

# History of Tae Kwon Do & Korea Gathered from Internet

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## History of Tae Kwon Do

Tae Kwon Do is a Korean martial art whose history is as paradoxical and contentious as is that of the country in which it was born. Everybody agrees that the Korean term "Tae" means to smash with the foot, "Kwon" means to smash with the hand, and "Do" means art or way of life. Most experts also accept that the name "Tae Kwon Do" was officially adopted to describe Korea's most popular martial art in 1955. But the foundation upon which Tae Kwon Do was built and its history since 1955 depend very much on who you ask.

## Ancient Foundations

The peninsula that is today called Korea has had over 4000 years of history. One legend holds that the peninsula was first ruled by a legendary figure named Dan-Gun in 2333 BC. According to legend, Dan-Gun's mother was a bear changed to human form and his father was descended from heaven.

During most of its history, Korea has not been one unified country. It has, instead, been a variety of different kingdoms occupying different portions of the peninsula at different times. Even today the Korean peninsula is split between the totalitarian communist state of North Korea and the fledgling democratic state of South Korea. One reason for this divisiveness is that Korea has been repeatedly invaded and dominated by its geographic neighbors: Mongolia, China, and Japan.

Because Korea is smaller and less powerful than the surrounding countries, the people of Korea saw the need to study martial arts early on in order to defend themselves from their more aggressive neighbors. Murals depicting men free sparring have been found on the ceiling of the Muyong-chong royal tomb which was constructed by the Koguryo dynasty sometime between 3 and 427 AD. Stone reliefs carved into the cave walls of Suck-Kool-Am in southern Korea, and dated at the sixth century AD, depict men performing high section blocks quite similar to those performed in modern day Tae Kwon Do.

As early as the seventh century AD Buddhism arrived on the scene. Zen Buddhist monks travelled from India to China and then eventually to the Korean peninsula. These monks brought to Korea both their religion and the martial art known as Kwon Bop.

At approximately the same time, during the Silla dynasty, a youth group known as the Hwa-Rang came into being. This group, also called "The Flower of Youth", trained its members in the arts of war, literature, and community service. Their code was:

1. Loyalty to the king
2. Obedience to parents
3. Faithfulness to friends
4. Never surrender in war
5. Avoid unnecessary killing

The martial art practiced by the Hwa-Rang was known as Soo Bak Do or Taek Kyon. It was the art of kicking, punching, and butting and remained popular in Korea for many centuries. A modern day martial art called Hwa-Rang Do, which takes its name in honor of this youth group, is practiced both inside and outside of Korea today.

A benefit of having been regularly invaded is that Koreans were exposed to a variety of cultures, languages, and martial

arts. Over time the circular motions of Kung-Fu from China, and the more abrupt, linear motions of Karate from Japan, were blended into the Korean martial arts. Both Kung-Fu and Karate added a wide variety of hand techniques to the primarily kicking martial arts native to Korea. This is especially notable in the less-well-known Korean martial art of Tang Soo Do whose students practice a 50-50 split of hand and foot techniques as opposed to the 30-70 split seen in typical Tae Kwon Do practitioners. "Tae" (kicking) comes first and foremost in Tae Kwon Do.

All of these influences from surrounding countries, and even as far away as India, have surely had an impact on Tae Kwon Do. But did martial arts start first in India, Okinawa, Korea, or somewhere else? Were the Korean martial arts primarily influenced by others, or did they do the influencing themselves? These questions are hotly debated. Everyone has their own opinion, but no one so far has made a case strong enough to win over the majority to their point of view.

## Modern History

The modern history of Tae Kwon Do is even more convoluted than the ancient version. While there are dozens of Tae Kwon Do organizations in the United States alone, world-wide most organizations are allied with one of two Korean federations: the ITF (International Tae Kwon Do Federation) or the WTF (World Tae Kwon Do Federation).

The ITF was founded by General Choi Hong Hi, the man who first used the term "Tae Kwon Do". As such, it can make a pretty strong case for being the first and more traditional version of Tae Kwon Do. On the other hand, it is the WTF that first held a world-wide Tae Kwon Do tournament and it is the WTF that managed to get Tae Kwon Do into the Olympics.

These two different federations were founded in the 1960s and 1970s and have spent their time since then growing into truly global organizations. They have also spent their time promoting two different versions of the history of Tae Kwon Do, each trying to discredit the other organization. The ITF calls all organizations not affiliated with them, "Imposters." The WTF, on the other hand, pretends General Choi and the ITF don't even exist.

## The ITF Version

General Choi says that although he holds a black belt in both the ancient Korean art of Taek Kyon and in the Japanese art of Karate, Tae Kwon Do is not merely a blending of these other martial arts. According to him, he felt the inspiration to create a new Korean martial art shortly after the liberation of Korea from Japanese rule at the end of World War II. The Japanese had effectively dominated Korea from the latter part of the 19th century until 1945.

In 1946, Choi was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the newly formed Republic of Korea army. He says the removal of the Japanese oppressors of Korea inspired him to create a new martial art which would be truly Korean. His position in the army allowed him to teach it to a large audience. Choi says that he completed the majority of his work on this new martial art (including the creation of new forms each named for an important figure in Korean history) by the end of 1954. The name "Tae Kwon Do" was officially adopted by a commission of Korean martial arts masters on April 11, 1955. Thereafter Choi devoted himself to spreading this new martial art throughout Korea, and then throughout the world.

In 1959 the Korea Tae Kwon Do Association was formed and General Choi was installed as president of the organization. That same year he published the first major text on Tae Kwon Do. Although this first text was printed in Korean only, it was the model for his later English text, "Tae Kwon Do The Art of Self-Defence," which was published in 1965. The 1965 version of the text described the original 20 Tae Kwon Do forms each of which were named after an important figure in Korean history. On March 22, 1966 the ITF was officially formed. The first "World Tae Kwon Do Championships" (the ITF Championships that is) were held in Montreal, Canada in 1974. In 1985 General Choi published his, "Encyclopedia of Tae Kwon Do," which is the most comprehensive documentation of the subject to date. He has also added four more forms to bring the total number of ITF forms to 24.

General Choi has circled the globe many times giving seminars to the ITF faithful and converting others to the ITF system of Tae Kwon Do.

## The WTF Version

The World Tae Kwon Do Federation version of history is a very different tale indeed. According to Richard Rhin Moon Chun, one of the highest ranking members of the WTF, the birth of Tae Kwon Do was a team effort, not the one-man-show the ITF claims. Chun states, "After the liberation of Korea, in 1945, a number of Koreans began a conscientious effort to revitalize the art of Tae Kwon Do as a national sport." He agrees that the title "Tae Kwon Do" was officially adopted to describe Korea's martial art in 1955. However it is from this point forward that the two histories diverge.

Chun makes no mention of the "Korea Tae Kwon Do Association" founded by General Choi in 1959, but instead states that the "Korean Tae Kwon Do Association" with President Young Chai Kim was founded in 1965. Master Un Young Kim was elected president of this organization in 1970. It was under Kim's leadership that the first "World Tae Kwon Do Championship" (the WTF Championship) took place in Seoul, South Korea in 1973. It was attended by competitors from 19 countries and perhaps more importantly, beat the ITF to the punch by one year.

According to Chun, it was immediately following this tournament that representatives of all of the attending countries formed the World Tae Kwon Do Federation with Master Un Young Kim as president. It was Master Kim who lead the charge to get Tae Kwon Do into the Olympics. Tae Kwon Do first appeared as a demonstration game in 1988 in Seoul, South Korea. It was a demonstration sport once again in Spain in 1992 and finally become a full-fledged sport at the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta.

## The Difference

One might fairly ask, "What difference does it make?" Either way, Tae Kwon Do comes from Korea. Either way it evolved from a variety of martial arts from inside and outside of Korea. Either way it emphasizes personal and spiritual development in addition to developing physical techniques.

The answer is that it makes a great deal of difference to the members of the ITF and the WTF both of whom believe themselves to be the keepers of the "real" Tae Kwon Do. And there are some real differences between the brands of Tae Kwon Do practiced by these two Federations.

One difference is in the hyungs or forms practiced. The ITF now calls forms, "Tuls". The Tuls they practice were created by General Choi, each one having been named for some person or concept significant to Korean history. Many of these Tuls were created in the 1950s and have had only minor changes made to them since then. Others were created in later years and have been taught to his black belt students through the many seminars he teaches each year.

The WTF on the other hand has gone through several different sets of forms which they now call, "Poom-Se". The original Poom-Se practiced by the WTF were Ki-Cho one through three, and Pal-Gwe one through eight. Most WTF schools no longer practice these, choosing instead to practice Tae-Kook (Tae-Guek) one through eight for students who have not yet earned their black belts. At the black belt level, there exists an entirely different set of Poom-Se each named for some important person or concept from Korea.

A second difference is the terminology (both Korean and English) used. While both federations have essentially similar techniques and activities, they use different words to describe those activities. For example, free sparring is currently called "Ya Yu Mat Soki" by the ITF. This same activity goes by the name "Kyo-Lu-Ki" in the WTF. The same holds true for virtually any stance, block, punch, or strike imaginable. The exceptions to this rule are the three most basic kicks in either version of Tae Kwon Do. The front snap kick, the roundhouse kick, and the side kick are called, "Ap Chaki", "Doll-Rye Chaki", and "Yeop Chaki" regardless of which federation you belong to.

A third difference is in the rules that govern free sparring in the ITF and WTF. In the ITF, students are obliged to wear foam

rubber hand and foot pads aimed, primarily, at minimizing damage to their opponents. These pads must cover the entirety of the hand and the top of the foot and toes. Students are allowed to kick and punch to both the head and body of their opponent. Because it is legal to strike to the face, the risk of a broken nose is quite real. Illegal targets are the back, back of the head, and anywhere below the belt.

In WTF free sparring, students wear cloth-covered padding on their arms, legs, and part of the foot. They wear thick chest padding similar in appearance to, although much lighter than, a bullet proof vest. Finally they also wear foam rubber head gear. The primary purpose of this equipment is the protection of the person wearing it. WTF competitors do not typically wear anything on their hands and punching to the face is illegal. Because WTF competitors wear more protection, they are expected to strike with more power.

In order to score a point in competition, "trembling shock" must be delivered. In other words if your opponent is not knocked over, or at least knocked backwards, by your strike, you do not earn a point. Consequently it is quite difficult to score a point by punching in WTF Tae Kwon Do. In fact many competitors don't even bother evading or blocking punches. They just keep walking forward in the hopes of getting close enough to land a solid kick. Because there are no legal attacks to the face, you are much less likely to get a broken nose in WTF free sparring. On the other hand because you have to strike so hard to earn a point, you are more likely to get a broken rib or a concussion than in ITF free sparring.

So differences do exist between the ITF and the WTF. Are the differences great enough to warrant the animosity each federation holds for the other? You decide.

In the meantime, the tens of millions of people who practice Tae Kwon Do are split into two halves as surely as Korea is split into North and South.

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Another Veiwpoint From: <http://library.thinkquest.org/16082/history/index.html>

**Introduction:** Taekwondo is a young martial art with an ancient history. In its modern form it was systemitized by General Choi Hong Hi in 1954-55. At that time it was given the name Taekwondo. Ever since the remote past man has been anxious to develop his martial mastery. That was his way to make his living and to defend himself against enemies - other men and the wild animals. Gradually that striving led to the formation of martial arts. Their development continues to nowadays as well as human desire for self-perfection. Although Taekwondo was formed in its modern style during the middle of the 20th century it was natural continuation of the evolution of the Korean martial arts and to be more precise - of the traditional Taek

Kyon (its characteristic high kicks are the basic of Taekwondo techniques) and Subak. That's the reason why we find it necessary to trace the history of the Korean martial arts back to their origin.

**Martial arts and Korea in the ancient times:** The foundation of Korea is dated back to the year 2333 B.C. At that time the country was known as Ko Chosun. Since then the Koreans practised sport games developing martial mastery as fights with stone weapons (spear and knife), kicks and hits, throwing, swimming. These skills were developed in the tribal states Chosun, Puyo and Chinha. It is considered that one of the most important requirements for the national leaders of those days has been the martial mastery.

The period of the three kingdoms

At the beginning of the New Era the Korean Peninsula was divided into three kingdoms - Koguryo in the Northern part, Paekche - in the South-Eastern, and Silla - in the South-Western one. There had been some smaller independent regions and a bigger one - Kaya, but later they were united to some of the three others on the peninsula. That's why that historical time was called the Period of The Three Kingdoms.

The first material evidences for practising of martial arts in Korea were founded in 1933 by archeologists in two of the royal tombs of Koguryo dynasty - Kakjeyo-Chong and Mion-Chong. These were frescoes showing two men practising Taek Kyon (in Muyong-chong tomb) and two others wrestling (in Kakshu-chong tomb) dated back to the year 3-427 A.D. The Japanese historian Tatashi Saito in his book "A Study of the Culture of Ancient Korea" writes: "These drawings show that the buried man has practised Taekwondo in his life, or that the ancient people have practised it along with dancing and singing to find peace for the soul of the deceased one."

In the year 320 Piryu, the ruler of Paekche, ordered a training centre of martial arts to be built in the capital town. Each month in the time of full moon there were contests in riding, fights with wooden sticks, hand-to-hand fights. The competitors were trained at that school. The educational programme included study of the Buddhistic doctrine and classic literature as well.

An important role for the development of the martial arts, culture and history of Korea had the Military Order of Hwa Rang. It was formed by the 24th king of Silla Chinghung Wang (540-576) for the young sons of the aristocrats. They were trained in perfect bow drawing and arrow shooting, fencing, riding, Taek Kyon (the art of foot fighting), Subak (the art of hand fighting). The Order had its Moral Code based on "The Five Orders" of the Buddhistic monk Won Wang (590): loyalty to the king, devotion to the parents, honesty to the friends, strenght in battles and using the marshal art only in the name of justice. That turned the training into a system for physical and spiritual mature called Hwa Rang Do("The Way of the Flower of Mastery"). Hwa Rang means "The Flower of Mastery" (Hwa - flower, blossom, Rang - a young master). The Order represented the hope of the Koreans for a better future (the flower was a symbol of glory, beauty and unity at that time). There were between 500 and 5000 members in different periods. In 676 they helped Silla to unite The Three Kingdoms in a new country - the United Silla. The fighters had fulfilled all hopes but later in 900 the state was divided into three parts again.

**Subak in the time of Koryo and Chosun dynasties:** After the end of the Silla dynasty, in 935 was established the new united state of Koryo (918-1392). The modern name of Korea originates from it. The period of that dynasty was characterized by the constant wars against the aggressors. Naturally the martial arts became of great importance and the most popular of them was Subak. Su means "hand" and bak - "attack", i.e. "hand fight". It is considered that Subak was at its hight during the time of the ruler Uijong (1147-1170). He organized many military tournaments and he himself was present at many of them. That fact has been proved by many written documents. On 5 May and 15 August according to the Moon Calendar were organized the Festivals of O-Dan with contests in Subak. It has to be mentioned that as the differet dynasties gave different names to their states, so was the situation with the names of martial arts - in the time of Koryo Taek Kyon was called Subak as well. But these two styles were very close.

