

The First Step - Groundbreaking Ceremony



On November 19, 1971, a groundbreaking ceremony was held for Kukkiwon.

Thanks in large part to Kim, Un yong's efforts, work on construction of Kukkiwon finally commenced.

November 19, 1971 was the date of the historic groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of Kukkiwon. Present at the event were Minister of Education Min, Kwan shik, former Prime Minister Song, Yo chan, former Navy Chief of Staff Kim, Young kwan, Seoul Shinmun (Seoul Newspaper) Managing Director Yoon, Il kyun, and Korea Baseball Organization President Kim, Jong rak. The groundbreaking ceremony for Kukkiwon was a major news topic at the time, making the evening news on national TV.

Construction of Kukkiwon was initiated by Bosung Industry (now the Dongyang Express Construction Group), on credit. The project was then struck by unforeseen circumstances. Midway through construction came the first Middle East oil crisis, causing massive setbacks to the project. The world plunged into a serious economic downturn. The original plans to complete construction within a year had hit a roadblock. Kim, Un yong determined that a delay in construction plans at this point would mean a delay of at least 2-3 years.



A view of the location before the construction of Kukkiwon.

He decided to push through with the original plan, and went about persuading those around him. Through many hardships and trials, construction of Kukkiwon progressed step by step on schedule. Electricity was connected in the building just a day prior to its scheduled completion. Everyone participating in the project cheered, and commenced preparations for the historic completion ceremony.

19일 서울시 3개구에서
현장에서 거행된다.
대지 2천평에 연건평 1
천2백여평의 3층건물이
도장에 건설되고 3천명
을 수용할 수 있는 스턴드
트 구조된다.

跆拳道場기공
跆拳道場기공식은 1월 30
일 태권도인의 숙원인 중
앙도장기공식을 19일 오후 2
시 開園式장관을 비롯한 많
은 체육계 인사와 참석한가
운데 영동개발지구인 城東구
三洞산 76현장에서 거행됐다.

Newspaper stories on the groundbreaking ceremony for the Central Dojang (Chosun Ilbo, November 18, 1971, and Kyunghyang Shinmun, November 20, 1971).

Kukkiwon Reveals Its Magnificence - Completion

The Taekwondo Center was finally completed and revealed in its majestic form to the world on November 30, 1972. The complex covered around 7,603 m², with a three-story structure in the center housing a 750 m² arena with seating for 3,000 people. Completion came just one year and 10 months after the appointment of President Kim, Un yong.



Kukkiwon, the aspiration of Taekwondo practitioners, was erected on a barren hillside in Gangnam, Seoul, on November 30, 1972.

Originally, the Taekwondo Center was to be named “Kukkiwon,” but the idea was abandoned as the corresponding name had already been taken by the headquarters for Japanese sumo wrestling. On February 6, 1973, the name Kukkiwon was finalized for the Central Dojang of Taekwondo. The name has the meaning of the main home for cultivation of Taekwondo as the national sport.

The opening ceremony tape of Kukkiwon was cut by KTA President Kim, Un yong, Prime Minister Kim, Jong pil, Seoul Mayor Yang, Taek sik, and Korean Sports Association President Kim, Taek soo, forming a new horizon for growth and regeneration (Dong-A Ilbo, December 1, 1972).

Securing a Wide Range of Facilities - Facilities and Structures



A recent view of Kukkiwon's entrance.

Kukkiwon represented the combined, prolonged efforts of many individuals. It was built in an architectural style merging the classical with the contemporary. The main structure was given a blue-tiled roof embodying the unique Korean spirit, and eight columns along the facade to represent the eight trigrams of traditional Eastern thought.

Kukkiwon became incorporated into the Seoul Metropolitan Government as an asset of the city on December 9, 1974. Kukkiwon is equipped with an indoor arena (main stadium), lecture halls, dormitories, lounges, shower facilities, locker rooms, medical room, and more. Once Kukkiwon was completed, supplies and equipment were donated from all corners of society. The Ambassador of West Germany to the Republic of Korea visited Kukkiwon in 1973, donating a large number of cabinets for use by athletes in the locker rooms.



Kukkiwon's main gate was erected in preparation for the first Asian Taekwondo Championships in 1974.

Roof-raising ceremony for the main gate (September 2, 1974)

A roof-raising ceremony for the main gate of Kukkiwon was held prior to the 1st Asian Taekwondo Championships. The roof-raising ceremony is an event that marks the completion of construction of a structure. Present at the event were Kukkiwon Vice President Hong, Chong soo and the staff and executives from the Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) including Secretary General Uhm, Woon kyu. The construction costs for the main gate were provided by the former Prime Minister and President of Incheon Steel, Song, Yo chan. The name board over the front gate reading "Kukkiwon" was written personally by then-Prime Minister Kim, Jong pil.

Collapse and restoration of the Kukkiwon main gate



On April 25, 2004, a heavy equipment operator struck and caused the collapse of the Kukkiwon main gate.

The cargo crane was making a U-turn on its way to a nearby construction site when the back of the crane struck the top of the main gate, causing the roof to collapse.

It was an astounding act of negligence on the part of the crane operator. Kukkiwon hurried to proceed with restoring the gate, but the Korea Cargo Truck Mutual Aid Association, the insurance provider for the crane, was sluggish with compensation. Gangnam-gu Office was short on funds as well, and work to restore the structure could only begin a year and a half later in October 2005.

With restoration complete, Kukkiwon held a second name board-hanging ceremony for the main gate with Kukkiwon employees and executives including President Uhm, Woon kyu in attendance.



Palgakjeong Pavilion, completed in 1975, was renamed Yungokjeong after the pen name of Kim, Un yong, Kukkiwon's first President.

Completion of the octagonal pavilion (August 20, 1975)

Jinro President Jang, Ik yong donated the facility immediately before the opening of the 2nd World Taekwondo Championships. The pavilion was later named Yungokjeong, after the pen name of Kim, Un yong.