

# *LARAMIE KEMPO KARATE CLUB*



## *Adult Manual*

Updated February 2026

# LARAMIE KEMPO KARATE CLUB

## INTRODUCTION

Head Instructor: Shihan Amber Travsky, 10th degree Black Belt, Kyoshi  
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Instructors: Rich Travsky, 7<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Ed Kempema, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Brian Baker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Bailey Abbott, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Shadow Abbott, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt

Other Black Belts from the Laramie Kempo Karate Club:

Karen Rogers, 5<sup>th</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Jack Wimbish, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Tim Evans, 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Tiffany Young, 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Shawn Palmer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Ross Tolman, 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Nicholas Haderlie, 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Black Belt

Mark Wingate, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Dan Eastwood, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Elijah Massey, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Nathanael Massey, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Katie Kempema, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt  
Dawson Poteet, 1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt

Web site: <http://www.laramiekempo.com>

## SCHOOL MOTTO

Above all else, to seek to  
control my mind and my body  
to obey my will quietly.

To seek to adjust to every  
situation, good or bad, which I  
may meet in my daily life.

Don't permit yourself to show temper,  
and always remember that when you  
are in the right, you can afford to keep  
your temper, and when you are in the  
wrong, you cannot afford to lose it.

## THE FIVE S's OF KARATE:

Strength  
Stamina  
Skill  
Speed  
Surprise

## BELT RANKING

There are Junior and Senior rankings. The belt colors are the same, as listed below but Junior belts have a black stripe running the length of them. Junior ranks also earn four stripes at each level before testing for the next rank.

Rank	Belt Color
9 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	White
8 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Yellow
7 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Orange
6 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Blue
5 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Purple
4 <sup>th</sup> Kyu	Green
3 <sup>rd</sup> Kyu	High Green
2 <sup>nd</sup> Kyu	Brown
1 <sup>st</sup> Kyu	High Brown

### Black Belt Ranks:

1 <sup>st</sup> Dan (Shodan)	Black
2 <sup>nd</sup> Dan (Nidan)	Black
3 <sup>rd</sup> Dan (Sandan)	Black
4 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Yodan)	Black
5 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Godan)	Black and Red
6 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Rokudan)	Red and Black
7 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Shichidan)	Red and Black
8 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Hachidan)	Red and Black
9 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Kudan)	Red and Black
10 <sup>th</sup> Dan (Judan)	Red

## **HISTORY OF KEMPO**

*Prepared by Amber Travsky, 10th Dan and Edited by Sofu Stephen Blackburn*

The art of Kempo is unique, as far as its history goes in two respects: it is considered by many to be the very first eclectic martial art, as well as having reasonably firm roots dating back to 520 b.c. The person who was the catalyst of Kempo was a prince of southern India named Bodhidharma (P'uT'iTaMo in Chinese). According to the records of Lo-Yang temple, Bodhidharma was a Buddhist monk under the tutelage of Prajnatarā. It is presumed that upon his deathbed, Prajnatarā requested Bodhidharma to travel to China where the principles of Buddhism were in decline, and spread the knowledge of dhyana (zen Buddhism or Chan Buddhism).

It is estimated that in 520 during the Southern dynasties, Bodhidharma entered China and traveled northward to the kingdom of Wei where he met Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty. During this meeting the emperor and Bodhidharma entered an intense period of discussion over Zen koans. Bodhidharma did not convince the worldly emperor so he left his court to travel to the Honan province and enter the Shaolin Monastery.

Upon his arrival, Bodhidharma noted the haggard condition of the monks. The monks it seemed spent all their time in passive meditation and carried on with little or no physical exercise. Many of the monks would often fall asleep in meditation, while others needed assistance in the basic necessities of life due to their weakened condition. For several days, Bodhidharma himself meditated on the predicament in a cave outside of the temple, seeking enlightenment to the situation. Upon his return, Bodhidharma began to instruct the monks in an art he called Shih Pa Lo Han Sho, or 18 hands of Lo Han. The techniques of Lo Han were used as a method of physical and mental conditioning, and were never intended to be used in the arts of war.

During the Sui period of China's history, approximately 40 years or so after Bodhidharma's death, hoodlums furiously assaulted the Shaolin monastery and the monks' attempts at defense were next to futile until a priest, referred to as the "begging monk", defeated several of the outlaws with an extensive array of hand and foot techniques. The techniques of this monk so inspired the other priests that they requested instruction in the martial style as a way of protection. This art was later to be known as Shaolin Chuan Fa or "Fist Method."

Several decades after Bodhidharma's death, a Chuan Fa master known as Ch'ueh Tuan Shang-jen (Chin Gempin in Japanese) rediscovered the original Lo Han techniques, lost for many years and adding his knowledge of Chuan Fa to the repertoire, increased the total number of techniques to seventy-two. Ch'ueh then spent the next few years traveling, promoting his art, until he met Li in the province of Shensi. Li, a master of Chuan Fa as well as other arts, further developed the techniques of Ch'ueh, and together formed a total of 108 techniques. Furthermore, they categorized these techniques into five categories, distinguished by various animals whose instinctive actions reflected the movements of this new version of Chuan Fa.

At this period in time, the evolution of Chuan Fa into Kempo breaks off into two separate branches - one to the Ryukyu kingdoms of Okinawa and the other to the islands of Japan. Little is known about the actual development of Kempo in Okinawa, much coming through mainly due to legends or comments of certain Karate masters of the 20th century. It is believed that sometime between the Sui and Ming dynasties (800-year gap) Chinese monks brought over Chuan Fa to be taught at various temples. What happened at this point is unknown.

One of the legends that is much easier to follow and well documented concerns a man named Sakugawa who traveled from his province of Shuri to China in the 18th century to learn the secrets of Chuan Fa. After several years Sakugawa returned to Shuri, much to the surprise of his kin who believed him dead, with a mastery of Chuan Fa. Over the years, Sakugawa refined the techniques of Chuan Fa and formed the art of Shuri-te, the predecessor of modern Karate.

