



A Brief History With General Information For New Students

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Thank you for your interest
in Chinese Kenpo Karate
at AKKA-KarateUSA.

We hope that your
association with
our school
and Kenpo is a long
and fruitful one,
and that this booklet
answers many of your
questions as you begin
your training with us.

AMERICAN KENPO KARATE ACADEMY DOJO RULES

- 1) Observe Dojo etiquette by bowing upon entering and leaving training area.
- 2) Address all instructors and fellow students as Mr., Ms., Ma'am, or Sir.
- 3) Students must be in full uniform at all times while training in Dojo. Exceptions made for weight training, bag work and "contact" workouts. Ask management for clarification.
- 4) Arrive ten minutes prior to your class, to allow you to check in at the reception desk, get dressed and stretched out for your class.
- 5) All sparring must be supervised by an instructor.
- 6) It is mandatory for all students to have a mouth piece, groin protection, headgear, chest protection, gloves and footpads in order to spar.
 - 7) No full-contact sparring is allowed. No contact to the head or groin is allowed.
 - 8) No horseplay allowed at any time.
 - 9) Do not congregate in the lobby or around the reception desk.
- 10) You must call and cancel your regularly scheduled lessons or your account will be charged. Repeated failure to call will result in postponing your belt tests.
 - 11) Be sure to pick up payment receipts.
 - 12) The deck area is to be used for training only.
- 13) It is discourteous to interrupt or interfere with lessons in progress.
 - 14) Seek permission from the instructor to enter a class that is already in progress.
 - 15) Please help keep the Dojo clean by putting trash in proper receptacles.
- 16) COURTESY, HONESTY, RESPECT, DISCIPLINE, LOYALTY and COURAGE are the motivating values of this school and are the expected characteristics of all of our students.



American Kenpo Karate Academy History

The earliest and, therefore, most speculative sources of our current American Kenpo Karate System are numerous:

1) Shang Dynasty through Han Dynasty (1600 B.C.–220 A.D.)

Most Chinese martial arts styles can be traced back about 3,500 years to the practice of Shuai Chiao. Shuai Chiao developed from such influences as the grappling maneuvers of Mongolian wrestling; the footwork of horn butting (Chiao Ti); and the simple empty hands boxing being practiced by the feudal nobility. It took approximately 1800 years of development for Shuai Chiao to develop into some type of standard techniques (with variations from different regions of China). Shuai Chiao became a national pastime that was widely practiced by the nobility and the military. By the onset of the Han Dynasty, Taoism had developed as the main belief structure in China. The philosophy of yin and yang, force and counter-force, balance and counter-balance, and the philosophy of the Five Elements were incorporated into the people's Shuai Chiao. Taoist priests continued to work and develop internal power (qi or chi), breathing methods (nei gong), as well as moving and standing meditation [Canzonieri, Feb. 1996]. One such Taoist contributor was Hua T'o, a surgeon who proposed a series of health exercises involving animal postures (bear's neck, fowl's twist, etc.). He is the source of the southern long-hand forms. Hua T'o also introduced our animal attitudes as physical and mental models, as well as the Taoist breathing techniques.

2) Liang Dynasty through Sung Dynasty (500–1260 A.D.)

Bodhidharma (Daruma Daishi, Tamo) was the 28th East Indian prince and the successor to Buddha. Bodhidharma traveled to China to preach Buddhism, i.e., that one must coexist with nature and the surrounding environment. After being rejected by the warring Chinese populace, he retired at the Shaolin Monastery. While attempting to teach the Shaolin monks, Bodhidharma found that many fell asleep during meditation. Bodhidharma introduced a series of hand and foot movements to strengthen the physical and spiritual natures of the Buddhist monks. The Shaolin monks used Bodhidharma's exercises as well as the fighting skills of body guards, temple guards, military generals, ex-soldiers visiting Shaolin and fellow monks (who came from poor backgrounds) to create the 18 Lohan Boxing style [Canzonieri, Feb. 1996]. From this beginning, the Shaolin monks continued to develop their martial techniques to aid in the protection and defense of the monastery from bandits. Bodhidharma's influence is preserved by us in his most famous quote, which is restated by Mitose: "...to fall down seven times, to rise eight times, life starts from now."

