



空手道
練習

KEEPING THE FLAME ALIVE

Hankimuye 4th dan essay

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Introduction

This essay is my current view on Hankimuye. I am convinced that I would write this essay differently in a few years. In recent years, especially since I started Jeilkwan (my dojang), I find myself in a positive whirlwind in terms of personal development. For the most part thanks to teaching my students at Jeilkwan.

“Tradition does not mean to look after the ash, but to keep the flame alive.”

A statement that describes exactly how I approach my Hankimuye practice. Master Ko Baek-yong did not say it literally, but he certainly stimulated us to investigate and experience for ourselves. As a dojang owner, I noticed that it is very important to adapt to the times when teaching. Don't cling too much to old traditions, but build on what is already there and continue to develop Hankimuye following your own path.

How it all started

From an early age I have been fascinated by martial arts. In the year 2000 I started my Hapkido training at Boelot's in Best led by Mari Thoonen. I was very much impressed by the energetic way of training and the combination of spectacular kicks, throws and joint locks.

After receiving my black belt (1st dan) in 2005, I continued my training at the NHF. I traveled all over the country to participate in open trainings and seminars. The NHF had a very good relationship with several masters from South Korea, with Master Ko Baek-yong in particular. Almost every year, Hapkido practitioners from the NHF traveled to South Korea and the Korean masters also visited the Netherlands almost every year.

In 2014 I visited South Korea for the first time. Traveling is already in my blood, so to combine it with my passion was a great opportunity. After two weeks of training I received my 2nd dan. During the Hankimuye summer camp in 2015 in The Netherlands, I was recognized as a trainer under the WHF by Master Ko Baek-yong. For me this was the last push I needed to start a great adventure, namely starting my own Martial Arts school. On January 11, 2016 I opened Jeilkwan in Rosmalen. The name Jeilkwan was given to me by Master Ko Baek-yong.



In 2017, Master Ko Baek-yong fell seriously ill. Together with other NHF instructors we traveled to Seosan in South Korea to pay our last respects to Master Ko. We trained, laughed and cried together. We also did an exam for the last time. For me it was very honorable to get my 3rd dan under Master Ko's approval. Although practicing Hankimuye is not about status, grades and exams, I still cherish that moment.

Since 2017 I also train Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ). BJJ is particularly specialized in ground fighting and is therefore very complementary to Hankimuye. Practicing BJJ makes me a more complete martial artist. First and foremost, I like the sparring and strategic thinking. Because you can go 100% while sparring, you learn to deal with a lot of pressure and uncomfortable situations. Something that can make all the difference in practical self-defense. It also creates a strong feeling of brotherhood and mutual respect. I incorporate the insights I gain from practicing BJJ consciously and unconsciously into my lessons at Jeilkwan.

“You win or you learn.”

What Hankimuye means to me

To explain what Hankimuye means to me I start with The Golden Circle of Simon Sinek: Start with the Why. Why do we do the things we do.

Why I practice Hankimuye

Practicing martial arts gives me a lot of energy and meaning in life. It makes me physically and mentally strong, but it also makes me relaxed. During training I switch off completely from the outside world and live in the moment. This I want to share with others.

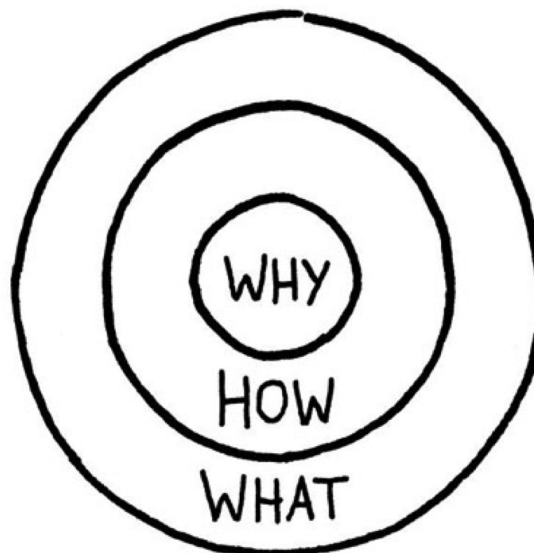
How I practice and teach Hankimuye

Our (Korean) masters have always encouraged us to further develop our martial arts. In this way we remain relevant and applicable in the present time. We do not believe in learning hundreds of techniques, but all the more in learning a number of basic principles. Principles that can be used in almost any situation.