Another member of Shuri, Shionja, returned to Okinawa from China around 1784 with a Chinese companion, an envoy from the court of Peking, named Kushanku bringing with them the art of Chuan Fa which both studied in China and traveled around Okinawa demonstrating their art.

Aside from these two brief tales, little can be said about the development of Kempo in Okinawa for little or no mention of its being is mentioned until the popularization of Karate in 1903. None the less, the development of Chuan Fa can be clearly seen in the arts of Shorin ryu and Goju ryu Karate, as well as Ryukyu Kempo.

In 1609 Okinawa was taken over by the Shimazu clan of Japan who passed a number of prohibitive ordinances including a ban on all weapons. In 1629 Okinawans banded together to resist the enemy, resulting in a new fighting style called "te" and translated "hand." This style is the first recorded instance of an art that closely approximates modern karate. The study of this art went "underground" to avoid detection by the Japanese samurai. Because of this, "te" took on two characteristics: it became secretive and it became extremely violent since the sole purpose of its practitioners was to maim or kill.

In 1875 Japanese occupation ended but the secrecy of karate continued for some time. Rivalry between schools developed as each began vying with others for supremacy in these arts. Some schools developed a competitive sport emphasis while others preferred to keep their art on a higher level, disdaining from competition of any sort and practicing only kata.

The evolution of Chuan Fa is far from clear in Japan and many gaps still remain. The term Kempo is the Japanese pronunciation of Chuan Fa and translates as "Law of the Fist" or "Way of the Fist." One of the main theories behind the development of Kempo is similar to that in Okinawa that concerns the various Buddhist temples teaching the art to various young monks. The actual practice of Kempo in these temples was kept secret until the 17th century, at which time the art of Shorinji Kempo began to be taught outside the temple.

At the beginning of the 17th century two families, the Kumamoto and the Nagasaki brought knowledge of Chuan Fa from China to Kyushu in Japan. This art was modified throughout the years into its current form known as Kosho-ryu Kempo, or "Old Pine Tree Style." The most modern versions of Kempo have sprouted from this form.

In 1955 Masters Shigeru Nakamura and Zenryo Shimabuku formed the “Okinawa Kenpo Renmei” (Okinawa Kenpo Association) to support the promotion of the practice of Karate’ through sport competition and to unite all Okinawa Karate. It was his desire to raise its status to the same level that Japanese Kendo and Judo shared. Master Nakamura is known for his development of “Bogu Gear” which is protective gear used in contact sparring.

Upon the death of Master Nakamura in 1969 The Okinawa Kenpo Renmei disbanded, though his students retained the name Okinawa Kenpo. We are those students.

Two years later, in 1972 Master Seikichi Odo took over as head of the system and instituted the Kobujitstu Arts (Okinawa Weapons) into the style. This is something that Master Nakamura had not wanted to do.

One of Master Nakamura’s students, Master Hideka Nakayama, continued to teach Master Nakamura’s Okinawa Kenpo Karate’ having brought it to the United States at the request of the United States Air Force where he opened a dojo in Cheyenne, Wyoming with a student of his. There he took as a student Master James M. Lloyd. Master Lloyd was promoted to Shodan on the 8th of August 1973, by Master Nakayama and San dan George M. “Micky” King.

All research seems to indicate that there was a split in the style of “Okinawa Kenpo” upon the death of Master Shigeru Nakamura. Master Odo included in the style the teaching of Kobujitsu and making weaponry required training; Master Nakayama continued to teach only “Empty Hand” techniques. Details of this division are not available and reasons can only be surmised. The political implications are probably not Karate’s finest hour. Master Odo did not change or loose any of Master Nakamura’s art but he did expand upon it. Many very good things came from Master Odo’s influence on the style and the inclusion of the Kobujitsu Arts is a matter of perspective. Master Nakamura was a practitioner of both Karate’ and Kobujitsu but believed they were of a different philosophy, apparently so different that if combined into one style each would detract from the other. One of his main goals was to raise the status of Karate’ to that of Kendo and Judo through competition. Sparring with weapons would be dangerous and was impractical. The addition of Kobujitsu took the style into a different direction. Master Nakayama continued with the same philosophical direction that Master Nakamura intended.

Master James M. Lloyd studied under Master Nakayama after training with several people for relatively short periods of time. Master Nakayama provided a complete formal foundation upon which Master Lloyd built an excellent and accomplished career. He continued to be a student of Master Nakayama until Master Nakayama retired and moved back to Okinawa. Master Lloyd competed successfully for several years and was sought after as a draw for tournaments frequently in his prime. Master Lloyd established dojos in Wyoming, Colorado, California, and Florida. His students have then spread his work throughout the entire country, passing on Master Nakamura’s and Master Nakayama’s dream.

## **The Laramie Kempo Karate Club**

Shihan Amber Travsky began the Laramie Kempo Karate Club in 1985. Her Instructor, Lao Shi Stephen Blackburn, had taught in Laramie for a number of years and had established the Okinawa Kempo School. When he moved to Virginia, he passed on the club to another black belt but promoted Amber to Shodan (1st Dan black belt) before leaving. Amber continued training with the Okinawa Kempo club until opening the Laramie Kempo Karate Club in 1985 after becoming the karate instructor for classes at the University of Wyoming. She continued teaching martial arts for UW for 30 years until the class was discontinued. Lao Shi Blackburn continues as her instructor.

Prior to studying kempo with Lao Shi Blackburn, Shihan Travsky studied Tae Kwon Do, beginning in 1973, and Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan, beginning in 1978. She received her Shodan for Okinawa Kempo in 1982, her Shodan in Moo Duk Kwan Karate in 1985, her Nidan (2nd Dan) for Okinawa Kempo in 1986, her Sandan (3rd Dan) in 1989, her Yodan (4th Dan) in January 1997, Godan (5th Dan) in April 2000, and Roku-dan (6<sup>th</sup> dan) in April 2004. She was promoted to 7<sup>th</sup> dan black belt in 2012 and to 8<sup>th</sup> dan black belt in 2015. In 2025 she was promoted to 10<sup>th</sup> dan black belt and awarded the title of Grandmaster for those students that began their training in the Laramie Kempo dojo.

