

of graduates of Yong-In University (Korea), Budo University (Japan), or people who have acquired their black belts from such graduates. While this is not to argue that some university programs are not good—in fact, some are outstanding (especially in Korea and Japan) such as that at the University of California Berkeley—many in the US are unfortunately quite poor. In addition, Only Yong-In and Budo Universities offer a martial arts major through their colleges of martial arts while ALL other colleges and universities offering martial arts provide limited training within the framework of a physical education major. Thus there can be NO question as to the knowledge and skills of students from these institutions.



TRAPPED!

Where there exists an owner or instructor of limited or no knowledge and skill the local perception of martial arts is significantly diminished. Unfortunately, such instructors often engage in inappropriate behaviors. Then community members come to believe that such behavior is true of all practitioners of karate and the martial arts. Then, even true black belts are tarred by the same brush that people use on the black belt claimants. To offer something from my experience, the year that Greeneville TTJC was chosen by the people of FOX39 to be the focus of a program, another local karate instructor was asked to leave the local parenting fair because of things they were doing with children—THERE AT THE PARENTING FAIR! More recently this owner/instructor faced criminal charges on an unrelated matter. The numbers of serious complaints I have heard about this school and its instructors fill a small book. Yet, this school only recently was forced out of business after many years of operation. When problems occurred at this school—as they invariably did—the victims frequently speak as if their experience would have been no different at TTJC which is entirely untrue! And, thus through no fault of TTJC or any TTJC instructor, the TTJC reputation becomes trapped and has suffered.

While, as with doctors, lawyers, and teachers, true certification cannot weed out all of the bad apples it has proven to reduce their number.

Mind and Body Training

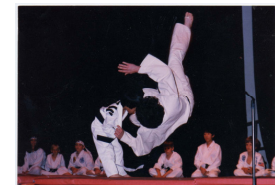
In the martial art of Taekwondo we speak of “*Chung Myung Kwon*” or mind and body training. **Taekwondo masters have long recognized that the training of the mind is every bit as important as the training of the body, if not more so.**



The relationships of the tenets of Taekwondo to the training of the mind and spirit should be clear—on the spiritual side we speak of developing *Pak Chul Pul Kul* (indomitable spirit), of *In Neh* (perseverance), and *Ja Jeh* (self control); and on the behavioral side, *Ye Eu* (courtesy), *Jung Jhick* (integrity), and *Choung Sung* (loyalty).

The importance of teaching, from the very beginning, these moral codes for development of the whole person cannot be understated. If they are not provided, then the person learns the wrong kind of “spirit” from the training and the “untraining” is extremely difficult.

Unfortunately, as of this writing, US martial arts are best characterized as “caveat emptor” or BUYER BEWARE! You must do some real work checking to find out if the owner/instructor is truly knowledgeable in the martial arts because there are many in the industry dead set against certification. As one person wrote in a letter to the editor of a professional martial arts magazine “I have been teaching karate for over 20 years. Who can tell me I’m not a black belt.” One owner/instructor told me in a phone conversation that if I didn’t think his black belt was legitimate he could give me plenty of phone numbers of his friends that I could call. If true certification existed in this country background checks would be of less importance though I would never recommend the calling of the owner/instructors friends in this regard.





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**Walk in gentle
strength.**

**Personal Observations
on the Need for a
System of Black Belt
Certification in the US**
- by Clifford Terry -
publication of
TTJC[©]



Master Terry began training with Grandmaster Pyong K. Eun more than 27 years ago. He has earned Black Belts in Taekwondo, Judo, and Hapkido. Since establishing the TTJC-Greenville School in 1994, he has earned many awards for the innovative program he uses. Not only do they provide martial arts training, but, gymnastic training, and some introduction to Korean language and culture—some students even travel to Korea. In addition, this outstanding program was the basis for the Greenville school being chosen from all of the karate schools in the Tri-cities/Greenville area as the focus of a “FOX39 Kids Club” program on karate which aired in May 1999. In 2008, Master Terry was given a lifetime appointment to the Board of Directors for the State of Tennessee for USA Taekwondo, an arm of the US Olympic Committee. Master Terry hopes that publications such as this may shed light on the darker side of US martial arts and thereby motivate needed reforms for the benefit of all.

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A couple days ago I received by mail a request to join yet another “martial arts hall of fame”. This time it is the USA Martial Arts Hall of Fame. There are many such organizations ranging from the World Martial Arts Hall of Fame to this latest entry. It seems that every year I receive a “nomination” to some such new hall of fame. Mind you, these are not halls of fame such as we know of for football and baseball where people are elected based on their demonstrated knowledge and abilities, but instead what I have termed a “feel good” hall of fame. You can “nominate” yourself, your family and your friends (whether they have martial arts knowledge is irrelevant), even your pets if you wish. Once the appropriate amount of money has been paid to the organization the nominated person (or whatever) receives their induction plaques, papers, etc. to hang on the wall. I can see that the best purpose of such organizations is to increase school retention. The school master can nominate the best student or instructor, the best achieving student or instructor, or the student or instructor possessing the best level of pure skill. The master can even nominate the most supportive parents of a child student, or basically use the nomination as a reward for services rendered to the school. This is all OK because the intent is to make people *feel good*, but I personally hesitate to use such rewards because I would be afraid that such rewards for some may be seen as an insult to others.

