

TAEGUK

The Taeguk Poomsae represent the ideals of the martial art of Taekwondo pacifism, unity, creative spirit, indomitable spirit, and eternity.

As well as containing the basic physical movements which must be mastered to become proficient in Taekwondo, the poomsae also contain the thoughts which accompany the practice of Taekwondo. It is from these thoughts that Taekwondo gains its ideals. To understand the Taeguk poomsae fully we must look at the philosophy of these forms.

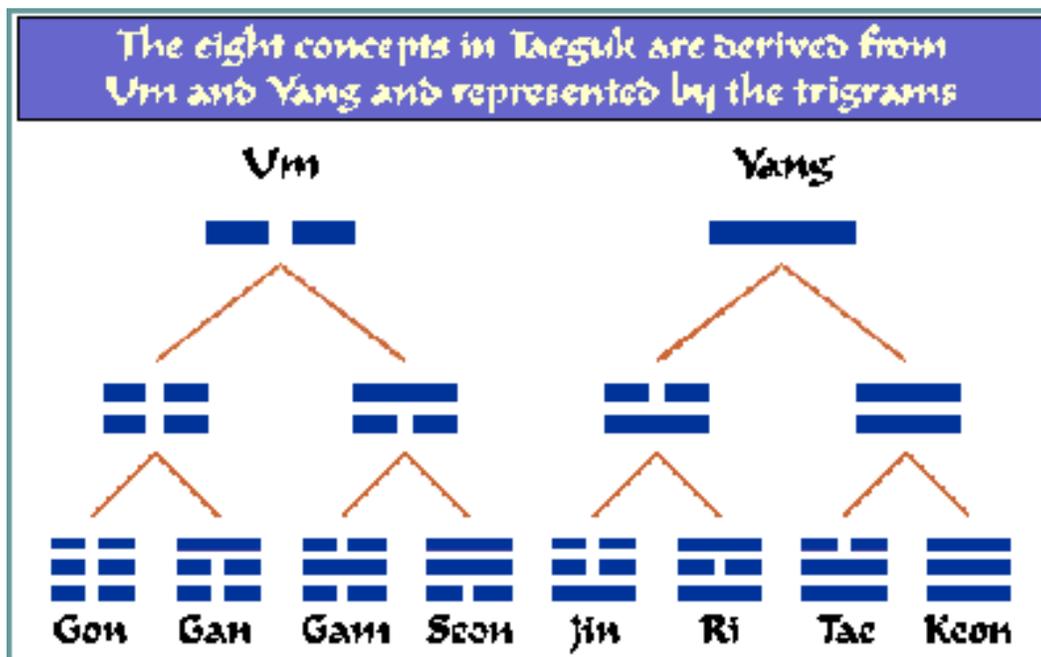
Taeguk stems from, and is bound to the ideas found in one of the noblest documents in the Orient addressing the meaning of life - the *Jooyeok*, the *Book of Changes*.

The *Book of Changes*, also known as the *I Ching*, was originally written in China by Fuh Hi approximately 3,300 years ago and has been added to over a period of hundreds of years by several Chinese sages.

The book describes a theory in which the phenomenon of constant, shifting change, which is the human condition, is shown to possess a moral harmony. The theory analyses the process in which two opposing metaphysical forces called *um* and *yang* (the Korean names for ying and yang) combine to generate new combinations. These are seen as the conceptual mechanism which propitiate life and the universe.

Fuh Hi identified eight subsequent combinations derived from the two primal forces, *um* and *yang* (diagram A). He named them, and arranged them in a circle to illustrate their harmonious relationships, and designated the character of each (diagram B).

