

Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

# **Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do**

## **– A History**

by

**Dale Copeland**

**New Zealand Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do**

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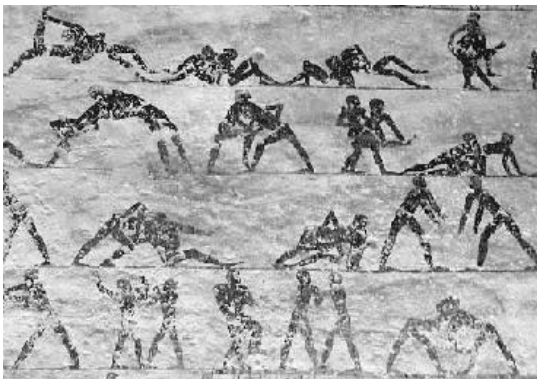


### The History of Martial Arts

The earliest evidence of martial arts goes back thousands of years, and the true roots are difficult to reconstruct. Inherent patterns of human aggression which inspire the practice of mock combat (in particular wrestling) and optimization of serious close combat are doubtlessly inherited from the pre-recorded history stage and were made into an 'art' from the earliest emergence of that concept. Indeed, many universals of martial art are fixed by the specifics of human physiology (body structure and possible joint movements) and are not dependent on a particular tradition or era.

#### From five thousand years ago

The earliest evidence for specifics of martial arts as practised in the past comes from figurative depictions of fights as well as analysis of archaeological evidence, especially weaponry. The oldest works of art depicting scenes of battle and wrestling techniques date back to 3400 BCE and were found in a



tomb of the Middle Kingdom of Egypt at Beni Hasan.

(Note: 'BCE' – 'before the Common Era' has replaced 'BC' – 'before Christ'. 'CE' – 'common era' replaces 'AD' – 'Anno Domini', Latin for 'in the year of the Lord'.)

Dating back to 3000 BCE in Mesopotamia (Babylon), reliefs depicting struggle were found. In Vietnam, drawings and sketches from 2879 BCE describe ways of combat using sword, stick, bow, and spears. Pictorial representations of fist fighting in the Minoan civilization date to the 2nd millennium BCE.

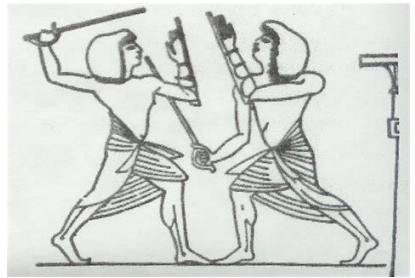
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Literary descriptions of combat began in the 2nd millennium BCE, with mention of weaponry and combat in texts like the *Gilgamesh* epic or the *Rig-Veda*. Detailed description of Late Bronze Age to Early Iron Age hand-to-hand

combat with spear, sword and shield are found in the *Iliad* (c. 8th century BCE) and also the *Mahabharatha*. (Note: 'c.' means 'circa', Latin for 'about')

Later, martial styles as varied as *Gidigbo* (a form of wrestling practised by the Yoruba people of Nigeria), *Donga* (a form of stickfighting used by the Suri people of Ethiopia), *Musangwe* (a form of bare-knuckle boxing practised by the Venda people of South Africa), *Tahtib* (a form of stickfighting from the Copts of Egypt) and *Engolo* (a form of kicking,



dodging and leg sweeping practised by the tribes of the Cunene river region of Angola), to name just a few, were developed by cultures all over Africa.

In gymnasiums similar to those of Greece, recruits would practise wrestling, callisthenics and duelling with single-stick.

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The works of **Homer** (900 – 800 BCE) contain descriptions of unarmed combat. By the time of the Greek city-states (700 BCE) boxing, wrestling and other related forms of combat were regular events in the Olympiads. The Greek philosopher **Plato** (427 – 347 BCE) mentions *skiamachia* (fighting without an opponent) – a kind of shadow boxing which was eventually combined with wrestling and boxing to form *pankration*, a fighting system in which the whole body was used as a weapon.



The Greek practitioners of *pankration* became the later Roman gladiators. Gladiatorial games were introduced into Germany, Normandy and England after the fall of Rome, and became the basis of modern boxing and wrestling.

These two images (from the side of jugs), show the sport of *pankration*. No weapons, but hands wrapped in one of the illustrations. The onlookers are perhaps referees/judges. Their reason for the sapling, and for what looks like extended fingers on one, is unknown.



Specific martial traditions become identifiable in Classical Antiquity, with disciplines such as *shuai jiao*, Greek wrestling or those described in the Indian epics or the hand-to-hand combat practice, including the integration of notions of 'hard' and 'soft' techniques, in China in the 5th century BCE.

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We must remember that many civilisations may not have left written or sculptural records of fighting techniques, but they most certainly passed on their skills in fighting and weapon-making, traditional challenges, stick-fighting, and the best use for different weapons, in attack or defence.

Note: According to Māori scholar **Tīmoti Kāretu**, *haka* have been erroneously defined by generations as 'war dances', while Māori mythology places *haka* as a dance about the celebration of life.

### China

The art of *Palgwae* flourished during the era of Ju Gong (approximately 2000 BCE) and was perfected during the Song dynasty a thousand years later.

The ***Han History Bibliographies*** record that, between 206 BCE and 9 CE there was a distinction between no-holds-barred weaponless fighting, which it calls *shǒubó*, for which 'how-to' manuals had already been written, and sportive wrestling, then known as *juéli* or *jiǎoli*.

Wrestling is also documented in the ***Shǐ Jì Records of the Grand Historian***, written by **Sima Qian** (c. 100 BCE).

In the 1st century CE, six chapters of Hand Fighting were included in the ***Han Shu*** (history of the Former Han Dynasty) written by **Ban Gu**. The 'Five Animals' concept in Chinese martial arts is attributed to **Hua Tuo**, a 3rd-century physician. The five animals are tiger, crane, leopard, snake and dragon. But this list is sometimes expanded to as many as 38 animals, including such surprises as centipede and duck.



*Eagle claw hand*

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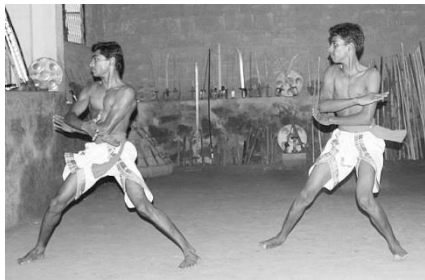
In the Tang dynasty, descriptions of sword dances were immortalized in poems. In the Song and Yuan dynasties, *xiangpu* (the earliest form of *sumo*) contests were sponsored by the imperial courts.

Between the 16th and 17th centuries there are at least forty extant sources which provided evidence that, not only did monks of *Shaolin* practise martial arts, but it had become such an integral element of *Shaolin* monastic life that the monks justified it by creating new Buddhist lore.



### India

Classical Sanskrit epics are the earliest written accounts of combat in India. The term *dwandwayuddha* referred to a duel, such that it was a battle between only two warriors and not armies. The ***Mahabharata*** describes a prolonged battle between two warriors using bows, swords, and fists. Stories describing **Krishna** report that he sometimes engaged in wrestling matches where he used knee strikes to the chest, punches to the head, hair pulling, and strangleholds. Another unarmed battle in the ***Mahabharata*** describes two fighters boxing with clenched fists and fighting with kicks, finger strikes, knee strikes and head-butts. **Krishna Maharaja**, who single-handedly



overcame an elephant according to the ***Mahabharata***, is credited with developing the sixteen principles of armed combat.

***Kalaripayattu***, from the 12th century, is the most ancient martial art in India,



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The **Vedas** are a large body of religious texts originating in ancient India. Composed in Vedic Sanskrit, the texts constitute the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest scriptures of Hinduism. Many of the popular sports mentioned in the **Vedas** and the epics have their origins in military training, such as boxing, wrestling, chariot-racing, horse-riding and archery. Competitions were held not just as a contest of the players' prowess but also as a common way for a woman to find a bridegroom.

Ten fighting styles of northern India were said to have been created in different areas based on their local animals and gods. Tradition ascribes their coming together in the 6th-century to the Buddhist University of Takshashila, located in today's Punjab region.

Like other branches of Sanskrit literature, treatises on martial arts become more systematic in the course of the 1st millennium CE. The grappling art of *vajra-mushti* ('knuckle dusters') is mentioned in sources of the early centuries CE. This is a 1792 drawing of Indian wrestlers wearing Vajra-mushti.



Military accounts of the Gupta Empire (c. 240–480) and the later **Agni Purana** identify over 130 different weapons, divided into thrown and unthrown classes. The **Kama Sutra** written by **Vātsyāyana** says women should regularly 'practise with sword, single-stick, quarterstaff, and bow and arrow'.

The **Sushruta Samhita** was the main source of knowledge about surgery in ancient India. It identifies 107 vital points on the human body of which 64 were classified as being lethal if properly struck with a fist or stick. **Sushruta**, also spelled **Suśruta**, (6th century BCE), was an Indian surgeon known for his

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pioneering operations and techniques. His writing was expanded and added to right through to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. His work formed the basis of the medical discipline *ayurveda* which was taught alongside various martial arts.

Fighting arts were not exclusive to the Kshatriya caste which consisted of Kings and warriors. It was originally the highest caste but was demoted in favour of the Brahmin. A woman could be a Kshatriya but would not become a warrior. The 8th-century text *Kuvalaymala* by **Udyotanasuri** recorded such systems being taught at *gurukula* educational institutions, where Brahmin students from throughout the subcontinent were learning and practising archery, fighting with sword and shield, with daggers, sticks, lances, and with fists, and in duels (*niuddham*).

