

**A JAPANESE GLOSSARY FOR
KARATE STUDENTS**

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Michael Cowie
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KENKYO-HA GOJU KARATE KEMPO KAI

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ISBN 978-1-291-10218-5

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(First edition published 2012)

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Preface

The Japanese language is comparatively easy to learn to speak, but difficult and laborious to learn to read and write. Not many karate students will want to learn it thoroughly, but every student needs at least a smattering, and it is to provide such a smattering that we have produced this glossary. It is divided into sections covering general terms, stances, striking techniques, kicking techniques, defensive techniques, etiquette and instructions, parts of the body, and counting. We have provided also, as a matter of interest, a few short biographies of some distinguished founders of karate ryu. We have not, however, included any of the terminology of sport or competition karate. The “general terms” section includes many words and expressions associated with other arts (aikido; jiu jitsu; kendo; kobudo; iaido) that are useful for the karateka to know. The printing of a word or phrase in bold type indicates that it has its own separate entry elsewhere in the book.

We have not tried to indicate the pronunciation of Japanese (for instance by diacritical marks indicating long and short vowels). Such indications are, at best, approximate; on the whole, Japanese is a language that often sounds quite different from what you think it will sound like, and the best way to learn to pronounce it is by listening to Japanese speakers speaking it. The Japanese tend to be polite and tolerant towards people who are trying to learn their language. If anything, they err on the side of courtesy in being reluctant to point out one’s mistakes.

2 *A Glossary of Japanese Terms*

We have come across four recurrent problems. One is that Japanese contains many more synonyms than European languages do: many more different words that mean the same thing or – sometimes with subtle nuances – more or less the same thing. There are, for instance, at least ten Japanese words for “abdomen.” Another is that many Japanese words are written in different ways, either with different kanji or in the syllabic scripts called katakana and hiragana. A third is that there are many homophones in Japanese: many words that sound the same but mean something different from one another. For the most part, we have tried to confine our entries to words and orthographies that are most common, and therefore most likely to be encountered. If we have failed in this respect, we hope that readers will tell us.

Which brings us to our fourth problem – one that all compilers of glossaries run up against: that of what to put in and what to leave out. On the one hand, there seemed no point in including very recondite or unusual material; on the other, we did not want to omit anything that might be useful. The distinction is not as straightforward as one would like, and it may be that we have included things that would have been better left out, or failed to include ones that would have been better put in. For this reason, we ask those who use this book to regard it as a permanent work-in-progress and to let us have any suggestions that occur to them for additions, deletions or amendments. Anyone who wishes to get in touch with us is welcome to do so, and we will do our best to respond to polite communications quickly and positively.

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Finally: it should be kept in mind always that the techniques of karate are dangerous. They should be used only in self-defence and only in the last resort. Karate training should be undertaken only under the guidance of an experienced and competent teacher. The practice of karate calls for a high degree of physical fitness, and before beginning any programme of strenuous exercise the student should consult a medical professional to make sure that he or she is in good health. Karate practice is undertaken at the student's own risk, and he or she should be fully aware of its hazards. The authors and publishers of this book do not accept any responsibility for loss, damage or injury arising out of the use of techniques mentioned or described in the following pages.

MC

RD

1

General Terms and Expressions

(There are several different and equally acceptable ways of Romanising Japanese words – of writing Japanese words in the Latin alphabet familiar to Europeans. The reader may encounter spellings different from those used here.)

A

Agatsu (吾勝)

Self-mastery; victory over the self: the conquest of ego and the cultivation of humility and self-restraint considered as ethical objectives of the martial arts. The maxim *Masa katsu agatsu* (正勝吾勝), “true victory is victory over the self,” was coined by Ueshiba Morihei, the founder of **aikido**; it is one of the guiding principles of aikido, but has an obvious general applicability.

Age (上げ)

A noun related to the verb *ageru* (上げる), “to lift up; to raise; to elevate.” In the context of **karate** practice, the word is usually used adjectivally, to mean “rising” or “moving upwards.” It can occur in conjunction with the names of a wide range of techniques.

Agura (胡坐)

A seated posture on the floor with the legs crossed “tailor style” (as distinct from the Japanese kneeling posture called **seiza**); traditionally considered unfeminine and generally uncouth: the literal meaning of the word is “foreign sitting” or “barbarian sitting.” Not frowned on nowadays, however, and often seen in the **dojo** as a way of relaxed sitting that westerners usually find more comfortable than **seiza**. **Anza** is a polite alternative term.

Ai (合)

Blending; coming together; fusion; harmony; unification.

Ai gamae (合構え)

“Harmony posture”: a posture such that each opponent/training partner has the same foot forward. See **Ai hanmi**; **Kamae**.

Ai hanmi (合半身)

A synonym for **ai gamae**.

Aikibudo (合気武道)

See **Aikido**.

Aikido (合気道)

The throwing and joint-locking art created by Ueshiba Morihei (植芝 盛平) (1883–1969). The word aikido means something like “the way of harmonising energy”: the essence of the art lies in the idea of harmonising or blending with an attacker’s energy and using it to defeat him; Ueshiba **Osensei** originally called it **Aikibudo**, “energy harmonising martial way.” Historically, aikido can be regarded as a reformulation and development of Daito Ryu aiki jutsu, the art studied by Ueshiba under Takeda Sokaku ((武田 惣角) (1859–1943). It is sometimes said that aikido became increasingly soft and unpractical in Ueshiba’s later years, mainly thanks to his growing preoccupation with its spiritual or quasi-religious aspects (see **Omoto kyo**). Especially since Ueshiba Osensei’s death, aikido has developed along several different lines, reflecting a range of technical and political differences. A hard and “realistic” form of aikido, said to reflect Ueshiba’s earlier teaching, is the Yoshinkan aikido founded in 1955 by Shioda Gozo (塩田剛三) (1915–1994). A competitive form of aikido called Shodokan aikido was developed by Tomiki Kenji ((富木謙治) (1900–1979) in the 1960s. What one might call original or “mainstream” aikido is represented by the Aikikai Foundation (財団法

人合気会) (Zaidanhoji Aikikai) in Tokyo. The current head of the Aikikai Foundation is Ueshiba Morihei's grandson Ueshiba Moriteru (植芝 守央) (b. 1951).

Aite (相手)

Opponent/training partner.

Ai uchi (相打ち)

Simultaneous striking; mutual kill; tie; draw.

Aka (朱)

Red (aka is also "total," "complete," "perfect," "obvious").

Antei (安定)

Stability; equilibrium.

Anza (安座)

"Relaxed sitting"; see **Agura**.

Aoi (青い)

Blue.

Ashi sabaki (足捌き)

Footwork as used to control distance, angle of attack, etc., while maintaining a stable posture. **Unsoku** is a synonym. See also **Tai sabaki**.

Ashi waza (足技)

Foot/leg techniques; sometimes synonymous with **keri waza**, but more often denoting foot/leg throwing techniques, as in **judo** and **jujutsu**.

Ate (当)

A strike; hit; blow; **uchi** is a synonym. Cf. **Atemi** and **Tsuki**.

Atemi (当て身)

A strike; hit; blow: more or less synonymous with **ate**, but perhaps with a more specific sense of striking a person (as distinct from, say, a target).

Atemi no kokyu (当ての呼吸)

Literally, “the breath of the strike”: i.e. the acquired habit or technique of co-ordinating breathing and striking in such a way as to maximise the force of the strike. In **karate**, developing this technique is an important aspect of **kata** and **kihon** practice.

Atemi uke (当て身受け)

A simultaneous block and strike.

Atemi waza (当て身技)

A collective term for striking techniques; more or less synonymous with **uchi waza**, but with perhaps the additional sense of striking the body’s vital points.

Ato no sen (後の先)

Literally, “first move later”: a response to, or interception of, an attack immediately after the attack is launched; the opposite of pre-emption. **Tai no sen** is more or less a synonym. Cf. **Sen no sen**.

Ato uchi (後打ち)

“Later strike”: i.e. a delayed strike; a feint; a “broken time” attack.

Awase (合わせ)

Joined together; united; opposite; facing.

Ayumi ashi (歩み足)

Normal walking movement, considered as an aspect of **ashi sabaki**.

B

Banbutsuruten (万物流転)

Literally, “ten thousand things flow and change”: i.e. everything is constantly changing or in a state of flux; reality is constituted by the endless interplay of opposites.¹ This idea as a fruitful principle of the martial arts (the dualism of hard and soft, attack and defence, advance and retreat) probably originates in the Chinese (Daoist) cosmological concepts of Yin and Yang, as represented in the familiar ‘taijitu’ diagram:



The same idea has, however, been present in western philosophy since the earliest days. See also **Inyo; Kyojitsu**.

Banzai (万歳)

Contrary to popular supposition, banzai is not really a “war-cry.” It is most common as an interjection of the same kind as “hurrah!” or “yahoo!” in English. Shouting “banzai” three times (this is called banzaisansho: 万歳三唱) is the equivalent of the western custom of giving three cheers.

¹ 万 – “ten thousand” – is often used in both Chinese and Japanese to mean “many things” or “all things.”

Bo (棒)

Staff: one of the weapons of Okinawan **kobudo**, but used also in a number of **karate** schools. The bo most often seen is called rokushaku bo (六尺棒), “six foot staff” (a shaku is as near a foot as makes no difference), but longer and shorter bo occur. They are usually made of red or white oak, though bamboo, rattan and even iron (see **Tetsu bo**) are used also. The bo is normally about 1.25” in diameter (a thickness that can be grasped firmly by the average hand) and circular in cross section, though some bo taper to about .75” at each end and one occasionally comes across examples that are hexagonal or octagonal in cross-section. **Kon** (also pronounced and Romanised as **Kun**) is a synonym.

Bogu (防具)

Armour; padding; body protection. Nowadays the term refers to the protective gear worn by **karate** students while sparring and to the light body armour worn by practitioners of **kendo** and similar arts. **Yoroi** is a synonym. The use of bogu by karate students is said to have been introduced by **Mabuni Kenwa**.

Bokken (木剣)

A wooden practice sword, a replica of the **katana**, usually made of red or white oak. The bokken was devised originally as a training weapon to avoid the dangers of using live blades, but it has come to be regarded as a weapon in its own right. **Bokuto** is a synonym; see also **Suburito**.

Bokuto (木刀)

See **Bokken**.

Bubishi (武備志)

Bubishi is the Japanese rendering of the Chinese *Wubei Zhi*, “Treatise of Military Arts and Science.” The term refers to a col-

lection of material belonging to the Fujian White Crane and Monk Fist traditions of chuan fa (quanfa) assembled at some time between the mid seventeenth and late nineteenth centuries.¹ The identity of the original compiler or compilers is unknown. The work has been edited and translated into English by Patrick McCarthy as *Bubishi: The Classic Manual of Combat* (Tuttle Publishing, 2008). The *Bubishi* was highly regarded by Okinawan **karate** teachers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; it is upon this fact that its reputation as the “bible” of karate largely depends. It is of considerable historical interest, but contemporary readers will find it difficult to see why any great practical significance should be attributed to it.

Budo (武道)

“Martial ways”: a generic, and now the most commonly used, term for the Japanese martial arts. **Bugei** is more or less a synonym, but *bugei* is an older term; it seems also to lack the ethical overtones conferred by the “-do” suffix. See **Do**.

Budoka (武道家)

Martial arts expert; professional or distinguished martial artist (and see **-ka**). **Bugeisha** is largely synonymous, though perhaps without the same connotation of expertise or distinction.

Budokai (武道会)

Martial arts association.

Budokan (武道館)

“Martial arts hall”: the word is most often used to denote the Nippon Budokan (日本武道館) – the large arena in Kitanomaru

¹ A much longer compilation of the same name was produced in China in the seventeenth century by Mao Yuanyi (1594–1640); but this enormous work – of more than 200 volumes – is not what **karate** historians mean by the *Bubishi*.

Park in central Tokyo built to accommodate the **judo** competition in the 1964 Olympic Games. The Japanese annual national championships of various martial arts are held there. It is used also as a venue for musical and other events. “Budokan” can, however, be used, and often is used, to denote any hall or building in which martial arts are practised. Cf. **Dojo**.

Bugei (武芸)

See **Budo**.

Bugei Ryuha Daijiten (武芸流派大事典)

A descriptive encyclopedia of Japanese martial arts, both extinct and still in being, compiled and edited by Watatani Kiyoshi and Yamada Tadashi and published in successive editions between 1963 and 1978 (from 1963 to 1968 the work was called *Bugei Ryuha Jiten* (武芸流派辭典)). A revised reprint of the 1978 edition was published in 2003. The work includes both **koryu** and **gendai** arts.

Bugeisha (武芸者)

See **Budoka**.

Bujinkatagi (武人氣質)

Martial ardour; true warrior spirit; courage; resolution.

Bujutsu (武術)

Martial technique; a term sometimes used interchangeably with **budo**, but without the ethical overtones imparted by the “-do” suffix. See **Do**; **Jutsu**.

Bukidori (武器取り)

“Weapon taking”: self-defence practice against armed attacks.

Bukyo

1. **武俠**: Chivalry; heroism; gallantry.
2. **武教**: The doctrines of **bushido**.

Bunbu (文武)

Literally “letters and arms”: the literary and martial arts considered as mutually complementary; **bunburyodo**, “the way of both letters and arms,” expresses the gentlemanly ideal or “way” of a well-rounded or versatile pursuit of both. The idea is something like that conveyed in English by the term “Renaissance man.”

Bunburyodo (文武兩道)

See **Bunbu**.

Bunkai (分解)

The step-by-step analysis or dissection of **kata** with a view to discovering **oyo**; bunkai is an essential part of kata practice.

Bushi (武士)

“Gentleman warrior”: the “complete” martial artist, in terms of both technical and moral excellence.

Bushido (武士道)

“Warrior path” or “warrior way”: the ideology of service and self-sacrifice associated with the **Samurai**, analogous to the European idea of chivalry. The seven cardinal virtues of bushido are righteousness (義: gi), courage (勇氣: yuki), benevolence (仁: jin), courtesy (禮: rei), integrity (誠: makoto), honour (名譽: meiyo) and loyalty (忠義: chugi). In essence, bushido is a kind of unwritten gentleman’s code, but attempts to express it in writing can be found in the *Hagakure* of Tashiro Tsuramoto and *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* by Nitobe Inazo. The idea of bushido has to an extent sur-

vived the passing of the feudal culture of Japan and continues to exercise an influence on the practice of the martial arts.

Bushi no nasake (武士の情け)

“Warrior compassion”: a phrase that expresses a central paradox of the martial arts: that the practitioner’s life-goal is a state of enlightened gentleness or compassion. See also **Bunbu**, **Bushi** and **Gikyoshin**.

C

Cha (茶)

Brown. There are several words to express the various shades of brown, but this seems to be the commonest. The same word is also “tea.”

Chakuchi ashi (着地足)

A method of stepping such that the rear foot moves forward to the place where the front foot originally was without passing it. Also (and more usually) called **tsugi ashi**.

Chi (血)

Blood; **ketsu** and **ketsueki** are synonyms.

Chidori ashi (千鳥足)

Literally “chicken legs”: a zig-zag or diagonal method of stepping forwards (**mae chidori ashi**) or backwards (**ura chidori ashi**). The same expression can denote uncertain or drunken staggering!

Chi’ishi (力石)

A contraction of **chikara ishi**, “strength stones”: a Okinawan strength and flexibility training aid (part of the equipment of **hojo undo**) consisting of a short wooden pole with a stone or concrete

weight on one end. Chi'ishi come in various weights and sizes depending on the requirements of the individual user. The original chi'ishi were perhaps sledgehammers or stone weights.



Chi'ishi

Chikama (近い間)

A contraction of chikai **ma ai**, “short distance”: a stance such that opponents are in striking distance of one another without having to move forward.

Chikara (力)

Ability; energy; power; proficiency; strength; **ryoku** is a synonym.

Chinkuchi (筋骨勢)

“Muscle energy”: a sudden and intense concentration/co-ordination of breath and muscular energy at the moment of delivering a strike. See also **Kiai**.

Chudan (中段)

Mid section or level: the area of the body roughly between the waist and the top of the chest.

Chugaeri (宙返り)

A somersault; a forward rolling breakfall. **Mae mawari ukemi** and **zenpo kaiten** are synonyms. See **Ukemi**.

Chusen (中線)

Centreline: an imaginary line drawn down the centre of the body, roughly from the bridge of the nose to the navel. **Seichusen** and **nakazumi** are synonyms.

D

Dachi (立ち)

See **Tachi**.

Dai

1. **大**: All; big, large; great; greater.
2. **第**: “Number” in an ordinal sense; i.e. dai ichi = number 1; dai ni = number 2. Dai should not be confused with kazu (数), which is “number” or “figure” in a nominal sense: i.e. 1 is a “kazu,” but “kazu ichi” does not mean “number one” of a series. (See the section on counting in Japanese.)
3. **代**: Representative; deputy; see **Shihan dai**.

Dai Nippon Butoku Kai (大日本武徳会)

The “All Japan Martial Virtue Society”: the foremost Japanese martial arts organisation, created at Kyoto in 1895 under the authority of the Ministry of Education and with the sanction of the Meiji emperor. At a time when foreign influence was perceived as a threat to Japanese national identity its purpose was to standardise, regulate and promote martial disciplines and systems throughout Japan. The Dai Nippon Butoku Kai was abolished by the allies at the end of World War II as part of a general policy of suppressing the supposed aggressive tendencies of Japanese culture. It was revived with a new constitution in 1953, though it is no longer an official government body. Cf. **Kokusai Budoin**.

Dan (段)

Degree; grade; level; rank: in **karate** and other **gendai budo** systems, the ranks or grades into which **yudansha** are divided, usually ranging from shodan (“lowest degree”) to judan (“tenth degree”). Dan grades are customarily signified by a black “belt” or **obi**, though in some **ryu** senior yudansha (usually rokudan – sixth dan – and above) wear red, red-and-white or white obi. Tradition-

ally, a school has either only one judan (its founder or its founder's successor) or a very small number, drawn from among its most senior exponents. Dan grades (and indeed all grades) indicate only the relative standing of their holders within a particular **ryu** or organisation. There is nothing absolute or objective about them, nor is there any common system of assessment by which they are awarded. Contrary to what is sometimes supposed, the award of "grades" in the martial arts is not a particularly ancient or traditional practice. The system of **kyu** and dan grades was introduced into **judo** by Kano Jigoro (嘉納治五郎) (1860–1938) in 1883. Only in the 1920s was it adopted by **Funakoshi Gichin** and applied to his karate students. It is now a universal feature of gendai budo arts, and some traditional arts have adopted it. Generally speaking, though, grades and coloured **obi** are not used by **koryu** systems. See **Menkyo**.

Danryokusei (弾力性)

Elasticity; flexibility; resilience; adaptability; the mental strength to recover from setbacks.

Deashi (出足)

Continuous forward movement. For example, a common form of **ashi barai** is called deashi barai, "forward-moving leg sweep."

Degeiko (出稽古)

"Leaving old things behind": the practice (often deplored by the traditionally-minded as an act of disloyalty) of going on to train in a school other than one's original one for the purposes of broadening experience.

Densho (伝承)

"Received transmission"; "orthodoxy": the teachings of a school handed down as part of the school's tradition from generation to generation.

Dento (伝統)

“Governing tradition”: the proper or accepted way of doing things; largely synonymous with **densho**.

Dentoteki (伝統的)

“Traditional”: an adjectival form of **dento**.

Deshi (弟子)

Student; pupil; an **uchi deshi** is an “inside student” or apprentice who lives with, or who is in constant attendance on, the teacher. Cf. **Soto deshi**. The traditional idea was that the uchi deshi would learn not only the techniques of a martial art but also, by the master’s example over a period of years, the general art of living a virtuous life. In the past, uchi deshi were often children sent by their families to study with a master, and adult uchi deshi were to some extent domestic servants. Nowadays, uchi deshi are typically adults chosen by the teacher for individual tuition in view of their unusual dedication or natural ability. The growth of **karate** into a mass-participation activity has meant that the great majority of students are not deshi in any traditional sense. Most students are members of clubs that are in turn members of associations whose head is very remote from the rank and file, most of whom may never or hardly ever meet him.

Do (道)

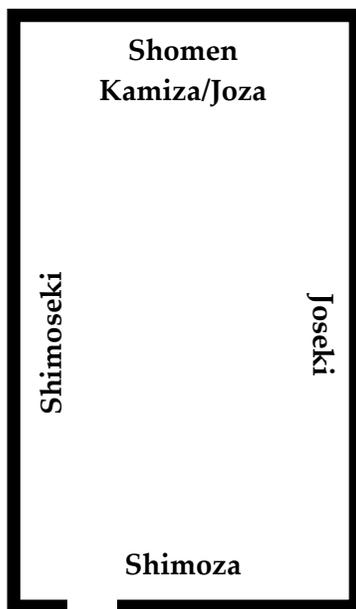
“Way” or “path,” with the connotation of “Zen way,” “Buddhist teaching,” “the proper way to conduct oneself.” It can occur as a word, a prefix or a suffix. The idea conveyed in such expressions as **karate-do** or **kendo** is that the art in question is an “inner” way of self-perfection rather than the merely “external” practice of a fighting system; cf. **Jutsu**. The Japanese concept of a martial “way” is similar to the idea found in the medieval European tradition of chivalry: that fighting prowess can be humanised and civilised by association with a code of personal excellence.

Dogi (道着)

Training clothes or uniform; often abbreviated to **gi** or prefixed with the name of the art of which it is the uniform: **karategi**, **judo-gi**, **jujutsugi**, etc. **Keikogi** is a synonym.

Dojo (道場)

The “way-place” in which an art is practised. The traditional or archetypal Japanese dojo is rectangular and oriented north–south, with the entrance at the south end. The area along the north wall is called the kamiza or joza (上座) (“seat of honour”; “highest seat,” reserved for distinguished visitors); the area along the south wall is called the shimoza (下座) (“low seat”); the area along the east wall is the joseki (上席) (“high place”), where the teachers sit before and at the end of practice; the area along the opposite or west wall is the shimoseki (下席) (“low place”) where the students sit. The north wall or far end of the dojo is called the shomen (正面) (“front”); typically, there is a Shinto or Buddhist shrine or a picture of the founder there. (This terminology varies somewhat in practice. Also, a dojo is not necessarily a building or in a building. A garden or park can be a dojo.)



Dojo arashi (道場嵐)

“**Dojo storming**”: the practice (now almost entirely defunct) of visiting a rival dojo and challenging its students to fight, on the understanding that the losers would become students of the winners. The practice seems to embody a mixture of pride and commercial rivalry.

Dojo cho (道場長)

The head of a **dojo**: often the administrative head or owner of the building rather than the chief instructor.

Dojo kun (道場訓)

A list of the general precepts or guiding principles of a **dojo** or (more often) of a “style” or **ryu**, usually posted on the dojo wall and recited as a kind of litany at the beginning and/or end of practice. Typically the dojo kun is a series of short maxims devised by the founder and recited to remind the students of his ideals. For instance, the dojo kun of **Shotokan karate** is as follows:

- 一、人格完成に努むること (hitotsu, jinkaku kansei ni tsutomuru koto);
- 一、誠の道を守ること (hitotsu, makoto no michi wo mamoru koto);
- 一、努力の精神を養うこと (hitotsu, doryoku no seishin wo yashinau koto);
- 一、礼儀を重んずること (hitotsu, reigi wo omonzuru koto);
- 一、血気の勇を戒むること (hitotsu, kekki no yu wo imashimuru koto).

In English:

Let each seek perfection of character;

Let each defend the way of truth;

Let each cultivate the spirit of effort;

Let each show respect and courtesy;

Let each refrain from rash courage.

Doshu (道主)

Literally “master of the way”: the head of a system or school – traditionally (though not always, and nowadays seldom) the eldest son of the school’s founder or previous head. The title is now most often used to denote the successor of Ueshiba Morihei as head of the Aikikai Foundation in Tokyo. See **Aikido**.

E

Eda dojo (枝道場)

Branch **dojo**, as distinct from the **honbu** dojo. And see **Shibu**.

Eibu (英武)

Exemplary or outstanding courage.

Eiki (銳氣)

Ardour; courage; valour.

Eikikujiku (銳氣挫く)

To demoralise; to break or crush (in a psychological sense); to undermine the spirit or “nerve” of an opponent.

Embu (演武)

A martial arts demonstration or performance.

Embujo (演武場)

The place – arena, stadium – in which a martial arts demonstration is held.

Embusen (演武線)

Literally “martial performance line”: the line or track that one can imagine being described on the floor by the practitioner’s feet dur-

ing the execution of a **kata**. Often (though not in all cases) the embusen line starts and ends at the same point on the floor.

Enga osae (偃臥押え)

Pinning an opponent face down; driving an opponent's face into the floor.

Engeiko (円稽古)

"Circle practice": the student stands in the centre of a circle of his fellows, who take it in turns to attack him. See also **Happo kumite**.

Enshinryoku (遠心力)

Centrifugal force; "whipping" force.

Enshu (演習)

Practice; exercise; drill.

Enzan no metsuke (遠山の目付け)

Literally, "looking at the mountain in the distance": the expression is meant to convey the idea of taking in the whole of an opponent with one's eyes rather than allowing them to become focussed on a single part of him or an isolated aspect of the situation.

F

Fuantei (浮安定)

Lack of balance; instability; a high, unstable posture. 浮 is "floating" or "rising to the surface"; the intended image is presumably of someone bobbing about like a cork in the water, in contrast to the kind of rootedness or stability expressed in such expressions as **fudo dachi**.

Fudo ken (不動拳)

“Immovable” – i.e. tightly clenched – fist.

Fudo shin (不動心)

“Immovable mind”: steadiness, imperturbability, resolve; an undistracted or undisturbed state of being. Cf. **Mushin**.

Fujubun (不十分)

Weak, inadequate, imperfect, insufficient: a technique delivered with insufficient force or commitment.

Fukubu (腹部)

Abdomen; belly: **hara** is more or less a synonym.

Fukukin (腹筋)

Abdominal muscles; “sit-up” exercises.

Fuku shidojin (副指導員)

Assistant or associate instructor.

Fukushikikokyu (腹式呼吸)

Abdominal breathing, sometimes called “Buddha” breathing: deep breathing, inhaling slowly through the nose and exhaling through the mouth, flattening the diaphragm while inhaling in order to take advantage of the full volume of the lungs. Correct fukushikikoyu produces a visible expansion or rounding of the belly, as in pictures and statues of the familiar Buddha figure called Hotei. Abdominal breathing also has (a) a marked calming effect, and (b) the effect of lowering the body’s centre of gravity, thereby contributing to a properly stable, rooted stance. See **Ibuki**.

Fukutsu (不屈)

Persistence; determination; fortitude; “never say die” spirit.

Fukyugata (普及型)

Elementary or beginners’ **kata**, originally intended to stimulate interest in **karate** among the young, especially in secondary schools. The term is typically used to denote the two kata composed in 1940 by Nagamine Shoshin (長嶺将真) (1907–1997) and **Miyagi Chojun**. Miyagi’s fukyu gata is the **Goju** kata now called Gekisai dai ichi. Nagamine Shoshin’s is practised as part of the curriculum of **Matsubayashi Ryu**. The Taikyoku series composed by **Funakoshi Yoshitaka** may also be described as fukyu gata. The term is virtually synonymous with **Kihongata**.

Fumi uchi (踏み打ち)

A collective term for strikes made in conjunction with a forward step or lunge.

Fumi waza (踏み技)

A collective term for stamping or crushing techniques.

Furibo (振り棒)

“Swinging staff”: a heavy iron-shod cudgel, somewhat like a **suburito**, about four feet long; nowadays not often seen and used, where it is used at all, mainly as a strength-training implement.

Furimi (振り身)

Body positioning; techniques of evasion, more or less synonymous with **tai sabaki**.

Futari dori (二人取)

Attack by two opponents simultaneously; also called **futari gake**.

Futari gake (二人掛け)

See **Futari dori**.

G

Gaiden (外傳)

“Transmission from elsewhere”: teachings introduced into a **ryu** from an outside source – i.e. that were not part of the founder’s original teaching. Depending on the cultural conservatism or otherwise of the **ryu**, such extrinsic teachings can be regarded as fruitful additions to the curriculum or as disloyal departures from orthodoxy. The traditional Japanese tendency was to regard departures from the received transmission almost as acts of treachery; schools nowadays tend to be much more open-minded, though this is by no means universally true. Cf. **Kata yaburi**.

Gaiho (外方)

Outward; turning away; turning outwards: a synonym (though not as widely used) for **soto**.

Gaman (我慢)

Patience; perseverance; tolerance; self-control; self-denial.

Gambatte (頑張って)

An imperative form of the verb *gambaru* (頑張る), “to persevere”; “to persist”; “to hang on.” “Gambatte!” is a common interjection or shout of encouragement, more or less along the lines of “Go for it!” “Get stuck in!” “Keep it up!”

Ganriki (眼力)

Observation; discernment; insight; penetration. Specifically, a penetrating gaze or stare intended to dominate, control or intimidate an opponent; “eyeballing.”

