

THE TRUTH OF ITKF



Dear Traditional Karate Friends.

Some of you know me but for those that don't, my name is John-Price Kataoka. Originally from Canada, I have lived in Japan for the past 30 years. I first moved here to study karate, but I stayed as I met my wife and now have a family. I continue to train and study my passion for traditional karate.

I am posting my interview with Jorgensen Sensei because I was dismayed by the words I read about ITKF and in particular, Jorgensen Sensei. First by the Brazil group, led by Mr. Gilberto Gaertner and then by Mr. Dejan Nedev of the Macedonia group – both of whom claim and say many negative things against ITKF and Jorgensen Sensei. What they had to say bothered me because their words did not represent what I know, or had experienced in the ITKF started by Sensei Hidetaka Nishiyama, nor do they reflect the character of the person I know as Sensei Jorgensen. I wanted to hear what he had to say, so I sent him the two articles and asked if I could ask some questions that were raised in my mind by these two conflicting articles.

FULL DISCLOSURE: I want the reader to be fully aware that I have been involved in the original ITKF of Nishiyama Sensei since 1992 when the World Championships were held in Canada and Jorgensen Sensei was the President of the ITKF organization in Canada. I chose to follow him as my instructor in 2005, following a seminar with Nishiyama Sensei held in Canada for preparation for the World Championships to be hosted by Canada in

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2006. Jorgensen Sensei was also the President of ITKF in Canada at that time. I wanted to hear his response to the accusations made by these people. Here's what he had to say:

John Price-Kataoka: Sensei, recently, Global ITKF posted an article on their website commenting on California ITKF. In the article there are claims about people associated with California ITKF being dishonest, egocentric and disloyal to the legacy of Nishiyama Sensei. I would like to ask you some questions regarding statements made in the article as well as the rebuttal that was posted in response to Brazil by Macedonia ITKF. I hope this will clarify some things for those who take the time to read this interview.

Jorgensen Sensei: No problem. As you know, I have a long history of involvement with ITKF and know its history completely. So let me first clarify – there is no “California” ITKF – there is only ITKF – and that is the ITKF that Sensei Nishiyama formed and incorporated in the United States of America and registered with the California Secretary of State decades ago. People can claim whatever they wish, but the fact is the original and only real ITKF is the one Sensei incorporated. Throughout the entire history of ITKF people have been trying to destroy ITKF – beginning in the 1970's and continuing until today. They can spin it however they want, but the truth is that the organization formed by Mr. Gaertner was created in 2019 without the knowledge or advance discussion of the original ITKF members, or the original ITKF Board of Directors. Nor was the existence of his new organization raised at the ITKF General Meeting he claims took place in 2019. His records and use of my name is taken well out of context. We, the original ITKF Members and Board only found out about this new organization he had incorporated, following his and Mr. Kuster's execution of the suspension of the late Dr. Vladimir Jorga and the entire European Traditional Karate Federation (ETKF) in 2021. ETKF had been an active and strong member of the original organization for 29 years. Dr. Vladimir Jorga had been a member of the ITKF Board of Directors continuously since 1974. It was crazy! Now we have the Nedev family in Macedonia who have created another new “ITKF” organization in 2021. Dr. Vladimir Jorga and the ETKF did not know about that formation either, even though Dejan Nedev was the General Secretary of the ETKF. Now both (Gaertner & Nedev) claim to be the legacy of the original ITKF. They are only a legacy of themselves. They have no connection to the original ITKF incorporated in the United States of America whatsoever. In both cases that was by their own choice.

Anyone knows that an organization begins on the date of its incorporation. For Brazil, that is 2019. For Macedonia that is 2021. For ITKF registered in California that is 1974 with the incorporation of IAKF. The name was changed and registered with the California Secretary of State in 1995. So, I ask *you* – “Who is being dishonest?” Mr. Gaertner abandoned the original ITKF. He was dishonest to me and to ITKF – but I assume we will get to part of the story later.

John Price-Kataoka: Gilberto Gaertner was quoted as saying that after the death of Nishiyama Sensei in 2008, the ITKF lacked the solid foundation and effective governance to carry forward his (Nishiyama's) legacy. What are your thoughts about this comment?

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Jorgensen Sensei: His comment is nonsense and only designed to elevate the status of himself. Following Sensei Nishiyama's passing the ITKF continued to build and grow. As evidence of that fact, Watanabe Sensei from Brazil, who was an avid follower of Nishiyama Sensei, came to the Summer Camp in San Diego in 2009 (on behalf of Brazil) and presented a strong proposal and commitment to host the 2010 World Championships in Curitiba Brazil in honour of Sensei. If there was no strong foundation as Mr. Gaertner claims, why would Watanabe Sensei and Brazil want to take such a big risk?

We had the largest participation at the 2010 Championship in Brazil following Sensei's passing since the return of ITKF World Championships in 1990, hosted by Peru. Before 1990 ITKF had not held a World Championship since 1983 hosted in Cairo, Egypt. This was because of the chaos and uncertainty caused by the unjust IOC recognition of WUKO. ITKF waited until after its protest of this decision was made to the IOC Court of Arbitration of Sport in 1986.

