

Karate

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ILLUSTRATED

OPENING DOORS TO SAVE KUNG-FU

A one man struggle to
"teach all races"

NUNCHAKU FOR POLICE?

"Yes" or "no!"

ARE REFEREES REGIONALLY PREJUDICED?

Fighter says, "Rules
work for no man."

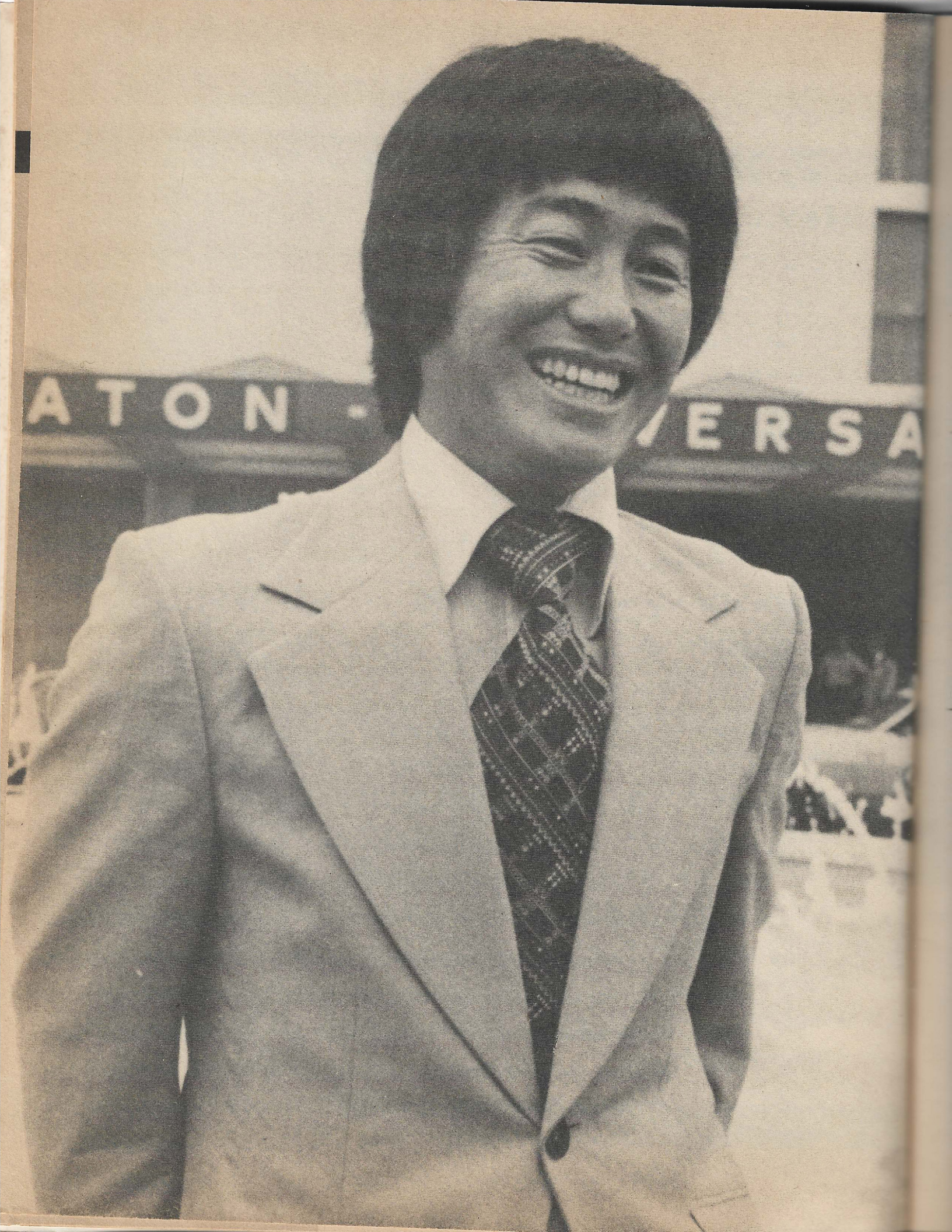
BEGINNING KUNG-FU

Part 3: Introduction
to combinations

DYNAMITE WITHOUT A FUSE

The instructor who refuses to explode





By James Tugend

"KIAAI..." A savage scream rips the air as a fragile, young Korean leaps high and lashes out his foot with incredible speed and agility. Three men in karate gi stand motionless in a semi-circle in front of the airborne figure and the slabs of wood they hold between their thumbs and forefingers break in unison as the foot completes its deadly arc within the blink of an eye.

