moment of stress, the best way to be calm is to breathe. Whenever you feel anxious or excited, take a few deep slow breaths with full inhalation and exhalation, which will help to calm you down. One breathing technique I have learned from my dear friend Dr. Andrew Weil, which has been proven to be very effective is the 4-7-8 breath: 4-counts breath in, 7-counts hold, 8-counts breathing out.

Ultimately, true calmness arises from a peace of mind and true serenity that comes from embracing and surrendering to God.

Eliminate Distractions

Part of being calm is to rid your mind of distractions and be present in the moment. You must clear your mind of all unnecessary thoughts as though erasing and wiping clean a chalkboard that is filled with cluttered writings. You cannot write over an existing chalkboard full of writings and expect it to be legible. It is the same with your mind and if you took the time at the beginning of class as I have prescribed then you should be better prepared.

However, even when we do all the preparatory work, often our mind wanders with bombardment of frivolous, unnecessary distractions often triggered by anxiety and fear. With such nonsense as can I really do this; what if I make a mistake; I don't want to embarrass myself; what's for dinner; I think he's mad at me; the teacher doesn't like me; do I look fat; I feel silly; what if I get hurt; oh, that looks scary; nope, I can't do that, etc. Once you travel down this path and allow it to fester, there's no turning back and you will fail, fall,

worst yet get injured. This is when you must realize that you're spiraling out of control and reign yourself back by taking a moment to exercise your breath.

Furthermore, as instructors you should not have any parents or spectators watching the class. I realize that many schools allow for this, but I recommend against it. This also means you cannot have people coming to check out the class before they join. The primary

focus of your class is the well-being of your students, and you must create the best condition for them to flourish. I make sure that in our schools that there are no spectators and if there is, then they are out of sight from the students. Also, for any trial students, the only way for them to check out our class is by participating in the class and never can they just come to watch a class; no looky-loos!

Continued on February 2023 Issue...

Hwarang Forever,
Grandmaster Taejoon Lee
 President WHRDA



**The Transformative Power
 of
 HWA RANG DO®**

How Hwa Rang Do and the guidance of Grandmaster Taejoon Lee have changed me to a better person.

Before I share with you my testimonial, I want to express how grateful I am and would like to thank Grandmaster Taejoon Lee (Kuksanim) for the past 6 years he has been living in Luxembourg, helping me to make tremendous changes in myself, and in both my personal and professional life.

I was adopted from Korea to Luxembourg at the age of 4 months, grew up all of my life here and like most adoptees I went through an identity crisis, searching for my roots, confused on where I belong, contemplating why I was given up for adoption, living my life with fears of abandonment and rejection. Lacking self-esteem and a

strong sense of who I really am, I lost purpose and meaning in my life which led to me giving up and quitting easily whenever I was confronted with the slightest of hardship and smallest of challenges.

When Grandmaster Lee relocated to Luxembourg in February 2017, I recently enrolled in a 3-month program to the Hwa Rang Do Club here in Luxembourg. To say the least, put simply I was a mess; mentally unstable with suicidal thoughts, self-harming, severe depression, overweight, unemployed and had no goals in my life.

I was helping Grandmaster Lee in his relocation and adjusting to Lux Life which is very different from sunny Californian lifestyle. I remember our first conversation we had at his half-furnished home which had a big impact in my life! Not knowing at that time who Grandmaster Lee really was, that he had been teaching for over 45 years having taught thousands of students and have dealt with all sorts of issues and problems of his students, having heard every story imaginable, I thought my story was special. At that time, I shared my mental and emotional state with

him, thinking it might surprise and even shock him, but something told me he might be able to help me. I used to go to therapy on a regular basis, seeing many different doctors and therapists, taking many strong medications for all the diagnosis they had given me, which I didn't question as I trusted them blindly as they were experts, professionals in their field. I cannot even remember exactly what we were talking about, but I know the only question that popped into my mind was, "How does he know that? He doesn't know me! Why would the therapists not tell me these things, which seemed so obvious to help me?"

What Grandmaster Lee did was not a complicated, convoluted, fabricated pep talk or diagnosis, he just simply told me the truth to my face, how I really was; that I was being a victim and that I was weak. Those precise words which I didn't like or want to hear. As Grandmaster Lee tells us all the time, "Truth hurts and is never pleasant to hear." This shocked me so much because he was the only person who pushed me out of my comfort zone, my safe hiding bubble, forcing me to confront reality, the truth!

