

A Web-Based History of Contemporary Hapkido

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Abstract

The history of contemporary hapkido is intertwined with the development of a number of ancient and modern fighting styles in Korea, China and Japan. Over the course of more than two millennia, history relating to hapkido has been passed down orally from teacher to student from the Three Kingdoms period (57 BCE-668 CE) of Korea and continuing to the present day. In recent years, developments in web-publishing have created a unique venue where teachers and students alike have set into writing their once oral history. These histories recorded on the Internet are as dynamic as hapkido itself, constantly changing to reflect the political, social and cultural atmosphere of the time. Thus, this study and the history recorded herein are but a time slice of hapkido observed today, and as told by various practitioners around the world.

Introduction

Hapkido is a contemporary Korean martial art rooted in the ancient fighting systems of early Korea, China and Japan. Literally, hapkido means “the way of harmonious energy,” or “the way of coordinated power.” Among martial arts, hapkido is somewhat unique in that it blends a variety of hard striking and kicking techniques with soft deflection techniques. These soft techniques are often circular (large and/or small circles) and involve throwing, takedowns and joint and pressure-point manipulation to redirect the attacker’s energy. The extensive repertoire of both hard and soft techniques incorporated in hapkido is due in large part to the assimilation of various techniques from an assortment of martial arts, a process initiated during the Three Kingdoms period (57 BCE – 668 CE) of Korea and continuing to the present day. These martial arts include, but are not limited to, subak, Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu, tae-kyon, judo, and aikido.

The historical developments that led to the eventual creation of modern hapkido are difficult to trace due to a lack of complete historical records and the selective nature of the records that do exist. Any historical records that do survive, whether they be oral or written, are themselves shaped by the cultural and social atmosphere in which they were recorded. Thus, any attempt to examine the historical development of hapkido must bear these facts in mind. Much of what survives today are oral histories passed down over time from master to student. Few of these oral histories have actually been recorded in book form, although there are notable exceptions.¹ In

recent years, however, a great deal of what was once oral folklore has been recorded on the Internet as background history for hapkido schools seeking to attract students. This new medium captures the history of hapkido as never before and opens new pathways to explore its dynamic evolution over time.

The purpose of this paper is to trace the historical development of hapkido from its earliest roots in Korea to its present form. This study primarily uses web-based texts from hapkido and related martial art schools from around the world to identify common threads that form the foundation for a historical retelling of the development of hapkido. This analysis is divided into two main sections: the first section deals with the ancient martial arts systems of Korea, and their contribution to hapkido; the second section treats hapkido as a modern martial art and seeks to examine how the ancient martial arts traditions of Korea and Japan were incorporated into hapkido. This final section also documents the fragmentation of hapkido from its modern inception with Grandmasters Choi and Ji to the creation of hankido by Dr. Ken Min in the early 1990s.

Ancient Roots: Early Korean Martial Arts

The early development of martial arts in Korea is difficult to accurately trace because much of their history is based on oral lore passed from teacher to student for over two millennia. Nonetheless, the earliest accounts can be traced back to the Three Kingdoms period, when the kingdoms of Koguryo (37 BCE-668 CE), Paekje (18 BCE-600 CE), and Silla (57 BCE-936 CE) struggled to control the Korean

peninsula. From this time period, the earliest known depictions of martial arts are entombed wall paintings (ca. 50 BCE), which show men in what appear to be fighting stances.² The first written accounts of martial arts appear much later in the *Samguk Yusa* (Memorabilia of the Three Kingdoms, written during the 13th Century), which records generals of the Three Kingdoms training and fighting against each other in martial arts.³ Unfortunately, the texts fail to provide details of either the martial arts or the specific techniques used by these warriors.

Hwa Rang Do

By 670 CE, the Silla kingdom had defeated both the kingdoms of Koguryo and Paekje, and had united the Korean Peninsula under one rule. Many historians claim that the success of Silla over the other kingdoms was due in large part to a group of aristocratic young men known as the hwarang warriors (literally, “the flowering manhood”), who trained in the arts of war.⁴ Despite the fact that the hwarang were not officially part of the Silla army, their military spirit, loyalty to king and nation, and courage on the battlefield were important factors in the both the historical development of the Silla kingdom as well as Korean martial arts as a whole.⁵

One of the most famous legends of the hwarang tells the story of a sixteen-year-old commander Kwanch'ang, the son of General P'umil, who died in the wars of unification:

Kwanch'ang (or Kwanjang) was the son of General P'umil of Silla. His appearance was elegant and he became a Hwarang as a youth and was on intimate terms with

others. At the age of sixteen he was already accomplished in horseback riding and archery. A certain commander (taegam) recommended him to King Muyól.

