



Taekwondo as a Community Service

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Introduction

The martial arts are a part of many cultures throughout the world. Shaolin priests have been practicing forms of Kung Fu or Wu Shu for thousands of years. Necessity for self-defense across the Far East has produced many different styles of martial arts including Karate in Okinawa and Japan and Taekwondo in Korea. Many students ask, "What is the difference between Karate and Taekwondo?" The exact answer is difficult to find, but the obvious difference is the extensive use of foot techniques in Taekwondo. Japanese styles of Karate practice many of the same kicks as does Taekwondo, but their reliance on those kicking techniques is much less extensive. Another significant difference is the popularity enjoyed outside of their native country. Karate is also widespread, but doesn't enjoy the popularity of Taekwondo in countries all over the world.

The result of this popularity is that Taekwondo is available in almost every city in the world, but at what cost? Commercial Taekwondo schools have been started in many places, but the cost of maintaining those schools forces the owners to charge higher prices for tuition. This sometimes prevents a significant portion of the potential students from participating in them and gaining the benefits associated with martial arts practice. This thesis will explore this issue deeper, and argue the need for community based Taekwondo clubs that can provide the benefits of martial arts education at a cost that everyone can afford.

History of Taekwondo

The earliest known records of Martial Arts being practiced in Korea date back to before the birth of Christ. The earliest forms of Korean martial arts are known as *Tae Kyon*. The evidence most often used to support the notion that martial arts were being practiced at that time are wall-paintings in ancient tombs that show two men in fighting-stance. At that time, Korea was ruled by three dynasties: Koguryo (37 B.C. - 668 A.D.), Paekje (18 B.C. - 600 A.D.), and Silla (57 B.C. - 935 A.D.). The Silla unified the dynasties in 668 A.D. The Hwa Rang Do played an important role in this unification. The Hwa Rang Do was a group of young noble men, devoted to mind and body who served the Silla Dynasty. The Hwa Rang Do had an honor-code and practiced various forms of martial arts, including Tae Kyon and Soo Bakh Do. The old honor-code of the HwaRang is the philosophical background of modern Taekwondo.

In 936 A.D. the Koryo dynasty began and the modern name of Korea is derived from Koryo. During the Koryo Dynasty, the sport Soo Bakh Do, which was then used as a military training method, became popular. During the Joseon dynasty (1392 A.D. - 1910 A.D.) the emphasis on military training disappeared. In the Joseon dynasty Confucianism was the state religion, and according to Confucianism, the higher classes should study poetry and play music. Fighting was for commoners.

Modern Taekwondo has been influenced by many other Martial Arts. Probably the most evident of these is Karate. Japan occupied Korea from around 1910 until the end of World War II. During the occupation of Korea, the Japanese tried to erase all traces of the Korean culture, including the traditional martial arts. During the war, lots of Koreans were trained as soldiers in Japan, thus giving many Koreans the opportunity to learn Karate.

After World War II, when Korea once again gained its independence, a move was made to recapture the martial arts traditions of the past. Martial arts gyms or “kwans” were formed around the country and martial arts training began. These gyms are known today as:

- Chung Do Kwan
- Moo Duk Kwan
- Yun Moo Kwan
- Chang Moo Kwan
- Oh Do Kwan
- Ji Do Kwan
- Chi Do Kwan
- Song Moo Kwan

The author is familiar with several of these kwans, as his first training in Taekwondo was a Master of Oh Do Kwan Taekwondo named Chu Kyo Il, and currently the NPS Taekwondo Association is affiliated with the Ji Do Kwan, through Master Kang’s teacher, Master Jin Sukh Byun of Los Angeles. In 1955 the Kwans came together to form the style Tae Soo Do. Around 1957, the name Taekwondo was adopted for its similarity to the name Tae Kyon.

General Choi Hong Hi was one of those soldiers trained by the Japanese during World War II, and when he was placed in charge of the Army, he required them to learn Taekwondo, so the very first Taekwondo students were Korean soldiers. At that time, Taekwondo was heavily influenced by Shotokan Karate, reflecting General Choi’s training in Japan. Around 1962, the Korean Amateur Sports Association recognized the Korean Taekwondo Union, and in 1965 the name was changed to Korean Taekwondo Association (K.T.A.). General Choi was made the first president of the K.T.A. in 1965, but it didn’t last long. In 1966, General Choi visited North Korea to introduce Taekwondo, but the South Korean government frowned upon his efforts. He was forced to leave Korea in disgrace. General Choi left for America and established the I.T.F. (International Taekwondo Federation) as a separate organization, two years later.

