

**Masters of the Martial Arts**

**By**

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**Sho-Dan Research Paper**

**Okinawan Shorin-Ryu Karate-Do**

**Respectfully Submitted on July 29, 1995**

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## Masters of the Martial Arts

The Sixteenth President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, once said, "I may walk slow, but I never walk back." My fellow Americans, during my eight years of karate-do training "I may have walked slow" some times. However, my friends, I have tried to "never walk back". On July 9, 1987, I took the first step down the road of unseen pain, happiness, discipline, and self-fulfillment. Although the last step of karate-do does not exist, I do feel my karate-do training has helped me reach the state of catharsis (the purging of morbid emotions). Thus, I feel more self-fulfilled towards myself and country. However, this is not good enough. In order to truly understand the benefits of karate-do, I must embrace masters of the martial arts. By doing this, I will truly become one with karate-do, both mentally and physically. Indeed, masters of the martial arts are a positive catalyst for my daily life.

Aikido is called "the road to harmony". "The founding ideas of aikido can be traced back to the samurai of the Oizu han (clan) in the Tohoku area, who studied the martial skills of various ryu" (Finn 159). One of the ryu of the han was Daito-Ryu which included various techniques founded in the twelfth century by Minamoto Yoshimitsu. These techniques were brought to the han in 1754 by Takeda Kunitsugu and were

called aikijutsu. Takeda Kunitsugu passed his knowledge down to a man named Saigo Tanomo. In the last years of the nineteenth century, Saigo Tanomo released his skills to Takeda Sokaku who became an instructor to the Aizu warriors.

My friends, at this time in history aikido had not yet taken its present shape and form. In effect, "the road to harmony" was not built yet. However, my friends, it is important to reflect on Takeda Sokaku for a few moments, because he is the master who cleared the path so that the "road to harmony" could be built.

Takeda Sokaku was born on October 10, 1860, in Aizu. His family were priests by profession. However, his father was ozeki (champion) rank in sumo. "In 1870, Takeda Sokaku studied Onoha Itto-Ryu under Shibuya Toma and earned a teaching license in 1876" (Finn 159). At this time in his life, Takeda Sokaku traveled to Tokyo and studied Jikishinkage-Ryu. Later he returned to Tohoku to study with Saigo Tanomo, who taught him aikijutsu. Now, Takeda Sokaku began to clear the path to build "the road to harmony". "He used his extensive knowledge to revise the system of aikijutsu within Daitio-Ryu. During his lifetime, he taught over 30,000 students his system of Daito-Ryu aikijutsu" (Finn 159). Takeda Sokaku's students consisted of the public and the police of Japan. Of all of his students, only twenty held the menkyo (teacher's license). Of course, Morihei Ueshiba was one of these twenty students.

My friends, we are now at the meat and potatoes of this discussion, because Morihei Ueshiba was the founder of modern aikido. In effect, Morihei Ueshiba built "the road to harmony" on the path that Takeda Sokaku cleared. With Takeda Sokaku we ate the salad. However, with Morihei Ueshiba we are eating the main course!

Master Morihei Ueshiba was born in 1883. He studied different martial skills, and at the age of eighteen he studied the jujutsu of Kitio-Ryu and later Tenjin Shinyo-Ryu. "In 1902, Morihei Ueshiba became a member of the Yagyu-Ryu school of swordsmanship, and in 1908 he earned a teacher's license" (Finn 159). "He later met Takeda Sokaku in Hokkaido and began his training in Daitio-Ryu. In 1917, Morihei Ueshiba earned the title of menkyo" (Finn 159). It was at this time that Morihei Ueshiba began to formulate the system that became known as modern day aikido. Master Ueshiba wanted his aikido to be based on the principles of harmony. Morihei Ueshiba believed that the true meaning of his aikido philosophy "rests with direct experience rather than explanation. However, some insight is possible through the use of the written word" (Finn 159). Master Morihei Ueshiba developed the following aikido formula:

"When two opposing entities meet, discord is created.

When two non-opposing entities meet, harmony exists.

If an opposing entity meets a non-opposing entity, it

meets no resistance. In aikido, the enemy's attack is absorbed by the defender who does not oppose it. The defender, however, is not defeated. This is true because in the fusion of unity between the two spirits, by yielding the defender has become the controlling force and directs the opponent's energy wherever he wishes" (Finn 159).

