



International IMGKA Master's Seminar – Vila Nova de Gaia - Portugal

INTERNATIONAL IMGKA MASTER'S SEMINAR



国際明武館剛柔流空手道連盟

NEW GENERATION OF OKINAWAN MASTERS



AKIHIRO YAGI

9th DAN (HANSHI)
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF IMGKA

AKIHITO YAGI

9th DAN (HANSHI)
CHAIRMAN OF IMGKA

PORTUGAL 30 MAY 2026

(SPECIAL CLASSES 27, 28, 29)

Registration: www.meibukanportugal.com



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Message from Sensei Ricardo Leite, Chief Instructor

Dear friends,

It is with great honor and enthusiasm that I am pleased to announce the **International IMGKA Masters' Seminar**, which will take place on **May 30** in **Vila Nova de Gaia**. We will have the presence in our country of **Hanshi Akihito Yagi, 9th Dan**, and his younger brother, **Hanshi Akihiro Yagi, 9th Dan**.

Next May, Portugal will become the epicenter of traditional Okinawan karate.

The Yagi brothers are grandsons of the great master **Meitoku Yagi**, founder of **Meibukan** and a direct student of **Sensei Chojun Miyagi**, creator of the **Goju-Ryu** style. These masters bring with them not only technical excellence, but also the living legacy and ancestral wisdom of a lineage that defines the essence of this art.

The open seminar will take place on **May 30**, where the energy and knowledge of these masters will be shared with all practitioners. However, the learning journey begins earlier: on **May 27, 28, and 29**, the **Hombu Dojo of Meibukan Portugal – Dojo Vilagaia** – will open its doors for **Private Masterclasses**, offering a unique opportunity for close interaction and technical refinement in an environment of exclusive dedication.

This will be **Sensei Akihito Yagi's third visit to Portugal** and **the first visit of his brother Akihiro Yagi**.

We want this event to be more than training; we want it to be a great celebration of Okinawan karate on Portuguese soil. We invite all enthusiasts and practitioners to join us in this celebration of discipline, respect, and tradition.

Prepare your spirit and your *karategi*. The cradle of karate is coming to us.

I wish everyone excellent moments of practice, learning, sharing, fellowship, and friendship.

We look forward to seeing you!

Sensei Ricardo Leite, Chief Instructor

Ricardo Leite



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF VILA NOVA DE GAIA

WELCOME TO VILA NOVA DE GAIA

It is with great pleasure that we welcome this prestigious International Karate Event, which reinforces the spirit of loyalty and respect so well symbolized by sport.

Karate, more than a sports modality, is a school of discipline and self-improvement, values we admire and wish to see reflected in this seminar.

To all participants, I wish you an unforgettable experience, marked by fair play and excellence.

Welcome to Gaia.

Best regards,

Luis Filipe Menezes

President of the City Council of Vila Nova de Gaia



WELCOME MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE PARISH COUNCIL OF GULPILHARES

Welcome to Gulpilhares, the “stage” where the discipline and spirit of Karate come together.

It is an honor to welcome athletes, masters, and enthusiasts from all over the world to this International Karate Event. Gulpilhares, in Vila Nova de Gaia, takes great pride in its strong connection to the martial arts, being home to institutions such as Dojo Vilagaia and Associação Meibukan Portugal, both recognized references in Goju-Ryu Karate.

Oss! May this tatami be a space for self-improvement, mutual respect, and friendship. In Gulpilhares, we believe that Karate goes beyond competition; it is a way of life. We wish all athletes the greatest success and hope you take with you the very best memories of our hospitality.

Alfredo Rocha

President of the Parish Council of Gulpilhares



HANSHI AKIHITO YAGI

Sensei Akihito Yagi is one of the most prominent figures in traditional Okinawan Goju-Ryu karate today, currently serving as the President of the International Meibukan Goju-Ryu Karatedo Association (IMGKA).

Biographical Profile

Date of Birth: April 4, 1977 in the city of Naha, Okinawa Prefecture, Japan.

Rank: Holds the title of Hanshi, 9th Dan (as of 2023), having succeeded his father in the leadership of the organization.