The spectators gasp in astonishment and there's a brief moment of heavy silence, almost as if the audience is paying unconscious homage to the unseen aura of pure, raw power that seemed to electrify the room as the boards snapped.

As the diminutive karateka hits the ground and turns to face the crowd, the savagery and power he exhibited only a split second before disappears completely. And in its place, an almost unnatural calmness and serenity overcomes his features.

But the young Korean is older now. The calmness and serenity is still there and so is the power. But it's matured, along with the man. "I did that as a young man," admits Jay Hyon, the proprietor of four very successful tae kwon do dojo

continued his study of tae kwon do and at the same time, earned a degree in chemical engineering. Shortly after graduation, he emigrated to the United States and found a job as an engineer.

TAKING TAE KWON DO TO MINNESOTA

But it wasn't engineering that eventually drew him to the Twin Cities and finally made him decide to settle there. It was his love of tae kwon do.

Hyon had first traveled to Minneapolis at the invitation of some friends and found that most of the people living there had never heard of tae kwon do. He liked the area and decided it would be a perfect place to open a dojo. Finally, in 1968, he quit engineering for good and devoted all of his time to building up his schools.

"Tae kwon do was not too popular until a few years ago," Hyon recalls. "People in Minneapolis had never heard of it."

Tae Kwon Do Expert~ DYNAMITE Without a Fuse

in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the man responsible for the Korean martial art's popularity in the Twin Cities area. But, he adds quickly, "I don't think that is an important part of training. I trained that way as a kid, but it is not the traditional way."

The paradoxical nature of the man and the sport make for a unique blend. Tae kwon do with all of its potential power is, according to Jun (Jay) Hyon, a gentle art. And, while most martial arts do preach a sort of modified pacifism, most karate techniques are considered "hard style." Nevertheless, Hyon approaches tae kwon do with the same fervent pacifism one normally associates with aikido artists.

"I cannot hit," says Hyon, "that's against the philosophy of tae kwon do—to hurt someone. You can accomplish what you need in other ways."

Hyon learned the traditional philosophy of tae kwon do in the traditional manner. Like many present-day tae kwon do experts, he first took up the art as a young boy in North Korea because he was a physically weak youth and wanted to develop self-discipline and strength. The youngest of five sons, his family was middle class landowners until the Communists took over and divided up the Hyon's holdings among the tenant farmers. The family stayed on, working the land with their former employees until the Chinese entered the Korean conflict. Only then did they move south to Seoul where Hyon

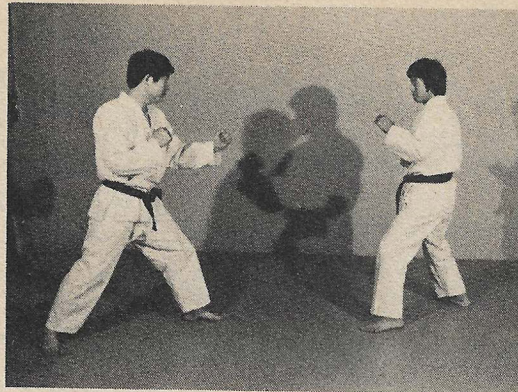
Nevertheless, the first year he did well, but plowed every cent of profits back into his dojo, so he came out with very little to live on. He grossed about \$50,000 a year, but reinvested it in advertising and modern equipment. He uses the Universal Caladiator, a machine with 13 different exercise stations, to be used by as many people simultaneously, working in varied planes in all types of exercises. He also installed expensive mirrors and a costly air-circulation system.

Eventually, it all began to pay off. Hyon credits the television series *Kung Fu* and martial arts movies for much of the success. "People believe what they see on television," he says, "and have signed up for instruction in the oriental martial arts in droves ever since the series. Many come just for the exercise, and some for the techniques."

But if there is one thing Hyon is a stickler on, it is adhering to the non-violent philosophy of tae kwon do. It's brought out in his teachings, in the example he sets and in the demands he makes of his students both in the dojo and out.

