



4th dan essay
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Introduction

In this essay, I will talk about the important moments that have shown how I've gotten better and have grown significant over time in Hapkido. I'll share the valuable lessons I've learned from my teachers and fellow students, and how Hankimuye's way of thinking has helped me face problems in and out of class. Also, I will explain some details of training – mainly the principles of Hankimuye. Circle, Flow and Harmony

Hankimuye for me, is a way of life. It defines me the way I am. The way I decide. And even the way I think. Without my past practicing Hapkido, I would not be at the place where I stand right now.

I am proud to show you my essay for my 4th dan examination. After all those years of practicing I have reached a new milestone. For me, Hankimuye is the best way to master yourself, not only physically but also mentally.

Respect - Discipline - Self confidence

Most important parts for me of Hankimuye are respect, discipline and self-confidence. I'm happy to teach within those manners. The way I see kids building on their future and growing from within. They don't see the growth by themselves in the first couple of years. But our team can be very proud of our association that we are well known in society. And to be part of a better future for the kids.

*“When we act in harmony with things,
we encounter the least resistance.”*

~ Tao Meng

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From the beginning

My interest in martial artist is not begun from myself. At the age of 6 I fought a lot with my brother in the weekends after dinner. Some kind of cocky behavior. But always play full. Eventually my parents came up with the idea to apply me on the hapkido school around the corner. It was at walking distance at around 800-meter walking.

I didn't know what to expect. Not any idea what to think about hapkido. I was a little bit nervous for after the holiday break. After summer it began. Went to Keep Fit, the trainings' location back then with my brother. Most of the people there where much older than us. And more impressive, as far as I remember the lowest belt color was green. Luckily, we had from most of the people a warm welcome. I had a classmate, who was also practicing Hapkido. He was purple belt at that time. And we were good friends. He was very good because he started from a very young age. Eventually he immigrated to New Zealand at the age of 10. I also made other good friends on the mat. But unfortunately some friend decided to go other directions. In the years that I was colored belt I had multiple friends/training partners that quitted hapkido. That also put me on a scale to quit or not to quit. Also my brother decided to quit after red belt. But I had the drive to go on, to fulfill my goal and archive a black belt. No matter what.

At least till my 12th age I had loads of fun training in Keep Fit. We went from Keep Fit to the Westwal on the industrial area. We trained more often during the week. It were good times. I was felt part as with the older generation. And so came the dream to become a teacher. When I was at the age of 13, I started helping assisting Paulus and Jelle in KeepFit where the kids still trained. I remember I was very nervous when Paulus asked me to do the warming up next week. So, I prepared the best I could. After a few weeks I did not know if I wanted to proceed. I was still nervous in front of the group. But I kept on going. Especially when my school came with an assignment to do an internship at a volunteer association or company. I asked permission to do that as assistant teacher at our hapkido lessons. Luckily that was allowed. So, for that time I still was a bit nervous but a good reason to keep on going for at least 16 more hours, same as 6 weeks. In those 6 weeks I gained a lot more motivation while writing my report as assigned by school. The positive words from my teacher, and from Paulus and Jelle gave me thrust in what I was doing and the path I was going.

Since then, it went better and better. My nervousity flowed away. Looking back at that moment shows me I was that 'small' insecure person. Who grew enormously in certainty. I'm very happy that I did proceed in teaching and kept on going this direction.

Later on, some difficult times followed in school period. A bad time especially when I broke my collarbone. I kept motivation and came to look at the lessons almost every week while healing from my injury. A time where I needed hapkido to relieve those stressful moments and forget about everything that had to do with school. After healing my training was like a medicine. The 1,5 hour a week was enough to pull me through that period. I remember I trained more often a week. On Thursday and sometimes Monday.

In that moment we (Paulus and I) taught morning groups on Saturday for 3 hours. After lunch another group. Then stack the mats and cleaned Keep Fit. On the bike to the Waaierhoek and trained there for another 1,5 hours. We also started teaching on Friday evenings. It was a hard time due the growth of ChongMuKwan. But I'm happy that I was part of the team. It became a dedication every time I taught, and trained. Looking back on a very good time with awesome friend, which are mostly still member or came back to our great team nowadays.

Eventually I passed my first blackbelt examination when I was 17. A full day of training and exercising. Tired but satisfied after a long day with good friends and fellow trainings partners.

Teaching and Mentorship

“The three principles of teaching”

Respect

“It teaches children that each person is different and to respect each other’s differences.”