Karate Background and Lineage

Akihito Yagi belongs to a direct and highly respected lineage of Okinawan karate:

Beginnings: He began training in 1980 at the age of three under the guidance of his grandfather, the legendary master Meitoku Yagi (founder of Meibukan and direct student of Sensei Chojun Miyagi, the creator of Goju-Ryu).

Training: He was guided by both his grandfather and his father, Sensei Meitatsu Yagi (10th Dan). He grew up immersed in the philosophy of traditional Okinawan karate and Meibukan, which emphasizes the concept of the “*warrior with a pure mind.*”

Leadership: In 2007, he assumed the presidency of the Yagi Dojo (World Headquarters), and in December 2015 he became President of the international federation (IMGKA). He currently travels the world teaching seminars and preserving the purity of the style.

Cinema and Cultural Outreach

Akihito Yagi is also widely known outside the martial arts community for his work in film:

Kuro Obi (Black Belt): In 2007, he starred in the Japanese film *Kuro Obi*, portraying the character Giryu. The film is renowned for using real karate masters (such as Shotokan practitioner Tatsuya Naka) instead of professional actors, ensuring authenticity in both technique and philosophy.

Other Projects: He has participated in other productions such as *High-Kick Girl!* (2009) and frequently collaborates with the Kuro-Obi World channel, where he demonstrates the ancestral techniques of Meibukan.



HANSHI AKIHIRO YAGI

Sensei Akihiro Yagi is a central figure in contemporary Okinawan karate, belonging to the direct lineage of the Meibukan Goju-Ryu style.

Date of Birth: October 20, 1978

Rank: Holds the title of Hanshi, 9th Dan

Current Role: Serves as Vice President (Fuko-Kaicho) of the International Meibukan Goju-Ryu Karate-Do Association (IMGKA), working alongside his older brother, Sensei Akihito Yagi.

Karate Background

Family Lineage: He is the son of Meitatsu Yagi (10th Dan) and the grandson of the legendary Meitoku Yagi, a direct student of Sensei Chojun Miyagi (the founder of Goju-Ryu).

Training Beginnings: He began practicing karate at the age of three under the guidance of his grandfather, Sensei Meitoku Yagi, and his father, Sensei Meitatsu Yagi.

Leadership and Teaching: In the absence of his brother Akihito (who frequently travels for international seminars), Akihiro is responsible for leading training sessions at the IMGKA Hombu Dojo in Naha, Okinawa.

Achievements: In addition to his role as a master, Akihiro Yagi has competed internationally, winning a gold medal at world championships (such as the event held in Italy).

Cultural Preservation: He is recognized for demonstrating the Meibuken Katas (katas created by his grandfather) at official ceremonies and actively contributes to the promotion of Okinawan karate as a cultural heritage.



VILA NOVA DE GAIA

Vila Nova de Gaia is a municipality belonging to the Metropolitan Area of Porto. Located in the district of Porto, the city is in the Northern Region of Portugal.

With 300.000 inhabitants it is the most populated municipality in the North Region and one of the most populated municipalities in the country.

Vila Nova de Gaia has been known nationally and internationally for its Porto wine companies for centuries. However, other industries (cars and glass) help the municipality to be acknowledge due to their economic weight.

Vila Nova de Gaia is also a land of artists. Sculptors as Soares dos Reis (n. 1847- f. 1889), and Teixeira Lopes (n. 1866- f. 1942); writers as Maria Alberta Menéres (n. 1930 – f. 2019), and Diogo de Macedo (n. 1889- f. 1959) are key figures of portuguese culture, born in the municipality.

Some athletes from Vila Nova de Gaia have also distinguished themselves by their brilliant careers. Cases such as Vanessa Fernandes (Olympic triathlete medalist), her father Venceslau Fernandes (winner of Volta a Portugal, Cycling Tour at 39 years old) and Vítor Baía (former international goalkeeper and one of the players with most trophies won in the world).



TODO UM MUNDO

WHAT TO VISIT

Vila Nova de Gaia has a privileged geographical location, with over 15km of Atlantic coastline and almost 2 dozen beaches distinguished with “Blue Flag” for their environmental quality.

The Riverside area, on the south bank of the Douro River, in front of the city of Porto, is the welcome card of the district and must-see site. Here, you can find the well know Port wine cellars and know more about its history.