3) Yuan Dynasty (1260–1368 A.D.)

During this Era, martial arts also became an integral part of the Chinese lifestyle. The martial arts were taught by only a select number of clans, who in turn passed on the deadly secrets to select clan members. The selected clan members were made, by their mentors, to swear never to disclose the secrets they received [Tindall, May 1996]. Around 1200 A.D., Genghis Khan began his conquest of China and in the process attacked a region containing one of the Shaolin temples. A high priest of the temple escaped to Japan where he met a Shinto priest whose name was Kosho. Kosho had already mastered a variety of fighting arts including: Kendo (Swordsmanship), Naginata-do (Lance fighting), Kyudo (archery), fighting on horses and swim fighting. The high priest taught the Ch'uan Fa (Fist Law) system to Kosho. After becoming a master of all these systems combined, he changed his name to Mitose and began teaching his martial arts (Kosho-Ryu Kempo). Nearly 80 years later, a Buddhist descendant of Mitose (Kosho) founded the Kosho-Shorei (Old Pine Tree) temple in order to teach his philosophy of true self-defense (self-defense without body contact). Kosho-Shorei contained a complete system of wartime self-defense (Kosho Ryu) as well as a system of teaching religion, the arts, and humanities (Kosho-Shorii). The wartime art of Kosho-Ryu Kempo, was taught only to family members (insiders). Kosho-Ryu was passed on from generation to generation in order for the family members to be familiar with it and to be able to defend against it [Golub, Reference].

Through these Japanese generations, the ancient Chinese art was extensively modified from its original circular movements to the more strict linear format preferred by the Japanese. The linear movements and takedowns incorporated into the modern American Kenpo can be traced directly to Kosho-Ryu.

4) Ming Dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.)

By the start of this period, the Shaolin monk Ch'ueh Yuan had increased the original techniques of the 18 Lohan style to 72 movements. Ch'ueh Yuan eventually obtained permission to leave the monastery and traveled extensively throughout China in search of other Martial Arts masters to confer with. Ch'ueh Yuan obtained many techniques and ideas from his travels before teaming with two contemporaries; Li Sou (great Lohan martial arts master) and Pai Yu-Feng (Hit Tai Tau internal boxing master). The three masters returned to the Shaolin Monastery to combine what was known from the internal and external styles. Ch'ueh Yuan's 72 movements were expanded into 170. The new movements were then categorized into five distinct animal styles: Tiger, Crane, Leopard, Dragon, and Serpent. The five animal styles are the basis of the Shaolin Ch'uan Fa ("Fist Law") known as "Five Forms Fist" [Canzonieri, March, 1996]. Also during this era a dispersion of Ch'uan Fa or "Fist Law" occurred outside of China. In 1372, an official Chinese tributary relationship was established between China and Okinawa's King Sho-ha-shi. The Chinese martial arts began to mingle with Okinawan fist fighting (Tode). The intermingling of fighting styles occurred because of the establishment of a permanent Okinawan settlement in the Chinese capitol of Ch'uan Chou and the migration of 36 families from the Chinese province of Fukien to Kume-mura, Okinawa. In this way Chinese boxing was passed on to many Okinawans. In 1609, Japan, led by Shimazu, conquered Okinawa. However, the Okinawa Te Style (Ch'uan Fa) was already established within the populace. By 1629, various Okinawan Ch'uan Fa groups and tode (fist fighting) societies had banded together to form a new fighting style called "Te". During this period, many Okinawans were secretly sent to China to learn its fighting systems [Corcoran, 1984].

5) Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912)

After the Mongol takeover of China, the Ming Dynasty officials, which consisted mostly of the Imperial Guards, took refuge in the Shaolin Monastery to plot their revenge. With the influence of the Ming Dynasty Imperial Guards the Shaolin Monasteries began to codify and strengthen their particular martial art styles. Legend has it, and we emphasize the legend has never been empirically verified, that in order to graduate from the Shaolin monastery, monks would have to exhibit phenomenal skills and pass through 18 testing chambers in the temple. If they survived the first 17 chambers, they would have to grip an iron cauldron with their bare forearms and have the raised relief of a tiger and dragon burnt into their skin. These marks were the signs of a true Shaolin Master. During this tumultuous period, the monasteries were periodically burned down and the ever resilient Shaolin Monastery had to be relocated in Honan, Fukien, Kwangtung and elsewhere. This was beneficial to the development of the martial arts, because as battles between the Ch'ing Dynasties and the Shaolin monks continued the different fighting styles intermingled and spread to the common populace. Two such styles born from the turmoil were Wing Chun Kung Fu and Hung Gar Kung Fu. Not only were these styles important to the spread of Ch'uan Fa to the common people of China, Japan, and Okinawa but they have significant influence on the evolution of American Kenpo Karate [See Thomas Connor, below]. A quick summary on the origins of Wing Chun and Hung Gar are given below:

Wing Chun Kung Fu

During the reign of Emperor Kangshi of the Ching Dynasty (1662-1722) Ch'uan Fa became very strong in the Shaolin Monastery of Mt. Sung, in Honan Province. This aroused the fear of the Manchu government, which sent troops to attack the Monastery. Although they were unsuccessful, a man named Chan Man Wai, a recently appointed civil servant seeking favor with the government, devised a plan. He plotted with Shaolin monk Ma Ning Yee, and others, who were persuaded to betray their companions by setting fire to the monastery while soldiers attacked it from the outside. The monastery was burned down, and the monks and disciples scattered. Buddhist Abbess Ng Mui, Abbot Chi Shin, Abbot Bak Mei, Master Fung Doe Duk and Master Mew Hing escaped and went their separate ways.

Ng Mui took refuge in the White Crane Temple on Mt. Chai Har. It was there she met Yim Yee and his daughter Wing Chun from whom she often bought bean curd on her way home from the market. Wing Chun's beauty attracted the attention of a local bully, who tried to force Wing Chun to marry him. Ng Mui learned of this and took pity on Wing Chun. She agreed to teach Wing Chun fighting techniques so she could protect herself. Wing Chun followed Ng Mui into the mountains, and began to learn Ch'uan Fa. She trained night and day, until she mastered the techniques. Then she challenged the bully to a fight and beat him. Ng Mui later traveled around the country, but before she left she told Wing Chun to strictly honor the Ch'uan Fa traditions, to develop her skills after her marriage, and to help the people working to overthrow the Manchu government and restore the Ming Dynasty [Yip Man, Reference].

Hung Gar Kung Fu

Historically, Southern China has been dominated by five Kung Fu styles: Hung, Lau, Choy, Lay and Mok. Hung Gar is the most widespread and popular of these. Gar means clan or family in Cantonese, whereas Hung refers to the family name of the man who invented the system, Hung Hei Goon. According to legend, Master Gee See, a monk of the Fukien Shaolin Temple, taught Hung Hei Goon, a Fukien tea merchant, the Shaolin Tiger Style. Hung, being a curious man, always sought to improve his skills. He added to his Tiger Style many of the elements from his wife's White Crane system. He also incorporated movements from the Dragon, Snake, and Leopard forms, as well as techniques from the Five Elements Fist. He modified and expanded his "Tiger-Crane" Style to develop a system better balanced in long and short-range application, a system which better reflected his own character and skills—Hung Gar. Hung Hei Goon developed a reputation for being a fighter of great skill and was known as "The Southern Fist". The essence of Hung Gar can be found in its name "Hung", meaning to "stand tall with integrity." Hung Gar philosophy stresses honesty, directness, iron will—power and righteousness. To show the diversity of fighting styles available throughout China, the following list names the various monasteries that existed at one point in time. A brief summary of the styles attributed to have been developed by the different monasteries is:

Honan – Northern Fist, Ground Dragon, Monkey Praying Mantis, Cotton Fist, eight Drunken Immortals, 10,000 Lotus Blooming, Golden Snake, Staff, Spear, Jointed Sticks, Single Broadsword, Double Broadsword, Tiger Hook Swords, Double Edged Sword, Three Sectional Staff, Chain Whip, Double daggers, Double Hand Axes, Single and Double Butterfly Knives.

Fukien – Southern Fist, Golden Centipede, Sparrow, White Monkey, Wild Horse, Iron Bone Training, Iron Palm Training, Iron Shirt Training, Short Fist.

Kwangtung – Tiger-Crane System, Fist of Ch'a, Crab, Golden Roaches, 10,000 Bees Attacking.

