

Se Jong Tae Kwon Do Student Development

Martial Arts Philosophy Handbook



Why is Philosophy important?

- Martial arts is a process of self improvement, it is a philosophy taught through the body. Philosophy can be considered a basis of knowledge, thoughts, reasoning, and expressions of particular values that guide an individual in life's experiences. Within each martial artist the process of learning helps develop his or her philosophy; it is an evolving process that is not stagnant or stationary.
- The Master of each martial art system must have a guiding philosophy. From this basis of knowledge an entire martial art system is set on a specific path of principles, values, and physical training. Typically to the martial artist, this involves a lifetime of learning, and developing martial skills. Specific to the art of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do, there are two guiding principles: The development of self and the development of others through martial arts training. The improvement of self and others defines the entire system of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do; it is expressed outwardly through physical martial arts training, dedication of each instructor and the concept of a non-profit organization. Improvement of self and others is exemplified in each individual student.

Purpose and Content

Purpose: The purpose of this handbook is to assist the student with the development of a personal martial art philosophy. Thoughts, expressions, emotions, behaviors, and physical training create opportunities for each student to develop a personal martial art philosophy. This handbook can be used as a working document which can be expanded by the experience of each individual martial art student.

Content:

- Reflections from Father Robert Connolly (Founder)
- Writings from the Tao Te Ching
- Philosophy of Technique
- Philosophy of Hyungs
- Values of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do
- Examples of Black Belt Philosophies
- The Story of a Master
- Questions to ask yourself
- Expanding ones horizons



Photo: Instructor Randy Miskech

Reflections From Father Robert Connolly

Founder Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

A new student in the Martial Arts can become overwhelmed by the amount of knowledge, detail and physical fitness required to become proficient in the art. Everything from balance to transitions, to throws, locks and holds, require the student's full attention and effort. Every student learns uniquely.

After years of study, the student begins to realize that the landscape of the Art they began to study has changed. It is not about precise execution; the Martial Arts are about the simplicity of life and the simplicity of movement. Now the student may begin to study.



Written: January 16, 2015 Father Robert Connolly
Founder Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

Philosophical Writings From The Tao Te Ching

Lao Tzu

Author



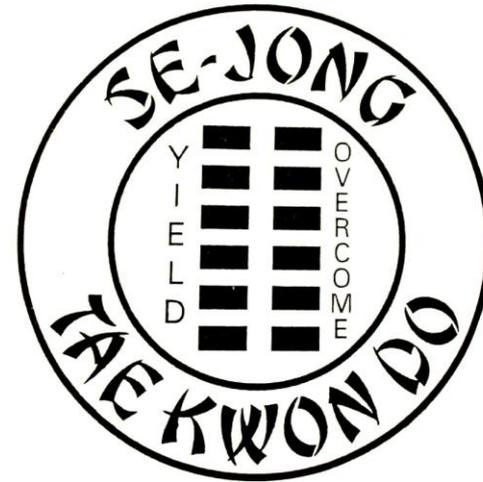
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Philosophical Writings From The Tao Te Ching

Chapter twenty two of The Tao Te Ching

Yield and overcome;
Bend and be straight;
Empty and be full;
Wear out and be new;
Have little and gain;
Have much and be confused;

Therefore wise men embrace the one and set an example for all.
Not putting on a display, they shine forth.
Not justifying themselves, they are distinguished.
Not boasting, they receive recognition.
Not bragging, they never falter.
They do not quarrel, so no one quarrels with them.
Therefore, the ancients say,
“Yield and Overcome”.
Is that an empty saying?
Be really whole, and all things will come to you.



The words Yield and Overcome in our logo are
Taken from Chapter twenty two of the Tae Te Ching

(Dale, Ralph A., pg 45) *This writing is an example of humility. Humility begins with understanding the gifts, talents, skills, and abilities that you possess and how you train them.*