The earliest extant manual of Indian martial arts is contained as chapters 248 to 251 in the ***Agni Purana*** (c. 8th – 11th centuries), giving an account of *dhanurveda* in a total of 104 verses which describe how to improve a warrior's individual prowess and kill enemies using various different methods in warfare, whether a warrior went to war in chariots, on elephants or horses, or on foot. Foot methods were subdivided into armed combat and unarmed combat. Armed combat included using bow and arrow, sword, spear, noose, armour, iron dart, club, battle axe, discus, or trident. Unarmed methods included wrestling, knee strikes, and punching and kicking.

### Thailand/Siam

**Muay Thai** sometimes referred to as **Thai boxing**, is a combat sport that uses stand-up striking along with various clinching techniques. This discipline is known as the “Art of eight limbs”, because of the use of fists, elbows, knees and shins.



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The history of Muay Thai can be traced at least to the 16th century as a peace-time martial art practised by soldiers. As well as being a practical fighting technique for use in actual warfare, Muay became a sport in which the

opponents fought in front of spectators who went to watch for entertainment. These Muay contests gradually became an integral part of local festivals and celebrations, especially those held at temples. Eventually, the previously bare-fisted fighters started wearing lengths of hemp rope around their hands and forearms.

The ascension of King Rama V to the throne in 1868 ushered in a golden age not only for Muay but for the whole country. Muay progressed greatly during the reign of Rama V as a direct result of the king's personal interest in the sport. The country was at peace and Muay functioned as a means of physical exercise, self-defence, attacking, recreation and personal advancement.



Following a bloodless revolution in 1932, Siam became a constitutional monarchy and changed its official name to Thailand,

Muay Thai became widespread internationally in the late 20th to 21st century, when Westernised practitioners from Thailand began competing in kickboxing and mixed-rules matches as well as matches under Muay Thai rules around the world.

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### Malaysia

**Silat Melayu** ('art of Malay Silat') or simply Silat, is a combative art of self-defence from the Malay world, that employs *langkah* ('steps') and *jurus* ('movements')

to ward off assaults or to strike, either with or without weapons. Silat traced its origin to the early days of Malay civilisation, and has since developed into a fine tradition of physical and spiritual training that embodies aspects of



traditional Malay attire, performing art and social customs. The philosophical foundation of modern Malay Silat is largely based on the Islamic spirituality. Its moves and shapes are rooted from the basis of Silat movements called *Bunga Silat*, and Silat performances are normally

accompanied by Malay drums. Silat is a generic name for martial arts of several countries in Southeast Asia.

### Japan

The historical origin of Japanese martial arts can be found in the warrior traditions of the *samurai* and the caste system that restricted the use of weapons by members of the non-warrior classes. *Samurai* were the hereditary military nobility and officer caste of medieval and early-modern Japan from the late 12th century until their abolition in the 1870s during the *Meiji* era. They were the well-paid retainers of the *daimyo*, the great feudal landholders.



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Originally, *samurai* were expected to be proficient in many weapons, as well as unarmed combat, and to attain the highest possible mastery of combat skills, for the purpose of glorifying either themselves or their liege.

A large number of schools evolved to teach these skills, with those existing before the *Meiji* Restoration classed as *Koryū* or old stream. Over time there was a trend away from the traditional purpose to a philosophy of coupling spiritual goals with the striving to perfect their martial skills.

The Japanese ***Book of Five Rings*** *Go Rin no Sho* is a text on *kenjutsu* and the martial arts in general, written by the Japanese swordsman **Miyamoto Musashi** around 1645. Many translations have been made, and it enjoys an audience considerably broader than just martial artists and people across East Asia. For instance, some foreign business leaders find its discussion of conflict and taking the advantage to be relevant to their work in a business context. The modern-day *Hyōhō Niten Ichi-ryū* employs it as a manual of technique and philosophy. Differently from other styles, which attribute their techniques to divine inspiration, *Niten Ichi Ryu* techniques are the direct result of combat experience by **Musashi Sensei**. They are the same techniques he used in over 60 duels, all of which **Musashi** won.



### Korea

The history of Korea is a story of change. Invasions from surrounding countries, internal power battles and boundary changes, and a rigid social system meant that peasants could only work the land, soldiers would have to fight to support their current leader, and the leading caste would retain control, status and wealth. Korean martial arts were fighting practices for

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battle not for personal well-being. It is only relatively recently that the practices have been adapted for use by both military and non-military personnel as a method of personal growth or recreation.

Myth has it that Dan Gun founded Korea in 2333 BCE (the 23<sup>rd</sup> century BCE). Korea was always a geopolitical region besieged by foreign invasions, mostly from China or Japan, as well as power struggles between different kingdoms within Korea. Consequently, the Korean people developed martial methods and strategies in order to defend themselves and their territory.

This ceramic figure of a Silla fighting horse is wearing spectacular armour.



A brief summary of Korean Dynasties: 300 – 600: CE is called the Three Kingdoms era, with Silla, Paekche (Baekje) and Goguryo (Koguryo). But there was also a smaller Gaya confederacy in the southern region of the Korean Peninsula and relatively large states like Okjeo, Buyeo, and Dongye in its northern part with Manchuria which is now part of modern China.

660 – 935 CE: the Silla Dynasty

936 – 1392 CE: the Koryo (Goryeo) Dynasty

1392 – 1910 CE: the Joseon or Yi (Lee) Dynasty

(Spelling differences come from different transcriptions of Korean)

During the reign of **Chin Heung**, the 24<sup>th</sup> king of Silla, the young aristocrats and warrior class formed an elite officers' corps called *Hwa Rangdo*. They trained with all weapons and practised hand and foot fighting, but also hardened themselves with endurance feats such as mountain-climbing, and winter swimming in wild rivers. All to prepare themselves for the task of defending their homeland. Probably the very beginning of what we know of as the Korean martial art.



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4<sup>th</sup> century image of archers on horses and a modern youth portraying a warrior in Silla Hwa Rang.



*Taekkyon* is the traditional martial art of Korea. *Taekkyon* came into existence before the Silla dynasty united the peninsula in 1668. It is believed

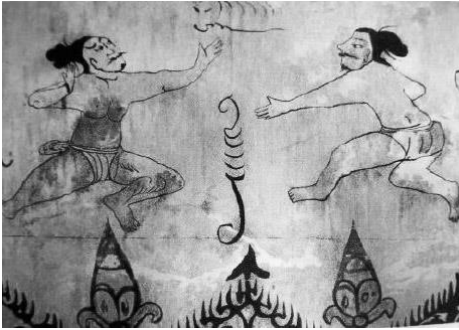
*Taekkyon* was known as *Subak* (or *Soo Bak-Gi*) at that time. The name was apparently used for a folk dance as well as the martial art. This pre-1900 photo shows children playing *Taekkyon/Subak*.



The original martial art *Subak* (modern spelling *Soo Bahk Do*) used bare-hand techniques, mostly slaps with the palm. Many modern games seem to be variations of this hand-clapping contest. From the child's Pat-a-Cake to a very fast contest "Slime-yuk-yuk", here played by two Taekwon-do students. I'm not necessarily claiming a direct link from Subak – it could be little more than an illustration of the movements made possible by the structure of our joints, and also our inherent competitive tendencies. Interestingly, it also includes slaps with backhand against backhand.



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In Korea, each region had its own style of *Subak*; today, only two styles remain. One is taught purely as *Subak*, the other has been absorbed into modern *Taekkyeon* by **Master Shin Han Seung**. When he tried to resurrect *Taekkyeon* after the Korean War, he sought instruction from the *Taekkyeon* master, **Song**

**Dok Ki**, and the *Subak* master **Il Dong**. **Shin Han Seung** then combined *Taekkyeon* and *Subak*.

*Taekkyeon* focuses on upright fighting: footwork, kicks, strikes, blocks, throws and rhythm. *Soo Bak-Gi* was very popular, and competitions were held at festivals twice a year, along with Korean wrestling, hopping, and *Jeki-Chagi* (which has evolved into the modern pastime of Hacky-Sack).

*Ssireum* is the traditional wrestling art of Korea. **Gakjeochong** murals show that wrestling in Korea dates back as early as the pre-Three Kingdom era. The **Book of Later Han**, a Chinese document that was written either before or early in the history of the Three Kingdoms also has records of Korean wrestling.

*Ssireum* first gained widespread popularity during the Joseon dynasty (1392-1910). This late-18<sup>th</sup> century drawing shows a crowd watching a *Ssireum* bout.





### The 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Korea has not been truly free since Japan started to encroach in 1876, and then completely occupied Korea in 1910. The country remained part of the Japanese Empire until 1945, and resistance by patriots was treated very harshly, as we can see in many of the pattern meanings. Imprisonment or execution was common. Schools were not permitted to teach using the Korean language and the Korean people were treated as serfs.

During the Japanese occupation (1909 – 1945) it was forbidden to practise any of the martial arts. *Taek Kyon* ( or *Taekyon*) was secretly practised by some dedicated stalwarts and passed on to a handful of students.