Gassho (合掌)

A traditional Buddhist gesture of greeting made with the palms pressed together at chest level as if in prayer. Raising the hands from the chest to the forehead is a gesture of special deference or respect.

Gasshuku (合宿)

A period of intensive (typically residential) training – a “training camp,” often held annually as a sort of “highlight of the year” occasion, intended to bring members of a school together for the purposes of shared practice and “bonding.”

Gedan (下段)

Lower level; the area of the body extending approximately from the waist downwards. As an adjective, *gedan* – “low” – can be prefixed to the names of a wide variety of striking, blocking and kicking techniques to indicate the area to which, or the direction in which, they are to be applied.

Gendai (現代)

Modern; recent; present-day. The *gendai budo* are those martial arts that became established after the Meiji restoration of 1868. They include (but are not limited to) **aikido**, **judo**, **iaido**, **karate-do**, **kendo** and **kyudo**. “Established” in this context means included in the list of arts officially recognised by the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai**. It is entirely conceivable that other arts will come to be recognised as *gendai budo* in the future. Cf. **Koryu**. The expression *gendai budo* has now almost entirely lost the slightly pejorative sense that once attached to it. (Some *gendai* arts – modern **jujutsu** schools, for example – are reformulations or modernised versions of ancient arts, and may in a certain sense be described as both *gendai* and *koryu budo*.)

Geri (蹴り)

See **Keri**.

Gi (着)

See **Dogi**; **Keikogi**.

Gikyoshin (義侠心)

A generous, magnanimous, chivalrous heart or spirit; a moral ideal of the martial artist. A **gikyonoshi** is the sort of warrior gentleman admired also in western chivalric traditions; a knight; a paladin.

Gikyonoshi (義侠の士)

See **Gikyoshin**.

Go (剛)

Hard, tough, masculine, “external”; for martial arts purposes, more or less the equivalent of the Chinese Yang.

Goju Kai (剛柔会)

The version or variant of **Goju Ryu** established after World War II by **Yamaguchi Gogen**. The technical differences between Goju Kai and Goju Ryu (in the performance of **kata**, for example) are minor and certainly not such as to establish Goju Kai as a separate “style” or school of **karate**. Arguably Yamaguchi **Osensei**’s Goju Kai is a “Japanified” version of Okinawan Goju Ryu, but the distinction between Goju Kai and Goju Ryu is in reality a subtle one.

Goju Ryu (剛柔流)

The Okinawan “hard/soft” school of **karate** founded by **Miyagi Chojun**, largely under the influence of the Chinese White Crane methods that he acquired from his teacher **Higashionna Kanryo**. The name originally suggested (by Miyagi **Osensei**’s student

Shinzato Jinen) was **Hanko Ryu**. The name Goju Ryu, derived from a sentence in the **Bubishi**, was coined by Miyagi Osensei in 1929. Goju Ryu combines hard (**go**) linear, closed-fist techniques with soft (**ju**) open-hand and evasive ones.

Gonenkoroshi (五年殺し)

Literally “five year killing”; the term is the Japanese equivalent of what in Chinese is called “dim mak.” These expressions denote the belief (at least as old as the thirteenth century) that it is possible to cause delayed death or serious illness by striking or pressing certain vital points on the body. Dim mak is not a simple matter of causing the kind of injury that might result in delayed death from (say) internal bleeding or a ruptured spleen or liver; nor is it a matter of striking “pressure points” in the sense of nerve-centres. It is supposed to be an esoteric art in itself, relying on a knowledge of acupuncture points and the possibility of disrupting the body’s vital energy by means of them (see **Ki**). No scientific evidence supports the contention that “delayed death” can be brought about in the intended sense, but the belief that it can be persists, as one of the enduring superstitions of the martial arts. There are still teachers who claim a knowledge of “death touch” techniques. **Okurasu garoshi** is a synonym.

Goshaku bo (五尺棒)

A **bo** about five feet in length, shorter than, but in all other respects similar to, the more usual rokushaku bo.

Goshin jutsu (護身術)

The art of self-defence; techniques of self-defence; also called goshin no jutsu (護身の術).

Gyaku (逆)

Opposite; reverse; rear. Gyaku is prefixed to the names of many techniques as an indication that they are to be performed “re-

versed”: i.e. with the rear or opposite foot or hand (though the exact sense of “gyaku” will depend somewhat on the technique in question). See, e.g., **Gyaku tsuki**.

H

Ha (派)

School; faction; sub-group. See **Ryuha**.

Hachimaki (鉢巻)

A headband or bandanna made of red or white cloth, often decorated with a **kamon** or some inspirational maxim. Traditionally hachimaki are worn as a symbol of dedication or perseverance or sincerity. They are worn not only by martial artists but by anyone – sports fans, for example – wishing to make a gesture of commitment or loyalty. Possibly they originated as protectors or sweatbands worn under **Samurai** helmets. The wearing of hachimaki by western martial artists tends to be regarded as an affectation. White hachimaki with the inscription 神風 (kami kaze)¹ were worn by Japanese “suicide” pilots during World War II. This fact has to some extent brought their use into disrepute in the West.

Hacho (破調)

Arythmic or unpredictable movement as a tactical means of confusing an opponent; broken rhythm.

Hai

1. はい: “Yes,” used in the **dojo** to signify affirmation or assent (see also **Osu**); often used also as a **kiai**.

¹ Kami kaze is “wind sent by the gods.” It is a term much older than World War II; it was originally used in reference to the great storms by which the invading Mongolian navy was repulsed from Hakata Bay in 1274 and 1281.

2. 背: Back; reverse; ridge (as of a mountain).

Haibu yori (背部より)

From behind; from the rear.

Haishin undo (背身運動)

“Warm up” exercises to stretch the back. Cf. **Junbi undo**.

Hakaisuru (破壊する)

To destroy, break, demolish, disrupt.

Hakama (袴)

A traditional Japanese ankle-length skirt-like garment originally worn by men only but now worn by women also. There are two types: *umanori* (馬乗り) (with the legs divided; in effect, a pair of very baggy trousers or culottes) and *andon* (行灯) (with undivided legs). Hakama are worn by practitioners (sometimes by senior practitioners only) of a number of martial arts, e.g. **aikido**, **iaido**, **jujutsu**, **kendo**, **kenjutsu**, **kyudo** (though not usually by students of **karate**). The hakama worn by martial artists are usually black or dark blue. They have seven deep pleats, two at the back and five at the front, said to represent the seven virtues of **bushido**. Outside the martial arts, hakama are now worn in Japan only on very formal occasions and at tea-ceremonies, weddings and funerals.

Hakkaishiki (発会式)

Formal opening ceremony; opening etiquette; the sequence of bows and responses with which a training session traditionally begins. Cf. **Heikaishiki**

Hakutsuru (白鶴)

The Japanese translation of the Chinese Bai He, “White Crane.” Bai He Quan (“White Crane Fist”) is a southern Chinese martial

art that originated in Fujian province. In its various forms it exerted considerable influence on the development of **karate** in Okinawa, particularly on what was to become **Goju Ryu**, **Shorin Ryu** and **Uechi Ryu**. There are several karate **kata** called Hakutsuru, imported from China to Okinawa by Okinawan teachers who studied there, or by Chinese immigrants.

Hamon (破門)

Expulsion; banishment; excommunication: the formal exclusion of a student from a **ryu**. Individuals are typically expelled for substantial and repeated misconduct – serious discourtesy, publicly embarrassing the ryu, teaching the techniques of the ryu to outsiders without permission, etc.; but expulsion occurs also for reasons that may seem trivial or vindictive to an outsider. Western students have often not understood (or much cared about) how easy it is to give offence to traditional Japanese sensibilities, though Japanese **sensei** nowadays are a good deal less touchy than their forebears were.¹

Han (半)

Half; semi-.

Hanaji (鼻血)

Epistaxis; nosebleed.

Hanare (離れ)

Detachment; separation: specifically, the critical moment of release of an arrow in **kyudo**; figuratively, the idea of acting at the completely appropriate moment with the mind detached or separated from all distraction.

¹ The homophone word hamon (written 刃文), denotes the distinctive pattern created along the length of a sword blade by the tempering process.

Hanbo (半棒)

Literally “half-staff”: a short staff, about three feet long; i.e. somewhat shorter than the **jo**. **Tanbo** and **Tanjo** are synonyms.

Hangeki (反撃)

Counter-attack.

Hanko (判子)

A signature stamp or seal used to “sign” official documents. **Inkan** is more or less a synonym.

Hanko Ryu (半硬流)

“Half hard School”: a name originally proposed by **Miyagi Chojun**’s student Shinzato Jinen for **Goju Ryu** and considered by **Mabuni Kenwa** as a name for what became **Shito Ryu**.

Hanmi (半身)

“Half-facing” – i.e. with the head and hips facing forward but the torso turned somewhat to one side. The word occurs as an adjective in conjunction with the names of a number of stances, to indicate a slightly rotated position of the practitioner’s upper body.

Hanpukugeiko (反復稽古)

Training through constant repetition, to create “muscle memory” or conditioned reflex. **Hanpukurensu** is a synonym.

Hanpukurensu (反復練習)

See **Hanpukugeiko**.

Hansayo (反作用)

Reaction; response.

Hansha undo (反射運動)

Reflex action; immediate, automatic response to a stimulus. **Hansha sayo** is a synonym.

Hansha sayo (反射作用)

See **Hansha undo**.

Hanshi (範士)

A **shogo** literally meaning “exemplary warrior” but usually translated (when it is translated at all) as “master teacher” or “grand master.” Broadly speaking, the term carries the connotation that its bearer is a teacher of teachers. It is a title customarily awarded only to those of eighth **dan** (or the **koryu** equivalent) and above.

Hantai (反対)

Opposite; opposed.

Hanza han dachi (半座半立ち)

Attack and defence training with one person standing and the other sitting.

Happo kumite (八方組手)

Defence against eight opponents in a circle. See **Engeiko**; **Kumite**.

Hara (腹)

Abdomen; belly; the body’s centre of balance or gravity. **Fukubu** is more or less a synonym, but **hara** has acquired the additional connotation (probably a cultural importation from China) of being a central repository of the body’s natural energy or vitality (see **Ki**; **Tanden**). The word has also a figurative sense approximating to “mind” or “intention,” with an implication of sincerity or

wholeheartedness: i.e. something that comes from the *hara* is done wholeheartedly, with total commitment. The expression **harakiri** is, literally, “belly cut.”

Harai (払い)

Sweeping; clearing away: the word usually becomes “barai” as a suffix or when it occurs in compounds after another word (see, e.g. **Gedan barai**).

Harakiri (腹切)

Also (and more formally) called *seppuku* (切腹). Ritual suicide by self-disembowelment as a response to defeat or disgrace. The practice of *harakiri* is, of course, now obsolete (though a few isolated cases occur), but it expresses an aspect of the single-minded righteousness traditionally associated with the martial artist’s character: the idea that it is better to die than suffer defeat or dishonour. A specific kind of suicide called *junshi* (殉死) was sometimes committed by **Samurai** retainers after the death of their lord as a final and supreme gesture of loyalty. As recently as 1964 – though, one suspects, more as a publicity stunt than anything else – **Oyama Masutatsu** vowed to commit *harakiri* if a Japanese did not win the first All-Japan Full Contact Karate Open Championship.

Hebi ni mikomareta kaeru (蛇に見込まれた蛙)

Literally “a frog beneath the snake’s gaze”: the “rabbit in the headlights” phenomenon of paralysis through fear.

Heian (平安)

“Peace”: the collective name of the five elementary **kata** of **Shotokan karate**; with minor differences, they are the same as the Okinawan **Pinan** series. The name *Heian* was given to them by **Funakoshi Gichin**. “*Heian*” refers also to the period of Japanese history between 794 and 1185.

Heijutsu no sanbyo (兵術の三病)

The “three sicknesses” of the martial arts; the mental states that most impede the martial artist: doubt, negligence and egoism.

Heikaishiki (閉会式)

Formal closing ceremony; cf. **Hakkaishiki**.

Heishugata (閉手形)

The **Goju Ryu kata** Sanchin and Tensho are customarily called heishugata, “closed hands” kata. The meaning of the term is not clear; cf. **Kaishugata**.

Hidari (左)

Left-hand side.

Hidari mawari (左回り)

Turning to the left; anticlockwise.

Hiden waza (秘傳伎)

Secret or esoteric techniques; techniques revealed only to senior or specially selected students. The idea of secret techniques or special powers revealed only to the initiate involves a good deal of superstition and has little credibility in the modern world (cf. **Gonenkoroshi; Ki**). It has often been used as device to maintain the interest of the gullible or to increase the mystique and reputation of a teacher. Students have come increasingly to see that there is nothing in any martial art that, subject to the necessary degree of natural ability, cannot eventually be acquired by hard and intelligent training. There are difficult and advanced techniques, but there are no “secrets.”

Hiki (引き)

Retracting, pulling back.

Hikiage (引き上げ)

Moving away from an opponent after striking.

Hiki ashi (引き足)

Retracting the foot after a kick; stepping back.

Hiki te (引き手)

“Pulling hand”: the hand that is pulled back to the waist when striking or blocking with the other hand in formal **karate** practice. In terms of **kata bunkai**, hiki te is usually interpreted as a concealed blocking or trapping or pulling application.

Hiki waza (引き技)

Techniques delivered while retreating; strikes delivered while moving in the opposite direction to the strike. The term is especially associated with, though need not be confined to, **kendo**.

Hiragana (平仮名)

See **Kana**.

Hitori geiko (独り稽古)

Solitary practice; solo practice; **kata** practice; practice of **kihon** without a partner.

Ho (方 or 法)

Method; process; way of acting; and see **Hoho**.

Hoho (方法)

More or less the same as **ho**, and either of the two kanji of hoho can be used to write **ho** (see above). The doubling seems to create a strengthened implication of a specifically *correct* method or way of acting or performing a given technique.

Hojo undo (補助運動)

Strength training, associated especially with Okinawan karate, using a range of apparatus originally improvised from ordinary domestic and agricultural implements. More recently, exercise scientists have suggested that certain elements of hojo undo impose unhealthy stresses on the joints; but this is a matter of controversy. Purists – especially practitioners of **Goju Ryu karate** – continue to use the traditional implements in the traditional exercise patterns, though it is fair to point out that the same benefits can be achieved with modern weight-training equipment. For a selection see **Chi'ishi; Ishisashi; Jari bako; Kongoken; Makiage; Makiwara; Nigiri game; Tan; Tetsu geta.**

Hombu (本部)

Headquarters; administrative centre; the “mother” **dojo** of a **ryu**, often (though not always) the first or largest dojo established by the founder.

Hyakunin kumite (百人組み手)

“One hundred man fighting”: in **Kyokushinkai karate**, the ultimate test of the student’s courage and endurance. The individual is required to fight one hundred opponents successively in rounds of about two minutes each with a minute’s rest between each round. The fighting is full-contact with only blows to the head and groin forbidden (though kicks to the head are allowed). To succeed, the candidate must win at least half the rounds; if knocked down, he must not remain down for more than fifteen seconds. **Oyama Masutatsu**’s original intention was that completion of the hyakunin kumite would be a requirement for promotion to fourth or fifth **dan**, but this intention was soon abandoned. The number of people actually to complete the hyakunin kumite is unsurprisingly small. Oyama Masutatsu himself completed it three times.

Iaido (居合道)

The **gendai** art of sword-drawing. The art consists almost entirely of **kata**; its aim is formal perfection in drawing the sword, making a cut, and returning the sword to the saya or scabbard. The Zen Nippon Iaido Renmei, All Japan Iaido Federation (全日本居合道連盟, Zen Nippon Iaido Renmei) was founded in 1948.

Ibuki (息吹)

Breath, from the verb *ibuku* (息吹く), “to breathe.” The expression “*ibuki* breathing” usually refers to the kind of deep, stertorous breathing associated with the performance of *Sanchin kata*. See also **Fukushikokyu**.

Ichinen (一念)

“One thought” or “one desire”: wholeheartedness; single-minded concentration, undistracted by extraneous influences.

Ichitaita (一对多)

“One against many”: defence against multiple attackers.

Ido geiko (移動稽古)

Moving practice; the performance of basic techniques while moving. **Ido kihon** is a synonym.

Ido kihon (移動基本)

See **Ido geiko**.

Ie (いえ)

“No.”

Iji (意地)

Disposition, spirit, willpower, stubbornness, persistence, appetite.

Ikinari (行き成り)

Acting suddenly, without warning: without “telegraphing” your intentions to an opponent. Cf. **Ikkini**.

Iki no chosei (息の調製)

A term associated especially with **Kyokushinkai karate**, though of general applicability; literally “preparation of the breath”: breath control; the co-ordination of breathing with movement and technique in **kata** performance.

Iki o dasu (息を出す)

To breathe out; to exhale.

Iki o korosu (息を殺す)

To “kill” the breath: i.e. to hold the breath; **iki o tsumeru** is a synonym.

Iki o suru (息をする)

To breathe; **iki o tsuku** is a synonym.

Iki o su (息を吸う)

To breathe in; to inhale

Iki o tsuku (息をつく)

See **iki o suru**.

Iki o tsumeru (息を詰める)

See **Iki o korosu**.

Ikiuchi (息打ち)

“Breath-strike” – striking on the exhalation; striking in the time it takes to exhale. Cf. **Atemi no kokyu**.

Ikken hissatsu (一拳必殺)

“One blow, certain death”: a maxim not, of course, nowadays taken literally. It is used in modern martial arts practice to express the principle (a) that every strike should be made with total commitment, as if one’s life depended on it, and (b) that an encounter should be finished as quickly as possible, employing the minimum number of techniques. There is also the figurative suggestion that each blow or strike should be intended to kill the ego.

Ikkini (一気に)

In one breath; instantly; without thought or hesitation; more or less synonymous with **Ikinari**.

Inasu (往なす)

To parry or fend off, to sidestep or evade; to chase away.

Inkan (印鑑)

See **Hanko**.

Inka shomei (印可証明)

A certificate of transmission or completion of training. Inka shomei (often abbreviated to inka) is primarily a certificate of dharma transmission issued by a master to a **Zen** student; but the certificates issued to students under the **menkyo** system are also called inka shomei.

Inyo (陰陽)

“Positive and negative”; “shadow and sunlight”: a Japanese translation of the Chinese Yin and Yang, denoting (in Daoist cosmology and metaphysics) the supposed duality of cosmic or universal forces. **Kyojitsu** may be regarded as a virtual synonym, as, for martial arts purposes, may **goju**. See also **Banbutsuruten**.

Irimi (入り身)

An aspect of **tai sabaki**: neutralising or smothering an attack by entering directly into it. The term is particularly associated with , though by no means confined to, **aikido**.

Ishisashi (石錠)

“Stone padlock,” an Okinawan karate strength-training device, one of the implements of **hojo undo**. Modern “kettle bells,” resemble ishi sashi quite closely and can be used as substitutes.



Ishi sashi

Isshaku bo (一尺棒)

A staff or cudgel one shaku – about one foot – in length; a truncheon.

Isshin Ryu (一心流)

“One Heart School”: an Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo ryu** founded in 1956 by **Shimabuku Tatsuo**. A good deal troubled by political divisions after the death of its founder, Isshin Ryu is comparatively little practised in Europe, though it is well established in the USA.

Isshi soden (一子相伝)

The traditional practice of handing down the teachings of a **ryu** from father to eldest son. The spread and proliferation of the mar-

tial arts during the twentieth century and beyond has made the practice obsolescent, though it is not quite extinct. In recent times (e.g. within **Isshin Ryu** after the death of **Shimabuku Tatsuo**) it has given rise to considerable “political” difficulties. The recent history of karate has been plagued by succession crises largely because it is no longer possible to identify an indisputable “heir” to the ryu’s founder or current head.

Issoku ikken no maai (一足一拳の間合い)

“One step, one strike distance”; a distance between opponents such that neither can strike the other without stepping forward.

Jari bako (砂利箱)

“Sand box”; “grit box”: a container (usually a jar or bowl rather than a box) filled with sand or gravel into which the hands are plunged repeatedly to harden and callous the skin; one of the implements of **hojo undo**. **Suna bako** is a synonym.

Jiffa (ジツハ)

An Okinawan word for the pin (about four inches long) by which the traditional “top-knot” hairstyle was held in place. Some exponents of **Uechi Ryu/Pangai Noon** practise a **kata** (called Jiffa) in which two jiffa are used, one in each hand, as weapons of attack and defence. The word is pronounced, Okinawan style, as “Jifua.”

Jiku ashi (軸足)

“Axis leg”; “pivot leg”: the leg that remains stationary as the practitioner moves from one stance to another; the “non-stepping” leg.

Jissen (実戦)

Literally “reality match”: real combat; actual fighting. **Jissen kumite** in **Kyokushikai karate** is full contact fighting without any protective equipment. See **Hyakunin kumite**.

Jissen kumite (実戦組手)

See **Jissen**.

Jiyu kumite (自由組手)

Free – i.e. unchoreographed, unrestricted, spontaneous – sparring or fighting, as distinct from **Yakusoku kumite**. The degree to which jiyu kumite is genuinely free varies from **ryu** to ryu and **dojo** to dojo, as does the degree of permitted contact and the use or non-use of protective equipment. The closest approximation to authentically “free” fighting is probably the **jissen kumite** of **Kyokushinkai karate**.

Jo (杖)

A staff about four feet in length, usually made of red or white oak; **yonshaku bo** is a synonym.

Jodan (上段)

Upper or high level; the area of the body approximately from the top of the chest upwards. Appearing as an adjective in front of the name of a technique, the word indicates that the technique is meant to attack or defend the upper part of the body.

Joge (上下)

High and low; up and down; two-handed techniques performed in an upwards and downwards direction, or at a high and low level, simultaneously. See, for example, **Joge uke**.

Jokyo (助教)

Assistant teacher; assistant instructor.

Joshi goshinjutsu (女子護身術)

Women’s self-defence; defensive tactics and techniques devised especially for use by women.

Ju (柔)

Soft, flexible, gentle; roughly the Japanese equivalent, for martial arts purposes, of the Chinese Yin. see **Goju Ryu; Judo; Jujutsu**.

Judo (柔道)

“Gentle way”; “supple way”; “flexible way”: a **gendai** throwing and grappling art developed in the late nineteenth century by Kano Jigoro (see **Dan**). It is often called **Kodokan** judo, after the name of the **honbu dojo** opened by Kano in Tokyo in 1882. The roots of judo lie in traditional **jujutsu** – Kano **Osensei** studied Tenjin Shin’yo Ryu and Kito Ryu jujutsu as a young man – but by giving the suffix “-do” to his art Kano indicated that he wished it to be regarded primarily as a “way” of self-improvement and social benefit (see **Do**). Especially since 1964 – the year of its acceptance as an Olympic event – judo has become almost entirely a combat sport and there has been a tendency to eliminate from it techniques that are considered dangerous. Judo was the first Japanese martial art to become established to any significant extent in the West, but (as has been true also of **karate**) at the cost of losing a good deal of its original character and ethos.

Jujutsu (柔術)

“Gentle art,” though “supple art” or “flexible art” would perhaps be more satisfactory translations: the throwing, locking and striking art that is the immediate ancestor of **Judo**. Jujutsu is regarded as a **koryu** art and there are many traditional and ancient **ryu**, though a number of jujutsu schools have been founded in the modern era.

Junan taiso (柔軟体操)

Exercises to promote flexibility; stretching exercises.

Junbi taiso (準備体操)

See **Junbi undo**.

Junbi undo (準備運動)

Calisthenic or “warm-up” exercises to stretch the body and raise its core temperature before practice. **Junbi taiso** is a synonym. The term junbi undo often refers specifically to the exercise sequence devised by **Miyagi Chojun** for **Goju Ryu** practitioners and now used in Goju Ryu **dojo** as part of the ryu’s formal curriculum.

Jundokan (順道館)

“Right Way Hall”: the name of the **dojo** in Naha City, Okinawa established by Miyazato Ei’ichi (宮里 栄一) (1922–1999) in 1957. After the death of **Miyagi Chojun**, Miyazato Sensei was regarded by many, though not by all, as his successor as the head of **Goju Ryu karate**. The name of the dojo is evidently intended to convey the message that here is studied the true way of Miyagi Osensei.

Jutsu (術)

“Technique”; “art”; “method”; “means.” The term is a general one, not confined to the martial arts. As a suffix, in such constructions as **jujutsu** or **kenjutsu**, it denotes (on the whole) the technical or exterior, as distinct from the ethical or “philosophical,” aspect of an art. See **Do**. (Jutsu is sometimes Romanised as “jitsu,” but this is to invite confusion with 実 (jitsu): “truth”; “honesty”; “sincerity.”)

K

-ka (家)

As a suffix, -ka means more or less what “-ist” or “-er” means in English: an exponent or a practitioner of an occupation or pursuit; thus a karateka is one who practises **karate**; a jujutsuka one who practises **jujutsu**, and so on. Generally speaking (though there are exceptions to this) the “-ka” suffix does not imply anything about an individual’s skill or level of attainment.

Kachi wa saya no naka ni ari (勝ちは鞘の中にあり)

A proverb associated with **kenjutsu** but of general applicability: “Victory comes while the sword is still in the sheath.” Its primary meaning is that the right state of mind is essential to victory: an individual who lacks confidence or who is distracted or anxious will lose the contest regardless of technical skill. A secondary meaning might be that it is better to win without fighting, by force of personality or reason. The proverb exists in several forms, but the meaning in each case is the same.

Kae ashi (返足)

Tactical stance changing or switching; a form of **ashi sabaki**: exchanging the rear leg for the forward leg without losing ground, either by bringing the rear foot up to the front foot and stepping back with the front foot, or by bringing the front foot back to the rear foot and stepping forward with the rear foot.

Kaeshi (返し)

“Reversal,” “turning the tables”: see **Kaeshi waza**; the word *kaeshi* (usually Romanised as *gaeshi*) sometimes occurs also in the compound names of joint locking techniques: i.e. joint “reversals.”

Kaeshi waza (返し技)

Countering techniques; reversal or “table-turning” techniques (especially in throwing and grappling arts) that exhibit the skill of turning an attack against the attacker – of turning attack into defence and counter-attack.

Kai (会)

Association; club; gathering; assembly: usually as a suffix, as in **Kyokushinkai** or **Shotokai**. **Kyokai** is a synonym.

Kaicho (会長)

President; chairman; the head of a **kai**. Cf. **Kancho**.

Kaihi (回避)

Evasion; avoidance; simultaneously deflecting an attack and moving out of its path; cf. **Tai sabaki**.

Kaishugata (開手型)

The **kata** Gekisai dai ichi, gekisai dai ni, Saifa, Seiunchin, Shisochin, Sanseiryu, Seipai, Kururunfa, Seisan and Suparunpai of **Goju Ryu** are collectively called kaishugata, “open-hand” kata; cf. **Heishugata**. The term has no obvious reference to the ways in which the kata are performed. The original idea may have been that these are publicly accessible kata, given ‘open-handedly,’ as distinct from the esoteric or closed-handed “heishugata.”

Kaishu isshoku (鎧袖一触)

Defeating an opponent with a single blow. Cf. **Ikken hissatsu**.

Kaiso (開祖)

Founder; founding father; originator.

Kaiten (回転)

Rotation; turning; spinning.

Kakari geiko (懸かり稽古)

“Attack training”; a practice such that the student is required to defend himself against multiple continuous attacks; the term is characteristic of **aikido**, but has a wider applicability.

Kakari waza (懸かり技)

Attacking techniques.

Kake hiki (駆け引き)

Tactics; strategy; discovering an opponent's intentions and responding appropriately.

Kakeru (掛ける)

To hang, to catch; to hook onto, as in **kake uke**.

Kakiwakeru (掻き分ける)

To push or force one's way past or through, as in **kakiwake uke**.

Kakushi waza (隠し技)

Esoteric or more advanced techniques lying beneath the obvious applications of **kata** movements; concealed techniques to be explored through **bunkai**. cf. **Oyo**; **Okuden waza**.

Kakuto (格闘)

Hand to hand combat; fighting without weapons; grappling.

Kakutogi (格闘技)

A collective term for weaponless martial arts.

Kama (鎌)

A short-bladed sickle originally used for harvesting rice, etc.; one of the weapons of Okinawan **kobudo**, usually used in pairs.



Kama

Kamae (構え)

An “on guard” or fighting stance; a “whole body” posture (as distinct from **tachi**, which refers only to the “stance” of the legs and feet). The word **kamae** carries an implication of mental alertness or preparedness. **Kamae** is a noun related to **kamaeru** (構える), “to prepare,” “to set oneself up.” In compounds with other words, **kamae** is often Romanised and pronounced **gamae**.

Kamon (家紋)

Crest; badge. **Mon**, **monsho** and **mondokoro** are synonyms.

Kan (館)

Hall; meeting-house; building.

Kana (仮名)

The two Japanese systems of syllabic writing, **katakana** and **hiragana**, used when it is necessary to spell a foreign word or name or a native Japanese word or inflexion that cannot be expressed in **kanji**.

Kancho (館長)

Chief; director: the head of a “house” – i.e. of an organisation that uses **kan** as part of its name. **Kaicho** has the same meaning but is applied to the head of an organisation that uses the suffix **kai**.

