

Keiko
Shotokan
Karate

Keiko Shotokan karate

Techniques, history, philosophy, and grading syllabus.

First edition June 2000

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Disclaimer: The authors accept no responsibility for any injury, or damage of any sort, that may occur as a result of the use of techniques shown in this work. The activities shown herein are for education purposes and their use is at your own risk. You should consult a qualified physician before undertaking any physical exercise.

Although the term “he” and other references to males have been used as the object or subject of sentences throughout this work the term “she” or references to females could just as easily apply and no sexist intent should be inferred.

WELCOME TO KEIKO SHOTOKAN KARATE

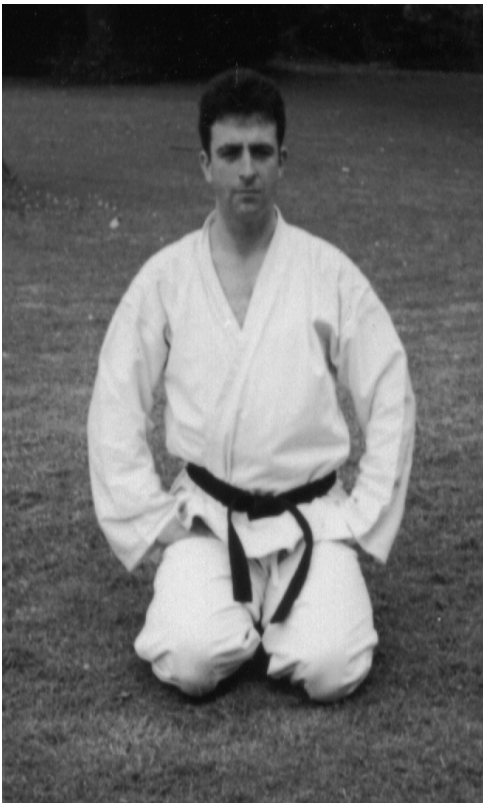
Congratulations on choosing our organisation to train with. Karate as an art holds something for everyone, so we will endeavour to maximise the benefit to you from the area of Karate which is of the most interest to you.

This organisation is dedicated to training those who are searching for a method of self-defence, a form of fitness, a fun past-time, perhaps a sport, but certainly an alternative to the modern, cluttered lifestyle.

Karate-do, or The Way of the Empty Hand, is all of the above and has a rich history and meaning, besides.

Shotokan is the name of the style of Karate-do that we practice. It has a characteristic signature all to itself and was created by the “Father of Modern Karate”, Funakoshi Gichin.

Keiko is the name of our organisation, just as others may be called Fred’s Karate Club, or South London Self Defence Academy, we shun the cult of personality or ties to a geographical area in favour of a concept. Keiko is about “Training”, in the old fashion, in a meaningful way.



There are pages presented elsewhere in this binder which explain these terms and many more in detail.

This manual is intended to provide a home for your studies, your research, your thoughts and musings. It also serves as a reminder of techniques, a “prompter” if you will. *No book* can take the place of **regular training** with our instructors, but we hope that when used in conjunction with training, this manual will provide a solid reference for your art.

This book is a work-in-progress, and will be added to by the instructors just as you will add to it. Karate is your art, and your thoughts and findings are vital to your study. No matter how silly you may think your notes are, they form a part of your educational process.

There are many books on “techniques” on the market, so our reference to techniques is brief and is always secondary to the actual instruction you receive in class. More important are the pages on the less tangible aspects of the art. It is worth re-

reading these pages every once in a while, and noting how your thoughts differ from the last time you read that section.

STARTING OUT

“Why do you want to learn Karate?” Sensei asked. The teacher wore a black belt and looked imposing, perhaps even a little bit grim.

Joe was attending the class for the first time, and judging from the way people were hitting each other was not sure that he *did* want to learn karate.

“I would like to be able to defend myself,” Joe began, resolved to seeing out the first lesson, realising that the people fighting were not actually hurting each other, “And I suppose that I could get a bit fitter.”

“Those are fine reasons, Joe”, said the Sensei, “And if you are dedicated to training then you will be able to defend yourself and you will be fitter. I say dedicated because it won’t happen overnight, but if you train hard it will happen.”

Joe liked that. Too often people promised instant this and “while-u-wait” that, it was nice to hear someone else saying that something worth having had to be earned.

The lesson began.

The exercises were difficult and felt unnatural, but the coloured belts seemed to be able to do them. The brown belts were doing the exercises really well, and Joe supposed that if one persevered to that level then they would seem easier.

The rest of the lesson passed as a blur, blocks and punches were demonstrated and repeated and when Joe got them wrong the techniques were corrected.

The teacher emphasised time and time again that what was learned was only to be used in self-defence and never to play or attack anyone. That was not what Karate was about.



At the end of the lesson Joe’s head was spinning. There was a lot of information to take in. Sensei assured Joe that eventually these things would be easier and would be remembered. Sensei also said that the times relaxing between sessions were as important in rest as working hard was during the lesson; those times allowed the body and mind to recover from training.

All in all, Joe enjoyed the first lesson. It was hard work, but it was the first step on the road to being a better person, and to being good at Karate.

THE DOJO

The dojo literally translates as the **place of the way**. This indicates a place where people practice whatever their particular way is. We study the Way of the Empty Hand (Karate do), and the dojo is wherever we happen to be practising.



The dojo should be clean and tidy; for health and safety and also to prevent a cluttering of the mind.

When we enter the dojo, we should be in a state to train – mind and body. We do not bring our worldly woes into the dojo or we will be thinking about our friends outside when someone is trying to hit us. Our hair should be neat and tidy, tied back if it is long. Our nails must be neat and clean. We try not to have injuries in the dojo, but if one should occur then we will not have infection of wounds from other students' dirty nails.

Jewellery is not worn in the dojo. Rings cut and necklaces get tangled/strangle, earrings catch fingers and tear from lobes. Should you be unable or unwilling to remove a piece of jewellery then it should be secured with sticking plasters or something similar. Shoes must not be worn on any part of the training area.

The dojo is a “non-smoking” environment.

Our uniforms must be washed and ironed, our smart appearance helps our minds to make smart techniques. A scruffy gi is a symptom of lack of discipline, and a lack of forethought.

Courtesy must be shown at all times, and deference to seniors is polite (and expected). Part of that courtesy is being on time and adhering to the recognised etiquette.



Before a lesson begins, members are expected to warm up quietly or practice their techniques. When not being instructed we should be even more mindful of the actions of other members around us, if only to avoid accidents. We must always inform the instructor if there are any medical conditions which preclude us from performing certain activities. A safe environment for training is only available if all of the facts are known.

