



## Peterson's Martial Arts Mu Sa Kwan Tang Soo Do Federation

### WHAT IS A GUP?

“Gup” is a term used to designate a level of achievement below black belt (dan). “Gup belt” means a varied colored *dee* (belt), and someone who wears one is also known as *Yu Gup Ja*, meaning Gup Belt Holder. The beginning color for gup is white, representing purity, innocence, youth, energy, and ambition. Gups come in all ages, genders and sizes. Each start from the same point but will explore their quest for knowledge in martial arts at their own pace. The path of a gup, represented by the color belt/rank system can be compared to the passing seasons of the year. White represents winter and the beginning of a new cycle. Purple indicates the coming of spring, new growth, and a hunger for life. Green indicates the youthful maturity of independence within sight of the instructor. This level, equated to summer, may also be the most crucial level for the student to pass because they have either become addicted or bored and must make a decision to stay or go. Red of autumn represents the initiation of full maturity, commitment to the martial arts way, and a sense of self-esteem. This comes from many successes along the way and the anticipation of completion. Midnight blue completes the cycle of colors but also represents the beginning of a new cycle of seasons; winter, at a higher level.

The Gup ranks can also be compared to the grades in public school education. For example:

- 9<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> gups are like those students in elementary school (grades K-5)
- 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> gups are like those students in junior high school (grades 6-8)
- 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> gups are like those students in senior high school (grades 9-12)

When a gup transitions into becoming a dan, then s/he has essentially graduated from “high school”.

Expectations for gup ranks are ever evolving and will be naturally tailored by age, gender and natural ability. Several key concepts, common to all gup ranks, are as follows:

1. The process of gaining physical strength begins with the gup rank. The process of learning control of this physical strength will be continual.
2. Mental strengthening is a form of self-discovery. Once a student decides s/he “can”, the biggest challenge is over. The student will grow in self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem. The student will gradually allow this to become a part of his/her everyday life without being aware of it.



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3. Learning processes will evolve. The easy part of this process is learning the physical moves of martial arts. The subtle part of this process is learning to respect the art, to respect the members of the dojang, and to respect the instructors, but most importantly to respect himself or herself. Manners and etiquette can be mimicked, but sincerity cannot.
4. Expectations for training will evolve. Come to class focused, eager to learn, with an open mind. Many lessons will be taught every class, but only a few will be isolated to the technical aspects of martial arts. A consistency in training effort by the gup should be encouraged. Come to the dojang on good days and bad days. This will help the gup to learn how to be consistent, in every situation.
5. Honesty to oneself and others will build loyalty and trustworthiness. These elements are as necessary to a complete martial artist as are physical skills. Without these elements, there is no direction or goal for the student.
6. Study the concepts and elements of Tang Soo Do. Learn and live by the principles, creed, and code of conduct. Know the eight key concepts of Tang Soo Do. Apply this knowledge to the everyday aspects of life.

### GUP BELT SYSTEM

The following is the Gup belt system used by the Mu Sa Kwan Tang Soo Do Federation:

GUP	BELT	REQUIRED TIME	POSITION
9th Gup	White	<b>First day member</b>	Novice Gup
8th Gup	Purple with 1 white stripe	Two to three months after beginning	Novice Gup
7th Gup	Purple with 2 white stripes	Three months from 8 <sup>th</sup> Gup test	Novice Gup
6th Gup	Green with 1 white stripe	Three months from 7 <sup>th</sup> Gup test	Intermediate Gup
5th Gup	Green with 2 white stripes	Three months from 6 <sup>th</sup> Gup test	Intermediate Gup
4th Gup	Green with 3 white stripes	Three months from 5 <sup>th</sup> Gup test	Intermediate Gup
3rd Gup	Red with 1 white stripe	Three months from 4 <sup>th</sup> Gup test	Advanced Gup
2nd Gup	Red with 2 white stripes	Three months from 3 <sup>rd</sup> Gup test	Advanced Gup
1st Gup	Red with 3 white stripes	Three months from 2 <sup>nd</sup> Gup test	Advanced Gup
1st Dan	Navy blue with 1 gold stripe	Six to nine months from 1 <sup>st</sup> Gup test	Dan Member / Instructor trainee