

# Tae Kwon Do Defined

Tae Kwon Do can be described in the following manner: "Tae" means literally means to jump, kick, or smash with the foot. "Kwon" denotes a fist to punch, strike, or block with. "Do" means an art, way, or method to achieve a desired goal. (When written in Chinese script Do is Tao.) Thus, when taken collectively Tae Kwon Do indicates techniques of unarmed combat for self-defense, using the skillful application of hand and foot techniques for the rapid destruction of your opponent.

In Tae Kwon Do there are four basic sets of movements:

1. Chagi, foot techniques.
2. Sugi, hand techniques.
3. Makki, blocking techniques.
4. Pealhagi, dodging or shifting techniques.

Chagi (foot techniques) can be broken down into two groups of techniques: Attacking or defensive techniques. Tae Kwon Do makes extensive use of kicking techniques based upon Korea's unique thought pattern. In Korea it is believed that the hands of a person are very valuable and should not be demeaned by striking an enemy. Additionally, there are very practical reasons that foot techniques were developed to such a high degree of proficiency. Korea is a country made up of many mountains and so the people developed strong legs from walking up and down the mountains. By developing this strength and flexibility in the legs it was only natural that they be used in a combative nature. Your legs are stronger than your arms. So even if your opponent is much larger than you your legs can reach him and deliver a stronger attack than his arms.

Sugi (hand techniques) play an important role in Tae Kwon Do. As with the legs, the hands can be used for defensive as well as offensive techniques. Traditionally in Tae Kwon Do, hands were mainly used as offensive weapons, and to create openings so that the more powerful legs could be brought to bear upon the opponent. However, today in America hand techniques are being used in greater number to the exposure to other styles of Martial Arts.

Hand techniques are broken down into three separate concepts:

1. Punching
2. Thrusting
3. Striking

Punching is delivered by twisting the hand fully at the moment of impact to cause internal hemorrhaging. An example of this technique would be the Pal Pop Gi, the first basic exercise. Thrusting is delivered by twisting the hand less than in a punching technique. An example of this technique would be Sang Dan Sudo Chi Gi (knife hand). Striking would be delivered with the least amount of twist of the hand, the attack being delivered with almost a straight-line motion of the hand. A good example of this technique would be the Palm Heel Strike.

Makki (blocking) is the obstruction of your opponent's attack with a part of your own body so that the force of the attack is dissipated without injury to the defender. Makki plays a key role in Tae Kwon Do and is exemplified by the fact that all Hyung (forms) begin with a defensive or blocking motion. This indicates the defensive nature of Tae Kwon Do and reinforces the notion that our skill should only be used in appropriate situations.

Pealhagi (dodging) is the shifting of the body so as to avoid the attack movement of your opponent and placing yourself in the most advantageous position to initiate attacks and defense. This is a skill that comes with many long hours of training.

To practice Tae Kwon Do there are four aspects that must be covered:

1. Basic Exercise.
2. Hyung or Forms.
3. Dae Ryun or Sparring.
4. Psychological aspects.

Basic exercise as the name would imply involves the repetitive practice of punching, kicking, blocking, and moving techniques. By the repeated practice of these techniques the student forms and masters the physical movements in Tae Kwon Do. This would be like learning the alphabet for a young child. Without this foundation it will be impossible to proceed to more advanced techniques in Tae Kwon Do. The practice of the basic exercises is not just for the beginning student, but for the advanced as well.

Hyung or Forms are prearranged combinations of kicks, punches, block, body movements, and jumps that are arranged in a logical pattern. These forms have a long history in the Martial Arts and have been passed down from Instructor to Student for many years. For many Students that do not fully understand the meaning of Tae Kwon Do they find the practices of Forms boring and unimportant. On this matter a new Student must take on face value that the practice of forms is very important. In the old days the only way that an Instructor could pass the important aspects of his style was by the use of forms. They would devise these sets of movements to a sequence so that the first form taught would be the simplest. As a Student advanced in experience and the Instructor trusted the Student, forms would become increasingly difficult. Even today when we teach Tae Kwon Do the new Student will begin with very easy Forms and progress to the more advanced. Even though you advance in rank and skill it is still important to practice the basic Hyungs. You will be able to analyze these forms in a different light.

Dae Ryun or Sparring is a relatively new addition to the Martial Arts. This has given rise to the sporting aspects of the Martial Arts in general. This is the area in which most Martial Arts schools spend the most time. It may or may not be the wisest use of time. However, this is the aspect of training that most individuals enjoy the most. There are several types of Sparring and they can be performed in either a prearranged or spontaneous manner. Sparring is an auxiliary method of training and is used to supplement the basic patterns of practice.

