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Syllabus & Expectations

March 2015



Syllabus & Expectations

Grading

Sitting Stance Middle Punch
Short Stance Low Block
Short Stance Rising Block
Inward Block
Front Kick
Push Kick
Axe Kick
Turning Kick

Korean

Cha-ryot - attention
Kyong-rye - bow
Joon-bee - ready position
Shee-jak - start
Go-man - stop
Do-bok - Taekwondo uniform

Theory

For 98% of the movements in Taekwondo two arms are used - one performing the specific action and the other assisting (generally in retracting but sometimes in support). For example, when performing a low block, the blocking arm goes from the shoulder to block the lower part of the body - however the opposite arm quickly and sharply retracts back to the waist. The commonly given reason for this is Newton's Third Law simply described as "every action has an equal and opposite reaction". By intentionally moving something in the opposite direction it builds power in the action arm and often aids in twisting the waist.

History

Taekwondo is a martial art invented in South Korea. It was officially named in 1955, the name chosen both because it means, in simple terms, "the art of kicking and punching" and also due to its similarity to an ancient Korean martial art called Taekkyon. Taekwondo is the world's most popular martial art with over 70 million practitioners.

Expectations

Attention position should be done without flapping the arms, bowing should be done without the eyes looking forward and the ready position should take 5 seconds - showing confidence that the student will take the time necessary to learn properly and not rush through. The examiner is looking for an understanding of the two arms principle, the hand movements at yellow stripe level should all be using two hands.

The blocks should finish in the correct place and cover the area being defended on the way. The kicks demonstrated at yellow stripe all build in progression. The first three all start with the knee moving forwards and the standing foot twisting out to approximately 30°. The direction of attack changes from slightly upward, straight forward and then to downwards. That covers the three potential attacks that are linear in motion towards the opponent. The final one starts in the same way, knee pointing forwards, but at that point the standing foot twists out to approximately 90° and the kicking shin rotates to be parallel to the floor before extension.



Grading

Taegeuk 1

Long stance double punch

Fast Kick

Cut Kick

Back Kick

Korean

Hana - one

Dool - two

Set - three

Net - four

Dwi-dora - turn around

Pal Pa-kwo - change feet

Poom-sae - pattern or form

Theory

There are two ways of generating force - linear (or translation) and rotation. If you stand with your shoulders square and only moving your arm punch forward you are generating linear force. If you stand the same way and hold your arm out to the side and then keeping your arm locked rotate your waist you are generating rotational force. Taekwondo techniques aim to combine both types of force generation for maximum effect. So, as an example when you punch as well as the arm extending forwards (generating linear force), you also rotate the punching fist within the last 10-20% of the movement (which is the same for 98% of Taekwondo techniques) and you rotate the waist.

So Taekwondo uses both types of force generation to increase the power. The other important principle of power generation is that you can increase the power by making the movement faster (which we are above by adding the two types of force generation) or increase the weight (technically the mass) of the striking object. Obviously you can't make your hand weigh more dramatically during a fight (unless you grab a roll of coins), however you can try to make a solid connection from the striking part all the way through the body and in to the feet to the floor.

This means instead of the mass just being the striking arm, the whole mass of the body links generate more power. This is why it's important to ensure the back foot is firmly flat on the floor during most Taekwondo stances, if not the force travels through the body and is then wasted in pushing the foot to the floor. This principle of a solid connection through the body is called "kinetic linking".

History

There are two versions of Taekwondo history. 9 schools in Korea combined to form Taekwondo. One of them was the Oh Do Kwan run by General Choi Hong-Hi (in Korean surnames come first). General Choi spells his art Taekwon-do (which is often how you can tell which version is being spoken about) and they practice a different style of Taekwondo (also known as ITF or International Taekwon-do Federation style). Members of that association and it's offshoots believe that General Choi is the founder of Taekwondo and responsible for the creation of the art.

However, the fact is that General Choi only had "Honourary Dan Rank" and that current scholars in Korea cannot find any records of his "alleged" martial arts training. The Kukkiwon Taekwondo style that the rest of the people practice gives due credit to all people involved in the creation of the art, and sees it as a group unification effort.

Expectations

As this is the first grading that has a pattern or poomsae in it (sequence of movements in different directions) examiners are looking for the ability to remember the pattern correctly and concentrate on each movement being performed correctly when it isn't preceded and followed by the exact same movement. The kicks involved in the grading are now focused around using the front leg (using a kick already known in a different way), a more sport focused version of the push kick (so knowing how a slight variation of an existing kick can be more effective) and a spinning kick.



Grading

Taegeuk 2

Taegeuk 1

Long stance inner forearm block

Long stance backfist front strike

Side kicks

One for one kicking

Korean

Ap So-gi - short stance

Ap Ku-bi - long stance

Dwit Ku-bi - back stance

Joo-choom So-gi - sitting stance

Cha-gi - kicking

Ji-roo-gi - punching

Theory

When you are performing a hand technique while stepping forward, it's important that the hand and foot finish together. This builds on the principle of power generation introduced at yellow stripe level and the principle of kinetic linking introduced at yellow belt. If you know that moving forward generates more power (linear force) and you know that having your feet firmly planted builds more power (kinetic linking), then it's only logical to guess that the optimum for generating power is to strike at the exact moment you are finishing the movement when the feet are transitioning to being firmly planted. So, hand techniques should finish at the exact moment/split-second the foot finishes.

History

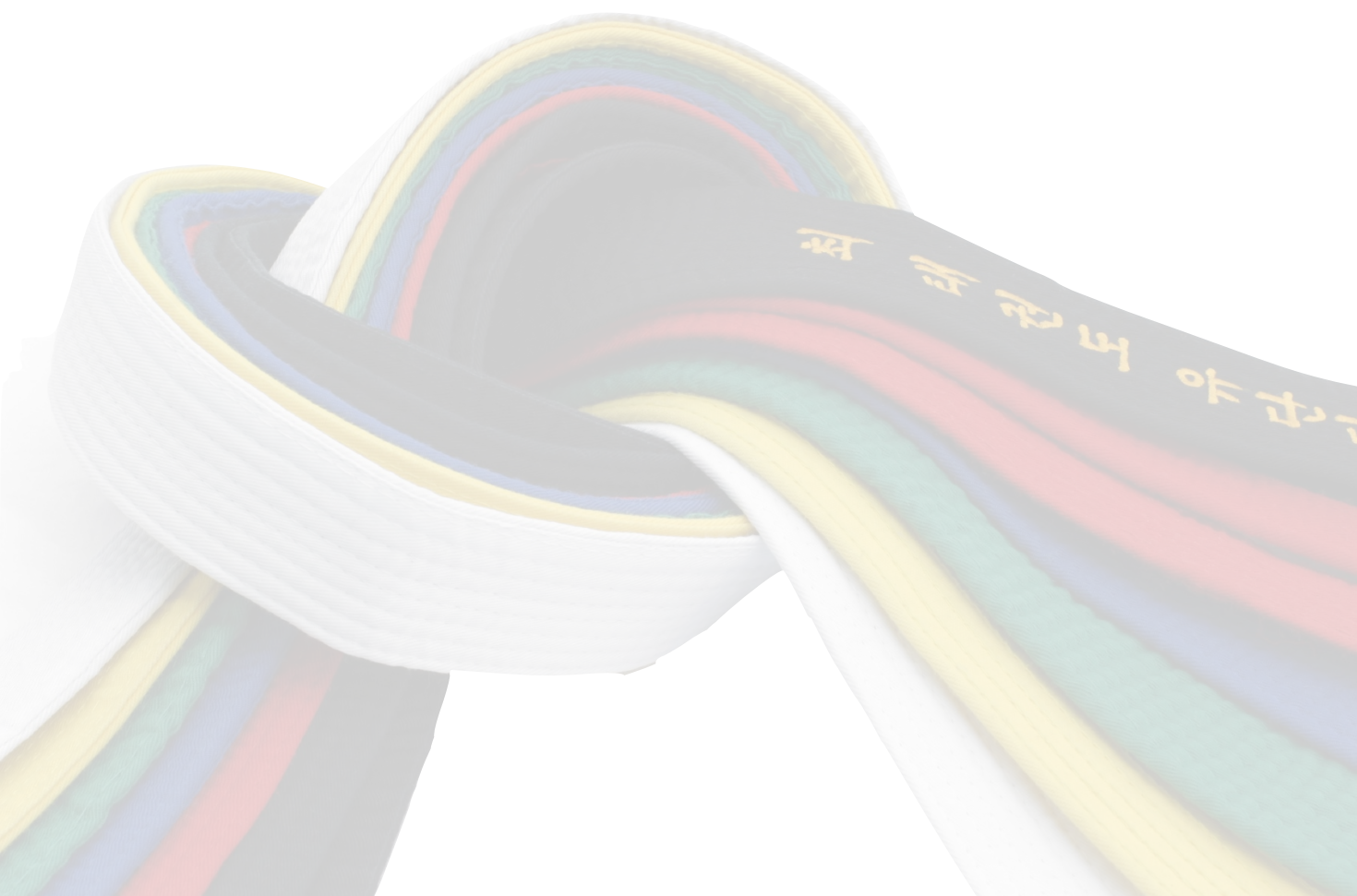
In 1972 the World Taekwondo Headquarters, called Kukkiwon in Korea was opened. This was a purpose built gymnasium with offices, changing rooms and lecture rooms. Kukkiwon is also the name of the organisation that resides in that building and is responsible for setting the martial art standard and dan grading standards and certification. The name comes from a piece of calligraphy done by ex-Korean President Park Chung-Hee in 1971 - it said "Kukki Taekwondo" meaning "National sport, Taekwondo". Won in Korean means place, so Kukkiwon means the place for training in the national sport.

