



# STUDY ON THE VALUES OF *CHONKWON* *POOMSAE* IN TAEKWONDO

YOUNG-SEONG HWANG, DO-HO KIM, SANG-CHUL LEE,  
SOO-PAN LEE, SEONG-JUN AN\*

Poomsae is a cultural heritage of Korea including her spirit and bodily movement. It is also martial arts with self-confidence, technique, and spiritual ability acquired by practice based on the formalized discipline of Poomsae line. Poomsae is the method of learning a variety of bodily movement such as protective action, the order of aggressive action, sequential actions like Seogi, Makgi, Jireugi, Chigi, Chagi and so on. Such an action will be acquired through much repeated practice emphasized on balance, concentration, cooperation, breathing control, moving forward and backward, softness and strength, and so on. The function of Poomsae is not only a simple body movement, but also the acquisition of the way (道) internalized through conscious training (Bang-Chool, Kim, Chang-Hoo, Lee, 2007; Oh-Ryun, Kwon 2007).

Each form of Poomsae is a crystal of scientific technology based on the essence of Korean traditional spirit and field experience. Poomsae starts with a basic movement like walking, and then it goes to much difficult movements. In terms of balance, both top and bottom and left and right are not formally confronted. But the weight of light and heavy is quantitatively given in real movements.

The term, *poomsae* includes an important meaning. It consists of two words, *poom* and *sae*. “Poom” means “appearance” and “formation” and “sae” means “energy”, “figure”, character in the Korean language. The general meaning of *poomsae* is used to artistically express a certain movement. Based on such a meaning, *poomsae* is recognized as a total (or comprehensive) art with harmonious philosophy, artistry, and technology (Ki-Cheon, Lee, You-Jin, Park 2006). The basic aim of training *poomsae* is not to simply get a technique, but to orient the spirit and value of Taekwondo as a mean of acquiring personality and self-confidence.

The establishment of history of Taekwondo and the philosophy of *poomsae* are necessary to get right consciousness toward the traditions of Korea, The purpose of this study is to

\* Pusan National University, Busan, South Korea

achieve the academic development of *poomsae* through the establishment of its identity and the suggestion of its vision and to enhance a trainee's positive value based on the philosophy and artistic character of Taekwondo. It is also to improve a quality of life.

## I. PHILOSOPHICAL MEANING OF *CHONKWON POOMSAE*

The practice of *poomsae* is to cultivate a trainee's challenging spirit and to get his/her self-confidence. Its value is also quantitatively presented. The belts with different colors symbolically mean order, different stages of practice, and personality. The system of *gup* and *dan* consists of nine stages.

The hand skill with a heavenly rule (*chonkwon*) is the universe itself as a base of all things which has a might ability of creativity and change. It is named because of the highest form and meaning in the world produced through person's fearful and respectful mind to the universe. Taekwondo was made based on the thought and behavior of Koreans as a descendants of heaven.

*Chonkwon Poomsae* has multiple dimensions like bodily development, education, human nature, and spirit. It means the control of person's mind through the practice of skills and the awareness of a soul. *Chonkwon Poomsae* philosophically means a visible space much high and half-circular. The movements of *Chonkwon Poomsae* are made from an imagined world of heaven unlimited and profound. The life of *Chonkwon Poomsae* is to express the internal thought acquired by a rule and order-oriented training outward.

New movements include *Nalgaepiogi*, *Bamjumeok Sot-um chigi*, *Whidureo makgi*, *Gumgang Pyeong jireugi*, *Taesang Milgi*, and so on. Their characteristics are closely related to the thought of Chonkwon expressed as a gentle circle composed of the big and small movements of body. The movements of *Chonkwon Poomsae* make person feel the new recognition of beauty, the weakness and strength of behavior, and the control of power. It will help person to bring his/her physical development and to get educational effects and high spirit. The philosophical value of *Chonkwon Poomsae* will be enhanced through the interactions between bodily movements and self-development and personality education.

