

Book Review
***Traditional Taekwondo:
The Link Between Past, Present
and Future***

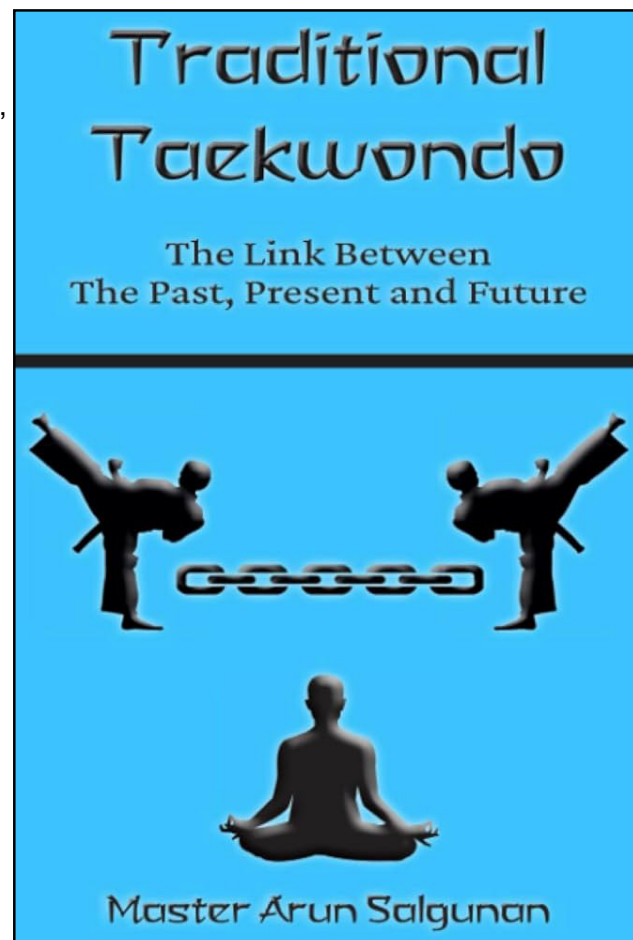
By Master Arun Salgunan

Reviewed by Michele Radakovits, 3rd Dan

In Master Arun Salgunan's debut book, *Traditional Taekwondo: The Link Between The Past, Present and Future*, he pens a heartfelt chronicle of his martial arts journey as a student, teacher, and school owner, as well as a dedicated disciple of Grandmaster Doug Cook. He describes how a traditional Taekwondo practice can benefit an individual outside the dojang when its virtues are applied to life.

Owner of TPM Martial Arts in Milford, Pennsylvania, Master Salgunan begins his book by equating his view of a sincere, traditional Taekwondo practice with "the pursuit of perfection of character." While this may sound naïve or like something out of a noble tale, his breakdown of the virtues and lifestyle an earnest martial artist strives to attain is both invigorating and enlightening to practitioners. He credits these virtues as the "do" or way to counter the negativity we all confront in life.

The martial virtues of courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control, and indomitable spirit are each given a chapter, highlighting their importance and merits. The virtues are thoughtfully and skillfully explained. Master Salgunan uses his own personal experiences, interspersed with thoughts from his students, historical facts, inspirational stories, and quotes to thoroughly illustrate each. His comparisons of the virtues, as used in training and practicing Taekwondo, and that of the virtues, as



used in daily life, give evidence to the value of each in shaping and bolstering a solid character.


Readers who relate to the difficulties that a Taekwondoist may experience in the dojang will surely relate to employing those same virtues to cope with the challenges and struggles of life. Master Salgunan points out that while the world severely lacks courtesy, the very foundation of a traditional Taekwondo practice is courtesy. Responding with “yes, ma’am” or “yes, sir” may not completely transform the world, but it is a sign of respect. It is also a step to counteract the rudeness that exists.

Life can be difficult. The author points out that we all experience days when we may not want to show up. It is often easier to give in to being tired, weary, or even lazy, but implementing the virtue of perseverance spurs us to face the difficulties within and outside of the dojang. These scenarios are examples of applying two of the virtues inherent to each Taekwondo class taught by Master Salgunan—as he learned from his teachers throughout his training journey.



Master Arun Salgunan at a recent promotion test.

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In the modern world of such things as high-speed internet, iPads, iPhones, etc. what is it that attracts so many people to traditional (self-defense) Taekwondo?

The answer may lie in the nature of the human being past, present and future seeking improved self-defense skills, physical and inner wellbeing.


Traditional Taekwondo training may improve the overall quality of life for those who follow its path. I cannot say that it will do for you what it did for me, but it is a journey worth exploring.

Like the old saying goes...

"I can describe an apple to you, but how will you know what it taste like unless you try it for yourself?"


This book is my personal testament to the art of Taekwondo.

I hope you enjoy its pages and seek the adventure.



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Master Salgunan’s gratitude for his teachers and training extends to the opportunities his dedicated practice has afforded him. His training and knowledge span Tang Soo Do, Hae Dong Kumdo, Hapkido, Ssang Jul Gon, and Taekwondo. He recounts memories of Dan testing in front of Grandmasters and Master Instructors, being a member and becoming an affiliate school of Chosun Taekwondo Academy, and joining the USTA under Grandmaster Richard Chun. Master Salgunan gives a warm account of traveling with his TPM students and fellow Chosun Taekwondo Academy martial artists to train in Korea and the South of France. The topics and memories he touches upon are beautifully illustrated by photos of his training events and many of the martial artists he holds in the highest regard.

He concludes his book with fond memories of Grandmaster Richard Chun and an optimistic look at the future of Taekwondo. His confidence in the future preservation of

traditional Taekwondo comes from his dedication and trust in Grandmaster Doug Cook, president of the United States Taekwondo Alliance. Master Salgunan generously and graciously shares his martial journey that spans over 30 years. His humble nature, intense dedication, vast knowledge, and indomitable spirit can be found throughout this sincere writing.



Master Arun Salgunan



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