Expectations

Green stripe is a transition from an absolute beginner in to the middle ranks of coloured belts. Now there are two very similar patterns to learn so it's important that the beginner can keep the separate. The two hand techniques done at this rank seem very similar to a spectator, but the difference is subtle in turning the movement from a defensive one to an offensive one - through a slight change in starting position and a difference in direction of travel.

The kick demonstrated for this rank is known as the hallmark of Taekwondo. It can also be very difficult to perform properly as the kick is performed with the standing foot facing 180° away from the opponent.

Finally for this rank we ask the student to be able to demonstrate a range of kicks, being able to maintain their balance and distance throughout, while also being concerned for the safety of their training partner.



Grading

Taegeuk 3 (T3)

Taegeuk 2 (T2)

One for one kicking (1/1)

Free Sparring (F/S)

Destruction: Elbow strike (ES)

Destruction: Side kick (SK)

Korean

Joo-muk - fist

Son-nal - knifehand

Pal-koop - elbow

Mak-ki - blocking

Kyo-ru-gi - sparring

Ki-hap - shout (from the diaphragm)

Theory

The Korean flag has a symbol at its centre made of a swirling shape that is half red and half blue. This symbol is central to Korean philosophy and is known as "um-yang". Everything is made of opposites - male/female, hard/soft, dark/light. During poomsae performance a distinguishing fact from Japanese Karate is that Taekwondo patterns or forms have soft movements of preparation in between rapid accelerations for the techniques themselves. If the whole of the pattern is done with tension and power there is too much tension in the body to generate real force, not to mention that it's incredibly and unnecessarily tiring on the body. The body needs

History

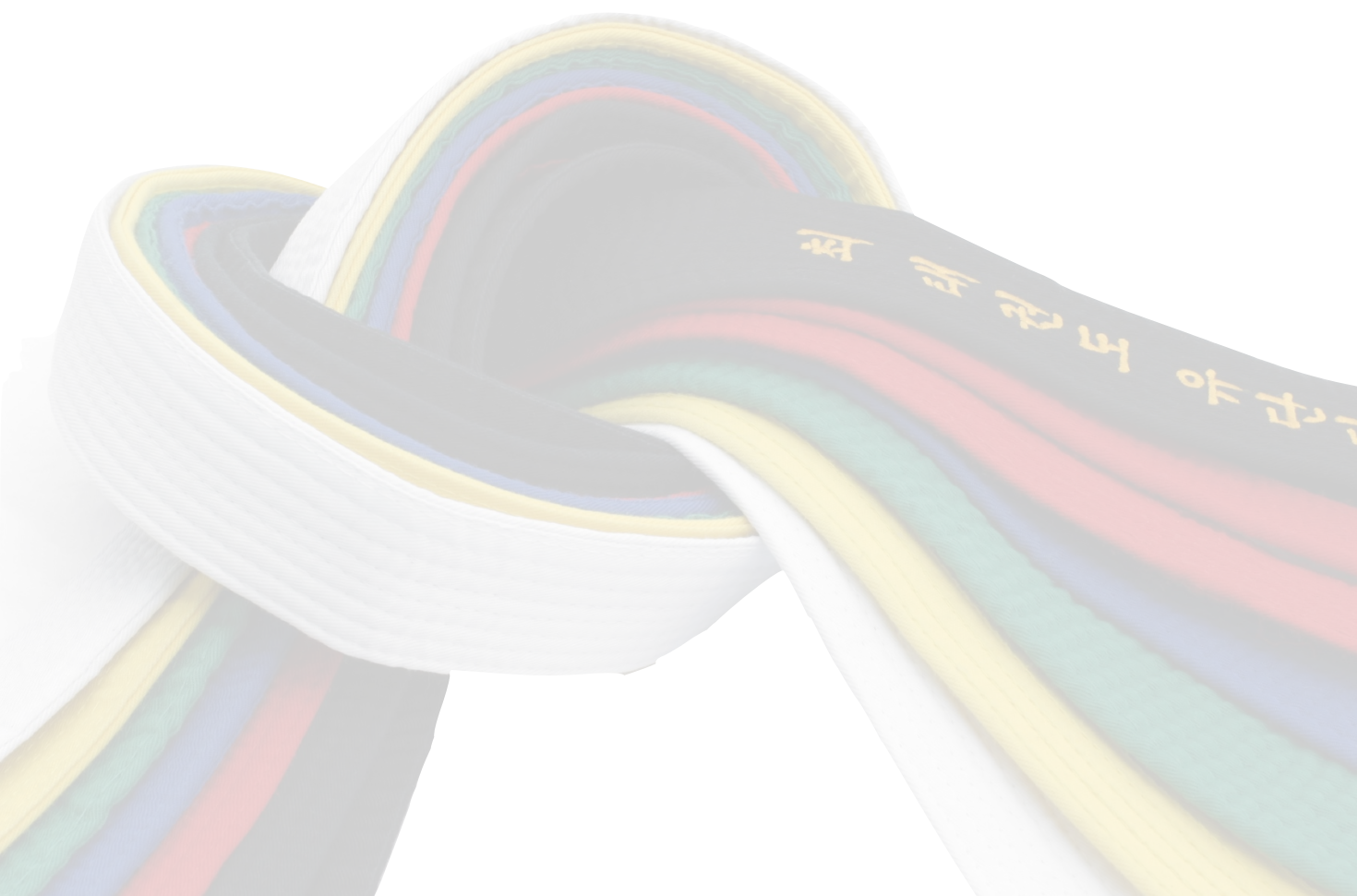
The World Taekwondo Federation was set up in 1973 to manage the sport side of Taekwondo. They developed a body protector and other pads to keep the participants safe during full contact fighting. In keeping with the Korean traditional view that they are artisans and to punch people in the face is uncouth, they developed rules where kicks to the head were allowed but punches were not (both are acceptable to the body). This developed Taekwondo in to a dynamic and uniquely recognisable martial art sport, that ended up in it becoming a demonstration sport in the 1988 Olympics (and again in 1992) and a full sport in 2000. People often refer to the non-ITF style of Taekwondo as WTF Taekwondo, but in reality the WTF only governs the sport side of our style - a better name would be one of Kukki-Taekwondo, Kukkiwon Taekwondo or Kukkiwon-style Taekwondo.

