

Sacramento Uechi-Ryu Karate



Student Guide

Coloma Community Center

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uechiryu-rengo.jp

About Our Dojo

The **Sacramento Uechi-Ryu Dojo**, led by **Sensei Joan Neide (10th Dan)** and **Sensei Robert Van Der Volgen (9th Dan)**, teaches the traditional Okinawan karate style of **Uechi-Ryu** under the **Uechi-Ryu Karate-Do Rengokai**. Our mission is to preserve and share this art as passed down by our teachers, welcoming students of all backgrounds, whether their goal is **fitness, competition, or cultural appreciation**. At our dojo we combine **traditional** and **modern** training methods to teach **real world, functional karate**.

What is Karate?

Karate originated in the **Ryukyu Kingdom** (modern-day **Okinawa**), a cultural crossroads where trade with China, Japan, and Southeast Asia introduced diverse martial influences. Okinawan practitioners synthesized these techniques with their indigenous combat art, **Ti**, forming **Tōde** (唐手, "**Chinese Hand**") later known as **Karate**. Initially, training was shrouded in secrecy, practiced primarily among the nobility without formal uniforms or ranking systems.

In 1879, Okinawa was annexed by the Japanese Empire, and in the early 20th century, masters like **Gichin Funakoshi** (founder of Shotokan) introduced karate to mainland Japan. To align with Japanese culture and philosophy, the character for "**China**" (唐) was replaced with "**Empty**" (空), rebranding the art as **Karate-dō** (空手道, "**the way of the empty hand**"). Funakoshi adopted elements from Judo, including the dogi (uniform) and kyu/dan belt system, adding structure to its teaching. As karate spread globally, distinct styles emerged. Shotokan's long stances and linear strikes, Goju-Ryu's circular movements and breath control, and Uechi-Ryu's close-range combat. There are now hundreds of Karate styles and organizations worldwide.

Karate is known for its dynamic striking techniques, explosive power, and precise footwork, and includes throws, joint locks, and grappling. Traditional training systematically develops these skills through three core disciplines: **Kihon (fundamental techniques)** builds proper form, **Kata (prearranged forms)** ingrains movement patterns, and **Kumite (sparring)** applies techniques against resisting opponents.

What is Uechi-Ryu?

Uechi-Ryu (上地流) is one of the three major styles of Okinawan Karate. It is named after its founder, **Kanbun Uechi**, who brought the art to Okinawa after training the Southern Kung Fu style of **Pangai-noon** in China. After his death in 1948, the art was refined, expanded, and popularized by his son **Kanei Uechi**.

This Karate style is known for its focus on close-in fighting techniques utilizing all parts of the body including the **knees, elbows, fingers, and toes**, to deliver **devastatingly quick, fight-ending blows**. The principle movements of the techniques are based on three animals; the **Dragon, Tiger, and Crane**.

Our Uechi-Ryu Organization

Our dojo is under the Uechi-Ryu Karate-Do Rengokai Association (上地流空手道連合会), a conglomerate of dojos from multiple organizations. Within this association we are under Master Shintoku Takara (10th Dan) and his son Kazuya Takara (9th Dan) of Okinawa Uechi-Ryu Karate-Do Kyokai Futenma Dojo (沖縄上地流協会 普天間道場).

Master Shintoku Takara has trained for more than 70 years, is a direct student of Master Kanei Uechi, and is the Senior Advisor for the Rengokai Association alongside fellow Master Tsutomu Nakahodo (10th Dan).



Takara sensei, 5th from the right, during the Rengokai Group Training in June 2024.

Class Schedule as of June 2025

	Training Schedule			
Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
5:00 PM			No Class	
6:00 PM	Valley Community Church	Coloma Community Center		Coloma Community Center
7:00 PM				
8:00 PM				
9:00 PM				

Valley Community Church

3150 Wissemann Drive, Sacramento, CA 95826

Monday 6:30pm-8:00pm

Coloma Community Center

4623 T St, Sacramento, CA 95819

Tuesday 6:00pm-7:45pm

Thursday 6:00pm-7:45pm

Hojo Undo (Basic Techniques)

For video instruction on these techniques, please visit the Resources Section of the Dojo website (<https://www.sacramentouechiryu.com/resources>)

Shōmen geri (正面蹴り) (Front kick)

Sokutō geri (足刀蹴り) (Side kick)

Seiken zuki (正拳突き) (Closed Fist Punch)

Mawashi zuki (廻し突き) (Hook Punch)

Hajiki uke hiraken zuki (平拳受け平拳突き) (Tiger paw blocks and strike)

Shutō uchi Uraken uchi Shōken zuki (手刀打ち裏拳打ち小拳突き) (Chop, Back-fist, One-knuckle punch)

Hiji zuki (肘突き) (Elbow strikes)

Tenshin zensoku geri (転身前足蹴り) (Turn-Block-Front Kick-Forward Leg)

Tenshin kōsoku geri (転身後足蹴り) (Turn-Block-Front Kick-Back Leg)

Tenshin shōken zuki (転身小拳突き) (Turn-Block-One Knuckle Punch)