There are two important facts considering the development of the martial arts during the rule of Chosun dynasty (1392-1910). The first one is that Subak became more popular among the ordinary people unlike the time of Koryo when it had been a privilege for the military men only. The other significant event was the Martial Art Treatise "Muye Dobo Tongji" written by Li Dok Moo in 1790 on the order of king Chongjo. Te Kion, Subak and Sirum - the initial forms of Taekwondo, were the basic theme of that work. The third king of I dynasty (1401-1408) ordered to be found the masters of Taek Kyon, Subak and Sirum (Korean wrestling) and they to train the soldiers of the Korean army. In 1592 Japan occupied Korea. Followed the 7 years war against the aggressors during which Taek Kyon fighters had rendered great services.

But when the period of Li dynasty (1832-1910) came the martial arts were forbidden and their masters were persecuted. Their practising was illegal but continued in secret.

**Nowadays:** In 1910 the occupation army of Japan conquered Korea. That time the Japanese banned the national Korean martial arts totally. Just to a small part of privileged men was allowed to practise Judo and Kum Do. The Koreans who were cadets in Japanese military schools could train Karate and Aiki Djutsu too. Despite the prohibition under death penalty the Korean martial arts flourished. They became the main weapon in the anti-aggressive struggle.

A great contribution for the development of the modern Taekwondo has General Choi Hong Hi. He was born on 9 November 1918. As a child Choi was a weak and delicate boy. He began studying calligraphy. His teacher Han Il Dong noticed the bad health of his young student and started training him in Taek Kyon as well. Then Choi studied in Japan where he attained the rank of 2nd degree black belt in Karate. After the end of the Second World War he came back to his liberated country. There he joined the army of the new Republic of Korea. As a company commander he trained his soldiers in a fighting system combining the techniques of Karate hand hits with Taek Kyon kicks. In those days there were many different martial schools with great masters. Choi Hong Hi worked hardly on his mastery perfection and organized his own school. On 11 April 1955 a special board of the new Korean martial art summoned by General Choi decided on the name of Taekwondo which had been submitted by him. Some of the other masters joined their schools to the newly formed structure. It is unknown how many of the schools of that time went on their own way. In 1959 the Korean Taekwondo Association was founded with Choi Hong Hi as a vice-president. On the next year he was elected for president. That was the time when Taekwondo was introduced to the world. Each year a demo-team led by Choi Hong Hi performed spectacular demonstrations. They won more and more people for the great idea of Taekwondo.

On 22 March 1966 was founded the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF). At the beginning its members were Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, The Federal Republic of Germany, USA, Turkey, Italy and Egypt.

On 28 May 1973 was established the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) with the participation of 19 countries and the First World Competition took place in Seoul, South Korea.

On 17 July 1980 WTF was granted recognition by International Olympic Committee (IOC) at the 83th General Session in Moscow.

On 17 September 1988 Taekwondo WTF was a demonstration sport of the 24th Olympiad in Seoul with 192 competitors from over 35 nations.

On 30 July 1992 Taekwondo was a demonstration sport of the 25th Olympiad in Barcelona with 128 competitors from over 30 nations

On 4 September 1994 **A dream becomes reality!** - Taekwondo became an official Olympic sport in Sidney 2000 Olympic Games at 103th IOC Session in Paris.

**A glimpse of Tae Kwon Do:** Taekwondo is a modern martial art with Korean origin. It was developed as a self-defence system characterized by extremely high kicks. All Taekwondo techniques and movements are worked out according to the bio-mechanical principles of human limbs - to be used most effectively. "Tae" in Korean means "a kick, a jump", "Kwon" - "a fist, a punch", and "Do" - "an art, a way". So, Taekwondo is "The art of the kick and the punch", but Taekwondo means also "the way" to physical and moral self-perfection. In the process of practising Taekwondo man finds out that it is a way of living as well. That refers to more of the martial arts, too.

In Taekwondo except the kicks (which are really the prime part of the system) are studied also punches, hand blocks, catches, throwings. In its program are included, of course, basic technique knowledge, sparring, forms (patterns), self-defence and others.

Taekwondo is an extremely attractive sport with impressive kicks. That's why it becomes more and more popular. Now there are more than 30 million practitioners registered officially in WTF. After its demonstrative participation in the Olympic Games in 1988 in Seoul and 1992 in Barcelona, Taekwondo WTF has become an olympic sport included in the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games.

**Tae Kwon Do Organizations:** There are three main Taekwondo organizations in the world: ITF (International Taekwon-do Federation) - since 1966, WTF (The World Taekwondo Federation) - founded in 1973, and GTF (Global Taekwon-do Federation) - established in 1990. There are some differences in the technique performance and the sports regulations of the three federations.

Besides the three mentioned organizations there are many other associations, federations, schools and clubs headed by well-known masters. They are not in the central structures because of one or another reason. But these formations are local and do not pretend for world acknowledgement.



**International Taekwon-do Federation**



Gen. Choi Hong Hi - President of ITF

ITF was founded on 22 March 1966, with associations in Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, West Germany, the United States, Turkey, Italy, Arab Republic of Egypt and Korea. Now more than 50 national federations and associations are included in ITF. General Choi Hong Hi is its president since its establishment. The foot technique of ITF is characterized by a clear path with high amplitude and a long focusing in its final part (the so called classical or traditional technique). The movements and the exercises are performed with the typical ITF "wave" - an up-and-down body movement aiming at the increasing of the hit power. In the process of practising a block or a hit there is a characteristic hissing sound made by a sudden breathing out through the teeth. So in the hit moment the abdominal press is tough and it protects the inner organs in case of opponent's counter-attack. The sparring is according to the semi-contact rules, i.e. the strong hits are forbidden and under penalty.



**The World Taekwondo Federation**



Dr. Un Yong Kim - President of WTF

WTF was established on 28 May 1973 with participation of 19 countries. At the present moment 158 countries are its members. In 1980 the federation was officially recognized by the International Olympic Committee. President of WTF is Dr. Un Yong Kim, a person of great organization skill. He has a significant contribution to the quick Taekwondo spread and its proclamation for an olympic sport. WTF foot technique is with sparring orientation. The hit path is maximum short directed to the nearest way to the aim. That's the idea of increasing the speed and the moment of surprize. There is no "wave" movement. The exhalation is not clear, often soundless, in order to "hide" the moment of attack start. There is a full-contact sparring, i.e. the techniques are executed at most strenght. Naturally, that requires a good safe protective equipment.



**Global Taekwon-do Federation**



Grand master Park Jung Tae - President of GTF

GTF was founded by Grand master Park Jung Tae in 1990. It is most popular in Europe and North America. Grandmaster Park has been a secretary general of ITF. He decided to establish a new federation to purify the politics out of Taekwondo, because he was annoyed by the constant speculations of ITF and WTF, and of North and South Korea respectfully. There is no difference in the sport techniques and rules between GTF and ITF.

**Conclusion:** It has to be mentioned at the end that the difference in the technique performance of WTF and ITF (GTF) is relative. First, because the sparring technique is with classical origin. Second, sparring technique is practised in ITF, too, and classical in WTF - in demonstrations and breakings (the so called power test). The one federation is orientated more to the sport aspect of Taekwondo, the other one to the classical martial-practical one - that's just the difference. Taekwondo "conquered" the world not as WTF, or ITF, or GTF, but just as Taekwondo. The three federations have their own tribute to its development, spread and at last to that universal acknowledgement - Taekwondo to be a member of the great family of the Olympic Sports.

**Tae Kwon Do Nature & Spirit:** The basis in Taekwondo practising is the technique. The training system is an endless repetition and perfecting of the studied techniques. We mean not only the working out of separate hits, blocks, but sparring and forms as well. That striving to skill perfection, body fitness respectfully and the satisfaction which follows is the first component of Taekwondo. That is the so called technical ideal. It is the first step of each beginner.

As it was mentioned, Taekwondo is not just physical exercises but an art as well. The concept of Taekwondo art is the union of mind and spirit aiming at self-perfection. When a man is heartly involved in his self-development, thinks over and analyses his acts, then it comes the real human mature - not only physical, but spiritual and moral one.

That desire for self-perfection is natural. But man lives in the surrounding environment, not out of it. That is the reason for the philosophical ideal of Taekwondo as a wish for uniting man and nature through practising Taekwondo. It is a way of living based on the harmony between man and manhood. So if someone works on hit techniques only he will never realize the concept of Taekwondo.

In the modern world Taekwondo develops as a sport and a system of physical education with great success. That is possible only through the union of the three ideals of Taekwondo - the ideal of technical perfection, the ideal of combining mind and spirit in order to help the process of self-

perfection and the extrovert ideal - the harmony between man and nature which is the basic one in many Eastern philosophical doctrines. All that could be reached by the constant physical trainings - a main part of Taekwondo practicing. The sport aspect of Taekwondo is in the natural human striving to act, contest and conquer. The practitioner aims at developing strength, speed and precision. Those strivings are expressed in sparring competitions.

Taekwondo spirit is in the desire to realize the values of its practising. Because the technique is the basic part of the trainings, the spiritual development is in connection with the technical one. Taekwondo realization is a personal affair. Often the practitioner creates an image of the ideal Taekwondo man who becomes his own ideal. Of course, that is an individual image, formed on the basis of the long training way and is not a real person, because the process of self-perfection is endless and therefore, nobody could be perfect.

**The symbolism of the training uniform (Tobok):** As it was mentioned, many Eastern philosophic doctrines are the basis of Taekwondo. In their concepts the harmony in human life is very important. Not many people know that the principle is followed even in the construction of the training uniform (tobok). It is considered that tobok originates from the national Korean costume. The three geometrical shapes are combined in it: square (in the sleeves and trousers), circle (the belt around the waist) and triangle (the V-neck and tights). According to the Yin and Yang theory the three main components of the universe and the geometrical shapes of tobok have their meaning - the trousers symbolize the Earth, the belt stands for man and the upper garment - heaven. So the endless form of the belt - a circle - symbolizes the circuit of human life among heaven and earth. The white colour is the purity of consciousness and peace.

**The symbolism of the belt (Tti):** The belt is a nonseparable part of Taekwondo equipment. It shows the rank or degree of the practitioner. In Taekwondo WTF there are 5 colours of belts - white, yellow, blue, red and black one. The white symbolizes the beginning, the arising. At the other end is the black one - the conclusion (here is the dualistic ideal of Yin and Yang again). The yellow is the Sun, the new energy which rises, the blue - the sky, striving to knowledge, the red - danger but passion, too. There are 9 ranks of degree for students (gup) from white belt to the red one, and 9 masters (dan) - all of them black belts. The ultimate number in the decimal system is 9. So the initial degree is the 1st gup and the highest one is the 9th dan.

## **Official History from WTF.org website**

The historical background of Taekwondo development will be explained following the chronological order of 4 different ages; ancient times, middle ages, modern ages and present times.

### **Ancient Times**

#### **The origin of Tae Kwon DO**

Man by nature has instinct to preserve his own life as well as his race, and therefore engages in physical activities either consciously or unconsciously. Man cannot do without physical motions that he grows and developed on them, regardless of time and space. In ancient times people had no means other than the bare hands and body to defend themselves; so they naturally developed the bare-hand fighting techniques. Even at times when arms were developed as defensive or offensive means, people continued to enjoy the bare-hand fighting techniques for the purpose of building physical strength as well as showing off through matches at rituals of tribal communities.

In the early days of the Korean peninsula, there were three tribes, each enjoying warrior's martial art contests

during the ritual seasons. At the time, people learned techniques from their experiences of fighting against the beasts whose defensive and offensive motions were also the subject of analysis. It is believed that this was exactly the true grounding of today's Taekwondo, which names have descended from "Subak", "Taekkyon" and so on.

In the latter part of ancient times on the Korean peninsula, three kingdoms were rivaling among them for the hegemony. They were Koguryo, Paekje and Shilla all indulged in growing national strength with trained warriors. Therefore, the Korean history tells that there were military personalities among the well-known prominent national leaders of the three kingdoms, which proves the military tendency of ruling hierarchy.

As a result, youth warriors were organized, such as "Hwarangdo" in Shilla and "Chouisonin" in Koguryo, which both adopted martial art training as one of the important subjects of learning. A known martial art book of the days, called "Muyedobo-Tongji" wrote "Taekwondo is the basis of martial art, enabling one to build strength by using the hand and foot freely and training arms and legs as well as the body to adaptable to any critical situations," which means Taekwondo was already prevalent in that age. Thus, it can be easily assumed that Taekwondo was originated from the days of tribal communities on the Korean peninsula.

Shilla kingdom founded in B.C. 57 on the southeastern part of Korea, and Koguryo founded in B.C. 37 on the northern part of Korea along Yalu river, both made great efforts to raise their youngsters into strong warriors called "hwarang" and "sunbae" respectively, certainly with Taekwondo as one of the principal subjects of physical training.

### **Koguryo's "sonbae" and Taekkyon**

Koguryo was founded on the northern part of Korea, surrounded by hostile Han [Chinese] tribes in the north. Therefore, in its early days, the kingdom organized a strong warrior corps called "Sunbae" in its attempt to consolidate power.

According to the scholars, a man of virtue who never recoils from a fight means "sunbae", which is a member of the warrior corps. Later, the chronicle of the Old Chosun Dynasty described the lift of Koguryo days, saying; "people gathered on march 10 every year at a site of ritual, where they enjoyed a sword dance, archery, Taekkyon contests and so on," implying that Taekkyon was one of the popular events for the ritual in the Koguryo days. It also said "sunbae" lived in groups, learning history and literary arts at home and going out to construct roads and fortresses for the benefits of society, always devoting themselves to the nations.

Therefore, it was natural that Koguryo put the priority of interests on the Taekkyon which was the basis of martial arts, as can be proven by the wall paintings discovered at tombs of Koguryo days. A mural painting at the Samsil tomb shows two warriors engaged in a face-to-face match in Taekkyon stance, and a third at the same tomb shows the scene of Korean wrestling bout [Ssireum], clearly distinguishing it from Taekkyon. It can be assumed from the painting of Taekkyon match that the dead were either a Taekkyon practical or the subject of condolence with dances and martial art.

### **Silla's "Hwarang" and Taekkyon**

The Kingdom of Shilla was founded on the southeastern part of the Korean peninsula where there were no immediate threats from outside, but along with the birth of Paekje Kingdom on its west flank and the start of invasions by Koguryo from the north, Shilla was impelled to arm itself with development of martial arts.

In fact, "hwarangdo" is the typical example of Shilla's martial arts, which is an assimilation of Koguryo's "sunbae" system. The youth group hwarangdo were well trained with the senses of filial piety, loyalty to the kingdom and sacrificial devotion to society to become important personalities for the rein of the kingdom. Notable among them were Kim Yu-Shin and Kim Chun-Chu that made definite contributions to the unification of those three kingdoms.

