

Tae Kwon Do History



Introduction:

Although modern Taekwondo has actually only existed for about 50 years (the martial art known Tae Kwon Do was developed between 1945 and 1955 and only became known as Tae Kwon Do in 1955.), it is based upon Shotokan Karate, another 20th century martial art, and ancient Korea martial arts, such as Taekkyon and Subak, that have lost favor in modern times. Tae Kwon Do is a martial art that means "The Way of the Feet and Hands".

Writings on Taekwondo history usually portray Taekwondo as a unique product of Korean culture, developed over the long course of Korean history since the Three Kingdoms Era. However, Taekwondo's primary influence came from Japanese Karate that was introduced into Korea during the Japanese occupation of Korea during the early 1900s.

Few written records on ancient Korean history exist, so factual information on Korean martial arts is scarce and sketchy. Because of this, most Korean martial arts writers find something in Korean history to support their claims; writers on Tae Kwon Do included. If one researches the history of Tae Kwon Do, in the research they will find differing and sometimes contradictory information.

Majority of this information is a summary taken from Reference 1. For more details, please review the entire material on history of Tae Kwon Do from Reference 1.

Origins of Tae Kwon Do:

Empty-hand fighting did not originate wholly in only one country, but it developed naturally in every place humans settled. In each country, people adapted their fighting techniques to deal with the dangers in their local environments. As trade and politics brought these countries into contact with each other, their various fighting styles influenced each other, sometimes leading to the development of entirely different fighting systems.

In ancient Korea, Koreans developed weapons to assist in the gathering of food and for self-defense, and developed their minds and bodies through recreational games and competitions. Each tribe participated in warrior martial art contests during the ritual seasons, contests such as "Yongko," in the Puyo State, "Tongmaeng," in the Koguryo state, "Muchon," in the Ye and Mahan states, and "Kabi," in the Silla dynasty. These activities eventually developed into exercises that were used to improve health or fighting abilities.

Ancient Korean warriors trained in the military art "Farando" (which used head, elbow, and foot techniques to fight the enemy). They developed two special systems of training: borrowed strength and shorting of space. Borrowed strength referred to borrowing strength from some great being or thing, such as increasing ones power by having unity with the Great Spirit or using herbs or training devices. Space shorting referred to a special way of walking.

The long experience of ancient people in defending themselves against their enemies and animal attacks, as well as their imitation of the defensive and offensive positions of animals, slowly led

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them to develop more effective fighting skills of their own. Some believe this is the true beginning of modern Taekwondo.

The earliest influence on Korean martial arts from another country is believed to have been a form of Chinese hand and foot fighting called "kwon-bop" (punching and butting, which was based on kung-fu). Some believe that during China's Sung and Ming Dynasties, "Nei-chia" (internal kung-fu) and "Wai-chia" (external kung-fu) were also introduced into Korea. However, if the statues and murals in ancient Korean temples and tombs do indeed depict ancient martial arts movements (as many believe), then they predate any kung-fu influence.

Military personalities were among the well-known prominent national leaders during the Three Kingdoms Era. This military orientation led to the development of warrior groups, such as Koguryo's "chouisonin" (individual members were called "Sonbae") and the sixth century Silla warrior nobility group known as "Hwarang-do" (individual members were called Hwarang). Both groups adopted Subak training as one of their important learning subjects and both used the same organizational and hierarchical structure.

Subak was popularized in Koguryo by the Sonbae and handed down to the Hwarang warrior group in Silla. Subak was further popularized by the Hwarang who added more foot techniques to the art and spread its influence throughout the Korean peninsula. Although Subak first appeared in the Koguryo kingdom, the Hwarang-do is credited with the growth and spread of the art throughout Korea. When Koguryo became so strong that Silla was unable to defend itself, Silla saw the need for special warriors which were called the "Hwarang-do."

The Hwarang-do was a philosophical and religious code followed by valiant warriors—not a fighting style in itself. In the beginning, the Hwarang primarily fought using Subak. They studied Subak as a systemized martial art at their learning houses and it gradually became popular among ordinary people. Hwarang-do education based its guiding principles on the Five Codes of Human Conduct:

1. Loyalty to your country
2. Obedience to your parents
3. Trustworthiness to your friends
4. Courage to never retreat from the enemy
5. Justice to never take a life without cause

The codes became a way of life for the young men and guided their moral behavior and the use to which they put their Subak training. The codes formed the philosophical background for modern Taekwondo,

The Hwarang were warriors who were disciplined at an early age to endure all types of weather and hardships. They further developed Subak, which until then was primarily practiced as an art form, by adding hand techniques, kicks, mental discipline, and principles to transform it into a useful combat skill. Their extensive mountain running endurance training gave them strong legs, and as their leg muscles developed, they began to incorporate formalized kicking techniques into Subak. They developed a martial art system of foot fighting named, "Subak-gi," which is

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believed to be the initial source of the extensive number of kicking techniques used in Korean martial art styles.

