

**PAN-AMERICAN GOJU RYU KARATEDO  
SEIWAKAI NEWSLETTER**

全米剛柔流空手道  
誠和会社内報

**Dedicated to Traditional Goju Ryu Karatedo  
Issue 54: May/June 2022**

All issues of the Pan-American Seiwa Kai Newsletter can be found online at:  
<http://www.greatlakesseiwakai.com/usa-seiwa-kai-newsletters.html>

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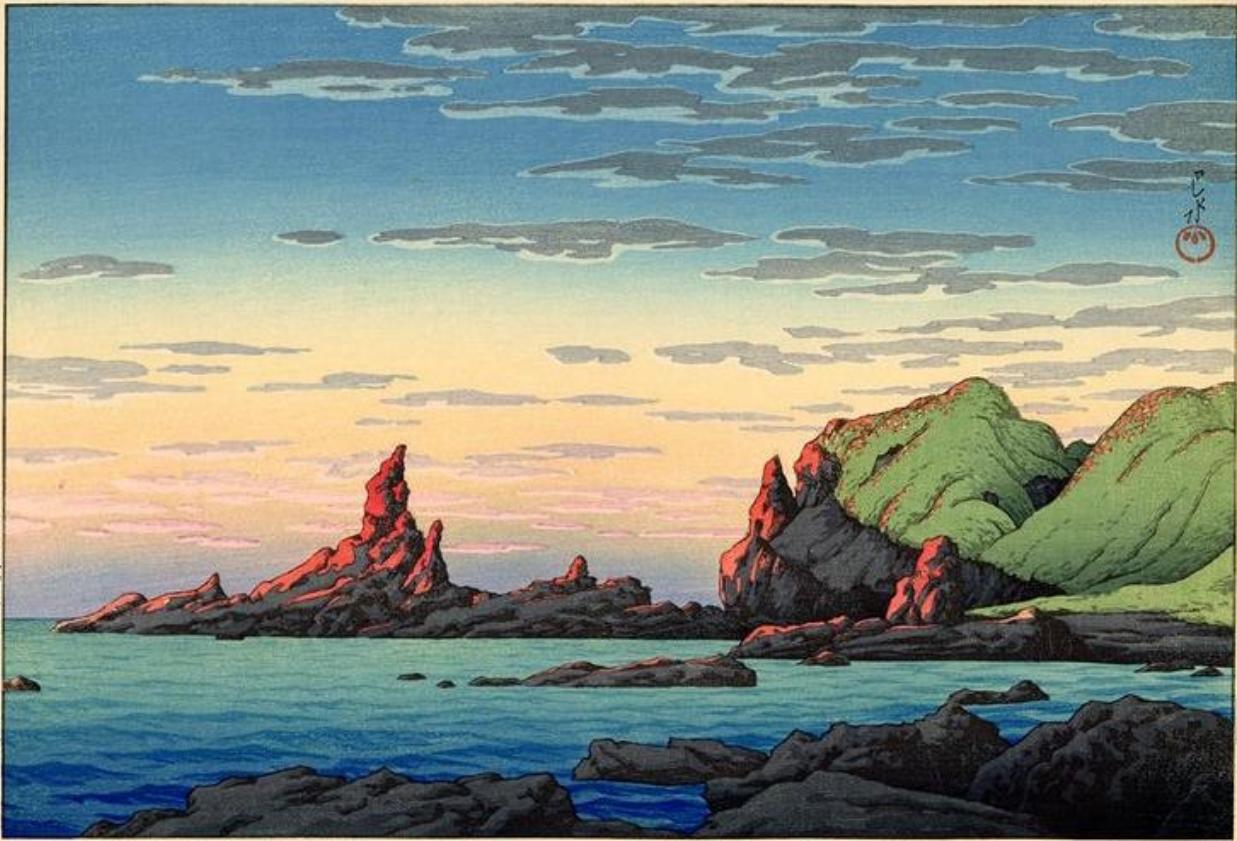
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**Newsletter Editor:**  
**Mark Cramer**



## Kawase Hasui: *Ryuga Island, Oga Peninsula*

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## Lifting Each Other Up

by Crystal Villagran



I'm not sure who coined the phrase "Go where you're celebrated – not tolerated," but I can tell you that we only have a finite amount of time on this earth, so I know I prefer to spend it with people who challenge me to be better and always lift me up.

The dojo is a place where I can be surrounded by those that inspire, hold me accountable, and lift me up. There are those days when I'm feeling exhausted, distracted, or overstimulated. I can always count on my karate peers to push me in the right direction. What may have begun as a difficult day, results in an exhilarating, accomplished, and fulfilled day

because I have chosen to surround myself with those that push me to remain on my positive path.