The chronicle of Old Chosun described the life of hwarangs, members of hwarangdo: "hwarang were selected by the kingdom through contests and, after selection, they lived together in a group, learning, exercising subak, fencing and horse-riding, and sometimes enjoyed various games of communities, working on emergency aids and construction of fortresses and roads, and they were always ready to sacrifice their lives at the time of war."

Hwarangs were particularly influenced by the Buddhistic disciplines and therefore the bronze statues of a Kumgang

Yoksa [a man of great physical strength] currently exhibited at the Kyongju Museum clearly indicate that martial arts were practiced at temples by showing a strong man's bare-hand defensive and offensive stances.

Especially the shape of a fist shown on the statue of Kumgang Yoksa exactly resembles that of a "jungkwon" [proper fist] in the contemporary term of Taekwondo. The statue also shows "pyon jumok " [flat fist] and the use of legs, which are seen in today's Taekwondo.

It is really noticeable that in the Shilla epoch the terms "subak" [hand techniques] and "taekkyon" appear together, signifying that both hand and foot techniques were used in martial arts as shown in today's Taekwondo.

### **Taekkyon transmitted from Koguryo to Shilla**

as the art of taekkyon was popularized in Koguryo, it was also handed down to Silla, which is justified by the following points of view;

- (1) "Hwarang"(or sonrang) in Silla has the same meaning with the word "sonbae" in Koguryo by indicating both the youth warrior's corps from their etymological origins.
- (2) Both Hwarang and sonbae had the same organizations and hierarchical structure with each other.
- (3) According to historical, as sonbaes in Koguryo used to compete in taekkyon games at the time of their national festivals, Hwarangs in Silla also played taekkyon games (subak, dokkyoni or taekkyoni) at such festivals as "palkwanhoe" and "hankawi" , thus systematically developing the ancient fighting techniques into the taekkyon(or sonbae) as the basis of martial arts by around a.d.200. from the 4th century the Hwarangs took the takkyon lesson as a systemized martial art at their learning houses to make it also popularized among ordinary people so much so that their techniques were depicted on the mural paintings of ancient warrior tombs. Again, it is also true that taekkyon, coming down to Silla, was further developed into a school of martial art with the division of techniques, i ,e bare-hand techniques and foot techniques, which can be proved by the fact that both hand and foot techniques art clearly shown in the ancient sculptures buddlistic statues.

### **Middle Ages**

The Koryo dynasty, which reunified the Korean peninsula after Shilla [A.D. 918 to 1392], had the Taekkyon develop more systematically and made it a compulsory subject in the examinations for selection of military cadets.

The techniques and power of Taekkyon grew to become effective weapons even to kill human beings. In the military, a pattern of collective practice, called "obyong-subak-hui [5 soldier's Taekkyon play], was introduced so that it might be used in a real war.

In the early days of Koryo dynasty, martial art abilities were the only required qualifications to become military personnel because the kingdom utterly needed the national defense capabilities after conquering the peninsula. A certain plain soldier who mastered Taekkyon techniques was promoted to a general, and young were invited to Taekkyon contests where the skilled ones were selected to become military officers. There were lots of other examples in which many Taekkyon-mastered youths were picked at contests, which is proof that Taekwondo sports was originated in that epoch. The chronicles of Koryo dynasty writes: "at a power contest of Taekkyon techniques, Lee Yi- Min punched a pillar of the house with his right-hand fist, then some of the props of the roof were shaken. Another Taekkyon practicer had his fist pierce through the clay-wall."

Especially the kings of Koryo dynasty were much interested in "subakhui" [Taekkyon contest], making it a compulsory course of military training. Therefore, subakhui was also popular out for inspection tours in the villages.

However, the Koryo dynasty in its latest years had gunpowder and new types of weapons available at hand, thus slowing down its support of martial as the folk games to be transmitted down to the modern Korea, Chosun. (Taekkyon explained in the Koryo history book)

## **Modern Ages**

In the modern times of Korea, the Chosun dynasty [1392-1910] the imperial Korea and the Japanese colonial rule until 1945, Taekwondo was rather called "subakhui" than "Taekkyon" and it suffered an eventual loss of official support from the central government as the weapons were modernized for national defense, although the subkhui was still popular in the early days of Chosun.

The Chosun dynasty was founded on the ideology of Confucianism, which resulted in rejecting Buddhism and giving more importance on literary art than martial art. Nonetheless, the Annals of Chosun Dynasty tells about the contests of subakhui ordered by local officials for the purpose of selecting soldiers and others ordered by the kings who enjoyed watching subakhui contests at the times of feasts. It was also ruled by the defense department that a soldier should be employed when he wins three other contestants in the subakhui bouts. However, as the government progressed, the government officials began to lay more importance on power struggles than on the interest of defense, naturally neglecting promotion of martial arts.

Then, it was only in the days of King Jungjo after the disgraceful invasion of Korea by the Japanese [1592] that the royal government revived strong defense measures by strengthening military training and martial art practice. Around this period there was a publication of the so-called "Muyedobo-Tongji," a book of martial art illustrations, which 4th volume entitled "hand-fighting techniques" contained the illustration of 38 motions, exactly resembling today's Taekwondo poomsae and basic movements, although those motions cannot be compared with today's Taekwondo poomsae, which has been modernized through scientific studies.

Even under the Japanese colonial rule, some famous Korean writers, such as Shin Chae- Ho and Choi Nam-Sun, mentioned about Taekwondo, saying "present subak prevailing in Seoul came from the sunbae in the Koguryo dynasty," and "subak is like today's Taekkyon which was originally practiced as martial art but is now played mostly by children as games."

However, the Japanese colonial government totally prohibited all folkloric games including Taekkyon in the process of suppressing the Korean people. The martial art Taekkyon [Taekwondo] had been secretly handed down only by the masters of the art until the liberation of the country in 1945. Song Duk-Ki, one of the then masters testifies that his master was Im Ho who was reputed for his excellent skills of Taekkyon, "jumping over the walls and running through the wood just like a tiger." (explanation of taekkon techniques in muyedobo-tongji (general illustrations of techniques) (scene of contest).

At the time, 14 terms of techniques were used representing 5 kicking patterns, 4 hand techniques, 3 pushing-down-the-heel patterns, 1 turning-over-kick pattern and 1 technique of downing-the-whole-body. Also noteworthy is the use the term "poom" which signified a face-to-face stance preparing for a fight. The masters of Taekkyon were also under constant threat of imprisonment, which resulted in an eventual of Taekkyon as popular games

## **Present Times**

Upon liberation of Korea from the Japanese colonial rule after World War II, the Korean people began recovering the thought of self-reliance and the traditional folkloric games resumed their popularity. Song Duk-Ki, aforementioned master of Taekkyon, presented a demonstration of the martial art before the first republic of Korea president Syngman Rhee on the occasion of his birthday, clearly distinguishing Taekwondo from the Japanese Karate which had been introduced by the Japanese rulers.

Martial art experts began opening Taekwondo gymnasiums all over the country and after the end of Korean War [1950-1953] Taekwondo was popularized among the dan-grade black-belters within the country, also dispatching about 2,000 Taekwondo masters to more than 100 countries.

After all, following the nomination of Taekwondo as a national martial art in 1971, the present Kukkiwon was founded in 1972 to be used as the headquarters as well as the site of various Taekwondo competitions. Then a year later, in 1973 the World Taekwondo Federation was established. In 1973, the biennial World Taekwondo

Championships was organized.

In 1984, Taekwondo was admitted to the Asian games as an official event. In 1975, Taekwondo was accepted as an official sport by the U.S Amateur Athletic Union [AAU] and also admitted to the General Association of International Sports Federations [GAISF], followed by the adoption of official sports event by the International Council of Military Sports [CISM] in 1976. The WTF became an IOC-recognized sports federation in 1980, making Taekwondo an Olympic sport. Then the adoption of Taekwondo as an official event was followed by the world games in 1981, the pan-American games in 1986, and finally by the Sydney 2000 Olympics in 1994 and then Athens 2004 Olympic Games in 2000. On November 29, 2002, the 114th IOC Session also confirmed the inclusion of Taekwondo in the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.

## POOMSAE

[TAEGUK  
SIPJIN](#)

[KORYO  
JITAE](#)

[KEUMGANG  
CHONKWON](#)

[TAEBAEK  
HANSU](#)

[PYONGWON  
ILYEO](#)

### ▣ Poomsae TAEGUK

- 1 Jang      Taegeuk 1 Jang represents the symbol of "Keon", one of the 8 Kwaes (divination signs), which means the "heaven and yang". As the "Keon" symbolizes the beginning of the creation of all thing in the universe, do does the Taegeuk 1 Jang in the training of Taekwondo. This poomsae is characterized by its easiness in practicing, largely consisting of walking and basic actions, such as arae-makki, momtong-makki, momtong-jireugi, and ap-chagi. The 8th Kup-grade trainees practice this poomsae.
- 2 Jang      Taegeuk 2 Jang symbolizes the "Tae", one of the 8 divination signs, which signifies the inner firmness and the outer softness. An introduction of the olgul-makki is a new development of Taegeuk poomsae. The ap-chagi actions appear more frequently than in Taegeuk 1 Jang. The 7th Kup-grade trainees practice this poomsae.
- 3 Jang      Taegeuk 3 Jang symbolizes the "Ra", one of the 8 divination signs, which represent "hot and bright". This is to encourage the trainees to harbor a sense of justice and ardor for training. A successful accomplishment of this poomsae will give the trainees a promotion to a blue belt. New actions are sonnol-mok-chigi and sonnol -makki and dwit-kubi stance. This poomsae is characterized by successive makki and chigi, and continued jireugis. Emphasis is laid on the counterattacks against the opponent's chigi. The 6th Kup-grade trainees practice this poomsae.
- 4 Jang      Taegeuk 4 Jang symbolizes the "Jin", one of the 8 divination signs, which represent the thunder meaning great power and dignity. New techniques are sonnol-momtong-makki, pyon-son-kkeut-jireugi, jebipoom-mok-chigi, yop-chagi, momtong- bakkat-makki, deung-jumeok-olgul-apchigi and mikkeurombal [slipping foot] techniques. Various movements in preparation for the kyorugi and lot of dwit-kubi cases characterize it. The 5th Kup-grade trainees practice this poomsae.
- 5 Jang      Taegeuk 5 Jang symbolizes the "Son", one of the 8 divination signs, which represent the wind, meaning both mighty force and calmness according to its strength and weakness. New movements are me-jumeok-maeryo-chigi, palkup-dollyo-chigi, yop-chagi & yop-jireugi, palkup-pyo-jeok-chigi and such stances as kkoa-seogi, wen-seogi and oreun-seogi. This is characterized by the successive makkis such as area-makki and momtong-makki and also the chigi by thumbling after running. The 4th Kup-grade trainees practice this poomsae.
- 6 Jang      Taegeuk 6 Jang symbolizes the "Kam", one of the 8 divination signs, which represents water, meaning incessant flow and softness. New movements are han-sonnal-olgul-bakkat-makki, dollyo-chagi, olgul-bakkat-makki and batang-son- momtong-makki in addition to pyonhi-seogi [at-ease stance]. One should be careful to make the kicking foot land on the ground correctly after dyollo-chagi and to lower the hand by a palm's length at the time of delivering a batang-son momtong-makki lower than in the palmok-makki. This is practiced by the 3rd Kup-graders.
- 7 Jang      Taegeuk 7 Jang symbolizes the "Kan", one of the 8 divination signs, which represents the mountain, meaning ponder and

firmness. New movements are sonnal-arae-makki, batangson-kodureo-makki, bo-jumeok-kawi-makki, mureup-chigi, momtong-hecho-makki, jechin-du-jumeok-momtong-jireugi, otkoreo-arae-makki, pyojeok-chigi, yop-jireugi and such stances as beam-seogi and juchum-seogi. Smooth connection of movements is important for training. The 2nd Kup-graders practice this poomsae.

## 8 Jang

Taeguk 8 Jang symbolizes the "Kon", one of the 8 divination signs, which represents "Yin" and earth, meaning the root and settlement and also the beginning and the end. This is the last of the 8 Taeguk poomsaes, which may enable the trainees to undergo the Dan [black belt] promotion test. New movements are dubal-dangsong-bakkat-palmok-momtong-kodureo-bakkat-makki, twio-chagi, and palkup-dollyo-chigi. Emphasis must be laid on the accuracy of stepping and the difference between jumping-over kick and dubal-dangsong [alternate jumping kick in the air]. The 1st Kup-graders practice this poomsae.

## 8 Poomsae KORYO

Koryo poomsae symbolizes "seonbae" which means a learned man, who is characterized by a strong martial spirit as well as a righteous learned man's spirit. The spirit had been inherited through the ages of Koryo, Palhae and down to Koryo, which is the background of organizing the Koryo poomsae. The new techniques appearing in this poomsae are kodeum-chagi, opeun-sonnal-bakkat-chigi, sonnal-arae-makki, khaljaebi-mureup-nullo-kkokki, momtong-hecho-makki, jumeok-pyojeok-jireugi, pyonson-kkeut-jecho-jireugi, batang-son-nullo-makki, palkup-yop-chagi, me-jumeok-arae-pyojeok-chigi, etc, which only black-belters can practice. The jumbi-seogi is the tong-milgi that requires mental concentration by positioning the hand in between the upper abdomen and the lower abdomen where "sin"[divine] and "jeong"[spirit] converge. The line of poomsae represents the Chinese letter, which means "seonbae" or "seonbi", a learned man or a man virtue in the Korean language.

## 8 Poomsae KEUMGANG

Keumgang [meaning diamond] has the significance of "hardness" and "ponder", The Keumgang Mountain on the Korean peninsula, which is regarded as the center of national spirit, and the "Keumgang Yeoksa"[Keumgang warrior] as named by Buddha, who represents the mightiest warrior, are the background of denominating this poomsae. New techniques introduced in this poomsae are batangson-teok-chigi, han-son-nal-momtong-an-makki, Keumgang-makki, santeoul-makki, kheun dol-tzogi [large hinge], and the hak-dari-seogi. The poomsae line is symbolic of the Chinese letter. The movement should be powerful and well balanced so as to befit the black belt's dignity.

## 8 Poomsae TAEBAEK

Taebaek is the name of a mountain with the meaning of "bright mountain", where Tangun, the founder of the nation of Korean people, reigned the country, and the bright mountain symbolizes sacredness of soul and Tangun's thought of "hongik ingan"[humanitarian ideal]. There are numerous sites known as Taebaek, but Mt. Paektu, which has been typically known as the cradle of Korean people, is the background naming the Taebaek poomsae. New techniques introduced in this poomsae are sonnal-arae-hecho-makki, sonnal-opeo-japki [grabbing], japhin-son-mok-ppaegi [pulling out the caught wrist], Kumgang-momtong-makki, deung-jumeok-olgul-bakkat-chigi, dol-tzeogi [hinge], etc. The line of poomsae is like a Chinese letter, which symbolized the bridge between the Heaven and the earth, signifying human beings founded the nation by the Heaven's order. The poomsae movements are largely composed of momtong-makkis and chigis.