Shantung – Shantung Black Tiger, Tan Family Leg Techniques.

Omei Shan – White Crane, Eagle Claw, Golden Cock, white Swan, Ostrich.

Wutang Mountain – T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Pa Kua Chang, Hsing I Ch'uan, Liu Hsing Ch'uan, T'ai Chi Broadsword, Spear, Ta Mo Sword and Double Sword and Spear, Seven Star Sword.

Hua Mountain – Classical Fist of Hua, Modern Fist of Hua, Chang Ch'uan.

As stated earlier, the influence of these unique styles are still highly present in modern American Kenpo styles.

6) Karate Expansion (1915–1944)

After the occupation of the Okinawan and Ryukyu Islands by the Japanese, the secret study of the Okinawan Te was publicly allowed and a great popularization of Karate followed. Gichin Funakoshi and Knewa Mabuni (Okinawan Te Stylists) exported a form of sport karate to Japan in 1916. This was the Show Era in Japan. A great proliferation of martial arts and introduction of styles to the public occurred. By 1936 the term "Kara-Te" was utilized by the principal martial arts leaders of Okinawa.

7) Choki Motobu (1871–1944)

Motobu was an eccentric Okinawan Karate master. He is responsible for secretly translating the Ch'uan Fa elements of Okinawan Shorin-Ryu ("Shaolin Way") into the current basic structure now known as Shorei-Ryu Karate. Choki Motobu is associated with the rise of Kempo in Hawaii because of a publicized visit in 1933 as well as a mysterious link with James Mitose and the development of modern Kosho-Ryu Kempo [Corcoran, 1984].

8) Dr. James Mitose (1915–1981)

Mitose is a great grand master of Hawaiian/U.S. Kempo, and we can trace part of our lineage to him. At the age of 5, Mitose was sent to Japan to study the Mitose family tradition of Ch'uan Fa (or "Kempo" in Japanese) at the Mt. Akenkai Kosho-Shorei temple. As stated previously, the Ch'uan Fa tradition had already been modified by successive Mitose masters until it became known as Kosho-Shorei Kempo (Old Pine Tree Style). After fifteen years of training in his family's temple in Japan, Mitose returned to Hawaii. Following World War II, he opened the Official Self-Defense Club to begin teaching his family's wartime art of Kosho-Ryu Kempo to the general public. During the next fifteen years of teaching, Grand Master Mitose awarded black belts to only six of his students: Giro Nakamura, Thomas Young, Paul Yamaguchi, Arthur Keawe, Edward Lowe and William K.S. Chow [Corcoran, 1984].

9) William K.S. Chow (1914–1987)

Before studying under Grand Master Mitose, Master Chow had studied Boxing, Wrestling, Jujitsu and Karate. However, his main course of martial arts training was Chinese Shaolin Ch'uan Fa under the guidance of his father (Hoon Chow). Hoon Chow was a Buddhist Priest from Shanghai, China. Just prior to the Chinese Boxer Rebellion, Hoon Chow immigrated to Hawaii for a safer and more prosperous lifestyle. While living in Hawaii, Hoon Chow continued to practice the Shaolin Ch'uan Fa of Southeastern China (Kwangtung and Fukien). This is the style he taught his son, William K.S. Chow. Master William Chow incorporated many of the things his father had taught him into what he would be the first to call "Kenpo" (Fist Law) Karate. William K.S. Chow, a short man (approx. 5'1"), was raised in an Hawaiian culture where size, strength, and street-fighting ability were highly regarded. In order to survive on an island of giants, Master Chow began to alter Shaolin Ch'uan Fa to make it faster, more powerful, and oriented around street fighting situations. Master Chow began the transformation by shortening the circular motions and flowing movements of Shaolin Ch'uan Fa. He continued by incorporating the linear movements, joint locks and takedowns learned in boxing, karate and jujitsu. Finally, he placed a major emphasis on the availability and targeting of vital parts of the human anatomy [Master Sam Kuoho, Interview]. William K.S. Chow's Hawaiian Kenpo system (Kara-Ho Kenpo) was unusual for the time because it incorporated other martial arts techniques; Mitose had never associated his Kosho-Ryu Kempo with any other system. One of the most famous students under Chow's tutelage was Ed Parker.