## **Laramie Kempo Karate Club Affiliations**

Our dojo is affiliated, through Shihan Amber Travsky, with Lau Hau Kenpo.

Soke James M. Lloyd is, and remains, the founder of Lao Hau Kenpo. He has since retired but continues to train at his home in Florida. Lao Shi Steven Blackburn has also retired but he remains Shihan Amber's instructor; he lives in Tennessee.

Lao Hau Kenpo, or Tiger Kenpo, has as its very basis a focus on good life values – rather than being centered on kicks and punches.

As stated in the By-laws:

*“Be respectful to all, greet each other as brothers and sisters, for even those of lesser ability have a place of importance with us.”*

Lao Shi Stephen Blackburn started his martial arts training in Cheyenne, Wyoming in 1974 under James Lloyd, then a 2<sup>nd</sup> degree black belt. With his instructor's blessing, Master Blackburn also studied under Michael Mulconery, whose focus was on a style that combined karate, aikido, judo/jujutsu, and escrima.

Lao Shi Blackburn joined the military and studied various martial arts styles wherever he was stationed, including a 2½ year stay in Japan. He returned to Wyoming in 1979 where he opened a Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan dojang in Laramie. Amber Travsky joined his club in 1980 and trained with him in Laramie until he moved to Virginia in 1984. The club style changed to Okinawan Kenpo style in 1983 when Sensei Blackburn was promoted to the rank of 3<sup>rd</sup> degree black belt by Sensei Lloyd.

Through his world travels, Shihan Blackburn has studied and attained ranks in Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan, Tae Kwon Do, Kajukempo, and Okinawa Kenpo/Kempo.

### **What's the difference between Kempo and Kenpo?**

The only difference is in spelling. Both Kempo and Kenpo are technically pronounced the same and both are the English representation of the word "Kempo" which means Way or Law of the Fist. Generally, most offshoots of Kara-ho Kempo such as Ed Parker's American Kenpo Karate utilize Kenpo instead of Kempo. William Chow was the first person to use Kenpo to show his break-off from Kosho-ryu Kempo.

### **Styles of Kempo**

(This is not a complete list of Kempo styles)

*Kosho-ryu Kempo* - This style of Kempo was brought by visiting monks to the Mitose family monastery in the 15th century. Over the centuries this form of Shaolin Chuan Fa was blended and refined with forms of jujitsu that were common in the area. Kosho-ryu (name of the Mitose clan) not only teaches the hand techniques of Kempo but also includes methods of archery, flower arranging, rinzai zen Buddhism, and philosophy. The current grandmaster of Kosho-ryu Kempo is Bruce Juchnik who uses the term *Sei Kosho Shorei Kai* (S.K.S.K.) Kempo to describe Mitose style.

*Shaolin Kempo* - The Shaolin Kempo system was formed by Fred Villari a student of American and Shorinji Kempo systems. Fred Villari's system tended more towards the Kung-Fu element and utilizes the techniques of 5-animal Chuan Fa to a larger extent than most systems. Added to the Kempo system was the white tiger Chin Na (grappling) techniques and various new forms.

*Kara-ho Kenpo* - Founded by William Kwaisun Chow, this was an offshoot of Kosho-ryu Kempo that was blended with the Chow family 5-animal Chuan Fa. Kara-ho Kenpo utilizes many circular as well as linear techniques and requires 500 such techniques be learned for black-belt status. Currently, Kara-ho Kenpo is under the evolution of Sam Kuoha who has added various new techniques as well as 12 kata based on Chow's original 12 base linear techniques. In the 50's Chow's system was called Chinese Kara-ho Kenpo Karate but in the 80s he changed the spelling to Kempo to differentiate his style from other sub systems.

*American Kenpo* - An offspring of Kara-ho Kenpo, Ed Parker's American Kenpo system is the largest and most well-known Kenpo system in existence. Parker took what Chow taught him and organized every technique and movement into a format that could be broken down into levels for all students. Parker felt that the innovations he added to his Kenpo eventually made up 85% of the system, thus he renamed it American Kenpo. The American Kenpo system can be seen in the movies "The Perfect Weapon" and "Street Knight" starring 4th Dan Jeff Speakman head of the United Kenpo Karate Association.

Additional Kempo Styles include Nippon Kempo, Okinawa Kenpo, American Shaolin Kenpo, and White Tiger Kenpo

### **Does Kempo use other weapons aside from its fists?**

In Kempo schools, defenses against knives and clubs are seen from yellow belt and up as being the prime weapons for attacks. Kempo also teaches its students how to use various ancient weapons with emphasis on 6 main weapon types in many schools. Students can learn weapons in most schools from green belt and up although certain schools restrict the usage to black belts. It's required for students to acquire at least 5 weapon proficiencies by 2nd degree black belt.

### **Kempo forms**

Kempo has many forms with a notable characteristic of having both circular and linear movements as well as hard and soft techniques. Kempo forms are used to teach speed and coordination of strikes, as well as various principles such as angling, zone theories, and combination succession.

### **Black and White Gis**

In many traditional martial arts styles, white is the traditional gi. In traditional Kempo schools, all beginning students wear the black gi. In the Laramie Kempo Karate Club, black belts are allowed to mix black and white gi tops and bottoms. Also, in the Laramie Kempo Karate Club no other gi colors are allowed.

### **Similarities between Kempo and other arts**

Kempo and other martial arts have various similarities-primarily because of Kempo's diverse background and "borrowing" nature.

*Tae Kwon Do and Kempo*: Many of the aerial kicks and spinning kicks can be found in Kempo. The crescent and axe kicks are very common as are jumping side, roundhouse, and front kicks. Also common are jump spinning back kicks, jump spinning crescent kicks, as well as scissor kicks. After all, TaeKwonDo forms were taken from Shotokan and Okinawa-te, which were both influenced by Kempo.

