

**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 70: January/February 2025**

**All issues of the Pan-American Seiwakai Newsletter are Dedicated to
Accurately Reporting Seiwakai Events, Goju Ryu News, and Karatedo
Events, History & Philosophy.**



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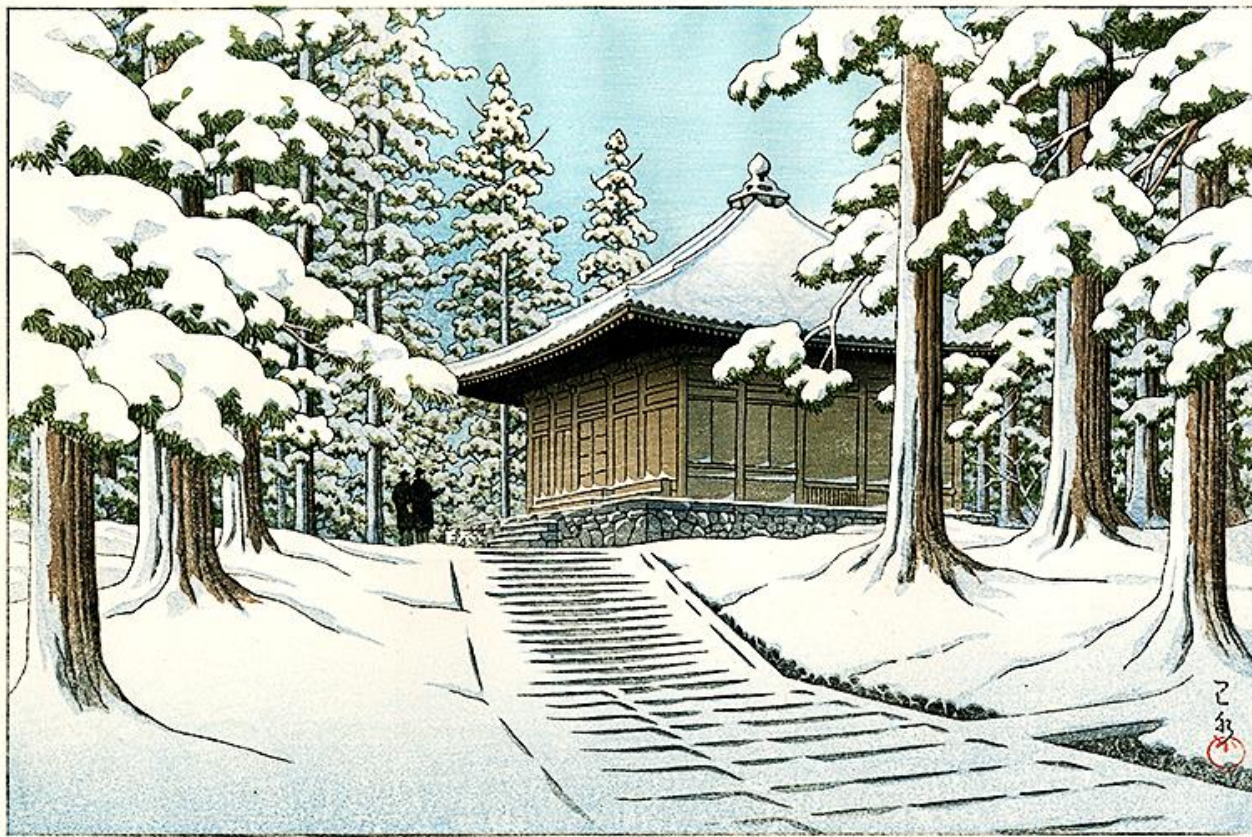
Newsletter Editor:

Mark Cramer

Seiwakai Canada

Peter Brown: Representative

Vassie Naidoo: Liaison



Chusonji Temple

Hasui Kawase

Kawase Hasui: Chusonji Temple

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Happy New Year!
あけましておめでとう
Akemashite Omedetō



Welcome to the Year of the Snake.

