

Korean Sports & Olympic Committee

스포츠영웅

Sports hero who gave Koreans great happiness and hope

A Big Man Who Embraced the World

Kim Un-yong



대한체육회
Korean Sport & Olympic Committee

A Big Man Who
Embraced the World
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A BIG MAN WHO EMBRACED THE WORLD

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A Big Man Who Embraced the World

Kim Un-yong

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Translated by Colin A. Mouat





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PUBLISHER'S FOREWORD



The publication of *A Big Man Who Embraced the World*, a critical biography that traces the course of life of one of South Korea's great sport heroes, Kim Un-yong, is an event of very great significance. I wish to extend my deepest thanks to the Sports Heroes selection committee members, the author, and everyone involved for their unstinting efforts that made the publication possible.

Since 2011, the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee (KSOC) has annually selected "Sports Heroes," in recognition of their achievements, from among sports figures who have served as role models for athletes and young people and have inspired great happiness and hope among the public by elevating the international stature of South Korea. The very first honorees in 2011 were the late marathoner Sohn Kee-chung and the late weightlifter Kim Sung-jip; other sports figures selected as Sports Heroes include the late runner Suh Yun-bok in 2013; the late sports administrator Min Kwan-sik and the wrestler Chang Chang-sun in 2014; wrestler Yang Jeong-mo, basketball player Park Shin-ja, and the sports administrator Kim Un-yong in 2015; and figure skater Kim Yuna in 2016.

This year sees the publication of a critical biography that sheds new light on the life of Kim Un-yong, a figure who inspired hope, courage, and pride among South Koreans by sharing South Korean sports throughout the world. Drawing from extensive published books and records relating to hero Kim Un-yong's life and activities, this biography tells the story of his passionate life as a sports administrator.

I am certain that Kim Un-yong's achievements as someone who dedicated his life to realizing his dreams and his visions for South Korean

sports—despite the difficult circumstances and the challenges that he faced—will help to inspire dreams, hope, and a spirit of challenge among the young people and athletes who are developing today.

With its publication ahead of the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Olympics, I hope that this biography of the South Korean sports hero Kim Un-yong will awaken a national interest in and an awareness of sports history. I look forward to Kim Un-yong's boundless love for sports and noble contributions to the advancement of sports being carried on unceasingly by the emerging future generations.

The KSOC wholeheartedly presents each of these beloved Sports Heroes as a national asset and a source of pride for everyone in sports. We look forward to your continued interest and support.

Thank you.

Lee Kee-heung

President, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee
October 2017



A Tribute to Dr. Kim Un-yong

Dr. Kim Un-yong was one of the most prominent sports administrators and visionaries of South Korea. He was a former vice president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and a founding president of the World Taekwondo Federation. He received a doctorate in Political Science and Diplomacy in 1963 from Yonsei University.

I have great admiration for this extraordinary man, his dedication, his passion, and his contributions to sports and society.

On January 23, 1971, Dr. Kim was elected the president of the Korean Taekwondo Association. Though he initially declined the position due to the continued conflicts within the organization, he was asked by the Korean government to accept and to clean up the association. With the belief that taekwondo was a Korean martial art and its governing body should therefore be based in Korea, in 1973 the World Taekwondo Federation was formed and Dr. Kim was elected its first president.

Dr. Kim was instrumental in bringing the 1988 Olympic Games to Seoul and its successful organization. He was responsible for getting taekwondo into the Olympic Games, which made its debut as a medal sport at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

Dr. Kim also served as president of the Korean Olympic Committee, president of the 2002 Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee, president of the Korea Taekwondo Association, president of the Kukkiwon, an ambassador at large with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, co-chairman of the Rebuilding Korea Committee, and internationally, he was the president of GAISE, executive board member of the IOC, chairman of the IOC Radio and Television Commission and founding president of the World Taekwondo Federation.

It is fitting that he has gained the admiration and respect of many in Korea and around the world.

Ng Ser Miang
IOC Executive Board Member

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ng Ser Miang'.



The Force behind a Phenomenon: Kim Un-yong

The history of the Korean Peninsula has long experienced severe friction: invasion, occupation, Japanese protectorate from 1910. The Olympic marathon champion Sohn Kee-chung was obliged to run under the pseudonym Ki Tei Son at Berlin in 1936. Following World War II, the super powers' Cold War division of North and South, and the ensuing Korean War (1950–1953), Seoul and much of the nation was reduced to ashes. The consequent rise of Seoul to become within thirty years a global powerhouse in industry, culture, and sport was truly a phenomenon of the twentieth century. This achievement owed much to an internationally little-known figure, Kim Un-yong.

Born in 1931, university-educated in Seoul and Texas, Kim became, during the militarily dominant presidency of Park Chung-hee (1963–1979), a wide-ranging motivator: variously councillor at the United Nations, deputy director-general of the President's office, secretary to the prime minister. Simultaneously, sensing the international visibility of sport, Kim almost single-handedly set about projecting South Korea's expanding profile.

The sport ascension began in 1974 at the international shooting federation's election of world championship host for 1978. Kim gambled with an offered accommodation fee of \$5 per head, half that proposed by favorite candidate Mexico, and was accepted: South Korea's first such hosting venture. In 1981, he was the only Korean representative at a world gathering in West Germany of all international sports federations, secretly planning Korea's bid months later at Baden-Baden by Seoul for the Olympic Games of 1988. Against all expectation, aided by advice from arch sportswear manufacturer Horst Dasler, Seoul defeated outright favorite Nagoya of Japan by 52 votes to 27, the Japanese partially scuttled by vigorous green-campaign protesters. This victory provoked immediate expectation of a third consecutive boycott, demanded by Soviet Union allies—South Korea having no diplomatic relations with more than half the UN.

"We had no contact with any Eastern Europeans," Kim recalled. "South Korea was still partially in darkness—our objective in hosting the Games was hospitality, whatever the cost."

In the interim prior to those Games, Kim's own international status had rapidly developed. Promoted by Juan Antonio Samaranch, newly elected president of the International Olympic Committee, Kim became head of the

General Assembly of International Sports Federations (GAISF), replacing Tommy Keller, controversial head of the International Rowing Federation who was challenging the authority of the IOC. Kim thus became a close associate of the most powerful figure in world sport, he also being appointed head of the organization of the IOC's "recognized sports" (ARISF), the conglomeration of events vying for inclusion in the Olympic Programme—most notably the national sport of Kim's homeland, taekwondo.

Attending the IOC Session of 1985 in East Berlin—GDR governed—Kim gained crucial contact with the Soviet bloc and reduction of the threat to Seoul's Games. "Our motivation was to raise the reputation of the South Korean economy—our industry, culture, science, and sport," claimed Kim. He and Samaranch were in almost daily contact for consolidation of the Games project. A Japanese finance newspaper estimated Kim's influence nationally to be "in the top twenty." Development of unknown sports for 1988 rapidly gained credibility, as in equestrianism. "Six years ago we had nothing more than a few donkeys."

The Seoul festival was to be a triumph, the largest Olympics yet in size, technology, and publicity—a metaphoric amalgam of German efficiency, Asian courtesy, and American financial acumen. In the immediate following years, GDP rose by 12 percent, four times faster than Europe. Diplomatic relations were established throughout the Soviet bloc with all except Cuba, Albania, North Korea, and China, state President Roh Tae-woo unimaginably holding a summit conference with President Gorbachev. The Kim "miracle" had become pervasive.

By the mid-nineties, it was evident that Kim had entered a small elite group of potential successors to Samaranch, among other accomplishments having gained, for the Sydney Games of 2000, the program's inclusion of taekwondo. Yet adversely, in 1999, he received a warning of conflict of interest, by an ad hoc investigation commission chaired by Richard Pound, for having assisted his son in gaining a work-permit green card in the United States during the bidding campaign by Winter Games host Salt Lake City.

When it came to the presidential election in Moscow in 2001, Kim was one of five candidates, and widely regarded as second favorite behind the Montreal lawyer Richard Pound, with Jacques Rogge of Belgium heavily supported numerically by the European vote. Kim's manifesto inadvertently erred: he recommended a "national office management fee" for IOC members, widely but unjustly interpreted as a bribe. Following a letter of complaint to the Ethics Commission by Netherlands member Prince Willem of

Orange, Kim was given a reprimand immediately before the voting started in the morning of July 16, 2001—yet still came second to Rogge, with Pound, perceived to be authoritarian, a dismayed third, the voting in the final round 59–23–22, showing a substantial Asian tide.

Encouraged by the support for an IOC leader beyond Europe, Kim made what was irrationally perceived, domestically with hindsight, as another tactical error: contending for a vice president's place simultaneously with a bid by Pyeongchang for the 2010 Winter Olympic Games. (The IOC is reluctant to vote twice for the same country in one day.) Up against Vancouver and Salzburg, Pyeongchang led on the first round, with 51 votes to Vancouver's 40 and Salzburg's 15. However all the Salzburg votes then switched to Vancouver, winning 56–53. Kim then defeated Gerhard Heiberg of Norway for the vice presidency. Though this election had come after the Pyeongchang reversal, there would be political vengeance at home.

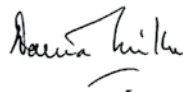
A year later Kim was imprisoned, without identifiable evidence, for alleged financial irregularities. His prosecution, widely criticized, was condemned by the UN Human Rights Commission. Yet, even before trial—which within the Korean judicial system rarely goes against the prosecution—the IOC Executive Board unconstitutionally demanded either that he resign or be expelled.

Such was Kim's esteem among fellow members, indeed worldwide, that the IOC received protests from twenty-six members. There was alleged collusion between the IOC and Korea's Blue House political HQ: the IOC feared an expulsion proposal, requiring a two-thirds majority, might well have failed.

In clouded circumstances, Kim resigned and was conditionally released, his letter of resignation, whether voluntary or contrived, taking almost two weeks to reach the IOC. The ultimate irony was that in 2005 the Executive Board approved a "domestic office allowance" for IOC members.

Kim's dignity was restored, his presence welcomed everywhere. Alongside Pierre de Coubertin, IOC father, and Sigfrid Edstrom, founder of IAAF and subsequent IOC president, no individual has specifically more enhanced sport in their nation than Kim Un-yong.

David Miller
The Times (London)



PREFACE

In Memory of Kim Un-yong

Former Korean Sport and Olympic Committee chairman Kim Un-yong, a great star and stalwart source of support for the South Korean sports community, passed away on October 3, 2017, at the age of 86.

It was simply devastating to hear of his sudden passing just before the publication of this book, a biography of this sports hero based on extensive information available from *The Greatest Olympics, Challenge to the World*, and other masterworks by Kim, various public sources such as the 50-year history of the Korean Olympic Committee, the 25-year history of the Kukkiwon, newspapers, and the internet, as well as eight interviews and various telephone conversations.

Kim Un-yong shared two messages with me in a telephone conversation on September 29, four days before his unexpected passing. First, he told me that he had finished his review of a galley proof following the biography's rough draft and said that it could be published in its current form; he also requested my presence at the Kimunyoung Cup International Open Taekwondo Championships, which were opening that October 27, and suggested that we meet for dinner. Second, he recounted his attendance of a September 27 ceremony to commemorate the opening of the South Korean national training center in Jincheon, Chungcheongbuk-do. "With such nice facilities, I'm worried South Korean elite sports might start losing their competitive edge," he quipped. "My legs are not so good now, and it's tough for me to attend the events I'm invited to," he added. "I'm not sure what I'll be able to do anymore." It brings all the more tears to my eyes to think of him predicting his own passing even as he voiced his grave concerns about the stagnation of elite sports in South Korea.

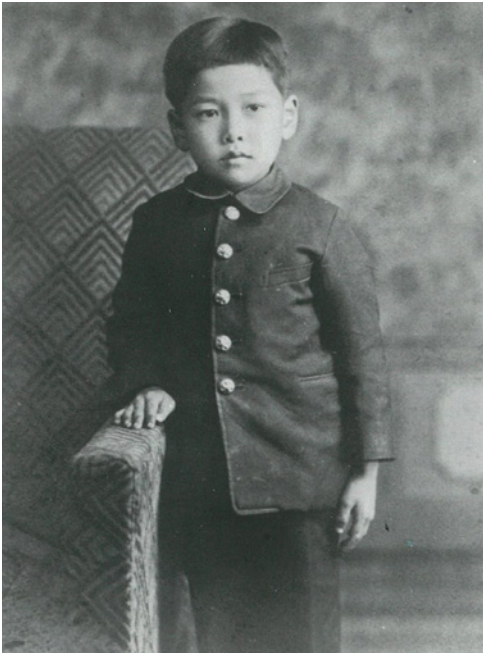
In respect for Kim Un-yong's wishes after his personal review, the text of the KOC's *Sports Hero: A Big Man Who Embraced the World*, Kim Un-yong is being published with few revisions, although some photographs have been added in the hopes of leaving a more complete record of his activities during his lifetime. As the final text he reviewed shortly before his passing, it may not be going too far to call it a posthumous work. May he rest in peace.

Chung Tae-hwa

PHOTOS



A portrait of happy family life in 1936, when Kim Un-yong (front left) was five years old. Father Kim Do-hak was a fashionable gentlemen and one of Daegu's leading figures.



Kim Un-yong just before entering Deoksan Primary School in Daegu (1936).



Kim Un-yong at the battle of Geonbeongsan Mountain's Hill 921.



Students in the Yonhi University Department of Political Science and Diplomacy in 1950. The Korean War broke out a little over a month after this picture was taken.



Kim Un-yong as a major while training at the US Anti-Aircraft and Guided Missile School (1955).



As an instructor, Kim Un-yong was in charge of teaching battalion-level tactics for the Infantry Officer Advanced Course at the US Army Infantry School (1957).



Kim Un-yong serves as interpreter for a speech by US General James Van Fleet on the Korean Military Academy campus on March 31, 1961, while Rhee Syngman and his wife look on.



Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee vice president Kim Un-yong shakes hands with IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch and network president Arthur Watson after concluding a contract for the event's television broadcasting rights with NBC on March 26, 1986.



Kim Un-yong in taekwondo uniform at the Kukkiwon (1987).



At the suggestion of Kim Un-yong (far right), Juan Antonio Samaranch (center) meets with the leaders of three political parties during a visit to Seoul ahead of the Olympics: Kim Dae-jung (second from right), Kim Jong-pil (third from right), Kim Young-sam (third from left), and Yun Gil-jung (second from left). SLOOC president Park Se-jik is on the far left (1988).



A commemorative photo of Kim Un-yong, Juan Antonio Samaranch, and their wives during the IOC president's visit for the Seoul Olympics.



SLOOC senior vice president Kim Un-yong visits the main stadium ahead of the 1988 Seoul Olympics as he considers preparations for the event.



Kim Un-yong brought taekwondo to the world's attention with a demonstration held at the opening ceremony of the Seoul Olympics at Juan Antonio Samaranch's suggestion.



The 1991 IOC general meeting in Birmingham, England.



At a 1993 general meeting of the KSOC and KOC, Kim Un-yong was elected as the 31st KSOC president and 21st KOC president.



IOC vice president Kim Un-yong beaming as he shows a document certifying taekwondo's adoption as an official 2000 Sydney Olympics event at a 1994 IOC general meeting in Paris.



IOC president Kim Un-yong in 1995 with Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) president Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah as they observe the opening ceremony for the East Asian Games in Harbin.



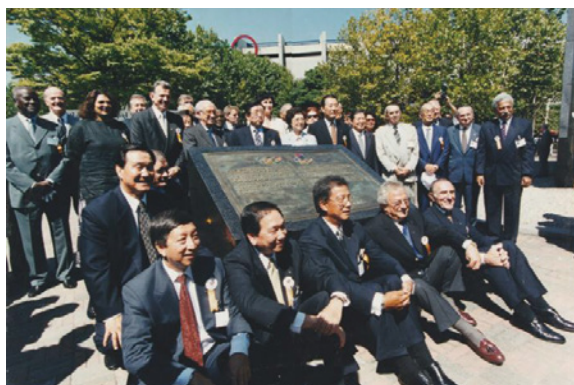
IOC vice president Kim Un-yong greets US President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton while attending the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Samsung Group chairman Lee Kun-hee was elected as an IOC member at an IOC general meeting ahead of the Atlanta Games.



Vice president Kim Un-yong and other IOC leaders visiting the Olympic Village for the 1996 Atlanta Olympics.



Kim Un-yong shares a warm handshake during a courtesy visit from Nelson Mandela during the South African President's 1997 visit to the IOC. Kim would later say that Mandela's warm smile was something he would always treasure in his heart.



A 1998 unveiling ceremony for a monument marking the tenth anniversary of the Seoul Olympics was attended by Prime Minister Goh Kun and numerous IOC officials, including president Juan Antonio Samaranch.



Kim Un-yong with officials from the South Korean squad at the 1998 Nagano Winter Olympics.



Kim Un-yong and his wife greet Japanese Emperor Hirohito and his wife while attending the Nagano Winter Olympics in February 1998.



Kim Un-yong at the 1999 IOC general meeting in Seoul with Jacques Rogge (left) and Thomas Bach (right).



Attendees pose for a commemorative photograph after a successful IOC general meeting in Seoul in 1999.



Kim Un-yong smiles broadly as he shares a toast with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il during a visit to North Korea as a member of a special delegation for President Kim Dae-jung.



A press conference for the South Korean squad at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.



WTF president and IOC vice president Kim Un-yong with IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch as they wait for the medal ceremony for the taekwondo competition, which became an official event for the first time at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.



A new era was ushered in at the 2000 Sydney Olympics when the South and North Korean squads marched jointly under the Korean Peninsula flag for the first time ever.



Kim Un-yong and family. The nine people pictured include his son, daughter-in-law, daughters, son-in-law, and grandchildren (2000).



IOC members Kim Un-yong and Lee Kun-hee with their wives and South Korean squad officials attending the 2000 Sydney Olympics.



The Valley Forge Freedom Foundation selected IOC member Kim Un-yong to receive a US Friendship Award in 2001.



A 2003 ceremony honoring the 30th anniversary of the World Taekwondo Federation.

A Legend and a Living Witness of Sports for This Era

“Yungok” Kim Un-yong. He may not be someone who could be called a professional “sportsman,” but there are few who would not view him as a “sports man”—for he has spent the last half-century of his life on the front lines of sports.

Sport has been Kim’s companion in life, a relationship that became a career at the age of 40 when he became the seventh chairman of the Korea Taekwondo Association on January 17, 1971, and that has continued even as he approaches his 87th year.¹ He served briefly in the government as a member of South Korea’s National Assembly—he was appointed as a proportional representative by President Kim Dae-jung in June 2000 to represent sports. Even then, sport was his whole life.

Since that time, Kim’s life has shared its fortunes with the modern history of South Korean sport. His every move became the focus of press attention at home and abroad; a single word from him would have a tremendous impact on the global sports world. His activities with the athletic community would become synonymous with the history of South Korean sports. The man himself became both a legend and a witness.

Kim’s star has shone all the brighter on the international stage thanks to his outstanding linguistic abilities—a fluent command of six languages that has allowed him to freely communicate with anyone he has met from any country.

In 1973, he became South Korea’s first-ever head of an international league when he founded the World Taekwondo Federation (renamed World

1 Shortly before the publication of the Korean edition of this book by the Korea Olympic Committee (KOC), Kim Un-yong passed away unexpectedly on October 3, 2017.

Taekwondo in June 2017). His international sports debut came the following year in 1974 as vice chairman and honorary secretary of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee (KSOC). At the time, South Korea was still a tiny, unknown Asian country to the global sports community.

It was a time in history when South Koreans thrilled to the voice of boxer Hong Soo-hwan crying, “Mother! I took out the champion,” after toppling Arnold Taylor in the World Boxing Council (WBC) bantamweight title match in Durban, South Africa in July 1974—a trip that required him to fly 30 hours, changing planes no fewer than six times. It was also a moment when relations with North Korea were entering their worst state ever, following the fatal shooting of First Lady Yuk Young-soo during a National Liberation Day celebratory ceremony on August 15 that year. Beyond that, it was an era when many South Koreans were still clutching empty stomachs amid the “barley hill” seasons, chanting “Let us live well” as they spurred on efforts to achieve modernization.

At a time when South Korea had yet to have an international profile, Kim was gradually laying the groundwork for internationalization in Korean sport.

Kim was a leading figure in the successful bid to host the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul; he still harbors vivid memories of the so-called “miracle in Baden-Baden” on September 30, 1981. As senior vice chairman of the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee, he played a vanguard role in leading the Soviet Union and other Communist countries back into the Olympic movement, bringing an end to the boycott-plagued “half-Olympics” of Moscow in 1980 and Los Angeles in 1984 and ringing down the final curtain on the Olympics as a stage for ideological war. Thanks to these efforts, the Seoul Olympics went down in history as a truly great event bringing together East and West.

This was not all. Kim also spearheaded the creation of the World Games, an international competition exclusively for non-Olympic events. His pioneering efforts in the globalization of taekwondo helped pave the way for its recognition as an official Olympic event, and he was also a leading figure in the establishment of the Association of IOC Recognized International Sports Federations (ARISF).

In 1984, Kim became vice chairman of the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF, later changed to SportAccord 2009–2017, now Global Association of International Sport Federations), one of the twin pillars of sport alongside the IOC. Two years later, he became its chairman.

To date, he remains the only South Korean to have served as head of a general international sports organization.

His activities broadened further after he became South Korea's sixth IOC member in 1986. He served as an IOC executive committee member and vice chairman, while heading the committees for radio and television, the IOC's major sources of revenue. By the late 1990s, his stature had risen to the point where he was second only to IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch in terms of influence in the world sport community. The world's foremost sports leaders would not hesitate to fly for hours to South Korea to have a ten-minute meeting with him.

Even this was not all. Kim worked tirelessly to develop taekwondo into a truly global sport, adopted first as a demonstration sport at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and 1992 Barcelona Olympics and finally as an official event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics. Without him, taekwondo's adoption as an official Olympic event—and one that reliably adds to South Korea's medal count—would have been all but impossible. His performance as an evangelist for inter-Korean reconciliation, successfully organizing the first-ever joint entrance by South and North Korean athletes at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, was by no means insubstantial and inspired the similar joint march of South and North Korea at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics almost 20 years later.

While it did not end with the same success, Kim's 2001 bid to become the IOC's first-ever non-Caucasian president in its hundred-year history served as a catalyst for positive change and new winds of reform for the committee.

All of the international sporting events and major international sports conferences held in South Korea during the 1990s and early 2000s—the 1997 Winter Universiade in Muju and Jeonju, the 1998 Asian Winter Games in Gangwon-do, the 2002 South Korea-Japan World Cup and the Asian Games in Busan, the 2003 Summer Universiade in Daegu, and an IOC session in 1999—came thanks to his direct and indirect support as an IOC member and “big man” in international sport.

It was during this period, when Kim Un-yong was active as chairman of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee and the South Korean Olympics Committee and vice president of the IOC, that South Korean sports began moving from the world's periphery to its center. It would also be fair to say that this was one of its greatest moments in terms of sports diplomacy, a time when it bowed to no other country. But Kim's path would not always be one of glory and joy.

When Pyeongchang failed in its July 2003 bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics, Korean bidding officials and politicians began accusing Kim Un-yong of “obstructing Pyeongchang” to hold on to his position as IOC vice president, despite information provided by numerous IOC members and the international media to the contrary. Soon he was arrested on charges of allegedly misappropriating public funds from the World Taekwondo Federation, which he had founded and painstakingly developed for over 30 years. Targeted by the South Korean administration, he suffered the painful experience of being forced to resign his IOC position. As the longest-serving president of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee, he was forced to step down, simply because of a powerful government figure who coveted the position.

Kim Un-yong was a unique international figure, without precedent in South Korean history, who exerted a powerful influence on the global sports world, acting as a force for good for Korea and Korean sports. Though he was eventually pardoned and reinstated, once tarnished, his reputation was never fully restored, and he was unfortunately never able to enjoy an honorable retirement to universal applause.

Looking back on his own path, Kim recalled, “The road I’ve traveled so far has been relatively smooth. However, I cannot say that everything has gone as I had expected. In retrospect, I think you could say today that my successes have come about because I would revise what I had initially considered to be the best goal so as to adopt the ‘next-best option,’ and this often brought surprisingly good results.”

(Kim Un-yong, *Challenge to the World*, Yonsei University Press 2008)

A blue-tinted photograph of a man in a suit and a young child standing together. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and striped tie. The child is on the right, wearing a light-colored, patterned jacket. They are both looking towards the camera. The background is a textured, mottled blue.

Chapter 1

Pursuing a Dream

A Mother's Foresight

Memories from a worn photograph

She was walking alone on a quiet mountain road. Dense forests of trees grew on either side of the tiny path. The morning fog rendered the road ahead almost invisible. She took careful steps, wary of tripping or taking a wrong turn. At times she stopped, startled at the sounds of the occasional, unidentifiable bird fluttering past.

No one walked with her or followed beyond, yet oddly she felt no fear. Occasionally, thoughts would enter her mind: Where am I going? What am I doing? Immediately, she shook them off.

How long had she been walking like this?

Suddenly, everything became bright. She raised her eyes to see an old man in gentleman's attire with a long gray beard hurling a large rock to her from the mountain. It happened so suddenly, she had no time to say anything or get out of the way. She caught the rock squarely in her chest.

It was a dream. Yet the memory was so vivid that it almost seemed real.

Kim Un-yong's mother would later share her dream of the mystical spirit throwing a rock to her as a premonition of his birth on March 19, 1931. He was born to father Kim Do-hak, then 33, and mother Lee Kyung-yi, then 30, who lived at 27 Bongsan-dong in Daegu. They were of the Geumnyeong Kim clan; his father hailed from Yeongcheon, while his mother was one of the Jeonju Lees (of the Joseon Dynasty).

Bongsan-dong, the neighborhood where he was born, is located near Sincheon Stream, which runs north to south through the center of the Daegu basin, and a hill to the west known as Sudosan Mountain (elevation 78 meters). Famous for the discovery of dolmens from the Paleolithic age, it



Three-year-old Kim Un-yong with his father (1934).

was a very quiet and beautiful village next to the flowing stream, where a *hyanggyo* (local Confucian school) nearby had taught long before.

Sincheon Stream was also known as Suseongcheon Stream, after the Suseonggyo Bridge, which had been built from north to south over the stream during the Japanese occupation. When midsummer came, it became a watering hole and rest area where adults and children of all ages would visit to swim. The mountains, ringing the whole of Daegu like folding screens, were pleasure grounds of the soul, inviting even to children from far away. The houses, most of them traditional Korean *hanok* structures, were surrounded by persimmon trees and covered in grapevines. A rich fruity scent could be smelled from the village entrance thanks to the many orchards all around.

Kim Do-hak was a wealthy member of the so-called “landed gentry” called *yangban*. The family owned a gold mine in Andong and large plots of land in Suseong, Chilgok, Jicheon, Uiseong, and Yeongcheon. They had several houses in Seoul, as well as homes and assets distributed over several locations in Daegu that allowed them to live in comfort.

A graduate of Kyushu University in Japan, Un-yong’s father worked for the *Chosun Minbo* newspaper in Daegu. The *Chosun Minbo*’s offices were located in the heart of Daegu, with the city hall and police station nearby. First a reporter before being promoted to head of accounting and general affairs, he was trusted enough to be tasked with the newspaper’s financial affairs.

Kim Do-hak was also a very gifted man who was quite active socially. He was adept at the violin and organ; a talented writer, he penned *Mt. Geumgangsán Excursion*, a collection of his impressions on roaming the various nooks and crannies of Inner and Outer Geumgangsán Mountain. *Mt. Geumgangsán Excursion* is a record of a July 1931 trip, documenting his journey from Seoul Station through Cheorwon to Jangansa Temple at the entrance of Mt. Geumgangsán, and then on to such sites as Mahayeon, the Haegeumgang, Onjong Village, Manmulsang Rocks, and Wonsan Beach. The diary provides such detail that the mountain’s sights seem to be painted before the reader. Kim’s father was considered one of Daegu’s most influential figures, serving as a member of the Chamber of Commerce and secretary of the Daegu Medical Experts’ Association and ranking among the top intelligentsia with his experience attending university in Japan.

The winter when Kim Un-yong was three years old, a fire broke out at the drugstore next to the Daegu Post Office when the employees poured alcohol

in the furnace because of the cold. The fire spread to his home behind the post office, and the main building was incinerated. As it happened, he was out with his caretaker, and the others were all able to quickly flee the house unhurt. The home was soon rebuilt, but photographs of the young Un-yong's mother and father were destroyed, along with various family documents.

His father regularly attended events as a representative of the newspaper, bringing his younger son with him each time—favoring the boy over his older adopted brother. As a result, Kim had many opportunities from a young age to meet renowned societal figures, a fact that would have a significant impact on his future. One time, he went with his father to a party held by the governor of Gyeongsangbuk-do. Seeing the governor dressed in a suit embroidered in gold, he said, “I want to be a governor someday too.” His father also took him by the hand to see the cherry blossoms of Jinhae and visit Haeinsa Temple. He brought the boy to violin recitals and magic conventions, instilling a sense of curiosity and artistic appreciation from a young age.

One unforgettable memory for Kim Un-yong was the experience of proudly watching his father greeting others as a newspaper representative at the public stadium where various sports events were organized by the newspaper. Athletic competitions were essentially the only means for Koreans to vent the anger in their hearts during the dark days of the Japanese occupation. A popular song included the lyrics, “An Chang-nam in the sky / Uhm Bok-dong on the ground”—and, indeed, this was the height of popularity for An, South Korea's first aviator, and Uhm, a cyclist who humbled his Japanese rivals.



Kim Un-yong's father Kim Do-hak at 25 as a reporter for the *Chosun Minbo* newspaper in Daegu.

Kim Un-yong also vividly recalled going with his mother and father to the Mangyunggwang Theater when he was five years old and applauding the Olympic documentary *Festival of Nations*, which showed images of athlete Sohn Kee-chung winning the marathon event at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

That very winter, Kim's father came down with a terrible cold that lasted for around two weeks. He had yet to fully recover when he was forced to drag his ailing body to the newspaper for a full day of work doing the year-end accounting and paying employees. By the time he returned home by rickshaw late that night, his body was burning. He was quickly admitted to Dorim Hospital, but by then his condition had worsened to acute pneumonia. He passed away the following morning. Penicillin only became available in Japan the following month.

Kim's brief memories of his father, lasting just five years, are captured in his only surviving photograph of the man. The father stands upright, holding his three-year-old son by the hand. It is a single image, but his father remained vividly burned into Kim Un-yong's mind for the rest of his life.

*The tree wishes to be quiet, but the wind never rests;
The child wishes to serve his parents, but his parents are no longer there.*
(Han Ying, *Han shi waizhuan*)

Even well into his old age, Kim Un-yong would reveal, "Not for one day have I forgotten my father's existence".

A mother's foresight

*A hoe is a blade
But it can never have the edge of a sickle
A father is a parent
wi deong-deo-dung-syeong
But he can never love like a mother
Oh! Master
He can never love like a mother*

(Modern adaptation of the lyrics to the Goryeo song
"Song of Yearning for Mother")

After losing his father at the age of five, Kim Un-yong grew up under particular care from his mother. Perhaps it was her fear that the boy's loss of his father might leave him despondent or vulnerable to waywardness.

The year after his father passed away, Kim Un-yong entered Deoksan Primary School in Daegu, where he was an honor student and served as class vice president in his second year. Toward the end of his third year, the family moved to Seoul and he transferred to Sakurai Primary School, a Japanese boys' school located in the Myeongnyun-dong neighborhood, near Sungkyunkwan University. Koreans accounted for just three of Sakurai's 1,800 students. The decision was based in large part on his mother's determination to have her children educated in Seoul, but another reason was her frustration with pestering relations in Daegu.

The situation was thus: the sudden death of Kim Un-yong's father at a young age resulted in an unexpected large insurance payout, amounting to 3,000 won at a time when a house sold for a few hundred won. Rural relations heard of the windfall and decided this was their moment. They came in droves to ask for money. At times, his mother would be unable to take it anymore. "Here, take this and get out of here!" she would cry, tossing several hundred-won notes their way. Relatives who would never have been able to say anything when her husband was alive may have seen the young widow as an easy target now. But she was no wallflower. At a time when the phrase "women's rights" was not even part of society's vocabulary, this mother of two sons was an exemplar of an "iron fist in a velvet glove."

Kim Un-yong's mother had moved to Daegu after marrying his father. She was a "new woman," an alumna of Ewha Girls' High School who had received the most modern education available to Korean women at the time. As a child, she had gone with her mother to live with her family near Seoul's Hyoja-dong neighborhood, where her great-aunt and her mother's first



Nine-year-old Kim Un-yong with his mother.



Gifted enough a musician to at one point harbor dreams of becoming a professional pianist, Kim Un-yong gave solo performances at campus recitals during his time at Kyungdong High School and Yonhi University. This image shows Kim performing on the piano as a Kyungdong High School student.

cousin were referred to by the aristocratic titles of “baroness” and “baron.” She never met her mother’s older brother, hearing only that he had gone missing while campaigning for independence in Shanghai. Another brother perished in Nagasaki when the United States dropped an atomic bomb in August 1945.

Kim Un-yong’s mother took him on many travels, visiting Wonsan’s beaches and many other places around Korea.

Among his mother’s teachings, he remembers her lessons in Western table manners most clearly. It came not while eating Western food at home, but in the dining car of the Gyeongbu train between Seoul and Busan. The young man did not even know what “Western” meant and was flustered at having to adopt Western table manners to eat in the rattling dining car.

At the time, he had no idea why he even had to learn them. He was merely learning what his mother taught him. It was only much later, when he decided to become a diplomat, that he realized just how valuable his mother’s instructions were. It was an early example of education from a mother representing the “new generation.”

Kim first learned to play the piano when he was in his fourth year of elementary school, not long after moving from Daegu to Seoul. Pianos were rare in Korea at the time, but his mother insisted that he learn, believing one had to know a musical instrument to participate in social life.

While his mother’s teachings were considerate, they were also strict. Her greatest displeasure was to hear others say her children had no manners because they had been brought up without a father.

While Un-yong was attending Aengjeong Primary School after moving to Seoul, his mother would prepare infusions of ginseng and various herbs—a

painstakingly made remedy to ensure her son would not be cowed by the physiques of the Japanese boys. But the boy hated the bitter taste of the Chinese medicine. One day, he emptied the bowl in the toilet to avoid drinking it. His mother caught him in the act and was furious.

“We may not have to worry about having something to eat, but many people are starving even today,” she said. “I don’t care if you don’t like it—throwing your medicine away is an embarrassment and something that deserves punishment.”

That day, his mother whipped him with a switch until his calves were swollen. It was the first and last whipping he received from her.

His mother often told him, “You’re going to do something very important someday. Don’t be one of those people who covet small things and end up missing out on great things. Always stay one step ahead, looking into the distance and waiting for your moment. And make sure that you are fully prepared to show what you can do when the time comes. It’s important to seize your opportunities, but it’s also important to have the ability to make opportunities your own.”

These words from his mother have remained a golden rule for Kim Un-yong. He long teared up to think of her unseen consideration, love, and foresight in even teaching him Western table manners during train journeys, encouraging him to study English from a young age, and instilling a rich sensibility in him with his piano lessons. Widowed at 36 years of age, she spent the next three decades raising two marvelous children before passing away in 1968 at the age of 68.

Outdoing Japanese classmates in studies and sport

When Kim Un-yong first transferred from his school in Daegu to Sakurai Primary School in Seoul, everything felt unfamiliar. The move from a Korean school to a Japanese one left him feeling uneasy, sandwiched among the Japanese students.

Sakurai Primary School was located in Inhyeon-dong, a neighborhood in Seoul’s Jung-gu district. After Korea later achieved independence, it became Yeonghee Elementary School, which later relocated to the district of Gangnam-gu. Its site is currently occupied by Dicksu Middle School.

His mother’s insistence on taking her children out of their Korean schools and sending them to ones with many Japanese students was made with



Kim Un-yong was a sumo wrestling devotee who hoped to become a wrestler himself at one time. Here he is seen wrestling at Aengjeong Primary School in 1941.

their future in mind. “Give the child you treasure one more lashing; give the child you despise one more rice cake,” an old saying instructed. It was a reflection of her deep belief that if they were to defeat Japan, they needed to interact with Japanese children from an early age and get to know them.

Education at the Japanese school was tremendously strict. Having achieved modernization early on with the Meiji Restoration (1868–1912), Japan’s system was based on modern, Western-style education. Kim Un-yong dedicated himself to both his studies and sports to ensure he did not fall behind his Japanese classmates. Although he did not vie for one of the top two spots schoolwide, he ranked toward the top academically.

It was in sports that he showed outstanding capabilities. In his fourth year, he was selected as a representative for a schoolwide relay run by twelve students, two from each grade level. In his fifth year, he was chosen to represent his grade level in a relay run by four students per grade. The school had kendo and sumo clubs; Kim joined the sumo club.

Although a war was taking place, the students would travel once a month on an outing from the school. These outings were meant as a way of practicing Western-style modern education, and the idea that human beings should grow in a humane way whatever negative conditions might be occurring. Students were also taken by their homeroom teachers to watch films. These outings and film viewings helped greatly in broadening the students’ horizons; for the young Kim Un-yong, they served to awaken his consciousness and inspire a vague sense that he should prepare some form of challenge to the world.

Students during the Japanese occupation were often pressed to do sports. At the primary schools, it was sumo, kendo, running, things like that. In Japanese primary schools, Koreans had to be extremely tenacious. So in the case of running, I was the fastest and ran in the schoolwide relay, or the “red and white” relay run by two students per grade level, and I got a lot of exercise that way. Because of sports, I was the best at fighting and the fastest, and I was the strongest at sumo. Even so, I’d get bullied a lot [by the Japanese students]. Today, they’re my Japanese friends. Thinking about those times brings me closer to them.”

(Kim Un-yong, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee meeting,
July 2015)

At the time, Kim excelled at sumo in particular. He competed hard at other sports but made sure to visit every sumo competition there was. He would even wait on the street for sumo athletes, whom he would stop and ask, “Do you think I could be a sumo wrestler?” They told him he was too small at the time, but that he should referee in Tokyo before trying again when he was grown. Hearing this, he told his mother, who gave him a scolding in return. “I didn’t raise you to go to Japan and do sumo wrestling,” she declared.

Though it would be much later, a Japanese classmate who was part of the same sumo club recalled that Kim was never intimidated by the Japanese students. “Nobody could ever beat Un-yong, because he would use strange techniques like tripping,” he remembered. Years later Kim was specially invited by the NHK network to deliver sumo commentary live in 1993. He showed outstanding acumen—some even said that he performed better than a professional commentator.

While she never spoke of it directly, his mother also worked to instill in him a sense of ethnic consciousness as a Korean. At home, they spoke only in Korean, never in Japanese, but she often advised him to study Japanese as well.

One day, his mother came to one of his school athletic events wearing a white traditional *hanbok* outfit. Even from a distance, the white dress was quite visible among the Japanese attendees. As a young Korean boy attending a Japanese school, he was also embarrassed when she brought along some neighbors, middle-aged Korean men, to act as cheerleaders, shouting his name to cheer him on. She wanted to boost his morale, but she also hoped to awaken his sense of identity as a Korean.

At school, his Japanese classmates viewed him with a mixture of prejudice and envy. They could not help their envy, given his skill at both studies and sport. At times, they would make up stories just to give him a hard time—as one episode illustrates.

At Kim Un-yong's home was a large collection of rare books collected by his father. Most of them had been acquired during his studies in Japan and were difficult to find in Korea. Obviously, most of them were in Japanese.

Among the books was a complete collection of the stories of Arsène Lupin. This book, which described the exploits of the titular character, an elusive thief created by the French mystery writer Maurice Leblanc, was a bestseller that was very popular among students at the time.

Everyone asked to borrow his books, and he loaned them to some of his classmates. One day, he arrived at school to find all the books he had lent out piled up on his desk. At that moment, the homeroom teacher arrived for the morning gathering. Seeing the stack of books on his desk, the teacher asked what was going on. Baffled, Kim was unable to answer.

Just then, the Japanese class president spoke up. “Kim-*san* is always reading these detective novels at school. He tells us that he wants to lend them to us, and it's disrupting our studies.”

Kim was too flustered to speak. He was petrified, assuming the teacher was going to give him a scolding. Instead, the Japanese teacher's response was surprisingly subdued. “Take the books home and read them there,” he instructed calmly.

Pursuing a Dream

Third year at Kyungdong Middle School: Korean liberation arrives

Kim Un-yong was quite angry at those Japanese classmates. He had merely lent them the books because they had asked to borrow them, but they had turned it around and tried to get him in trouble. While he was not told off by his homeroom teacher, at that moment he realized something: without power and strength, he would have to endure humiliations without being able to defend himself. In his anger, he learned from the boys in his neighborhood how to throw a punch and deliver a kick, and he would sometimes fight on the street with the Japanese children who harassed him or mocked him as a “Josenjin” (the derogatory Japanese name for Koreans in those days).

Kim hated going to school. Adults would always tell him the same thing: “Once we achieve independence, the Japanese will all go away. Just bear it until then.”

Eventually, he finished primary school, and it was time to enter middle school. This was 1943, at the height of the Pacific War. Among the public middle schools at the time were Kyunggi and Kyungbock for Korean students; Kyungsung, Yongsan, and Sungdong for Japanese students; and the new Asahigaoka, which had a student body that was half Korean and half Japanese.

At the encouragement of his teacher, Kim initially considered attending Kyungsung College of Education. Teachers actively recommended it because tuition was waived, and only the most outstanding students attended. But



Kim Un-yong in 1943 as a first-year student at Asahigaoka Middle School (now Kyungdong High School).

Kim was hesitant over the regulations: because studies at the school were paid for by the state, students were required to work for two years at a primary school after graduating.

Because he had attended a primary school with mostly Japanese students, his mother also wanted to send him to Kyunggi Middle School, where the students were Korean. She had also worked hard to gain acceptance for him to elite junior schools such as Kyunggi or Kyungbock. But Sakurai Primary School insisted that Japanese schools did not send students to Korean schools, and the young Kim Un-yong ended up at Asahigaoka (later Kyungdong) Middle School.

Asahigaoka was a five-year public school established on April 16, 1940, with a student body consisting of 100 Korean and 100 Japanese students. Accordingly, when he entered in 1943, the highest grade level was fourth year. As the Pacific War entered its final stages and Japan's chances of victory appeared bleak, the system was revised by Japan in an effort to send students into the armed forces quickly. In May 1945, graduation ceremonies were held simultaneously both for the five-year and four-year programs.

When Kim arrived at Asahigaoka Middle School, all of the teachers, apart from Korean Maeng Won-young, were Japanese. Among the other students entering with him were Choi Ho-joong, who would eventually become foreign minister; Lee Kye-chul, who served as Ambassador to Burma and was killed in a 1983 bombing at the Aung San mausoleum in Rangoon; and Lee Joo-cheon, who later served as director of the Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST). After Korea's independence, Maeng became the inaugural principal of Kyungdong Public Middle School.

Even after entering middle school, Kim Un-yong was loath to lose to Japanese students at anything. He studied hard and practiced every sport he could, from boxing to judo, skating, track, and karate. All the while, he continued with his piano lessons.

By his second year, he was being mobilized for various purposes. When the summer came, all of the students were pressed into forced labor under a "student mobilization order." He had almost no time to study. Some of the Japanese students volunteered or were selected for combat as youth airmen and navy pilots; each week, farewell gatherings would be held at Seoul Station. Many Korean students were also conscripted. Kim was exempted from student soldier mobilization because of his young age.

Instead, he traveled around collecting pine resin for use as aviation fuel and was mobilized to build magazines. His family's brass dishes were taken

away as a “government contribution” for the war efforts. Many growing sons and young fathers were forever separated from their families through conscription around this time.

Finally came August 15, 1945. The joyful news of liberation arrived while Kim Un-yong was working in Anyang, having been taken there to work on building magazines. From the greet cheers echoing from the Anyang city center, he could truly sense the Japanese Empire’s defeat.

After Korea’s liberation, Asahigaoka Middle School resumed instruction as a Korean school. It was renamed Kyungdong Public Middle School in September 1945. Following the US military government’s six-year regime in South Korea, it was reorganized in September 1951 into Kyungdong High and Donam Middle Schools; Donam Middle School was subsequently renamed Kyungdong Middle School in May 1953 and eventually closed as part of a middle school standardization policy in January 1972.

Pursuing a dream

For Kim Un-yong, the emotional jubilation of the country’s liberation came with all the excitement of adolescence. He felt relief that the war was over and elation that Korea had escaped colonial rule. He could now envisage a bright future where he had the hope of bringing his dreams to fruition without worrying about the Japanese.

Kim began to wave the Korean Taegeukgi flag as he chased ambitious dreams. He pondered anew the significance of his homeland and what he might be able to do for its sake. With liberation, as a fourth year student at Kyungdong Middle School (first grader at Kyungdong High School), Kim’s dream began slowly but surely to take definite shape.

He always ranked toward the top of his class, but rarely competed for one of the top two places. In English, however, he had no equals. When he entered middle school, he focused more on English than on any other subject. Part of this was the influence of his mother, a graduate of Ewha Girls’ High School. But he also committed himself to studying English more diligently than his other subjects because of the excitement of studying a new language. He was proud and thrilled to be able to converse with foreigners from different ethnicities and cultures.

Kim found more opportunities to improve his English when US troops were stationed in place of the now-departed Japanese after liberation. He

often stopped at Seoul National University in Seoul's Dongsung-dong neighborhood to talk with the US soldiers standing guard there. (In those days, US troops stood guard at universities.) In truth, these "conversations" were limited to very basic phrases such as "What's your name?" and "What time is it now?" but the US soldiers were very kind and complimented the young student of English.

Kim would also go late at night to meet and hang out with US soldiers. He would sit around bonfires with them and listen to them talk. At first, he had no idea what the soldiers were saying, but as he spent more and more time listening, he began to pick up words little by little. He began excelling more and more in his English classes, earning the favor of his teacher.

There was another influence around this time motivating him to devote himself more to his English studies: Hong Jae-ik, one of Korea's most respected teachers of all time. A young man at the time, Hong had refined manners and was very popular among the students as an English teacher. Kim Un-yong learned the basics of English education from Hong, who acted as his mentor.

Kim felt envious when Hong successfully passed the inaugural diplomats' examination—a tremendously difficult test that selected just four or five candidates from around the country—and left the school to join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After meeting Hong, he resolved to become a diplomat someday like his mentor, rubbing shoulders with people from other countries for the sake of Korea's honor.

Kim studied hard to become a diplomat, but he also maintained an equal interest in sport. During his fifth year at Kyungdong Middle School (today Kyungdong High School), a public middle school inter-varsity track and field competition was held at Seoul Stadium. Kim represented his school in the 5,000-meter race. Choi Yun-chil, a student in the same grade from Kyungbock Middle School who was rumored to be a good runner, was also entered in the race. Choi took the lead early on, with Kim following behind. After nine laps around the 400-meter track, Kim could not keep up and dropped out. Choi would later become a famous marathon runner who placed third behind Ham Ki-yong and Song Kil-yun at the 1950 Boston Marathon and took fourth in the marathon at the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki.

Around the same time, Un-yong studied taekwondo under Changmoo Kwan founder Yoon Byung-in of the YMCA martial arts division. His later relationship with the sport of taekwondo was in the cards from the start.

Yoon had been born in the Fengtian region of Manchuria in 1920. He studied martial arts from Mongolians and was active in Japan before Korea's liberation, at which time he returned to Korea to teach martial arts and taekwondo at the YMCA. When the Korean War broke out on June 25, 1950, he traveled to North Korea at the insistence of his older brother Byung-du. He would go on to study martial arts under the special athletic committee members of Moranbong. In 1984, he was working at a cement factory in Cheongjin when he was forced into exile; according to sources, he later died of lung cancer.

A young man in a military uniform, including a beret and a jacket, stands in a field of tall, dry grass. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue rectangle that serves as a background for the text.

Chapter 2

A Youth Dedicated to His Country

The Outbreak of the Korean War and Shattered Dreams

Growing diplomatic aspirations

*The sanctuary of education in the Yonsei Forest
with its spirit soaring high in the sky, Extended
around Muak embodying the Han River.*

*Ah our eternal shelter of truth, a beacon
mound of freedom.*

*The spring of truth surges here and the fire of
truth lights here.*

*We are the proud sons and daughters of
Yonsei.*

*With wisdom and strong bodies we have the
mission to carry out the calling from heaven.*

*Our glorious ideals come to form a bright
world.*



Kim Un-yong as a first-year student
of political science and diplomacy
at Yonhi University in 1949.

(“Song of Yonsei,” lyrics by Baek Nak-jun, music by Park Tae-jun)

Thanks to the influence of Hong Jae-ik, Kim Un-yong had a clear wish for the future. His future hope and dream was to become an outstanding diplomat like Hong. After his graduation from Kyungdong Middle School (today Kyungdong High School), he enrolled right away at Yonhi University (renamed Yonsei University in 1957).

Kim had considered attending Seoul National University, but it had no international relations department at the time. Indeed, Yonhi was the only university that had a department with the word “diplomacy” in its name. This was 1949, one year before the outbreak of the Korean War.

Yonhi University’s slogan was “truth and freedom,” and it boasted a freer, more open environment than any other institution in Korea. Its unique culture had much to do with its founder. The origins of Yonhi University lay in Gwanghyewon, a royal hospital that was the first Western-style medical institution in Korea when it opened on April 10, 1885. Two weeks after its opening, it was renamed Chejungwon, a title given to it by King Gojong (reign 1863–1897; Emperor 1897–1907). In 1904 the hospital was renamed to Severance Hospital and is part of Yonsei University today.

Gwanghyewon's founder was a Christian missionary and doctor, Horace Newton Allen. Horace Grant Underwood, also a missionary doctor, who arrived in Korea on the same boat as another American missionary Henry Appenzeller on Easter Sunday in 1885, began engaging in educational and evangelical efforts while introducing modern medicine to Korea. Allen and Underwood became actively involved in medical and educational activities from Chejungwon, which later became Yonhi Professional School and the Kyungsung Industrial Management School before being rechristened Yonhi University in 1946 after Korea's liberation.

Founded as a Christian educational institution, Yonhi University was rooted from its foundation in rational Western ideas, a place with a free and open atmosphere thanks to the presence of many foreign missionaries and faculty members with advanced overseas educations. It was the optimal training ground for a young man with dreams of becoming a diplomat.

Yonhi University's inaugural president, Dr. Baek Nak-jun, served alongside Hong Jae-ik as a beacon lighting the way forward for Kim Un-yong in his youth.

When he first came to the school, Baek taught that the "young students of the newly independent Republic of Korea must become great workers in the future."

"You are the ones who will venture out into the world and bring glory to Korea," he told them, adding that they "need English skills most of all—without English, you cannot achieve anything."

To this day, Kim clearly remembers Baek's teachings, his silver hair waving as he lectured with more vigor than any young professor.

Korea was now literally "reborn" as a newly independent country. We boasted a long tradition and history, but in experiencing 36 years of Japanese invasion, we had had a world of terrible darkness forced on us. Now that we had met our liberation, we could escape the dark tunnel of the past and spread our wings toward the world. You, the brave and capable talents of the new Korea, are standing now on the campus of Yonhi University, which offers the most free and creative education. Students! Rather than dwelling inwardly like frogs in the well, you must turn your gaze toward the outside. Must we repeat our history—alienated from the rest of the world and committing the folly of losing our very country? Or should we become the figures who lead the world? The world is a vast place, and there are many challenges that await you. If you are capable of harboring great ambitions and making your time in the

university worthwhile, this country and this world will someday be led by you.

(Kim Un-yong, *Challenge to the World*)

Baek also implored his students, “Broaden your relationships, approaching your first year as though you are making friends for the next four.” He emphasized the importance of human relationships. “When you are seniors,” he told them, “you must adopt an attitude of care toward the first-year underclassmen. Having friends who will last for decades ahead is more valuable than any teacher in this life.” For Kim Un-yong, Baek’s teachings became guidelines for befriending and maintaining relationships with others throughout his life.

Kim studied very diligently in his first year at the university. His books only left his side when he slept. It was also during this time that he realized that no matter how smart he may be, he could never outshine those who worked hard. Kim’s studies at Yonhi University were cut short during his second year after the outbreak of the Korean War on June 25, 1950, but he would later recall the lessons he learned there as the most valuable and worthwhile of his life.

While later working at the presidential Blue House (Cheongwadae), Kim and his younger fellow alumni held birthday celebrations for Baek for three years after Baek lost his National Assembly leader’s seat and his activities as an opposition leader were constrained. Kim never forgot the pleased smile on Baek’s face when Kim told him, “I continue to remember and treasure the teachings I received on the importance of human relationships and our world view in college.” “It’s thanks to them that I am here today,” he would say.

Kim entered Yonhi University in 1949, but it was not until eleven years later in 1960 that he formally graduated from Yonsei University, after serving in the Korean War (1950–1953) and spending many years in the Army and returning home from military training in the US.

The outbreak of the Korean War and shattered dreams

When he first entered Yonhi University, Kim Un-yong developed a detailed plan to achieve his dream of becoming a diplomat. In May 1950, Kim had finished his first year of university and was focusing on preparations for the foreign service test, division three of the second civil service examination. Another academic year, and he would be qualified to take the main exam-

ination; this was what he was readying himself for.

At the time, there was no separate diplomatic service examination—it was taken together with the civil service test. Division one was for administrative positions in the civil service, division two for judicial positions, and division three for diplomatic positions. Today, the three correspond respectively to the civil service examination, bar examination, and diplomatic service examination. The new university semester would also be beginning in June. He needed to obtain his qualifications with the appropriate credits in late May to advance.

Like the other students preparing for the civil service examination, Kim would spend all night studying. He memorized facts about the Constitution, international law, administrative law, and diplomatic history. His books were there beside him when he ate his meals.

June 20 came. He purchased a 2,000-won stamp at the Jongno Tax Office and then went to the examination committee on the corner of what is now the Central Government Complex in Seoul to submit his documents. According to the schedule, candidates would be gathering at the testing site on August 3 and sit for the examination from August 4 to 12.

But just five days after he submitted his exam application, his dreams lay in tatters. At dawn on June 25, North Korea invaded the South. It was the start of the Korean War. Never mind the diplomatic service examination—the country’s very existence was in jeopardy. Two days later on June 27, the school declared its closure. As the declaration was being made at the school’s outdoor amphitheater, North Korean Army Yak fighter planes—single engine, propeller fighters made by the Soviets—were bombarding the Yeouido airfield, while freight trains carrying South Korean soldiers traveled toward Susaek-dong.

There was an ad hoc meeting at the school that day, and Kim Un-yong, who was too preoccupied with his examination preparations to know much about what was happening outside, had not left Seoul. People’s Army troops had already arrived in the northern Seoul neighborhoods of Mia-ri, Chang-dong, and Susaek-dong, but people trusted the government’s declarations that it would “defend Seoul.” No one was fully aware how dire the situation was.

As soon as he heard the announcement that the school was closing, Kim rushed to Seoul Station. His top priority was to get to Daegu, where his mother lived. A single train stood there, almost invisible underneath the refugees clambering over its roof. A station worker told Kim that there were no further trains leaving Seoul. Trusting the worker, he resignedly returned to

Myeongnyun-dong, to stay with his friend and fellow Daegu native Byeon Eung-won. He would not learn until later that the last train from Seoul to Busan actually departed some hours later. The station employee had lied to him because there had been so many refugees. With the bombing of three Hangang river bridges by the South Korean Army that day, Seoul residents were trapped in the city.

Hearing of the outbreak of war, Kim's mother went every day to wait for him in front of Daegu Station. But because he had missed that train, he would not see her again until Seoul was recaptured three months later (on September 25). Nor could he communicate to her that he was still alive.

A fierce battle took place that night between South Korean troops and the North Korean People's Army forces swarming in from Pocheon; by morning, the People's Army had fully occupied Seoul. Shelling continued until the early hours of June 28. Kim and Byeon hid under their covers, terrified that one of the shells might strike their home and kill them. As the sound of bombardment quieted, he cautiously ventured out into the street, which he found lined with the bodies of South Korean soldiers. He could only hold his breath and remain in hiding. Two days later, People's Army troops occupied a hospital in the nearby Hyehwa-dong neighborhood to treat their wounded.

The People's Army soldiers were exultant. They paraded through the streets—venturing out there without a People's Army uniform was unthinkable. The soldiers fired machine guns into the sky, terrorizing residents. One time, Kim peeked out of the bathroom window to see two rows of soldiers marching on either side of the road.

Erupting just as he was preparing for the diplomatic service examination, the Korean War changed the course of Kim Un-yong's life. If it had never happened, perhaps he would have ended up an ordinary career diplomat without any ties to the sporting world.

Two close brushes with death

Unable to take refuge, Kim Un-yong remained in hiding in Seoul, where he suffered two close brushes with death. The first came as he was hiding out at the home of his friend Byeon Eung-won in Seoul's Myeongnyun-dong. One time, Byeon took his dog briefly out of the house to "check on the situation." While he was gone, North Korean People's Army troops suddenly burst into the home.

While marching in front of a nearby school, the soldiers had seen someone open a window and suspected that the person was attempting to fire upon them. They were now going through every home in the area, shouting at dwellers and slashing away with their bayonets at the ceilings, furniture, and quilts.

“Who fired a gun?” the soldiers shouted, their eyes glaring. “Where did you hide the weapon?” In tears, Byeon’s mother protested. “Why are you doing this?” she cried, but her pleas fell on deaf ears. After causing a commotion downstairs, the troops came up to the second floor where Kim was hiding. Grabbing him by the scuff of his neck, they bellowed at him to give up his weapon. For a moment, he felt sure: “This is the end for me.” The situation improved when Byeon returned shortly, but the People’s Army troops never took their guns off of him.

One of the senior officers—Kim did not know his exact rank, but the man had a star on his shoulder—ordered him to step outside. He refused to leave the room, protesting that he had no weapon and had not fired any gun. His determined stance was driven by a premonition that if he left with them, his life would be in danger.

As this scuffle was taking place, Han Tae-won arrived home, a third-year law student at Seoul National University who was also lodging at this friend’s house. Unbeknownst to his friends, Han had been heavily involved in underground left-wing activities and was active as the chief organizer at his law school. Once he arrived, the tense atmosphere dramatically changed. He exchanged words with the People’s Army officer in a vocabulary that only they could understand, talking about “revolution” and how he was a “key organizer,” and the troops’ attitude softened considerably. Shortly afterwards, they left, leaving behind three or four soldiers to monitor the house.

Their ordeal was not yet over, however. When evening came, the troops returned and took everyone to a building known as the “security department.” Though struck with the fear that they might be slain that night, Kim could offer no resistance. The security department officer questioned him for some time, but apparently had nothing to charge him with, releasing him under a two-week house arrest. He had narrowly escaped death.

After being trapped in the house for over a week, Kim felt he could no longer remain at his friend’s home. Part of this was the possibility he might bring some harm to the family, but there was another factor: as the war had intensified, the North Korean People’s Army had begun forcibly conscripting young people and students as “volunteer soldiers,” and he might find

himself dragged off with them as well.

Under cover of darkness, Kim fled to Gwacheon, where his aunt lived. In those days, traveling from Seoul to Gwacheon meant taking a boat across the Hangang River from Noryangjin or Maljukgeori Street. Even Gwacheon was not safe, however. The People's Army had already set up camp there.

Unable to stay with his aunt, Kim hid out on Umyeonsan Mountain, subsisting off of the rice balls that his aunt occasionally brought him. If she did not come at the appointed time, he would stave off hunger by eating acorns or picking cucumbers from fields at the mountain's base. It was the first time he had ever faced a rumbling stomach.

His difficulties continued until one day he heard word that the US troops had landed at Incheon. Hearing the faint sounds of cannon fire, he climbed to the top of Umyeonsan Mountain, where he could see smoke pouring from the cannons of an enormous warship. Now that the US troops were here, he believed he would soon be returning home. But for over a week, he saw no sign of any US soldiers.

While this was going on, the North Korean People's Army began fleeing up into the mountains. To avoid them, the refugees hiding in the mountains had to descend to midslope and conceal themselves in rice sheaves. On either side of Umyeonsan Mountain, the US troops and the People's Army fought a fierce battle: US reconnaissance teams and tanks fired shells at the North Korean forces, while US Air Force bombers dropped bombs from overhead. Unable to remain hidden in the sheaves any longer, Kim roamed around, taking cover in an air-raid shelter at one point. Though the US troops had apparently arrived, he could not actually see them, which meant that he could not come down off the mountain. He remained sandwiched there, with the People's Army troops holding out farther up the slope.

One day, Kim ventured out to find out what was happening, only to end up caught by remnants from the People's Army troops. A soldier thrust a gun at him and asked what he was doing there. In a panic, Kim lied and said he was a schoolteacher who lived nearby. The soldier hesitated briefly and then disappeared without a word. It may have been due to the haste of his retreat—but in any event, Kim had emerged unscathed from his second narrow brush with death.

Soon after Seoul was recovered, Kim Un-yong enlisted in the South Korean Army. His only thought was that he had to enlist and fight. While his enlistment and life as a soldier meant his dream of becoming a diplomat was temporarily on hold, they offered him a different opportunity.

The Korean War and the Political Upheavals of April 1960 and May 1961

Voluntary enlistment as interpreter officer and as infantry officer on the battlefield

Kim Un-yong enlisted as a liaison officer for the UN forces in October 1950, soon after Seoul was recaptured on September 25 after the Battle of Incheon. Being a liaison officer also meant serving as an interpreter. After four weeks of training, Kim was commissioned on November 30 as a first lieutenant. He was just 19 years old—two years younger than the minimum age for commissioning as an officer—but at the time he enlisted, Kim said that he was 21 years old. Family registers were not closely kept at the time, and with the war going on there was no way to check.

Kim had enlisted because he was unable to resist the call for young South Koreans to do something for their country in its moment of crisis. He was not thrilled to be serving as an interpreter; he wanted to fight the enemy like the other young men. He would have preferred to be an infantry officer rather than a liaison officer.

In December 1951, he entered a basic officers' course at the infantry school in Busan's Dongnae-gu district. Following his training, he was re-commissioned as a first lieutenant in the infantry, with an assignment to serve as aide-de-camp to the leader of the 5th Infantry Division on the East Sea coast. Initially a reserve division, the 5th Infantry Division received orders in January 1952 as a front-line division and advanced from Yangyang to Ganseong, which was home to the famous Buddhist temple of Geonbongsa. Considered one of Korea's four major temples, it was constructed as Wongaksa Temple



Kim Un-yong at the Battle of Geonbongsan Mountain on the eastern front (1952).

during the reign of King Beopheung of the Silla Kingdom and was the site where the monk Samyeong raised troops during the Japanese Invasions of the late 16th century. The temple ended up accidentally incinerated during combat while an 11th Infantry Division regiment was stationed there.

In January 1953, Kim Un-yong overcame 100-to-1 odds to pass the examination for infantry school training in the United States. Due to a severe lack of trained officers in the South Korean forces, 250 officers had been chosen and 150 were sent to the infantry school at Fort Benning in Georgia, while the other 100 went to the infantry school at Fort Sill in Oklahoma. They were given six months of training before being assigned as officers for front-line operations. Kim was selected in the fourth of five total rounds; among the officers selected before him were future President Park Chung-hee and Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil.

Before traveling to the US, Kim spent a month at Army headquarters in his hometown, Daegu, where he received a basic education on US customs, basic English, and skills such as tying a necktie and eating Western food. On March 15, he boarded a US warship at Busan for a 20-day trip across the Pacific. The officers ate three Western meals a day, with one English-speaking officer positioned at each 20-person table. If Kim said “scrambled eggs,” the others at his table would all say “same”; if he said “fried eggs,” they would say “same.” Upon arriving at the Army Infantry School at Fort Benning in Georgia, Kim underwent training in shooting and military tactics as well as academic teaching. Fort Benning was also home to an extension campus of Georgia State University. While Kim was training, he also wanted to study at an American university. He saved up \$25 from his allowance and signed up for a class on US political theory. Though he had been praised in the South Korean Army as having the best command of English, he still had difficulty comprehending the lectures at the American university.

The Armistice Agreement was signed on July 23 while Kim was undergoing training in Fort Benning. A radio broadcast announced that President Rhee Syngman had ordered the immediate return of exchange students in the US, but Colonel Son Hui-seon, who headed the exchange students team, claimed that he had not received any orders yet and told them to continue training. A graduation ceremony was held on September 2, and Kim headed home, arriving in Incheon on September 27. He was subsequently appointed chief intelligence officer for the 27th Infantry Division’s 79th regiment.

During his time as an intelligence officer, a combat demonstration was held at the 27th Infantry Division. The division had been selected for a

demonstration that involved reconfiguring the existing triangular division (a system including three platoons, three companies, three battalions, and three regiments) into a four-cornered one and moving rear forces to the front. Kim held a briefing in English in front of the assembled army corps commanders and military advisers from throughout the armed forces, including 2nd Corps commander Jang Do-yeong, 3rd Corps commander Song Yo-chan, 5th Corps commander Choi Young-hee, and 6th Corps commander Lee Han-rim.

Perhaps impressed by the briefing, both Jang and Lee requested Kim as their aide-de-camp. Kim's division commander at the time was Lee Hyung-seok, who had been an upperclassman at Jang's middle school in Sinuiju, thus loyalty dictated that he send Kim to the 2nd Corps. In the 2nd Corps, Kim was put in charge of caging a tiger cub captured by unit members on Jeokgeunsan Mountain, north of Hwacheon, and sending it to President Rhee Syngman. Higher command, however, still wanted Kim in the 6th Corps. Caught in the power struggle between the two corps, Kim was ultimately reassigned to the 6th Corps in Pocheon, Gyeonggi-do, in October 1954. There, he took on duties as operational liaison officer with the US's I Corps in Uijeongbu. While at I Corps, he read one American novel a day and taught Korean to American troops at the US Armed Forces Institution (USAFI).

In 1955, another opportunity arose for Kim to study in the United States. This time, he opted to learn Spanish. The school was Texas Western College (now University of Texas at El Paso), located on the Mexican border in El Paso, Texas. Seventy-five percent of El Paso's population was of Mexican descent. Many people commuted to the city every day from Mexico in armored cars. It was a perfect environment for studying Spanish: it was the only language people used, and even radio broadcasts were in Spanish. There, Kim graduated from the US Army's Anti-Aircraft and Guided Missile School—the same unit that implemented the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system in South Korea in 2017.

Not long after returning to Korea from his studies, Kim received yet another chance to travel back to the US. It came while he was serving in the strategic intelligence division of the Army Headquarters intelligence bureau in October 1958. After hearing about the recruitment of interpreting instructors for an advanced US officer course, he applied and placed second among the 15 instructors selected. Also chosen alongside him was future Sports Minister Cho Sang-ho. In late December, Kim returned to the

Army Infantry School in Fort Benning, three years after his previous visit. He taught battalion attack tactics and had to translate and print course materials and prepare for the classes he taught. When he had first arrived three years earlier, he had been a student. Now he was an instructor, spending three comfortable months in a room of his own at the barracks.

In April, 80 advanced officer course students arrived from South Korea. Some of the officers would later go on to serve as cabinet ministers and chiefs of staff, including Yoon Pil-yong, Cha Gyu-hyun, and Min Kyung-jung. Upon his return to Korea after the course's completion, he received requests from commanders in the different armed forces who had heard about the homecoming of officers who were fluent in English. Kim was assigned to the First Republic of Korea (ROK) Army Command in Wonju, where General Song Yo-chan was the commander. His duties at the secretariat included giving operational situation briefings, cooperating with US advisers, and interpreting for the commander. The chief of staff of the ROK command at the time was Park Chung-hee.

Since the outbreak of the Korean War, the recapture of Seoul, and his enlistment as a basic officer, Kim had traveled through the hinterlands of Gangwon-do, serving in settings such as Ganseong, Goseong, Yangyang, Hwacheon, Chuncheon, Yongmunsan Mountain, Wonju, Geombongsan Mountain in Wontong-ri, and Naksansa Temple. For three years, he faced off against the enemy on the very front lines. Kim had become a first lieutenant at the age of 19, a captain at 22 in 1953, a major at 23, and a lieutenant colonel at 29. Several weeks after the events of May 16, 1961, when Park Chung-hee staged a military coup and took control of the government, Kim would effectively step down from various positions within the armed forces. On paper, his transfer to the reserves would take place on October 31, 1967; in reality, he had not donned his military uniform since May 1961. His military career would last for 17 years from his enlistment in October 1950.

Meeting General Song Yo-chan: A milestone in a young man's life

When beginning his new life as a soldier, Kim Un-yong had an invaluable encounter that would serve as a definitive milestone along his youthful path—his meeting with General Song Yo-chan. From Song's time as First ROK Army commander in Wonju through his service as Army chief of staff, martial law commander during the student revolution of April 19, 1960,

and as prime minister, Kim would serve as his aide-de-camp and protocol secretary. In a sense, Kim shared the latter part of his military life with Song. In addition to his great influence on Kim's military career, Song also provided much assistance to Kim in achieving his dream of becoming a diplomat.

Kim remembers Song as a true soldier, stubborn in his ways but possessed of wisdom, virtue, and strong constitution. Thanks to the focus on his illustrious achievements in repelling the North Korean forces, many remember Song as a brave soldier, but he was also an intelligent and virtuous general.

General Song was rather large in build, but he was also a true giant in his achievements. People who don't know the real General Song have criticized his fiery personality and called him a "bonehead." But as someone who served him from up close, I am well aware of what a consummate soldier he was, someone who was constantly striving and studying.