"You cannot expect that all prospective students are nice guys when they walk in the door," Hyon says. "Some people have evil minds, or have hatred in their hearts. If they are allowed to spar, while their partner holds a punch, they might follow through and hurt someone. Teeth come out, black eyes, broken bones. That's not our art. I like to consider this an art."

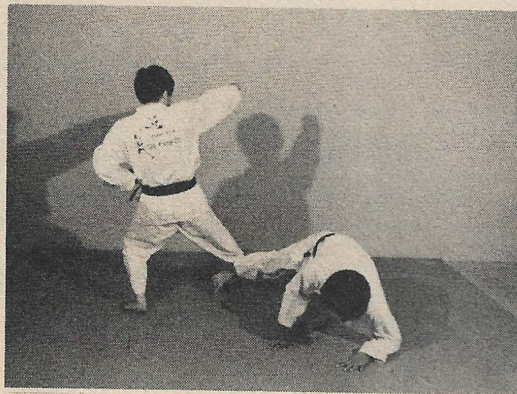
REVERSE LEG SWEEP



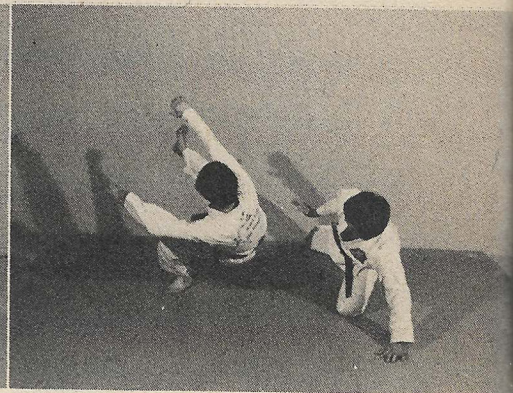
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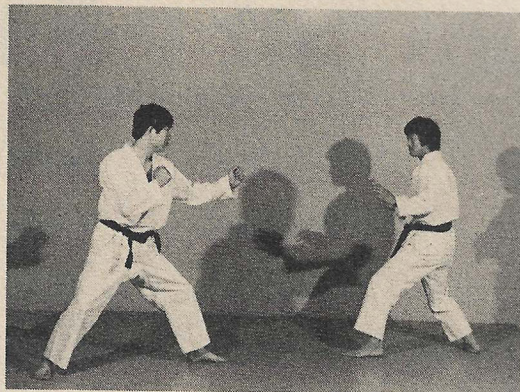


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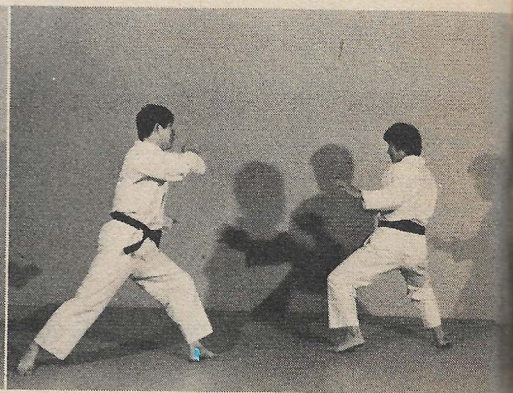


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DROP ROUNDHOUSE KICK



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Hyon is careful about who he signs up. If someone comes in with liquor on his breath, he tells them to come back when they are sober. "If we feel someone will be violent, we don't sign him up. I don't want to be rough to anybody, because that would give students bad influence. If I'm rough to anybody, they think that's the way it should be. I'm gentle. If people really give me a hard time, then I just grab them in the belly and push instead of hit, and they feel what's coming and get the hell out of there."

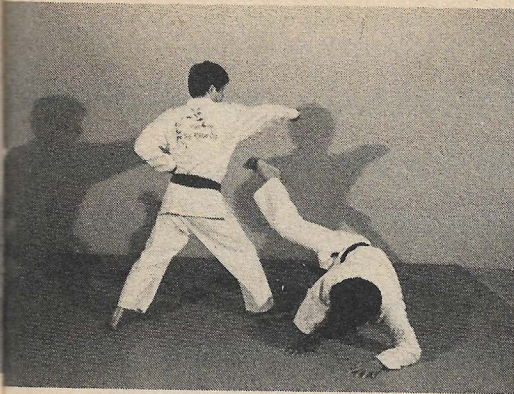
Hyon devotes about a third of the training time doing forms (hyung). "These formal exercises develop patience, stamina and, indirectly, good character," he says. "You have to have respect for your teacher and partner."