Expectations

The new pattern includes a new footwork pattern - the student blocks in back stance with a knifehand block and the examiner is looking to ensure a correct transition by putting the front foot one foot length further in front when continuing with a punch with the opposite hand. The rotation before the second set of low block/front kick/double punch - is balance maintained during this spin or does the student wobble.

This is the first grade where students consider for destruction. Under 15s can choose to use a paddle, yellow rebreakable board or a 12mm pine board. 15s and overs (adults in Kukkiwon terms) are expected to use an adult thickness rebreakable board or a 25mm pine board.

When students perform destruction, the examiners are looking specifically for spirit and technique. Does the student hit with confidence? Do they give a loud kihap? Do they execute a good technique? The student is not marked down if the board doesn't break.



Grading

Taegeuk 4

Taegeuk 3

Three for Three kicking

Free sparring

Destruction: Reverse Turning Kick

Korean

Ol-gool Mak-ki - rising or head section block

Ah-rae Mak-ki - low block

Mom-tong Mak-ki - inward (literally body) block

Go-do-ro Mak-ki - guarding block

Ap Cha-gi - front kick

Tol-lyo Cha-gi - turning kick

Nae-ryo Cha-gi - axe kick

Dwi Cha-gi - back kick

Yohp Cha-gi - side kick

Mil-lo Cha-gi - push kick

Bal-buch-yoh Tol-lyo Cha-gi - fast kick

Theory

At the beginner levels sparring is a case of trying to remember what techniques to do and trying to execute the blocks that the student knows to defend themselves.

At this level the student should be able to swiftly move their hands to the right place to protect their body, but it's important that they manage the distance well. Blocking a kick with the arms should be seen as a last resort. A better option is simply not to be there.

So, the key theory at this level is knowing how to manage distance to be able to quickly gain distance to score points and then retract to avoid kicks from the opponent. Ideally the defender will retract far enough to make the attacker miss, while putting their arms in the right place to cover where the kick may land, without offering their arm forward to be kicked - there's no need to take a kick on the arm if it's not needed.

History

The 9 original schools that combined to form Taekwondo were :

- * Chung Do Kwan (blue waves school)
- * Jidokwan (school of wisdom)
- * Changmookwan (developing martial arts school)
- * Song Moo Kwan (ever youthful martial arts school)
- * Moodukwan (school of martial virtue)
- * Oh Do Kwan (school of my way, General Choi's kwan)
- * Kang Duk Won (splinter school of Changmookwan)
- * Han Moo Kwan (splinter school of Jidokwan)
- * Jung Do Kwan (splinter school of Chung Do Kwan).

Expectations

During Taegeuk 4 the student has to perform an inward block with the "wrong" hand during a back stance. This is a difficult movement to do if the back stance isn't accurate. So this pattern tests the accuracy of the student's stances. Three for three kicking should be done fluidly in between kicks, demonstrating balance and technique accuracy. The kicks should also build in range - it's very bad to start with a long range kick and make the opponent retract a long way and then throw a short range kick and it be nowhere near the opponent. The kicks should progress from short to medium to long range.



Grading

Taegeuk 5

Taegeuk 4

One-step sparring

Free sparring

Destruction: back kick

Destruction: punch

Korean

Jeh-ja - student or beginner

Yu-gup-ja - coloured belt student

Yu-dan-ja - black belt holder

Kyo-sah-nim - instructor

Sa-buhm-nim - master instructor

Shim-pan-nim - judge/referee/examiner

Yohp Cha-gi - side kick

Theory

Step sparring, first tested on during this grading, is an example of demonstrating a variety of defences and counter attacks against a standard punch to the face. That said, the punch is done in a traditional way rather than a street attack way, so by its very nature, the defences can and should have slight pauses between them to allow the examiner and audience to appreciate what is being performed.

For coloured belts, each punch is preceded by a step back in to long stance and low block and a kihap. When the defender is ready, they kihap to signify they are ready to defend and the attacker then punches in a long stance to the body.

The key principle for defending is that it's acceptable to step back and block, it's acceptable to skip back and block with a kick (or counter directly with a kick) and it's acceptable to slip the punch while moving forward at an angle.

Most important is that the defender doesn't step directly in to the attack. The defender should kihap during their last counter-strike of the defence.

History

The Chang Moo Kwan founded by Grandmaster YOON Byung In in 1946. Grandmaster Yoon had studied Chinese Kung Fu (Ch'uan Fa) and then learnt Karate under Toyama Sensei (achieving 4th Dan at a time when the highest rank in Karate was 5th Dan) through a knowledge exchange where Grandmaster Yoon taught Toyama Sensei Ch'uan Fa and learnt Shudokan Karate in exchange.

Step Sparring

It's envisaged the list below gives all students a starting point. These should be learnt along with a qualified instructor, but listing them below gives the students something to practice. Where "same hand/side" is used it means the defender uses their right hand when a right punch is coming at them.

Strike - Step back short stance inward block with same hand, slide in to long stance and reverse punch

Strike - Step back short stance inward block with same hand, slide in to sitting stance and knife hand side strike

Strike - Sitting stance sliding out to the punching side at 45 degrees, inward block, double body punch, head punch

Lock - Same hand outer forearm knifehand block, step in to elbow pushing lock, front kick to finish

Kick - Quickly slide back, then outer crescent kick with opposite leg, turning kick to the body or head with other leg

Kick - Quickly slide back, then inward crescent kick with same leg, turning around and doing a back kick with the other leg

Expectations

In terms of poomsae, the new pattern has a clear section when the student is coming towards the examiner performing a block to middle section and then a strike to the face - it should be very clear that these are to different levels. Also, there are movements in the pattern where there are two strikes happening in different directions - a side kick to the side and a hammer fist that effectively strikes perpendicular to the kick.

The student should at least demonstrate the principle of "backward or slip" during one step sparring, even if the counter-attacks come slow or the striking part is incorrect.

Grading

Taegeuk 6

Taegeuk 1-5 (Examiner's choice)

Taegeuk 1-5 (Student's choice)

One-step sparring

Self-defence (hand and collar grabs, student request ~6)

Free sparring

Destruction: Two breaks with the hand, foot, anything

Korean

Kyo-ru-gi So-gi - sparring stance

Yul-lim-sae - open position

Da-chim-sae - closed position

Wen - left

Oruhn - right

Do-jang - training hall

Dan-jun - the lower stomach

Ddee - belt

Do-bok Dan-jung - tidy your uniform

Theory

Self-defence releases should always end in one of the three key elements - extract to a safe distance, leave your opponent in a lock where you can keep them placid until help or the police arrive or strike them to finish the fight.

It's a critical error to release the lock and then leave them in a position where they can continue the attack.

The defence should match the opponent, so an equal size or smaller opponent means the defender can use more elaborate defences. Against a larger opponent they should use strikes to softer or weaker targets and with striking parts that are less likely to be injured.

Step Sparring

Strike - Inward block in short stance, slide to sitting stance elbow to side, turn knife hand to groin, elbow to head

Strike - Reverse knifehand outer forearm block, grab and pull on to a turning kick, land head punch

Strike - Simultaneous knifehand block and inward knifehand strike, pull on to the knifehand strike then pull down and knee

Lock - Upward pressing block step under and round, knifehand strike to neck

Kick - Inward pressing block with the left, turn around to the right, elbow to the ribs, front kick to the groin.