I use a progressive approach and have an open mind to other martial arts. I keep on trying new things. A creative process from which I get a lot of pleasure and energy. I am convinced that you can only shape this in your own way. You can be inspired, but don't try to copy someone.

What I practice

I roughly divide my Hankimuye practice into 4 elements: martial arts, self-defense, fight and fit. (Read more about this on page 9)



Lifestyle and passion

The practice of Hankimuye, or Martial Arts in general, has evolved for me over the past 23 years from a sport to a lifestyle. It is woven into everything I do and the choices I make. It's always present, mentally and physically. A few examples:

- When I am nervous about an important event or presentation at work? When I have a difficult situation or conversation ahead of me? Then I use my focus and danjeun breathing to become more relaxed;
- Basically with every form of movement that I do, whether it's table tennis, kitesurfing or running, I'm looking for flow, an optimal chain of movement and I'm looking for the way of less resistance (read more on page 7);
- When snowboarding I consciously use my danjeun for balance and to carve through the snow;
- Breakingfalling is something that has helped me in various situations. You learn to protect your body and head and that saves a lot of injuries;
- Even when I am opening a door I use my Hankimuye (principles);
- During the day I have a sedentary job (office job). When I work from home, I take several breaks to do various Hankimuye exercises to stay healthy and flexible;
- This lifestyle also has an effect on practical matters such as the choice of a house to buy. A large attic was a requirement to build a private dojang;
- I recently started as a freelancer, so I am more flexible in my choices regarding training and teaching;
- But the most important part of the past 7 years has been running Jeilkwan and teaching, transferring my passion to adults and recently juniors as well. I get a lot of energy out of this.



Private dojang at my attic

Life stages

When I was young (adolescent) I hung out a lot on the street. Not in a gang or anything, the environment wasn't extremely violent, but it does make you streetwise. I also visited bars where things could get messy. I wasn't a brawler, but I've never struggled to stand up for myself. Once I was looking for a martial art that suited me, it wasn't just about learning martial arts techniques, but moreover about calming down in my head.

The beginning

The main reasons for me to start with (at the time) Hapkido were:

- Having an outlet;
- Become calm in the head;
- Learn to defend myself;
- Learn spectacular skills.

The combination of the explosiveness on the one hand and the softness and the controlled character on the other hand was something that intrigued me. Hard & soft. Eum & yang.

"It takes strength to be good."

Adult

Once I was a black belt, I was already a lot more emotionally stable. I really enjoyed training. I started sparring more often and was looking more for deepening to improve my skills. At a fairly young age I started with Hankido or Circle techniques. Knowing what I know now, I would have preferred to spend more time in my younger years on the more physical elements such as realistic self-defense and sparring because it suits that phase of life better.

Teaching

When I started my own school in 2016 and started teaching on a regular basis, a lot changed in me in terms of insight, mindset and skill. Because I not only started teaching, but also started my own martial arts school, I had the choice and freedom to "reinvent" my martial arts for myself and my students. To find my own way. It's great that the NHF supported me in this and still does. An amazing journey that I am still in the middle of.



First Jeilkwan training in 2016

Broadening

Because teaching my students was at the expense of my own training hours, I decided to train another martial art besides Hankimuye. Something complementary to Hankimuye. I chose Brazilian Jiu Jitsu because it's mainly about ground fighting and therefore you have to start all over again. Quite confrontational, but therefore highly instructive.

It is very interesting to explore other martial arts and schools. With an open mind and a humble attitude you will see that there are more similarities than differences. Practicing BJJ gave me new inspiration for my Hankimuye training. Especially the sparring under high pressure and the use of strategy are very interesting.

Hankimuye principles explained

Within our style we mainly use three principles: circle, flow and harmony. These principles we try to understand through the practice of circle techniques (Hosindobeop).

Principle of Circle

The principle of circle is practically everywhere. Circular movements help you find the way of less resistance. It is easier to absorb and deflect your opponent's energy or movement. But circle is also important in your own body structure. A round body structure makes your body strong. The connection within your body, from feet to fist, is a circular structure as well. I notice this especially when I practice the Sangmu forms.

Defense

The principle of circle comes in many ways. For instance, we use circular motion when we:

- Deflect a punch or kick;
- Redirect someone who grabs a hold of you;
- Counter a throw or takedown.