Before they spar, he explains to his students that he is teaching a non-violent art. And, if they don't accept the rules, he bars them from the school. "I have to watch out for the one who doesn't want control. Deep down inside, he has some hatred toward the Caucasian. "I kick them out," Hyon says emphatically.

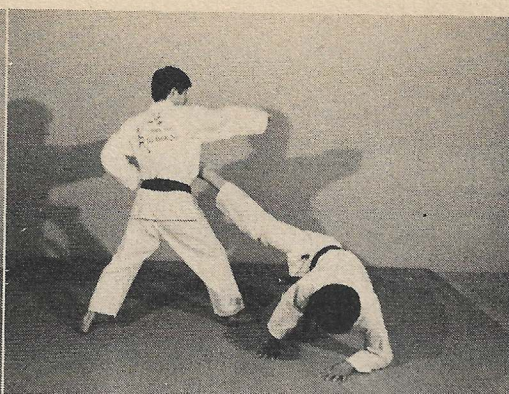
Hyon teaches sparring in three steps. First, students participate in pre-arranged sparring so that neither partner gets carried away. There is an attack, a block and counter attack.

The second step is semi-freefighting. The students know who will attack first.

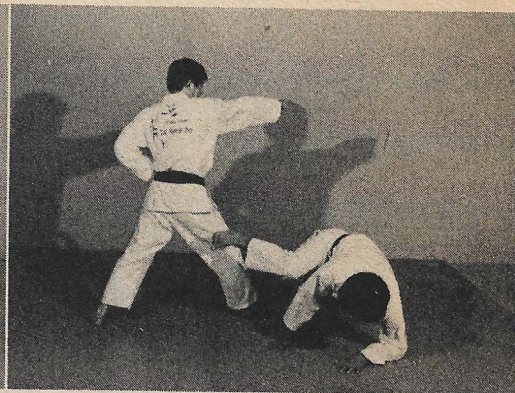
The third step is free fighting, and the students go all the way, but with control. That's where the discipline comes in.



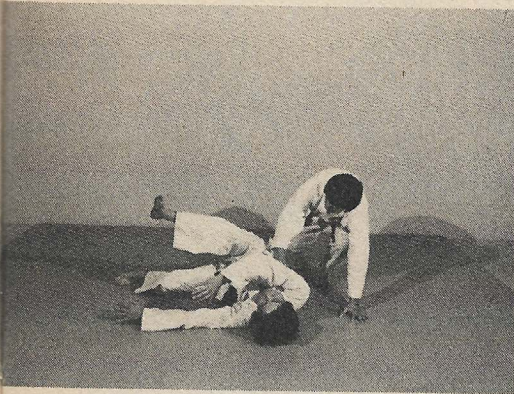
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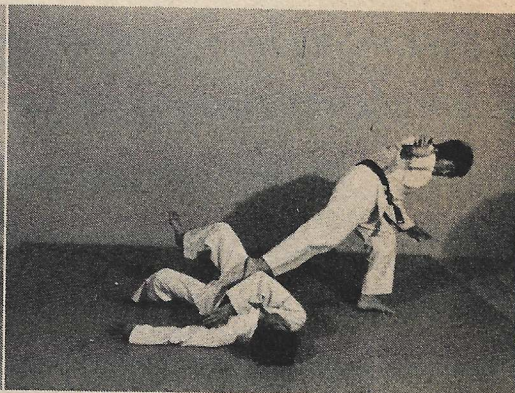
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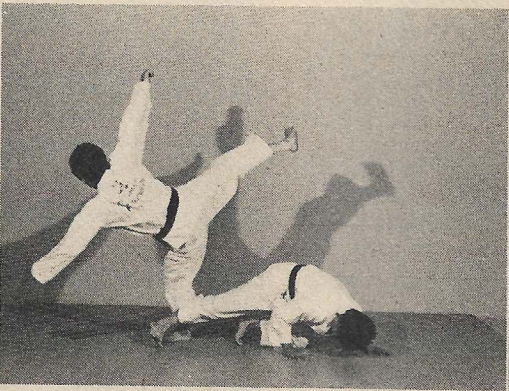
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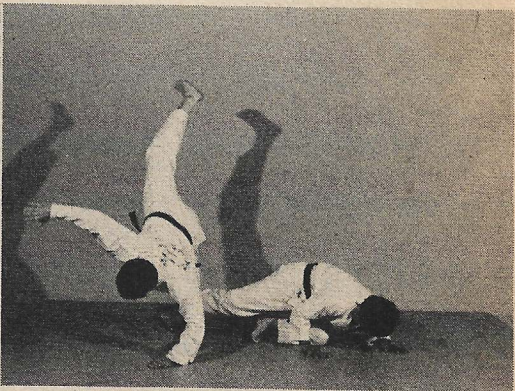
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They are not allowed to do this until they win a gold belt, which takes approximately three months.

