



The Roundhouse: Headlines from Around the Do-jang.

As you can see by the burgeoning boom in our class sizes, the Duvall Do-jang has experienced a welcome influx of new white belts lately. With so many beginners, it seems like a good time to reiterate some basic principles forged by founder General Choi Hong Hi, author of the Taekwon-Do Encyclopedia.

"If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere."

-- Frank A. Clark

According to General Choi, "There are two pitfalls all students regardless of rank should avoid:"

Boredom: With only one or two patterns to repeat over and over, many beginners tire of the hyungs portion of class. General Choi states that "boredom sets in between the third and sixth month" after the initial newness and excitement wears off. Many factors contribute to a beginner's ennui:

- The inability to perceive improvement
- Lack of self-confidence
- Physical fatigue

General Choi writes that the best way to combat boredom is to "attend classes regularly and develop resolve to attain a specific goal." Focus on one thing you want to work on in class each night, and strive to improve that single technique before moving on to the next.

Lack of Thoroughness: Because beginners often lose patience with basic, repetitive techniques, they tend to rush the learning process in an attempt to accelerate their advancement. As a result, these impatient students rob themselves of an extremely important opportunity to master the basics of Taekwon-Do from the very beginning. Stances, for example, are the foundation of all patterns. If nothing else, white belts should learn how to execute proper front and back stances until they become reflexive before advancing to the next step.

"Things do not change; we change."

-- Henry David Thoreau

The secret of becoming a black belt is a simple one according to General Choi: "Learn thoroughly each technique, especially patterns, step by step, not only developing a physical reflexive action, but developing mental concentration as well." Whether you're a white belt, black belt, or any color in-between, you should never tire of learning. The best student is always eager to learn and ask questions. So if you find yourself becoming bored or frustrated at your current belt level, change your perspective! Study the Bailey's Hyungs DVD to fine-tune your patterns. Read the literature in our Do-jang library to better understand the purpose and meaning of Taekwon-Do. Challenge yourself to use different combinations in sparring. If you are a blue belt or above, try a break you haven't attempted before. Remember: "Teachers open the door; but you must enter by yourself."

"We cannot expect a bamboo to grow in a field of reeds."

-- General Choi Hong Hi

As you progress up in rank, your responsibility increases, too. Once you become a yellow belt, you will be expected to set a good example for the white belts, who will be watching and attempting to emulate you as their higher-ranking peer. This should motivate you even more to train earnestly and with dedication so that you are executing the proper techniques.

"What we see depends mainly on what we look for."

-- Anonymous

The next time your mind starts to drift as you repeat Chon-Ji for the umpteenth time, look for ways to engage yourself. Try to begin and end your pattern in exactly the same spot, and if you don't, adjust your stances until you do. Or, perform your pattern in slow motion, using isometrics to isolate every technique. To borrow from Nike, "Just Taekwon-Do it!"