Due to their superb fighting skills, Silla was victorious over Paekche in 668 AD and Koguryo in 670 AD, and the Hwarang leader, General Kim Yu-Sin, unified the three kingdoms. A time of relative peace followed, which led to a decline of the Hwarang as a military organization.

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 Hwarang-do may have been the forerunners of the famed Japanese samurai. In his book *This is Karate*, Matutatsu Oyama, a well known authority of karate in Japan, mentions that the etymology of kara may have been derived from the country of Kaya at the southern tip of the Korean peninsula.

Toward the end of the Silla Dynasty, the Silla throne was so weakened it could not recover. By 918 AD, the Silla court was dead. By 935 AD, even the name Silla had disappeared. As the Silla Dynasty ended, the Koryo Dynasty developed.

When the powerful warlord, Wang Kon, took over Silla and founded the Koryo Dynasty (935-1392 AD), he named the unified kingdom "Koryo," an abbreviation of Koguryo. Subak played an important role as a popular sport activity of the people in the Koryo dynasty. During the early days of the dynasty, Subak proficiency was the only required qualification to join the military. Subak became an important national sport, practiced in contests called "Subakhui." Historical records indicate that the format and judgment of such contests became fairly standardized with elements of sparring (kyorugi) and breaking (kyokpa) competition. Subak attracted much attention from both the royal court and the public but, since the early Koryo Dynasty was a time of peace, Subak was of little use to the common man.

The invasions from China brought Chinese "kung-fu" to the Korean peninsula, greatly influencing Subak, which became more militaristic in nature. Although Subak was widely practiced, "Kwon Bop" became a more popular art. There were two types of kwon bop, one primarily defensive and the other more aggressive with jumping attacks and evasive movements.

During the Koryo Dynasty, Subak became known as Taekkyon, which was written in Chinese characters meaning, "push shoulder." Weapons, such as swords, bow and arrows, etc., were the primary tools of war during this period. Since Subak was used as a supplement to these weapons, it concentrated on "quick kill" techniques. Taekkyon, as the immediate predecessor to Subak, was a very aggressive hard style martial art system that was composed mostly of foot techniques.

As the time of peace came to an end, the focus of Taekkyon changed. During the reign of King Uijong (1147-1170 AD), it changed from a system designed primarily to promote physical fitness into a fighting art.

However, during the latter years of the dynasty when gunpowder and new types of weapons became available, support for martial arts training slowed and martial arts training for soldiers was minimal. High levels of training were reserved for the personal troops of feudal lords. These

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troops studied the so-called "Oryonkwon" (fist of five kinds), which included "Pogakwon" (fist of cannon strike), "Menhogwon" (fist of furious tiger), "Hugwon" (fist of monkey), "Hakkwon" (fist of crane), and "Chilsonkwon" (fist of seven stars).

However, in the latter half of the dynasty, the importance of Taekkyon as a martial art began to decline due to negligence of the royal court, which was constantly dealing with strife between feuding political factions. As the attention of the Korean masses continued to turn away from the martial arts, they turned to philosophy and the arts. They felt hand to hand combat was barbaric and martial artists were looked down upon. King Chung Mok (1344-1348 AD) outlawed the practice of Taekkyon by civilians.

The position of military officials started to become powerful again around the time of In Jong (17th Koryo monarch, 1122-1146). It is recorded that such military men as Chong Chung-Bu (who led a successful military revolt against the government in 1170), carried out their exploits by using sang-yae (common arts). Over time, the martial arts techniques of the common people and of the regular military gradually disappeared as a result of the preferential treatment given civil officials, the general contempt for military officials, and a government leadership that was weakened by literary pursuits at the expense of martial arts development.

