

Taekwon-Do – A Way of Life

4th Degree Thesis

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1.0 About the Author

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2.0 Introduction

This thesis is a précis and a limited explanation of the “Do” of Taekwon-Do. Because this topic is far reaching it is only possible to highlight and give brief understandings of the philosophy, ethics, morality and the physical and mental training that it encompasses.

“The Do” or “The Way” is also known in India as “Dharma” or “The Right Way” and is found in many forms and variations in all parts of the world where ancient and traditional martial arts were found. In medieval England, the “Code of Chivalry” for knights and the “Code of Bushido” for the Samurai in feudal Japan are just two examples. This philosophy of “The Way” encompasses many aspects of life including physical wellbeing, ethics, philosophy of life and training of the body mind and spirit.

The human being is a holistic being which encompasses total health (physical and mental). The physical condition is effected by mental and what I term as spiritual life outlook. Mental health is not only affected by the health and chemistry of the body but also the spiritual outlook. Recent research in hospitals has indicated that individuals that have an optimistic view of life, have fewer illnesses and are quicker to recover, than those

individuals that have a pessimistic view of life. Therefore it is a reasonable assumption that a positive spiritual view of life affects the whole wellbeing of an individual.

To have some understanding of “The Do” some knowledge of the history and development of martial arts and associated philosophy and ethics is required. This gives an understanding of the growth of the underlying fundamental philosophical basis of the martial art. A brief history of martial arts with an emphasis of the origins of Taekwon-Do is included in this thesis for this purpose. Also where appropriate for clarity, I have attempted a summary at the end of the appropriate chapter.

3.0 A History of Martial Arts

The word “martial” derives from the name of Mars, the Roman god of war. A practitioner of martial arts is referred to as a martial artist. The martial arts though commonly associated with East Asian cultures, is not unique to this region. Variations of martial arts, is found in all countries around the world from Egypt (Sebekkah and Tahtib) to France (Savate developed by sailors and street fighters).

Even though the origin of martial arts is obscure, it goes as far back as recorded history. In Egypt, Pharaoh Menes (c305 – 285B.C.) unified Egypt and desired to create the greatest army. He invited all the greatest warriors from India and Africa and other locations to train his armies. This was probably the catalyst for the first Olympic Games.^(1.01) Su Bak for example was the first documented martial art system to have existed on the Korean Peninsula. The date of its origin is based on legend under King Tan’gun (2333 B.C.), but there are historic records of Su Bak in the 4th century A.D.^(2.01)

We cannot consider true martial arts without considering eastern esoteric understanding of the ‘Chi’, philosophy, ethics, honour and moral precepts and the development and evolution of this is shown below. (These topics are given an in depth explanation in later chapters within this thesis).

The first Korean kingdom is said to have been formed by Tan’gun and as time progressed three Korean tribal states formed, Paekche (18 B.C. to 668 A.D.), Koguryo (37 B.C. to 668 A.D.) and Silla (57 B.C. to 935 A.D.) this became known as the three kingdom period.^(3.01)

Confucianism arrived in Koguryo and Paekche in the 4th century A.D. From Paekche Confucian ideals were transmitted to Japan at the bequest of King Kunch Ogo (346-375 A.D.). It was at this point that the Korean Martial Arts system of Su Bak was passed from Korea to Japan.^(2.02)

During the three kingdom period Confucian ideology seems to have the least direct effect upon the kingdom of Silla, but by the end of the 6th century A.D. Confucian ideals did have some influence on the cultural doctrines of Silla.

The religious and political system of thought of Taoism came to the Korean Peninsula in 624 A.D. At this time the elite members of Koguryo society began to take an interest in the speculative thought of Taoism.

Buddhism came to China from India with the introduction of Buddhist thought and philosophy in the 1st century A.D. and reached Koguryo in 372 A.D. The teachings reached Paekche in 384 A.D and Buddhism was introduced to Silla during the reign of King Nui Chi (417-457 A.D.) and accepted by the Silla aristocracy.

From Paekche, Buddhist monks were sent to Japan in the beginning of the 6th century and by the end of the 6th century Korean Buddhist monks were commonly sent to China, India and Japan. Even though the three kingdoms were Buddhist with ever increasing differences in their political ideologies the three kingdoms moved into new expansionist ideologies.^(2.03)

Koguryo due to its size and military strength was the first to launch aggressive assaults against its smaller neighbours Paekche and Silla. In addition to battling Koguryo, Silla and Paekche also fought each other.