It is the duty of existing practitioners to make new comers feel welcome and to set a good example. The dojo is not part of the outside world, it is a place for honing our abilities and our thinking. It is not to be treated as a playground or a dating venue or anything other than a dojo.

ATTITUDE

The following article has been distributed among students for a long time now, though unfortunately we no longer know where or with whom it originated, although from some of the spelling (which we have anglicised) it is probably American. No infringement of copyright is intended and it is included here for your reference:

“One of the first things you notice about a person is his attitude. Your attitude toward life and others is one of the most powerful generating forces on earth. If your attitude and thoughts are positive, your life will reflect positive results. Our jails are filled with people who have negative attitudes toward society and show no respect toward their fellow man or property. It is simple to understand that a criminal first performs the crime in his mind.

When you see a person who has a proper attitude it tells you that his energy is positive. Positive attitude produces enthusiasm which in turn generates energy. Positive-thinking people accomplish more life goals because they expect positive results. Belief creates the actual fact! You create your own reality. Take a situation where you are asked to do a certain job at work. Do the job without complaints and do it with pride. Whether it's a small or a big job is not important; what's important is that you put your heart into it. This means doing your very best.

Another way in which attitude plays a big part in your life is how you handle problems. Everyone has problems. With a good attitude problems become challenges. Learn to expect problems and use them to make you a stronger person. If you do experience a failure or setback, say to yourself - “That's not like me, I'll do better next time.” It's never too late to change your attitude. It's only when you give up and stop caring that you commit mental and physical suicide. You become your own worst enemy. You lose the harmonious balance of mind and body.

One way you can change your attitude, too, is to adopt the spirit of thankfulness. Most people go around in life aware only of what they want or don't have. Concentrate on your strengths. Be thankful for you food, clothing, shelter, and for people who appreciate and love you.

Treasure your time. Most people live their lives as if they had all the time in the world. Think about how much time is wasted on projects which are not of value to you or society. You must realise that what you do affects the universe as a whole. Have your life make a real difference; make it count! Learn as much as you can.

This enthusiasm for learning is one of the true realities of life. It was Ralph Waldo Emerson who said “Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm”.

Begin and end your day by being grateful for another chance and for the opportunities you were given to learn. Think of each day as if it were your last. Remind yourself of this constantly, and you will realise that some things are not so important anymore.”

What the article is indicating is that if you are to take part in any activity it is best to give it your whole attention, your best efforts. When you attend a Karate lesson it is best to concentrate and try your very best, to improve yourself and not rely on a teacher “bullying” you into performing correctly.

It is a part of our “Dojo Kun” (or *aims*) to “Refrain from Impetuous and violent behaviour.”

SHOTOKAN HISTORY

Shotokan is a relatively young form of karate at around 80 years of age. The style was created when Master Funakoshi Gichin taught in the universities of Japan.

As a writer of poetry, Funakoshi used the pen-name **Shoto** (meaning “pine waves”) and the place where he trained became known as Shoto’s **hall** or “the Shotokan”.

Master Funakoshi was born in 1868 in Shuri, Okinawa. His teachers were **Anko Itosu** and **Yasutsune Azato**, and it was they who spearheaded many of the movements that Funakoshi was famous for. In 1901, it is recorded that there was a public demonstration of karate, and in 1903 karate-do was introduced into public schools after a campaign led by Itosu.

Nowadays it does not seem notable that there were public demonstrations of karate, but it must be remembered that prior to the demonstrations noted above, karate was an art studied in secret, suppressed by the authorities.

By 1917 Funakoshi had been commanded to perform a karate demonstration on the Japanese mainland, and in 1921 he demonstrated before the Crown Prince of Japan, Hirohito.

Due to the success of his demonstrations, the first Japanese karate club was opened in 1922, and the Shotokan was opened in 1936. This was destroyed by bombs in 1945 in the second World War.

The name “Shotokan” was adopted by the students of Funakoshi to identify their style. It should be noted that Funakoshi thought there was only one karate-do, and disliked the idea of different “styles”.



The style spread throughout the universities and a body was established to organise them, “the Japanese Karate Association” (JKA). The JKA was headed by Master Nakayama following the death of Funakoshi in 1957, and it was under his guidance that instructors were put through an especially arduous course and sent out across the globe to popularise Karate do.

England was one of the destinations for the karate missionaries, and it was from these that we have most of the clubs in this country.

England has produced many notable karateka, including one of the few competition squads to beat the Japanese squad.

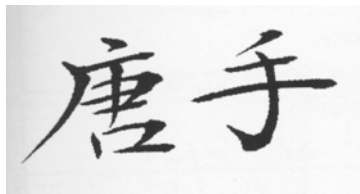
TO-DE BECOMES KARATE-DO

When karate was taken to Japan by Funakoshi Gichin, the idea was expressed in Japanese calligraphy with a symbol which meant “China” or “Relating to the Chinese”. Karate at that time could be translated to mean “Chinese Hand”.

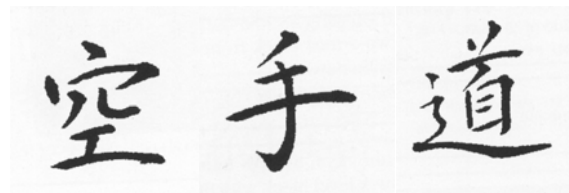
As the Japanese were in the throws of an upsurge of nationalism at the time it seemed right to change the name of the art in order for it to be accepted into Japanese culture. There had been times on Okinawa when the description of an item as Chinese had been used to make it seem fashionable and of quality. In Japan it was felt that the art may become stifled if it was related to another nation, especially as the Japanese already had established arts of Kendo, Judo, Kyudo, Iaido, etc. which they were proud of.

Master Funakoshi was chiefly responsible for the change of the character meaning Chinese into the character meaning **Empty**. There is evidence that another karate master, Hanagusuku Chomo had already used the new term in 1905, but the general acceptance of the term occurred around 1929.

The original character could be pronounced *to* or *kara*, and the new character is called *sora* but pronounced *kara*.



to de
Chinese Hand



kara te do
The way of the Empty Hand

The *Empty* referred to in “way of the empty hand” is usually taken to mean “without weapons”, but Funakoshi was fond of philosophy and it is believed that he deliberately used a character which could denote “without intention”.

In this way, Chinese hand – a method of fighting – became the way of the empty hand – a method of living life.

SPORT

Since the second World War there has been a definite movement towards karate becoming a sport. For good or ill, this is a fact.

Competition is a good way for young people to build up their muscles, their endurance, and their aerobic fitness.

Sparring allows competitors to experience adrenaline highs and lows, and makes for good analysis of opponents' weaknesses.