*Karate and Kempo:* Karate and Kempo share the closest similarities in techniques due to similar backgrounds. Beginner students utilize the hard blocks, and fist techniques of Karate to a large extent as well as include various circular and soft blocks found in Goju-ryu and Shorin-ryu. Another similarity is in training, using the horse stance as a training stance as well as the torque of the hips to create power.

*Jujitsu and Kempo:* Jujitsu derives many of its throwing techniques from Kempo, primarily its sweeps, hip and shoulder throws. Recently, many Kempo schools have started to add back the various loin/reap throws as well as sacrifice throws. Jujitsu has a greater amount of throwing techniques over Kempo and will most likely stay that way.

*Aikijutsu and Kempo:* Certain projection techniques found in Aikijutsu originated in Kempo, primarily Shiho-nage Irimi-Nage techniques as well as en-no-irimi. Like Jujitsu, Kempo took many projection techniques of Aikijutsu that would fit with Kempo's postures and over-all techniques.

*Kung Fu and Kempo:* Although Kempo has many origins in Kung Fu styles its evolution has thrown many of the soft techniques out the window so to speak. The principles derived from animals (dragon, snake, crane, leopard, tiger, monkey) have been kept as well as key-techniques, but the overall division of techniques has changed drastically.

## **RANK TESTING**

Testing Fee: None

Testing Dates:

Testing occurs in March, May, September and December with specific dates posted at least three months in advance.

Who may test:

All members, both youth and adults, must be approved for testing by Shihan Amber Travsky.

Preparing for a test:

It is up to each individual student to be certain of the testing requirements for their rank. Requirement lists are available in this manual. It is also the student's responsibility to discuss with a black belt any test requirement they do not understand or if there is something they have not been taught.

Test Grading:

Each rank test has specific requirements, as described elsewhere in this manual.

To Pass a Test:

Passing a test to gain the next rank is at the discretion of the Head Instructor. If a student fails to pass, an explanation will be provided. In some cases, a chance to meet the deficiencies in a timely period may be considered.

Testing Frequency:

Typically, an adult student is ready to test for their yellow belt after about three months. This depends greatly on how often they attend class and how much they practice outside class. Youth students take longer, but can progress through the yellow stripes fairly quickly, though their progress is much more age-dependent. Once a student reaches an intermediate level (blue belt and green belt), the time between tests lengthens and can get fairly long as they reach high green and then brown belt.

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## REQUIREMENTS FOR 8TH KYU, YELLOW BELT

For learning new kata, only the black belts or someone they assign can teach new kata. New kata is not something to teach your friends and it is not something to learn just by watching another student. Learning new kata is an honor that is earned following promotion to the next rank.

### I. Basic Techniques

1. Hand techniques in a horse stance:
  - a. Front punch
  - b. Upper block
  - c. Lower block
  - d. Inside-out block
  - e. Cross block
2. Kicks (from a relaxed fighting stance, stationary)
  - a. Front kick
  - b. Side kick
  - c. Round kick

### II. Kumite

Perform the following 5 one-steps. Focus on distance control.

1. Step with right leg at 45-degree angle into shallow horse stance while blocking with left hand. Punch with right hand and follow with a back-knuckle.
2. Step with right leg to side. Sidekick with left leg while bringing arms up to a guard. Knifehand with left hand to the collarbone.
3. Step right leg back into an "L" stance while doing an inside-out block with left hand. Step right leg toward partner and elbow strike to the mid-section. Add a back-knuckle to the nose. ***Make sure you go into an L-stance with this!***
4. Step right leg back into a front stance while doing an upper block with the left arm. Left hand "snakes around" partner's arm, forming a platform and trapping their arm to pull them off balance; pull towards your forehead NOT to your side or downwards. Follow with ridgehand with the right arm to the side of the head (temple).
5. Cross block with left arm while stepping in "toe-to-toe" with partner with left foot. Spin clockwise while moving right foot in a circle to outside of partner. Elbow strike to partner's head or side. Back-knuckle to the head.

### III. Kata

1. Taikyoku I (Shodan)
2. Taikyoku II (Nidan)

### IV. Free sparring

Spar against at least 2 different opponents without sparring gear. Focus on control and light contact.

## TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 7TH KYU, ORANGE BELT

### I. Basic Techniques

1. Hand techniques from a horse stance:
  - a. Knifehand
  - b. Ridgehand
  - c. Reverse knifehand
  - d. Crane's neck
2. Kicks, from a relaxed fighting stance:
  - a. Crescent
  - b. Reverse crescent
  - c. Back kick
  - d. Spinning side kick

### II. Kata

1. Taikyoku III (Sandan)
2. Naihanchi I (Shodan)

Be prepared to perform kata from earlier tests.

### III. Kumite' –

Perform the first one-steps (1 through 5), adding one to three moves at the end of each one.  
New Intermediate One-Steps:

6. Step left foot forward into front stance alongside opponent. Parry with left hand while doing a reverse knifehand with the right hand to opponent's solar plexus (area just below the sternum).
7. Step with left leg into a horse stance at a slight angle to opponent while doing a cross-block with the left hand. Follow with an inside-out block (called a transfer) with the left hand to continue to secure the opponent's arm. Follow with left hand punch to the ribs.
8. Step with left leg into a shallow horse stance at a slight angle to opponent. At the same time use both arms in a parry with a soft knifehand. Grab opponent's wrist with right hand and twist. Pull to your hip and hammer-fist with the left hand to side of the head (temple) of the opponent.
9. Step left foot back into L-stance while doing an inside-out block with the left arm. Round kick with the right leg to ribs or solar plexus; follow with a knife hand to the neck with the right hand.
10. One-step developed by the student.

