

The Eighth Wonder Of The World



When you organise a seminar, for one of the worlds most renowned martial artists, there's a lot to do and you can easily forget to do things. One of the things all involved forgot to do was to mention to Grandmaster Cho that he's seventy next year!!! The Seven Wonders of the World, while breathtaking, can still be explained by laws of physics and natures affects on the earth. However, Grandmaster Hee Il Cho has defied all of these facts and is still faster, stronger and more flexible than students fifty years his younger.

The man, the legend, lives and breaths his chosen martial art, Tae Kwon Do. He has dedicated his life, all across the world, to developing this traditional Korean art into a modern fighting system and spiritual way of life.

Grandmaster Cho had arrived in Europe to conduct International seminars in Ireland and Scotland. The first seminar kicked off in Ireland on Sunday 20th September in Dublin, before his International seminar in Scotland on the 22nd of September.

Both events attracted over 1,300 students and parents, an electrifying experience which started off with a special bagpipe performance by AImAA Ireland 5th Degree, Michael Fitzgerald. After all the introductions were done it was down to business.

While Grandmaster Cho amazed all students with his ballistic kicking and flawless boxing techniques, it's important to state that this was not just a demonstration. This was, in essence, a two hour class in which students learned the principles of body mechanics, scientific stretching techniques, and powerful body conditioning exercises and had a killer workout thrown in for good measure. As the Grandmaster always says, "the secret to martial arts is sweat".

While the physical part of both the seminars was one of the toughest workouts ever experienced, Grandmaster Cho also covered the mental and spiritual side of this dynamic martial art. "We can lead by example in life, through the perseverance of training in martial arts".



Grandmaster Cho kicking, punching and all-round martial arts skills are obvious to anyone who sees him in the flesh. But what a lot of people don't realise is his ability as an instructor. Now, you might think that a 9th Degree Black Belt with 60 years martial arts experience should be a great instructor by default. But Grandmaster Cho can do something that very few (extremely few!!) instructors can do, and that is teach 4 year old white belt children in the same class as 6th Degree masters. The seminar therefore, has to make learning fun for the kiddies and at the same time be educational for masters who may already be

training 30+ years. I was fortunate enough to train at this seminar and I still don't know how the, near 70 year old, Grandmaster achieved this.

While his abilities are world renowned, Grandmaster Cho's modesty and humbleness are what make up the spiritual side of his Tae Kwon Do life. Grandmaster Cho talked about how he still feels the need to improve his basic techniques (and we're talking white belt stuff here), his flexibility (even though he falls into the splits with ease) and how he still feels he needs to get stronger and faster!!! With this man as our guidance in the AIMAA, it's no wonder students train, train and then train some more. Not just the physical side of strength, flexibility, speed, etc. But also the mental side of knowledge, patience and the strong will to pass on this dynamic art to all students worldwide.



I think the admiration of the six hundred students in Ireland and the two hundred students in Scotland was evident by the fact that, while the seminar was two hours long, the signing of autographs and taking of photos took many hours. On both sides of the water, Grandmaster Cho and the AIMAA Masters took time to meet and talk to everyone, leaving no one without a kind word or photograph. Everyone who was there (even the parents, family friends) wanted to be able to say with pride that they witnessed, and trained; with the true 'Tae Kwon Do Prophet' that is Grandmaster Hee Ill Cho.

Written by James Farrell 4th Degree International Instructor A.I.M.A.A