SHOTOKAN TERMINOLOGY

VOCABULARY

BUNKAI (boon-kai)
A study of the techniques and applications in KATA.

DAN
Black-belt grades.
1st dan = shodan
2nd dan = nidan
3rd dan = sandan
4th dan = yondan etc.

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

EMBUSEN (emboo-sen)
Floor pattern transcribed by the placement of the feet in different stances during a kata.

GI (gee)
The karate uniform. In Shotokan karate a white, cotton gi is worn. Karate gis come in different “weights” (cotton-content), shapes (tournament and classic), and prices. A lightweight, classic gi is perfectly appropriate for a beginner.
HAI (ha–ee)
Yes, ok.

HIKI–TE (hee–kee–tay)
The retracting arm of a punching, blocking, or striking technique. Helps rotate the hips and maintain the stable and precise delivery of the technique.

KARATE
"Empty Hand".

KARATE–DO
"The Way of Karate" – physical, mental and social aspects.

KARATEKA
The practitioner of Karate.

KATA
Prescribed sequences of techniques performed with specific rhythm and timing

KI (kee)

KIAI (kee–ai)
A short, loud shout accompanying a sharp, strong technique. Helps release air from the lungs and relax the upper body so that the technique is more effective. Also helps focus mental energy and display spirit.

KIHON (kee-hon)

Basic techniques.

KIME (kee-may)

Focus of power.

KOHAI (ko-hai)

A student junior to oneself.

KYU (kee-u)

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

OBI (o-bee)

The karate belt. Different styles and potentially different schools within a style have a different belt-structure, but white belts are always worn by beginners and black belts by advanced students. In our dojo, we follow the traditional rank structure:

8 th kuy = white belt
7 th kuy = yellow belt
6 th kuy = orange belt
5 th kuy = green belt
4 th kuy = purple belt
3 rd kuy = brown belt
2 nd kuy = brown belt
1 st kuy = brown belt
1 st dan and above = black belt

OSU
No translation. Not a formal way of addressing someone in Japan, but very popular in American dojos. Indicates respect, acknowledgement, willingness and readiness to follow.

SEIZA
A proper sitting position used for the formal opening and closing of the class, and whenever the instructor asks students to sit on the side to watch a demonstration of techniques or kata.

SENSEI (sen‐say)
A teacher. A term reserved for the chief instructor of the dojo, and other high‐ranking members.

SEMPAI (sem‐pai)
A senior student

SHIHAN (shee‐han)
A formal title meaning master instructor or teacher of teachers. Very few people in the world have achieved this ranking.
SHOMEN (show-men)

The designated front wall of a Dojo. Often the place where the picture of our founder, Gichin Funakoshi and flags are displayed.

REI (ray)

Bow. A sign of respect, trust, and appreciation. May be done while standing, or while kneeling such as at the beginning and end of each class.

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

Sensei-ni-Rei: bow to the teacher

Otagai-ni-Rei: bow to each other

COMMANDS

DOMO ARIGATO:

Thank you very much.

SEIRETSU (say-retsu)

Line up in an orderly fashion.

SEIZA (say-za)

Sit.

SHIZENTAI (sheezen-tai)

Natural position.
YAME (ya–may)
Return to starting position (typically hachiji–dachi)

HAJIME (hajee–may)
Begin

KAMAE
Get into position, prepare.

MOKUSO
Close the eyes and meditate.

NAOTTE (na–oh–tay)
At ease, relax.

MATTE (ma–tay)
Wait.

MAWATE (mawa–tay)
Turn into position

YOI (yoh–ee)
Ready (both mentally and physically)

YASUMI (ya–sumay)
Rest – normally following a long series of drills.

YAME (ya–may)
Stop

COUNTING in Japanese
One: ichi (i–chi)
Two: ni (ni)
Three: san (sa–n)
Four: shi (shi)
Five: go (go)
Six: roku (ro–ku)
Seven: shichi (shi–chi)
Eight: hachi (ha–chi)
Nine: ku (ku)
Ten: ju (ju–u)

WAZA (Techniques)
Tsuki (tsu–kee) or zuki (zoo–kee): punching
Uke (ou–kay): blocking
Uchi (oo–chee): strike
Keri (ke–ree) or geri (ge–ree): kicking
TARGET AREAS on opponent's body:

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

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

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

SUNDOME (soon-doe-may): literally "one sun short-stop", used to describe distancing in sparing. Stop just short of the target. For beginners this is about an inch and a half or three centimeters. Thus many beginners think 'san(as in three)-dome'. The correct distance to stop short is more a matter of your control than a distance on a ruler. The correct distance is often closer and closer as one improves in skill. Of interest these dimensions are old historic dimensions:

one sun is = 1/10 shaku
1 shaku = 30.3cm
therefore 1 sun = 3.03cm

HIDARI: left

MIGI: right

GYAKU: reverse

AKA: red

SHIRO: white

YOKO: Side.

