

FACING THE DARKNESS

The Story of Chief Master Robert J. Ott

Martial art attracts people from all walks of life, cultures, and personalities. They (the arts) are blind to who embraces them and conform and adapt themselves to the individuals who pursue them. There are the champions, the dedicated students, the week-end musul-in (Korean for martial artists), the recreational students and the survivors.

It seems the world, in general, is in love with the champions. They are the ones who find everything easy, especially their chosen styles. They are the heroes and heroines of our fantasies. Moreover, they are who, we, as children strive to be. These noble warriors are often tall, attractive and have an almost regal bearing.

What happens when our heroes fall? Usually the public revels in their shame and moves on to the next cultural icon. Humanity is very good at rejection, sadly. But what "really" happens to these people when they fall? That's a very hard question. A lot depends on the nature of the events that befell him or her. In life, and especially, for those who study martial arts, more importantly, is the character of the martial artist in question.

What possible fates could humble a martial artist? The possibilities are endless. Imagine what a bullet could do... right in the temple and out an eye. That's what happened to young Bobby Ott, a promising young Hapkido master in New Jersey. As a result of defending a worker at his father's place of business, a thug blindsided him and shot him. The

horror story of what happened next and his slow recovery needs to be read to be fully understood.

Overcoming the psychological effects of the terrible attack was more difficult than the actual physical damage itself. Bobby went from being a young, handsome martial arts competitor and instructor, with his entire life ahead of him, to being like a broken doll - who weighed as much as a sack full of wet rags. His previous masters, family and close friends helped him go about the slow road to recovery and to dealing with the loss of sight, smell, and taste.

Being "pushed" back into teaching the martial arts, gave him new insight into what the arts and he really were. Through rediscovering the martial arts as a blind man, he had rebuilt his body and his skills, in ways that he never could have previously imagined. Gone were scissor kicks and flying side kicks. Flowing circular moves and short decisive linear strikes replaced them. The Korean expression of pilsung (certain victory) began to hold new meaning to him. As Hapkido was about controlling your opponent he in turn controlled his destiny in the same

way, moving and adjusting every decision as if he was performing a self-defense maneuver.

My father told me several times growing up with my own adversity, that the best way to "get even" was to be successful and happy. So I moved to Korea. Bobby moved to the other side of his country and called himself Robert as part of reinventing himself.

Finding vision in his life actually became clearer after his disability. As a young man he was not nearly as focused or determined. He lived his life, a day at a time and took a lot for granted. Years later, he truly grew into a man, in the more figurative sense of the word. Upon moving from his old life, he leaped into his new life, like a man possessed. He accomplished more than he had ever dreamed. Here are just a few of the things this survivor has achieved:

- * Chief Master - Temple of Certain Victory
- * President/CEO - Flowering Warrior Enterprises LLC
- * President/CEO - Certain Victory Food Services Inc.
- * Official Chairman - WA. State Business Enterprise Program

*By Master Guy Edward Larke
Edited by Ann M. Damerau*





- * Recognized Master Instructor - World Han Min Jok Hapkido Fed.
- * Washington State Director - National Korean Martial Arts Association
- * Recognized Master Instructor - World Sin Moo Hapkido Fed.
- * Recognized Master Instructor - Int. Farang Mu Sul Association
- * Certified Correspondent - Tae Kwon Do Times Magazine
- * 1994 World Martial Arts Association Man of the Year
- * 2009 Hall of Fame Master of the Year through Tae Kwon Do Times Magazine
- * 7th Dan Black Belt by the World Sin Moo Hapkido Federation signed by Grandmaster Kenneth P. MacKenzie, Grandmaster Scott Yates and the founder Grandmaster Doju Nim Ji Han Jae

The responsibility he feels now is as huge of a burden, as it is a privilege. His commitments are many, as a father, a husband, a writer, a martial

arts instructor, a successful business entrepreneur and president and CEO of Flowering Warrior Enterprises.

Closest to his heart, even more than the martial arts and his crusade to help the disabled, is his family. As his mother, step-father, grandmother and baby brother gave him the strength to fight against all odds, it's his wife, daughter and son that help him see tomorrow. His greatest regret is that he will never see his lovely wife or children, but their love keeps him alive. It can be summed up in this short story: "As my daughter Savannah and I shut our eyes and said good night to each other there was still something on her mind that she had to share." "I was tired and almost ready to enter the counting sheep phase, when her voice spoke words that opened my eyes with shock and uncertainty." My beautiful angel Savannah said to me "Daddy I am so glad you are blind." Slowly I turned to her and said in a very soft yet filled with question tone of voice "Why is that my love?" Her reply was smooth, confident and a true beam of light to me. She said "Because if you had not lost your eye sight you would have never moved to the Northwest met Mommy and had me." "Our love, warmth and time together would not come to be and that Daddy is something I cannot even imagine..."