Diagram A

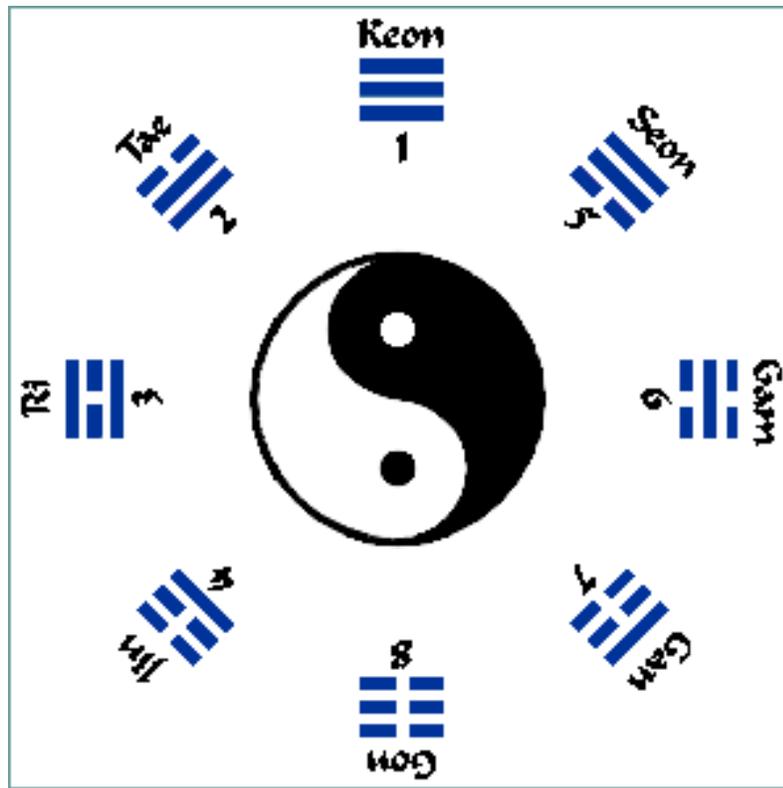


Fuh Hi showed that these eight concepts manifest themselves in all things, including our human destiny.

In Taeguk each of the eight concepts is represented as a trigram, which is derived from the symbols for *um* and *yang*. Each of the Taeguk poomsae is based on one of these concepts and integrates the concept into the methods of attack, defence, forward and backward movements, speed, control and intensity of the actions.

Fuh Hi arranged the trigrams around the Chinese symbol for ying and yang to show the relationship between each and their opposite.

Diagram B



Keon is a concept which is pure *um*. It is the creative force associated with heaven and light.

Tae is the concept of joy.

Ri means fire and sun, and it is interpreted as the creative passion.

Jin symbolises thunder, suggesting courage in the face of danger.

Seon symbolises wind, sometimes gentle, sometimes forceful.

Gam means water, and the characteristics of constancy and flow.

Gan means 'top stop', suggesting the wisdom of knowing where and when to stop.

Gon, the eighth, is a concept which is pure *yang*. Opposite *Keon*, the first, it symbolises the yielding earth, which provides the substance and the limitations through which *Keon* passes.

Gon and *Keon* are the keys to understanding the dialectics of the great circle. In *Gon* is realised the nature of *Keon*; and in *Keon*, the nature of *Gon*. Each defines the other in the paradox from which creation itself is congealed into reality, and into time.

Four of the trigrams; Keon, Gon, Ri, and Gam, together with the Korean symbol for um and yang make up the Korean National Flag, Taeguk-ki.



TAEGUK 1

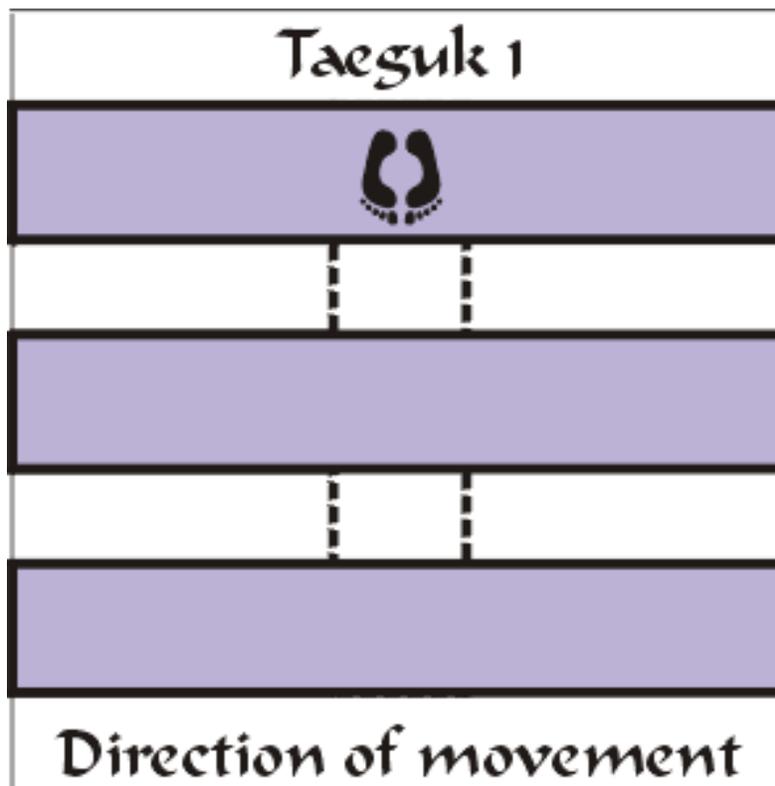
태극 일장

TAEGUK ONE

Represented by - *KEON*

This first Taeguk poomsae is designed for beginners. It is practised by students who have attained the rank of Yellow Belt. It includes the ready stance, the basic walking stance, both the forward stance and extended forward stance, and two front-kicks. Both low and high blocks are also included.

