

The Doctrine of Karate

by

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Introduction

What is karate? What is the basis for it as a martial art of self-defense? These questions are repeated over and over in dojo around this country. Often the answers are unsatisfactory. Students want knowledge, and yet the truth is not easy to pin down. On the surface, karate appears to be a simple art that involves punching and kicking. It seems to be about learning unique mechanical motions called techniques. As students train and learn more than the basics, what seemed simple begins to take on a complex nature. The more complex it becomes, the more perplexing the true nature of karate appears. As the karateka advances, similarities to other martial arts are observed. Asking questions about karate's roots and trying to trace the history of the art only leads to more confusion. The history of karate seems irrevocably intertwined with other martial arts so much so that the demarcation between arts has been lost, if it ever concisely existed. The more one searches for clear-cut answers, the more the question becomes whether karate ever actually existed as a separate entity.

And yet there is something unique about karate, something distinct. There is a different "feel" to it. When did karate separate from other arts and why? If karate does exist as a separate art, then there must be a distinctive foundation of general, underlying principles that provide the groundwork for the art. So, how can these principles be discovered? Searching the literature for clues to the nature of karate reveals no simple answers. The principles that guided the founders are vague or unrecorded. Despite the confusing and contradictory information found in most of the literature, it is possible to reach certain conclusions by extrapolating.

Karate is generally accepted as an antique martial art that was formulated, or translated from, various Chinese martial styles of chuan-fa through a few Okinawans who blended the Chinese styles with the Okinawan art *te* sometime between the late 1700s to early 1900s. It is also generally accepted that karate was initially a self-defense, either for palace guards as suggested by Choki Motobu¹ or for the nobility as suggested by Mark Bishop² or even for the general populace as suggested by Peter Lewis.³ The best-known early masters studied chuan-fa by traveling to China personally or from Chinese practitioners who visited Okinawa. While in the case of the earliest Okinawan masters there is sometimes confusion as to the exact details of their training, it is apparent that the roots of the martial arts they practiced are traceable to China. One such example is Sakugawa, one of the most important early karateka. Depending on the source, he was reported to have either traveled to China to learn Chinese boxing⁴ or he learned it on Okinawa⁵ itself. Kanryo Higaonna, another important figure in Okinawan karate, is reported to have done both, learning from experts in Okinawa and visiting China to further his training and knowledge.⁶ If so many of the early masters who were instrumental in the formation of karate trained in chuan-fa, then when and how did these Chinese systems become karate?

Simply identifying its origin is not enough to define karate since the art has certainly not been static. In the last seventy-five years, karate has evolved beyond the status of a little-known yet practical self-defense, into a way for self-refinement (*do*), a sport, and now into various fitness/conditioning programs. The relation between karate and self-defense has blurred to the extent that many respected karateka are asking if karate as it is now taught contains the necessary elements of a useful self-defense. Vince Morris notes in the preface to his book on kyusho-jitsu that there was "the proliferation of Japanese-centered styles post World War Two which

concentrated on developing and promoting the newly emerging sporting aspects of karate with little attention to, nor knowledge of, the more profound and dangerous non-sporting, self-defence constituents."⁷ Many authors feel this transition away from karate as a self-defense was initiated at the beginning of the 19th century by Ankoh Itosu. A. S. Rench suggests, "By the late 1930s, the majority of karate practiced was stripped of its dangerous and combat-effective techniques. Most of what remained was reduced to a form of cultural recreation."⁸

The more karate is scrutinized, the more questions arise that go unanswered. To seek answers to all of them goes far beyond the scope of this analysis. Instead, an attempt to explore and understand the roots of karate as a system of self-defense will be made. At the same time, the significance of other important variations of karate will not be overlooked. To understand karate more fully, it is necessary to search for the underlying principles that set karate apart from other methods of self-defense. For simplicity, the term *doctrine* will be used to mean these fundamental principles. Therefore, the question this paper intends to answer is: What is the doctrine on which karate was built?

It is important to differentiate between *doctrine* and two other terms that are commonly applied to any martial art and are often used mistakenly as synonymous for doctrine. Those two terms are *strategy* and *tactics*. For the purposes of this paper we will use the definitions arrived at in the author's earlier paper "Doctrine, Strategy, Tactics: Who Cares?" published in the United States Karate Association Forum, December, 1996. As defined in that paper, *doctrine is the general principles and philosophy that provides the framework within which a martial art functions. Doctrine establishes the theory of combat that dictates the methods a martial art will use. Doctrine dictates the tools that will be used for any given martial art.* This definition is generally in agreement with doctrine as defined by Morgan in his book *Living the Martial Way*.⁹

Strategy is the theoretical analysis of possible opponents using the principles set forth in the doctrine and planning the best self-defense applications against those opponents. *Strategy consists of the plans for actual use in combat of the tools dictated by the doctrine.* *Strategy* may be offensive or defensive. Strategies will be devised to cover as many enemies as possible by examining possible weakness and strengths. *Strategy* is the plan that connects doctrine and tactics.

Tactics are intelligent acts of combat performed during aggressive confrontation that fulfill the principles of doctrine and the plans of strategy. *Tactics* are the physical application of the plans and principles of a martial art. *Tactics* convert the theory and plans from doctrine and strategy into actions. *Tactics* provide a way for the mind to guide the body in actual self-defense situations to increase the likelihood of success (success in simplest terms being survival). *Tactics* are the physical "doing".

In general, tactics and strategy are not relevant to this paper. However, in those areas where doctrine and strategy are often confused, some clarification will be attempted. It is also possible for strategy and tactics to exist in situations where no doctrine has been established. One example of the recently developed eclectic styles without a doctrine is Jeet Kune Do. Here there are no classical standards and the pervading belief is that anything that works is acceptable.¹⁰ Doctrine is deemed unnecessary. Changes that occur continually are solely dependent on the current focus of the practitioner. Many modern styles, especially in the west, have such a basis since the general

driving force to create the style in the first place is economic. As ideas come to mind, the founder adds or subtracts as the mood (market) dictates. Thus, training methods seem to be always changing and there does not appear to be a unifying set of principles. These types of systems will not be studied here.

To further explain the terminology and application of doctrine, strategy and tactics, carpentry might be used as analogous in the sense that it is a "construction art." The *doctrine* for the art of carpentry could be to build structures using wood, hammer, rule, level, nail, saw, etc. This immediately differentiates carpentry from plumbing, bricklaying, or other construction arts. *Strategy* then is the summation of the methods used to plan, measure, secure, and generally perform carpentry tasks. *Tactics* are the actual sawing, nailing, and building of a structure.

To establish a probable doctrine for karate it is imperative to first define what characterizes karate. Since, as noted earlier, karate has evolved over the years, any definition of karate must include both what karate is and when it was created. A simple definition of karate might be that it is an ancient art of unarmed self-defense. This is what beginners are taught. But what makes it different from other martial arts? Subjectively, there is an underlying "feeling" of what karate is. Martial artists refer to themselves as *karateka* or *Tae Kwan Do* practitioners. They use the terms as if to identify themselves as students of separate martial arts without explaining the difference.

