

Is it 'Party' time for ITKD

Right,..... before we go off and get the streamers, balloons and party hats the party I am referring to is a political party. In recent times as an instructor of Taekwon-Do in the ITKD organisation I see genuine positive reasons and practical applications of our tenets for ITKD to take a big step forward and become a political party.

This essay is not intended to be an all in one document telling people how it needs to be done but a small seed that may inspire you to stop and think is this path, a path for us as ITKD practitioners.

The reasons I give, comes from a personal belief that a politician with the integrity of a true martial artist will have the ability to inspire not just their local club and community but society as a whole. I also believe that this is a selfless path to true patriotism not just for any one country but for all humanity. As we all know General Choi created ITF Taekwon-Do for all people regardless of their religious belief, creed, race or any other differences, I therefore thoroughly feel that a party that sees society as multiple individual people whose basic human communalities of family, safety in numbers along with the tenets and moral culture of ITF Taekwon-Do humanity can find unity.

Because not all people who come across this essay may have been studying Taekwon-Do for long and have only recently started, our tenets of Taekwon-Do are, Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self control and Indomitable Spirit which are ingrained into all Taekwon-Do students from the very start of our Taekwon-Do journey at white belt, although Moral culture is present throughout your journey in Taekwon-Do its not until you are 3rd Dan where you study it in greater detail. Therefore I would like to elaborate on moral culture or Jungshin sooyang and why a political party who has studied and is practicing its lessons will be of benefit to all.

So what is Moral culture? And what are the lessons that can be learnt from them? In the ITF encyclopaedia General Choi says *"The broad connotations and various possible interpretations of the moral culture are often very difficult for the western mind to grasp because this is an aspect of oriental philosophy*

which pervades the lives of oriental people. In a word, it is the endeavour and process of becoming an exemplary person such as Confucius”.

[In my opinion all politicians are speaking on behalf of a group of people therefore they should aspire to be such exemplary people as Confucius anyway.]

“To become such a person, one has to first find himself and acquire a moral character which is respected by all. This can only be achieved through constant practice of mental discipline. Thus, if the times call for it, the mentally disciplined man can contribute to the building of an ideal society through wise counsel to the government and, even after death, through his everlasting examples”

[This is a good opportunity for a serious Taekwon-Do practitioner to put in action the beginnings of building an ideal society by being part of the government.]

Confucius said, “To promote the sense of morality one must treat others with faithfulness and sincerity based on righteousness, and to eliminate completely vicious thinking”

The next few lessons are only a few of many that are described by General Choi Hong Hi in his encyclopaedia in which he was able to encompass his understandings of moral culture. The few lessons that I have decided to use, although not all of the lessons of moral culture from General Choi but are the ones that I believe any politician should take heed of.

“Be virtuous. It is difficult to define what virtue is. However, these are five human qualities which have been recognised as virtues since ancient times; humanity, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and trust. To be virtuous one must constantly cultivate and practice at these virtues”

1. Humanity (In)

“The ability to feel sorrow for the misfortune of fellow men and love them all equally as parents love their children equally”

I believe this virtue for a politician is one of understanding all people of the nation and will help the nation as the politician will be working for all people and not just one sector/group.

Tae Kong Mang (12th Century BC) said *“The heaven provides four seasons while the earth has the power to produce all living things. This privilege is not reserved for any specific person but for all human being’s.... therefore, humanity lies in the idea of sharing the fruits of nature with all people”*

2. Righteousness (Ui)

“The ability to feel ashamed of unjust acts and to do one’s duty to others. Righteousness is well defined in an act of a certain army general depicted in the book of “War Manual” written about 2400 years ago. A general was taking a break from the gruelling war with his soldiers by a riverbank when an aide brought him a small carafe of wine for his refreshment. He took the carafe and slowly emptied it into the flowing river in full view of the puzzled soldiers and invited them to share the wine with him by taking a sip of water from the river”

This is my most favourite description of a righteous act because it shows that all people deserve rewards equally and as a politician it would be a good reminder that although they are getting paid for their work that they do they are getting paid by the money of the people from the nation and should respect the position that the people of the nation has put them in. Just like the general in the army the politician is responsible for the people who follow. A politician from ITKD would not squander funds as if it’s their own but will have respect as it is from taxes which is the fruits of labour of others.

3. Propriety (Ye)

“Unlike animals fighting over food, a courteous man would offer another man a piece of bread even though both were starving, out of respect and good manners”

This virtue of propriety needs to be a staple of any politician because of an understanding of togetherness and fairness and not of who is better than the other person. A politician who is a Taekwon-Do practitioner will have respect for all and understand that every individual will need to prosper in an ideal society.

4. Wisdom (Ji)

“The ability to judge right from wrong, not especially in matters concerning the right and wrong of others but in matters concerning one self. A wise man (Yu Bee) once said to his sons, “No matter how small it is you should not do what you realise is wrong on the other hand you must do what is right no matter how small it may seem”.

This is one virtue that a lot of past politicians have needed but neglected by not doing what they feel is right because of the pressure they felt from others in Parliament by not admitting or acknowledging when they have done wrong. A Taekwon-Do politician will be wise enough to know what is right and strong enough not to do what is wrong.