Kanchu tanren (寒中鍛練)

Winter training; outdoor training in cold weather; **kan geiko** is a synonym, though **tanren** (鍛練) has the specific sense of “tempering” or “forging.”

Kan geiko (寒稽古)

See **Kanchu tanren**.

Kanji (漢字)

Literally “Chinese character”: the logographic Chinese characters used in Japanese writing, supplemented by the two syllabaries called **kana**. Some kanji (called *kokuji* (国字), “homeland characters”) are peculiar to the Japanese language, though formed according to Chinese principles. Others, (called *kokkun* (国訓), “homeland reading”) have acquired Japanese meanings different from their Chinese ones. All kanji can be read in different ways, depending on context, which is why words can look the same in writing yet sound completely different from one another. There are in excess of 100,000 kanji, though only some two to three thousand are in common use.

Kansetsu waza (関節技)

Joint locking techniques. See also **Kaeshi**.

Karate (空手)

“Empty hand.” Before the dissemination of karate from Okinawa to mainland Japan during the early twentieth century the word karate was written as 唐手, which is “Chinese hand” or “T’ang hand,” also pronounced **to**de. The change of name probably reflects both a social aspiration to secure the acceptance of karate as a Japanese art (i.e. to live down its supposedly “peasant” Okinawan origins) and Japanese hostility towards China after the Sino-Japanese war of 1894–1895. The new name – more correctly, the different orthography and meaning – was formally approved by a meeting of senior karate teachers in Naha City in 1936, though it had been in informal use for some time. **Funakoshi Gichin** was one of the earliest teachers to use it habitually. Despite having adopted the “empty hand” orthography, a number of the smaller Okinawan karate schools have continued to use traditional Okinawan weapons as part of their curriculum. They are, in effect, combined karate and **kobudo ryu**. To the best of our knowledge, such weapons are not used in Japanese schools.

Karate jutsu (空手術)

The art of karate considered as a repertoire of fighting techniques as distinct from an ethical “way” or **do**. See **Jutsu**. The term tends to be used by individuals who believe that karate practised as a **do** lacks realism.

Karate wa kunshi no bugei (空手は君子の武芸)

“Karate is the martial art of the virtuous man”: a maxim of **Funakoshi Gichin**. The words appear as part of the inscription on the memorial to Funakoshi erected in 1968 at Engaku-ji in Kamakura.

Kara uke (空受け)

“Empty block”; evasion without blocking; but see **Uke**.

Kata (型)

Choreographed sequences of attacking and defensive techniques differing in length and complexity according to the student’s level of experience. Kata are intended to train the practitioner in coordinated movement and to create conditioned reflexes through constant repetition. There are probably more than a hundred **karate** kata currently in use, though most are common to more than one **ryu**. Typically they are solo exercises, though two-person kata do exist. Many karate kata are the descendants of Chinese forms introduced into Okinawa by Chinese immigrants or learnt by Okinawan teachers during visits to China. As a suffix or in compound terms the word is often Romanised and pronounced as *ga-ta*. See also **Bunkai** and **Oyo**.

Katakana (片仮名)

See **Kana**.

Katame waza (固め技)

Grappling or immobilising techniques.

Katana (刀)

A long sword – a sword of the kind popularly called a “**Samurai sword**” – with a curved, single-edged blade two shaku (23.9 inches) or more in length. See also **Wakizashi**.



Katana

Kata no tokucho (型の特徴)

The essence of a **kata**; the specific principles or lessons embodied in a kata that give it its particular meaning or rationale.

Katate (片手)

One hand; single-handed. Cf. **Morote**.

Katate waza (片手伎)

Single-handed techniques.

Kata yaburi (型破り)

“Getting away from form”: the principle of learning form – the “correct” shape of **kihon** and **kata** – not for its own sake but in order to pass beyond it along one’s own developmental path; of not allowing oneself to become a prisoner of orthodoxy. This principle is often neglected by **karate** students, who tend to regard what they have been taught as an inviolable body of truth. The principle of kata yaburi is a valuable antidote to it. Cf. **Gaiden**.

Kazashi te (風手)

“Air hand”: a feint; **kensei**, **kensei tai** and **misekake** are synonyms.

Keikogi (稽古着)

See **Dogi; Gi**.

Keiraku (経絡)

Acupuncture “meridians”; the invisible channels supposedly connecting vital points in the body; the channels along which **ki** is said to flow. See also **Gonenkoroshi**.

Kempo (拳法)

"Fist method": a Japanese translation of the Chinese ch'uan fa or quanfa; the Chinese art of self-defence; “kung fu.”

Kendo (剣道)

Literally “the way of the sword,” but nowadays primarily a **gendai** art/competition sport of fencing with bamboo swords called shinai (竹刀). Kendo in this modern sense was recognised by the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai** in 1920. Like other Japanese martial arts, kendo was banned by the allies at the end of World War II. In its present form it came into being with the formation of the Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei (全日本剣道連盟) (All Japan Kendo Federation) in 1952. As with **karate** and **judo**, the spread of kendo outside Japan and the increasing emphasis on its sporting or competitive aspects have somewhat compromised its character as a “way.”

Kenjutsu (剣術)

The art or technique of swordsmanship; kenjutsu is the collective term for the Japanese sword arts as represented by the numerous kenjutsu **ryu**. A number of other terms – battojutsu (抜刀術); bat-todo (抜刀道); iaijutsu (居合術) – are often used interchangeably with kenjutsu, though there are subtle differences between these terms that are understood by specialists in the sword arts. Because training with the sword has no direct practical application in the

modern world, the sword arts are now practised purely for their own sake.

Kensei (牽制)

See **Kazashi te**.

Kensei tai (牽制他意)

See **Kazashi te**.

Kensho (見性)

See **Satori**.

Kenshusei (研修生)

Student or trainee or apprentice instructor.

Kento (拳頭)

The large knuckles at the base of the index and middle fingers; the principal striking surface of the fist.

Ken Zen ichi (拳禪一致)

“The fist and Zen are one”: a maxim associated with (though possibly not original to) **Funakoshi Gichin**. The words are among those inscribed on Funakoshi’s memorial at Engaku-ji in Kamakura. Cf. **Karate wa kunshi no bugei; Satori; Zen**.

Keri (蹴り)

A kick; in compounds with adjectives denoting the specific nature of the kick, *keri* is Romanised and pronounced as **geri** (as in **mawashi geri; yoko geri**).

Keri waza (蹴り技)

Kicking techniques.

Kesa (袈裟)

Literally, a Buddhist monk's stole or scarf, worn draped over the left shoulder; figuratively: diagonal; across the chest.

Ketsu (血)

See **Chi**.

Ketsueki (血液)

See **Chi**.

Ki

1. 氣: Breath; spirit; life; vitality. Ki in Japanese is the same as the Chinese "chi" or "ch'i" and seems to be an idea imported from China. The word need mean no more than "vitality" in an unproblematical sense. Ki is, however, often represented as a mysterious stuff or "life force" different from the ordinary forces of nature. It is held that ki understood in this sense flows around the body along invisible channels called **keiraku** ("meridians") and is capable of being manipulated for martial and therapeutic purposes. The belief that quasi-miraculous feats can be performed by the adept who understands and can direct or control ki is one of the superstitions of the martial arts. It is a belief unsupported by any reputable evidence. See also **Hiden waza** and **Gonenkoroshi**.

2. 黄: Yellow.

Kiai (気合)

"Spirit unification": the focussing or concentration of breath and energy in a loud, uninhibited, energy-releasing shout, the effect of which is also to startle and intimidate an opponent. The actual sound made is a matter of individual preference. **Hai** is a common one.

Kiaijutsu (気合術)

The art of using **kiai** as a weapon. It is said that a properly executed **kiai** can actually be felt by an opponent as a disruptive physical force, though it is not easy to believe that this can be true of the unamplified human voice. The tactical importance of a **kiai** lies in its capacity to startle and disinhibit rather than in any aspect of the physics of sound.

Ki gamae (気構え)

“Energy posture”: figuratively, the “posture” of the mind or spirit; readiness; preparedness; whole-body alertness. See **Kamae**.

Kigurai (気位)

“Pride,” sometimes in a pejorative sense (haughtiness; arrogance) but in the sense also of a calm and obvious self-confidence; the kind of commanding “presence” that can discourage an opponent or defuse a situation.

Kihon (基本)

Basics; fundamentals; the collective term for all the individual components or “nuts and bolts” of an art that must be mastered by the beginning and kept sharp by constant practice. **Kihon dosa** is a synonym.

Kihon dachi (基本立ち)

Basic or fundamental stances. See **Tachi**.

Kihon dosa (基本動作)

See **Kihon**.

Kihongata (基本形)

Basic or elementary or fundamental **kata**. See also **Fukyugata**.

Kihon waza (基本技)

Basic or fundamental techniques, the correct form of which needs to be learnt by constant repetition before they are applied or incorporated into **kata** and **kumite**.

Kikai o matsu (機会を待つ)

To wait for an opening or opportunity; to watch for a chance.

Kiko (氣功)

The Japanese equivalent of the Chinese chi kung or qigong: stretching and breathing exercise routines thought to develop or enhance **ki**.

Kime (極め)

Focus; concentration; single-minded commitment.

Kinhin (経行)

Zen meditation performed at a slow and deliberate walking pace to calm and concentrate the mind; one of its functions in monasteries is to stretch the legs after long periods of **zazen** or seated meditation.

Kinkochoku (筋硬直)

Muscle stiffness.

Kinnikutsu (筋肉痛)

Myalgia; muscular pain.

Kitaeru (鍛える)

To forge; temper; drill; train; discipline. Cf. **Tanren**.

Kizu (傷)

A wound; injury; scratch; cut; bruise.

Kobudo (古武道)

“Old martial ways”; in this literal sense, kobudo is more or less synonymous with **koryu**, but the term is used more commonly to denote the Okinawan art of using traditional weapons, mostly improvised from ordinary domestic or agricultural implements, in self-defence. Kobudo (or **kobujutsu**) is an art in its own right, but some Okinawan **karate ryu** incorporate kobudo weapons into their syllabus, and some weapons (especially the **bo** and **jo**) are used as training aids in a number of other arts.

Kobujutsu (古武術)

See **Kobudo**.

Kodansha (高段者)

A holder of a senior **dan** rank, usually godan (fifth dan) or above.

Kodokan (講道館)

See **Judo**.

Kohai (後輩)

Kohai are those who are junior to you in the **dojo**; in relation to them you are **sempai**: senior. You have a duty to teach and encourage them as though they were your younger brothers or sisters; they have a duty to respect you and learn from you. The relationship between **sempai** and **kohai** is thus one of on-giri (恩義理): mutual obligation.

Koho (後方)

See **Ushiro**.

Koho kaiten ukemi (後方回転受け身)

Backward rolling breakfall. See **Ukemi**.

Kokusai Budoin (国際武道院)

“International Martial Arts Federation.” The Kokusai Budoin was founded in Tokyo in 1952. Its function is to collect and provide access to important historical documents and sources of tuition, and generally to foster the Japanese martial arts. Organised in seven divisions – **Judo, Kendo, Karate, Aikido, Iaido, Jujutsu** and **Kobudo** – the Kokusai Budoin is a parallel body to the **Dai Nippon Butokukai**, though with not quite the same status. It has branches in seventeen countries, though in recent years it has been troubled by political disputes that have led to the formation of splinter organisations in Europe.

Kon (棍)

See **Bo**.

Kongoken (金剛圈)

A large, heavy, oval iron hoop about the height of an average man, used as part of the conditioning apparatus of **hojo undo**. It was introduced into **Goju Ryu karate** in the 1930s by **Miyagi Chojun** who had apparently come across it in Hawaii, where it was used as a training aid by wrestlers.



One of the many uses of the kongoken

Koroshi (殺し)

Death blow; fatal blow; a term sometimes used in reference to **Gonenkoroshi**.

Koryu (古流)

“Old schools” as distinct from **Gendai ryu**; koryu are the Japanese martial arts – mainly, though not exclusively, weapon arts – recognised by the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai** as having been established before the Meiji restoration of 1868. The koryu arts tend to be rigorously traditionalist in their outlook and have sometimes been associated with Japanese nationalism.

Kosa (交差)

Crossing; cross-shaped; intersecting.

Kossetsu (骨折)

Bone fracture.

Kote gitae (小手鍛たえ)

Forearm tempering or toughening by repeated mutual impact with the forearms of a training partner, used especially, though not exclusively, in **Goju Ryu karate**. **Ude tanren** is a synonym.

Kujiki (挫き)

A sprain.

Kumite (組み手)

“Meeting of hands”; “uniting of hands,” usually translated as “sparring”; see **Jiyu kumite**; **Jissen kumite**; **Yakusoku kumite**. Kumite is nowadays usually regarded as one of the three essential components of **karate** training, the other two being **kihon** and **kata**, but some of the earliest Okinawan teachers discouraged it or forbade it altogether, as being inconsistent (because competitive) with the ethical ideals of karate-do. Even today not everyone is

agreed as to its technical and ethical value. The popularity of jiyu kumite has contributed a good deal to the post-war metamorphosis of karate into a contact sport. (In compounds, kumite is sometimes Romanised and pronounced as gumite.)

Kun

1. 訓: Teaching; precept; maxim. See **Dojo kun**.
2. 棍: See **Bo**.

Kunshi no Ken (君子之拳)

“The virtuous man’s discipline”: a characterisation of **karate** coined by **Mabuni Kenwa**; a “motto” of **Shito Ryu**.

Kurai zume (位詰)

Overcoming or intimidating an opponent by one’s attitude or “presence”; fighting without fighting. Cf. **Kigurai**.

Kuro (黒)

Black.

Kuzushi (崩し)

Disrupting an opponent’s balance or posture.

Kuzushi waza (崩し技)

Techniques that exploit openings or weaknesses in an opponent’s stance to unbalance him.

Kyojitsu (虚実)

See **Inyo**.

Kyokai (協会)

See **Kai**.

Kyokushinkai (極真会)

“Extreme Reality Association”; “Ultimate Truth Association”: the **karate ryu** founded in 1964 by **Oyama Masutatsu**; noted for its rigorous training methods and emphasis on full-contact fighting without the use of **bogu**. See **Hyakunin kumite**; **Jissen kumite**.

Kyori (距離)

Range: the distance between oneself and an opponent; cf. **Maai**.

Kyoshi (教士)

Literally, “gentleman teacher”: a **shogo** above **Renshi** and below **Hanshi**, usually awarded only to those of seventh dan and above.

Kyu (級)

In **gendai budo ryu**, a kyu grade is a grade or rank held by junior students (**mudansha**) who have not yet attained the lowest of the **dan** grades. Such students usually wear an **obi** of a colour indicating their current grade. The number of kyu grades (and hence the number of coloured obi) varies from ryu to ryu, approximately between six and ten. The modern tendency has been for kyu grades (and children’s grades and half-grades) to increase in number, largely for commercial purposes. As with dan grades, kyu grades are not universal “qualifications”; they have no significance outside a particular ryu or **dojo**. Cf. **Menkyo**.

Kyudo (弓道)

The “way” of archery.

Kyusho (急所)

Pressure point; vital point; nerve centre.

Kyusho waza (急所技)

Pressure point techniques.

M

Maai (間合い)

Interval or distance: The “engagement distance” between opponents; the ground that each opponent must try to control considered in relation to the time taken to cross it and other tactical considerations. The term is particularly associated with **aikido** and **kendo**, but has a general applicability.

Mae (前)

Front; forwards; to the front. **Zen (前)** is a synonym.

Mae ashi (前足)

Front foot; front leg.

Mae kaiten (前回転)

Forward rolling breakfall; **chugaeri**, **mae mawari ukemi**, **zenpo kaiten** and **zenpo kaiten ukemi** are synonyms. See **Ukemi**.

Mae mawari ukemi (前回り受身)

See **Mae kaiten**.

Makasu (負かす)

To defeat; *makeru* (負ける) is the passive form: to be defeated.

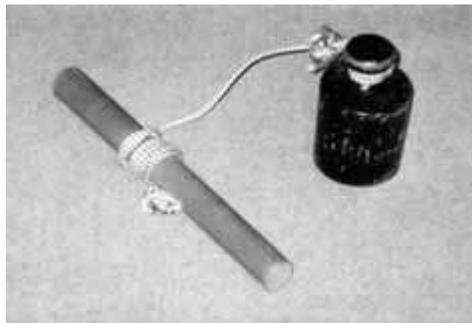
Make (負け)

A defeat.

Makiage kigu (巻揚器具)

Literally “lifting roller”: an easily improvised **hojo undo** implement consisting of a weighted cord that is repeatedly rolled and unrolled around a short wooden or metal rod to strengthen the

wrists and forearms (also called *makiage kigu* (巻揚器具) or *makiage gu* (巻揚器具): “rolling and lifting device”). The weight can be increased or reduced to suit individual requirements.



Makiage

Makiwara (巻藁)

An item of **hojo undo** equipment, but more widely used than most other such implements. The traditional makiwara is a pad of rice-straw mounted on a tapered wooden post about eight feet long and four inches wide, some three feet of which are sunk in the ground.



A makiwara in use; the karateka in the picture is Funakoshi Gichin

Nowadays leather-covered dense foam is often used instead of straw. Also, because it is not always convenient to have an outdoor makiwara, an indoor makiwara post is often bolted to the **dojo** floor by means of a metal bracket. The pad is struck repeatedly to toughen the hands, strengthen the wrists and train focus. **Tachi makiwara** is a synonym. Makiwara can be improvised from whatever materials come to hand; in practice they often differ greatly from this general description. “Makiwara” is, literally, “roll of straw,” but anything that can be used for repetitive striking practice can serve the purpose of a makiwara.

Manji (卍字)

A swastika, an ancient Buddhist image symbolising, among other things, the turning of “the wheel of the law.” The Nazi *Hakenkreuz* is a clockwise or right-facing swastika (卍), whereas the manji is usually anticlockwise (卐), but in view of the general disrepute into which the swastika symbol has fallen it is now rarely seen. It was until recently the **kamon** of the Japanese **gendai** art called Shorinji kempo.

Matsubayashi Ryu (松林流)

An Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo ryu** founded in 1947 by Nagamine Shoshin (長嶺将真) (1907–1997); a member of the **Shorin Ryu** family.

Mawashi (回し)

Turning; rotating: a word that occurs as an adjective in front of techniques to indicate the manner or direction in which they are to be executed; see, e.g. **Mawashi geri**.

Meijin (名人)

“Person of brilliance”: a title (not confined to the martial arts) conferred on persons of exceptional distinction.

Menboku (面目)

Honour; reputation; prestige; dignity; “face”: a concept having an importance in traditional Japanese culture that westerners find difficult to understand. **Mentsu** is a synonym.

Menboku o ushinau (面目を失う)

To lose “face”; to suffer a blow to one’s pride; to have one’s reputation damaged; to suffer the kind of humiliation that, traditionally, might lead one to commit **harakiri**.

Menkyo (免許)

“License”; “certificate.” **Koryu** arts typically use the menkyo system of ranking instead of the system of **dan** and **kyu** grades favoured by **gendai** arts. The number of levels within the menkyo system varies from **ryu** to ryu, though they are not as numerous as the dan and kyu grades. A typical scheme is as follows:

Menkyo Shoden (免許始伝): “certificate of first level transmission”; also Oku-iri (奥入), “entry within”;

Menkyo Chuden (免許中伝): “certificate of intermediate transmission”; also Mokuroku (目録), “certificate of experience”;

Menkyo Okuden (免許奥伝): “certificate of inner transmission”; sometimes simply called Menkyo;

Menkyo Kaiden (免許皆伝): “certificate of complete transmission.”

The highest level, Menkyo Kaiden, is usually attained only after thirty or so years of experience. It is not really possible to make comparisons between the menkyo and kyu/dan systems.

Me no tsukekata (目の付け方)

“Fixing the eyes;” “focus;” a less picturesque way than **Enzan no metsuke** of conveying the idea of looking through or beyond, ra-

ther than at, an opponent to aid peripheral or total vision; the proper focus of the eyes on the whole rather than the part.

Mentsu (面子)

See **Menboku**.

Meotode (夫婦手)

Literally “husband and wife hands”: the important Okinawan **ka-rate** principle of actively co-ordinating both hands in continuous attack and defence.

Mete (目手)

“Eye hand”: the forward or front hand – the hand that can be seen by, and hence used to feint at or mislead, an opponent.

Midori (緑)

Green.

Migamae (身構え)

Posture; physical posture or bearing or alertness; bodily as distinct from mental “attitude”: cf. **Ki gamae; Kamae**.

Migamaeru (身構える)

To be or to put oneself on guard; to be ready; to square off.

Migi (右)

Right; right-hand side.

Mikazuki (三日月)

“Three-day moon”: crescent shaped, like a new moon; the names of techniques that travel in an arc can be prefaced by mikazuki as an adjective; see, e.g. **Mikazuki geri**.

Mikuzure (見崩)

“Destroyed by looking”: the condition of being intimidated – “psyched out” – by the attitude or appearance of an opponent.

Misekake (見せ掛け)

See **Kazashi te**.

Mizu no kokoro (水の心)

“A mind like water”: a mind that is clear and unimpeded, able to flow and adapt without anxiety or distraction. Cf. **Mushin**.

Mochimi (餅み)

Literally, “like a sticky rice cake”: the feeling of heavy adhesion that should be cultivated in receiving attacks and controlling an opponent; the art or knack of “sticking” to an opponent. An important principle of Goju Ryu. Also Romanised as muchimi.

Mokuso (黙想)

Silent meditation or contemplation, in **seiza** at the beginning and end of practice and for a few moments (usually in **heiko dachi** or **hachiji dachi**) before beginning a **kata**, to clear and settle the mind.

Mon (紋)

See **Kamon**.

Mondokoro (紋所)

See **Kamon**.

Monjin (門人)

“Person at the gate”: beginner; novice; a student, especially one who has not yet achieved the lowest of the **kyu** grades.

Monsho (紋章)

See **Kamon**.

Morote (諸手)

With both hands; two-handed. **Soshu** is a synonym.

Moshiwake arimasen (申し訳 ありません)

Also **Moshiwake gozaimasen**. “I apologise”; “I’m sorry” (a more formal and serious apology than either **gomen nasai** or **sumimasen**).

Moshiwake gozaimasen (申し訳 ございません)

See **Moshiwake arimasen**.

Motobu-ha Shito Ryu (本部派系東流)

A **karate ryu** founded in 1959 by Kuniba Shogo (国場 将豪) (1935–1992); also called Kuniba-ha karate do (国場派空手道). It is a fusion or syncretism of **Shito Ryu** and **Motobu Ryu**.

Motobu ryu (本部流)

An Okinawan **karate ryu** founded ca 1925 by **Motobu Choki**; Motobu Ryu was apparently one of the earliest ryu, if not the earliest, to introduce **yakusoku kumite** drills. Motobu Ryu is related to, but not the same as, the Motobu family art called Motobu Udunde (本部ご殿手), “Motobu Palace Hand.”

Mudansha (無段者)

Literally, “no **dan** person”: a student who has not yet attained the lowest of the dan grades.

Murasaki (紫)

Purple.

Mushin (無心)

“No mind”; also **mushin no shin**: an acquired condition of mind/body such that the practitioner can act and respond instantaneously without any conscious engagement of the mind – i.e. by conditioned reflex rather than after choice or deliberation. A large part of the point of constant repetition of **kihon** and **kata** is to produce this condition. Cf. **Mizu no kokoro**.

Mushin no shin (無心の心)

“The mind of no mind”: see **Mushin**.

Mushotoku (無所得)

“No reward”; “no payment”: practice for its own sake; practice without any thought of gain.

Muyojo (無表情)

Expressionless; giving nothing away by facial expression; inscrutable; “deadpan.”

N

Nage (投げ)

Throw; thrower: the term used in throwing arts to mean what **tori** does in striking arts.

Nage waza (投げ技)

Throwing techniques

Naha te (那覇手)

One of the three indigenous fighting arts of Okinawa that are the precursors of modern **karate**; the others are **Shuri te** and **Tomari te**. Naha te is so called from its association with the area around

Naha, the old commercial port city of the Ryukyu kingdom and now the capital city of the Okinawa Prefecture. Naha te was greatly influenced by the Fujian White Crane arts brought to Okinawa by Chinese immigrants or brought back from China by Okinawans who had studied there. The organisation of these influences into a distinctive “style” is largely due to the efforts of **Higaonna Kanryo** in the 1880s. **Goju Ryu** is the most prominent (though not the only) modern descendant of Naha te. **Shorei Ryu** is a synonym.

Naka (中)

Centre; middle, as in such expressions as **Nakadaka ken uchi**.

Nakazumi (中墨)

See **Chusen**.

Nana korobi ya oki (七転八起)

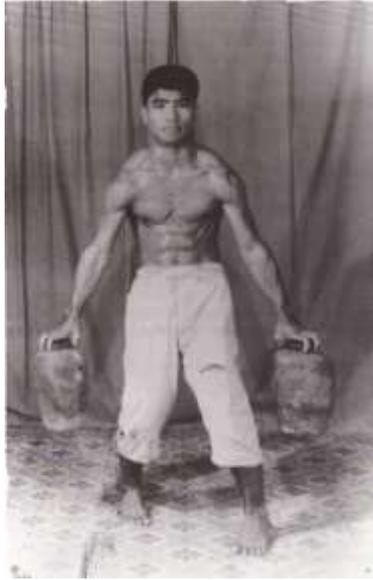
“Fall down seven times, get up eight”: a traditional exhortation to persevere; “never say die”; “never give up.”

Ne waza(寝技)

Groundwork techniques.

Nigiri game (握り瓶)

“Gripping jar”: an item of **hojo undo** equipment. Nigiri game are earthenware jars of various sizes filled with sand, each with a lipped rim that can be grasped by the practitioner’s hand. The practitioner moves in various stances while holding a jar in each hand to strengthen the arms, shoulders, back, and legs. The weight of the jars can be adjusted according to individual needs by altering the amount of sand they contain. The karateka in the illustration below is Shinyu Gushi (1939–2012) of **Uechi Ryu karate**.



Nigiri game in use

Nigiru (握る)

To grasp; to seize; to hold.

Nihon (日本)

Japan (literally “root of the sun”; “sunrise”); also Romanised and pronounced as Nippon. Nihongo (日本語) is the Japanese language; Nihonjin (日本人) is a Japanese person or the Japanese people.

Niju kun (二十訓)

“Twenty precepts”: a list of maxims composed by **Funakoshi Gichin** for the guidance of **karate** students, published in 1938 but possibly composed much earlier. They are as follows:

一、空手道は礼に始まり礼に終る事を忘るな
(Hitotsu, karate-do wa rei ni hajimari rei ni owaru koto o wasaru na)

“Karate-do begins and ends with a bow [with courtesy].”

一、空手に先手なし

(Hitotsu, karate ni sente nashi)

"In karate there is no first strike."

一、空手は義の補け

(Hitotsu, karate wa gi no tasuke)

"Karate is only the agent of justice."

一、先づ自己を知れ而して他を知れ

(Hitotsu, mazu onore o shire, shikashite ta o shire)

"First know yourself; then you will know others."

一、技術より心術

(Hitotsu, gijitsu yori shinjitsu)

"Spirit comes before technique."

一、心は放たん事を要す

(Hitotsu, kokoro wa hanatan koto o yosu)

"Be ready to free your mind."

一、禍は懈怠に生ず

(Hitotsu, wazawai wa ketai ni seizu)

"Misfortune comes from laziness/negligence."

一、道場のみの空手と思ふな

(Hitotsu, dojo no mi no karate to omou na)

"Karate goes beyond the **dojo**."

一、空手の修業は一生である

(Hitotsu, karate-do no shugyo wa iss sho de aru)

"Karate is a lifelong study."

一、凡ゆるものを空手化せよ其処に妙味あり

(Hitotsu, ara yuru mono o karateka seyo; soko ni myomi ari)

"The way of karate is to be applied to all things; in this lies its benefit."

一、空手は湯の如し絶えず熱度を与えざれば元の水に還る
(Hitotsu, karate wa yu no gotoku taezu netsu o atae zareba mo-
tono mizuni kaeru)

“Karate is like boiling water: without heat, it will cool again.”

一、勝つ考は持つな負けぬ考は必要
(Hitotsu, katsu kangae wa motsuna; makenu kangae wa
hitsuyo)

“Do not think of winning; rather, think of not losing.”

一、敵に因って轉化せよ
(Hitotsu, tekki ni yotte tenka seyo)

“Respond according to what your opponent does.”

一、戦は虚実の操縦如何に在り
(Hitotsu, tattakai wa kyojitsu no soju ikan ni ari)

“Conflict [avoidance and resolution] depends on how one
manages **kyojitsu**.”

一、人の手足を剣と思へ
(Hitotsu, hi to no teashi wa ken to omoe)

“Think of the hands and feet as swords.”

一、男子門を出づれば百万の敵あり
(Hitotsu, danshi mon o izureba hyakuman no teki ari)

“Outside your own gate, you face a million foes.”