MAE: front

ZENSHIN: Forward.

USHIRO: back
KEKOMI: thrust
KEAGE: snap

BODY PARTS
EMPI (em−pee): elbow
HIZA (hee−zah): knee
KAISHO (kay−sho): open hand, such as in shuto−uke
KENTSUI (ken−tschuee): hammer fist (also known as TETTSUI)
SOKUTO (sokoo−toh): edge of foot, such as in side thrust kick
URAKEN (oo−raken): back of fist
SHUTO (shoo−to): outer surface of hand alongside the small finger
HAITO (haee−to): inner surface of hand alongside the thumb
JODAN TSUKI: upper level punch
CHUDAN TSUKI: middle level punch
GEDAN TSUKI: lower level punch
CHOKU TSUKI: straight punch
GYAKU TSUKI: reverse punch
KAGI ZUKI: hook punch
HASAMI TSUKI: scissor punch
KIZAMI ZUKI: jab
MAWASHI ZUKI: roundhouse punch
MOROTE ZUKI: U-Punch with both fists simultaneously

TATE ZUKI: punch with fist along vertical plane

URA ZUKI: upper cut punch at close range

YAMA ZUKI: mountain Punch, a U-punch, resembles the character for mountain, thus the name.

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

UCHI UKE: inside-out block

SOTO UKE: outside block

GEDAN BARAI: lower level block

SHUTO UKE: knife hand block

MOROTE UKE: reinforced (augmented) block

JUJI UKE (joo-jee): X block

KAKIWAKE UKE: X block

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

EMPI UCHI: elbow strike

HAITO UCHI: ridge-hand strike

KENTSUI UCHI: (Or TETTSUI UCHI) hammer fist strike

MAE EMPI: forward elbow strike

MAWASHI EMPI UCHI: roundhouse (circular) elbow strike

OTOSHI EMPI UCHI: dropping elbow strike
TATE EMPI UCHI: rising elbow strike
TATE URAKEN UCHI: vertical back-fist strike
USHIRO EMPI UCHI: elbow strike aiming behind own body
YOKO MAWASHI EMPI UCHI: side elbow strike
NUKITE: stabbing using the extended index finger or both the index and the middle fingers

ASHI BARAI: Foot Sweep

GERI (kicks)
MAE GERI KEAGE: front snap kick
MAE GERI KEKOMI: front thrust kick.
MAE ASHI GERI: front kick with the front leg (KIZAMI GERI)
MAWASHI GERI: roundhouse kick
GYAKU MAWASHI GERI: reverse roundhouse kick
USHIRO MAWASHI GERI: inside-out roundhouse kick
HIZA GERI (hee-za): knee kick
MIKAZUKI GERI (meeka-zooki): crescent kick
TOBI GERI (to-bee): jumping kick
USHIRO GERI (oo-shee-ro): back kick
YOKO GERI KEAGE: side snap kick
YOKO GERI KEKOMI: side thrust kick
YOKO TOBI GERI: flying side kick
FUMIKOMI: stomping kick

DACHI (da-gee) (stances)

HACHIJI DACHI (ha-gee-jee): natural stance, feet about one shoulder width apart, toes pointing slightly outward

HEISOKU DACHI: informal attention stance. Feet together, toes pointing straight forward

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

KIBA DACHI (kee-ba): horse stance

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

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

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

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

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

KOSA DACHI: crossed-leg stance

SHIKO DACHI (shee-ko): square stance

KUMITE (koumi-tay) Sparring

GOHON KUMITE: five step basic sparring

SANBON KUMITE: three step basic sparring

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

JUI KUMITE: free sparing

STRATEGIES

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

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

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

SEN SEN NO SEN: attack before the opponent attacks

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