



Choi

soldiers unarmed combat. After his time in Vietnam, he was selected to train the instructors for the ITF in Korea. Grandmaster Park was also a pioneer of Tae Kwon Do in Hungary and Poland, being one of the first instructors ever to teach in these countries. Grandmaster Park was a driving force behind the worldwide spread of Tae Kwon Do. His organization, the GTF, includes members from 78 countries and is truly global.

In June of this year **General Choi**, founder of Tae Kwon Do died. During his life, General Choi was exiled, imprisoned, sentenced to death, maligned, honored, hated, and loved. I once went into a large and prestigious school in Denver, Colorado, to train while on vacation. The school owner invited me by phone and was very kind but when I arrived, he was not there. Instead, his son greeted me and asked about my background. When I told him that I studied the Chang Moo Kwan-style ITF forms he said, "Oh, you do communist style." The conversation spiraled downward from there.

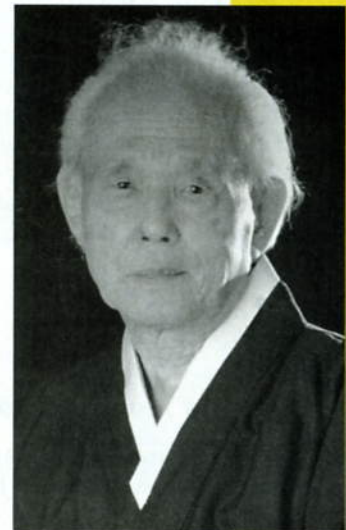
That was the first time that I heard that phrase, but it was not the last. General Choi was born in 1918 long before there was a North or

South Korea. Tong Il, or unification, of the two countries was his fondest wish. He saw the healing that Tae Kwon Do training is capable of and hoped that by sharing this all-Korea martial art with the people of the North, it might provide a common experience that would hasten the unification. The South Korean government ordered him to stop and threatened to pull his visa and the visas of all of his instructors. He made an unbelievably difficult decision and one that would shape the rest of his life and the landscape of Tae Kwon Do forever. He refused. You know the story: South Korea recreated the World Taekwondo Federation, changed all the forms and, basically, started over. There has been a rift between ITF (traditional schools) and WTF (sport Tae Kwon Do schools) ever since. Regardless of the side you grew up on, it is undeniable that General Choi, Hong Hi dedicated his life to sharing Tae Kwon Do with the world.

In July, **Hwang Kee**, founder of Moo Duk Kwan and Tang Soo Do died. When he was born, his parents named him Star Child because they knew he was destined for great things during his lifetime. When Hwang Kee was 22, he had his first formal martial art lesson. I think about how many students express to me their sincere wish that they had begun their martial arts experience earlier and then I think of Hwang Kee. Every time he asked a teacher for instruction, the teacher denied his request because he was too young. Hwang Kee's first instructor was Yang Kuk Jin who accepted him only after Hwang Kee visited his house every day and asked to be his student. Hwang Kee was only able to train with Master Yang for a little over a year before he had to return to Seoul. Years later, Hwang Kee went back to train with Master Yang but in 1946, China became a communist country and Hwang Kee was cut off from his master. He worked for a railway company during this time and studied on his own from books that he found in the library including books on Okinawan Karate and a 300-year-old text called *Moo Yei Do Bo Tong Ji*. He was a true scholar and he will be missed.

"The life of a human being, perhaps 100 years, can be considered as a day when compared with eternity. Therefore, we mortals are no more than simple travelers who pass by the eternal years of an eon in a day. It is evident that no one can live more than a limited amount of time. Nevertheless, most people foolishly enslave themselves to materialism as if they could live for thousands of years. And some people strive to bequeath a good spiritual legacy for coming generations, in this way, gaining immortality. Obviously, the spirit is perpetual while material is not; therefore, what we can do to leave behind something for the welfare of mankind is, perhaps, the most important thing in our lives.

"Here I leave Taekwon-Do for mankind as a trace of man of the late 20th century. The 24 patterns represent 24 hours, one day, or all my life." Choi Hong Hi (1918-2002)



Kee