In 1932, Master Morihei Ueshiba founded his dojo in the capital of Tokyo, in the area of Shinjuku. However, he retained his country dojo in Ibaraki. Master Morihei Ueshiba "believed in universal harmony and that aikido was a means of achieving that goal" (Finn 160). He also believed that violence and aggression could be turned aside by harmony of the spirit. Master Morihei Ueshiba finished walking down "the road to harmony" when he died in 1969.

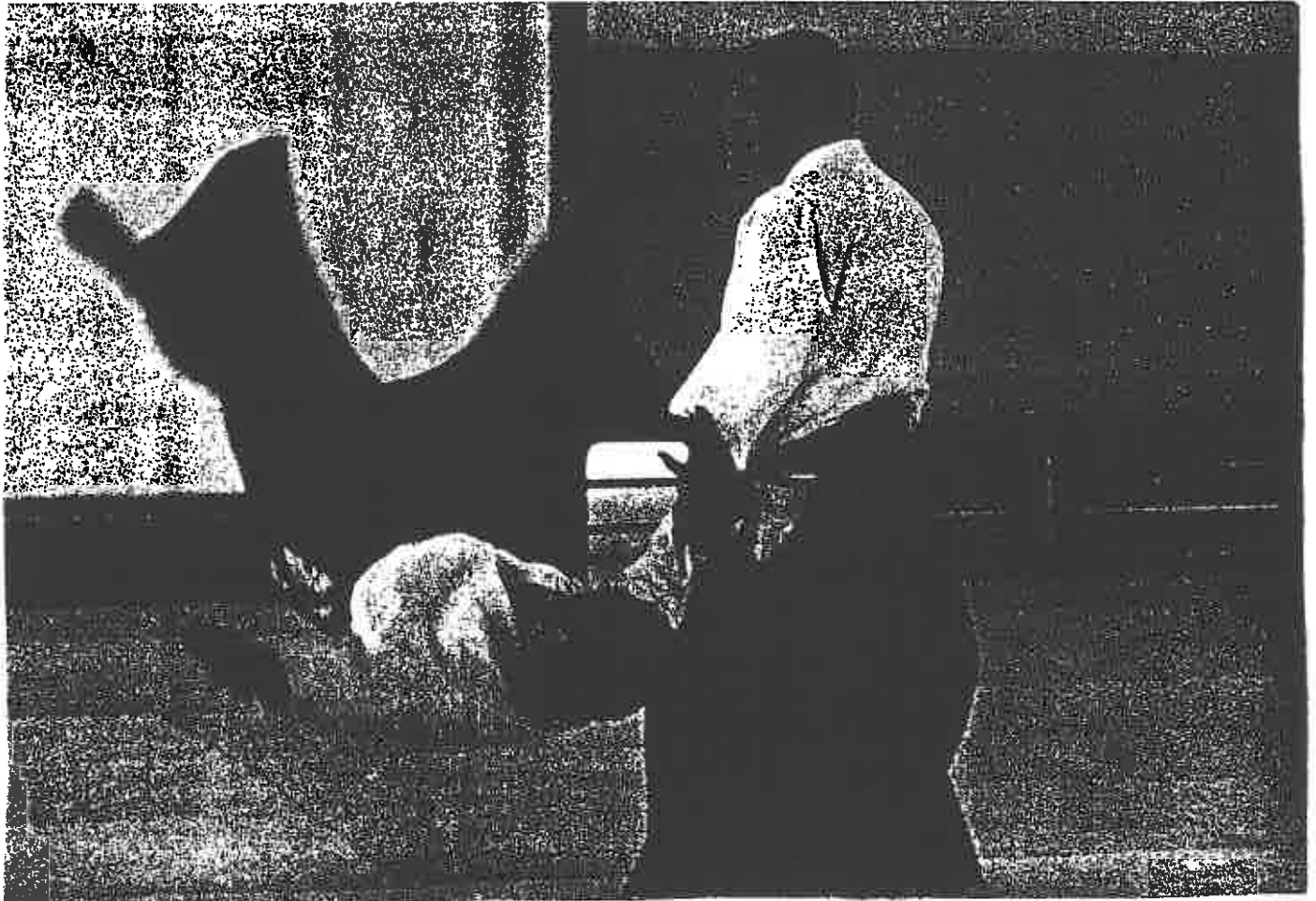


"Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), the founder of modern aikido and the teacher of many leading masters" (Finn 160).



