

MASTER GEDO CHANG

The GENTLEMAN of HAPKIDO

SAM PLUMB interviews Hapkido Master Chang exclusively for FIGHTERS

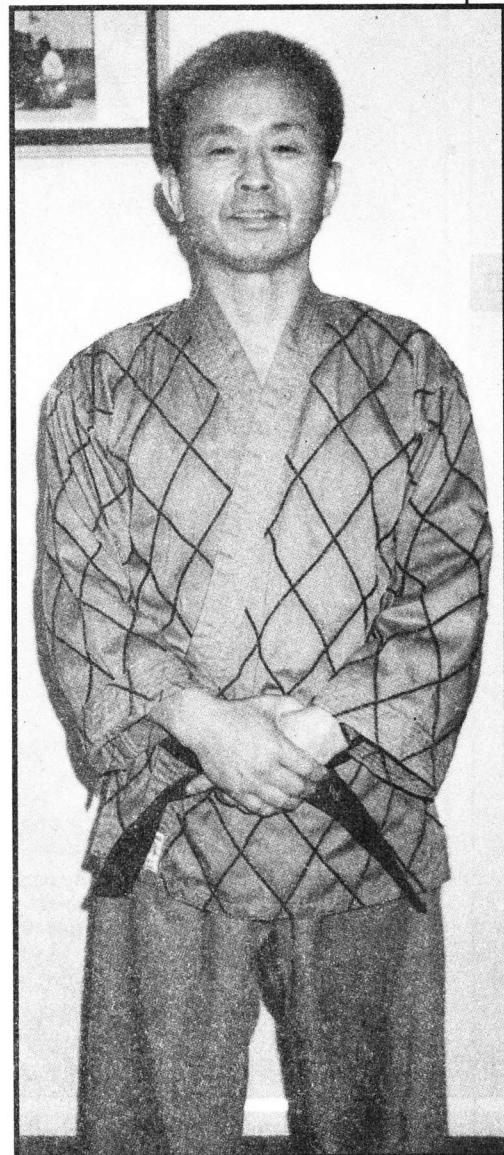
MASTER GEDO CHANG, 8th Dan Hapkido and president of the World Hapkido Union, recently held his first Ki and Hapkido Seminar in the UK at the Musubi No Cho Martial Arts Centre in Lincoln. Master Chang was here at the invitation of his student Tammy Parlour. Tammy spent many years studying Hapkido under Master Chang in the USA. She recently returned to England and now runs regular Hapkido classes in the city of Lincoln.

During a break in the seminar I had the opportunity to interview Master Chang exclusively for *Fighters*. This was the first time I had met, and trained, with Master Chang and I was nervous. Master

Chang is small in stature but a feeling of power emanates from him. Having watched him in action, I can attest that his mastery of "Ki" combined with the "physical" skills of Hapkido make him a very formidable man. As well as giving one of the most enjoyable seminars on Korean Hapkido I have ever attended, I found Master Chang to be a perfect gentleman.

Sam Plumb: Master Chang, why and when did you begin your martial arts training?

Gedo Chang: My family background - my father was a monk and he taught me from childhood.



Hapkido Master Gedo Chang, 8th Dan.



Some of the invited participants at Master Chang's seminar.

SP: When did you first travel to the USA?

GC: First in 1968, then again in 1972 and finally in 1973 I came with my family.

SP: Had you already set up Hapkido schools before 1973?

GC: Before 1973 I taught security guards, detectives and police personnel.

SP: Is Hapkido very strong in the USA?

GC: No, not as strong as Taekwondo, Kung-Fu or Karate. For instance, I am from Chicago and there are 60 Taekwondo masters there, but only three Hapkido masters. So Hapkido is not well known to the general public, but the martial artists know of Hapkido and that it is very practical.

SP: Can you tell us about your organization, the World Hapkido Union?

GC: The World Hapkido Union? I don't have much to talk about the Union



Above: Tammy Parlour on the receiving end of Master Chang's Hapkido. Right: Master Chang applies a stranglehold on Matthew Lyons.