PORTO AIRPORT

The International Airport Francisco Sá Carneiro is about 20km away of the event venue, Pavilhão da Escola Almeida Garrett – Vila Nova de Gaia. It should take you around 20min to reach by car, taxi, or uber. There is also the possibility to catch the subway.

IMPORTANT DATES

- January 8th: Online Registration available
 - From January 8 to April 15, registrations will have a promotional price. After April 15, an additional 20% will be applied
 - Groups of 5 participants from the same dojo/association = 1 free registration (4 = 5)
- May 30th, International IMGKA Master's Seminar
- Private classes - Hombu Dojo Vilagaia from 7pm to 8h30pm, take place on:
 - May 27th All belt ranks, for participants aged 12 and above
 - May 28th for black and brown belts
 - May 29th Lecture on the history of Okinawa and Goju-Ryu karate

Limited to 30 participants!

REGISTRATIONS

The registrations will be open on January 8th of 2026 through this link: [Registration - International Master's Seminar](#)

The registrations can be done either individually or by a group. A group registration is valid when a Dojo/Association signs a minimum number of 5 participants.

After the registration, within 5 days, we will reach you by email with the payment details. If you register as a group, the email will be sent to your Dojo/Association or its representative. The registration will be concluded upon receipt of proof of payment.

EVENT VENUE

PAVILHÃO DESPORTIVO DA ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA ALMEIDA GARRETT EM VILA NOVA DE GAIA

Address: Praceta Dr. José Sampaio, 4430-090 Vila Nova de Gaia

Contact: +351 223745640

GPS: 41.1234134500000, -8.6017949110000





The organization will provide lunch at the event venue to all participants who choose that option in the online registration. You must choose between a dish of meat, fish or vegetarian. You can also pick a dish to your family and friends if they join you for lunch. The meals will be self-service, and each meal will cost 10€ per person (includes a dish, drink and dessert).

ACCOMMODATION

The organization established a partnership with Clip Hotel in Vila Nova de Gaia. There will be discounts available to who registers through our online form. Following the form, we will reach out to you with more details about your accommodation.



MERCHANDISE

At the event venue there will be merchandise available for purchase. However, you can acquire your t-shirt at the moment of the online registration for 20€. At the event venue the t-shirt will have a price of 25€.

A preview of the official t-shirt will soon be available on the website of Meibukan Portugal.

The following will be available:

- Official t-shirt of the seminar
- T- shirt Meibukan Portugal
- Jackets Meibukan Portugal
- Other items



INTERNATIONAL IMGKA MASTER'S SEMINAR 2026

PROGRAM

Saturday, May 30

8:00 – Participant reception

9:00 / 11:00 – All ranks, ages 12 and over (inclusive)

11:00 / 11:15 – Group photo / Dojo (please remain for the opening ceremony)

11:15 – Seminar opening ceremony

Group photo (adults and children)

11:45 – Coffee break

12:00 / 12:45 – All ranks up to 11 years old

Group photo

13:00 / 14:30 – Lunch break at the sports hall

14:30 / 15:15 – All ranks up to 11 years old

15:15 / 15:45 – Photos and autographs

15:45 / 16:00 – Coffee break

16:00 / 18:00 – All ranks, ages 12 and over (inclusive)

Final photos



PRIVATE MASTERCLASSES, MAY 27 & 28

(Limited number of participants)

WEDNESDAY – DAY 27 (7:00 pm – 8:30 pm)

- Training for ages 12 and over – all ranks

THURSDAY – DAY 28 (7:00 pm – 8:30 pm)

- Training for ages 12 and over – brown and black belts

FRIDAY – DAY 29 (7:00 pm)

LECTURE – History of Okinawa karate and Goju-Ryu

- All ranks, ages 12 and over
- Welcome Dinner

SUNDAY – 31st (Morning)

- 9:30 am – Belt promotion exams

SAYONARA PARTY – Afternoon

- From 5:00 pm – 10:30 pm

INFORMATION

All information related to the seminar will be available on our website:

<https://www.meibukanportugal.com/>

Any doubts or questions will be answered by the event organization.

For any additional information please reach out to +351 913 602 139 / +351 969 456 832, or through our email geral.meibukanportugal@gmail.com (preferential)