

TAEKWON-DO

A WAY OF LIFE

3rd DAN ESSAY



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“Taekwon-Do is an art that implies a way of thinking and life, and particularly in instilling moral civilization and generating the power for justice”.

THE BEGINNING OF TIME

I began this journey at the age of 28; a journey I could never have imagined would lead me here and would be such a big part of my life. Back in 1992 armed with very little knowledge in Taekwon-Do, I entered a World Taekwon-Do Do-Jang looking for fitness and self defence. Through WTF I developed an understanding of the sport side and later went on to ITF where I gained skills in sparring, patterns, destruction, speciality, self defence techniques, and of course fitness was the result that I achieved.

My Journey 1992 -2009

- **1992 - 1995 World Taekwon-Do Federation (WTF)** – At 28 years of age I trained under Mr Parvin Hirawa a 2nd degree black belt. The most important aspect for me of TKD was free sparring. Patterns were purely to warm up before sparring.
- **1995 - 1998 International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)** – After moving with my family to Kapiti I trained in ITF under Mr Greg Trifford a 1st degree black belt. This really was when my passion for the art was born. After failing three pregradings due to my struggle with theory I had a break for 12 months and still unsure whether I would return to TKD.
- **1998 - 1999 Aikido** – I then went on to study under Mr Michael Murray a 3rd degree in Aikido. Aikido has helped open my mind and extend my knowledge of martial arts.
- **1999 – 2004 International Taekwon-Do Federation** – Whilst visiting my old club, I realized TKD was the place where I belonged. I rejoined the Kapiti club for 12 months before I moved onto Levin to train under Mr Andrew Salton, a 5th degree black belt and I were privileged to grade 1st degree black belt with his guidance.
- **2004 - 2009 International Taekwon-Do Federation** – For the past five years I have been running my own club in Waikanae. This has been one of the goals I

have set as part of my journey within Martial Arts. This has given me great pride to also watch the journeys my students have travelled and continue to travel, some from white belt all the way through to black stripe. Over the years the hunger for knowledge grew and although Taekwon-Do is my base I also studied and continue to study other forms of self defence.

- **2003 - 2009 International Combat Hapkido Federation** – My journey in Combat Hapkido started through watching my family train. I joined after the instructor threw me a uniform, what other choice did I have. Martial arts run through my veins. I started training under a 3rd degree black belt, Mr Mike Kiri and today train under my wife a 2nd degree black belt.



O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba

December 14, 1883–April 26, 1969

17 years on and I am looking forward to at least another 17 years studying martial arts, however at 62 years of age, will I still have the strength, stamina and flexibility I had as a young man. As O-Sensei Morihei Ueshiba (Founder of Aikido) refers to his earlier days as a fighter and then in his final years in his life he dedicated it to prayer and meditation. “In his final years O-Sensei spent much of each training session explaining the spiritual significance of Aikido, and insisted: “Aikido is the study of the spirit.” It is imperative to expand as much effort studying the profound philosophy of Aikido as practicing the

techniques.” (p. 74, Aikido) As my hunger for knowledge continues I wonder if it will involve my body or mind?

AGING PROCESS

Grading for my 1st Dan at 40 years of age, following 2nd Dan at age 43 and now working towards my 3rd Dan at 45. I had fears relating to my flexibility and doubted whether and still doubting whether my body can survive, or have I simply not prepared myself for such an event. These fears were not an issue when I was a younger martial artist. However we are all getting older and in one way or another our bodies are not what they were.

Taekwon-Do is not only for those with young agile bodies, but it is for anyone from the age of 7 through to the end. “The study of Taekwon-Do offers several unique advantages to the physical fitness of the student. No doubt one of life’s most treasured assets is good health” (p.37, Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do, 1988). As we mature and recognize there are changes in our strength, stamina and flexibility. Sadly we may be forced to accept that the side piercing kick does not “*reach the target in a straight line*”.

As said in the Black Belt Techniques Handbook “one of the greatest misconceptions within the martial arts is the notion that all black belt holders are experts” and as we know at 1st Dan the journey has just began. In Taekwon-Do it is not until 4th Dan are you considered an expert. This journey I have travelled and continue to travel will be different for you than it is for me. When I look at General Choi Hong Hi in his later years I see a Master not an old man, however when our youth look at him do they see the Master or an old man. Which leaves me with the question, how do my students see me?

CHA JIUGI (SIDE PIERCING KICK)

“Without a doubt, this is one of the most effective techniques for attacking an opponent at the flank. The footsword is employed as an attacking tool against the temple, armpit, floating ribs, and neck artery. The philtrum, point of the chin, and solar plexus are secondary targets. This technique is broken down into low, middle and high side piercing kicks”.

Basic principles to be observed:

1. The attacking tool must *reach the target in a straight line* with a revolving motion.
2. Regardless of the stance, the footsword must be brought to the inner knee joint of the stationary leg prior to delivering the kick.
3. Keep the toes of the kicking foot faced slightly downwards and the toes in the stationary foot pointed about 75 degrees outwards at the moment of impact.
4. For the maximum height, lean the body away from the kick as far as possible while still maintaining the balance.
5. Do not attempt to kick diagonally since this is a waste of power.
6. Unless advised otherwise by an instructor, execute a high punch using a right fist with a right foot and vice versa.
7. The stationary foot pivots allowing the hip to rotate with the kick.

(p. 254, Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do, 1988)

Using the side piercing kick or double side piercing kick as an example, “*reach the target in a straight line*”, my fear is what if you can not reach that target anymore?

When your sidekicks get lower, you may need to adjust your target area or better still develop self defence negotiating skills. A phrase I use often to my students is; “a young person may take two steps forward and a mature person may take two steps back in a self defence scenario.”

Age forces students to develop other strengths such as control, technique, instruction and theory.

Moral Culture could be one of your strongest strengths. People who fight for what they believe in are much stronger and fight harder. They are less likely to give up because they think if they lose, they lose for what they believe in. If you have a strong belief, you fight for a better world. That is why holy wars go on for so long, because it is all about faith, pride and origins.

TENETS OF TAEKWON-DO

With a mature mind and life experiences it is easier to live our lives around the tenets of Tae Kwon-Do. “Needless to say, the success or failure of Taekwon-Do training depends largely on how one observes and implements the tenets of Taekwon-Do which should serve as a guide for all serious students of the art.” (p. 13, Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do, 1988)

Taekwon-Do aims to achieve:

Courtesy (Ye Ui)

Integrity (Yom Chi)

Perseverance (In Nae)

Self-Control (Guk Gi)

Indomitable Spirit (Baekjul Boolgool)

Confucius declared; “it is an act of cowardice to fail to speak out against injustice.”

As history has proven, those who have pursued their dreams earnestly and strenuously with indomitable spirit have never failed to achieve their goals. (p.14, Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do, 1988)

Conclusion

My belief is that Taekwon-Do is not only an excellent form of fitness but also builds a healthy mind and body, irrelevant to age, physical ability or gender. It keeps you focused, motivated and agile. Not being one to recognise my own strengths I am proud of my achievements and my commitment to Taekwon-Do. I too would like to be a student in Taekwon-Do as long as my body and mind will allow me to.



General Choi Hong Hi

9 November 1918–15 June 2002

*I shall observe the tenets of Taekwon-Do
I shall respect the instructor and seniors
I shall never misuse Taekwon-Do
I shall be a champion of freedom and justice
I shall build a more peaceful world*