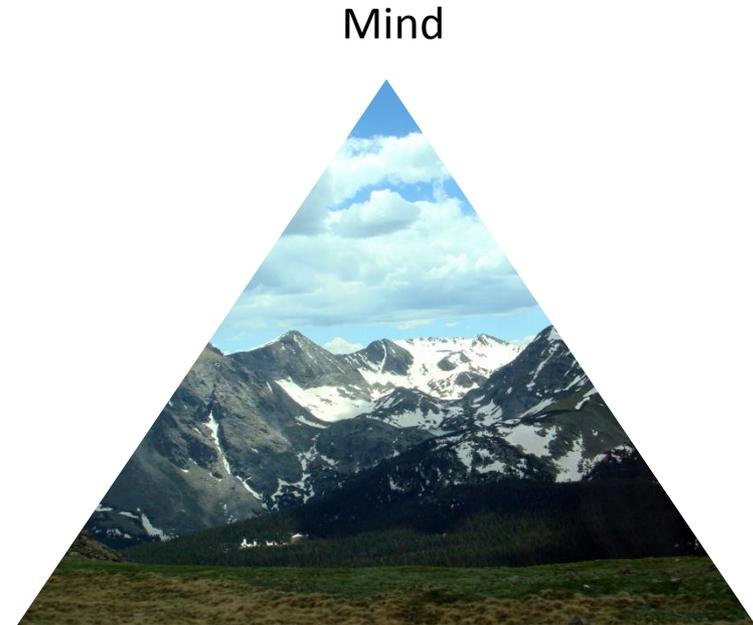
Philosophical Writings From The Tao Te Ching

The Tao that can be told
Is not the universal Tao.
The name that can be named
Is not the universal name.

In the infancy of the universe,
There were no names.
Naming fragments the mysteries of life
Into ten thousand things and their manifestations.

Yet mysteries and manifestations
Spring from the same source.
The Great Integrity
Which is the mystery within manifestation,
The manifestation within mystery,
And the un-naming of the named.

When these interpenetrations
Are in full attendance,
We will pass the gates of naming notions
In our journey towards transcendence.
(Dale, Ralph A., pg 3)



Mind

Body

Spirit

When developing your own martial art philosophy keep in mind that each of us are given talents that are molded and guided by a higher power. Whatever your beliefs, faith can help you understand your place in this very tiny world.

Philosophical Writings From The Tao Te Ching

Yin and Yang aren't sentimental.
They exist without moralizing.
They act regardless of our wishes
within the ebb and flow
of every pregnant moment.

The space between yin and yang
is like a bellows –
Empty, yet infinitely full.
The more it yields,
the more it fills.

Countless words
count less
than the silent balance
Between yin and yang.

(Dale, Ralph A., pg 11)



Taylor and Tanner Miskech

Female and Male
Good and evil
Light and Dark

Yin and Yang represent
Two sides of the coin,
opposite of each other,
but somehow still connected.

Both are needed to recognize
the other.

Yet Lao Tzu seems to suggest
that somehow we exist
somewhere in the middle.

It is the moment that exists
when the sun's light disappears.

What gray area do you live
in?

Philosophical Writings From The Tao Te Ching

We join thirty spokes
to the hub of a wheel,
yet it's the center hole
that makes it useful.

We shape clay
to birth a vessel,
yet it's the hollow within
that makes it useful.

We chisel doors and windows
to construct a room,
yet it's the inner space
that makes it useful.

Thus do we
create what is
to use what is not.
(Dale, Ralph A., pg 23)



(Picture taken from Microsoft Power Point Clip Art)

**A martial artist
must decide the purpose
of training the
Mind, body, and spirit.**

**What use is martial arts
training if it cannot
be used to protect
yourself?**

**Perhaps the ultimate
expression of martial arts
training is avoiding
conflict.**

**Therefore one could say
that purpose comes from
what is seen; usefulness
from what is not.**

**What is your purpose?
Is it useful?**

Philosophy of Technique

It can be said that the soul of a martial artist is seen through technique. Technique is unique to each practitioner, it is an expression of the martial artist seen through motion. Technique is an evolving process that grows through repetition, maturity, experience, and wisdom. As the martial artist grows in age, the body adapts technique to the strengths and weaknesses of the practitioner. Maturity in the art instinctively creates adaptations to allow the practitioner to perform skills that the body could not accomplish under other circumstances and conditions. Technique is the signature of a martial artist!



Photo: Randy Miskech age 18 executing a Blind folded Jump Back Side Piercing Kick while breaking four boards.

The same practitioner after 30 years of martial arts training. With maturity in the art adaptations occur that allow the martial artist to continue training. Using a lifetime of knowledge and experience a practitioner's technique will change to accommodate the weakness of the body.



Photo: Randy Miskech age 48 executing Yonkyo Soft Technique on his son Tanner Miskech 2nd Dan.



