



THE  
KARATE  
CODE

Conceived by

**Jesse Enkamp**

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CODE

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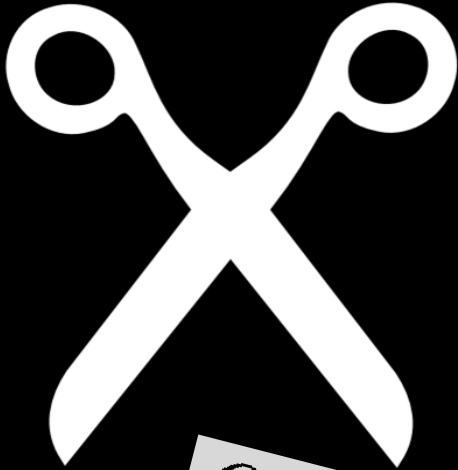
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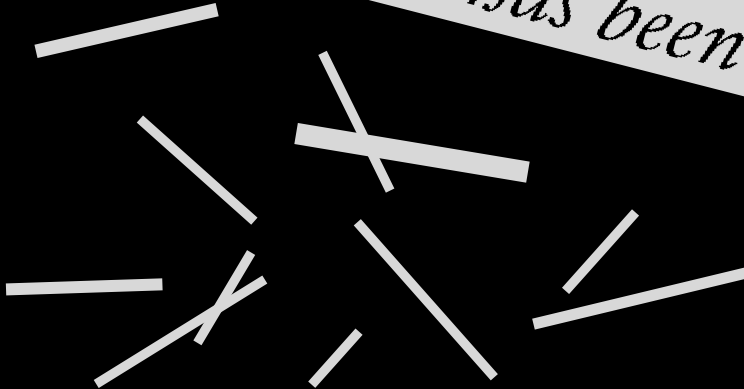
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# Prologue

*In the spring of 2010 a friend of mine asked, during his mandatory post-karate tournament failure depression, what the whole “purpose” of karate really was.*

I asked him what he meant.

“Well, karate has turned into a sport like any other! Sure, we bow to each other, but there's no genuine feeling of respect

left. So what's the purpose of it all? I might as well be playing soccer!?”

My friend was clearly upset.

And I remember clearly that it was at this point the idea for The Karate Code hit me - what if my friend wasn't alone in his concern? What if there were other people like him, other “karateka”, who were having a hard time understanding and identifying exactly *what* they were practicing?

I had to investigate.

So, I started looking around and immediately a trend emerged. People's view on what karate was - or wasn't - and what its inherited historical and cultural values stood for, were far more diverse and revealing than you could ever have ever imagined.

It was a real eye opener, although I can't say I was shocked.

*I had seen it coming.*

Because, for a very long time, there seemed to have existed no real consensus in the karate community regarding the



“definition” of our beloved art, so to speak. It seemed like the meaning and purpose of karate couldn’t be easily pinpointed - and if it could, actual training rarely seemed to go hand in hand with the provided theoretical answer.

Is karate a form of physical fitness? An exotic hobby?  
An exciting sport? A practical form of self-defense?

Depending on who you asked, and at what time you asked, the answer could be anything between heaven and earth.

But, as the saying goes, no matter what path you choose for your journey up the metaphorical mountain of karate, there is only one moon to be seen for those who achieve its summit.

Indeed, some paths may be straighter than others, but they all eventually lead up to the same top, revealing the same moon for everyone – provided that you keep on travelling.

So here's what I was wondering:

*What exactly does that imaginary moon consist of?*

After having climbed all the way to the top of mount karate, what is it that you're really looking at? What is it all about?

I knew there were only a few selected people in the world with the relevant experience to properly answer my question.

Which, being the self-appointed karate nerd that I am, left me with no choice but to track these venerated experts down, and simply ask them myself.

*“What does Karate mean to you?”*

A question much harder than it looks.

And, to tell you the truth, the answers I got were as revealing as they were diverse.

Again.

Because, as you will soon see for yourself, it appears that even among some of the most experienced karate practitioners on earth - men who have literally been eating, breathing and living karate their whole lives - there still seems to exist no true consensus on what karate really is all about.

Or... does it?