"First lesson gives proper attitude," Hyon explains. "We have to explain the rules which we require from the beginning. They have attitudes . . . quite a few just come down to learn how to kill. We have to change their thinking. It takes time to learn. We cannot teach them dangerous technique right away, we don't know what he's going to do when he steps out of school; so we have a unique system which teaches students, little by little, effectively. It takes only three half-hour sessions to learn some of the basics."

Now Hyon has four schools, five full time employees and it is a smoothly running and popular enterprise. This leaves him

free to travel quite a bit, one of his favorite past times.

Hyon would not like to move away permanently because Minneapolis has been good to him and he feels a strong sense of responsibility to his students. He trains himself about two hours a day, part of which is devoted to working out that evening's instruction. "If you do not constantly work and develop, you will become old hat," he says.

He also goes to a lot of tournaments to help friends. But he insists, "I myself don't like karate tournaments. Tournaments in Korea are a new thing . . . when I was training there they had no such thing. If you want to perform techniques you have to go all the way through. If you stop, you lose a lot of force."

"I don't know how the traditional arts of kung-fu and tai chi chuan would stand up against the modern, sophisticated techniques of tae kwon do," Hyon says, "but I still have a great deal of respect for their systems and the way they are designed. We use a lot of fake moves before we finally attack. For example, a low-level attack to get their attention down, then strike high. If it is slow, anyone can block it, but if it is fast, I don't see how anybody can. I am not putting tai chi down, I still respect that, it is simply what I am thinking."

Hyon is a strong believer in low level attacks, the opposite of what tae kwon do is noted for. "Everyone has to stand on the ground; you cannot fly forever," he insists.

Low-level attacks are not too good for tournaments. Not because they look awkward if stopped halfway, but because they are simply not called as points by most judges. Nevertheless, Hyon considers them his specialty. Considering the fact that nine out of ten of the top tournament competitors in the U.S. are tae kwon do men, it is highly significant that he does not follow the temptation to teach like the others do and turn out top competitors. Certainly it would further enhance his reputation and earning power, but it is the measure of his integrity that he nevertheless teaches in the manner he considers best for the self-defense, health and safety of his students.

PRACTICE DOES IT

In addition to hitting golf balls for up to eight hours a day, teaching and operating four dojo and training in tae kwon do about two hours a day, Hyon is now directing much of his energies to helping organize all the tae kwon do schools under one roof; the American Tae Kwon Do Federation.

Hyon points out that all the schools in Korea and Germany are state controlled. In fact hapkido—another Korean art—has recently been banned in Korea, since only pure and authorized tae kwon do can now be taught. Hyon does not suggest for a moment that the state should interfere, but he thinks there are some reforms that should be instituted and that only a national organization can bring them about.

For example, as it is presently, someone can print up his own degrees, in effect, promoting himself. There is no law against it. "Right now there are 10th degree black belts in tae kwon do, which is fantastic. You can even make your own certificate and hang it on the wall," Hyon says in exasperation. "Actually the ninth degree is the highest."

Of course, the American Tae Kwon Do Federation would only recognize the authentic tae kwon do, such as taught by Hyon, Yong Kil Kim, Kee Wan Kim, Henry Cho and hopefully such others as Chuck Norris' studios, should they wish to join. They could have the same promotions and certifications committee.