As a reminder to your readers, I was one of the four delegates to present the ITKF and the ITKF Traditional Karate Rules of Competition to the IOC Court of Arbitration for Sport in 1986. The four persons were, Nishiyama Sensei, Michael Crowe (General Secretary), Dr. Vladimir Jorga (Vice President) and me. Now, following the passing of Dr. Vladimir Jorga last year, I am the last person still living who was at that meeting and has firsthand knowledge and experience of the issues discussed and the background that shaped the future of ITKF and its decisions.

Was it hard following the passing of Nishiyama Sensei? Of course it was. It was extremely challenging. There were many egos to contend with and many people who thought they should be in control of ITKF. But our foundation was very strong and remains strong today. It strengthens everyday because the organization has purged itself of the individuals who only want to use the ITKF for their own individual business purpose, not for the evolution and benefit of all karate practitioners world-wide.

John Price-Kataoka: It has been said, *"you assumed the leadership of ITKF after Nishiyama passed away."* What do you have to say to such a comment?

Jorgensen Sensei: Again, that comment is nonsense. It may be someone's opinion, but as the saying goes "Opinions are great...everyone has one." But it has no basis in fact. It is a comment made by someone that has no knowledge of the ITKF, have never participated on the Board of Directors of the ITKF with Sensei and were not at the meeting when I was elected to take on the responsibility of ITKF Chairman and that of Technical Chairman.

In fact, at the meeting where I was elected as Chairman, I had proposed Dr. Vladimir Jorga to be Chairman as he was our Senior member. He declined and instead proposed me to the Board as both Chairman and Technical Chairman as I was Acting Chairman at the time. Dr. Jorga and I had a long history working together in ITKF.

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Those who know the history of Sensei's passing know full well that Nishiyama Sensei was very ill in 2008. He asked me to organize and lead the technical program of the 2008 Summer Camp, which I did. I met with him every day at summer camp and we spoke about the day's training and the next day's program.

The ITKF World Championships were scheduled for Lithuania later that year. When it was learned that Sensei was not going to be able to attend the Championship, he asked me to take on the role of Acting Chairman of ITKF and conduct the Judge's program and supervise the Championships in his absence as well as manage the meeting program. The lies expressed to the contrary by Mr. Gaertner and Mr. Kuster are insulting to the intelligence and integrity of those who know better.

I can absolutely say with certainty that my intention and dedication has been only to continue and advance ITKF according to the actual philosophy and direction taught to me by Nishiyama Sensei. It is not my own path, disguised with the claim it as Sensei's...it is absolutely Nishiyama Sensei's. That is why I could not abandon the original organization founded by him. To do anything else is to end his legacy because none of the people involved in the Brazil organization, including Mr. Gaertner have ever served on the Board of ITKF with Nishiyama Sensei, they did not help build the organization, or negotiate its philosophy at the side of Nishiyama Sensei to IOC. Consequently, they have zero understanding of the expectations or deep objectives Nishiyama Sensei had for the organization. They really don't have an inkling what "Nishiyama's legacy" stands for.

John Price-Kataoka: Is it true that the ITKF was not legally allowed to operate in the United States from 2008 onward?

Jorgensen Sensei: That is an equally absurd comment. It is a false narrative that was started in 2013 when ITKF had trouble with Mr. Kwiecinski, and he formed and claimed his false organization of WTKF to be the real ITKF. He began this rumour and made many disparaging comments about Nishiyama Sensei and his lack of competence in a global letter sent to all National Federation members of ITKF. He did so by using a list of members he acquired from the ITKF office. He misused it because he was given it to communicate information about the World Championship that Poland, with Mr. Kwiecinski as its President, had hosted the World Championships in Lodz the previous year. So, I have been through this in similar situations of organizations presenting misinformation to initiate the identity theft of ITKF. The strategy of misinformation from Brazil and Macedonia is not a new one.

To give some context, the conflict with Mr. Kwiecinski began because he was hosting the World Cup making decisions contrary to the technical policies of ITKF concerning World Cup events. As the conflict between him and ITKF grew, he began to bring forward this notion of ITKF as a non-entity in the United States. He then used this position to justify an illegal meeting he called in Dojo Stara Wies to create his version of ITKF through a new organization which he ultimately named WTKF – again naming it as the legitimate ITKF. If

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Mr. Gaertner is the one making this comment again now it would seem to me that he is using the same strategy. Now I read He and Mr. Kwiecinski are collaborating. It is absurd. Particularly since Mr. Gaertner at the time called the actions of Mr. Kwiecinski and the formation of WTKF illegal and voted to suspend Mr. Kwiecinski and Poland from ITKF.

John Price-Kataoka: What gave rise to this false narrative?