In the 4th year of the reign of Ye Jong (16th Koryo monarch, 1105-1122), the Kukchagam (National University) was established. Mu-hak (martial studies) was included among the seven curricula offered. However, it only increased the friction between civil officials and military officials and the mu-hak course ended up being one in name only. Thereafter, as the development of martial arts had been thus officially thwarted, the practice of martial arts by common people took on an aspect of secrecy, with techniques being handed down from father to son.

Although Taekkyon declined as a martial art, the Subakhui remained as folk games and they carried over into the next dynasty. Taekkyon survived as the only fighting system with a link to ancient Subak as it was carried into the Joseon Dynasty. In 1790 AD, the King T'aejo ordered General Lee Duck Mu and scholars Back Je Ga and Back Dong Soo to compile an official textbook on all the current Korean martial arts, the *Muyedobo-tongji*, which is now considered a classic of Korean martial arts literature. It was the first book widely available on Taekkyon and it helped promote the art among the general population. Before this time, the art had been restricted primarily to the military nobility. The book used drawings made from carved wooden blocks and consisted of about forty pages of Korean style paper. It illustrated many facets of martial training, outlined the proper equipment and uniform, and recorded various empty hand and weapons hyung. The book described how Taekkyon enabled one to build strength by training the arms and legs, as well as the body, to be adaptable to any critical situation.

Taekkyon existed in underground schools and was practiced by Korean citizens living abroad. One of the more common places for Koreans to go to learn martial arts was Japan, and several Koreans who were to become influential in the development of Taekwondo, began their martial art study in Japan.

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When Japan entered World War II, the Koreans were drawn into the war because of their occupation by the Japanese. After the war ended, the Japanese were forced from Korea by the allies; Korea was divided between the allies, and thus began another occupation.

After WWII and the end of the Japanese occupation, Korea went through a period of cultural revitalization. During this process, the martial arts, which were banned by the occupying forces, found a new resurgence. The Korean people, who swore to never be overpowered again, embraced the proliferation of the martial arts throughout the nation. From this, came the birth of the modern Korean martial arts. Various groups emerged, each claiming its own version of prowess. Most of the Korean martial arts at the time were predominantly extracted from the Japanese arts, with some derivatives of Chinese and Korean.

After the Japanese occupation ended in 1945, exiled Koreans returned to Korea bringing with them martial arts they had studied in other countries. Korean martial arts were influenced by the quick, straight-line movements that characterize the various Japanese martial arts. Masters who had studied martial arts in other countries (China, Japan, and Okinawa) returned to Korea and blended these with Taekkyon's foot techniques to form new Korean martial arts styles as methods to protect not only individual Koreans but also the country itself. Korean people began regaining the thought of self-reliance and traditional folk games resumed their popularity.

After the war, most martial arts schools in Korea were using the name karate and were using Japanese terminology to describe techniques. They used Japanese patterns and training methods. There were no techniques or terminology that resembled Taekkyon. This was a problem until after the Korean War when nationalistic and political motivations led to an effort to portray the martial arts that had developed in Korean as having ancient Korean origins.

At least four Japanese martial arts remained popular in Korea after liberation, albeit under their Koreanized names. Koreans continued to study Yudo (Judo), Komdo (Kendo), Yusul (Jujutsu), and Kongsudo (karate-do). The Korean Yudo Association was founded in October of 1945 by Mum-Suk Lee and Jin-Hee Han, and the Korean Komdo Association (K.K.A.) was organized in Seoul in 1948. The K.K.A. became affiliated with the Korean Amateur Sports Association on Nov. 20, 1953, and in the same year the Korean Yudo College was founded. Both Yudo and Komdo remained virtually unchanged from their Japanese namesakes. On the other hand, the arts of Yusul and Kongsudo have changed greatly since Korean liberation. Yusul developed into Hapkido and all of its derivatives (Kuksul, Hwarang-do, etc.), while Kongsudo would eventually go through the greatest changes of all, developing into Tangsoodo and Taekwondo.

Many Tangsoodo schools today still retain the forms of Karate-do. As late as 1965, Hong-Hi Choi was still teaching Shorin-ryu and Shorei-ryu forms along with his own forms. In 1968, Sihak Henry Cho asserted that "Taekwondo is identical to Japanese karate." Cho also noted that "some of the Korean public still use the 'karate' pronunciation in conversation."

From World War II until the early 1960's, Taekwondo consisted mostly of Japanese terminology and techniques. This was a problem for those asserting that Taekwondo had its roots in Korean history. The next generation of instructors solved this quandary by developing a method of competition that was radically different from Japanese competition. This made Taekwondo

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unique and different than Japanese karate. These changes were opposed by first generation Taekwondo instructors, such as Choi Hong Hi.

