

# 花郎道

## The Hwa Rang Do® Legacy

WHRDA Monthly Newsletter

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### NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE 2022

#### "MASTERS OR SLAVES"

By

Grandmaster Taejoon Lee

*"If crime and disease are to be regarded as the same thing, it follows that any state of mind which our masters choose to call 'disease' can be treated as a crime and compulsorily cured."*

C.S. Lewis



When we were young, as a child life was a playground filled with endless possibilities, allowing us to wonder and dream of being anything we wanted; a fireman, the president, an astronaut, and a doctor not one at a time in sequence but all of them together at once; the sky was the limit. It was the innocence, the naivete of youth, and the absence of fear which sparked our minds with hope and wonderment, causing us to dream the impossible. As we grew older, we began to experience increasingly more failures, disappointments, and heartbreaks, forcing us to endure greater pain and suffering, which corrupted our innocence and shattered our hopes with fear.

[www.hwarangdo.com](http://www.hwarangdo.com)



[www.hwarangdoglobal.com](http://www.hwarangdoglobal.com)



[www.cyberdojang.com](http://www.cyberdojang.com)



[www.allmartialarts.com](http://www.allmartialarts.com)

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Fear is the killer of dreams and the reviver of doubt and self-loathing. Fear is the mechanism in which evil fulfills its goal, the annihilation of humankind as evil loathes and hates humanity, achieving its endgame of self-destruction. Being that we are imperfect and impure creatures, we cannot eliminate fear as we cannot avoid making mistakes, doing wrong, or making bad choices, inflicting pain and suffering onto ourselves. Hence, negative emotions, pain, and suffering are unavoidable; it is an inconvenient fact of life. Then, the goal in our lives is not to rid oneself of fear but to learn to endure and overcome it.

The only way to triumph over fear is to face it, confront it, and in so doing one learns of courage, of fortitude, and resilience. There can be no courage without fear, and it is this courage which makes us noble to slay our demons, allowing us to realize our potentials. It is only with courage that one can take risks and without taking risks there can be no growth, no change, no betterment. And, without growth or change there can be no hope and without hope there is only despair.

There is a parable by the Teacher: He tells of a story of a man who goes on a long journey and decides to divide his wealth amongst his servants depending on their abilities. To the first he gives five talents (talent is a measure of currency during the Greco-Roman Period), to the second he gives two talents and to the third he gives one talent. Both the first and second servants take the money and invests, doubling their talents. The third with one talent decides to bury it in the ground for safe keeping. After a long while, the master returns and settles his account with his servants. He asked the first and the second servant what they had done with the talents he gave them, and they both replied by saying that they have doubled their talents and the master rewards them. He then asks the third servant what he did with his one talent and the servant replied, "I was afraid, so I went and hid your talent in the ground." Then the master called him a wicked, lazy, worthless servant, casting him out into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The talents symbolize potential as money must be used in order to gain profit in the same way one's potential must be used in order to realize one's value. Money buried in the ground does nothing but sit there eroding away. The third servant was afraid to lose the money, fixating on the negative consequences and overrun with fear he chooses what he feels is a safer and better path. Every human being is endowed with potential, the potential to do good or evil, the potential to be of value or be worthless, and whether one realizes and achieves their full potential or not is our choice.

Fear contracts, it hides, it seeks comfort, it isolates, it judges, it blames, it lies, it's slothful, it's irrational, it's self-righteous, it's amoral. Fear is our greatest enemy and conquering our fears is our greatest challenge. Only by overcoming our fears and liberating ourselves from its enslavement can we even begin to realize our human potential, the value of life, and experience the ultimate happiness and joy of love.

Friedrich Nietzsche states that in nature there are essentially two broad types of species – those animals which are naturally herd animals and those that are naturally loners; those that are prey and those that are predators, and this is the same with human beings. He claims that there are some who are born fearful and being dependent inclined to join a herd and some are born fearless and independent inclined to seek lonely endeavors. Furthermore, he goes on to state that there is nothing one can do about it as it is a product of evolution, and it is genetically encoded into us. He says, "Just as a sheep cannot help but be sheepish and a hawk cannot help but be hawkish, each of us inherits from our parents and from their parents before them a long line of inbuilt traits. It cannot be erased from a man's soul what his ancestors have preferably and most constantly done."

