

# 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  
*migi*: 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*  
*torimassen*: 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