

# TAEKWON-DO PATTERN (CHANG-HON) IN THE CONTEXT OF KOREAN HISTORY

Grandmaster Choi had completed Tong Il, the final Pattern of the original 24 Tul by 1963.

According to Choi, these patterns were derived from "the most illustrious people to have been produced by nearly five thousand years of Korean history and each movement in a Pattern must express the personality and spiritual character of the person it is named after".

I would like to present these personalities embedded into the historical context by giving a concise overview of Korea's turbulent history. Hopefully this will make it easier for some students to see the Pattern meanings not just as the single string of words they have to memorize for their theory test.

Understanding another culture is difficult without knowing its history. Unfortunately records of many historical figures are scarce. As a nation Korea has suffered several major invasions and has lived under the domination of foreign forces for many years, often associated with the destruction of historical records and art.

## The Beginning {*Chon-Ji; Dan-Gun*}

**CHON-JI:** means literally "the Heaven the Earth". It is, in the Orient, interpreted as the creation of the world or the beginning of human history, therefore, it is the initial pattern played by the beginner. This pattern consists of two similar parts; one to represent the Heaven and the other the Earth.

*Baekdu Mountain* on the border between North Korea and China is a volcanic mountain, its crater partially filled by Lake Chonji. *Lake Chonji* ("Heaven Lake") is the spiritual and mythological origin of the Korean people. According to legend, Heaven and Earth meet at this lake, here Hwanung descended from heaven. Koreans consider Mount Baekdu not only as the place of their ancestral origin, but also a sacred mountain, a mountain with its own spirit, that has been worshipped by the surrounding peoples throughout history. The legendary beginning of Korea's first kingdom takes place here: *Gojoseon* (2333 B.C.–108 B.C.) founded by Dan-Gun.

**DAN-GUN:** is named after the holy Dan-Gun, the legendary founder of Korea in the year of 2,333 B.C.

*Dan-Gun's* ancestry legend begins with Hwanin ("Lord of Heaven"). Hwanin had a son, Hwanung, who yearned to live on the earth among the people. Hwanung descended onto Baekdu Mountain and founded Sinsi ("The City of God"), where he instituted laws and moral codes and taught the people various arts, medicine, and agriculture.

A tiger and a bear prayed to Hwanung that they may become human. Upon hearing their prayers, Hwanung gave them 20 cloves of garlic and a bundle of mugwort, ordering them to eat only this sacred food and remain out of the sunlight for 100 days. The tiger gave up after twenty days and left the cave. However, the bear remained and was transformed into a woman. Hwanung took her for his wife and soon she gave birth to a son, who was named Dan-Gun.

The legend seems to reflect the sun-worship and totemism common in Northeast Asia at that time. The bear is often found in origin myths of Manchuria and the Russian Far East. The legend therefore may hint at the relationships among various tribes that worshipped the sun, bear and tiger. Myth and history blend together to describe the establishment of tribe into a people or nationality - the beginning of Korean history more than 4000 years ago.

Dan-Gun ascended to the throne [note that in Old Korean the same word *Geom* means not only King but also Bear], built the walled city of Asadal, situated near Pyongyang (present capital of North Korea), and called the kingdom Joseon—referred to today as "Old/Ancient Joseon" (Korean: "*Gojoseon*") so as not to be confused with the later Joseon Kingdom (1392A.D.–1897A.D.)

The legend of Dan-Gun was first recorded in the 12th century. In the face of continual threat of foreign domination the legend was often instrumental in reviving national unity. Even today October 3 in the Korean calendar is known as Gaecheonjeol ("Festival of the Opening of Heaven"). This day is now a national holiday, called National Foundation Day.

## Prehistory

The *Paleolithic Age* (the Old Stone Age) in Korean history indicates that human inhabitants were present on the Korean peninsula about half a million years ago, although they are not thought to be the direct ancestors of Koreans. These ancient people were pushed out of Korea into Japan and Siberia by a migrating group of hominins at the start of the Neolithic Age (the last part of the Stone Age, when agricultural skills had been developed but stone was still the principal material for tools and weapons).

Between 6,000 and 3,000 B.C., tribes of Tungusic people migrated into the Korean peninsula from Central Asia. These people were of the Neolithic Age and are thought to be the direct ancestors of the Korean people. Neolithic people in Korea began as hunter-gatherers, but by 2,000 B.C. they were living in an agrarian society.

They believed in Animism (they worshipped animals) and thought all natural objects had spirits. Shamanism (spirit worship) was prevalent as it was elsewhere in Asia during this time period. Shamans were believed to have supernatural healing power and the ability to contact spirits to protect family and community from evil spirits.

The Tungusic tribes spoke an Altaic language which includes the Turkic, Mongolic, Tungusic (Manchuria and Eastern Siberia), and Japonic language families and the Korean language.

The *Bronze Age* (characterized by the use of tools and weapons made of bronze - a metal alloy of copper with tin), represents the level of development of human culture that followed the Stone Age. It begun probably 2000 - 1000 B.C. in Korea and lasted to the fourth century B.C., when iron was introduced from China.

The Bronze Age people lived in tribal states or small walled-town states. Sometime during the late Bronze Age, half a dozen loosely affiliated walled-town states - the earliest form of state structure to exist in Korea - grew powerful on the peninsula and in Manchuria, and kingships became institutionalized.

# Gojoseon

“Go” meaning "ancient" distinguishes it from the later *Joseon* Dynasty



Although the term *Dan-Gun* commonly refers to the founder Dan-Gun Wanggeom, some believe it was a title meaning "high priest" suggesting a religious and political function combined in a single person and used by all rulers of *Gojoseon*.

The *Gojoseon* (Old Joseon) kingdom is said to have been established in 2333 B.C. in the basins of the Liao river, eventually stretching from the northern Korean peninsula to much of Manchuria. It is generally believed it developed from a loose federation into a powerful kingdom between 7th and 4th centuries B.C.. Around 300 B.C., *Gojoseon* lost significant western territory after a war with the Yan state in China and fell into a period of decline. The Chinese had discovered iron by this time and used it extensively in farming and warfare; the *Gojoseon* people were unable to match them. In 109-108 B.C., the Chinese Han-Dynasty attacked *Gojoseon* and destroyed it as a political entity. By the 1st Century B.C. *Gojoseon* disintegrated as it gradually lost the control of its former fiefs. As *Gojoseon* lost control of its confederacy, several smaller states sprang from its former territory.

# Three Kingdoms Period

Silla, was probably the first of these tribal people to form a kingdom in 57 B.C., Koguryo was founded in 37 B.C. and Baekje in 18 B.C.. The 3 Kingdoms period was a very turbulent period in the Korean history with territorial battles with each other and political control being sought by neighbouring countries.

## Silla {*Hwa-Rang; Yoo-Sin; Moon-Moo*}

57B.C.–935A.D.

According to Korean records, Silla was founded by King Park Hyeokgeose in 57B.C..

It began as a chiefdom in the *Samhan*, an ancient confederacy of Mahan, Jinhan, and Byeonhan in the central and southern Korean peninsula, which is thought to have formed around the time of the fall of Gojoseon. Becoming *Silla* in the Three Kingdoms of Korea, it later allied with China, and eventually conquered the other two kingdoms - Baekje in 660A.D. and Koguryeo in 668A.D.. Thereafter, *Unified Silla* or Later Silla as it is often referred to, occupied most of the Korean Peninsula, while the northern part re-emerged as *Parhae*(698 A.D.– 926A.D.), which was considered the successor state to Koguryō. After nearly 1000 years of rule, Silla fragmented into the brief Later Three Kingdoms, handing over power to its successor dynasty *Koryo* in 935A.D..



Silla at its height in 576A.D..

After the fall of Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.) China plunged into four centuries of division between rival regimes. This allowed the Korean kingdoms to live without much Chinese interference. But centuries of warfare with each other weakened the three kingdoms of Korea without giving paramount power in the peninsula to any.

Then the political situation changed dramatically with the reunification of China under the Sui Dynasty (589A.D.). The new Chinese emperor viewed the conquest of Manchuria and Korea as a vital part of his campaign to reconstruct the Chinese Empire as it had been under the Han dynasty.

In the 4th century, facing pressure from Baekje in the west and Japan in the south, Silla allied with Koguryeo. However, when Koguryeo began to expand its territory southward, moving its capital to Pyongyang, Silla switched into an alliance with Baekje.

*King Chin Heung* (540–576A.D.) established a strong military force. Silla helped Baekje drive Koguryeo out of the Han River (Seoul) territory, and then wrested control of the entire strategic region from Baekje in 553A.D., breaching the 120-year Baekje-Silla alliance. King Chin Heung also established the Hwarang. They would later play a very important role in the unification of the Three Kingdoms of Korea.

The **Hwarang** were a group of aristocratic young men, highly trained and skilled warriors, who developed into a formidable fighting force. Most of the great military leaders of the Silla Dynasty had been Hwarang. Their military spirit, their sense of loyalty to King and Nation, and their bravery on the battlefield contributed greatly to the power of the Silla army. *Hwarang-do* was a philosophical and moral code (long pre-dating Japanese Bushido -“way of the warrior”). It combined Confucian teachings, Taoist doctrines and Buddhist beliefs.

Se Sok O Gye –the *code of the Hwarang*:

- loyalty to the King & Country
- Respect and obedience to parents & elders
- Trustworthiness amongst friends
- Courage in battle
- Do not take life unjustly

The Hwarang were taught literature, science, calligraphy, painting, and poetry, plus art of warfare. The lives and deeds of the Hwarang illustrate an extraordinary level of courage, honor, wisdom, culture, compassion and impeccable conduct. The dedication and self-sacrifice of the Hwarang were clearly based on principles much stronger than ego and self-interest.

**HWA-RANG:** is named after the Hwa-Rang youth group which originated in the Silla Dynasty in the early 7th century. The 29 movements refer to the 29th Infantry Division, where Taekwon-Do developed into maturity.

[NOTE: inconsistency: Choi writes in his Encyclopedia that the Hwarang was formed under the reign of King Chin Heung (-576) >> 6th century]

Queen Seondeok (632-647A.D.), Silla’s first queen, continued the reorganization of the Silla armed forces. She intensified Silla’s ties and cultural exchange with China - many scholars were sent to China for studies and many Hwarang warriors to learn Chinese war tactics.

