

The Kwans of Taekwondo:

And how they relate to today

By: Mr. Paul Schaeffner

November 23, 2013

Contents

The Kwans of Taekwondo	3
Song Moo Kwan	3
Chung Do Kwan	4
Moo Duk Kwan	4
Kwon Bop Bu / Chang Moo Kwan	6
Yun Moo Kwan / Jidokwan	7
But How Does This Relate Today???	8
Korean Taekwondo Association	8
International TaeKwonDo Federation	8
World Taekwondo Federation	9
Taekwondo in the United States	10
American Taekwondo Association (ATA)	10
United Taekwondo Federation (UTF) and Global Taekwondo Alliance (GTA) ..	11

The Kwans of Taekwondo

Those who know the History of TaeKwonDo, realize that it is a fairly modern martial art. General Choi Hong-Hi was credited with creating Taekwondo in the year 1957, but its roots began long before the name existed. In pursuing this history, we need to understand the word itself. **Kwan** (Hanja: 館; Hangul: 관) in Korean literally means building or hall, but when used in martial arts it can also refer to a school or clan of martial artists, who follow the same style and/or leader.

In its origin, TaeKwonDo has five Kwans, which was followed by an additional four. These Kwans were Song Moo Kwan, Chung Do Kwan, Moo Duk Kwan, Kwon Bop Bu / Chang Moo Kwan, and Yun Moo Kwan / Jidokwan. Below is a short history of each Kwan.

Song Moo Kwan

Song Moo Kwan was founded March 11, 1944 by Byung Jick Ro. The name, Song Moo Kwan, means “Ever Youthful House of Martial Arts Training”. Some also know it as “the House of the Wavering Pines”, which draws from the Japanese meaning. (Center, Our Traditions, 2013). Ro began his martial arts journey through studying Shotokan (Song Do Kwan) karate along with Chung Do Kwan founder Won Kyuk Lee under Gichin Funakoshi in Japan, (beginning in 1936). After receiving his black belt in Shotokan, he began instructing, (while also adding moves of his own). He returned to Korea in February of 1944 and opened the Kaesung Dojang on March 11, 1944.

Several months later the school was closed due to Japanese occupation after World War II. He re-opened the school on May 2, 1946, but again, had to close due to the Korean War. (World Song Moo Kwan Association, 2013) In the 1960s Ro's son and eventual successor, Ro Hee Sang began studying Hapkido in 1963 and Northern Shaolin Kung Fu in 1967. He (Ro, Hee Sang) subsequently became an instructor to the Korean Army and one of Korea's Taekwondo champions. He trained Karate, Hapkido, Kumdo and Northern Shaolin Kung Fu (Center, 2013).

Chung Do Kwan

Chung Do Kwan was founded in 1944 by Won Kyuk Lee. The name Chung Do Kwan means, "The School of the Blue Waves." This represents a youthful spirit and vitality, (Shaw, 2001). He began his martial arts journey, in 1926 at the age of nineteen, by training in Shotokan Karate, under Gichin Funakoshi, at Chuo University, in Japan. Lee eventually returned to Korea and began teaching the martial arts in September of 1944. The location of his Kwan was at the Yong Shin School in the Suh Dae Moon Gu section of Seoul (Shaw, 2001).

In 1951, due to his age, Won Kuk Lee asked Duk Sung Son to take over as the Grandmaster of the studio. What is interesting to note is that Duk Sung Son was the instructor who signed General Choi's promotion certificate promoting him to 4th degree. After the liberation of Korea, the Chung Do Kwan had risen to become the 2nd biggest Taekwondo organization in Korea.

Moo Duk Kwan

The name Moo Duk Kwan means "House of Discipline" or "School of Martial Virtue" and implies a place of dedication (Chappell, 2013). Moo Duk Kwan was founded on November 9, 1945 by Hwang Kee. Master Kee started his journey in a similar manner to many modern martial artists. He was unable to train under any master early in life, so his training consisted of spying on students practicing an art called Taekkyon, and then copying their moves on his own. Taekkyon is a Chinese name whose characters translate to "Shoulder Push". It is believed to be the oldest Korean Martial Art, still in existence.

