

**PAN-AMERICAN GOJU RYU KARATEDO  
SEIWA KAI NEWSLETTER**

**全米剛柔流空手道  
誠和会社内報**

**Dedicated to Traditional Goju Ryu Karatedo  
ISSUE 24: May/June 2017**

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

Send submissions to the USA Seiwa Kai Newsletter to  
[greatlakesseiwakai@gmail.com](mailto:greatlakesseiwakai@gmail.com)



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Hasui Kawase – Nara Nigatsudo

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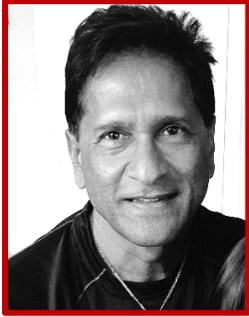
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# Shuji Tasaki: Intense and Dedicated to Teaching

## By Vassie Naidoo



A few years ago, I was teaching a seminar in the Great Lakes region. After I had been picked up at the airport, I was asked a question about Tasaki Sensei. My host said “I was told by Seiwa Kai Canada’s most senior member that he would tremble whenever Tasaki Hanshi would come near him. Was this reaction typical to the presence of Tasaki Hanshi?” My immediate reaction was “No! They didn’t tremble; they shit themselves.” He was such an intense and dedicated teacher, that he instilled fear and commanded respect from all who had contact with him.

Describing Tasaki Hanshi in this manner reminded me of something that happened at a Seiwa Kai Seminar in Mexico during November of 2010. Tasaki Hanshi was terminally ill, yet he still retained his intensity and his dedication to his students’ progress on the Seiwa Kai path.

I was at the airport to greet Tasaki Hanshi, and when I saw him sitting in a wheelchair. I was shocked. He looked so ill with cancer that I never thought that he would never be able to make it out of Mexico alive. However, he took an active role in teaching at the seminar even if he was confined to his wheelchair.

At one point, Tasaki Hanshi spotted someone across the room who was not properly performing technique. He was very hard on his students when it came to things like this because he genuinely cared for his students and wanted them to reach their greatest potential. I watched as Tasaki Hanshi wheeled his chair across the room to the offending student, got up out of his chair, and kicked him.

I was shocked. I didn’t think that Tasaki Hanshi could possibly have the strength to perform such a feat, but I realized that Tasaki Hanshi’s inner-strength and dedication to teaching had propelled him across the floor to correct that student.

I am certain that it was this same inner strength that brought Tasaki Hanshi to Mexico that November. Most humans would never have considered making such a trip, but Tasaki Sensei was so enthusiastic about spreading the Seiwa Kai Way and teaching in Mexico that his inner strength kept him going until the seminar was finished.

That was in November of 2010. He passed away two months later.

Below: Tasaki Sensei with Jim Pounds Sensei in 2010



# **Pan American Seiwa Kai Hombu Dojo Ravaged by Fire**

**By Mallica Cooper**



Our dojo has been up and running at this location for about 18 years. It's provided support and training for many individuals in their life's journey: for some, just passing through, for families that are in desperate need for their children to be guided through challenges and develop qualities where they are able to grow and value their own self-worth or just have a safe place where they feel welcomed and accepted, for many, it's been a place where they gain confidence and find happiness.

Our dojo has provided an environment where people can escape their daily hardships and/or the challenges of life's circumstance. Some pass through, as needed. Others take a break, then return, and some just simply never leave.

Growing up, I've watched my dad invest in people, more than he's ever invested in business... I've learned so much from him and hope to restore this place, which has provided so much for many people.

Our dojo is much greater than just a karate studio... we are family to EVERYONE who has ever walked in. We continue to strive to be exactly this, regardless of the hurdles.

## They Came to Train and Their Dojo was Gone

By Jim Pounds



As you now know, recently there was a fire at our USA Hombu Dojo in Santa Monica, caused by an electrical failure. The dojo also has an apartment where Vassie Shihan lives. Fortunately, most of the damage was confined to the back hall, student bathroom, and storage area, but there was also substantial smoke and water damage. Shihan also lost his classic red Mercedes (his second car) which he has been generous to loan visitors many times.