In 644 A.D. with Koguryeo attacking Silla and the queen requesting aid, Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty decided to prepare for a campaign against Koguryeo (see *Koguryeo-Tang War*).

In 660A.D. under King Muryeol (he and Chinese Emperor Gaozong were friends in the time before the Emperor ascended to the throne) general **Kim Yoo-Sin** was given total command of the Silla armed forces. He set out with 50,000 soldiers and fought the bloody battle of Hwangsanbeol, supported by Tang forces, against general *Ge-Baek*, leaving the kingdom of Baekje devastated.

Yoo-Sin's Silla forces and their Tang allies then moved on Koguryeo, the only adversary on the Korean peninsula to face Silla. They attacked the seemingly impregnable Koguryeo kingdom in 661, but were repelled. But The attack had weakened Koguryeo. In 668, under *King Moon-Moo* (son of King Muyeol), general *Kim Yoo-Sin* conquered Koguryeo to its north.

**YOO-SIN:** is named after General Kim Yoo Sin, a commanding general during the Silla Dynasty. The 68 movements refer to the last two figures of 668 A.D., the year Korea was united. The ready posture signifies a sword drawn on the right rather than left side, symbolizing Yoo Sin's mistake of following his king's orders to fight with foreign forces against his own nation.

[NOTE: Choi sees as a "mistake" that the unification of the three kingdoms came at the price of the destruction of two of them - furthermore this was accomplished with the support of foreign troops. Choi was born in a region of former Koguryeo kingdom and the thought of the destruction of this state at the hands of Chinese (foreign) troops, must have evoked strong patriotic resentments]

**King Moon-Moo** (reign 661–681A.D.) was the first ruler ever to see the Korean peninsula completely unified.

Silla then fought for nearly a decade to expel Chinese forces on the peninsula. In 676 the Sillans had driven out the Chinese, who had supported the Silla Kingdom in unifying the country probably with the ulterior motive to seize political control of Korea and enforce Chinese rule.

**MOON-MOO:** honors the 30th king of the Silla Dynasty. His body was buried near Dae Wang Am (Great King's Rock). According to his will, the body was placed in the sea "Where my soul shall forever defend my land against the Japanese." It is said that the Sok Gul Am (Stone Cave) was built to guard his tomb. The Sok Gul Am is a fine example of the culture of the Silla Dynasty. The 61 movements in this pattern symbolize the last two figures of 661 A.D. when Moon Moo came to the throne.

Moon-Moo ruled over the unified country for twenty years, until he fell ill in 681A.D.. Before he died he said to his son, Prince Sinmun: "Cremate my remains and scatter the ashes in the sea where the whales live. I will become a dragon and thwart foreign invasion."

King Moon-Moo was the first ruler ever to look upon the south of the Korean Peninsula as a single political entity after the fall of Gojoseon. As such, modern historians refer to the post-668 Silla kingdom as ....

### ***...Unified Silla.***

The name "Unified Silla" is a term that likely dates from after the division of Korea in 1945, and to some degree reflects modern-day political longings. Because of this, some historians suggest the term *North-South States Period* to better reflect the fact that Silla did not unify the entire region.

Although Silla did contribute to bring down Koguryeo, it was Tang Dynasty China who took control over most of former Koguryo's territory. Also, refugees of Koguryo founded ***Parhae*** state ("Balhae" or "Bohai" in Chinese) (698–926A.D.) a few years later in Manchuria. After Parhae's collapse its territory was controlled by the northern nomadic people and was thus no more part of Korean history.



Parhae at its greatest territorial extent

Unified Silla lasted for 267 years until, under King Gyeongsun, it fell to *Koryo* in 935A.D..

# Koguryo {*Kwang-Gae; Ul-Ji; Yon-Gae*}

37B.C. - 668A.D.

The English word "Korea" derives from "Koryo", which in turn was named after *Koguryo*.



Koguryeo at its height in 476 A.D..

According to the *Samguk Sagi* and the *Samguk Yusa*, a prince named Jumong, from the kingdom of Puyo (an ancient Korean kingdom located in today's Manchuria and northern North Korea), fled after a power struggle and founded the *Koguryeo* state in 37 B.C. in the Yalu (Korean: Amnok) river basin (the current China-North Korea border).

The Koguryeo homeland, currently known as central and southern Manchuria and northern Korea, is very mountainous and lacking in arable land. This territory could barely feed Koguryeo's own population and at times proved unable to do so. Koguryeo was known for raiding their neighbors, so they could expand their resource base and food stores and to dominate their tribal neighbors both politically and economically. The Koguryeo nation developed into a very warlike people, which was also due to the country's borderline being consistently being invaded neighbouring tribes.

The expanding Koguryeo kingdom soon entered into direct military contact with the Chinese Liaodong Commandery to its west. In the chaos following the fall of the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. – 220 A.D.), the former Han Commanderies had broken free of control and were ruled by various independent warlords. The Commanderies had been set up to control the populace in the area previously under the control of Gojoseon. Surrounded by these Commanderies, which were governed by aggressive warlords, Koguryeo moved to improve relations with the newly created Wei Dynasty of China (one of the empires that competed for control during China's Three Kingdoms period) and entered into a formal alliance with the Wei. After the Liaodong commandery was destroyed, the alliance broke and in the following Koguryeo-Wei War (244 A.D.) Koguryeo was invaded, its capital and army destroyed.

The Wei armies thought they had destroyed Koguryeo and soon left the area. However, in the following decades, Koguryeo rebuilt their capital and again began to raid and conquer the Chinese Commandaries, bringing the northern part of the Korean peninsula into the fold (313A.D.). From this point on, until the 7th century AD, territorial control of the peninsula would be contested primarily among the Three Kingdoms of Korea. This was helped by the breakup of northern China into minor barbarian-ruled states which after 300 A.D. allowed the Korean kingdoms to live without much Chinese interference for nearly three hundred years, although unofficial contacts remained. Koguryeo's expansion met a temporary setback when Baekje sacked one of Koguryeo's largest cities, Pyongyang, and killed its King in battle in 371A.D..

### *Zenith of Goguryeo's Power (391A.D. to 531A.D.)*

**KWANG-GAE:** is named after the famous Gwang-Gae-Toh-Wang, the 19th King of the Koguryo Dynasty, who regained all the lost territories including the greater part of Manchuria. The diagram (±) represents the expansion and recovery of lost territory. The 39 movements refer to the first two figures of 391 A.D., the year he came to the throne.

### *Kwang-Gae-Toh-Wang*

Immediately upon being crowned King of Koguryeo in 391A.D., Kwang-Gae-Toh granted himself the title "Supreme King Yeongnak", affirming himself as equal to the rulers of China and the king of Baekje.

He firmly establishing Koguryo as the most dominant power in the region.

In 392A.D. with Kwang-Gae-Toh in personal command, Koguryeo attacked Baekje. After several heavy defeats, Baekje began to politically crumble.

In 395 he attacked and conquered parts of central Manchuria. Several more campaigns followed against tribes in Inner Mongolia. There is evidence that Koguryo's maximum extent lay even further west, in present-day Mongolia.

In 400, Silla, in the southeast of the peninsula, requested Koguryo's assistance to defend against an alliance of the Japanese and Baekje. King Kwang-Gae-Toh defeated them, expelled Japan from Silla to southern Korea and submit Silla to his authority.

King Kwang-Gae-Toh the Great is one of only two rulers of Korea who were given the title 'Great' (the other one being King Sejong the Great of Joseon). He is regarded by Koreans as one of the greatest heroes of their history, and is often taken as a potent symbol of Korean nationalism - a movements throughout history to maintain the Korean cultural identity, history, and sovereignty in the face of foreign hegemony ("the political, economic, ideological or cultural power exerted by a dominant group over other groups, regardless of consent").

Koguryeo had reached its zenith in the 6th century. After this, however, it began a steady decline. Aristocratic factionalism increased, renegade magistrates with private armies appointed themselves de facto rulers of their areas of control. Weakening Koguryeo even more, was civil war amongst feudal lords over royal succession, Baekje and Silla allied to attack Koguryeo from the south in 551A.D.

In the late 6th and early 7th centuries, Koguryeo was often in conflict with the Sui and Tang Dynasties of China. Its relations with Baekje and Silla were complex and alternated between alliances and enmity.

The war along the middle of the Korean peninsula had important consequences. It effectively made Baekje the weakest player on the Korean peninsula and gave Silla an important resource and population rich area as a base for expansion. It also gave Silla direct access to the Yellow Sea, opening up trade and diplomatic access to the Chinese dynasties. This increasing tilt of Silla towards China would result in an alliance, that would prove disastrous for Koguryeo in the late 7th century.

### ***Koguryeo-Sui Wars***

The Koguryeo-Sui Wars were a series of campaigns launched by the *Sui Dynasty* (581-618A.D.) of China against the Koguryeo of Korea between 598 and 614. It resulted in the defeat of Sui and contributed to its eventual downfall of the dynasty in 618.

The Sui Dynasty had united China in 589A.D..

Sui asserted its position as the overlord of all of Asia, and most countries submitted themselves. However, Koguryeo insisted on maintaining an equal relationship with the Sui Dynasty. Sui was displeased with the challenge from Koguryeo, which continued small scale raiding into Sui's northern border, and in 598 an army and navy totaling 300,000 advanced to conquer Koguryeo. Unseasonably heavy rain made the army's progress almost impossible and hampered the transport of provisions. Constant attacks by Koguryeo forces and illness inflicted heavy casualties. Coming to the conclusion that the army could not achieve the objective on its own, the Sui decided to combine with their naval fleet. But rough seas and attacks, whenever they anchored, weakened the Chinese fleet and, when they engaged in a battle against a Koguryeo fleet totaling 50,000, the Sui fleet suffered a devastating loss. About 90% of all Sui troops perished, Koguryeo casualties are thought to be almost nonexistent.

### **Second War of 612A.D.**

After taking the throne in 604 Emperor Yang of Sui built the Grand Canal connecting the south, the economic base, and the north, the political base of China. The canal allowed transportation of troops for the coming military campaign on a massive scale. An estimated 1,100,000 combat troops were mobilized. The support troops, responsible for logistics and transportation of resources, are believed to have dwarfed even that number. The total strength of the army is estimated ranging from 3 million to more than 5 million.