## II. ARTISTIC MEANINGS OF *CHONKWON POOMSAE*

Chonkwon Poomsae is the artistic product of combining the rhythm, breathing, and lightness of bodily movements. For example, the action of Sot-um Jireugi in which two hands are raised to a breast and then expanded left and right will be performed seriously and slowly. Taesang Milgi expresses the lofty beauty achieved by the combination of the spirits of human and heaven/nature. Sequential movements like target Chagi, Kumkang yup jireugi, Anpalmok Bakat makgi, and Arae makgi are rhythmically composed and completed as a form of Poomsae with rhythmic and esthetical elements. Human being's body is divided by a gold (or complete) ratio among head, throat, navel, knee, and foot. Based on such a ratio, the movements of Chonkwon are composed of Nalgaepiogi as a top movement, Taesang Milgi, Sot-um Jireugi, Son-nal waesantul makgi as a top and bottom movement, and Nalgaepiogi, Gyupson Junbi seogi, Anpalmok Geodeuleo Momtong Makgi as a left and right movement. The training of bodily movements is based on a balance in terms of the connection and harmony of various movements, the strength and intensity of practice, and the development of muscles. The technique of Chonkwon is to firstly break a balance in the processes of acquiring skill and then to return a balanced pose. Such a breaking and returning of a balance is the essence of the technique of Chonkwon.

The harmony of various movements is rationally and efficiently done. And the beauty of movement is achieved by a harmony with its precision. The training value of Chonkwon is enhanced by the composition of harmony and disharmony between offense and defense. The beautiful movements of Chonkwon are made by the mature stage of body to do a complete performance through repeated practice (Kab-Soo, Kim, Sang-Hwa, Yoon, 2001). Chonkwon Poomsae is composed of vision, the movement of body center, the slowness and rapidity of speed, the strength and weakness of power, and the control of breathing. Its stages are divided into formation, practicability, meaning, and branch-completion. The types of Chonkwon Poomsae are the technique and composition of hand and foot, the slowness and rapidity of movement, the relaxation and tension of body, and so on. Its artistic values are related to form, lofty, balance, and harmony.

### III. TECHNICAL VALUE OF *CHEONKWON POOMSAE*

The word Taekwondo is a combination of Taekwon and Do. Taekwon is a physical technique practiced by a human. And the ultimate meaning of 'Do' is a path. Therefore, Taekwondo can be interpreted as a human path that a human practices as he trains for a technique called Taekwon. Also, it can be a technical path that such a human strive for. Form training includes a meaning of enhancing mental and personal quality as well as physical quality. (Hyung-Suk Song, Gyu-Hyung Lee, 2005) As one of the three parts of Taekwondo, Form is used as a technical measuring standard to evaluate loyalty and respect through a process of Gup and Dan (Gup means level and Dan means rank after black belt)

Form outline follows a symmetrical effect of right & left and Eum and Yang. It rotates three steps of Taeguk, which corresponds with Sky, Ground, and Human. And also, it follows a physical principle that always result in return to the starting point. Cheonkwon Form outline of '천' in Korean (it has a same look of capital T in English) includes the meaning of a person from sky, a person who follows sky, a person who received power from sky, a person who worships sky, and simply a person and sky (Dae-Chu, Jung, 2004).

Taekwondo's system of Gup and Dan is accomplished through nine levels each. The number of Gup and Dan symbolizes the order, level of training, and personality with a distinction of belt color. Gup advances from up to down, while Dan advances the other way around. Cheonkwon Form is in seventh Dan. Cheonkwon, Hansoo, and Ilyeo is Form that a high ranked Taekwondo player practices. Cheonkwon consists of many techniques such as Spreading wings, Thrusting Skyward (Sot-um jireuki), Blocking with hand shade (Son-nal waesantul makgi), and Blocking face while crossing arms (Ut-geol-u ulgool makgi).