The Kwans:

As the native arts and Japanese arts gained in popularity in Korea, several kwans (schools) that taught Japanese influenced martial arts sprang up in Korea. The various kwans ("schools") of Kongsudo retained much of the style of karate-do for many years, including the various kata or forms of Karate-do.

1945: **Chung Do Kwan.** The first kwan to teach a native Korean style of martial art the "Chung-do-kwan" (gym of the blue wave, meaning a youngster's spirit and vitality) was opened, in the Yong Chon district of Seoul, by Lee Won Kuk.

1945: **Moo Duk Kwan.** The "Moo-duk-kwan" (military virtue training hall) was founded on November 9, 1945, by Hwang Kee (aka. Ki-Chang Hang). Moo Duk Kwan's customs were the strongest among the first five big Kwans. There are two distinct schools of Moo Duk Kwan which evolved from a single source in modern Korean: Tang-soo-do (way of the chinese hand or knife hand) (the Japanese character used to depict this term is the same one used in karate) and Moo-duk-kwan, a division of Taekwondo.

1946: **Yun Moo Kwan.** One of the five original schools of martial arts established on the newly liberated Korean peninsula at the conclusion of World War II. The Yun-moo-kwan, which later became the Ji-do-kwan (wisdom way school)," was founded by Chun, Sang Sup in Seoul on May 3, 1946.

1946: **Ji Do Kwan.** Founded by Chun Sang Sup, on May 3, 1946, as the Choson Yun Moo Kwan Kong Soo Do Bu.

1946: **Chang-Moo-Kwan.** Yoon Byung In, who taught Moo Do with Chun Sang Sup in the Choson Yun Moo Kwan, founded the Chang Moo Kwan (development of martial arts training hall) in 1946 at the YMCA in Jong Ro, Seoul. The Chang Moo Kwan was represented with a symbol of two dragons.

1946: **Chi-Do-Kwan.** Founded by Pyang, Yon Kue (aka. Yun-Gae Byang, or Yun-Kwei Byong).

1946: **Song-Moo-Kwan.** The Song-moo-kwan (pine tree training hall or the ever youthful house of martial arts training) was founded by Ro Byung Jik in Kae Song. Its power and customs were the weakest among the first big five Kwans.

1953: **Oh-Do-Kwan.** Founded by General Choi Hong Hi at the 3rd Army Yong Dae Ri base.

1953: **Kang Duk Won.** A second incarnation of Chang-moo-kwan, Kang Duk Won was founded after the Korean War by Hong Jong Pyo and Park Chul Hee, who had practiced martial arts at the YMCA Kwon Bup Bu.

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1954: **Jung Do Kwan**. Founded by Lee Yong Woo in Suh Dae Moon Gu, Seoul.

1954: **Han Moo Kwan**. The Han-moo-kwan was founded by Lee Kyo Yoon in August 1954.

Although each of these kwans claimed to teach traditional Taekkyon, each emphasized a different aspect of Subak/Taekkyon and various names emerged for each fighting style. Styles became known by such names as Subak-do, Kwon-bop, Kong-soo-do, Tae-soo-do, and Dang-soo-do.

A rivalry existed between the kwans for control of the Korean martial arts. Dissension between the kwans prevented the formation of a central regulating board for many years. However, during those years, martial arts gained a strong foothold within the newly formed Korean Armed Forces (1945), with Taekkyon becoming a regular part of military training. The new Korean Army adopted the chung-do-kwan as its training school, mainly because of the kwan's tough, disciplined training, its stability, and the great expertise of its instructors. The Korean Yudo Association was formed in September 1945, and, in early 1946, Taekkyon masters began teaching troops stationed in Kwang-ju.

In July 1946, grandmasters Won Kuk Lee (chung-do-kwan), Byung Jick Noh (Song-moo-kwan), Sang Sup Chun (Yun-moo-kwan), and Byung In Yoon (YMCA kwan) met to discuss Korean martial arts and possible unification. Nothing definitive came from the meeting.

In 1946-1947, Choi Hong Hi, now a first lieutenant in the Korean Army's Second Infantry Regiment, taught martial arts to both Koreans and Americans stationed at Tae-jon. He continued to rise rapidly through the military ranks, and, in 1948, Major Choi Hong Hi became the martial arts instructor for the American Military Police School in Seoul.

