

Heisui Dojo Shotokan Karate-do Student Manual

The *Dojo Kun* (Rules of the Training Hall)

- *Strive for Perfection of Character**
- *Protect the Way of the Truth**
- *Foster the Spirit of Effort**
- *Respect the Principles of Etiquette**
- *Guard Against Impetuous Courage**

Tode Sakugawa (1733-1815)

Welcome to the practice of Shotokan Karate-do, a traditional form of Japanese martial arts. The goal of this booklet is to provide the new student with some basic information about Shotokan Karate-do in general and to provide students of the *Heisui Dojo - Orono Community Martial Arts* with specific information about class structure and practice.

History

Karate is an ancient form of empty-hand fighting that developed on the island of Okinawa in the Ryukyu archipelago south of Japan. Karate combines the traditional striking techniques of the Ryukyu Islands, known as *Te* or *Tode*, with the martial arts of coastal China variously known as *chuan-fa*, *kung fu*, or *kempo*. By the 1700's these early Okinawan martial arts systems had been divided into three main branches or styles commonly referred to as Shuri-te, Tomari-te and Naha-te after the communities in which they were practiced. In addition to the geographic distribution of early fighting styles, the more internal and strength focused forms of fighting were sometimes referred to as the *shorei* martial arts, while fast and "explosive" fighting methods were known as the *shorin*

martial arts. Eventually all of the various forms of *Te* or “fist” fighting on Okinawa became known as *karate*, a word that in its original form meant “China Fist.”

In the early nineteen-twenties an Okinawan karate expert from the Shuri region named *Funakoshi Gichin*¹ traveled from Okinawa to mainland Japan to demonstrate his fighting art. Funakoshi remained in Japan and began to instruct students in his form of martial arts, a combination of karate styles from several regions in Okinawa that was based primarily upon Shuri-te. Funakoshi called his martial art *Karate-do*. By using a synonym for the character “kara” and adding the suffix “do” Funakoshi changed the meaning of karate from “China Fist” to “Way of the Empty Hand”. While Funakoshi was not the first to employ these characters for karate he formalized this change to emphasize philosophical aspects of the practice of empty-hand fighting that had not been accentuated in the original Okinawan fighting traditions. Funakoshi’s students defined his art even more specifically calling his style *Shotokan Karate-do*, meaning “House of the Pine Waves Method of the Way of Empty Hands”. Since *Shoto* or “Pine Waves” was the pen name Funakoshi used when he wrote poetry, the name Shotokan stood for Funakoshi’s artistic style.

As Karate-do developed in Japan it began to take on characteristics of classical Japanese martial arts that were foreign to its Okinawan predecessor. Japanese karate, for example, began to use a rank structure indicated by colored belts similar to the one used in *Judo* (this rank hierarchy was later brought back to Okinawa and has now been adopted by nearly all styles of karate) and it developed a strong affinity with Zen philosophy as expressed in *Kendo* (Way of the Sword). Over the past seventy-five years

¹ Traditionally, Japanese names are listed with the family name first.

other changes have taken place in the development of Shotokan Karate-do that have further defined it as a distinct and rich martial way.

Today, Shotokan Karate-do ranks among the world's most popular martial arts. It is an energetic and dynamic form of self-defense that is characterized by fast and strong techniques, subtle body-shifting movements and traditional philosophies drawn from the precepts of Zen and *Bushido*, the Way of the Warrior. Because Shotokan enjoys such a rich history and heritage, contemporary masters are able to draw upon a wealth of oral history and tradition to pass along the fundamentals of their art.

Components of Karate

Shotokan Karate-do is comprised of three forms of practice, *kihon* - basic techniques, *kata* - pre-arranged techniques and *kumite* - sparring techniques. All three facets are emphasized equally in Shotokan Karate-do.

Kihon: Kihon or basic techniques are comprised of stances, blocks, strikes and kicks. Kihon are practiced through the use of both stationary and moving exercises. Kihon may be practiced with or without a partner and with or without a physical target. When practicing kihon, students should always be aware of their balance, stance and breathing.

Kata: Kata are pre-arranged sequences of techniques in which the *karateka* (karate practitioner) moves in an established *embusen* (pattern) executing pre-planned blocks and attacks. There are several goals of kata practice including practicing moving with techniques, enhancing physical conditioning, perfecting self-defense techniques that are too dangerous to practice on a training partner and fostering a state of *mushin* (empty mind) that is fundamental to Zen awareness. Kata practice is divided into two types: *kata*

kihon (basic patterns) and *kata bunkai* (analysis patterns). Learning the outward form and obvious meaning of the movements constitutes kata kihon. Once the basic movements of the forms are mastered students concentrate on kata bunkai, the deep analysis of kata movements.

