

## **Introduction To Hapkido.**

Hapkido is a complete art of self-defense. A Hapkidoist is able to handle virtually any situation and is able to apply the self-discipline and confidence derived from the study of Hapkido to enhance the quality of their life and protect the lives of those they love.

### **The Meaning of Hapkido**

In Korean Hap means to coordinate or combine. Ki means technique and can be interpreted as inner strength or power. Do means the way. Therefore Hapkido can be loosely translated as the way (art) of coordinated power.

### **Characteristics of Hapkido**

Hapkido employs the philosophy of using minimal force to overcome a stronger opponent. Therefore, great strength is not needed to apply the techniques effectively. In addition, Hapkido uses pressure points to assist in controlling the opponent.

Hapkido has a powerful arsenal of spinning kicks, thrusts and sweeps combined with hard and soft fist attacks and defenses. As well as the use of kicks and punches, Hapkido uses nerve and pressure point attacks, wrist and joint locks, and many twisting and throwing techniques. Approximately 270 categories of special movements incorporating 3400 techniques are included in the study of Hapkido.

The popularity of Hapkido is due to the fact that anyone, young or old, male or female can practice this complete art of self-defense regardless of physical weight or strength. Health is improved through systematic training and exercise. Development of muscles and muscle tone, correct posture, control of weight, a sense of self-confidence, self-control of both mind and body, and spiritual fulfillment are just some of the benefits of studying Hapkido.

In Hapkido, linear techniques form a solid base upon which the skill of circular techniques can be developed. Everything is taught in correct order to produce a balanced martial artist able to handle any situation.

Today, it is practiced by students of all backgrounds, ages and physiques. Hapkido can be applied from any position: standing, sitting or lying, and from any direction.

## **Comparison to Other Martial Arts.**

### **Aikido:**

As in Aikido, the attacker is encouraged to over-commit their attack. The attack is received with minimal resistance, it is guided past the target and then the defenders own force is added to it. The result is to unbalance and throw the opponent. However, opponents do not always attack with large movements. Often short jabs and kicks are delivered with such rapidity that it is very difficult to lead the opponent's force. In these situations, the close quarter blocking and striking techniques of Hapkido give the Hapkidoist knowledge of how to counter and overcome such attacks.

### **Jujitsu:**

Many of the joint locks and throws of Hapkido are very similar to those of Jujitsu. Painful twisting of the joints and tendons along with the application of painful pressure to vital points combined with a thorough knowledge of human anatomy help to control any opponent regardless of size or strength. These techniques are fine for close quarter attacks,

however because Jujitsu practitioners do not practice their techniques against proficient kickers or punchers, they are vulnerable to such long range attacks. Hapkidoists practice kicks and punches to a high degree of proficiency, thus the familiarity gained through practicing the techniques helps in defending against them.

### **Tae Kwon Do:**

Virtually all of the kicking techniques of Tae Kwon Do are identical to those of Hapkido. Spinning kicks, thrusts, circular kicks and sweeps are all used in sparring. Due to the fact that Hapkido is not a tournament-orientated style, other techniques like low spinning kicks, low-section kicks and knee strikes are also used. The basic hand techniques of Hapkido are similar to those of Tae Kwon Do, that is, mainly linear attacks with fist or knifehand. However in a confined space such as a crowded public bar or a narrow hallway, kicks are limited in their practicality. Self-defense tools such as elbows, knees, head butts and joint attacks are essential for survival in such situations. All these techniques are practiced in Hapkido to produce a thorough knowledge of all ranges of attack and defense.

### **Kung Fu:**

In Hapkido, as the student advances past the basic hand techniques, more emphasis is placed on small circular techniques and fast close quarter parrying which resemble the techniques of Kung Fu. Advanced weaponry techniques using the long pole Bo and the fan are similar to those of Kung Fu.

### **Judo:**

Throwing plays an important role in Hapkido. The basic principles of judo are used in Hapkido, that is, moving your opponent's center of balance to a vulnerable position and using your leg or body to topple the opponent. As well, Hapkido uses strikes or pressure points to maneuver the opponent with less use of strength.

### **Kendo:**

At advanced stages, students are taught Komdo. Basic strikes and blocks are similar to Kendo, however circular and low section attacks typical of traditional Korean swordsmanship are taught once the basics have been learned.