10) Ed Parker (1931–1990)

Ed Parker, a native of Hawaii and student of Master Chow, revised the traditional methods of coping with modern fighting situations and brought the art to mainland U.S.A. Master Parker developed the modern Kenpo style by analyzing combative predicaments from the viewpoints of the attacker, the defender, and the bystander or spectator. Through his observations, Master Parker disproved many theories and concepts that had previously been considered as combat effective.

Ed Parker systemized and categorized all the basic Kenpo elements into a logical order of progress for step-by-step instruction. Master Parker placed the Kenpo basics into eight categories: stances, blocks, parries, punches, strikes, finger techniques, kicks, and foot maneuvers. Master Parker also divided the Kenpo system into three major divisions: basics (including forms), self-defense techniques, and sparring (tournament and street). This innovative restructuring made the martial arts much easier to learn, understand, and master [Corcoran, 1984]. A recognized first generation student of Master Parker was Thomas Connor. Ed Parker and Thomas Connor were the founders of the Chinese Martial Arts Association.

11) Thomas Connor (1929-1989)

Master Connor began martial arts training at the age of 7 years in the local Wing Chun and Hung Gar schools located in Newark, NJ and New York City. He studied continually until the age of 15 years at which time he enlisted in the U.S. Army by falsifying his age to fight in World War II. At the end of the war he returned to the United States to study linguistics. During this educational period, he honed his fighting skills and proceeded to win a series of Golden Gloves awards. Being a World War II veteran, a linguistics expert and having extensive knowledge of the fighting arts, Master Connor was the ideal candidate for intelligence work. From approximately 1950 to 1959, Master Connor worked for the U.S. Government as an operative in Central America and Mexico. As an agent for the U.S., Master Connor was able to broaden his martial arts training to include Jujitsu. In 1960, an exhausted Thomas Connor moved to Mexico with his young family to retire. With time to meditate on life, Master Connor decided to return to the United States to begin teaching the martial arts. By 1965, Master Connor was running a very successful self-defense school and dance studio in San Jose, California. That same year, Master Connor formed a partnership (COPAR Kenpo) with Ed Parker and the two proceeded to open a series of Kenpo schools in San Jose, San Francisco, and Phoenix, Arizona. Within a short period of time, Master Connor's extensive knowledge and skill earned him the title of master in Ed Parker's original Kenpo system. It was during his time in California that Master Connor continued his involvement and training in Chinese Wushu or "Martial Arts". Master Connor frequently visited Chinatown in San Francisco to meet and train with other Wushu practitioners. It was in Chinatown that Master Connor learned how to use the two-headed chain and many other Chinese weapons. By the early 1970's, the partnership between Master Connor and Master Parker had expanded to include the Tracy Brothers (TRACOPAR Kenpo). Master Connor's interests had also expanded to include bodybuilding (Master Connor won numerous bodybuilding competitions including the Master's Division Mr. America). However, by the late 1970's the partnership has dissolved and Master Connor remained as owner of a great many Kenpo Schools (TRACO International) [Tom Connor II, Interview]. Tom Connor's mastery of Chinese Martial Arts, boxing, Jujitsu, and professional bodybuilding were incorporated into what was to become a very strong, yet highly artful form of American Kenpo. This unique system would later be named "American Kenpo Karate Academy" by Bill Packer, one of Master Connor's original students.

12) Bill Packer (1948-2005)

Before studying Kenpo Karate, Master Packer had martial arts experience in Okinawan-Te, Wing Chun, Tai Chi and Boxing. His most extensive prior training was in Boxing. From 1964-1968 Master Packer competed as an amateur boxer while serving in the U.S. Coast Guard. During this time, Master Packer was undefeated with a record of over 30 wins. At a very early stage in his career, Bill Packer had already mastered a variety of principles common to all martial arts (mind set, pressing an opponent, pushing down, skill enhancement techniques, physical training, etc.). After completing his tour with the Coast Guard, Master Packer immediately began fulltime training in American Kenpo under Master Tom Connor. By 1971, Master Packer's skill, enthusiasm, and drive had earned him the position of Southwest Regional Director for TRACO International. As Regional Director, interacting with a great number of schools, instructors, and students, Master Packer noticed that a large void existed in American Kenpo. Although the physical element of American Kenpo was superior, the philosophy, the tradition, and internal development was missing. In 1972, the Southwest region was reorganized, and renamed as the "American Kenpo Karate Association, Ltd. (AKKA)". Under the guidance and direction of Master Packer, our style of American Kenpo began to come full circle back to the roots of