Sparring works through competitors' aggression and allows humility to grow when organised properly.

Karate was originally only used in self-defence, and many of the techniques are dangerous and cannot be executed in the sporting arena. This has led to the situation where some karate looks nothing like the techniques which are our heritage.

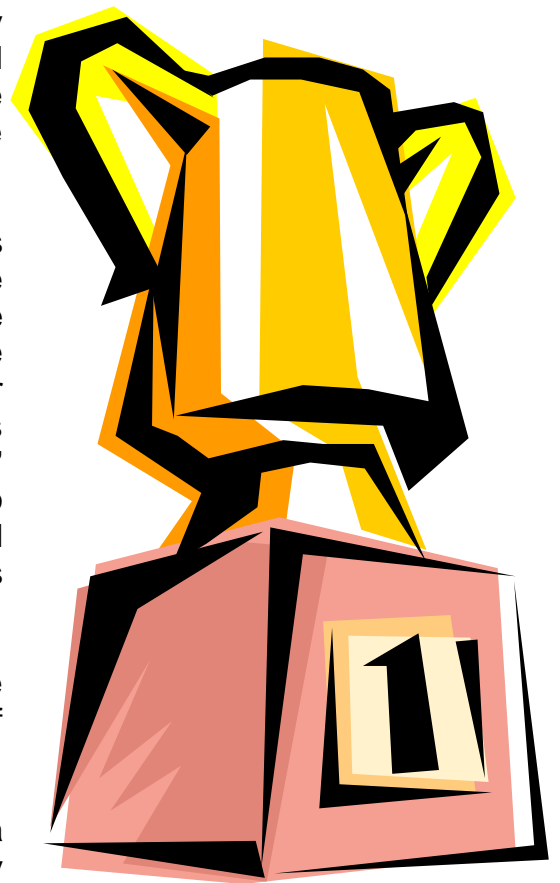
Taking part in Shiai (competition) is fine, so long as it is noted that this is not what karate is for. It must be understood by competitors who would also like to be able to fight for real that competition distance is wrong. The point at which kime is employed is different. The focus for competition techniques is the surface of the opponent's body, not through it as is necessary to stop a "real" opponent from being able to attack again. Due to competition being a recreational activity (and not a real fight) we are not allowed to injure the opponent. This is massively important.

Other dangers include training in one favoured technique (because it scores points), becoming egotistical if unbeaten, and using aggression/losing self-control.

Training for competition is fine, but be clear that it is a rules-bound arena; not real fighting. Be aware that many real karate techniques are not usable in competition, and do not lose sight of those techniques (for your own self-defence) in case you ever need them.

Competition techniques must be practiced only after one has become proficient in good basic theory. To practice for competition before there is a solid foundation merely leads to scruffy competition. If you are going to train for competition the last thing you want is to do it badly.

Enjoy competition for the fun distraction that it is.



THE TWENTY PRECEPTS OF KARATE DO

The man credited as the founder of modern Karate-do, Funakoshi Gichin took the art to Japan and lay down his philosophy for his students to follow. The highly structured Japanese had these bullet-points laid out to remind them of Master Funakoshi's thinking, as translated by Schlatt.

1. Never forget: Karate begins with rei and ends with rei.
(rei has the meaning of courtesy, respect)
2. There is no first hand in Karate.
(There is no first attack in Karate)
3. Karate supports righteousness
4. First understand yourself, then understand others.
5. The art of mind is more important than the art of technique.
6. The mind needs to be freed.
7. Trouble is born of negligence.
8. Do not think Karate is only in the dojo.
9. The training of Karate requires a lifetime.
10. Transform everything into Karate; there lies the exquisiteness.
11. Genuine Karate is like hot water; it cools down if you do not keep on heating it.
12. Do not have the idea of winning, while the idea of not losing is necessary.
13. Transform yourself according to the opponent.
14. The outcome of the fight all depends on the manoeuvre.
15. Imagine one's arms and legs as swords.
16. Once you leave the shelter of home, there are a million enemies.
17. Postures are for the beginner, later they are natural positions.
18. Do the kata correctly, the real fight is a different matter.
19. Do not forget the control of the dynamics (of power), the elasticity (of body) and the speed (of technique).
20. Always be good at the application of everything that you have learned.

Later, the JKA provided their Dojo Kun, or Dojo Rules, based on the Chinese Kun from the time of Bodhidharma. These five principles are said to have been used by the Okinawan master Sakugawa Shungo:

One, to seek the perfection of character!
One, to follow the path of truth!
One, to cultivate the spirit of effort!
One, to esteem etiquette!
One, to admonish brute courage!

The JKA version of this is:

Seek perfection of character
Be faithful
Endeavour
Respect others
Refrain from violent behaviour

The differences appear slight, but you are encouraged to note the thinking behind those differences and discuss them with the sempai and each other.



