

International Kwanmukan

Technical Congress Sessions



Kwanmukan Technical Congress

Session 1 Saturday October 6, 2012 from 9 am to 5 pm

Sunday Morning October 7, 2012 from 9 am to noon.

Purpose of Session 1

The purpose of this session was to define karate and then extract from this what the Kwanmukan is as an organization and as a style. To do this, we need to understand the forces that affected the karate we have learned during its introduction and acceptance into the Japanese culture. We defined the period prior to its acceptance in Japan classical karate (that which was created in Okinawa and Modern karate, that which was designed for introduction into the Japanese educational system. This session ended by learning how to gain an understanding of Heian kata using a Rosetta stone to translate meaning into understanding. The Heian kata were used as they are the basic kata of our style.

General Agenda

Definition of Karate

What is Karate?

Today

Self-defense, self-control, self-discipline

Healthy Exercise

Philosophical

Blocking, Timing, Kiai, Breathing, Striking – is this real karate or just sport. Taekwondo meets this definition

Classical Karate included a whole bunch of things

What is Judo? Jujitsu? Aikido? Tomiki Aikido? Kendo? Iaido? Jodo? Kobudo?

What was the impact of Judo on Karate?

Judo was approved for use in the schools in Japan and karate wanted to follow suit. Kano tried to get karate in as part of Judo, but the karate people wanted karate to stand on its own.

Remember, Judo initially had 3 parts, Nage Waza, Ne Waza and Atemi Waza. Karate became punches and kicks to define itself as not part of judo and the throws and grappling were taken out of karate to distinguish it from Judo. Judo was already a simplification of Jujitsu without certain dangerous techniques (throws which land you on your head or dislocate the arm or shoulder).

What is tradition in karate?

What is traditional in Karate?

How far back does tradition go?

What is Classical karate?

How did Karate come to the USA?

When did karate become a sport? In the 1930's.

When did competition change karate? In the 1930's

There is concern today that sport will change karate from what we know today, but it was already changed from what it was prior to 1930's. Karate changed to become a sport and to have a high school curriculum. There is concern that the new sports rules will change karate, but this is a reaction from the seniors who have been cut out of the refereeing – which will change the sport as the younger set have a different perspective. The inclusion of bunkai is an attempt

to redefine karate and put life back into it. But this is only for kata which has already lost ground as being a competitive performance only.

Purpose and Use

What is the purpose of Karate?

Current karate uses systems designed to teach in public schools.

Progress of class was established by warm-ups, line drills, ippon kumite (waza), kata, kumite.

After class - fool around time. (Warm ups, basics, moving basics, kata, kumite is Shotokan standard.)

What are the implications of a martial art/karate as a defensive art?

Karate designed to put someone on the ground.

Karate Style

Karate, what is style and what does style mean?

Prescribed way people perform technique according to school or teacher

What does style mean in relation to kata?

What does it mean to train in the style and apply yourself?

Do you bunkai in style?

Do you kumite in style?

How do we get from style to application to actual use?

Can you combat in style?

Karate Philosophy

When was philosophy introduced to karate?

What was the purpose of introducing philosophy?

What are the aspects of karate?

Karate ni sente nashi. What is it, what does it mean?

It means there is no second strike. The fight is over. To have a first implies a second.

What is meant by one killing blow?

Means technique properly applied does not need another technique.

One killing blow is a myth in sparring to gain attention to the sport by engaging the mind.

Kwanmukan

How did the Kwanmukan come about?

Is Kwanmukan a style?

Where did the style of Kwanmukan derive?

What is Kwan Mu?

What is Kwanmukan?

What is Kwanmudo?

What is Kwanmukai?

What is Kwanmuzendokai?

What is "Ha"? How does "Ha" apply to the Kwanmukan?

Direction

Where are the modern Martial Arts going?

Sports, Combatives

Where is modern karate going?
Where the Kwanmukan should be going?

Kwanmukan Tradition

What is tradition in the Kwanmukan?
What is traditional in Kwanmukan?
Where does tradition come from?

Kata

What is needed to understand kata?
What is kata?
What does kata mean?
What does kata do?
What is kata good for?
How is kata exemplified?
Where did kata come from? How did kata get started?
If kata is a book, how do you read it?

