

**FUNDAMENTALS
OF
SHORIN-RYU KARATE**

JOHN NEWMAN

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by

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Preface

During the past several years, the American Karate Federation has grown to become a large and widespread organization. In that time, the quality and integrity of the art have been maintained through rigidly orthodox instruction. This book is a codification of basic techniques of Shorin-Ryu karate and practices of the American Karate Federation. It is, as well, a response to the many requests of students for a beginning text, and a continuation of orthodox instruction.

When the decision to write this book was made at the most senior levels of the AKF, I approached the task with great humility. The Oriental martial arts have been a major force in my life. I respect the cultures and values they represent and I admire the purity they manifest. In my opinion, Shorin-Ryu karate is the finest fighting style in the world.

The parts of Shorin-Ryu described and illustrated here are those basic techniques and drills which lend themselves to written presentation. Since this manual is to be used only in support of work in the training hall, it is appropriate to leave much unsaid. Each student, now and forever, should look to his primary instructor as the source of correct technique.

Many members of the American Karate Federation assisted in the production of this manual. Sensei Tiktin and Sensei Saprnov

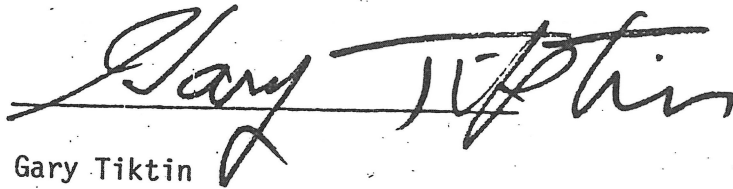
read and revised a draft of the entire text, with the exception of this preface. Gloria Newman also read the entire text and suggested useful revisions. Paul Tanner posed correctly and competently for the illustrations, and Larry Riley took the photographs upon which Byron Mallory's drawings are based. Dr. William Barker supplied medical and anatomical advice relating to techniques, and Allen Yarowsky and Tom Hronik assisted with production, business and legal matters. For the second printing, Liz Hronik assisted with preparation of the manuscript.

In addition to members of the AKF, two other individuals also helped with this manual. Ms. Helen Linneman provided invaluable assistance with reproduction of the illustrations, and Steve DeWitt did a fine job of film processing.

While the persons mentioned and many others deserve credit for their important contributions to this manual, the final responsibility for its content is my own.

Introduction

This manual is an official publication of the American Karate Federation. It reflects the fundamentals of Okinawan Shorin-Ryu karate. It is impossible to learn karate from this book or from any other book. That has not been our purpose. This manual is to supplement regular instruction in the training hall. The student shall continue to develop to the extent that he practices the art and tradition, and therein lies the growth of karate.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Tiktin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line drawn through the middle of the name.

Gary Tiktin

Godan

President and First Teacher

American Karate Federation

Section One

A BACKGROUND TO THE PRACTICE OF KARATE



Karate Students

Students usually begin karate training because they want to become physically tough or because they want to associate with Oriental culture, religion or philosophy. In the American Karate Federation, instruction is directed toward the physical techniques of karate. There is little or no interest in Oriental culture or philosophy as a component of karate instruction. While it may be possible to show historical connections between the martial arts and certain Oriental religions and philosophies, the exploration and explanation of these matters can be done competently only by serious professional scholars with at least reading knowledge of the languages involved and substantial research experience. It is perfectly legitimate for instructors and students to interest themselves in Oriental studies and to pursue those studies at whatever level they wish, but this is not a necessary part of the practice of karate. Especially, American Karate Federation classes are not the proper environment for discussions of Oriental philosophy and religion and their putative relationship to Shorin-Ryu karate.

The regular practice of karate does tend to produce or enhance firmness of purpose, self-confidence and a certain peace of mind in some students. Increased physical prowess often has those effects. More importantly, the practice of Shorin-Ryu karate brings the student into contact with a system of body movement

which is literally hundreds of years old. The great emphasis upon orthodoxy in Shorin-Ryu Matsubayashi karate has assured the preservation of the art, intact, over the years. Thus, the serious student of karate is allowed to learn and to participate in a great tradition. Students may begin karate for any reason, but those who stay to become proficient do so because of their personal involvement with the physical content of the art. Beyond mere physical toughness is an appreciation of the relaxed, natural beauty inherent in an effective technique. The execution of even a perfect center punch may elude all students, but to understand that it exists as an ideal, and to attempt to approach the ideal, is a unique and satisfying personal experience.

The role of the karate instructor is to embody and display good technique. The instructor approaches the ideal more closely than does the student. In western academic practice, the instructor orients both toward his subject and toward his student; he attempts to form a bridge between the two. In karate training, the instructor's attention and concern are turned much more toward his art. While students learn by observing the art expressed in the body of the instructor, the instructor himself is more concerned with approaching the ideal than he is with communicating the art to students. It is the responsibility of the student, therefore, to bridge the gap between the instructor and himself. All that an instructor can possibly "say" about the art is expressed in his movements. The student should observe and imitate, rather than attempt to question and analyze. The instructor alone can determine when and if a student might need verbal guidance. Such

occasions are seldom. The movements of karate are simple and natural. They can best be learned by practice. In time, the body will comfortably accept and express the movements of the art.