Shōmen hajiki (正面弾き) (front fingertip strikes)

Koi no shippo uchi, tate uchi (鯉の尻尾打ち縦打ち) (Fish-tail wrist blocks/strikes in four directions)

Koi no shippo uchi, yoko uchi (鯉の尻尾打ち横打ち) (Fish-tail wrist blocks/strikes)

Shinkokyu (深呼吸) (Deep breathing)

Kata (Forms)

For video instruction on the 8 Kata, please visit the Resources Section of the Dojo website (<https://www.sacramentouechiryu.com/resources>)

Sanchin (三戦): Literally translated as "three fights/conflicts". From the kanji 三 ("three") and 戦う ("to fight/to struggle"). Usually interpreted as three Modes/Conflicts: "Mind, Body and Spirit."

Kanshiwa (完子和): A combination of the first kanji in Kanbun's name, and the last two kanji written in Chinese order of Shu Shiwa's name in Japanese pronunciation. Created by Saburo Uehara in 1956.

Kanshū (完周): A combination of the first kanji in Kanbun's name, and the kanji for Shu Shiwa's family name (Shu). Originally known as Daini Seisan (第二十三) or "Second Seisan," it was created by Seiki Itokazu in the 1956.

Seichin (十戦): Literally translated: "10 fights/conflicts," or a combination of the names of Seisan and Sanchin. Created by Saburo Uehara in the 1950s.

Seisan (十三): Literally translated: "13." Usually interpreted as "Thirteen modes of attack and defense" or "13 positions to attack/defend from".)

Seiryū (十六): Literally translated: "16." Created by Kanei Uechi in 1950.

Kanchin (完戦): A combination of Kanbun's first kanji 完 and "fight" 戦.
Created by Kanei Uechi in the 1950s.

Sanseiryū (三十六): Literally translated: "36." Sometimes interpreted as "thirty-six modes of attack and defense" or "36 positions to attack/defend from."

Yakusoku Kumite (Pre-Arranged Sparring)

For video instruction on Pre-Arranged Sparring, please visit the Resources Section of the Dojo website
(<https://www.sacramentouechiryu.com/resources>)

Kyu Kumite (1 to 5): Prearranged sparring for Kyu Rank students utilizing basic attacks, blocks, and counters.

Dan Kumite (1 to 6): Prearranged sparring for Advanced Dan Rank students utilizing more complex techniques, including takedowns and attack redirections.

Kinna Kumite (1 to 6): Sacramento Dojo's Prearranged Grappling sparring for Advanced Students. All techniques involve throws, takedowns, and weight manipulation.

Kote Kitae (Traditional Partner Body Conditioning)

- Arm Rubbing
- Arm Pounding
- Leg Pounding
- Stomach Pounding
- Clinch Swimming
- Wrestling Pummeling

Jiyuu Kumite (Free Sparring)

Equipment

- Mouth Guard **(Required)**
- MMA Sparring Gloves **(Required)**
- Shin Guards **(Required)**
- Helmet **(Optional)**
- Elbow Pads **(Required for Advanced Students)**
- Knee Pads **(Required for Advanced Students)**

Equipment Recommendations are available in the Resources section of the Dojo website. (<https://www.sacramentouechiryu.com/resources>)

General Rules

- Punches and Kicks allowed to all areas of the head and body except the **back of the head, spine, groin, or knee joints and other sensitive areas.**
- Grabbing the Dogi and Clinch is allowed.
- Punches, Kicks, and Knees (to the Body) are allowed during Clinch.
- Be respectful of your partner and the Karateka around you.

Additional Rules for Advanced Students

- Light elbow strikes are allowed to legal striking areas as long as you are wearing elbow pads.
- Controlled Knees towards the face that do not make contact are allowed if you have elbow pads.
- Controlled takedowns and sweeps are allowed if there are mats.
- If there are mats, Grappling is allowed on the ground for 30 seconds. Pressure applied during submissions must be gradual to prevent injury.

Banned Techniques

- No excessive contact to the head
- No Biting
- No Eye Gouging
- No Fish Hooking

- No Small Joint Manipulation
- No Spinal locks
- No Scissor Sweeps
- No Takedowns that involve dropping your partner on their head
- No Locks that twist knees or ankles

Basic Striking Combinations

1. Jab - Cross - Switch Kick
2. Jab - Cross - Hook - Roundhouse Kick
3. Body Cross - Hook - Roundhouse Kick
4. Hook - Cross - Switch Kick
5. (Weave inside) Power Uppercut - Hook - Roundhouse Kick
6. Power Upper Cut - Hook - Cross - Switch Kick
7. Jab - Lead Hook - Cross - Roundhouse Kick
8. Step out - Lead Body Hook - Lead Hook - Roundhouse Kick
9. Cross - Uppercut - Roundhouse Kick
10. Step out - Body hook - Cross - Switch Kick
11. Step out - Body Hook - Power Hook - Roundhouse kick
12. Step out 45 - Vertical Jab - Cross - Roundhouse Kick

