KARATE TERMINOLOGY

VOCABULARY

BUNKAI (boon-kai)

A study of the techniques and applications in KATA.

DAN

Black-belt grades.

1 st dan = shodan

2 nd dan = nidan

3 rd dan = sandan

4 th dan = yondan etc.

DOJO

A word used for the place of practice of martial arts.

EMBUSEN (emboo-sen)

Floor pattern transcribed by the placement of the feet in different

stances during a kata.

GI (gee)

The karate uniform. In Shotokan karate a white, cotton gi is worn.

Karate gis come in different “weights” (cotton-content), shapes

(tournament and classic), and prices. A lightweight, classic gi is

perfectly appropriate for a beginner.

HAI (ha-ee)

Yes, ok.

HIKI-TE (hee-kee-tay)

The retracting arm of a punching, blocking, or striking technique.

Helps rotate the hips and maintain the stable and precise delivery of

the technique.

KARATE

“Empty Hand".

KARATE-DO

"The Way of Karate” -physical, mental and social aspects.

KARATEKA

The practitioner of Karate.

KATA

Prescribed sequences of techniques performed with specific rhythm

and timing

KI (kee)

Mind. Spirit. Energy.

KIAI (kee-ai)

A short, loud shout accompanying a sharp, strong technique. Helps

release air from the lungs and relax the upper body so that the

technique is more effective. Also helps focus mental energy and

display spirit.

KIHON (kee-hon)

Basic techniques.

KIME (kee-may)

Focus of power.

KOHAI (ko-hai)

A student junior to oneself.

KYU (kee-u)

Grades 8 to 1 - all color belts. Any grade below a black belt.

OBI (o-bee)

The karate belt. Different styles and potentially different schools

within a style have a different belt-structure, but white belts are

always worn by beginners and black belts by advanced students. In

our dojo, we follow the traditional rank structure:

8 th kuy = white belt

7 th kuy = yellow belt

6 th kuy = orange belt

5 th kuy = green belt

4 th kuy = purple belt

3rd kuy = blue belt

2nd kuy = brown belt

1st kuy = brown belt

1 st dan and above = black belt

OSU (Oss)

No translation. Not a formal way of addressing someone in Japan,

but very popular in American dojos. Indicates respect,

acknowledgement, willingness and readiness to follow.

SEIZA

A proper sitting position used for the formal opening and closing of

the class, and whenever the instructor asks students to sit on the

side to watch a demonstration of techniques or kata.

SENSEI (sen-say)

A teacher. A term reserved for the chief instructor of the dojo, and

other high-ranking members. (Advanced follower of Karate-Do)

SEMPAI (sem-pai)

A senior student

SHIHAN (shee-han)

A formal title meaning master instructor or teacher of teachers.

Very few people in the world have achieved this ranking.

SHOMEN (show-men)

The designated front wall of a Dojo. Often the place where the

picture of our founder, Gichin Funakoshi and flags are displayed.

REI (ray)

Bow. A sign of respect, trust, and appreciation. May be done while

standing, or while kneeling such as at the beginning and end of

each class.

Shomen-ni-Rei: bow to the front of the dojo

Sensei-ni-Rei: bow to the teacher

Otagai-ni-Rei: bow to each other

COMMANDS

DOMO ARIGATO:

Thank you very much.

SEIRETSU (say-retsu)

Line up in an orderly fashion.

SEIZA (say-za)

Sit.

SHIZENTAI (sheezen-tai)

Natural position.

YAME (ya-may)

Return to starting position (typically hachiji-dachi)

HAJIME (hajee-may)

Begin

KAMAE

Get into position, prepare.

MOKUSO

Close the eyes and meditate.

NAOTTE (na-oh-tay)

At ease, relax.

MATTE (ma-tay)

Wait.

MAWATE (mawa-tay)

Turn into position

YOI (yoh-ee)

Ready (both mentally and physically)

YASUMI (ya-sumay)

Rest - normally following a long series of drills.

YAME (ya-may)

Stop

COUNTING in Japanese

One: ichi (i-chi)

Two: ni (ni)

Three: san (sa-n)

Four: shi (shi)

Five: go (go)

Six: roku (ro-ku)

Seven: shichi (shi-chi)

Eight: hachi (ha-chi)

Nine: ku (ku)

Ten: ju (ju-u)

WAZA (Techniques)

Tsuki (tsu-kee) or zuki (zoo-kee): punching

Uke (ou-kay): blocking

Uchi (oo-chee): strike

Keri (ke-ree) or geri (ge-ree): kicking

TARGET AREAS on opponent's body:

Jodan (joh-dan): upper level, includes face, neck, and head area

Chudan (choo-dan): middle level, includes the chest, side chest and

back area

Gedan (gay-dan): lower level, the lower trunk area

SUNDOME (soon-doe-may): literally "one sun short-stop", used to

describe distancing in sparing. Stop just short of the target. For

beginners this is about an inch and a half or three centimetres.