## 8 Poomsae PYONGWON

Pyongwon means a plain that is a vast stretched-out land. It is the source of life for all the creatures and the field where human beings live their life. The poomsae Pyongwon was based on the idea of peace and struggle resulting from the principles of origin and use. The new techniques introduced in this poomsae are palkup-olloyo-chigi, kodureo-olgul-yop-makki, dangkyo-teok-jireugi, meongye-chigi, hecho-santeul-makki, etc. The jumbi-seogi is the moa-seogi-wen-kyop-son [left overlapping hands], which requires concentration of force in the beginning and source of human life. The line of poomsae means the origin and transformation of the plain.

## 8 Poomsae SIPJIN

The word "Sipjin" derived from the thought of 10 longevity, which advocates there are ten creatures of long life, namely, sun, moon, mountain, water, stone, pine-tree, herb of eternal youth, tortoise, deer, and crane. They are 2 heavenly bodies, 3 natural resources, 2 plants and 3 animals, all giving human beings faith, hope and love. The poomsae Sipjin symbolizes those things. The new techniques introduced in this poomsae are hwangso-makki [bull makki], son-badak[palm]-kodureo-makki, opeun-son-nal-jireugi, son-nal-arae-makki, bawi-milgi [rock pushing], son-nal-deung-momtong-hecho-makki, kodeo-olligi [lifting up], chettari-jireugi [fork-shape jireugi], son-nal-otkoreo-arae-makki, son-nal-deung-momtong-makki, which counts 10. The Chinese letter meaning ten is the form of the poomsae line, which signifies an infinite numbering of the decimal system and ceaseless development.

## 8 Poomsae JITAE

The word "Jitae" means a man standing on the ground with two feet, looking over the sky. A man on the earth represents the way of struggling for human life, such as kicking, trading and jumping on the ground. Therefore, the poomsae symbolizes various aspects occurring in the course of human being's struggle for existence. The new techniques introduced in this poomsae are han-son-nal-olgul-makki, keumgang-momtong-jireugi,

and me-jumeok-yop-pyojeok-chigi only, and the poomsae line signified a man standing on earth to spring up toward the heaven.

**■ Poomsae CHONKWON**

The word "Chonkwon" means the Heaven's Great Mighty, which is the origin of all the creature and itself the cosmos. Its infinite competence signifies the creation, change and completion. Human beings have used the name of Heaven for all principal earthly shapes and meanings because they felt afraid of the Heaven's mighty. Over 4,000 years ago, the founder of the Korean people, "Hwanin" meant the heavenly King. He settled down in the "heavenly" town as the capital near the heavenly sea and heavenly mountain, where the Han people as the heavenly race gave birth to the proper through and action from which Taekwondo was originated. The poomsae Chunkwon is based on such sublime history and thoughts

The new techniques introduced in thtis poomsae are nalgae-pyogi [wing opening], bam-jumeok-sosum-chigi [knuckle protruding fist springing chigi], hwidullo-makki [swinging makki], hwidullo-jabadangkigi [swinging and drawing], keumgang-yop-jireugi, taesan-milgi, etc., and a crouched walking manner.

The characteristics of movements are large actions and arm sections forming gentle curves, thus symbolizing the greatness of Chunkwon thought. The poomsae line "T" symbolizes a man coming down from the heaven, submitting to the will of Heaven, being endowed power by the Heaven and worshipping the Heaven, which means the oneness between the Heaven and a human being.

**■ Poomsae HANSU**

The word "Hansu" means water is the source of substance preserving the life and growing all the creatures. Hansu symbolizes birth of a life and growth, strength & weakness, magnanimity & harmony, and adaptability. Especially, "han" has the various meanings, namely, the name of a country, numerousness, largeness, evenness, length and even the heaven and the root of evening, among others. Above all, the above significances, is the background of organizing this poomsae.

The new techniques introduced in this poomsae are son-nal-deung-momtong-hecho-makki, me-jumeok-yang-yopkuri[both flanks]-chigi, kodureo-khaljaebi, an-palmok-arae- pyojeok-makki, son-nal-keumgang-makki, etc., and also modum-bal as a stance.

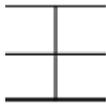
Actions should be practiced softly like water but continuously like a drop of water gathering to make an ocean. The poomsae line symbolizes the Chinese letter that means water.

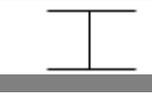
**■ Poomsae ILYEO**

Ilyeo means the thought of a great Buddhist priest of Silla Dynasty, Saint Wonhyo, which is characterized by the philosophy of oneness of mind [spirit] and body [material]. It teaches that a point, a line or a circle ends up all in one. Therefore, the poomsae Ilyeo represents the harmonization of spirit and body, which is the essence of martial art, after a long training of various types of techniques and spiritual cultivation for completion of Taekwondo practice.

The new techniques introduced in this poomsae are son-nal-olgul-makki, wesanteul-yop-chagi, du-son-pyo[two opened hands]-bitureo-jabadangkigi [twisting and pulling], two- yop-chagi and the first stance of ogeum[knee back]-hakdari-seogi. Jumbi-seogi is the bo-jumeok-moa-seogi [wrapped-up fist moa-seogi], in which, as the last step of poomsae training, two wrapped-up fists are placed in front of the chin, which has the significance of unification and moderation, so that the spiritual energy can flow freely into the body as well as the two hands. The line of poomsae symbolizes the Buddhist mark [swastika], in commemoration of saint Wonhyo, which means a state of perfect selflessness in Buddhism where origin, substance and service come into congruity.

**Classification of Poomsae Patterns** —

Name of Poomsae	Number of patterns	Number of patterns	Lines of Poomsae	Level of Training
TAEGUK	1ST Jang	18		Keup & 1st Dan (Poom)
	2ND Jang	18		
	3RD Jang	20		
	4TH Jang	20		
	5TH Jang	20		
	6TH Jang	19		
	7TH Jang	25		
	8TH Jang	27		
KORYO	Single pattern	30		2nd Dan(Poom)

KUMGANG	Single pattern	27		3rd Dan (Poom)
TAEBACK	Single pattern	26		4th Dan
PYONGWON	Single pattern	21		5th Dan
SHIPJIN	Single pattern	28		5th Dan
JITAE	Single pattern	28		6th Dan
CHUNKWON	Single pattern	26		7th Dan
HANSOO	Single pattern	27		8th Dan
ILYEO	Single pattern	23		9th Dan

### Philosophical Principles of Taekwondo

The philosophy of Taekwondo is very special, but what makes it so special? If we learn philosophy from books, we tend to forget it as soon as we leave them, because it is not related to our actual lives. But since Taekwondo is connected with our lives like every movement of ours is, we can never forget its philosophy.

That is, the philosophy is one of actions that can be learned from other actions, and our everyday activities. Taekwondo philosophy represents the principles of the changes and movements in human beings. It also represents the principles of our lives, since life consists of our movements. Therefore, we can say Taekwondo is a philosophy in itself. We can understand the philosophy of Taekwondo by doing Taekwondo, and this understanding should lead to better understanding and enhancement of our life. The principles of Taekwondo can be explained in several ways but here we will explain it simply with the principle of "Sam Jae" [Three Elements] and that of "Eum" [the Negative or Darkness] and "Yang" [the Positive or the Brightness]. "Sam Jae" refers to "Cheon" [the Heaven], "Ji" [the Earth], and "In" [the Man] and the principles concerning them. In oriental countries, it has been recognized as the central principle that explains the changes of everything in the world. "Sam Jae" and the changes of "Eum" and "Yang" constitute the "Eight Trigrams for Divination" in the "Book of Changes." The principle of Sam Jae has been emphasized in oriental countries, especially in Korea. If you understand Taekwondo's principle, you could understand all the skills and spiritual depth of Taekwondo. The principle of Eum and Yang has also been emphasized in oriental countries as the central principle of life. It maintains that everything has an opposite side. This principle explains various forms of changes, but it comes from "Taegeuk" [the Great Absolute], which represents the ultimate claim that Eum and Yang was the one and the same thing. If we understand Taekwondo according to this principle, we will find a solution, and by continuously changing skills, we will never get stuck, in any situation. After we understand these philosophical principles of Taekwondo, we can find proper ways to understand and develop our lives.

### Historical Development of Taekwondo Philosophies

What is the philosophy of Taekwondo?

Taekwondo contains thoughts that Han [Korean] people had developed through history. Its philosophy is easily

explained with Hongik-Ingan, Jaese-Ihwa, or Hwarangdo spirit. Hongik-Ingan and Jaese-Ihwa were not only ideologies of Tangun Chosun's foundation, but also a fundamental thought of Han people. With time, these ideas developed into the Hwarangdo spirit and the Taekwondo philosophy today. Now, let's look at the principles contents of the philosophy.

Hongik-Ingan" means universal welfare of mankind. It was the idea of the national foundation by Tangun, and the Taekwondo spirit too has inherited the idea of Hongik-Ingan. It is easily confirmed from the fact that the word of Taekwondo, itself means to suppress fighting and induce peace. On one hand, Jaese-Ihwa means that the world is educated in accordance with the reason of heaven. Taekwondo is a principle, not a simple connection with movements. It is the Korean traditional martial art characterized by the trinity of body, mind and life. Thus, the principle is the reason of all creation, and so it refers to the reason of heaven in Jaese-Ihwa. Therefore, human beings can be educated in accordance with the reason of heaven through correct training of Taekwondo. That's the very meaning of Jaese-Ihwa. Hongik-Ingan and Jaese-Ihwa appear clearly in the myth of the Korean foundation. According to it, "In the early age, Hwan-Wung, the son of Heaven established a nation called Baedal [earliest name of Korea]. He then announced the purpose of the national foundation as Jaese-Ihwa [educate with the reason of heaven] and Hongik-Ingan [universal welfare of mankind].

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from: <http://tkdunion.org/membership-event-registration/dan-promotion-requirements/>

## Black belt Testing and Promotion

### Requirements from the Member School Manual - Student's Eligibility to Test

All students of an affiliated Taekwon-Do International school are entitled to participate in belt testings sponsored by the Member Schools. They must be members of good standing at the Member Schools and have completed the minimum requirements for the grade level they request. These requirements include proficiency in the required patterns, step sparring, sparring and breaking, as well as "time-in-rank" (explained below) and a minimum age requirement. Continuing character development consistent with the five tenets of Taekwon-Do (courtesy, integrity, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit) is also a significant part of the achievement required at each grade level.

Lower belt students may test about every two months. Black Belt students in Taekwon-Do International must satisfy a minimum time (or "time-in-rank") requirements as follows:

Testing From	Testing To	Minimum Time in Rank	Minimum Age
1st Degree	2nd Degree	2 years	
2nd Degree	3rd Degree	2 years	
3rd Degree	4th Degree	3 years	27 years
4th Degree	5th Degree	4 years	30 years
5th Degree	6th Degree	5 years	34 years
6th Degree	7th Degree	6 years	39 years
7th Degree	8th Degree	6 years	45 years
8th Degree	9th Degree	8 years	53 years

Examiner Rank Requirements: Under Taekwon-Do International by-laws, the following Black Belt ranks may conduct grade tests:

<b>Examiner Rank</b>	<b>May Conduct Tests Up To</b>
1st Degree	Cannot conduct testing
2nd Degree	Testing with Grandmaster Supervision
3rd Degree	Testing with Grandmaster Supervision
4th Degree	1st Degree Black Belt
5th Degree	2nd Degree Black Belt
6th Degree	3rd Degree Black Belt
7th Degree	4th Degree Black Belt
8th Degree	7th Degree Black Belt
9th Degree	9th Degree Black Belt

from: <http://www.intermartialarts.com/practice/taekwondo-itf>

## Taekwondo (ITF): Forms

Submitted by [ashley](#) on Sat, 04/18/2009 - 10:12

Taekwondo (ITF)

General Choi Hong Hi founded the **Taekwondo Forms** and these set of rules in Korea 1966. This has set standards for training (sparring, patterns, and breaking). There is also a unified grading system.

### Forms

The Tul (patterns/forms) are similar in principle to the well-known kata of karate. In total there are 24 patterns, which represent 24 hours of the day. Each pattern represents an important era of Korean history or an important person.

All the patterns start and end at the same position. This allows the student to develop stances and movement that have the correct stride, width and direction. There is a pattern for each grade including the nine degrees of black belt. The number nine has significance as the highest single digit number. It is formed from multiplying 3 by 3. The number three is significant of the three lines that represent the earth (lower), the mortals (middle) and the heavens (upper). 'The individual who can unite all three realms within themselves will be reborn as a king.'

**Forms Rules:** They should begin and end at the same position  
Maintain correct posture and direction



Muscle contraction and relaxation must be appropriate to the particular movement  
The pattern should flow without being rigid  
The pace of the movements should increase and decrease correctly  
A pattern should attempt to be mastered before training in the next one  
Techniques should be performed with same standard when using right and left lower and upper limbs

### Stances

Attention stance: feet together

Ready stance: feet shoulder width apart

Sitting (horse) stance: feet one and half shoulder widths apart with weight distributed equally.

Walking stance: Both feet facing forwards. One shoulder width wide. One and a half shoulder widths long. Front knee is bent and back leg is straight.

L stance: Weight is distributed as 70 per cent on the back leg, and 30 per cent on the front leg. Back foot faces horizontal. Front foot faces forward. Both knees are bent and the stance is one and a half shoulder widths long. This stance is useful for avoiding sweeps, and allowing the front leg to be quickly lifted whilst being supported on the back leg.

Fixed stance: Same as L stance but longer (up to two shoulder widths in length). The weight is equally distributed.

Saju Jirugi

This is also known as four directional punching

Saju Makgi

This is also known as four directional blocking

## The 24 Taekwondo Forms

**Chon Ji (8th kup):** 'The heaven and the earth'. Represents the beginnings of humankind. This is the initial beginner pattern that contains 19 movements and 3 different stances (ready, walking and L stance). Classical text explains that Chon ji represents the creation of the universe and the changing nature of the world. The theory surrounds the interaction of two opposing elements that form a combination for the basic matter of the universe. Many techniques within taekwondo use the interaction of opposing forces.

**Dan Gun (7th kup):** The holy Dan Gun is known to be the ancient founder of Korea circa 2000 BC. This pattern contains 21 movements and 3 stances (ready, walking and L stance). The story of Dan Gun is derived from the mythical theory that Hwan ung came from heaven to rule the world. He was met by a bear and a tiger who requested to be turned into humans. The bear fulfilled the commandments and was transformed into a woman, but the tiger was not transformed. Hwan ung changed into a man and married the woman leading to the birth of Dan Gun. This story gained popularity after the merging of kingdoms.