In 1973, since Korea was where Taekwondo started, the World Taekwondo Federation (W.T.F.) was established in Seoul to provide an international arm for the Korean Taekwondo Association. At the first inaugural meeting, Dr. Un Yong Kim was elected as president of the WTF and drafted a charter for the federation. The WTF is the only official organization recognized by the Korean government as an international regulating body for Taekwondo. The World Taekwondo Federation has since made a

major effort to standardize tournament rules and organize world-class competitions. After the 2nd World TKD Championships in Seoul, the WTF became an affiliate of the General Assembly of International Sports Federation (GAISF), which has ties to the International Olympic Committee (IOC). The IOC recognized and admitted the WTF in July 1980. In 1982 the General Session of the IOC designated Taekwondo as an official Demonstration Sport for the 1988 Olympic Games in Seoul, Korea. Taekwondo then became an official Olympic Sport in the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia.

Since Modern-day Taekwondo's official birth in 1955, its development as a sport has been rapid. Over 30 million people practice Taekwondo today in more than 156 countries.

Taekwondo as a commercial enterprise

Taekwondo is arguably the most popular martial art in the world. Although the author does not know all of the reasons that this is true, it appears from the Taekwondo establishment in North America that many Taekwondo practitioners left Korea and migrated around the world during the 1960s, 1970s and the 1980s and established commercial Taekwondo academies and schools. Most Taekwondo schools in the U.S. are operated as commercial establishments. Martial arts instruction can be a profitable business, if it is run as a business. This business-centric approach is necessary to ensure the viability of the school. Successful martial arts businesses are generally operated in high rent districts to ensure that the school gets the visibility required to make it successful. The high cost of space and facilities for running a successful commercial school can be extensive.

There is a need, therefore, in these commercial establishments to be as, or more, concerned about the cash flow of the business as about the integrity of the instruction given. This need to ensure proper cash flow generally means that tuition is high, and contracts are required to ensure that the business gets a steady flow of needed cash to keep the business open. The effect of this type of approach is diametrically opposed to increasing the number of students in the school. To ensure that enough students register for the classes, there are usually incentives to make the class more attractive in the beginning, if not for the students themselves, for the parents. Incentives include free lessons, or startup packages that include uniforms, equipment, or the promise of guaranteed rank promotions. Black belt clubs are very common among commercial schools. There is an expectation among students who join the black belt club that they will attain a black belt if they only stay the appropriate amount of time.

These techniques to ensure the viability of commercial martial arts schools are not always successful. Unfortunately, very few commercial martial arts schools actually achieve what they would consider success. Most are doomed to failure, from a business perspective, and many end up costing the owner/instructor their martial arts career. This thesis is not intended to debate the right or wrong of this approach, but to propose an alternative approach.

Hypothesis

There is a large segment of the population who are not able to participate in these commercial schools. Usually, this is due to the high cost of membership, but sometimes it can be the result of not having a martial arts school available within a reasonable distance. This thesis is concerned with the availability of affordable Taekwondo instruction without the burdens of viability that plague commercial school owners. The hypothesis of this thesis is:

Taekwondo as a community service provides a valuable alternative to commercial instruction and adds significant value to the lives of the people involved.

Value is a term sometimes not well defined. What constitutes value? This thesis will consider value to be a quality that is positive in nature and enhances the quality of life the recipient. The remainder of this thesis is intended to support this hypothesis, and convince the reader of its validity.

Community Service Value of Taekwondo

Taekwondo as an all-around physical fitness activity is well known in Korea. In Korea, school children have one day each week that they wear their Doboks to school. Presumably, since they wear their Doboks to school, they are expected to participate in Taekwondo instruction. The author can only presume that this instruction is their physical fitness activity in school. It is a fact that Taekwondo is practiced in the Korean military as a regular part of physical training exercises. Although this instruction is institutionalized in the education system, it does not mean that all children practice for life. Many Korean children do it only because they have to, and quit as soon as they are able. Even those that quit have gained an immeasurable amount of discipline and health benefit that serves them for the rest of their lives.