In standing form of Cheonkwon Form, there are front-bending ten times and backward bending eleven times. It consists of balanced attack and defense form with eleven times of defense and twelve times of attacks. Analyzing the number of Cheonkwon Form technique, there are total 27 movements including Gyupson Junbi seogi (folded-hand preparation-two times), Abgoobe (front leg bending standing-ten times), Duigoobe (backward leg bending standing-eleven times), Juchoom Seogi (hesitating stand-two times), Beom Seogi (offensive standing-two times). There are 27 blocking movements including Hanson Nalbituleo Makgi (one hand twisted block) -three times, Arae Makgi (Under block)-two times, Momtong Baggat Makgi (Outerbody block)-two times, and Anpal Momtong Bituleo Makgi (blocking inner wrist twisting body)-two times. For standing movement, there are Gyupson Junbi Seogi

(fold-handed preparation standing)-two times, Apgoobe (front leg bending standing)-ten times, Duigoobe (backward leg bending standing)-eleven times, Juchoom Seogi (hesitating stand-two times), Beom Seogi (offensive standing-two times). There are total eleven blocking movements for defense including Hanson Nalbituleo Makgi (one hand twisted block)-three times, Arae Makgi (Under block)-two times, Momtong Baggat Makgi (Outerbody block)-two times, Anpalmok Momtong Mituleo Makgi (blocking inner wrist twisting body)-once, Son nal Arae Makgi (blocking under with sidehand)-once, waesantul makgi (part mountain shaped block)-two times. Punching in offensive movements includes Sot-um Jireugi (Skyward punching)-once, Momtong Baro Jireugi (Direct punch towards body)-two times, Momtong Bandae Jireugi (Punching opposite side of body)-four times, Gumgang-two times. There are three types of kicking such as sidekick frontkick and target-kick. There is no slapping nor thrusting. And there are applied movements including spreading wings -once and Taesan Milgi (pushing Tae Mt.)- two times.

According to advanced research, when we look at physical effect Form's technical value affects, it increases density of bones, amount of energy consumption, insulin, balance of upper and lower body, muscular strength and flexibility. Also, it enhances mental health, develops social tendency and prevents sicknesses such as backache, arthritis, high blood pressure, and diabetes. In addition, it strengthens bone structure, stamina, sinew, and cord. Furthermore, it prevents reduction of muscle and body ability, moderates weight, and improve one's posture and status (Jung gyu Lim, 2002; Ju sik Park, Ki jin Kim, 2003; Min hyun Kim, Eun Gyu Choi, 2005; Jae min Jung, 2005; Si-Ok An, 2005).

Looking at advantages of training Cheonkwon Form, since Taekwondo is a combination of anaerobic exercise and aerobic exercise, there are lots of stretching movements, it helps one's flexibility and growth through muscular movement of legs and arms, and it teaches courtesy and respect preventing obesity, depression, avoidance of people, etc.

### Concluding Remarks

After looking at Cheonkwon Form from philosophical, artistic, and technical perspective, we concluded following. First of all, Cheonkwon Form's philosophically represents half-circled visional dimension which forms high and half-circled shape, and infinite imaginary world that a Creator ruled where week humans worship him. It is a collection of movements utilizing infinitely wide imaginary world in sky. Essential spirit of this Form is to acquire Cheonkwon's high and wide ideology with proper power and quick moderation, and then to adopt it to

reveal inner ideological aspect according to rules and direction within the form. By acquiring Cheonkwon’s high and wide ideology, adopting it into the life, and training within the form, it not only reaches you to a high level of physical development, educational effect, and technical growth, but it also contains a philosophical value giving you self-development and discipline.

