



An Explanation of the Taekwondo Student Oath

1. **To be loyal to my nation and to my parents.**
2. **To be obedient to my instructor.**
3. **To observe the school regulations.**
4. **To respect my seniors and practice patience and courtesy to my juniors.**
5. **To be righteous and show good conduct.**

The Taekwondo student oath is not new. It has been adapted from the original "**Five Codes of Human Conduct**," written by Wongkang, a Buddhist scholar, hundreds of years ago. Originally the young nobility that were selected to study Taekwondo were educated in many disciplines, but the code of conduct, as it is now, is followed to **guide the moral development of the student's life.**

The principle "Do" in Taekwondo is a whole encompassing philosophy for one's life, both in action and in spirit. It is only through this development that we can unite our actions and our spirit, leading us closer to absolute goodness. This is a path of a lifetime, and no matter what belt level we achieve, we are all students of Taekwondo. Each step leads us closer to Kun-Ja, the Taekwondo model of virtue.

The significance of **loyalty to our nation** can be understood both historically as well as in the present. Centuries ago, Korea was repeatedly under attack by Japanese warlords or pirates, and from this oppression Taekwondo flourished. Although we in Canada have not experienced such repression, we must not become complacent. We are fortunate in Canada to have freedom and opportunity only dreamed about in many other countries. As citizens, we are able to have non-violent democratic elections where we are able to control our nation's destiny. Should we become complacent, we could find that our freedoms and liberties are eroded. Recent historical examples are the two World Wars and the Korean War, and we only need to read the newspapers to realize how blessed we are to live in Canada. We must not let our comfort turn to apathy and allow the shape of our nation to change.

Loyalty to our parents is paramount, for without them we would not exist. They have loved and nurtured us unquestioningly. We can learn from their wisdom and experiences in life. When we are younger, we forget that our parents have gone through many of the same trials and tribulations that we experience; the year is different but the emotions are the same. When we fall in love, we feel such intense passion that we are sure that we must be the only ones who have ever had this feeling. Yet, when we take the time to look at our parents as individuals, we can realize that their feelings are as real and intense as those that we experience. They have struggled with tough decisions and have faced adversity, which allows them to speak with wisdom. When one is young we tend to look at an old wrinkled face and forget that inside are all the dreams and desires that are in us. Also, let us not forget them for they were there from the beginning with their unconditional love and there comes a time when we must be there for them.

Obedience to our instructor is important, as the relationship between instructor and student is similar to that of parent and child. We must think of our Master as having the absolute position, and the foundation of this relationship is respect. Without respect, we cannot trust; without trust, our instructor will not influence our training in Taekwondo. How can one cultivate the inner person without having a positive role model? We must trust our teacher's judgement and it is then that we begin the task of acquiring wisdom and knowledge.

Our school is like a family and has different dynamics. **Observance of the school regulations** is important, because without them things would become chaotic. These rules are for everyone in our club, regardless of belt level. They range from practical Dojang rules to those that are linked to personal behavior and uniform. The rules regarding attendance have much to do with commitment and respect for our Master and our school. Also, if we are committed to supporting our school, we must make time for it. If we don't make time, we are only sabotaging our own physical and moral development.

Respect for senior members of our school and the **practice of patience and courtesy to our juniors** underscores the importance of interpersonal respect in all that we do. Senior belts have worked hard to obtain their belt level. Juniors must respect their black belts, realizing that each has met his or her own personal challenge in obtaining their black belt. They have gone through the process of self-discovery that placed them in a position of achieving their personal best. At the same time, as a senior belt, we must not forget our own struggles at different levels so that we may be patient and courteous with our juniors. We can extend this respect, patience and courtesy to all our human relations.

To be righteous and to show good conduct is extremely important both in the Dojang and the world outside. We must live by the ideals that are taught – wisdom, human-heartedness and courage. Taekwondo emphasizes the morals of us as humans to live out our life in righteousness. We should not take a short cut in life if it involves compromising one's values. Perhaps we can make the world a better place by living a virtuous life and seeking self-enlightenment.

The Relationship Between Black Belt and Master

Our relationship to our Master is similar to that of parent and child. As a white belt, we are nurtured by our Master's guiding hand. Our belts are like an umbilical cord providing both physical and emotional nurturance of our soul. The exercise designed by your Master should encourage discipline and an increased level of mental and physical being. Like a child in the womb, the first few months are the most important period of our training. Fundamental techniques are learned and expanded on. Slowly, as a child learns to walk and gain independence with the guidance of its parents, we also acquire improvement in ourselves; physically, mentally and spiritually through the guidance of our Master. The Master helps the student to overcome his fears and weaknesses, teaching him to face them, and if not change them, then accept what cannot be changed.

The relationship between student and Master is based on respect. Without this trust and respect, a teacher is not able to influence his student's education. As a student, we are led by example and not just because one is a Master. We learn from watching our Master, who he is and how he treats us.