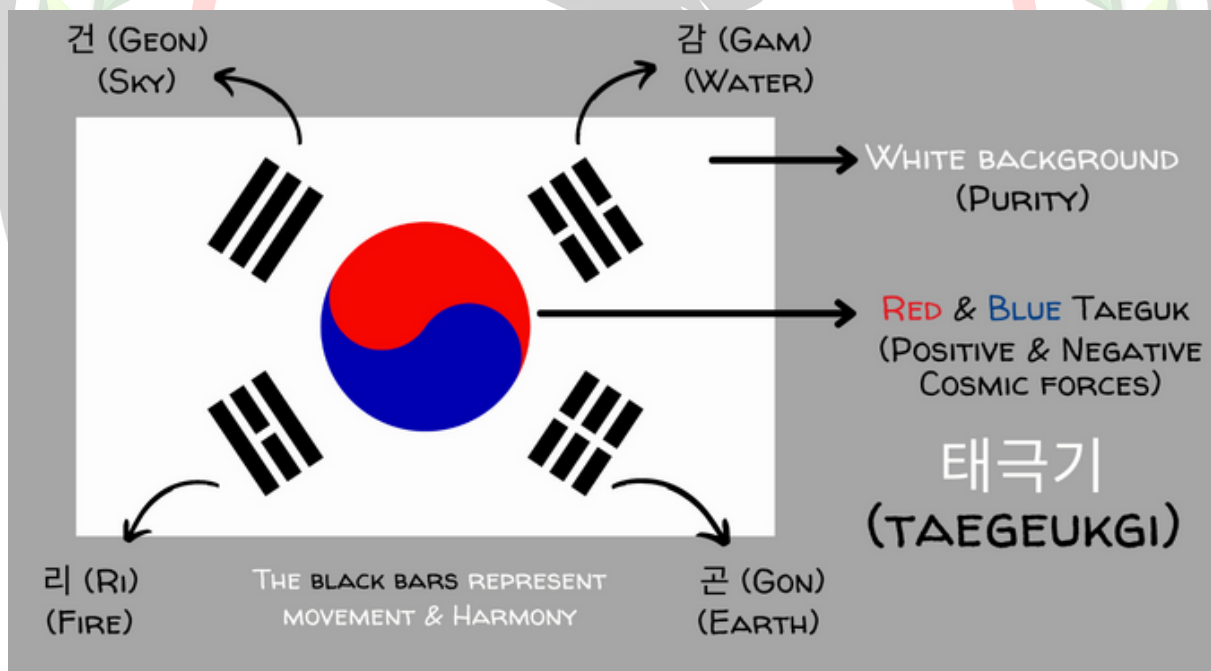




Tae Geukgi

Korea's flag is composed of four colours: White, Red, Blue, and Black. Each colour has its purpose in the flag. It has a plain white background forming a rectangular shape. In the middle, a yin-yang circle is formed, minus the spots, with the colour red on the upper half and blue on the lower half. The circle is then surrounded by four trigrams with the colour black, placed in each of the four corners.



White background

The colour white is seen as a traditional colour in Korean, commonly used in daily clothing in the 19th century. The white background itself represents purity and peace.

Red and Blue Taegeuk

The red and blue colours alone are named 태극 (taegeuk), which are essentially what the whole flag was named after, with the meaning “supreme ultimate” in English. The red and blue taegeuk is divided into two parts, decidedly in the shape of yin-yang, which was derived from old Chinese philosophical ideologies.

Separately they represent elements opposite of each other, like good vs. bad. Specifically, the red half represents positive cosmic forces, while the blue half is a symbol of negative cosmic forces.

But put together like this, the shape is a symbol of the opposing elements complementing each other. The thicker part of yin and yang represents the beginning, and the slimmer part expresses the ending. So, where yang ends, yin (or eum in Korea) starts, and then where yin ends, yang starts, and so on.

Black bars

The four groups of black bars also follow Confucian ideologies.

The three solid bars are 건 (geon), meaning “sky” and the three bars set apart in the middle are 곤 (gon), meaning “earth.” The bars on the upper right corner is 리 (ri), which represents “fire,” and the bars on the lower-left corner are 감 (gam) which symbolizes “water”

These four black trigrams represent the movement and harmony of the forces in the Korean flag.