Through common usage karate has come to mean almost any self-defense system that includes some degree of hitting, striking or kicking. Many schools advertise that they teach karate without presenting a clear definition of what it is they teach. In various situations, the term karate may refer to Okinawan, Japanese, Korean, or Hawaiian striking arts, various jujutsu schools, and judo reformulated as self-defense. Additionally, karate often includes portions of kobudo. If there ever was a precise definition for the term "karate" it seems to have disappeared. For karate to be a distinctive martial art it cannot be all things to all people. Therefore, this paper will also attempt to answer the question: How can karate be concisely defined?

Before undertaking the search for a definition of karate, the term impact (or percussion) technique must be understood. As used within this paper, impact techniques are defined as "to hit or strike by projecting a portion of the body forcefully at an opponent so that the force of contact produces damage to the opponent". This contrasts with grappling which includes grabbing, holding, joint-bending and choking. The terms "impact technique" and "percussion technique" will be used interchangeably.

In addition, there are, several different manifestations of karate whose existence leads to questions about whether they are similar enough to have the same doctrine, or so dissimilar as to have been formulated using different doctrines. These include the *jutsu* or single-minded practice for combat effectiveness, the way (*do*) toward self-improvement, which developed out of the *jutsu* but has the goal of self-perfection, and the tournament application of karate. All of these variations of the art of karate seem to have legitimate claim to the name karate as a martial art yet all are different. Are they too different to all have the same doctrine?

Finally, as noted earlier, the history of karate is intertwined with other martial arts. Karate shares many techniques and strategies with other martial arts. Karate and all other weaponless

martial arts share the same ultimate goal. So where does karate fit amongst the various weaponless martial arts?

The original question, what is the doctrine of karate, depends on answering several other questions. To summarize, this paper will attempt to answer the following questions: (1) How can karate be defined? (2) What is the doctrine or founding principles of karate? (3) Do the various manifestations of karate share a common doctrine? (4) Where does karate fit among the many different martial arts as a self-defense system? In discovering the answers to these questions several areas will be investigated. These include an examination of the time frame for the emergence of karate from its beginnings in chuan-fa and *te*, the differences between karate and other martial arts, and the differences between the actual doctrine for karate and strategies commonly presented as doctrines.

Discussion

As mentioned, the search for the doctrine of karate begins by attempting to define karate as a martial art. Investigation into this subject leads to some tenuous historical information since most "records" are more word-of-mouth myths than factually substantiated history.¹¹ Nonetheless, judicious examination of the literature can lead by extrapolation to some logical conclusions.

Breaking down the term martial art at the broadest level, there is: "martial" meaning something inclined or disposed toward war, and "art" meaning the principles or methods governing any craft or human activity. A martial art then is comprised of the principles governing a craft designed for use in warfare.

There are several levels on which the term "martial art" may be applied. There are martial arts applied by groups such as armies, or socio-political groups. And there are martial arts designed specifically for the individual. For both the group and the individual, the basic goal is survival. Appendix 1 illustrates the comparative hierarchy of the components of survival skills for both groups and individuals. From this it can be seen that karate is indeed a martial art concerned with individual survival.

Still, at this level, the concept is too broad to define distinctive martial arts. This definition includes Oriental and European arts, and everything from throwing grenades to all manner of unarmed combat. Depending on the dojo, style or head instructor, karate is taught as either an exclusively "empty hand" art or as a martial art that includes several weapon arts like bo, nunchaku, kama, etc. The use of weapons as an integral part of karate training only complicates the search for the doctrine of karate. Doctrines for arts using weapons are by the very presence of the weapon irreconcilably different from weaponless arts. If a weapon is at hand, the training includes the use of it. If there are no weapons, the art is formulated around what to do with only the body itself.

But why is it so important to train in a martial art that presupposes the combatant has no weapon? Some legends infer that the birth of "empty hand" self-defense was fostered by the Okinawan peasants when the weapons were taken away by legal decree. Generally, historians disagree with this oversimplification. Most peasants were too busy scratching out a living to have

time to develop or master martial arts. Furthermore, systems of unarmed self-defense pre-date any documented Okinawan system. Even today, with the high degree of technology employed in combat, soldiers still learn and have a need for empty hand combat systems. In short, at the heart of the development of weaponless systems of combat is the sense of vulnerability every warrior feels when forced to defend himself without weapons. This vulnerability is reinforced by the very real probability that this type of situation could happen. And since every warrior realizes the potential of being forced into a violent confrontation when no weapons are available, either through loss or inoperative status, then a weaponless system of self-defense is required. Karate fills that need.

Karate indeed is a word derived from the Oriental ideographs (kanji or picture writing). The modern kanji for karate is made up of the two parts "kara" meaning "empty" and "te" "hand". It is evident from this that the idea of self-defense without weapons was important to those who coined this name for karate. It is well documented that the early kanji for "karate" originated sometime in the 19th century and referred to "China hand", not "empty hand" as it is today.^{12,13} At this point, it is not the term that is important but the evolutionary history of the martial art that became karate. Following this progression shows that originally the karate practiced on Okinawa was similar to the chuan-fa of China. The early use of a term meaning China hand demonstrates that the early Okinawan masters felt tied closely enough with China and the Chinese martial arts to refer to the Okinawan art as something from China. History shows that early masters did indeed practice Chinese self-defense and it was near the end of the 19th Century when changes began to formulate karate as a separate art. Nagamine suggests that the issue of the name given to the Okinawan martial art was settled once and for all at a meeting in 1936 between Miyagi, Hanashiro, Motobu, Kyan and others. At this meeting, it was decided by consensus to call the art "karate" meaning an "empty-handed self-defense art" or a "weaponless art of self-defense."¹⁴ There can be little doubt that the need to develop a weaponless martial art and karate's preponderance of weaponless applications was one of the major factors compelling this highly respected group of masters to finally decide on the kanji for karate meaning "empty hand."

Therefore, having clearly established the importance of a weaponless art, and without further justification, it is concluded that karate, for the purposes of defining it and its doctrine, is a martial art applied by individuals who are without weapons. And since the doctrine for any weapon art will be significantly different from that for any weaponless art, the use of weapons will be excluded from this investigation.

But having established karate as a weaponless art only limits slightly what karate may be. In order to define karate, it is necessary to trace its history on a chronological basis. Included in this search are several important aspects of karate that have changed with the passage of time. These will be examined in order to establish the essence of the art. These include, but are not limited to, the name given to the art during various time periods, the important masters of those times, and descriptions of the art as those masters practiced it.