The Koguryeo troops retreated behind what is now known as the Liao River. A fortunate event for the Koreans was that the river melted much sooner than usual. About 300,000 Chinese troops, bypassed the main defensive lines and headed towards the Koguryeo capital of Pyongyang to link up with Sui naval forces which contained reinforcements and supplies. However, Koguryeo was able to defeat the Sui navy. Thus, when the Sui's armies finally reached Pyongyang, they didn't have the supplies for a lengthy siege. Sui troops retreated, and General ***Ul-Ji Mon Dok*** led the Koguryeo troops to victory by luring the Sui into an ambush outside of Pyongyang. At the *Battle of Salsu River* (present-day Chongchon River), Koguryeo soldiers released water from a dam, which split the Sui army and cut off their escape route. Of the original 300,000 soldiers, only 2,700 escaped to Sui China.

The Chinese's continuous campaigns against Koguryo resulted in the deaths of millions of people in Sui kingdom. The discontent against the regime rose, and after the last campaign, revolts erupted across China. The losses that Sui suffered, both in terms of lives and resources contributed to the fall of the Sui Dynasty in 618 A.D..

**UL-JI:** is named after general Ul-Ji Moon Dok who successfully defended Korea against a Tang's invasion force of nearly one million soldiers led by Yang Je in 612 A.D., Ul-Ji employing hit and run guerilla tactics, was able to decimate a large percentage of the force. The diagram (ㄗ) represents his surname. The 42 movements represents the author's age when he designed the pattern.

[Note: inconsistency: should read Sui dynasty, Tang came to power in 618 A.D. part as result of Sui's massive losses in the Koguryo-Sui Wars]



China at Tang Dynasty with location of Grand Canal

### ***Koguryo-Tang War and Tang-Silla alliance***

In China the *Tang Dynasty* (618-907A.D.) followed after the collapse of the Sui Empire. Tang is generally regarded as a high point in Chinese civilization and Emperor Taizong of Tang (ruling from 626 to 649A.D.) is considered one of the greatest rulers in Chinese history.

In 642 Yeongnyu, the king of Koguryo, had been plotting with some of the officials to kill his general ***Yon Gae Somoon***, whose power and influence were rapidly overtaking the throne's. When Yon received the news, he started a coup and killed the king and the high level officials. Yon appointed himself Dae Mangniji and had the actual control of the government and the military.

In 643, Silla's Queen Seondeok requested aid from Tang claiming that her state was under heavy attack by Baekje, allied with Koguryo. This, combined with the murder of King Yeongnyu (who had favored appeasement to Tang Dynasty) at the hands of the military general Yon Gae Somoon, increased tensions between Tang and Koguryo, as Yon Gae took an increasingly provocative stance against Tang. An alliance between Tang and Koguryo's rival Silla was the consequence.

In 645, Tang's emperor, Taizong, launched an attack against Koguryo. Tang was able to defeat Koguryo's network of defenses, but had difficulties at the last link in the defense chain at *Ansi Fortress.*, Tang Taizong was not able to capture Ansi, and the Tang army withdrew after suffering large losses during the siege of Ansi and after running out of food supplies.

There were preparations of another massive campaign, but Emperor Taizong died in summer 649, and this campaign against Koguryo was not launched

After Taizong's death Tang armies were again sent to conquer Koguryo in 661 and 662, but could not overcome the successful defence lead by Yon Gae Somoon, although the Tang attacks inflicted substantial losses. The population and economy were severely damaged after the three major invasions and never fully recovered.

Koguryo's ally in the southwest, Baekje, had already fallen to the Silla-Tang alliance in 660.

In 666A.D. Yon Gae Somoon died and civil war ensued among his three sons.

**YON-GAE:** is named after a famous general during the Koguryo Dynasty, Yon Gae Somoon. The 49 movements refer to the last two figures of 649 A.D., the year he forced the Tang Dynasty to quit Korea after destroying nearly 300,000 of their troops at Ansi Sung.

Two years after Yeon's death, Koguryo finally fell in 668A.D..

# Baekje {*Ge-Baek*}

8B.C. - 660



Baekje at its height in 375A.D..

According to the *Samguk Sagi* (the oldest surviving Korean history book, written in the 12th century A.D.), Onjo, the son of Koguryo's founder Jumong, founded the nation of *Baekje* in 18 B.C. with the early capital of Wiryeseong in the modern-day Seoul area.

Baekje alternately battled and allied with Koguryo and Silla as the three kingdoms expanded control over the peninsula. After defeating Koguryo in 371 A.D., Baekje had become a dominant power in East Asia, whose influence was not limited to the Korean peninsula. At its peak in the 4th century Baekje controlled most of the western Korean Peninsula as far north as Pyongyang. Some Chinese and Korean records indicate, that the territory included parts of present-day China across the Yellow Sea.

The kingdom actively adopted Chinese culture and technology. Chinese writing system was introduced. Buddhism became the official state religion in 384 A.D.. Baekje also became a significant regional sea power and established political and trade relations with the Japanese rulers, transmitting continental cultural influences to Japan. In the 5th century A.D., Baekje retreated under the southward military threat of Koguryo, and in 475, the Seoul region fell to Koguryo.

Baekje's capital was located at Ungjin (present-day Gongju) in an isolated mountainous terrain.

[Note: history seemed to repeat itself when in 2004 the South Korean Prime Minister Lee Hae-chan announced a controversial project to move the country's capital from Seoul to Gongju -approximately 120 km south of Seoul. The goal was to move by 2030 to reduce Seoul's overcrowding and economic dominance over the rest of South Korea. Perhaps not coincidentally, it would also move the government and administration out of range of North Korean artillery fire].

Ungjin, the new capital, was secure against the north but was also disconnected from the outside world. It was closer to Silla than its previous capital Wiryeseon. However, a military alliance was forged between Silla and Baekje against Koguryo.

The 6th century A.D. (Sabi period) witnessed the flowering of Baekje culture, alongside the growth of Buddhism. Under pressure from Koguryo to the north and Silla to the east, Baekje sought to strengthen its relationship with China. In the 7th century, with the growing influence of Silla in the southern and central Korean peninsula, Baekje began its decline.

In 660 A.D., the coalition troops of Silla and Tang Dynasty China attacked Baekje, which was then allied with Koguryo. A heavily outnumbered army led by General **Ge-Baek** was defeated in the Battle of Hwangsanbeol near Nonsan. The capital Sabi fell almost immediately thereafter, resulting in the annexation of Baekje by Silla. King Uija and his son were sent into exile in China, while part of the ruling class fled to Japan.

**GE-BAEK:** is named after Ge-Baek, a great general in the Baek Je Dynasty (660 A.D.). The diagram (I) represents his severe and strict military discipline.

Legend says, that when the united army of Silla and the Chinese invaded Baekje, General *Ge-Baek* organized 5,000 soldiers of the highest morale and courage to meet them in battle. He knew before he set out that his army was outnumbered and that his efforts would be futile, but he did not hesitate to try to defend his country, reportedly stating "I would rather die than be a slave of the enemy." He then killed his wife and family to prevent them from falling into the hands of enemy forces, and to prevent the thought of them to influence his actions or cause him to falter in battle.

His forces tried to block the advance of General *Kim Yoo Sin* on the Baekje capital Sabi. The two generals met on the plains of Hwangsan Field, where Ge Baek's forces fought bravely, but they were outnumbered ten to one, he and his men were annihilated and the kingdom of Baekje came under Silla rule.

# Korean Buddhism {*Won-Hyo*}

**WON-HYO:** was the noted monk who introduced Buddhism to the Silla Dynasty in the year of 686 A.D.

When *Buddhism* was originally introduced to Korea from China in 372A.D., about 800 years after the death of the historical Buddha, Shamanism was the indigenous religion. As it was not seen to conflict with the rites of nature worship, it was allowed to blend in with Shamanism. Thus, the mountains, that were believed to be the residence of spirits in pre-Buddhist times became the sites of Buddhist temples.

Buddhism was formally adopted by Silla in 527A.D. by King Beopheung. However, true Buddhist freedom in Silla would not begin until the reign of King Chin Heung (540–576A.D.), it then became an officially sponsored faith. Its state-protection aspects were emphasized. Thus, the Hwarang had strong connections to Buddhism.

With unification under Silla after 668 A.D., Buddhism came to play a less perceptible role in politics, as the monarchy attempted to adopt Chinese Confucian institutions of statecraft to govern an enlarged state and to curb the power of the aristocratic families. Nevertheless, Buddhism still enjoyed a central place in larger Silla society. Hundreds of Silla monks traveled to Tang China in search of education

***Won-Hyo*** (617 - 686 A.D.) was one of the leading thinkers, writers and commentators of the Korean Buddhist tradition. His over 80 works became classics revered throughout China and Japan as well as Korea.

Legend says that Won-Hyo and a close friend were traveling to China where they hoped to study Buddhism further. They were caught in a heavy downpour and forced to take shelter. During the night Won-Hyo was overcome with thirst, and reaching out, grasped what he perceived to be a gourd, and drinking from it, was refreshed with a draught of cool, refreshing water. Upon waking the next morning, however, the companions discovered much to their amazement, that their shelter was in fact an ancient tomb littered with human skulls, and the vessel, from which Won-Hyo had drunk, was in fact a human skull full of brackish water. Moved by the experience of believing a gruesome site to be a comfortable haven, and skull of mildewy water a refreshing drink, Won-Hyo was astonished at the power of the human mind to transform reality. After this "consciousness-only" enlightenment experience, he abandoned his plan to go to China. He left the priesthood and turned to the spreading of the Buddha dharma ("path or teaching of Buddha") as a layman.

Though Buddhism in Korea initially enjoyed wide acceptance, even being supported as the state ideology during the *Koryo* period [918A.D. to 1392A.D.], it suffered repression during the *Joseon* Dynasty [1392A.D.-1910A.D.]. During this period, *Neo-Confucian* ideology overcame the prior dominance of Buddhism.

