

Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do:

A Guide to Unity of Body, Mind, and Soul



Owen Johnston

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

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Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do:  
A Guide to Unity of Body, Mind, and Soul

Owen Johnston  
2005

**The goal of all training is  
To stand for peace, harmony, and truth**

'The true purpose of budo is the search for truth. In karate, three elements are important - physical strength, spirit and heart. The end of do (the way), cannot be achieved in a few years, rather it is a lifelong search. Perhaps you could say the aim is to make us good Human Beings.'

- Ohtsuka Hironori (6/1/1892 - 1/29/1982), founder of Wado ryu karate

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Introduction

Wado-Ryu Karate-do, as a tool for self-improvement in one's own life and for the lives of others, is rivaled by few other disciplines on earth. It may be practiced nearly anywhere, anytime, and by almost anyone, especially its code of conduct. It is not necessarily a religion, but indeed a discipline that one may apply to one's existing beliefs. It is simply one of many methods by which one may step onto the path of becoming the best person one can possibly be, where one's ultimate teacher will be life itself.

No book can replace formal, technical instruction; as such, this book is primarily designed as a companion guide for the existing or prospective student of Wado-Ryu Karate-do. I also do not pretend that this book is a general guide to the wide world of karate; nor do I present a comprehensive study of its history. Yet, I attempt to make a passable starting point on either subject. Please refer to my **Sources, Inspiration, and Recommended Viewing** section near the end of the book for more details.

I hope that this book indeed serves you well, or at least provides some entertainment value. If you would like to know more, feel free to get in touch with me.

My lineage:

I am the student of Sensei Craig McKenzie. He was taught by Sensei Kevin Marshall, who in turn was taught by Sensei Dale Coker. His teacher was Shihan Ronald Woodard. More lineage information is found in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of the book.

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Part I:  
Foundation -

A Concise History and Lineage of Wado-Ryu

"The Way is not meant as a *way of fighting*. It is a path on which you travel to find your own inner peace and harmony. It is yours to seek and find."

- Ohtsuka Hironori

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Chapter I: History

Hironori Ohtsuka founded Wado-Ryu, the 1st Japanese form of Karate in 1938. It was the result of many years of training in various forms of Japanese Jiu Jitsu and Okinawan Karate, as well as Aikido, developed into a single fluid, powerful, yet peaceful martial art. Wado-Ryu Karate is the Way of Peace and Harmony, and is practiced as a way of life by millions of people worldwide.

For such a relatively new and widely practiced martial art, details of its origin are either scarce or hotly debated. There is also plenty of speculation and rumor. I will give as factual an outline of the history as I am able. Also, I apologize beforehand if it seems that any part of this history is vague, which is a result of the lack of facts pertaining to that particular section. For a more comprehensive study of Karate, Wado-Ryu, and Ohtsuka-sensei, please refer to my endnotes.

Ohtsuka began his martial arts training very young. His great uncle Chojiro Ebashi began teaching him Jiu Jitsu (alternately spelled jujutsu and jujitsu), a grappling oriented art beginning at the age of 3 or 4. He was later enrolled around age 5 or 6 in shindo yoshin-ryu jujutsu ("Sacred Willow Style" jujutsu) under Shinzaburo Nakayama-sensei. This form of Jiu Jitsu was founded by Katsunosuke Matsuoka, a student of Yoshin-ryu jujutsu ("Willow Style"), in the early to mid 1800s. Shindo Yoshin-ryu emphasizes grace and natural movement.

This study of natural flowing movement later played a major role in the development of Wado principles, along with Ohtsuka's training later in life under Morihei Ueshiba O'Sensei, founder of Aikido. The use of the opponent's momentum are as important in defeating him or her as your own movements. Also, Jiu Jitsu's orientation towards rugged practicality influenced Ohtsuka's modifications to the Karate techniques he would later learn.

The Jiu Jitsu community of that time generally retained many of the Samurai traditions and fighting arts from which Jiu Jitsu itself was derived. Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu, for example, contained Kenjutsu influence and a heavier emphasis on striking than many other Jiu Jitsu forms. The Kenjutsu side was a definite influence on the body shifting and hand controlling techniques Ohtsuka later included in Wado-Ryu.

Ohtsuka continued his study of Jiu Jitsu for many years. During his period at Waseda University (from 1910-1917, where he earned his Associate's Degree in Economics) he experimented with various Jiu Jitsu styles to find their best qualities. Even this

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doHistory continued

early on, Ohtsuka began evolving his techniques and principles.

According to many, on June 1st 1920 Ohtsuka was promoted to 4th Grandmaster of Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu. This has been much debated, however. The 3rd grandmaster of Shindo Yoshin Ryu, Tatsuo Matsuoka (grandson of the art's founder), did not pass away until 1989, 7 years after Ohtsuka's death. Also, Ohtsuka's instructor, Nakayama, had previously branched off from the founder to begin his own style and lineage of Shindo Yoshin-ryu. It is also heavily debated as to how much or little of the actual shindo yoshin-ryu jujutsu curriculum was later adopted into Wado ryu. Also, Ohtsuka had, at some time during the early 1920s, been awarded a "menkyo kaiden" certificate. This certification essentially meant he had gained full proficiency in the system. At the very least, Wado was heavily influenced by the shindo yoshin-ryu principles, and some of its waza (techniques).

Nonetheless, Ohtsuka's path as a budoka was set by this point, and would soon take its first fateful turn. He would soon meet the father of modern karate, Gichin Funakoshi. In the fall of 1922, Ohtsuka was giving thought to his future. Although his job at the bank appeared secure, he was not satisfied. He wanted to devote his life to his true passion, the martial arts. This interest was heightened even more when Ohtsuka found out that an Okinawan school teacher, Gichin Funakoshi, was invited by Crown Prince Hirohito to perform karate before the Emperor of Japan at a public hall in Tokyo. Ohtsuka attended the demonstration, and as a result became one of Funakoshi's 35 original Japanese students.

Because of the popularity gained by the demonstration, Funakoshi stayed in Japan. Ohtsuka was at Funakoshi's dojo nearly every night, absorbing the art. By 1924, he became chief assistant instructor. On April 24th, Ohtsuka was named among the first seven black belts in modern karate.

Funakoshi came to rely heavily on Ohtsuka. At 32, Ohtsuka's realized his dream of being a full time martial artist. However, he found Funakoshi's karate (later named Shotokan) lacking. He felt there was little sense behind the philosophies, the kata seemed to have no practical application, and the movements were too confined. Also, Funakoshi did not allow free sparring, leaving no way to truly test his karate. Therefore, while still assisting Funakoshi, Ohtsuka trained with other notable masters. These included Kenwa Mabuni, founder of Shito-Ryu Karate, as well as Choki Motobu, famous for his excellent technical and fighting

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History continued

abilities, and Morihei Ueshiba, founder of Aikido.

Ueshiba O'Sensei helped Ohtsuka find the missing link, and officially begin the creation of Wado. Like Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu, Aikido is a direct descendant of Aikijujutsu (a part of Samurai combative). The greatness of Aikido is in its reliance on natural movements, focusing on breathing, relaxation, and "ki" (life force; breath; spirit). Whereas most karate tended to generate tension in performing techniques, Aikido was the opposite. Instead of meeting force of force, it blended with and redirected the opposing force or ki.

It was upon learning Aikido that Ohtsuka-sensei began to form a new budo, a Way of Harmony. He would eventually blend the basics of Funakoshi's karate, the practicality of Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu, and the spirituality of Aikido, as well as the natural, evasive movements of the latter two. Much like the Jiu Jitsu influence on Ohtsuka-meijin's budo, Aikido had more influence on the principles from which techniques are derived, rather than the specific techniques themselves. Also, it would appear that Shito ryu Karate and Shindo Yoshin Ryu Jiu Jitsu had a much heavier influence on Wado than Aikido.

Ohtsuka gradually incorporated knowledge from Jiu Jitsu, Aikido, and the other karate sensei he trained with, into the classes Funakoshi-sensei had put him in charge of. This included free fighting, and weaving his newfound principles into the kata. While many students agreed with the changes being made, Funakoshi-sensei viewed them as contrary to his teachings. Due to their disagreements, it was in 1930 that Ohtsuka-sensei and Funakoshi-sensei finally parted ways.

Over the 4 years that followed, with help from students who also left Funakoshi's instruction, Ohtsuka continued his own teaching. Constantly developing his new budo, he focused on deriving practical defense from formal art. A major breakthrough was the idea of Kihon Kumite Kata, which became his greatest contribution to martial arts. In blending Jiu Jitsu, Aikido, and Karate, he created not only 36 new kata, but a new budo.

Ohtsuka-sensei created the All Japan Karate-do Research Organization (*Dai Nippon Karatedo Shinko Kai*) in 1934, after encouragement from many of his students. Also, his son Jiro (later known as Hironori Ohtsuka II), who would later become Ohtsuka's heir, was born that same year.

Four years later, the All Japan Classical Martial Arts

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Festival (*Dai Nippon Kobudo Tai Kai*) invited Ohtsuka-sensei to demonstrate his controversial new style. He was asked to name the style prior to the demonstration, and he registered it as Shin Shu Wado Ryu Karate-jujutsu - New Style Way of Harmony School. The year after, when Dai Nippon Butokukai requested all Japanese martial arts and their chief instructors register their names, Ohtsuka-sensei gave the name Wado-Ryu - Way of Peace and Harmony.

Ohtsuka-sensei continued teaching, and Wado-Ryu eventually became one of the most highly regarded Japanese martial arts. The 1st All Japan Wado-Ryu Karate championships were held in 1955. In 1963, Mr. Arakawa, Mr. Takashima, and Mr. Tatsao Suzuki left Japan to help spread Wado-Ryu Karate to Europe and America. Emperor Hirohito in 1966 awarded Ohtsuka-sensei with The Grand Order of the Rising Sun (*Kyuokujitsusho*). In 1972, the president of International Martial Arts Federation (*Kokusai Budo Renmei*) awarded Ohtsuka the title of "meijin" (master), the first time a karateka had been given such an honor in Japan. Even now, many years after his death in 1982, people all over the world are still being affected in a positive way by Ohtsuka's Wado-Ryu Karate-do, which is his ultimate honor.

