

In my last blog I touched on leadership and its importance in the art we study.

I read a lot, I like to read. I think it is important to always remember that there are three parts to martial arts training: Physical, spiritual, and mental; thus we train not only our bodies but our minds as well. So, I feel it is important to read and study about martial arts and other interests as well as it is to physically train.

Most People think of Tae Kwon Do as a “new” martial art, as its common form is traced back to the 1950s. However, I recently read that Tae Kwon Do actually traces its roots back to around the year 50 BC. At that time one of the Dominant Kingdoms in the area now known as Korea was the Silla Kingdom. Many of the techniques, stances and movements were part of a Korean (or Sillian) Martial art called Taek Kyon. The group of Sillian warriors trained in this manner became known as, the Hwarang. They formed the society of Hwarang do. Taek Kyon was the basis of a training regiment designed for the young Korean Nobility and warrior caste of that time. It was based not only on physical discipline, but also on mental and moral discipline as well.

Like Tae Kwon Do, Taek Kyon also had had a set of tenets as its underpinning; although instead of tenets they called them the Five Codes of Human Conduct. As the Hwarang Do was clearly designed as an academy to produce military leaders, their tenets were designed more for behavior in battle. Never the less, they still stressed honor, respect, and trustworthiness, just as our own tenets do.

I encourage you as you read my blogs, to look at the things I may write as: me sharing my opinions and thoughts with you and, challenging you to think about them. Then come up with opinions and thoughts on the subject yourselves.

Have you ever noticed that there is nothing in our tenets about ordering people around, or about being a leader? Instead they stress honesty, respect and loyalty. As we come up through the belts, we learn the tenets and we practice discipline, honor and respect as we train. By the time we become upper belts, a new white belt watching us train should see the tenets manifest in everything we do in the dojang.

I would like to challenge all of you in the coming new year to not just recite the tenets as we start each class and forget about them. But, instead to actually think about what they mean and practice them in the dojang for the entire class. I believe what you will find if you do this, that you will begin to look at leadership in a new way.