When, in the fifth year of Hsien-ching, kyongsin, the king sent troops and, together with a Tang general, attacked Paekche, he made Kwanch'ang an adjunct general. When the two armies met on the plain of Hwangsan (now Nonsan), P'umil said to his son, "You are young, but you have spirit. Now is the time to render brilliant service and rise to wealth and honor. You must show dauntless courage."

"I shall," Kwanch'ang replied, mounting his horse and couching his lance. He galloped into the enemy line killing several of the foe. Outnumbered, he was taken a prisoner and brought to the Paekche general, Kyebaek. Kyebaek had Kwanch'ang's helmet removed. Kyebaek was greatly moved by the youth and valor of his captive and could not bring himself to kill him. He said with a sigh, "Silla has marvelous knights. Even a youth is like this—how much stronger must their soldiers be?" He then let Kwanch'ang return alive.

Upon returning, Kwanch'ang remarked, "Earlier when I attacked the enemy's position I could not behead the enemy general, nor capture their standard. This is my greatest regret. In my second attack I will be sure to succeed." He scooped up water from a well and drank; he then rushed upon the enemy line and fought desperately. Kyebaek caught him alive, beheaded him, and sent back the head, tied to the saddle of his horse.

General P'umil took his son's head and, wiping the blood with his sleeve, said, "He saved his honor. Now that he has died for the King's cause, I have no

regrets.”

The three armies were moved by this and strengthened their resolve. Beating drums and shouting war cries, they charged the enemy lines and utterly routed the Paekche forces. King Muyól conferred the posthumous title of kúpch'an (Rank 9) on Kwanch'ang and had him buried with full rites.⁶

Although the hwarang contributed greatly to the militaristic unification of Korean, their movement was much more of a philosophical and religious code than a particular fighting style practiced by a unique school of martial arts. In this sense, the hwarang movement shares similarities with the samurai of feudal Japan, whose practice of bushido embraced more than just the fighting arts. In contrast, the hwarang movement did not gain the political influence of the samurai class, nor did Silla youth remain hwarang warriors for life as did the samurai. The hwarang were reputed to have studied Chinese classics and military strategies as well as fighting arts as part of their spiritual, mental and physical training. Unfortunately, no records of any set forms have ever been found from their philosophical/religious movement. The eighth century scholar Kim Tae-mun supposedly recorded the tales of the hwarang warriors in his book, *The Records of the Hwa Rang (Hwarang Segi)*, but the book has not survived. Excerpts were recorded by Kim Pu-sik (1075-1151), the Koryo historian who compiled the *History of the Three Kingdoms (Samguk Sagi)* in 1145.

With respect to the development of hapkido, the hwarang movement embodies many of the same features of contemporary hapkido, emphasizing both

martial technique as well as intellectual and spiritual development. In this regard, the hwarang movement is often viewed as the root of the spiritual and intellectual philosophies of many Korean martial arts, not just hapkido. Thus, although specific techniques from the hwarang movement do not survive, the evolution of contemporary hapkido is rooted in the early tradition of the hwarang with their holistic approach towards spiritual, mental and physical training.

Soo Bakh (Subak)

Subak is perhaps the first distinct Korean martial art mentioned in historical texts of the Koryo dynasty (936-1392). The Koryo Sa (History of Koryo) briefly mentions subak while describing official court functions and military training.⁷ Based on Chinese records that list sho buo (Chinese for subak), some scholars postulate that subak was an ancient, comprehensive system with roots in northern China.⁸ Although many scholars use the terms subak and tae-kyon interchangeably when describing martial arts prior to the Yi dynasty (1392-1910), the name tae-kyon was not recorded until the eighteenth or nineteenth century.⁹ That being said, subak was likely an early precursor to both the striking art of tae-kyon and the grappling art of yoo sool. Some even postulate that yoo sool may have influenced the development of Japanese jujitsu (yoo sool and jujitsu are written with the same Chinese characters), but yoo sool died out in Korea.¹⁰ Tae-kyon is thus the only surviving descendant from the ancient art of subak.

