

GRANDMASTER YOON BYUNG-IN

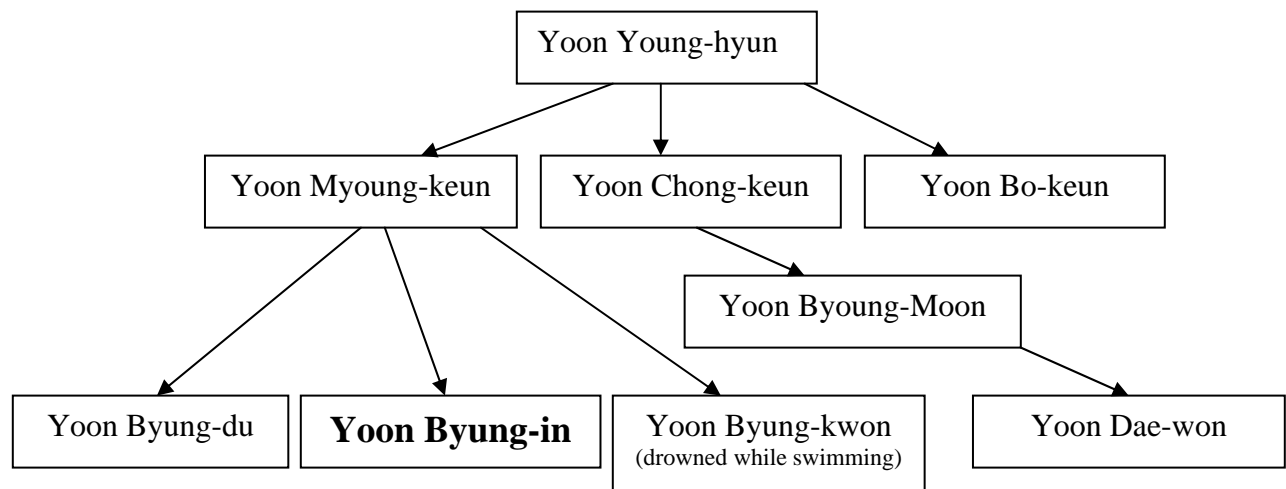
By: Grandmaster Kim Soo

(as told to Robert McLain, Chief Instructor of the Arlington Chayon-Ryu dojang)

Yoon Byung-in was born on May 18, 1920 in Mu-Sun, Bong-Chon, Manchuria. He was the middle of three sons of Yoon Myoung-keun, a local distillery owner.

Yoon Byung-in's Family

Yoon Byung-in's grandfather, Yoon Young-hyun, was from the Yang Ban (Noble) class in South Korea. During the later part of the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910A.D.), he was the government appointed Country Chief of the Tong-young and Gojae Island Districts. When Imperial Japan invaded Korea in 1909, Yoon Young-hyun was pushed out of his government position. To avoid any trouble with the Japanese forces he took his family to Manchuria. Yoon Young-hyun fathered three sons: Yoon Myoung-keun, Yoon Chong-keun, and Yoon Bo-keun. The family fell onto hard times financially. The eldest son, Yoon Myoung-keun, later became owner of a distillery, which brought the family out of poverty and into wealth. Yoon Myoung-keun had three sons himself: Yoon Byung-du, **Yoon Byung-in**, Yoon Byung-kwon.



Master Yoon Byung-in's Childhood & Education Days

Yoon Byung-in began his academic studies at Shin-kyoung elementary school and later attended Youn-byun middle school. During his elementary school days he began studies of Chuan-fa under the guidance of a Mongolian instructor. According to his 2nd cousin, Yoon Byung-bu, most chuan-fa instructors in the area were from Mongolia at that time. He also described Yoon Byung-in as, "very bright, sincere, quiet, always helping people. Typical martial artist." Yoon Byung-in continued his studies of chuan-fa through elementary and middle school. His cousin adds, "He was very strong. If he ever had to fight, he would never seriously hurt anyone. He just did enough to make them stop."

Despite having a relatively peaceful childhood, Yoon Byung-in suffered a severe injury to his right hand. One winter while huddling around a neighborhood fire for warmth, he was shoved forward into the fire. He stopped his body from getting burned at the expense of his right hand being immersed in the hot coals. Unfortunately, there were no doctors in the area to help and he ended up losing ½ of the length of his fingers. To hide his injury, Yoon Byung-in would always wear white gloves in public and while instructing classes. Later, his students would wear white gloves during training to show respect for their teacher.

In 1938, Yoon Byung-in graduated from high school and was chosen by his family to study at Nihon University in Tokyo, Japan. This was very prestigious and reflects that Yoon Byung-in must have been a good academic student. In Asian culture, the oldest son (Big Son) usually receives the preferential treatment and would normally be sent to study abroad. But instead of the oldest son, Yoon Byung-in (middle son) was selected. He was the only member of his family sent to study in Japan. He majored in Colonial Agriculture from 1939 until December 1941.