Chinese Ch'uan Fa. Master Bill Packer started by researching the history, philosophy and meaning of the animals, elements, and colors associated with Kenpo. He incorporated the various icons, according to belt, into the system. To insure the incorporation of traditional Chinese ideas, Master Packer had a renowned professor of Chinese philosophy teach martial arts philosophy classes to instructors. These new additions to the system eventually expanded to include elements of the internal martial arts of "Qi Gong". Most of Master Packer's findings and developments can be found in the current AKKA Manual, which is available at AKKA-Karate USA.

Parallel with the mental and spiritual advancement of the system, was the explosion of AKKA kickboxing. After observing the first World Karate Association (WKA) Championships, Master Packer knew that with his knowledge of mental conditioning, physical training, and fighting techniques, trained AKKA kick boxers could excel in world competition. Since 1974, AKKA kickboxing has been a dominant force in world competition. The following is a list of accomplishments under Master Bill Packer:

128 World Ranked Fighters

15 World Titles

8 North American Titles

8 U.S. Titles

3 Intercontinental Muy Thai Titles

Regional Karate Champion for 7 years (Master Bill Packer)

Premier Inductee to Martial Arts Hall of Fame

1982 Kickboxing "Trainer of the Year"

In 1978, the AKKA and TRACO systems were unified and again expanded. Master Bill Packer and Master Tom Connor agreed that the system could still be improved by integrating more Chinese Wushu elements (circular movements, continual motion, etc.). The two Masters felt that the Hawaiian element (or Japanese influence) in Kenpo was still too strong. Master Packer and Master Connor used their combined knowledge and wisdom to improve the system. Previously taught self-defense techniques were reanalyzed and either abandoned or changed. New and advanced katas were added to the system (Stalking Panther, Tiger Hunt, Monkey, Leopard, Advanced Staff, Whispering Winds, Enter The Temple, etc.). Since the death of Tom Connor, all the TRACO and AKKA schools have strengthened their interconnection by unanimously adopting the AKKA name and world famous "Dragonman" logo. Master Bill Packer remained the sole remaining authority on the unique AKKA style of Kenpo Karate until his untimely death in 2005. As president of AKKA, Ltd., Master Bill Packer continued to research, develop, and improve the American Kenpo Karate Association.

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If you have further questions concerning the history or traditions of AKKA-KarateUSA, please take the opportunity to ask your instructor for more information.

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Student advancement is very important to both the student and the AKKA staff. Students must keep progressing to maintain high levels of interest and motivation, thus allowing them to achieve the inherent life values of Kenpo Karate. Our evaluations consist of the following procedures: Every student must complete the basic requirements of each belt level and fulfill the minimum time allocation before they are allowed to graduate to the next belt rank. As a general rule, all minimum times will be adhered to, though, often students will be allowed to graduate from GoldBelt sooner than the minimum time.

Gold Belt... 12 Weeks

Orange Belt... 16 Weeks

Purple Belt... 16 Weeks

Blue Belt... 16 Weeks

Green Belt... 24 Weeks

3rd Brown... 24 Weeks

2nd Brown... 24 Weeks

1st Brown... 24 Weeks

1st Black... 48 Weeks

In order to be eligible to graduate, students must have their tuition account current, and have a good attendance record. Students are required to complete an evaluation process which will include calisthenics and all of the self-defense postures and katas, including all previous belt material and their current belt material. If a student passes the evaluation, he or she is ready for the formal graduation for advancement to the next belt. The belt rank is a sign-post on the path of development. Proficiency in the technical aspects of the movements and an understanding of the animal-element metaphor is required for the student to be given the opportunity to graduate from any particular belt. The formal graduation will be witnessed by advanced degree instructors.

Please be prepared for a \$40.00 evaluation fee to include both the evaluation, formal graduation, belt, diploma and filing fees registering the belt ranking with the central office of American Kenpo Karate Academies in Denver, Colorado. Black Belt is evaluated here in Kansas City and formally tested in Colorado at assigned times twice a year. The Black Belt Test is followed by a public presentation for the student body here in Kansas City. Evaluation fees for Black Belt are set for each evaluation to reflect the cost of the evaluation procedure.

