

Statement of Philosophy
Scott Williams, Hapkido 3rd Dan
December 1, 2007

Walking the Walk

I have been very fortunate to be able to be part of this organization for over 13 years. When I first started Hapkido in 1994 I had to set goals for myself. I kept telling myself no matter how many injuries or problems I might encounter that I had to at least reach black belt. In my first few years working out I had to do the best I could to ignore the distractions and barriers that always seemed to pop up and attempt to get in my way. Everything from the hour drive I had to and from class, the friends who wanted me to hang out and not go to class that night, to a mother who seemed to ask every now and then "so are you done yet?". The funny thing was, once that I reached black belt it was just too hard to say "ok, I made it, I'm done". In the time it took to reach the level of black belt I was amazed at everything that I had found. Not only did I have a cool looking belt around my waist but as I looked around the Dojang I saw everything that I had really gained. I saw friends that would no matter if they continued in Hapkido or not would always be there for me, I saw a home that always had the light on for me when I needed a place to go. There **were** just too many things that I had gained to say "I'm done".

Unfortunately, working and living in a college, setting the goals and requirements that other people acquire would mean that their time spent in the Dojang would be short lived. I actually found myself sometimes depressed because it seemed that my friends were getting recycled. Just as I would start to really get to know someone they would graduate and have to move away. But after some time I realized it actually just means that I am able to have more friends. The friendships and relationships that I have been able to acquire thanks to Hapkido and the martial arts under Master Pak **have** been just as valuable to me as the self-defense that I have learned. My friends have given me so much, besides the everyday confidence and support in the Dojang to goals outside of class. My friends I've made have allowed me to live dreams that has taken me mountain biking in Japan, surfing in California, to being a godfather. Am I Done? I hope not. Even looking into the near future and the possibilities of moving away from the Dojang I hope to be able to say that I am never done.

As some of you know I did not start Hapkido here in Ames under Master Pak. I started in the Iowa City Dojang under Master Paks' student Master Mike Drahos. I remember as a blue belt coming to Ames and watching Master Drahos test for his 4th Dan. I believe I kept hearing myself in my head saying there is no way that I could make it to that level (even though, I am testing for the same rank now, I still know I will never be that level). Besides the performance of Master Drahos that day I remember watching him read his statement of philosophy in front of the Dojang. Even though I unfortunately cannot recall the topic of his paper I do remember one line that he used a couple of times. "If you're going to talk the talk, you better know how to walk the walk". Now to me this phrase can be taken many different ways. I think commonly when people hear this said they may take it as bragging or being macho. But actually I believe this is a good statement that once a person starts teaching other students they really should ask themselves, "am I walking the walk?"

In all 3 of Master Pak's martial arts classes the 5 tenets are taught Courtesy, Integrity, Perseverance, Self-Control, and Indomitable Spirit. We hear these words over and over again, but can you ask yourself and honestly answer that you practice the 5

tenets that are taught or do you just think you do. As a martial artist can you look at yourself in the mirror and tell yourself that you "talk the talk and still walk the walk". One way of testing this I believe is **cross-training** in different martial art styles. Everyone has one style that drew them into the Pak family martial arts. But as you grow, and if the opportunity allows you the chance to try the other martial arts styles. Do you decide to train in another style as a black belt just cross training, or will you be a white belt just like all the other white belts in your beginner class. I am always surprised when it seems that the 5 tenets suddenly does not exist because an advance person has chosen to work out in a new way or style. Is Courtesy or Integrity being practiced if a student feels they do not need to do what is asked on the sole purpose that they were advance students in another style? Is Perseverance and Self-Control being practiced if that advance student expects the other beginners to be as athletic or capable as they are, so they can get the workout at the speed they were once accustomed to. Is Indomitable Spirit present if the lessons presented by the new school or style are constantly questioned or challenged instead of accepted and attempted.

When I received my 1st degree black belt in Hapkido I decided to take the time to try Taekwondo. Unfortunately, I believe I came close to failing all 5 **tenets** at one time or another in my short time working out. It's easy to become friends with other instructors and it can be hard to see the fine lines between friends and teacher/student positions. I can understand how hard it can be to go from students looking to you for directions and guidance to yourself being the one needing the guidance. I was lucky to be able to stop and see myself and to change what I was doing. But time and time again I see other members going through the same thing **whether** they notice it or not. My very first semester teaching our white belt class in Hapkido years ago we had a couple of advance students from another style. I had watched these individuals teaching in their class, and I was really amazed at the transformation that took place when they became students themselves. If any of their students had challenged or questioned them like they had in acted in our class there would be serious discipline. But suddenly it was acceptable behavior. That is why I would like to ask all of our advance members to look at themselves and ask "Am I walking the walk". If by choosing to train in another style are you done? Will you give up everything that you have learned or taught? Or will you walk the walk?

Every year we gather for our awards banquet here in Ames. As you can see Master Pak has hundreds of people who admire and respect him. I do not believe that this could be possible without the practice and teaching of the 5 **tenets**. The more that I learned about the **tenets** the more I realized the things that I missed and took for granted when I was younger, like the Perseverance and Indomitable Spirit of my parents to make sure my brother and I had what we needed provided to us. I may never be able to open my own school, have hundreds of students, or become a grand master. But I hope to be able to say that I would do my best to walk the walk, and never be done.