In essence according to Nietzsche, we are born either as masters or as slaves. So, if this was true and/or one believes it to be true, then the goal would be to understand what you are whether master or slave, then by accepting that fact would eliminate overreaching expectations, allowing you to live a better life without extensive struggles, disappointments, and strife. Merely as an observational study and a proponent of evolution, one could agree with Nietzsche, however, one important fact must be taken into account, we are not animals. The theory that human beings have arisen from apes and that they are our ancestors is highly contestable and has yet to be proven to be true. We are similar yet distinctly unique and no ape possesses the high cognitive abilities and consciousness of human beings.

Only human beings possess the ability to make choices and alter their destiny unhindered from instinct and pre-determinism.

Even if one agrees that our social behavior does evolve and changes throughout history without fully advocating the “Theory of Evolution”, human beings still possess the unique attribute to alter their future by the choices that they make.

Whether that we exercise this ability effectively or not is questionable to say the least, but it does not negate the fact that we have such power. It is through our free will, better yet our free won’t that not only do we possess the intellectual acumen of the power of rational thought to make proper choices but more importantly we have the power to say “no” and choose against preconditioned, expected outcomes.

This ability to say “no”, I won’t do this or that, is what makes us truly powerful as we can be unreactive and choose against the expected norms. This is our true power, to say no to temptations, to mass hysteria, to tyranny, to oppression, to injustice, to violence, to ridicule, to false witnesses, to lies. However, this requires much discipline, courage, knowledge, and wisdom as the tools for conformity and oppression is through fear, ignorance, and confusion. The struggles of daily living, the pursuit of vain superficial materialism and indulgent pleasures distracts us from what is essential, fundamental, and primary, the seeking of knowledge and truth which is the foundation to purpose and meaning.

It is true that as sheep, as a frightened herd, dependent on the shepherd for our lives, we are easier to control and manage so for those of you who believe in evolution and you are born as prey, as a slave, then my heart and prayer goes out to you as you have no way to change but forever be confined to your natural disposition. And, God forbid when one such sheep decides to leave the flock and become a leader, a master, a self-empowered independent thinker who actually desires to make a difference in their lives. It is often the case that those who live by such memes as “ignorance is bliss”, “life is too short so enjoy it”, “I don’t believe in anything because there’s so much information”, “all beliefs can’t be true so nothing is true” who are most opinionated and critical of others and act as shepherds to gather those strays back into the flock by manipulating their weaknesses and insecurities, reminding them that they are only sheep in wolf’s clothing, only pretending to be strong and independent while in truth they are no different than them, another sheep. By the nature of the herd mentality, they shun, ridicule and persecute anyone who tries to leave the flock or stands against them.

For me and for those who are teachers of Hwa Rang Do®, it is our goal and our mission to empower each person to strive and to achieve their full God-given potential through courage and perseverance: The courage to take the risk and the resilience and endurance to persevere. We reject the idea that we are born as slaves or masters and support the belief that every human being has the power to transform themselves into a strong leader, a master of their own destiny not because this path is an easy one, but it is the most noble one. It is true that we are all slaves; we are all slaves to sin and with this knowledge begins true wisdom by being humble to God. We are however masters of our own choices, and it is through our choices that we will be blessed or damned. No human being should be a slave to any human master, but only surrender to God as their one and only Master.

We are all born free; free to choose and choosing the right path requires the utmost courage and wisdom. Moreover, once a choice is made, it will be challenged on all fronts and the hardships and suffering begin. making it harder to stay on the path. It is our choice to be a master or a slave, a peasant or a warrior, to stand or fall, to fight or flee. More than ever we as humanity are challenged to rise and fight against the tyranny and oppression by fear promoted, endorsed, and enforced by the masses and governments. We cannot eliminate the risks of enduring harm, suffering, pain, or death. All we can and should do is to strengthen, fortify, and forge our will and spirit so that when the time comes to endure such persecution as we fight for our freedom, for what is right that we may remain convicted to the Truth and never sway, never falter, never surrender. The alternative is to choose ignorance, turn a blind eye, and fall in line to the slaughterhouse.