In the nineteenth century, Japan adopted the Gregorian Calendar, and they celebrate the new year on January 1st just as we do. However, they kept the traditional Japanese zodiac that has twelve animal signs – rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and boar.

Additionally, there are five elements associated with each animal in the twelve-year cycle – fire, earth, metal, water, and wood.

Consequently, your animal zodiac sign will occur every twelve years, while your specific animal and element zodiac signs will align only once every 60 years.

If you were born in 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013, or 2025 this is your zodiac year in the 12-year cycle. If you were born in 1965, this is a once in a lifetime animal and element alignment; your animal and element zodiac signs have made their complete 60-year cycle. It's the Year of the Wooden Snake



One of the most important holidays in Japan is New Year (正月, shōgatsu). Businesses shut down from January 1 to January 3, and families gather to spend the days together.

Each new year provides a fresh start. All obligations are supposed to be completed by the end of the year and forget-the-year parties (bonenkai) are held to leave the old year's worries and troubles behind.

On New Year's Eve, soba noodles which symbolize longevity are served, and homes and entrance gates are decorated with ornaments. Clothes and houses are thoroughly cleaned.

January 1 is customarily started by viewing the new year's first sunrise which is believed to be representative for the whole year that has just begun. The day is supposed to be full of joy and free of stress and anger. Everything is clean, and no work should be done.

It is traditional to visit a shrine or temple on New Year's Day. Some popular temples and shrines, such as Tokyo's Meiji Shrine, attract several million people during the three days. It is quite striking to visit a temple at the actual turn of the year when large temple bells are rung 108 times ending at midnight.¹

¹ <https://www.japan-guide.com/e/e2064.html>

Sad News

It is with great sadness that I am announcing the passing of one of our Seiwakai family members, Keith Williams (Yondan). He passed away on 01/01/2025 after a lengthy illness.

Keith began his karate training in 1978, earned his Shodan in the 1980s, and had a dojo in Toledo at Northwest Baptist Church for many years. Some of you knew him from the Great Lakes Seiwakai Seminars in Ohio and Michigan or from when he traveled to Omagari, Japan in 2017 for our International Seminar.



Above: Keith Williams Sensei, Vassie Naidoo Shihan, Stan Burt, and Mark Cramer Shihan

At his funeral he was dressed and buried in his dogi bearing a Seiwakai patch and his kuro obi.

His smile, good nature, and kindness will be missed by all.



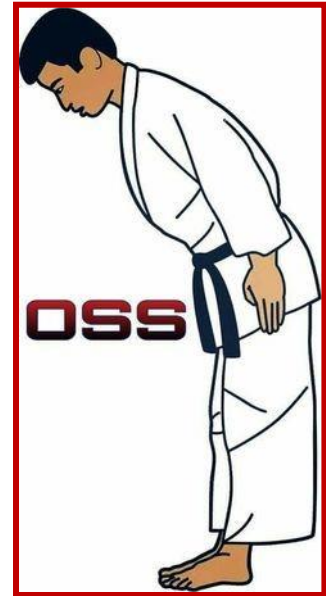
Above: Keith Williams Sensei and Mark Cramer Shihan having dinner at the Ohara Ryokan in Omagari, Japan 2017.

Oss: Its Meaning and Proper Usage

This article was previously published in Issue 20 of the Pan American Seiwakai Newsletter, and I believe that it was still relevant today.

Over the years, I have observed martial arts myths and misinformation being told as facts in karate dojos and within martial arts circles. Now that we have entered the internet age, these myths and misinformation have become more widespread than ever. I have found this to be the case in the use of the term *Oss*. (It is also written *Osu* or *Ossu* with the “u” sound being truncated.)

There seems to be two extremes in the misinformation that has been taught and disseminated regarding this term. With some people and in some dojos, *Oss* is used constantly for almost everything – a greeting, an affirmation, an exclamation, a farewell, and more. For other people and in other dojos, *Oss* is a forbidden expression – a crude and coarse utterance that is used primarily by drunken Japanese sailors.