This conversation was the first time that made a real impact in my life that made me want to change. With being overweight, obese (highest weight 98kg with a height of 160cm), he told me to lose weight and said that I was "fat." Another shock! No one had dared to ever say that to me, but once again that was the truth and that was exactly what I needed to hear.

Grandmaster Lee always told us from the very beginning that he didn't come here to please us, but to teach and to help us be the best that we can possibly be. And if we don't like his way of teaching, then we could all leave.

Even though I spent much time with Grandmaster Lee inside and outside the dojang, he consistently told me the truth, and although it was not always pleasant to hear I knew that it was essential for me to truly change and improve myself, so I stayed and continued to follow his teachings. If this happened at work or anywhere else, I would have quit immediately, running away and not dealing with my problems constantly living in denial.

I had previously trained in Karate for many years, but even that did not last. However, being a student under the leadership of Grandmaster Lee there was something very different. At first,

as a Korean adoptee searching for my roots I was very interested in the Korean Culture, and that was my main attraction to follow him initially because of his Korean Ethnicity. Also being a member of the club, I felt like I belonged to something. It was different than what I had ever experienced, there was a genuine sense of being a part of a real family. The care, support, and love that I received felt as though it was from my real sisters and brothers as they would always selflessly do as much as they could to help me grow.

Hwa Rang Do was the only thing in my life which I had not given up so easily even when being pushed or challenged in and outside the dojang, completely contrary to my normal pattern of avoiding and running away when things got tough. I began to understand that this martial art under the leadership, guidance, and mentorship of Grandmaster Lee would be the only thing up to now that could possibly save my life.

With a renewed sense of purpose to better myself I practiced hard, overcame many challenges during the weekly classes, as well as from the preparation and competition in the Annual World Championships. With time, I saw many physical changes, became more confident, and my overall self-esteem improved. In addition, I saw changes and improvements in how I was dealing and coping with my emotional problems and my mood swings. This change did not come easy and not without a price. Grandmaster Lee spent hundreds of hours of his precious time with me outside the Dojang for many years where I cried after every class overwhelmed with my emotions and insecurities.

However, I was very stubborn to change and although I listened, I didn't always follow what he told me to do. As a result, it took me a long time before I truly began my transformation.

In November of 2017, Grandmaster Lee invited me to become a member of the Teuk Gong Team (translates to special force team), which was the core leadership program in Hwa Rang Do where we learn to be role models and assistant instructors of the club.

It was another big challenge and having low self-esteem I was not sure if I could do it. It wasn't mandatory and he didn't push me to decide, saying that it was all up to me to make the proper decision and that life is all about making the right choices.

He didn't invite me to be a part of TGT because my techniques were exceptional or that I was a good role model, but because he knew that I needed it to become a better, stronger person, with the potential to be able to help others in the same struggle.

It wasn't an easy decision to make, knowing the high standards that Grandmaster Lee holds his students to, especially his TGT members. I also had to attend a special class for TGT once a week and assist in teaching at least one day per week, sometimes more. I was filled with many doubts and the fear of failure, yet I was excited in the possibility of what it can do for me. So, one belt later, upon receiving my purple belt, I accepted. Little did I know, how much it would change my life!

In the beginning, I didn't know anything, but through the many hours of intensive training outdoors, indoors, in rain or snow Grandmaster Lee taught us to be strong in mind, body, and spirit. Many times, I thought of giving up and when Grandmaster Lee sensed our weaknesses and doubts, he pushed us to quit, telling us we can leave anytime and it's better to do it sooner than later.

Grandmaster Lee always told us, "With greater the rank, the greater the responsibility." I thought I understood what this meant, but I would soon find out that I had it all wrong. With each advancement in rank, I sensed greater confidence and began to be more critical of others, the students, and even my seniors. I thought I was doing my job well, but soon realized that I was quick to correct them on their mistakes without compassion and understanding, but just inflating my ego. This was nothing new as I was always quick to judge other people to protect myself which made me very defensive.