Shihan Vassie's focus is to challenge students. But it is also to celebrate every achievement, both big and small. This mindset trickles down to the instructors and students. This makes the energy at the dojo energetic, and exciting. It feels more like training with family, than doing just another workout.

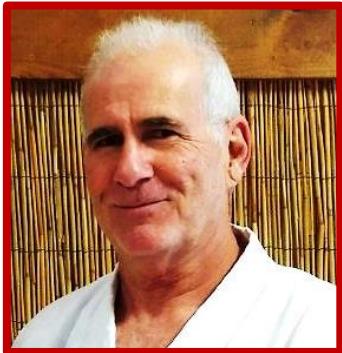
At the dojo, I know I am going to be pushed to be a better version of myself. Along the way, I will most certainly take some time to celebrate myself and my achievements. It feels all the sweeter when I celebrate with those who encourage my success.

Life is too short to be around negativity. Let's inspire others. You see, the dojo is more than just a place to work out. It's a community where we lift each other up.



## **A Changing of the Guard**

### **From Jim Pounds**



It has been my honor to serve as the President of USA Seiwakai for the past three and a half years and I am proud of our accomplishments, including:

- Creating a strong, functional, and ongoing Board of Directors
- Achieving our new 501c3 non-profit corporate status
- Developing the Seiwakai Instructors' Series
- Establishing the USA Seiwakai Women's Advisory Board Subcommittee
- Establishing a vibrant marketing Subcommittee

My intention as President has always been to help establish an organization that can grow and thrive over time, incorporating new leadership and ideas, rather than the typical karate organization with one person at the top forever. I think we have established this and I feel confident that USA Seiwakai is in good hands moving forward.

Due to personal time constraints, I have tendered my resignation in order to spend more time on my own dojo and real estate business. I remain a committed member of this organization and stand ready to advise or help out when and where I am needed.

I congratulate Mark Cramer Shihan as the new President and Robert Dalessio Shihan as the incoming Vice-President. I have absolutely no doubt they, and the entire Board of Directors, will represent all of us to the best of their talents and abilities.

I'm excited for our future! So long as we pull together, we will be the preeminent traditional karate organization in the USA.

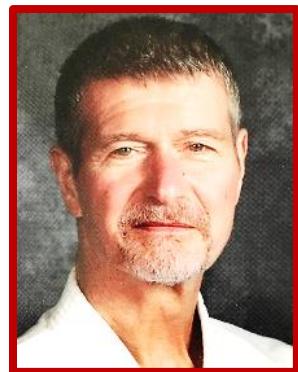
Thank you for your support and trust in me.

Sincerely,  
James Pounds  
Seiwakai of Texas

### **From Mark Cramer**

I would like to thank Jim Pounds Shihan for all that was accomplished during his tenure as President of Seiwakai USA. His leadership, energy, and insight got us to where we are today as a strong and healthy non-profit organization.

Speaking on behalf of the other officers and board members, we are all looking forward to working with our Seiwakai USA family. Furthermore, we intend to continue the momentum and expand upon the progress that Jim Shihan's leadership has provided to all members of Seiwakai USA.



Sincerely,  
Mark Cramer  
President Seiwakai USA

## Traditional Karate-Do Verses McDojo Martial Arts

I was recently asked: “Who are your biggest competitors in karate?” After first reflecting on this question, I discussed it with some of my friends in both Goju Ryu and Shotokan – the two most prevalent styles of traditional karate in this area of Ohio and Michigan. I don’t view Shotokan as my competition, and the Shotokan instructors don’t view Goju Ryu as their competition.



We both teach traditional Japanese karate-do. If a student decides to train in a Shotokan dojo in this area, they will receive the same high-quality instruction that they would receive in one of our Goju Ryu Seiwakai dojos. As far as I’m concerned, a student benefits with either style they chose because we both focus on the same goal – developing each student’s potential.

There was a consensus among us that our competition is the McDojo. Their focus is not on developing student potential; their focus is on making money. McDojos are businesses first and foremost, and a quick internet search sheds light on their monetary motivation: “*The \$4 billion Martial arts industry is indeed a large industry. Presently, it is estimated that millions of people are enrolled in martial arts schools and thousands are joining classes every day hence it will be a wise decision to start a martial art school to leverage on this growing industry. You can start one by buying the franchise of a martial arts school.*” This website goes on to list some of the lucrative franchises in the martial arts “industry” and their respective fees.

