

## How are you feeling about being selected to represent SG?

**Eden:** It is definitely an honour. I'm quite excited to wear the nation's flag on my chest. But I am most nervous about washing my Gi as red does run onto white and I only have one competition Gi. On a more serious note I'm not just any karateka but an SKA karateka bringing us to the World Championships.

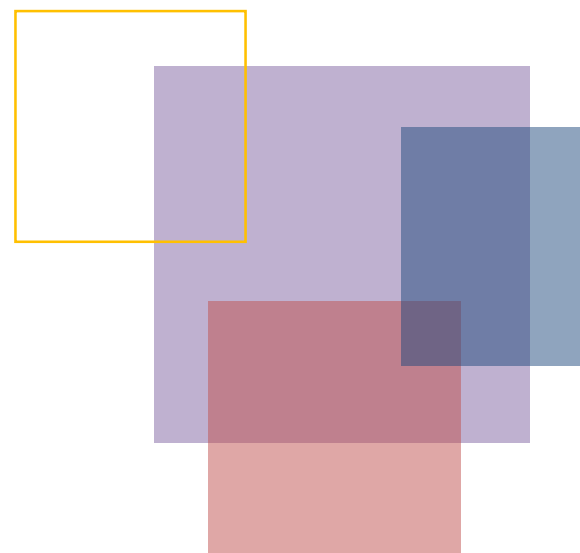
**Shannon:** It feels surreal even up until now, it has been my dream for a long time so I'm glad that I finally have the opportunity!



## Spotlight on Eden Ang & Shannon Leong

We are very proud to announce 2 of our instructors Eden and Shannon have been selected to represent Singapore at the coming World Karate Federation (WKF) Senior World Championship 2021 to be held in Dubai from 16 to 21 November 2021.

Today we do a quick catch up with them to learn more about them, how they started learning karate, how they had been practicing and what they hope to achieve at the championship.



**When did you start learning karate? What makes you pick up karate?**

**Eden:** Haha, the truth is I was forced into it by my parents at about the age of 7. I didn't really appreciate it until I met Senseis whom I really looked up to. They were very patient and inspired me both in and beyond the dojo.

I believe Karate chose me. Karate and Tae Kwon Do classes were offered on the notice board under my block when I was young. My guess is that my mum, who is a Japanese, probably selected the Japanese art. Plus we all know Karate is the best martial art!

**Shannon:** I started when I was 6 years old due to my parents wanting me to pick up some self-defense skills. I fell in love with it and the rest is history really hahaha...



**What motivates you to keep training for so long?**

**Eden:** A lesser known fact is that I actually stopped training for about 12 years. I only came back to serious training about 3 years ago. I was doing a lot of competing in my later teens and I wanted to focus on different arts in that stage of my life. When I told my Sensei I was thinking of leaving, he told me "Sure, do what you have to do. Karate will always be here. When you feel ready, come back and Karate will welcome you back with open arms". Those words reminded me that after many years I still had a home in Karate. In my younger days I was motivated by breaking boards and winning medals. These days my interest in development and understanding of the human body intrigues me, and my student's love for karate motivates me.

**Shannon:** My love for the sport, definitely. There is always something new to learn and takeaway from karate and so the sport itself motivates me to keep training!





**How have you been preparing for this championship? Eg. Any difference in your training schedules, any sacrifices you had to make, did Covid pandemic affect your training?**

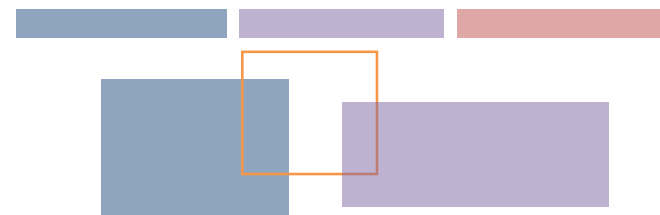
**Eden:** Since I set my mind to competing, I have been training every day of the year, in most days twice a day (These are a mixture of kata specific as well as strength & conditioning). I have taken a few days off this year however due to injuries I sustained in my Mixed Martial Arts training. I usually do Jiu Jitsu or MMA about five days a week, however I've had to stop for two weeks to get my body specifically ready for Kata and safe from injury.

When it comes to sacrifices, my wife has been the most understanding as she supports me wholeheartedly. However, if I could do magic I would pause time so that I could spend more time with her, rather than going to the carpark alone late at night. Also I run in and out of work a lot so that I can squeeze training times in. I do wish I could spend

more time with my colleagues and staff at work in a more social setting.

The Covid pandemic had actually opened quite a door for me. Before Covid hit, I was training as a student at the Dojo. However during the circuit breaker, I opened up an invite for some of the SKA members to train alongside me on Zoom. Thanks to Hendri and some of the other guys, the interest grew and before long the Zoom group was almost the size of a regular class. When the restrictions eased, Sensei Wong and Sensei Leong blessed me with the opportunity to be able to lead the class and share my passion. Which leads me to where I am today. So every cloud does have its silver lining.

