

# JTC TIMES



## Black Belt: Start of the New Journey

I have been asked by many people why I continued training in Taekwondo after I was granted a black belt. The question is entirely natural. On the wall of our dojang, in large letters, appears the statement, "Our goal is black belt!" In addition, I have observed that some students with whom I have trained leave the studio once they achieve the first Dan black belt. I feel that the stated goal of the dojang and the action of these students are intimately linked. The students apparently believe that there remains little else for them to accomplish in the sport. This is clearly wrong!

Awarding a black belt to a student is, in my view, the beginning of his path through Taekwondo. It is the start of the journey and not its conclusion. The goal should be to begin with a black belt. The first Dan is simply "the first." The student then has acquired the basic skills to begin to understand and practice Taekwondo. To those who observe carefully, there is a clear and definable difference among those who have achieved the first Dan and those who have progressed further.

The true beauty of this art is that there is no final goal. Each student at every rank has physical and philosophical areas in which they are deficient. With each Dan



comes a new form. With each of these new forms comes a new opportunity for self-expression. There always is a need for more quickness and speed. There always is another kick to add to an existing combination. There always are thicker boards. There always are more bricks. This is not only the message of Taekwondo. It is the true message of life.

At such time as an individual has reached all of his goals, he has nothing left to achieve. With nothing else to do, nothing else to learn, and nothing else to experience, his life, in practical terms, is over. Long before I discovered Taekwondo, I already had determined that I always would have several projects in various stages of completion. I had plans

to write other books. I had many places I had yet to visit. I had not climbed a mountain or jumped from an airplane. I had not experienced the wedding of any of my children or the joys of being a grandparent. And now, as a second dan black belt, I have not achieved my goals in Taekwondo.

I will be sixty-five years of age when I test for my third dan in 2010. I plan to continue my journey in the practice of this martial art. As I begin to focus less time on my professional life as a surgeon, I will be able to devote even more time and effort to physical activity as I did in my youth. As I have more opportunity for travel, to experience the wonders of earth, and to share in the accomplishments of my children and their families, I always will be able to return to my training.

Taekwondo has provided me with yet another goal which I can never truly reach. The quest for this goal is the answer to the mystery of the martial art and of life itself. Ultimately, we live first for ourselves. Even those who love and remember us after we are gone will pass away. In a short time, our imprint on this world will fade. Still, the journey which we have the opportunity to take during our lives more than makes up for the bargain we all make at the time of our birth that establishes us as mortal beings. To fail to make the journey as broad and exciting as possible is to waste a unique

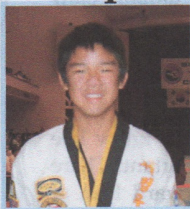
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### JTC Top Ten List

#### Things you didn't know about Master Sonu

1. Is a TKD maniac.
2. Spent the day after Thanksgiving training.
3. Does not like to sleep.
4. Suffered three broken bones.
5. Has a fake ACL (knee ligament)
6. Studied how to build the best TKD school in his business school.
7. Has two "master" degrees, MBA and TKD master.
8. Loves watching MMA and MotoGP
9. Is a devoted Christian and wakes up at 5:30 am to pray
10. Has taught TKD in four different countries.

## How Taekwondo Improved My Life



Taekwondo has affected me in all aspects of my life. Taekwondo has helped me stay focused in school, improved my athleticism, and become a

great person. Discipline, respect, and hard-work are the biggest things I've learned from Taekwondo.

What I've learned from Taekwondo has clearly affected me in school. I don't mean the punching and kicking, but the philosophy of Taekwondo that formed

my character. Taekwondo has helped me to be a discipline, hard-working student. I am much more capable of staying focused in class. Being focused, I am a lot more efficient, able to finish my work early, allowing me to enjoy other things. Taekwondo has helped me become more composed in situations that would cause others to panic. During tests, I can stay very calm. Sparring class has taught me a good way to develop this skill to control my anxiety. Taekwondo taught me to always work hard in school. Hard work led me to excellence in many assignments, and I earned good grades.

Taekwondo also impacted my ability in sports positively and directly. I benefited in nearly every single sport by doing

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**How TKD Improved My Life**

*Continued from page 1 ...*

Taekwondo. Taekwondo provided me an excellent foundation of balance, strength, agility, and speed. For example, agility, a necessity for many sports is easily developed in Taekwondo. Without agility, many techniques are extremely difficult to do. Taekwondo also helped me with my stamina, so I do not get tired easily.