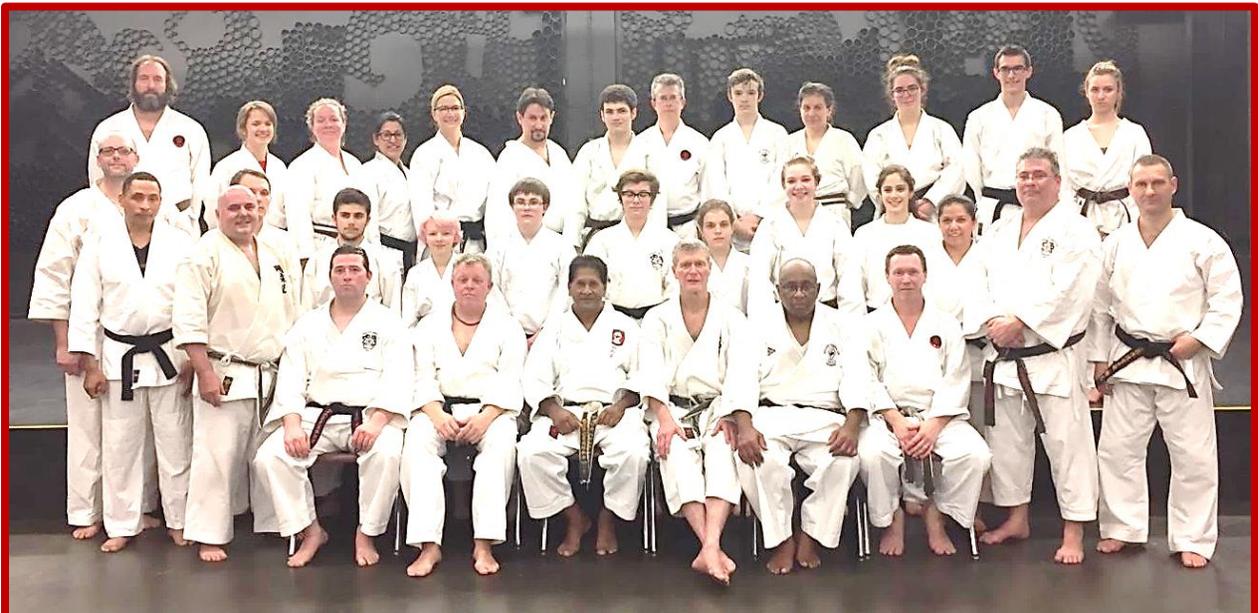
He had insurance, but coverage is less than actual damage.

I am asking for contributions to help him defray his out of pocket expenses. Any amount will help. Make checks to either KICK (Karate for Inner City Kids) or to Vassie Naidoo. You may send them directly to:

Vassie Naidoo Shihan  
2202 Pico Blvd.  
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Thanks, in advance! Let's help a guy who has helped all of us in so many ways.

## Great Lakes Seiwa Kai Spring Gasshuku And Friendship Tournament



### Friday's Session at Toledo (Ohio) School for the Arts

Vassie Naidoo, Chief Instructor for Pan American Seiwa Kai, taught the ninety-two people from Ohio, Michigan, New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois who participated in this three-day event held on March 31<sup>st</sup>, April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> making this a very well represented regional Seminar.

Friday evening's session was held in Ohio at Toledo School for the Arts and attendance was limited to black belts, brown belts, and invited guests. Even with this limitation, thirty-three people were present. During this session, Vassie Shihan covered aspects of traditional Goju Ryu kumite as developed by Yamaguchi Sensei and perfected by Tasaki Sensei.

## Saturday at Bedford (Michigan) Douglas Road School



Saturday's seminar sessions were held in Michigan at Bedford's Douglas Road School, and was open to all students. The first session on Saturday was devoted to kihon, and our youngest karate students trained hard, learned their basics, and had fun punching and kicking their instructors.

During the following two sessions, Vassie Shihan covered Goju Ryu Kata. The details and subtleties of the kata and their applications were intricately explained by Vassie Shihan. We all came away with an enhanced knowledge of our style.

A special thankyou goes out to Kevin Moskie Sensei, Sean O'Leary Sensei, Dianna Martinez Sensei and all of their students for coming in from New York, Pennsylvania, and Illinois. Another special thankyou goes out to Randy Kopke Sensei and his students for joining in on the weekend of training and fun.