In order to understand kata you need a Rosetta stone.

Does karate kata have blocks? Strikes? Locks? Throws? Tai Sabaki?

Design of Kata

Takes a combination and create a flow by breaking the action into smaller parts for understanding. This is what we see when we perform the kata. In reading the kata, we cannot use our preconceived notions. Not all similar movements say the same thing. A movement is what it is when it is.

Kwanmukan Kata

Kata in the Kwanmukan
What do we know about the kata?
From our heritage
From other heritage
From direct experience

Purpose of Taikyoku and the Heian Kata

Purpose of Taikyoku

First Cause – what was before heaven and earth and what is after heaven and earth?

Additionally even development of the body, ability to bear body soundly. Done in 5 seconds at the advanced level, 45 at the beginner level.

Purpose of the Heian Kata

To have the ability to defend oneself completely in most situations. Allows you to have a peaceful mind knowing you can take care of yourself. They are named after the peaceful Heian period of Japan.

Developed to teach karate in the grade and high schools in Japan

Which style is the original form of the kata?

Why are there so many ways to do it when it is only about 80 years old?

Developed to teach self-defense that does not annihilate the opponent.

Purpose of the Kwan Mu Kata

Kwan Mu First Effort

What is its purpose, why was it created, how was it designed and what is its meaning?
If one anticipates, who has made the first attack?

Kwan Mu Second Effort

What is its purpose, why was it created, how was it designed and what is its meaning?
What is the purpose of a block?
What is the purpose of an attack?

Kwan Mu Third Effort

What is its purpose, why was it created, how was it designed and what is its meaning?
To be is to see.
To see is to know.
To know is to be.
If then what have you?
It is already too late!?
Thirty Spokes form the hub of a wheel, but the use of the wheel is the part that is empty.

Understanding Kata

Original kata were designed to show strategy and tactics in life and death confrontations.
The original kata may just show a sample of the movements within the theme of the kata.
We must consider both written and oral explanation of kata.
What do we mean by the theme of a kata?
The theme of the individual kata is the kata's strategy, tactics, and method of movement.
The strategies for use of the movements is contained in each individual kata
How does theme dictate the application of the movements contained within the kata?
Individual movements are considered within the particular kata theme, not the theme of another kata.

Hidden Movements

Do hidden movements exist?
If so, what is meant by hidden movements/
What are the hidden movements in the kata we study?

Combat Karate – Not self-defense or sport

Does Combat Karate exist?
If so where is it?
Is it in the kata?
What is the difference between individual verses group combat?
Which kata are for individual combat and which are for group combat? Does it make a difference?

Teaching System Used Today

Should kata be taught first: the correct movement and application or should the "basics" be taught first and the kata follow?

In Kwanmukan, we teach the body to move correctly, and then we learn how to use the body. That is, we learn proper body mechanics first, and then apply the mechanics.

Two Purposes of Kata

1. Correct body dynamics
2. Collection of combat techniques in practice format

Bunkai (Application)

What is Bunkai?

Bunkai (分解?), literally meaning "analysis"[1] or "disassembly",[2] is a term used in Japanese martial arts referring to the *application* of fighting techniques extracted from the moves of a "form" (kata).

What is the purpose of Bunkai?

What is the result of Bunkai?

Definitive result – opponent out and on the ground every time (at the end of each bunkai)

Kenka

What is Kenka?

Kenka means a drunken brawl or a fight.

Rules Understanding Application of Kata

1. There is no first strike (from either you or the opponent)
2. Names of movements have been disguised or at least misnamed
3. Only one opponent and that opponent is to the front
4. Front hand is attacking hand – shortest distance.
5. Block with both hands – preparatory hand is defend in the block (cross block)
6. Block equals stop
7. Understand the switch step
8. Technique in two counts can be performed in one count
9. Immobilize attacker before striking
10. Use both hands together
11. Grabbing hand is pulling hand – grab and twist
12. Supporting hand is a grabbing hand
13. No technique ends with a block
14. Set position can be an invitation
15. Break balance to the tip of the triangle
16. Knife hand can cut
17. Take opponent's back
18. Use double twist for throws
19. Use leverage
20. Kicks are low especially when grabbing
21. Crossing legs stance is a body shift or a joint kick
22. Crossover with turn is a throw
23. Jumps and body shifts represent throws
24. Some techniques are following when primary technique fails
25. Up equals down, down equals up for throws (Hang opponent to the sky)

26. Movements practiced in one count are performed in one count
27. Connective movements (Repetition left and right may not mean both sides)
28. To release from a hold or grip, study the direction of the fingers
29. Re-block and re-grip
30. Draw opponent in to turn him upside down with palm
31. Extend the opponent's elbow.