Takedown - Slip to the right and simultaneous knifehand outer forearm block and inward knifehand strike, grab the wrist and shoulder, lift your right foot up and take the front leg by stepping back in long stance and then punch the floored opponent.

Self-defence

Cross-wrist grab - Pull out of the gap by twisting your wrist so the narrowest part fits easier.

Cross-wrist grab - Rotate and lift up, grab the wrist and push on the back of the elbow.

Same-wrist grab - Pull out of the gap, same as for a cross-wrist grab

Same-wrist grab - Same hand put on the back of their hand, open the hand and rotate their wrist over, put your elbow on theirs and then push down on their elbow.

Lapel grab - Simultaneous outer forearm block and push to the chest to the inside of their grabbing arm

Lapel grab - Hold, turn your body in to it and punch to the face

Expectations

The new poomsae has an awkward reverse knifehand block in long stance that is difficult to develop power for without a strong core. This is the first pattern with a slow breathing exercise in it - the student should do this to the count of five, not feel rushed and remain confident throughout.

Given that the student can request where they are grabbed, there shouldn't be a long delay before the defence. However, at this stage this is a new area of Taekwondo so some leeway is given.

Grading

Taegeuk 7

Taegeuk 1-6 (Examiner's choice)

Taegeuk 1-6 (Student's choice)

One-step sparring

Self-defence (hand, collar and bear hug - student requests ~6)

Free sparring

Destruction: Two breaks, both with the feet

Theory

As the student is getting close to black belt level, where they can open a club in the UK (although not promote students) they must understand how to describe movements clearly. This is commonly done using lines of the body for the finishing position and angles. Students should practice going through every movement they know and ensure they know and can explain where body parts are supposed to be using these lines.



Step Sparring

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Strike - Reverse knifehand outer forearm block, grab and pull on to a turning kick, land head punch

Strike - Simultaneous knifehand block and inward knifehand strike, pull on to the knifehand strike then pull down and knee

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Lapel grab - Simultaneous outer forearm block and push to the chest to the inside of their grabbing arm

Lapel grab - Hold, turn your body in to it and punch to the face

Expectations

Taegeuk 7 is a much more advanced poomsae than those before it. The new stance - tiger stance - is a difficult one to make stable, strong and fluid all at the same time. There are subtle twists in the palm block to back fist transition and the double scissor blocks. These are all difficult to master and it's this subtlety that examiners are looking for.

Given the theory is about correct positioning of body parts, at this level students should demonstrate a high level of accuracy in movement.

Grading

Taegeuk 8

Taegeuk 1-7 (Examiner's choice)

Taegeuk 1-7 (Student's choice)

One-step sparring

Self-defence - any at random, attacker's choice

Free sparring

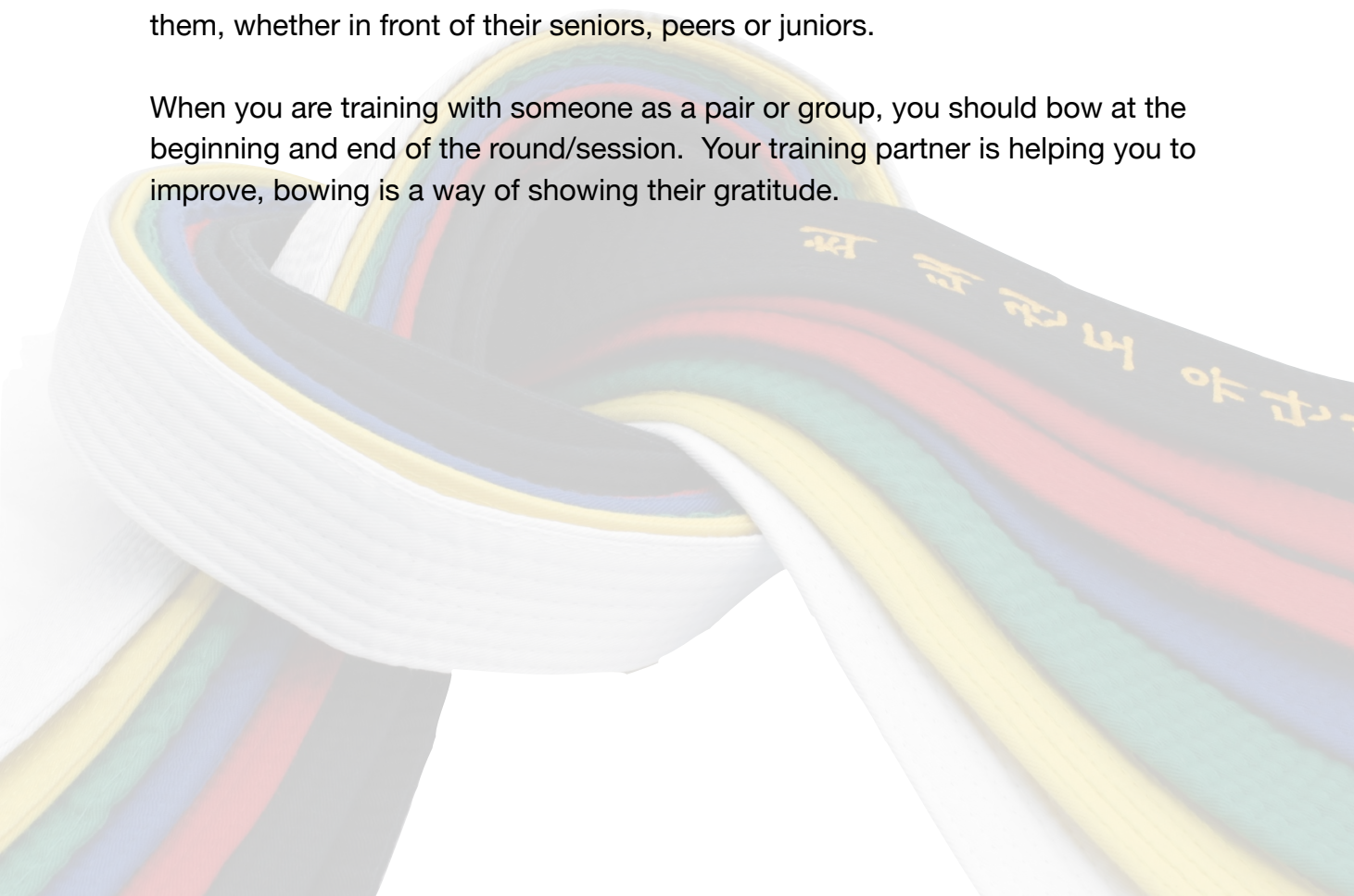
Destruction: two breaks, both with the feet, one must be a jumping technique

Theory

Korean society is built around hierarchy and people must show the correct respect to their seniors and peers. This is clearly shown throughout Taekwondo. As taught to beginners, bowing must be done with the eyes down. Bowing is a respectful, friendly gesture and to keep your eyes on the opponent shows distrust which is not a friendly or respectful gesture. When giving or receiving something from a peer or senior, you must either use both hands or you must use your right hand with your left hand touching your right elbow.

When given an instruction by a senior, this must be followed unless you feel your safety would be in jeopardy (in which case you should raise this respectfully). It is considered the height of rudeness to disobey a senior's instruction or to argue with them, whether in front of their seniors, peers or juniors.

When you are training with someone as a pair or group, you should bow at the beginning and end of the round/session. Your training partner is helping you to improve, bowing is a way of showing their gratitude.



