



Dedicated to the memory of



KIM Chong Soo
7th Dan Black belt

Undeafated Korean High School Champion 1966 - 1968, Undeafated Korean University Champion 1969 - 1972
Undeafated Korean Armed Forces Champion 1972 -1974, Head of Australian National Taekwondo team -
7th Asian Games 1986, Head of Australian National Taekwondo team - 1st World Cup, 1993

In the 1970's Taekwondo growth was exploding around the world and the World Taekwondo organisation (WT) realised it had to send many master instructors around the world so the art could grow properly and uniformly. After military service, young Korean Taekwondo masters were sent off on postings to help develop Taekwondo's global growth.

Master Kim was officially invited to Australia in 1975 and began teaching the day he landed here with no English. From that day on he taught tirelessly 6 - 7 times a week, every week. He was also instrumental in building the NSW state body as the president for 6 years and for several other years as NSW Technical Director, as well as being an executive of the National body.

Since the 1970's Master Kim's teachings have nurtured thousands of young Australians to a positive productive and fulfilled life. He was a also a shining example of how multiculturalism is a huge asset for our society.

Master Kim passed away in January 1998 from complications arising from a hereditary illness, he was 47 years old. The following excerpts are from a conversation between Master Kim and his senior student Gary Simmons in April 1992.

GS: Can you remember how old you were when you actually started training?

Master Kim: Around ten years old, something like that.

GS: What did Taekwondo mean to you as a small boy in Korea?

Master Kim: I started off with a little bit of training for self defence, then after I went to middle school and started to win competitions I got a sports scholarship for high school, then another scholarship for university. Then the army, it was the same thing. I just did Taekwondo training.

GS: What did your military service entail?

Master Kim: In the early seventies Korea had a compulsory National Service. After graduating from University I was in the army for three years, Airborne. When I joined up I was accepted into the Taekwondo team. After two months of basic military training, it was full time Taekwondo training and nothing else. Our unit, the army Taekwondo team had nothing to do with the rest of the army, (Laughs) I didn't touch a gun... (Laughs) they didn't even give me one because there was no time.

Q: Just train, train, train?

A: Yes up every morning at six o'clock then start training. I was the armed forces champion for three years, that's why I trained everyday.

Q: Do champions have a high public profile?

A: Yes. The Taekwondo team are national heroes, like the cricket team is over here. Every youngster dreams of one day being in the team. Over there Taekwondo is the national sport. All the time there are articles and pictures in newspapers and on TV. I remember they put a special badge on my army uniform saying "This is the army champion" then my name... sort of like an ID. Then when I went outside

if anyone saw the uniform like the Police (Korea has very strict security laws) they don't ask questions.

GS: What does Taekwondo mean to you these days?

Master Kim: Taekwondo means to use punching (passionately slams fist into palm - and laughs), to use kicks. That is the way of Taekwondo. It is also self defence. We use punching, we use kicking... to bring the mind, body and spirit together. That's what I call Taekwondo - an art.

GS: Over the years you must have had many good instructors, do any in particular stick in your mind?

Master Kim: Yes, but I haven't had many instructors... my last one from high school and my university coach is a man called Tiger Kim, he now lives in America, in New York, he's my instructor.

GS: What was special about his training?

Master Kim: Special about his training? Well, it was very HARD training. At that time he followed a German philosophy called 'Sparta' training. You know Spartan training - it's based on the philosophies of the ancient Greek warrior kingdom of Sparta. That means we lived in training camps and he was behind you all the time and he pushed HARD and the rule was to never give up. Japanese Samurai training has a similar philosophy, you know what I mean? Samurai training, it's about pushing very hard. Yes... Tiger Kim, he's over in New York, he's the number one Taekwondo man around the world. He's the number one Master. He's fantastic in all techniques, in everything he is number one. Everybody in Korea knows him.

GS: What have you got to do to be a really good martial artist?

Master Kim: The most important thing is not to drink or smoke. Also you have to be a good person because if someone who trains in martial arts does not have a good personality or character, then they can get into trouble. Also, most good martial artists who have been training for a long time respect everyone. For example, if a good martial artist is outside on the street and someone wants to make trouble, they just keep calm and humble... however, if someone attacks in anyway they can defend themselves effectively. That is the main thing.

GS: What is your opinion on the argument "my style is stronger than your style"?

Master Kim: No, that sort of talk is nonsense! It doesn't matter what style it is, you just keep quiet and study, study, study. Then people will find out which style is better and which is not. I've noticed that the general Australian public don't fully understand the idea of martial arts. Quite often people think that they can learn all they need to learn about martial arts after a couple of months training. The fact is, you never finish, it's the same as academic study... you go to university, you graduate and then keep studying at higher and higher levels. It's exactly the same with Taekwondo, just keep working, keep training, keep quiet... become a master.



Master Kim Chong Soo kicking an apple off the head of a trusting student with a round house kick (*mom dolyo chagi*) at Cronulla in 1981