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H  
Gumtoogi  
**GM Taejoo**

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Hwa Rang Do



*Creation of Gumtoogi and  
Bongtoogi:*

**Hwa Rang Do®** since it's conception in 1960 by our Founder, Dr. Joo Bang Lee, it has been one of the most comprehensive martial arts in the World as it was created with the Eastern metaphysics of the Um/Yang Theory, stating that there exists a polar dichotomy to all things and one must strive for balance by understanding all oppositions. Therefore, our most important goal is to maximize the human potential - mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, enhancing all aspects of human development, which in turn allowed the creation of a vast curriculum.

# Hwa Rang Do

## & Bongtoogi

# Lee



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Another way  
we like to think  
of it as: "One  
Cut, One Life!"



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**“The traditional methods of kumdo/kendo did not allow the full expression of Hwa Rang Do’s Um-Yangian philosophy of balance, which permeates into every aspect of our lives.”**

**S**ince the Japanese have created the equipment necessary to effectively practice sword fighting safely, we have decided to use the kendo/kumdo armor by adding a modification in the form of a leg protector (Hache Hogu), which is a patented proprietary property of the World Hwa Rang Do Association. By adding the Hache Hogu it allows for leg strikes as well as spinning cuts to exercise the full breadth of Hwa Rang Do’s comprehensive style and curriculum. Also, we have innovated the uniform and changed the wearing of the “hakama”, which is identifiably Japanese with the “gumpo.” Hwa Rang Do’s gumpo was designed by Dojoonim Dr. Joo Bang Lee and is also constructed as a long skirt to cover the footwork.

In addition, we have created our own name of “Gumtoogi” to avoid further confusion, as we are not attempting to promote kendo/kumdo, but our own style of sword fighting, borrowing from the existing armor and equipment. We are not trying to take something Japanese and call it Korean as it is the debate with the current kendo vs. kumdo argument, but to create our own style of sword fighting and to make possible what was previously not.

The traditional methods of kumdo/kendo did not allow the full expression of Hwa Rang Do’s Um-Yangian philosophy of balance, which permeates into every aspect of our lives. Which meant, we needed to integrate not only linear cuts and movements, but also rotational cuts and movements. Hence, balancing the soft/circular elements of Um with the hard/linear elements of Yang. This led to the creation of the Hache Hogu and with it we have taken the basic principles of kumdo/kendo and incorporated the rotational strikes to make it unique to our Art of Hwa Rang Do. In addition, we practice fighting with all sizes, variations and

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combinations of swords (made in bamboo) as well as incorporating a wide range of movements and techniques.

For a traditional kumdo/kendoist, spinning and giving ones back to the opponent is the last thing you would want to do and is considered as an absurdity. However, our goal is not only to be effective, but more importantly to expand and maximize our human potential, allowing the individual to innovate and push the boundaries and limits of current conventions. Therefore, the goal is to be not only an effective warrior, but also to push ourselves to make

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difficult techniques work and in so doing we elevate not only ourselves, but also the art, which in essence is what makes us artists.

Our dynamic expression of weaponry is through Gumtoogi (Sword Fighting) and Bongtoogi (Stick Fighting), having a category for bladed-weapons and blunt-weapons. The purity of martial arts is founded on swordsmanship, which is much more than a weapon, but an archetype of power, kingdom, and knighthood. It is based on a duel – the idea “One Cut, One Kill.”

#### *Various categories of Gumtoogi:*

- Jang Gum – Long Swords
- Ssang Gum – Twin Medium Swords
- Combination – One Short & One Long
- Gum Bangpae - Sword & Shield
- Jang Chang – Spear
- Dan Gum – Knife Fighting

Bongtoogi has the similar rules as Gumtoogi, however, it is fighting with all different lengths of blunt weaponry, in

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**“In  
swordsmanship,  
in a duel,  
it is about life or  
death, not winning  
or losing.  
There’s only one  
price for a  
mistake “death”;  
there are no  
do-overs. This is  
the true warrior’s  
mind-set.  
Gumtoogi is the  
best way of  
cultivating this  
“Warrior Ethos”,  
“The Hwarang  
Spirit!”**

particular the staffs (Jangbong) and batons (Jungbong). To ensure safety and prevent injury, we only use light rattan staffs and batons approved by the WHRDA. These are not escrima sticks as they are too dense and hard to practice with our armor. The focus is to develop accuracy and speed rather than just pummeling and bludgeoning each other.

***Various categories of Bongtoogi:***

- Jang Bong – Long Staff
- Ssang Bong – Twin Medium Sticks
- Jung Bong – Medium stick or Baton
- Bong Bangpae – Stick and Shield

We are also working on implementing the “bangpae” (shield) into our weapon fighting as well as “Goongtoogi” (archery), dueling with foam tipped arrows. This category of Mugi Daeryun (Weapon Fighting) completes our art and our dynamic expression, allowing us to preserve the Ancient Hwarang martial skills it is entirety as a modern art of combat and personal development. One day in the future, we hope to add combat horsemanship, which will truly complete our art.

In swordsmanship, in a duel, it is about life or death, not winning or losing. There’s only one price for a mistake “death”; there are no do-overs. This is the true warrior’s mind-set. Gumtoogi is the best way of cultivating this “Warrior Ethos”, “The Hwarang Spirit!”

Another way we like to think of it as: “One Cut, One Life!”

Kuksa Taejoon Lee

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