Only after Buddhist monks helped repel a Japanese invasion at the end of the 16th century (see *So-San*), did the persecution of Buddhism and Buddhist practitioners stop. Buddhism in Korea remained subdued until the end of the Joseon period, when its position was strengthened somewhat by the *Japanese occupation*, which lasted from 1910 to 1945. After World War II, the Seon ("Zen" in Japanese, "Chan" in Chinese) school of Korean Buddhism once again gained acceptance. North Korea is officially atheist.

# Koryo {Choi-Yong; Po-Eun}

918A.D. to 1392A.D.

At the end of the 9th century Silla fell into a state of confusion. With a weakening of royal authority, rebellions sprung up everywhere and clan chiefs dominated the local areas. Silla was split into three territories which became known as the *Later Three Kingdoms*.

The last king of *Later Koguryo* - which was the greatest among the Later Three Kingdoms - was driven out by his subjects and Wang Kon took the crown (918). Wang Kon, later known as King T'aejo, renamed Later Koguryo as *Koryo*

The last sovereign of Silla, followed the popular sentiments of the people and ceded his sovereignty to Koryo in 935.

Koryo attacked *Later Baekje* in 936. With this, the *Later Three Kingdoms*, which were in a state of confusion for over 40 years, were reunified by Koryo.

By the 11th century the central government of Koryo gained complete authority and power over local lords. Numerous reforms included creating an exam for civil officials and a land-ownership reform.

During this period Koryo suffered regular invasions from foreign powers. The most devastating invasion came from the fiercest and most powerful military force the ancient world had ever known - the *Mongols*. In 1231, as part of a general campaign to conquer China, Mongolians invaded Koryo at tremendous cost to civilian lives throughout the Korean peninsula. Ultimately resulting in Korea becoming a tributary of the Mongol Yuan Dynasty. A peace treaty permitted Koryo to keep a certain sovereign power and traditional cultures.

In the mid-14th century, after nearly 100 years of Mongol rule, their power started to wane and Yuan (the Mongols named their dynasty Yuan) was driven back northward by the newly rising kingdom of *Ming* (1368–1644).

## *Choi Yong*

1316–1388A.D.

**CHOI-YONG:** is named after General Choi Yong, Premier and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces during the 14th century Koryo Dynasty. Choi Yong was greatly respected for his loyalty, patriotism, and humility. He was executed by his subordinate commanders headed by General Yi Sung Gae, who later become the first king of the Yi Dynasty.

Despite being born into a wealthy family, *Choi Yong's* beginnings were humble, and his lifestyle spartan. He viewed simplicity as a virtue and quickly gained the confidence of both, his men and his king, during numerous battles with Japanese pirates who began raiding the Korean coast around 1350.

He put down several rebellions and defeated a Mongol force attacking Koryo. Court intrigues and false accusations resulted in a punishment of six years in exile, and brought him dangerously close to execution - but he was eventually restored to his previous position as commander of the armed forces. In 1388 General Yi Seonggye, General Choi-Yong's subordinate, was ordered to use his armies to push the Ming armies out of the Korean peninsula and invade Liaodong. However, Yi, knowing the support he enjoyed from both the high-ranking government officials and the general populace, decided to return to the capital and trigger a coup d'état. Choi-Yong put up a fierce fight at the palace, but was overwhelmed by Yi's forces. He was later beheaded in the name of the government controlled by Yi Seonggye.

Choi-Yong was a great general who was wholeheartedly devoted to the protection of his country. He risked his life many times for Koryo, and his unswerving loyalty eventually cost him his life.

### ***Po-Eun***

1337–1392A.D.

**PO-EUN:** is the pseudonym of a loyal subject Chong Mong-Chu (1400) who was a famous poet and whose poem "I would not serve a second master though I might be crucified a hundred times" is known to every Korean. He was also a pioneer in the field of physics. The diagram (—) represents his unerring loyalty to the king and country towards the end of the Koryo Dynasty.

***Chong Mong-Chu*** - often known by his pen name ***Po-Eun*** - was a Korean civil minister and scholar during the late period of the Koryo dynasty

Chong was dispatched as a delegate to Japan in 1377, around the time, as waegu (Japanese pirates) invasions into the Korean peninsula were extreme. His negotiations led to the promise of Japanese aid in defeating the pirates. In 1384 he traveled to the Chinese capital and his negotiations with the Ming dynasty led to peace with China in 1385.

Chong was murdered in 1392 because he refused to betray his loyalty to the Koryo Dynasty and his allegiance to the king. The orders were given on behalf of Yi Bang-won (later Taejong of Joseon), a son of Yi Seonggye, (who had overthrown the last king of Koryo in order to found the Joseon Dynasty).

The 474-year-old Koryo Dynasty symbolically ended with Chong's death and was followed by the *Joseon* Dynasty.

# Joseon {*Se-Jong*}

1392-1910A.D.

[Joseon also Chosŏn, Choson, Chosun or Yi Dynasty]

[Note: Yi = Korean version of the popular Chinese name Li, which is often spelled Lee in English]

In 1392 Yi Seong-gye (-1398) overthrew Goryeo and founded the Yi (Lee) Dynasty (1392 to 1910 A.D.) as *Taejo* of Joseon, helped by his son Yi Bang-won. He declared a new dynasty under the name of Joseon (meaning to revive an older dynasty also known as (Go-)Joseon, founded nearly four thousand years previously).

After years of tensions and conflicts between Taejo's sons, Yi Bang-won assumed the throne of Joseon as King *Taejong* (1400-1418) after eliminating part of his own family.

During the course of Taejong's rule, the growing animosity between the Buddhists and Confucian scholars was a concern. As the old forces of aristocracy declined and scholar bureaucrats gained power, the new government readily decided to adopt Confucianism as the state ideology.

At the very beginning of his reign, Taejong banned private armies and removed opposition from the government. He also changed the political system, creating a strong central government and an absolute monarchy. Confucianism was promoted, which was more like a political philosophy rather than a religion; thus demoting Buddhism, which had become corrupt. He closed many temples, that had been established by Koryeo kings, seized their large possessions and added them to the national treasury.

During this period there was a backlash towards *martial arts* which resulted in the arts losing popularity and they fell into decline. The monasteries and semi-feudal military estates, which had flourished in the Koryeo Dynasty, had been centres for training in the martial arts. They had been given special status and they had become powerful forces. Now they were viewed as weakening the authority of the government.

In 1418 King Taejong abdicated, giving the throne to his son *Sejong the Great* of Joseon

## *Se-Jong the Great*

1397 – 1450A.D.

SE-JONG:

is named after the greatest Korean king, Se-Jong, who invented the Korean alphabet in 1443, and was also a noted meteorologist. The diagram (ㅊ) represents the king, while the 24 movements refer to the 24 letters of the Korean alphabet.

The early Yi Dynasty flourished intellectually and culturally in the reign of Sejong the Great. The national territory, as it is known today, was established during this period.

Joseon saw the advancement of scientific technologies;

a reform of the Korean calendar system,

efforts to develop a Korean system of traditional medicine - distinct from that of China;

the first book about Korean farming, dealing with agricultural subjects such as planting, harvesting, and soil treatment - these techniques were needed in order to sustain the newly-adopted methods of intensive, continuous cultivation in Korean agriculture. Sejong depended on the agricultural produce of Joseon's farmers, so he allowed them to pay more or less tax according to fluctuations of economic prosperity. He supported literature, and encouraged high class officials and scholars to study at the court.

King Sejong presided over the introduction of the Korean alphabet, with the explicit goal that Koreans from all classes would read and write. He also attempted to establish a cultural identity for his people through its unique script. First published in 1446 A.D., anyone could learn Hangul in a short period of time.

The creation of the written language of *Hangul* was announced to the Korean people in the Hunminjeongeum, meaning "The verbally right sounds meant to teach the people."

( Hangul is a phonemic alphabet organized into syllabic blocks. Each block consists of at least two of the 24 Hangul letters )

Hangul faced opposition by the literary elite - Confucian scholars in the 1440s, who believed *hanja* to be the only legitimate writing system - and perhaps saw it as a threat to their status. ( *hanja* is the Korean name for Chinese characters; more specifically, it refers to those Chinese characters borrowed from Chinese and incorporated into the Korean language with Korean pronunciation. *hanmun* refers to Classical Chinese writing )

However, Hangul entered popular culture as Sejong had intended. Lower classes embraced it, became literate and were able to communicate with one another in writing. It was effective enough at disseminating information among the uneducated - so that Yeonsangun, the paranoid 10th king, forbade the study or use of Hangul and banned Hangul documents in 1504,

Due to growing Korean nationalism in the 19th century and Japan's attempt to sever Korea from China's sphere of influence, Hangul was eventually adopted in official documents for the first time in 1894. Elementary school texts began using Hangul in 1895, and in 1896 the first newspaper was printed in both Hangul and English. Still, the literary elites continued to use Chinese characters.

After Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910, Japanese became the official language. However, Hangul was taught in the Japanese-established schools of colonial Korea built after the annexation. But in 1938 the Korean language was banned from schools as part of a policy of cultural assimilation, and all Korean-language publications were outlawed in 1941. The definitive modern orthography was published in 1946, just after independence from Japan.

## NEO-CONFUCIANISME {*Toi-Gye; Yul-Gok*}

During the Chinese Song (960A.D.-1279A.D.) Dynasty the Confucian scholar *Zhu Xi* became the leading figure of *Neo-Confucianisme*. This is based on Metaphysics (from the Greek meta-“beyond”, physika - “physical” ; a branch of philosophy concerned with explaining the fundamental nature of being) and was known as the “study of Zhu Xi”. It was introduced to Korea towards the end of the Koryo Dynasty and became the main current of Confucianism during the Joseon Dynasty with great influence on politics, society and education. In the 16th centuryA.D., metaphysics became a subject of even deeper study and philosophical disputes continued between Yi Hwang (Toi-Gye) and his younger contemporary Yi I (Yul-Gok), the two most prominent Korean Confucian scholars of the Joseon Dynasty. Both were great metaphysicians.

Zhu Xi maintained that all things are brought into being by the union of two universal aspects of reality: *qi*, sometimes translated as vital (or physical, material) force; and *li*, sometimes translated as rational principle (or law). Qi and Li operate together in mutual dependence.

### *Toi-Gye*

1501-1570A.D.