(Kim Un-yong, "Unforgettable People," in *Challenge to the World*.)

As an illustration of Song's intelligence as a general, Kim noted the disciplinary purge that he carried out and the planning and management system that he introduced when he became Army chief of staff in 1957 after serving as commander of the First ROK Army.

When Song became Army chief of staff, he undertook a large-scale purge to restore discipline in the military, which had become a morass of corruption. The purge had its origins in the many issues he witnessed in the South Korean military during his time as First ROK Army commander, with many forsaking their defense duties to accept bribes and misappropriate military supplies. While the purge took place with the approval of then-President Rhee Syngman, it was a difficult endeavor even for a general of the greatest integrity like Song. Needless to say, he maintained a relationship of closeness and utter trust with the Eighth US Army. During the purge, Kim and Provost Marshal Lee Kyu-kwang would draft English-language reports based on Lee's investigations; the reports would be sent to the Blue House, and the purges would be carried out once approval came. While there were some detentions, most cases resulted in recommendations to resign.

Song also introduced a planning and management system for the military. In his view, rational and efficient management of the haphazardly developed budget was a means of building trust and ensuring a new beginning for the South Korean military. Along these lines, he introduced advanced systems from the West.

Kim was watching beside General Song when the latter was appointed minister of defense and prime minister in the transitional moments of the military government's establishment in the wake of the events of May 16, 1961. By introducing the budget planning and management system for the administration, Song laid the groundwork for the future Ministry of Planning and Budget. Kim also witnessed Song developing the first five-year economic development plan while serving as chairman of the Economic Planning Board.

Later on, when the military government first broke its promise to a public desiring a transfer of power to civil government and created a new political party to assume power, Song relinquished his position as prime minister after one year due to frictions with figures in the administration. He incurred the administration's disfavor by printing a statement entitled "What I Desire from the Military Revolution Government" across the front page of the *Dong-A Ilbo* newspaper. "The military must transfer power to a civil government and return to its proper duties," he wrote. Song was imprisoned as part of the so-called "four accusations" episode, and Kim in turn was taken away from an airfield in front of his wife and children to undergo brutal questioning.

This close relationship between Kim and Song would continue beyond the military and into civilian life.

Political upheavals of April 19 and May 16

While working as a senior officer, Kim Un-yong was both first-hand witness to and participant in the political upheavals of the student revolution on April 19, 1960, and the military coup d'état on May 16, 1961. The student revolution was an exceptional experience for him. That very year, he graduated from Yonsei University as an undergraduate transfer student and registered for graduate school for a master's degree in political science and diplomacy. Most significantly, he was a lieutenant colonel in the Army, serving as senior aide to Army chief of staff and martial law commander Song Yo-chan.

The student revolution of April 19, 1960, was touched off by a corrupt election on March 15 to select South Korea's fourth president and vice president. The Rhee Syngman administration's Liberal Party abused government power and financial influence to win the election, including tactics such as semi-public voting, expelling opposition party observers, switching out

ballot boxes, and fabricating vote counts. On that day, students and citizens in Masan staged a demonstration to denounce the election improprieties. The administration responded by branding the demonstrators as communists and suppressing them with violence and gunfire. The situation seemed to abate somewhat, only to escalate once again when Kim Ju-yeol, a high school student who had gone missing during an April 11 demonstration in Masan, was found dead with a tear gas shell struck through his eye.

April 18 brought a demonstration by students at Korea University, which began with the reading of a statement calling for the “lifting of the signal fire to claim true democratic ideals.” The event ended in a brutal suppression, and by April 19 citizens and students across the country rallied to call for Rhee’s resignation and an end to the military administration. Things were spiraling out of control.

As marching students and citizens arrived at the president’s residence in the Blue House around 11 a.m. on April 19, police opened fire to stop their advance. General Song Yo-chan was summoned to the Blue House at around 3 p.m.; emergency martial law was declared shortly thereafter. During an emergency Cabinet meeting at the Blue House, there had been discussions of applying the declaration retroactively to 11 a.m., but the time was kept at 3 p.m. after strenuous objections from Song. It was in essence a ploy to avoid responsibility by making it appear as though the police’s fire on students and citizens had taken place under conditions of emergency martial law.

Song Yo-chan was the Army chief of staff at the time, while Paik Sun-yup served as chairman of the Combined Chiefs of Staff, Yu Jae-heung as First Army commander, Jang Do-yeong as Second Army commander, Choi Young-hee as general superintendent of military education, Kim Jong-oh as deputy chief of staff, and Park Chung-hee as commander of the Busan logistics base. The number of military figures was large enough that some were discussing the possibility of a coup d’état. Indeed, there were several potential variables at play depending on Song’s decision as the emergency martial law commander, as he had an active division in Seoul and controlled the intelligence and military police organizations. But Song remained true to the military’s proper role.

With the declaration of emergency martial law, the military went into an emergency mobilization system. To control the chaotic situation in Seoul, Song called for a circumspect response to the demonstrators, stationing Yangpyeong’s 15th Division at Gyeongbokgung Palace and appointing Brigadier General Lee Seok-bong from Army headquarters as a superintendent

to prevent abuse of command authority by division head Cho Jae-mi.

The situation seemed to be under control after the martial law army surrounded and detained all 1,900 demonstrators assembled at Korea University between the late night of April 19 and early morning on April 20. But agreeing with Kim Un-yong's recommendation, Song declared that the students were "not rioters" and demanded the release of "everyone but the arsonists." Apart from arsonists, all of the demonstrators were released, and the situation escalated into a confrontation between the military and police. The police had declared the demonstrators to be in violation of the law and insisted that everyone would face stern punishment; Song's release of those demonstrators put him in conflict with police policy.

In addition to that, the ruling Liberal Party requested that Song lend out 100,000 rounds of carbine ammunition for the police to use in gaining control of the situation. Song flatly refused. Already, he could clearly sense the public's desire for democracy.

Song had a firm opinion about the emergency martial law declaration. He was of the belief that the military was not capable of involving itself and should not involve itself in political matters. His basic position was that the military should only restore security when ordered to do so, and that all other matters should be resolved through politics. While all this was happening, the situation seemed to reach resolution when National Assembly Speaker Lee Ki-poong, the ringleader behind the March 15 election irregularities, emerged from hiding on the front and announced his resignation as president-elect. Meeting with foreign reporters as martial law commander, Song was discussing Lee's resignation and plans to contain the situation when a newsroom chief rushed in and announced that Lee had rescinded his resignation announcement as president-elect. The Liberal Party threatened Song, declaring that he would be immediately terminated if he did not take a hard line in suppressing the demonstrators. The party's executive committee pressured for him to be recalled, but Song remained adamant. The news of Lee reversing his resignation designation had thrown fuel on the flames. As distrust of the administration reached its height, it gave way to a sense of betrayal and loathing.

On April 25, around 300 professors at universities in central Seoul adopted an emergency statement and staged a demonstration on Taepyeongno Street. Learning of the situation, Kim Un-yong deemed it an emergency and reported it to Song. At the time, Song was napping on his cot in the field. Song told him to report the matter to the deputy chief of staff and

then fell back asleep as though nothing had happened. He seemed to already perceive the truth: neither the military nor police could do anything to stop the hatred toward the Liberal Party or the public's longing for democracy.

As university professors joined the students and citizens in demonstrations, Song went to the Blue House and delivered a blunt message to President Rhee Syngman. "What the people want is for the president to resign," he said. The very next day, on April 26, Rhee stepped down with the words, "If the people wish it to be so." Lee Ki-poong and his entire family would commit suicide two days later.

With the collapse of the Liberal Party administration and the launch of a "transitional Cabinet," Song resigned as chief of staff and left to study at George Washington University in the United States. Kim would later ask him why the military had not assumed control of the administration when many were demanding that it do so. "We weren't prepared," Song replied. "For the military to take control of the government, it would have had to subdue all the opposing factions."

Kim Un-yong watched the entire process unfold as senior aide to martial law commander Song Yo-chan. He also bore witness to the moment firsthand when the unity of students and public brought an overnight end to the absolute authority of the ruling Liberal Party that had seemed as though it may last forever.

He was pleased. As a soldier, he was proud to have sided with the people and to have honored his duty to protect the country and its public.

Protocol secretary to the Prime Minister after May 16

The coup d'état of May 16, 1961, occurred in the early morning hours as Kim Un-yong slept at home in Seoul's Ahyeon-dong neighborhood. Startled awake by the sound of gunfire, he called the Counter Intelligence Corps commander Lee Chol-hui. It was a coup, Lee told him. Generals Chung Il-kwon, Song Yo-chan, and Choi Young-hee were all in the US at the time; Song alone had declared his support for the revolution. Shortly afterwards, Song returned as minister of defense and called up Kim, who had been his senior aide while he was chief of staff. This time, he would be an aide to the minister of defense.

The agent behind this revolution was General Park Chung-hee, who became chairman of the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction with



Kim Un-yong appearing at a Voice of America interview of Army Chief of Staff Song Yo-chan.

Song Yo-chan serving as prime minister. Kim became protocol secretary to prime minister Song, handling duties involving protocol, interpreting, telephone calls, English documents, and schedule management. Soon afterwards, the prime minister was assigned the additional role of minister of foreign affairs, which meant that Kim was now secretary to the foreign minister as well.

The commerce minister at the time was Jung Nae-hiuk. Jung was traveling to the United Kingdom, and on the prime minister's orders, Kim had to draft credentials for the minister. He also had to write an oath pledging to accept any punishment for divulgence of this fact. He later learned that the credentials were needed to print new money in the UK for currency reforms.

On one occasion, the Foreign Ministry asked him to travel as a *chargé d'affaires* while it was building embassies in Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo, and in Morocco. He hoped to go to Morocco, but he was told that Shin Gi-heum had already been internally selected for Morocco and was ordered to travel to the Republic of the Congo. At the time, he had no idea where the country was. He looked it up and read that it was a place with many infectious diseases and unclean streets, where General Charles de Gaulle had been during World War II. He turned down the post, willing even to risk discharge. Perhaps if he had gone to the Republic of the Congo, he may well have ended up a career diplomat without becoming involved in sports.

In March 1962, Yun Po-sun stepped down as president, and General Park Chung-hee became acting president. Many leading forces in the revolution now viewed Prime Minister Song Yo-chan as a burden. He ultimately clashed with the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA) director in the

“four accusations” episode and stepped down as prime minister against Park’s protests. Song later served as an aide for one month to acting president and Supreme Council chief Park as he briefly assumed the functions of prime minister.

A month later, Economic Planning Board Minister Kim Hyun-chul, a civilian, was appointed as prime minister. Song indicated his desire to return to service as a soldier but stayed on when asked to continue working.

By March 1963, many were clamoring for a transfer of power to civil government. Returning to Gimpo Airport after a tour of West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States at the invitation of the West German government and the Asia Foundation, Kim Un-yong was met by two men in black suits who escorted him to an interrogation room at the KCIA’s Seoul branch.

Kim was accused of involvement in an English translation of Song’s statement that was published in the *Dong-A Ilbo*, in which he had called for the military to relinquish authority to civil government and return to its proper function. Facing threats and intimidation, Kim was interrogated deep into the night, but was ultimately freed after nothing emerged. The following morning, he gave notice to Prime Minister Kim Hyun-chul. “I apologize for causing any problems,” he said in announcing his resignation. In response, the prime minister lamented, “The Republic of Korea is ruining its young talents by behaving in this way.”

A Love of Languages

Kim Un-yong's first steps toward a diplomatic career took place when he was serving as a lieutenant colonel. Despite talk of him serving as consul general in Cairo or as chargé d'affaires in Morocco or the Republic of the Congo while working as a secretary to the foreign minister, his first actual appointment was as an adviser at the South Korean Embassy in the United States on August 1, 1963.

South Korea had just undergone a civil war and a military revolution, and the transitional period toward civil government had left it in extremely dire straits economically. Internationally, South Korea was poorly perceived, branded as an underdeveloped country in both political and economic terms. Perhaps for this reason, the priority task of its embassy was to receive as much economic aid as possible from the US. After that came activities to improve South Korea's image.

Much of Kim's time in Washington was spent performing simple duties of greeting and seeing off guests at the airport. His work was dull and demeaning enough to leave him wondering why he had come all the way to the US to do such mundane things. At the same time, it was in performing these simple duties that he realized how much of diplomacy is pure patience.

Kim was serving as an adviser in the US on November 22, 1963, when President John F. Kennedy was shot dead during a parade in Dallas, Texas. The television brought non-stop coverage of Kennedy's assassination and Lyndon B. Johnson being sworn in as president. Washington was in mourning, and heads of state began arriving from around the world to express condolences. Prime Minister Kim Hyun-chul was preparing to attend on South Korea's behalf when a decision was made to have president-elect Park Chung-hee attend instead.

Kim Un-yong traveled to Washington Dulles International Airport to greet Park. As the president-elect passed the welcoming party, he saw Kim and took his hand. "Are your children growing up well?" he asked. Park had remembered the month or so they had spent together while he had been prime minister. As they walked together, someone tapped his shoulder from behind. It was Park Jong-gyu, head of the Presidential Security Service, telling him he was obstructing security and needed to clear out.

While in Washington, Kim Un-yong became friends with the speaker of the US House of Representatives and the whips, members of the Senate Foreign

Relations Committee, and numerous aides. His fluent command of English proved highly beneficial. Foreign correspondents in Washington at the time included future Culture Minister Kim Seong-jin from the Dongyang News Agency, Seol Guk-hwan and Bong Du-wan from the *Hankook Ilbo*, future Grand National Party deputy leader Kim Yoon-hwan and Mun Myeong-ja from the *Chosun Ilbo*, and Cho Dong-won from the Donghwa News Agency.

Once, Kim was visited by Ambassador Kim Jeong-yeol. The ambassador told him that assistant army attaché Park Bo-hee—later second-in-command at the Unification Church—was going around telling Americans that South Korean sect leader Moon Sun-Myung was the second coming of Jesus Christ. This was potentially troublesome for the ambassador, and he requested that Kim deliver a message of warning. Kim met with Park and asked whether the account was true. Park replied that it was; every day, he had been inviting elderly women from his neighborhood to his basement recreation room and evangelizing for the Unification Church. “This is America,” Kim said. “Who’s going to believe that some Korean nobody knows is the living Jesus Christ?” The next day, Park changed his approach to evangelizing.

In March 1965, Kim Un-yong took on a position at the UN mission in New York. It was an opportunity to see the world from a different angle than the one in Washington. Half of the staffers in the UN Secretariat were diplomats from the Soviet bloc, leading some to claim that “half the UN Secretariat is KGB.” Every year, South Korea had to enlist the UN’s support for a South Korea resolution. Mission staffers would have little to do between January and August, only to frantically spring into action between September and December to draw support for the resolution during the UN General Assembly period.

At the time, karate and kung fu were flourishing amid a martial arts boom in the US. South Korean instructors were teaching the martial art of *kongsudo* as “karate” or “Korean karate.” Teachers included Kim Ki-hwang and Lee Jhoon-goo in Washington and Cho Si-hak, Chun Rhin-moon, Sohn Deok-seong, Jeon Gye-bae, Shin Hyeon-ok, and Kim Jeong-guk in New York. Kim Un-yong frequently traveled to studios to train; to avoid embarrassing himself, he would throw all his might into breaking pine boards during his board-breaking demonstrations. Needless to say, his interactions with US instructors during this time would be instrumental later on when he became head of the Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA), organized the World Championships, and founded the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF).

A love of languages

“What gave you the idea of becoming vice president of the IOC and attempting to become its president? Do you have some secret?”

This is one of the things Kim was most frequently asked by people both at home and overseas. It is a question that may forever come up for someone who, after founding the WTF, achieved membership of WTF in the GAISF in 1974 ahead of similar martial arts such as wushu and karate, someone who was the fastest to achieve executive committee and vice president status in the IOC, and someone who, as an Asian, attempted to become the leader of an organization dominated by Europeans for over one hundred years.

Kim Un-yong’s response may seem like a cliché.

“I don’t have any special secret. I’ve worked hard in my own way, and I think I’ve also been equally fortunate.”

These were, as the Korean saying goes, “words with bones.” Without skill, hard work alone would not be enough to propel someone to world-class standing. Such efforts must be backed by ability. For Kim Un-yong, foreign language ability in particular was both a talent and a special source of strength. His answer reflects the fact that he was someone who worked hard to achieve the ability to express himself freely in foreign tongues, and that he also put great effort into achieving his world-class standing.

Kim Un-yong had a command of Japanese, English, French, German, Spanish, and Russian. With Korean included, this means he could speak seven languages. It also meant that he never suffered the awkwardness of being unable to converse with someone due to language issues while working on the international stage.

Kim had the opportunity to study Japanese naturally when he attended primary school and middle school with many Japanese students from a young age. He did not set out with any special goal of learning it; he had no choice but to speak it, and so he learned. While most other Koreans strove to forget Japanese after liberation, Kim worked steadily to maintain his command. He felt that the ability to speak many languages might someday serve him well as a diplomat.

It was thanks to his linguistic abilities that Kim was invited to deliver live commentary in Japanese on NHK TV as a special guest at a January 1993 sumo competition in Tokyo. Drawing on his old school day memories of sumo wrestling, his knowledgeable commentary drew higher praise than even some professional commentators.

Kim began studying English in his first year of middle school. It was his favorite subject, the one he was most interested in. He recognized early on that understanding the other person was of paramount importance in acquiring a good command of English. Instinctively he knew that you had to understand with the ears before you could communicate with the mouth. Once the US troops were stationed in Korea after liberation, he went to visit them every night to listen to them speaking.

As he reached the higher grades, it was the fashion at the time to memorize entire English dictionaries. Kim had no intention of being second best to anyone when it came to English, and he too attempted to memorize. He learned from A through D, but as he prepared to move on the next letter, he found he could not recall the words from “A.” At this rate, when would he ever have the dictionary memorized? It was then that he changed his approach, creating many sentences he could use frequently to remember the words he learned and broadening the scope of his vocabulary.

Shakespeare’s plays provided the best texts for his English studies. With a keen interest in literature, he saw the rich vocabulary and varied expressions in the plays as an opportunity to learn about English thought and traditions.

Kim’s English abilities grew exponentially when he arrived at Yonhi University.

A direct influence in terms of polishing his unrefined English came from Lillias Underwood, the wife of college founder Horace G. Underwood, who had introduced modern English courses. English composition was now taught by Professor Provost, who was instrumental in helping with Kim’s pronunciation and perfecting his composition skills. Provost also had Kim memorize sentences from the Bible, including the Sermon on the Mount



Kim Un-yong with other foreign students at Texas Western College in the United States. Kim found time to attend college while being trained at the US Army Infantry School.

(Matthew 5–7) and 1 Corinthians, using scripture to assist his understanding of Western thought and culture. Professor Phillips taught the Western political philosophy of democratic government in its original language, while English reading was taught by Dr. Kim Seong-gi, who had studied phonetics at the University of London and would later serve as South Korea's vice minister of culture. English also became part of Kim Un-yong's life while he was studying overseas in the US as a soldier.

Kim began studying French in his fourth year of middle school and German in his fifth year; both are languages that he used on occasion over the years. Both English and French are designated as the official languages of the IOC, which is headquartered in Lausanne (a French speaking Swiss canton), and those who can get by in English but speak no French are less likely to gain recognition. As a rule, French is used in the IOC for various documents, press conferences, and speeches.

Kim studied French intently, believing that he had to possess exceptional abilities to overcome the handicap of his poor Asian background and gain recognition from everyone.

Spanish was a language that Kim learned while studying abroad in the US at Texas Western College while undergoing military training. Seventy-five percent of the El Paso residents were of Mexican descent, and most of the television and radio broadcasts and newspapers were in Spanish. The best way to learn a language is to acquire it naturally while interacting with people who use it, and for Kim Un-yong, learning Spanish was a matter of acquiring a living language as part of daily life with Mexicans. His overseas study experience offered the ideal circumstances for learning Spanish.

Kim began learning Russian while interacting with people in the former Soviet Union over issues related to the 1988 Seoul Olympics before diplomatic relations were established. With the 1980 games in Moscow and the 1984 games in Los Angeles, the Olympics had been split in two over ideological differences between East and West, and Kim began studying Russian separately as was necessary for his frequent encounters with the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries in connection with the Seoul games. Official meetings presented no real problems because of the presence of interpreters, but knowing the Russian language made a huge difference when he had to meet face-to-face and converse at dinners, receptions, or meetings and seminars to discuss highly detailed issues. After studying the language he was able to freely converse with people from the USSR, and the two sides were able to communicate clearly.

It may sound easy, but the process of learning all these languages was not at all smooth in his day, before the television and the widespread international travels we enjoy today, nor did the historical situation permit him to merely study in comfort at his leisure. These were truly turbulent times, difficult and trying. It was a time that called for exceptional efforts, a time when one could only succeed by combining work with studies.

While Kim was in the US as a soldier, he trained and studied at the US Artillery School during the day and attended courses at night. He slept just five hours a night as a result and often suffered from nosebleeds.

“You have to study languages.”

Anyone who has met Kim Un-yong has heard these words at least once. To all of the many people he ever met in the sports world, he stressed the importance of languages. “If I had not studied any foreign languages, founding the World Taekwondo Federation would have been unimaginable, and I would never have been able to succeed as an IOC member,” he has said.

Kim also stressed that one should not content oneself with merely understanding a foreign language; only when we understand that country’s culture and the inner elements expressed in its language can we say that we truly speak the language. In a modern age when the world is growing closer, he says, a foreign language is a necessity rather than a choice. When the world changes, it often changes through ideas expressed through words, i.e. language. Without constant effort, language proficiency can be quickly lost. The greatest secret to learning a language, he said, is that it must continue throughout one’s lifetime.

Language learning itself is not the goal. It is merely a prerequisite for achieving a goal. But until that condition is met, you have to overcome whatever obstacles you happen to encounter. When I first started studying languages, I was filled with dreams of venturing out into the world as a diplomat for my newly liberated homeland. Studying foreign languages was a pleasure in itself as it took me to foreign places in my imagination.

...

The world is one big family. English is no longer a “foreign language”; it is a necessary prerequisite in an age of globalization. Just as you need capital to do business, a foreign language is an essential skill and an asset for all future endeavors you engage in with the world.

(Kim Un-yong, “Aspiring to Become a Global Leader,”
in *Challenge to the World*)

The board-smashing pianist-diplomat

Kim Un-yong first started learning to play the piano in his fourth year at Aengjeong Primary School, the Japanese school he attended after moving from Daegu to Seoul's Myeongnyun-dong neighborhood. Few houses at the time had pianos, and learning was difficult. Kim's mother was an educated woman from the new generation, an Ewha Girls' High School graduate who believed that men and women alike should be able to play a musical instrument. It was at her recommendation that Kim began his piano studies.

The piano soon became his pastime. He sat at the instrument every day, enjoying the simple act of playing and becoming entranced by the beautiful melodies. He remained deeply interested in the piano while attending middle school, high school, and university. He delivered a solo performance at a school festival while attending Kyungdong High School. His main pieces were Chopin's "Fantaisie-Improptu," "Scherzo," and "Revolutionary Etude" and Weber's "Invitation to the Dance," which he played to great plaudits.

His passion was such that he seriously considered becoming a professional pianist. He wondered whether he actually had the talent to become a concert pianist or if he should simply enjoy it as a hobby.

Kim and his mother went to study and test with Ewha Women's University professor Shin Jae-deok, who was then known as one of the country's top pianists. In 1947, lessons cost around 2,000 won a month. Most of the learners were students at Kyunggi and Ewha Girls' High Schools. Being chastised in front of the female students was a fate worse than death for



Kim Un-yong (second from right) during his time as a diplomat at South Korea's UN mission.

him, and so he practiced with even more passion. Perhaps his future would have been different if Shin had been more impressed. Fortunately, the professor instead said, “I’m not sure yet whether he really has the talent.” This allowed him to give up his dream of becoming a pianist.

Kim’s proficiency on the piano became very useful when he worked as a diplomat. Diplomats are occasionally called upon to invite large numbers of highly cultivated foreign guests to their homes for dinner. At times, those foreign guests might all be Americans; other times, they would be diplomats from other countries stationed in Washington, D.C. Some level of ceremony is also important when entertaining foreign guests in order to better associate at an interpersonal level. In terms of diplomatic status, particular caution is required when speaking and dining together.

Accordingly, Kim would play the piano as a way of setting the mood after meals. Through the universal world language of music and piano, he was able to create opportunities to become closer to other diplomats. On a few occasions, this would lead to him being invited to perform on US broadcasts. His activities were not restricted to playing the piano, though. After finishing his recital, he would sometimes stack thick pine boards on the floor for a taekwondo board smashing demonstration. With his cry of *yat!* he would split the boards in two, to everyone’s astonishment. All of them seemed to marvel that the very same hands that had just been playing the piano so beautifully could now smash the boards. It was a display of the talent that had allowed Kim to officially achieve the fourth *dan* (rank) black belt in taekwondo as a student at Kyungdong High School.

After the Korean War ended, South Korea was a weak nation both politically and economically. Many around the world believed that it would never recover. Understandably, it was also viewed with pity in diplomatic circles; some even seemed to regard Koreans as “savages.”

As someone who was required to keep close relationships with those diplomats, Kim Un-yong understood the situation acutely. Unfortunately, the South Korea of the day had little to boast about. And because people overseas had such little knowledge about it, they clearly would not understand if he were to boast about anything that “this is ours.”

At the time, a number of taekwondo instructors had boldly ventured out into the world to teach the martial art. Awareness had risen somewhat. In a sense, Kim’s piano recitals and taekwondo demonstrations were intended to send the message that Koreans should not be viewed lightly. It was also deliberately intended to show that Korea possesses a longstanding history

and tradition and an illustrious culture. Afterwards, he became known in diplomatic circles as the “pianist diplomat who can break wooden boards with bare hands.”

The ways in which this manifested were not always positive. When Korean taekwondo instructors first began opening studios and demonstrating smashing skills overseas, one diplomat is said to have brought along a stone and asked him to smash that. To foreign diplomats, the sight of him smashing boards—when he was not even a taekwondo instructor himself—would have seemed utterly awe inspiring

On one occasion, Kim responded to an invitation and was asked to smash a thick hardwood desk top. Their intention was clear: they wanted to test his abilities, but there also a hint of mischievous desire to embarrass him. He felt quite upset; he had not been training on a daily basis. But he could not back down either. Summoning his mental powers, he brought his fist down with all his might. Great pain racked his hand. But he looked down and saw that the thick hardwood desk top had been split in two. Thunderous applause erupted from the people crowded around him.

When I played the piano and gave a board smashing taekwondo demonstration, my goal was only ever to build harmonious relationships. I did not do it to show off. But I also knew that you sometimes need to clearly show your abilities in front of people. You cannot accomplish great things if you appear weaker than the other people or are seen as subpar. Throughout my life, I kept in mind that in order to achieve greater things, I would have to be a step ahead of everyone else at something, to look even an inch farther ahead, to work constantly to achieve that one extra level of ability.

(Kim Un-yong, “Aspiring to Become a Global Leader,”
in *Challenge to the World*)

Diplomatic career comes to an abrupt end

As a diplomat, Kim Un-yong brought great passion and the fullest effort to everything he did. He stood shoulder to shoulder with representatives of the world’s nations and had nothing to envy as he went about his activities. He felt as though he was embracing the world. He even thought there might be no life better suited to him than that of a diplomat.

Perhaps it was the case that clouds always follow the sunshine. Or perhaps it was the case that blessings sometimes come in disguise.

Whatever the case, two major incidents erupted that would leave South Korea's future impossible to predict. The first of them was the so-called "Kim Shin-jo Incident," which took place on January 21, 1968, when 31 armed guerrillas from the 124th Special Forces Unit of the North Korean Public Security Ministry's espionage bureau made a failed attempt to attack the presidential Blue House. Two days later on January 23 came the "Pueblo Incident," where the USS Pueblo, an American spy ship carrying a crew of 83, was captured by a North Korean Navy patrol boat in international waters off of North Korea's Wonsan Harbor.

The Korean War (1950–1953) had only ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty, so the South and North Korea were still technically at war. The threat of crisis loomed in South Korea and abroad; another war with North Korea seemed to be on the horizon. This also meant that South Korea-US relations were a more crucial matter than ever before.

In the midst of these crises, a phone call came from Blue House Presidential Security Service (PSS) chief Park Jong-gyu.

"The Blue House needs a first-class secretary to handle US-related issues. You need to come home straight away."

At the time, South Korea had few experts who knew much about the US. Fortunately for Kim Un-yong, he had had many interactions not only with Washington politicians but also with New Yorkers from various walks of life. He was the right man for the job.

Having served as a diplomat abroad for over five years, Kim Un-yong felt



Kim Un-yong interpreting during a meeting between Prime Minister and Supreme Council for National Reconstruction chairman Park Chung-hee and US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Collin (1961).

it may be time for him to live in South Korea at least for a while. He also thought serving as a “first-class secretary in charge of US affairs” might be a good move. On March 15, he returned to Seoul via Paris and Tokyo with his wife, son, and two daughters in tow. But his actual job turned out to be quite different from what he had expected. Instead, it consisted solely of serving in an advisory role to presidential bodyguards who were receiving special training from a US Air Force Special Operations unit. He would do this first, he was told, and then go on to the secretariat. Unable to refuse, he decided to stay put for the time being. Instead, he ended up affiliated with the PSS for some time as a deputy director (first class).

In January 1969, Kim and PSS chief Park Jong-gyu attended Richard Nixon’s inauguration as US president. The president’s podium was surrounded by clear aluminum, which was said to make it bulletproof from every angle. But it cost \$100,000—something South Korea could never afford. After they returned, Park made the presidential podium bulletproof by plating it on the inside. When North Korean assassin Mun Se-gwang fired upon President Park Chung-hee during a speech on August 15 (National Liberation Day), 1974, First Lady Yuk Young-soo was struck, but the bullets fired at Park did not penetrate the podium. They merely left a dent—the plating had performed its bullet-proofing role.

In January 1970, South Korea asked the US for \$50 million in special military aid, but approval appeared unlikely. The Blue House decided to send Kim Un-yong. His mission was to do whatever it took to secure the aid. He traveled with the communications office director and had to submit daily progress reports. The military aid package had to pass the foreign affairs and defense committees in both the House and Senate, but whenever it passed on one side, it would get stuck on the other. Kim had to draw on all of his connections to succeed, making use of famed Washington columnist Jack Anderson to meet with Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman J. William Fulbright.

Kim also accompanied Deputy Speaker Jang Gyeong-soon when he went to visit US Speaker of the House Carl Albert as part of a National Assembly delegation to sound out the US response to Park’s attempts to amend the Constitution ahead of the 1971 presidential election to allow for a third term. It was not a situation where he could speak to anyone about the election. The response from the US not positive. Kim returned first to South Korea, where he was summoned by Park, who asked him about the response. Unable to lie, he merely repeated that Jang would “report when

he arrives.” However, upon his return, Jang announced that US would “not be opposed”—causing Kim to lose quite a few points.

Kim was urged to become a lawmaker when the Yushin Fraternity was created in the National Assembly. But after his experiences in April 1960 and May 1961, he had no desire to enter politics. Park Jong-gyu would sometimes tell people about this “strange fellow who refuses to become a National Assemblyman even if you order him to.”

With these kinds of duties at the Blue House, Kim Un-yong was worried and conflicted. He feared that he might have to give up his career as a diplomat—something that had seemed perfectly suited to him. So what should he do instead? At first, he considered going into business for himself. He had experience lecturing, and at one point the image crossed his mind of living out his dream of teaching as a scholar of international law. But he was also an active personality who enjoyed meeting people, and he had to wonder whether life as a scholar was really for him.

An answer seemed difficult to find. Day after day, he puzzled over the question: What was the life he had chosen for himself, and what would the future bring? Yet he could not say with confidence that this was his path. The more he thought about it, the more it seemed that he should be involved in something enterprising and active.

He found himself thinking back to the words of Baek Nak-jun, who had been such a great source of inspiration for his career path when a student at Yonsei University. “Harbor great ambitions toward the world and develop the capabilities to lead the world!” Baek had told him. Yet there did not seem to be anything in his power to do. Between the faint hope that he might someday return to life as a diplomat and the feeling that it would be irresponsible to do anything rash while working as an aide in the Blue House at his homeland’s behest, he was in a position where he could ill afford to behave imprudently.

“If you cannot fight and you cannot flee, flow.” In an instant, the words flashed across his mind: If you can’t avoid it, enjoy it. That was the answer. Rather than spinning his wheels trying to figure out what to do, he should enjoy some long-awaited time at home with his family.

A saying holds, “Simply turn your gaze, and there is nirvana.” Kim Un-yong’s change of focus left him feeling much lighter. More than anything, it comforted him that he could now be close to his mother, who had been widowed and left alone at such a young age.

But his hope quickly proved to be wishful thinking. While he was travel-

ing to the US on business, his mother fell into critical condition and passed away shortly thereafter in her sickbed. She had lived alone for over 30 years, supporting her children with all her heart and ability, believing in and devoting herself most to Un-yong, her only biological child. In 1968, at the age of 37, Kim Un-yong said a quiet goodbye to his mother.



Chapter 3

Into the World

First beginnings in sports administration as KTA president

Kim Un-yong first became involved with the taekwondo world in 1971, when he had become a scholastic director, following a stint as an aide for US relations, in the Blue House Presidential Security Service (PSS). He was 40 at the time. Confucius once said 40 was the “age of being free from vacillation.” At that age, one was supposedly no longer vulnerable to temptation. For Kim Un-yong, however, it was a time of great inner discord.

Since becoming a diplomat, as he had always dreamed of, he had worked as a counselor at the South Korean embassies in the United States and the United Kingdom and the mission to the United Nations on behalf of South Korea. From there, he had gone on to the Blue House Presidential Security Service, answering the call for a first class secretary to address “diplomatic issues with the US.” Yet he seemed to have been summoned home on a pretext and his actual duties at the Blue House involved facilitating the special training of service staffers by the US armed forces stationed in Korea. He was also tasked with taking care of protocol at Blue House functions.

The scholastic directorship was not well suited to him either. For someone as active as Kim, used to interacting with people and associating with Westerners and other foreigners from around the world, a job that involved sitting at a desk all day and granting administrative approvals was a terrible mismatch. Just as he was wondering whether there might be some way for him to return to diplomacy, he received an offer to serve as president of the Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA). It was January 1971.

Prior to the coup d'état of May 16, 1961, the KTA did not even possess a full-fledged organizational structure. Under pressure from the military government, an integrated association was finally created, and in December 1962 Chae Myung-shin was brought on board as inaugural president. But infighting remained a deep-seated issue, and the KTA presidency changed hands no fewer than five times in nine years. With Kim Yong-chae serving out four of these years in the fifth and sixth presidential terms, this meant that the association had actually gone through four presidents in its first five years. Whenever a new president took office, he would face a lack of confidence from opposing factions or rumor mongering and smear campaigns.

Among sports groups at the time, the KTA was seen as the most trou-

blesome and problem-ridden—enough so that even the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee was astonished. It was like the Warring States Period with its rival warlords: nine major schools (Chungdo Kwan, Jido Kwan, Mooduk Kwan, Changmoo Kwan, Songmoo Kwan, Hanmoo Kwan, Kangduk Won, Jungdo Kwan, and Ohdo Kwan) and over 30 smaller schools. Each passing day seemed to bring another school. The schools were hostile to one another and issued *dan* certificates however they saw fit. It was chaos. Defiance of rulings and fraudulent rulings were a routine occurrence. One Presidential Championship at Jangchung Gymnasium erupted into pandemonium amid fighting between an airborne corps battalion and marine battalion participating in the event.

In addition, there was a schism at home and abroad after the KTA's third president Choi Hong-hi founded the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF). A wave of reflection had also begun emerging among younger taekwondo practitioners. Lee Chong-woo of the Jido Kwan school, Uhm Woon-kyu of the Chungdo Kwan school, and Hong Jong-su of the Mooduk Kwan school voted to have Kim Un-yong serve as the seventh president of the KTA.

While working as a counselor at the South Korean Embassy in the US in 1963, Kim Un-yong interacted with instructors Cho Si-hak, Shin Hyun-woo, and Chun Rhin-moon, who had settled in New York and were working to promote taekwondo. He would sometimes visit the studios to train and befriended the Korean instructors. After he returned to South Korea from the US a few years later, Cho contacted Lee Chong-woo and told him about Kim. This was someone who was excellent at sports and genuinely interested in taekwondo, Cho said, suggesting that he be selected as president. Hearing this, Lee met with Kim Un-yong, explained to him about the association's situation, and asked him to serve as president. At the time, Lee Chong-woo and I were in charge of the South Korean taekwondo community. If the two of us agreed on something, that was the decision.

(Former Kukkiwon director and sports veteran Uhm Woon-kyu, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee meeting, 2015)

This was how Kim Un-yong described his feelings at the time:

I experienced a tremendous amount of conflict and anguish when I quit my career as a diplomat and became an aide in the Presidential Blue

House. Even there, however, I was fulfilling my duty to work on behalf of the country and the public, and had a real hope that I might eventually go back to working as a diplomat. That dream of a diplomatic career is obviously something I still kept with me even when I became a scholastic director at the Blue House. But taking on the presidency of a sports association—usually something that retired officials did at the time—meant that that hope would be extinguished completely. I spent over a month racked with despair and doubt. Here I was, having to give up my lifelong dream of being a diplomat. The more I thought about it, the bleaker my future seemed.

(Kim Un-yong, *Challenge to the World*)

While Kim Un-yong was anguishing over the offer of KTA presidency, he was visited by many taekwondo school heads who urged him to accept. Just as he had displayed so much skill as a diplomat, they told him, so he could play a major role for the KTA in its time of great difficulty at home and abroad. They also praised his abilities, noting that taekwondo was becoming well known internationally and stressing that someone capable of doing great things in the world was just as important as a diplomat.

Kim Un-yong continued to debate what to do about the KTA presidency offer. In his mind, he could see a kaleidoscope of images of Korean instructors living as immigrants in the US and UK, taking great pains to promote taekwondo. He had helped instructors take out bank loans when they could not afford to open taekwondo studios. He could picture instructors struggling in their competition with Japanese karate and *kongsoodo* studios. He recalled helping organize competitions, and sometimes guaranteeing their bank loans or paying rent on behalf of some instructors who could not afford it. He remembered the sweat poured through training and sparring together. It occurred to him that the KTA presidency might well be his destiny.

Four development plans for taekwondo

After debating it for a month, I finally decided to accept the KTA presidency. Now that I had agreed, I couldn't very well just keep my name up there for a few months before moving on. The KTA presidency is an unpaid, part-time honorary position, but it demands a sense of responsibility and mission, so you are under a tremendous amount of pressure. I

came out with four visions for taekwondo: adoption as a national sport, globalization, leading in the promotion of national prestige, and leading in the defense of the country.

(Kim Un-yong, *Wise Men Learn from the Elders*, Joongang Books, 2009)

After Kim made the fateful decision to accept the presidency, the KTA held a directors' meeting on January 29, 1971, and nominated him as its seventh president. While Kim enjoyed sports personally, he had no experience with sports administration and had never considered heading a sports organization. Having taken on the KTA presidency at the urging of young taekwondo flag bearers like Uhm Woon-kyu and Lee Chong-woo, he began putting his characteristic way of thinking into practice.

Kim shared his ambitions for taekwondo, declaring as he assumed the presidency that he would “use the solid foundation laid by past presidents to hasten Korean taekwondo’s capture of international leadership” and “develop integrated taekwondo texts and taekwondo films.” Internally, he

made a vow to accept everything with humility, to fight any obstacles, and to keep his eyes wide open even when the road ahead was unclear, imbuing everything with meaning and having a vision for the future. He further cemented his ambition to “inspire a sense of pride and self-respect by establishing taekwondo as the martial art of the Korean people, establish an organized system to venture out onto the global stage, and thereby win recognition from the world.”

In short, his plan was to establish taekwondo as South Korea’s national sport and achieve its globalization. This idea was inspired by his experiences as a diplomat in New York, London, and elsewhere, which had taught him that internationalization and globaliza-



At a regular representatives' general meeting in 1971, Kim Un-yong was unanimously selected as the seventh president of the Korea Taekwondo Association.

tion were the sole paths to survival. He had also determined that the best way to stop all the infighting among the major and minor schools was by establishing taekwondo as both a national and international sport.

As a first step toward this, he decided to establish a central taekwondo stadium.

This project, he believed, was of paramount importance because the presence of a central stadium had the potential to provide a pivot around which to unify the fragmented practitioners and all of their sects, while offering a foothold for taekwondo to reach the rest of the world. At a personal level, he had been interested in taekwondo and karate since his time at Kyungdong High School, and as a certified fifth *dan* practitioner, he naturally saw the need for a central stadium. And while most of the association heads for other sports made their pledges about establishing independent gymnasiums or dedicated stadiums, none ever achieved it (apart from shooting ranges). The building of a central taekwondo stadium, Kim thought, offered an excellent opportunity to erase the stigma of a “problem association” plagued by constant infighting.

Kim announced the central stadium plan at his first press conference as KTA president. Immediately, the reporters began firing questions at him.

“You say it’s your plan to build a central stadium, but do you really mean to build it?”

“Yes.”

“How much do you expect it to cost?”

For a moment, he was taken aback. He turned to ask Jido Kwan president Lee Chong-woo, who was seated beside him. On a piece of paper, Lee wrote the number “300 million [won].” It seemed like too much, so Kim decided to knock 100 million off. “Two hundred million,” he said. Sure enough, the next day’s newspaper featured a huge article titled “Taekwondo Hall to Be Built for 200 Million.”

Kim Un-yong had taken his first steps as the new president of the Korea Taekwondo Association.

Breaking grounds of the Central Hall of Taekwondo

Kim Un-yong would emphasize the ability to execute over planning. In his view, even the best-laid plans are useless without the ability to put them into practice. This ability to execute was one of his key strengths: once he

decided on a course of action, he did not look back. So it was with the Central Hall of Taekwondo, which he approached with the brute force of a bulldozer.

His vision for the Central Hall was ambitious in scope, but none of the finer details were yet in place. There was merely the agreement that taekwondo needed a central hall to serve as a symbol for its country of origin. Kim's first step was to choose a site. He looked at a map of Seoul and visited all the state-owned plots of land. He set his sights on a site in the Jangchungdan area, but had to abandon that plan because of a prior announcement that nothing could be built there. As he continued his survey, several candidate sites emerged. He met with then-Seoul Mayor Yang Taek-shik, a close friend of his.

"I need about 2,000 *pyeong* (around 6,600 square meters) to build the Central Hall," he said. "If it's not too difficult, could you lend us some city-owned land?"

Yang replied that he would provide 2,000 *pyeong* of land in the Jamsil neighborhood. Seoul's Gangnam area at the time was a wilderness without running water or electricity; the only thing there at the time was the Chilsung Cider company. Jamsil was even more desolate: practically flooded out, with the occasional pumpkin patch.

"Jamsil would work for a large-scale stadium," Kim told Yang. "What we're building is a central hall." He laid out the map and asked for a particular area marked by contour lines—the area that would become the site of the Central Hall known as the Kukkiwon today.

"It's too much trouble to plane down the hills. There's some good land



Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil (center), Korean Sport and Olympic Committee president Kim Taek-su, and Korea Taekwondo Association president Kim Un-yong (left) cut the ribbon at a groundbreaking ceremony for the Kukkiwon (1971).

farther down,” Yang replied. “The land you picked is at the top of the hill—I don’t get it.”

“For a monumental hall like this, the value will increase if we build it on top of a hill,” Kim said. “And there’s also the hope that if you go to the top of the mountain, there may be some kind of a miracle in the taekwondo world.” He insisted on the hilltop site in the neighborhood known as Yeoksam-dong.

The groundbreaking ceremony took place in chilly conditions on November 19, 1971. It had been less than one year since Kim Un-yong had become the KTA president. The first spadeful of earth at the ceremony were dug by Culture and Education Minister Min Kwan-shik, former Prime Minister Song Yo-chan, former Navy chief of staff Kim Young-gwan, *Seoul Shinmun* executive director Yoon Il-gyun, and Korea Baseball Association president Kim Jong-rak. The ceremony was a big enough story to make the Daehan News.

Coincidentally, the Jamsil neighborhood mentioned at the time as a candidate site would later house the main stadium for the Seoul Olympics.

Though it may appear small today surrounded by tall buildings, at the time the Central Hall would be a commanding presence on a high hilltop perch, in the middle of wilderness.

A year later, the finished Kukkiwon is revealed

For the Central Hall of Taekwondo (renamed the Kukkiwon in 1973), Kim Un-yong hoped to use Korean-style architecture, something that would provide a sense of both familiarity and traditional beauty with its tall doors on either side and its tiled roof.

This was the plan as the groundbreaking ceremony was held, but the hurdles before its completion proved formidable. Not only was there a shortage of funds for the construction, but the first oil shocks in 1972 compounded the problem.

Some 6 million won alone was spent on cutting the hill down. At the time, a Level 5 Blue House guard earned around 20,000 won a year, a bag of cement cost 270 won, and a ton of rebar cost around 20,000 won. The KTA possessed almost no money, which meant that it was entirely up to the president to find the funds for the construction.

The company in charge of the construction was Dong Yang Engineering and Construction. The construction was carried out entirely on credit. Still,



Panorama of the Kukkiwon,
which opened on December 9,
1972.

not everything could be deferred. First, Kim Un-yong drew upon his personal assets; he could not very well ask other people to help out without contributing anything himself. Samsung chairman Lee Byung-chul made a generous contribution of 3 million won. Hyundai vice president Chung In-young, who also served as KTA vice president, gave 2 million won and Poonghan Textile and Daenong also gave 2 million won each.

Support also came in the form of donations of materials: Ssangyong provided cement, Incheon Steel offered rebar, and Hankuk Glass and Dongkwang Glass provided all the glass between them. Wood was provided by Dong-A Enterprises, the roof by Byucksan. Donations were also received from taekwondo enthusiasts and supporters. Acquaintances who offered to treat Kim to celebrate the Kukkiwon's building provided necessary materials and supplies instead. As more of these large and small acts of support and goodwill were offered, the Kukkiwon construction began gaining momentum.

In a column from August 10, 2010, titled "Our Kukkiwon and China's Shaolin Temple," Kim wrote of the support received during the Kukkiwon construction effort.

The 2-million-won Central Hall construction fund that the KTA had assembled over the previous years by taking 100 won out of every 1,000 won in evaluation fees was scarcely enough to purchase a few tons of rebar. My understanding is that 1.5 million won of this was taken from the KTA's taekwondo textbook production fund, and the rest came from association operational funds. So we met with various political and business figures in South Korea and asked for their support. It was through

their heartfelt donations of money and materials that the Kukkiwon was built. You can see the Kukkiwon's value all the more by looking at the people who provided support for its construction at the time. From the surviving materials and my memory, the list goes as follows (in Korean alphabetical order):

- Kang Shin-ho, president, Dong-A Pharmaceutical: One fountain-style water purifier
- Kyungsung Textiles chairman: 2 million won
- Kim Dong-su, presidential secretary: 100 metal chairs
- Kim Sung-geon, chairman, Ssangyong: 3,500 bags of cement
- Kim In-deuk, chairman, Byucksan Construction: Entire roof
- Kim Jong-pil, prime minister: 1 million won for a water pump
- Dongkwang Glass and Hankuk Glass: All construction involving glass
- J. Robert Fluor, chairman, Fluor (US): \$3,000
- Gulf Oil (US): \$5,000
- Roy Chalk, chairman, TC Aviation (US): \$5,000
- Park Mu-seung, chairman, Jeonju Paper: one fountain-style water purifier
- Park Bo-hi, president, Korean Cultural and Freedom Foundation: \$1,000
- Park Yong-gon, president, Hanyang Food (current Doosan Group honorary chairman): 500,000 won
- Park Yong-hak, chairman, Daenong: 2 million won
- Park Jong-gyu, director, Presidential Security Service: 1,000 plants + 3 million won
- Song Yo-chan, former prime minister (then president of Incheon Steel): 3 million won for gate construction, 600 tons of rebar
- Seung Sang-bae, chairman, Donghwa Enterprise: Timber
- Yang Taek-shik, mayor of Seoul: Free use of 2,000 pyeong of land (later increased to 5,500 pyeong), two green pine and ginkgo trees
- Lee Min-ha, president, Dongyang Express: 1.5 million won (not including design)
- Lee Byung-chul, chairman, Samsung: 3 million won
- Rhee Jhoon-gu (Jhoon Rhee) taekwondo instructor: \$500
- Jang Ik-yong, chairman, Jinro: 1 million won + 8 million won for Yungokjeong Pavilion
- Chun Rhin-moon (Richard Chun), taekwondo instructor: \$500
- Chung In-yung, vice president, Hyundai Engineering & Construction: 2 million won

- *Cho Si-bak (S. Henry Cho), taekwondo instructor: \$3,000*
- *Wilfried Sarrazin, German ambassador to South Korea: 100 sets of metal cabinets, 20 bed sets*
- *Blue House: Two telephones*
- *President of Poonghan Textile: 2 million won*
- *Hankook Ilbo: 5,000 plants*
- *Korean American Foundation: \$10,000*
- *Hwacheon Gongsa: 2 million won*

In addition to this, I provided a total of 13 million won for the Kukkiwon's construction from my own personal assets, including 10 million won for building, 2 million won for its registration as a private foundation, and 1 million won to build the security guard's office.

Despite all of this help, a serious crisis would emerge: the oil shock from the Middle East. The shock occurred as the clouds of war began gathering in the Middle East—home to many of the world's petroleum exporters—a year ahead of the outbreak of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war there. The initial plan had been to finish construction within one year, but setbacks now looked inevitable. Concerned third parties began suggesting that an extended three-year plan should be adopted instead. Kim Un-yong held a different view. In his opinion, a delay in the construction plan provided no guarantee the construction would be completed within two or even three years. If he missed this chance, the opportunity to build the Kukkiwon might not come again.

Deciding that opportunity might not knock a second time if he failed to take the chance when it was given, Kim remained steadfast. Indeed, he began working to win others over to his point of view, even digging out wells for water and helping with the electrical work personally.

On November 30, 1972, exactly one year after the groundbreaking ceremony, the completed Kukkiwon was finally revealed in all its splendor. It covered an area of 2,300 *pyeong* (7,600 square meters), with a three-story, 227-*pyeong* stadium capable of seating 2,000. The opening ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee Chairman Kim Taek-su, Seoul Mayor Yang Taek-shik, former Prime Minister Song Yo-chan, the German Ambassador Wilfried Sarrazin, and many other guests.

In a message of appreciation, Kim Jong-pil declared, “With Korean taekwondo making a name for itself internationally, we now have the con-

struction of a central hall to serve as a cradle for its development, giving us a stature befitting the home country of taekwondo. Now it is time to use this hall as a platform to achieve even greater development, contributing to promotion of our national prestige and improvement of our public's physical constitution."

Kim Un-yong went on to reveal his ambitions for taekwondo during a commemorative dinner. "To show the world the true face of taekwondo as Korea's national sport," he declared, "I intend to hold a fully-fledged world championship in May of next year, inviting practitioners from all over the world and the overseas instructors who have currently been sent to over 40 countries worldwide." He also pledged to "standardize *dan* promotion reviews and re-educate instructors to show the true nature of taekwondo's head temple as the world's greatest in terms of skill."

Seoul National University architecture professor Lee Kwang-no, who supervised the initial design for the Central Hall of Taekwondo, explained that he had "attempted to symbolize the authority of Korean taekwondo by covering the roof in *cheonggiwa* (blue tiles) reflecting the soul of Korea and placing eight round pillars at the front of the building to conform to the eight *gwae* (trigrams) of taekwondo." In this way, he said, he had focused on "giving it the image of a hall for Korea's traditional martial art."

After all the difficulties of the construction's beginning and completion, the hall itself was not exactly impressive. Indeed, it was rather shabby. Gangnam was still a wilderness at the time. The roads were all unpaved, with only a strip of asphalt at the center. There was no telephone service, electricity, or running water. The electricity only came on the day before the opening; two telephones were lent out by the Blue House. Water was drawn up from a well at the foot of the hill and kept in a tank. Despite the cold winter weather, heating was out of the question.

What might have happened had the Kukkiwon's construction been delayed after the Middle East oil shock erupted, as so many suggested?

Perhaps this would have led to delays in the establishment of the World Taekwondo Federation (1972) and the launch of the World Taekwondo Championships (1973) and the *dan* promotions, education, and integration provided by the Kukkiwon. Without the 1975 membership in the General Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), taekwondo's status as an Olympic sport today may never have been possible.

In May 2010 the Kukkiwon became a special status corporation owned by the government.

Founding the WTF

“National Sport Taekwondo”: A handwritten inscription from President Park Chung-hee

While Kim Un-yong was building the Kukkiwon, he was also working with Uhm Woon-kyu and Lee Chong-woo to create a more organized taekwondo system. Uhm was made the KTA’s secretary general and executive director, while Lee was made chairman of the technique review committee, which oversaw the judgment and competition committees. This meant that Lee was in charge of technique-related areas, while Uhm was in charge of execution.

When you live in this world, you may find a lot of people who are personally close to the president and will come up to him and say, “Mr. President, you can’t do it that way, you have to do it this way.” I’ve seen a lot of that. But that isn’t the case with our taekwondo association. As president, Kim Un-yong was involved in important projects, but he left a lot of things up to us. He had the idea that he should leave the association’s internal matters to the experts and support everything from behind. (Uhm Woon-kyu, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee meeting, 2015)

As Kim was working on publishing a text to technically integrate taekwondo, he also enlisted Lee Chong-woo’s assistance in an effort to “locate taekwondo’s roots.” After combing through various sources of literature, he found the origins in the wall paintings of the Goguryeo Muyongchong Tomb, depicting the tradition that had been carried on later in the history of the Joseon Dynasty. With this, he established taekwondo’s history as dating back to the Goguryeo Kingdom (37 BC–AD 668). Claims that taekwondo was a modified form of karate or an imitation of *tangsoodo*, or that it had its origins in the martial art of *hwarangdo*, would subsequently disappear.

At first, people would say, “What do you mean, taekwondo as a national sport? Ssireum and football—those are national sports. Taekwondo is the kind of thing thugs do.” So I went to President Park Chung-hee, and I got a handwritten calligraphy inscription from him reading, “Kukki Taekwondo” (which means “National Sport Taekwondo”). I don’t think

it's because I said taekwondo was the national sport—the president must have seen some report in the press. He liked that sort of thing. And here he had written, “Kukki Taekwondo,” and given that to me. There were only around 2,000 to 3,000 taekwondo studios in South Korea at the time, so I printed out 2,000 copies and hung them up in all the studios. After that, nobody said that sort of thing anymore.

(Kim Un-yong, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee meeting, 2015)

It was on March 20, 1971, that Kim received the handwritten inscription from President Park reading, “National Sport Taekwondo.” He had been president of the Korea Taekwondo Association for less than two months.

From that moment on, the KTA began operating smoothly under Kim’s strong leadership. Once the dream of all practitioners was realized with the Central Hall’s construction, even those who had been skeptical before began listening to what Kim Un-yong had to say.

The KTA’s Central Hall was renamed “Kukkiwon” on February 6, 1973, just over two months after its opening. As someone whose diplomatic experience had instilled a firm belief that internationalization and globalization were the only ways for taekwondo to grow, Kim Un-yong felt the name “Central Hall of Taekwondo” was not something that could be presented to the world. He initially planned to rename it “Kukkikwan,” or “hall of the national sport,” but after taking into account that Japan’s central hall for sumo wrestling was called the Kokugikan (which consisted of the same Chinese characters), he decided on the name Kukkiwon, known in English as the World Taekwondo Headquarters.

After the Kukkiwon’s registration as a foundation, Kim went to work integrating the 30-odd schools of taekwondo and organizing the history and tradition of the sport with the opening of training centers, integration of *dan* promotion reviews, integration of *poomsae* forms, dispatching of and support to overseas instructors, determining the sport’s history, and publishing taekwondo texts and magazines.

It would not be going too far to say that the Kukkiwon was founded thanks to Kim Un-yong, and it was through the Kukkiwon’s founding that the World Championships were held, the World Taekwondo Federation was established, and the path to globalization was laid.

Publishing taekwondo textbooks and tracing the sport's origins

While the Kukkiwon's construction was under way, Kim Un-yong was also working to establish taekwondo as a more organized system. At the time, each *kwan* (school) had its own *poomsae* (forms), but there were no texts established systematically by the KTA. As the association nominally in charge of all taekwondo schools, the KTA's lack of a proper textbook stemmed from the heavy influence of the individual schools. Creating one would mean consulting one *kwan* or another, which would trigger an outcry from the others. The fast turnover of presidents and the periodic reshuffling of the executive board had much to do with this.

But Kim Un-yong was different: he had influence. His credentials as deputy director of the Blue House Presidential Security Service—someone who had the occasional meeting with an all-powerful president—tended to silence most of the noisier *kwan* heads early on. More than anything, none of them had the nerve to badmouth the powerful association president who had fulfilled his pledge to build a central hall for taekwondo.

In Lee Chong-woo and Uhm Woon-kyu, Kim also had at his side two school heads who were trusted by young taekwondo practitioners. In terms of taekwondo skills, Uhm had the narrow edge, but Lee was far stronger in terms of technical formulation. Uhm was also a powerful and aggressive administrator.

They established a system in which Lee Chong-woo would present plans, Kim would decide upon them as president, and Uhm Woon-kyu was responsible for the execution. To assist with this, judgment and competition committees were created under the KTA's technique review committee, and Lee and Uhm were respectively appointed as technique review committee chairman and KTA secretary general.

Lee played a central role in the publication of a taekwondo textbook. The cost was 1.5 million won, which was taken from a fund of 2 million won created for the Central Hall's construction by accepting contributions of 100 won per *dan*. Once the textbook had been published, the system fell rapidly into place—something made possible thanks to the coordination of school heads Lee Chong-woo, Uhm Woon-kyu, Hong Jong-su, Lee Nam-suk, Ro Byung-jick, Lee Byeong-ro, Bae Byung-ki, Kim Soon-bae, Kwak Byung-oh, Choi Nam-do, and Lee Kyo-yun.

Tracing the history of taekwondo was a task entrusted to Lee Chong-woo. Many claimed at the time that taekwondo was a modified form of

karate or an inferior imitation of *tangsoodo*, but its origins were traced to the wall paintings of the Goguryeo-era Muyongchong Tomb. Paintings on the walls of Muyongchong Tomb, located in the Tonggou township of Ji'an County in what is today Manchuria (which served as capital of the Goguryeo Kingdom between 209 and 427 AD), show two people facing each other at a fixed distance in postures that suggest attacking with their hands and feet in actions similar to those of today's taekwondo matches. Records were also located showing that during the Joseon era, this had developed into the martial art of *subakhee*, which was popular among the general populace. The discovery of records describing how residents of Jeolla-do and Chungcheong-do gathered in the village of Jakji on the border between the two provinces to compete at *subakhee* showed that it was a competitive sport in addition to a martial art.

This data served as a basis for establishing the history of taekwondo.

Setting aside the Goguryeo tomb at Muyongchong, there are over 500 forms of self-defense martial arts in the world. The important thing is how you develop that art or sport and create rules that the world will accept. The same principle applies whether you're talking about baseball, tennis, or ping pong. The history of modern taekwondo began with the world accepting it as standardized by the Kukkiwon and WTF.

I am very proud and find it very significant that taekwondo became an Olympic sport just 20 years after we globalized it by locating its history and standardizing its rules and regulations. We managed to do in two decades what other sports took a century to achieve. Taekwondo's adoption as an official Olympic event has not only helped to promote Korean culture in the world, but has also given South Koreans many gold medals and raised the standing of many taekwondo practitioners.

(Kim Un-yong, "Standardizing Taekwondo"
in *30 Years of the Olympics*, Soujusha, 2001)

Launching the World Taekwondo Championships and the World Taekwondo Federation

Kim Un-yong had spent around a month mulling over the offer to become president of the Korea Taekwondo Association before he finally accepted it. Yet his actions once he accepted the position give the impression that



KTA president Kim Un-yong presents an award at the first World Taekwondo Championships. (1973)

he was working according to a well-planned script. Everything happened nearly without a hitch, from the president's handwritten message calling taekwondo the "national sport" and the Kukkiwon's construction to the staging of the World Taekwondo Championship and the establishment of the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF).

Most sports groups have stated aims of building dedicated stadiums or central halls, but even those groups that had powerful business or political figures serving as presidents failed to deliver on what they promised. At the time, Kim Un-yong's pledge to build a central hall for taekwondo seemed rather farfetched.

Yet he went ahead to fulfill his promise, laying the "national sport" debate to rest with the inscription from President Park and barreling through difficulties to complete construction of the Kukkiwon and integrate the chaotic array of *kwans*.

In his commemorative address upon the Kukkiwon's completion, Kim had ambitiously declared, "To show the world the true face of taekwondo as Korea's national sport, I intend to hold a world championship in May 1973, inviting teams from the 40 countries worldwide where Korean instructors have been sent from Seoul." He was confident in the plan he had already completed in his mind.

In January 1973, Kim declared at a general meeting of KTA representatives that the "preparations to cement Korea's stature as the home of taekwondo are now complete." The time had come, he said, to adopt a clear sense of purpose in establishing a future vision and create a new history for taekwondo. He was clearly stating his goal: to stage a world taekwondo

championship and establish the martial art as a global sport.

Not long afterward, the first World Taekwondo Championship was held at the Kukkiwon over a three-day period from May 25 to 27, 1973. It was a historic event. There was no world federation at the time, nor any support from the state. It had not been organized by local associations in the world's countries. Taekwondo instructors around the world brought their pupils entirely at their own expense.

A total of 161 athletes participated on 20 teams representing 17 countries, including three teams representing the eastern, central, and western United States; two teams from Germany; and one team each from France, Free China (Taiwan), Uganda, Ivory Coast, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Cambodia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Java, the Philippines, and Austria.

For the opening ceremony, the teams entered in alphabetical order to a military band accompaniment, starting with the central US team holding the American flag. Uhm Woon-kyu declared the event under way, after which Kim Un-yong delivered an opening address. "I am thrilled to see the long dreamed-of world championship taking place at the Kukkiwon in Korea, the home country of taekwondo," he said. "As a global event taking place for the first time ever, there may be some shortcomings in the preparations and staging, but there is great significance in the fact that we have created rules for our own martial art of taekwondo and elevated it into a global sport to hold this international event." Next came welcoming and congratulatory addresses from Seoul Mayor Yang Taek-shik and Culture and Education Minister Min Kwan-shik, who expressed their hopes to see the bonds of mutual understanding and friendship grow stronger among the countries through the taekwondo spirit.

On behalf of the 161 participating athletes, South Korea's Kim Jeong-bong delivered an oath to compete fairly. After a demonstration of smashing, sparring, and *poomsae* by a children's drill team, the competition began. It consisted of three three-minute rounds with no head gear. Competitors wore only protective gear made from bamboo.

On May 28, the day after the world championship ended, 35 representatives from 17 countries gathered at the Kukkiwon for the establishment of the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF). Kim Un-yong was selected as its inaugural president, with Roland Demarco of the US and Seo Wagner of West Germany as vice presidents and Lee Chong-woo as secretary general. Even as an ad hoc organization, it marked a first step toward globalization. The countries that participated in the WTF's inaugural general meeting were

France, Uganda, Colombia, West Germany, Austria, Guatemala, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Free China, Cambodia, the US, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and South Korea.

So the Kukkiwon was built and the World Taekwondo Championships were held. Now all of our instructors from around the world were expecting the next world championship to be organized. For that to happen, there needed to be a World Taekwondo Federation. So one was created. We didn't create it because someone told us to; it was made in response to that natural expectation from instructors. So we created it, and then realized there was no one to run it. I was director of the Kukkiwon and chairman of the KTA in the home country of taekwondo, so it made sense that I would be the president of the WTF. As a result, the KTA ended up a pillar back in taekwondo's home country, the WTF was in charge of promotion and management around the world, and the Kukkiwon was responsible for maintaining the martial art tradition and spirit and supporting the two organizations. Nobody asked us to divide these up among three organizations—it was a mission from history and the spirit of the times.

(Kim Un-yong, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee meeting, 2015)

On April 17, 1973, the Culture and Education Ministry had moved to dissolve the International Taekwon-Do Federation (led by Choi Hong-hi) after scandals involving the over-issuance and purchasing of *dan* certifications. The WTF, organized under Kim Un-yong's leadership, was now the only legally recognized international association established in South Korea.

Strategy for globalizing and internationalizing taekwondo

Having emerged on the forefront of sports as KTA and WTF president, Kim Un-yong began taking steps to internationalize taekwondo. Perhaps his considerable experience as a diplomat had taught him which ways worked fastest in achieving globalization and internationalization. His actions were both unconventional and unhesitating. Once he had determined his path was the correct one, he pushed through any opposition.

In reality, no taekwondo practitioner opposed the things he was trying to do. At a time when even the sports associations run by conglomerate figures and powerful presidents were unable to build their own dedicated



Juan Antonio Samaranch visits the Kukkiwon (1982).

stadiums—including basketball, volleyball, and football groups—Kim had finished construction on a central hall, staged a world championship, and founded a world federation within a year of taking over the presidency of KTA. When it came to drive and perseverance, he had no rivals.

Nor was there anything to find fault with, as Kim left the internal matters up to Uhm Woon-kyu and Lee Chong-woo—two of the most trusted figures in taekwondo—and focused on working to promote awareness of taekwondo outside. His firm leadership put an end, at least temporarily, to the hostility and conflict among the various squabbling *kwans*.

In 1975, Kim assumed another term as KTA president. It was an obvious decision, given the mood in taekwondo at the time. In the short time since he had taken over the presidency, he had achieved longstanding dreams no president before him could have imagined coming true: the building of the Kukkiwon, the staging of the World Championships, and the founding of a world federation. His stature in the athletic community had risen all the more in 1974 when he became vice president of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee and vice president and honorary secretary general of the Korean Olympic Committee. After the funeral of First Lady Yuk Young-soo, who had been slain by a North Korean assassin's bullet on August 15 of that year, Kim retired from government service and was able to devote his energies full-time to sports administration. For all of these reasons, his re-election as president was all but assured.

For directors to lead the KTA under his second term, Kim turned mainly to non-taekwondo figures. The taekwondo practitioners were instead entrusted with the technique review committee. In a bid to ensure the association's financial soundness and promote awareness of taekwondo, he brought Hyundai Engineering & Construction president Chung In-yung and Jeonju

Paper CEO Park Mu-seung on board as vice presidents and filled the board with such prominent contemporary figures as Choi Gak-gyu, Park Bo-hi, Choi Soon-gil, Han Bong-su, Jang Ik-yong, and Kim Bong-gyun.

The second World Taekwondo Championships were held on August 28, 1975, with 352 participants competing from 30 countries. South Korea won again, taking eight victories in all classes; Free China came in second. Communist Yugoslavia participated for the first time, along with Morocco and Egypt, leading some to describe the event as a triumph of sports diplomacy. Disappointingly, a failure to integrate the rules resulted in the US, West Germany, and others being unable to show their capabilities.

It was on a visit to South Korea during this competition that GAISF secretary general Oscar State hinted at the possibility of taekwondo's GAISF membership.

After the success of the second championships, Kim Un-yong began broadening his efforts. On October 5 of that year, his confidence in the globalization of taekwondo would be further boosted when a general meeting of the GAISF in Montreal unanimously approved the WTF's admission, despite objections from wushu and karate representatives. Drawing strength from this, Kim traveled the world, offering encouragement to taekwondo instructors overseas and taking part in every international federation meeting he could to broaden his network of connections.

Relations between the WTF and the ITF

Any discussion of the globalization of taekwondo would be incomplete without mentioning relations between the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF), led by Kim Un-yong, and the International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF), led by Choi Hong-hi.

Kim met Choi at the Vietnamese embassy not long after becoming KTA president when a group of athletes arrived from Vietnam to train. At the time, Choi urged him to have the KTA join the ITF. A world federation was essential for the globalization of taekwondo, and this was before the WTF's launch.

But while the ITF had the word "international" in its title, it was not a global federation. An international federation would require the membership of various associations around the world; the ITF did not have that. Discussions were held on integration with the KTA, but no progress was made.



Kim Un-yong and North Korean IOC member Chang Ung.

It may be necessary to provide some background on Choi's establishment of the ITF.

Choi Hong-hi contributed greatly to promoting taekwondo in the South Korea military during his time as a general. Discharged from the armed services after the May 1961 coup, he traveled to Malaysia as ambassador, only to have to return home under unsavory circumstances. In early 1965, he became president of the KTA. After becoming president, he insisted that the association formally adopt the Chang Hun Ryu style, which he had developed. Within a year, he faced a no-confidence vote by the board. Lee Chong-woo encouraged him to let go of the presidency; to salve his wounds, he suggested that Choi should do something global—perhaps create and head a group. In 1966, Choi founded the ITF as a goodwill organization.

In 1972, Choi went into exile in Canada before crossing over into North Korea. After his departure for Canada, the ITF was embroiled in scandals involving the over-issuance and sale of *dan* certifications. On April 17, 1973, the Culture and Sports Ministry ordered its dissolution. The ITF had lost the ability to operate at home. No accurate information is available on Choi's journey from Canada to North Korea. Today, Ri Yong-son of North Korea serves as ITF president, with North Korean Olympic Committee member Chang Ung as honorary chairman.