Grandmaster Lee helped me to realize that it was my fear and weakness that made me self-righteous and by being critical of other people, I would always have a way out as they would always fail to meet my expectations. He checked my ego every time it sprung its ugly head, humbling me and taught me to focus and worry about bettering myself and most importantly to first see the faults within me before I judge or criticize others. Every time when I complained about the faults and mistakes of others, he would always point out that I also do the same and that I must first fix myself before I can help others.

This is one of the most important lessons that I have learned - to not blame or externalize my problems but to take ownership and be responsible for myself first and foremost. Then, after I have fixed my problem, then others will follow and this was what it meant to have greater responsibility; to be responsible and accountable for myself, and this is true leadership, to lead by example.

I persevered through Hwa Rang Do, but my work life was not good. I didn't apply what I had learned into my professional life and at every little

problem I was confronted with, I chose to quit. Grandmaster Lee told me that he never met anyone who quit so many jobs in such a short period of time and that I had to learn to take all the challenges as an opportunity to learn from my mistakes and not repeating them. However, although I tried my best to listen to what he had told me, I couldn't do it and I continued to quit again and again.

I went to college to become an educator of children, youth, and people with disabilities. That was what I intended to do for my career, and I tried very hard to make it work, but no matter how hard I tried to motivate myself there was something holding me back and I became increasingly unhappy. And once again, Grandmaster Lee helped me to realize the truth.

I had always loved dogs and have two rescue dogs of my own when I met Grandmaster Lee. I also worked with a Korean dog rescue organization helping them to find forever homes for the dogs in Korea, which are mostly rescued from Korean illegal meat markets. This was my passion, but I was never confident enough to make it as a livelihood. Grandmaster Lee even told me when he first met me in 2017, that I should go into the dog business. I never thought in that moment that it would ever become a reality.

He said that in order to succeed and be happy in life, we must not chase after money but find what we love and make it pay. He said that Dojoonim taught him that, "Man should not follow money, but that money should follow man."

After 5 years of trying to make it as an educator and quitting so many jobs, in the winter of 2021, I finally got enough courage to open my own Dog Boarding & Pet Care Business. I could have never done it without Grandmaster Lee's teachings and his support. However, when I told him what I was intending on doing, expecting him to be happy and excited for me, instead he once again told me the truth. He asked me if I was sure that's what I wanted and then proceeded to tell me that being an entrepreneur, having your own business is the hardest thing that anyone can do in their life and that over 90% of the people who start their business fail in their first year.

Needless to say, I was once again shocked, but he was testing me. He wanted to know how committed I was and told me another lesson of burning all the ships. That, there was a general who invaded a foreign land by ships and upon landing he was confronted by an enormous army, and they were losing the battle. So, the general commanded his soldiers to burn all the ships so that they cannot retreat and had no way back home. With that, his soldiers fought fiercely and not only defeated the one army but all of the land, conquering the kingdom.

With the support and guidance in opening and running a business, Grandmaster Lee taught me many things. What we learn in Hwa Rang Do started to

mirror in my personal and professional life. I used to be a quiet, shy, introverted person, but now I speak with confidence to clients, dealing with their issues and complaints. I love training the dogs and at the same time I am also able to teach the owners. I was finally happy doing what I've always dreamt about doing but was too afraid to start. I could have never imagined in my life that I would have ever been able to do this if it weren't for Hwa Rang Do. Grandmaster Lee always told us that everything happens for a reason and only God knows exactly why; we could only imagine.

When I thought my life was finally falling into place and becoming more stable, on Feb 19, 2022, I had a bad accident during the Global Tae Soo Do Class with Grandmaster Lee. As I was assisting him while he was teaching a simple sweep, which he has done thousands of times, I took a wrong step with my right foot during the fall and broke my foot in 4 different places. It was a really bad break and I had to get surgery on the same day but being responsible for the dogs under my care, I refused the surgery being aware of the consequences and took care first of the dogs.

Next day, I went to the hospital to get surgery. It has been a long recovery journey with rehabilitation and reeducation. Lots of sweat, pain, and worrying not knowing if I can ever walk properly again. However, the most challenging part of all this was that I had to stop my business and had to survive with very little income. Grandmaster Lee, the Hwa Rang Do Club, my family, and close friends helped me through these difficult times, from emotional support, house chores, financial support, to just being there for my dogs and myself. Additionally, Grandmaster Lee took care of my youngest dog, Korean Jindo named Duyu, while I was unable to care for my dogs. And, on top all that, we discovered that Duyu had some type of diabetes and needed lots of medical attention.