With the beginning of the Korean War, when North Korea attacked across the 38th parallel into South Korea, interest in Korean martial arts increased. This set the foundation for a major turning point in Korean martial arts in 1952.

Beginnings of Han Moo Kwan:

Mr. Kim's instructor, Kyo Yoon Lee (66 years old), started the Hon Kuk Gymnasium on July 20, 1953. He was the first Korean Martial Arts instructor at the Korean Youn Hee University, from May 1945, to May 1955. The word Han is the South Korea name for Korea, the word Moo means Military or Martial, and the word Kwan means School or Hall; together Han Moo Kwan means "Korean Military School".

The Central Gymnasium of Taekwondo Han Moo Kwan was founded by Kyo Yoon Lee August 15, 1954 and is one of the first nine original Kwans that later formed Kukkiwon Taekwondo. Great Grand Master Kyo Yoon Lee continues to be active in the World Taekwondo Federation and serves on the Dan/Poom Black Belt promotion committee of the Kukkiwon [2].

The "official" Taekwondo Han Moo Kwan still exists today, but only as a fraternal social friendship club. The official training curriculum endorsed by Taekwondo Han Moo Kwan is the

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Kukkiwon curriculum. The current President of Taekwondo Han Moo Kwan remains its founder, Great Grand Master Kyo Yoon Lee. The Korean Han Moo Kwan supports the World Taekwondo Federation [2].

Beginnings of Modern Tae Kwon Do:

In 1955, Tae Kwon Do was formed. An effort to unite the many variations of Korean Martial arts under one name, Tae Kwon Do was organized and officially made. Many groups resisted the request from the government to unite and kept their own Korean style of martial arts.

Many international Tae Kwon Do organizations exist today. The two largest are the International Tae Kwon Do Federation (ITF) and the World Tae Kwon Do Federation (WTF).

International Tae Kwon Do Federation (ITF)

In 1965, Choi retired from the South Korean army as a two-star general (major general) and was appointed as the country's first ambassador to Malaysia, by President Park. Through Choi's efforts, Taekwondo spread through Malaysia and reached national acceptance when, in 1971, the art was demonstrated in the Merdeka Stadium at the request of Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman. In 1965, Ambassador Choi was appointed by the Korean government to lead a goodwill mission to West Germany, Italy, Turkey, United-Arab Republic, Malaysia, and Singapore. This trip was significant in that for the first time in Korean history, it declared Taekwondo as the national martial art of Korea. Although Choi briefly returned to Korea to start an international branch of the KTA, he never gained much political influence in Korea.

On March 22, 1966, Choi formed the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) in Seoul, Korea, with the consent of nine countries. The federation established associations in Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, West Germany, Turkey, Italy, Arab Republic of Egypt, Korea, and the United States. This was the first time that the headquarters of an international organization had been established in Korea. The ITF was formed as a private organization and was never the international arm of the KTA.

The next few years saw the exponential growth of Taekwondo, with Choi, through the ITF, tirelessly traveling the world to teach and expand his art, especially to the youth of the world. While he was working internationally, others were establishing a stronghold in Korea, which led to his loss of influence within Korea.

A goodwill trip (one of many he made to numerous other countries) to North Korea (he was born in 1918 in Hwa Dae, Myong Chun District in what only became North Korea in 1953) by a Taekwondo demonstration team in 1980 caused General Choi to fall in disgrace in the eyes of South Koreans. (Although there was controversy over the trip, Choi did nothing illegal or treasonous). Due to the controversy over the trip, Choi, who was 54 years of age at the time, resigned as president of the KTA and, with the unanimous consent of member countries, moved the ITF to Toronto, Canada. Since the ITF was a private organization, not a governmental entity, Choi was allowed to take the ITF with him to Canada.

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In Canada, Choi felt that he would be wise to teach Taekwondo in North Korea and trained the instructors who would do the job. Through North Korea, he felt that Taekwondo could spread to other socialist and third world countries. He made up his mind to produce Taekwondo instructors in North Korea who were not contaminated by eastern commercialism. In this way, he felt the true Taekwondo, philosophy, and techniques could be developed. In addition, he thought that this movement would stimulate and motivate instructors in the free world.

North Korea is a member of the original International Taekwondo Federation and South Korea is a member of the World Taekwondo Federation, founded 7 years after the ITF was founded.