During the World Taekwondo Championships at the Taekwondowon in Muju in late June 2017, Kim was appalled to hear talk of integrating the WTF and ITF from Chang and Ri, who had arrived with a North Korean taekwondo demonstration team.

"The WTF," he declared, "was developed as organization to oversee a sport that is now an official Olympic event, a sport that is practiced

in nearly every country in the world. The ITF is a group existing only in name. I cannot for the life of me understand their public discussion of a merger.” Every time the subject of the proposed merger came up, he would deplore how thoughtless people pandering to populism were tarnishing the good name of taekwondo practitioners.

Teaching the World about Taekwondo

The WTF joins GAISF

After successfully staging the first World Taekwondo Championship and becoming president of the newly formed WTF, both in 1973, Kim Un-yong felt confident in taekwondo's establishment as a sport. "More than the simple fact that Western members of the taekwondo family came to the sport's home country and gained a new sense of wonder and understanding of the limitlessness of its techniques, it

is important that the ground-clearing efforts to develop taekwondo from a martial art into a global sport are now over and the process of international recognition is now under way," he was quoted as saying in a KTA-published taekwondo magazine. Many had voiced doubts about whether taekwondo could be developed into a sport; putting those questions to rest and establishing definite potential and confidence were some of the great achievements of the world championships. Kim saw himself as having many new tasks to tackle: strengthening the WTF organization, researching the rules of international competition and learning about international judging, establishing a taekwondo college to nurture the talents of taekwondo practitioners, staging an Asian competition, and pushing for taekwondo's adoption as an Olympic event. More than anything, he had to overtake karate to win recognition of taekwondo on the global stage.

Kim would later recall the process of taekwondo's GAISF membership in a Newsis column published on August 29, 2011, titled "How Far Has Taekwondo Come?"



World Taekwondo Federation president Kim Un-yong at the 21st GAISF general meeting with International Weightlifting Federation president Tamas Ajan and International Swimming Federation president Robert Helmick.

The greatest goals of the KTA were to achieve results internationally and make use of an international umbrella. We started by making use

of the umbrella (approvals). Karate was too powerful, and we would have ended up as just an ad hoc group. In October 1974, the first Asian Taekwondo Championships were held at the Kukkiwon and an Asian federation was established. In 1975, the second World Taekwondo Championships were held at Jangchung Gymnasium, with 30 countries participating. The event was attended by GAISF secretary general Oscar State, who urged us to pursue GAISF membership. At the GAISF general assembly meeting in Montreal on October 5, 1975 (under President Thomas Keller), the WTF was unanimously approved for membership over objections from judo, karate, ITF, and swimming representatives. The prevailing belief at the time was that taekwondo was just one school of karate, representing the same martial art; some of the dojangs overseas even advertised it as “Korean karate.” It was a pivotal event. Thanks to its GAISF membership, the WTF became an official international federation, competing and co-existing with other Olympic and non-Olympic international sports federations. We had taken our first formal steps on the international stage.

After this, the federation went to work taking advantage of the umbrella of international certification from above, while obtaining certification and budgetary support for the scattered national associations under the auspices of individual NOCs. Rather than developing from the bottom up, it was a matter of using diplomacy, taking advantage of the GAISF umbrella to expand quickly from the top down—building down rather than up. Things developed so quickly that the school heads—people like Uhm Woon-kyu, Lee Chong-woo, Hong Jong-su, Lee Nam-suk, Lee Kyo-yun, Lee Geum-hong, and Kim Soon-bae who were used to unconditionally supporting the president—were all bewildered.

It may sound simple, but the GAISF membership that provided the first step toward taekwondo’s globalization was actually an intensely difficult process in the face of objections from the judo, karate, and swimming groups.

The GAISF general meeting took place on October 4–9, 1975, at the Sheraton Mt. Royal Hotel in Montreal. The attendees were unfamiliar faces to South Koreans at the time: the Soviet Union’s Nikolay Nikifirov-Denisov for boxing, Brazil’s Jao Havelange for football, France’s Pierre Ferri for fencing, Great Britain’s Charles Palmer for judo, the American Harold Henning for swimming, Switzerland’s Kurt Hasler for shooting, Great Britain’s Inger Frith for archery, and Austria’s Gottfried Schödl for weightlifting.

Attending as WTF president, Kim Un-yong met with the taekwondo-friendly GAISF secretary general Oscar State as soon as he arrived at the meeting site. Unexpectedly, State shared some unwelcome news: Charles Palmer, president and executive committee member of the International Judo Federation, was leading the charge to oppose the WTF's membership.

Kim was alarmed. Admission as a new GAISF member required unanimous approval; the opposition of even one person would ruin the WTF's chances. Kim met four times with Palmer to share his views. Despite persistent attempts to win him over, Palmer remained adamantly opposed.

Palmer cited five arguments against. First, he claimed that taekwondo was too similar to karate. Second, he noted that taekwondo in Europe was part of the judo federation, and because other martial arts such as karate and kung fu would oppose recognizing taekwondo alone, some time and research was needed. Third, he thought that State held too favorable a view of taekwondo after traveling to Seoul. Fourth, he felt that any membership motion submitted should be addressed together with karate. Finally, he maintained that the WTF was a disputed organization, citing its split with the North Korea-led ITF.

Kim's original plan had been to use State's active support for membership to raise the WTF's admission as the ninth agenda item. The situation took a rapid turn, however, when Palmer replaced State as the new secretary general, and it was only through the narrowest of margins that it appeared on the agenda.

The debate over the WTF's membership was a heated one that lasted for two full hours.

"Taekwondo," Kim Un-yong argued, "is an event with three three-minute rounds where the athletes wear protective safety gear. Our focus is on kicking with actual attacking moves, whereas karate is an intrinsically different sport that involves blocking the opponent's attacks."

As the debate wore on with more of these attacks and parries, Palmer proposed a postponement of the membership decision and suggested creating a research committee to investigate the matter more closely over the next year. The shooting, canoeing, and judo representatives all agreed. In contrast, the presidents representing rowing, boxing, wrestling, and archery all actively supported taekwondo's admission.

This came to a rather anticlimactic end on the last day of the general meeting, when International Judo Federation president Antonio Garcia de la Fuente, who served simultaneously as president of Spain's judo associa-

tion and vice president of its taekwondo association, declared, “Taekwondo is taekwondo and judo is judo.” The vote was unanimous, and the WTF became a GAISF member.

The WTF’s admission to GAISF was significant in five major ways.

First, by beating out other martial arts such as Japan’s karate and China’s wushu to win recognition as a global sport, taekwondo assumed a place alongside such international sports as football, volleyball, and basketball, laying the groundwork for its globalization.

Second, among the 60 or so international federations, the WTF was the only Asian one to have a world federation headquarters at home (in Seoul). While Japan was the home country of judo, the headquarters for the sport’s federation were located in the UK.

Third, it qualified taekwondo to bid for recognition as an official event at the Olympics and other competitions. The WTF’s admission to GAISF would lay the grounds for taekwondo’s eventual selection as an official Olympic event 19 years later at an IOC general meeting in Paris (1994).

Fourth, it gave Kim Un-yong representational authority to discuss the future of international sports on an equal footing with the presidents of international federations around the world. Having led the WTF, Kim would go on ten years later to become a leader of GAISF, assuming the vice presidency in 1985 and the presidency in 1986.

Fifth, it boosted the morale of the taekwondo instructors who had ventured out around the world, while contributing greatly to enhancing South Korea’s prestige through the sport.

A three decade-long goal realized with the integration of taekwondo’s ten *kwans*

As KTA president, WTF president, and chairman and director of the Kukkiwon, Kim Un-yong now held absolute authority when it came to taekwondo. But the sense of division among the different *kwans* (schools) remained. Taekwondo in the modern sense emerged with Korea’s liberation in 1945, and by the 1960s the number of schools had proliferated to around 40. New schools seemed to be cropping up every day. A vicious cycle reigned, where branch schools broke away from the main schools to form schools of their own, which then splintered into further branches and schools.

As president of the KTA, Kim Un-yong had pledged to integrate the

schools, but putting an end to the splintering and infighting was not easy. It would perhaps be accurate to say that the interests of the individual schools factored in more strongly than the advancement of taekwondo as a sport. The schools professed that integration would destroy their hierarchies or leave them rootless—but their real concern was declining revenues.

The integration entered full swing in 1974, three years after Kim assumed the presidency, with the consolidation of the 40 or so schools into nine main *kwans*. Two years later, on May 20, 1976, the *kwan* directors' council (a KTA member group) approved a move to present a face more befitting the home country of taekwondo. They independently moved to abolish the existing *kwan* names and place them under direct administration, assigning them Arabic numerals for the sake of administrative convenience.

After the change, the *kwans* became School 1 (Songmoo Kwan), School 2 (Hanmoo Kwan), School 3 (Changmoo Kwan), School 4 (Mooduk Kwan), School 5 (Ohdo Kwan), School 6 (Kangduk Kwan), School 7 (Jungdo Kwan), School 8 (Jido Kwan), and School 9 (Chungdo Kwan). In the case of the Mooduk Kwan, some of the high-ranking practitioners, mainly from the Seoul area, joined forces to break off and create a tenth *kwan*.

The old *kwan* names had been abolished and replaced with numbers from 1 to 10, but the problems remained. Some figures who were particularly upset about the *kwan* issues agreed that the *kwans* should be eliminated completely to address irregularities in *dan* promotion reviews and other issues. Members began traveling to South Korea's different cities and provinces to rally support. At a regular KTA representatives' meeting in January 1977, *kwan* integration was finally raised as a key agenda item. A special committee for *kwan* integration was established; as president, Kim Un-yong was entrusted with its membership.

Following the meeting's decision, a *kwan* integration committee was formed on February 23 with a membership of 15, including veteran practitioners and the director of the Kukkiwon. An agreement was reached: a one-year grace period would be granted for the directors of the central *kwans* to relinquish all of the schools affiliated with them. On August 7, 1978, the ten *kwans* were finally dissolved and a general school (headed by Kim Un-yong) was established. Through an integrated administrative system, they hoped to eliminate the deep-seated factionalism and related administrative and technical issues, helping to realize great advancements in the globalization of taekwondo. The executives for the new general school included Kim as general director, Lee Chong-woo and Uhm Woon-kyu as deputy directors,

Lee Nam-suk as secretary general, Lee Byeong-ro and Kang Won-sik as auditors, and a bylaw review committee consisting of Lee Chong-woo, Uhm Woon-kyu, Lee Nam-suk, Kang Won-sik, and Kwak Byung-oh.

This decision would prove historic for the advancement of taekwondo. Agreeing that the integration would help put an end to infighting and add momentum to taekwondo's globalization, the directors of the ten schools signed and sealed the resolution. In order, the signatories were Chun Jung-woong from School 1 (Songmoo Kwan), Lee Kyo-yun from School 2 (Hanmoo Kwan), Lee Nam-suk from School 3 (Changmoo Kwan), Choi Nam-do from School 4 (Mooduk Kwan), Kwak Byung-oh from School 5 (Ohdo Kwan), Lee Geum-hong from School 6 (Kangduk Kwan), Lee Yong-woo from School 7 (Jungdo Kwan), Lee Chong-woo from School 8 (Jido Kwan), Uhm Woon-kyu from School 9 (Chungdo Kwan), and Kim In-seok from School 10 (Kwanri Kwan). Lee Byeong-ro and Kang Won-sik added their signatures as witnesses.

The details of the nine resolutions adopted are as follows:

- ① The taekwondo community hereby abolishes the *kwan* (school) system maintained for the past 30 years and will dedicate itself to the unifying of practitioners.
- ② Prior to today, efforts at integration of *poomsae* and terminology and technical standardization have been under way since 1972, the *kwan* titles have been abolished, and numerals have been introduced to reduce and reorganize the system.
- ③ School-based *dan* promotion reviews and recommendations are to be abolished, and instructors at individual studios are to issue recommendations directly to the main school.
- ④ To fully protect the interests of instructors and trainees as individual students, we shall perform our duties as volunteers in administrative terms.
- ⑤ Being aware of the national mission of taekwondo, we shall firmly uphold the proper code of conduct for taekwondo leaders and assume a leading role in achieving unity and establishing a hierarchy.
- ⑥ As leaders in the home country of taekwondo, we pledge to devote our energies to technical development to continue establishing a world-leading position.
- ⑦ As of today, the *kwan* offices that existed to maintain individual schools shall be closed down, and all administrative bases shall be

null and void.

- ⑧ The main school shall maintain close ties to the Kukkiwon and commit its fullest efforts to maintaining the administrative system.
- ⑨ As representatives of the main school, we affix our signatures and seals in resolution to selflessly contribute to the advancement of taekwondo.

Little over a year after entering full swing, the school integration had come to fruition. But the aftermath would be considerable, with the Kukkiwon's school directors vacillating between their moral obligations and their personal interests after losing their authority to conduct reviews for rank and *dan* advancement. At the same time, the elimination of the different schools and standardization under the association's auspices was made possible by the cooperation of some of the school directors and the unstinting efforts of certain intermediate level figures.

By the 1980s, the schools had disappeared, at least outwardly. Some of them would continue to independently celebrate the anniversary of their foundation. This sort of deepseated emphasis on *kwan* lineage has persisted behind appointment requests and remains as one of the darker aspects of taekwondo today.

Continental taekwondo unions provide a framework

When he became the KTA president, Kim focused his efforts on four main areas: establishing taekwondo as a national sport, globalization, serving as a flag bearer in promoting national prestige internationally, and helping defend the country. The national sport task was completed when he received the handwritten calligraphy inscription from President Park Chung-hee reading, "National Sport Taekwondo."

The first steps toward globalization came with the building of the Kukkiwon as a center for taekwondo, the establishment of the World Championships and the WTF, and membership in the GAISF. But taekwondo still had far to go. Between the first World Championships in 1973 and the second one in 1975, the number of participating countries had nearly doubled from 17 countries (comprising 19 teams) to 30.

A closer look, however, showed that most of these athletes were not truly representative of their countries. Instead, they mainly represented a selection of Korean instructors teaching taekwondo overseas. For the



Kim Un-yong in 1976 with some of the taekwondo instructors active in Europe. Thanks to the efforts of these instructors, the first European Taekwondo Championships were held and the European Taekwondo Federation established the same year.

world federation to become fully established and gain prestige, establishing taekwondo unions in the countries of the world—and creating continental unions and championships—became a crucial task.

On October 26, 1974, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) officially adopted taekwondo as a competitive sport. Soon, the countries of the world would be scrambling to establish taekwondo unions of their own.

The countries of Europe were the quickest to move. On May 22–23, 1976, the inaugural European Taekwondo Championships were held in Barcelona organized by Spain in conjunction with West Germany, Italy, and France. A day earlier on May 21, twelve of the participating countries—Spain, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, West Germany, Italy, France, the Netherlands, Turkey, Greece, Denmark, and the UK—had held a general meeting to found the European Taekwondo Union (ETU), with Spain’s Antonio Garcia as president and Marco Saila as secretary general. It was the first continental union in the WTF; today, it includes 50 member countries.

The ETU’s launch was an event of great significance. European-dominated judo organizations had been the biggest opponents when the WTF was unanimously approved to join the GAISE, and taekwondo was treated in Europe as one subsection of the Judo Association. Establishing independence as an athletic group in its own right was no easy matter.

The WTF’s second continental union was the Pan Am Taekwondo Union (PATU). PATU was formed during the third World Taekwondo Championships in Chicago on September 15–17, 1977, with Kim Un-yong himself in attendance. PATU’s membership currently stands at

45 countries. The first Pan Am Taekwondo Championships were held the following year on September 17, 1978, in Mexico, with 152 participants representing ten countries.

Common sense might suggest that Asia would have been the first continent to establish a union, given South Korea's status as founding country and the geographic proximity of other countries. In reality, the union was relatively late to emerge. The first Asian Championships took place at the Kukkiwon on October 18, 1974; the second took place in Melbourne, Australia, on October 16, 1976. Because no Asian union existed, the WTF served as organizer. On the final day (October 17), a preparatory meeting was held for the establishment of an Asian union, with participants representing South Korea, Australia, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, New Zealand, Iran, Taiwan, and Japan. An agreement was reached to hold a general meeting in Hong Kong for the establishment when the third championships were held there in 1978. After the closing ceremony of the third Asian Championships on September 10, 1978, the Asian union held an inaugural general meeting in Hong Kong with representatives from 11 countries and territories (South Korea, Australia, Brunei, Guam, Hong Kong, Iran, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, and Thailand). Uhm Woon-kyu and Lee Chong-woo attended as observers from the WTF. Uhm was initially selected as president, but adamantly refused to accept. Another election was held, and Iran's Prince Sariat Shafigh was selected as the inaugural president and Malaysia's Tun Tan Siew Sin as vice president. Today, Lee Kyu-seok is president of the Asian Taekwondo Union, which boasts 43 member countries.

The fourth of the continental unions to be founded was the African Taekwondo Union (AFTU), when eleven countries gathered in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, during the first African Taekwondo Championships on April 10, 1979. Michel Kanga of Ivory Coast was elected as president and Benjamin Soudé of Benin as secretary general. At 51, it boasts the largest number of member nations today.

Finally, the Oceania Taekwondo Union (OTU) was established much later during the first Oceania Taekwondo Championships on July 17, 2005. The chief members were Australia, Guam, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, and Tonga. Fifteen countries are currently members.

Sharing taekwondo with the world

As the individual in charge of taekwondo's three main organizations—the KTA, WTF, and the Kukkiwon—Kim Un-yong's chief preoccupation was the question of how to teach the world about taekwondo. No matter how good a sport taekwondo might establish itself to be, it would be a mere echo in the void if no one was aware of it.

As a former diplomat, Kim knew this better than anyone. For taekwondo to achieve globalization, the world would need to know about it and recognize it as a sport. When he first took over as KTA president, many well-meaning people tried to discourage him. Why was he taking on an inferior imitation of karate, *tangsoodo*, and *kongsoodo*, they asked. Of all the sports, why did he choose such a troublesome group full of divisive factions and embroiled in infighting?

Prior to the Kukkiwon's construction, taekwondo had no dedicated stadium; events were staged at different venues. During the National Sports Festival, competitions were held at Dongdaemun Stadium's outdoor volleyball court. Athletes were grateful to have the opportunity to compete indoors at the Hansung Girls' High School gymnasium. When foreign guests arrived, the best that could be managed for taekwondo demonstrations was the tenth-floor auditorium of the Sports Center in Seoul's Mugyo-dong neighborhood.

Kim Un-yong began spreading the word about taekwondo, taking maximum advantage of his experience studying and teaching three times in the US as a soldier and the friendships he had formed overseas while working as a counselor at the Korean embassies in the US and the UK and with the UN. His fluent command of languages provided a secret weapon, allowing him to form friendships easily with people from any country.

Whenever the opportunity arose, he would invite overseas sports officials, parliamentary figures, and military figures to see taekwondo demonstrations at the Kukkiwon. He also bestowed honorary *dan* certifications as a means of promoting taekwondo. The list of visitors to the Kukkiwon is too long to enumerate but includes a truly diverse array of military figures, government officials, National Assembly members, ambassadors, athletic association officials, reporters, internationally renowned columnists, international union officials, military school cadets, and global martial arts magazine editors.

A Kukkiwon visit on June 28, 1976, by the world's greatest heavyweight boxer Muhammad Ali was also part of these efforts. Kim believed that a

great way to promote the legitimacy and superiority of taekwondo would be to invite world-famous celebrities and honored guests.

When asked which martial art he thought was the best—Korean taekwondo, Japanese karate, or Chinese kung fu—Ali replied that he thought taekwondo was the “strongest.” With complete training, he said, no other martial art could compete. “[Japanese professional wrestler Antonio] Inoki was so scared of my taekwondo that he fought on his back,” Ali joked. Kim drew major notice from the local and international press when he provided Ali with a taekwondo uniform and honorary *dan* certificate during his visit to South Korea after a match against Inoki in Japan. As he hoped, the encounter with Ali provided a means of promoting taekwondo internationally.

Perhaps the greatest moment in taekwondo promotion, though, came on April 9, 1982, when IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch visited the Kukkiwon. Accompanied by vice president Masaji Kiyokawa and his daughter Maria Teresa, Samaranch observed a drill demonstration by a team of 32 Midong Elementary School students, then a competitive demonstration by adult athletes from Korea National Sport University. Kim Un-yong explained to him about the essence of taekwondo and how it emanated from oneness of technique and spirit.

After the demonstrations were over, Kim delivered a briefing in Spanish on the taekwondo situation around the world, with WTF executive committee members in attendance—including US Olympic Committee (USOC) director Joshua Henson, Kenyan Minister of State Godfrey G. Kariuki, and



To spread the word about taekwondo around the world, Kim Un-yong made sure to invite noted sports figures to visit the Kukkiwon when they came to South Korea. Here he is seen presenting an honorary *dan* certification to Muhammad Ali on May 28, 1976.

European Taekwondo Union president Heinz Marx. “The time has come,” Samaranch said, “for taekwondo to be adopted as an official Olympic sport.” He delivered a further boost to Kim by stressing the “need for even greater enthusiasm from all taekwondo practitioners.”

With Samaranch’s visit, the Kukkiwon established itself as the place to go to view taekwondo demonstrations when people visited South Korea, including foreign sports leaders as well as political, economic, and cultural figures. Needless to say, these visitors would lead the way in promoting taekwondo as informal ambassadors when they returned to their home countries.

The 1980s: overcoming one crisis after another

Everyone faces trials of some form in life. The question is how you overcome and transcend them. Those who cannot triumph over adversity are the true losers. Yet triumphing over adversity requires faith and perseverance, the inner strength to withstand the difficult times. Such was the case for Kim Un-yong in the early 1980s.

The political situation in South Korea between late 1979 and early 1980 cannot be described as anything except turbulent. The assassination of President Park Chung-hee in Seoul’s Gungjeong-dong neighborhood on October 26, 1979, was followed in rapid succession by the events of December 12 of the same year, with the military clash that occurred when the Hanahoe association, led by top military administration figures Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo, commanded their units to arrest Army chief of staff Jeong Seung-hwa without the approval of then-President Choi Kyu-hah. After seizing power, the new military administration used armed force to quash the large-scale demonstrations as students and members of the public came together to demand democracy and an end to martial law. The citizens’ demands for democracy came in response to the closure of the National Assembly, a ban on political activity, and intensified media censorship, and the use of violence to suppress them led in turn to the Democracy Movement of May 18, 1980. People were in a panic, and the country was plunged into dire chaos.

After the events of May 18, the new military administration seized power with the arrival of the Special Committee for National Security Measures. Soon, it launched a campaign to “purify society” in the name of stability. The main thrust of this campaign involved providing a period of state man-

agement and “purification education” to gangsters and thugs before sending them back into society. What the new administration’s campaign turned into, however, was a process of “pruning” those who did not meet their standards in the name of social purity.

The social purification storm would visit the taekwondo community as well. At the time, taekwondo had achieved stable development with the integration of the various schools within the Kukkiwon and the formation of continental unions overseas under the auspices of the WTF. Kim Un-yong describes the situation in his book *Challenge to the World*.

I don't know who was responsible, but the military administration began seizing taekwondo figures right and left, carrying out arrests in an effort to suppress them. I think some of them had it in for me personally. It may be that after taekwondo's great strides as a national sport since I took over as KTA president, certain people felt insecure and jealous or coveted the KTA presidency.

There was one person, a relative of one of the key administration figures, who was very open and deliberate about wanting to take the KTA presidency away from me. He resorted to methods like requesting anonymous letters from five or six overseas instructors. The authorities put pressure on me and other taekwondo school heads to resign. We all had no choice but to give our notices. The military administration at that time wielded more powerful authority than ever before. These were frightening people who had used tanks to quash the democracy movement in Gwangju; nobody at the time knew what to do. So we all resigned and were subjected to an internal investigation.

Kim Un-yong had no choice; he had to keep a low profile, persevering and waiting for his opportunity.

“Do they think we’re some sort of a violent group? Why are they targeting people who have given their heart and soul for the sake of the country and the advancement of taekwondo?”

“If a thief broke into your house and insisted that you were the thief, would you simply go along with it?”

The school heads would call Kim late at night, complaining of their unfair treatment. He reassured them that things would turn out “all right.” “Just wait and see,” he said. But he too had difficulty suppressing his rage and indignation.

Ten years earlier he had been practically strong-armed into accepting the role of the KTA president. Now that he had painstakingly built it up, he had to give that position up—and he felt terrible. He had done the best he could for the globalization of taekwondo and achieved great advancements as a result. He now possessed great affection for the sport. Inside, he wondered whether any other president could handle international matters as well as he. He also felt a sense of irony over the effort to strip him of a position that was purely honorary and held no political element or economic rewards.

At the same time, he was not in a position to tackle the military administration head on. Each day, a new political incident was splashed across the front page of the newspapers. It was an uncertain environment where even well-known politicians were falling on the chopping block overnight; the Korea Taekwondo Association was nothing.

For a while, Kim lived under a quasi house arrest. There was nobody watching and waiting outside, yet he feared what might happen to him if he ventured out; at the same time, he was not in a position to voice his views publicly. All he could do was quietly watch as things developed.

I was just laying low and waiting for an opportunity. For the previous ten years, the association executives, taekwondo officials, and I had worked purely for the advancement of taekwondo. We had not been working for any kind of personal gain or honors. They could investigate all they wanted; they were not going to find any irregularities. Believing that the truth would come to light when the time came, I quietly tended to my own body and mind. I worked out very intensely during that time—the equivalent of running the distance from Seoul to Daejeon in a day. People at my health club who didn't know me thought I was some kind of a marathoner. It was enough to make them wonder if I were an aging athlete or a coach.

(Kim Un-yong, *Challenge to the World*)

The military administration's high-handed tactics did soften somewhat over time. The resignations were all rejected; apparently, the investigation had been completed. This seemed like the obvious outcome, since there was no corruption to uncover. But many of the officials who had worked with Kim in the association had to give up their jobs, and as the authorities' scrutiny intensified, instructors were no longer able to run their studios freely.

With his resignation rejected, Kim's views changed. After having his res-

ignation demanded and then refused, he felt as though he had been turned into a pawn for the military regime. He would have preferred to resign of his own accord. Indeed, his wife actively recommended that he do just that.

At the same time, it was clear that if he threw everything away now, the globalization of taekwondo that he had worked so hard to achieve would all be for naught. He would also have no way to save the taekwondo school leaders who had lost their posts. He changed his mind: now he would do whatever he could to carry on the presidency and to continue the work he had started.

After his decisive contribution to Seoul's successful Olympic bid on September 30, 1981, Kim made a proposal to Culture and Education Minister Lee Kyu-ho for the reinstatement of all the taekwondo officials who had resigned amid the "social purification" campaign.

The typhoon had passed, but the aftermath remained. It surfaced in particular in 1983 as rumors arose that President Chun Doo-hwan's younger brother Chun Kyung-hwan coveted the KTA presidency.

There was another storm that happened in '83. One day, the sports minister Lee Won-kyung contacted me and asked to meet at the Seoul Transportation Center. He had been an underclassman when I was in the Yonsei University political science and diplomacy department.

"We'll support you to keep the World Taekwondo Federation, but you will need to give up the Kukkiwon and KTA presidency."

Unlike today, the WTF at the time was an adjunct to the KTA and the Kukkiwon.

I told him, "I'd rather quit than just handle the WTF." He replied, "Do as you see fit." Then he added, "The president holds a far more negative view than you realize." I was being unilaterally notified. The KTA representatives' meeting, which had been scheduled for January, ended up not being held on orders from the sports minister. I heard that Chun Kyung-hwan of the Saemaul Movement headquarters, who was the president's younger brother, had met with the minister at a hotel in southern Seoul. He was trying to requisition taekwondo. I couldn't simply stand there and do nothing, so I met with Hyun Hong-ju, the vice director of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (now the National Intelligence Service). He asked for a situation report, so I brought him one.

The representatives' meeting was finally held in March, and things ended up blowing over. There were all sorts of anonymous letters being

sent to authorities all the way through 1984 in an effort to drive me out, and I was frequently under investigation.

(Kim Un-yong, *30 Years of the Olympics*)

These experiences left Kim Un-yong most of all with a keen awareness of the need for friends when facing trouble. He had people sharing his difficulties with him—stalwart supporters who wept with him and shared his anguish as he worked through his problems. Without their support, he recalls, the success of the Seoul Olympics and the adoption of taekwondo as an official event at the 2000 Sydney and 2004 Athens Olympics would never have been possible.

He also learned the need to be patient and persistent while you wait for your opportunities. He gained a deep understanding of the need for perseverance: judging when to step ahead and when to retreat, and committing your energies to preparing for the future while you wait.

Shouts of 'Taekwondo' Echo around the World

Approval as an Olympic event

Admission to the GAISF had not been Kim Un-yong's ultimate goal. When he first introduced taekwondo on the global stage, his aim was to gain international recognition for it as a sport rather than a martial art. The GAISF admission was merely a manifestation of this—a stepping stone. His ultimate goal was to have taekwondo adopted as an Olympic event.

As he had planned, the GAISF admission led to taekwondo spreading rapidly to every continent.

In April 1976, taekwondo was adopted as an official event at the first executive committee meeting of the International Military Sports Council (CISM) in Seoul. On May 21, the first European Taekwondo Championships were held in Barcelona and the European Taekwondo Union was established, with Marco Salla as president.

After visiting the Kukkiwon and viewing a taekwondo drill demonstration, CISM president Aldo Massarini noted that taekwondo was “highly effective for both physical and mental training” and suggested it should be “applied in particular to promote combat capabilities.” The other executive committee members were also lavish in their praise, noting that South Korean soldiers were already recognized as “exceptionally strong because of their taekwondo training.”

Following the CISM executive committee's decision, the first World Military Taekwondo Championship was held on November 1–6, 1980, at Seoul's Jangchung Gymnasium, with 160 athletes participating from 15 countries. In addition to South Korea, the countries participating were Singapore, the US, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, Ghana, Kenya, Morocco, the UK, Colombia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Thailand, and Ecuador.

In September 1978, the first Pan Am Taekwondo Championships were held in Mexico with Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC) president Mario Vázquez Raña attending. In April 1979, the first African Taekwondo Championships (with Kim Young-tae as competition committee chairman) were held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and the African Taekwondo Union was founded with Wasanan Kone as president. The \$50,000 support provided was no small sum at the time. Events were moving at a breathtaking pace.

Following the establishment of the continental unions and taekwondo's admission to various international sports groups, Kim Un-yong began working in earnest on its adoption as an Olympic event.

The first development in that direction came on June 27, 1980, when the event review committee of the IOC's Olympic Programme Commission (chaired by Arpad Csanadi) adopted taekwondo as an IOC approved event. During the approval process, Csanadi announced a subsidiary condition that other martial arts such as karate, hapkido, and kung fu would not be approved as a matter of long-term IOC policy.

All that remained for the Programme Commission's approval to take effect was approval by the IOC Executive Board and General Assembly. The final approval came on July 17 at the 83rd IOC General Assembly in Moscow. Instrumental assistance came from newly minted president Juan Antonio Samaranch and vice president Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye of Ivory Coast. Csanadi, along with many committee members (from Norway, West Germany, Canada, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Kenya, and Mexico, among other countries), GAISF president Thomas Keller, and various world federation chairs contributed their unstinting efforts to win over the IOC members. This concerted show of support by the IOC members and world sports leaders offers an illustration of how great and deep their trust in Kim Un-yong was.

With this, taekwondo was approved as an Olympic event, and the WTF won certification as an IOC-recognized international federation. On August 7, a banquet was held at the Hotel Shilla to commemorate the approval and the WTF's recognition. It was a great celebration attended by around 800 people, including officials with non-Olympic sport federations and overseas taekwondo instructors as well as National Assembly Speaker Min Kwan-shik, Korean Sport and Olympic Committee president Cho Sang-ho, and Minister of Culture and Education Lee Kyu-ho.

In a congratulatory message, Kim Un-yong declared, "The approval [of taekwondo] as an Olympic event less than five years after the WTF's admission to GAISF was the result of efforts by all taekwondo practitioners for the modernization and globalization of taekwondo." Kim also said the IOC's approval was "particularly significant if you consider that table tennis was approved by the IOC just two years ago, despite the International Table Tennis Federation having a 50-year history and 100 million people." He then called on all taekwondo practitioners to "show solidarity and become practitioners who constantly study and exert themselves in order to open

up a more glorious future for Korean taekwondo.”

But everything has its difficulties. Problems of various sizes arise. So it was with taekwondo’s approval by the IOC as a sporting event. The International Taekwon-Do Federation (ITF), led by Choi Hong-hi, was adamant in its protests. In the end, the IOC decided to investigate the extent to which National Olympic Committees (NOCs) in the countries of the world recognized the WTF and ITF. The study came to an end at an IOC General Assembly meeting during the 1984 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, with the IOC opting to recommend that WTF and ITF merge in the long term. With Kim’s status as KOC vice president and honorary secretary general and the rapid rise in his stature after winning the Seoul Olympics bid affording him great influence internationally, he had had no problems winning over the individual NOCs.

The groundwork for his broad-ranging activities came with the so-called “Miracle of Baden-Baden,” which occurred on September 30, 1981, when Seoul was named at the host for the 1988 Summer Olympics. A large part of the success had been owed to taekwondo instructors around the world who worked actively to promote Korea’s Olympic bid. Kim himself had attended as a representative at the IOC General Assembly meeting in Baden-Baden, winning over the IOC members with his fluent command of English.

As the driving force behind Seoul’s successful Olympic bid and president of the WTF, Kim Un-yong’s role would soon broaden to the IOC. By April 8, 1982, it had developed enough for him to invite IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch to the Kukkiwon to view a taekwondo demonstration and hear a briefing on the WTF’s current situation during a visit to review preparations for the Seoul Olympics. Samaranch was accompanied by Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee chairman Kim Yong-sik, Japanese IOC member Masaji Kiyokama, and South Korean IOC member Kim Taek-su, with members of the WTF executive committee also in attendance.

Samaranch’s Kukkiwon visit was highly symbolic. Taekwondo might have won the approval of the IOC Programme Commission’s event review committee on June 27, 1980, but prickly relations with the ITF remained an unresolved issue. The IOC president’s visit effectively meant that the WTF had beaten the ITF out. It was also evidence that Kim Un-yong’s role extended beyond that of a simple organizing committee vice president to serve as a *de facto* force behind the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee. It could also safely be called the first step toward taekwondo’s adoption

as an Olympic event. A little over two weeks later on July 17, the WTF won official approval at the IOC's 83rd General Assembly in Moscow. Taekwondo had effectively become an official IOC-recognized event.

After Samaranch's visit, the Kukkiwon established itself as an obvious stop for IOC members, international federation presidents, and NOC chairs visiting South Korea. This meant that taekwondo had taken another step forward toward globalization and international recognition.

World Games inaugural president: skill and stature

The inaugural World Games, held in the western California resort city of Santa Clara on July 24–August 2, 1981, represented a significant event that showed Kim Un-yong's skill and stature within the international sports and community, along with taekwondo's potential to develop into a global sport.

The World Games concept first emerged at a GAISF general meeting in 1974. It started from the idea of developing an event to take the place in the Olympics, which had become too large in quantitative terms, posing an excessive financial burden that made it practically impossible for additional sports to be adopted as Olympic events. After five years of researching the issue, the decision to establish the World Games was made at the 13th GAISF general meeting in Monte Carlo on October 20, 1979. Kim Un-yong was elected as NOF (Non-Olympic Federation) president and executive committee chairman (president) for the World Games. On May 20, 1980, Kim Un-yong held an NOF and World Games general meeting in Seoul,



The opening ceremony of the World Games, which were established in Santa Clara in 1981. As founding chairman of the World Games, Kim Un-yong showed his prestige and prowess at home and abroad thanks to the event's success.

where an agreement was reached to hold the World Games every four years, with the first event to take place in 1981 in Santa Clara.

The inaugural World Games proved a splendid event, with around 1,500 athletes competing from 60 countries in 16 events: taekwondo, baseball, badminton, bowling, bodybuilding, casting, karate, softball, power lifting, roller skating, synchronized swimming, water skiing, tug-of-war, racquetball, tumbling, and women's water polo.

The opening ceremony was held at Santa Clara University's Buck Shaw Stadium, with magnificent displays including a skydiving demonstration, a taekwondo demonstration by 100 US practitioners, and a Korean folk dance performance. The event's opening was declared by GAISF president Thomas Keller, after which US President Ronald Reagan delivered a congratulatory address, Santa Clara Mayor William Gissler gave a welcome address, and Kim Un-yong gave an opening address as World Games president.

"This event, which is seven years in the making, is not intended to oppose the Olympics," Kim said. "Rather, its purpose and goal is to bring non-Olympic events together in one place and nurture an organized sports festival. I hope that in the future, we will all come together under the GAISF banner and forsake 'sportsman politics' in favor of working to promote understanding and cooperation."

Among the features and characteristics of the first World Games were the decision not to display flags or play national anthems, which was intended to discourage the idea of nations competing; the limiting of group events to up to 12 teams and solo events to a small number of elite athletes, which was meant to prevent the games from growing too unwieldy; and the decision to have participating athletes living together by event rather than by country in the athletes' village.

The establishment of the World Games held great meaning not only for taekwondo but also for Kim Un-yong personally. Taekwondo's first appearance in an international sporting event—coming as it did amid the rapid progress in globalization since the WTF's establishment—had further revealed its potential as a global sport.

With Kim as the vanguard of taekwondo's globalization as WTF president, it was also an opportunity for him to display his prowess on an international stage. His global reputation as a consummate sports administrator was boosted by his outstanding performance in preparing for the event for all NOFs and serving as a control tower and inaugural World Games chairman. Not only did these activities prove very helpful in his bid for the Seoul

Olympics two months later, but they also served as stepping stones toward his election as GAISF vice president in 1984 and president two years later.

1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics, catalysts for globalization

On September 30, 1981, the voice of IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch rang out in the tiny West Germany city of Baden-Baden. “Séoul 52, Nagoya 27.” It was enough to shake South Koreans out of their beds. The “Miracle of Baden-Baden,” when Seoul beat out Nagoya to become the host city for the Summer Games of the XXIV Olympiad in 1988, was the opening salvo in South Korean sports advancement to the center of the global stage. Less than two months later, the general assembly of the Asian Games Federation (AGF) decided at a November 26 meeting in New Delhi to select Seoul as host city for the tenth Asian Games in 1986. (The AGF would subsequently be renamed the Olympic Council of Asia on December 5, 1982.) Taking place two years apart, the Asian and world sports festivals became catalysts that launched Korea’s home sport of taekwondo towards further globalization.

Needless to say, Kim Un-yong’s high stature in the GAISF and the skill he displayed in establishing and successfully organizing the World Games were instrumental in the Asian Games and Olympic bids. Seoul’s selection as host city for the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics instantly propelled South Korea to the heart of global sports. It also resulted in changing perceptions and treatment for taekwondo internationally.

The first example of this came at a general meeting of the Pan American Sports Organization (ODEPA) in Caracas on August 12–13, 1983. The Pan Am Games is a sporting event for countries in the Americas. Kim Un-yong attended the meeting and requested the adoption of taekwondo as an official Pan Am Games event. This adoption would be a first step toward including taekwondo in continental competitions—an important step in upgrading taekwondo’s status from a disorganized sport taught by instructors around the world to an accredited association recognized by individual NOCs, and eventually bringing it into the Olympics.

But ANOC and Pan Am Games chairman Mario Vázquez Raña said that while taekwondo was a good sport, the Pan Am Games had too many events as it was. He proposed revisiting the issue at the general meeting in Cuba two years later. He spoke of a “postponement,” but he was essentially

declining to include it.

In response, a vote was requested by the US, Belize, Costa Rica, and other countries, and taekwondo was adopted as an official event by a vote of 22–2 (with two abstentions). This paved the way for the establishment of and budgetary support for NOC-recognized taekwondo associations in various Central and South American countries. The United States Taekwondo Union (USTU) was admitted to the US Olympic Committee (USOC), where it selected representatives and executive committee members and received annual budgetary support along with \$1 million from the surplus LA Olympic fund.

Taekwondo was also adopted as an official event at the African Games held on November 28–December 1, 1983, and selected officially for the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul on September 28, 1984. This period additionally saw the introduction of mandatory headgear: inspired by a boxing match at the LA Olympics, Kim Un-yong issued an order on his return to require its use. This was meant to address the issue of safety, which was a crucial condition for taekwondo's adoption as an official Olympic event. Kim was also elected as GAISF vice president around this time, further adding to his voice in international sports.

At the IOC's 90th General Assembly in East Berlin on June 2–6, 1985, taekwondo was adopted as a demonstration sport at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. Originally, baseball and badminton had been selected as demonstration events, while taekwondo and *ssireum* wrestling were chosen as cultural exhibition events. Concerned about taekwondo's prospects for ever being adopted as official Olympic event, Kim worked arduously to broach the issue with Samaranch. In the end, badminton was excluded and taekwondo included as a demonstration event.

While this was happening, Korea Shooting Federation president Park Jong-gyu, who had succeeded Kim Taek-su in July 1984 as South Korea's fifth IOC member, passed away just 17 months into the role on December 5, 1985. With the Asian Games in ten months and the Olympics two years and ten months away, South Korea now had a vacant seat in the IOC.

As a result of all of this, Kim's role continued to grow as he assumed all liaison duties with the IOC for the Seoul Olympics—and his standing on the international stage grew in tow. The IOC did not have a Coordination Commission at the time.

Shouts of ‘taekwondo’ echo around the world

Kim Un-yong had gotten taekwondo adopted as an official event at the 1986 Asian Games and a demonstration event at the 1988 Olympics, but he was not—could not be—content with this. His ultimate goal had been to have taekwondo adopted as a permanent official event at the Olympics. Instead, he had adopted a strategy of making the WTF a member of all international sports bodies.

He had his hands full and then some. In addition to his role as senior vice president for the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and 1988 Seoul Olympics organizing committees, he was WTF president and GAISF vice president. Despite having all of this going on, he was still able to contribute to getting taekwondo approved as an official event by the executive committee of the International University Sport Federation (FISU, president Primo Nebiolo) in Zagreb, Croatia, on May 8–10, 1986. The second International University Taekwondo Championships, which had been scheduled to take place in Berkeley, California, that November, were re-christened as the inaugural World University Taekwondo Championship under FISU’s auspices. Two days after the FISU executive meeting ended, WTF joined the International Fair Play Committee in Paris on May 12.

On September 20, 1986, a deeply moved Kim Un-yong watched at Sungkyunkwan University’s Suwon campus as the first-ever taekwondo competition was held at the Asian Games, with 84 athletes and 40 officials participating from 17 countries. That emotion had barely subsided when he was elected that October 17 as South Korea’s sixth IOC member; a week later on October 25, he was elected to succeed Thomas Keller as president of GAISF, a federation encompassing 120 international federations.

In response to Kim’s election as IOC member and GAISF president, Korean Olympic Committee chairman Kim Jong-ha described him as “someone who has made immense contributions and accomplished innumerable feats since establishing a relationship with the sporting community in 1971” and declared that “this honor today is the result of that.” Park Se-jik, chairman of the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee, was similarly unstinting in his praise. “Dr. Kim’s selection as an IOC member and GAISF president,” he said, “is the result of his outstanding skill and leadership and the great achievements he has made over the years.” In response to the praise, Kim Un-yong pledged to “work even harder to help South Korean sports achieve even greater stature on the international stage.”

As an IOC member, Kim now had a platform for even broader activities, and his push to globalize taekwondo and win its adoption as an Olympic event gained greater momentum.

An official taekwondo competition was staged at the fourth Africa Games in Nairobi on August 1–4, 1987, with 11 countries participating, and another took place at the tenth Pan Am Games in Indianapolis on August 14–16, with 128 participants from 26 countries. It was around this time that taekwondo and the WTF, benefitting from the broad umbrellas of the IOC and GAISF, began winning approval and budgetary support from various NOCs in the Americas, overtaking karate, wushu, and ITF through its rapid spread. The standing of Korean taekwondo instructors rose as a matter of course.

Fifty-eight athletes from five countries took part in the 14th Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta on September 16–19, 1987. On October 1, a Kuk-kiwon demonstration team (headed by Hong Jong-su) was invited by the IOC to deliver a demonstration of smashing, sparring, and other taekwondo skills in Lausanne for an Olympic week event, drawing applause from the foreign audience. This was all part of Kim's plan to promote taekwondo's superiority as a sporting event and a deeper understanding of the discipline.

At the Seoul Olympics opening ceremony on September 17, 1988, a magnificent pre-event taekwondo demonstration by the Special Forces Group (Airborne) left a powerful impression with its live broadcast throughout the world. After that came the first-ever Olympic taekwondo competition as a demonstration event at Jangchung Gymnasium.

The Olympic Council of Asia executive committee's adoption of taekwondo as an official event at the 1994 Asian Games in Hiroshima on April 22, 1992, would also have been all but impossible without Kim. Originally,



After becoming an IOC member in 1986, Kim Un-yong became the first South Korean sports world figure to be elected GAISF president.

Japan had selected 15 weight divisions for karate while leaving out taekwondo completely. The omission had been deliberate: in addition to their belief that they would be unable to recapture the second-place ranking they had lost to South Korea if taekwondo were included, they were also conscious of the rivalry between taekwondo and karate.

To get taekwondo adopted as an official event, Kim bargained tenaciously with the Japanese government and Japanese Olympic Committee (JOC) president Hironoshin Furuhashi. Noting in particular Japan's designs on winning the right to host the next Olympics, he threatened not to support that bid unless taekwondo was included as an official event. In the end, the JOC made a huge concession and taekwondo was officially adopted—something that would have been impossible had Kim not been an IOC member.

Demonstration sport at two consecutive Olympics

Although taekwondo had made an impression on the people around the world as a demonstration event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, it was left out completely from the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. There, Spain's Basque pelota and roller hockey were adopted as demonstration events.

Kim Un-yong was deeply concerned. With taekwondo's adoption as an official sport at the 1986 Asian Games and demonstration event at the 1988 Olympics, great hurdles had been cleared on its way to becoming an official Olympic sport. If it were absent from the events at the 1992 Olympics, not only would its globalization be delayed, but there may never be such a favorable momentum. Missing the opportunity now could mean waiting another decade—or century.

Kim thought deeply about what to do to resolve this. The international community operates according to orders and rules. For sports in general, and for the Olympics in particular as the top sporting event, one cannot win by violating those orders and rules.

“Knock, and the door will be opened to you,” taught Jesus. Kim was finally able to find his solution: an exhibition game. This curious new title was coined for the first time in Olympic history. Strictly speaking, this was not the first usage of the term “exhibition game.” At the 1988 Seoul Olympics, badminton and bowling had been staged as exhibition games. More specifically, they had been called “cultural exhibition events.”

I immediately went to see Samaranch.

“Taekwondo was adopted as a demonstration event at the ’88 Seoul Olympics, but it has been left out completely from the ’92 Olympics in Barcelona. For the sake of taekwondo’s global promotion, I need to somehow get it adopted at the Barcelona Games.”

As soon as I spoke, Samaranch’s face grew rigid.

“But the demonstration events have already been decided, and the rules state that only two events are allowed . . .”

“So I thought up a new name. We’ll call it an exhibition game.”

“That’s it! An exhibition game. Is there anything in the rules about that?”

“No, there isn’t. I made it up.”

“If the Barcelona event becomes a historic setting for unveiling various new competitions, it will be that much more memorable for the spectators and people around the world. It may not be in the rules, but from the viewers’ standpoint, they’re going to think ‘the more, the merrier’ rather than wanting just two demonstration events. So while we have these traditional Spanish sports, I would like you to submit a request to the IOC as president to have a taekwondo competition as an exhibition game.”

*(Kim Un-yong, “Nothing Is Impossible,” in *Challenge to the World*)*

Kim admitted that his idea was farfetched and audacious. It was a risk. There was no guarantee that Samaranch would accept it in the first place, but if it was voted down and word got out, South Korea would certainly face serious denunciation. Yet he was unafraid. A kaleidoscope of memories flashed in his mind: back when he had built the Kukkiwon, the oil shocks had led acquaintances to recommend halting construction, yet he had pushed ahead with it and completed the project in one year. Had he not finished the Kukkiwon back then, would the world championships have been held and the WTF created? Would it have been possible to hold a taekwondo demonstration sport at the 1988 Olympics?

His long-cherished dream of globalizing taekwondo was within his reach; he could not stop now. Part of this was his belief in life that it was better to try and fail than to not try for fear of failure. Having worked closely with Samaranch in various activities within the IOC, he also believed the president would help him out in some way or another.

Samaranch spoke, his voice somewhat stern.

“Is any of this possible? Have you thought about the details?”

Once he heard this, Kim knew he had won half the battle.

“We’ll keep the number of weight classes to a minimum and make sure to finish the competition within one day. It’s an exhibition game, so it will only include an exhibition. South Korea will take care of the security issues and protection for the athletes.”

“Fine. Let’s give it a shot. But since there’s nothing in the Olympic Charter about ‘exhibition games,’ it’s probably a good idea to meet individually with each of the executive committee members to request their support.”

Having received the okay from Samaranch, Kim went to work meeting one-on-one to persuade the executive committee members. He explained to them that after taekwondo’s strong reception at the Seoul Olympics in 1988, its inclusion in the Barcelona Olympics in 1992 would make for a more diverse and entertaining event. He asked—sometimes pleading—for their cooperation in including a one-day event as an exhibition game.

During an executive committee meeting to review preparations for the Barcelona Games, Samaranch asked, “Are there any objections?” None of the members objected. Instead, they approved a motion upgrading taekwondo from an “exhibition game,” as Kim had suggested, to a demonstration event. The initial plan had been to complete the exhibition in one day; with its status now changed to a demonstration sport, the competition period was extended by four days, giving the Barcelona Games three demonstration events for the first time in Olympic history. Would it have been possible had Kim abandoned the idea as too difficult or impossible? This success also serves as a testament to the depth of his influence within the IOC.

The taekwondo competition at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics was attended by King Juan Carlos I of Spain, Samaranch, and many IOC members, who also participated in distributing awards. Samaranch additionally proposed changing the uniform colors to blue and red like those of judo for the television broadcast; to preserve the tradition of white uniforms, Kim made a counterproposal to use blue and red protective equipment and headgear, which Samaranch agreed to. Yet another hurdle toward taekwondo’s adoption as an official Olympic event had been cleared.

World Taekwondo Championships at Madison Square Garden

The combined 11th World Taekwondo Championships and fourth Women’s Taekwondo Championships at Madison Square Garden in the heart of New

York City on August 21–23, 1993, was another key part of Kim Un-yong's efforts to have taekwondo adopted as an official Olympic sport.

Opened in 1968, Madison Square Garden is considered one of the US's premier indoor arenas, playing host to performances by numerous stars, as well as basketball, tennis, boxing, and wrestling matches and ice shows. With its Manhattan location putting it at the epicenter of the US, it could fairly be called a mecca for sporting events.

This also means that it is not the kind of place that can be rented out for just any event. Rental fees are notoriously high, and even then the venue is not provided without good reason. It is a place where money talks.

Kim Un-yong made a point of holding the World Taekwondo Championships there. It was part of a carefully plotted strategy. While it had been adopted as an official event at some major sporting competitions, taekwondo was still an unfamiliar sport to many. By staging a competition at a world-famous venue such as the Madison Square Garden, Kim believed he could promote its standing and prestige as a global sport.

Kim did not merely select Madison Square Garden as a venue. His next step was to reach an agreement with the national US broadcaster ABC to provide \$300,000 in production costs, contingent on the network broadcasting the entire event. It was an opportunity for households across the US to witness a taekwondo competition.

On top of this, Kim also invited IOC members and athletic bureau directors who were mostly unaware of taekwondo. Among the IOC members attending were Jean-Claude Ganga; Anita DeFrantz, the IOC's first female member and eventual first female vice president; Gilbert Felli, director of the Department of Sports, Olympic Games Coordination and Relations with International Federations; and Sergio Santander Fantini, Fidel Mendoza Carrasquilla, Antonio Rodriguez, and Agustin Arroyo. Joining them to observe the taekwondo competition were *Sport Intern* editor Karl-Heinz Huba, International Sports Press Association (AIPS) president Togay Bayatli, and Atlanta Olympics Organizing Committee chairman Bill Payne.

The response was overwhelming. The audience rating in the US, with all of its channel options, was a full 16 percent—ahead of broadcasts for sports popular among Americans such as tennis and golf. It was proof that taekwondo could win popularity in the US.

All of this came as a surprise to the IOC officials, who described the liveliness, energetic kicks, and orderly event management as “wonderful” and “excellent.”

Taekwondo is the kind of sport where it would seem that everything is at a standstill, only for one of the athletes to come up with a kick at a seemingly impossible angle to knock his or her opponent to the mat. A single match can be decided in the tenth of a second that a competitor lets his or her guard down, making it a riveting watch for audiences.

A great deal of behind-the-scenes effort went into the process from taekwondo's opportunities as a demonstration event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and 1992 Barcelona Olympics to its adoption as an official Olympic event. The annual World Taekwondo Championships were not merely competitions; their use as a platform to propel taekwondo to the next stage could well be described as an example of sports diplomacy at work.

But taekwondo was not adopted for the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta. The biggest reason for this was that demonstration events themselves were eliminated at those games. This meant taekwondo would have to become an official event, but there was not enough time for that. The events in any given Olympics are decided six years earlier. For taekwondo to become an official event at the Atlanta Olympics, the decision would have had to be made at the IOC General Assembly meeting in 1990. Two years were not enough time for taekwondo to be included as an official event, having made its first Olympic appearance as a demonstration event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

Some members of the South Korean press blamed Kim Un-yong for taekwondo's omission from the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. Despite availing himself of every opportunity to make rosy predictions about taekwondo's adoption on the Olympic stage being a sure thing and creating a false expectation, they claimed, there had been no evidence of him actually having mentioned taekwondo in any of the IOC General Assembly meetings. In response to this, Kim said that he had not been working toward taekwondo's adoption at the 1996 Atlanta Olympics; instead, he said, he had focused more efforts on developing competition rules and safeguards and having them recognized by various sports association and IOC members.

The Miracle at La Défense

Clandestine operation for a last-minute inclusion

For Kim Un-yong, Paris was a city of hope and dreams. It was the city where the modern Olympics had been born, and 100 years later, it became the city where Korea's global sport of taekwondo was officially adopted for the Olympics.

But when the IOC General Assembly meeting in Paris first began in September 1994, no one was certain about taekwondo's prospects for adoption. The

South Korean government had not even taken an interest in the issue. There was reason enough for this.

Even though taekwondo had been adopted as a demonstration event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and 1992 Barcelona Olympics, it had not been included at all in the 1996 Atlanta Olympics. The entire concept of demonstration events had been eliminated from the Games. Official event status was the only way to see taekwondo competitions at the Olympics.

For a new event to take place in official Olympic competition, it requires the final approval of the General Assembly. To be presented before the General Assembly at all, it must first pass through the IOC's Programme Commission and Executive Board. Taekwondo did not even make it to the Executive Board, having been voted down 9-to-11 at a Programme Commission meeting in Lausanne on May 1993. It was a non-starter right out of the gate.

There were other reasons. Not only did the WTF have a longstanding hostile relationship with the North Korea-supported ITF, but taekwondo also hit a roadblock with IOC regulations against "similar events." An outcry was expected from Japanese karate and Chinese wushu, which stood to suffer a heavy blow if taekwondo was adopted at the Olympics. A further impediment was a new trend in the Olympic movement to reduce the number of



Kim Un-yong gives a presentation on taekwondo at the 1994 IOC general meeting. It was at this meeting that taekwondo was adopted unanimously as an official event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

events substantially to prevent the Olympics from becoming bloated.

The IOC General Assembly meeting in Paris was nonetheless a focus of South Korean press attention. In addition to domestic reports that Samsung Group chairman Lee Kun-hee might become an IOC member alongside Kim Un-yong, there had also been a pledge of sorts from Samaranch. Many were watching to see not only whether taekwondo might be officially adopted as an Olympic event, but also whether South Korea might have two IOC members for the first time in history.

According to IOC regulations, official events must be decided six years before the Olympics are held. The deadline for 1996 had already passed, and the 1994 IOC General Assembly meeting in Paris was effectively a “Magenot line” for taekwondo’s adoption for the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney.

Taking place in Paris on the 100th anniversary of Baron Coubertin’s establishment of the IOC, the General Assembly meeting would include an Executive Board meeting on August 26–28 and, for the first time in the 13 years since Baden-Baden in 1981, an IOC Congress on August 29–September 3. The matter of taekwondo’s adoption as an official Olympic event would be decided at a General Assembly meeting attended by 89 IOC members on September 4–5.

Around one month before the Paris meeting, Samaranch had hinted that taekwondo and triathlon might be added as medal events. This, and the welcoming response from the 2000 Sydney Olympics Organizing Committee, raised hopes that the longstanding dream of taekwondo’s official adoption might finally come true.

Attending the meeting in Paris with the KOC’s honorary general manager Lee Kang-pyung, international committee chair Park Sang-ha, and executive director Han Yang-soon, Kim Un-yong addressed South Korean foreign correspondents in Paris during a meeting before the Executive Board was convened. “Taekwondo’s stature is higher than ever since its adoption as an official event for numerous competitions around the world,” he said. “With this IOC General Assembly, it now has a golden opportunity for adoption as an official Olympic event.”

His response raised high hopes among South Korean news outlets, which printed articles in their August 27 editions titled “Chances for Taekwondo’s Adoption as Official 2000 Olympic Event High” (*Chosun Ilbo*), “Taekwondo’s Official Event Status a Sure Thing” (*Hankook Ilbo*), “Samaranch Hints at Taekwondo’s Adoption as Official Event” (*Kyunghyang Shinmun*), and “Taekwondo’s Chances for Official Adoption Strong” (*Kukmin Ilbo*).

But within just three days, the positive climate had evaporated. By August 30, the domestic press was claiming taekwondo's chances for adoption as an official Olympic event were all but finished. "Taekwondo's Adoption as Official 2000 Olympic Event Not Even Discussed," *Sports Seoul* titled one article. "Taekwondo's Olympic Adoption Uncertain," the *Hankyoreh* wrote.

While all this was happening, survey findings with positive significance for taekwondo began drawing attention. An Olympic program opinion survey was printed by the German magazine *Sport Intern* based on interviews with 100 global sports leaders and influential sports community members, including IOC members and individual NOC chairs and secretaries general.

The results showed track and field, gymnastics, and swimming events to rank side-by-side as the most popular of the "mandatory" Olympic events, at 50 votes apiece. In the fourth to seventh places were basketball (49 votes), rowing (48), cycling (47), and volleyball (46). Listed as "events necessary for the operation of the Olympics" were football, wrestling, yachting, badminton, boxing, canoeing, tennis, handball, and judo.

Sixteen mandatory events and 26 necessary events were selected for the survey. Among them, triathlon placed 24th with 13 votes, while taekwondo stood at 25th with nine votes—placing it ahead of archery (27th), golf (28th), and baseball (29th). Reports were also emerging that could prove influential in triathlon and taekwondo's adoption as official events at the Sydney Olympics.

But the mood did not readily change. The biggest issue concerned intense and tenacious attempts at sabotage by karate and the ITF, both of which positioned their instructors in Europe around the Executive Board and General Assembly avenues for shows of strength. Karate representatives noted their sport's enormous popularity in France and other European countries and threatened to take legal action against the IOC. They distributed anonymous letters to Executive Board members while waging a determined one-on-one lobbying campaign.

Similarly intense campaigning was seen from the ITF, whose members joined what appeared to be agents rushed in from Pyongyang to disseminate unidentified documents in the IOC member's hotel rooms. The ITF also cited the words of UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who had described the Olympics as "promoting reconciliation in troubled regions." Taekwondo's adoption at the Olympics, it argued, should only come after the WTF and ITF had merged. Letters in Korean and English attributed to ITF president Choi Hong-hi were circulated among the IOC members as

part of the federation's tenacious efforts. The sabotage efforts were severe enough that Samaranch questioned whether security staff might have to be put in place.

The reason for the clear difference in moods between Paris and South Korea had much to do with the silence of Kim Un-yong, who held the key to taekwondo's adoption at the Olympics. To keep the prospect of the miracle alive, he kept a poker face and worked quietly behind the scenes. With a confidential matter, the odds of success are greater when fewer people know about it. The only ones who did know were Kim and Samaranch.

The two men had devised a secret "James Bond" operation so that taekwondo's adoption would come as a surprise on the final day. Their plan was to prepare a motion for the official adoption of triathlon and taekwondo to be approved by the Executive Board on the last day, at which point a General Assembly meeting would be held on the spot to adopt both sports without any change of venues.

The plan would never have come off without Samaranch's support. With taekwondo having already been voted down by the Programme Commission, there was no time to attempt to work on the Executive Board members, and coordinating opinions would be no easy task. Both men had concluded there was no need for the potential fuss that might be raised by bringing the matter to the Executive Board beforehand.

As promised, Samaranch convened an ad hoc Executive Board meeting on the eve of the General Meeting. As the final item on the agenda, he raised a vote on whether taekwondo's adoption as an Olympic event should be raised before the General Assembly. Surprisingly enough, there were no objections from the Executive Board members. A large part of this was thanks to past efforts to win them over, but perhaps another fact was their belief that the official adoption of taekwondo was ultimately a matter to be decided by the General Assembly.

At the Sofitel Hotel after the ad hoc Executive Board meeting, Samaranch revealed that the official adoption of taekwondo event was more or less a foregone conclusion. "We have made a very important decision to accept taekwondo and triathlon as events at the Sydney Olympics," he said. "The matter will be decided tomorrow by the General Assembly. But the official adoption of the two events will be limited to Sydney, and the future fate of both events will be decided once the games are over."

Another IOC official noted that the IOC General Assembly had "never before overturned a decision by the Executive Board." Taekwondo, the

official said, had been “essentially already adopted as an official event at the Sydney Games.” On the matter of taekwondo and triathlon’s adoption being restricted to the Sydney Games, another official noted that after first becoming an official event at the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, judo had also been omitted from the next Olympics before being adopted again. The official’s stance was more circumspect: they would have to wait for the General Assembly’s decision to know the final outcome.

Speaking to foreign correspondents in Paris, Kim Un-yong stressed that the Executive Board had “proposed taekwondo and triathlon solely for the Sydney Olympics” and had not “raised it as an agendum.” Despite this cautious stance, he noted that there had been no opposition from the Executive Board to taekwondo’s adoption, hinting that its adoption by the General Assembly would face no problems.

85-to-0: The miracle at La Défense

Kim Un-yong and Juan Antonio Samaranch shared close enough ties that detractors would cynically describe them as a “Mafia.” A former Spanish politician, diplomat, and banker elected as the 10th IOC president at the 1980 Moscow Olympics, Samaranch brilliantly helped revive the IOC back from the brink of bankruptcy. But behind his revival of the IOC was the unseen hand of Kim Un-yong, who spearheaded negotiations on broadcasting rights. As such, neither man was disposed to declining a favor from the other.

This relationship with Samaranch was effectively the key to Kim’s ability to include taekwondo’s adoption as an official Olympic event as a last-minute Executive Board agendum. In fact, Samaranch had proposed during their effort that the inclusion be restricted to one weight class each for men and women. Kim was adamantly opposed. It would be better not to include it at all, he insisted. Samaranch’s conclusion was based on the example of judo, which had offered just four gold medals when adopted as an official event in 1964, and the fact that triathlon, which was a strong contender for adoption alongside taekwondo, had only one event each for men and women. He may also have been concerned about the Executive Board members coming after him if taekwondo did start out offering a large number of medals. Samaranch finally backed down. There would be two classes each for men and women, he said, and Kim would have to work hard to win the Executive Board members over.

Secure in his belief in Samaranch's powerful support, Kim proposed a total of six gold medals—three classes each for men and women—when the actual Executive Board meeting took place. The Board approved his plan without any major objections; Samaranch played dumb all the while.

No announcement was made. With the karate, wushu, and ITF representatives objecting so strenuously, they concluded, there was no need to wake sleeping dogs.

After four days of lively subcommittee discussions, the Olympic Congress and Executive Board meeting came to a close. It was now the eve of the IOC General Assembly. Kim Un-yong discussed his plan for the meeting with his supporters, including Jean-Claude Ganga of the Republic of the Congo. Ganga and Libyan member Bashir Mohamed Attarabulsi also devised plans to make statements in support of taekwondo's adoption and prevent other members from raising questions against it.

The day of judgment finally arrived. From early that morning, the international conference hall at the Centre National des Industries et Techniques in La Défense on the outskirts of Paris was crowded with people: WTF officials including vice president Lee Chong-woo and secretary general Lee Geum-hong, along with around 150 students and instructors around the world, including teachers Park Sun-jae from Italy and Park Soo-nam from Germany. Spanish Taekwondo Union president and WTF vice president Marco Salla enthusiastically distributed Spanish-language copies of a taekwondo textbook published by the Spanish Olympic Committee.

As soon as the General Assembly meeting began, Vladimír Černušák of Slovakia fired the opening salvo.

"If it's just one sport, why do you have two different federations?"

It was an obvious question, but also a very basic one.

"The reason taekwondo has been raised as an official Olympic event is because I am confident in its unlimited potential as a sport. I don't know anything about similar groups like the ITF. But the WTF has been staging international competitions continuously since it was founded in 1973. It was admitted to GAISF in 1975 and received IOC approval in 1980. It was adopted as an official event for the 1983 Pan Am Games, the 1986 Asian Games, and the 1990 African Games. It was a demonstration event at the 1988 and 1992 Olympics and has 140 member countries around the world."

Kim's response was seamless. Then he went a step further.

"Over the past 20 years or so, taekwondo has made rapid strides as a global sport. It possesses its own complete set of rules and equipment

that are different from other martial arts, and with its value having been improved this way, I don't see it at all as unreasonable for it to be included in Olympic competition."

There were no further questions. As promised ahead of time, five or six IOC members made statements expressing their support.

Samaranch, who was presiding over the meeting, first asked whether there were any objections to taekwondo's adoption as an official Olympic sport. He then asked if any of the commission members wished to abstain. There was silence.

The final vote was unanimous: all 85 IOC members approved. Taekwondo's adoption as an official Olympic event was approved by a vote of 85-to-0, with no opposition. Triathlon was also approved with a vote of 83 for, one against, and one abstention.

Speaking to the South Korean press after taekwondo's adoption as official Olympic event, Kim asked for their understanding. "I was 99 percent sure it would pass, but the other 1 percent could have been an issue," he said. "I had to remain extremely prudent until I had it in my pocket. And with the 'James Bond' operation to get it passed, I couldn't say anything."

That evening, Kim received a phone call from South Korean president Kim Young-sam sincerely congratulating him on his outstanding achievement. And Kim Un-yong deserved it—in the 20 years since its founding in 1973, the WTF had achieved what other sports took a century to do.

"After the decades I had devoted to the globalization and internationalization of taekwondo, I felt proud to have reached that moment," he later recalled. "It feels like the globalization of taekwondo overlapped with the process of broadening my influence within the IOC since being elected as a member."

Returning to South Korea after the IOC General Assembly meeting, Kim met President Kim Young-sam for breakfast at the Blue House and gave interviews for domestic news outlets. He was also busy reviewing the roster of South Korean athletes in preparation for the Asian Games in Hiroshima one month hence.

Before, the South Korean government had shown no interest at all in taekwondo's adoption as an Olympic event. Now it was calling to offer 30 million won in travel and other expenses. Kim turned it down. "The IOC General Assembly is over, everything's done, and now you offer your support?" he asked. In his opinion, the government's plan was to offer a belated gift amounting to less than half of what was actually spent, so that it could

pretend to have provided its support.

It is said that there are no “if”s in history. But if it had not been for Kim Un-yong, would taekwondo have been so quickly adopted as an official Olympic event?

While taekwondo did win adoption as an event at the Sydney Olympics, the seemingly certain election of Samsung Group chairman Lee Kun-hee as an IOC member ended up being postponed. Perhaps Juan Antonio Samaranch concluded it would have caused too many issues for South Korea to be provided with yet another “gift” so soon after taekwondo’s adoption.

Lavish praise from the South Korean press

Once taekwondo was adopted as an official event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, South Korean news outlets scrambled to put together taekwondo features. Needless to say, WTF president Kim Un-yong was singled out as the great hero of the adoption and spotlighted in numerous media.



After taekwondo was adopted as an official Olympic event, the South Korean press published numerous articles spotlighting Kim Un-yong and taekwondo.

In most of the newspapers, taekwondo’s adoption at the Olympics was the subject of front-page stories and top sporting news pieces. “Taekwondo Finds Its Footing as Global Sport,” the *Seoul Shinmun* wrote. “Korea’s Martial Art Certified as Global Sport,” said the *Dong-A Ilbo*. “Korea’s Traditional Sport Ventures into the World,” the *Daily Sports* wrote. “Attention! Soul of Korea Travels to Olympics,” the *JoongAng Ilbo* titled its piece. The *Kukmin Ilbo* wrote, “Korea’s Martial Art Wins Illustrious Recognition on Global Stage,” while *Sports Seoul* wrote, “Definite Medal Prospects: Green Light for High Count.”

Sports Chosun also printed a series titled “From National Sport

to Global Sport,” spotlighting the last decade of achievements through sports diplomacy, the history and true nature of taekwondo, and the ways in which its stature needed to change. Newspapers published opinion pieces entitled “Taekwondo Ventures into Olympics” (*Hankuk Ilbo*), “Achievement for ‘Sports Korea’” (*Seoul Shinmun*), “Urgency of Taekwondo’s Internationalization” (*JoongAng Ilbo*), “Sports Diplomacy, The Kim Un-yong Method” (*Segye Ilbo*), and “Triumph of Sports Diplomacy” (*Kukmin Ilbo*). The newspapers also published the background story behind WTF president Kim Un-yong’s efforts toward taekwondo’s Olympic adoption starting with globalization of the sport as KTA president, as well as interviews on the sabotage efforts by Japan and North Korea.

