

KARATE GLOSSARY

A

age: rising, upward

ago: chin

ai: union, meeting; harmony

aiki: harmony, union of energies

aikido: way of harmony; Japanese martial art of joint locking and throwing

aiuchi: simultaneously striking (each other); clash

aka: red

ashi: leg, foot

ashi-barai: foot sweep

atama: head

ate: hit, strike, smash

atemi: hit to body

awase: combined, joined together

ayumi: walking, stepping

B

barai (harai): sweep

basami (hasami): scissors

bo: staff, long stick used as weapon

bokken: wooden sword (*katana*) usually used for practice

bu: martial; war

budo: martial way; way of war

bunkai: analysis; study of *kata* applications

buse (fuse): lay down

bushi: warrior

bushido: way of the warrior; warrior code

C

chakugan: focus attention; viewpoint; looking at your opponent

chi gung (qigong): (Chinese) breath skill, breathing exercises to promote internal energy development

chika-ma: short distance

choku: direct, straight

chuan fa: (Chinese) fist way; Chinese martial art of striking and kicking, also known as *kung fu* or *wushu*

chudan: middle level

chui: warning; usually the second warning in a competition match

D

dachi (tachi): stance; standing

dai (tai): big; great; body

dan: level

daoshi (taoshi): topple, make fall

deshi: student

do: path, way; torso

dogi (gi): training uniform

dojo: place for studying the way; the room in which one practices *budo*

domo arigato: thank you

dori (tori): hold, grab; attacker, the one applying the technique to the *uke*
dosoku: across torso
dozo: please

E

embusen: line on floor; performance line of a kata, kata floor pattern
empi (hiji): elbow
ensho: heel
eri: collar

F

fudo: unmoving, rooted
fukushin: corner judge, assistant judge
fumikomi: thrusting step, stomp kick
furi: swinging
fuse (buse): lay down

G

gaeshi (kaeshi): reversing, returning
gaijin: outsider, foreigner, non-Japanese
gaiwan: outer forearm
garami (karami): entangle, entwine
gari (kari): cut, reap
gassho: joined palm
gasshuku: special training camp
gatame (katame): lock, hold, tighten
gedan: lower level
geiko (keiko): training, practice
geri (keri): kick
gi (dogi): training uniform
go: five; after
go-no-sen: seize the initiative later, usually involving a defense and then a counterattack
goshi (koshi): hip; ball of the foot
guruma (kuruma): wheel
gyaku: reverse, opposite

H

hachi: eight
hachiji: shape of character for *hachi* (8)
hadaka: naked
hai: yes
haishu: backhand
haisoku: instep of foot
haito: sword-ridge; ridge-hand
haiwan: back-arm, back of forearm
hajime: begin
hakama: traditional pleated pants worn by *budo* students
han: half
hangetsu: half-moon

hanmi: half-body, body turning
hansoku: rule violation; disqualification from a competition event
hantai: opposite side; opposition
hantei: decision
hara: stomach, belly
harai (barai): sweep
harakiri: belly cut; form of ritual suicide
hasami (basami): scissors
hayai: quick, fast; early
heian: peace and stability; peaceful mind
heiko: parallel
heisoku: closed feet, feet together
henka: change sides; variation of a form or technique
hidari: left
hiji (empi): elbow
hiki: pull; retreat
hikiashi: pulling foot, pulling leg
hikite: pulling hand
hikiwake: tie, equal, draw
hineri: twisting
hiragana: written symbols used as part of the Japanese writing system
hiraken: flat fist, fore-knuckle fist
hiraki: lateral dodging
hitai: forehead
hiza: knee
hodoki: freeing
hokotenkan: changes in direction
honbu: headquarters

I

iaido: way of harmony in action; Japanese martial art of drawing and cutting with the sword
ibuki: breath; forced abdominal breathing usually accompanied by throat contraction and guttural sound
ichi: one
ikken-hissatsu: one fist certain kill, to kill with one blow
inyo: symbol of the JKA
ippon: one point, one side, one step, etc.
ippon-ken: one-knuckle fist
irimi: body entering

J

jiku-ashi: pivot leg; supporting leg
jime (shime): strangulation, choking
jinchu: philtrum area just above upper lip, part of the maxilla
jiyu (jyu): freestyle, free
jiyu-ippon-kumite: 1-step free sparring, semi-free sparring
jiyu-kumite: free sparring
jo: short wooden staff
jodan: upper level
jogai: out of bounds
ju: soft, gentle; ten
judo: gentle way; Japanese martial art of wrestling

juji: cross, shape of character for *ju* (10)
jujutsu: gentle art; Japanese martial art of striking, grappling, and joint manipulation
jun: follow, chase; corresponding to
jutsu: art, technique, skill