**TOI-GYE:** is the pen name of the noted scholar Yi Hwang (16th century), an authority on neo-Confucianism. The 37 movements of the pattern refer to his birthplace on 37° latitude, the diagram (±) represents “scholar”.

*Yi Hwang* passed the civil service exams with top honors in 1534 and continued his scholarly pursuits whilst working for the government. His integrity made him relentless as he took part in purges of corrupt government officials. On several occasions he was even exiled from the capital for his firm commitment to principles. Yi Hwang was disillusioned by the power struggles and discord in the royal court and left political office. However, he was continuously brought out of retirement and held several positions away from the royal court i.a. governor. He wrote many advisory documents and gave lectures from the teachings of Song Dynasty Confucian scholars. His school of thought contrasted with the school established by Yi Hwang's counterpart Yi I.

### *Yul-Gok*

1536-1584A.D.

**YUL-GOK:** is the pseudonym of a great philosopher and scholar Yi I (1536-1584) nicknamed the “Confucius of Korea”. The 38 movements of this pattern refer to his birthplace on 38° latitude and the diagram (±) represents “scholar”.

**Yi I** is not only known as a scholar but also as a revered politician and reformer. It is said that by the age of seven he had finished his lessons in the Confucian classics, and passed the Civil Service literary examination at the age of 13.

Yi I was not only known as a philosopher but also as a social reformer. He did not agree with the Neo-Confucianism teachings followed by Yi Hwang. His school of Neo-Confucianism placed emphasis on the more concrete, material elements, rather than inner spiritual perception. This practical and pragmatic approach valued external experience and learning. Unlike Yi Hwang, who suffered through turbulent times and did not enjoy being in politics, Yi I was an active official who thought it important to implement Confucian values and principles to government administration.

Yi I is also well-known for his foresight about national security. Due to splits within the ruling class, the national defense was weakened. Yi-I proposed to draft and reinforce the army against a possible Japanese attack, but his proposal was rejected by the central government. His worry was found to be well-founded soon after his death, when *Hideyoshi Toyotomi's* Japanese forces invaded Korea in 1592.

## **Japanese invasions of Korea** {*Choong-Jang; So-San;*

1592–1598A.D.

*Choong-Moo}*

(“Seven Year War”)

In 1592 the newly unified *Japan* decided to conquer Ming China by way of Korea. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, a daimyo or warlord in the Sengoku period who had unified the political factions of Japan, led the first invasion (1592-1593) with over 200,000 Japanese soldiers into Joseon. Division in the Joseon court, inability to assess Japanese military capability and failed attempts at diplomacy led to poor preparation on Joseon's part. With no standing forces to engage them, the Japanese pushed their way to the capital Seoul in just 15 days. The use of imported Portuguese muskets by the Japanese against Korean forces mostly armed with swords, bows, arrows and spears, left most of the southern peninsula occupied within months. Pyongyang and Hanseong (present-day Seoul) were captured. However, throughout the country, loyal volunteer armies formed and local resistance slowed down the Japanese advance

### ***Choong-Jang***

1567-1596A.D.

**CHOONG-JANG** is the pseudonym given to General Kim Duk Ryang who lived during the Yi Dynasty, 14th century. This pattern ends with a left-hand attack to symbolize the tragedy of his death at 27 in prison before he was able to reach full maturity.

[Note: inconsistency: should read 16th century. It seems that Gen. Choi's 1st English book on TKD printed in 1965 states: “Chung-Jang was the given name to the great General Kim Dok-Ryong of the Yi Dynasty about 400 years ago]

**Kim Duk Ryang** was a commander in the army during the Yi Dynasty. In 1592 when Hideyoshi invaded Joseon, Kim Duk Ryang was promoted to General and in 1594 to Commander in Chief of the Cholla Province. Under his leadership the army was able to repel the Japanese forces from the province.

But the bitter rivalries at court had their impact also on Kim Duk Ryang - he was arrested in 1595. Due to his success on the battlefield, he was released by royal decree.

He was finally killed in 1596, by poisoning, after allegations that he had taken part in the Mong Hak Yi rebellion. Posthumously he was cleared of all charges and dishonor.

Throughout the country, loyal volunteer armies formed and fought against the Japanese together with the government armies of Joseon. The tide of the war shifted away from Japan, when the Ming armies joined in the fight.

## ***So-San***

1520-1604A.D.

**SO-SAN:** is the pseudonym of the great monk Choi Hyong Ung (1520-1604) during the Yi Dynasty. The 72 movements refer to his age when he organized a corps of monk soldiers with the assistance of his pupil Sa Myung Dang. The monk soldiers helped repulse the Japanese pirates who overran most of the Korean peninsula in 1592.

**Choi Hyong-Ung** began life as a Neo-Confucian, but he was unhappy with the teachings and went on to study Buddhism, where he became a great teacher.

During the Japanese Invasion So-San organized a militia consisting of several thousand monks, who fought the Japanese invaders using guerrilla tactics.

Due to his 72 years of age, So-San appointed his closest disciple Sa Myung to be the field commander.

The monks' army was a critical factor in the eventual expulsion of the Japanese forces. The Japanese were harried at sea by *Admiral Yi Soon-Sin* (Choong-Moo), and by General *Kim Duk Ryang* (Choong-Jang) in the Cholla province (Honam).

On land the Korean forces had struggled and suffered a series of defeats, but Korean naval forces, led by Admiral Yi Sun-Sin, secured full control of the sea.

## ***Choong-Moo***

1545–1598A.D.

**CHOONG-MOO:** was the name given to the great Admiral Yi Soon-Sin of the Yi Dynasty. He was reputed to have invented the first armoured battleship (*Kobukson*) in 1592, which is said to be the precursor of the present day submarine. The reason why this pattern ends with a left hand attack is to symbolize his regrettable death, having no chance to show his unrestrained potentiality checked by the forced reservation of his loyalty to the king.

***Yi Sun-Sin***, one of the greatest heroes in Korean history, was a Korean naval commander noted for his victories against the Japanese navy during the *Japanese invasions of Korea (1592-1598)* in the Joseon Dynasty. Yi is reputed to be one of the few admirals to have been victorious in every naval battle (of at least 23) in which he commanded, and he is also known for his innovative use of the turtle ship.

Brilliance and early accomplishments in his career made his superiors jealous, and they falsely accused him of desertion during battle. Yi's was stripped of his officer rank, imprisoned and tortured. After his release, he was allowed to fight as an enlisted soldier. However, after a short period of time, he was appointed as the commander of the Seoul military training center and became later a military magistrate.

Yi's efforts in northern Korea were rewarded, when Yi was assigned as Commander of the Jeolla Naval District in 1591. From there, he was able to undertake a buildup of the regional navy, including the construction of the turtle ship, a considerable factor in his victories. The *Kobukson's* deck was shielded to deflect cannon fire and covered with iron spikes to discourage enemies from attempting to board the ship. Two sails and the addition of oars not only increased its speed, but made it so maneuverable, that it could turn on its own radius. Its "dragon head" at the ship's bow emitted smoke to hide its movements from the enemy in short distance combat.

[Note: "precursor of the present day submarine does not mean that the ship was able to submerge, Although Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) made sketches of a submarine, the first submarine used for military purposes (coincidentally named "Turtle") was built in 1776. The "Turtle" was a one-man, wooden submarine powered by hand-turned propellers. It was used during the American Revolution against British warships. The comparison with a submarine is rather based on the capability of a stealth approach.]

Yi's brilliance as a strategist emerged during the war. His personal command over the fleets made the attacks on Japanese ships coordinated and decisive. It was largely due to Yi's command that the Japanese were eventually forced to retreat, keeping Joseon and Ming China safe from another Japanese invasion until the end of the war. His campaigns resulted in hundreds of sunken Japanese warships, transports, supply ships and thousands of Japanese naval casualties.

In 1597 A.D. Hideyoshi launched another invasion, but this time the government, volunteer and Ming armies checked Japan's advance northward.

Yi had once more fallen into disgrace after refusing to conduct an attack, that would have been disastrous for the fleet. He was relieved of command, placed under arrest, imprisoned and tortured almost to death. King Seonjo wanted to have Yi killed, but the admiral's supporters at court convinced the king to spare him due to his past service record. When Yi's successor caused the annihilation of almost the entire Joseon navy, Admiral Yi was quickly reassigned his post. With only 13 battle ships and 200 surviving sailors remaining, he lured the Japanese fleet of over 300 ships into the Battle of Myeongnyang Strait. Through his superb strategy, using the extreme tidal currents to his advantage, he annihilated the Japanese navy, - making it one of the greatest naval victories in history.

The admiral died in the last major battle of the Japanese invasions of Korea, the battle of Noryang, which was fought between the Japanese navy and the combined fleets of the Joseon and Ming navies. This and Hideyoshi's sudden death marked the end of the seven-year Japanese War in 1598, the Japanese again withdrew.

Following the war, relations between Korea and Japan had been completely suspended. After the death of Toyotomi Hideyoshi, however, negotiations between the Korean court and the Tokugawa Shogunate were activated. As Tokugawa Ieyasu needed to restore commercial relations with Korea in order to have access to the technology of the mainland, diplomatic and trade relations were restored on a limited basis in 1607.

In 1627 A.D. **Manchu** nomads overran the northern regions of Korea and in 1637, during a second invasion, they captured Seoul and wrested an unconditional surrender from Ming China's traditional ally Joseon.

Following these events the Korean Kingdom became increasingly isolationist. Its rulers sought to limit contact with foreign countries and Korea became known as the "*Hermit Kingdom*". In addition, partly because of the war in Korea against Japan, the Ming Dynasty was weakened, which led to the establishment of the **Qing** Dynasty (1644 A.D. to 1912 A.D.) in China. From now on Korea had to pay tribute to the new Qing dynasty emperors as a Qing dynasty's protectorate.

Although Joseon experienced a nearly 200-year period of peace, the power of the kingdom further waned towards the end of the 18th century. Internal strife, power struggles, international pressure and rebellions at home, led to a rapid decline in the late 19th century.

# Korea under Japanese influence and rule

{*Joong-Gun; Do-San; Eui-Am; Sam-Il*}



Korea as part of the Japanese empire, 1939

Korea was occupied and declared a Japanese protectorate in the 1905 Eulsa Treaty and officially annexed in 1910. Subsequently it was under Japanese rule as part of Japan's 35-year imperialist expansion (1910–1945), ending formally with the Japanese defeat in World War II in 1945.