Self-defence

Left-grabs-right shoulder grab - Hand on top of theirs, rotate the arm over to apply pressure to the back of the elbow as a straight arm lock

Shoulder grab - Step closer, rotate the arm the other way over, bending their elbow, using their bent arm to left the elbow inwards, then tiger mouth hand to the neck while they're in the arm lock.

Bear hug - Stamp on the foot, drop the weight and lift the arms up simultaneously, elbow to the groin.

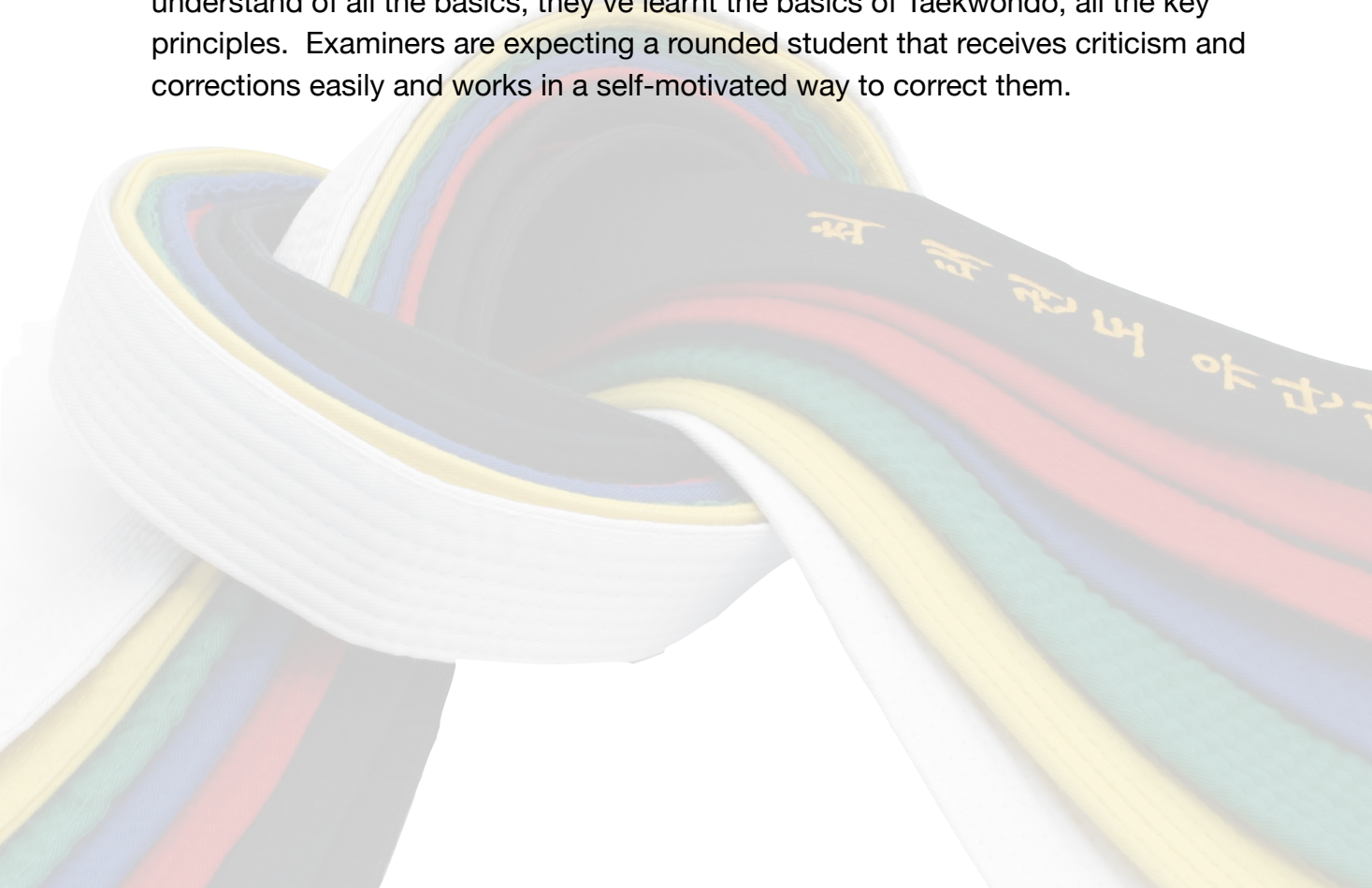
Rear headlock - Assuming on the right side of the opponent, left the left arm up between their legs, then grab your protruding left arm with your right hand and lift – this can be on the back of the knee or the groin.

Lapel grab - Dolphin lock or "S-lock"

Cross-wrist grab - Twist your hand so that you grab your opponents wrist and turn the opponents arm so the elbow would bend upwards. Elbow them to the face, pass your arm underneath their elbow and grab your own uniform (dobok). Pull down on the arm to lock the elbow

Expectations

Black stripe is the last of the coloured belt, at this point they should have a good understand of all the basics, they've learnt the basics of Taekwondo, all the key principles. Examiners are expecting a rounded student that receives criticism and corrections easily and works in a self-motivated way to correct them.



Yellow Stripe

Sitting Stance Middle Punch
Short Stance Low Block
Short Stance Rising Block
Inward Block
Front Kick
Push Kick
Axe Kick
Turning Kick

Yellow Belt

Taegeuk 1
Long stance double punch
Fast Kick
Cut Kick
Back Kick

Green Stripe

Taegeuk 2
Taegeuk 1
Long stance inner forearm block
Long stance backfist front strike
Side kicks
One for one kicking

Green Belt

Taegeuk 3 (T3)
Taegeuk 2 (T2)
One for one kicking (1/1)
Free Sparring (F/S)
Destruction: Elbow strike (ES)
Destruction: Side kick (SK)

Blue Stripe

Taegeuk 4
Taegeuk 3
Three for Three kicking
Free sparring
Destruction: Reverse Turning Kick

Blue Belt

Taegeuk 5
Taegeuk 4
One-step sparring
Free sparring
Destruction: back kick
Destruction: punch

Red Stripe

Taegeuk 6
Taegeuk 1-5 (Examiner's choice)
Taegeuk 1-5 (Student's choice)
One-step sparring
Self-defence (hand and collar grabs)
Free sparring
Destruction: Two breaks with anything

Red Belt

Taegeuk 7
Taegeuk 1-6 (Examiner's choice)
Taegeuk 1-6 (Student's choice)
One-step sparring
Self-defence (hand, collar and bear hug)
Free sparring
Destruction: Two breaks, both with the feet

Black Stripe

Taegeuk 8
Taegeuk 1-7 (Examiner's choice)
Taegeuk 1-7 (Student's choice)
One-step sparring
Self-defence
Free sparring
Destruction: two breaks, both with the feet, one must be a jumping technique

Black Belt Ranks

Students under 15 obtain “Poom ranks” rather than “Dan ranks”. This means that there is no implied teaching ability and that are considered junior to an equal ranked Dan candidate. When they turn 15 they can exchange their certificate for an equal Dan certificate.

At 1st Dan level students in the UK are allowed to open their own school and obtain instructor insurance. They are not allowed to promote their own students to either coloured belt or dan ranks - that is a privilege gained with 4th Dan Kukkiwon certification.

At Kukkiwon 4th Dan black belts gain the title of Master. This is a rank of trust, where the examiner believes they can be trusted to faithfully and correctly pass on Taekwondo and only bestow rank on worthy candidates.

Whether Masters use their title or not is a personal decision. It can help, particularly when teaching children, to get students in the habit of using title + last name, as it risks causing less offence if they are used to it and a visiting Master or Grand Master attends the dojang.

Sometimes at 7th Dan, a practitioner can be awarded the title of “Grand Master” by another Grand Master. This is a personal decision by the awarding Grand Master. Normally when the practitioner reaches 8th Dan Kukkiwon they are considered a Grand Master within the Taekwondo community without requiring the award of the title. The sidebars of this rank guide state “8th Dan Grand Master”, but 7th Dans can be Grand Master too, on an individual basis.