It's save to say that most attacks happen by someone who is physically stronger than you. Using pure force will not work in that case. A circular motion and round body structure make you powerfull and limber at the same time, especially against a linear motion.

Offense

You can also apply the principle of circle more offensively. For instance:

- When you are striking using your danjeun, you make a round or circular motion from your hip region;
- When you are doing a spinning heel kick, you use relaxation and circular motion to generate power;
- When you make a striking combinations or a spinning backfist, you use circle steps and timing to generate power;
- When you execute offensive takedowns and throws, it is often round movements and body structure that make the difference.



The principle of Flow

You can explain the principle of flow by the way you execute a circle technique or self-defense sequence. Once your partner is in motion and off balance, it's flow that keeps him moving and trying to find his balance again. Controlling your partner by directing the movement or energy in a way he cannot stop.

But for me flow is more than that. Flow is in movement, but also in connecting movements or techniques. Flow and timing come along and you can find this also in the execution of kicks, strikes, throws and counters:

- Flow in circle techniques;
- Flow in striking combinations;
- Flow in deflecting several attacks and counters;
- You can find flow in your body when doing a spinning heel kick as well.

Sangmu Hyeong no. 5 is an excellent way to practice flow in your striking and throwing. Connecting movements in a way where your body feels in an optimal state.

The principle of Harmony

This is the most difficult principle to interpret, because it is all about feeling. Harmony is about connection and being in contact with your opponent (or training buddy). It is a continuous play between feeling and anticipating your opponent's movement and energy. Through a good connection you are able to feel the way of least resistance and to disturb the balance (danjeun) of your opponent.

Practicing harmony works best for me when we practice hosindobeop with a double grab, for example two hands on two wrists. You are challenged to connect and play with the body structure, flow and energy of your training buddy. It sometimes feels like a kind of dance, but without the rhythm.



Teaching Hankimuye

When I started my martial arts school Jeilkwan in 2016, I had the advantage that all students started at the same level and I could build my teaching program from scratch. The perfect opportunity to further develop my style of Hankimiye in the present time and environment. A world opened up for me. I was forced to revive and teach the basics again. In particular, the self-defense I had learned in the past was no longer appropriate to the present time.

A number of things that characterize my lessons at Jeilkwan are:

- Not too many solo drills, but train as much as possible with a training partner, so you develop a feeling for body mechanics and its anatomy;
- Light sparring and sparring practice forms that fit our style;
- Pressure testing self-defense techniques to test their effectiveness. This has resulted in a number of adjustments of our techniques;
- Make a clear distinction between areas and their purposes;
- Students are encouraged to find their own way. I fill the backpack, but they have to decide for themselves what to take on their journey and what to change to suit them;
- Assistant trainers are given the space to develop their own teaching style;
- More focus on mobility and functional strength through movement training. Especially important for students who are 35 years or older.

Beginners

Sometimes we forget that our students are only at the beginning of their martial arts quest and we dive too quickly into the complex matter of circle techniques and principles. In the curriculum and exam requirements, I try to take into account what they need most. For example, learning to defend against common attacks such as a head lock and a haymaker.

Children and juniors

It is important for children that they can set their boundaries (verbally). To be able to do this convincingly, they have to be strong (mentally). You only become mentally strong when you know that you can back it up physically. That's why a physically challenging workout and outlet are essential to build confidence. We keep it playful, but realistic.

Personal approach

I am always looking for the approach that best suits the person, but mainly I am helping my students to improve their body posture and structure. I love doing this joint quest.

Waves

Something I pass on to students at an early stage is that your development comes in waves. Sometimes you are in a good flow, you are a sponge and everything seems to work out. And sometimes it's one step forward and two big steps behind. Ups and downs. In those downs is where we sometimes lose ourselves.

“No pain, no gain”