Jorgensen Sensei: The real story, which I alerted the ITKF Board about at its Meeting in 2010 in Brazil (Mr. Kwiecinski was a Board member) is related to a tax issue that dates to 2002. However, as I said in response to Mr. Kwiecinski's letter in 2013, when he first claimed Nishiyama Sensei's ITKF was an illegitimate organization operating illegally, the ITKF relied on the advice of a Chartered Accounting firm to handle its financial reporting obligations to the government authorities. Nishiyama Sensei did not handle the financial accounting or reporting personally. Consequently, he may not have known or understood the details of the issue that created the problem with the suspension of status. Certainly, as I found out in our forensic investigation it was complicated, confusing and required a serious level of forensic accounting to correct.

I was very concerned when I learned of the situation in 2010. However, I contacted the regulatory agency of the California government to determine the issue. It took a great deal of time and effort to work back through the issue as resubmissions of previous documents from previous years needed to be analyzed, corrected and submitted again separately year by year. The government agencies responsible for the recognition of ITKF assured me that the ITKF could continue to operate legally within the United States. They also spoke to Mr. Kwiecinski's lawyer and explained to him the same thing by telephone in 2013, but since it did not serve Mr. Kwiecinski's agenda, he continued to promote the contrary and false accusation. And now, Mr. Gaertner brings this matter up again 12 years later knowing full well it was false. Your readers can make their own decision as to why.

John Price-Kataoka: Mr Gaertner says that Nishiyama's daughter, Nami Nishiyama, confirmed this situation in a letter to Mr. Kwiecinski, does that not prove his point?

Not at all. That's only part of the story. While it is true that Ms. Nami Nishiyama (Nishiyama Sensei's daughter) wrote a letter to Mr. Kwiecinski informing him that ITKF had been suspended since 2002, he used her answer out of context. As I explained in my previous answer, it is a complete lie that the ITKF was operating illegally. Nami wrote the letter to Mr. Kwiecinski because he demanded to be told how long ITKF had been in a suspended status. I don't think she had any idea of this situation until we started to investigate the matter, as I stated in my last answer. Nami is an extremely honest person and 2002 is that date that we were given to cover as part of our forensic audit to correct the problem. It took us until 2013 to get to the root of the issue and resubmit documents. As I said, the issue turned out to be an accounting submission error related to transfers between AAKF and ITKF, which until 2010 shared offices. People can be critical of the length of time it took for us to correct it – but we (the part-time ITKF staff and me) did the forensic searches

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needed to find the documents ourselves to get to the core issue. It was unnecessary to pay thousands of dollars to have it done quickly an accounting firm because we were working with the government agencies and it did not affect our ability to operate, legally.

Once we had it corrected the government agencies reimbursed all accrued penalties and fine money to ITKF and the organization was brought back into current standing. Again, I emphasize, ITKF was never operating “illegally”. That comment is simply a strategy used by those who wish to do harm to either myself or ITKF, or both.

I think this conclusion is borne out by the fact that Mr. Kwiecinski was fully aware of the situation for 3 years prior to making his accusation in 2013 and Mr. Gaertner was also aware of this for 13 years prior to him dredging it up in his recent article to discredit myself and Nishiyama Sensei’s ITKF.

What is true however, is that both individuals have incorporated an organization to replace Nishiyama Sensei’s ITKF, each claiming they are the original and legitimate organization – now they seem to be collaborating. Both use the same strategy of circulating misinformation while claiming honesty, both breached the policies, constitution and trust of ITKF. Both started parallel organizations to claim the identity of ITKF. The saying, “there is no honour among thieves!” seems to ring true again.

John Price-Kataoka: In 2013, when there was an attempt to steal the name of ITKF by another group (WTKF), which you have mentioned – what help did Mr. Gaertner provide, if any to the situation?

Mr. Kwiecinski called a meeting in 2013 at Dojo Stara Weis in Poland claiming it was a legitimate ITKF World meeting. It was not. He used the above-mentioned problem I have already explained in detail, to give his position credibility. He had attendees sign-in with the country they were from. Mr. Kwiecinski then claimed later that these individuals were the actual ITKF representatives from their respective countries. For example, one of the participants was from Canada and another was from Brazil. Mr. Gaertner wrote a strong letter which clearly stated that the participant from Brazil was not a representative of the actual Brazil ITKF National Member Federation and did not represent the views of the Federation. He denounced the meeting. His response was unsolicited by me. I simply received a copy of his letter. Canada did the same thing as the person attending was a former student of mine, but that person held no position on the Canadian Federation.

The meeting of Mr. Kwiecinski was not a legally called meeting of ITKF in any way. Initially, I wanted to attend this meeting to confront him with his lie, and I proposed the same to the ITKF Board at the time. However, the Board of ITKF did not support this suggestion on the advice of our legal counsel, Mr. Michael Crowe who thought it would give undue legitimacy to the meeting itself. He wanted to mediate a solution. The Board supported that suggestion. Mr. Crowe tried to mediate but failed. It resulted in a major split within the

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organization. Countries influenced by Mr. Kwiecinski followed him to the WTKF. The original ITKF carried on its path.