Grading

Koryo

Taegeuk 8

Taegeuk 1-7 (Examiner's choice)

One-step sparring

Free sparring (2 x 2 minute rounds)

Two breaks of the student's choice

(they can measure and setup in between techniques)

Self-defence releases

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Koryo as: "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 Koguryo, Pahaee and down to Koryo, which is the background of organising the Koryo poomsae. The line of poomsae represents the Chinese letter which means 'seonbae' or 'seonbi', a learned man or a man of virtue in the Korean language."

The main difference between a coloured belt and a black belt is that the black belt understands that there is more to learn and more to travel on the martial arts journey, that it is time to kick it up a notch and train even harder than before.

When a student comes to this realisation, and shows the persistence and determination to go on with the journey, then this student is ready for promotion to 1st Dan, where his focus will be to make his techniques solid and strong.

The diagram for the the Koryo poomsae is character # 31(Sa) in Bruce Grant's dictionary, and he defines it as follows: "scholar; gentleman; officer; soldier". Examples given are Shin Sa (gentleman, man of honour), Byun Ho Sa (lawyer, attorney) and Yong Sa (brave man, man of courage).

Grading

Keumgang

Koryo

Taegeuk 1-8 (Examiner's choice)

One-step sparring

Free sparring (2 x 2 minute rounds)

Two breaks of the student's choice

(they should only measure and setup the first technique, must flow in to the second.

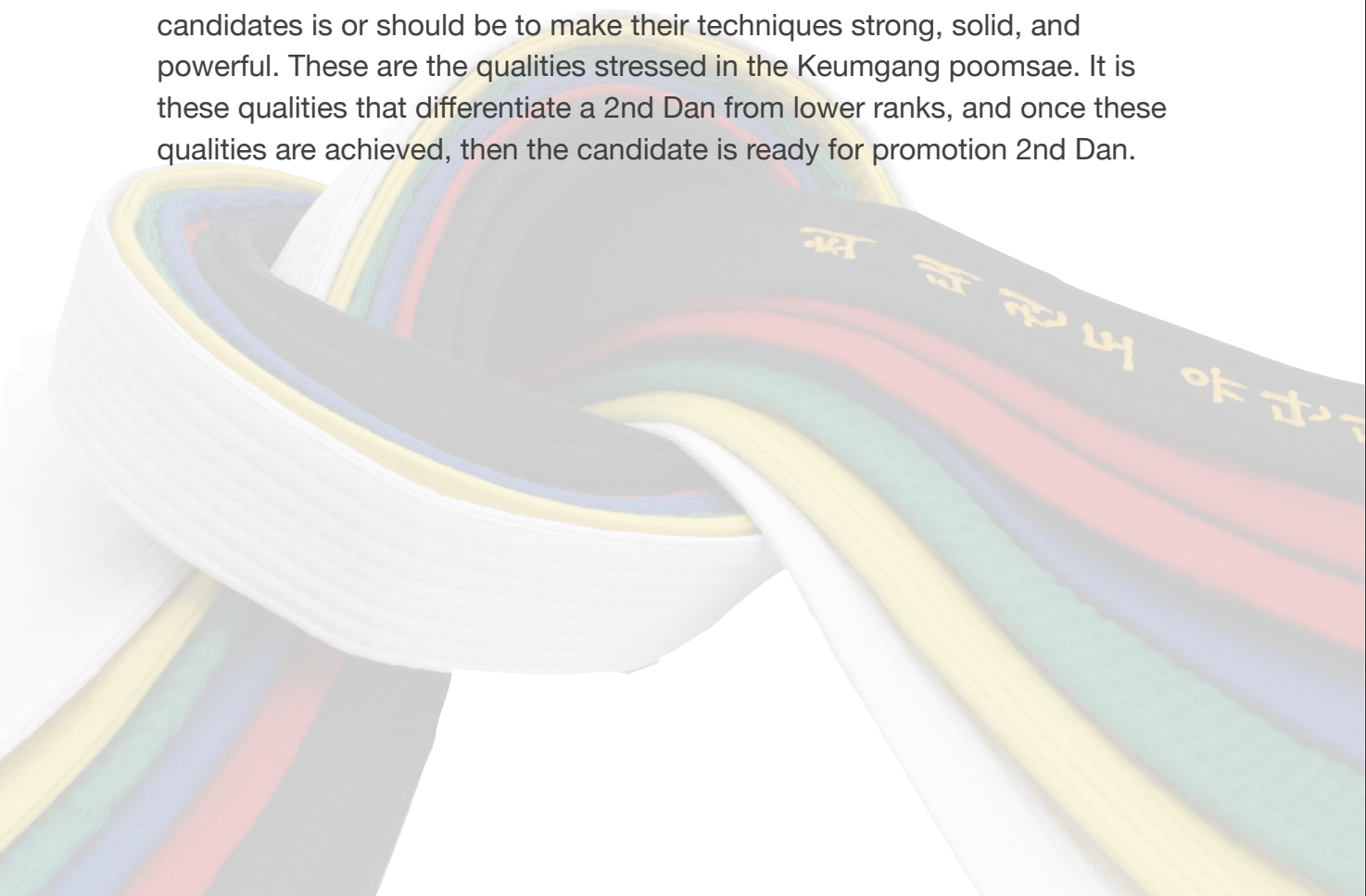
One must be a kick)

Self-defence against wrist grabs, collar, neck

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Keumgang as follows: "Keumgang (meaning diamond) has the significance of 'hardness' and 'ponderosity'. Mount Keumgang on the Korean peninsula, which is regarded as the centre of national spirit, and the 'Keumgang Yoksa' (Keumgang warrior) as named by Buddha, who represents a mightiest warrior, are the background denominating this poomsae. The movements should be powerful and well-balanced so as to befit a black belter's dignity."

Keumgang is the poomsae for 2nd Dan level, and the focus of the 2nd Dan candidates is or should be to make their techniques strong, solid, and powerful. These are the qualities stressed in the Keumgang poomsae. It is these qualities that differentiate a 2nd Dan from lower ranks, and once these qualities are achieved, then the candidate is ready for promotion 2nd Dan.



Grading

Taebaek

Keumgang

Taegeuk 5-Koryo (Examiner's choice)

One-step sparring

Free sparring (1 x 2 minute round)

Free sparring 2 vs 1 (1 x 1 minute round)

Knife self-defence (thrust, slash and downward strike)

Two breaks of the student's choice

(They should only measure and setup the first technique, must flow in to the second.

One must be a jumping kick)

Background

The new Kukkiwon Textbook describes Taebaek as follows: "Taebaek is the name of a mountain with the meaning of bright mountain', where Tangun, the founder of the nation of Korean people, reined the country, and the bright mountain symbolises sacredness of soul and Tangun's thought of 'hongik ingan' (humanitarian ideal)."

The original philosophy was developing technique or form first (in Koryo and the Kup level poomsae), then power (in Keumgang) before speed (in Taebaek). Of course the way to develop speed is through thorough knowledge and practice of the basics, which is what Taebaek is all about.

The thing that distinguishes a 3rd Dan from a 2nd Dan is or should be the depth of knowledge with regard to the basics, as well as speed. When a 2nd Dan has acquired these qualities, then he or she is ready for 3rd Dan promotion.

The nine Kukkiwon black belt poomsae are divided up into groups of three. Each group of three is developed around one of the three main areas of study for a martial artist, which is the body, the mind and the spirit. Additionally, these three groups can be associated with Koguryo, Paekjae and Shilla, the original Three Kingdoms.