As they say when it rains it pours. Life is unpredictable as Grandmaster Lee had always said and that bad things happen to good people all the time, but he also said that no matter how hard life gets, that God gives us the tools and the strength to overcome and by doing so that is how we become stronger and better.

I had to start learning to walk again, starting steps by step. If I didn't practice Hwa Rang Do, I would already have given up. But, since I was motivated to become better, I wanted to recover as quickly as possible. There were many setbacks I dealt with, nevertheless I was motivated to start assisting in the Little Tigers, Juniors, and Adult Classes again as soon as possible. Being Part of TGT, I wanted to be reliable to support my Team and help our students.

Then the Digital Championships came, and I wanted to compete in all three Divisions. I have been a Green Sash in Hwa Rang Do for a while and although I could barely walk, my foot still swol-

len, but I did my best to compete in as many divisions as my body allowed me to do. It was my duty as TGT, doesn't matter of the injury, that I had to compete and be an example for our students that with any limitation you can still compete and do your best. I also wanted to challenge myself.

I learnt so many things and grew in so many ways, I cannot express it all here, but I will share some of the most valuable lessons I have learned.

I realize now that I am never alone and that I am loved by many and if these things didn't happen then I would never have come to realize the wonderful relationships I have with my family, friends, and now Hwa Rang Do which I cherish and immensely grateful for.

I realized the meaning and value of living a life of service and self-sacrifice rather than self-centeredness. "Why me?" has been the question which led me to self-pity and depression, but now I live to better myself so that I can be of greater service to others and of course dogs.

I know now that as long as I persevere and remain on the path, as long as I am strong and stay true, making the right choices I can accomplish my goals and improve my life.

Through my Hwa Rang Do experience with Grandmaster Taejoon Lee, I have stopped all medications; stopped receiving any therapy, lost about 30kg and still need to lose a little more, started my own business, and now I feel motivated each day looking forward to the possibilities. Grandmaster Lee helped me to realize the truth about myself and accept the worst parts of myself, then he taught me how to overcome them. And, that was the most important lesson I've learned is that when you love then you must be truthful, but also be strong enough to help and support to fight and overcome our struggles and challenges of life together. For me, this is Hwa Rang Do.

My recovery journey is not over yet. It will be a long time, but I am committed to making it happen as soon as possible.

My Hwa Rang Do Journey has also just started, and I am looking forward to studying and learning at my best to become a better person so that I can help others!

I am honored to learn directly from Grandmaster Lee under his leadership, guidance and mentorship, looking forward to many years to come, but especially the next year, as it is his last year in Luxembourg! I thank God for bringing him and Hwa Rang Do into my life.

대단히 감사합니다.

Thank you very much.

**Your humble student
Véronique Mee Hee Wilhelm
Hwa Rang Do Club Luxembourg**

LUXEMBOURG SEMINARS

with

GRANDMASTER TAEJOON LEE

November 13, 2022

Grandmaster Taejoon Lee conducted a seminar on Gotoogi - Grappling and Sparring techniques on Sunday, November 13, 2022. It was a fantastic opportunity to learn directly from Kuksanim and both the students from Luxembourg as well the Netherlands participated in this informative, exciting event. Also, it was streamed live online to other students in the United States as well as Italy. It was also attended by Master David Kijek and Master Dylan Sirmy.





Minneapolis HWA RANG DO®

2022 Holiday Demo & Party!

On Saturday, December 10th, the Hwa Rang Do Minneapolis Academy once again held its annual Holiday Party, which featured a student demonstration, family potluck, Secret Salsa gift exchange, and late-night karaoke party. Starting in the late afternoon, as soon as the doors opened the school quickly filled with the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. The students were abound with nervous excitement as they prepared to show their families what they've been learning at Hwa Rang Do before celebrating the Christmas spirit.



The event kicked off with the school demonstration, hosted by the school's leader, Master Dylan Sirny. The youth and teen groups, led by Lead Youth Instructor Daniel LaFave, showcased

the popular crisscross challenge, separating into two lines, and alternating as they ran at full speed diagonally across the mat in opposite directions, careful not to run into the person crossing before them from the other side. After running, they also showed their strength with power punches, their acrobatics with rolls and cartwheels, and their force with running jump kicks. As the proud parents clapped and beamed seeing their children each have their own opportunity to shine in the show's introduction, the students were just getting warmed up.