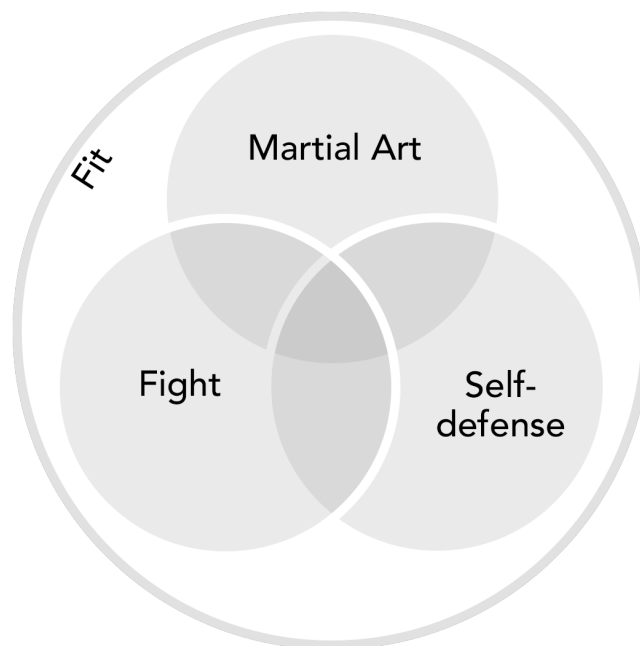
Method of training

In order to properly learn and practice Hankimuye, it is essential to clearly indicate (especially in the Western world) the purpose or application of each part of training. By this I don't mean you have to explain everything literally. No, I am a strong supporter of learning by doing, but because we work a lot with exercises that are not directly related to realistic self-defense (e.g. circle techniques), it is essential to indicate the purpose of each part.

When I am teaching Hankimuye I distinguish 4 separate parts that partly overlap each other. See schedule below:

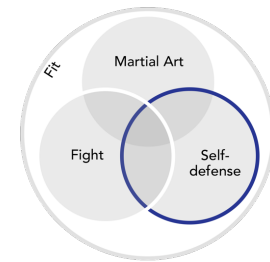
1. Martial art
2. Self defense
3. Fighting
4. Fit

So the separation is not as strict, but it helps students to better understand Hankimuye.



Martial Art

Within Hankimuye, or even within martial arts in general, we often work with exercises to make certain skills better and to push boundaries. For example, a circle technique is not a practically applicable self-defense technique, but a form of exercise that teaches the 3 principles of Hankimuye. The same goes for a jumping spinning heel kick. Not exactly something you would do 'on the streets', but it expands your skillset and you explore the extremes of your mental and physical abilities. On top of that, your common techniques become a lot more effective.



Goals

- Learn to apply the Hankimuye principles: circle, flow & harmony;
- Finding the way of least resistance;
- Learning to move and generate power from relaxation;
- To become more mentally and physically resilient;
- Practicing and refining a technique, for example a joint lock or a kick;
- Using the movement or energy of your opponent (Hosindobeop);
- Using your breathing and energy (Hwansangdobeop);
- Keeping balance and disrupting balance.

How

Parts within Martial Art are:

- Hosindobeop (circle techniques);
- Hwansangdobeop (visualization);
- Combinations of joint locks and balance disruptions in one flow;
- Extreme fall breaking such as far and high rolling;
- Loose techniques such as kicks and punches, purely aimed at perfecting technique, timing and momentum generation.

Find the path of least resistance

This is a principle you practice mostly through martial arts exercises. It can be explained in two ways:

Self-defense

We learn to use circular movements to deflect the force of an often stronger opponent. If someone pushes, I do not counter it with force, but try to use and absorb the energy to get my opponent off balance. The way of least resistance.

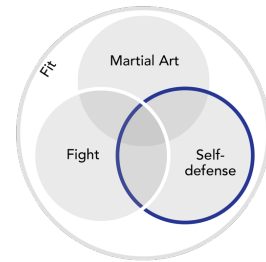
Repetition

A beautiful aspect of our style is the art of repetition. If you repeat a circle step or a certain kicking technique a lot (e.g., 1,000 times) it's going to grind or hurt somewhere. That's the moment where you start aiming for relaxation in technique, the way of least resistance in your body movement. The search for relaxation is something I also use in daily life, for example, when my back hurts during work. An additional benefit of repeating a lot is that you can get into a kind of meditative state or flow state. A state of being where you forget about time and live completely in the moment.

“Many practice!”

Self-defense

This is by far the most difficult part. Mentally and physically. Self-defense is very underestimated. It is very difficult to practice in a realistic way without getting injured. For example, if you teach children, you want to teach them how to stand up for themselves. But to be able to do that, they have to be mentally strong and that comes with physical abilities. There is no easy way.



Goal

Learning to protect yourself and others from common attacks in Western Europe. Protect in the broadest sense of the word. This includes preventing violence and de-escalating threatening situations.