Background (continued)

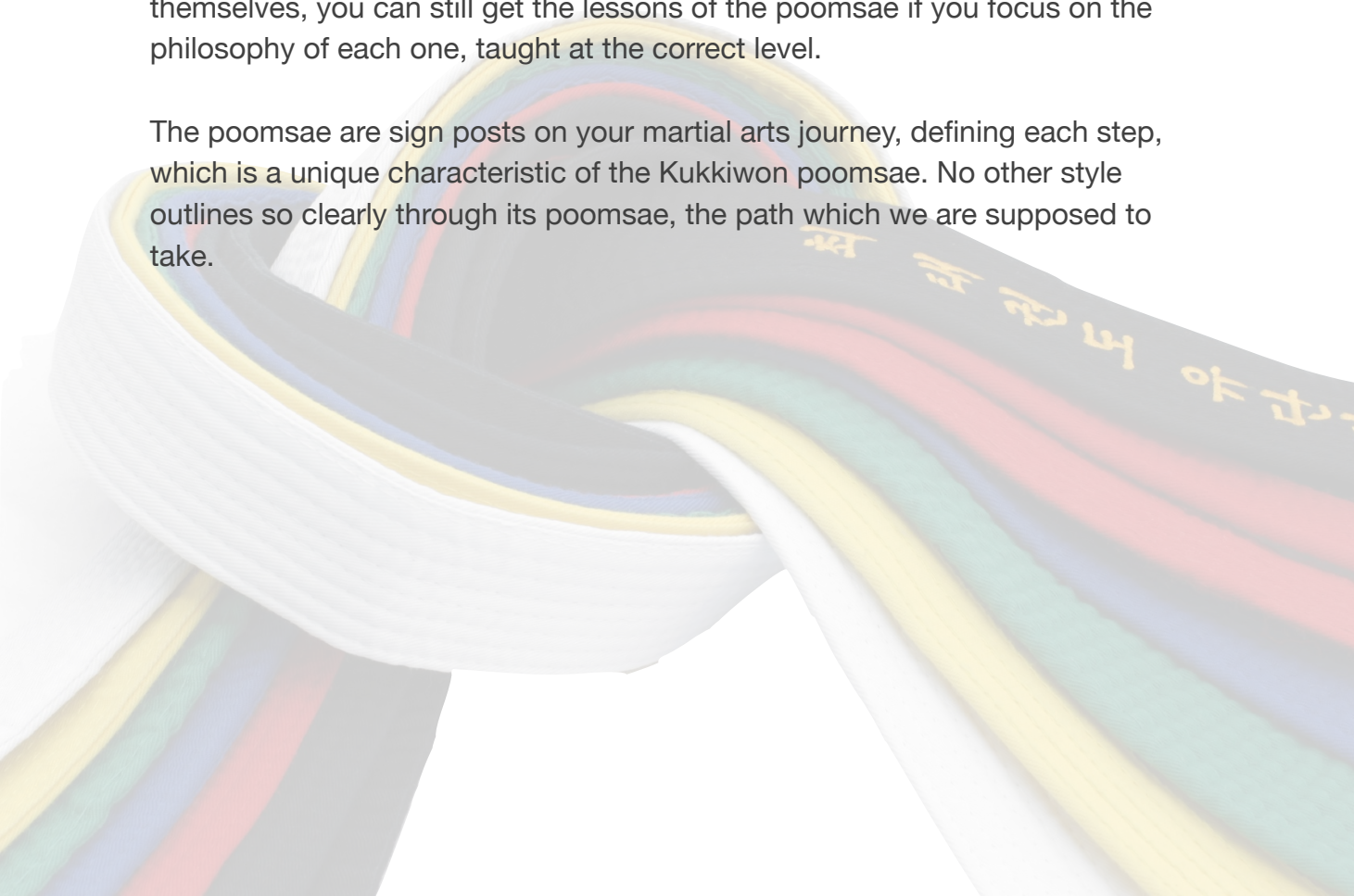
The first three yudanja poomsae are centered around the body or the physical development of a student. Similarly, Koguryo (or Koryo) in North Korea is distinguished by its great natural beauty, abundance of raw materials for building (i.e., iron ore, etc.) as well as its location for Korea's greatest mountains. The symbolism of the mountains in the first three yudanja poomsae has extra meaning in that it marks the climb of a martial artist's journey up through the physical levels of his art.

The second group of three is focused on mental development, while the last three are concerned mainly with spiritual development.

Studying the philosophy behind each of the poomsae gives additional insight into not only the poomsae themselves, but also into the process of developing through the dan ranks.

Failing to see the philosophy behind each of the poomsae robs the student and/or the instructor of an opportunity to see what the pioneers felt was important at each level. The pioneers were wise men who knew what they were doing, because they themselves went through the very process that they describe for us in the poomsae. Even if you don't practice the poomsae themselves, you can still get the lessons of the poomsae if you focus on the philosophy of each one, taught at the correct level.

The poomsae are sign posts on your martial arts journey, defining each step, which is a unique characteristic of the Kukkiwon poomsae. No other style outlines so clearly through its poomsae, the path which we are supposed to take.



Grading

Pyongwon

Taebaek

Taegeuk 5-Keumgang (Examiner's choice)

One-step sparring

Free sparring (2 x 2 minute round)

Free sparring 2 vs 1 (1 x 1 minute round)

Knife self-defence (thrust, slash and downward strike)

Three breaks of the student's choice

(They should only measure and setup the first technique, must flow in to the others.

Choice of one technique being suspended or two of the strikes being simultaneous, at least one being a kick)

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Pyongwon as follows: "Pyongwon means plain which 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 line of poomsae means the origin and transformation of the plain."

Pyongwon is traditionally be learned at the 4th Dan level, since the focus of the 4th Dan is or should be to come down from the lofty physical heights of the mountains scaled at the lower dans and to develop his or her teaching abilities, to transform the fertile plain of the dojang floor into a place where new crops of students are raised. If you look at a dojang floor when it is empty, it takes on the appearance of a fertile plain. The older, more traditional wooden floor looks like a freshly plowed field, ripe for planting.

Pyongwon is the shortest poomsae of all the Kukkiwon poomsae, which tells the 4th Dan that for this dan, his focus is not on his own training, but the training of his students. The side to side movement pattern of Pyongwon mirrors the movements of an instructor going back and forth across the dojang floor, teaching his or her students. It is these teaching qualities that differentiate a 4th Dan from lower ranks, and the Kukkiwon 4th Dan gains the title of "Master" and has the ability to promote their own students to one grade below themselves.

Grading

Sipjin

Pyongwon

Taegeuk 5-Keumgang (Candidates's choice)

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Sipjin as follows: "The word 'sipjin' was 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. Sipjin symbolises these things. The Chinese letter meaning ten is the form of the poomsae line, which signifies an infinite numbering of the decimal system and ceaseless development."

Sipjin is the poomsae for 5th Dan candidates and the form symbolises the exponential growth that many 5th Dans experience. After sacrificing his own development for the sake of the development of his students and his own teaching style as a 4th Dan, hopefully the candidate testing for 5th Dan has developed students who can help teach, which frees up the candidate to go back to earnest hard training.

When the 5th Dan does go back to training, for some reason, he or she undergoes a magical transformation, one of the telltale signs being the ten fold increase in knowledge that accompanies this period of development. One new concept gets turned into ten new ideas or techniques, and so forth. It is at this stage that a practitioner starts to develop his own style, based on his or her own interests and areas of discovery. He takes the techniques and principles that were taught to him, and creates new methods which he can call his own. That is what the ten fold increase is all about, seeing all of the possibilities, developing one's own style, one's own signature on a particular system. At this point, the practitioner becomes his own teacher, going within himself on the beginning of a journey of true self discovery, what Musashi would call "all things with no teacher."