## **The Four Areas of Tae Kwon Do Today**

### **Tae Kwon Do As An Sport**

As a sport, Tae Kwon Do is rapidly taking its place the world sport mainstream. Tae Kwon Do was introduced into the Olympic games in 1988 in Seoul, Korea. Tae Kwon Do can be one of the most exciting competitive sports today. With the varied use of hand and foot techniques tremendous skill is required to apply the various tactics with speed, power, and skill without endangering your opponent. Because of the absence of physical contact injuries are infrequent and minor which makes it a very safe sport to practice.

### **Tae Kwon Do As An Art**

When Tae Kwon Do is demonstrated by a skilled practitioner, the coordination, speed, power, balance, and control is regarded as a highly skilled art form. Such a demonstration is truly a beautiful sight to see.

### **Tae Kwon Do For Physical And Mental Fitness**

It is a general impression that fighting, breaking boards, and bricks is what Tae Kwon Do consists of, but this is an entirely mistaken concept. Tae Kwon Do demonstrates feats as breaking boards and bricks only to show what the human body is capable of. This kind of training in Tae Kwon Do involves both the physical and mental aspect of human development. These breaking techniques demonstrate to the spectators as well as to the participant speed, power, and courage. For the Student this is a real example of what they are capable of doing with their hands and feet. It will require trust and courage on their part to break these hard objects. The Student will trust the judgment of the instructor of the ability to break such objects. It then requires the courage of their convictions to accomplish the breaking technique. Having the knowledge that with bare hands and feet one can break boards, bricks, and blocks, I feel the Student will respect this power and not abuse it.

Tae Kwon Do is one of the most all-around methods of physical fitness since it is a natural weight regulator either for taking pounds off or putting them on as needed. Additionally, Tae Kwon Do makes use of all of the body parts in training. Both the right and left sides are exercised equally. In Korea all Students of Elementary and Secondary schools undergo Tae Kwon Do class in the curriculum of athletics under a Ministry of Education decree. Besides, most collegians, all soldiers, and policemen, and even workers practice Tae Kwon Do regardless of age and sex.

Today in the U.S. there has been research activities validating the claims for improved mental states. Pyecha indicated that participants with as little as 8 weeks of biweekly training might significantly influence personality. Further more, they found that the training made a significant contribution to the stated psychosocial goals of physical

education. The participants seemed more warm hearted and easy going than those without Martial Arts training.

Superior Martial Artists score higher on scales of Defensiveness, Self Control, Achievement, Dominance, Endurance, Affiliation of Heterosexuality, Exhibition, Autonomy, and favorable Adjectives checked. What this means is that "the superior Martial Artist seems to be an outgoing extrovert somewhat aware of his social environment, looking at himself positively, and trying to get ahead in life.

Psychiatrist Kroll noted that Karate has several advantages to offer as a physical education and/or therapeutic adjunct to psychiatry. The effects of participating in a physical education program are obvious to the casual observer, but the emphasis upon wholesome character attributes and etiquette can be seen as desirable in its attempt to ameliorate asocial tendencies.

Mihevic, in 1982, reviewed research dealing with reduction of anxiety, depression, and muscular tension. It was indicated that vigorous and acute exercise would result in a significant reduction in state anxiety and muscular tension. It was further indicated by Greist et All in 1979 that Chronic Physical activity is as effective in alleviating the symptoms and complaints of mild clinical depression as traditional psychotherapy. As you can see the claims for the positive mental development of those who practice Tae Kwon Do has validation in the current scientific research.

### **Tae Kwon Do For Self Defense**

Even to the casual observer it is quite obvious that the well-trained Martial Artist has a very powerful means of self-defense. In Korea, the Presidential Protective Forces are all trained in Tae Kwon Do. Additionally, several other countries are also adopting Tae Kwon Do in the training programs of their prospective forces.

### **History Of Tae Kwon Do**

Tae Kwon Do, as we know it today is the Martial discipline that has evolved from the ancient hand and foot arts of Korea. The self-defense art of Korea had many names, some of which are Subak, Kwon Bop, Tae Kyun, or Yu Sool. The art of self-defense is as old as mankind. Tae Kwon Do is the product of countless years of practice by generations of Martial Artists. Tae Kwon Do can trace its evolution to the "Three Kingdoms Period" of Korea and perhaps its roots extend even further in history.

It is only logical, with the constant struggle of mankind, that more efficient forms of combat are developed. Various geographical and cultural influences the primitive forms of combat into the Martial Arts as we know them today. The Martial Arts are based on the imitation of effective methods of combat and, as would be expected, have crossed cultural lines. These fighting arts have been transmitted by commerce, war, and religion. As the arts are transmitted these pre-existing forms of combat are modified to fit the national character. Thus, by integrating fighting methods from other nations the national Martial Arts are constantly changing. This can even be seen today by the blend of boxing and Tae Kwon Do to form Full Contact Karate. This is a blend of Western Boxing and Tae Kwon Do/Karate that appeals to the American Martial Artist.