A special meeting of ITKF was then called and hosted by Mexico in Cancun later in the same year. This resulted in the suspension of the countries and individuals who had contravened the policies and constitution of the ITKF. It was a very difficult and disappointing time for the organization. Mr. Gaertner was a strong proponent of suspension. His letter and strong support at the Special Meeting called to discuss the consequences of Mr. Kwiecinski's manipulation were his contribution. Now he does the same thing.

John Price-Kataoka: In 2017, at the General Assembly in Montecatini, you asked Gaertner to become chairman of the ITKF. Some say this was due to pressure from people within the ITKF. Why did you choose Gaertner, and was there any pressure on you to do so?

Jorgensen Sensei: Following the Special Meeting in Cancun I received pressure (based on the attack from Mr. Kwiecinski) that I had too much "power" holding both the position of Chairman and Technical Chairman of ITKF. For me, it had never been a consideration because the Board of ITKF had elected me to take both positions because of my history within ITKF. I was simply doing the job I was asked. It was the first time this issue came forward. I understood the optics and how it could be perceived. I thought it would be a good idea to split the administration and technical responsibilities to show that I was not "holding on to power" as was the accusation started by Mr. Kwiecinski. I also thought it would allow me to split the workload and allow me to focus on the technical issues. But that turned out not to be the case.

I think that accusation of "too much power" was quite unfair as, besides Dr. Vladimir Jorga, I had been the most involved through 5 decades with both the technical side and administrative side of ITKF. I spent countless hours with Nishiyama Sensei travelling and discussing both aspects of the organization as we navigated through the IOC negotiations. This gave me a very good understanding of the objectives and expectations Nishiyama Sensei had for the direction of the organization. In fact, I think I may be the only one who has received all Dan ranks from Sho-Dan to Shishi-Dan directly from the hand of Nishiyama Sensei.

I also learned from these experiences and from him, that training on the dojo floor is quite different from the education of learning the purpose of an organization, committing to it and maintaining it without waiver or compromise. Doing one does not automatically give the other. As Sensei once told me, "Training everyday on the dojo floor, makes a good soldier – but not a general."

However, to answer your question specifically – Mr. Gaertner and I had worked well together previously. He seemed to understand the distinction of administrative and technical. I thought he would be able to bring a strong administrative skill set to the

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organization. He had a large successful National Federation, and I wanted to focus on the technical aspects as I had been working on several technical projects. I thought he and I would be a good team. However, as it turned out – he wanted to take responsibility for everything, technical and administrative which is exactly what I was trying to avoid. I did not create this current situation. I was looking for help – not an assassination.

John Price-Kataoka: What happened after the meeting in Montecatini?

Jorgensen Sensei: What unfolded after that meeting was nothing short of a coup. The elected Board of the ITKF (of which I was one) had no idea that Mr. Gaertner formed an entirely new organization in Brazil. I asked him several times prior to the 2019 Meeting – a meeting he claims legitimized his actions – if he had fulfilled the yearly regulatory filings to maintain the ITKF registration. He told me not to worry – he had it “all under control”. As it turned out, this control was to form a completely new organization, abandon the original organization incorporated by Sensei Nishiyama in the United States, suspend Dr. Vladimir Jorga and the European Federation in breach the actual Constitution of the ITKF, manipulating its intent and precedence of operation and, finally, suspending me.

Mr. Kuster, whom Mr. Gaertner relied on to execute his decisions, was introduced as the General Secretary based on his work in 1990 helping Mr. Eduardo Salas, President of the Peruvian National Federation with the World Championships. I don’t know the truth of his story that he was part of helping Nishiyama Sensei “build the Constitution of ITKF”. Nor did Dr. Vladimir Jorga. Both of us had been heavily involved since the 1970’s and hadn’t seen him in any such meeting.

The Constitution of the ITKF is based on the organization of IAKF (International Amateur Karate Federation) which Nishiyama Sensei had formed and incorporated in 1974. This was the organization that submitted the application to the IOC Program Commission in 1976, under Nishiyama Sensei’s signature and was the predecessor to the ITKF. The name International Traditional Karate Federation (ITKF) came about because of meetings held with the IOC Program Commission following the recognition of WUKO in 1985 and their suggestion that IAKF needed a more distinctive name to distinguish its karate from the type of karate being claimed by WUKO. Thus, the names ITKF and Traditional Karate were born, and this was the name used at our presentation to the IOC CAS in 1986. There was not major “rewriting” of the Constitution – only some revisions!

Regardless, the truth is that Mr. Kuster was a junior black belt in 1990, holding the rank of Ni-dan. If he was as involved as he claims to have been long standing members of the ITKF were unaware of this. In fact, he left the ITKF organization following the Peru Championships in 1990 and was not active in ITKF again for the next 30 years. He reappeared (as a Ni-Dan) in 2019.

1990 to 2019 is a long time to be absent from an organization and still claim you know the organization intimately. To me he has no authority to describe the “legacy of Nishiyama

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Sensei” because he has experienced it primarily through hearsay. Perhaps this is why he sought to silence both Dr. Vladimir Jorga and me since we lived the legacies of Nishiyama Sensei and ITKF being built and could ask difficult questions about commitment with more knowledge than himself or that of Mr. Gaertner.