I never forgot those words and not long after she spoke those thoughts to me I had an opportunity of sharing that statement to a large group of Wounded Warriors from the United States Army. They have asked me to be there speaker for a large function. When I shared those words with the

Soldiers I struggled to not let a tear run down my face for it brought so much spirit from me. I shared to each Soldier that life has moments and experiences that are not based off of right or wrong, good or bad, fair or un-fair for they are simply parts of life. I shared to each one of those young men and women who fought for freedom and independence, that at times, life simply is what it is, no more and no less. I let each of those Warriors know, that each day, I wish that somehow or some way I could bring my eyesight back, but somehow, not allow it to ever effect the goodness I have been able to share to others, because of it. My words, actions and story have given many the strength, courage and indomitable spirit that they so desperately needed in life. So the truth is that my blindness has given more vision then ten sets of eyes ever could...

The 2nd Super Summer International Korean Martial Arts Seminar (the 1st being in 2009) in 2011 will, most likely be, the culmination of his 30 years experience in the martial arts. It brings together, probably the most diverse collection of masters of the Korean martial arts in North America. All carefully chosen, they represent every possible aspect of the Korean arts. These masters' strengths, knowledge and achievements are highlighted and detailed in the advertisement, following this article.

As a result of his experiences, personal battles and his efforts to inspire others, he has appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers. He has also been the cover story of a number of international martial arts magazines, including Taekwondo Times. Through these media, he has become a well recognized writer and journalist. His autobiography "Certain Victory" has been widely received and is still in high demand - four years after its initial publication.

Where many masters focus on sport martial arts or street fighting, Master Ott researches and follows the tradition and historical parts to Korean Martial Arts. As one can guess by his company's name, Flowering Warrior Enterprises, he holds the image of the ancient Hwarang knights of the Shilla Dynasty in high regard. He espouses those ideals in everything he touches.

For any who are interested in a real survivor's ongoing story please



visit: www.certainvictory.com. His numerous products include his autobiography (in book form, DVD, and audio book), certifications in the martial arts discipline, Kidokwon, custom made swords and fans from Korea and the list goes on. He prides himself on having an eclectic web-site, as eclectic as the man himself.

Master Guy Edward Larke has dedicated his life from a young age to the pursuit of the martial arts, Asian culture and hopology. It led him to Korea in 2000 and has lived there since then. He lives in Seongnam city with his wife Gi-Ryung and son Alexander. He holds black belts in Taekwondo, Hapkido, Taekkyon, Bon Kuk Kumdo, Korean kickboxing, Karate-do, Wushu, Cheonji-muye-do, and Hosin-sul. Currently he teaches Taekwondo, Karate and Cheonji-muye-do full time in addition to writing for various magazines and running Kisa-Do Muye & Marketing. He can be contacted at kisa_do_muye@yahoo.ca

"COHESION"

BY CHIEF MASTER ROBERT J.OTT

*UM & YANG IS THE CONSTANT COHESION OF ALL THINGS IN THE UNIVERSE...
*IT WILL TURN DISCIPLINE INTO FREEDOM AND FREEDOM INTO INDEPENDENCE...
*UM & YANG WILL ALLOW US TO HAVE OUR DREAMS BECOME GOALS AND FIND THAT LIFE IS NOT PERFECTION IT IS PROGRESS...
*IT WILL ALLOW US TO HAVE THE TRUTH QUESTIONED WHILE AT THE SAME TIME HAVE THE UNCERTAINTY FIND CONTENTMENT...
*UM & YANG WILL SHARE TO ALL THAT WHAT WE PUT OUT IN LIFE WILL BE WHAT WE RECEIVE BACK IN ONE FASHION OR ANOTHER...
*MORE SO THEN ALL UM & YANG CAN ENABLE US LIVING BEINGS TO OBTAIN IS PLEASURABLE WILLINGNESS TO HOW WE LOOK AT THE DAILY ROUTINES OF LIFE...
*FOR WHEN IT IS ALL SAID AND DONE ONLY YOU CAN MAKE THE CHOICE OF WHETHER THE GLASS THAT RESTS IN YOUR HAND IS HALF WAY EMPTY OR HALF WAY FULL...