Kumite: Kumite is sparring practice. However, just like there are many kihon techniques and many kata, there are many types of sparring. In Shotokan kumite is usually practiced using non-contact or light-contact rules. Some forms of kumite include *kihon kumite* or basic (pre-arranged) sparring, *ippon kumite* or one-step sparring, and *jiyu kumite* or free sparring. Sparring is not fighting. Sparring is used for practicing the strong and spontaneous application of attacking and defensive maneuvers.

Ranks and Progression in Karate-do

Practitioners of karate are often recognized by ranks indicated by colored belts (*obi*) that they wear with their uniforms (*gi* or *dogi*). The novice or *kyu* grades wear white or colored belts. Expert or *dan* grades generally wear black belts. In Shotokan Karate-do, organizations normally award eight to ten kyu ranks and up to ten dan ranks. The Heisui Dojo use a ten-kyu model prior to awarding the black belt.

Assuming regular practice, students normally progress in rank every three to six months prior to brown belt level. Three months is usually the minimum amount of time a student must train between examinations. Brown belt students normally test for rank every six to twelve months. Students who are able to train several times per week without interruption can expect to earn the rank of shodan in as little as three years, although taking up to six years to achieve first-degree rank is not uncommon due to interruptions in training schedules, injuries, vacations, etc. However, this schedule may

be altered. Students with prior experience are sometimes eligible to skip grades or to test on an accelerated schedule.

Commonly Asked Questions & Answers

Q: Will it really take three to six years to get my black belt?

A: No, it will take three to six weeks for delivery. However, to *earn* the rank of shodan in Shotokan Karate-do it normally takes at least three years.

Q: I am not very athletic. Is karate right for me?

A: Karate is a great form of physical conditioning and exercise. It also imparts confidence and a useful skill. Those us who are not naturally gifted athletes may be the ones who benefit most from karate practice.

Q: I am just the opposite of the last guy. I am a natural athlete. Is karate going to challenge me?

A: Karate is as challenging as you want to make it. Many world-class athletes cross-train in the martial arts. Worldwide competitions are held annually and regional competitions are held regularly. Karate can be a life-long physical and mental pursuit.

Q: Will I get hurt doing karate?

A: Karate is a fighting art. You can't practice karate and expect you will never get hit. However, most karate injuries are very minor and consist only of bumps and bruises. Injury rates are comparable to other sports activities. While almost every black belt has had his share of sprained or broken fingers and toes and a few black eyes, few martial artists are ever seriously injured.

Q: Will I develop good self-defense skills by practicing karate?

A: If you practice diligently you can become a much better fighter than you were before you started your karate practice. Unfortunately, not every one has the natural gifts to make them a world-class athlete, fighter or competitor. Take heart though, Master Funakoshi was a 5'1" schoolteacher and he left an indelible stamp on the history of the martial arts.

Q: Are there competitions in karate?

A: There are several kinds of competition in karate. They are frequently classified as either *Open* or *Traditional* competition. Open tournaments generally allow anyone to compete regardless of their school, style or organizational affiliation. In sparring matches competitors are severely restricted in the amount of contact they are allowed to make and in the target areas they are allowed to attack. In Open competition participants wear a lot of protective padding. In Open kata competition both traditional and contemporary forms are permitted (however, our school only practices traditional kata).

In Traditional competition, the styles, schools and associations that are allowed to participate are generally restricted. More contact, larger sanctioned striking areas and the use of fewer pads are characteristic differences in kumite competition. In Traditional kata competition only traditional Japanese and Okinawan forms are allowed.

Q: Will I be required to compete if I do karate?

A: No, you can be a very successful karateka even if you never step foot in the ring. However, students are encouraged to try competition simply to get a degree of exposure to other schools, styles and martial artists. Your participation in any type of competition is based purely on your personal preference.

Q: Does karate make students more violent?

A: Although no one can predict the personality traits of a particular individual, studies that have tested aggression among martial artists have concluded that practicing *traditional* martial arts (such as Shotokan Karate-do) can reduce aggressive tendencies, even among juvenile delinquents and other at-risk populations. However, learning martial arts outside of a strict, traditional regimen has been shown to increase aggressive tendencies among at-risk groups.