COURTESY

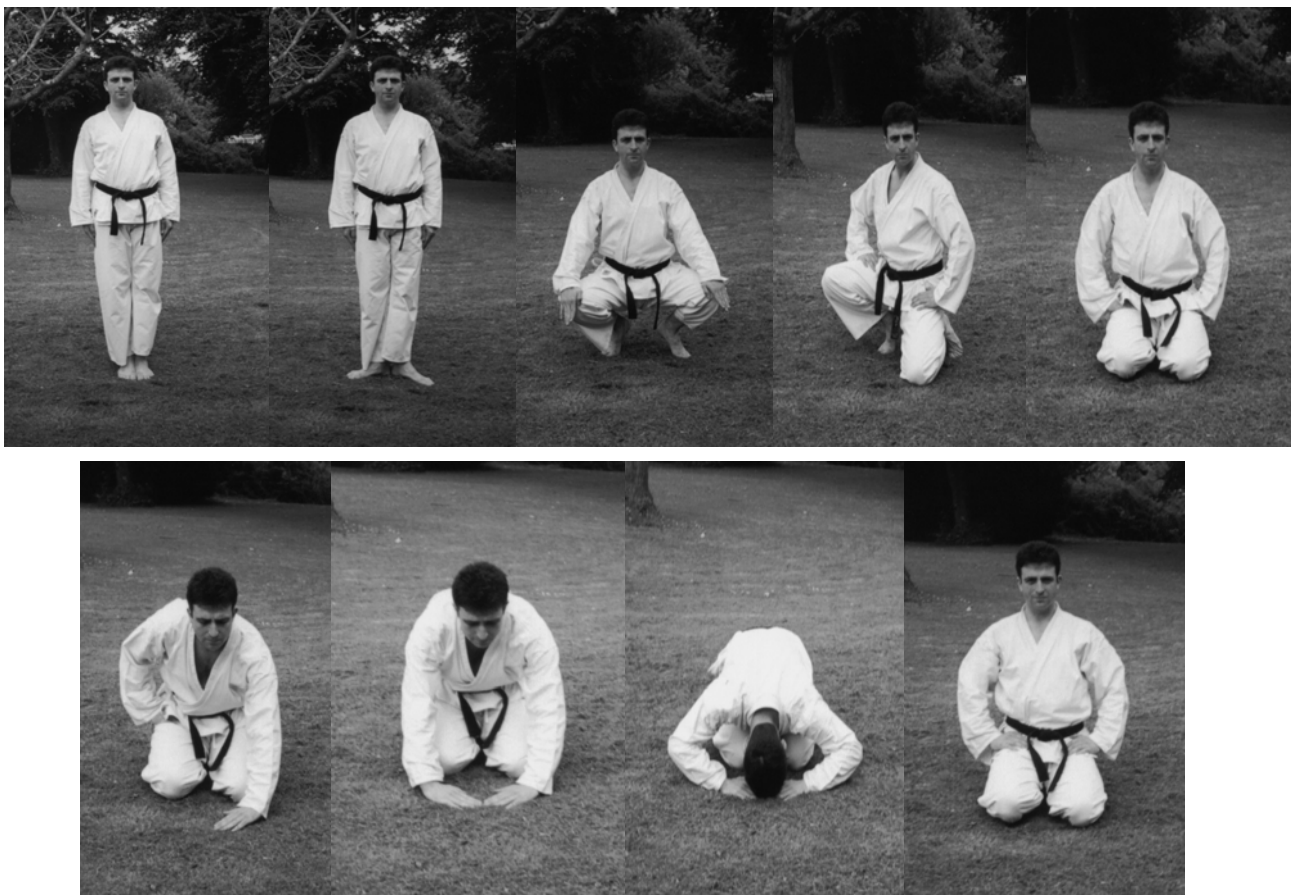
“Karate do begins and ends with courtesy” Gichin Funakoshi.

The sayings of Master Funakoshi provide us with sentiments of many layers. We can take the literal translation; that the way of the open hand is started and finished with courtesy. This emphasises the beginning and the end of the lesson, and every section of the lesson in between.

The bow is our physical show of courtesy, performed in a serious manner it is a display of our mindset whilst practising Karate do.

The mental courtesy manifested in the bow is of detachment from outside concerns. To make full use of our training time we must set aside our worries and problems from our everyday lives and concentrate on perfecting our Karate. A side effect of our attempt to do this is to allow our subconscious brain to work on our problems while our consciousness is busy with Karate; our subconscious brain is better able to provide solutions and put our problems in order than our muddled waking brain.

In bowing to our training partner/opponent we are showing them that we will train seriously, and with their best interests in our minds.



We do not help our partner by “going lightly” on them but rather we prevent them from truly benefiting from training.

Being serious does not take away our enjoyment of training, but allows us to enjoy it without losing the maximum benefit or our safety. Seriousness and courtesy *allow* us to trust our partner/opponent. We can still laugh and have fun, but not whilst executing a potentially dangerous technique. Laughing has to wait until we are resting, recovering, and stretching.

The very use of courtesy prevents “larking around” in the dojo. If we are respectful of our training partners then we do not abuse their trust in us by attacking them outside of our instructed occasions. When practicing with a partner we demonstrate control/focus of our technique, and only to the degree instructed. Attacking a student outside of a lesson is an assault, making the assaulter no more than the type of person we are training to protect ourselves from. If the technique has not been asked for by an instructor then it is not in the lesson.

Showing someone “now I could do this” when it has not been asked for or allowed for in the lesson plan is disruptive and disrespectful. Offering advice to other students can be helpful, but we need to be mindful of the right time and place for this advice. Jumping the gun by anticipating the next part of a practiced combination means that you are not concentrating on the part you are *meant* to be practicing - which is inattentive and rude.

When we examine the mindset for courtesy we find that it is linked to another famous Karate tenet; “In Karate do there is no first attack”. By remaining courteous we strive to avoid the situations when the physical aspect of our art would be necessary. We do not enter into situations where we have to fight because we behave properly, do not antagonise, and seek to defer violent situations. With courtesy there is a beginning to our way and an end to fighting. The paradox of a method of fighting producing a pacifist person is one of the fascinating aspects of The Way of the Empty Hand.

A reading of the phrase between the lines could be taken to mean that “The Way” ends when courtesy ends, leaving us with the assumption that what we are left with is our “Empty Hands”.

Other facets of our courtesy are manifested with the word “Oss”. The word is used when agreeing with instruction; Acknowledging an instruction or good techniques from a partner; to gain the attention of an instructor, and many other situations. Oss does not have a simple translation, but the characters used to write the word in Japanese give the impression of perseverance;- both asking for it and exchanging the intention to do it. One article used the term “please be patient with me” as the translation, as both an apology and an exclamation of the intention to try again and try harder.

Physically, courtesy is expressed by simple things, such as wearing your finger and toe nails short and clean. This is common sense and a factor in the health and safety of the members of the dojo; but really it is your attitude to training made manifest.

Courtesy is something to practice, just like every other part of our art.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF KARATE-DO

If those who practised karate only trained their bodies and had no philosophy to train their minds then they would end up as no more than thugs. Within our art there is a tradition of training ourselves to be better people, and nowhere is this made more plain than in the words of **Master Funakoshi Gichin**:

“The ultimate aim of karate-do lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of character.”

In karate we learn how to use our bare hands as weapons which are capable of inflicting great harm, so it is only right that we should train our minds to not wish that harm on anyone. We take a vow to only use our art in defence of ourselves, our family, and our friends, or in pursuit of justice. In this way we assure those around us of our honourable intentions and try to prevent bad publicity of our art and our fellow artists.

It is worth noting that of Master Funakoshi's 20 precepts of karate-do, the majority of them are to do with mindset. Only two of the 20 are concerned with technique.

Karate thinking has a zen attitude about it, though you do not need to be a zen practitioner to appreciate “the Way”.

By the term “zen”, we should understand a way of *being*, not a religion or organisation. People can not worship zen. The term is concerned only with living for the moment, for accepting what life has to throw at us and not crumbling beneath it.

Elements of zen refer to just “being”, not anticipating the future or dwelling on the past. Glories and tragedies are nothing in zen, they do not affect how you are now.

This was the attitude of the samurai, and the only way a man can act in battle without being overcome by thoughts of consequences. Consequences do, of course, play a part, but they should be considered *well before* the heat of battle.

We must know, when we use our martial arts, that it is as a **last resort**, and that we have not encouraged the situation to a point where our skills are necessary.

