

## Loyalty and Taekwon-Do As interpreted by Peter Graham

### Loyalty (*noun*)

1. The state or quality of being loyal
2. Faithful adherence to a sovereign, government, leader, cause etc
3. An example or instance of faithfulness, adherence to a belief.

This is the definition of loyalty as expounded by the Oxford dictionary.

To me, *loyalty* is very much like *respect* - it has to be earned and cannot be demanded.

To use *loyalty* in context with Taekwon-Do is difficult without disseminating what particular aspects of Taekwon-Do one is referring to.

If we are referring to the art of Taekwon-Do then we probably need to differentiate as to *which* school of Taekwon-Do we have chosen to be loyal to.

In setting the title of this exercise I believe the Examiners are directing the question to ones loyalty to what I personally consider to be the true form of the art, namely the Chang Hon form of the art formulated by General Choi Hong Hi.

However, as we all well know, there are various organisations that lay claim to what they maintain is the fact that they - and only they - are the true and original.

This of course makes it very difficult for the student to ascertain to where their respective loyalties should be aligned.

Personally, I ascribe to the philosophy of Taekwon-Do as envisaged and set out by the Founder and written in his lifes works. (With a few exceptions!) As a rational human being, my analysis of The Generals memoirs paint a slightly different picture, no doubt because I lack the Asian cultural upbringing, but the overall perception of the moral concept of the way one should aspire to live one's life is inspiring.

Unfortunately humans, being what they are, have set about making a mockery of what I believe the General had in mind, and a lust for power and financial gain coupled with dodgy political ideology have set about destroying the dream that I truly believe was the driving force behind what the General envisaged when he set about sharing his vision with those that were prepared to listen and learn.

Many words have been written regarding Taekwon-Do and many of them bring areas of the art into pretty severe disrepute, portraying many of the leading players forming the hierarchy of its evolvement as corrupt thugs and exploiters who cared little for the original concept. (See; *A Killing Art* by Alex Gillis)

Here again we have a split in where we might apply any feelings of loyalty. Are we talking here of the Philosophical side or the Physical side of Taekwon-Do?

I have no problem attributing loyalty to the 'Teaching of Moral Culture' or the twenty four (25?) tuls as taught by The General, but what I *do* have a problem with is pledging any form of loyalty to some of the aspects and edicts foisted on us by some of the International

bodies who purport to operate the Art 'For the Good of The Art' but fail to disclose the surreptitious way they go about doing this or where the sometimes substantial financial results are being directed.

It seems the majority of martial arts have been inundated by all the wrong people for all the right reasons. (or should that be put the other way around?!)

When I first contemplated how I was going to approach this essay, it soon became obvious that I would have to focus on one particular aspect of Taekwon-Do. This would mean I would have to eliminate obvious factors that make up the big picture.

So, starting from the top, I'm afraid I would not be able to pledge loyalty to the founder of Taekwon-do.

General Choi was obviously a brilliant man in the world of martial arts but as much as I admire him for what he achieved in his lifetime, he was somewhat of a megalomaniac ("Taekwon-do is easy to learn. That is why it has spread like wildfire all over the world. Someday it will be on the moon and the stars.) *Yeah right - Good luck with that!*

Add to this what could only be described as outright arrogance in the way he was renowned for speaking to people and treating people he considered to be his underlings, it appears to be in conflict to the founder's teachings on '*humility*' and I would find it extremely difficult to declare *loyalty* to such a man.

Then there is Taekwon-Do on the international scene.

Leaving aside the *other* splits from the organisation, the one that New Zealand has affiliated itself to still exhibits an element of arrogance. This exists within the hierarchy/management that precludes any justification for loyalty. It is manifested mainly in the reluctance of the group to produce audited accounts to indicate where the vast amounts of money that is being collected is ultimately channelled. I can accept that a certain amount of this could be commercially sensitive, but I feel that we, as a member of the organisation, are entitled to more information than has in the past been the case. This, coupled with the dubious way voting on key items is conducted at congress makes it difficult to declare *loyalty* to such an organisation.

Having said that, there are many that hold top positions within ITF that I have the utmost respect for. It is unfortunate that Grand Master Tran is no longer with us as I feel he, more than most, imbued the true teachings (*Do*) of the art.

And finally there is the International Taekwon-Do Foundation of New Zealand (Incorporated) to whom I have no hesitation in pledging my unreserved loyalty.

This probably stems from the fact that I have every confidence in those at the top of the organisation, both technical and managerial, and their collective ability to attempt to provide us with a martial art that encompasses everything the General conceived at the birth of Taekwon-Do.

The main reason for this is that ITFNZ have not been corrupted by money or personnel quests for power - and long may that continue.

Another reason I feel so strongly loyal to *this* part of Taekwon-Do could possibly also be attributed to our geographic isolation. This has engendered a strong, almost family, feeling of involvement and has allowed me to meet many people over the past thirty five years that I would give my utmost trust to - and this to me represents **Loyalty and Taekwon-Do**.