

# Taekwon-Do

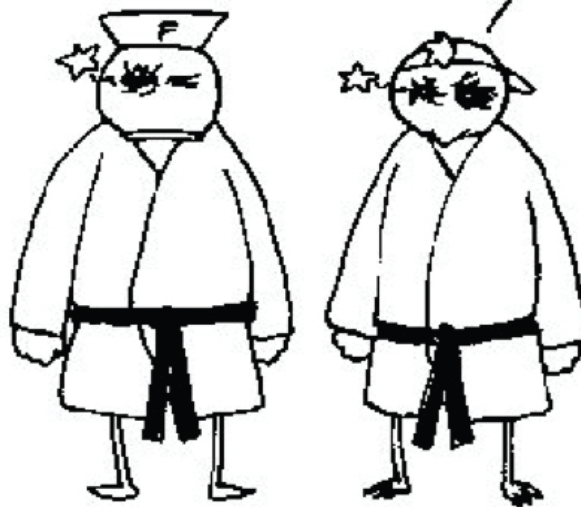
*"What is Taekwon-Do, fundamentally? What is its nature and substance, its reason for being?"*

- Marcus Aurelius -

**FOKKE & SUKKE  
ARE DOING A SELFDEFENSE-SPORT**

**PICKED  
A FIGHT  
IN A BAR**

**BUT THAT GUY  
SUCKED AT  
TAEKWON-DO**



RGVT

Robert Boer

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# Back to Mars

## *Taekwon and Do*

### Fundamentals: Do

"What is Taekwon-Do, fundamentally? What is its nature and substance, its reason for being?" Marcus Aurelius, the great Roman philosopher and emperor, might ask such a question of General Choi Hong Hi, founder of Taekwon-Do, in the hereafter.

The first thing the general said in his interview on his Legacy cd rom was: "The objective(s) of Taekwon-Do is to develop character(...)" and later "...become a useful member of society". On top of that he has his students recite, in the oath of Taekwon-Do: "I shall be a champion of freedom and justice" and "I shall build a more peaceful world". Tough acts to perform.

All these admirable goals require wisdom, strength, and courage.

In the tenets of Taekwon-Do, we read the traits that facilitate success on this journey: courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit. When the late Grandmaster Tran Trieu Quan devised his outline and policy for the ITF, he created 4 categories for development:

Taekwon-Do as:

1. a sport
2. a martial art
3. a way of life
4. an instrument for social development

Several initiatives have since followed to make GM Tran's ideas a reality. The sport aspect is highly organized and progressing; with the Do-course, the "way of life category" was covered. The sport part makes Taekwon-Do a healthy endeavor and accepted by the general public. It is the "Do"-part of Taekwon-Do that makes the system an art, a tool for social development, and way of life. On top of that, several initiatives around the world in Africa and Asia, the Kids-

course and Harmony-program, make Taekwon-Do an instrument of social development.



Taekwon-Do as a ‘martial’ art, though, is hard to grasp as a concept and still lags behind.

So: How ‘martial’ is Taekwon-Do?

The word ‘martial’ is rooted in the word Mars, the Roman god of war and fertility. The Roman consul would say: “Mars Vigila” meaning “Mars, wake up” when he shook the sacred spears of Mars upon the outbreak of war. This is very similar to the use of the words “Charyot,” “Kyong-ye,” and “Junbi” in Taekwon-Do terminology.

- “Charyot” or “pay attention/wake up” and then
- “Kyong-ye” or “pay your respect/de-escalate”,
- “Junbi” or “be ready for what is coming”.

These words embody the warrior mindset and are part of the warrior skills. Standing for freedom and justice requires an understanding of all three. They imply stepping in where others step out, speaking up where others shut up, either in a combative or an empathic manner. It is what the Japanese samurai called *iru* or “entering”. Entering, or stepping into a just battle, or stepping into the life of somebody who needs your help: both require strength, timing, and courage.

The battles a warrior picks defines them in life. Not all battles are the same and not all battles are worthy endeavors. Battle does not make you a useful member of society. Hence, the tenets and oath serve as the Taekwon-Do warrior code and guideline, as do the exemplary lives and works of the scholars, sages, and great leaders after which General Choi named his 24 patterns. These patterns are the technical core of the system.

Indomitable spirit is, in essence, the warrior spirit needed to practice *iru*. It is the last of the tenets and makes Taekwon-Do a “martial” art.....on paper...

In order to ‘enter’ in the real world, we have to apply the concepts, ideas, and tenets learned in training. Otherwise, they are just rhetorical exercises and fancy moral wallpaper. So, without proper application the Do-part of Taekwon-Do is meaningless.

## Fundamentals: Taekwon

This also is true for Taekwon-Do techniques. The ‘Taekwon’ part of Taekwon-Do. Entering everyday life with Taekwon-Do skills means that we have to judge these skills according to real life standards. Practical and state-of-the-art applications of the concepts embedded in the 24 patterns of Taekwon-Do make the system a more reliable tool for safety and standing your ground when necessary. If Taekwon-Do fails there, it fails as a martial art. Self-defense skills, thus, are at the heart of the Taekwon-Do way.

