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Midwest Tae Kwon Do Academy News

No. 1 - Spring 1993 - A Newsletter published by Midwest Tae Kwon Do Academy
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With every spring season nature displays its rebirth in warm new colors and strength. Thanks to the dedication and perseverance of many students, the Midwest Tae Kwon Do Academy is speeding into the season with renewed vitality. As spring unfolds a few changes are in order. First of all a change in schedule (effective May 3):

Monday:	5:45 - 7:15 pm - all
Tuesday:	5:30 - 6:30 pm - beginners 6:30 - 7:30 pm - intermediate & advanced
Wednesday:	5:30 - 6:30 pm - children 10 and under 6:30 - 7:30 pm - all
Thursday:	5:30 - 6:30 pm - beginners 6:30 - 7:30 pm - adult self-defense
Friday:	5:45 - 7:15 pm - all

These are actual class times, please arrive at least ten minutes prior to the start of class.

Black belt classes: 4/30, 5/14, 5/28, 6/11, 6/25 - 7:15 pm

MARK YOUR CALENDERS!!

- May 1: Master S.U. Kim's tournament in O'Fallon, MO.
- May 22: the second 1993 promotion test
- May 23: school picnic

As summer approaches students should take a few precautions in preparation for training. Remember lots of sweating ahead!! So before class drink plenty of fluids (especially water). Avoid eating 90 minutes prior to class and if you must then eat light.

The following are excerpts from TAEKWON-DO (The Korean Art of Self-Defence), Gen. Choi Hong Hi (1972).

History of Taekwon-Do (Taekwon-Do Yoksa)

Approximately 1300 years ago, (during the 6th century A.D.) the Korean peninsula was divided into three kingdoms: Silla, Koguryo, and Baek Je. Silla, the smallest of these kingdoms, was constantly under invasion and harassment by its two more powerful northern and western neighbors. During the reign of Chin Heung, twenty-fourth King of Silla, the young aristocrats and warrior class formed an elite officer corps called Hwa Rang-Do. This warrior corps - in addition to the ordinary training in spear, bow, sword, and hook - also trained themselves by practicing mental and physical discipline, and various forms of hand and foot fighting. To harden their bodies, they climbed rugged mountains, swam the turbulent rivers in the coldest months, and drove themselves unmercifully to prepare for the task of defending their homeland. To guide themselves and give purpose to their knighthood, they incorporated a five-point code of conduct set forth by their country's greatest Buddhist monk and scholar, Won Kang:

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

The Hwa Rang-Do became known in the peninsula for their courage and skill in battle, gaining respect from even their bitterest foes. The strength they derived from their respect to their code enabled them to attain feats of valor that became legendary. Many of these brave young warriors died on fields of battle in the threshold of their youth - as young as fourteen or fifteen years of age. Through their feats, however, they inspired the people of Silla to rise and unite. From the victories of Silla, the Korean peninsula became united for the first time in its history.

There is much historical evidence to document the existence of a form of hand and foot fighting during this period, in both Silla and Koguryo. Some of the postures resemble Taek Kyon and jujitsu techniques. During the period of Hwa Rang-Do, the original primitive art of hand fighting called Soo Bak was popular among the common people in Koguryo. The people had a high regard for Soo Bak. During the Dan-O festivals (On the 5th of May of the lunar calendar) and mid-Autumn festivals (August 15th of the lunar calendar), competition of Soo Bak was held along with games of Korean wrestling, tug of war, Taek Kyon, hopping contests, and Jegi-Chagi.

It appears that the warriors of Hwa Rang-Do added a new dimension to this national art of foot fighting by gearing it to a combative art and infusing the principles of the Hwa Rang-Do. The new mental concepts as well as physical elevated foot fighting to an art and it became Soo Bak-Gi.

