



International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF) was founded in 1966 by Major General Choi Hong Hi six years before his exile from South Korea in 1972 and seven years before the WTF. His first visit of good will to North Korea was in 1980, when he introduced Taekwon-Do there. It is one of the two major international Taekwon-Do organisations. General Choi was the primary figure in the development of Taekwon-Do during the 20th century and headed meetings with the senior Taekwon-Do masters to unify the Korean martial arts schools under the name Taekwon-Do. He is also responsible for providing Taekwon-Do with its name which was agreed upon on April 11th, 1955. He is acknowledged by practitioners of ITF Taekwon-Do as the founder and father of Taekwon-Do.

Choi Hong Hi (November 9, 1918 - June 15, 2002) was a South Korean army general and the founder of Taekwon-do. As a retired Major-General, he was his country's first ambassador to Malaysia. He later fled the country and eventually settled in Canada and North Korea for the rest of his life. General Choi was born in what was to be North Korea during the Japanese Colonial Period and died in P'yongyang, the North Korean capital. During his adult life, however, Choi lived in Japan, South Korea, and Canada gaining the rank of Major-General during his career in the South Korean army. When written in combination with one's name, the military title General refers to a particular rank, that represented in the US and ROK armies by four stars worn on the collar. Choi, Hong Hi never held this rank; neither in the Army of the Republic of Korea, nor in any other army. The rank of general does refer to a four star general. They are also addressed as general. So in this case the rank and title are the same. However, a one star (brigadier) general, two star (major) general and three star (Lt. General) are all properly referred to as general. So the title to any general, regardless of stars is simply general. That is standard military protocol for the US and ROK Army. Choi did serve in the Korean army. He was a general officer. As a Brigadier, (wearing one star) Choi served as the Chief of Staff to General Paik Sun Yup, the first Korean officer to achieve four-star rank in that army. He was also a Major General, two stars. From the public record, it appears that, as an officer in the army of a nation fighting a terrible war on their own soil, Mister Choi never held a combat command nor ever performed duties which would have placed him in harm's way as a soldier. Choi did go on to command an infantry division before retiring, but it was a training division, and stationed on an off-shore island. As a boy he was educated in Korea under the Japanese occupation of the Korean peninsula. At that time, many of the traditions of the Korean people were suppressed by the Japanese, including the country's ancient martial arts, which were and still are renowned for the dynamic kicking techniques that are taught in them. Choi Hong Hi claims he was trained in the Korean martial art of Taekyon in secret. However, the Korea Taekyon Association states these claims were false. When he became older he went to Japan to study at university, there he claimed to have trained in Shotokan Karate and achieved the rank of black belt within two years of training, however, all the Kwan leaders who trained at the universities in Japan, never saw him, and the Japanese masters did not know of him. He used NAM, Tae Hi to combine aspects of karate with aspects of the ancient Korean martial arts to create Oh Do Kwan. General Choi Hong Hi Dakin Burdick Friday August 9, 2002 The Guardian General Choi Hong-hi, who has died aged 83 of stomach cancer, was a prime mover in the development of the Korean martial art of Taekwon-do: he helped to shape it, name it and spread it to 123 nations, often through personal visits. His title derived from a career that took him to the rank of major general in the South Korean army. Choi's martial arts achievements were threefold. First, in 1952 he brought about the adoption of training in martial arts as an aid to South Korean military conditioning. Secondly, he supported the development of Korean karate, given the name Taekwon-do in 1955, which he believed was superior in both spirit and technique to Japanese karate. Lastly, he and his students spread Taekwon-do across the globe, and saw it become a medal sport in Sydney at the 2000 Olympics. Korean practitioners argued over a number of names for the form of Korean karate unified during the 1950s and 60s, but Choi won acceptance for Taekwon-do, and in 1966 founded the International Taekwon-do Federation (ITF). For the rest of his life, he led demonstration tours all over the world. His first manual in English, Taekwon-Do (1965), eventually led to the publication of an entire encyclopedia on the art in 1985. Born in what is now North Korea when it was under Japanese occupation, Choi fled to Japan to complete his education after a wrestler was set on his trail following a gambling dispute. In 1942, he was drafted into the Japanese army, but was imprisoned for attempting to escape to join the opposition Korean Liberation Army in 1945. Only the liberation of Korea saved him from the death penalty. After the war, the division of Korea between north and south left him unable to return to the land of his birth. He rose quickly in the new South Korean army, and, two years after the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, he created an officer training program and an infantry division that provided Taekwon-do instructors. After the cessation of hostilities in 1953, his rise continued, and in 1961 he supported the military coup d'etat, but suffered a setback when General Park Chung-Hee emerged as the new president. In the late 1940s, Park had received a death sentence, later rescinded, from a military panel that had included Choi, who was thus forced to retire from the military following the coup. In 1962, he was sent to Malaysia as ambassador, but after his return to South Korea in 1965 he continued to find life under the Park regime so intolerable

that in 1972 he left for Canada. Choi took the headquarters of the ITF to Toronto with him, and South Korea responded by forming a new organization, the World Taekwon-do Federation (WTF), based in Seoul. Choi's final years were marked by his efforts to return to North Korea. He introduced Taekwon-do there in 1980, and won further favor with the government by changing the name of one solo practice form from kodang (after a North Korean democratic Christian moderate, presumed slain by the Red Army in 1946) to Juche (after the isolationist policy of self-reliance advocated by North Korean leader Kim Il-Sung). Though Choi's intention had been reconciliatory, unfortunately South Korea saw it as treasonous. Shortly before his death in Pyongyang, the North Korean capital, Choi was able to announce through the ITF website, I am the man who has the most followers in the world: be that as it may, the impact of Taekwon-do, with 50m practitioners after 50 years of existence, is undeniable. Choi leaves his wife, two daughters and a son. Choi Hong-Hi, martial arts expert, born November 9 1918; died June 15 2002

photo's from General Choi Hong-Hi 3 day IIC Seminar 09/03/2001 Budapest Hungary