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Chapter II: Karate Lineage

A brief history of Karate is detailed later in the book. Outlined here is a basic lineage. Any further worthwhile information is accepted and appreciated.

**Sokon Matsumura**

Student of Kong Su Kung/Kushanku and Sakugawa

Matsumura taught Okinawan Shuri-te which later became known as Shorin-Ryu. This form was a combination of Sakugawa's tode, and Kong Su Kung's Chinese Boxing.

**Yasutsune Itosu**

Student of Sokon Matsumura

Itosu-sensei continued Shorin-Ryu as it was originally taught by Matsumura-sensei.

**Kanryo Higaonna**

He practiced and taught the Naha-te style which became known as Shorei-Ryu (influenced directly by Zhao Long Liu, a Chinese martial art). After his death, Shorei-ryu was continued by Chojun Miyagi, who later formulated it into Goju-Ryu.

**Kosanku Matsumora**

He practiced and taught Tomari-te.

Other practitioners and styles at/around the time:

Hohan Sokan, founder of Matsumuro Seito

Chotoku Kyan, founder of Shobayashi-Ryu

Chosin Chibana, founder of Kobayashi-Ryu

Shosin Nagamine, founder of Matsubayashi-Ryu

Joen Nakazato, founder of Shorinji-Ryu

Kanbun Uechi, founder of Uechi-Ryu

Motubi-Ryu, a family style

Isshin-Ryu, founded by Tatsuo Shimabuku.

Toon-Ryu, founded by Juhatsu Kiyoda.

Shito-Ryu, founded by Kenwa Mabuni.

Okinawan Kempo, a combination of Shuri-te, Naha-te, and Tomari-te, founded by Shigeru Nalamura.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doLineage continued**Gichin Funakoshi**Student of Yasutsune Itosu and Sokon Matsumura

The father of modern karate-do, Funakoshi-sensei founded Shotokan Karate-do in the 1920's after popularizing his martial art in Japan. He originally studied under not only Matsumura and Itosu-sensei but a number of other masters, whom Funakoshi talks about in detail in his *Karate-do: My Way of Life*.

**Choki Motobu**Student of Soken Matsumura and Anko Itosu of Shuri, Kosaku Matsumora of Tomari, and possibly Tokumine

His teaching methods primarily consisted of Naihanchi kata for kihon (basics), and kumite. He stressed up-close fighting.

**Hironori Ohtsuka**Student of Gichin Funakoshi

Founder of Wado-Ryu Karate-do, Ohtsuka-sensei developed the style as a blend of the basics and kata of Shotokan Karate, the rugged practicality and natural movements of Shindo Yoshin-ryu Jiu Jitsu, and the fluidity and peacefulness of Aikido. The Wado-Ryu symbol represents peace encompassing strength.

In the months leading to his retirement, he decided that his son was to succeed him as grandmaster of Wado-Ryu. However, some of the higher level Wado-Ryu Karateka were not in favor of this decision. Negotiations took place, but no agreement could be reached as to the next grandmaster. As a result, some of the karateka split off to form their own associations.

**Hironori Ohtsuka II (Ohtsuka Jiro)**Son & Student of Hironori Ohtsuka

Months before his father's death, he and a group split from Japan Karate Federation-Wadokai. His split is named Wadoryu Renmei. It is regarded as a private group. In 1989 a new split occurred. Suzuki Tatsuo, resident in London, founded International Wadoryu Federation. Apparently, Jiro misappropriated organizational funds and was kicked out of JKF-Wadokai. There is documentation supporting this, although the succession argument is the one most backed by Jiro as to the split.

**Hironori Ohtsuka III**Grandson of Hironori Ohtsuka

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doLineage continued**Tatsao Suzuki**Senior Student of Hironori OhtsukaFounder of International Wadoryu Federation

Suzuki sensei was one of the primary influences in spreading Wado throughout Europe. As a result, Wado is currently the most widely practiced form of karate in Britain.

Lineage of my personal Wado ryu:**Kiyohisa Hirano-soke**Student of Hironori OhtsukaFounder of Japan International Karate Center

Hirano-soke founded Heiwa-do, his interpretation of Wado-Ryu Karate-do. It also blends in ideas from Shotokan, Shito-Ryu, and Goju-Ryu, as well as Aikido, Iaido, and Judo. The basic strategy and philosophies are classical Wado-Ryu.

Shotokan's scientific approach to body physics helps students grasp instruction more easily. Shito's efficiency & superior stances are also adopted. Also integrated into the movements are Goju-Ryu's dynamic breathing methods.

The name Heiwa-do uses the first kanji (Japanese set of Chinese loanwords) of Hirano (Hira, or Hei) & the 1st character from Wado (Wa). The do in Heiwa-do translates to The Way. Heiwa-do's name was created out of respect for its origins in Wado-Ryu. Heiwa also happens to be the Japanese word for peace; therefore Heiwa-do literally means The Way of Peace.

**Shihan Ronald Woodard**Student of Kiyohisa Hirano-soke & current shihan of JIKCShihan Woodard is the 1st JIKC instructor in continental US.**Sensei Dale Coker**Student of Shihan Ronald WoodardFounder of Nippon Kokusai Karate CenterFounder of Japan Karate Institute**Sensei Curtis Boyd**Student of Sensei Dale Coker**Sensei Kevin Marshall**Student of Sensei Dale Coker

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Part II:  
Fundamentals -  
Principles, Techniques, and Kata

Included herein are the underlying concepts of the self-defense side of Wado-Ryu Karate-do, meant to be applied to every day life.

A comprehensive listing of all techniques and variations as practiced in every family style and branch of Wado-Ryu, as well as the differences in kata between branches, is beyond the focus of this book. Also, no book, no matter how technical the explanations and pictures, can possibly replace formal instruction. Therefore, included herein is a general guide that I hope will serve you alongside your daily training.

The general learning curve intended is for body mechanics, mental preparations, and ethical precepts to be practiced in the first phases of training. After such training, application of principles, mental focus, and personal development may be assisted.

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Chapter III: Wado ryu Karate Principles

**The Way of Peace School of The Empty Hand**

We should seek unity, harmony, and peace within ourselves and the world around us. Do not look to one way of doing things or one technique. Instead, internalize all you have learned, to become water that takes the shape of the situation, and the path of least resistance. Do not meet force with force, but avoid attacks with body movements, footwork, and deflection. Blend naturally with opposing energy to find an advantage or solution.

**Zanshin**

"Remaining mind" / Awareness.

**Haragei**

Breathing art/"Belly art"/Body Focus. Breathe, relax, and settle your body, naturally.

**Mushin**

"Mind-without-thinking"/Mental Focus. Empty your mind and be fully aware of all angles. Do not concentrate on one technique, but let your principles guide you according to the situation.

**Kiai**

"Life force harmony"/Spirit Focus. Exert your spirit in a powerful yet natural way. Be flexible, intimidating, and untouchable.

**Tai Sabaki**

Body management/body shifting/"optimum utilization". Wado-Ryu movements are performed with economy of motion.

**The 3 body shifting methods - San mi Ittai**

These are the 3 body shifting methods that typify Wado-Ryu.

Ten-i - **Move away** from the attack.

Ten-tai - **Turn** and realign the body to dodge the attack or reduce the area on your body that is vulnerable to attack.

Ten-gi - **Perform techniques** while the attack passes through. Consider using his/her momentum to your advantage.

**Timings for counter attack**

Consider uses for the body shifting methods.

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Wado ryu Karate Principles continued

Go no Sen - **Defensive attack.** Counter once the attack is completed, but before the opponent is able to attack again.

Sen - **Simultaneously attack** with the attacker. You will complete your counter first, and/or displace the attacker's movement.

Sensen no Sen - **Preempt the attack** with your own, by perceiving your opponent's intent. This will catch him/her off guard, breaking his/her mental balance.

**Defensive movements**

Heavily influenced by Shindo Yoshin-ryu jujutsu, these movements are used to control the opponent's energy. These movements apply maai and body shifting. Consider uses of the timings for counter attack.

Nagasu - **Flowing / Fluidity.** Move evasively off the line of attack but closely enough that the attacker's force can be used to add to your own. Often combined with penetrating into an opponent's side (irimi).

Irimi - **Move to enter** the opponent's attack.

Inasu - **Move under, inside, or around** the attack.

Noru - **Control** the opponent's movement.

**Musubi**

"Connection". This deals with finding the opponent's center of gravity. Imagine touching fine silk - use no energy. In this way you must become undecipherable. Focusing on skill in application rather than force guarantees proper use of principle, and that the opponent will be less likely to be able to use their own strength against you. Relax and develop sensitivity! Once you find this, you will find the same principles in all waza. Remember to push with the hands and pull with the feet.

**Maai**

The state of mind and spirit of the combatants, and the distance between them. Keep enough space to attack and defend. At a high level, you control the spirit and energy of a conflict. Draw a reaction from the opponent that will give you a tactical advantage. Practice the above principles to understand maai, and practice maai to apply the following. Never stop studying tactics so you may better see from this broad view.

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Wado ryu Karate Principles continued

**Ki Ken Tai no Ichi**

"Mind and Body as One". Coordination of mind and body in movement. Thought and action must become one; there is no time to concentrate on thought in battle.

**Hei Jo Shin**

"Calm mind and body". When the opponent feints or draws a weapon, you should not flinch, but be prepared. Harness the adrenal state so that you do not panic, but fight reflexively.