To establish a definition for karate, we begin by tracing the history of karate and its roots in China. History connects Chinese martial arts with Okinawa as far back as 1393 with the 36 families¹⁵ but the transition from Chinese martial arts to karate came later. The earliest martial artist generally connected directly with the birth of karate is Tode Sakugawa. His life is reported as

spanning either 1733-1815, 1762-1843, or 1774-1838 depending on the source.¹⁶ As reported by McCarthy, Sakugawa, who was a security agent for at least part of his life, studied the fighting traditions in Fouchou, Beijing and Satsuma. It is also reported that Sakugawa learned from the Chinese master Kusankun and that either he or Kusankun may have brought the *Bubishi* (a basic martial arts reference book) to Okinawa from China.¹⁷ Regardless of the historical version of Sakugawa's training ascribed to, it is clear that Sakugawa was trained in China and was in fact a master of some form of chuan-fa. He was given the name *Tode*, which is the Okinawan reading of the characters originally used for karate, meaning Tang (China) hand. Nagamine suggests that the term *tode* was used to distinguish the art practiced by certain Okinawans as being different from *te* which is the martial art known to have been indigenous to Okinawa.¹⁸ By inference, Sakugawa was training in an art separate from *te* which they chose to call *tode* (or karate - China hand). Sakugawa, therefore, is the figure associated with the founding of a new art. McCarthy also points out that Sakugawa had a profound impact on self-defense methods that developed around Shuri. Shuri, as will be shown, is the well documented birthplace for numerous karate styles and masters. Haines reports that Sakugawa went to China in 1724 (contradicts dates above) and returned many years later to found the "now-famed Sakugawa school of karate" though the martial art taught there originally was most likely based on Chinese chuan-fa.¹⁹ This reinforces the idea that Sakugawa was among the founders of what would become modern karate. To prove that *tode*, or Chinese self-defense, is the forerunner of karate it is necessary to trace the art from teacher to student. One way to do this is to start with Sakugawa and following the lineage of the masters through to the present thus formulating a historical understanding of karate.

Sakugawa, at least in some fashion, helped with the training of Sokon Matsumura who was a bodyguard to several Okinawan kings. Matsumura (1809 - 1901) also made trips to China where he studied under Chinese boxing experts Ason and Iwah²⁰. Matsumura taught in Shuri, as did Sakugawa, and contributed heavily to passing *tode* from the early 19th century on to the late 19th century. Because of these strong connections to Chinese teachers, there is credence to the idea that at this time the martial art taught in Shuri remained strongly related to the Chinese methods. Up to this point, it may have been more a form of chuan-fa than modern karate.

Also teaching in Shuri during this general timeframe was master Ankoh Itosu (1813-1915 or 1832-1916), who more than any other late 19th century Okinawan master, reshaped karate into the art found at the end of World War II. Itosu studied under a number of teachers including Sokon Matsumura and a Chinese master living in Okinawa. Itosu began the reforms that eventually led to the introduction of karate to the Okinawan school system. Itosu is credited with the development of the five pinan kata. Some historians credit him with development of the corkscrew punch as it now exists.²¹ Evidence reveals the corkscrew punch in several Chinese systems that pre-date karate and it even appears in the Eight Brocades, a Chinese exercise system dating as far back as 1100 A.D.

Nonetheless, Itosu was a primary force behind numerous changes to karate. As part of the reformation for use in the schools, Itosu removed many techniques that were judged too dangerous for use by children. Itosu is credited with teaching the idea that the body should be able to take blows and that karateka should not worry so much about mobility. This is a dramatic departure from the "light and airy" Chinese systems that were practiced by earlier masters. It is this change in basic strategy that can be seen in later karate due, no doubt, to the tremendous influence of

Itosu's karate, if for no other reason than the numbers of school children who learned karate during their education.

At the same time, as the name for the martial art that was commonly practiced in Okinawa changed to karate (empty hand), various styles of the art begin to emerge. Instead of teaching karate as a general method for unarmed self-defense as had been done in the past, various masters began to sort out and separate according to distinctive styles. Early literature made little reference to specific styles. As McCarthy put it, "Sometime between 1784 and 1903, karate replaced *te* as the common term used to designate the major fighting forms of Okinawa. During the latter part of the 19th century the general classifications for various karate methods were named for the cities where they are practiced. The most important were Shuri-te (where Sakugawa and Matsumura taught), Naha-te and Tomari-te. At this time it was common for the earliest masters to have studied under several different sensei and thus their training co-mingled various teachings into a more uniform mix of theories and techniques. Around the turn of the century, methods or systems of fighting began to evolve and become categorized as different ryu (styles)."²²

McCarthy goes on to add, "By 1903, karate had more less become standardized into these ryu, many of which are still being taught today."²³ It is also interesting to note that Bishop indicates that many modern styles were introduced after World War II by Okinawans who saw the commercial value of claiming a unique style.²⁴ Much of what was taught to American service men immediately after World War II fell into this category.

In other cities, other prominent karate masters flourished and taught their art during the latter part of the 19th century. In addition to those teaching in and associated with the karate from Shuri, there were noted teachers in both Tomari and Naha. Tomari-te was very similar to Shuri-te but was reportedly taught under tight secrecy. However, several important Tomari-te masters need to be included in this investigation.

The dominant masters who taught in Tomari were Kosaku Matsumora and Kokan Oyadamari. Both of these early masters learned from Chinese instructors and had ties to Chinese methods. Kosaku Matsumora (1829-1898) learned Chinese boxing from a Chinese military attache living in Tomari named Ason. Kokan Oyadamori is also believed to have learned from a Chinese practitioner living in Tomari (perhaps Ason). Oyadamori practiced a light style that became the unique family system. As a style tomari-te was described as soft and not jerky.²⁵ Again we see the early masters practicing what seems to be identifiably a Chinese system of self-defense consisting of light, mobile movements.

Meanwhile, in Naha there was another group teaching karate of a similar nature but different enough to be called Naha-te. Primary among this group was Kanryo Higaonna (1853 - 1917). Higaonna was to Naha what Itosu is to Shuri. In his own way, Higaonna is one of the most influential karateka of his time. Some sources state that Higaonna trained under Arakai Seisho starting at age 20. Juhatsu Kyoda (one of Higaonna's top students) reported that Higaonna traveled to Fuchou several times to study Chinese boxing. In China, Higaonna's instructors are reported to have been either Ryu Ryo Ko and/or Wan Shin Zan. According to Juhatsu Kyoda, Higaonna learned from someone named Ru Ru (probably the same person as Ryu Ryo Ko).²⁶ While there seems to be some confusion about the specifics, the indisputable fact is that Higaonna trained under

Chinese masters and practiced Chinese methods. Higaonna called his style of karate Shorei-ryu, which is often translated by Westerners today as "Enlightened Spirit School". However, it is speculated that Higaonna's use of the term Shorei actually was a reflection of the fact that he practiced a form of southern shoalin-tsu which he had learned in the Fuchou area of China.²⁷ From history, Higaonna's shorei-ryu (more likely read shaolin) or naha-te is reported to have been much lighter, softer and full of evasions than the karate developed after Higaonna's death by one of his top students, Chojun Miyagi.²⁸ As Bishop puts it "Higaonna's sparring was described by Nakaima as 'light with extraordinary footwork and low, fast kicks.' Thus the foot anchoring, solid stances of modern Goju-ryu stand in contrast to Higaonna's style and it seems likely that, like many teachers of his time, he held much back when teaching fighting techniques."²⁹

Thus far all of the most prominent names associated with the art of karate appear to have practiced an art based very closely on various chuan-fa styles. These include Sakugawa, Higaonna, Matsumora and Matsumura who lived during the 18th and 19th centuries and practiced *tode* or karate (China hand) in one form or another. Though they were closely tied to Chinese methods they retained their Okinawan background which gave their martial art a certain uniqueness.