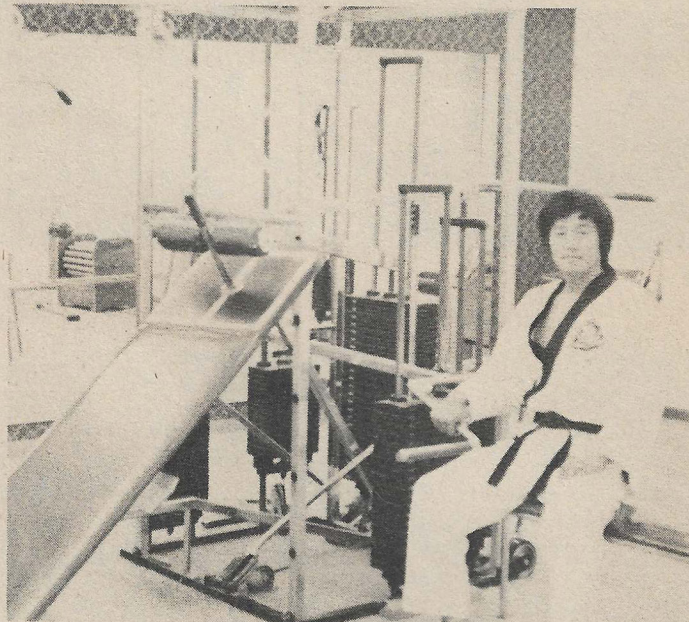
Without some reform in this area, in the future it will be difficult to tell the real tae kwon do school from the phony. Hyon imagines it will take a long time to organize, but he would like to see all the authentic schools under one roof.

TAE KWON DO — FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH?

Hyon looks much younger than his age of thirty-eight. In fact his own appearance is one of his best advertisements. Many people say they joined just because he is such a fine example of what his art can do for a man. Hyon not only looks strong and healthy, he also emanates a gentlemanly confidence and poise that anyone might envy. Combine these qualities with his obvious good looks, and you would think

that Hollywood would snap him up. Actually, they already have, sort of, anyway. He had a small role in the movie *The Wrestler*, which was filmed in Minneapolis.

But Hyong makes a better contribution to the martial arts

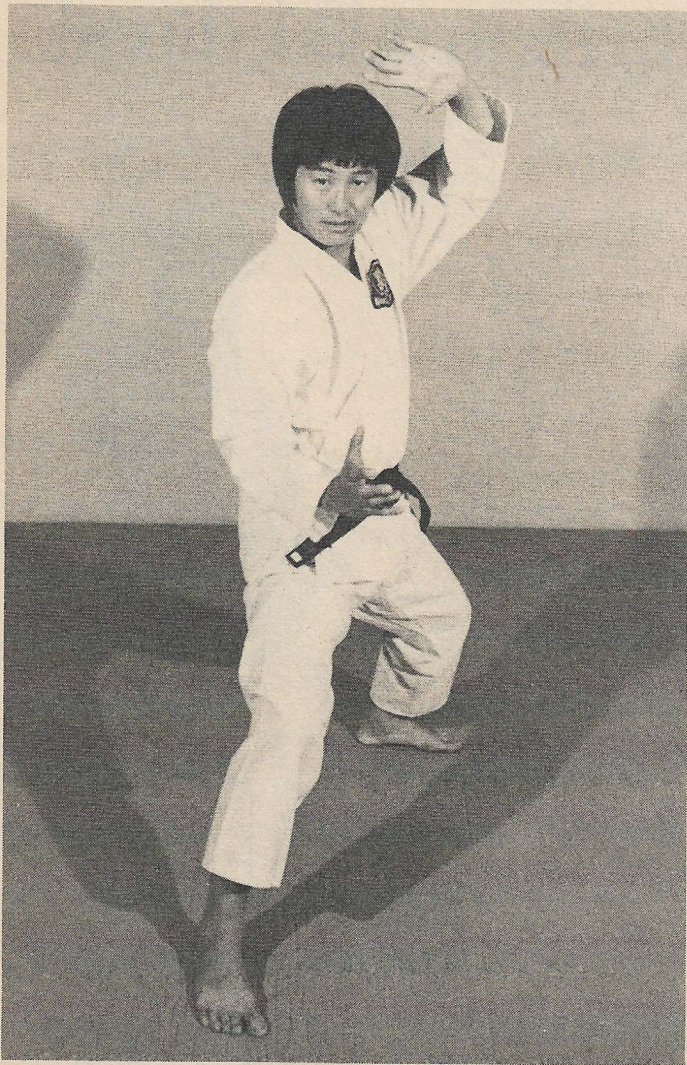


DYNAMIC DOJO decor includes full-length mirrors, a costly air-circulation system and a rather sophisticated looking piece of machinery called a Universal Caladiator. It has 13 different exercise stations which can be used simultaneously, by as many people working in varied planes in all types of exercises.