I learned that respect is needed throughout life. You must respect your family, your teachers, and your friends. If you don't respect them, they won't respect you. Respect will make you a favorite

among adults. JTC has always emphasized the importance of respecting your seniors and instructors. You should always respect everyone around you. Not only does Taekwondo teach you to respect others, it also earns you respect. Being a black belt, I am respect by other students and my friends.

Taekwondo will benefit you in all sorts of ways directly or indirectly. Though you may not realize the things you learn from Taekwondo, I am sure they affect you in some way.

*— Andrew Arifin, 2nd Dan, is a 7th grader and has trained at JTC for 8 years.*

**Start of the New Journey**

*Continued from page 1 ...*

gift. To fail to achieve a stated goal does not always mean that we are deficient. It is the pursuit of a lofty goal which, above all else, makes us human. It distinguishes us from the creatures that are, by their very nature, condemned to search throughout their lives for food and shelter on a path leading nowhere but to extinction.

Life can be seen as circular. Yet, although we ultimately return to another state of being, we have the opportunity to grow in strength, and to acquire both knowledge and wisdom. Each of the forms of Taekwondo, if performed correctly, returns us to the exact point at which we began. The eight 'kwaes', or signs of divination, when taken together represent the very flow of the cosmos. They are placed about the circular figure of the 'um' and the 'yang'. These fundamental and opposing forces of nature are contained within this circle. The black belt, when tied, also is circular, with no defined beginning and no end. It becomes clear through the practice of Taekwondo that it is not the end of the journey which is of primary importance. It is the journey itself which defines the essence of who we are.

*— Samuel Ballon, MD, is a second Dan Instructor and this was his testimony at the 2009 JTC Christmas Party*



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**The Iron Horse: To Squat to be Strong (part 1)**

Thus far we have covered "pushing" our way to stronger chest, shoulders, and triceps. We have "pulled" our way to a strong back and biceps. Now it's time for what is possibly the most important movement and exercise for both athletic performance and general strength and fitness: The "squat." The performance of this exercise is both simple and complex. When performed correctly, squatting will strengthen the front of the thighs (quadriceps), the back of the thighs (hamstrings), the Gluteals (if you don't know what these are, ask your parents), your lower back, spinal erectors, and the entire abdominal core. Yes! You will develop strong abs from squatting. These muscles are the most important group in almost every sport and activity known to man. All running, jumping, kicking, turning, throwing and swinging movements begin with the transfer of strength and power through the legs and the abdominal core. Basically, as an athlete, you should squat.

There are many variations of the squat but some basic elements of form are

applicable to all of them. Keep your chest up and shoulders back and down. Tighten your abdominals, and arch your lower back. Think of a soldier standing at attention. Keep your upper body completely vertical and feet just slightly wider than shoulder width apart. The first movement is to push the hips back and then bend the knees. The key to squatting is to keep the upper body vertical and achieve as deep a knee flexion as possible. The weight should be on the middle of the foot and heels. At minimum you should be able to squat deep enough so that the hip joint is parallel to the knee. If you can go deeper to the point where your hamstrings actually touch your calves then you're ahead of the game. As you descend, force your knees out to the sides, keep your weight back and on your heels, and keep your trunk upright (I know I've said that before, but it's important. There should be only minimal forward lean at the waist).

*— To be continued in March issue. David Ballon is a certified fitness instructor.*

**Buddy Night**

**February 26-27**

*"Let us FREE YOU from the kids!"*

**We'll feed and entertain them. Rediscover marriage and life without kids for a night.**

**Drop off: Friday Feb 26, 5:00 pm**

**Pick up: Saturday Feb 27 12:00 pm**

**\$50 alone. \$30 for friends or siblings. Bring a non-member friend and get \$10 off.**

**Includes dinner, breakfast, indoor/outdoor games, snacks, drinks, and TKD lessons.**

**Belt Promotion Test**

**Friday, January 15**

**4:00 pm Review**

**5:00 pm Junior Belts**

**6:00 pm Senior Belts**

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**JTC Taekwondo Center**  
 5161 Moorpark Ave, San Jose, CA 95129  
 (408) 253-0500  
 WWW.JTCTKD.COM