



(Left to Right) Grandmaster Byung In Yoon, Grandmaster Jong Pyo Hong, and Grandmaster Kim Soo.

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Why Chayon-Ryu?

ChaYon-Ryu enjoys a very [rich history](#), drawing on the contributions of many dedicated grandmasters through the generations. Each of these grandmasters gave his own system a name, and each taught a well known martial art. One may wonder, then, why Grandmaster Kim Soo created Chayon-Ryu instead of adopting one of his predecessor's names.

Why not call our system Chang Moo Kwan, Kang Duk Won or Shudokan? Why not describe our art as simply tae kwon do, chu'an-fa, or karate? Did Grandmaster Kim Soo break ranks with his predecessors and reject their organizations? Is he just indulging his ego by starting his own system? History readily explains his actual reasons for establishing the Chayon-Ryu system.

Martial Art for Health

The liberation of Korea from Japanese occupation in 1945 permitted martial arts practice to resume in Korea. The Japanese reign of 36 years and Korea's own 600-year Confucian Yi Dynasty beforehand combined to suppress and erase all indigenous martial arts. The modern rebirth of Korean martial arts got off to a fast start, however, as the first generation of kwan founders after World War II were all high ranking and college educated.

Unfortunately, the outbreak of the Korean war cut short the first generation's tenure. Several key grandmasters were kidnapped or disappeared, including our own [Byung In Yoon](#). Others retired from teaching or left the country. Their students-the second generation-had only a brief chance to train with them: perhaps three to four years during peacetime. Thus much knowledge was lost, since the first generation had no time to impart it. Moreover, the third generation (including Grandmaster Kim Soo) lacked any opportunity whatsoever to study directly under the original grandmasters.

Notably, the second generation taught no breathing techniques while pushing the students through hard training until they reached total exhaustion. Many suffered broken bones, groin kicks and other serious injuries. Some even died. After one or two years, almost everyone quit. Only the toughest survived.

Grandmaster Kim loved the martial arts, training constantly. But within three years he developed a bad ulcer. A year or two later he began experiencing rheumatism. By his college days he had a lower back problem. He accumulated many serious physical ailments, all due to poor training methods. Ironically, he became far less healthy than other people who practiced no martial arts.

When Grandmaster Kim immigrated to the United States in 1968, his immediate concern was simply to earn a living, to survive and care for his family. Initially he had no time to research the cause of his injuries. Instead, he trained and taught the same way he had learned from the second generation.

Eventually, though, Grandmaster Kim reached the point where he could devote time to investigate his own injuries. Indeed, their continuation virtually forced him to. He began studying martial art more intensely while teaching, and he realized that he had been breathing improperly since his early training. From these and other insights Grandmaster Kim developed Chayon-Ryu.

In Korea today, few train long enough to develop such long-term health problems or recognize their cause. Students quit training from disinterest after only two or three years. Research and development of better teaching methods has been unnecessary and nonexistent in contemporary tae kwon do sport organizations.

In the United States, though, students often train for ten, fifteen or twenty years. If they get hurt, they will simply quit. Therefore, necessity has compelled improving training methods so students could continue.

Likewise, the reason people study martial arts has changed for modern society. Originally martial arts were designed for warfare. The highest honor was to die in combat protecting the king or emperor. No one really trained for personal self-improvement.

For example; historically punching was practiced with the mouth closed and exhale at impact. Designed for the soldier, this technique increased speed and power. Of course, the soldier would never live long enough to develop health problems anyway. He was interested merely in maximizing strength to fight and die in battle. Indeed, a samurai who sought to live longer was no samurai at all.

Today people study martial arts for their personal happiness, rather than to die for an emperor. The student is seeking health, longevity, and relaxation - and to protect himself and his family. Since these goals are today's reality, instruction must consider the short-term and long-term physical repercussions. Grandmaster Kim founded Chayon-Ryu to respond to these modern needs.

Many people today are seeking to fill a vacuum in their lives, to find a deeper meaning or a sense of purpose. Unfortunately,

some are taken in by phony religious movements that prey on weakness and promise answers in return for blind faith.

The same danger exists in selecting a martial art school: Many are actually fronts for religious cults, exercising mind control and using the trappings of a dojang to fool an unfamiliar public. These cults accomplish the exact opposite of the true martial art purpose.

In contrast, Chayon-Ryu seeks to turn the weak into the strong. Chayon-Ryu offers far more than just self-defense or sport competition. Chayon-Ryu combines philosophical insight with physical training to create mentally strong and independent individuals. As a lifestyle martial art, or sang hwal mu do, Chayon-Ryu teaches one how to gain self-confidence and self-reliance by following the natural, logical way to life. Through continued training, the Chayon-Ryu student can eventually find enlightenment, or nam.

Freedom of Expression

Following the devastation of World War II, Korea was an extremely poor country. Martial artists had no prospect of earning a living by teaching. The situation was ripe for exploitation by politicians.

By doling out meager salaries, Korean politicians succeeded over time in enlisting many masters who were happy to receive any means of support. In return, those masters abandoned their separate kwans and pledged their loyalty to a single, new order: tae kwon do. Traditions fell by the wayside as curriculum and rank requirements became standardized.

Classic forms gave way to new creations. With the departure of the original kwan founders, the few remaining senior students who resisted this assimilation sooner or later retired, or were simply squeezed into obscurity.

Assimilation of Korean martial arts into one simple sport required the erasing of the traditional styles. Revisionist history displaced the actual family trees, fictionalizing tae kwon do as a 2000-year-old indigenous Korean martial art. The politicians could exercise far easier control if their followers lacked any knowledge of their true original masters. As a result, many of today's tae kwan do masters do not know their original roots or appreciate the value of tradition.

Grandmaster Kim Soo came to the United States to preserve our true heritage. Grandmaster Kim's motivations are best described by the five qualities symbolized by the bamboo in the Chayon-Ryu system patch; loyalty, honesty, purity, sincerity, and humility. The freedom of expression in the United States

enabled Grandmaster Kim to succeed in this mission. Today Chayon-Ryu survives like a rare work of art.

Many Martial Arts

As readers of the [History of Chayon-Ryu](#) realize, Grandmaster Kim sought to bring as much martial art knowledge to the United States as he could gather. Our original lineage to Grandmaster Yoon Byung In encompassed both chu'an-fa and karate, passed through Grandmaster Lee Nam Sok, Park Chull Hee and Hong Jong Pyo to Grandmaster Kim Soo.

Grandmaster Kim separately studied hapkido and judo from Grandmasters Ji Han Jae and Han Jin Hee, respectively. The addition of these arts broadened Chayon-Ryu from Grandmaster Yoon's original line, necessitating a different system. Grandmaster Kim integrated chu'an-fa, karate, hapkido, and judo into one system through the common thread of natural body movement, giving birth to the Chayon-Ryu system.

People often ask Grandmaster Kim, "Since you are so high ranking, who teaches you?" At a certain level, where one understands the fundamental principles, one can learn anywhere from anything. A dog, a movie, a fan, a low ranking student - These are a grandmaster's teachers.

The Chayon-Ryu philosophy is to follow the natural way. By adhering to this principle one can improve one's lifestyle and continue to learn and benefit forever.