Silla turned to the T'ang Dynasty in China for help. A military alliance was formed to fight against the forces of Koguryo and Paekche. In 660 A.D. the combined forces of Silla and China defeated Paekche. The T'ang government ignored its agreement with Silla and set up five military bases in Paekche and pro-Chinese enclaves inside Silla itself. Though Silla would have gone to war with the T'ang Dynasty, they could not defeat the T'ang whilst Koguryo existed.

During this period of war in the 6th century the Hwa Rang, the first highly organised group of martial arts practitioners came into being. This aristocratic warrior group, born in Silla is what is attributed to unifying of the three kingdoms of Korea. The Hwa Rang (Flowering Youth) were conceived by King Chin Hung of Silla in 576 A.D these young noblemen who were loyal to the throne, were extensively trained in all forms of warfare in armed and unarmed forms of combat.

The chosen men of the Hwa Rang were trained in martial arts as well as continuing their studies in Buddhism, 'Chi', science and the arts to become cultivated warriors. The Hwa Rang developed their bodies by climbing mountains and swimming in turbulent rivers in the coldest months of the year. They trained in all forms of known hand to hand combat namely Su Bak including sword, staff, hook, spear and bow and arrow.

Due to the endurance training by the Hwa Rang such as running up mountains, their leg muscles were developed to an exceptional degree, formalized kicking techniques were added to Su Bak which then became Su Bak Gi.^(4.01) This is believed to be the source for the advanced kicking techniques of the Korean martial arts. An interesting note is that at the head of the Hwa Rang hierarchy were several women. These were known as the Won Hwa (Original Flower) which indicates the two natures of the martial art of the cultured warrior.^(2.04)

During the late three kingdom period, Su Bak became fragmented and differing schools of martial arts came into being. A new system of martial arts called Yu Sul was formed. This was a softer grappling art which is believed to be the influence which started the Japanese system of Jujitsu. During this time Su Bak became known as Tae Kwon or in Chinese characters for “Push Shoulders”. Yul Sul did not last very long and by the end of the 7th century it no longer existed. Tae Kwon was therefore the only fighting system left with links to the ancient Hwa Rang.^(2.05)

Upon unification of the three kingdom by the Silla Dynasty (688-935), cultural arts and not warfare flourished in the highly centralised Buddhist state. The Silla Dynasty was then overthrown by the rebel Koryo Dynasty (935-1392) but the philosophic outlook of the country continued to grow.^(5.01)

A coup in 1170 by the Cho military family seized control and suppressed Buddhism ideals. The Mongols invaded the Korean Peninsula in 1231 and in 1258 the Cho regime was deposed and the Koryo government was returned to power under the guidance of the Mongols. The average citizen felt hand to hand combat was barbaric and martial arts practitioners were looked down on in all regions of Korea. King Chung Mok (1392-1348) outlawed the practice of Tae Kwon by civilians, altogether.

A revolt against the Mongolian rule took place in 1356. After years of internal warfare, the Koryo Dynasty was overthrown and the Yi Dynasty which swore allegiance to the Ming Dynasty of China took power. Throughout the Yi Dynasty cultural interactions between China, Japan and Korea increased and martial art ideologies exchanged on a limited level. Kung Fu from China and Karate from Japan existed in a limited manner in Korea. Tae Kwon though influenced by these systems it still maintained itself as a highly aggressive self defence system. Virtually all records of the actual techniques of the ancient Korean martial arts were destroyed by Japan who occupied the Korean Peninsula from 1909 onwards. There are only two remaining documents that survived, the Moo Yee Jee Bo and the Moo Yeh Do Bok Tong Gi which gives an insight into Korea's martial art history, From this it passed down from ancient to modern times.^(3.02)

From this brief overview of the historical development of martial arts, it can be seen as the martial arts evolved from a purely physical attack and defence system for warfare, it became a vehicle for the individual martial art practitioner to develop not only their body and fighting skills, but also to develop themselves mentally and spiritually beyond that of the normal person. This enabled the martial art practitioner to accomplish feats of strength, agility and endurance that some cases appear almost impossible.

