

October 7, 2015

TO: Mr. JEONG, Man Soon
President,
KUKKIWON

Mr. HONG, Moo Jong
Chairman of the Board,
KUKKIWON

CC: Mr. KIM, Jong Duck
Minister of Korean Sports Culture and Tourism

Mr. KIM, Chong
Deputy Minister of Korean Sports Culture and Tourism

Dear Sirs:

As leaders of several independent and separate Taekwondo organizations in the United States of America, we are writing to you to express our deep concern regarding the manner in which Kukkiwon in choosing to proceed internationally, specifically in a couple of areas that we will discuss shortly.

We begin by saying that we fully support Kukkiwon as the World Taekwondo Headquarters, and we have been supporters of Kukkiwon over the past 40 years. The idea of Kukkiwon being viewed as the Mecca of Taekwondo for Taekwondo practitioners globally is a positive idea that we support and help to perpetuate. The globalization of Taekwondo and the success that Taekwondo enjoys in over 200 countries is directly attributable to the outstanding job that Kukkiwon and the World Taekwondo Federation have done in exporting the Korean Martial Art and Sport to the international community, and in gaining success all over the world. The Kukkiwon Dan Certificate is an unquestioned document that has great value and meaning to those who possess a Kukkiwon Certificate because it represents the ideals and tenets of Taekwondo. More importantly, the Kukkiwon Dan Certificate is embraced all over the world as the standard of excellence in Taekwondo training as a martial art.

Transparency and Fairness

Our concern exists because of the recent actions on the part of Kukkiwon to do the following:

Kukkiwon engaged individuals in several countries and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with those individuals without having an open and transparent process for selecting those individuals. This is true in the case of the United States of America. Further, Kukkiwon did not honor existing agreements with individuals that were selected through a fair and transparent process in the past. One organization with an MOU uses the name "Kukkiwon America", which demonstrates the personal nature under which the Kukkiwon is conducting business. Actions like this destroy the credibility of Kukkiwon and cause concerns that Kukkiwon is prone to acting in a whimsical manner, one that suits only the needs of Kukkiwon. This does not cause Taekwondo leaders to continue to cling to the belief that Kukkiwon will adhere to the tenets of Taekwondo that it expresses to the world, nor does Kukkiwon act in a manner that allows for global practitioners to trust Kukkiwon at

its word. Transparency in business dealings should be at the forefront of all business dealings, especially from an organization that puts itself as the World Taekwondo Headquarters. All members should feel that they are being treated fairly, and that any agreement entered into with Kukkiwon will be honored. This is not what has happened with the awarding of MOUs to individuals in the USA without an open and fair selection process.

Opposition to Kukkiwon's Regional Poom/Dan Promotion Examiners Training and Certification Course

In addition, the new requirement to attend a Kukkiwon Examiner Seminar in order to be certified to test individuals for Kukkiwon Dan Certification is a travesty that flies in the face of all that Kukkiwon has done in the past, and all that its Dan Certificates stand for. In the past, a Taekwondo Master could test and promote students and process black belt certification through Kukkiwon. Now, this privilege is being given to only a chosen few who have a relationship with an organization who has an MOU gained unfairly with the Kukkiwon. This shows great disrespect to all the Senior Grand Master who have sacrificed their entire lives promoting and growing Kukkiwon Taekwondo in the USA.

From a dojang owner perspective, for a Black Belt student to have to attend a Regional Promotion Exam does not make any sense for many reasons:

1. There is a special bond between Grandmaster/Master and Student. If the student is required to attend a promotion exam that is not administered by his or her Grandmaster/Master it does not strengthen this very important bond.
2. Geographically, the USA is a very large country. By requiring students to attend a regional exam, travel expenses will increase significantly (airfare/gas, room and board). This will also inhibit the students to be able to celebrate their achievements with their family and friends who would normally be in attendance to support.
3. From a curriculum standpoint, many Grandmasters and Masters have developed a testing procedure that is carried out over a period of time (days, sometimes weeks). To hold a regional exam that will only take a couple of hours will cheapen the value of the promotion.
4. If Masters and Grandmasters are not allowed to test their own students as this Regional Dan/Poom Testing will create, relationships will become strained and uncomfortable between area Masters and school owners.
5. Kukkiwon needs to understand that in the United States, all Taekwondo students come from private dojangs. Without support for the dojangs and their owners, the Kukkiwon will not survive.

These are just some of the reasons why us and many Masters and Taekwondo School Owners in the United States are in agreement with American Taekwondo United's letter that was distributed stating their opposition to this Regional Dan/Poom Test, and must stop immediately to prevent irreversible damage to the Kukkiwon's already declining reputation.

Opposition to Kukkiwon's Special Dan Test

Recently, a trend has been developing in the Kukkiwon organization of offering "Special Dan Testing" in countries. These Special Dan Tests have served only to infuriate Taekwondo practitioners that have adhered to the process of being loyal to their

instructors and by going through those instructors for Kukkiwon Dan testing. Suddenly, lower level Taekwondo students have been elevated far beyond the one rank Skip Dan that is a part of Kukkiwon's standard procedures. It has not been uncommon for persons to go from 1st or 2nd Dan to 6th Dan certification by Kukkiwon. In many cases these persons have not continued to study or to practice the martial art of Taekwondo for many years. Nonetheless, they are allowed to achieve certification of Dan rank that is equal to that of Taekwondo students that have loyally and faithfully continued to study and to practice Taekwondo with their instructor.

