

Juche and Kodang

A Brief History

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Kodang was one of the original 24 patterns created by General Choi. In 1986, however, Kodang was removed from the official syllabus by General Choi and replaced by a new pattern, which he named Juche. General Choi maintained the change was to incorporate new techniques, but political and financial events of the times may have also contributed to this change.

According to Grandmaster Choi, the patterns were derived from "the most illustrious people to have been produced by nearly five thousand years of Korean history" and each movement in a pattern must express the personality and spiritual character of the person it is named after". It is in this context that General Choi Hong Hi dedicated one of his second-degree patterns to South Korean patriot Cho Man Sik.

Kodang is the pseudonym of the patriot Cho Man Sik (1 February 1883 - 15 October 1950) who dedicated his life to the independence movement and education of Korea. The 39 movements of the pattern show the number of times of his imprisonment as well as the location of his birthplace on 39 degrees latitude.

Cho was born in Kangsŏ-gun, South P'yŏngan Province, now in North Korea. He was a leader the fields of society, education, culture and industry. He held positions of authority in the Sanjeonghyeon Church, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Gwanseo Athletic Association and the Chosun Dially Newspaper. He was also the head of the Chosun Democratic Party and was awarded the Order of Merit for National Foundation in 1970. Cho is regarded as a martyr in South Korea.

In his youth he was an activist within Korea's Christian community, but from 1910 with Japan's annexation of Korea he became increasingly involved with his country's independence movement. His participation in the 1919 Sam-Il protest marches led to his arrest and detention, along with 50,000 of other Koreans.

After his release, he dedicated himself to non-violent resistance to the occupation, a stance which earned him the epithet "The Gandhi of Korea". He advocated the principle of self-sufficiency for the nation, and formed a number of commercial enterprises intended to encourage Koreans to buy home-produced goods and so instil a sense of nationalism.

During WWII Cho organised the Chosun Democratic Party and became an important political leader in the area, which is now North Korea. After moving into the 38th parallel, the Soviets decided to use Korean organisations to govern indirectly through provisional committees, which

were consolidated into the "Temporary Five Provinces People's Committee". Cho Man Sik initially led this committee. This committee was made up of nationalists, communists and Christian leaders of which Kim Il Sung represented the communists. The committee would collapse in 1945 after issues over the trusteeship of the country.

A four-power trusteeship of Korea involving China, Britain, the U.S.S.R and the U.S.A was proposed by the Moscow Conference in 1945. This was met with massive demonstrations with the majority of the Korean population unable to accept the idea of foreign power trusteeship and immediate Korean independence the only acceptable solution. Cho Man Sik was one of the key leaders of this opposition.

In 1946 the U.S.- Soviet Joint Commission met to discuss the implementation of the Moscow Agreement. With the Soviet proposal excluding all non-communist political groups and the U.S. insisting that this was a violation of democratic principles, the Commission acknowledged an impasse and adjourned the Commission. Non-communists started to flee to the South, but Cho decided to stay. On 8 February 1946 he was forced to resign from his position of Chairman of the Provisional People's Committee for the Five Provinces, and was placed under house arrest by the Soviets, from which position he continued to vocally oppose the communists. Cho stood in the 1948 vice-presidency election, but was unsuccessful, receiving only 10 votes from the National Assembly. Later transferred to a prison in Pyongyang, he was executed on 15 October 1950. His political rival Kim Il Sung now consolidated his power and the two halves of the country moved towards permanent division and within three years separate governments had been set up.

Juche is a philosophical idea that man is the master of everything and decides everything, in other words, the idea that man is the master of the world and his own destiny. It is said that this idea was rooted in Baekdu Mountain which symbolises the spirit of the Korean people. The diagram (M) represents Baekdu Mountain .

However, the Juche Idea is also the national Communist ideology of North Korea and the political system based on it. The doctrine is a component part of Kimilsungism, is used to justify the personality cult of Kim Il Sung (1912-1994) and his son Kim Jong Il (b. 1942). The core principle of the Juche ideology since the 1970s has been based on the notion of the superiority of willpower and ideology over environmental conditions. Juche literally means "main body" or "subject"; it has also been translated in North Korean sources as "independent stand" and the "spirit of self-reliance".

Kim Il-Sung advanced Juche as a slogan in a December 28, 1955, speech titled "On Eliminating Dogmatism and Formalism and Establishing Juche in Ideological Work" in rejection of the policy of de-Stalinization (bureaucratic self-reform) in the Soviet Union. However, he later claimed to have originally developed juche in the 1930s, during his alleged struggle against the Japanese occupation. The Juche Idea itself gradually emerged as a systematic ideological doctrine under the political pressures of the Sino-Soviet split in the 1960s. The word "Juche" also began to appear in untranslated form in English-language North Korean works from around 1965. Kim Il Sung outlined the three fundamental principles of Juche in his April 14, 1965, speech "On Socialist Construction and the South Korean Revolution in the Democratic People's Republic of

Korea". Much of this philosophy can be traced back to Stalinist and Maoist ideology, but during the ideological struggle between the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s *juche* became North Korea's "own style of socialism" (*urisik sahoejuui*).