4.0 Code and Honour

All traditional and complete martial arts have a code of honour and ethics. Without this, the martial art becomes just a physical form of combat and not an art. To have this as part of the art including a philosophy (discussed in the next chapter), allows the training of the body, mind and spirit as a complete holistic unit, whereas just a physical form of combat

trains the body, (this is further discussed in Chapter 8.0 Training the Body, Mind and Spirit) which has negative effect on the individual.^(6.01)

An example of codes of honour is the unwritten Knights Code of Chivalry from the violent Middle Ages of Europe. The knight was expected to temper his aggression with a chivalrous side to his nature showing the dualistic nature of the cultivated warrior. This code was a moral system which idealised knighthood with the qualities of bravery, courtesy, honour and gallantry towards women. Even though the code was unwritten, details of the code through scripts of ancient ballads have been handed down. The Knights Code of Chivalry and vows of Knighthood were:

- To fear God and maintain His Church
- To serve the liege lord in valour and faith
- To protect the weak and defenceless
- To give succour to widows and orphans
- To refrain from the wanton giving of offence
- To live by honour and glory
- To despise pecuniary reward
- To fight for the welfare of all
- To obey those placed in authority
- To guard the honour of fellow knights
- To eschew unfairness, meanness and deceit
- To keep faith
- At all times to speak the truth
- To persevere to the end in any enterprise
- To respect the honour of women
- Never to refuse a challenge from an equal
- Never turn the back on a foe

The virtues of a knight as described in the 14th Century were faith, charity, justice, sagacity, prudence, temperance, resolution, truth, liberality, diligence, hope and valour.^(7.01)

To live ones life under a Code of Honour, is to view all individuals with respect until such times as they prove themselves not worthy of it. Honourable individuals give mutual respect to each other which leads to a more harmonious society.

Honour is many things and described in many ways, it is respect and good reputation of yourself and others, it is always doing your best, it is not letting yourself or others down, it is doing what you think is right and respecting what others think is right, it is also honesty, dignity and being loyal, and it always means keeping your word. Honour is a quality that is felt and becomes an integral part of the life of the martial art practitioner. Honour is often perverted and is only true when associated with the highest ideals and ethics. When an individual aspires to the highest ideals and ethics, then it is instinctively known what is honourable and what is not.

5.0 Philosophy of Martial Arts

Philosophy is deep thought that involves questions. The study of traditional martial arts involves an equal balance of physical, mental and philosophical aspects. Philosophical thought is often tied specifically with religion. This is not correct, whilst religion has often been tied to philosophy, religion is a separate entity. The religious aspects tied to a philosophy can be removed.^(8.01)

One well recognised philosophy is Japanese Bushido. Japanese Bushido is described as a philosophy which is a code of moral principles that the samurai were required or instructed to follow, it is a code unuttered and unwritten and created the ideal of the cultivated warrior. The samurai Bushido code encompassed loyalty to their master, filial piety and reverence to the Emperor. The tenets of Bushido were frugality, loyalty, mastery of martial arts and honour to the death.

A modern explanation in James William's article "Virtue of the Sword" is:-
'The warrior protects and defends because he realises the value of others. He knows they are essential to society and in his gift of service, recognises and values theirs. When faced with a woman or child in a situation in which they are vulnerable, there are two types of men: those who would offer succour and aid, and those that would prey upon them. In modern society there is another loathsome breed' who would totally ignore their plight.'
^(9.01)

A modern view recognises that brave trained men will risk themselves for others, as George Orwell stated "We sleep easy in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those that would do us harm".

In early feudal times (6th century) on the Korean Peninsular, young men were taught the higher levels of Buddhism, honour and the arts and the most talented became the Hwa Rang.^(10.01)

The ancient Korean Hwa Rang had a code of ethics laid down for them by the eminent Buddhist monk Wong Kang.

The code of ethics for the Hwa Rang were:

1. Be loyal to your king.
2. Be obedient to your parents.
3. Be honourable to your friends.
4. Never retreat in battle.
5. Make a just kill.

The strength they derived from their respect to their code enabled them to attain feats of valour that became legendary.^(4.02)

The philosophy, tenets and ethics of modern Taekwon-Do as given by General Choi Hong Hi contains all of the unwritten ethics and philosophy of the Bushido Code, the

medieval Knights Code of Chivalry as well as the basics of the code of ethics of the ancient Hwa Rung. The tenets, “Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self Control and Indomitable Spirit” are clearly explained and become a guidance not only within the dojong, but also to be applied in all aspects of the Taekwon-Do students life.