With the rise of the Yi dynasty, subak enjoy a brief

period of popularity before it was outlawed to civilians. Gradually military training ceased, and with it martial arts disappeared from the prominent position that it once occupied in Korean culture.¹¹

Modern Martial Arts and Hapkido

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the re-emergence of martial arts in Korea, due in part to the continued practice and refinement of ancient arts (e.g., subak) by Buddhist monks in Korea and China, and the adoption of Japanese martial arts during the occupation of Korea by Japanese forces from 1910 until the end of World War II. During the occupation, the practice of traditional Korean martial arts was strictly forbidden, yet Koreans were permitted to study Japanese martial arts. Many Koreans continued to practice their own martial arts in secret, as their ancestors had presumably done during the Yi dynasty. The forced juxtaposition of Korean and Japanese martial arts had a pronounced effect on the development of Korean martial arts and hapkido in particular. The ancient art of Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu had a particularly strong influence on the thinking and training of Grandmaster Choi Young Sool (1904-1986), who is regarded as one of the founders of modern Hapkido.

Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu

Much like the history of the early Korean martial arts, the origin of Daito-ryu Aiki-jujutsu is shrouded in legend and its history was passed down over successive generations from teacher to student. Daito-

ryu Aiki-jujutsu is purported to have been founded by Minamoto no Shinra Saburo Yoshimitsu (1045-1127), the last grandson of emperor Seiwa. Yoshimitsu was a master of the so-jutsu (spear), to-ho (sword methods), and tai-jutsu (body arts), as well as archery. He also supposedly dissected the cadavers of executed criminals and slain enemy soldiers of the Gosamen war (1083-1087) in order to study the structure of the human body. Through this study, he developed gyakute and ichigeki hissatsu (techniques of killing with one blow). It is also said that the philosophical root of his martial arts practice came directly from his observations of the silk spider catching its prey. Although earlier techniques of Daito-ryu were developed by prior members of the Minamoto clan, Yoshimitsu is credited with having refined and perfected these previous techniques and passing them down to the Takeda family of Kai.¹²

The modern history of Daito-ryu originates with Takeda Soemon (1758-1853) who taught a derivative system called Aiki-in-ho-yo, "the aiki system of yin and yang," which he passed on to Saigo Tanomo (1829-1905). Saigo Tonomo had also trained in Misoguchi-ryu swordsmanship and Koshu-ryu military science, which served him well in the Boshin war (1868). Legend has it that during the Boshin war, word reached Saigo's family that he had been killed with the Imperial forces. To preserve the honor of the family name, his mother, wife, five daughters and other members of his family committed ritual suicide. In reality, Saigo's life had been spared, but when he learned of the fate of his family, he changed his name to Hoshina and became a Shinto priest.¹³

One of Saigo's students, Takeda Sokaku

(1860-1943), was the grandson of Takeda Soemon and is credited with introducing the public to Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu. Takeda Sokaku is reputed to have studied a number of swordsmanship and spear fighting styles. Over the course of his long career as an instructor, he taught some thirty-thousand students, including police officers, military officers, and public officials. Another one of Saigo's famous students was Ueshiba Morihei, who later went on to found aikido.

The Birth of Hapkido

The history of hapkido begins with Grandmaster Choi Yong Sool during the early part of the 20th century. Grandmaster Choi grew up in Korea under Japanese occupation, during which time many Koreans were transplanted to Japan to work as menial laborers. In an interview conducted by Joseph Sheya in 1982, Grandmaster Choi recounted his early childhood in Korea and his eventual encounter with Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu master Takeda Sensi:

When I was a child I lived in the village of Yong Dong in Choong Chung Province, Korea. At this time there were many Japanese people in my region because of the Japanese occupation of Korea. I became acquainted with a Mr. Morimoto, who was a Japanese businessman and candy store owner. Morimoto had no sons. When the time came for him to return to Japan he abducted me and took me with him to Japan, intending that I would become his son. I did not like this man and because of my constant protest and crying he abandoned me in the town of Moji soon after we came to Japan. From Moji, I traveled alone to Osaka. I soon gave myself up to despair and while crying and wandering aimlessly, I was picked up by the police. When the

authorities found out that I had no family in Japan, they arranged for me to be cared for at a Buddhist temple. I lived there for about two years under the care of the monk Kintaro, Wadanabi.