Rules of Combat

Strike the quickly immobilizing where possible

Move to gain and maintain advantage and dispatch quickly

Main Points of the Kata

Heian Kata

Shodan

Essentials of karate defense, proper body dynamics. No attacks except to the head, no kicks except to the groin. Introduces switch step, grabbing and punching, outside hand, cross counter and eye gouge.

Nidan

Get there first. Immediate response. Uses counter technique, connective techniques, strike from closest possible distance and cross counter.

Sandan

In-close fighting. Mixing it up. Uses switch step, grab and punch, outside hand, three types of throws, twisting arms for takedowns.

Yodan

Abstracted from Bassai, Kusankyu, and Jion. Movements interrelate within the kata. Various kicks – front, side, knee – methods of intersecting the hands, pulling opponent around and striking, grab and kick, knee strike anywhere.

Godan

Abstracted from Chinto, Bassai, and Kusankyu. Movements interrelate within the kata. Look for neck throws, grabbing hand, stopping, one arm back throw, and defense against a kick.

Tekki

Is it side fighting? Fighting with your back to a wall? Fighting on a boat? Or is it simply Tai Sabaki with strikes, kicks, and locks? Look for Joint kicks, throws, foot sweep, grabbing and punching.

Jion

Greeting was school specific. Helped prevent fights within a school. Identified who trained with whom. Block with both hands and kick, cross counter punch, front hand is the attacking hand, and lure, then counterattack.

Question - What is a block?

Block verses defend. Block = stop, defend means to fend off.
The current concept of block comes from sport karate from the 1930's.

Ways to move the arm/hand

How many ways are there?

Up, down, left, right, around, pull, push

Arm can be straight or bent

Fists can be open or closed

Use front or back of hand or fist (side also possible)

Kwanmukan Technical Congress

Session 2 Saturday January 12, 2013 from 9 am to 5 pm
Sunday Morning January 13, 2013 from 9 am to noon

Purpose of Session 2

This session dealt with the forces that affected karate in the period prior to its introduction in Japan and how these forces were used by Ankoh Itosu to impact the karate that was brought to Japan. In doing so, it was explained that the Heian Kata were the fundamentals (designed by Itosu) to be understood to reduce the time period required to be proficient in karate. We also studied how these fundamentals progressed in the Heian kata series both through more advanced skill and through the design of the particular Heian kata to express a given idea. Underlying this was the concept that the physical development (practice of the kata) and the application of the kata are both important and both within the design of the kata. Practice and application are necessary to master the kata.

This session also presented the application of Jion and Tekki Sho. These are more advanced kata and some of the application expressed and expanded that within the Heian kata. A more expanded Rosetta stone was used to understand the application of these two kata.

General Agenda

What is classical karate?

- 1) No relation to Buddhism, Confucianism or Taoism. Karate is not religion or philosophy.
- 2) The dojo shrine started in Japan based on Japanese customs (Shinto Shrine)
- 3) Not Related to philosophy – this came later in Japan
- 4) Shorin and Shorei were probably Chinese concepts or styles developed in Okinawa. Shuri-te and Naha-te (and tomari-te) were probably coined 1926 or so. Itosu created Shuri-te kata.

Itosu's Impact

- 1) Preserved the original kata
- 2) Created new kata selecting technique from traditional kata
- 3) Extracted the essence of the fundamentals
- 4) Introduced measures to shorten the process of advancement
- 5) Opened karate to the public and worked towards its dissemination
- 6) Used oral instruction for the application of the kata

We could say Itosu took traditional Tote (Tode) kata and created new kata using the term "karate."

