



Asai Shotokan Association International

March 16, 2014

Dear ASAI members,

I was informed recently by some of our members that IJKA (International Japan Martial arts Karatedokai headed by Mrs. Asai) has made some accusations to ASAI on its website. I have found this action as not only unfair, but also incorrect. I consider their action as childish and unproductive. So initially I was going to ignore the whole thing. However, my advisors told me that a silence to an accusation could easily mean, in the Western world, an acceptance of guilt. Therefore, I decided to provide the facts and my side of the story, so that the members and friends of ASAI, as well as everyone else who is interested in Asai karate, will have the full story.

Before I go over each accusation (there are six of them) and my story, I would like to provide the vital information that shows that there was a close relationship between Mrs. Asai and I. In fact, I was the first member of IJKA, and also the vice chairman of the organization in 2009. Yes, Mrs. Asai and I were not strangers to each other at all. This is something everyone must remember before I begin the analysis of each accusation. Though I have written about this once before I need to do this again. I hate to go through the gory details but I will provide the full story as IJKA came up with the accusations.

I only met her a few times before his passing in 2006, but I visited Master Asai's house many times since his funeral to pay my respect, and to pray in front of the portable altar at his house. Those visits occurred in the years between 2007 and 2009. In those years I was a member of JKS, the organization Master Asai created in 2000 (I became a member in 2002 and resigned in 2009). During those visits Mrs. Asai complained to me that she was being rejected from JKS. She was afraid Master Asai's name and his heritage were going to be forgotten. She expressed her wish that she wanted to start a new organization to focus on Asai karate. Even for an insider I could feel the negative trend in the organization at that time so I shared her concern. Mrs. Asai knew nothing of karate and had little experience in establishing a karate organization so she asked me if I could help and, I accepted her request.

In 2009, we jointly established the organization: IJKA. I was the first member and also she appointed me as the vice chairman and the board member. Of course, the board members were only myself and Mrs. Asai then. I helped in the establishment of IJKA for one year then I had to step out. I became very unhappy with the direction IJKA was taking, which was far different from what I envisioned when I started.

There were 3 major reasons for my departure.

1) I objected to the appointment of her brother, Master Chen, as Chief Instructor of IJKA. With a due respect that he was a master of kung fu, he was not qualified as the technical person to teach Asai karate. He never practiced karate and did not know Asai karate. He might have been someone who we could trust, but I thought it was deadly wrong to appoint him for this position just because he was her brother. If you look at his martial arts performance you can easily judge that he is not the inheritor of Asai karate. I do not think he knows any of Asai katas.

2) I objected to have the Honbu dojo in Taiwan. I strongly recommended that we establish the organization in Japan and to have the dojo in Tokyo. Mrs. Asai disagreed and now the HQ dojo is in Taiwan and most of the members are Taiwanese with very few in Japan.

3) The last part is rather long, but I think it is very important. Many of the readers know that there is another organization by the same initials, IJKA (The International Japan Karate-Do Association headed by Sensei Kato of UK). This organization was, in fact, created by Master Asai in 1990 with Sensei Kato in Europe. At the time of establishment of the new organization, Mrs. Asai complained and accused of Sensei Kato for taking over the organization. She even considered pressing legal charges against him. I advised her to establish an organization with another name, rather than creating confusion by using the same name. I also advised her to work with Sensei Kato, as he is a senior instructor and can teach Asai karate in Europe. I advised her to work with him and keep him as the head in Europe and then she could focus on the Asian front, while I would take care of the Americas. I considered it a good thing to have many existing dojos as members rather than starting from no members. I believed, and still believe, that it is better and more beneficial to have other organizations and the dojos to practice Asai karate, rather than to suppress them. She rejected all my recommendations and remained conflictive to Kato IJKA. I realized then that she is not a collaborating type of person but rather a conflicting type. This attitude is totally opposite of what Asai sensei wanted to see among the karate practitioners. He accepted all the practitioners from any organizations and styles. In the end, I realized that I could not be a part of the organization that restricted rather than promoted Asai karate.

We had a very friendly and cooperating relationship until I resigned in 2009. I wanted to leave the organization in good terms, but she resented my resignation and we terminated our communication ever since.

Let me go over each accusation. (Each is presented in quotes from the IJKA website.)

1. Announcing "his" group as "Asai Shotokan Association International (ASAI)." "Asai karate has never formed such organization."

This is a strange remark, as IJKA is trying to make it sound like it is the "Asai karate". It is true that we did not ask IJKA for any permission, but we have no obligation to do so as no one organization or a person has the exclusivity to Asai karate. Asai karate belongs to every karateka. It can be practiced by all and we do not need to receive permission from anyone or any organizations. This would be the same if we had formed an organization after Funakoshi or Shotokan. There are many organizations with Shotokan or Funakoshi in their names and I can correctly suspect none of those went to Mrs. Funakoshi, or his relatives for permission to use those names.

