

Chayon-Ryu World Headquarters

Date: February 19, 2001

From: Grandmaster Kim Soo

To: All Students

Topic: Courage

Dear Students,

When I lived in Korea, many of my "friends" would get into fights. Actually, they would go looking for them. I didn't. For this reason they said I lacked courage. Why else would I not fight. I had so many "fighting" skills from my training - why didn't I use them. This was the only way to find out if they would work in a real situation.

This attitude raises a couple of interesting questions. One is: "What is the purpose of your training?" The other is simply: "What is courage?"

What is the purpose of your training?

You learn self defense for just that purpose - self defense. To protect yourself from a physical attacker. You train to prevent trouble, not cause it. Your intent should be to avoid problems, not encourage them. If you go out looking for trouble you will surely find it. Causing trouble with the intention of using your Martial Art skills to beat someone up is an abuse of your training. (And it's also against the law, considered the same as an 'armed' attack, you could be charged with assault with a deadly weapon.)

Sometimes, students will 'jokingly' provoke someone, with the intention of drawing a hostile response. When they get a hostile response they are only too happy to return it. Again, the intention is wrong. If you were really joking, it is your responsibility to quell the situation by apologizing and explaining you were only joking. Increasing the hostility helps nobody and the situation will most likely end in violence.

Another point to remember is: "there is always someone better than you." It doesn't matter what your belt level. Your opponent may use a technique or combination that you have never seen before. Or he may have five friends nearby. It doesn't matter how, but one mistake on the 'battlefield' and you may be dead.

How does that help your life? If this is how you use your training it may be too late. Ju Hwa Ip Ma is a Cancer of the thoughts, caused by focusing on Mu Sul (martial technique). It is caused by not balancing your mental growth with your physical performance.

Your Mu Sul has caused your ego to run wild, believing you are all powerful. You do not understand the consequences of using your physical skills. You do not understand the appropriate times to use these skills.

Where have you been? This is not what I teach. Chayon-Ryu emphasizes mental and physical balance. Chayon-Ryu training should lead you to become more considerate and respectful to others. You should be avoiding conflict, not causing it.

True confidence grows by training with mental and physical balance. Meditation and cleaning are humility training for mental balance. Courage derived from training should be used to advance your life.

If you are walking down the street and you see some fresh dog mess in front of you, you have two choices. You can walk around it, or you can kick it out of your way. If you avoid, you remain clean. If you kick it out of your way, it gets all over you. Even though you continue to pass, you are still contaminated from your poor choice. The more times you are involved in trouble, the greater are the consequences. By avoiding trouble, your life remains calm and safe.

What is courage?

Let me tell you more about my "friends." They are still in Korea, probably still in the same town. Weak, hollow men with no confidence. You see, while their bodies were strong, their minds were weak. They thought that by showing how tough they were, they would get respect and position. Maybe it even worked for a little while. But as they aged, their physical strength waned. With no mental or physical strength they had nothing left.

Just as an alcoholic drinks to ignore his problems, when he sobers up, his problems are still there. As they aged, these "friends" were left with only their weak minds. This weakness started when they began to look for easy ways to use Martial Arts for their own gain.

They did things like selling certificates, endorsing the political wishes of other people - all the while disregarding the teachings of their original Instructors. They didn't have the courage to follow their dreams. They didn't have the courage to leave their country of birth. So that is where they stagnated.

They had the courage to fight, but not improve their lives. One street fight or ten street fights, it doesn't matter. These are little things. Courage should be used for more important things. Save your courage for the big battles in your life - happiness, security, serenity. Don't waste it on little meaningless battles.

Courage is a mental and spiritual quality, not a physical quality. As your courage grows, so too does your confidence. As your confidence grows, so too does your courage. They feed off each other.

Ultimately, the purpose of Chayon-Ryu is to improve your life. Use the lessons from your training and apply them to your work, social and family life. You should attempt to accomplish goals that previously seemed beyond you. You have the courage to attempt this because the only person who places limitations on you, is yourself. All you need to do is keep trying until you get it right. Just like practicing a form.

As well as improving your life you should also try to improve your Martial Art skills. It is not enough to reach a certain level and feel that is enough. For you to keep improving your life, you need to keep improving your physical and mental ability in Chayon-Ryu.

Show some leadership skills, help teach, clean, and organize activities around the dojang. It may seem backwards to you, but the more effort you put into Chayon-Ryu, the more your life will benefit from your training. Even if this means dedicating an extra hour each week to training or cleaning, your investment will be well worth it in the future.

I came to the United States with \$100 and a three month visitor's visa. I came to fulfill my dream of passing on the knowledge of my teachers. I could no longer do this in Korea because of political pressures to forget the "old ways" and join with modern Taekwondo.

I wanted to share the benefits of my training with as many people as possible. I wanted to respect and honor my teachers. If you wish to respect and honor me, you should plan to open your own schools in the future. This will show, and test your courage.

I am third generation since the reintroduction of Martial Arts to Korea after the Japanese occupation. You are fourth generation in the Chayon-Ryu family. You may never have known your great, great grandfather but you still carry his name. Even though you never knew Grandmaster Byung In Yoon, he would be proud to have you teaching his legacy.

You now carry the name of Chayon-Ryu, your family in Martial Arts.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Byung In Yoon', written in a cursive style.