

# Japan Karate-Do Organization

## Dojo Etiquette

Welcome to the Japan Karate-Do Organization. It is our hope that you will become as committed as we are to maintaining the highest level of training. Karate is a Japanese martial art, and there will be customs and practices that are different from what you are used to. These are a few of the rules that all members are expected to follow.

- 1) Always have a clean GI (uniform).
  - (a) The belt you wear is something you have earned through hard work and dedication. The proper place for your belt is around your waist or inside your training bag. You should never have your belt around the back of your neck as you would carry a towel, or drag your belt on the floor.
- 2) Personal hygiene is important, be sure to keep your finger and toe nails clipped.
- 3) Mrs. Miki is referred to as Sensei inside the dojo and either Sensei or Mrs. Miki elsewhere. Hanshi is referred to as Hanshi.
- 4) All Shodan (1<sup>st</sup> level black belts) and above are referred to as SENPAI (senior).
  - (a) The words Hanshi, Sensei and Senpai are titles and in the Japanese language always follow the person's name. In U.S. dojos, you will often hear the form "Sensei Sherry" but the proper Japanese usage is "Sherry Sensei".
- 5) Always bow before entering onto the training area.
- 6) Once you enter the training area, the only talking should be about Karate. This is not a social area.
  - (a) Only students coming to class are allowed to enter the dojo floor.
- 7) Class begins with a short period of meditation to prepare for the training to come. This is followed by bowing to show respect for the art, for the teacher, and finally for those senior members present. When you are late, it is a sign of disrespect, so be on time.
  - (a) If you enter class late, do the following: bow at the edge of the mats, sit and meditate, bow to shomeni, and then wait to be told by the instructor to join class.
- 8) When your name is called, answer strongly with a "hai" and move quickly to where you are directed.
- 9) Always bow lower and hold your bow slightly longer than your senior partner. Remember, Karate is a Japanese martial art and showing respect to those senior to you is extremely important in Japan and thus in our dojo.
- 10) All forms of Jewelry should be removed before you begin training. Great pains are taken to avoid injury, but physical contact is part of Karate and Jewelry, like long fingernails and toenails increase the risk.
- 11) The correct ready/resting position (Yoi) is with your feet in a comfortable position, approximately shoulder width, and your hands closed into fists held

slightly in front of your body. You should not put your hands on your hips or behind your back. It is impolite to stand around with your hands on your hips.

- 12) It is important for you to remember, that within the dojo, a willingness to work hard and a strong spirit will make you stand out and earn the respect of the other members. Once you choose to enter our dojo, it is the responsibility of the senior members to help you improve. You are expected to ask for help on technique and it is our duty to give it.

**BUT**, when senior member takes the time to point out an area where you need to improve, and works with you on that area, devote some of your own time to practicing that particular technique to show the senior member that you are serious about improving. None of us are perfect in our technique, but we are constantly striving for Perfection. Criticism of your technique should be seen as a sign that someone cares about your improvement. Senior member may see a greater ability in you than you are aware exists.

The members of our dojo train in Karate for a variety of reasons, but everyone trains with the same goal in mind, and that is to improve. The respect you are given here is the result of the effort you've put into training and the rank you have attained. When you enter the dojo, have a clear mind, be ready to work hard, and be sure to leave any ego or bad attitude outside.

- 13) Parents can support their child by encouraging physical conditioning at home such as running, push ups and sit ups. Please leave all technical teaching to the instructors inside or outside the dojo.