

Doshi-Kai Shotokan Karate Member Handbook



The Doshi-Kai Shotokan Karate Member Handbook Version 1.0



Matsuyama Sensei
President - Doshi-Kai Shotokan Karate Dojo

Email: info@doshikai.net
Web Site: www.doshikai.net

Author: Barry Poitras, info@doshikai.net

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Introduction

This handbook is written to provide a valuable reference for dojo members. It is a guide for new students to assist in understanding basic concepts, commands, and dojo etiquette.

What is Shotokan Karate-do?

Shotokan Karate was founded by Grandmaster Gichin Funakoshi who studied Te under Grandmaster Itosu and Grandmaster Higaonna in Okinawa. Back then, Karate was called Te (hand), and different types of Te were studied in various areas of Okinawa.

Grandmaster Funakoshi was the first Karate-ka to introduce Te to mainland Japan. He demonstrated his Karate at the physical education Expo held in Tokyo in 1921. Funakoshi was supposed to stay for only a short period of time, but Jigoro Kano, the founder of Judo, was impressed by Funakoshi's Karate, and persuaded him to stay longer to teach Karate at the Kodokan (the Mecca of Judo).



Grandmaster Gichin Funakoshi

After Grandmaster Funakoshi taught at the Kodokan, he started teaching privately at Meisei Juku where he stayed. At the request of college students, he began to teach Karate at several colleges, including Waseda University, with Master Noguchi and Master Watanabe, Keio University with Master Obata, and Taku Shoku University, with Master Nakayama. Around this time, he changed the writing of Karate in Chinese characters from "Karate" (Chinese Hand) to "Karate" (Empty Hand). This meant not only to defend yourself without weapons (empty hands) but also to create a state of empty mind (Kuu), so that you can be ready for any type of situation mentally.

There were two major Styles in Karate in Okinawa: Shorei-Ryu, which stressed power and strength, and Shorin-Ryu, which stressed speed and sharpness. Grandmaster Funakoshi selected 15 Katas (Forms) from these two styles and changed their names from Okinawan to Japanese.

After Grandmaster Funakoshi passed away in 1957, his followers started calling his Karate "Shotokan", derived from his pen name "Shoto". Today, Shotokan Karate is studied by many and is the most popular traditional Japanese Karate style in Japan and all over the world.

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History

Doshi-Kai (meaning “the group pursuing the way”) was founded by Master Nagao Matsuyama, in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1984.

The atmosphere at Doshi-Kai is unique—serious and focused, but friendly and not militaristic. In this setting, you can really feel the difference between “commercial” martial arts and the rare traditional non-profit groups where the “art” is more important than the promotion, the technique more valued than the belt, and the individual progress is not measured by how much you’ve paid out, but by how hard you work on yourself.

These classes will challenge you to excel, much like the way they were taught in Japan to promote mental and physical discipline. Master Matsuyama’s advanced take on Shotokan combines the flexibility and fluidity of Taisabaki (shifting) with the speed, power and forward focus of traditional Shotokan.

Every class with Master Matsuyama is like a special seminar—he has been mentored by Master Watanabe, who himself is the oldest living student of the founder of Shotokan Karate, Grandmaster Funakoshi. Advanced students come from a long way off, just to have a chance to work out with Master Matsuyama at his level.

The adult classes are open and beneficial to students of all levels, from the very beginners to Black Belts, men, women and adolescents. A special class schedule is in place for children of all ages, to get them started on the path of true Martial Arts: discipline, physical and mental health, balance and personal growth.

Although the classes are very strenuous, much like the way they were traditionally taught in Japan, in order to promote mental and physical discipline, there is a very smooth transition from Kihon (Basics) and Kata (Form) to Kumite (Sparring), unlike the traditional workouts, so students can appreciate and enjoy them more. The classes are open to beginners as well as advanced black belts.

About Master Matsuyama

Master Matsuyama started training in Karate at Waseda University in Tokyo in the early 1970s under Master Toshio Watanabe who is the oldest living student of Grandmaster Funakoshi. He is one of the few students who is authorized to teach Shotokan Karate overseas by Master Watanabe.