John Price-Kataoka: Why was the 2019 World Championship’s location changed from Macedonia to Curitiba, Brazil?

Jorgensen Sensei: I can only tell you what I was told by Mr. Gaertner. That is, the Macedonia organization did not send in any final proposal or made any real or legitimate arrangements to host the Championships.

John Price-Kataoka: Global ITKF claims they opened a bank account for ITKF after the 2019 General Assembly. Is this accurate?

Jorgensen Sensei: We learned in our investigation into the new organization incorporated by Mr. Gaertner that the bank account was in the name of that new organization – not the ITKF. An organization which the use of PayPal allowed them to direct funds to this new organization – a different organization with its own separate constitution and Board of Directors – not the original ITKF as we understood it to be. We were also able to secure a copy of the actual documents of incorporation from the Brazilian registration office, so we (the original ITKF) have actual proof of this statement.

John Price-Kataoka: At the 2019 General Assembly, do you recall discussions about moving the administrative headquarters to Brazil?

Jorgensen Sensei: I don’t recall that specific discussion at the 2019 Assembly. I do recall it being raised at a subsequent meeting. But there is a difference between moving the administrative office and moving the “Office” of the organization – a term which is sometimes used to describe the legal authority of the entire organization coming under a different governance law.

I have never opposed moving the administrative office. In fact, the ITKF Board had discussed doing such a thing in 2013. However, the ITKF Board that considered moving the administrative office was completely opposed to transferring the governance office which indicates the laws which empower the organization’s Constitution and bylaws, and govern legal challenges. The Board wanted governance to remain in the United States.

As I recall, at the meeting of Mr. Gaertner’s where this move was discussed, different people (including myself) tried to get clarification on what he and Mr. Kuster meant by “administrative” office in the context of my previous statement above. The questions were never answered clearly, but rather rudely dismissed by Mr. Kuster as insignificant. This made it clear to me that they intended to move the governance office, not simply the administrative office. Their game and management style are one of “smoke and mirrors”.

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That is, distraction to avoid the actual reality of what they want to do. And, we found this to be the true case later when we learned that Mr. Gaertner had incorporated a completely new organization to replace the existing ITKF.

John Price-Kataoka: Global says their records of the 2019 General Assembly “dismantle any narrative of ignorance or disagreement with” the decision to move the administrative office to Brazil. Do you have any comment on this statement?

Jorgensen Sensei: In retrospect, based on what we have learned since 2019, I think the 2019 General Assembly was a sham. It was held without any knowledge by the ITKF members that a new and parallel organization was put into existence with Mr. Gaertner as President, but with a completely different Constitution and Board registered with the incorporation. When Mr. Gaertner extolled his commitment and the amount of work he had done – he listed meetings from what he referred to as an “internal” Board. When questioned as to this “internal” Board’s function, he casually brushed it off as people he used for “advice”, not decisions.

The impression was given that decisions were being made at the 2019 meeting, when in fact they had already been made by his “internal” Board – which only Mr. Gaertner knew existed – not the ITKF organization. Consequently, I have come to believe that Mr. Gaertner used the 2019 meeting to create records and give legitimacy to what he had already done and/or would soon implement later through a series of hurriedly called and heavy controlled meetings. These hurriedly called meetings under the guise of “Emergency Meetings” allowed no real discussion and, any questions were taken as a personal attack of non-support for Mr. Gaertner. He had already begun to change the ITKF – we just didn’t know it at the time. Had we been informed, I believe an entirely different outcome would have happened.

I also believe that is why the usual process of distributing proper voting indicators and proper registration with formal announcement of actual voting members – a process used previously by Nishiyama Sensei and Mr. Michael Crowe, General Secretary, to validate proper member voting, was not done. Rather, Mr. Gaertner created a “members” list on a white board and allowed anyone in the room to talk and vote. We trusted him at that meeting. But he would later break that trust, at least for me, when we found out what was done and the way it was done – incorporation of an entirely new organization without the knowledge of the actual organization or the Board of Directors of the organization.

John Price-Kataoka: What do you personally remember from the General Assembly?

Jorgensen Sensei: It was very much chaos with no real validation of the status of countries present and voting. I expressed the same to you at the meeting as well as Dr. Vladimir Jorga after the meeting.

John Price-Kataoka: Is the ITKF based in California a legal entity?

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Jorgensen Sensei: Of course it is. Mr. Gaertner made a big mistake by abandoning it. It still existed as a legal entity after abandoning it. Either he got bad advice, or he didn't really understand the process, or he didn't care. What ever his reason was, it was not the right or legal thing to do.

The way he has managed, and the incorporation of a completely new organization was reviewed by two different legal firms, contrasting it against the actual ITKF Constitution and meeting documents and State law. Both came to the same conclusion. That is, the 2019 meeting should not be considered as valid. The new organization is not the legitimate ITKF, did not replace the original ITKF in any legal sense, and borders on fraud. The actual ITKF is the original one. We circulated those opinions to the ITKF members previously.