The actions in Taeguk one are associated with *Keon*. *Keon* is the creative force which inhabits all physical forms. *Keon* is powerful and aggressive, and it is represented by heaven and light. The direction of movement for Taeguk one follows the trigram that represents *Keon*.



TAEGUK 2

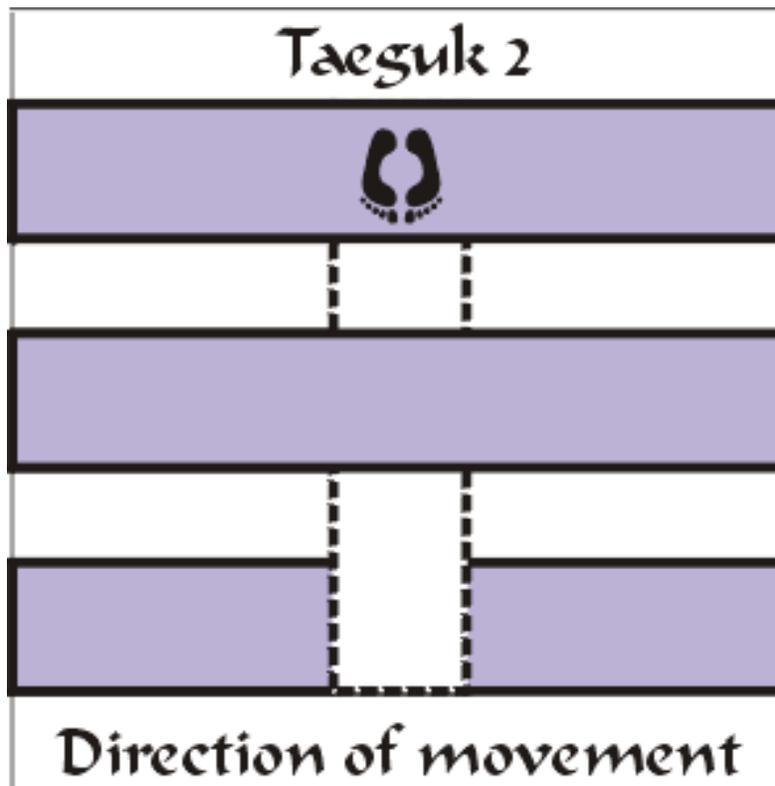
태극 이장

TAEGUK TWO

Represented by - *TAE*

The second of the Taeguk poomsae uses actions from the first and adds to them the front punch aimed at the head of the imagined opponent. It is practised by students who have attained the rank of Yellow Belt / Green tip.

The actions in Taeguk two are associated with *Tae*. *Tae* is the concept of joy and is of a spiritually uplifting nature. *Tae* reflects serenity and gentleness and is not aggressive. *Tae* is symbolised with the image of a lake. In keeping with this philosophy, this poomsae should be performed with fluidity and ease, without struggle, while maintaining strength and conviction. The direction of movement in Taeguk two follows the trigram that represents *Tae*.