It is curious to note that one distinction some historians attempt to build between chuan-fa and karate is the use of the closed fist. Haines claims *tode* is considered indigenous to Okinawa because it uses the closed fist techniques while true chuan-fa uses the open hand.³⁰ But as mentioned earlier, several Chinese systems utilize the closed fist including Hsing Yi³¹, and Choy Li Fut.³² Even the Chinese exercise system known as Eight Brocades includes the closed fist.³³ Therefore, this distinction seems more artificial than factual and will not be included in the discussion.

As karate moved into the 20th century, the teachers changed. The group of 19th century masters, Higaonna et al, gave way to their students who formed the next group of masters. They included Kyan, Chibana, Miyagi, Motobu, and Funakoshi. Along with others, these men became the instructors who carried karate across the turn of the century into the 1900s. At this point Okinawa was nationally aligned with Japan so it is not unexpected to find that the new masters reflect a lower level of Chinese influence. Some of these masters did have limited exposure to Chinese teachers but to a lesser degree than previous karate masters. This change in the level of Chinese influence is in part responsible for the changes that karate was experiencing.

As noted earlier, it was this new group of instructors who authored and authenticated the change of the ideograph to read "kara" meaning empty instead of "kara" meaning China. McCarthy states that Hanashiro Chomo was the first to use the new ideograph in 1905. Karate had *do* added to the term and this new combined ideograph was officially accepted by the Japanese in 1933 and by Okinawa in 1936.³⁴ Haines states that Chomo first used "kara" meaning empty in his book titled *Karate Soshu Hen* in 1906.³⁵

Not only had the ideograph used to designate karate changed, but the karate being taught had changed as well. Many Okinawan masters were working for the acceptance of karate as an art by the Japanese. Because of this, many of the changes resulted from demands by the Dai Nippon Budoku Kai, which was the governing body for martial arts at that time. This was driven by the Japanese military society's idea of what was considered a *budo*.³⁶

McCarthy states that the Butoku Kai placed certain requirements on karate in order for it to be accepted as an art, ". . . karate had to unify its many factions; the ideogram "karate" had to be changed to eliminate any Chinese connotations; karate groups had to adopt a standard practice uniform, establish a curriculum and standards for testing, assign degrees of proficiency, and organize a competition format like that of kendo and judo."³⁷ It is significant that it was this later generation of karate masters who had less direct contact with the Chinese martial arts that changed karate. Combat effective self-defense became less evident and karate became a means to train young men in physical conditioning and discipline. As shown earlier, Itosu began the change by modifying karate to allow the teaching of it in Okinawan schools. Also, as karate was incorporated into the Japanese military methodology, the training methods were modified so that training could accommodate larger numbers of students rather than the few individuals given special attention from earlier masters.

Another unique precept that was handed down by the masters of the early 20th century, especially Funakoshi, was the idea that karate was intended to be used as a defensive martial art. The inscription on Funakoshi's grave stone, quoted by Nagamine, is an important indication of the depth to which this ideal was at the heart of karate. The phrase "karate ni sente nashi (there is no first attack in karate)"³⁸ has been carried through several generations of karateka.

After the war, the leadership of karate transferred to the modern masters, those of the mid and late 20th century, including Nagamine, Higa, Miyazato, and Zenryo Shimabukuro. While many of these masters were trained in classical karate, few trained with multiple masters nor in multiple styles. Fewer still trained with Chinese instructors so the direct Chinese influence was largely lost. In addition, the influence of the changes made to karate by Itosu and in response to the Japanese demands cannot be entirely dismissed.

It was this later 20th century group who brought karate to the attention of the rest of the world. The karate they exemplified, however, was certainly different from the karate of the late 19th century. And more changes were taking place. With the rise of tournaments and tournament style karate, the art was becoming more oriented towards competition. Nagamine refers to the All-Japan Tournament held December 1, 1963 as a highlight of tournaments.³⁹ This drive to win tournaments, to gain fame and fortune, affected the karate itself. Rules eliminated many of the deadliest techniques and targets. Tournaments led to a rise in showmanship, in seeking the flashy, the artistic. More and more the self-defense aspects that had dominated karate during earlier eras were left out. For many, karate had now become a sport.

At the present time, the clock has moved full circle. While many traditional Okinawan systems have retained the heritage of karate as a self-defense, many western masters are researching the methods of earlier karateka, especially those before the turn of the century. They are seeking information on the ways more closely tied to the Chinese arts and to practical self-defense techniques. Recreations of old styles are surfacing that are designed to capture the old ways. Kyusho Justsu and Koryu Uchinadi are examples of disciplines where the knowledge of early methods of combat self-defense are resurfacing. Coupled with many other modern styles, today's karateka are exploring the roots of karate as a combat art. They are attempting to re-

educate and revitalize the ancient self-defense art of karate especially in the western martial arts community.

It is apparent that karate has gone through several changes over the last 200 years. The changes correspond to different eras and different masters. The earliest Okinawan masters were Chinese trained. They practiced various systems of chuan-fa with some influence from Okinawan *te*. It is almost certain that the first generation of Okinawans (such as Matsumura and Higaonna) were practitioners of these Chinese martial arts. Some references conclude that karate came from Southern Shaolin boxing systems such as white crane (pai-huo-chuan), monk fist (luo-hau-chuan), intellectual fist (hsing-yi) and 8-trigrams (pa kua chuan).⁴⁰ Which Chinese systems directly influenced the formation of karate is not of major consequence; more important is the general nature of these Chinese systems. Most of them contain numerous grappling techniques. Grappling is clearly shown in the illustrations found in the *Bubishi*. However, many of these techniques appear to have been pushed aside as karate slowly evolved away from the older chuan-fa styles. Nagamine suggests that " Not until the late 17th and early 18th century did the art of karate take shape as *te* merged with the Chinese style of self-defense to form the present-day kata of karate."⁴¹ *Te* and chuan-fa are both generally light, airy systems (though various systems of chuan-fa exhibit wide ranges of mobility) heavily integrated with grappling, throwing and striking. Later generations transformed these systems into the more Okinawan art of karate, and as can be seen in Choki Motobu's book, very few grappling techniques are evident. In many circles, karate as practiced in the 20th century, is more rigid and powerful, and is built, at least at lower levels, almost exclusively on impact techniques. Itosu was a primary influence on this change and for better or worse it seems certain that impact techniques are, and have been for a long time, key elements of karate. Karate training relies heavily on the makiwara which does not exist within chuan-fa unless one includes the Wing Chun dummy. Thus, one can conclude that karate has moved from a clearly Chinese system, to a self-defense system based on powerful impact techniques, to a modern sport karate and back to self-defense based on Chinese methodology. The art has completed the circle and returned to its roots.