Hwarang forever and Godspeed,

**Grandmaster Taejoon Lee**





## 2022 FORWARD MARCH!



Master Dylan Sirny  
5th Degree Black Sash,  
Vice President of the  
WHRDA

As we enter the new year there are many things on our near horizon. Of course, many people are motivated to push their training to the next level, so remember, the most important aspect of your training routine is staying focused on being consistent! We know that new year motivation is helpful to get the ball rolling, however, staying consistent on a regular routine of training is what builds the momentum of snowballed results. Little-by-little, step-by-step, day-by-day is how significant growth occurs so make sure that along with charting a few specific goals and milestones to shoot for, it is just as important to chart a reasonable schedule for you to stick to! Stick to that routine for just 30-45 days and you are sure to be out of any old ruts and now marching forward on the path to success!

I also wanted to take a quick moment to update you as to some of the many plans that the WHRDA is working on right now as we speak. This year you can expect to see:

### Online Enhancements:

- As we continue to grow the hwarangdo.org platform there will be even more training opportunities than there are now. Currently all Tae Soo Do students have access to their curriculum, and we are working on adding the Hwa Rang Do Color Sash material.
- The Cyberdojang will also continue to grow with the addition of specialized training topics directly from Kuksanim. This is actually a MASSIVE archive of seminar & workshop material from the past that will be combined with additional new material. As we work on organizing the content, it is hard to believe how much material is available along with how complete & comprehensive our martial art is!
- The online Community Forums are expected to launch in February, and will include a variety of sections related to training, history, philosophy, and teaching. We look forward to the discussions for our global community.
- The Dojangmanager for our school operations will also be enhanced. Instructors and Staff can look forward to additional features such as class attendance, membership processing, and local event management.

### Non-Profit endeavors:

- The start of official funding drives for the Scholarship Campaigns related to general training will also be opened in February. We hope to build a healthy fund to help people on a need & merit basis to get into training, along with a fund for the instructor training vocational program as well.
- There is also additional work going on related to organizational development and connections to various foundations.

### Other items:

Make sure to stay tuned in to Kuksanim's new regular podcast @ [livebythesword.tv](https://livebythesword.tv)  
If you aren't already training in the weekly Global classes, get signed up here = <https://hwarangdo.org/global-online-classes>

Best wishes to you and your family for the coming year! I hope you see many positive results through your consistent training!

## New Year's Message from Some of our WHRDA Members

Like many people my age, I grew up surrounded by comics and superheroes, extraordinary characters, common people by day and rescuers of the innocent and defenseless by night. My imagination was firing, I wanted to become like them, be strong like them. This is basically the reason why I decided to start training in martial arts, and I can only thank God for having known Hwa Rang Do® right from the start through my current instructors. It was during the initial introduction to Hwa Rang Do which I immediately identified with the common underlying principles that fascinated me about the superheroes of my childhood, mainly of strength and courage. During my many years of practice in Hwa Rang Do I have learned that power is nothing if it is an end to itself, and that being courageous does not mean to be without fear.



Simone Negro  
1st Degree Black Sash,  
Hwa Rang Do®  
Genoa Academy

Contrariwise, power has meaning only when it's put towards the service of others, only when we use it to help, protect or defend people who otherwise could not do it alone. A Warrior does not fight because he wants to, to feel powerful or satisfied, a Warrior fights because he must. I was taught a very interesting story about being courageous: One day fear knocked on the door, courage went to open it, he saw him, even recognized him, but smiled at him with the love of a father who plays cops and robbers with his own little son.

I have two aspirations for the future. One is personal, the legacy of that dream I had as a child, to continue training, to prepare myself hoping that one day I am able to enter a room and without saying a word, make everyone understand the type of person I have become, loyal and honorable, proud and courageous, a warrior, a true Hwarang. Only with my presence, my spirit.

