

# RIVERBEND TAE KWON DO ACADEMY

## AMERICAN FLAG



On January 1, 1776, the Continental Army was reorganized in accordance with a Congressional resolution which placed American forces under George Washington's control. On that New Year's Day the Continental Army was laying siege to Boston which had been taken over by the British Army. Washington ordered the Grand Union flag hoisted above his base at Prospect Hill. It had 13 alternate red and white stripes and the British Union Jack in the upper left-hand corner (the canton).

In May of 1776, Betsy Ross reported that she sewed the first American flag.

On June 14, 1777, in order to establish an official flag for the new nation, the Continental Congress passed the first Flag Act: "Resolved that the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation."

Between 1777 and 1960, Congress passed several acts that changed the shape, design and arrangement of the flag and allowed for additional stars and stripes to be added to reflect the admission of each new state.

- Act of January 13, 1794 - provided for 15 stripes and 15 stars after May 1795.
- Act of April 4, 1818 - provided for 13 stripes and one star for each state, to be added to the flag on the 4th of July following the admission of each new state, signed by President Monroe.
- Executive Order of President Taft dated June 24, 1912 - established proportions of the flag and provided for arrangement of the stars in six horizontal rows of eight each, a single point of each star to be upward.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated January 3, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in seven rows of seven stars each, staggered horizontally and vertically.
- Executive Order of President Eisenhower dated August 21, 1959 - provided for the arrangement of the stars in nine rows of stars staggered horizontally and eleven rows of stars staggered vertically.

Today the flag consists of thirteen horizontal stripes, seven red alternating with 6 white. **The stripes represent the original 13 colonies; the stars represent the 50 states of the Union. The colors of the flag are symbolic as well: Red symbolizes Hardiness and Valor - The blood that has been shed for our country, White symbolizes Purity and Innocence and Blue represents Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice.**

The flag has been changed 26 times since the new, 13-state union adopted it. The 48-star version went unchanged for 47 years, until the 50-star version became official on July 4, 1960 (the first July 4 following Hawaii's admission to the union on August 21, 1959); the 47-year-record of the 48-star version was the longest time the flag went unmodified until July 4, 2007, when the current 50-star version of the Flag of the United States broke the record.

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### KOREAN FLAG (Taegukki)



The meaning of Korean National Flag is very philosophical. The origin comes from the Oriental philosophy called Eum-Yang, in Chinese pronunciation Yin-Yang. In Korea, the symbol of 'Yin and Yang', and sometimes the flag itself, is called *Taeguk* and summarizes the thoughts of 'I Ching' (called 'Yeok' in Korean). The name means as much as the flag of 'Great Extremes'.

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.

The red and blue circle in the center is called 'Taeguk', the origin of all things in the universe. 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.

# KOREAN FLAG

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## The symbols

Yin means dark and cold, while Yang means bright and hot. A very old book called Choo-Yuk which is written by a Chinese claims all objects and events in the world are expressed by the movement of Yin and Yang. For example, the moon is Yin while the sun is Yang. The earth is Yin and the sky is Yang. The night is Yin and the day is Yang. The winter is Yin and the summer is Yang. Yin and Yang are relative. Therefore, A can be Yin with respect to B while A can be Yang with respect to C. For example, the spring is Yin with respect to the summer and it is at the same time Yang with respect to the winter.



**Kun** Heaven



**Yi** Fire



**Kan** Water



**Kon** Earth