...while living in the temple, I was fascinated by murals of battles and paintings of famous martial arts scenes displayed throughout the temple. When the time came, Wadanabi asked me what direction I wanted my life to take. I immediately pointed to a scene on the wall depicting the martial arts and said this is what I want to be. Kintaro, Wadanabi was a close friend of Takeda, Sokaku and arranged my introduction to him. Takeda, Sokaku liked me and feeling great sympathy for my situation, decided to adopt me. Upon my adoption he gave me the Japanese name Asao, Yoshida. I was about 11 years old at this time.¹⁴

Grandmaster Choi claimed to have trained for over thirty years with Takeda Sokaku, mastering all 3808 Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu techniques.¹⁵ According to his account, Grandmaster Choi was also an instructor for Takeda, and at one point even traveled with him to Hawaii where they performed demonstrations of Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu.¹⁶ Upon the death of Takeda Sokaku at the end of World War II, Grandmaster Choi returned to Korea in the winter of 1945.

Grandmaster Choi's life upon his return to Korean differs significantly from account to account. In one version Grandmaster Choi is reputed to have lost his suitcase which contained all of his money and certificates from Takeda Sensei while traveling home.¹⁷ Other historians claim that there is simply no written record of Grandmaster Choi ever being a student or teacher of Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu with Takeda Sokaku.¹⁸

Nonetheless, Grandmaster Choi spent a large part of his life training in one form or another under the influence of Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu, of which he obviously gained a deep understanding.

In Korea, Grandmaster Choi once again found himself on the streets, where he made a living selling rice cakes. After a year, Grandmaster Choi saved enough money to purchase several pigs, which he fed with leftover grain that he obtained every morning from the Suh Brewery Company. On February 21st, 1948, Grandmaster Choi was assaulted outside the Suh Brewery where he easily defeated his attackers using the Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu techniques he had learned in Japan under Takeda Sokaku.¹⁹

It so happened that the manager of the Suh Brewery, Suh Bok Sup (1924-), had witnessed the altercation from his second story window. Suh was intrigued by the new fighting style he had witnessed and summoned Grandmaster Choi to his office. Fearing that he would lose his allotment of grain over the incident, Grandmaster Choi reportedly declined the meeting, but in the end agreed to meet Suh. The following is Suh's account of that first meeting in his dojang:

I said to him that since I had no objection to money, please teach me whatever you know. I was able to judge his financial situation just by looking at him. I stood up and I took him to the room next to my office. I opened up the door and it was a big place with Tabor min mats, Japanese throwing mats. That's where I asked him to please show me the techniques. Since Choi Yong Sool knew I was a first degree judo, he told me to throw him. I didn't really feel like throwing him because he was much older

than me. I was somewhat hesitant to throw him yet I lightly grabbed him and he immediately used a pain technique on me. It happened all of a sudden, without explaining anything, he just did it. I got angry. Here I was, very gentle with Choi and I felt he wasn't too nice to me so I got mad. I wanted to take time but Choi Yong Sool gave me no chance so I decided to fight back. I decided to throw Choi Yong Sool and grabbed him on the shoulder. I found myself in trouble. In judo, usually one person has touched the other person's body in order to throw him, but this time there was no touching involved. So, I was deeply impressed. So that's how the two of us got started.²⁰

After their first encounter, Suh Bok Sup offered to provide Grandmaster Choi with grain, money and the use of his private dojang to teach other students in exchange for private lessons. Grandmaster Choi agreed and decided to call his style Yoo Sool (Korean for jujitsu), to which he later added kicking and weapons techniques.²¹

Both Grandmaster Choi and Suh Bok Suh were instrumental in publicizing yoo sool (which was soon to be termed hapkido) throughout Korea following the Korean War. Suh Bok Suh recounts:

Choi Yong Sool and I traveled to different counties and court houses and different universities and public areas to give demonstrations. We brought our mats. The very first time we gave a demonstration in hapkido was at the Daegu University gymnasium. We asked for anybody who knew martial arts such as judo, kick boxing, boxing, etc., and had a contest. We would show our techniques and that really publicized hapkido. We even taught our techniques at orphanages. We became high profile people in the city and that's why it

became publicized so rapidly.²²

One of Grandmaster Choi's students, Grandmaster Ji Han Jae, had a particularly strong impact on the development of modern hapkido. Some consider both Grandmaster Ji and Grandmaster Choi the founders of modern hapkido. At the age of 13, Grandmaster Ji began training yoo sool with Grandmaster Choi in Daegu city. Grandmaster Ji trained with Grandmaster Choi from 1949-1956 during which time he also trained under a master known as "Taoist Lee," from whom he learned tae-kyon kicking, jang-bong (six-foot staff), the dan-bong (short stick), and meditation. Grandmaster Ji also studied meditation for five years under a female monk known as to him as "Grandma".²³