The little tiger group of preschool through 1st grade students came up next to perform with Instructor William Kingsley. After an introductory peek at their daily warm-up routine, the youngest performers of the evening not only

showed their kiaping ability while alternating strong punches, but they demonstrated their listening skills as well. Instructor Kingsley challenged them with fast paced stance changes, quickly leading them through the listening stance, horse stance, ready stance,



At such a young age, they pride themselves on all that they have learned, including the ability to understand the Korean counting and bowing commands. The audience silently rooted for them, as they followed along in unison, careful to pay close attention to their instructor's commands.

Once the tigers had finished up, the junior students had the floor, taking us through a variety of skill sets. First up, a group of intermediate and advanced students showed the crowd the Tae Soo Do (TSD) Jang Bong (Long Staff) Form that is introduced and studied in the TSD intermediate levels. You could see that the viewers, especially those sitting in the front row, closest to the performers and their weapons, were impressed with the students' level of control as they performed side-by-side as a group, undoubtedly knowing the level of precision necessary to avoid any accidental strikes to those around them. The same could be said for the next group of performers, the Hwa Rang Do (HRD) color sashes who performed their Ssangjyelbong (Nunchucks) Form. With many twists, turns, and even summersaults, the group demonstrated their skill and control with the weapons while simultaneously keeping in-step with each other.



Next we saw self-defense techniques from all levels of training, shown in a domino style where one group gets up to perform while the others take a knee, allowing the audience to know exactly where to direct their eyes.

As one group completes their demonstration, they then take a knee while the next pair in line takes their turn to perform. This section of the show started with the TSD beginner juniors, who showed us some basic block-and-counters that can be used against a punch or a kick. Next were the TSD intermediate juniors, who defended themselves from punch/kick combinations, and countered with various strikes and kicks of their own. The advanced juniors rounded out the TSD portion, showing higher level techniques that included takedowns and joint locks in order to defend themselves from an attacker. Finally, the HRD color sash juniors and teens showcased their defensive tactics, showcasing even more advanced material as they blocked, threw, and locked up their partners.



While Hwa Rang Do/Tae Soo Do students have much to remember by way of standardized curriculum, those who are heavily involved in their martial art studies often like to make up their own sequences as well. A handful of members in Master Sirmy's Teuk Gong Team (TGT) gave their own unique twist to the combinations they've learned, and demonstrated what "tricking" can look like with a little creativity and imagination. This often meant turning and kicking in multiple directions within a few seconds, varying their height from high and low kicks, adding acrobatics, and spin & jump kicking their way across the mat. One student, 14 year-old Oskari Lehto, even caught the audience by surprise as he got to the end of the mat. Just as they began clapping for his performance, he redirected his motion back the way he came with yet another upbeat and impressive kicking sequence.



Quickly transitioning into grappling, Oskari returned to the mat with 13 year-old Orion Sirmy, to demonstrate a grappling match between the two HRD green sash students. With plenty of experience in training and matching with each other, the two had multiple moves and submissions to attempt. Utilizing their knowledge of arm bars, shoulder locks, triangles, chokes, leg locks, etc., they took turns advancing and defending their positions. And with extremely competitive yet good-natured spirits, they are always an exciting pair to watch.

To finish out the show, some of the Hwa Rang Do Instructors, Nick Frugé, Daniel LaFave, Aaron Godin, William Kingsley, and Eliot Estrine demonstrated their skills with their respective color sash techniques. After featuring one-on-one defenses, Red Sash Instructor Nick Frugé, finished out the performance with his kick-defense techniques against multiple attackers.



Finally, the students gathered their strength for the board breaking challenges, lining up to break a board with whichever technique they chose. A few of the advanced kickers impressed the crowd with 540 degree jump spin kicks, even breaking boards out of Master Sirmy's hands while he stood on a chair and held the board high. The event wrapped up with a brick breaking challenge by Instructor Aaron Godin.



