



Master Sean Kim oversees the White Belt children's 'break' at their rank test.

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What is Kong?

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Kong is merit or credit from your service and achievements.

If two soldiers are up for promotion, their superior officers will look at their records to see their respective achievements. If one has many awards and the other has few, it is obvious who will be promoted. Soldiers are promoted for what they have done for their nation, not because they are good looking or have a killer's mind.

This is the same in martial arts. Many students attend classes expecting to be automatically promoted when they have served their time. They feel that by paying their dues and attending class they are doing enough. Perhaps up to Blue belt level this is an acceptable attitude, as it takes some time to understand the importance of the Dojang in one's life. However, above this level, students have been training for several years and should understand the importance of doing more around the Dojang.

Black Belt students, especially, should build up Kong in order to be promoted to the next Dan level. Without Kong why do you deserve to be promoted? To be promoted you must have special credit. You must have shown leadership qualities, and set a good example for other Black Belts and all junior students. Do you think you get Kong from sparring hard, intimidating other students, showing how tough and strong you are, or having an "I am better than you" attitude? Do you think that training once a week and not having a regular teaching commitment builds your Kong? What does that do for the organization? Nothing! From my point of view this is building "minus" Kong, because your intention is wrong. To truly reach Master level you need to build Kong.

How do you get Kong?

Kong is easy to build. You just need to show the generosity you are learning from your training. Show your generosity by helping the system. You could donate some time to help maintain or repair the Dojang. Spend some time cleaning before or after class. At the very least you need to pick up the dust that you drop. You don't need to make a special trip. Just do something other than train once a week. Show some initiative. Do not wait for someone to tell you what to do, take the responsibility yourself.

But, don't clean for me! You benefit from cleaning by building your Kong, not mine. If you clean for me your intention is wrong. I have spoken about this on numerous occasions but I still see many students who do not understand. None of your

efforts should be to impress me. If this is the case, then I am unimpressed.

When I see you are doing these things for the right reasons then I am surely satisfied. Although it may not be obvious to you, it is obvious to me when your attitude is correct and when it is not. Those who give their time freely, expect nothing in return. This is building your Kong. Those who are trying to impress me always want some form of restitution or recognition, and it saddens me that these students don't understand who benefits from their labors.

You also build your Kong by attending regular events such as Instructor Clinics, Black Belt classes, and Rank examinations. You are aware of the events on the [calendar](#). Offer to help organize some of these events. Put together a special class for the annual seminar. Even just a special demonstration for the next rank test. Something! Do you think a few forms, breaking a brick and sparring are your requirements? Black Belt requirements are not tested during class. They are tested by your actions throughout the year. When you have met these requirements, then you will be permitted to test for your next Dan level.

Black Belts should attend 90% of all events if they expect to be promoted. Attending 10% of these functions means you are not meeting your requirements. It is worse that I have to hassle you to attend these functions. It means you do not understand that your rank imposes responsibilities on you, not "special guest" privileges.

You also build your Kong by lending your expertise to Chayon-Ryu. Wherever possible, you should freely offer your services to improve the image and status of Chayon-Ryu within the community. Share your knowledge in the community either by helping promote Chayon-Ryu or offering to teach or demonstrate your skills at your workplace or community hall. By sharing the benefits you have received from your training we can make this world a better place in which to live.

Quite often, new students come to the Dojang and see their old friends. Their first statement is either "I didn't know you were a Black Belt," or "I didn't know you trained in martial arts." This is deplorable. How could you train for so long and not tell your friends or work-mates about it? Is this a "humble" attitude, or a negative attitude? I consider it the latter. You need to share the "good medicine" with your friends and co-workers. You don't need to drag them along to class, but let them know that you train and how it has helped your life. Put some flyers up so people realize that someone they know trains at the school. Remember how difficult it was for you to come to class when you didn't know anyone. Probably many of your friends, relatives, or acquaintances would come to class if they knew

someone. This is how you build your Kong. Share Chayon-Ryu with the world and see how many people you can help.

I have built up much Kong in my life. Your Kong shows what you want, what you have done, and your effort to achieve these goals. Every chance I got, I taught my friends and shared the benefits of my training. I have shared with you for 32 years in the USA, and 45 years since I started teaching in Korea. Every time I share my knowledge I build my Kong. When you teach, you build your Kong. You never know, the lesson you teach might save a person's life, or make them rich beyond their wildest dreams.

You build Kong for your life. If you don't build Kong then you get no result. The saying, In Gua Ung Bo means "Where there is cause there will be a result." The seeds you throw return to you. If you throw many "good" seeds you will get a plentiful return. If you throw no seeds then nothing returns to you. If you throw bad seeds ... well I am sure you understand.

Students have too many excuses why they cannot help at the Dojang. They don't have time, their spouse or children need them, or they are too tired from working all day. These are simply excuses, showing a lack of understanding about how training affects their lives. Do you think you get no other benefits in your life than the ability to fight and defend yourself. If so, you are surely missing the point of the lessons I am teaching. You should acknowledge how Chayon-Ryu has enhanced your life, and then you would be willing to donate some time and effort in the improvement of your school and system. However, until you acknowledge these benefits, you will just think I am asking you to work for me without being paid -- more "minus" Kong. I am not asking for a lot, just a little on a regular basis, so that you may benefit from your efforts.

If you don't go to work, you don't get paid. That is obvious, so you go to work. But, how many people say "Oh, all my problems would be over if I won the lottery." They do not want to work for their reward. They just want the reward -- no In, "Patience." What then? Do they have enough common sense to manage their money wisely if they did win? In most cases the answer is a resounding "NO."

By following the "Basic Principles," your training builds common sense. By helping the system you are building your Kong. In this manner, Kong is similar to Karma or "Grace." When you give freely of your time and effort, your merit and grace grow, and your life prospers.

Your annual dues are the absolute minimum to attend the school. Still, they do not even pay for the lesson. Your time and effort pay for the lesson, and you can only understand what you learn by giving back to the system.

How much Kong have you built?

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