Master Matsuyama has also trained extensively in Aikido and Mugai-Ryu Iaido, as well as Ryukyu-Kobudo (Okinawan weapons). He has developed a unique training system by using tai sabaki or body-shifting techniques along with the traditional, fast, strong and straight forward Shotokan techniques – smooth yet

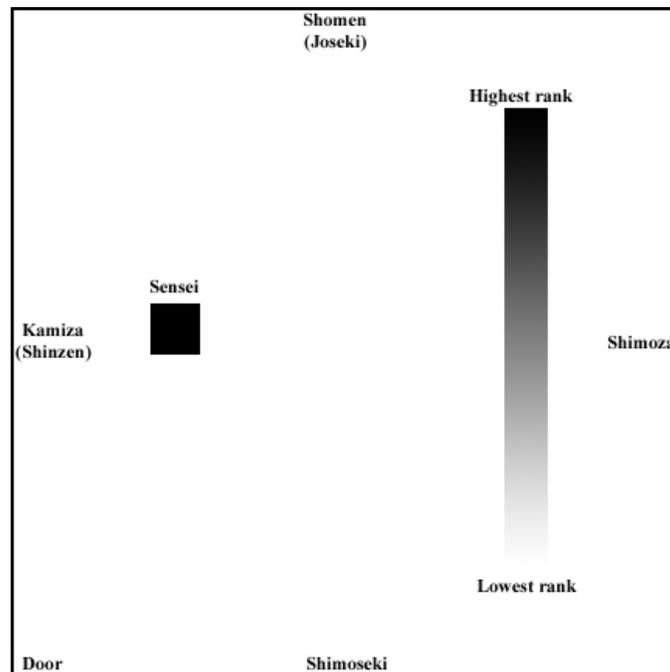
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strong and effective. From the basic body-shifting to the advanced body-shifting, students of any levels will be able to learn this system step by step.

If you are serious about training Karate, Doshi-Kai is the dojo for you.

The Dojo

The dojo has several areas of importance.



The four walls of the dojo are symbolic. Kamiza is the East wall, or altar, where the protective Shinto deities reside. It is symbolic of the rising sun and energies. This area is also called shinzen. Sensei begins class from shinzen. Shimoza is the side opposite kamiza; this is where the students line up by rank, with the higher ranked students on the right.

Beginning the class

At the start of the class, all students line up, head up straight, eyes forward. Sensei will then announce “seiza,” at which time everyone will kneel into seiza.

Mokuso

It is important to clear one’s mind of the days work, activities, etc. and focus on your development in the dojo. Once in seiza, Sensei will announce “mokuso,” or meditate. Use these brief moments to close your eyes and clear your thoughts in preparation for practice.

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Rei

Upon completion of mokuso, we then bow to sensei and shomen. Upon completion of the bow, we rise, step forward and begin some warm-up exercises.

Warming up

Warming up typically consists of stretching exercises that help prepare the body for the rigors of practice. It is important to warm-up properly before any workout in order to avoid and prevent injury. Our warm-up exercises include stretching of the following areas:

- Legs and knees
- Neck and shoulders
- Wrists and elbows
- Ankles and toes
- Torso and hips

Entering and leaving the dojo

- When entering the dojo, please remove your shoes before walking across the dojo floor.
- Remove all watches and jewelry prior to practice (keiko)
- Upon stepping on or off the dojo floor, one should execute a standing bow, facing shomen, backing away.
- Please notify sensei prior to leaving the dojo floor if class is still in session

Safety

Safety within the dojo requires the attention of all members. This includes the removal of jewelry, including watches, bracelets, necklaces and rings that could get caught or cause injury to the student or others.

Shoes and socks should be removed prior to stepping on the dojo floor.

The Shotokan Kata

Kata are a predetermined series of blocking, evading and countering techniques against single or multiple attackers, who may be armed or unarmed. Kata was developed as a way in which an individual could practice basic techniques. There are currently twenty five forms recognized by the Shotokan style:

1. "Heian Shodan"
2. "Heian Nidan"
3. "Heian Sandan"
4. "Heian Yondan"
5. "Heian Godan"
6. "Tekki Shodan"
7. "Tekki Nidan"
8. "Tekki Sandan"
9. "Bassai-Dai"

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10. "Kanku-Dai"
11. "Empi"
12. "Hangetsu"
13. "Jutte"
14. "Gankaku"
15. "Jion"
16. "Rohai"
17. "Sochin"
18. "Nijushiho"
19. "Bassai-Sho"
20. "Kanku-Sho"
21. "Jiin"
22. "Wankan"
23. "Gojushiho-Dai"
24. "Gojushiho-Sho"
25. "Chinte"
26. "Unsu"

Definition of Japanese Terms

This section outlines some of the Japanese terms heard during class and when discussing topics related to Shotokan Karate and other martial arts.