# Radix / Roots

*Creating an self-defense approach in conjunction  
with and rooted in Taekwon-Do*

Developing the fundamentals

Here is what gen. Choi said about selfdefense techniques in his encyclopedia:

## SELF-DEFENCE TECHNIQUES (Hosin Sul)

These techniques are not only the most interesting in Taekwon-Do but also the most advanced. They are in every sense, for a practical self-defense. These techniques are the logical application of various motions acquired from patterns, sparring, and fundamental movements to be used against a sudden attack by an armed or unarmed opponent.

The defender must know how to make use of his or her opponent's momentum and force, while utilizing his or her dynamic and reflexive actions against momentarily undefended target.

Certainly, these self-defense techniques can only be effective if the student take the time to constantly train with them under realistic conditions.

Gen. Choi: Volume 5 p. 268

Keywords in this quote are circled in red. If you put them together you get basic requirements for self-defense techniques:

*- Advanced practical self-defense is about reflexive and logical application of technique under realistic conditions -*

Since Taekwon-Do is our chosen system of martial arts we want to get the best out of it when it comes to self-defense. This raises a number of questions about techniques in pattern:

- Taekwon-Do applications of pattern techniques often seem unpractical and unrealistic.
- Why is that and how do we overcome this?
- What are we practicing when we are practicing pattern?
- Taekwon-Do techniques have their origins in other, older systems. What is a practical (and original) application of our techniques?
- In which context and condition can we use them without altering them? And is this even possible?
- How do we test our skills? And where does this fit in our curriculum?

The answers to these questions point in following direction: research is necessary into the roots and the tactical treasures of the Taekwon-Do patterns to recover, reconstruct and develop techniques that have meaningful self-defense applications. We call this the “Radix approach”.

- *Radix means “root” (of a plant) or “the smallest meaningful unit” (of a language).* -

Taekwon-Do is rooted in a long martial history.

The myriad of techniques found in our patterns invites us to dig deep into the origins of our art. One of the youngest known family members is Shotokan karate which is related to the Okinawan systems which is connected to the Chinese mainland. Which solutions are hidden in older approaches and lost to the Taekwon-Do eye? There is a lot to be learned in conversations and cross training with other martial artists.

Some of us are already started on this journey, acquiring new insights and skills, deepening our Taekwon-Do knowledge. We find some applications that meet the requirements mentioned by gen. Choi by looking into the kitchen of other systems. Others are obvious. Some applications are also lost to our colleagues from other martial arts. Here the creative work starts for us.

# Tul / Pattern

*the Taekwon-Do appstore*

Over time we found that effective approaches often have certain qualities in common. This resulted in a checklist that helps to reconstruct and create other valid applications and tactics. It helps finding and reading pattern techniques that sometimes are hard to decipher.

Useally the more a technique is in line with this list the better it works.

## Tul Application Checklist

1. Advancing techniques imply attack, retreating techniques imply defense
2. There is only one enemy at a time.
3. Every movement in Tul has martial meaning/significance.
4. A hand returning to chamber usually has something in it (Dang-gi son)
5. Utilize the shortest distance to your opponent.
6. There is no "block".
7. Contour the body—strike hard to soft and soft to hard.

Once you find or create an application the following principles help testing it. Clarification of general tactics and context in which it's used help sharpening the techniques and create logical sequences and series.

## Principles for testing

1. Understand why it works
2. An application must work on an "unwilling" partner
3. Every technique should be able to immediately end the fight
4. A lock or hold and nerve strikes are not a primary fighting techniques
5. Work with the physiology, psychology and physics not against them
6. Use both hands
7. Stances aren't just for Tul and often practical as application themselves
8. More than one proper interpretation exists
9. If you are not there, you cannot get hit

## From isolation to improvisation

Once you start testing approaches you ultimately strive for more realistic, yet safe, conditions. The steps to take to go from single, isolated techniques to complex and improvised scenario based training need a clear preparation to equip the trainee with solid and reality-based skills. Otherwise stress and panic dictate all the options. And they are already a big chunk of the reality of self defense. To make this work we not only need techniques but also tactics and drills. These have the same goals as drills in for example competition sparring.

A following learning cycle applies:

1. Learn the principles
2. Learn the tul
3. Learn the applications
4. Identify the underlying principles and tactics. Adapt, vary and drill
5. Gain live-experience: tul based sparring and improvisation

After working through this cycle elements to create scenarios can be added, like role play, choice speech, locations and props, improvised weapons etc.

As a data-base of techniques patterns are very valuable.

All the Taekwon-Do patterns are full of possibilities and hidden information once you start digging. The learning cycle is endless.

Since we just recently began to emphasise a more martial approach to the system there is still a lot of work to be done.

Kind regards, Robert

*The next two pages show some basic Tul techniques from Chon Ji tul as an example*





Groeten. Dit gaat aan alle Hosin Sul technieken vooraf. Worden scenario's getraind laten we groeten achterwege.



De "Danggi Son" oftewel de terugkerende of terugtrekkende hand

Danggi Son=returning hand



anpalmok makgi



palkup taerigi

palmok najunde makgi



euhkallin sonbadak naeryo makgi+moorup chagi

sonkal daebbi makgi

sonkal najunde makgi



olloyo makgi

ap joomuk noollo makgi