EDITORIAL

Beyond the Trail

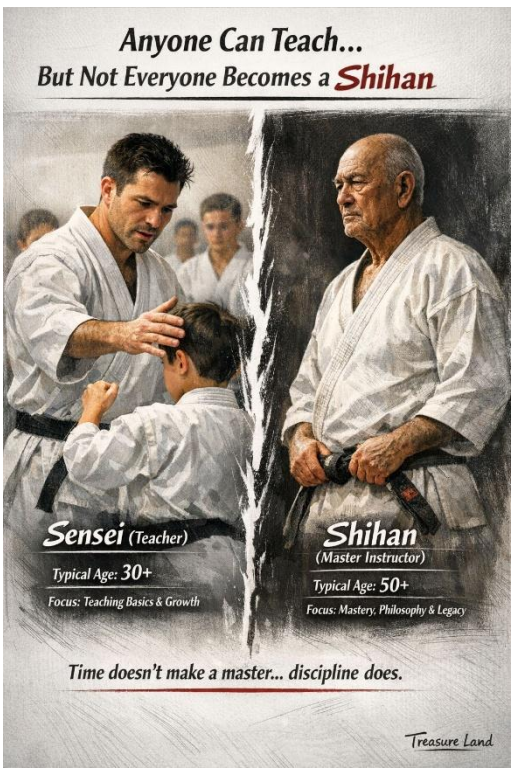
These days I came across a text that made me pause. It spoke of the fact that behind every black belt there is a journey – but not every journey reaches the same depth. This is a thought that I can only underline after many decades in Tang So Do.

We often use terms like *Sa Bum Nim* and *Kwan Chang Nim*, but we rarely really stop to feel what they mean. A Sa Bum Nim is a teacher. Someone who has walked the path a good way, who knows his own mistakes and has learned to lead others safely. It teaches technique, structure and discipline. He makes sure that the foundation is right. Without him, there would be no beginning.

But a Kwan Chang Nim is not simply created by time or rank. Decades of training leave their mark – not only in the body, but in the mind. Anyone who stays so long, who goes through ups and downs, who accepts and overcomes injuries, doubts and also their own limits, changes. At some point, it's no longer just about teaching techniques. It's about embodying attitude.

I've seen a lot of good technicians in my life. Some of them were excellent Sa Bum Nim. But only a few have continued the long way – to where movement becomes calmer, words become fewer and yet say more. There begins what can perhaps be described as *Kwan Chang Nim* .

Unfortunately, I also see a different development today. There are always people who see the belt above all else – the visible sign, the rank, the recognition. You want to move forward, but you don't always want to meet the requirements. They look for shortcuts, avoid the uncomfortable parts of training and shy away from continuous work on themselves. But without this work, progress remains superficial. A belt can be tied – but it doesn't add depth.



What is often missing is the right mindset: patience, humility and the willingness to be corrected. Real learning begins where one's own pride becomes quieter. Those who only collect but do not internalize may be promoted faster – but not really better. In addition, there is often a lack of thinking beyond one's own training. An association does not live from titles, but from the commitment of its members. The will to get involved, to take responsibility and to support others on their way is an essential part of our art. If you train only for yourself, you miss an important aspect: the common path. Tang So Do has always been a community – a togetherness that is based on respect, commitment and mutual support.

The difference is not in the title. It is in development. One shows the way. The other *has* become the way. But that doesn't mean that this is a goal that can be easily achieved

if you wait long enough. It is a decision that is made anew every day: Do I train only to pass, to teach, perhaps also to impress? Or do I train to change myself?

This is an important question, especially for the younger ones among us. A black belt is not an end. It is an invitation. What you make of it will determine how deep your journey will go.

Stay patient. Stay honest. And above all: Stay on the path.

KCN Klaus Traogemann

NEWS AND EVENTS

Beginning of a New Stage

„It was a real pleasure catching up with my former Tang Soo Do instructor Klaus Trogemann, after nearly 40 years since my time living in Germany. Enjoy the rest of your travels in Australia — hope we can catch up again when I visit Germany!" - George Currenti with Klaus Trogemann in Melbourne, Australia.