#### 1918 - Choi Hong-Hi

It was into this political and social tension that **Choi Hong Hi** was born on November 9th, 1918 in the rugged area of Hwa Dae in the Myong Chun District, in what is now the D.P.R.K. (North Korea). It was then the north eastern part of a unified Korea under the control of the Japanese Empire, which ran Korea via a colonial government. Japan had annexed Korea, against the will of the Korean people. A young **Choi** grew up like many Koreans of the day with anger towards the colonial Japanese and resisting their unfair control. Throughout his childhood he was a very frail and sickly boy which was a constant source of worry for his parents. Weak in body but a politically strong-minded and wilful child, **Choi** became involved in a school protest spurred by the maltreatment of Koreans in Kwang Ju, a southern part of Korea. These protests spread throughout the Korean Peninsula. At the age of 12, as a 5th grade student, he was permanently expelled from school for agitating a mass student demonstration against the Japanese authorities who were in control of Korea at that time.



**1932**

After Choi's expulsion, his father sought alternative educational opportunities for his son. He sent him to study calligraphy under one of the most famous teachers in Korea, **Master Han Il-Dong**. **Han**, in addition to his skills as a calligrapher, was also a Master of *Taekkyon*, the ancient Korean Art of Foot Fighting. He was concerned over the frail condition of his new pupil and began to teach Choi the rigorous exercises of *Taekkyon* to help build his strength and physique.

**1937**

In 1937 **Choi** was sent to Kyoto in Japan to further his education. It was there that he met a fellow Korean who was a teacher of the Japanese *Karate* and taught **Choi** this martial art. **Choi** became a black belt and also learned *Shotokan karate*.

Just before he had left Korea, **Choi** apparently had a disagreement with a wrestler named **Hu**, and the possibility of a future confrontation inspired him to train; in his own words, 'I would imagine that these were the techniques I would use to defend myself against the wrestler, **Mr. Hu**, if he did attempt to carry out his promise to tear me limb from limb when I eventually returned to Korea'.

These techniques, together with his *Taekyon* training, were to later provide a solid platform on which our modern day Taekwon-Do would be built. **Choi** stayed in Japan for the remainder of his schooling, preparatory school, high school, and finally the University in Tokyo. During this time there followed a period of both mental and physical training and experimentation with his new fighting techniques intensified until, with the attainment of his Second Degree Black Belt, he began teaching at a YMCA in Tokyo. His military career

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also began in 1937, when he was forced to join the Japanese army as a student 'volunteer', during Japan's occupancy of Korea.

### 1939

With the outbreak of World War II, **Choi** was forced into enlisting in the Japanese 'Volunteer Army'. Japan was fully engaged in the Second World War, and mounting pressure was applied to Korean males to join the war effort. Since Japan did not get a sufficient number of volunteers the pressure was increased and Koreans faced conscription-like tactics, compelling Koreans like **Choi Hong-Hi** into forced enlistment.

Many thousands of Korean females, including teenage girls, were kidnapped and forced into sexual slavery as 'comfort women' for the Japanese Imperial Military. The photograph shows the bronze 'Statue of Peace', commemorating the wartime comfort women. Now installed in Sydney, Australia.



### 1942 - 45

**Choi** was posted to North Korea in 1942. He hid to avoid conscription into the Japanese Army but was caught, and in October 1943 began his basic training in the Japanese army. After completing the mandatory training he was assigned to Pyongyang in Korea. A group of Korean student soldiers plotted to overthrow the local leadership and join the Korean underground resistance movement. However a traitorous Korean collaborator discovered the plan and the leaders, including **Choi**, were arrested, convicted, and sent to Pyong Yang prison for treason. They were released on August 15, 1945 when Japan surrendered unconditionally ending WWII.

It is difficult to find the actual truth in a history when there are so many versions existing. Some writers say that Choi was sentenced to seven years in

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prison, some say for eight years. Another that he was in prison 'to await the outcome of an eight month pre-trial examination'. The most dramatic version is that he was sentenced to death and due to have been executed on August 18, 1945. Released just three days before, when the war ended.

The General himself only wrote (in the Condensed Encyclopaedia) 'I was imprisoned for a time in a Japanese army jail'.

It was this period of solitude within the Camp that allowed him to formulate and put into practice his '*Taekwon-Do*'. Within a short time, both his cellmate and jailer became students. Eventually, the entire prison courtyard evolved into one gigantic training camp!

On August 15<sup>th</sup>, World War Two ended, and Japan surrendered. Korea was liberated from the Japanese by both Soviet and US forces, so the responsibility for overseeing the rebuilding and rehabilitation of Korea was divided between the two sides, and the country was divided along the 38th parallel. The USSR occupied Korea north of this line, the USA occupied the south. It was intended as a temporary measure until a Korean government could be formed for the whole country. The new Republic of Korea Armed Forces was organised in the south.

Shortly after the liberation **Choi Hong-Hi** moved south to Seoul and participated in the fledging democratic anti-communist movement.

With the end of the Pacific War and the subsequent disbandment of the Imperial Japanese Army, which had been occupying Korea since 1910, a void of indigenous security force was created, while the pool of human resources came from various backgrounds, including the former Imperial Japanese Army, Manchurian Army, and Korean Liberation Army.

The U.S. military administration opened the Military Language School in Seoul on December 5, 1945, in order to train military interpreters as well as

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the new generation of commissioned officers with unified, predominantly American, military doctrine.

Beginning in 1945, shortly after the end of World War II and Japanese Occupation, new martial arts schools called *kwans* had opened in Seoul. These schools were established by Korean martial artists with backgrounds in Japanese and Chinese martial arts. At the time, indigenous disciplines (such as *Taekkyeon*) were being forgotten, due to years of decline and repression by the Japanese colonial government. The umbrella term '*traditional Taekwondo*' typically refers to the martial arts practised by the *kwans* during the 1940s and 1950s, though in reality the term '*Taekwondo*' had not yet been coined at that time, and indeed each *kwan* (school) was practising its own unique style of the Korean art.

### 1946

In January 1946, the South Joseon National Defence Force was established. It was the predecessor to the Republic of Korea (ROK) army.

The South Joseon Defence Academy was founded on May 1, 1946, under the authority of the U.S. military administration in South Korea, taking over 60 cadets from the Military Language School and augmented by 28 new officer candidates drafted from line units.

**Choi Hong-Hi** enrolled in the first class of the Academy and became a founding member of the National Defence Force. This opportunity allowed him to fast track his way up the promotional ladder. It also gave him access to many subordinate soldiers who also became his martial art students.

During his military career, **Choi** had constantly researched various martial arts, mainly *Taekkyeon*, *kung fu* and *karate* – drawing from each to create his original version of *Taekwon-do*.

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He devoted his life for ten years to study, devise and develop new techniques of attack and defence, comparing always with other martial arts. His basis was the excellent technical movements of *Soo Bak Gi*, and also *Tae Kyon*, the traditional martial art of Korea, with its spiritual basis on ethics of the East, by which one can generate his/her strength to the maximum in the principle of modern science, different from the existing technical movements.

As he advanced in military rank, the number of soldiers he commanded increased accordingly. **Choi** rose quickly through the ranks, making Company Commander in Kwang-Ju where the young Second Lieutenant began teaching his entire Regiment his new Martial Art, after which he was promoted to First Lieutenant, transferring to Taejon and commanding the Second Infantry Regiment. It was at his new post that **Choi** began to spread his Art on a greater level promoting his unarmed combat as '*Taekwon-Do*'. In 1947 he rose to Captain and then Major, and in 1948 he was posted to Seoul as the Head of Logistics, and *Taekwon-Do* Instructor to the American Military Police School there.

### 1948

Following the establishment of the South Korean government on August 15, 1948, the *National Defence Force* was renamed to 'Republic of Korea Army', and *South Joseon Defence Academy* to 'Korea Military Academy'.



Under the auspices of the UN, a democratic government established the Republic of Korea (South Korea) with its capital in Seoul. The Soviets established the communist Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) with its capital in Pyongyang. Following the establishment of the South Korean government on August 15, 1948, the *National Defence Force* was renamed to 'Republic of Korea Army', and *South*

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*Joseon Defence Academy* to 'Korea Military Academy' accordingly. *Choi* was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the new South Korean Army and he made up his mind to create the martial arts of Korea to outshine all other martial arts in both spiritual and technical aspects so as to demonstrate the spirit and wisdom of the Korean nation to the whole world.

### 1950 – 1953 – The Korean War

At least 2.5 million persons lost their lives in the Korean War which was fought between North Korea and South Korea from 1950 to 1953. The war began on 25 June 1950 when North Korea, supplied and advised by the Soviet Union, invaded the South following clashes along the border and rebellions in South Korea. The United Nations, with the United States as the principal participant, joined the war on the side of the South Koreans, and the People's Republic of China came to North Korea's aid.



On the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, **Choi Hong-Hi** had been ordered to set up an officer training academy. **Choi** had risen quickly in the new South Korean army and, two years after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, he created an officer training program and an infantry division that provided *Taekwon-do* instructors.

**Choi** was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and was appointed as Chief of Staff of the First Corps of the Korean Army in 1952.

### 1953

While a 1-Star Brigadier-General **General Choi** was tasked with forming a new division on JeJu Island. He looked to expand the martial arts training to the new division that he was forming. To help accomplish this he recruited **Lieutenant Nam Tae-Hi** and **Sergeant Han Cha-Kyo**. **Lieutenant Nam** was a

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senior student of the *Chung Do Kwan*. He was also becoming a legend for his exploits on the battlefield and his proficiency in deadly hand-to-hand combat skills. **Sergeant Han** was his junior at the *Chung Do Kwan* and one of his students. The 29th Infantry Division was nicknamed the “Fist Division” and the Division Flag contained an image of **General Choi’s** fist superimposed over an image of the Korean peninsula. The flag design was an indication of



**General Choi’s** deep desire to reunite his beloved homeland. (Note: this image is also used on the badge for WorldWide Taekwon-Do.)