DISENCHANTED STAR, Hyon's brief brush with show business included a fight scene with Harold "Oddjob" Sakata in a movie called "The Wrestlers." Agent apathy, sponsor hesitancy, producer's greed while capitalizing on the martial arts boom and general Hollywood frustrations all contributed to his decision to quit seeking movie roles. "I will only accept roles as they come," he says.



by teaching in Minneapolis. He is filling a great need there, and is quite content. "I receive quite a few letters from small towns asking me to come and teach," he says, "but I can't do anything about it. I'm alone; I don't have any competition, any enemies."



PROJECTING AN IMAGE of youth and vitality, Hyon looks much younger than his age of 38. He's his own best advertisement.

"In tournaments, you also have to attack certain areas. Then the meaning of tae kwon do is not there. You cannot exclude anyplace from toe to top of head as far as self-defense is concerned. You don't have to attack too high either."

Hyon is himself a specialist at 'low level attacks.' Most tae kwon do practitioners are noted for kicks to the head, but Hyon prefers kicks to the lower body and legs and other low-leg techniques. These techniques must be followed through with, however, which is not possible in tournament conditions. "If you pull them, you lose balance and look bad," he says.

Hyon also points out that the strikes used in tournament karate are too loose for practical situations. For example, in order to get in quickly for a point, the fist is held too loose for actual contact.

"Looks good, sounds good (with a kiai), fast enough, but you cannot really hurt like this," Hyon complains, "unless you

are a real expert at tai chi chuan or whatever. But still a lot of people like to compete and you have to go along with this."

But he does teach his students tournament rules if they do want to compete.

COMPETITION OVEREMPHASIZED

In 1971 many of his students were anxious to compete. "It's all they really thought of . . . who is champion, champion," he mouths the words as if it doesn't quite make sense. "They like to be like that, so they go to some small town around here and the judging was real bad. And they come back disappointed." After that, Hyon gave the only tournament he ever hosted.

Hyon also points out that in tournaments there are often broken teeth and various other injuries; the very thing he tries to prevent in his classes.

Tournaments do provide an opportunity for him to meet other martial artists and exchange notes, however, and he feels this is a valuable and important part of the continual education of an instructor. He travels around the country to discuss techniques with other instructors to keep up with the changes.

Hyon is always looking to see if he can find anything to borrow from other styles that he could utilize in his own tae kwon do style. So far, the only thing he's found is the reverse snap punch from shodokan, which he incorporated into his teaching. "It is kind of good for tournament techniques," he says, "and popular in tournaments."

Although Hyon studied judo in Korea for awhile he says, "We have our own techniques for throwing in a free fighting situation, but judo wouldn't help for that."

Of the other martial arts he finds tai chi chuan the most fascinating. The highly sophisticated and complicated art "could only have been developed by the Chinese," he says admiringly. "Anybody can learn it, but only the Chinese, with their tremendous mental ability, could think of that long term of training. It takes 10 or 15 years to master.

"I don't know how good it is, but it's very interesting for them to design that sort of art. It fascinates me. I don't know how good you can be with tai chi. A lot of people these days learned only a few months and are trying to teach." Since tai chi is a much respected "timeless art," Hyon had a practitioner of this art demonstrate its form to his classes.

Hyon can only play golf about four months out of the year because of the heavy winters. And for a confirmed golf nut like Jay Hyon, that is cruel punishment. But he cannot desert his students and would be foolish to give up his schools. Perhaps the best compromise is to travel. If he is offered work in Hollywood he might move back and forth quite a bit, especially in the winter. And, as if life were meant to dovetail neatly for Hyon, his wife is an airline stewardess which enables him to travel most places without charge. He is considering going back to Korea for their first national amateur gold tournament. Now *that* is a tournament at which you will not see Hyon on the sidelines.

This karateka has accomplished quite a lot for a successful refugee. Hyon looks forward to a life of tranquility and contentment, refreshed by the great satisfaction he derives from teaching tae kwon do and satisfied by pursuing his hobby with the total commitment and discipline which is an integral part of his being.