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Chapter IV: Techniques & Terms

**Basic Directions/Positions:**

High (Jodan) / Middle (Chudan) / Low (Gedan)  
Left (Hidari) / Right (Migi)  
Centerline (Seichusen)

**Strikes:**

Arm Strikes:

Knife hand (Shuto)  
Ridge hand (Haito)  
Elbow strike (Empi zuki)  
Hammer fist (Tettsui)  
Back fist (Uraken zuki)  
Spear hand thrust (Nukite tsuki)  
One knuckle punch (Ippon ken)  
Palm strike (Kamate)  
Jab (Tibokomizuki / Kizamizuki)  
Cross (Chokuzuki)  
Reverse Punch (Gyakuzuki)  
Hook (Furizuki / Kagizuki)  
Uppercut (Urazuki)

Kicks:

Front kick (Mae geri)  
Roundhouse kick (Mawashi geri)  
Side thrust kick (Yoku geri)  
Back kick (Ushiro geri)  
Inward & Outward Crescent kicks (Mikazuki geri)  
Knee kick (Hiza geri)

**Blocks:**

High block (Jodan uke)  
Outward & Inward middle blocks (Chudan soto uke, Chudan uchi uke)  
Low block (Gedan bari uke)  
Knife hand block (Shuto uke), Support hand block (Morote uke)  
Round block (Mawashi uke)  
Elbow block (Hui uke)  
Cross arm block (Juji uke)  
Sweeping block (Nagashi uke)  
Circle block

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doTechniques continued**Stances:**

Attention stance (Musubi dachi - feet together)  
 Ready stance (Jigotai dachi)  
 Horse stance (Naihanchi dachi)  
 Straddle / 45 degree horse stance (Shiko dachi)  
 Cat foot stance (Neko ashi dachi)  
 Back stance (Kokutsu dachi)  
 Front stance (Zenkutsu dachi)  
 Hanmi (Half facing stance / posture)  
 Sanchin dachi (Hourglass stance, as used in Goju ryu)  
 Crane stance (Tsuru dachi)  
 Side / Hooked stance  
 Forward stance

**Grappling:**

This includes takedowns, as well as seizing & controlling techniques. These deal with various body points, including vital organs, muscles, joints, and nerve clusters. When using locks, maintain pressure and use pain to control or subdue the opponent.

Remember to control all the joints in the arm when applying wrist / arm locks, and to push with your hands rather than pull (do not depend on the opponent for balance!). The key is to not allow the opponent to use their strength to resist - find their center and attack their weak line of movement and use circular movements to defeat the linearity of the human body.

Study kuzushi and sensitivity to understand not only grappling, but striking - don't miss the forest for the trees!

**Locks:**

Arm lock (Ude gatame), Cross arm lock (Juji gatame)  
 Wrist lock variations  
 Neck crank variations (rear naked choke, etc.)

**Sweeps:**

Major outer and inner reaps (Osoto gari, Uchi gari)  
 Minor outer and inner reaps (Kosoto gari, Kouchi gari)  
 Foot sweep (Okuriashi harai), Forward foot sweep (Deashi harai)

**Positions:**

Standing - Rear, front, side  
 Ground - Side/half mount, full mount, guard

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doTechniques continued**Drills:**Alternate sparring

Take turns striking, with no blocking or hard contact.

Call sparring

Call a technique, and wait for your partner to say "Hai" before you attack. He/she will then defend and counter. It is then your partner's turn to attack.

Sticking hands (Sensitivity drill)

You and your partner face each other upclose in fighting stances, and use only your hands. This helps develop sensitivity to direction of force, redirection, & natural counters. It may be also help further understand bunkai, and how to not depend only on one's eyes in close-range fighting. Sticking hands helps drill Ki Ken Tai no Ichi and Hei Jo Shin. Practice this well.

Kuzushi (Balance breaking)

You & your partner clinch, and use momentum, body mechanics, sticking hands, foot sweeps/reaps, etc. to try to break one another's balance. Try to create openings for takedowns.

Remember that Major outer reap uses the back leg on the opposite leg. Major inner reap aims for the inside (mirror image). Minor outer reap uses the front leg on the same side (mirror image), and Minor inner reap aims to the opposite leg.

**Self-defense techniques:**

When attacked, one must counter quickly and efficiently. Use both grappling and striking skills as necessary.

A few self defense examples:

<u>Technique</u>	<u>Counter</u>
Choke hold	Punch, Wrist Lock, control, juji gatame
Outward Crescent Kick	High block, reap, knock-out techniques
Front Snap Kick	Scoop block, reap, punch
Front Snap Kick	Evade or knee block, punch, reap, k.o.
Roundhouse Kick	Evade, Block & pull takedown
Roundhouse Kick	Evade block, Reverse Punch, reap, k.o.

Punch Counter 1:

Pulling Block with the near hand as you step to the

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doTechniques continued

attacker's outside, and attack to the neck. Wrap your attacking arm around the neck to apply a neck crank. Use your attacking hand to hold on to your other bicep, as you push down and forward on the head with your free hand to cut off breathing. Your back should be turned towards him/her to prevent groin strikes. Use your near knee to strike upwards on theirs, and apply more pressure on the neck until he/she taps out or goes unconscious.

---

Punch Counter 2:

Block forearm with near hand and strike bicep with far hand. Use blocking hand to trap, tetsui with striking hand. Continue to trap behind the head, knee the body, elbow the head, and apply a neck crank with leverage.

---

Punch Counter 3:

Mawashi uke to the outside and trap the attacking hand. Elbow to the head, knee to the body, and elbow to his/her elbow. One may then outward tetsui and foot sweep, followed by kicks, or a submission grapple such as juji gatame or rear naked choke.

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Punch Counter 4:

Smash the near knee with a side or front kick, as you block / evade and trap the attacking hand under your arm. Knock the attacker into submission or unconsciousness with elbows, knees, and other in-close strikes to vital organs. The trapped arm may also be cranked in an arm lock if necessary.

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Circular Punch/Knife Counter:

Against a wide untrained punch, a hook, or a knife thrust to the neck, apply Shiho Nage (four step throw). Maintain control of the wrist and get the weapon (if any) away from him/her.

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Straight Punch/Knife Counter:

Enter the outside of the attack (irimi). Push him/her off balance with mawashi uke as you evade as you strike the jaw line with the near elbow or tetsui the solar plexus with the near hand. Apply a wrist lock and twist the attacker to the ground, or use your near elbow to raise the jaw and strike downwards at the neck (using a downward "cutting" motion) to effect a takedown. In either case, control the attacker on the way down as well as the weapon; move it away from the attacker as soon as possible.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doChapter V: Kata

**"A kata may be regarded as an integration of offensive and defensive techniques, but it is more than that. One should try to understand the spirit of the master karateka who created the kata, for it has a life of its own and requires five or six years to be mastered."**

**- Hironori Ohtsuka, Wado-Ryu founder**

Kata - "Formal movements"; in the context of Japanese martial arts, an "imaginary fight".  
 Bunkai - Principles and application of kata.

**Kata:**

Wado-Ryu kata tend to use the Okinawan names. Alternate names included are the Japanese / Shotokan names, unless otherwise indicated. The kata included in any particular dojo's curriculum may vary from this list, however. As such, this list is intended to be informative to those interested in kata history, rather than suggestive of what should be required to learn. I also do not pretend that my information is complete / perfect, due to a lack of written records in early "te" history, and ongoing debate. I have also listed various other kata I am aware of.

**Kata list****List of Wado ryu kata**

Pinan (Heian) series: Shodan, Nidan, Sandan, Yodan, and Godan  
 "Peaceful Mind" Numbers 1-5. Said to be created by Anko Itosu in 1905 or 1906, basing them on Kushanku, and a forgotten kata called Channan. There is some debate as to whether Kushanku was instead formulated from the Pinan series, however. Ohtsuka-meijin studied the Pinan series under both Funakoshi- and Mabuni-sensei. Ohtsuka later made modifications to these kata under the direction of Mabuni, and also used influences from Shindo Yoshin ryu jujutsu.

Kushanku (Kanku Dai)

"Sky Viewing". Said to be the most advanced of all Okinawan kata. Ohtsuka-sensei studied Kushanku under Funakoshi- and Mabuni-sensei.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continuedChinto (Gankaku)

"Fighting to the East" / "Crane on a Rock". Formulated in Tomari from the teachings of a Chinese sailor of the same name, this kata was based mostly on White Crane Kung-Fu and later adopted into shuri-te. Ohtsuka-sensei studied variations of this kata under masters Funakoshi and Mabuni.

Seishan (Hangetsu)

"13 Hands"/"Crescent Moon". It is based on movements brought from Fukien to Okinawa circa 1700. Ohtsuka-sensei also knew and taught the shuri-te version of Seishan.

Naifanchi / Naihanchi (Tekki Shodan)

"Holding your ground", "The Iron Horse", or "Battlefield". Named after naihanchi dachi, which the kata centers around. This kata was transmitted by Matsumura-sensei throughout Shuri and Tomari sometime before 1825. Master Ohtsuka learned Naifanchi from Motobu-sensei, although it appears Ohtsuka's Naifanchi is slightly different from Motobu's.

Bassai

"To Penetrate A Fortress". An Okinawan Tomari-te kata. It uses dynamic stances and hip rotation to find a way past attacks. The Shotokan, Shito, and Wado ryu versions of Bassai are directly based upon Master Itosu's Bassai. Ohtsuka-meijin learned Bassai from Funakoshi-sensei.

Wanshu (Empi)

"Flying Swallow". A Tomari-te kata based on movements brought to Okinawa in 1683 by a Chinese envoy of the same name. Ohtsuka-sensei learned Wanshu from Master Funakoshi.

Jion

"Temple Sounds" / "In the Jion-ji Shaolin Temple". A Tomari-te kata, it is named after the Jion-Je, a Buddhist temple. This is a strong kata Ohtsuka studied under Funakoshi and Mabuni.

Jutte (Jitte - alternate spelling)

"Ten Hands". It is said that anyone who masters this Tomari-te kata has the strength of 5 men. Ohtsuka learned this kata under Funakoshi and Mabuni.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continuedRohai (Meikyo)

"Clear Mirror", "The Mirror of the Soul", or "White Heron". Originally a Tomari-te kata, a version of it was taught by Itosu-sensei. Itosu Rohai was taught by Master Mabuni to Ohtsuka. The Rohai practiced in Wado is known as Rohai Shodan, in Shotokan.

Suparimpei (Pechurrin - Chinese name)

"108 Steps" (represents the 108 evil spirits of man). Developed from a Chinese form used in systems including Dragon Boxing and Tiger Boxing. Practiced in Wado.

Niseishi (Nijushiho)

Transmitted by Ankichi Aragaki, variations of this Shuri-te kata exist in Shotokan, Shito, and Wado.

Unsu (Unshu - alternate spelling)

"Defense of a Cloud" or "Cloud Hand". This Tomari-te kata is practiced in Shotokan, Shito, and Wado.