But when did this martial art called karate come into being? If the birth of karate is based solely on the time when the ideograph became karate (empty hand), it is fairly clear that karate originated somewhere near the turn of the century even though it did not "officially" get recognized until early in the 20th century. Even then, it is evident that karate included several different dominant strategies. Light airy, evasive systems are just as much karate as the hard, immobile, powerful styles. In fact, often both of these general categories of karate co-existed. Still, the search is for a single definition of karate that will include all its various aspects.

Before a definition can be determined, it is imperative that the reasons for these changes to karate are explored. Otherwise, both the definition and doctrine established may be based on individual preferences and not on underlying principles. For one thing, it can easily be seen that lure of money spawned hype, styles, and in some cases, false information that would attract students - paying students. Tournaments were and continue to be driven by the promise of cash. Curriculums change to match the market perception of need. If students want to learn about self-defense, the commercial side of karate becomes focused on self-defense. Often, the advertisement is more hype about having developed the "ultimate self-defense" than any uniquely effective self-defense system. These conditions spawn charlatans who clutter the literature with unsubstantiated

claims and false information. Therefore, legitimate research needs to weed out these theories, instructors, arts and styles from the arena of informed knowledge.

Others suggest that karate evolved because students were not completely trained before being released from their master's tutelage. Some authors have suggested that karate was originally a complete art which lost much of its original content because students never completed their training before they went off to train others.⁴² Nagamine mentions the "instant instructor" as the source of much misinformation about karate after World War II.⁴³ A large body of evidence indicates that many Westerners received just such training either because they returned home too soon to be completely trained or because they were taken in by these lesser trained instructors. Nonetheless, it is the acknowledged oriental masters that are considered in this research so it is less likely that conclusions will be based on the opinions and methods of untrained karateka.

Though the idea that later masters were insufficiently trained in many of the details of karate methodology is plausible, there are other more compelling possibilities. One is that many of the best teachers were lost during the war. In addition, the younger generation of Okinawan or Japanese masters who began to teach karate after World War II may have been infatuated with the tournament aspects of karate which included the projected image of power. They neglected other aspects and centered their training around this narrower portion of the overall art of karate. This can be understood and may even be mirrored by similar circumstances that have overtaken American karate. In America, as in other parts of the world, the quest for tournament trophies has transformed karate into something more flashy than practical in less than thirty years. Many now see the pendulum swinging back. Those who only fifteen years ago were looking for a special, modified kata to "wow" the tournament judges are now searching for the best self-defense techniques that are contained within the most traditional karate kata that can be found. Is it then unreasonable to believe that the same thing happened on Okinawa? Perhaps the drive to win tournaments overshadowed the essence of karate as it was originally formulated. It may be that Itosu's demand that karate be powerful, immobile and impenetrable, captured the thoughts of the karateka of that time. It may also be that karateka and the students who flocked to pay the tuition demanded powerful techniques, "macho" karate, so to speak.

Possibly another more important clue as to why karate was transformed from the more inclusive Chinese systems into the impact-dominated system of later styles, may come from Seitoku Higa who is quoted by Bishop as saying "Unlike karate katas, *ti* (alternate spelling for *te*) takes a long time to master."⁴⁴ This admission that *ti*, full of grappling techniques, was hard for beginners to become competent in may be a clue as to why karate separated from its roots in chuan-fa and *te*.

Why the shift came about may never be satisfactorily answered. The significant question pertinent to the definition for karate is whether karate is an "impact" art, or whether it was formulated around many types of techniques, including grappling, throws, chokes and various other eclectic methods. As concluded earlier, karate is actually an art developed from chuan-fa and therefore must have originally included numerous types of techniques. Whatever the reason, the facts seem clear. Karate underwent a transformation early in the 20th century, giving up much of the soft, light airy feel that had dominated the systems based more closely on the Chinese arts. It took on its own aura of power, of crushing opponents with a single blow. A major contributor to

this revised thinking had to be the influential master Ankoh Itosu. At the same time, it became a more universally taught system, being introduced into the schools and embarking on the path of sport competition. These changes really define the beginnings of karate as we know it. Yet, if the essence of combat effective self-defense is to remain within the scope of karate, then the older, serious techniques must be included as part of the system.

So, how is karate defined? Bishop states that all karate is based on chuan-fa styles from the Foucho area⁴⁵ and evidence supports this theory. Ken Tallack in his preface to Choki Motobu's book says karate came from Shuri guardsmen who combined kata, makiwara and kumite training with the goal of "one blow, one life."⁴⁶ There seems to be some truth to this argument since several of the early masters were indeed Shuri guardsmen at one time or another during their lifespan. But are these two definitions mutually exclusive? Both indicate that the basis for karate is the combination of chuan-fa and *te*. Seen this way, the evolution of karate may reflect more of a change in focus than the creation of different arts. Karate, like most things, has not been static. Changes that karate has undergone since its inception are a reflection of the focus and the changes that each succeeding generation of karate teachers emphasized.

A perfect example of this change in focus is Miyagi's system of goju that is an adaptation of Higaonna's shorei-ryu. Miyagi's goju is reported as more rigid and powerful than the Chinese-based system that was practiced by his sensei. Japanese goju may be even more removed from Higaonna's style. And yet, all of these are surely karate. So it seems there are many definitions based on the specific time periods used to define karate. The goal here is to find a simplified definition broad enough to encompass all the various aspects of karate, past, present and future, and still provide a basis for separating karate from other arts. Several recurring aspects are evident. At least at initial training levels, karate is an impact art. It also includes various grappling techniques. In general, impact techniques are taught first and other broad categories of techniques are added as the karateka becomes more efficient at self-defense. If all this is wrapped into a single definition for karate it becomes: Karate is an unarmed, individual self-defense developed in Okinawa sometime during the end of the 19th century that uses powerful impact techniques delivered by the hands (either open handed or closed fist), feet, elbows, knees or head to disable the attacker. Grappling techniques and other eclectic methods are added as the level of expertise of the karateka increases. This definition contains the remnants of the Chinese systems and allows karate to retain its own flavor.

Having answered the first question, then what is the doctrine for this karate? If karate is a powerful weaponless art built on impact techniques, what was the doctrine that produced such an art out of the more grappling-oriented arts that preceded it? First we must consider the goal of any martial art. In Nagamine's book, Ankichi Arakaki reportedly said karate originated from man's instinct for self-preservation.⁴⁷ The ultimate goal is, of course, survival. As noted earlier, karate deals with weaponless combat, witness the current kanji. But under what criteria does karate operate? As stated earlier, the origins of all the variations of karate come from the *jutsu*. Self-defense is the initial primary concern and the goal is survival. If the goal is survival, then it is imperative that the student becomes effective in defending oneself least the student die before learning the entire art. To that end we can define a secondary goal. Karate intends to produce the most effective self-defense possible for the minimum amount of training. In other words, the realistic self-defense goal is to be as good as possible as quickly as possible.