I can remember being a guest in a dojo where *Oss* was used for just about anything and everything. I was greeted by *Oss* as I entered. As the sensei introduced me, there was another loud *Oss* offered by the class presumably exclaiming their appreciation of my presence. At some point, the sensei asked if everyone understood a particular concept, and *Oss* was the affirmative response. As I left, I was given a farewell *Oss* by many members of the dojo. The expression was used often and in a wide variety of situations.

A quick internet search confirmed the aforementioned usage of *Oss*. A U.S. based karate dojo explains: “In our school of karate, ‘OSU’ is a greeting, and is used to replace words and phrases such as ‘yes, good, I will, and excuse me.’” The online Urban Dictionary tells us something nearly identical about the definition of *Oss*: “A term used in karate or mixed martial arts schools meaning yes, hello, goodbye, and I understand.” I found these types of explanations and definitions over and over again on my internet search of U.S. dojos and organizations. Unfortunately, these definitions and usage of *Oss* are entirely incorrect.



On the opposite side of the spectrum, there are dojos and karate instructors who forbid the use of *Oss* claiming that it is unsuitable for polite company. I know a high-ranking instructor in an Americanized Goju organization who chided anyone who dared to say *Oss* in his presence. I once observed an unsuspecting instructor who made the mistake of saying *Oss* in front of him at a seminar. That instructor was immediately ridiculed with: “Only you and drunken Japanese sailors use that expression.”

My internet search also found the reference to *Oss* as a crude utterance. Although this second view was a bit more difficult to locate than the first, it was nonetheless available on the internet. On the All Gojuryu Network, the writer of an article tells us that he was given this explanation of *Oss* by the Japanese grandmother of a childhood friend. He tells us: “Ossu is considered impolite in

general Japanese language.” The author goes on to explain that at one time “anything military was the cool thing to do, and drunk military men were common. Exiting the bars at all hours of the morning these men would mumble ‘Onegaishimasu’ whenever upon [seeing] their comrades... however the words never did quite come out that way. If you or I poured out of a bar at 3:00 AM and stumbled upon a group of comrades, how would ‘Onegaishimasu’ come out of our mouths? But of course, as a garbled ‘Ossusussss’ or possibly worse.” Additionally, the author goes on to point out that when he has trained in Japan, he has not heard *Oss* used by the Japanese. Certainly, this view of the use of *Oss* lends credence to the idea that it is the crude utterance of drunken sailors.

Even though this explanation comes closer to the actual meaning and acceptable usage of *Oss*, it too is not completely accurate. In order to get a definitive answer about the precise meaning and the proper usage of *Oss*, one should not rely on the usage of the Japanese language by instructors of Americanized karate, or the explanation of a friend’s Japanese grandmother.

Instead, one should turn to an expert in the martial arts who possesses a consummate understanding of the Japanese language and culture. No one could be more appropriate for this than Shuji Tasaki Sensei, the founder of Seiwakai Goju Ryu Karatedo. He lived in Japan his entire life, and consequently, should be able to define the precise meaning of *Oss* and explain its proper usage within the context of the martial arts.



In an interview conducted by Leo Lipinski Shihan, Tasaki Sensei explained the meaning and proper usage of *Oss*. He told us: “It is an important Japanese value. OSS means ‘Endure and suppress yourself.’ It should not be used frivolously. Often, I ask people if they know what they are saying. It is an abbreviation of Oshi Shinobu.”

押忍

Kanji for Oss or Oshi Shinobu

It is important to note that Tasaki Sensei’s definition and usage of *Oss* is also available on the internet although it was a bit more difficult to locate. In an article written by Wendell E. Wilson, *Oss* is defined as “persevering while suffering” which is essentially the same as Tasaki Sensei’s definition. The article also makes reference to the meaning of the kanji characters above, and it warns that *Oss* is not a substitute for *Yes* (*hai*) or *I understand* (*wakarimasu*).

Consequently, we can see that *Oss* is not a catch-all phrase, and it is not a drunken sailor’s crude corruption of the greeting *Onegaishimasu*. Instead, we are told by Tasaki Sensei that the concept of *Oshi Shinobu* – enduring hardship and suppressing oneself – is an important Japanese cultural value.