In 1958, Grandmaster Ji left Daegu city and moved to Andong where he opened two yoo sool schools. He remained in Andong for only a short period of time before relocating to Seoul later in 1958. In Seoul, Grandmaster Ji trained two students (Bong Soo Han and Myung Kwan Sik) who would go on to found the International Hapkido Association and the World Hapkido Association respectively.²⁴ The following is an account by a student of Grandmaster Ji, recounting how yoo sool came to be known as hapkido:

...Ji began to piece together the yoo sool (yoo kwon sool) teachings of Grandmaster Choi, with the methods of meditation, the tae kyon kicking techniques, and the weapons techniques learned from Taoist Lee, along with the spiritual training he received from "grandma," to formulate his own style of martial art, for which he chose the name "hapkido." He had originally thought of calling it "Hapki-yoo-kwon-sool," but

decided against that, feeling it was too long of a name. He thought of other martial arts he had heard of, such as tae kwon do, kong soo do, soo bakh do, etc., where the word "do" was being used instead of "sool". He liked this idea because the word "do" means a path to follow, or a way of life, rather than simply meaning "technique", as "sool" implies. The name hapkido was chosen in 1959, and has been used ever since. The word itself can be translated as the "way of coordinated power." Where "hap" means to unify or coordinate, "ki" means mental and/or physical energy, and "do" means a way of life, or the "path" or "way" of coordinating your mental and physical energy into one entity.

During a conversation I had with Grandmaster Ji, Han Jae...it was related to me that after he chose the name hapkido to represent his art, he gave this name to his teacher, Choi Yong Sool to use—out of respect. Choi taught under the name hapkido until his death in 1986, even though he did not teach the complete curriculum—leaving out the majority of the kicking techniques, and a lot of the weapons techniques.²⁵

In a different account, Suh Bok Suh claims that both he and Grandmaster Choi were the first to devise the name hapkido.²⁶ In yet another story, Grandmaster Choi claims to have named his art hapkido upon his return from Japan.²⁷ Whoever first coined the name hapkido, it is clear that the development of modern hapkido was greatly influenced by both Grandmaster Choi and Grandmaster Ji.

In 1961, General Park Chung Hee (1917-1979) overthrew the Korean government and was eventually elected president. During Park's dictatorship, Grandmaster Ji gained enormous political power and

influence and quickly became instructor to the Military Supreme Council and the Presidential Security Forces.²⁸ In 1962, Grandmaster Ji also became the personal bodyguard of President Park until his death in 1979.

It was also in the early 1960s that Grandmaster Ji's martial arts curriculum was finalized owing to a unique period of collaboration between a fellow colleague and former student Kim Moo Woong. Over the course of nearly eight months, Kim and Grandmaster Ji trained together and exchanged ideas about which kicking techniques should be adopted into hapkido.²⁹ The only significant difference that resulted from the collaboration was that Grandmaster Ji taught that the low turning heel kick should be done with only the ball of the supporting foot touching the ground, whereas Kim taught that the knee and the foot of the supporting leg were to both be on the ground.³⁰

It was also during the early 1960s that President Park lifted restrictions banning Japanese goods from Korea. Shortly thereafter, Grandmaster Ji came across a book on aikido where he realized that both aikido and hapkido shared the same characters. Dismayed by the discovery, Grandmaster Ji changed the name of hapkido to kido.³¹

In September, 1963, the Korean Kido Association was granted an official charter by the Korean government (through the Ministry of Education), which enabled the organization to supervise and regulate the standards of teaching as well as the promotional requirements of black belts in thirty-one different Korean martial arts. Grandmaster Choi was elected the first chairman of the newly founded

Korean Kido Association. Among the various duties of the organization, the Korean Kido Association held outreach programs intended to promote martial arts to public school students, police officers and military officials.³²

In 1965, Grandmaster Ji abandoned the Korean Kido Association and founded his own organization, the Korea Hapkido Association. His departure from the Korean Kido Association was mainly motivated by politics and facilitated in large part by his personal relationship with President Park, which enabled him to successfully charter his own organization without help or approval from the broader martial arts community.³³ Grandmaster Ji's fame continued to grow and by 1969, he was teaching hapkido in the United States to the FBI and the Secret Service.