The martial arts training at the time was pretty much limited to basic *karate* with some of the beginning modifications and was called *Tang Soo Do*. After the completion of the recruit’s training the ‘Fist Division’ relocated to the Korean mainland. Hence Jeju Island can be appropriately and accurately referred to as the ‘Womb of Taekwon-Do’.

1953 was an eventful year for **Choi**, for both his military career and the progress of his Martial Art *Taekwon-Do*. He wrote the first authoritative book in Korea on ***Military Intelligence*** and also co-ordinated and commanded the elite 29th Infantry Division, which eventually became the spearhead for *Taekwon-Do*.

Fighting in the Korean War ended in July 1953 when an armistice was agreed, with Korea still divided into two hostile states. Negotiations in 1954 produced no further agreement, and the front line along the heavily-guarded 38<sup>th</sup> parallel has been accepted ever since as the de facto boundary between North and South Korea.

New Zealand military forces were involved in Korea from 1950 to 1957, with 4700 New Zealanders in the New Zealand contingent - Kayforce - under UN



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command, taking part in the United Nations 'police action' to repel communist North Korea's invasion of its southern neighbour. The Korean War conflict lasted from 25 June 1950 to 27 July 1953.



A New Zealander, Bob Jagger, took this photo of Seoul just after the war.

A reduced New Zealand force remained in South Korea in a garrison role until the last troops were withdrawn in 1957.

Korea has not been truly free and independent and unified since Japan started to encroach in 1876, and is still divided, not just in terms of being two separate states - the ideologies and politics of the two countries are also vastly different.

It was always the dream of **General Choi Hong Hi** to see a unified Korea.

### 1954

In September 1954 the newly-promoted **Major General Choi** arranged for a martial arts demonstration to commemorate the formation of the 29th Infantry Division and to celebrate the birthday of **Dr. Rhee Seung-Man**, PhD, the first president of South Korea. In the demonstration **Lieutenant Nam**

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broke 13 roof tiles with his fore fist. This impressed **Dr. Rhee** and he urged martial arts to be introduced to the army under a single system, but he apparently misrecognized the technique on display as *Taekkyeon*. **General Choi** knew that this was a term from *Tang Soo Do* or *Korean Karate*.

*Tang Soo Do* is the Korean pronunciation of Chinese symbols for ***The Way of the Tang Hand***. The name *Tae Soo Do* was also used to describe a unified style Korean martial arts. This name consists of the *hanja* characters for *tae* 'to stomp, trample', *su* 'hand' and *do* 'way, discipline'.

Note: *hanja* refers to Chinese characters used in the writing of the Korean language. *Hanja* was used as early as the *Gojoseon* period, the first ever Korean kingdom. According to the ***Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms***, *Gojoseon* was established in 2333 BCE by **Dangun**.

Although a phonetic written language *Hangul* (also known as Chosŏn'gŭl in North Korea) had been created by **King Sejong the Great** in 1446, it did not come into widespread official use until the late 19th and early 20th century.

The techniques of what is commonly known as *Tang Soo Do* combine elements of *Shōtōkan*, *Subak*, *Taekkyeon*, and *Kung Fu*.

**Choi** formed the *Oh Do Kwan* (Gym of my way) in Seoul, where soldiers were trained in his new martial art to become the pioneer *Taekwon-do* instructors. General Choi also commanded *Chung Do Kwan*, which was the largest civilian gym in Korea.

*Taekwon-do* was practised only by the Military and those in the *Chung Do Kwan* following General Choi. The soldiers in the military trained through the *Oh Do Kwan*, which was co-founded by **General Choi Hong-Hi** and **Captain Nam Tae-Hi**. They decided upon the name as its use avoided the controversy of the battling *Kwans*. *Oh Do Kwan* translates as 'gym of my way', or 'my

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gym'. So the *Oh Do Kwan* was now your place to train when you served in the military, regardless of any previous *Kwan* training or lack thereof. The name sent a message that all were welcome. The Director was **General Choi**, **Captain Nam** served as the Chief Instructor, while **Sergeant Han** was the Assistant Instructor.

The *Oh Do Kwan* can be considered the first *Taekwon-Do* gym. It was in the *Oh Do Kwan* that some of the first overt changes took hold that would lead *Taekwon-Do* into becoming a uniquely new Korean Martial Art of Self-defence. These obvious changes were the creation of the first 3 Korean *Tuls* or Patterns, which some call forms and in Korea used to be called *Hyungs*. The first 3 patterns devised were ***Hwa Rang Tul***, ***Chung Moo Tul*** and ***Ul Ji Tul***. The first 3 Masters of Taekwon-Do, **General Choi**, **Colonel Nam** and **Sergeant Han** collaborated on all 3 Patterns. The *Tuls* were the brainchild of **General Choi**. He would go on to design 26 *Tuls* over his lifetime. He included a final total of 24 in the creation of the syllabus that he oversaw. ***Hwa Rang Tul*** had **General Choi** envisioning movements, like a director, with **Captain Nam** and **Sergeant Han** working out the movements, much like actors taking cues from a movie director. ***Chung Moo Tul*** had **Captain Nam** mostly working through the movements with **General Choi**. ***Ul Ji*** had **Sergeant Han** being the primary assistant helping **General Choi** or at times **Captain Nam**. Prior to this the Korean Karate *Kwans* simply trained using Karate *Katas*, learned by Koreans in Japan or from Japanese sources. The *Oh Do Kwan* nurtured the early development of Taekwon-Do and as such can be rightfully considered the 'Cradle of Taekwon-Do.'

**The General** was motivated to come up with a new name to better describe the Korean Martial Art that they were developing. Training in this art was now to be taught to all the soldiers following the comments by their President who was the Commander in Chief, **Dr. Seung-Man Rhee** (also known as **Dr. Rhee Seung-Man** with the traditional ordering of the name).

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**General Choi** used his extensive knowledge of Chinese gained through his Calligraphy training, learning the Chinese classics and higher education to conceive the new name of *Tae Kwon Do*. Once he had the name he realized that for such an important milestone, he needed to have it accepted by others and then seek presidential authorization.

At that time there was a national movement to re-instil Korean pride and reinvigorate Korean culture. In keeping with this movement, Korea needed to have their very own National Martial Art and **General Choi's** vision was that *Taekwon-Do* would become just that. It was late in 1954 that he completed the fundamentals of Taekwon-Do.

### 1955

Beginning in 1955 the leaders of the *kwans* began discussing in earnest the possibility of creating a unified Korean martial art. Until then, *Tang Soo Do* was the term used for Korean *Karate*,

**General Choi Hong-Hi** advocated the use of the name *Taekwon-Do*, replacing *su* 'hand' with *kwon* 'fist', (the term *quán* was also used for 'martial arts' in Chinese). The name was also the closest to the pronunciation of *Taekkyeon*, in accordance with the views of the president. So, in history, *Taekwon-Do* was founded on April 11, 1955, when the Session of Naming Board, consisting of noted historians and leaders of society deeply versed in martial arts, decided to name the martial art so far studied and completed by **General Choi Hong Hi** *Taekwon-Do*.

The name submitted by **General Choi** was unanimously selected for its apt description of the art; *Tae* (foot), *Kwon* (fist), *Do* (art). Not only did this new name bear a close similarity to the ancient name of *Taek Kyon*, but the name gave a new sense of nationalism to the art, whereas the prevalent names of *Dang Soo* and *Kong Soo* connoted Chinese or Japanese martial arts.

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The years of research and development by **General Choi** resulted in the **Chang Hun** style (pen name of the author) of *Taekwon-Do*. Though this style is primarily adopted and adapted from *Taek Kyon*, *Soo Bak-Gi* and *Karate* techniques, a myriad of new techniques have been added, especially in the variety of hand techniques and the perfection of foot techniques.

The new name was initially slow to catch on among the leaders of the *kwans*. But *Taekwondo* was adopted for use by the South Korean military, which increased its popularity among civilian martial arts schools.

The process for obtaining the all-important presidential approval began with a series of meetings that included elected officials, top military personnel, businessmen, those influential in the media and other leading members of Korean society. When they approved the name *Taekwon-Do* that **General Choi** submitted, research would then be conducted before the name was to be sent to **Dr. Rhee** for presidential approval. The process proved successful when **General Choi** convinced the President and staff at the Blue House (the home and office of the President) to have the name written in Calligraphy using Chinese *HanJa* characters. **Dr. Rhee** honoured **Choi's** request, writing the calligraphy himself and signing with his pen name *U-Nam*.

In 1955 **General Choi** led the Korean Army's Taekwon-do demonstration team on a tour of China and Vietnam to promote his form of unarmed combat. After breath-taking displays, both these countries adopted **General Choi's Taekwon-do** as an integral part of their soldiers' military training.

Officially, 1955 signalled the beginning of **Taekwon-Do** as a formally recognized martial art in Korea. During that year, a special Board was formed to formalise and officially name **General Choi's** Martial Art. The Board included leading Instructors of the Art, Korean Historians, prominent leaders of Korean Society and Heads of Korean State. On April 11, the Board, summoned by the General, decided on the name '*Taekwon-Do*' which had

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been submitted by him. This single unified name replaced all others that had previously been used to describe the un-armed Military combat that was being practised within the Korean Army. Confusing terms such as *Dang Soo*, *Gong Soo*, *Taek Kyon*, *Kwon Bup* and *Tae Soo* were now dropped from use.