Kihon Kumite Kata (Basic Sparring Forms):

The 1st 10 out of the original 36 are still practiced in many Wado dojo. These kata are two-person drills.

Ipponme / Nihonme / Sanbonme / Yohonme / Gohonme  
Rokuhonme / Shichihonme / Hachibonme / Kyuhonme / Juhonme

**List of other kata (terribly incomplete!)**

Kihon Kata Shodan / Nidan

Basic Forms 1 and 2

Sei Shi

"24 Steps". A Shorin-ryu kata performed in 3 directions - the points of a triangle.

Seipai

Variations exist in Goju-ryu and Shito-ryu. It was influenced by White Crane Kung-Fu.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continuedAnnan

A Shito-ryu kata that primarily uses open hand techniques. It also has a Goju variation. Annan has great versatility and speed in its self defense techniques.

Useishi (Gojushiho Sho)

"54 steps" number one. A Shotokan kata.

Gojushiho Dai

"54 steps" number two. A Shotokan kata.

Ji'in

Variations exist in Shotokan, Shito & Wado.

Nipaipo

A Shito kata with a Chinese flair.

**Bunkai**

Bunkai, or application, is not simply one prescribed method but interpreting the movements according to the principles. Therefore, the following bunkai is not meant to be "the right way" or "the only way", but instead meant to get you thinking.

**Wado ryu kata bunkai**Pinan Shodan

This kata helps movements become stable, efficient, and intimidating. The first technique, "c block", sets up for a redirection. Even the sword hand blocks can become attacks.

Pinan Nidan

This kata instructs further on timing, distance management, and counter-attacking quickly.

Pinan Sandan

This kata teaches a continuous guard. It also helps become body shifting, consistency of stances, and redirection of attack. The first half may be interpreted in various ways. When practicing Pinan Nidan, imagine perceiving an opponent's intent less predictable, and more efficient. The middle & low blocks in

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continued

the beginning may be termed "continuous block", which may be interpreted in many ways. The turn after the spearhand strike, and follow-up with the outward tetsui, is twisting out of the opponent's grappling of your arm, and countering.

The use of the elbows in naihanchi dachi may be either strikes or strong blocks. This may be interpreted in many ways in close quarters. The last moves of the kata may be seen as elbowing to both the back and front, breaking rear grapples with an elbow to each opponent's abdomen and a hook to the face, or a powerful hook or elbow to an opponent in front.

Pinan Yodan

Stepping into a back stance as you double block disrupts the opponent's movement, as you simultaneously block and counter. Blocking behind you immediately after the initial blocks cuts a sneak attack short. The low block, front snap kick, and elbow combination will block, stumble, and knock out an opponent. The sequence after the second elbow assists in learning how to follow through with attacks, and helps practice economy of motion.

The cross-block that begins the second half of the kata counters a grab attempt. Pulling the hand back as you kick may be interpreted as trapping the opponent's arm under yours, and pulling him/her into a kick to the groin.

Pinan Godan

The high cross block sets up for an arm lock, tetsui, and finishing punch. The jump ends with a strike to a fallen opponent. The palm strikes followed by pulling motions represent attacking the groin and causing severe trauma to it.

Kushanku

The Pinan kata help one understand Kushanku, as there are many similarities. The ready phase of Kushanku clears the mind. The slow motions may often be used as blocks and/or attacks, but it is preferable to perform them slowly for breathing and focus. Practice consistency in stances, torque, and momentum in this kata. Kushanku provides endless insight, and helps greatly in the study of other advanced kata.

In the second half, the sequence that ends with a punch to the ground represents blocking a kick, throwing the opponent, and knocking him/her out. The next sequence blocks and throws an

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continued

opponent, then jumps over him/her to kick another, and follows through with a finishing strike. The last sequence is a takedown with a knockout blow.

Naihanchi

Naihanchi develops lower body strength. It also teaches one to settle all one's strength in the abdomen/center and draw from it. The methods employed in Naihanchi are best applied and interpreted in a narrow space.

Bassai

Bassai builds a stronger, more efficient defense. The first two middle blocks may be seen as a kick counter and takedown; the backfists near the end may also be used this way by performing scooping blocks to set up for the attacks. The crescent kick redirects an attack, so as to set up for the elbow strike. After the elbow is 3 sets of double strikes to counter a rear grapple attempt.

Wanshu

Wanshu, like Bassai, is technical and efficient, but is of a more aggressive nature. It is also a study in timing and follow-through. Stepping into side stance as you set up for a low block may be seen as body shifting to dodge an attack, as you move in to punch the opponent. The jump represents stomping on a downed opponent while preparing to block an attack from another.

Jion

Jion is very direct, yet powerful, stable, and technical. Its use of stances will greatly assist your footwork. Remember, the physical side of fighting is done from the ground up.

The first technique may be considered as a striking block, and its uses are numerous. Compare this to Pinan Sandan. The low block and middle block in back stance sequence sets up for a pulling block and punch counter. Performing low block in back stance, then a supported backfist in jigotsu dachi may represent blocking a low punch, then sweeping a kick.

**Other kata bunkai**Kihon Kata Shodan

Basic awareness, stances, defenses, attack angles, economy

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continued

of motion, & focus. High Blocks 2 & 3 may be used as strikes.

Kihon Kata Nidan

It teaches power generation through hip twisting and body torque as well as momentum.

Seipai

As an Okinawan kata, Seipai uses a small structure to reinforce mobility. Due to the Crane influence, Seipai is a study in entering and parrying. The first combination blocks and pulls a low attack, then knocks the attacker down. The rolling motion of the arms after the turn, low block, middle block, and mawashi uke combination represents a damaging arm lock. In a variation of Seipai, juji uke is performed just before the sweep. The last two strikes of the kata knock the opponent down, then out.

Gojushiho Sho

This kata is a study in close quarters techniques. The first sequence is a double wrist block, and counter attack. The sequences after the elbow strike represent a kick counter, nukite, and grapple counter. The last sequence represents blocking an attack to the midsection, blocking a grapple attempt, then counter attacking to the collar bones.

Annan

Annan contains many practical, efficient counter attack methods. It is also very useful in practicing breathing, focus, and fighting principles. Raising the knee and striking with the finger may represent blocking a kick, then hitting the vital point below the ear. Stepping into naihanchi dachi, extending the hands, and clinching them into fists will jam the opponent, and grab him/her to gain control for the side kick. The "ox jaw" wrist blocking sequence near the end blocks a middle punch, then knocking the shoulder out of joint.

**Overview:**

Aside from the dojo precepts, kata is traditionally Karate-do's primary tool for personal development. It is the textbook of Karate-do that is to be learned, understood, and applied. It is

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doKata continued

the tool by which Karate-do demonstrates fighting principles, but also creates unity in one's body, mind, and soul.

What may seem unnatural motions become second nature with training and practice. Kata assists in drilling good habits, and replacing bad ones. Once the techniques have been absorbed, patterns, principles, and body mechanics may be understood. The "art" of "martial art" is understanding these underlying ideas, that guide techniques and give them meaning. A technique is not just a strike or block, but also the factors necessary for those to work (timing, movement, and so forth). By practicing kata, and drilling "bunkai", you will learn to apply principles with no extra "clutter".

The fighting principles, when well applied, will work in many situations. Awareness and defensive principles help avoid, assess, or diffuse encounters. The search for unity means we should use lethal force as a last resort. The key is to move last, but hit first. In this way, there is no first strike in karate, but we meet force with a passive counter. Look for new ways to interpret kata - many secrets may be found...or created.

Mentally, kata teaches focus, and attention to all angles. One must cut through disclarity of mind to understand kata, and with this a growing process takes place. You will find bunkai where you did not before, as you imagine the problems the kata creators faced. This problem solving that kata teaches is invaluable. It balances the mind and grounds it to a reality that is still unpredictable, yet enriched by clearer understanding.

Physically, kata enforces proper use of body structure. It also strengthens the muscles through natural body weight exercises. Practiced vigorously, kata improves cardiovascular efficiency. Kata is therapeutic and empowering.

Spiritually, kata provides a path of self awareness. In practicing or even creating new kata, one builds resolve. In aiming for mastery, one builds patience. In either, one has to continually search in and outside of themselves, that one may learn how to apply the truths contained within kata.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doPart III:Dojo -Philosophy, Terms, and Ranking System

The following material is what I personally teach. However, I do understand that regional and personal differences will necessarily make for different experiences in the dojo you choose. It is my hope that the following chapters will give you an idea of what you may expect in a Wado-Ryu Karate dojo. The lessons you learn there can last a lifetime. Don't settle for less! You're looking for comprehensive training that will make you proficient in a well-rounded system of defense...and living.

Students are promoted based on personal merit, not just proficiency of fighting technique. Belts are worn simply to help fellow students *approximately* classify one's level of *technical* proficiency.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

Chapter VI: Philosophy

**Purpose of Karate Training**

To stand for peace, harmony, and truth!

**Dojo Precepts**

- 1) Perfect one's character!
- 1) Dedicate oneself to others!
- 1) Uphold honor, bravery, and justice!
- 1) Never stop learning!
- 1) Obtain victory without conflict!

**Mukso (Meditation)**

- 1) Meditation warms up the mind before training hard  
Clear the mind and focus!
- 2) Meditation cools down the mind after training hard.  
Think about what you did well, and what you want to work on.

**Bowing**

Shomen ni rei - Bow to the front  
Otagai ni rei - Bow to each other

**Respect**

- 1) Respect one another on and off the training floor.
- 2) Respect your teachers or seniors by giving them your best.
- 3) Respect everyone by upholding the principles of right conduct.
- 4) Respect yourself by doing the best you can for others.