During his academic career at Nihon University, Yoon Byung-in had the opportunity to meet karate Master Toyama Kanken through an interesting situation. Master Toyama Kanken was faculty at Nihon University and was Sensei (Teacher) for the university karate club. Some of the Korean students were allowed to join the club and learn karate. One of the Korean students decided to spend additional time with his college sweetheart and began to miss karate club practices. This angered the Japanese karate students and they pursued the Korean student and beat him up. The Korean student knew about Yoon Byung-in's practice of Chuan-fa, as he was routinely seen conditioning himself by striking a large tree in the university courtyard. The tree eventually started leaning a little bit towards the ground from his training. The Korean student begged Yoon Byung-in for help against the karate toughs. He asked, "You are a Korean, I am a Korean, will you please help me to not get beat up?" Yoon Byung-in agreed and upon the next intended beating from the Japanese karate students, Yoon Byung-in sprung into action using Chuan-fa. He skillfully deflected and evaded the karate students' strikes and kicks to the point that they gave up and ran back to tell their teacher about what happened.

Luckily, Toyama Sensei was an open-minded person and invited Yoon Byung-in to tell him about the skillful non-karate martial art he used against his students. Yoon Byung-in explained to Toyama Sensei about his Chuan-fa education in Manchuria. Toyama Sensei appreciated the Chuan-fa background since he (Toyama) had studied Chuan-fa in Taiwan for 7 years, previously. They decided to exchange knowledge; Yoon Byung-in would teach Toyama Kanken Chuan-fa and Toyama Kanken would teach Yoon Byung-in his Shudo-Ryu karate.

Yoon Byung-in was later made Captain of the university karate club and recognized as a 4th degree black belt by Toyama Kanken. Toyama was a 5th degree black belt at that time, which made Yoon Byung-in the highest ranked student in the karate club.

Yoon Byung-in Returns To Korea

When the Japanese military surrendered on August 15, 1945, marking the end of a 36-year occupation of Korea, Yoon Byung-in returned to Korea. His family was in North Korea, but they decided to settle in South Korea. The entire family made the trip except for the oldest son, Yoon Byung-du. Byung-du got caught in the mandatory draft into the North Korean army between 1946 and 1950.

Yoon Byung-in settled in the Chung-yang Rhee area in Seoul. He had two notable friends from the karate club at Nihon University living nearby: Chun Sang-sup and Yoon Ui-byung (Yoon Kwe-byung). Chun Sang-sup was head of the karate club within the Cho-sun Yun-Moo Kwan Yudo School located in Seoul, Korea.

The Cho-sun Yun-Moo Kwan was the Korean main branch and representative of the Japanese Kodo-kan (Lecturing Way School) judo during this time. The name, "Cho-Sun," means, "Morning calm," and was the name of Korea during the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910AD). Since August 15, 1945, North Korea has used this name for their country. South Korea used "Cho-Sun" for their country name until the Korean Peninsula became divided at the 38th parallel on August 15, 1945. The name, "Yun-Moo Kwan," means "researching (or "study") martial arts school."

Chun Sang-sup invited Yoon Byung-in to teach kwon bup (chuan-fa) and karate at the Cho-sun Yun-Moo Kwan. Yoon Byung-in taught with Chun Sang-sup at the club for 6 months before he (Yoon Byung-in) was invited to teach at the Cho-Sun Central YMCA in Seoul, Korea. In the instructor's directory of Toyama Kanken's book published in 1946 or 47, Yoon Byung-in is listed as Chief Instructor of the Cho-Sun YMCA. The book also lists Yoon Ui-byung (Yoon Kwe-byung) as chief instructor of the Ji-do Kwan (Way Of Wisdom School) in Seoul, Korea. Both Yoon Byung-in and Yoon Ui-byung (Yoon Kwe-byung) are listed at 4th dan black belt in the directory.

Yoon Byung-in taught in many places in addition to the Cho-Sun YMCA. He became faculty at Sung-Kyun Kwan University and Kyoung-Nong Agricultural College, teaching chuan-fa and karate. He was also appointed as bodyguard of 1st Korean President Syng-mahn Rhee, but he refused the appointment. One reason for his refusal was because of the requirement to salute (military style with the right hand) to President Rhee. Yoon Byung-in was missing fingers on his right hand from the injury during his youth and wanted to avoid the embarrassment.

Yoon Byung-in married Yim Seung-duk on January 15, 1949. She became pregnant and gave birth to a daughter, Yoon Young-sook, on December 5, 1949. Unfortunately, Yoon Byung-in never got to see much of his daughter.

Korean War

In June 1950, the Korean War started and South Korea was in turmoil.

