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## An Analysis of and Recommendation for the Japanese KARATE's Process of Flowing into KOREA

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### Abstract

*As a traditional Japanese martial art and a self defense technique, Karate is one that which does not use a weapon but systematically trains hands and feet to run, kick, lunge, block and avoid, among other techniques while promptly identifying moving targets and submitting the counterparts with a legal strike. As this Karate was introduced to Korea, it has formed a new martial arts culture in combination with traditional Korean martial arts. It is very rare that a nation or a culture has a unique culture of its own and instead has flourished and grown by interacting with and under the influence of other nations and cultures. Karate was also developed as a result of a combination of "te", indigenous to Okinawa, and the martial art of the fist of southern China, and it was spread throughout Japan decisively by Funakoshi Gichin in October 1908, when it was adopted as a formal subject along with Judo and Kendo for Teachers School in Okinawa and Jeongrip Jeil Middle School. Thereafter in 1936, a meeting was held in Naha, the capital of Okinawa, to unify the official name of Karate into Karatem(空手). And in May 1956, the Okinawa Karate Federation was formed, and in 1960, the first official grading and dan review was held, and in February 1967, it turned into the All Okinawa Karate Federation.*

*Ever since, Karate has globalized through the magnificent works of Oyama Masters(Choi Young-eui) and was adopted as a formal event for the Tokyo Summer Olympic Games in 2020.*

*During the 36-year Japanese colonial period, Koreans naturally came to learn about the Japanese culture, and Korean students who learned Karate during their study in Japan returned and taught Karate they learned before and after liberation, which gave rises to the inflow of Japanese Karate into Korea.*

*Among the representative figures was Lee Won-guk, who founded the 'Cheongdokwan' and went to Japan's Waseda Middle and High School to studied Karate from Funakoshi Gichin by entering 'Shotokan', the root of Karate while he attended faculty of law at Chou University. And while studying in Japan, Roh Byeong-jik who founded 'Songmukwan' also learned Karate at 'Shotokan' of Funakoshi Gichin, the founder of the modern Karate, and Jeon Sang-seob also learned Karate during his study in Japan, founded 'Chosun Yeonmukwan' and taught Karate.*

*Yoon Byeong-in, who taught Karate at the YMCA Fungfu Department located in Jongno, Seoul, also learned Karate during his study in Japan and was promoted to the 5th dan.*

*The Japanese Karate, which was introduced into Korea, formed Karate with five major factions including Moodeokkwan, and taught Karate. However, in September 1954, the title of Taekwondo was conceived by Choi Hong-hee, and in 1965, Choi Hong-hee became the chairman of the Korean Taesoodo Association and renamed it to the Korean Taekwondo Association and used 'Taekwondo' as its official name.*

*In November 1972, the central studio 'Kukkiwon' launched and integrated.*

*Given this background, this study will help to understand the historical flow of the culture of Korean and Japanese martial arts and also help understand the foundation for the formation of martial arts through the analysis of Japanese Karate's flow into Korea.*

**[Keywords]** Martial Arts, Karate, History, Taekwondo, Kukkiwon

## 1. Introduction

It is very rare that a nation or a culture has a unique culture of its own and instead has flourished and grown by interacting with and under the influence of other nations and cultures[1]. As a traditional Japanese martial art and a self defense technique, Karate is one that which does not use a weapon but systematically trains hands and feet to run, kick, lunge, block and avoid, among other techniques while promptly identifying moving targets and submitting the counterparts with a legal strike. The training and teaching of martial arts such as Karate are undertaken under a strong teacher student relationship, and the characteristics of the east Asian martial arts in which those with such identities are handed down as a single faction can be identifiable[2]. Such phenomena are one of the reasons for the lack of literature and materials to study martial arts. Karate is also a martial art that has been trained by the common people in the background of the period that carries the joys and sorrows of people, and accordingly, Karate research has been limited. As this Karate has flowed into Korea, it has formed a new culture of martial arts in combination with traditional Korean martial arts[3].

Therefore, this study intends to explore what changes the Japanese Karate underwent for development, and among numerous Japanese cultures that took their roots during the 36 year long colonial period, how Karate representative of the Japanese martial arts flowed into Korea, and ultimately, how it has been influential on the culture of Korean martial arts.

## 2. Change of Japanese Karate

The Japanese Karate is a martial art originated from Okinawa, and as agriculture settled during the 8th century, it grew into a castle town nation from the 11th century, after which Ryukyu Kingdom formed during the 15th century and flourished by pursuing tributary trade with China and Japan, then came under invasion of Satsuma, a feudal lord in the 17th century, and became a colony, then

was integrated into the Japanese territory during the Meiji era in 1879.

However, Okinawa was prohibited from carrying weapons because of the restrictive weapons policy expressed as Katanagari.

The Okinawans had a bare-handed martial art of resistance without use of weapons, and the Ryukyu people tried to train their bare hands in secrets and try to weaponize them as a form of martial art, which is now called Karate.

Karate is written as Dangsus Karate in Chinese characters, and read 'Karate' in Japanese. In Okinawa, it has been called 'Te', 'Karate' or Okinawa "Te" from the past[4].

This Karate was developed through the combination of "Te", which was indigenous to Okinawa, and the martial art of the fist of southern China, and it was spread throughout Japan decisively by Funakoshi Gichin in October 1908, when it was adopted as a formal subject along with Judo and Kendo for Teachers School in Okinawa and Jeongrip Jeil Middle School. Funakoshi Gichin organized a demonstration team and gave a demonstration of Karate in mainland Japan for the first time at Mudeokjeon of Kyoto in 1917, and in 1922, participated in the Komudo exhibitions sponsored by the Ministry of Education, formed Dangsus Department at Keio University for the first time in 1924 then expanded to another at Waseda University, Keio's rival[5]. In 1934, he founded Shotokan following his name, and Shotokan Karate grew into a the most influential group on the Japanese mainland and completely settles on the mainland. In 1936, a meeting was held in Naha, the capital of Okinawa, to unify the official name of Karate into Karate(空手). Thereafter, in May 1956, the Okinawa Karate Federation was organized, and in 1960, the first official grading and dan review was held, and in February 1967, it grew into the All Okinawa Karate Federation[6].