### IV. Self-defense - must perform on both sides

1. Same-side hand grab and walk away
2. Same-side hand grab and control attacker
3. Cross-side hand grab and control attacker

### V. Free sparring

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**TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 6TH KYU, BLUE BELT**

- I. Basic Techniques:
1. Advancing in a front stance:
    - a. Low block, reverse punch
    - b. High block, reverse punch
    - c. Inside-out block, reverse punch
    - d. Cross block, reverse punch
    - e. Parry, spearhand
    - f. Front kick, low block
    - g. Side kick, low block
    - h. Round kick, low block
- II. Kata
1. Naihanchi II (Nidan)
  2. Pinan I (Shodan)
- Be prepared to perform kata from earlier tests.
- III. Kumite' - Advanced one-steps:
11. Classic Five Elbows:
    - a. Step back into L-stance with right leg and do an inside-out block with the left arm.
    - b. Step right leg in close to opponent and strike right elbow to their stomach (elbow #1).
    - c. Using same arm, pull back and then re-strike with the elbow to the ribs (while maintaining block with left arm) (elbow #2).
    - d. Raise opponent's arm to your shoulder as you turn around 180 degrees and while also twisting opponent's wrist to turn arm so it is elbow-down on your shoulder. Use left arm and strike opponent's stomach with your elbow (elbow #3).
    - e. Move opponent's arm from your left shoulder, over your head and to your right shoulder while elbowing their kidney with the right arm (elbow #4). Be sure to keep the arm twisted and secured.
    - f. Turn 180 degrees to opponent's back and strike final elbow blow at opponent's back of the neck (elbow #5).
  12. Step right leg back into shallow front stance while doing an upper V-block with both hands. The back of your hands, left hand in front of the right, should block opponent's wrist. Twist both hands simultaneously so palms are inward, allowing you to grasp opponent's wrist with both hands. In a clockwise direction, while holding their wrist, do a circle, first with a small radius and then larger, to throw them off balance. Follow-up move is your choice, based on positioning of opponent at that point.
  13. Perform One-Step #5, but at the end do a take-down. To do this, reach right leg between opponent's two feet, turn him towards the right and then quickly turn it to the left while pushing right heel to the ground. This take-down should create a "pop" resulting in your opponent losing his or her balance and being easily pushed backward.
  - 14 – 15. Final 3 one-steps are student's choice, made up on their own or with the assistance of class black belts.
- IV. Self-defense - must perform on both sides
1. Repeat all techniques from Orange Belt test.
  2. One-handed lapel grab and control attacker
  3. Two-handed lapel grab and control attacker
  4. Two-handed wrist grab, release and attack
- V. Free Sparring

## TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 5TH KYU, PURPLE BELT

- I. Basic Techniques:
1. Knife-hands, advancing in an L-Stance
  2. Kicking, using the front leg in a stationary L-Stance:
    - a. Front kick
    - b. Side Kick
    - c. Round Kick
  3. Jumping Front Kick
  4. Kicking combination using the back leg each kick: front kick, sidekick, spinning sidekick, round kick.
- II. Kata
1. Pinan II
- Be prepared to perform other kata from earlier tests.
- III. Kumite' - Two-steps:
1. Attack: Front kick with right leg (back leg) followed by a hammer fist with the right arm.  
Defense: Step right leg back into a front stance while doing a double V block low to block kick, followed by a V block high. Follow-up with attack of choice.
  2. Attack: Sidekick with right leg (back leg) followed by a backfist with the right hand.  
Defense: Step back or to the side to avoid and deflect kick to avoid contact. Block opponent's backfist with a backfist and follow-up with attack of choice to finish the sequence.
  3. Attack: Round kick low with right leg (back leg) followed by a backfist with the right hand.  
Defense: Block kick with left hand with a hammer fist, while moving into a horse stance with the right leg coming forward. Backfist to block opponent's back fist, followed by follow-up of choice.
  4. Two-step of choice.
  5. Two-step of choice
- Also: 5 one-steps from previous testing.
- IV. Self-defense - must perform on both sides
1. Repeat all techniques from Blue Belt test.
  2. Grab from behind, two-handed neck hold, control attacker.
  3. Grab from behind, bear hug. Escape and attack.
- IV. Free Sparring

## TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 4TH KYU, GREEN BELT

### I. Basic Techniques:

Start in a relaxed fighting stance and do second technique in a spring-style stance

1. Backfist, Reverse Punch (spring style stance)
2. Upper block, Reverse Knifehand (spring style stance)
3. Low block, crane's neck (spring style stance)
4. Inside-out block, palm thrust (spring style stance)
5. Cross-block, upper cut (spring style stance)

Kicks:

1. Double front kick
2. Double sidekick
3. Double roundkick
4. Outside-in crescent kick, spinning heel kick

### II. Kata

1. Pinan III (Sandan)

Be prepared to perform kata from earlier tests.

### III. Kumite'

A total of 8 two-step techniques; the first four from last test and four made up ones.

### IV. Self-defense - must perform on both sides

1. Repeat all techniques from Purple Belt test. At completion of each control move, add minimum of two attacking moves to "take out" your attacker.

### V. Free Sparring

## **TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 3RD KYU, HIGH GREEN BELT**

- I. Basic Techniques:
  - 1. Plum blossom hand drill
  - 2. Jump spinning crescent kick
  - 3. 3 functional combinations - these are drill-type sequences with 3 to 5 moves per sequence. Move down the floor with each of these. You may be asked to lead the class for this requirement.
  
- II. Kata
  - 1. Pinan IV (Yodan)
  - 2. Pinan V (Godan)

Be prepared to explain any moves.

Be prepared to perform kata from earlier tests.

- III. Kumite
  - 1. Three-steps: 5 techniques  
Three steps involve three advancing punches at face level, responding with a block and then, on the third punch, defensive moves.
  - 2. Two-steps: 5 techniques. These are from any of the previous tests.
  - 3. One-steps: 5 techniques. These are from any of the previous tests.
  
- IV. Self-defense - must perform on both sides
  - 1. Repeat moves from Green Belt test.
  - 2. Same-side, one arm grab of shoulder. Control and attack.
  - 3. Two-arm shoulder grabs. Control and attack.
  
- V. Free Sparring

## TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 2ND KYU, BROWN BELT

- I. Basic Technique:
  - 1. Flying sidekick
  - 2. 5 functional combinations of hand and feet techniques. Be ready to show these to the class and explain them in a teaching situation in a class before or after the test.
  
