# Symbolism of the flag

The Korean national flag is called Taegukki and is a composite of oriental symbolism. The origin comes from the old oriental philosophy called the theory of Eum-Yang. Eum means dark and cold, while Yang means bright and hot. For example, the moon is Eum while the sun is yang; the earth is Eum and the heaven is yang; a woman is Eum and a man is yang; the night is Eum and the day is yang; the winter is Eum and the summer is yang, etc. Eum and yang are opposites and struggle with each other while they cooperate in harmony. The harmonious state of the movement of Eum and yang is called Taeguk which is also the name of the Korean national flag, i.e. Taegukki. (Ki means a flag).

The flag consists of three parts: The white background, the red and blue circle in the center and four trigrams, one in each corner of the flag.
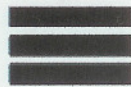
The white background of the flag means peace and purity.

The red and blue circle in the center is called 'Taeguk'. The central thought is perfect harmony and balance: A continuous movement within the sphere of infinity, resulting in one unit. The blue part of 'Taeguk' is called 'Eum' and represents all negative aspects of the balance that is typical for the symbol. The red part is called 'Yang' and describes all positive aspects.

The four trigrams at the corners (called 'Kwe' in Korean) also represent the concept of opposites and balance. The trigrams are heaven (upper-left) and at the other corner earth, water (upper-right) and at the other corner fire. Looking at symbols of the trigrams, you can see that they are opposites as well. Three unbroken bars (heaven) vs. three broken bars (earth), etc.

For the Korean people their flag of T'aeGuk-Ki is a source of pride and inspiration. During the Japanese occupation period beginning in 1910 the Korean flag was outlawed in public places and for about thirty five years the T'aeGuk flags were kept hidden until Liberation Day in 1945. The Korean flag has been a symbol of this country's struggle for independence and freedom.

# The symbols

**Kun**    Heaven

**Yi**    Fire

**Kam**    Water

**Kon**    Earth