

Reishiki

In many *dojos* you might have noticed people mumbling words and phrases (Oneishemamma or Domo Arigato homabatamabamen? what?) and stumble through etiquette, formal practices or ceremonies and do not know either what they are doing or saying (in Japanese). In truth, most have never been explained what etiquette has to do with their safety or standards in their *dojo*. Many martial artists are unaware of *Reishiki*, *Reigi-saho*, and the proper etiquette of their *dojo* or martial art.

To explain *Reishiki* we must recognize that many Eastern religions are not true forms of worship. Many Eastern religions are philosophical systems coping with everyday occurrences. Some of these philosophical systems include practices that condition the body and mind to prepare a warrior for battle. Over time, practitioners began to honor the founders of these philosophies, turning them into deities and their philosophies and philosophies of the systems into doctrine. Historical examples include: Lao Tsu, Bautama (Buhidharma), or Confucius, as the originators of Taoism, Buddhism, or Confucianism.

Etiquette in the *dojo* is not to place students beneath another or to place instructors on a level higher closer to gods; it is not a mystery in the Martial Arts or part of the secret you will find out of when you reach a certain rank. *Reigi-saho*, or etiquette, is to organize the dojo into a functional society demonstrating discipline, dedication, respect, common sense, and most of all, manners.

Reishiki comes from two Japanese words. The first is "*rei*" defined as: bow, salutation, salute, courtesy, propriety, ceremony, thanks, and appreciation. The second part of the term is "*shiki*" defined as: ceremony, rite or function. Combine into the term "*Reishiki*" can translate as: ceremonial manners, bowing ceremony, or etiquette. Some might consider this type of consideration to another human being as being conservatively old fashioned; however, we could say that the end goal of *rei* is rooted into all forms of Budo because any Martial Art without *Reishiki* is just fighting.

Reishiki is the bowing ceremony that open and close class. This is where *deshi* (students) line up according to their particular rank and pay their respect and thanks for what they are about to learn or have learned. A highly structured class in any Budo, that includes *Goju Ryu karatedo*, begins on time with the senior student or instructor calling the beginning of class by ordering everyone to line up.

'Seiretsu' /sei-rit-seu/ or **'Shugo'** /shoo-go/ - [line up]

'Kiotsuke' /key-oht-skay/ - [attention]

'Seiza' /say-zah/ - [kneeling bow]

'Mokuso Hajime' /mok-so hah-jee-may/ - [begin meditation]

'Mokuso Yame' /mok-so yah-me/ - [stop meditation]

'Shomen ni Rei' /sho-men nee ray/[face Shomen -> bow] no verbal cues

'Shihan ni Rei' /shee-han nee ray/- [face Shihan -> bow and say **'Onegai Shimasu'**] /oh-nay-guy-she-mahhs/ *if present*

'Sensei ni Rei' /sen-say nee ray/ - [face Sensei -> bow and say **'Onegai Shimasu'**] *if present*

'Sempai ni Rei' /sem-pai nee ray/ - [face Sensei -> bow and say **'Onegai Shimasu'**] *if present*

'Shudo no Rei' /shoe-dhoi nee ray/- [face 3rd degrees and above -> bow and say **'Onegai Shimasu'**] *if present*

'Otegai ni Rei' /oh-tai-guy nee ray/- [ends turn in 90 degrees -> bow and say **'Onegai Shimasu'**]

'Kiritu' /kee-ree-tsoo/ or **'Dashimasu'** /da-shi-mahhs / or **Tatte** /tah-tay/ - [stand up]

'Rei' /ray/ - [standing bow] no verbal cues

To end class the senior student or instructor will call everyone to line up.

'Seiretsu' /sei-rit-seu/ or **'Shugo'** /shoo-go/ - [line up]

'Kiotsuke' /key-oht-skay/ - [attention]

'Seiza' /say-zah/ - [kneeling bow]

'Mokuso Hajime' /mok-so hah-jee-may/ - [begin meditation]

'Mokuso Yame' /mok-so yah-me/ - [stop meditation]

'Shomen ni Rei' /sho-men nee ray/[face Shomen -> bow] no verbal cues

'Shihan ni - Rei' /shee-han nee ray/- [face Shihan -> bow and say **'Domo Arigato Gozaimashita'**] /dou-mo ah-ree-gah-toe go-zie-mahsh-tah/ *if present*

'Sensei ni - Rei' /sen-say nee ray/ - [face Sensei -> bow and say **'Domo Arigato Gozaimashita'**] *if present*