Itosu's Precepts help define classical karate

- 1) Practice Method
 - a. Physical Development
 - b. Strengthen the sinew and bond, harden, the body and use the hands and feet as weapons
 - c. Postures are very important
 - d. Practice as if on the battlefield – as if you need to use it.
 - e. Train relative to one's strength to avoid injury
- 2) Process of Advancement

- a. Two hours per day to be effective in 3-4 years.
- b. Hit a makiwara 100-200 times with correct posture per day
- 3) Kata
 - a. Preserve as they are written
 - b. Divided into those for training and application and those practiced separately
 - c. Practice often after learning their meaning
 - d. Learn the oral instruction
- 4) Effectiveness of karate
 - a. Naturally become brave (Gain Confidence)
 - b. Good for health and promotes long life (if you actually practice)
 - c. Mastering karate will allow one to “take ten opponents.” Practicing karate will not lose its applicability.
- 5) Contribution to society
 - a. Serve one’s parents and country – follow the moral authority of your time
 - b. Useful as soldiers
 - c. Helps develop a militaristic society (this notion was considered important to the society in Japan including Okinawa at that time.)
- 6) Dissemination
 - a. If introduced into public schools, it will spread all over – what karate was trying to accomplish in the period up to the 1930’s.

Purpose of Karate according to Itosu

- 1) Physical development
- 2) Public defense – one’s family or country, not personal fights (fist of virtue)
- 3) Not to use karate kicks and punches to inflict injury unless unavoidable

We are taught to not injure someone with karate and to avoid fighting at all costs? What does this mean? We need to learn techniques other than just strikes and kicks such as restraining techniques, throws, joint holds. These are part of karate and found in the curriculum. Itosu stated to not use karate kicks and punches to injure people unless unavoidable. He meant that we should use karate techniques other than punching and kicking as much as possible.

What does karate do for you?

- 1) Develops the body
- 2) Ability to protect one’s family and country
- 3) Use for defense trying not to injure
- 4) Strengthen the muscles and bones, harden the body
- 5) Develops confidence and courage
- 6) Correct practice is good for health and promotes long life
- 7) Mastery will allow you to use it successfully

How do I get the benefits of practicing karate (Master it)?

- 1) Train 3-4 years 2 hours a day
- 2) Hit the makiwara 100-200 times a day (use good posture)
- 3) Stances are important so develop them
- 4) Learn the meaning of the moves in kata
- 5) Practice according to your strength to not injure the body

What are the important aspects of training?

- 1) Postures/Stances –The upper and lower body must connect through the core. The core is GET FROM PAM. Lower shoulders and relax having the feeling of opening out your chest. Keep the back straight, strength in the legs and energy lowered to the abdomen.
- 2) Breathing - Lower the breathing to the abdomen and feel the movement coming from the abdomen.
- 3) Relaxation (Remove Power) Muscles can only flex and contract – taking power means removing power away or relaxing. You relax by taking power away. Taking power away allows the body to relax so that it can move more quickly and powerfully. For example, we use the biceps contraction when grabbing or asserting strength. Most strikes require the expansion (flex) of the biceps. Relaxing the biceps avoids using the biceps as a brake when performing technique.
- 4) Practice in earnest with the intent of going into a fight. If someone were standing outside the dojo with a baseball bat waiting for you to leave, how would you practice? Train with that mind.
- 5) Partner practice is important. Partner practice is not a social event. You must strike at your partner in earnest so your partner develops the correct mind.
- 6) Exaggerating your strength and power can lead to injury. Practice within your capabilities. Examples,
 - a. When kicking and not striking something, do not use the knee joint to stop the kick, retract with the surrounding muscle. This reduces the chance of knee injury in the future. The same thing for punches. Do not lock the elbow on a punch. Withdraw all punches with the surrounding muscle tissue.
 - b. Stances should not let the knee extend out over the foot. Especially in low stances. This stresses the knee unacceptably.
 - c. If you turn the hips forward in your stances, make sure the foot holding your weight is set to move forward as in walking forward, otherwise you put undue stress into the forward (bracing) hip.
 - d. Forcing a kick by turning the hips creates the same type of stress in the standing hip joint. Instead, pivot appropriately and keep your kicks within a comfortable height.