The following is an excerpt from Kim’s interview with one *Chosun Ilbo* correspondent in Paris.

Q: When did you start feeling confident in taekwondo’s official adoption?

A: We started the real preparations in June. With so many efforts at sabotage by similar groups, we had to be very cautious and focus on winning over opponents. There were other factors too: the fact that I was IOC vice president, the absolute understanding and support from president Samaranche, the understanding of fellow IOC members, and South Korea’s national standing and the reach of taekwondo.

Q: After this success with taekwondo, some people are predicting you might become IOC president in ’97.

A: It’s not going to be easy for an Asian. An IOC president has to have character and ability, but unquestionably he also needs to be backed up by national strength and good fortune. As far as whether I run or not, we’ll have to wait and see. Right now, I’m busy with what I’m doing now.

Q: The achievement with taekwondo is something that is poised to go down in South Korean sports history.

A: You could see this as laying the groundwork for South Korean culture to become a permanent part of global culture. Obviously, medals are important too. The president has been fortunate, the country has been fortunate, and taekwondo and I have been fortunate.

Q: What sort of preparations are needed from the Korean taekwondo community going ahead?

A: Back when Japan included judo in the 1964 Olympics, its foreign minister made a lot of contributions. Judo was initially included in three weight classes. It was omitted once before being included again. To make it a permanent event, we're going to need to keep improving the competition rules, provide more entertaining matches, and compete well in Sydney.

Q: Do you have any plans to accept North Korea's proposal to integrate North and South Korean taekwondo?

A: Taekwondo doesn't belong to just North and South Korea. It's a matter of all 140 countries in the International Olympic Committee. You cannot confuse politics with sports. And since we're not at the stage where an agreement purely between North and South Korea will solve things, integration is out of the question.

(Kim Un-yong, interview by Kim Kwang-il, *Chosun Ilbo*,
September 6, 1994)

In another interview with a France correspondent for the *Hankook Ilbo*, he named Japan and North Korea's sabotage efforts as the most difficult part of the experience. "In their jealousy over taekwondo's success, North Korea and Japan showed world-class sabotage tactics and unprecedented tenacity," he sighed. "They even had their ambassadors lobbying with the country. I couldn't predict how effective their lobbying would be, so even though I saw it as 99 percent likely, I maintained a circumspect stance all the way to the end."

Kim went on to say, "Things are not going to work out just by going around bearing gifts of ginseng tea. This was the product of years of effort. Even during my free time, I was visiting individual committee members to explain to them about taekwondo's global status and ask for support. Some of the committee members were even offended at not being asked. Based on my calculations last night, I was confident about around 60 of the 89 members, so I knew it would pass if it went up for a vote."

The Olympic adoption process

Twelve years after the miracle at La Défense on September 4, 1994, the decision was made at a WTF general meeting at Hotel Equatorial in Ho Chi Minh City on July 25, 2006, to name September 4 as "Taekwondo Day." A

little over a month later on September 4, a grand Taekwondo Day proclamation ceremony was held, simultaneously with the opening ceremony for the inaugural World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships at the Second Olympic Park Gymnasium. The event had 179 officials and 386 athletes participating from 59 countries and included a demonstration by a disabled taekwondo team, a congratulatory message by IOC president Jacques Rogge, and the unveiling of a commemorative symbol. But Kim Un-yong, the main contributor to taekwondo's adoption as an official Olympic event, was not even invited. At the time, he had stepped down from all positions after becoming the scapegoat of Korean politicians for Pyeongchang's failed 2010 Winter Olympics bid.

In retrospect, the process leading up to taekwondo's official adoption at the Olympics features many events unprecedented in IOC history for their drama.

The following is an overview of the process from Kim's appointment as seventh president of the Korea Taekwondo Association to the founding of the Kukkiwon, the establishment of the World Taekwondo Federation, and taekwondo's eventual adoption as an Olympic event.

- **January 29, 1971:** Kim Un-yong is unanimously elected as the KTA's seventh president by the association's board of directors.
- **April 15, 1971:** The cultural magazine *Taekwondo* is launched as a forum for dialogue among taekwondo practitioners.
- **November 19, 1971:** KTA holds a groundbreaking ceremony for the Central Hall.
- **December 9, 1972:** KTA completes construction of the Central Hall.
- **February 6, 1973:** KTA renames the Central Hall "Kukkiwon."
- **February 24, 1973:** A taekwondo textbook is issued to promote the use of integrated *poomsae* (a set sequence of movements consisting of various fundamental stances, blocks, punches, and kicks which are logically arranged in a meaningful order in response to attacks from multiple imaginary assailants).
- **May 25–27, 1973:** Inaugural World Taekwondo Championships are held (Kukkiwon, 19 participating teams from 17 countries); South Korea places first, the US second, Free China and Mexico tie for third.
- **May 28, 1973:** The World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) is established (with KTA president Kim Un-yong as inaugural president).
- **August 7, 1974:** Kukkiwon is registered as a private foundation and arti-

cles of association are adopted.

- **October 18, 1974:** Inaugural Asian Championships are held (Kukkiwon, 99 participants from ten countries); South Korea wins in all eight weight classes, followed by Taiwan in second, Cambodia in third, and the Philippines in fourth.
- **October 26, 1974:** Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) adopts taekwondo as an official competition event.
- **January 1, 1975:** Kim Un-yong is re-elected as KTA president at a regular representatives' meeting; 1975 is designated the "Year of Taekwondo Globalization."
- **August 28–30, 1975:** Second World Taekwondo Championships are held (Kukkiwon, 352 participants from 30 countries).
- **October 8, 1975:** The WTF is unanimously admitted as a full member of GAISF at the latter's third general meeting.
- **April 7–11, 1976:** Taekwondo is adopted as an official event at the first meeting of the International Military Sports Council (CISM) executive committee.
- **May 21, 1976:** The European Taekwondo Union (ETU) is founded with Antonio Garcia de la Fuente as president and Marco Saila as secretary general.
- **May 22–23, 1976:** Inaugural European Taekwondo Championships are held (Barcelona, 123 participants from 12 countries).
- **June 28, 1976:** World pro boxing heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali visits the Kukkiwon.
- **October 16–17, 1976:** Second Asian Taekwondo Championships are held (Melbourne, 260 participants from eight countries); South Korea is the all-around winner.
- **September 15–17, 1977:** Third World Taekwondo Championships are held (Chicago, 72 participants from 46 countries).
- **September 17, 1977:** Pan American Taekwondo Union founded (Chicago) with Dan Marrow (US) as president and Min Kyung-ho as secretary general.
- **April 28, 1978:** US Olympic Committee adopts taekwondo as an official event.
- **June 30–July 2, 1978:** Pre-World Games taekwondo championship is held (Kukkiwon, Jangchung Gymnasium).
- **August 7, 1978:** Ten taekwondo *kwans* (schools) are integrated into the main school (with Kim Un-yong as director).

- **September 10, 1978:** Asian Taekwondo Union is founded (Miramar Hotel, Hong Kong; representatives from 11 countries).
- **September 23–25, 1978:** Inaugural Pan Am Taekwondo Championships are held (Mexico City, participants from 11 countries).
- **October 25, 1978:** African Taekwondo Union is founded with Wasanan Kone as president (representatives from 14 countries).
- **March 30, 1979:** Korean Women Taekwondo Federation founded with Lee Hak-seon as inaugural president.
- **April 12–13, 1979:** Inaugural African Taekwondo Championship is held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.
- **October 20, 1979:** Kim Un-yong is elected at a GAISF general meeting as the group's first Asian Non-Olympic Federation (NOF) president.
- **June 27, 1980:** Taekwondo is adopted as an official IOC event (demonstration sport) at a IOC Programme Commission (chairman Arpad Csanadi) event review committee meeting.
- **July 15, 1980:** Juan Antonio Samaranch becomes the IOC's seventh president.
- **July 17, 1980:** WTF is certified as an international federation at the 83rd IOC General Assembly meeting in Moscow. (The International Taekwon-Do Federation also requests IOC approval, leading the IOC Programme Commission to order individual NOCs to investigate the state of affairs in the dissemination and approval of WTF and ITF.)
- **July 19, 1980:** South Korea decides to boycott XXII Olympiad in Moscow over Soviet invasion of Afghanistan.
- **July 24–August 2, 1980:** Inaugural World Games are held in Santa Clara (chairman Kim Un-yong), including taekwondo and 15 other events.
- **September 30, 1981:** Seoul is chosen as 1988 XXIV Olympiad host city at the 84th meeting of the IOC General Assembly in Baden-Baden, Germany.
- **November 2, 1981:** Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee is launched with Kim Yong-sik as chairman and Kim Un-yong as vice chairman.
- **November 16, 1981:** Seoul is selected as host city for the tenth Asian Games in 1986 at an Asian Games Federation general meeting in New Delhi; the AGF is subsequently renamed the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) on December 5, 1982.
- **April 8, 1982:** IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch visits the Kukkiwon.
- **August 12–13, 1983:** Request is made at Pan Am Games general meeting (ODEPA, Caracas) for taekwondo's adoption as an official event; approval

is granted by a 22–2 margin (two abstentions) after the US, Belize, and Costa Rica request a vote.

- **November 28–December 1, 1983:** Taekwondo is adopted as an official event at the African Games.
- **July 26, 1984:** KTA president Park Jong-gyu is elected a member of the IOC.
- **September 28, 1984:** Taekwondo is selected as an official event for the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul.
- **June 3, 1985:** Taekwondo is selected as a demonstration event for the 1986 Seoul Olympics at the 90th IOC General Assembly meeting in East Berlin.
- **December 5, 1985:** IOC member Park Jong-gyu passes away.
- **May 8–10, 1986:** International University Sport Federation (FISU, president Primo Nebiolo) executive committee selects taekwondo as a federation event.
- **May 12, 1986:** The WTF becomes a member of the Paris-based International Fair Play Committee.
- **September 20, 1986:** The tenth Asian Games open in Seoul; the first taekwondo competition in Asian Games history is held (Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon; 84 athletes and 40 officials participating from 17 countries).
- **October 17, 1986:** Kim Un-yong is elected as WTF president, Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee senior vice chairman, and an IOC member (Lausanne).
- **October 25, 1986:** Kim Un-yong is elected as president of GAISF (Monaco), succeeding Thomas Keller.
- **February 16, 1987:** Kim Un-yong is named honorary chairman of the Korean Olympic Committee (KOC, chairman Kim Jong-ha).
- **August 1–4, 1987:** A taekwondo competition is held at the fourth African Games in Nairobi with 11 countries participating.
- **August 14–16, 1987:** A taekwondo competition is held at the tenth Pan Am Games in Indianapolis (128 participants from 26 countries).
- **September 16–19, 1987:** A taekwondo competition is held at the 14th Southeast Asian Games in Jakarta (58 participants from five countries).
- **October 1, 1987:** A Kukkiwon demonstration team headed by Hong Jong-su performs a taekwondo demonstration at an Olympic Week event at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne at the IOC's invitation.
- **August 15, 1988:** Kim Un-yong is named head of the IOC's radio and TV subcommittee and elected a member of the IOC Executive Board at the

92nd IOC General Assembly meeting in Seoul.

- **September 17, 1988:** The XXIV Summer Olympiad is held in Seoul with taekwondo as a demonstration event (Jangchung Gymnasium); the Special Forces Group (Airborne) performs a taekwondo demonstration at a pre-opening ceremony event.
- **January 1991:** Kim Un-yong resigns as KTA president and is succeeded by Army reserve general Choi Se-chang.
- **April 22, 1992:** Taekwondo is adopted by the OCA executive committee as an official event for the 12th Asian Games in Hiroshima in 1994.
- **July 23, 1992:** Kim Un-yong is elected IOC vice president and Executive Board member at an IOC General Assembly meeting in Barcelona, beating Japan's Chiharu Igaya by a 54–28 vote.
- **August 3–5, 1992:** A taekwondo demonstration event is held at the Barcelona Olympics (128 athletes and 116 officials participating from 27 countries).
- **October 24, 1992:** Kim Un-yong is elected to a second four-year term as GAISF president at the federation's 26th general meeting in Shanghai.
- **February 26, 1993:** Kim Un-yong is elected as the 31st chairman of the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee, 21st chairman of the KOC, and chairman of the 1997 Muju/Jeonju Winter Universiade Organizing Committee.
- **June 18, 1993:** Kim Un-yong is elected chairman of the International Foundation for Olympic Development (IFOD).
- **June 23, 1993:** Kim Un-yong is elected chairman of the Olympic Africa Foundation (Ivory Coast's IOC member Guirandou-N'Diaye as secretary general).
- **August 18, 1993:** Kim Un-yong is re-elected as sixth WTF president.
- **August 21–23, 1993:** Eleventh World Taekwondo Championships and fourth Women's Taekwondo Championships are held at Madison Square Garden (443 male athletes from 82 countries, 226 female athletes from 54 countries; broadcast live on ABC).
- **January 15, 1994:** WTF launches a committee for the adoption of taekwondo as an event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.
- **May 1994:** The IOC Programme Commission (chaired by Franco Carraro) rejects taekwondo's adoption as an official event by a 11–9 vote.
- **September 5, 1994:** Taekwondo is adopted as an official event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics by a unanimous 85–0 vote at the IOC General Assembly in Paris.

A sport for people all over the world

Taekwondo was no longer just South Korea's sport—it was a sport beloved by people all over the world. A total of 208 countries have joined the World Taekwondo Federation alone. It has become a global sport studied and practiced by over 50 million people worldwide.

A number of famous figures have since studied taekwondo. They run the gamut from former US President Bill Clinton and former king of Spain and “guardian” of Spanish democracy Juan Carlos to legendary Hong Kong action star Bruce Lee and American actors Chuck Norris, Steven Seagal, and Jamie Foxx, along with master Tim Connolly. One of the main reasons so many Hollywood action stars love taekwondo is that no other martial art can match it when it comes to bare-fisted fight scenes.

Occasionally, stories in the news draw attention for sharing examples of success through taekwondo. One recent case was that of Egyptian athlete Caroline Maher, who in 2013 became the first Arab/African woman to be inducted into the Taekwondo Hall of Fame. Drawn to the sport by its kicks at the age of ten, Maher won some 130 medals and trophies at international events in 38 different countries as a member of the Egyptian national team; in 2015, she was appointed by the Egyptian president as a member of parliament. In addition to learning self-defense, Maher has said, taekwondo has also taught her how to manage teams effectively, how to be efficient with them, and how to persevere in pursuit of goals. She has also talked of her realization that helping others—including outreach efforts for disabled people based on taekwondo's teaching that “peace is more important than victory”—made her happy.

Taekwondo's ability to lay down roots in the global market has much to do with the overseas activities of its instructors—people who traveled abroad empty-handed from Korea in the 1950s and 1960s, carving out a place for taekwondo and sharing it with others in difficult environments.

In North America, taekwondo was widely propagated and expanded through the efforts of Rhee Jhoon-goo, who traveled to the US in 1957; Lee Haeng-ung, who settled there in 1962; and others including Kim Jong-su, Yang Dong-ja, Kwon Duk-gun, Chun Rhin-moon, Lee Sang-chul, Park Yeon-ee, Park Dong-keun, and Chung Hwa. Lee Haeng-ung in particular is a legendary figure whom former US President Bill Clinton refers to as “Grand Master” and greets in the Korean style with a respectfully bowed head. Vanguard figures in South and Central America include Moon Dae-

won in Mexico and Kim Jeong-won in Brazil.

In Europe, taekwondo has had tough competition in the form of Japanese karate, which laid down roots ten years before taekwondo was first introduced in the 1960s by Korean miners working in Germany. Since then, figures like France's Kim Young-ho, Germany's Park Soo-nam, Italy's Park Sun-jae, Austria's Lee Kwang-bae, and Yugoslavia's Lee Kyung-myung have worked hard to promote taekwondo in Europe, including Eastern Europe.

Countless other overseas instructors continue to lead the way in promoting taekwondo, including Lee Tae-eun, subject of the "Tae E. Lee Day" celebrated every May 31 by the city of Ottawa in Canada; Professor Min Kyung-ho, who established the first taekwondo club at the University of California, Berkeley; and Hong Sung-chun, who helped make taekwondo the second national sport of the Philippines.

The WTF estimates over 5,000 Korean teachers working overseas today, around 2,000 of them in Africa and South America. As long as they are around, taekwondo will continue to develop into one of the most beloved and widely enjoyed martial arts and sports around the world.



Kim Un-yong practices taekwondo with employees at the Kukkiwon, which has established itself as a "sacred site" for the sport (1987).

Special contribution by Kukkiwon and World Taekwondo Federation founding president Kim Un-yong

A message to taekwondo practitioners

The modern and Olympic taekwondo of today traces its origins to the construction of the Kukkiwon and the establishment of the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF). When I assumed the office of the Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) president in 1971, the group was seen as the biggest

disaster in the Korean Sport and Olympic Committee, some 30 different *kwans* (schools) competing without any proper system, sense of history, or a central hall.

I began implementing reforms according to a four-point vision: 1) developing taekwondo into the national sport, 2) globalization, 3) serving as a flag bearer for promoting national prestige internationally, and 4) helping defend the country. As a first step, I fulfilled taekwondo practitioners' dreams through my own efforts in 1972 by building a central hall for the KTA, a process that took one year. In 1973, we staged the World Taekwondo Championships at the Kukkiwon and established the WTF.

For the sake of taekwondo's globalization, I used my authority to organize taekwondo into three parts: the KTA, the WTF, and the Kukkiwon (the new name given to the KTA Central Hall in 1972). It was meant to function as a trinity of sorts, where the KTA served as the association for the home country of taekwondo, the WTF assumed responsibility for promoting taekwondo throughout the world, and the Kukkiwon served as the "roots of taekwondo," supporting the WTF and KTA while upholding its traditions and spirit as a martial art.

The first order of business was to reform and systematize taekwondo within South Korea. I integrated the 30 *kwans*, unified all *dan* promotion reviews under the Kukkiwon, and created an educational system for qualified instructors, including leadership and judging courses. I also implemented competition rules, an evaluation system, *poomsae*, uniforms, safety gear, and electronic protections, while working to establish the origins and history of taekwondo and share all of these rules with the world. After watching a boxing match at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, I required the use of headgear in taekwondo for competition safety.

During this time, taekwondo was often still confused with Japanese karate. During preparations for the Seoul Olympics, I took advantage of my role overseeing the Olympic organization to invite sports leaders to the Kukkiwon from all over the world, including IOC president Samaranch and other IOC members, heads of international federations and NOCs, and sports ministers from various countries. There, I focused on promoting taekwondo through demonstrations and explanations about the sport. I also had quite a few honorary *dan* certifications issued. At the same time, I promoted the creation of taekwondo curricula at various universities. We began publishing textbooks and association journals in an effort to improve the capabilities of taekwondo leaders. To support overseas instructors, we conferred interna-

tional instructor certifications.

In addition to these institutional measures for taekwondo at home, I also focused on using the international umbrella to gradually promote taekwondo on to the global stage. In 1975, taekwondo showed its identity and became a certified sport when it was admitted to the GAISF before karate. Taekwondo was admitted to the International Military Sports Council (CISM) in 1976 and introduced at the Pan Am Games (1983), African Games (1982), Asian Games (1983), and International University Sport Federation (FISU) in 1986. In 1980, the WTF became an approved IOC event at an IOC General Assembly meeting in Moscow.

In its own right, the WTF has worked to introduce taekwondo's promotion and internationalization to the next level: holding the bi-yearly World Taekwondo Championships and the Asian Championships, Pan Am Championships, African Championships, and European Championships, while founding different continental unions and organizing taekwondo groups in each country to promote their stature and ensure policy and budgetary support as official NOC and athletic association member groups around the world.

With the help of IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch (who made a rare visit to the Kukkiwon on April 10, 1982, while visiting South Korea for an Olympics-related review), taekwondo twice appeared before the world as an exhibition event at the 1988 Seoul Olympics and 1992 Barcelona Olympics. At the centennial IOC General Assembly meeting in Paris in 1994, it was approved by an 85-to-0 vote to become an official Olympic event. At the time, there was vehement opposition from North Korea's International Taekwon-Do Federation and other one-on-one match sports such as karate. The overseas taekwondo studios that had previously advertised themselves as "karate" subsequently re-christened themselves as "taekwondo," and taekwondo associations in various countries began receiving support from their local governments and NOCs—bringing the promotion of taekwondo to where it stands today. The World Taekwondo Hanmadang was also established in 1991 to carry on its tradition and spirit as a martial art.

Taekwondo may be an Olympic sport, but it has been developed as a martial arts sport, maintaining its martial arts spirit and traditions. Its roots must be upheld through this kind of continued guarding of its traditions and philosophy. Primary responsibility for this lies with the Kukkiwon. On the path to the Olympics, the Kukkiwon, KTA, and WTF served as a trinity, racing forward to achieve their common vision. Stability was achieved within

growth. If taekwondo abandoned its martial arts roots and became solely focused on competitions, it could never hope to compete with track and field, swimming, or gymnastics.

Taekwondo now demands a new vision. Stability will be achieved through reforms and growth when we show our united strength in racing toward that vision. The Olympic philosophies are peace and the education of young people. In an era of aging populations, a martial arts sport can lead the way in educating the young to build a healthy society. As the world's premier martial arts sport, as an Olympic martial arts sport passionately enjoyed by young people, taekwondo can also serve as a source of discipline and strength for levelheaded young people, healthy older people, and positive societies.



Chapter 4

Embracing the World

From Seoul to Baden-Baden

Emergence as an sports diplomat

Kim Un-yong's true emergence as an international sports diplomat came about in 1974. In February of that year, he became vice president of the Korea Sports Council (KSC) and vice president and honorary secretary general of the Korean Olympic Committee (KOC). The position of KOC's honorary secretary general was particularly important, as it required serving as a window to the outside world on South



At a 1974 general meeting of the International Shooting Sport Federation in Bern, Kim Un-yong successfully bid to have Seoul host the 1978 World Shooting Championships. From left: Park Kap-chul, Oh Jeon-sik, Kim Un-yong, Shin Yong-suk.

Korea's behalf with international sports organizations such as the IOC. In this case, it was Kim's fluent linguistic capabilities that proved crucial.

By assuming this role as the KOC's window to the outside world in addition to his important positions as president of the KTA, Kukkiwon, and WTF and on the Korea Sports Council—which may be called the “head office” of South Korean sport—Kim naturally took his place on the front lines of diplomacy through sports. More specifically, he made a successful debut on the international sports stage that September when his consummate international sense and drive led to Seoul's selection as host city for the 1978 World Shooting Championships.

Kim did not have any real connection to shooting. The Korea Shooting Federation (KSF) was run at the time by Blue House Presidential Security Service (PSS) chief Park Jong-gyu, known by the nickname “Pistol Park.” Park had great ambitions for the advancement of shooting. He had built a world-class shooting range in September 1970 on a 100,000 *pyeong* (about 330,000 square meters) plot of Taereung Forest land owned by the Cultural Heritage Administration, and he had successfully bid for the 42nd World Shooting Championships in 1978. At that point, the championships had never been held before in an Asian country. More than anything, Park's audacity showed

in the way he managed to win the championships at a time when the sport of shooting remained at a very rudimentary level in South Korea.

The host country for the 42nd World Shooting Championships was decided at a general meeting of the L'Union Internationale de Tir (UIT) on September 25, 1974, just before the 41st World Shooting Championships in Bern. As KSF president, Park was originally supposed to attend as a representative. But about a month earlier on August 15, Mun Se-gwang, the assassin sent by North Korea, had fatally shot First Lady Yuk Young-soo. Park had resigned as PSS chief and was keeping a low profile after the incident; he was in no position to attend the general meeting. An application had been submitted to bring the World Championships to South Korea, and now there was no one to go to the meeting.

Park turned to Kim Un-yong, asking him to attend the meeting as a representative. Kim's relationship with Park can be traced back to his brief stint in 1956 working for the Army headquarters intelligence bureau under Brigadier General Kim Kye-won. Park had been in charge of the administrative and personnel section at the time. Kim was appointed three months later as an instructor for the US Army headquarters officers' advanced course. Not long after that, then-Major Park Jong-gyu arrived as a student in the ranger program, and the two met frequently. Park had few other acquaintances and often contacted Kim to meet. The two became friends, building a relationship that would endure despite occasional clashes. After they went to work in different places, they drifted apart. However, when Park became head of the PSS for the Supreme Council for National Reconstruction chairman after the successful coup of May 16, 1961, he renewed his cooperative relationship with Kim while the latter worked as a prime minister's aide to Song Yo-chan, Park Chung-hee, and Kim Hyun-chul.

From there, Kim Un-yong had gone on to serve as a counselor at the South Korean embassy in Washington, D.C. When President-elect Park Chung-hee arrived in the US for the funeral of President John F. Kennedy in November 1963, Kim met him at Dulles International Airport. As the two greeted each other warmly and walked along hand in hand, a man had tapped Kim on the shoulder and told him to clear out because he was blocking security. It had been none other than Park Jong-gyu.

Through this relationship, Park knew better than anyone how proficient Kim was at foreign languages, how bold he was, and how capable he was of persuading people. But Kim knew very little about shooting, let alone the internal workings of the KSF. It was also a time when the Soviet-led

Eastern Bloc and North Korea were raising issues and causing obstruction in every matter where South Korea was involved. “I’m just not confident,” Kim said. But after some earnest pleading from Park, he felt he had no choice but to accept.

Three countries were hoping to win the World Shooting Championships bid: South Korea, South Africa, and Mexico. South Africa eventually dropped out, narrowing the contest to just South Korea and Mexico.

The South Korean delegation was led by Kim Un-yong, accompanied by KSF vice president Seo Jae-kwan; *Kyungbyang Shinmun* political desk editor Oh Jeon-sik; reporters Park Kap-chul, Shin Yong-suk, and Lee Suk-hyung; and film director Jung Jin-woo. By the time they arrived in Bern, South Korea’s bidding rival, Mexico, was already actively lobbying United Press International (UPI) president Mario Vázquez Raña. Mexico was a far more prosperous nation than South Korea and had experience hosting the Olympics in 1968; in terms of both infrastructure and reputation, it eclipsed South Korea by far. Indeed, the Mexicans did not view South Korea as having much of a chance. Few believed that South Korea could defeat Mexico to win the championship bid.

The UIT at the time was chaired by Kurt Hasler of Switzerland, with George Vichosof of Greece as first vice president and Ernst Zimmermann of Germany as secretary general. South Korea’s delegates knew none of them. Vázquez Raña, in contrast, made no secret of his close ties to UIT officials, inviting them and their wives to fancy restaurants. South Korea was at a clear disadvantage.

The general meeting took place at the International Postal Union (IPU) headquarters. Mexico went first to explain its bid proposal.

“Mexico has hosted the Pan Am Games and the Olympics,” a confident Vázquez Raña declared. “We have all the necessary infrastructure and management capabilities, and everyone knows about our hospitality.” The biggest question on the participating countries’ minds concerned lodging expenses, and the Mexicans made an astonishing offer: they would charge just 10 dollars a day.

Next came Kim Un-yong’s presentation as South Korean representative. With his trademark fluent English, he instantly had the meeting room transfixed. In the Taereung International Shooting Range, he explained, South Korea had a world-class, Olympic-worthy venue. Despite Korea’s division, he added, there would be no concerns about the athlete’s safety. Moreover, the only path forward for development of the shooting discipline lay in

granting an Asian country the right to host the world championships. Then he dropped a bombshell: accommodations would be provided at only five dollars a day per person. This was a gamble on Kim's part. Without consulting back home, he had proposed lodging costs at half the rate Mexico was offering. Originally, he had planned to name a number slightly less than Mexico's, perhaps around eight or nine dollars. Deciding that this would not be enough to win—and that it would better to win than to lose the bid trying to save money—he made the announcement on his own authority.

In the final discussion, Japanese representative Minoru Anzai provided some support fire. "The world championships have never once been held in Asia," he declared. "South Korea should get it this time." From Malaysia, Asian Shooting Confederation president Tun Tan Siew Sin delivered an impassioned message. "Only when the World Championships are staged in Asian countries too can shooting develop around the world," he said, winning the sympathies of attendees from many countries.

The North Korean representative, in contrast, claimed that South Korea could not win the bid because it was "ruled by a dictatorial government." The remarks drew a warning from the president's group not to make political statements.

The president then asked a question that caught Kim completely off guard. "Is the Taereung Shooting Range Munich-model or Wiesbaden-model?" he asked. Kim turned to KSF vice president Seo Jae-kwan, who was sitting next to him. Seo said he did not really know. At that moment, Kim remembered that the previous World Championships had been held in Wiesbaden. "Wiesbaden-model," he replied. It was a lucky guess: he had taken a stab to avert disaster, and it had proven correct. He was also asked somewhat skeptically whether the five dollars meant five *American* dollars. Kim was unambiguous: "Mexico is talking about ten American dollars. We're talking about five American dollars." He was further asked what kind of food would be provided. At the time, people did not know much about South Korea. "We have everything—Western, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean," Kim said, drawing applause.

The meeting ended, and a lunch break followed. In the ensuing vote, South Korea won by a margin of 62 to 40. It was an incredible victory. The South Koreans erupted in cheers, their hands in the air; the North Korean representatives all exited. Kim immediately sent a message to Park Jong-gyu announcing the victory. "You did a great job," an elated Park said. "Now go get smashed." South Korean Ambassador to Switzerland Lee Dong-won

also heard the news of the successful bid and raced over in astonishment to the celebratory reception.

There are several reasons that South Korea was able to beat Mexico and win the World Shooting Championships, but I think that one of them was language. I delivered my explanation of the proposal in English, while Vázquez Raña gave his in Spanish. Even with interpreters, I felt that English worked to our advantage.

Whatever happened to the \$5 in accommodation costs per day? I heard that when the Championships were actually held in '78, it cost \$40. They had invoked the International Monetary Fund (IMF) infrastructure rules. The accommodations built for the athletes at the time are now the Walk-erhill Apartments.

The reason that the 1978 World Shooting Championships are so important is because they laid the groundwork for our successful bid for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. By doing such an outstanding job hosting a world championship in an official Olympic sport, we showed some of our capability to host the Olympics. In The Olympic Revolution: The Biography of Juan Antonio Samaranch, David Miller writes that this victory marked the beginning of geopolitical change in Asia.

(Kim Un-yong, Wise Men Learn from the Elders)

This seemingly impossible success at winning the 42nd World Shooting Championships for South Korea marked an illustrious debut for Kim as a sports diplomat on the international stage. Despite the great achievement of



Kim Un-yong with IOC president Lord Killanin at the 1976 Montreal Olympics.

South Korea winning the right to host its first-ever world championships, the story received little domestic press attention at the time, as the whole nation was mourning the death of First Lady Yuk Young-soo.

Involvement in the 1976 Winter and Summer Olympics

Kim Un-yong's success in 1974 while appearing as a proxy when South Korea bid for the 42nd World Shooting Championships in Bern offered a preview of his later achievements. It was during this time that he began preparing to soar in the world of international sport.

Kim's first involvement in the Olympics came as a meeting representative for the 12th Winter Olympics in Innsbruck on February 4–15, 1976, in his capacity as Korean Olympic Committee vice president and honorary secretary general. A total of four other officials represented South Korea, including delegation head Park Dong-seon, manager Jang Myung-hee, and coaches Park Chang-seop and Shin Geon-jo. Three athletes were also participating in the Innsbruck Games: Lee Young-ha and Lee Nam-soon in speed skating and Yoon Hyo-jin in figure skating, bringing the total delegation up to just seven. The organizing committee only provided a vehicle for teams of ten or more; the South Korea team was so small that it did not even receive one.

The 12th Winter Olympics were originally to be held in Denver, Colorado, but the city forfeited its right to host due to opposition from civic groups citing environmental destruction and economic issues. Instead, hosting rights went to Innsbruck, which had already hosted the Winter Olympics once before in 1964. South Korea had competed in seven Winter Olympics since the national flag, the Taegukgi, made its first appearance at the fifth Winter Olympics in St. Moritz (1948). But the only significance was in the participation itself; Korea's medal chances were non-existent.

The 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck were also the first since British-born Irish journalist Lord Killanin had become the IOC's new president, taking over from American Avery Brundage shortly after the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre.

In speed skating, South Korean athlete Lee Young-ha came in 22nd in the men's 500 meters with a time of 0:41.08, 15th in the 1,000 meters with 1:22.88, 18th in the 1,500 meters with 2:05.25, and 11th out of 32 in the 5,000 meters with 7:41.96. It was a confidence-boosting performance; the barriers were high, but the differences in records were not all that great.



Kim Un-yong with Lee Young-ha, who competed at the 1976 Innsbruck Winter Olympics.

With some effort, South Korea could yet reach the top level worldwide. Lee Nam-soon, a 13-year-old second-year student in a girls' middle school, placed toward the bottom in all events where she competed but was seen as having made a relatively strong showing for herself at her age. In women's figure skating, Yoon Hyo-jin finished 17th out of 20 competitors.

While none of the South Korean athletes had claimed medals, Kim took advantage of the opportunity to meet and befriend US Olympic Committee president Philip Krumm, International Swimming Federation president Harold Henning, USSR's IOC member Vitaly Smirnov (later Minister of Sports 1981–1990), and others. It was the beginning of his life in the world of sports diplomacy.

Two months after the Innsbruck Winter Olympics ended, Kim found himself that April with an unexpected opportunity to travel to Poland. He would be heading the South Korean delegation in lieu of Korean Sport Council president Kim Taek-su at the Junior World Fencing Championships in Poznan, 300 kilometers from Warsaw.

At the time, visas were not granted in South Korea for travel to Communist countries; whenever "Korea" was mentioned, people naturally thought of North Korea. In Warsaw, Kim boarded a bus with the Yugoslavian team. When they arrived in Poznan, the hotel had hung up a flag as a welcoming gesture—the North Korean flag. Kim quickly replaced it with a South Korean flag that he had with him. South Korea's fencing capabilities were also weak, but it was the only Asian country competing. After the consolation match, it finished with fourth, fifth, and sixth place consolation prizes. Although Kim had met with diplomats from Communist countries before

as a diplomat himself, this was his first time to visit a Communist country. The experience would be of great service to him in his later efforts when encouraging Communist countries to participate in the '88 Seoul Olympics.

Kim also attended the next Summer Olympics, which took place in Montreal on July 17–August 1, 1976. There with him were Korean Sport Council (KSC) president Kim Taek-su and Korean Olympic Committee (KOC) vice president Lee Won-gyung, who would later serve as foreign minister. Kim Un-yong watched nervously as wrestler Yang Jung-mo became Korea's first gold medalist since its liberation. He could vividly recall images from his youth when at five years of age, holding his father's hand, he watched the film at Daegu's Mangyunggwang Theater showing marathoner Sohn Kee-chung's victory in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. As Yang stood tall with the gold medal around his neck and the national anthem played, Kim too found himself straighten up as he felt powerful emotions well up within him. At that moment, he gained a new sense of the power of Olympic gold.

As there were few Koreans living in Montreal at the time, it was inconceivable to even attempt to assemble a cheering squad. Instead, Kim cheered himself, traveling around with 20 or so taekwondo instructors including Yoon O-jang, Lee Jung-su, Shin Sang-jin, and Lee Nam-suk.

He was similarly moved by the women volleyball team's bronze medal performance. The lively team—with players including Cho Hye-jung, Yu Jung-hye, Yu Gyung-hwa, Bae Gyung-ja, Baek Myung-sun, and Yoon Young-nae—had produced a string of stirring come-from-behind victories, returning from two sets down to sweep the remaining three against East Germany, Poland, and Cuba.

At the time, IOC members were issued “A” ID cards and NOC officials “B” cards. No ID cards were provided to athletic association presidents. As KOC officials, President Kim Taek-su, Vice President Lee Won-gyung, and Kim Un-yong in his role as a KOC board member all received B cards. South Korea's IOC member at the time was Jang Ki-young. At the volleyball match, Kim met with Korea Volleyball Association president Lee Nak-seon and Korea Shooting Federation president Park Jong-gyu. They did not have ID cards and were forced to watch the match from the spectators' section. Kim Un-yong later attempted to go over and say hello to Lee and Park along with Jang Ki-young and Kim Taek-su, but they seemed to be in a foul mood and remained seated as they shook hands.

Back when I traveled to the 1976 Montreal Olympics, it never even

occurred to me that South Korea might host the Olympic Games. The KOC's objective at the time was "to not lose too badly to Japan and to make sure to beat North Korea" in international matches. At the time, we were at the level of maybe hosting the Asian Games at some point, so it was not too far out of line to think that.

(Kim Un-yong, *The Greatest Olympics. From Baden-Baden to Seoul*, YBM Sisayoungosa, 1989)

World Shooting Championships success stokes Olympic dreams

The successful staging of the 42nd World Shooting Championships at Taereung International Shooting Range on September 27–October 5, 1978, was an exhilarating moment for South Korean sports officials. For the first time in 100 years of competitive shooting, the championships had been held in an Asian country. Moreover, the world championships of an Olympic event had been staged for the first time in South Korea. The press was unstinting in its praise, calling the event “epochal” for South Korean sports.

Despite a boycott by the Eastern Bloc, the championships were the biggest ever, with 1,581 competitors participating from 71 of the 103 UIT member countries. The participants were fighting for the Phoenix Victory Cup bestowed by President Park Chung-hee, and the event defied predictions that the absence of the world's best Eastern Bloc competitors would translate into disappointing performance. Instead, seven world records were set, and the event received approving evaluations in terms of management. The US came in first overall with 18 gold medals; South Korea did not win any golds, but ranked 12th overall and best in Asia with three silvers and five bronzes. Australia placed 13th, Japan 14th.

The success of the World Shooting Championships proved pivotal in sparking the new dream of bidding for the Olympics. Many global shooting community figures who visited South Korea for the championships praised it as “having Olympic-hosting capabilities”—messages that were duly passed along to President Park Chung-hee and Korea Shooting Federation (KSF) president Park Jong-gyu.

In response, Park Jong-gyu suggested to President Park that South Korea try for the Olympics. At the time, it seemed like a farfetched idea. South Korea had successfully bid for the sixth Asian Games in 1966, but with the government deciding to channel all financial investment into economic

development, it forfeited the championship and paid \$250,000 to Thailand in compensation for the losses. It had not hosted the Asian Games ever since. Most thought that it was premature to talk about hosting the Summer Olympics, the biggest sporting event in the world, after a single World Shooting Championships.

In the spring of 1979, there was a citizens' athletic review committee meeting presided over by Prime Minister Nam Duk-woo. Culture Minister Park Chan-hyun, KOC president Park Jong-gyu, IOC member Kim Taek-su, Seoul Mayor Jung Sang-chun, and I got together to discuss the matter of an Olympic bid. The mood was not positive. The first meeting ended inconclusively. By the time of the second meeting, Choi Kyu-hah had replaced Nam Duk-woo as prime minister. Kim Taek-su, who was a member of the IOC at the time, was extremely pessimistic about our chances. "If Seoul did submit a bid for the Olympics, mine would be the only vote," he predicted. But Park Jong-gyu was more impetuous. "Let's just try, and if it doesn't work out we can all resign," he said. Kim Taek-su became argumentative. "If you want to resign, you can resign," he said. "I'm not resigning." The conclusion was that in terms of economic and national strength, it was too early for us to bid for the Olympics.

(Kim Un-yong, *Wise Men Learn from the Elders*)

When Park Jong-gyu took over as president of the Korea Sports Council (KSC) and the Korean Olympic Committee (KOC) in February 1979, he felt fairly confident in South Korea's Olympic bid chances. On March 16, less than a month after becoming president, he secretly submitted a proposal to bid for the Olympics in Seoul to the presiding Ministry of Culture and Education. As a dry run of sorts, he also planned a bid for the 1986 Asian Games. Ministry officials treated the KSC's Olympic bid proposal as part of their routine business; none of them believed it actually feasible. Park Jong-gyu, who enjoyed great authority thanks to the trust of President Park, carried out the follow-up efforts for the bid without any involvement from the Ministry or the city of Seoul.

Thanks to Park Jong-gyu's tenacious efforts and the favorable response from working-level officials handling the bid at the Ministry, Prime Minister Choi Kyu-hah moved on August 3, 1979, to hold a Citizens' Athletic Review Committee meeting to officially discuss an Olympic bid. In a reflection of the issue's importance, a seven-member sub-committee was established to con-

duct a review. Its final decision was to go ahead with the bid—provided that it did not pose too great a financial burden—in the interest of establishing a national consensus, increasing interchange with anti-Communist countries, and gaining the upper hand in competition with the North Korean regime.

After that, efforts quickly fell into place. A written resolution by the Cabinet on September 3 was followed by President Park Chung-hee's approval on September 21. On October 8, 1979, Seoul Mayor Jung Sang-chun held a press conference at the Sejong Culture Center to officially announce the city's bid for the XXIV Summer Olympiad.

But before the excitement of the announcement even had a chance to cool, President Park was fatally shot on October 26, plunging the country into chaos. In the wake of the assassination, no one could even mention the topic of an Olympic bid.

Olympic bidding embers revived

The death of South Korea's president, slain by the head of the Korean Central Intelligence Agency (KCIA), plunged the country into dire chaos. Moreover, there was now no one left to lead the Olympic bid. Indeed, the attempt to win the Olympics had been a one-man effort until then, pursued on the powerful authority of a person—Park Jong-gyu—who enjoyed President Park's absolute trust. It was not an organized effort representing the views of the athletic community as a whole. Park Jong-gyu held on to his nominal position as president of the Korea Sports Council until early July of the year after the assassination. In reality, however, that committee and the KOC were operating under an acting system directed by KOC vice president Cho Sang-ho. The situation was precarious enough that any mention of an Olympic bid remained more or less taboo. More than anything, though, it was the absence of Park Jong-gyu that killed the bid's momentum.

When the embers of the Olympic bid were finally revived, it was after the launch of the Fifth Republic, as General Chun Doo-hwan took office as South Korea's eleventh president on September 1, 1980, after seizing power in the December 12 military insurrection of 1979, in the face of popular resistance movements such as the May 18 Democratic Uprising in Gwangju in 1980.

While it had technically been during the pre-administration period, a bid had been publicly announced, and the KOC had to do something with the

application deadline looming on November 30. With behind-the-scenes support from Park Jong-gyu, Cho Sang-ho made the proposal to the Ministry of Culture and Education as the 26th KSC and KOC president, deciding that it would be in the country's interest to pursue the Seoul Olympics bid as originally planned. Minister Lee Kyu-ho readily agreed.

Park met with State Minister Roh Tae-woo to explain the justification for the bid, while Kim Un-yong provided detailed explanations to prominent Fifth Republic figures including Jung Ho-yong, Lee Sang-hoon, and Park Hee-do, arguing that Seoul did indeed have a chance to win. In the process, Lee Kyu-ho turned to Kim, a fellow Yonsei University alumnus who already enjoyed a great reputation in the international sports community, and actively sought his opinions.

President Chun received a report from Lee on November 28, with two days remaining to submit the Olympic bid. At first, he vacillated between the positions of the city of Seoul and economic officials, who saw the financial burden as too great to justify the bid, and those of the athletic community, which maintained it could help promote the legitimacy of the military government at home and abroad. In the end, Chun decided on November 30 to go ahead with the bid.

His reasoning behind the decision was that “an Olympics bid decision made by the previous president and announced domestically and overseas cannot be altered without special grounds,” and that it would “not be right to give up and succumb to defeatism without even attempting such a historic endeavor.”

The government's position thus decided, the KOC managed to communicate its intent to bid to the IOC before the deadline elapsed. On December 5, the IOC officially announced Seoul, South Korea, and Nagoya, Japan, as candidate cities for the 1988 Summer Olympics.

In February 1981, a task force assembled for the Olympic bid narrowly managed to submit a proposal by the date stated by the IOC—but a problem belatedly arose.

It was the huge budgetary demands that ended up a stumbling block. When the city of Seoul declared its Olympic bid on October 8, 1979, it had a total budget of 250 billion won. The number subsequently swelled to 620 billion won, once the 20 or so new athletic venues demanded by the IOC were factored in. Even this 620 billion won constituted only the direct expenses associated with the Games; adding in the 1.9 trillion won in subway and other overhead costs from the city brought the total to some

2.52 trillion won. Much of this might have been offset if they had born in mind TV broadcasting rights, the insignia (badge) business, and other profit-making ventures. But South Korea's knowledge of the Olympics was so scant, and the time pressure so great, that the bid proposal had essentially been slapped together in haste.

As the swelling price tag resurrected arguments against bidding for the Olympics in Seoul, the period through May 1981 passed without any decision. Full-scale efforts had yet to even get off the ground. It was around this time that Kim Un-yong was attending a joint meeting of the IOC Executive Board and the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF) in Lausanne on April 10, 1981. He was there as an associate member of the association following the approval granted to the WTF by the 1980 IOC General Assembly in Moscow.

This particular event was organized by the IOC to invite Seoul and Nagoya, the two cities that had announced bids for the 1988 Olympics, to explain the state of their Olympic preparations. The representatives from Nagoya, which had been working steadily on its Olympic bid and related promotional activities for the past two years, delivered their report and showed a film on the preparation situation. Seoul was not present—and had not given any sort of reply. At the time, the final decision on whether to go ahead with the bid had not yet been made.

During the meeting, GAISF president Thomas Keller noted to IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch that while Nagoya had come to provide an explanation, Seoul had not responded at all. He suggested that Seoul should be viewed as having no intention to go ahead with its bid, and have its eligibility revoked. Keller was livid that Seoul had not responded to his telex.

In response, Samaranch said that it was “my understanding that Seoul is also making preparations.” They did not know what was happening, he said, and should just wait and see. He also argued that it was better to have two cities vying for the Games rather than just one. Samaranch had overruled Keller. Once the meeting had ended, Kim Un-yong approached Samaranch to express his thanks. “Seoul is indeed preparing,” he told the IOC president, who responded with a message of encouragement.

“Go back and take care of your preparations.”

Considering what might have happened had Samaranch accepted Keller's suggestion, this was a moment of crisis narrowly averted.

Seoul vs. Nagoya battle begins

The South Korean government at this time was in a difficult situation. An inaugural Olympic bidding committee had been staged on April 16 under Prime Minister Nam Duk-woo, but Seoul Mayor Park Young-su and Economic Planning Board Minister Shin Byung-heon both voiced strong opposition to the bid, citing difficulties in coming up with the needed finances. No conclusion had yet been reached. Some of those opposing Seoul's bid for the Olympics suggested reaching a "deal" with Nagoya: Seoul would withdraw its bid and support Nagoya's in exchange for Japan supporting South Korea's bid for the Asian Games. The idea did not materialize.

While this was happening, inspection teams began arriving in Seoul in accordance with the IOC's candidate city inspection schedule. Inspectors from the Association of National Olympic Committees (ANOC), the IOC, and the international federations actually overseeing the events visited the city between March 28 and June 9. Their conclusions boosted Seoul's chances: the results, they said, showed Seoul to be on par with such modern global cities as New York and Tokyo.

As the situation took a rapid turn, the order finally came in late May to start preparing for the Olympic bid. The foreign minister sent cables to overseas missions asking them to contact local IOC members to share South Korea's plans to bid for the Olympics and enlist their support. Seoul Mayor Park Young-su sent a letter from the city to the NOC formally announcing its bid.

Minister of Culture and Education Lee Kyu-ho had argued strongly for the Olympic bid from the start. To him, Kim Un-yong was the only one he could trust. Part of this had to do with their sharing an alma mater, but Kim had also established himself by then as a prominent figure in the international sports world. Every time they met, Lee implored Kim to do his best to meet with IOC members and win their support for Seoul's Olympic bid. "If we don't get the Asian Games or the Olympics, I may be drummed out of here," he joked. Lee was the supporter, while Kim was the man of action—the two of them working together as a team.

The Olympic planning team was soon joined by KBS president Lee Won-hong, and the group would meet every day at the Lotte Hotel to deliberate. With just four months remaining before the September 30 Olympic Congress in Baden-Baden where the Olympic host city would be decided, they had no choice but to wage a full-scale campaign.

In most cases, Olympic bids begin with an application from the city hoping to host the games or its athletic community. South Korea's case was different. The Olympics' status as the world's biggest sports festival raises a whole host of issues involving airport controls, immigration management, customs, ports, public health, infrastructure, and security. As a result, the organizing committee's composition is necessarily quite dependent on the government of the country in question. In South Korea's case, the bid originated with the government after a decision by the president. As a result, it held a distinct advantage over Nagoya's in terms of staffing, resources, preparations, and financial support. It might not be overstating things to say that the battle had begun not between Nagoya and Seoul, but between Nagoya and South Korea.

The Baden-Baden Miracle

A four-month omnidirectional sports diplomacy campaign

South Korea first competed in the Olympics under the Taegukgi flag in 1948. A team of 50 athletes in seven sports competed in the Summer Games in London. It had also participated in February of the same year at the Winter Olympics in St. Moritz, but there it only brought three athletes.

It was not until 28 years later in 1976 that Yang Jung-mo wore South Korea's first gold medal around his neck at the Montreal Olympics. South Korea sat out the 1980 Moscow Olympics, joining a boycott by the US and other Western countries over the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan. As a result, it had relatively little interaction with the international sports community. Because so little time had passed since Korea's liberation from Japanese colonial rule and the horrors of the Korean War, most of the overseas sports officials still regarded it as a poor developing country. In short, South Korea was a marginal presence, recognized by almost no one in the international sports world.

While all this was happening, Kim Un-yong was following up his meteoric rise in international sports through the 1973 establishment of the WTF and its recognition by the IOC and admission to GAISF by building close ties with international federation presidents and IOC members as the first Asian Non-Olympic Federation (NOF) chairman and inaugural chairman of the World Games. He was of course still serving as vice president of the KSC and KOC back home, but most of his real activities were skewed internationally. For the sake of Seoul's Olympic bid, Kim's actions—and his ability to win over IOC members—now emerged as a major factor.

The inaugural World Games had taken place in Santa Clara on July 24–August 2, 1981. After they finished, Kim did not have the luxury of immediately returning to South Korea. Instead, he traveled to Ecuador to meet with Agustín Arroyo and to Panama to meet with Virgilio de León. For two days, he stayed with them, using Central and South America as the base for his Olympic bid activities. From there, he headed to New York, where he met with American IOC Executive Board member Julian Roosevelt and Canadian IOC member Richard W. Pound. He was able to meet with so many IOC members because of his roles as WTF president, GAISF executive committee member, and World Games chairman. During their meeting,

Roosevelt complained that South Korean embassy employees were pressing too hard for a meeting and asked for them to stop hounding him.

To establish a European base, activities in the UK were entrusted to International Table Tennis Federation president Roy Evans and NOC secretary general Richard Palmer. They traveled to meet with IOC member Kees Kerdel in the Netherlands, IOC Executive Board member Prince Alexandre de Merode and International Military Sport Council (CISM) secretaries general Raoul Mollet and Adrian Vanden Eede in Belgium, and Grand Duke Jean in Luxembourg to request their support for Seoul.

Kim Un-yong also invited Louis Guirandou N'Diaye of Ivory Coast to Seoul, who became the first IOC member to visit with Seoul Mayor Jung Sang-chun to hear a briefing on the Olympic preparations. Kim further availed himself of every opportunity to talk to foreign journalists about Seoul's chances of winning the bid. He arranged for Norway's Jan Staubo to visit Hyundai Shipbuilding yards, letting him see for himself the state of economic development in South Korea.

"The IOC has 80 members, but they don't vote as country blocs," he explained. "South Korea does not have diplomatic ties with socialist countries, but there are only around ten IOC members from socialist states. Not all of the IOC members are going to be friends of Japan, and while Japan has hosted both Summer and Winter Olympics, South Korean has never hosted either. Seoul is already building new stadiums, while Japan's exist only on paper. And while non-Koreans may not know much about Seoul, that problem can be solved through active publicity." This was the approach Kim encouraged to ensure press coverage would be as positive as possible.

As the bid was entering its final stage around mid-August, Prime Minister Nam Duk-woo presided over a meeting of the Olympic bid countermeasures council. It was an occasion for summarizing interim results of the bidding activities to date. The findings showed that while around 60 IOC members had been contacted, only about five actively supported the bid, with 16 each pledging support and "favorable consideration." In contrast, almost no meetings had been held with IOC members from Communist countries. In terms of region, North America and Oceania were relatively positive toward Seoul, while Europe, the Communist Bloc, and the Middle East leaned toward Nagoya. South America and Africa were on the fence, suggesting considerable opportunities to make inroads.

The results were encouraging, but there was still some trepidation. In the bidding activities to date, Seoul had been rated as far superior to Nagoya in

terms of venue infrastructure and urban environment but was consistently hampered by the issues of participation by Communist countries without diplomatic ties to South Korea and the athletes' safety issues resulting from tense antagonism between South and North Korea. The IOC members had painful memories of the 1972 Munich Olympics, where the Arab guerrilla group Black September had infiltrated the athletes' village and massacred eleven Israeli athletes and coaches. There were also concerns stemming from the Moscow Olympics the year before, where the Western boycott had resulted in an incomplete Olympics. If Seoul won the Olympics bid and the Communist countries boycotted, they feared, this sort of incompleteness might become a permanent state of affairs. The bid's success now hinged on their ability to assuage the IOC members' fears in the remaining time.

During the same period, Japan extended invitations to all IOC members and completed its visits and meetings. The Japanese were brimming with confidence, sure that they had the minimum number of votes to put them on safe ground.

Ten-day operation in Baden-Baden

In late August, a little over a month before the IOC General Assembly meeting in Baden-Baden, Kim Un-yong met with Culture Minister Lee Kyu-ho. They were attempting to reach an accurate assessment of the situation to date. More than anything, Lee trusted in Kim's decisions. Not only was he personally close with many of the IOC members, but his role in overseeing international federations as head of the NOF, even if they were non-Olympic events, meant that he was more knowledgeable about the international sports world than anyone else involved in the bid.

Kim told Lee that with a bit more support behind the bidding committee, Seoul had a chance to defeat Nagoya. Even then, the city of Seoul remained skeptical. Lee reported the message to President Chun Doo-hwan and the administration's second-in-command, State Minister for Political Affairs Roh Tae-woo. In a September 3 national security countermeasure meeting at the Blue House, President Chun delivered an emphatic message of commitment: "Whatever happens, bring us the Olympics." He also delivered a special order to Seoul Mayor Park Young-su, informing him that his job depended on his performance at the General Assembly meeting. With the president's words, all that was left was the dispatch of the troops.



Kim Un-yong attends the 1981 IOC general meeting in Baden-Baden with the meeting's general secretary, West German IOC member Walther Tröger.

As the six official representatives were preparing to leave for the General Assembly meeting in Baden-Baden, Kim Un-yong received a letter from IOC director general Monique Berlioux. It informed him that he had a pending ID application as WTF president as well as another as one of the six official members of the Seoul Olympic bidding committee. He had to choose one of the two, the letter said.

Previously, the government's special countermeasures division had notified the IOC of six people selected as official representatives to attend the important presentation: Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) chairman Chung Ju-yung, Seoul Mayor Park Young-su, KOC president Cho Sang-ho and vice president Jeon Sang-jin, Korea Broadcasting Service (KBS) president Lee Won-hong, and WTF president Kim Un-yong. Hearing of this, Kim Un-yong recommended that former KOC honorary secretary general Lee Won-kyung be made an official representative in his stead. His suggestion was initially opposed, dismissed as an example of Kim's humility.

Kim saw things differently. As WTF president, he was eligible to enter the IOC General Assembly meeting site. For IOC General Assembly meetings, IOC members were issued "A" cards, international federation representatives "B" cards, NOC members "C" cards, and official representatives "D" cards. A, B, and C cards qualified the holder to attend all meetings, while D cards only allowed the holders to attend for an hour and a half to present their application. His conclusion was that even if his name was left off the list of official delegates, a B card would be more advantageous to him because he could freely attend different meetings and talk to IOC members there.

Meanwhile, an emergency cash infusion was needed after the local activity

funds allocated by the government proved woefully inadequate. The problem was solved without much fuss when Chung Ju-yung provided an initial loan of \$200,000, which he agreed to resolve later. Once the host city was decided, Chung generously agreed to write off the entire amount.

Prior to traveling to Baden-Baden, Kim Un-yong had worked consistently with Chung. Chung said that while he was handling the work of supporting the South Korean economy, he did not know anyone; he asked to be taken along and be introduced to people. To prepare gifts before the group's departure, Kim received 6 million won from Chung to buy quartz necklaces, bracelets, brooches, and ginseng products. He brought them to Chung and told him to use them as he saw fit. The Japanese side was already carrying around Seiko watches and pearl rings at the time.

Corporation heads involved in the Olympic bid, including the Daewoo Group's Kim Woo-joong, the Dongah Group's Choi Won-seok, the Hanjin Group's Cho Choong-hoon, Hanyang Corporation's Bai Jong-ryul, and KOTRA's Jang Sung-hwan, toured countries in Africa, Europe, and South-east Asia. Further support came unexpectedly in the form of Park Jong-gyu, who had first lit the embers of the Olympic bid with the successful staging of the 1978 World Shooting Championships. Park was not allowed to travel overseas at the time due to the terms of the Political Activity Prohibition Act, but the authorities granted solicitude and allowed him to attend for the sake of the Olympic bid.

Finally, it was time to depart for Baden-Baden and the final showdown. Located along the middle course of the Oos River in the Black Forest of southwestern Germany's Baden-Württemberg state, Baden-Baden is a resort community of just 40,000 people noted in Europe for its hot springs. The members of the South Korean delegation, including the bid representatives and support staff, assembled in the town on April 21, a day before the exhibition hall's opening. Just ten days remained before the IOC General Assembly meeting where the 1988 Summer Olympics host city would be decided. The battle of sports diplomacy had entered its final stages.

A united bidding team goes to work

South Korea's delegation was meticulous with its preparations, from promotional booklets on the city of Seoul to equipment for the exhibition hall, VIP presents and souvenirs, and interpreting staff. Kim Un-yong, who

had ample experience attending international sports meetings and various international sports events, proposed various ideas for the things the delegation should prepare and the plans they should develop; most of these ideas were adopted.

For its meeting sites, South Korea turned mostly to the French restaurant Stahlbad and the Chinese restaurant China Palace. The IOC was based in the Brenners Park Hotel and the IFs in the Bellevue Hotel. There, together with Chung Ju-yung, Kim met with IOC members with whom he was on friendly terms. Indeed, he met so many people that he could not remember just how many, including Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye, Lance Cross, Virgilio de Leon, Julian Roosevelt, Niels Holst-Sørensen, Agustin Arroyo, Mario Vázquez Raña, Thomas Keller, Boris Stankovic, Horst Dassler, and Kéba Mbaye. Taekwondo instructors arrived in force to lend their aid, including Choi Won-cheol from Spain and Kim Man-geum and Park Soenam from Germany.

The South Korean delegates used every connection they could to meet with the IOC members. Bed-ridden IOC member Hamzah Abu Samah was brought from Malaysia by Ambassador Choi Ho-joong and escorted to Frankfurt by Kim Un-yong for his return home. Hamzah would become a major source of aid in soliciting backing for South Korea's bid from IOC members representing Islamic countries.

The rear support team was entrusted to Lee Yeon-taek, an administrative coordinator in the Prime Minister's Office. The South Korean delegation had an official and unofficial support staff of around 100 members. Since there were no vacancies in central Baden-Baden, Lee rented out the Wald Hotel in the valley for daily strategy meetings.

On September 23, a gallery was set up in Baden-Baden's Altbahnhof to promote the countries and cities bidding for the Olympics. Exhibition halls were opened for five cities: Seoul and Nagoya, which were hoping to stage the 1988 Summer Olympics, and the Winter Olympics candidate cities of Calgary, Canada; Falun, Sweden; and Cortina, Italy. The gallery was one of the key means of promotion on site; its importance could not be stressed enough as the main venue sought out by IOC members, world sports leaders, and visitors.

South Korea's exhibition hall measured around 30 *pyeong* (100 square meters), centering on a mock-up of Jamsil Olympic Stadium (then under construction) and providing vivid illustrations of the country's traditional culture and modernized present. The national specialty of red ginseng tea,

served in porcelain cups, was chosen as a beverage for the gallery, which was fitted out with items reflecting South Korea's traditions: KOC badges, *tae-geuk* fans, mask wall hangings, a model of a golden crown, *kkotsin* flower shoes, and traditional *norigae* ornaments.

Hearing that Japan was bringing in Japan Airlines (JAL) crew members, the South Koreans also introduced their own five flight attendants from Korean Airlines (KAL): Kim Yeo-ok, Yu Seung-hee, Choi Seung-hee, Kim Sung-mi, and Choi Jung-ran.

Three former Miss Koreas were also brought in. Visitors were entranced by the beautiful smiling guides dressed in lovely traditional Korean silk *hanbok* outfits. They offered a top-of-the-line reception with their cups of ginseng tea, while souvenirs lovingly prepared to emphasize South Korea's traditional grace proved wildly popular. Sohn Kee-chung, the gold medalist marathoner from the 1936 Berlin Olympics, made a deep impression taking commemorative pictures with visitors in the hall and signing autographs. It was a hugely successful, lively hall, with IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch and over 30 IOC members counted among its more than 10,000 visitors.

Japan, in contrast, already had the experience of hosting the Summer Olympics in Tokyo and Winter Olympics in Sapporo and had its Olympic bid prepared early on. As a result, it may have been a bit over-confident. Its Nagoya gallery was staffed by just two female PR employees and had only a few photographs in it. Its main stadium and other venues and sporting facilities were still only plans on paper; none of them were yet under construction.

Nevertheless, the prevailing view was that Nagoya still held the advantage. The day before voting, *LA Times* reporter Ken Reich and Kyodo News reporter Miyakawa both predicted Nagoya would win by 20 votes.

Cheers for 'Séoul, Corée'

South Korea's bidding campaign was a well-oiled machine, everything moving perfectly like interlocking gears. It was a coordinated effort by KOC president Cho Sang-ho, "enlisted man" Park Jong-gyu, a KOC team boasting outstanding English abilities (with Kim Un-yong, Jeon Sang-jin, Choi Man-rip, and Kim Se-won), Chung Ju-yung and other business world figures, and six different support teams.

Seoul was at a disadvantage to Nagoya in every respect. Nagoya had begun its preparations two years earlier and had everything in place, with invitations extended to all the IOC members.

In Seoul's case, the final decision to go ahead with the bid had come just four months before the IOC General Assembly meeting. It stood to reason that it would be lagging behind. Nobody felt certain of its prospects for victory. In fact, most did not even believe it could win. At the same time, everyone did sense how many of the IOC members came around to South Korea's side over the brief four months of preparations.

Kim Un-yong in particular sensed that while they might not be showing it outwardly, the IOC members were leaning more and more toward supporting Seoul's bid. Two days before the briefings began, he met with GAISF president Thomas Keller and ANOC president Mario Vázquez Raña. Keller had previously predicted Nagoya would win by a large margin; now, he said, it finally seemed that Seoul might have a shot. Vázquez Raña, for his part, arranged to have Chung Ju-yung meet with Adidas chairman Horst Dassler.

Beyond his role as chairman of the Adidas sporting goods company, Dassler had great pull with IOC members representing Communist countries. For Vázquez Raña to volunteer to arrange a meeting with him provided evidence that Seoul was by no means out of the competition with Nagoya. Chung offered his pledge that Adidas sporting goods would be used if Seoul hosted the Olympics. He had cannily tapped into Adidas's fears that it might lose markets to competing companies like Mizuno if Nagoya became host city. Dassler's support proved invaluable in gaining support for Seoul's bid from the IOC members from Communist countries that Seoul itself could not approach.

The taekwondo instructors following Kim Un-yong contributed in their own ways. Someone provided a tipoff that officials of the International Taekwon-Do Federation headed by Choi Hong-hi, then in exile in Canada, were descending on Baden-Baden to oppose Seoul's bid. Kim did not think this plausible, but the information had been passed along to him by Cho Sang-ho, so he had to take it at face value. Immediately, he enlisted some of the taekwondo instructors—including Lee Geum-hong from Seoul, Kim Man-geum from Germany, and Choi Won-cheol from Spain—to provide security for South Korea's representatives. They were now prepared for Choi's agents to arrive; as expected, however, they never did.

In an effort to boost morale among the support team members, Stutt-

gart-based instructor Park Su-nam visited the hotel one day with a car full of crocks containing a wide variety of Korean foods. The hotel where the South Korean representatives were staying was under tight security, as it provided accommodations not only for Prince Philip, Yuri Titov, Primo Nebiolo, and other IOC members, but all of the international federation presidents and secretaries general. The security staff conducting the inspection refused to allow the food to be brought in, until the South Korean delegation members personally vouched for it. It was an illustration of the way the South Korean delegation, the support team, and the taekwondo instructors living in Europe worked together singled-mindedly for the Olympic bid. Nagoya, in contrast, was facing demonstrations by citizens opposing its bid.

One day, Chung Ju-yung approached Kim and suggested that they go to the park. When they arrived, he shared a message of consolation. “If I really think about it, you seem to be the only one who knows people and can do the job,” he said. “No matter how unpleasant things get, do your best for the country. And take me along with you. I’ll explain things to President Chun when I return.” Later in his life, Kim Un-yong would remember Chung as “a tremendously generous and active person with an enormous sense of resolution in approaching his work.”

The decision day finally arrived. A final presentation summarizing all of the bidding activities to date was held at the Kurhaus on September 29, a day ahead of the General Assembly meeting. Believing that this presentation was their last chance, the South Korean representatives scrupulously checked everything, preparing answers for anticipated questions in 150 areas.

Nagoya still appeared confident of its victory. Regarding it as more or less a formality, its representatives made their presentation without any great emphasis. Seoul’s representatives presented next, with Mayor Park Young-su delivering a simple greeting message before Cho Sang-ho spoke about the justification for Seoul hosting the Games and showed a 16-minute video. The images offered a comprehensive look at Seoul’s splendidly modern face and its various sporting facilities, including Jamsil Stadium, which was then under construction. Kim Un-yong had supplied different ideas for the video, believing that a great effort had to go into crafting it to win over the IOC members.

Next came a Q&A session with 13 IOC members and international federation presidents. Most of the questions concerned technical issues with the venues, athletes’ safety and athletes’ village concerns, accommodations, transportation measures, and various amenities.

Finally, the question they had been waiting for arrived. The president of the International Federation of Gymnastics (FIG), Yuri Titov of the Soviet Union (USSR), skeptically asked, “Seoul is asking Japan to loan it \$6 billion. Isn’t that money to host the Olympics?” He seemed to be asking the question on Japan’s behalf.

But that was one of the questions that they had prepared for in advance. Deputy Prime Minister Yu Chang-soon tackled the response. “The issue of a loan from Japan is a simple economic matter between countries,” he said. “Not only that, but borrowing money for economic construction is something seen frequently in other countries around the world and has nothing whatsoever to do with the Olympic bid.” Yu went on to say that “by the time the Olympics are held in 1988, South Korea’s economic capabilities will far exceed Japan’s GNP at the time the 1964 Tokyo Olympics were held.” After overwhelming the meeting with his lucid economic logic, Yu landed the final counterpunch with his argument centering on security and economic cooperation.

The Korean Peninsula has been divided for 36 years. The Armistice has persisted for the 28 years since the Korean War. South Korea is investing huge amounts of financial resources on this front to preserve the peace. Our security capabilities are directly tied to Japan’s security. Yet Japan does nothing to assist South Korea with its security burden. I believe the public loan is significant in making up for that vacuum.

*(The Miracle of Baden-Baden: A Story I Want to Share,
Korea Sports Promotion Foundation, 2011)*

Another question came from IOC member Lance Cross (New Zealand), who raised the question of South Koreans lacking color television. KBS president Lee Won-hong delivered a fluid and lucid response on the availability of color TV, satellites, and an international broadcast center (IBC). IOC members even questioned whether South Korea’s greater distance compared to Japan meant that airfare would be higher. As a question, this defied common sense, but such was the situation at the time: even IOC members were simply that unaware about Seoul.

After the explanations from Nagoya and Seoul came a technical meeting between the IOC and international federations. Kim Un-yong was present at the meeting as president of the World Taekwondo Federation. Without him, without the establishment of the WTF, and without the WTF’s eventual

recognition by the IOC, South Korea would not have had a representative at the meeting—that is, no one to discuss the issues that emerged there. Most of the issues raised during the meeting concerned the long distance to Seoul, its lack of experience hosting global championship events, and the lack of infrastructure at a global standard. Kim replied to each with brief explanations that had the IOC members and international federation presidents nodding along.

At 2 p.m. the next day, the 80 IOC members filed into the voting site at the Kurhaus. An hour and 45 minutes later, Samaranch ascended the platform and took out a piece of paper with the voting outcome.

“Séoul, Corée.”

For a moment, silence reigned. South Korea’s representatives were speechless—dumbfounded. Was this a dream? In delivering the announcement, even Samaranch is said to have questioned whether there was some error in the total. Someone shouted “Hurrah!” and the Korean delegates began screaming and embracing one another. The vote was 52-to-27, a perfect victory by a nearly twofold score.

“The IOC’s selection of Seoul is a victory for the Olympic movement,” Samaranch said in a press conference. Japan, for its part, offered feeble excuses, complaining it had been “defeated by South Korea’s honey trap.”