In October 1982, General Choi met with Mr. Csandi, Chairman of the Programming Committee of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), in Budapest, Hungary, to discuss IOC recognition of the ITF. In April 1984, Choi visited Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, President of the International Olympic Committee, in Lausanne, to prove to him that the ITF was the only governing body of true Taekwondo.

In September 1984 Choi Hong Hi invited key instructors such as Lee Su Hi, Rhee Ki Ha, Park Jung Tae and Choi Jung Hwa to Pyongyang to finalize the publication of his *Encyclopedia of Taekwondo*.

A desire to establish a strong location for spreading Taekwondo throughout the world, especially in socialist, Third World countries, and politically disadvantaged countries, led the ITF to consider leaving Canada. In December 1984, the Fifth ITF Congress meeting in Vienna unanimously decided to relocate the ITF to Vienna, the capital city of Austria. In 1985, the ITF moved to Vienna and Choi published the *Encyclopedia of Taekwondo*, which documented all Taekwondo techniques.

On September 20, 1985, during the administration of Kim Il Sung (North Korea) and General Chun Doo Hwan (South Korea) visitors and art performers of South and North Korea were exchanged simultaneously between the two countries. It was the first time in 40 years since the division of the country that separated families in two Koreas had an opportunity to meet their lost families. An art performance was held at Pyongyang Grand Theatre by the South, and at Seoul National Theater by the North on September 21 and 22.

On June 11, 1986, Choi took the DPRK Taekwondo demonstration team to the People's Republic of China. The members of the Korean Taekwondo team made a wonderful performance and created a stir in the capital of Beijing, and in the cities of Xian and Jinan. It was Taekwondo's first appearance in China and the performance made a deep impression on the people. This visit eventually became the motivation for the Chinese people adopt Taekwondo as a martial art.

General Choi Hong Hi died of stomach cancer on June 15, 2002.

On September 22, 2002, 70 representatives from 46 countries attended a memorial service for General Choi. The solemn and memorable service was held in Pyongyang, North Korea, the birthplace of General Choi. A special Congress of the ITF was also held on September 22, 2002 to uphold the General's last wish to elect Mr. Chang Ung as the new president of the

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International Taekwondo Federation. In his last words, and before nine officials of the ITF, General Choi named Mr. Chang Ung as the new president of the International Taekwondo Federation

There was conflict within the ITF before Choi's death and it escalated after his death. There are now 3 main ITF groups who claim to be the "real" ITF:

- ITF Vienna: led by Tran Trieu Quan, who was elected as the new president.
- ITF North Korea: led by Chang Ung, who was named by Choi to be his successor.
- ITF Canada: led by Choi Jung Hwa, Choi's son.

World Tae Kwon Do Federation (WTF)

On January 17, 1971, Dr. Un Yong Kim, who was serving as Deputy Chief of the Presidential Protective Forces, was elected president of the KTA. He had been instrumental in organizing the building of an advanced Taekwondo training establishment in Seoul, Korea. On March 20, 1971, Korean President Park Chung Hee declared Taekwondo the national sport of Korea and allocated funds to build the "Kukkiwon," which would serve as the central gymnasium and world headquarters for Taekwondo.

Construction began in 1971 and it was completed on November 30, 1972. Feeling that Korea was the mother country of Taekwondo and that the world headquarters should be located there, he dissolved the ITF's connection with KTA and on May 28, 1973 created a new international body called the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF). The Kukkiwon became known as the "mecca of world Taekwondo." On May 25-27, 1973, the first biennial World Taekwondo Championship was held at the Kukkiwon, with the participation of 19 countries. The success of this event proved that Taekwondo had been internationally recognized as a valid sport as well as being an extremely effective method of self-defense. The event started Taekwondo toward becoming a world sport.

During the meet, several KTA leaders called for establishment of a worldwide Taekwondo organization to help get Taekwondo into the Olympics. Representatives of the participating countries at the meet formed a new, worldwide organization to promote Taekwondo on an international level, the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF). They elected Dr. Un Yong Kim as president and the WTF absorbed the KTA.

General Choi was not included in this meeting. In 1972, before the completion of the Kukkiwon and before the formation of the WTF, General Choi had left Korea and moved his ITF to Canada.

