

## **Soke Kanazawa - REI 禮( EtiquetteOREI(BOW, Etiquette)**

The first lesson in KARATE begins with the practice of REI 禮. Then it is always practiced and reminded. Its importance is stressed even more when beginning training in KUMITE 組手.

Only those who understand the depth of its meaning reach a high level of proficiency. KARATE-DO is a martial art and as such has no end or explanation in itself. It is through a process of hard training and rigorous discipline that we try to understand and reach the Way (MICHI or DO). Master FUNAKOSHI was fully aware of its importance as he often reminded his students of it, and one of the twenty principles (SHOTO NIJUKKUN 松濤二十訓) is that KARATE begins with REI and ends with REI.

The REI may be defined as the will to establish a relationship based on mutual trust, goodwill, understanding, and respect of individual feelings by showing our respect. In society, it is a means of maintaining harmony between people for a better society. The REIGI 禮儀 is the code (SAHO作法), or the way of expressing this concept. Those who learn KARATE-DO must understand the depth of the meaning of REI and always behave according to the principles of REIGI 禮儀.

KARATE-DO is natural and should be applied to daily living. In practice REI is a ceremony or a formality by which two people facing each other exchange mutual signs of their respect and trust.

**SAHO 作法:** How to execute correctly the REI in training or in KUMITE.

The two partners face each other, in the position SHIZENTAI HACHIJI DACHI 自然八字立, they assume the position MUSUBI DACHI (heels together), the attacker bringing his right foot to his left foot and the defender his left foot to his right. They look at each other in the eyes for a moment. Then, leaning forward with the upper body straight, at an angle of approximately 30 degrees with a total view of the opponent's lower body without staring at any specific point (one second). They straighten up, look at each other in the eyes and then resume the stance HACHIJI DACHI (the feet return to their original position). When they are ready to begin (KISEI 起勢), they assume their respective stances.

For instance, in GOHON 五本, SANBON 三本 and KIHON IPPON KUMITE 基本一本組手, from their respective stances, at a certain distance (MAAI 間合) from SHIZENTAI HACHIJI DACHI 自然體立 (Natural stance), the attacker steps back with his right foot (or left) to assume ZENKUTSU DACHI 前屈立 (front stance), HIDARI GEDAN BARAI 左下段擋受 (left or right gedan bari downward arm block) or (MIGI 右) and informs his opponent of the target and type of attack, while the defender maintains his position. The attacker must

retreat. This is part of the REIGI禮儀 towards his partner.

After each execution, each returns to his initial position of SHIZENTAI HACHIJI DACHI 自然八字立 by inhaling while bringing the displaced foot back, then exhaling while tensing the abdomen (HARA下腹) with the feeling that the KI氣 is in the lower abdomen ready for the next movement.

It is of utmost importance that breathing is linked to the proper movement and awareness of the situation, whether executing REI禮, taking a position, or practicing KUMITE. Always remember that breathing has a very great influence not only on the health, but also on the physique, ability, technical level (power-speed) and the brain of person.

(Selected from the book - S.K.I. Kumite Kyohan by Soke Kanazawa)