The Operation of Classes

American Karate Federation classes are conducted in a formal, disciplined manner. This is absolutely without exception. Classes begin with a standing bow and end with a kneeling bow. Students also bow when entering or leaving the training hall. While individual instructors may choose to use more or less verbal explanation in support of their teaching, there are very few occasions when more than ten percent of a class is given over to expository instruction. Students should concern themselves primarily with observation and imitation. Before or after formal classes, an instructor may choose to allow questions and supply answers, but normally, students should not ask questions or speak to the instructor unnecessarily.

A karate uniform, approved by the instructor, is worn for all classes. Students wear white or unbleached cotton uniforms. Although some stains and tears seem unavoidable, the uniform should be washed frequently and maintained in good repair. When carried to and from classes, the uniform is folded neatly and tied with the belt. Students do not wear protective cups or other body armor. Such devices create a false sense of security and inhibit the development of good karate. Jewelry should be removed before practice and long hair tied back out of the way.

During classes, students should remain in proper formation,

paying close attention to the instructor. There are no breaks or rest periods during training. Students who find it necessary to drop out of class should leave the practice hall, bowing at the door, and not return until the next class. Some instructors may allow students to join a class late if there is good cause and the late arrival is arranged in advance. In such cases, the student should enter the practice hall quietly and join the class unobtrusively. Similar behavior is appropriate if a student has been granted permission to leave a class early.

Individual instructors may make policies regarding spectators which are appropriate to their local situations, but all spectators should behave in a quiet, respectful manner. While Shorin-Ryu classes are not spectacles for the idly curious, persons with a serious interest in the art are welcome to observe. Students from other styles of karate may be allowed to watch classes, or, on occasion, be invited to train with a Shorin-Ryu class. Shorin-Ryu students should not visit other classes without the permission of their instructor.

Karate Rank

In the American Karate Federation, rank is awarded in formal tests. Rank derives from ability, not from time. There is no minimum time required for any rank, and there is no assurance that promotions will occur after a given time. Individuals vary greatly in their ability to learn karate. Very few have the potential to earn a black belt.

Rank is indicated by the color of the belt worn with the uniform. White, green and brown belts represent kyu ranks, and the black belt represents a dan rank. A beginning student may wear the white belt as part of his uniform, but the belt does not represent a rank until the student has passed a test and received a rank card. The relationship of belt colors to kyu levels is as follows.

beginning white belt	- 6th <u>kyu</u>
advanced white belt	- 5th "
beginning green belt	- 4th "
beginning brown belt	- 3rd " (The brown belt
award at third <u>kyu</u>	is a common Shorin-Ryu practice, but in all AKF
schools, 3rd <u>kyu</u>	is awarded as an advanced green belt.)
middle brown belt	- 2nd <u>kyu</u>
advanced brown belt	- 1st "

Each of the five dan levels in the American Karate Federation is represented by a black belt. There is a vast gulf between the kyu or "step" and the dan or "level" rankings. Students must recognize and respect this great difference as part of a correct attitude toward karate training and karate tradition. The dan

rankings have the following names.

1st degree black belt	-	<u>Shodan</u>
2nd " " "	-	<u>Nidan</u>
3rd " " "	-	<u>Sandan</u>
4th " " "	-	<u>Yondan</u>
5th " " "	-	<u>Godan</u>

The award of a first degree black belt represents a very high level of karate ability, developed over years of training. Any further advancement is a quite individual matter, requiring a lengthy additional time of study and training. Because the tests for first degree black belt are so demanding, many aspirants fail, and it is especially difficult to advance beyond that to second degree. A promotion to third degree black belt is an extraordinary event. It recognizes an outstanding level of ability combined with significant contributions to the instruction and growth of the art. The few individuals who hold ranks of third degree black belt and beyond assume major supervisory and administrative responsibilities within the American Karate Federation and normally direct the work of other black belts at the state or national level. All AKF rank is permanent. While a student may quit the organization or give up karate training entirely, he does not lose his rank.

Other Shorin-Ryu rank, outside of the American Karate Federation, extends beyond fifth degree black belt to the single eighth degree, Sensei Nagamine, who wears the red belt.

Breaking

by
Walter Saprnov
Fourth Degree Black Belt
Vice-President, American Karate Federation

Breaking plays a peripheral role in karate. It is not intrinsic to the art, as are kata, nor is it (usually) a part of standard class exercise. Nonetheless, it is a physical manifestation of karate power and can be, to that extent, valuable. The karate student acquires ever-increasing striking power as a part of normal development. Breaking can be a measure of that development. The karate teacher is sometimes asked to demonstrate martial skills formally. Breaking can add display value to such demonstrations. Finally, breaking can yield some physical satisfaction in providing an outlet for karate power built through long and regular training. It is, however, no substitute for that training; nor is it to be confused with fighting skill - bricks do not hit back.

Breaking training begins with the toughening of the parts of the body used to strike the target. These include the elbows, the knuckles, the bases of the hands, the fingertips and the feet. Again, this toughening of all, some or none of these is optional with each student and is not a part of classroom instruction. The toughening exercises differ for the various striking points. For example, the three inches of the outside edge of the arm below the point of the elbow will become hard after the first few elbow breaks. The knuckles, bases of the hands and the feet are