In the U.S., there are many examples of community service martial arts programs that have been very successful. One such program is the one initiated by Chuck Norris to “kick drugs out of America,” which now touches 4200 kids at 30 different schools. [1] These programs serve to focus the attention of the child on something constructive as opposed to the destructive activities that are more readily available to children today. Still others have started successful community service-based martial arts programs with tremendous success. Reverend Ken Fizer at Otterbein United Methodist Church in Martinsburg, WV has such a program running in his church. Fizer says, “The classes teach kids self-defense in a safe, Christian environment and instill discipline, self-control, respect and integrity.” [2] Taekwondo also teaches self-confidence. This is a trait that more kids and adults need in today’s competitive society.

Absence of year round athletic programs

One of the reasons that community based athletic programs are so popular is that there is a lack of year-round athletic programs in our society. Most sports that offer

community based programs are short-lived, lasting no more than three months. Football or soccer in the fall, basketball in the spring, and baseball in the summer is about the best that parents can hope for. Even swimming is not available year-round unless the family has access to an indoor pool. All of these activities are also available either for children or their parents, but not usually both. Taekwondo is a skill that can be learned by parents and children side-by-side in the same class. Much of the success of the NPS Taekwondo Association through the years has been gained from parents being active with their kids and their spouses.

Value of Discipline gained from martial arts

Most martial arts schools cite discipline as a key attribute of a martial arts education. For some, this discipline is harsh, and for others, it is not so harsh. The requirements to stand in line, listen to the instructor, stay quiet and do what you are told are essential ingredients in Taekwondo training. Students who do not learn discipline not only disrupt the class, they do not learn the essential skills necessary to progress. They also do not endear themselves to the instructor, losing opportunities to get the positive attention that might help them to progress.

Harsh discipline is also unnecessary. Students should pay attention and do what they are told because they respect the instructor, not because they fear them. In community based Taekwondo programs, this is especially important, as people seem to see value in what they pay for, even those who don't have much to spend. If they believe that the instructor does not respect the students, and treats them too harshly, they may decide it is not worth the hassle, and decide the instructor is not the kind they want their children exposed to. Kindness and respect work much better and make students loyal to the program and their instructors.

History of NPS Taekwondo Association

The NPS Taekwondo Association finds its roots in the Naval Postgraduate School Taekwondo Club, but really started in August 1990 in a military gymnasium in Tongduchon, Korea. The author, then a Captain in the U.S. Army was transferred from Monterey, California to the Second Infantry Division at Camp Casey, Korea. He had just left his family thousands of miles away in El Paso, Texas and was sent to Korea for a year of "unaccompanied service". Before he left El Paso, his wife, Caryn, and son, David, had started studying Taekwondo at a local commercial martial arts school in El Paso. Caryn had reported that they really loved it and were doing well. It wasn't long before the author discovered that no matter how much time he spent at work, there would always be more work to do, and was looking for an excuse to get out of the office at closing time.

He discovered that there was an active Taekwondo class at the gymnasium close to his barracks. He decided to study Taekwondo as a surprise to his family so that when he returned to the U.S., they would have something they could do together. Little did he know how much it would mean to his life and marriage in the years to come.

Naval Postgraduate School Taekwondo Club

In August 1991, the author returned to Monterey, California after a year in Korea, invigorated for growth as a new Doctoral Student in Computer Science and also as a brand new 1st Dan Black Belt. Almost immediately, the author began searching for a martial arts class that would enable him to continue his growth in his new love, as well as the martial arts growth of his wife and son, both of whom had made significant progress in their study of Taekwondo during his absence. Unfortunately, there were none to be found, at least none that the author felt comfortable taking his family to. With the help of a fellow soldier, the author decided to start a club of his own, just for the opportunity to train and practice. Thus, the Naval Postgraduate School Taekwondo Club was born.