\$4 billion Martial arts industry is indeed a large industry. Presently, it is estimated that millions of people are enrolled in martial arts schools and thousands are joining classes every day hence it will be a wise decision to start a martial art school to leverage on this growing industry. You can start one by buying the franchise of a martial arts school.” This website goes on to list some of the lucrative franchises in the martial arts “industry” and their respective fees.

However, it is important to note that completely absent from this site’s discussion about purchasing a karate franchise is any mention of the karate skills and qualifications that are needed to properly instruct students and to fully develop their potential. This is obviously a case of putting profits ahead of proper instruction.

In order to maximize their profits, McDojos pressure their customers to sign long-term contracts where they must continue to pay even if they fall upon economic hard times, or their child loses interest. Additionally, some of these McDojos offer an “accelerated black belt class” where, for a hefty additional fee, you can get a black belt in as little as 18 months. It doesn’t seem to matter how little is learned by the customer as long as the contract is paid off.

Unfortunately, a McDojo’s ability to compete with traditional karate stems from the public’s lack of knowledge about the martial arts which frequently causes a prospective karate student to become a McDojo customer. The majority of people who are interested in taking karate have little knowledge about the differences between traditional karate and McDojo Martial Arts. In deciding where to begin their training or their child’s training, people seldomly research the type of karate they’re considering and instead are influenced by the advertising that is paid for by these businesses. It is lamentable that there’s not an easy way to educate the public of the differences between a McDojo and traditional karate to prevent their loss of money and time.

Without a doubt, traditional karate dojos charge tuition, but by contrast they usually do not require long-term contracts. Most importantly, they put student development above monetary gain. This

type of teaching goes beyond instructing students only in proper karate technique; it includes developing the whole person. In traditional karate, there is an old adage stating that instructors should “polish the whole person not just their technique.”

Furthermore, traditional karate instructors tend to be thoroughly educated in an internationally recognized style and affiliated with an internationally respected organization. This is something which is seldomly in the credentials of a McDojo. To be a Sensei in a traditional karate dojo, instructors must hold at least a Sandan (3<sup>rd</sup> Black Belt) ensuring that they have been training for a minimum of 9 years. Additionally, they have seen their senior instructors model the type of teaching that includes both instruction in proper technique and in the polishing of the person.

An interesting anecdote illuminates some of these points. Great Lakes Seiwakai performed an annual domo at the Bedford Trade Fair for 17 consecutive years. In one of the first years of these domos, we were scheduled to perform our demo immediately before a local McDojo was scheduled to perform theirs. First, we briefly explained traditional karate’s philosophy and goals, then we demonstrated several Goju Ryu kata and their corresponding bunkai. Finally, we demonstrated several matches of spirited kumite. After watching the Great Lakes Seiwakai demo and seeing the audience’s reaction to it, the McDojo declined to perform their scheduled demo.

After that year, this McDojo insisted that their demo be scheduled on a different day than the Great Lakes Seiwakai demo. They even attempted to have us barred from future Bedford Trade Fairs because we weren’t a member of the Bedford Business Association, and they were. However, their efforts to eliminate us as their competition failed since we are part of the Bedford Public Schools Community Education Program, and the trade fair’s venue is at the school district’s high school.



Great Lakes Seiwakai Demonstrating Kata Bunkai

The only logical conclusion that can be drawn is that the McDojo cancelled their demo, demanded a change in future scheduling, and attempted to bar us from future events because they didn’t want the audience to directly compare their McDojo Martial Arts to Traditional Karate-Do. They were afraid of being upstaged by traditional karate and losing prospective customers.

Losing customers is the worst nightmare in “the \$4 billion martial arts industry.”

## **Seiwakai Humor**

There were two old karate buddies who continued to compete in tournaments well past their prime. One day after another competition, they were talking and wondering if there is karate in heaven. So, they made a pact. They vowed that whoever passed away first would come back and let the other know.

About a week later one of the old karate buddies passed away. About a month after that, the surviving old karate-ka was at yet another competition. Suddenly he saw an apparition. Miraculously, it was his old buddy who had come back to visit him.

"Please tell me, are there karate competitions in heaven?" asked the surviving karate-ka.

"I have good news and bad news for you" replied the apparition to his old karate buddy. "The good news is that, yes, there are karate competitions in heaven. The bad news is you're competing next Saturday."