一、構は初心者には自然体
(Hitotsu, kamae wa shoshinsha ni atowa shizentai)

“‘Stances’ are for beginners; later, one stands naturally.”

一、形は正しく実戦は別物
(Hitotsu, kata wa tadashiku, jissen wa betsumono)

“Exact performance of **kata** is one thing; real combat is some-
thing else.”

一、力の強弱体の伸縮技の緩急を忘るな

(Hitotsu, chikara no kyojaku tai no shinshuku waza no kankyu)

“Do not forget the correct application of strength and weakness, stretching and contracting the body, and slowness and quickness of technique.”

一、常に思念工夫せよ

(Hitotsu, tsune ni shinen ku fu seyo)

“Be mindful [dedicated, diligent] at all times.”

Ningen keisei (人間形成)

Character formation; establishing one’s moral identity as a human being; the pursuit of excellence.

Ninja (忍者)

Literally “spy people”: feudal Japanese practitioners of espionage and unorthodox warfare, especially between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. By the nineteenth century, the exploits of the ninja had become so much a part of Japanese folklore that it is not now possible to distinguish fact from fiction. Modern attempts to revive the art of **ninjutsu** owe a great deal to imagination, wishful thinking and commercial opportunism.

Ninjutsu (忍術)

The dark arts of espionage and combat supposed to have been practised by the **ninja**.

Nintai (忍耐)

Patience, perseverance, endurance.

Nippon Budokan (日本武道館)

See **Budokan**.

Niwa dojo (庭道場)

Garden **dojo**; the term is especially associated with the garden do-jo of **Miyagi Chojun** at Tsuboya, Naha City, Okinawa.

Nunchaku (双節棍)

An Okinawan **kobudo** weapon consisting of two short staves, circular or octagonal in cross-section, joined by a short chain or cord. It is thought that they were originally used as flails to thresh rice and soya beans. They may be related to the Chinese two-section staff called Chang Xiao Bang, introduced to Okinawa by Chinese immigrants.



Nunchaku

Nyumonsha (入門者)

Beginner; novice. **Shoshinsha** is a synonym.

O

O (大)

An alternative reading of **Dai**: all; big, large; great; greater.

Obi (帯)

The belt or sash of various kinds that is part of traditional Japanese dress for both men and women; specifically, the narrow sash (usually made of heavy cotton fabric) worn around the waist by practitioners of **karate** and other **gendai** arts. Now that karate jackets have ties at the sides (though **judo** jackets do not), obi have

lost most of their original function of keeping the jacket closed. They are nowadays worn in the **dojo** to indicate (by their colour) the grade or rank of the wearer. See **Dan**; **Kyu**. They have little utility except in large classes or gatherings where the students are not known to each other or to the **sensei**. **Koryu** arts do not usually use coloured obi to denote rank.

Obi musubi (帯結び)

The belt-knot. **Obi** should not be lashed around the waist carelessly, but tied carefully in a way that avoids crossing at the back, produces a square, flat knot (called koma musubi: (駒結び)), and leaves two ends of equal length. This is not only a matter of smartness and comfort. The small ceremony of tying the obi focuses and calms the mind of the student before practice.

Oi (追)

Chasing; following; from the verb *ou* (追う): “to chase”; “to run after”; “to pursue.”

Oi waza (追技)

Chasing or pursuit techniques; techniques used to attack a retreating opponent; techniques for pressing home an advantage.

Okuden waza (奥傳技)

A more usual equivalent of **Kakushi waza**: “inner” techniques; not really “secret” techniques but applications that lie beneath the obvious or superficial meaning of a kata and that need to be discovered through careful **bunkai**. **Okugi waza** is another synonym; and see **Oyo**.

Okugi waza (奥義伎)

See **Okuden waza**.

Okurasu garoshi (遅らす過労死)

“Delayed killing”; see **Gonenkoroshi**.

Omote (表)

Front; outside.

Onko chishin (温故知新)

“If you wish to understand the new, look to the old”: value and respect the traditional ways of doing things; understand that everything depends for its character on what went before it.

Osaekomi waza (押さえ込み技)

Pinning techniques; hold-downs; groundwork techniques for controlling an opponent.

Osaeru (押さえる)

To hold down; to hold back; to restrain; to control.

Osensei (翁先生)

“Venerable teacher”; or, if the same word is written as 大先生, “great teacher”: an honorific usually reserved for the founders of ryu. Cf. **Sensei**.

Oshieru (教える)

To teach; to instruct.

Osu

1. 押す: To press; to push.
2. 押忍: A word heard frequently in karate **dojo** – especially **Kyokushinkai** dojo – as a salutation or an emphatic affirmative (pronounced “Oss!”). It is for most practical purposes the same as **hai**. **Osu** is said to be a contraction of “oshi shinobu,” which

means something like “persevere no matter what” or “press on regardless”; or of **onegaishimasu**.

(As an informal greeting outside the dojo – “hi!” – “osu” is a contraction of “ohayo gozaimasu” (お早うございます): “good morning.”)

Otoshi (落とし)

Dropping; falling; descending.

Oyo

1. **応用**: “Applications”: specific techniques extracted from a kata by **bunkai**; the most obvious or immediately accessible of those techniques, as distinct from **Okuden waza/Kakushi waza**. **Oyo dosa** and **Oyo waza** are more or less synonyms.

2. **大揚**: Magnanimity; generosity; nobility of spirit.

Oyo dosa (応用動作)

See **Oyo (1)**.

Oyo waza (応用技)

See **Oyo (1)**.

P

Pangai nōon (半硬軟)

Pangai nōon (pronounced “han ko nan” in Japanese) is the Southern Chinese martial art studied by **Uechi Kanbun** during his sojourn in China and taught by him under that name until it became known as **Uechi Ryu** in about 1940. The name means “half hard, half soft.” The original Chinese Pangai nōon is believed to be extinct, but in 1978 a group of Uechi Ryu students led by Seiki Itokazu and Takashi Kinjo separated themselves from Uechi Kanbun’s original foundation and began to try to reconstruct

Pangai nōon from the **kata** that Uechi **Osensei** brought back from China.

Pechin (親雲上)

Pechin (also pronounced and Romanised as Peichin) is an Okinawan term for one of the official governing classes of the feudal Ryukyu kingdom before the annexation of Okinawa by Japan in 1879. The Pechin were the equivalent of, and by the middle of the nineteenth century were treated and addressed as, **Samurai**. They were responsible for, among other things, the development of and training in the traditional Okinawan fighting arts. In this capacity they had a considerable influence on the development of Okinawan **te** or **tode**.

Pinan (平安)

“Peace”: the name of the series of elementary **kata** devised in the early 1900s by **Itosu Anko** especially for use in schools. The same series, with minor modifications and studied in a slightly different order, is called **Heian** by Shotokan practitioners. Heian is the Japanese reading of 平安; Pinan is the Chinese reading.

R

Rei (礼)

A bow; an expression of thanks or gratitude; courtesy; politeness.

Reigi (礼儀)

Good manners; courtesy; formal or proper behaviour; the etiquette that applies to particular situations. **Reigisaho**, **Reiho**, **Reishiki** and **Saho** are more or less synonyms.

Reigisaho (礼儀作法)

See **Reigi**.

Reiho (礼法)

See **Reigi**.

Reisansoke (礼三息)

“A bow in three breaths”: i.e. a formal bow performed in the time that it takes to inhale, exhale and inhale again. The idea is that one should inhale slowly while bending forward, exhale at the lowest part of the bow, and inhale again while returning to an upright posture. This method produces a bow of suitable appearance and duration: not too long, but not the impolite cursory nod that is so often seen.

Reishiki (礼式)

See **Reigi**.

Renbukai (錬武会)

“Association for martial training”: an eclectic **karate ryu** (called Renbukan (錬武館) until 1964) founded ca 1950 by Nakamura Norio (中村 憲郎) and other students of a Korean teacher called Yun Kwei Byung. The ryu concentrates on full-contact fighting with the use of **bogu**.

Renkei waza (連係技)

Combination techniques; linked techniques: two or more techniques delivered in rapid succession. **Renraku** and **Renraku waza** are synonyms.

Renmei (連盟)

Federation; association; league; alliance.

Renraku (連盟)

See **Renkei waza**.

Renraku waza (連盟技)

See **Renkei waza**.

Rensa hanna (連鎖反応)

Literally “chain reaction,”: self-defence by using the body of one opponent against others; e.g. throwing one opponent into another.

Renshi (錬士)

A **shogo** below **kyoshi** and **hanshi**, usually awarded to teachers of fifth dan and above.

Renshu ho (練習法)

Methods of training; practice methods.

Renzoku (連続)

Consecutive; continuous; without a break.

Renzoku kumite (連続組手)

Continuous sparring; one individual fighting others to the point of exhaustion.

Renzoku waza (連続技)

See **Renkei waza**.

Renzoku tsuki (連続突き)

Continuous punching with alternating hands; “chain” punching; **ren tsuki** is a synonym.

Ren tsuki (連突き)

See **Renzoku tsuki**.

Ritsuzen (立禪)

Standing meditation, as distinct from **zazen**; to some extent synonymous with **mokuso**.

Rinzai (臨濟)

One of the two main schools of **Zen** in Japan; the other is **Soto**.

Rokushaku bo (六勺棒)

See **Bo**.

Romaji (ローマ字)

The Latin or Roman alphabet as used to transliterate or “Romanise” Japanese into a script readable by westerners.

Ryo (両)

Both.

Ryo ken (両拳)

Both fists.

Ryoku (力)

See **Chikara**.

Ryosho awase (両掌合せ)

Both hands together.

Ryotekiki (両手利き)

Ambidexterity; equal facility with both hands.

Ryu

1. 流: Literally “stream,” but used figuratively to mean style; method; manner; school – i.e. a “stream” of transmission.

2. 竜: Dragon.

Ryuei Ryu (劉衛流)

“Weapon Defence School”: an Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo ryu** founded ca 1875 by Nakaima Noritaka (中今仙卓) (1819–ca 1890). Ryuei Ryu was regarded as the private property of the Nakaima family until the 1970s, when Nakaima Kenko (中今健光) (1911–1989), the founder’s grandson, fearing that it would otherwise become extinct, began to teach it to students outside the family.

Ryugi (流技)

The syllabus or curriculum or principles of a **ryu**; method or style. See also **Ryugi no honshitsu**.

Ryugi no honshitsu (流技の本質)

The unifying essence or ethos of a **ryu**; its real nature considered as something more than the sum total of its techniques.

Ryuha (流派)

Often used interchangeably with **ryu**, but strictly speaking a sect or sub-branch of a **ryu**; cf. **Ha**.

S

Saho (作法)

See **Reigi**.

Sai (釵)

A **kobudo** weapon used (usually in pairs) in a number of Okinawan **karate ryu**: a short pitchfork or trident with a long middle prong, possibly used originally for lifting rice-bales. The long prong of the **sai** should be roughly the length of the practitioner’s forearm.



Saika tanden (最下丹田)

A synonym for **Tanden**.

Sama (様)

An honorific mode of address or suffix, used after the family name of someone to whom one wants to show special respect, especially at a first meeting; a more formal equivalent of **san**.

Samurai (侍)

Literally “retainer”; “one who waits upon”: The warrior nobility of feudal Japan, associated with the chivalric code of **Bushido**. The Samurai class was abolished as part of the Meiji reforms of the nineteenth century, but Samurai ideals or loyalty, dedication and honour continue to exert a strong influence on both ancient and modern martial arts.

San (さん)

The customary Japanese honorific suffix, used after a family name; the equivalent of “Mr” or “Mrs” or “Miss.” The Japanese are a good deal more formal than most westerners (though this is less true than it used to be), and even people who know one another quite well often do not call one another by their “given” names. It is considered impolite to omit to address someone older than or

senior to oneself as **San** or **Sama**. One does not ordinarily refer to oneself as **San**.

Sanbon ren tsuki (三本連突き)

Three consecutive punches, often delivered as a sequence of *jo-dan*, *chudan* and *gedan* punches; **sanbon tsuki** and **sanren tsuki** are synonyms.

Sanbon tsuki (三本突き)

See **Sanbon ren tsuki**.

Sanchin hoko (三戦歩行)

A short crescent-shaped step forwards or backwards made with the feet sliding on the floor while moving forwards or backwards in **sanchin dachi**.

Sanchin shime (三戦締め)

A method of testing conditioning and strength of posture consisting of a series of hard slaps or strikes (sometimes even kicks and blows) delivered to various parts of the body during a performance of **Sanchin kata**. **Shime** is supposed to be challenging rather than painful, but one sometimes sees it inflicted and undergone as a sort of endurance test.

Sanjakubo (三尺棒)

A short staff, about three feet long.

Sankai kawari no heiho (山海変りの兵法)

Literally “the strategy of exchanging mountain and sea”: a maxim expressing the principle of doing what an opponent does not expect; unpredictability. The maxim is associated with the famous swordsman *Musashi Miyamoto*, but has a wider applicability.

Sankukai (三空会)

“Three Heavens Association”: a Japanese **karate ryu** founded by Nanbu Yoshinao (南部義尚) (b. 1943) in 1970 as an offshoot of **Shito Ryu/Shukokai**. In 1978 Nanbu Sensei launched a new, eclectic martial art system called Nanbudo (南部道), but Sankukai continues to exist as a separate, though not very prominent, ryu.

San mi ittai (三位一体)

A threefold principle of **Wado Ryu karate**, emphasising coordinated shifting, turning, and countering in receiving an attack. Cf. **Tai sabaki**.

Sanren tsuki (三連突き)

See **Sanbon ren tsuki**.

Sasaeru (支える)

To prop; to support; to sustain: the nominal form *sasae* (支え) is used in conjunction with the names of many techniques to indicate that one arm is to be supported or reinforced by the other. The word **morote** is sometimes used in a similar way; cf. **Morote uke**.

Sasoi (誘い)

An invitation; a temptation or invitation to an opponent to attack; a feint or false opening.

Sasoi waza (誘い技)

“Temptation techniques”: techniques intended to draw an opponent in or provoke an attack.

Sato juku (佐藤塾)

A Japanese **karate** school founded by Sato Katsuaki (b. 1946) (佐藤勝昭) in 1977. It is an offshoot or modification of **Kyokushinkai** ka-

rate. **Kumite** or fighting is still full-contact, but more emphasis is given to precision and safety. Sato Sensei also uses the term Odo Ryu (王道流), “Sovereign Way School.”

Satori (悟り)

Enlightenment; understanding: a sudden, non-intellectual awareness of reality and hence of one’s own place in it – of one’s Buddha nature. **Ken Zen ichi** is an acknowledgment of the fact that Karate practice is one of the countless ways in and through which the attainment of such enlightenment is possible. **Kensho** is a synonym, or virtually so, though some authors suggest that kensho is a brief glimpse of understanding whereas satori is a fuller and more abiding experience. See also **Zen**.

Satori o hiraku (悟りを開く)

A verbal phrase expressing the “opening up” (i.e. like a flower) of **satori**; to attain enlightenment or understanding.

Satsujiga (殺自我)

Killing or doing away with the ego; overcoming self-absorption or self-centredness.

Sayu (左右)

Left and right.

Sayu undo (左右運動)

Exercises to train the left and right hands or the left and right sides of the body equally. See **Ryotekiki**.

Sei

1. **正**: Natural; true; correct; righteous.
2. **誠**: Sincerity; integrity; fidelity. **Seishin** is a synonym.

Seichusen (正中線)

See **Chusen**.

Seido juku (誠道塾)

“Sincere way school”: A Japanese **karate** school¹ founded in 1976 by Nakamura Tadashi (b. 1942) (中村忠); one of the many off-shoots of **Kyokushinkai** karate. Nakamura Sensei is one of the few people to have completed (in 1965) the **Hyakunin kumite**.

Seidokaikan (正道会館)

“Righteous Way Association Hall”: a Japanese full-contact **karate ryu** founded in 1980 by the kickboxing promoter Ishii Kazuyoshi (b. 1953) (石井 和義) as a derivative of **Kyokushinkai** karate.

Seidokan (正道館)

“Righteous Way Hall”: an Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo ryu** (a member of the **Shorin Ryu** family) founded in 1968 by Toma Shian (b. 1930) (泊思案).

Seiri taiso (整理体操)

Literally “adjustment exercises” or “putting in order exercises”: cooling-down exercises at the end of practice. **Seiri undo**, **shumatsu dosa** and **shumatsu undo** are synonyms.

Seiri undo (整理運動)

See **Seiri taiso**.

Seishin (誠心)

See **Sei (2)**.

¹ “Juku” (塾) is “school” but in a more restricted sense than **ryu**. The term tends to be used by innovators who do not see themselves as having created a new “style.” Cf. **Sato juku**.

Seishin ryoku (精神力)

Spiritual or moral strength; emotional strength; strength of will; mental resilience.

Seishin shuyo (精神修養)

Moral and spiritual cultivation; mental discipline or training; self-improvement.

Seishin tanren (精神鍛錬)

Spiritual forging or tempering, especially through arduous training. See **Tanren**.

Seiteigata (制定形)

Established or official **kata**; the **kata** that comprise the formal syllabus of a **ryu**.

Seiza (正座)

The customary Japanese seated or kneeling posture; kneeling with the tops of the feet flat on the floor and sitting back on the heels. **Seiza no kamae** is a synonym.

Seiza no kamae (正座の構え)

See **Seiza**.

Sempai (先輩)

A senior member of the **dojo** who, as such, is understood to have a moral responsibility for his or her juniors. cf. **Kohai**.

Sen no sen (先の先)

Seizing the initiative; reading a situation and responding to an attack at the very first sign of danger; pre-emption. Cf. **Ato no sen**.

Sensei (先生)

Teacher; literally “one who has gone before”; “one born before”; “elder.” Sensei is a common word in Japanese that applies to teachers and leaders of all kinds. As a form of address it is more or less the equivalent of “Sir in English. In **karate**, there is an unwritten understanding that no one under the rank of third **dan** is addressed as Sensei, but this convention is not always observed.

-sha (者)

A suffix similar in meaning to **-ka**: “-ist”; “an exponent of ...”; see, e.g., **Bugeisha**.

Shibu (支部)

Branch; subdivision; a branch dojo. And see **Eda dojo**.

Shibucho (支部長)

Branch head; branch leader.

Shidoin (指導員)

Instructor.

Shidokan (士道館)

“Hall of the Way of the Samurai,” a Japanese full-contact **karate ryu** founded in 1981 by Soeno Yoshiji (添野義二) (b. 1947); one of the many derivatives of **Kyokushinkai** karate.

Shihan (師範)

Expert teacher; master instructor: a title that is nowadays so often self-awarded as to have lost much of its value.

Shihan dai (師範代)

Assistant instructor; the chief instructor’s representative or “right-hand man.”

Shin (心)

Heart, will, mind, spirit.

Shindo Jinen Ryu (神道自然流)

A syncretic Japanese **karate ryu** founded in 1933 by Konishi Yasuhiro (小西康裕)(1893–1983). The ryu has much in common with **Shotokan** and **Shito Ryu**, with elements of **aikido** and **kendo**.

Shindo Ryu (心道流)

An Okinawan **karate ryu** known until 1983 as Goju ryu Shindokai (剛柔流心道会), founded by Zaha Nikichi (座波仁吉) (1914–2009) in 1951.

Shiro (白)

White.

Shito Ryu (糸東流)

An Okinawan **karate ryu** founded in 1931 by **Mabuni Kenwa**; noted for its large number of kata. Shito ryu was one of the first karate ryu to be recognised by the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai**.

Shodai (初代)

Founder; founding father; originator.

Shogo (称号)

Martial arts titles – **Renshi**, **Kyoshi**, **Hanshi** and **Meijin** – inaugurated by the **Dai Nippon Butokukai** and conferred in recognition of high distinction as a teacher. It is now common for non-Japanese teachers to award themselves such honorifics, or to have them conferred by their students or by some membership organisation. Contrary to what is sometimes supposed, shogo do not attach automatically to holders of high **dan** grades or to the heads of organisations.

Shohei Ryu (照平流)

A variant or descendant of **Uechi Ryu karate**, formed by senior practitioners of Uechi Ryu as a consequence of disputes that occurred after the death of **Uechi Kanei** in 1991.

Shoreikan (尚礼館)

“Hall of respect and courtesy”: a **Goju Ryu ha** founded in 1954 by Toguchi Seikichi (土口世吉) (1917–1998) after the death of **Miyagi Chojun**.

Shorei Ryu (昭霊流)

“Bright Spirit School,” a term synonymous with **Naha te**. The term Shorei Ryu was used also by the American martial artist Robert Trias (1923–1989) as one of the names of his own eclectic style of **karate**.

Shorinji Kempo (少林寺拳法)

“Shaolin Temple Fist Way”: an eclectic martial art and **Zen** way of self-improvement founded by So Doshin (宗道臣) (1911–1980) in 1947. So Doshin lived for many years in China, and is said to have studied at the Shaolin Temple.¹

Shorinji Ryu Kenkokan (少林寺流拳行館)

“Shaolin Temple School, Fist Journey Hall”: An Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo ryu** founded in 1947 by Hisataka Masayoshi Kori (久高政祺 幸利) (1907–1988).

¹ The Shaolin Temple, the name of which has become virtually synonymous with the Chinese and Chinese-influenced martial arts, is a Chan (Zen) Buddhist temple at Song Shan, near Zhengzhou City, Henan Province in Dengfeng, China. Founded in the fifth century, it still exists, though on the sufferance of the Chinese government. It is said that there was also a “southern” Shaolin Temple in Fujian Province, though the existence of such a temple is not universally accepted.

Shorin Ryu (小林流)

An Okinawan **karate ryu** founded in 1933 by Chibana Choshin (知花 朝信) (1885–1969), a student of **Itosu Anko**. Shorin Ryu is sometimes called Kobayashi (小林) Shorin Ryu, but this is, in a certain sense, incorrect.¹ Chibana Choshin's Shorin Ryu is a descendant of the original Shorin Ryu of **Matsumura Sokon**. It has split into a number of separate schools since Chibana Sensei's death. A different line of transmission from Matsumura Sokon is represented by **Shorin Ryu Matsumura Seito**.

Shorin Ryu Matsumura Seito (小林流松村正統)

"Traditional Matsumura Shaolin School": a descendant of **Matsumura Sokon's** original **Shorin Ryu**, founded in 1952 by Soken Hohān (祖堅 方範) (1889–1982). Soken Sensei was the nephew of Matsumura's grandson Matsumura Nabetanme (松村ナビータンメー) (1860–1930).

Shorin Ryu Shidokan (小林流志道館)

"Shaolin School Warrior Way Hall": an Okinawan **karate ryu** founded after Chibana Choshin's death in 1969 by Miyahira Katsuya (宮平 勝哉) (1918–2010).

Shoshinsha (初心者)

See **Nyumonsha**.

Shoshinsha geiko (初心者稽古)

Beginner's practice; elementary or entry-level training.

¹ Chibana Choshin wrote the word Shorin as 小林 ("Little Forest") rather than 少林 ("Shaolin"); but 小林 can also be read and pronounced as Kobayashi. "Kobayashi Shorin Ryu" is thus a pleonasm; it means "Little Forest Little Forest School." Kobayashi is a common Japanese family name, but not of anyone associated with the founding of Shorin Ryu.

Shotokai (松濤会)

Dai Nihon Karate-do Shotokai (大日本空手道松濤会) is the name of the association founded in the 1930s by **Funakoshi Gichin** to teach and spread the art of **karate**; its **honbu dojo** was called **Shotokan**. Originally, neither Shotokai nor Shotokan were the names of karate “styles,” but since Funakoshi Osensei’s death in 1957 and the technical and political quarrels that followed it, there have been separate Shotokan and Shotokai organisations each claiming to perpetuate the spirit and intentions of the founder. Shotokai and Shotokan have thus for all practical purposes become distinct **ryu**. Shotokai as an organisation separate from the Shotokan “establishment” was founded in 1957 by Egami Shigeru (江上 茂) (1912–1981). A separate body called Karate-do Shotokai was established in the United Kingdom in 1965 by Harada Mitsusuke (原田 満祐) (1928–2021), a student of Egami Shigeru. Harada’s karate seems to have developed along lines very different from what Funakoshi taught, though Harada claimed repeatedly to be upholding the true teaching of the Master.

Shotokan (松濤館)

See **Shotokai**. Funakoshi Osensei did not intend to found a “style” of **karate**; he was, indeed, opposed to the idea of separate karate **ryu** and advocated the unification of them all. Largely by historical accident, however, “Shotokan” has come to be everywhere regarded as the style founded by Funakoshi. It is now represented internationally by an organisation called Nihon Karate Kyokai (日本空手協会): the Japan Karate Association. The association was created in 1949 by some of Funakoshi’s senior students from Japanese university karate clubs. In the years since 1957, the Japan Karate Association has splintered into an ever-growing proliferation of “Shotokan” groups, though it remains the most influential and, from some points of view, the most authentic legatee of Funakoshi Osensei’s teaching.

Shudokan (修道館)

“Discipline Way Hall”: an eclectic Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo** ryu founded in 1930 by Toyama Kanken (遠山寛賢) (1888–1966). Toyama Sensei studied under several Okinawan masters and also spent some six years studying Chinese arts in Taiwan.

Shugyo (修行)

Severe or austere training; asceticism; rigorous self-discipline.

Shukketsu (出血)

Bleeding, haemorrhage.

Shukokai (修交会)

“Friendship Association”: a name coined in the late 1940s by Tani Chojiro (谷長治郎) (1921–1998), founder of Tani-ha Shito Ryu (修交派糸東流). Tani Sensei’s original purpose was to create an association in which all “styles” could come together to share knowledge, though this idea never came to fruition. Shukokai became a “style” in itself – a technical evolution of Shito Ryu – under his pupil Kimura Shigeru (亀村仟) (1941–1995).

Shumatsu dosa (終末動作)

See **Seiri taiso**.

Shumatsu undo (終末運動)

See **Seiri taiso**.

Shuri te (首里手)

One of the three Okinawan arts that are the main precursors of modern **karate ryu**; the others are **Naha te** and **Tomari te**. Shuri te is so called because of its association with the royal municipality of Shuri, now a district of the city of Naha. **Shotokan**, **Shotokai**,

Wado Ryu, Shito Ryu, and Shorin Ryu all trace their lineage, or a substantial part of their lineage, back to Shuri te.

Soke (宗家)

Family head; head of a **ryu**: typically the founder or the founder's successor.

Soshu (双手)

See **Morote**.

Soto

1. **外**: Outside; outer; moving outwards. See **Gaiho**.
2. **曹洞**: One of the two major schools of Japanese **Zen**; the other is **Rinzai**.

Soto deshi (外弟子)

An "outside" student, as distinct from an **uchi deshi**. A soto deshi is a student who does not live with the teacher and is not on especially intimate terms with him. See **Deshi**.

Suburito (素振り刀)

A wooden practice sword; a thicker and heavier version of the **bokken**.

Suji chigai (筋違い)

A cramp; a sprain; a muscle strain.

Sumimasen (済みません)

"Excuse me"; "I'm sorry": an everyday expression; a conventional and not particularly profound apology. Also a "thank you." See **Gomen nasai**; **Moshiwake arimasen**.

Suna bako (砂箱)

See **Jari bako**.

Suwari waza (座り技)

Techniques performed from a seated or kneeling position.

T

Tachi (立ち)

Stance, specifically with reference to the positioning of the legs and feet; cf. **Kamae**. In compound terms the word is usually Romanised and pronounced as **dachi**; e.g. **Zenkutsu dachi**.

Tachi makiwara (立ち巻藁)

See **Makiwara**.

Tai chikara (体力)

Bodily strength; muscle power, perhaps with an implication of “brute force”; physical strength considered as distinct from mental attitude, tactics, etc. **Wan ryoku** is a synonym.

Taijutsu (体術)

Literally “Body skill” or “body technique,” a general term for the unarmed Japanese fighting arts. The term is particularly associated now with the eclectic Bujinkan (武神館) system of Hatsumi Masaaki (初見良昭) (b. 1931).

Tai no sen (待の先)

See **Ato no sen**.

Tai no shinshuku (体の伸縮)

Literally “expansion and contraction of the body”; the dynamic and co-ordinated “opening and closing” use of the whole body in

executing techniques; a skill that must be especially emphasised in the practice of kata.

Tai sabaki (体捌き)

Literally “body judgment”; tactical body-shifting or repositioning in receiving or evading an attack. **Tenshin** is a synonym.

Taki shugyo (滝修行)

A purification ritual that involves seated or standing meditation under a waterfall; the practice is of some interest to the martial artist because of the well-known filmed performance of it by **Yamaguchi Gogen**.

Tameshiwari (試し割り)

Literally “testing by breaking”; the practice of breaking boards or other hard materials with the hands, feet and other parts of the body, including the head; its purpose is to condition the body parts involved and test the “spirit” and focus of the practitioner.

Tan (担)

An item of **hojo undo** equipment resembling a barbell. There are old photographs of Okinawan students training with a tan that looks like a pair of trolley wheels on an axle. It may be that this is how the tan originated, though it often takes the form of a wooden pole with a concrete weight on each end.



Tan

Tanbo (短棒)

See **Hanbo**.

