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## From ‘Central Dojang’ to ‘Kukkiwon’



"In Celebration of the First World Taekwondo Championship. May 25-27, 1973 AD. World Taekwondo Federation Establishment. May 28, 1973. World Taekwondo Federation President Un Yong Kim"

### Three Monuments

Inside the garden of Kukkiwon stand three historical monuments. The oldest monument, erected in May 1973, reads: "The 1st World Taekwondo Championships." The monument commemorates the success of the first ever international Taekwondo competition which occurred in less than one year since the establishment of Kukkiwon, and shows a strong determination to make Taekwondo a world sport.

The second monument was erected in 1985. It celebrates worldwide recognition of Taekwondo as it was selected as an official sport for the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul and also as a demonstration sport for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. The third monument was erected 10 years later in 1995 to commemorate the selection as an official sport for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The Olympic rings and the World Taekwondo



The third monument erected in 1995 was donated by Cheil Worldwide Co. to commemorate the anniversary of official sport selection for the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The Olympic logo and the WTF logo are engraved on the monument.



The Yoon Gok Jung - a pavilion named after Un Yong Kim's pseudonym



Federation (WTF) logo are inscribed on the monument. Kukkiwon building, with its Korean style roof, resembles a traditional Korean palace. The building exterior is grand and modern, but the eaves evoke traditional Korean architecture. There are hints of traditional Korean elegance in various nooks and crannies of the building structure.

### Unification Agreement among Taekwondo Leaders

After the 1945 independence movement, a majority of Taekwondo grandmasters began to toy with the idea of "improving and unifying Korean martial arts that were suppressed during Japanese invasion." They wanted to turn Taekwondo into a global sport by checking further 'foreign influence and deformation' and reestablish it into a traditional Korean bare hand martial art.

In July 1946, Taekwondo grandmasters including Byung Jick Ro, Sang Sup Chun, Won Kuk Lee, and Byung In Yoon agreed on standard and unified coaching methods for Korean martial arts.

However, the outbreak of the Korean War not long after in 1950 forced them to disperse throughout Northern and Southern parts of Korea. Grandmasters who took refuge in Busan became key figures to create the Korean Kongsudo Federation. The federation would later become a precursor in unifying Taekwondo organizations.

Meanwhile, another organization - Korea Taekwondo



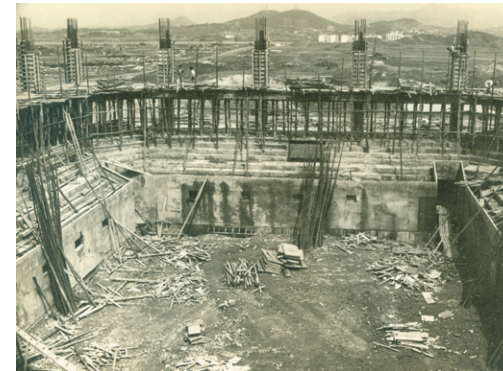
Association (KTA) - was formed in 1959 (President: Major General Hong Hi Choi), centered on Chung Do Kwan. Since then, countless other similar organizations emerged, but finally in September 1961, the United Consolidation Committee was formed whereby all official responsibilities were delegated to the seven people in this committee.

After organizing board members and appointing executive officers, the United Consolidation Committee launched the Korean Taesoodo Association. The presidency position was left vacant and Un Kyu Uhm (who later became Kukkiwon president) and Chong Woo Lee were appointed as vice presidents. In June 1962, the committee formed an affiliation with the Korean Olympic Committee. Korea Taesoodo Association was renamed 'Korea Taekwondo Association' on August 5 of the following year.

### The Central Dojang of Dreams

In January 1967, KTA welcomed Yong Chae Kim (a member of the National Assembly) as the 5th president, succeeding President Byung Jik Ro. Kim, who was also the leader of the Young Republicans (then-ruling party), served two consecutive terms from 1969 to 1971. He helped lay the foundation of 'World Taekwondo' by  $\Delta$  dispatching Taekwondo masters overseas for the first time and  $\Delta$  constructing the foundation of Central Dojang (currently Kukkiwon).

President Kim secured ₩28,000,000 (about \$30,000) of



national treasury from the national assembly to build Central Dojang. This financial security was crucial in constructing what became today's Kukkiwon.

