

Taekwon-Do Self-Defense
Hidden Truths of HapKiDo in Taekwon-Do
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Throughout my many years of martial arts training I have found my home to be with the Korean arts due to their effectiveness in the field of self-defense. Depending on the art form different aspects of self-defense is emphasized. Within the Korean arts there is a reality that many instructors fail to recognize. That is that many arts are not as unique as they have been taught. The history of Korean martial arts proves that there are many different influences both in syllabus and philosophy.

An example of this is within the art of Taekwon-Do (TKD), *The Way of the Foot and Fist*. The composition of Taekwon-Do consists of fundamental techniques, Tuls, Dallyon, sparring and Ho Sin Sul. Many aspects of the composition of Taekwon-Do are easy to figure out, but some may not be as easy to understand. Let's take Ho Sin Sul as an example. Roughly translated, ho sin sul means self defense techniques. Self defense has multiple aspects, theories, dimensions and history all in itself. Some things to consider in self defense techniques include hand techniques, foot techniques, blocking techniques, dodging techniques, throwing techniques, ground techniques, sitting techniques, choking techniques, falling techniques and a whole lot more. The art of self defense appear endless.

When our founder of Taekwon-Do, General Choi Hong Hi designed our art he combined two well known martial art systems. One was called TaeKyun and the other was Shotokan Karate (*Kara-te, Empty Hand*). He utilized the foot/kicking techniques of TaeKyun and the hand/striking techniques of Shotokan Karate. Within the art of Shotokan Karate there is a minor (as in college degrees requiring a major and a minor) in

Judo introduced by Judo founder Kano Jigoro. Just as Karate has Judo influence in the art it has come to many people's attention that HapKiDo (Way of coordinated energy/power) is a part of Taekwon-Do.

The evidence which many people have found in regards to Taekwon-Do having HapKiDo influence and techniques in it can be derived from several sources. One such source comes from the March 2000 issue of Taekwon-Do Times magazine. In this issue of Taekwon-Do Times magazine a gentleman by the name of Master Chung, Kee Tae from Canada was interviewed and stated that General Choi Hong Hi asked him to teach his (Master Chung Kee Tae who was also a HapKiDo black belt) self defense techniques. Master Chung Kee Tae states that General Choi said it is a very good idea to have the self-defense techniques of Hapkido in our Tae Kwon Do program. I do not know at what level (he wanted to introduce the art), he just wanted to show self defense techniques to his people in his book. General Choi is a very smart person and he wanted to help his people so he wanted to show them self defense techniques for Tae Kwon Do. In 1969 General Choi started writing his TKD book. He took many picture of me doing Hapkido techniques to be published in his first book in Korea which came out in 1972. Most Taekwon-Do masters, teachers and student know that there is self defense in TKD. They are not aware that many of the techniques came from Hapkido.

Besides this issue of Taekwon-Do Times magazine a voice from the HapKiDo community also had this to say. Grand Master J.R. West, 8th Dan, President of the United States Korean Martial Arts Federation and USA Rep for the DaeHan Kido Hwe (Korea Kido Association...the original governing body of martial arts in Korea) in the field of Hapkido stated that there were 1,000 HapKiDo techniques that General Choi had

included in his art. During a casual conversation with Mr. Ted Hick who received his ITF 1st Dan in 1970 stated that at one time Grand Master Charles Sereff (A-9-1), the first American ITF Grand Master wanted all his black belts to earn ranking in the art of Aikido which is identical to HapKiDo. The founder of both Aikido and HapKiDo trained under the same instructor in the art of Daito Ryu Jujitsu.

The combination of these two arts has done and will continue to do many great things for the Taekwon-Do community. For example, in today's military striking arts aren't always the answers to handling peace time operations. The self defense techniques in HapKiDo can help occupations such as military and police officers to restrain and escort individuals without causing severe damage to their opponent. The art of Taekwon-Do alone does not have many if any of these types of techniques within its standardized syllabus. It is also good for retention. In many cases some students wish to learn other types of self defense that they feel are not offered either in their dojang or within their art. So they tend to look elsewhere for this training. Offering a self defense syllabus with striking, dodging, joint locks, throws and etc can help retention in the Taekwon-Do dojang. Though many martial artists feel that having both arts available is a good thing some of the older generation TKD masters feel that blending the arts is disrespectful and not traditional. Oddly enough though many Taekwon-Do schools already offer training in both Taekwon-Do and HapKiDo. This is due to many Korean martial arts instructors who are not "hard core traditionalists" feel that the art of Taekwon-Do and HapKiDo complement each other.

What are people in the martial arts community saying about Taekwon-Do now a day? Many people see Taekwon-Do as a "sport" and does not offer the student real

world self-defense. In a March 1990 issue of Taekwon-Do Times there's an article entitled, "Are Taekwon-Do schools Really Teaching Self Defense?" (pp. 26-30). This is the article that started it all. It is a scathing criticism of how sport Taekwon-Do is ruining self defense and it presents a great case for incorporating HapKiDo into Taekwon-Do schools... managing to aggravate both sides! Along with this article high ranking black belts in both arts have agreed upon one thing. Most Taekwon-Do people can't do what HapKiDo people can do. Most HapKiDo people can't do what Taekwon-Do people can do. While going through the ranks I have made an observation. It appears that we don't get to truly learn self defense until the rank of Red belt. This leaves too many years of training to not truly know how to defend ourselves in a well rounded manner.

As we discover more about our bodies, environment, enemy and etc it is safe to say that our training is constantly evolving. We can evolve Taekwon-Do by adding more Hapkido self-defense within the syllabus as well as testing requirements. Taekwon-Do theories, concepts, techniques and etc has changed over the decades so should the self defense. Many Korean martial arts organizations are opening its doors to other systems of martial arts. An example is the World HapKiDo Association. In their advertisements they claim to have a self-defense/HapKiDo program for all Taekwon-Do schools. This is a transitional program for Taekwon-Do students and instructors to slowly transition into a different training philosophy. Students of other martial art systems are slowly finding themselves attending specialty seminars with self defense themes as well.

Why do most Taekwon-Do folks have a difficult time learning and performing HapKiDo techniques? It is because Taekwon-Do practitioners are not used to getting grabbed or grabbing someone. It's a different concept going from punching and kicking

to grabbing and throwing. However, when breaking down the application of some of the techniques in Taekwon-Do tuls there are in fact some HapKiDo or self-defense techniques. In the black belt pattern So-San you have a releasing motion from a wrist grab. This is also seen in the color belt pattern Do-San. Individual techniques found in the ITF encyclopedia illustrate sweeping kicks, foot tackling and much more. The concepts of defending oneself while standing, kneeling, sitting and while lying on the ground is illustrated in the ITF encyclopedia, which is standard training in the art of HapKiDo.

In conclusion I have talked about General Choi Hong Hi's vision to bring practical self defense to his Taekwon-Do. The introduction of HapKiDo techniques has historically been added into the art of Taekwon-Do and can help with student retention in the dojang. Also, many of the ITF Taekwon-Do pioneers of the art have stated that training in other arts that specialize in self defense techniques is a must and have slowly made it part of their training and testing requirements. Finally, the art of self defense is constantly changing and it's time we change as well. There is only one that that is constant and that is everything and everyone to include martial arts, changes.