With this goal of karate as a guide, the search for the doctrine of karate recognizes other sources of information that served and guided early masters. One such book that predates even karate is the *Bubishi*. The *Bubishi* is known to have been used by the earliest karate masters including Higaonna, perhaps Sakugawa, and many modern masters including Funakoshi, Miyagi, Tatsuo Shimabukuro and Yamaguchi. In addition to specific self-defense techniques, the *Bubishi* contains the eight precepts of chuan-fa. These may be viewed as the umbrella doctrine that covers all the various armed and unarmed oriental combat systems. In capsule form these precepts are:

- 1) the mind is one with heaven and earth
- 2) circulation is like the sun and moon
- 3) inhaling is soft while exhaling is hard
- 4) adapt to change
- 5) react without thought
- 6) distance and posture will determine the outcome
- 7) see the unseen
- 8) expect the unexpected⁴⁸

It is readily apparent that these precepts are very general. They can be applied to not only all the oriental martial arts but also to other combat systems as well. While this may be a good starting point, it does not directly lead us into the doctrine for karate. The precepts are too general and can even be applied to weapon arts as well as weaponless arts. They apply to grappling as readily as to impact arts. They do not explain what the unique doctrine for karate is.

Other authors have searched for answers about karate. Doctrine, as discussed by Forrest E. Morgan in his book *Living The Martial Way*, is the overlying theory that guides any martial art in setting the limits on activities, techniques and strategies. Doctrine refers to a set of broad general beliefs. Even so, to be useful as a doctrine for karate it cannot be as general as the precepts from the *Bubishi*. In the *Bubishi* the doctrine sought must refer to a system of personal combat, and for the art of karate it must apply to a specific system of weaponless personal combat. If the *Bubishi* gives us an idea for an umbrella doctrine for all arts, what is the specific doctrine for karate? As established earlier, the first statement from the definition for karate is that karate relies on the unarmed hands and feet. The doctrine must therefore start with the same premise and so the first statement within the doctrine must also be that karate is a martial art without weapons. Thus, karate is distinct from any form of armed combat.

What about the fact that for the beginner at least karate has discarded the grappling methods of other arts in favor of impact techniques. Why is this so? Many past masters have noted that the use of grappling takes a longer time to learn to reach a level of proficiency that makes it useful as a self-defense. There are numerous references indicating that masters of numerous weaponless combat arts have recognized the essential difference in training required to reach proficiency in impact versus grappling type arts. In the USKA Forum, December 1997, James S. Hanna quotes James Mitose from his book *What is Self-defense* as saying he ". . . advises readers to use punches, strikes and kicks when in desperate straits rather than grappling maneuvers" and in the same article, Hanna quotes Robert Smith from the book *Chinese Boxing* as saying ". . . striking is better than Chin-Na (Chinese grappling) unless the Chin-Na man is expert."⁴⁹ The conclusion, it seems, is that impact techniques take less time to learn than many grappling methods and students can produce

effective results with less practice. Also, impact techniques have a higher probability of working in an actual self-defense situation so are less risky to use.

There are very good physiological reasons for this. Siddle discusses at length the classification of survival motor skills into gross, fine or complex.⁵⁰ To evaluate reaction under stress, the "inverted U" theory demonstrates that as stress increases, all three skill levels improve up to a point. At very high levels of stress, only gross motor skills remain capable and in fact, gross motor skills continue to improve even under levels of stress which make complex skills disappear. This explains why impact techniques are favored over other more complex skills for self-defense. In general, chin-na and many grappling skills fall within the complex motor skills classification. By contrast, karate's impact techniques generally fall into the gross motor skills category.

Siddle reports studies of law enforcement officers who overwhelmingly use gross motor skills in self-defense situations to the exclusion of other trained skills. The fact that stress management can overcome the effects of high stress levels no doubt explains why more complex self-defense systems can be effective but it also explains why they take a much longer training period.

In addition to the effects of stress, the increased level of complexity requires more training to make the techniques work in a combat situation. That, in and of itself, means the simpler techniques will be useful earlier in a martial artist's training. A simple block/punch self-defense is more easily learned and applied than a wrist lock which requires precise capture of the opponent's limb and manipulation of a joint or nerve point. Rather than take these conclusions without testing, an experiment was done with a dozen students at various levels of proficiency to see if it was easier to capture another's limb and manipulate it through some type of joint lock or grappling technique, or if a simple block and impact counterattack could be more quickly learned. Students were paired off with an *uke* and then attacked using simple punching or single-handed grabbing attacks. The defenders were instructed to either block and counter with an impact response or to ward off, grab the attacking arm and apply a grappling response. In all cases the verdict was that it was much easier to use the impact technique. The judgement was that grappling methods required more practice to be useful. Some students felt they might never have sufficient skill to make the grappling technique work against a determined, aggressive opponent. While this is a small sampling, it does demonstrate the relative ease of attaining an effective level between grappling, joint locking, etc. and the impact techniques that dominant karate.

Another way to evaluate this proposed doctrine is to study actual combat encounters. Individual combatants who are not employed in law enforcement were interviewed to determine the type of combat techniques used during actual physical violence. From their responses, it becomes evident that in a disproportionate number of instances impact techniques were used exclusively, even in cases where one or more of the combatants was trained in the grappling arts. Hitting is more effective and easier to apply (especially under stress), so it is used more often. Therefore, karate relies on training within this doctrine as a primary method. This does not mean that impact techniques are used exclusively, and more advanced students may include many other types of weaponless combat. As one gains skill in the impact techniques and achieves a level of self-defense competency, other more difficult techniques can be added to the repertoire. Once a student begins to have confidence in the ability to escape serious injury if attacked, he can begin to

appreciate the need for techniques that allow for more limited defensive escalation. Grappling is a means to defend oneself with potential for less serious consequences for the attacker.

This information leads to the conclusion that karate depends, at least initially, on impact techniques and that there are good reasons for this. Thus, the doctrine for karate is that it is a weaponless combat system based on the premise that impact techniques are more reliable and easier to learn than other techniques as a means of disabling an opponent.

However, if the doctrine for karate is formulated simply around impact techniques, then the question might arise as to how karate is different from boxing, savate, or other percussion systems. Certainly karate differs from any sport-oriented art in that it is based on the idea of "no rules" self-defense combat applications. In addition, the degree to which the karateka sets his or her expectations separates karate from other impact systems. Simple punches driven solely by physical strength are insufficient. Karate, as defined here, uses powerful techniques delivered by the hands, feet, elbows, knees or head and combines reaction force, breath/internal energy (chi or ki), strong postures, speed, timing and awareness and specific targeting to produce extraordinary results.