K

kachi: victory, win; value, merit
kaeshi (gaeshi): reversing, returning
kafukubu: abdomen
kagi: hook
kaikomi: lifting the knee high and tucked in close to body (preparing for kick)
kaisho: open hand(s)
kaiten: rotation
kakato: heel
kakiwake: wedge; push aside; separate
kakuto: crane-head; back of wrist
kamae: posture, position, guard
kamaete: go into position
kanji: Chinese script used as part of the Japanese writing system
kansetsu: joint; joint locking
kao: face
kara: empty
karami (garami): entangle, entwine
karate (karate-do): empty hand; Japanese martial art of punching, striking, and kicking
karateka: student of *karate*
kari (gari): cut, reap
kata: form, shape, pattern; one side; shoulder
katakana: written symbols used as part of the Japanese writing system
katame (gatame): lock, hold, tighten
katana: Japanese single-edged curved sword, preferred weapon of the *samurai*
keage: snap kick; rising kick
keiko (geiko): training
keikoku: caution; usually the first warning in a competition match
keimochi: Okinawan noble class
keito: chicken head
kekomi: thrust kick
ken: fist; sword
kensei: diversion, feint; sword saint, title given to a warrior of legendary skill in swordsmanship
kendo: way of the sword; Japanese martial art of fencing
kentsui: hammer-fist
keri (geri): kick
ki: internal energy, spirit, breath (pronounced *chi* in Chinese)
kiai: union of energy; spirit yell
kiba: horse-riding
kihon: basic, fundamental
kihon-gohon-kumite: basic 5-step sparring
kihon-ippon-kumite: basic 1-step sparring
kihon-sanbon-kumite: basic 3-step sparring
kiken: withdraw, retreat; forfeit (a match)
kime: focus; to decide; deciding factor; winning move
kinteki: testicles, groin region
ki-o-tsuke: ready at attention (in *musubi-dachi*)

kirigaeshi: returning cut
kirikae: switch, change
kirikae-ashi: switch the feet
kiritsu: stand up
kitsutsuki: woodpecker
kizami: jab; to nick, notch, or carve out; cutting; attacking with the lead hand or leg
ko: small
kobudo: ancient martial arts; the study of ancient weaponry
kohai: junior student
koho: rear, behind, back direction
koko: tiger-mouth
kokoro: spirit, heart
kokutsu: back bend
kokyu: breathing
komi: thrust, drive forward
kosa: cross
koshi (goshi): hip; ball of the foot
koshiki: traditional, old style
kote: wrist
kubotan: self defense keychain developed by Takayuki Kubota
kudaki: crush; break into pieces
kumade: bear-hand
kumi: meeting; grip
kumite: sparring; meeting of hands
kung fu (gung fu): (Chinese) great skill; martial art of striking and kicking, also known as *chuan fa* or *wushu*
kuro: black
kuruma (guruma): wheel
kutsu (kussu): bend
kuzushi: unbalancing an opponent; demolish, collapse
kyoku: extreme; ultimate
kyu: rank; non-black belt; nine
kyusho: pressure point

L

M

ma: distance
maai: proper meeting distance between two partners
mae: front
maki: roll up, wrap
makiwara: rolled straw; striking post
manji: swastika; swirling, vortex
matte: stop, wait
mawashi: rotating, turning; circular
mawate: turn
men: face
mienai: could not see
mi: right
mikazuki: crescent-moon
mizu-nagare: water flowing
mokuso: meditation
morote: both hands, double-hand

moto-no-ichi: back to starting positions
muboubi: defenseless
mudansha: student possessing *kyu* level, not black belt
mugorei: without count, no count
mukae: meet; go ahead
muki (muke): facing, direction
mune (muna): chest
mushin: no mind, without thought
muso: incomparable
musubi: united

N

nagashi: flowing
nage: throw, projection
naiwan: inner forearm
nakae: enter the fighting area
nami-gaeshi: returning wave
naname: diagonal
naore: recover
nei chia: (Chinese) internal styles (of martial arts)
neji: twisting, spiralling
neko-ashi: cat-leg
ni: two
nigiri: control
nukete-masu: off target attack
nukite: spear-hand

O

o: big, great
obi: belt
okuri: sliding; sending
omote: front; facing; exterior
osae: pressing; holding, immobilizing
oshi: pushing
osu (oss): word of acknowledgement used in many karate dojo (implies "yes, I understand")
otagai: mutual, each other
otoshi: falling, dropping
oyo: application (of kata)

P

pankration: (Greek) all powerful; a "no rules" match of striking and wrestling introduced in the 33rd Olympics

Q

qigong (chi gung): (Chinese) breath skill, breathing exercises to promote internal energy development

R

randori: taking chaos, grasping freedom; freestyle practice

rei: bow; respect
ren: alternate, consecutive
renoji: L-shape, shape of character for *re*
roku: six
ryo: both, two
ryoken: both fists
ryosho: both palms
ryosoku: both sides
ryu: school, style
ryuun: current clouds, flowing clouds