**“To search for the old is to understand the new.
This is a matter of time.
In all things man must have a clear mind.
The Way, who passes it on straight and well?”**
- poetry by Shoto.

KEIKO

Keiko is a very important term to us in our organisation. The word is often translated simply as “**practice**”, and it is true that it means this. There are, however, underlying principles conveyed when a person views the characters which make up the term “keiko”.

Japanese writing does not just tell you how to pronounce a word, it contains *ideas!*
The characters which make up the word keiko contain the elements of *waza*, *ki*, & *shin*.

Waza is the term for technique, performed correctly and without embellishment.

Ki is the term for spirit, soul, and the internal energy which does not rely on brute force. This same symbol is used in the terms *Kiai*, *Kime*, and *Aikido*.

Shin is the term for mind, and heart. A practitioner must always practice with the correct intention and determination, as embodied by shin.

Together, these terms make up a word with the ultimate meaning of maturing one's self through practice. This was the way that martial artists trained in the past, and further translations of the term could be “**consider the old ways**” or “consider the past”. When we train in this manner we are agreeing to help our juniors, respect our seniors, and be mindful of the safety of ourselves and our training partners. This training is not to be taken lightly. It requires dedication, a sincere attitude, discipline, and care.

Without this attitude underlying our study we would become nothing more than thugs and bullies. This would certainly not be a good way to practice martial arts. We prefer to take the moral high ground.

As we train in a tradition which depends upon techniques being passed on in the same manner they were taught to our forebears it seems that keiko is a good name for our group.

As you can see, **KEIKO** is more than just a name!

Incidentally; **Kangeiko** is Midwinter training/Cold training, your uniform is a **keikogi** (practice clothes), and **renzo kugeiko** are your flow drills.



BUDO

Budo is a much misunderstood term. Usually translated as “the Way of the Warrior”, budo is the method by which the ancient Samurai conducted their affairs.

The characters which make up the term budo consist of symbols for a *spear*, denoting conflict, and another for *stopping*. As such, a budoka (practitioner of budo) can be said to be involved in methods of stopping conflict.



The need for an ethical code of conduct for warriors evolved during times of peace – after all, during times of war they did what they *had* to do. Warriors living by the code of budo can be likened to the European tradition of chivalrous knights. The samurai were expected to be gentlemen, and this code of honour prevented the warrior caste of society from being too powerful for the overlords to control.

Samurai acted as professional soldiers, bodyguards to their lords, and a police force. There certainly were instances when the power given to them was abused, but the individuals who went against the code of budo would be ostracised from society and expected to atone for their actions.

For a martial artist there is a responsibility to learn techniques well. There is also a responsibility to protect others with our knowledge and abilities. Sometimes this protection takes the form of NOT doing something - like fighting - when that is what is required. Sometimes we are obliged to “Do the Right Thing”, even when it is difficult, emotionally or physically. We are obliged to set ourselves high standards, to live by as well as in technique. This obligation is part of “The Way of the Warrior”, Budo.

The spirit of budo which has been passed down to modern times is reflected in our words and actions and how we represent our art and ourselves. When we swear our oath to only use our skills in defence of ourselves and our families, and in pursuit of justice, then we are practising budo. When we train hard, and push ourselves to our limits, remaining in control of our behaviour and our aggression, we are budoka. Being conscientious and courteous, and *aware* of our actions and our surroundings is budo.

Budo is being a good martial artist.

THE NEED FOR GRADING EXAMINATIONS

What belt you wear is not really as important as it may sometimes seem. We appear to place a lot of emphasis on gradings and moving up the belt ranks, but in truth the rank is just an indicator of what each person has achieved so far. It is good to set yourself the goal of gaining a new belt, so long as you realise just what that entails. You are really committing yourself to learning a new set of techniques, and to attending the lessons with the right attitude to accomplish that.

So why do we have examinations instead of simply awarding grades to deserving students?

The answer is that the pressure of attending an examination and performing techniques before a judge does not resemble anywhere near the amount of pressure one feels in a conflict situation.

Once again we are training a facet of our personality as well as our body.

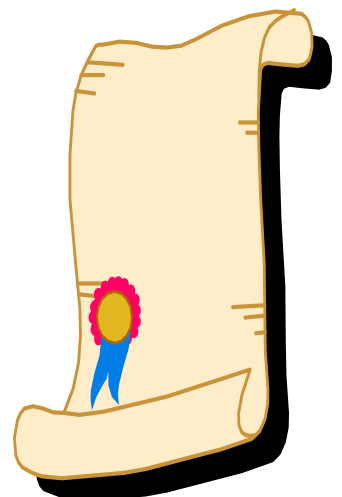
In times past there was no need for grading; practitioners stood or fell on how well they performed in actual combat. Teachers introduced the white belt for their apprentices, which, legend has it, one wore until it turned black. Now that we train in a **do** art, and especially here in the west where we tend to need such milestones to aim for, there are various coloured belts to gain along the way to black belt.

It is possible to be examined every three months, though this is at the instructor's discretion. There is no automatic right to attempt a grading, and there is no guarantee of a pass, either. The instructor will propose that a student grades based on the student's attendance, general attitude, and the ability level displayed at regular training.

One of the facets of gradings which is frequently mis-understood is the idea that there are a certain number of lessons to attend to become eligible to grade. Grade is a measure of progress. Progress is not merely physical but is also measured in moral values, understanding, effort, and willingness. Someone who is physically able to perform advanced techniques but who has not developed the right character may not be permitted to grade - reflecting their lack of progress. Sometimes a lack of physical perfection of technique will be overlooked if there has been sufficient development in other areas - thus demonstrating progress. Effort is the key.

More is expected of those capable of more. Less may be expected if someone is less capable. Grade is a very personal award and not a measure of one's abilities against those of another.

A student who does not grade every three months is not necessarily a bad student, they just need more time to polish their technique.



BASIC TECHNIQUES - STANCES

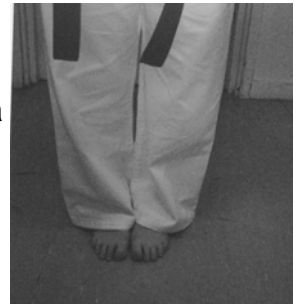
Before we can look at the combinations which you must perform to be considered for each grade, we must first look at the basic stances and techniques.

STANCES:

One of the foremost criteria for all stances is that weight should rest on all parts of the feet equally. This means that there should not be any extra tension or pressure on the outside or inside part of the sole, but rather that the whole foot should bear the weight.

HEISOKU DACHI

Feet together stance. A formal position in preparation for beginning a technique or to bow.