"Kishomaru Ueshiba, son of the founder of aikido Morihei Ueshiba, performs a technique called shihonage" (Finn 161).





"Aikido being practiced at the Ueshiba main dojo, in Tokyo" (Finn 161).

Iaido is known as "the steel blade of virtue". Iaido is a non-empty hand system that has techniques which are practiced without a partner. These techniques consist of the following four, separate actions:

- 1). nukitsuke - the drawing of the sword from the scabbard.
- 2). kiritsuke - the cut or cuts used to dispatch the enemy.
- 3). chiburi - the symbolic action of shaking the blood from the blade.
- 4). noto - the resheathing of the sword.

The techniques of iaido represent a particular situation and are practiced in kata style. The katas of iaido enable the student "to develop his skill through both spiritual and intuitive understanding" (Finn 171). Now, my friends, please allow me to discuss some of iaido's masters.

The first master was Hayashizaki Jinsuke Shigenobu. He was born in 1549 in Sagami (modern day Kanagawa). Legend has it that "one day while meditating at the Hayashizaki shrine in Oshu, Master Shigenobu experienced a vision which led him to re-evaluate all of his previous knowledge of swordsmanship" (Finn 171). Master Shigenobu invented a style of quick sword drawing in which he believed more emphasis should be placed on inner-self development through this training. His principles would later form iaido.

Supposedly, Master Shigenobu toured the country and taught his new found knowledge. Rumor has it that "many different

styles were established in his name, including Shimmei Muso-Ryu, Shigenobu-Ryu, and Hayashizaki-Ryu" (Finn 171). By the way, Hayashizaki was the name he took after his revelation at the Shrine!

The second through eleventh masters that contributed in forming iaido have put their own mark in martial arts history. It is interesting to note that each of these masters developed their own ryus. Of course, my friends, these various ryus were the crust that later formed the pie of iaido. The following are some examples to support this hypothesis.

"The second master, Tamiya Heibei, developed his own system called Tamiya-Ryu. The seventh master, Hasagawa Eishin, introduced a style called Eishin-Ryu, which was performed from the seated position called tate-hiza" (Finn 171). Master Omori Rokudayu Morimasa was the ninth master. He supposedly developed seated techniques called seiza, which "was a formal way of sitting taught by a school of etiquette called Ogasawara-Ryu" (Finn 171).

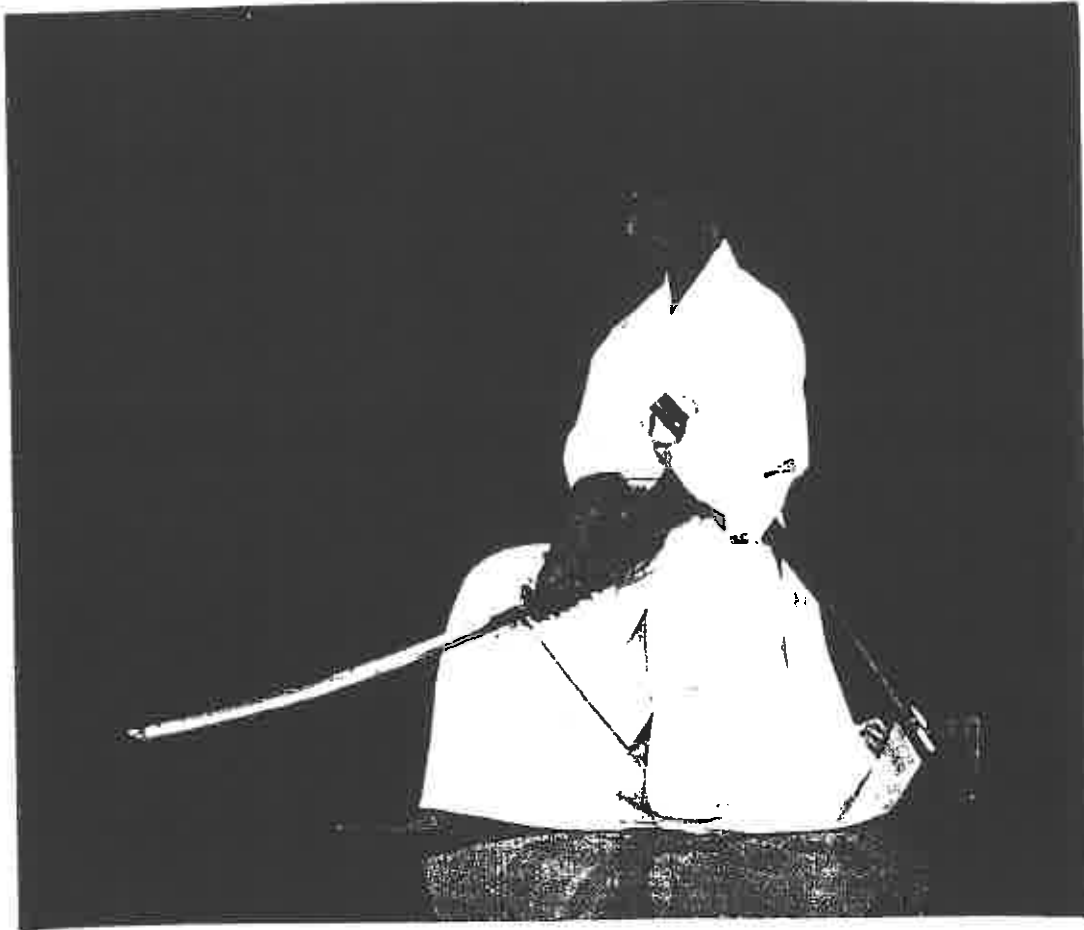
Through my studies, I discovered that once the eleventh master walked on stage, there was a so-called split in the style of what would be known as iaido. In fact, by modern times the style came to be known as Muso Shinden-Ryu and Muso Jikiden Eishin-Ryu.