**Do San (6th kup):** This contains 28 movements and 4 stances (ready, walking, L stance and sitting). Do San also known as Chang Ho Ahn was a major promoter for Korean independence. He was a patriot who was determined to further the education and culture of the Korean public. This movement was at its peak during the Japanese occupation. Having spent various periods in the USA, he was ultimately arrested by the Japanese. He died in 1938 during his imprisonment.

**Won Hyo (5th kup):** In the Silla Dynasty circa 600 A.D, Won Hyo was a famous monk who introduced the practice of Buddhism. This pattern contains 28 movements and 5 stances (ready, walking, fixed, L-stance and bending). He was recognised by the Chinese Tang dynasty as a scholar. Eventually he travelled through much of Korea, teaching Buddhism and improving the quality of the suffering communities. He was regarded at the highest level within the monastery.

**Yul Gok (4th kup):** This pattern contains 38 movements (signifying his birthplace on the 38th degree of latitude) and 5 stances (ready, walking, fixed, L-stance and bending). Yul Gok was also known as 'Confucius of Korea'. He worked for the government during the Yi dynasty but later on he focussed mainly on writing philosophical texts. He made some monumental changes and improved the country's social structure.

**Joong Gun (3rd kup):** The first Japanese governor of Korea was Hiro Bumi. He was responsible for the merger with Korea. His fate was to be assassinated by Joong Gun. This pattern contains 32 movements that signify the age at which Joong Gun was executed for his crime in 1910. There are 5 stances (ready, walking, fixed, L-stance and bending). He is remembered for sacrificing his life for the benefit of the country.

**Toi Gye (2nd Kup):** The 37 movements symbolise the birth of Toi Gye on the 37th degree of latitude. There are 5 stances (ready, walking, fixed, L-stance and bending). He was also known as Yi Hwang and was famous as a philosopher who promoted Confucianism (Joo ja hak). He attained the highest level of civil service but then left this to become a scholar. He educated young men at the Do san institute and eventually died around 1570.

**Hwa Rang (1st kup):** This is based on the 29 movements (29th infantry division) and 7 stances (ready, walking, fixed, L-stance, bending, vertical and closed). The Hwa Rang were a group of highly trained young men, who had to maintain the highest moral values as well as physical skills. Living in the mountains, they lived by pledging an allegiance to the king, respect for parents, friends and animals. They originated in Silla and ultimately led to the conquering of the three kingdoms and unification of Korea.

**Choong Moo (1st Dan Black belt):** This pattern consists of 30 movements and 5 stances (ready, walking, fixed, L-stance and bending) Choong Moo (Admiral Yi Sun Sin) created the first armoured battleship (precursor to submarine). His death is symbolised by the left-handed strike which ends the pattern.

**Po-Eun:** This contains 36 movements and it is based on a famous poet called Chong Mong –Chu towards the end of the koryo dynasty. The direction and layout of the pattern symbolises the loyalty to king and country.

**Kwang-Gae:** Kwang Gae Toh Wang was a famous king during the Koryo dynasty. He gained power during the Koryo dynasty. The 39 movements symbolise the year he ascended to the throne 391 A.D.

**Ge-Baek:** This is named after a man who was a famous general during the Baek je period. The movements and spacing are based upon strict military discipline. There are 44 movements

**Eui Am:** This 45 move pattern is based upon the age when Son Byong Hi used the term sondo kyo (The way of heavenly religion) He had an important place in the Korean independence movement.

**Choong Jang:** Also known as General Kim Duk Ryang (circa 1350 A.D). This pattern symbolises his young death whilst in prison. There are 52 movements.

**Juche:** The 45 movements centre around the idea that man is in control of his own destiny. The layout of the pattern represents Baekdu mountain which contains the spirit of the Korean people. It is here where an idea was created that man is the master of everything.

**Ko Dang:** The 39 movements have been created for Cho Man Shik. He was a patriot who was part of the Korean independence movement and he provided much education for people.

**Sam Il:** The 33 movements signify 33 patriots who initiated the Korean independence movement which began on the 1st of March 1919.

**Yoo sin:** 68 movements represent the year 668 A.D when the Korean kingdoms were united. The pattern is named after General Kim Yoo Sin who was a famous commander during the Silla period.

**Choi Yong:** This is named after General Choi Yong. He was a commander in chief during the Koryo dynasty. He was widely respected for his patriotism but was executed at the hands of Yi Sung Gae. It has 46 movements.

**Yong Gae :** The 49 movements represent the year 649 A.D, which is when General Yong Gae brought about the exit of the Tang dynasty from Korea during the Koguryo period. 300,000 troops were lost by the Chinese.

**UI Ji:** 42 movements tell the story of how General UI Ji Moon deflected Tang's invasion around 612 A.D. Korea was successfully defended.

**Moon Moo:** 61 movements signify the year 661 A.D when Moon Moo became the 30th king during the Silla period. His body is said to have been placed in the sea, so that his soul may defend against the Japanese.

**So San:** Choi Hyong Ung is a famous monk from the Lee dynasty. 72 movements represent the age 72 which is when he arranged for a group of monk soldiers to make resistance against Japan during the 16th century.

**Se Jong :** This contains 24 movements which are a representation of the 24 letters of the alphabet that was created by Se Jong in 1443. He was arguably the greatest king of Korean times.

**Tong Il :** The 56 movements of this pattern are centred around a layout that represents unification. This relates to the segregation that occurred around 1945.

**Sparring:** The arena is 9m by 9m. If the fighter moves out of this area, a warning is given. Three warnings lead to the loss of one point. If too much contact is used, then a point can be subtracted. If three points are lost in one bout, the fighter is disqualified. Each sparring round is two minutes. There are two rounds in national competition. ITF uses a 'continuous point' sparring score system, whereby four judges will award points during the fight. Elbow strikes, knee strikes, blows to the back of the head or below the belt are not allowed.

**Kicking drills:** Seven main types of kicking are practised . The routine consists of the individual throwing a jab and a cross, which is then followed by the kick with the right leg. The individual then turns 90 degrees to the left and repeats the routine and so on until 360 degrees has been achieved. Therefore each kick is executed four times with the right leg and then the direction of turning is reversed in order to repeat the routine with the opposite leg. This is done for each of the following kicks:

- 1) Front kick
- 2) Roundhouse kick
- 3) Side kick
- 4) Axe kick
- 5) Hook kick
- 6) Spin back kick
- 7) Spin hook kick

**Breaking / destruction:** The practice of board/wood breaking techniques usually begins after blue belt stage (4th kup). Breaking is used to display the accuracy and power of a particular technique. Commonly used lower limb techniques include side, back, hook, turning (roundhouse), jump side and jump back kicks. Upper limb techniques include elbow, palm heel, inner and outer knife hand strikes. Successful breaking depends on correct attitude, good technique and aiming for point behind where the board is held.

## The following all from Wikipedia:

[http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_is\\_Tae\\_Kwon\\_Do\\_Grandmaster&altQ=What\\_is-Taekwondo\\_Grandmaster](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_Tae_Kwon_Do_Grandmaster&altQ=What_is-Taekwondo_Grandmaster)

### What is Tae Kwon Do Grandmaster?

**Short Answer:** A Taekwondo Grandmaster is a teacher of the Masters in a Taekwondo organization.

**Detailed Answer:** The English term "Grandmaster" is basically the equivalent of the Korean term "Kwanjang" which means the head of an organization, like the dean of a university. In the Korean language, the suffix "nim" is added to titles to create an honorific form used when a junior is speaking to, or about a senior. Thus, the term is commonly spoken as "Kwanjangnim" (pronounced: Kwahn jahn nim)

In the years just before Taekwondo was named, there was one officially recognized Kwan (school) of Martial Art run in Korea by a Korean. College Professor [Won](#) Kuk Lee (also written as Yi, Won Kuk) obtained permission from the occupying government of Japan to open what he called the Chung Do Kwan (school of the Blue Wave) where he taught a unique method based on his life long study of the Korean version of Chinese hand fighting he called Tang Soo Do (also written as tangsudo), and Japanese Shotokan Karate which he learned from famed Karate Master Gichen Funakoshi, and some influence from the Korean kicking method of Tae kyon.

After the liberation of Korea in 1945, many students of the Chung Do Kwan opened Annex schools under various names. The head instructor of an individual school is typically known as a sabeom (honorific "sabeomnim") which means teacher, or Master. Each of the Masters have their original teacher that they learn from, and that person is known as the Kwanjangnim, or teacher of the Masters.

In modern times, any high ranking Dan (adult Black Belt) might choose to sever connections with his or her original teacher, and form their own organization, or do so with the permission of their Grandmaster, thus becoming a Grandmaster in their own right. Many modern organizations grant titles of Masters to 4th or 5th Degree Black [Belts](#) (adults only) while others reserve that title for 6th degree and above. Some use different titles for each level of Master including Associate Master, Senior Master, Chief Master, and even Professor. Usually, the title of Grandmaster is reserved for 8th or 9th Dan, and must be conferred upon the candidate by an established, and recognized 9th Degree Grandmaster. Some organizations go by the philosophy that there is only one Grandmaster within an organization, and that is the one highest ranking Master, usually a 9th Dan

Read more: [http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What\\_is\\_Tae\\_Kwon\\_Do\\_Grandmaster#ixzz25dVa6f3r](http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_Tae_Kwon_Do_Grandmaster#ixzz25dVa6f3r)

### Original masters of taekwondo

**Original masters of taekwondo** is a group of twelve South Korean [martial art masters](#) assembled by the [Korea Taekwon-Do Association](#) (KTA) in the early 1960s to promote the newly-established art of [taekwondo](#). In alphabetical order following Korean naming conventions, they are: Choi Chang Keun, Choi Kwang Jo, Han Cha Kyo, Kim Jong Chan, Kim Kwang Il, Kong Young Il, Park Jong Soo, Park Jung Tae, Park Sun Jae, Rhee Chong Chul, Rhee Chong Hyup, and Rhee Ki Ha.

The group came under the leadership of [Choi Hong Hi](#) (1918–2002), inaugural President of the KTA and later founder of the [International Taekwon-Do Federation](#) (ITF), and [Nam Tae Hi](#) (born 1929), known as the Father of Vietnamese Taekwondo. Many of these men held senior positions in the ITF under Choi, but several left over time. Most of the men settled in North America, while others settled in Europe or Australia.

### Korea Taekwondo Association

**Korea Taekwondo Association** (KTA), originally the **Korea Taekwon-Do Association**, is the first [taekwondo](#) organisation. It was founded in 1959, although official South Korean sources give 1961 as its year of establishment. In 1966, some members of the KTA, led by [H. H. Choi](#), formed the [International Taekwon-Do Federation](#) (ITF); other members founded [Kukkiwon](#) and the [World Taekwondo Federation](#) (WTF) in the early 1970s. The KTA sits under the Korea Sports Council, is aligned with Kukkiwon, and is a Member National Association (MNA) of the WTF. Its goal is to promote the martial art taekwondo as a [national sport](#) within South Korea.

#### **History**

The KTA's history has been marked by political difficulties. In 1959, H. H. Choi was the first President of the KTA and Byung Jik Ro (listed as "No" by Park, 1993) and Kae Byung Yun were the inaugural Vice-Presidents. When H. H. Choi was appointed as South Korea's ambassador to Malaysia in 1962, Myung Shin Choi became the second President of the KTA. In the early 1960s, the KTA was renamed as the Korea Taesoodo Association, and then to the current form in 1965.

During the 1960s, the KTA assembled the twelve [original masters of taekwondo](#) to promote taekwondo throughout the world. Choi headed a demonstration tour of 18 countries in 1965; this was one of many demonstration missions that

eventually covered every continent. Choi again became President in 1965, but was forced to resign after a year, reportedly due to his unpopular authoritarian leadership style.<sup>[2]</sup> He went on to establish the [International Taekwon-Do Federation](#) (ITF) the following year. B. J. Ro of the [Song Moo Kwan](#), who had been one of the KTA's inaugural Vice-Presidents, became the fourth President.

In 1967, Yong Chae Kim of the [Kang Duk Kwan](#) became the fifth President of the KTA. That same year, the KTA created new [black belt](#) forms, including Koryo, Keumgang, Taebaek, Pyongwon, Shipjin, Jittae, Cheongkwon, Hansoo, and Ilyo. On 29 January 1971, Un Yong Kim became the sixth President of the KTA, and continued in the position in 1973. The KTA's leadership would remain stable for the next 20 years or so. In 1989, Chong Soo Hong from the [Moo Duk Kwan](#) was appointed Vice-President of the KTA.

The early 2000s were a time of trouble for the KTA leadership. One source states that Un Yong Kim resigned from the KTA presidency in 2001, while other sources state that in 1997, Pil Gon Rhee was already in place as President of the KTA. In any case, Kim presided over the organisation for around 20 years. In March 2002, Cheon Seo Koo was elected President of the KTA, and apparently held that position until at least 2004, though news sources have reported that he was arrested in late 2003.

In early 2008, Jung Gil Kim was President of the KTA. On 11 June 2008, Joon Pyo Hong was elected as the 24th President of the KTA, and he continued in the position in 2009.

### **Dan Ranking**

The first official KTA [dan](#) promotion test was held on 11 November 1962. The KTA continued awarding *dan* ranks for several years, but handed over direct *dan* promotion responsibilities to either the WTF in April 1976, according to a [Black Belt](#) magazine report, or to Kukkiwon on 5 February 1980, according to historians Won Sik Kang and Kyong Myong Lee. Since then, however, some *dan* ranks have apparently still been awarded under the authority of the KTA (e.g., S. S. Lee's 9th *dan* from the Jidokwan, KTA, in 1993).

### **Black Belt (Martial Arts)**

In [martial arts](#), the **black belt** is a way to describe a graduate of a field where a practitioner's level is often marked by the color of the belt. The black belt is commonly the highest belt color used and denotes a degree of competence. It is often associated with a teaching grade though frequently not the highest grade or the "expert" of public perception.<sup>[1]</sup> It is also a relatively recent invention, dating from the late 19th century, rather than an ancient custom.

#### **Origin**

The systematic use of belt colour to denote the rank was first used by [Kano Jigoro](#), the founder of [judo](#), who first devised the colored belt system using [obi](#), and awarded the first black belts to denote a [Dan rank](#) in the 1880s. Initially the wide obi was used; as practitioners trained in [kimono](#), only [white](#) and black obi were used. It was not until the early 1900s, after the introduction of the [judogi](#), that an expanded colored belt system of awarding rank was created.<sup>[2]</sup> Other martial arts later adopted the custom or variation on it (e.g. using colored sashes) to denote rank including in arts that traditionally did not have a formalized rank structure. This kind of ranking is less common in arts that do not claim a far eastern origin, though it is used in the [Marine Corps Martial Arts Program](#).

#### **Relative Rank**

Rank and belts are not equivalent between arts, styles, or even within some organizations. In some arts, a black belt is expected in three years, while in others ten years may be common. Testing for black belt is commonly more rigorous and more centralized than for lower grades. It is a common belief that belts are handed out more loosely in the West than in Asia, where the custom of using the color of the belt to indicate a practitioner's rank originated. In Japan, however, rank often comes more or less automatically with time training and the black belt has little to do with the "master" level which westerners often think of when they hear the term "black belt".