Tanden (丹田)

The Japanese equivalent of the Chinese word dantian. The term is often used as a synonym for **hara**, though the two do not mean quite the same thing. Strictly speaking the tanden is a point two or three inches below the navel, traditionally supposed to be the seat, or one of the important seats, of the body's natural vitality or **ki**.

Tanjo (短杖)

See **Hanbo**.

Tanren (鍛練)

Forging metal; tempering; hardening. Figuratively: building character and conditioning the body by rigorous training.

Tanto (短刀)

“Short sword”: a single-edged knife from six to ten inches long.

Tanto dori (短刀取り)

“Knife taking”; the hazardous skill of disarming an opponent armed with a knife.

Taorete nochi yamu (倒れて後止む)

Proverb: “Stop when you drop”; never give in; fight to the bitter end.

Taoshi waza (倒し技)

A collective term for takedown techniques (leg sweeps, throws, arm locks, etc.).

Tatami (畳)

Japanese domestic floor mats, rectangular in shape and traditionally made of rice straw with a covering of woven soft rush straw. Tatami used in the modern **dojo** are usually of plastic-covered

polystyrene foam and about two inches thick. They are most commonly used in dojo where throwing arts – **judo**; **aikido** – are practised.

Tate (縦)

Vertical; upright; standing.

Te (手)

Hand, arm; but also used in an extended sense as the name of the indigenous martial art of Okinawa (Sometimes Romanised as ti or de), the ancestor art of all **karate** styles. See also **Tode**; **Naha te**; **Tomari te**; **Shuri te**.

Ten gi (転技)

A technical term of **Wado Ryu Karate**; the principle of shifting the body in such a way as to let an attack go past and counter-attacking as it does so. Cf. **Tai sabaki**.

Ten i (転位)

A technical term of **Wado Ryu karate**; the principle of shifting away from, or out of the line of, an attack. Cf. **Tai sabaki**.

Tenkan (転換)

“Converting”; “diverting”: a swift pivoting turn, the primary purpose of which is to step out of the way of a attack and let the attacker go past so that one can move into a position of tactical advantage behind him. The term is most often used in **aikido**, but has a general applicability. Examples occur in the **Naha te kata** Saifa. Cf. **Tai sabaki**.

Tenshin (転位)

See **Tai sabaki**.

Tetsu bo (鉄棒)

A heavy **bo**, made of iron; originally a **Samurai** weapon but now chiefly a strength-training device for the wrists and forearms.

Tetsu geta (鉄下駄)

Heavy iron clogs; an item of **hojo undo** equipment used to strengthen the legs and ankles for kicking and postural purposes.



Tetsu geta

Tobi (飛び)

Jumping; leaping.

Tobi waza (飛び技)

Techniques performed while jumping – either upwards, to gain height, or forwards, to close distance quickly. The most spectacular of such techniques are kicks, many of which have entered **karate** as a result of cross fertilisation with the Korean art of Tae kwon do. Generally speaking, jumping techniques are more flamboyant than effective.

Tode (唐手)

“T’ang Dynasty (i.e. Chinese) hand”; “Chinese technique”; the term is Romanised also as tote, toti and toude. Tode is the name that began to be applied in the second half of the eighteenth cen-

ture to the indigenous Okinawan **te** after the influence of the arts introduced to Okinawa from China had made itself definitely felt. Thus **Naha te**, **Shuri te** and **Tomari te** are all varieties of tode. We first come across the word as a sobriquet or nickname of **Sakugawa Kanga**. The kanji 唐手 can also be read and pronounced as “kara te,” but **karate** is nowadays almost always written with the kanji that mean “empty hand” rather than “Chinese hand.”

Tokui (得意)

A speciality; a “strong point”; favourite; chosen. Tokuigata (得意型) are one’s speciality or favourite kata; tokui waza (得意技) are one’s favoured or strongest techniques.

Tomari te (泊手)

One of the three Okinawan precursors of the modern **karate ryu**: see also **Naha te** and **Shuri te**. Tomari te was associated with the municipality of Tomari, now a district of the city of Naha. The smallest and least influential of the three main schools of Okinawan **tode**, Tomari te seems to have been subsumed into Shuri te at a comparatively early stage. Sochin (壯鎮) and Unsu (雲手) **kata** are among those said to have been originally part of Tomari te.

Tonfa (トンファー)

A **Kobudo** weapon, typically used in pairs, originally improvised from the short handles used to turn a millstone or quern for grinding rice. It is interesting to note that in recent years a number of police forces have adopted “side-handle” batons that look like tonfa in place of the older straight baton or truncheon.



Tonfa

Tōon Ryu (東恩流)

A **karate** and **kobudo ryu** founded ca 1934 by Kyoda Juhatsu (許田重発) (1887–1968). Like **Miyagi Chojun**, Kyoda Sensei was a student of **Higashionna Kanryo** but, despite this association, Tōon Ryu differs significantly from Miyagi Chojun's **Goju Ryu**. Kyoda studied also with Higashionna Kanryo's older cousin Kanyu.

Tori (取り)

In partnered karate practice, tori is the partner who defends against the attack delivered by **uke**.

Torite (捕手)

“Capturing hand”; “seizing hand”; another – older – name for **ju-jutsu**. In **Shotokan karate**, escaping techniques are called torite; in a number of cases they are also **suwari waza**.

Tori waza (捕り技)

Grasping or seizing techniques.

Tsuki (突き)

The word is almost always translated into English as “punch,” but tsuki and its related verb tsuku (突く) have more the sense of thrusting or lunging or stabbing or attacking than punching. In practice, the distinction between tsuki, **ate** and **uchi** is not clear cut.

Tsugi ashi (次足)

See **Chakuchi ashi**.

Tuite waza (トウエテ技)

Okinawan grappling and joint locking techniques.

U

Uchi

1. 打ち: A strike; a blow. And see **Ate**; **Atemi**.
2. 内: Inside; within; inwards.

Uchi deshi (内弟子)

An “inside” student. See **Deshi**; **Soto deshi**.

Uchi waza (打ち技)

Striking techniques.

Ude tanren (腕鍛錬)

“Arm tempering”: exercises to toughen the forearms by striking them repeatedly against the forearms of a training partner. **Kote gitae** is a synonym.

Ude tate fuse (腕立て伏せ)

Press-ups; push-ups; often shortened to ude tate.

Uechi Ryu (上地流)

An Okinawan **karate ryu** founded in 1925 by **Uechi Kanbun**; see also **Pangai nōon**. Of the modern karate schools, Uechi Ryu is the one that seems to have remained closest to its Chinese origins.

Uke (受け)

1. Uke in this sense is almost always translated into English as “block.” It is difficult to find a more satisfactory word, but “block” means rather less than uke does. Strictly speaking, uke is related to the verb *ukeru* (受ける), “to receive.” The idea is not so much that of blocking an attack by force as of “receiving” it with a suitable defensive action.

2. Somewhat confusingly, *uke* in this sense is the individual who, in partner work, delivers the attack and hence “receives” the defensive response of **tori**.

Ukemi (受身)

Literally “receiving body”; breakfalls; the art of falling safely.

Uke waza (受け技)

“Blocking” techniques; techniques for receiving an attack. See **Uke (1)**.

Ukiashi (浮き足)

Floating leg; a leg on which no weight is placed, as in **neko ashi dachi**.

Undo (運動)

Exercise, as in **hojo undo** and **junbi undo**.

Unsoku (運足)

See **Ashi sabaki**.

Ura (裏)

Opposite, reverse, the back of; backwards.

Ushiro (後ろ)

Rear; rearwards.

Ushiro kaiten ukemi (後ろ回転受け身)

Rear rolling breakfall. See **Ukemi**.

Ushiro ukemi (後ろ受け身)

Rear breakfall. See **Ukemi**.

Ushiro waza (後ろ技)

Techniques delivered to the rear.

W

Wa (和)

Peace; concord; harmony.

Wado Ryu (和道流)

“Way of Harmony School”: a Japanese **karate ryu** founded in 1934 by **Ohtsuka Hironori**, who added a range of **jujutsu** principles and techniques to the karate that he had learnt from **Funakoshi Gichin**.

Wakisashi (脇差)

A sword of the same shape as the **katana** but with a shorter blade.

Wan ryoku (腕力)

See **Tai chikara**.

Waza (技)

Technique.

Y

Yakusoku (約束)

Arrangement; convention; agreement: a term typically used in a martial arts context to mean prearranged, planned or choreographed, as in **Yakusoku kumite**.

Yakusoku kumite (約束組手)

Sparring or fighting drills that follow a set or prearranged form, as distinct from **jiyu kumite**. For instance, **sanbon kumite** (三本組手),

“three step sparring,” consists of an attacker making three prescribed attacks forward and the defender retreating and blocking three times and then counterattacking. Many schools include a range of yakusoku kumite sequences in their curriculum. Their purpose is to develop speed and accuracy of technique. Because the defender always knows what the attacks will be and the attacker always knows what the defender’s response will be, yakusoku kumite is useful only during the relatively early stages of training, and only as a preliminary to spontaneous and unrehearsed encounters.

Yoko (横)

Horizontal; side; sideways; to the side.

Yoko ukemi (横受身)

Side breakfall. See **Ukemi**.

Yonshaku bo (四尺棒)

See **Jo**.

Yoroi (甲)

See **Bogu**.

Yudansha (有段者)

Those members of an association or **ryu** or **dojo** who hold the rank of first dan or above. Cf. **Mudansha**.

Z

Za (座)

Sitting or seated, as in such expressions as **zazen** or **seiza**.

Zaho (座法)

Methods or styles of sitting.

Zanshin (残心)

Literally, “remaining mind”; continuing focus or alertness after a technique has been completed. The word expresses the principle of not “switching off” the mind until the encounter is definitely over.

Zazen (座禪)

Seated meditation.

Zen

1. **前**: Front; to the front; **mae** is a (more common) synonym.
2. **全**: All; whole; entire; complete: a suffix that functions like the English prefixes “pan-” or “omni-”. Thus (for instance) Zen Nihon Kendo Renmei (全日本剣道連盟) is “All Japan Kendo Federation.”
3. **禪**: A form of Buddhism that originated in China (where it is called Ch’an) in the sixth century and was brought to Japan in the eighth. Zen is not in any ordinary sense a religion. It involves no supernatural beliefs, does not engage in any kind of worship and places little emphasis on scripture and ritual. In principle it emphasises personal and direct experience of **satori** attained through **zazen** and related practices with the help of a skilled teacher, though the actual practice in Zen monasteries tends to depart from this minimalist description.

Zenmi (前見)

“Front-facing”; i.e facing to the front with the hips square, as distinct from standing with the body turned slightly to one side: cf. **Hanmi**.

Zenpo ashi (前方足)

Stepping forward.

Zenpo kaiten ukemi (前方回転受身)

Forward rolling breakfall; often abbreviated to zenpo kaiten.

Chugaeri and **mae mawari ukemi** are synonyms. See **Ukemi**.

Zori (草履)

Thonged Japanese sandals, made of rice straw or, for outdoor use, leather or wood. Students often wear them between the changing-room and the **dojo** to keep their feet clean. They should be left neatly at the dojo door. (The rubber flipflops familiar in the West originated as copies of the zori that American servicemen came across in Japan.)

2

Technical Terms

- Stances
- Striking Techniques
- Kicking Techniques
- Defensive Techniques
- Etiquette and Instructions
- Parts of the Body
- Counting in Japanese

The following list is not exhaustive, but it will introduce the student to the technical terms encountered most frequently in the **dojo**. The reader should remember, however, that the technical vocabulary of **karate** is not set in stone. In practice, terminology varies a good deal from **ryu** to ryu and from **dojo** to dojo, and the same expression can mean different things to different people. It is a good idea to be prepared for this possibility. One should certainly not be dogmatic about one's own understanding of terms when coming across variations used elsewhere.

It should be borne in mind also that striking and defensive techniques commonly have added to their names one or

more adjectival words indicating the way or direction in which, or the area of the body to which, they are to be applied: **age**, **mawashi**, **otoshi**, **chudan**, and so forth. Thus, for instance, **hidari chudan gyaku tsuki** (左中段逆突き) is “reverse thrust to the mid-section with the left hand”; **migi jodan oi tsuki** (右上段追突き) is “upper-level pursuing thrust with the right hand.” It is not practicable or necessary to list all possible combinations; the student will soon master the necessary terms and how to combine them.

Stances

(Tachi (立ち))

Fudo dachi (不動立ち)

“Solid stance”; “immobile stance”; “firm stance.” This expression means different things according to the usage of the particular school. It is most often understood to denote a low, strong, forward-facing stance with the weight distributed equally between the feet. In this sense it is sometimes described as a kind of cross between **zenkutsu dachi** and **shiko dachi**. In all its variants the essential feature of fudo dachi is that it should involve a strong sense of immovability, purpose and groundedness. The word fudo – “solid,” “immovable” – refers to the practitioner’s unshakeable attitude or state of mind as well as to the posture of his or her body.

Hachiji dachi (八字立ち)

“Number eight stance” or “figure eight stance”: a relaxed or natural stance with the heels at approximately shoulder-width and the toes turned somewhat outwards to form a shape on the floor like the Japanese numeral 八. Also often called **shizentai dachi**.

Han getsu dachi (半月)

“Half-moon stance”: a longer and wider variant of **Sanchin dachi**. The name reflects the fact that the leading foot describes a crescent or half-moon shape on the floor as it steps forward in han getsu dachi, as at the beginning of the **Shotokan kata** called Hangetsu (the same kata is called Seishan or Seisan by Wado Ryu students). There is some reason to think that han getsu dachi exposes the knees to an unhealthy degree of stress by requiring them to buckle inwards excessively.

Han kokutsu dachi

“Half backwards yielding stance”: a shorter and higher version of **kokutsu dachi**.

Han zenkutsu dachi

“Half front bending stance”: a shorter and higher version of **zenkutsu dachi**.

Heiko dachi (並行立ち)

“Side by side stance”: a relaxed or natural stance with the feet placed side by side at approximately shoulder-width. Heiko dachi is similar to **hachiji dachi** except that, in heiko dachi, the feet are parallel rather than with the toes pointing outwards.

Heisoku dachi (閉足立ち)

“Closed feet stance”: an upright stance similar to **musubi dachi** except that, in heisoku dachi, the toes are not turned outwards. The feet should be side by side with their inside edges touching.

Takeashi dachi (駆け足立ち)

“Running stance”; “advancing stance”: another name (used by **Kyokushinkai** students) for **kosa dachi**.

Kiba dachi (騎馬立ち)

“Horse-riding stance”; “equestrian stance.” This is a low stance with the feet wide apart and parallel and the knees bent, as if one were sitting on a horse. Like **han getsu dachi**, kiba dachi is a stance that tends to place a great deal of stress on the knees. Cf. **Naihanchi dachi**; **Shiko dachi**. An important part of kiba dachi and the related shiko and naihanchi dachi is to keep the back straight and to avoid leaning forward or sticking the buttocks out.

Kokutsu dachi (後屈立ち)

“Backwards yielding stance”: a forward-facing stance with the weight transferred predominantly onto the rear leg as if, having started in **zenkutsu dachi**, one had rocked or shifted one’s body backwards away from an attack. See also **Han kokutsu dachi**; **Neko ashi dachi**.

Kosa dachi (交差立ち)

“Crossing stance”; “crossover stance”: a cross-legged stance with the knee of the rear leg pressed against the back of the knee of the lead leg as if one were in the process of turning through 180°. Kosa dachi is more versatile – as an evasion, or a stance from which to deliver a surprise kick, or as a means of moving past an attacker and closing in on him from the side – than it may at first sight seem. Kosa dachi is called **akeashi dachi** by **Kyokushinkai** students.

Moto dachi (基立ち)

“Foundation stance”; “root stance”: A high, natural “boxing stance”; the basic “ready” stance for **kumite**. The rear foot is some eighteen inches behind the lead foot; the lateral distance between the feet is about the width of two fists; the knees are slightly flexed; the lead foot points forward and the rear foot turns about twenty or thirty degrees outward; the body faces forward or is

rotated slightly to one side. This stance is often also called **Shizen-tai dachi**. Cf. **Hachiji dachi**.

Musubi dachi (結び立ち)

“Knot-shaped stance”: a preparatory or “bowing” stance with the heels together and the toes pointing outwards, forming a shape on the floor like the two ends of an obi emerging from the knot.

Naihanchi dachi (ナイハンチ立ち)

A stance associated with the Naihanchi or Tekki **kata** series. Some say that it is exactly the same as **kiba dachi**, others say that in naihanchi dachi the toes are turned slightly inwards. The difference between naihanchi dachi and kiba dachi are often very slight, though one often sees Naihanchi kata performed in a stance a good deal higher than the typical kiba dachi. The exact interpretation varies from school to school.

Neko ashi dachi (猫足立ち)

“Cat leg stance”; “cat foot stance”: a high stance with the whole of the weight transferred onto the rear leg with the front leg slightly bent and the toes of the foot resting lightly on the ground as if poised to kick. Examples of rapid postural shifting into neko ashi dachi occur at the end of the **Goju kata** Gekisai dai ni. A stance very like neko ashi dachi but with some weight still on the front foot is called **kokutsu dachi** by **Kyokushinkai** students.

Sagi ashi dachi (鷺足立ち)

“Heron leg stance”: an alternative name for **tsuru ashi dachi**.

Sanchin dachi (立ち)

“Three battles stance”: the stance associated with the ancient and fundamental **kata** called Sanchin. The torso faces towards the

front with the hips square; the rear foot and knee point forwards; the front foot is turned in slightly, and, at least in principle, the thighs are brought close enough together to protect the groin from a kick. The feet should not be too far apart, otherwise the inward bending of the knees as the thighs are closed will be uncomfortable and potentially damaging (cf. **Han getsu dachi**). The relative positions of the feet, knees and hips in this stance are said to resemble an hourglass, and *sanchin dachi* is sometimes called “hourglass” stance in English. When moving forward and backward in this stance the feet should slide on the floor without being lifted.

Shiko dachi (四股立ち)

Shiko dachi is so called from the sumo wrestlers’ ceremonial leg raising and foot stamping ritual performed at the beginning of a match (“*shiko*” (四股) is the name of this ritual). The stance is similar to **kiba dachi** – a wide, sitting-down stance as though bestriding a horse – except that, in *shiko dachi*, the toes are turned outwards.

Shizentai dachi (自然体立ち)

“Natural body stance”; “spontaneous body stance”; often abbreviated to *shizentai* (自然体): an alternative name for **hachiji dachi** and, in some schools, **moto dachi**.

Tsuru ashi dachi (鶴足立ち):

“Crane leg stance”; “crane foot stance”: a stance on one leg, mimicking the posture of a large wading bird. Some versions involve tucking the ankle of one leg behind the knee of the supporting leg (as in the **Shotokan kata** called *Gankaku*), or resting the sole of the foot against the lower thigh or knee of the supporting leg. In each case, the primary training purpose of the stance is to develop balance and groundedness.

Yoi dachi (善い立ち)

“Ready stance”: this stance is typically assumed immediately before beginning a **kata**. It takes different forms in different **ryu**. In some **Goju Ryu** dojo it is the same as **musubi dachi**, except that the hands are held forward at groin level with the left hand on top of the right. Other **ryu** use **hachiji dachi** or **heiko dachi** with the fists clenched at the sides.

Zenkutsu dachi (前屈立ち)

“Front bending stance”: this name indicates not that the karateka should lean or bend forward, but that the front leg should be bent and the rear leg kept straight (though the rear knee should not be locked out). The shin of the front leg should be approximately at right-angles to the floor so that the toes are just visible inside the knee if the karateka looks down. If the toes are invisible, the knee is too far forward; if more of the foot than the toes are visible, the knee is too far back; if the toes are visible on the outside of the knee, the knee is buckling inwards. The lateral distance between the feet should be more or less shoulder-width.

NOTE

The practitioner should keep in mind that “stances” considered as purely static postures, and especially very low or deep stances, are of value mainly as means of training attributes that will eventually transfer themselves to higher and more mobile stances: balance, stability, flexibility and leg strength. This is the meaning of **Fu-nakoshi Gichin’s** advice: “‘Stances’ are for beginners; later, one stands naturally.” In practice, of course, one is constantly moving from one “stance” to another.

Striking Techniques

(Uchi Waza (打ち技); Atemi Waza (当て身技))

Age tsuki (上げ突き)

“Rising thrust”:¹ a straight punch that rises towards a target significantly higher than the punch’s point of origin; the **jodan** punches at the beginning of the **Goju kata** Gekisai dai ichi and Gekisai dai ni are examples (it is said that **Miyagi Chojun** incorporated these punches into the Gekisai kata with the image in mind of relatively short Okinawans punching the faces of American soldiers. We do not know whether this is apocryphal or not; we suspect that it is).

Awase tsuki (合せ突き)

“Combined thrust”:¹ A technique similar to **yama tsuki** but with the hands closer together as the technique is delivered. Examples occur at the end of the **Goju kata** Gekisai dai ichi.

¹ We make the point again that, despite the usual translation, **tsuki** is primarily a thrusting or stabbing blow rather than a “punch”; **uchi** and **ate** have more the sense of striking, but the distinction between these terms is not exact. There seems to be no strict logic or consistency about the use of the terms **tsuki** and **uchi**.

Choku tsuki (直突き)

“Direct thrust”; “straight thrust”: a punch that moves to the target by the most direct route, travelling in a linear path with the elbow behind the fist, following its path. In its strict form, the punch begins with the fist in a supinated (knuckles downward) position and twists into a pronated (knuckles upward) position as it moves towards the target, reaching the end of this spiraling motion at the point of impact. This combination of forward thrust and helical twist should feel as though the fist were being screwed or drilled into the target.

Empi¹ uchi (猿臂打ち)

“Monkey elbow strike”: a blow with the olecranon process of the ulna – the bony prominence at the back of the elbow; the name is apparently intended to emphasise the tactical importance of the elbow’s bony nature. Empi uchi is a very effective technique where there is an opportunity to use it, though plainly it can be deployed only at close ranges. It can be delivered in any plane or direction. Thus **age** empi uchi (上げ猿臂打ち) is an elbow strike rising upwards; **mawashi** empi uchi (回し猿臂打ち) is an elbow strike turning or arcing in from the side; **otoshi** empi uchi (落し猿臂打ち) is a descending or downward-moving elbow strike.

Gyaku tsuki (逆突き)

“Opposite side punch”; “reverse punch” (though “reverse punch” is a somewhat unhelpful translation). When a straight punch – **choku tsuki** – is executed from a front stance, if the front leg and

¹ There is a Shotokan kata called Empi (often Romanised as Enpi), but this “empi” is a different word – (燕飛) – meaning “flying swallow.” The original Okinawan version of the kata is called Wansu or Wanshu, probably after its Chinese creator. The name Empi or Enpi was given to it by **Funakoshi Gichin**.

the striking fist are on opposite sides, the technique is called *gyaku tsuki*; cf. **Seiken uchi**.

Haishu uchi (背手打ち)

“Back hand strike.” *Haishu uchi* is a kind of reversed slap: a strike delivered (most obviously to an attacker’s ear or the side of his head or face) with the back – the dorsal surface – of the hand with the fingers extended and the thumb folded across the palm.¹

Haito uchi (背刀打ち)

“Reversed knife/sword strike”: a blow delivered with the inside edge – the thumb-side edge – of the hand, with the fingers extended and the thumb folded across the palm, chiefly using the side of the knuckle at the base of the index finger as the striking surface. Because 背 is also “ridge,” *haito uchi* is sometimes translated as “ridge-hand strike”: the striking edge of the hand has a shape something like that of a mountain-ridge. **Hai** (背) understood as “reversed” expresses the fact that *haito uchi* is in effect a reversed **shuto uchi**. Because its tendency otherwise would be to hyperextend the elbow joint (i.e. to exert a force against the joint’s natural direction of movement), *haito uchi* should be delivered with the arm slightly flexed. The fingers should also be kept pressed tightly together to avoid injury. It is not easy to imagine the circumstances in which *haito uchi* would be a particularly serviceable technique. Examples of it occur at the end of the **Goju kata Saifa**.

Hebi uchi (蛇打ち)

“Snake strike”: a technique delivered as a jab or poke with the index and middle fingers extended as though they were the fangs or

¹ Because it is so vulnerable to being grabbed by an attacker or accidentally caught in the sleeve of a practice partner’s **gi**, the thumb should never be left sticking out when performing open-handed techniques.

forked tongue of a snake. The other two fingers should be folded into the palm with the thumb pressed down on top of them. It is difficult to imagine any application for this technique other than as a jab into an attacker's eyes. As such – because it is clearly so damaging, and most ordinary people would not be able to bring themselves to do it anyway – hebi uchi is a technique of limited utility. At all events, it is one that should be used only in circumstances of extreme danger. Also, two unsupported fingers can easily be grabbed by an attacker or injured by unintended impact with a hard surface. To minimise the risk of injury, the extended fingers should be kept slightly flexed. Hebi uchi exemplifies the Chinese martial arts habit of imitating the behaviour or characteristics of non-human animals. It is not often seen in **karate dojo**, and purists may wish to say that it is not a karate technique at all.

Heiko tsuki (平行突き)

“Parallel thrust”: two **choku tsuki** delivered simultaneously, with the fists side by side; more or less synonymous with **morote tsuki**.

Hiji ate (肘当て)

“Elbow strike,” using the normal Japanese word for “elbow”; an alternative, though less common, name, for **Empi uchi**.

Ippon ken¹ uchi (一本拳打ち)

“One knuckle strike.” This technique is executed (most commonly with the fist held vertical) by striking the target with the middle knuckle of the index finger with the index finger supported by the pressure of the thumb beneath it, pressing against its distal knuckle. The point of ippon ken uchi is to focus or concentrate the whole force of a blow into a small area. See also **Nakadaka ken uchi**.

¹ **Ken (拳)** in phrases of this kind is “hand” or “fist” or “knuckle.” It should not be confused with the **ken (剣)** in **kendo** or **kenjutsu**, which is “sword.”

Jun tsuki (準突き)

“Corresponding [side] thrust”: this name is sometimes used synonymously with **seiken uchi** or **mae tae uchi**; also, it is used by **Wado Ryu** practitioners as the name of the technique elsewhere called **oi tsuki**.

Kagi tsuki (鉤突き)

“Hooking thrust”: the name means the same here as it does in such English expressions as “left hook” or “right hook.” **Mawashi tsuki** is sometimes treated as a synonym, but strictly speaking the two techniques are not the same.

Kizami tsuki (刻み突き)

“Chopping thrust”: A “jab” punch with the lead hand. **Kizami tsuki** is not what most people would think of as a “chop”; the idea conveyed in the name is of rapid, short-range repeated motion, used to set up an opponent or keep an opponent at a distance.

Koken uchi (腕拳打ち)

“Wrist strike”: a blow delivered with the back or top of the wrist. It is not a technique that would come obviously to mind as a useful one to employ. It has most potential as a “rising” strike (in which case it would be called **age koken uchi** (上げ腕拳打ち)), perhaps as part of an escape from a wrist-grab. It is in this form that it occurs in the **Goju kata** Tensho. The **koken uchi** hand-shape occurs also at the end of the **Goju kata** Sanseiryu and Suparunpai. **Koken uchi** is also sometimes recommended as a blocking technique, though, again, it is not a particularly realistic or useful resource.

Mae te uchi (前手打ち)

“Front hand strike”: an alternative name for **seiken uchi**. Cf **Jun tsuki**. Practitioners of Harada Mitsusuke’s version of **Shotokai karate** seem to use **mae te uchi** as a synonym for **kizami tsuki**.

Mawashi tsuki (回し突き)

“Turning thrust”; “roundhouse thrust”: a curving or turning punch. Mawashi tsuki can be described as a “hook” punch, but it differs from **kagi tsuki** in that, as the hand travels towards the target in mawashi tsuki, the arm is rotated outwards and the back of the hand turned in towards the striker. The point of this is to bring the large knuckles of the striking hand immediately into contact with the target.

Morote tsuki (双手突き)

“Two-handed thrust”: a technique typically understood as two **choku tsuki** delivered simultaneously, with the fists side by side. (More generally, any kind of punch made with both hands simultaneously could be described as a morote tsuki.) See also **Heiko tsuki**; **Ryo ken uchi**.

Nakadaka ken uchi (中高拳打ち)

“Middle high knuckle strike”; “convex fist strike.” The idea here is similar to that of **ippon ken uchi**: to concentrate the whole force of a blow into a small striking surface. The hand is formed into a fist, but with the middle knuckle of the third finger protruding, the finger being supported from below by the thumb pressed against its distal knuckle.

Nukite tsuki (貫手突き)

“Piercing hand thrust,” often translated as “spear hand thrust.” This technique is delivered with the extended fingers, as if the hand were the blade of a spear or dagger being thrust into an opponent. To minimise the risk of injury the fingers of the striking hand must be held rigid and the thumb folded across the palm. Some **Uechi Ryu** practitioners make a speciality of this technique and condition their hands so rigorously that they can break wooden boards with it. In the long run, this use of nukite tsuki

and the conditioning required to accomplish it will do irreversible damage to the fingers. The effectiveness of *nukite tsuki* depends to a great extent on the nature of the chosen target. In reality, it is a technique practicable against soft targets only (especially the throat); certainly it does not lend itself to use against bony surfaces. The tip of the middle finger will make contact with the target first and is vulnerable to compressive injury even if well supported by the fingers on either side of it.