The assassination attempt on President Park in 1974, which resulted in the death of Park's wife, was a turning point in Grandmaster Ji's life. Following the assassination attempt, Grandmaster Ji resigned as from his post, together with all of the Presidential Security Guards.³⁴ Shortly thereafter, Grandmaster Ji was once again asked to serve in the Presidential Security force, where he remained until Park's death in 1979.

In 1984, Grandmaster Ji left Korea and immigrated to the United States where he founded World Sin Moo Hapkido, which he considers his gift to the United States and the western world for their support during the Korean conflict.³⁵ Grandmaster Ji continues to teach hapkido today in seminars all over the United States.

Fragmentation of Hapkido

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, three main organizations dominated the hapkido community. These organizations included the Korea Hapkido Association (founded by Grandmaster Ji in 1965), the Korean Hapki Association (founded in 1969 by Myung Jae Nam), and the Korean Hapkido Association (founded in 1971 by Kim Moo Woong). In 1973, the leaders of these three organizations met and agreed to form one unified organization, Dae Han Kul Hapkido Hyub Hwe, Republic of Korea Hapkido Association.

By the early 1980s, renewed internal disputes resulted in fragmentation of the hapkido community once again. In 1984, Grandmaster Ji left Korea and founded World Sin Moo Hapkido, while at the same time, Grandmaster Kim Moo Woong resigned from the Republic of Korea Hapkido Association and founded a new organization with an old name, the Korean Hapkido Association. Also in the early 1980s, Grandmaster Oh Se-Lim became the president of the Republic of Korea Hapkido Association, which he later changed to the Korea Hapkido Association (the same name that Grandmaster Ji had used in the 1960s). Eventually, Grandmaster Oh founded a new organization, the Korea Hapkido Federation.

By the early 1990s, a new organization was created by Myung Jae Nam, which he called the International Hankido Federation.³⁶ Myung's hankido is a hybrid version of hapkido, which he learned from Grandmaster Ji, and aikido, owing from many years of collaboration with Japanese aikido instructor Hirata Sensei. Myung's hankido differs significantly from Dr.

Min's version of hankido taught at the University of Berkeley today (see below).

In sum, the large number of hapkido organizations established since the early 1960s reflects both the varying philosophical beliefs on how and what techniques should be incorporated into hapkido, as well as the various political disagreements among hapkido practitioners. The end result of such disagreements creates further fragmentation in the hapkido community, which already lacks a strong centralizing organization. The following is just a sampling of some of the major organizations in Korea and the United States as compiled by David Beck (2004).³⁷

World Hapkido Federation

- Myung Kwang Sik.

One of the biggest schools in the United States. Myung was a student of Ji's (starting in 1957) who claims Choi as his teacher.

World Sin Moo Hapkido Association

- Ji Han Jae—founder of hapkido.

Korea Hapkido Federation

- Oh Se Lim, 10th Dan

This group is the largest in Korea. Oh was an early student of Grandmaster Ji in Andong.

International Hapki Federation

- Myong Jae Nam (deceased).

His son renamed the group to International Hankido Federation. This organization is one of the only to sponsor hapkido competitions.

World Kido Federation/Korea Kido Association

- Seo In Sun.

Seo was a student of Grandmaster Choi

Korea Hapkido Association

- Hwang Duk Kyu

Hwang was Grandmaster Ji's first student in Seoul.

Korean Hapkido Association

- Kim Moo Woong.

Kim studied with Grandmaster Choi and together with Granmaster Ji helped refine his style.

American Hapkido Association

- Lee Chong Min

American Hapkido Association

- Mike Wollmershouser.

Wollmershouser was a student of Choi's.

Universal Hapkido Institute

- Kim Ik Hwan

International Hapkido Federation

- Han Bong Soo.

Han was a student of Grandmaster Ji. He was one of the first hapkido instructors in the United States and is famous for the "Billy Jack" movies that gave hapkido its first mass dissemination to the public.