#### **Ability**

In contrast to the "black belt as master" stereotype, a black belt commonly indicates the wearer is competent in a style's basic technique and principles. Since in many styles a black belt takes approximately three to six years of training to achieve, a good intuitive analogy would be a bachelor's degree: the student has a good understanding of concepts and

ability to use them but has not yet perfected their skills. In this analogy a master's degree and a doctorate would represent advancement past the first degree.

Another way to describe this links to the terms used in Japanese arts; [shodan](#) (for a first degree black belt), means literally the first/beginning step, and the next grades, nidan and sandan are each numbered as "ni" is two and "san" is three, meaning second step, third step, etc. The shodan black belt is not the end of training but rather as a beginning to advanced learning: the individual now "knows how to walk" and may thus begin the "journey".

As a 'black belt' is commonly viewed as conferring some status, achieving one has been used as a marketing 'gimmick', for example a guarantee of being awarded one within a specific period or if a specific amount is paid. Some schools place profit ahead of ability when using these tactics and are sometimes referred to as McDojos

### **Teaching**

In some Japanese schools, after obtaining a black belt the student also begins to instruct, and may be referred to as a [senpai](#) (senior student) or [sensei](#) (teacher). In others, a black belt student should not be called sensei until they are sandan (third degree black belt), as this denotes a greater degree of experience and a sensei must have this and grasp of what is involved in teaching a martial art.

### **Higher Grades**

In [Japanese martial arts](#) the further subdivisions of black belt ranks may be linked to [dan](#) grades and indicated by 'stripes' on the belt. Yūdansha (roughly translating from Japanese to "person who holds a *dan* grade") is often used to describe those who hold a black belt rank. While the belt remains black, stripes or other insignia may be added to denote seniority, in some arts, very senior grades will wear differently colored belts. In judo and some forms of [karate](#) where a sixth dan will wear a red and white belt, although the red and white belt is often reserved only for ceremonial occasions, while a black belt is still worn during training. At 9th or 10th dan becomes [red](#). In some schools of [Jujutsu](#), the [Shihan](#) rank and higher wear purple belts. These other colors are often still referred to collectively as 'black belts

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### **Kukkiwon**

**Kukkiwon**, also known as **World Taekwondo Headquarters**, and home of the **World Taekwondo Academy**, is the official [taekwondo](#) governing organisation established by the [South Korean government](#). It is supervised by the International Sports Division of the [Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism](#).

### **History**

Kukkiwon is based at 635 [Yeoksam-Dong](#) in the [Gangnam-Gu](#) district of [Seoul](#), [South Korea](#). Construction of the main building commenced on 19 November 1971, and was completed on 30 November 1972, with the organisation being officially named on 6 February 1973. The main building accommodates up to 3,000 people for events. Standing at three storeys in height, the building's roof features *kiwa* (blue Korean tiles)—the same type of roofing as the [Blue House](#) (the official residence of the President of South Korea).

In May 1973, the [Korea Taekwondo Association](#) and Kukkiwon hosted the first [World Taekwondo Championships](#), with 200 taekwondo competitors from 17 countries in attendance. Kukkiwon has had a permanent taekwondo demonstration team since September 1974.

Un Yong Kim was the first President of Kukkiwon,<sup>[10][11]</sup> and resigned from the position on 15 November 2001. Woon Kyu Uhm of the [Chung Do Kwan](#) was elected President on 2 March 2004 The President in late 2005 was Yong Gye Um. On 10 December 2009, Seung Wan Lee of the [Jidokwan](#) was elected as Kukkiwon's next President.

In mid-2010, Won Sik Kang became the current President; he is also the current president of Song Moo Kwan, Korea

## Role

Kukkiwon is the centre of taekwondo instructor education, being the home of the World Taekwondo Academy, and issues official instructor and *dan* (black belt) and *poom* (junior black belt, for practitioners under 15 years of age) certifications. The organisation's main aims are:

- "Help people to develop their spiritual and physical strength by spreading our cultural asset, Taekwondo.
- "Introducing Taekwondo's philosophy and skills in order to enhance the national prestige abroad."

## Competition

According to the [World Taekwondo Federation's](#) (WTF) rules, taekwondo competitors seeking entry into WTF-sanctioned events must hold black belt rank (whether *poom* or *dan*) from Kukkiwon. Kukkiwon has specified 21 articles in its regulations for *poom* and *dan* promotion tests. Article 2 of these regulations notes that they apply to all instructors and students enrolled as members of Member National Associations of the WTF. Article 4 stipulates that "WTF will support the Member National Associations to help perform the task of Dan promotion testing smoothly.

The organisation has contributed significantly to the introduction of taekwondo as a full medal sport in the [Asian Games](#) (from [Seoul 1986](#)) and the [Olympic Games](#) (from [Sydney 2000](#)). Despite these efforts, according to information published by the South Korean government, one of taekwondo's largest problems from an organisational perspective is that "over 90% of the taekwondo market operates separately from Kukkiwon, the World Taekwondo Headquarters and there is a lack of communication between taekwondo organisations and Kukkiwon

## Rank Promotions

In Kukkiwon's promotion test regulations, Article 8 lists the time and age limits associated with promotion between ranks; that is, the minimum time a candidate must have held a certain rank, and the minimum age a candidate must be, before becoming eligible to be tested for promotion to the next rank. For promotion to ranks up to and including 5th *dan*, there are different minimum age limits depending on whether the candidate had previously been promoted into *poom* ranks. Time and age limits are not inflexible; for example, under Article 17, winners of Olympic Games, other world-level, and continental-level WTF championships may receive concessions. Article 18 allows for taekwondo practitioners with non-Kukkiwon ranks to apply for Kukkiwon rank certification

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## **International Taekwon-Do Federation**

**International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF)** is a [taekwondo](#) organization founded on Mar. 22, 1966, by [General Choi Hong Hi](#) in [Seoul, South Korea](#). The ITF exists to promote and encourage the growth of the [Korean martial art](#) of taekwondo. After the [South Korean Government](#) abandoned the ITF, it established the [World Taekwondo Federation](#) to continue the mission of taekwondo's globalization. Once [General Choi Hong Hi](#) was exiled out of South Korea, he returned to North Korea and introduced the organization which settled there. In 2001, the ITF Congress voted for [General Choi Hong Hi](#) as President for four years of the six-year term, then for his son (Choi Jung Hwa) to serve as President for the remaining two years. This was overturned (whether legally or illegally is disputed) by General Choi, causing a rift between himself and his son, Choi Jung Hwa split away from his father and created another organisation, which Choi Jung Hwa claimed to be the true ITF. While the majority of the TKD world stayed with General Choi, many others decided to follow Choi Jung Hwa. General Choi subsequently died in June 2002, having never reconciled with his son. On his deathbed in June 2002, General Choi allegedly said that he wanted a man known as [Chang Ung](#), a North Korean IOC member, to take over as President. An extraordinary Congress of the ITF was called with Chang Ung declared as the new President; but the legality of this Congress is disputed. Those claiming that the Congress was illegal (i.e. against the ITF's Constitution) held another Congress, at which Master [Trần Triệu Quân](#) (an 8th degree black belt) was elected as President. Thus there are now three organisations claiming to be the ITF. ITF's main functions are to coordinate and approve tournaments and seminars, set standards for teaching (patterns, sparring, destruction), collaborate with affiliated member organizations, and service members in regards to rank and certifications

**Patterns**, or *teul* in Korean, originally called *hyeong*, form an important aspect of training in Taekwon-Do. They are equivalent to the *kata* in *karate*. The majority of the patterns (except Yul-Gok, Ul-Ji and Tong-II) start with a defensive

move, which emphasizes taekwon-do's defensive nature. All of the patterns start and end at the same location. This ensures that the practitioners' stances are the correct length, width, and in the proper direction.<sup>1</sup>

There are 24 patterns in the official ITF syllabus; this is symbolic of the 24 hours in a day. The names of these patterns typically refer either to events in Korean history or to important people in Korean history. Elements of the patterns may also be historical references, such as the number of moves, the diagram, the way the pattern ends, and so on.

Patterns (*teul*) are performed in accordance with "The Encyclopedia of Taekwon-Do" in 15 volumes written by General Choi Hong Hi, the latest edition being from 1999. This comprehensive work contains 15 volumes with volumes 8 through 15 dedicated to the 24 patterns and containing descriptions of the pattern movements as well as pictures showing possible applications of some of the movements. There is also the book entitled "The Korean Art of Self Defense" (the 1999 edition, the latest used by ITF under Grandmaster [Tran Trieu Quan](#) and ITF under Grandmaster Choi, or the 2004 edition, the latest used by ITF under Chang Ung), also known as the Condensed Encyclopedia, written by General Choi Hong Hi. This is a single condensed encyclopedia of approximately 770 pages with a section dedicated to the 24 patterns.

The 24 Patterns in Taekwon-Do ITF are:

- i. Saju-Jirugi
- ii. Saju-Makgi

1. Chon-Ji (19 Movements)	13. Eui-Am (45 Movements)
2. Dan-Gun (21 Movements)	14. Choong-Jang (52 Movements)
3. Do-San (24 Movements)	15. Juche (45 Movements)/Ko-Dang (39 Movements)
4. Won-Hyo (28 Movements)	16. Sam-Il (33 Movements)
5. Yul-Gok (38 Movements)	17. Yoo-Sin (68 Movements)
6. Joong-Gun (32 Movements)	18. Choi-Yong (46 Movements)
7. Toi-Gye (37 Movements)	19. Yon-Gae (49 Movements)
8. Hwa-Rang (29 Movements)	20. Ul-Ji (42 Movements)
9. Choong-Moo (30 Movements)	21. Moon-Moo (61 Movements)
10. Kwang Gae (39 Movements)	22. So-San (72 Movements)
11. Po-Eun (36 Movements)	23. Se-Jong (24 Movements)
12. Ge-Baek (44 Movements)	24. Tong-Il (56 Movements)

### **Sparring**

ITF competition sparring rounds are 2 minutes and in national and international levels of competition they hold two rounds each 2 minutes with a one minute rest in between. Certain rules are no strikes below the belt, no elbow strikes, brawling, no falling down, no going outside of the ring, hit to the groin and knee strike are not allowed. The ring is a 9 metre by 9 metre (8 x 8 metre optional) ring marked by square mats or tape instead of a traditional style kickboxing rings with ropes. It has no sides allowing the fighter to move out of bounds. Whenever a fighter creates an infraction of the rules the centre referee will issue a warning to the fighter who created the infraction. 3 warnings equals a minus point. If a fighter uses excessive contact, he or she will be given a foul, which is an automatic minus point ; three fouls in a bout results in disqualification. ITF taekwon-do is fought in continuous point sparring. Four judges score the fights in each of the corners in the square ring. After the fight, a judge votes for which ever fighter has the most points and a winner is declared. In the case of a draw the fighters go to a one minute overtime round. If there is another draw the fighters go to a sudden death round where the fighter who scores first is declared the winner.

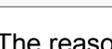
The official rules for ITF sparring competition are available at the ITF website.

## Ranks

The ITF ranking system consists of six solid color belts; white, yellow, green, blue, red, and black.

Coloured belt ranks are defined as follows (from lowest to highest rank):

	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Description</b>
	10th <i>kup</i>	White - Signifies innocence, as that of the beginning student who has no previous knowledge of Taekwon-Do.
	9th <i>kup</i>	White with yellow tag
	8th <i>kup</i>	Yellow - Signifies the earth from which a plant sprouts and takes root as the foundation of Taekwon-Do is being laid.
	7th <i>kup</i>	Yellow with green tag
	6th <i>kup</i>	Green - Signifies the plant's growth as Taekwon-Do skills begin to develop.
	5th <i>kup</i>	Green with blue tag
	4th <i>kup</i>	Blue - Signifies the Heaven towards which the plant matures into a towering tree as training in Taekwon-Do progresses.
	3rd <i>kup</i>	Blue with red tag
	2nd <i>kup</i>	Red - Signifies Danger, cautioning the student to exercise control and warning the opponent to stay away.
	1st <i>kup</i>	Red with black tag
	1st <i>dan</i>	Black - Opposite of white, therefore signifying maturity and proficiency in Taekwon-Do; also indicates the wearer's imperviousness to darkness and fear.

	2nd <i>dan</i>	Assistant Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 2 years)
	3rd <i>dan</i>	Assistant Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 3 years)
	4th <i>dan</i>	International Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 4 years). At this point, a person may become a "SaBum-Nim"
	5th <i>dan</i>	Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 5 years)
	6th <i>dan</i>	Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 6 years)
	7th <i>dan</i>	Master Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 7 years)
	8th <i>dan</i>	Senior Master Instructor (must remain at this rank at least 8 years)
	9th <i>dan</i>	Grand Master

The reason for nine black belt degrees is that the number nine is not only the highest of the single-digit numbers, but also is the number of three multiplied by three. In the Orient, three is one of the more esteemed numbers. The Chinese character for 3 is three horizontal lines, one above the other. The bottom line represents earth; the middle line represents mortals; the upper line represents heaven. It was believed that a man who could unite the three realms in himself, would aspire or be reborn into a king.

### **Black belt promotion**

Up to 7th dan, all ranks require the student to perform a test of all skills and knowledge up to their rank to be promoted. Ranks above 7th dan may be awarded with consent of the promotion committee with no physical test required; due to the nature of and responsibilities of a master no longer being centered on the physical development of students. However, if the recipient desires, a demonstration may be performed. 9th degree (being the highest) can only be awarded when the special committee examines and reaches a unanimous consent.

Some national associations, such as the National Taekwon-Do Norway, have longer training times between each black belt grade.

A 4th degree may grade students up to 2nd degree. A 5th or 6th degree International Instructor may grade students up to 3rd degree, while a 7th degree Master may grade students up to 5th degree. An 8th degree Master may grade students up to 6th degree. Promotion to 7th degree or above must be done by the ITF's Master Promotion Committee.

### **Philosophy**

The upsurge in aggressive behaviour in today's society, has led to a loss of the basic moral values that many people once shared. Analysts<sup>1</sup> have noted that many people are misguided, left to search for their own values in a disillusioned society where of war, crime and corruption is common. General Choi Hong Hi believed through the philosophy of taekwon-do that

we could make the world a more peaceful place. In a time where much is corrupt it is hard for one to find their own way, to tell right from wrong, or to even resist temptation into doing that which believes is wrong.

The philosophy of taekwon-do is summarized in the oath and the tenets.