Philosophy of Hyungs (Patterns–Forms)



- In Se Jong Tae Kwon Do Hyungs (patterns) are the primary teaching tool of the entire system.
- From 10th grade white belt to 7th Dan Black Belt every rank has assigned Hyungs.
- Within this structure the martial artist has a process of learning that allows skill and technique to develop.
- Stepping away from the obvious, Hyungs go beyond skill training and guide the martial artist into the area of spirit.
- Hyungs are meditation in motion. The practitioner must clear the mind of all thought and allow motion to take control expressing it's will on the body. A very personal relationship is developed with each individual form. It is affected by life's circumstances at the moment a pattern is conceptualized.
- It is said that movements of a Hyung can be achieved in a day, but will take a lifetime to master. (Photos taken from Microsoft Power Point Clip Art)

Values of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

The Four Respect God, Master, Others, Self

The Four Respects of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do are central to life. A student must be able to incorporate the Four Respects into everyday life. God is a belief in a higher power, which holds us accountable for our actions. To respect the Master means that a student must recognize the time, talent and dedication another individual has made, and is willing to share. Therefore the student must be willing to learn. Others is paramount in Se Jong Tae Kwon Do. Each student must be able to place the ideals of other students before their own; teaching selflessness. Self, every student must learn self respect. When a student gains respect for their own talents, abilities and most importantly their weaknesses, then respect for others has higher meaning.



Values of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

The Five Appreciations of

Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

Nature, Family, System, Rank, Country

Every Se Jong Student learns to value life and all that it provides for us. Martial arts training is much more than punches and kicks; it's the recognition of all that makes us human beings. The Five appreciations teach us that we impact others and therefore have an obligation to serve. We understand that nature affects our lives. We know that family goes beyond our parents and siblings, and extends to friends that we train with, the people we work and go to church with. Se Jong students have respect for all martial arts systems and understand that no system is better than any other, only different. Country, we cannot take for granted where we live, the freedom we are given and the sacrifice given on our behalf to maintain that freedom. Every Se Jong student learns to appreciate these values.



(Photo taken from Microsoft Power Point Clip Art)

Values of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

The Nine Expressions of Se Jong Tae Kwon Do

Courtesy, Kindness, Gentleness, Generosity, Humor, Humility, Honesty,
Patience and Peace

All of the Nine Expressions of Se Jong have one common theme, how we should act toward others. Se Jong students are taught to care about other individuals and using the Nine Expressions, demonstrate the values of life. Se Jong students are taught that the highest mastery of martial skill is to avoid conflict. When a student embraces the Nine Expressions, conflict is rarely encountered.



(Photo taken from Microsoft Power Point Clip Art)

Black Belt Requirements

To obtain a Black Belt in Se Jong Tae Kwon Do the following requirements must be met.

- Attend class each week for a minimum of 6 years.
- Attend at least 1 seminar each month.
- Attend summer camp
- Complete a written and physical skill test
- Submit a written philosophy

Black Belt Philosophies

I see myself at the bottom of a mountain.
With each step I learn something. At First I
thought I could reach the top of the mountain,
Now I realize there is no top to this mountain,
only the Journey.



Submitted By

Randy Miskech 7th Dan

November 2, 1982

Black Belt Philosophies

One

*The ocean I challenge with my feet planted firmly in a strong stance,
I seek to master the waves, conquer the rhythm with my defiance,
But the waves displace me, my rigid body is tossed,
How can this be that with all my might my balance is lost
My body grows tired, it loses its strength to resist,
But my mind races on, "a winning technique must exist,"
And then my thoughts are distracted by the natural gentleness of the ocean,
A new feeling to me saying "give me motion,"
Lifting my feet I accept the gesture, I become one with the tide,
Yielding to my opponent I've found balance, peace inside,
And as I leave the water the simplicity of life seems clearer to see,
The conflicts I often face are not nature's design but put there by me,
I bow to the ocean, turn and walk lightly along the shore,
Embracing the one, I become one with all things, the master of myself and nothing more.*

Submitted By:

Mr. David Malarik 5th Dan
November 26, 1985

Martial Arts Philosophy Handbook



(Picture taken from Microsoft Power Point Clip Art)

The Story of a Master

Master Is as a Master Does

The term Master in the martial arts (like the term Black Belt) has many meanings. It can be the rank achieved in a given style that indicates that a person has fulfilled the requirements for such a rank. It can indicate a degree of proficiency in technique of a given style. It can be the designation bestowed upon a person because they have contributed financially or politically to a given martial arts organization. It can be a title that is appropriated by a person for ego satisfaction.