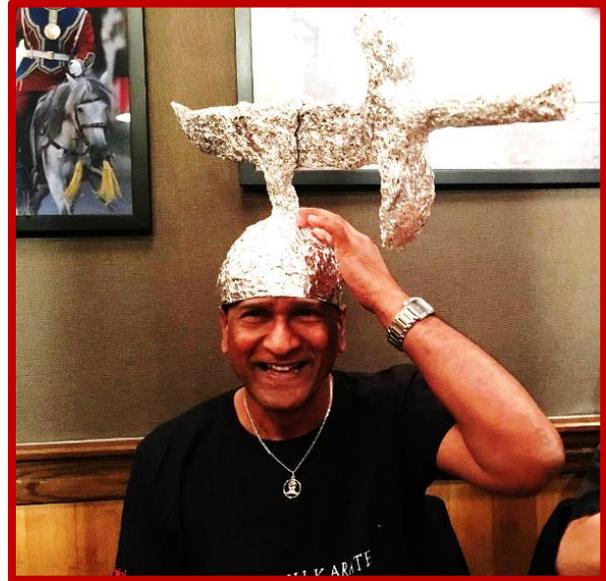
Saturday's seminar sessions were followed by a Shinsa and then a banquette.

## Saturday's Banquet



## ...And the Hat

We were expecting thirty-five attendees at the banquet, but this year's dinner party grew with fifty-five people in attendance. Fortunately, the restaurant was able to open a second room for us. Overflow fun was had by all. Additionally, as part of a continuing celebration of his birthday, Vassie Shihan sported his new Mongolian sword party hat.



## Sunday's Friendship Tournament



Seventy-two students of Goju Ryu Karatedo polished their skills and tested their spirits in the Great Lakes Seiwa Kai Friendship tournament.



## **Be Here Now**

### **By Jim Pounds**

I would argue that there is too much emphasis on grading these days. When so much emphasis is placed on advancing your rank, the focus of training becomes skewed. There is a tendency for both instructor and students to become myopic when focusing down upon the smallest detail, often at the expense of understanding a bigger picture – the beauty of the physical differences between practitioners and playing to the uniqueness of those differences to form a complete practitioner. The constant drive to make practitioners look and perform precisely the same to achieve a grading standard often results in machine-like sameness. Lost is an awareness that different bodies and personalities move and react differently, even while technically within the confines of a kata.

Because grading has become so rampant the tendency is to overemphasize the tiniest nuances of technique until much of the inherent flow of the kata has been lost in the never-ending quest to get it “right.” We must at times ask if right means right performance or karate that works? Performance and effectiveness must be mutually inclusive in karate, because the two traits enhance one another. But they must be in balance. Too much emphasis on karate being performance oriented (grading or competing) can adversely impact our understanding and effectiveness of karate self-defense. Conversely, too much emphasis on effective self-defense alone distills out the art and beauty of karate-do in favor of only karate-jutsu.

Depending on your need or preference, either performance or self-defense may stand alone but we lose something of the whole in the process. The martial arts practiced by Special Forces is beautifully effective but is hardly beautiful. It is nasty, quick, dirty, and brutish – as it needs to be. Conversely, martial arts practiced only to satisfy the requirements of performance are typically dramatic, one-dimensional, and overly concerned with minutiae rather than effectiveness. Many practitioners of Japanese karate feel this has become the fate of Korean Taekwondo because of the undo emphasis on tournament competition. Too much emphasis on doing things the one “correct” way to pass a grading has much the same effect.

It is rare to attend any training seminar these days in which a grading is not part of the event, typically on the afternoon of the last day. These seminars then become cram schools for those who come to grade, and because of that, those practitioners who came to train receive the cram school style of teaching – drill down, smaller focus, again and again. Forget about the big picture. I am reminded of the argument against standardized testing in public schools: “Are we teaching them to think or to pass tests?” Good question.

I admit that part of my bias is that I came from many years in a karate organization in which we hardly concerned ourselves about rank for two reasons:

First, once you were yudansha rank was so slow in coming that you almost quit expecting or even yearning for it. But you could bank on the fact that the rank you held could hold its own against a similar rank anywhere in the world. That's a lot more reassuring than the insecurity of wondering if you really deserve the rank you hold and if it stacks up to others. One of the worst insults in that organization was to hear, "Humm, maybe he was promoted too soon." Ouch! There are plenty of crappy black belts in the world. You don't want to be one of them!

