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## Interview with Paul Starling, Kyoshi-Shihan I.K.G.A. Vice-President for the Oceania-Bloc

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**Can you give us a little bit of your background here** (as you feel comfortable):

**Current License:** Kyoshi

**When Received:** Kyoshi 1989 awarded with 6th Dan

**Current Rank:** 7th Dan

**When Received:** 7th Dan 1995

**Year Started:** 1963

**Where:** Sydney Australia

**Birthday:** 12th Feb 1948

**Family Info** (Any): Father was a Lt. Colonel in the Australian Regular Army with 43 years service before retiring. I was also in the Army for 6 years and was a Platoon Commander with the rank of Second Lieutenant ( 2Lt ). 1966 - 1972.

**Could you tell us, a little bit about HOW and WHY you decided to learn Goju-Ryu, and in particular the Yamaguchi Way?**

In my early high school years I took up Judo becoming a State Champion in a Junior Division. I had always been interested in Karate and had purchased every Karate book and Magazine that I could get from about 1960 onwards. Yamaguchi Goju Kai Karate first came to Australia in 1963, and I was one of the very original students, and was as a matter of fact only the 2nd person to be graded to Black Belt in the original Sydney ( Australian ) Dojo. At that stage ( to the best of my knowledge) Goju-Kai was the only Japanese based Karate Organization in Australia.



**What were your impressions at Hombu Dojo when you first arrived there, and what the practice was like?**

My first trip to Japan was in 1970, as a member of the Australian National Karate Team for the First World Karate Do Championship Tournament ( WUKO - WKF ) held in Tokyo and Osaka in October 1970. After the Championships I stayed for one month of training at the Hombu Dojo in Tokyo as a guest of Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi. He had visited Australia earlier that year in April 1970 when he had graded me to 2nd Dan. Whilst in Japan I was instructed to open my own Dojo on my return to Australia and was given the Dojo name of Sydney Goju Kan by Gogen Hanshi, he also awarded me Licenced Instructor Status of Shidoiin.

I was very excited and impressed by the Japanese training, and the attitude and fighting spirit of the Japanese Instructors and students. Just to be there and experience the Japanese Culture and way of life was a rewarding experience in itself. In those days, there

were hardly any foreign visitors Seniors to extend full friendship and hospitality to me, in return for me having helped him in Australia earlier that year. Still, the training was very hard, and the Kumite very strong !

**At that time, who were the main instructors at Hombu Dojo?**

Well, I had many Instructors in Japan between 1970 and 1973. I returned to Japan in 1972 following on from the 2nd World Karate Do Championship Tournament in Paris France where I had again represented Australia. Gogen Hanshi had again visited Australia that year, staying at my parents' house along with Shuji Tasaki Shihan. He invited me to return

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to Japan for one year of fulltime live in training at the newly formed Nihon Karatedo Senmon Gakko (Japan Karatedo College) where I graduated as the very first Graduate of the College, and was awarded with the Shihan Renshi Licence in December 1973.

During those early years my instructors were Grandmaster Gogen Yamaguchi himself, Tasaki Shihan, Goshi Yamaguchi Shihan (now Saiko Shihan), Grandmaster Hironori Otsuka from Wado Ryu, Grandmaster Iwata Manzao from Shito Ryu, Grandmaster Tamae from Rembukan and Grandmaster Motokatsu Inoue from Ryukyu Kobujitsu Hozon Shinko Kai. All of these Grandmasters were personal friends of Gogen Hanshi and were guest instructors at his Karate College. Other Goju Kai Instructors included Ishibashi Shihan, Sakamoto Shihan from NTV, Takahashi Shihan, Tsugimoto Shihan, Machida Shihan, and Ishihara Shihan.

**Could you please share with us, some of fond memories you have of Gogen Yamaguchi-Kaiso?**

He was an incredible man. Warm, friendly, and although he was much older and more senior to myself in Karate Do, always treated me with total respect and dignity. He used to teach Yoga and Meditation classes, and sometimes entered the Dojo with his Karategi and Red Belt and corrected us, taught Basics, and Self Defence Techniques. It was indeed a great honor to not only be taught by him, but to even be in his presence ! He radiated energy, and although being advanced in years was extremely alert and agile.

**What kinds of things do you pay attention to when you are instructing or explaining?**

My teaching has now changed greatly. I only instruct advanced people, , mainly Instructors and Black Belts. I do not need to teach them how to perform basics, as they already know. I do not need to impose discipline, as they already have self discipline developed from years of training. So I can concentrate on demonstrating the "Finer Points" of how best to achieve maximum effectiveness in all of their techniques, and how to modify and adapt their training as they get older. Also how to become better people.

I have students who have been with me from the beginning of my first Dojo. Amongst my students who have gone on to become Shihans in their own right, are Ingo De Jong Shihan (European IKGA Director and IKGA Vice President), Helmut Moldners Shihan (former Branch Chief of the North Coast New South Wales IKGA), Alexandra "Sandie" Starling Shihan, the first Australian ever to achieve a medal in the World Karate Championships for WUKO - WKF, which happened in Taiwan in 1982, and Mark Burton Shihan current New South Wales Branch Chief.

**Do you have any last words of advice?**

Yes, keep training. Don't give up. Karate is a journey of "Self Discovery". Place equal emphasis on your inner development as to your external development so that you have BALANCE in your life. That is, your spiritual, mental, and emotional development are just as important as your technical development. True Karatedo should lead to inner peace and comfort as to who you are. You have nothing to prove to anyone, but yourself. Of course Karate Do is practiced as part of a group involvement, but your greatest opponent is always yourself. KARATE IS FOR LIFE. ENJOY LIFE. ENJOY KARATE.

**Thank you so much for your time and your effort to promote the vision Gogen-Kaiso had and Goshi Saiko-Shihan has, for the organization we all love.**



**Eugene Kitney-sensei  
Administrator – IKGA Fan Page aka "The Goju-Kai Fan"**

More information on Paul Starling-Shihan coming in the future. Watch this page for announcements coming soon.  
Check <http://www.gojukai.com.au/> for more.

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