General Choi Hong Hi stated “I have come to define the spiritual dimensions of Taekwon-Do as fusing oneself with the ideals of Taekwon-Do and attaining the full meaning of each of the Taekwon-Do patterns. If we consider ourselves as one with Taekwon-Do, we will respect it as we respect our own bodies and Taekwon-Do will never be used in a dishonourable way.”^(4.03)

This statement alone implies the all encompassing nature of the philosophy of Taekwon-Do and the implication that the philosophy is applied to every aspect of ones life.

6.0 Moral Conduct

Ethics and Moral Conduct involve the ability of the individual to integrate and relate to society, which is even more important when the individual has martial arts skills, which require the individual to have greater responsibility to individuals and society as a whole.

Confucius said “to promote the sense of morality one must treat others with faithfulness and sincerity based on righteousness and to eliminate completely vicious thinking.” These are the goals that the martial artist should try to aspire to.

The eastern martial arts believed that harnessing the inner energy and coupled with ethics and codes of honour elevated the warrior above that of the common people. In the Korean Peninsula during the Korean three kingdom period, contests of skill and courage were held under gruelling conditions. The winners were given the title of Son-Bi and the winners were held as an example and in esteem by all.^(4.04)

The Korean Knights of the Hwa Rang (Flowering Youth) were taught the higher levels of Buddhism, honour and the arts and moral conduct .^(10.02) which became their lives. Many of the Hwa Rang died in battle at a very young age still adhering to the moral and ethical principles that was their life.^(4.05)

As can be determined from this, the moral conduct of the individual is closely associated with the philosophy, ethics and honour. The martial art practitioner accepts this as an integral part of the martial art practitioners life. Moral conduct besides knowing right from wrong also is an inherent part of our relationship with others and society in general. This is also an integral and fundamental part of Taekwon-Do as created by General Choi Hong Hi.^(4.06)

7.0 Health

The benefits of Taekwon-Do include better health and fitness, greater flexibility and stamina, confidence, self awareness and assertiveness, discipline of mind and body and in reduction of stress.^(11.01)

Nutrition is an important aspect of health and particular attention must be given to a balanced diet and adequate intake of approximately 90 various vitamins, minerals, trace elements etc. and of course water. It is generally thought that the average individual only has an intake of about 30 to 40 of these important elements and generally does not drink enough water. It is essential to have these various elements to be in optimum health.

As an information note, the majority of produce grown and that is readily available, has been grown on depleted farmland that only produce crops with PKN fertilisers. This means that all the trace elements, minerals etc. that are required for optimum health are missing or greatly reduced. Consideration should be given to organically grown produce or supplements. Should supplements be considered then vitamins and minerals in the colloidal (liquid) form is probably the best as these are readily absorbed by the body. This is not an endorsement of organically grown produce or a promotion of the therapeutic benefits of fresh juices. The intent is to draw the martial artists' attention and awareness to the lack of nutritional value in some of today's force grown produce, grown on mineral deficient land.

We rely on food to provide us with mental and physical energy, and to keep us warm. The body also relies on these nutriment for all its own building materials. Literally we are made of what we eat. It is obvious that what nutrition we have has a marked effect on the way we look, the way we feel and the energy and stamina that is available to us. It is necessary to understand the two different types of metabolism in the body. Aerobic metabolism requires oxygen to convert nutriment such as carbohydrates, fats and proteins to adenosine triphosphate (ATP). This is for energy which is used up very quickly and is continually being produced and used during endurance activities. Anaerobic metabolism (glycolysis) creates adenosine triphosphate (ATP) exclusively from carbohydrates with lactic acid being the by-product. This produces energy for short high intensity bursts of activity.^(12.01)

There is a constant turnover of cells within all body tissues. As old cells break down new cells made primarily from dietary protein take their place. A complete turnover of body tissues takes place every seven years.^(13.01)

When competing, it necessary to carefully plan pre-competition eating to prevent any distracting symptoms of hunger during competition and to maintain energy stores during the competition. Exercising on a full stomach is not recommended as food that remains in the stomach during the competition may cause cramping, nausea etc. It is recommended that a meal is eaten approximately one to four hours prior to an event depending on what and how much the person has eaten. It is recommended to eat or drink something that is easily digestible in about 20 to 30 minutes prior to the event. The closer to the event time the less a person should eat.