Second, when you aren't overly concerned about advancing your rank you are free to focus on the creativity of your personal karate. I believe you become more creative and flow most naturally when you are working toward what really works for you individually. Constantly worrying about everything being "correct" to someone else's standard or body type tends to make you move like Frankenstein rather than Bruce Lee – concerned with correct rather than effect.

Let me disclaim that I'm NOT saying we don't need good basics. We absolutely do. I subscribe to the maxim that the best practitioners do the best basics. The way they flow by adapting those basics to their own physiology is where the rubber meets the road. As Robert Frost wrote: "I took the road less traveled by, and that made all the difference."

Last year I was invited to a training seminar by one of my old friends, a Shihan in another Goju-Ryu organization. There was no grading involved nor any real mention of rank other than to ask the attendees to line up in order of their grade level. You pretty much lined up where you thought you belonged and most attendees were pretty humble about it. None of the instructors or guests were addressed by titles – everyone was simply "Sensei". During the training, there was more emphasis on strong shin (spirit) to create effective karate rather than on an emphasis that everyone do it the same. Of course, technique and basics were covered, but spirit and flow were stressed. The result was a vibrant, powerful training seminar that pretty much made the ground tremble with energy. And you know what? Looking around, I saw that everyone was empowered by this discovery of their true power through training hard and not worrying as much about it being right. And it *was* right! With good models and lots of sweat, we'll figure out what works for ourselves. Even though karate starts with uniformity, it ends with an evolution of blending that uniformity with our personal physiology and temperament. Something powerful is created.

In summation, be proud of your rank. Learn what comes from being that level before thinking only of the next.

## Upcoming Events

**The USA Seiwa Kai Goju Ryu Karatedo Seminar  
With Fujiwara Shihan and Vassie Naidoo Shihan  
In Monica, California on November 10, 11, & 12  
Save These Dates!**



*Great Training and Great Fun*

# 2017 Northern California Okaigan Dojo Tournament

By Sanjit Mandal



Back row: Sanjit, Arnav

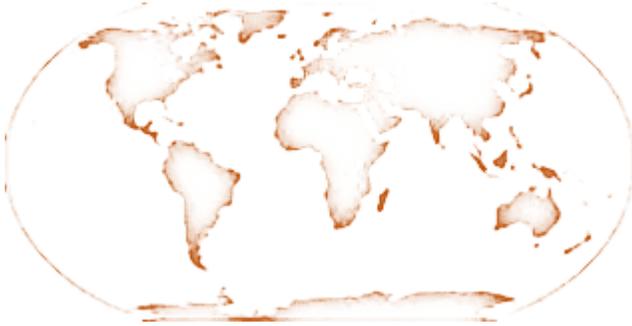
Front (L-R): Roshni, Daisy, Atishay, Neela, Sarina

Kata videos:

Neela: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ulnlA37DsJI>

Arnav: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJAktxUxT4M&t=4s>

## Seiwa Kai Around the Globe



## Seiwa Kai Goju Ryu Karatedo International Upcoming Events

### Seiwa Kai Seminar



**July 26, 27, 28 – Training**

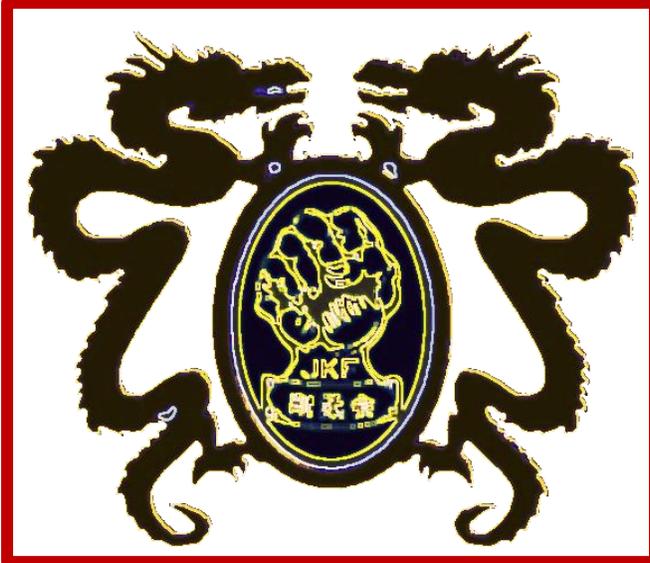
**July 29 – Rest Day and Seiwa Kai Party**