Humble Beginnings

The club had its first meeting on October 1st, 1991, in a racquetball court in the Navy gymnasium at the Naval Postgraduate School. That first class had seven members, five students and two instructors. It was difficult teaching class in a racquetball court, but at least it was a place to work out. The class grew steadily, and by the end of May 1992, the group had grown to over 20 members. Also, there was almost always an audience, and many of those watching became members of the class. Along the way, the author also met someone very important to the association. Walking along the road in his dobok one afternoon on his way to class, the author was stopped by a gentleman and asked about the class. It seems that this gentleman played racquetball, and had observed the class on occasion. The author invited the gentleman to join the club, but he declined.

Ever since his return from Korea, the author had searched for another instructor that he could train with, and could sponsor his promotion to 2nd Degree Black Belt. He had visited masters as far away as 75 miles in San Jose, but could not find anyone that he felt comfortable with. One day, as he was walking through one of the buildings on campus, he ran into the gentleman that he had met on the street that afternoon. He turned out to be a Professor at the school. The author stopped to talk to the professor out of courtesy, and while in his office, caught a glimpse of a plaque from a Taekwondo organization on his wall that said "Master Keebom Kang." He was dumbfounded and excited all at once. He asked the gentleman if he would consider training him, so that he could be a better instructor for the club. The master agreed, and what started as a one on one arrangement between Master Keebom Kang and the author, has turned into a 12 year long association and friendship.

Youth Program

Shortly after the author's family arrived back in Monterey, the kids started attending school and going to the La Mesa Youth Center for their after school program. One day, the author thought that perhaps he could help the youth center by offering one class per week for the kids in the after school program. The director was accepting, but somewhat skeptical about the one-hour class. After just a little while, she was appreciative of the program. The first youth class started with 12 kids, ages 5 to 10. The

class was offered for free, but the children were instructed that they could participate only if they obeyed some simple rules. Those simple rules have evolved into the following five regular rules for youth members of the association:

1. **Homework First:** Children are instructed that they can only participate in the class if they have completed all of their homework, any chores that their parents require of them at home, and their grades remain high. This rule is intended to teach the children that Taekwondo instruction should never take the place of the more important things in life like school and family responsibility.
2. **Be Nice to Someone Every Day:** Children are also instructed to pick one person every day to be nice to. It is not necessary for them to do something tangible for someone. Sometimes being nice is as simple as smiling at someone who is having a bad day. It is hoped that learning to be nice to one person every day will help them learn develop habits of courtesy and kindness.
3. **Take Care of Your Own Uniform:** When the children get a uniform, which they usually want to do very quickly, they are instructed that it is their uniform and not their parents'. It is their responsibility to know where it is at all times, to put it in the laundry so their parents can wash it, and to take it after it is clean, fold it and put it away so they know where it is for class the next time. This is to teach them personal responsibility.
4. **Never Use Taekwondo at the Playground or at School:** Children are told that what they learn in the class is to remain in the class, and learning these skills is not a way to gain superiority over their playmates. This is intended to prevent the kids from feeling that they are now "better" than others. It also helps prevent members of the community from feeling that the class is teaching the kids to be bullies.
5. **Practice Something Every Day:** Since the class originally only met once per week for an hour, it was nearly impossible for the kids to remember from one week to another, what they had learned in the previous class. Even today, most classes only meet a couple of times per week. This rule is intended to keep the skills they learn in their mind, so they can retain as much as possible.

These rules are enforced very strictly, especially rules 1 and 4. Breaking either of these rules is grounds for not being allowed to come to the class again. It only takes one or two breaking a rule and being told not to come back for the kids to pay very close attention to the rules. That youth class eventually grew to over 50 children. It was enough that the author had to break the group into two different classes and recruit help to run the class.

Outgrowing the Racquetball Court

Not only the kid's class was growing bigger all of the time. Eventually, the class in the racquetball court grew to over 30 people, and would no longer fit in a racquetball court. There was an aerobics room across from the gymnasium in another building, and a time slot finally opened up in the schedule for that room to allow the class to move to the bigger room. The room was ideal for a martial arts class. It was large enough for everyone, had raised floors, so jumping was cushioned some, and it had mirrors to help

the students see themselves while they practiced. It also had some cabinets for our equipment. The class continued to grow, eventually growing to almost 50. In those first three years, the class grew in numbers, but also in experience. By June 1994, when the author and his family left Monterey, the club had produced over 10 black belts, and had started something that would turn out to be unstoppable. The Naval Postgraduate School Taekwondo Club is still going strong today under the direction of Master Keebom Kang and many talented black belt instructors.