'Sempai ni - Rei' /sem-pai nee ray/ - [face Sensei -> bow and say **'Domo Arigato Gozaimashita'**] *if present*

'Shudo no - Rei' /shoe-dhoi nee ray/- [face 3rd degrees and above -> bow and say **'Domo Arigato Gozaimashita'**] *if present*

'Otegai ni - Rei' /oh-tai-guy nee ray/- [ends turn in 90 degrees -> bow and say **'Domo Arigato Gozaimashita'**]

'Kiritsu' /kee-ree-tsoo/ or **'Dashimasu'** /da-shi-mahhs/ or **'Tatte'** /tah-tay/ - [stand up]

'Rei' /ray/ - [standing bow] no verbal cues

Yes, it is a lot of bowing; however, this should just about sum it up for any traditional *dojo*, including *Iaido*, *Aikido*, *Kendo* and *Judo*. This ceremony is not to be considered religious in nature, it is an important part of the *Reishiki* which is focused etiquette and is essential to Budo. *Reishiki* is important to the creation of a formal and traditional atmosphere in the *dojo*. In traditional *karatedo*, one of the first concepts that we are taught is that of *Reishiki* (or at least it should be). I do not think many students would last long who greets their instructor with "Yo Sensei" or "Yo, my main man-Sensei." As we begin our training, the concepts of *Reishiki* are taught to us as much of the art is, through observing those who have come before us. Watching our seniors in training and in their general actions and interactions in the *dojo* is an outstanding way to learn, provided that the seniors have been observant over the years. There are many occasions in the day to day operations of a *dojo* that require some form of ceremony. Some of the more common times are:

Beginning and the end of classes
Seminar or Special training by Guest Instructor
Mudansha/Yudansha (student/black belt)
Shinsa (Audition for Rank)

Many do not take class time in a *dojo* to teach the concepts of *Reishiki*, and I have yet to find a book on the subject. It should also be noted that there is a marked difference between "*Dojo Reishiki*" and that used in and to the general public. There are also noted differences between Japanese and Okinawa forms of *Reishiki*.

The student should stop and bow when entering or leaving a *dojo* and should bow once to *Shomen* and again if *dan* ranks are present. *Dan* ranks should bow once to the *Shomen* and again if the *Sensei* is present. I cannot stress how important it is to follow the proper protocol regarding etiquette and rank in the *dojo* or how important it is to bow before and after (in and out of) each exercise whether formal or informal. Etiquette is an integral part of Budo and without it we would be practicing nothing more than violence. The more training a person receives the calmer, dignified and humble the Karatedo practitioner should become. The beginner must practice etiquette in order to make him/herself a better person.

What is *Osu* - “*Oss*” short for “*Osae Shinobu*”?

OSU! You might have heard or even said it yourself, but do you know its origin, or that it is an abbreviation; chances are, probably not. The word “*osu*” of Japanese origin has become an almost vernacular word in the world of Karate, understood and exchanged between numerous practitioners of many nationalities, not only on the occasion of everyday greetings but also in place of expression such as “Thank you”, “Glad to meet you”, “Good-bye”, “Understood” and “I understand”.

The *OSU*, a phonetic transcription, is in fact, written with two Chinese characters. The first character (*Osae*) meaning literally, “pushing”, symbolizing the fighting spirit, the importance of effort, and facing all obstacles, pushing them away, with a positive and unchanging attitude (*FudoShin*). The second (*Shinobu*) meaning literally, “suffering”, expresses the courage and spirit of perseverance; suffering pains and resisting depression with patience and without giving up, always keeping spirits high.

The *Karateka* must strive to possess these physical and moral qualities which enable him/her to face any ordeal. However, this “spirit of *Osu*” can only be maintained and developed with persistent daily effort. The key word “*OSU*” is used in order to encourage the *karateka* to make a resolution, to convey it to each other and to encourage each other along the path of *Karatedo*. It is used as a word of many meanings, expressing the willingness to strive against all odds, to persevere on the road to physical, mental and spiritual strength, an expression of respect of ones seniors and responsibility to ones juniors.

In *Goju Ryu Karatedo*, instead of *OSU*, practitioners have maintained the most formal or most polite greetings of *Onegai Shimasu* and *Domo Arigato Gozaimashita*. Some believe that this is over kill if used outside of a dojo or when meeting the Emperor of Japan...

Most Formal/polite - *Domo Arigato Gozaimashita*

Less formal/polite - *Arigato Gozaimashita*

Even less formal/polite – *Arigato*