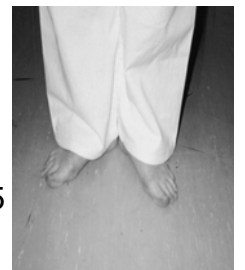
UCHI HACHI JI DACHI

Inverted figure "8" stance. The knees are very slightly bent, the feet are parallel at the outside edge and only one shoulder width apart. This stance is close to being relaxed, and is adopted as a waiting-but-ready posture. It is important to note that the weight should be evenly distributed between the legs, and that no more pressure is placed on any area of the sole of the foot than on any other.



MUSUBI DACHI

United stance. The heels are together and the toes are turned out to at least 45 degrees.



ZENKUTSU DACHI

Front Stance. A dynamic, moving stance with the weight forward, ready to take a fresh step. The front knee is bent, and the back leg is straight but not locked. The feet are parallel and aimed in the direction of travel.



This stance should convey the feeling of being ready to spring forward, with your weight over the front knee.

Almost as though someone were pulling you by your belt. When you move it should be a relief to your muscles, not an effort.





KOKUTSU DACHI

Back stance. A defensive posture used for receiving an attack. The weight is heavily on the rear leg, which is bent and aimed to the side; and the front leg is aimed forwards and not allowed to fully straighten. One of the keys to making this stance correctly is the alignment of the back foot, knee, and hip; as a vertical line should appear to join them.

KIBA DACHI

Horse riding stance. The weight is central and the feet are parallel, two shoulder widths apart. The body should be lowered dramatically to assume a sitting position with a vertical spine, as though riding a horse. The knees should be projected forwards rather than to the sides in order that no extra tension is placed on the outsides of the feet.



SHIKO DACHI

Square stance. Like kaba dachi with the toes aimed outwards.



HANGETSU DACHI



Half moon stance. The feet move in a crescent shape. This stance looks like kiba dachi performed at a 45 degree angle to the viewer and with the knees angled inwards as a defensive posture.



NEKO ASHI DACHI

Cat-foot stance. Both feet are angled forwards, and the weight is placed heavily onto the back leg. The front foot is arched so that only the ball of the foot touches the ground, and then only lightly. This is an exception to the "equal weight distribution" theory as the front foot has only the slightest of pressure, and then only on the ball of the foot.



SOCHIN DACHI or FUDO DACHI



Strong/calm stance or Immovable stance. Like hangetsu dachi, but with the knees aimed outwards.



There are many more stances that are not initially required. Those shown above are all that are required prior to black belt, although stances such as kosa dachi occur in kata there is no real need to *study* them at this stage.

When stepping from one stance to another:

- keep your feet close to the ground. This keeps your centre of gravity low and helps your balance. It also helps to avoid you getting “swept” off your feet.
- usually use a “C” shaped step, bringing your feet together in the middle of the step. This allows you to step “off-line” or into an opponent without telegraphing the fact. It also allows you to use your knee and toes as weapons where a straight step might be less effective.
- finish your step as you use your technique. Not before your weight has landed, not once your weight has settled, but together.
- make your legs keep up with your arms. Arm movements tend to be quicker, but legs have more muscle mass. Fast leg movements make fast techniques.

LINE THEORY

When attacked, imagine a line between your opponent’s weapons and yourself. This is the line which is most dangerous to you and the one which is easiest for him to use. By being aware of this line you can decide to be “on” it or “off” it. Obviously you are safer being “off-line”, as his weapons will not have a direct route to you.

Moving directly backwards does not take you “off-line”, it merely makes the line longer. Being further away can help, of course, but in the end the fastest one of you will win, and that could be your attacker.

Moving to one side or the other takes you “off-line”, but only until your opponent can turn to face you.

Moving directly past your opponent takes you off-line, brings you in close to use a retaliation, and positions your opponent so that he cannot easily bring his weapons to bear.

Your prime concern must always be to move to a position of safety.

THE GRADING SYLLABUS

In order to achieve each grade in karate one must first be tested to demonstrate their ability and eligibility for that grade. The techniques shown are not everything that a karateka should know at that grade, but instead represent their core ability improving.

The tests become successively more difficult, and where a technique is repeated the latter grade is expected to be better at that technique than someone attempting it for the first time.

The following list contains the techniques for each grade; they are subject to change and an examiner may choose to alter a sequence to find out if you are paying attention.

The grading consists of demonstrations of basic techniques and combinations, performance of kata, and demonstration with a partner of defensive principles and countermeasures.

Basics

The criteria here is progressive for subsequent grades. A demonstration of good form, timing, attitude, and focus of tension/impact is required in each technique.

Kata

Prearranged sequences of movements, requiring all of the above criteria, but also requiring knowledge of the applications of the techniques.

Moving on from one kata to another, we must never forget the ones before, not least because you can be called upon to perform them at any time. It is most embarrassing for a black belt not to know Heian Shodan.

Advanced practitioners are expected to perform their previous kata to a better standard than someone attempting that kata in their grading for the first time.

Oyo & Kumite

Working with a partner to show control, speed, timing, distancing, reactions, and a working knowledge of techniques including safe defensive principles.

Orange Belt (9th Kyu) – Fundamentals

The following are pieces of information which you need to take on board early in your training, and which you review and refresh periodically.

ZENKUTSU DACHI – Front Stance

The front leg is bent and bears most of the weight with the back leg pushing forwards.

Note that both feet face the direction of travel.

The feeling associated with this stance is of forward motion; your energy and momentum is projecting forwards.

Note that the rear leg is not locked out, even though it appears to be straight. Locking the leg is bad for the joints and also means that when you move you have to unlock the leg - creating work for yourself.



OI ZUKI – Lunge Punch



This is a punch to the front – a direct thrust. It is characterised by starting with a withdrawn hand sitting on the hip of the rear leg and ending with a full step and that fist thrown forwards.

The spine remains vertical – don't lean.

The body remains square to the front – shomen.

The shoulders remain lowered throughout – pull down with the latissimus dorsii muscles.

As the fist is thrown forwards (as the step lands) the elbow is the first thing to move and it remains close to the sides – this is not a hook punch.



Note that as you step both feet are aimed forwards.

This punch can be Jodan or Chudan.

AGE UKE – Rising Receiver Technique

Much more complex than it actually looks. The final position is one of the forearm above the leading leg raised high enough to protect the head. A slight incline of the forearm is required to prevent a descending attack from hitting the head. The arm must project across the body far enough to protect the whole head (not just halfway across). The shoulders are not raised, they should still be pulled down, and the elbow is pulled in, travelling straight/directly up and down – this protects the armpit also.

The body twists, from the hip, to a 45° or, better position – hanmi, lessening the target area and using hips and leg muscles to increase the thrust of the age uke.