Expanding beyond Monterey

In June 1994, the author graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School with a Ph.D. in Computer Science (with a minor in Taekwondo)[\[1\]](#). Upon leaving Monterey, California, the author's family was transferred to Atlanta, Georgia where the author was assigned to the Army Research Laboratory on the campus of Georgia Institute of Technology. It quickly became clear that the author would not be able to live without regular training in Taekwondo, so he and Caryn started a lunchtime class on campus. This class never really blossomed into a big class, but there were a few dedicated students in that class that are still active with our association. It is not clear exactly why the university campus was not a good place to build an active Taekwondo class, but it seems most likely to be due to a lack of a sense of community on a university campus. Students don't really feel like a part of the campus. It is only a place where they go temporarily to get an education and then move on. Students' schedules also change from semester to semester and they cannot always be available at the same time for class.

When it became clear that the lunchtime class was never going to blossom, the author and his wife, Caryn, had the notion that they should find a place closer to home to start an evening class. After talking with a neighbor, they discovered that there was a church around the corner with a large gymnasium that was sometimes rented out to groups for outside activities. After a few negotiations, the Zoar United Methodist Church Taekwondo class was started in 1995. About this time, the author consulted with his master, and decided to form an association to maintain the roots of these new clubs with the original club in Monterey. Thus, the first three clubs of the NPS Taekwondo Association were established.

The beginning of the Zoar class was different than the author had experienced in Monterey. It was clear from the beginning that this class was going to be more of a family activity for its members. Out of the 20 or so students that started with the class, $\frac{3}{4}$ of them were part of one family or another taking the class. Of those original students, over half are still with the association. One of those original members is now the Chief Instructor of that club.

It was at the Zoar class that the author started to experience the spiritual aspects of the class. Although the author had been a Christian for more than 20 years, he had fallen away from the church. Through interaction with some of the people at Zoar United Methodist Church, he began to develop an interest in renewing his relationship with

God. This change of heart was due almost exclusively to the sense of family that existed in the Zoar club.

One of the students that started in the Monterey Club and received his black belt through the Monterey Club was LCdr Victor Diramio, U.S. Navy. When Vic graduated from the Naval Postgraduate School, he was transferred to the Washington, DC area. Vic was a dedicated Taekwondo student and had maintained his personal practice through lunchtime practice and the occasional visit by the author to DC. He came to the Zoar club for a promotion test in November 1996, and was promoted to 2nd Dan. He was so moved by the club at Zoar UMC that upon his return to Washington, he approached the principal at his children's school and asked about starting a class in the evening at the school. That class at Rockledge Elementary School in Woodbridge, VA became the fourth club in the association.

In April 1997, the author was notified that once again, the Army would transfer him and his family. He would have to transfer to Washington, DC that summer. When he was notified, he contacted LCdr Diramio to inquire about places to live and discovered that the Navy had just notified Vic that he was to transfer to Hawaii in June that summer. It was arranged that the author and his family would rent the Diramio's house for the time they lived in the DC area, and take over leadership of the Rockledge Elementary School Taekwondo Club.

Now, the question that had to be answered was "what would happen to the Zoar UMC class?" There were only two students who had achieved the rank of black belt at this time, and neither of them was capable of leading the club. One was a 16-year-old girl, and the other was a contractor that did not have the time to lead the club. There were three students who had achieved the rank of Deputy Black Belt, and one of those, Yvonne Gulley, had the temperament and time to lead the class. She took over the class, and has since grown the Zoar Club into one of, if not the strongest clubs in the association. The relationship of the NPS Taekwondo Association with churches had begun, and it has only grown stronger through the years. Taekwondo is a very spiritual activity, and the community provided by a church is the perfect place for a club to grow.