**There are 186 hours in every week.**

**If you practice karate 3 hours per week, you are practicing less than 2% of the week.**

**Saying "I don't have time to train" is the equivalent of saying "The dog ate my homework."**

**No one's going to believe it.**

**Stop making excuses!**

**Go to the dojo and train!**

## Two Monks and a Young Woman – A Zen Parable



A senior monk and a junior monk were traveling together when they came to a swift moving river. The monks were preparing to cross the river, when they saw a young and beautiful woman who was also attempting to cross. The young woman asked the monks if they could help her cross to the other side.

The monks had taken vows not to touch a woman, and they quickly glanced at each other. Then, without a word, the older monk picked up the woman, carried her across the river, placed her gently on the other side, and then continued on his journey.

The younger monk couldn't believe what had just happened and was speechless.

An hour passed without a word between them. Two more hours passed, then three, and finally the younger monk could contain himself no longer. He blurted out: "As monks, we are not permitted to touch a woman. How could you carry that woman on your back?"

The older monk looked at younger monk and replied, "I set her down on the other side of the river, why are you still carrying her?"

*Back in 1972, the Senpai in my university karate club told us this Zen parable. Fifty years later, I still, from time to time, recall its simple message.*

*Too often do we carry the weight of past as we journey through life. The burden that we carry causes unpleasant thoughts and emotions. We can choose to leave these unpleasant memories behind us and concentrate on the present moment making our journey less burdensome.*

## **British Columbia Provincial Championships**

### **From Fred Lee Goshukan Canada**

UBC Goju Ryu Karate's first appearance at the Karate BC Provincial Championships. So nice to see everyone in person again.



## Seiwakai Around the Globe



### Goju Ryu Karatedo Seiwakai International

**Seiichi Fujiwara**



**President**

**Satoru Takahashi**



**Vice President**

**Vassie Naidoo**



**Vice President**

**Ben Mare**



**Director  
Africa**

**Gurmit Singh**



**Director  
Europe**

**Abel Figueiredo**



**Director  
Europe**

**Glenn Stephenson**



**Director  
Oceania**

**Craig Vokey**



**Director  
Pan America**

**Eddie Liu**



**Director  
Asia**

*“Lead them by political maneuvers, restrain them with punishments: the people will become cunning and shameless. Lead them by virtue, restrain them with ritual: they will develop a sense of shame and a sense of participation.” Confucius 孔子 (Koshi)*

# 2022 Seiwakai International Seminar and Shinsa



**From Fujiwara Hanshi**

To all overseas Seiwakai members

I think everyone is doing well and devoting themselves to practicing karate. We would like to inform you that the schedule has been decided as follows. It's been two years since the event, so, I'm looking forward to resuming it.

## **2022 Seiwakai Overseas Seminar**

**Dates:** July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 8<sup>th</sup>

**Times:** 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM (including lunch break)

**Venue:** Omagari Daikyoku Budokan

## **July 9<sup>th</sup> Free Day and Seiwakai Party at 5 PM**

**Dates:** July 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>

**Times:** 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM (including lunch break)

**Venue:** Kamioka Gymnasium (due to national elections)

**Date:** July 12th

**Time:** Training – 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

## **2022 Seiwakai Shinsa**

**Time:** 1 PM to 3 PM

**Venue:** Daikyoku Budokan, Omagari, Japan

**Date:** July 13 Travel Day to Tokyo

## 2022 JKF Goju Kai Overseas Seminar, Shinsa, and Competition



**Overseas Seminar:** July 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup>

**Registration:** July 14<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 8:00 AM

**Venue:** Zenkuren Kaikan, Tokyo

**Date:** July 14<sup>th</sup>

**Time:** 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM (with lunch break)

**Date:** July 15th

**Venue:** Zenkuren Kaikan, Tokyo

**Time:** 9:00 AM to 12:00

**Shinsa:** 1st to 5th dan and 6th to 8th dan

**Times:** announced the day before

**Venue:** Yokohame Budokan, Kanagawa Prefecture (venue is subject to change)

**There will not be a JKF Goju Kai Party this year.**



## 2022 JKF Gojukai National Karatedo Championships

**Dates:** July 16-17, 2022

**Time:** Competition begins at 9:00 AM

**Venue:** Budokan Yokoyama, Japan

## **United Kingdom Karate-do Goju Kai Annual Tournament (2022) From Gurmit Singh**

I arrived back in UK (after 5 months in Asia) to attend the annual UKKGK tournament held last Saturday in Slough. Congratulations to Amrit Ghatore for a hugely success event attended by over 480 competitors. This is exactly the impact we need now after 2 years of covid-19 lockdown and restrictions.



United Kingdom Karate-do Goju Kai (2022) Annual Tournament from Gurmit Singh