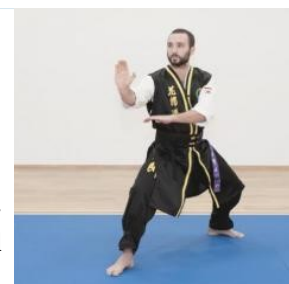
The second is to continue teaching. I have the privilege of being a Tae Soo Do® Instructor, teaching both adults and children. I have chosen this word with care, as it fully represents the incredible responsibility and enormous satisfaction that is obtained in being an instructor, being able to help other people, to help them believe in their dreams, to help and motivate them towards their goals, by facing the challenges that confronts them, to become "Warrior-heroes" and leave the world a little better than the way they found it. After all, this is what "heroes" are, ordinary people, like any of us, doing extraordinary things. They do not wear knitted socks, they do not know how to fly, and they are not invulnerable, but on the contrary, they can feel fear, anger, remorse, pain. They can make mistakes, get hurt, feel the whole weight of the world on themselves, and yet continue to fight, get knocked down, getting up over and over again for what is right. This what makes them heroic. I strongly believe that each of us can become one, it is my job to motivate people to help others to become heroes. That is what Hwa Rang Do® has taught me, and I couldn't be more grateful for that.

### Hwarang Forever!

#### Aspirations for the New Year,

I will put my heart in what I believe is most important, strengthening my faith.

The past 2 years have been, to say the least, very dynamic, and rich in blessings for me. I got married to a beautiful woman, Valentina, a true example of a loving wife and a caring mother. We have had 2 daughters, Chiara, and Cecilia, who fill our lives with joy and happiness (and struggles, of course!). I have lived and worked in Luxembourg, in Kenya, in the south of Italy and again in Luxembourg, before moving back again to my mother country a few months ago. All this, while the entire world was affected by the spread of Covid-19. Most of this, inspired by the teachings and guidance of Grand Master Taejoon Lee.



Giuseppe Morelli  
EU Liaison and Funding  
Director for the WHRDA.

Every stage of this long, at times exciting but also very difficult journey, has been instrumental to one thing, re-connecting me with my faith in God, which I had not cultivated in a long time.

A journey which began years earlier, when I started practicing Hwa Rang Do® in Luxembourg, when I first met Grand Master Lee. It is not my aim to dwell further on past events, as I intend to write about my vision for the next year. However, I also think it is important to identify the connectors, the common threads, what brought me here and now, to understand what I aspire to be and the areas I need to work on to get there.

How are Hwa Rang Do® and Faith connected? In my personal experience, they almost overlap with each other, where Faith is the end and Hwa Rang Do® has been the means to get there (the “way”). The martial discipline, the training, the objective to improve not just to better the self, but rather to be a better student, a better example, a better father, husband, son, brother, friend, a better human being. It is through this hard work and dedication that I have re-discovered the Love and Faith in God. When I train, when I go to work, I now pray. I pray God to give me strength, wisdom, to guide my thoughts, my words, and my actions.

I am sitting on my couch, my little girls sleeping on my sides, while I write this short article and I realize how blessed I am. There is peace in my heart. But, as much as I enjoy the happiness of being a father - it goes without saying - it also comes with sacrifices, compromises, and self-denial. Fatherhood becomes the new point of the compass to draw the lines of my future life, but it cannot become the excuse to withdrawal and do less. For the year to come there is one source of inspiration that I would like to mention here. Someone who has not done less due to fatherhood. On the contrary, he has done more. That is, Kyo Bum Nim Roberto Cesca, who I look up to for the determination he has shown, especially in the last couple of years, relentlessly serving the growth of Hwa Rang Do® in Luxembourg, always putting his own interests and ambitions in second place. I have worked shoulder-to-shoulder with him for many years. I now hope to be able to walk on his footprints and be a driver of change, a source of inspiration as he is for his students in Luxembourg.

## Hwarang



Silvia Russo  
Yellow sash  
Hwa Rang Do®  
Genoa Academy

"How can we take a step forward in realizing who we are called to be?" The first word that comes to mind is FREEDOM. I consider myself lucky because I was born in Italy, where I was able to choose what I believed was right for me. Today at the age of 48 I wonder how much of what I "built" is really the result of my will, and my freedom of choice or how much is the result of what others, social habits, consumerism typical of Western countries, traditions and religion led me to believe was right for me.

