Shuji Tasaki Sensei Passes Away

by Des Tuck

Shuji Tasaki Sensei, 9th Dan JKF Goju Kai, passed away on January 31, 2011, just a few days after his 78th birthday. Tasaki Sensei’s ability as a Goju Ryu master was unquestioned. He started his karate training in 1951 under Gogen Yamaguchi Sensei, his only teacher, and when he left the Yamaguchi group twenty years later, he had been the senior instructor in the Tokyo dojo of Yamaguchi Sensei for many years.

In 1963, Tasaki Sensei won the first World Goju Kai Karate-do championship, in the days when “knockout, knockdown, break bones and finish them” matches were the way in karate tournaments. In 1972, Tasaki Sensei started his own organization, Goju Ryu Karate-do Seiwa Ka, which was known for its tough fighters, under the stern and demanding direction of their teacher. His insight and experience in karate-do were unique, and this was evident even in his waning years when ill health began to take its toll.

Under Tasaki Sensei’s watchful eye, Seiwa Kai grew into a large organization, present in dozens of countries around the world on every continent. As demanding and uncompromising as he was with his seniors, he was intensely human and knew how to take care of his people. He gave, and expected in return, unquestioned loyalty, and was the embodiment of the Budo spirit.

Tasaki Sensei showed great love for and commitment to his students. His greatest pleasure was to travel around the world teaching them, and sharing his wisdom when his students came to Japan for training or testing. In November, 2010, even though he was in poor health and suffering from a painful back injury, he insisted on traveling to Mexico to teach at the first Mexico JKF Goju Kai seminar. This was his last trip to do what he loved most.

The world has lost a powerful force in Goju Ryu karate-do and he will be sorely missed.

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