

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

Sune Uke: Shin Block

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"

Yoko-Geri Kekomi: "Side Thrust kick"

Yoko-Geri Kiaj: "Side Snap 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"