Hearing the results of the bid for the Seoul Olympics, Kim Un-yong came to a realization. At the time the city first bid for the Games, no one truly had believed that it would succeed. And yet now it had won. To be sure, a number of factors can be cited for the success—but that would simply be a matter of analyzing the outcome. Kim never believed that Seoul’s success in bidding for the Olympics was a miracle. Victory does not arrive in the form of miracles, he insisted—it requires the crucial efforts that will put it within one’s grasp. The simple fact that no vote is certain until the counting is complete would serve as an invaluable lesson to him later on in the process of having taekwondo adopted as an official Olympic sport and making his own bid for the IOC presidency.

After the General Assembly meeting ended, a celebratory reception for Seoul’s selection as Olympic host city was held at the Kurhaus. A jubilant Chung Ju-yung danced around merrily. KAL chairman Cho Choong-hoon feted the delegates’ return home with a specially provided Boeing 747. Once they arrived back in Seoul, they headed straight to the presidential Blue House to report to President Chun Doo-hwan. Each of them delivered some remarks, but none of them boasted of their own achievements. Instead, their

words of praise were reserved for each other.

Seeing this, President Chun praised their efforts saying, “Koreans have a habit of mainly boasting about themselves. To see the way you are conceding to and praising each other, I get the sense that everyone has really worked together on this. If you bring that kind of spirit to preparing for the Olympics, I’m sure everything will go well.”

Broadcasting Rights: The Cornerstone to a Successful Olympics

The SLOOC's launch and international relations

See the fire in the sky
We feel the beating of our hearts together
This is our time to rise above
We know the chance is here to live forever
For all time

Hand in hand we stand all across the land
We can make this world a better place in which to live
Hand in hand we can start to understand
Breaking down the walls that come between us for all time
Arirang

Every time we give it all
We feel the flame eternally inside us
Lift our hands up to the sky
The morning calm helps us to live in harmony
For all time

Hand in hand we stand all across the land
We can make this world a better place in which to live
Hand in hand we can start to understand
Breaking down the walls that come between us for all time
Arirang

(“Hand in Hand,” the 1988 Seoul Olympics theme song)

On September 30, 1981, a milestone in South Korean history had been achieved. To skip ahead in the story, the Seoul Olympics would be a meticulously prepared success that reaffirmed Olympic values by honoring the basic sporting philosophy of unity between East and West. The successful staging of the Olympics would also lend further momentum to South Korea's economic and democratic development, providing a foothold for its emergence from developing to developed economy—and eventually the advanced country that it is becoming today. South Korea stands alone in



Kim Un-yong with the group Koreana, singers of the theme song for the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

the world as a country that achieved political and economic development simultaneously while staging the global sports festival that is the Olympics. But while its political system and economy developed over the course of the Olympics' preparations and staging, the process was by no means an untroubled one.

On November 2, a month after Seoul had been selected as host city for the Olympics, the Seoul Olympics Bidding Committee was developmentally dissolved, and the Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee (SLOOC) was established at the Sejong Center in downtown Seoul. From this time until its eventual post-Olympics disbanding on April 3, 1989, SLOOC would work as one with the government and Korean Olympic Committee, channeling all of its energies and administrative capabilities into preparing for and staging the Games.

In its seven years and five months of operation, the SLOOC served as the guiding force for sports in South Korea. Its presidency was held in turn by Kim Yong-sik, Roh Tae-woo, and Park Se-jik; after being appointed an IOC member in 1986, Kim Un-yong directed practical efforts at home and overseas as SLOOC's senior vice president.

The biggest issue at the time of SLOOC's establishment was South Korea's lack of any kind of official relationship with China and the Soviet Union, as well as any other members of the Eastern Bloc. There were no diplomatic ties, no economic or cultural interchange. The SLOOC had to deal with a number of disruptions as a result, including boycotts, terrorist threats, and demands for venue changes, and spent a great deal of time and effort resolving them. Most of the international issues were handled by Kim Un-yong. Having established himself early on the international stage, he had inter-

acted closely with international federation officials, IOC members, and even athletic officials in Communist countries.

The SLOOC was an acting organization entrusted with authority from the IOC to prepare for the Olympics in accordance with the Olympic Charter. Maintaining close cooperation between the SLOOC and IOC was thus a matter of paramount importance.

It was here that Kim's role was especially significant. By necessity, everything had to be based on the Olympic Charter, and the NOCs were obligated to comply with the IOC's direction. Where Kim was unable to resolve an issue, the IOC stepped in to provide assistance, offering expert information on areas that he was not familiar with.

Between national pride and stark reality

Earnings from the sale of television broadcasting rights are the IOC's chief source of revenue and funding. Fundamentally, those earnings belong to the IOC, with guarantees in place for their use on behalf of all sports.

In terms of the specific uses of these earnings, around 20 percent are allocated to television infrastructure. Two-thirds of the remainder are given to the Olympic organizing committee, while the other third is in turn split by the IOC into thirds as cooperation funds for the IOC, international federations, and the NOCs. Funds allocated to the IOC are used for transportation and lodging for international referees, while those given to individual NOCs are used for equipment and for transportation and lodging for athletes and officials. The more funds that can be negotiated from broadcasters, the more money is assigned to the organizing committee, which serves to determine whether an Olympics made or lost money. In other words, television broadcasting rights are the single biggest revenue source for the Olympics.

The history of Olympic broadcasting rights dates back to the 1960, when the US network CBS paid \$50,000 to broadcast the Squaw Valley Winter Olympics. Amid the development of television and its increasingly widespread availability (especially in color), as well as the growing popularity of sports, the amounts rose to \$1.5 million for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, \$25 million for the 1976 Montreal Olympics, and \$85 million for the 1980 Moscow Olympics. For the 1984 Summer Olympics in LA, ABC paid a full \$225 million. TV broadcasting rights truly were the goose that laid the golden egg.

For South Korean officials, these numbers were a source of misunderstanding. Seeing that the amounts had tripled with each passing Olympics, they estimated the Seoul Olympics would receive over \$600 million. But the organizing committee members failed to understand the reality, and their expectation proved naïve.

To begin with, the Calgary Winter Games and Seoul Summer Games were both held in 1988, coming a scant seven months apart. (At the time, the two Olympics were customarily both held in the same year.) The US advertising market was not big enough to pay \$800–900 million to broadcast two sets of Olympics in one year. Moreover, CBS and ABC, the two networks interested in broadcasting the Olympics, were poised for acquisition by other companies. South Korea was well and truly in the dark when it came to international sports trends.

Second, the US broadcasters remained skeptical of the Seoul Olympics' commercial success. The 1980 Moscow Olympics and 1984 Los Angeles Olympics had been "half-events." Given Korea's division, it was unclear whether the Communist countries would take part in the Seoul Olympics, and North Korea was seen as posing a serious terrorism threat. Serious misgivings remained about whether the Olympics could actually be staged in Korea.

Third, the organizing committee committed an elementary mistake. Strictly speaking, it was not the committee itself, but Trans World International (TWI), which the committee had contracted as a television consultant. While the organizing committee and TWI were playing the numbers game with their predictions in the \$500–600 million range, Barry Frank of TWI, an advisory committee member with whom the organizing committee had a \$1 million contract, took it upon himself to announce the morning finals schedule for major events. Because the event schedule was the prerogative of the organizing committee, Frank believed that he could develop and announce it as he saw fit.

In reality, the event schedule is closely tied to television ratings and is a very important matter in broadcasting rights negotiations. For that reason, it requires close coordination with the international federations for the respective events. The East Coast of the US, which pays the most in broadcasting rights, has a 14-hour time difference from South Korea. For ratings to rise, the major event finals for the most popular sports in the US, including track and field and swimming events, have to take place between 8 p.m. and midnight in New York. The more sports fans are tuning in, the

greater the advertising fees rise and the more beneficial the situation is in terms of negotiating broadcasting rights. Here, the event schedule had been announced unilaterally without any awareness of the situation. It was no wonder that the international federations and networks were up in arms.

Fourth, Frank's proposal to have them produce the content themselves and sell it all over the world—which was made in response to setbacks in the US broadcasting rights negotiations—was utterly unacceptable. A breakdown in broadcasting rights negotiations with the US not only results in no Olympic effect, but also creates problems for negotiations with other countries, including Japan and European countries. In the case of the IOC, the matter is even more serious.

For these reasons, the IOC estimated that the Olympics broadcasting rights would come out to around \$400 million at most—far short of the organizing committee's expectations.

Kim Un-yong's first order of business was to address the event scheduling issue. Only then could the organizing committee nudge the broadcasting rights negotiations with the US in a more beneficial direction.

With International Swimming Federation (ISF) president Robert Helmick, Kim coordinated some of the finals to strike a balance between the morning and evening schedule by putting diving events during morning hours. He also obtained an agreement from International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) president Yuri Titov by moving some of the finals up to midday. He struggled until the eleventh hour coordinating schedules with the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF), which remained at odds even after the intervention of organizing committee secretary general Cho Sang-ho. In addition to the large number of events, such factors as the athletes' conditions and IAAF traditions also had to be taken into account.

Only after scheduling coordination was complete for the most popular events—track and field, swimming, and gymnastics—did he begin negotiating broadcasting rights.

The two days of negotiations began on September 12, 1985, at the Lausanne Palace hotel in Switzerland. IOC television subcommittee member Dick Pound and the South Korean delegation consisting of Sports Minister Lee Young-ho, working level committee chair Kim Un-yong, and project official Park Se-young from the SLOOC met in turn with individual networks.

After the meetings with the different US television channels, the offers stood at \$300 million from CBS, and \$225 million from ABC with an additional guarantee of up to \$135 million from cable network ESPN. NBC

said it would offer \$325 million with no strings attached, or \$300 million combined with an additional amount of up to \$150 million if advertising revenue exceeded \$637.5 million.

It was a dilemma for Kim Un-yong, caught between his sense of national pride and the going market rates. He explained in detail about his extensive research on the event schedule and the international broadcasting center (IBC)'s facilities and services, but his words fell on deaf ears with the networks.

After six months of negotiations, a contract with NBC

The numbers were a disappointment for the organizing committee, which had been expecting at least \$500 million. The mood back at home upon their return was similarly dire. The IOC was pressuring them to sign a contract quickly with NBC; from South Korea, there was pressure to refuse it as a matter of national pride.

Kim Un-yong knew that no US broadcaster was willing to pay \$500 million for the rights to broadcast the Seoul Olympics. At the time, NBC and the other networks had total budgets in the range of \$2 billion. Factoring in all the costs for the broadcasting of popular US sports like Major League Baseball and NFL football, the various National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) events, NBA basketball, and NHL hockey, along with program and music production, the \$300 million in production costs to broadcast the Olympics, and the purchasing of equipment, Olympic broadcasting rights in the \$500–600 million range were out of the question. At



IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch, Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee senior vice president Kim Un-yong, and NBC president Arthur Watson hold a signing ceremony on March 26, 1986, following protracted negotiations with the US network for Olympic television broadcasting rights.

the same time, Kim was not in a position to say anything openly about it, after the organizing committee's high expectations—stoked by consultancy TWI's tantalizing predictions—had been relayed in full to the Blue House.

He had not held out high hopes for either CBS or ABC, as he had already heard tips that the former might be acquired by Tisch and the latter by Capital Cities Communications. NBC, however, seemed proactive about its offer, sending Alex Gilady, Jarobin Gilbert, and former Under Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke to Seoul several times for the groundwork. Kim saw some serious potential there.

To Sports Minister Lee Young-ho, who joined him in the negotiations, Kim suggested making an offer to NBC of \$350 million plus \$150 million in scaled profits based on advertising revenue. It did not go over. The \$350 million total was considered absolutely unacceptable, falling well short of the organizing committee's predictions of \$500–600 million. If anything, Lee was optimistic that the amount would increase over time. The reality was the reverse. If anyone was feeling the heat, it was the organizing committee.

The second round of negotiations in New York in October 1985 was a different situation. Project team director Park Se-young had resigned from the delegation on grounds of his own business, and legal adviser Don Petroni (a partner at O'Melveny & Myers) had no authority to make important decisions. As chief negotiator, Kim Un-yong was in the position of having to handle everything on his own, from the preparations to the final decisions. He had to be diplomat, jurist, and television expert all in one.

ABC and CBS refused to budge from the amounts in their first round of negotiations. Realizing that they were effectively the sole bidders, NBC offered \$300 million, take it or leave it. It was an arrogance born of disregard. Kim would have been willing to sign with CBS if it paid just \$2 million more, but the network was adamant on its \$300 million offer. He had no choice but to sign with NBC.

The IOC was urging a swift resolution to the contract, while NBC turned the screws by claiming to have Samaranch's agreement. At that moment, an idea occurred to Kim. After considering whether there might not be some way of winning a bit more—if only for the sake of national pride and the national interest—he came up with a practical compromise. In light of NBC's unwillingness to pay any more than \$300 million, he suggested accepting that as a base amount, along with guarantees of up to \$200 million if advertising revenues exceeded \$637.5 million.

The broadcasting rights negotiations with NBC were more than just

an issue of money; they would have a decisive impact on talks with other broadcasters around the world. If these talks broke down, it would spell the end to any broadcasting rights negotiations with US networks, and the prestige of the Seoul Olympics would suffer. It would lead to further discussions of a change in the host city, and whatever outcome that had, it would clearly have a momentous impact on the staging of the Games.

NBC accepted his offer the next day. But there would be even more hurdles to clear for both sides before the contract was signed.

Once NBC accepted the offer, Kim asked network president Arthur Watson for a guarantee from Radio Corporation of America (RCA), the network's parent company. He was finally able to return home with RCA's guarantee after some prodding from Samaranch, who told Watson to "provide the guarantee and get things wrapped up quickly." But some figures in the South Korean cabinet complained about the fact that a company like RCA was providing the guarantee for the US side, while South Korea had Korea Exchange Bank providing its guarantee; these were institutions of differing ranks, they argued. "RCA is bigger than Korea Exchange Bank," Deputy Prime Minister for the Economy Kim Man-je declared in response. "There is no issue." The matter was passed. While these issues were being raised in South Korea, the contract's signing was being delayed by differences of opinion on key matters with its terms. The matters related to the inherent complexity of broadcasting rights negotiations and the demands of NBC, which was asking for protections on all rights.

The central issue concerned refund conditions. NBC was presenting repayment conditions in anticipation of a possible cancellation or postponement of the Olympics, their staging in a location that was not near Seoul, or the Communist countries' failure to participate due to the same East-West hostilities seen with the Moscow and Los Angeles Games. The network's request was for Korea Exchange Bank to issue a letter of credit for a total repayment fund of \$330 million, upon which NBC would be able to automatically request payment at any time.

Neither the organizing committee nor the government would look kindly on this. In reality, a letter of credit would present no issue so long as the Olympics went ahead normally. But without any precedent on the matter, no conclusion could be reached, despite repeated urgings of the IOC.

Determining that broadcasting rights negotiations with other countries might be significantly affected if things dragged out too long, Kim decided to pay a visit to Samaranch in December 1985. He made a new offer: if

the letter of credit's scope could be reduced by eliminating certain items that were beyond their power to guarantee, he would broach the issuance with the South Korean government. Samaranch immediately called NBC to explain the new proposal, but the network's response was to unilaterally call a postponement to the negotiations. Yet another round of negotiations ensued in New York on January 13–20, 1986, but they merely resulted in the same issues being raised without any progress.

There would be no resolution unless the letter of credit was issued. Kim Un-yong headed to the Blue House with Sports Minister Park Se-jik to deliver a detailed explanation and describe the current Olympic preparations. After an hour and a half of persuasive efforts, they drew an encouraging message from President Chun Doo-hwan. "Assume responsibility for the negotiations and finish the contract," he told them. Agreements were finally reached on several items at the final negotiations in New York on March 17. The Seoul Olympics broadcasting rights matter finally came to a close at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne on March 26 with the signatures of Samaranch, IOC Finance Commission chairman Jean de Beaumont, NBC president Arthur Watson, and Kim Un-yong as SLOOC representative. Another \$2 million was received after demands for six months' worth of interest for the six-month delay in the contract. Pleased at the news of the contract's completion, President Chun offered some jesting words of praise. "Great job," he told Kim. "The \$2 million you can have."

After the broadcasting rights contract with NBC was signed, network president Arthur Watson sent Kim a long letter. The following is an excerpt from it:

We have reached a successful conclusion to our contract negotiations. Having acquired the rights to broadcast the Olympics in the US, NBC Sports is now set to begin as scheduled. To be sure, we will not only be focusing on sports during the Olympics. We will be putting South Korea and its people, culture, history, and development front and center while placing the Olympics competition around that. . . .

We at NBC sports are aware of the special bond that exists between South Korea and the US. For the past 30 years, our destinies have been substantially intertwined. At the same time, we are also aware that your culture will be unfamiliar to many Americans. Prior to and during the 1988 Summer Olympics, we hope that a new understanding will be gained on South Korea's history and development situation. To that end, my col-

leagues and I would like to have the opportunity for discussions with you and other officials on how to accurately represent the very special country that is South Korea.

Samaranch and IOC television committee chief Dick Pound also sent a letter to “Vice President Kim.”

With regard to the television broadcasting rights contract with NBC, we congratulate you on your outstanding accomplishment. This was an extremely difficult and important negotiation with direct bearing on the success of the Seoul Olympics. Had it failed for any reason, it would have had a negative impact both in financial terms and on perceptions of the Seoul Olympics among people around the world today. Your participation proved very effective; without it, the negotiations might have never been concluded. Now we look forward to everyone working together to turn this plan into a brilliant success.

Broadcasting contracts with Japan and Europe

No sooner had Kim Un-yong returned to Seoul after managing to conclude the difficult negotiations tug-of-war with NBC than he found another issue awaiting him: Japan. Negotiations with Japanese television were another matter. To begin with, the South Korean public's attitudes toward the US broadcasting rights negotiations were not positive. While Kim prided himself on being able to receive more than expected in broadcasting fees, South Koreans were unimpressed, having trusted in the organizing committee's loud proclamations of figures in the \$500–600 million range. The negotiations with Japan represented yet another thorny issue. In light of the two countries' prickly relationship and public opinion at home, Kim had to produce a better deal.

Not long after he returned from the US deal in Lausanne, Kim received a visit from NHK executive director Keiji Shima. Straight out, Shima protested the behind-the-scenes negotiations with TBS for Olympic broadcasting rights. Kim could guess the reason for Shima's complaint: Sports Minister Lee Young-ho and Secretary General Lee Ha-woo had made a secret deal with Yasuhiko Shimazaki from the company Tokyo Shima Creative House. Lee Young-ho, who also served as executive committee presi-

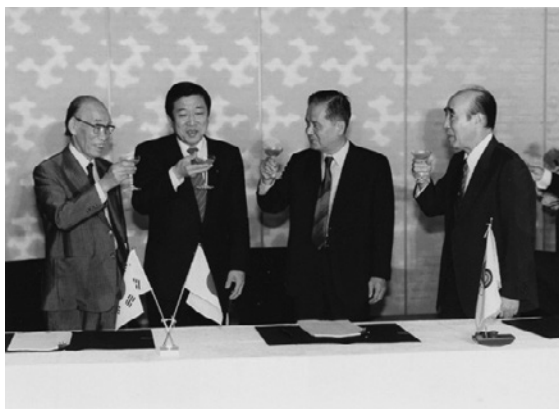
dent for SLOOC, and Lee Ha-woo had signed a document with Shimazaki guaranteeing \$1 million for broadcasting rights to TBS for the 1986 Asian Games in Seoul and \$60 million for broadcasting of the Olympics. As proof of his sincerity, Shimazaki had agreed to pay an advance of \$500,000 for the Asian Games broadcasting while keeping the deal a secret for the time being. They had considered the contract a good deal, since there had never been television broadcasting rights for the Asian Games before.

But Kim Un-yong predicted the negotiations would fall apart. It was unimaginable for non-broadcasters to purchase Japanese broadcasting rights and broadcast an event. TBS, the Japanese network to which Shimazaki intended to sell the rights, did not have the capabilities to broadcast either the Olympics or the Asian Games. Shimazaki himself was not a professional broadcaster, but a mere broadcasting broker.

Kim Un-yong was aware of all this but decided to sidestep the issue. “I’ve just arrived back from Lausanne, and I have no idea what this is about,” he told Shima. “I’ll look into it and get back to you.”

In Japan, six broadcasters (NHK, NTV, Asahi, Fuji, TBS, and TV Tokyo) formed a consortium to broadcast the Olympics. NHK paid 80 percent of the broadcasting rights fees. The behind-the-scenes contract had been made without any knowledge of this situation. The first order of business, then, was to take care of the TBS issue.

Kim summoned a TBS official and demanded that they receive a bank guarantee within 60 days. As he anticipated, no guarantee was received. He had SLOOC send an official document cancelling the contract, holding on to the \$500,000 deposit as a penalty. After that, he met with an



Kim Un-yong drinks a toast after signing a contract with Japan for television broadcasting rights for the 1988 Seoul Olympics. NHK bureau chief Keiji Shima is the second person from the right.

NHK executive director in Los Angeles and signed a \$750,000 contract for Asian Games broadcasting rights. The amount had now risen to \$1.25 million total.

The next matter concerned the Olympic broadcasting rights. For the LA Olympics in 1984, Japan had signed a contract for \$18 million. The IOC thought something along the lines of \$30 million would be sufficient.

The government and SLOOC held a few meetings on the issue of Japanese Olympics broadcasting rights; most attendees demanded a minimum of \$80 million. These arguments were not based on anything precise; they were simply calling for a large amount in view of the state of the two countries' relations.

Kim Un-yong was once again exclusively tasked with the Japanese broadcasting rights negotiations. He had personally concluded that \$80 million was absolutely out of the question, but that \$50 million would put him at 120 percent of his target amount. During the first meeting, he demanded \$100 million. As his reasoning, he explained, "Japan's GNP is nearly one-third that of the US, and it's also close to one-third in terms of television and advertising market scale. Also, Japan's geographic proximity to South Korea puts it in the same time zone, which means it is in a much more beneficial position than the US in terms of broadcasting and advertising."

In response, the Japanese side complained that the event schedule was designed for US time zones, that advertising sales were only around one-fifth of US levels, and that NHK, which paid 80 percent of the broadcasting fees, was a public broadcaster that operated on donations. It finally made an offer of \$30 million—the amount Kim had initially predicted.

For the second round of negotiations, he emerged with a substantially smaller proposal. To begin with, he realized that the South Korean side would need to lower the threshold somewhat for Japan to raise it in return. It is an ironclad law of negotiating that if one side refuses to budge on its initial demands, the other side will make no further concessions either. The secret to negotiating is how effectively each side is able to give and take. Kim Un-yong knew this well.

With the second round of negotiations, the difference narrowed a bit to \$70 million vs. \$40 million. Inwardly, Kim was thrilled when Japan came out with the \$40 million offer in the second round. He had the impression it could be talked up to \$50 million. The second round also ended with the two sides unable to bridge their differences. In a separate meeting with NHK's executive director Shima, who was representing the Japanese side,

Kim said that South Korea was willing to move down from its \$70 million figure and asked Japan to raise its offer to the \$50–60 million range.

In the third round of negotiations, Kim raised the number even higher than in the second. His new figure was up \$8 million to \$78 million. Japan was somewhat taken aback by the increase. Its representatives refused to back down: nothing higher than \$40 million they said. It was a tense tug-of-war. The question was who would loosen their grip first.

The fateful moment eventually arrived during negotiations held on February 23–24, 1987, when Japan finally made an offer of \$50 million. This was the amount that Kim had been anticipating. His tactics in increasing the amount for the third round of negotiations had played a major role in upping the pressure on Japan. The actual total was \$52 million, including another \$2 million from NHK as a “special cooperation fund” to KBS. In the past, Kim had argued that the Japanese broadcasting rights should go for at least \$50 million. The eventual agreement on a figure of \$52 million reflected Japan’s consideration for his new position since becoming an IOC member.

NHK’s initial plan had been to pay a 15 percent deposit and a 40 percent intermediate payment, with the remaining 45 percent to be paid in full once the Olympics were over. The final contract stipulated payments of 50 percent 45 days after the negotiations and 50 percent another 45 days after that. The amount was close to \$60 million once interest was factored in. Kim reported the contract’s completion to President Chun Doo-hwan and was complimented on his “job well done.”

Samaranch marveled at Kim’s negotiating prowess, admitting that he had thought \$35 million would have rated as a success. The Seoul Olympics broadcasting rights negotiations were an especially big victory when compared to the \$62.5 million contract Japan signed four years later for the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. One senior Korean government official ended up disgraced after asking NHK for political funds—apparently unaware that such a thing was out of the question for a public enterprise supported by the Japanese government.

Next came Europe. There, the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) held sway, and Samaranch himself did the negotiating. In March 1987, an official contract for \$28 million was concluded at the IOC headquarters with Samaranch, EBU president Albert Scharf, and Kim Un-yong in attendance.

Further contracts were signed in turn with Australia for \$10 million, South America (OTI) for \$2.92 million (plus \$10,000 for the Paralympics), Eastern Europe (OIRT) for \$3 million, Asia (ABU) for \$1.5 million, Canada for

\$4.9 million, and Africa for \$170,000. This brought the total in broadcasting rights fees to \$480 million. With the chief revenue source established, the groundwork for the Olympics' success was now in place.

These television rights negotiations for the Seoul Olympics were observed by Samaranch, who named Kim head of the IOC's television and radio committee once he became a member. As of 2008, he had signed contracts totaling \$3.3 billion in broadcasting rights, serving with distinction in rescuing the IOC from the brink of financial ruin after the 1980 Moscow Olympics and raising it from rags to relative riches.

Getting the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc to Participate

The lingering boycott threat

Upon Seoul's selection in Baden-Baden as host city for the 1988 Olympics, the question of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries' participation emerged as a major issue.

As early as the Baden-Baden meeting, the Eastern Bloc voiced serious opposition to Seoul's selection as Olympic host city, and the objections continued after the decision was made. The IOC General Assembly meeting in Baden-Baden had taken place just one year after the close of the 1980 Moscow Olympics, where a boycott by Western countries spearheaded by US President Jimmy Carter had resulted in the Games being reduced to half an event. A bigger issue for Seoul now that it had won the right to host the Olympics was that it had no diplomatic, economic, or culture interchange or bilateral relations with any members of the Eastern Bloc.

As a result, in order to participate in international competitions and conferences in the Eastern Bloc, South Korea had to resort to multinational relations, making use of other countries that did have ties to those countries. If, say, the World Weightlifting Championships were held in Eastern Europe, South Koreans would have to receive visas through Hong Kong or Japan, which both had diplomatic ties to Eastern Europe, and be willing to go through the hassle of changing planes multiple times. This alone would have been a blessing, but once they did enter Eastern Europe, North Korea's overt sabotage efforts and attempts to find fault with the South were tenacious and unyielding.

The Eastern Bloc countries continued to demand that the 1988 Olympics host city be changed, and they did not hesitate to threaten a boycott if it was not. The intensity was particularly severe after the West's boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics and the East's boycott of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

While all this was happening, Kim Un-yong was attending frequent international meetings and building relationships with officials in the international federations for different sports. The Eastern Bloc officials that he met were open people who did not hesitate to engage him in dialogue. None of them could promise their country's participation in the Seoul Games, but they never mentioned a boycott either. Kim's conversations with them had nothing to do with ideology, but they would also tell him that as the

dialogue developed and the moment for a decision came, the Kremlin might at any moment give a decisive “yes” or “no” answer.

Just as the window for dialogue with the Eastern Bloc was cracking open, the worst possible incident occurred: in 1983, a Soviet fighter plane shot down a Korean Air Lines (KAL) passenger plane. KAL Flight 007 departed New York on September 1 en route to Seoul via Anchorage. While temporarily in Soviet skies, it was fired upon by a Soviet interceptor, crashing into the sea to the west of Sakhalin Island. All 269 on board perished, including a member of the US House of Representatives. The incident took place at a time when the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union was at its zenith. The prevailing view was that the embers of that conflict had spilled over to South Korea, but a number of conspiracy theories also surfaced, and the precise reasons behind the incident remain unknown. In any event, anti-Soviet sentiments in South Korea reached a peak, and the matter of the Soviet Union’s participation in the Seoul Olympics was more or less a taboo topic.

The Cold War between the US and Soviet Union also affected the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. On May 8, 1984, the Soviet Union and other Communist countries announced their boycott of the event. The declaration resulted in growing fears that the Seoul Olympics four years hence might also end up another “half Olympics.” Some began cautiously suggesting that the only solution would be to change the host city. By May and June 1984, calls for the selection of a new host city were being strongly voiced by Italian IOC member Franco Carraro and French Olympic Committee president Nelson Paillou, as well as countries such as the US and West Germany. Unable to take any countermeasures, SLOOC quietly waited for the situation to die down.

While this was happening, Kim Un-yong attended the LA Olympics with SLOOC president Roh Tae-woo. The Western press fired question after question at Roh, many of them about sensitive topics that he was unable to respond on. Did Roh think the Soviet Union would participate in the Seoul Olympics? Did he think the South Korean public would forgive the atrocity by the Soviets? Perhaps having anticipated that such questions would be asked, Roh quieted the Western reporters with general statements about the basic principles and responsibilities. “This situation is extremely unfortunate,” he replied, “but the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee and the Olympic family have an obligation to organize the Olympics and contribute to the Olympic movement.”

First official meeting with the Soviets at the 1984 LA Olympics

After the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc had announced their boycott of the LA Olympics on May 8, 1984, Kim Un-yong met with Samaranch ahead of a joint IOC-IF-Los Angeles Olympics Organizing Committee meeting in Lausanne. Samaranch was in shock over the Eastern European countries' decision to boycott the Games. Ever since the Western countries had boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympics, he had put great efforts into ensuring that the Eastern Bloc nations would participate in Los Angeles. He had believed the preparations to be going well, only to be hit with the boycott just two months before the Olympics were set to begin. Samaranch had of course been elected IOC president at a General Assembly meeting during the Moscow Olympics, and the Western countries' absence from the Moscow Games could not be called his responsibility. With a second straight "half Olympics" taking place since he had assumed the presidency, however, he must have concluded that this was likely to result in serious damage to his leadership or influence.

For this reason, Samaranch channeled his energies all the more into ensuring the Seoul Olympics' success. Every time an international meeting or event was held in Eastern Europe, he would travel there to meet with the head of state, prime minister, or sports officials. He also had the IOC Charter amended so that invitations to the Olympics could be issued directly by the IOC one year prior rather than by the organizing committees. All of this was due to the huge number of countries that South Korea did not have diplomatic relations with. The IOC also took preemptive action to eliminate financial issues as a reason for not participating by providing airfare and accommodations for up to eight people per NOC, along with \$8,000 for equipment costs and \$500 each for up to six athletes. To appease North Korea, it encouraged discussions between South and North regarding reciprocally participating in competitions dispersed between them. All of this, of course, came after the LA Olympics had finished.

Taking place four years before the Seoul Games, the LA Olympics were the last and only opportunity for the South Koreans to learn from an actual Olympic competition. SLOOC duly sent out staffers in force to attend the Games. But the head of the LA Olympics Organizing Committee, Peter Ueberroth, was someone who saw every issue in terms of the logic of capitalism, earning him criticism for what many saw as excessive commercialism. Everything was provided, from ID cards to transportation,



Kim Un-yong at Moscow's Red Square with Soviet IOC member Vitaly Smirnov.

lodging, and admission to the venues—but at a cost.

What made the LA Olympics especially important for preparations toward the Seoul Games was the South Koreans' first official meeting with the Soviets.

During the LA Olympics, Kim Un-yong and Roh Tae-woo attempted to meet with sports leaders from Eastern European countries; in many cases, they succeeded. In particular, they held their first discussions on the issue of the Soviet Union's participation in the Seoul Games with Soviet IOC members Vitaly Smirnov and Konstantin Andrianov, as well as Soviet Vice Minister of Sport and International Amateur Cycling Federation president Valery Sysoev. This was progress indeed, given the lack of any real contact with the Soviet Union prior to that.

Through Adidas chairman Horst Dassler, who had been such a great source of support to the South Koreans in Baden-Baden, Kim and Roh met with Sysoev for dinner in Beverly Hills. The meeting started out quite stiff, but it gradually mellowed, and the parties agreed that they should cooperate.

During the meeting, Roh Tae-woo said that he and the people of South Korea hoped that the Soviet Union would participate in the Seoul Olympics in accordance with the Olympic philosophy, pledging guarantees on the Soviets' safety and comfort if they agreed to take part. Sysoev said that he would work to meet the goals desired by members of the Olympic family around the world. While he could not promise the Soviet Union's participation then and there, he suggested that the two sides might improve their relationship going ahead. It was the sort of thing that might seem like a formality, simple diplomatic rhetoric out of consideration for the other party. But for the South Koreans, it was a matter of great significance, opening its

first-ever diplomatic channel with the Soviets.

In June 1985, Kim and Roh Tae-woo attended an IOC General Assembly meeting in East Berlin. It was an occasion for reporting on preparations for the Seoul Olympics. As had been the case before, Roh was a representative of the Democratic Justice Party and widely recognized as South Korea's second-in-command. A word from him was as good as an official message on behalf of the country. Kim and Roh had been tipped off that East Germany was seriously considering participation in the Seoul Olympics. In any event, the East German athletic officials were quite cooperative. Sports Minister Manfred Ewald in particular organized an especially cordial reception—though he had previously stated that he “wanted to hold a great reception for President Roh, but could not because of the busy IOC General Assembly schedule.” Attending the event with the vice chairman and vice ministers, Ewald noted both the similarities and differences between South and North Korean issues and those between East and West Germany, while stressing that politics and sports should be kept separate. It was an indirect but strong hint that the East Germans intended to take part in the Seoul Olympics.

Later on, Manfred Ewald's pressure on the Soviet Union would prove decisive in the Eastern European countries' participation in the Seoul Games, and he would advise Samaranch several times in inter-Korean athletic talks.

Finding light in the darkness

Kim Un-yong believed that the Soviet Union's participation was a top priority for the Seoul Olympics to succeed. Already, the Olympics had suffered the stigma of being reduced to half an event in Moscow and Los Angeles. If the divisions persisted through the Seoul Olympics, the free world and the communists might well decide to each hold their own Olympics separately. Having played such a major part in planning and implementing the Olympic bid—and in preparing for the Games once that bid had succeeded—Kim Un-yong would lead the way in encouraging the Soviet Union's participation in the Seoul Olympics.

There was a reason for Kim putting so much effort into the Soviet Union's participation. To begin with, the Soviets' participation would mean that the Eastern European countries were participating as well. If all of the Communist countries took part, the North Korean threat would evaporate as a matter of course. In addition, the level of value from the competition would

increase, taking care of the reduction provisions discussed in the broadcasting rights negotiations and allowing for a large financial profit. This would mean that the Seoul Olympics were successful.

It was only after Kim met Soviet senior sports officials for the first time with Roh Tae-woo during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics that he saw just how great a divide the past 40 to 50 years of isolation had produced. They could not talk the way he had done with the US and Japan, nor was theirs the kind of culture he was used to encountering. For their first meeting, Kim had to invite along a lady named Huguette Clergironnet from the French embassy in Moscow to serve as an interpreter; since they had no diplomatic ties, he had to be cautious in everything that he said. He was worried that his message might not come through, but he could not afford to simply wait without attempting to contact the other side.

Kim carefully considered methods of bringing the Soviets to Seoul.

“If they would come, we could provide them with every convenience . . . ”

No clear answer came to mind. The only approach seemed to be opening up a channel for dialogue with them and attempting ongoing interchanges, while pledging to guarantee their safety and convenience if they came to Seoul. Like the blind men feeling the elephant, he had to work out bit by bit what the Soviets were thinking and what they wanted.

Kim felt that he had to learn Russian to get through to the Soviets. He had never experienced issues communicating with anyone from any country before. Inevitably, they spoke at least one language from among English, Japanese, German, French, or Spanish. Yet for some reason, he could not communicate with the Soviets. He belatedly began to study Russian, believing



Kim Un-yeong meets with Deputy Sports Minister Gavrilin and other members of a Soviet National Olympic Committee delegation visiting Seoul in 1988.

that the best approach to gaining their participation in the Seoul Olympics would be to persuade them in their own language. With his aptitude for languages, he was soon proficient enough to hold a decent conversation in Russian. He began meeting with the Soviet sports officials, communicating fluently with them in Russian and developing closer relationships with them.

Kim Un-yong learned much more about the Soviet Union and received crucial help from Soviet sports officials when he attended a meeting of the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) television committee at the Sports Hotel in Moscow on June 5–9, 1987. There, he had an opportunity to meet with Soviet Deputy Broadcasting Minister Henrika Yushkevitch and negotiate television broadcasting rights with the Eastern European broadcasting union (OIRT), and to develop a closer relationship with IOC member Vitaly Smirnov. Smirnov had been first deputy chairman of the organizing committee for the Moscow Olympics, putting him in command of the entire Olympic organization, and he offered his advice on how Kim should approach the Soviet Sport Ministry and government. Kim also had an opportunity to open up and talk past midnight over vodka with Smirnov and Deputy Sport Minister Gavrilin.

In late June and early July, Kim Un-yong met with Gavrilin again in Tokyo to discuss details for the first-ever visit to South Korea by an official Soviet delegation. He stressed that Seoul would follow the Olympic Charter and promised to guarantee all comfort and safety if the Soviets participated in the Olympics, but the biggest problem had to do with the Soviet request to dock their ship in Incheon Harbor. The Soviets admitted to their problem: they would be unable to take part in the Seoul Games if their ship could not put in at Incheon.

The reason that the Soviets needed to dock at Incheon was to use its ship for accommodations of outside officials, cultural groups, and visitors and to provide all kinds of amenities such as food and drinks to its athletes. The Soviet Union was considered a superpower in sports, frequently contesting the top two spots with the Americans, and it was very sensitive when it came to the health and physical condition of its athletes. Theirs was a similar attitude to that of the South Koreans, who set up “Korea Houses” outside the athletes’ village during Olympic competitions to provide physical therapy, food, beverages, and other services for the athletes’ competitive condition. The Soviets intended to use their boat at Incheon Harbor as such a place.

It was clear enough that South Korea would have a number of reasons to oppose having a Soviet ship docked at Incheon Harbor. But based on

the past examples of the Melbourne, Tokyo, and Montreal Games, Kim did not feel that this should be a major problem. While the presence of a Soviet ship could be taken as intended for espionage activities, he did not think the Soviet Union would actually use an old-fashioned method like a ship to spy on South Korea.

In the end, the South Korea allowed the Soviet ship to dock at Incheon on the condition that official representatives, athletes, and officials had to be accommodated in the Olympic athletes' village according to the Olympic Charter.

The Soviets were brusque at first, but became quite friendly later on. They proved to be quite similar to Asians in many ways, and Kim's relationship with them was an important factor in the Soviet Union's participation in the Seoul Olympics.

The first act of a 'Whole Olympics'

At this point, the Soviets shunned contact at the government level; they only spoke to SLOOC. All communication was limited to the Olympics, and all contact with the Soviet Union was handled by Kim Un-yong. Kim had a telex installed in the WTF president's office at the Kukkiwon to allow him to liaise with the Soviet Ministry of Sport. He used the telex to address every issue from the Soviet ship and aircraft to its Olympic squad, VIP reception, and financial and safety matters. The first official visit to the South Korea by Soviet NOC and Ministry of Sport representatives came on July 26, 1987,



A ceremony for the sending of invitations to the Seoul Olympics is held in Lausanne, home of the IOC headquarters, on September 17, 1987—exactly one year before the event is to open.

about 20 days after Kim's meeting with Gavrilin in Tokyo.

A delegation of around ten members—including Soviet Committee for Physical Culture and Sport deputy chairman Anatoly Kolesov and NOC secretary general and International Federation of Gymnastics president Yuri Titov, along with officials from Russia's shipping, aircraft, and public health agencies, Aeroflot, and a shipping company—stayed in Seoul through August 1, holding talks and checking progress in various areas.

Kim Un-yong held discussions with them on a number of issues, including the ship that was to dock at Incheon Harbor, the landing of aircraft, athletes' village concerns, transportation and training site concerns, and matters related to the assignment of additional officials. They explained that they needed an answer on these issues by October or November before the Soviet Union could reach a decision on participation, adding that a decision would also be made on the participation of other Eastern European countries. Providing a response by then was realistically out of the question. While they could not make any promises, they did indicate that they were training athletes and making other preparations for the Games, which lent weight to the likelihood of their participation.

When it came to improving relations with the Soviet Union, Kim Un-yong was aware that in human relationships, it was more important to make use of individual preferences and ties to the Soviet Union than to confine the discussion to dry work-related matters. He had a very special gift for making the most of this fact.

For instance, upon hearing that Kolesov had taken a deep interest in taekwondo after seeing a match at a US national competition in Houston, he invited the Soviet delegation leader to the Kukkiwon for a taekwondo demonstration. As a result, the Soviet Union moved in 1988 to lift a ban on martial arts. By March 1990, it had organized the Soviet Taekwondo Association and joined the WTF, another by-product of the Seoul Olympics.

Kim also mentioned the story of Joseon King Gojong's royal refuge at the Russian legation. The incident had taken place after the 1895 assassination of Queen Myeongseong. Feeling threatened by ruthless attacks from the Japanese military, Gojong and the Crown Prince left the Joseon royal palace and took up residence in the Russian legation on February 11, 1896; they would remain there for roughly the next year. It was during this time that King Gojong tasted coffee for the first time. When he returned to Changdeokgung Palace, he brought coffee with him to drink with his retainers. This, he told the Soviets, marked Koreans' first experience with the drink.

The Soviet delegation members became very interested in this history and warmed toward Kim, paying a visit to the still-preserved Russian legation site behind Deoksugung Palace. This was not the reason that the Soviets participated in the Seoul Olympics, but it certainly did contribute to increasing their appreciation of Seoul and South Korea.

While carrying on these meetings with the Soviets, Kim also had to focus his attention on interactions with sports leaders in Eastern Europe. With Samaranch's help, he met with other Soviet sports leaders including Marat Gramov, Yushkevitch, Smirnov, Titov, and Syssoev, along with Minister Ewald from East Germany, Ivan Slavkov from Bulgaria, Alexandru Siperco from Romania, and Minister Gabor Deák and Tamas Ajan from Hungary.

The Eastern European sports leaders did not want any kind of reporting or photographs of them during their Seoul visit. They were looking for semi-secret negotiations. To ensure the success of the talks, they also made a rule that no one was to disclose details about the negotiations in their newspapers or press. This meant that there would be no attempts to use the media to gain the upper hand. In addition to forestalling various side effects, this approach also enabled more flexible negotiating, contributing to success in reaching agreements with relative ease.

After the negotiations with the Soviets, Minister Ewald from East Germany visited Seoul with IOC member Günther Heinze. They did not want to meet with officials from the Sports Ministry or any other government agency—they only planned to speak to SLOOC. If the sports minister wished to meet with them, he could only do so in the SLOOC building as a SLOOC member. They wanted to avoid anything that might be misconstrued as contact between government agencies—perhaps as a gesture toward North Korea.

Ewald was an enthusiastic proponent of Eastern Europe's participation in the Seoul Olympics, declaring that East Germany would participate even if all the other countries decided to boycott. He also stressed the importance of inter-Korean sports dialogue, arguing that the Olympics should be jointly hosted, with North Korea given six or more events. In contrast to him, most of the Soviet sports leaders were only interested in technical and economic issues related to Olympic participation and made almost no reference to inter-Korean sports dialogue.

Samaranch provided a great deal of assistance in the negotiations with the Soviet Union and the countries of Eastern Europe. He also advised the Soviets to resolve all of their issues in connection with the Seoul Olympics

through Kim Un-yong, as someone with ample backing from the IOC.

On September 17, 1987, with the opening of the Seoul Olympics one year away, a ceremony was held to issue invitations to the Games to NOCs around the world. As a rule, invitations to the Seoul Olympics were supposed to be sent by SLOOC. Because South Korea did not have diplomatic ties with Eastern Europe, however, the IOC went so far as to amend its Charter to allow it to send the invitations directly from its headquarters in Lausanne. North Korea requested a delay in the invitations' issuance, citing the inter-Korean sports dialogue then under way. The IOC summarily refused. All NOCs had to send a response directly to the IOC on the question of their participation within the next four months, before January 17, 1988.

At a gathering just before the official invitation issuance ceremony, Samaranch spoke about the Olympics and the Olympic movement holding significance beyond that of a sporting event. "Olympism means a combination of sport and culture, which means that a comprehensive program must be created in terms of culture, stamps, scholarship, media, sculpture, painting, and music," he said. During the same gathering, Kim Un-yong's daughter Hae-jung, an international award-winning, virtuoso concert pianist who had recently graduated from Juilliard School of Music, gave a performance at Samaranch's special request. A child prodigy, Hae-jung had won first prizes in the Juilliard Piano Competition in 1980 and the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition in 1983 as well as the Munz Scholarship Piano Competition in 1986. She played Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 with the Lausanne Chamber Orchestra under the baton of conductor Peter Maag, receiving a standing ovation. The performance was broadcast live on television and radio throughout Switzerland and the rest of Europe and included in an in-flight music program for Swiss aircraft.

Samaranch presided over the invitation ceremony. To his right was Park Se-jik as SLOOC's representative. Next to him sat Kim Un-yong as South Korea's IOC member, on the left IOC vice president Prince Alexandre de Merode. Other attendees that day included the Grand Duke of Luxembourg, IAAF president Primo Nebiolo, ANOC president Mario Vázquez Raña, Berthold Beitz, Australian IOC member Kevan Gosper, Japanese IOC member Chiharu Igaya, Raymond Gafner, and president Kim Jong-ha on behalf of the South Korean NOC. With the official invitations going out a year ahead of the Seoul Olympics, the countdown had finally begun.

But the matter of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc's participation remained undecided. To be sure, there were four months left to reach a

decision, but this was something that Kim Un-yong would have to address as a separate matter from the official invitations. The invitations may have gone out to the various NOCs, but after nearly two and a half months, the issue of the Soviet ship docking at Incheon Harbor was still unresolved.

Perhaps the Soviets decided they could not simply wait and see, as they contacted Kim and suggested meeting again. On December 4 and 5, he met again with Gavrilin at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo. This time, Gavrilin privately told him of the Soviet Union's plans to participate in the Seoul Olympics. He pressed heavily for the Soviet ship to be allowed to dock at Incheon Harbor. He also promised that there would be an announcement shortly on the Eastern European countries' participation.

Having received the Soviet Union's informal agreement to participate in the Seoul Olympics, Kim Un-yong could not afford to wait for the South Korean government's official position to come. He went to President Chun Doo-hwan and explained in detail about the preceding negotiations, adding that the Soviets had pledged to abide by South Korean law and the Olympic Charter. Hearing this, Chun granted permission for the Soviet ship to dock at Incheon. Based on the president's permission, Kim unofficially delivered an "OK" to the Soviets.

While this was happening, East Germany became the first of the Eastern European countries to officially declare its participation in the Seoul Olympics with an announcement on December 21. The very next day, Hungary became the second. A trend was taking shape.

Now all that remained was for the Soviet Union to officially announce its participation. Considerable headway had been made on that matter after President Chun approved the Soviet ship to dock at Incheon harbor, but the problem was not yet over. There were many issues to be resolved, including what routes the Soviet Union's Aeroflot airline would use, how its planes would be landing, who would be providing them with services, what channels South Korea and the Soviet Union would be using to communicate, and what protections would be extended for Soviets visiting as tourists and cheering squad members. To discuss these particulars, the Soviet delegation paid a second official visit to Seoul on December 27–30. There were no major differences between the two sides, and the Soviet representatives reached an agreement with the South Koreans on nearly every matter.

Seoul and the Soviet Union agreed to carry out all of their communications over the telex installed in the GAISF president's office at the Kukkiwon and to establish a temporary Soviet consular office to handle consular affairs to

protect Soviet citizens during the Olympics. Ideally, diplomacy starts out of a bilateral relationship, but Kim Un-yong knew well that when one side makes progress in diplomatic relations—however unilaterally—it customarily develops into a bilateral relationship in the end. For this reason, he saw the establishment of a Soviet consular office as a very positive development, a judgment founded in his experience as a diplomat.

With this agreement reached, more official participation announcements emerged—first from Bulgaria and Poland on January 6, then from Yugoslavia on January 7, and from Romania and Mongolia on January 8. Around this time, Kim received notification from the IOC and Soviet Union that the Soviets planned to make a final announcement on their participation in the Seoul Olympics following an NOC meeting on January 9–10. He reported the news to the Blue House, Democratic Justice Party leader Roh Tae-woo, and SLOOC president Park Se-jik, keeping quiet on the matter with the press.

The matter of the Soviet Union's announcement of its participation in the Seoul Olympics was a major story, attracting press attention all over the world. Finally, on the evening of January 11, Kim watched on TV as Gramov and Gavrilin jointly made the official announcement that the Soviets would be participating in the Seoul Games. The same day, China, which stood alongside the Soviet Union as one of the two central axes of the Communist world, also officially announced its participation. After the two boycotts in Moscow and Los Angeles, the Soviets' decision to take part was a huge event for the Seoul Olympics.

The first act of a “whole Olympics” had been staged.

Inter-Korean Athletic Talks Are Held

North Korea demands joint hosting

Once Seoul launched its bid for the Olympics, the most tenacious opposition had come from North Korea. In Baden-Baden, North Korea had vocally opposed Seoul's selection, using the Communist countries of Eastern Europe as a pretext. It was unable to employ overt intimidation tactics once Seoul was selected as host city, but it continued to make terrorist threats and use the Eastern Bloc members that it had close ties with as an excuse to demand that a new host city be chosen. Pyongyang was determined to somehow stop the Games from taking place in Seoul, believing it was certain to suffer a serious blow if they went ahead. None of its efforts succeeded, however.

While there were many reasons for the North's failure, perhaps the biggest was the climate of *détente* between the US and Soviet Union. Every time it would demand a change to the host city, Samaranch would silence it with the stern message that there would be no change. Sports leaders and athletes, for their part, had had just about all they could take of "abnormal" Olympics over the past 12 years.

On February 1, 1985, Samaranch sent official letters simultaneously to South and North Korea informing them that he would be willing to chair inter-Korean athletic talks if they agreed to it, and asking for them to reply on the matter of their consent. South Korea replied with its agreement on March 31, but there was no response from North Korea, which took until July 6 to answer with its agreement.

Samaranch's reasoning for organizing the inter-Korean talks was simple. While Seoul had won the right to host the Olympics in 1988, the IOC could also decide, in the spirit of the Olympic movement and world peace, to invoke the president's authority and demand that the South and North Korean NOCs meet to discuss sharing the Olympic events and competitions between them. He was proposing an approach in which South Korea would participate in competitions held in North Korea and vice versa.

Having already experienced two "half Olympics," Samaranch felt that both East and West needed to participate together for the Olympic movement to be brought back on track. He also hoped that North Korea's participation would bring a swift resolution to the boycott and terrorism threats

that plagued the Seoul Games. Samaranch decided to arrange inter-Korean sports talks, while instructing Romanian IOC member Alexandru Siperco and South Korean member Kim Un-yong to respectively discuss the matter with the Eastern Bloc and Seoul.

With South and North Korea giving their agreement, Samaranch officially announced on July 24 that IOC-chaired inter-Korean talks would be taking place at the IOC headquarters in Lausanne on October 8–9. Only six days later on July 30, North Korea submitted a list of demands in the name of Deputy Premier Chong Chun-ki. Its terms were that the XXIV Olympiad should be jointly held in South and North Korea, that its title should be the “Choson Pyongyang/Seoul Olympics,” that equal numbers of competitions should be split between Seoul and Pyongyang, and that their athletes should compete as a unified South and North Korean team.

It was a change in strategy from North Korea, which was now waging a diplomatic offensive against the Olympics. Its demands were utterly worthless, flying in the face of the Olympic Charter and having no precedent in Olympic history. According to the Olympic Charter, the right to host the Olympics is granted to a city rather than a country, and the host site chosen for the XXIV Olympiad in 1988 was Seoul, not South Korea. North Korea was certainly aware of this. Behind its call to jointly host the event were ulterior motives: to organize an Olympic boycott and, if that failed, to sabotage the Olympics themselves.

After North Korea adopted its new diplomatic strategy and began calling for jointly hosting the Games with the South, Samaranch replied on August 25 that the IOC Charter barred the kind of co-hosting arrangement that Pyongyang was describing. At the same time, he said that he would have a discussion with SLOOC on whether some of the events could be staged in North Korea to ensure the participation of as many Koreans as possible, and strongly urged North Korea to take part in the inter-Korean sports talks.

So it was that South and North Korea ended up meeting face-to-face for the first time in Lausanne on October 8–9, 1985. As expected, the talks did not go smoothly. Instead, North Korea used every trick in the book in an effort to prevent Seoul from hosting the Olympics. It met every concession with a demand for more concessions, insisting to the bitter end on a joint hosting arrangement.

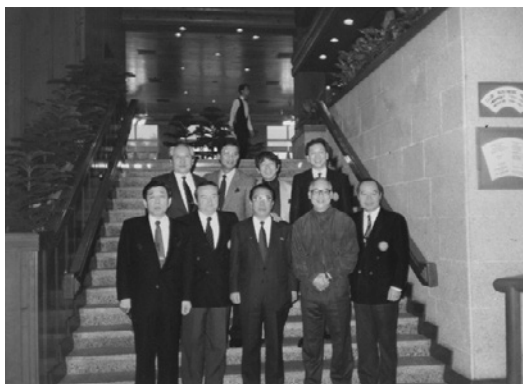
Four rounds of inter-Korean athletic talks end without results

A total of four rounds of inter-Korean talks were held on the matter of North Korea's participation in the Seoul Olympics: a first round on October 8–9, 1985, a second on January 8–9, 1986, a third on June 10–11 of the same year, and a fourth on July 14–15, 1987. North Korea would come out with new proposals over this period, but its key focus for all four rounds remained fixated on joint hosting of the Olympics. Despite the IOC's repeated insistence that this was not possible, the North Koreans remained unmoved. In contrast, the South Koreans made numerous concessions, accepting many of the IOC's demands in accordance with the IOC Charter's terms prohibiting joint hosting but allowing shared hosting. None of this would yield any results.

The socialist countries of Eastern Europe were applying constant pressure on Seoul to share more events with North Korea. If more events were held in North Korea, the Eastern Bloc countries would be able to participate in the Seoul Olympics without any major issues. The Eastern European countries were not all in agreement with one another. For example, East German Sports Minister Manfred Ewald suggested a plan in which six events would be shared, while Soviet IOC member Vitaly Smirnov and Bulgarian member Ivan Slavkov voiced the opinion that North Korea would not accept a proposal to have more events staged on their side. As if to bear this out, many experts predicted that Pyongyang would face a tougher issue with the necessity of having some 25,000 registered officials, athletes, reporters, and television staff freely passing back and forth over the Armistice Line. Since accepting a shared hosting arrangement would require Pyongyang to open its borders to the world, this meant that they could not actually accept any proposal.

What this also meant was that North Korea's real aim was not to be a part of the Seoul Olympics, but to sabotage the Games as much as possible. Its intentions were made clear by its incomprehensible behavior.

Over the course of four rounds of inter-Korean meetings, the North Koreans acted as though they had already won the privilege of hosting the Olympics. The Olympic host country is granted the benefit of being able to compete in main events without having to go through regional qualifying tournaments; North Korea chose not to participate in the Asian qualifying tournaments in Malaysia for the Olympic football event. Its actions made no sense. FIFA deemed its conduct disgraceful and sternly stripped it of its eligibility to compete in Olympic football.



Kim Un-yong with other Asian IOC members. North Korean member Kim Yu-sun can be seen in the center of the front row.

This was not the only incident. The IOC instructed a delegation headed by Romanian sports minister and IOC senior vice president Alexandru Sipercu to visit Pyongyang and Seoul on May 27–29 to make preparations for the upcoming fourth round of talks. After concluding its visit to Pyongyang, the delegates planned to travel to Seoul via Panmunjeom, but the North Koreans refused to allow them to pass through. Their behavior was inexplicable: after repeated reassurances that they would guarantee free transit between South and North during the Olympics, they were preventing an IOC delegation visiting for the two sides’ Olympic preparations from entering. After this incident, Samaranch began questioning North Korea’s sincerity. He did not give up encouraging inter-Korean dialogue, but he did start entertaining doubts that North Korea actually planned to participate in the Seoul Olympics.

Officially North Korea’s senior representative for the four rounds of inter-Korean athletic talks was IOC member Kim Yu-sun, but the actual role of senior representative was performed by diplomat Chin Chung-guk, who had previously served as ambassador in Geneva. Around the time of the talks, Chin held press conferences to explain the North’s position. Much to the IOC’s consternation, the content was always self-serving and contrary to the facts.

Prior to the fourth round of talks, an IOC General Assembly meeting was held in Istanbul in May 1987. Taking the platform after Samaranch’s report on the inter-Korean athletic talks, Kim Yu-sun declared out of nowhere that North Korea would be “co-hosting the XXIV Olympiad in Seoul and Pyongyang, with eight events to be staged in North Korea.” This was noth-

ing but a wish list from Pyongyang; none of it had been agreed upon or even mentioned.

Kim Un-yong was clear about the positions of the IOC and South Korea.

“According to the Olympic Charter, the right to host the Olympics was granted to Seoul, but Seoul received a request from the IOC to allow for some of the events to be organized in North Korea in the spirit of the Olympic movement and world peace,” he said. “Before discussing any important matters such as free transit between South and North or the opening and closing ceremonies, Seoul is waiting for North Korea to accept the IOC’s offer. The door is still open.”

The IOC finally decided to send a delegation to Pyongyang and Seoul for detailed discussions on all inter-Korean issues prior to the next General Assembly meeting. Alexandru Siperco, IOC member from Romania, served as delegation leader, visiting Pyongyang and Seoul in turn. At the time, Seoul viewed Siperco as too close to the North Koreans and worried that he might pressure for more events to be given to North Korea or for the Olympics to be jointly hosted. Rumors circulated that the North Korean ambassador in Bucharest had threatened Siperco that there would be a “bloodbath” if Seoul hosted the Olympics on its own. At a press conference in Seoul, Siperco said he was “optimistic that the Seoul Olympics will be the greatest of festivals with more countries participating than ever before in its history, including North Korea.” He also reported that North Korea was currently building gymnastics and wrestling venues and a stadium capable of seating 150,000 people, and would guarantee free transit from the South to IOC registration card holders and all other members of the Olympics family once the conditions were met. Ironically, his very own IOC delegation had not been allowed to travel back and forth freely.

Kim Un-yong held several meetings with SLOOC president Park Se-jik while Siperco was in Seoul. With the Olympics almost a year away, the meetings focused on how SLOOC now needed to make some kind of a decision. “The door is always open to North Korea,” Kim said, “but the organization of Olympic events is ultimately the responsibility of the organizing committee. We need to hurry up and get on with the preparations.”

June 29 Declaration calms demonstrations at home

They may have had very different visions, but South and North Korea were

putting their heads together to discuss the North's participation in the Seoul Olympics. While this was happening, however, North Korea was conspiring to sabotage both the Olympics and the Seoul Asian Games.

At 3:12 p.m. on September 14, 1986, an explosion occurred at Gimpo Airport. An unidentified explosive was detonated in a stainless steel garbage can in front of the exit for international flights. Five people were killed and 33 others were wounded. The incident occurred the day before Samaranch was scheduled to visit South Korea for the Asian Games, which were set to open just six days hence.

Upon investigation, police determined that it had been a C-4 device, carefully manipulated so that the fragments would fly toward the sidewalk and crosswalk rather than scattering randomly. Since C-4 was chiefly used by North Korea and Islamic terrorist groups, they surmised that North Korea was responsible, but the culprit was never caught and the case remained unsolved. East Germany's secret intelligence service would later conclude that the attack had been carried out by global terrorist Abu Nidal after receiving support from Kim Il-sung to sabotage the Seoul Asian Games.

Another incident involved Korean Air Lines Flight 858, a Boeing 707 that departed Baghdad for Bangkok at 11:27 p.m. on November 28, 1987. At around 2:05 p.m. the following day (local time), it exploded in midair over the Andaman Sea off of Burma. All 115 people on board were killed.

Investigators determined that the terrorists were North Korean agents Kim Seung-il, 70, and Kim Hyon-hui, 26, disguised as Japanese nationals named "Shinichi and Mayumi Hachiya." Kim Hyon-hui confessed that she had received a handwritten order from Kim Jong-il demanding that a Korean Air Lines passenger plane be bombed to sabotage applications to participate in the 1988 Seoul Olympics. They had departed North Korea on November 13, arrived in Baghdad, and boarded Flight 858. They subsequently disembarked at Abu Dhabi Airport, leaving a high-performance explosive device disguised as a radio and a liquor bottle on the seat tray. While they were attempting to leave the airport in Bahrain, their passports were found to be forgeries. Kim Seung-il had committed suicide by swallowing poison concealed in a cigarette filter, she explained; she survived because she had only swallowed a small dose.

Along the same lines as these incidents was the bombing that took place at the Aung San mausoleum in Burma on October 9, 1983, in an attempt to assassinate President Chun Doo-hwan. Twenty-one people died in the attack, including four senior South Korean cabinet ministers, and 46 were

injured. Each of these tragedies occurred as part of North Korea's sabotage campaign targeting the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and 1988 Seoul Olympics.

In addition to the continued threats from North Korea, things were roiling back in the South. Large-scale demonstrations were held in the streets of 18 cities in what became known as the June 1987 Struggle. Day after day, protests were held by students and ordinary citizens. The situation had emerged after opposition parties and political forces called for an amendment to the Constitution, denouncing the immorality, illegitimacy, and undemocratic character of the indirectly elected Chun. But Chun announced "constitutional protection measures" banning any discussion of an amendment on April 13, 1987, in response. Things escalated into full-scale confrontation after news that Seoul National University student Park Jong-chul had died under torture by police. June 26 saw the largest demonstrations in history, as around one million people in 37 cities protested vehemently late into the night.

The demonstrations became a top news story in the foreign press for days on end. It was not good for Seoul to be in such turmoil at a sensitive moment with the Olympics approaching. The IOC and its individual members showed a keen interest in South Korea's demonstrations and political developments; whenever they met with Kim Un-yong, their questions were focused more on those issues than on preparations for the Olympics.

Each time, Kim would explain to them that the demonstrations in South Korea were the result of domestic circumstances and had nothing whatsoever to do with the Olympics. He also worked to persuade them that the situation would die down before the Olympics began.

While in the US or Sydney for broadcasting rights contracts, he would face questions from ABC and NBC about the Olympics' safety. Gavrilin, the Soviet vice minister of sport, even revealed that he had requested that Soviet television stations refrain from airing images of the demonstrations in Seoul on the grounds that it was hindering their athletes' training.

The US athletes were no exception either. Some expressed reservations about going to Seoul, openly calling for the host city to be replaced with somewhere safer if the situation continued to deteriorate. US IOC member Robert Helmick was forced to repeatedly announce that the US would definitely be participating in the Seoul Games.

Kim Un-yong himself was deeply concerned about the demonstrations in South Korea, but he could not afford to let it show. Every time he met with the IOC and its members or officials from the international federations, he

had to reassure them that the people of South Korea were united when it came to supporting the Olympics. Roh Tae-woo, the former sports minister and SLOOC president, was now a ruling party presidential candidate, and he too had to repeatedly inform the IOC of South Koreans' commitment to holding a successful Olympics.

On Sunday, June 28, Kim Un-yong went to Roh Tae-woo's home with SLOOC president Park Se-jik to report on the inter-Korean sports talks and pass along a message from Samaranch. Inside, he was deeply curious to know what Roh could do in the face of such tremendous opposition from the public, but he was in no position to ask him straight out.

Roh Tae-woo appeared quite serene. He asked Kim to tell Samaranch not to worry about the success of the Olympics, adding that everything would soon be properly resolved in accordance with the public's wishes. Kim did not understand what he meant by that at the time, but he did get the powerful sense that something was in the works. The following day, Roh made the June 29 Declaration allowing free political activity and instituting direct presidential elections. The demonstrations soon began to subside.

'The door is always open'

To bring a successful conclusion to the fourth (and ultimately last) round of inter-Korean talks, the South Koreans prepared a proposal to increase the number of shared events to six. But on the second day of the talks, Samaranch visited Kim Un-yong and advised him to start with a proposal for five events rather than six. They would be five events proposed by the IOC: all men's and women's archery events, all men's and women's table tennis events, all women's volleyball events, one group in the football qualifying, and the men's cycling individual road race. The South Koreans immediately accepted, but North Koreans made a host of additional demands: the allocation of eight events to the North based on its population relative to the South, the adoption of the names "Seoul Olympics" and "Pyongyang Olympics" for their respective events, establishment of their own organizing committee, television broadcasting rights, and opening and closing ceremonies in Seoul and Pyongyang.

By this point, the IOC had caught on to the North Koreans' ulterior motives. Samaranch became extremely annoyed with the way they kept raising more demands whenever the other side made concessions—first two

events, then four, then five, and so on. He indicated to Kim Un-yong that he was willing to give up one or two more events if the North Koreans accepted the IOC's proposal. He also said that he would discuss the attendant practical issues, including free travel, television rights, and the opening and closing ceremonies. The broadcasting rights were already under contract, which would be extremely difficult to undo, but Samaranch said that the IOC was considering providing \$20 million at its own expense to support television installation efforts in Pyongyang. Once the fourth round of talks had ended, North Korea requested an additional round; the IOC insisted that it would not hold any more unless its proposal was accepted.

For their part, the Eastern European countries that had supported Pyongyang and demanded joint hosting or the allocation of more events to North Korea had begun distancing themselves from its repeated over-the-top demands. Having witnessed the ongoing efforts by the IOC and SLOOC to include North Korea in the Olympics, they did not raise any objections. Indeed, they were already preparing to travel to Seoul themselves. Cuba was virtually alone among the Communist countries remaining sympathetic to the North Koreans.

In response, North Korea contacted the IOC both directly and through the Eastern Bloc countries to demand a delay in the Olympic invitation issuance ceremony scheduled for September 17, 1987, one year before the Seoul Olympics' opening. The IOC dismissed it, demanding an answer to its proposal instead and stressing that the "door is still open."

Hope for North Korea's participation evaporates

The outcome of the inter-Korean athletic talks was a great disappointment to South Koreans. People who did not understand about the Olympic Charter or its importance blasted the wasting of an opportunity to hasten reunification. Many social leaders and intellectuals even believed that the event should be held jointly to ensure North Korea's participation. Accordingly, they misunderstood the IOC's and the South Korean representatives' proposals as a deliberate attempt to ignore the North's demands and block its participation.

Kim Un-yong's response to this was emphatic.

You first need to think about why it is that the Olympic host city is

selected seven years in advance. It means that seven years are needed to host the Olympics. If the Games could be held just anywhere, there wouldn't be any need for seven years of lead time. The same applies not just for all of the Olympics events, but even for competitions in a single sport. Beyond matters of event scheduling, you have to do all manners of work for the athletes and officials—transportation, meals, interpreting, volunteering, safety, TV broadcasting, press operations, and so forth. You also need venues for the competition, amenities for the visitors, vehicles, tickets—all of these things need enormous preparations. North Korea had neither the intention nor the capabilities to co-host the Olympics. It certainly was not prepared to accept all of the television and newspaper reporters visiting the Games, most of them from Western countries. They just wanted to prevent us from holding the Olympics. I cannot put enough emphasis on the significance of the IOC and Samaranch going beyond the Olympic Charter with such a historic proposal. Those efforts from them contributed greatly to the success of the Seoul Olympics and the Olympic movement, and the proactive attitude adopted by the organizing committee was a decisive factor in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries participating in the Seoul Olympics.

A new year dawned. It was now 1988, the year of the Olympics. The Chun Doo-hwan administration was finished, and a new administration had taken office under Roh Tae-woo, who had been chosen as president in a direct election. Samaranch was scheduled to visit that April for his final review of the preparations for the Olympics. During his stay, he planned to visit the leaders of the three opposition parties to offer his thanks for their support and assistance with the Games.

Those leaders were the so-called “three Kims”: Kim Dae-jung, Kim Young-sam, and Kim Jong-pil. Government officials were sensitive about the matter, however. They seemed to think something terrible would happen if the three were to say anything opposed to the Games. Some also voiced skepticism over whether the three opposition leaders would accept Samaranch's invitation.

It was a deeply ignorant attitude, suggesting an indifference to the South Korean public and world's attention to the upcoming Olympics. It would have been quite insensible for political leaders to shun meetings with IOC members at a time when the Olympics were fast approaching and all the world's sports leaders—all of the world's population, really—were focused



Juan Antonio Samaranch meeting with South Korean political leaders at Kim Un-yong's suggestion. From left: Kim Young-sam, Yun Gil-jung, Kim Dae-jung, Samaranch, Kim Un-yong.

on the success of the Seoul Olympics.

The meeting eventually came to pass when Samaranch followed Kim Un-yong's suggestion to invite the three opposition leaders and the ruling party leader to breakfast. Kim Dae-jung, Kim Young-sam, and Kim Jong-pil attended, along with the ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP) representative committee member Yun Gil-jung and Kim Un-yong. During the meeting, the "three Kims" agreed in their recognition that the IOC had made a great deal of effort toward the inter-Korean athletic talks and that North Korea's proposal to jointly host the Olympics was unrealistic. At the same time, they argued that the South Korean public and the IOC should continue making attempts toward North Korea's participation in the Seoul Olympics, offering their own pledge to cooperate at a national level toward the success that they saw as essential for the sake of Korean unity.

