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Contact for more information, word document or high resolution photos:  
**Natalie Colavecchia, WFC Manager, Meetings & Communications**  
Tel: 416-484 9978 E-mail: [ncolavecchia@wfc.org](mailto:ncolavecchia@wfc.org)

### **Prosecutions in South Korea – Appeal for Support and Donations.**

*This is a special news release and report on the prosecution of chiropractors in South Korea, and an appeal to all chiropractors and chiropractic organizations to donate funds as you are able to the Korean Chiropractic Association (KCA), the World Federation of Chiropractic's member association in South Korea.*

*Here is background information and the current situation. KCA President, Dr. Taeg Su Choi is appealing a recent conviction and 5 other KCA members are facing prosecutions.*

**Background.** In South Korea chiropractors, and other health professionals not recognized by law such as acupuncturists, face two major opponents. The first is the Korean Medical Association (KMA) representing the medical profession. The second is the Oriental Medical Doctors' Association (OMDA) who represent a large and powerful group of regulated OMDs who provide chuna (manipulation techniques – taught with translated versions of chiropractic text books), herbal remedies and acupuncture.

The KMA and the OMDA have been reporting chiropractors to the police, thus leading to multiple prosecutions against chiropractors, since the first Korean chiropractor Dr. Yong Serb Song returned from Palmer College in the early 1990s. Dr. Song, the first President and founder of the KCA, was convicted three times before he passed away in 2001. His son and daughter, Dr. Joonn-Han (Steven) Song and Dr. Su-Hie (Katrina) Song, are also Palmer graduates and have also faced prosecutions.

Over the years many chiropractors, most prominently anyone brave enough to become part of the KCA, have faced prosecutions and convictions. Several have had second and third convictions and not only large fines but suspended prison sentences, forcing them to leave their homes and country for new lives in Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, the USA and elsewhere.

Some convicted chiropractors, including Dr. Katrina Song, have appealed to the Constitutional Court. Their argument has been that Koreans have a constitutional right to choose and receive natural forms of healthcare that relieve pain and suffering, and chiropractors have a constitutional right to offer their services. The current medical law is too wide and unconstitutional in restricting those rights.

In early cases the panel of nine judges all supported the medical law. When Dr. Katrina Song appealed in 2001 two of nine judges found in her favour, and all said that the government should be reviewing the situation. However facing the threat of a one year suspended term of imprisonment Dr. Song had to abandon chiropractic practice.

Each year the Constitutional Court has become more supportive as brave KCA leaders and others have continued in practice, faced prosecution and conviction, and then appealed. A majority of six of nine judges is required for success. Acupuncturists have also continued

fighting appeals. In an acupuncture appeal last July the Constitutional Court had five of nine judges ruling the medical law was unconstitutional – one short of victory.

**Current Situation.** The current President of the KCA is Dr. Taeg Su Choi, a 1998 graduate of Life Chiropractic College who practices in Changwon City in South Korea. He has been KCA President since December 2003 and has been an inspirational leader. Working with Congressman Kim he arranged KCA/WFC symposia at the Korean National Assembly in Seoul in 2005, 2006 and 2007. He has written policy documents on chiropractic for legislators and an impressive book on chiropractic for the general public titled *No Surgery, No Drugs, Chiropractic Medicine*.

Dr. Choi has faced five prosecutions since 2004 – in other words since becoming KCA President. The most recent began on a complaint from the OMDA. He was convicted and fined \$3,000. On legal advice he appealed to both the Constitutional Court and within the general court system. In the general court appeal he received probation.



KCA President, Dr. Taeg Su Choi at his local police station during the current prosecution.

Dr. Choi has now launched a further appeal in the general court system and is waiting for hearings there and in the Constitutional Court.

These important appeals are naturally supported and made on behalf of the KCA. The legal team of three lawyers is led by Taewon Park, a leading lawyer in the field who has won many cases relative to massage therapy and acupuncture. He was involved in the acupuncture appeal before the constitutional court last year.

Another current conviction and appeal relates to Dr. Junyong Ahn, a 2006 Palmer College graduate who has practiced in the capital Seoul for the past 5 years. In the Lower Court he was convicted and fined US\$5,000. His case is now on appeal before the Supreme Court.

“Last months formal chiropractic clinics were investigated by local health officers and one new prosecution has begun”, reports Dr. Taeg Su Choi. “This is from complaints from the KMA and OMDA which continue to try to get rid of the chiropractic profession in South Korea”.



KCA lawyer, Mr. Taewon Park addresses the KCA at a recent membership meeting.

The KCA, which once had approximately 60 members, is currently reduced to 17 members because of the hostile environment to chiropractic practice in Korea. Most of these 17 already have at least one conviction. The WFC, which will itself be making a donation, asks you to be generous in supporting the KCA at this pivotal time for the survival and success of the chiropractic profession in South Korea.