John Price-Kataoka: Does California ITKF have accountability and legal standing?

Jorgensen Sensei: I have already answered that question, but to do so again – the answer is absolutely! But the question I put back to you is, “Does Mr. Gaertner, Mr. Kuster and the Brazil organization have any?” Their process is one of eliminating opposition by purging it from the organization without any notice, appeal process or discussion. That makes them accountable only to themselves. Moreover, claiming to be an organization that currently already exists by plagiarizing or using that organizations materials is neither legal, nor ethical. The legal entity of the original organization incorporated in the United States existed and still exists when Mr. Gaertner incorporated his ITKF. The same holds true for the WTKF of Mr. Kwiecinski and the Macedonia ITKF of Mr. Nedev. While Mr. Nedev claims to hold legal Trademark of ITKF, his registration of that Trademark was done with his full knowledge that the mark was that of the original ITKF and that the original ITKF has a registered Trademark that precedes the date of his. He had full knowledge of that organization existing and registered in the United States. In fact, as the General Secretary of the ETKF at the time, he was aware of the activity of the original ITKF. However, he did not participate in the proper process but rather sought a “short cut” to put him in control. He also claims a false meeting that legitimizes his position. That challenge is yet to be met.

John Price-Kataoka: Some people criticize California ITKF because there is no physical office located there. What is your response to this?

Jorgensen Sensei: Again, there is no such thing as “California” ITKF. It is the ITKF. There is a legal process available in the United States that allows an administrative office to be located out-of-country, while continuing to be a legal entity in the United States of America. We follow and comply with that process. The Administrative office is now located in Canada – the legal governance is in the United States. ITKF was never intended to be governed by the laws of Brazil or Macedonia, or Poland for that matter.

John Price-Kataoka: Others criticize you for once again assuming leadership of the ITKF. Do you have a response?

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Jorgensen Sensei: I did not assume the leadership of ITKF on my own. I did it with the support of many countries who know the truth and want to build the actual ITKF Nishiyama Sensei created. And I appreciate that others recognize the original ITKF. The real ITKF is alive and well and held its World Championship earlier this year in Berlin, Germany. There were a significant number of countries participating and we continue to grow each day. Regardless of the plagiarism or identity theft that ITKF has had to endure from these other organizations, we are committed to the actual path created by Nishiyama Sensei. The materials and publications the other organizations use and claim as their own, belong to the original ITKF. Everyone knows that fact and where they originated.

Indeed, when Nishiyama Sensei passed away, the family's representative and I met to discuss the future of the organizations he created, including his style organization JIA. We went through every publication and technical document created by Sensei. The family contracted a Trademark lawyer. It is the family that owns the rights to the images of Sensei. The family and I also set about ensuring the Trademarks. The family's Trademark lawyer was involved. We (original ITKF) made an agreement for the use of these by the ITKF incorporated by Nishiyama Sensei's hand, in perpetuity. That organization is the original ITKF registered through the Secretary of State in California – not one in Brazil, or Macedonia, or Poland.

John Price-Kataoka: Do you think Global ITKF acted in a “democratic spirit” while you were still a member of their group?

Jorgensen Sensei: Absolutely not. As you know very well, discussion or questions were not encouraged, except from supporters who expressed total agreement with Mr. Gaertner and Mr. Kuster. Their behaviour is not behaviour of a democratic organization.

John Price-Kataoka: I remember attending an online Zoom meeting where the entire ETKF was suspended and replaced with new members. Do you remember that meeting, and do you have any comments about it?

Jorgensen Sensei: Yes, I remember it. And as you saw at the meeting, I spoke against it as much as I was allowed – which was again limited by Mr. Kuster. The process was completely against the Constitution of ITKF – at least the ITKF I knew and had been a part of for 50 years. Setting aside the fact there was no notice given to the individual member countries of ETKF, the formation of the replacement organization was absolutely not proper. It did not include all the countries it needed to. This was because the notice for the formation meeting was sent to a very closely aligned group, within a very short timeframe – and deliberately excluded many other Member countries who may have been opposed. In fact, some countries who should have attended did not know the meeting had even happened. The action was taken solely to purge Dr. Vladimir Jorga and countries deemed problematic, from Mr. Gaertner's organization.

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John Price-Kataoka: Global ITKF has also stated that if a new chairman is elected from another country, the administrative office will then move to the country of the newly elected chairman. What do you think about such a policy?

Jorgensen Sensei: The question remains, “Will the governance office also move? Or will it now remain in Brazil?” It seems to me it is the governance office Mr. Gaertner wanted to move under the guise of the “administration” office – otherwise he would not have abandoned the original organization registered in the United States. Look at the IOC. In my active time with ITKF there has been an IOC President from Spain, Germany and now South Africa. Has the office moved? No, it has not. The organization is the key focus – not the individual.

John Price-Kataoka: You were suspended from Global ITKF—why?