Itosu on Advancement

There are two adages that we hear about how long it takes to become proficient. It takes three years to learn a kata and if you practice 2-3 hours a day for 3-4 years you will become proficient. These two adages are contradictory. Prior to Itosu a kata was practiced for many years to master it. Little explanation was given in the fundamentals and the individual learned through continued effort. Itosu expressed that learning the fundamental concepts would speed up the training curve. If you understood the fundamentals, you could more easily and quickly learn the basics. When he developed the Heian kata he had this mind: Unify kata in the Shuri styles to speed advancement and understanding of the more advanced kata. In effect, the Heian kata became the fundamentals of learning the more advanced kata.

(Itosu also created other kata. He indicated this by how he named the kata. Dai is the original version, Sho a new version created by Itosu. This allowed the preservation of the original version.)

Judo verses Karate Advancement

Judo also adopted the idea of teaching/explaining the fundamentals to increase advancement. Judo introduced the use of a foot sweep through developing the concept of off balancing – kuzushi.

Fundamentals in Judo taught to help advancement are off balancing, entry and execution. In karate, the essence is in the posture including lowering the shoulders, breathing, strength in the legs, and connecting the upper and lower body through the core. Additionally, karate taught a combative method whereas in Judo the concept was to throw the opponent. It was natural that the fundamentals in Judo explain the concept of throwing, whereas in karate the fundamentals were the striking and kicking. In karate, use of the Heian kata helped learn the technique of defense (not individual movements although a more simple kata allowed the student to master correct body movement fundamentals in an easier environment.)

Comparing the development of modern karate to judo

Structural Comparison

Judo – physical education, martial arts, moral education.	Karate
Essence of fundamentals	Essence of fundamentals (posture)
Shortening of the advancement process	Shortening of the advancement process
Adoption of new kata such as the Nage no Kata	Adoption of new kata (Heian, Gekisei, etc.)
Unification of moral education, martial and physical education	Unification of moral education, martial and physical education
Spiritual development competition and physical education	
Mind; spiritual Development, Instruction question and answer method	Mind Spirit of Loyalty and of not killing
Techniques differed between competition and kata removing dangerous techniques in the competition only	Techniques preserved in the original kata – one can take 10 opponents
Body: Physical Development (used Randori)	Body: Develop the body to live a long life (train every day)
Randori started from the beginning	Competition started later on with dangerous techniques removed.
Kata included dangerous techniques	Techniques other than punches and kicks were discarded.
Competition eliminated dangerous techniques	(Competition eliminated dangerous techniques but the impact of this was later on)
Service to society – mutual welfare and benefit (worthy use of human effort and mutual prosperity)	Service to a militaristic society
Spread into public schools would spread it throughout Japan.	Spread into public schools would spread it throughout Japan

Technical Comparison

Judo	Karate
Techniques clearly delineated in the kata	Techniques not clearly specified in writing
One explanation for each kata	Many explanations for each movement limited only by the imagination
Randori started from the inception allowing	Competition between schools did not appear until

competition	1957
Other styles were sought out to test actual skill in competition	Competition with other styles was discouraged (banned.)
New Techniques were actively introduced	Techniques other than punches and kicks were discarded.

Judo and Karate Development

Both changed their names. Jujitsu was the forerunner of Judo and Judo was created from jujitsu. The name Judo was used to differentiate this new martial art. It is unclear whether the phrase karate was used instead of Tode (Tote) by Itosu to indicate: that which came after his changes thus indicating a new direction rather than a new martial art. It is possible the change may have had more to do with the Chinese Sino wars. We can think of Tode as classical and karate as referring to traditional karate as we know it. Judo did incorporate technique appropriate for a barehanded martial art and did not develop those techniques for use against full armor or while carrying a sword, which was the backbone of jujitsu technique as these techniques were not in keeping with the changing times. Karate on the other hand did not have major changes in technical knowledge. Thus Judo was created as a synthesis of many different barehanded martial arts such as the over the shoulder throw from wrestling. The Judo Kodokan also included other styles such as aikido, which they called Kodokan goshenjutsu and added a technical body consisting of karate's kicks and punches. Karate came later to Japan and to make itself different than other martial arts eliminated techniques rather than incorporating outside techniques.