After President Un Yong Kim was appointed as the 7th president on January 1971, Central Dojang construction plan began to come together. The grand plan was to construct a 3,306m<sup>2</sup> wide building across a 9,917m<sup>2</sup> land. Kukkiwon has been interpreted as a type of monumental figure ever since. President Kim initially suggested that Kukkiwon be built on the upland of Yeoksam-dong to serve a symbolic purpose. Back in the 1960's, Yeoksam-dong has not yet been urbanized, and Kim wanted Kukkiwon to become a symbol of spirit and strength that towers over the city.

### Corporate Sponsorship for Constructions Costs and Building Materials

In the early 1970s, the tallest building on Taeheran-ro in Yeoksam-dong was merely 12 stories high. Other buildings were still undeveloped, and rice patties and single-family detached houses were scattered around the then-rural area.

Kukkiwon officials believed that erecting a tall building in this hilly neighborhood would draw instant attention. They also believed that building of Kukkiwon on the hillside would place more meaning to its presence - as visitors would be required to hike to reach the Taekwondo 'mecca.'

From the WTF perspective, providing a massive

construction cost for Kukkiwon was not easy. The construction was funded by major corporations including Samsung, Dongyang Engineering & Construction, Daenong, OB, Jinro, and Dong-il Coporation. Furthermore, Ssangyong Cement Co., supplied cement, Inchon Steel Co. (current Hyundai-Steel Co) supplied steel, Donga Enterprise Co. supplied lumber, Byucksan Group supplied roofing, and Hanglas and Dongkwang Co. supplied glass.

During the construction, however, the economy deteriorated due to the outbreak of the oil crisis. The goal to complete the construction in less than one year was seemingly unfeasible and voices were raised to extend the construction period to three years. But others believed that doing so would ultimately lead the construction to take longer than three years. Therefore, despite ongoing economic difficulties, President Kim decided to go forth with the construction. President Kim was concerned that foregoing the opportunity now might mean the construction may never be complete. Kim encouraged the construction team to finish within the initial completion period. One day before the completion, the building was lit and all workers cheered in elation. Their one year of hard work finally bore fruit and the Central Dojang of dreams was finally built.

### Opening of Kukkiwon

Kukkiwon held a groundbreaking ceremony for Central Dojang on the hills of Yeoksam-dong Gangnam-Gu, Seoul on November 19, 1971. Attendees at the



Groundbreaking Ceremony for Kukkiwon held on November 19, 1971

ceremony included government officials, sports figures, and foreign envoys.

Central Dojang's 4,220m<sup>2</sup> wide concrete building stood on 6,900m<sup>2</sup> of land and consisted of three stories and one basement floor. The building had a main stadium with 3,000-people capacity, lecture halls, a dormitory, a cafeteria, shower stalls, and a nurse's office.

The complete construction cost about ₩150,000,000; it was a significant amount considering Korea's economy in the early 1970s. During the construction, the world economy fell into its first oil crisis. The construction continued despite growing doubts on whether it can be completed in less than one year.

At the end of 376 days of construction, the opening ceremony was held on November 30, 1972. The long awaited construction of Taekwondo Central Dojang was finally complete. After years of borrowing high school



gymnasiums for competitions and promotion tests, Central Dojang was finally able to operate as an independent body.

Central Dojang set a long-range goal to △unify Taekwondo techniques, △unify Poom · Dan (upper level techniques promotion tests and cultivate masters through techniques and Taekwondo education, △improve master skills and knowledge, △host domestic and international competitions, and △take pride as a Taekwondo practitioner at Central Dojang and serve the country by promoting physical well-being its citizens.

Central Dojang was renamed ‘Kukkiwon’ on February 6, 1973. In Korean, Kukki means “a country’s martial art” (in this case, Taekwondo) and won means “house.” Thus, Kukkiwon ultimately means “a house that upholds



Taekwondo,” and may be loosely translated as the “World Taekwondo Headquarters”.

### Kukkiwon’s Main Businesses

Kukkiwon’s main businesses are divided into three camps: Poom · Dan promotion tests, master education and training, and research. Poom · Dan promotion tests are designed to rank all Taekwondo players around the world by a unified standard. The test is an evaluation process for Taekwondo players to advance in their Poom or Dan. Poom is assigned to players 15 years and under, and Dan is assigned to players 15 and over.

Other businesses run by Kukkiwon include: △Taekwondo technique developments and research, △Poom · Dan promotion tests and educational business for Taekwondo promotion, △master dispatch overseas and Taekwondo master cultivation through master training and education programs, △Taekwondo demonstration teams dispatch, △overseas Taekwondo promotion and international exchange, △Taekwondo competitions and event hosting, △Taekwondo awareness and cultural promotion, △managing Taekwondo players’ welfare, and △Taekwondo-affiliated organization sponsorship.