My friends, we now come to Master Nakayama Hakudo (1869-1958). He is considered the father of modern iaido and the

last head master of the Muso Shinden-Ryu. The key ingredient to remember is that Master Nakayama Hakudo "revised and popularized the system which consisted of selected techniques from Omori-Ryu, Eishin-Ryu, and other central teachings called Okuden. As these changes took place, the skill gradually became known as iaido" (Finn 171).



"Nakayama Hakudo was the father of modern iaido and the last head master of Muso Shinden-Ryu" (Finn 170).



"Iaido perfection: both legs and body are straight and horizontal to the ground, the blade is low after the cut, and the scabbard is correctly placed" (Finn 171).

Jujutsu or jiu-jitsu is a Japanese martial art that means "compliant techniques". However, it also means "the art of gentleness", "the art of suppleness", and "the art of pliancy". Jiu-jitsu makes use of the body's vulnerable points, known in Japanese as kyusho or atemi. "More than 125 jiu-jitsu systems developed in Japan" (Frakas 131). "It is claimed that the Chinese boxer named Chen Yuan-pin taught some Southern Chinese boxing to three leaderless samurai, and they subsequently incorporated his teachings into jiu-jitsu" (Clark 11). However, the story does not end here. Please, allow me to palpitate so that I can discover other masters of jiu-jitsu.

Annual tournaments were held during the reign of the Emperor Minmyo, and in the mid 9th century, the sixth son of Emperor Fukiwara started a line of development which eventually gave rise to the Daito-Ryu aiki-jiu-jitsu.

The famous swordsman Miyamoto Musashi studied a form of yawarra-ge named Kakushi-jutsu which specialized in the use of concealed weapons. In the early 17th century, the swordsman Nagao Kemmotsu "developed a school of what was termed Tai jutsu (body techniques). This too involved the usage of hidden weapons" (Clark 12). At the same time, a man by the name of Oguri Niemon developed a form of grappling which "could be used by people in street clothes. He intended this to be used during times of peace, naming it wa justu (techniques of softness)" (Clark 13). My friends, all of these various techniques can

be brought together under the general heading of kumi-uchi. "From these techniques, what we now refer to as jiu-jitsu was developed" (Clark 13).

The first entirely weaponless jiu-jitsu school was opened by a samurai named Terada Kanemon. He narrowed down the classical bujutsu martial tradition of the Kito-Ryu to a purely weaponless school which he called Jikishin-Ryu. The system he taught was named judo (compliant techniques). This is not to be confused with Master Jigoro Kano's judo which came into being nearly a century later.

Another master of jiu-jitsu was Iso Mataemon. "During the first half of the 19th century, Master Iso Mataemon studied two, classical, jiu-jitsu ryus and took from them a study of striking techniques to the body's vulnerable points" (Clark 14). He named his school the Tenjin Shinyo-Ryu. Master Mataemon taught his students never to waste their energy in a loud shout, but to kiai with mouth closed.