### 1959

In 1959 the **Korea Taekwon-Do Association** or **KTA (Korea Tang Soo Do Association)** was established to facilitate the unification of Korean martial arts. **General Choi**, of the *Oh Do Kwan*, wanted the other member *kwans* of the KTA to adopt his own **Chang Hon**-style of *Taekwondo*, as a unified style. This was, however, met with resistance as the other *kwans* instead wanted a unified style to be created based on inputs from all the *kwans*, to serve as a way to include the heritage and characteristics of all of the styles, not just that of a single *kwan*.

In 1959, Taekwon-Do escaped its national boundaries, with **General Choi** and nineteen of his top Black Belts touring South Vietnam and Taiwan. The tour was a major success, astounding spectators with the Taekwon-Do techniques, and Taekwon-Do began to spread around the world. (Taekwon-Do is now an internationally recognised name, so I stop using italics for it.)

In this same year, **General Choi** was elevated to two illustrious posts; President of his newly formed **Korea Taekwon-Do Association** and Deputy Commander of the 2nd Army in Tae-Gu.

The General also published his first Korean book on Taekwon-Do.

### 1960

**General Choi Hong Hi** introduced Taekwon-Do to the USA in 1960 while attending Missile Course in Texas, USA.

### 1961

In 1961, **Choi** returned to Korea as the 'Director of Intelligence' for the Korean Army. It was the year of maturation for both **General Choi's** military career and also for Taekwon-Do, with his command of the largest training centres in Korea, and the growing strength of the Korea Taekwon-do Association with **Choi** as its President.

He assumed command of the Combat Armed Command, directing the infantry, artillery, armoured, signal and aviation schools.

He was also assigned command of the 6th Army Corps and the U.S Army's 7th Infantry Division thus becoming the first General in Korean history to exercise military control over foreign troops.

After the cessation of hostilities in 1953, **General Choi's** rise had continued, and in 1961 he supported the military coup d'état, but suffered a setback when **General Park Chung-Hee** emerged as the new president of South Korea. In the late 1940s, **Park** had received a death sentence, later rescinded, from a military panel that had included **Choi**, who was thus forced to retire from the military following the coup.

### 1962 - 64

In 1962, he was sent to Malaysia as Korean ambassador. As an ambassador, and now a retired 2-star General, **Choi** led a goodwill mission on tours of Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East. During the next few years, he led Taekwon-do demonstration teams throughout the world, as a result of which a Taekwon-Do association was formed in Malaysia in 1963, reaching national acceptance when the Art was demonstrated at the Merdeka Stadium at the request of the Prime Minister, **Tunku Abdul Rhaman**.

In the same year, two important milestones took place; the famous

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demonstration at the United Nations building in New York, and the introduction of Taekwon-Do to the Armed Forces of Vietnam under **Major Nam Tae Hee**.

In February 1964, the **Singapore Taekwon-Do Association** was formed and the groundwork laid for forming associations in the outer reaches of Brunei.

The Founder was also able to draw a clear line between Taekwon-Do and Karate by completely eliminating all the remaining terminology of Karate.

### 1965

**General Choi** started the spread of taekwondo by stationing Korean taekwondo instructors around the world. He also wrote the first English taekwondo book, ***Taekwon-Do, the Art of Self Defence***. It contained 20 Chang-Hon Patterns and 9 Karate Kata.

In 1965 The Founder, now retired from the Army, was appointed by the Government of the Republic of Korea to lead a goodwill mission to West Germany, Italy, Turkey, United Arab Republic (UAE), Malaysia, and Singapore. This trip is significant in that The Founder, for the first time in Korean history, declared Taekwon-Do as the National Martial Art of Korea.

### 1966

On the 22nd of March 1966, **General Choi Hong Hi** founded the **International Taekwon-Do Federation (I.T.F.)**, with Associations in Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, West Germany, the United States of America, Turkey, Italy, Arab Republic of Egypt and South Korea. General Choi was elected as first President of **ITF**.

The establishment of the **ITF** was of great significance in the history of Taekwon-Do. The art was taken up by several foreign armies, and was



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taught at West Point in America. During the Vietnam War, the Taekwon-Do training of Korean and other foreign soldiers was said to have had a demoralising effect on the Viet Cong.

Initially, the South Korean president Dr Rhee, having close ties to General Choi, had given General Choi's **ITF** limited support. However, the South Korean government wished to avoid North Korean influence on the martial art. Conversely, **ITF** president **Choi Hong-Hi** sought support for his **Chang Hon**-style of Taekwondo from all quarters, including North Korea. Because of both the resistance from the other *kwans*, and political disagreements about teaching Taekwondo in North Korea and unifying the whole Korean Peninsula, **Choi** had broken with the (South Korea) **KTA**, to establish the **International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)**— a separate governing body devoted to institutionalizing his **Chang Hon**-style of Taekwondo.

### 1971

In 1971, the South Korean president **Park Chung Hee** began to use Taekwon-Do as anti-communist political propaganda. **Choi** was fiercely against this.

### 1972/23

After his return to South Korea in 1965 **General Choi** had continued to find life under the **Park** regime so intolerable that in 1972 he left for Canada, going into exile in Canada after the South Korean government objected to his introduction of the martial art into North Korea.

He endured death threats from Korean Central Intelligence, attempts to kidnap him and attempts on his life by armed assassins. On one occasion his son and daughter were kidnapped and their lives threatened if **Choi** did not return to Korea. His response was 'I choose Taekwon-Do over my son'. They were freed.

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He moved the Headquarters of International Taekwon-Do Federation, with the unanimous consent of member countries, to Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

South Korea responded by forming a new organization, the **World Taekwon-Do Federation (WTF)**, based in Seoul, and withdrew its support for the ITF. The ITF continued to function as an independent federation, with headquarters in Toronto.

**General Choi** and a specially selected ITF Demonstration Team toured Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Far East. A total of 13 countries were visited and new ITF branches established in 5 of these countries. The tour was an overwhelming success with a total of more than 100,000 people watching the demonstration in Egypt alone.

The South Korea government, with the support of **KTA** and *Kukkiwon*, had formed the **World Taekwondo Federation (WTF**, renamed to **World Taekwondo** in 2017/18 because of another use of the initials) to promote the sporting side of *Kukki-Taekwondo*. WT competitions employ *Kukkiwon*-style Taekwondo which is now often referred to as WT-style Taekwondo, sport-style Taekwondo, or Olympic-style Taekwondo, though in reality the style is defined by the *Kukkiwon*, not WT. *Kukkiwon* now serves many of the functions previously served by the KTA, in terms of defining a government-sponsored unified martial art. *Kukkiwon* is based at 635 Yeoksam-dong in the Gangnam-gu district of Seoul, South Korea. Construction was completed in 1972, with the organization being officially named on 6 February 1973.

### 1974

**General Choi** continued to teach Taekwon-Do throughout the world, including North Korea, and in 1974 he organised the first Taekwon-Do world championships in Montreal, Canada. The event was opened by the Founder who formalised and set the foundation for the ITF Competition Rules. Later

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in this year **General Choi** led the 4th ITF Demonstration Team consisting of 10 of the world's top Instructors, to Jamaica, Curacao, Costa Rica, Colombia, Venezuela and Surinam.

### 1975

In 1975, Taekwon-Do had the privilege of being the first martial art to give a demonstration at the Sydney Opera House in New South Wales, Australia. **General Choi** also visited Greece and Sweden to conduct Seminars later in the year. In November he went to Holland to declare the opening of the First European Taekwon-Do Championships in Amsterdam.

### 1977

The Founder toured Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Japan. In a Tokyo interview the Founder publicly denounced the President of South Korea, **Park Jung Hee**, believing **Park** to be using **Choi's** Art for political gain.

### 1978

**General Choi** toured Malaysia, Pakistan, Kenya and South Africa. He also led an ITF Masters Demonstration Team to Sweden, Poland, Hungary and Yugoslavia. In September of the same year the Second World Taekwon-Do Championships were held in Oklahoma City, USA.

### 1979

The **All Europe Taekwon-Do Federation (AETF)** was formed in June 1979 in Oslo, Norway by **Master Rhee Ki Ha**. After this historic event **General Choi** toured Sweden, Denmark, West Germany, France and Greenland accompanied by **Masters Rhee Ki Ha** and **Khang Su Jong**. In November he led the 6th International Taekwon-Do demonstration team to Argentina.

### 1980

In his final years **Choi Hong-Hi** determined to return to North Korea. He introduced Taekwon-do there in 1980, and won further favour with the DPRK Government when he replaced the pattern '*Ko-dang*', named after a North Korean Democratic Christian (allegedly executed by the Red Army in 1946) to the pattern we know today as '*Juche*'. *Juche* is a philosophical idea of 'Self-reliance' - an isolationist view strongly followed by former North Korean Leader **Kim Il Sung**. Although **General Choi's** intention had been reconciliation towards his homeland, the South Korean Government unfortunately saw it as treasonous.

Accompanied by **Master Rhee Ki Ha** and fourteen second generation Senior Instructors (including his own son, **Choi Joong Hwa**), **Choi Hong-Hi** made a historic trip to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This was the first time Taekwon-Do was demonstrated to the people of North Korea. In November, the first **AETF** Championships were held in London, UK. Eighteen countries participated. (AE = All-Europe)

### 1981

In January of 1981, the Founder made his third visit to Australia, to open the First Pacific Taekwon-Do Championships in Queensland. During this visit he observed the formation of the **South Pacific Taekwon-Do Federation** and the **Australian Taekwon-Do Federation**. In June of the same year, the Founder led the 8th ITF Demonstration Team to Tokyo, Japan.

