

USA Brings Home Gold and More

Emiljun Rapada
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Team USA receives awards at international martial arts tournament.

Gapyeong, South Korea – The 7-member team of Tong-Il Moo-Do (TIMD) USA brought home 3 gold medals with trophies, 6 silver medals and 3 bronze medals from the recently concluded 8th World Peace Cup Tournament in South Korea, held February 13-17, 2016. The event was sponsored by the World Tong-Il Moo-Do Federation and Martial Arts Federation for World Peace in commemoration of True Parents' joint birthday celebration on February 13.

Vision and History of the Tournament

The World Peace Cup Tournament was initiated by True Father, a Grandmaster in his own right, in order to promote peace and cultivate the spirit of young people through the practice of martial arts. The first tournament was held on October 9-10, 2008 at the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, USA. Since its inception, thousands of practitioners from different styles and traditions around the world have come together in friendly competition and education centering on the philosophy of Tong-Il Moo-Do (The Way of the Unified Martial Arts).

Tong-Il Moo-Do philosophy encompasses topics like Introduction to Martial Arts, Unification Principle, Family Values Education, Character-based Education and many others designed to help the practitioner become a person of mature character, establish a happy and healthy family, experience the ethical and loving relationships that result from family life, and use his or her creative abilities to make a positive contribution to society. In 2008, True Father gave this very important calligraphy to TIMD practitioners as a guiding principle: “The Way of Loyalty and Filial Piety is the Foundation of All Victories,” which is a theme very much alive in TIMD practice to this day.

Tournament Highlights

The event was segmented into different programs starting with the joint birthday celebration of True Parents on February 13 and followed by the International Instructors' Technical Seminar on February 14. Then Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, Chairman of the World TIMD Federation, gathered Martial Arts Founders, Grandmasters, including TIMD Continental and National Leaders, and all international participants to a Special Assembly showcasing the vision and the long history of TIMD. On February 16, preliminary tournaments in different competition categories went full circle, highlighting the team form competition, which is the most anticipated segment of the event.

On the final day, February 17, the Martial Arts Festival offered a spectacular display of skill, technique and creativity from different schools of martial arts worldwide. One of the special guests was the Honorable Mohamed Gello, Ambassador of Kenya to Seoul, whose government, through the Ministry of Sports, Culture and Arts, financially supported 20 Kenyan players to attend the event. Grandmaster Fabio Perez, who founded Academia Hisao Lee de Artes Marciales, the biggest and most influential martial arts schools in Panama, also gave a moving testimony. Later in the day, the championship rounds commenced, ending with a very enthusiastic closing and awards ceremony. As everyone formed a huge circle holding each other's hands, "Urie So Wonun Tongil" (or the "Song of Unity") was sung, followed by four cheers of victory for the glory of Heavenly Parent and True Parents.

Competition Results

The USA team consisted of 5 men and 2 women, who competed in various categories, particularly in form and sparring competitions. Master Vincent Belmonte (TIMD Black Belt 5th Degree), VP on Technical and the head of the delegation, got 1 gold medal and a trophy in free sparring and 2 bronze medals in the open and standard form competitions, respectively. Ms. Ayano Kaneko (TIMD Black Belt) also defeated all her competitors in free sparring, giving her the gold medal and a trophy; she earned another bronze medal in free sparring from a different weight division. Ms. Janina Cernova-Shinozaki (TIMD Black Belt 1st Degree) won the gold medal and a trophy in free sparring as well.

Other competitors who earned medals include Mr. Emiljun Rapada (TIMD Black Belt 3rd Degree), who received a silver medal in free sparring and another silver medal in open form competition, and Mel Colin Pacopia (TIMD Black Belt), who garnered 2 silver medals in the free sparring and standard form competitions. Zachary Beebe (Jiu Jitsu Blue Belt) landed 2nd place with a silver medal in free sparring. Sueo Toh (Black Belt 1st Degree), the most senior participant, ranked 1st place in the open and standard form competition. For the complete competition results, check out our webpage dedicated to coverage of the recent tournament.

Team USA Heads Home

Some members of the TIMD USA team shared their testimonies at the conclusion of the tournament:

"The experience of an international tournament and training was really amazing. It did not feel like we've known each other for only a few days—I felt like I've known everyone I met here for many years. Even though we're coming from different places and cultures, the atmosphere is like one big family enjoying everyone's presence, free from judgment."

– Zachary Beebe

"Got exposed to many cultures and forms of martial arts. Made friends from dojos around the world. The staff did a good job of taking care of the needs of the participants. I just wish I had competed in more categories."

– Ayano Kaneko

Back in the United States, there are seven active TIMD chapters located in New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and California. Other areas like Chicago and Nevada are clamoring to open local chapters but the main challenge they face is how to bring instructors to come and teach the art and philosophies of TIMD. In New Jersey, the plan to open a commercial gym has been approved.

Some upcoming activities for 2016 include the Martial Arts Bootcamp in May, the 11th Youth Peace Cup Tournament in June, National Instructors' Training and Promotion in August and the National Black Belt Conference in October. Other international competitions are also scheduled such as TIMD World Open Tournament in Mombasa, Kenya in August 2016 and the 9th World Peace Cup Tournament in Brazil in 2017. To participate or find out more, please contact Master Shota Iwasaki, TIMD USA President, or check out the TIMD website: <http://www.tongilmoodo.com/>.

TIMD Team USA would like to thank all those who donated and contributed to our tournament funds, especially Master Steve Kearny, KODAN through its president, Rev. Hiroshi Inose, and all those who gave contributions online. We would also like to give our sincerest gratitude to the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification through North American Continental Chairman Dr. Ki Hoon Kim and National President Dr. Michael Balcomb for their support and encouragement. Most of all, we give thanks to our Heavenly Parent, True Parents and our families for their love and blessings.