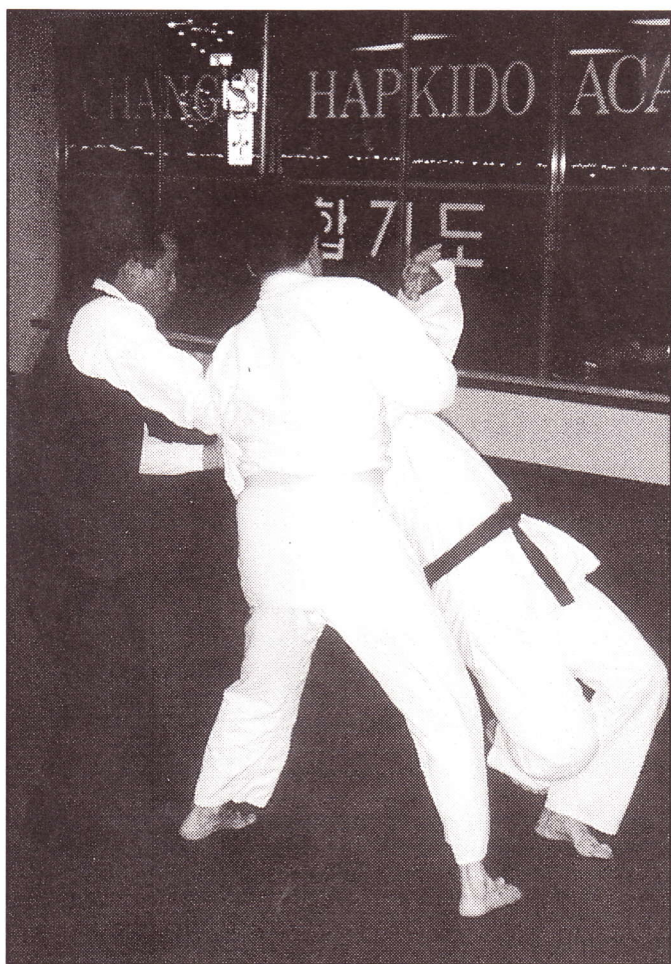


Grandmaster G

An Exclusive Interview with

Master Gedo Chang, 8th Dan Hapkido, holds seminars and lectures on Hapkido, Inner Power, Spirituality, Human Behaviour and other subjects. His teachings and philosophy are known worldwide, influencing students and Masters alike. On a recent trip to his school in Chicago, Master Chang shared some of his wisdom, whilst planning his next visit to England.



TKD-KMA: What is the role of Master, and what does being a Master mean?

Gedo Chang: Nowadays many people exaggerate too much. Some claim to be Masters and others not; often you cannot trust what has been said or written about someone. The only way to truly know whether they are true Masters is to see how they teach.

Black Belts and Masters alike must first be capable "abil-

ity wise". Also, no matter when or where they are, they must be ready to act, not controlled by an insistence that they are tired or have leg problems etc. I teach my students to be ready in any circumstance physically and mentally. This means that through everyday life you must condition your mind and body all the time. No matter whether you are young or old you should be ready.

The true centre of Master actually comes from his personality; an ability to love people, help people and influence them in a more positive direction.

TKD-KMA: How has the role of Master changed?

G.C.: In the old days the martial arts started in order to train people to fight better in the battlefield, nowadays there is no such battle. Today the concept should be changed. Centuries ago they emphasised the physical part, but these days we should also equally emphasise the other-side: compassion, friendship, wisdom etc. In this manner we can influence people more positively.

TKD-KMA: Do you think Masters have an obligation to ensure the quality of other corrupt Masters?

G.C.: We Masters do not want the Martial Art society corrupted. We know people who open up a school after 3 months training, insisting that they are a 3rd Degree Black Belt. Others after a year claim themselves Masters, this such thing should be corrected.

In the Oriental countries we do not have this problem because of the governments strict controls. In the rest of the world, like in America, there are no such controls. The best way to stop this corruption is for the government to establish certain regulations, in this way false leaders of Martial Art society should disappear.

As Masters we can not go and tell them that they are not right. It is unfortunate that some of the false Master are very capable business men, thus attracting more students. Well trained Masters sometimes have problems because of lack of students if they are not as adept in business. The corruption within Martial Arts society should be stopped otherwise we will simply turn into a marketplace.

