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My Favorite Asian Arts and its Influence on Me

There are some people who go through life not knowing what they are going to do with their life and there are those that know what they will do the second they think about it. In this case, I knew that I was destined to be great at something the second I marveled at those old Kung Fu movies starting Bruce Lee, Sam Woo, or my personal favorite, Delon Tan. I knew I was destined for greatness not when I watched these movies or when my dad would tell me I would kick him and scream Kung Fu moves in my sleep, but when I could not stop learning about this thing called "Taekwondo."

I began Taekwondo around the age of five at the Delon Tan Martial Arts Academy in Monterey Park. At first, Taekwondo was to me, the deadly cinema inspired art of striking an opponent down with a fierce and guttural "AHH!" but I was gravely mistaken. My masters, Grandmaster Delon Tan, Master Chen, and Master Jefferson Wu, have told me amusing stories about my first day there. They told me that I was a very rowdy kid who was hyperactive, annoyingly curious, and disobedient. In retrospect, I do recall being one obnoxious little runt of a kid.

In addition to versatile, yet deadly attacks, I also remember loving the movements of Taekwondo. The grace, the beauty, the magnificence of their steps was entrancing. It levitated me to a world of respect, loyalty, and unification. These three words did not have much of an influence on me at the beginning of my career, but as the years went on and I began to understand the art more, I realized that Taekwondo cannot, and could not, be mastered unless I had those three aspects in my life. As a result, I learned to respect all other competitors, my

fellow classmates, and my masters before I could learn anything else. Loyalty heeded the stalking shadow of shame and betrayal. Unification was something that took me a while to understand. I always thought that Taekwondo was an independent event. As in the movies, there was only one hero, and the occasional bond with the master or the beautiful girl who had to be rescued. However, I realized that I could not have gotten anywhere without my team. Although I was a higher belt at the time of the epiphany, if you would like to call it that, I realized that my team taught me how to be a leader and how to interact with everyone in order to receive the best outcome for not only myself, but for the team as a whole.

On the other hand, Taekwondo has not only taught me respect, loyalty, and unification, but it has literally become my way of life. I have a higher sense of focus, commitment, and activity. I began to do better in school with Taekwondo there to keep me in check. I had an obligation to commit to my schoolwork as well as my extracurricular activities to maintain a healthy physical and mental being. Taekwondo taught me to be courteous to everyone because how I treat him or her is the way I want to be treated. One of the most important lessons I learned in life came from Taekwondo, and that is, "There is no such thing as perfect. If there were such a thing, everything would be normal." This quote is what drives my mental state of being. It shows me that I can always improve myself and no matter how much I perfect, there will always be something to get better at. I will work for the "perfect" world in which nothing is wrong and everything is correct and flawless. It may seem hypocritical to strive for a perfect world that I do not believe it even so, it is the engine that keeps my world moving on.

Some may think that Taekwondo or any Martial art is rarely needed, but Taekwondo is used in my everyday life. When I go to school, I know what is right from wrong. In one incident, a new student came to school and although I had an awkward feeling about him, I decided to talk to him. However, because I did not feel safe next to him, I decided to stop talking to him. Taekwondo helped me in this incident because a few years later, I met up with him and he tried to sell me drugs. I was able to focus and think of the possible outcomes and I walked away and never saw him again. I became more independent and have learned many lessons by myself, but even more with the help of friends, family, and teachers. Taekwondo helped me achieve this by fighting. In a fight, all the mistakes I make are put on my shoulders and I cannot blame anyone else. However, it always helps to make the right decision with the help of others who are willing to help me. With their help, I know that I can defend myself, if I must defend others in their time of need or even walk away when I need to walk away.

Simply put, Taekwondo's influence on me is so substantial, that it is not only the model that my life has been molded around after, but also the fire that burns inside me that cannot be extinguished. I love this art with my life because it is my life. Taekwondo may be important to others, but its effect on them shall not exceed the lessons and experiences I have. I stated earlier that I was destined to become great at Taekwondo. For the past few years, I have been the national champion or have competed in the national championships of Taekwondo in various locations across the United States. My goal is to be able to continue taekwondo and compete in the 2012 Olympic Games and represent the USA. I will be twenty years old by then and possibly in my prime. Henceforth, I will push myself to the limit and more to reach my goals, and all of this, is thanks to Taekwondo.