Master Jigoro Kano was born in 1860. He began his study of the martial arts at the age of seventeen, by enrolling in the Tenjin Shinyo-Ryu school of jiu-jitsu. His first teacher was Fukuda Hachinosuke, and when the latter died, he joined the Kio-Ryu in 1881. There, Master Kano trained under Master Ikubo Tsunetoshi. Therefore, "Master Kano received a good grounding in both striking and grappling/throwing techniques" (Clark 15).



"A program of study brought him into contact with two bujutsu ryus, namely the Sekiguchi-Ryu and the Seigo-Ryu way of jiu-jitsu. The result of this combination of practice and theory was the founding in 1882 of the martial way of Kodokan judo" (Clark 15). Master Kano chose the suffix "do" to emphasize the philosophical nature of his system.



"There are many traditional Japanese scrolls that depict empty-hand strategy and restraint often used in jujutsu" (Finn 144).



"Towards the end of Japan's feudal period all classes of society began to study the skills of jujutsu" (Finn 145).



"A master of jujutsu employs an ear-piercing kiai as he disarms an opponent with a staff" (Finn 147).

Kendo is called "the sword of humanity". Kendo can trace its beginnings back to the days of the sword skills of the samurai warrior. "Unfortunately, no single person can be classified as the founder of kendo" (Finn 156). However, a man named Nakanishi Chunta developed a style of fencing which used protective armor and a sword made from flexible strips of bamboo. "Master Nakanishi Chunta believed in the philosophy of swordsmanship which enlightened the spirit while retaining the positive combativeness of the classical warrior" (Finn 156). This way of thinking was called the Yagyū-Ryū. Many other ryū of that time began to place greater emphasis on spiritual development rather than on practical, combative ability. However, my friends, kendo is still thought of as "the way of the sword". In fact, "it developed from kenjutsu (art of the sword)" (Farkas 150).

In a nutshell, modern kendo is divided into competitive training and kata. "The katas consist of seven long-sword and three short-sword forms, which represent the techniques and values of the classical warrior" (Finn 156). Modern kendo is a means of spiritual and moral development. It is a catalyst for positive attitude, strength of conviction, fast reactions to sudden situations, and a mature attitude in society. My friends, I believe, beyond a reasonable doubt, that these core ingredients of modern kendo were a part of Master Nakanishi Chunta's daily life and were reflected in his soul.



"Viewing his opponent through the helmet of his kendo armor, the exponent has trained his mind and body for the intuitive moment in which to strike" (Finn 156).



"A modern skill called juken-do is practiced in kendo armor. The exponents use wooden rifles and compete for points in bayonet fighting" (Finn 157).

Kung-fu is called "skill", "strength", "ability", "task", or "work". Kung-fu is also known as "wu-shu". We use the term "kung fu" in our Western World environment. However, "kung-fu is in fact a Cantonese word merely meaning an 'acquired skill'" (Finn 54). So, my friends, "it can refer equally to knitting or cookery as it can to the martial arts!" (Finn 54). However, the Chinese describe kung-fu by the name of wu-shu.

Kung-fu (wu-shu) "has two main divisions and several subdivisions with respect to the types of blows used, style of practice, and attitude" (Farkas 160). Also, there are southern and northern styles of kung-fu (wu-shu). The southern styles display techniques of strength and power. In contrast, the northern styles have techniques of soft, open movements in which focus is on the lower body. There are also hard and soft styles of kung-fu (wu-shu).

The hard styles of kung-fu (wu-shu) were started by Master Bodhidharma in A.D. 520. He developed eighteen fighting postures known as the Lohan system. Later, "the first Sung emperor, Chao Kuang-yin (960-976), introduced another thirty-two forms called 'long boxing' to complement the Lohan system" (Finn 55). Just before the Ming dynasty, a monk called Chueh Yuan re-styled the Lohan system to include a total of seventy-two techniques. At a later date, a man named "Master Pai Yu Feng formulated the hard style of kung-fu (wu-shu) into its present form with a total of 170 techniques" (Finn 55).