How

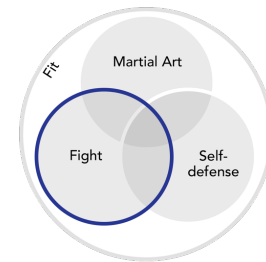
We train realistic attacks and practical applications. We don't get carried away too much, but an important element is pressure testing. Not just practicing a technique, but being attacked under high pressure and unannounced. The stress factor is huge and learning how to deal with this stress is probably the most important part of this training.

Real self-defense is raw and bold and seems contradictory with the compliant and relaxed art we often practice. Still, if you claim to teach your students to defend themselves in a real nasty situation, it is important to practice realistically as well. Again, the trick is to calmly build up the pressure and let everyone go home in one piece.



Fight

Although Hankimuye has no competition element nor a long-standing culture of sparring, I find it an essential part of my Hankimuye training and classes.



Goals

- Battle with yourself;
- Get to know yourself;
- Facing yourself;
- Become physically and mentally strong.

Furthermore, you work on your fitness, reflexes, resilience, timing, distance management and applicability of your techniques. You learn to deal with the unexpected and be comfortable in uncomfortable situations. Something that will benefit you in multiple aspects of your life. Also in your self-defense.

How

- Spar exercises: for example, using limited techniques or games such as knee tapping;
- Combinations: kick and punch combinations on each other or on the pads. Possibly adding by takedowns and throws;
- Free sparring: stand-up, from clinch, ground fighting.

Mindset

I sometimes jokingly say, "we don't have to step into the MMA cage." But do keep each other sharp and challenge each other at the right level. You can only be mentally strong if you feel physically powerful. There is no easy way.

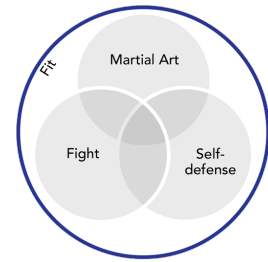
We build it up slowly and treat each other with respect. We rarely spar harder than 50% intensity. It is very important to keep it playful. That way you can practice it more, you dare to try new things and you work on a higher fighting IQ. Not to mention, it's super fun and challenging to do. Good for the cohesion within your group.

"You win or you learn."



Fit

Practicing Hankimuye is physically very challenging. You use your body in ways it is not used to. Especially when you are just beginning. Therefore, it is incredibly important to have basic fitness and flexibility to avoid injury and get the most out of your training.



Purpose

The goal of this training is to improve and maintain your strength, flexibility and mobility. We do this by means of:

- Various Hankimuye agility exercises such as: tumbling, rolling (far and high), breakfalling, dynamic push-ups (yoga roll), Hapkido walk etcetera;
- Dynamic and static stretching. I personally prefer dynamic stretching during class because it keeps you warm and you also practice technique;
- Movement training: animal walks.

Animal walks

On the subject of Fit, you can write piles of books, but in this essay, I want to focus particularly on the animal walks. In 2019, a friend pointed out about this method of movement training. So what is it? It has no boundaries or rules, but you usually walk or move on all fours on the ground (quadrupedal), for example like a monkey, bear, crab, crocodile etcetera. I initially incorporated it into my own training and soon noticed that I became not only more mobile and flexible, but also more strong. You do every exercise with your own body weight and you develop pure functional strength. After 20 years of martial arts training, sometimes it's good to step out of your comfort zone (like I did with BJJ). I have integrated these animal walks into the warming up of my classes. Although the students find the exercises very tough, everyone is motivated to keep doing them because they simply benefit from them a lot. Even the kids love it. The animal walks contribute to:



1. **Mobility & Movement Quality**
The ability to control and improve the movements of our joints.
2. **Functional strength**
Because you move your body freely with your own body weight, you develop functional strength. You don't pump up your muscles, but keep them long and limber.
3. **Coordination, flexibility and agility**
The ability to move fluidly, without restriction and efficiently, relying on your natural biomechanics. Flow and timing are also elements you train.
4. **Injuries**
Helping to prevent and recover from injuries.

"We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."

Final word

Writing a thesis about your passion is something very personal. At the same time, practicing and teaching Hankimuye is also something very personal. In fact, it has all the ingredients you need. What do I mean by that? I can put my energy into it, lose myself in it, get frustrated, get insights, experience joy, it energizes me, it gives me obstacles, it teaches me to put things into perspective, it makes me confident, grounded, in touch with myself. I have gotten to know myself better, especially in situations when things get tough. It's very physical and at the same time mental. The battle with yourself. It is complex but also very basic.
It is eum & yang.