S

sabaki: shifting, dodging, displacing
sagiashi: crane-leg
sakate: throat
saken: left fist
samurai: to serve; ancient Japanese warriors
san: three
sanchin: hour-glass; 3 wars
sankaku: triangle
sasae-ashi: supporting leg
sashi: stealthy
sasho: left palm
seiken: fore-fist
seiritsu: line up
seiryuto: ox-jaw; sabre
seiza: sit correctly; kneel (position before and after *budo* class)
sempai: senior student
sen: before; advance; reaction; initiative
sen-no-sen: seize the initiative earlier, usually involving a simultaneous counter-attack
sen-sen-no-sen: seize the initiative in anticipation of opponent's attack (before the actual attack)
sensei: born before; teacher
senshu: competitor
sentei: selection, grouping
seppuku: ritual suicide
shi (yon): four
shiai: match, contest
shichi (nana): seven
shihan: teacher; master teacher
shihon: four directions, four points, etc.
shikkaku: disqualification (from entire tournament)
shime (jime): strangulation, choking
shinai: practice sword made out of split bamboo, usually used in *kendo*
shiro: white
shitei: designation; mandatory
shizen: natural
sho: palm; small
shobu: contest, match
shodan: first level black belt
shomen: front; top of head
shoto: pine waves, whispering pines; Gichin Funakoshi's pen-name
shugo: meeting

shuto: sword-hand, knife-hand
shuwan: anterior forearm
sode: sleeve
soete: added hand
soku: foot
sokumen: side
sokuto: blade of foot
soto: outside, exterior
suihei: horizontal
suigetsu: solar plexus
sukui: scooping; spoon
sun: unit of length, about 3 cm
sun-dome: to stop a technique just before making contact
suri (yori): sliding, gliding
sutemi: abandon body; sacrifice throw
suwari: kneeling

T

tachi (dachi): stance, standing
tadzuna: bridle, reins
tai (dai): big; great; body
tai chi (tai chi chuan): (Chinese) supreme ultimate (fist); Chinese internal martial art performed very slowly
tai-sabaki: body shifting, dodging
tameshiwari: breaking test; breaking bricks, wood, etc.
tanden: center of abdomen, body's center of energy
tanto: short sword, knife, dagger
taoshi (daoshi): topple, make fall
tatami: training mats; straw mats
tate: vertical; stand; build
te: hand
te-hodoki: hand freeing
teinoji: T-shape, shape of character for *tei*
teisho: palm-heel
tekki: iron horseman
tekubi: wrist
ten: sky, heaven; universe
tenkan: divert, turning, circular movement
tettsui: iron hammer, hammer-fist
tenbin: balance
to-ma: long distance
tobi (tobikomi): leap, jump, fly
tobu: head
tode: Chinese hand; Okinawan martial art preceding karate
tokui: favorite; best, one's specialty
tora: tiger
tori (dori): hold, grab; take; attacker, the one applying the technique to the *uke*
torimasen: did not take; competitor did not receive a point, no point
tsugi: follow; shuffle (shuffle step)
tsukami (zukami): grasp, grip, grab
tsuru: crane
tsuki (zuki): punch; thrust

tsuzukete: continue, keep going; resume fighting

U

uchi: inside, interior; strike, hit

uchikomi: driving, pounding in; repeated practice without completion

ude: arm

uke: block; receive; defender, the one receiving the technique from the *tori*

ukemi: break-falling, body receive

uken: right fist

uke-tsuki (tsuki-uke): block-punch

ukete-masu: blocked attack

unsoku: footwork, movements of feet

ura: opposite, reverse, inverted, back

uraken: backfist

ushiro: back, behind, rear

usho: right palm

V

Vrajmushti: (Indian) thunderbolt fist or diamond fist; martial art of India focusing on grappling and striking

W

wai chia: (Chinese) external styles (of martial arts)

wakizashi: Japanese short sword, smaller version of the *katana*

wan: arm

washide: eagle-hand

waza: technique, skill

waza-ari: two points technique occurred

wushu: (Chinese) martial arts; martial art of striking and kicking, also known as *kung fu* or *chuan fa*

X

Y

yakusoku-kumite: announcement sparring

yama: mountain

yame: stop, finish

yasume: relax, rest

yin yang: (Chinese) symbol representing the duality of nature

yoi: ready

yoko: side, sideways, lateral

yor (suri): sliding, gliding

yowai: weak; fragile

yubi: finger

yudansha: student possessing dan level(s), black belt

yumi: bow (i.e. as in bow and arrow)

Z

za: sit

zanshin: remaining mind, relaxed state of readiness

zenkutsu: front bend

zukami (*tsukami*): grasp, grip, grab

zuki (*tsuki*): punch; thrust