The above lines come from my former TSD student on a reunion after 40 years. George Currenti from Australia was working as an engineer at Siemens at the time and trained in my TSD studio until he went back to Melbourne Australia after a few years. Despite the distance, our connection never broke off. We always remained in a loose connection.

Now that he has retired, he plans to start again with Tang Soo Do, although in the meantime he acquired a 4th Dan in Taekwondo due to lack of TSD opportunities. Since he still has good memories of the martial art of TSD, he was looking for a way to continue it under qualified guidance. Therefore, he contacted me and invited me to an exchange about ways to tackle this, which we did in detail. In the coming year, he plans to come to Europe to intensify the exchange of opportunities.

Another meeting was planned with Master Ivan C. H. Tnay, 6th Dan, of Victoria Australia from the Australian Tang Soo Do Academy. We took the test for 3rd Dan together in Philadelphia in 1988 at the WTSDA headquarters. Due to last minute schedule issues, we had to postpone the meeting.

Since there was also interest in a cooperation on the part of the Asia Pacific TSD Association under the direction of Grandmaster Stephen Washington (9th Dan) in Perth, who trained together with me in the WTSDA, a trip to refresh our contact was a good idea. We did our Mater's Test together in Alabama, Grandmaster Washington tested for 6th Dan, I tested for 5th Dan. Unfortunately, our schedules didn't match, and therefore it remained with Grandmaster Stephen Washington that we would meet next year on his long-planned trip to Europe and have an exchange about joint TSD activities.

KCN Klaus Trogemann

TSD Trainer Seminar

The year 2026 started with one of the cornerstones of the TGTDSA, the trainer seminar. Already in the invitation, there was a five-page essay, with a lot of basic knowledge and helpful information for a DTSDV trainer, which can be accessed at any time. I was very excited because it was my first time participant. The joy of seeing the members from the other clubs again in the new year accompanied me there as well. We were thirteen participants, from brown belt with stripes (3rd Gup) upwards.

First, the definition of a TGTSDA instructor was explained to us. On a blackboard in the Esting Tang So Do studio, which I have never consciously noticed, Grandmaster Klaus Trogemann recorded important key points and made some sketches to clarify his explanations. We were shown the schedule, with the essential content, for a successful coaching session. Not to forget: Always have a plan B ready to deal with any situation-dependent changes. It is also important to get to know your students physically and psychologically to be able to respond to each one separately (face reading) without neglecting the entire training group.

At the end of the seminar, the instructors of the various clubs exchanged a wide variety of experiences, worries and problems with each other. They tried to advise each other and give each other tips. We realized that we had all had to overcome similar situations at some point. It became clear once again that the exchange within the TSD family is very helpful for all of us and possible at any time.

To all instructors who were unable to attend this seminar, I encourage you to read the essay to this seminar. Grandmaster Klaus Trogemann once again managed to make the seminar lively, informative, interesting and funny with his anecdotes and extensive knowledge.

Tang Soo!

Carmen Mehl, Cho Dan, TSD Leitershofen, Germany

Is Self-defence Always Too Late? - *Rethinking Action, Reaction, and Initiative in Martial Arts*

During training, a student once asked a question that cuts straight to the heart of self-defence: *"SBN, isn't self-defence always too late? An action is always faster than a reaction."*

At first glance, the logic seems undeniable. When an attacker throws a punch or kick, your defensive response necessarily comes afterward. Neurology confirms it: perception, processing, and decision-making take time. A reaction follows an action—and therefore appears slower. If this is true, then a troubling conclusion seems to follow: does self-defence begin from a position of disadvantage? The answer depends entirely on how we understand *when* a fight actually begins.

The Linear Model—and Its Limits

Most people imagine a fight as a simple sequence: The attacker initiates. The defender reacts. The defender blocks, evades, or counters.

Within this linear framework, reaction is always late. Anyone who trains only to respond to visible attacks is, by definition, chasing events that have already started. In real confrontations, this delay is amplified by stress, surprise, and adrenaline. By the time the defender consciously recognizes the attack, the decisive moment may already have passed. Yet this model, while intuitive, describes only the final instant of conflict—not the conflict itself.

When Does an Attack Truly Begin?