- II. Kata
  - Naihanchi III (Sandan)
  - You will be asked to perform other kata from earlier tests.
  
- III. Kumite'
  - All techniques come from kata. Be able to illustrate which kata the moves come from. Kata moves can be adapted with additional moves as needed.
  - 1. One-steps: 5 techniques
  - 2. Two-steps: 5 techniques
  - 3. Three-steps: 5 techniques
  
- IV. Self-defense - must perform on both sides
  - 1. Repeat moves from High Green Belt test. Add more realism to attacks.
  - 2. Be prepared to show releases from any attack.
  
- V. Free sparring – with gear; includes two-on-one sparring.

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**TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 1ST KYU, HIGH BROWN BELT**

I. Basic Techniques:

1. Five functional combinations - all taught to the class before or after the test
2. Jumping crescent kick
3. Jumping reverse crescent kick

II. Kata

Hangetsu

You will be asked to perform other kata from earlier tests.

III. Kumite

Five each of one, two, and three-steps.

IV. Self-defense

Perform grabs and releases as an opponent attacks with random techniques.

IV. Free sparring

## TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR 1ST DAN BLACK BELT - SHODAN

Testing for Shodan is based much more on attitude, motivation, self-discipline, and focus rather than the beauty of kicks and special techniques. A true Shodan is in the heart, not in the feet.

To test for this rank, the student must gain experience in class of teaching other students.

### I. Basic Techniques

Basic techniques will focus on teaching drills. This will not be a part of the test but you will have to teach class on a number of occasions prior to the test to demonstrate the techniques.

### II. Kata

Bassai

Be prepared to show **ALL** kata.

### III. Kumite'

Be prepared to demonstrate one-, two-, and three-step techniques from previous tests.

### IV. Self-defense

Be prepared to demonstrate grabs, releases, and other self-defense techniques to the class. You may be asked to teach the class these techniques prior to the test.

### V. Free sparring

### VI. General Martial Arts Knowledge

Be prepared to answer questions concerning the history and origin of the martial arts. Also, some thoughts into philosophy may be asked.

## **TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR NIDAN, 2ND DAN BLACK BELT**

Generally, a student must continue studying Kempo and teaching it in some manner for a minimum of two years after promotion to Shodan before being allowed to test for Nidan.

### **I. Teaching**

Much of the basis for this rank is on teaching. With teaching comes the acknowledgement that you are here not only for yourself but, also, to help others. Passing on your knowledge to others is the focus of this rank.

### **II. Kata**

The focus on this rank is in the use of weapons. You must learn kata using a minimum of three different weapons.

1. Bo form #1
2. Sai form: Pinan 1
3. Sai form: Pinan 2

The other two weapons kata are not specified. One must be a different weapon not already used. Weapons you may select include the kama, tonfa, nunchaku, bo, sai, sword, escrima sticks, etc. You may end up picking up traditional kata from other styles or you may adapt one of our kata to a weapon.

### **III. Other test requirements will be based on the individual and at the discretion of the Shihan.**

Note that there is no change in the belt; it just gets more worn with use. Our belts lack markings that indicate actual dan grade.

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## TEST REQUIREMENTS FOR SANDAN AND HIGHER BLACK BELTS

Higher dan ranks are based on a continued pursuit of the martial arts either by teaching in a formal class, assisting with the Laramie Kempo Karate Club, or furthering the art in some manner.

As we age, kicks don't get higher and punches don't get faster. Accepting this is also a part of continuing with the martial arts and rank progression in the upper dan levels.

With dan ranks, the same black belt is worn up to 4<sup>th</sup> dan. At 5<sup>th</sup> dan the belt is half red and half black with the black half worn on the top. At 6<sup>th</sup> dan, the same belt is worn with the black half on the bottom; this same belt is worn up to 9<sup>th</sup> dan. For the highest rank (10<sup>th</sup> dan) a solid red belt is worn.

Karate's first and foremost objective is character development.

## SPECIAL TITLES

**Hanshi** - Honorary title that literally means "exemplary teacher" and usually *the* master of a system or style. This is the highest position attainable in Japanese/Okinawan martial arts. It was once translated as "grandmaster" but that title is considered to be too ostentatious by some.

**Kyoshi** – Honorary title sometimes that literally means "expert instructor," perhaps equivalent to an "assistant professor."

**Master** – The English language title of "master" is typically associated with 5<sup>th</sup> dan. In some systems it is adopted automatically at that level, whereas in others it requires a Master's Teaching Certificate from an accrediting organization in order to be considered official.

**Renshi** – Honorary title that literally means "polished expert," and usually an assistant to a higher-ranked kyoshi.

**Sempai** – A term for a senior student, usually brown belt or first dan black belt, and often used only when the student is assisting the sensei or leading a class in his stead.

**Sensei** – A sensei is simply a "teacher," literally "one who has gone before," i.e. is older or has taken the same path as the student but is now farther along. All black belts who teach regularly in the Laramie Kempo dojo have the title of Sensei.

**Shihan** – A "teacher of teachers" responsible for the structure and standards of style of those senseis under his authority. Most shihans have a rank of sixth dan or above, and preside over their own style or at least over a group of schools each under a sensei.

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## JUNIOR AND ADULT BELT SYSTEMS

The Laramie Kempo Karate club recognizes both Junior and Adult ranks. All students under the age of 14 will test as Juniors. Junior belts are the same color as the Adult system except that a black stripe runs the length of the belt.

The reason for having two systems of ranking is to be fair to the Junior students. It is not fair to expect a 7-year-old and a 25-year-old to perform the same. That doesn't mean that one will try harder than the other. Effort has nothing to do with age. But there are physical differences that, if there were only one system, could prevent a Junior student from progressing through the ranks. *The test requirements are the same for Junior and Senior ranks.* When a Junior student joins the adult class, he or she must retest into the adult class for their existing rank.