**Traditions**

- 1) Do's and Don'ts: Don't wear anything on your feet on the training floor, or anything that inhibits training. Snacks are not allowed. Do wear your uniform to class & all dojo functions.
- 2) Courtesy / Respect: Bow when entering and leaving the training floor. Bow when a teacher enters or leaves the training floor. Say "Thank you" or "Arigato" and "Hai, sensei" often. Ask the teacher first before you leave the floor for any reason.
- 3) Relationships: Teacher-Student (oyabun-kobun) and Senior-Junior (sempai-kohai). In Japanese tradition, the relationship of master & apprentice is comparable to that of parent & child. In the dojo, one should respect seniors highly & with seriousness.
- 4) Honor: Carry yourself in an honorable fashion in dealing with people in and out of the dojo.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doChapter VII: Terms**Pronunciation**

Ei is like long a, ai is like ie in pie, y is like long e

**General**

Dojo	- "Place of the Way"; The training hall
Sensei	- "One who comes before"; Instructor
Sempai	- "Senior"; Senior Student / Assistant Instructor
Kohai	- "Junior"; Instructor-in-training
Wado-Ryu	- "School of the Peaceful Way"
Karate-do	- "Way of the Empty Hand"; Founded in Okinawa as a system of self-defense & conduct
Hai	- Yes

**Commands**

Yoi	- Ready
Kiyotsuke rei	- Line up, bow
Jiyu kumite	- Free sparring
Hajime	- Start
Yame	- Stop
Mawate	- Turn
Seiza	- Formal Japanese sitting position
Mukso	- Concentration / Meditation
Shomen ni rei	- Bow to the front
Otagai ni rei	- Bow to each other
Tate	- Stand up

**Counting**

Ichi	- One
Ni	- Two
San	- Three
Shi	- Four
Go	- Five
Roku	- Six
Shichi	- Seven
Hachi	- Eight
Ku	- Nine
Chu	- Ten

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doChapter VIII: Syllabus**Kyu** - Class (10th to 1st)**Dan** - Grade/Step (1st to 10th)

The requirements for each rank include any/all previous requirements, and include noted additions and changes.

**10th kyu (Beginning Rank)**Requirements: A willingness to learn! ☺**9th kyu**Requirements:**Blocks:** High & Low blocks; Inward & Outward Middle blocks**Strikes:** Jab, Reverse punch, Backfist, Front snap kick**Stances:** Musubi dachi, Jigotai dachi, Zenkutsu dachi**Sparring:** Alternate & Call sparring**Personal:** Try to do a good deed every day, no matter the size.**8th kyu****Strikes:** Hook, uppercut, elbow, crescent kicks**Stances:** Naihanchi dachi, Kokutsu dachi**Kata:** Naihanchi, and bunkai**Also:** Dojo Precepts and Purpose of Karate training memorized**7th kyu****Blocks:** Sword hand block, Sword hand strike, Ridgehand strike**Strikes:** Spear hand thrust, Roundhouse kick**Stances:** Back stance**Kata:** 1/4<sup>th</sup> of Kushanku, and bunkai**Sparring:** Basic tai sabaki (body shifting); 2 rounds of light free sparring**Also:** Sticking hands (Sensitivity drill); improved footwork**6th kyu****Strikes:** Hammer strike, kamate (palm)**Kata:** Half of Kushanku, and bunkai**Sparring:** Improved combinations (Lots of pad work!); Basic ma-ai (application of fighting ranges)**Also:** Kuzushi (Balance breaking); Grappling & takedown basics  
Acceptance of *Kohai* rank (see requirements on page 36)**Optional:** Any Pinan series kata

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doSyllabus continued5th kyu**Strikes:** Side thrust kick**Kata:** 3/4<sup>th</sup> of Kushanku, and bunkai**Sparring:** 2 rounds of medium contact free sparring (instead of light sparring); Breaking the opponent's line: Defense & Attack timings**Also:** Attack by drawing; At least one self-defense technique4th kyu**Strikes:** Back kick**Stances:** Catfoot stance**Kata:** All of Kushanku, and bunkai**Sparring:** Improved maai, broken rhythm, discipline, application of principles; 3 rounds of medium contact free sparring**Also:** An obvious dedication to self improvement.3rd kyu**Blocks:** Morote uke**Strikes:** Spinning back kick**Kata:** Bassai, and bunkai**Other:** At least two self-defense techniques**Overall:** Economy of motion; basic development of strategy (Remember, this is more than just technique versus technique!)2nd kyu**Blocks:** Mawashi uke**Kata:** Wanshu, and bunkai**Sparring:** 3 rounds of hard contact sparring (instead of medium sparring; age and health allowing)**Other:** Hei Jo Shin (calm mind and body). Acceptance of *Sempai* rank - see the requirements on page 36.**Overall:** Good control and focus1st kyu / "Pre-shodan"**Kata:** Student's choice of the following kata: Seipai, Gojushiho Sho, Annan, or Jion, plus bunkai.**Blocks:** Circle block**Sparring:** Good timing and distance management**Overall:** Good application and strategy**Also:** Minimum age is 8; a high level of dedication to others

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

Syllabus continued

**Shodan / "Black Belt"**

**Sparring:** A self defense scenario of instructor's choice. Also, a self defense scenario of student's choice. It will be graded based on realism (including psychological, physiological, and environmental factors, etc.), effectiveness of reaction (spontaneity, care, control, etc.). Remember, real life and survival are more than just hand-to-hand technique! Lastly, five (5) 2-minute rounds of hard to full contact sparring (age and health allowing).

**Overall:** Minimum age is 13, and minimum training time is 2 years. Also required is an understanding of and technical proficiency in Wado ryu basics (physical, mental, and spiritual). Essentially, promotion to shodan means your instructor acknowledges you as having just begun your true walk along the martial path.

**Other:** Acceptance of Sensei title. See requirements on the next page.

**Nidan / 2nd degree Black belt**

**Kata:** 3 advanced kata of your choice

**Also:** Greater understanding of martial arts, no technical flaws, personalization of technique, and at least 5 years of training.

**Sandan / 3rd degree Black belt**

**Sparring:** 5 2-minute rounds of full contact sparring with 5 different black belts, including a round against instructor.

**Also:** Advanced understanding of martial arts & development of strategy. Self-defense situations. At least 10 years of training.

**4th - 10th Black belts (Master Ranks)**

**Yondan/Godan/Rokudan/Shichidan/Hachidan/Kudan/Judan**

**Requirements:** Exceptional accomplishments in furthering Karate-do. Such accomplishments often include revolutionary development and/or much personal research of kumite, technique, philosophy, teaching methods in general, etc.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doSyllabus continuedCommon traits of high ranking black belts:

**Yondan:** Advanced teaching level; "Apprentice Master"

**Godan:** High level of research & understanding of Karate and themselves.

**Rokudan:** Great commitment to benefiting all Karate students.

**Shichidan:** Advanced application of personal research.

**Hachidan:** Revolutionary accomplishments/research.

**Kudan:** Nearly lifelong dedication to Karate in a great way; has the best qualities a person can attain through Karate-do.

**Judan:** Commonly reserved for the soke (grandmaster or founder) of a style or one who wields a similar level of respect.

**Kohai ("Junior" / Junior Assistant / Instructor-in-training)**

**Rank:** 6<sup>th</sup> kyu or above

**Other:** This is an acknowledgment of your status as a serious "junior student", as well as your dependability, and dedication to others and the *karate way*. Must also have a basic understanding of the history & lineage of Wado ryu (an oral summary of the 1st 2 chapters of this book will do ☺). Minimum training time of 1 year.

**Sempai ("Senior" / Senior student/ Assistant Instructor)**Requirements:

**Rank:** 2<sup>nd</sup> kyu

**Writing:** Book reports on Miyamoto Musashi's Book of Five Rings, Gichin Funakoshi's Karate-do: My Way of Life, and martial arts classic of choice. Feel free to choose from among books, movies, instructional videos, etc. Recommended movie is Circle of Iron.

**Other:** The ability to effectively communicate the ideas and mechanics of Wado-Ryu. Average training time to attain this rank is 2 years.

**Sensei (Instructor / "One who comes before")**Requirements:

**Rank:** Shodan

**Other:** 1 year teaching experience and satisfactory teaching ability. Also, present your own research into an area of martial arts. It must apply to real life in a way beneficial to others, and show a degree of maturity.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-doPart IV: Insight

The following articles share further insight on The Way. Look to the endnotes for the sources I used when researching this book, as well as recommended reading/viewing.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

**Budo**

Literally translated from Japanese, "Budo" is "The Way of Brave and Enlightened Activity". Therefore, a "budoka" is not simply one who practices a traditional form of Japanese martial arts, but one who always seeks greater being and awareness for him or herself and others. Budo is heavily rooted in Zen Buddhism, and as such can be considered moving meditation. Budo can be the start of a new personal journey of continual improvement for yourself and all of your loved ones, regardless of your personal faith.

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**Duty**

Duty comes first. This will be different for everyone: moral, civic, religious, or a combination. Personal goals can be good to have, although they may not always be ethical. Consider your duties first, and then your own personal goals, in light of what your ethics and obligations. Honor is found in upholding your duties in the most ethical fashion possible.

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**Dojo**

Translated from Japanese, "dojo" means "training hall", or, "The Place of The Way". Therefore, "dojo" can apply to traditional budo training floors, or to the battleground of life itself. This means your training does not end when you leave the training floor. You must uphold honor at all times, all places, for not everyone else will. Expect the unexpected. These are the things you train to do. Research this continually.

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**Myself**

I suppose that, as a martial artist, I am expected to be tougher, stronger, faster, and wiser than everyone else. I can assure you that I am none of those. I am as human as everyone else, with my share of faults. I am simply following my course in life, which is helping others on The Way. As a result of my personal moral code, which is Christian, I must do what I can to help anyone of any belief. It is simply the right thing to do. Not everyone will agree with my personal code, nor am I the one to convince them. I must simply do my duty, never expecting happiness in return. The happiness of others comes first, and it is involving myself in this that makes me happy. I hope then, that I may help you somehow. Let me know, fellow traveler.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do**Confidence**

Confidence and ego are not necessarily the same, nor are they mutually exclusive. One must have confidence to work toward one's dreams. However, one must not let accomplishment inflate the ego. The ego consumes entirely and clouds the mind. It drives one's mind higher into the sky and farther from reality. Clouds and life have a tendency to rain. When this happens, your fire will be dampened, you will fall back to earth, and you will feel pain and remorse. Your clouded head will rain tears. However, rain and tears are part of a growing process. Yet, one must not allow oneself to drown in remorse. One must search for the truth of why one did not succeed, how one let oneself be so blind. That is the not-so-subtle difference between ego and confidence. Never forget this, or you will be reminded of it. Also, it is better to be reminded of it in the training hall than in life.