A punch does not emerge from nothing. Long before the strike, distance changes, posture shifts, tension rises, breathing alters, intention forms. The physical attack is merely the last link in a longer chain. If self-defence begins only at that final link, then yes—it is often too late. But effective self-defence does not wait for the punch.

Anticipation: Acting on Intention, Not Impact

This is where anticipation becomes central. Anticipation is not guesswork or prediction. It is the trained ability to recognize pre-attack cues and act on them. Instead of responding to the punch, you respond to the *decision to punch*. Technically speaking, anticipation is still a reaction—but it is a reaction to an earlier moment in time. By shifting your response forward in the chain, your action appears faster than the attack itself. To the attacker, it feels as if you were ahead of them. To the defender, it feels calm, timely, and controlled.

Is Anticipation Faster Than Reaction?

The student's question remains valid: *Isn't reaction always slower than action?* Yes—if action and reaction are viewed as fixed, linear categories. But in a real fight, action and reaction are not absolutes. They are perspectives. What appears to be an action from one side is often a reaction to something else: positioning, pressure, timing, presence

A confrontation is not a series of isolated moves, but a continuous interaction. Initiative flows back and forth, often invisibly. Victory does not belong to the one who moves fastest, but to the one who understands *earliest* what is becoming inevitable.

Action and Reaction as Narrative

From the outside, it may look like one person attacks and the other defends. From the inside, the story may be reversed: one person creates pressure, the other is forced to respond. Who "has the initiative" often depends on narrative rather than fact. At higher levels of martial arts, this distinction fades entirely: defence becomes offense, offense becomes defence - blocking and countering occur simultaneously. At that level, a fight has no clear beginning or end—only timing and intent.

What This Means for Real Self-defence

Self-defence is not about the perfect block, the fastest counter, the right technique at the last possible moment. It is about recognizing escalation, reading intent and taking initiative before reaction becomes unavoidable. Those who wait until they are certain an attack is coming are often already behind. Those who recognize the moment when an attack has become *inevitable* still have

space to act. This is why effective self-defence is rarely dramatic. It is subtle, early, and often invisible to bystanders.

Answering the Student's Question

So — is self-defence always too late? Yes, if you believe self-defence begins with the attack. No, if you understand that self-defence begins with intention. You do not need to be faster than the strike. You need to be present before reaction becomes your only option. That is not a matter of speed — but of awareness.

Final Reflection

A fight is not won by reacting faster, but by recognizing the moment when reacting is no longer necessary. That understanding lies at the heart of martial arts—and of true self-defence.

Richard Suijker, 5th Dan, Dojang Ki Horangi, The Netherlands

Clinic in Leitershofen

The TSD Leitershofen invited to another successful clinic in Leitershofen in mid-March. KCN Klaus Trogemann and Master Thomas Krause created an instructive morning filled with TSD forms, weapon forms and weapon one-step techniques.

The 40 participants were divided into two groups so that everyone could be supported according to their level of knowledge and ability. Occasionally, the one or the other may have been a bit confused and didn't know where their arms and legs were, but it's always interesting to be able to try something on a clinic that you wouldn't learn in training. During the break, we were provided with all kinds of treats - thanks to the Leitershofen team - before the TSD students started learning and practicing again.

As always, the seminar ended with lunch together, which then extended into the afternoon and offered the opportunity for good conversations, informative exchange and nice anecdotes.

Tatjana Schwarz, 3. Dan, Bulsajo TSD Senden, Germany

Friendly Reminder

Our newsletter lives from the contributions of its members - from your impressions, your experiences and your stories from the training. In the past few weeks, there have been numerous activities, including courses in Munich, and belt exams in various schools. It is events like these that make up our association and that we would like to share with each other.

Therefore, my heartfelt request: Take a moment and let us be part of it. A short report, a few personal impressions or even a photo with a few lines - all this helps to keep our community alive and to make the common path visible.

It's not about perfect words; it's about real experiences. Every contribution is valuable and helps to fill our newsletter with life.

I look forward to reading from you.

Tatjana Schwarz, Newsletter-Team

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Klaus Trogemann, TGTSDA Editorial Team