### WORDS WE USE

Karate (kah-rah-tay)	"Empty hand"
Kempo	"Way of the fist"
Training hall	Dojo
Training uniform	Gi (pronounced gee)
Instructor	Sensei
Master Instructor	Shihan
Forms	Kata
Attention	Cha Ryut
Bow	Kung Ret
Ready Stance	Choon Bee
Begin	Seeja (Korean) or Hajime' (Japanese)
Yell	Kiai

COUNTING:

English	Korean	Japanese
One	HaNa (hah-nah)	Ichi (eechee)
Two	Dool (dool)	Ni (nee)
Three	Set (set)	San (san)
Four	Net (net)	Shi (shee)
Five	Taset (taw-set)	Go (go)
Six	Yoset (yaah-set)	Roku (row-koo)
Seven	Il Gop (ill-goop)	Sichi (see-chee)
Eight	Yo Dul (yahl-dool)	Hachi (haw-chee)
Nine	Ah Hope (ahh-oop)	Ko (coo)
Ten	Yohl (yaah-ool)	Ju (jew)

## DOJO (TRAINING HALL) RULES

DO'S	DON'TS
1. Bow at the dojo entrance prior to coming into the room. Take shoes off before entering.	1. Don't enter dojo unless an adult is present.
2. Before and after class, stay within the entryway next to the dojo.	2. Don't wander around the building before or after class.
3. Come to class with a clean and neat gi. Have t-shirts tucked in and belt tied correctly.	3. Don't wear jewelry including watches, earrings, or rings.
4. Treat other students and instructors with respect.	4. Don't kick, punch, or harass other students. No sparring in the dojo without the permission of a black belt.
5. Do spit out gum before starting class.	5. Don't lean against the wall during class.
6. If late for class, do wait in choon-be next to the class until bowed in by a black belt.	6. Don't use any profanity or mean language during class.

Any person using excessive force against another student or instructor may not be allowed to return to the club if the actions persist. We are all here to learn the martial arts - not to hurt our fellow students.

## MY JOURNEY IN THE MARTIAL ARTS

*by Shihan Amber L. Travsky*

Asking new students why they start kempo typically results in responses such as, "to learn self-defense," "to learn self-discipline", "to get exercise and become more fit."

Most likely, you started because of a similar reason. Your purpose for studying the martial arts may change with time. Back in 1973, as a high school student, I started karate because my ballet teacher retired and I couldn't find another ballet class. So, I went into Tae Kwon Do. I started mostly out of curiosity and a desire for a good workout. Little did I realize I was starting a long and exciting journey in the martial arts.

Martial arts aren't for everyone. Many people put on a white belt and end their study before they ever reach yellow belt. Others get to black belt and decide that is the end.

Getting to black belt is not the end of the journey. It is merely the beginning of a serious study of the martial arts. A Black Belt is the symbol of a serious student - someone who has made a commitment to the study of the Art.

Typically, black belt is also the beginning of being in the dojo for reasons other than you. A person wearing a black belt passes on his/her knowledge and is in the dojo to help others.

I have passed through many phases in my personal journey. As I mentioned, I started mostly for the workout and the challenge. After about four years, I moved to Laramie and switched to the Korean art of Tang Soo Do Moo Duk Kwan, with Sensei Stephen Blackburn. After about five years, our club switched to Okinawa Kempo.

At one time I enjoyed competition and had a desire to test my skills in tournaments; during another phase, my primary focus was to progress through the ranks and to learn the skills necessary for each promotion. I loved the challenge of learning new techniques and getting promoted through the ranks. I focused on the self-discipline and I thrived on pushing myself to do my best.

There was a time when I got bored with it all. I struggled to come to class and forced myself to practice. That passed, though, and my enthusiasm was rekindled as I found my favorite aspect of the martial arts: teaching.

I now see the study of the martial arts as much more than just a fitness program. Sure, it is great for maintaining flexibility and conditioning, but it is much more. It has become a part of me. I don't *do* the martial arts; I *am* the martial arts. By that, I mean, martial arts is also about myself as I learn to deal with unpleasant situations; as I am confronted with life situations that I seemingly cannot control.

For example, if I have a situation where a co-worker is being rude or unkind towards me, or who is literally driving me up a wall, I try to accept that without having it affect my mental outlook. I cannot control what they think of me; I cannot control their actions. All I can control is my own response and how it affects me.

In the mid-1990s I served as Mayor of Laramie. In that office, I had to be around people who were fairly rude towards me. It was very difficult to accept at first. I can't say, even today, that I find it easy to accept. I strive to maintain a positive outlook and to ignore their insults and cutting remarks. It has been a difficult lesson to learn. But, this lesson, in my mind, has been as much a part of my martial arts training as learning a sidekick.

I strive to be the best I can be, not only in a physical sense, but in other aspects, too. I try to live "the moment", where I don't dwell on the past, recalling things I wish I had done differently; and, although I plan for the future and look forward to it, I try not to dwell on it to the point where I forget to "smell the roses" today.

There are fundamentally different perspectives on what the martial arts is about. The following quotes illustrate the difference:

*"Whenever you cross swords with an enemy you must not think of cutting him either strongly or weakly, just think of cutting and killing him. Be intent solely upon killing the enemy."*

- by Miyamoto Musashi, a 15th-Century Samurai  
(from *A Book of Five Rings*)

These quotes contrast different ways of dealing with conflict; they are also the basis of two radically different approaches to the martial arts. One approach lays the foundation for violence and increased aggression under the guise of self-improvement, while the other nurtures self-understanding and intelligence.

Which is right? I can't answer that for anyone except myself. However, I do feel there is an over emphasis on the first perspective. Coming from a desire for personal power, many individuals focus on aggressive fighting skills. This view of martial arts, which is violent, militaristic, and egotistic is a popularized romantic view exploited in both movies and magazines.

I feel it is a perverted misapplication of what is, in essence, a way of life devoted to developing sensitivity and understanding. Rather than focusing on lethal self-defense techniques, and conquering and "killing the enemy", and proving one's self through competition, the *ART* of the martial arts is concerned with understanding violence, "subduing the enemy without fighting", thereby creating the means of going beyond conflict.