Q: Do you use “karate weapons” in Shotokan Karate-do?

A: Shotokan practice de-emphasizes the use of weapons and novice Shotokan karateka usually refrain from the practice of *kobudo* (traditional Okinawan/Japanese weaponry). Instead, Shotokan emphasizes the perfection of body movement and technique. At advanced levels weapons may be used to augment training. However, training with weapons nearly always plays a secondary role in Shotokan Karate-do.

Q: Which style of martial arts is the best?

A: There is no real answer to this question. Certain styles are more popular than others, Shotokan among them. Other styles may be more or less strenuous, fast, slow, aggressive, competitive, etc. The best thing to do is to try a style that looks interesting and exciting to you. If you decide to move to a different style, a different school or even

a different activity altogether don't worry, you're not failing at anything or letting anyone down, you're simply doing what is best for you.

Q: What makes the Shotokan style unique?

A: Shotokan is one of four major styles of Japanese karate along with *Shito-ryu*, *Nihon Goju-ryu* and *Wado-ryu*. There are also several styles of Okinawan karate and recently many non-traditional styles of karate have become popular. Shotokan, however, is unique due to its particular emphasis on the perfection of basic form and technique, the use of long, deep stances and the development of powerful thrusting and snapping strikes. Shotokan is known for its direct and efficient linear strikes, strong blocks and fast evasive maneuvers. Shotokan is a "hard" style of karate that demands physical and mental commitment from its practitioners to achieve success.

Q: Is karate religious?

A: Many people assume that because karate practitioners bow and engage in breathing/meditation exercises karate must be some form of religious exercise. However, *karate is a martial art not a religious discipline*. A strong moral and behavioral code is emphasized in traditional karate-do to ensure safety and respect among practitioners, but there are no religious overtones to this code. These rules are summarized in the *dojo-kun*, Master Sakugawa's five rules for karate training.

Q: What is the best way to supplement my karate training?

A: The best way to get better at karate is to simply practice more karate. However, a good fitness program including cardiovascular and resistance (weight) training will improve your overall health and athletic performance. Also, a good stretching regimen is very beneficial. Traditional supplementary exercises such as *makiwara* (striking post) training and *suburi* (heavy wooden sword) techniques can be interesting and helpful. Ask your instructor for specific training advice.

Q: What is the deal with all the different Shotokan organizations? Do they all practice Shotokan Karate-do?

A: Originally there was only one Shotokan Karate-do organization, the *Shoto-kai* (Pine Waves Association). However, after Funakoshi's death in the nineteen-fifties some masters formed the *Nihon Karate Kyokai* (Japan Karate Association), a more commercial organization. Today there are many Shotokan organizations. Some are large, international enterprises. Others are small, independent organizations representing only one or two schools. Quality of training, not membership, is what counts, though.

There are many legitimate Shotokan Karate-do organizations both within and outside of Japan today.

Q: To what organization does the Heisui Dojo belong? What does this affiliation mean?

A: The Heisui Dojo is independent in its administration, but is affiliated with the *National Karate Jujitsu Union*. The NKJU is one of the oldest American martial arts organizations in still in existence. It unites traditional martial artists from around the country and provides training and support for our school and instructors. This organizational style allows us the freedom to incorporate techniques from various Shotokan sub-styles while we remain true to Funakoshi Sensei's original karate. Heisui Dojo students are encouraged to register with the NKJU once they decide to commit to training.

Q: What is the rank structure of the Heisui Dojo?

A: The ranks that Heisui Dojo students earn are as follows:

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Belt Color</u>	<u>Japanese Title</u>	<u>Student Level</u>
10 th rank	White	Jukyu	Novice
9 th rank	Yellow	KuKyu	Novice
8 th rank	Orange	Hachikyu	Novice
7 th rank	Blue	Nanakyu	Intermediate
6 th rank	Green	Rokukyu	Intermediate
5 th rank	Green	Gokyu	Intermediate
4 th rank	Green	Yonkyu	Intermediate
3 rd rank	Brown	Sankyu	Advanced
2 nd rank	Brown	Nikyu	Advanced
1 st rank	Brown	Ikkyu	Advanced
1 st degree	Black	Shodan*	-----

*Students younger than sixteen years old will not be graded to shodan. Younger students may be graded *shodan-ho* or "temporary first grade." Upon reaching their sixteenth birthday shodan-ho students must re-test for their rank.