We can trace the Martial Arts through various records and begin to see the development of the Arts. In early written records (Egyptian Hieroglyphics around 4000 B.C.) there is a form of hand and foot fighting depicted on the walls of the pyramids. Also, in the Book of Jasher, and ancient Hebrew document, there are references to a special school that trained the armies of the Pharaoh in unarmed combat forms. There are records of unarmed combat in the ruins of Sumer, Mesopotamia (3000 B.C.). These ruins depict a similar art to that of the Egyptian army. Also there are references of this form of combat in Bein Hasan, Egypt (2300 B.C.).

These techniques, or refinements traveled to Crete and then to Greece. In Homer's Iliad we find references to a fifth century B.C. boxing champion who killed 1800 men and defeated another 302.

In fighting forms indeed transmitted through contact with other cultures were these forms introduced into the Orient? By looking at history we find that there was considerable intercourse between the Greek, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Persian Civilizations. You can find that the Mesopotamian culture had contact with the Indus Civilization of India (2300B.C.) during the Shang Dynasty (1722-1122 B.C.). Arabian caravans traded with China bringing home the treasures of Cathay. Alexander the Great in 326 B.C. conquered a very large portion of North Western India. As history tells us the Greek cultural influence would be felt for many years to come. This could be part of the vehicle that helped to spread various forms of unarmed combat.

During the thirteenth century B.C. there was a warrior class in India known as the Kshatriya. The Kshatriya were the warrior of India and were trained in the current forms of Martial Arts. It was the duty of the Kshatriya to protect in the time of war and to govern in the time of peace. The Kshatriya practiced the pugilistic art of Vajramushti. Translated Vajramushti indicates "One whose clenched fist is ... adamant; of a Kshatriya; the clenched fist as a weapon." This notation of a fighting art appears in the Buddhist Lotus Sutra (Fu Hua San Ch'ing).

Vajramushti in Chinese is read as Hsian ch'a Hsiang P'u. Some of the characters in the Chinese are also used in Japanese to represent the ancient art of Sumo. Vajramushti could be considered a very influential part of the Chinese schools of Wu Shu.

During the reign of the Emperor Ming Ti, of the Han Dynasty (64 A.D.) Buddhism was introduced to China. The story goes that Ming Ti on several successive nights had seen a dream. That of a man in golden raiment, hold in his hands a bow and arrow pointing toward the west. Ming Ti finally decided to send messengers to seek the man whom he had seen in his dreams. Ming Ti selected a group of 18 ambassadors who started off to India by the western route. On their way they found 2 men on horse carrying with them scripture and images. They then escorted the men back to the Emperor. This then was the first official introduction of Buddhism into China.

Bodhidharama was the third child of King Suondha, the 28th patriarch, and a member of the Kshatriya. Bodhidharama is credited with the introduction of the Art that has been associated with the Shaolin Monastery. It is logical to assume that Bodhidharama was trained in Vajaramushti and that it was introduced to the Monks. During his stay at the Shaolin Monastery in Hunan Province Bodhidharama found the Monks to be in poor physical condition and so he taught them a method of conditioning. This was known as Shin Pa Lo Han Sho. Bodhidharama is also credited with the I-hu Ching, and the His-Ching all of which had a marred influence of Chinese fighting Arts.

Late in the first century B.C. a people from the Sungari Valley moved in and formed a kingdom, which they called Koryo; this was the origin of the westernized name of Korea. At about the same time the kingdoms of Sillia in the Southeast and Paekche in the Southwest were formed from Tungusic tribes who through previous centuries had populated the Eastern side of the peninsula and the three Han States. Also, the small state of Imana (mimana) had grown up on the South Coast, where Japanese colonists settled with the tribes there. This was a Japanese protectorate through the first six centuries A.D.

The foundation of Korea is shrouded in myth with the core being that of a divine ruler known as Tan' Gun. Tan' Gun has been called Sinnin which can be translated as angel, spirit, divine man, or a god. Legend has it that the Creator offered to turn a bear and a tiger into a human being if they would eat certain plants and herbs and stay in a dark place for three weeks. The tiger did not last through the trial and remained a tiger. The bear, however, was turned into a woman. The Creator was taken by her beauty and fathered a son by her. This son was Tan 'Gun (2333 B.C.). Tan' Gun is said to be the third person in a divine tirumerate: Huwanin is God (ch'on), Hwanung is the spirit (sin) and Tan' Gun is the god man (sinnin). Tan' Gun founded his capitol at P'yongyang. He also built the altar atop Mari Mountain at the south end of Kanghwa Island. Tan' gun gave Korea its first, last, and real name Chosun (land of the morning calm).