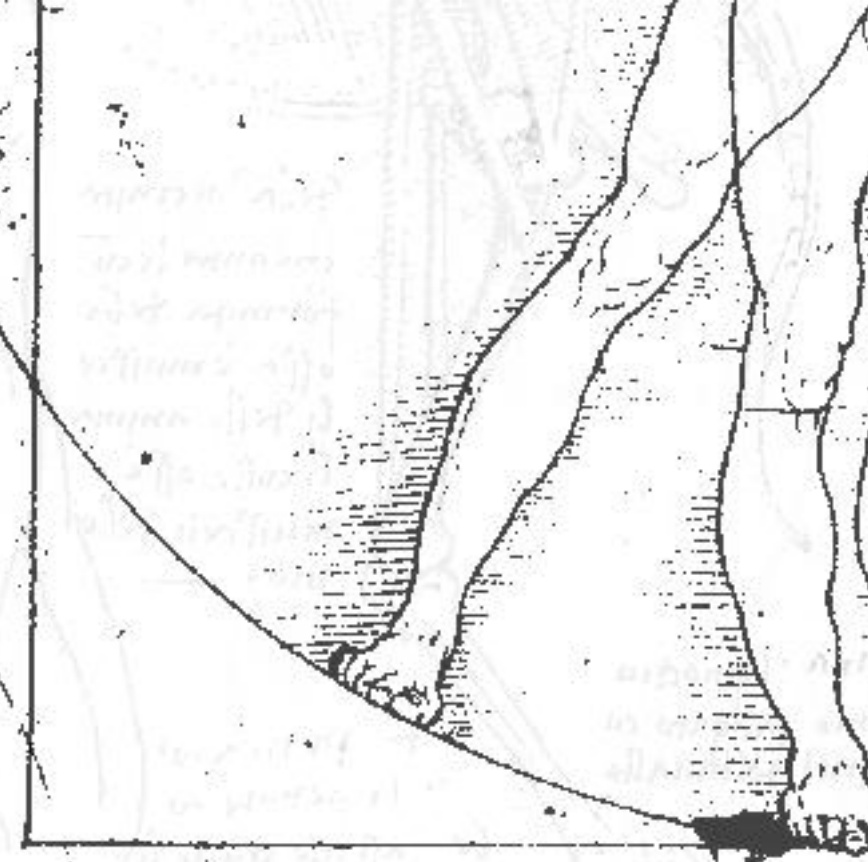
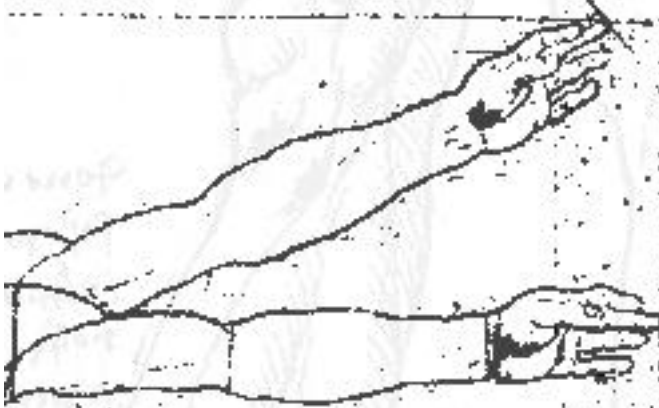
That question is for you to ponder on, dear reader, as you are now free to taste the fruits of my continual questioning - through tapping into the collective wisdom of some of the world's most experienced karate masters alive.

Their thoughts are what make up this book.

Thoughts accumulated through a lifetime of study in the art of the empty hand.

*Karatedô.*

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# Creation

by Mitsusuke Harada

*There is no doubt that karate practitioners each have their own goals and values; and practise with heart and soul.*

*But after all, they do what they do for their own best interest.*

My late teacher, master Gichin Funakoshi, always taught with great passion that “karate practice is for life”.

Even when he was over 80 years old, he would come to our dôjô at least once a week, to teach young students and demonstrate kumite by grappling with his senior disciples.

Indeed he completed his way of  
life, true to his words.

A Zen master, Kôdô Sawaki [1880-1965, considered by many to be the greatest Zen master of the 20<sup>th</sup> century], once wrote that “Budô is about the creation of self before the foe”.



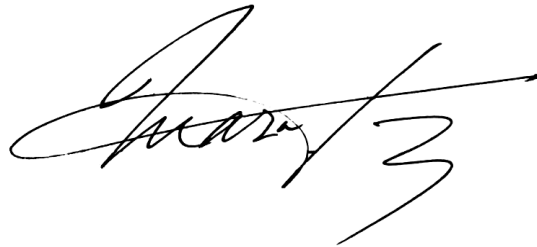
His words relate well to my master Gichin's words "karate practice is for life".

I firmly believe that the philosophy of "creating oneself before the foe" is the source of budô - which has made a significance influence on the Japanese mind through Japanese intellectual history.

This is a phenomenon that is not recognised in any other country, hence the term "samurai spirit" - which is the reason why many people are very much attracted to budô.

In fact, this is also the reason why many budô books, including “Go Rin no Sho” [The Book of Five Rings] have been translated into many languages and are read by a world wide audience.

I have dedicated my entire life to karate and believe more firmly than ever that “the significance of karate lies in the creation of self until death”.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to Mas Oyama, the founder of Kyokushin Karate. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping 'M' and a long, horizontal stroke extending to the right.



Master Mitsusuke  
Harada [b. 1928] is the  
founder of Karatedô  
Shôtôkai. He was a direct  
student under Gichin  
Funakoshi and was in  
2007 appointed Member  
of the Order of the  
British Empire by Queen  
Elizabeth II for his life  
long service to karate.



# The Party Ain't Over!

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