### 1983

**Choi** continued to develop the ITF-style, preparing for the publication of his 15-volume *Encyclopaedia of Taekwon-Do*. Note: written accounts can differ about dates. The 1985 date for the publication is often given as 1983, when the General was working towards publication.

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**General Choi** continued to promote Taekwon-Do globally with tours to Greenland, the United Kingdom, West Germany, Austria, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Finland. He also attended the **First Intercontinental Taekwon-Do** Championships held in Naples, Italy, and in January 1983 he visited Colorado, U.S.A to promote **Mr Charles E. Sereff**, President of **United States Taekwon-Do Federation, (USTF)** to 7th degree.

### 1984

In April 1984, General Choi declared the opening of the Fourth World Taekwon-Do Championships held in Glasgow, Scotland, U.K. In the same month, he visited the President of the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** in Lausanne, attempting to prove that only the ITF was the true world governing body of Taekwon-Do. In September, the Founder invited Senior ITF Instructors **Rhee Ki Ha**, **Lee Suk Hi**, **Park Jung Tae** and **Choi Joong Hwa** to Pyongyang, DPRK, to finalize the publication of the **Taekwon-Do Encyclopaedia**.

In the following month, **General Choi** visited New York City to declare open the 3rd annual **General Choi Cup** in North America. In December the **5th ITF Congress** meeting was held in Vienna, Austria. It was unanimously decided to relocate the **ITF** to Vienna by March of the next year. Also at the meeting, **Choi Hong Hi** was re-elected for another term as President.

### 1985

Without doubt, 1985 was one of the most significant years for the founder of Taekwon-Do as he finished the documentation of all of the techniques he had invented by publishing the first edition of the 15 volume **Encyclopaedia of Taekwon-Do**. He was also able to establish a strong foundation for the spreading of his art to the entire world, especially the socialist as well as the Third World countries by moving the **ITF** Headquarters to Vienna, the capital city of Austria. 1985 also marked the 30th anniversary of Taekwon-Do with celebratory events being held all around the world.

### 1987

1987 was a significant year for **General Choi** because he showed once again his indomitable spirit as well as perseverance by announcing the 5th World Championships in Athens, Greece, despite persistent interference from the South Korean Government. Later in this year the Founder attended the 20th Anniversary Dinner & Awards Ceremony of the **UKTA**.

### 1988

In 1988, the Founder participated in two important events. In May, the Hungarian Government hosted the 6th World Championships in Budapest and later in the year The Founder was at last able to realise a final long-standing wish, to introduce and teach his art to the Soviet Union by leading an **ITF** Demonstration Team to Moscow. With this move he completed the final chapter in his bid to see his beloved Art established around the world.

### 1999

In a 1999 interview for **The Times** in Britain, General Choi answered the question 'How did the patterns of TAEKWON-DO come about?' with:

“When the Japanese invaded Korea they tried to remove the Korean nationality. You could not go to school and be educated if you were not Japanese. I was left a man with no country and therefore no national pride. The Patterns of TAEKWON-DO represent the history of Korea from time in legend to this century. The propagation of TAEKWON-DO throughout the world has also enabled, through the patterns, a small part of Korean history to be learned by its practitioners. A part of Korea therefore now exists across the whole world and Korea’s nationality and history can never be removed by oppressors again.”

As **General Choi** himself wrote:

“On the spiritual level, Taekwon-Do is derived from the traditional, ethical and moral principles of the Orient and, of course from my personal philosophy. Even though I am only five feet tall, I pride myself on having lived in strict accordance with moral convictions. I have tried to fight on the side of justice without fear of any kind. I believe that this was possible for me only because of the formidable power and indomitable spirit instilled by Taekwon-Do.”

### The 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**General Choi Hong-Hi** died on 15 June 2002 in Pyongyang, DPR of Korea, where he received a state funeral in the **Patriotic Martyrs' Cemetery**. Since 1986, this national cemetery is reserved for people who contributed to the “liberation of the country” and “socialist construction”. Here lie many veterans of the Korean independence movement, army and national officials, and outstanding citizens in the fields of science, medicine, and literature.

He is remembered as the founder and champion of taekwondo. He is listed in the Taekwondo Hall of Fame with various titles: **‘Father of Taekwon-Do’**, **‘Founder and First President of the International Taekwon-Do Federation’**, and **‘Founder of Oh Do Kwan’**.

Shortly before his death, Choi announced on the ITF website, ‘I am the man who has the most followers in the world.’ The impact of Taekwon-Do, with 50 million practitioners after 50 years of existence, is undeniable.

### In Summary

The oldest governing body for Taekwondo is the **Korea Taekwon-Do Association (KTA)**, formed in 1959 through a collaborative effort by representatives from the nine original *kwans*, or martial arts schools, in Korea. The main international organisational bodies for Taekwondo today are the **International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)**, founded by **Choi Hong-Hi** in 1966, and the partnership of the *Kukkiwon* and **World Taekwondo (WT)**, (formerly **World Taekwondo Federation** or **WTF**). *Gyeonggi* a type of full-contact sparring, has been an Olympic event since 2000. In 2018, the South Korean government officially designated Taekwondo as Korea's national martial art.



Today, Korean martial arts are being practised worldwide; more than one in a hundred of the world's population practises some form of Taekwondo. Among the best recognized Korean practices using weapons are traditional Korean archery and *Kumdo*, the Korean adaptation of the Japanese *Kendo*. The best known unarmed Korean martial arts are *Taekwondo* and *Hapkido*, though such traditional practices such as *ssireum* - Korean Wrestling - and *Taekkyon* - Korean Foot Fighting - are rapidly gaining in popularity both inside and outside the country. In November 2011, *Taekkyon* was recognized by UNESCO and placed on its **Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity List**. There has also been a revival of traditional swordsmanship.

The **International Taekwon-Do Federation** has developed rapidly over past decades overcoming all difficulties since its foundation. It has now expanded and developed into a huge international organization with 50 million practitioners in 128 member countries.



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All Koreans owe a debt of gratitude to **General Choi Hong Hi** who created Taekwon-Do and founded the **ITF** as its first President, then dedicated his life to spreading Taekwon-Do globally, which put Korea on the map as well as giving Korea a complimentary face to the world.

All Taekwon-Do students also owe a debt to **General Choi**, as without him there would not be our Korean Martial Art, Taekwon-Do.

**Choi Hong-Hi** is perhaps the Korean name that not only has the widest global recognition, but it can be stated that perhaps no other individual Korean has ever done more to teach the world about Korea, its customs, culture and history. One of the tactics he used to accomplish this was to name the Korean Taekwon-Do Patterns or *Tuls* after great Korean Patriots, significant events in Korea's history or themes/spirit of the Korean people. He did this consciously, as he felt it would ensure that any invading or occupying foreign force could never eradicate Korea's history, as it would be disseminated internationally through his Original Taekwon-Do.

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We are told that **Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do** is named after the pseudonym or pen name of **General Choi Hong-Hi**, who developed this set of patterns.

Worldwide, there are many martial art clubs who are proud to teach and practise **Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do**, following **General Choi Hong-Hi**, using his *Encyclopaedia* as their handbook and rejecting changes. So there are thousands of students around the world who study, respect and honour the martial art **Taekwon-Do** using the **Chang-Hon** system. The question arises frequently, where does the name '**Chang-Hon**' come from? The literal translation of the Korean words is '*blue cottage*'.

## Pseudonyms – A Digression

In our culture, some might be given nicknames based on physical characteristics (Pine Tree / Colin Mead, Piggy Muldoon), or a version of their actual name ('Chippy' for C Hipkins, a Mr Beveridge I knew who was always called 'Grog'). Pseudonyms or Pen-names are sometimes adopted by writers whose real names are for some reason unsuitable. Such as the sisters **Charlotte, Emily and Anne Brontë**, who published their poetry and novels using the names **Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell**, as women were not permitted to publish in 19<sup>th</sup> Century England. The writer **Lewis Carroll** was really **Charles Lutwidge Dodgson**, a scholar and instructor at Oxford University, who valued his privacy and his reputation, and feared that being known as the author of ***Alice in Wonderland*** would change his quiet life. **J.K. Rowling** is **Joanne Rowling** (no middle name), but her name was given as **J.K.** because her publishers thought that young boys wouldn't choose to read a female author. And she used the name **Robert Galbrath** to write books of crime fiction, so there would be none of the hype and expectations that the ***Harry Potter*** books had brought her.

But our European use of pseudonyms is irrelevant to Korean usage.

We need to understand a little about Korean names. A Korean name comprises first a family name (which we call the surname), usually followed by a middle name which would be the same for all of a wide family in the same generation (so it would be the same for your siblings and your cousins), and then finally a given name. A person would be known to all but his closest associates only by the surname. The given name (we call it the 'first name' but for Koreans it is last) would be used only by family and close friends.

Many Koreans used pen names or pseudonyms (as you can see by the names of some of our ITF patterns)

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***Do-San*** for **Ahn Chang-Ho**

***Yul-Gok*** for **Yi-I**

***Choong-Moo*** was the name meaning ‘Loyalty-Chivalry’ given posthumously to **Yi Soon-Sin**

***Po-Eun*** for **Chong Mong-Chu**

***Eui-Am*** for **Son Byong Hi**

***Choong-Jang*** for **Kim Duk Ryang**

***Ko-Dang*** for **Cho Man Shik**

***So-San*** for **Choi Hyong Ung**

***Toi-Gye*** for **Yi Hwang**

The only pseudonym for which we have been given a reason is for ***Do San***: **Ahn Chang-Ho** worked towards Korean independence from Japan all his life. When he was 27 he emigrated to USA and as his ship approached Hawaii he resolved to stand tall against the sea of turmoil which was engulfing Korea, so he called himself ***Do-San***, meaning ‘Island Mountain’. He formed groups of Koreans in USA, and then back in Korea, to strive for freedom for his country.