## **History of Hapkido.**

### **Introduction:**

Any attempt to trace the exact historical development of Hapkido is fraught with difficulties due to lack of complete historical records and the selective nature of those particular records that do exist. All written and oral history is shaped by the political, social and cultural climate of the times and any examination of Hapkido history must be viewed with this in mind. However certain threads can be pulled together so we can obtain a general perspective of the roots and subsequent development of Hapkido. What must also be kept in mind is that previous to 1945 there was a long historical decline of the martial arts of Korea commencing with the Yi dynasty (1392-1910) and finishing with the Japanese occupation (1910-45) where they were all but stamped out. In many cases just a few scattered individuals, often monks living in seclusion in the mountains with perhaps just one or two disciples, kept the ancient martial arts of Korea alive. Since the end of the Japanese

occupation in 1945 there has been a rediscovery by the Korean people of their culture and martial arts in particular. Many elements of their ancient martial arts such as Tae Kyon, Yu Sool and Soo Bak Gi have been incorporated into modern arts such as Hapkido, Kuk Sool Won and Tang Soo Do.

Many different sources have been used including oral testimony from masters still living in Korea and other countries today. This includes eighty three year old Grandmaster Jang In Mok, 9th degree who resides in Teague city in Korea and who trained in Japan under Daito Ryu Aikijujitsu Grandmaster Takeda Sokaku, Grandmaster Ji Han Jae 10th degree and Grandmaster of Sin Moo Hapkido, Grandmaster Kim Byung Chu 8th Degree and President of the Korean Hapkido Association, grandmaster Huh Ill Woong 8th Degree, Professor of martial arts at Myung Ji University, Seoul and master Kim Sung Su, 6th Degree, President of the Australian Hapkido Association.

A further complication in unraveling this history is the fact that many martial arts masters were influenced by more than just one style and that the name Hapkido is a fairly recent name. The word Sool in Korean has been recognized traditionally as meaning art or method whereas the term do is a Japanese way of thinking, meaning way of life. This appears in arts such as Judo, Kendo, and Iado. In Sun Seo of the Korean Kuk Sool Won Association asserts that the word do does not appear in Korean records until around the middle of Japanese colonial rule of Korea.

### **Origin of the name Hapkido.**

Choi Yong Sool (1904-1986) used the name Yu Sool to describe the art he began teaching in Korea after 1945. There is a dispute as to who actually first used the name Hapkido. Ji Han Jae insists that he first used the name in 1957 when he opened a school in Seoul and Suh Bok Sub says he and Choi Young Sul first used the name officially in 1958.

Suh Bok Sub, Choi's first student, insists that on February 12, 1948, a Monday, the first Hapkido dojang opened and it was called Korean Yu Kwan Sool Hapkidojang. Choi it seems was not quite sure what to call his art when he landed back in Korea. The Japanese name for the art was Ya Wa Ra, taught by Takeda Sokaku of the Daito Ryu (Dai Dong in Korean). Suh Bok Sub insists the early name they used was Yu Kwan Sool Hapkido. He states "The meaning of Korean HapKi, Yu Kwan Sool Dae Han means Korea, Hap Ki means total arts, Daito Ryu or Ya Wa Ra came from Japan to Korea. It was Yu Sool which is Yu Kwan Sool with the Kwon removed. At that time Yu Sool meant something like Judo in Japan, so Grandmaster Choi thought it had a confusing meaning so he put kwon in the middle of it.

Many people thought Hapkido (in the sense of what Choi taught) came from Judo because Yu Sool was used, but it did not. Kwan in Chinese letters means fist. So literally Yu Kwon means soft fist. So without hitting anybody you use a soft fist which uses the other person's energy. In 1958 Choi Yong Sool agreed to officially add the Do to Hap Ki to have the lasting name Hapkido. No one else did this." (Tae Kwon Do, May 1996: 43, 47).

On the other hand, Dr Hee Young Kimm, founder of Han Mu Do, and a well known martial arts historian claims that Ji Han-Jae, a former student of Grandmaster Choi and now Grandmaster of Sin Moo Hapkido, called what he had learned from Choi Yong Sool, Hapki Yu Kwon Sool but felt the name was too long and shortened it to Hapkido in 1957. This was confirmed by Grandmaster Ji Han Jae in a personal interview conducted with him on the 20th of September, 1996.

