

Secret applications within Song Moo Kwan's hyungs
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Back in the early 1970s, the Chung Bong hyung were presented to the students of the Karate Center in Minneapolis, MN by Grandmaster Jun Sun "Jay" Hyon. They were the result of serious study and training from Song Moo Kwan Taekwondo founder, Supreme Grandmaster Ro, Byung Jick.

Their development was credited to Grandmaster Hyon but was a collaboration with two other Taekwondo masters. Master Moon Kim and Grandmaster Il Kuen Kim (Fridley, MN). They developed the seven hyung series that became the landmark for Song Moo Kwan. Many years later, with Grandmaster Ro, Hee Sang leading the World Song Moo Kwan Association, the Chung Bong hyung have become the official forms of the organization. The challenging patterns and early development of tactical combinations sets this series apart from most others being used today.

This hyung series affords a much greater number of kicks and employs several transitory stances to develop technique applications. These have been greatly over-looked within the series, most Korean forms practice for that matter, as they appeared when the World Taekwondo Federation came into existence and Full Contact Kickboxing was in its' prime with Bill Wallace, Joe Lewis and Chuck Norris fighting. The sport aspect started to take over and left traditional self defense development behind.

For the years that I spent training with Master Tom Sullivan (Karate North), a direct student of Grandmaster Hyon, I was told "All of the techniques that you need to be successful in sparring can be found in your forms." The application to the sport was readily presented. One of the first illustrations of this comes from Chung Bong Ee Bon with the Round Kick/Backfist combination. (Figures 1, 1a & 1b). This, though, didn't address the self defense application of the same combination.

Figure 1



Figure 1a



Figure 1b



The past few years of my training have been focused on finding what is underneath the patterns and combinations. Part of my curiosity with the Chung Bong hyung has always been why there were only seven patterns. Over the past 35 years of training with them, I have had the opportunity to learn about the Hyung-ahn and Pyung-ahn series that were adopted from the early Shotokan training that most Taekwondo masters received during the Japanese occupation of Korea prior to World War II. This brought to mind how those Japanese and Okinawan forms were developed. By stepping back to the “used to protect your life” perspective that gave rise to much of the martial arts, I think there is more to these patterns that illustrate how to use them for self defense and to increase mastery of Song Moo Kwan Taekwondo.

The self defense applications become visible as the student develops their understanding of technique and tactics. The old saying of “make the art your own” refers to the student’s development of tactics and NOT just skipping techniques or movements because they don’t like them. The development of technique application usually happens through three stages. In the first stage, the student often learns a “story” that helps to learn the pattern. The next stage is

the technique/combination application as their teacher understands or applies it. The final stage is the student developing the application according to how they understand the technique/combination.

This can be illustrated nicely in the opening movements of Chung Bong Il Bon. The technique is setting back to a right Fighting stance doing a Guarding Block with an exhale, then stepping forward to a Front stance doing a Lunge punch. The beginner can view this movement as preparing to fight by setting in a strong stance and breathing, then attacking. (Figures 2). The advanced student can find that the movement leads into a joint lock and punch combination. (Figures 2a)

Figure 2



Figure 2a



Now, one of the main flaws in learning patterns is that students believe that the whole pattern is one fight versus many opponents. While this “story” is pretty good for helping students remember the pattern, it is too limited in the development of technique applications. A good rule to apply here is that direction changes are “fight” changes. The development of patterns is based on the need to practice effective, practical techniques/combinations during regular training. They evolved into geometrical patterns to enable more students to practice in a limited space. With the commercialization of the martial arts, many lost the connection to the concept that fighting for your life should only be one or two techniques.

In the same line, not all movements in a pattern may be a technique. Chung Bong Ee Bon has something like this at the beginning of the pattern. After stepping to a Fighting stance, the student does a Circle block, then an Outward block with the back of the hand. This leads to a Front kick/Lunge punch combination.

The “story” version is often presented as Circle block a Front kick, then Outward block a Lunge punch and finishing by grabbing the opponent to perform a Front kick/Lunge punch combination on them. (Figures 3) The self defense version skips the Circle block and could view it as a cross-hand wrist grab. The grab is defended by doing an arm bar (the outward block movement), then performing the Front kick/Lunge punch. (Figures 3a)

Figure 3



Figure 3a



These are illustrations of the applications that are found within this hyung series. Their presentation to students has been slow as the focus of Taekwondo has gone toward the Olympic sport version. I feel that it is important for Taekwondo to keep its personal protection roots as a prominent role in Today’s training. The lessons learned ages ago still apply today and need to be taught.