TAEGUK 3

태극 삼장

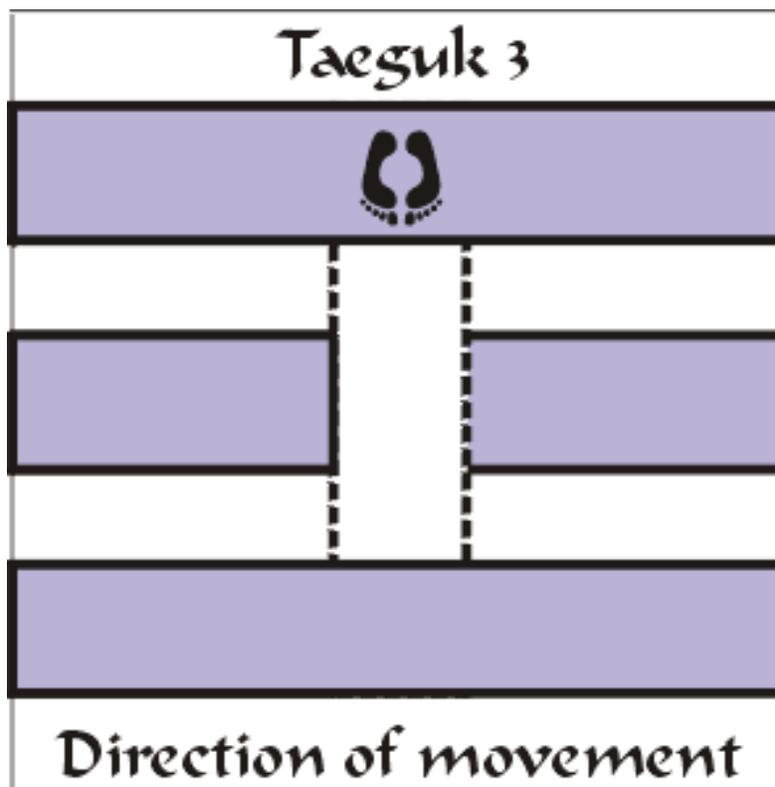
TAEGUK THREE

Represented by - *Ri*

The concept of *Ri* means creative passion and is symbolised as fire or sun. The actions that are introduced in this poomsae include the knife hand strike and block. The front kick is followed immediately with a double front punch.

Most important is the variety in quickness and strength required by the practitioner. The moves must demonstrate the qualities of fire and sun; continually moving, sometimes slow, sometimes fast; flickering energy - stillness followed by excitement or passion.

Taeguk three is practised by students who have attained the rank of Green Belt. The trigram that represents *Ri* provides the direction of movement for Taeguk three.



TAEGUK 4

태극사장

TAEGUK FOUR

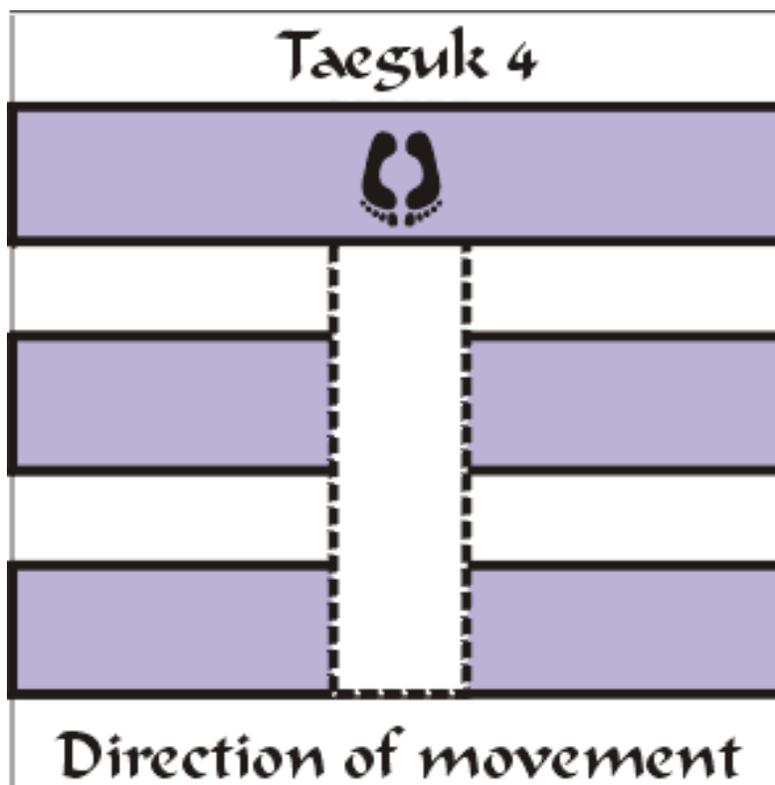
Represented by - *JIN*

Taeguk four applies the concept of *Jin*, which means thunder and suggests courage in the face of danger.

Taeguk four is practised by students upon attaining the rank of Green Belt / Blue tip.

Introduced in this poomsae are blocks combined with strikes and powerful front kicks immediately reverting to blocks in the back stance. Such actions require strength, balance and composure. In these actions are displayed the philosophical characteristics of *Jin*.

The trigram that represents *Jin* gives us the direction of movement for Taeguk four.



