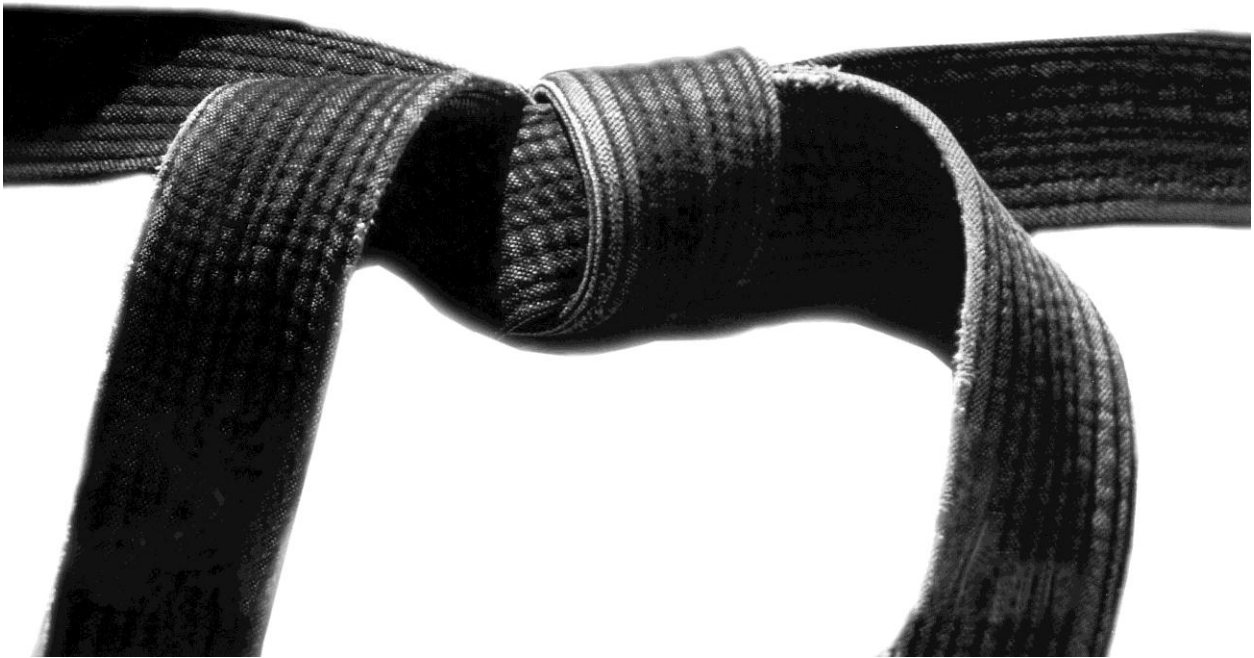


**What Tang Soo Do and PKSA Karate  
Means To Me, What Being a Black Belt  
Means To Me and What My Instructor  
Means To Me**

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August 13, 2013

*“Here, it contains everything you need to find your way to the golden glow. [hands him an empty fortune cookie] Think Leroy! You have just opened a fortune cookie without a fortune, written by a master who does not exist, to find a solution to a problem whose answer you already know! There is one place that you have not yet looked and it is there, only there that you shall find the master!” Leroy Green’s master from the movie “The Last Dragon”*

### **WHAT TANG SOO DO AND PKSA KARATE MEANS TO ME**

It all started when I was little watching martial arts movies. My dad’s favorite karate movie is “The Five Deadly Venoms” which is really good. My favorite karate movie is “The Last Dragon”. I would copy the moves on my little sister and my dad, trying to get “The Glow” to surround my body just like it did in the movie. I asked my dad why Leroy had to wait until the end of the movie to get the glow to beat the bad man. My dad said that even though Leroy had the physical skills of a master, he did not have the mental skills of a master. Leroy had to know that he was the master he was looking for!

I thought that it would be pretty cool one day to be a master of karate, but I did not know how it was going to happen. I was inspired by my Uncle Ted who is a third degree black belt in Taekwondo and I was amazed about all the things he knew. One day, I was given a Kids Power sheet from school and brought it home. My mom and dad asked me if I wanted to do karate. I told them sure; I would do karate so I can be like my Uncle Ted. So, my dad looked at the paper and commented, “What is Tang Soo Do?” We looked up Tang Soo Do on the internet. I was so excited, I called my Grammy and T-Lori and told them I was going to be just like Uncle Ted and take karate. They asked me what form and I began to explain to them everything my dad had

told me off the internet. While sharing with them I made the important decision within myself to study Tang Soo Do so I could be a great master.

Since I am a smart kid and kind of short, people may try to bully me. My first day with Master Brian Walker was teaching me how to run, punch, and kick the training dummy. I was more than eager to learn Tang Soo Do so I could protect myself and my little sister. Now that I am studying Tang Soo Do, I am able to defend myself and have more confidence in myself. Without Tang Soo Do, I would have remained this quiet little boy with no way of defending myself against anyone. Tang Soo Do has allowed me to meet new kids and to become friends with them. It has helped me to become very outspoken, outgoing, and a confident kid. PKSA Karate has given me the opportunity to teach classes and encourage other students. I often tell my peers at school that karate helped me become a better person and student. I share my experience of learning a new language, counting and learning different Korean moves. Since, I have never been taught another language before, I was really confused. I was thinking, “how am I going to be able to remember all of this stuff when I have not even learned another language in school”? By going through this process, it has prepared me to become a better student, a person, friend and child. It has taught me how to look at an obstacle not as a stumbling block, but as a test preparing me to become a master.