A liquid meal can be taken closer to the event as the stomach digests liquids faster. The pre-event meal should consist of foods such as pasta, fruits, breads, energy bars and drinks. The carbohydrates help increase the glycogen (energy) in the muscles. The result

of depleted glycogen stores is “hitting the wall” and when this happens the body begins to rely on anaerobic metabolism for energy which happens at a much slower rate of conversion. When competing at all day events such as tournaments, it is important to consider the food required and the time of the event and the amount energy needed. Planning ahead with prepared meals and snacks that are easily digested is recommended. Foods that are high in fats should be avoided as they remain in the stomach for a long time.^(12.02)

It is important to consider hydration during exercise and competition. Adequate fluid intake is paramount and is essential for comfort, performance and safety. When exercising, it is important to consider the type of fluids consumed. Studies have shown a loss of 2% or more in body weight due to sweating has a direct link to loss of blood volume. When this happens, the heart works harder to move the blood through the body which leads to reduced performance in athletes. Other research has shown where individuals consume too much water there is the possibility of suffering from hyponatremia (water intoxication). Therefore it is clear that drinking the correct amount of fluids is critical for performance and safety. The American College of Sports Medicine suggests plain water without sugar, caffeine or alcohol is best. For the correct balance of fluids for exercise, The American College of Sports Medicine also suggests the following, two plus cups of fluid two hours before exercise, drink every 15 minutes during exercise and keep drinks cooler than the air temperature and close at hand. Exercising for more than one hour, sports drinks containing carbohydrate not greater than 8% concentration, may be beneficial.^(12.03)

Correct breathing is extremely important in every aspect of an individual’s life especially if they are practicing martial arts or any other strenuous activity. Individuals should make it a lifetime habit to breathe consciously. Breathing consciously is possibly the single most important thing an individual can do for their own health. Automatic breathing is often quite ineffective, but most individuals tend to be limited to automatic breathing.

Approximately 33% of people do not breathe well enough to sustain health. Oxygen intake and elimination of carbon dioxide is inadequate to allow optimum functioning of the heart, liver and other vital organs.^(14.01)

Deep breathing utilising the lower diaphragm enables the blood to be oxygenated and to provide the necessary energy to the body cells, muscles and organs for strenuous activity. When engaged in strenuous activity and running “out of breath”, then a short inhaling into the diaphragm on the way ‘down’ and an even exhale on the way ‘up’ will rejuvenate the individual and give energy and a ‘second wind’. In the event of being struck in contact sport and the individual is “winded”, then exhaling from the diaphragm instead of ‘sucking air’ which is the natural response, allows the individual to recover very quickly which is essential in a combat situation.

As can be determined, health is an extremely large topic encompasses physical and mental health. Nutrition and exercise combined assist in mental health. Exercise and

mental health have not been discussed in this chapter as it is touched upon in the following chapters.

8.0 Training Body, Mind and Spirit

8.1 Body

Practicing Taekwon-Do deepens the breathing, improves balance, posture, flexibility, coordination and strength. As an individual matures natural changes take place within the body. Up to the early 20's the way the muscles fire changes and the explosive nature of the muscles is decreased. This slowing of the reflex can be mitigated by the absence of stiffness whilst the techniques of Taekwon-Do are executed.

8.1.1 Physiology

It is important to understand the connections of bones, muscles, sinews and tendons, balance, centres, equilibrium and stances. The idea of body structure describes the relationship between parts of a complex but unified organism. Gravity affects our structure throughout our lives as a forming or deforming mechanism depending how well or how poorly a body is adapted to gravity. Poor posture when sitting or moving with a rounded back and shoulders sloped is an example of this.

The connective tissue, primarily muscle wrappings which surrounds and runs throughout the entire body, is a three dimensional and continuous network. The connective tissue determines the position of the bones and the body segments to each other by its respective state of tension. The muscle wrappings are also fundamental for the muscular balance of the body and the tensional relationship between muscles. This has a direct relationship with the stances, centres and equilibrium which is a crucial part of Taekwon-Do.