### **Taekwon-Do Oath**

#### **I shall observe the tenets of Taekwon-Do.**

All students must swear to carefully observe, acknowledge and live by each one of the taekwon-do tenets. Here is a brief and basic explanation of each:

#### **I shall respect the instructor and seniors.**

A student vows to respect their instructors and those senior to them (both in age and rank). An instructor must also act respectfully to all students and persons in order to be respected and therefore not misusing Taekwon-Do.<sup>[10]</sup>

#### **I shall never misuse Taekwon-Do.**

One will never misuse Taekwon-Do to harm other, for their own personal gain or for any other manner that is unjust (this one is particularly important in any martial art, not just Taekwon-Do, as a trained martial artist could easily kill a person in unarmed close combat).

#### **I shall be a champion of freedom and justice.**

The 4th line, "I shall be a champion of freedom and justice" can apply to many areas of life and although many may think one would have to do something amazing to achieve this, this part of the oath can be respected by even the littlest things in ones daily activity. If one becomes more open-minded to understanding others ideologies or the way others go about their lives instead of being quick to judge, then maybe the world would be a more understanding and accepting place.

Thus allowing people to have the freedom they deserve. By accepting this belief one is bringing justice to this world and therefore being a champion of justice. As we often see, conflicts can occur over common misconceptions of information. One must understand the full story and have all the facts before he can truly make a proper judgement.

#### **I shall build a more peaceful world.**

The final line of the oath is "I shall build a more peaceful world". One can also easily obtain this goal by going about their daily lives in a more peaceful manner. If everyone did this, the world would obviously become a more peaceful place. As we often see, conflicts can occur over common misconceptions of information. One must understand the full story and have all the facts before he can truly make a proper judgement. However, this does not mean a student cannot defend themselves against aggression directed towards themselves as that would defeat some of the purpose of Taekwondo, an art of unarmed self-defence. That does not mean though however a student can provoke aggression towards another individual, as that would breaking the oath. As we often see, conflicts can occur over common misconceptions of information. One must understand the full story and have all the facts before he can truly make a proper judgement.

**Taekwon-Do Tenets:** There are five tenets defined in the ITF.

#### **Courtesy (Ye Ui )**

Showing courtesy to all, respecting others, having manners as well as maintaining the appropriate etiquette at all times, both within and outside the dojang (designated training area).

#### **Integrity (Yom Chi)**

Although it may be similar, this form of integrity takes on a more wider role then defined in the common dictionary. In Taekwondo, integrity means not only to determine what is right or wrong but also having the conscience to feel guilt if one has done wrong and to have the integrity stand up for what is right.

#### **Perseverance (In Nae)**

One will persevere time and time again until they have achieved a result which is adequate towards what one was trying to achieve.

### **Self-control (Guk Gi)**

This means to not only have control over one's physical acts, but also their mental thoughts and actions.

### **Indomitable spirit (Baekjul Boolgool)**

To have indomitable spirit means to have the courage to stand up for what you believe in, no matter what odds you are up against, and to always give 100% effort in whatever you do.

## **World Taekwondo Federation**

The **World Taekwondo Federation** (WTF) is the International Federation (IF) member of the [International Olympic Committee](#) (IOC) for the competition events of the [martial art of taekwondo](#). International Federations (IFs) are international non-governmental organisations recognised by the IOC as administering one or more sports at world level.

The WTF was established in [South Korea](#) on May 28, 1973, at its inaugural meeting held at the [Kukkiwon](#) with participation of 35 representatives from the world. The WTF, which only governs the function of Taekwondo competitions and related support services, should not be confused with the World Taekwondo Headquarters, also known as [Kukkiwon](#), which is a center of learning and research of taekwondo located in [Yeoksam-dong](#), Seoul. Former WTF president Kim Un-Yong successfully lobbied to include taekwondo sparring competition as a demonstration sport in the [1988](#) and [1992 Summer Olympics](#), and official Full Medal Olympic sport beginning in 2000.

According to the WTF, "Taekwondo is one of the most systematic and scientific Korean traditional martial arts, that teaches more than physical fighting skills. It is a discipline that shows ways of enhancing our spirit and life through training our body and mind. Today, it has become a global sport that has gained an international reputation, and stands among the official games in the Olympics."

### **Organizational Structure**

The organizational structure of the WTF has diversified at various times over its more than 30 year history to incorporate the various changes, affiliations and associations over these years of growth. As of 2011 the organization is headed up by a General Assembly made up from members of the 200 member National Associations from the five world regions it represents. This in turn consists of a WTF Council composed of an Executive Committee and various sub committees. The Executive Committee comprises a president, secretariat, and an Advisory Council. The sub committees are made up of various departments within the organization, including a technical committee and representative committees of games, women's, legislative, financial, medical, athletic and PR areas.

The WTF has often been seen as a world sports federation since its founding in 1973 and later membership in the GASIF and the selection of the International Federation, or IF of Taekwondo under the IOC. The WTF was presided over by former I.O.C Vice President Un Yong Kim, from its inception in 1973 until 2004. Kim was also the president of the Korea Taekwondo Association, [Kukkiwon](#), the Korea Sports Association and President of the GASIF, the main pillar of the Olympic movement. The Current President of the WTF is Chung Won Choue.

### **List of TaeKwonDo Grandmasters** *This is an [incomplete list](#),*

Many taekwondo grandmasters are natives of South Korea, the birthplace of this widely-known martial art

**List of taekwondo grandmasters** includes notable persons who have been recognised as [grandmasters](#) of the [Korean martial art of taekwondo](#). There is no single, universally-recognised set of criteria to define a taekwondo grandmaster; different organisations and different styles have their own rules. Those listed below are grouped by system: [Kukkiwon](#) (widely known as the [World Taekwondo Federation](#) or WTF system), [International Taekwon-Do Federation](#) (ITF), and other systems (which includes some persons receiving ranks from taekwondo organisations that predate the other two systems, e.g., the original [Korea Taekwondo Association](#)).

### **Kukkiwon (World Taekwondo Federation)**

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This list includes persons who: (1) are ranked at least 9th [dan](#) by Kukkiwon (the highest rank normally awarded to living persons within that system); (2) are notable as individuals; and (3) are notable for their contribution to taekwondo.

Name	Rank	Life	Residence	Prominence
<a href="#">Ahn, Kyongwon</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1937–	United States of America	Founded United Taekwondo Association; former President of the United States Taekwondo Union
<a href="#">Choi, Tae-hong</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1935– 2009	United States of America	Founded first taekwondo school in Oregon, USA; former Vice-President of the United States Taekwondo Union
<a href="#">Kim, Ki Whang</a>	10th <i>dan</i>	1920– 1993	United States of America	Promoted to 10th <i>dan</i> by the KTA; Chairman of the US Olympic Taekwondo team
Lee, Chong Soo	9th <i>dan</i>	1938–	Canada	Father of Canadian taekwondo
Lee, Hyeon Kon	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1947–	United States of America	Chairman of Board of Education of Kukkiwon; former Vice Chairman of Education of the WTF; author of taekwondo textbook
Lee, Kwan Sung	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 194?– 2003	United States of America	President of Kentucky Taekwondo Association.
Mayes, Myong Sok Namkung	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1954–	United States of America	Highest-ranked woman in taekwondo
<a href="#">Paik, Sang Kee</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1929– 2009	United States of America	Early student of <a href="#">B. I. Yoon</a> and K. W. Kim; created Sa-Sang Kwan system
<a href="#">Park, Dong Keun</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1945–	United States of America	Father of Thai taekwondo; Head Coach of US Olympic taekwondo team in 1988 and 1992
Park, Sun Jae	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1940–	Italy	Father of Italian taekwondo; Vice President (Italy) of the WTF; one of the KTA's 12 original masters

## International Taekwon-Do Federation

This list includes persons who: (1) are ranked 9th *dan* by the ITF (and thus officially recognised as 'Grand Masters' within that system);<sup>[13]</sup> (2) are notable as individuals; and (3) are notable for their contribution to taekwondo.

Name	Rank	Life	Residence	Prominence
Bos, Willem Jacob	9th <i>dan</i>	1952–	Italy	President of the All European Taekwon-Do Federation 2004–2006; Technical Director for the Italian Taekwon-Do Federation 1992–
<a href="#">Choi, Chang Keun</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1940–	Canada	Leading campaign to reunite the ITF; one of the KTA's 12 original masters
<a href="#">Choi, Hong Hi</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1918–2002	Canada	Played major role in establishing taekwondo; inaugural President of the KTA; founded the ITF; co-led the KTA's 12 original masters
Choi, Jung Hwa	9th <i>dan</i>	1954–	United Kingdom	President of one of the three ITF organisations; son of H. H. Choi; involvement in Korean political controversy
<a href="#">Howard, Robert</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1938–	Ireland	President of the Republic of Ireland Taekwon-Do Association; helped establish taekwondo in Ireland; first European man promoted to 9th <i>dan</i>
<a href="#">Kong, Young Il</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1943–	United States of America	One of the few promoted to 9th <i>dan</i> by H. H. Choi; one of the KTA's 12 original masters
<a href="#">Nam, Tae Hi</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1929–	United States of America	Father of Vietnamese taekwondo; pivotal performance in martial arts demonstration 1954; co-led the KTA's 12 original masters
Dang, Huy Duc	9th <i>dan</i>	1944–	United States of America	Director of Martial Arts Training Center, South Vietnam National Police Force Headquarters; one of the few promoted to 9th <i>dan</i> by H. H. Choi

Nguyen, Van Binh	9th <i>dan</i>	1936–	United States of America	Chairman of ITF Masters Promotion Committee; President of ITF-USA; pioneer of taekwondo in Vietnam
<a href="#">Park, Jong Soo</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1941–	Canada	One of the KTA's 12 original masters
<a href="#">Rhee, Ki Ha</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1938–	United Kingdom	Father of British and Irish taekwondo; one of the few promoted to 9th <i>dan</i> by H. H. Choi; one of the KTA's 12 original masters
Sereff, Charles	9th <i>dan</i>	1933–	United States of America	One of the few promoted to 9th <i>dan</i> by H. H. Choi; founded the United States Taekwon-Do Federation
<a href="#">Tran, Trieu Quan</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1952– 2010	Canada	President of one of the three ITF organisations from 2003 to 2010
Trajtenberg, Pablo	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1955–	Argentina	President of one of the three ITF organisations after T. Q. Tran's death in 2010

**Other taekwondo systems** This list includes persons who: (1) have been widely-recognised masters for at least 30 years; (2) are notable as individuals; and (3) are notable for their contribution to taekwondo.

Name	Rank	Life	Residence	Prominence
Ahn, Eung Choon	9th <i>dan</i>	1941–	United States of America	Founded Hae San Martial Arts Association
<a href="#">Cho, Hee Il</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1940–	United States of America	Founded <a href="#">Action International Martial Arts Association</a> ; wrote several taekwondo books
<a href="#">Cho, Sihak Henry</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1934– 2012	United States of America	Pioneer of taekwondo in the United States of America; wrote several books; contributed <a href="#">karate</a> article in <a href="#">World Book Encyclopedia</a> (1976)

<a href="#">Choi, Kwang Jo</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1942–	United States of America	Founded <a href="#">Choi Kwang-Do</a> ; one of the KTA's 12 original masters
<a href="#">Han, Cha Kyo</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	1934–1996	United States of America	One of the KTA's 12 original masters
Hwang, Kwang Sung	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1942–	United States of America	One of the few promoted to 9th <i>dan</i> by H. H. Choi
<a href="#">Park, Jung Tae</a>	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1943–2002	Canada	One of the KTA's 12 original masters
<a href="#">Rhee, Chong Chul</a>	8th <i>dan</i>	c. 1935–	Australia	Father of Australian taekwondo; founded <a href="#">Rhee Taekwon-Do</a> ; one of the KTA's 12 original masters
<a href="#">Rhee, Jhoon Goo</a>	10th <i>dan</i>	1932–	United States of America	Father of American taekwondo
<a href="#">Yates, Keith D.</a>	10th <i>dan</i>	1950–	United States of America	Founded Nam Seo Kwan Tae Kwon Do; author of several martial arts books

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## **Original Masters of Taekwondo**

**Original masters of taekwondo** is a group of twelve South Korean [martial art masters](#) assembled by the [Korea Taekwon-Do Association](#) (KTA) in the early 1960s to promote the newly-established art of [taekwondo](#). In alphabetical order following Korean naming conventions, they are: Choi Chang Keun, Choi Kwang Jo, Han Cha Kyo, Kim Jong Chan, Kim Kwang Il, Kong Young Il, Park Jong Soo, Park Jung Tae, Park Sun Jae, Rhee Chong Chul, Rhee Chong Hyup, and Rhee Ki Ha.

The group came under the leadership of [Choi Hong Hi](#) (1918–2002), inaugural President of the KTA and later founder of the [International Taekwon-Do Federation](#) (ITF), and [Nam Tae Hi](#) (born 1929), known as the Father of Vietnamese Taekwondo. Many of these men held senior positions in the ITF under Choi, but several left over time. Most of the men settled in North America, while others settled in Europe or Australia.

## History

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### Demonstrations and tours

The original masters of taekwondo featured in the earliest demonstrations of taekwondo as a [Korean martial art](#) outside South Korea. The following table summarises demonstrations or instructional tours for which references are available.