Training Hankimuye involves a ranking system that differentiates skill and experience between practitioners. In the same vein, we teach children to respect each other’s differences regardless of ranking. Each person is accorded due respect whether he/she is just starting on their martial arts journey or are further along than the rest.

Furthermore, Hankimuye is open to all kinds of people, men, women, and of all ages. It is welcoming to all and first teaches us that not everybody is the same. We all have different body types, different heights, and we all come from different cultures. Hankimuye teaches our children to respect and celebrate our differences as human beings. Children’s perceptions, attitudes, and interpersonal skills can be developed in the practice of martial arts. Martial arts develops positive behavior in and out of training by teaching children the most basic values such as respect.

Discipline

“The practice of training people to obey rules or a code of behavior, using punishment to correct.”

Martial arts training involves interaction between the student and the teacher. There is no way children will be able to practice any form of martial art if they do not develop a respect for their seniors, trainers, and coaches. The connection between the trainer and the student is vital and respect is something that the child learns early on if he or she aims to learn the basics of any form of martial art. Furthermore, children learn to respect their peers who may be more advanced than they are. Practitioners are always encouraged to help each other in training. Ultimately, children learn to respect their trainers for the experience and skills they are able to share with them, and at the same time, they will learn that their trainers respect them as well for their willingness to improve themselves through martial arts training. Improving oneself as a martial artist is an invaluable experience that develops confidence and a sense of determination that serves one well in all aspects and stages of their lives. The respect that students develop for their masters, teachers, fellow students, and their own abilities is projected, shared, and applied to their interpersonal relationships at home, school, and in the community. The practice of showing and earning respect for others leads most martial arts students to become better citizens, better leaders, and better people overall.

Self confidence

"Self-confidence is trust in oneself, one's personal judgment, ability, power, etc."

Self-confidence is a crucial aspect of personal development, influencing every facet of one's life. It is the belief in one's abilities and worth, a fundamental element for success in any endeavor. While self-confidence can be cultivated through various means, one particularly effective and transformative avenue is martial arts. Martial arts not only equip individuals with physical skills but also nurtures a deep sense of self-assurance.

Hankimuye and in general martial arts often involve self-reflection and self-awareness. Practitioners are encouraged to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, both physically and mentally. This self-awareness allows individuals to set realistic goals and work steadily towards self-improvement. As they witness their progress and development, their self-esteem naturally grows. The process of setting and achieving goals in martial arts reinforces the belief in one's abilities, leading to increased self-confidence not only in the dojo but also in everyday life.

*"Discipline is doing what you hate to do,
but nonetheless doing it like you love it"*

~ Mike Tyson

Mindset and Everyday Life

Earning a black belt is a significant milestone, but the true growth appears in the years that follow. It's a journey of self-discovery, leadership, and personal development. My black belt was not just a belt around my waist, it's a symbol of my steadfast commitment to growth, both as a martial artist and as an individual. It signifies that I've embraced the path of lifelong learning and self-improvement, and that, in itself, is a noteworthy achievement.

From that period of earning my black belt. I started to work my day-to-day job. I finished school. And the "adult" life took his forms. I can say that if I never had my background in Martial arts I would not be in the place where I am right now. I don't know where I would've been. But definitely not at this place right here. Hankimuye brought me the confidence to take steps which I'm not sure if I would have taken it without my past as Hankido'er. I have learned to set and achieve goals. Adapt to challenges, and deal with pressure. The quality's equivalent to martial arts grows and became a part of my life.

Being able to self-reflect when something is not going my way. Evaluate and refine techniques. Seeking perfection in executing which is an unreachable ideal. This mindset extends to life outside of Hankimuye, where I apply the same principles of constant self-improvement to my personal and professional activities.

The 3- principles of Hankimuye

Circle

Circular movements are a symbol for wholeness in hankido. Circular motions are commonly used for guiding power, balance, fluency,

For me the S-lock is a great example of what circle is meant for in self-defense. Everybody knows that the S-lock is an easy used lock to the wrist. When we talk about straight grab to the wrist. The first part is blocking the others grip by putting your hand over his hand. Then you use the circular motion to reach with your gripped hand over his wrist to form the S- in his wrist. Then you turn over your hand to push him down. Sounds easy right? But then' there are a lot "what if's" in this technique. When the opponent is more stronger than you, it will become very difficult to reach the perfect end form of this technique. Also, when he is a lot taller. It's almost impossible to reach over his hand to make the S-lock. The circular movements in this technique can make it easier. The only thing to find out is "where is his power" regarding to his power you can turn the circular motions sideways to complete form. For example, if he is longer then you and you cannot reach over his hand. You can make that turn over, to a turn sideways under. There is still the circle to guide his force. And there is still the S-lock.