The next club to join the association was also at a church. Major Jon Walter, a student in the Georgia Tech class had earned his black belt and wanted to start a club at his church, Calvary Baptist Church in Lilburn, Georgia. He started the club with another of the black belts from Georgia Tech, Brian Rivera. One of their first students was the pastor of the church, and the club thrived. Members of the church joined the club and the club grew and had a good relationship with the church. Unfortunately, it was not long before Jon Walter was also transferred away from the area. One of the students that had joined the club at Calvary was Major Roger Dixon. He had transferred into the Army Research Lab to replace the author. He and his daughters had studied Taekwondo at West Point, and they joined the club at Calvary. When Jon Walter left, Roger had just received his black belt, so he took over as Chief Instructor of the club. He and his daughters did a superb job of running that club, but unfortunately, the church stopped supporting the club after Jon Walter left and the pastor stopped participating. The author

believes that they began to resent nonmembers using their facilities. The Dixon's moved to Bethany Baptist Church in Snellville, Georgia, and started another club. This one has thrived and is still going strong. This is the club that introduced prayer before and after class, and several of the church clubs have adopted this practice.

Meanwhile in Virginia, the Rockledge Elementary School Taekwondo Club was growing under the leadership of the Dampier's. The first opportunity to take over the class was when school started in August 1997. The principal was very supportive. Due to budget limitations, she was unable to provide physical education classes to the students of the school, so she was interested in the Taekwondo class filling that gap. For three school years, the Dampier's taught Taekwondo classes at Rockledge. From that club, two additional school clubs started in Northern Virginia area, one more in Woodbridge, and one in Stafford, VA just outside of Quantico Marine Base.

In March 2000, upon retirement from the Army, the author and his family moved from Woodbridge, VA to Starkville, MS, where the author took a job as a professor of computer science at Mississippi State University. In May 2000, the Dampier's started a Taekwondo club at First United Methodist Church in Starkville. The club and the church have grown to appreciate one another, and now the club is considered an active ministry of the church.

Current State of NPS Taekwondo Association

The association has grown very rapidly and very strong. Most commercial martial arts clubs last only a couple of years because they are so expensive to run. In the NPS Taekwondo Association, we have only had three clubs close down, and in two cases, it was because the Chief Instructor was military and was transferred out of the area before a replacement could be trained. The author is convinced that the clubs are popular because they provide a valuable service that satisfies a need in the lives of the students they attract.

Organization

The NPS Taekwondo Association is organized as a loose federation of independent clubs with a centralized testing standard that must be adhered to by all clubs. Finances, schedule, leadership, and administration of the local clubs are completely up to the local club. Some clubs operate free, and others charge a nominal fee to cover rent expenses. One of the goals of the Association has always been to provide martial arts training for as little as possible, and that is a goal that every club has to strive for. The association specifies testing standards, and clubs are not allowed to vary from that. The reason for this is to ensure that any student in the association can go to any club and participate without having to worry about not knowing the curriculum. Some of the clubs teach additional material, and that is not only acceptable, but also encouraged in some cases. Every club is required to test only to the standard.

Leadership

Leadership of the association has until very recently been exercised by a very small group of people. Master Keebom Kang has been the director of the association, while the author and his wife Caryn have handled the every day operations. This worked well as long as the association remained small, but as the number of students has grown, it has become more and more difficult to manage. With the anticipated promotion of the next three members to 4th Dan, a Board of Director's has been established with Master Kang as the Chairman of the Board, and each of the 4th Dans and above as directors. Policy decisions will now be made by the board and implemented by the Chief Instructors in their individual clubs. Conformance to centralized standards and policies has never been difficult to achieve as black belt promotions are centrally managed, and clubs that do not follow the rules do not get black belt tests.

Current Clubs

The NPS Taekwondo Association now enjoys the membership of 12 active clubs, with the most recent club opened in Baghdad, Iraq, for American Servicemen currently engaged in combat operations in that country. The oldest club still in existence is in Monterey, California. The largest club is currently the club in Snellville at Zoar United Methodist Church. Other clubs include: Woodbridge, VA; Stafford, VA; Lake Mary, FL; Starkville, MS; Mississippi State, MS; Snellville, GA (Bethany); Snellville, GA (Trinity); Grayson, GA; and Auburn, AL.