The American Biochemist, Dr. Ida Rolf observed in her research that most people demonstrate an unbalanced body structure. A person that is put off balance can only remain standing under considerable effort, holding themselves up against gravity. Various influences can cause bodily imbalance during an individual person's lifetime, such as, injuries, illnesses, emotional traumatic experiences, poor postural habits within a family etc. Similarly poor posture (incorrect centres and balance) during work or sporting activities can impair the optimal balance in the body. Under the effect of gravity, these influences can combine to become fixed within the muscles of the body.^(15.01)

Body structure not only defines movement patterns and posture but has a large influence on the general physical, psychological and spiritual well being of the individual. It is obvious that the freely moving joints wear down less. A flexible body promotes free breathing and good health for the inner organs and nerve function. If less energy is expended during everyday activities including sport due to the body being under less tension, then we can assume that more energy is available to the individual. For a well functioning body and a calm psychological state, a balanced body is not the only criteria, but it is however a necessary condition.^(15.02)

An understanding of economic movement is required to ensure the lowest expenditure of energy. In the case of walking for example, the leg swing forward which disturbs the

equilibrium of the body is neutralised by the backward swing of the arm. The remainder of the energy is directed into the ground and neutralised by friction. This action and reaction is used extensively in the techniques of Taekwon-Do.

The nature of the initiation of movement is essential for an economic movement because according to the law of inertia, even though this is often very short it normally requires a large expenditure of energy. Because the movement should be as economic as possible, the path the movement takes is also important. A further characteristic of economic movement is its execution at right angled degree. Movement is only energy saving if it takes the shortest path from start to end point in sequence in accordance with the equation $\text{energy} = \text{force} \times \text{path}$.^(15.03)

The research of Dr. Ida Rolf agrees exactly with the principles of Taekwon-Do techniques as laid down by General Choi Hong Hi; 'keep the back straight, straight line and shortest distance, absence of stiffness, relax the muscles, oblique angles etc'.

8.1.2 Stretching

Correct stretching is an important aspect of training. Cognisance of ones own body structure and fitness levels, is necessary to avoid inappropriate stretching techniques which could lead to injury. Thomas Kurz in his book 'Stretching Scientifically' stated "If you are a karateka, kickboxer, Taekwon-Do player, or an athlete of any combat sport that calls for full-extension kicks, you should select from among the following types of exercises, dynamic stretching, isometric stretching and relaxed stretching."^(16.01)

The six kinds of flexibility are described as, 1) dynamic active flexibility only using the muscles of the moving body part, 2) dynamic passive flexibility below the pain threshold using external assistance as needed to reach the painless limit of motion, 3) dynamic passive flexibility over the pain threshold and up to pain tolerance using external assistance needed to reach the maximum limit of motion permitted by pain tolerance, 4) static active flexibility using the muscles of the stretched body part to hold a stretched position, 5) static passive flexibility below the pain threshold using external assistance needed to reach the painless maximum stretch, 6) static passive flexibility up to pain tolerance using external assistance as needed to reach maximum stretch permitted by pain tolerance.^(16.02)

8.1.3 Breathing

Correct breathing coordinated with correct actions results in an increase in delivered power. Controlled breathing effects stamina and speed and conditions the body to receive a blow and assists the power of a blow against an opponent. Exhaling a breath at the critical moment when a blow is landed can prevent loss of consciousness and stifle pain. A sharp exhaling of breath at moment of impact on an opponent tenses the abdomen and concentrates power on delivery and slow inhaling of breath prepares for the next movement. .^(4.07)

If the individual practices breathing in all the areas of their lives, a person will gain control of their body and its functions. This will provide energy and power to the body and the mind as the brain is enriched with oxygen, remember “Breath is Life”.

8.2 Mind

Martial arts have some important statements to make in the areas of mental health, particularly in terms of energy within our bodies, psyches, interpersonal relationships and the universe.^(17.01) Training the mind to focus allows the mind and body to de-stress and be calm.