In a later meeting at the invitation of Kim Young-sam and his wife, Samaranch suggested that South Korea should attempt to improve its relationships with socialist countries to help South Korea's entry on the global stage and security in Northeast Asia. As it happened, Kim Young-sam would go on to open up diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union through his "northern diplomacy" after taking office as president in 1993. Samaranch also met with representatives of opposition politicians at Kim Dae-jung's request to explain the IOC's position and efforts. The calls from students and opposition leaders for co-hosting of the Olympics with North Korea soon disappeared. After meeting with the three Kims, Samaranch said that he was prepared to visit North Korea if invited. No word came from Pyongyang, and in the end North Korea did not participate in the Seoul Olympics.

The Greatest Olympics

Olympics relations furnish an opportunity for transformation

Kim Un-yong met a large number of sports-related figures to enlist international cooperation while preparing for the Seoul Olympics. Sometimes they were national sports officials, but other times they were politicians and government officials. Most of the Soviet and Eastern European sports leaders were high-ranking government officials. The relationships that Kim formed through his personal encounters with them were all mediated through the Olympic movement, the Olympic competition, and sports. Their mutual trust and cooperation was ever rooted in the Olympic spirit.

Kim Un-yong would refer to this as “Olympic relations.” In the beginning, Olympic relations required a great deal of effort and patience toward understanding the other side’s position and circumstances before an agreement could be reached. After that, however, they tended to expand into many different areas once the Olympics were finished: trainee exchanges, joint seminars, reciprocal athletes’ visits, friendly matches and the like. Perhaps the epitome of this was the so-called “ping pong diplomacy,” where the US and China achieved normalization of their relationship through the medium of table tennis.

The Soviet Union and Eastern European countries’ announcements of their participation in the Seoul Olympics created an opportunity for Korea Football Association president Kim Woo-joong and Korea Tennis Association president Cho Choong-keon to travel to the Soviet Union. Cho, who was also president of KAL, enlisted the help of Samaranch and Gramov in acquiring rights for the airline to fly in Soviet airspace, allowing it to transport athletes more quickly and comfortably. It truly was a turnaround from the 1983 incident in which a Soviet fighter plane shot down a KAL passenger jet.

The Olympics are not only about competition. Cultural events make up an equally important part. These events were important for South Korea to introduce its culture with visiting Olympics squads and other visitors, but they were also important in terms of sharing the cultures of the participating countries. In addition to the Olympic events, Kim Un-yong hoped that the Seoul Olympics would be a full-scale festival with culture and

arts groups participating from all over the world. He needed to focus on cultural exchanges with the Soviet Union, the nations of Eastern Europe, and other countries visiting South Korea for the first time, since they had the potential to spread to many different areas in the future. The Soviet Union in particular boasted some of the greatest culture in the world with its pianists, orchestras, ballet troupes, and circuses. Kim felt that if he could get them to participate in cultural events for the Seoul Olympics, the Games would truly be one of the greatest festivals of humankind.

To this end, Kim held discussions through the Soviet Sports Ministry on visits by cultural groups including orchestras, ballet troupes, circuses, and magicians. The IOC likewise remained in close contact with the Soviet Culture Ministry. The Soviet Union responded favorably, announcing plans to send a delegation of cultural envoys exclusively during the Olympic period. The Soviet Union's TASS news agency proposed an exhibition of folk photography, while the Soviet Sports Ministry made a request to exhibit and sell Russian food and folk items. For the cultural envoy delegation, plans were made for visiting performances in South Korea during the Olympics by the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, a mixed Moscow ballet troupe, and a 120-member chorus featuring Nelly Lee and Ludmila Nam.

The process was not without its share of problems. The *Chosun Ilbo* protested its fellow newspaper the *Dong-A Ilbo* sponsoring the invitation of Soviet cultural groups. After marathon meetings lasting three days, an agreement was reached to have the *Chosun Ilbo* sponsor the Bolshoi chorus and photography exhibition while the *Dong-A Ilbo* sponsored the orchestra and ballet performances. Police also investigated brokers soliciting money and items to bring Soviet culture and arts groups to South Korea. After Suh Hai-kyung and Kim Un-yong's daughter Hae-jung were selected to accompany the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra, the family of a student who had paid one of these brokers began sending anonymous letters to various figures alleging that Suh's selection had been based on money and Kim Hae-jung's on her father's influence.

In this Olympic relationship all these cultural events were restricted as part of the Olympic events during the Olympic period—the Soviet Union's participation in the Games, the temporary consular office, the minimal economic ties, the permission for KAL to fly in Soviet airspace, the stops by Soviet aircraft, the docking in Incheon Harbor, the visiting performances by Soviet culture and arts groups, the visits by Soviet VIPs, the athletic exchanges, and the exhibitions of folk art, photography, and commercial

products. But they would prove highly significant in providing the impetus for a change in Soviet policies not long after the Olympics.

Hopes for Eastern European participation

Kim Un-yong and his wife visited the Soviet Union no fewer than three times in 1988. When he first arrived in April, he was the first South Korean to visit with an official invitation from the Soviet government; when he returned on July 1, he was invited to the official residence of Deputy Patriarch Alexy of the Russian Orthodox Church for lunch. Even Samaranch had not been offered a lunch during his visit to Leningrad; Kim was the first sports leader to receive an invitation. He was treated to a lavish lunch attended by members of the Soviet Communist Party's central committee on religion, and Alexy delivered the message that the issue of a diplomatic relationship with South Korea would be resolved once the Olympics were over. He also provided two medals (nine centimeters in diameters, weighing 500 grams) to commemorate the thousandth anniversary of the Russian Orthodox Church's establishment in 988. One of them, he said, was a gift to President Roh Tae-woo in honor of the good will between the Soviet Union and South Korea. Kim was impressed by Alexy's clear pronunciation of the president's name.

While the Soviet Union and countries of Eastern Europe had said that they would participate in the Seoul Olympics, reassurances that everything



While visiting the Soviet Union in 1987 to convince the country to take part in the Seoul Olympics, Kim Un-yong became the first sports leader invited for lunch at the official residence of Russian Orthodox Deputy Patriarch Alexy.

was proceeding smoothly were needed until they actually arrived in the city. The situation was similar to the participation of the Soviet Union and Japan in the World Gymnastics Championships ahead of the Olympics. Japan was unable to take part because of the tight schedule, but the Soviet Union agreed to participate, citing the advantage of being able to do off-season training at the site of the Olympics, and the championships were held in August. Park Jong-hoon's achievement in winning South Korea its first-ever Olympic bronze in the men's vault came after he had honed his abilities through this event.

Meanwhile, Soviet NOC representatives visited Seoul four more times between April and August to discuss issues related to support and their participation in the Olympics. Kim Un-yong held discussions with the Soviets on their various demands, accepting them as long as it was permitted by the Olympic Charter and did not violate the Olympic spirit. At the same time, he also visited the countries of Eastern Europe for further discussions.

Prior to the Olympics, Kim paid two visits to Hungary and one each to Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and China. During his visit to China, his friend He Zhenliang from the IOC joked, "You've spent all your time traveling Eastern Europe and haven't come to China once!"

The East German delegates visited Seoul five times; delegations came from Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Poland for two visits each and once each from Romania and Mongolia. Day after day, Kim Un-yong faced a busy schedule traveling all over the world to attend IOC, international federation, and NOC meetings. He would sleep in airplanes before heading to meetings the next day, and then back onto another airplane bound for another country.

The most memorable place that Kim visited in Eastern Europe was Poland. His visit on July 25–28, 1988, was his second after his 1976 trip to Poznan near Warsaw to attend the World Junior Fencing Championships. This time, he met with Deputy Prime Minister Jozef Koziol, who stressed the importance of improving relations. "Relations between South Korea and Poland must not end with the Olympics," Koziol said. That evening, he heard a story about North Korea while attending a dinner provided by Minister for Youth Affairs Aleksander Kwaśniewski. An employee from the North Korean embassy had visited the deputy minister and said that while Pyongyang understood Poland's participation in the Olympics, it wanted to know whether it was really necessary to participate in the taekwondo

demonstration event, send culture and arts groups, and participate in the youth camp. Although some progress seemed to have been made in the inter-Korean athletic talks with the proposal to have some events hosted in North Korea as the Olympics drew nearer, here was evidence that Pyongyang was working behind the scenes to sabotage things with the countries of Eastern Europe.

Romania was led at the time by dictator President Nicolae Ceausescu, with a regime similar to North Korea's. During his visit, Kim heard about their poor conditions and had to promise to offer all possible support. Romania had been the only Eastern Bloc country to participate in the LA Olympics despite the boycott. Ceausescu was reluctant to spend foreign currency on the Olympics; during the LA Games, he explained, he had received \$180,000 from the organizing committee. He demanded the waiving of athletes' village fees, chartered aircraft, and exemptions on airport service charges. As an International Radio and Television Organisation (OIRT) member, Romania had to pay \$250,000 to broadcast the Olympics, but even this was beyond the country's capabilities, and it had to abandon its plans to transmit the event. It was also unable to participate in the youth camp cultural event despite a promise to cover all invitation costs.

Kim Un-yong would visit almost every Communist country before the start of the 1988 Olympics, from Hungary and Bulgaria to China. Hungary was already preparing to establish diplomatic ties with Seoul, so all Kim needed to do was confirm its friendly relationship and its plans to participate in the Games. China was preparing for the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing, and Kim granted it special allowance to send additional officials and observers to the Seoul Olympics ahead of the Asian Games event. While Olympic rules limited the number of transportation vehicles that could be assigned to individual country teams, Kim arranged for additional vehicles at the Chinese team's request. The organizing committee had no remaining buses, but KAL president Cho Choong-keun willingly agreed to lend one out.

In touring the different Eastern European countries, Kim gained an understanding of their respective strengths and needs. It was also an opportunity to learn about their history, customs, and people. Most important, while the socialist countries' immediate focus was on the Olympics, he hoped to re-channel that interest into economic and cultural areas once the event was finished.

After the Seoul Olympics, most of these Eastern European countries

would become central to President Roh Tae-woo's northern policy, providing a basis for the establishment of diplomatic ties and relationships of substantive economic cooperation. It was another excellent illustration of the ways in which "Olympic relations" could grow.

Four principles amid constant demands

Kim Un-yong was the only member participating on the organizing committee throughout the entire process from Seoul's bid for the Olympics to the eventual disbanding once the event had concluded and accounts had been settled. The SLOOC presidency passed from Kim Yong-sik to Roh Tae-woo and on to Park Se-jik, but Kim Un-yong remained solidly in place all the while. Given South Korea's hitherto underdeveloped status when it came to sports, with almost no international competitions and nothing in the way of sports diplomacy, Kim was the only figure who had relationships with diverse international sports organizations such as the IOC, GAISE, and ANOC as well as with sports leaders in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

After his role as KTA and WTF president and KOC member led to his appointment as vice president of SLOOC and on to senior vice president in 1984, he took on all manner of difficult and unpleasant tasks, devoting his every energy to the Seoul Olympics' success. He was involved in every sensitive and serious issue from television broadcasting rights to talks with the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc and inter-Korean talks, working to steer them toward successful outcomes. While North Korea's participation did not come to pass, his experience negotiating with the North Koreans proved pivotal to the much later achievement at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, where the South and North Korean athletes entered together hand in hand for the first time at the opening ceremony.

In his preparations for the Seoul Olympics, Kim sometimes had arguments with government officials. When the working-level staff were unable to make decisions, he would meet personally with the president to explain the situation and gain his approval. What allowed Kim to enjoy near-complete authority in the Seoul Olympics preparations was the utter trust placed in him by the SLOOC presidents, the prominent government figures Roh Tae-woo and Park Se-jik. More important than this, however, was the fact that no one else had the same capabilities on the international sports stage to bring about the Seoul Olympics' success.

With his 1986 appointment as South Korea's sixth IOC member, Kim now directed the organizing committee in the role of IOC mediator. His duties were enormously important for the Seoul Olympics preparations, but he performed magnificently in both his roles as IOC member and SLOOC senior vice president.

SLOOC sent a total of 16 delegations to IOC Executive Board meetings to report on the preparations. Five times the delegation was headed by Roh Tae-woo, three times by Park Se-jik, and eight times by Kim Un-yong.

As senior vice president of SLOOC Kim would typically attend the IOC Executive Board meetings to report in detail on the Seoul Olympics preparations and the unique issues specific to South Korea, after which the SLOOC president would deliver a general report before the IOC General Assembly. With the Executive Board, there was no room for sloppiness: meetings were held around four times a year and addressed sensitive issues each time. Once a decision was made, there was no opportunity to reverse it.

The duties that SLOOC had to perform for the Olympics reached to every area of society. Members took on a huge number of tasks involving everything from the aircraft and ships the athletes arrived on to vehicles for their transportation, ID card issuance, athletes' and press village management, accommodations for IOC members and overseas VIPs, venue and event schedule management, judges and other competition staff, volunteers, medical care, various cultural events and ceremonies, the torch relay, and security. There was no room for carelessness in any of them.

With such large-scale competitions as the Olympics, utterly unexpected demands become a matter of course, and their handling can decide the success of the competition.

While it was easy to understand the countries' difficulties in working on behalf of their teams and trying to maintain top competitive abilities, the demands from the Olympic family routinely tested SLOOC's abilities to cope. In the end, this was the price that they had to pay for a successful Seoul Olympics, but they could not give every country everything that it wanted.

In response to this, Kim Un-yong adopted an approach of four principles in every department: adherence to the Olympic Charter, past precedent, the South Koreans' capabilities, and willingness. Did the country's demands relate to anything mentioned in the Olympic Charter? If not, did any precedent exist for them? If the answer was no to both, then it was time to make an accurate assessment of whether it was something the South Koreans were capable of doing or willing to do. This meant that while they should do their

best to help when facing demands, they should not let themselves be bullied by anyone into doing more than what the Olympic Charter stipulated. Indeed, the Soviets would make several unreasonable demands after docking their ship at Incheon Harbor, but stopped after the organizers refused citing the Olympic Charter and South Korean law.

Needless to say, these four principles furnished a small stepping stone toward the Seoul Olympics' success and served as guidelines in the activities of the organizing committee staff.

Preparations and more preparations

Many of the world's countries had watched with concern in Baden-Baden when Seoul won the right to hold the 1988 Olympics. In the eyes of overseas sports leaders, Seoul was seen as deficient in too many ways. Having staged almost no global competitions before, its organizational capabilities were an unknown quantity, and observers did not feel assured of its economic strength. The confrontation between South and North meant a constant threat of war and political instability. The South Koreans were obviously very worried about the possibility of a new host city being chosen or another boycott occurring. But attitudes toward Seoul began to change after its staging of the 1986 Asian Games, which amounted to a dress rehearsal for the Olympics. The Asian Games proved helpful for the Seoul Olympics in many ways in terms of organization, broadcasting, venue management, and cooperation with international organizations.

To gain experience and learn about organizing competitions, SLOOC members attended every kind of important competition and meeting taking place around the world. They also worked to foster a boom in athletics—a weak point for South Korea—by staging the Seoul World Athletics Championships and World Cup Marathon.

Nothing in the Seoul Olympics preparations went perfectly smoothly. A celebratory event was held on September 29, 1984, to mark the opening of the main venue for the Olympic track and field and football events and the opening and closing ceremonies, with Samaranch and IAAF president Primo Nebiolo in attendance. After the event, a special track and field competition was held, but most of the spectators left after the celebration event. As he witnessed the sparse crowd of fewer than 2,000 filling the broad 69,000-seat stadium, he realized that nurturing a track and field boom to keep that

main venue filled was a different matter from organizing the track and field events with the most gold medals on the line.

The opening ceremony, which would be the focus of the world's attention, was another headache. The IOC and NOCs demanded seats so that all of the athletes could sit down in the main venue to watch the opening ceremony. Organizing seats in the main venue for the nearly 10,000 athletes was virtually impossible, yet the SLOOC remained dogged by their constant demands and unbearable pressure. The committee members were blind-sided further by demands that the competitors from the yachting events in Busan be allowed to attend the opening ceremony. Originally, around half of the 500 yachting competitors were to come up to Seoul by train the day before the ceremony and spend the night in a hotel, while the remainder flew up by charter plane on the day of the event. Now all 500 of them suddenly wanted to fly in on opening ceremony day, and the organizers had their hands full trying to coordinate. The change raised serious issues: the previously reserved train and hotel rooms would have to be canceled, and a separate charter plane would be needed. But when International Sailing Federation president Peter Tallberg requested that Samaranch mediate, they had no choice but to comply. Then, the following day, it was announced that the competitors would be going back to the original plan, and the organizers had to go through the hassle of reversing everything once again.

International Federation for Equestrian Sports (IFES) rules state that individual hurdles are to take place at the main venue on the last day of the Olympics, just before the marathon and closing ceremony. But at the LA Olympics, the individual hurdles had been staged at an alternate location, and the winners had ridden in on horseback to walk a lap around the main venue before the medal ceremony was held. IFES wanted to adopt the same approach at the Seoul Olympics. Equestrian events have a very deep tradition and require a high level of skill and special competition facilities. Contrary to IFES's wishes, IAAF president Nebiolo wanted only the marathon to be held at the main venue, arguing that the individual hurdles took too much time and that it would be impossible to move all of the equipment. Nebiolo had no regard at all for non-track and field events.

It would not be easy to devise a plan that would satisfy both IFES and IAAF. Kim Un-yong racked his brain to think of a solution. IFES was led by Princess Anne of the United Kingdom; given her unique stature and the social reputation she enjoyed for devotion to sports and popular welfare, the organization's demands could not simply be brushed aside. After persua-

sive efforts with Nebiolo and talking with IFES officials, an agreement was reached to have the individual hurdles finals take place at 8 a.m. so that they would finish before the marathon began.

In April 1987, Kim met with Princess Anne in Lausanne, where the IOC Executive Board and international federations were holding a meeting. Their discussion focused on areas for improvement, as well as her proposed visit to a meeting of the IFES board in Seoul that October. When the scheduled visit came, the princess toured the event facilities in Wondang and Gwacheon and found them very much to her satisfaction. They reached an agreement on matters concerning television coverage of the event, quarantine procedures for the horses, veterinary services, stables, transportation of the horses, and special consideration to allow horses and their grooms to enter the country together. In addition, the princess herself was to be provided with security measures in consideration of her stature and have a bathroom built within the equestrian park for her own personal use.

And so it went with every event, each of them presenting various major and minor issues. The volleyball finals venue had to be changed after the newly appointed international federation chairman Ruben Acosta demanded a gymnasium that would accommodate 15,000 to 20,000 people. In the case of canoeing and rowing, Kim had to deal with issues of training times and places, boat transportation, press seating, and competition schedule adjustment due to overlapping of the transportation systems linking public transportation with the Misari course in Gyeonggi-do. The president of the International Rowing Federation was GAISF president Thomas Keller, a very difficult-to-please individual who stood alongside Samaranch as one of the twin pillars of international sport. Theirs was an awkward relationship thanks to differences in opinion on the Olympic movement. The GAISF was the international organization that would be passed down to Kim Un-yong after he became an IOC member.

As preparations followed preparations, the Seoul Olympics finally emerged as the most perfect event in Olympic history, with 13,304 people (9,417 athletes and 3,887 officials) participating from 160 countries over 16 days. Everything was nearly flawless, from the facilities, management, and participation to the services for the different countries, public order, and safety. Included in this festival were some 15,740 reporters and television staff, 10,288 judges and council representatives, 900 youth camp participants from 48 countries, 3,400 VIPs from 162 countries, 30,000 cultural event participants from 80 countries, 24,000 volunteers, and 240,000 visitors.

A total of 112 facilities were used, including 34 event venues, 72 training sites, and six related facilities. Thirty-three new world records were set and another five world records were tied, while 227 Olympic records were set and 42 tied. An estimated 3.5 million spectators watched the competitions; a total of 3,272,973 tickets were sold.

While there had been some difficulties scheduling events for the Seoul Olympics due to the time difference with the US and Europe, 1,000 of the 1,030 events—all but 30—began on time, and another 15 started one minute late. Nine of them started three minutes late, and just six took longer to begin. No Olympics before had ever had so many events start on time. Everything had moved like a well-oiled machine.

The Ben Johnson doping affair

There had been flies in the ointment, however.

The Seoul Olympics may have gone off mostly without a hitch, but it would not be totally free from problems. It all started on September 22, when South Korean boxer Byun Jung-il, seen as a potential medalist contender, lost in the second round of the bantamweight competition to Bulgarian Aleksandar Hristov. Two deductions had proven crucial in Byun's defeat. When the decision of Byun's loss was announced, trainer Lee Hong-su leaped into the ring. Soon other boxing officials and coaching staff members had joined him there, and a scuffle ensued as New Zealand referee Keith Walker was grabbed by the neck and shaken in protest. Chairs and water bottles were hurled into the ring. In an instant, pandemonium reigned.

Walker, the referee who had been grabbed by the neck, managed to leave the venue under the protection of boxing officials and security staff; the assistant referees at ringside all fled. The fighting turned physical for a time as tournament police and security staff tried to stop the now worked-up spectators from leaping down from the stands. To protest the decision, Byun and his coaching staff held an hour-and-a-half-long silent protest in and around the ring. As the incident erupted, Samaranch visited the International Boxing Council (IBC), where he spent 40 minutes watching the scene. The US network NBC treated it as a major news story, broadcasting the situation live for over an hour—and fanning antipathy toward itself and the US among South Koreans as a consequence. After South Korea requested another review, the IBC held an appeals committee meeting attended by

president Anwar Chowdhry, jury members, and technical inspectors. A decision was made not to assign Walker to any more competitions; fearing for his safety, the referee returned to New Zealand the very next day.

Before this episode had been an incident in which four athletes were simultaneously stripped of their medals, including 56-kg weightlifting gold medalist Mitko Grablev and 67.5-kg gold medalist Angel Genchev of Bulgaria and 100-kg silver medalist Andor Szanyi of Hungary.

Five days later came the evening of September 27. Samaranch summoned Kim Un-yong to his room.

“We have a problem.”

“What is it?”

The Seoul Olympics were nearing the end. Samaranch rarely spoke so seriously; when the Byun incident had occurred, he had dismissed the defiance of the referee’s ruling as a routine occurrence. Kim was worried.

“Merode says Johnson tested positive in a doping test. Don’t tell anyone. We’ll make a decision tomorrow morning after we know more.”

Alexandre de Merode was president of the IOC Medical Commission. Kim was dumbstruck.

Three days earlier on September 24, the men’s 100-meter finals were held to determine the “fastest man in the world.” Ben Johnson of Canada had beaten the American Carl Lewis with a new world record time of 9.79 seconds. His win earned him worldwide attention. In celebration, Samaranch had awarded his first gold medal of the Seoul Olympics to Johnson.

Three days later, Johnson’s urine sample showed that he had taken a banned substance, a muscle-enhancing anabolic steroid known as stanozolol. The meeting continued throughout the evening. The press sensed that something was up, and the telephone began ringing. Canadian IOC member Dick Pound told people that someone had tampered with Johnson’s urine sample. Johnson had tested negative at the 1987 World Championships in Athletics in Rome. This raised questions about whether he had taken the banned substance in the six months before the Olympics began. Overnight, the Olympic hero was now branded a cheat, leaving South Korea like a fugitive the day after the substance was detected.

The next day, IOC spokesperson Michele Verdier announced that Johnson would be stripped of his gold, confirming there would be no change to any disciplinary measures taken in accordance with IAAF rules.

The incident with Byun Jung-il’s decision resulted in Boxing Association of Korea president Kim Seung-yeon being called to the Blue House and

KOC president Kim Jong-ha resigning. The KOC president's resignation in the middle of the Olympics was certain to cause all sorts of issues. Kim Un-yong called Kim Jong-ha into Samaranch's room the very same evening that the Ben Johnson doping scandal erupted. For some time, Kim Un-yong and Samaranch worked to persuade Kim Jong-ha that it made no sense to not have an NOC president representing South Korea while the Olympics were going on. In the end, he reversed his decision. Fortunately, Kim Jong-ha's attempted resignation did not draw press attention amid the Johnson scandal.

In August 2008, 20 years after the Seoul Olympics, the online edition of the British daily *The Times* selected 50 crucial moments from 112 years of Olympic history. First among them was the doping scandal involving "three-day wonder" Ben Johnson. Even today, the scandal remains one of the most shocking stories in global sports.

In addition to this, two US swimmers stole a statue from a hotel bar in Seoul's Itaewon neighborhood, while NBC broadcasting staff ordered T-shirts showing the boxing ring incident as a "symbol." The US athletes' disorderly conduct during the opening ceremony similarly drew some rather emotional words. These too were a few more flies in the ointment.

1988 Seoul Games: The 'Greatest Olympics'



Cover of the book *The Greatest Olympics*.

Every time the Olympics are held, the host country shares something of its unique culture. The Olympics are not merely about sporting events. If competitions were all there was to them, they may never have become the global sports festival they are today.

The term "best Olympics yet" tends to always come up once an Olympic competition has ended. So it was with the most recent event, the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, and the 2012 London Olympics before that. Even after being plagued with some of the worst traffic, humidity, and security conditions, as well

as the construction of venues lasting up until the very opening of the Games, the Rio Games were still lauded as the “best Olympics yet.”

The Seoul Olympics defied the cliché, going down in history as the “greatest Olympics.” There is a reason for this.

After the successful staging of the Seoul Olympics as South Korea’s sole IOC member and vice president of SLOOC, Kim Un-yong wrote a book about the event the following year in 1989. He thought about what to call it before finally deciding to “give it a title no one can imitate” and naming the book *The Greatest Olympics*. It was published by YBM Sisayoungosa in 1989 and translated into Japanese, Chinese, and English. The title stuck for the Seoul Games; even an official history of the Olympic games authored by David Miller and published by the IOC in 2008 referred to the Seoul Games as the “greatest Olympics.”

In the introduction to *The Greatest Olympics. From Baden-Baden to Seoul*, Kim Un-yong wrote:

When Seoul was awarded the 24th Olympic Games in Baden-Baden, West Germany, on September 30, 1981, the world as well as Seoul reacted with surprise. Some were concerned about Seoul’s organizing capabilities. Some worried about boycotts and terrorist threats. Others called for a change of sites.

But in seven years’ time, the entire population of Korea, with the support of the Olympic family, successfully opened and closed the Games, thus bringing together the youths of the world for a gala sports festival. The Seoul Games were not only the greatest in Olympic history, but they also achieved a major goal of the Olympic Charter by contributing to international understanding and world peace...

The Seoul Olympics were the largest festival of mankind in peacetime and the Games brought the Olympic Movement back to its original purpose: bringing together the young athletes of the world in one place, transcending barriers of sex, religion, race and political creed, reinforcing friendship and goodwill, helping to build a better, peaceful world.

In the foreword to the book, Samaranch wrote:

On the long road from October 1981 to September 1988, the IOC was lucky enough to be able to count on some very exceptional men, first

and foremost, the current president of the Republic of Korea, Mr. Roh Tae-woo, who was for a time president of the Organizing Committee and the real inspiration behind the Games. It would be impossible to name all the other key figures of these Games, but I must mention here the extraordinary work achieved by the IOC member in the Republic of Korea, Dr. Kim Un-yong, whose calm and diplomacy was greatly appreciated and respected by us all. President of GAISF, vice president of the Organizing Committee, in addition to being a member of the Executive Board of the IOC, Dr. Kim was the perfect mediator for all parties concerned. A very apt negotiator, with a broad knowledge of the sporting world, he very quickly became the most efficient channel of communication with the Organizing Committee.

Dr. Kim Un-yong is thus in an extremely privileged position to be able to tell the real story of these Games, both from a Korean as well as an international point of view. There is indeed a great deal to be told regarding the Games, which have a unique history within our Olympic Movement, organised in a divided country, still considered to be a developing one, and subjected to many fears and threats due to the international situation.

Apart from being a tremendous success for the entire Olympic family, one could perhaps even say that the Olympic Games in Seoul were a major factor behind the rapid democratisation of the Republic of Korea and the development of an element of international goodwill, cooperation and fraternity, a new hope for Peace.

So what accounts for both Kim Un-yong and Samaranch referring to the Seoul Games as the “greatest Olympics” or the “best Games ever in our Olympic history”?

First is the fact that they were a “whole Olympics” reuniting East and West. At the time, the Olympics had remained trapped in an ideological nightmare since the 1972 Munich Games, when the Arab terrorist organization Black September attacked members of the Israeli team. At the 1976 Montreal Olympics, where wrestler Yang Jung-mo won South Korea its first Olympic gold medal since liberation, 32 African countries announced a boycott and walked out of the athletes’ village after the IOC refused what it deemed a “political” request by the Supreme Council for Sport in Africa (SCSA) to ban New Zealand from participating in the Games because of its sports interchange with South Africa, which had adopted racially discriminatory policies

at the time. The Taiwanese squad also traveled to Montreal to take part in the Games as the “Republic of China,” only to be refused entry by Canada, which had formed diplomatic ties with the People’s Republic of China and severed ties with Taiwan since Montreal had won its host city bid. The incident left a major black mark by failing to honor the Olympic Charter’s golden rule that no Olympic host nation should discriminate on political grounds.

As is well known, the 1980 Moscow Olympics and 1984 Los Angeles Olympics ended up “half events,” the former due to a Western boycott over the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan and the latter due to a boycott by the Soviet Union and other Communist countries in response to the West’s boycott of the Moscow Games. The Seoul Olympics had put this East-West enmity to rest, bringing everyone together for the first time in 12 years. It was an Olympics where no country’s participation was refused on political grounds.

A second reason is related to the collapse of Communism and the realization of democracy. After the Seoul Olympics, the insular Communist sphere began collapsing at an astonishing rate. The Soviet Union broke apart after the Seoul Olympics, and an international climate of reconciliation began to spread. One after another, South Korea formed diplomatic relations and expanded interchange with the Soviet Union and other Communist countries. The Seoul Olympics were the single most influential Olympics in terms of ending the Cold War era between East and West.

A third reason is the stepping stone the Olympics provided for South Korea’s democratization and development into an advanced economy. At the time Seoul was bidding to host the Olympics, many had questioned whether South Korea could properly stage the games amid the Korean Peninsula’s division and the underdevelopment of its economy—yet the games ended up a success. The sight of the South Korean people coming together also left a deep impression on people around the world, helping to provide a stepping stone toward economic development. The period after the Olympics also saw the arrival of South Korea’s first popularly elected president and the complete retreat of its military government, furnishing an occasion for advancement in civic consciousness as well.

The Seoul Olympics played an important role in bringing East and West together and declaring an end to the Cold War and its ideology. They also had the effect of reviving the Olympic spirit and spreading the Olympic movement throughout the world. It is for these reasons that Kim Un-yong refers to them as the “greatest Olympics.”

Kim Un-yong and the IOC

Becoming an IOC Member

Granted the honour of becoming a member of the International Olympic Committee and of representing it, and declaring myself aware of my responsibilities in such capacity, I undertake to serve the Olympic Movement to the very best of my ability, to respect and ensure the respect of all the provisions of the Olympic Charter and the decisions of the IOC, which I consider as not subject to appeal on my part, to comply with the Code of Ethics, to keep myself free from any political or commercial influence and from any racial or religious consideration, to fight against all other forms of discrimination and to defend in all circumstances the interests of the IOC and those of the Olympic Movement.



Kim Un-yong takes the IOC oath after being appointed as a member (1986).

(Oath taken by IOC Members)

Kim Un-yong was elected as a member of the IOC at the 19th General Assembly meeting in Lausanne on October 17, 1986, one month after the Seoul Asian Games ended. He was the sixth South Korean to serve as an IOC member, after Lee Ki-bung (1955–1960), Lee Sang-baek (1964–1966), Jang Key-young (1967–1977), Kim Taek-su (1977–1983), and Park Jong-gyu (1984–1985). In the past, the practice had been for those elected as IOC members to assume their membership the following year. With the Seoul Olympics just two years away, however, Kim had to take his oath and begin his duties immediately upon election.

Kim's outstanding work capabilities, high level of name recognition in the international sports community, and fluent language abilities had all been factors in his becoming an IOC member. He also benefitted from Sama-

ranch's active and firm recommendation despite the administration's desire to nominate a political figure—and a little bit of luck.

Kim Taek-su, who had succeeded Jang Ki-young as a member, passed away from cancer in 1983, leaving South Korea with an empty seat on the IOC. At the time, Kim Un-yong was busy coordinating affairs with the IOC as vice president of the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee (SLOOC) following its 1981 launch.

One day, SLOOC president and sports minister Roh Tae-woo summoned Kim in connection with his recommendation for membership on the IOC.

"Normally, I would have to recommend you, but out of loyalty I have no choice but to nominate [Korea Shooting Federation president] Park Jong-gyu," Roh explained, adding that he would "make sure to give you an opportunity next time." Kim was actually grateful to Roh for calling him in to tell him this when he was under no obligation to do so. Naturally, he took the "next time" part with a grain of salt.

But then something utterly unexpected happened. Park Jong-gyu, who had become South Korea's new IOC member at a General Assembly meeting during the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, died of cancer just over a year later in November 1985. The issue of South Korea's representation on the IOC had once again surfaced. The host country of the impending 1988 Olympics could not afford to simply leave its seat vacant. At the time, there were no IOC member or athletes' committee member positions for international federation presidents as there are today. Potential members were recommended on their individual qualifications and submitted to an IOC General Assembly vote.

Many people coveted the IOC seat. President Chun Doo-hwan discussed the nomination issue in a meeting with Samaranch while visiting Switzerland in the spring of 1986.

In consideration of the Seoul Olympics event schedule, broadcasting rights, and IOC-SLOOC cooperation, Samaranch said that he wanted Kim Un-yong nominated as an IOC member. Chun responded that he had someone else in mind, and they could not reach an agreement.

In reality, Kim and Chun had a somewhat rancorous relationship. After the new military government had taken power, Kim had had to resign as Korea Taekwondo Association (KTA) president because Chun's younger brother Chun Kyung-hwan coveted the position. In 1983, Kim was pushed to resign personally by Sports Minister Lee Young-ho. President Chun was well aware of this, and it made some sense that he would not readily nomi-

nate Kim for the IOC seat.

That April, Samaranch visited Seoul. Again, no agreement could be reached. Samaranch still wanted Kim Un-yong nominated for the IOC; Chun had someone else in mind, although he would not mention any name. In the sports world, rumors were rife that he was strongly backing administration heavyweight and former sports minister and SLOOC president Roh Tae-woo or then-sports minister Park Se-jik.

As their disagreement persisted, Samaranch hinted to Chun that he was not going to be flexible on the matter. “If you keep proposing political figures, you may end up hosting the Olympics without a member on the IOC,” he said. President Chun ultimately backed down.

It was a long and tortuous process, but in the end Kim Un-yong became South Korea’s sixth member of the IOC. While it had been customary for IOC members to take on their positions the year after election, Kim took his oath at the same General Assembly meeting and immediately started work as a member. The Seoul Olympics were less than two years away. Samaranch made a special entreaty for Kim to “make sure every effort goes into preparations for the Seoul Games.”

IOC members are recommended by the president and go through the Executive Board before being elected by the General Assembly. Whereas UN ambassadors are people sent to represent their country and work for its national interests at the UN, IOC members are people working around the world on the IOC’s behalf. Typically, the right to nominate IOC members is not left to the country in question; instead, the IOC internally recommends individuals recognized as having contributed to the development of sports, and there are discussions with the country in question. As the Charter indicates, IOC members are guaranteed to work independently of any political or financial pressures. At the same time, it is human nature for citizens of a particular country to work on behalf of national interests as well.

Kim Un-yong was no different. After becoming an IOC member, he devoted all his capabilities to the success of the Asian Games and Seoul Olympics, and he was able to play a major role in their success as a result.

Swift rise to IOC Vice President and Executive Board Member

At the 94th IOC General Assembly meeting at Seoul’s Hotel Shilla on August 15, 1988, Kim Un-yong was elected to a four-year term on the Executive

Board. It had been 669 days since he had become an IOC member on October 17, 1986—a year and ten months. At less than two years, it was the shortest time anyone had spent as a member before joining the Executive Board. Kim was also the first South Korean to be elected to the IOC Executive Board. Gunnar Ericsson, who was elected to the board alongside him, had been an IOC member for 23 years. Samaranch had made an unsuccessful Executive Board bid after two years and ultimately became a member after four. In comparison, Kim’s promotion had been swift indeed. With just a month or so remaining before the opening of the Seoul Olympics, Kim’s election to the Executive Board as SLOOC senior vice pres-

ident also inspired greater confidence as cooperation with the IOC became smoother and the Seoul Olympics organization gained momentum.

The Executive Board election where Kim had run was a marathon session lasting two hours and 40 minutes and involving ten rounds of voting. It remained uncertain to the last just who would be chosen. Two vacancies were to be filled by a majority vote, and there were a total of six candidates. Kim had drawn the most votes in the first balloting, but not a majority. The voting continued, with Sweden’s Ericsson winning his seat in the fourth round and Kim finally being elected by a 50–32 vote in the tenth.

After being elected to the Executive Board, Kim Un-yong described the experience as “utterly unexpected and an emotional moment I will never forget.” He also declared what he expected to achieve through the role. “The fact that I have become an Executive Board member does not mean that I can suddenly start representing my country’s interests,” he said, “but I will do my best to enable South Korean sports to make strides on the global stage.”

Today, the IOC Executive Board consists of 15 members, including the



Top: Founding members at the time of the IOC's inaugural general meeting in 1894.

Bottom: Executive committee for the 100th anniversary of the IOC's establishment (1994).

IOC president, four vice presidents, and 10 other IOC members. At the time, though, it had only seven members. The board was created in 1921, with members elected to no more than one four-year term. The typical practice was for items to pass the General Assembly after first being approved by the Executive Board; it would not be overstating the matter to say that the Executive Board members effectively run the IOC.

The stipulated duties of Executive Board members allow them absolute authority for the full range of the IOC's management, finances, and appointments: assuming overall responsibility for the IOC's operations, overseeing adherence to the Olympic Charter, approving all internal regulations related to the IOC's inner organization, overseeing management of IOC finances, executing IOC candidate selection procedures, and guaranteeing appropriate enforcement of the Olympic Charter and Olympic organization by enacting all necessary regulations (bylaws, resolutions, norms, guidelines) in whatever form they deem most suitable.

After this, Kim Un-yong ran for the vice presidency at an IOC General Assembly meeting just before the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona. Once the four-year term on the Executive Board elapses, the member must either become a vice president or leave the board. The typical practice had been for a single candidate to be selected from among the Executive Board members for election as vice president without a vote. However, 1988 saw a contest between South Korea and Japan, with neither Kim nor Japan's Chiharu Igaya conceding in their battle for the vice presidency seat.

Igaya was somewhat of a hero in Japan, the first Asian silver medalist in the men's slalom event at the VII Winter Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo in 1956. He had also actively campaigned to win votes, citing the upcoming 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano. Igaya was a former athlete who had become an IOC member four years before Kim. This and Japan's economic strength served as his greatest advantages.

Unlike Igaya, Kim Un-yong had never had an athletic career. His advantages were his role as head of an international sports organization and his proactive and far-reaching approach to interpersonal relationships and the ability to get along well with people from any country. In terms of economic strength, South Korea now stood tall—certainly it did not disqualify the country from having an IOC vice president. Kim felt encouraged by the fact that his bid for the vice presidency came at Samaranch's recommendation.

North Korean IOC member Kim Yu-sun felt confident about Kim's chances of victory. "Judging from the mood around here, things seem to be

tilting in Mr. Kim's favor," he said, adding that there was "even talk about him possibility succeeding Samaranch as president." Samaranch, in contrast, warned, "You never know with elections until the votes are counted." He advised Kim Un-yong to "humbly do your best until the end."

In the final count, Kim won by a large margin of 54–28 and was elected vice president. After the election was over, Samaranch admitted that he had been "worried [Gunnar] Ericsson might run with all of his European votes." Ericsson, who had become an Executive Board member alongside Kim in 1988, had said he would run, but eventually dropped out, citing his old age, and announced his support for Kim just before voting.

Kim Un-yong offered his own dispassionate assessment of the lightning-speed progress he made in becoming an Executive Board member less than two years after joining the IOC and vice president another four years later.

There is not some special secret of success that applies on the international stage. The most important thing is that the IOC members are fairly assessing your strengths. After that, it is important to value human relations with respect and esteem for people's character, close human relationships where you treat everyone fairly without distance or taking sides.

I always treated all IOC members equally, whether they represented a small African country or a world-dominating power.

I also think that I was fairly recognized for my achievements in raising up taekwondo to the stature of a global sport and my ability in safely handling the television broadcasting rights issues and ensuring the Seoul Olympics' success.

All of this is important, from beginning to end. For good results to come, you have to do your job diligently, reward faith in you, and live up to your words throughout the process.

(Kim Un-yong, "Aspiring to Become a World Leader,"
in *Challenge to the World*)

A 'Late-Century Nightmare': Salt Lake City Olympic bidding scandal

After becoming an IOC member in 1986, Kim Un-yong quickly established himself as a major presence on the committee. Part of this was due to the

global sports community's focus on the Seoul Olympics taking place in a divided Korea, after the 1980 Moscow Olympics and 1984 Los Angeles Olympics had each been reduced to "half Olympics" amid the Cold War between East and West. But it would be truer to call this the result of Kim's trademark sociability.

Kim's ability to talk freely with English-speaking IOC members in English, French-speaking ones in French, and Spanish-speaking ones in Spanish succeeded in winning him their favor and attention. This, combined with his active approach to interpersonal relations and his abilities as a problem solver capable of resolving issues for committee members, established him in a short time as an influential figure in the global sports community. An example of this was his election as president of the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF). Coming less than two months after his election to the IOC, it gave him a level of influence nearly on par with the IOC.

Thanks to his influence within the IOC, Kim became president of its radio/television subcommittee in 1988, assuming responsibility for arguably the IOC's chief revenue sources the year of the Seoul Olympics. In 1992, he was elected vice president of the IOC just six years after joining.

It goes without saying that the success of the 1988 Seoul Olympics played a large part in this. That success, followed by the success of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, helped cement the Olympics as a sports festival for all people around the world, and the IOC's influence naturally grew. The effects were not universally positive, however: the success of the Seoul and Barcelona Olympics triggered intense competition among other cities and countries to win their own Games.

As the Olympic bidding competition intensified, the IOC adopted new guidelines: from the 2002 Winter Olympics host city selection onward, cities deemed by a special committee to have the ability to host the Games would first be selected and presented before the General Assembly.

The host city for the Olympics is decided seven years before the event takes place. The special committee for the 2002 Winter Olympics host city decision was thus created in 1995, with then-IOC vice president Kim Un-yong serving as chairman. His assumption of this role, which involved making the final presentation to the General Assembly following a preliminary examination of prospective cities that had applied to host the Games, gives a true sense of his stature within the IOC. That stature, however, would suffer a severe blow in a scandal that erupted four years later with the "investiga-

tion” headed by Kim’s archrival Dick Pound, a Canadian lawyer who was vying to succeed Samaranch as the next IOC president.

Following a two-day evaluation team report and bid application document review in Lausanne that February, four candidate cities had been selected, including Salt Lake City in the US, Jaca in Spain, and Sion in Switzerland. IOC member visits to the cities took place in groups rather than individually, in an effort to forestall possible issues. At the General Assembly meeting, Salt Lake City was chosen as the 2002 Winter Olympics host city.

The problem first erupted four years later in 1999. It was the end of the century, with a new millennium just around the corner, and trouble was brewing in the Salt Lake City Olympics Organizing Committee.

Bid leaders Tom Welch and Dave Johnson, who had contributed the most to the city’s successful bid, found themselves facing a torrent of criticism in the media. To make matters worse, International Ski Federation (FIS) president and Executive Board member Marc Hodler described Salt Lake City’s Winter Olympics bid in an interview with the magazine *Swiss Facts* as involving the “buying of IOC members and scattering of cash.” The global sports community had been turned upside down.

The story became front-page news for days on end in the Western press, the US press in particular, which had already been hammering away at the IOC as an “insular organization.”

Samaranch instituted an ad hoc investigation committee chaired by Dick Pound and drafted plans for reforms. Jacques Rogge, Pal Schmitt, Francois Carrard, and Keba Mbaye were named as the other members of the ad hoc committee. The investigation uncovered evidence that members—mainly from South America and African countries—had been offered jobs or scholarship money for their children. The scholarship funds to help attend US universities did not amount to much—around \$5,000—but it was a major blemish for the IOC, an organization demanding the highest levels of integrity.

At a March 1999 General Assembly meeting, six members of the IOC were expelled: Jean-Claude Ganga (Congo), Zein El Abdin Ahmed Abdel Gadir (Sudan), Lamine Keita (Mali), Suili Paul Wallwork (Samoa), Agustin Arroyo (Ecuador), and Sergio Santander Fantini (Chile). Most of them had been supporters of Kim. Initially, some had felt it would be going too far to expel members for what was involved. But Pound and other committee members from the US and UK insisted that the IOC would collapse if the expulsions were not approved, and the measure finally passed.

In response to US criticisms, a reform plan was also developed. The IOC's membership would consist of 75 individual members, 15 National Olympic Committee (NOC) representatives, 15 international federation (IF) representatives, and ten athletes' representatives, with a total number of 115 people. The retirement age would be lowered to 70 years for new IOC members (80 for existing ones). IOC members would be prohibited from visiting cities bidding to host the Olympics.

This was not all. While he did not allege any personal improprieties by Kim Un-yong, ad hoc investigation committee chairman Dick Pound alleged that Kim's son Jung-hoon (John) had obtained permanent residency in the US under false pretenses at a satellite company with connections to the Salt Lake City bidding committee. Kim became terribly upset that Pound was dragging his son into the scandal; he and Pound exchanged harsh words that almost escalated into fisticuffs during an Executive Board meeting break. Kim Un-yong had no issue with allegations being made about himself, but could not bear to witness his family being targeted and smeared.

The reform plan passed, and ten IOC members resigned or were expelled. The incident led to an FBI investigation and a US Congressional hearing chaired by Senator John McCain, who had presidential ambitions.

On December 5, 2003, federal judge David Sam of the US District Court for Utah finally dismissed the prosecution's case and acquitted the leaders of Salt Lake City's Olympic bid, Thomas K. Welch and David R. Johnson, of charges that they illegally influenced IOC members for their votes. Following their exoneration, Welch and Johnson were each paid \$1 million in 2006 as compensation for their ordeal. Kim Jung-hoon was also cleared of the charges relating to his green card that had resulted from Pound's "investigation."

This put an official end to the Salt Lake City bribery scandal that had tainted the 2002 Winter Olympics and plunged the IOC into a public relations nightmare. However, it had already diminished Kim Un-yong's power base.

The first non-Caucasian to stand for the IOC presidency

As the new millennium arrived, Kim Un-yong began preparing to reach unprecedented heights. He was steeling himself to boldly tackle a barrier no one had yet cleared—nor even attempted to surmount.



Kim Un-yong holds a press conference in Monaco, home of the GAISF headquarters, to announce his candidacy for the IOC presidency (2001).

Kim's rise through the IOC had come with unprecedented speed: he had become an Executive Board member a year and 10 months after his 1986 election to the IOC and a vice president five years and 10 months after joining. Some of the world's most illustrious media rated him as the second most influential figure in global sports in the 1990s; by the end of the decade, they often named him "Samaranch's successor."

It was based on this assessment that Kim cautiously prepared to run for the IOC presidency. He took his time in declaring his intentions, however. Facing persistent questions from the global press on whether he planned to run, he would only smile, without offering a confirmation or denial.

Kim had closely examined what he would have to do for the IOC and global sports as IOC president. He worked on his pledges, which were rooted in his own "IOC philosophy." His belief was that the IOC presidency was not a position for wielding authority or gaining rewards, but one for dedication and service to the advancement of global sports.

The time finally came for him to cast the die. On April 3, 2001, nine days ahead of the deadline for announcing candidacy for the IOC presidency, he officially declared his bid from Monte Carlo, home of the GAISF headquarters. It was three months before the 112th IOC General Assembly meeting in Moscow, where the next president would be chosen.

That day, Kim Un-yong delivered his candidacy speech in front of reporters from the world's top news agencies, including the AP, AFP, and Reuters, as well as representatives of the UK's *Daily Telegraph*, Germany's *Sport Intern*, and the South Korean press.

"If I become president of the IOC, I will first lead the way in bringing

back Olympism, which has been tarnished by excessive commercialism,” he declared. “I will also focus on the youth education that is the backbone of the Olympics and work to honor the Olympic philosophy of pursuing peace. This will require a universal leader with support from all five continents, a leader whose capabilities have been recognized. That is why I am running.”

One of the foreign reporters posed a question.

“It has been said that you lean more conservative than reformist. Don’t you think the IOC needs reforms right now?”

Kim had been prepared for just such a question.

“The reforms I am thinking of are not a matter of changing entire systems overnight and switching people out. Reform is about constantly modernizing and improving, and I have consistently been involved in such things as IOC vice president, chairman of the radio/television subcommittee, and an IOC member.”

A day ahead of his official candidacy announcement, Kim had given an interview with *JoongAng Ilbo* reporter Son Jang-hwan. The following is an excerpt from that piece.

Q: What were the factors behind your decision to run?

A: “The Olympic philosophies of educating young people and pursuing peace have been severely hurt recently by doping, environmental destruction, and commercialism in sports. It is time for the IOC to play its role as an organization responsible for pursuing Olympic ideals. Only a universal leader with the support of five continents and a leader with social capabilities can perform that role, and I believe that I am better suited than the others.”

Q: What sort of things are you planning to do if you become president?

A: “The IOC to date has been run in a Eurocentric way. I intend to distribute support evenly to the Olympics movements of the 199 national Olympic committees (NOCs) in the IOC. I will support different youth programs suited to the Olympic philosophy and support developing countries.”

Q: Other candidates have been calling for reforms.

A: “IOC activities are based in human relationships. You can’t exchange gifts worth \$200 or more. You can’t accept scholarships for your sons or daughters even if they meet eligibility criteria. You aren’t allowed to

be treated to dinners. Those kinds of simplistic, incidental approaches are not reforms. Indeed, they are destructive to human relationships. The reforms I am thinking of are about continuing to solve financial issues and improve Olympic competitions in a way that conforms to the Olympic philosophy. . . .”

Q: Some have predicted that Samaranch will support you, while others believe he will side with Jacques Rogge.

A: “Rogge ended up benefitting from the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics scandal. As head of the investigation committee, Pound rebelled against Samaranch and lost, and I took a beating. In Samaranch’s judgment, Rogge may seem a strong contender as the next president. But now he is in a difficult spot. I think Samaranch will remain neutral. . . .”

(JoongAng Ilbo, April 3, 2001)

The campaign begins

Kim Un-yong had done some careful investigating before running for the IOC presidency. Over and over, he had examined whether a non-Caucasian would be capable of capturing a presidency that had been held solely by Caucasians throughout its history, as well as how many votes he expected to win.

The biggest concern weighing on his mind was the damage caused during Salt Lake City scandal, where Dick Pound served as the investigation committee chairman. Ten IOC members had been forced out as a result, including Ganga, Gadir, Keita, Wallwork, Arroyo, and Santander Fantini, and 20 new members had been brought in to take their places. Most of the new additions were Caucasian, and most of the expelled members had been active supporters of Kim’s. In that sense, he had essentially lost nearly 30 votes.

Kim first found himself facing internal curbs in the IOC in March 1998, when the German magazine *Sport Intern* published a ranking of the 125 most influential figures active in global sports in 1997. The report had Samaranch in first place and Kim Un-yong sharing second place with IAAF president Primo Nebiolo. With Samaranch’s retirement a foregone conclusion, the appearance of so many reports suggesting that Kim was first in line as the next IOC president led to increasing concerns and fears among Western members that the IOC presidency might well end up in the hands of an outsider. In an attempted smear campaign, these same IOC members had

played a central role in amplifying the Salt Lake City “scandal” and forcing out ten long serving colleagues from the IOC. Nevertheless, Kim Un-yong believed he could win so long as Samaranch remained neutral.

When he announced his official candidacy and the final five candidates were selected, reports in the South Korean and overseas press began publishing numerous articles about their respective leanings and questioning who would be the next president.

The five candidates were Dick Pound of Canada, Kim Un-yong of South Korea, Jacques Rogge of Belgium, Pal Schmitt of Hungary, and Anita DeFrantz of the US. Of the five, the press predicted a three-way race among Kim, Rogge, and Pound, with Kim and Rogge likely to face off in the final round. Kim, they said, had the votes of the 37 Asian and African members locked up; with a few more votes from North America and Europe, he could end up with 40–42 to Rogge’s 37–38 and Pound’s 18–20.

But dark clouds began to roll in almost as soon as Kim declared his bid for the IOC presidency. Just a week later on April 10, the IOC ethics committee announced new guidelines for the presidential election. They had been slapped together on orders from Samaranch.

The guidelines included a ban on IOC members announcing their personal preferences for any candidate, a ban on fellow members visiting candidates individually, a ban on smearing among candidates, limits on spending by candidates, bans on organizing seminars and meetings, and a ban on election pledge speeches prior to voting. At first glance, the regulations seemed to make sense. But those terms prevented candidates from visiting IOC members for any meaningful discussions before voting, attending seminars, or even dining together. The foreign news outlets all reported that the regulations were expressly intended to hamstring Kim.

In fact, Samaranch and Rogge had already paid “official” visits to various European countries and participated in numerous “official” meetings at the IOC’s expense. These were “previously scheduled meetings,” they claimed, or presented some other pretext as to why their activities were permitted exceptions. Official IOC pamphlets included photographs of the two of them together. Samaranch even sent associates and staff to European countries to campaign for Rogge, while taking every opportunity to smear Kim.

Things got even more out of hand. On April 28–May 6, 2001, an IOC Cultural Commission meeting and Olympic Fair were scheduled to take place at the Olympic Park in Seoul. The event was supervised by the Olympic memorabilia collection committee, which Samaranch chaired. Yet Sama-

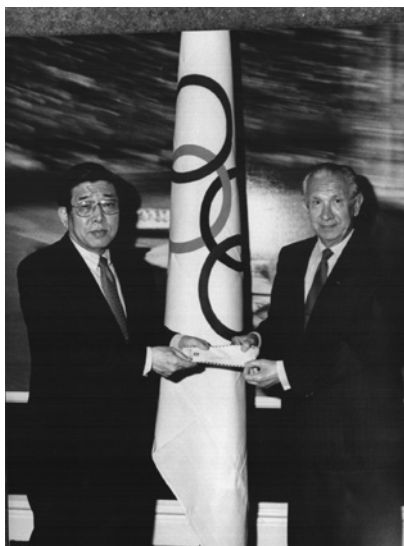
ranch suddenly bowed out, claiming he was ill.

Samaranch's reasons for not visiting South Korea were easy enough to guess.

Before the Olympic Fair was staged, Samaranch sent his close associate, Israeli IOC member Alex Gilady, to visit Kim and request an opportunity to speak before the National Assembly. "National Assembly speeches are given by foreign heads of state—people like Clinton and Putin," Kim told him. "As the head of an NGO serving mankind, the IOC president may get an opportunity like that in a country that wants to host the Olympics, but that's just not the accepted practice here."

Instead, Kim had arranged for Samaranch to meet with President Kim Dae-jung at the Blue House. But Samaranch never visited. He visited Malaysia, India, Australia, and Bhutan over the same time, but did not come to South Korea. This suggests that Samaranch, recognizing that a visit to South Korea could come across as a show of support for Kim, had used the inability to speak before the National Assembly as an excuse not to visit. With the election looming, it was an ominous sign.

Kim and Samaranch



Kim Un-yong and Juan Antonio Samaranch in 1991.

What sort of relationship did Juan Antonio Samaranch and Kim Un-yong have as the IOC president and vice president? When Kim declared his bid for the presidency, Samaranch was in a position to have a decisive impact on the election, having been the president for over 20 years, and the question of what stance Samaranch would take became a major focus of public speculation. In that sense, it may be necessary to look at Kim's relationship with Samaranch.

An IOC president serves an eight-year term, with the possibility of one four-year extension when it finishes. Elected president in 1980, Samaranch

had already served out 12 years and been elected to another four-year term with the IOC members' agreement.

After the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, Samaranch drew attention when he laid out a framework for who would succeed him in his authorized biography *Olympic Revolution*. In the book, he named four people as being potential IOC presidents: current vice presidents Kim Un-yong of South Korea and Kevan Gosper of Australia, and former vice presidents Richard Pound of Canada and Keba Mbaye of Senegal. He described Kim as a man of many talents, Mbaye as an idealist, and Gosper and Pound as entrepreneurial types. Although he had led the Seoul Olympics to success in 1988, Kim had only been an IOC member for six years; for Samaranch to name him as a potential successor in 1992 offers a glimpse at Kim's stature within the IOC.

Two years later, Samaranch visited Athens to attend an event on December 6, 1994, to mark the centennial of the Greek Olympic Committee. In a press conference with the Athens newspaper *Ta Nea*, he announced that in consideration of his age (74), he would not be running again for the IOC presidency when his term ended in 1997. In the event, Samaranch would blithely break that promise. Around two months before a 1997 IOC General Assembly meeting in Lausanne, Mbaye, the IOC's legal committee chairman, visited Kim with a secret message from Samaranch.

The reason for the visit was simple: Samaranch planned to run for the IOC presidency again and was asking not to be opposed. Mbaye suggested there was no problem with giving Samaranch the opportunity if the president supported Kim four years later. "If you show understanding on this, Pound and the other members won't dare to challenge it," he added.

At the time, Kim Un-yong had a fairly strong base with African and South American countries, but he felt that it would be beyond his abilities to break into Samaranch's stronghold. His personal relationship with Samaranch was such that he could not really refuse, either. Beyond that, he had the 1997 Muju Winter Universiade and 2002 Busan Winter Asian Games to organize, and with the foreign exchange crisis in South Korea, he had his hands very full as Korean Sports Council (KSC) president preventing federations and teams from disintegrating. Samaranch finally managed to receive an additional four years as president without a vote at the Lausanne General Assembly meeting, and Kim Un-yong was appointed once again as an Executive Board member.

This was the relationship between Kim and Samaranch: apart from their

roles as vice president and president, their ties were such that neither could really refuse a favor to the other. One of the factors that had enabled Kim to become an IOC member in 1986 had been the enthusiastic recommendation from Samaranch. The two had shared views on many things ever since, although there were occasions when they were actively opposed. Samaranch, who had worked under the Franco dictatorship in Spain, would always gravitate toward the reigning political power of the times. Kim and Samaranch were “frenemies” in a sense, rather than eternal comrades who would travel together to the end.

A century as a European stronghold

The 112nd IOC General Assembly meeting in Moscow finally arrived, and with it the election of the new IOC president. Kim was locked in a tight contest with Jacques Rogge, despite the sabotage campaign by North American and European IOC members, who were reluctant to give up control over the IOC that had been their “exclusive” historical organization since its founding in 1894. Kim had support from IOC members in some parts of North America, South America, Africa, and Asia; Rogge’s supporters included Samaranch and his followers and the US and European members.

There had been false rumors and whispers spread around that Kim’s election as president would be the IOC’s “ruin,” that he was not permitted to enter the US since the Salt Lake City scandal, and that he had links to South Korean dictators.

On July 15, 2001, the eve before the IOC presidency election, Kim was approached by journalists and commented during the exchange that the IOC should cover the expenses of IOC members in order to prevent corruption. “The IOC must continue to constantly reform and modernize, and the IOC members who hold the authority to decide Olympic host cities cannot make that decision without visiting the candidate cities,” he said. Kim also stated that the IOC should cover a certain amount of yearly expenses for its members to administer their offices and to promote the Olympic movement. “While IOC members are unpaid volunteers, some minimum expenses should be covered in order to avoid backbiting,” he argued. It was a statement of his own convictions: if some minimal expenses were covered, all IOC members would be able to work fairly and transparently.

Implicit within these statements and pledges was a call to reduce the more

than \$200,000 spent annually on Samaranch's accommodations alone, as well as the funds spent enlarging the organization with meaningless committees like the "Olympic memorabilia collection committee," and to use them for the advancement of sport instead.

But the remarks would backfire on Kim almost immediately. Ten minutes before the election, Samaranch held an unscheduled meeting of the ethics committee and distributed a press release characterizing Kim's call for the IOC to cover up to \$50,000 in annual IOC member expenses as "buying votes."

The election of the eighth IOC president was the last agenda item on the last day of the IOC General Meeting on July 16, 2001, at the World Trade Center, Moscow. It was preceded by a short rebuke against Kim's comment made the day before that the IOC should cover the costs of its members. In the end, Kim Un-yong failed to break into the fortress that had been held down by the IOC's western members for over a century.

Moderated by IOC secretary general and lawyer Francois Carrard, the election's first vote predictably eliminated Anita DeFrantz of the US. This was immediately followed by a second vote, in which Jacques Rogge of Belgium received 59 votes, Kim 23, Dick Pound of Canada 22, and Pal Schmitt of Hungary six. With a majority of votes, Rogge was elected the new president. The election was over in less than ten minutes.

The announcement of the new president was made at the Column Hall, about 15 minutes away by car from the the World Trade Center in Moscow. Column Hall was also where Samaranch's election as IOC president had been announced 21 years earlier. The announcement of his chosen successor there and the election of his son Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr. as a new IOC member were proof of the utter influence he still exerted. Instead of materials about the candidates for the presidency, the IOC General Assembly venue was stacked with copies of Samaranch's photo books and promotional materials about him. Large screens in the lobby and press center periodically showed videos of Samaranch's exploits, lauding him as the new "honorary lifetime president."

In the end, Jacques Rogge, whose career with the IOC had been shorter than Kim's, was the beneficiary of Samaranch's backing as well as the support of reformists concerned about the Olympics' excessive commercialization and a firmly united bloc of European and North American members. Rogge also became the first former Olympic competitor to serve as IOC president.

Kim Un-yong had anticipated that his unswerving support from Asia and Africa and the additional support from North America would put him at something of an advantage against Rogge, but in the end he was unable to break through the IOC's "aristocracy" in the face of Samaranch's machinations. In particular, he also suffered the loss of some Asian members who bought into the argument that Asia would not be given "two prizes" after Beijing's selection as the 2008 Summer Olympics host city. The smear campaign and the false accusations denouncing his statement in favor of the IOC covering the expenses of IOC members as "vote buying," were designed to make him look like a corrupt figure from a bygone era and took away votes from Kim.

After the election was over, an indignant Japanese reporter claimed to have "never witnessed such a corrupt election" and wondered whether a formal complaint should be lodged. Reporters from UPI and the UK's *The Independent* also rated the vote a fraud, comparing it to a competition where Kim Un-yong's hands and feet had been tied while the others ran free to their hearts' content. One said that if the UN had supervised the proceedings, it would have called for another election. North Korean IOC member Chang Ung lamented that everything had seemed likely to work out just the day before, only for the situation to change in the space of a day.

The same US news outlets that had denounced Kim Un-yong during the Salt Lake City scandal—including the *LA Times*, *USA Today*, and the *New York Times*—seemed genuinely sorry about his defeat. US Olympic Committee president Sandra Baldwin and figures from the highest echelons of the US State Department expressed dismay at the outcome, saying they had expected Asia to see its first IOC president. France's *L'Équipe*, the AFP, and the Swiss media joined the chorus in denouncing the election.

Kim Un-yong was unswayed by what others were saying. He merely expressed his dismay that the same figures who had been responsible for corruption in the IOC and had sown discord among its members were safe and sound.

Samaranch made several requests to meet with Kim after the election, but Kim declined all of them.

Golden Era for the KOC

Era of the ‘sports president’

The Korean Sport and Olympics Committee (KSOC) started as the Chosun Sport Association on July 13, 1920. In 2020, it will celebrate 100 years as the sole group overseeing sports for South Korea. As a social organization, it boasts a longer history than all but some religious groups.

After Korea was liberated in 1945 from occupation by imperial Japan, the Chosun Sport Association was renamed the Korean Sports Council (KSC) and joined the IOC. This brought the founding of the Korean Olympic Committee (KOC), which represents South Korea internationally. While some frictions had existed in the past between the KSC and KOC over the selection of athletes for the national teams, the two are today integrated as one organization, the KSOC. The KSC is the “chief temple” of South Korean sports, and its president is often likened to the country’s “president of sports.” It is a position that every sports figure in Korea dreams of occupying at some point in his or her career.

After the 1988 Seoul Olympics ended, the tide of democratization led to democratic procedures being adopted for the election of the KSOC president. Before that, however, the selection was typically a matter of government designation. Some sense of the stature the KSC president held can be found in the list of powerful political figures who previously held the post, including Shin Ik-hee, Lee Ki-bung, Jang Ki-young, Min Kwan-shik, Park Jong-gyu, Chung Ju-yung, and Roh Tae-woo.

When Kim Un-yong became president of the Korea Taekwondo Association in 1971, he also became a director of the KSC and a member of the KOC. In 1974, the year after he established the World Taekwondo Federation and became its inaugural president, he took on the positions of KSC vice president and KOC honorary secretary general and vice president.



Kim Un-yong is handed the KSOC flag by predecessor Kim Jong-yeol after becoming the committee's 31st president on February 25, 1993.

While the KSC and KOC are a single organization today, they were very different organizations at the time. As is the case today, however, the KSC president simultaneously served as KOC president, and many KSC directors were also KOC members. It was a system in which the KSC oversaw sports at home while the KOC represented South Korean internationally. In that sense, the KOC's honorary secretary general held a status equivalent to an international committee chairman today. It was a crucially important role—a kind of diplomatic representative in international sports.

Kim Un-yong was no doubt one of the single biggest contributors to the success of the Olympic movement in South Korea, beginning with his efforts with the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and 1988 Seoul Olympics bids and continuing with his broadcasting rights negotiations, his negotiations with the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, and his leadership and direction for all preparations for the events. While South Korea's successful staging of the Asian Games and Olympics resulted in greater recognition for it internationally, there was also a growing sense among sports figures that no one but Kim Un-yong could parlay that momentum into stronger capabilities in sports. Part of this had to do with Kim Jong-yeol, the former rugby player who became the KSC's first democratically elected president in 1989, the year after the Seoul Olympics. Kim Jong-yeol was second to none in his passion for sports, but was a provincial figure lacking in an international sense.

With so many expectations from sports figures behind him, Kim Un-yong announced his candidacy for election as the 31st KSC president on February 23, 1993. His opponent was Shin Dong-wook, president of the Korean Archery Association. Kim won by a vote of 26–13, a margin of half, and became KSC president. The following day on February 24, he was also elected the 21st president of the KOC. The inauguration ceremony was held on February 26. The day before that, February 25, saw the inauguration of Kim Young-sam as Korean president, putting an end to the era of military men presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo. Kim Un-yong's "sports president" era began the same day as Kim Young-sam's democratic administration.

When Kim Un-yong was elected KSC president, he was also serving as IOC vice president and chairman of the IOC's television subcommittee, which accounted for a large portion of the IOC's finances. In addition to these weighty posts, he was also president of GAISE. With his role already large enough for him to be selected as the second-ranked leader in world sports after Samaranch, the additional role as KSC president stood to pose

a potential burden.

The positions of KSC and KOC president are part-time, uncompensated, and honorary in character. Nevertheless, the holder has a great deal of work to do as leader of sports in South Korea, and the positions are vitally important. As if to bear this out, Kim Un-yong found himself facing a mountain of work as KSC president. With the launch of the Kim Young-sam administration, the Government Organization Act was revised to eliminate the Sports Ministry that had existed since 1982 (including the Ministry of Sports and Youth) and to create the Ministry of Sports and Culture. Cooperation with the administration was now of paramount importance. Presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo had been very interested in sports, and the Sports Ministry and the Ministry of Sports and Youth had actively supported the KSC. There was a stronger likelihood that the Kim Young-sam administration, in contrast, would disparage sports as a product of the military era and be less willing to provide support.

Meanwhile, with the successful staging of the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics, as well as the astonishing displays of competitive ability there, South Koreans' expectations for sports had soared through the roof, but the sports systems as a whole were still at the level of an underdeveloped country. In terms of an international sense and sports diplomacy, things were still just beginning.

In a press interview after election as KSC president, Kim Un-yong announced his plans to establish the committee as financially self-sufficient, to promote welfare for athletes, and to nurture experts in sports marketing. "The sports world will pursue both stability and reforms in line with the new administration's philosophy, and the KSC will take a leading role as an actor in the Olympic movement, helping South Korean sports grow in harmony with the world," he said.

Turning point for a superior training environment and athletes' welfare

The international stature of the KOC rose to new heights when Kim Un-yong took over as its president. Virtually overnight South Korea had advanced from the fringes to become a global sports power, ranking fourth overall at the 1988 Seoul Olympics with 12 gold, 10 silver, and 11 bronze medals and seventh at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics with 12 gold, five silver, and 12



Opening ceremony for the Taereung Hockey Arena in 2001.

bronze medals. With IOC vice president and GAISF president Kim Un-yong occupying the KOC presidency, the KOC was also able to play a leading role in global sports diplomacy and international organizations.

But while it had gathered momentum in international terms, the domestic situation was quite a different story. There were many issues to address, including improving athletes' competitive abilities now that South Korea was emerging as a global sports power, as well as repairs to dilapidated training facilities and matters of athletes' welfare. If the country were to perform poorly in the Asian Games or Olympics, responsibility for that would fall on Kim as KSC and KOC president. It was a tremendous weight to take on.

