



MARTIAL ARTS FOR HEALTH & WELLNESS, LLC

September 2025 Newsletter



Hapkido, Where Did This Name Come From?

In the martial arts there are various histories that can be disputed by varying sources. One of the martial arts that is a great example of this is Hapkido. I am not going to go into any of the stories about Hapkido's antiquity and who founded the art, either Choi, Yong Sul or Ji, Han Jae. Instead I want to look at the name and three stories on how the name was first coined.

The first story on how Hapkido came to be named begins when Choi, Yong Sul first met Suh, Bok Sub in 1948. After their initial meeting Suh began training in Yawara under Choi, Yong Sul. Yawara is the name Choi used for the Japanese art he was teaching. In Korean Yawara is pronounced Yu Sul. Suh believed Yu Sul sounded similar to Yudo (Korean pronunciation for Judo) and influenced Choi to use the term Yu Kwon Sul (soft punch technique) to describe his art.

In 1954 Suh's father became a congressman and this opened up opportunities for Suh and Choi to give demonstrations of the art they practiced at public events. After a demonstration at Young Nam University for the faculty and students one of the professors approached Suh and explained while he was being educated in Japan he saw a similar demonstration of an art called Aikido. The Chinese characters used to write Aikido in Japanese would be pronounced Hapkido in Korean. Upon hearing this Suh started to use the name Hapkido to describe his art and claims to be the first person to use the term.

合氣道

Hapkido written in Chinese characters.

합기도

Hapkido written in Korean characters.

A second theory on the origin of the name comes from one of Choi's students named Kang, Moon Jin. Kang trained under Choi in 1950 and after a short period of training opened his own school in Daegu City. To advertise the school a sign was hung that clearly said Hapkido in Chinese characters. Some of Choi's students informed him about the school being opened without his consent. According to Lee, Joo Bang the founder of Hwa Rang Do, Choi went to the school and slapped Kang's face and took the sign down and kept it in his home for many years after the incident. Shortly after this Kang closed his school.

In the mean time many different students came to train with Choi at his home and upon seeing this sign assumed it was his chosen name for the art he was teaching. Because of this students started to use the name Hapkido for their art. This theory does not hold a lot of influence however because up until 1968 Choi used many names to describe his art; Yawara, Yu Kwon Sul, Yu Sul, Yu Eun Sul, Hapki Sul and Kido.

A final theory on the creation of the name Hapkido attributes it to Ji, Han Jae. Ji trained under Choi and eventually moved from Daegu City to An Dong City in 1957 and opened a school called the Dae Han Hapki Yu Kwon Sul An Mu Kwan. After nine months of teaching and living in An Dong he moved to Seoul and opened another school and carried the title Hapki Yu Kwon Sul, Seoul Director. While teaching in Seoul, Ji had the opportunity to compare his art to other arts such as Kong Soo Do, Tang Soo Do, Yudo and Kum Do. All of these arts ended in "Do" with means "the way."



Hapkido training in South Korea.





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In Ji's opinion, Hapki Yu Kwon Sul was too long a name and wanted to shorten it to "Hapkido." Ji realized changing the name of the art was a serious matter but could not discuss it with Choi so he went to Daegu City and discussed it with a fellow classmate under Choi named Kim, Moo Hong in 1958. Upon hearing how other arts all ended in "Do" instead of "Sul" Kim thought it was a good idea to go ahead with the name change. Later on Kim moved to Seoul and opened the Shin Moo Kwan school and used the name Hapkido to describe his art. Many of the first generation GrandMasters agree that Ji, Han Jae was the first to coin the term Hapkido.

Here we have three differing accounts of how Hapkido came to be named such. Like most histories Hapkido's history is written by the person holding the pen. I'll leave it up to you to come to your own educated decision on who first named the art Hapkido. A good source for general history of Hapkido is the book *History of Korea and Hapkido* by Dr. He-Young Kimm.

Why am I sharing this information with you? Some of the self-defense techniques that we practice derive from my training in Hapkido and Judo. I feel it's important not just to come and go through the motions but to try and know a little bit about where what we practice came from.

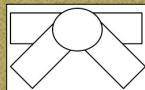
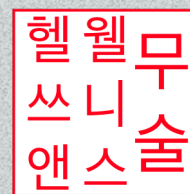
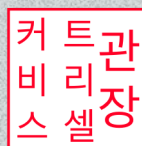
Take care,

Kirby Strissel

Kwan Jang - Martial Arts For Health & Wellness, LLC
Administrator - Korea/USA Simmudo Association

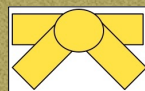


About to be thrown by
GM Kim, Jong Soung

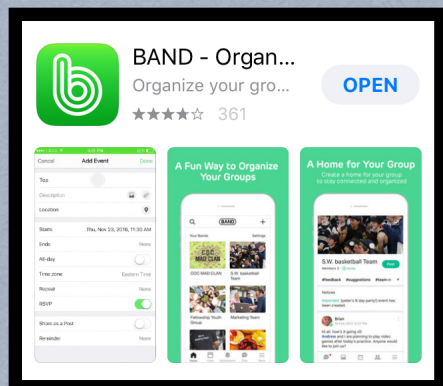


Thursday September 11, 2025 Promotion Test

White Belts	5:00 PM
Yellow Belts	6:00 PM
Green & Blue	7:00PM
Red Belts	8:00 PM



There will be no regular class on test night for white, yellow, green and blue belts. Red and black belts can attend the red belt testing to assist with any red belts testing this evening.



Hey, join our 'Martial Arts For Health & Wellness, LLC' group on BAND - The app for groups and communities!
<https://band.us/n/aea5Actau5P3f>

If you have not yet please download the BAND app to your smartphone. I will be using this as another communication method for updates about last minute changes that may affect class schedules. You can join the group at the above link.

