

SHOTOKAN TERMINOLOGY

VOCABULARY

BUNKAI (boon-kai)

A study of the techniques and applications in KATA.

DAN

Black-belt grades.

1 st dan = shodan

2 nd dan = nidan

3 rd dan = sandan

4 th dan = yondan etc.

DOJO

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

EMBUSEN (emboo-sen)

Floor pattern transcribed by the placement of the feet in different stances during a kata.

GI (gee)

The karate uniform. In Shotokan karate a white, cotton gi is worn. Karate gis come in different "weights" (cotton-content), shapes (tournament and classic), and prices. A lightweight, classic gi is perfectly appropriate for a beginner.

HAI (ha-ee)

Yes, ok.

HIKI-TE (hee-kee-tay)

The retracting arm of a punching, blocking, or striking technique. Helps rotate the hips and maintain the stable and precise delivery of the technique.

KARATE

“Empty Hand”.

KARATE-DO

“The Way of Karate” –physical, mental and social aspects.

KARATEKA

The practitioner of Karate.

KATA

Prescribed sequences of techniques performed with specific rhythm and timing

KI (kee)

Mind. Spirit. Energy.

KIAI (kee-ai)

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

KIHON (kee-hon)

Basic techniques.

KIME (kee-may)

Focus of power.

KOHAI (ko-hai)

A student junior to oneself.

KYU (kee-u)

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

OBI (o-bee)

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

8 th kuy = white belt

7 th kuy = yellow belt

6 th kuy = orange belt

5 th kuy = green belt

4th kyu = purple belt

3rd kyu = brown belt

2nd kyu = brown belt

1st kyu = brown belt

1st 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-retsuo)

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-chee) (stances)

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

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

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

KIBA DACHI (kee-ba): horse stance

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

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

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

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

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

KOSA DACHI: crossed-leg stance

SHIKO DACHI (shee-ko): square stance

KUMITE (koumi-tay) Sparring

GOHON KUMITE: five step basic sparring

SANBON KUMITE: three step basic sparring

IPPON KUMITE: one step basic sparring

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

JUI KUMITE: free sparring

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