From our 25 patterns named for inspiring historical figures, 9 used pseudonyms or pen names: a large proportion. And even the President Dr Rhee signed his calligraphy accepting the name Taekwon-Do with his pen-name **U-Nam**.

Perhaps because in Korea there are relatively few surnames (the first part of a Korean name). Just three surnames, namely **Park**, **Lee**, and **Kim** are used by over half of the Korean population.

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In English-speaking nations, **Park** is often transcribed as **Pak**, **Bak** and **Bahk**. **Lee** and **Rhee** are both common spellings for the same name, **Lee** in South Korea or **Rhee** in the North. In South Korea, the pronunciation of the name is simply the English vowel sound for a long e, as in 'see'. This pronunciation is often spelled as **Yi**. When speaking, **Gim** is more likely to be understood correctly than **Kim**.

The question arises, why would **Choi Hong-Hi** have, or choose, the pen-name **Chang-Hon** (also written **Chang-Huhn** or **Chang-Heon** or **Chang Hon**) which means '*blue cottage*'? Perhaps merely because the spoken words of his name **Choi Hong** and **Chang Hon** have a similar sound? And as the Korean Hangeul alphabet comprises symbols depicting pronunciation, the words also have a similar appearance when written.

**Choi Hong** 최홍 **Chang Hon** 창훈 or **Chang Huhn** 창훈

Did the pen name arise from a slip in the calligraphy brush or a mis-reading? A mis-pronunciation or mis-hearing? Or a conscious choice by the General? But if that, then why '*blue cottage*'?

Incidentally, the name **Blue Cottage** has been adopted as the title for one of the Taekwon-Do clubs in USA. On their website, they write:

“At **Blue Cottage Taekwon-Do** our mission is to maintain the integrity and the original concepts that our founder **General Choi Hong Hi** intended. Our name is derived from the founder of Taekwon-Do's pen name, **Chang Huhn** meaning *Blue Cottage*. What is *Blue Cottage* martial art? He developed his own curriculum for teaching Martial Art, using his pen name of **Chang Heon**, **Chang Hon** or **Chang Huhn - Blue Cottage**”.

No other explanation for the name is given.

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Searching for an explanation or reference to anything like a *'blue cottage'* in the history of the General brought only one possibility – the place of an important meeting. *'The Blue House'* – home and office of the President of South Korea, Dr Rhee.

*Cheong Wa Dae* (Korean: 청와대 literally 'Cyan-tile Pavilion'), also known as the **Blue House** after the blue tiling on the roof, served as the executive office and official residence of the president of South Korea from 1948 to 2022. It is located in a public park in the Jongno district of the South Korean capital Seoul. It was here that **General Choi** had to approach **Dr. Rhee** with his proposal that Taekwon-do be the unified Korean martial art. His proposal



was accepted in 1955, but later, with a new president of South Korea, and with increasing opposition to **General Choi's** spreading of his Taekwon-do to North Korea and to the rest of the world, South Korea turned against him. The thought arises that perhaps *'blue cottage'* was chosen as a disparaging belittling of the power held in the **Blue House**. We can only guess.

So Taekwon-Do was used officially since 1955 (and note that even the President of South Korea used a pen name **U-Nam**.) We must accept and honour **Chang-Hon** as an accepted and respected name, without further searches for its origin.

We have seen KTA and ITF and WT split apart for political reasons. And seen ITF spreading around the world and taking on names denoting place such as

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United Kingdom Taekwon-Do Association, All-European International Taekwon-Do Federation, Australian Taekwon-do Federation, Taekwon-Do Association of Malaysia etc. Since his death there have been more offshoots. Some were started by those who had travelled with the General and wanted to continue spreading his knowledge, skills, and passions. Perhaps some were wanting to be seen as the rightful heir and the new leader. They sometimes decided on a new title for their version, with the title indicating their hopes for the future. 'World', 'Worldwide', 'Unified'. Sometimes they introduced changes in techniques or in priorities.

Throughout the world, many Taekwon-Do clubs follow not only the patterns, but also the ethics, of **General Choi**. They use the General's Encyclopaedia as their basis, following the patterns, the ranking order, the methodology of the techniques and, especially, the moral culture. They often stress this by using '**Chang-Hon**' as part of the club name, or as the main description of their aims and methods.

It is often said that **Chang-Hon** clubs aim to put the '**Do**' back in Taekwon-Do. As Taekwon-Do' means literally "foot, hand, way", **Do** means the way, the path to be followed.

Taekwon-do clubs which follow the Chang-Hon patterns and ethics often break away from the organisation of the bigger Federations and either practise alone or find other similar clubs and share seminars, gradings and training camps with them. A sharing of skills and needs, and always adhering to the patterns and ethics as laid down by **General Choi Hong-Hi**.

**Grand Master J. Cariarti** had travelled with **General Choi Hong-Hi**, and continued to travel, to teach, and to encourage mostly in Venezuela, the U.K., Malaysia and Canada. He was instrumental in setting up the **International Chang-Hon Taekwon-do Federation (ICTF)**, dedicated to the practice and teachings of Taekwon-Do as they were originally developed and taught by

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the founder, **General Choi Hong Hi**. **Choi** had created Taekwon-Do with no international or political boundaries, and students were encouraged to experience other *do jangs* and styles. The ICTF holds true to these teachings, all members are free to experience every opportunity available. The ICTF also welcomes any style or organization to attend its events and share the knowledge – to the betterment of everyone.

There is also the **Chan-Hun International Taekwon Do Federation (CHITF)** with world headquarters in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.

In all of these clubs, friendly groups, affiliations and Federations, the students not only learn the techniques and method of Taekwon-Do but also learn to follow the traditions and values as they were taught by the founder himself.

The Masters, instructors and students are all motivated by the same passion for Taekwon-do and its values. The indomitable spirit that the founder expressed is alive today and is pursued vigorously. Between all these groups, a strong sense of shared values and mutual respect is clearly evident. Of course, competition at the local and international level can be vigorous. However, it is the shared teachings of the fundamental and advanced techniques of Taekwon-do that our Masters provide that bring us together.

Most important to us here in New Zealand is the loose affiliation set up by **Master Neill Livingstone QSM**, founder and chief instructor of the Taranaki Taekwon-Do club in New Plymouth, New Zealand. An affiliation of clubs holding to the principles of **Chang-Hon Taekwon-do**.

Note: as a keen black belt, and the Midland Regional Director for New Zealand's ITKD (originally ITFNZ) group, **Neill Livingstone** was able to train twice with **General**



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**Choi Hong Hi** himself, at seminars in New Zealand in the 1990s. That left a lasting impression on him.

He learned a lot, but became disillusioned as he saw the ITKD group as a whole seemed to be oriented towards tournaments and medals, fund-raising for the elite rather than catering for the ordinary student. He felt that the General himself had set up Taekwon-Do as a social tool, to be a major part of the life of every student, no matter what their abilities or disabilities.

In 1993 he started a club in New Plymouth, in Taranaki, New Zealand, and took groups of students to tournaments around the country, but as a 4<sup>th</sup> degree black belt and still disillusioned, he decided he had a choice – to give up martial arts completely, or to leave ITKD and work alone, following the Encyclopaedia and aiming to do the best for his students. His aim to bring out the best in all, not just the tournament elite, can be demonstrated by the enthusiastic reception for the weekend events he organised in New Plymouth **Minis and Masters** (for under 10 and over 30 year olds), held in 2003, 2004, and 2005, and for the 2004 seminar **First Dan Fever**, for all first Dans. With some trepidation, he and the Taranaki Taekwon-Do club left ITKD.

As his student Kirsten Livingstone put it “After Taranaki Taekwon-Do became an independent club, we needed to be affiliated to someone who could perform senior Dan gradings. **Worldwide Taekwon-Do** with **Master Jamie Moore** in Australia seemed to be the best fit at the time. In June 2007 Master Moore came over to conduct Mr. Livingstone’s 5<sup>th</sup> Dan grading.” Groups of Taranaki black belts went to several seminars and gradings in Australia.

A loose affiliation of New Zealand Taekwon-Do clubs, Whangarei, Botany and New Plymouth joined him in **WWTKD**, encouraged by open seminars and camps. Two **Tul Tours** to Korea were a highlight, with enthusiasts from other countries as well as other clubs in New Zealand joining the Taranaki group. They all became like-minded friends in Taekwon-Do. Unfortunately a newcomer’s ego forced a division from **WWTKD** but respect and friendship



## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

remains with many **WW** adherents. The Taranaki club became a member group of **ITFHQ** in Korea and has many good friends there.

Taekwon-Do means foot-hand-way. 'Do' is the way, the path. Not just the method or the techniques of self-defence, but the way of life. Building a more peaceful world. Following the tenets of Taekwon-do, leading to respect for other, inclusivity for all others regardless of physical difficulties, injuries, size or age. Never political or commercial.

**Master Neill Livingstone** wrote:

**Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do New Zealand** is a network of like-minded clubs and individuals who practise and teach **General Choi Hong-Hi's** Legacy. We are not an official organisation, but rather clubs and individuals who work together in a collaborative manner. In saying this we do have a structure that allows us to be proactive in maintaining high standards while supporting each other with knowledge and experience. The relationship between all involved is built on mutual respect while following the student oath and the Taekwon-Do tenets.