The second great man to influence Korea was Chinese. Chi' Tzu could not swear allegiance to a dynastic line and so departed to found his own state in the Korean Peninsula (1122 B.C.). Chi' Tzu also introduced Chinese culture such as medicine, magic, fortune telling, and fine arts of the time.

The Chinese eventually divide Chosun into four areas: Lolang (Nangnang), Lint'un (Imdun), Hsuant'u (Hyundo) and Chenfan (Chinpun). The Chinese relinquished control over what became the kingdom of Koryo in 37 B.C. Chumong was the grandson of Ha-bu-ru who ruled the Puyu who came from the Amur River. Chu-mong left with some of his friends to seek his own fortune and married the daughter of the local ruler or Cholbon. This was the start of the Three Kingdoms period of Korea.

King Onjo, who made his capitol at Nawhan where it remained until 6 B.C., when the capitol was moved to Pukhan, founded Paekche in 18 B.C.. Paekche can be translated as a "hundred cross over the river, or had come from beyond." Paekche occupied the southwestern part of the Korean peninsula with its central zone around the Han River.

Paekche would carry on commerce with China and pass on cultural developments to Japan in the years to come.

Park Hyuk Sose founded Silla in (57 B.C. - 932B.C.) and made Kyung Ju its capitol. Consisting initially of weak, disorganized tribal groups seeking unity, Silla emerged as a power in the fourth century A.D. Because of Silla's geographical location it escaped occupation by its neighbors Koryo and Paekche. This small kingdom, however, was not spared from military raids. These came not only from neighboring kingdoms on the peninsula itself, but from Japan as well. Thus, survival dictated the marshalling of a strong army in Silla.

Of the Three Kingdoms, Silla, Paekche, and Koryo, Silla was the smaller. Silla was under constant harassment and threat of invasion by its more powerful neighbors to the north and west.

"The History of the Three Kingdoms" Volume 81, on Paekche of the "Sui China Chronicles" indicate that many Paekche kings like King Onjo, King Asin, and King Biryu fostered Martial Arts. One Korean King even caused a scandal by practicing the grappling martial art Cireum (King Chung Hael). Generals were prompted in part due to their skill in the Martial Arts. General Kim Tuck-ryong rose from the ranks due in part to his skill in Cireum. The people as a result like to engage in Martial Arts such as Cireum and Tae Kyon. Cireum is the native form of wrestling and was introduced during the reign of King Chung Hyi of the Koryo Kingdom. It traces its roots to Chinese and Mongol grappling forms. Cireum did not experience the decline in popularity as did other forms of Martial Arts during the Yi dynasty. In fact during the 13th century when other Martial Arts were declining in popularity Cireum actually increased. This native wrestling form is still practiced and contests are held on national holidays such as the 5th moon and August harvest.

Buddhism first came to Korea in 372 A.D. by a Chinese monk named Soonto. Soonto arrived at the court of King Soo Soo-Rim of the Koryo Kingdom. Paekche soon afterwards sent for teachers and Silla followed in accepting Buddhism. As we shall see a famous Buddhist monk was instrumental in the Martial Arts of Korea. Buddhism was adopted through China, which had accepted Mahayana or "Greater Vehicle" school of Buddhism. The Hinayana or "Lesser Vehicle" was practiced in Paekche who communicated directly with India. Korean records indicate that the first Buddhist monk in Paekche was a monk named Marananda. It is conceivable that the art of Vajaramushti entered Korea at this time in much the same manner as Bodhidharana.

Koryo established the first university in Korea, T'aehak (372 A.D.) The people of Koryo considered national defense to be their primary concern so it is understandable that the Confucian Classics along with the Martial Arts were taught to the children of the nobility. The book that must have influenced that time period would be Sun Tzu's "The Art of War". This book was considered by many to be one of the most remarkable books ever written. Any military leader in the Orient could quote this book by heart. Its practicality has survived even in to the modern era. Mao Tze Tung I his writings would

paraphrase it. This book has found many men throughout the years quoting it. Bobby Knight, of Indiana University, has even quoted Sun Tzu.

Kung-Sool used a bow that was reflex in design and composite in nature. It was a short weapon and was used by mounted and foot soldiers. The tactics of the Mongolians were used by Korea, and played a major factor in strategy. Two great men in Korean history Tong Myong and Yi Songye, who were founders of the Koryo and Yi dynasty's, were known superior archers. The Koreans even used the bow and arrow during the Korean War.