Several examples are available that demonstrate the effectiveness that karateka expect to achieve. Oyama reportedly defeated both a cow with seiken and a bull with shuto!⁵¹ Choki Motobu struck down a Russian traveling boxer with a single mae geri (or with a hand technique according to Nagamine⁵²) at age 55.⁵³ Specific targets are a key consideration and the idea of the "one punch kill" is a training maxim.

This leads to another issue. Impact techniques landing on insensitive areas of the body have little effect and are wasted effort. Targeting and the effects impact techniques on the human body must be studied and therefore training must include utilization of specific targets. This will ensure that maximum results are obtained from minimum effort. This study of targeting is often referred to as kyusho-waza and is an important part of the doctrine of karate.

What doctrine covers this grand overview of karate? In succinct form, the doctrine of karate seems to be that of a weaponless, impact system using specific targets for individual self-defense designed for immediate effectiveness that can be expanded to include other methods and varied techniques.

What about the difference between the way (*do*) and combat practice or *jutsu*? Do these two karates have separate doctrines or could they retain the same one applied in different ways? Karatedo is the art of karate as a way for self-improvement, of seeking *shibumi*. Often this means severe physical and mental discipline, repetitious workouts that dull the mind and push the karateka into states of moving meditation. Karate-jutsu, on the other hand, deals only with pragmatic, useful self-defense geared toward physical combat.⁵⁴ If it works to disable the attacker, it is good. There is no need to worry about repetitions to perfect the precise form, movement, nor fluid grace that means so much within karatedo. Are they different arts? The *do* trains as if for *jutsu* without the specific intent nor the worry about actually using karate for self-defense. The *do* puts emphasis on the perfection of form while the *jutsu* focuses on results. Are these different methods for practicing the same art grounded in the same foundation? While it is true that emphasis on perfection can lose sight of the underlying self-defense principles, if karate is to remain the art being practiced, then

self-defense should not be eliminated from the training. The purpose behind the techniques in either case needs to be effective self-defense. Therefore, there is no reason to search for different doctrines. The tools are the same. Only the workout methods and the slant given to various aspects of training are different. In short, *do* trains as if for jutsu without conscious intent to use the art in combat.

And now that a doctrine for karate has been proposed, the examples Morgan uses to explain doctrine need to be revisited. Morgan discusses the differences between tae kwan do and karate.⁵⁵ He claims they do not share a common doctrine since tae kwan do relies on the feet and uses a long range doctrine while karate uses a short range doctrine. Morgan says that tae kwon do proceeds on the assumption that legs are longer and stronger than arms and therefore, they should be the primary weapons. If the doctrine just established is accepted, then Morgan's argument appears to represent more of a difference in strategies. Various styles of karate may practice this same tae kwon do strategy, and many karateka within any style may practice either strategy. One says feet are more effective and should be the primary weapons. The other says that the hands are more effective and should be the primary weapons. It is also known that Northern and Southern Shaolin systems differ in a similar manner and yet it has never been stated that these are two different arts founded on different doctrines.⁵⁶ In short, both of these theories are different sides of the same coin. They do not define a doctrine, but only two strategies within the same doctrine.

It can be seen in many styles of karate that there is room for many particular, specific strategies. The doctrine for karate allows for, even encourages, many diverse strategies. This provides for various individual strategies for individual karateka. Often these personal strategies overlap, just as the strategies for various styles overlap under the umbrella doctrine for karate. This is not to be confused with the sport of tae kwon do nor sport karate. With either of these sports it is the rules that must be abided by. Therefore the sport doctrine is artificially founded in the rules. Since rules have no direct relationship to combat self-defense situations, no sporting application can be considered a true self-defense martial art. Therefore, sports do not follow doctrines that apply to combat self-defense. Since karate is now defined as an unarmed self-defense, the doctrine that applies to karate is not the same as applies to the sport of karate.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to answer the following questions: (1) How can karate be defined? (2) What is the doctrine or founding principles of karate? (3) Do the various manifestations of karate share a common doctrine? (4) Where does karate fit among the many different martial arts as a self-defense system?

Research shows that karate has existed in several separate eras and that it continues to evolve. Any definition of karate must acknowledge the existence of these variations throughout time. Fundamentally, karate is the practice of self-defense. The underlying factor that makes karate a unique or distinctive martial art is the relatively short period of training required to reach an effective level of self-defense skill. In general, less experienced karateka are more effective than similar levels of other arts because it is easier to learn to hit and kick than it is to grab, choke, throw or control an opponent. Considering all this, a case could be made for the existence of separate definitions and separate doctrines for each era of karate. In this paper, the conclusion is

that **all** eras fall under the same definition and under one doctrine. The differences reflect only variations on the same theme.

At the very highest levels of mastery, karate includes both impact and grappling techniques though at different levels of proficiency than for other martial arts. This reflects the fact that at the highest levels of mastery, all unarmed, individual combat martial arts begin to lose their individual identity and become more and more alike. In the broadest sense, this is a result of the fact that there are only so many potential attacks that need to be defended. Therefore, as any given martial art reaches higher levels of mastery and begins to broaden the range of techniques used, the methods of response begin to converge on the same ones. When Nagamine said, "Even though we take different roads to ascend the wooded mountain, each of us can achieve our goal and appreciate the moon when we reach the top,"⁵⁷ he was talking about various styles of karate. But this idea applies just as well to a comparison of karate with other individual, weaponless martial arts. At the highest levels of mastery karate does encompass many different methods of self-defense. So watching the greatest masters may leave the impression that karate is indeed not a separate art. When examining the highest levels of mastery, it is not the top of the mountain where the trail has led that must be examined, it is the path by which the master got there that identifies the art the master practices. Karate provides a unique path to reach the upper levels of mastery.

Part of the doctrine established here is that karate teaches the easiest-to-learn techniques first to allow the student to achieve some level of effective self-defense in a short time. In line with this doctrine, it can be seen that much of karate training was designed around individual training. Karate training can be accomplished almost any time, anywhere, by any practitioner. In this respect, it differs from grappling because meaningful techniques can be practiced without reliance on a partner.

Since situations that demand the actual use of self-defense applications do not affect the average karateka, there is a definite need for other goals. This defines the need for karatedo. The goal for any martial art that wishes to be classified *do* remains perfection, perfection as it pertains to the human spirit. No one reaches perfection regardless of the length of training. For karatedo the real journey is a path inward and cannot be reached by perfection of technique alone. Karatedo indeed takes a lifetime. Thus, instead of spending a lifetime training for an attack that never materializes, the karateka can spend a lifetime refining and polishing character, will, patience, discipline and spirit. These goals have value for anyone and provide a sense of purpose that cannot be diminished by time, age, sex or physical condition.