Japan's involvement in the region began with the 1876 Japan–Korea Treaty during the Joseon Dynasty:

After the Industrial Revolution in the 18th century, *European Imperialism* colonized Africa, most of Central, South and Southeast Asia including India. East Asia was invaded beginning with the Opium Wars in China by Britain and other foreign powers, while the American Asiatic Squadron forced Japan to open its ports to the western world in 1854.

Humiliated by unequal treaties and the prospect of losing its independence and integrity to imperialist powers, Japan embarked on a rapid transformation, successfully turning itself from a medieval society into a modern industrialized state. After the Tokugawa Shogunate came to its official end in 1867, the *Meiji Restoration* in 1868 led to enormous changes in Japan's political and social structure.

The newly modernised Meiji government of Japan turned to Korea, then in the sphere of influence of China's Qing Dynasty, and developed a plan to open up and exert influence on Korea before a European power could. During the late Joseon period, Korea had been largely an isolationist pre-industrial society, where most foreign trade was prohibited. Those Japanese in favor also saw the issue in Korea to be an ideal opportunity to find employment for the thousands of out-of-work samurai, who had lost most of their income and social standing in the new Meiji social and economic order.

Japan employed gunboat diplomacy to force Joseon Dynasty into signing the unequal *Treaty of Ganghwa* in 1876. It ended Joseon's status as a tributary state of Qing China (thus making it more difficult for Korea to seek Chinese military assistance) and it opened three ports to Japanese trade.

In 1894, during the Donghak Peasant Revolution, which became the catalyst for the *First Sino-Japanese* war, protesters took to the streets, demanding democratic reforms and an end to Japanese and Russian influence in Korean affairs. The Korean government asked for Chinese assistance to end the uprising. When China sent troops into Korea, Japan responded by sending its own troops. Japan won this First Sino-Japanese War, and China signed the Treaty of Shimonoseki in 1895, recognizing "the full and complete independence and autonomy of Korea", thus ending Korea's protectorate relationship with the Chinese Qing dynasty.

Korea's relations with Russia were good and when in 1896 King Gojong and the crown prince feared a coup d'état, they took refuge in the Russian legation in Seoul, from where they governed for about one year.

The anti-colonialist Boxer Rebellion in China led to a Russian invasion of Manchuria and to the *Russo-Japanese War* (1904-1905). Under Japanese pressure the Korean government allowed Japan to use the country for operations against Russia.

Japan won the war and, with the subsequent withdrawal of Russian influence, Japan gained the undisputed supremacy in Korea, forcing the Korean emperor into signing the *Eulsa Treaty*. Korea became a *Japanese protectorate*. Many intellectuals and scholars set up various organizations and associations, embarking on patriotic movements for independence.

## ***Joong-Gun***

1879-1910

**JOONG-GUN:** is named after the patriot Ahn Joong-Gun who assassinated Hiro-Bumi Ito, the first Japanese governor-general of Korea, known as the man who played the leading part in the Korea-Japan merger. There are 32 movements in this pattern to represent Mr. Ahn's age when he was executed at Lui-Shung prison (1910).

***Ahn Joong-Gun*** was a Korean independence activist, nationalist, and Pan-Asianist (he believed in a union of the three great countries in East Asia, China, Korea, and Japan in order to counter and fight off the "White Peril" (being the European countries engaged in colonialism), and so restoring peace to East Asia).

As a boy, Ahn learned Chinese literature and Western sciences, but was more interested in martial arts and marksmanship. In 1907 he exiled himself to Vladivostok to join armed resistance against the Japanese colonial rulers.

On October 26, 1909, he assassinated Hiro-Bumi Itō following the signing of the *Eulsa Treaty* with Korea on the verge of annexation by Japan. Ito, the first Prime Minister of Japan and then-Japanese Resident-General of Korea, had led the colonization of Korea.

After he was arrested, Ahn was quoted as saying, "I have ventured to commit a serious crime, offering my life for my country. This is the behavior of a noble-minded patriot". In the court, Ahn insisted that he be treated as a prisoner of war, as lieutenant general of the Korea resistance army, instead of a criminal, and listed 15 crimes Ito had committed which convinced him to kill Ito:

1. Assassinating the Korean Empress Myeongseong
2. Dethroning the Emperor Gojong
3. Forcing 14 unequal treaties on Korea
4. Massacring innocent Koreans
5. Taking the power of Korean government by force
6. Plundering Korean railroads, mines, forests, and rivers
7. Forcing the use of Japanese banknotes
8. Disbanding Korean armed forces
9. Obstructing education of Koreans
10. Banning Koreans from studying abroad
11. Confiscating and burning Korean textbooks
12. Spreading a rumor to the world that Koreans wanted Japanese protection
13. Deceiving the Japanese Emperor by saying that the relationship between Korea and Japan was peaceful when in truth it was full of hostility and conflicts
14. Breaking the peace of Asia
15. Assassinating the Emperor Komei of Japan.

Ahn requested to be executed as a prisoner of war by firing squad. But instead it was ordered that he should be hanged as a common criminal would be.

The assassination of Ito by Ahn was praised by Koreans and many Chinese as well, who were all struggling against Japanese invasion at the time.

In 1910 Japan effectively annexed Korea with the *Japan-Korea Annexation Treaty* ("His Majesty the Emperor of Korea makes the complete and permanent cession to His Majesty the Emperor of Japan of all rights of sovereignty over the whole of Korea."), ending the Joseon dynasty and officially starting the period of Japanese rule in Korea.

## ***Do-San***

1878 - 1938

**DO-SAN:** is the pseudonym of the patriot Ahn Chang-Ho (1876-1938). The 24 movements represent his entire life which he devoted to furthering the education of Korea and its independence movement.

**Ahn Chang-Ho** was a Korean independence activist. He established the Shinminhoe (New Korea Society), when he returned to Korea from the US in 1907. It was the most important organization to fight the Japanese Occupation and many of the great Korean patriots became members of this group. In 1919 Chang-Ho was a key member in the founding of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in Shanghai. Educational reform and modernizing schools were two main efforts of Do-San. He was arrested and put in prison more than five times for his patriotism and independence activities, the first time in connection with Ahn Joong Gun's assassination of Itō Hirobumi. Many consider Do-San to be one of the key moral and philosophical leaders of Korea during the 20th century. In 1937, Japanese authorities arrested Ahn, but due to severe illness, he was released on bail and died the same year.

### **Eui-Am**

1861-1922

**EUI-AM:** is the pseudonym of Son Byong Hi, leader of the Korean independence movement on March 1, 1919. The 45 movements refer to his age when he changed the name of Dong Hak (Oriental Culture) to Chondo Kyo (Heavenly Way Religion) in 1905. The diagram (I) represents his indomitable spirit, displayed while dedicating himself to the prosperity of his nation.

**Son Byong-Hi** was a Korean nationalist and independence activist.

1894 Choe Si-Hyeong led the *Dong-Hak* Peasant Revolution in protest against the corruption of the Joseon government, and Son Byong-Hi served as a commander. This revolution quickly grew into a resistance struggle against foreign invasion and occupation, in which Japan was the principal target. In 1895 the revolution was put down, Choe Si-Hyeong was captured and executed in 1898 and Son Byong-Hi became the next Great Leader of Dong Hak.

Members of Dong Hak were severely persecuted by the Japanese government, and in 1905 Son decided to modernize the religion in order to legitimize it in the eyes of the Japanese. He officially changed the name of Dong Hak ("Oriental Culture") to *Chondo Kyo* ("Heavenly Way Religion"). ("Chondoism" - is a 20th-century Korean religious movement, based on the 19th century Dong Hak movement, that had its origins in the peasant rebellions which started in 1812 during the Joseon Dynasty. It attempts to transform the believers into intelligent moral beings with a high social consciousness. In this respect, it could be seen as a humanistic socialist religion).

Throughout 1918 Son helped to set up a systematic underground anti-Japanese movement for which the Chondo Kyo gave financial support. A Declaration of Independence was prepared and half of the national leaders were members of Chondo Kyo.

## ***Sam-II - March 1st Movement***

**SAM-IL:** denotes the historical date of the independence movement of Korea which began throughout the country on March 1, 1919. The 33 movements in the pattern stand for the 33 patriots who planned the movement.

After Emperor Gojong died in January 1919 with a rumor of poisoning, independence rallies against Japanese invaders took place nationwide on 1 March 1919 (the March-1st- or *Sam-II-Movement*), and the Declaration of Independence was publicly proclaimed in Seoul. It is estimated that 2 million people took part in these rallies. The Japanese police and soldiers violently suppressed the protests. During the 12 months of demonstrations more than 7,500 Koreans were killed, nearly 17,000 wounded, and around 47,000 arrested, including *Son Byong-Hi*, who, while in prison, became ill and he died in 1922.

The March 1st Movement was a catalyst for the establishment of the *Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea* by Korean émigrés in Shanghai 1919. The modern South Korean government considers this Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea the legal representation of the Korean people throughout the period of Japanese rule.

Some Koreans left the Korean peninsula to Manchuria and formed resistance groups, which would travel in and out of the Korean-Chinese border, fighting guerrilla warfare with the Japanese forces. These guerilla armies would come together in 1941 as the *Korean Liberation Army* - the armed forces of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea. Tens of thousands of Koreans also joined the *Peoples Liberation Army* (the unified military organization of the People's Republic of China, 1928-) and the *National Revolutionary Army* (the Military Arm of the Kuomintang, 1925-1947)

During *World War II* Koreans were forced to support the Japanese war effort. Hundreds of thousands of men were drafted to fight for Japan or to work in mines and factories under appalling conditions. Around 200,000 girls and women, mostly from Korea and China, were conscripted as "comfort women" for Japanese military brothels.

In 1938, an estimated 800,000 ethnic Koreans were living in Japan as immigrants. Combined with forced laborers during World War II they brought the total to over 2 million by the end of the war. In 1946, some 1,340,000 ethnic Koreans were repatriated to Korea, with 650,000 choosing to remain in Japan.