Because the army needed more manpower than could be supplied by the Aristocrats, Koryo established schools (Kongdang) in all the districts of its territory. In it the children of the lower class were trained in "reading and archery". One can assume that the course of study was similar in both T'aehak and Kongdang.

Silla also had a similar institution founded under the reign of King Chinhung (540 to 576 A.D.), during the old Silla dynasty (957 B.C. to 668 A.D). This was the well-known Hwa-rang Do (translated as "Flower Youth"). The Hwa-rang was an elite fighting corps made up of young Aristocrats. They received training in the Confucian Classics, Sun Tzu's "The Art of War", as well as the Martial Arts. These young men would subject themselves to strict discipline and suffer severe hardships to strengthen their mind and body. During the reign of King Chinp'youn and Queen Sondok the Buddhist monk Won'gwang was highly required in China, so great in fact was his reputation that he was one of a few Silla monks to be included in the "Sok Kosun-Jon" (A Supplement to Biographies of Eminent Priests). This was compiled in China.

During the reign of Queen Sondok a monk by the name of Chajang developed a theory that Silla was the Buddhist land par excellence intending to disarm Koryo and Paekche. Chajang had a pagoda built with nine stories at Hwang Yongsa. Additionally he built Tongdosa where he hoped to enhance the morality of Silla.

It is reported in the "Samguk Yusa" that two youths named Kwisan and Ch'uhang visited Won'gwang at Kasul-Sa temple and asked for rules by which they could live their lives. Won'Gwang replied:

"There are ten Bodhivastva precepts in the Buddhist law, but I don't think you can follow them all because you are subjects of the King. So I give you the five mundane commandments: 1) Loyalty to the King, 2) Piety to Parents, 3) Faith in Friends, 4) No retreat on the battleground, and 5) Selection in the killing of living things."

While Kwisan and Ch'uan (by historical records) were not members of the Hwa rang it must be assumed that Won'Gwang gave these instructions not only for the Hwa rang but all the youth of Silla.

The Hwa rang became known in the peninsula for their courage and skill in battle, gaining respect from even their bitterest foes. The strength they derived came from



respect to their code given by Won'Gwang and enabled them to attain feats of valor that became legendary. Through their feats they inspired the people to rise, unite, and eventually conquer Koryo and Paekche. Kim Yu-Sin was a famous Hwa rang who played an important role in the unification of Korea. From the victories of Silla the Korean peninsula became united for the first time in its history.

During the days of glory Silla produced an outstanding monk by the name of Won hyo. Won hyo did not travel to China to study Buddhism, as was the style of the time, but rather, stayed in Korea. He wrote extensively and was well received in T'ang China. This would indicate that he was a Buddhist Scholar of great insight.

During this time period Confucianism and Buddhism could and did flourish under the same patronage. Confucianism was used for the individual's career path and Buddhism was the religion tract. Both thought patterns lived in harmony.

In 1935 a group of Japanese archaeologists discovered the royal tombs of Muyong Chong and Kakchu Chon, which date back to the Koryo dynasty. The tombs were located in Tungku, China, and Tung-hua province of Manchuria where Koryo had its capitol. The ceiling of the Muyong Chong tomb carried a painting portraying two unarmed men confronting each other. The mural painting of the Kakchu Chong tomb shows two men engaged in Tae Kyon. These tombs were constructed between 3 A.D. and 427 A.D. Tatashi Saito, the Japanese archaeologist, said in his "Study of Culture in Ancient Korea" that "judging from the tomb, the man to whom the tomb belonged must have been devoted to Tae Kwon Do in his lifetime so that a Tae Kwon Do scene was painted in his tomb to solace his spirit."

Other evidence of early Tae Kyon can be found at the temple of Sokkuram, which dates to the reign of King Kyongdokk (742-765 A.D.). The "Samguk Yusa" relates that "During the reign of King Kyongdokk, Tae-Song, the King's first minister, commenced the construction of Pulguk-sa in the tenth year of T'ien-pao (742). Tae-Song died during the reign of King Hyegong, on the second of December in the ninth year of Ta-Li (774); the construction of the temple was finished some years later. In front of the Grotto in Gyeongju there are two stone images of warriors in stances resembling modern Tae Kwon Do forms. They form an attack pattern by raising right hands up to their ear while defending their lower bodies with left hands. This posture looks very similar to movements in "Ship Soo" (ten hands). These guardians are known as "Kumgang Yoksa".

When Silla was overthrown in 935 A.D. and the Koryo dynasty was founded Tae Kyon flourished. It was during this time that some of Korea's finest warrior heroes were produced.

During the Koryo dynasty there were four school systems in existence. The Kukchahak was designated for children of officials of grades 1 through 3, the Taehak for children of officials of the grades 4 and 5, the Samunhak for children of grades 6 and 7, and the Chaphak for other officials and children of the Sangnom (commoners). As would

be expected the first three schools taught the Confucian doctrine, which was a requirement to advance in civil government.