Martial Arts are often termed active meditation as continuous practice focuses and strengthens the mind and improves confidence. There is growing evidence indicating both long term and short term psychosocial changes from practicing martial arts. The findings in most of these studies indicate that the practise of martial arts leads to positive psychosocial changes in the martial arts practitioners.^(18.01)

A number of these studies took groups over a particular period of time, looking at martial artists with different belt rank and time of participation. These various studies used different systems to examine students of jujitsu, karate and Taekwon-Do. The positive traits seen in higher ranked and more experienced groups were initially thought to be due to the students with negative traits dropping out of the activity. There was found an inverse relationship between rank and aggression in students studying in “Traditional” martial arts. (Traditional martial arts are those which encompass philosophy, ethics and codes of conduct). Former students also had these lower measures of aggression. This suggests a decrease in aggression can be attributed to training, not loss of students with negative traits dropping out of the activity. .^(18.02)

Further evidence and studies looking at different students of hapkido, judo, jujitsu, karate, Taekwon-Do and tai chi at different points in time, support the findings of the single point studies summarised above.^(18.03)

Martial arts practice as indicated in the studies mentioned above, cultivates decreases in hostility and feeling vulnerable to attack. It also engenders confidence and assists in eliminating an individual, radiating a “victim complex”. Because of this, it is particularly important to encourage ladies to train in active martial arts such as Taekwon-Do.^(18.04)

Practicing martial arts appears to lead to more easy going and warm hearted individuals and increases in self confidence, self esteem and self control. Further research has shown that the style of martial art may also be relevant. Aikido students did not show this decrease in trait anxiety but styles such as Taekwon-Do did. This suggests that certain martial arts might lead to changes more quickly than others.^(18.05)

Asian martial arts have much in common with other physical activities such as Western sports and physical activity. Physical fitness, skills acquisition and social activity are common to both. Western sports however, tend to emphasise competition and winning. Asian martial arts have traditionally emphasised self knowledge, self improvement and

self control and also usually teaching self defence skills. There is also the added dimension in Asian martial arts, of philosophical and ethical teachings that are applied through an individual's life. There is also a high degree of tradition and etiquette and emphasis of the integration of the mind and body with a mediative component.^(18.06)

Martial arts practice has been found to be helpful for various people with special needs. Martial arts' can be used to give benefits for these people and using martial arts as a means to treat psychological problems. It has been noted that women suffering from psycho sexual abuse, eating disorders, substance abuse etc have reported that martial arts training, was helpful in their recovery.

Other findings have shown that adolescents identified as juvenile delinquents were assigned to one of three groups and various changes within the groups recorded. The first group received traditional Taekwon-Do training involving meditation, warm up exercises, a brief understanding of Taekwon-Do and the techniques. The second group received modern Taekwon-Do training where only the techniques were taught. The third group received no martial arts training only increased physical activity. All groups were taught by the same instructor, for the same length of time (6 months) and in the same location.

At the end of 6 months the students in traditional Taekwon-Do showed a decrease in aggressiveness and anxiety and an increase in self esteem. The second group studying modern Taekwon-Do showed an increased tendency towards delinquency and an increase in aggressiveness. The third group doing only exercise showed an increase in self esteem, but no other changes.

In conclusion, research over 30 years show that traditional martial arts, promotes positive psychosocial changes. Training without ethical, moral, spiritual or mediative components does not promote any positive changes in the students. Even though it is not completely understood how martial arts makes these positive changes, martial arts are finding their place in the treatment of psychological disorders. As a side note and observation, it is good to know that research is beginning to support the knowledge of the old martial art masters, that the martial arts can develop both better bodies and better minds and may lead to a better and more peaceful society.^(18.07)

8.3 Spirit

The eastern martial arts believed that harnessing the inner energy and coupled with ethics and codes of honour elevated the warrior above that of the common people. This is also seen in the ancient Greek Olympic Games where the champion athlete was awarded a wreath of laurel leaves as a crown. The Olympic champion bestowed honour to his city and became a hero to the people.^(19.01) A similar understanding was held by the people of the Korean Peninsula in the Korean three kingdom period, where contests of skill and courage were held under gruelling conditions. The winners were given the title of Son-Bi and the winners were held in great esteem by all.^(4.08) These ancient athletes had learnt to utilise energy with the mind and elevate themselves above the average citizen.

The effective management of energy is an important dimension in the martial arts as well as the mental health professions. 'Chi' and the transfer of energy, is studied through the martial arts using concepts borrowed from Japanese swordsmanship. In examining and observing the traditional disciplines of Aikido, Taekwon-Do and Karate, it becomes clear that more is involved than kicking, punching and throwing bodies on the floor.^(17.02)

'Chi' also known as 'Qi' or 'Ki', is a concept in traditional Asian culture. It is believed to be a part of every living thing that exists, as a kind of life force or spiritual energy.^(20.01) It is also recognised in various forms as 'Spiritus' in western culture, and 'Maban' in Australian aboriginal mythology, 'Ka' in Egyptian mythology, 'Ruah' in Hebrew mythology etc. It is clear that this concept of a universal life force is accepted universally all over the world in both the past and in the present.