I spent the first 36 years of my life trying to meet the expectations of others, good daughter, good student, good friend, good sister, good wife but where was I? Where was the real me? How can a completely lost person be an example, help people and improve this society and this world? They simply cannot. This is my project, my purpose, and my resolution for next year and for all future years, to free myself as much as

I can from fears, prejudices, indifference, and labels that the historical and social context in which we live have induced. I will go beyond mere news and information, I will listen and observe, and I will always ask myself questions, if what I am doing and if my behavior is the result of my free mind or of conditioning.

If I work, study and practice projecting my mind towards the image of myself and my life as I would like it, day after day I will find myself, I will find my balance, I will live and understand every emotion without being subjugated. I must be the "mistress" of my mind so I can become an improved and better version of mother, daughter, sister, friend and practitioner of Hwa Rang Do®. Now I'm in the middle, I'm just a shadow of what I could be, of what I have the right and the duty to be.

If each of us were responsible for their own mind, we could not only improve ourselves but improve our micro and macro universe: our family, our friends, our cities, and nations. We are "bombarded" with wrong messages; it is not the new smartphone model, or the new car, the extra-luxury vacation, or the fashionable clothes, or being thin or eternally young, that makes us better, but it is being yourself, realizing yourself, knowing, understanding, study, breathe and love.

The first step forward that should be taken to achieve what we are called to be is knowledge, or rather continuous learning by exploiting every opportunity, observing, and listening, exchanging opinions, constantly asking questions, closely linked to a deep introspection and analysis of oneself. One day I closed my eyes, and I went back in time to when I was a child and I dreamt and imagined my future life and my future self, I realized that I was not like that at all. That day I decided to change, today I have decided to start making my child's dream come true.

## Hwarang

On the threshold of a new year that announces itself once again marked by "fear" (a very powerful virus in circulation, capable of infecting and corrupting the spirit) I take with myself, as every year, the commitment that is the basis of all the rest. Before any project, goal, aspiration for growth, I make a commitment to take care of life, to experience the intensity of living without being distracted by the noise that surrounds us and that always risks making us lose sight of the meaning of what we are. It is an existential posture from which everything else follows. It is a bit like a good basic position to adopt in our Art: balanced, low, in which we feel the energy well distributed. Renewing the commitment to life always means knowing where you are, even when everything around us is complex and confused. It means knowing what matters, even when many certainties crumble. I am an absolute beginner in our art, but in recent years I have experienced, the mind-body unity, that a daily training in our art helps not only to improve my martial skills, but my existential posture.



Simone Regazzoni  
Red belt  
Hwa Rang Do®  
Genoa Academy

It is on the basis of this posture that I can plan my growth intended not as an increase in the strength and performance of my Ego or improvement of my social image, but as an enhancement and vital "flowering", as an intensification of the life I keep in me, that is immensely greater than my Ego. This life is nourished by everything that increases its power and does not give up anything: training, readings, meetings, dialogue, feelings, relationships starting with those in my family, the people I love, and with friends. I'm not very fond of uplifting moral purposes. I know that I will be able to look at myself in the mirror every morning if I do anything to protect the serenity of my family, if I am loyal to those I recognize as a friend and if I am honest with myself, starting with my mistakes and defeats. Here's how to honor life in this year that begins. The light in the world, in my eyes, is the sum of many honorable behaviors.

Part of my job consists in teaching and touring the country giving lectures and philosophy lessons. Especially at a time like this I feel the responsibility of encouraging people, especially young people, to cultivate the time of thought, critical reflection, deepening, reading. Training the mind is the only way we have to cultivate an increasingly threatened freedom. For 2022 I have two goals: the publication of a philosophy book about the ocean, which I have been working on for a few years, and the achievement of Tae Soo Do® black belt. In both cases it will be a struggle between Life-power and Ego-force. Impossible as it is to completely erase the Ego while writing, training, and fighting, it would be a lie, especially for those like me who have a bulky Ego. I believe it is necessary to know how to make good use of one's Ego, without becoming its slaves. If I am able to find a balance between my Ego and the vital power that flows in me, I will be able to achieve these two objectives that will help me to become what I do not yet know I can be. A surfboard does not reach the beach only with the strength of the rider, it must enter into consonance with the power of the waves that support it and push it forward.