Basic Clinch Positions

1. 50-50
2. Double Collar Tie
3. Cross Face
4. 9 to 6/3 to 6
5. Body Lock
6. Double Outside
7. Double Inside
8. Side Lock
9. Outside Gi Hold

Basic Takedowns

1. Single Leg
2. Double Leg
3. Outside Reaping Throw
4. Hip Toss
5. Body Lock Throw

6. Russian Arm Drag
7. Judo Single Leg (Kuchiki taoshi)(朽木倒)
8. Head Drag Snap

Basic Grappling Positions

1. Full Guard
2. Side Control
3. Half Guard
4. Full Mount
5. Taking the back

Basic Submissions

1. Rear Naked Choke
2. Armbar
3. Americana
4. Kimura
5. Triangle
6. Arm Triangle

Grading Curriculum

Kyu Ranks (Colored Belts)

Grade	Belt Color	Minimum Time in Grade	Grading Requirements
10th Kyu	White		Beginning Rank
9th Kyu	White - 1 Green Stripe		Hand Techniques: Oi Zuki, Gyaku Zuki, Mawashi Uke Leg Techniques: Shomen/Mae Geri, Mawashi Geri Kata: Sanchin Kyu Kumite 1
8th Kyu	White - 2 Green Stripes		Hand Techniques: Mawashi Tsuki Hajiki Uke, Hiraken Tsuki Leg Techniques: Yoko Geri Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa Kyu Kumite 1-2
7th Kyu	White - 3 Green Stripes		Hand Techniques: Seiken Tsuki, Shuto Uraken Uchi Shoken Tsuki, Hiji Tsuki Leg Techniques: Ushiro geri Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa Kyu Kumite 1-3
6th Kyu	White - Green Bar		Hand Techniques: Shomen Hajiki, Koi no shippo uchi tate uchi, koi no shippo uchi yoko uchi Leg Techniques: Ushiro geri Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu Kyu Kumite 1- 4
5th Kyu	Green Belt		Hojo Undo (All) Leg Techniques: Ura Mawashi geri Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu Kyu Kumite 1- 5
4th Kyu	Green Belt - 1 Brown Stripe		Hojo Undo (All) Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu, Seichin Kyu Kumite 1- 5

3rd Kyu	Brown Belt		Hojo Undo (All) Kote Kitae Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu, Seichin, Seisan Kanshiwa Bunkai Kyu Kumite 1- 5
2nd Kyu	Brown Belt - 1 Black Stripe		Hojo Undo (All) Kote Kitae Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu, Seichin, Seisan Kanshiwa Bunkai Kyu Kumite 1- 5
1st Kyu	Brown Belt - Black Bar		Hojo Undo (All) Kote Kitae Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu, Seichin, Seisan Kanshiwa Bunkai Kyu Kumite 1- 5

Dan Ranks (Black Belt)

Grade	Belt Color	Minimum Time in Grade	Grading Requirements
Shodan	Black Belt	1 Year	Hojo Undo (All) Kote Kitae Kata: Sanchin, Kanshiwa, Kanshu, Seichin, Seisan Seisan Bunkai Kyu Kumite 1- 5 Sparring: 10 Rounds, 2 minutes
Nidan	Black Belt	2 Years	Sanchin Kata, Hojo Undo, Daiti Yakusoku Kumite, Seisan Bunkai, Arm Conditioning, Sparring and Questions, Seiryu Kata

Sandan	Black Belt	3 Years	Sanchin Kata, Hojo Undo, Daiti Yakusoku Kumite, Seisan Bunkai Arm Conditioning, Sparring and Questions, Kanchin Kata
Yondan	Black Belt	4 Years	Sanchin Kata, Hojo Undo, Daiti Yakusoku Kumite, Arm Conditioning, Sparring and Questions, Sanseiryu Kata, Sanseiryu Bunkai
Godan	Black Belt	5 Years	Sanchin Kata, Hojo Undo, Daiti Yakusoku Kumite, Arm Conditioning, Sparring and Questions, Sanseiryu Kata, Sanseiryu Bunkai
Rokudan	Black Belt	6 Years	Kata: Sanchin, Seisan, Sanseryu
Nanadan	Black Belt	7 Years	Kata: Sanchin, Seisan, Sanseryu
Hachidan	Black Belt	8 Years	Kata: Sanchin, Seisan, Sanseryu
Kyuudan	Black Belt	9 Years	Kata: Sanchin, Seisan, Sanseryu
Juudan	Black Belt	n/a	As recommended by the Board

Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take to earn a black belt?

The time it takes to earn a black belt is heavily reliant on how often you train, how much effort you put into training and can take anywhere from two to ten years.

Where can I buy gear?

Suggested brands of Karate Uniforms and Gear are located in the resources section of the website. (<https://www.sacramentouechiryu.com/resources>)

When am I eligible for promotion?

Decisions on who is eligible for promotion and when is handled on a case by case basis. When you are ready, you will be informed in advance that you will test for the next belt rank.

Do I need to wear a Karate Gi?

Karate Gi are required starting at 6th Kyu (White Belt with Green Bar)

I would like to enter competitions. How do I go about competing?

Please reach out to any of the senseis if you would like to compete in tournaments and we will help you prepare.