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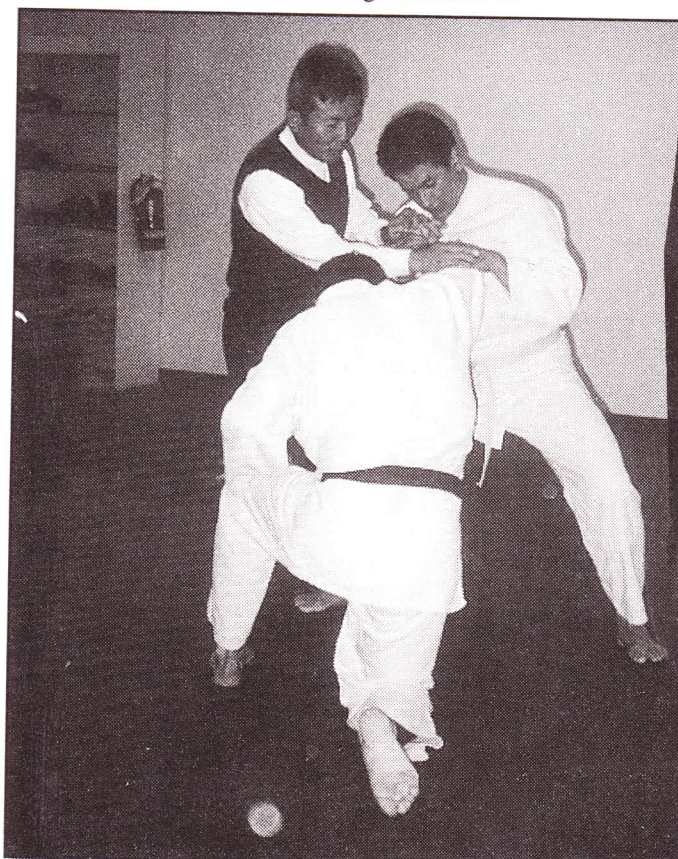
TKD-KMA: *What are students looking for when they first enrol in Hapkido?*

G.C.: There are many reasons, some want to learn self defence techniques, some to condition mind and body, some for physical discipline. No matter what they first want however, eventually they realise that Hapkido is much deeper, more profound than they ever expected. Hapkido is more than physical health or self defence techniques. The more important part of Hapkido training is inner peace, wisdom and discipline - which is what I try to teach.

TKD-KMA: *What do you look for within new students?*

G.C.: First, as a Master, I must analyse the student understanding his personality and physical capability. Once I understand who they are, I can plan what to teach and how to lead. For instance, a very violent child should be smoothed down, a very weak or too soft child through lack of confidence should be brought up a little bit and helped to be tougher. My main point is not only physical capability, but mainly that I want them to change themselves.

Gedo Chang
8th dan,
Hapkido



TKD-KMA: In a society whereby crime and violence is increasing, is it right to be teaching a child to fight, or should we encourage them to love - aren't these two contradictory?

G.C.: Children should be children; if they act like adults that is abnormal. When we teach children we tell them not to fight for nothing, but also we are not supposed to tell them, no matter what, don't fight. What is the purpose of children being here? They want to learn, want to gain ability to defend themselves and fight against bad people. When someone bothers or picks on a child then they can warn them a couple of times, but if they are being kicked and punched, they must fight back. We can not expect that if somebody hit you that you shouldn't fight back. As an instructor, therefore, we should teach them not to fight for nothing, but always to defend themselves.

