

# General Karate Terminology

**Karate:** Literally “empty hand”. A weaponless form of self-defense emphasizing punches and kicks.

**Karate-do:** “The way of karate”. The physical practice of karate combined with the philosophical understanding of the art as a way to self-improvement.

**Pangai-noon:** “Half Hard-Half Soft”. The original name of Uechi-Ryu from the southern [Fujian](#) province of China. In the late 19th century and early 20th century Kanbun Uechi studied Pangai-noon and [Chinese medicine](#) under the tutelage of Shū Shiwa.

**Uechi Ryu Karate Do:** (waychee roo - kah rah tay doe) – Uechi is the last name of Kanbun who brought Pangainoon to Okinawa from China. Ryu simply means “style”.

**Kenyukai:** Seiyu Shinjo Strong Fist Group (Karate Association) – Kiyohide Shinjo (Seiyu’s son) is the head of the Kenyukai

**Dojo:** Literally “way place”. This is the training hall where one learns a “way”; in our case, the way of karate.

**Sensei:** “Teacher” or instructor. Literally “one who has gone before”

**Sempai:** “Senior” or a senior student.

**Kihon:** “Basics” or fundamental exercises.

**Wa-uke:** Circle block with bushiken strike

**Kata:** “Form” or formal karate exercise. Technically, kata is a choreographed set of offensive and defensive movements performed in a set pattern against multiple imaginary opponents.

**Sanchin:** “Three conflicts”. This “kihon” or basic kata forms the base of Uechi-ryu karate. The three conflicts to be mastered during Sanchin are those of the Mind, Body and Spirit.

**Kanshiwa:** Second kata, a combination of the first kanji in Kanbun's name, and the last two kanji (if written in Chinese order) of Shu Shiwa's [Japanese pronunciation] name.

**Kanshu:** Third Kata, a combination of the first kanji in Kanbun's name, and the kanji for Shu Shiwa's family name (Shu).

**Three Animals:** Tiger (strength and speed), Crane (balance, stability and timing) and Dragon (breathing, spirit and unpredictability)

**Dogi or "Gi":** "Uniform" worn in the dojo.

**Obi:** One's karate "belt".

**Kumite:** Literally "putting together of hands". Often referred to as "sparring", kumite can either be done in a promised (yakusoku), or free-style (jiyu) fashion.

**Bunkai:** Literally "analysis". A bunkai is a "break down" of the kata to analyze the application of individual techniques.

**Migi:** Right (as in "right" side): Migi ashi mae (right foot forward).

**Hidari:** Left (as in "left" side): Hidari ashi mae (left foot forward).

**Uke:** To block / to receive: Wa uke (circle block); Mawashi uke (round block).

**Zanshin:** "Remaining mind" or continued commitment demonstrated during practice.

**Shomen:** "Front". In the dojo, the designated area where calligraphy or photographs are hung.

**Ryu:** "Style" or school.

**Kiotsuke:** "To come to attention". Typically performed prior to bowing at the beginning of an exercise, kata or two-person drill.

**Rei:** "Bow". Performed as sign of respect and courtesy.

**Otagai ni Rei:** "Bow to each other".

**Shomen ni Rei:** “Bow to the front”.

**Seiza:** The traditional Japanese formal method of sitting on the floor with the knees bent and the legs under the body.

**Yame:** “Stop”

**Kiai:** Two words meaning “to unite” and “spirit/energy”. A shout delivered for the purpose of focusing all of one’s energy.

**Osu:** Pronounced like goose without the G. It is a slang word that means ‘I will be Patient; I will push myself. Additionally, it is a respectful way of saying; yes, I understand, I agree, I will do it, hello, or good bye, depending on the situation.

**Yoi:** “Ready”

**Kamaete:** “Ready hands”, or to move into a ready position.

**Tsuki:** “Punch”

**Seiken Tsuki:** “Fore-fist punch”

**Kizami-Tsuki:** “Short punch” or jab

**Gyaku-Tsuki:** “Reverse punch”

**Mawashi-Tsuki:** “Round punch”

**Hiraken:** “Fore knuckle strike”

**Shoken:** “One Knuckle Punch”

**Kokken:** “Crane Beak Strike”

**Sokusen:** “Toe Fist”

**Shomen-Geri or Mai-Geri:** “Front snap kick”

**Mawashi-Geri:** “Round kick”

**Yoko-Geri:** “Side kick”

**Uda-Mawashi-Geri:** “Hook kick”

**Ushiro-Geri:** “Back kick”

**Dachi:** “Stance”

**Yoi-dachi:** “Ready stance”

**Sanchin-Dachi:** “Hour-glass stance”

**Zenkutsu-Dachi:** “Front stance”

**Necko-ashi-dachi:** “Cat stance”

**Kiba-dachi:** “Horse stance”

**Shiko-Dachi:** “Square stance”

**Koso-Dachi:** “Hook stance”

**Jodan:** “High area”

**Chudan:** “Middle area”

**Gedan:** “Low area”