However, one must concentrate and remain grounded during this period of extreme growth and expansion. Otherwise there could be negative ramifications on the practitioner's future progress. Sipjin's emphasis on stability is a reminder, and a warning, on this very point.

Grading

Jitae

Sipjin

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Jitae as follows: "The word 'Jitae' means a man standing on the ground with the two feet, looking over the sky. A man on the earth represents the way of struggling for human life, such as kicking, treading and jumping on the ground. Therefore, the poomsae symbolises various aspects occurring in the course of human being's struggle for existence and the poomsae line signifies a man standing on the earth to spring up toward the heaven."

If there is one quality that distinguishes a 6th Dan from lower dans, it is the intuitive ability to do the right thing at the right moment. This is the coach who can sum up an opponent's entire game after less than one round and instantly give the type of advice that will defeat that opponent. This is the instructor who can take any student and in the space of five minutes deal with whatever challenge that particular student is facing with a response that is nothing short of inspirational. It is almost as if whatever the 6th Dan does, works.

The 6th Dan is a transition period, going from the mental lessons of the middle dans, to the spiritual lessons of the upper dans. It is also the half way point, in terms of time in grade in the journey from white belt to beyond 9th Dan. This is why the poomsae line of Jitae signifies a man standing on the earth to spring up toward the heaven, because having gone through the physical and mental demands of the art, he can intuitively see and feel what the journey lies ahead, which is to take it to the next level.

So we can see that the Taekwondo journey, as mapped out within the poomsae created by the pioneers, is a journey of hope and of self-discovery, where each step builds upon the lessons learned at the lower levels. To a certain extent, one must have a good master who can guide the student through the various levels, and certain lessons can only be truly understood by those who have walked the path, but all can enhance their trip by taking heed of the sign posts as laid out by the pioneers. If you wish to honour them or show your respect, then you will practice the poomsae as they were intended to be practiced, with the proper feeling and philosophy behind the movements.

Grading

Chonkwon

Jitae

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Chonkwon as follows: "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. The characteristics of movements are large actions and arm actions forming gentle curves, thus symbolising the greatness of Chonkwon thought. The poomsae line "T" symbolises a man coming down from the heaven, submitting to the will of Heaven, being endowed power by the Heaven and worshiping the Heaven, which means the oneness between the Heaven and a human being."

The 7th through 9th Dan levels are normally considered the ranks of policy makers - those who make the decisions that ultimately shape the direction and destiny of Taekwondo. This level of responsibility requires that the practitioner have a "big picture" viewpoint, the type that one would have if he or she were positioned in the sky, or in heaven if you will. The large sweeping motions contained in the poomsae Chonkwon symbolises the broad sweeping effects that decision making on this level can have on the art.

Another way to look at Chonkwon is an acknowledgement to Taekwondo's early roots and one of the major lineages that influenced Taekwondo - GM YOON Byung In and his YMCA Kwon Bup Bu. GM Yoon was an eclectic martial artist who studied in both China and Japan. Similarly, the movements found in Chonkwon reflect such an influence or background. Even the name of the form, Chonkwon, contains part of GM Yoon's art name, the Kwon from Joo An Pa (Chuan Fa) Kwon Bup.

GM Yoon's work was carried on by the Chang Moo Kwan, through GM LEE Nam Suk, and in the original Taekwondo Textbook, GM KIM Soon Bae, another of GM Yoon's original students, is shown demonstrating the form.

Grading

Hansu
Chonkwon

IMPORTANT

8th Dan Kukkiwon must be tested for at the World Taekwondo Headquarters, Kukkiwon, in South Korea.

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Hansu as follows: "The word "Hansu" means water which is the source of substance preserving the life and growing all the creatures. Hansu symbolizes birth of a life and growth, strongness and weakness, magninimity and harmony, and adaptability. Especially, "han" has the various meanings, namely, the name of a country, numerousness, largeness, evenness, longness, and even the heaven and the root of everything, among others. Above all, the nature of water characterised by unbreakability and flexibility, in addition to all the above significances, is the background of organizing this poomsae. 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 which means water."

The philosophy and symbolism of water in a martial arts context is familiar to most, and is explained well in the Kukkiwon Textbook passages cited above. An alternative meaning would be that Hansu is another acknowledgement to Taekwondo's early roots and the lineage that influenced Taekwondo -- GM LEE Won Kuk and his Tang Soo Do Chung Do Kwan. The name of the Kwan, "Chung Do", is usually translated into english as "Blue Waves", waves being formed by water.

The movements contained in Hansu reflect the Chung Do Kwan's basic philosophies and contributions to Taekwondo, one being the emphasis on the use of full body weight and power in techniques. This is shown in the three middle punches shown in the very beginning of the form.

The trademark kick of the Chung Do Kwan is the side kick, which is featured in Hansu. Chung Do Kwan GM UHM Woon Kyu first popularized the use of the side kick in sparring, so much so that other members of the Chung Do Kwan began copying and imitating him.

Grading

Ilyeo
Hansu

IMPORTANT

9th Dan tests must be tested for in South Korea, either at the Kukkiwon or Changmookwan as appropriate.

Background

The Kukkiwon Textbook describes Ilyeo as follows: "Ilyeo" means the thought of a great Buddhist priest of Silla Dynasty, Saint Won Hyo, which is characterised by the philosophy of oneness of mind (spirit) and body (material). It teaches that a point, a line or a circle ends up after all in one. Therefore, the poomsae Ilyeo represents the harmonisation 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 Oneness spoken of at the time of the creation of the poomsae Ilyeo meant the unification of the different Kwan, which was the foremost goal of the Taekwondo pioneers. In order to unify, each Kwan had to give up its worldly desire of individual Kwan expansion in favour of the goal of a single Taekwondo system, each individual piece moving together toward a single goal. It is what the pioneers sacrificed for and made a reality, by putting aside individual differences and working together.

The original name of Ilyeo poomsae was Shilla poomsae, Shilla being the one which unified the Korean peninsula into a single country. Up until most recently, every leader of Korea for the last one thousand years came from Shilla, which today is called Kyong Sang Do. In this way, the pioneers hoped to do the same thing, unifying Taekwondo in the same that the Three Kingdoms were unified under Shilla.

An alternate explanation of the Buddhist overlay is found in the philosophy of the Jidokwan, which is the third major Kwan that led the unification efforts. The Jidokwan symbol is comprised of the familiar figure eight outline, called the Otugi. This represents the concept of "Seven Times down, Eight Times up". The outline of the Jidokwan symbol (which is also on the Kodokan Judo symbol, since the Jidokwan got its start at the Chosun Yun Moo Kwan, a Judo school) is the eight fold leaf pattern which represents the Buddhist eight fold path.

1st Dan/Poom

Koryo
Taegeuk 8
Taegeuk 1-7
One-step sparring
Free sparring
Two breaks of the student's choice
Self-defence

2nd Dan/Poom

Keumgang
Koryo
Taegeuk 1-8
One-step sparring
Free sparring
Two breaks of the student's choice
Self-defence

3rd Dan/Poom

Taebaek
Keumgang
Taegeuk 5-Koryo (Examiner's choice)
One-step sparring
Free sparring
Free sparring 2 vs 1
Knife self-defence
Two breaks of the student's choice

4th Dan/Poom

Pyongwon
Taebaek
Taegeuk 5-Keumgang
One-step sparring
Free sparring
Free sparring 2 vs 1
Knife self-defence
Three breaks of the student's choice

5th Dan

Sipjin
Pyongwon
Taegeuk 5-Keumgang

6th Dan

Jitae
Sipjin

7th Dan

Chonkwon
Jitae

8th Dan

Hansu
Chonkwon

9th Dan

Ilyeo
Hansu