'Chi' is a central concept in many Korean, Chinese and Japanese martial arts. Traditional Neo-Confucian explanation of 'Chi' is given in most martial arts schools. The 'Chi' is often interpreted representing a combining, blending or coordinating of energy or a principle of non-conflicting forces. Most martial art systems which incorporate the idea of 'Chi', believe the martial artist may harness the 'Chi' energy in a special area in the lower stomach referred to, in Korean, as 'dan tian'. The martial artist utilises this energy in their martial art techniques, utilising special breathing techniques which are also found in the Buddhist meditation practises common to Asian countries.^(20.02)

Most long term martial arts practitioners note that the practise of building 'Chi' by the breathing exercises, deep relaxation and meditation practice, causes profound physiological changes that enhances special martial arts skills. After sufficient practice an ability to feel and circulate the 'Chi' develops. Martial art practitioners able to experience these sensations find their sense of touch is enhanced, along with dramatically improved balance and coordination. These skills then enable improved martial arts performance.^(20.03)

9.0 Training into the Later Years – and Beyond 70

Martial Arts – at my age?! Mental and physical health in the later years of an individual's life become more imperative as the individual's body goes through the natural changes of life. This chapter has been dedicated to the benefits of this important aspect of the benefits of martial arts.

Many martial arts have high impact and high power generation. Though this continuous stress on the body can appear to be sustained whilst young (under 30 years), from observation as the individuals mature, health issues such as arthritis, joint damage, high blood pressure and back problems become more pronounced.^(21.01)

New research published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine shows that people in their 40's and 50's who regularly practice martial arts, demonstrate astounding levels of physical fitness in comparison to people the same age who don't exercise at all. The study subjects who practiced martial arts had 12% less body fat, were able to do twice as

many sit ups, had enhanced flexibility and leg strength, demonstrated a stronger immune system and showed greatly improved balance.^(22.01)

Is it possible to improve flexibility at fifty or sixty years of age. The answer is yes, even eighty year olds and older can increase their flexibility. The range of motion that can be achieved is dependant on the initial level of flexibility and strength. In the later years, flexibility and strength decline partly due to aging and partly due to inactivity. The American College of Sports Medicine stated the age related loss of strength can be decreased with training and can maintain or restore flexibility. Men and women 90 years old or older can increase their strength and muscle mass. The timeframe involved is longer than younger people but it does as long as the structure of the individual joints, are not an obstacle.^(16.03)

Taekwon-Do is practised at the individual's level of health, fitness and age. Taekwon-Do as conceived by General Choi Hong Hi bypasses most of these problems described above, due to the relaxation and soft application of techniques until power is delivered within a narrow bandwidth.

General Choi Hong Hi was a fine example of fitness levels that can be maintained into the later years. On a personal note, attending a seminar in 1998 conducted by General Choi Hong Hi, who in that time was in his 70's, was an uplifting experience and made me realise that high levels of strength, flexibility and health that are attainable in the later years, and because of this, I was able to set my own personal goals.

Practicing the Taekwon-Do patterns in a gentle "slow" manner has the same effect as Tai Chi, with the added benefit that as health and flexibility improves and increases, the more 'robust' aspects of Taekwon-Do can be introduced.

10.0 Summary

To summarise the "The Do" or "The Way" of Taekwon Do, is an almost impossible task, due to the all encompassing and deep nature of the subject. Therefore a brief but not complete summary will be made. To separate the various aspects of the 'Do' was quite difficult as the 'Do' is homogenous in its nature with everything interrelated. All the different components, categories and characteristics affect each other.

To live the way of the 'Do' or the 'Right Way' is a never ending personal lifetime journey. I believe it is the nature of the true martial artist to evolve from student to teacher and then to student again, always learning, always teaching. Developing the skills that an individual has inherited from their teacher and always striving to improve them with good health, good attitude and humility, this is the 'Do'. Everything that goes with nature and with the 'flow' is the right way.

Taekwon-Do is a never ending lifetime journey and adventure – enjoy your own journey.

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