**Shannon:** My training has ramped up a significant amount since the start of the year when I really wished to do karate full time. I now train twice a day for six days with one rest day. I do my kata in the morning and have strength training in the evenings with my strength and conditioning coach. Since I just graduated from university this year, finding a job would have been the first thing on my mind if I weren't in this sport, but I guess my biggest sacrifice is really good food because I have to swap out for a healthier diet!



**Training for competition may seem a lonely journey because very few can make the cut for the selection team, what keeps you going?**

**Eden:** You hit the nail on the head with the word “lonely”. It really can be a very lonely journey, especially times when I’m in the gym, carpark, or Dojo alone. I usually use the time to reflect on myself internally. I usually listen to The Joe Rogan podcast, my own podcast, Double Intent (for me to self-analyse), and marketing talks etc. I also listen to soppy Mando pop and soundtracks. Listening to music sometimes helps to perk me up.

Having said all this, it’s honestly not that bad. The SKA community around me is very supportive. We actually have a secret training every Saturday (not so secret once this article goes out) from 3pm where we set up a competition setting i.e. we mark out the tatami with WKF dimensions, we have a grading sheet where we critique one

another and we video down our performances for in depth analysis as well. Truly, I am only as strong as my fellow SKA teammates.

**Shannon:** To be honest, the rest of the team who are going there with me inspire me a lot. They push themselves to be the best that they can and in turn it really pushed me to be the best that I can. Kata seems very individual but to have a supportive team like them makes it feel less lonely.



**With the championship only a couple of weeks away, how are you feeling now and what results or takeaways do you hope to achieve at the championship?**

**Eden:** I’m feeling very positive and excited about it actually. I’m excited to bring Singaporean Kata to the World Championships. I believe as much as Kata is a set routine, our national culture is infused and each country has its own style and flavour. Will I come back as the world champion? I’m also a pragmatic person so perhaps this quote my mother used to tell me before I compete is most apt to address this. “Don’t need to go there to win, go there to NOT be defeated.” That is my goal.

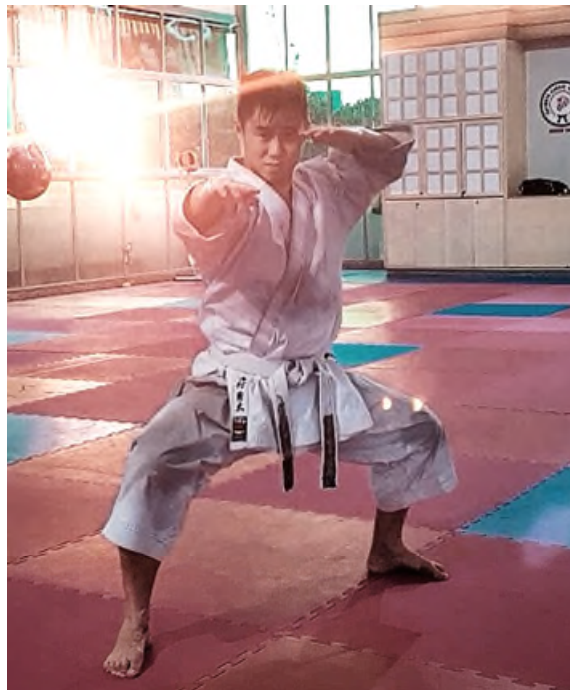
**Shannon:** I’ve been really excited to attend such a large scale competition for the first time, I’ll just give my very best and show the fruit of my labour. Whatever result comes, there’s always room for improvement!



Any advice to give for others who aspire to represent SG at WKF championship one day?

**Eden:** Do it! You can definitely do it. We have taken the first step, please ride on our efforts and shine.

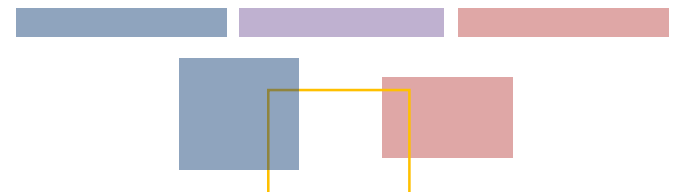
**Shannon:** Even if things are hard, don't lose your dream. Keep working towards it, keep learning, keep improving! One day you'll get there, I believe in you!



We hope the heartfelt words of Eden and Shannon helps you know them a bit better and motivates you to love the art of Karate more.

As Eden and Shannon continue to push themselves and train harder in the days leading to the championship, a prestigious event which will feature many of the world's top karate players, including the recently minted Olympics medallists. We would like to gently remind them to take good care of themselves, both physically and mentally.

We hereby wish them all the best in their pursuit for individual growth, experience and achievements for themselves and for Singapore.





## Presentation of contributions from President & members of SKA

On behalf of Eden and Shannon, the SKA management would like to take thank all members and parents of our junior members in your thoughtful contributions towards the funding for Eden's and Shannon's trip to the championship.



A special note that Sensei Leong will also be travelling with Eden and Shannon to the WKF Senior World Championship as the Singapore competition team's Kata coach.