Oi tsuki (追突き)

“Following thrust”; “pursuing thrust”: a **choku tsuki** executed while stepping or lunging forward with the leg on the same side as the hand delivering the thrust or punch. The point of the technique is to gain distance or pursue a retreating opponent.

Ryo ken uchi (両拳打ち)

“Both hands strike”: synonymous for the most part with **morote tsuki**. See also **Heiko tsuki**.

Seiken uchi (正拳打ち)

When a straight punch – **choku tsuki** – is executed with the front leg and the striking fist on the same side, the technique is called *seiken uchi* or **mae te uchi** or **Jun tsuki**. Cf. **Gyaku tsuki**.

Shita uchi (下打ち)

“Underneath strike”; “strike from below.” *Shita uchi* is a straightforward uppercut: a close-range punch rising from below with the hand supinated (knuckles facing away from you), most obviously striking upwards into an attacker’s chin. In form, it is the same as **ura uchi**, but with a longer and upwards travel. Although it is a “rising” punch, *shita uchi* should not be confused with **age tsuki**.

Shotei uchi (掌底打ち)

“Palm heel strike.” Shotei is “the bottom of the palm of the hand”: i.e. the muscular pad or surface at the base of the hand when the hand is bent back at the wrist. Shotei uchi is often more of a hard push or thrust than a strike. It is a useful and adaptable technique that can easily flow from an open handed block, or itself flow into a seizing or clawing technique. As a strike or push, it particularly effective against the nose or under the chin. A **gedan** shotei uchi is almost necessarily delivered with the hand upside-down (i.e. fingers pointing towards the floor); it might be called **gyaku** shotei uchi (逆掌底打ち), “inverted palm heel strike.”

Shuto uchi (手刀打ち)

“Sword hand strike.” Shuto uchi is the classical “**karate chop**”: a technique delivered with the outside edge of the hand, striking with the muscular pad between the base of the little finger and the wrist. The shape of the hand is essentially the same as that used in **nukite tsuki**. To avoid injury the fingers must be pressed tightly together and the thumb kept well folded in across the palm. Shuto uchi is most effective against the neck. It perhaps obvious that a “karate chop” to the throat or cervical spine is an extremely dangerous technique.

Tate ken tsuki (縦拳突き)

“Vertical fist thrust”: a thrust or punch delivered with the fist held vertical (i.e. with the little-finger side of the hand downwards and the fist at right-angles to the floor). **Isshin Ryu** practitioners use a form of tate ken – vertical fist – with the thumb held at the top of the fist with its tip pressed down firmly against the second knuckle of the index finger. **Shimabuku Tatsuo** considered this configuration to be particularly strong and stable. Vertical fist strikes are typically seen in the Chinese martial arts: the Wing Chun punch is an obvious example.

Teisho uchi (底掌打ち)

An alternative name for **Shotei uchi**.

Tettsui uchi (鉄槌打ち)

“Iron hammer strike.” The striking surface in this case is the same as in **shuto uchi** – the resilient surface of the hand between the base of the little finger and the wrist – but with the hand clenched into a fist and used as if it were a hammer.

Uraken uchi (裏拳打ち)

“Back fist strike”; “reversed fist strike.” Uraken uchi is a “back” or “reversed” fist strike in the sense of being executed with the hand supinated (knuckles facing away from you); it is delivered by throwing the “back” of the fist at the target and striking it with the large knuckles of the first two fingers. The nose or eyes or temples are obvious objectives, but uraken uchi is a very versatile technique; it is also easy to disguise. The fist should be “flung” at the target with a whipping action, as though the hand were a weight attached to the wrist by a spring. The fist should be held comparatively loosely as it travels towards the target and tensed suddenly at the moment of impact. The effectiveness of uraken uchi comes from a combination of this sudden tensing of the fist and the “springy” action of the wrist.

Ura uchi (裏打ち)

“Reversed strike”; ura uchi is a short-range or short-arm strike delivered with the hand supinated (knuckles downward) – i.e. “reversed” from the typical pronated position of the fist at the end of a punch. Often the idea is to pull the attacker into the blow rather than striking out at him with it (there are examples of this application in the **Goju kata** Saifa. In view of the short distance of its travel, ura uchi is most effective when delivered with the fist in the **nakadaka** or **ippon ken** configuration.

Yama tsuki (山突き)

“Mountain thrust”: a two-handed lunging punch made with one hand above the other, the lower hand supinated and the upper pronated. The two arms and the head of the person executing the technique form a shape vaguely like the kanji for “mountain” (yama: 山) laid on its side. The lower hand strikes **ura uchi** to the abdomen or solar plexus, the upper strikes to the face. There are examples in the **Shotokan kata** Bassai dai and the **Goju kata** Seipai. Some people plausibly consider yama tsuki to be a disguised throwing technique rather than a somewhat impracticable strike.

Kicking Techniques

(Keri Waza (蹴り技))

Ashi barai (足払い)

“Leg sweep”; “foot sweep”: not strictly speaking a “kick” but a low reaping motion of the leg/foot intended to sweep away an attacker’s leg. For many practical purposes ashi barai can be thought of as a low-level **mawashi geri**, striking an attacker’s calf or ankle with the instep or shin. It can also be a backwards or reverse sweeping or hooking motion, or a strike with the sole of the foot to an attacker’s ankle or lower leg. It can, indeed, be any foot or leg technique that has the effect of knocking or sweeping away an attacker’s supporting leg.

Fuetsu geri (斧鉞蹴り)

“Axe kick”: the foot is swung high into the air with the leg kept virtually straight and allowed to fall in a chopping motion onto the target, with gravity providing the force of the impact. This technique is most obviously useful as a way of finishing off an attacker who is already on the ground. Because the impact would otherwise force the knee against its natural direction of movement, the kicking leg should be kept slightly flexed so as to retain a degree of shock-absorbing capacity at the moment of contact. Fuetsu geri is also, and more usually, called **otoshi kakato geri**, but it should be remembered that any kick that uses the calcaneus

bone – the hard bone of the heel – to strike with is a kakato geri. For this reason we think the more specific term fuetsu geri more suitable.

Fumikomi geri (踏み込み蹴り)

“Stamping kick”; “stepping-on kick.” Like **fuetsu geri**, fumikomi geri is most obviously a “finishing” technique for use against a fallen attacker. The knee is raised high and the foot driven downwards into the target with a stamping action, striking with the bone of the heel. The force of the kick will be augmented if the kicker has the feeling that he is dropping the whole weight of his body down onto the attacker.

Hiza geri (膝蹴り)

“Knee kick.” Like **ashi barai**, hiza geri is not really a “kick” at all; it is a close-range technique executed by driving the knee upwards into an attacker’s body. The force of the technique comes mainly from the pushing of the foot of the supporting leg against the ground as the upward strike is made. The effect of hiza geri can be intensified by pulling an attacker onto it.

Kakato geri (踵蹴り)

“Heel kick”: a kick that uses the bone of the heel as its striking surface. See also **Fumikomi geri**; **Fuetsu geri**.

Kansetsu geri (関節蹴り)

“Joint kick”: a kick directed against a joint with a view to hyperextending or otherwise damaging it.

Kin geri (金蹴り)

“Testicle kick” – kin here is an abbreviation of **kintama**. The knee is lifted up with the foot plantarflexed (i.e. toes pointed down-

wards) and the foot driven forwards and upwards into the attacker's groin, striking with the upper surface.

Mae geri keage (前蹴り蹴上)

“Front upwards kick” – but keage (蹴上) in this context is usually taken to mean that the kick is delivered with a sharp snapping motion rather than a push. The knee is lifted up and the foot shot directly forward to the target, usually striking with the ball of the foot. See also **Yoko geri**.

Mae geri kekomi (前蹴り蹴込み)

“Front rising kick” – kekomi (蹴込み) is in ordinary speech more or less synonymous with keage (see **Mae geri keage**), but in this context is taken to mean that the kick is delivered with a thrusting rather than a snapping action, as if to push an attacker away from you. In other respects, mae geri kekomi is the same as mae geri keage: a kick to the front, usually with the ball of the foot. See also **Yoko geri**.

Mawashi geri (回し蹴り):

“Turning kick”; “Roundhouse kick.” Older and less supple students tend to find **jodan** – high level – mawashi geri difficult because it requires a very mobile hip joint. It should be borne in mind that mawashi geri does not have to be particularly high. There are several ways of executing it. Most commonly in **karate**, the leg is lifted up to the side and the hip rotated so that the leg is more or less parallel with the ground (imagine swinging your leg over a bicycle). The foot is then whipped around in a lateral arc, with the idea, in the case of a high-level mawashi geri, of kicking around and past an attacker's guard. In its “pure” Japanese form, mawashi geri is supposed to use the ball of the foot as the striking surface, with the foot dorsiflexed (i.e. the toes lifted higher than the heel, creating a relatively acute angle between the top of the foot and the bottom of the shin) and the toes pulled well back.

This, however, is very difficult to do, and most people strike with the dorsal surface of the foot. **Oyama Masutatsu** introduced into **Kyokushinkai** karate a roundhouse kick using the shin: a technique borrowed from Muay Thai (“Thai boxing”).

Mikazuki geri (三日月蹴り)

“Three-day moon kick”; “crescent kick”: a kick that moves up from the ground to the target in an arc, striking or slapping the target with the sole of the foot; often taught as a disarming technique, optimistically intended to knock a weapon out of an attacker’s hand. Examples of occur in the **Shotokan Heian** Godan and the **Goju** kata Suparunpai.

Otoshi kakato geri (落とし踵蹴り):

“Descending heel kick”; “dropping heel kick”: see **Fuetsu geri**.

Sokuto geri (足刀蹴り)

“Foot-sword kick”: a kick with the outside edge of the foot, often a **kansetsu geri** directed against an attacker’s knee. There are several examples in the **Goju** kata Sanseiryu.

Tobi geri (飛び蹴り)

“Flying kick”; “leaping kick”: a kick executed while jumping either forwards, to gain distance, or upwards, to gain height. **Tobi** often occurs as an adjective in conjunction with the name of a kick. For instance, tobi **mae geri** (飛び前蹴り) is a jumping or “flying” front kick.

Ushiro geri (後蹴り)

“Rear kick”; “backwards kick”: a thrusting or snapping heel kick to the rear; i.e. directed against an attacker behind you.

Yoko geri (横蹴り)

“Sideways kick”; “horizontal kick” (“horizontal” in the sense that the long axis of the kicking foot is horizontal to the ground or parallel with the ground): the knee is lifted high and the foot shot out to the side. Like **mawashi geri**, **jodan yoko geri** are difficult to do because they call for considerable hip flexibility; but, again like **mawashi geri**, **yoko geri** do not have to be very high. The striking surface can be the heel, sole or edge of the foot. Like **mae geri**, **yoko geri** can be delivered as a snap kick (*keage*) (蹴上) or a thrust kick (*kekomi*) (蹴込み).

NOTES

1. The reader should bear in mind that there is a certain fluidity about kicking terminology. Thus, for instance, the low kicks in the **Goju kata** *Sanseiryu* are **yoko geri** (because they travel more or less sideways in relation to the kicker), **kansetsu geri** (because directed against an opponent’s knee joint) and **sokuto geri** (because delivered with the edge of the foot); **fuetsu geri** and **ushiro geri** are also **kakato geri** (because they strike with the heel), but so is **fumikomi geri**, and **mae geri** also can be a **kakato geri** if the heel rather than the ball of the foot is used as the striking surface.
2. Beginners and older students are often discouraged by the importance that modern **karate** seems to attach to very high kicks and spectacular, athletic leaping and spinning kicks. These techniques – in many cases imported from the Korean art of *taekwon do* – have tended to enter **karate** curricula because they are crowd-pleasers and competition winners. For practical purposes – by which we mean self-defence purposes – it is neither necessary nor particularly desirable to kick higher than the groin or mid section. The higher the kick, the more (in most cases) the kicker’s balance will be compromised, and the likelier the kicker will be to have the kick caught and his supporting leg reaped from under him. Also, kicking someone in the head

– kicking a small, moving, defended target – is hard to do in “real life” and not really a good tactical choice; nor are very high kicks “traditional.” In the unhappy event of a real attack, complicated and flamboyant kicks will not help you unless you have an exceptional degree of speed and skill. It is far better to train to deliver a few straightforward kicks strongly and effectively than to struggle to perform kicks that are complex, difficult and weak.

Defensive Techniques

(Uke Waza (受け技))

Uke waza (受け技) is an expression usually translated as “blocking techniques.” Because “block” is so standard a term in English martial arts writing we shall go on using it; but **uke** (受け) really means something more than, and different from, what “blocking” seems to suggest. The verb ukeru (受ける) is “to receive”; hence, in our present context, uke implies “receiving an attack with a defensive action.” The reason for this distinction between “receiving” and “blocking” is simple enough. It is a truth of physics that, in a collision between two opposing forces, the stronger force will inevitably prevail; and, if you are attacked, it is always prudent to assume that your attacker is stronger than you. The objective in executing an “uke,” therefore, is not to oppose one force with another, but to *receive* an attack intelligently by absorbing or redirecting it and creating the possibility of control and counter-attack. This involves body shifting and the control of space and distance as well as obstructive movements of the arms and legs.



Age uke (上げ受け)

“Rising block”: a deflection of a blow upwards and outwards, using the outside of the forearm in a rising motion; a very natural defensive movement. Ideally the forearm should rotate as the block is executed so that the attack is to an extent “thrown” off it like an object making contact with a rotating wheel. The forearm must not be too close to the head and the elbow must not be at too acute an angle; otherwise it is easy for an attack from overhead to reach over it.

Ashi uke (脚受け)

“Leg block”: the use of the leg or foot to deflect an attack – usually a low kick, though it is theoretically possible to use **mikazuki geri** to deflect a hand or knife attack. Leg blocks are much used in Thai Boxing. Our opinion, for what it is worth, is that, generally speaking, they are not a good self-defence option. A very high degree of balance and “grounding” is essential if they are to be used successfully; also, it is not a good idea to risk being kicked hard on the knee or shin by someone wearing boots or shoes.

Chudan uke (中段受け)

“Mid-level block”: an alternative or generic name for **soto ude uke** and **uchi ude uke**.

Gedan barai (下段払い)

“Low level sweep”: a downward sweeping deflection (usually of a kick) with the forearm. *Gedan barai* can be **soto** (外) (moving outwards from the body’s centreline and delivered with the outside of the arm) or **uchi** (内) (moving inwards towards and across the body’s centreline and delivered with the inside of the arm). See also **Gedan uke**; **Nagashi uke**.

Gedan uke (下段受け)

“Low level block.” *Gedan uke* is superficially exactly the same as **gedan barai**, but with a sense more of impact than of “sweeping.” Like *gedan barai*, *gedan uke* can be applied inwards-to-outwards (**soto** (外)) or outwards-to-inwards (**uchi** (内)). See also **Gedan barai**; **Nagashi uke**.

Hiki uke (引き受け)

“Pulling block”: having received an attack, the receiver’s hand seizes the attacking limb and pulls the attacker forwards, to un-balance him or onto a counter-attack or both. More often than not, *hiki uke* is a technique that flows seamlessly from **kake uke** or **shuto uke**. The frequent occurrence of **hiki te** in *kata* is often explained as disguised *hiki uke*.

Jodan uke (上段受け)

“Upper level block”: an alternative name for **age uke**.

Joge uke (上下受け)

“Up and down block”: a simultaneous **chudan uke** and **gedan uke**, as in the **Goju kata** *Seiunchin* (制引戦) and the **Shotokan Heian sandan**. In some schools this technique is called **Kosa uke**.

Juji uke (十字受け)

“Figure ten block”, so called because, in executing it, the defender’s wrists make a cross shape like that of the Japanese numeral ten, **ju** (十); an alternative name for **kosa uke**.

Kake uke (掛け受け)

“Hanging block,” made with the outside of the wrist or the lower part of the forearm, with the hand “hanging” or hooking over the attacker’s arm ready to grasp and pull. *Kake uke* flows or converts

very easily into **hiki uke**. A two-handed *kake uke/hiki uke* is a favourite technique of Goju ryu, appearing, for instance, in the **kata gekisai dai ni** and *shisochin*.

Kakiwake uke (掻き分ける受け)

“Pushing through block,” often translated as “wedge block”: a **chudan block** made with the outside of both forearms simultaneously, hands pronated (the back of the hands towards you), as if forcing your way between the arms of an attacker who is trying to grab your neck or clothes with both hands. It can easily flow into a double punch to an attacker’s face. There are examples in the **Shotokan kata Heian yondan** and *Jion*.

Kosa uke (交差受け)

“Crossing block”: a block made with the arms crossed at the wrists. It can be used to deflect an attack either upwards, as in the **Goju kata Kururunfa** and the **Shotokan kata Heian godan**, or downwards, as in Goju’s *Sanseiryu kata* or Shotokan’s *Heian yondan*. (An upward *kosa uke* would be called **age kosa uke** (上げ交差受け); a downward *kosa uke* would be called **gedan kosa uke** (下段交差受け) or **otoshi kosa uke** (落とし交差受け).) It seems to come naturally to right-handed people to execute *kosa uke* with the right wrist on top of the left, but it does not really matter. *Kosa uke* can be executed with the hands open or closed. See also **Juji uke** and **Joge uke**.

Mawashi uke (廻し受け)

“Turning block”: a two-handed block combining **uchi ude uke**, and **kake uke** and flowing immediately into a **simultaneous jodan** and **gedan shotei uchi**. There are numerous illustrations in the **Goju kata Suparunpai**. It occurs also at the end of the *Goju kata gekisai dai ni*. It is often also called **tora guchi**, “tiger mouth,” because of the position in which the hands finish.

Morote uke (双手受け)

“Block with both hands,” often translated as “augmented” or “reinforced” block. As used in **Shotokan karate** the term denotes a **soto ude uke** executed with the fist of the other hand pressed against the inside of the elbow of the blocking arm as if to prop or reinforce it. The original idea was probably that the “reinforcing” hand should be so placed in relation to the block as to be able to deliver an instant counter-attack. A broadly similar technique, though with the palm rather than the fist of the “reinforcing” arm pressed against the inside of the blocking arm, occurs in the **Goju kata** Seiunchin. Generically, morote uke might be used as a term for any blocking technique involving the use of both hands. In this more general sense, **mawashi uke**, for example, is a morote uke.

Nagashi uke (流し受け)

“Flowing block.” A pushing block made with the palm or palm-heel sweeping across the front of the body and slightly downwards. Some people use the same term to mean an outside-to-inside **gedan barai** or **gedan uke**.

Shotei uke (掌底受け)

“Palm heel block”: a block, usually executed laterally across the defender’s body, with the heel of the hand. Delivered downwards, against a low blow or a kick or a strike with the knee (as in the **Goju kata** Kururunfa) it is called **otoshi shotei uke** (落とし掌底受け). To avoid the risk of injury to the fingers it is important to block only with the palm-heel, or at least with the palmar surface of the hand, and to keep the fingers somewhat bent. Cf. **Shotei uchi**.

Shuto uke (手刀受け)

“Sword-hand block; “knife-hand block”: a block made with the outside edge of the hand with the fingers extended, i.e. in the same configuration as that used in **shuto uchi**. As with shuto uchi,

it is important to keep the fingers pressed close together to avoid the risk of injury. Like **kake uke**, *shuto uke* can easily “flow” or be converted into a “grasp and pull” **hiki uke**.

Soto ude uke (外腕受け)

“Outwards arm block”: a block made with the outside (the thumb side) of the forearm moving outwards relative to the centreline of the defender’s body. The hand is supinated (knuckles facing away from you). Cf. **Uchi ude uke**. See also **Chudan uke**.

Teisho uke (底掌受け)

An alternative name for **shotei uke**.

Tora guchi (虎口)

An alternative name for **Mawashi uke**.

Uchi ude uke (内腕受け):

“Inwards arm block”: a block made with the inside (the little finger side) of the forearm moving inwards – i.e. towards and across the centreline of the defender’s body. The hand is supinated (knuckles facing away from you). Cf. **Soto ude uke**. See also **Chudan uke**.

Wa uke (輪受け)

“Circle block.” This name is given in **Uechi Ryu** to a two-handed blocking and trapping sequence very similar to the one that occurs in the **Goju kata** *Gekisai dai ni* and *Suparunpai* but with larger, more expansive movements.

NOTE

Blocking techniques usually illustrated with the fist closed can also be executed with the hand open (**kosa uke** is done in both ways

in the **Goju kata** Sanseiryu (三十六)). The advantage of this is that an open-handed block can flow more easily into a grasping or locking technique; the disadvantage is that it exposes the fingers to an increased risk of injury.

Etiquette and Instructions (Reishiki (礼式); Shiji (指示))

Arigato (ありがとう)

Arigato by itself is an informal “thank you.” More formally one would say **arigato gozaimasu** or **arigato gozaimashita**. More formally still, or to express more profound thanks, one would say **domo** (ども) arigato gozaimasu/shita. Domo by itself is also an informal “thanks.” Broadly speaking, arigato gozaimasu is “thank you for what you are doing/about to do” and arigato gozaimashita is “thank you for what you have done.”

Arigato gozaimasu (ありがとうございます)

See **Arigato**.

Arigato gozaimashita (ありがとうございました)

See **Arigato**.

Do itashi mashite (どういたしまして)

A conventional reply to thanks; “You’re welcome”; “don’t mention it.”

Domo arigato gozaimasu (どうもありがとうございます):

See **Arigato**.

Hajime (はじめ)

Instruction: "Begin"; "Commence."

Kamaete (構えて)

"Get ready"; "on guard!" An instruction to assume a **kamae**; to be ready for action.

Kudasai (下さい)

"Please" (making a request).

Ki o tsukete (気をつけて)

Literally, "Gather your **ki**": An instruction, amounting more or less to "attention please," calling the class to order at the beginning of practice. It is customarily a signal given by the teacher to line up in rank order and prepare to make the preliminary bows. For similar instructions see **Narande** and **Seiretsude**.

Matte (待って)

Instruction: "Pause"; "Wait."

Mawatte (まわって)

Instruction: "Turn around."

Narande (ならんで)

Instruction: "Line up." See also **Seiretsude**.

Onegaishimasu (御願います)

A formal/deferential form of “please,” often used as a preliminary to asking the teacher a question; somewhat along the lines of “Would you be so kind as to ...”.

Otagai ni rei (御互いに礼)

A bow to one another before practice; an instruction to the members of the class to bow to one another.

Rei (礼)

Bow; courtesy; an instruction to bow. Social bowing is an integral part of Japanese life, and many shades of meaning – thanks, respect, deference, greeting, apology – are conveyed by it. The deeper/lower the bow, the greater the respect; respect is shown also by lowering the eyes. Bowing should never be accompanied by any sense of self-abasement as distinct from politeness and proper deference. It must, however, be done properly. In Japan, not bowing at all, or giving only a perfunctory nod, is often a way of signalling your superiority over someone and putting him in his place. Even when bowing to an equal, the bow should be deliberate, formal and held for two or three seconds. See **Rei-sansoke**.

Ritsu rei (立礼)

A standing bow, as distinct from **seiza rei**. Broadly speaking, the upper body should be inclined forwards about thirty degrees; lower bows are appropriate when bowing to the teacher or a distinguished visitor.

Seiretsude (せいれつで)

Instruction: “Line up.” See also **Narande**.

Seiza rei (正座礼)

A seated bow performed at the beginning and end of practice; a bow of the kind called “kow tow” in China. The student sits in **seiza**, places the palms of his hands on the floor, and leans forward until his forehead almost touches the floor between his hands. As with standing bows, the idea is to show proper respect to the teacher, one’s fellow students, and the art itself; there should never be a sense that one is merely grovelling on the floor.

Sensei ni rei (先生に礼)

A bow to the teacher before practice; an instruction to bow to the teacher. A bow to the teacher is typically somewhat lower than an “ordinary” bow.

Shomen ni rei (正面に礼)

A bow before practice towards the front – the far wall – of the **dojo**, often towards a shrine or a picture of the founder placed there; an instruction to bow to the front of the dojo.

Suwatte (すわって)

Instruction: “sit down.”

Tachi rei (立ち礼)

An alternative name for **ritsu rei**.

Tatte (たって)

Instruction: “Stand up.”

Yame (止め)

Instruction: “Stop.”

Yoi (よい)

Ready; prepared. The word is an adjective, but it is often used as an instruction to assume **yoi dachi** at the beginning of a **kata**.

Yoroshiku onegai itashimasu (よろしくおいたします)

This is a common polite phrase with many context-dependent meanings. It need mean no more than the English “pleased to meet you” on being introduced to someone. As a formal way of introducing oneself on entering the **dojo** it means something like “Please receive me with kindness/favour.”

Zarei (座礼)

An alternative term for **Seiza rei**.

NOTE

The degree of formality found in the **dojo** varies a good deal from place to place, and one should always accept the practices of a **dojo** that one visits. **Dojo** etiquette is one of the things that expresses the difference between the martial arts and mere violence. Properly and thoughtfully performed, the formalities of the **dojo** provide students with constant reminders that they have embarked on a way of life in which courtesy, mindfulness, respect for others and self-restraint are of the essence. On the other hand, too much formality and fuss can swamp the mind and become a distraction or, worse, a means of creating and reinforcing unhealthy relationships of domination and dependence. One should never allow the requirements of discipline and courtesy to undermine one’s own sense of individuality and self-worth.

Parts of the Body

Abdomen:	腹	Hara
	腹部	Fukubu
	下腹部	Kafukubu
	下腹	Shita hara (Kafuku)
	お腹	Onaka
	丹田	Tanden
	下っ腹	Shitappara
	胴	Do (trunk; torso)
	小腹	Kobara
	臍下	Seika (Lower abdomen)
Achilles tendon:	アキレス腱	Akiresuken
Abdominal muscles:	腹筋	Harasuji; Fukkin; Fuku-kin
Adam's apple:	喉仏	Nodobotoke

Ankle:	足首	Ashikubi
	踝	Kurubushi
Arm:	腕	Ude
	上肢	Joshi
	手	Te
Artery:	動脈	Domyaku
Axilla/armpit:	腋	Waki
	脇の下	Waki no shita
	腋窩	Ekika
Back:	背	Se
	背中	Senaka
	腰	Koshi (lower back, hips, waist)
Back of the hand:	手の甲	Te no ko
	背手	Haishu
Ball of the foot:	中足	Chusoku
	前足	Zenzoku (Zenkyaku; Mae ashi)
	上足底	Josokutei
Biceps:	二頭筋	Nitokin
	上腕二頭筋	Jowan nitokin

Bladder:	膀胱	Boko
Body:	体	Tai (Karada)
	身体	Shintai (Karada)
	人体	Jintai
	胴	Do (trunk, torso, abdomen, waist)
	胴体	Dotai (trunk; torso)
	肌身	Hadami
	上体	Jotai (upper body)
Bone:	骨	Kotsu (Hone)
Bridge of the nose:	鼻柱	Hanabashira
	鼻筋	Hanasuji
	鼻っ柱	Hanappashira
	鼻梁	Biryō
Buttocks:	臀部	Denbu
	尻	Shiri
	お尻	Oshiri
Calf of the leg:	脹ら脛	Fukurahagi
	腓	Komura (Kobura)
Carotid artery:	頸動脈	Keidomyaku
Cheek:	頬	Hoh (Hoho)
Cheekbone:	頬骨	Hohbone (Hohobone; Yokotsu; Tsurabone)

	頬	Hohgeta (Hohogeta)
Chest:	胸	Mune
	胸部	Kyobu (Kyokaku)
	胸間	Kyokan
	胸板	Munaita
	胸先	Munasaki
Chin/Jaw:	顎	Ago
Clavicle:	鎖骨	Sakotsu
Coccyx:	尾骨	Bikotsu
	尾てい骨	Biteikotsu
Deltoid:	三角筋	Sankakukin (lit. “triangular muscle”)
Diaphragm:	横隔膜	Okakumaku
Ear:	耳	Mimi
Ear lobe:	耳朶	Jida
Elbow:	肘	Hiji
	猿臂	Empi ¹
Eye/eyeball:	瞳	Hitomi
	目	Me

¹ Hiji is the usual word for “elbow,” but empi – a word that denotes a long bony elbow like a monkey’s – occurs more commonly in association with karate techniques.