We currently even grade our Masters, which is a contradiction in terms. We have Grand Masters and Supreme Grand Masters. I soon suspect we will see a Mega-Supreme Grand Master of Grand Masters. Masters are a dime a dozen, a true Master is hard to find. The term Master was intended to designate one who understands the heart of the martial arts. A Master understands the underpinnings of selflessness and dedication that are at the core of martial disciplines.

A Master should be one who understands the meaning behind the discipline of the art. The Master respects him/her self and therefore has a profound respect for others. The Master shares the art because he/she wants to share the freedom and the sensitivity the art has given to them.

The Master does not have tunnel vision, but understands the beauty and the benefit of all the arts. The Master is disciplined, humble, and loyal to his/her students and traditions, he/she is faithful to his/her roots and open to new knowledge. The Master is honest with him/her self and honest with the student. The Master knows, and most significantly understands that he/she does not know.

The Master senses the deepest meaning of the martial arts cannot be taught, but can only be caught. He / She strives to be an example and he/she hopes (prays) that the students will learn from the example that is imperfectly given.

The Master understands his/her own strengths, is profoundly aware of his/her own weaknesses and openly shares what he/she has learned from both. The Master wants to share what he/she knows, but also realizes that the heart of the art, the heart of life is learning.

The Master is willing to learn from anyone, from any style, from people with much experience, and from people with no experience. The Master has been around long enough to recognize that every person, every life situation, every martial art style teaches us about the techniques of living life to its fullest.

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The Story of a Master

Master Is as a Master Does



The Master transcended his/her prejudice toward style, familiarity, taste and developed the view that all learning is good, and learning is never over.

The Master has internalized the number 33 of the Tao Te Ching, that points out “to overcome others requires force, to overcome self requires strength.” The Master’s primary interest is for others. The good of the student as a martial artist and as a human being is more important to the Master than money, reputation or success. The Master wrestles with him/her self to conquer the temptation to use his/her position for self importance or ego stroking.

The Master recognizes that a student’s primary expression of loyalty is measured by their desire to continue the tradition of honesty, openness and learning that the Master provided for them. Even if this results in the students moving away from the teacher. The Master encourages his/her students to look elsewhere when the Master is unable to meet the student’s needs.

The Master recognizes in the depth of his/her heart that there is no “best” in our fragile martial arts world, there are only good students and good styles. The Master is saddened by the brutality that passes itself off as martial arts, as he/she is saddened by the martial arts “charlatans of ‘mystical secrets.’”

Aware of his/her own inadequacy, the Master secretly anguishes over his/her worthiness to be looked to as a teacher. The Master is also aware of his/her own vulnerability and mortality, and therefore does not take him/her self too seriously.

The Master has taken Robert Frost’s “road less traveled, and that has made all the difference.” The Master is also aware that the journey is itself the adventure, there is no finish line, no mountain peak, only the journey.

The Master knows enough to realize, that in the body of knowledge that is called the Martial Arts, there is much, much more he/she does not know that he/she does know.

The Master realizes he/she is not yet a Master

(Written by Father Robert Connolly, in the late 1980 (s) exact date unknown)

Questions to Ask Yourself

When you are all alone, and know one is in your presence, who are you at that moment?

Record your response:

Questions to Ask Yourself

*When you are training independently
without the presence of your instructor,
why are you doing this?*

Record your response:

Questions to ask yourself

What do you hope to accomplish through your journey in the martial arts?

Record your response:

Questions to Ask Yourself

*How can understanding yourself help
others?*

Record your response:

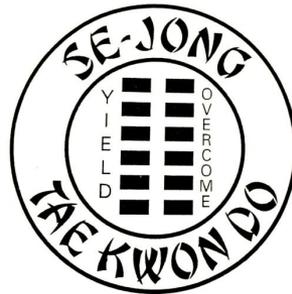
Questions to Ask Yourself

*What is your Philosophy of Martial
Arts?*

Record your response:

Expanding Your Horizons

As a student in Se Jong Tae Kwon Do, you are given the gift of martial arts. It is the desire of our entire system that you have the honesty, courage, and dedication to expand yourself mentally, physically, and spiritually. Now, expand your horizons and share the gift that was given to you with anyone that is kind enough to share their time. Remember, the journey is of importance, the outcome will take care of itself. Never stop learning.



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