Budgetary issues were critical in order for Kim Un-yong to form visions and to execute plans. President Kim Young-sam's administration's dim view of sports began to make itself apparent. One example was the 76th Korean National Sports Festival in 1995. For the first time in the event's history, its chief host was a smaller city, Pohang. Typically, the Korean National Sports Festival host city is decided five years ahead of time, which meant that Pohang was chosen shortly after the Seoul Olympics. The practice had typically been for the host city to build not only competition facilities but also urban infrastructure with government support. The Kim Young-sam administration was reluctant even to provide financial support to the Korean National Sports Festival, regarding such support as a vestige of the military government era.

Kim Un-yong had seen that producing good results in the Olympics required a huge investment in athletes' training and welfare. He held peri-

odic discussions with the Culture and Sports Ministry and met with National Assembly members and senior government officials as needed. After his election as KSC president, Samaranch had advised him, “Even though I’m president of the IOC, only about 40 percent of what I do is sports-related. The other 60 percent is the interactions and other duties for the IOC’s sake. It will be the same for you.” Kim did not quite know what Samaranch had meant at the time, but after becoming KSC president he understood. He had a vast number of things to attend to besides sports.

As a priority project, Kim pushed actively for improvements to the national athletes’ training environment. Opened in 1966, the facilities at the Taereung Athletes’ Village were now 27 years old, run down, and in need of replacement, if not the building of a new village. In Kim’s view, training facility modernization was essential for the continued development of elite sports. He knew better than anyone about sports facilities around the world and committed his energies to creating facilities for Korean athletes that would be second to none.

The result of this was the Olympic House, completed in 1996. An athletes’ dormitory barely capable of accommodating 200 people had been transformed into a pleasant housing complex accommodating over 600. The choice of the name “Olympic House” was meant to impress a sense of mission upon the national athletes taking up residence there. The dormitories were not the only things changed. Hearing that the US athletes’ village supplied 4,000 calories in meals a day, he also increased meals for the South Korean athletes to the same level.

Once the dormitories were built, the training sites became the next issue. The training sites too were outworn and obsolete. Selecting events where South Korea’s Olympic medal prospects were strong, Kim launched a large-scale training site renovation and construction effort. Indoor tracks of questionable utility were converted into handball and badminton courts, with international competitions staged at the newly transformed, efficient indoor gymnasiums. With so many football fields in South Korea already, the Taereung football field was turned into a hockey training ground and covered with artificial turf.

While South Korea’s summer sports had reached more or less world-class levels with the hosting of the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics, winter sports training sites were badly dilapidated. There were outdoor rinks as well as indoor rinks created from renovated swimming pools, but the facilities were too run down for proper training. Athletes could not use the outdoor

rinks for training in the summer; in the case of the indoor rinks, which were used as training sites for ice hockey, short track speed skating, and figure skating, the large distance between surface and ceiling resulted in high levels of moisture and poor ice quality. Heating was poor, accidents frequent.

What really made improvements to these winter sports venues so crucial, however, was South Korea's performance in the medal box at the Albertville Winter Olympics in 1992, the year before Kim Un-yong became president. South Korean athletes had captured two golds and one bronze in short track speed skating, which had been adopted as an official event. Before then, South Korea had never claimed a single medal at the Winter Olympics. At Albertville, Kim Yoon-man won its first silver in speed skating. Sensing the emerging winter sports potential of Korean athletes, establishing an indoor skating rink now became more urgent a task than everbefore.

Outstanding competitors emerge from outstanding training environments. Kim understood the simple truth: in modern competitive sports, everything is proportional to investment. New ice pipes were installed at the indoor rink to improve its conditions; dehumidifiers were doubled, dramatically reducing the moisture and allowing athletes to focus on their training in a pleasant environment. The outdoor skating rink was renovated into an all-weather indoor skating rink with a 400-meter track. Transformed into an international skating site with the world's eighth 400-meter rink, it was opened up to the public outside of athlete training times and used as a lifestyle sports center for citizens to use in their leisure time. With its renovation, it was now available for training use during the summer.

It goes without saying that these improvements to the training environment, including the indoor rink renovation and the building of an indoor skating center, were a major impetus to South Korea producing star winter sports athletes such as Kim Yuna, who moved the world with her figure skating, and Lee Sang-hwa, who established herself as a speed skating legend. The jumping tower in Muju was another innovative training site that was almost unimaginable at the time. If the ski jump site had not been built in Muju, South Korean would never have been able to train a single ski jumper—let alone the athletes who placed eighth in the team event at the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics and won two gold medals at the 2003 Winter Universiade in Tarvisio, Italy.

The Taebaek Athletes' Village was built in 1998 for high-altitude training. After hearing in 1996 that track and field athletes were traveling to Kunming for off-season training at high altitudes, Kim concluded that there



Opening ceremony for the Taebaek branch village in 1998.

was no need to go to China and made the decision to build a high-altitude training site at home. Another motivation to build the site quickly came when Hwang Young-jo said after visiting Kunming that it was the “perfect place to break your legs.” It was a difficult construction lasting over two years, but on June 30, 1998, the Taebaek Athletes’ Village opened its doors as South Korea’s first high-altitude training site, built at an altitude of 1,300 meters on Hambaeksan Mountain in Gangwon-do. These days, it is used for boxing, track and field, cycling, and other sports that require boosting cardiopulmonary activity; during the summer, it serves as a training site for teams playing pro basketball, which is an indoor event in the winter.

Since the 1950s, the Hanguk Gymnasium on Euljiro 3-ga Street had been a cradle for martial arts athletes and weightlifters. By now, however, it was too old and cramped to be usable. Kim made the bold decision to close down this home of veteran athletes. He then proceeded to buy new land in Hanam and built seven tennis courts, which were opened to future tennis players and aficionados of the sport.

The KSC had to rely on government subsidies for most of its budget, and there was little to go around. Solving this problem meant going through the hassle of meeting with officials in the Ministry of Planning and Budget or Ministry of Culture and Sports (now the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) and extracting the budget piecemeal by emphasizing the importance of building new accommodations and athletic venues. At times, the committee received corporate support. Despite budgetary constraints, meal allowances and food expenses were increased to boost athlete morale. The medalists’ pension was increased after remaining frozen since the early 1980s, and special encouragement bonuses of \$10,000 for Olympic gold,

\$5,000 for silver, and \$3,000 for bronze were instituted, funded by Kim Un-yong's allowances as KSOC president, as a reward for the medalists.

Leading South Korea to the center stage of world sports

Kim Un-yong regarded sports as a “living, moving organism.” He maintained that without constant evolution and development, it would not survive. Having honed his international sense in his younger diplomat days as a counselor at the UN mission and the South Korean embassies in Washington and London, and having pursued the internationalization and globalization of taekwondo as he began a relationship with sport and founded the Kukkiwon and the World Taekwondo Federation, he intuitively understood that when things do not continue to develop, they degenerate.

In that sense, he did not view the 1986 Asian Games and 1988 Olympics as the culmination of the internationalization of South Korean sports, but merely as a beginning. The fact that the winning bid for the Seoul Olympics was called the “miracle of Baden-Baden”—and the fact that this was seen as natural—stemmed from the weakness of South Korea's sports diplomacy. Nobody had the faith that something could be created out of nothing.

Kim Un-yong had pondered this issue more than anyone after taking over as KSC president. The Seoul Olympics had been the most successful in Olympic history, yet the benefits had not been great. South Korea's economic growth had made a mockery of doomsayers around the world that said it would never recover from the Korean War, which had broken out just five years after the country had escaped imperial Japanese rule and was



Unveiling ceremony for a 1998 monument marking the 10th anniversary of the Seoul Olympics.

divided due to Cold War ideological conflict between superpowers. Kim had succeeded in presenting South Korea before the world as a country with the vision and the drive to host the Olympics, yet the Seoul Olympics fever eventually cooled substantially. As president of the KSC and KOC, he saw it as falling upon him to find a way to revive what small embers remained from the Seoul Olympics success and set them blazing again.

To carry on these embers and steer South Korea closer to the center stage of world sports, Kim felt it was essential to host large international sports competitions and conferences that would continue to attract attention from the international sports community. His belief was influenced by the flood of proposals for sports partnership agreements and off-season training exchanges coming from major global sports powers after he became the chief representative of sports in South Korea.

Much of this obviously had to do with the many friends he had established in the sports world as a leader in the globalization of taekwondo since the early 1970s, along with the relationships and experiences he had acquired in his more than ten years as GAISF president and as an IOC member since 1986. Within the IOC, he had held important posts, becoming an Executive Board member in 1988 and vice president in 1992. As he went on to take over the reigns of the KSC and KOC, global sports figures' interest in South Korea naturally grew commensurately.

Sports diplomacy is fundamentally different from the kind of diplomacy carried out by governments. It is freer and less constrained by protocol and formalities, but it must also be rooted in the kind of interpersonal trust and friendliness that allow people to open up. Good human relationships are key. As such, sports diplomacy cannot be achieved overnight. It requires closeness: i.e., meeting and speaking often and understanding one another. In that sense, Kim Un-yong's strengths outweighed anyone else's.

After establishing a plan to make use of this and bring South Korean sports into the world, Kim went to work bidding to host various large-scale international sports conferences in Korea. This began in 1995 when he successfully bid to have Seoul host a congress for the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA), the central organization for Asian sports. Later that year, the GAISF congress was also held in South Korea. In 1996, the first Asian world congress of the The Association for International Sport for All (TAFISA), supported by the IOC, was held in Seoul. Focused on the topic of "the 21st century global family and sports," the TAFISA world congress was attended by 25 IOC members, including Samaranch, as well



Walking event with attendees at an IOC World Lifestyle Sports competition in South Korea, the first to be held in Asia.

as 500 international federation representatives, NOC members, lifestyle sports group representatives, and others. Leading to the adoption of the “Seoul Declaration,” it had the dual effect of increasing the global stature of South Koreans sports and drawing notice from sports figures around the world.

Kim’s efforts to host global sports events reached their zenith when he successfully arranged to host an IOC Executive Board meeting in 1998 and IOC General Assembly meeting in 1999, both in Seoul. The successful bid for and hosting of these two events involving organizations overseeing global sports served as a stepping stone for South Korea’s emergence as a true leader in Asian sports and a central presence in global sports. The presence of Samaranch and numerous other IOC members at events to mark the KSC’s 74th anniversary and the KOC’s 50th anniversary, and the attendance of around 40 IOC members at a 10th anniversary event for the Seoul Olympics in 1998, offered proof that South Korea now stood on par with other nations of the world.

These various successes with global sports events had a positive effect on future Korean bids for international sports competitions. It began with the 1997 Winter Universiade in Muju and Jeonju, marking the first general winter sports competition in South Korean history. The Busan East Asian Games took place that fall, while the Winter Asian Games were held in Yongpyeong, Gangwon-do (where the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics would eventually be held in 2018), in 1999. The World Cup and Busan Asian Games were held in 2002, and the Summer Universiade was staged in Daegu in 2003.

The host cities for all of these international sports competitions and conventions are decided by vote. In each case, South Korea won over its rivals by an overwhelming margin. One overseas sports figure jokingly complained that South Korea was monopolizing all of the international sports events and should “give other countries a chance.”

Kim Un-yong’s success in winning almost every international conference or event South Korea bid for after becoming KSC and KOC president earned him the nickname “Dong Bang Bool Pae” (meaning the “invincible man from East”) in the domestic press. (The name derives from a character of the popular 1992 Hong Kong film *Swordsman II*). But this legend, he stressed, was not something forged overnight and could be taken for granted.

“An IOC member represents the IOC, working to promote the Olympic movement throughout the world, not just in South Korea,” he explained. “Although I was not an IOC member representing South Korea, I was obliged to have the development of South Korean sports planted deep in my mind as KSC and KOC president.”

Winning the 1999 IOC General Assembly Meeting and 2002 Busan Asian Games

In 1995 and 1995, South Korea was preparing to bid for three major sports-related events. One of them was the 1999 meeting of the IOC General Assembly, while the other two were the Asian Games and the FIFA World Cup for the year 2002. The Asian Games host city would be chosen



At the closing ceremony of the 1998 Asian Games in Bangkok, the OCA flag is handed off to Busan as the next host city.

by an OCA General Assembly meeting at Seoul's Lotte Hotel on May 23, 1995; the site for the 108th General Assembly meeting would be chosen by the 104th meeting in Budapest on June 15–18, 1995; and the World Cup host country would be chosen by the FIFA Executive Committee at the federation's headquarters in Zurich a year later on May 31, 1996.

Success in winning hosting honors for the Asian Games and IOC General Assembly would be a gauge of Kim Un-yong's abilities as KSC and KOC president and IOC vice president. While Korea Football Association president Chung Mong-joon played a leading role with the World Cup decision as FIFA vice president and an Executive Committee member, Kim's lateral support was critical.

Kim's influence was evident during the bid for the 2002 Asian Games in Busan. It was 2000, and Busan and Kaohsiung, Taiwan, were locked in a contest to win the symbolic first Asian Games of the new century. Hoping to use the sports event as a way of alleviating its diplomatic isolation, the Taiwanese government actively supported Kaohsiung's bid, donating \$10 million to the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) development fund and offering free accommodations to all teams. Its activities put it at an advantage over Busan. But China was working to sabotage the campaign, threatening to boycott the Asian Games if they were held in Taiwan. China's fear was that if the event was held there, it would work to reinforce the international community's perception of there being "two Chinas." To avert the predicament, Kim changed the final voting method from a secret ballot by the executive committee to a show of hands at the general assembly on voting day. Many of the 41 countries were conscious of China's attitude, and were obliged to side with Busan, which won hosting honors by an overwhelming margin of 37 votes in favor. The Kaohsiung representatives protested that that they would have won in a secret ballot. They threatened to file a complaint, but it was too late. The change in executive committee voting method from secret ballot to a show of hands was possible due to Kim's international stature. The 2002 Busan Asian Games would end up drawing attention in the global sporting community when North Korea's decision to send athletes and a large cheering squad of attractive women became a global topic.

Seoul's successful bid to host the IOC General Assembly meeting in 1999 was also essentially a single-handed achievement by Kim. Held once a year, the meetings cannot be compared to the Olympics, but they hold great significance as international conferences where the organizations

that control the Olympics come together. The 1999 event held symbolic significance as the last of the 20th century, and it was an important occasion where the 2006 Winter Olympics host city would be decided. Thousands of people would be attending, including IOC and international federation members, representatives of the cities bidding for the Winter Olympics, and members of the press. Whichever city hosted the meeting would gain a publicity opportunity and a rise in stature.

Seoul's rival for the 1999 IOC General Assembly meeting was Rio de Janeiro. The city was already well known around the world for its beautiful natural scenery and abundance of tourism resources, and it was committed enough to its bid to have IOC members from Latin America joining in the campaign, along with the president of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and FIFA president João Havelange. Seoul's only advantage over Rio was better informational materials about the necessary General Assembly meeting preparations; it did not even have any videos produced. As IOC vice president, Kim Un-yong had yet another battle on his hands.

Seeing Seoul's struggles, Samaranch told Kim that he might be better off conceding the meeting to Rio in exchange for Havelange's cooperation in winning the 2002 World Cup bid. Kim respectfully declined.

"What kind of cooperation is Havelange going to offer if Seoul concedes to Rio?" he asked. "In the World Cup case, we'll need to compete with Japan anyway, and we have to win that contest to get the bid. There's no guarantee that we'll get anything in return from Brazil for pulling our bid. South Korea has made many advancements when it comes to sports, and it will make more contributions to the Olympics movement going forward. To that end, I'm planning to do what I can for this host city decision."

In Kim's view, there was no justification for Seoul conceding; it was not going to receive any special benefits from Rio or experience positive effects in its international relations. More to the point, he saw no reason why Seoul—why South Korea—should play second best to Rio or Brazil. Seoul was known worldwide as a center of the Olympic movement since the 1988 Olympics. South Korea had claimed 12 gold medals at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, while Brazil had earned two, and South America as a whole had accounted for 14.

The battle between Seoul and Rio escalated into a contest between Kim and the Latin American IOC members. In addition to Havelange and Padilla, Primo Nebiolo from Italy and ANOC president Mario Vázquez Raña joined the campaign opposing Seoul.

At the time, the IOC had 40 members from Europe, 20 from South America, 20 from Africa, five from Oceania, and 13 from Asia. The active support for Rio from members without any direct ties to Brazil stemmed from a tacit agreement that Kim's rising influence within the IOC needed to be checked. Conversely, Kim saw his contest with the Latin Americans, who represented one of the largest groups in the IOC, as a good opportunity to test just how much influence he actually had.

The fight was nearing its final stages when Italian member Franco Carraro approached Kim. A former mayor of Rome and Italian transportation minister, Carraro was one of Havelange's powerful supporters. His suggestion was that with the Brazilian president himself supporting Rio's campaign, it might be better for the Brazilian city to play host in 1999 and Seoul to do the honors in 2001, if only to save face for Brazil. Kim responded with a counterproposal: Why not hold the 1999 meeting in Seoul and the 2001 in Rio?

So it went, as both sides committed their energies to the tense battle. The selection of the 1999 General Assembly meeting host city was finally raised just before adjournment on the last day of the Budapest meeting. All that remained was the vote. So great was the Latin bloc's influence that few in the international sports community saw Seoul as likely to win. Ultimately, however, Seoul won the vote by a margin of 53 to 31.

After the meeting was over, a journalist with the Kyodo News London branch named Hiroshi Takeuchi asked for an interview. Takeuchi wanted to know whether Seoul would be facing a disadvantage in its World Cup bid now that it had beaten out Rio. Kim's response was simple.

"With the World Cup, the country with the capability to win the bid will get to host the event," he said. "I don't see it as something determined by what Havelange wants as an individual. I believe the 21 members of the FIFA Executive Committee will take everything into account in their assessment and make the right decision."

The bid for the 2002 World Cup came one year after the bid for the Asian Games in Busan. With the Asian Games, President Kim Young-sam had provided a big gift to his support base in Busan, but as a former football player during his Kyungnam Middle School days, he was also very interested in hosting the World Cup. Kim Un-yong was not active on the front lines of the 2002 World Cup bid, but he provided his support indirectly by working on Samaranch and meeting with IOC members from the same countries as the FIFA Executive Committee members.

As had always been the case, South Korea entered the race later than Japan, and its odds of winning over Japan were seen as impossible. In addition to the football association, resident employees from Japanese companies were joining the push to win votes. Kim asked the IOC members to convince their home countries' FIFA members to give South Korea the World Cup and actively sought the support of Italian IOC member and FIFA heavyweight Ottavio Cincuenta. Kim was close with Havelange as well, but Havelange was already leaning toward Japan.

In May 1996, one month ahead of the World Cup host country decision, President Kim Young-sam invited Juan Antonio Samaranch to have lunch. "South Korea is my second home. I've been here 30 times now," Samaranch told Kim Young-sam. "What do you need?"

"Judging from the FIFA situation right now, it looks as though Havelange is siding with Japan, which means South Korean won't be able to host alone," he continued. "But a lot of FIFA members say that joint hosting is a possibility."

"Co-hosting would be fine," Kim Young-sam replied. "Help us."

Samaranch was surprised. "Are you really interested in co-hosting?" he wondered, and received several reassurances from the Korean president that this was indeed the case.

"Havelange will be visiting the IOC headquarters on May 20 to discuss Rio de Janeiro's bid for the 2004 Olympics," Samaranch said. "I'll talk to him then."

But Samaranch was unable to win over Havelange, who was dead set on Japan hosting the 2002 World Cup alone. At the same time, he noted that Havelange would be returning a week later with the Brazilian president because of Olympics-related issues and promised to work on him again.

Samaranch called Kim Un-yong at around 8 p.m. on May 29, a day ahead of the vote. "Let President Kim know that Havelange has agreed to a co-hosting arrangement," he said. "FIFA will make the official announcement tomorrow." It was noon in Lausanne time.

Kim reported to the Blue House that South Korea and Japan would be co-hosting the World Cup. "All right, that's fine then," the president serenely replied. While it received little mention in the press, there were reports overseas that Samaranch had threatened Havelange into agreeing to the co-hosting arrangement, warning that if it went to a vote, Japan would lose and Havelange would be embarrassed. What ultimately led Havelange to shift his support from Japan alone to the co-hosting decision

was the fate of Rio de Janeiro's Olympic bid. Such was Samaranch's power.

In the end, South Korea's strong desire for its 2002 World Cup bid led Samaranch, many IOC members, and FIFA Executive Committee members to the decision to have the World Cup co-hosted for the first time in the event's history. After that, the support of President Kim Young-sam and the efforts of Chung Mong-joon and Koo Pyong-hwoi played a major part.

South and North Korea's joint entrance under one flag at the 2000 Sydney Olympics

The millennial Sydney Olympics delivered a deeply moving moment for people all around the world when South and North Korea entered the Olympic Stadium together for the first time in Olympic history at the opening ceremony. But the process leading up to that joint entrance was a truly tortuous path.

The story of the Sydney Olympics joint entrance began with official IOC letters sent to South Korean president Kim Dae-jung and North Korean leader Kim Jong-il on May 25, 2000, in the name of IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch. Kim Un-yong had been the one to first suggest the idea to Samaranch. "South and North Korea would like to enter together at the Sydney Olympics," he had said. "Can the IOC do anything to actively support that?" Samaranch replied that he would do "anything for the sake of peace." He pledged his full-scale cooperation and sent the official IOC letters to Seoul and Pyongyang.

Kim's request to Samaranch for the IOC's cooperation on the joint entrance



South and North Korea held the first-ever joint entrance holding the Korean Peninsula flag at the Sydney Olympics.

was driven by his sense that the winds of inter-Korean reconciliation were stronger than ever before, with President Kim Dae-jung scheduled to pay a historic visit to Pyongyang in the near future as part of his “sunshine policy” toward North Korea that earned him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2000. By this point, Kim Un-yong had also added the title of National Assemblyman—by appointment of President Kim Dae-Jung as a proportional representative for the ruling Millennium Democratic Party (MDP)—to a list of duties that included presidents of the KSC, KOC, KKW, and WTF and membership on the IOC Executive Board.

On June 15, 2000, Kim would meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il as a member of the special entourage accompanying President Kim Dae-jung to Pyongyang.

During that visit, Kim Un-yong had the opportunity to speak briefly with Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-il seemed to have a detailed knowledge of Kim Un-yong’s titles and personal affairs. “What could North and South Korea do together in sports?” he asked.

“The Sydney Olympics aren’t far away, and the IOC is proposing that South and North Korea enter together at the opening ceremony,” Kim Un-yong replied.

Kim Jong-il laughed. “Of course I know about that,” he said. “What kind of events would an inter-Korean team be the best in the world at if we put one together?”

Kim Un-yong recalled the experience of visiting a joint training session by a unified inter-Korean team competing at the 1991 World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, Japan. He had offered his encouragement, and the women’s division had gone on to a dramatic victory. “How about table tennis to start with?” he suggested.

“Perhaps we can produce a better result if the North and South Korean sporting communities work together,” Kim Jong-il replied.

Before the meeting, Kim Un-yong had no prior knowledge of the North Korean leader except what he had heard in Western media reports: that he was a stubborn, insular person who liked drinking, films, and women. But his short conversation was enough to totally alter his preconceptions. He would later recall his impression of Kim Jong-il.

I had been interacting with North Korean sports officials for decades on behalf of South Korean sports, so I expected at some point to have the opportunity to meet with Kim Jong-il, but I never imagined I would

meet him there at a historic inter-Korean summit accompanying President Kim Dae-jung. Chairman Kim Jong-il seemed to be an intelligent person with leadership ability and proper judgment. He was dynamic and had an excellent sense of humor and an open way of thinking. He exuded confidence in everything, and he was the type that acts decisively according to what he thinks is right. There's a story about how Prime Minister Thatcher of the United Kingdom met with Gorbachev when the Cold War was coming to an end and told him, "I can talk to you." The impression I got from Kim Jong-il was that you could talk to him.

(Kim Un-yong, *Challenge to the World*)

During working-level discussions in different areas in conjunction with the inter-Korean summit, Kim Un-yong met with Chang Ung, North Korea's IOC member and vice president of the North Korean National Sports Guidance Committee. The two agreed that the South and North Korean squads' joint entrance at the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony could serve as a symbol for inter-Korean peace, and they shared detailed and broad discussions on matters related to the entrance. The Inter-Korean Joint Statement issued on June 15 specifically mentioned exchange and cooperation in the area of sports.

After returning from Pyongyang, Kim Un-yong expected good news to arrive shortly. But some time passed without a word. It was not until late July that he was contacted by the IOC headquarters about the arrival of North Korea's response. In its initial proposal for the two sides to enter together, the IOC had said that the South and North Korean teams should



South and North Korean IOC members together at the Sydney Olympics. From left: Kim Un-yong, Lee Kun-hee, Chang Ung.

enter simultaneously and march with a total of three flags: the IOC flag and the South and North Korean national flags. The athletes' uniforms could be integrated, but they would compete separately and be treated as separate countries on the medal stand.

In its response to this proposal, North Korea said that having the two sides enter with their respective flags would be tantamount to reinforcing their division. For South and North to truly be one, it suggested, they should carry the same Korean Peninsula flag used at the World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, Japan. Their proposal was a step ahead of the IOC's, and the IOC replied that it would respect North Korea's position. With the Olympics nearing and little time left to prepare, no further progress was made.

Fearing that everything might be for naught at this rate, Kim Un-yong came up with the new idea of inviting both the South and North Korean heads of state to the Sydney Olympics. Samaranch predicted that they might not come, but agreed to give it a try. Letters of invitation were sent in the IOC president's name to President Kim Dae-jung and Chairman Kim Jong-il. Kim Jong-il ultimately said it was "not possible," but the mere fact that he responded to the IOC at all marked a significant step forward for inter-Korean sports exchange.

Time continued to pass without any detailed exchange of opinions or agreement on the joint entrance. The situation took a rapid turn, however, when Chang Ung and North Korean Olympic Committee president Pak Myong-chol arrived in Sydney a week ahead of the Olympics' opening on September 15.

Arriving at Sydney International Airport on September 7, Chang told reporters, "There's still time to discuss things." He hinted at the possibility of the joint entrance going ahead. "If you look at the unified inter-Korean team at the 1991 World Table Tennis Championships in Chiba, some very complicated issues were resolved in the space of a day," he said. "The joint entrance issue isn't just a matter of South and North Korea. It's a three-party issue that includes the IOC, and negotiations are currently under way. If we respect the spirit of the June 15 Inter-Korean Joint Statement, then I don't think it's such a strange idea to have us enter together and compete separately."

An emergency meeting was held among the three men: Kim Un-yong, Chang Ung, and Samaranch. Chang proposed that when either side won a medal, the Korean Peninsula flag should be raised instead of the respec-

tive national flag and “Arirang” (a popular Korean folksong) played in place of the national anthem. Samaranch said he understood the idea, but noted that there was no precedent in the IOC Charter and explained that it would take around three months to resolve the issue in technical terms. Seeing his negative response, North Korea withdrew the suggestion.

At this point, Kim Un-yong proposed to Chang that the two sides should make their joint entrance wearing the same uniform so that South and North would be entering under the same conditions. Chang agreed, saying that it was “good as a rule” and suggesting that each side pick 50 people for the entrance. No ready conclusion could be reached. With 400 members on the South Korean team, it was clear that if just 50 of them were chosen to take part in the opening ceremony, the other athletes and officials would complain about being unable to participate.

In consideration of this, Samaranch proposed increasing the number of athletes entering to 100 from each side. North Korea just repeated the same message: the name should be “Korea,” the flag should be the Korean Peninsula flag, and the two sides should compete separately. There was no progress. Samaranch started to despair, worrying that North Korea’s rigidity would prevent the joint entrance from happening. But Kim Un-yong never gave up hope.

On the last day of talks, the North Korean side announced that it had “agreed to make a concession in consideration of Mr. Kim’s [Un-yong] efforts and position.” Chang agreed to have 90 members enter for each side and promised to contact Pyongyang to have 20 staff members assembled to make up the difference on the North Korean side. Officially, 90 people each entered on the South and North Korean sides, for a total of 180; in reality, however, the final count was 120 for South Korea and 60 for North Korea. Once the total number had been decided on, the next matter concerned procurement of the uniforms agreed upon by the two sides. Just two days remained before the opening ceremony, and with the date coinciding with Chuseok, one of South Korea’s biggest holidays, most of the stores were closed. Kim urgently contacted Seoul, and after going around to different suit manufacturers, employees were able to fly in 300 outfits in small, medium, and large sizes. Back in Sydney, all of the female athletes were enlisted to help affix Korean Peninsula flags to the outfits in place of the South Korean flag.

While an agreement had been reached on the joint entrance issue, unreasonable demands from Samaranch threatened to cause a disaster.

After the South and North Korean sides reached their agreement, Samaranch was about to hold a press conference with the domestic and foreign media to make the announcement. He was accompanied by Kim Un-yong and North Korean IOC member Chang Ung for the event, which took place just after the opening ceremony for the IOC General Assembly meeting. Samaranch asked Kim and Chang whether they would carry an Olympic flag rather than the Korean Peninsula flag they had agreed on as representatives of South and North. It was unthinkable.

Kim adamantly refused. “Unity between South and North is the dream of 70 million Koreans, and this is a historic moment opening the path toward peaceful reunification of Korea,” he said. “We cannot enter with anything except the flag of the Korean Peninsula symbolizing oneness between South and North.”

But it did not end there. The next morning, Samaranch suddenly called Kim to his room and made another proposal: since there were two flag-bearers for the South and North, he suggested, one of them could carry the Korean Peninsula flag while the other held a flag reading “Thank you IOC.” This too was unacceptable. Kim responded negatively, calling the idea “childish”—much to Samaranch’s displeasure. Samaranch continued making bizarre suggestions, prompting Kim to issue a stern warning. “Korea is home to 70 million people, one of the world’s top ten powers, and a sports power with a 400-member team participating in the Olympics,” he said. “It has the world’s eleventh-highest economic trade volumes. Don’t treat us like we’re East Timor or Herzegovina or some other country with four athletes and a population of 800,000 people.”

The episode was enough to raise suspicions that Samaranch was trying to cement his own position by raising the IOC as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize with the joint inter-Korean entrance and the East Timor and Herzegovina issues.

Another clash of opinions concerned the uniforms. Samaranch had clearly announced that the IOC would pay for the costs of uniforms when South and North entered together, but after the entrance finally came to pass, he played dumb. Only when asked why he was not paying the uniform costs did Samaranch ask for the total bill. When told it was \$150,000, he agreed to pay just \$30,000. Astonished, Kim asked him to pay \$50,000. Samaranch continued insisting on \$30,000 before finally relenting and agreeing to pay \$40,000 only, amounting to only about a quarter of the actual costs.

After all of these twists and turns came the September 15, 2000. At 7:29

p.m., South Korean flag-bearer Jung Eun-soon and North Korean flag-bearer Park Jong-chol entered the Olympic Stadium 96th behind a sign reading “Korea,” holding aloft a flag symbolizing the unification of the Korean Peninsula. Kim Un-yong and Chang Ung marched hand in hand past the box seats. Fifty-five years after the Korean Peninsula’s division into South and North, the two sides had become one. Samaranch and all of the other VIPs in the box seats rose with along the 120,000 spectators filling the stadium to deliver a warm round of applause and cheers to welcome this historic moment.

The South and North Korean teams’ joint entrance at the Sydney Olympics opening ceremony was a great symbolic achievement, showing the world that the two sides were one and the same people. All differences of politics and ideology vanished, and the stadium was filled with only the fervent desire for a peaceful reunification.

News outlets around the world shared news of the day’s stirring and emotional event. AFP reported that the South and North Korean teams had “achieved the dream of unification through sport.” CNN said they had “achieved a small form of unification at the Olympic opening ceremony.” The South Korean press shared the excitement with pieces titled “World Celebrates March, Strides Toward Unification of 70 Million Koreans,” “120,000 Give Standing Ovation as ‘Arirang’ Plays,” “Korea Is One: The Day a New History of Inter-Korean Oneness Was Opened,” and “Let’s Enter the World’s Top Four with a Unified Team.”

For Kim Un-yong, who had spent more than three months pursuing the joint entrance and discussing it with North Korean IOC member Chang Ung, as well as having fought in the Korean War (1950–1953) as a young man, it was an especially emotional moment. The event itself may have lasted just five minutes, but after all the hurdles he had been cleared and after all the close discussions he had held behind the scenes to make that historic moment happen, it was a truly special feeling.

Nuturing future sports diplomats

After Kim Un-yong took over as KSC and KOC president, South Korea began hosting a number of international competitions, conferences, and commemorative events. Despite having hosted the Olympics, the world’s greatest festival of sport, it got off to an inauspicious start. All of these



The ceremony for Yungok Grand Women Sport Awards in 2013.

international sports-related events required a great deal of preparations and periodic checkups on everything from organization to budgets, accommodations, protocol, transportations, security, communications, marketing, health care, broadcasting, entry and exit procedures, and cooperation with related organizations. KSC and KOC staff began learning about these things step by step, gaining a natural understanding of currents in global sports, honing an international sense, and acquiring expert working capabilities.

Since first entering the international sports stage with his establishment of the WTF and role as its inaugural president, Kim had rarely received help from anyone in his efforts at sports diplomacy with the IOC and international organizations. At the time, “sports diplomacy” itself was an unfamiliar term. Nor was there anyone with relevant experience in Korea whom he could really ask for help. He had no choice but to learn through trial and error and through observation.

Nurturing talented sports diplomats is not something that happens artificially in a short period of time. There is no manual or textbook for it. It is something you acquire naturally through experience and practical efforts. The best shortcut to training for it is through meeting lots of people in person, clashing with them at times, and building good human relationships and trust.

Just as education is an investment for the long term, so the training of sports diplomats must proceed from the basics up. The key aspects of sports diplomacy include language ability and international knowledge and experience. Effective sports diplomacy only comes through building

closeness and mutual friendship. Diplomacy is not a matter for the imagination or theories; it is based on evidence and pragmatic gains, and it requires understanding the other side's culture as well as research and reasoning on issues as they arise. Even if diplomatic negotiations cannot produce a result that satisfies everyone absolutely, I believe there must be a "win-win" outcome.

(Kim Un-yong, *Challenge to the World*)

Believing that sports diplomacy can only succeed where there are good human relationships based on trust coupled with constant contacts and interaction, Kim Un-yong led the way in nurturing future sports diplomats. To provide opportunities to South Korean sports figures, he opened paths to memberships in the IOC and OCA and their subcommittees. He made various efforts toward Korea Wrestling Federation president Lee Kun-hee's 1996 election as an IOC member and supported the election of Korea Ski Association president Lee Seung-won and Korea Soft Tennis Association president Park Sang-ha as OCA vice presidents. He also helped many Korean sports figures form relationships with the IOC by recommending them as subcommittee members, including Kwon Yoon-bang, Kim Sook-ja, "Rocky" Yoon Gang-ro, Kim Cheol-ju, Cha Il-seok, Jeon Yi-kyung, Jang Ju-ho, Park Seo-ho, Kim Yong-rae, Cho Kyung-ja, and Han Yang-soon.

In addition, Kim arranged as many KSC and KOC staff members as possible to sit on bidding and organizing committees for various international events taking place in South Korea. He wanted to give them opportunities to meet with eminent sports figures around the world, building diplomatic capabilities and gaining practical international experience that would help develop their professional skills. It was a self-evident truth: no matter how much language learning they might do, it would not successfully transform them into sports diplomats if they stayed cooped up at home. Visible results in sports diplomacy could only come about when future diplomats ventured out into the world and became one with the world through their work. In that sense, the staging of various international competitions and conferences in Korea offered an excellent opportunity to acquire such training to an even larger pool of potential sports diplomats in South Korea.

Kim Un-yong saw South Korean sports figures' inability to gain real global recognition despite their numerous efforts to promote Olympics as stemming from a lack of public relations capability and awareness of

how to make their achievements known. He made sure to emphasize the dedicated contributions of South Korean sports figures before the IOC and various international sports federations, convincing them that they should do something for them in return. This also helped to promote the stature of those South Korean sports figures.

More than anything, Kim took full advantage of his position as IOC vice president and awards committee member to bestow Olympic decorations generously. The conferment of Olympic honors on such figures as Lee Kun-hee, Choi Won-seok, Cho Sang-ho, Kim Ok-jin, Jang Ju-ho, Jang Choong-sik, Chung Ju-yung, Min Kwan-shik, Yoon Duk-joo, Lee Sang-chul, Kim Jung-haeng, and Cho Kyung-ja boosted their personal prestige as well as the nation's. Many people were also awarded commemorative IOC plaques, while Olympic cups were given to the KOC and the city of Seoul as an Olympic host city.

Then as now, women were as active as men in the South Korean sports world. The list of distinguished South Korean female sports figures is too long to enumerate, but includes 1960s basketball star Park Shin-ja, Sarajevo table tennis heroines Jung Hyun-sook and Lee Ailesa, and archer Kim Jin-ho. Nevertheless, institutional measures to encourage and support all of these many female sports figures were relatively lacking.

Accordingly, Kim hired numerous female staff members to work for the KSC and KOC, including Cho Kyung-ja, Kim Min-ja, Hong Yang-ja, Yoon Duk-joo, Cho Jung-soon, Kim Sook-ja, Lee Duk-boon, Won Young-shin, Lee Young-sook, Lee Hye-sook, and Kim Young-chae. He also created the Yungok Grand Women Sport Awards (named after his personal pen name), which continue to be awarded each year.

Special Contribution by former KSC Secretary General Bae Soon-hak

Founding of Sports Museum Leads the Way in Discovering the Roots of Korean Sports

Kim Un-yong became president of the KSC and KOC in 1993, while I was serving as head of the KSC's planning and coordination office. I had met him before, of course, when he was serving as president of the Korea Tae-

kwondo Association and vice president of the KSC and KOC, but we had no connections professionally.

My first impression of Kim Un-yong was that he seemed rather Western in bearing, natural and mild-mannered, and that this carried over into his working style. Perhaps it had to do with his important duties in international sports as an IOC member, GAISF president, and WTF president, but except where they involved major policy decisions, in most domestic matters, he would accept the opinions of working-level staffers and work would proceed very smoothly. For instance, when we were deciding the headquarters staff for the Olympics or Asian Games athletic teams, he would rarely revise the list of officials and never gave orders to “add So-and-So to the headquarters staff.” At the same time, he also observed the rule that all authority granted came with responsibility.

After assuming the presidency, Kim Un-yong focused his energies into efficiently staging the Korean National Sports Festival. He increased the efficiency by requiring host cities from the 74th festival in 1993 onward to stage the National Junior Athletic Competition in the last week of May the following year. This meant that no additional budget would need to be invested for the sports and lodging facilities, and the same staff and volunteers would be used for the junior competition. For the 75th festival in Daejeon in 1994, he invited numerous IOC members in honor of the IOC’s centennial as a way of promoting the event internationally. With the 74th festival in 1995, he allowed regional small and medium-sized cities in the province of the host city to host the event, which contributed greatly to



KOC president Kim Un-yong (center) accompanied by KSC secretary general Bae Soon-hak (right) and KOC vice president Park Sang-ha (left) while inspecting the site of the Winter Olympics (2002).

increasing the availability of sporting facilities in South Korea's provincial cities. Beginning with the 78th festival in 1997, he changed the opening ceremony time from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., sparing the media, cheering squads, and athletes the inconvenience of having to assemble at six in the morning. In these thoughtful ways, Kim Un-yong used the festival actively as a way to expand sporting facilities and promote a passion for sport in smaller provincial cities.

In addition, he expanded training facilities for national athletes with the construction of the Taebaek Athletes' Village as a facility for acclimation to high altitudes and the Taereung International Skating Center—at a cost of 24 billion won—for advancement in winter sports capability. He had all-purpose gymnasiums and dedicated indoor event facilities like the Gae-sungwan and Oryungwan built in the Taebaek Athletes' Village, and he purchased a skiing boarding house in Muju.

As befits an expert in international sports diplomacy, Kim signed sports agreements with 23 countries including Kazakhstan, Russia, and China through 1999, when I worked as secretary general. His success in winning bids to host numerous international competitions and conferences is well known.

Kim Un-yong showed much care and concern for the employees, especially the lower-ranking ones. As many people know, the KSOC president is a part-time, honorary position with no pay; his only compensation was an allowance of 2.5 million won a month for external activity costs. This was far from enough to cover meetings and dinners with members of around 60 sports associations, KSC directors, KOC members, and sports officials. But in the nine years and three months that he served as the longest-running president in KSC history (from February 23, 1993, to March 12, 2002), Kim never spent a penny of his monthly allowance. Instead, he saved it all up to donate to the union at the end of the year to be shared with the non-management employees. Whenever he visited the Taereung Athletes' Village, he would make sure to stop at the athletes' cafeteria and visit the kitchen to offer words of encouragement and gifts of money to the staff there. "It's thanks to your care that our national athletes have put up such good results at international competitions," he would tell them. To the employees, he was the greatest of presidents.

Kim also returned the entire subsidy of 100 million won per year given by the government to IOC members.

Ahead of all of these accomplishments by Kim Un-yong, I would like to

mention two as particularly exceptional.

First, he had a 1996 book on the 50-year history of the KOC translated in English and distributed around the world. He had determined that there were no materials available introducing and promoting the KSC and KOC overseas. He was dedicated enough to the project to translate the English version himself.

The other achievement was the 2000 opening of a sports museum at the Mugyo Gymnasium site in Seoul. This may have been inspired by Kim's previous experience joining forces with Juan Antonio Samaranch to open an IOC museum in May 1994 for the IOC's hundredth anniversary. For the museum's establishment, Kim had raised \$7 million in South Korea, including \$2 million from the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee, \$1 million from Samsung, \$1 million from the KOC, and \$1 million from *Han-kook Ilbo* chairman Jang Kang-jae. The KOC's \$1 million came out of a \$2 million donation from Samsung chairman Lee Kun-hee, who allocated the other \$1 million for the KOC to use itself.

At the time of the opening of the three-story, 220-pyeong (727 square meter) sports museum, South Korea's first, I retired from my position as KSC secretary general and became the museum's director. The opening ceremony was attended by former minister of education and KSC president Min Kwan-shik and the minister of culture and sports Park Jie-won. Kim donated many artifacts he had received from the IOC and other countries to the museum; whenever IOC members or sports figures came from overseas to visit, he would make sure to have them stop at the museum in Mugyo. The following year, the museum had an additional two stories added, bringing the total to four. Kim Un-yong had often lamented that while South Korea had become a global sports power after the Seoul Olympics, there was no place to commemorate this or assemble historical items representing the sweat and toil of past sports figures. Sadly, the Mugyo Sports Museum would be closed down in the interests of the bottom line when Kim Jung-kil took over as KOC president in February 2005, and its holdings would be banished to a corner of the Taereung Skating Center.

Days of Glory, Days of Disgrace

Supporting Lee Kun-hee's arrival in the IOC

The IOC General Assembly meeting ahead of the 1996 Atlantic Olympics had a different meaning for Kim Un-yong. At the time, he was serving as IOC senior vice president and chairman of the television committee and was being talked about as the next IOC president. With the appointment of Samsung Group chairman Lee Kun-hee as its new IOC member, South Korea's standing in international sports rose all the more.

Lee had first expressed his aspirations of becoming an IOC member around the time of the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. At the time, Kim had been elected vice president just six months after becoming an IOC member and was recognized as second in the IOC hierarchy after Juan Antonio Samaranch. He saw Lee as being qualified to serve on the IOC, having been a wrestler during his student days and maintaining numerous teams while heading several sports associations as Samsung chairman, which proved his commitment over many years. Needless to say, there were also many rumors at the time about others pursuing or being recommended for the IOC position besides Lee.

In April 1993, less than two months after becoming president of the KSC and KOC, Kim was summoned to the Blue House by President Kim Young-sam. "I've heard that South Korea needs another IOC member and there are many people campaigning for it," the president said. He asked Kim Un-yong to explain who the candidates were. After hearing from Kim Un-yong about the rumors of former sports ministers and KSC presidents campaigning, president Kim Young-sam recommended Lee Kun-hee, who



At a 1996 congratulatory banquet for Samsung Group chairman and IOC member Lee Kun-hee.

was then president of the Korea Wrestling Federation and vice president of the KOC.

Kim Un-yong was pondering how to make the recommendation to the IOC when he was contacted again by the Blue House. Apparently, Lee had made some remarks while in China that were seen to hurt the national image, such as saying South Korea had “nothing first class, a second-class economy, and a third-class politics.” The Blue House was incensed and wanted him to ignore the president’s previous recommendation. Samaranch was scheduled to visit Seoul in a few days for an interview-cum-meeting with Lee, and Kim had been considering making the recommendation then. Now the Blue House was barring Samaranch and Lee from even meeting.

Somehow the “misunderstanding” was cleared up, and the Blue House once again recommended Lee as the best candidate. During Samaranch’s next visit to South Korea, Lee met with him and shared opinions on a wide range of issues, including the meaning of sports and the Olympic movement. It was a *de facto* job interview.

When the IOC General Assembly meeting opened in Paris in 1994, the South Korean press published numerous reports that Lee’s selection as an additional IOC member was assured. In reality, Kim could not recommend Lee as an IOC member because he was then busy conducting his covert operation to have taekwondo adopted as an official event at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Lee finally was chosen as an IOC member alongside North Korea’s Chang Ung at the 1996 IOC General Assembly meeting in Atlanta. Even this was a tortuous process. Just before the Olympics, Samaranch paid another visit to South Korea and had lunch with President Kim Young-sam. President Kim made a request for an additional IOC member seat; Samaranch said he would think it over. A few days later, he said that it would not be possible this time and had to be postponed until the next time. Hearing this, the Blue House was quite displeased, believing a promise to have been broken. Kim talked to Samaranch, explaining the mood in the Blue House. Samaranch said he would appoint Lee as an IOC member alongside Chang, on the condition that he not oppose the latter on the Executive Board.

In the end, Lee became an IOC member, serving as a sturdy pillar of elite South Korean sports and maintaining teams even when many companies were disbanding teams and abandoning sports associations amid the financial crisis caused in late 1997 by severe foreign exchange shortages. Samsung also signed an official mobile phone sponsorship contract with the

IOC; later, Samsung's mobile phones would become recognized as the best and the most technologically advanced in the world, serving as a corporate pioneer into the world market.

Thrust into politics as a National Assemblyman

At the dawn of the new millennium, Kim Un-yong was appointed by President Kim Dae-jung to the 16th National Assembly as a proportional representative (nationwide) for the ruling Millennium Democratic Party (MDP; now the Democratic Party). After the turbulent experiences of April 1960 and May 1961, and again in the 1980s, Kim had resolved never to become involved in politics, repulsed by the political world and its hypocrisy, betrayals, conspiracies, rumor-mongering, and backstabbing. His wife was also against it and Kim declined two or three times, but President Kim Dae-jung was very insistent and left no option than for Kim Un-yong to accept the appointment as a national assemblyman.

When he became KSC president in 1993, Kim could not avoid associating with politicians. The presidency was an unpaid, part-time volunteer position, but he had to draw on the support of powerful politicians to win and stage the Seoul Olympics, the Asian Games, the Universiade events, and various other international competitions and conferences. He needed help not just from politicians but also at times from the Blue House for nearly everything he did, be it formulating new sports policies, taking measures for the welfare of athletes, or renovating or building such facilities as the Taereung Athletes' Village.



Kim Un-yong gives an introduction at a National Assembly South Korea-US Forum at the invitation of the US Ambassador to South Korea (2001).

But while he enlisted politicians' aid, that did not mean he had any interest in becoming a politician himself. His plate was already more than full with his positions at home and abroad as an IOC member and president of the WTF, KSC, and GAISF. After being re-elected as KSC president in February 1997, he had several meetings with Kim Dae-jung ahead of the presidential election that December 18. These were ordinary ceremonial occasions: a publication party for Yu Jong-geun, the governor of Jeollabuk-do who had worked so hard on the Muju Winter Olympics bid; the opening ceremony of the Busan East Asian Games in May 1997; and a meeting of the Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee. During Yu's publication party, they had chatted briefly about the upcoming election. At the Busan East Asian Games, Kim Dae-jung's seat was in the second row of the royal box. The two shared a simple exchange. "I'm sorry [about the seat]," Kim Un-yong said. "I know," Kim Dae-jung replied.

When they met at the Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee meeting, Kim Dae-jung bowed his head in supplication to the committee's officials. "In the 1971 presidential election, hundreds of thousands of Busan citizens voted," he said. "This is the last time. If it doesn't happen now, it never will. Please support me this time to finally become president."

Kim Un-yong would later recall his impression of Kim Dae-jung at these meetings. "He was a very mild and gentle person," he said. "I thought it would be good to have an internationally recognized figure like Kim Dae-jung as president, and my heart also went out to him when I saw him bowing his head like that to the organizing committee staff."

He would meet Kim Dae-jung once more in early October, when the presidential election campaign was entering full swing. The 78th Korean National Sports Festival was under way in Changwon at the time. Hearing that Kim Dae-jung wanted to see him, Kim Un-yong traveled from Changwon to Seoul, and the two met at the Seogyo Hotel with the help of National Assembly member Chung Dae-cheol. It was also the first time that Kim Un-yong met Kim Dae-jung's son Hong-il. Kim Dae-jung requested sports figures to unite in helping him become president.

At the time, South Korea was facing a foreign exchange crisis—popularly referred to today as the "IMF Crisis." Conglomerate companies had begun disbanding sports teams and abandoning sports associations; it was a serious crisis for elite sports. Support from politicians and the Blue House was urgently needed.

Kim Dae-jung did become the 15th president of the Republic of Korea, and



IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch places an IOC medal on President Kim Dae-jung during a visit to the Blue House.

the nation bounced back from the foreign exchange crisis in record time—a year and a half. As the new millennium broke, Kim Un-yong received a request just before the 16th National Assembly elections: Lawmaker Choi Jae-seung wanted him to come on board as an inaugural member of the president’s new Millennium Democratic Party (MDP). After much thought, he agreed. His name joined a list of 25 prominent figures that also included Suh Young-hoon, Han Myung-sook, Song Ja, Lee Man-sup, Jang Tae-wan, and Lee Jae-jung. Kim Un-yong had to agree with Kim Dae-jung’s stated plan to create the new MDP for right democratic politics in the new century. His decision to join the MDP in an advisory capacity was also based on the sense that it might be a good idea for the sports community to have a proper voice.

After the list of inaugural MDP members was announced, Kim took a beating from members of the Grand National Party when, as KSC president, he attended the National Assembly’s Culture and Tourism Committee. “If you wanted to be a National Assembly member, why didn’t you talk to us?” they said. Kim had become an inaugural member of the MDP thinking things would be all right so long as he did not join the National Assembly. Indeed, asked repeatedly to become a proportional representative in the National Assembly appointed by the president, Kim Un-yong had declined. It was neither his nor his wife’s wish for him to become involved in politics.

A few days later, however, without his consent or knowledge, the press published a list of the proportional representatives appointed by the president for the ruling MDP, which included his name. Kim Un-yong asked the MDP secretariat to remove his name but was told that this was “not possible,” and he could not reach the Blue House. Suddenly and inexplicably, he

was a national assemblyman.

The 25 inaugural members had attended a dinner at the Blue House. When lawmaker Lee Jae-jung said that Kim Un-yong was “world-famous,” the president replied, “When we go out, he’s more famous than me.” He then turned to Kim and said twice, “I look forward to your cooperation.” It became impossible to decline without embarrassing the president given that the press had already been informed of Kim’s nomination to the National Assembly. He had no choice but to accept, despite his own personal reluctance. He also tried to look on the bright side: it could mean a step forward for sports.

Talk of an inter-Korean political summit began after Kim joined the National Assembly. Eventually, he would share views on sports exchange with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in Pyongyang while visiting as part of President Kim’s delegation alongside Chung Mong-joon, Chung Mong-hun, Lee Hae-chan, Lee Wan-gu, Koo Beom-mo, Son Byung-doo, Son Kil-seung, Jang Sang, and Moon Chung-in. It was this visit that planted the seeds that would lead to South and North Korea entering together for the first time holding the Korean Peninsula flag at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

‘Leave the KSC!’

On the eve of the new millennium, Kim Un-yong’s standing in the IOC had suffered a serious blow in the 1999 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics scandal, which led to ten of his supporters in the IOC being forced out. He had done nothing wrong, serving only as chairman of the special committee selecting Salt Lake City as a Winter Olympics host city in 1995. But day after day of attacks in the US press did great damage to his international image. The situation was bad enough that some naively interpreted his 2000 appointment to the National Assembly for the MDP as President Kim Dae-jung’s way of “shielding him” from the beating he was taking from the US media.

The Salt Lake City scandal was described by some observers as a “late-century nightmare.” It erupted in 1999 and continued for another 4 years until the US District Court for Utah finally dismissed the prosecution’s case and exonerated the defendants. For Kim Un-yong, it dealt a serious blow to his bid to become the eighth IOC president at the 2001 General Assembly meeting in Moscow. Despite his exoneration from any wrongdoing, he faced persistent attempts by his detractors to recycle all the gossip and innuendo

for purposes of character assassination and false allegations to discredit him. He already had to contend with the fact that a bloc of European IOC members, led by Samaranch, was determined to prevent the IOC presidency from going to a South Korean. Kim was unable to overcome these obstacles and barriers in an uneven playing field and ended up losing to Jacques Rogge, who had Samaranch's all-out support.

Not long after his return from the Moscow IOC session in July 2001, Kim was contacted by the Blue House and invited to a private meeting with President Kim Dae-jung. He thought it may have been intended to console him on fighting the good fight with the IOC election. It turned out to be something completely unexpected.

Noting that North Korea appeared unlikely to attend the 2002 Busan Asian Games, and that the event seemed likely to be eclipsed by the World Cup, the president suggested it would be a good idea for Kim to quit as president of the Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee, and as KSC president as well. He suggested that Kim was already too busy as an IOC member, GAISF president, and WTF president, and should just focus on those positions and become more involved in the National Assembly. Kim Un-yong had the very strong sense that the president had someone else in mind for those roles.

"As far as the Busan Asian Games go, we've been preparing for five years, and the organization will function after I quit. In terms of the KSC presidency, I don't care about the three years and six months remaining in my terms, but the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics are coming up soon, and things will fall apart if I quit now. Leave the timing for my resignation up to me."

With these words, Kim left the Blue House. But he was not in a position to talk to anyone else regarding the president's command.

The following day, he resigned as Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee (BAGOC) president. It caused an uproar in Busan, where nobody understood the reason. Some even cursed him as "that bastard." Some time later, Busan Mayor Hur Nam-sik learned the truth. "I didn't know," he said, and apologized for the misunderstanding.

A few days after Kim Un-yong resigned from BAGOC, Blue House Chief of Staff Han Kwang-ok called and told him to announce the date of his resignation as KSC president to the press just six months into his term. "If I tell the media now, it will make me a lame duck. Leave the timing to me," he replied and hung up.

Misfortunes seldom visit alone.

The 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics took place on February 8–24. The athletes performed poorly, and press was at an all-time low over the Kim Dong-sung controversy in short track speed skating. While Kim Dong-sung's disqualification for allegedly blocking the US's Apolo Ohno would be described as an all-time bad call that left a black mark on the Salt Lake City Games, he had in fact merely hesitated to avoid a collision. In any event, the case ended up going before the International Skating Union and the IOC Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The time had come for Kim to step down as scheduled from his position as KSC president. Rumors were rife that the next KSC president had already been chosen from among President Kim Dae-jung's closest associates.

On February 28, 2002, a general meeting of KSC regular representatives was held at the Plaza Hotel. It was Kim's last time to preside over the proceedings as president. He had not told anyone about the resignation matter. The budget and project plans were all passed in sequence. Just before the meeting was to be adjourned, he made the announcement. "I've done everything there is for me to do," he said. "I will be stepping down as KSC and KOC president." Everyone present was stunned and bewildered.

With a full three and a half years left in his term, Kim could have held out, but he wanted to keep his promise to President Kim Dae-jung. Vice president Park Sang-ha was absent, and Kim Jung-haeng, whose name was first in Korean alphabetical order among the vice presidents present, was named as acting president. Korea Equestrian Federation president Ahn Duk-ki and 48 other sports associations' heads voted to refuse the resignation and have Kim remain in his position; a similar resolution was announced at the Taereung Athletes' Village. The campaign for Kim's return lasted nearly three months. Many news outlets made references to a "regency" or "immediate return," but Kim held fast to his resignation.

After stepping down from the KSC, Kim published *Challenge to the World* (Yonsei University Press, 2002; the book was updated and a second edition published in 2008), a book about his journey from his entry into the sports community to his bid for the IOC presidency. A publication party was held at the 63 Building in Seoul's Yeouido neighborhood. Kim invited all of the national team athletes training away at the Taereung Athletes' Village. It was his last dinner for the athletes who had boosted the national interests wearing the *taegeuk* symbol on South Korea's behalf.

It was an ignominious resignation that left Kim unable to complete his term despite being thrice elected as KSOC president. Nor was he allowed

to explain the reasons why it was that he had said goodbye to the KSC and KOC.

In the election to choose Kim's successor as KSC president, Kim Jung-haeng ran against Choi Man-lip (later vice president of the 2003 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Bidding Committee) and Lee Yeon-taek. Lee, who enjoyed full-scale support from the ruling party (MDP), was the winner. In the past, Lee Yeon-taek had served as minister of government administration, chairman of the Korea Sports Promotion Foundation, and co-president of the 2002 South Korea-Japan World Cup Organizing Committee; now he was president of KSC. After completing his term, Lee ran again when successor Kim Jung-kil resigned in 2008. As a result, he enjoyed the honor of being named KSC president for a second time.

Gangwon-do and Muju compete for the Winter Olympics

Kim Un-yong achieved a great many things for South Korean sports from his start in sports administration as Korea Taekwondo Association president in 1971 to his resignation as KSC and KOC president with three years left in his term on February 28, 2002.

It had all begun with the 1978 World Shooting Championships, with South Korea's successful bid to host its first-ever world championship event. Kim had put his heart and soul into the bid for and successful staging of the Seoul Olympics. After becoming KSC and KOC president in 1993, he elevated the stature of South Korean sports by bidding successfully for various international competitions and conferences. The conferences included all of the major international sports meetings, including the OCA and GAISF general meetings, the TAFISA congress, and meetings of the IOC Executive Board and General Assembly. After the Olympics, he bid successfully to have major international competitions held throughout South Korea: the 1997 East Asian Games, the 1997 Muju Winter Universiade, the 1997 Winter Asian Games in Gangwon-do, the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, the 2002 FIFA World Cup co-hosted with Japan, and the 2003 Summer Universiade in Daegu, along with the world fencing and bodybuilding championships. Dozens of times throughout his term, Kim achieved things other countries might not accomplish once in ten years.

After the Summer Olympics and World Cup, the only "mammoth" international competition left for South Korea to host was the Winter Olym-

pics. While it had not been his intention to give up the various positions he held at home as Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee president or KSC and KOC president and remain only as an IOC member and WTF president, Kim Un-yong decided that winning the Winter Olympics was the final achievement he needed for the advancement of sports in South Korea. With 20 years having passed since the 1988 Seoul Olympics, he felt that the Winter Olympics bid was an opportunity to stoke a new passion for sports in South Korea and make another stride in global sports history.

Kim Un-yong had felt an increasing yearning for Korea to host the Winter Olympics since the successful staging of the Muju/Jeonju Winter Universiade in 1997. For the universiade, the basic snow sports, including skiing and biathlon events, were held in Muju, while ice sports like short track speed skating and hockey were held at hastily built venues in Jeonju. Ssangbangwool built a resort in Muju and the country's first ski jumping tower, and the bid has also resulted in a luxury hotel called the Tirol. Encouraged by the words of IOC members visiting the Universiade who said the facilities were good enough for the Olympics and filled with confidence after hearing the event described as a "success beyond all imagining," Jeollabuk-do Governor Yu Jong-geun and Ssangbangwool began to consider bidding for the Winter Olympics. Around the same time, Kim Un-yong was traveling with Samaranch to inspect the IOC pavilion built for the Daejeon Expo, and he suggested that the IOC president visit the Muju ski resort. Muju was committed, having received written approval for the Winter Olympics bid from Prime Minister Lee Han-dong. But the foreign exchange crisis had left the central government unable to provide financial support. The coup de grâce came as Ssangbangwool, which had provided so much investment in winter sports, went bankrupt.

In contrast, late starter Gangwon-do enjoyed good fortune thanks to the 1999 Winter Asian Games, for which Kim Un-yong had served as organizing committee chairman. Staged in Harbin in 1996, the Winter Asian Games had originally been scheduled for 2000, but the OCA proposed holding it a year earlier on January 30–February 6, 1999. Around 800 athletes participated from 21 countries. Subsequent Winter Asian Games would take place at four-year intervals in Aomori, Japan, in 2003 and Changchun, China, in 2007. At the time of the event, Gangwon-do was building the new Taereung Ice Arena and donated the old Taereung venue to the Chuncheon Outdoor Skating Center, helping it to reduce its facility costs. With the help of former Prime Minister Kim

Jong-pil, it also received a low-interest loan to complete construction on the Yongpyeong indoor short track skating rink, which had been halted for lack of funds. Because there was no ski jumping tower, ski jump events were not included in the competition. The success of the Winter Asian Games sparked Gangwon-do's interest in hosting the Winter Olympics.

It would be fair to say that the Muju ski jump center and Taereung indoor skating rink represented South Korea's only Winter Olympics-worthy venues at the time. There were ski resort facilities in Muju and Yongpyeong, but they were not up to Olympic competition standards, and facilities for sledding and other events were non-existent. Also lacking were any staff or officials with experience in international competitions or the capabilities to manage them.

Pyeongchang's 2010 Winter Olympics bid: a post mortem

In 2001 Kim Un-yong believed that if the momentum from overcoming the IMF foreign exchange crisis with unparalleled speed could be channeled into a winning Winter Olympics bid, it could provide an opportunity for South Korea to make further strides not only with its economy, but with advancements in its lagging winter sports and the use of beautiful natural scenery to promote the tourism industry. Drawing on his memories of visiting the hinterlands of Gangwon-do on the front lines as a junior officer during the Korean War—places like Ganseong, Goseong, Yangyang, Hwacheon, Geombongsan Mountain, and Yongmunsan Mountain—he saw Gangwon province in particular as having unlimited potential for future development and being the optimal candidate to host the Winter Olympics. But the winter sports facilities and subsidiary facilities in Gangwon-do at the time were mostly at a rudimentary level compared to the already world-famous winter sports cities of Europe and North America.

To win the Olympic bid, Kim saw it as essential first to have the rest of the world learn about Gangwon-do. The best way of sharing the province as a winter sports center was through a bid to host the Olympic Games.

Selection as a Winter Olympics host city does not happen overnight. It requires honing management experience through international events and building Olympic-caliber facilities. It requires training world-class athletes in various winter sporting events and garnering support from many IOC members and international federation officials. For this reason, Kim did not

see Gangwon-do's application to bid for the Winter Olympics as necessarily a one-time thing. The circumstances were very different from the Seoul Olympics bid.

The 2010 Winter Olympics host city was set to be decided at a 2003 IOC General Assembly meeting in Prague. Drawing on the province's experience hosting the Winter Asian Games, Governor Kim Jin-sun announced a bidding plan for the 2010 Winter Olympics on July 15, 1999. Gangwon-do submitted its Olympic bidding application in October 2000 to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (now the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism) and the Korean Olympic Committee (KOC). On August 28, 2002, the KOC designated Pyeongchang as an official candidate city for the 2010 Winter Olympics; on January 11, 2003, it submitted a bidding application to the IOC. Pyeongchang's rivals in the bid were Salzburg, Austria, and Vancouver, Canada.

Pyeongchang lagged far behind either Salzburg or Vancouver in terms of environment, urban facilities, and winter sports infrastructure or après-ski. Its representatives eagerly succumbed to a misunderstanding, however, in making too much of the pleasantries from IOC assessment team leader Gerhard Heiberg about Pyeongchang having "great potential" after seeing its streets packed with welcoming crowds during the team's visit. They mistakenly jumped to the conclusion that the city's selection as 2010 Winter Olympics host city was all but assured.

Kim Un-yong was effectively on his own in managing Pyeongchang's 2010 Winter Olympics hosting bid. He would invite bidding committee officials to GAISF general meetings, IOC meetings, and other international sports federation gatherings to introduce the bidding officials, and he would connect visiting IOC and international federation officials in Seoul with Governor Kim Jin-sun and his team. He even personally footed the travel costs for South Korean delegations at a GAISF general meeting in Colorado Springs and an OCA general meeting in Kuwait.

The IOC's selection process for both Summer and Winter Olympics host cities typically involves a lot of flattering remarks about how "great" and "marvelous" the candidates are. Every two years, seven to eight cities succumb to the flattery, wasting tremendous amounts of money and effort on a losing Olympic bid. In some cases, cities that do apply end up quitting along the way due to objections from the public or the government.

As the IOC General Assembly meeting in Prague drew nearer, Kim Un-yong was already preparing for the next opportunity if Pyeongchang's

bid failed the first time. Seeing the efforts that were being channeled into promotion of the bid in Korea domestically, he suggested several times that they would be better spent earning votes among the IOC members and preparing. No one listened.

Before the Prague meeting, Kim had an opportunity to meet President Roh Moo-hyun at the Blue House. “Everyone’s telling me I should go to Prague,” Roh told him. “What do you think?” In his characteristically forthright fashion, Kim politely told the president that Pyeongchang was in poorer shape than the other cities and did not have the resources. “South Korea is unlikely to get it this time,” he told Roh frankly. “It looks like we’re going to have to apply again next time. I think it would be a political burden on you if you came and Pyeongchang lost.”

The mood in Prague more or less bore out Kim’s predictions. Samaranch, by now the IOC’s honorary lifetime president, told him, “Pyeongchang is not going to beat Vancouver or Salzburg this time, no matter how much pull you have or how hard you work toward the bid. You should be focusing on coming in second, and a close second at that. Don’t come in third.” Samaranch also frankly advised him that if he was elected IOC vice president in the elections two days after the host city selection and helped with preparations while serving as first vice president, Pyeongchang was likely to be a shoo-in to win at the General Assembly meeting in Guatemala City four years later. The other IOC members agreed with Samaranch. He was advocating a realistic approach: you had to have power within the IOC.

The mood in South Korea was quite different.

Governor Kim Jin-sun met me and told me to abandon my run as IOC vice president in advance and call on the IOC members to support Pyeongchang in return for that “sacrifice.” I told him that this would not be effective, that he didn’t understand the IOC members’ way of thinking or the nature of the IOC. I also explained that there was no connection between my run for vice president and support for Pyeongchang, but he did not seem to understand. After the governor failed to persuade me, next it was Prime Minister Goh Kun who invited me to breakfast and said the same thing. Goh ended up meeting with Samaranch, who spent an hour explaining this to him. Like Governor Kim Jin-sun, Goh Kun did not seem to understand.

(Kim Un-yong, “Days of Glory, Days of Disgrace,”
in *Challenge to the World*)

Pyeongchang's first challenge ended in failure. In the initial vote on July 2, 2003, it came in first with 51 votes, ahead of Vancouver (40) and Salzburg (26). But it failed to win a majority, leading to a runoff vote in which it earned 53 votes—three behind Vancouver's 56. It was a bitter reversal. The main reason for the failure appeared to be the inability to capture Salzburg votes from the first round.

Kim Un-yong had done his best to promote Pyeongchang's bid and thought Koreans should accept the outcome with humility and the hope that Pyeongchang would win when it would bid again in 2007. Outside parties were strictly barred from entering the IOC members' hotel for security reasons, so it was almost impossible for anyone else to meet with IOC members. Kim had met with all of the Asian, African, European, and American IOC members he could and asked them to support Pyeongchang. The foreign press concluded that 49 of Pyeongchang's 53 final votes were Kim's votes.

Incarceration

After Pyeongchang lost its bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics, speculation began in Korea over the reasons for the failure. The bidding officials argued that the city would have won if Kim had given up on running for IOC vice president. Some even claimed that he had "sacrificed" Pyeongchang to win the vice presidency. Kim did not respond to any of the speculation. Whatever the reasons, he believed that he bore at least some responsibility for the Pyeongchang bid's failure.

The blame throwing did not end there, however. Instead, it continued to fester. The bidding officials mobilized Gangwon-do residents to come up to Seoul in bus loads and hold demonstrations against him, calling him a "national traitor" (*maegookno*) and burning his effigies. A National Assemblyman from Gangwon-do, Kim Yong-hak (Hannara Party) launched a cross-party Special Committee of the 2010 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics Bidding Support in the National Assembly and called for Kim Un-yong's impeachment for allegedly "campaigning passively" and "sabotaging the bid."

On October 26 Kim filed defamation action against Kim Yong-hak and three Pyeongchang bidding officials, namely, Gong Ro-myung (chairman, 2010 Pyeongchang Winter Olympic Bidding Committee), Choi Man-lip

(vice chairman) and Choi Seung-ho (secretary general), but this went nowhere. Instead, the prosecution announced that they were investigating Kim for suspected corruption.

In early December 2003, Kim was returning to Seoul from attending a meeting of the IOC Executive Board in Lausanne and a taekwondo qualifying competition for the 2004 Athens Olympics in Paris when he heard that the World Taekwondo Federation was under investigation. No one was especially concerned. It was an international organization created single-handedly from the ground up, it was not receiving budgetary support in South Korea, and it was only involved in external activities. His was a part-time position with no decision-making authority.