All students, except those preparing to test for successive degrees of Black Belt, take preliminary progress checks or stripe tests during the month leading up to their formal rank graduation. Students are awarded black stripes on their belts at these progress checks signifying that an assigned portion of the new material being learned has been adequately performed in front of an instructor. Three stripes are awarded per belt for the following requirements"

Stripe 1...Running current chart of self defense techniques from memory.

Stripe 2...Performing Hands on Techniques of current chart with support team member.

Stripe 3...Running katas required for current rank

There is no charge for progress checks. Students are "striped" during the 3 weeks leading up to their next rank promotion.

At the Black Belt Test in Colorado, each candidate is assisted by a support person of their choosing. To prepare for the experience of the Black Belt Test, students recruit fellow students for support at lower belt graduations.

Ask your instructor any questions you may have about recruiting support or being the support person for another student.

The student body is divided into "Juniors" and "Seniors"; the junior program is for all students under the age of 16 who have not yet earned a "Junior Black Belt." All other students are in the senior program.

As a student moves up through the ranks they may find that they are not graduating at the date specified on their Mission Statement. The date listed on the Mission Statement reflects the minimum time that a student must have trained in a particular belt to graduate. There are no maximum times. We have had students graduate as Black Belts at 3 1/2 years, and some have taken over ten years for the same rank. Belt graduation is scheduled at the sole discretion of the instructor responsible for each particular student.

General Guidelines for Training

Students begin their training at widely varied levels of conditioning and health. It is important that each student train at a level appropriate to their physical and mental constitution. Allow us to use a philosophical metaphor developed by the Chinese to describe the state and development of the beginning student. The Chinese saw each beginner as a Drunken Monkey: dissatisfied with their current state, skeptical, undisciplined, erratically intellectual, rude, and lazy. In some ways, the decision to train in the first place is a product of the Drunken Monkey Mind seeking internal change through external means, i.e., using the training itself as another intoxicant. The challenge for the teacher is to sober up the Monkey before the motivations that brought them in the door send them back out. Our system of American Kenpo begins with the student training in the Tiger as a method and attitude. In some ways, the Tiger kills the Drunken Monkey...metaphorically, of course. Strict attention to the physical details of the basics, kata, and self-defense techniques is all that is required to accomplish the task. Please avoid "forced" regimens that prematurely tax the body, breath, and mind. The Chinese viewed the body, breath, and mind as three treasures to be regulated to produce essence, energy, and spirit.

In the early student level belts (Gold, Orange, Purple), regular diligent attendance at lessons with minimal practice outside of class is sufficient to progress, though preparation for Purple Belt will often acquaint the student with the need for intense outside work.

At the beginning of Blue Belt, it is suggested that the student develop a habit of twice weekly practice of at least half an hour, 45 minutes is preferable, to review and correlate material from the previous three belts. This should be in addition to continued regular attendance twice a week in scheduled lessons.

Green Belt is major step up, and requires a commitment to diligent practice outside of class. The kata, "Chinese Hands" is over two minutes long, and requires a certain level of aerobic conditioning. The belt evaluation covers the previous four belts and Green Belt, and is usually viewed as a pleasant ordeal that serves to edify the character of all who persevere. During the learning of the Green Belt, some students begin to explore cross-training in other disciplines such as yoga, weight-lifting, or running, as a way to address particular areas of growth that would improve their overall skill. Ask your instructor for advice concerning cross-training.

During the Brown Belts, most students encounter their hardest challenges. As a beginner, one merely has to learn new motion to change and develop. Usually during Green Belt, the student finds that the accumulation of new material has little effect on their overall skill level. In Brown, the student is forced by circumstance to develop and change through internal effort. External accumulation of more motion (horizontal development) needs to be replaced by a deepened understanding of previous material and how it relates to what is new (vertical development). Each person is unique in the time and means required to rise to the challenge of the material in the Brown Belts. Often, the Monkey raises his/her still drunken head to whine and moan about the unfairness of it all.