- it is just another organization - I am the president. We do not give certificates. Anyone who wants to be a black belt has to study our system; they have to do regular rank testing. I understand there are some associations who accept video tapes of gradings. The students don't know anything about the system - as long as they are capable of demonstrating a few techniques on video they are given black belts. I don't do that. You know, you can learn techniques in any place, but what about discipline? Discipline is very important.

Definition

SP: What is your definition of Hapkido?

GC: "Hap" means co-ordination between mind and body; "Ki" means inner potential or inner force or inner power; "Do" means a discipline. So, literally speaking, through disciplined life you learn how to co-ordinate between mind and body in order to utilize your inner potential.

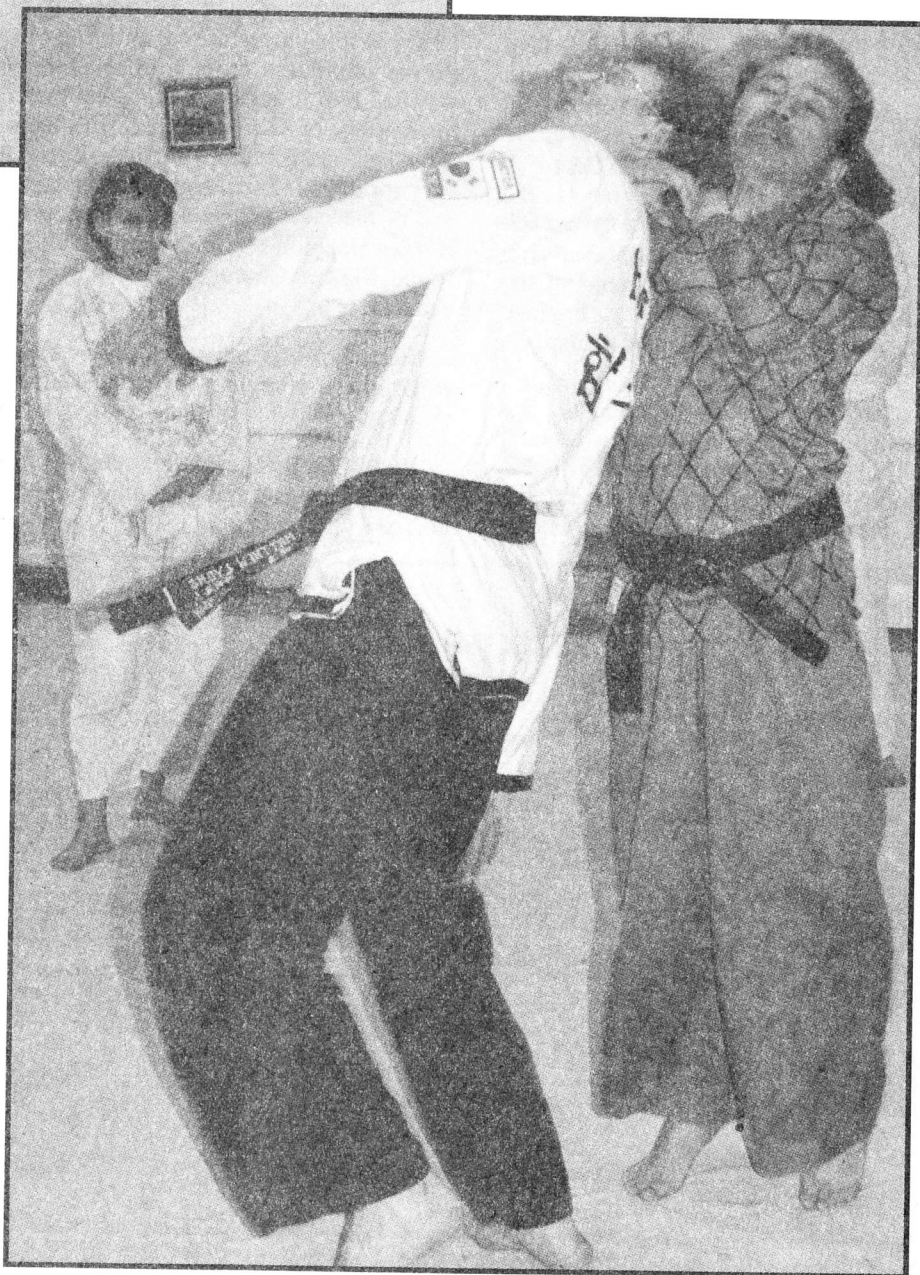
SP: Do you teach Hapkido in a traditional manner?