Q: How does one advance in rank?

A: Every rank has clearly defined requirements, which are provided to the student by their instructor. In order to progress in rank you must demonstrate proficiency in the skills required, show a strong and positive attitude and attend classes on a regular basis. The Heisui Dojo sponsors formal testing opportunities at which time students may be invited to demonstrate mastery of their techniques for several judges. However, students who practice diligently and with a good attitude may also be promoted without formally testing for a new rank.

Annotated Bibliography of Useful Sources of Information

Below is a list of sources of information that may be useful to students of Shotokan Karate-do. This is not a complete list and it is evolving over time. Students are encouraged to conduct research on their own and to check upgrades to this list in the future.

Technical Manuals for Shotokan

Funakoshi Gichin. Karate-do Kyohan: The Master Text. This is Funakoshi's final written opinion on his brand of karate. It is an irreplaceable reference for all serious students of Shotokan Karate-do. It includes material on kihon, sixteen kata and some traditional throwing and self-defense skills. The basic techniques in the book provide an excellent foundation to the Shotokan style, but for the advanced student this text can unlock the depth of tradition within the Shotokan methodology.

Funakoshi Gichin. Karate-do Nyumon: The Beginner's Text. This book was posthumously, compiled by Funakoshi's top student, Shigeru Egami, from unpublished material left by the master and his deceased son and heir. It is a combination technical manual and a guide to the *Shotokai* sub-style. It includes a detailed section on the *Ten no Kata*.

Nakayama Masatoshi. Best Karate Volumes 1-15. The revered master of the Japan Karate Association breaks down the fundamentals of Shotokan Karate-do. A great technical series, these volumes contain basic concepts and skills, traditional sparring techniques and twenty-four (of twenty-six) JKA recognized forms. It is, however, light on interpretation and very expensive (about \$15.00 per volume).

Nakayama Masatoshi. Dynamic Karate. The highlights of the Best Karate series and other books by Master Nakayama compiled into one volume. This book serves as a textbook for many Shotokan karateka. Dynamic Karate includes much more interpretation than Nakayama's individual books, but has no instruction on kata.

Nishiyama Hidetaka and Brown, Richard C. Karate: The Art of Empty Hand Fighting. One of the first summaries of karate published in English. It contains detailed explanations of Shotokan fundamentals. It also includes sections on traditional kumite and the kata *Heian Yondan*.

Interpretive Works on Karate-do

Funakoshi Gichin. Karate-do, My Way of Life. This short and very readable book is Funakoshi's memoirs concerning the role of karate in his life. This book contains many interesting anecdotes about *O-Sensei's* training in Okinawa and early Shotokan development in Japan.

Kim, Richard C. The Weaponless Warriors. This book is a collection of short stories compiled from oral tales on Okinawa, the birthplace of karate, about the great masters of the art. The vignettes are true, or at least are based upon the truth. The book provides great insight into the history and traditions of early karate.

Nichol, C.W. Moving Zen. This is a moving and readable account of one Westerner's journey to Japan to study Shotokan in the nineteen-sixties, a period regarded by many as the "Golden Age" of Japanese karate.

Martial Arts Periodicals

Classical Fighting Arts. A very good and inexpensive quarterly magazine focusing on traditional martial arts, this periodical includes news, interviews, historical articles and editorials (formerly known as Dragon Times).

Journal of Asian Martial Arts. A quarterly journal for interdisciplinary martial arts studies, the JAMA usually includes academic articles on the history, psychology and cultural aspects of the martial arts followed by general articles and interviews. It also includes a technical section and book reviews. Out of print.

Shotokan Karate Magazine. A professionally produced magazines focusing on the JKA sub-style of Shotokan (although not exclusively on the JKA organization itself). It contains good photos and excellent interviews and articles of karateka affiliated with the big, multinational Shotokan organizations. It is available by subscription only.

Traditional Kata of Shotokan Karate-do

The following list represents over thirty kata practiced by Shotokan organizations. Some schools practice as few as fifteen of the kata listed while others practice all those on this list plus additional "out-style" forms. There are over one hundred Okinawan and Japanese kata practiced by various traditional karate organizations, so students should keep in mind that this list is neither exhaustive nor applicable to all forms of karate.

Kata listed in **boldface** are required for testing by the Heisui Dojo for ranks up to and including Shodan. However, students may be required to learn extra kata for a variety of reasons including an expressed interest by the student, for competition purposes or to strengthen weak areas the individual student may need to develop. Each kata emphasizes particular skills, so not all Shotokan karateka practice all of these forms. Students are encouraged to try to master their required kata rather than to try to learn all of the patterns.