Date	Place(s)	Masters involved
March 1959	Far East: Taiwan · Vietnam	C. K. Han
February 1964	Singapore	K. H. Rhee
1964	Penang, Malaysia	C. K. Choi
1964	Yugoslavia	S. J. Park
c. 1964	Brunei · Hong Kong · Indonesia · Malaysia · Singapore	C. C. Rhee
c. 1964–1965	Malaysia · Singapore	C. H. Rhee
c. 1965	Adelaide, Australia	C. C. Rhee
c. October 1965	United Arab Republic (now Egypt) · Italy · Malaysia · Singapore · Turkey · West Germany	C. K. Han, J. S. Park
1965–1967	Vietnam	J. T. Park
Date	Place(s)	Masters involved
1966	Netherlands	J. S. Park

c. 1966–1967	Hong Kong · Indonesia · Malaysia · Singapore	K. J. Choi
1967	Japan	C. K. Han
1967	United Kingdom	K. H. Rhee
1968	Hong Kong	C. K. Han
1968	Canada	J. S. Park
c. 1968–1969	Paris, France	K. I. Kim, S. J. Park, K. H. Rhee
March 1970	Toronto, Canada	J. T. Park
1970	Perth, Australia	C. C. Rhee
1970	Vancouver, Canada	C. K. Choi
1970	United States of America	K. J. Choi
1971	Singapore	C. K. Han
1971	United States of America	C. K. Han
1972	Apollo Stadium, Adelaide, Australia	C. C. Rhee, C. H. Rhee
November– December 1973	Africa · Europe · Far East · Middle East	C. K. Choi, Y. I. Kong, J. S. Park, S. J. Park, K. H. Rhee
July 1974	Sydney, Australia	C. H. Rhee
1974	Maple Leaf Gardens, Toronto, Canada	Y. I. Kong, J. S. Park, K. H. Rhee

9 March 1975	Kelvin Halls, Glasgow, United Kingdom	C. K. Choi, K. I. Kim, Y. I. Kong, J. S. Park, J. T. Park, S. J. Park, K. H. Rhee
c. early 1978	Kenya · Malaysia · Pakistan · South Africa	K. H. Rhee
May 1978	Hungary · Poland · Sweden · Yugoslavia	C. K. Choi, J. T. Park, K. H. Rhee
1979	Denmark · France · Greenland · Sweden · West Germany	K. H. Rhee
November 1979	Argentina	C. K. Choi, J. C. Kim, J. T. Park, K. H. Rhee
<b>Date</b>	<b>Place(s)</b>	<b>Masters involved</b>
January 1981	Queensland, Australia	C. K. Choi
1981	North Korea	J. T. Park
October–November 1982	Austria · Czechoslovakia · Denmark · Finland · Greenland · Hungary · Poland · United Kingdom · West Germany · Yugoslavia	J. T. Park
November 1984	New York, United States of America	J. T. Park
November 1985	Norway	J. T. Park
1987	Buenos Aires, Argentina	J. T. Park
1990	USSR	K. H. Rhee
<b>Date</b>	<b>Place(s)</b>	<b>Masters involved</b>

25–27 April 2003	Solvalla Sports Institute, Espoo, Finland	K. H. Rhee
2–4 May 2008	Vancouver, Canada	J. C. Kim, J. S. Park
27–28 September 2008	Beijing, China	J. S. Park
2–3 December 2009	Curtin University of Technology, Perth, Australia	K. H. Rhee

### Relationship with H. H. Choi

Many of the original masters of taekwondo went on to prominent roles in the ITF in the late 1960s and 1970s. As time passed and many of these masters left the ITF, their photographs were removed from Choi's series of taekwondo textbooks and replaced with photographs of current ITF masters. One of the main reasons for their departure was Choi's insistence on initiating relationships with North Korea, during a period in which that country and South Korea were "technically at war" (Gillis, 2003, p. 104; C. K. Choi, 2010, p. 147), or at best, had "no diplomatic relations" (C. K. Choi, 2010, p. 147) or "no diplomatic ties" (World Taekwon-Do Alliance). At least one of the masters reported that it was with regret that he stopped supporting Choi. North and South Korea are still considered to be technically at war.

Seven of the masters settled in North America: Chang Keun Choi (Canada, 1970), Kwang Jo Choi (USA, 1970), Cha Kyo Han (USA, 1971), Jong Chan Kim (Canada), Young Il Kong (USA, c. 1968), Jong Soo Park (Canada, 1968), and Jung Tae Park (Canada, 1970). The leaders of the group also settled in North America: H. H. Choi moved to Canada and T. H. Nam settled in the USA. Three of the masters settled in Europe: Kwang Il Kim (West Germany, now Germany, c. 1970), Sun Jae Park (Italy, c. 1970), and Ki Ha Rhee (United Kingdom, 1967). Two of the masters settled in Australia: Chong Chul Rhee (c. 1965), and Chong Hyup Rhee (c. 1970).

C. K. Choi, J. C. Kim, Y. I. Kong, J. S. Park, and K. H. Rhee have maintained the strongest links with the ITF. H. H. Choi had personally promoted C. K. Choi to 8th *dan* (1981), Y. I. Kong to 9th *dan* (1997), and K. H. Rhee to 9th *dan* (1997).

### Biographies

The following table summarises the status of the twelve original masters of taekwondo.

Name	Rank	Life	Residence	Organisation	Affiliation
Choi Chang Keun	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1940–	 Vancouver, Canada	Tae Kwon Do Pioneers	ITF
Choi Kwang Jo	9th <i>dan</i>	1942–	 Atlanta, USA	Choi Kwang-Do	Independent
Han Cha Kyo	9th <i>dan</i>	1934–1996	 Chicago, USA	Universal Tae Kwon Do Federation	Independent

Kim Jong Chan	7th <i>dan</i> or higher	1937–	 Vancouver, Canada	Jong Kim Martial Arts	ITF
Kim Kwang Il	6th <i>dan</i> or higher	?–	 Germany	?	?
Kong Young Il	9th <i>dan</i>	1943–	 Las Vegas, USA	Young Brothers Tae Kwon-Do Institute	ITF
Park Jong Soo	9th <i>dan</i>	1941–	 Toronto, Canada	Jong Soo Park Institute of Taekwon-Do	ITF
Park Jung Tae	9th <i>dan</i>	c. 1943–2002	 Mississauga, Canada	Global Taekwon-Do Federation	Independent
Park Sun Jae	7th <i>dan</i> or higher	?–	 Italy	?	WTF
Rhee Chong Chul	8th <i>dan</i>	c. 1935–	 Sydney, Australia	Rhee Taekwon-Do	Independent
Rhee Chong Hyup	7th <i>dan</i>	c. 1940–	 Melbourne, Australia	Rhee Taekwon-Do	Independent
Rhee Ki Ha	9th <i>dan</i>	1938–	 Glasgow, UK	United Kingdom Taekwon-Do Association	ITF

**Choi Chang Keun:** C. K. Choi was born around 1940 in Korea. He began his martial arts training in the South Korean army in 1956, studying taekwondo and [karate](#). Choi taught taekwondo in Malaysia from 1964, and moved to Vancouver, Canada, in 1970. In 1973, he held the rank of 7th *dan*. Choi was promoted to 8th *dan* in 1981 by H. H. Choi, and attained the rank of 9th *dan* in 2002. He is still based in Vancouver.

**Choi Kwang Jo:** K. J. Choi was born on 2 March 1942, in [Daegu](#), Korea. His martial art training began when he was still a child, learning [kwon bup](#). Choi served in the South Korean military and came into contact with H. H. Choi there. Around 1966–1967, he taught taekwondo in Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. Choi moved to the United States of America in 1970 to seek medical treatment for injuries sustained from martial arts training. In 1987, he founded his own martial art system and organisation, [Choi Kwang-Do](#). He is presently based in Atlanta. Choi holds the rank of 9th *dan* in his own martial art, [Choi Kwang-Do](#).

**Han Cha Kyo:** C. K. Han was born on 20 July 1934 in Seoul, Korea. He trained under three martial art masters: Tae Hi Nam, Duk Sung Son, and Woon Kyu Um. Han was the first of the original masters of taekwondo to demonstrate

overseas, participating in the March 1959 tour of Taiwan and Vietnam. Following a career in the South Korean military, he emigrated to the United States of America in 1971, settling in Chicago. Han founded his own organisation, the Universal Tae Kwon Do Federation, around 1980. He continued teaching taekwondo until his death in 1996.

**Kim Jong Chan:** J. C. Kim was born in 1937. He taught taekwondo in Malaysia in the mid-1960s. In 1979, ranked 7th *dan*, he taught and demonstrated in Argentina along with C. K. Choi, J. T. Park, and K. H. Rhee. A letter by Kim published in the July 1985 issue of *Black Belt* magazine lists his title at the time as President of the 'World Tukido Council. He is based in Vancouver, Canada.

**Kim Kwang Il:** K. I. Kim contributed to the introduction of taekwondo into [West Germany](#). He was head instructor of the ITF in West Germany, but was relieved of this duty in October 1971. In 1975, Kim was ranked 6th *dan*. He promoted Rolf Becking, head of the ITF Germany Technical Committee, to the rank of 2nd *dan* in 1976 in [Stuttgart](#), West Germany. Between 1974 and 1977 Kim had a restaurant in Stuttgart and had completed training as a Brewmeister prior to 1974.

**Kong Young Il:** Y. I. Kong was born in 1943 in Korea. He began training in the martial arts as a child in 1952, starting with [Shotokan](#) karate. From 1963 to 1967, Kong served in the South Korean army, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He participated in several demonstration tours across the world. Following a career in the South Korean military, Kong emigrated to the United States of America just before or in 1968. He and his younger brother, Young Bo Kong, founded the Young Brothers Taekwondo Associates in 1968. Kong was promoted to the rank of 9th *dan* in 1997 by H. H. Choi in Poland. He is presently based in Las Vegas.

**Park Jong Soo:** J. S. Park was born in 1941 in Chung-Nam, Korea. He trained in taekwondo under H. H. Choi. In 1965, he was invited to be the coach of the German Taekwon-Do Association, and moved from South Korea to West Germany. The following year, he moved to the Netherlands and founded the Netherlands Taekwon-Do Association. In 1968, Park settled in Toronto, Canada. Park holds the rank of 9th [dan](#), and is still based in Toronto.

**Park Jung Tae:** J. T. Park was born in 1943 or 1944 in Korea. He began training in the martial arts as a child, starting with [boxing](#) before moving on to [judo](#) and then taekwondo. From 1965 to 1967, Park directed military taekwondo training in Vietnam. He emigrated to Canada where he met his future wife, Linda, in Toronto in 1970. In 1984, Park was ranked 8th *dan* in the ITF. He founded his own organisation, the Global Taekwon-Do Federation (GTF), on 14 June 1990—the year after his departure from the ITF due to North–South Korean political issues. Park was based in [Mississauga](#) until his death in 2002.

**Park Sun Jae:** S. J. Park is a pioneer of taekwondo in Italy. In 1964, he visited Croatia to present seminars on his art. He introduced taekwondo to Italy around 1968. In 1968, he was ranked 5th *dan*, and in 1975, he was ranked 7th *dan*. He was elected Vice-President (Italy) in the European Tae Kwon Do Union (within the [World Taekwondo Federation](#)) at the union's inaugural meeting in 1976. In 2002, he was a member of the arbitration board for the WTF's World Cup Taekwondo championship in Tokyo. On 15 February 2004, the Executive Council of the WTF elected him as Acting President of the WTF following Un Yong Kim's resignation from the presidency of the organisation. He is currently Vice President (Italy) of the WTF. Park was President of the Federazione Italiana Taekwondo (Italian Taekwondo Federation) around 1998, and still held the position as of 2008 and 2009.

**Rhee Chong Chul:** C. C. Rhee was born around 1935 in Korea. As a youth, he trained in martial arts, [basketball](#), boxing, [gymnastics](#), and weights. Later, he was an instructor in the [Korean Marines](#) for three years, teaching unarmed combat to the Marine Commandoes, Marine Brigade Headquarters, and the Marine 2nd Infantry Division. Rhee helped introduce the art of taekwondo to Southeast Asia—most notably in Malaysia and Singapore, but also in Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Brunei. He founded his own organisation, [Rhee Taekwon-Do](#), in [Adelaide](#), Australia, around 1965. Rhee came to be known as the Father of Australian Taekwondo. He is presently based in Sydney.

**Rhee Chong Hyup:** C. H. Rhee was born around 1940 in Korea. In the mid-1960s, he contributed to the introduction of taekwondo to Malaysia and Singapore. He arrived in Australia in 1970 and settled in [Melbourne](#), Australia. Rhee is in charge of Rhee Taekwon-Do operations in Melbourne.

**Rhee Ki Ha:** K. H. Rhee was born on 20 March 1938 in Seoul, Korea His martial arts training began when he was around 7 or 8 years of age, learning judo from his father. He later learned karate from one of his schoolteachers. When Rhee served in the South Korean military forces, he came into contact with H. H. Choi and learned taekwondo in the 35th

Infantry Division.<sup>[13]</sup> From February 1964, he taught taekwondo to [Royal Air Force](#) personnel in Singapore. He emigrated to London on 2 July 1967. He attained the rank of 8th *dan* in 1981, and was promoted to 9th *dan* by H. H. Choi on 1 July 1997 in [Saint Petersburg](#), Russia. Rhee came to be known as the Father of British Taekwondo, as well as the Father of Irish Taekwondo. He is now based in Glasgow.

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## **Grandmaster Hee Il Cho's Top Ranking Students**

### **Grand Master Philip Ameris: A World Renown Taekwondo Master**

Grandmaster Philip Ameris is Grandmaster Hee Il Cho's senior student and Technical Director of the Action International Martial Arts Association (AIMAA). He holds the rank of 8th-Degree Black Belt and has over 40 years of experience in martial arts. He has won numerous national and international championships and was the USA Taekwondo Team Captain for the 1988 World Championships.

Grandmaster Ameris is the Chief Instructor and owner of Cho's Taekwondo in New Kensington, Pennsylvania. He is actively involved in teaching and instructs 90% of the classes each week. He has traveled throughout the world teaching seminars and clinics about traditional Taekwondo. Grandmaster Ameris has developed R.A.P.E. Defense™ - a proven and effective course on women's self defense.

Grandmaster Ameris has been featured in numerous martial arts publications throughout the world, and has dedicated his life to studying the way of Taekwondo as well as teaching traditional martial arts methods and values. He has been married for 30 years to Jeanne (4th Degree Black Belt) and has two children, Philip Jr. (4th Degree Black Belt) and Jimmy (1st Degree Black Belt).

### **Master Peter Byrne**

6th degree black belt Master Peter Byrne is the regional director of A.I.M.A.A. Ireland and is the senior student of Master John Darcy. Master Byrne is an exemplary instructor and Tae Kwon Do practitioner, who specializes in one step defense. Master Byrne frequently travels over 200 miles to train with Master John Darcy in Dublin, as well as attend National and International events.

International Instructor - Over 28 years experience - R.A.P.E.™ Qualified Instructor - Certified International Referee - A.I.M.M.A. Ireland team coach 1996-2002 - Ireland Board of Examiners - International Seminar Instructor - Qualified First Aider

## **Master John Darcy:** European regional Director

7th or 8th? degree Black belt

Master John Darcy has been training for the past 35 years in Tae kwon-Do. In 1995 Master Darcy introduced AImAA to Ireland and since AImAA started in Ireland , it has gone from strength to strength in the organization and each member is taught how to train hard and motivate themselves and achieved their goals in AImAA. Master Darcy is in constant contact with Grandmaster Hee Il Cho and this brings AImAA Ireland closer to its world head quarters. Master Darcy travels to the AImAA world hq frequently and brings with him many students each time to give them first hand knowledge of what training under his Grandmaster is all about.

Master Darcy has organised several trips by Grandmaster Hee Il Cho and Master Philip Ameris to our shores. These seminars and gradings have noticeable improved the overall ability and confidence of the Irish students. It is a sign of this man's character that he not only a colleague of Grandmaster Hee Il Cho's but also his good friend. ..

"...I've had a most enjoyable relationship with Mr. John Darcy for more than 20 years, and have been very pleased with his great leadership and enthusiasm for AImAA Ireland. After his participation and support in the Association, there has been a tremendous growth in the organization and motivated students..."

Statistics:

- AImAA Ireland Chief Instructor.
- European Regional Director.
- 6th Degree Black Belt.
- Over 35 Years Experience.
- Senior Student of Grandmaster Hee Il Cho.
- Winner of several National and International Competitions.
- Contributor to over 20 of Grandmaster Cho's Home Study Program Videos
- Owner and Promoter of Cho's TKD Turnapin.
- Dublin (AImAA Ireland HQ)
- Certified R.A.P.E. TM Defense Instructor.
- International Referee.
- Feature on front cover of Black Belt Magazine.
- Instructor to several National Schools and Colleges.
- Host of first AImAA Open World Championships.