	眼	Gan (Manako)
	眸子	Boshi
	目玉	Medama
	眼球	Gankyu
Eye socket:	眼孔	Ganko
	眼窩	Ganka
Face:	面	Men
	面皮	Mempi
	顔	Kao
	顔面	Gammen
	顔付き	Kaotsuki
Finger:	指	Yubi
	手指	Shushi
	一指	Isshi
	手の指	Te no yubi
Fist:	拳	Ken (Kobushi)
	拳固	Genko
	拳骨	Genkotsu
	鉄拳	Tekken
Foot:	足	Ashi
	下手	Shimote
Forearm:	小手	Kote
	腕	Ude (Wan)
	前腕	Mae ude

	前膊	Zenpaku
	前腕	Zenwan
	下膊	Kahaku
Forehead:	額	Hitai (Gaku)
	前額	Zengaku
	前額部	Zengakubu
	前頭部	Zentobu
	お凸	Odeko
	凸	Deko
	眉間	Miken
	真っ向	Makko
Groin:	金的	Kinteki
	股	Mata
	鼠蹊	Sokei
	鼠徑部	Sokeibu
Hair:	髪	Kami (Hatsu)
	髪 <small>の</small> 毛	Kami no ke
	毛	Ke
	毛髪	Mohatsu
Hamstrings:	膝腱	Shitsuken
Hand:	手	Te (Shu)
Head:	頭	Atama (To; Kashira; Kaburi; Zu; Tsuburi; Tsumu; Kabu; Kobe)
	首	Kobe
	頭部	Tobu
	頭	Zu

	頭腦	Zuno
Heart:	心臟 心肝	Shinzo Shinkan
Heel:	踵	Kakato (Kibisu; Kubiso; Akuto)
Heel bone:	踵骨 後ろ踵	Shokotsu Ushiro kakato
Hips:	腰 尻 腰部 腰間	Koshi Shiri Yobu Yokan
Humerus:	上腕骨	Jowan kotsu
Instep:	足の甲 足背	Ashi no ko Sokuhai
Joint:	關節	Kansetsu
Jugular vein:	頸靜脈	Keijomyaku
Kidney:	腎臟	Jinzo
Knee:	膝 小膝	Hiza (Shitsu) Kohiza
Knuckle:	節 指の節	Fushi Yubi no fushi
Larynx:	喉頭	Koto
Leg:	脚 下肢	Ashi Kashi
Ligament:	靱帶	Jintai

Lip:	唇	Kuchibiru
	口唇	Koshin
Mouth:	口	Kuchi (Ku)
Muscle:	筋	Suji (Kin)
	筋肉	Kinniku
Neck:	首	Kubi
Nerve:	神経	Shinkei
Nipple:	乳首	Chikubi
Nose:	鼻	Hana
Palm:	掌	Sho
	手の平	Te no hira
	手の内	Te no uchi
	平手	Hirate
	手掌	Shusho
Pelvis:	骨盤	Kotsuban
Rib:	肋	Abara
	肋骨	Rokkotsu
Shin:	脛	Hagi
	脛	Sune
	向こう脛	Mukozune
	弁慶の泣き所	Benkei no nakidokoro
Shoulder:	肩	Kata (Ken)
	肩部	Kembu
	肩身	Katami

	双肩	Soken
Skin:	皮膚 皮	Hifu Kawa
Skull:	頭蓋骨 頭蓋骨 頭骨 人頭 顱骨	Zugaikotsu Togaikotsu Zukotsu (Kashirabone; Tokotsu) Hitogashira Rokotsu
Solar plexus:	鳩尾 太陽神經叢	Mizu ochi Taiyoshinkeiso
Sole of the foot:	足の裏 足底 底	Ashi no ura Sokutei Soko
Sternum:	胸骨	Kyokotsu
Stomach:	腹 胃 お腹 下腹	Hara I (pron. "ee") Onaka Shita hara (Kafuku)
Temple:	蟀谷	Komekami
Tendon:	筋	Suji
Testicles:	金玉 辜丸	Kintama ¹ Kogan
Thigh:	大腿	Daitai

¹ Kintama is a colloquialism or euphemism, somewhat along the lines of "family jewels."

	上腿	Jotai
	腿	Momo
	太股	Futomomo
	股	Mata
Throat:	喉元	Nodomoto
Thumb:	拇指	Boshi
	親指	Oyayubi
Toe:	指	Yubi
	足の指	Ashi no yubi
Trachea:	气管	Kikan
	喉笛	Nodobue
Upper arm:	腕	Kaina (Ude)
	上腕	Jowan
	上膊	Johaku
	二の腕	Ni no ude
Vein:	静脈	Jomyaku
	筋	Suji
Wrist:	手首	Tekubi
	腕首	Udekubi

Counting in Japanese

Cardinal numbers:

Ichi (一):	One
Ni (二):	Two
San (三):	Three
Shi/Yon (四):	Four
Go (五):	Five
Roku (六):	Six
Shichi/Nana (七):	Seven
Hachi (八):	Eight
Ku (九):	Nine
Ju (十):	Ten
Ju ichi (十一):	Eleven
Ju go (十五):	Fifteen
Ni ju (二十):	Twenty

San ju (三十):	Thirty
Shi/Yon ju (四十):	Forty
Go ju (五十):	Fifty
Roku ju (六十):	Sixty
Shichi/Nana ju (七十):	Seventy
Hachi ju (八十):	Eighty
Ku ju (九十):	Ninety
Hyaku (百):	One hundred
Sen (千):	One thousand

Numbers are also written in arabic numerals (1, 2, 3 ...), especially when Japanese is written horizontally. Note that the numbers 四 and 七 are often pronounced and Romanised as “yon” and “nana” respectively, rather than as “shi and “shichi.” This is because the homophones 死 (shi) and 死地 (shichi) are, respectively, “death” and “at death’s door”: the preferred readings of “four” and “seven” thus reflect a Japanese number-superstition similar to the one that westerners have about thirteen.

Ordinal numbers are easily created by adding the suffix banme (番目) to the cardinal number, thus:

Ichibanme (一番目):	first
Nibanme (二番目):	second
Sanbanme (三番目):	third
Yonbanme (四番目):	fourth

Gobanme (五番目):	fifth
Rokubanme (六番目):	sixth
Nanabanme (七番目):	seventh
Hachibanme (八番目):	eighth
Kyubanme (九番目):	ninth
Jubanme (十番目):	tenth
Hyakubanme (百番目):	hundredth
Senbanme (千番目):	thousandth

Also, one can say **dai ichi (第一)**, **dai ni (第二)** – “number one,” “number two” – and so on.

Adverbial numbers can be formed by adding the suffix **-kai (回)** to the cardinal number, though in some cases this has the effect of modifying the pronunciation and Romanisation.

Ikkai (一回)	once
Nikai (二回)	twice
Sankai (三回)	three times/thrice
Yonkai (四回)	four times
Gokai (五回)	five times
Rokkai (六回)	six times
Nanakai (七回)	seven times
Hachikai/hakkai (八回)	eight times

Nanatsu (七つ)

Yattsu (八つ)

Kokonotsu (九つ)

To (十)

These complications are mentioned here as a matter of interest only. The student is not likely to come across them unless he or she begins to take more than a superficial interest in the Japanese language.

Biographies

- Sakugawa Kanga
- Matsumura Sokon
- Itosu Anko
- Higaonna Kanryo
- Funakoshi Gichin
- Motobu Choki
- Uechi Kanbun
- Miyagi Chojun
- Mabuni Kenwa
- Ohtsuka Hironori
- Funakoshi Yoshitaka
- Shimabuku Tatsuo
- Yamaguchi Gogen
- Uechi Kanei
- Oyama Masutatsu

Sakugawa Kanga (佐久川 寛賀) (1733–1815)

The earliest “founding father” of **karate** of whom we have any definite information is the **Shuri te** master Sakugawa Kanga. In about 1750 Sakugawa began his martial arts training with an Okinawan martial artist called Takahara **Pechin** (1683–1760). Takahara had himself studied under a teacher called Chatan Yara (1668–1756), who had in turn studied xingyiquan and qigong in the Fujian province of China under a teacher called Gong Xiangjun. Takahara is said to have been the first Okinawan martial artist to emphasise the ethical dimensions of **te** – compassion, humility and love – alongside its technical and instrumental aspects. In about 1756, he suggested to Sakugawa that he study at Kumemura – Naha City’s enclave of Chinese scholars and martial artists – with a Chinese teacher called Gong Xiangfu or Kushanku.



Sakugawa Kanga

Kushanku was a native of Fujian province who had been sent to Okinawa as a diplomat; he is said to have studied quanfa with a monk of the “southern” Shaolin temple (see p. 95 n.). Sakugawa spent some six years as his pupil and after his death (ca 1762) composed in his honour the **kata** that is still called Kushanku (also called Kanku dai, the name given to it in the 1930s by **Funakoshi Gichin**).¹ When he began teaching in Shuri, Sakugawa became known as Sakugawa **Tode** – “Chinese hand Sakugawa.” This sobriquet is as far as one can tell the earliest occurrence of the expression “tode,” and it is generally believed that Sakugawa was one of the earliest teachers to make a systematic fusion of Okinawan te and the Chinese arts. Whether the above drawing is an accurate likeness of Sakugawa is open to question. We do not know when or by whom it was made, but it looks suspiciously modern; it is hard to believe that it is a drawing from life. There exists also a photograph of an old man with a long white beard that is often represented as being a picture of Sakugawa in later life, but Sakugawa Tode died more than a decade before the first permanent photographic image was produced, and the photograph in question cannot be of him. It has been suggested that it is a photograph of Sakugawa Tode’s son or grandson, also called Sakugawa Kanga (1786–1867).

Matsumura Sokon (松村宗棍) (ca 1797–1889)²

One of **Sakugawa Kanga**’s most distinguished students was a native of the Yamagawa district of Shuri called Matsumura Sokon.

¹ Also attributed to him is the **bo** kata called Sakugawa no kon.

² Several different birth and death dates for Matsumuta Sokon are given in the available sources; the ones reproduced here are those most consistent with his having been a student of Sakugawa Kanga. The birth date recorded on Matsumura’s memorial in Shuri is 1809, but in that case he would have been only six years old in the year of Sakugawa’s death. A possible suggestion is that Matsumura was the student of the younger Sakugawa Kanga (see above) rather than of the famous Sakugawa Tode; but we are inclined to think that the earlier birth date is the more likely.

Sakugawa was in his late seventies when the young Matsumura approached him, and not especially keen to take on another student; but Sakugawa accepted the lad as a favour to Matsumura's father, who was a friend and apparently anxious about his son's incipient delinquent tendencies.

Matsumura studied with Sakugawa from about 1810 to 1815, apparently showing great ability from the first. He also became a noted scholar and calligrapher. In 1816 he entered the service of the royal family of the Ryukyu kingdom as a bodyguard and martial arts teacher, eventually becoming the chief bodyguard of King Sho Ko (1787–1839). He acquired a reputation as an exacting teacher of great physical strength, speed and personal presence, able, according to **Funakoshi Gichin**, to defeat an opponent simply by the "look of death" in his eye (cf. **Kigurai**; **Kurai zume**).¹ His royal service earned him the titles of Chikudun **Pechin** (筑登之親雲上)² and **Bushi**, by the latter of which he still often known. It is said that he acquired this title after a successful contest with a bull.

Matsumura several times travelled to China and Japan on government service. He studied quanfa in China: some versions of his biography say that he studied at the "southern" Shaolin temple; others identify Chinese masters called Ason, Iwah and Wai Xinxian as his teachers. In the Satsuma province of Japan he also studied the Jigen Ryu (示現流) style of **kenjutsu** with a **Samurai** exponent of the art called Ijuin Yashichiro (伊集院弥七). On his return to Okinawa he taught the **kata** Naihanchi, Passai, Seisan, Chinto, Gojushiho, Kushanku and **Hakutsuru** (the last of which is unique to the Matsumura line of transmission).³ He is said also to have acquired one or more called Chiang Nan or Channan from a Chinese teacher of that name who had come to Shuri on business.

¹ Funakoshi Gichin, *Karate-do: My Way of Life* (Kodansha, 1981), ch. 2.

² Chikudun Pechin is the lowest of the three Pechin ranks; the other two are Pekumi (親雲上) and Satunushi Pechin (里之子親雲上).

³ There are now several kata called Hakutsuru, but it is generally believed that Matsumura taught only one and that the others are later compositions.

These kata are now lost, but they are believed to have formed the basis of the first two of the five elementary kata now known as **Pinan** or **Heian**. It is important to note that, like **Sakugawa Kanga**'s teacher Takahara Pechin, Matsumura attached great importance to the ethical aspects of martial arts practice when carried to its highest level: self-development, discipline, virtue, sincerity, peace and harmony.¹



Matsumura Sokon

(As in the case of Sakugawa Kanga, we do not know if the drawing given here is an accurate likeness. There are one or two other images purporting to be of him, but none is fully authenticated.)

The importance of Matsumura "Bushi" to **karate** history lies chiefly in the fact that, continuing the work of Sakugawa Kanga, he systematised the various Okinawan and Chinese elements of Okinawa **te** into a more coherent system than anything that had existed previously. This system, variants of which are still extant, became known as Matsumura **Shorin Ryu** (松村少林流) ("Matsumura Shaolin School"), though it is unclear whether this name

¹ See Matsumura's letter of 13 May, 1882 to his student Ryosei Kuwae: George W. Alexander, *Okinawa: Island of Karate* (Yamazato Publications, 1991), p. 43.

was devised by Matsumura himself or by his student **Itosu Anko**. At all events, it represents an acknowledgement of the Chinese roots of the art. It is also possible, though not certain, that it was Matsumura who coined the expression **Shuri te**.

Itosu Anko (糸洲 安恒) (1831–1915)

Matsumura Sokon's student Itosu Anko was another native of the Yamagawa district of Shuri. He began his studies with Matsumura at the age of fifteen. In adult life he became a civil servant in the service of the Okinawan monarchy until its abolition in 1879. Thereafter he was a teacher, first at the Shuri Jingo Elementary School, later at the Okinawa Prefectural Dai Ichi College and the Prefectural Teacher Training College. He did not invent his own version or style of **tode**, but he popularised the **Shorin Ryu** taught by Matsumura and adapted it to educational purposes of his own. It is possible that it was he who coined the name Shorin Ryu, and he is an important figure in the Shorin ryu lineage.



Itosu Anko. This image is enlarged from a group photograph; the identity of the young man in the foreground is not known

Itosu was the earliest **karate** teacher to promote the study of the art outside the traditional model of a closely supervised personal relationship – often a “live-in” relationship – between teacher and pupil (see **Deshi**). His principal innovation was to bring about the introduction of **Shuri te** into the Okinawan secondary school system. The proposed advantages of this project are set out in a long letter that Itosu sent to the Okinawan Prefectural Education Department in 1908.¹ In pursuance of his educational goals he devised the series of simplified **kata** called **Pinan** suitable for use by schoolchildren. These were abridged from the Kushanku and Chiang Nan/Channan kata that Itosu learnt from Matsumura. He also broke down the long Naihanchi kata taught by Matsumura into the three shorter kata now called Naihanchi (or Tekki) shodan, nidan and sandan (the original “long” Naihanchi is now lost, though there have been conjectural attempts to reconstruct it from the various Naihanchi kata currently practised.) If we are to take literally the statements of many of his subsequent students, Itosu taught numerous other kata that have since become familiar elements of curricula derived from the Shuri te tradition. He is said also to have invented the helical or “corkscrew” punch that is a characteristic of modern karate (though this is sometimes attributed to Matsumura Sokon). Itosu seems to have been the first to use the regimented or mechanical method of class

¹ This letter is printed in Nakasone Genwa's *Karate-do Taikan* (空手道大観) (*A General Survey of Karate-do*) (1938). It includes the statement that “Karate did not develop from Buddhism or Confucianism.” We have not seen the letter in the original language, but it is not easy to see what Itosu can have meant by this. Karate may not have *developed from* Buddhism or Confucianism, but it was certainly influenced by them from earliest times. Matsumura Sokon (in the letter referred to on p. 169, above) identified Buddhism and Confucianism as the ethical bases of karate, and many early karateka were happy enough to claim a connection with the Shaolin Temple. Karate is not a purely “secular” art. If Itosu Anko meant to suggest that it is, he was certainly mistaken.

teaching that has now established itself universally.¹ Among his many students were **Funakoshi Gichin** and **Mabuni Kenwa**. It is as their teacher, and as the *de facto* inventor of karate teaching to large groups as distinct from individual students, that Itosu is chiefly important from the point of view of the karate historian.

Higaonna (Higashionna) Kanryo (東恩納 寛量) (1853–1916)

Higaonna (Higashionna) Kanryo (1853–1916)² may be regarded as the first to establish a distinct **Naha te** style. He was born into a relatively prosperous commercial family in the Nishimura district of Naha City and at the age of fourteen or fifteen began to study Lohan quan (“Monk Fist”) with a teacher called Aragaki Seisho (新垣世璋) (1840–1918). (Aragaki is known by several names, including Aragaki Tsuji Pechin Seisho.) Aragaki was an official interpreter at the Okinawan royal court who had apparently studied in Fuzhou City, Fujian province, with a teacher called Wai Xinxian – possibly the same Wai Xinxian that some sources identify as a teacher of **Matsumura Sokon**. Highly regarded in his day, Aragaki’s students are said to have included **Funakoshi Gichin**, **Mabuni Kenwa** and **Uechi Kanbun**. Aragaki was known for teaching the **kata** Unsu (雲手), Seisan (十三), Shihohai (四方拜), Nisesshi (二十四) and Sanchin.³ It is possible that Higaonna learnt Sanchin and Seisan kata from him. Higaonna is usually said to have learnt Sanchin in China, but Aragaki was certainly teaching it on Okinawa during the 1860s and 1870s.

¹ Though some sources associate this “militaristic” style of training especially with the **Shuri te** teacher Yabu Kentsu (屋部憲通) (1866–1937).

² The kanji of his name are pronounced “Higaonna” in Okinawa, and “Higashionna” in Japan. The name is not uncommon; Higaonna Kanryo and the contemporary **Goju Ryu** teacher Higaonna Morio are not related.

³ Two **kobudo** kata are also attributed to him: Aragaki no kon and Aragaki no sai .



Higaonna Kanryo

In March 1873 Higaonna migrated to Fuzhou, possibly taking with him a letter of introduction to Wai Xinxian from Aragaki. According to some accounts, he remained in China for fifteen years. Some say that he went to China specifically to study the martial arts; others suggest that his anti-Japanese sympathies made it prudent to go into exile at a time of political tension between Okinawa and Japan. He appears to have trained in a number of arts with several teachers, but his principal teacher is identified, under several variant forms of his name, as Ru Ru Kyo, Ryu Ryu Ko, To Ru Ko, Liu Liu Gung, Liu Liu Ko or To Ru Ko. Higaonna never wrote this name down, and there has been a certain amount of speculation as to exactly who this Chinese teacher was; it has been suggested that there never was such a person and that Ryu Ryu Ko (etc.) was actually the name of a place. This suggestion is not plausible, however, and has not found wide acceptance. The various forms of the name that have been transcribed from the oral tradition conceivably reflect mishearings or Okinawan pronunciations of Xie Zhongxiang (1852–1930), the founder of the Fujian Whooping Crane method of quanfa. This at

any rate is the most widely held belief as to the identity of Higaonna's principal teacher. Higaonna – only a year younger than Xie Zhongxiang – seems at first to have been a domestic servant or factotum rather than a formal student. The legend is that Higaonna rescued Xie Zhongxiang's daughter from drowning and, in gratitude, Xie Zhongxiang accepted him as a pupil. This, however, is the kind of folkloric motif that it is impossible to verify.

Higaonna returned to Okinawa in the 1880s and began to teach a style combining his earlier knowledge of Okinawa *te* with the Fujian White Crane methods that he had acquired in China. According to his student Kyoda Juhatsu (許田重発) (1887–1968) Higaonna taught four kata: Sanchin, Sanseiryu (三十六), Seisan (十三) and Pechurin (百歩連) (more usually called Suparunpai (壹百零八)); though it is generally believed that he also knew and taught – though presumably not to Kyoda Juhatsu – Kururunfa (久留頓破),



*Xie Zhongxiang, Higaonna Kanryo's
possible or probable teacher*

Saifa (碎破), Seiunchin (制引戰), Seipai (十八) and Shisochin (四向戰). It seems likely, however, that the earliest versions of these ka-

ta were rather different from the ones practised today. For our purposes the most important of Higaonna's students are **Miyagi Chojun** and **Mabuni Kenwa**.

Funakoshi Gichin (船越 義珍) (1868–1957)

Despite the competing claim of **Kyokushinkai**, it seems likely that **Shotokan** is the most widely practised style of **karate** in the world, thanks largely to the efforts of its founder, Funakoshi Gichin. Funakoshi **Osensei** was born into the minor Okinawan aristocracy in the Yamagawa district of Shuri – the district that had also produced **Matsumura Sokon** and **Itosu Anko**. Like **Mabuni Kenwa**, he enjoyed poor health as a child. For this reason his parents sent him at the age of eleven to study **tode** with Asato Anko (安里 安恒) (1827–1906), whose son was a schoolmate of his. Finding that his health quickly improved, he took to the art with enthusiasm. Subsequently he became a student of **Itosu Anko**, whom he regarded as his principal teacher.



Funakoshi Gichin in later life

Superficially, the cultured and literate Funakoshi is the last person that most people would think of as being a famous karate master. His original intention was to enter the medical profession. He qualified for entry to the medical faculty of Tokyo University, but after the Meiji restoration of 1868 the university's policy was to accept only students who were prepared to repudiate all aspects of pre-Meiji culture. Funakoshi's family was among what was called the *ganko-to* (頑固党) – the obstinate party. Among other things they declined to abandon the topknot **Samurai** hairstyle that the Japanese had prohibited as part of the Meiji reforms. Excluded from the university, Funakoshi became a schoolmaster (though, to the great disgust of his parents, he eventually cut off his topknot anyway). Apparently he did not begin to teach karate until 1901, when he was thirty-three years old. In 1906 he was instrumental in forming the Okinawa Shubokai (沖縄修防会) (Okinawa Self-Defence Study Association), of which he became chairman in 1913. Within a few years his reputation as a karate master was well established. In 1917 he was invited to represent Okinawa at a demonstration at the Butokuden (武徳殿) (Martial Virtues Temple) in Kyoto. In 1921, Crown Prince Hirohito visited Okinawa and Funakoshi was again invited to give a performance, by which the future emperor declared himself much impressed. Finally, in May 1922, he was asked by Kano Jigoro (嘉納治五郎) (1860–1938), the founder of **judo**, to give a demonstration at the first All-Japan Athletics Exhibition at Ochanomizu, Tokyo. This event was such a success that he decided to remain in Japan, leaving his family behind him in Okinawa. He remained in Tokyo for the rest of his life. Some sources suggest that he was unable to return to Okinawa because of gambling debts run up by his eldest son Giei, but this looks like a story put about by rivals. It seems to have originated from somewhere in the **Wado Ryu** family, whose founder is known to have been on bad terms with Funakoshi Giei. Surviving footage of Funakoshi Osensei leaves one with the impression that, technically, he was not outstanding. His significance lies mainly in the fact that he was indefatigable in promoting kara-

te on the Japanese mainland. In common with many of his contemporaries he was determined to establish Okinawan karate as a respectable Japanese art and to create a secure foundation upon which a distinctively Japanese karate might be built. Well understanding the importance of recruiting young men he established flourishing karate clubs at Keio, Waseda, Hitotsubashi, Takushoku, Chuo, Gakushuin and Hosei universities. He substituted Japanese names or readings for the names of several Okinawan kata: **Pinan** became **Heian**; Kushanku (観空) became Kanku (観空); Naihanchi (ナイハンチ) became Tekki (鉄騎), and so on. He was one of the first teachers to adopt the practice of writing the word karate as 空手, "empty hand." He also introduced into karate the **kyu/dan** system that had been adopted by Kano Jigoro as a means of ranking judo students.

Although he is universally regarded as a style founder, Funakoshi himself did not give his karate a name or think of it as a "style." Like many early teachers, he was hostile to the idea of separate styles or **ryu**, insisting that karate should move towards unification into a single art that might "pursue an orderly and useful progress into man's future."¹ In 1939 he opened a **dojo** in Tokyo that became known as Shotokan: "Shoto's hall" (Shoto (松濤, "Waving Pines") was the pen name with which Funakoshi signed his poems and calligraphies); but the synecdoche by which the word Shotokan became the name of a "style" originated with Funakoshi's students rather than with Funakoshi himself. One sometimes comes across the expression "Shotokan Ryu," but this term has never been in general use among Shotokan karateka.

Motobu Choki (本部 朝基) (1870–1944)

Motobu Choki is mentioned frequently not so much as the founder of a **ryu** but as a colourful figure in the history of **karate** and as the teacher of (among others) **Ohtsuka Hironori** and **Shimabuku Tat-**

¹ Funakoshi Gichin, *Karate Do: My Way of Life*, p. 38.

suo.¹ A native of Shuri, his father was distantly related to the Okinawan royal house and the Motobu family had for many generations practised a form of Okinawa **te** called Motobu Udunde (本部ご殿手) – “Motobu Palace Hand.” As his father’s third son Motobu Choki was not eligible to inherit the family style and was more or less obliged to seek his martial arts education elsewhere. He studied with **Matsumura Sokon**, **Itosu Anko** and others, and was to some degree self-taught. Because his habit was to test his prowess by picking fights in the less salubrious quarters of Shuri, he acquired a reputation as a ruffian that made him disliked by his more fastidious contemporaries; he and **Funakoshi Gichin**, for example, were on famously bad terms, especially after several senior students of Funakoshi left him to study with Motobu. It is said also that Motobu humiliated Funakoshi by defeating him in his dojo in front of his students, though the details of this are not clear. It is never possible to authenticate stories of this kind, which tend to be concocted or embroidered by partisans.



Motobu Choki

¹ The suggestion that he taught or was related to the Hawaiian martial artist James Mitose has been repudiated by the Motobu family.

It is said that Motobu taught only one **kata**, *Naihanchi*, though the suggestion that he knew no others is probably not correct. Having moved to Osaka, Japan, in 1951, he was – at the age of 52 – talked into competing in a boxing match against a much younger fighter, whom he defeated decisively. As a result he received many requests to open a **dojo** and did so in 1925, teaching there until the outbreak of World War II. He was one of the earliest karate teachers – possibly the earliest – to develop **yakusoku kumite** drills. **Motobu Ryu** continued to be taught after his death by his son Chosei (兆世) (b. 1925) and is in existence still, but it has never established itself as a major school. Motobu Chosei also inherited Motobu Udunde from his uncle Motobu Choyu (本部朝勇) (1857–1928), and the two arts seem now to have merged. Motobu Choki's 1932 book *Watashi no Karate Jutsu* (私の空手術) has been published in an English translation by Patrick and Yuriko McCarthy as *Karate: My Art* (International Ryukyū Karate Research Group, 2002).

Uechi Kanbun (上地 完文) (1877–1948)

Uechi Ryu is now well established, though its practice is not as widespread as that of the larger **karate** schools. It stands somewhat apart from those schools in that its founder appears not to have studied in any depth with any of the well known Okinawan or Japanese masters. Uechi Kanbun was born in or near the village of Takinto on the Motobu peninsula in northern Okinawa – well away from the Shuri/Naha/Tomari nucleus. In 1897, apparently to avoid Japanese military conscription, he migrated to China, where he settled in Fuchou City, Fujian province. During his time in China he studied a Southern Chinese art called **Pangai nōon** with a teacher called Zhou Zihe (pronounced Shu Shiwa in Japanese) (1869–1945). Zhou Zihe awarded him a licence to teach in 1904, and he remained in China until 1909, teaching in Nansoe, a town about 250 miles to the south of Fuchou. It is said that he abandoned teaching and returned to Okinawa – either out of

shame or to escape legal consequences – after one of his students killed a man during a quarrel over land irrigation.



Zhou Zhihe (Shu Shiwa), Uechi Kanbun's teacher

In 1926, after some years of unsuccessful farming on Okinawa, Uechi relocated to Wakayama City in the Kansai region of Japan, where he found work in a textile mill. It was at this point that he resumed teaching, using the living quarters of the mill as his **dojo** (this first dojo was called Shataku (社宅), “Company House”). It is said that he began to teach there after he was asked to share his skills with members of the local Okinawan community who were being bullied by Japanese gangs. Another (not incompatible) version is that he was persuaded to resume teaching by a fellow worker called Tomoyose Ryuyu (友寄隆宏) (d. 1970), who became his first student in Japan. In 1932, having by now acquired a fairly large number of students, Uechi founded the Han Ko Nan Karate Jutsu Kenkyu-jo (半硬軟空手術研究所) (Pangai nōon Karate Method Research Association) in the Tebira district of Wakayama. In 1940 this was re-named the Uechi Ryu Karate Jutsu Kenkyu-jo (上地流空手術研究所). This re-naming was apparently at the urging of his pupils and/or at the suggestion of **Mabuni Kenwa**, but it is said

that Uechi himself always used the name Pangai nōon and had no intention of founding a new “style.”



Uechi Kanbun

In 1945 Uechi retired from teaching and returned to his family on Okinawa, leaving the Wakayama dojo in the hands of Tomoyose Ryuyu. In the depressed living conditions of post-war Okinawa he contracted a kidney infection and died at the age of 71. On his death he was succeeded as the head of what was by now called Uechi Ryu by his son **Uechi Kanei**. One of the most distinguished students of Uechi Kanei and Tomoyose Ryuyu was an American serviceman called George Mattson (b. 1937), who since 1958 has been almost single-handedly responsible for the establishment of Uechi Ryu in the USA.

