

The Qualities and Characteristics of Rank:

First-Degree Black Belt

A first-degree black belt (junior instructor), has achieved a certain level of physical expertise. Understanding the concepts and principles of motion, he has become a formidable fighter defensively and offensively. However, his skills outstrip his ability to communicate and teach, so teaching is essential to any further progress.

Second-Degree Black Belt

For the second-degree black belt (associate instructor), the ability to teach has begun to reinforce newfound skills. He has discovered that 'to teach is to learn,' and this is accompanied by a re-evaluation of past mistakes and bad habits. A new sense of responsibility appears, and he must begin to cultivate an image of authority within the school.

Third-Degree Black Belt

At third-degree (senior instructor), the black belt finds that first and second-degree black belts look to him for guidance and direction in the execution of techniques. He now has the authority within the school environment to organize a curriculum, express policy and set up tests.

Fourth-Degree Black Belt

At fourth-degree (head instructor), the black belt acquires the privilege of overriding others within the school after careful discussion, as well as a more mature ability to communicate that allows teaching first, second and third-degree black belts. Together with these responsibilities, the fourth-degree black belt assists the master instructor in seminars, demonstrations and other public functions at which the school and the art are represented. His physical expertise should be noticeably above that of more junior black belts, particularly in terms of speed, power and timing.

Fifth-Degree Black Belt

The fifth-degree black belt (associate professor), has reached the level at which he begins to teach the art beyond the realm of the school. Although the school curriculum has been carefully spelled out, he is no longer bound by it and has acquired the ability to tailor it to fit individual students. At fifth degree, in short, the black belt now moves on to a broader base of responsibility.

Sixth-Degree Black Belt

The sixth-degree black belt (professor) has now reached a level at which he can not only teach the art but begin to positively formulate its concepts and principles outside his school. As a result, caution becomes imperative. He has advanced to a critical point in his art, and it is at this point that his accumulation of time in grade becomes his defense against teaching what he cannot later retract.

Seventh-Degree Black Belt

At seventh-degree (senior professor), a noticeable change takes place in the black belt's understanding of his art. He becomes capable of ascertaining the problems that lie within the teaching of the curriculum. Working from a broader base and beginning to teach locally, nationally and internationally what was once taught mainly at home, he now recognizes that his former ways may not work abroad and must be tailored to particular minds, cultures and agendas. He has realized that while the language of the art remains the same, the varied applications of that language must be fitted to the environment. In brief, a seventh degree who goes out to teach in the world must have learned to tailor his teachings to the place and the people.

Eighth-Degree Black Belt

At eighth-degree (associate master), the black belt's concerns shift to exploring areas of physical mastery that were not visible to him in the past. His art eventually begins to expand physically and mentally, so much so that a definite physical change becomes evident, expressing the fact that he has begun to settle into a physical mastery. Thus, movements are less contrived because they are in the process of becoming embodied within him.

Ninth-Degree Black Belt

At ninth-degree (master of arts), the black belt has reached a level where, at any given moment, he can choreograph a technique by reaching a 'superconscious' level. No longer separate from the art he has internalized, he has at last embodied it and become an element of it. What he teaches and what he physically embodies are indivisible. His contributions to the martial arts inside and outside the community are many, and his rank is backed by at least 25 years of sacrifice and service.

Tenth-Degree Black Belt

Tenth-degree represents a lifelong endeavor to help all humankind. The rank is so respected by peers and students that the person's work affects the course of the art.

(The titles for the 10 ranks of black belt and the basic ideas of the differences between them came from Ed Parker. I have added a few needed definitions and explanations and provided interpretations.) -Larry Tatum



Legend and Definitions:

Larry Tatum Diploma

The Crest

The initials, L.T. represent the initials of the President of the Association, as he is the driving force behind the organization.

The spearhead exhibits that this Association is a driving force leading the way for many new ideas in Kenpo.

The shaft of the spearhead is placed upright as a positive driving force.

The white background represents the open-minded attitude of the Association as it accepts changes, for change allows the spearhead to continue to push forth.

The three shields depict three facets of the Association that make up the complete shield.

The chevron denotes authority and honor--the color purple being a royal color, as well as being the highest spiritual color.

The tree represents two things: the tree of knowledge and the fact that the Association has been rooted in and serving many members throughout the world for many years--its fruits producing many martial artists.

The heart and red band represent strength and compassion inside as well as outside of the Association.

The ten letters in the motto 'confidence' represent a cycle of completion.

The black color of the letters exhibits that there will always be darkness to be pierced by the spearhead, as the darkness unfolds to the light of knowledge.

The dragon represents the highest level of attainment in the martial arts. A level at which there is binding of spiritual and physical development.

Four Phases of Kenpo

Traditional Kenpo~Chinese Kenpo

American Kenpo~Universal Kenpo

(all encompassing can't be labeled)

Sword

The use of Man Made Weapons

Hands

Kenpo Salute-says we use Natural weapons also
The Scholar and the Warrior Empty Hands Fighting
Tigers

Represents earthly strength reaching for the dragon. Also, they represent primitive and mechanical levels of ability reaching for the spontaneous level, (the dragon)

The Dragon

Represents the Spiritual side of the art. The highest level of consciousness with the art

The Circle

Represents Infinity. No Beginning, No End.
Like life, the art is a continuous cycle of learning with No Beginning and No End

The Equations

These symbols are the mathematical building blocks of Kenpo at its fullest development

Universal Pattern

A three dimensional pattern that shows every possible angle that motion can travel on, forward and reverse

The Volcano

Represents the colonization and culmination of Kenpo in Hawaii, as both sides of the Art, linear and circular were brought together to form the basis of the art that we use today

The Belts

Represent long and short term goals that give measurement to one's growth within the Art

Chinese Letters

Represent

"Kenpo Karate, The Spirit of The Tiger and The Dragon"

R=K!→∞ K!→
as K↑ 18!=x17x16...1
=6.40x10

Dated 25 day of April

In The Year 2014

By Order of the Guiding Faculty

Larry Tatum

President

8th. Degree Black

By the Authority Of The Governing Body
of Larry Tatum's
Kenpo Karate Association
In The Spirit Of The Scholar and Warrior
Past, Present And Future

Adolfo Lucena

Is Awarded The Rank of

8th Degree Black Belt

Larry Tatum
Instructor

10th. Degree Black
Rank

Carla
Witness

Dated This 25 day of April

In The Year 2014

Being At Madrid

In The Sovereign State Of Spain

School Code: AP-1-001-LTC