We are very passionate about the art of Taekwon-Do and have a wealth of knowledge that we are very willing to share. We get together regularly for technical seminars, camps and gradings. Gup and Dan gradings are conducted by our appointed grading panel. We have many friendships with other organisations, clubs and individuals that we respect and love working with as friends.

**Here at Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do** all instructors and clubs have a common goal in teaching the art of Taekwon-Do as created by **General Choi Hong Hi**. Keeping his legacy alive. We also conduct a National Seminar & Master Class each year where all the clubs can get together for training, Instructor development, socialising and having fun

## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

**New Zealand Chang-Hon Taekwon-do** founding member instructors and clubs based in New Zealand, under **Master Neill Livingstone QSM**

<b>Master Neill Livingstone</b>	Taranaki Taekwon-Do club, New Plymouth
<b>Master Kirsten Livingstone</b>	EmPowerU club in New Plymouth
<b>David Ferrington IV Dan</b>	New Lynn Taekwon-do, Auckland
<b>Luke Deane III Dan</b>	Seddon Taekwon-do, Seddon
<b>Victor Coda IV Dan</b>	Hurupaki Club, Whangarei
<b>Matthew Kennett II Dan</b>	Invercargill Taekwon-Do club, Invercargill

### Taranaki Taewon-Do

**Taranaki Taekwon-Do** club currently has 15 black belts training regularly, and referring to the Encyclopaedia to answer any questions. There is a wealth of knowledge, and **Master Livingstone** is keen to share it with others, in the Chang-Hon style. He shared seminars with (and respects) the **Unified** group in Australia, but is still searching to follow the true **Do** as described by the General. He developed the concept of free and willing interaction and co-operation between clubs which became **Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do**.



The full class trains twice a week, black belts 3 times, and the kids' class once. Over the years we have forged many friendships both here in New Zealand and from around the world. We have enjoyed many seminars, camps, tournaments etc. with these Taekwon-Do practitioners.

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We are a member group of **ITFHQ** Korea and many of our black belts have participated in **TUL TOURS** in South Korea, in 2015 & 2019 and are planning another Tul Tour in 2024. We have many good friends within ITKD in various clubs here in New Zealand and Australia.



There are many Taekwon-Do federations now since the passing of the General. Too many to count. Unity is a dream of many but it seems that it will never happen because of politics and money. At Taranaki Taekwon-Do we stay loyal to the general by teaching the Chang-Hon style of Taekwon-do and using the 15 volume encyclopaedia as a reference.

Each year we try and invite different Masters to New Zealand to share their expertise with us. Unfortunately due to Covid this could not happen for a couple of years but we are now able to connect again.

## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

In October 2022 a Senior Dan Grading was held in New Plymouth, with examiners and seminar facilitators Senior Master Burn of Australia and Master Neill Livingstone, and Special Guest David McCorkindale IV Dan.



## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

Five students graded to 1<sup>st</sup> Dan, three to 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan, five to 3<sup>rd</sup>, two to 4<sup>th</sup>, two to 5<sup>th</sup>, one to 6<sup>th</sup>, and one to 7<sup>th</sup> (Master Kirsten Livingstone.) Students and instructors from Taranaki, Empower-U, Seddon, Whangarei and Australia made it an exciting day.



### EmpowerU Taekwon-Do



Kirsten Livingstone, a student of Taranaki Taekwon-Do since 1993, and now **Master Kirsten Livingstone**, wrote: “I remember my first grading. From white to yellow belt. As we were such a small club, we had to travel to Palmerston North. We all travelled down in 2 cars for a very daunting experience. There were approximately 100 people grading from around the Palmerston North area. All ranks, sizes and ages. I remember getting called up after a long wait, I performed Chon-Ji, said the pattern meaning, and that was that. Because of the sheer numbers, our time on the floor was very limited. It seemed like a very long way to go for 5 minutes on the floor, but that’s how it was.

A memorable event was meeting General Choi, Master Serriff VIII and Master McCullum VII in January 1996 at an International Instructors Course in Auckland. I was only a red belt at the time so only got to participate on day 1 but was enthralled watching over the rest of the weekend. It was an amazing honour to meet General Choi who signed my red belt.

I reached 1st Dan on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1996. John Bevin and I were the Taranaki Taekwon-Do club’s first black belts. We travelled to Auckland for the grading and were graded by Mr. Paul McPhail V Dan, and Mr. Evan Davidson V Dan.

## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

With so many events around the country, the cost was getting out of hand to attend all these events so I said to Mr Livingstone that we should hold some events in New Plymouth. Free or as cheap as we can so people from all over the country can attend. Some of the events we put on over the years were: Nov 2002 National Epson under 18 tournaments; May 2003 National Women's Weekend; October 2003, 2004, 2005 Minis and Masters tournament; July 2004 First Dan Fever.

In 2004 I graded to 4<sup>th</sup> Dan in Rotorua. It was quite a big deal, as it was the first time the new Masters Mr McPhail and Davidson were grading their NZ students rather than getting in an International Instructor from overseas. This was my last grading within the ITFNZ system, as we then left to become independent not long after. In 2022 I graded to Master in New Plymouth, with Master Neill Livingstone and Master Neville Burn from Australia.

In 2015 I had set up EmpowerU to teach self-defence classes to women and girls, in schools, gyms, and businesses, including the Port Security teams and Customs Officers. My main point of difference was being a female. This was my main message. "Teaching self defence from a woman's perspective". Many women who have been physically or emotionally abused wanted self defence but felt unsafe, threatened, or anxious about a male taking the class.

In 2018, I started the **EmpowerU Taekwon-Do** club and now have about 25 members. I travel to seminars and attend some training sessions with the Taranaki Taekwon-Do club. I would love to encourage more cross training between Taranaki Taekwon-Do and EmpowerU Taekwon-Do. Perhaps having mini tournaments or competitions in the future. Even better would be inter-club competitions within the Chang Hon group.

As for me, I am happy instructing and passing on General Choi's Legacy. Growing Taekwon-Do in Taranaki, New Zealand and the World.



## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

I am very privileged to carry on the teachings of General Choi. Opening my club is the best thing I did in the development of my Taekwon-Do. I love teaching and it's fantastic to have the opportunity to do so."



Taekwon

**Master Kirsten Livingstone**



## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

From **David Ferrington**, New Lynn Taekwon-do

In 2014, **Master Livingstone** approached New Lynn Taekwon-do with an invitation to join **Chang-Hon TKD**, a newly formed organisation focused on collaboration and independence. Without hesitation, the club accepted the invitation and joined **Chang-Hon**, becoming a founding member.

Prior to joining Chang-Hon, New Lynn Taekwon-do was part of **WorldWide TKD**, with the Taranaki club. However, the opportunity to create a more formal, independent organisation that fostered collaboration and recognised gradings and events was too good to pass up. It was a decision that the club has never regretted.

The success of **Chang-Hon** is a testament to the power of collaboration and the value of independence. By working together, clubs within the organisation can achieve more than they ever could on their own. At the same time, by maintaining their independence, each club can continue to offer the unique approach and character that makes them special.

One of the benefits of being a part of **Chang-Hon TKD** is that the organization provides opportunities for training with high-level instructors. The organization also provides opportunities for training camps and seminars, which allow members to train with different instructors and learn new techniques.

For **New Lynn Taekwon-do**, being a part of **Chang-Hon** has been a wonderful experience. The club has grown and improved, thanks in part to the resources and support of other clubs within the organisation. The collaborative spirit of **Chang-Hon** has fostered a sense of community and shared purpose that extends beyond the club itself.



## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

New Lynn Taekwon-do and Chang-Hon TKD share a commitment to excellence and growth, and the club is proud to be a part of the organization. Through collaboration and a commitment to fostering community, the organization continues to grow and thrive.



**David Ferrington, New Lynn Taekwon-do, Auckland**

## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

**Seddon Taekwon-Do** – from an article in the Awatere & Flaxbourne News, April '22

Luke Deane believes in giving back to the community he grew up in. Four years ago, as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Dan black belt, he started the Seddon Taekwon-Do club. Luke said he never intended to start a club but when he was approached to help local youth with self-defence lessons. "It just sort of happened. My enjoyment comes from helping people and giving young people confidence in life. Taekwon-Do is a military art so it is quite strict, but very rewarding. It teaches courtesy, integrity, perseverance and self-control which are vital skills as you become an adult."



**Luke Dean, Seddon**



### **Seminar & Master Class, Seddon 2022**

Now the club regularly attracts 20-25 students and recently hosted a seminar facilitated by one of the country's top instructors, which was

## Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do

attended by 45 TKD exponents from clubs based in Whangarei, Auckland, Taranaki, Nelson, Blenheim and, of course, Seddon.

Headlining the seminar/master class was TKD master Neill Livingstone from Taranaki, a 7<sup>th</sup> Dan black belt. Luke says it was quite a coup to get someone of Neill's stature involved, who can provide top-level tuition in technique and also inspire those around him. Instructors and students from Whangarei, Auckland, Taranaki, Blenheim, Seddon and Invercargill attended.

**Victor Coda** – from Hurupaki Club, Whangarei

Although Whangarei is a long way from New Plymouth, and a **very** long way from Seddon, Victor joins all our shared activities, is a friend to all, and runs excellent workshops, especially in self-defence from weapons.



Victor Coda running a workshop in Seddon.

# Chang-Hon Taekwon-Do



General Choi Hong-Hi