Grandmaster Ji also placed a much greater emphasis on kicking than did Choi Yong Sool (Ji

claims Choi originally only taught front, side and roundhouse kicks), incorporating Tae Kyon techniques, and it is through his influence and others such as Kim Moo Wong that we see the vast repertoire of kicks that Hapkido is noted for. In addition Grandmaster Ji introduced Taoist breathing and weapons such as the Cane, Jang Bong and Dan Bong.

The conjecture about who originally thought of the name is a product of the turbulent political scene of Hapkido in Korea in the late 1950's and early 1960's when the art was establishing itself rapidly and it was undergoing fairly rapid evolution.

### **Korea and the Hwarang.**

Modern Hapkido (as opposed to the original style taught by Choi Yong Sool) should not be simply seen as Korean Aikijujitsu. In addition to the influence of Aikijujitsu on Hapkido there are also elements of other traditional Korean martial arts techniques encompassing Kwan Jul Ki Bub (joint twisting, throws, holding and choking), Dang Shin Ki Bub (strike, punch and kick) and Moo Ki Sool (short sword, long sword, short stick, long pole, cane, spear, rope, stone throws and knife throws). These techniques in turn derived from Sado Mu Sool (tribal martial arts), Buldo Mu Sool (Buddhist martial arts) and Koong Joong Mu Sool (royal court martial arts). These techniques were originally known and handed down through a hierarchy of monks, ruling families and royal officials for self protection and personal safety. Recorded history of these arts dates back as early as Sam Kuk Si Dae (the era of the three kingdoms - 3A.D.).

Buddhism arrived in China from India during Hu Han Mal (late Han period - 67 B.C.) and was introduced to Korea in 372 A.D. The first patriarch of Son (Zen in Japanese, Chan in Chinese) Buddhism and the 28th patriarch of Buddhism, Bodhidharma (480-528) made an epic trip across the Himalayas and arrived at Song Shan Shaolin temple, China in 520 A.D. where he began to teach the monks Son.. Many people credit him with forming the nucleus of martial arts but this proposition is almost certainly a myth. He may have introduced a particular form of the martial arts but the ability to the organize fighting methods is a feature known in many parts of the world and certainly before this date. What is more likely is that he developed a method of martial practice that was uniquely tied up with Son Buddhism.

Under the reign of King Pop Hung, Buddhism became the sanctioned state religion of Silla and this patronage spawned a period of monastic order, the construction of monasteries and the development of the arts. Large numbers of Korean monks travelled to China for instruction with ninety percent of them coming from Silla.

King Chin Hung came to power in Silla in 540 A.D. and one of the most significant acts he performed was the creation of the Hwa Rang warrior. He called upon a famous Buddhist priest, Won Kwang Bopsa who had developed a system of martial arts based on harmony with the laws of nature to establish a state sanctioned martial art Young members of the nobility were taught martial arts with the Buddhist faith to become warrior-intellectuals who embodied culture and chivalry.

The empty handed fighting techniques were known for their blending of the hard and the soft, linear and circular attacks based on Won Kwang Bopsa's concept of the unity of the opposites embodied in the Um-Yang. The ferocious fighting spirit of the Hwa Rang became legendary and their deeds were recorded in poetry and literature. This literature became part of Korean folklore and heroic legend and evolved into a system of ethics and morality that was essential to the evolution of the martial artist since their dedication to duty and self sacrifice rested on something larger than themselves.

These deep historical and philosophical connections sets Hapkido apart from Aikido that has its own particular philosophy developed by the founder Uyeshiba.

### **Early connections to Aikijujitsu and Aikido.**

Chinese civilization spread into Korea and Japan heavily influencing the indigenous peoples of these lands. All three of these countries in turn have had important influences on each other. Korean travelers brought many skills with them to Japan including Buddhism and certain martial arts skills. From 668 A.D. the Shilla kingdom dominated the Korean peninsula and there was a florescence of martial arts along with many other cultural developments. Oral sources in Korea tell of a Paekje kingdom prince who traveled to Japan to escape political persecution and brought with him a martial art that was based mainly on defensive techniques, circularity and the use of an opponent's force against them called Yu Sool.

The Japanese were meticulous in keeping family and clan records and Grandmaster Huh Ill Woong has a copy of the Daito Ryu family scroll that lists the third name as this prince who brought new techniques and organization to the previously disjointed family martial arts.