To this accusation, my reply is "yes" we have formed a separate organization for the reasons stated in our mission statement: to promote Asai ryu. We sadly feel that other entities (including IJKA) have

not adequately and sufficiently promoted Asai ryu karate. I am proud to say that ASAI now has the members in more than 30 countries around the world, and I feel ASAI is doing its job to promote Asai karate. I am confident, Asai sensei in heaven would not only permit this, but also be very happy with what we are doing.

2. "Acquired from our website the late Master Tetsuhiko Asai's signature and using it."

We simply deny this accusation as we did not take anything from the website of IJKA. I have in my hand not only the diplomas signed by Asai sensei but also the hand written letters he sent me. These documents (posted here) belong to me. On the other hand, I must claim that IJKA "stole" a photo of our sample diploma from our website without our permission. We consider this act hypocritical.

3. "Using the late Tetsuhiko Asai's name whenever fitting."

Our answer is "yes". We and perhaps a dozen other interested organizations and dojo's honor and promote Asai's achievements whenever we can. So, what is wrong with that? We strongly feel Master Asai's legacy is very important to not only Shotokan but to all traditional karate, thus his teachings need to be promoted. I specifically chose the initial name of ASAI to honor my late sensei Asai. As long as we remember his name he still lives within us.

We want to ask to all the readers how our desire and actions are improper or wrong.

4. "Displayed a sample certificate dated June 18th 2013, certifying someone, even though the person is not qualified as the IJKA official certification examiner."

This accusation is quite strange and difficult to understand. This diploma they referred is ours and for the ASAI members strictly and it has nothing to do with IJKA. We do not need to have an IJKA examiner for our examination. This accusation is totally missing the point and once again IJKA used the photo from our website without our permission.

5. "Calling himself as Shuseki Shihan, even though the IJKA would never give such a rank to someone who studied Asai karate for a mere two years."

There are three points I need to address here.

One is an error in their statement that I studied Asai karate only two years. I became a follower of Asai karate in 2001, and trained under Asai sensei till 2006. Besides, I was a life time member of JKA for 40 years and Asai sensei was the Technical Director of JKA in 80's and 90's. This means I was training under the technical guidance of JKA Technical Director in those years. Asai karate is not totally different from JKA karate, of course. Rather, it is an extension of Shotokan karate. Thus I had a deep basic understanding of standard Shotokan karate when I was exposed to Asai karate in 2001.

The second is that I trained under Asai sensei and received the rank of 5 dan and 6 dan in JKS. "Shihan" is not a title and it is only a formal calling for sensei. Besides, this name can be used for any practitioners who have 5 dan and above. I certainly do not need a permission from IJKA or any

other organization to call myself any title what-so-ever. Besides, I am using the name of Shihan as a nickname for a personal reason which I have explained in the past.

Thirdly, in ASAI I am the Chief Instructor, though I do not call myself Shuseki Shihan as I believe this title in Japanese should be kept only for Master Asai. I do not see any wrong doing by having this title in the organization I founded.

Lastly, I want to add that this accusation is hypocritical as IJKA gave this very title to someone (kung fu teacher) who has never practiced Asai karate. How can they explain or justify this?

6. "Committing a fraudulent practice by attaching "Asai" to his own name on a certificate to clearly trick people outside Japan into believing that the certificate was issued by Master Asai."

This accusation is also strange. I'm sure everyone understands that Master Asai is not with us any more so how could he be signing anything? I can clearly tell you that we did not put the Asai sensei's signature as the examiner or the authorizer. We wanted to honor him as the founder of Asai ryu karate by including his writing. Any certificates (rank or examiner) clearly state that they come from ASAI, with my signature and that of the President, Dr. Johnson. We openly state this and nothing is hidden. How could there be any trickery? I believe our approach is honest and straight forward. I want to ask the public to evaluate this and make the judgment after studying all the facts I presented here.

At the end of the accusation Mrs. Asai states that I did not follow the bushido. I do not understand why she would say this. She is not Japanese (born and raised in Taiwan) and has never practiced karate or budo. I doubt very seriously that she knows anything about bushido. Before she accuses someone I suggest she looks at herself more carefully first, and see if what she is doing is truly contributing to the propagation of her late husband's karate. On the other hand, ASAI will continue to promote his karate to honor Asai sensei and to benefit thousands of karate practitioners around the world. Now we want to ask, who is doing the right thing?

To learn more about ASAI, check out our official website: www.asaikarate.com and also the Facebook fan page: <https://www.facebook.com/asairyukarate>

We have nothing to hide so I invite you to write to me and send me your inquiries. I am happy to provide you whatever the information you may request. My email address is [<asai.karate@yahoo.com>](mailto:asai.karate@yahoo.com).

In karate-do,

Shihan Kousaku Yokota

Founder & Chief Instructor, ASAI