Looking at both the definition and the doctrine, it must be concluded that all martial arts are roots of the same tree. Beginning with the *Bubishi*, there are certain underlying precepts that can be applied to every martial art. The most basic fundamental concept is the will to survive. Building on this general set of precepts, karate separates itself from the vast pool of martial arts first because it uses no weapons. It also is a system of individual self-defense combat. Then, based on the overwhelming evidence and opinions of the masters, it is concluded that karate is not as difficult to learn nor as complex to apply as the grappling arts. Once an effective level of self-defense mastery is attained, the doctrine of karate allows for other more complex training. The conclusion of some that karate is less sophisticated or that it is a lower level martial art than more complete (in the sense that it includes all the various methodologies for self-defense) arts such as

jujitsu is wholly unfounded. For practical reasons, karate starts with the simplest techniques that can provide an effective means of self-defense. As mastery grows, karate embraces other categories of techniques and is only limited by the karateka's ability to learn, train and become proficient.

Specifically then, the original questions are answered. First, the definition for karate is that karate is an unarmed, individual self-defense developed in Okinawa sometime during the end of the 19th century and that it uses powerful impact techniques delivered by the hands (either open handed or closed fist), feet, elbows, knees or head to disable the attacker. Grappling techniques and other eclectic methods are added as the level of expertise of the karateka increases.

Karate's doctrine states that karate is a weaponless, impact system using specific targets for individual self-defense designed for immediate effectiveness that can be expanded to include other methods and varied techniques.

The various manifestations of karate are all cut from the same cloth and therefore fall under a single doctrine. One exception is sport karate which uses rules in place of an established doctrine.

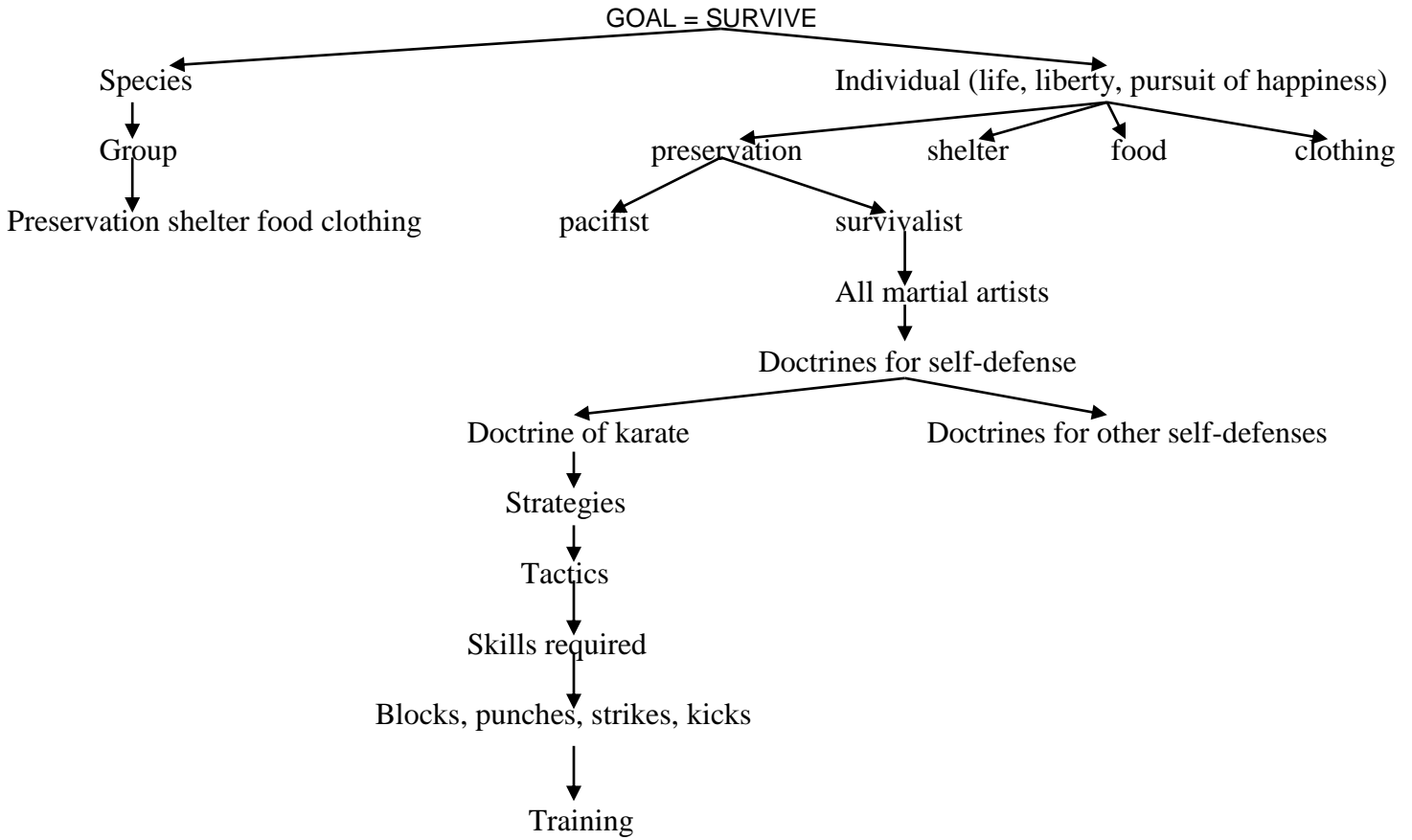
Finally, the conclusion is that karate does indeed exist as a separate martial art. Karate provides one of many paths to reach the summit of unarmed self-defense skill. Karate is not the only method available to reach this goal. Karate begins with a specific doctrine that guides the practitioner toward that goal. As the upper levels of mastery are attained, karate becomes melded with other systems of self-defense and differences are less obvious. However, it is the path to reach mastery that defines karate as a martial art, not the end of the journey. Karate is a martial art based on a doctrine that is translated through strategy and tactics into actual self-defense applications and training methods.

As a final note, one might look at how this definition and doctrine applies to a specific style of karate. As an example, Seito Shorei (the author's style) has, in fact, a style-specific doctrine which says to use the hands first and the feet second, to close with the attacker and, if possible, to get behind the attacker. Clearly, this is directly in line with the doctrine of karate beginning with the concept that the easiest to learn is the first to learn. It gives the student a degree of proficiency even while learning more advanced techniques. Also, Seito Shorei allows for personal strategies within the framework of the style in order to allow individual karateka to maximize their own abilities. Seito Shorei provides for the continuing expansion of each karateka's abilities, arsenal of techniques, and degree of mastery. Thus Seito Shorei is an example of a style that provides a perfectly legitimate path to the mastery of self-defense using the doctrine of karate as its foundation. There is ample evidence that past masters developed and taught karate in this same manner.

The author hopes that instructors will now have answers to the questions that students ask about how to define karate, the doctrine of karate, and how is it different from other unarmed self-defense systems. As with any discipline of human endeavor, karate lies in the hands of those who are committed to seeking honest answers to just such questions and who are not afraid to face head-

on whatever they find. Research that broadens the scope of knowledge for all karateka is essential to preserve the history and integrity of the martial art of karate.

The Hierarchy of Martial Theory



End Notes

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