The principles are based on three axioms "independence in politics" (*chaju*), "self-sustenance in the economy" (*charip*) and "self-defense in national defense" (*chawi*). Contrary to an individualistic interpretation of the subject and the idea of self-reliance, *juche* stresses the development of the collective and the principle of the supreme leader (*suryongron*). Current North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il officially authored the definitive statement on *Juche* in a 1982 document titled *On the Juche Idea*. He has final authority over the interpretation of the state ideology and incorporated the *Songun* (army-first) policy into it in 1996.

In 1972, *Juche* replaced Marxism-Leninism in the revised North Korean constitution as the official state ideology, this being a response to the Sino-Soviet split. *Juche* was nonetheless defined as a creative application of Marxism-Leninism. Kim Il-Sung also explained that *Juche* was not original to North Korea and that in formulating it he only laid stress on a programmatic orientation that is inherent to all Marxist-Leninist states.

After the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korea's greatest economic benefactor, all reference to Marxism-Leninism was dropped in the revised 1998 constitution. But Marxist-Leninist phraseology remains in occasional use, for example, socialism and communism. The establishment of the *Songun* doctrine in the mid-1990s, however, has formally designated the military, not the proletariat or working class, as the main revolutionary force in North Korea.

In an interview in 1999, when asked why *Kodang* was replaced with *Juche*, the General replied, "As new techniques were developed they needed to be represented in the patterns. The pattern *Kodang* was replaced simply because it represented the latest Korean history, basically last in first out. Since the new techniques are difficult to perform, (i.e. dodging reverse turning kicks, slow motion side kick/reverse kick consecutive kicks, mid-air strikes, defensive hooking kicks, 2 directional kick, landing in a left diagonal stance while performing a block) they should come in at the 2nd Dan Black Belt level, as that is when one can be in peak condition."

It has also been speculated that there were political considerations in the change of these two patterns. In 1965 the General returned to South Korea after fulfilling his role as Malaysian Ambassador. At this time the normalisation of diplomatic relationship between Korea and Japan was being established, amongst general dissent from the people who remembered the struggle for independence from Japan. The president of South Korea, Park Chung Hee, tried to force many prominent figures to make supporting announcements, including the General. The General also felt Taekwon-Do was being used as anti-communist political propaganda and for the president's own political ends. General Choi and Park Chung Hee had long been political rivals. In the late 1940s, Park had received a death sentence, later rescinded, from a military panel that had included General Choi.

In the early 1970s the General felt the way for national survival was the "fraternal love for unity of the country" and the General decided to stand in the front of the unification movement. In 1971, the General approached the South Korean government to teach Taekwon-Do in North Korea and for financial help to continue the international spread of Taekwon-Do. He was refused on both counts as North Korea was still regarded as an enemy state and any contact would be regarded as treasonous. The General also felt that as he was born in the Hwa Dae Myong Chun District of Korea, in what is now North Korea, and as other North Korean born people living in South Korea had been discriminated against by a largely South Korean born government. Unable to secure funding, being used as a political pawn, discriminated against by a government and unable to teach in his homeland, the General left South Korea in 1972 and went into exile in Canada. Choi took the headquarters of the ITF to Toronto with him, and South Korea responded by forming a new organisation, the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF), based in Seoul.

As no other funding was available, the General approached North Korea following his move to Canada. In 1980 the General and 15 of his students, including his son Choi Joong Hwa, made a monumental trip to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This was the first time Taekwon-Do was introduced to the people of North Korea. While the General maintained his intention to return was reconciliatory, South Korea saw this trip as treasonous and he was labelled a communist.

The ramifications of this trip were widespread. Many instructors felt that the General had gone against many of the principals he had always maintained. The General had been an army general in the Korean War and fought against North Korea and now he was providing the North Korean army with the secrets he had taught South Korean army. He had also taught the Doctrine of Anti-Communism to the South Korean soldiers yet was seen as supporting a Communist Regime. Most of the military instructors left ITF. The South Korean government also threatened to blacklist any instructor supporting the General and would bar any from re-entering South Korea. Many instructors had moved overseas to spread TKD but still had family in South Korea. These political threats and the loss of faith in the General caused many instructors to leave ITF and severely weakened the organisation.

In conclusion, while the General maintained the change from Kodang to Juche was to incorporate new techniques further research shows that the political environment of the time and a lack of funds to globalise Taekwon-Do were also leading factors in the change. The change of the pattern name and the subsequent establishment of relations with North Korea and the polarisation of relations with South Korea had widespread and long-term ramifications that would affect the organisation for many years to come.

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