After the outbreak of the *Sino-Japanese War* (1937) and of *World War II* (1941), Japan attempted to obliterate Korea as a nation. The continuance of Korean culture itself began to be illegal. Worship at Japanese Shinto shrines was made compulsory. The Korean language was banned and Koreans were forced to adopt Japanese names. Newspapers were prohibited from publishing in Korean. Numerous Korean cultural artifacts were destroyed or taken to Japan.

# The division of Korea

General Order No. 1, drafted in early August 1945 by the United States for Japanese surrender terms, stated for Korea, that Japanese forces north of the *38th parallel* were to surrender to Soviet commanders and those south of that line to the US Commander in Chief - to avoid that the whole peninsula might be occupied by the Soviet Union. Soviet troops had launched an invasion of Manchuria and landed at the northern tip of Korea only days before. At the same time, the US dropped their two atomic bomb on Japan, first Hiroshima and then Nagasaki, resulting in Japan's unconditional surrender on August 15. On Sep 8th, US troops arrived in Korea, almost one month after the Soviets, who had occupied the northern half and stopped at the 38th parallel, as per agreement with the United States - there were now two zones in Korea.

In **South Korea** various political parties had a common goal: immediate self-government. The People's Republic of Korea was proclaimed, but the US military government refused to recognize it, mainly because it was deemed too communist.

The country was plagued by political and economic chaos during this period, partly as aftereffects of the Japanese exploitation. Waves of refugees from North Korea also helped to keep the country in turmoil.

The U.S. military was largely unprepared for the challenge of administering the country, arriving with no knowledge of the language, culture or political situation, thus having an unintended destabilizing effect.

Beginning with anti-communist Syngman Rhee, who had moved back to Korea after decades of exile in the United States, a series of autocratic ("one who rules by himself"; a form of government in which one person possesses all the power) governments took power in South Korea, initially with American support.

On August 15, 1948, Syngman Rhee proclaimed the *Republic of Korea (South Korea)* and became its first president. In December that year the United Nations recognized the Republic of Korea as the sole legal government of Korea.

U.S. forces left the peninsula.

In 1946, the North had implemented land reforms by confiscating private property and especially Japanese and pro-Japanese owned facilities and factories, and placed them under state ownership. Demand for land reforms in the South grew strong, leading to the Land Reform Act 1949.

On June 25, 1950, the invasion of the South by North Korea marked the beginning of the *Korean War*.

In **North Korea**, unlike the US forces in the South, the Soviet army marched in, accompanied by an army of Korean communists. This allowed the USSR to easily instal a Communist-controlled government in the North without establishing a military government. A month after the South was granted independence as the Republic of Korea (South Korea), the *Democratic People's Republic*

*of Korea* (DPRK) was proclaimed on September 9, with *Kim Il Sung* as premier. The Soviet Union declared that Kim's regime was the only lawful government on the peninsula.

Originally the division was meant to be temporary. But initial hopes for a unified, independent Korea quickly evaporated as the politics of the *Cold War* resulted in the establishment of two separate nations with opposed political, economic, and social systems in 1948. As nationalists, both Syngman Rhee and Kim Il-Sung, were intent upon reunifying Korea - under their own political system.

The withdrawal of most U.S. forces from *South Korea* in 1948 left the government in Seoul defended only by a weak and inexperienced South Korean army.

The *North Korean* army, by contrast, had been the beneficiary of the Soviet Union's outdated Soviet WWII-era equipment, and had a core of hardened veterans, who had fought as anti-Japanese guerrillas or with the Chinese Communists.

Both Korean armies had continually harassed each other with skirmishes and each continually staged raids across the 38th parallel border. Initially, the Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin rejected Kim's requests for permission to invade the South, but in late 1949 the Communist victory in China and the development of Soviet nuclear weapons made him re-consider Kim's proposal. In January 1950, after China's Mao Zedong indicated that China would send troops and other support to Kim, Stalin approved an invasion.

The **Korean War** broke out when North Korea crossed the 38th parallel line in large numbers to invade the South on June 25, 1950.

It was the first significant armed conflict of the *Cold War* (1945-1991).

Due to a combination of surprise, superior military forces and a poorly armed South Korean army, the Northern forces quickly captured Seoul. Syngman Rhee and his government were forced to flee further south to a remaining area around Pusan. However, the North Koreans failed to unify the peninsula, when foreign powers entered the civil war. North Korean forces were soon defeated and driven northwards by United Nations forces led by the United States under command of General MacArthur. By October, the U.N. forces had retaken Seoul and captured Pyongyang. But MacArthur had crossed the 38th parallel in the mistaken belief that the Chinese would not enter the war. This would lead to major losses.

In November Chinese forces entered the war and overran the U.N. forces with their sheer numbers in a human-wave tactic, retaking Pyongyang in December 1950 and Seoul in January 1951. MacArthur was relieved of duty after his earlier mistake regarding China and after threatening not only to destroy China unless it surrendered, but that it would be his own decision, and not the American President's, whether or not to use nuclear weapons.

In March U.N. forces retook Seoul, and the war essentially became a bloody stalemate. The front was stabilized in 1953 along the 38th parallel, what eventually became the current *Armistice Line*.

## South Korea

After the Armistice in 1953, South Korea experienced political turmoil. *Rhee* assumed dictatorial powers, declared martial law, imprisoned opposition and rigged presidential elections. His leadership was ended in 1960 by popular protests against a disputed election.

After new parliamentary elections, the Second Republic was established. Political activity, which had been repressed under the Rhee regime, went into the other extreme and increased to around 2,000 demonstrations during the eight months of the Second Republic.

The government failed to implement effective reforms, which brought about endless social unrest, political turmoil and ultimately, the coup d'état, led by *Park Chung-Hee* in May 1961. He was one of a group of military leaders who had been pushing for the de-politicization of the military. Dissatisfied with the cleanup measures undertaken by the Second Republic and convinced that the current disoriented state would collapse into communism, they chose to take matters into their own hands. Park's main policy was anticommunism. As a means to check the opposition, the military authority created the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) in 1961. Park and the other military leaders pledged that the government would be returned to a democratic civilian government within 2 years, and that they would not run for office in the next elections. However, Park became presidential candidate of the new Democratic Republican Party (DRP), which consisted mainly of KCIA officials, ran for president and won the election of 1963. In 1979, mass anti-government demonstrations occurred nationwide. In the midst of this political turmoil, Park Chung-Hee was assassinated by the director of the KCIA, thus bringing the 18 year rule of military regime to an end.

Tight monetary laws and low interest rates attributed to price stability and helped boom the economy. The country opened up to foreign investments and GDP rose as Korean exports increased. The rapid economic growth, however, widened the gap between the rich and the poor, the urban and rural regions.

In 1980 North Korea had submitted a "one nation, two system" reunification proposal which was met with a suggestion from the South to meet and prepare a unification constitution and government through a referendum. In 1985, families from both sides of the border made cross visits to Seoul and Pyongyang in an historic event.

Despite the economic growth and results in diplomacy, the government, having gained power by coup d' état, was essentially a military regime. Public support and trust was low when the promises for democratic justice never materialized. In the 1985 National Assembly elections opposition parties together won more votes than the government party, clearly indicating that the public wanted a change. More than a million students and citizens participated in anti-government protests all over the nation in June 1987. In October 1987 a revised Constitution was approved by national referendum and direct elections for a new president were carried out in December. The country eventually transitioned to become a market-oriented democracy.

The *Sixth Republic* began in 1987 and remains the current Republic of South Korea (2010). It started with the election of Roh Tae-Woo, the first direct presidential election in 16 years. Freedom of press was expanded, restrictions on overseas travels were lifted. However, the growth of the economy had slowed down compared to the 80s, with strong labor unions and higher wages reducing the competitiveness of Korean products on the international market.

A historic event was held in 1990 when North Korea accepted the proposal for exchange between the two Koreas, resulting in high-level talks, cultural and sports exchange. In 1991 a joint communique on denuclearization was agreed upon, and the two Koreas simultaneously became members of the UN. Relations with the North improved and a summit meeting was planned, but was postponed indefinitely with the death of *Kim Il Sung*. Tensions varied between the two Koreas thereafter, with cycles of small military skirmishes and apologies.

In 1997, the nation suffered a severe financial crisis and the government had to approach the International Monetary Fund for relief funds. The situation led to the opposition leader *Kim Dae-Jung* winning the presidency in the same year, left with the daunting task of overcoming the economic crisis.

In diplomacy, Kim Dae-jung pursued the "*Sunshine Policy*", a series of efforts to reconcile with North Korea. This culminated in reunions of the separated families of the Korean War and the summit talk with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il. For his efforts, Kim Dae-Jung was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000. However, the Sunshine Policy was questioned when, after 9/11, the US classified North Korea as part of the "*axis of evil*" ( former President G.W.Bush accused the governments of North Korea, Iran and Iraq of helping terrorism and seeking weapons of mass destruction), and the dispute over the North's *nuclear weapons program* intensified.

## North Korea {*Juche*}

In the North, *Kim Il-Sung* consolidated his power after the Korean War. Up to this time, North Korean politics were represented by four factions: the Yunan (pro-Chinese) faction, pro-Soviet, native Korean communists, and Kim's own group.

Kim and his guerrilla faction had the advantage of appearing as national heroes due to their resistance against the Japanese, and there was no question about their patriotism. By contrast, the pro-Chinese and Soviet groups tended to appear as the representatives of other nations. A series of purges followed in 1956-1958, and by 1961 there was no remaining opposition to Kim.

The gradual rift between China and the USSR, that developed in the early 1960s, caused North Korea to pursue a delicate balancing act between the two communist giants. By 1963, this balance clearly tipped towards Peking. North Korea joined the Chinese in criticizing Khrushchev for "revisionism" and for being too soft on the United States.

Racial, cultural, and historical ties also pulled North Korea closer to China. However, Kim Il Sung eventually decided, that he was moving too far towards becoming a Chinese satellite. China was also comparatively backwards and did not provide the technical and military assistance Pyongyang sought. In October 1964, the People's Republic of China exploded its first atomic bomb, but subsequently refused to give North Korea any nuclear weapons of its own, apparently fearing that Kim might use them in his quest to reunify the peninsula. In 1965, the pro-Chinese stance of North Korea had noticeably diminished.