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**Dedication**

Dedication is needed to walk the unending path to perfection. One must continually seek truth, in every thing. Narrow and hard is the way of truth, but great are the rewards at the end.

My path is found on the battleground of life serving my Lord and Savior. I am far from perfection, but I believe He is leading me all the way. If Christ is not your Truth, I can not hold it against you. I am only another human being on the road of life. The most I can do is help others the best I know how. Consider all this carefully before making a decision. Remember caution in all decisions, for you will need dedication to see you through to the end of where they lead you.

Never forget this, or you will be reminded of it. Also, better to be reminded of it in the training hall than the battleground of life.

**Karate Precepts****Perfect one's character:**

Do not harbor hatred and bitterness. Negativity breeds negativity. Love one another. Enough cannot be said on this.

**Dedicate oneself to others:**

And not just to oneself. Selfishness leads to hate, which leads to anger. Anger consumes all in its path and is never quenched, except by effort, which rebuilds. This may be one's own effort, or the effort of another, changing your nature and your life from the inside out. This will influence those around you.

**Uphold honor, bravery, and justice:**

In these you will find right paths. Selfishness corrupts. Patience instructs. Only time will tell.

**Never stop learning:**

Always consider following right paths. Think not on the way of life or death. Life's sorrows in disguise will always surprise you. Do not settle for less than truth, or you will be deceived. Letting go of life too quickly is not always honorable. Let go of concern for your life or death; seek only honor and truth. Focus only on these, then pain and deception turn into lessons, or blessings. You must always seek greater understanding, so you may seek greater truth.

"Obstacles are what you see when you lose sight of your goal." - Anonymous

**Obtain victory without conflict:**

The paramount of skill is victory without conflict. Preserve the whole using your empty hand. You must practice preserving the whole in every thing.

**In summary:**

Meditate on all of this continually.

Righteousness is The Divine Truth.

Righteousness is the goal of all existence.

Righteousness is the only path to Nirvana, or Heaven.

**Karate Principles**

**"The ultimate aim of karate lies not in victory or defeat, but in the perfection of the character of its participants."**

**- Gichin Funakoshi, founder of Shotokan Karate**

The underlying principles of karate-do (Way of the Empty Hand) include not only self-defense, but a system of learning that provides one with a tool for self-improvement. Its accessibility is shown by its ability to be practiced hard or soft, by nearly anyone, and nearly anywhere, even in one's own mind. Its precepts and discipline can lead us on in the difficult times of our lives. This is the connection of body, mind, and soul.

**"There is no first strike in karate."**

**- Gichin Funakoshi**

Karate-do is a way of life that teaches one to be the best he or she can be, in spite of and because of the worst situations that one faces. Karate is a code of conduct that avoids conflict; its level of force is only stepped up if absolutely necessary. In this way, karate may be used to defend oneself and others without striking a single blow.

**Way of the Empty Hand**

Karate is not simply a method of empty handed combat, but also a way of peace. Keep your mind open to the situation, and to the Truth. Do not miss the forest for the trees. Cut through all the hype and find understanding. Your hand, the human hand, is the most versatile physical tool on the planet. Your mind is an even more versatile tool. It is the tool of your human soul, human instincts. In that way, your mind is a hand, reaching out for truth, greater things. Therefore, Karate is the way of uniting body, mind, and soul, that one may be a sharpened tool. Once one has learned Karate, its textbook of technique, philosophy, kata, one should digest it and make it part of one's nature. Continue to sharpen yourself, refining what you have learned, using it to your advantage and the good of others.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

**Strategy**

After years of study, I have come to a small understanding of the way of strategy. I will here explain some strategy as it applies to warrior-citizens. Seek whatever truth you may find here, then continue on your search for enlightenment.

In the broad view, a warrior must uphold the values of his or her society to be of any honorable use. We all depend on one another. The warrior must quell disorder, promote peace, and cultivate character. In practicing the ways of war, one has an obligation to not use them in an illegal or immoral fashion.

Let us now consider fighting tactics. First, we must understand self defense. One should exercise caution in the use of force. Awareness must have the highest priority.

In self defense, one must be able to read the situation and potential adversary. Pay attention to the neighborhood, your own mental and physical state, as well as the mental state of potential attackers. One can never be too careful. When visiting a new area, stay in well lit areas that seem safe. Also try to find good information on the right places to stay if you are going to be in town for a while.

There are many articles on the uses of makeshift weapons, and weapon disarms. Not all such articles are realistic, nor are any of them a substitute for hands-on defense training. They may be a supplement to such training from a true instructor. The broken rhythm of fighting, the form without form, and the warrior's mindset are difficult to learn without guidance.

There is never enough thought given to proper timings. Blend with or break the opponent's energy, rhythm, or attitude. Read timings/habits quickly. This is applied to hand to hand combat, large scale combat, and overall strategy. Study this well.

You must be ready to defend yourself as soon as you leave your home, even if you are not feeling well, caught off guard, outnumbered, or overwhelmed by a stronger attacker intent on killing you. You must be prepared for the worst. End the fight as soon & as peacefully as possible; simplicity & instinct are key!

In life, stay truthful to yourself and loved ones. Take the most honorable course of action in every situation; your enemy today may become your ally tomorrow. Your best friend can be your worst enemy because he or she knows the most about you. It is in this case you must treat them as honorably as possible. Also remember that what protects and upholds you today may hinder you tomorrow. Watch carefully, ask questions, and do not ever stop learning. This will be your lifelong progress, and contribution.

**Strategy - part II**

Many fights actually begin at or near home; before a disagreement turns into an altercation, try to defuse the situation. In any altercation, use positive reinforcement. "I know / am sure you're a nice person, but I would rather not (fill in the blank)." Remember, martial arts are not just collections of fighting techniques, but "arts" by which we defend the quality of life for ourselves and others.

"Budo" and "kung fu" have rather holistic meanings for everyday life, and not simply "martial arts", as they are so commonly translated. In this sense, "martial art" may itself take on a new meaning. "Martial" certainly connotes fighting tactics, yet "art" presents a deeper level of understanding. Do everything you can to "preserve the whole". Do not fight if possible, or to take the path of least resistance if conflict is inevitable. Fight out of necessity rather than hostility.

Let us further look into how to apply the art of strategy as it relates to self defense. The attacker believes he/she has an advantage. This may include a weapon, surprise, strength, and so forth. He / she is also more likely to attack you if he / she sees you as a potential victim. Therefore, be cautious when you are fatigued or alone, and do not appear timid, even if you are smaller than potential attackers. Always try to stay aware, and prepared to talk your way out of a situation, or defend yourself.

The environment, mindset of the attacker, and effects of panic will further handicap you. Your attackers do not come at you in prearranged patterns. You have to be ready to fight back, and take the initiative, because every second counts!

The best defense is a good offense. Use distance and the environment; be spontaneous. This is all very important against multiple assailants! Your movements must be fluid, economical, and not overly mechanical. The longer the fight, the more dangerous it becomes! When you are in unfamiliar territory, try to scan for escape routes, taking potential obstacles into account. Don't forget to pack along something like pepper spray, or be ready to pinch and bite if needed to distract adversaries before your knockout blow. Overall, you want to be as prepared as possible for potential violence.

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**Strategy - Part III**

I will here attempt to be non style specific in discussing fight strategy. Simply remember to train your reflexes for the proper use of body mechanics. Prepare your mind for a self defense mindset, rather than hostility. Remember "zanshin" - remaining mind. This is your most powerful weapon. Prevention is better than cure!

When faced with a heavy handed puncher, his or her hand speed and upper body defenses may be hard to match or get past. In this case, timing and creativity are of high priority. In a street situation, you do not have time to memorize his or her habits. Neither do you get the benefit of watching fight tapes beforehand. Watch for openings in the attacks, and draw out your opponent for a timed hit. Don't forget use of body shifting; especially to the outside of the opponent, which will present you with a strategic advantage. This reduces his / her options by 50%. This will be easier or harder to do depending on the attacker's training; such is hard to judge immediately, so it is instead better to take the initiative and/or counter-hit as quickly and efficiently as possible. Untrained punchers, however, tend to have a large amount of telegraphing (movements that signal a certain attack, not unlike "tells" in poker).

Against a kicker, remember that people are already on the brink of disaster on two feet, and taking another foot off the ground ruins balance even more. Also, a kick generally takes longer than a punch to reach its destination. Use this in conjunction with "stop hits" when you are at or just outside of the attacker's kicking range. Essentially, you will want to react to the opponent's starting movement as quickly as possible with a jamming technique or combination. Be extra careful when the attacker does manage to raise a kick. A well trained kicker can often change a kick's height or target before putting his or her foot down.

You must maintain a strong cover from which you can counter swiftly, and off-balance your opponent while their kicking foot is still traveling. Make an opportunity to close with the kicker, and reduce his or her options. Elbows and knees are particularly effective for striking away kicks, and use in close-up fighting. Use caution, however, if your attacker appears trained in a heavily body-conditioning oriented flavor of Muay Thai / Thaiboxing, Kyokushin karate, or the like. Counter striking to vital areas that cannot be conditioned (solar plexus and so forth) will be even more important in these cases.

**Strategy - Part III continued**

Many fights end up hitting the ground. If you are not comfortable working from the ground, then maintain a solid fighting distance and avoid in-close fighting as much as possible. Adding to the danger of ground fighting is the possibility of more attackers arriving, glass on the ground, weapons, and your most immediate attacker being much heavier, as well as numerous other factors. A grappler will have methods of closing the fighting distance with you, and taking you out of the range from which many types of strikes can be thrown solidly. In this case, make well-timed use of elbows, knees, standing submissions, reversals, makeshift weapons, and other such anti-grappling maneuvers. Be especially careful not to over-extend your strikes, or leave them extended for long after delivery, against a seasoned grappler.

When faced with an attacker who you suspect has a weapon, you will, of course, have even more reason to seek means of escaping the situation other than hand to hand combat. It is possible that if you comply with your attacker, they will let you alone afterwards. However, do not always be quick to believe that he or she shares your belief system; they could very well harm or even kill you after getting what he / she wanted.