Secondly, from aesthetic value of Cheonkwon Form, movement of spreading wings and punching skyward is done solemnly and slowly, Taesan Milgi presents a sacred desire to breathe freely through combination of human’s Ki, Nature’s Ki, and water from nature. Target-kicking and Kumkang yup jireugi, Duigoobe, Jat-un bal, Anpal mok, Bakat makgi and consecutive moments of Arae Makgi contains artistic elements and rhythm inside the form. Perfect symmetrical ratio consists of Spreading wings, Kumkang yup jireugi, up and down movements from Taesan milgi, skyward punching while swinging two arms, Santul makgi, Gyupson preparation standing, and momtong bakat makgi. Technique of Cheonkwon starts from stabled posture, it breaks that status while training, and it returns to the stabled posture, which shows an art of balance.

Accordingly, Cheonkwon Form consists of vision, movement of body’s center, strength, breathing, and it contains several level of shape, practicality, meaning, and perfection. In type, there are technique and composition, centre, expansion and contraction, and Ki. It clearly expresses creative intention and artistic aspect through form, balance, rhythm, harmony and artistic experience. Thirdly, in technical value of Cheonkwon Form, in Korean (it has a same look of capital T in English) includes the meaning of a person from sky, a person who follows sky, a person who received power from sky, a person who worships sky, and simply a person and sky.

*Cheonkwon* form is a part of seventh *dan*. *Cheonkwon*, *Hansoo*, *Ilyeo* are Forms that high ranked Taekwondo player practices. *Cheonkwon* presents lots of new movements including spreading wings, *sotum jireugi*, *sonnal waesan tul makgi*, *utguleo ulgool makgi*, etc.

In standing movement of Cheonkwon Form, Duigoope appears the most as eleven times with total 27 movements of apgupi ten times, *Duigoope* eleven times, *gyupson junbi seogi* (folded hand preparation standing)-two times, *Juchum seogi* (hesitant standing)-two times, and Bum *seogi* (tiger standing)-two times. It consists of eleven times of defense, nine times of hand attack, three times of kicks. There is no slapping nor thrusting, and there are applied movements with spreading wings and *taesan milgi*. This shows a good balanced offense and defense. Regarding mental and physical heath, it improves flexibility, blood vessel’s flexibility and growth. Also, since it value courtesy and mental training through physical action, it is

proved that *cheonkwon* prevents stress and depression from obesity, prevents avoidance of people, improves memory capacity, and prevents sickness such as arteriosclerosis and frozen shoulder.

REFERENCES

Kab-Soo, Kim, Sang-Hwa, Yoon (2001). A Study on the Art Meaning Search and Philosophy of Taekwondo Traning. KAHPERD, 40 (1), 29-38.

Jae-Min, Jung (2005). Analysis of intensity and energy consumption on *poom-sae* of Taekwondo practice. Graduate School of Education Ulsan University.

Min-Hyunm Kim (2005). Taekwondo Participation and Skill Level to Physical Self Concept. Korea sport research, 1695), 1599-1608.

Bang-Chool, Kim, Chang-Hoo, Lee (2007). Critiques and Methodology of Taekwondo Philosophy. KAHPERD, 46(2), 35-45

Oh-Ryun, Kwon (2007). The Internal Values of Pumsae in Taekwondo. Philosophy of Movement, 15(4), 171-187.

Ju-Sik, Park, Ki-jin, Kim (2003). Comparison of Exercise Intensity following to the Types of Poomse of Black Belt Players in Taekwondo. *Journal of Sport and Leisure Studies*, 20, 1145-1156.

Dae-Chul, Jung (2004). The Aesthetic Definition about Compositive Principles of ‘Taekwon do Poomsae’, Korea sport research, 15 (4), 1257-1264.

Song, Hyeong-Seok, Lee, Kyu-Hyung (2005). Toward a Definition of the concept Taekwondo. KAHPERD, 44 (3), 57-67.

Lee, Gyo-Yun. (1993) TaeKwondo. Seoul: Ilshin Publishing Company.

Im, Il-Hyuk. (2005). Study for Aesthetic Character of Taekwondo. KPSSD, 12913), 27-36.