In spite of these beliefs, however, the prosecutorial investigation had already crossed a certain threshold. The day he was due to arrive back in Seoul, inquiries had been made on all bank accounts associated with him, and personal items belonging to all his family members as well as his IOC-related documents were confiscated from his empty apartment with neighborhood association employees and apartment security staff in attendance as they broke down his front door. Fed by the prosecution, news reports published fabricated accounts that bundles of cash and hundreds of thousands of dollars in foreign currencies were found in his apartment, along with watches and rings worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. The rumors about his private life made it sound as though he was living in opulence like Louis XIV.

Kim Un-yong believes that all of this was an attempt to scapegoat him for the failure of Pyeongchang's bid for the 2010 Winter Olympics, a view supported by international observers.

To make matters worse, IOC president Jacques Rogge rushed to suspend him and to launch an IOC investigation based solely on the newspaper reports, before any official charge or indictment. (See the "Chronology" section.) Within a month Kim Un-yong would find himself arrested and living behind bars, held indefinitely and bail refused.

As part of this state operation against me, the press was manipulated to mislead the public and sports figures in a campaign to engender suspicion and discredit me. They painted me as this shameless person who misappropriated public funds to live in opulence and acted like a tyrannical dictator in the sports world. My lifetime of public service and all of my achievements were ignored or dismissed. But despite their

best efforts and all their scrutiny, they never found anything to hang me with—because it did not exist to be found.

According to the indictment prepared by the chief prosecutor Woo Byung-woo, they argued that seven years of pay and allowances for four secretaries, lunch money, telephone and fax usage charges, postal fees, seven years of newspaper subscriptions for my office as an IOC member, cleaning expenses, and first aid medicine expenses were “misappropriated” because they came from the WTF. Based on accounting errors, they also characterized the \$1.5 million in North Korean sports association support and expenses for the invitation of seven IOC members to the National Winter Sports Festival in Yongpyeong as misappropriation. Costs for entertaining and accommodating IOC members during events hosted in Korea were characterized as misappropriation of public funds. Even though I was an IOC member, president of a world federation, and president of the Kukkiwon, they claimed that that did not qualify as a justification for these expenses.

The support I received from Samsung and Federation of Korean Industries (FKI) when I ran for the IOC presidency was called “embezzlement” because I spent it for a “personal purpose,” i.e. to stand for IOC presidency. Support funds as a National Assembly member and payments for four World Cup opening ceremony tickets I purchased at the IOC president’s request and 16 tickets to the US team’s World Cup matches for the Eighth Army High School at the Eighth Army’s request—all considered “misappropriation.” Even 2,000 won for my secretary’s aviation insurance and a 1.3 million won payment for a birthday party I didn’t even know about were listed in the indictment as misappropriation. There was an accounting ledger I had never seen before, something like a housekeeping book for odd general expenses, and this served as the basis for the “misappropriation” charges.

They were going out of their way to try to pin the criminal charges on me. Thanks to their cooperation with an irresponsible press that was painting me as unethical, I was indicted and had to spend time in prison. The court sided with the prosecutor’s arguments as they usually do in Korea and helped them achieve their aim regardless of the truth or fairness.

(Kim Un-yong, “Days of Glory, Days of Disgrace,”
in *Challenge to the World*)

In response to the prosecutors' charges, Kim argued that the money had all been spent for international sports activities and that none of it had been misappropriated. On January 27, 2004, an arrest warrant was issued against him, charging him with the alleged misappropriation of 3.8 billion won, breach of trust through bribery acceptance, and violation of the Foreign Exchange Transactions Act. On June 3 of that year, he was sentenced to two years in prison and 788 million won in penalties by the Seoul Central District Court. Nearly a year after his detention, the verdict was upheld by the Supreme Court on January 14, 2005, unashamedly applying a presumption of guilt: "Since Mr. Kim failed to give convincing and rational explanations on why he drew the money and how he spent it, it can be inferred that he used the public money for personal purposes."

UN Human Rights Report: 'Scapegoat for the Pyeongchang Olympic Bid Failure in 2003'

Kim Un-yong had almost no opportunity to speak for himself during the trial.

A flood of petitions from around the world expressing moral outrage and arguing his innocence resulted in Kim being accused of "insults to the judicial authorities." Even to claim his innocence was an "insult" to the judiciary, according to the prosecutors.

The Seoul Central District Court for its part suggested that the prosecution strike off most of the charges in the indictment because they were "administrative" rather than "criminal" matters. However, the prosecution (led by prosecutor Woo Byung-woo) only became more aggressive, enlisting Kim's own defense lawyers to attempt to persuade him to admit all charges. This left Kim Un-yong feeling utterly resigned; a fair trial was out of the question. Predictably, the court upheld the prosecutors' submissions to render a guilty verdict on June 3, 2004.

A 2005 annual report by the UN Commission on Human Rights described the prosecution of Kim Un-yong as a "human rights issue" and called him a "prisoner of conscience." It points out that the case was designed to lay political blame for Pyeongchang's bid failure on Kim Un-yong and the Korean judiciary applied the presumption of guilt in order to achieve the desired conviction.

“It is common practice of the [South Korean] courts to utilize the interrogation protocol produced by the prosecutor’s office as indisputable evidence upon which a conviction may be based. . . . Judges strive never to return a not-guilty verdict; the courts boast a conviction rate of approximately 99 percent.

During Kim's trial, a letter sent to his attorneys by North Korean IOC member Chang Ung was printed in some newspapers. In the letter, Chang said that he had received much support, although he did not disclose the amount, and that although he had not written out receipts because he did not carry his seal with him, he was always grateful, and the letter constituted his receipt. Responding to claims during the trial that \$1.5 million in support had been provided to North Korea, Chang added that his calculations showed an amount of \$4 million.

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Proposals and prospects for the reform of the UN Commission on Human Rights

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Kim's incarceration, that plan went up in smoke.

Many things happened while Kim Un-yong was in prison. He spent a brief time in the hospital when his incarceration was suspended for a few days for cataract surgery. Despite his advanced age and failing health, the Supreme Court refused to grant bail. Kim had been elected honorary president of the WTF in recognition of his achievements in founding the federation. In March 2004, however, while his resignation was accepted, there was no mention of his nomination as the honorary president anywhere. An attempt seemed to be afoot to expunge him completely from the sports world.

After Kim met the conditions for parole, review procedures were completed, and as Kim was awaiting release in May 2005, he was visited by Kim Jung-kil, who had become KSC president earlier that year in February with the administration's support. A powerful figure with a close relationship to President Roh Moo-hyun, Kim Jung-kil ascended to the KSC presidency in 2005, having previously been elected Korea Taekwondo Association president in February 2004, also backed by the Roh Moo-hyun administration. As they were talking, Kim Un-yong noted an upcoming IOC General Assembly meeting in Singapore and asked if his release could be expedited. Kim Jung-kil said that he would discuss the matter with the president. But after he left, there was no further word. Instead, Kim Un-yong heard rumors upon Kim Jung-kil's return from attending the World Taekwondo Championships in Madrid that he had been telling people that Kim Un-yong's refusal to resign from the IOC would be a hindrance to Pyeongchang winning the Winter Olympics bid. Some reported that Kim Jung-kil's remarks hinted that he himself might become an IOC member if only Kim Un-yong stepped down. Kim Un-yong declined all meetings with Kim Jung-kil thereafter.

Three IOC resignation letters under pressure from government authorities

While in prison, Kim Un-yong met several times with Kim Woo-sik, chief of staff for President Roh Moo-hyun at the Blue House and a fellow Yonsei University alumnus who had previously headed the National Assembly Supporters Association. One day, Kim Woo-sik arrived with Kim Jung-kil for a meeting while Kim Un-yong was at the hospital for treatment.

Kim Woo-sik barely spoke during the encounter. Instead, it was Kim Jung-kil who did most of the talking. He mentioned traveling to the World Taekwondo Championships in Madrid and meeting with many people there, including Juan Antonio Samaranch's son. During the conversation, it came up that there would be a vote at the IOC General Assembly meeting in Singapore on whether to expel Kim Un-yong. A two-thirds result, he suggested, would hurt Pyeongchang's future chances of winning the 2014 Winter Olympics bid. Kim Jung-kil suggested it would be better for him to resign. Kim Un-yong had no way of knowing what kind of information this was based on, but the message was that he should voluntarily resign before being expelled from the IOC. It occurred to him that when the issue of his IOC resignation came up at the highest levels, Kim Woo-sik may have felt unable to discuss the matter and relied instead on Kim Jung-kil to communicate it indirectly. If true, this could create obstacles for his release. It also crossed his mind that he would be unable to function as an IOC member anyway if his government opposed it.

"I'm incarcerated right now, and it would be a dishonor for the country for me to write a letter of resignation in these circumstances," he told Kim Jung-kil. He penned a written pledge to submit his letter of resignation on June 15 after being released in late May. But the expression on Kim Jung-kil's face suggested he was unappeased. The next day, Blue House Secretary Yoon Duk-hoo visited and asked Kim Un-yong to write his IOC resignation dated in May. With the approval of the prison director, he wrote a resignation dated May 15. Next, he was informed through his family members (who had received another message from the Blue House) that he had to write a resignation dated that very day; he wrote another letter dated May 9. The Blue House also told him that he must send the resignation to the IOC personally and provide evidence. Kim's family members went to the post office and sent the letter to Lausanne, forwarding the receipts both to the Blue House and to Kim Jung-kil.

Kim Un-yong had done everything the Blue House had asked of him. Yet his release from prison in late May was canceled. Some had argued that he could only be released once the letter had been received by the IOC; accordingly, his release date was to be on June 30 now, after the letter was received.

The letter caused controversy in the IOC. While Kim Un-yong had written it himself, there were doubts as to whether he had done so against his will or given up his position under coercion. The common wisdom is that

resignations under duress while physically detained are null and void, but an online IOC announcement stated on its website that the resignation had been accepted. In fact, Jacques Rogge's actual written acceptance of the resignation was only forwarded to the KOC in mid-2006.

Kim Un-yong received a special National Liberation Day pardon and reinstatement from the new President Lee Myung-bak on August 12, while the 2008 Beijing Olympics were taking place. Congratulatory messages and telephone calls poured in from Pastor David Yonggi Cho of Yoido Full Gospel Church, Women's Korean Basketball League president Kim Won-gil, Grand National Party policy committee chairman Yim Tae-hee, and many overseas taekwondo instructors, as well as friends and colleagues in the IOC and taekwondo practitioners around the world. Samaranch visited Kim's hotel to congratulate him. "I heard the good news and came to see you," he said, adding that he was "sorry the IOC could not use its influence at the time because it was a political case." Former FIFA president João Havelange also sent a congratulatory letter saying that "enjoying the Olympic Games in Beijing and hearing of the special reinstatement was the best news."

Kim Un-yong's absence the reason for Pyeongchang's second bid failure?

The first thing that Kim did after returning home a free man, "relieved" of all of his positions, was to tend to his failing health. His excellent basic constitution, the result of his active sporting activities since childhood, was what had enabled him to travel the world so frequently as an IOC member, GAISF president, WTF president, KSC president, KTA president, and chairman of various international competitions.

But more than a year and a half in prison under harsh conditions (a small solitary cell with no window or furniture, not even a chair, and a bucket for a toilet) when he was over 70 years old had taken a heavy toll on him physically and mentally. He had to visit clinics of every type—ophthalmologists, cardiologists, orthopedic surgeons, urologists, and dentists. To tend to his worn body and mind, he traveled to Tokyo in April 2006 as a visiting professor of law at Keio University.

University president Yuichiro Anzai declared it "an honor to have a former IOC vice president at our school" and offered him a number of

amenities, including an office, faculty discussion room and club privileges, and a faculty apartment. For the first time in many, many years, Kim was able to read books at his leisure, lecture to students, and write the things he had been unable to before. He had been a student at Yonhee University when the Korean War broke out, and since enlisting as an interpreting officer, he had never had a single break. After more than 50 breathless years, it was his first experience of comfort and peace.

While staying in Japan, Kim observed a rowing competition between Keio and Waseda University and visited Meiji Jingu Stadium to see baseball games and wrestling matches by Waseda and Keio. Keio was divided into Mita, Hiyoshi, Yagami, Shonan Fujisawa, Shinanomachi, and Kyoritsu campuses, and Kim took turns visiting each of the deans, providing guidance, lectures, and attending social gatherings on sports. A sports exchange agreement was signed between Keio and Yonsei University at the request of Yonsei Sports Association chairman Park Gap-cheol.

Most surprising for Kim was the Hiyoshi campus, which had 39 athletic clubs, each of them with its own dedicated practice ground. While South Korean universities usually have a single stadium for track and field, football, baseball, and hockey, this campus had separate ones. The track and field and swimming facilities were of a global standard, and Kim felt envious of the disparity with the South Korean sports environment. In all, he spent seven years and three months until July 2014 as a visiting professor at Keio University.

It was during these years that the 2014 Winter Olympics host city was to be decided at an IOC General Assembly in Guatemala City in 2007. Pyeongchang had announced that it would be attempting another bid.

North Korean IOC member Chang Ung said he could “not understand how people who claim to be bidding for the Olympics keep shooting themselves in the foot.” Noting that Kim still had influence over around 20 to 30 members, Chang suggested enlisting his help. It was also being reported that IOC vice president Thomas Bach of Germany and Singaporean IOC member Ng Ser Miang had said the same thing repeatedly to officials on the Pyeongchang Organizing Committee—but that their advice had fallen on deaf ears.

Before Governor Kim Jin-sun left for Guatemala, I called him and suggested that he focus less on the “showmanship” and more on winning votes. I don’t know if my words had an impact. Before he left, I

was told that they had secured 49 votes. I laughed and told [aide] Oh Ji-cheol how the IOC worked. "If they said 50, you should see it as 30," I said. The reports are always inflated. It's tough to meet with the IOC members, but even if you do, they don't let on as a rule as to whether you have their vote.

When Governor Kim Jin-sun said Samaranch was backing Sochi, I said, "I'm sure he's not supporting it in particular. Stop by and say hello to him when you travel to Europe." He went to Samaranch, who apparently advised him to "get full-scale support from Samsung." Many other people visited after that, including Han Seung-su, Yoon Kang-ro, and Samsung Group officials. But what do you expect from people who don't understand about using the right people in the right position, people who hover around the periphery while ignoring the center, people who put on a show and try to gain concessions for themselves, people who think they have nothing to lose, people who credit themselves with every success and blame someone else for every failure?

(Kim Un-yong, "Days of Glory, Days of Disgrace,"
in *Challenge to the World*)

National Assembly member Lee Kwang-jae and aide Oh Ji-cheol both seemed to have thought Kim Un-yong should play a leading role. But most of the eight task force members were opposed, and it never happened.

Kim Un-yong recalled his telephone conversation with Samaranch on the eve of the Guatemala meeting.

Samaranch asked me, "Are you coming to Guatemala?"

"Should I?" I replied.

"If you do and it fails again, they'll just blame you. I wouldn't come."

Surely they won't pin it on me again, I said. He said he would not put it past them. At the time, many were saying Samaranch had canceled a breakfast with the South Korean president Roh Moo-hyun because he was backing Sochi.

"I'm tired after arriving late at night. I'm not going to have breakfast at eight in the morning," he said. Samaranch also noted that many people had visited Putin's reception, while almost no one attended the South Korean president's. "It's a good lesson: South Korea can't do anything without you on the IOC," he said before hanging up.

Kim Un-yong saw much of South Korean so-called sports diplomacy as mere window-dressing. They needed to be focusing on the votes, but they were spending their energy to put on a show for appearance's sake. Before the IOC meeting in Guatemala, they staged a series of events that the IOC did not especially care about, including rallies at home, a walking competition, and Buddhist and Christian prayer meetings. If they had that kind of budget and energy, he suggested, they would be better off meeting with one more IOC member. He also said that he was not sure what the National Assembly members and hundreds of delegation members who traveled to the 2003 General Assembly meeting in Prague had actually done.

In the end, Pyeongchang earned 36 votes in the first round—15 fewer than it had won in Prague. In the second round, it lost to Sochi by a vote of 47 to 51.

A feature article in the July 6 edition of the *JoongAng Ilbo* bore the title “Without Big Man, Limits to Sports Diplomacy in Winning IOC Votes.” The article quoted sports experts as saying that no one had come to fill the void left by Kim Un-yong when he retired after representing South Korea as a sports diplomat for over 20 years. In their obsession with inflicting damage and destruction, no one had devised any alternatives, it suggested.

Kim Un-yong had ceased all outside activities after being arrested. He had stepped down from his position on the IOC. His absence was clearly a blow to achieving the national dream of hosting the Winter Olympics. This was seen as being all the truer in view of his major role as a leader for Asian and African members of the IOC—a heavyweight who controlled more than 30 votes. The article concluded that Pyeongchang had failed at its second Winter Olympics bid precisely because it did not have Kim Un-yong.

David Miller, the eminent British journalist who wrote a book on the 100-year history of the IOC, offered his own analysis on the reasons for Sochi's victory and Pyeongchang's second defeat in the July 6, 2007, edition of *The Daily Telegraph*.

With Tokyo bidding for the summer games of 2016, Japan opposed Korea, not wanting the risk of Asian “congestion.”

China, intending to campaign for the Olympic Winter Games of 2018, likewise opposed an intervening Asian winter host.

Russia received a reciprocal favour from eastern European voters for having supported the UEFA presidential election of Michel Platini.

Former IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch [sic], elected in 1980 with substantial backing by the Soviet Union, exerted clandestine influence on Russia's behalf.

At least two IOC members opposed Pyeongchang because of Korea's harsh imprisonment of former IOC vice-president Un Yong Kim as scapegoat for defeat by Vancouver.

Special Contribution by former IOC vice president Kim Un-yong

South Korea, A Country That Tries to Drag Down Its Own Best

Juan Antonio Samaranch always used to say, "With sporting competitions and elections, you never know the outcome until it's over." Truer words were never spoken. He also remarked, "The law is a double edged sword. It can be read one way and it can be read the opposite way." Seeing South Korea's preparations to bid for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, he said, "Instead of working to win votes, South Koreans pride themselves on their proposal explanations and assessment reports and think that's enough. They start planning their victory celebration to claim credit for the success." And all of this without the knowledge of what its rival countries are up to. In the end, Pyeongchang won 36 votes in the first round, that is 15 fewer than the 51 at the Prague meeting. In the second, it lost to Sochi 47 to 51.

This was the result of our unwillingness to believe that Rogge, Samaranch, China, Japan, the US, and Europe were backing Sochi. It is in the nature of the IOC to compliment or flatter candidate cities. They tell all the cities bidding how "everything is great," how the evaluation reports show them to have hosting capabilities, encouraging them to go ahead and enter the race. It is like habit. I don't know if they were taken in by that or they used what Rogge said as an excuse, but in the end the bidders deceived the South Korean public and wasted public money on a big charade. They even told president Roh Moo-hyun that it was going to succeed and encouraged him to come to Guatemala City.

They inspired big dreams among the South Korean public and young people, encouraging their hopes for unlimited development, an opportunity to venture out into the world, development of Gangwon-do through subway and highway constructions, Pyeongchang's development to become

a global winter sports mecca, and a new opportunity for advancement in South Korean winter sports—and then they let them down. The question many people were asking overseas was who was going to be scapegoated over this second failure. But unlike Prague, this time President Roh Moo-hyun himself had personally led the bidding efforts.

The July 6, 2007, edition of the *JoongAng Ilbo* advised caution in trying again. It also talked about being unable to understand why the Korean bid failure was being blamed on Vladimir Putin. It talked about how self-mocking it sounded to say Korea lost four years ago because I was there, and then to say they lost this time because I was not there. They failed to conceive how many votes four years ago came because of me, as the foreign press observed; they all mistook it for something they'd accomplished themselves without working for it. A piece in Japan's *Yomiuri Shimbun* newspaper right after the Prague IOC meeting in 2003 stated that I was responsible for 49 of 53 votes received by South Korea. Whether it's for money lobbying or face marketing, sports diplomacy requires big players. Lobbying only works when you're close to and trusted by the IOC members. On the understanding that you can't create those big names overnight, the *JoongAng Ilbo* said they needed to closely analyze the reasons for their defeat and come up with responsive measures before trying again.

Most of the online messages said things like, "If Kim Un-yong had been there, our chances would have been 100 percent. The void he left behind is too great," "It's not going to be easy going forward," "We need Kim Un-yong," "Kim Un-yong was the victim of a witch hunt," "What are they doing driving him out and then regretting it later?," "We knew this would happen when they blamed the loss last time on Kim Un-yong and tried to bury him," "This is what we get for doing in our own candidate for the IOC presidency," "There's no big figure in the global sports world to take Kim Un-yong's place, and it will take decades to create another one," and "They need to publicly apologize and take responsibility for destroying South Korea's own sports world heavyweight and hero." There was also a lot of talk about how "the lack of any major players from this era was the biggest reason for the loss," "Now we understand why he was so great," "We need to rehabilitate this immortal sports hero," and "It's in Koreans' nature to envy and frame their own greatest."

Israeli IOC member Alex Gilady said that South Korea needed to learn more. When I met him recently after the Rio Olympics, he noted what had become of South Korean sports after that and said that it served them right.

The international sports community is not a place where you can simply railroad things through.

In March 2008, I met with IOC honorary lifetime president Juan Antonio Samaranch over Gwangju's bid for the 2013 Summer Universiade. "You made the Seoul Olympics bid a success and brought taekwondo into the Olympics," he told me. "What got in there got in because of you. You're the one who brought South Korean sports to the top of the world. I can't understand why they were attacking that like this." He went on to say, "In every field, they all attack the number one. They go after you as the number one in sports, they go after Lee Kun-hee as the number one in business. I don't get it." Lee Kun-hee too was subsequently sentenced to three years in prison, but the sentence suspended for five years, on charges of irregular stock transfers and tax evasion in a special prosecutor's investigation over slush funds, bank accounts under false names, and inheritance issues.

In *The Official History of the Olympic Games and the IOC: From Athens to London 1894–2012* (Mainstream Publishing, 2012), the eminent author David Miller provided a detailed analysis of the reasons for Pyeongchang's defeat, the scapegoating, the prosecutors' indictment and the trial, statements from my supporters, the possibility that a motion to expel me at the IOC's Singapore General Assembly meeting would have been voted down, secret meetings between the Blue House and Jacques Rogge, the coerced resignation, and the UN Commission on Human Rights report denouncing the victimization by political authorities.

I sense how history at last illuminates facts and truth. The book talks about how Gangwon-do Governor Kim Jin-sun spent \$50 million on the two bids and led Pyeongchang to its "third time lucky" success with smoke-screens and evasive maneuvers. The hundred-plus years' Olympic history views this as inane face-saving. Eventually, history will place responsibility squarely where it belonged, for the huge amount of taxpayer money that they had wasted, and demand that future bidding feasibilities be given a more rational consideration.

After all the benefits to the local government, now everybody is trying to bid for international competitions. They talk about how winning those competitions has an employment generating effect in the dozens of trillions of won. But if they are planning to provide accommodations and airfare for an unmarketable competition and then rely on the government to pay for the shortfall later on, that is just a waste of precious taxpayer money. I think the best approach is to examine the feasibility more rationally, make

adjustments, and if there is money to spend on bids, they should lower the public's taxes and invest it in needed social services. Marketing revenues for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics are dozens of times greater than Pyeongchang's. What kind of conditions did Kim Jin-sun leave Pyeongchang in? Where has he gone?

(Kim Un-yong, "Days of Glory, Days of Disgrace,"
in *Challenge to the World*)



Chapter 5

Unabated Passion

World leaders Kim Un-yong has known



Top: Kim Un-yong meets with Princess Anne, an IOC member for the United Kingdom (1987).

Bottom: Kim Un-yong greets US President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton in 1996.

The 80th International Sports Press Association (AIPS) Congress took place on May 10, 2017, at Lotte Hotel in Seoul. The congress was co-organized by the Korea Sports Press Union (chairman Jung Hee-don) and AIPS (president Gianni Merlo), and attended by around 250 sports journalists from 120 countries around the world. Participants glimpsed preparations for the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics—then seven months away—and held discussions on major issues for the international sports world and the rapidly changing media environment.

One special guest drew particular attention at the con-

gress's official opening ceremony that day: Kim Un-yong. While Kim almost never appeared in public except for very special events, he had received a special invitation from AIPS president Gianni Merlo. "I'd like to meet Kim Un-yong as someone in South Korea who influenced the global sports community," Merlo said. During his opening address, Merlo introduced Kim, drawing a standing ovation from all the foreign sports journalists present. One overseas reporter declared, "Dr. Kim is a legendary figure in global sports," raising his hand and clicking a camera shutter in his direction. After the ceremony ended, many reporters crowded around Kim to say hello and take commemorative pictures with him. Even a decade after he had last held an official position in South Korea or overseas, he was still a charismatic figure in international sports.

Over the years, Kim Un-yong met people from ordinary backgrounds to some of the most globally influential figures in politics, the economy, and

sports. He drew inspiration from them and tried to discover the wisdom in their lives.

Kim's aspirations to become a diplomat were nurtured after his encounter with Hong Byung-ik, a teacher at Kyungdong Middle School. At Yonsei University, a single word from President Baek Nak-jun had him visualise himself roaring toward the world. After joining the army, Kim spent turbulent years by the side of General Song Yo-chan, a true soldier and a man of integrity who never compromised when it came to his convictions.

Kim also met with global leaders while making the world his home as a leader in various sports organizations, including as World Taekwondo Federation president, Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee senior vice president, IOC vice president and Executive Board member, and GAISF president.

Another person whom Kim met was Nelson Mandela, the black human rights activist who led the way in addressing racism as president of South Africa after 27 years in prison, declaring that he had too little time creating a new country to spend on needless things like vengeance. Still another was Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, who brought an end to the Cold War between East and West. Kim met former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, a master diplomat with great influence on US foreign policy, and President Bill Clinton, as well as Chinese president Jiang Zemin, Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain and her husband Prince Philip, Princess Anne, and King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain, who adopted the ways of commoners.

Prince Rainier III of Monaco, whose 1956 marriage of the famous American film actress Grace Kelly was considered the “wedding of the century,” made sure to meet with Kim at least twice a year, as the GAISF headquarters were in Monte Carlo. The two were close enough to share intimate details about their personal lives.

Kim had been on distant terms with Jacques Rogge, the figure who had vied with Kim as the “next Samaranch,” since Rogge led the push to remove Kim from the IOC in collaboration with the Korean administration. However, current IOC president Thomas Bach, the “German gentleman,” adjusted his busy schedule during a July 2017 visit to the World Taekwondo Championships in Muju in order to meet with Kim.

In addition to meeting these overseas leaders, Kim Un-yong also served South Korean president Park Chung-hee briefly during his time as prime minister and was close enough to presidents Chun Doo-hwan and Roh Tae-woo to speak openly and seek their cooperation for the successful organization of the Seoul Olympics.

I was luckier than others, and because I endeavored to live with passion, I was able to experience some of the most important moments of the Republic of Korea's contemporary history since its foundation. In the process, I met personally with "big names" from various fields who represented South Korea and other countries. While pursuing the Olympic movement and globalizing taekwondo, I made friends with now-historic figures in world history. . . .

To look back on it now, many of the great people whom I met have already passed away. It is said that one only knows how tall a tree stood when it falls. There are many feelings that I experience as I think back upon them. These were people whose life trajectory was always out of the ordinary, but as I recall them anew, I remember less their mistakes and disappointments and feel more of a sense of fondness and appreciation for their strengths.

(Preface, *Great Men and Women Kim Un-yong Has Met*,
Joongang Books, 2014)

Another sports diplomat and eternal companion

In his later years, when Kim Un-yong did not have any special business, he would usually stay at home to be with his wife and lifelong companion, Park Dong-sook. He had done so ever since her release from the hospital five months after suffering a stroke in November 2014. He sat next to her, feeding her meals because of her difficulties using her right arm, and he



Kim Un-yong with family members at his 1958 wedding.

was a ready conversation partner when she was bored. He held her hand every time she went to the hospital for treatment or physical therapy, and he made sure not to schedule any outside business on days she had a hospital appointment. He paid no mind to his son and daughter when they suggested taking her in his stead.

Kim said that he needed to be with his wife to feel comforted and free of cares. He could often be seen walking slowly hand in hand with her in Seoul's Yeouido neighborhood. Her condition had improved after physical therapy, but she did have to spend over a week in the intensive care unit after a fall at home in August.

Kim Un-yong described his wife as "the person who has become half of my life." Introduced to each other by a relative, Park Dong-sook and the then-soldier Kim Un-yong took their wedding vows on April 20, 1958, at the Seoul Diplomatic Center. The ceremony was officiated by General Lee Yong-joon, the minister of communication, with Cho Sang-ho serving as master of ceremonies. A close acquaintance, Cho would later serve as secretary general of the Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee, president of the Korean Sport Council, and minister of sports.

Like most South Korean husbands of his generation, Kim Un-yong admitted he was not always thoughtful or attentive to his wife. He had to spend half of the year overseas, and when he did return to South Korea, he would come home late at night due to the backlog of work.

For this reason, his wife would often travel with him when he went overseas. While other couples might enjoy the idea of traveling abroad together, Kim's wife often had to spend time on her own while her husband tended to his busy meeting preparations from the moment they boarded the airplane. Fortunately, the IOC members' association had a program for wives, and Kim's wife formed friendships with the wives of IOC members from around the world while participating in cultural events and seminars organized by women's groups.

Kim's wife also diligently studied foreign languages to be able to talk naturally with foreigners and her husband's visiting friends from around the world. As a result, she now possesses some command of English and French. This enables her to converse without any difficulties with anyone she meets at any occasion; Kim had often been told by his international acquaintances that his wife "truly is the best lady." Some South Korean newspapers have described her as a "woman with a constantly busy husband who never gets a day's rest for herself" and a "woman who has traveled the world many

times yet has never truly gone sightseeing.”

While Kim Un-yong was indicted and tried after being politically targeted for the failure of the 2010 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics bid in July 2003, he faced criticisms about traveling with his wife. Many questioned what that had to do with sports diplomacy. To this, Kim responded that at various sports events around the world, there are things the men must do and things the women must do. It is not readily apparent, not visible to the outside, he explains, but it is a part of sports diplomacy. This is why Kim Un-yong did not hesitate to call his wife Park Dong-sook another sports diplomat herself, and his “eternal companion.”

Founding the Kim Un-Yong Sport Committee (KUYSC) and launching the Kimunyoung Cup International Open Taekwondo Championships

In 2005, Kim Un-yong resigned from the IOC under coercion from the Roh Moo-hyun administration. He also had to quit the WTF he had founded in 1973 and all other duties related to sports under political pressure. However, he served in advisory roles for various international competitions in South Korea—on the 2014 Incheon Asian Games Organizing Committee and 2015 Gwangju Summer Universiade Organizing Committee, for example—but these were more or less courtesy honors. As the names suggest—Korea Taekwondo Association lifetime honorary president, Kukkiwon honorary president, Korean Sport Council advisor—they were honorary positions that did not include practical administrative responsibilities. Rather than dismissing the positions as merely honorary, it may be more accurate to call them a form of respectful treatment toward a South Korean sports veteran now in his eighties.

In 2012, his alma mater Yonsei University dedicated the “Kim Un-yong Hall” in its Sports Science Complex in honor of his accomplishments at home and abroad. In 2015, he was selected by the Kukkiwon as a “proud taekwondo practitioner,” while KOC enshrined him in the KOC Hall of Fame as a sports hero (sports administration). In addition, he was selected in 2016 by the Taekwondo Promotion Foundation among “people who have brought honor to taekwondo,” and his name was permanently inscribed at the Taekwondo-won museum in Muju, Jeollabuk-do.

As 2016 was drawing to a close, Kim founded the Kimunyoung Sport



Launch ceremony for the Kimunhyong Cup International Open Taekwondo Championships organizing committee.

Committee at the recommendation of acquaintances. His aim was to share his international experience and knowledge with future generations aspiring to become sport figures or embarking on careers in international sport.

The Kim Un-Yong Sport Committee (KUYSC) has the founding vision and goals of “contributing to the advancement of South Korea through sports development, to global sports, and to the advancement of South Korean sports diplomacy through taekwondo’s permanent establishment as an official Olympic event.”

As its first project, Kim showed his unchanging love for taekwondo with the inaugural 2017 Kimunhyong Cup International Open Taekwondo Championships. A five-day event lasting from October 28 to November 1, 2017, it featured three events—sparring, *poomsae* (forms), and competition—and was attended by around 3,000 people from all over the world. Declaring that “the event is being held to establish a foundation for strengthening taekwondo capabilities and promoting international exchange,” Kim reaffirmed his commitment, through the KUYSC, to “do my utmost so that men and women of all ages from around the world can hone their body and mind through taekwondo, establishing taekwondo as a martial arts sport beloved by people.”

On the KUYSC homepage is a greeting message from Kim Un-yong titled “1988 Seoul Olympics was a big turning point in the modern history of Korea.” It is reproduced in its entirety below, as it shows the course Kim has traveled in his life over a half-century with sports.

A small country in East Asia once scarred by war and poverty hosted the world's largest sports festival and attracted the attention of the whole world. The 1988 Seoul Olympics created a new chapter of harmony between the East and the West. Korea achieved fourth place in medal rankings, and the event served as a springboard to develop its economy, democracy and sports.

Today, Korea has established itself as a sports powerhouse. We invited the Summer and Winter Olympics, FIFA World Cup, World Athletics Championships. The Olympic medal standings of Korea are among the top ten in the world.

I have dedicated the last 40 years of my life to the Olympic movement, Korean sports development, and Taekwondo in my capacity as IOC vice president, KOC president, and founding president of Kukkiwon (World Taekwondo Headquarters) and the World Taekwondo Federation. After military service during the Korean War, I served in Washington, London, and with the UN as a diplomat. Through the use of sports diplomacy I globalized the Korean martial arts sport Taekwondo in record time and made it an Olympic sport at the IOC Congress in 1994. In addition, I helped organize the 1986 Seoul Asian Games and 1988 Seoul Olympics successfully. I helped to host 2002 Korea-Japan FIFA World Cup. I organized the joint march of South-North Korean delegations at the Opening Ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

The Kimunhyong Sport Committee (KUYSC) will work to promote the Olympic movement, support Korean sports and diplomacy, and the globalization of taekwondo.

The KimunhyongSport Committee will organize the leadership training program and international seminars to meet new global challenges. We will support further development of Taekwondo and organize the Kimunhyong Cup International Taekwondo Championships. We will continue to organize the Kimunhyong (Yungok) Grand Women Sport Awards (held since 1988 Olympics Games) to foster outstanding sports women.

We will do our best to support Korean sports to move another step forward with a new vision. Thank you!

A big man's deepening sighs

In 2017, Kim Un-yong could only sigh in disappointment to see the recent performance of South Korea's elite athletes at international competitions. His fear was that after emerging as a global sports powerhouse with the 1988 Seoul Olympics, South Korea may yet be surpassed by Japan and slip back to third place in Asia. With Lee Kun-hee's inexplicable resignation as an IOC member on August 11, 2017, the marked decline in sports diplomacy was deeply troubling to him as well.

Kim pointed to the results of several world championships in 2017 as signaling a swift rise for Japan and a steady decline for South Korea. At the World Wrestling Championships in Paris on August 23, South Korea won just one gold and one bronze medal, while Japan placed first worldwide with six golds, one silver, and two bronzes. At the badminton's BWF World Championships in Glasgow on August 29, Noromi Okuhama of Japan won gold in women's singles, while South Korea's world number one men's player Son Wan-ho had to settle for bronze.

Furthermore, at the 2017 World Judo Championships in Budapest on September 4, South Korea failed to win any gold medals for the first time in three years since 2014; on the other hand, Japan practically monopolized the golds with seven medals. Some viewed this as signaling a decline in judo's past role as a source for South Korea of Olympic medals and wins over Japan.

The upcoming 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo were even more disquieting. Having already outperformed South Korea at the 2016 Rio Olympics (with 12 gold, 8 silver, and 21 bronze medals to South Korea's 9, 3, and 9, respectively), Japan is expected to widen the gap even further in Tokyo. The adoption of karate as an official event there added to his worries,

as it means inevitable competition with taekwondo. As someone acutely aware of the IOC's inner workings, he saw it as obvious that the committee "would not give the same official recognition to two similar martial arts like taekwondo and karate." Many are now increasingly concerned that after all of the painstaking efforts that went into taekwondo's globalization and its adoption as an official Olympic sport, it could now end up marginalized by karate. While many in Korea have been talking down the possibility, Japan has been making steady advances; now, claimed Kim, it is preparing to "overtake South Korea."

Kim attributed this rapid slump in South Korean sports on the international stage to a combination of factors, including a lack of sports diplomacy capability and a government that shows little understanding of elite sports. He could not hide his concern that South Korea's sports diplomacy stands to be weakened all the more with Lee Kun-hee now absent from the IOC.

When Korean Sport Olympic Committee (KSOC) president Lee Ki-heung applied to become an IOC member in his capacity as NOC president, many South Korean news outlets saw his selection as a possibility, with the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics not far away. According to Kim, Lee Ki-heung's failure to win candidacy was the result of his ignorance of broader IOC currents, specifically its trend of forming committees around former competitors now in their early to mid-fifties. Furthermore, Kim saw the IOC members' roles as constrained by the approach of forming IOC coordination committees rather than relying on the host country's IOC members for Olympics operation or management. For effective sports diplomacy, what South Korea sorely needed was another "big man" wielding influence from within the IOC. Since Kim's forced resignation, however, the country had more or less given up.

Offering support as long as he could

Between his beginnings as Korea Taekwondo Association president in 1971 and the time he resigned as IOC member and stepped down from the front lines of the sports world in 2005, Kim Un-yong held virtually every major position in sports at home and abroad. While there is no need to enumerate them all, a look at the various jobs he held over the years gives a true sense of what an important position he held in South Korean sports history and how major his role was on the international stage.

By turning the 1988 Seoul Olympics into the “greatest Olympics” uniting East and West and spearheading the adoption of the national sport taekwondo as an official Olympic event (in 1994, for the 2000 Sydney Olympics), he transformed Korea from a small, inconsequential country on the divided Korean Peninsula into a vital part of the world. He delivered a profoundly moving moment of hope for peace for people all over the world when the South and North Korean teams entered together for the first time in history at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

This was the same South Korea that was so devastated and ravaged after escaping imperial Japanese rule and enduring the Korean War that the rest of the world saw it as incapable of rising again. With the successful staging of the Seoul Olympics, it transformed into “the world’s Korea” and a global sports leader. Kim Un-yong’s role behind this phenomenon as a “big man” in the global sports community is an established fact.

But Kim was denied an honorable retirement. His good name and the honors he had acquired at home and on the international stage through his life’s works were ruthlessly stripped from him in the name of political power. And while he had expected a new leader to emerge soon after he departed the scene, someone who could carry on the necessary work, twelve years have passed without anyone arriving to take his place.

Even with this mixture of honor and humiliation, there is one thing which Kim Un-yong firmly retained. He had let go of all of his positions in South Korea and overseas, but there were still IOC members and international federation officials everywhere who would lend a hand at a single word from him. There still are prominent figures in global sports who have known Kim Un-yong over many years and are holding steadfast in their faith in Kim Un-yong. Kim could still pick up the phone and call them anytime to hear the latest news, and they still reached out from time to time to keep in touch with Kim.

“What can I do? I have to offer my support for as long as I still can,” declared the big man of global sports, deep disappointment audible in his sigh.

Kim Un-yong still lives on as a hidden hero of South Korean—no, of the entire world’s sports arena.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY

Before 1950

March 19, 1931

Born to father Kim Do-hak and mother Lee Kyung-yi in Daegu's Bongsan neighborhood.

1936

Kim Un-yong's father passes away.

March 1937

Enrolls at Deoksan Primary School in Daegu.

1939

Moves to Seoul and transfers to Kyungsung Sakurai Primary School.

March 1943

Enrolls at Asahigaoka (Kyungdong) Middle School (now Kyungdong High School).

August 15, 1945

Korea's liberation (from Japanese colonial rule) occurs during Kim's third year at Kyungdong Middle School.

March 1949

Enrolls in political science and diplomacy department at Yonhi University (renamed Yonsei University in 1957).

1950s

June 25, 1950

Korean War breaks out during Kim's second year at Yonhi University

November 30, 1950

Joins International Allied Liaison

Officers' Group at Army Headquarters (interpretation officer, commissioned as first lieutenant).

December 23, 1950

Army Headquarters retreats to Daegu.

January 6, 1951

Assigned to 6th Infantry Division, 7th Regiment (Gwanghyewon-ri, Chungcheongbuk-do; regiment leader Im Bu-taek).

January 25, 1951

Participates in Battle of Geumnam-jang (Yongin) as part of UN Forces counterattack.

March 1951

Participates in Battles of Hoengseong and Yangdeogwon-ri.

April 1951

6th Infantry operations division (Battle of Chuncheon) retreats to Mt. Yongmunsan during Battle of Sachang-ri.

May 1951

Repels Chinese Communist forces at Battle of Yongmunsan, advances to Guman-ri and Hwacheon (Hill 1,152).

July 1951

Enrolls in basic officers' course at Army Infantry School in Busan.

December 7, 1951

Graduates from basic officers' course at Army Infantry School in Busan, commissioned as first lieutenant in Army Infantry.

December 1951

Assigned as aide-de-camp to 5th Infantry Division leader (Yangyang).

May 1952

Combat at Hill 351 in Goseong (front line command post, Hwarang Order of Military Merit).

August 1952

Assigned as aide-de-camp to 11th Infantry Division leader (Hwarang Silver Star Order of Military Merit), liaison officer to US 45th Infantry Division.

March 1953

Attends basic officer's course at US Army Infantry School at Fort Benning; promoted to captain.

August 31, 1953

Graduates from US Army Infantry School (captain).

September 1953

Head of 27th Infantry operations division (Naksansa Temple, Yangyang), 79th Regiment S-2 (intelligence chief).

July 1954

Head of 6th Corps operations division (Pocheon).

October 1954

Liaison officer to US First Corps.

March 1955

Promoted to Army major.

July 1955

Enters Anti-Aircraft and Guided Missile School at Fort Bliss (unmanned aircraft program).

June 28, 1956

Graduates from US Anti-Aircraft and Guided Missile School; studies at Texas Western College.

July 1956

Strategic intelligence department, Army Headquarters intelligence division.

December 1956

Instructor for advanced officers' course at US Army Infantry School (large-scale attack tactics).

September 1957

Secretariat, First Army Command at Wonju.

February 1959

Assigned as aide-de-camp to Army Chief of Staff (Song Yo-chan).

March 1959

Re-enrolls in political science and diplomacy department at Yonsei University College of Social Science.

1960s

February 1960

Graduates from Yonsei University College of Social Science, political science and diplomacy department.

April 19, 1960

Student revolution occurs; senior aide-de-camp to emergency martial law commander (Army Chief of Staff Song Yo-chan).

February 1, 1961

Promoted to Army lieutenant colonel; aide to US Korean Military Advisory Group leader (General Hamilton

H. Howze, later commander of the Eighth US Army).

May 16, 1961

Military coup d'état led by Park Chung-hee.

June 1961

Aide to minister of defense (Song Yo-chan); discharged after May 16 coup; protocol secretary to prime minister/minister of defense (Song Yo-chan, Park Chung-hee, Kim Hyun-chul).

December 1961

Completes master's degree in political science and diplomacy at Yonsei University; protocol secretary to prime minister/minister of defense (Song Yo-chan), secretary to minister of defense.

August 1963

Completes doctoral program in political science and diplomacy at Yonsei University; counselor at South Korean Embassies to the United States and United Kingdom.

October 1965

South Korean representative at 20th UN General Assembly.

March 1968

Blue House Presidential Security Service aide (deputy director) charged with US relations (Army liaison). Kim Un-yong's mother passes away.

1970s

January 29, 1971

Seventh president of Korea Tae-

kwondo Association (KTA); board member, Korea Sports Council (KSC).

March 20, 1971

President Park Chung-hee presents handwritten message declaring taekwondo South Korea's "national sport."

April 15, 1971

Taekwondo cultural magazine founded as forum for dialogue among taekwondo practitioners.

November 19, 1971

Construction begins on Central Hall of Taekwondo.

January 16, 1972

General meeting of KTA representatives; all executive members tender resignations and Kim alone is re-elected president; new executive board is formed and entrusted to president.

January 20, 1972

KTA standing director system abolished, secretariat established (director Uhm Woon-kyu).

February 22, 1972

English-language edition of *Taekwondo* pamphlet published; 4,000 copies distributed in 35 countries.

November 30, 1972

Central Hall of Taekwondo opens (land area 16,500 square meters, 4,220 square meters of floor space) with Kim Un-yong as president; ribbon is cut by Prime Minister Kim Jong-pil, Seoul Mayor Yang Taek-shik, Culture and Education Minister Shim Chang-yu, and KSC president Kim Taek-su.

February 6, 1973

Central Hall of Taekwondo renamed “Kukkiwon.”

February 24, 1973

Taekwondo textbook published to promote integrated *poomsae* (forms).

May 25–27, 1973

First World Taekwondo Championships held at Kukkiwon; 19 teams participate from 17 countries (first place: South Korea, second place: US, third place: Free China and Mexico).

May 28, 1973

World Taekwondo Federation (WTF) established with Kim Un-yong as inaugural president, Lee Jong-woo as secretary general, Hyun Woo-young as technical committee director (inaugural general meeting participant countries: France, Uganda, Mexico, West Germany, Austria, Guatemala, Colombia, Philippines, Hong Kong, Free China, Cambodia, US, Ivory Coast, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, and South Korea).

February 13, 1974

Vice president of Korea Sports Council (KSC), Korean Olympic Committee (KOC).

April 23, 1974

Awarded Order of Merit at Republic of Korea Sports Awards.

May 7, 1974

Association of American Universities (AAU) adopts taekwondo as competitive event for affiliated groups.

August 7, 1974

Kukkiwon established as foundation with capital of 2 million won; inau-

gural directors: Kim Un-yong (president), Jung In-young, Cho Seok-rae, Jang Ik-ryong, Kim Young-il, Han Bong-su, Park Mu-seung, Kim Bong-gyun, Kim Shin-jung, Choi Kak-ryu, Hong Jong-su, Am Gung-ho, Suh Kyu-duk, Jung Young-hoon, Kim Jin-bong, Won Kyung-su.

August 15, 1974

First Lady Yuk Young-soo assassinated by a North Korean agent.

August 25, 1974

Resigns as deputy director of Blue House Presidential Security Service, ending career as government official.

September 25, 1974

Attends as representative at general meeting of the International Shooting Union (UIT, renamed International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) in 1998) in Bern, Switzerland; successfully bids to host 1978 World Shooting Championships in South Korea.

October 18, 1974

First Asian Taekwondo Championships held at Kukkiwon (99 athletes from 10 countries); South Korea wins in all eight weight classes (second place: Taiwan, third place: Cambodia, fourth place: Philippines); KSC vice president and KOC vice president/honorary general manager.

October 26, 1974

AAU adopts taekwondo as official competition event.

January 12, 1975

Re-elected KTA president at regular general meeting of representatives;

1975 designated as “year of taekwondo’s globalization.”

August 28–30, 1975

Second World Taekwondo Championships held at Kukkiwon; 352 participants from 30 countries.

October 9, 1975

WTF unanimously admitted as regular member at 3rd general meeting of Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF), then General Association of International Sports Federations

February 11, 1976

KOC vice president/honorary general manager.

April 7–11, 1976

International Military Sports Council (CISM) adopts taekwondo as official event at first executive committee meeting.

May 21, 1976

European Taekwondo Union founded in Barcelona (12 participating countries: Spain, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, West Germany, Italy, UK, France, Netherlands, Turkey, Denmark, and Greece) with Antonio Garcia de la Fuente (Spain) as president and Marco Salla as secretary general.

May 22–23, 1976

First European Taekwondo Championships held in Barcelona; 123 participants from 12 countries.

June 28, 1976

World pro boxing heavyweight champion Muhammad Ali visits Kukkiwon.

October 16–17, 1976

Second Asian Taekwondo Championships held in Melbourne; 260 participants from eight countries; South Korea emerges as all-around winner.

September 15–17, 1977

Third World Taekwondo Championships held in Chicago; 72 participants from 46 countries.

September 17, 1977

Pan Am Taekwondo Union established in Chicago with Dan Marrow (US) as president, Min Kyung-ho as secretary general; WTF president Kim Un-yong and secretary general Lee Jong-woo in attendance.

April 28, 1978

US Olympic Committee adopts taekwondo as official event.

June 30–July 2, 1978

Pre-World Games taekwondo competition held at Kukkiwon and Jangchung Gymnasium.

August 7, 1978

Ten taekwondo *kwans* (schools) integrated into main school (director Kim Un-yong).

September 10, 1978

Asian Taekwondo Union founded (Miramar Hotel, Hong Kong); 12 participating countries/territories including South Korea, Iran, Thailand, Free China, Malaysia, Guam, Brunei, Singapore, Hong Kong, New Zealand, and Pakistan; president: Prince Sariat Shafigh of Iran.

September 23–25, 1978

Inaugural Pan Am Taekwondo

Championships held in Mexico; 11 participating countries including Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, US, and Colombia.

[September 27, 1978](#)

42nd World Shooting Championships held in Seoul (1,334 participants from 66 countries), becoming the first world championships staged in South Korea.

[October 25, 1978](#)

African Taekwondo Union founded (president: Wasanan Kone); 14 participating countries including Ivory Coast, Ghana, Gabon, Morocco, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Lesotho, Kenya, Cameroon, Sudan, and South Africa.

[March 30, 1979](#)

Korean Women Taekwondo Federation founded (inaugural president: Lee Hak-seon).

[April 4](#)

First African Taekwondo Championships held in Ivory Coast.

[March 18, 1979](#)

Appointed member of national sports review committee.

[October 20, 1979](#)

First Asian appointed as Non-Olympic Event Federation (NOF) chairman at GAISF general meeting.

1980s

[June 27, 1980](#)

IOC Programme Commission (chaired by Árpád Csanádi) compe-

tition event review committee selects taekwondo as official IOC event.

[July 15, 1980](#)

Juan Antonio Samaranch appointed seventh IOC president.

[July 17, 1980](#)

83rd IOC General Assembly meeting held in Moscow; taekwondo approved as Olympic event and WTF recognized as international federation.

[July 19, 1980](#)

Decision to boycott XXII Olympiad in Moscow in protest of Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan.

[July 24–August 2, 1981](#)

Inaugural World Games held in Santa Clara (executive committee chairman: Kim Un-yong); competitions in 16 events, including taekwondo.

[September 30, 1981](#)

84th IOC General Assembly meeting held in Baden-Baden; Seoul selected as host city for XXIV Olympiad in 1988.

[November 2, 1981](#)

Seoul Olympics Organizing Committee (SLOOC) launched with Kim Un-yong as president.

[November 26, 1981](#)

AGF general meeting in New Delhi; Seoul chosen as host city for 10th Asian Games in 1986 (AGF would subsequently be renamed the Olympic Council of Asia [OCA] on December 5, 1982).

[April 8, 1982](#)

IOC president Samaranch visits Kukkiwon; Kim Un-yong becomes

IOC Olympic movement subcommittee member, inaugural president of Association of IOC Recognised International Sports Federations (ARISF).

[August 12–13, 1983](#)

Official adoption of taekwondo raised at Pan Am Games general meeting in Caracas; adopted by a vote of 22–2 (2 abstentions) after voting is requested by the US, Belize, and Costa Rica.

[November 28–December 1, 1983](#)

Taekwondo adopted as official event at Africa Games.

[July 26, 1984](#)

Korea Shooting Federation president Park Jong-gyu elected as IOC member.

[September 28, 1984](#)

Taekwondo selected as official event at Seoul Asian Games in 1986; Kim Un-yong becomes GAISF vice president.

[June 3, 1985](#)

90th IOC General Assembly meeting in East Berlin; taekwondo selected as demonstration sport at 1988 Seoul Olympics debuts at Jangchung Gymnasium.

[December 5, 1985](#)

IOC member Park Jong-gyu passes away.

[May 8–10, 1985](#)

International University Sports Federation (FISU, president Primo Nebiolo) executive committee selected taekwondo as FISU event; Kim Un-yong named senior vice

president of SLOOC and 1986 Seoul Asian Games Organizing Committee.

[May 12, 1986](#)

WTA joins International Fair Play Committee (Paris).

[September 20, 1986](#)

10th Asian Games open in Seoul; first taekwondo competition held at Asian Games (Sungkyunkwan University, Suwon; 84 athletes and 40 officials from 17 countries).

[October 17, 1986](#)

WTF president and SLOOC senior vice president Kim Un-yong selected as IOC member (Lausanne).

[October 25, 1986](#)

Appointed GAISF president (Monaco, succeeding Thomas Keller).

[February 16, 1987](#)

Appointed emeritus president of Korean Olympic Committee (president Kim Jong-ha).

[August 14–16, 1987](#)

10th Pan Am Games held in Indianapolis (128 participants from 26 countries); taekwondo competition held.

[September 16–19, 1987](#)

14th Southeast Asian Games held in Jakarta (58 participants from five countries); taekwondo competition held.

[October 1, 1987](#)

Kukkiwon team (headed by Hong Jong-su) performs taekwondo demonstration for Olympic Week event at IOC headquarters in Lausanne at IOC's invitation.

August 15, 1988

Appointed head of IOC television subcommittee; named IOC Executive Board member at 92nd IOC General Assembly meeting in Seoul.

September 17, 1988

XXIV Olympiad opens in Seoul; taekwondo demonstration held at Jangchung Area; special airborne forces perform taekwondo demonstration at pre-opening ceremony event.

September 11, 1989

Named KOC emeritus president; Yungok Grand Women Sport Awards established (volleyball player Park Shin-ja becomes first awardee).

1990s

June 1990

Special presidential envoy (Hungary, Yugoslavia, Poland); Seoul Peace Awards committee member.

January 1991

Resigns at KTA president, succeeded by Reserve General Choi Se-chang.

April 22, 1992

Taekwondo adopted at Asian Games in Hiroshima.

July 23, 1992

Elected IOC vice president and Executive Board member at IOC General Assembly meeting in Barcelona; defeats Chiharu Igaya of Japan by 54 votes to 28.

August 3–5, 1992

Taekwondo exhibition event at Barcelona Olympics; 128 athletes

and 116 officials from 27 countries.

October 24, 1992

Re-elected to four-year term as GAISF president at 26th general meeting in Shanghai.

February 26, 1993

Appointed 31st KSC president and 21st KOC president, president of 1997 Muju/Jeonju Winter Universiade Organizing Committee.

June 18, 1993

Elected chairman of International Foundation for Olympic Development (IFOD).

June 23, 1993

Appointed chairman of Olympic Africa Foundation (secretary general: Ivorian IOC member Louis Guirandou-N'Diaye).

August 18, 1993

Re-elected as sixth WTF president.

August 21–23, 1993

11th World Taekwondo Championships/4th Women's Taekwondo Championships held at Madison Square Garden, New York City; 443 male participants from 82 countries, 226 female participants from 54 countries; broadcast live on US network ABC.

September 28, 1993

Appointed president of 1997 Muju/Jeonju Winter Universiade Organizing Committee.

December 12, 1993

OCA general meeting held in Kuwait; Yongpyeong selected as host city for 3rd Winter Asian Games in 1999

after North Korea forfeits hosting.

[January 15, 1994](#)

Committee launched for adoption of taekwondo as event at 2000 Sydney Olympics.

[February 3, 1994](#)

102nd IOC General Assembly meeting held in Lillehammer, Norway; Kim Un-yong appointed president of 2002 Winter Olympics host city selection committee.

[May 1994](#)

IOC Programme Commission (president Franco Carraro) votes 11–9 to reject adoption of taekwondo; Kim Un-yong becomes IOC museum board member.

[September 5, 1994](#)

IOC General Assembly meeting in Paris; taekwondo adopted as official event at 2000 Sydney Olympics by unanimous 85–0 vote.

[October 8–9, 1994](#)

12th Asian Games held in Hiroshima; 76 participants from 21 countries.

[October 19–22, 1994](#)

Re-elected GAISF president at 28th general assembly in Monte Carlo

[January 24, 1995](#)

German sports magazine *Sport Intern* selects Kim as world's second most influential sports leader for 1994.

[February 15, 1995](#)

WTF joins Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF, president Primo Nebiolo).

[May 23, 1995](#)

14th OCA general meeting held in

Seoul; Busan selected as host city for 2002 Asian Games.

[September 1995](#)

Named president of 1997 Busan East Asian Games and 2002 Busan Asian Games Organizing Committee, Foreign Ministry ambassador for international sports exchange.

[October 23–26, 1995](#)

29th GAISF general meeting held in Seoul.

[November 1995](#)

Named president of 1999 Gangwon Winter Asian Games Organizing Committee.

[July 16–18, 1996](#)

105th IOC General Assembly meeting held in Atlanta; Korea Wrestling Federation president Lee Kun-hee elected as IOC member.

[October 19, 1996](#)

Re-elected president at 30th GAISF general meeting in Monte Carlo.

[November 17, 1996](#)

Sydney Olympics taekwondo competition quota raised from 64 to 100 at IOC Executive Board meeting.

[February 26, 1997](#)

Appointed 32nd KSC president and 22nd KOC president.

[May 17–18, 1997](#)

2nd Busan East Asian Games held; 40 participants from six countries.

[September 1–3, 1997](#)

106th IOC General Assembly meeting held in Lausanne; Kim Un-yong elected IOC Executive Board member.

November 19, 1997

Re-elected seventh president of WTF.

May 22, 1998

IOC designates Taereung Athletes' Village as world's best training center.

June 30, 1998

Taebaek high-altitude training center opened (Sodo-dong of Taebaek, Gangwon-do).

September 13–17, 1998

IOC Executive Board meeting held in Seoul; establishment of Olympic movement anti-doping organization approved.

September 17, 1998

Named president of organizing committee for Seoul Olympics 10th anniversary commemorative meeting.

October 18, 1998

Re-elected GAISF president.

December 7–10, 1998

13th Asian Games held in Bangkok with 173 participants (110 male, 63 female) from 26 countries; *Sport Intern* selects Kim Un-yong as second most influential figure in global sports; named senior advisory committee member for 2002 World Cup Organizing Committee.

January 30, 1999

4th Winter Asian Games open in Gangwon-do.

June 12–20, 1999

109th IOC General Assembly meeting held in Seoul; attended by 92 IOC members, including president Juan Antonio Samaranch.

1999

Salt Lake City scandal erupts.

Since 2000

June 5, 2000

Member of 16th National Assembly, appointed as a proportional representative by president Kim Dae-jung.

June 15, 2000

Meets North Korean leader Kim Jong-il while accompanying South Korean president Kim Dae-jung on Pyongyang visit and broaches possible joint march at 2000 Sydney Olympics; sports exchange and cooperation stipulated in inter-Korean joint statement.

September 27, 2000

South and North Korean squads enter together at Sydney Olympics; first official taekwondo competition in Olympic history, 102 male and female athletes participating in eight weight classes.

December 19, 2000

Taekwondo established as official event at 2004 Athens Olympics.

December 29, 2000

Appointed chairman of IOC radio/television subcommittee.

February 27, 2001

Elected to third term as 33rd KSC and 23rd KOC president.

April 3, 2001

Becomes first non-Caucasian to run for IOC presidency.

October 31, 2001

Re-elected WTF president at general meeting in Jeju.

February 28, 2002

Resigns as KSC and KOC president with three years left in term at general meeting of KSC representatives (as demanded by president Kim Dae-jung).

May 29, 2002

Lee Yeon-taek elected 34th KSC and 24th KOC president.

September 27, 2002

14th Asian Games open in Busan.

2003

National Assembly South Korea/America Forum chairman; inaugural chairman, SportAccord.

July 2, 2003

115th IOC General Assembly meeting in Prague; Pyeongchang loses to Vancouver in its (first) bid for 2010 Winter Olympics.

July 3, 2003

Kim Un-yong registers as a candidate for IOC vice presidency

July 4, 2003

Kim Un-yong is elected as IOC vice president by a substantial margin.

July - August 2003

Gangwon-do (Pyeongchang) officials organize and stage demonstrations against Kim Un-yong blaming him for Pyeongchang bid failure and branding him a “national traitor.”

August 21, 2003

22nd Summer Universiade opens in Daegu.

October 26, 2003

Kim Un-yong files defamation action against four Pyeongchang bid officials.

November 2003

Kim Un-yong declines newly elected President Roh Moo-hyun’s invitation to join the new (ruling) Uri Party.

December 24, 2003

Prosecution announces that it is investigating Kim Un-yong for suspected corruption.

January 9, 2004

Jacque Rogge convenes IOC Ethics Commission to suspend Kim Un-yong.

January 27, 2004

Kim Un-yong is arrested at Severance Hospital while undergoing medical treatment and imprisoned; bail is refused.

June 3, 2004

Seoul Central District Court accepts the prosecutorial submissions as “evidence” and convicts Kim Un-yong.

September 17, 2004

Seoul Court of Appeal rejects Kim Un-yong’s appeal.

January 14, 2005

Supreme Court of Korea upholds the conviction by applying a “presumption of guilt.”

February 11, 2005

IOC Executive Board unanimously passes Jacques Rogge’s recommendation for Kim’s expulsion, to be submitted to the General Assembly in Singapore (July 2005) for a vote.

April 13, 2005

17th WTF congress held in Madrid;

administration backed candidate
Choue Chung-won elected president.

[June 30, 2005](#)

Kim Un-yong is released from prison,
subject to a gag order preventing him
from speaking to the press.

[July 19, 2005](#)

WTF celebrates taekwondo becoming
an official Olympic sport simulta-
neously with its 32rd anniversary,
without inviting Kim Un-yong.

[2006](#)

Advisor to 2014 Incheon Asian
Games Organizing Committee.

[July 4, 2007](#)

119th IOC General Assembly meet-
ing in Guatemala City; Pyeongchang
loses to Sochi in its second bid to
host 2014 Winter Olympics.

[August 12, 2008](#)

Kim Un-yong receives a Presidential
Pardon and Reinstatement.

[2009](#)

Lifetime emeritus president, Korea
Taekwondo Association; permanent
adviser, KOC; emeritus chairman,
Kukkiwon.

[2010](#)

Emeritus chairman, 2015 Gwangju
Summer Universiade Bidding
Committee; permanent adviser,
2015 Gwangju Summer Universiade
Organizing Committee.

[July 6, 2011](#)

123rd IOC General Assembly
meeting in Durban; Pyeongchang
defeats Munich and Annecy, France,
in its third bid to become host city

for 2018 Winter Olympics.

[2012](#)

Yonsei University dedicates Kim
Un-yong Hall in the Sports Science
Complex.

[2013](#)

On the 60th anniversary of the
armistice, Kim Un-yong is awarded a
National Defense Hero Medal from
the Ministry of Patriots and Veterans
Affairs on account of his service
during Korean War (1950–1953).

[2015](#)

Selected by Kukkiwon for “Proud
Taekwondo Practitioners” award;
enshrined in KOC Sports Hero Hall
of Fame (sports administrator).

[2016](#)

Enshrined by Taekwondo Promotion
Foundation as “person who has
brought to honor to taekwondo.”

[November 4, 2016](#)

Kim Un-Yong Sport Committee
(KUYSC) founded.

[April 21, 2017](#)

Kimunyoung Cup International Open
Taekwondo Championships Organiz-
ing Committee launched.

[October 28–November 1, 2017](#)

The (inaugural) 2017 Kimunyoung
Cup International Open Taekwondo
Championships are held in Seoul.
2,500 athletes from 60 countries
around the world participate.

[November 28, 2017](#)

29th Yungok Grand Women Sport
Awards are held.

DECORATIONS

South Korea:

Hwarang Order of Military Merit (1952); Hwarang Silver Star Order of Military Merit (1952); Order of Service Merit, Yellow Stripes (1961); Order of Sport Merit, Maengho Medal (1980); Order of Sport Merit, Cheongnyong Medal (1986); Order of Civil Merit, Moran Medal (1988); Korean War Service Medal; UN Service Medal; President's Commendation (twice); Prime Minister's Commendation (twice); Army Chief of Staff's Commendation (five times); National Defense Hero Medal for Korean War Service (2013, 60th anniversary of Korean War ending).

International:

Commendatore (Italy); Order of Sport Merit (Ivory Coast); Sports Award (Republic of China); Order of Leopold II (Belgium); National Order of Merit (France); Order of Supreme National Merit (Spain); Order of Diplomatic Service Merit (Spain); Order of Sport Merit (Monaco); Order of National Merit (Monaco); Presidential Order of Merit (Philippines); Sports Academy Distinguished Eagle Award (US); General José de San Martín Independence Order of Merit (Argentina).

Other Awards:

Order of Merit, Republic of Korea Sports Awards (1972); Proud Yonsei Alumni Award; Seoul City Culture Award; 1st Sport Seoul Sports Award; Proud Kyungdong Alumni Award; Pentathlon Award (Italy); Korea Sports Press Union Order of Merit; Sports Star Award (Euro Sports); Friendship Award, Valley Forge Freedom Foundation (US); Republic of Korea Person of National Merit (Military Merit); Combat Sports Academy Academician (Russia); US Air Force Minister's Commendation; Commendation, Governor of Nagano Prefecture (Japan); Special Sports Merit Award, Keio University (Japan, 2010); Proud Taekwondo Practitioner Award (Kukkiwon); People Who Have Honored Taekwondo enshrinement (Taekwondowon, 2015); Republic of Korea Sports Hero Award (KOC, 2015).

PUBLICATIONS

Books:

Taekwondo Textbook (Korean/English, Kukkiwon, 1973)

The Greatest Olympics (Korean/English/Chinese/Japanese, YBM Sisayoungosa, 1989)

Toward a Broader World (Apseon Chaek, 1995)

Challenge to the World (Yonsei University Press, 2002, 2008)

30 Years of the Olympics (Japanese, Soujusha, 2001)

Wise Men Learn from the Elders (Joongang Books, 2009)

Great Men and Women Kim Un-yong Has Met (Joongang Books, 2014)

Regular Columns:

Stories Kim Un-yong Would like to Leave Behind (*JoongAng Ilbo*, September 22, 2008–February 18, 2009)

Great Men and Women Kim Un-yong Has Met (*Ilyo Sinmun*, January 10, 2010–February 6, 2011)

Kim Un-yong's High Mountains and Deep Valleys (*Newsis*, January 31, 2011–May 6, 2013)

Challenge to the World (*Graphys*, July 5, 2016–February 20, 2017)

REFERENCES

- Kukkiwon World Taekwondo Center: 25 Years of History* (Kukkiwon, 1997)
- Transcripts of KSC recordings with veteran sports figures: Kim Un-yong (KOC, 2015)
- Transcripts of recordings with former Kukkiwon president Uhm Woon-kyu (KOC, 2015)
- Recordings and videos for sports figure history preservation effort (KOC, 2015)
- “Miracle at La Défense” in *Times of Passion with Sport* (pp. 85–94, Korean Sports Journalists Association, August 2015)
- “The Life of ‘Yungok’ Kim Un-yong and His Influence on South Korean Sports Diplomacy” (Yonsei University master’s thesis by Ju Hyung-chul, 2008)
- Taekwondo Canon* (Seo Sung-won, Anibig, 2012)
- Stories to Share: The Baden-Baden Miracle* (Korea Sports Promotion Foundation, 2011)
- Fifty Years of the Korean Olympic Committee* (KOC, 1996)

About the Author



Chung Tae-hwa

Born in 1953 in Sangju, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Chung Tae-hwa graduated from Daegu High School and Yeungnam University. He started his career as a sports journalist for *The Maeil Shinmun* (based in Daegu) in 1980, where he worked his way up to Head of Sports. For 18 years after the foundation of Korean professional baseball in 1982, Chung thrived as a sports specialist, covering the 1988 Seoul Olympics, 1992 Barcelona Olympics, 1994

Lillehammer Winter Olympics, three Asian Games, the Universiade, and the World Championships of baseball and archery. He currently serves as the secretary general of the Korea Sports Journalists Association and as a member of the Korean Sport & Olympic Committee's Public Relations and Media Commission and the Sports Hero Selection Committee. Chung coauthored *The Centennial History of Korean Volleyball* (published by the Korea Volleyball Association, 2016).

Dr. Kim Un-yong was one of the most prominent sports administrators and visionaries of South Korea. He was a former vice president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and a founding president of the World Taekwondo Federation. He received a doctorate in Political Science and Diplomacy in 1963 from Yonsei University. I have great admiration for this extraordinary man, his dedication, his passion and his contributions to sports and society.

A Tribute to Dr. Kim Un-yong – Ng Ser Miang, IOC Executive Board Member

The Seoul festival was to be a triumph, the largest Olympics yet in size, technology, and publicity: a metaphoric amalgam of German efficiency, Asian courtesy, and American financial acumen. In the immediate following years, GDP rose by 12 percent, four times faster than Europe. Diplomatic relations were established throughout the Soviet bloc with all except Cuba, Albania, North Korea, and China, state President Roh Tae-woo unimaginably holding a summit conference with President Gorbachev. The Kim “miracle” had become pervasive.

The Force behind a Phenomenon: Kim Un-yong – David Miller, The Times (London)

He had a 1996 book on the 50-year history of the KOC translated in English and distributed around the world. He had determined that there were no materials available introducing and promoting the KSC and KOC overseas. He was dedicated enough to the project to translate the English version himself. The other achievement was the 2000 opening of a sports museum at the Mugyo Gymnasium site in Seoul. This may have been inspired by Kim’s previous experience joining forces with Juan Antonio Samaranch to open an IOC museum in May 1994 for the IOC’s hundredth anniversary.

Special Contribution – former KSC Secretary General Bae Soon-hak



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