



Skovsangervej 43
8382 Hinnerup

To the President
Kukkiwon World Taekwondo Headquarter

Open Letter

Denmark, December 14th 2015

Dear Sir

It is with some reflection that we have decided to share my feedback regarding my participation in the Kukkiwon Examiner's Seminar in Vienna with you. I find it necessary to share my observations as I believe there are certain areas of improvement at least taking the European culture as a whole into consideration.

Overall opinion

In our opinion the overall planning process and execution of the Examiner Course in Vienna was disappointing as no or very poor information was received prior to the course. Also the execution of the course itself was seemed very unorganized without a clear link between the purpose and the execution.

Based on a constructive approach I have summarized my findings leading to my overall opinion as follows:

Preparation

- Even though the seminar was announced 3 months prior to the seminar itself the organizers did not arrange catering during the seminar or accommodation. Further, according to ETU's webpage it was announced that a detailed agenda would be available on August 12. As this was not the case we sent several email inquiries to the ETU and the Kukkiwon regarding this, however, we did not receive any response.
- The approval of participation was received approx. 1½ week in advance of the seminar. However, we had to purchase non-refundable flight tickets and arrange hotel in advance to reduce our own personal cost and thereby taken on a considerable financial risk.
- The communication regarding the registration and commence of the course on November 13 was changed several time i.e. initially at 9 a.m., then 12 pm. and finally 11 a.m.
- We had asked for detailed information as to the agenda by mail several times in order to plan and pack appropriately. However, no agenda was received until November 12. This was subsequent to the time we had to leave for our flight to Vienna.

The Seminar

- The registration was conducted at another place (hotel) than where the seminar was conducted. This appears inefficient and cumbersome as to organization, transportation etc.
- Registration appeared chaotic and inefficient with three different lines all with extreme waiting time. The first line was for payment, another line for the registration itself and a final line for registering personal information on a computer. This information had been sent beforehand together with the application for participation (address, email address etc.). The average registration time was 2 – 2½ hours

Day 1

- Line-up – we spend approx. 1 hour for lineup with a lot of confusion as to rows and columns, Classes etc. We ended up somewhat mixed and the timetable was already behind schedule
- We spend an hour or more on basic stances with no explanation as to the thinking and relevance for Dan Examiners who are holders of 4. Dan to 8. Dan.
- The remaining part of the training was basic techniques demonstrated by an older Kukkiwon instructor. Great respect for being able to practice taekwondo at the age of 70+ years, however, if the intention was being a role model and demonstrating the taekwondo skills to be evaluated by Dan examiners it leaves a great deal behind.
- Auditorium/Theatre - the evening session was about Regulations and Rule for Test. The presentation was conducted in Korean using pdf-files with Korean writing as well focusing on general stuff. Information was translated in poor English and German with poor sound/acoustics. Why did the presenter not use extracts of English version and focused on the parts being relevant for the promotion tests?

Day 2

- Line-up – again we spend approx. 1 hour for line-up with a lot of confusion as to rows and columns, Classes etc.
- We spend several hours on basic techniques and a lot of time on exercising Poomsae (color belt) - would have assumed that this was part of the basic skill-set for 4. Dan - 8. Dan practitioners.
- Auditorium/Theatre - the afternoon and evening sessions was planned to address Scoring Method of Promotion Test and Theory of Promotion Test. Apparently, these presentations included a substantial part of meditation, how instructors ran their business (and the level of income they made) rather than sticking to the agenda. Information was translated in poor English and German - poor sound/acoustics. Why did the presenter not use extracts of English version and focused on the parts being relevant for the promotion tests?

Day 3

- Line-up – again we spend approx. 3/4 hour for line-up with subsequent identity verification and changing of positions in groups of 5.
- Training of Poomsae (black belts) was conducted during the morning as a self-training exercise in groups of 5 prior to the afternoon test - no guidance or instructions were given. The morning training concluded with a rehearsal where the poomsaes was demonstrated as preparation to the afternoon test.
- Lunch break was surprisingly extended on day 3 as Master Park Soo Nam concluded that one hour was insufficient as no catering was available on site and there was at least 15 min. to the nearest catering option in walking distance. Consequently, the time schedule was delayed once again.
- After lunch we lined up once again and wasting time just to go to the auditorium for the written test. However, just to return to the main area again to conduct the written test. Imaging the time spend moving 150 participants forth and back several times during the course.
- The written test was not in a straight forward English but was rather difficult to understand due to the translation. Further, the test contained an error in one of the questions. Kukkiwon instructors were very focused on a fair test process and in strong language threaten everyone not to cheat as you would be dismissed if discovered. However, the answers of all questions were copied and used by the Austrian participants. This was informed to the instructors, however, no one paid attention and no action was taken. How is this fair to everyone else?
- Subsequent to the written test there was a warm-up before the demonstration of Poomsae. However, this was stopped and we were ordered back to the auditorium just to wait for 1½-2 hours while the Jump Dan examination was conducted.

- The examination was conducted and the timetable was yet again delayed. Whether this caused the closing ceremony to be concluded in a few minutes and certificates just to be handed out in random by a local instructor shall remain unexplained. However, this was a rather disappointing conclusion of a 3 day seminar.

Reflection

- We paid EUR 150,- in registration fee per participant - received no catering during the seminar (water, fruit and meals) or accommodation. We find it difficult to understand what kind of expenses the registration fee was intended to cover as we assume that rental cost for the training facilities does not add up to EUR 20,000+ for 2½ days. It would be interesting to have access to the final settlement.
- Furthermore, we paid USD 250,- for license fee per participant. In total this adds up to USD 37,500. Again, it would be interesting to understand what kind of cost this should cover as the Kukkiwon is defined as a non-profit organization.
- The seminar in general lacked structure and a common thread as to the theme "Examiner Seminar"
- We are surprised that presentations and especially pdf-files used were in Korean language when being in Europe
- It leaves the impression that the meaning of the word "respect" is a one way thing - from participants to instructors/organizer and not vice versa.

Our overall conclusion states a disappointing impression of the Kukkiwon not seen before. We are surprised that the Kukkiwon with the intention of increasing the level of quality and supporting a new examiner structure is not able to arrange, organize or conduct courses like this with experienced taekwondo Grand Masters and Masters.

With reference to the numerous other posts on the social media we understand that it is not only us that have had a disappointing experience. This makes it even more miserable and hopefully the Kukkiwon is willing to listen and learn.

Best regards

On behalf of the Danish delegation

Momme Knutzen

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