Besides self-defense circular motions return in every category of techniques. The most important one are the Hankido techniques. That start with circular motion steps. Transits into circular motion movements of the wrist to take over. And eventually circular motions in the counter -end technique. These 12 techniques are the basics that come across every aspect of Hankimuye in general. Its very important to understand the deeper meaning and knowledge in those techniques to apply them on for example kicks and even falling techniques.

Flow

Adaptability:

Flow in Hapkido depends on the practitioner's ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. This adaptability is achieved by understanding and internalizing a fixed repertoire of techniques. As the situation evolves, the practitioner can transition smoothly from one technique to another, ensuring a continuous and effective response.

Circular Movement:

Circular movement is a fundamental element of Hapkido flow. Circular movements allow the practitioner to deflect, redirect, and counter an opponent's attack with minimal effort, efficiently conserving energy and maintaining control.

Succumb to Conquer:

In Hapkido, practitioners are taught to use their opponent's power and energy against them. This means that instead of resisting or using brute force, practitioners give in to the opponent's attack, redirect it, and then regain control. This principle embodies the art of flow by allowing the practitioner to use the opponent's energy to their advantage.

The principles of flow in Hapkido emphasize the efficiency of movement, adaptability in the face of adversity, and a strong connection between the practitioner's mental and physical

abilities. As practitioners of Hapkido strive to master the art of flow, they embark on a journey of personal growth and self-discovery, transcending the boundaries of physical struggle and enriching their lives in countless ways.

Harmony

Physical Harmony

At the core of Hankimuye lies the physical harmony of the practitioner. To be effective in any martial art, you need a deep understanding of body mechanics, balance, and the precise execution of techniques. I learned over the past years to move my body efficiently, achieving a unity of form and function. The goal is not just to overpower an opponent but to do so with minimum effort, avoiding unnecessary damage and injury. The path to physical harmony teaches us as practitioners to listen to their bodies, respect our limits, and optimize our movements.

Mental Harmony

The mental aspect of Hankimuye is equally crucial. Harmony in this context is commonly related to focus, concentration, and the ability to stay calm under pressure. In the past years we are train more to cultivate a strong mind that can make quick decisions in the heat of battle. This mental harmony extends to my daily life, helping to deal with stress, anxiety, and other challenges that may come across. Through diligent practice, we develop resilience and self-discipline, which are valuable tools for personal growth.

Emotional Harmony

Harmony in Hankimuye also encompasses emotional balance. Training on the mat often bring fear, aggression, and frustration. It provides a structured environment for individuals to confront their emotions and learn to manage them effectively. Emotional harmony fosters self-control, empathy, and the ability to interact peacefully with others. By practicing, individuals can not only defend themselves physically but also achieve emotional balance in their lives.

"Water can flow, or it can crash. Be water my friend"

~ Bruce Lee

Future goals

As a future chairman of our association, I would like to keep our association healthy in all aspects. Our mission is to empower youth through martial arts as the cornerstone of their life education. We believe that martial arts, in addition to physical fitness and self-defense skills, provide an invaluable platform for conveying crucial life values such as discipline, respect and perseverance. Our goal is to guide young people on a journey of self-discovery, where they can set and achieve goals, learn from both successes and failures, and develop unwavering self-confidence and mental resilience. We are committed to nurturing character, promoting mental strength and building a strong foundation for a successful and balanced life through their participation in martial arts.

"I believe that children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way.

Show them all the beauty they possess inside"

~ Whitney Houston

Conclusion

It was a pleasure to write this essay. I'm proud to look back in my past as member of Chongmukwan. The path I've walked, the steps I made. The trainings we participate. The knowledge we receive and share. It's great to be part of this all. Not everybody will understand that I (almost) never skip my Saturday afternoon class. But for me it's the start and end for the new week. I gain a lot of energy from it. Even I am not always that motivated to go. But still I go.

For sure I will stay motivated to go on with what we are doing. We have a wonderful team. To know, that we make impact on society due to our lessons gives me the motivation to proceed. We can be part of the future of those young kids. Teaching them well about norm and values. Pleasure and fun are part of the experience and motivation. I can say that I really enjoy being part of Chongmukwan. I hope I can share my experience to our younger generation so we can make an even better future for the club.

"We know what we are, but know not what we may be"

~ Shakespeare