To gain positions in government one must pass state examinations were based on the classics. This examination system was established during the rule of Kwanjong (950-975 A.D.). This civil service examination was also used in China and Japan for their government officials.

According to An Je San, a noted historian, the King of Chosun would hold a tournament of Yoo Sul at Kak Chon Pavilion on Ma-Ae Sam every May. The winner of these contests would receive a prestigious government post. The winners of the annual contest Yi Ui-Min, Chong Chun Bu, and Sa Kyang Sung, eventually became leading generals during the Koryo dynasty.

Yoo-Sul (soft art) was adapted from Chinese sources and was popular by 1150. Yoo-Sul was made up of throwing techniques (mechige), grappling techniques (kuchigi), and striking techniques (kuepso chrigi). Yoo-Sul was designed as a form of combat that emphasized closing with the opponent and applying their techniques. Unlike Japanese Jujitsu, Yoo-Sul did not emphasize techniques to counter hand and foot attacks.

The following are excerpts from the "History of Koryo" and provides a look at Tae Kwon Do at that time:

---King Uijong promoted Yi Ui-Min from the military rank of Taechong to Pyolchang because his Tae Kwon Do skill was outstanding (Chapter 41, Volume 128).

---General Chong Chung-Bu ordered military officers to practice Subak (Chapter 41, Volume 128).

---The king observed Subak games at the Hwabigun Palace and Ma-Am Sam (Volume 36).

As you can imagine the Martial Arts prospered under such royal patronage and became a permanent segment of national life.

Don F. Draeger in "Asian Fighting Arts" states that two empty hand systems dominate all other the Sorim Temple School and the Songkae School. The Sorim Temple School was developed by priests and made use of swift, evasive movement and jumping attacks. The Songkae style was a defensive style developed by its founder Chang Songkae, of the Chinese Ming dynasty (1368-1644). As a side note General Choi Hong Hi in "Tae Kwon Do the Art of Self Defense" mentions two schools of forms (hyung) So-rim mit and So-ryoun Yu. He states that these two schools are of Japanese and Okinawan origin, but their derivation is not definitely known. "The Sho-Rin (So-rim mit) is characterized by light and speedy movements and is suitable for a light person. The Hei-An, Bat-Sai, Kuoh-Shang-Kouh, En-Bi, and Ro-Hai are the typical patterns of this school."

In 1392, General Sung Kye Yi overthrew the Koryo dynasty and the martial arts declined under the Yi dynasty. During the Yi dynasty there was a period of "civil enlightenment" in which anything related to the military was frowned upon. This policy caused many of the warriors to leave the secular life and turn to the Buddhist temples. There they practiced the martial arts in much the same way as the monks of the Shaolin monastery and Yamabushi (mountain warriors) of China and Japan respectively.

During the 12th century a monk by the name of Myoch'ong, who combined Buddhism and Confucianism, attempted to develop the hand-to-hand combat systems in the military schools. He favored the Chinese combative techniques. He used Korean archers mounted as well as on foot to cover the empty handed fighters. Myo'chong at this time also realized that the sword techniques had not been developed to a high degree and so he added it to the curricula that he had devised. This would give an indication that the unarmed methods of the time were highly developed. That Myo'chong would send into battle unarmed men against armed opponents, which was considered to be the highest praise of the fighting art at the time.

In 1443, King Se-Jong, who was the fourth monarch of the Yi dynasty, commissioned a group of scholars to devise a Korean alphabet. The result was called Hangul. This alphabet now consists of 24 letters- 14 consonants and 10 vowels.

Yi Toe-Gey (1501-1570 A.D.) was a Confucian scholar who had the penname of Yi Hwan. He was born in Kyong Sang-Do province and passed the state examinations at the age of 34. He held the position that the universe was composed of two vital elements Yi and Ki (mind and matter). Yi (mind) being the root of Ki (matter).

Another scholar of this time was Yi I known by the penname of Yi Yul gok (1536-1584 A.D.). Yi I was born in the Kang Won-Do province and was known for composing a denunciation of one Chin Pokchang at the age of seven. After the death of his mother he retired to Kungang San (Diamond Mountain) to study Buddhist scripture. After a year of study he returned to the secular life and Confucianism. He had tried to unite Buddhism and Confucianism.