International Hapkido Federation

- James Benko, Ph.D

International Combat HKD Federation

- John Pelligrini.

United States Korean Martial Arts Federation

- J.R. West.

National Korean Martial Arts Association

- Rudy Timmerman.

International Hapkido Alliance

- Geoff Booth.

Master Booth is a student of Grandmaster Ji.

The Origin of Hankido

Hankido is a recent attempt by Dr. Ken Min to bring the various hapkido organizations back under one umbrella organization. Literally, hankido means “the Korean way of spirit/energy/power.” In Korea, hankido has been endorsed by Yong In University, which lends a great deal of credibility to the newly formed organization, because Yong In is one of the premiere martial arts centers in Korea. The fusion of different hapkido organizations and their styles seeks to create a much broader martial art, in which “each of the divergent hapkido styles has something to offer to hankido”.³⁸ Dr. Min's vision seeks to involve not only hapkido practitioners, but also other martial artists in the practice of hankido, further enriching and broadening its scope. A centerpiece of Dr. Min's hankido is *kyukkido* or trithlon sparring, which allows a practitioner the opportunity to compete in taekwondo-style sparing, standing throws, groundwork, and open free sparring as part of a single competition.³⁹ It is hoped that this unique and versatile competitive sport based on hapkido will highlight the comprehensive nature of hankido and involve participants from martial art schools outside of the hapkido community.

The concept of a regulating organization such as hankido is not new, and has been proposed since the various schools of hapkido began appearing in the 1960s. One particular problem in the development of hankido is that the term has already been coined in Korea and the United States by Myong Jae Nam to describe his hybrid hapkido-aikido style by the name hankido. Much of the literature on the Internet is

devoted to this form of hankido, whereas hankido as defined by Dr. Min is scarcely represented.

Conclusions:

As hapkido is in essence a fusion of a number of martial arts, it is intrinsically non-static and is constantly changing and evolving to meet the changing needs and expectations of its practitioners.⁴⁰ To this extent, hapkido has historically accepted the incorporation of new ideas and techniques as they pertain to the greater refinement of the art. Through time, hapkido has incorporated the stylistic features of a number of martial arts including, but not limited to, subak, Daito-ryu Aiki-jutsu, tae-kyon, judo, and aikido, among others. This characteristic of embracing change in hapkido has resulted in the creation of a tremendously flexible and comprehensive martial art, while at the same time it has perhaps contributed to its fragmented nature as well.

The history of hapkido has come alive in recent years as individual masters or their students have begun publishing histories of hapkido online. These histories, which range from short paragraphs to well-developed essays, have significantly added to the depth and richness of historical accounts on the development of hapkido. While each text should be considered individually and carefully read in light of their social, cultural and potentially political nature, they nonetheless record the dynamic evolution of a modern martial art with ancient roots.

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End Notes

¹ See for instance, Kwang.

² Bannon.

³ Seo.

⁴ Bannon.

⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁶ Lee.

⁷ Young.

⁸ *Ibidem*.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ Draeger & Smith, p. 76.

¹¹ Young.

¹² Keen.

¹³ Cushing.

- ¹⁴ Sheya.
- ¹⁵ *Ibidem.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem.*
- ¹⁷ See, for example, Nore.
- ¹⁸ See, for example, Shaw.
- ¹⁹ Nore.
- ²⁰ Wollmershauser.
- ²¹ Nore.
- ²² Wollmershauser.
- ²³ World Sin Moo Hapkido Association website.
- ²⁴ *Ibidem.*
- ²⁵ Shin Koo Hapkido website.
- ²⁶ Wollmershauser.
- ²⁷ Sheya.
- ²⁸ World Sin Moo Hapkido Association website.
- ²⁹ Shin Koo Hapkido website.
- ³⁰ *Ibidem.*
- ³¹ *Ibidem.*
- ³² *Ibidem.*
- ³³ *Ibidem.*
- ³⁴ Duggan.
- ³⁵ Shin Koo Hapkido website.
- ³⁶ Uesugi.
- ³⁷ In Korean, the terms 'Association' and 'Federation' are identical, which adds much confusion to the process of tracing the names and nomenclature of martial arts groups.

³⁸ Abbott.

³⁹ See the UCMAF Journal of Martial Arts Studies Monograph, vol. 1, 1994, pp. 176-182, for Dr. Min's article outlining an early form of triathlon competition.

⁴⁰ Abbott.