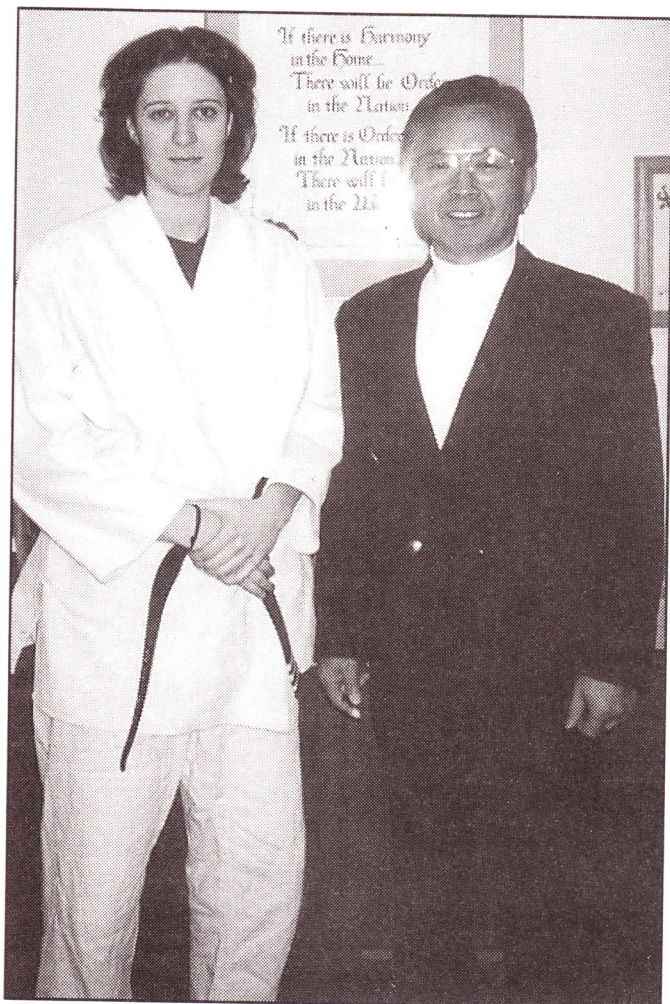
TKD-KMA: At the end of your classes you often lecture. How important is that lecture?

G.C.: While practicing Hapkido only physically they will be attuned only to that direction. I must also explain the philosophy behind the techniques: through confidence how they change their personality, their lifestyle, how students should help others. Some Masters teach techniques only. Others, like myself, teach and lecture. There is a big difference attitude-wise. Without such philosophy and education they are



more vulnerable to lose their temper, solving problems with physical power alone. My students, even before something happens, will always try to prevent conflict. They will be more cautious, relaxing more and controlling their emotion. There is a big difference compared to those who don't hear such lectures; this is why I travel around the world giving lectures. When they hear my words they are surprised, awed. They didn't know how to connect. So I help Martial Artists





to understand how to connect their physical discipline with their social life.

TKD-KMA: *Your students are very diverse. How do you ensure that your lectures enlighten all, without conflict, causing trouble or offence?*

G.C.: I do not talk about religion except to give occasional examples from texts. Once in a while people who have a very cultic religious attitude resist. In this case this is their obstacle. Even people who believe in Buddha or Jesus Christ can have a cultic attitude. The fact that you don't believe doesn't determine if you are a cult, it is the attitude towards your belief system that will determine this. I try to teach people to wake up. If they practice martial arts long and hard, then they realise the ultimate goal is about the same as the goal of other religions or wisdom's.

TKD-KMA: *Do you encourage students to question?*

G.C.: I assume that your question is about the deeper side of the martial arts, not about students understanding the physical reason for a front block? Questioning the deeper side?...No. Honestly speaking student's questions are very irrelevant, they try to attain knowledge by questioning and answering, but Martial Art training is not this way. Knowledge doesn't

mean much. They should practice until they perceive truth, until they perceive the sense of their discipline or actions - keep on practicing.

TKD-KMA: *Do you feel that Westerners understand this?*

G.C.: Even Eastern people want to question. If a three year old little girl questions her parents about sex, that is irrelevant - it is not time for her to understand what it is. In Zen Buddhism the disciple would be scolded or ignored. Students must perceive the truth by practicing not by attaining knowledge. They may question, but Instructors should not answer every question. Unless they reach up to that level, they will not understand.

TKD-KMA: *You travel worldwide by giving lectures/seminars. Some participants claim that they are the best that they have ever attended. Why do you think this is?*

G.C.: If such people get seminars from true Masters, any Master will satisfy the participants. There are so many self-proclaimed Masters! Some students may be going to seminars of false Masters and think that all seminars are like this - then I appear. I not only teach physical techniques but also train both the mental and physical side. They will think "Wow!", not because I am the greatest, but because of past experience of poor quality. My main difference is the mental part, in fact, most other Masters have been influenced by my philosophy. If they are shocked though, that means that they haven't studied under a good instructor.

TKD-KMA: *When will you be coming back to England?*

G.C.: My next seminar will be during the weekend of 13th March 1999, everyone is welcome to attend.

For information on Master Gedo Chang's upcoming seminars please contact Instructor Tammy Parlour, c/o Chang's Hapkido Club, Flat 3, 171 Carholme Road, Lincoln, LN1 1RU. 01522 880 141.