In the 16th century the Japanese under Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1592) mounted a large invasion of Korea. A great hero emerged from this crucial period of history. Yi Sun Shin was one of a few who had foreseen the forthcoming invasion. By using the Korean navy founded by Sin Sukchu in 1466, Yi Sun Shin developed the Turtle Ships (Kobukson), which were the first iron plated battle ships in the world. These ships were very fast and powerful. The Kobukson soon became the nightmare of the Japanese empire. As the commanding Admiral of the Cholla Fleet, Yi Sun Shin had prepared the Turtle Ships that would give him victory at Okpo (Chinhae) and the extermination of the Japanese fleet off of Hansa Island. These crushing defeats completely frustrated the Japanese strategy of parallel advances on land and sea.

Korea requested aid from the Ming dynasty and was given immediate response by the Chinese government. The Ming were more willing to help Korea because it was clear

that this was the first step to the conquest of China. This intervention of the Ming gave a boost to the moral of the Koreans and encouraged the formation of volunteers. The "yangbang" (nobles) assumed the leadership of recruitment and gathered individuals from all ranks and classes "sangnom" (commoners) and Buddhist monks.

Buddhist monks such as Su San Dae Sa and Sam Yung Dang came to the aid of their country in rallying the defense against invaders. Some 700 volunteer soldiers from the Kumsan area fought the Japanese invaders with bare hands. Sosan, a Buddhist monk became one of the great military leaders rallying 1500 monks for the resistance. Other Buddhist monks of this time who came to the defense of their country were Samyong (700 men) Noemuk (1000 men), and Kho (700 men). The Yi dynasty added an independent command to its army for command of this priestly army known as the Tochongsop.

The Japanese suffered defeats as a result of the Ming intervention, the volunteer army, and the brilliance of Yi Sun Shin. It is recorded in the 35th volume of "The Historical Records of Sonjo" that General Kwon Yul who was the commander of Haeng Ju Garrison repelled Hideyoshi's invading forces with a company of stone throwers. As a note stone throwing was a sport practiced by the Koreans where men would gather in two opposing forces and throw stones at each other. The Japanese banned this sport during their occupation in 1910.

Due to the defeats and the Japanese realization that there would be no quick victory peace talks were held. There was not a successful conclusion and in 1597 the Japanese once again attacked Korea.

At this time Admiral Yi had been imprisoned due to factional strife. The Japanese scored a crushing defeat over the Korean Navy at Hansan Island. Ironically this was the scene of Admiral Yi's victory over the Japanese. Upon the defeat at Hansan the Korean government released Admiral Yi and returned him to his former position. With only 12 ships left in the fleet Admiral Yi was able to win a battle at Myong Yang straits against an overwhelming number of Japanese ships.

In 1598, Toyotomi Hideyoshi died and the Japanese will was broken. The troops began to withdraw. It would seem likely that the new shogun would want his troops at home to consolidate his power. It was during this time that Yi Sun Shin fought his last battle. At the height of his career he was struck down by a Japanese bullet at the battle of Hamhae Island where he fought the amassed Japanese fleet of 200 ships.

Buddhism suffered persecution under the Yi dynasty for over 500 years. The monks salvaged what they could from their property. The Yi dynasty outlawed Buddhist from public life, even barring them from entering cities. Sons of the Yangbang were barred from Monkish careers and those in the temples were urged to return to the secular life.

During the Yi dynasty there is speculation that convoys from Okinawa carried Subak or Tae Kyun back to their homeland. This may have been a forerunner of Okinawa-te. Okinawans adoption of the Korean seesaw game of "Nul" was an indication of cultural adaptation by the Okinawans.

In 1790, General Yi Dok-Mu wrote a book on martial arts under the instruction of King Chongjo. This is known as "Muye Dobo Tongji" and is the known text on Tae Kyun. The descriptions of techniques in this text are similar to those used today in Tae Kwon Do and Hapkido.

By the end of the Yi dynasty the martial arts all but disappeared. The final blow to the martial arts came with the rule of Japan in 1909, when it was forbidden to practice any native martial art. In 1905 due to the Korea-Japan Peace Treaty the Japanese educational system was imposed upon all of the Korean Schools. At this time every schoolboy was introduced to Judo and Kendo.

Prince Ito Hirobumi (1841-1909) is known as one from the founders of modern Japan. He was appointed as the resident general of Korea in 1905 and resigned in July 1909. The prince had resigned to become president of the Japanese Privy Council. Under the patronage of the Japanese, who were living in Seoul formed the Chosen Kosho Kanko-kai (Society for the publication of old Korean books). This was the Japanese society that published 70 volumes during the period of November 1909 to June 1916. On October 26, Prince Hirobumi was assassinated by An Joong Gun at Harbin railway station. Mr. An was executed at Lui-Shung prison in 1910, he was 32.

In 1910 Ch'oe Namson founded the Chosun Kwang Mun Ho (Society for the Promotion of Korean Books) that was to serve as a rival to the Kosho-Kanko-kai.