Tang Soo Do has caused me to be more mature than my friends and classmates who do not take karate. (Most of the time, they seem to be doing stuff so childish or it does not make sense.) In karate, even though I do not fully know or understand, I do know that we do everything for a reason. We move our hips for power. We stand a certain way depending on the move we about to do. I think the biggest impact of martial arts to my life is attention to detail. A lot of times, I did not pay attention to detail. But in karate, I have to. Detail is very important

because it can be the difference between black belt and no black belt or it can be the difference between life and death! So because of karate, attention to detail helps me in school, home, and at church.

Tang Soo Do has also taught me that even if there are not a lot of people trying to get to the highest level, there will be always be a few people trying to get there. I will use this for my life when trying to do something a lot of other people would not do. PSKA Karate has influenced my life because it has taught me that some people are always looking at you. It may not be a lot of people, but someone is always looking at you to see how you do things and how you react. So I have to be sure that I am striving for excellence in everything I do.

Tang Soo Do has prepared me how to react under pressure. Every belt helps to know more and more material. Without Tang Soo Do, the only pressure I usually have is school, but because I make all A's, the pressure is little. Karate allows me to get balance for my body. It was during this time that I found out that I could jump really high and I could kick over my head. This is what Tang Soo Do means to me.

### **WHAT BEING A BLACK BELT MEANS TO ME**

Why do I want to be a black belt? After my first belt promotion and celebration, my dad told me that I needed to look at karate like I look at school. In kindergarten, you graduate but you do not graduate again until the twelfth grade. So even though I would get other promotions, I did not expect any other celebrations until I reached black belt. But just like the twelfth grade, black belt seemed so far away, I wondered could I ever do it.

What does being a black belt mean to me? I started out with a lot of kids from white belt, but I am the only one in my age group that is still here. I started karate when I was five (and

three quarters) years old and will become a black belt at ten years old. I am really happy because I think that I will be the youngest black belt that Sa Bom Nim has ever had!

Black belt to me means endurance. There were many times that I felt like quitting because I was tired or I wanted to do something else. But then I think about the scripture that says the race is not given to the swift nor the strong, but to the one who endures, and my family who has invested time and placed worth on me. I also think about my fellow black belts (Terrance, Austin and Henry) and as the youngest, if I could do it, it would probably motivate them to continue.

Black belt to me also means knowledge. It does not matter your age, you have the same level of knowledge and no one can take that away from you. Training for becoming a black belt has been the hardest thing I have ever done in my life. I have to know so much information. I also have to be in good mental and physical condition so I have to work out. This process has been very hard. But if I can pass the black belt test, then I think that I can pass any test in my life! I look forward to the day when I can share with the kids that you do not have to be big, tall, and old to get a black belt!

Lastly, black belt to me means respect. I may be small and young but when I step on that mat everyone must respect me. Maybe my path can be like Master R. Collins', Jr. who began Tang Soo Do when he was four years old and became an instructor at thirteen! They will have to bow out to me as "Cho Dan"! This respect should then make it easier for me to be an instructor and teach it. Just thinking about it gets me pumped up! But I realize that Cho Dan is just the beginning! I really want to see how everything comes together and to learn new moves and holds so I can really know self-defense at the highest level! I know that being a black belt will really teach me what to do in dangerous situations and help me to get to the master level. So

when I am training or being an instructor, someone can look at me and say like Leroy's girlfriend said from the movie The Last Dragon, "You sure look like a master to me!" Right now, I am nervous about the testing coming up, but being a black belt puts me into a new family. I am glad! This is what being a black belt means to me.

### **WHAT MY INSTRUCTOR MEANS TO ME**

My instructor, Michael Tullier, a.k.a. Monster Tullier has taught me everything I know about Tang Soo Do. What my instructor means to me is somebody who makes me confident that I can do this. I was in the Lil Ninja class, but Sa Bom Nim put me in the regular class because he said that I was mature for my age. I really liked that he did it which mean he saw the potential in me. Even though I was small, I could remember my moves just like the other kids in the class.

One day Sa Bom Nim showed up to my elementary school to talk about Kid's Power. I think I was at yellow belt at the time. So Sa Bom Nim called me down to demonstrate my form to the students. I was so excited I was able to show my friends and other kids what I had been learning in karate and it made me feel good.

What my instructor means to me is someone who helped me with confidence and he made me better. He does not take it easy on me. He really pushes me to do very well. He is a very good instructor. What I like most is that he demands respect. If someone is not paying attention or talking he makes them sit down. Most of all, Sa Bom Nim cares about me. He always treats my parents nicely and I would not want to have another main instructor than Master Tullier! He also has taught me everything that I know about being a black belt. This is what my instructor means to me.

I would like to start by thanking all of the students who I have ever been in class with. I would like to give special thanks to the students who helped me along the way. They are Logan, Terrance, Austin, Henry, David, and Rachel. I would like to thank the parents of PKSA for their encouragement and support. I would like to acknowledge all of the staff at the karate school, especially Miss Lacy, and the students at the school for making me a better student, teacher and encouraging me to keep going. I am thankful to all of the instructors who helped train me and all of the instructors who have flown from out of town for my testings. I want to acknowledge Kyo Sa Nim Betz for training with me and Master Terry Griffin, who sometimes gave me a ride home. I would also like to say to my Dad and Mom thank you for all of the support with karate, making me go even when I did not want to and not letting me give up. Most people must think black belt is the end, but it is only the beginning.