The soft styles of kung-fu (wu-shu) can be credited to Master San-feng who lived during the period of Mongol rule (1260-1368). Master San-feng was born in the Hupei area of central China. "Master San-feng developed a defensive system of boxing, a forerunner of the tai-chi, which was based on the principles of the yin-yang" (Finn 55). The yin-yang consists of the five elements and concepts of the pa-kua (trigrams). A trigram is "a figure of three parallel lines used in various combinations in Chinese divination" (Finn 55). One important aspect of Master San-Feng's training was his concept of the chi (ki in Japanese). The chi is the universal energy that exists in all things. Master San-feng believed that correct breathing fills the body with the chi. Also, Master San-feng believed that "at the moment of death the last breath leaves the body; with the first cry of a newborn child the intake of air gives it independent life" (Finn 55). The tai-chi is practiced by the old and young people of China in parks and open spaces. "These slow, graceful, sweeping movements hide a more subtle and powerful defensive system" (Finn 56).

A northern style of kung-fu (wu-shu) is called hsing-i. It is attributed to Master Chi Lung-feng who was born during the Ming dynasty. Master Chi Lung-feng's techniques of hsing-i are very linear in appearance. His five forms of attack are based on the principle of the five natural elements. Master Chi Lung-feng's techniques also display twelve sequences of

movement that are based on the principles of twelve animals. Also, the concepts of the yin-yang are expressed in the ideals of emptiness and fullness. Master Chi Lung-feng believed that "in the meditative state of emptiness the spontaneous response to any situation is possible" (Finn 56).



"Master Liu Zhiqing, leader of the Wushu Association of Harbin in northern China" (Finn 53).



"Both the movements and spirits of animals and birds were captured by Chinese masters of wu-shu and embodied in their martial arts training" (Finn 52).

Tae kwon do is called the "kick-punch way" or "way of hands and feet". During my research of tae kwon do, I discovered two hypotheses of how it was born and who gave birth to it.

Tae kwon do is the "primary form of Korean unarmed combat named during a conference of the Chung Do Kwan Masters in 1955" (Farkas 260). Legend has it that the name tae kwon do was submitted for consideration by General Choi Hong Hi. Supposedly, it was chosen because it resembled the old name of "tae kyon" in pronunciation and meaning.

For the second hypothesis, we must go back in time to Korea of the fifth century. At this time, Korea was divided into the following three countries: Paekche, Silla, and Koguryu. Internal conflict arose and Koguryu defeated Paekche. However, "Silla obtained help from the Chinese T'ang dynasty and ruled supreme, setting up the capital in Kwangju" (Finn 188). The noble families were well versed in martial skills, and the young warriors were called hwarang. According to some traditions, "a school of martial arts was established by Master Won Kwang Bopsa which taught hwarangdo. Hwarangdo is a balance of philosophy and fighting arts" (Finn 188). Indeed, the system of hwarangdo paralleled the Japanese teachings of Bushido. Hence, the Korean knights became formidable and awesome warriors. The Korean knights had the following skills: the gun shin pup (similar to ninjutsu), kookup hwal bub (a form of acupuncture and medicine), nengong (internal and empty-hand techniques),

and a certain type of weapon skills system called way-gong. However, "by the thirteenth century hwarang had fallen into decline and only the essence of these skills has been preserved today" (Finn 188). In the long run, "through various invasions and occupations, the Koreans adopted much from both China and Japan. However, the empty-hand skills date back to the union of Silla and the T'ang dynasty. Chinese empty-hand fighting was taught to the hwarang" (Finn 188). In effect, this particular system became known as t'sang-su. My friends, from this original source and with Korean influence, it developed into kwonpup. Eventually, "by the eighteenth century the system of tae kwon had sprung up in central Korea, based on the skills of kwonpup. In 1945, it became known as tae kwon do and has since spread throughout the world" (Finn 188).



"One is never too young to begin to learn a martial art. These children in a Korean community in the USA are practicing tae kwon do" (Finn 188).

Indeed, this has been a wondrous journey. By embracing masters of the martial arts, I have re-discovered my life in karate-do. I believe, beyond a reasonable doubt, that all of these great masters shared the similar pain, happiness, discipline, and self-fulfilment that I have shared.

In today's world, the future of our lives may seem very uncertain. All of the crime, disease, and hate in this country seems to be choking the life out of our souls. However, we can continue to embrace the ideas and high morals of masters of the martial arts. By doing this, "we will never walk back". Indeed, masters of the martial arts are a positive catalyst for our present and future lives.



Is this a familiar face?



"Gichin Funakoshi, a father of modern karate-do" (Finn 162).  
He was also "founder of the Japan Karate Association" (Nagamine 22).

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