During this period the Korean Athletic Society was formed in July 1920. This organization was disbanded by the Japanese in 1938 and replaced by the Chosun Athletic Association.

In 1941 the Japanese required all the Korean youths to study Judo and Juken-Jutsu (bayonet art). Tae Kyon secretly survived among a remnant of stalwarts by going underground. Tae Kyon was passed on to the handful of students, such as Kuk Ki Song and Ill Dong Han. At the same time many Koreans oppressed at home emigrated to study and work in other parts of the world, including China and Japan. No restriction on the unarmed martial arts existed in other countries and so Tae Kyon was exposed to other forms of unarmed combat. This would prove to be an exciting development for Tae Kyon.

With the liberation of Korea in 1945 many of the immigrants returned to Korea bringing with them new ideas to give a breath of life to Tae Kyun. During this time the five original Kwans were formed. The first Kwan opened was Chung Do Kwan in 1945 by Won Kook Lee at Yong Chun, Seoul. Later on November 9, 1945 Whang Kee founded Mood Duk Kwan (Tang Soo Do) beside a railroad station. Whang Kee had, at

the age of 23, gone to China and studied the martial arts in 1936 and returned after the conclusion of hostilities. Sup Chun Sang also known as Sup Jun Sang founded Yun Moo Kwan at a Y.M.C.A. The Y.M.C.A.s are recognized as the single largest factor in growth of western sports in Korea. In that same year Yon Kue Pyang founded Chi Do Kwan. Between 1953 and 1954 three more Kwans were founded. Gae Byang Yun founded Ji Do Kwan, Byung Chik Ro founded Song Moo Kwon, or sometimes known as Sang Moo Kwan.

Second Lieutenant Choi Hong Hi began teaching Tae Kwon Do in Kwang Ji to the Korean Military. Lieutenant Choi also taught some Americans stationed with the 2nd Infantry Regiment in Korea during this period. In 1949 the then Lt. Col. Choi attended ground school at Ft. Riley just outside of Topeka, Kansas. Later as a General Choi Hong Hi along with Tae Hi Nam would found O Do Kwan. O Do Kwan was established as a military kwan. As instructors of Tae Kwon Do were drafted into Military service the best were "requested" to join O Do Kwan. This gave General Choi a strong base to latter start his own "International Tae Kwon Do Federation."

In 1945, the first National Association was the Kyong Soo Do Association, which was headed by Cho Ryon Chi, President of the Korean Residents Association and the Korean Youth Association in Japan. Kong Soo Do written in Chinese script is pronounced in Japanese as Karate Do.

On April 11, 1955 there was a meeting of Chung Do Kwan instructors to decide on a name by which to call their national art. Chung Do Kwan was at the time the largest civilian Kwan. General Choi submitted the name Tae Kwon Do and this was chosen for its resemblance to Tae Kyon. AT that time not all the major Kwans merged under this new name, and have not to this day. That same year (1955) the Kong Soo Do Association broke up when descension set in. On September 14, 1961 when the military government assumed power the Tae Kwon Do groups were ordered to form one organization. According to Jhoon Ree this was called the Korean Tae Kwon Do Association (in other sources it was named the Tae Soo Do Association). General Choi was elected its first president. Whang Kee who was the founder of Tang Soo Do, maintained the Korean Soo Bak Do Association after lengthy court battles. The Chi Do Kwan Association also seceded from the national organization. However, by 1962 many of the instructors rejoined the Korean Tae Kwon Do Association. This association was given official recognition by the Korean Athletic Association and the Army.

In the early 1960's many high-ranking Tae Kwon Do instructors established schools in the United States. At the U.S. Military Academy at West Point Song Duk Son, S. Henry Chu in New York, Sang Kyu Shim in Detroit, Ki Wang Kim and Jhoon Ree in Washington D.C., Jack Hwang in Oklahoma City, and Jun Sun Hyun in Minneapolis.

Further, in the early 60's some new styles were formed. Son Duk Son and Kang Shu Chong established Kook Moo Kwon; Yu Sung Kim established Chung Yung Kwang; Young Jin Park established Hwa Rang; Yun Hun Shin established Moon Mu Kwan; and Young Woo Lee established Jung Do Kwan.

On March 22, 1966 General Choi founded the International Tae Kwon Do Federation and set up his headquarters in Montreal, Canada.

In 1973 Master Instructor Young Sun Kang moved to the United States. Young Sun Kang has become one of the most influential men in Tae Kwon Do in the United States. Young Sun Kang has taught Tae Kwon Do Chung Do Kwan in Boston, Omaha, St. Louis, and Louisville, KY. Currently he lives in Korea and has played an active role in several national organizations. He also serves as President of the United States Tae Kwon Do Alliance and the American Martial Arts Association.