Association Members

There have been many people associated with the NPS Taekwondo Association over the years. In addition to students, there have been many parents and family members that have supported the activities associated with the individual clubs. These supporters have been instrumental in making the association a viable enterprise. Some of these non-participating supporters have been rewarded over the years with Honorary Black Belts. Most have served loyally without any reward at all.

Black Belt

The most influential members of the association have been those students that have achieved the black belt. During the last 12 years, the association has enjoyed over 150 black belt certifications. These range in rank from 1st Dan/Poom to 4th Dan, and almost all of the 2nd Dan and above certifications have been students who got their 1st Dan with the association. On October 18, 2003, the association anticipates celebrating its 100th 1st Dan promotion. All others are members who have earned their promotions through dedicated service and adoption of the association philosophy and goals.

Most members of the association who have achieved the black belt end up helping to instruct at local clubs or starting clubs of their own. The association supports black belts who are interested in starting local clubs, as long as they adopt the philosophy of the association, and support the notion of Taekwondo as a community service. Black belt

instructors also spend their time supporting and helping to grow the clubs they “grew up” in.

Another trait of black belt members of the association is that they continue to be students. All adopt the truth that Taekwondo is a life-long activity and only through continued study and growth can the member gain all of the benefits of Taekwondo.

Future of NPS Taekwondo Association

The future of the NPS Taekwondo Association is not completely known at this point, but looks to be very positive. The association has experienced growth beyond the author’s wildest expectations. From those seven people working out in a racquetball court to over 500 active members in 12 different clubs, the association has become a force for community service unrivaled by very few.

The association’s growth has to date been from within. All clubs are started by members who have earned their black belts in the association. It is possible that the association will begin to get inquiries about entire clubs joining. As long as those clubs are willing to operate within the guidelines established by the NPS Taekwondo Association, this will probably be acceptable. Those situations will have to be considered on a case-by-case basis. One thing is for sure, as the number of black belts continues to grow, the potential for new clubs increases. What is the limit? Who knows and does it matter?

Creating a covenant relationship between association and member

One of the ways that the association can ensure its continued growth is by encouraging the black belts to undertake activities that will aid growth. At the inaugural Board of Director’s meeting in the summer of 2003, this issue was discussed. One of the board members, Soonho Jeong, suggested that if the black belt member of the association felt they had an obligation to assist in the maintenance and growth of the association, they would be more likely to help. It was decided that the association would establish a system of covenants with its members. Upon promotion to a Dan grade, every member would be required to detail a plan of activities that they would engage in to earn their next promotion. The leaders of the association would review this plan and if it were sufficient, a covenant would be established that would enable the member to earn the right to their next promotion test by fulfilling their promises outlined in the covenant, in addition to the normal requirements for promotion. The Board of Director’s at the next meeting on October 18, 2003 will review a draft document outlining this new policy.

Conclusion

Taekwondo is a martial art, and students learn how to defend themselves. Taekwondo is also a sport, and students can learn how to fight in tournaments.

Taekwondo is exercise for those that take its practice seriously and put in the required amount of effort. Taekwondo is also a social activity that when practiced can improve the quality of life of its practitioners. The bottom line is that Taekwondo provides a positive influence on most people who practice it. Whether the student is young or old, fat or thin, tall or short, smart or “not so smart”, Taekwondo provides an activity for all of them. When practiced regularly, the young will grow up strong and mature, the old will feel better physically and stay younger longer, the fat will get thin, the thin will get stronger and bigger, the tall will learn that begin big does not necessarily make you better and the short will learn how to use their skills to overcome their shortness, the “not so smart” will learn and get smarter, and the smart will learn to be tolerant of those that aren’t as smart. The NPS Taekwondo Association is an organization committed to providing Taekwondo instruction to those that cannot afford to pay high commercial tuition rates, and this thesis has tried to show that it is valuable to do so.

References

1. <http://www.chucknorris.com/html/kick.html>
2. Fizer, Ken, “Evangelism: Pastor Combines Martial Arts and Ministry”, Interpreter, Volume 47, Number 3, April 2003, pp. 12.

[1] Master Kang often claimed that the author was at the Naval Postgraduate School studying Taekwondo, and along the way, he managed to get a Ph.D. in Computer Science.