**July 30, 31, and August 1 – Training**

**August 2 – Travel to Wakayama**

**Anyone from Pan America who is interested in going to Japan this year should contact Vassie Shihan As Soon As Possible.**

# JKF Goju Kai Seminar



**August 3 and 4**

JKF Goju Kai Overseas Seminar

**August 4**

Shinsa for Shodan to Hachidan

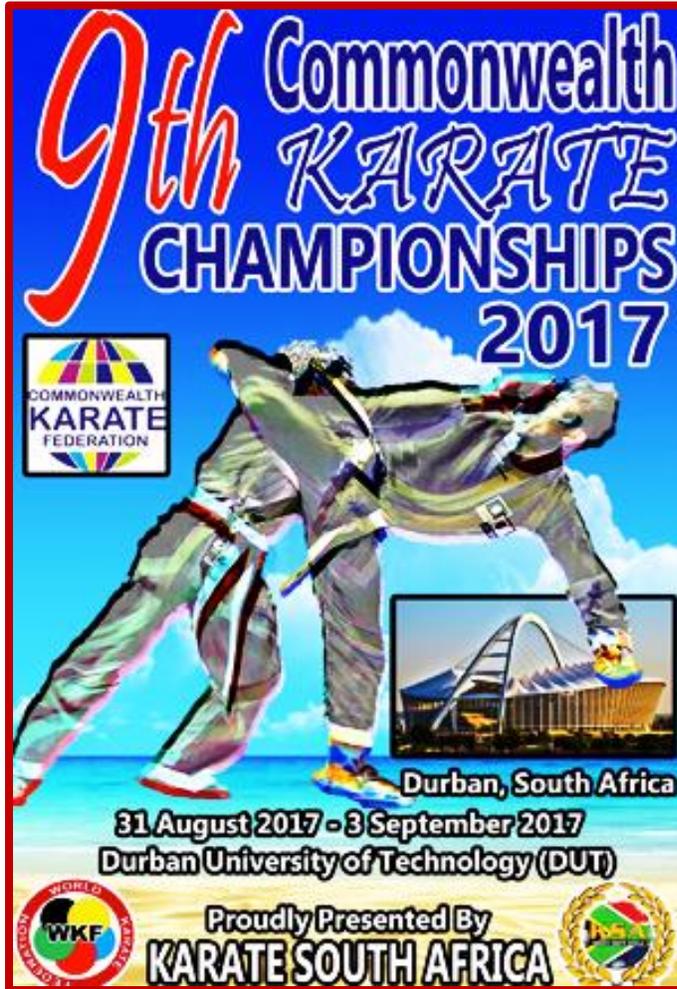
**August 5**

JKF Goju Kai Party

**August 5 and 6**

JKF Goju Kai Tournament

## Canada is Invited to 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Championships In South Africa



Canadian karate athletes, coaches and officials have been invited to take part in the 9<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Karate Championships, which will take place in Durban, South Africa, from August 31<sup>st</sup> to September 3<sup>rd</sup> 2017. This prestigious event represents an important step in the sustained international efforts towards inclusion of the sport of karate in the official program of the Commonwealth Games. Canadian participants must be registrants in good standing with Karate Canada (through membership with their Provincial / Territorial Association). Participation will be open to several competitors per nation (expected to be up to a maximum of 6 competitors - to be confirmed) in each division (as this is an "Open" competition, participants are not required to hold any given status or ranking points total, and are not required to be current National Team Roster members), and Karate Canada will register interested participants on a "first come first serve" basis (the link to an online registration form will

be made available very soon), however participants will be responsible for organizing all other aspects of their participation and for covering all related expenses (registration, travel, lodging, coaching / support staff).

For those in commonwealth countries please take note of this event. Please remember you need to be part of the WKF recognized federation in your country to take part. If I can answer any questions about the event please let me know.

Craig Vokey

<http://www.karatecanada.org/pdf/CKF%20Championships%202017%20-%20Bulletin%20%20202.pdf>

# Goshukan Seiwa Kai South Africa

By Gary Mahnke



Goshukan ReachOut was proud to sponsor another one of our fleet buses to Miracle Kidz Safe House and Orphanage to take these wonderful kidz on a Easter Camping ...trip this past weekend. A great time was had by all making memories that these boys and girls will carry with them for the rest of their lives!