



# Tang Soo Times

Pal Che Tang Soo Do

610-522-9120  
229 South Chester Pike  
Glenolden, PA 19036

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## Calendar of Events:

February 19th - Black Belt pre-test and gup test  
April 16th - Black Belt test

## Birthdays:

Kim D'Angelo - Feb. 15th

## New Students:

Zach Dittus                      Bill Pullin                      Katie Romasko                      Tommy Canlan  
Tommy Schoettle                      Gaetano Luciotti                      Ebony Armstrong

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

**Visit our new website, [PalCheTSD.com](http://PalCheTSD.com).**

## Instructor's Angle

September 1996

*Mr. Centrone wrote this article after a recovery from a previous surgery. As he recovers now, let us all not only train for ourselves, but also for him.*

"Take it To The Bank."

"I asked God for strength, that I might achieve.  
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.  
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.  
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things."

This is a quote from a famous baseball player named Roy Campanella who early in his life struggled with being one of the first Negro players in the major leagues, and later died a crippled man in a wheel chair. He had experienced both the highs and lows that life has to offer.

This quote means a lot to me and basically sums up a week in my life earlier this summer. One day asking for the strength to make it through my E Dan test, and just a few days later asking for my life.

In life you discover that it is not the good times that get you through bad times but rather the struggles and difficult times that shape your character and spirit. Our training teaches us to be obedient to our parents and to honor our friends. Without my family and friends I could not have recovered as I did. We learn things like no retreat in battle, indomitable spirit, and perseverance. These are the tools I used to get myself through my accident and subsequent recovery.

Why are you taking Tang Soo Do? Why do you push yourself to train while you are injured? Why do you train when at times you do not feel like attending class? These are some of the questions I used to ask myself. Do you ever ask yourself some of these same questions?

Recently I had been injured in an accident and found the answers to these very questions. I hope none of you ever have to go through what I did to find those same answers. What I found out about myself was that when faced with what others believed to be an impossible task to recover, I was able to summon what was needed to get back on my feet. The love and hope of family and friends is the first thing needed to rebound from the most catastrophic circumstances.

But, what about the times when you are alone with just your thoughts for company? What can you use to find encouragement when there is no one else around, not just in recovery but in any tough situation you may come across? My Tang Soo Do training is what helped me get through some tough private moments. Not the physical aspects of my training, but the mental toughness that the physical training brought on.

During the first day of physical rehab at the hospital I was doing leg exercises with the therapist standing over me yelling encouragement. Hearing her count reminded me of a lesson from one of my early classes in karate and I began to cry. The therapist thought I was in pain and told me to stop. But, these were tears of joy. I was reminded of an extremely hot night when we were working on what seemed like instinct. We were so exhausted that I remember thinking that it was crazy for us to train like that.

Master Raver would often tell us that "Karate was like a bank, the more we put in, the more we could get out." He told us to remember this particular night and put it in our bank, because some day we could withdraw it from our account. Lying on that therapy table I finally realized the lesson from that night's class so many years before.

## Master's Corner

This story ran last in the August 1999 Newsletter and 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.

### **Black Belt Health**

Submitted by: Sundar Swaminathan

Importance of stretching harder in the winter:

Stretching is the basic warm-up to practically every sport. Whether one plays football in the fall, basketball in the winter, or track in the spring, it is imperative that the athlete stretches in order to loosen up their muscles. Stretching increases flexibility, balance, circulation, and muscle tone while decreasing stiff joints and muscular tension. Especially during the months of winter, extra emphasis should be placed on stretching before doing any activity. This includes shoveling too! This is because the muscle is a dense series of muscle fibers which allow our bodies to move. If anyone has ever worked with play-doh, they will notice that it is easier to mold and shape it when it is warm and pliable. Our muscles are just like this. During the summer and spring seasons, we are generally more active. We go outside and play in the park or throw the football around. Our muscles are already warm so that when we come to karate we stretch even harder to push those muscles and increase flexibility. However, during the winter months we barely move around. Our muscles are stiff and more inflexible. This is why kicking in the winter is sometimes a lot tougher than in the summer. Stretching these muscles allows them to lengthen and loosen up. Doing anything without stretching these 'cold' muscles causes strain in the muscle fibers and sometimes a tear. So when we stretch before class make sure you are pushing yourself because otherwise you may injure yourself and that will keep you out of class and make you even more inflexible.

### **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 forty-seven ronin posted the night they avenged the death of their lord.)

# Kids Section

A couple of months ago a human skeleton appeared in the kids's page with all kinds of facts about bones. But there is more to the body than bones! (no bones about it...) The same website, DiscoveryKids, has provided the information for this month's Kids' Section which is about the cardiovascular system. All this information is free game for written tests, so read up! You can also visit Discovery Kids' website "your gross and cool body" and learn all about weird things like ear wax, burping, and all kinds of stuff.

## Your Cardiovascular system

### **What is it?**

It's a big name for one of the most important systems in the body. Made up of the heart, blood and blood vessels, the circulatory system is your body's delivery system. Blood moving from the heart, delivers oxygen and nutrients to every part of the body. On the return trip, the blood picks up waste products so that your body can get rid of them.

### **Your Heart**

About the size of your clenched fist, your heart is a muscle. It contracts and relaxes some 70 or so times a minute at rest — more if you are exercising — and squeezes and pumps blood through its chambers to all parts of the body. And it does this through an extraordinary collection of blood vessels.

### **Your Blood Stream**

Your blood travels through a rubbery pipeline with many branches, both big and small. Strung together end to end, your blood vessels could circle the globe 2 1/2 times! The tubes that carry blood away from your heart are called arteries. They're hoses that carry blood pumped under high pressure to smaller and smaller branched tubes called capillaries. The tubes that more gently drain back to the heart are veins.

### **How does your blood get oxygen?**

When you inhale, you breathe in air and send it down to your lungs. Blood is pumped from the heart to your lungs, where oxygen from the air you've breathed in gets mixed with it. That oxygen-rich blood then travels back to the heart where it is pumped through arteries and capillaries to the whole body, delivering oxygen to all the cells in the body — including bones, skin and other organs. Veins then carry the oxygen-depleted blood back to the heart for another ride.

### **FACTOIDS:**

- The body of an adult contains over 60,000 miles of blood vessels!
- An adult's heart pumps nearly 4000 gallons of blood each day!
- Your heart beats some 30 million times a year!
- The average three-year-old has two pints of blood in their body; the average adult at least five times more!
- A "heartbeat" is really the sound of the valves in the heart closing as they push blood through its chambers.