If you use the expression *Oss*, it would be wise to use it appropriately, and only with the spirit and the dignity of Tasaki Sensei’s explanation. I would definitely avoid using it in Japan since I have never heard it used by the Japanese inside or outside of a dojo or budokan.

Upcoming Seminars

Seiwakai Goshukan Canada Seminar 2025



May 2, 3, & 4

Etobicoke (Toronto), Canada

Special guest instructor Vassie Naidoo.

More details to follow.

Seiwakai Pan American Seminar 2025



November 7, 8, & 9

Toledo, Ohio

Details to follow

Chief Instructor – Vassie Naidoo, Seiwakai International Vice President

Seiwakai Around the Globe



Goju Ryu Karatedo Seiwakai International

Seiichi Fujiwara



President

Satoru Takahashi



Vice President

Vassie Naidoo



Vice President

Ben Mare



**Director
Africa**

Abel Figueiredo



**Director
Europe**

Pal Gila



**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)

Seiwakai International Seminar in Japan



Hi All,

Those that are going and thinking of going, please contact your teachers.

Seiwakai Seminar Omagari, Akita,
July 16th, 17th, 18th, 10am to 12noon All Levels

Lunch

3pm to 5pm All Levels

19th Free Day

20th, 21st, 10.00am to 12noon All Levels

LUNCH

3.00pm TO 5.00pm All Levels

18th and 21st 3pm to 5pm 6th Dan and above will Split from the group

22nd, 10am to 12noon

Thereafter Dan Testing

6pm Seiwakai Party

23rd Travel to Sendai

JKF Goju Kai

Seminar and Dan Testing 24th, 25th

Tournament 26th, 27th

Party To Be Determined

Due to the deterioration of Mrs. Fujiwara's health, Fujiwara Shihan will not be able to attend any of the seminars outside of Japan this year. Thank you for understanding.

Thank You

Vassie Naidoo

ヴァッシー



誠
和
会

Goju-Ryu Karate-do
Seiwakai - Switzerland
National Seminar 2025

+ 30 years' Shintaikan
karate clubs anniversary



Abel A. Figueiredo
8th dan - Kyoshi



Luigi Stanziano
7th dan - Kyoshi

FEE:

1 day – 40 CHF

2 day – 80 CHF

1-2 March 2025

(10h00-12h30 / 14h30-17h00)

2300 La Chaux-de-Fonds, Halle Volta

Contact: hinek@mailbox.org / +33 6 08 46 84 45





SEIWAKAI INTERNATIONAL ITALY EVENTS 2025



*Experience the thrill of karate in one of Italy's most picturesque locations.
Seiwakai karateka from all over the world will gather in Oristano, Sardinia.*

*Two days of seminars will be a unique opportunity for Goju Ryu enthusiasts to learn and hone
their skills by expanding their knowledge thanks to Hanshi Seichi Fujiwara and the most
representative Seiwakai top Shihan.*

*A great occasion to celebrate the athletes' commitment, determination and talent will be the
European Championship to win the continental title.*

*Immersed in a unique scenario, take part in a sightseeing tour from the ancient ruins of Tharros to
the extraordinary well of Santa Cristina, get to know the legendary warriors of Mont'e Prama and
relax on the beautiful beaches of the area, enjoying the crystalclear sea.*

*Don't miss the opportunity to participate in this unrepeatable event, where tradition,
nature and passion for karate will give you an unforgettable experience.
Seiwakai Italia is waiting for you!*

**26/29TH JUNE 2025
ITALY - SARDINYA - ORISTANO**

COMMING SOON DETAILS

ORGANIZATION BY SEIWAKAI JKF GOJU KAI ITALIA

REFERENCE - KYOSHI LUIGI STANZIANO

CONTACT: GOJUKAN.ITALIA@YAHOO.IT /// WHATSAPP: +39 380 322 8680

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SEIWAKAI INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR



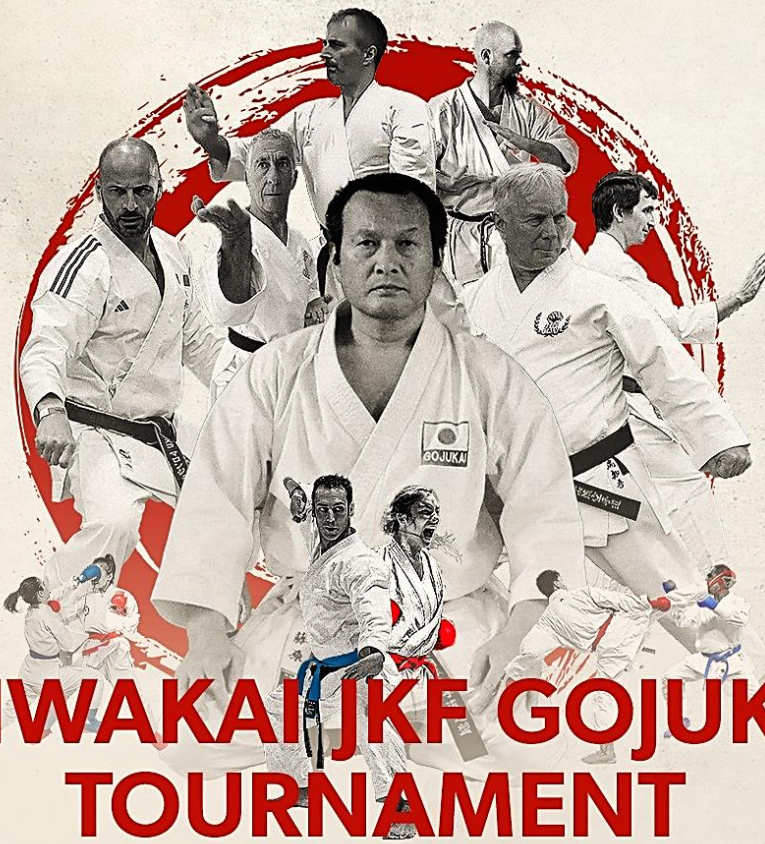
SEIICHI FUJIWARA - HANSHI • 8TH DAN

VASSIE NAIDOO - HANSHI • 8TH DAN - RASTISLAV MRÁZ - KYOSHI 8TH DAN - ABEL FIGUEIREDO - KYOSHI • 8TH DAN

PAL GILA - KYOSHI • 7TH DAN - LUIGI STANZIANO - KYOSHI • 7TH DAN

27TH / 28TH JUNE 2025

DAN GRADING: JKF GOJUKAI - SEIWAKAI



SEIWAKAI JKF GOJUKAI TOURNAMENT

29TH JUNE 2025

ITALY - SARDINIA - ORISTANO

VENUE: PALA SPORT LOC. SA RODIA

ORGANIZZATION BY SEIWAKAI JKF GOJU KAI ITALIA



REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA



Comune di
ORISTANO

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Black Belt Training in Australia



Seiwakai/Goshukan/Shuseikan Black Belt Training which was hosted at Borg Dojos in Sydney on 7th December 2024. A special thanks goes out to Shihans Glenn Stephenson, Stacey Karetsian, and Paul Kean. It was a great turnout and raining amongst all Dojos in hot and humid conditions.



Seiwakai Portugal



This past Saturday, we were in Beja for an internship of the Portugal Seiwakai Karate Associations Network. It was the first internship of the season 2024-2025, being organized by the South Zone of Seiwakai Portugal, in the case of the Karate Association of Beja.

The education of coaches, advanced practitioners, and early-stage practitioners is possible and desirable, with the deepening performance stages on multidimensional demanding criteria (biopsychosocial paradigm), an important space.

Adults, youth and children have been attentive and joined a transformational practice, which makes them interpretively model their path of improvement in an educational way.

Gm to all this past Saturday morning In the afternoon, we focused more on black belts. I've got a good impression!



Mario Borg and Bernie Haughey received their Renshi Titles from Seiichi Fujiwara Shihan.



“We are so proud to be members of Seiwakai Japan.
Seiwakai is a wonderful karate family.”