



Kim Soo demonstrates a side-kick with his Russian Language Professor, Mr. Yuri Bolkov. 1961

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What Is Chayon-Ryu Martial Arts?

by Grandmaster Kim Soo, 10th. Dan & Founder, Chayon-Ryu Martial Arts

Probably the most common question I am asked is, "What is Chayon-Ryu?" Many people have heard of taekwondo, karate, kung-fu, jujitsu, hapkido, or bong-sul (staff and weapons). They see our web site, or phonebook advertisement and want to know how these martial arts fit within Chayon-Ryu. Common questions include, "Can they get black belts in all or just one of these arts?" and "How are they combined into one style?" I would hope all Chayon-Ryu students could answer these questions. This paper is to help prospective and current students understand, "What is Chayon-Ryu?"

Chayon-Ryu, "The Natural Way," is a scientific method of teaching martial arts. Following the laws of nature, it emphasizes mental and physical balance rather than simply "kick and punch." Chayon-Ryu is beyond any one style of martial arts. Rather than teaching "a thousand techniques," Chayon-Ryu teaches basic principles that can be used to synthesize the proper defense and response to a variety of situations. Attaining Black Belt in Chayon-Ryu means overall proficiency in these arts, not a Black Belt in each art.

Let me first address the question of the combination of martial arts. Chayon-Ryu includes all the aforementioned arts. The styles of karate, kung-fu (chuan-fa), taekwondo, and bong-sul include forms. These forms are a series of specified movements, much as a dance recital would contain. The colored belt Okinawan karate forms (Pyung-Ahn series), are standard among many karate schools. The chuan-fa forms are those practiced by Grandmaster Yoon, Byung-In, who in the early 1920s was the first Korean national to learn Chinese chuan-fa and bring it back to Korea. Many of these chuan-fa forms, and advanced karate forms, have been lost in time. Due to our heritage, and my continual training, Chayon-Ryu is one of the few systems to preserve the traditional forms as designed and practiced by the original Grandmasters. During the 1960s the Korean government sought to unify the Kwans (martial art schools), leading to the development of taekwondo and new forms (Palgue series), which are also incorporated into Chayon-Ryu.

Modern taekwondo places heavy reliance on tournament fighting, to the extent it is now an Olympic sport. Some people see tournaments as the pinnacle of martial arts ability. However, while sparring has always been part of

training, it is not the most important part. Tournaments teach the wrong values: win at all costs and egoism. Martial art training is not about trophies and medals for the physically gifted or aggressive. Sparring should benefit both participants, not result in winners and losers. In Chayon-Ryu, sparring is intended to help individuals develop their martial art skills, without the threat or intimidation of being injured. There is no emphasis on tournaments and sport competitions. However, students are not restricted from participating in open tournaments if they wish.

Chayon-Ryu also incorporates two throwing arts, aikijutsu and judo. I have taken the most important principles of these arts and incorporated them into the self-defense portion of Chayon-Ryu. The best self-defense is a combination of different arts. A soldier has many weapons and chooses a weapon based on the situation. Martial artists also need to recognize the level of threat and respond appropriately. Sometimes an assailant only needs to be controlled, whereas other circumstances represent a "kill or be killed" situation. By incorporating different arts you can respond appropriately in any situation.

However, Chayon-Ryu is much more than just the physical practice of several martial art systems. Physical training without corresponding mental balance is akin to giving a child a loaded gun; he doesn't understand what it can do. Mental and physical balance is the most important aspect of Chayon-Ryu training.

As an educational system, Chayon-Ryu teaches morality, purpose, humility, common sense, persistence, and patience. Chayon-Ryu teaches morality through the Dojang Hun (training oath), which students recite before and after every class:

- **Seek Perfection of Character**
- **Live the Way of Truth**
- **Endeavor**
- **Be Faithful**
- **Respect Others**
- **Refrain from Violent Behavior**

As you can see, this offers guidelines within which to live and train. Becoming a morally better person leads to a safer, happier, more fulfilling life. Patience gives you willpower when life's problems seem too difficult to continue. Humility leads you to selflessly help others, and teaches that the words and actions of others should not be taken personally.

Chayon-Ryu emphasizes the "Basic Principles" rather than thousands of techniques. The millions of variations in nature resulted from adaptation to specific situations. Likewise, variety in martial techniques, are nothing more than adaptations of the Basic Principles. The Basic Principles, which I have found through my years of study and research, can also be considered common sense or truths. Commonsense is logical reasoning that comes from life experiences rather than formal education. Studying Chayon-Ryu accelerates this learning process. Understanding the Basic Principles leads to an understanding of nature, the world, and the universe. This gives a reference point for yourself, your actions, and the events in your life. This is true freedom and leads you to make the correct decisions for your future.

The purpose of martial arts in the 21st century is health and longevity; therefore, training must reflect these goals. You are not training to die for a President or political leader, and very rarely will you encounter a physical attacker, especially if you avoid trouble. Modern day enemies are internal rather than external. Stress, worry, insecurity, jealousy, impatience, defeat, and depression are ever-present. You must fight these inside enemies on a daily or even hourly basis, and defeat them through your training. Ultimately, Chayon-Ryu training helps your life, the lives of your family, and the lives of those you encounter.

Chayon-Ryu incorporates six martial arts using a modern, scientific teaching method. Its purpose is to help you become confident, strong, and independent. By developing mental and physical balance, you can easily overcome the challenges of the 21st century.