Alas, such is the fate for all of us who have been forced by our natures to look at ourselves in the development of internal discipline. Black Belt is meant to symbolize the beginning of true practice. Prior to Black Belt, one trains in preparation for practice. To graduate as a Black Belt, a student must have earned a First Brown Belt and persisted in a 12 month period of directed training designed to prepare them for the test in Colorado. The final call on whether a student graduates at a particular Black Belt Test is made two months prior to the test. From White Belt to Black Belt takes a minimum of four years of training. On average, most students at AKKA Karate USA have earned their Black Belt in five to eight years. More than you can possibly imagine, Black Belt Tests are scheduled at the sole discretion of your instructor and school management.

Chinese Kenpo as taught at AKKA Karate USA is an Eastern Method taught in a Western Style. The student learns from the outside in to make legitimate, artistic martial expression possible from the inside out. The beginning is a fragile time. Give yourself space to develop in a way that is comfortable and functional for the long haul.

ATTENDANCE

Students must attend at least two classes a week to be a student at AKKA Karate USA, and these two classes are considered standing appointments which are automatically charged to the student's account each week. If you cannot attend one of your standing appointments during a particular week, you must call and cancel that lesson and make it up within two weeks of the missed class to stay current on your curriculum.

You may attend as many extra classes as you wish during a particular week, but you will only be charged for two lessons per week. Please remember, as a courtesy, call and cancel your regular lessons if you are unable to attend class. . If we do not hear from you we do call to check in .

MANUALS AND DVD'S

Manuals are available for each level of your training. They are invaluable as a lifetime reference for all concerns within each belt. Students are able to enhance their physical instruction with written information to help make the learning process easier.

DVD's are also available and are aligned with the manuals. Most students use them as visual aids for pattern exactness. They are excellent for test preparations and reference checks.

TRAINING EQUIPMENT

Each AKKA-Karate USA location carries a complete line of Martial Arts and physical training equipment. Our prices are designed to give our students the best value for their money. If you find defective equipment, please return it for an exchange. We have sales at various times of the year where prices are reduced even further. Beginning students receive a 20% discount (Black Belt Club Discount) on all equipment purchases during their first ninety days of training. If you have any "special order" requests, please ask the front desk to order it for you. We ask all of our students to be properly equipped to insure their safety and the safety of their fellow students. There is a belt by belt list of suggested equipment in your welcome packet to give you an idea of some things you will want to acquire as you progress in your training. A full sparring gear set is required to engage in kumite in class or tournaments. This can be ordered at any time once training begins and is required to test for Green Belt.

TOURNAMENTS

AKKA-Karate USA sponsors inter-dojō tournaments between our five area schools. We ask for full support, either as a competitor or as a spectator, so when you see our tournament poster, please try and put us on your calendar. Please remember that students do compete for different reasons. Some like to calibrate their technical skill level, some are taking a quantum leap using mock combat to overcome the paralysis of fear, and then some students just plain like the thrill of competition. Regardless of the reason, safety comes first, and we have some very disciplined contact rules. Please come and attend in the spirit of control. Many of our students also participate in Open Tournaments locally and throughout the Midwest. Open tournament flyers are posted on the bulletin board in the lobby. If you have questions about the reputation of a particular, posted tournament, ask the senior staff. Refer to the Tournament brochure in your welcome packet for more details.

TRANSFERS

Students may transfer from the school where they originally began their lessons to any other local or national branch of the AKKA Karate USA family under the following conditions:

- 1) Their student account is up-to-date;
- 2) They have a good record of proper decorum and attendance at the location from which they are transferring;
- 3) They have sought and received approval of the transfer from the manager of the location they are presently attending.

The transfer privilege is to be used in those instances in which there are few options for the student to attend at their present school because of factors such as distance to lessons and scheduling.

If you have any further questions about any aspect of our policies or procedures, or if you are curious about how we can tailor your training experience to directly address your needs and aspirations, please ask to speak with your head instructor.

“The mind of every creature,
great or small, is the
master of its own body.

But only as the mind flows
with nature may that mastery
be exercised to its fullest.

There is no limit to the
wondrous powers of the body;
nor is there a limit to the
ways one may harness those
powers to the mastery of the
harmonious mind.

It may take half a lifetime
to master one system.”

--Master Po (Keye Luke)