Jorgensen Sensei: I have never been formally advised by Mr. Gaertner or his cronies of my suspension. There was never any formal Notice of Suspension, Process of Appeal, or any communication of any type to me. I understand I was suspended at a meeting where I was absent. I could not attend because I was travelling to Western Canada. Ironically, it was the only Board meeting that I missed in my entire time of being part of the ITKF Board which spans decades. I was informally notified by another member of the Board of the suspension following the meeting. Is that professionalism, honesty, integrity? I think not.

The member who notified me said the reason given at the meeting was that I had reinstated the original ITKF. But, in my defense I had done so on the request of the ETKF National Federations who had been unjustly suspended a few months before and had just learned that Mr. Gaertner had abandoned the original ITKF registration. This was the same time that we learned that Mr. Gaertner had incorporated an entirely new ITKF organization 3 months prior to the 2019 General Assembly, without the knowledge of the general membership or the 2017 ITKF Board of Directors. I was shocked. My motives were to protect the original organization’s status as it had been abandoned by Mr. Gaertner without anyone’s knowledge – including mine.

Similarly, shortly after my personal suspension, Mr. Gaertner and Mr. Kuster lobbied for the suspension of Canada as a member without any notice, without any communication, or without any right to appeal, or any just cause given to the National Federation of Canada. This was simply vengeance on their part as I had made it perfectly clear that my actions with the original ITKF did not involve the Canadian Federation. Canada could have replaced me as President and remained a member. It was never given an opportunity even though Canada had been a significant supporter of the ITKF for decades. Again, this is a mafia type management style – which permanently eliminates any potential opposition. That certainly is not a democratic organization. I wrote in protest to Mr. Gaertner as I understand others did as well, but I received zero response.

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Even in the toughest times we went through with Mr. Kwiecinski and Poland there was a great deal of time spent to try and mediate the differences before the Special Meeting to consider suspension was called. That is not how the organization operated by Mr. Gaertner and Mr. Kuster operate.

John Price-Kataoka: Have they tried to keep a channel of communication open with you after your suspension?

Jorgensen Sensei: No. As I said, I received no communication aside from what they write about me and Nishiyama Sensei's original ITKF. They simply removed (blocked me) from the electronic portals the organization uses to communicate. I think this also answers your question about Mr. Gaertner's organization being democratic. A democratic organization offers an avenue of appeal or mediation to resolve difficult conflict. Mr. Gaertner and Mr. Kuster do not.

I did reach out to Mr. Romulo Machado, who served as the ITKF General Secretary following Mr. Crowe, the day I informally learned of my suspension. He and I have a long history in ITKF. I explained to him the situation of the abandonment of the original ITKF, which I thought was a threat to ITKF and what I had done to protect the ITKF and the resulting suspension. He understood very well the importance of the original organization, the mistake made by Mr. Gaertner and was supportive of the action I had taken. He offered to speak with Mr. Gaertner as his country and Brazil have a shared language and he thought he might be able to overcome the misunderstanding. That was in 2021. He and I have spoken since but there appears to be no interest on the part of Mr. Gaertner for corrective action to be taken, or any discussion to be held. This tells me his continued statements of commitment to ITKF and Nishiyama's Sensei's legacy are false. They are made only to serve his agenda.

John Price-Kataoka: This is a quote from a magazine article posted on the Global ITKF website:

"Unfortunately, the world of karate also faces serious distortions, driven by egocentric minds in need of validation, and we must address them clearly. There are organizations created by former members of our institution who, after having their ties severed in accordance with our constitution, began copying our structure, our regulations, our visual identity, and even our name, attempting to present themselves as the legitimate continuation of the federation founded by Hidetaka Nishiyama. This is absolutely unacceptable."

Do you think you are being egocentric?

Do you feel you are copying Global's structure, regulations, and identity?

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Jorgensen Sensei: You do understand that the “magazine” you quote from is their own magazine? Consequently, it is unlikely to provide a balanced opinion or comment. But to answer your questions – I am not egotistical to want to protect the legacy organization of Nishiyama Sensei, created and registered by him. I believe, as others do, that Mr. Gaertner made a colossal mistake and doesn’t know how to resolve it because he can’t own it or admit to it. He must blame someone else. He has shown that by his unwillingness to face the issue and communicate a resolve. Perhaps he doesn’t want a resolve because he doesn’t have the depth of knowledge or history of ITKF. He wants to create it in his own image – not Nishiyama Sensei’s. I don’t really know. What I do know is the behaviour displayed by him and people like him is the real definition of being egotistical.

I agree that it is abhorrent for an organization to do what you have described in the quote to another organization, but the culprit is not the original ITKF – the culprits are housed within Global ITKF. They are the ones who have done the misdeeds. They are also hypocrites to say these things when Mr. Gaertner created a completely new and parallel ITKF organization without letting the actual Board of Directors or Membership at the time in on his secret. As I have already pointed out – he never informed the actual Board of the ITKF. Such action is a direct opposition to the ITKF he says he is committed to – particularly when he sabotaged the original organization himself. He never told them of that either. The meetings he claim have legitimized his actions and himself are meetings after the purge of many long-standing members and individuals.