It was an exciting performance by the Minneapolis students, who immediately took to the potluck dinner afterwards, with cookies and cupcakes dancing in their eyes. The families who participated brought a wonderful variety of foods, drinks, and desserts to go around. It was with great appreciation that everyone dined together, proud of their students and excited for the festivities. Once everyone had had their fill, those who had signed up to be a Secret Sulsa gathered to exchange their gifts. A new take on the traditional Secret Santa game, "Super" Secret Sulsa (Sulsa being a Korean word roughly translating to "ninja"), is a game where everyone gets the completed "likes and interests" profile of another player, but with only a number on the paper in place of a name. Their task is finding a gift for this person based only on the information given in the profile and see if they can figure out who it is prior to

the gift exchange. With dozens of people participating overall in the various age groups, it can be quite a challenge. More than anything, it's a chance for students to get to know their fellow classmates and spread some holiday cheer! The anticipation and curiosity were finally sated when the students got to exchange the gifts and find out who had which Sulsa.

The time then came for karaoke and late-night partying, with many brave souls giving their best rendition of classic songs in front of the crowd and enjoying the party together long into the evening. What a wonderful time it was to gather and celebrate the accomplishments of yet another great year and further the Hwarang Spirit which binds us all as one big family at the Hwa Rang Do Minneapolis Academy and to all the Hwarang Warriors across the globe in the present, past and the future.

We would also like to take this opportunity to wish our Founder Supreme Grandmaster Dr. Joo Bang Lee, Grandmaster Taejoon Lee, and Master David Kijek as well as all the Instructors and students throughout the world a very Merry Christmas and much happiness, health and joy in the New Year. We look forward to seeing all of you next year in Luxembourg!


**Hwarang Forever and God bless,
Kristina Sirny**

THE WORLD
HWA RANG DO® ASSOCIATION



NON-PROFIT MISSION

It is our goal through our discipline to maximize the self in total, creating a strong foundation to bear the weight of the ever-changing unstable world and allow the individual to courageously seek for the Truth and live a life of true meaning and purpose in the service to humanity for its betterment, honoring God and all for His Glory!"



Find out how Visit:
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 &
<https://www.hwarangdo.lu/non-profit>

2023 WHRDA SUMMER EVENT

Save the Dates!



WORLD HWA RANG DO® ASSOCIATION PROUDLY PRESENT:

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LUXEMBOURG 1st - 8th JULY 2023

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JOIN US AND LEARN DIRECTLY FROM THE HWA RANG DO FOUNDER DR. JOO BANG LEE AND HIS HEIR, THE GRANDMASTER TAEJOON LEE.

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July 1st to 8th, 2023

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS & TRAINING CONFERENCE IN LUXEMBOURG!

MORE INFO & REGISTRATION DETAILS WILL BE COMING SOON

The traditional annual gathering of Hwa Rang Do students, instructors, and masters is finally returning after the COVID era lockdowns & restrictions. Prior to the recent times, the WHRDA hosted 20+ years of consecutive annual summer events that allowed participants to train directly with our head Grandmasters. The week long training conference is a precious opportunity to learn directly from the source of our art, Founder Dr. Joo Bang Lee and his eldest son & heir Grandmaster Taejoon Lee. While specific training topics for the sessions are still being considered, everyone will be sure to get to experience all aspects of the complete training

system that is Hwa Rang Do. There is always something for everyone - kick/punch striking, grappling/submissions, weapon fighting, plus high level details related to belt level curriculum. Training from dawn to dusk everyday for a week is certainly an eye opening experience, especially when you are joined with other students and instructors from around the globe.

Of course the other big highlight of the event is the World Championship tournament! There will be event divisions for all ages of children and adults and belt rank levels. Facing the challenge of other global competitors certainly brings out one's potential. Class train-

ing and practice is our ongoing grind of personal development, however, the spark of competition propels people to much greater heights as you are forged by the pressure of the experience. Face your fears and expand as you step into the rings with your peers for a good spirited challenge! The Hwa Rang Do World Championships is a true decathlon of the martial arts - Open Hand Forms, Weapon Forms, Kick-Punch-Throw Sparring, Grappling, Stick & Sword Fighting, plus Demonstrations.

Along with all of the amazing training and competition, it is important to also make sure to reconnect with our fellow martial art brothers and sisters. Share

not only the journey of the event, but also the journey of life on the path of the Hwarang! There will also be group dinners and a celebratory banquet combining with the action packed week bringing forth a depth of camaraderie for all attendees.

Please make sure to get your passport renewed and save the dates for July 1st to 8th 2023.

See you in Luxembourg this summer!