5. Trust (Shin)

“The ability to keep one's words and promises not only to one's friends but to everyone in general. Without trust a person loses all principles and dignities and becomes a liar and cheater”

This has been a downfall for a lot of politicians who have not kept their word to the general public and lost a lot of trust and became a liar and a cheater by their actions or inactions. A politician from the ITKD party would understand the responsibilities they have to uphold the trust of those he/she represent.

“A man may occupy two positions in a lifetime. Basically there are two kinds of position; one is the 5 virtues given by heaven, explained earlier and the other given by man such as a cabinet minister, bureau, and so on.

Unfortunately man often relies on worldly position which is transient at best, but what man gives can also be taken away. On the other hand, what heaven endows us with is eternal. This is not to say that we reject all worldly things but rather that we keep positions in proper balance so that the virtues of the former position provides guidance for the proper use of the latter”.

This means for a Taekwon-Do politician, that it's ok to have nice things like a late model Bentley or a million dollar house providing that it has been obtained

with honour and is the fruit of your own labour and not by devious means. Being a reminder not to lie and cheat to obtain material things as it is also about the process and not just the means.

Be firm of mind, *“A person of strong conviction is unsuspecting and unafraid. When proved wrong, he has the moral strength to admit his mistakes to even the most humble and has the courage to stand up to the mighty if he believes himself to be right in all matters”*

This will be a good lesson for a Taekwon-Do politician as we are only human and do make mistakes but will have the strength and courage to admit said mistake, learn and grow from the whole experience. Also a Taekwon-Do politician who is firm of mind will stand up to any other political parties who may be bigger in numbers who will try to sway his thoughts.

In summary our philosophies, tenets and moral culture in ITKD allows us to be a humble and just politician who will have the ability to not only lead but to inspire tranquillity, peace and loyalty through the cultivation and continued practice of ITF Taekwon-Do and all of its components.

So, now that we've established ITKD is a good breeding ground for a good political party and politicians we now have to ask ourselves do we have the eligibility to establish a political party within New Zealand.....so with a little bit of research the answer is YES.

What does a political party need to have to apply for and maintain registration?

- 1) An acceptable party name (and any abbreviation).

We have already a good party name 'ITKD'

- 2) Satisfactory evidence of at least 500 eligible members.

To be an eligible member you need to have the right to vote in New Zealand and to be a financial member of ITKD political party which we can incorporate with the yearly registration fee at no extra charge. At the 2012 nationals it was said that we had 3,500 registered members and I'm sure ITKD has more than 500 eligible members not

including non practicing family members who may also like to become a member.

- 3) Statutory declarations from its party secretary concerning membership, intention to contest general elections, and advising of any component parties.

Firstly we would need to appoint a party secretary who is willing to undertake several responsibilities and to head up the application process which includes membership, intention to contest general election etc.

- 4) Party membership rules showing what is required for current financial membership, and candidate selection rules which provide for the democratic involvement of members in the process.

This means we would need to clearly define how to become a member and rules and regulations of being a member and how we select our candidates.

- 5) An auditor (or person who has agreed to be auditor when the party is registered).

Every registered party must have as auditor a chartered accountant who does not have a conflict of interest involving a direct or indirect relationship with the party (although they may be a member who is not an office holder) and who holds a Certificate of Public Practice. A partnership may be named as auditor. A body corporate may not be named as auditor (but an employee of a body corporate may be). Parties and prospective auditors are referred to the relevant provisions of the Electoral Act 1993, the Companies Act 1993, and the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Accountants Act 1996 (and the Institute Rules) setting out the requirement of who may be an auditor and what they must do in auditing and reporting on the annual returns of party donations and returns of general election expenses. The application for registration must detail the name and postal address of the person or firm and include the written agreement of the proposed auditor.

- 6) A party secretary with a postal address (and ideally phone, fax and e-mail contact details).

A named individual is required to fill the role of party secretary in accordance with the Electoral Act 1993, although they may have a different title and broader role within the party. As well as being a

point of contact, the party secretary has personal responsibility to complete certain compliance tasks such as providing annual statutory declarations confirming continuing eligibility for registration, annual party donation returns, authorising election advertising, and making general election expense returns. Failure to meet some of these obligations can be an offence attracting substantial fines or jail. The application for registration must detail the name and postal address of the party secretary, and ideally include phone and fax numbers as well as an e-mail address to speed communications.

- 7) Either the secretary, or a sitting MP who is a current financial member of the party, to make the application.

This one is pretty self explanatory the person who is our party secretary or someone who is a sitting MP who is a current financial member of our party will need to submit an application to the electoral commission on our behalf.

The party will also need to understand and be prepared to meet the ongoing compliance requirements of being a registered political party. So what I am saying is that we have a responsibility to influence and generate change given the moral culture and tenets that we aspire too, not only within the organisation but should practice what we teach in the wider community.

At this point I would also like to mention that in our ITKD past we have had an ally who was in a political party and was there to support ITKD or at that time ITFNZ in a dark and turbulent time. Although he wasn't a Taekwon-Do practitioner he supported our organisation and was made a patron of Taekwon-Do and an honorary 4th Dan and his name was Mr David Lange from the Labour party of New Zealand. What he did and how he became a Taekwon-Do patron is another story but for now maybe we can generate our own Mr Lange from within our own ranks.

Taekwon,

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References from:

ITF Taekwon-Do encyclopaedia by General Choi Hong Hi

www.elections.org.nz