Kukkiwon Special Dan Tests were held in the United States in 2009 in Las Vegas and 2013 in Chicago. Per Kukkiwon rules and regulations, a black belt is allowed to skip from 1st Dan to 3rd Dan if they meet all the requirements. However, because many students were skipped from 1st Dan to 6th or 7th Dan, it angered many Taekwondo Masters and Grandmasters in the United States. A petition was circulated that requested an explanation from the Kukkiwon, but no clear answer was given. These Special Dan Test created the sentiment of "Give Kukkiwon money and buy your promotion" throughout the Taekwondo community. Only 1,000 out of 40,000 dojang are using Kukkiwon Dan Certification. It is becoming clear why only 2.5% of dojang choose to use Kukkiwon Certification. Because of this low participation number, we must work together to improve the perception and show the honor and prestige of receiving a Kukkiwon Dan Certification. Perhaps Special Dan Testing is necessary in some situations, however not much was gained from the previous two Special Dan Tests in the United States. However, reputation was lost and the value of a Kukkiwon Dan Certificate was diminished. Therefore, distrust with the Kukkiwon has grown and many are questioning the need for Kukkiwon Certification for their Black Belts. Some countries are already using their own Dan certification. If Kukkiwon de-values its own Dan Certification program, perhaps in the future, all 200 countries will abandon the Kukkiwon's Dan Certification and instead issue its own Dan Certification and Kukkiwon will only be the Official Certification for Korea.

Practitioners in the Taekwondo community are well aware of those who attend a Special Dan Test and who successfully get certified by Kukkiwon at a level well beyond their years of Taekwondo experience, and this causes complete mistrust of the Kukkiwon certification process and also what the Kukkiwon Dan Certificate actually represents. Those who have studied and trained for many years in order to meet requirements for promotion that have always been the standard for Kukkiwon Dan Certification, are offended by those allowed to skip from a novice level of certification to that of a senior Master level. While this may serve as a good source of income for Kukkiwon, it also greatly dishonors all that Kukkiwon stands for. Integrity of the organization is questioned and the appearance of representing all that is good about Taekwondo is severely tarnished. **Therefore, it our strong recommendation that the Special Dan Testing is also stopped immediately** until the opportunity to discuss further to determine if it is in the best interest for the Kukkiwon and United States to proceed.

Minister of Korean Sports Culture and Tourism

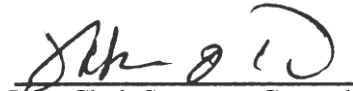
From the Taekwondo Promotion Act, the Kukkiwon falls under the Korean Minister of Sports Culture and Tourism. It is the Minister's obligation to supervise and oversee the actions of the Kukkiwon. If the Kukkiwon is fulfilling it's mission then the Minister does not have to do anything. We respectfully request that the Minister continue to review the

actions of the Kukkiwon to ensure it is in the best interest for the Kukkiwon, Korea, and Taekwondo worldwide.

As leaders of Taekwondo organizations in the United States of America, we stand united in disapproving of the actions that are listed above. It is our sincere hope that Kukkiwon revisit these actions and see the value in ceasing these activities immediately. The reputation of Kukkiwon is at stake, a reputation that has been built over a number of decades. All of this could be destroyed should Taekwondo leaders and practitioners no longer view Kukkiwon with the high ideals that have kept Kukkiwon and its Dan Certificates in such high demand. Recognition of the Kukkiwon Dan Certificate as the Standard of Certification for Taekwondo Black Belts globally is sure to diminish rapidly and to disappear. National Dan Certification is already replacing Kukkiwon as the national standard in several countries. This trend is likely to grow and to continue until Kukkiwon loses its global standing as the Taekwondo industry standard. We do not want that to happen. Kukkiwon must modify its behavior immediately in order to maintain its standing as the World Taekwondo Headquarters, with certification that is globally recognized as the industry standard. Our hope is that the Kukkiwon works together with the global Taekwondo community to determine what is best for the Kukkiwon as well as its members. Thank you for your consideration, and we respectfully request a reply to this letter by October 18, 2015.

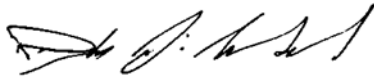
Respectfully Submitted:

U.S. Taekwondo Grandmasters' Society



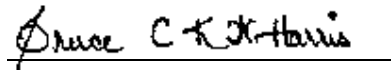
John Choi, Secretary General
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U.S. Taekwondo Committee



Doug Fuechsel, Executive Director
Swordtruth357@gmail.com

USA Taekwondo



Bruce Harris, Secretary General
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U.S. Taekwondo Grandmaster Society

- Formed 2003 in Los Angeles, CA with 8th/9th Dan Grandmasters
- Members include all founding Grandmaster in USA (over 200 members)
- Supported and attended by Taekwondo Promotional Foundation since inception

- Over the last 14 years, created Hall Of Fame to recognize what Grandmasters did for the Taekwondo movement in USA and throughout the world.
- President: Jin Song Chung

U.S. Taekwondo Committee

- Formed in 2007 to maintain Martial Arts spirit for Taekwondo in the USA
- Hosted 2008 World Taekwondo Hanmadang in Los Angeles, CA - the 1st time it was held outside of Korea
- Hosts the US Open Taekwondo Hanmadang since 2009 to promote Kukkiwon's World Taekwondo Hanmadang in USA
- 2009 – 2010 Conducted Kukkiwon License Seminars, Referee Seminars and Poomsae Seminars
- President: Sang Chul Lee

USA Taekwondo

- National Governing Body of Sports Taekwondo under the US Olympic Committee
- Secretary General: Bruce Harris