Meanwhile the peninsula remained divided and relations with the Republic of Korea and the United States were bitterly hostile, with many clashes along the *Korean Demilitarized Zone* (DMZ). Both countries got involved in Vietnam with North Korea sending a fighter squadron to Hanoi's assistance, - conversely South Korea, with over 300.000 soldiers, had the second-largest contingent of foreign troops in South Vietnam- after the United States.

In 1975, with the fall of Saigon, Kim Il Sung began to feel that the US had shown its weakness and that reunification of Korea may finally be possible. He visited Peking in the hope of gaining support for this plan. Mao Zedong refused, saying the China would be unable to assist North Korea this time, because of the after-effects of the Cultural Revolution and because China had just restored relations with the US. Kim therefore went home empty-handed.

During the 1960s, North Korea's level of industrial output had been higher than the South's, and so had been its living standards. In the 1970s, the expansion of North Korea's economy went into reverse.

By the mid to late-1970s some parts of the capitalist world, including South Korea, were creating new industries based around computers, electronics, and other advanced technology in contrast to North Korea's Stalinist economy of mining and steel production.

Kim, the "Great Leader", - as the North Koreans addressed him -, had created a personal dictatorship and extensive personality cult, but he had to face the challenge of an increasingly prosperous and well-armed South Korea, which threatened to undermine the legitimacy of his own regime.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 deprived North Korea of its main source of economic aid, leaving China as the isolated regime's only major ally. Without Soviet aid, North Korea's economy went into a free-fall.

*Kim Jong Il* was already conducting most of the day-to-day running of the state and apparently kept his father in the dark about the growing economic disaster. Also at this time, North Korea was attracting the ire of the international community for its attempts at developing nuclear weapons.

Kim Il-sung, the "Eternal Leader", died on July 8, 1994, succeeded by his son.

## ***JUCHE***

is the official state ideology of North Korea, introduced by *Kim Il-Sung* in 1955. It teaches that "man is the master of everything and decides everything," and that the Korean people are the masters of Korea's revolution.

**JUCHE:** is a philosophical idea that man is the master of everything and decides everything, in other words, the idea that man is the master of the world and his own destiny. It is said that this idea was rooted in Baekdu Mountain which symbolizes the spirit of the Korean people. The diagram (ㄱ) represents Baekdu Mountain.

The three fundamental principles of Juche are:

1. "independence in politics"
2. "self-sustenance in the economy"
3. "self-defense in national defense" .

The Juche outlook requires absolute loyalty to the revolutionary party and leader.

Despite its aspirations to self-sufficiency, North Korea has continually relied on economic assistance from other countries. Historically, North Korea received most of its assistance from the USSR until its collapse in 1991. Following the fall of the USSR, the North Korean economy went into a crisis, with consequent infrastructural failures contributing to the mass famine of the mid-1990s. Finally the People's Republic of China agreed to be a substitute for the Soviet Union as a major aid provider, supplying over US\$400 million per year in humanitarian assistance. Since 2007, North Korea also received large supplies of heavy fuel oil and technical assistance as scheduled in the Six-Party Talks (The Six-Party Talks aim to find a peaceful resolution to the security concerns, as a result of the North Korean nuclear weapons program). North Korea was the second largest recipient of international food aid in 2005, and continues to suffer chronic food shortages.

Also, the opinions of the people have no actual weight in decision-making, which is under Kim Jong-Il's autocratic control.

***Kim Jong-Il***, the “Dear Leader”, who had already assumed key positions in the government, officially took the titles of General Secretary of the Workers' Party of Korea and the “highest post of the state”, chairman of the National Defense Commission.

During Kim Jong-Il's rule, North Korea's economy has continued to deteriorate and the standard of living of its 23 million people has continued to fall. From 1996 to 1999 after record floods and severe droughts the country experienced a large-scale famine which left some 600,000 – 900,000 people dead. The fundamental cause of this decline is that the state, which runs the entire economy, is bankrupt, and cannot pay for the necessary imports of capital goods to undertake the desperately needed modernization of its industrial plants. The inefficiency of North Korea's Stalinist-style collective agricultural system also contributed to the disaster. As a result, North Korea is now dependent on international food aid to feed its population. North Korea spends about a quarter of its GDP on armaments, including the development of nuclear weapons. China remains Pyongyang's only ally, although the two no longer have much resemblance. The PRC by the 1990s had become a major force in the world economy, while North Korea looks like a relic from another era.

In 2006 North Korea announced the successfully detonation of a nuclear device underground. Furthermore it has an active missile development program. North Korea's advancements in weapons technology appear to give them leverage in ongoing negotiations with the United Nations and other countries. In February 2007, North Korea signed an agreement with South Korea, the United States, Russia, China, and Japan, in which North Korea will shut down its Yongbyon nuclear reactor in exchange for economic and energy assistance. However, in 2009 the North continued its nuclear test program.

North Korea's - seemingly paranoid - deep distrust against foreign powers is founded on Korea's long history of power struggles and invasions.

The Asia-Pacific-Journal published in 2009 an interesting article, based on U.S. State Department documents dating back to the latter half of the 1950s, that were declassified in 1993 and 1994.

According to this article:

The United States suffered a serious financial deficit as a result of the Korean War in the 1950s. To solve this problem, it moved to reduce the sizes of US forces in Korea and the South Korean military, which depended on U.S. financial aid. As President Rhee Syngman opposed this plan, the

U.S. introduced nuclear weapons into South Korea in January 1958.

As nuclear weapons were deployed in South Korea, North Korea began a massive program of underground construction in the 1960s and deployed its conventional forces in forward positions. North Korea asked the Soviet Union in 1963 and China in 1964 for help in developing nuclear weapons of its own, but was rebuffed, and North Korea began to develop its own program in the late 1970s.

North Korea seeks, through development of nuclear weapons, to secure international recognition as well as economic aid and national security. Thus for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, provision must be made for North Korea to dismantle its nuclear weapons without a sense of insecurity. In addition, it is unrealistic to urge North Korea to unilaterally dismantle its nuclear weapons without a breakthrough in U.S.-North Korea relations, preparing the withdrawal of US forces in South Korea and finally eliminating the U.S. nuclear umbrella for South Korea. Ever since the early 1990s, inter-Korean relations and the security environment surrounding the divided Korean peninsula have been deeply affected by the issue of North Korean nuclear weapons. Two decades later, the issue remains to be resolved with no portend of resolution in the near future. It is necessary to examine the historical background or the root causes of the issue to see how and when it came about before searching for solutions.

One of the biggest factors and immediate causes behind North Korea's nuclear weapons development has been the threat of a nuclear attack by the U.S. In 1951, amidst the Korean War, the U.S. issued threats of a nuclear attack on North Korea [and China]. It began to deploy nuclear weapons in South Korea as early as 1958.

Kim Jong-Il's health issues have become so serious in 2010 that his youngest son, ***Kim Jong-Un***, in a move to secure him as the successor, was promoted to a key position in the ruling Workers' Party, made a four-star general (without having any relevant military experience) and named vice chairman of the Central Military Commission.

Will there be a change in North Korea's political heading just because Jong-Un has attended an English-language International school in Switzerland, is fluent in English, German and French, enjoys skiing, basketball and is a fan of Jean-Claude van Damme?

# Korean reunification *{Tong-Il}*

TONG-IL: denotes the resolution of the unification of Korea which has been divided since 1945. The diagram (I) symbolizes the homogenous race.

Already in 1948, before the Korean War, both sides - Syngman Rhee and Kim Il-Sung - wanted to reunify the peninsula, - but each under his own political system.

The process towards the hypothetical future reunification of North Korea and South Korea under a single government seemed to make progress in 2000 by the “June 15th North-South Joint Declaration”, when the two countries agreed to work towards a peaceful reunification.

The nature of unification, i.e. through North Korean collapse or gradual integration of the North and South, is still a topic of intense political debate and even conflict among interested parties, which include both Koreas, the People's Republic of China, Japan, Russia, and the United States.

The *Sunshine Policy* was the foreign policy of South Korea towards North Korea until Lee Myung-Bak's election to presidency in 2008.

*Opponents* argue that dialogue and trade with North Korea has done nothing to improve prospects for peaceful reunification, and have helped bolster the totalitarian North Korean government. Hard-line policy supporters also argue that the help given to North Korea only continues the regime of Kim Jong-Il and that leaving it alone will eventually bring the collapse of North Korea, thus allowing the country to be reunified under the Republic of Korea.

*Supporters* argue that sanctions and threats from the governments of the United States and South Korea have harmed, rather than improved, prospects for reunification, and that, if the North Korean government does not feel threatened by South Korea or the United States, it will have nothing to lose and everything to gain from dialogue and engagement with the outside world. Many argue that the only alternative to dialogue is an unacceptable military outcome - with possibly disastrous global consequences.

*Lee Myung-Bak*, the current President of South Korea and former CEO of Hyundai, has intensified the Grand National Party's traditional hardline stance due to the latest setback - the 2010 sinking of the South Korean warship Cheonan, killing 46 crewmen, by a torpedo fired from a North Korean submarine.

Prior it had been suggested that the formation of a Korean Economic Community could be a way to ease in unification of the Korean peninsula, - after North Korea gives up its nuclear ambitions.

General Choi Hong-Hi, seeing communism as a threat and being an active senior officer in the South Korean army, was for many years an opponent of the regime in the North. Later, true to his “dream of spreading Taekwon-Do worldwide regardless of ideology and nationality”, he changed into a more placatory stance towards North Korea, where he introduced ITF in 1980. Though Choi's intention had been reconciliatory, unfortunately, South Korea saw it as treasonous.

By this time, a division of Taekwon-Do into two main organizations and styles, ITF and WTF, had already taken place, partly due to political interference. South Korea had become a WTF stronghold.

Choi's relations with North Korea, where ITF became widespread through government support, improved significantly. He replaced the pattern *Ko-Dang* by *Juche*, and towards the end of his life he returned to his native (today's North) Korea to die in Pyongyang.

Although in the epilogue of his memories General Choi writes: “Does the world of Taekwon-Do have to stay divided in two, even if we have to accept the fact of divided Korea?”, the last of the 24 Pattern, *Tong-Il*, represents the Korean people's desire to be again a unified country - its diagram symbolizing the North and South becoming one.

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