To change hands/sides of the body the rising hand is opened and the body is drawn square – shomen – with the elbow being the first part of the arm to descend. As the leading arm descends the fist closes again – hikite – and draws back to the hip.

The rising hand travels upwards as a fist with the elbow lowest. The elbows of the two arms will pass with a characteristic brushing/tearing noise.

The rising hand travels upwards with the palm towards the face. At head height the forearm begins to twist so that any blow is received on both bones in the forearm – not just the ulna, and the arm continues to rise and twist ending with the ulna uppermost and the palm facing away from the face.

The move is performed quickly and the flick of the wrist can be the most damaging part of the defence to an attacker.

Note that the arm is not right in front of the head, but rather at least 6". The distance from the attacker – maai – is what lessens the impact and the danger to the karateka.

SOTO UKE – Outer Receiving Technique

The blocking arm begins close to the ear of the same side, with the palm of the fist forwards. The arm comes around and twists at the last moment so that the palm faces you. The end position is no higher than the shoulder, with the elbow being approximately 2 fists distance from the hip. The wrist is straight, and the body set in hanmi.

To change hands, the arm straightens to a palm down position as the opposite hand approaches the ear, and then the previously blocking arm returns to the hip – hikite.



UCHI UKE – Inner Receiving Technique

The “blocking” hand is taken to the opposite hip, the elbow meeting the elbow of the other, outstretched arm. The elbows pass with a characteristic tearing motion as the arms end in the same position as Soto Uke – its just the route which is different.

The body should be set in shomen when changing positions, and hanmi when executed.

MAE GERI – Front Kick

The knee of the kicking leg should be raised sharply with the heel remaining close to the body and the toes pulled back.

The foot must not be allowed to dangle.

The weight of the body should remain over the supporting leg – or you will fall over – with no change to posture, guard position or incline of the head. The higher the knee is raised the better as the kick is projected straight out, with the leg acting like a piston or a crank-shaft.

The ball of the foot is the area that makes the contact.



It is equally important that the foot withdraws quickly and under control after contact and that it is placed down, not just allowed to flop.



Orange Belt (9th Kyu) – Kata

KIHON KATA

Kihon simply means basic.

The kata is also known as Taikyoku Shodan which can be translated as Great Universal Route First Part.

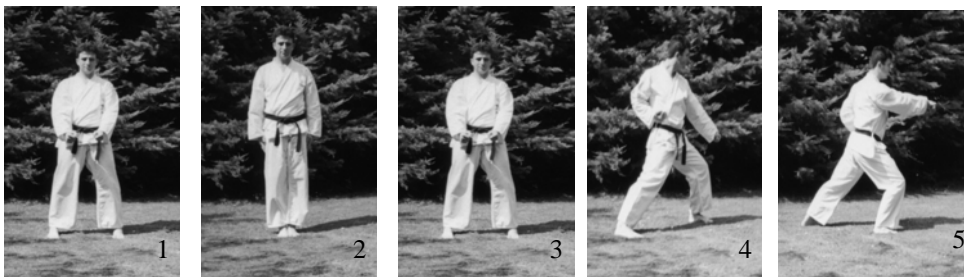
This kata was created by Funakoshi Gichin as an introductory form, but one so profound in its simplicity that even the best artists should return to it to contemplate frequently.

There is a school of thought which suggests that knowing one kata thoroughly is enough for any self-defence situation. If a student were to learn Kihon thoroughly then he would learn how to deal with:

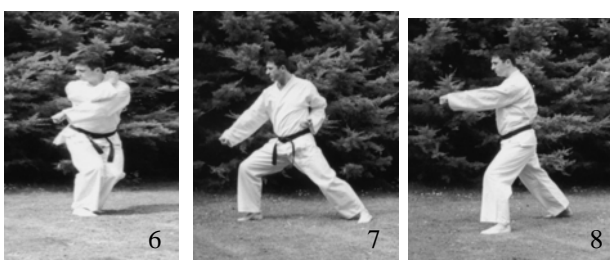
Bearhugs, strangulation, fist attacks, grabs of the wrist/elbow/lapel/shoulder, kicks, and many more.

Note that the geometric shape laid out as a pattern for the kata does not dictate that multiple opponents are waiting for you at the prescribed co-ordinates, but should instead serve as a memory-aid. The directions that the kata moves through are indicators of the direction that you take to deal with an opponent, or the direction you want him to go in.

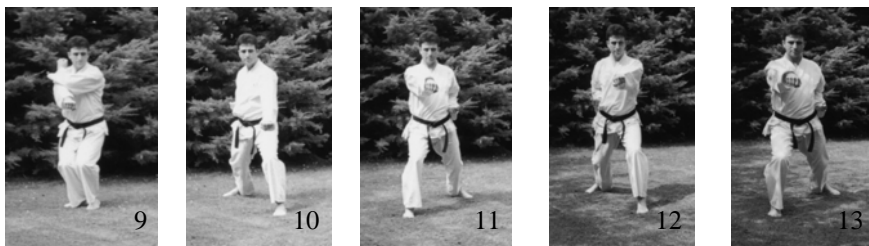
To learn the kata correctly, one must be taught it, not learn from pictures. Here is a reminder of the moves to Kihon:



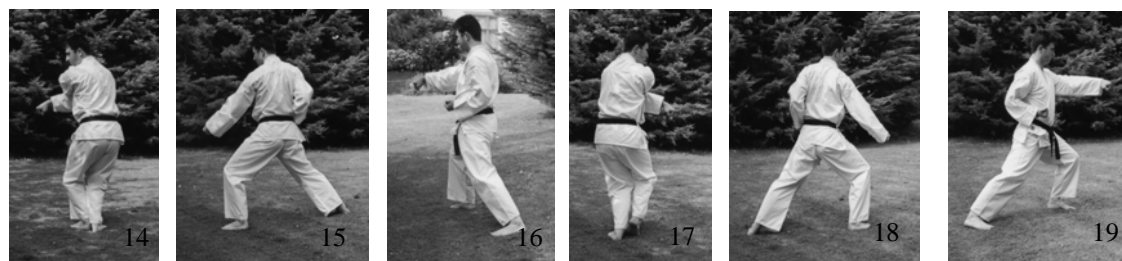
- 1) Face the front.
- 2) Bow politely, and with your feet together name your kata in a strong fashion.
- 3) Then make the ready position by crossing your arms in front of your body and making your stance a shoulder-width, moving first your left foot and then your right. When told “hajime” begin to move in a controlled and dynamic fashion. Look to your left, lower your centre of gravity and prepare to step to the left and make gedan barai.
- 4) Step out to the left and make gedan barai over the front (left) knee. Ensure that both feet face the same way.
- 5) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi.



