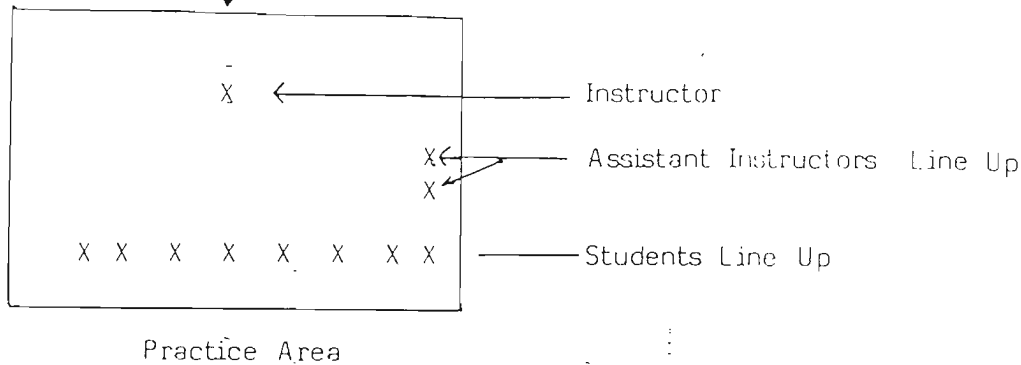


Picture of Funakoshi with  
Dojo Kun underneath  
on this wall.



DOJO KUN

We shall endeavor to build our character.  
We shall be faithful in our study.  
We shall cultivate courage and tenacity.  
We shall attach great importance to etiquette.  
We shall be wary of foolishness.

To start class - The instructor says "Keko hajime mas " (KE-KHŌE). Then he takes a position in front of the class. The instructor stands underneath the picture of Funakoshi. He is one foot from the wall. His back is to the wall. Then he waits until everyone has lined up. Then, he walks forward until he is approximately halfway between the wall (with the dojo-kun) and the class lineup. He stops there and turns 180° to face the wall. He pauses briefly. He then kneels down - left knee goes down first followed by right, the feet are crossed right over left, back straight, eyes straight, both hands open (palms down) on his upper thighs.

The next step depends on which students are present. If assistant instructors are present, the procedure varies.

For example: If there are no assistant instructors, then after the instructor sits in seiza, the first person in the line says "Seiza" loudly and clearly and immediately drops his left knee and sits in seiza position. The rest of the students follow suit. It is important here that as soon as the first person's left knee touches the floor the next person's left knee immediately goes to the floor and assumes seiza, and so on until everyone is kneeling. It is necessary that everyone moves one after another smoothly and quickly so as not to keep the instructor waiting. Everyone is now sitting with back straight and eyes straight

Let's assume that Pat Hickey is leading the class and David Ames is assisting. After Pat went to the center of the room and knelt, David, who is standing on the side with his right side directly toward the front wall, will wait until Pat kneels and his hands have come to rest on his upper thighs before he kneels. If there were two assistant instructors, they would both wait until Pat finished kneeling and then kneel almost together - the second one waiting until the first one's left knee touches the ground before he starts to move. The people in the assistant instructor line never announce "Seiza" to the rest of class unless the first person in the line of students forgets. Then it would be up to the least senior of the assistant instructors or the one on the left end of their line. Normally "Seiza" is announced by the first person in the regular line.

To start class - The assistant instructor line should consist of no one under 4th or 5th dan. If there are other 1st, 2nd, or 3rd dans present, they belong in the main line. If kyus, 1st dans, 2nd dans and one 3rd dan are present, the third dan would go to the assistant line, the rest are in the regular line. A 2nd dan could sit in assistant line if the rest of the class was made up of 1st dans and kyu grades. Usually only the senior 2nd dan present goes to the assistant line. A 1st dan would go to the assistant line only if he was the sole 1st dan present along with low kyus or among a strictly junior class, providing the dan was an adult. No one under 1st dan can sit in assistant line. Adjustments can be indicated by the instructor before he goes to the center of the room and kneels.