Basic Kata:

Ten no Kata

Universal Form

Taikyoku Shodan

First Cause Number One

Taikyoku Nidan

First Cause Number Two

Taikyoku Sandan

First Cause Number Three

Heian Shodan

Peaceful Mind Number One

Intermediate Kata:

Heian Nidan

Peaceful Mind Number Two

Heian Sandan

Peaceful Mind Number Three

Heian Yondan

Peaceful Mind Number Four

Heian Godan

Peaceful Mind Number Five

Tekki Shodan

Iron Horse Number One

Advanced Kata:

Tekki Nidan

Iron Horse Number Two

Tekki Sandan

Iron Horse Number Three

Empi

Flying Swallow

Bassai-Dai

To Penetrate a Fortress (Primary)

Bassai-Sho

To Penetrate a Fortress (Secondary)

Kanku-Dai

To Look to the Sky (Primary)

Kanku-Sho

To Look to the Sky (Secondary)

Jion

Form from Jion Temple

Jitte

Ten Hands

Ji'in

Temple Grounds

Gankaku

Crane on a Rock

Nijushiho

Twenty-Four Steps

Gojushiho-Dai

Fifty-Four Steps (Primary)

Gojushiho-Sho

Fifty-Four Steps (Secondary)

Hangetsu

Half Moon

Unsu

Cloud Hands

Sochin

Energetic Calm

Meikyo

Bright Mirror

Chinte

Unusual Hands

Wankan

King's Crown

Weapons Kata:

Tenryu no Kon

Demon Bo (long staff) form

Equipment

Very little equipment is required to practice Shotokan Karate-do. Beginning students may participate in regular gym clothing (sweatpants and t-shirts) until they

decide to commit to karate practice. When students decide to become involved in long-term karate practice they should purchase the following equipment:

Mandatory Equipment:

Karate Gi and Obi: Students are required to wear a white karate uniform and an appropriate rank belt for classes, competitions and testing. Beginner's uniforms (\$25.00-\$35.00) normally include a white belt.

Groin Protection: Male students must purchase a standard cup and supporter. Sparring opportunities and competition opportunities will be severely restricted without this piece of equipment. Cost is normally between \$8.00 and \$15.00.

Mouth Guard: All students should purchase a moldable mouth guard. Cost is normally \$3.00 to \$15.00 depending on model.

Optional Equipment:

Sparring Gear: Two types of sparring gear are available, Open-style and Traditional-style. Open style gear consists of foam hand, foot and head coverings. Cost is normally \$35.00 per piece of equipment or about \$100.00 for a complete set. If students are purchasing gear separately hand pads should be purchased first. Traditional gear consists solely of specialized hand guards, the cost for which is normally \$10.00 to \$45.00. Of course, other types of equipment (shin pads, weapons, etc.) are available however, *karate is more about practice than purchase* so don't feel you have to have every piece of equipment before you begin.

The total cost of introductory karate equipment is generally about \$135.00, including complete sparring gear. However, students can borrow sparring gear from the club as long as they provide their own groin and mouth protection. For about **\$35.00** the beginning student can purchase his uniform and basic equipment. Equipment should be purchased through the club as it is often possible to combine shipping and handling costs group orders may receive volume discounts.

Rules of the Heisui Dojo

1. Obey the *Dojo Kun*
2. Be courteous to your training partners and expect courtesy in return.
3. Practice with intensity. Refrain from swearing and other forms of negative language in the dojo.
4. Wear the appropriate uniform to class. Female students should wear a white t-shirt under their dogi.
5. Wear a clean karate gi.
6. Trim fingernails and toenails and tie back long hair.

7. Do not wear jewelry or watches in class (medic-alert chains are acceptable). Jewelry that cannot be removed must be taped.
8. Do not use alcohol or any other intoxicants (including over the counter or prescription medication) before class.
9. Do not bring wireless phones to class or shut off ringers during class.
10. Be on time to class. If late, enter quietly and stretch until the instructor recognizes you.
11. Harassment due to race, gender, religion or sexual preference will not be tolerated.
12. If you are in a physical altercation contact the instructor about the incident *immediately*.

Contact Information

If you have questions concerning Heisui Dojo – Orono Community Martial Arts please contact Geoffrey Wingard, at:

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