One of the first things Un Yong Kim did as president of the WTF was to dissolve the WTF connection with Choi Hong Hi. Since then, all Taekwondo activities outside of Korea have been coordinated by the WTF, the only official organization recognized by the Korean government as the international regulating body for Taekwondo. Kim was instrumental in changing the direction of Taekwondo in the WTF from a martial art to a martial sport.

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The World Taekwondo Federation is made up of Taekwondo national governing bodies (NGBs). The Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) is the NGB for Taekwondo in the Republic of Korea. The United States Taekwondo Union (USTU) is the NGB for Taekwondo in the United States. Individuals may be affiliated with the WTF through their NGB, but individuals cannot join the WTF directly.

On January 8, 1977, nine of the largest kwans (Chung-do-kwan, Ji-do-kwan, Moo-duk-kwan, Chang-moo-kwan, Song-moo-kwan, Han-moo-kwan, Oh-do-kwan, Jung-do-kwan, and Kang-duk-won) recognized the Kukkiwon as the sole black belt promotional body for Taekwondo. Before this declaration, most practitioners valued their individual kwan certification more so than "official" certificates issued by the Kukkiwon or the KTA. By recognizing the Kukkiwon's ultimate promotional authority in Korea, the kwan heads voluntarily gave up much of their power and prestige. Also in 1977, the WTF replaced kwan names with serial numbers. The kwan serial numbers are as follows: (1) Song-moo-kwan, (2) Han-moo-kwan, (3) Chang-moo-kwan, (4) Moo-duk-kwan, (5) O-do-kwan, (6) Kang-du-kwan, (7) Jung-do-kwan, (8) Ji-do-kwan, and (9) Chung-do-kwan.

Taekwondo is now one of the national sports of Korea and is included in all school grades and as a requisite for military training. It has become so much a sport in Korea that the WTF now comes under the control of the Korean Athletics Association and not the martial arts body, the ki-do-hae.

Since the formation of the WTF as a rival to the ITF, Taekwondo has not been a unified sport. Since the WTF headquarters is located in Korea, Korea has given its support the development of WTF Taekwondo. In the 1980's struggle to determine who would govern Olympic Taekwondo, the WTF won.

Taekwondo has evolved into two basic types, one is the traditional martial art promoted by the ITF and the other is a progressive martial sport promoted by the WTF with Olympic competition as its primary goal.

Taekwondo has become one of the most practiced martial arts in the world. Its popularity may be attributed to it being an official Pan-American sport, a demonstration sport in the 1988 and 1992 Olympics, and a full medal sport in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

Our Han Moo Kwan Tae Kwon Do Club:

Our Han Moo Kwan Tae Kwon Do Club was officially started in February of 1973 by Mr. Ui Jung Kim and Mr. Robert Rainie. Our Han Moo Kwan Club retains the traditional style and philosophy taught to Mr. Kim in the 1950s and 1960s in Seoul, Korea, before the unification of the Kwans (schools) into the World TaeKwonDo Federation (WTF). Unlike WTF, which markets its training toward younger students desiring to achieve through competition (sport), this form addresses the needs of the adult who wishes to practice a power form designed for personal combat. This fighting art is used strictly for self-defense using only bare hands and feet, no weaponry, to fend off attackers. This fighting art also promotes improving oneself physically and spiritually.

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This philosophy and its strategies are not tied to and are independent of any individual society's legal or moral whims.

- Close the distance
- Be grounded; extend your energy
- Be offensive, not just defensive
- Strike for damage to end it quickly to minimize injuries on both sides
- Get off the Line
- Keep it simple
- Focus on the opponent, not just the weapon. The opponent is the one that will harm you
- Fight as if your life depends on it, doing whatever it takes to defend your life

In the late 1970s, an ambassador of WTF traveled to the United States and approached Mr. Kim with a mandate to have him convert his school to the standards of this new organization. Mr. Kim politely declined. WTF training is more sport oriented, tailored to a younger audience, with a focus on competition. Mr. Kim's style of practice matches the needs of adult students who wish to learn a power form of martial art with a constant focus on self defense. Changing to WTF style would not only have confused and discouraged the students of his club, it would have discarded one of the few remaining genuine martial styles of Tae Kwon Do.

Mr. Kim was our chief instructor from the time the club began in 1973 until he became gravely ill in December 1997. He passed into eternity in January of 1999. His legacy lives on through the work of a board of directors and several highly skilled teachers.

References:

1. www.tkdutor.com, 10 June 2007
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Han_Moo_Kwan, 9 June 2007