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The Symbolism Behind the Keumgang Poomsae

Hello, my name is María Elena and I am a Taekwondo Black Belt. In preparation for my 2Dan testing, I will be writing on the history and importance behind the black belt poomsae, Keumgang.

Keumgang is the poomsae known for its command of balance, strength, and need for focus. In 751 CE, King Gyeongdeok created a monument for the Buddhist faith known as the Sokkuram Grotto. Within this beautiful monument, a statute is present showing Buddha in the lotus position. On the outside of this man-made cave, there is a statute of the great warrior and protector known as Keumgang Yuksa. The name Keumgang means “diamond” or “thunderbolt” if translated from Sanskrit. According to Richard Chun and Doug Cook from YMAA, “Keumgangembodies the power of compassion yet manifests raw, physical power”. The name, Kumgang was also given to one of the most beautiful mountains in Korea told to be the center of the nation’s spirit. The mountain is also significant to the poomsae because the formation in which one moves while performing the poomsae is the Chinese symbol for “mountain”, commemorating Keumgang Yuksa and the mountain Kumgang, by showing the strength, grace, power, and the majesty of both.

Keumgang is my favorite poomsae and it felt right to write and research more about the meaning and history behind it. I acquired my information from the illustrative and guiding book, Complete Taekwondo Poomsae, created by Kyu Hyung Lee and Sang H. Kim. I also learned

more about the history of Keumgang from the YMAA written by Richard Chun and Doug Cook in the article, "History and Philosophy of Taekwondo – Part 1". Thank you.