The attacker may also be on drugs such as PCP, which would make him or her very dangerous to deal with. Pain compliance may not work as well against such an assailant; move defensively while doing as much damage as possible. Use the environment even more so, such as getting free to run and throwing things in his / her path. Also be extra careful of weapons the attacker is wielding. If at close range, attempt to stop the weapon from even being drawn. If this is not possible, dodge an attack or jam it as your opponent comes at you. Control the wielding arm, and strike at your opponent with your free limbs, head butts, etc. until you can disarm or subdue. It's also very important not to get caught off guard with a handgun, which would put you at a severe disadvantage. In this case, use distraction or other methods to diffuse the situation, and disarm if necessary.

Overall, many attackers will concentrate on their "weapon" (striking, grappling, a weapon, sheer strength or numbers, etc). Your attacker may believe that he / she has something that guarantees success. There is no way anyone can plan ahead for all situations, however. You must instead constantly learn, as well as use strategy, adaptability, and heart to your advantage, in a fight or life itself.

### **A Brief History of Karate**

Karate-do, in all its various forms, finds its origins in one place - the Ryukyu islands off the coast of Japan. What we know as one of the most widely practiced systems of self defense and discipline in the world is the result of centuries of development. While Karate-do was introduced as a code of ethics to a peacetime America only a few decades ago, it began through the need of Ryukyu natives for better methods of fighting.

There are a few theories about the origins of the fighting arts that later became collectively known as Karate-do. However, it is certain that many notable Chinese kung fu practitioners settled in Okinawa, the capital of the Ryukyu kingdom.

The origins of the Chinese arts themselves are also shrouded in the mists of time. A widely accepted theory is that Bodhidharma, the founder of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism created what would later evolve into Shaolin kung-fu. The original exercises were used to strengthen his monks' bodies, minds, and spirits, to help them better fulfill their duties. This level of personal cultivation carried across to many Chinese martial arts. By way of transmission to other countries, this carried across to other martial arts, Karate-do being one of them.

Details are rather sketchy at best as to the actual origins of Karate-do, however. It is most widely accepted that in the year 1507, a weapons ban was passed by King Sho Shin. This led to the rapid development of native unarmed fighting arts. These arts were primarily influenced by various forms of Chinese kung fu, which Okinawans began learning in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

Okinawans learned forms of Shaolin kung fu from Shaolin masters who fled China as a result of the oppressive Qing dynasty. Okinawans also learned various forms of kung fu from Chinese merchants, Chinese officials on diplomatic missions, and young members of wealthy Okinawan families who went to China to learn "Quan Fa" / kung fu to further their education and martial arts studies. The general name given to the fighting arts learned and further refined by the Okinawan martial artists was tode-jutsu (alternately spelled tou-di), the Okinawan name given to Chinese martial arts.

In February 1609, invasion of Okinawa by the Satsuma clan (of Kyushu, Japan) triggered another period of rapid development of native Okinawan fighting arts. Satsuma control lasted until 1879, when the King of Ryukyu finally abdicated and the country became part of Japan.

During this period, *kobudo* (often translated "classical

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

**A Brief History of Karate continued**

fighting method"; commonly used to represent Okinawan weapon fighting) evolved. Farm implements were used as weapons, as traditional weapons were not allowed. However, some of the native Ryukyu warrior class traveled up to the Satsuma clan in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and learned their samurai fighting art Jigen-ryu kenjutsu. It was not long after this that Sokon Matsumura, "Toudi" Sakugawa, and Tsuken Koura, among the many who had made the trip, introduced their contributions to kobudo.

Ultimately, three major strains were developed from Ryukyu kenpo karate-jutsu (as tode-jutsu eventually came to be called). These strains were named Shuri-te, Naha-te, and Tomari-te, for the regions in which they were developed. All three regions are based in the southern part of Okinawa. The differences of the three styles may be traced back to the socio-economic status of those who practiced them. The lowest rung on the ladder was the worker class studying Tomari-Te. The middle section was the merchant class studying Naha-Te. The upper class noblemen were taking up practice of Shuri-te in and around the capital.

Matsumura is commonly considered the great grandfather of the karate movement in and around Shuri. He learned native Okinawan fighting from Sakugawa (who in turn learned from Kusankun and other masters). He later studied in Fujian and Satsuma. He learned Shaolin Boxing (Shorin-ryu) under the tutelage of master Iwah. As a result of the efforts of Matsumura, the fighting arts that surfaced around the noble / castle district of Shuri came to be known as Shuri-te (Shuri hand).

The Chinese master Ason taught Zhao Ling Liu (Shorei-ryu) to Sakiyama, Gushi, Nagahama, and Tomoyori of Naha. This led to the development of Naha-te. Naha, a coastal city, was a large trade center at the time. Xie Zhongxiang (nicknamed Ryuru Ko) of Fuzhou founded Whooping Crane kung fu (hakutsuru) and taught it to a number of notable karate masters in the Fuzhou province. Wai Xinxian, it is said, was a Qing dynasty officer, and taught Xingyi kung fu as well as Monk Fist Boxing. It is also said he assisted Master Iwah's instruction in Fuzhou province.

Two separate, modern styles developed from Naha-te: Goju-Ryu and Uechi-Ryu. Goju-ryu stresses deep breathing methods (ibuki). Its kata, including Sanchin, tend to utilize dynamic tension for power training. Uechi-ryu uses a number of kata that Kanei Uechi (1877-1948) learned while in China, as well as several Goju-ryu kata. Uechi-ryu's Sanchin is done with open hands, and doesn't use the deep breathing emphasized by Goju ryu.

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**A Brief History of Karate continued**

Naha-te's Chinese lineage can be seen through the influence of the forms and methods of Crane and other styles. Dragon Boxing includes the forms Seisan, Peichurrin (also known as Suparimpei), Saam Chien, and Eighteen Scholar Fists. Tiger Boxing also includes Saam Chien and Peichurrin, as well as Sanseiru and others. Arhat Boxing (Monk Fist) has Saam Chien, Seisan, Jitte, Seipai, Useishi, Peichurrin, and other forms.

While Karate was primarily organized in Shuri and Naha, Tomari originally had little direct influence. This is because, at that time, Tomari was inhabited by a simple people; it was a working class city of fishermen. Tomari had its share of notable masters, however, with Kosaku Matsumora (1829-1898), Kokan Oyadomari (1827-1905) and Gikei Yamazato (1835-1905) the most notable. They studied under Annan, as well as Ason, a Chinese sergeant.

Tomari was located near Shuri, and therefore its fighting arts developed partly under its influence. Some of the Chinese masters who taught Tomari villagers, however, did not reach Shuri. Some of these teachings did later influence Shuri-te, nonetheless, as exchanges eventually took place. Many of the kata became part of both Shuri-te and Tomari-te. Some of the kata unique to Tomari-te, however, are Wansu, Rohai, and Wankan. It is widely believed that Chotoku Kyan (1870-1945) brought the kata Ananku from Taiwan in 1895. It is said, sadly, there are other kata that have been lost over time.

It is also said in Okinawan tradition that a pirate or sailor (named Chinto, or Annan, depending on the source), was a castaway from a shipwreck on the coast. He took refuge in the graveyard of the mountains of Tomari, and later lived in a cave. Reportedly, Sokon Matsumura formulated the kata Chinto (also known as Gankaku) from the sailor's White Crane Kung Fu teachings. Chinto kata, of which there are more than half a dozen versions, was adopted into shuri-te. The Tomari-te chinto kata as a Chinese flair, in contrast with the simpler looking shuri-te version. Chinto kata uses straight lines of movement, and is executed with power. A one legged stance occurs many times, bearing the image of a crane poised to strike its prey. The flying kicks of this kata differentiates it from others.

Matsumora and Oyadomari apprenticed under local masters Kishin Teruya (1804-1864) and Giko Uku (1800-1850). They learned from Teruya the kata Passai, Rohai, and Wanshu, and from Uku, the kata Naifanchi. Matsumora was also versed in the jo-jutsu (short

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staff technique) of Jigen ryu. It is often said in Okinawan sources that Matsumora is Annan's successor. Yamazato followed Matsumora and Oyadomari, who were close friends. Both masters encouraged their students to exchange techniques and kata, furthering the development of Tomari-te. Tomari-te became a light form of fighting, with plenty of feints.

The kata Seishan is named after a well known Chinese martial artist who lived in or near Shuri circa 1700. He was associated with Takahara Perchin, a map-maker who was the first to teach Tode Sakugawa. The kata is said to be the oldest still in use, and translates to "13" or "30". The naha-te Seisan has a Chinese flair, while the shuri-te version evolved in its own way. The movements are repeated in sets of three, and has pivots and turning of the head. Toward the middle of seishan, there is a set of three double blocks that may be used as blocks to the side; it may be seen as a spear thrust to the eyes, or as an arm grab. The foot movements in seishan kata may be used to enter the opponent's legs, and break his or her balance. Hangetsu, the Japanese name for Seisan, translates to half-moon. This is taken from the stances & footwork, as well as the hand movements, which use circular paths. As with many other forms, the kata's movements differ slightly between styles.

Throughout this period, tode-jutsu was taught primarily for health, philosophy and self defense. In this way, the Chinese tradition was continued. Tou-di, the karate of old, was not meant for the competition seen in modern karate. In fact, there were no public classes, as practicing fighting was forbidden as a way to promote public order. The to-de masters chose their students with caution because they were liable for problems that could arise (and frequently did) from their students' actions. Tode-jutsu had also become a part of the imperial guards' training. As a result of Okinawa's annexation to Japan, however, there was a huge unemployment boom, and poverty spread heavily. Because of this, a number of chikundun peichin (those who upheld public order in the Ryukyu kingdom) started teaching tode-jutsu for money.

In the Satsuma occupation's later years, Japan began major changes as a result of the Meiji restoration. Cultural reforms led to the abolition of the feudal system, the abasement of the samurai class, and development of democracy. However, democracy was never fully implemented, nor were all the ideas of the samurai code and the feudal system totally abandoned. Japan did not want to totally lose its strong identity to (primarily

**A Brief History of Karate continued**

Western) foreign influences. Part of this identity was the bugei (martial arts), which assisted in the shaping of modern Japan.

The budo (martial ways), as they came to be called, were more than simply a cultural recreation. The ruling elite used the spread of budo to further instill moral virtues, the values of bushido (way of the warrior), and "Japaneseness" in the Japanese public. In this Pre-World War II age full of increasing militarism, Japan needed strong, able men who were willing to fight to the death. Japan also hoped that young men of good health and mind would be more productive citizens.