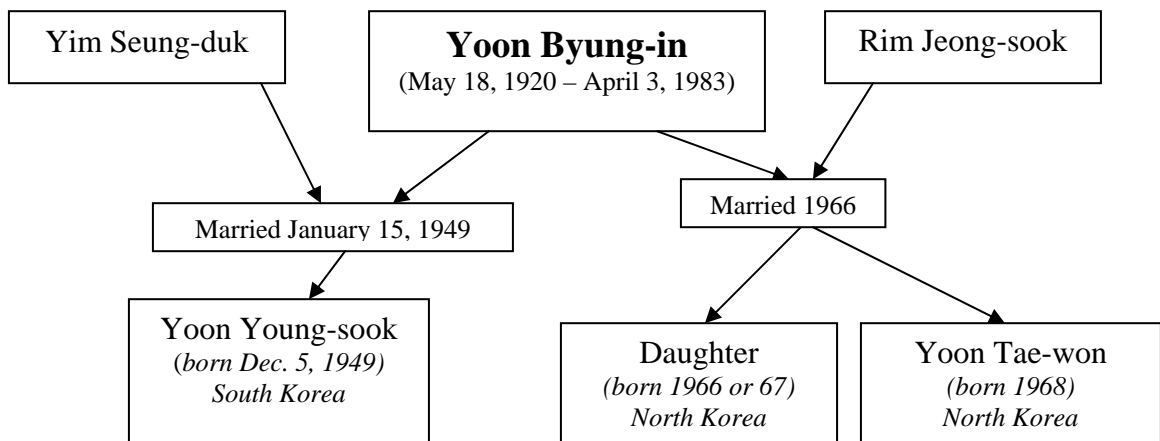
In August 1950, Yoon Byung-in's older brother Yoon Byung-du showed up as a Captain in the North Korean Army. He told Yoon Byung-in, "I am your older brother and you must come with me." Yoon Byung-in was then taken to North Korea by his brother.

On July 10, 1951 peace talks began between North Korea and the United Nations. On November 25, 1951 the talks resulted in a country being divided at the 38th parallel: North Korea would control the north part of the Korean peninsula (with Soviet Union occupation) and South Korea would control the south (with U.S. occupation). During this time, Yoon Byung-in was in a POW camp on Gojae-do Island. Through an interview process POWs could decide where they wanted to go. Yoon Byung-in chose to live in South Korea with his family. Unfortunately, during the application process North Korean POW soldiers jumped on Yoon Byung-in preventing him from leaving.

1951-66: Unknown activities.

From January 1966 until August 1967, Yoon Byung-in was appointed by the North Korean government sports committee to teach an intensive Gyuck-Sul (special combat strategy) course to the Moran-Bong physical specialists group (specially selected group) in Pyong-yang, the capital of North Korea. It was during this time that the sports committee recommended he get married. Yoon Byung-in got married and had two children: a daughter (born in 1966 or 67) and a son, Yoon Tae-won (born in 1968). In December 1967, the North Korean government's International Sports Association told Yoon Byung-in, "Gyuck Sul is not a game or international sport. The government has cancelled the Gyuck Sul program." He was sent back home to work at a cement factory in Cheong-jin City, Ham-Gyoung North Province. In 1969 or 1970, North Korea accepted the I.T.F Taekwondo of Ex.-South Korean General Choi Hong-hi as their national martial sport. Grandmaster Kim Soo assumes that the Gyuck-Sul leaders trained by Yoon Byung-in were used to promote I.T.F. Taekwondo in North Korea.

Yoon Byung-in worked in the cement factory until he died of lung cancer on April 3, 1983.



Information resources

The information about Grandmaster Yoon Byung-in was made possible by an e-mail sent to Grandmaster Kim Soo in October 2005 from Mr. Yoon Dae-won. Yoon Dae-won is the son of Yoon Byoung-moon, who is cousin of Yoon Byung-in. Through continued correspondence with Mr. Yoon Byoung-moon, Grandmaster Kim Soo was able to arrange a meeting in Korea with Grandmaster Yoon's family on December 18, 2005 in Seoul, Korea.

Yoon Byung-bu, 2nd cousin, is the same age as Yoon Byung-in and grew up with him in Manchuria. He was able to give information about Yoon Byung-in's life from childhood until 1951. He also provided a letter that Yoon Byung-in had sent on April 4, 1974 to his close friend, Dr. Won Il-woo. At the time the letter was written, Dr. Won was technical director of Youn-byun Hospital located in Gi-Lim Province, China. This letter gave summarized information about Yoon Byung-in's activities from 1966-1974.

Grandmaster Kim Ki-whang(deceased 1993) of Washington D.C., was a junior classmate to Yoon Byung-in in the colonial rule department at Nihon University and a member of the karate club under Toyama Kanken's direction. Grandmaster Kim Ki-whang provided information to Grandmaster Kim Soo throughout the years about Yoon Byung-in's college days and training at Nihon University.

Yim Seung-duk, Yoon Byung-in's first wife, is alive and living in Il-San, near Seoul, Korea. Yoon Young-sook (daughter from Yoon Byung-in's marriage to Yim Seung-duk) is currently a doctor of internal medicine in Incheon, Korea.

For more information about Yoon Byung-in, please contact Grandmaster Kim Soo at gmkimsoo@kimsookarate.com or by calling 1-713-681-9261.