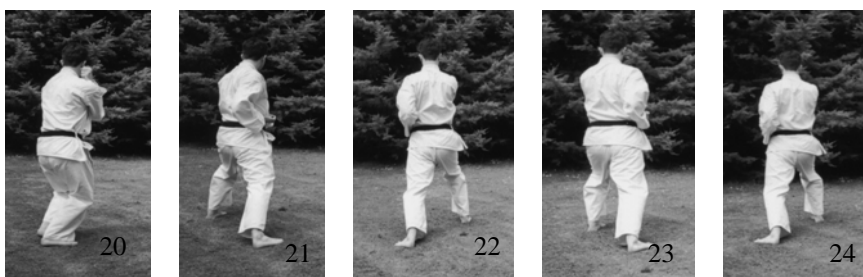
- 6) Look over your right shoulder. Turn with the front foot, pivoting 180 degrees clockwise on the rear foot. The feeling should be one of pulling back your right hip. Prepare to make gedan barai with your right arm.
- 7) Complete the turn with migi gedan barai and zenkutsudachi.
- 8) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into hidari zenkutsudachi.



- 9) Look to your left, pull the left foot back, and prepare to make gedan barai with the left arm.
- 10) Step out onto the main embusen of the kata with hidari gedan barai and zenkutsudachi.
- 11) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi.
- 12) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into hidari zenkutsudachi.
- 13) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi. As the punch lands, **Kiai.**



- 14) Look to your right, then pivot 90 degrees anti-clockwise on your right foot. The feeling should be one of pulling the left hip. Prepare to make gedan barai with your left arm.
- 15) Step out into hidari zenkutsudachi with gedan barai.
- 16) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi
- 17) Look over your right shoulder. Turn with the front foot, pivoting clockwise on the rear foot. The feeling should be one of pulling back your right hip. Prepare to make gedan barai with your right arm.
- 18) Complete the turn with migi gedan barai and zenkutsudachi.
- 19) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into hidari zenkutsudachi.



- 20) Look to your left, pull the left foot back, and prepare to make gedan barai with the left arm.
- 21) Step out onto the main embusen of the kata with hidari gedan barai and zenkutsudachi.
- 22) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi.
- 23) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into hidari zenkutsudachi.
- 24) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi. As the punch lands, **Kiai.**



- 25) Look to your right, then pivot 90 degrees anti-clockwise on your right foot. The feeling should be one of pulling the left hip. Prepare to make gedan barai with your left arm.
 26) Step out into hidari zenkutsudachi with gedan barai.
 27) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into migi zenkutsudachi.



- 28) Look over your right shoulder. Turn with the front foot, pivoting 180 degrees clockwise on the rear foot. The feeling should be one of pulling back your right hip. Prepare to make gedan barai with your right arm.
 29) Complete the turn with migi gedan barai and zenkutsudachi.
 30) Step directly forwards with chudan oi-zuki into hidari zenkutsudachi



Wait in this final position until instructed “Yame”. Then, under control, pull back the right foot and cross your arms in front of your body. Remain alert. When instructed “Naore” bow politely and then return to the same position but relax.

The movements of the kata should be studied. There are many benefits to performing the kata in the correct way repeatedly, not least of which is the mental state when the movements are performed without conscious thought. This produces a natural flow to your kata performance.

Orange Belt (9th kyu) – Oyo Jutsu

Whereas **kumite** means *hand-match* (or sparring), **oyo jutsu** translates as *the science of close fighting*, and is used to link kata techniques to kumite.

There are two types of Oyo tested in the examination, the first is against a stepping, straight punch, similar to kumite. The second type is much closer and is a response against a hook punch, from a “guarded” upright position.

Initially, the requirement for this section of your knowledge is very little, but it is of vital

importance!

The first principle of fighting is **avoidance**. This is what your grading requires. Simply do not allow your opponent to hit you.

In the first type of Oyo, in order to prepare you for future requirements, it is necessary that in your avoidance of a strike you step forwards, **off-line** (45 degrees) with either leg, and preferably to the **outside** of an opponent's target range.

In the "Hook Oyo", it is essential to **move away from the danger**, in the **same direction** as the punch was going. We refer to this as "**riding the force** of the blow"

At this stage we are not concerned with retaliation or apprehending an opponent, merely in your safety and the foundation of sound principles.

Orange Belt (9th kyu) – Kumite

You may also be asked to perform **5-step kumite**; an exercise to develop timing and to make your arms strong. Do not confuse kumite with fighting. The actions in 5-step kumite are only to make sure that you can deflect a blow with your arms.

Grading Summary for 9th Kyu

FUNDAMENTALS (Kihon)

Oi-Zuki, Jodan & Chudan

Age Uke

Soto Uke

Uchi Uke

Mae Geri

KATA

Kihon

KUMITE

Gohon Kumite

Jodan Oi-Zuki

Chudan Oi-Zuki

OYO

Straight: Avoidance Steps

Hook: Avoidance Steps

THE HIDDEN PARTS

It is often said that there are secrets of karate which grant “super human powers”. A famous karate teacher told your instructor “It’s only a secret if you don’t know it.”

When one imagines the situation in Okinawa, where the people were under the rule of another nation, one can see why they might not have shared all their knowledge with the overlords. One might further suppose that those same invaders might, in turn, have kept back certain parts of their art from the military forces occupying *their* country after World War 2.

The proof of all this supposition is scattered around; to be seen when one looks at our art. Shortly before he died, the Okinawan master of karate, Hohan Soken, made available notes and diagrams which were previously kept back from all but his closest students. This opened up areas of research for many martial artists, and light was quickly shed on some of the more esoteric parts of karate.

- ♦ Why do we use two arms to block?
- ♦ What is really happening with an “assisted block”?
- ♦ Why do some say that the moves contained in kata are lethal? They don’t look it!
- ♦ What is the target for spear-hand strike? What is the striking area of the hand?
- ♦ Why are we using these bizarre stances? Would you ever use one in a fight?

Knowing these secrets does not make one a better martial artist than someone who does not. You can practice karate without ever using a punch or knowing where a strike is meant to land.

Knowing the applications *does* help if you ever have to use your art, though. You will instinctively react with whatever you train your technique to be. If you always train to punch the stomach then that is where you will punch when under pressure. If you always use age uke as a block then that is all you will be able to use it for. If you visualise the use of age uke against the elbow or the jaw when you practice kata then you will be able to use it that way, too.

For each technique there are various “layers” of application.

Whereas we will often remind you of a technique’s appearance in this manual, its various applications must be learned in class.