TAEGVK 5

태극 오장

TAEGVK FIVE

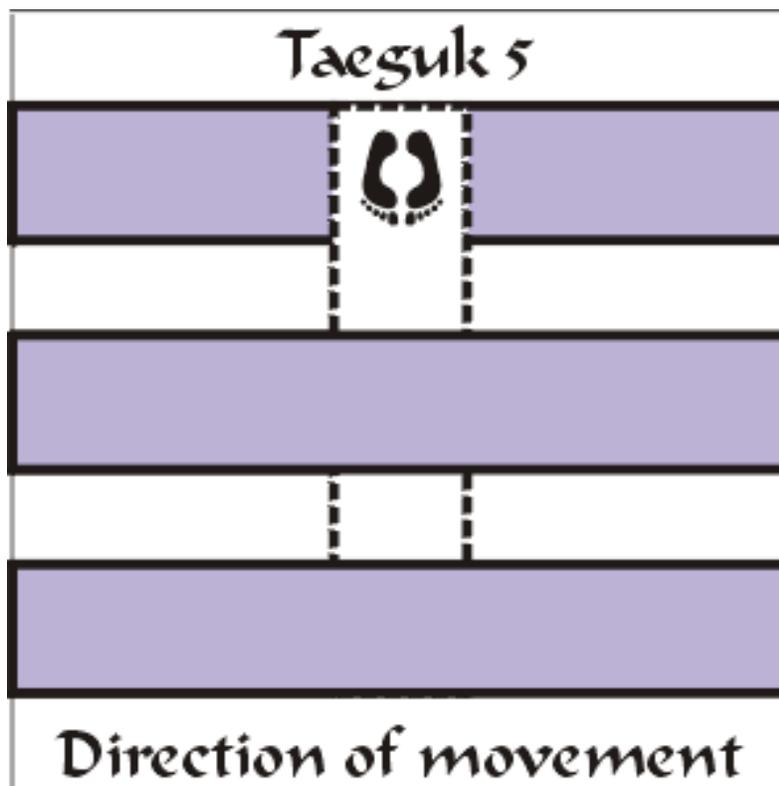
Represented by - *SEON*

Seon symbolises wind, sometimes gentle, sometimes forceful. Wind is yeilding and penetrating, soothing and destructive; invisible and yet, manifesting. These characteristics are encompassed in *Seon* and seen in Taeguk five with actions that are subtle, but strong and pure.

New movements include a sweeping hammer fist strike, powerful elbow strikes, and leaping into a cross-legged stance. Taeguk five is practised by students upon attaining the rank of Blue Belt.

Students should endeavour to perform quick, flowing combinations when practicing this poomsae.

The direction of movement for Taeguk five follows the trigram representing *Seon*.



TAEGUK 6

태극 육장

TAEGUK SIX

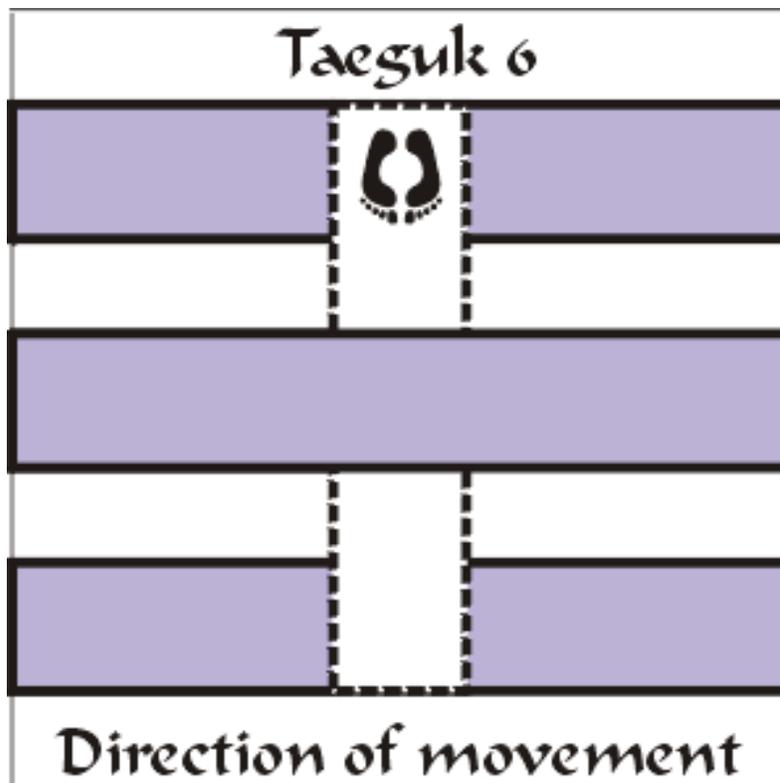
Represented by - *GAM*

Gam means water, and the characteristics of constancy and flow. The concept of *Gam* defines the dramatic expressions within Taeguk six. Water is flowing, shapeless, and is not stopped by obstacles but rather, incorporates them in its' sense of flow.