*"To subdue the enemy without fighting is the highest skill."*

- by Gichin Funakoshi  
(from *Karate do - My Way of Life*)

The intent of the Art of the martial arts is to give one the opportunity for self-discovery. Where the more violent approach in karate develops the tough hide of invulnerability, the Art of the martial arts fosters flexibility, suppleness, and sensitivity - and this is a great strength. Real personal power comes from being open, questioning, being susceptible to oneself and others. Only a false sense of power can come from the other perspective.

Think of yourself as a calm pond. Strive to keep it calm and serene. Situations in our lives are like pebbles being thrown in the pond. How much it ripples is up to you. How many ripples you try to create in other people's ponds, is also up to you.

*"The ultimate purpose of karate is to develop the better features of human character rather than merely to strengthen human beings against physical enemies." - Masutatsu Oyama*

## BECOMING A CHEF OF THE MARTIAL ARTS

*By Stephen Blackburn*

Most of you don't know this about me, but in addition to other things in a miss-spent youth, I studied to be a gourmet chef. I enjoy cooking, especially for large groups, and I am really happy when people can barely push themselves away from my table, and waddle, groaning, over to an easy chair to wait for things to settle. One of the things I haven't had the chance to do much while in Taiwan, is to bake, but last weekend I decided to make Foccacia bread.

Now, as anyone can tell you, Foccacia out of a box is easy, but not necessarily the tastiest; but doing it by hand is really tough. Old yeast won't allow the bread to rise as it should, too much oil and the mixture never set up right, and you really should use Olive oil for the best flavor. The combination of rosemary and garlic, along with basil and other herbs, if done wrong, is a taste disaster. There isn't enough cheese and tomato sauce, or other toppings, to save a Foccacia gone bad. Done right, it transports you on a breath of savory wind to far-away Tuscany, in the moonlight, soft music, romance.....

Where was I? Oh yeah. How Foccacia bread is like martial arts. The comparison has to do with ingredients and artistry. Martial arts are made up of several aspects, and to go back to a cooking metaphor, are several slices of the same.....well, perhaps pizza, if you view pizza as a pie. Exercise, nutrition, basic techniques, conditioning (different from exercise), kata, one-steps, kumite, weapons, energy training, healing arts, history, culture (and the subdivisions of art, flower arranging, music, tea, even weaving), philosophy. All of these are a part of the study of martial arts, along with language, strategy and tactics and other areas. People mistake what they see of the martial arts (the physical) as being the sum total of the arts. They don't see the lifelong study that is required to be a true martial artist.

But all of these are ingredients, they are not the "artistry" that I mentioned above. It's the artistry that is the goal, not the mastery of the ingredients. There is a subtle but noticeable difference in people who master the ingredients, and those who are artists.

In cooking, a person who masters the ingredients is a cook. A person who masters the artistry is a chef. Not that we don't need cooks; of course we do. A cook prepares a meal, and for example, in the military, a cook prepares a meal for hundreds or thousands of troops. A chef prepares an experience. Often, it's an experience for only a few to enjoy.

A cook can transmit their skills easily. Often, it's a "cookbook" with pictures, diagrams, recipes, and hints. A chef may have a hard time transmitting their skills; often it's all about the hints.

-- Hanshi Steve

P.S. Just in case you wanted to know, the Foccacia was a complete flop. Instead of Tuscany, moonlight, soft music, and romance, I had to settle for a burger at a nearby Burger King, during a rainstorm, the music was too loud, and romance.... well, according to my wife, romance would shorten my lifespan\*.

## THE TRUE MEANING OF THE BLACK BELT

Black belt testing is a very rare event. The Laramie Kempo Karate Club believes there is much more to being a black belt than having fancy kicks, being able to break boards, or winning trophies at a tournament. It is about the martial art *spirit*. It is what is inside that makes a black belt - though knowing kata and doing good punches and kicks is important.

Being a black belt means doing your best to become a better person. It means doing your best to make the world a better place. It means trying your best to be the best *you* can be and helping others to be their best.

It takes years of dedication. It means practicing even when you don't want to.

It means coming to class even when you'd rather do something else.

It means walking away when someone picks on you, even though you know how to fight. It means realizing that, no matter how much you practice, and how hard you try, you must always try harder.

Being a black belt means realizing it is just a beginning, not an end. It is the beginning of being a serious student of the martial arts.

It is not about bragging. It is not about strutting around.

You must learn *humility* - the opposite of being a showoff. Humility is much more difficult to master than a fancy kick or sparring. It is the true meaning of the black belt.

## WHAT IS SELF DISCIPLINE?

In *The Martial Spirit* by Herman Kauz, he discusses the topic of discipline, especially as it relates to *kata* or forms. The following excerpt is from his book:

"By 'discipline' I mean developing the ability to do something each day which is not always pleasant and about which one is not always enthusiastic. It is easy to engage in some activity which excites and which we like. However, even though we have made up our minds to live in a certain way, we will encounter many days or perhaps weeks when we are less than eager to do the work connected with our choice. If we practice on only the days we really want to, our progress will be extremely slow. In addition, we are apt to stop our training altogether, because the particular form we are doing becomes easier with daily practice and more difficult when it is done infrequently.

Spending a certain portion of each day in practice, the results of which are not quickly evident, is difficult. Those students who enroll in a school of martial arts, which holds daily classes are fortunate, because once the class begins, they are swept along in the general procedure. The energy generated by fellow students and the teacher serves

to carry each individual along. Those who attend class only once or twice a week and who must practice alone for a period of time each day have a more difficult time of it. It is true that beginners usually throw themselves into training with enthusiasm. But when this initial flush of enthusiasm begins to fade, they need help in establishing a steady pattern of training. Gradually, however, students fall into the habit of training at certain times of the day. If for some reason, they are unable to train, they feel that something has been left undone. Once a certain momentum of practice has been established, it becomes easier to do one's prescribed period of training than to avoid it."

Kauz, Herman. *The Martial Spirit - an introduction to the origin, philosophy, and psychology of the martial arts*. 1977. The Overlook Press; Woodstock, New York.