Yu Sool translates roughly as "soft art" and it may have been derived from Chinese sources. It was very popular in Korea by 1150 A.D. Its techniques were characterised by a passive combat attitude where the enemy was allowed to make the first move and his attack being directed to the defender's advantage. Throws (mechigi), grappling techniques (kuchigi), and assaulting techniques (kuepso chirigi) composed the main body of the art. There were twenty four basic and ten secret methods comprising the original repertoire.

Dr An Ja San has stated in his book of ancient Korea Chosun Moo Sa Yongoong Jun, a biography of Korean warriors, that the Yu Sool school was considered similar to jujitsu and was known under the name of Soo Bak-Gi and Taek Kyon. Every year during the month of May the King of Chosun held competitions in this form of unarmed combat at Kak Chon Pavilion on Ma Am mountain. The contest winner was awarded a prestigious government post. Participation was compulsory for all soldiers and three winners of these annual contests were Lee Yi Min, Jang Jong Boo and Sa Kyang Sung who became leading generals during the Koryo Dynasty.

### **Daito Ryu Aikijujitsu.**

Aikijujitsu was propagated according to the Japanese system of hierarchical transmission by blood, adoption or affiliation. It was said to have been founded by Prince Teijun, the sixth son of emperor Seiwa (850-880 A.D.) who was the 56th ruler of Japan. Tsunamoto, Prince Teijun's eldest son, was given the name Minamoto and the art was passed down through succeeding generations of the Minamoto family. Yoshimitsu Minamoto (1056-1127 A.D.) is regarded as the actual founder of the "Daito Ryu" (great eastern style). Yoshimitsu's grandson, Yoshikiyo (some records indicate that he may have been the second son of Yoshimitsu) founded the Takeda branch of the Minamoto family in the province of Kai. Takeda is a place in the province of Kai.

It is recorded that Yoshimitsu studied anatomy by dissecting bodies of war dead and criminals and his house "Daito mansion" has given its name to his system of Aikijujitsu, hence we have the name "Daito Ryu". The techniques were passed on to successive generations as the secret art of the Takeda house and made known only to members and

retainers of the family. In 1574, Takeda Kunitsugu moved to Aizu. Thereafter the art remained an exclusively samurai practice and handed down within the family until Japan emerged from isolation into the Meiji period in 1868. Sokaku Takeda (1860-1943 and 32nd in line from Yoshimitsu), the then head of the family began to teach the art outside of the Takeda household and began to travel widely, finally settling in Hokkaido.

### **Choi Yong Sul.**

It is here that the Korean connection again appears. The most widely known figure in the establishment of Hapkido is Choi Yong-Sul. There are many varying accounts of Choi's training in Japan and each particular story must be seen in the context of who is writing it. Much of Japanese history is written from an ethnocentric point of view, particularly in relation to Korean history. An example of this is the way Korean history was rewritten to the Japanese viewpoint during their brutal occupation of Korea from 1910 to 1945. During this period the Japanese tried to completely eliminate Korean thought, cultural arts and the foundation of traditional Korean martial arts as these posed a threat to their authority in an occupied land.

Choi was born in 1904 at Chung Buk province in Korea. Some have said that he lost his parents at an early age. He is thought to have been in Japan by 1913 where he was a houseboy/servant, perhaps even the adopted son of Daito Ryu Aikijujitsu Grandmaster Takeda Sokaku. Martial arts historian Kim Jeong Yoon from Seoul says that after Choi was orphaned he was taken to Japan by a Japanese family. He then spent four years living in a temple before Takeda, a close friend of the abbot, took him in. Perhaps a more authoritative account comes from Suh Bok Sub, Choi's first student in Korea.

In an interview with Michael Wollmershauser of Massachusetts in 1996 Suh Bok Sub stated that Choi had told him that he was born into a very poor Korean family who lived close by to a candy factory run by a Japanese couple. The couple took a liking to Choi and, as his family could not afford him, they allowed the couple to return to Japan with their son. This accords with the Kim Jeong-yoon's account. As a Japanese couple took him to Japan there was no problem Choi entering Japan. The couple left Choi at a Buddhist temple so they could travel more widely in Japan and so that Choi could be given an education. Apparently Choi was not interested in schooling and was causing some minor problems by fighting and having a lack of discipline.