It is important for the practitioner to recognise this as a type of confidence, of always knowing that whatever difficulties or hardships he may encounter in life, or in the practice of his art, there exists no doubt of overcoming them as long as he retains the qualities of acceptance, flow, and natural integrity.

The movements in Taeguk six must be performed with fluidity and the feeling that every action is exactly what is called for to overcome the situation at each particular instant.

Students should endeavour to perform quick, flowing combinations when practicing this poomsae. Taeguk six is practised by students who have reached the rank of Blue Belt / Red tip. The direction of movement is shown in the trigram representing *Gam*.



TAEGVK 7

태극 칠장

TAEGVK SEVEN

Represented by - *GAN*

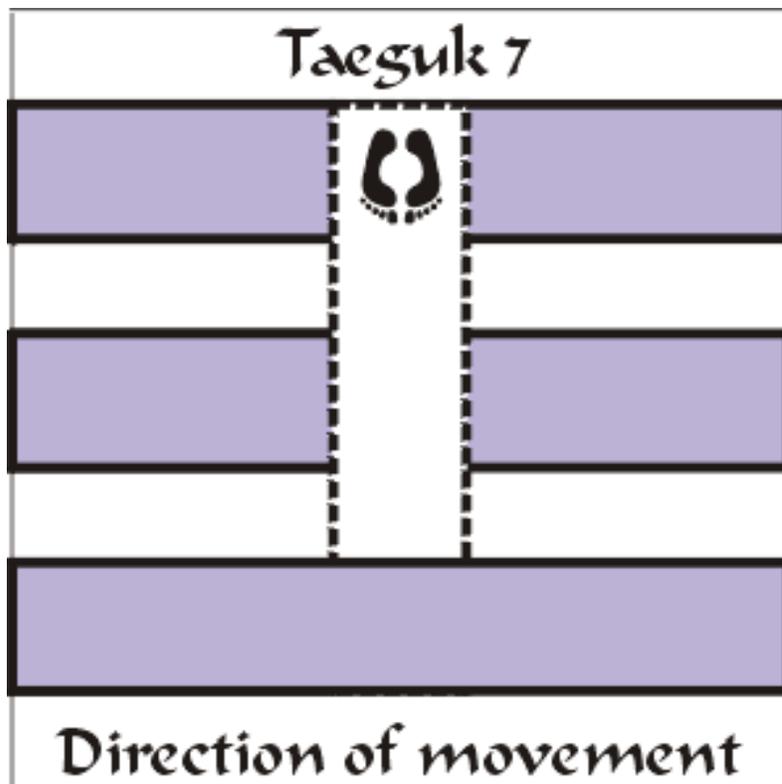
Gan means 'top stop', suggesting the wisdom of knowing where and when to stop.

The actions in Taeguk seven apply the concept called *Gan* and interpret this concept which is symbolized by the image of a mountain, as the principle of stability.

This stability is defined as the structural soundness which results from having resolved one's ambition

The tiger stance, in which most of your weight is settled on the back leg expresses this peculiar stability which also contains ambition. This poomsae actions use the tiger stance repeatedly.

Taeguk seven is practised by students who have reached the rank of Red Belt. The direction of movement can be seen in the trigram representing *Gan*.



TAEGVK 8

태극 팔장

TAEGVK EIGHT

Represented by - *GON*

Gon, the eighth, is a concept which is pure *yang*. Opposite *Keon*, the first, it symbolises the yielding earth, which provides the substance and the limitations through which *Keon* passes.

The actions in this eighth and last Taeguk poomsae are guided by the principle called *Gon*. This principle is defined as the quality of being receptive and is symbolised by the earth, providing the substance into which the heavenly light and energy of *keon* enters to produce physical forms.

Taeguk eight is practised by students who have reached the rank of Red Belt / Black tip. Taeguk eight jang is intended as a summation and a review of all the previous forms for the student on his way to attaining the rank of black belt.

As with the previous Taeguk poomsae, the direction of movement is shown in the trigram that represents *Gon*.