In May 1936, he began training in Kung Fu under Yang Kuk Jin in Manchuria (Kee, 1995). In August 1937, Kee returned to Korea where he claims he learned the philosophy of Okinawan Karate from Gichin Funakoshi's books. This became the foundation that later influenced Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan and is evidenced in the Pyung Ahn forms as well as Bassai and Kong Sang Kun (Terrigno, 2007).

His first two attempts at running a school of Hwa Soo Do were unsuccessful due to the unpopularity of its name. He then met Won Kyuk Lee at the Chung Do Kwan, and combined the Japanese techniques into his Kung Fu to create Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan. In 1957, Kee made a discovery of Soo Bahk, a true Korean martial art, in a 300 year old text called the "Moo Yei Do Bo Tong Ji". Kee developed the Soo Bahk system to be studied through the Moo Duk Kwan. He chose the name Soo Bahk Do, a derivative of Soo Bahk Ki, hand striking technique, and Soo Bahk Hee, hand striking dance, which were detailed in the "Moo Yei Do Bo Tong Ji" (Terrigno, 2007). In 1960, the Korean Soo Bahk Do Association was incorporated and officially registered with the

Korean government as a traditional Korean martial art. The following year, the Moo Duk Kwan discipline was recognized internationally for the first time.

Kwon Bop Bu / Chang Moo Kwan

Kwon Bop Bu / Chang Moo Kwan was founded in 1946 by Yoon, Byung-In. Yoon, Byung-In had studied Chinese Kung Fu (ch'uan-fa) under the guidance of a Mongolian instructor in Manchuria, while in grade school. Later, Yoon had the opportunity to go to college in Japan. During this time he trained in karate, at the university karate club, with Kanken Tōyama. Another of the Korean students had a confrontation with a group of Japanese students regarding a girl. The Japanese karate students pursued the Korean student and beat him up. Yoon Byung-in became angered, from the Japanese karate students, and sprang into action using Ch'uan-fa. He skillfully deflected and evaded the karate students' strikes and kicks to the point that they gave up and ran back to tell their teacher about what happened. Sensei Kanken Tōyama invited Yoon Byung-in to talk about his skill at Ch'uan-fa. Toyama appreciated the Ch'uan-fa background since he (Toyama) had personally studied Ch'uan-fa in Taiwan for 7 years. They decided to exchange knowledge; Yoon Byung-in taught Toyama Kanken Ch'uan-fa and Toyama Kanken taught Yoon Byung-in his Shudo-Ryu karate. By the time Yoon left the University, he had been promoted to 4th Dan in Shudo-Ryu Karate (Soo, 2013).

Yoon moved to South Korea and began teaching karate and Ch'uan-fa, at the Cho-Sun Central YMCA. Later he created his art and called it Kwon Bop Kong Soo Do. Unlike other taekwondo Kwans, early Chang Moo Kwan was mainly based on Chinese Kung Fu (ch'uan-fa).

Most records show that Yoon went missing during the Korean War, but one source, (Kim Soo Karate), states that he was later released from a North Korean POW camp and forced to live out the rest of his life in North Korea.

His teachings were carried on by his top student Lee Nam Suk, who changed the name of the school to Chang Moo Kwan. 10th Dan Grandmaster Soon Bae Kim is currently the President of Song Moo Kwan and is one of two Kukkiwon 10th Dans in charge of Kukkiwon testing.

Yun Moo Kwan / Jidokwan

Yun Moo Kwan / Jidokwan was founded March 3, 1946 by Sang Sup Chun. Its name translates as "School of Wisdom", "The Way of Wisdom" or "The Right Way" (Taekwondo, 2013). Chun began his journey by studying Judo, while in grade school (Lee, 1999). He later attended Dong Yang Chuck Sik (Takushoku) College in Japan. While in Japan, he studied Shotokan karate under Master Gichin Funakoshi.

Chun Sup Sang had a very close relationship with Yoon Byung-In, founder of Kwon Bop Bu. Chun and Yoon traveled to train together and with other martial artists. They trained with each other so much that they became known as brothers and the two Kwans became known as "Brother Kwans" (Lee, 1999). The full name of this Kwan was "Cho-Sun Yun Moo Kwan Kong Soo Do Bu"

Chun went missing during the Korean War and was never heard from again. Subsequently, this Kwan voted to change its name to Jidokwan. After Chun disappeared in the Korean War, the original students of Chun voted Master Yon Kwai Byeong who trained in Ch'uan-Fa in Manchuria as Jidokwan 1st President (Lee, 1999).