GC: Discipline wise yes, I teach in a very traditional way - or classical way. But technique wise I revise them, because

I don't want to break the arms and legs of an opponent. Actually, the techniques feel very easy - soft, non-violent and defensive.

SP: What is your opinion of martial arts schools that have gone the sports route; those that place an emphasis on competition rather than traditional martial arts values?

GC: Very sad. It's like boxing, wrestling or soccer - nothing different. Martial arts must be different because martial arts emphasize discipline. You must understand what discipline means. The word discipline comes from Latin and it means that you keep your composure. A similar word is "self control". Through discipline you become freer. By emptying your mind you neutralize fear, anger, anxiety, self-centredness, arrogance and so forth. You must empty impurity, then you become



more and more pure. Through discipline you will naturally conquer yourself. So, actually, our enemies are not in the street; our enemies are within - fear, anxiety, arrogance - these type of things. We have to overcome them.

SP: How is Hapkido developing today?

GC: You mean technique-wise?

SP: How has Hapkido changed since its inception? For instance some schools have added Forms when originally there were no forms in Hapkido.

GC: As long as they do not forget the principles of Hapkido. They can perfect new techniques, they can de-organise, they can revise. When all martial arts were created it was war time; always fighting between tribes and different kingdoms. So the purpose of martial arts was killing each other. However, nowadays we are not supposed to kill each other. So for self defence purposes martial arts must be soft. When a martial artist becomes a Master he can start his own school and add his own techniques. Sure, Hapkido originally didn't have Forms. In the mid 1960's the Korea Hapkido Association allowed Masters to add Forms if they wished. Even in my school I created Forms which were much

different to Taekwondo Forms.

SP: Do you use protective wear, such as body armour, for instance?

GC: No, not at all. Some people believe that full-contact is good when sparring but we are not supposed to cause injury. In my school we don't wear protective gear and we don't have full contact. It is difficult to develop techniques through full contact because they always depend on one kick or one punch. Sometimes, when sparring in class, you lightly touch the face or a vital area of the body of your partner. With full force the opponent would easily be knocked down. I believe techniques are more important. Hapkido is a martial art; we are meant to be **artistic**.

Defensive style

SP: You hold high grades in both Hapkido and Taekwondo, how would you compare the two?

GC: I love Taekwondo but I like Hapkido better. Taekwondo is aggressive and a hard style. Hapkido is the opposite - softer, non-violent and a defensive style. If you study my style of Hapkido you will naturally understand kicks and punches so I don't have to teach Taekwondo,

although I am a 5th Degree in that art.

SP: Finally, Master Chang, what advice would you like to give to all the Hapkido students in the UK?

GC: I have not met many British Hapkido students so I don't know what to say. According to my experience in America, I think you will have the same problems as Hapkido students in the States. What I want to say to **all** martial artists, not just Hapkido students, is that some people have a desire to learn many different martial arts at once. So many martial arts schools of today advertise as teaching Judo, Karate, Kung Fu, Hapkido - it is impossible. I want people to stay with **one** martial art and to try to achieve a certain proficiency. Once they reach this proficiency they don't have to be concerned about other martial arts. There is an old Samurai maxim: "He who has mastered an art will rebuild it in his every action".

SP: Master Chang, thank you very much for your time.

Anyone wishing further information on the Korean art of Hapkido should write to Sam Plumb, European Hapkido Alliance, 28 Jubilee Road, Whitwell, Worksop, Notts. S80 4PL; telephone 01909 723023.

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