Style Names

Two organizations vied for supremacy in the martial arts – the Kodokan of Judo in Tokyo and the Butokukai of Kyoto. Interestingly enough, Funakoshi was connected with the Kodokan and did not take a style name, whereas those such as Kenwa Mabuni and Miyagi Chojun were nearer to Kyoto and the Butokukai and registered style names through them.

Omotegie

This was the original word for what we know as *kata*. The word *kata* began to be sometime used after 1908 as Itosu did not use the word *kata*. Funakoshi first used the word *kata* in print in 1922.

Kata

There is a difference between the function of the kata and the application of kata. Kata as a function trains the body, whereas application is for use of the technique. Application today is called bunkai. Both function and application are important to master karate. First, in training the body, correct body mechanics is a must. However, we need to start practicing the correct application so we can become better karateka. Use of correct application is important today, as the modern kata explanation does not give rise to fully practicing karate. The application is insufficient or simply wrong for the long-term serious karateka. Nothing important will be learned otherwise.

Reading the Kata

- 1) There is no first attack. In karate there is almost always a counter. Practice needs to be come so proficient that the block and counter become simultaneous which is the essence of karate technique. What this means is that the blocking hand becomes the attacking hand. If an attack is thusly countered correctly, there is no need of further attack.

- 2) Immobilize the opponent before striking. Put your opponent into a position where he cannot attack again.
- 3) Names of movements are disguised. Much of the terminology we use today came about with the evolution of textbooks and use in the educational system. This occurred after coming to Japan. Thus references were made to actions of the body that did not fully represent what the meaning of the movement was.
- 4) No techniques end with a block. There is always a counteroffensive movement. Most blocks are really attacks and hidden movements were not left out of the kata.
- 5) Block with both hands. The preparation for the block by crossing the arms (used in many blocks) is itself a natural action of defense and should be taught that way. Using this natural reaction will help understand the nature of the double block found in most actions.
- 6) The grabbing and pulling hand. The hand is pulled to the hip to pull the opponent to that position. This not only pulls the opponent off balance but can reduce the distance of a punch increasing its speed from point to point. Thus, you are quicker, prevent the opponent from escape, and remove his ability to strike further. In addition it helps set up the understanding of how to throw and joint lock. Twisting while pulling enhances the effect dramatically.
- 7) The front hand is the attacking hand. One benefit is that you attack from the closest possible distance. e.g. First movement of Heian Nidan
- 8) Movements practiced in two counts are often performed in one count. Two counts is the breaking down of the step into parts to learn. The parts are then reassembled into the whole.
- 9) Switch Step. Most kata are done with walking steps, but use of a stitch step allows the kata to be adjusted for defense. (Fumi Kae) e.g. Beginning of Heian Shodan
- 10) Kicks are performed low while grabbing the opponent.
- 11) There is one opponent and that opponent is to the front. The line of performance is a separate thing.
- 12) Hang the opponent to the ski. Use of a forearm twist off balancing the opponent upward.
- 13) Reblock and Regrip. This is a controlling concept shutting down the opponents attack using both hands. e.g. Beginning of Heian Sandan
- 14) Take the opponents back. Most difficult position for the opponent.
- 15) Cross legged stance represents a body shift or a joint kick.
- 16) Jumps and body shifts represent throws.
- 17) Throw your opponent off balance in a triangle whose base is the base of the opponent's feet.
- 18) You can use both hands together – supporting hand is the grabbing and pulling hand.
- 19) Cut the forearm. Consider striking the opponents arms using your hands and arms as a sword.
- 20) Kamae is an invitation to draw the opponent into where you want them to be.
- 21) Release from holds. Study the directions of the fingers. This will indicate different conditions to break the opponents balance. Consider that we mainly either use the index or little finger to grab.
- 22) Empty one's sake cup. Armlocks while standing up as in Bassai.
- 23) Draw the opponent in and turn him upside down. Using the palm heel turn the opponent upside down. Extend the opponents arm in most instances. This can also be used to dislocate.
- 24) Extend the opponents elbow. E.g. Jitte where you extend the elbow making it easier to take the staff from the opponent.