But How Does This Relate to Today???

The Kwans united in 1955 as Tae Soo Do. In the beginning of 1957, the name Taekwondo was adopted by several Korean martial arts masters, for its similarity to the name Tae Kyon. (Nauta, 2012). The primary Korean Taekwondo Associations, found today, are the Korean Taekwondo Association (KTA), the International TaeKwonDo Federation (ITF) and the World TaeKwonDo Federation (WTF).

Korean Taekwondo Association

The Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) is the National Governing Body for Taekwondo in the Republic of Korea (ROK), just like the United States Taekwondo Union (USTU) is the National Governing Body for Taekwondo in the United States of America. (Nauta, 2012). Although the KTA still remains the main governing body of Taekwondo, the KTA officially became the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) in 1973.

International TaeKwonDo Federation

Technically, 1955 signaled the beginning of Taekwondo as a formally recognized art in Korea. During that year, a special board was formed which included leading master instructors, historians, and prominent leaders of society. A number of names for the new martial art were submitted. On the 11th of April, the board summoned by Gen.

Choi Hong Hi, decided on the name of Taekwondo which had been submitted by him. This single unified name of Taekwondo replaced the different and confusing terms; Dang Soo, Gong Soo, Taek Kyon, Kwon Bup, etc. (Linhart, 2012)

In 1959, Taekwondo spread beyond its national boundaries. The father of Taekwondo and nineteen of his top black belt holders toured the Far East. The tour was a major success, astounding all spectators with the excellence of the Taekwondo techniques. In this year, Choi was elevated to two illustrious posts; President of his newly formed Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) and deputy commander of the 2nd Army in Tae Gu (Linhart, 2012).

Seven years later, due to a goodwill demonstration in North Korea, General Choi was viewed with disgrace by the South Korean President. General Choi stepped down and resigned his position in the KTA. Due to this set-back, he formed a new organization. On March 22, 1966, the International Taekwondo Federation, as currently recognized, was officially formed (Linhart, 2012).

At that time, nine countries were involved: Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, West Germany, USA, Turkey, Italy, and Egypt. Taekwondo is now taught in almost every country in the world, (Federation, 2013).

World Taekwondo Federation

Demonstrations were given all over the world and it took a while before real progress was made. Eventually, in 1973, the World Taekwondo Federation (W.T.F.) was founded. In 1980, W.T.F. Taekwondo was recognized by the International Olympic

Committee (I.O.C.) and became a demonstration sport at the Olympics in 1988. In the year 2000 taekwondo made its debut as an official Olympic sport. (Nauta, 2012).

While looking at both the ITF and the WTF, a common viewpoint is often made. The ITF emphasizes the ability of a person to defend himself against attacks so it incorporates all areas of self-defense. The WTF, on the other hand, emphasizes the element of sports and competition, (M., 2011). So in comparison, the ITF tends to represent more schools aimed at forms and self-defense, and the WTF schools tend to be more focused on sparring / tournaments.

The Kukkiwon Headquarters also known as World Taekwondo Headquarters is the home of WTF Taekwondo. The *Kukkiwon Headquarters* in *Gangnam-Gu* were established in 1972 to promote Taekwondo worldwide, organize national and international taekwondo competitions and train Taekwondo coaches and referees. There are now over 80 million people who enjoy Taekwondo in over 182 countries (Korea, 2011).

Taekwondo in the United States

American Taekwondo Association (ATA)

In 1968, Korean General Hong Hi Choi met with the then Master Haeng Ung Lee, who at the time was teaching Taekwondo-Japanese mixed martial arts to his organization of followers. General Choi quickly taught Master Lee the first 16 Cheon-jeje forms of Taekwondo. (Association, 2013). From this meeting, Master Lee went on to form the American Taekwondo Association, in 1969, in Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1983, Grand Master Lee introduced the Songahm system of Taekwondo. The Songahm Taekwondo Federation (STF), was formed in 1984, and operates all of the licensed affiliate schools in South America. The ATA oversees schools in the United States and Canada, and in the fall of 1990, the World Traditional Taekwondo Union (WTTU), was formed, encompassing the rest of the world. (Association, 2013).