Stances:

- Shizen-tai – Natural Stance
- Heisoku-dachi – Closed Stance
- Zenkutsu-dachi – Forward Stance
- Kokutsu-dachi – Back Stance
- Kiba-dachi – Horse Riding Stance
- Fudo-dachi – Ready Stance
- Neko-ashi-dachi – Cat Stance

Strikes:

- Maete-zusuki – Jab
- Gyaku-zuki – Reverse Punch
- Oizuki – Stepping Punch
- Uraken – Back Fist
- Nukite – Piercing Hand

Blocks:

- Gedan-barai – Down Block
- Uchi-uke – Inside Block
- Soto-uke – Outside Block
- Age-uke – Rising Block
- Shuto-uke – Knife Hand Block

Kicks:

- Mae-geri – Front Kick

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Yoko-geri – Side Kick

Mawashi-geri – Round House Kick

- bunkai – The application of the technique, a description of the real-world scenario around which the kata is formed.
- Dan – advanced grades from 1 to 10
- hajime – start
- jo-ha-kyu – the concept of rhythm within the kata. Jo-ha-kyu is expressed as slow-to-fast-to-slow movement. Strikes should exhibit a buildup of intensity and speed, slowly starting the technique and increasing the speed through the strike, then letting the intensity slow again.
- keiko-gi – the jacket (top half) of the uniform
- Ki – spirit or presence
- Kumite - sparring
- Kyu – student grade, from 5 up to 1 where 1 is the highest
- ma-ai – the distance between combatants
- metsuke – one’s gaze or look.
- mo ichido - one more time
- mokuso – meditate
- Otagai ni rei – bow to each other
- rei – bow
- reigi – etiquette
- reiho – etiquette, method of bowing
- ritsu rei – standing bow
- seiza - kneeling
- shomen – the front of the dojo, also the front of the head, as in shomen uchi
- shomen ni rei – bow to front of the dojo
- tatte – to stand up from the kneeling position (seiza)
- yame – stop
- yudansha – members with dan grades
- zanshin – remaining spirit/heart

Counting in Japanese

For many of the warm-ups and exercises, students will hear a count in Japanese. The following are the Japanese words for the numbers one through ten, with pronunciation in parentheses – the final vowel is often not pronounced in Japanese words:

1. Ichi (eech)
2. Ni (nee)
3. San (sahn)
4. Shi (she)
5. Go (go)
6. Roku (rook)
7. Shichi (sheech)
8. Hachi (hach)
9. Kyu (kyu)

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10. Ju (joo)

Doshikai Equipment / Uniform Recommendations

Clothing

To get started you may use any comfortable, loose fitting, athletic-cut clothing for your training. A sweatshirt and sweatpants or a martial arts gi will work just fine. More specialized athletic pads may be obtained through your local sporting goods store or any martial arts supplier.

As soon as you are sure that you wish to pursue your studies, you should invest in a karate gi uniform. While many fabrics and colors are available, traditionally, Doshikai shotokan students wear uniforms that are the same throughout their school to recognize their affiliation with that school and with their sensei. At Doshikai we wear white, 100% cotton, with no patches or embroidery other than the doshikai characters on the keiko-gi over the heart.

Obi

The Obi is the belt that is used to close and secure the keikogi. All students start with a white belt.

Sources

The clothing and equipment listed above may be obtained from a variety of sources. Again, there are multiple links available from the website as well as this Doshikai Handbook.

Most of the items listed above can be obtained through www.e-bogu.com. We have found their prices to be competitive and their service to be very good.

Sources of Information

This section provides sources of useful information regarding budo, martial arts and related philosophies.

Web Sites

Informational

Commercial

Books

In The Dojo – Dave Lowry

Karate-Do, My Way of Life – Gichin Funakoshi

Living The Martial Way – Forrest Morgan

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Video