As a result, many budo were introduced to the school system. Some of these classical budo included Aikido (The Way of Spiritual Harmony), Jiu Jitsu (unarmed self defense art often focused on grappling), and Kendo (Way of the Sword), derived from the samurai fighting traditions. Also, Judo ("Gentle Art") was developed from jiu jitsu in the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Itosu Anko led a group of Okinawan karate-jutsu experts in a campaign to introduce the art to the Okinawan school system as a form of exercise. Many of the dangerous applications were not practiced in the school system, transforming karate from a hidden art of self defense into a unique recreation.

Karate was introduced in this form to the Japanese mainland in 1917. The Japanese martial arts association ("Dai Nippon Butokukai") was interested enough in karate to invite the art's best practitioner. Their intent was to compare karate-jutsu to Japanese jiu jitsu in matches of skill.

Gichin Funakoshi was an Okinawan native who taught at the school "Shoto Gakko", which prepared Okinawans for Japanese civil service. His life's passion, however, was karate. Because of the respect he commanded from Japanese gentlemen, and his skill in karate, he was selected to represent Okinawa's martial art.

He defeated every opponent he faced at the demonstration, and won great respect. Because of this and his love of Japanese culture, he stayed on the mainland to further propagate karate. As a result of the first and further exhibitions, he gained many followers and ultimately began teaching out of a Kendo dojo.

At first, there were cultural barriers and traditions that slowed the progress of karate across the mainland. As a result of Funakoshi's excellence in teaching, however, he broke through the prejudices against karate. Eventually, he was able to open his own dojo, which was the first formalized karate dojo. Also during this time, karate as a whole came to be formalized and

**A Brief History of Karate continued**

"Japanized" (although divisions among separate karate styles have not, to this day, been resolved - primarily due to pride and organizational politics).

Such formalization included acceptance of the kyu/dan (class/grade) system as devised by Jigoro Kano (founder of judo). Also, it became important that all teachers were qualified and knowledgeable. Finally, it was necessary to institute a standard curriculum, uniform, and competitive format.

Nationalism and anti-Chinese sentiment made the karate-jutsu movement consider a more appropriate ideogram to represent their art. The original "kara" ideogram of karate meant China, as did the "tou" of toudi (Chinese hand, and a reference to the Tang dynasty). The replacement ideogram means "empty", and takes on not just a physical but a spiritual meaning. "Kara" may represent the "void", and freedom from worldly desire.

Also changed was the suffix for karate. Instead of jutsu (art/science), do (way/path/totality, pronounced "dao" in Mandarin) came to be used. In this sense, as a result of the efforts of such masters as Itosu, karate-do joined kendo, jiu jitsu, aikido, and judo as a modern budo, in which not only combat is practiced, but also a cultural discipline for the pursuit of harmony.

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do**Peace, Harmony, and Truth**

Practice the Way of the Empty Hand to become as an empty vessel. This is so that you may take natural courses of action, like water, that you may find the path of least resistance. This is in order to better understand and utilize your nature, as it relates to the universe, and universal truth.

Practice the Way of Peace and Harmony in every way possible. Strength (the hand) of mind, body, and soul is a tool for peace and harmony (the dove). Peace and harmony give strength meaning.

Life, like the ocean, is an ebb and tide, a give and take. Learn to subside and crash upon the shores of life. Study, recover, train, become...Then give it all back. This all relates to not just combat, but life itself.

Like the ecosystem, people all depend on each other. Do not hesitate to plant a good seed. Though "an eye for an eye" makes the world blind, a favor for a favor makes the world a garden.

In your search for peace, harmony, and truth, strip away the unessential. Make leaps of faith; give it all your best effort. Do not ever hesitate, or stop learning. Reach to the bottom of the lake of your soul. I believe in you. I wish you the best, and God bless you.

A large, bold, black Japanese character '湖' (Lake) is centered on the page. The character is written in a traditional, slightly stylized font with thick strokes and a small dot on the left side of the top stroke.

Mizuumi - Lake

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**On Teaching**

*"True karate-do is this; that in daily life one's mind and body be trained and developed in a spirit of humility; and that in critical times, one be devoted utterly to the cause of justice." - Gichin Funakoshi, Karate-do Kyohan*

This article will concern itself with the business of teaching martial arts. The teaching of martial arts concerns itself with helping others. It is not necessarily wrong to make a living on the arts, but we must keep in mind that prestige is nothing if one does not set a good example.

We can not have desirable progress in the "martial ways" or peace and happiness without mutual respect. To ensure continued progress in the effectiveness of philosophy and technique of our own arts, we must study our arts diligently while opening our minds to other perspectives. In this way, teachers must set an example for their students by being an excellent one themselves. This level of modesty takes years to cultivate through proper etiquette - and is one of the ultimate goals of our training. It is said that to have taught once is to have twice learned.

We must be of good conscience when considering our talents and faults. Before we can realize our full potential in teaching others, we must honestly and modestly learn our own strengths and weaknesses. Let us look at ourselves in the mirrors of truth, good standards, and absoluteness, while chasing the rainbow of perfection.

*"The technique of the martial arts is like the universe - there is no limit to knowledge. One must realize no limit to one's performance." - Hironori Ohtsuka*

Most of all, we must be respectful. This might sound cliché; however, we must remember to have and give respect as least as much as we get it. Modesty is key.

It is easy to lose modesty under a pile of well-practiced technique. Keep in mind, however, that without modesty of character, you have gained nothing from training. We learn to fight so as not to fight. There are no winners in war - only losers. We must fight against fighting - to have the least possible bloodshed. With this in mind, we must punch and kick not to win or lose, but to learn from each other in martial brotherhood.

*"Have no regard for the martial aspects when training, but rather adhere to the way of peace." - Hironori Ohtsuka*

Owen Johnston's Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do

**Sources, Inspiration, and Recommended Viewing**

"Bible of Karate - Bubishi" translated with commentary by Patrick McCarthy. This book contains a wealth of in-depth information, analysis, and history.

"The Complete Idiot's Guide to Karate" by Randall G. Hassell and Edmond Otis. This book makes an excellent starting point for anyone wanting to know more about the wide world of Karate-do.

"Karate - Technique & Spirit" by Tadashi Nakamura. This is a wonderful, inspiring pictorial guide to Karate as a whole and many of its techniques.

"The Karate Dojo" by Peter Urban

"Karate-do: My Way of Life" by Gichin Funakoshi

"The Art of War" by Sun Tzu

"A Book of Five Rings" by Miyamoto Musashi

The official Wado-Ryu Japan site <http://www.wado-ryu.jp>

Japan International Karate Center homepage - <http://www.jikc.org>

The Japan Karate Institute homepage <http://www.japankarate.net>.

More details on Ohtsuka's life and the expansion of Karate

USA National Karate Federation website <http://www.usankf.org/>

Great listing of kata by karate ryu (style).

Takamura ha Shindo Yoshin Ryu <http://www.shinyokai.com>

Jarek's Chinese Martial Arts Pages

<http://www.chinafrominside.com/ma/> - Information about Chinese internal martial arts.

<http://www.conradjoneskarate.com/>

This great webpage about Wado has a lot of information about classes in the Tennessee area as well as Wado as a whole. Their kata information is great!

<http://www.msishinryu.com/history/tomari-te/>

Very detailed explanation of the Tomari region's important role in the development of karate.

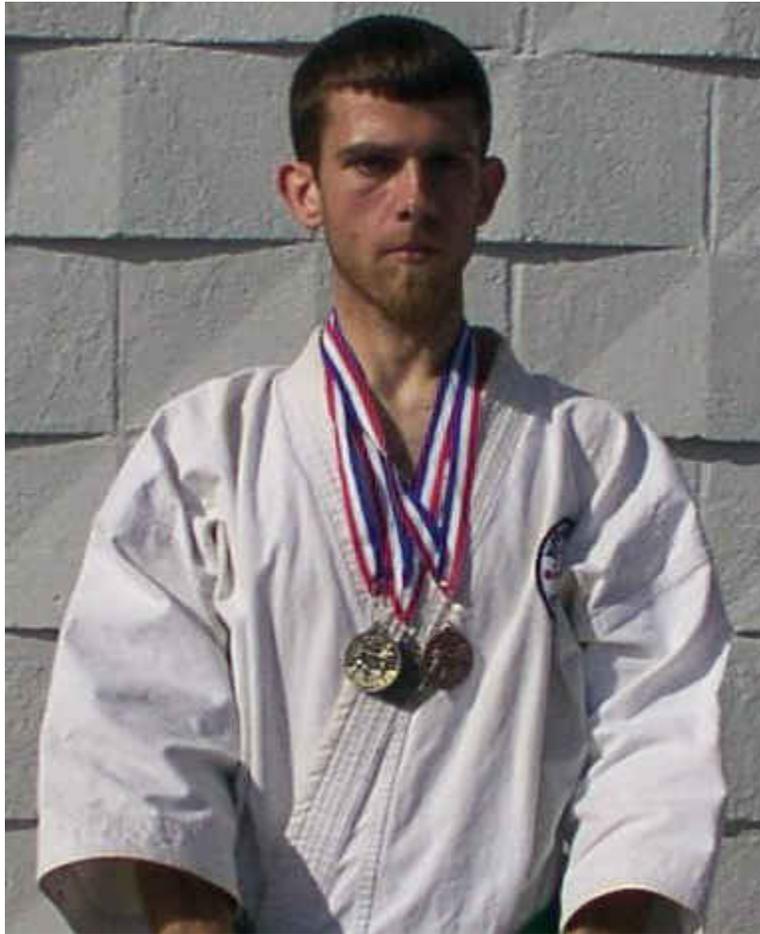
<http://www.kojosho.com/kata.html>

<http://www.hogia.net/karate/karate/history.htm>

Various religious texts and commentaries

A fellow Wado practitioner, and poster on [www.budoseek.net](http://www.budoseek.net), shared a few observations about stances and terminology with me. I have assimilated some of these into the book as well.

Understanding Wado-Ryu Karate-do:  
A Guide to Unity of Body, Mind, and Soul



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