The head of the temple sent him to a friend of his by the name of Sokaku Takeda. Choi then cleaned Takeda's dojo for five years after which the master permitted him to learn aikijujitsu. In Suh Bok Sub's interview he mentions Choi showing a photograph of Takeda to him and explaining to Suh that Takeda was his surrogate father.

Many Aikijujitsu exponents cannot accept the proposition that Choi, a Korean of low status in Japanese eyes could have possibly been taught or been close to Takeda. On the other hand Bernie Lau, an Aikijujitsu researcher and instructor in February's 1987 edition of Black Belt commented that one of the more famous styles related to Daito Ryu is Hapkido. In addition he makes the comment that Uyeshiba Morehei, Aikido founder and a former student of Takeda, was so far below in social status than the other of Takeda's disciples that he could not even get a proper recommendation to study under Takeda.

In Japan, Choi used the Japanese name Yoshida Tatsujutsu (or Tatujutu) since Japanese law at the time required everyone to use a Japanese name. Dr He-Young Kimm explains that on Choi's return to Taegye city in Korea in 1945 after the end of the Japanese occupation, a bag with his martial arts certificates and money was stolen. This has been confirmed by Suh Bok Sub who states that the bag was stolen at Younson train station after Choi returned to

his home town of Yong Dong then decided to locate to Taegu city after he found no one to meet him at the train station. However there is no official records in the Daito Ryu to reflect the granting of a teaching certificate.

Perhaps the reason no records exist is the fact that despite Choi's close relationship with Takeda he was not Japanese and therefore excluded from the records or that he did not pay any money for lessons and thus there is no registration of payment.

Some claim that Choi's training was limited to just attending seminars. Regardless of these conjectures, Choi spent thirty two years in Japan off and on and his techniques reflect a definite link to Daito Ryu Aikijujitsu. Recent information has come to light in the form of a personal interview with Master Choi in 1982 in New York where he details the early years of his life. It seems he was abducted by the Japanese couple and then abandoned by them because he was being extremely difficult. This would account for him arriving at a Buddhist monastery because they often looked after orphans. Suh Bok Sub also mentions that by the time he returned to Korea to stay after the war he was married to a Korean woman and he had three daughters and a son. It seems he had traveled from Japan to Korea previously and met his wife on one of these visits.

### **Jang In Mok**

We now come to a most interesting development that does not appear in much of the Hapkido literature. Still living today in Taegue city is Grandmaster Jang In Mok who also trained under Takeda Sokaku. Grandmaster Jang is eighty three years old which makes his birth year 1912. He has a scroll that lists his training record in the Daito Ryu. Even though Jang In Mok was born later than Choi Yong Sool they were contemporaries in Japan studying under Takeda and they both returned to Taegue city in Korea in 1945. Jang is a doctor of oriental medicine and massage but also used to teach Hapkido. As his career was mainly as a doctor he did not produce large numbers of students. Further research on Grandmaster Jang's early years in Japan is presently continuing and should he provide us with any further information it is certain to improve our resolution into this window of the past.

From these two men who trained under Takeda Sokaku there has been a florescence of Hapkido masters who have spread the art around the world to the benefit of tens of thousands of students. As in any creative art each master has stamped their personal style and emphasis on their Hapkido. Dr Kim He Young documents many of the early Hapkido masters who trained under Choi Yong Sool. Among those listed are Suh Bok Sub, Kim Moo Wong (Shin Moo Kwan Hapkido), Ji Han Jae (Sin Moo Hapkido), Lee Joo Bang (founder of Hwarang Do), Suh In Hyuk (founder of Kuk Sool Won), Won Kwang Wha (Moo Sool Kwan Hapkido) and Kim Jung Yun (Han Pul). What is clear is that Suh Bok Sub was Choi Yong Sool's first student in Korea and his first lesson was on Sunday , February 22, 1948. At the present, the two highest ranking students of Choi Yong Sool are Grandmaster Im Hyon Soo (9th degree) teaching in Taegu city, Korea, Grandmaster Chin il Chang (9th degree) in New York city and head of Hapkido (under Choi's system) . Grandmaster Ji Han Jae (10th Dan) heads his extensive Sin Moo Hapkido organization.

Understanding these historical connections is an important component in any serious study of Hapkido and the martial arts journey.