However, the Karate faction in Japan contributed to the spread of Karate with the characteristics of each faction, but it was not enough to become globalized. Among the Karate factions, the most magnificent Karate known to the world through the activities of

Oyama Masters(Choi Young-eui) was Keukjin Karate, and Karate was selected as an official event for the 2020 Summer Olympic Games in Tokyo.

### 3. Process of Karate Flowing into Korea

The forced dismissal of King Kojong in 1907 and the dismantling of the military, followed by Japan's land survey project starting in 1910, gave rise to the 36 year period of colonization by Japan. As a result, Koreans came to naturally learn about the Japanese culture, and Koreans went to study in Japan. Some of these Korean students learned the Japanese Karate while studying in Japan.

The people who spread Karate in Korea were not the Japanese but mostly Korean students who studied in Japan and returned to teach the Karate they learned before and after the liberation of Korea[7].

The first person to teach Karate in Korea was Lee Won-guk, the founder of 'Cheongdokwan', who was born into a wealthy family in Youngdong, Chungbuk. In 1926, at the age of 19, he went to study in Japan, and after attending Waseda Middle and High School, entered 'Shotokan' the roots of Karate while studying at Chuo University, and learned Karate from Funakoshi Gichin and was promoted to 4th dan. Thereafter, he passed the Japanese high civil service exam and worked as a civil servant in the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, and in 1944, while working as a legal department officer for the Justice Department of the Chosun Governor General's Office, he spread the Karate he practiced. In August 1944, he launched 'Cheongdokwan' at the Youngshin School Auditorium for the first time in Okcheon-dong, Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, and for the second time after a year, in August 1945, he relocated it to 'Hwagangkyowon' in Kwansu-dong, Jongro-gu, then for the third time relocated to special annex of Taegosa Temple in the city, then for the fourth time, relocated it to 'Shicheonkyodang' in Kyeongjiodong, Jongro-gu to spread Karate.

Cheongdowan faction was consisted of 'Kukmukwan' located in Incheon, 'Jeongdokwan' in Seodaemun-gu, Seoul, and

'Cheongryongkwan' in Gwangju, and 'Ohdokwan' centered around soldiers[8].

In addition, originally from Kaeseong of Hwanghae-do Province, Roh Byeong-jik who founded 'Karate Songmukwan' returned to Korea after studying Karate at Shotokan of Funakoshi Gichin, the founder of the modern Karate during his study in Japan, and in March 1944, launched a studio in Gwandeokjeong in Janam-dong of Kaeseong and began teaching his students[9].

From 1966, he served as the chairman of the 4th Korea Taekwondo Association(KTA) for a year. During his incumbency, KTA created the 'President's Cup Team Competition', which boasts the most history and tradition, and directly led the first launch of the tournament, through which Taekwondo gained popularity and attracted attention[10].

Jeon Sang-seob also learned Karate during his study in Japan, and after returning to Korea in 1943, taught Karate in Sogong-dong, and in March 1946, he officially founded the 'Chosun Yeonmukwan' and taught Karate. Thereafter, he renamed it to 'Jidokwan' and developed around Jeonju of Jeonbuk.

Yoon Byeong-in, who taught Karate at the YMCA Martial Art of the Fist Department in Jongro, Seoul, also learned Karate during his study in Japan and was promoted to the 5th dan. The YMCA Martial Art of the Fist Department has continued via Changmukwan and Kangdeokwon[11].

As said in the above, the Japanese Karate, which was introduced into Korea, formed 5 major factions including Mudeokkwan, all of which taught Karate. However, in September 1954, the name of Taekwondo was conceived by Choi Hong-hee, and was called Taesoodo from 1961 to 1965, then Choi Hong-hee served as the chairman of the Korean Taesoodo Association in 1965, then renamed it to the Korean Taekwondo Association and used the official name of 'Taekwondo'.

In November 1972, the central studio 'Kukkiwon' launched and integrated[12].

### 4. Conclusion

Reviewing the flow of the culture, most of the Korean and Japanese cultures flowed into the Japanese archipelago through the Korean peninsula originated from the Yellow River Civilization. However, the Japanese Karate flowed into Korea from Japan.

This study intends to analyze the process of the Japanese Karate entering into Korea, understand the culture of the Japanese martial arts and also understand the background of how Karate was able to enter into Korea away from the general flow of east Asian culture at the time Karate was not propagated overseas, further to what influence it has had on the culture of Korean martial arts.

1) Karate, representing the martial arts culture among the Japanese culture, was introduced to Korea not by the Japanese, but by the Korean students who studied in Japan.

2) Korean students brought Karate into Korea because during the 36 year long Japanese colonial rule, Koreans naturally interacted with the Japanese culture and Koreans studied in Japan. Some of these Korean students learned Karate in Japan during their study and returned to teach Karate in Korea.

3) Karate, entering into Korea, formed five major factions, all of which taught Japanese Karate. However, in 1954, Choi Hong-hee conceived the title of Taekwondo, but from 1961 to 1965, it was called Taesoodo, and as Choi Hong-hee served as the chairman of the Korean Taesoodo Association, he renamed it to the Korean Taekwondo Association and officially used the title of 'Taekwondo'.

4) In November 1972, the central studio of 'Kukkiwon' launched and integrated to give influence to building the foundation of the Korean martial arts and sports.

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