Thus many beginners think 'san(as in three)-dome'. The correct

distance to stop short is more a matter of your control than a

distance on a ruler.

The correct distance is often closer and closer as one improves in

skill.

Of interest these dimensions are old historic dimensions:

one sun is = 1/10 shaku

1 shaku = 30.3cm

therefore 1 sun = 3.03cm

HIDARI: left

MIGI: right

GYAKU: reverse

AKA: red

SHIRO: white

YOKO: Side.

MAE: front

ZENSHIN: Forward.

USHIRO: back

KEKOMI: thrust

KEAGE: snap

BODY PARTS

EMPI (em-pee): elbow

HIZA (hee-zah): knee

KAISHO (kay-sho): open hand, such as in shuto-uke

KENTSUI (ken-tschuee): hammer fist (also known as TETTSUI)

SOKUTO (sokoo-toh): edge of foot, such as in side thrust kick

URAKEN (oo-raken): back of fist

SHUTO (shoo-to): outer surface of hand alongside the small finger

HAITO (haee-to): inner surface of hand alongside the thumb

JODAN TSUKI: upper level punch

CHUDAN TSUKI: middle level punch

GEDAN TSUKI: lower level punch

CHOKU TSUKI: straight punch

GYAKU TSUKI: reverse punch

KAGI ZUKI: hook punch

HASAMI TSUKI: scissor punch

KIZAMI ZUKI: jab

MAWASHI ZUKI: roundhouse punch

MOROTE ZUKI: U-Punch with both fists simultaneously

TATE ZUKI: punch with fist along vertical plane

URA ZUKI: upper cut punch at close range

YAMA ZUKI: mountain Punch, a U-punch, resembles the character

for mountain, thus the name.

AGE UKE (ah-gay oo-kay): rising block

UCHI UKE: inside-out block

SOTO UKE: outside block

GEDAN BARAI: lower level block

SHUTO UKE: knife hand block

MOROTE UKE: reinforced (augmented) block

JUJI UKE (joo-jee): X block

KAKIWAKE UKE: X block

MANJI UKE: double block with one arm in gedan barai and the other

in uchi uke.

EMPI UCHI: elbow strike

HAITO UCHI: ridge-hand strike

KENTSUI UCHI: (Or TETTSUI UCHI) hammer fist strike

MAE EMPI: forward elbow strike

MAWASHI EMPI UCHI: roundhouse (circular) elbow strike

OTOSHI EMPI UCHI: dropping elbow strike

TATE EMPI UCHI: rising elbow strike

TATE URAKEN UCHI: vertical back-fist strike

USHIRO EMPI UCHI: elbow strike aiming behind own body

YOKO MAWASHI EMPI UCHI: side elbow strike

NUKITE: stabbing using the extended index finger or both the index

and the middle fingers

ASHI BARAI: Foot Sweep

GERI (kicks)

MAE GERI KEAGE: front snap kick

MAE GERI KEKOMI: front thrust kick.

MAE ASHI GERI: front kick with the front leg (KIZAMI GERI)

MAWASHI GERI: roundhouse kick

GYAKU MAWASHI GERI: reverse roundhouse kick

USHIRO MAWASHI GERI: inside-out roundhouse kick

HIZA GERI (hee-za): knee kick

MIKAZUKI GERI (meeka-zooki): crescent kick

TOBI GERI (to-bee): jumping kick

USHIRO GERI (oo-shee-ro): back kick

YOKO GERI KEAGE: side snap kick

YOKO GERI KEKOMI: side thrust kick

YOKO TOBI GERI: flying side kick

FUMIKOMI: stomping kick

DACHI (da-chee) (stances)

HACHIJI DACHI (ha-chee-jee): natural stance, feet about one

shoulder width apart, toes pointing slightly outward

HEISOKU DACHI: informal attention stance. Feet together, toes

pointing straight forward

ZENKUTSU DACHI (zen-koo-tsoo): front stance

KIBA DACHI (kee-ba): horse stance

KOKUTSU DACHI (ko-koo-tsoo): back stance

FUDO DACHI (foo-do): immovable stance, a cross between front

and back stance (SOCHIN DACHI)

SANCHIN DACHI (san-cheen): hour-glass stance

HANGETSU DACHI (han-gay-tsoo): "half-moon" stance

GANKAKU DACHI (gan-ka-koo): crane stance

KOSA DACHI: crossed-leg stance

SHIKO DACHI (shee-ko): square stance

KUMITE (koumi-tay) Sparring

GOHON KUMITE: five step basic sparring

SANBON KUMITE: three step basic sparring

IPPON KUMITE: one step basic sparring

JIYU IPPON KUMITE: one step free sparring (semi-free sparring)

JUI KUMITE: free sparing

STRATEGIES

GO NO SEN: allow the opponent to attack first so as to open up

targets for counterattack

INASU: avoid an on-coming attack by removing your body from the

line of attack

SEN NO SEN: attack at the exact moment that the opponent attacks

SEN SEN NO SEN: attack before the opponent attacks

TAI SABAKI: shift to remove your body from the line of attack