The famous Korean Historian, Dr. Danje Shin Chae Ho, in his writings of ancient Chosun, describes contests of skill and courage under the most grueling of conditions: "Dancing with swords and certain water sports were held on the frozen river to test a contestant's courage. Archery and Taek Kyon contests were held to test skill and strength. The winner of the hunt was given the title of Son-Bi. All the above were judged to be necessary prerequisites of the warrior, and winners were held in esteem by all." Dr. Danje further states that the art of Soo Bak was eventually introduced to China as Kwon Bup and as a form of jujitsu to Japan.

While pursuing historical documents relating to the martial arts in Korea, it was interesting to discover that the Third King of the Yi Dynasty (1401-1408) actively recruited experts in Taek Kyon, Sirum (Korean wrestling), stone throwing, archery, and Soo Bak Gi to help in organizing a strong army.

Much historical documentation seems to indicate that some of these forms of open hand fighting may have been eventually exported to Japan and formed the basis for Japanese Jujitsu and Karate. The Korean Hwa Rang-Do may have been the forerunners of the famed Japanese Samurai. In his book "this is Karate", Masutatsu Oyama, a well-known authority of Karate in Japan, mentions that the etymology of Kara refers to the kingdom of Karak at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, where their type of open and fighting may have been brought to Japan by these ancestors of the Japanese people.

Taek Kyon in the Koryo Dynasty

In another interesting study, Dr. An Ja San has stated in his book of ancient Korea, "Chosun Moo Sa Youngoong Jun," the biography of Korean warriors, that the Yoo Sul school (which could now be considered jujitsu) was known under the name of Soo Bak-Gi or Taek Kyon. Annually during the month of May, the King of Chosun held a match of this form of unarmed combat at Kak Chon Pavilion on Ma

Am Mountain. The winner of this contest was awarded a prestigious government post. The King also made the contest compulsory for all soldiers. Three of the winners of this annual contest - Lee Yi Min, Jang Joong Boo, and Sa Kyang Sung - eventually became leading generals during the Koryo Dynasty. It appears that the King held more than a passing interest in the art.

There were twenty-five fundamental movements or postures used by the practitioners. These postures incorporated hand, leg, jumping, falling, rolling, and pulling techniques.

Certainly the Silla and Koryo marked a flowering of the martial arts in Korea. Soon after, however, the dynasties acquired an anti-military posture. Though this began a period of civil enlightenment, anything dealing with the military was debased. By the end of the Yi Dynasty, the martial arts appeared to have ceased existing. The final blow came with the Japanese occupation (1909-1945), when it was forbidden to practice any of the martial arts. Taek Kyon was secretly practiced by some dedicated stalwarts and passed on to a handful of students. Proponents of the art, such as Song Duk Ki and Han Il Dong, managed to keep the art alive.

With the liberation of Korea in 1945, the new Republic of Korea Armed Forces was organized on January 15, 1946. A young Second Lieutenant, Choi Hong Hi, recently released from a Japanese prison camp, began teaching his martial arts to some of his soldiers. The rest, of

course, is history, resulting in what is today known throughout the world as Taekwon-Do.

In 1955, the name Taekwon-Do was chosen as the new name of the national martial art by a board of instructors, historians, and other prominent persons. The name was selected for its apt description of the art: Tae (foot), Kwon (fist), Do (art). Not only did this new name bear a close similarity to the ancient name of Taek Kyon, but the name gave a new sense of nationalism to the art, whereas the prevalent names of Dang Soo connoted Chinese hand.

The years of research and development by General Choi resulted in the Chang Hun style (pen name of the author) of Taekwon-Do. Though this style is primarily based on Taek Kyon, Soo Bak, and Karate techniques, a myriad of techniques have been added, especially in the variety of hand techniques and perfection of foot techniques. The Chang Hun style is based on twenty-four patterns, each perfected and polished by General Choi Hong Hi and his colleagues, from the white belt pattern Chon-Ji, to the highest one, Tong Il.

After 1300 years, a Korean martial art has reached full maturity, and has spread from a small band of aristocratic warriors to practitioners in more than 60 countries with millions of students. The combination of the old classical techniques and new modifications have resulted in a form of self-defense and mental conditioning unrivaled in the modern world.