Over the years, many organizations have broken off from the ATA. Of these, a short list is United States Taekwondo Federation (USTF), under Grandmaster Scott McNeely, The United Taekwondo Federation (UTF), under Master Dennis Thompson, the American Taekwondo Fellowship (ATF) under Master Neil Singleton, the Chin Mu Kwan Taekwondo Federation (CTF) under Grandmaster Kang, Yon Ho. There is also the ITA, the USTU, the USTC, and the ITC, amongst many others not listed. (Brihno360, 2011).

United Taekwondo Federation (UTF) and Global Taekwondo Alliance (GTA)

The UTF and GTA are both spinoffs of the ATA. The UTF was formed by Master Dennis Thompson and later passed to Master Tim Castle. The GTA was formed by Grand Master Russ Northup, who had gained his later ranks under Grand Master Scott McNeely, (USTF / WTA).

Works Cited

- Association, A. T. (2013). *ATA History*. Retrieved December 02, 2013, from ATA Online:
<http://www.ataonline.com/about/history.asp>
- Brihno360. (2011, March 10). *Taekwondo History Thread*. Retrieved Decemeber 2013, 2013, from Bullshido.Net: <http://www.bullshido.net/forums/showthread.php?t=104283&page=2>
- Center, W. M. (2013). *Our Grand Master*. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from World Martial Arts Center: <http://www.wmacenter.com/index.cfm?page=8>
- Center, W. M. (2013). *Our Traditions*. Retrieved December 02, 2013, from World Martial Arts Center: <http://www.wmacenter.com/index.cfm?page=16>
- Chappell, D. (2013). *Black Belt Moo Duk Kwan: Black Belt Lessons for Life*. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from BlackbeltROA.com: <http://blackbeltroa.com/>
- Federation, I. T.-D. (2013). *ITF - Organization*. Retrieved December 2013, 2013, from International Taekwon-Do Federation: <http://www.tkd-itf.org/pagina.php?idpag=1122&web=47&lng=3>
- Kee, H. (1995). *Hwang Kee*. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from Complete Martial Arts.com: <http://www.completemartialarts.com/whoswho/halloffame/hwangkee.htm>
- Korea, E. (2011). *Kukkiwon World Taekwondo Headquarters*. Retrieved December 2013, 2013, from Exploring Korea: <http://www.exploringkorea.com/kukkiwon-world-taekwondo-headquarters/>
- Lee, C. W. (1999). *History of Jidokwan*. Retrieved November 26, 2013, from History: <http://www.taekwondojidokwan.com/page6.html>
- Linhart, L. (2012). *ITF - History of Taekwondo*. Retrieved December 02, 2013, from International Taekwondo Federation: <http://www.itftkd.org/?Content=HistoryOfTKD>
- M., E. (2011, April 16). *Differences Between ITF and WTF*. Retrieved December 04, 2013, from Differences Between.net: <http://www.differencebetween.net/miscellaneous/culture-miscellaneous/difference-between-itf-and-wtf/>
- Nauta, B. (2012). *General Taekwondo Informatin - History*. Retrieved December 02, 2013, from Barrel.net: <http://www.barrel.net/history.php>
- Shaw, S. (2001). *Scott Shaw.com*. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from Hapkido and Taekwondo History, by Scott Shaw: <http://www.scottshaw.com/history.html>
- Soo, G. K. (2013). *Grandmaster Yoon byung-In*. Retrieved November 26, 2013, from Kim Soo Karate: http://kimsookarate.com/intro/yoon/Byung_In_YoonrevMay3.pdf

Taekwondo, B. D. (2013, September 15). *Jidokwan History and Origins*. Retrieved December 02, 2013, from Blue Dragon Taekwondo: <http://www.bluedragonkd.net/jidokwanoriginsandhistory.htm>

Terrigno, M. C. (2007). *Tang Soo Do World*. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from Tang Soo Do World: http://www.tangsoodoworld.com/reference/reference_history_of_MDK.htm

World Song Moo Kwan Association. (2013). *A Short history of Song Moo Kwan*. Retrieved November 23, 2013, from World Song Moo Kwan Association: <http://www.songmookwan.com/index.php/hist-of-smk/short-history-smk-menu>