The date of the incorporation of his new organization is September 2019 – a full three months before the supposed General Assembly which was held in Brazil. Between 2017 and 2019 he held many, many meetings with his “internal” Board – which was also unknown to the actual Board of ITKF elected in 2017. Yet he did not hold one single meeting with the ITKF Board of 2017. Is that acceptable? I don’t think so. The many members that continue today in the original ITKF organization also agree with this assessment.

John Price-Kataoka: Do you believe California ITKF is the legitimate continuation of the federation founded by Hidetaka Nishiyama?

Jorgensen Sensei: It is not the “California” ITKF – it is the ITKF created by Nishiyama Sensei. Just because Mr. Gaertner decided to ignore and abandon it – does not make it any less real.

The original organization registered in California **IS** the legacy of Nishiyama Sensei, it has all of the history of Traditional Karate including the legacy of the negotiations with WUKO and WKF. Mr. Gaertner’s organization does not.

John Price-Kataoka: Here is another quote from the same article:

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“We are facing practices that amount to institutional fraud and may involve crimes such as misappropriation of intellectual property, unfair competition, and falsification of corporate identity. These are entities with no real headquarters, no legal structure, no democratically elected board, no registered members — operating based on appearances, driven by social media, and, in many cases, with deliberate bad faith,” denounced Gaertner.

These are serious claims. Do you have any comments regarding them?

Do you think ITKF is being dishonest or acting in bad faith?

What is your response to claims that original ITKF is stealing intellectual property?

Jorgensen Sensei: Again, I believe they have the issue backwards. The two legal opinions which we contracted and circulated to our members state the opposite to their claims. The misconduct is on the part of Mr. Gaertner and his organization, not the original ITKF. I have already explained the Trademarks and Copyright matters. Those rights were never transferred to Mr. Gaertner’s organization any more than they were transferred to Mr. Kwiecinski’s WTKF, or to Mr. Nedev’s Macedonia ITKF. Each of these people and organizations assumed that it is very expensive to defend these rights and that legal action was unlikely to be taken and so they moved ahead and claimed the identity and material of ITKF as their own. That is real identity theft!

And, on a moral and ethical level it is abhorrent. The rights do not belong to them. They can cry foul all they want, but I know they are cheating because I was part of registering those rights legally in the first place. I hope karate-ka will understand this and begin to judge their hollow claims of honesty, integrity and “keepers of moral and ethical values” differently and more harshly. They claim a strong understanding and commitment to the BUDO principles of Traditional Karate, but honesty, ethical and moral behaviour are the foundation of BUDO. To this they are hypocrites.

These organizations are all membership organizations. I believe that eventually the original ITKF will come out ahead as more students and supporters come to learn the truth and judge them accordingly.

As Sensei often said, “Time is short!” Time is coming too quickly when those who actually know the story will not be here to correct the misinformation, and the gap will be filled by such creative story tellers such as these people are. Thus, I am not going to waste my time trying. My focus is on rebuilding the original ITKF with those people who understand and want the organization to succeed. That is a much more positive way to spend my time.

John Price-Kataoka: Do you have any final words regarding the statements made by people leading Global ITKF?

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Jorgensen Sensei: They are excellent spin doctors with good marketing skills. But their organization is not built on the foundation of Nishiyama Sensei. They are not committed to building and growing Nishiyama's legacy. They are simply dedicated to building their own legacy using Nishiyama Sensei's name and work. They had a chance to prove it was different, but they chose not to. It is unfortunate, but I think it is self-explanatory that purging the organization of its long standing senior ITKF members who have the most history with Nishiyama Sensei in ITKF is a strong indication that the organization they operate is not the organization of Nishiyama Sensei's. It is a cardboard cutout.

John Price-Kataoka: Do you have any final words you would like readers to know?

Jorgensen Sensei: Many people claim to follow Nishiyama Sensei, but few know, or follow, his path. The path of Nishiyama Sensei through ITKF is about human development. The objective of his path is to assist each person in achieving his, or her maximum potential – not simply as an athlete in Traditional Karate, but as a human being. Competition is part of that journey, but only as a tool to be used in the greater objective of self-development.

Traditional Karate has competition every day in its dojos. Its purpose is not to be a champion – but to understand yourself, using danger as motivation to strengthen mind, body and spirit. Tournament competition is meant to do the same thing – but on a bigger stage with more unknown factors to face. That's why Sensei always maintained strictly his point that the rules of tournament competition must reflect exactly the training of the dojo. Many do not understand the meaning of that statement. And, many more have lost that objective.

The purpose of the original ITKF is to keep Sensei's path clean through understanding that fundamental objective which can be simply expressed as – “sometimes you win, and sometimes you learn...but learning is always a win.”

John Price-Kataoka: Thank you for taking the time to do this Sensei.

Jorgensen Sensei: OSU. Thank you for your interest.