Let's go back a few paragraphs. Everyone has just finished kneeling into seiza. The instructor then says, "Mokuso" (pronounced MUK SO) loudly and clearly. Everyone closes their eyes and breathes deeply for between thirty seconds and one minute. The instructor says "Mokuso Yame" and everyone opens their eyes. The instructor then says "Shomen Ni Rei" (SHOW-MEN-KNEE-RAY) (bow to the master). Everyone bows by first placing the left hand and then the right hand on the floor. The palm, fingers and thumbs are flat and the tips of the index fingers and thumb touching, in the manner of the beginning of Kanku Dai. The bow is low, almost touching the hands with the forehead. Everyone holds this position for 1 second. Everyone should at this point be aware of the person directly to their right, all the way up to the senior student. As soon as the instructor arises from his bow, the senior student, who is aware of the instructor's movement, starts to rise. Then the next student, aware of the seniors movement, starts to rise, and so on, and so on, like a chain reaction. The instructor, who still has his back to the students, then turns to face the class. He does this by turning his upper torso to the right, placing his hands on the floor, and lifts himself up slightly with his legs still crossed. He turns himself around to face the class still seated in seiza. He places his open hands palm down on his upper thighs. The senior student in the regular line then tells the class to bow. What he says depends on who is instructing.

If the chief instructor is teaching, he says, "Sensei Ni Rei"; and everyone bows, rising as before, in order of rank. The chief instructor is the only one called Sensei - everyone else is called Sempai (SEM-PIE) (senior).

If a very high and honored dan is there, they would say, "Shomen Ni Rei" (bow to the master). The chief instructor sits between the high dan and the senior assistant instructor (on a line between them and slightly closer to the high dan).

The instructor then rises right leg first and either warms the class up himself (Usually he has someone else do this.) or tells someone else to do it. Let's say that someone else is told to do it. He would then rise and everyone else would wait until the assistant says, "Everyone up." Then they rise right leg first.

In end class - The instructor says, "Koko Orei Mas." (ORE-REI), which means that every one lines up. The instructor goes to the front of the room, faces the class with his back almost against the wall, and waits until everyone lines up. He can now indicate any adjustment in the line-up or assistant instructor can. The instructor then walks halfway toward the class, turns to look at Funakoshi's picture, pauses briefly, then kneels and sits as described before. Assistant instructors, if present kneel next. The senior student in the main line then says, "Seiza" loudly and clearly, as before. Everyone then kneels as previously described. The instructor then says "Mokuso" and everyone closes their eyes and meditates for 30 seconds - 1 minute. The instructor then says "Mokuso Yame" and everyone opens their eyes. The senior student in the main line then says, "Dojo Kun" loudly and clearly. Everyone except the instructor repeats this in unison (including assistant instructors), loudly and clearly - but not too loudly. The senior student in the main line then says "WE SHALL ENDEAVOR TO BUILD OUR CHARACTER", and everyone except the instructor repeats in unison. The senior student keeps reciting each sentence of the dojo kun and the class repeats it each time until done.

The instructor pauses briefly and then says, "Shomen Ni Rei" and everyone bows to Funakoshi's picture. This bow is held for 1 second. Everyone then rises from the bow in succession as before, starting with instructor. The instructor, still kneeling, turns to his right to face the class as described before. The senior student in the main line waits for the instructor to settle back and then says, "Sensei Ni Rei" or "Sempai Ni Rei" as required. Everyone bows (The instructor can say, "Thank you." before bowing if he chooses.) and the class rises in order. If there are assistant instructors present, the senior in the main line says, "Sempai Ni Rei", and the assistant instructors put their fingertips on the floor and lift themselves up while still kneeling, shifting themselves to face the main body of the class. Simultaneously, the class shifts in the same manner as to face the assistant instructors. This is done rather quickly because the senior student then says, "Rei" and the class and assistant instructors bow to each other, rising up after 1 second, starting with the senior assistant instructor and proceeding quickly and smoothly throughout the rest of the class, everyone shifting back to their proper positions. Sensei does not bow at this time. However, if an assistant instructor is leading the class, then he will bow also. (An "OSU" can be accompanied with each bow if desired.) ("OOSS!")

At this time the instructor usually says a few words. This lasts for no less than 1 minute to 5 minutes and can involve any subject from general news and information to a full blown karate lecture. The instructor then rises, right leg first and walks to the exit of the practice area, bows and exits. During this time, everyone else is sitting perfectly still. Beginners are permitted to squirm slightly, but even this is discouraged. Yellow belts and above are not allowed to squirm, slouch, or lean forward.

The next highest rank then rises and exits in the same manner and this continues until everyone exits. All students must wait until the first couple of highest ranking students have left completely before they can begin to rise and exit. After this, the class exits more rapidly, not waiting until the person before has left completely, as they did with the instructor and the assistant instructors.