

1. Preface

One of the most important aims of Tae Kwon-Do is to acquire the skill to defend oneself. In the relatively peaceful society we live in, the best way to defend oneself may not be "Ip jung phil sung", one strike is sufficient for victory, as one has to take in to account the amount of damage you inflict upon your assailant.

It is not uncommon that the defender is judicially punished just for defending oneself so effectively that the assailant is injured.

The suggested solution to this problem is to moderate the harm you inflict on your assailant depending on the aggressiveness of his attack and the skills of combat that he seems to possess.

To be able to find time to make such an assessment, it is here suggested that one should use both verbal and body language to convince the assailant that one does not intend to fight him, at the same time as one does not use techniques that gives the assailant the knowledge that one has the ability to effectively defend oneself.

The purpose of this thesis is to give a guidance and point-of-views on what I call intuitive self-defense where you not only defend yourself with effective Taekwon-Do techniques but also by using other available means to put your opponent in a psychological disadvantage.

2. The initial Self-defense situation

At the first instance of an attack the defender has instantly to respond, mentally, verbally or physically.

The way the defender responds is of course highly dependent if the attack is verbal at first or is taking physical shape at the first instance.

3. Verbal attack and defense techniques

If the attack is verbal the defender always has the possibility to ignore the attack and just carry on as usual. This could be a mean to escape a confrontation which could lead to a violent situation and could be a suitable course of action if you want to avoid the possible damage to you, your company or the assailant.

If the defender reacts to the assailant's verbal attack, it is the same as to recognize the assailant and his attack which is just what he wants. He wants you to stop your actions so that he gets the opportunity to further his plans of harassment.

If you just stop in your tracks, so to speak, you will find yourself in an uncomfortable situation where you now that the verbal attack at any time can escalate to a physical one.

If you in this situation shift in to what is easily understood as an 'fighting position' you will yourself heighten the tension and escalate the situation.

So there is relay only two suggested positions here.

Either you prepare yourself mentally for an attack as you try to position yourself at a proper distance from the attacker, and put yourself in a relaxed stance preferably with one leg slightly to the rear as in a to little side-facing Vertical stance and with your open hands relaxed at your sides and slightly turned outwards. By having the body a little side-facing and turning your lowered open hands outwards your body language tells the opponent that you are open and defenseless and which no harm. This position does not give away that you posses the mental and physical skills to defend yourself, witch puts your attacker in a more relaxed mode and denies him the knowledge of your skills.

Or you position yourself in a strong clearly recognizable fighting stance as Niunja Sogi Daebi Makgi to frighten of the attack. This could be effective but in some situations it could be unfitting or even unwise to show that you posses fighting skills. This may also be an action that escalates the situation witch you might want to avoid.

It is of cause also possible that one, as a student of Taekwon-Do, should judge oneself to be more suitable to deal with this kind of aggressor so that the assailant does not attack a less prepared person and could thereby inflict more serious mental and physical damage.

4. Physical attack and defense techniques

In the case of a physical attack you have no real choice other than to react.

The attack could be either pushing, grasping or striking.

In the case of a pushing or grasping attack it is suggested that one should use both body and verbal language to convince the attacker that one wishes not to fight.

By using verbal reaffirmation that you have no intention to fight you are trying to convince the aggressor to stop the harassment. At the same time you are making it clear to him and to anyone in the vicinity that it is the aggressor that is responsible for the attack witch clarifies your actions as actions taken in a self-defense situation.

By stepping away from the attacker, if possible, one positions oneself out of his immediate grasp and tells him that one does not want a confrontation. By positioning one foot slightly to the rear one turns the body sideways in a more defensive and retreating way. By holding ones arms in a 'Hands Up' position with open out turned hands one shows that one means no harm and has 'given up'.

The use of the 'Hands Up' stance could be very effective. In our western society it has been instilled in us that when you put your hands up you do not want to fight.

This stems from the notion that one is carrying a handgun in a belt strap and could be said to be a heritage from the Wild West or at least the Wild West movies.

What is not so easily recognized is that this is a very good fighting stance with one leg retracted and at a proper kicking distance. The hands are raised and are able to defend the upper body as well as the elbows are positioned to defend against a kick to the ribcage.

Virtually any attacking techniques can take the beginning in this seemingly defensive and harmless position, which allows the defender to use almost any appropriate self-defense technique to ward off an attack and to swiftly retaliate.

Just by turning the body a little more sideways and elongate the stance one attains what is very close to Niunja Sogi Sonkal Daebi Makgi and one finds oneself in a very familiar fighting position.

It is of course of great importance to keep the hands open, or the 'Hands Up' stance will easily be recognized as a fighting stance, and so giving away our advantage to the attacker.



'Hands Up' Self-defense position to instill calm in the aggressor.

If grabbed a similar defensive position is possible.



'Hands UP' defensive position while being grabbed

When one is being grabbed it is also possible to put one hand on the aggressor in a reassuring way. Two positions are suggested here.

Position one is against a grip with two hands or a preparation from the aggressor to butting with the forehead.

To defend, calmly put a hand on the aggressor's chest, with the close vicinity of the aggressor's windpipe it is possible to quickly defend against further aggressions.



'Friendly' hand on attackers chest.

In the case the attacker grips with one hand, the defender can calmly put a hand on the attackers shoulder. The close vicinity of the aggressors windpipe, adamsapple and mastrod, makes it is possible to quickly defend against further aggressions.



'Friendly' hand on attackers shoulder.

If the attacker strikes away the hand one simply turns to the 'Hands Up' defensive position.

When releasing from a grasp of the opposite hand it is also recommended that one simply makes a releasing circle from the middle and up and out, while steeping back and positioning one self in the 'Hands Up' stance.



'Instinctive release' from a grab does not show the aggressor that one uses Taekwon-Do



'Instinctive block' from rear grasp and stepping away in 'Hands Up' defensive position

When releasing from a grasp it could be beneficial to do it in an 'Instinctive' manner that does not tell the aggressor that you have self-defense skills. By putting yourself away from the aggressor in the 'Hands Up' position you may gain time to judge the seriousness of the situation.

In the case of a direct attack from an assailant there is little doubt that one has the right to use the proper amount of violence to stem off the attack.

It is now too late to use body language to calm the attacker and it is time to use Taekwon-Do techniques of self-defense for the rapid destruction of the moving opponent.

5. Conclusion

To aid the defender at the initial stages of a self-defense situation, body language can be an effective tool.

First to calm the attacker and try to avoid further aggressions.

Secondly to allow an effective fighting stance in the 'Hands Up' position.

Thirdly to keep the fact that one possesses self-defense capability from the attacker and thereby gain the advantage of a surprise.

It is my hope that these thoughts and techniques can be of benefit to students of Taekwon-Do, especially to the junior ranks that hopefully can use them to avoid getting in to unwanted trouble before they effectively can fend for them selves.