Unfortunately some school owners try to use these purchased **feel good** “hall of fame” awards as an unethical means of qualifying themselves or their schools. Frequently they do so because they lack self confidence to sell themselves - their martial arts knowledge and ability — in and of itself as should be done. Instead they rely on a gimmick such as this or getting their picture taken with a big celebrity such as Chuck Norris or some other star as their pitch to promote themselves—usually to make money. If they really do have martial arts knowledge and ability gimmicks are not necessary. Unfortunately, the vast majority of people I have encountered who use such gimmicks often never earned even a first level black belt. Such people do more harm than good, both to their students as well as to the martial arts. BUYER BEWARE!

What are the martial arts?



“The martial arts have, for centuries, proved a successful training ground for developing discipline, character strength and confidence. In the past, however, only the Buddhist monks and the elite warriors of the orient had access to the secrets that turned men into supermen. “ These words are not only true but speak of knowledge common to many.

While there exist many styles of martial arts the martial arts for which we primarily train at TTJC are best defined as the techniques of *Do Soo Kong Kwon* as they utilize mostly the hands and feet to attack and defend. The traditional weapons of oriental martial arts - the long and short wooden sticks (called staffs), the bow and arrow, spears, swords and other cutting implements are called *Byeong Ki Sul*. These skills of these arts are employed by a variety systems around the world but they all fall into three major categories as follows:



Kwon Bup—the system of techniques that are characterized by striking with the hands and/or feet. Included in this category are Taekwondo, Kung Fu, and even boxing.

Sol Ghak—the system of techniques that are characterized by throws of opponents. Included in this category are Judo, Ssirum, and Sumo.



Kum Na—the techniques of Kum Na are used to attack the opponents joints and/or pressure points. The best

known examples of these techniques are Hapkido and Aikikido.

It should be mentioned here that between 1,000 and 2,000 years ago the peoples of Korea, China, and Japan realized that the martial arts taught important life values. About 1,500 years ago the Korean peoples developed the training so as to prepare the sons of nobility to take their roles of leadership in society. In addition to the gymnastic and physical training, these children were trained in the mental disciplines of respect, perseverance, discipline (literally the controlling of all aspects of one's own behavior), goal setting, focus, and leadership. Even today the value of traditional martial arts training for children should NOT be underestimated in preparing them for their adult lives.

Unfortunately, within the last 35 years the US has seen a proliferation of schools claiming to teach martial arts. As there currently exists no system of certification for martial artists in the US, many instructors and school owners have little or no formal training in the arts. I personally know of instructors who never trained to even a first level black belt, but, instead, acquired their belts either as a gift from a credible black belt or simply purchased their belts. These instructors and school owners, inspired perhaps by movies such as "Karate Kid", Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, and/or Chuck Norris movies wish to heighten their prestige in their community by faking a martial arts knowledge which they lack. Often these people will take money from others to train them or their children in "martial arts" Some even go so far as to



pay money to advertise that they have even been inducted into some "Martial Arts Hall of Fame". They will go to almost



The symbol of the World Taekwondo Federation which is located at the Kukkiwon in Seoul, Korea

(RIGHT) The cherry blossom, the symbol for International Judo, is used by the Kodakan which is located in Tokyo, Japan



any length to make their black belts appear legitimate—including making the claim that they are teaching karate in a "Christian" school (Note: Martial arts CORRECTLY trained is based on the values of self improvement/self-enhancement regardless the religious background of the student, thus all can significantly benefit from the training, Christians, Jews, Buddhists, Moslems, or whatever). Schools run by such unethical people (and there are many) teach little of the techniques or proper mental training involved in martial arts because the instructors lack both the knowledge and the internal will to pursue the martial arts until they learn the knowledge. Such schools can do little to help the student and may even do long term harm—again a situation I have witnessed. *In fact, I discovered after years of effort that because of the problems acquired by the students associated with training from such schools it often is the wise course to disallow such students from our program as opposed to trying to retrain them.*



The negative societal impact of these schools cannot be underestimated.

The US does poorly in

Taekwondo and Judo Olympic Games competition and US Black Belts generally are on level with beginner and/or intermediate level COLORED belts from many other countries. On the local level I have observed that such schools create students lacking to some degree in very important social skills, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Often such students suffer increased aggressiveness and many can become arrogant and bullyish.

Therefore I would strongly argue for the need in this country of a legitimate certification board. I propose the members of such a board would consist

The uniform patch (at right) representing the International Hapkido Federation.