Uechi Kanbun's original Pangai nōon/Uechi Ryu had only three kata: Sanchin, Seisan and Sanseiryu. (It is said that Zhou Zihe also taught a version of Suparunpai kata, but it seems that Uechi did not learn it from him.) Uechi did not, as far as we can tell, supplement what he had learnt in China with anything else; apparently he was resolved as a matter of principle not to add to or change the system that he had learnt from Zhou Zihe. Uechi

Ryu is usually classified as a **Naha te** school, but this classification is not entirely apt. Though some sources say that he knew **Higaonna Kanryo**, Uechi does not seem to have had any very prolonged association with Naha or Naha te teachers. Generally speaking, indeed, Uechi Ryu looks markedly different from almost everything else that one thinks of as karate. One's impression is that the Uechi Ryu kata, having come directly from China without much or any Okinawan mediation, stand much closer to their Chinese originals than the **Goju** kata do.¹ Uechi Ryu also explicitly perpetuates the Chinese quanfa tradition of mimicking the behaviour of real or imaginary animals; its techniques are said to be inspired by the movements of the tiger, the dragon and the crane.

Miyagi Chojun (宮城 長順) (1888–1953)

The founder of **Goju Ryu**, Miyagi Chojun, was born in the Higashimachi district of Naha. When he was ten or eleven years old he began to study with a **Tomari te** practitioner called Aragaki Ryuko² (新垣竜子) (1875–1961) who in 1902 introduced him to **Higaonna Kanryo**. Apart from two years of military service during 1910–1912, Miyagi remained with Higaonna until the latter's death in 1915. During his military service he studied **judo** and, as a non-commissioned officer in the army medical corps, acquired a knowledge of anatomy and physiology that he was later to put to use in devising the thorough routine of **junbi undo** that is still used by Goju Ryu karateka.

¹ They are longer and more elaborate than the kata of the same name that occur in other curricula; the Uechi Ryu version of Sanchin kata is performed with the hands open and without the laborious and potentially harmful "Valsalva" breathing that so often characterises performances of the same kata by Goju Ryu, Isshin Ryu and **Kyokushinkai** practitioners.

² It is not clear whether Aragaki Ryuko was related to the Aragaki Seisho who had taught **Higaonna Kanryo**. The prominent Goju Ryu teacher Aragaki Shuichi (1929–2021) was Aragaki Ryuko's grandson.



Miyagi Chojun

Shortly before Higaonna's death Miyagi travelled to China with a Chinese friend called Wu Xiangui (1886–1940) (known in Okinawa as Gokenki), who was an exponent of Fujian White Crane quanfa. Initially they seem to have had no particular study plan in view. Their immediate purpose was to try to locate the school of Higaonna's teacher Ryu Ryu Ko; it is possible that they made the journey at Higaonna's suggestion or request. They were able to locate Ryu Ryu Ko's grave and copy out the inscription on the gravestone,¹ but they could find no trace of the school. They succeeded only in making contact with an elderly former student of Ryu Ryu Ko who told them that his art was no longer practised. On this occasion Miyagi remained in Fujian province for some time, where he is said to have studied bagua-zhang and Shaolin quan. Some sources say that he visited China three times in all.

¹ This tells against the suggestion (see p.176) that there was no such person as Ryu Ryu Ko.

On his return to Okinawa, Miyagi began to teach a synthesis of what he had learnt from Higaonna Kanryo and what he had acquired in China: a combination of the existing **Naha te** with the hard, linear techniques of Shaolin quan and the soft circular defensive movements of baguazhang. It was not until 1926 that, with the financial assistance of his friend Gokenki, he opened a **dojo** in Naha City. His partners in this venture were Hanashiro Chomo (花城 長茂) (1869–1945), Motobu Choyu (本部朝勇) (1857–1928) (**Motobu Choki's** older brother) and **Mabuni Kenwa**. Each taught his own version of **tode**, with additional instruction in Fujian White Crane provided by Gokenki. This dojo was short lived, however, succumbing to financial difficulties in 1929.

The name Goju Ryu came into being more or less by accident. In 1929, Miyagi's protégé Shinzato Jinan (済新里ジなん) (1901–1945) gave a demonstration of Miyagi's art at a martial arts festival in Japan. He was a little taken aback to be asked what the name of his style was, because so far no one had thought to give it a name. On the spur of the moment, presumably for the sake of saying something rather than nothing, he replied that it was called **Hanko Ryu** (半硬流) ("Half-hard school"). When he told this story to Miyagi, Miyagi decided on the name Goju Ryu ("Hard/Soft School"). The name comes from the third of eight principles of quanfa listed in the *Bubishi*: "Ho go ju don to" (法剛柔吞吐), "The method of hard and soft is breathing in and breathing out." Goju Ryu was the name that Miyagi **Osensei** registered with the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai** in 1933.

Mabuni Kenwa (摩文仁 賢和) (1889–1952)

Mabuni Kenwa (1889–1952), the creator of **Shito Ryu**, was a native of Shuri and, according to some sources, a remote descendant of a distinguished military family. It is said that he suffered chronic ill health as a child, and it was with a view to strengthening his constitution that at the age of thirteen he was sent to study **Shuri te** with **Itosu Anko**. He remained with Itosu for seven years. Then,

in 1909, Itosu, who was by now seventy-eight years old, recommended that he broaden his education by studying with another teacher. Mabuni's contemporary **Miyagi Chojun** introduced him to **Higaonna Kanryo**, with whom he studied **Naha te** until Higaonna's death in 1915. He is said also to have spent time with several other teachers, including Aragaki Seisho (新垣世璋) (1840–1918) and Miyagi Chojun's friend Gokenki.



Mabuni Kenwa

Having spent some time as a police officer on Okinawa, Mabuni made a number of visits to Tokyo between 1917 and 1928, in the process becoming part of the general movement to popularise **karate** on mainland Japan. In 1927 he met Kano Jigoro (嘉納治五郎) (1860–1936), the founder of **judo**, who was apparently favourably impressed by his karate. Finally, in 1929, with Kano's encouragement, Mabuni took up permanent residence in the city of Osaka on Japan's main island of Honshu.

Mabuni's Okinawan martial arts education had made him acquainted with both the hard, linear techniques of **Shuri te** and the

circular, close range methods characteristic of Naha te. Over a longish period the idea seems to have formed in his mind that the strengths of Shuri te and Naha te might be brought together into a new synthesis. He began to teach this integrated style in 1929, opening a number of **dojo** in Osaka with the help and support of a prosperous student called Sakagami Ryusho (坂上隆祥) (1915–1993), who was himself to become a distinguished Shito Ryu instructor.

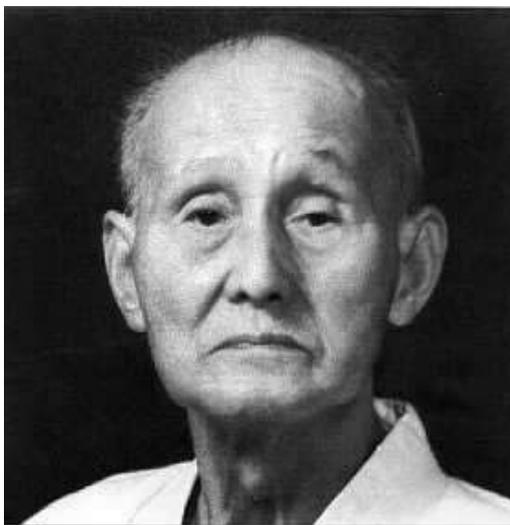
The Okinawan teachers who brought karate to Japan often found themselves up against the inherent conservatism of the Japanese and a certain tendency to regard Okinawans as colonial bumpkins. Mabuni found that people in Osaka were mystified by his art and inclined to be hostile to it, and he applied himself constantly to devising new and more interesting ways of training. He was one of the first karate instructors to experiment with **bogu kumite**: sparring using padded body armour. Having himself been a police officer on Okinawa, he adopted the practice of giving free instruction at various police stations across western Japan. In 1931 Mabuni created an organisation called the Dai Nippon Karate-do Kai (大日本空手道会) – the All Japan Karate-do Association – to unite under one administration the various branches of his school (the “Dai” was later dropped from the name, possibly in modest recognition of the fact that Shito Ryu was largely confined to the Osaka area). Presently the question arose of what the school should be called (before any school could be sanctioned by the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai** it had to have a name). Mabuni’s first choice was Hanko Ryu, “Half-hard School”; but on reflection he settled on the name Shito Ryu. Possibly this change of mind came about partly because he knew that Hanko Ryu had already been briefly proposed as the name of **Goju Ryu**. More substantially, he decided that he wanted the name of his school to reflect his indebtedness to his teachers. “Shi” (糸) and “to” (東) are, respectively, readings of the initial kanji of the names of Itosu Anko (糸洲 安恒) and Higaonna Kanryo (東恩納 寛量). (Also, the homophone “Shito” (私闘) is “personal struggle”; we may suppose that the pun

was intentional.) Shito Ryu was thus the name registered with the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai in 1939. Some Shito Ryu organisations claim with pride that Shito Ryu was the first karate school to be recognised by the Dai Nippon Butoku Kai, though this distinction seems in fact to belong to **Goju Ryu**.

Mabuni is said to have had an encyclopaedic knowledge of **ka-ta** and to have assimilated new kata with remarkable speed. As a syncretic style intentionally combining **Shuri te**, **Tomari te** and **Naha te** elements, Shito Ryu has always been distinguished by its large number of kata, drawn from all three traditions.

Ohtsuka Hironori (大塚 博紀) (1892–1982)

Wado Ryu is one of the only two major **karate** schools to have originated wholly in Japan (**Kyokushinkai** is the other). Its founder, Ohtsuka Hironori, was born in Shimodate City, Ibaraki Prefecture, and as far as we know spent the whole of his life in Japan. Like **Funakoshi Gichin**, Ohtsuka was not a flamboyant character.



Ohtsuka Hironori

For much of his early life he was an employee of the Kawasaki Bank in Shimodate, and the record contains no colourful stories

about his prowess. After some elementary training in childhood with his father and a great-uncle, at the age of thirteen he became a student of Shindo Yoshin Ryu ju jutsu (新道楊心流柔術) under Nakayama Shinzaburo (中山辰三郎) (1870–1933); he was awarded his **menkyo** kaiden by Nakayama in 1921. Then, in 1922, he met Funakoshi Gichin, newly arrived in Japan – he seems to have attended Funakoshi’s Tokyo display of that year – and at once began to study karate under him. Because Shindo Ryu contains kicking and striking as well as grappling techniques Ohtsuka found himself on familiar ground. Soon he became proficient in the fifteen **kata** that Funakoshi was then teaching. By 1928 he was an assistant instructor in Funakoshi’s Meishojuko **dojo**. He seems also to have served as a sort of unofficial dojo treasurer, presumably in view of the experience he had acquired in the Kawasaki Bank.

At some time in the early 1930s Ohtsuka and Funakoshi parted company. Ohtsuka had come to feel that **kumite** must be an integral part of “realistic” karate training, whereas Funakoshi was still vehemently opposed to any kind of sparring or competitive engagement between karateka. **Motobu Choki**, on the other hand, favoured kumite and had already developed his series of prearranged **yakusoku** kumite sequences. In the late 1920s Ohtsuka had begun to study with Motobu and also with **Mabuni Kenwa**, and Funakoshi (who notoriously disliked the rough and ready Motobu) apparently resented this. It has been suggested also that Funakoshi’s son Giei had accused Ohtsuka of misappropriating dojo funds. This accusation may or may not have been justified, but at all events Ohtsuka decided to go his own way and develop his ideas into a new school.

On 1 April, 1934 he opened his own school, the Dai Nippon Karate Shinko Kai (大日本空手振興会) (All Japan Karate Promotion Association), in Tokyo. The curriculum that he adopted was, in effect, a fusion of Funakoshi’s karate with elements of Shindo Yoshin Ryu ju jutsu. Ohtsuka had studied several other arts to some degree, but most of the technical differences between Shoto-

kan and Wado Ryu are explicable in terms of the modifying influence of Shindo Yoshin Ryu. Wado Ryu emphasised kumite from the first, ranging from paired kumite drills similar to the ones devised by Motobu to spontaneous **jiyu kumite**. Ohtsuka was active in promoting karate competitions, especially during the period of reconstruction after World War II, when it became clear that the allies would tolerate the Japanese martial arts only if they were more or less repackaged as sports. The name Wado Ryu (“Harmony Way School”) came into being in 1938 when the school was registered with the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai** under the name Shinshu (“New Style”) Wado Ryu Karate Ju Jutsu (新種和道流空手柔術).

Funakoshi Yoshitaka (船越義豪) (1906–1945)

Funakoshi Yoshitaka was the third son of **Funakoshi Gichin**. Born on Okinawa and a **karate** student from the age of twelve (his father had introduced him to his own teachers), he moved to Japan to join his father in 1923. Between about 1930 and 1945 he was his father’s chief assistant (known as Waka Sensei (稚先生), “Young Teacher”) and obvious successor. He was apparently regarded by his contemporaries as a karateka of quite exceptional gifts, though one can, of course, never measure the extent to which posthumous reputations resting on pious memory are deserved. His claim to a distinguished place in karate history lies chiefly in the fact that he extended and modified his father’s karate so completely as to create, in effect, the modern **Shotokan** canon. He introduced new kicking techniques (including **mawashi geri**; **yoko geri kekomi**; **yoko geri keage**; **ushiro geri**), emphasised higher kicks and long-range attacking techniques, composed the three elementary **kata** called Taikyoku (太極), revised the **Heian** kata, and (despite his father’s dislike of competitive sparring) introduced **yakusoku** and **jiyu kumite** into the university clubs that his father had set up. He also introduced new stances: **kiba dachi** (in place of the more traditional **shiko dachi**), **fudo dachi** and **kokutsu dachi**. The differences between the **Pinan** and **Heian** kata series almost all reflect

Funakoshi Yoshitaka's influence, as does the modern emphasis on using the whole body dynamically in defence and attack. Unfortunately, he was in poor health for much of his life: he was diagnosed with tuberculosis at the age of seven. Like his father, he took up karate largely with a view to strengthening his constitution, and it may be that karate practice did indeed enable him to live as long as he did. In the impoverished conditions of wartime Japan his health deteriorated markedly and he died in the spring of 1945 at the age of 39.



Funakoshi Yoshitaka

Shimabuku Tatsuo (島袋 龍夫) (1908–1975)

Isshin Ryu is an Okinawan **karate** and **kobudo** school that has achieved a much more widespread acceptance in the USA than in Europe. Its founder, Shimabuku Tatsuo, was born into a farming family in Kyan village near Shuri.¹ After picking up some

¹ His "given name" was Shinkichi (しんきち); he adopted the name Tatsuo (龍夫, "Dragon Man") after the launch of Isshin Ryu. "Shimabuku" is pronounced "Shimabukuru" in Japan; both Romanisations

rudimentary knowledge from an uncle he began in about 1931 to study **Shorin Ryu** with **Matsumura Sokon's** student Kyan Chotoku (喜屋武朝徳) (1870–1945). From Kyan he learnt Seisan (十三), Naihanchi, Wansu (云手), Chinto (鎮鬪) and Kushanku **kata**. Under his supervision he also learnt the **bo** kata called Tokumine no kon (徳嶺の棍) and acquired some proficiency in the use of the sai. He re-



Shimabuku Tatsuo

mained with Kyan, whom he regarded as his principal teacher, until 1936. From 1936 to 1938 he studied with **Miyagi Chojun**, who taught him Seiunchin (制引戦) and Sanchin kata, and, during 1939, with **Motobu Choki**. These studies were interrupted by World War II, though it is said that Shimabuku again studied with Miyagi after the war and remained with him until Miyagi's death. In the 1950s he resumed the study of kobudo under Taira Shinken

of the name are common. The well known Shorin Ryu teacher Shimabuku Eizo (島袋永三) (1925–2017) was Shimabuku Tatsuo's younger brother.

(平信賢) (1897–1970) and over the course of time incorporated several kobudo kata into his own system.

Isshin Ryu has a well-known foundation myth. Shimabuku opened his first **dojo** in 1946, in the village of Konbu, near Tengan on Okinawa. It was then that the idea began to take shape in his mind, as it had earlier in **Mabuni Kenwa's**, of bringing together the best elements of Okinawan karate – of what had by now become **Shorin Ryu** and **Goju Ryu** – into a single method, but he lacked the confidence to put this idea into practice. At some point during 1955 he had a vivid dream in which there appeared to him a goddess,



Isshin Ryu no Megami

half woman and half dragon, who assured him that he now had the ability to found a new karate school and urged him create it in her image: half gentle, half fierce.¹ This goddess he later called Isshin Ryu no Megami (一心流の女神) (Isshin Ryu's goddess). A picture of

¹ Some sources describe this event as a vision, others as a dream that Shimabuku had while snoozing in a chair; a less flattering version is that it was a dream he had while drunk. Shimabuku himself – who was apparently very superstitious – seems to have regarded his “vision” as a supernatural revelation rather than a dream.

Isshin Ryu no Megami against the dream-background that Shimabuku described is now used as the **kamon** of Isshin Ryu. (The version of Isshin Ryu no Megami illustrated above was designed by Shimabuku's student Arcenio Advincula (b. 1938). The overall shape of the kamon represents the vertical fist (縦拳, **tate ken**) which is a "trademark" technique of Isshin Ryu.)

Whether directly inspired by Shimabuku's dream or not, the school now called Isshin Ryu came formally into existence on 15 January, 1956.¹ (Before that date Shimabuku had at different times called his synthesis Chanmigua te (チャンミーグワー手) and Sunsū (スンスウ).² Isshin Ryu is unusual among the better known karate **ryu** in that it includes the study of three traditional Okinawan weapons: **bo**, **sai** and **tonfa**. In this sense, though the orthography 空手 has been retained, Isshin Ryu karate is not an "empty handed" system but a fusion of karate with elements of kobudo.

One's impression is that Shimabuku Tatsuo is the least highly regarded of the founders of recognised "styles." He and his school have come in for a good deal of criticism over the years. Many of his students disliked the innovations that he began to introduce after World War II and went elsewhere; he appears not to have had the force of personality that enabled other innovators to carry their students with them. His willingness to teach American soldiers and marines stationed on Okinawa alienated some of his contemporaries, and partly accounts for the fact that Isshin Ryu has been far more successful in America than in Okinawa and Japan. His technical competence also has not escaped censure. The kata that he recorded on film when he visited the USA in 1966 look weak and casual, and the reasons usually given for this – that

¹ It should not be confused with the splinter of Kyokushinkai called Ishin Ryu, created by the English karateka David Donovan in 1973.

² "Chanmigua" apparently means "Cross-eyed Kyan" in the Okinawan language; the word was a nickname – evidently not as rude as it sounds in English – of Kyan Chotoku, who was very short-sighted. "Sunsu" is an Okinawan word said to mean either "Old Man's Son" or "Strong Man." The Isshin Ryu syllabus also contains an advanced kata called Sunsū, composed by Shimabuku.

he did not want to be filmed; that he was drunk at the time – are not reassuring. These strictures tend to be repeated as part of the pattern of reputational damage that Isshin Ryu has suffered during the past thirty years or so, partly as a result of the chronic political infighting that has accompanied its spread since Shimabuku's death in 1975.

Yamaguchi Gogen (山口剛玄) (1909–1989)

Miyagi Chojun visited mainland Japan several times between 1928 and 1931. **Karate** was now firmly established there, especially in the universities, largely thanks to the efforts of **Funakoshi Gichin**. The purpose of Miyagi's visits was mainly to promote **Goju Ryu** and secure its acceptance in Japan by the **Dai Nippon Butoku Kai**. At Ritsumeikan University in Kyoto he met a young law student and enthusiastic karateka called Yamaguchi Jitsumi who, with Miyagi's encouragement, founded the Ritsumeikan Daigaku Karate Kenkyu Kai (立命館大学空手研究会) (the Ritsumeikan University Karate Study Association). This was the first karate club to be founded in western Japan and quickly acquired a reputation as a centre of excellence.

Eventually, Miyagi appointed Yamaguchi as his representative in Japan, deputing to him the task of overseeing the spread and development of Goju Ryu there. At about this time he gave him the *nom de guerre* Gogen (剛玄) – “Mysterious Strength” or “Hidden Strength” – by which he is now always known. It was Yamaguchi who in 1932 designed the famous Goju Ryu clenched fist badge, apparently based on a drawing of Miyagi Chojun's right hand; it was initially intended only as the emblem of the Ritsumeikan University karate club. A religious mystic of striking appearance and great personal magnetism, Yamaguchi did more than anyone else in the Goju community to foster the art in Japan and beyond; he was to become perhaps the most famous of all Goju karate masters. He was born in Miyakonojo Shonai, Miyazaki Prefecture, near Kagoshima City on the island of Kyushu: with him and his generation (especially his older contemporary

Ohtsuka Hironori), karate began for the first time to be disseminated by people of non-Okinawan origin.



Yamaguchi Gogen

At the time of Miyagi Chojun's death, Yamaguchi Gogen's Japanese branch of Goju Ryu was already to some extent dissociated from Miyagi's Okinawan students. In 1950 Yamaguchi had founded the International Karate-do Goju Association (Kokusai Karate-do Goju Kai: 国際空手道剛柔会) in Tokyo, with himself as its head regardless of the fact that Miyagi was still alive;¹ and the **Goju Kai** of the Yamaguchi family has in some respects come to be perceived as a "style" distinct from the Goju Ryu of Miyagi **Osensei**; it is often regarded as a Japanese recension of the original Okinawan version. Some Goju Kai students may wish to regard what they do as a "new and improved" Goju Ryu, but the differences are more apparent than real. The Goju Kai curriculum includes competitive sparring, which the traditional Goju Ryu curriculum does not, and the Goju Ryu kata are performed

¹ The current head of this organisation is Yamaguchi Gogen's third son, Goshi (剛史) (1942). His oldest son, Gosei (剛正) (b. 1935), is the head of his own organisation in the United States called Goju Kai Karate-do USA.

slightly differently by Goju Kai students; but these differences are certainly not pronounced enough to establish Goju Kai as a separate **ryu**.

Uechi Kanei (上地完英) (1911–1991)

Uechi Kanei, born in Izumi, Okinawa, was the older of the two sons of **Uechi Kanbun** and from 1948 to 1991 his successor as the head of **Uechi Ryu**. He studied with his father from the age of 17 and, after Uechi Kanbun's death, greatly extended the Uechi Ryu curriculum, largely with a view to making it more accessible to beginners. In relation to Uechi Ryu, his influence is comparable to – is if anything greater than – that of **Funakoshi Yoshitaka** on the development of **Shotokan**. Uechi Ryu in its present form is to all



Uechi Kanei

intents and purposes the creation of Uechi Kanei, who added five **kata** to the original three taught by his father. These kata, unique to Uechi Ryu, are all new and in a certain sense “untraditional,” though they are all derived from or inspired by the style's foundational Seisan and Sanseiryu kata. They are as follows:

Kanshiwa (完子和) (also called Kanshabu): a beginners' kata, intended to introduce the student to tiger-type techniques.

Kanshu (完周): a kata consisting mainly of crane techniques.

Seichin (十戦): a kata combining elements from Sanchin and Seisan and using whip-like "dragon" techniques.

Seiryu (十六): another "dragon" kata.

Kanchin (完戦): a kata intended to be a kind of introduction to Uechi Ryu's long and complex version of Sanseiryu.

(Uechi Kanei was in 1991 succeeded by his own son, Uechi Kanmei (上地完明) (b. 1941) but political disputes and personality clashes have since led to the fragmentation of Uechi Ryu into several separate organisations.)

Oyama Masutatsu (大山 倍達) (1923–1994)

Kyokushinkai is the youngest of the major **karate** schools, and is said by some to be the most widely practised style in the world. It is by a long way the most challenging in terms of its training regime. That it is called **kai** rather than **ryu** suggests that its founder did not so much suppose himself to be founding a new "style" as to be bringing together the best elements of others. Kyokushin karate was the creation of Oyama Masutatsu, and its formal beginning is usually dated from 1964 (though the name Kyokushin had been in use since at least 1957, and some authorities consider 1957 to be the real foundation date). Oyama's indefatigable self-promotion and the myths about him that his followers have fostered make it difficult to get at the true facts of his biography, but it is clear that he was a remarkable – and, according to some accounts, not wholly admirable – character.¹

¹ Oyama's canonical biography consists largely of stories that originate with Oyama himself and that cannot be independently verified. This is not to say that they are false; only that they should be approached with caution. See also Nakamura Tadashi (trans. D.L. Logan), *The Human Face of Karate: My Life, My Karate-Do* (Shufunotomo, 1989).

Although he spent most of his life there, Oyama was not a native of Japan. He was born in a small village near Gunsan in South Korea and spent much of his childhood on an aunt's farm in Manchuria; his name originally was Yong I Cho. He was certainly not lacking in ambition. Apparently he became fascinated at an early age by the career of Otto von Bismarck, and began to imagine a similarly great future for himself. He migrated to Japan at the age of fifteen hoping to become a military pilot. It was at this time – no doubt with a view to integrating himself more easily into an environment notably hostile to Koreans – that he adopted a Japanese name,¹ though did not become a Japanese citizen until 1964.



Oyama Masutatsu

Oyama had begun his martial arts training in Manchuria with a teacher called Yi or Lee, a seasonal worker on his aunt's farm, though presumably this early experience was not very systematic or thorough. In Japan, he studied **Shotokan karate** at **Funakoshi Gichin's dojo** at Takushoku University. He achieved the rank of

¹ Oyama (大山) is "Great Mountain": not a particularly uncommon Japanese name, but one has a feeling that it is typical of Oyama to have chosen it.

nidan (second **dan**) in two years, and by the time he joined the Imperial Japanese Army in 1943 he was a yondan (fourth dan), though in later life he spoke of Funakoshi Osensei with scant respect. He also studied Daito Ryu aiki jujutsu under the ultra-nationalist Yoshida Kotaro (吉田幸太郎) (1883–1966), who awarded him the **menkyo** kaiden that is now displayed in the Kyokushinkai **hombu** dojo in Tokyo.

Intensely devoted to his country of adoption, Oyama served in the Pacific during World War II (there is a story, almost certainly untrue, that he became a kamikaze pilot but that his mission was aborted because of engine failure). The surrender and allied occupation of Japan seems to have precipitated him, as it did many Japanese patriots, into a serious psychological crisis. It was at this point, overcome with grief and self-doubt, that he met a senior student of **Yamaguchi Gogen's**, a fellow Korean called So Nei Chu, who encouraged him to study **Goju Ryu** and who turned his mind towards Nichiren Buddhism. In later life Oyama recorded his deep gratitude to So Nei Chu for rescuing him from a kind of spiritual despair. He also studied **judo** at the Sone **dojo** in Nakano, Tokyo, achieving the rank of yondan in four years. In 1946 Oyama was introduced to the Japanese historical novelist Yoshikawa Eiji (吉川英治) (1892–1962), author of the novel *Musashi*, a fictionalised life of the famous swordsman Musashi Miyamoto (宮本武蔵) (1584–1645). The influence of Yoshikawa and his writing apparently opened Oyama's eyes to the true meaning of **Bushido**.

Restless and dissatisfied with himself and yearning for some elusive perfection, Oyama resolved to spend three years training body and mind in harsh self-imposed solitude. In 1946, encouraged by So Nei Chu, he and a friend called Yashiro set off for Mount Minobi in Yamanashi Prefecture, intending to live and train there. Yashiro returned to civilization after a few weeks. Oyama, made of sterner stuff, remained on the mountain for fourteen months, until the friend who had arranged to supply him with food sent a message saying that he could no longer afford to do so. After a short interval – during which he easily won the Ka-

rate section of the 1947 Japanese National Martial Arts Championships – Oyama withdrew from the world again, this time to Mount Kiyosumi in Chiba Prefecture. There, according to his own account, he trained in solitude with fanatical dedication for another eighteen months. At the end of this time he felt that he had finally conquered himself.

There is a good deal of the self-publicist and showman about Oyama, but he was clearly a karateka of extraordinary strength and ability. On his return from Mount Kiyosumi he continued to study Goju Ryu under Yamaguchi, eventually attaining the rank of hachidan (eighth dan); but he persistently pushed himself beyond what most people would consider reasonable limits. Most famously, he engaged in a series of bare-handed contests against bulls (possibly he remembered the old story of **Matsumura Sokon**'s contest with a bull). Despite being seriously gored on one occasion, he is said to have done this fifty-two times and to have killed three of the bulls outright. In 1953 he separated himself from Goju Ryu and opened his own small dojo in Tokyo (bigger and better dojo followed in 1957 and 1964). He began to use the word Kyokushin in 1957, and in 1964 brought the various schools that were by then teaching Kyokushin karate into a central association called the Kokusai Karate Kyokai no Kyokushin Kaikan (International Karate Organisation Kyokushin Hall (国際空手協会の極真会館)). Thereafter, he dedicated himself with outstanding success to spreading Kyokushin karate throughout the world. He inaugurated the All-Japan Full Contact Karate Open Championships, held every year since 1969, and the World Full Contact Karate Open Championships, held every four years since 1975.

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